

Defend Serbia Against U.S./NATO Attack!

Defeat U.S. Imperialism Through Workers Revolution!

*The following is a Spartacist League/
U.S. statement issued on March 25.*

The barrage of cruise missiles and bombs launched against Serbia yesterday by the U.S. and its NATO allies brings us all a step closer to a new world war. This is a bloody statement by America's imperialist rulers that they will stop at nothing in their ruthless drive for profits and world domination. Democrat Clinton and the capitalist class he represents also suck the lifeblood out of workers in the U.S. through ever more grinding exploitation and brutal oppression enforced through ram-

pant racist cop terror. Any military blows against U.S. imperialism are in the direct and immediate interest of working people and minorities in this country and around the world. As proletarian revolutionaries fighting to build a party to lead the working class to power against the capitalist exploiters and oppressors, the Spartacist League, U.S. section of the International Communist League, declares forthrightly: **Defend Serbia against U.S./NATO attack! Down with the United Nations economic sanctions! All U.S./UN/NATO troops out of the Balkans!**

Defeat U.S. imperialism through workers revolution!

The "humanitarian" face of American imperialism in the Balkans is U.S. ambassador William Walker, who helped orchestrate the CIA-sponsored death squad regimes in Central America which slaughtered hundreds of thousands of workers, peasants and indigenous peoples in the 1980s. Clinton's cynical lies to the contrary, NATO's war against Serbia has nothing to do with "human rights" or defense of the Albanian population of Kosovo against

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Young Spartacus
Spartacus Youth Club speakout at
New York University, March 23.

Balkans Trip Wire



AP photos

Flames engulf section of Pristina, capital of Kosovo, after NATO missile strike. War against Serbia is ominous escalation in U.S. imperialist aggression, bringing closer the threat of a new world war.

MARCH 29—Into the sixth day of the terror war against the Serbian people, the U.S. and its NATO partners continue to crash bombs and cruise missiles into Serbia and the predominantly Albanian province of Kosovo. While Washington has kept a tight lid on news reports from the war front, it is clear that the targeting of "military installations" in urban areas—including the headquarters of Slobodan Milosevic, president of the Serb-dominated rump Yugoslav republic—is aimed not least at sowing terror among the besieged population. Sections of the capital of Belgrade have gone up in flames, the first time this city has come under bombardment since Hitler's Luftwaffe attacked it in 1941.

As the International Communist League has proclaimed in statements issued by its national sections around the world (see article, page 3), the working class and oppressed peoples everywhere have a vital interest in **defending the Serbs against the American-led NATO attack!** Opponents of the U.S./NATO imperialists can only welcome the downing of one of the U.S. Air Force's small number of F-117 "stealth" fighters as a blow against the racist capitalist U.S. rulers. Rapacious U.S. imperialism must be brought down through the mobilization of the multiracial proletariat in socialist revolution. The Spartacist League fights to forge the Leninist vanguard party needed to bring this understanding to the working class and to lead it in seizing state power.

Under the cynical pretext of defending the Kosovo Albanians, the U.S. ruling class is seeking to reassert its authority as the policeman of the world. Amid the collapse of the Soviet Union, destroyed by capitalist counterrevolution in 1991-

92, America's rulers declared themselves to be unchallenged masters of a "New World Order." When Saddam Hussein's Iraq and Slobodan Milosevic's Serbia refused to bow to Washington's dictates, they were branded as "rogue states" to be punished and whipped into line.

In 1991, the Pentagon war machine launched a devastating attack against Iraq, formerly a Moscow client state. The ongoing starvation blockade imposed in 1990 by the U.S. under United Nations cover—resulting in the death of well over a million Iraqis—has been punctuated by periodic terror bombing, which continues to this day. In 1995, NATO warplanes and missiles were launched against the Bosnian Serbs as a prelude to the U.S.-led occupation of Bosnia. Throughout this period, Serbia has been subjected to Western economic sanctions which have doubtless contributed to the deaths of many Serbs, especially children, the poor and the elderly.

U.S. military actions and economic

warfare in the Near East and Balkans are in a broader sense also directed against its main imperialist rivals: Germany and Japan. It is not only the rulers in Baghdad and Belgrade who are to be taught that the U.S. is now "the world's only superpower," but also the rulers in Tokyo, Berlin, Paris et al. In savaging Iraq, American imperialism is demonstrating its determination to maintain control over the Persian Gulf oil fields and to gain control over the oil and gas fields of the former Soviet Caucasus. U.S. intervention in the nationalist/communist wars precipitated by the German-initiated breakup of Yugoslavia is aimed above all at maintaining American military dominance in Europe through NATO.

In the current war against Serbia can be seen the spectre of a wider Balkan war or series of wars such as took place early this century. These wars, resulting from the intersection of regional national conflicts with rivalries among the major

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Defeat U.S. Imperialism...

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“ethnic cleansing.” In fact, the all-sided nationalist bloodbath in the Balkans was directly instigated by the imperialists in their drive to destroy the former Yugoslavia through capitalist counterrevolution. Social counterrevolution has once again made the Balkans the flash point of ancient nationalist hatreds and interimperialist rivalries. Marxists oppose the poison of nationalism and fight for the class unity of the workers of Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Kosovo in overthrowing all the bloody nationalist regimes of the region, from Serbian strongman Slobodan Milosevic to the U.S.-backed fascistic Tudjman in Croatia. **For a socialist federation of the Balkans!**

If America’s capitalist rulers get away with imposing their diktat in Kosovo, it will give them a freer hand to sow terror

and destruction around the world. It will also strengthen their hand in breaking strikes, busting unions and flooding the ghettos and barrios of America with even more cops. On the other hand, every blow against U.S. imperialism in the Balkans will help to weaken the class enemy, providing an opening for the working class and oppressed here to fight against the torrent of attacks being leveled by Wall Street and its political agents, the Democratic and Republican parties. We fight to build the multiracial revolutionary workers party, forged in the crucible of class struggle, which is the necessary instrument to lead the working class to the overthrow of this entire system based on racism, exploitation and war through a socialist revolution which rips industry and power away from a small handful of filthy rich and creates an egalitarian socialist economy.

NATO was set up by the U.S. 50 years ago as a military alliance aimed at the destruction of the Soviet Union, which was created as a result of the only suc-

cessful workers revolution in history, the October Revolution of 1917. Undermined by decades of Stalinist misrule, the Soviet Union was destroyed through capitalist counterrevolution in 1991-92. Now the U.S. imperialists—who butchered over two million people in their losing counterrevolutionary war against the Indochinese workers and peasants in the 1960s and ’70s—act as if nothing stands in the way of imposing their power everywhere. In recent years, the U.S. has invaded, bombed or tried to starve into submission one country after another, from Somalia to Haiti and Iraq. **U.S. hands off Iraq! Down with the UN starvation blockade!**

Beneath the current unity of the NATO “allies” over the bombing of Serbia lie fundamental and escalating interimperialist rivalries expressed in the growing trade war between the U.S. and Europe, as well as Japan. It was imperialist machinations stoking nationalist hatreds in the Balkans which led directly to World War I in 1914. Today, NATO bombing is a trip wire for a broader and even bloodier international conflagration, potentially drawing in Greece, Turkey and Russia. While acting as soft cop for NATO, capitalist Russia’s denunciation of the U.S./NATO military attack on Serbia is in line with its ambition to assert itself as a regional imperialist power. Both Russia and the U.S. have huge nuclear arsenals, and the U.S. has already demonstrated its readiness to use these weapons with the nuclear incineration of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. Capitalism is an irrational system, and the mad drive for profit and power inherent in this system will inevitably lead to a nuclear third world war if it is not stopped through international proletarian revolution.

While simultaneously promoting illusions that American capitalism can be reformed, protests against the U.S. bombing of Serbia organized by Workers World Party through its International Action Center front group have been grotesque orgies of Serb chauvinism featuring chants of “Kosovo is Serbia.” Until the ethnic Albanian Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK) became nothing but a pawn of NATO imperialism’s war aims, we called for the right of the Albanian population of Kosovo to form an independent state. But groups like the International Socialist Organization (ISO) and Socialist Action which champion the

nationalist UCK provide an ideological cover for the predatory aims of U.S. imperialism in the region.

What unites all of these reformist “socialists,” from the slavishly pro-Milosevic Workers World to the ISO, is their belief that the imperialist rulers can be pressured into more “peaceful” and “-humane” policies. Thus, an International Action Center leaflet pleads, “Stop the Bombing of Yugoslavia! Money For Jobs & Education, Not War!” The lie that America’s capitalist rulers can be made to change their priorities to benefit working people and minorities serves to shackle workers to the racist, capitalist Democratic Party. It is an obstacle to mobilizing the working class and the oppressed in *class struggle* against U.S. imperialism. Imperialism is not a policy which can be “reformed” but a *system* of exploitation and war. Imperialist war is the concentrated expression of the “normal” brutal workings of the capitalist profit system, which daily condemns countless numbers of working people around the world to death.

The widespread outrage over the death squad style killing of black African Amadou Diallo by four cops of the NYPD Street Crime Unit points to the seething anger building at the base of American society. This was also seen in the enormous popularity of the strikes by UPS Teamsters and GM auto workers in the past couple of years. The power to destroy this system of racism, war and exploitation lies in the hands of the multiracial working class. But that power is shackled by the AFL-CIO labor tops who themselves fuel the flames of imperialist war through their protectionist tirades against workers of other countries while tying working people in the U.S. to their exploiters, particularly to the Democratic Party. From World Wars I and II to Korea, Vietnam and today the Balkans, the Democratic Party is the party of imperialist war.

The Spartacist League is dedicated to building a revolutionary workers party like the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky which led the October Revolution—a party which champions the cause of all the oppressed, a party rooted in proletarian internationalism. Join us in building the party which will lead new October Revolutions and put an end once and for all to imperialist mass murder. Defend Serbia! Defeat U.S. imperialism through workers revolution! ■



TROTSKY

Lenin and Trotsky’s Comintern: Party of World Revolution

This month marks the 80th anniversary of the founding of the Third (Communist) International in Moscow. Under the guidance of the Bolshevik Party of V.I. Lenin and L.D. Trotsky, which led the October Revolution of 1917, the Comintern counterposed to the pro-imperialist Social Democracy of the Second International the program of world socialist revolution. As the Third International was transformed into an

anti-revolutionary tool of the nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy which usurped political power in the Soviet Union in 1923-24, passing over to outright reformism in the mid-1930s, Trotsky and the Left Opposition carried forward the program of Leninist internationalism. Today, the International Communist League seeks to reforge the Trotskyist Fourth International, founded in 1938, as the necessary instrument in the fight for new October Revolutions around the world.

Seventy-two years have passed since the Communist Party announced its programme to the world in the form of a Manifesto written by the greatest teachers of the proletarian revolution, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Even at that time communism, which had barely entered the arena of struggle, was beset by the baiting, lies, hatred, and persecution of the possessing classes, who rightly sensed in it their mortal enemy. In the course of those seven decades communism developed along complex paths, periods of stormy advance alternating with periods of decline; it has known successes, but also severe defeats. But essentially the movement proceeded along the path indicated in advance by the Manifesto of the Communist Party. The epoch of final, decisive struggle came later than the apostles of social revolution had expected and hoped. But it has come. We communists, the representatives of the revolutionary proletariat of various countries of Europe, America, and Asia, who have gathered in Soviet Moscow, feel and consider ourselves to be the heirs and executors of the cause whose programme was announced 72 years ago. Our task is to generalize the revolutionary experience of the working class, to cleanse the movement of the disintegrating admixtures of opportunism and social-patriotism, to mobilize the forces of all genuinely revolutionary parties of the world proletariat and thereby facilitate and hasten the victory of the communist revolution throughout the world....

