

Defend Serbia Against U.S./NATO Attack!
Defeat U.S. Imperialism Through Socialist Revolution!

Down With U.S./NATO Terror Bombing!

APRIL 12—After nearly three weeks of bombing, the imperialist war against Serbia is the biggest military conflagration in Europe since World War II. Amid a rapid buildup of NATO ground forces on the borders of Kosovo, there is a growing crescendo among Western ruling circles for a full-scale invasion of the rump Serb-dominated Yugoslav republic, which would threaten to draw the whole region into war. Notably, the *New York Times* (10 April) devoted a prominent front-page article to a gruff warning by Washington that Russia had better not intervene in the Balkans on Serbia's side. The deepening conflict in the Balkans underscores the urgency of forging Leninist vanguard parties to lead the proletariat in socialist revolution to sweep away rapacious U.S. imperialism and all the capitalist ruling classes. *Defend Serbia! Defeat U.S./NATO imperialism! For workers revolution!*

According to Belgrade, some 300 civilians have been killed and several thousand more wounded by the bombing. On April 5, bombs slammed into the small Serbian town of Aleksinac, devastating two residential areas and killing at least seven people. In Kosovo, Serbian villages

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Imperialist air war is aimed at sowing terror in Serbian population. Residential neighborhood in town of Aleksinac reduced to rubble by NATO bombs.



AP photos

Victory to Newport News Shipyard Workers!

APRIL 12—For the past week, some 9,200 strikers at Newport News Shipbuilding in the Virginia Tidewater area have shut down production at the country's only builder of nuclear-powered aircraft carriers. The day the strike began last Monday, thousands of members of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 8888 took over the street outside the plant in a mass

picket that stretched 14 city blocks. As hundreds of cops stood glaring, strikers chanted: "88: Close the Gate!"

This is the tenth-largest strike in the U.S. since 1995, hitting a major military contractor as the U.S. government is waging a war of imperialist domination against the Serbian people. The Newport News strike is a critical battle for the entire labor movement and particularly for unions in the "open shop" South.

Local 8888 was forged as an integrated industrial union through a bitter three-month strike in 1979 after a union recognition vote the year before which defeated the former company "union."



WV Photo

USWA Local 8888 strike at Newport News shipyard can be springboard to organize racist, open-shop South.

One veteran of that battle says, "We were fighting for recognition then. We're fighting to survive now." With the huge General Dynamics conglomerate looking to take over the shipyard, management is intent on inflicting a crippling defeat on the union in order to keep wages down and get a better selling price.

Wages for this highly skilled workforce average only \$12-14 an hour. Shipyard workers haven't seen a pay raise in *six years*. Some haven't had one in as much as *16 years*. Some workers take home so little that they qualify for welfare benefits to help feed their children. Strikers are

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Local 100 Tops Bilk Members, Bust Union Shop for Bosses

TWU: No to Racist, Union-Busting “Workfare” Scheme!

NEW YORK CITY—The Transit Authority (TA) recently announced that by the end of this month it will bring in the first of 1,000 welfare recipients who will be forced to clean the subways to keep their meager benefits. The responsibility for introducing “workfare” slavery into the largest urban transit system in the country lies squarely at the doorstep of the Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100 bureaucracy which has continually eroded the union’s power through class collaboration with capitalist politicians from both the Democratic and Republican parties. In late 1996, local president Willie James reopened the then-existing contract at the behest of TA management to push through a sellout that provided for slashing the jobs of nearly 600 unionized

cleaners and replacing them with desperately poor people forced to work for their sub-poverty-level welfare benefits. As we wrote at the time in “NYC ‘Workfare’ Deal: Enslaving the Poor, Busting the Unions” (WV No. 652, 27 September 1996): “This betrayal by the Local 100 tops is not only a vicious attack on overwhelmingly minority welfare recipients but is a dagger pointed straight at the heart of the TWU—and all NYC municipal unions.”

“Workfare” is a centerpiece in the American rulers’ all-sided assault on the living standards of the working class and poor initiated by Democratic president Clinton with his pledge to “end welfare as we know it.” In cities like New York, AFL-CIO officials are literally the back-

bone of the Democratic Party machine—which exists to maintain racist capitalism at all costs. Occasionally, they even back openly labor-hating politicians like Mayor Giuliani. Racist, union-busting “workfare” was foisted on this city with the collusion of labor traitors like AFSCME District Council 37’s former president Stanley Hill along with the Local 100 tops. The city rulers intend to use the growing ranks of “workfare” laborers as a union-busting force against the municipal unions.

Transit workers, who are themselves heavily black and immigrant, must mobilize their union to defeat this attempt to cripple the TWU and pit the unionized workforce against the minority poor. While the tame New Directions (ND) “opposition” to James claims to oppose “workfare,” in practice it bows to the 1996 deal and calls for a provision in the next contract not to organize “workfare” laborers as union brothers and sisters but to *exclude* them from the TA workforce. The last thing the ND fakers, who include almost half of the Local 100 Executive Board and control a number of key divisions, want to see is a real union struggle that turns the tables on management, for example, by defying the state’s strikebreaking Taylor Law.

