

“Humanitarian” Cover for Imperialist Occupation

U.S. Global Cops Out of Somalia!

President Bush has ordered a massive military intervention into Somalia, code-named “Operation Restore Hope.” With public opinion horrified by the images of Somali children slowly starving to death as local warlords seize most of the food aid, Bush promises to use the U.S. military to ensure that the desperate population is fed. President-elect Bill Clinton quickly gave his enthusiastic support to a military intervention whose purpose is supposedly not strategic gain but humanitarian relief. But behind this feigned concern by the racist American rulers for starving black Africans is the sinister reality of U.S. imperialism, which is using the famine in Somalia to justify direct military intervention in Africa.

While TV is filled with heart-rending scenes of Somali children with distended bellies and sunken eyes, followed by shots of Mad Max road warriors roaming around in their “technicals” (pickup trucks with mounted machine guns), this is the excuse for sending in a colonial expeditionary force of 28,000 to 35,000 U.S. troops. To distribute food? To put down gangs armed with AKs? Hardly. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Colin Powell explained that it had to be “a large enough force that we could dominate the entire country,” and “these numbers may go up considerably” (*New York Times*, 5 December).

The media are trying to sell the lie, particularly to black people in this country, that the imperialists are “coming to the aid” of the impoverished people of war-torn Somalia out of “humanitarian” concern. Nonsense. The famine in Africa is caused by imperialist exploitation, which drives the population into conditions of poverty that are below the minimum level for survival (see “Imperialism Starves Africa,” *WV* No. 561, 16 October). Deprived of food and currency reserves, the African nations are decimated by natural disasters like drought, or political and economic crises. In Somalia, mass starvation has resulted from the breakup of the country, a by-product of the capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union. After coming to power at the end of the 1960s, murderous Somali strongman Siad Barre was able to play off the USSR and the U.S. to obtain financial aid and sophisticated arms until he was overthrown in early 1991.

Now Washington claims it is going to fix the situation in Somalia. General Powell says that the U.S. army is going to Somalia “like the cavalry coming to the rescue” (*CNN*, 5 December). The idea of the U.S. military, which dropped the



From Kurdistan to the Horn of Africa



Stone/Sygma

“Operation Provide Comfort,” spring 1991: U.S. ferried aid to Kurdish refugees (above) while using them as pawns. Washington manipulated Iraqi Kurds into aiding suppression of Turkish Kurds by bloody Turkish regime.

atomic bomb on Hiroshima, raped Vietnam and trained generations of torturers in Latin America and elsewhere, as a force for humanitarian relief is grotesque! For over a year after Somalia broke down into clan warfare and famine, the imperialist leaders turned their

back on the mass starvation there. And virtually nothing is being proposed to assist the more than a dozen other African countries which, faced with the worst drought in a century, are being wracked by starvation.

What interests the imperialists in

Somalia is that they see it as an ideal military base, strategically situated astride the sea lanes of the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden, providing a forward base for intervention in the Near East. Indeed, according to the

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Prometheus Research Library Book

**James P. Cannon
and the Early Years of
American Communism**

Selected Writings and Speeches, 1920–1928

SEE PAGE EIGHT

Stop the Deportations of the L.A. Eight!

On December 8 the deportation hearings of Michael Shehadeh and Khader Hamide are scheduled to resume. Permanent residents of the U.S., Shehadeh and Hamide are part of a group of seven Palestinians and a Kenyan woman, known as the "Los Angeles Eight," who have been fighting government witch-hunting deportation proceedings for the past five years. To expel the other six,

the Immigration and Naturalization Service is citing technical violation of their visitor's visas.

In January 1987 the L.A. Eight were arrested and initially charged under the McCarthyite McCarran-Walter Act with "advocating world communism." Specifically, the government alleges they were supporters of the radical-nationalist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine

(PFLP). Congress repealed the thought-crime anti-communist provisions of the McCarran Act in 1990, replacing it with a "cleaner" immigration law which mandates deportation for "terrorist activity."

It's none of the government's business what political views people have, or what political organizations they support, and we oppose such witchhunting laws whatever their pretext.

The L.A. Eight—well-established businessmen, students and working people—all deny membership in the PFLP or participation in any of its activities. Hamide, whom the feds alleged was the Southern California "PFLP leader," is a businessman who has lived in the U.S. for over 20 years and is active in Democratic Party politics. Then-FBI director William Webster testified before Congress that Hamide and Shehadeh "had not been found to have engaged themselves in terrorist activity," and that if the L.A. Eight "had been United States citizens, there would not have been any basis for their arrest."

The eight are charged with a thought crime, pure and simple. In fact, weeks after their arrest, "Justice" Department spokesmen admitted they were compelled to use the witchhunting McCarran-Walter Act because "a lengthy FBI investigation failed to turn up evidence of plans to commit criminal or terrorist acts" (*Washington Post*, 29 January 1987).

The newest round of hearings began in October with the government's star witness, Tel Aviv University professor Ariel Merari, a so-called expert on "terrorism." In a grotesque display of chutzpah, Merari introduced a collection of documents seized from a PFLP building by the Israeli army during its 1982 invasion of Lebanon—which led to the bloody massacre of over 1,800 Palestinians, mostly women and children in the refugee camps at Sabra and Shatila. Defense attorney Leonard Weinglass noted that the Israeli prime minister's office has taken a direct interest in trying to nail the L.A. Eight as terrorists. It is the Zionist rulers who are truly dangerous terrorists, and they have a nuclear arsenal at their fingertips.

If, as expected, immigration judge Bruce Einhorn, a former federal prosecutor, rules the PFLP to be "terrorist," the feds will then set out to prove that

Hamide and Shehadeh "abetted" the organization. In typical star-chamber fashion the government has hidden behind "national security" grounds and refused to divulge any evidence to support their allegations, forcing the L.A. Eight to fight the charges blindfolded.

The years-long investigation of the L.A. Eight came amid the many Reagan/Bush "terrorism" scares, which sought to criminalize any support to the poor and oppressed around the world, gripped in life-and-death battles against the butchers propped up by U.S. imperialism. Palestinian militants and Salvadoran trade unionists have been excluded from the U.S. under the thought-crime immigration laws, while the terrorists in the White House roll out the red carpet for their own partners in crime, from former Israeli "defense minister" Ariel Sharon, the butcher of Sabra and Shatila, to José Napoleon Duarte, leader of El Salvador's death squad democracy.

The vendetta against the L.A. Eight represents the intersection of "terrorism" hysteria and anti-immigrant chauvinism. It was in the L.A. Eight's fight against deportation in 1987 that government plans came to light for herding Arab residents into concentration camps during wartime, plans which loomed as a frightening possibility with the U.S. assault on Iraq. Today's heightened use of the Immigration Service in efforts to break strikes, such as the months-long battle by Southern California drywall workers, illustrates that the new domestic order is just the same old order of racist and anti-immigrant terror.

Stop the deportations! Hands off the L.A. Eight! Full citizenship rights for all immigrant workers and their families! For more information and to send contributions, write: Committee for Justice to Stop the McCarran-Walter Act Deportations, P.O. Box 4631, Los Angeles, CA 90051.

* * *

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Judith Gabriel



Members of L.A. Eight face McCarthyite deportations.



TROTSKY

James P. Cannon and the Russian Revolution

The destruction of the Soviet workers state was the end product of manifold betrayals by the Stalinist bureaucracy, not least its erosion of the consciousness of the proletariat which made the October Revolution of 1917. The nationalist dogma of "socialism in one country" was the antithesis of the Bolshevik internationalism which animated the Soviet workers in the early years of the revolution. Among the works in the Prometheus Research



LENIN

Library's new book, James P. Cannon and the Early Years of American Communism (1992), is a speech given by Cannon in 1923 after a lengthy stay in Soviet Russia, which vividly describes the internationalist sentiment in Lenin and Trotsky's time.

I found the red soldiers pretty well informed as to what is going on in the world. They spoke of the prospects of revolution in Germany with the air of men who had read and talked much about it. That is part of their education; Trotsky keeps them fully informed about international developments, and there are special Communist detachments in all regiments who carry on a constant propaganda for internationalism.

Capitalist journalists write a great deal about the intense national patriotism of the Red Army. These stories are usually written by journalists who sit around in Moscow hotels and cook up stories about it, and, as a rule, they are very far from the truth. As a matter of fact, the main effort of Communist propaganda in the army is to overcome tendencies toward Russian national patriotism and to develop a patriotism to the international proletariat. Since the army quit singing *God Save the Tsar* it has had no national official hymn. The official air played in the Red Army is the *Internationale*. Internationalism is the watchword....

On the fifth anniversary of the revolution the delegates of the Communist parties and red trade unions were the guests of the proletariat of Petrograd. A great throng of workers met us at the station. We symbolized to them the international labor movement and they gave us a warm and generous welcome. Red Army troops were drawn up before the station, the streets in all directions were packed with workers who had come to greet us, and from every building and post flew banners, proclaiming the fifth anniversary of the Russian Revolution and hailing the international revolution....

Wherever there is a group of militant workers anywhere in the world, there is the Russian Revolution. The Russian Revolution is in the heart of every rebel worker the world over. The Russian Revolution is in this room.

Comrade Trotsky told us, just before we left Moscow, that the best way we can help Soviet Russia is to build a bigger trade union movement and a stronger party of our own. Recognition by other governments will be of some temporary value, but the real recognition Soviet Russia wants is the recognition of the working class. When she gets that she will not need the recognition of capitalist governments. Then she can refuse to recognize them!

For, after all, Soviet Russia is not a "country." Soviet Russia is a part of the world labor movement. Soviet Russia is a strike—the greatest strike in all history. When the working class of Europe and America join that strike it will be the end of capitalism.

