Navy Seals Take the Beach...from the Press
Making Somalia Safe for Imperialism

In the early morning hours of December 9, U.S. amphibious assault forces of "Operation Restore Hope" hit the beaches of Mogadishu. But the only "hostile" forces they encountered were mobs of reporters, who followed them around the beach taking interviews and shooting television footage. The top brass had seen the opportunity for a colossal public relations ploy—"combat" scenes without the unseemly sight of dead bodies—and timed the "attack" to be televised live at prime time in the eastern U.S. The "objectives" of the mock attack were the airport and the port area, both of which have been in the hands of Pakistani UN troops since October. But the commandos who carried out the "attack" weren't given the script, and they went berserk as they stealthily waded ashore into a media circus.

It was supposed to be a textbook operation, beginning with Navy SEALs (frogmen) in wetsuits, followed by Marine reconnaissance teams paddling ashore in rubber dinghies, followed by an "assault" force of attack helicopters, hovercraft and amphibious landing craft. But the commandos, wearing fancy night-vision goggles, were blinded as they emerged from the surf and stumbled...continued on page 9

Pentagon's orchestrated "photo op" backfires as phalanx of reporters besieges Navy commandos, blinding them with TV lights.

"Collective Guilt" Deportations, Death Squad Murders

Israel Out of the Occupied Territories!

Christmas is killing season in the "Holy Land." On December 19, Israeli troops fired into a crowd of protesters in the Gaza town of Khan Yunis, murdering an eight-year-old girl and five others, raising to some 40 the total number of Palestinians gunned down in the Occupied Territories in the past two months alone. On December 8, the fifth anniversary of the Palestinian Intifada (uprising), the Zionist state completely sealed off the Gaza Strip, imposing a starvation regime on the Palestinian population as revenge for the drive-by shooting of three Israeli soldiers by militants from the Islamic fundamentalist Hamas group.

A week later, as collective punishment for the kidnapping and execution of an Israeli border guard, the Rabin "Labor" government rounded up 1,600 Palestinians supposedly associated with Hamas and another fundamentalist group, Islamic Jihad. On December 17, more than 400 of them were thrown blindfolded into military buses and helicopters to be deported to Lebanon. They were dumped in the border area in a driving rain. With the Lebanese government massing tanks to block the deportations, the Palestinians are penned in on a strip of freezing wasteland, with no shelter other than tents from the Red Cross, while facing mortar fire from the Israelis' puppet "South Lebanon Army."

Concerned at upsetting the year-old sham "peace" talks, through which they hope to establish a Pax Americana in the Near East, the U.S. imperialists have criticized the mass deportations. Only six months ago, Yitzhak Rabin was grotesquely touted by the American media as the "peace" candidate in the Israeli elections. Rabin is a Zionist pig par excellence, whose bloody career dates back to the mass expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians during and after the 1948 war. He is the architect of the notorious "iron fist" policy of murderous terror aimed at suppressing the Intifada. His decree of "force, might, beatings" ordered Israeli troops to systematically break the legs of young protesters.

The Israeli border guard, Nissim Toledano, was seized by Hamas in an attempt to ransom their imprisoned 57-year-old leader Sheik Ahmed Yassin. After rejecting the appeals of Toledano's family to release Yassin, the government cynically fueled anti-Arab hysteria with live radio broadcasts of the family wailing when...continued on page 9
MacKinnon Clique Selzes Women's Art

Feminist Anti-Porn Prof and Her Junior Jesse Helms

A clique of aspiring sex witchhunters at the University of Michigan law school, home of notorious anti-porn crusader Catharine MacKinnon, recently put their mentor’s precepts into practice by seizing and removing part of an artist’s exhibit there.

Artist Carol Jacobsen’s multimedia exhibit, titled “Porn ‘im-age’ ry: Picturing Pornography,” had shown for several weeks in October without incident in the U-M student union. But when MacKinnon allied in the crusade against “the demon porn” hit town for a symposium on prostitution, away went one of the “offending” videocassettes. One segment, a self-portrait by performance artist Veronica Vera, included not only clips of her in commercial sex movies, but also tape of Vera’s testimony to the Senate judiciary committee against anti-pornography legislation drafted by MacKinnon and others.

The student paper, The Michigan Daily (6 November 1992), stated in its editorial, “Freedom from Speech?”: “This was a reprehensible act of censorship.” What we have here are rationally anti-sex feminists doing the work of religion reconstituted. The Senate judiciary committee argues that one of the racist bigots who has tried to censor what he calls “obscene art” is eager to please the anti-porn heavy hitters, a clique of law students snatched the video because speakers at the symposium on “Prostitution: From Academia to Activism” didn’t like it. Law student Ann Kramer, defending the censorship, named “pornography linked to violence against women, and some of our guests and speakers...thought it would spark violent reactions towards them” (Ann Arbor News, 3 November 1992).

The News noted: “Some law students also worried that they’d lose the support of the major symposium speakers, which included prominent feminist writers Andrea Dworkin and John Stoltenberg, director of the Council for Prostitution Alternatives, Susan Kay Hunter, and U-M law professor Catharine MacKinnon.” The only “safety” these would-be thought police were interested in was safety from opposing viewpoints. Dr. Jacobsen only decided not to exhibit the video after a shouting match with the Anti-Porn protesters who had forced the removal. Professor Tamar Lewin noted that “Dr. Jacobsen...has been an outspoken critic of Ms. MacKinnon’s anti-porn arguments.”

MacKinnon furiously berated the New York Times for the “disproportionate visibility” of its lengthy article on the incident. She tried to deny the blatant censorship by deliberately referring to “the videotape, while ignoring the wholeness point.” Moreover, she continued, “The article falsely implies I was responsible and belittles the students as my lackeys” (New York Times, 12 December 1992).