After years of cutbacks and “productivity” speedups, with ridership way up, the TA is sitting on nearly a \$400 million budget surplus. If management wants to bring in a thousand workers from the welfare rolls to help clean the filthy subway stations and cars, the 34,000 members of Local 100 should say fine: **Organize them into the union! Hire them at full union wages and benefits with full union protection! Equal pay for equal work!**

With its power to shut down the financial citadel of U.S. imperialism, Local 100 should be leading a fight by all city unions to *organize the unorganized* and to scrap slave-labor “workfare” once and for all. Such a fight would be immensely popular right now, especially as New York’s minority population seethes with anger over the vicious NYPD killing of black African Amadou Diallo. With thousands of black transit workers keenly aware it could just as easily have been them as Diallo, our call for mass labor protests against racist cop terror has found deep resonance among the TWU ranks.

A fight to organize the unorganized also means a struggle for *jobs for all*—for a shorter workweek at no loss in pay—and full cost-of-living escalator clauses in union contracts. New York needs a *mas-*

sive program of public works at union wages—for quality, integrated housing and schools, for free quality health care, for massive reconstruction of roads, bridges and tunnels and everything we need for a decent life. In the course of such struggles there must be forged a new, class-struggle leadership of labor, through political combat against all wings of the trade-union bureaucracy, which seek to chain the unions to the agencies and parties of the class enemy—whether Clinton’s Democrats or, in the case of James, Republican mayor Rudolph Giuliani.

New York’s “workfare” program is ground zero in the racist rulers’ war on unions and the poor. Some **40,000 people** have been pressed into the city’s “Work Experience Program” (WEP) gangs, forced to labor in city buildings, hospitals and parks with no rights, no benefits, no union and no hope. Hundreds of thousands have been cut from the welfare rolls in the past few years. The Parks Department had nearly 2,800 workers in 1990, but now this workforce is one-third that size and some 6,000 WEP workers are filling the void. Because of “workfare,” hundreds of welfare recipients have been ripped out of the city colleges and denied a chance for higher education and a decent job.

With a rate of unionization over twice that in private industry and large numbers of black and minority workers, public employees unions are high on the capitalists’ hit list. Municipal union jobs which once provided one of the only avenues to a decent livelihood for blacks, immigrants and other minorities are being slashed to the core around the country. The axing of “welfare as we know it” by both parties and the imposition of “workfare” has given the capitalists another tool to ratchet up the level of exploitation to ensure fat profits for the tiny wealthy minority who own the means of production. The capitalist profit system is premised on sowing and enforcing divisions in the working class, setting sectors of the exploited and oppressed against one another through racism, sexism and anti-immigrant bigotry.

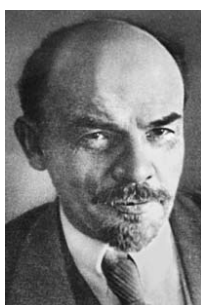
Today the union misleaders act more like low-wage labor contractors than even labor lieutenants of capital. It took bitter struggles to forge Local 100 into an integrated industrial union. Now the union tops are working overtime to turn back the clock and open up this unionized workplace to brutal non-union exploitation again. Like the rest of New York City’s AFL-CIO brass—now immersed in



TROTSKY

For a Class-Struggle Fight to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!

Our class-struggle perspective aimed at mobilizing labor’s power to free death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal stands in the tradition of the International Labor Defense (ILD) led by James P. Cannon. In the 1920s, the ILD and its fraternal organizations in other countries led hundreds of thousands of workers in protest against the monstrous frame-up of anarchist workers Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti in



LENIN

Massachusetts. In article after article, including one written in August 1927 after they were granted a brief reprieve on the eve of their execution, Cannon warned sharply against illusions in the capitalist “justice” system as an obstacle to proletarian mobilization.

The lives of Sacco and Vanzetti still hang in the balance and they are in greater danger now than ever before. Every mention of the case should begin with this warning to the working masses not to be fooled with false hopes and false security....

The militant protest movement has halted the executioners up till now. As the final hour drew near, the movement assumed such proportions and militancy and expressed itself in mass demonstrations and strikes on such a scale, as to shake the world. It was especially the last phase of mass demonstrations and strikes which threw the real power of the masses into the scale against the murder plans of the Massachusetts hangmen. Those who emphasized this line of action, who understood and pointed out at every turn the fundamental class issues involved in the case, and who appealed to the mass power of the workers, were entirely correct. This line is the decisive line. The greatest hope now lies in a further development and energetic promotion of this class-struggle policy....

All brakes upon this movement must be regarded as the greatest danger. All illusions which paralyze the movement must be overcome. All agents of the bosses who try to sabotage and discredit the protest and strike movement must be given their proper name.

While the judges of the Supreme Court prepare their decision on the case again, we must appeal at the same time to the laboring masses of America and the whole world who are the highest court of all. The workers have a deep conviction for Sacco and Vanzetti, and they have the power to compel their release. We must help the workers to understand this power, to organize it and to use it. The protest strikes already carried out, in spite of and against the misleaders of labor, are opening up a new page in the development of the American working class. The unparalleled heroic example of Sacco and Vanzetti has inspired and called forth new resources of courage, class solidarity and sacrifice.