—James P. Cannon, "The Fifth Year of the Russian Revolution" (early 1923)

WORKERS VANGUARD

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Bureaucrats Give Scabs Half the Jobs

Drywallers Strike Settled, Fight for Solid Union Goes On

LOS ANGELES—After almost six months of hard class struggle, the strike of drywall construction workers in Southern California has been settled. The 43 contractors in five counties who make up the Pacific Rim Drywall Association were finally forced to recognize the union. The contract includes health benefits, significant wage increases, a union shop and a union hiring hall that will rid them of the hated labor contractors. But it also includes a no-strike clause, and in a scandalous stab in the back, Carpenters union bureaucrats agreed that contractors will initially be required to hire only 50 percent of their workers from the ranks of the strikers! Current jobs, and half of all new work, will be filled by *scabs*!

Up against the powerful home builders of Southern California, the workers defended their picket lines against the LAPD, Orange County sheriffs and the strikebreaking INS (Immigration and Naturalization Service), the hated *migra*. At the beginning of the strike, an incredulous *Orange County Register* (19 July) marveled at these workers, "Mexican, immigrant, Spanish-speaking, taking on the most potent political powers in the county." These strikers captured the



Militant Latino strikers picket against LAPD brutality.

WV Photo

Stop the Deportations! Scabs Out—Enforce the Union Hiring Hall!

imagination of the multiracial working class from the San Pedro docks to the Century City hotels to the ghettos and barrios of L.A.

Yet this long, courageous struggle, at the cost of hundreds of arrests and deportations, is being *sabotaged* by the AFL-CIO craft union tops. One Carpenters

business agent admitted the strikers "weren't thrilled" with the contract. More bluntly, strikers told *Workers Vanguard*, "It sucks." In San Diego, where the scabbing was heaviest, the contractors are refusing to sign, as 250 drywallers continue the strike.

Strikers told WV that even before the settlement, picket lines were ordered down at sites of some contractors who had simply agreed to talk. The no-strike pledge has pissed off a lot of workers, who know that the contractors will do everything to gut any gains. Already, contractors are calling the people they want, bypassing the union hiring hall. One worker said that only 200 strikers have been called back to work. And the entire agreement has an escape clause that the bosses can drive a tractor-trailer through: if contractors show the contract puts them at an unfair advantage with non-union competitors, wages and benefits can be slashed in the name of "market relief"!

This is an outrage! Strikers have not weathered hundreds of arrests, cop beatings and deportations only to be working side by side with scabs who crawled on their belly for the bosses. Returning strikers should greet the scabs with an "education committee" (something like a cross between the L.A. Raiders and Pancho Villa's diplomatic corps) to "teach" them how a union hiring hall works—and make sure they owe their allegiance to a union forged in six months of hard struggle.

As we go to press, negotiations are continuing to have outstanding legal charges against the drywallers dropped, but there has not been a single mention from the bureaucrats of defending the strikers who still face deportation proceedings at the hands of the INS. The drywallers have fought hard—but they

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Letters

Gould's Mismeasure of Marx

November 16, 1992

To the Editor:

I was particularly interested in your polemic on Stephen Jay Gould in *Workers Vanguard* of 13 November 1992.

First of all, I wanted to add one point, regarding the applicability of dialectics to natural processes which I believe you left out, and which should, I think, have occurred to you.

Besides quantum theory, it seems pretty clear that Einstein's theory of relativity, particularly the fact that mass can transform into energy, and energy back into mass, also seems to point to the applicability of dialectics to the natural processes of nature.

Secondly, I think your point distinguishing between nature's random choice in biological evolution and, on

the other hand, the presence or absence of conscious leadership in human historical development is true, but also that this very point tends to be fudged by less-"hard" scientific students when they say things like, "Biological evolution gives way to cultural evolution." This, it seems to me, is absolutely true, and without fault as far as it goes, *particularly* in looking at the transition between apes and people, and I think Gould's done, pretty admirable work (as I gather you seem to agree) in pointing to the way in which the role of labor (Engels' contribution) has had so very much to do with this transition.

But a lot of people who say things of this sort—i.e., natural "randomness" giving way to a more purposive cultural (i.e., human agency-centered) develop-

ment—don't seem to know where it came from or, if they do, are simply fudging, as I said, because Marx and Engels just ain't so popular in these parts.

Warm comradely greetings to all,
Al Greene
Dunedin, Florida

November 23, 1992

Dear Comrades:

I very much appreciated your polemic with Stephen Jay Gould on the future of the Soviet Union ("Punctured Equilibrium: Stephen Jay Gould and the Mismeasure of Marx," WV No. 563, 13 November). You say you find it remarkable that Gould "never mentions the name of Trotsky," "a mystery...since Trotsky's archives are located in Harvard's Houghton Library, just a short walk from the buildings where Gould works." In fact Gould is not alone among contemporary scientists in being shy mentioning the great revolutionary's

name while borrowing freely from his ideas. Marshall Sahlins and Edward Service, two eminent American anthropologists, in their book *Evolution and Culture* use Trotsky's theory of uneven and combined development to explain the course of human history from tribal to space age, but give credit for the idea to Veblen and Mao! Historian-anthropologist Eric Wolf in *Europe and the People Without History* agrees with Trotsky that modes of production coexist and become intertwined in the imperialist-ruled countries, but then asserts that Trotsky failed to generalize this concept for countries other than Russia.

Trotsky in his lifetime suffered slander at the hands of bourgeois intellectuals. Today, his contribution to social science being undeniable, he is subject to a perhaps no better fate—distortion and misapplication. Your article goes a long way in setting the record straight.

Comradely,
J.P.
Kent, Ohio

Spike Lee Rewrites Malcolm X

5 December 1992

To the Editor,

Spike Lee's movie "Malcolm X" includes a scene in Harvard Yard where a young blonde woman asks Malcolm what she could do to help. Malcolm answered, "Nothing." At this point, a small but not insignificant portion of the predominantly black, mid-Manhattan audience at which I saw the movie burst into cheers. This is a disconcerting reflection of the impact of Lee's careful tailoring of Malcolm's story.

Spike Lee fails to set the record straight. According to the *Autobiography of Malcolm X*, the actual scene took place in a Black Muslim restaurant in Harlem, where the young woman followed Malcolm after hearing him speak at a New England college. But unlike Lee, Malcolm had more to say about the incident. In the epilogue to the autobiography, Alex Haley recounts Malcolm's telling black photographer Gordon Parks, "Well, I've lived to regret that incident. In many parts of the African

continent I saw white students helping black people. Something like this kills a lot of argument. I did many things as a Muslim that I'm sorry for now. I was a zombie then—like all Muslims—I was hypnotized, pointed in a certain direction and told to march."

Since Lee doesn't show the convulsive struggles of the day, there is obviously no way for the audience to see the armies of black and white men and women who braved the police-state terror of the South to immerse themselves in the freedom struggles—and who gave their lives in the fight for black equality—people including Viola Liuzzo, Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner.

Many of these young civil rights workers came to see the root cause of racist oppression in capitalist unequal-

ity (see "An Activist Recalls the 'Freedom Summer' of 1964," *Black History and the Class Struggle*, No. 7). Those who never found the road to revolutionary Trotskyism were burned by their popular-frontist politics and ultimately led back into the Democratic Party of war and racism, or out of politics entirely. But the Democratic Party is Spike Lee's party too. And to a generation of increasingly ghettoized black youth, who have been led to believe that political struggle means driving Korean and Arab shopkeepers out of the 'hood, Lee's movie offers no sense of any kind of independent political struggle—let alone a multiracial and revolutionary one.

Comradely,
Paul C.
New York, NY

Somalia...

(continued from page 1)

Washington Post (4 December), the Pentagon is planning to set up modern port and airfield facilities in the Somali capital of Mogadishu.

The imperialist rulers are trying to pretend that this is going to be a quick operation, but in reality they are preparing for a prolonged military occupation of Somalia. President Bush piously vowed that U.S. troops would not seek to influence Somalia's political crisis, and General Powell is talking about withdrawing U.S. forces "in a few months." But Powell quickly hedged, saying that U.S. Marines would remain stationed off the Somali coast as a "posse," ready to intervene again, and that "a few units" of ground forces would remain in Somalia indefinitely to support UN "peacekeepers."

Moreover, UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali insisted that, in addition to distributing food relief, an aim of the intervention is to "maintain security in the region" and "reconciliate" warring clan chiefs. A CIA report, summarized by the *New York Times* (2 December), estimates that the prospects for setting up a stable Somali government are bleak, and proposes a UN protectorate or trusteeship by which a country (unnamed) would rule Somalia on behalf of the UN "until the territory is ready for self-government." Thus, Somalia would be recolonized in the name of "the white man's burden" of bringing "peace" and "civilization" to Africa.

Washington Declares "Supersovereignty"

As the imperialists arrogantly assert their right to intervene as they wish anywhere and at any time, columnist William Safire waxed eloquent on the need for the "only standing superpower" to have a "new sovereignty":

"When do the world's responsible powers have a right to intrude on what used to be an impenetrable sovereignty? Anarchy offers the obvious invitation to intervene, as is the case in Somalia—but what of cases of genocidal tyranny, as practiced by Iraq in its portion of Kurdistan, or by the Khmer Rouge as it plots new savagery in Cambodia, or by Serbia as it readies for its final solution in Kosovo?"

—*New York Times*,
30 November

As Safire put it: "By virtue of being the superpower, we have a superinterest." And so U.S. imperialism arrogantly asserts "supersovereignty," to intervene when and where they want. This is the same doctrine that the White House and Supreme Court use to assert the "right" of the U.S. to kidnap anyone, from Panamanian heads of government to Mexican doctors, in the name of "justice."

"Operation Restore Hope" in Somalia is of a piece with Bush's supposedly humanitarian "Operation Provide Comfort" last year, when the U.S. set up a "security zone" for Kurds in northern Iraq. In the aftermath of the Persian Gulf War—in which the Pentagon wantonly slaughtered over 100,000 Iraqis—Kurds and Shi'ites rose up. After Hussein put down the revolt, the U.S. flew in food and medicine to Kurdish refugees in the north while U.S. warplanes prevented Iraqi military attacks. In return, Washington demanded that the Iraqi Kurdish organizations cooperate with the reactionary Turkish regime in repressing fighters of the Turkish PKK (Kurdish Workers Party). So in the interests of imperialist "divide and rule" policy, Iraqi Kurds massacre Turkish Kurds!