Coming from a person whose entire public career is devoted to the proposition that the blame, or “responsibility,” for violent criminal acts can be pinned on books, videotapes or pictures the perpetrators happen to have looked at, this is pretty thick. MacKinnon, along with Dworkin and other right-wing feminists, is notorious for her assaults on “First Amendment fundamentalists.” “The bottom line of the First Amendment is that porn stays,” she wrote. “Our bottom line is that porn goes,” is MacKinnon’s line (quoted in Women on the Verge, “The Breakdown,” Playboy, January 1993).

There is no known link between violent crime and pornography, but many feminists have used their expensive efforts of government “guardians of morality,” such as the notorious Edwin Meese Commission, for anti-sex pornography, to end AIDS and in great detail probe into this question. Holding hearings across the country, the sleazy Meese police tried to establish that pornography causes marital infidelity, divorce, child molestation, rape, incest, serial murders, hairy penis-stabbing, and worse.

The false equation of whatever you want to call sexually explicit fantasies—woman’s art or American pornography—with the very real brutality of the world around us is dangerous. Introducing the danger into the free speech debate, as the Meese Commission did, by brief of the Spartanist League and Patrician Defense Committee in defense of Indiana bookellers accused of selling “obscene products,” we argued against those feminists who “have allied themselves with the sex-obsessed police in an anti-porn frenzy. The real purpose of which is not to protect women or children—or to fight against sex and social conformity. Indeed, anti-obscenity laws have historically been used against women’s rights, especially in censoring birth control information” (Women and Revolution No. 35, Summer 1988).

The first victims of official legal crackdowns are all too likely to be those fighting for their own freedom from racist or sexist oppression. The Canadian Supreme Court last year upheld obscenity laws in agreement with the MacKinnon-Meese theory, which harms women by leading to violence—and the very first charges brought were against a lesbian magazine.

The furor over this blatant censorship hopefully will help destroy some of the anti-sex feminists who flourished under “Reagan reaction.” But it’s not only Republican reactionaries who are the problem. Because organized religion and the institution of the family are necessary social props for capitalism, the Democ­rats too find it necessary to launch peri­odic “family values” crusades against anything perceived as a threat to these institutions, especially anything smacking of sex outside authorized marriage. During the Reagan era, the city of New York White House, we noted in a piece de­pending porn star Harry Reems (The Daily Fordham rammed by Al Goldstein against obscenity charges: “the forces of law, order and cleanliness” were doubtless encouraged by the prospect of religious fundamentalist p蘧nusomo Jimmy Carter as the next president” (“God-Fearing Hypocrites Revile Sin and Smut,” Women and Revolution No. 12, Summer 1976). Update that to Southern Baptists Bill Clinton and Al (and rock ‘n roll censor 1980). As we concluded then: “It is, of course, true that many films, magazines and books perpetuate the image of women as simply sexual objects and are generally offensive in this regard. But state censorship of sexual fantasies and of personal relationships between con­senting adults is not the solution to women’s oppression. Abolishing wom­en’s oppression requires uprooting the oppressive and deeply corrupt bourgeois state through socialist revolution.”

NOTICE The closing date for news in this issue is December 22.
Down with Solidarność Reaction! Workers to Power!

Coal Strikers Shake Walesa’s Poland

WARSAW, December 21—For the second time this year, mass working-class struggle threatens to topple WARSAW, December 21—For the second time this year, mass working-class struggle threatens to topple WARSAW, December 21—For the second time this year, mass working-class struggle threatens to topple WARSAW, December 21—For the second time this year, mass working-class struggle threatens to topple WARSAW, December 21—For the second time this year, mass working-class struggle threatens to topple WARSAW, December 21—For the second time this year, mass working-class struggle threatens to topple WARSAW, December 21—For the second time this year, mass working-class struggle threatens to topple WARSAW, December 21—For the second time this year, mass working-class struggle threatens to topple WARSAW, December 21—For the second time this year, mass working-class struggle threatens to topple WARSAW, December 21—For the second time this year, mass working-class struggle threatens to topple WARSAW, 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working-class struggle threaten...
"Workers Power" Rally in Vienna with Serbian Chetnik Fascists


For the following political horror trip there is no precedent in the history of the Austrian left. At least I cannot remember ever being privy to a bizarre "bloc constellation" during the last 30 years.

Not just another "scandal" from the right-centrist Workers Power (WP) and its misnamed League for a Revolutionary Communist International (LRCI) but a mind-boggling Austrian group Arbeiterinnenstandpunkt (ASt) carried out a united-front action with another Serbian monarchist group who offered the nationalist fascists—another pseudo-Trotskyist group (the so-called "third-camp" methodology) has been to promote "neutral" or "non-principle" events and go on to recount that the "moderate" nationalists of the Serbian Rebirth failed to actively join in our defence or kick the Chetniks off the demonstration. Indeed, they even gave the microphone to a Chetnik speaker to placate them, thus turning the demonstration into a reactionary nationalist event.

A reactionary nationalist event indeed—a rally initiated by the ASt jointly with monarchists and pursued until the nationalists' Chetnik buddies dragged them off! And Workers Power is quite clear that it is not interested in what it calls "nonsense about principle." Unfortunately, there are no Serbian workers' organisations or leaders in Vienna, independent of one or another type of nationalist. If there were, we would happily organise a demonstration with them.

As for Draskovic's "anti-imperialism," he has come out as a more extreme anti-communist than Milosevic and offered his links with the Chetniks to promote "peace," i.e., to secure the Balkans for imperialist exploitation.

Fresh from organising its "reactionary nationalist event," WP has made a positive programme out of the complete absence of principle which led to the Vienna scandal. The Trotskyist International article concludes with a grotesque parody of Leon Trotsky, who urged the Chetniks to promote "peace."

"For our part, we take those lessons into the struggle and organisations of the working class as they now exist, learning from them how to advance the cause of communism. We do this not simply despite having to make temporary alliances with the devil and his grandmother but just through such alliances." (our emphasis).