—James P. Cannon, “No Illusions!” *Notebook of an Agitator* (1958)

WORKERS VANGUARD



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16 April 1999

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Saturday, April 24, 7 p.m.

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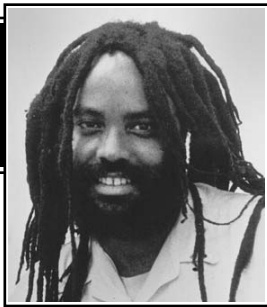
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From Death Row, This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal

What Justice Means...



The deadly doorway execution of the Guinean immigrant, Amadou Diallo in early February in New York City has electrified the city, the nation and parts of the world. It has shown, in clearest terms, that there is a malevolent state of war between the so-called “peace officers,” and the African-American community. One side of this fatal conflict is paid and armed by the state, to defend the state’s interests; the other side is largely unarmed, and gripped by an overarching sense of fear, and also one of betrayal, as the very forces supported by their tax dollars, conspires to instill terror in their everyday lives. It is, of course, no defense to this charge that the victim, Mr. Diallo, was a Guinean, as opposed to an American citizen. In the eyes of his brutal killers, he was perhaps, a Black or Puerto Rican American, who (if they bothered to listen to him) spoke with a funny accent. For them, his aggravating factor was the walnut-colored complexion, which precipitated a death sentence.

His mother and father, like many middle-classed Africans of the Diaspora, had read of the “American way of life,” had seen glowing television reports of American cultural life, of life in one of the West’s great metropolises, and therefore felt, perhaps with some trepidation over street crimes by the ever present poor. But, never, in their wildest imaginings, could they have suspected that the armed servants of the state, the police, could constitute a deadly threat to their boy, a knowledge felt by every African-American family, that learned, not by reading, but by grim experience.

They therefore must have been stunned beyond belief to hear the news, that young Amadou, who was in the process of building his new life in America’s capital of capital, was shot in the vestibule of his own apartment building, with 41 bullets aimed at his extinction.

How could this happen, they may have wondered—in America?

These parents, torn beyond belief, are they not victims?

Those four killer cops who leveled their weapons against an innocent man, are they not murderers?

The legal discourse that flows from capital’s mouthpieces concerning the Diallo case, will be illuminating.

Already, the white majoritarian media are trying to sell the story of how these “good officers” were in “fear.” Who has the best reason in America to have fear—a cop or a Black man facing him?

Where are the perennial calls for the death penalty that are bellowed from the press when presumably innocent people are called guilty within hours of the conflict?

Where are the animalistic condemnations that follow such acts, about “wolf packs,” “gorillas in the midst,” or “wild beasts”?

These cold and silent killers, are “good and decent men,” or “fine officers” who are “just doing their job.” What is their job? Murder? Assassinations? They excel in this practice!

It is unsafe for a columnist to offer any prediction of how this case will turn out, but it is relatively safe to say that they will never face murder charges. They will never join New York State’s newly-brandished Death Row. They will probably never see the inside of a jail cell.

At best, the taxpayers of the great city of New York will ultimately foot the bill for a civil suit settlement, and several million dollars in blood money will be paid to the Diallo family.

That, unfortunately, is the only stunted measure of “justice” that this African family will ever see, and even that twisted degree will be more than that ever seen by many African-Americans or Puerto-Ricans,

for whom justice in the naked city is just another word.

For them, for their progeny, prisons are constructed and filled when people go awry. For agents of the state, there is another kind of justice, where they massage politicians, where “unions” pay their legal fees, and where, even if a judgment is entered in a civil suit, not a dollar comes from their wallet.

Indeed, if the past is any measure, they may be promoted for “coolness under fire,” and for “doing a good job,” or for “protecting the citizenry.” Watch.

What is their job?

Their job is the same job of the troops in post-colonial Vietnam: to keep the natives in control; to instill terror in the dark, poor, working class population; and, in furtherance thereof, to kill.

Pleas from Black leaders for the intervention of Clinton or Reno will undoubtedly fall on deaf ears. Isn’t it ironic that Blacks beat the floorboards of America, and raised their sweet voices to the vaults of heaven to protect Clinton, but now, in their hour of need, he is silent?

For him, for the system, they are just doing their jobs.

1 March 1999

© 1999 by Mumia Abu-Jamal

Join the fight to free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Contact the Partisan Defense Committee. In New York: PDC, P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013-0099; phone (212) 406-4252; E-mail: 75057.3201@compuserve.com. In Chicago: PDC, P.O. Box 802867, Chicago, IL 60680-2867; phone (312) 454-4931. In the Bay Area, PDC, P.O. Box 77462, San Francisco, CA 94107-0462; phone (510) 839-0852.