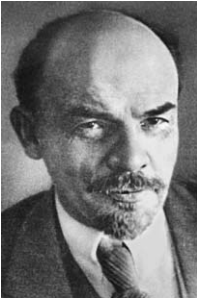
The bourgeois world order has been sufficiently lashed by socialist criticism. The task of the international communist party consists in overthrowing that order and erecting in its place the edifice of the socialist order.

We summon the working men and women of all countries to unite under the communist banner under which the first great victories have already been won.

Proletarians of all countries! In the struggle against imperialist savagery, against monarchy, against the privileged estates, against the bourgeois State and bourgeois property, against all kinds and forms of social and national oppression—**Unite!**

Under the banner of workers’ Soviets, under the banner of revolutionary struggle for power and the dictatorship of the proletariat, under the banner of the Third International—proletarians of all countries, unite!

—“Manifesto of the Communist International to the Proletariat of the Entire World” (March 1919)



LENIN

WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League of the U.S.



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2 April 1999

Spartacist Forum

For Women’s Liberation Through Socialist Revolution

The Communist Fight for Women’s Liberation in the Muslim East

Speaker: Amy Rath

Saturday April 17, 4 p.m.

Mount Hollywood Congregational Church
4607 Prospect Ave., (One block east of Vermont)

LOS ANGELES

For more information: (213) 380-8239

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725 Commonwealth Ave., Rm. B18A
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Information and readings: (212) 267-1025 or spartacus.club@nyu.edu

As Fake Lefts Wallow in “Human Rights” Imperialism

ICL Protests Demand: “Defend Serbia Against U.S./NATO Terror Bombing!”

As the U.S./NATO launched military attacks against Serbia, the International Communist League immediately swung into action against the imperialist war as a unified Leninist internationalist organization. Around the world, our comrades issued leaflets, initiated speakouts and intervened in other protests to raise our unique revolutionary perspective for *defense of Serbia against imperialist attack* and for *defeat of imperialism through workers revolution*.

The U.S./NATO air strikes and the buildup of imperialist ground troops threatening a wider war provides further tinder for social explosions within the imperialist centers. While the fake lefts try to derail opposition to the war into parliamentary maneuvers for a more “humane” imperialist policy, the ICL fights to give an organized anticapitalist expression to the antiwar mood among workers and youth, evident already even in these early days of the bombing. We fight to advance the consciousness of the working class to understand that what is required is a proletarian, revolutionary, internationalist struggle against the capitalist system which breeds war. At a Paris demonstration in defense of “illegal” immigrants (*sans-papiers*) on March 27, our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyiste de France (LTF) carried a placard reading, “Deportations from Roissy, Bombing of Kosovo, Police Terror in the Ghettos: This Government Is Capitalist, Racist and Imperialist!” This slogan earned approval from immigrant workers—and opposition from the fake left which supports the Socialist-led popular-front government.

The ex-Stalinists, Social Democrats and “New Labour” today ruling capitalist France, Italy, Germany and Britain are *more* bellicose than their right-wing predecessors, in part because the leaders of these treacherous parties arrogantly think they can fool the population into believing that imperialist war and racist deportations are in the best interests of the workers they purport to represent. It’s not going over. In Germany, mothers of soldiers sent to the Bundeswehr staging area in Macedonia confronted Social Democratic (SPD) defense minister Scharping on a TV talk show and threatened to send a delegation to meet with Serbian mothers to call for an end to the war.

Across West Europe, hundreds of thousands of workers from the former Yugoslavia are integrated into the industrial proletariat. United with the rest of the proletariat in class struggle against capitalist austerity and imperialist war, they can play a powerful role in defeating the poisonous chauvinism which the social-democratic rulers use to divide the workers. The German press is whipping up fear and loathing against “the enemy within,” the alleged “danger” represented by 800,000 Serbs resident in Germany. This new racist threat against immigrants spurred interest among protesters in the active defense by the ICL and its German section, the Spartakist Workers Party (SpAD), of the Kurdish workers facing mass deportations following the arrest by Turkey of Kurdistan Workers Party leader Abdullah Öcalan. After buying our paper, one Serbian worker at a Hamburg protest exclaimed: “You know, for 20 years my co-workers in the plant have been talking SPD to me. But tomorrow

I’m going to turn in my SPD party card.”

The ex-Stalinists of the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), who sold out the East German deformed workers state to the West German bankers, now jockey for position as the “left” opposition in parliament and act as brokers of “peace” rallies with an explicitly pro-capitalist agenda for a “better” imperialist foreign policy, a “European security solution” based on

Spartakist



Spartakist Canada

the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and more independent of the American military colossus. When PDS leader Gregor Gysi took the podium at a March 27 rally in Berlin, our comrades of the SpAD held up placards reading, “PDS Call for UN and OSCE Intervention Is a Social-Chauvinist Fig Leaf for Imperialist Attack!” and “PDS Sold Out the DDR to the Bourgeoisie of Auschwitz!” While some PDS members went apoplectic, demonstrators snapped up copies of *Spartakist* with its front-page headline, “No Vote for SPD, PDS!” Our placard, “The Red Army and Tito’s Partisans Smashed the Nazi Wehrmacht!” quickly sorted out anti-fascist Slav workers from the right-wing Serbian monarchists in the crowd.

The French Communist Party (PCF), which is part of the capitalist popular-front government, also revels in anti-American chauvinism *to alibi its support to its own ruling class*. While condemning the NATO bombing, PCF leader Robert Hue holds up the imperialist-dictated “negotiations,” that French farce in the Rambouillet chateau, as a lost opportunity for a “political solution to this unbearable conflict.” As our comrades in the LTF wrote in their leaflet, “War is the continuation of politics and diplomacy by other means: the Rambouillet talks were

the fig leaf for the imperialist occupation of Kosovo with or without bombings.”

Just across the narrow Adriatic Sea from the slaughter and studded with NATO military bases, Italy has been plunged into another political crisis by the Balkans war. The popular-front government there has been carrying out vicious repression against Albanian refugees streaming into the country.

tion and which exterminated the Balkan peoples during World War II.”

Our revolutionary opposition to imperialist war is in sharp contrast to the fake Trotskyists who peddle illusions that the imperialist warmongers can be pressured to rein in their terror. Demonstrations called by self-proclaimed socialists in the U.S. and Europe have centered on bleating pleas to “stop the bombing.” But

Workers Hammer



In protests against NATO terror war, ICL fights for perspective of workers revolution to overthrow imperialist warmongers. Clockwise from bottom left: ICL contingents at protests in Toronto, Berlin and London; SYC speakout at Boston University.



Young Spartacus

Uniquely, our comrades of the Lega Trotskista d'Italia (LTd'I) fight for full citizenship rights for immigrants and call for defense of Serbia and defeat of the Italian ruling class and all the imperialists. Having stepped down from the capitalist austerity government last year to appease its restive working-class base, Rifondazione Comunista (RC) now postures as an “antiwar” party.

At a campus speakout in Naples, our comrades exposed this posture, pointing to the unity of RC with the Italian bourgeoisie: “When they were in government, RC buried the crimes of Italian imperialism in Somalia and restored the Italian protectorate over Albania which existed under Mussolini. They voted for the legislation which imposed detention camp lagers and visa quotas on immigrants.” Noting Italy’s role in the breakup of the former Yugoslavia, the LTd'I speaker said: “Italy and Germany were the first to recognize Croatia. The Pope of counter-revolution made a saint of the Cardinal of the Ustasha, which massacred thousands of Serbs, Jews and Roma. Rifondazione seeks to lay all the blame on American imperialism. But Italy and Europe are just as much enemies of all oppressed peoples. It was Italy which invented concentration camps in Libya, which first used poison gas against the Ethiopian popula-

bloody terror against weaker nations, against colonial and semicolonial countries is *inherent* in the imperialist system of oppression and exploitation. The reformist British Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and its international satellites (in the U.S., the International Socialist Organization) *hailed* the capitalist counter-revolutions in the Soviet Union and East Europe—beginning with Polish Solidarność in the 1980s—which set the stage for this Balkans war. At a protest in Warsaw on March 26, these cheerleaders for Solidarność reaction and anti-communist Polish nationalism screamed, “We already had Moscow, we don’t want Washington” in an attempt to drown out our comrades of the Spartakusowska Grupa Polski as they chanted, “Defend Serbia! Defeat American imperialism and its Polish lackeys!” Never wanting for chutzpah, the fake left’s main banner at the Warsaw demonstration was “Make Love, Not War”—in a country where women’s right to abortion and birth control were virtually abolished by the Solidarność counterrevolution they supported!

In London, the British SWP joined with a Serb-nationalist contingent outside 10 Downing Street on March 25, chanting, “Blair and Clinton, wanted for

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France, Spain—Down With Anti-Basque Repression!

For the Right of Self-Determination for the Basque People!

PART ONE

On March 9, as right-wing Spanish prime minister José María Aznar was being hosted by French Socialist prime minister Lionel Jospin, police in Paris staged a roundup of supporters of the separatist Basque Homeland and Freedom (ETA). The arrest of Javier Arizcuren-Ruiz (also known as Kantauri), a key leader of ETA, along with six supporters, provoked massive demonstrations demanding “Independence!” and “General amnesty for ETA prison-

LE BOLCHEVIK

ers!” in the Basque country of north-eastern Spain.

The latest arrests came only six months after ETA declared a unilateral truce in its decades-long fight for an independent Basque homeland. In announcing the cease-fire, ETA proclaimed that it was “willing to learn” from the April 1998 Northern Ireland “peace” accords, a reactionary imperialist-imposed deal which maintains the subjugation of the oppressed Catholic minority there and mandates the continued presence of the British military.

Aznar hailed “Franco-Spanish cooperation in the fight against terrorism.” Indeed, for years France has collaborated with Spain in waging a brutal campaign of repression against Basque militants. Many Basque militants have been deported to Spain, where torture of “terrorist” suspects is routine, and dozens continue to languish in French prisons. We say: Free Javier Arizcuren-Ruiz and all victims of anti-Basque repression in France and Spain!

We publish below an article written before the recent events, translated from *Le Bolchévik* No. 146 (Summer 1998), newspaper of the Ligue Trotskyste de France, section of the International Communist League.

* * *

Last July [1997], the long simmering unrest in the Basque region of northern Spain exploded into international prominence as vast reactionary demonstrations thronged major Spanish cities following the kidnapping and shooting of a minor bourgeois politician by the Basque separatist group Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA—Basque Homeland and Freedom). In the space of a few days, around six million people joined protests against the killing of Miguel Angel Blanco Garrido, a town councilman from the ruling Popular Party (PP) of José María Aznar. In Madrid, Bilbao and elsewhere, representatives of the right-wing government marched hand in hand with leaders of the Socialist and Communist parties and the trade unions.

The Aznar government has used the climate of anti-ETA hysteria to reinforce its draconian “anti-terrorist” legislation, aimed at crushing the Basque independence movement’s decades-long resistance to Castilian-centered bureaucratic domination and repression. Shortly after the shooting of Blanco Garrido, 23 leaders of Herri Batasuna (HB), a petty-bourgeois nationalist coalition which is seen as the political wing of ETA, were each sen-



Tens of thousands march for Basque independence in San Sebastián in Spain, July 1997, carrying pictures of imprisoned ETA supporters.

tenced to seven years in prison for the “crime” of distributing a propaganda video by ETA.

As Marxist-Leninists, we defend the Basque people’s elementary democratic right of self-determination, including the right to full independence from the French and Spanish states. Hands off the leaders of HB!