The ASt's network of organisations, including its third-campist methodology, has in fact placed them squarely in the camp of capitalist counterrevolution, on the barricades with the Yeltsin lackeys and racketeers in Moscow in August 1991. It was a decisive act of its rightist degeneration, forgetting the infamous tour in Britain of Yuri Butchenko, supported by the Russian fascist NTS, to rid Britain of its "unpopular" UDM, to pivot for the "rights" of "Ustash-Jovin Croatian nationalists against the then-Yugoslav deformed workers state, to its Viennese waltz with Chetnik fascists—whatever causes Workers Power advances with its "temporary alliances," it certainly isn't communism.

Nationalism has been the spearhead of capitalist counterrevolution which has...
Pittsburgh Press Fight Sold Out

At the end of July, Teamster newspaper drivers in Pittsburgh declared: “This was where a stand had to be taken.” The Pittsburgh Press had been struck since May 17, as the newspaper bosses vow to wipe out almost all drivers’ jobs. When the Press tried to run a scab paper in the early morning hours of July 27, Teamsters, press workers and supporters massed, 5,000 strong, in the streets in front of the Press building and stopped the scabs cold. Pittsburgh press workers showed all labor a crucial lesson: mass pickets lined back the dogs and stopped the scabs. The scabs never returned, but negotiations between the Newspaper Unions Unity Council and the Press dragged on for months.

Now the Teamsters and the other press unions are handing in hundreds of jobs in a deal for Blade Communications to buy the Press from E.W. Scripps Co. in order to close it down. The Press agreement allows Blade, the owner of the Post-Gazette (the other Pittsburgh daily sharing facilities with the Press under a joint operating agreement), to purchase the Press and fold the two papers into one. The Press will disap-ppear, at least 260 out of 627 Teamster jobs will be eliminated, and the jobs of hundreds of pressmen, printers, mailers, typesetters and other unionists will be destroyed! The guarantees of lifetime health insur-ance benefits for retirees are as believable as a snowball in July.

After militant pickets stopped the scabs in July, Workers Vanguard warned: “The company claims the scabs are leaving town. But Press Co. is still demanding the elimination of hundreds of jobs. They’re trying to get back from the federal mediator at the bargaining table what they lost in the streets. Press workers: Don’t be sucked! You’ve won a big round, now keep the bosses and their scabs on the run! Occupy the plant and ring it with pickets—Stop the Press!” But instead of playing hardball, the newspaper bosses played ball with the company, with disastrous results.

The AFL-CIO News (1 December 1993) claims “victory” for the Teamsters in the giving up of the Press’s “Strategic Approaches Committee,” brought in to “help” with the negotiations. They also credit the SAG for getting the legality of the Teamster’s due process to the NMB, which the Teamster exec-tive’s say was not even in the press.

The Pittsburgh Press settlement, however, was a real stab in the back. Pittsburgh labor didn’t pour out into the streets last July for more givebacks. The Press strike could only be won by sending a message to the country that scabbering can be stopped. No BS about waiting for Congress to pass a “replacement worker bill”—raw union power did the job. But with their faith in federal mediation and reliance on a boycott of cap-italist advertisers, the unions’ Newspaper Unity Council snatched defeat from the jaws of victory.

This year’s Pittsburgh Labor Day rally was a big red, white and blue pep rally to get out the vote for Clinton. Thousands of unionists marched in downtown Pittsburgh, but instead of marching into the Press building and occupying it, the workers were subjected to hot air about the need for a new administration in Wash­ington. So now a new administration is coming in, and the workers still get screwed. Democrats and Repub-li­cans are two wings of the capitalists’ property— we need a fighting workers party.

Hands Off the Newspaper Drivers Union!

The bosses and their state have revived an old weapon in their anti-labor arsenal—declare the unions criminal enterprises and seize control of them. In recent years this tactic has been used against the Teamsters and Longshor­ners. Now the latest victims of this union-busting tactic are newspaper drivers in New York City. On November 23, the Newspaper and Mail Deliv­erers Union (NMDU) was hit with a string of criminal indictments by the Manhattan district attorney claiming that the union itself is an organized crime racket. Just like labor-baiter, redbaiter Robert Kennedy went after Jimmy Hoffa, Democratic D.A. Robert Morgenthau (and his pals in the New York Times executive suite) are out to get the drivers union because it rep­resents union power. Kennedy nailed the Teamsters leader after Hoffa won the New York Times master Freight Agreement. Similarly, the drivers have the mus-cle to shut down the Big Apple’s dailies, and the paper bosses are still seething over the NMDU’s militancy during the bitter Daily News strike last year.

In short, WP echoes the imperialists’ saber rattling for full-scale military intervention in Yugoslavia. For our part, we support the March Down with the imperialist embargo of Serb/NATO/UN—Out of the Balkan­s! Amid the horror of nation­alist slaughter, we look to the coming of a new generation of internationalist proletarian militants to defeat the all-sided counterrevolutionary drive.

The ASI should have been something of an embarrassment ever since it alibied the Nazi war criminal Kurt Waldheim, calling two years after his exposure to “unconditionally subordinate all its decisions to parliament” and to pay him “the average wage of a skilled worker.” But with its soft-core support to German unification under capitalism, its godding of the “one fatherland” mobs of skin-heads and social democrats to “hunt down” the Stalinists, its calls on the govern­ment of Margaret Thatcher to aid the NATO-­infested Lithuanian Sajudis, the Butchenko scandal and, not least, openly siding with Ulster/Bush counter-revolution in the Soviet Union, Workers Power has more than moved far to the right—it has become unhinged.

While the pages of Workers Power in Britain have contained not a word on its Greater Serb­ian “united front,” it has become infamous throughout the European left.