Urgently needed contributions for Mumia’s legal defense, which are tax-deductible, should be made payable to the Bill of Rights Foundation, earmarked “Mumia Abu-Jamal Legal Defense,” and sent to the Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal, 163 Amsterdam Ave., No. 115, New York, NY 10023-5001. If you wish to correspond with Jamal, you can write to: Mumia Abu-Jamal, AM8335, SCI Greene, 1040 E. Roy Furman Hwy., Waynesburg, PA 15370.

cynical pre-election stunts to bolster the Democratic Party challengers for upcoming mayoral and Senate elections—Local 100 bureaucrats are always whining about the need to gain more “influence in Albany,” avoiding confrontations with City Hall, Wall Street and TA management like the plague. Labor must break completely with the Democrats and Republicans and forge a workers party which opposes every machination of the capitalist rulers and their politicians.

“Workfare” is most threatening to the union’s most exploited members. Since 1995, the number of cleaners—whose ranks include the highest concentration of black and women workers in the TA—has been cut by 22 percent. Management has also sliced up this workforce into four separate job titles: those with some seniority have a “civil service” job title, new-hires are defined as “labor class” cleaners and now, in addition to non-union “workfare” laborers, there will be a category of “lead cleaners,” who will be paid \$1.70 more per hour to act as straw bosses over the WEP work gangs. Such tiers and divisions are clearly designed to undermine the unity and strength of the union.

With their contract expiring in December 1999, transit workers are fuming over the introduction of “workfare” and other attacks, such as the TA’s moves to terminate injured workers on restricted duty, an escalation in “disciplinary” victimizations and drug testing, ceaseless harassment of union safety reps and deteriorating work conditions. So what’s Willie James doing about it? He wants to bilk every union member for \$60 in order to hire a public relations firm to boost the “public image” of transit workers through radio and TV ads. Transit workers heading into a contract meeting last month told WV salesmen that James wants to hire a PR huckster who specializes in boosting racist cop “unions” and produced a nauseating pro-cop, pro-death penalty ad for imperialist terror-bomber Clinton in the 1996 election.



WV Photo

Over 2,500 NYC transit workers protested cutbacks outside TA headquarters in downtown Brooklyn, March 1996. TWU’s power to shut down NYC is shackled by pro-capitalist union tops.

The way the union brass intends to fleece the membership for the \$60 special assessment is through the company-controlled dues checkoff. This system should be abolished! Collection of union dues by elected shop stewards would help make the union leadership accountable to the membership and prepare the union for taking action against management. As was shown in the 1980 NYC transit strike, when the state government seized union dues to pay off fines imposed under the Taylor Law, allowing management to act as the union’s collection agency ensures that the money will get cut off when it’s needed most.

Many transit workers look to the in-house New Directions “opposition” as an alternative to the Local 100 “old guard” bureaucracy under James and former local head, now TWU International president, Sonny Hall. But ND shares the same class-collaborationist, pro-capitalist politics. All these junior bureaucrats really want is to ride their lawyers’ coattails into power in the local. ND has repeatedly launched suits against the union in the bosses’ courts and has heaped praise on “striking” Rikers Island prison guards. We say: Cops and courts out of the

unions! Labor must clean its own house!

The capitalist class relies upon its labor lieutenants in the union bureaucracy to police the workers and contain or prevent struggle. For organized labor to reverse decades of givebacks and restore its lost strength requires that the unions be mobilized on behalf of all the oppressed. As is particularly clear in the case of the heavily black transit workforce, union rights

and black rights either march forward together or fall back separately. Welfare slashing is aimed at grinding down the already miserable living standards of workers and the poor. As revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky wrote in the Transitional Program (1938) during the devastation of the Great Depression:

“The question is one of guarding the proletariat from decay, demoralization and ruin. The question is one of life or death of the only creative and progressive class, and by that token, of the future of mankind. If capitalism is incapable of satisfying the demands inevitably arising from the calamities generated by itself, then let it perish.”

The overthrow of this capitalist system of exploitation, racism and imperialist war requires the forging of a revolutionary workers party.

As Marxists, we oppose the destruction of welfare and other social programs benefiting the working class and poor. But our goal is not simply to reintroduce programs that were designed to sustain the unemployed in permanent poverty. Ours is the fight for proletarian revolution and the establishment of an egalitarian socialist economy where everyone will have a place in social and economic life. ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

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France, Spain—Down With Anti-Basque Repression!

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

PART TWO

The following is the conclusion of an article translated from *Le Bolchévik* No. 146 (Summer 1998), newspaper of the *Ligue Trotskyste de France (LTF)*, section of the *International Communist League*. Part One appeared in WV No. 710 (2 April).

In the epoch of imperialism, renewed impetus has been given to separatist movements seeking to escape the economic dislocation and political chaos wrought by capitalism in its decline. As

LE BOLCHEVIK

Trotsky wrote in "War and the Fourth International" (June 1934), "Having used the nation for its development, capitalism has nowhere, in no single corner of the world, solved fully the national problem." This is particularly true of Spain, where the bourgeois revolution was much more partial than in France.

Despite their strong sense of regional and ethnic identity, the mainly rural Basque provinces did not aspire to nationhood until the late 19th century, when rapid industrialization led to the transformation of Basque society. The massive immigration of workers from Asturias, Castile and elsewhere to the steel mills and mines of Vizcaya meant that formerly Basque-speaking areas were now predominantly Spanish-speaking. Moreover, Spanish workers were organized by the Socialist PSOE and its General Workers Union (UGT), both avowedly Marxist organizations. The founder of Basque nationalism, Sabino Arana Goiri, was alarmed by the threat posed by these socialist-minded workers to traditional Basque bourgeois society, which was characterized by the extreme Catholicism of the Basque Ignacio Loyola and his Jesuit order.