While Marxists oppose the petty-bourgeois strategy of individual terror in the struggle against capitalist oppression, we do so from the standpoint of the class-conscious proletariat, which uniquely has the social power to overthrow the capitalist system on account of its relationship to the means of production under capitalism. Nonetheless, when the oppressed direct their actions against the bourgeoisie and its state, we defend them against the retribution of the capitalists. The PP is the direct descendant of Alianza Popular, the party led by Francoists like Manuel Fraga Iribarne, who served as minister of the interior under the Franco dictatorship. The kidnapping and execution of bourgeois politicians and industrialists are ultimately futile acts but *they are not crimes against the working people.*

A telling indictment of the opportunism of the Spanish left is its capitulation to the hysterical witchhunt against ETA, and that it limits itself to empty dis-

courses on the Basque people’s right to self-determination. Their obfuscation and contradictions are dictated by the fundamental support to the repressive Spanish state, expressed in their tailing of the popular front.

Today, the treacherous leaders of the Spanish proletariat such as Julio Anguita of the Communist Party (CP) make common cause with Franco’s heirs against the Basque nationalists. This is hardly surprising. The reformist social democrats and Stalinists derailed the massive working-class upsurge that followed the death of Franco in 1975 and channeled it into support for the Juan Carlos “reform” monarchy and the centralist Constitution, which explicitly denies the right of self-determination for the Basques, Catalans and others. The Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) and the CP-dominated United Left (IU) popular front are signatories to the Pacto de Ajuria Enea, an all-party device designed to isolate the more militant nationalists of HB and to combat ETA. And the PSOE, when it was in government, set up the Grupos Antiterroristas de Liberación (GAL) death squads to assassinate ETA members in collusion with the French security forces, controlled at that time by Mitterrand’s Socialist Party.

Defense of the Basque nationalists in no way implies the slightest accommo-

dation to nationalism as an ideology. In Spain, the polarization along national lines—HB is capable of mobilizing a demonstration of 40,000 people in the Basque country in response to the anti-ETA demonstrations—can only be overcome by a proletarian vanguard actively struggling against national oppression. Without this crucial element, the historical strength of nationalist ideology, the enormous weight of brutal national oppression and the social-chauvinism of the Spanish left combine to drive Basque workers into the arms of the Basque nationalists, who are today the main force in the region’s trade unions. An authentic proletarian leadership fighting against the entire capitalist system would unite behind it not only those struggling against national oppression but also other specially oppressed sectors—from youth demonstrating against “temporary employment agencies” which organize wage slavery to women activists, who demonstrated in large numbers on International Women’s Day [1998] against anti-women violence.

Marxists fight to have the national question taken “off the agenda” in order to lay bare the fundamental class reality that Basque workers and capitalists have counterposed interests. The Basque bourgeoisie, which increasingly looks beyond Spain, seeks to maximize its freedom to exploit its “own” working class (for example, in the demand for “autonomy in management-worker relations”). The Basque bourgeoisie also has independent economic interests outside Spain, particularly in Latin America.

Terrorism is a natural policy for petty-bourgeois nationalists, who have no strategy to mobilize the oppressed masses. While Marxists defend those who target the capitalist state against the much bloodier terrorism of the state itself, we recognize that the nationalists are capable of appalling acts of indiscriminate terrorism such as the Hipercor bombing of June 1987. On that occasion ETA detonated a huge bomb in the Hipercor supermarket in San Andreu, a working-class suburb of Barcelona, killing more than 20 people. Such crimes, like the bombings of pubs in Ireland, can have no other purpose than provoking violence between different peoples and feeding the fears and hatreds inherent in all nationalism.

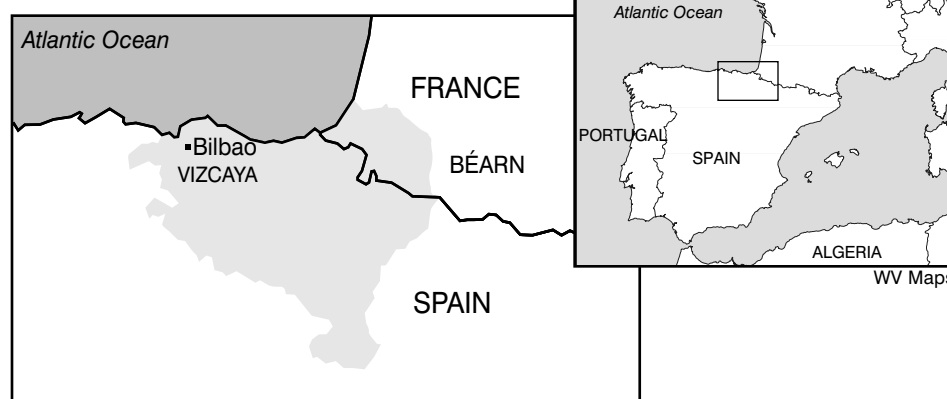
Two decades ago the Basque region, and especially its proletariat, was in the vanguard of militant struggle against the decrepit Franco dictatorship. In 1970, international protests against the Burgos trials of ETA militants forced the blood-soaked regime to commute the death sentences passed on six of the defendants. At the time, ETA was popular among Spanish workers, many of whom supported the cause of Basque and Catalan self-determination. Likewise, the Spanish left protested the anti-ETA repression and formally supported the right of Basque independence.

The National Question and Bourgeois Revolutions

Today, there is a veritable propaganda industry in France whose role is to spread the idea that, even in the imperialist epoch, the French state stands on the values of the 1789 Revolution. Within

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Basque region spans the border between Spain and France. ICL calls for right of self-determination of Basque people in both countries.



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The NATO attack on Serbia has sharply increased tensions between the U.S. and Russia, which seeks to reassert its prerevolutionary, tsarist role as the great-power protector of the Serbs. When Washington peremptorily told Russian prime minister Yevgeny Primakov that it was about to proceed with the assault on Serbia despite Russian protestations, Primakov canceled a state visit with Clinton in mid-flight and ordered his plane to turn around. And while most NATO allies have for now fallen in line behind the U.S., both Greece and Italy—site of 14 NATO air bases which are the main platform for the air war against Serbia—have already called for a halt to the bombing campaign. Meanwhile, in marked contrast to the 1991 Gulf War against Iraq, the U.S. ostentatiously shunted aside the UN even as a fig leaf in launching the war against Serbia.

Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin called on the workers to turn that imperialist war into a civil war in all the belligerent countries. The Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (Bolsheviks) in Russia followed this course of struggle, which resulted in the October Revolution of 1917 that smashed the capitalist state and took revolutionary Russia out of the imperialist carnage.

SPARTACIST

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For a Leninist-Trotskyist Party!

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USA_US89 JP

No. 53, Summer 1997, \$1.50 (56 pages)

Reuters

AFP

A black and white photograph showing five British soldiers standing in a line, holding rifles, over a row of dead or dying young men lying on the ground in a dusty area. The soldiers are wearing helmets and combat uniforms. The young men are lying face down or on their sides, appearing lifeless. The scene is set in a dusty, open area with some trees in the background.

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5

Balkans...

(continued from page 5)

In the late 1980s, the strident nationalist Slobodan Milosevic, who took over the Serbian League of Communists, trampled on Tito’s carefully balanced national arrangements, beginning with a violent attack on the Albanians of Kosovo. Milosevic’s drive for a “Greater Serbia,” in turn, reinforced anti-Communist nationalism in Croatia and Slovenia, the wealthier, traditionally Roman Catholic republics of northern Yugoslavia, which had formerly been part of the German sphere of influence.

The terminal crisis of Titoist Yugoslavia came in early 1991, as capitalist counterrevolution swept across East Europe, when newly elected right-wing nationalist governments in Croatia and Slovenia declared secession from the federated state. While the U.S., Britain and France initially made a halfhearted diplomatic effort to preserve a unified Yugoslavia as a capitalist state, the newly unified German Fourth Reich moved in to steamroller its European allies into recognizing the independence of Slovenia and Croatia. The U.S. then joined Germany in throwing its weight behind an independent Bosnia under the leadership of Muslim nationalist forces. The drive of German imperialism to restore its sphere of influence in the northern Balkans is not simply motivated by historical sentiment or a desire for revenge. This region contains a wealth of minerals of strategic importance to German industry.

The Serbs were not only the largest nationality in pre-1991 Yugoslavia but also the most geographically dispersed. A quarter of the Serb population lived outside its own national republic, mainly in Croatia and Bosnia. With the breakup of Yugoslavia, the large Serbian communities confronted a hostile Croatian national regime in Zagreb and a hostile Bosnian Muslim regime in Sarajevo. Fear of becoming an oppressed minority, combined with chauvinist sentiment for a Greater Serbia, ignited a new series of Balkan wars.

These wars have followed the same basic pattern, first in eastern Croatia, then Bosnia and now Kosovo: after the Serb forces initially gained the upper hand, U.S. imperialism intervened directly or indirectly on the side of the anti-Serb forces. The U.S. and Germany provided the Tudjman regime with not only large quantities of modern weaponry but also high-level training and advisers. This enabled the Croatian army in mid-1995, in league with NATO’s air assault, to rout the Serb forces and then undertake wholesale “ethnic cleansing.” At the same time, the U.S. covertly funded and armed Islamic fundamentalist killers in Bosnia, including *mujahedin* cutthroats who had fought in Afghanistan.

Washington used the three-sided communalist bloodletting in Bosnia to reposition itself vis-à-vis the main West European states. The U.S. sabotaged a number of “peace” plans put forward by the European Union which would have involved the introduction of European, but not American, forces into the former Yugoslav republic. After Washington succeeded in getting its European “allies” to



WV Map

agree to the massive bombing of the Bosnian Serbs in 1995, Clinton cut a deal with Milosevic (the Dayton Accords) for the NATO occupation and de facto partition of Bosnia.

We warned at the time: “The U.S.-imposed pact and NATO occupation will produce yet more bloodshed, while further hardening nationalist hatreds among the South Slav peoples” (WV No. 634, 1 December 1995). The imperialist occupation of Bosnia set into motion developments leading to the current crisis over Kosovo, a crisis of much greater magnitude and potentially far graver historical consequences.

Washington’s Kosovo Adventure

We called for the right of national self-determination for the Albanians of Kosovo—who make up 90 percent of its population—long before their cause became fashionable among Western liberals and leftists. In the mid-1970s, when national conflicts and tensions were increasingly manifest in Tito’s Yugoslavia, we wrote:

“Marxists should, of course, recognize the rights of the Albanian people of Kosovo and western Macedonia to fuse with Albania. The border in this region was established by military conquests of the Serb bourgeoisie in 1913 and in no way reflects the national borders of Albania. Such a fusion would disrupt neither the geographical nor economic unity of Yugoslavia.”

—“The National Question in Yugoslavia: Part 2,” WV No. 110, 21 May 1976

A democratic and progressive solution to these national questions would have required proletarian political revolutions to overthrow the then-ruling Stalinist bureaucracies in Yugoslavia, Albania and Bulgaria, leading to a socialist federation of the Balkans. Today, we fight for socialist revolution to overthrow all the bourgeois-nationalist regimes in the region, from Tudjman’s Croatia to Milosevic’s Serbia.

But in the present conditions of capitalist counterrevolution and imperialist intervention, national conflicts in the Balkans have had a reactionary character on all sides. Thus the Albanian separatists of the Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK), adhering to the murderous logic of bourgeois nationalism, have carried out indiscriminate attacks on Serbian villages. Moreover, with direct U.S./NATO intervention on the side of the Kosovo Albanians in recent months, the question of national self-determination has become subordinated to the defense of

Serbia against imperialist attack. Indeed, the UCK’s basic strategy has been to bring about a level of armed conflict sufficient to induce the Americans to intervene on its behalf.