In Russia, the political platform which the ASI shared with the monarchists/Chetniks in Vienna is called the “red-brown bloc.” Workers Power’s LRC now bears the “distinctive” of singularly translating the “red-brown bloc” to the murderous competing nationalisms of the Balkan cock­pit that have savagely torn apart the Yugoslav deformed workers state. Now all the “old crap” is com­ing back and Workers Power are up to their necks in it. We think you should be told.
Part One of Two

bachev abandoned the German Democratic Republic (DDR—East Germany), the German bourgeoisie recouped its defeat at the hands of the Red Army in World War II. The masters of the Fourth Reich believed they would now achieve through economic means what Hitler tried and failed to achieve by military means. They envisioned an empire of the D-mark stretching from Iberia to Siberia.

Where the Nazi regime crushed and terrorized the German working class through a totalitarian police state, the rulers of the capitalist successor state to Hitler’s Reich promised to maintain and extend the postwar “German model” of class collaboration, dubbed the “social market economy.” No one would be worse off as a result of reunification. Helmut Kohl proclaimed as he assumed Hitler’s old title of “chancellor of the German people.” There would be no higher taxes in western Germany, while citizens of the former DDR were told they would attain western living standards in five years. But barely a year after the Fourth Reich won the March 1990 DDR elections, tens of thousands of East Germans were in the streets of Leipzig furiously protesting the “chancellor of lies.”

In reality, capitalist Anschluss (annexation) led to the dismantling of the East German industrial economy as half the labor force was put on the dole. Kohl spoke of “creative destruction,” citing the architect of the postwar German “economic miracle” Ludwig Erhard (who borrowed the phrase from economist Josef Schumpeter). But this is destruction pure and simple. The illusions of East German working people that they would instantly achieve the “good life” of the West were quickly and brutally shattered. In the spring of 1991 Kohl was pelted with vegetables by angry protesters as he tried to speak in the eastern German industrial center of Halle. To prevent far more serious social unrest, Bonn had to transfer vast sums of money to eastern Germany for unemployment insurance, pensions for early retirement and make-work jobs.

Hoping to avoid a confrontation with the powerful west German labor movement, the Kohl regime resorted to massive deficit spending rather than raise taxes or cut social programs. Between 1989 and 1991 the combined budget deficits of the federal, Länder (state) and local governments multiplied more than tenfold, from $8 billion to $83 billion! This scale of borrowing cannot long continue.

Both the ruling Christian Democrats and Social Democratic (SPD) “opposition” have been demanding that the west German populace bear the cost of reunification in the name of the “solidarity” of the German nation. Real sacrifice, not just belt-tightening, is needed, declares east German Social Democrat Wolfgang Thierse. Even IG Metall union president Franz Steinrückler joined the chorus for a “solidarity pact.” But the west German working class—which includes two million Turkish, Yugoslav and other immigrant workers who were euphemistically known as Gastarbeiter (“guest workers”)—is in no mood to sacrifice to restore the financial order of the Fourth Reich.

This was dramatically demonstrated by the public and transport workers (ÖTV) strike this past spring, the biggest strike in western Germany in four decades. For eleven days, from Bavaria to the North Sea ports, garbage piled up, trains did not run and mail was not delivered. The strike ended in a political humiliation for Kohl, who had provoked it, and a setback for the German ruling class as a whole.

The failure to extract a greater surplus from their own proletariat has upset the plans of Frankfurt bankers and Ruhr industrialists to transform East Europe into a German neocolonial empire. Kohl & Co. promised generous subsidies to the new right-wing regimes from Tudjman’s Croatia to Yeltsin’s Russia. By early last year Bonn had pledged over 60 percent of all Western financial aid to the former Soviet republics. But since then the paymaster of the East European counterrevolution has been pleading shortage of funds. “Until now, Germany has done much more than its allies—indeed too much—for eastern Europe,” Bonn defense minister Volker Rühe complained to an Anglo-German conference last April (London Guardian, 2 April 1992). The following month Kohl told reporters at the UN, “we Germans have reached the limit of our capacity to help” East Europe. Without massive financial “help” from their Western imperialist godfathers, the fledgling bourgeois states from the Balkans to the former Soviet republics remain weak and fragile, trying to build capitalism without capital. The result is total economic collapse, political chaos and fratricidal nationalism.

The economic dislocations of the Fourth Reich are wreaking havoc in West Europe as well. The grandiose proclamation of a new era of “European unity” made at Maastricht a year ago is in tatters. By jacking up interest rates, the Bundesbank detonated the spectacular collapse of the European Monetary System last fall. France—its farmers running wild in the streets—is denouncing Bonn for capitulating to the U.S. attack on the European Community’s agricultural protectionism. And the so-called “poor four”—Spain, Portugal, Ireland
and Greece—threatening to hold up all Community decisions unless they get more “cohesion” money from the richer countries, meaning mainly Germany. Fat chance these days!

The eastern German Länder of the former DDR remain a devastated region economically, while western Germany is in the first stages of what could be a long and deep recession. Germany used to be called the locomotive pulling forward the European capitalist economy. Today, the German locomotive is pulling the rest of West Europe on a fast track downhill. It’s said nowadays that reunified Germany is economically weaker than was West Germany. It is not so much weaker in absolute terms as enormously overstretched. And that overextension is generating increasing national conflict, social turmoil, and class struggle throughout Europe, not least in Germany itself.

The “German Model” Becomes Too Expensive

“In the past, we’ve been too generous with wage increases,” stated Achim Dickmann, managing director of the motor industry association, on the eve of the 1991 OTV strike. Reunification has intensified a growing structural weakness of German capitalism, namely, that labor costs have become far higher than its main international competitors.

Taking sick leave and pension benefits into account, employeecomensation in west German industry is over 50 percent higher than in the United States and the other major West European countries, and over a third higher than in Japan. At the same time, the average work year in western Germany is 1,700 hours a year, compared to 1,750 hours in France and Britain, 1,900 hours in the U.S. and 2,150 hours in Japan.

