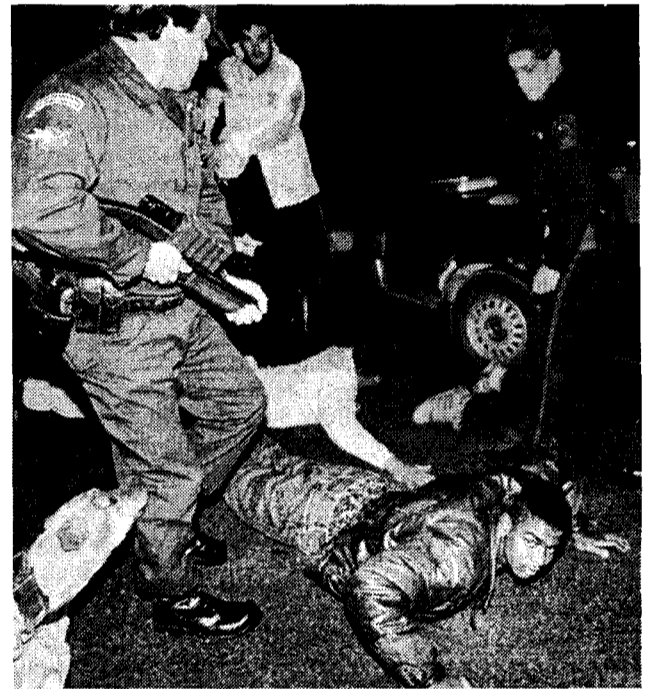


Jobless Rate Rises, World Economic Crisis Deepens

Fight Capitalist Ruin Unchain Labor's Power

For a Revolutionary Workers Party—For a Workers Government!



Philadelphia transit workers rally during combative 40-day strike last summer; black youth in Boston attacked by cops. Labor needs a class-struggle leadership that champions the cause of all the oppressed.

OCTOBER 3—As stock markets around the world continue to plunge, U.S. president Clinton yesterday convened a meeting of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in Washington, D.C. where he pushed for faster intervention to “ward off economic crisis” (*New York Times*, 3 October). For over a year, the U.S. imperialists have used their IMF tool to impose starvation austerity from Indonesia to South Korea, aiming in part to insulate the American economy from the effects of the Asian financial collapse. Now, however, there is no room for

the illusion that American capitalism is somehow immune from the effects of the financial crisis. Fueled in good measure by the plunging of exports to Asia and Latin America, some 114,000 manufacturing jobs have been lost in the U.S. this year, while overall unemployment began to rise last month.

Less than ten years ago, the imperialist ruling classes proclaimed the “death of communism” as capitalist counterrevolution engulfed the bureaucratically degenerated Soviet workers state. What ensued was a wave of attacks internationally on

the working class and the oppressed, as the capitalists drove to maximize profits by intensifying the exploitation of labor. The racist American rulers arrogantly presumed that they could get away with starving the poor, killing the sick and aged and further impoverishing all of labor without provoking any social protest.

While the bourgeois rulers bray that Marxism has “failed,” they cannot eliminate the class struggle born of the irreconcilable conflict of interests between labor and capital. People cannot stand

having no future for themselves or their kids, or being oppressed like slaves, with poverty, disease and homelessness threatening millions. Today, as the mood of bourgeois triumphalism recedes out of fear of a world depression, the working masses internationally are being impelled into struggle. Recently in the U.S., a series of solid and popular strikes—from the UPS Teamsters strike in August 1997 to this summer’s 54-day United Auto Workers (UAW) strike against General Motors in Flint—have demonstrated a

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Germany: Social Democrats Win Anti-Immigrant Austerity Elections

OCTOBER 4—The election of Social Democratic Party (SPD) candidate Gerhard Schröder as German chancellor last Sunday brought to an end 16 years of conservative Christian Democratic (CDU) rule under Helmut Kohl. As the rise in stock prices on the Frank-

furt exchange in response to Schröder’s victory made clear, the bourgeoisie expects an SPD government to push through a program of anti-working-class austerity and “rationalization” aimed at enhancing German imperialism’s competitiveness against its major international rivals, the U.S. and Japan. And Schröder has amply confirmed his readiness to carry out this task. The German election outcome follows a pattern seen in much of West Europe in the last couple of years, as the bourgeoisies from Britain to France and Italy have

installed governments headed by social-democratic parties to wage war against the unions and implement sharp cuts in workers’ living standards.

Terror against immigrants and other minorities has served as the battering ram for the bourgeoisie in deflecting anger over high unemployment and in attacking social programs and other gains for all of the working class. Particularly in Germany, this has fueled the ominous, regular occurrence of thousands-strong fascist marches. Among the SPD’s working-class base,

including many workers of Turkish and Kurdish origin, there are widespread illusions that an SPD regime will safeguard jobs and social benefits and offer some measure of alleviation to minorities suffering pervasive discrimination and cop and fascist terror. Such illusions, promoted as well by a spectrum of self-styled revolutionary groups, will soon be brutally shattered.

The escalating attacks on the “social welfare state” and the rise of fascist terror are the direct result of the capitalist

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Down With La Migra Terror in Los Angeles!

The case of two Los Angeles women facing deportation starkly illustrates the brutality of the racist witchhunt against immigrants being carried out by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). Maura Gomez's "crime" was to speak a single word—*dejenlo* (leave him alone)—when she saw four men beating a Latino man in the lobby of her friend's apartment building in L.A.'s Mid-Wilshire district last October. Gomez explained to the *Los Angeles Times* (7 May), "I thought, 'They have guns; a shot will kill my kids.' I called the police."

But it turned out the four thugs were themselves Immigration cops—the hated *la migra*. Gomez and a neighbor, Ziola Rodriguez, were taken into custody by the LAPD for "interfering" with the INS agents' efforts and "inciting" apartment residents against them. Although neither

was ever charged with any offense, Gomez and Rodriguez were locked up at the INS' Terminal Island facility for nine days and now face imminent deportation.

A native of Honduras, Gomez has lived in the U.S. for the past nine years and has two children born here. Rodriguez, from Guatemala, has lived in this country for eleven years and has three American-born children. To justify the order for Rodriguez's deportation, Judge Isabel Bronzina vindictively accused her of being a burden to the public for having accepted government assistance for her children, one of whom is mentally handicapped and requires special care.

The two women are being victimized under provisions of the 1996 immigration "reform" signed into law by Democratic president Clinton, aiming to terrorize legal and undocumented immigrants alike.

Along with the axing of welfare, this law epitomizes the capitalist rulers' offensive against immigrants and the poor. As part of this bipartisan campaign, Clinton also doubled the number of Border Patrol troops in his first term in office. Not satisfied with the record numbers of deportations brought about by these measures, the Clinton administration has escalated the war against immigrants to new levels

of barbarity. Now the number of immigrants seeking welfare benefits they are entitled to has plummeted, while according to INS projections, by the end of this month the number of citizenship applications submitted in the past year will have declined by almost 50 percent.

The U.S. capitalist rulers have long relied on whipping up racial and ethnic hatred in furthering the exploitation of all workers. At the same time, immigrant workers have increasingly played a combative role in the struggles of the U.S. proletariat. All this underscores the crucial necessity for the integrated labor movement to mobilize in defense of the rights of immigrants and on behalf of all the oppressed. **No deportations! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!** ■

The Fight for Revolutionary Leadership

In its role as labor lieutenants of the capitalist class, the trade-union bureaucracy chains the working class to the bourgeois order, particularly through political support to the Democratic Party. Where the reformist left amnesties the labor misleaders and adapts to the existing consciousness of the working class, Marxists seek to win the proletariat to an understanding of its historic class interests as the gravedigger of the capitalist system of exploitation and oppression. In a 1932 polemic against the then-centrist Communist Party's call for "rank-and-file leadership" of the trade unions, American Trotskyist leader James P. Cannon stressed the need to fight for revolutionary leadership of the labor movement as part of the struggle to forge a vanguard party of the proletariat.



TROTSKY



LENIN

The working class under capitalism is not and cannot be a homogeneous body. The enormous pressure of the ruling-class ideology presses heavily upon it. Bourgeois ideas, disseminated through the press, the schools, the movies, the political parties, and in other ways, demoralize and corrupt the thoughts of the workers. Besides that, the working class under capitalism is divided into various economic categories, with different standards of living and, to a certain extent, different immediate interests. The upper stratum, the aristocracy of labor, which is the most conservative and at the same time the best organized, becomes a means of strengthening bourgeois influences over the class. The labor bureaucrats, with their high salaries and petty-bourgeois standards of life, act as the agents of capital in the labor movement.

As a result of all this, it is possible under capitalism for only a minority of the working class to free itself from bourgeois influences and ideas and to understand the historical class position of the proletariat. These are the conscious workers, the vanguard of the class. In order to influence the class it is necessary for these conscious workers to organize themselves and to fight unitedly against the domination of the capitalists and their agents in the labor movement. From this arises the Marxist idea of the centralized workers' party. It is the first letter of the Marxist alphabet on the question of working-class organization.

This principle of leadership by the most conscious and resolute elements applies to strikes and other daily struggles as well as to the class struggle as a whole. The agitation for "the leadership of the rank and file" negates this principle and sows confusion. By this it only makes the leadership of the reactionary agents of the capitalists more secure. This harmful and anti-Marxist slogan should be cast aside. Instead of it, the Communist workers in the unions, as in every other field of the class struggle, should frankly contrast their policy and their leadership to the policy and the leadership of the labor lieutenants of capital. This is the only way to teach the workers and help them in their struggle. There is no roundabout way.

—James P. Cannon, "Under Rank-and-File Leadership" (April 1932)

WORKERS VANGUARD

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The closing date for news in this issue is October 6.

No. 698

9 October 1998

Spartacist Events

Imperialism and Class Struggle in Asia

LOS ANGELES

Saturday, October 10, 4 p.m.
Hollywood United Methodist Church
6817 Franklin Avenue
(Highland Ave. exit off 101 Freeway)
For more information: (213) 380-8239

SAN FRANCISCO

Saturday, October 24, 7:30 p.m.
Women's Building
3543 18th Street (near Valencia)
For more information: (415) 777-9367 or
(510) 839-0851

CHICAGO

Defeat of Reconstruction and the
Great Rail Strike of 1877

The Shaping of Racist American Capitalism

Saturday, October 10, 7 p.m.
Ida Noyes Hall, Library Room
University of Chicago
(1212 E. 59th Street)
For more information: (312) 454-4930

NEW YORK CITY

The Fight for Revolutionary Marxism Today

Saturday, October 24, 3 p.m.
Vanderbilt Hall, Room 214
New York University Law School
40 Washington Square South
(between MacDougal and Sullivan streets)
For more information: (212) 267-1025

Spartacus Youth Club Classes

BOSTON

Anti-Labor Attacks, Cop Terror
and the Capitalist State
Thursday, October 15, 7 p.m.

Revolution vs. Reform:
The Russian Revolution and How
the Working Class Took Power
Thursday, October 22, 7 p.m.

College of Arts and Sciences, Rm. 220
725 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston University (near Boston Univ.
East on the Green Line B Branch)
For readings and information: (617) 666-9453

NEW YORK CITY

Revolution vs. Reform:
The Russian Revolution—How the
Working Class Took Power
Tuesday, October 13, 7 p.m.

Trotskyism vs. Stalinism:
The Revolution Betrayed
Tuesday, October 27, 7 p.m.

Loeb Student Center, Room 413
New York University
(LaGuardia Pl. & Washington Sq. South)
For readings and information: (212) 267-1025

TORONTO

The Revolution Betrayed
Thursday, October 15, 7 p.m.

International Student Centre
33 St. George Street
(north of College Street)
For readings and information: (416) 593-4138

International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)

International Center: Box 7429 GPO, New York, NY 10116, USA

Spartacist League of Australia	Spartacist League, GPO Box 3473 Sydney, NSW, 2001, Australia
Spartacist League/Britain	Spartacist Publications, PO Box 1041 London NW5 3EU, England
Trotskyist League of Canada/ Ligue trotskyste du Canada	Trotskyist League, Box 7198, Station A Toronto, Ontario, M5W 1X8, Canada
Spartakist-Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands	SpAD, Postfach 5 55 10127 Berlin, Germany
Dublin Spartacist Group	PO Box 2944, Dublin 1 Republic of Ireland
Ligue trotskyste de France	Le Bolchévick, B.P. 135-10 75463 Paris Cedex 10, France
Spartacist Group India/Lanka	write to Spartacist, New York
Lega trotskista d'Italia	Walter Fidacaro C.P. 1591, 20101 Milano, Italy
Spartacist Group Japan	Spartacist Group Japan PO Box 49, Akabane Yubinkyoku Kita-ku, Tokyo 115, Japan
Grupo Espartaquista de México	J. Vega, Apdo. Postal 1251 Admon. Palacio Postal 1 C.P. 06002, México D.F., Mexico
Spartacist/Moscow	write to Le Bolchévick, Paris
Spartakusowska Grupa Polski	Platforma Spartakusowców Skrytka Poczтовая 148 02-588 Warszawa 48, Poland
Spartacist/South Africa	Spartacist, PostNet Suite 248 Private Bag X2226 Johannesburg 2000, South Africa
Spartacist League/U.S.	Spartacist League, Box 1377 GPO New York, NY 10116, USA

Exchange on "Workplace Violence" Witchhunt

The following letters deal with our report in "Workplace Violence" Witchhunt Targets Unions, Minorities" (WV No. 695, 28 August) on the victimization of AFSCME Local 444 member Randy Kim, an East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) auto mechanic who was fired and subjected to criminal charges for "terrorist threats" allegedly made while joking with a co-worker. The letters are published in full and exactly as we received them.