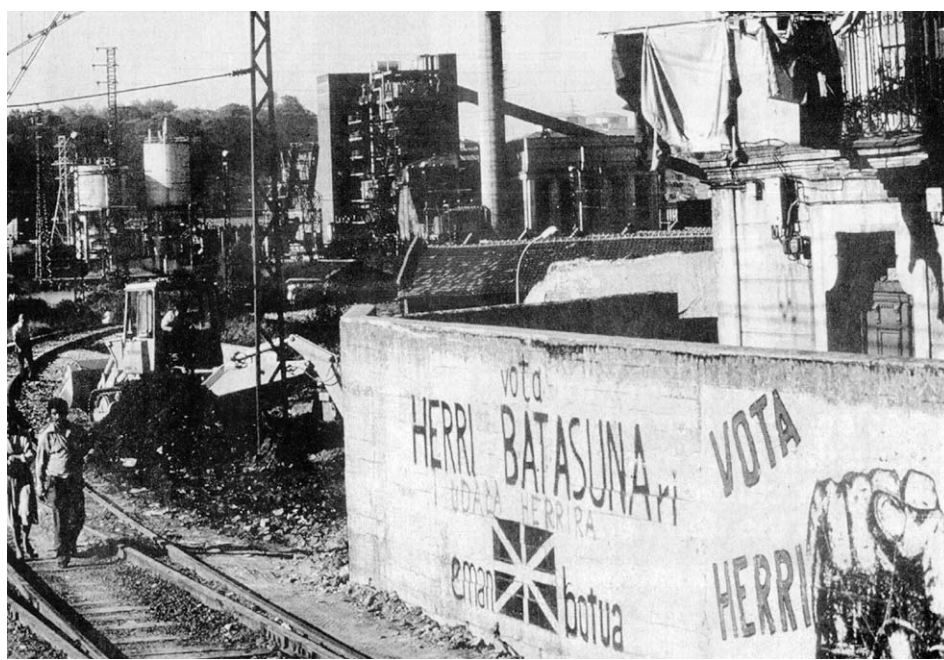
The party founded by Arana, the Partido Nacionalista Vasco (PNV—Basque Nationalist Party), espoused reactionary clericalism and chauvinist bigotry from its inception. Arana considered Spaniards to be racially inferior to Basques, and membership in the PNV was restricted to those who could demonstrate that all four grandparents had Basque names. The party opposed mixed marriages and called for the expulsion of non-Basque workers from Euskadi. Given the strength of Madrid centralism relative to Basque separatism, the PNV came to adopt a position which fell short of demanding full independence. In this way the PNV was able to win support from key elements of the Basque bourgeoisie—the Vizcayan industrialists and financial elites who leaned toward regional autonomy within a unitary Spanish state.

After the fall of Alfonso XIII and the proclamation of the Second Republic in 1931, the PNV convened a meeting to proclaim a Basque Republic which was stopped by force. Ever fearful of the proletariat, the nationalists gravitated toward alliance with the right-wing opposition in Madrid, but the likes of Gil Robles, and later Franco, were to prove even more implacable foes of the Basque nationalist cause than the liberal Republicans. Not surprisingly, when the Civil War erupted in July 1936 in response to Franco's military uprising, the PNV found itself in an equivocal position, pressured on one side

by the Vatican and on the other by the British imperialists who feared for their investments in Vizcaya and doubted that Franco was strong enough to exorcise the spectre of proletarian revolution. The Basque Statute of Autonomy, which had been held in abeyance, was now proffered by the Madrid government in an attempt

had acquired class consciousness.

With the death of Franco in 1975, Spain entered a prerevolutionary crisis, as a massive strike wave throughout the country was accompanied by tremendous outpourings of nationalist and regionalist sentiment in Catalonia and the Basque provinces in particular. With neighboring



Magnum

Intense national oppression in industrialized Basque region of Spain has led to wide support for separatist Herri Batasuna and ETA. Proletarian rule would guarantee right of self-determination for Basques in Spain and France.

to keep the Basques within the Republican camp. The Carlists [supporters of the royal family] in Navarre, who had long been associated with military conspiracy, joined Franco and Mola.

Unlike in Catalonia, the factories were not seized by the proletariat. The Basque government ordered the repression of the anarchist CNT [trade-union federation] and closed its print shops, while President Aguirre proposed sending Basque troops to Barcelona to act as a "moderating force" on the workers movement there. The reformist misleaders of the working class—Stalinists, social-democrats, anarchists—and the centrist POUM strangled the proletarian revolution in Spain by tying the workers to their capitalist rulers through the medium of the people's front, thus paving the way for the victory of Francoist military bonapartism. As soon as they felt able to do so, the Basque bourgeoisie handed the key cities of Bilbao and Donostia (San Sebastián) intact to the Francoists.