Before reunification, West Germany was held up as a model of prosperity and economic strength, with highly competitive, export-driven industry based on superior productivity and advanced technology. 2) a strong trade-union movement led by social-democratic bureaucrats committed to preserving class peace and profitability, and to politically subverting the East German deformed workers state in the Eastern German economies. 3) relatively low public/political overhead costs as long as West Germany functioned as the protagonist of American imperialism.

The Cold War division of Europe between the U.S.-dominated alliance and the Soviet bloc, running along the Elbe through the heart of Germany, circumvented the global role of German imperialism. This was codified in the constitutional ban on deploying the Bundeswehr outside the West European region of NATO. A similar prohibition was written into Japan’s postwar constitution, which was dictated by the American proconsul Douglas MacArthur. As a consequence, in the late 1980s the West German military budget amounted to 3 percent of its huge gross national product compared to 4 percent for France, almost 5 percent for Britain and 6.5 percent for the U.S.

On the other hand, while Japanese capitalism has even lower military overhead costs than Germany, Toyota and Nippon Steel—their workers imprisoned in docile, company unions—provide no where near the wage levels of Volkswagen and Krupp, although they certainly have the financial resources to do so. Rather, the Japanese zaibutsu (cartels) used the surplus value extracted from their factories in Tokyo and Osaka to expand the superexploitation of workers in their East Asian neocolonies, from South Korea to Indonesia.

At a time when Reagan’s America and Thatcher’s Britain were breaking strikes and gutting the labor movement, German unions were still able to make significant economic gains. The 1984 auto strike, organized by IG Metall, cracked the traditional 40-hour workweek long prevalent in Western capitalist countries. Why were Frankfurt bankers and Ruhr industrialists prepared to maintain the institutionalized class collaboration symbolized by the system of union-management “co-determination”? The answer lies in German imperialism’s strengthened popular opposition to Western capitalism in the DDR. The seductive lies of Brandt, Schmidt & Co. about the virtuous role of the DDR would have had little effect east of the Elbe. Today, even Social Democratic union bureaucrats can see the gulf between the collapse of the Soviet bloc and the bosses’ harder line on the labor front at home.

Before reunification German capitalism had a compelling political reason to buy off the Social Democratic SPD unions, and sufficient resources to do so. The political motive has now disappeared and the resources are fast dwindling. One out of every three jobs in western Germany depends on exports. These exports depend on high productivity, superior quality and meretricious after-sale servicing. Mercedes, Porsche and BMW are the automobiles of choice for yuppies around the globe. However, Germany’s competitive advantage lies not so much in luxury consumer durables as in producer goods. “For most of our textile machines, we have no competition,” boasted the son of the founder of Karl Mayer Textilmaschinenfabrik. “Many products can only be made on our machines” (quoted in Philip Gloriavitch, Juzgenrat, Simon & Schuster, 1992). But fewer and fewer German firms can claim “we have no competition.”

Consider the machine tool industry, key to an industrial economy. This is the terrain of the German Mittelstand—the middle bourgeoisie, whose medium-size companies are run, in the words of a British weekly, by those who know their business to the last millimeter and pence. There are 450 tool makers in western Germany, each makes up to 1 million products a year, and their companies make an annual profit of 600,000 marks. They have invested heavily in new technology, and they have worked hard to keep their workers healthy and happy, and to maintain a close relationship with their unions. The German Mittelstand is the last bastion of industrial democracy in Europe.

For most of the postwar era Germany dominated the world market for machine tools, accounting for 31 percent of global exports in 1970, compared to 12 percent for the U.S. and a mere 3 percent for Japan. But then Japan and its East Asian neocolonies began making major inroads into the machine tool market, beginning with standard items like lathes and milling machines. Japanese firms now enjoy economies of scale not available to the smaller-sized German companies. By 1990 the German share of world exports of machine tools had fallen to 24 percent and the U.S. was reduced to a minuscule 3 percent, while Japan took 18 percent of the international market.

Since then the west German machine tool industry has been in the doldrums. The American recession and the collapse of the Soviet bloc has drastically cut demand in two of Germany’s major foreign markets while sky-high interest rates discouraged industrial construction and real estate development in Germany itself. Orders from German toymakers fell by 20 percent in 1991 and an additional estimated 25 percent last year.

Now with the collapse of the artificial
The destruction of East Germany's industrial economy

While threatening to degrade the workers of western Germany, the rulers of the Fourth Reich have already subjected the working people of the former DDR to immiseration and dependence on the dole. A liberal American economist, Robert Isak, observed: “In a visit to the East German capital, East Berlin, during the summer of 1991, the only people who could afford to buy more than a coffee or a beer in the restaurants were the tourists” (“Germany: Economic Powerhouse or Stalemate,” Challenge, September-October 1992).

A year earlier the socialized economy of the DDR was dissolved when the decision was made to slash the rate of exchange in East Germany and the nationalized enterprises were taken over by the West German Treuhandanstalt (Trusteeship Agency). “The collapse in industrial production which followed went beyond almost anything that historians have observed anywhere in the world,” wrote the conservative German entrepreneur Lutz Hoffmann (in Paul J. Wellens, ed., Economic Aspects of German Reunification, Springer-Verlag, 1991). Industrial output has plummeted 75 percent since 1989. A year after the establishment of the currency union, almost 5 million workers out of a labor force of 9.5 million were either unemployed outright, on “short-time work” or forced out of the labor market.

The economic collapse has been especially devastating for the women of eastern Germany, who comprise 65 percent of those officially registered as unemployed. The elimination of female day care made it difficult, if not impossible, for many women to work. Part-time jobs, largely held by women, were among the first to be done away with in the Treuhand’s “cost-cutting” drives. And men thrown out of the factories began competing for jobs in which women had predominated, such as bank clerks, mail carriers and public transit workers.