AFSCME Local 444
Oakland, California
September 25, 1998

Editor;

This letter, sent on behalf of AFSCME Local 444's Executive Board, is in response to the August 28, 1998 article on "workplace violence policies" and the union movement's role. In the section entitled "The Frame Up of Randy Kim", the author makes inaccurate and blatantly false accusations of AFSCME 444's leadership. You allege that 444's leadership "opposed taking strike action to defend Kim", encouraged our members to have "illusions in the EBMUD Board of Directors", "never lifted a finger" in

Board of Directors; however we also recognize that as politicians they are susceptible to pressure. We have and do advocate and organize our members attendance there in mass numbers on issues of critical importance. It is also a forum to gather our members. This is but one tool in our arsenal to fight our employer; we would be foolish not to use it. Your own supporters have asked this Local to send letters to various representatives of the state protesting the state's actions in regards to prisoners such as Geronimo Pratt.

Your allegations that 444's leadership "never lifted a finger" in Randy's defense until forced to by concerned and angry union members is outrageous, dishonest and offensive.

Randy was put on paid administrative leave the day after the alleged comments were made. 444's Chief Steward was specifically directed by Randy and his civil attorney NOT to file a grievance until further along in the legal proceedings. 444's leadership was in regular contact with Randy throughout this period; he insisted that any actions taken on his behalf by the local be guided by his attorneys, both civil and criminal. Because of the unprecedented nature of this situation and seeing

tests, objections or refusals by your supporters at this indignity.

Normally we would not waste our time responding to an article in a paper such as yours, but these outrageous statements mandated that we do so.

At our most recent union meeting we were treated to a lengthy denunciation of the union leadership by one of your paper's supporters, essentially repeating the allegations in the article. This individual played a most disgraceful role when the President of this Local, an Electrician in his department, was under attack for union activities and facing sexual harassment from her supervisors. Not only did this so-called socialist not help the Sister fight this harassment but blamed her for it, attributing the harassment to "psychological" problems between her and her boss. Such a position clearly undermines a person fighting victimization by management.

The truth of the matter is that this was nothing but an excuse on this individual's part to refuse to intervene on the side of a fellow worker against management. It was a perfect example of the real-life role the supporters of the Worker's Vanguard paper play in the day to day struggles between workers and their employers.

struggle of working class people.

One final note; 444's president spoke to Randy Kim prior to the sending of this letter, and he stated that he had spoken to the individual who had interviewed him for the article, as well as your leading supporter in our union and asked for a retraction of the false portrayal of 444's role in his defense. He maintains this position.

We demand a written retraction of the falsehoods and an apology.

Cheryl Zuur
President, AFSCME 444

CC; Greg Best
Randy Kim

* * *

Alameda, CA
October 2, 1998

Dear Workers Vanguard,

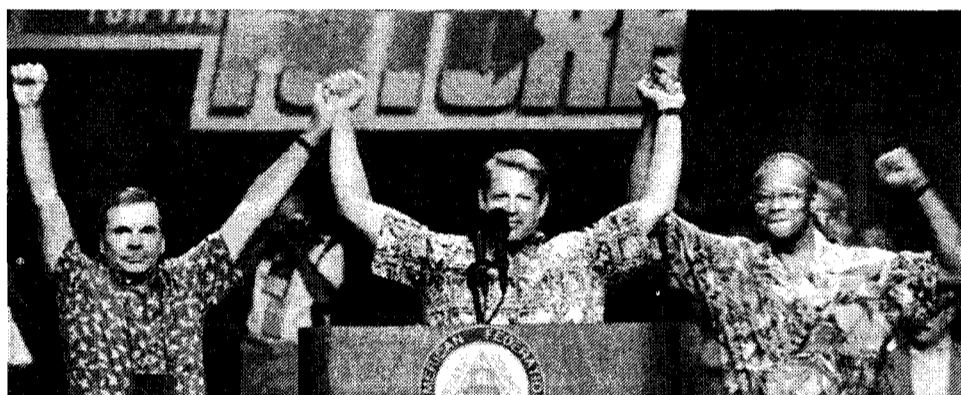
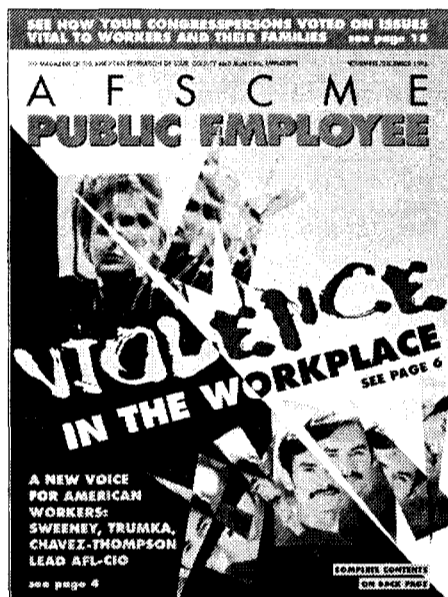
By now you've probably received a letter on official union stationery signed by my AFSCME Local 444 president Cheryl Zuur objecting to the article you wrote in the August 28 issue on "Workplace violence," particularly the section on the frame-up and firing of Randy Kim, a highly respected fellow worker who has worked for EBMUD for 23 years and who was active in the union as a steward and officer for many years. (I'm one of the guys she keeps referring to as your "supporters.") I've been reading Workers Vanguard for many years, but now I thought I had better write to you because there are so many untruthful statements in this letter about matters that only members of 444 would know about.

The heart of Cheryl's letter is her statement that it is "blatantly false" that the union "never lifted a finger in Kim's defense until forced to by concerned and angry union members, and failed to file a grievance until after Kim was fired." On this basis she is demanding a "retraction" by your paper. Well your article happens to be the literal truth. Randy was suspended and ordered off the premises on April 9, barred from company property and had his house searched by the police. Yet no action was taken by Cheryl, or the people around her like the 2nd VP Richard Mellor or the chief steward Ron Barker, even after Randy gave a report on his suspension at the April union meeting later that month. Yet there were two articles by Richard Mellor in the April issue of the union newsletter "Mainline" reporting how the union had aggressively responded to other attacks on union officers, Richard himself and 1st VP Roger Martinez. Richard has had a reputation for many years for his "in-your-face" manner of standing up to management. So why not for Randy?

Another whole month went by and still nothing had been done. Not even had a grievance been filed which is standard practice when a union member is attacked by the company. By this time people in both Locals 444 and 2019 (the other AFSCME local here) were getting pretty worried and upset. Why wasn't the union doing anything? They understood that if the District got away with firing a shop steward on these trumped up charges then it would create an atmosphere of fear and intimidation. Which is in fact what has happened. You will think twice now before mouthing off at some supervisor.

This was the mood when a bunch of us went to the 444 union meeting on May 21 where there was a larger than usual attendance, about 70 people. A group of members from 2019 had come in solidarity to support joint action by both locals in defense of Randy, but they

continued on page 4



Cohen/Public Employee Press

AFSCME tops promote "workplace violence" campaign used by capitalists to victimize union militants, chain labor to bosses' Democratic Party. Al Gore feted by AFSCME president Gerald McEntee (left) and secretary-treasurer William Lucy at August union convention in Honolulu.

Kim's defense until forced to by concerned and angry union members, and failed to file a grievance until after Kim was fired. You state that the "reason for this treachery" is because 444's leadership supports EBMUD's "workplace violence" policy.

Finally, you portray 444's president and chief steward as "docile" and "misleaders" because they "willingly allowed themselves to be scanned by metal detectors" on the way into Kim's Skelly hearing.

444's leadership never opposed strike action to defend Randy Kim. What we opposed was a motion made by your supporter to send a letter to our employer threatening to walk off the job if Randy was terminated. Management is aware that a mood does not exist among our membership for the sort of job action threatened in the motion. The leadership and other members opposed the motion suggesting instead that intermediate steps be organized such as rallies or Board protests that would help generate support for such an action. This would require a huge amount of organizational activity within the local which many workers are not prepared to take on at this time, but which your supporter avoids like the plague. This motion was defeated; the only vote in favor was by your supporter; brother Kim himself urged the membership to vote against it.

We have no illusions in EBMUD's

no evidence of there being support for an immediate work stoppage, it was prudent to honor Randy's request.

444's leadership does not support or agree with the "workplace violence" policy at EBMUD as you falsely claim. We challenge you to provide any concrete evidence whatsoever that we support this policy. Furthermore, as your supporter knows (or would know if he were active in the union) the only reason that we have raised the issue of being excluded from the process of establishing this workplace violence policy is that under the terms of our Contract management must include us in the process of establishing any policy that affects hours, wages and working conditions. Given that they failed to include us in this process, the implementation of this policy (ig [sic] their termination of Randy Kim) is a contract violation.

Your reference in the article to, the President and Chief Steward allowing themselves to be "scanned" by metal detectors in order to attend Kim's Skelly hearing is true. What does this have to do with being "docile"? Had the President and Chief Steward not subjected themselves to this, Randy would have had no Union presence at his hearing. Curiously enough, your own supporters, as well as other members of the Local have attended Randy's court proceedings, all of us being scanned by metal detectors in order to enter. There have been no sit down pro-

This individual never has the courage to either openly and directly say he supports your paper or to distribute it publicly. The case of Randy Kim is the only time he has ever participated in any discussion at a union meeting that directly pertains to an issue with the employer. The only—the only—times he comes to meetings is to seek money and/or other types of support for some cause which your paper is taking up. He has never done anything to strengthen the union in its direct battle with the employer. We thus find it somewhat hypocritical of him to suddenly find such an interest in the immediate class struggle.

Your supporters in our workplace avoid participating in the day to day work of the union; they refuse to take positions, particularly as stewards. They don't file grievances. They never confront the boss directly on the job. They have remained silent, refusing to speak up on issues they disagree with at meetings in order to not offend the membership so they can get money from the Local. In fact, the only time your supporters generally attend meetings is when they want money, or for opportunist reasons. This doesn't go unnoticed and weakens the ability to support issues as people often associate the messenger with the message.

We believe that the dishonest, immature and cowardly approach of your paper and it's supporters in our workplace is totally foreign to the best traditions of the

Letters...

(continued from page 3)

were stopped at the door by Richard Mellor and Roger Martinez who told them they were not welcome and to go away. A number of 444 members were very upset about this.

During the meeting Cheryl didn't even mention Randy's case until I demanded it. I then put up the following motion, which passed *unanimously*: "The local shall send the following letter to EBMUD and the District Attorney and also circulate in petition form: 'Local 444 demands that the frame-up criminal charges against Randy Kim be dropped, that he be reinstated immediately and that his record be cleared.'" Someone from the floor yelled out and wanted to know why a grievance hadn't been filed. Everyone at the meeting agreed the chief steward Ron would file a grievance right away.

So here we were—6 weeks after Randy had been run off the job and suspended—and this was the *first time* that the union was doing anything to defend Randy and therefore the union as a whole. And it only happened because "concerned and angry union members" forced the leadership to finally take some action to defend all of us. Just like you said.

A similar motion was subsequently passed by Local 2019. But in both locals, elements of the leadership objected to the word "frame-up." In the 2019 meeting there was a split vote and the word was deleted. When Cheryl wrote a letter on May 26 to EBMUD management as directed by the membership, she too omitted "frame-up" from the motion that was passed. This omission is very telling because if you don't see Randy's case as a frame-up then the direct implication is that Randy *did* make threats and so was guilty as charged. Some people in fact refused to defend Randy on this basis.

So I don't know who Cheryl thinks she's fooling with her letter because the membership of both locals knew long before Workers Vanguard came out that her leadership team hadn't lifted a finger to defend Randy until that 444 local meeting in May.

Now I want to talk about what I and other union members who have seen this letter think is the most underhanded part of Cheryl's letter. At the end she claims that she spoke to Randy Kim before sending her letter and that he "asked for a retraction of the false portrayal of 444's role in his defense. He maintains this position." I happen to know from speaking to Randy that this is *totally untrue*. He specifically told her that he did *not* want a retraction but would like one small correction, which I'll get to.

As soon as your article started to get around the shops at work, both Cheryl and Richard Mellor called Randy (for the first time) to get him to sign a letter that they were writing, but he didn't want to get involved. What he told me was that he liked the article, that it was accurate,

but he thought it could have used one more sentence stating that his lawyer had advised the union leadership not to file a grievance until Randy was fired. *But* he added, this applied to a limited time after the May union meeting, because even after the leadership knew he was being fired in late June when Randy was sent a "notice of intent to terminate" they still didn't file a grievance. Randy was fired on July 28 but a grievance was not filed until August 11—*four months after Randy was pulled from work!*

Cheryl's letter tries to blame Randy and his lawyer for not filing a grievance for him: "444's Chief Steward was specifically directed by Randy and his civil attorney NOT to file a grievance until

Because of them Randy has lost everything he has worked for 23 years. It is outrageously rotten that Cheryl and her people now try to use Randy as a shield to cover their own betrayal of his case. What could be more despicable than to falsely say that Randy wanted a retraction of the article when it was their *inaction* that cost Randy his job?