Washington is throwing massive firepower into Somalia: artillery, tanks, armored cars and helicopter gunships, with an aircraft carrier battle group offshore for reinforcements and possible bombing missions. In addition, there will be several thousand troops from half a dozen countries, including France, Canada, Egypt, and Somalia's former colonial ruler, Italy. Facing untrained and



U.S. imperialism is responsible for bloody breakup of Somalia and mass starvation.

undisciplined bands armed with light weapons, most U.S. officials agree with the military analyst who estimated that "this ought to be a piece of cake" (*Los Angeles Times*, 30 November). Meanwhile, the racist U.S. ambassador to Kenya warned: "If you liked Beirut, you'll love Mogadishu."

No doubt many in Somalia and elsewhere believe that the U.S. presence can only be beneficial since things could scarcely get any worse. Of the African regimes, only the Sudan has opposed the U.S. intervention in Somalia. Yet ultimately, direct American military intervention in Africa can only result in increased oppression and exploitation of the African people. The U.S. was the main supporter and arms supplier to Somali butcher Siad Barre from the late 1970s, when President Jimmy Carter wooed him away from being a Soviet client, until the late 1980s, when the end of the Cold War made the Horn of Africa lose much of its strategic interest to Washington. But since the Gulf War, the U.S. is intent on reinforcing its strategic presence in the region vis-à-vis its imperialist rivals.

With Bush giving a "democratic," "humanitarian" façade to the pursuit of imperialist interests, liberal Democrats are positively ecstatic. Liberal columnist Murray Kempton effusively declares of Bush:

"Now we can say goodbye, grateful for his having lifted himself and his countrymen up to this one great moment that transcends all of his and our lesser hours.... We have assembled our battalions not to fight but to save a people we do not even know and who can offer us no spoil except the sense that we have done a good action for no material boon."

—*Los Angeles Times*,
12 December

Liberals would like to cloak U.S. imperial interests in the rhetoric of "dogoodism." But when the Carter administration installed a "human rights junta" in El Salvador in a U.S.-sponsored coup in the fall of 1979, it opened the road to a decade of bloody repression. And Carter's "human rights" campaign over Afghanistan and Poland was the opening salvo in Cold War II, which ultimately

saw the collapse of the Soviet degenerated workers state into capitalist misery and nationalist bloodletting.

Western Imperialism and the Yugoslav Bloodbath

There is also pressure to intervene further in Yugoslavia in the name of supposedly "humanitarian" concerns. The communal civil war, with "ethnic cleansing" carried out on all sides, has created more than two million refugees, and continues to do so at a rate of more than a thousand a day. The UN estimates that more than 400,000 people could die this winter of cold, disease and starvation. While publicizing Serbian war crimes (and ignoring those of the fascistic Croatian regime), the U.S. and West Europe are refusing to accept more than a handful of refugees from slaughter.

During the election campaign, Democrat Clinton criticized Republican Bush for not intervening more forcefully in Yugoslavia. He talked about providing arms to Muslims in Bosnia and hinted at bombing attacks against military targets in Serbia. Having whipped up nationalist conflicts in Yugoslavia in the interests of capitalist counterrevolution, the imperialists now seek to contain the nationalist furies. Restoring imperialist "stability" in Yugoslavia is being seen as a "test" of Bush's New World Order.

While Pentagon generals think the occupation of Somalia will be a cakewalk, they know that intervention into the Balkan cauldron would be very different. Here they would be facing not lightly armed bands but formidable military forces—the Yugoslav army and Serbian militias—with a long tradition of fighting foreign invaders. Yugoslavia has become the Lebanon of Europe, with myriad conflicting national/communist forces and shifting alliances. And if the U.S. or other Western "peacekeepers" try to work out a deal with the Serbs, they risk being attacked by the Croats, Bosnian Muslims, Macedonians, Albanians, etc.

The bloody breakup of Yugoslavia is intertwined with *interimperialist* rivalry. The secessionist regimes in Croatia and Slovenia—before World War I provinces



Democratic president-elect Clinton applauds Bush's military adventure in Somalia.

in the Austro-Hungarian Empire—were set up in the summer of 1991 as clients of the newly reunified German Fourth Reich. Serbia, on the other hand, is historically a Balkan ally of British and French imperialism.

Although Washington politicians now ritually denounce Serbian "aggression," and the American media even compares Belgrade nationalist strongman Slobodan Milosevic to Hitler, U.S. imperialism is not fundamentally hostile to a strong Serbian state. Thus the Bush administration gave special dispensation for an American millionaire of Serbian extraction, Milan Panic, to become prime minister of the rump Yugoslav state. The U.S. rulers would like to have a more pro-Serbian posture, provided that Milosevic is replaced by pro-Western "democrats," that is, direct agents of Wall Street and Washington.

If, despite these factors, U.S. and/or West European troops do intervene in Yugoslavia, revolutionaries must give military support to Serbia against the imperialist invaders. While we support no side in the present communist bloodletting, we resolutely oppose the imperialist blockade and any attempt to bring the "new world order" to Yugoslavia. This would only further inflame national hatred among the Balkan peoples, as well as intensify their exploitation by Western capitalism.

The myth of a "humanitarian" imperialism has captivated various radlibs, as well as the social democrats of *In These Times*, who call for military intervention in Yugoslavia. In Europe, Alain Krivine, leader of the French section of the United Secretariat, likewise signed an appeal calling for European imperialist intervention in Yugoslavia. In sharp contrast, the International Communist League makes no concession to the so-called "democratic" bourgeoisie. We fight to mobilize the working class to bring down the imperialist system through international socialist revolution.

Military "Superpower" With a Bankrupt Economy

U.S. imperialism is seeking to play the role of "cops of the world" with a debt-ridden financial structure, an obsolete industrial plant and a population whose living standards have been driven downward for the past two decades. Washington is trying to assert its global leadership through a massive military apparatus which rests on a decaying economic base. No longer able to compete effectively with Japan and Germany in the world market as it is presently organized, American capitalism will be driven to use the Pentagon war machine to carve out its own exclusive trade zones and spheres of exploitation.

Over the past decade the U.S. has reasserted its "superpower" status through military adventures on the cheap against poor Third World countries—the rape of the tiny black West Indian island of Grenada, terror bombing of Qaddafi's Libya, the invasion of Panama, Operation Desert Slaughter against Iraq, and now the occupation of famine-stricken Somalia. However, American imperialism cannot reverse its decline by taking over small and impoverished Central American or east African countries. The Pentagon's military power can change the real balance of economic forces in the world only if it is successfully directed against Japan in Asia and against Germany in Europe: a replay of World War II, only this time *starting* with nuclear weapons.

Today, the U.S. military must act as cops of the world, because the Wall Street banks and Fortune 500 corporations *exploit the working people of the world*, from South Korea to South Africa, from Central America to Central Europe. Only if the capitalist bloodsuckers who run this country are overthrown by the working class, allied with the black and Hispanic poor, can the drive toward a new world war be halted and America's productive capacity be made to serve the genuine interests of humanity. ■

Trotskyists Say: "Defending the DDR Was Not a Crime, Selling It Out Was"



Washington Post



Burkhard Lange

After former DDR leader Erich Honecker (left) was forcibly handed over to the Fourth Reich, comrades of the Spartakist Workers Party participated in united-front demonstration outside Moabit prison July 28, demanding his freedom.

Free Erich Honecker!

On November 12, the show trial began in Berlin of former DDR leader Erich Honecker and five other representatives of the bureaucratically deformed East German workers state that was annexed by capitalist West Germany in 1990. Intended by those staging it to be a "Nuremberg trial of Communists," it is scheduled to run on for two years, though doctors give the chief defendant less than 18 months to live. Outside the courthouse on the opening day, the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany (SpAD), section of the International Communist League, protested against this obscene spectacle, chanting: "Down with the anti-Communist witchhunt! Freedom for Erich Honecker!" At the end of the demo, the Spartakists were joined by supporters of the Erich Honecker Solidarity Committee.

An SpAD press statement linked the revenge trial with the Nazi pogroms in Rostock and the scheduled mass deportation of Roma (Gypsies) as the hideous face of counterrevolution led by Christian Democratic chancellor Kohl together with the Social Democrats (SPD):

"The Honecker trial is the high point of the SPD-led witchhunt directed against everything recalling the victory of the Red Army over Nazi Germany and the DDR deformed workers state which grew out of that. For the 'crime' of defending the DDR, SPD justice minister Jutte Limbach has thrown Honecker into Moabit prison, where he was previously jailed as a resistance fighter by the Gestapo....

"The revolutionary working class in power will have its own score to settle with the Stalinists for their crimes against the working class, including selling out the DDR. But that isn't the concern of the bourgeoisie and their Social Democratic flunkys."

All TV reports of the trial opening, including the ARD, ZDF and RTL channels, and international stations including CNN and BBC, covered the Trotskyists' protest. SAT1 cable TV commented that "the Spartakists are not alone in their protest—after all, 43 percent of the German population is against the Honecker trial." Virtually all the daily papers mentioned our comrades' demonstration; only *Neues Deutschland*, voice of the turncoat ex-Stalinists of the PDS, and the "alternative" anti-communist witchhunters of *taz* said nothing. No wonder, for them *defending* the DDR workers state was a crime, not selling it out!

Among the demands at the November 12 protest was: "Hands off Markus Wolf!" The former head of DDR intel-

ligence is being charged with "treason" because he successfully fought against NATO and West German imperialism. The SpAD also called for "freedom for the anti-fascist hero Gerhard Bögelein," who recently received a life sentence in the SPD bastion of Hamburg, because as a soldier in World War II he went over to the Red Army, fought against the German fascists, and was said to have killed a Nazi army judge who had the blood of more than 100 Soviet partisans and German army soldiers on his hands.

Earlier, on November 7, the anniversary of the Russian October Revolution, there was a demonstration of 100 people outside the German embassy in Paris, in which our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyiste de France participated with a contingent of 40. However, the "anti-opportunist" Stalinists of the Erich Honecker Committee, which called the protest, split the demonstration in a sectarian manner rather than march together with Trotskyists.