Crassly blaming the victims, German bourgeois economists like Hoffmann claim that the exchange of deutschmarks for DDR marks at a one-to-one ratio with the July 1990 currency union priced east German workers—contemptuously described as “a labor force not used to working efficiently”—out of the world market. Yet factory wages in Dresden and Leipzig are still only half the level of Munich and the Ruhr.

But in deciding where to invest, German firms are comparing labor costs in Prussia and Saxony to those in Mexico and Brazil. In fact, Daimler-Benz recently canceled plans to build a truck factory at Ludwigsfelde, south of Berlin, while going ahead with its Mexican project. At the same time, Krupp backed off from a proposal to build an ITK steel plant at Eisenhüttenstadt, eastern Germany’s largest steelworks, citing the “general misery” prevailing in the European steel market.

Even where West German companies have taken over the former enterprises of the DDR, they’ve slashed the workforce on a large scale. For example, Opel (General Motors’ German subsidiary) bought and retrofitted a major automotive plant in Eisenach which used to produce the Wartburg. The old Wartburg plant employed 14,000 people; the new Opel operation employs 2,000.

This graphically illustrates the differences between a collectivized economy, even where deformed by Stalinist bureaucratic mismanagement, and a capitalist economy. The overriding economic goal in the DDR was maintaining full employment while maximizing total output for the country as a whole. Workers in enterprises where production per head was relatively low were laid off at that rate. At the same time, they could voluntarily transfer to better-paying jobs in other enterprises, which in effect corre- sponded to higher productivity.

The overriding goal of a capitalist firm is to maximize the rate of profit, i.e., the return per unit of money invested. This means simultaneously minimizing the number of workers employed while maximizing output per worker. In eastern Germany today, mass unemployment coexists with speedup and overwork for those lucky enough to have jobs. “We have people who are working day and night, and those who have no work at all,” the deputy mayor of Bautzen, the regional center of eastern Saxony, told the London Financial Times (11 August 1992). The threat of unemployment is being used to condition East German workers to the new discipline imposed by their new capitalist bosses.

This points to the fact that the dismantlement of the DDR’s industrial economy was not based simply on calculations of profitability. It was also designed to atomize and terrorize the traditionally socialist proletariat of the DDR, thus preventing popular resistance to the new order of the Fourth Reich. Contributing to the economic devastation was the Treuhand’s firing of 1,400 enterprise managers ostensibly due to incompetence. In reality, this purging of the east German industrial cadre is part of a broader attempt to atomize and terrorize (symbolized by the show trial of Erich Honecker) intended to portray the DDR as a criminal state and to wreak vengeance for Germany’s defeat at the hands of the Red Army in World War II.

By 1991 the output of eastern German manufacturers had fallen 45 percent to $12 billion. This supplied roughly half of consumer demand. The other half was covered by government transfers in the form of unemployment insurance, pensions and social programs. What the Kohl regime called funds for the “reconstruction” of eastern Germany was in effect a massive internal export subsidy for West German manufacturers, for the benefit of consumer goods. The only productive investment was concentrated in communica- tions, to facilitate the “reconstruction” of eastern Germany, to facilitate the marketing of commodities made in western Germany. Philip J. Bryson, an American specialist on the economy of the DDR, pointed out: “there is no compelling case for West-German investment in eastern Germany. Investment is essentially access to the East German market, which is now just a part of their own. It is simple enough to exploit production capacities in eastern Germany and import the appropriate share of large outputs to the East for sale.”

“The Economics of German Reunification,” Journal of Comparative Economics (March 1992)

In 1990-91, western Germany experienced a mini-boom, concentrated in consumer goods, generated by subsidized exports to the new eastern Länder. For example, over three-quarters of the 4,000 DDR marks per person which could be exchanged at a rate of one to one was spent on purchases of new goods and services from the West. But once the initial spending spree was over, the financing of the reunification was transferred to the German government, which pressed the entire European capitalist economy, and has now rebounced back against itself.

TO BE CONTINUED
Somalia...

(continued from page 1)

...still in power and under the control of the European Union. The situation in the country is dire, with widespread famine and human suffering.

Israel...

(continued from page 1)

In the Gaza Strip, the Israeli army continues to engage in human rights abuses and violations of international law.

Free Mordechai Vanunu!

The Zionist terrorist machine targets not only individuals but whole nations. Vanunu's release would be a significant blow to the Zionist project.

Israeli Arabs protesting in January 1988 (left) against then war minister Yitzhak Rabin's “Iron fist” repression against Palestinian Intifada.

Israelis and Palestinians are fighting for their freedom and self-determination. The struggle continues.

9

1 JANUARY 1993

Complaints about the detention of Mordechai Vanunu have been met with official denials by Israel.

Mordechai Vanunu is a former employee of Israel's Mossad intelligence agency who defected to the UK in 1986 and revealed the existence of Israel's nuclear weapons program.

Vanunu was convicted of leak and treason in 1988 and sentenced to 18 years in prison. His release in 1998 was a major victory for human rights and freedom of information.

I...
It was supposed to be a bravura show trial for the “New World Order,” the latest application of Washington’s doctrine of “superpower-assertiveness.” A Supreme Court ruling last June in the trial of Mexican gynecologist Humberto Alvarez Machain declared the U.S. “right” to kidnap any foreign doctor accused of “anti-American” laws. In April, the government scored a victory in the test case of General Manuel Noriega, a Miami court convicted the Panamanian strongman in the December 1989 U.S. invasion of Panama, granting the U.S. a victory. In the December 1989 invasion of Panama, the U.S. seized Rafeedie, who earlier ruled that the defendant’s kidnapping was illegal.