Cheryl's letter claims that the 444 leadership does not agree with the "workplace violence" policy at EBMUD and challenges anybody to prove otherwise. Well in the same May 26 letter to management I mentioned above, Cheryl states: "We intend to grieve the District's so-called 'Violence in the Workplace' policy that is being used to harass and intimidate our



AFSCME Local 444 endorsed and joined in July 1993 Emeryville, California protest initiated by the Labor Black League against racist discrimination at Denny's restaurants.

further along in the legal proceedings." But it turns out that it was actually the other way around—it was the chief steward Ron Barker and Cheryl that came up with the excuse for not filing a grievance, *not* Randy's lawyer. This was revealed at the September Local 444 union meeting when a member speaking from the floor quoted from a message sent by Ron to Cheryl on May 29, a whole week after the May membership mandated that a grievance be filed on Randy's case *immediately*. In this message Ron says he was concerned about filing a grievance, because it might push the District's hand to charge Randy with something. He said he told Randy to talk with his attorney to suggest that filing a grievance now would be a bad idea.

In other words they hadn't filed a grievance from day one on Randy's case because it is AFSCME's policy to go along with "workplace violence" programs. So when the membership at the May union meeting forced them to defend Randy, starting with filing a grievance, they then came up with a reason for not doing this that they thought would appeal to Randy's lawyer! Now they brazenly say, "It was prudent to honor Randy's request."

members as well as Randy's treatment." That was four months ago and no grievance against EBMUD's "Workplace Violence" policy has ever been filed. So not only did they never file a grievance for Randy until two weeks after he was fired, but they never filed a grievance against the policy EBMUD used to fire Randy. Cheryl also said at the September union meeting that neither she nor anyone of our delegation said a word about AFSCME's support to "workplace violence" programs at the recent International convention in Hawaii. To me that says it all.

The leadership *did* oppose my July motion for strike action to defend Randy as they admit in their letter to you. Richard Mellor, who increasingly is playing the role of Cheryl's attack dog at union meetings, used almost identical language as in the letter by arguing that "the company would just laugh at such a notice from the union. The company knows the troubles the union has. We'd just get fired." This was clearly intended to let the membership know that the *leadership* did not support a work stoppage for Randy and was intended to demoralize members. In fact, one steward remarked afterward that he would have voted for my motion, but he was intimidated by the leadership's comments. In contrast to the leadership, a steward who voted for my strike motion said "Sooner or later, we must make a stand or we won't have a union... We need to stop them or no one will be safe."

This isn't the first time that Cheryl has used Richard Mellor with his reputation as a union "militant" to be her point man in arguing down proposals for strike action at union meetings. Nor are my efforts in defense of Randy Kim the first time I have played an active role in the union. For example during last year's contract negotiations I was repeatedly opposed by Mellor when I raised motions for strike action to back up our negotiations with District management.

In line with this Mellor doesn't hesitate to resort to red-baiting as a weapon against people that he doesn't agree with, which shows up in the language of this letter. He himself used to sell the paper *Labor Militant* at work (which I never thought was too smart) and he really

hates "the Sparts." So during the contract period when he and I frequently banged heads at union meetings, he would say loudly, "Hey, why aren't you selling your paper with your comrades?" implying that anyone who reads Workers Vanguard must be a member of the Spartacists. Recently he posted a xerox copy of the "Workplace Violence" article on the bulletin board at work on which he had written, "Brother Best is a supporter of the Spartacist League who publishes the paper. If you have any questions about the article perhaps Greg can answer them." This is real dirty stuff that smacks of the McCarthyite witchhunt of the 1950's when people lost their jobs because of accusations of political affiliation.

There is one of those sneaky anonymous stories in this letter that I want to respond to directly because I know it is aimed at me. The whole story of not defending Cheryl against sexual harassment from her supervisors is a total fabrication including the incident itself. It never happened and no one I work with in the shop ever heard of it. The one time she asked everybody in the shop to sign a group grievance when she was being given a hard time for union activities by a supervisor, all of us agreed but she never filed it.

Another thing: no I don't go to every meeting and neither do most members. Usually there's only about 30-40 people at meetings. Like other members I attend meetings when it looks like something important is coming up like contract negotiations or Randy's case, which is what they are really reacting to here. But in this letter they seem to be saying that only a small group of regulars has the right to make policy and say what they think. I disagree with that. The union is *all* its members and not just whatever leadership happens to be in office and its supporters. It's a big tent that should be able to include all points of view.

You should know that Cheryl and Richard are literally working overtime personally distributing their scurrilous letter all over at work, particularly to workers who were active in Randy's defense. Too bad they *never* showed this kind of energy defending Randy. To make matters worse Cheryl is telling people in both locals that Randy "doesn't really want his job back." It's really disgusting. Copies of their letter were even being publicly distributed last weekend at a prison reform conference up in Berkeley, even before I had received it. I thought this was pretty far out!

I wanted to let you know that the negative opinions expressed in their letter do not, in my experience, represent the feelings of most of the people here. I actually think it's an embarrassment to our union. Not that everyone agrees with everything in Workers Vanguard, but a lot of our members really liked what you said about Randy Kim's case and workplace violence. One co-worker said it was the best thing he's ever read on the subject.

I think who they are really angry with are the union membership in both locals who turned out to force the union officers they had elected to defend a well respected union brother who was blatantly victimized by management. But since they can't attack the membership and get away with it, they are lashing out at Workers Vanguard and people like me who took some initiative to defend the union.

Gregg Best

cc: AFSCME 444
Randy Kim

WV Replies:

The letter from AFSCME Local 444 president Cheryl Zuur demands "a written retraction of the falsehoods" in our article "'Workplace Violence' Witchhunt Targets Unions, Minorities." We thank Brother Best for setting the record straight on Zuur's false allegations. There are times when WV articles have contained wrong or inaccurate statements. We always welcome and publish letters of correction. But as Gregg Best's letter makes devastatingly clear, what Zuur

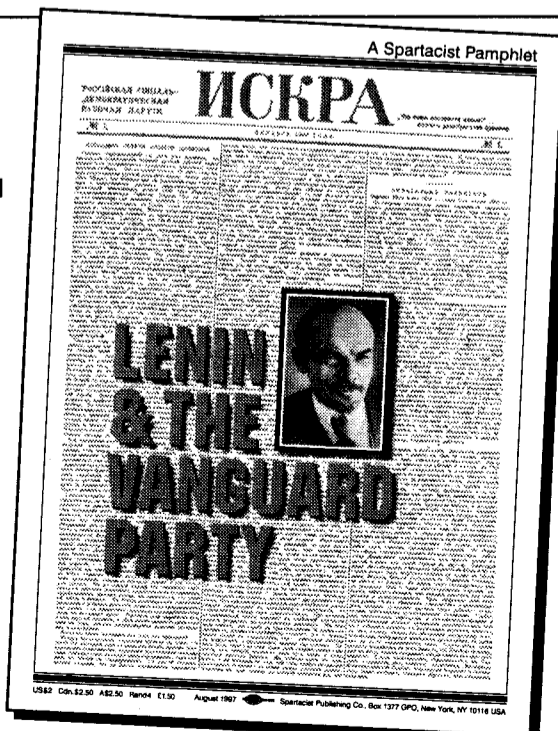
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objects to is not the facts presented in our article about the company's victimization of Randy Kim, but our political characterizations and conclusions.

Behind the not-so-subtle anti-communist innuendo of Zuur's letter is another political agenda with its own factional purpose. Indeed, we first received a copy of this letter on September 26—not by mail, but at a conference on the "Prison Industrial Complex" at UC Berkeley, where it was handed out to people around a Spartacist League literature table. It was distributed not by a Local 444 member but rather by a political co-thinker of local vice president Richard Mellor. Both are active with the Labor Party group, an electoral shill for the Democratic Party.

Mellor and Zuur are, of course, entitled to their own political views, and we would defend them against any victimization by the company or red-baiting attacks by the higher echelons of the union bureaucracy. But they should not try to present their particular politics and animus toward the Spartacist League—which they maintained long before they occupied their current union positions—as representing the union as a whole.

"Workplace Violence": A New Union-Busting Tool

Our article on the "workplace violence" campaign by the employers and the capitalist state demonstrated how these programs are intended to gut the fundamental purpose of the unions—the defense of the workers against the bosses. Like the "war on drugs" which is used to victimize labor militants and minorities, "workplace violence" programs are aimed at criminalizing workers who stand up for their rights against the employers. That the top leadership of the American trade unions has embraced this deadly campaign—participating in joint committees with management and gutting contractual protections against company discipline—is another example of how the labor misleaders betray the interests of the working class in service to the capitalist exploiters.

In her letter, Zuur challenges us to "provide any concrete evidence whatsoever" that the Local 444 leadership "support or agree with the 'workplace violence' policy at EBMUD." The AFSCME International leadership avidly supports these programs, which have been in place at EBMUD since 1996. If the current Local 444 leadership doesn't support such policies, then Zuur should provide the concrete evidence of where she has ever opposed them. The *only* objection by the Local 444 executive board has been to complain, as Zuur does in her letter to WV, that the union was "excluded from the process of establishing this workplace violence policy." Why would the local leadership want to be included in a "process" they claim not to support?

A central political point of our article was to drive home the understanding that if the unions are to be instruments for the defense of the workers against the employers, they must stand completely independent of the capitalists, their state



Socialist Organiser

AFSCME Local 444 contributed to PDC campaign of solidarity with 1984-85 British miners strike, which raised over \$20,000 from trade unions and individuals internationally.

and political parties, and all agencies of the bourgeoisie. Complaining that we took the AFSCME 444 leadership to task for sowing illusions in the company's Board of Directors, Zuur protests: "We have no illusions in EBMUD's Board of Directors." But in the very next breath she gives the game away, describing the members of the board as "politicians...susceptible to pressure."

The idea that instruments of the capitalist rulers and their political parties—especially the Democratic Party, which is supported by the union leadership—can be pressured to take up the defense of the unions is a defining feature of the worldview of the AFL-CIO bureaucracy. This outlook is rooted in the material privileges that the labor bureaucrats derive for their services as the political agents for the bosses in shackling the unions to the interests of American capitalism. While Zuur & Co. hardly have such perquisites of office, they, too, oppose the militant class-struggle tactics which built the unions and are necessary to win any battles against the employers. The labor tops instead seek to channel any anger and combativity by the union ranks into pressuring company stockholders or pleading with other agencies of the bosses for redress.

Zuur protests our observation that she and the union's chief steward allowed themselves to be searched as if they were terrorists—without a peep of protest—at Kim's termination hearing. This meek submission to being frisked for weapons only served to lend credence to the bourgeoisie's outrageous slanders of not only Randy Kim but *all* union activists as "violent." The hearing was held at the offices of Investigative & Protective Services of America. This private outfit specializes in "workplace violence" cases and "hostile terminations," and its ex-cop executives brag about their role in persecuting the Black Panther Party. The very location of this meeting was itself an extension of the union-busting "workplace violence" policy of EBMUD.

As Marxists, we understand that the capitalist state is the executive committee of the ruling class, composed at its core of bodies of armed men—cops, prison guards, courts, the army—who serve to

defend the system of exploitation based on the private ownership of the means of production. This state cannot be reformed to serve the interests of the working class. But the AFSCME International leadership believes otherwise, seeing the cops as "workers," and has organized *over 100,000 prison guards* into the union. As revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky wrote, "The worker who becomes a policeman in the service of the capitalist state, is a bourgeois cop, not a worker."

WV's "workplace violence" article prominently featured our demand "Cops and prison guards out of the unions!" In her letter, Zuur is mum on this question. But her ally on the local executive board, Richard Mellor, lamented in his *AFSCME Activist* "opposition" newsletter (July-September 1995) that the "union movement is weakened" by efforts of "correctional officers" in New York to leave AFSCME. Here he also ran a report sympathetic to prison guards in the South who were subjected to tiny doses of the same deadly pepper spray they routinely and massively use on prisoners!

Black Rights and Union Rights

Zuur's letter to WV complains that people she labels as our "supporters" in the workplace have never "done anything to strengthen the union in its direct battle with the employer." The authors condescendingly write, "Normally we would not waste our time responding to an article in a paper such as yours." In fact, what has them squealing like stuck pigs is that members of the union, supported and publicized by our paper, *fought* to strengthen the union through class-struggle defense of Randy Kim against the "workplace violence" witch-hunt. Zuur's innuendos attempting to link union militants to the Spartacist League as "supporters" of WV are intended to portray efforts to defend Randy Kim as some kind of "communist plot."