The SpAD's opposition to the anti-Communist witchhunt has been met with violent attacks from the *Autonome* scene. On November 22, a sizable goon squad of these semi-anarchists repeatedly assaulted the Spartakist contingent at a protest against the Nazi murder of a Berlin squatter, particularly objecting to our signs for freedom for Honecker. Again on December 5, the same gang threatened our comrades at an anti-fascist demo in Berlin, screaming, "You communists should be stabbed to death!" And while these "autonomous" thugs do the dirty work for the bourgeoisie, the German state is now hauling the Spartakists into court for tearing down a Nazi flag at the Brandenburg Gate last June!

The trial of the DDR leaders has shown the bloodthirsty character of the bourgeoisie's legal vendetta. The proceedings initially had to be postponed after 40 minutes because East Germany's former president Willi Stoph couldn't be dragged before the anti-Communist tribunal due to a heart attack. On the second day of hearings, Honecker, who is suffering from cancer of the liver, had a fainting spell. The case against former state security (Stasi) chief Erich Mielke had to be separated, so that he could be tried on charges against him first raised by Nazi courts.

In the face of his persecutors, Honecker has shown dignity and defiance. On December 3, after giving a clenched-fist salute upon entering the courtroom,

he read out an hour-long statement before the court. Honecker noted that "I and my comrades...are led before the public just as the Roman Caesars once paraded their captured adversaries." John F. Kennedy was not tried for sending U.S. troops to Vietnam, he pointed out, nor George Bush for invading Panama.

This "court of the victors over the vanquished," said the former East German leader, hopes "to totally discredit the DDR" as a "state of injustice" and criminalize Communists. "Socialism, already pronounced dead, is to be killed again." The capitalist rulers are not brought before courts for producing joblessness and homelessness, Honecker said, because "those who are killed by the market economy lose their lives legally."

"Increasingly, 'Ossis' [East Germans] will recognize that the living conditions in the DDR deformed them less than 'Wessis' were deformed by the 'social market economy'," Honecker said, citing the victorious bourgeoisie's attacks on day-care centers, working conditions, health care and equality for women. Today, while he and his comrades, longtime anti-fascists, are on trial and Jews are arrested for protesting the pogrom in Rostock, Nazi mobs are running wild in the streets, attacking and killing immigrants, as in Mölln. After finishing his indictment of his persecutors, the prisoner said to those who sit in judgment over him: "Do what you feel you have to do."

It is noteworthy how pusillanimous has been the support for Honecker from his former comrades. The PDS ex-Stalinists-turned-social-democrats want to put as much distance between themselves and their former leader as possible, only calling for an end to the trial because of his age and because it is discrediting the "*Rechtsstaat*" (law-based state) of reunited capitalist Germany *which they support*. (Indeed, the trial is going so badly for the bourgeoisie that there is talk of dropping Honecker from the defendants for "medical reasons," and the more sophisticated witchhunters of *taz* are making suggestions for "civilizing the Honecker trial.")

Moreover, even though Honecker et al. are being tried on charges of ordering border guards to shoot, and Honecker devoted much of his speech to defending the Berlin Wall, his Stalinist backers of the Honecker Solidarity Committee are silent about the Wall. In contrast, we have noted that this was a bureaucratic measure to defend the socialist gains of

the deformed workers state. That's why the bourgeoisie hated it, and why we Trotskyists defended it against imperialism, while supporting its opening as the product of a nascent political revolution in the DDR in 1989.

The unrepentant Stalinist Honecker speaks of "the defeat of socialism," referring to the DDR as "an experiment that failed." But it wasn't socialism that failed; rather the nationalist lie of building "socialism in one country" was a bureaucratic perversion doomed to failure, all the more so in a third of a country.

In defending Erich Honecker, we do not simply equate him with every other Stalinist or reformist. While Honecker was sitting in Hitler's jails, Walter Ulbricht was in Moscow handing over German Communists to Stalin's executioners and even to the Gestapo. On the other hand, we expressed condolences over the assassination of social democrat Olaf Palme, who was the chief executive of a bourgeois state, but was killed for his leftist reputation, not because he was a good cop for Swedish capitalism.

Various pseudo-leftists have raised the call for "workers tribunals" to try the former DDR leaders. When the SpAD pointed out, in response to a letter, that this was a "left" cover to the witchhunt, this produced a frenzied response from the Arbeitermacht (Workers Power) group, which penned a foam-flecked provocation under the title, "SpAD Before a Workers Tribunal?" (see *Workers Hammer* No. 131, September-October 1992). Likewise the BSA, German followers of the dubious David North, denounce the SpAD for being "against workers tribunals to call the Stalinist gangsters to account" (*Neue Arbeiterpresse*, 30 October). But to have a workers court implies working-class state power; to call for it today under capitalism amounts to giving support to the bourgeoisie's show trials.

Concretely, given the present leadership of the German working class it would mean a "tribunal" presided over by the Social Democrats, the very ones who are running the trial of Honecker & Co. And, in fact, east German SPD leader Wolfgang Thierse has called for a "tribunal" in order to "reappraise DDR history." And how would a sentence be carried out? Perhaps the would-be "leftist" witchhunters considered it "justice" when former Polish Stalinist prime minister Piotr Jaroszewicz, who was widely disliked for running the economy into the ground in the 1970s, was murdered along with his wife in his home in Warsaw last September.

Erich Honecker is being tried by the wrong class for the wrong crimes. With this show trial, the bourgeoisie of the Fourth Reich of German imperialism wants to whitewash the Third Reich. The Spartakists are doing their class duty in defending the victims of this capitalist class justice, just as we fought tooth and nail against capitalist reunification of Germany, which gave rise to this witchhunt, racist terror, mass unemployment and other horrors.

Boris Yeltsin's handing over of Honecker, who had sought asylum in Moscow, was a blood offering by those who have thrown the former USSR into mass poverty, with looming anti-Semitic pogroms and bloody nationalist civil wars, in order to open up the remains of the Soviet workers state for plundering by the Deutsche Bank. But the counter-revolutionary drive by imperialism has run up against fierce resistance by working people and youth, from Italy to Germany and Poland. As our comrades chanted at the demonstration: "Stalinism is dead, communism lives!" ■

NOTICE

Workers Vanguard skips a week in December. Our next issue will be dated January 1.

Drywallers...

(continued from page 3)

have been betrayed by the pro-capitalist labor traitors, and their reformist hangers-on, who *did nothing to mobilize L.A. unions* to win a decisive victory in this key class battle. One tail on the bureaucratic donkey, the International Socialist Organization, waxes enthusiastic about the "important step forward" of the settlement, while concealing the contract clause that gives half the jobs to scabs and not even mentioning the deportations!

Sure, the union tops donated rice and beans and a few bucks—after all, they want the drywallers' dues money. But immigrant workers were *leading a battle for all labor* in an industry and an area where the union movement has been weak. In contrast to the pseudo-socialists, the Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee took up the drywallers' struggle early on and fought for real solidarity *action* by L.A. labor. In a statement to a July 14 defense rally in Santa Ana, PDC spokesman Benito Montgomery said, "The unity and determination you have shown must serve as a call to the integrated labor movement—longshore, aerospace, Teamsters, hotel/restaurant and janitors—to come out and fight shoulder to shoulder to defeat *migra* union-busting."

Drywallers Play Hardball

The drywallers understood from the beginning what they faced. "We are all getting ripped off and exploited by rich bosses. And we have police and immigration and politicians all against us," said one striker. The employers, the Building Industry Association of Southern California, are billion-dollar developers in a highly lucrative industry—new homes in Orange County average almost \$300,000. The capitalist state threw everything at the strikers—special "labor relations" squads of Orange County sheriffs, outrageous bail of \$50,000 on *kidnapping* charges for militant picket lines, *lynching* charges for allegedly rescuing their comrades from LAPD dragnets.

It was "a labor movement that has stunned experts with its organized and willful defiance" (*Orange County Register*). One sheriff bitterly complained, "I have not seen anything this organized...where they are being this bold, this brazen." Ten years ago, unions in the Southern Californian residential building trades industry were wiped out during the Reagan years in Reagan country. Mexican workers, many from the village of Maguay in the central Mexican state of Guanajuato, were brought in to break the union. Wage scales plummeted, creating the conditions that sparked this strike: workers are paid as little as \$300 for backbreaking 60-hour weeks installing 100-pound sheets of drywall.

Overwhelmingly Latino, cut off from unionized, commercial construction by the prejudice and backwardness of the craft union tops, the drywallers fought



Drywallers and supporters at November 14 meeting on union contract at Carpenters Hall in Orange County, California.

WV Photos



to win a union. From Washington, D.C., International Brotherhood of Carpenters president Sig Lucassen pronounced that "the trade union movement—the Brotherhood included—will be dead in the water unless it brings them in" (*Carpenter*, September-October 1992). But when strikers ran up against the cops and judges and *la migra*, the cowardly, pro-Democratic Party AFL-CIO chiefs hid behind anti-labor laws. Orange County Central Labor Council secretary-treasurer Bill Fogarty admitted the gutless impotence of the bureaucracy when he claimed there was an advantage to the drywallers "organizing alone": "labor's hands are tied. An employer can get an injunction against a union." The drywallers' "advantage" lay in the fact that, unlike the pro-capitalist tops, they refused to play by the bosses' rules.

The strike began in June, but it gained prominence when an orchestrated sheriffs/INS attack on the picket lines over the July 4 weekend resulted in the largest mass arrest in Orange County history. Strikers were arrested on outrageous charges of "kidnapping" (!) for running a handful of scabs off a construction site. INS agents were waiting at the jail when strikers were brought there. Strikers' wives quickly organized a demonstration that surrounded the jail. More than 70 workers were forced into "voluntary deportation," another 26 are still in the courts. *Workers Vanguard* demanded "Labor Must Defend the Drywallers!" and "No Deportations!" The PDC contacted L.A. unions to come

out to the court hearing. We joined over a hundred strikers protesting outside the L.A. federal building, but the union tops (and fake-lefts) didn't bother to show.