The Mexican government of Carlos Salinas de Gortari indignantly rejected these allegations. But despite the 1970s talk of extraditing the DEA agents who kidnapped the doctor, the subversive Salinas regime isn’t about to jeopardize its cozy relations with its godfathers in Washington. Three days after Alvarez was acquitted, Salinas and Bush signed the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), paving the way for wholesale U.S. takeover of the Mexican economy. Another by-product of the Camarena case was a 1990 Supreme Court ruling that the Fourth Amendment ban on unreasonable search and seizure doesn’t apply to U.S. agents searching foreign territory. It’s all under the pretext of the “war on drugs”—in reality a war on the masses of Latin America and black and Hispanic minorities in the U.S.

The U.S. has won a trumping on Mexico’s threadbare sovereignty—brisk Mexican police to kidnap a Mexican national for a crime supposedly committed in Mexico—touched off protests even from normally docile Latin American bourgeois leaders and U.S. liberals. The Washington Post noted that “the Court of Appeals of the Republic of South Africa ruled that the prosecution of a defendant kidnapped by agents of that government in another country must be dismissed,” and the Los Angeles Times worried, “What will the United States do if a government like Iran’s or Libya’s decides to ‘snatch’ a U.S. citizen wanted for some crime against those radical regimes?”

Perhaps you know exactly what Washington would do in retaliation: bomb Tripoli again or shoot down another Iranian airliner. Now that the Soviet Union isn’t there to check their ambitions, the hubris of the American imperialists, who consider themselves masters of the universe, is boundless. Just three days before Alvarez’ acquittal, Manuel Noriega was officially declared a “prisoner of war”—not that this will make any difference in his situation. Such may be the fate of small-time dictators who don’t jump high enough to please their U.S. paymasters. But the worst is yet to come. Latin America and the world have fared far worse at the hands of Yankee imperialism than any world socialist revolution can bring these mass murderers to justice for their crimes against the people of Grenada, Feneba and Iraq (to name just a few of their most recent victims).

In more than 140 incursions and invasions over the last 180 years, the U.S. has stolen huge chunks of land from Mexico. While no territorial injustice can be completely undone, the U.S. passes, a victorious socialist revolution in the U.S. would return the fertile lower Rio Grande Valley to its rightful owners. The working class and peasants of Latin America would return the fertile areas and cities of the U.S. as a whole. The U.S. would lose control of the Horn of Africa. Camp Pendleton would be commandeered to the Horn of Africa. Camp Pendleton would be commandeered to

LAPD Siege...

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Purple Ribbons and Purple Prose

Canadian Protectionism at Auto Jobs Protest

We print below a report from an auto worker and supporter of the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyiste of Canada about a protest called by the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) at the General Motors plant in St. Catharines, Ontario.

ST. CATHARINES, December 12—About 1,500 workers demonstrated at GM Plant No. 4 on Ontario Street. Most, but not all, came from nearby Ironworkers and Steelworkers locals hard hit by layoffs. A few; mostly GM Auto Workers locals and machinists was also in attendance because the CAW national conference was held in Toronto. But the day turned out to be a bigger protest than I could have imagined. The economy was down, the day was gray, cold and slushy. The rally was supposed to kick off a "GM enrollment campaign" to keep open the two threatened GM plants—Rear Axle and Foundry. (All other shades of the day was gray, cold but not all, were from the CAW.) The slogan of the campaign is "Fight for a Fighting Future." The demo was a sea of purple—purple ribbons on every breast, purple balloons on every car. The local was downsizing the band, purple rhetoric on every bureaucrat's lips. The speeches were long, the mayor and the chairman of the Niagara Regional Council pledged their deadly solidarity. Peter Kormos, the so-called "boy" of the provincial New Democratic Party caucus, was cheered—largely, I suspect, because he was quite good. The Ontario premier who had just walked out of the public employee unions with a vendetta against the CAW wasn't on the guest list. Kormos was the only provincial NDPer who showed his face, although the plant and region's premier had personally assured him that GM workers had the premier's "full support." Another local union official gave the poisonous trade-war speech calling for tactics like those in the U.S. Meanwhile, over 20,000 laid-off GM workers are losing income payments and being dumped into the welfare web to boot. GM has already gutted medical benefits of white-collar workers, and its next moves will follow the Canadian health care for retirees and union workers.

The company cops at the top of the UAW can't just fire away the auto bosses, starting with Chrysler in 1979. Their jingoism against Japanese and European cars can't hide the fact that U.S. workers entered the arms of the class enemy. The bureaucrats deserve the title "GM gypsies," bouncing from one closed plant to the next. Now Saare from the CAW, one up with an "early retirement" program for perhaps 7,000 workers—by stealing $50 million from the retraining program. Meanwhile, over 20,000 laid-off GM workers are losing income payments and being dumped into the welfare web to boot. GM has already gutted medical benefits of white-collar workers, and its next moves will follow the Canadian health care for retirees and union workers.

Meanwhile, at Caterpillar, workers who saw their bitter 163-day strike sold out from under them by the UAW misleaders last April now face a threat to their union's very existence. Returning to work under terms unilaterally imposed by the company, strikers have been forced to work alongside scabs who slashed across their picket lines. At the UAW's Caterpillar strikers have cut off the union's dues checkoff, hoping that misguided workers angered by the strike's miserable outcome would help the company undermine the UAW. Work was sent to non-union plants or to the Caterpillar factory, where the UAW union has agreed to cut "new-hires" pay in half! Now Caterpillar has imposed the terms of their "contract" on workers," giving them the choice of a job under the union's dues checkoff, or a "flex-time" work scheme that will tear up many workers' lives.

Moreover, as part of its union-busting offensive, CAT cut off pay for union committeemen, sending full-time stewards back to the workbenches. Company-paid committeemen are hostage to the bosses, just as the dues checkoff gives management a stranglehold over union finances. Class-struggle unionism is counterposed to such institutionalized class collaboration. We fight for elected stewards paid by the union, and dues collection by the union to make officers financially and politically accountable to the ranks, and to prepare the union for combat.