Zuur sneeringly dismisses as "opportunist" attempts to "seek money and/or other types of support for some cause which your paper is taking up." What is Zuur referring to here? That Local 444 has contributed to the legal defense efforts and joined in labor-centered actions initiated by the Partisan Defense

Committee for black death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal? That union members joined in the fight that finally freed former Black Panther Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt) from the prison hellhole in which he'd been confined for 27 years? That the union banner was proudly carried at a 1993 protest in Emeryville initiated by the Labor Black League protesting Jim Crow discrimination at Denny's restaurants? That the local contributed to the 1985 PDC campaign to raise funds for striking British miners and their families during their hard-fought class battle against the Thatcher government? That the local endorsed the November 1988 Philadelphia labor/black mobilization initiated by the PDC against the KKK and Nazi skinheads?

Being a newly elected president of Local 444, Zuur may not be aware of the long and honorable history of her union's efforts going back some 15 years on behalf of causes and cases in the interests of all workers and the oppressed. We are proud of this history of joint efforts, and Local 444 members should also rightly be proud of their role in these campaigns.

It is precisely through such support to broader political questions of fighting racism and government repression that the unions will become organs of class struggle against the capitalist system. Our perspective is to win union militants to our program and purpose of building a revolutionary leadership of the labor movement. The defense of class-war prisoners, the fight for labor/black mobilizations against fascist terror, opposition to any and every manifestation of racist discrimination are crucial to overcoming the racial divisions fostered by the capitalist rulers. That Zuur spits on such a perspective as "opportunist" and irrelevant to the "direct battle with the employer" reflects her view that working people are incapable of dealing with broader political questions and expresses the divide that separates our perspective of the revolutionary emancipation of labor from the chains of capitalist exploitation from those whose program is defined by the parameters set by the capitalist rulers. As we wrote in concluding our "workplace violence" article:

"To rally behind it the forces to sweep away the capitalist enemy, the working class must champion the cause of all the oppressed. The lieutenants of capital who sabotage labor from within must be ousted and replaced with a class-struggle leadership of the unions—Break from the Democrats and Republicans! The key to victory lies in forging a multiracial revolutionary workers party to fight for a workers government, which will take society's productive forces out of the hands of the bourgeoisie and consign the exploitation, oppression and violence inherent in capitalism to the scrapheap of history."

We again urge our readers to send a contribution, as the PDC has done, to Randy Kim's ongoing legal defense fund: Randy K. Kim Solidarity Fund, c/o Alan A. Dressler, Attorney-at-law, 633 Battery Street, Suite 635, San Francisco, CA 94111. ■

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The Holocaust, "Collective Guilt" and German Imperialism

We reprint below the second part of an article, originally published in the German-language edition of Spartacist (No. 20, Summer 1998), dealing with the controversy touched off by Daniel Goldhagen's Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust (Vintage Books, 1997) and a recent polemic against Goldhagen by Norman G. Finkelstein and Ruth Bettina Birn titled A Nation on Trial: The Goldhagen Thesis and Historical Truth (Henry Holt & Co., 1998). Part One appeared in WV No. 697 (25 September).

SPARTACIST

The onset of the Great Depression in 1929 provoked a deepening class polarization in Germany. The Nazis became the second-largest party in the Reichstag in 1930 and the largest in 1932. The German Communist Party (KPD) also registered a dramatic increase in electoral support, a reflection of its growing strength on the streets and in the factories. As the country approached a situation of virtual civil war, with daily street battles between Nazi stormtroopers and KPD defense guards, the bourgeoisie installed a series of makeshift bonapartist regimes, while increasingly throwing its weight behind Hitler. The bourgeoisie could not continue to rule in the old way. The only real

PART TWO

alternatives were workers revolution or the fascists' "radical" solution to economic chaos and social disorder: militarization of the economy, smashing of the workers organizations, and preparation for another world war. The proletarian leadership was not ready to impose its class solution to the crisis, but the bourgeoisie did not hesitate to impose theirs.

The German bourgeoisie handed power to Hitler in pursuit of its fundamental aims, without any special attachment to the Nazis' demented plan to annihilate the Jews. Hitlerism was a *bonapartist* instrument (i.e., with a certain freedom to act independently of the immediate wishes of particular elements of the capitalist class, which remained the real masters). Such an instrument was needed to militarize society across the board and smash the organized workers. Neither the anachronistic, aristocratic militarism of the Kaiser nor the trappings of "Weimar democracy" could any longer bring "order" to the crisis conditions of Germany between the two world wars.

Thus, while the bourgeoisie eagerly accepted the Nazis as an instrument to save its class rule, the rulers and their instrument were not identical. With its base in the lower middle classes and the

lumpenproletariat, the Nazi movement's ideology and especially its virulently racist anti-Semitism reflected the tortured past of the "lower orders," especially the peasantry. The Jews occupied a permanent place in the peasants' demonology after the Thirty Years War (1618-1648), when Central Europe was engulfed in a condition of general war: a third of the population died, either slaughtered at the hands of mercenary armies ravaging the land or killed by war-induced famine and disease. The role of the Jews as speculators (the *Kornjuden*) during these years of devastation and starvation was deeply etched in the consciousness of the peasantry, which endured unimaginable suffering.



Landesbildstelle, Berlin
"Red Front" militia of Stalinized KPD in early 1930s; Trotskyist newspaper, 1932. Left Opposition fought to win KPD to perspective of workers united front to smash Hitler's Nazis as part of fight for socialist revolution.

This heritage made the Jews a natural scapegoat in Germany and a lightning rod for the Nazis' virulent German nationalism. The Jews had a unique utility for this purpose because of the poisoned and explosive historically derived regional/religious division of Germany between the Protestant North and the Catholic areas. The national unification of Germany came very late and was not a settled question. Separatist currents persisted even into the 20th century, e.g. in Bavaria (and Konrad Adenauer, who headed the post-WWII CDU regime, began his political career in the 1920s in the French-backed Catholic Rhineland

separatist movement). The German bourgeoisie, having already missed out on the division of the world among the other European imperialist powers which were strong nation-states when Germany was not, needed a centralized strong state. The Jews were a wonderfully convenient internal enemy, being neither Protestant nor Catholic.

Trotsky and the Struggle Against Fascism in Germany

In "Germany, the Key to the International Situation" (November 1931), Trotsky warned:

"The moment has come when the prerevolutionary situation must be transformed into the revolutionary—or the counter-

the Social Democracy for the strength of fascism; (b) the absolute irreconcilability between fascism and those workers organizations on which the Social Democracy itself depends."

In the social crisis then racking Germany, the Nazis represented an *immediate* mortal threat to the workers movement, which included those millions of workers organized in the SPD and the SPD-led trade unions. Trotsky explained:

"At the moment that the 'normal' police and military resources of the bourgeois dictatorship, together with their parliamentary screens, no longer suffice to hold society in a state of equilibrium—the turn of the fascist regime arrives. Through the fascist agency, capitalism sets in motion the masses of the crazed petty bourgeoisie, and bands of the declassed and demoralized lumpenproletariat; all the countless human beings whom finance capital itself has brought to desperation and frenzy."

In article after article, Trotsky urged the KPD to force the SPD into a *united front*—under the watchword "March separately, strike together!"—to stop the Nazis, using this also to break the Social Democratic workers from their misleaders and lead them in a struggle for proletarian power. He warned:

"It is the duty of the Left Opposition to give the alarm: the leadership of the Comintern is driving the German proletariat toward an enormous catastrophe, the essence of which is a panicky capitulation before fascism!"

The alarm went unheeded. "The Moscow leadership has not only proclaimed as infallible the policy which guaranteed victory to Hitler, but has also prohibited all discussion of what had occurred," wrote Trotsky in July 1933 ("It Is Necessary to Build Communist Parties and an International Anew"). "An organization which was not roused by the thunder of fascism and which submits docilely to such outrageous acts of the bureaucracy demonstrates thereby that it is dead and that nothing can ever revive it." The Left Opposition proceeded to the task of building a new Bolshevik party in Germany and a new, Fourth International.

As Trotsky had foreseen, the Third Reich immediately extirpated the workers organizations which had been built up over a half century of struggle, their leaders forced into exile, their best militants assassinated or thrown into Dachau and other concentration camps. (This is what Goldhagen describes as "by and large" a "consensual," "peaceful revolution willingly acquiesced to by the German people.") Thus was the road paved for the

revolutionary. On the direction in which the solution of the German crisis develops will depend not only the fate of Germany herself (and that is already a great deal), but also the fate of Europe, the destiny of the entire world, for many years to come."

This outcome, in turn, hinged on the question of revolutionary leadership—an authentically communist party to lead the proletariat in crushing the fascist menace and seizing power in its own name.

Notwithstanding years of Stalinist degeneration, the KPD retained the support of millions of revolutionary-minded workers. As part of their struggle to oust the nationalist Stalin regime and return the Soviet Union and the Communist International to the path of Bolshevik internationalism, Trotsky and the Left Opposition fought to break the KPD from its centrist "third period" zigzagging between criminal passivity and sectarian adventurism. As part of downplaying the Hitlerite menace, the KPD baptized the Social Democratic Party (SPD) as "social-fascist." In his January 1932 article "What Next?"—which was distributed in the tens of thousands by the German Left Opposition—Trotsky argued:

"In its present phase, German Communism in its struggle against the Social Democracy must lean on two separate facts: (a) the political responsibility of

Brian Hendler



Feanny/SABA



Daniel Goldhagen (far left), Norman Finkelstein

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mass extermination of the Jews and other minorities and the coming inter-imperialist slaughter. In "What Is National Socialism?" (November 1933), Trotsky wrote: "The compulsory concentration of all forces and resources of the people in the interests of imperialism—the true historic mission of the fascist dictatorship—means preparation for war."

The destruction of the domestic workers movement went hand in hand with the German bourgeoisie's drive to destroy the first workers state. Already in 1919, the same *Freikorps* gangs which were drowning the revolutionary German workers in blood were also rampaging through the Baltics to "defend the Fatherland from Russian Bolshevism" (quoted in Richard M. Watt, *The Kings Depart* [1968]). Under the banner of a crusade against "Jew Bolshevism," the Nazi regime prepared for war against the Soviet Union. Operation Barbarossa, the June 1941 onslaught against the USSR, also marked the beginning of the Nazi genocide, the horrendous "final solution of the Jewish question."

Meanwhile, Stalin had gone from one "panicky capitulation" to another—pleading for an alliance with the (no less anti-Soviet) "democratic" imperialists, killing off the core of the Red Army command structure on the eve of war, placing blind faith in Hitler's assurances of a "non-aggression" pact. Following the 1939 Hitler-Stalin pact, anti-fascist novels were removed from Soviet libraries and the very word "fascism" was expunged from the Soviet press. So thoroughgoing was Stalin's faith in Hitler's word that he rejected Soviet intelligence reports of the Nazis' impending invasion. Even after the invasion in June 1941, the self-anointed "commander in chief" paralyzed Soviet defenses for several critical weeks. It took four bloody years, at a cost of some 26 million Soviet lives, for the Red Army and the Soviet people to defeat the Nazi scourge and rescue what remained of European Jewry. And it was the Red Army that broke the back of the Nazi-led Wehrmacht, which suffered 80 percent of its casualties on the Eastern Front. The D-Day invasion of Europe by the Allied forces had less to do with mopping up the remnants of the German army than with racing the advancing Red Army to Berlin and restabilizing capitalist rule in West Europe.

Goldhagen, Zionism and German Revanchism

Today, capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union and the East European bureaucratically deformed workers states has brought a return to immiseration and pogromism for working people and national minorities in those countries. It has also led to an enormous escalation in attacks on the workers of West Europe, including deportations and intensified racist terror against immigrants and workers of Turkish, Kurdish and North African origin. Facing growing competition from their imperialist rivals, the bourgeoisies slash away at the social welfare programs granted at the end of World War II to head off the spectre of red revolution and seek to salvage their anarchic profit system by qualitatively lowering the workers' living standards.

Emboldened by "official" state racism, the fascists—the spearhead of bourgeois reaction—are growing apace as they feed off the frustrations of large numbers of unemployed youth and channel this into bloody atrocities against ethnic and national minorities. Capitalist annexation of East Germany ushered in a rising tide of murderous assaults on immigrants and asylum seekers, arson attacks on Turkish and Kurdish families and outright pogroms, like the days-long siege and firebombing of a Vietnamese refugee hostel in Rostock by hundreds of Nazis in August 1992. In the last election the fascists rolled up 13 percent of the vote in Saxony-Anhalt in the wake of the Fourth Reich's vindictive devastation of industry in the East. Meanwhile, the social-chauvinist—i.e., social-democratic and ex-Stalinist—misleaders ape the fas-

cists in seeking to scapegoat immigrants and "foreign" workers for the ravages inflicted by the capitalist system. The DGB trade-union federation tops' call for quotas for immigrants echoes the Nazis' slogan "Jobs for Germans first!"

Once again anti-Semitism is a handmaiden of imperialist reaction and resurgent national chauvinism. The fascists who carry out bloody attacks against dark-skinned people also deface Jewish cemeteries and set fire to synagogues, as in Lübeck in 1994 and 1995. In May 1997, the cops themselves invaded a synagogue in Halle, smashing windows and breaking down doors. Several months earlier, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, conservative organ of the big bourgeoisie, had written of Britain's then-foreign secretary as "the Jew Rifkind." An exhibit last year of the Wehrmacht's role in the Holocaust provoked a furor, as did a few years earlier the film *Nasty Girl*, based on a true account of a high school student who tried to explore the history of her town under the Third Reich.