The contract negotiated by the union tops stipulates that the union must screen drywallers at the hiring hall for undocumented workers, under the sanctions provisions of the racist, anti-labor Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. On behalf of their masters in the Democratic Party, the labor fakers have been the worst promoters of jingoist attacks on "illegal immigration." For years, the only time you heard the bureaucrats talk of Mexican and Central American workers was to blame them for the loss of jobs in decaying American capitalism. That is the AFL-CIO tops' motivation in opposing the imperialist North American Free Trade Agreement to be signed later this month, a scheme for the super-exploitation of the Mexican proletariat.

The Spartacist League opposes this plan for a "Fortress North America" because we fight for international workers solidarity. The drywallers strike was a precious opportunity for the labor movement to wage a sharp fight to say: *anybody who has made it to this country has a right to stay here and work at good*

union jobs. We fought to stop INS union-busting and for *full citizenship rights for foreign-born workers*. The historic discrimination against blacks, Latinos and women in the construction industry must be dramatically broken. Now is the time to make the developers pay for aggressive, union-run recruitment and apprenticeship programs to bring black, Latino and Asian men and women into residential and commercial construction.

Class Struggle Against the New World Order

The drywallers strike came on the heels of the explosion of rage in Los Angeles and across the country after the acquittal of the racist cops who brutally beat Rodney King. *Migra* vans patrolled the streets of L.A. during the riot. The National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights reports that 900 workers were "processed for removal"—that is, *deported*. They also reported that the "LAPD is known to have turned over hundreds of Latinos directly to the INS just on the basis of 'looking like undocumented workers'." The L.A. rebellion sent the U.S. rulers' "New World Order" up in flames, as workers and the oppressed across the world saw the color of racist American "justice" and the fragility of U.S. imperialism's claim to rule the world.

The drywallers inspired workers by reviving class-struggle tactics like roving pickets, real picket lines that scabs learned it was dangerous to cross. They brought a taste of the power of labor to the open shop backwaters of Orange County and the "Inland Empire." There have been key labor battles in L.A.—hotel workers, janitors, longshoremen, teachers (who are now facing a 12 percent pay cut)—which have breathed new life into the labor movement here. But the labor traitors funnel the anger of workers on the docks and construction sites into the Democratic Party of imperialism and war. That is why the unions were criminally silent in the face of the bloody state repression in L.A. last May.

After the mass arrest of drywallers in July, we demanded the labor movement *act* to defend the drywallers, and pointed the way forward:

"The labor movement, especially powerful industrial unions like longshore and aerospace, must defeat INS union-busting and defend foreign-born workers. As the fastest-growing component of the union movement, these workers are linked in struggle to their black and white class allies, and are a bridge to combative Mexican workers on the other side of the border. From among them will be recruited class-conscious cadres who will play a crucial role in forging the revolutionary internationalist workers party that will bring down the racist capitalist system once and for all!" ■

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War Talk Escalates Over Macedonia

Greece Rocked by Strike Wave

A massive strike wave swept Greece this summer and fall, shaking the government of brutal austerity led by Constantine Mitsotakis and his right-wing New Democracy (ND) party. The Athens buses stopped running, and power was repeatedly cut for up to eight hours. A series of public sector strikes crippled banks and postal and phone services for weeks. The labor upsurge was punctuated by street battles with riot police, militant mass picketing and three general strikes in September which repeatedly brought over 100,000 workers into the streets.

Since coming to office in April 1990 the ND government has pursued a devastating Thatcherite program of wage, welfare and pension cuts, mass layoffs and privatizations, along with anti-trade-union laws. The details of this program have been dictated by the European Community (EC), and the latest round of anti-working-class measures was explicitly tied to Greece's endorsement of the collapsing Maastricht Treaty. As in Italy, millions of workers struck against the regime's cutback/privatization plans, but were shackled by their reformist leaders (see "Red Hot Autumn in Italy," WV No. 560, 2 October).

Meanwhile, the government's attacks on the working class have been accompanied by ferocious chauvinist saber rattling over former Yugoslav Macedonia.



Striking Athens bus drivers in August spearheaded massive Greek working-class struggle.

its offensive and the class struggle has broken out again.

In July, the 8,000 bus workers of Athens came out on strike to resist the loss of 1,400 jobs through privatization. The

forced to call a 24-hour general strike on September 3, followed by two 48-hour general strikes on September 9-10 and 16-17, in order to contain the strike movement.

GSEE president Lambros Kanellopoulos declared, "We will fight to the end." But in reality the Stalinist and PASOK leaders were working to head off what was needed: a full-scale workers mobilization which could have defeated the government's all-sided attacks and opened the road to a fight for working-class power. In the end the government, although shaken and internally divided, was able to pass its legislation, and to survive for the time being. The bus workers have been defeated, left to dangle in isolation by the union bureaucrats.

An all-out general strike to defeat the austerity measures and prevent the institution of anti-union legislation would by its very nature have raised the question "Which class will rule?" The union leaders, whether KKE or PASOK, have unambiguously answered that question: the bourgeoisie. PASOK has called for early elections, hoping to ride the wave of hostility to New Democracy and take parliamentary power. It promises a "social contract"—i.e., a deal to impose austerity by a four-year period of "collaboration of social forces."

The KKE is currently posturing to the left, while effectively supporting the government. Pointing out that PASOK "is not a real alternative," the KKE

opposed new elections. During the strikes the KKE refused even to call for bringing down Mitsotakis! This even-handed "opposition" to ND and PASOK has nothing to do with revolutionary struggle against these two bourgeois parties; rather it leaves the KKE's options open in the event of a hung parliament. The KKE has already participated in two coalition governments which preceded Mitsotakis in 1989-90, first as the junior partner to ND, then as junior partner to both ND and PASOK! And they will certainly do so again if the opportunity presents itself.

The fight for workers state power in Greece means total opposition to coalitionism, which prevents the working class from fighting independently for its own interests. Those, like the Greek USec grouping OKDE (Spartakos), who call for a "united front" of the "left," i.e., a "popular front" of the KKE and the bourgeois-nationalist PASOK against New Democracy, are asking the working class to put its head on the capitalists' chopping block.

KKE in the Camp of the Bourgeoisie

The KKE is the historic mass party of the Greek working class. Its partisan struggle against the Nazi wartime occupation and in the civil war that broke out in 1944 gave it great authority. That authority was duly abused to block the seizure of power by the working class at the end of the war, when the Communist Party, as in France and Italy, made peace with the bourgeoisie, disarmed the working class and entered into a popular-front capitalist government to rebuild the Greek capitalist state machine. This 1945 betrayal did not prevent the bourgeoisie, aided and abetted by British and U.S. imperialism, from turning on the Communists, renewing the civil war and slaughtering thousands in a campaign designed to break the potential for working-class revolution.

The defeat of the KKE-led forces in 1949, conforming to Stalin's postwar settlement with Churchill that gave Greece to imperialism, paved the way for a series of rightist regimes culminating in the infamous colonels' dictatorship of 1967-74. Despite this history, the goal of the KKE has remained to find its way back into the corridors of capitalist power. This ambition was finally realized in 1989, when the KKE formed an alliance (the Synaspismos) with a small Eurocommunist breakaway, the KKE (Interior). The message of the alliance was that the KKE, a renowned "hardline" Stalinist party whose leadership had resided in Moscow under

continued on page 11



Former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia is target of chauvinist campaign by Greek bourgeoisie abetted by Greek Stalinist KKE.

Military expenditure has escalated in an arms race with Turkey, and the draft period has been lengthened. Last month Greek president Karamanlis called for closing the borders with "Skopje," the Greek-chauvinist term for Yugoslav Macedonia. This may come to a head over the EC heads of state meeting in Edinburgh this month, where recognition of Macedonia may be broached.

The strikes this year are the latest and largest battles of resistance by an intensely combative working class. In September 1990 a first batch of austerity measures provoked a wave of walkouts, including power, banking, municipal workers and the state-owned Olympic Airways. School occupations by students, supported by teachers, shut down state education for two months. The killing of a left-wing teacher in the southern city of Pátrai sparked a quarter-million-strong demonstration in Athens, and three days of street fighting. The government was forced to back down. Now the ruling class has renewed

bus workers mounted pickets and staged daily demonstrations through downtown, forcing the government to mobilize the army to run scab services. This struggle inspired the working class: in August the GSEE (General Confederation of Greek Workers) called a demonstration in support of the strikers, which brought tens of thousands into the streets of the capital. Even after the public workers strikes were called off, on October 6 some 40,000 workers rallied in an Athens stadium and another 20,000 crowded outside, in an impressive show of solidarity with the bus drivers.

When the government announced its Maastricht package increasing the retirement age to 65 and cutting pensions and social security payments, the public sector exploded. In August tear gas filled the streets as riot police sought to break up mass demonstrations; union leaders and strikers were jailed. The GSEE, led by the Stalinist KKE (Communist Party) and the bourgeois populist PASOK (Panhellenic Socialist Movement), was



Cops in riot gear massed for anti-striker violence.

James P. Cannon and the Early Years of American Communism

Selected Writings and Speeches, 1920–1928



Labor Defender

The Prometheus Research Library, the library and archive of the Spartacist League/U.S. Central Committee, has just published its first book, *James P. Cannon and the Early Years of American Communism: Selected Writings and Speeches, 1920-1928*. The 624-page volume, available in both paperback and hardcover, contains 60 documents, articles and speeches by Cannon from the time he was a leader of the Communist Party (called at that time the Workers Party), as well as an extensive historical introduction by the PRL. Supplementing Theodore Draper's excellent two-volume history of the American Communist movement (*The Roots of American Communism* and *American Communism and Soviet Russia*), as well as Cannon's letters to Draper published as *The First Ten Years of American Communism*, the PRL book provides original documentary material from American Communism's first decade. The book, which covers Cannon's years as one of the principal leaders of the American section of the Communist

were formed from disparate elements and individuals, most of them expelled from the Communist movement only after having been discredited and stripped of all supporters. Cannon stands out as a Communist leader who came over to Trotsky with his authority pretty much intact. And unlike the European groupings of the Left Opposition, for the most part a collection of petty-bourgeois circles, the CLA began with a base among worker militants. Together these factors gave the American Trotskyists a more solid grounding in Communist tradition and practices.