While the interests of U.S. imperialism and the Kosovo Albanian nationalists now coincide, they are not the same. The basic aim of the American ruling class is to weaken and humiliate Milosevic—possibly to topple him—but not to establish an independent Albanian Kosovo or strengthen the forces of Albanian nationalism elsewhere in the Balkans. Hence Clinton called for NATO forces to occupy Kosovo and run it as an “autonomous” province. However, the legal fiction would be maintained that Kosovo is still part of the Serbian state. Thus Washington would have the option of returning Kosovo to actual Serbian rule if Milosevic or, more likely, a successor chose to become an American client regime a few years down the road.



AP

Milosevic rose to power by pushing virulent Serb chauvinism. Serbian tank in Kosovo flies flag of World War II Chetnik reactionaries.

However, this military adventure could blow up big time in the face of U.S. imperialism. That’s why there’s significant opposition, or at least reservations, within American ruling circles, especially among more right-wing elements. Republican Senator and presidential aspirant John McCain, who was a navy pilot in the Vietnam War, argues: “These bombs are not going to do the job.... You’re just going to solidify the determination of the Serbs to resist a peace agreement” (*New York Times*, 25 March).

Clinton is gambling that the bombing will induce Milosevic to allow the NATO occupation of Kosovo. But what if the Serbs hang tough? Macedonia, where upwards of 10,000 NATO troops—including a fresh contingent of U.S. forces—are in place along the border with Kosovo, has already been rocked by violent protests against the U.S. attack. For now, all but a handful of the most rabid anti-Serb hawks in the U.S. and West Europe have ruled out a NATO ground invasion of Kosovo. The longer the bombing continues, the more likely it will produce sharp divisions between the U.S. and European governments and within the ruling classes of the NATO member states. And if Milosevic buckles under and lets the Americans take over

Kosovo, the consequences could be even more disastrous. In initially arguing against U.S. military intervention, Vietnam War criminal Henry Kissinger (who now calls for ground troops) laid out a worst-case, but quite plausible, scenario: “An independent Albanian Kosovo surely would seek to incorporate the neighboring Albanian minorities—mostly in Macedonia—and perhaps even Albania itself. And a Macedonian conflict would land us precisely back in the Balkan wars of earlier in this century” (*Washington Post*, 22 February).

American “Superpower” Arrogance and the New World Disorder

Like the monarchical rulers of Serbia in the pre-World War I era, Milosevic looks to Russia to be Serbia’s great-power protector. For their part, Russian nationalist politicians of all stripes ritually voice sympathy for “our little Serb brothers” and denounce American “aggression” in the Balkans. However, Russia’s new capitalist rulers are not only deeply in debt to the bankers of Wall Street and Frankfurt, but most of their money is invested in Western financial markets. Consequently, Moscow’s actual role in the wars of ex-Yugoslavia has been playing “soft cop” toward the Serbs on behalf of the Americans and Germans. As a former member of Milosevic’s inner circle put it: “Russia is a poor cousin who calculates her own interests” (*London Financial Times*, 22 March).

But the relatively pro-Western Yeltsin/Primakov regime could well be displaced by more extreme nationalists waiting in the wings. In any case, the Western imperialists understand that the current social, economic and political disintegration of post-Soviet Russia—which still has 7,000 nuclear weapons inherited from the USSR—is not likely to be a permanent or even long-term condition. The *London Economist* (13 March)—house organ of Anglo-American financiers—recently wrote: “Sooner or later some strong and honest man will pull post-Yeltsin Russia together, and another contender for global influence will have reappeared on the scene.”

Thus the stated differences between Washington and Moscow over the Balkans are not just diplomatic play-acting. The U.S. drive to weaken and humiliate Serbia is in part intended to forestall Russia’s re-emergence as a major European power with its own client states in the Balkans. Likewise, the recent extension of NATO to three states which were formerly part of the Soviet bloc—Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic—is intended to intimidate and contain Russia. There is now speculation that in response the Russian military might move nuclear missiles into Belarus, a small state directly bordering Poland. And no one should doubt that Pentagon strategists have maintained and updated their plans for nuclear war with Russia.

While Clinton triumphantly proclaims that the bombing of Serbia demonstrates the unprecedented “unity” between the U.S. and its European NATO allies, the Kosovo adventure takes place against a background of increasing tensions between the U.S. and the West European states, as well as Japan and China. A Congressional vote to impose stiff quotas on steel imports—particularly aimed at Japan, Russia and Brazil—came only days before the U.S. launched its war on Serbia. A recent cover of the *Economist* depicted a cartoon of two dogs snarling at one another above the caption, “America and Europe discuss their differences.”

In the past few weeks, the U.S. has imposed punitive tariffs against the European Union in a longstanding dispute over Caribbean banana exports and threatened further sanctions in retaliation against a European ban on hormone-treated beef from the U.S. The growing tensions between the U.S. and West Europe were also evident in the uproar in Germany over the execution of two German nationals in Arizona

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last month and, even more sharply, in the public outrage in Italy provoked by a U.S. military court’s acquittal of an Air Force pilot who sent 20 people plunging to their deaths in a cable car in the Italian Alps during a training flight last year. The U.S. bureau chief for *La Repubblica* expressed “the feeling that the United States—the only surviving superpower,’ as we are so often told—acts more and more unilaterally and capriciously, whether it is attacking Saddam Hussein or judging a low-flying pilot” (*New York Times*, 6 March).

The NATO bombing of Serbia also takes place at a time of growing American belligerence toward China, the last major bureaucratically deformed workers state remaining in the world. Washington is making a big brouhaha about China supposedly “stealing” U.S. military secrets. While the Stalinist bureaucrats in Beijing, as part of their headlong drive toward capitalist restoration, remain desirous of doing lucrative business deals with American and other capitalists, they are resentful and to a degree fearful of America’s self-appointed role as cops of the world. The *People’s Daily* (25 March), organ of the ruling Chinese Communist Party, accused NATO of “flagrantly using barbaric military force to interfere in Yugoslavia,” and China joined Russia in voting against the NATO bombing in the UN Security Council. Such actions are, to be sure, an impotent form of diplomatic protest. But they signal the potential for major and bloody conflicts in the Far East in the not-so-distant future.

Meanwhile, Germany and Japan are rearming apace and have thrown off their post-WWII bans against engaging in military actions abroad. German imperialism, under a Social Democratic/Green coalition government, is gloating that its fighter jets are taking part in the air war against Serbia, its first combat role since World War II. Coincidentally, Japanese warships last week fired on two boats, described as North Korean, in international waters. While the incident itself was relatively minor, it was likewise the first time since World War II that Japanese imperialism had deployed naval destroyers on a military mission.

Liberals, Fake Lefts Spearhead “Human Rights” Imperialism

“Send in the marines!” “Bomb ’em back to the stone age!” For decades these slogans were associated with the most right-wing, flag-waving, foam-flecked supporters of American imperialism. As against such yahoos, liberals usually

argued that the interests of American foreign policy were better served by diplomacy and economic aid. However, since the end of the Cold War, liberals along with many self-described leftists have become the most strident advocates of U.S. military action to bring “democracy and human rights” to the rest of the world.

Nowhere is this clearer than in the case of the Balkans. The very same day that Kissinger published his piece, “No U.S. Ground Forces for Kosovo,” the left-liberal *Nation* (22 February) ran an



Harcourt Brace Jovanovich
Leadership of World War II Communist Partisans was drawn from the many nationalities making up Yugoslavia. Tito (second from left), who was from Croatia, pictured with Slovenian, Serbian and Montenegrin Communists.

editorial demanding: “If Milosevic fails to agree to autonomy pending a binding referendum [on independence], he should be told that Kosovo’s independence will be recognized forthwith and that the Kosovars will get military aid to secure and defend it. In either case, any ultimatum should order the complete withdrawal of Serbian forces from the province and the insertion of an international military and police force.”

While the *Nation*’s bellicose line on Kosovo represents a shift from its more pacifistic posture in the past, it is nonetheless entirely consistent with its liberal outlook. A central premise of liberalism is that the existing American state represents the democratic will of its citizens. Consequently, the American state—the U.S. armed forces being at its core—should extend the benefits of democracy to the rest of the world, if necessary by force. Marxists understand that in reality the American state is a dictatorship of the

bourgeoisie, an instrument of bloody repression through which American capitalists maintain their exploitation of working people in this country and around the globe.

Nonetheless, a number of groups which claim to be Marxist are in fact advocates of “human rights” imperialism. Prominent among these is the International Socialist Organization (ISO). Basically, the ISO seeks to attract young liberals by presenting itself as more consistent and militant supporters of liberal principles than the Clinton White

House and Democratic Party in general. Its criticism of Clinton’s policy in the Balkans is substantially identical to that of the *Nation*, that the U.S. should wrest Kosovo from the Serbs and give it to the Albanians. The ISO’s *Socialist Worker* (12 March) states: “The U.S.-backed ‘peace’ plan won’t bring peace in Kosovo because it doesn’t deal with the roots of the conflict—the demand of the Albanian majority for independence.”

To be sure, the ISO stops short of outright support for U.S./NATO military action against Serbia. But the reason these left social democrats give for opposing the bombing is merely tactical, claiming that it “will only make a tense situation worse—and undermine opponents of Milosevic’s war machine in Serbia.” Thus the ISO depicts Milosevic and his “war machine” as the main enemy in the Balkans conflict, *not* U.S. imperialism and its infinitely more powerful, nuclear-armed war machine. At protests in the U.S., the ISO has carried signs pleading with Clinton to “Stop the Bombing.” But logically, if the NATO forces invaded Serbia, overthrew Milosevic and replaced him with a puppet regime which granted “independence” to Kosovo, the ISO should support such an action. The core point is that by demonizing Milosevic as the main enemy of “peace and democracy” in the Balkans, the ISO serves as a left apologist for the U.S./NATO terror bombing of Serbia.

The same holds for other left groups, some of which claim to be Trotskyist. A prime example in the U.S. is Socialist Action. Since Socialist Action professes to oppose American imperialism in principle, it absurdly claims that U.S./NATO intervention is aimed at strengthening the Serbs against the Kosovo Albanians! “Imperialists Step Up Pressure on Kosovo Rebels,” *Socialist Action* (February 1999) informs us, while an article in the March issue asserts that “the Western powers will continue to bring the maximum pressure to bear on the Kosovo delegation to get them to accept terms that will meet Milosevic’s political conditions.”

Reading this, someone who knew nothing about what was happening in the Balkans would assume that the U.S. was now bombing the Albanian Kosovars with the support of the Serbs. In fact, Clinton convinced the Kosovo Albanian nationalists to sign the Rambouillet agreement in order to provide a diplomatic pretext for attacking Milosevic’s Serbia, which is what the UCK wanted, as it railed even against Clinton’s pretense of seeking a last-minute deal with Belgrade to avert the bombing.

The leaders of Socialist Action are not naive or ignorant, just cynical and dishonest. They know full well that the Kosovo Albanian separatists are the strongest supporters of U.S./NATO air strikes against Serbia and of NATO occupation of Kosovo. If Socialist Action is serious about squaring its “anti-imperialist” pretensions with its line on Kosovo, try carrying signs reading “Down With U.S. Imperialism!” in the pro-bombing demonstrations currently being staged by supporters of the Albanians in the U.S.!