Naturally, the initial reaction to Goldhagen's book even among "respectable" bourgeois voices in Germany was a vile chauvinist and anti-Semitic uproar. The arrogant Junker's daughter Gräfin Donhoff warned in *Die Zeit* (6 September 1996) that the book "could bring back" anti-Semitism, rehashing the racist lie that Jews brought persecution on themselves. Under a scurrilous headline, "The



Roma (Gypsy) prisoners at Belzec concentration camp. Nazis murdered as many as half million Roma in Holocaust.

Sociologist as Executioner," Rudolph Augstein railed in *Der Spiegel* (15 April 1996): "The debate over whether Auschwitz was a unique atrocity has already been settled and cannot be rolled out anew every year." This "liberal" publisher of Germany's most prominent newsweekly has his own reasons to "forget" the past: he began his journalistic career in 1942 at the Nazi *Völkische Beobachter*, and for years after its founding in 1946 by British occupation forces, the pro-SPD *Spiegel* was a haven for "former" SS killers.

Yet only months after being denounced in the German press, Goldhagen was being fêted by much of the country's intellectual elite. At one of these gatherings, Social Democratic darling Wolfgang Wippermann enthused, "Goldhagen has done our country, and our culture, a great service" (*New York Times Maga-*

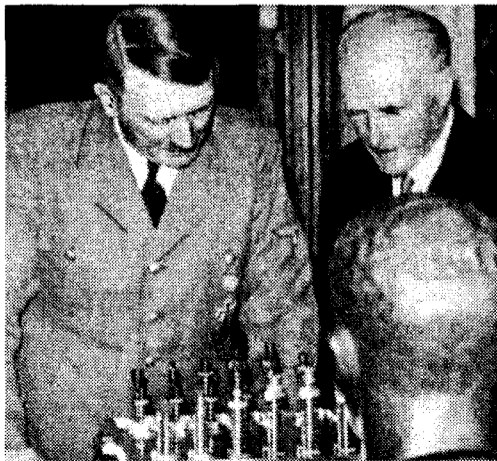
zine, 26 January 1997). These ideologues for the Fourth Reich realized that Goldhagen was, after all, "good for the Germans." His warm welcome by Germany's ruling circles was, suggested Volker Ullrich, an editor at *Die Zeit*, the result of "Goldhagen's firm confidence in the democratic capacity of the Germans to learn." Indeed, Goldhagen's anti-German vitriol notwithstanding, he extends a clean bill of health to "democratic" German imperialism, noting in his foreword to the German edition: "In the Federal Republic of Germany, the political culture and most individual Germans

have become genuinely democratic. Also, its antisemitic component has diminished enormously." His triumphal tour of Germany was itself "one more indication of how Germany has changed," Goldhagen told the *Jerusalem Post* (6 December 1997).

Goldhagen attributes this transformation largely to the "re-education" carried out under the postwar occupation by the imperialist Allies. In fact, that episode clearly demonstrated that *the bourgeoisie which perpetrated the Holocaust continues to rule Germany today*. Only in Soviet-occupied territory was any real justice meted out to the Nazi mass murderers.

By January 1951, every German industrialist who had been imprisoned for war crimes was free under a general clemency ordered by U.S. High Commissioner John J. McCloy (see Robert

Hitler with Gustav Krupp; heads of Daimler-Benz and Siemens (far right). German industrialists supported Nazis, were "rehabilitated" under postwar U.S. occupation.



Kohl and Reagan honor Nazi SS war criminals at Bitburg, 1985.

Wistrich, *Who's Who in Nazi Germany* [1984]). Steel magnate Friedrich Flick, who worked tens of thousands of Jewish slave laborers to death, was given back control of Daimler-Benz and the other companies in his enormous industrial empire. The same was true for munitions manufacturer Alfred Krupp, who killed up to 80,000 slave laborers, while his "super Nazi" father Gustav was not even imprisoned. Nor were thousands of "minor" Nazis, like Gestapo founder Rudolf Diels, who assumed a high-ranking position in the Interior Ministry after the war.

In Goldhagen's blinkered vision, it doesn't matter that today's "democratic" Germany is a nightmare of oppression and cop and fascist terror for millions of dark-skinned immigrants and asylum seekers. This Zionist doesn't "notice" because today's "Jews" are Turks and Kurds: German citizenship is determined by "blood," not birthplace, being denied even to people born in Germany, as well as those who have lived and worked here for years. In his book, Goldhagen barely even mentions the Nazi genocide of up to a half million Roma (Gypsies)—a people which suffered proportionately higher casualties in the Holocaust than even the Jews—and the slaughter of millions of Slavs and Communists.

The Zionist proponent of German "collective guilt" thus lends his imprimatur to the ideological rearmament of the Fourth Reich. The Goldhagen debate has been compared with the so-called *Historikerstreit*, when Third Reich apologists like historian Ernst Nolte sought to "relativize" the Holocaust and to excuse Hitler's "excesses" in the greater interest of the "crusade against Bolshevism." The aim was to fuel a revival of German "patriotism." But this aim is shared by right-wing apologists for Hitler *and* by the more farsighted spokesmen willing to mouth regrets for the past to clear away an obstacle to Germany's revanchist imperialist appetites of the future. Historian Robert Wistrich observed: "Central to [Chancellor Helmut Kohl's] vision has been the desire to 'normalize' Germany's past and to legitimize a robust, healthy patriotism as the basis for a positive German identity.... [Germans today] want to feel pride in being German, to enjoy their history without guilt, and (more dubiously) to draw a definitive line (*Schlussstrich*) over the Nazi past" (*London Times Literary Supplement*, 7 June 1996). It is for helping to draw that *Schlussstrich* for the

continued on page 8

Der Spiegel photos



Holocaust...

(continued from page 7)

bourgeoisie of Auschwitz that Goldhagen was awarded the "Democracy Prize."

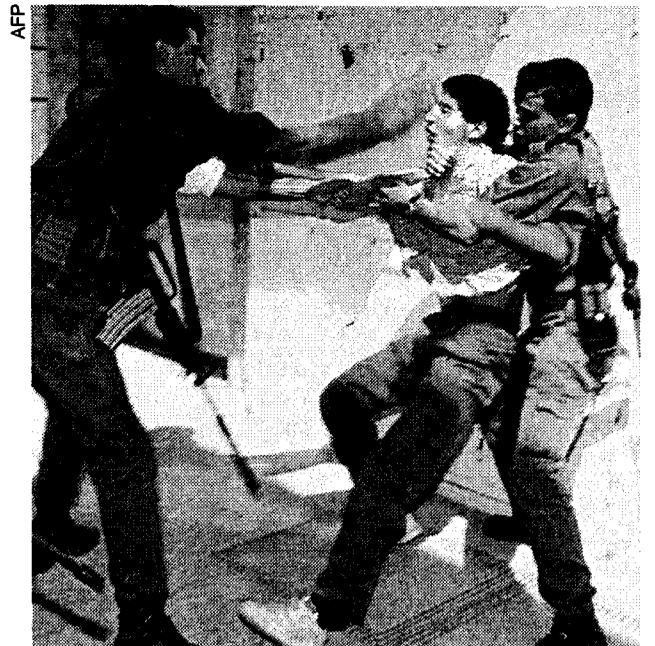
Zionist Book-Banners Up in Arms

While denying that he subscribes to any such notion, Goldhagen promotes a crystalline expression of the "collective guilt" line which is common coin among Zionists and postwar German liberals. Stripped of its Harvardian "sociologese," his argument is astoundingly trite: "ordinary Germans" killed Jews because they hated Jews and wanted to see them dead. Per Goldhagen, the police and other "willing executioners" who staffed the Nazis' apparatus of mass murder were representative of a population which in its overwhelming mass welcomed Hitler and the Holocaust because the German people, uniquely, had been imbued over the centuries with a virulently "eliminationist" form of anti-Semitism. In short, he writes, "No Germans, no Holocaust." Actually this line goes right back to Allied war propaganda, which sought to justify the mass terror bombing of German civilians with the assertion that all Germans supported Hitler. British and American forces achieved massive civilian slaughter by attacking German cities like Dresden with successive waves of bombers, which dropped first high explosives, then incendiary bombs, then time-delayed bombs to kill the firemen. In the mouths of the Allied war criminals, the dead were all "Nazis."

Goldhagen's is truly a "Holocaust study" for the "death of communism" era. In a book of 600-plus pages which



Theodore Herzl with Kaiser Wilhelm II in Palestine in 1898. Zionists sought imperialist patronage for a "Jewish state" created through expulsion of Arabs. Right: Israeli police terrorize Palestinian.



German workers movement in opposing anti-Semitic bigotry, points to the Nazi "anti-Bolshevik crusade" ignored by Goldhagen, and dismisses the notion that the German people before World War II were a seamlessly reactionary mass thirsting to exterminate the Jews, arguing that Hitler had to repeatedly tone down his anti-Semitic diatribes in order to gain electoral support.

Finkelstein also punctures Goldhagen's metaphysical claim that German racism against the Jews was historically unique in its virulence, pointedly referring, among other examples, to Jim Crow racism against blacks in the U.S. and the vile anti-Japanese chauvinism which accompanied the 1941-45 Pacific War. Finkelstein's co-author, Birn, who is the chief historian for the Canadian Department of Justice "war crimes" division, notes in

Goldhagen and his crowd are hardly up in arms simply because, as *Newsweek* (23 March) implied, Finkelstein systematically took apart "his use of scholarly sources." Finkelstein did something far worse in their eyes: his book addressed how these apologists for Israeli anti-Arab terror cynically use the Holocaust for their own purposes. He pointed to the logic motivating Goldhagen:

"At all times and for no reason, Gentiles harbor homicidal anti-Jewish animus, while Jews always enjoy a priori moral impunity. That ahistorical conception is of evident utility to those who maintain that all critiques of Zionism are simply disguised forms of anti-Semitism. The Jewish state is accordingly immunized from legitimate censure of its policies: all criticism is and must be motivated by fanatical anti-Semitism."

What undoubtedly envenoms the Zionists against Finkelstein, who has written two earlier books exposing Israel's drive for *Lebensraum* against the Palestinians, is that they can't simply denounce this son of Nazi concentration camp survivors as an "anti-Semite."

Communism and the Jewish Question

The Zionists' affinity for German imperialism is based both on *Realpolitik* and a shared ideological outlook. Theodore Herzl and the other founding fathers of the Zionist movement borrowed heavily from the "Blut-und-Boden" (blood-and-soil) ideological arsenal of rising German imperialism at the turn of the century. In pursuit of their reactionary project of carving an exclusivist "Jewish state" out of the living body of the Palestinian Arab people, the Zionists sought the patronage of one or another great power—looking to British imperialism, Russian tsarism and even Hitler's Third Reich (see "Revolution, Counterrevolution and the Jewish Question," *Spartacist* [English Edition] No. 49-50, Winter 1993-94).

Among the numerous instances of collaboration between the Zionists and the Nazis was the infamous "Transfer Agreement" of the 1930s whereby German Jewish capital was funneled to Palestine. The fascist Lehi group, then headed by future Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Sha-

mir, explicitly espoused a "commonality of interests...between the aims of the New Order in Europe according to the German approach and the true national aspirations of the Jewish people." Before they went on to slaughter every Jew they could get their hands on, the Nazis, too, acknowledged a "commonality of interests," allowing the Zionists to function openly in Germany as late as 1938.

The Zionists' fascination with German fascism flowed from their own aims. Seeking to cohere a nation in an epoch when nationalism had outlived any progressive content, Zionism—whether bourgeois, "Laborite" or even "socialist"—was necessarily hostile to rationalism, internationalism and communism.

It was only through the destruction of the German workers movement that Hitler was able to embark on his horrendous "final solution." And it was only as a result of the Holocaust, which destroyed root and branch the once-vibrant pro-socialist Jewish workers movement in East Europe, that the Zionists were able to achieve their aim in the creation of the Israeli capitalist state. Zionist collaboration with German imperialism has continued to this day: Germany was instrumental in helping Israel build its nuclear arsenal. It was for exposing the scale of this arsenal that courageous Israeli nuclear technician Mordechai Vanunu was vindictively sentenced to 18 years in a maximum-security Israeli dungeon. The ICL demands: Freedom now for Vanunu!

Far from resolving the Jewish question, Israel is a semi-theocratic deathtrap for the Jewish people as well as a slaughterhouse for the oppressed Palestinians. The "eliminationist mindset" which Goldhagen uniquely ascribes to prewar Germany is today palpable among Israel's capitalist rulers, in whose eyes Palestinians and all Arabs are *Untermenschen*. As proletarian internationalists who fight for a socialist federation of the Near East, in which the national rights of the Palestinian Arab, Hebrew-speaking and other peoples will be upheld, we say: Defend the Palestinian people—Israel out of the Occupied Territories!