The selection of material in *James P. Cannon and the Early Years of American Communism* is designed to shed light on the origins of American Trotskyism. To provide as complete a documentary record as possible of the evolution of Cannon and the group he

the bibliography of Cannon's writings and speeches for the period, which appears at the end of the volume.

Also included is an appendix containing material written in the summer of 1928 by some of Cannon's key factional collaborators, as well as a letter by Antoinette Konikow—also expelled for Trotskyism in 1928 but not a supporter of the Cannon faction—who led a small Boston grouping into the CLA. Another appendix contains Jack Stachel's December 1928 report to the Workers Party's Political Committee on "The Right Danger and Trotskyism." The report, based on correspondence stolen from Cannon's apartment by party leader Jay Lovestone's henchmen, details the support and interest the expelled Trotskyists had generated within the Workers Party.

In collecting material for inclusion, the PRL searched the bulk of the American archives likely to contain material by Cannon, as well as the available publications of the Communist movement in the 1920s. Not surprisingly, this search uncovered few items by Cannon from the early "underground" period of American Communism (1919-21); nor did the PRL find many documents from the seven months Cannon spent in Moscow in 1922 as the American representative to the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI), though the archives of the CI in Moscow may contain such material. However, all other major portions of Cannon's career as a Communist leader are covered.

Taken together, the material assembled in *James P. Cannon and the Early Years of American Communism* provides a powerful documentary record which confirms, as it supplements, Cannon's *The First Ten Years of American Communism*. As the introduction notes, "Such a documentary record—even a highly selective one—cannot be said to exist for the accounts of many leading ex-Communists, to say nothing of the official histories penned by Stalinist hacks" like William Z. Foster and Earl Browder.

This book is a must for anyone who considers himself a communist and for any serious student of American communism and the Communist International, and of interest to many students of social history. The introduction provides a comprehensive overview of Workers Party history in the 1920s, and the PRL has also provided a 29-page glossary of names and terms, as well as footnotes giving extensive background information on the party's trade-union work, disputes within the Comintern, and other subjects raised in the documents. The volume is fully indexed and includes 16 pages of rare photographs, including one from the CI's Fifth World Congress (1924) showing Trotsky with a Vietnamese delegate, Nguyen Ai Quoc (Ho Chi Minh). Both cloth and paperback editions are smyth sewn, and printed and bound by union labor (Allied Printing Trades). The result is an attractive, sturdy volume which is easy to open, read and consult.

Cannon's Papers and Cannon's Party

One of the book's dedications is to George Breitman. It was comrade Breitman, the general editor for the Socialist Workers Party's Pathfinder Press series of Trotsky and Cannon writings, who in 1984 prodded the Prometheus Research Library staff to begin compiling material for this book, though he bears no direct responsibility for the end result. Breitman had been expelled from the SWP in 1983, along with a number of others, for opposing party leader Jack Barnes' open attacks on Trotsky and the theory of permanent revolution. He was a founder and leader of the Fourth Internationalist Tendency (FIT) until his death in 1986.

Barnes' party had long since ceased to be Trotskyist, having in 1963 formalized a "reunification" with Ernest Mandel's European Pabloists explicitly around a program of political support to Cuba's Fidel Castro. Declaring that experience since World War II showed

A Review:

James P. Cannon and the Early Years of American Communism
Spartacist Publishing Co.,
624 pp., \$22.50 (\$14.50 paperback)

International, also serves as a prelude to Pathfinder Press' series of Cannon writings, which was centrally edited by the late George Breitman. Pathfinder's series covers the period when Cannon was the authoritative leader of the American Trotskyist movement.

Coming out of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) and won to Communism in the great wave of labor radicalism which swept the world in response to the 1917 Russian Revolution, Cannon was a founding American Communist, chairman and chief public spokesman of the Workers Party when it was founded in 1921, and a member of the party's top leadership bodies for most of the next seven years. In October 1928 he and about a hundred factional supporters were expelled from the party for attempting to organize a faction in support of Leon Trotsky's International Left Opposition (ILO). They went on to form the nucleus of the first Trotskyist organization in the United States, the Communist League of America (CLA). The central leader of American Trotskyism for the next 25 years, until his retirement as secretary of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in 1953, Cannon was the finest communist leader this country has yet produced.

The introduction to this volume notes that the American Trotskyist movement was unique in having been generated from an established factional grouping in the official Comintern section—other early ILO sections



Workers Monthly

Jim Cannon (left) at founding conference of International Labor Defense in June 1925 with George Maurer, secretary of the Labor Defense Council which merged with ILD.

pulled together in the factional wars which wracked the American party during the 1920s, the book is heavily weighted toward major factional documents and statements, including some material that was probably not written by Cannon but was coauthored or signed by him. The book does not include many of the popular agitational pieces Cannon wrote in the 1920s since the best of these were selected by him for his *Notebook of an Agitator*, published in 1958 and still available from Pathfinder Press. A sense of how selective the PRL had to be in choosing material for the book is provided by



Labor Defender

Group of delegates to second conference of International Labor Defense, September 1926.

a Trotskyist proletarian vanguard to be no longer necessary for the overthrow of capitalism, the SWP (under the regime of the stodgy Farrell Dobbs and the up-and-coming Jack Barnes) joined with Mandel & Co. in seeking to reduce "Trotskyism" to a force for cheer-leading insurgent Stalinists, Third World nationalists and other "revolutionaries of action." In the U.S. this political liquidationism was accompanied by accommodation to the illusory program of black nationalism: positing a separatist "road" to black liberation, the SWP—which had earlier been impermissibly passive and legalistic in its response to the civil rights struggles—relieved itself of any responsibility to fight to win black cadres to the Trotskyist program and party. The Spartacist League originated as the SWP's Revolutionary Tendency, expelled in 1963 for opposition to the party's centrist course.

The SWP's centrist phase was soon shown to be a brief way station in the plunge into outright reformism, as the party emerged as the "best builder" of the right wing of the Vietnam antiwar movement, competing successfully with the reformist, Stalinist CP. Reveling in social-patriotism, the SWP worked hard to keep newly radicalized youth under the sway of Democratic Party politicians and pro-Democrat labor bureaucrats, in opposition to the New Leftists like SDS and the Black Panthers who hated imperialism and whom the SWP baited as "violent" and "ultraleftist."

Jim Cannon, though no longer the party's central administrator, remained as its national chairman through its degeneration into full-blown reformism; he died in 1974. Many longtime cadres remained members of the SWP Central Committee, and it was only when Barnes explicitly repudiated Trotsky as an irrelevant sectarian that a layer of party veterans was impelled into opposition. But it is to the credit of George Breitman and others that they refused to spit on the tradition of Trotskyism as they understood it, and thus they were expelled from the party they had served for so long. Comrade Breitman in particular—whom we had known in the SWP mainly as an antagonist, a spokesman for the orientation to black nationalism—had spent many years overseeing the work of selecting, editing and annotating Trotsky's writings for publication by Pathfinder. Expelled from the SWP, hampered by ill health and the limited resources of the FIT, Breitman learned of the PRL's interest in the documentation on Cannon's career as a Communist leader and was willing to encourage and collaborate with us on archival matters.

Barnes' SWP completed the process of (literally) "junking the old Trotskyism" just as the PRL was finishing the editorial work on *James P. Cannon and the Early Years of American Communism*. Barnes removed from his party headquarters most of the papers and documents from the SWP's revolutionary years under Cannon's leadership. The files on the work of Trotsky's Fourth International were given to the Hoover Institution at Stanford; papers and documents relating to the party's domestic work were given to the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, where the SWP had long maintained an archive.

Included in the latter deposit were the personal correspondence files and papers of Cannon and his longtime companion, Rose Karsner. The papers were



Labor Herald

July 1923 Farmer-Labor conference in Chicago, initiated by Chicago Federation of Labor.

opened to researchers in July, and PRL staff members were able to review them, finding a few items by Cannon unavailable from other sources. These items are included in the bibliography, and some are quoted in the introduction, which also makes use of quotations from previously unpublished correspondence between Cannon and Theodore Draper.

Factional Gang Warfare in the Workers Party

In addition to material from the Cannon papers, the PRL's introduction makes extensive use of documents and interviews from Theodore Draper's research files, as well as of newly available autobiographical manuscripts by American Communists prominent in the 1920s. This previously unpublished material adds color to the introduction. For example, Alexander Bittelman, a Russian-born Jewish Communist who was William Z. Foster's chief factional collaborator, throws some revealing light on the factional lineup in the Workers Party in 1923-25, when Cannon and Foster led a grouping centered on the party's trade unionists. The Cannon-Foster group split in two in August 1925, after a cable from the Comintern upset their elected majority at the Workers Party's Fourth Convention. But from late 1923 until August 1925 this group had a majority on the party's Central Committee, leading the party in opposition to the C.E. Ruthenberg-Jay Lovestone-John Pepper factional bloc, which was based primarily on the party's Eastern European language federations. Bittelman recalls:

"Most of the Cannon-Foster circle were a rather rough-and-ready group of individuals. There was among them much camaraderie, plain spoken talk and few niceties in mutual relations. In group discussions they would use what they chose to call 'trade union language,' in which variations on 'damn it' were of the more innocent expressions. And candor compels me also to say this: in our own circle four-letter exclamations were a dime a dozen and sometimes cheaper. Whereas Ruthenberg, in circumstances which tempt one to resort to some such

exclamation, would merely say: 'Goodness gracious.' I can never forget the expression on the faces of some of my comrades in the Foster-Cannon circle on such occasions."