At bottom, the fake-socialist reformists embrace the liberal view that the “democratic” capitalist state can serve the interests of working people and the oppressed and that imperialism is a policy which can be changed under pressure. World War I, the first global interimperialist conflagration, laid bare such illusions promoted by the likes of German Social Democrat Karl Kautsky. Writing at the height of that imperialist slaughter, Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin noted in “Socialism and War” (1915) that with the concentration of capital in vast, powerful monopolies,

“Almost the entire globe has been divided up among the ‘lords of capital’ either in the form of colonies, or by entangling other countries in thousands of threads of financial exploitation.... Formerly progressive, capitalism has become reactionary; it has developed the forces of production to such a degree that mankind is faced with the alternative of adopting socialism or of experiencing years and even decades of armed struggle between the ‘Great’ Powers for the artificial preservation of capitalism by means of colonies, monopolies, privileges and national oppression of every kind.”

Today, capitalism’s ineluctable drive toward ever more and wider wars threatens the nuclear annihilation of all humanity. We of the International Communist League fight for new October Revolutions, the only way to end once and for all the war-driven world capitalist system. ■

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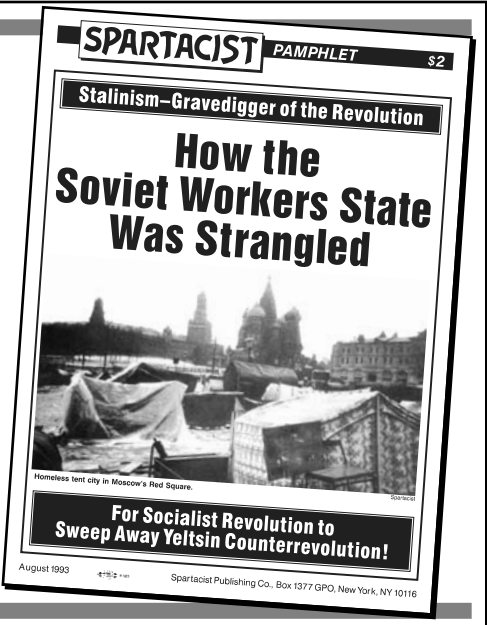
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Oakland...

(continued from page 12)

mayor Jerry Brown, a former Democratic Party governor, and the Alameda mayor were quick to welcome this militarized exercise in state terror.

The military brass claims that these exercises are not for domestic use but to train for foreign “humanitarian” missions, among which they included the invasions of Somalia and Haiti. In 1993, U.S. imperialist troops invaded Somalia under the guise of providing “humanitarian” famine aid. They massacred hundreds of men, women and children until the poorly armed Somalis fought back, shooting down three Black Hawk helicopters and killing 20 U.S. soldiers. While most of the left bought into the humanitarian scam, from the beginning the Spartacist League called for “U.S./UN troops out of Somalia now!” Now in the Balkans, the U.S. and its NATO allies cynically claim humanitarian concerns as they rain bombs and missiles on Serbia in pursuit of their imperialist aims.

The real impetus for Urban Warrior is the 1992 Los Angeles upheaval sparked by the acquittal of the sadistic racist cops caught on videotape beating Rodney King. Outrage at that hideous injustice and the broad national sympathy for the L.A. protesters cast a spotlight on the deep fissures and widespread discontents at the base of American society. This explosion of anger—and particularly the fact that it encompassed not only blacks



WV Photo

New York City, May 1992. Capitalist rulers were shaken as South Central L.A. erupted in outrage over acquittal of sadistic racist cops who beat Rodney King and protests spread across the country.

and Latinos but also a significant number of poor white youth, cutting across the racial divisions fomented by the capitalists to maintain their class rule—deeply frightened the bourgeoisie. National Guard, Army and Marine units were called out to occupy South Central L.A.; thousands were arrested and hundreds of immigrants deported.

Hours after the police-state occupation had begun, the Partisan Defense Committee—a legal and social defense organization allied with the Spartacist League—issued a call on the powerful

L.A. unions, from the centrally important longshoremen at the L.A. and Long Beach ports to Teamster truckers and transit workers, to organize work stoppages and mass mobilizations in defense of the besieged ghetto and barrio masses, demanding the withdrawal of cops and troops. As we wrote at the time:

“The impoverished residents of the ghettos and barrios lack the class consciousness and social power to move from protest to the struggle for state power. To bring down this racist system requires the leadership of a fighting, multiracial workers movement that truly champions

ICL Protests...

(continued from page 3)

murder.” As our comrades in the Spartacist League/Britain wrote in their leaflet, “These were the ‘socialists’ who were ‘over the moon’ when Blair was elected.” SWP members horrified at the brutality of war in the Balkans might cast their eyes across the Irish Sea and ask why their party refuses to oppose the presence of bloody British troops in Northern Ireland!

The ICL stands in the tradition of V.I. Lenin, who sharply broke with the Second International of social-chauvinism and reactionary patriotism at the onset of World War I. Lenin’s “Socialism and War,” a powerful handbook of revolutionary internationalism written in 1915 and circulated clandestinely to workers and soldiers throughout Europe in the crucible of war, teaches:

“The standpoint of social-chauvinism is shared equally by both advocates of victory for their governments in the present war and by advocates of the slogan of ‘neither victory nor defeat.’ A revolutionary class cannot but wish for the defeat of its government in a reactionary war, and cannot fail to see that the latter’s military reverses must facilitate its overthrow.”

Lenin stressed that in the case of an imperialist war against a small or semi-colonial people, it is the duty of the working class not only to fight for the defeat of one’s “own” government but to defend the victims of imperialist aggression. That is why the ICL forthrightly calls for the defeat of the U.S./NATO imperialists and for defense of Serbia! We called for the right of self-determination for the Albanian population of Kosovo against the Serb-chauvinist regime in Belgrade until the Albanian separatists became simply a pawn of NATO’s predatory designs. For Marxists, the democratic right of self-determination for the Kosovo Albanians is necessarily subordinated *now* to the struggle against the imperialist bombing and threatened invasion.

The fake Trotskyists try to camouflage their support to the capitalist rulers waging this war by limiting their calls to “stop the bombing” while *pounding the workers with social-chauvinist garbage about the need to crush Serbia!* These ostensible leftists have made the Kosovo Albanians their *cause célèbre* just as Kosovo has become the war cry for an imperialist invasion of the Balkans. The French Lutte Ouvrière (LO), which has a well-deserved notoriety for refusing to address special oppression under capital-

ism—whether it is racial, national or women’s oppression—has suddenly discovered Serbian oppression of the Kosovo Albanians in order to pass off French military intervention as “humanitarian.” LO writes: “The population of Albanian origin would perhaps be temporarily relieved from the crimes committed by the Serbian troops; however their aspirations would not be satisfied” (*Lutte Ouvrière*, 26 March). Not to be outdone, Alain Krivine’s Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR) carried a banner at a March 26 demonstration reading: “Neither Milosevic nor NATO: Self-Determination for Kosovo!” The previous day, Krivine thundered, “The Belgrade regime must be isolated and the Kosovo people must be given all the means, including military means, to defend their lives and impose their freedom.” The unity between these hypocrites posturing as an “antiwar” movement and the imperialist warmongers themselves couldn’t be clearer.

War tests the backbone of revolutionary parties and their willingness to withstand the pressure of social-chauvinism. Imperialist bombardment of the Balkans has revealed the British centrist Workers Power (WP) group to have crushed vertebrae. Grotesquely equating the Serbian victims of murderous NATO air strikes with the imperialist powers raining down death and destruction, *Workers Power* (March 1999) declares: “For us, in this conflict, NATO imperialism and the Serb forces are equally reactionary.” Adding to the bourgeoisie’s propaganda blitz for war in the Balkans, WP writes: “Victory to the Kosovar national liberation struggle!” and calls for “Arms, medical supplies, food with no strings to the Kosovars!” Their afterthought—“No to NATO bombing of Serbia!”—is a threadbare curtain to cover their capitulation to their own imperialism.

Centrism, like all manner of opportunism, is inherently nationalistic. The outbreak of war has fractured Workers Power’s “international”—the League for a Revolutionary Communist International (LRCI)—into opposing pieces like rubble blown to bits across the war zone. In France, where demonstrations against the war have brought out as many as 10,000 people, including thousands of Serbs who came to France a generation ago to work in industry, Pouvoir Ouvrier (PO) reprinted its British comrades’ propaganda *minus* the most egregious statement equating the NATO imperialists

with the Serbs. Showing a left face to these large protests, PO’s youth group added the slogan, “Defeat the NATO attack against Serbia and Montenegro.”

But in Austria—a historic foe of Serbia—the WP affiliate displayed a war lust that would put Bill Clinton to shame, unabashedly siding with the imperialists *against* Serbia. Complaining about the delayed onset of bombing due to the peace talks in Rambouillet, they scorned the “humiliating retreat of the U.S. and Britain on air attacks against the Serbs” and complained, “Despite the warlike uproar of U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright, in all probability not one house will be bombed to bits—at least on the Serbian side” (*ArbeiterInnen-standpunkt*, March 1999)! Capitulating to the large PDS-run rallies, German Workers Power states, “We defend Serbia and Montenegro unconditionally against NATO attacks”—while then urging support to the Kosovo Albanian nationalists...who explicitly call for the introduction of NATO ground troops against Serbia!

An LRCI statement distributed at a public meeting in London on March 30 ludicrously claims to be simultaneously for and against the Serbs in reaction to the NATO attack: “In Serbia and Montenegro—*though not in Kosova which they have no right to occupy*—we support the Serbian forces’ self-defence against NATO attack despite the fact that the Serbs would not face this attack if they withdrew from Kosova.” Their paper opposition to the NATO bombing is further belied by their statement that the workers movement “should recognise the right of the Kosovars to acquire arms and supplies from whoever is willing to give them and also their right to take full military advantage of the imperialist bombing to drive out the ‘Yugoslav’ forces.” This is a blatantly self-contradictory position designed to paper over the differences between the LRCI’s national sections.

What we are seeing with Workers Power is the national decomposition of this pseudo-Trotskyist “international.” When Cold War II burned white hot over the presence of Soviet troops in Afghanistan, and under the impact of the Spartacist tendency’s unique support to the Red Army intervention and our call to extend social gains of the October Revolution to the Afghan peoples, Workers Power formally abandoned its anti-Soviet “third campism” and teetered between the

the cause of the oppressed, rather than acting as job-trusting bureaucrats and labor cops for the capitalists, holding down and dividing up the ranks as the sellout labor officialdom does today.”

—“L.A. Upheaval Shakes America,” WV No. 551, 13 May 1992

Capitalists Strengthen Repressive Machinery

The L.A. upheaval confirmed the bourgeoisie’s fears that the everyday racist brutality of its increasingly bonapartist police may be insufficient to contain future social explosions as the gap grows between the tiny handful of the very rich and the ever expanding ranks of the desperately poor. Over the past two decades, and particularly as interimperialist competition has escalated following the restoration of capitalism in the former Soviet Union, the bourgeoisie has moved to squeeze ever more profits from workers by driving down living standards, while writing off whole layers of the ghetto poor as a “surplus population.” Recent years have seen the wholesale destruction of social welfare programs benefiting the poor. This has been accompanied by a massive expansion of the capitalist machinery of state repression.

Marine Corps Commandant General Charles C. Krulak declaims that future battles will be fought in the “urban canyons” formed by high-rise buildings. And in a recent article in *Armed Forces Journal International* (quoted in the *San Francisco Guardian*, 10 March),

pulls of revolution and counterrevolution...only to collapse into the camp of pro-imperialist counterrevolution. It’s been a hard lurch to the right since, particularly with the Yeltsinite counterrevolution in the Soviet Union which WP supported. In the early 1990s, WP campaigned for “Workers Aid to Bosnia,” which we nailed at the time as “a stalking horse for NATO intervention” against the Serbs on behalf of the Bosnian Muslim regime (WV No. 604, 5 August 1994). This sordid episode prepared WP’s overt support to imperialist war moves in the Balkans today. “Human rights” imperialism? Tell it to the Serbian women and children bombed out of their homes, or the Albanian refugees fleeing the war zone to NATO countries which won’t let them in!