[TO BE CONTINUED]



Spartakist protest against 1990 German ban on Soviet Jewish immigration, held at Berlin memorial to Herbert Baum, Jewish Communist murdered by the Nazis.

purports to explain the Nazis' rise to power, Goldhagen says nothing of the class conflicts which were tearing at the fabric of German capitalist society and barely notes the existence of mass Social Democratic and Communist parties. (Even the London *Economist* [27 April 1996], that mouthpiece for British finance capital, was constrained to comment that Goldhagen neglects "the class fractures of German society...in favour of a mysterious German-ness," aptly headlining its review: "If All Were Guilty, None Were.") Like Kaiser Wilhelm at the outbreak of World War I, Goldhagen might say: "I see no parties, I see only Germans." This is nonsense: German society was deeply *split*; the mass of the proletariat was opposed to Hitler, but they were *betrayed* by their Stalinist and Social Democratic leaders.

In his essay in *A Nation on Trial*, expanded from an article in *New Left Review* (July/August 1997), Norman Finkelstein, who teaches at New York University and the City University of New York, rips apart the "academic" façade for Goldhagen's recycled "collective guilt" line, charging: "Replete with gross misrepresentations of the secondary literature and internal contradictions, Goldhagen's book is worthless as scholarship." Finkelstein documents the history of the

her essay (originally published in the Cambridge University Press *Historical Journal*) that the Baltic nationalists and others who served as accomplices to the Third Reich were often more bestial in their treatment of the Jews than their German overlords and scores Goldhagen for equating the "specific culture" of the police units he examines with German society as a whole. Indeed, the police battalions which slaughtered Jews and Communists on the Eastern Front had been trained in bloody battles against the German workers.

Goldhagen excoriated Birn for her "fallacious annihilative effort," even seizing on Britain's draconian libel laws to launch a suit against her! But it was Finkelstein's essay in particular which provoked the wrath of Goldhagen and his Zionist supporters. Anti-Defamation League head Abraham Foxman demanded that Henry Holt & Co. call off the book's publication, railing that the matter at issue is "what is 'legitimate criticism' and what goes beyond the pale"! World Jewish Congress chief Elan Steinberg called the book "garbage" and fumed that its author was "a well-known anti-Zionist," and a Canadian Jewish Congress spokesman denounced Finkelstein as "an anathema to the vast majority of Jews on this continent."

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Germany...

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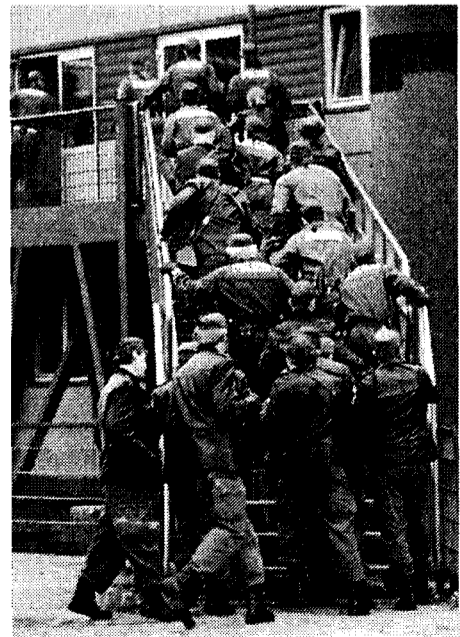
counterrevolution which eight years ago destroyed the East German (DDR) bureaucratically deformed workers state and created a reunified Fourth Reich of German imperialism. However grotesquely deformed by Stalinist misrule, the planned economy in the former DDR—based on the expropriation of capitalism—guaranteed a livelihood, free health care and education to all women and men, old and young. In order to whip up popular support for capitalist reunification, Kohl promised to make East Germany bloom. Instead the German bourgeoisie vindictively devastated industry in the East, turning the region into a wasteland, while extorting hundreds of billions from working people in the West to pay the cost of *Anschluss* (annexation).

In large parts of the former DDR, fully one in five are officially jobless while unemployment nationwide is higher than at any time since before World War II. And the official figures don't even pretend to count many youth, women, immigrants and other minorities. Finding fertile soil in the burgeoning ranks of the unemployed, the fascists have been emboldened by government attacks on immigrants and asylum seekers, leading to a chilling escalation of racist murders, pogromist firebombings and mass Nazi rallies across Germany. A week before the elections this September, some 5,000 Nazi skinheads rampaged through the eastern city of Rostock, the site of a 1992 pogrom in which a refugee hostel was firebombed.

As the Nazi gangs terrorized Rostock, the SPD city administration called out thousands of cops to "protect" the fascists and ride roughshod over anti-racist protesters. Joining with Kohl in eliminating the right of asylum for refugees in 1992, various SPD state governments in Germany have led the way in deportations, fanning the flames of racist reaction. In last year's city elections in Hamburg, the Social Democrats ran a racist "law and order" campaign against "foreign criminality" which was so virulent that the London *Independent* (22 September 1997) called it "one of the most xenophobic election campaigns conducted by the left in postwar Germany."

Similarly, the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS)—social-democratic successor to the former Stalinist ruling party in the DDR, which garnered some 20 percent of the vote in the East last week—has fostered a climate of chauvinism which feeds fascist terror. Seeking to capitalize on massive frustration and despair, the PDS appeals to "Ossi [East German] nationalism." PDS leaders have even held meetings with fascists and rail against "foreign colleagues" who work under "illegal conditions" while "every third construction worker in the East is unemployed" (*Neues Deutschland*, 30 April).

As we wrote in our article on the Hamburg elections, "Social Democrats'



Bernhard Rudolph

Racist Hamburg SPD administration ordered police assault on refugee home, March 1998.

Racist Campaign Fuels Nazi Terror" (WV No. 682, 16 January):

"To call for a vote today for either the SPD or the PDS is to betray the class interests of the proletariat and to bind it to its class enemy; it means enlisting in the campaign of racist anti-immigrant hysteria which is fueling the growth of the Nazis....

"Today the West European bourgeoisies prefer to rely on their social-democratic lackeys and the popular front to keep their stranglehold on the working masses. They cultivate the Nazis as a reserve army, i.e., as an insurance policy in case of the resurgence of a revolutionary workers movement."

The proletariat, with its strategic immigrant component, has the vital interest and social power to organize the unorganized; to fight for equal pay for equal work and jobs for all through a shorter workweek at full union-scale wages, including for women and foreign workers; to demand full citizenship rights for all immigrants and their families. Mobilizing the proletariat to achieve these demands requires the construction of a revolutionary leadership—an internationalist vanguard party—forged through *breaking* the SPD's working-class base from its racist, social-democratic misleaders, the agents



Melde Press

German troops are part of UN "peacekeeping" force in former Yugoslavia, where Nazis slaughtered more than a fifth of population in World War II.

of the bourgeoisie in the workers movement. This is what our comrades of the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany (SpAD) fight for.

SPD: Loyal Servants of German Imperialism

Schröder triumphed over Kohl amid promises of a "new awakening." But even bourgeois commentators noted that what differences existed between the CDU and SPD candidates were largely rhetorical. Schröder earned a reputation as the "bosses' comrade" for his cozy relations with the employers as head of the Lower Saxony state government. Now he is promoting an "Alliance for Jobs" bringing together government, business and trade-union representatives. The aim of this class-collaborationist scheme is to implement sharp cuts in wages and benefits. Jost Stollman, slated to be economics minister in the new regime, is a virulently anti-union former computer company magnate and Reagan/Thatcher-style "supply-sider" who openly calls for dismantling the current system of social security measures.

The SPD won support among ethnic minorities with its call for reforming the citizenship laws to bring them more in line with the other countries of the European Union (EU). But as elsewhere in the EU, this offer of token rights to a handful of immigrant residents would come with continued mass deportations and further draconian restrictions on immigration. While some 100,000 ethnic Turkish and Kurdish people born in Germany have recently been made citizens, citizenship remains primarily based on "blood right"—automatically granted to returning ethnic Germans whose families had not lived there for centuries, while denied to others who have lived and worked in Germany for up to two generations.

The proposed SPD "reform" would still impose an eight-year waiting period for citizenship. What it would mean in practice can be seen in neighboring

Hamburg protest against unemployment, which has reached highest level since before World War II.



Stecher/Visum

France, where the June 1997 parliamentary elections ushered in a class-collaborationist coalition, a popular front, headed by Lionel Jospin's Socialist Party in alliance with openly bourgeois elements. Some 140,000 "sans papiers" (undocumented immigrant workers) registered with the police for residency permits promised by the new government. Just over half were granted papers, and Jospin has since threatened to deport the rest.

mobilization against the Nazis. In the wake of the Rostock anti-immigrant provocation, SPD chairman Oskar Lafontaine announced that his party would take immediate measures against "illegal" immigrant workers. Thus the SPD/DGB tops encourage further racist attacks.

This is a criminal betrayal of the interests of the multiethnic workers movement. In the face of a proletarian challenge to its class rule, the bourgeoisie will unleash the fascist terror gangs to crush the workers movement, as it did in the early 1930s. Where the reformist and centrist left looks to pressure the racist SPD to stem the fascist menace, the SpAD fights for worker/immigrant mobilizations to smash the Nazis as part of a struggle for the proletarian seizure of state power.

Schröder's talk of a "new awakening" is in fact aimed at promoting the interests of German imperialism, particularly in the Balkans, East Europe and the former Soviet Union. With its *Ostpolitik* (Eastern policy) in the 1960s, the SPD served as the advance guard for capitalist restoration in East Germany and throughout East Europe, acting for decades as a conduit for CIA intrigues there. In 1995, with the support of the SPD, the German bourgeoisie reversed the postwar ban on military operations abroad, deploying combat troops in Bosnia as part of NATO's "peacekeeping" forces. German troops are now stationed in the former Yugoslavia, where the Nazi Wehrmacht had murdered more than a fifth of the population during World War II. Now Schröder is clamoring for NATO military strikes against Serbia. The SPD also seeks to consolidate Germany's economic domination of the EU as a trade bloc against the U.S. and Japan. Down with racist "Fortress Europe"! For a Socialist United States of Europe!

Schröder is seeking to form a coalition government with the bourgeois Green environmentalist party. Despite occasional pacifist rhetoric, the Greens have long been the spearhead for resurgent German chauvinism and the drive to assert Germany's role as a world power, particularly against the U.S. This is what is behind their nominal call for

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Meanwhile, Schröder joins with Kohl in demanding that even long-resident "immigrants" who are convicted of any criminal offense be deported immediately. Four days after the election, the SPD-Green city government in Hamburg ordered a massive "drug raid" by 300 cops on a hostel for black asylum seekers. The SpAD calls for full citizenship rights for all who have made it to Germany! Stop the deportations! For the right of asylum for all refugees from rightist terror!

The German Trade Union Federation (DGB) tops, who are linked organically to the SPD, echo the Nazi battle cry "Jobs for Germans first!" with their protectionist chauvinism. Faced with the Nazi march in Rostock last month, the DGB youth organized an SPD election rally for the same day hundreds of miles away in Frankfurt to head off any proletarian



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Labor...

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revived fighting spirit among unionized workers.

The mobilization of the proletariat in pursuit of its own class interests—and on behalf of blacks, immigrants and all the oppressed—requires a political struggle against the pro-capitalist trade-union bureaucracy. As the “labor lieutenants” of capital, the union misleaders chain workers to the U.S. ruling class through political support to the capitalist Democratic Party, championing chauvinist trade protectionism and bowing before the bourgeoisie’s anti-strike laws and “arbitration” boards.

The alternative lies in forging a new, class-struggle union leadership as part of the fight to build a multiracial workers party based on the program of socialist revolution: for a workers government to expropriate the bourgeoisie and construct an international egalitarian socialist society. Below we print in edited form excerpts from a presentation by comrade Steve Behrens on this question at a Los Angeles Spartacist League forum last month.

* * *

A few weeks ago, an SL comrade was distributing our newspaper with the headline “Capitalist Rulers Rattled by GM Strike” (WV No. 694, 31 July) to a UPS workforce in New Jersey when a young worker came up and asked, “Do you think we started all of this?” In an immediate sense, the nearly 200,000-strong Teamsters strike last year signaled a modest but real turn in the class struggle in the U.S. We have embarked upon a period which poses increasing social struggles between the two primary classes in society: the bourgeoisie—the property-owning class—and the working class, whose interests are directly counterposed to those of the bosses.

While the economic gains of the UPS strike were modest, it broke a string of

victories for the bosses particularly since the watershed smashing of the PATCO air traffic controllers union by the government in 1981. It was a hugely popular strike that generated a widespread recognition of the power of the organized, multiracial working class. Working people profoundly identified with the UPS workers’ struggle against part-time work and two-tiered wages, which have become standard weapons of the bosses to drive down labor costs.

Then last summer, workers at Flint GM shut down the North American operations of the world’s largest manufacturing company. This was the costliest strike ever suffered by American capitalism, with losses of \$12 billion in sales and \$3 billion in profits. It showed the ability of labor to bring the profit-making mechanisms of capitalism to a grinding halt. But it also showed the pernicious role of the labor bureaucrats, who derail class struggle in service to their capitalist masters. The UAW tops’ voluntary acquiescence to government arbitration—a crucial tool of the bourgeoisie designed to demobilize union power—led quickly to the end of the strike, as the union bureaucrats feared an unfavorable ruling from the federal arbitrator.