GM Pleads Poverty

After the boardroom coup that instigated the strike, Caterpillar's PR machine gave a false picture of the company's financial situation. Only a betrayal of workers can account for the company's demand for tax breaks...for the so-called Big Three, whose profits in 1983-89 alone.

It took hard class struggle to build the UAW and the Farm Equipment Workers, the UAW's predecessor at CAT, in the 1930s and 40s. The Trotskyists League has uniquely fought for class-struggle mobilizations of the proletariat, including nationwide strike action against mass layoffs, combined with sitdowns to challenge the bosses' property rights (and, in like in Flint '37, keep hold of the machinery before they move it out). What's needed is to galvanize a political fight to forge a revolutionary workers party that can win the battle for a workers government to rebuild the industry of this country as part of a socialist planned economy.
"Will work for food," read the sign of a worker outside the Fisher Guide plant in Ewing, New Jersey on December 3. One of 2,050 workers being thrown out of work at the GM parts plant, he is joining 85,000 workers at 23 parts and assembly plants across North America that are scheduled to close in the next two years. Fully one-quarter of the GM workforce is being thrown on the scrap heap, as the auto giant declares war on its workers. This wave of layoffs goes far beyond General Motors. Ford Motor Company had announced huge cuts at its plants in Britain. The auto companies were followed by IBM, which announced the slashing of 25,000 jobs, on top of the 100,000 already cut since 1986. The job massacre is capitalism's Christmas gift to tens of thousands of workers and their families around the world.

Workers at plants from Sioux City, Iowa to St. Catharines, Ontario have been waiting, as the bosses on the 14th floor of the General Motors building in Detroit have been sharpening their knives. Pressured by Wall Street to "get tough with the union," the GM board fired chairman Robert Stempel in late October, replacing him with former GM/Europe head John Smith. Smith's mandate: slash 25 percent of GM's capacity. Wall Street, looking with alarm at GM's $86.2 billion in debt, reportedly threatened to downgrade their paper to "junk bond levels. (When he was approached about a possible takeover of GM, Chrysler boss Lee Iacocca quipped, "it might be easier to buy Greece.")

Newsweek (2 November 1992) reported that "in recent weeks a few analysts have even breathed the dreaded words 'Chap­

GM workers in Flint, Michigan. Company has announced closure of 23 plants, eliminating jobs of 85,000 auto workers.

ter 11'" (bankruptcy) as they complain that GM is "on the cusp of undoing this country's industrial base."

It is the workers who are being "undone," and UAW president Owen Bieber and the rest of the Solidarity House gang are right in there with the auto bosses doing it to them. After the GM announcement, Bieber begged the bosses to wait for a Democrat to move into the White House. "We look forward to a bet­
er economic and political climate when President-elect Clinton takes office." But "Right to Work" Willie is going to stick it to labor, and the labor bureaucrats got a whiff of what Clinton's yuppie tech­nocrats have in store for the working class at last week's "summit" in Little Rock. The AFL-CIO piecéd who flocked to Arkansas to get some crumbs from their "friend of labor" were stunned to hear the Clinton gang's hit list of "pro­duc­tivity" and "efficiency" demands.

Clinton never promised anything to workers and minorities. He ostenta­tiously flew back to Arkansas to execute his mandate: slash 25 percent of the GM board of directors, and then into a waiting squad car. Owen Bieber stuck his hand in his pocket and took out the same number of cars as ten years ago—with half the workforce.

The black working class of Detroit has been decimated. Not a single auto plant is left in Southern California. The average GM worker today is 46 years old.

LAPD Siege in South-Central

LOS ANGELES—On the afternoon of December 14, the L.A. police carried out a massive invasion of the black neighbor­hood around the intersection of Flor­ence and Normandie, the flashpoint of last April's upheaval. It was like Beirut over here," said area resident Annette Brooks of the siege by over 350 cops, who terrorized the neighborhood for some 18 hours. A citywide tactical alert, which kept all police agencies in readi­ness, was in effect for two days.

The pretext for this LAPD nightriding was a rally in defense of four black youth, on trial for the beating of white trucker Reginald Denny as L.A. burst into flames last April 30, following the racist acquittal of the cops who beat Rodney King. The assault on Denny was a vicious crime, and his attackers are criminals who should be behind bars. But the cops' message last week was that any protest by L.A. minorities would be smashed with an iron fist. This was a trial run for their newest weapons and latest techniques.

The cops began their attack on the demonstration by seizing an activist for distributing literature in defense of the police. "You've got to be a realist about it." The Auto Workers tops have repeatedly sold their deadly mix of Democrats, give­backs and racist protectionism, with the result that in just a dozen years 40 per­cent of the union has been wiped out over half a million jobs gone, 218,000 at GM alone. Ford brags it is producing the same number of cars as ten years ago—with half the workforce.

The black working class of Detroit has been decimated. Not a single auto plant is left in Southern California. The average GM worker today is 46 years old.

The black working class of Detroit has been decimated. Not a single auto plant is left in Southern California. The average GM worker today is 46 years old.

"L.A. Four." When protesters objected, the cops went on a rampage, firing their recently acquired (and potentially lethal) plastic bullets into the crowd. SWAT teams armed with assault rifles sealed off the neighborhood, while riot cops swept up and down the side streets screaming abuse as they beat residents, throwing some into their homes and ran­domly arresting others. The owner of a chili-dog stand was dragged away along with customers, thrown to the ground and then into a waiting squad car.

At least 53 people were arrested, many while standing on their porches or in their front yards. The police siege con­tinued throughout the night, as helicop­ters lit the way for unmarked Chevy Sub­urbs that cruised the streets with cops aiming automatic weapons through their sunroofs. The local capitalist media fell into lockstep, all but blacking out reports of the cop riot, ostensibly so as not to "spark further unrest." Meanwhile, city politicians including black Democrats and liberals hailed the LAPD for "getting it right this time."

In the wake of the 1960s ghetto riots...