ICL sections far and wide, including in countries removed from the immediate conflict, have agitated against this war as revolutionary internationalists. Speakouts at the UNAM campus in Mexico City have exposed U.S. “human rights” hypocrisy in the Balkans by pointing to the reality of Yankee imperialist oppression throughout Latin America. Our comrades in South Africa organized a speakout at Witwatersrand University and brought the lessons home. Against illusions fostered by the South African Communist Party (SACP), whose only objection to the bombing is that it is not carried out under the blue flag of the United Nations, the leaflet issued by our comrades notes:

“The SACP pushes illusions in the very imperialist body whose ‘peacekeeping’ operations—from Korea to Congo and Iraq—is a figleaf for imperialist slaughter.... When this [South African] strike-breaking capitalist government sent troops to Lesotho last year, the reformist SACP stood four-square behind it. From Angola to the Congo to Libya, bourgeois nationalists in South Africa and the rest of Africa propose OAU [Organization of African Unity] or UN ‘peacekeepers’ while in practice perpetuating imperialist enslavement.”

The Spartacist League/U.S. has a particular internationalist duty to bring revolutionary consciousness to the working people of this country, the most powerful imperialist predator on the face of the planet. As the Spartacist speaker declared at a speakout at the Chicago campus of the University of Illinois: “We in the belly of the imperialist beast have an obligation to organize the class with the power and the interest to bring down this rapacious bloody system through proletarian revolution. Anti-imperialism abroad means class struggle at home!”■

Col. James A. Lasswell, head of the Marine Corps Warfare Laboratory, writes:

“The future urban center will contain a mixed population, ranging from the rich elite to the poor and disenfranchised. Day to day existence for most of the urban poor will be balanced tenuously on the edge of collapse. With social conditions ripe for exploitation, the smallest tilt of unfavorable circumstances might be enough to instigate starvation, disease, social ferment, cultural unrest, and other forms of urban violence.”

Though the Marines insist they have no plans to invade U.S. cities, the photographs of cities depicted in Urban Warrior training documents include Miami, Seattle, Chicago, San Diego, New York and San Francisco (*Express*, 12 March). The same article goes on to say:

“Special weapons have been developed allowing the U.S. forces to fire mortars over the tops of skyscrapers.... Other weapons would blast through steel-reinforced concrete to incinerate the inhabitants of a specific room hidden deep inside a high rise. Work is underway to perfect a machine gun that can fire around corners.... Special troops equipped with nonrichocheting weapons and air-quality sensors can slither through city sewers and utility tunnels on special sleds and trolleys designed to take over subway systems.”

Already under the Reagan administration, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), originally charged with overseeing disaster relief, was transformed into an apparatus to put down urban insurrection, with the power to set up concentration camps for the mass detention of those the rulers deem undesirable. The authority for military exercises like Urban Warrior came directly out of the “anti-terrorist” crack-down in the wake of the 1995 bombing of the Federal building in Oklahoma City. Seizing on this atrocity, Clinton pushed through a sinister “counterterrorism” bill chock-full of provisions to increase the repressive powers of the capitalist state: secret trials for non-citizen “suspected terrorists,” using the military for domestic police enforcement, unlimited harassment and surveillance of dissident organizations, blanket authorization for wiretaps, and an escalation of the ongoing campaign against the constitutional right to bear arms. This came on top of Clinton’s 1994 “crime” bill, which vastly extended the death penalty for federal offenses and introduced more stringent gun control measures.

The ruling class cynically uses the threat of terrorism as a cover for everything from terror-bombing foreign countries to cracking down on civil liberties in the U.S. The May 1985 bombing of the Philly MOVE home under Reagan, which burned to death 11 black people—including five children—and destroyed an entire black neighborhood, brought home in blood and fire what the capitalist state has in store for any who step “out of line.” This was followed under Clinton by the fiery holocaust of 86 men, women and children in the integrated Branch Davidian religious commune near Waco, Texas in April 1993.

In a plan to further augment the powers of the state, Clinton recently revealed in an interview with the *New York Times* (22 January) a Pentagon proposal to

appoint a military commander for the continental U.S. According to another article in the *Times* (28 January), the pretext is “a growing threat of major terrorist strikes on U.S. soil.” This would be a significant step since the U.S. bourgeoisie has long upheld the formal (and mythical) separation of the military from domestic repressive duties as a benefit of bourgeois democracy. In fact, the Marines are already being used to patrol the border with Mexico and two years ago shot dead a Mexican American youth in Texas.

The Bourgeois Military and State Terror

The machinery of organized violence which is at the core of the capitalist state—prisons, cops, courts and the mili-



Military occupation of Detroit, 1967: 43 were killed and over 7,000 arrested during bloody suppression of ghetto upheaval.

tary—exists to protect the continued rule of the wealthy elite that controls the means of production against the working masses and the oppressed at home and abroad. A quick review of U.S. history demonstrates this elementary Marxist truth. Military troops have been used repeatedly to repress workers strikes, plebeian upheavals and protests by the poor and oppressed.

In 1877, a nationwide rail strike against cuts in already miserable wages was drowned in blood by National Guard and federal troops, including some who had just been withdrawn from the South as part of the final betrayal of Radical Reconstruction (see “Defeat of Reconstruction and the Great Rail Strike of 1877: The Shaping of Racist American Capitalism,” *WV* No. 701, 20 November 1998). In the bloody Ludlow, Colorado massacre of 1914, 21 men, women and children, mainly families of striking miners, were killed by the machine-gun fire of the state militia. But at Ludlow the workers were armed by the United Mine Workers, and to the horror of the bosses, for ten days some 1,000 strikers fought back bullet for bullet. In 1970, National Guard units fresh from strikebreaking duty against a Teamsters strike in Ohio were sent to Kent State University, where they gunned down four students protesting the bombing of Cambodia and the presence of ROTC on campus.

A wave of ghetto upheavals rocked urban centers in the late 1960s in response to racist police terror and the killing of black political leaders. The sight of hordes of riot-clad cops, trigger-happy National Guardsmen and combat-trained army troops storming through the ghettos, invading black homes in search of arms and dispersing crowds of blacks with tear gas and hot lead became a familiar one across the U.S.

The Chicago ghetto revolt in the summer of 1966 was sparked by cop terror in the Puerto Rican barrio and spread rapidly through an area of 800 blocks housing 300,000 black people. When 900 riot-clad cops were unable to restore the “peace,” notorious racist mayor Daley called in 45,000 National Guardsmen, who clubbed blacks into unconsciousness and fatally shot two people, including a 14-year-old expectant mother. After Martin Luther King Jr.’s assassination two

years later, President Johnson ordered 5,000 troops into Chicago to quell unrest and federalized the Illinois National Guard.

In 1967, the 82nd Airborne was brought in to repress the Detroit ghetto explosion. Former Black Panther Party leader Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt), a Vietnam vet, described in an interview with *Workers Vanguard* (No. 382, 28 June 1985) how his unit was mobilized to put down the unrest: “I was a sergeant and had done the year over there [Vietnam] that was required. And they called in the paratroopers to quell it because the National Guard couldn’t do it. It just so happened that the paratroopers that they sent out, our unit, was something like 60-70 percent black.” Geronimo’s unit was immediately pulled out and penalized for

tute “charter schools” for the upscale while gutting the already massively underfunded public schools which are the reserve of working-class and minority youth. In his first three months in office, Brown has moved fast to implement this anti-working-class, racist program, making bonapartist moves against the city’s established, largely black administrative bureaucracy and moving to take over the public schools.

Despite his trademark offbeat, Buddhist/New Age/populist rhetoric, Brown is a mainstream bourgeois politician with hands-on experience in administering the capitalist state. Following a recent killing of an Oakland cop, Brown made clear his commitment to terrorizing the oppressed black and Latino population of Oakland when he ranted: “If they don’t work, carry guns and are damned dangerous, they have no place in Oakland. We will not tolerate outlaws” (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 12 January). Yet Brown’s election was greeted with adulation by swarms of reformist fake socialists, as well as the likes of former Black Panther leader David Hilliard, who is himself a candidate for Oakland City Council. Some of Brown’s liberal backers professed to be shocked by his embrace of the Marines. But it should come as no surprise that he wants a Marine Corps prepared to assist his racist cops if they can’t keep a lid on any protest his capitalist administration may face.

Demonstrations against the Marine invasion of Oakland were relatively small gatherings of pacifists, liberals and the reformist left. When protesters occupied Brown’s office on March 17, they were met with a violent cop assault which resulted in 22 arrests, including two for felony robbery charges. We demand: Drop the charges against all protesters!

The dominant theme of these protests was the liberal notion that the government could be pressured to “change its priorities.” This was voiced by one participant who said, “If the government is going to spend \$4.5 million [on Urban Warrior], they should spend it on Oakland schools” (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 17 March). But this capitalist government pours *hundreds of billions* every year into augmenting its forces of repression precisely because *its* purpose is to protect the property and power of the American bourgeoisie from the many whose blood and sweat make the profits for the few. The capitalist state’s answer to the desperate plight of the impoverished ghetto and barrio masses is ever more intense racist repression, pushed no less by the Democrats than the Republicans. The bourgeois state cannot be reformed but must be smashed through proletarian revolution.

The Spartacist League fights to break workers and minorities from the Democratic Party of racism and war. We seek to build a revolutionary workers party that will act as the tribune of the people, exposing and fighting against every manifestation of oppression and injustice. Such a party is needed to lead the working class in the seizure of state power, to rip industry from the hands of the bourgeoisie and replace this profit-driven system with an egalitarian socialist society. ■

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New York...

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include thousands of black workers who know that it could just as easily have been them as Amadou Diallo. Our call for labor protests has found deep resonance among the transit union membership. They have the power to stop the world center of finance capital dead in its tracks. The black, Hispanic, Asian and white workers in the city workers unions—from Local 1199 hospital workers to Teamsters—could bring the wheels of New York City government to a grinding halt.

There will be no end to police brutality short of the destruction of the system of capitalist exploitation and racist oppression which the cops serve as armed guard dogs. But a massive mobilization of labor would give the cops some pause. For a taste of that, recall the 40,000-strong protest by overwhelmingly white New York City construction workers last summer. Facing down mounted police, they took to the streets chanting, “New York City—our city!” Bringing that kind of social power to bear in a mass protest against cop terror would be a big step toward imbuing the working class with the understanding that its interests are inseparably linked to the defense of the

of American capitalist rule and the cops are the enforcers. At a March 10 hearing on police brutality in Harlem, a black father spoke powerfully to the everyday reality of treatment at the hands of the cops:

“I live in the projects up in Soundview, and the way the police approach you up there is not so polite. First of all, they curse at you, they throw you around, they totally disrespect and humiliate you.... I do not allow my children out after dark, after ten o’clock in the street.... My 15-year-old, he’s six feet. He says, ‘Dad, but everybody out here knows me.’ I say, ‘Yeah, but the police don’t know you.’ And that’s the reality.”