The labor bureaucrats’ affinity for binding arbitration directly reflects the deadly illusions they foster in the capitalist state. Far from being somehow a “neutral” body, the bourgeois state is the “executive committee” of the capitalists, whose purpose is to enforce and maintain their rule. When class battles erupt, the state has an arsenal of weapons to use on behalf of its class—from court injunctions to anti-labor legislation to the deployment of its strikebreaking cops.

But the working class has its own weapons, the kind of class-struggle tactics which can bring the capitalists to their knees: sit-down strikes, solidarity strikes and secondary labor boycotts. To employ these methods poses a break with the class collaborationism of the labor bureaucracy which hogties workers to the Democratic Party and the bosses’

rules. We stand for the total and unconditional independence of the working class from the bourgeoisie, its state and its political parties. The proletariat must have its own party that fights on behalf of all the oppressed and brings to the working class the understanding that only by establishing its own class rule can the system of capitalist exploitation be ended once and for all.

In Russia in 1917, the Bolshevik Party of V.I. Lenin and L.D. Trotsky led the working class to state power and created a society where those who labored ruled—the dictatorship of the proletariat. The destruction in 1991-92 of the Soviet workers state, undermined by decades of Stalinist misrule, was a historic defeat for the international working class and has set back class consciousness, not uniformly, but in an overall sense.

Nevertheless, the imperialist chorus which yesterday was singing “Happy Days Are Here Again” has today changed its tune as the Asian economic crisis threatens to trigger a worldwide depression. Such economic crises are endemic to capitalism, and with them necessarily comes the drive by the capitalists to enormously intensify the exploitation of labor in order to sustain their share of an ever-falling rate of profit. This inevitably provokes resistance by the working class. The important strikes over the past year or so, both here and abroad—a two-day general strike in Puerto Rico against the privatization of the telephone company, plant occupations by workers in South Korea fighting IMF austerity—belie the bourgeoisie’s smug assertion of capitalist stability and provide real opportunities for us as communists to forge a party which is revolutionary, internationalist and proletarian.

Against Chauvinist Economic Protectionism

The demise of the Soviet Union has also changed relations among the main imperialist powers—the United States, Japan and Germany—which are no longer linked by a common bond of class

hatred for the USSR. Now the antagonisms among them are coming to the fore. At a time when all the world’s markets are spoken for, any new market acquisition will come at the expense of an imperialist competitor. This has led to heightened tensions and the spectre of interimperialist war, this time with nuclear capacity from the start. The U.S. rulers continue to wield their military muscle around the world as a warning against the semicolonial peoples as well as America’s imperialist rivals, seen most recently in the bloody terror bombing of Afghanistan and the Sudan.

In a confrontation last fall over an ongoing trade dispute, the U.S. government ordered the Coast Guard to seize Japanese cargo ships in American ports. While an agreement was reached, such a seizure would have been an act of war. The threatened embargo of Japanese shipping was the first since the American/British/Dutch embargo in 1941 which cut off vital oil shipments to Japan. This in turn led to the Second World War in the Pacific, which ended with the incineration of some 200,000 people through the A-bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the bloody U.S. imperialists. The latest confrontation was a less-than-subtle message to the Japanese; the bourgeoisie has a memory, too.

Proletarian internationalism is critical at a time when the ruling class is fanning the flames of national chauvinism and, through the trade-union misleaders, bringing this poison into the working class. I’m sure that people in this room have seen the bumper sticker I saw the other day. It said, “Proud to be Union” and below it, “Do not display on an import.” It is not a big step from complaining that “they” are stealing “our” jobs to the demonization of “them” as the enemy. In the end, trade wars lead to shooting wars, the ultimate means for rival capitalist states to secure a monopoly of foreign markets and spheres of influence.

The same chauvinist union leaders who scream for protectionism are the

Germany...

(continued from page 9)

withdrawal from the U.S.-dominated NATO alliance. Former 1960s New Leftist and current Green spokesman Daniel Cohn-Bendit argues for military strikes against Serbia and has repudiated his former support for the right of asylum in Germany. The SpAD demands: Germany/NATO/UN out of the Balkans! Not one man, not one penny for the imperialist army!

The SPD and Greens seek to refurbish the image of German imperialism by removing the stigma of the Nazi past. Proclaiming that Germany must again be a “self-assured” nation, Schröder has denounced plans to set up a government fund for reparations for Jewish slave laborers under Hitler’s Third Reich and even opposes the construction of a Holocaust Memorial in Berlin. Instead, Schröder’s nominee for “culture minister” supports right-wing plans for rebuilding the Berlin palace of Kaiser Wilhelm, whose monarchy was swept away by a revolutionary upsurge of workers and sailors in 1918-19.

For New October Revolutions!

Formed as a result of proletarian struggle in the last decades of the 19th century, the SPD had by 1914 made its peace with German imperialism, voting for war credits at the outbreak of World War I. The SPD acted as the bourgeoisie’s “bloodhounds” in organizing the suppression of the 1918-19 Spartacist uprising and presiding over the murder of heroic revolutionary leaders Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht.

The SPD served as the classic example of what Russian Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin termed a bourgeois workers party, organically rooted in the labor movement but committed to the defense of capitalist



United-front protest stopped Nazi provocation in Berlin, February 1997. SpAD fights for worker/immigrant mobilizations against fascist terror, for full citizenship rights for immigrants.

class rule. During the 1920s, the SPD served as the chief administrator of the Weimar Republic, paving the way for Hitler’s rise to power. Since the end of World War II, the SPD has been one of the two principal parties of German capitalism (see “The Holocaust, ‘Collective Guilt’ and German Imperialism,” page 6).

Today, the Social Democrats are offering to push through the “structural reforms” demanded by their capitalist masters: attacking the unions, dismantling what’s left of social welfare programs and driving workers of Turkish, Kurdish and Slavic descent out of their jobs and out of Germany. Yet this did not stop the reformist Linksruck, affiliated with Tony Cliff’s Socialist Workers Party in Britain and the International Socialist Organization in the U.S., from openly calling for a vote to the SPD. The centrist Gruppe Arbeitermacht, tied to Workers Power in Britain, supported both the SPD and the PDS.

Looking to strike a more “leftist” posture against the SPD loyalists, the Rev-

olutionär Sozialistische Bund (RSB), offspring of the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat, called for a “critical vote” to the PDS (*Avanti*, June 1998). In fact, a call to vote PDS is nothing other than support for the SPD through the back door, as the former declared itself “unconditionally” for Chancellor Schröder. If anything, the PDS has been even more forward than the SPD or the Greens in fomenting national chauvinism. The PDS paper *Neues Deutschland* now features arguments for reclaiming Germany’s “national identity” and has even opened its pages to Nazi spokesmen (*Der Spiegel*, 28 September). Taking the lead in this obscene “dialogue” with the fascists are adherents of the Communist Platform “left wing” of the PDS.

The so-called Social Equality Party, German group of David North’s “International Committee,” ran a slate in the elections formally counterposed to the SPD and PDS. But this “leftist” pose is a complete fraud. Throughout the Cold War, the Northites wallowed in the anti-

Communism of the imperialists and their social-democratic lieutenants, supporting every movement aimed at the destruction of the Soviet Union, from the Afghan *mujahedin* to Polish *Solidarność*. Still marching in lockstep with the bourgeoisie as it gears up its assault on labor, the Northites today write off the trade unions as in any way workers organizations.

As the SpAD wrote in “No Vote to SPD, PDS!” (*Spartakist* No. 133, Autumn 1998):

“What all the pseudo-leftist groups around the SPD/PDS reject is the necessity of workers revolution. Their conception consists of a purely parliamentary, reformist perspective, whereby the capitalist system of brutal exploitation, racism and imperialist war can be made to serve the interests of the working class and oppressed. We Marxists know that the capitalist system is an obstacle to the development of the productive capacities of humanity. After plunging humanity into two world wars, the bourgeoisie today threatens it with extinction by nuclear war. Only with a revolutionary perspective can the working class free itself and the rest of humanity from the scourge of wage slavery, racism and war. Capitalism cannot be reformed but must be destroyed.”

Virtually to a man, the groups which orbit around the SPD and PDS supported the capitalist reunification of Germany in 1989-90. The SpAD/ICL was unique in its forthright, unambiguous opposition to capitalist reunification, as we fought for socialist revolution in the West and proletarian political revolution to sweep away the nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy which led the counterrevolution from within the DDR. Today, as then, we fight for a red soviet Germany in a Socialist United States of Europe. The SpAD has set itself the goal of building a revolutionary workers party modeled on the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky, as part of the ICL’s fight to reforge the Trotskyist Fourth International to lead the struggle for new October Revolutions worldwide. ■

best promoters of "free trade" when it comes to the U.S. imperialists entering foreign markets. As Trotsky wrote of the reformist trade-union leaders in his 1940 essay "Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay":

"The intensification of class contradictions within each country, the intensification of antagonisms between one country and another, produce a situation in which imperialist capitalism can tolerate (i.e., up to a certain time) a reformist bureaucracy only if the latter serves directly as a petty but active stockholder of its imperialist enterprises, of its plans and programs within the country as well as on the world arena."

Struggle Against Black Oppression Is Key

What are the particular tasks in building a conscious proletarian struggle for power in the belly of the beast of U.S. imperialism? How do we bridge the huge gap between the growing and keenly felt immiseration of working people and all the oppressed in this country and forging the necessary consciousness to lead our class to victory? In his 1902 work *What Is To Be Done?*, Lenin made the point that "the working class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade union consciousness, i.e., the conviction that it is necessary to combine in unions, fight the employers and strive to compel the government to pass necessary labor legislation, etc." Revolutionary class consciousness must be introduced from the outside, by the communist vanguard party.

The obstacles before us in this task are both social—the poison of anti-black racism—and political, i.e., the class collaborationism of the pro-capitalist union bureaucracy, expressed politically through its loyalty to the Democratic Party. The United States is the only advanced capitalist country where the working class has not attained even a minimal level of political class consciousness. In its mass, it has never supported a party which even claims to stand for the interests of workers against the bosses, let alone the declared goal of replacing capitalism with socialism. But at the same time, this country has seen its share of convulsive and often violent class struggle.

Class exploitation here has always been wrapped in the envelope of raw racism. American capitalism was built upon the special oppression of blacks, and its maintenance depends upon it. It took a bloody civil war to smash chattel slavery. But the brief promise of black equality during Reconstruction was betrayed by the withdrawal of Union troops from the South in the Compromise of 1877. With the rise of American imperi-

alism in the late 1800s, highlighted by the seizure of the Philippines and Puerto Rico, racist U.S. colonial rule had its domestic reflection in the system of Jim Crow racist segregation in the South.

It was the militant, integrated labor struggles of the 1930s, often led by reds, that were critical to bringing black workers into the newly formed industrial unions. The labor battles of the '30s overcame in part the racial and ethnic



Defense of immigrants, minorities is key to fight for revolutionary leadership: SL banner at 1997 rally for strawberry workers in Watsonville, California (above); PDC-initiated anti-Klan protest in Chicago, June 1996.

divisions which the ruling class has used to cripple American workers' struggle and obscure class divisions. Today, in the population as a whole, the percentage of unionization is highest among black male workers (one out of five). This points to the objective basis for our program of revolutionary integrationism, which links the struggle for black equality to that for proletarian power. Blacks remain a race-color caste in America—segregated at the bottom of society yet, strategically, integrated into the powerful industrial proletariat. Black liberation requires integrated class struggle to abolish capitalism and achieve a socialist egalitarian society.

As the section of the working people with the most to gain from the destruction of the power of the exploiters and oppressors, the militant black proletariat will play a vanguard role as leaders and fighters for socialist revolution. There is no way forward for the working class in this country if the fight for black freedom is not taken up head on. The fight to develop revolutionary consciousness in the working class is not a matter of cheerleading for day-to-day economic struggles but of building a party that is a *tribune of the people*, that reacts to every act of tyranny and oppression.

As an expression of this, for more than ten years the Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee, the class-struggle defense organization associated with the SL, have fought for the freedom of death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal—a former Black Panther—as part of our fight to abolish the racist death penalty. As Mumia continues to struggle and speak out from death row on behalf of the oppressed, it is urgent



that the power of the multiracial labor movement be actively mobilized to free this innocent man.

Break with the Democrats! For a Workers Government!

Here in California, we have a large population of immigrant workers who are introduced into the proletariat at its lowest levels to satisfy the capitalists' need for cheap labor. These workers hail from poorer, less developed countries and have few if any rights. Both Clinton's Democrats and Governor Pete Wilson's Republicans are slashing any kind of social benefits for blacks and immigrants while massively militarizing the border with Mexico, forcing immigrants either to traverse freezing, rugged mountain terrain or face heat exposure in the desert areas. Reports are now common of finding groups who have died in desperate attempts to avoid the border police.