In the immediate wake of Franco's victory, a frightful revenge was exacted against all the vanquished forces of the Republic. Hundreds of thousands of workers throughout the peninsula were summarily executed. The Basque and Catalan statutes of autonomy were revoked and the use of Catalan and Euskara were forbidden as part of Franco's program to forcibly Castilianize the entire population. By 1954, the number of speakers of Euskara had fallen from 700,000 to 525,000. Attempts to celebrate the Basque national festival of *Aberri Eguna* were brutally suppressed by the Guardia Civil and the political police. Meanwhile, the Basque exile government was expelled from Paris. While these repressive measures humiliated the entrepreneurial industrialists and financiers of Barcelona and Bilbao, they were centrally aimed at the highly combative proletariat of the northern industrial regions, which

Portugal also in the throes of workers revolution, this was the moment to galvanize the working class and oppressed of the whole peninsula in a struggle to overthrow the rotting capitalist system and establish a soviet federation of Iberian workers republics, which would have opened the road to a Socialist United States of Europe. Proletarian rule in Spain would guarantee the rights of the Basques, Catalans and others to national self-determination and would champion the liberation of women and the cause of all the oppressed. Unfortunately the key to victory was absent in both Spain and Portugal—a genuinely revolutionary, communist leadership of the proletariat.

The scale of nationalist agitation in the north of Spain compelled the bourgeoisie to accord limited autonomy to the Basque and Catalan regions. Fifteen other regional political authorities were created, including an autonomous government in Navarre. The Comunidad Autónoma Vasca (CAV—Basque Autonomous Community), which unites the

three western Basque provinces in Spain—Álava, Guipúzcoa and Vizcaya—has some limited powers over finance. It also has its own police force, the Ertzaintza, which operates almost as a private army of the PNV and is the preferred force for suppressing the more radical nationalist groups. The Basque regional parliament of *Ajuria Enea* and the Catalan Generalitat are the devices through which the local bourgeoisies extract concessions from the central government in Madrid. But national oppression, especially of the Basques, has continued unabated. In the five years from 1990 to 1995, almost 2,000 political events were repressed, over a thousand people were wounded in clashes with police—including a number of people blinded by rubber bullets—and almost 800 others were arrested under the anti-terrorist laws. Upwards of 500 ETA [separatist Basque Homeland and Freedom] prisoners are dispersed in jails throughout Spain and are not even allowed to communicate with family members in Euskara!

The Popular Front Against the Basque People, in France...

When, in October 1983, Felipe Gonzalez's PSOE became the first "left" government in Spain since the Civil War, it immediately entered into collaboration with the Mitterrand administration in France to crush the Basque separatists. Under the first Mitterrand popular-front governments from 1983 to 1987, the GAL ["anti-terrorist" death squads], with the complicity of various French state security services, killed 27 and wounded 30 ETA members who had sought refuge in the Northern Basque country or who were from that area. Then, there were roundups and deportations to Spain—where torture of Basque nationalists is widespread—not to mention a higher proportion of police per inhabitant than in any other region of France (P. Cassan, *le Pouvoir français et la question basque (1981-1993)* [1996]). These policies have been maintained today by the capitalist government of Socialist prime minister Jospin, [French Communist Party (PCF) transport minister Claude] Gayssot and [bourgeois politician Jean-Pierre] Chevènement. In late 1997, Chevènement, the ultra-chauvinist minister of the interior, negotiated with his Spanish counterpart the continuing deportation of ETA refugees in return for a strengthening of surveillance at Spain's southern borders

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(meaning ever more Moroccans drowning in the Straits of Gibraltar as they try to get into racist Fortress Europe). And he signed a new extradition order against a historic ETA leader, José Luis Ansola-Larranaga.

The PCF participates in the popular-front government as it did when then-General Secretary [Georges] Marchais launched an attack in 1984 against a Soviet historian who spoke of diverse peoples in France: “For us...any man or woman who has French citizenship is French. France is not a multiethnic country. It is one country, one nation, one people, the product of a long history” (quoted in James Jacob, *Hills of Conflict: Basque Nationalism in France* [1994]). Defense of “the Republic, one and indivisible” is simply a cover for chauvinism and repression by the centralizing French state. To embrace the myth that national questions were supposedly resolved by the French Revolution can only lead to support for the centralizing French state, chauvinism and denial of the right of self-determination. The PCF propagates this myth within the French workers movement, and the entire far left follows suit. Even the LTF recognized the right of self-determination for the Basques in Spain while refusing this right for the Northern Basque country, the part of the Basque country in France. This position was examined and rectified during our last conference. We now call for the right of self-determination for the Basque people south *and* north of the Pyrenees (see our bulletin, *la Lutte pour une section française de la LCI dans le monde post-soviétique* [The Struggle for a French Section of the ICL in the Post-Soviet World]).