At the same meeting, cards were handed out instructing people how to behave when approached by the police: don’t run, be respectful, avoid confrontation, do not fight back even if hit. Black cops go into grade schools and give six-year-old kids the same message. There’s no instruction on their legal and constitutional rights against unwarranted search and seizure because there is no “Bill of Rights” on the streets of the inner cities. You’re told “you fit the description,” you’re spread-eagled, slammed into a car hood and consider yourself lucky if you escape alive. Of black and Hispanic men between the ages of 24 and 35 interviewed by the New York *Daily News* (26 March), *81 out of 100* reported that they had been stopped and harassed by the

murder rap. In 1983, Koch was run out of Harlem when he dared show his face at hearings on police brutality. But a couple of weeks ago, there was Koch announcing that he was going to protest and get arrested at One Police Plaza with his fellow Democrats. He didn’t make it due to heart problems. Too bad. Doubtless, thousands would have gotten much pleasure if Koch’s ticker had given out while being handcuffed by the same cops whose brutality he so avidly encouraged.

But it wasn’t just Koch. Black liberal David Dinkins hired an additional 6,000 cops and let them loose on the ghetto streets. And Al Sharpton organized anti-drug vigilantes to serve as auxiliaries to the police. When he ran for NYC mayor in the last election, Sharpton didn’t say a word about reducing the power or size of the cops. While Giuliani plays on racism to bolster the police force, portraying them as the “thin blue line” protecting whites from the ghetto poor, the black Democrats do the same job by playing on the fears of black parents for the safety of their kids in order to push for more cops, more police powers and stiffer sentences. The upshot of this “war on crime” is that nearly one million black people are now in prison.

Jesse Jackson, who took time out from stumping for Clinton’s imperialist terror

expression to the anger of the Harlem masses and rally working-class support to the side of the besieged inner city of New York. The Spartacist-initiated Harlem Solidarity Committee organized a rally of close to one thousand largely black and Hispanic workers in the center of New York’s garment district around the slogans “Remove the Rioting Cops from Harlem” and “Support the Right of the Citizens of the Ghetto to Defend Themselves.”

Working against the efforts of the Harlem Defense Council was the so-called “Unity Council” encompassing organizations from the NAACP to the Nation of Islam as well as black Democrats and businessmen. This “unity” council pledged to “restore peace in the community” and leafletted and canvassed Harlem urging residents to stay away from the march called by the HDC. Working the same side of the street as Wagner and his cops in trying to prevent any organized, political response to the police terror, the Unity Council put forward a series of demands for “reforming the police.”

Today, that role is being played by the black Democrats and union bureaucrats, with a gaggle of phony leftists in their tow. They’re trying to get out in front of the outrage against the cops and defuse it with empty demands to “reform” the police. The ten-point program devised by the black Dems calls for more black and minority cops, to require cops to live within the city limits, for a stronger civilian review board and for federal oversight of the cops.

But it makes little difference if the cops are black or white or live in your neighborhood. Their job is to operate as the armed enforcers for the rule of racist American capitalism. The Feds aren’t going to help you—they are the central executive committee of this whole *system* of cop terror. Nor are the cops going to be “controlled by the community,” for the simple reason that they are servants of a ruling class whose profits are derived from the exploitation of labor and the racist oppression of blacks, immigrants and all minorities.

The whole purpose of this ten-point program is not to oppose the cops but to preserve the authority of strikebreaking, racist “law and order” by making it appear as if it is simply a question of a few bad apples in an otherwise fine police force. That is made perfectly clear in point seven: “The salary and benefits for police officers must be improved. Law enforcement officers are entrusted with an extraordinary responsibility and they should be compensated accordingly.” It is a real statement of the loyalties of the labor bureaucrats, who have done nothing to fight for their own membership, that they are pulling out the stops for a pay raise for the cops!

Bolstering the efforts of this committee for the whitewash of the racist cops is the International Socialist Organization (ISO), which is pushing a “Citywide Network Against Police Violence” with a virtually identical ten-point program minus the demand for higher pay for the cops. No surprises here. In Canada, this



DeLucia/NY Times



Hughes/NY Daily News



Sipa

Democrats have been in forefront of unleashing cop terror in the ghettos, from racist pig Ed Koch to liberal David Dinkins (at left in center photo) to “law and order” president Clinton.

ghettos and barrios and the fight for black freedom.

The obstacle to this is the trade-union bureaucracy, which is bound hand and foot to serving the interests of the class enemy, mainly in its Democratic Party face. They’re working overtime to prevent any real protest against the cops. 1199 president Dennis Rivera put it baldly: “The terror that some of us have is that if we don’t channel this into a solution, this will fizzle, and there will be a sense of frustration and an increased polarization.” Polarization between the working masses and the racist rulers is the last thing the labor tops want. Their job is to preserve the racist status quo, and thus their “solution” is to try to channel the outrage against the cops into support for the Democrats and the preservation of police-enforced “law and order.”

Street Crimes Unit—An Elite Death Squad

The cops who gunned down Amadou Diallo are part of the Street Crimes Unit. Comprising *1 percent* of the total police force in New York City—380 out of 39,000 cops—this special squad accounts for almost half of all weapons seizures. By police department records alone, the SCU has searched more than 45,000 people over the past two years. But even this is a vast understatement of the sweeping terror carried out by this elite police gang. No less an authority than New York State attorney general Eliot Spitzer estimates that it is more likely that hundreds of thousands have been stopped, since the cops generally report only one-tenth or one-fifth of their searches. And that doesn’t account for the harassment, brutality and terror carried out by the rest of the 39,000 cops on the streets.

Brutal racist oppression is at the heart

cops. One who had been stopped *50 times* said simply, “I know if I go home, I’ve won.”

This reign of racist cop terror isn’t new, nor has it gotten worse uniquely under Republican mayor Giuliani. He’s a tinpot police-state dictator, all right. But the Democrats are no alternative. Besides Giuliani, there has been only one other Republican mayor of New York City in the past 50 years. The rest have been Democrats who were instrumental in arming and unleashing the cops.

It is a measure of the cynicism of the Police Plaza sit-ins organized by Sharpton that one of his supporters is former Democratic Party mayor Ed Koch. Koch is a certified racist pig. Riding into the mayor’s office on the wave of a racist backlash, Koch reveled in contempt for black people. Mocking black activists who were protesting his closure of Sydenham Hospital in Harlem, Koch put on an Afro wig and did a minstrel jig at a fundraising party in 1980. From day one, his record as mayor was an unmitigated trail of racist horrors punctuated by the names of those many black people killed by his cops. Michael Stewart: a young black artist choked to death by the transit police. Eleanor Bumpurs: an ailing black grandmother who was murdered by an NYPD eviction squad for failure to pay \$396 in back rent. Edmund Perry: a 17-year-old black honor student killed by cops.

While the racist cops killed with impunity, Koch had a whole machinery for cover-up. His chief medical examiner, Dr. Elliot Gross, gouged the eyes out of the corpse of Michael Stewart to remove evidence of hemorrhaging from the cop choke hold. He ordered the autopsy report on Eleanor Bumpurs to say that she had only been shot once, not twice, in order to help the cops beat a

war against Serbia to get himself arrested at the One Police Plaza protests, has been a leading force in pushing the “war on drugs” which has been central to the vast escalation of police repression. The armies of cops who occupy the inner cities, the paramilitary SWAT teams which maraud through the streets randomly breaking into apartments with guns drawn, the hundreds of thousands of black and Hispanic youth behind bars are the direct result of the “drug war” pushed by Jackson as front man for the Democrats.

Harlem 1964: Democrats Crush Black Struggle

In the summer of 1964, the killing of 15-year-old James Powell by an off-duty cop in Harlem sparked an outpouring of rage. It was an opportunity for the racist city rulers under Democratic Party mayor Robert F. Wagner to move in to crush the black masses who were becoming politicized and organized, engaging in school boycotts protesting segregation, demonstrations against cop terror and rent strikes in which thousands formed tenants councils, withheld rents and won services and repairs from reluctant slumlords. Wave after wave of the specially trained, elite Tactical Patrol Force swept through Harlem indiscriminately beating and terrorizing all who crossed their path.

A protest demonstration called by the Harlem Defense Council (HDC) organized by the Progressive Labor Party (PL) was banned by the Wagner administration. When black PL leader Bill Epton and civil rights lawyer Conrad Lynn courageously stepped out to lead the march, they were faced with a force of *27,000 cops* lining the streets and were immediately arrested. The newly formed Spartacist group sought to give organized

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Basques...

(continued from page 4)

the workers movement, this myth is particularly propagated by the chauvinist French Communist Party (PCF), which also pretends that practically the entire “people” was engaged in the Resistance against the Nazis, etc. It is revealing to note how minor the differences historically are between authoritarian Spain and so-called “Republican” France in their repression of the Basque people.

In France, the Basques have no legal status at all—there is no Basque *département* [administrative district], nor even a university. In recent times, the withdrawal of the right of asylum, summary expulsions of Basque militants and the activities of the fascistic GAL terrorists have served to nourish national resentment also in the Basque region of France, where there has been a large degree of solidarity with the Basques across the border. While the development of the Basque question in France and Spain has been very different, it is clear that today there exists a single Basque nation divided and oppressed by these two capitalist powers.

The Basques are an ancient people, who certainly predate the Indo-Europeans in Europe. Their language, Euskara, has no distinguishable relationship to any other language, certainly not to French or Spanish. It has been in decline throughout the 20th century, repressed by the French and Spanish authorities, although a recent campaign to revive it, aided by the *ikastolak* (Basque-language schools), has met with some success. The Basque language is one of the major factors contributing to Basque national sentiment, indeed the only way to describe a Basque in Euskara is *euskaldun*, “Basque speaker.”

To understand the persistence of national questions in France and in the Iberian peninsula today, it is necessary to understand how the questions have evolved historically. Lenin wrote that for the complete victory of commodity production, the bourgeoisie had first to capture the domestic market and that it needed politically united territories whose population spoke a single language, with all obstacles to their development eliminated. That was the economic foundation of the national movements. It was in that sense that Trotsky wrote,



AFP

Right-wing Spanish prime minister José María Aznar (left) and French Socialist leader Lionel Jospin join in anti-Basque repression. Right: Cops in Pamplona, Spain drag off Herri Batasuna supporter in 1997 crackdown on Basque militants.



Reuters

comparing Spain and France:

“Spain’s retarded economic development inevitably weakened the centralist tendencies inherent in capitalism. The decline of the commercial and industrial life in the cities and of the economic ties between them inevitably led to the lessening of the dependence of individual provinces upon each other. This is the chief reason why bourgeois Spain has not succeeded to this day in eliminating the centrifugal tendencies of its historic provinces. The meagerness of the national resources and the feeling of restlessness all over the country could not help but foster separatist tendencies. Particularism appears in Spain with unusual force, especially compared with neighboring France, where the Great Revolution finally established the bourgeois nation, united and indivisible, over the old feudal provinces.”

—“The Revolution in Spain”
(January 1931)

The fact that even in France the national question was not completely resolved by the Revolution of 1789 was due to its nature as a *bourgeois* revolution. From the time of Henry III until the revolution, all kings of France were also termed “king of Navarre,” ruling over that part of the Basque country north of the Pyrenees. After the revolution, the French National Assembly voted for the abolition of the constitutions of the three Basque provinces, Basse Navarre, Soule and Labourd, which were put down by force. The *département* of Basses-Pyrénées was then created, including the [non-Basque] Béarn region.

During the French Revolution, from 1792 to 1798, each French *département* and each commune [town] had complete

administrative autonomy. This autonomy was destroyed by Napoleon’s 1799 coup d’état, which installed prefects and reactionary centralization. The French bourgeoisie presents this reactionary centralization as a gain of the revolution.