The capitalists, abetted by the union bureaucracy, try to poison class consciousness and solidarity among the

workers by fomenting racial, sexual, religious, national and ethnic divisions. The struggle for the unity and integrity of the working class against chauvinism and racism is thus a vital task for the proletarian vanguard. Today the fight against anti-immigrant bigotry is an acid test for the workers movement and the left across the globe. The International Communist League and the SL/U.S. call on the labor movement to fight deportations and demand full citizenship rights for all immigrants.

Latin American and other immigrant workers often bring with them a rich history of class struggle, enriching American labor struggles with their experience. The growing immigrant component of the working class cries out for union organization. Any serious effort to organize the unorganized will *not* be taken up by the narrow bureaucracy that sits atop the unions and is chauvinist to its core, but requires a class-struggle leadership. Such a leadership would fight to mobilize the social power of labor in action to defend and organize immigrant workers here, and would pursue joint class struggle on both sides of the border against the IMF and Wall Street bosses, whose NAFTA "free trade" rape of Mexico is aimed at driving down workers' living conditions and wages throughout the continent.

If you have a one-sided view of the American capitalist system—an over-estimation of its power, and with that an awestruck prostration before it—then you'll display a profound lack of confidence in the revolutionary potential of the proletariat and see no need to build the kind of combat party that is fit to lead the class to state power. If you don't see the revolutionary capacity of the working class, then you look elsewhere, and in this country that means pressuring the capitalist Democrats. This captures the role played by various fake-socialist outfits, which act as loyal apologists for the pro-capitalist labor leadership.

We are entering a period which has every indication of being a convulsive chapter in human history. The objective conditions for socialist revolution are more than ripe; the critical need is the forging of a leadership to realize the revolutionary potential of the proletariat. The Spartacist League, U.S. section of the International Communist League, seeks to build such a leadership, embodied in the revolutionary party, by engaging in the struggles of our class and doing political battle with its current pro-capitalist misleaders. We urge you to join us in the fight for the American revolution as an integral part of the international socialist revolution. ■

CUNY...

(continued from page 12)

union can play a pivotal role in sparking a fight by all city workers and championing the poor and homeless. Transit workers, who actually transport the labor that makes Wall Street run, have real social power if they use it. That means playing hardball, ripping up the strikebreaking Taylor Law with the militant class-struggle tactics that built the unions. Militant labor action in transit can smash this "budget of doom" and bring Giuliani to his knees with strikes, backed by the rest of city labor. The unions represent the unity of the multiethnic working class (as well as many CUNY parents and students). The multiracial working class has the power to expropriate the bosses, seize the wealth and take power and run society in our own interests!"

In contrast, during the 1995 CUNY protests, the International Socialist Organization (ISO) based its strategy on trying to corral student protesters into supporting the Democratic Party through "progressive" union bureaucrats such as 1199 head (and then state Democratic Party vice chairman) Dennis Rivera. In a recent issue of its paper, *Socialist Worker* (27 March), the ISO pleads: "CUNY students, faculty and staff must organize to defend CUNY's poor and working students' rights to education." But the

agency to which these self-proclaimed socialists look to take up the fight for education is none other than the campus administration—the hired servants of the capitalist rulers! This is in keeping with their belief that if cops "rebel collectively" they could become anything other than paid thugs of the capitalists (see "ISO: Looking for a Few Good Cops," WV No. 664, 21 March 1997).

On the eve of the CUNY Board of Trustees vote to abolish remedial education programs, an ISO spokesman at Hunter College argued in the student newspaper (*Hunter Envoy*, 21 April): "Students should demand that [Hunter] President Caputo take a stand in words and action, by supporting Open Admissions and reinstating two semesters of remediation at Hunter." Administrators are hired in order to *enforce* austerity, not to fight it! The SYC calls to abolish the administration and to replace it with worker, faculty and student control. Those who work and study at CUNY should run it! Cops off campus!

Another group at CUNY, which emerged from the 1995 budget cuts protests, is the Student Liberation Action Movement (SLAM). SLAM's answer to the attacks on education—and everything else—is to mobilize students to plead with the powers that be for "more." Thus

its strategy necessarily accepts the framework defined by the racist capitalist rulers. Correspondingly, SLAM's appeals for "more" are not insignificantly related to advancing their own petty interests and advantage—particularly those that come with running student governments, as they presently do at Hunter College. Despite its "liberation" rhetoric, the SLAM student bureaucrats at Hunter consider the college to be their own private fiefdom which they run like some urban street gang. These thugs put far more effort into trying to keep the Spartacus Youth Club—which counterposes our revolutionary perspective of mobilizing the power of labor to SLAM's strategy of pleading with the capitalist rulers—off their turf than into any supposed fight against the attacks on education at CUNY.

The Spartacus Youth Clubs, youth groups of the Spartacist League, seek to win students to the understanding that the social power to fight this decaying capitalist system lies in the hands of the working class. That power has been seen in recent strikes from the UPS Teamsters strike last summer to the more recent strike against Flint GM, which brought the North American operations of the world's largest corporation to a standstill. The SYC seeks to win a new generation

of workers and students and to train them to be the future leaders of the multiracial revolutionary party which is necessary to lead the working class to end this system of capitalist exploitation and oppression. If you are looking for a real strategy to fight against the shredding of education for black, poor and working-class youth, then it's time to join in the fight for a communist future! Join us! ■

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WORKERS VANGUARD

For Open Admissions, No Tuition!

NYC: Fight Racist Purge at CUNY!

Last May a meeting of the Board of Trustees for the City University of New York (CUNY) system voted to end remedial classes at the university's eleven four-year colleges. A squadron of city cops were on hand to stop any dissent against this move to further the purge of minority and working-class students from CUNY. Students and faculty who came to protest were forcibly evicted

Young Spartacus

from the meeting and some two dozen were handcuffed and taken away in paddy wagons. Faced with a lawsuit charging that the meeting had violated New York State's "open meeting" law, the Board of Trustees has yet to implement its decision to ax remedial education programs. But as noted in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (10 July), "a coterie of fiscally and socially conservative politicians, trustees, and policy analysts" are determined to push through this plan. Leading the pack are racist New York City mayor Rudolph Giuliani and New York governor George Pataki.

The threatened destruction of remedial education programs is the latest installment in the string of attacks on the CUNY system that has been waged by both Democratic and Republican city and state administrations. Coming on top of steadily increasing tuition at this once-free university, the new measure would totally gut the decades-long open admissions policy at CUNY by getting

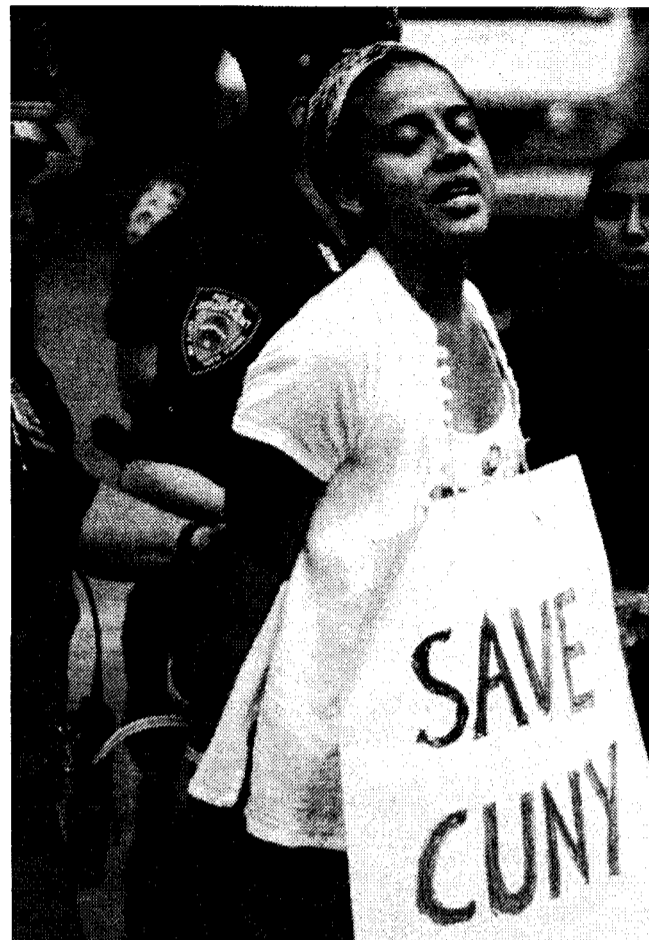
cent of this year's entering class at UC Berkeley was black.

Given the continued erosion of any real public education system, remedial classes are the only way that many students can prepare for college. Nearly two-thirds of entering freshmen at CUNY's four-year schools failed at least one placement exam, and according to one study, 12,000 students will be rejected in 1999 if remedial classes are abolished. This includes 55 percent of entering Hispanics, 51 percent of entering Asians, 46 percent of entering blacks and 38 percent of entering whites.

Inner-city "schools" in New York City—the financial capital of the American Empire—are increasingly nothing more than holding pens for ghetto and barrio youth. Students are warehoused in barbed-wired, deteriorating buildings, and overcrowded classes spill over to bathrooms and broom closets. More interested in social regimentation and control than education, the Board of Education voted this year to have the kill-crazy New York City Police Department control "security" at public schools. And it is not just at primary schools: recently the City College administration admitted that it has installed secret cameras in smoke detectors outside rooms where student activists meet, filming who attends these meetings.

The open admissions policy at CUNY was instituted following student protests in the late 1960s demanding increased access for minority students. As late as the early 1960s, City College was almost

Protester arrested outside May Board of Trustees meeting which voted to end remedial education at CUNY.



Helayne Seidman

have put higher education further and further out of the reach of working-class and minority youth.

Today, the dismantling of CUNY is being done under the rubric of improving "standards." Herman Badillo, vice chairman of the CUNY Board of Trustees, announced that "we're moving back to having academic standards that preserve the value of a CUNY diploma." It is true that between 1920 and 1970 more CUNY graduates earned PhDs than those from any other school except UC Berkeley—another public school—and eight of its graduates were awarded the Nobel Prize. But what is different today isn't that students are less "gifted" or "hard-working." The dismantling of CUNY is organically linked to the decay of American capitalism.

During CUNY's heyday, American capitalism needed skilled, literate workers. But the bourgeoisie only spends on education what it thinks it can realize back in profits. Or, as right-wing ide-

population. Once a reserve army of labor to be maintained, albeit minimally, today for the racist rulers the black ghetto poor are not worth 'wasting' money on even to keep alive, much less educate."

While the ruling class has slashed funds for education to the bone, *billions* are poured into the prison system, which is one of the few growth industries in America today.

The Spartacus Youth Clubs and the Spartacist League demand free education, open admissions and state-paid living stipends for all students. Bastions of class privilege like Columbia and New York University should be nationalized and made accessible to working-class students. But even such a just and basic demand as quality, integrated education for all runs up against a capitalist class which controls the means of production, distribution and finance and which sees little reason for providing a decent education to most children. The fight against attacks on education is part of our program to smash this racist capitalist system, where everything is based on profit for the bourgeoisie, and replace it with an egalitarian socialist society, where production is carried on for human need. This can only be achieved by a workers revolution.

Students Must Ally with Labor

The New York SYC and SL have intervened into protests at CUNY to win student militants to the understanding of the need to ally themselves with the social power of the multiracial working class. This is hardly an abstract question. The fight for quality education for youth is a very real and felt issue for working people. In New York City, many working-class families either have children who go to CUNY or desperately want their kids to get a higher education so that they can have some future other than backbreaking exploitation. As we wrote in "Students and Labor: Unite to Stop the Budget Ax!" (WV No. 619, 24 March 1995), as tens of thousands of students and workers protested against budget cuts:

"What workers and youth need is *militant class struggle* against our common enemy. A union like Local 1199, for example, with 117,000 workers in New York State has a multiracial membership with deep roots in the community because of the services it delivers. The

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Young Spartacus

NYC rally against budget cuts, 1991. Spartacus Youth Clubs fight for free, quality, integrated education for all.

rid of programs that have provided the only chance at higher education for hundreds of thousands of New York City's working-class, minority and immigrant youth. They are seeking to pare down the student body to those deemed "worthy" of education—professionals, technicians, managers and ideologues needed to run capitalism profitably. These attacks are analogous to the slashing of affirmative action programs across the country. In California, following the passage of Proposition 209, which abolished affirmative action, barely more than 2 per-

cent of the entering class was foreign-born—from 76 countries. The entering class in 1992 was 39 percent black, 28 percent Hispanic and 18 percent Asian. At the same time, open admissions—and essentially free education—at CUNY has been under attack for more than two decades now. In 1976, when New York City was on the verge of Wall Street-manufactured bankruptcy, CUNY's budget was slashed by a third. Tuition fees were imposed for the first time on New York City residents. Since then, repeated fee hikes

logue George Will put it in *Newsweek* (13 April), "Colleges are churning out more graduates than the job market really requires." As we wrote in "Education U.S.A.—Separate and Unequal" (WV No. 544, 7 February 1992):

"Having taken the wrecking ball to the auto factories, gutted the steel mills and closed many of the mines, there are few jobs left for which to train the children of the working class and the poor. And if educating the sons and daughters of white workers has increasingly become an expendable overhead for decaying American capitalism, the children of black workers are deemed *an expendable*