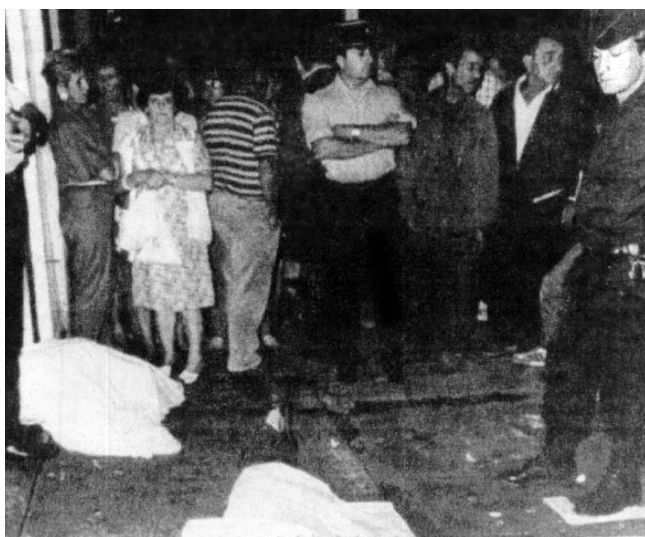
...And in Spain

The Castilian-chauvinist stance of the main reformist workers parties in Spain echoes the Francoists’ call for “Spain, one and indivisible.” This is also the position of so-called “far left” groups like Ted Grant’s *Militante* group in Spain and the French Morenoite Ligue Socialiste des Travailleurs (LST). A leaflet distributed by *El Militante* shortly after the shooting of Blanco Garrido [town councilman from the right-wing Popular Party (PP)] has the shameful headline “Against the Terrorism of ETA, Against State Terrorism,” as if the two were equivalent, and argues:

“Defense of the right of self-determination must also be a demand of the whole working class—a right which does not imply the right of independence. Marxists are against the independence of Euskadi at this moment because it would not solve the problems of the Basque working class nor the working class of the rest of the state, but we want a voluntary union of the peoples.”

This line of capitulating to the dominant Castilian chauvinism is shared by the economist Lutte Ouvrière (LO) and by Voix des Travailleurs [VdT, a split from LO]. Regarding the assassination of Blanco Garrido, VdT puts the Spanish state and ETA on the same level under the headline: “The Spanish State and ETA: Same Methods and Same Contempt for the Population” (*VdT*, 18 December 1997). Meanwhile, LO denounces ETA and speaks of “disgusting and barbaric terrorist acts which justifiably provoke disgust and indignation” (*Lutte Ouvrière* No. 1543). LO denounced ETA and all the other nationalists (Basque, Catalan, Andalusian, Galician, etc.) for “issuing reactionary nationalist propaganda which contributes to dividing the working class” and “lines the workers up behind the bourgeoisie of each region and sets them against each other by invoking ridiculous regional borders either inherited from another age or even completely artificial” (*Lutte de classe*, October 1997).

Such declarations recall Lenin’s remark: “Marx questions a socialist belonging to an oppressor nation about his attitude to the oppressed nation and at once reveals a defect *common* to the socialists of the dominant nations (the English and the Russian): failure to understand their socialist duties towards the downtrodden nations, their echoing of the prejudices



no credit

Basque refugees massacred in September 1985 by Spanish GAL death squad. Capitalist governments of Spain and France, including under former social-democratic leaders Felipe Gonzalez and François Mitterrand, collaborate in brutal anti-Basque repression.

acquired from the bourgeoisie of the ‘dominant nation’” (“The Right of Nations to Self-Determination,” February-May 1914). LO does not take on the Spanish bourgeoisie, which oppresses the national minorities; LO takes part in the French and Castilian chauvinist campaigns against the ETA, which are carried out jointly by the PP, the PSOE, the PCF, the Basque bourgeoisie in Spain and the Jospin-Gayssot government in France. And, of course, LO does not call for self-determination for the Basque people.

These chauvinist positions are the exact opposite of that of Lenin and

the PSOE to “adopt a genuine program of Marxism in relation to the national and other class questions” and demands workers control of the Guardia Civil and Spanish army academies! The idea that the core of the capitalist state—the army and police—can be subjected to “workers control,” rather than that it must be smashed through the revolutionary insurrection of the proletariat, has been the refrain of reformists since the time of Karl Marx. *Militante* is here repeating the longstanding position that the Grantites share with the likes of the Cliffite *Socialismo Internacional*, that cops and



Julio Fuentes

1988 steel strike in Bilbao in Spain’s Basque country. A Leninist vanguard party of the proletariat would champion national rights as part of struggle for workers revolution.

authentic Marxism. In his 1916 theses on “The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination,” Lenin wrote:

“The right of nations to self-determination implies exclusively the right to independence in the political sense, the right to free political separation from the oppressor nation.”

LO has never called for the right of self-determination for national minorities in France (except for Corsica). In a polemic against the [French Mandelite] Ligue Communiste (predecessor of the LCR), which spoke of “regionalists,” LO put forward its own version of the myth that the French Revolution settled the national questions in France:

“The efforts by the Capetian kings to enlarge their domain and extend their power, and the development of the bourgeoisie which took place in their shadow, were indeed the starting point for the formation of a French nation, while the Occitan and Breton nations never existed as such except in the heads of some nostalgic intellectuals.”

—*Lutte de classe*, June 1973

LO solves the problem by claiming that only the French nation exists. And LO called ETA “maximalist” because “ETA claims the French provinces of Labourd and Soule” (*Lutte de classe*, November 1986).