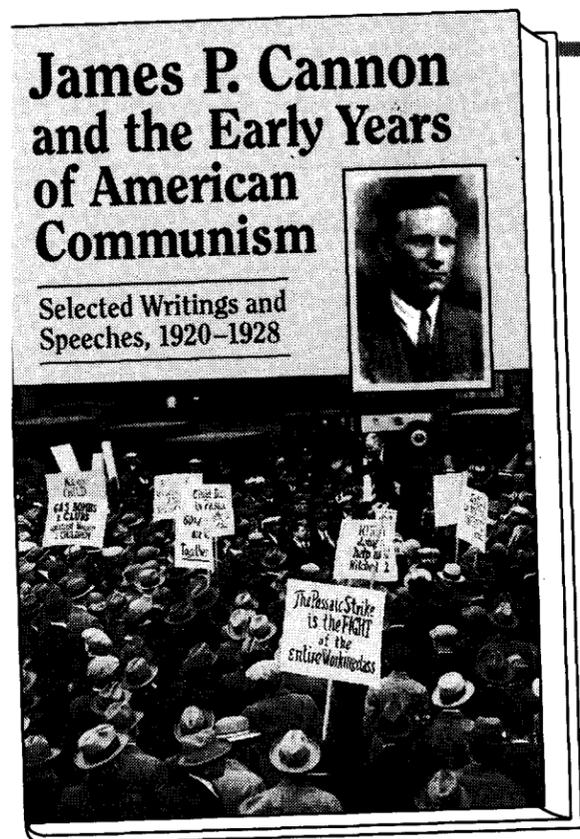
—Alexander Bittelman, *Things I Have Learned* (unpublished, written in 1963)

Both Cannon and Foster had been syndicalists before joining the Communist movement. They had real connections and experience in the labor movement, Cannon as an organizer of revolutionary unions in the IWW, and Foster as an American Federation of Labor-backed organizer, leading major class battles in the steel and meatpacking industries in Chicago in 1919. (In the Workers Party they differed in their approach to labor, Foster being the leading advocate of exclusively "bor-ing from within" the existing AFL unions, while Cannon favored a more flexible policy.) In contrast, Ruthenberg had been a straight SP party man, though one with an honorable record as a leader of the left wing and militant opponent of World War I. Lovestone and his cronies were neophytes, recruited from New York's City College.

In contrast to this diversity, in Britain the sectarian inability of the CP to regroup substantially from revolutionary syndicalist, Celtic and left-feminist currents attracted to Communism by the Russian Revolution rendered the British Communists, narrowly drawn from former Socialist parliamentarians, pretty much sterile (see "British Communism Aborted," *Spartacist* No. 36-37, Winter 1985-86).

Differences in political culture made for a political vitality in the early American party, and they underlie the factional dogfights which plagued it in the 1920s, but do not explain them. The machinations of political adventurers like Jay Lovestone (who went on to become a CIA operative) lent the situation a particularly venal character. In an unpublished letter to Draper cited in the introduction, Cannon described Lovestone's "will, ruthless driving ambition, to say nothing of his

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James P. Cannon...

(continued from page 9)

diabolical passion for intrigue and his indefatigable energy in setting men against each other and fouling things up generally." But if Lovestone and his mentor, the Hungarian John Pepper, who arrived in the United States in 1922 as a self-proclaimed "representative" of the Communist International, did much to keep the factional pot boiling, it was the increasingly Stalinized Comintern which provided the heat.

The Degeneration of the Communist International

As Leninists and Trotskyists, we also consider ourselves Cannonists. This is not because of the American origins of our tendency, but rather because of our "Russian" origins, the Bolshevism which James P. Cannon taught us. In his fine speech on the "Russian question" from October 1939, in the heat of a faction fight against those who flinched from defending the Soviet Union on the eve of World War II, Cannon said: "We are, in fact, the party of the Russian revolution. We have been

Cannon was sorely disillusioned when the sudden death of C.E. Ruthenberg in March 1927 precipitated an orgy of unprincipled factional warfare resulting in the patently opportunist and corrupt Jay Lovestone assuming the mantle of party leadership with Comintern support. Having reached a dead end in the internal factional wars, Cannon was predisposed, when he received a copy of Leon Trotsky's critique of the draft Comintern program at the CI's Sixth Congress in 1928, to make the leap to Trotsky's internationalist understanding of the communist program and the Stalinist degeneration of the Third International. Amid much else, that seminal document contained Trotsky's opposition to the anti-Marxist construct of a "two-class workers' and peasants' party," which gave Cannon and the American Communists so much trouble in the incarnation of the "Farmer-Labor" movement.

The Labor Party Question

The PRL's introduction notes that it would be a mistake to look at the material in *James P. Cannon and the Early Years of American Communism* as "simply the prelude to Cannon's later emergence as an authoritative Trotskyist leader. For Cannon was also one of

in the 1920s and today, and today's communists will find much of relevance in Cannon's writings.

The book brings together material from Cannon on the Workers Party's brief bloc with the John Fitzpatrick leadership of the Chicago Federation of Labor in the effort to build a national "Farmer-Labor Party"; the Workers Party's subsequent adaptation to the petty-bourgeois Farmer-Labor movement; the party's work in building an opposition to John L. Lewis in the miners union; the role of party supporters in the leadership of the New York garment workers unions; and the party's activities in defense of class-war prisoners, in particular the great campaign against the execution of the anarchists Sacco and Vanzetti in 1927, which Cannon led in his capacity as head of the party's defense organization, the International Labor Defense.

It was the question of the Farmer-Labor movement and the Communists' call for the creation of a labor party which dominated the disputes in the Workers Party during 1922-25. The PRL's introduction details the formation, trajectory and social composition of the Farmer-Labor movement, necessary background material for any reader trying to make sense of the disputes. The Zinoviev leadership of the Comintern took up the fight against the Workers Party's opportunist bulge (revealed most clearly in the party's near-support to the third-party candidacy of "Progressive" Republican Robert M. La Follette in 1924) only reluctantly and at the insistence of Trotsky in Moscow. In the aftermath, the party's discussions on the question were deformed and distorted by Zinoviev's campaign against Trotsky for "underestimating" the peasantry. Moscow's insistence that the American party continue to orient toward the La Follette movement and fight for a two-class "workers and farmers" party totally muddied the waters, creating a confusion on the labor party slogan from which the ostensibly communist movement in this country still suffers.

In previously unpublished notes written for Theodore Draper and quoted by the PRL in its introduction, Cannon pointed to the key role of the indefatigable John Pepper in formulating the party's opportunist adaptation to the La Follette movement, a policy which persisted even after the Cannon-Foster factional alliance had overthrown the Pepper-Lovestone-Ruthenberg leadership at the party's Third Convention:

"The cold fact is that the party which had proclaimed itself at its inception as a revolutionary party of the working class, and had adopted a corresponding program, became, for a period in 1924, the advocate of a 'third party' of capitalism, and offered to support, under certain conditions, the presidential candidacy of the petty-bourgeois demagogue La Follette....

"The bewildered party disgraced itself in this affair, and all the prominent leaders without exception, myself included, were in it up to our necks, with no excuse save that of ignorance and no reason except perhaps the foolhardy ambition to outwit ourselves. If I can force myself to return to this leap into political irrationality, even now—30 years later—it is only because a bad experience, honestly evaluated and accounted for, may serve a useful purpose in immunizing the movement against similar abnormalities in the future.

"Foster's role in this sorry business was the same as mine and that of all the other American leaders at the time. Pepper—interpreting what he took to be the Comintern line—formulated the policy; the rest of us went along. Considering the fact that Pepper had been defeated and put in the minority at the party convention, at the end of 1923, this says a lot for his resilience and continuing influence, but it doesn't say much for the rest of us."

—James P. Cannon, unpublished notes (written about 1959)

In the aftermath of the 1924 elections, Cannon and his factional supporters attempted to assimilate the



Labor Defender

From left to right: Bill Dunne, Tom O'Flaherty, Big Bill Haywood and James Cannon, probably in Moscow, spring 1925.

the people, and the only people, who have had the Russian revolution in their program and in their blood."

Trotskyists have always claimed for themselves the record of the revolutionary Communist International from 1919-23, and stand on the record of the opposition which fought from within in 1924-33 to reverse the degeneration of the Soviet regime and the International, and which went on to found the Fourth International. Trotsky's powerful analysis identified the cause of the degeneration in the failure of the Russian Revolution to extend itself internationally, resulting in the rise of a bureaucratic caste within the young, economically backward Soviet republic. This privileged, conservative caste headed by Stalin, accepting isolation, came to espouse a program of "building socialism in one country" and attempting to deflect the hostility of imperialism by eschewing the struggle for world revolution.

Trotsky's insistence that the fate of the Soviet regime depended, in the final analysis, on the extension of the revolution to the industrialized imperialist countries is fully borne out in the negative today by the final cowardly collapse of the regime of Stalin's heirs, both within and outside the ex-USSR. Today, it is more important than ever for those who continue to fight for Lenin's communism to examine the history and experience of the early Communist International. *James P. Cannon and the Early Years of American Communism* provides some key documentary material for such a study.

During the period covered by the book Cannon was in Moscow five times for various Comintern congresses and ECCI plenums, and some of his speeches to Comintern bodies are included in the volume. Cannon spent seven months there in 1922, when the CI leadership still retained a revolutionary perspective, and the experience served to make of Cannon a confirmed "Cominternist," who was slow to realize later in the decade that things had fundamentally changed with the ascendancy of Zinoviev, Stalin and Bukharin in the Russian party.

The material contained in the new volume graphically illustrates the correctness of Trotsky's perspective of fighting from inside the Comintern during the 1920s. Cannon tried to chart a perspective for the Workers Party based on revolutionary communism, even as the International lost its revolutionary perspective and the weight of an expanding and self-confident American imperialism bore down on the American party. After Lenin's final stroke, followed by his death in January 1924, most other American Communist leaders bowed to the Stalinizing Comintern, waging unprincipled power struggles in the Workers Party. Cannon, though on the basis of an incomplete understanding, built a "faction against factionalism" which sought to push the party in a revolutionary direction.

the most able Communist leaders in the 1920s, a period when the party was not yet homogenized into a rigid Stalinist orthodoxy. This was a time of real, necessary and inevitable debate about the tasks facing Communists in the United States."