The myth that the French Revolution supposedly solved the national questions in France was invented by the bourgeoisie after the debacle of 1870 and the Paris Commune that followed, that is, *one century after* the revolution. At that time, the French bourgeoisie turned education into a key vehicle for achieving several objectives. The main one was to prepare revenge against the Germans. This required having the greatest amount of cannon fodder possible and preparing it to go to the massacre by making it as patriotic and chauvinist as possible. (The general staff got a law passed in 1890 allowing all Italian, Spanish, German and other immigrants—and their children—who had come to build the railroads or work in the mines to be naturalized.) This patriotic campaign was also a way for the bourgeoisie to avoid having the working class launch a new Commune. This was also an opportunity to give the working class the education required by the industrial revolution.

The public education system that was set up was thus a school for chauvinism and patriotism. In order to better ideologically prepare the working class and peasantry, the myth of “the French nation going back to the Gauls” was *invented*. This new history of France was inculcated at school, where the children of

minorities as well as children in the colonies in Africa, Asia and elsewhere were told that their ancestors were Gauls! This history, created in the context of imperialist and colonialist pillage, was peddled by the bourgeoisie and its Stalinist and social-democratic lackeys. We’re a long way here from Valmy [a battle in the French Revolution] and the struggle against the reactionaries in Europe who tried to crush the democratic gains resulting from the overthrow of feudalism by the French bourgeoisie.

In its preparation for a revanchist drive and for the slaughter of the First World War, the bourgeoisie also needed to unite the country linguistically. The languages and dialects spoken in the countryside needed to be eradicated. Patriotism and chauvinism needed to be expressed in a single language, French. In 1835, more than half of the mayors in the regions of Bayonne and Mauléon did not speak a word of French (as was also the case with many school teachers). Teachers, the foundation of the public education system, were the battering ram of patriotism and chauvinism, and French became a requirement. It was imposed on children, who were subjected to every possible punishment and harassment when they spoke their mother tongue. Despite the French bourgeoisie’s language policy, the forced assimilation of the Basques was never fully realized. Today, the highest percentage of Basque speakers in the entire Basque country is to be found in the Basque provinces in France.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

outfit supported a strike by prison guards. In Britain, they argued that all “coppers” weren’t really “bastards” but could in fact be a force on the side of the working class and oppressed if they only “rebel collectively.” Black, Hispanic and other residents of New York City got a flavor of such a collective rebellion by the cops a few years back when these thugs in blue rampaged through the streets and subways after being incited at a City Hall rally by Giuliani as part of his bid to take over the mayor’s office from David Dinkins.

More recently, the ISO-initiated Campaign to End the Death Penalty issued a leaflet calling for a March 17 NYC protest in defense of former Black Panther Lawrence Hayes with the demand: “Hands off the parole system”! This is a call to preserve a system of virtual slavery for those released from prison before their full term. The Communist Party and Workers World scramble to outdo Sharpton et al. in sowing deadly illusions that the cops can be tamed through “community control” or toothless “civilian review boards.” Thus, they too take their place among those who are trying to put a “democratic” face on racist capitalist “law and order.”

Socialist Action (March 1999) chimes in saying: “The protests also provide the opportunity to begin organizing to get the cops out of the Black community and to establish Black control of the Black community and the police.” An example of what Socialist Action is talking about are the police auxiliary squads organized

by the Nation of Islam to police housing projects. These fake leftists simultaneously act as cheerleaders for anti-Asian, anti-Arab, anti-Semitic black nationalist demagogues like Louis Farrakhan and Khallid Muhammad in their efforts to be exploiters of their “own” communities in the inner cities while playing the role of waterboys for the racist, job-trusting labor bureaucrats.

Break with the Democrats! Build a Workers Party!

At a February 25 press conference appealing for Clinton to “step up to the plate and provide leadership” against police brutality, Hugh Price, president of the National Urban League, lectured that the Democratic Party president should remember that “the very people who have stuck with you through thick and thin are the primary victims of brutality and abuse” (*People’s Weekly World*, 6 March). It is the reality that those blacks who do continue to vote overwhelmingly cast their ballots for the Democrats, who are seen as the “lesser evil.” But the Democrats are no less a party of racist capitalist “law and order” than the Republicans. This has been increasingly clear since the election of Clinton, who rode into the White House through open appeals to the white racist vote and proceeded to flood the ghettos with tens of thousands more cops and vastly expand the racist death penalty.

That black people vote for a party that has done more to increase the misery of the ghetto masses and augment the pow-

ers of racist state repression than even its Republican predecessors reflects the absence of a political party that fights for them. Black people are in their overwhelming majority working people. They need a party that fights for their interests, against strikebreaking and racist terror, against ever more grinding exploitation and poverty and all-sided oppression—not a party that makes empty promises once every four years come election time, but a party that mobilizes labor/black power in the factories and on the streets. They need a party that understands that the fight against racist oppression means a fight to get rid of the capitalist ruling class which foment racism to divide the working class and maintain its profits and class rule. They need a party based on the understanding that the fundamental division in this racist society is not by skin color but between two counterposed classes—the small handful who own all the means of production and the vast majority who must sell their labor power in order to survive. That kind of party is a multiracial revolutionary workers party.

Speaking to the thousand-strong rally of black and Hispanic workers who had come out in solidarity with the besieged Harlem masses in 1964, *Spartacist* editor James Robertson described the role of the cops in provoking the riots as an excuse to crush the black masses. Noting the attempts by the Democratic Party city administration to blame communists for stirring up Harlem, he declared, “Unfortunately there aren’t many Reds

in Harlem now—*but there will be!*” The vicious redbaiting attacks by the rulers were testimony to their fear of the potent combination of labor, blacks and reds. For it is the social power of organized labor—with its heavy concentration of black workers—linked to the anger of the ghettos and under revolutionary leadership that can and will spell the end of the rule of capital and its marauding cops in America through victorious proletarian socialist revolution.

As we wrote in our supplement “Unchain Labor’s Power!” (WV No. 673, 5 September 1997), written in the wake of the widely popular strike by Teamsters at United Parcel Service:

“When those who labor rule, the tremendous wealth of this society will be used to provide a decent life for the working people, the poor, blacks, immigrants, the young, the aged. The fight for black freedom will be realized in the overthrow of the rule of American capital. When the workers have the industrial wealth that is now being squeezed out of the working class for the profits of the bosses, we will begin to build a planned socialist economy on an international scale. Then we can right some historical crimes and pay off some debts, like some tens of billions of dollars to the Vietnamese and others whose countries have been maimed under the passing treads of American tanks and the bombs of American planes. As for ‘compensation’ to the people who lined their pockets with fat profits while driving everyone else to ruin, the victorious proletariat can offer to those who don’t get in that way that they too will have the right to honest labor and will live to see their grandchildren prosper in a truly humane society.”■

WORKERS VANGUARD

Operation “Urban Warrior” Marines Invade Oakland

OAKLAND—For four days in March, some 700 U.S. Marines invaded this heavily black, working-class city and its environs. Using attack helicopters, hovercraft and amphibious ships, the Marines made repeated landings at the former Alameda Naval Air Station. At the now-closed Oak Knolls Naval Hospital in nearby Oakland, they fired off 10,000 rounds of blank ammunition and dozens of “flashbang” grenades in “mock” battles not far from residential neighborhoods and a school. Residents were awakened by the sound of automatic gunfire and Cobra helicopters buzzing overhead at tree-top level. “We were under aerial attack,” complained one resident. “That was not supposed to be part of the deal” (*San Francisco*

Chronicle, 17 March).

This military exercise, called “Urban Warrior Advanced Warfighting Experiment,” was an ominous display of the state forces to be mobilized against the working class, blacks and all of the oppressed in the event of any perceived challenge to the rule of racist American capitalism. Oakland is the latest of eight cities to be invaded by the Marines in such exercises. In Texas on February 8, with no advance warning “a squadron of eight black helicopters flying at tree top level dropped a team of elite special operations soldiers into the center of Kingsville” (*San Francisco Bay Guardian*, 10 March). For two hours, they conducted “war games” using *live* ammunition and real explo-

sives, setting fire to one building. Residents of a retirement home watched in disbelief as explosions blew out windows of a nearby office building.

San Francisco’s Presidio, a former army base and now a national park, was originally scheduled to be the center of “Urban Warrior” in the Bay Area. But it was vetoed by the park service, which was concerned that the grass would be trampled! And in Monterey, where Marines staged an “occupation” of a military intelligence school, a planned amphibious landing was forbidden for fear of disrupting the whale migration. But no such compunctions applied when it came to terrorizing Oakland’s black population. Indeed, “New Age” Oakland *continued on page 8*



Frohman/SF Chronicle

U.S. Marines descend on Alameda near Oakland in “Urban Warrior” exercise aimed at preparing for suppression of ghetto revolts, labor struggles.

As New York Seethes Over Diallo Killing

Beware Democratic Party Hustlers— Enemies of Labor, Blacks

Mobilize Mass Labor Protest Against Racist Cop Terror!

Seven weeks after the murder of black immigrant Amadou Diallo, gunned down in a hail of 41 bullets by four members of the NYPD’s elite death-squad-style Street Crimes Unit (SCU), New York City continues to boil with outrage against the racist killer cops. Worried that the raw fear and hatred of the cops could ignite a social explosion, black Democratic Party officials have scrambled to get out in front of the protests in a desperate bid to confine them to electoral pressure politics and above all to preserve the “integrity” of the police. New York Democratic Party Senator Charles Schumer made it plain as day what these efforts were all about when he worried aloud on the Senate floor that growing anger against the cops could undermine the racist “war on crime.”

For weeks now, there have been sit-ins at One Police Plaza organized by former FBI fink and black Democrat Al Sharpton. An array of Democratic Party politicians and black CEOs—from former mayor David Dinkins and New York State comptroller Carl McCall to the chairman of the Philadelphia Coca-Cola bottling company—as well as various celebrities like actress Susan Sarandon have volunteered themselves to be handcuffed and led away by the cops. These carefully choreographed arrests have all the elements of theater of the absurd. No

ghetto resident or black or white working person would voluntarily put themselves in the hands of the racist cops. There’d be no release for them a few hours later, but rather the everyday nightmare of being brutalized, trapped and held in “the system.”

Yet despite the consummate cynicism of the Democratic Party orchestrators, these protests began to mushroom as hundreds came out to demonstrate their fury against the indignity, humiliation and raw terror that they are subjected to daily by the cops. So Sharpton has now called off the Police Plaza sit-ins, while the black Dems and “responsible” labor leaders like Dennis Rivera huddled in meetings to come up with a ten-point program aimed at refurbishing the image of the cops—and strengthening them—including demanding that they get better pay!

Now these types are building for a protest on April 3 in Washington, D.C., centrally to appeal for Clinton and Janet Reno’s Justice Department to “investigate the epidemic of police brutality.” *This is obscene!* While they’re at it, why don’t they demand that Bill Gates investigate and remedy the disparity in income between rich and poor in America?! Thousands more cops who are today terrorizing the inner cities were put there by Clinton. And if you want to see an “investigation” by Janet Reno’s Justice

While Democrats push pro-cop whitewash schemes, Spartacist/Labor Black League protesters at March 29 demonstration outside NYPD headquarters call for mobilization of labor power.



WV Photo

Department, look no further than the incinerated corpses of 86 men, women and children of the racially integrated Branch Davidian religious sect near Waco, Texas, who were sent to a fiery death on Reno’s orders in 1993.

Enough! The mass outrage against the cops *does* need an organized political expression. Not one aimed at strengthening the hand of the Democrats, the polit-

ical tool of the very capitalist rulers whose interests the cops “serve and protect,” but one which provides a proletarian class axis that can weld the social power of the multiracial working class to the anger of the inner city through mass labor-centered protest against cop terror.

The ranks of powerful unions like the Transport Workers Union in New York *continued on page 10*