The 1920s was a period of bourgeois reaction in the United States, as the post-World War I revolutionary wave receded and the bourgeoisie succeeded in stabilizing the capitalist world order. Inaugurated by the landslide victory of Republican Warren Harding in 1920, these years were marked by a rise in Klan terror and an all-time high in anti-immigrant sentiment. The state embarked on a major assault on the trade-union movement: AFL membership fell from almost 20 percent of the non-agricultural workforce in 1920 to just over 10 percent in 1930. The American ruling class was smugly confident that the working class was cowed and an era of U.S.-dominated imperialist prosperity was at hand. A short while later, the U.S. stock market crash and the ensuing world depression ushered in a new period, marked in this country by widespread radicalization and the turbulent struggles for industrial unions. Many parallels can be drawn between America



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Workers Monthly

New Cannon book contains 16 pages of rare photographs. Communist demonstration in Washington, March 1925, protests counterrevolutionary terror in Poland.

import of their opportunist error and steer the party away from the Farmer-Labor milieu; Lovestone and Pepper won the Comintern's support for a continued orientation to petty-bourgeois Farmer-Laborism. In 1924 Cannon did not know that Trotsky had been responsible for the CI's opposition to the Workers Party's La Follette policy. But the fact that, unwittingly and blatantly, Cannon supported the thrust of Trotsky's intervention goes a long way to explaining his later evolution toward Trotskyism. Also notable is Cannon's failure to speak or write major articles in support of Zinoviev-Stalin-Bukharin's "anti-Trotskyism" cam-

paign. While voting for all the ritual anti-Trotsky resolutions in the American party, where the anti-Trotsky campaign merged with the struggle against the social-democratic tendency led by Ludwig Lore, he was by all accounts unenthusiastic on the question. Bittelman quotes Cannon as often remarking, "Stalin makes leaders out of shit and shit out of leaders."

Nonetheless, as the material collected in *James P. Cannon and the Early Years of American Communism* demonstrates, there were many elements of the Cannon faction's political profile that militated against their being able to make the leap to the Left Opposition: a

parochial focus on American questions, insistence on the strategy of a bloc with "progressives" in the unions, a lack of attention to fighting Jim Crow segregation in the labor movement. While Martin Abern, Max Shachtman and Arne Swabeck made the leap to Trotskyism with Cannon, Cannon's chief political collaborator, William F. Dunne, who was also Cannon's best friend, did not.

The fact that Cannon remained true to the revolutionism which inspired his youth, leading a significant number of founding American Communist cadre into Trotsky's Left Opposition in 1928, is a key historical precondition for the formation of the Spartacist tendency and our existence today. As Trotsky underlined, the decisive factor in the survival of the irrational and outmoded capitalist system is the crisis of revolutionary proletarian leadership. Our links to the revolutionary Communist International, carried forward in the early Trotskyist movement and Cannon's SWP through the 1940s and 1950s, are thin. But they are real, as *James P. Cannon and the Early Years of American Communism* demonstrates. This allows us to proclaim, along with Cannon:

"The important thing to remember is that our modern Trotskyist movement originated in the Communist Party—and nowhere else. Despite all the negative aspects of the party in those early years...despite its weaknesses, its crudities, its infantile sicknesses, its mistakes; whatever may be said in retrospect about the faction struggles and their eventual degeneration; whatever may be said about the degeneration of the Communist Party in this country—it must be recognized that out of the Communist Party came the forces for the regeneration of the revolutionary movement.... Therefore, we should say that the early period of the Communist movement in this country belongs to us."

—James P. Cannon, *The History of American Trotskyism* (1944) ■

Greece...

(continued from page 7)

the colonels' regime, was ready to do business.

New Democracy invited the Synaspismos into a coalition government under the banner of "national reconciliation": the civil war was to be "forgotten," and "catharsis" would cleanse the corruption which had discredited the former PASOK administration under Andreas Papandreu. The reward for this betrayal of the working class? The ministries of justice and the interior were given to the KKE, so that it could play its full role in internal repression. This in a country where the army officer corps and the police are riddled with fascists and the enforcers of the dictatorship!

This "anti-PASOK" coalition was followed in short order by a new, "broad" coalition including PASOK. Both governments presided over rampant inflation (the highest in the EC) and a constant grinding down of workers' living standards, paving the way for the current Mitsotakis austerity government.

The experience of popular-front betrayal has radically eroded the KKE's traditional strength in the working class. Its newspaper sales and membership have sharply fallen. Having entered into the government in a flush of Gorbachevite enthusiasm for reconciliation with the bourgeoisie, the KKE was torn apart by factional struggle between "renovators," who yearn to be at one with PASOK, and "hardliners."

Today the KKE leadership poses as a Marxist-Leninist defender of socialism and of the gains of the former Soviet Union. It denounces Yeltsin, defends Erich Honecker and supports embattled Cuba. But the popular-frontist policies of coalition and "national reconciliation" with the bourgeoisie, and the policies of "socialism in one country" and "peaceful coexistence" which led to the downfall of the USSR, are two sides of the same Stalinist coin. If the revolution is not to be spread to the West, then it must be blocked and strangled by tying the working class to its masters in every capitalist country.

The KKE has lost its Soviet patrons through counterrevolution in the USSR, but it has not lost its appetite for class treason in Greece. When the Greek bourgeoisie pays the KKE an official state subsidy of 180 million drachmas (about \$900,000), it does

so because it gets value for money.

The betrayals of the KKE have given an opening to the left-talking social-democratic followers of Tony Cliff, the OSE (Organization for Socialist Revolution). While posturing as militant defenders of the working class, active in strikes and student struggles, and suffering state repression for their position on Macedonia, the Cliffites backed the seizure of power by Yeltsin's counterrevolutionary forces in Russia (declaiming "Communism is dead: good riddance to Stalinism"). The OSE recommends that the Greek bourgeoisie should spend less money on guns and more on schools and hospitals, a classical reformist demand. And it is now espousing a vote to the national-chauvinist bourgeois party PASOK, because of the weakening of the KKE.

Chauvinist Hysteria over Macedonia

The attacks on workers in Greece have been matched by a furious bourgeois campaign of national chauvinism which unites ND and PASOK, and which the KKE tails. During the imperialist war on Iraq, KKE union leaders (headed by then-secretary of the GSEE, "hardliner" Kostopoulos), along with PASOK concluded a two-year deal with Mitsotakis guaranteeing wage cuts across the board. Today the bourgeoisie tries to bind the working class to it by whipping up anti-Macedonian and anti-Turkish sentiment in an atmosphere of war preparations.

Across the country posters declare "Macedonia Is Greek!" In June the government won EC backing for its demand that the former Yugoslav republic cannot include the word "Macedonia" in its name. In the coded language of Greek chauvinism only the name of the capital, Skopje, is permissible. Simultaneously the government declares that there are no Macedonians in Greece, only "Slav-speaking Greeks," claiming that Macedonia is a geographical and not a national entity.

The chauvinist denial of the very existence of this small national minority in northern Greece echoes the Turkish state's term "mountain-dwelling Turks" to refer to Kurds. Similarly, the Greek bourgeoisie denies the existence of Turks in Greece: as a government spokesman put it, "In Greece there exist no Turks, only Muslims." The Greek Macedonians (who number currently about 200,000) are denied language rights and suffer

systematic discrimination. Bourgeois hostility toward them is fueled by the disproportionate role that Macedonians played in the Communist-led forces in the Greek civil war.

But behind the current government campaign lie territorial ambitions which could draw Greece, Turkey and Bulgaria into another Balkan war. If the Serbian regime of Milosevic moves to take over Yugoslav Macedonia, then the substantial, NATO-equipped armies of both Greece and Turkey will likely enter into a battle for the region. The *London Guardian* (4 December) reports that both Turkey and Greece are receiving over 1,000 tanks and armored vehicles from NATO, artillery pieces, and billions of dollars worth of new military jets. The British government, with Prime Minister Major currently president of the EC, has stated that Serbian incursion into Macedonia will be met by armed intervention, reflecting the EC and U.S. imperialists' determination to back up their clients in the region.

The response of the KKE to the tidal wave of chauvinism is a sustained capitulation to Greek nationalism. While declaring, "we don't legitimize any ambitions of homegrown nationalists to propagandize the logic of a 'tooth for a tooth,'" they state, "we don't let any foreign nationalist lay claim to even a centimeter of Greek soil," and proclaim, "the KKE has no need for lessons in patriotism" (KKE pamphlet "Positions on the Balkans," February 1992). Claiming to be indifferent to the name of the Macedonian republic, they consistently use the term "Skopje," which in Greek politics unambiguously places one in the chauvinist camp.

The honorary president of the KKE, Florakis, underscored their stance in a 1988 speech: "For us, for our party, a Macedonian minority does not exist. On this we are categorical.... As long as they are Greek citizens, they have the same rights and these rights we defend fanatically and consistently." Obviously the KKE could not care less about the rights either of the Macedonians or the estimated 350,000 immigrants who live and work in Greece illegally. Revolutionaries in Greece would see the fight for full citizenship rights for all foreign-born workers as an essential part of their program.

The KKE is nominally opposed to the U.S. or NATO intervening in the Balkans. Instead it calls for intervention by the UN...under whose aegis U.S. and

NATO forces are already at work in the Adriatic and Yugoslavia.

Build a Leninist-Trotskyist Party in Greece!

In January, May and September, different groups of leftists were tried for distributing propaganda supporting recognition of Yugoslav Macedonia. In the first two cases prison sentences were handed down. The trial of the Greek Cliffites of the OSE for "treason" has been postponed until January 1993. The international workers movement must oppose this vicious repression and demand the freeing of all those jailed and dropping the charges against the five OSE members!

Against the revanchist claims of the competing Balkan ruling classes, and in opposition to imperialist war moves, the International Communist League declares: *No imperialist intervention in the Balkans! No U.S. bases in Greece! Not one penny, not one man for the capitalist army! For the right of self-determination for Macedonia, including Greek Macedonians! For full democratic rights for minorities in Greece! For a Balkan Socialist Federation, including Greece!*

The Greek working class has a long history of militant struggle. Yet again and again the struggles have been dissipated or crushed because of the politics of the popular front: class collaboration to save capitalist rule. The critical need is to build an internationalist, revolutionary workers party, based on the authentic communist program of Lenin and Trotsky, to fight for workers revolution throughout the region. ■

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