Militante plumbs the depths of reformist stupidity when it calls on the United Left [Spanish Communist Party-dominated popular-front formation] and

prison guards are simply “workers in uniform.”

The suicidal policy of reliance on a “reformed, democratic” bourgeois police has been amply exposed by Spanish history, for example during the Barcelona May Days of 1937 when the Republican *asaltos* acted as counterrevolutionary stormtroopers against the insurrectionary proletariat. The Spanish military, with Franco’s handpicked successor—the Bourbon king Juan Carlos—at its head, is the most implacable enemy of the working class and national minorities. The 1981 *tejerazo*—an attempted coup by elements of the Guardia Civil and army generals—had as one of its principal objectives a halt to concessions to the nationalists, which it by and large achieved with the promulgation shortly afterwards of the LOAPA, a law designed to “harmonize” the autonomy process.

The Cliffites of *Socialismo Internacional* denounce ETA’s “disastrous” policy for, in their words, “paying no attention to the massive rejection” of the assassination of Blanco Garrido. Thus, they solidarize with those who participated in the “massive” anti-ETA demonstrations, which included a number of fascists. The Spanish Morenoite Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT) also denounces the “terrorists” of ETA and HB [Herri Batasuna]. The PRT demands a classless—that is, bourgeois—Basque republic, and in a special



Cambio 16

pamphlet on Euskadi (22 February 1997) joined with the hysterical bourgeois press campaign in demanding that ETA free one of its hostages, the prison official Ortega Lara. The PRT’s French sister organization, the Ligue Socialiste des Travailleurs, has gone so far as to argue that the Spanish bourgeoisie has “by and large” resolved the national question in the peninsula.

In the Morenoites’ fairy-tale world, “the Basque and Catalan languages are not only recognized and their use encouraged, but the autonomous parliaments are elected on the basis of universal suffrage.... So a number of national demands have in fact been satisfied by the bourgeoisie.” The LST conspicuously fails to demand the right of self-determination for the Basques in Spain, much less those in France. This organization recently dissolved into the French VdT group, which has no public position on the colonies of its own imperialism. For the Morenoites, the main enemy is ETA, whom they accuse of “barbarity” and “aggravating confusion in the minds of many workers and youth” (*Coordination*, 1 September 1997).

The ex-Vargaite [fake-Trotskyist] Partido Obrero Revolucionario (POR), in a leaflet dated 14 July 1997, called for a negotiated political solution in the Basque country and expressed its “understanding” for participants in the reactionary anti-ETA demonstrations and its opposition to attacks on members of the PP. A “negotiated political solution” is the “democratic alternative” proposed by the petty-bourgeois nationalists of ETA—otherwise known as the “KAS Alternative”—a call for an independent bourgeois Euskadi. The POR tails HB as the “best representatives of the Basque people” while at the same time refusing to defend it against the witchhunt directed against it. Indeed, the POR is a member of the Catalan Unitat d’Esquerrres, part of the IU popular front, which in turn is part of the Ajuria Enea, which initiated the witchhunting.

ETA was founded in the 1950s by a group of PNV youth, disillusioned with their party’s timid opposition to the dictatorship. By the mid-1970s, with the renewal of militant working-class struggle, there was a polarization within ETA, which began to pay lip service to the proletariat, even proclaiming itself Marxist at its Fourth Congress. By the Fifth Congress, ETA was expelling groups who were “attempting to build a workers party with a Spanish dimension.” A fusion with a section of ETA helped establish the Liga Comunista Revolucionaria as one of the largest sections of Ernest Mandel’s fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat. Today, Zutik, the remnants of the LCR in the Basque country, has also enlisted in the anti-ETA campaign.

The betrayals of the reformists and centrists who derailed the working-class struggles of the 1930s and 1970s have left the ground open to petty-bourgeois nationalists like HB, who recruit militant youth but can only envisage some kind of Basque autonomy—courtesy of the European Union. It is laughable to suggest that

continued on page 8

Mumia...

(continued from page 12)

labor flexing its muscle in political struggle on behalf of all the oppressed.

Since taking up Jamal's cause some 12 years ago, the Spartacist League and the Partisan Defense Committee have fought for a perspective centered on the power of the multiracial working class. As we wrote in an SL statement to a PDC-initiated labor/black protest for Jamal in Chicago last November:

"Based on the only significant integration in racist America—the workplace and the factory floor—the trade unions have the social power and potential to become battalions in the struggle against racism and exploitation and to shake the foundations of this decaying capitalist system. If undertaken with a mobilization of the union movement, the fight to free Mumia, to abolish the racist death penalty, would be a first, giant step in that direction. To that end, labor must break the chains forged by the trade-union misleaders that have shackled the unions to the political parties and the state agencies of the enemy class."

It is elementary that if labor's power is to be brought to bear in a mighty blow on behalf of Jamal, it must be mobilized independent of the very forces of the capitalist state that worked for years to frame up this innocent man. In taking up the cause of Jamal's freedom, the working class must understand not only the nature of the capitalist state as a force for organized violence against the exploited and oppressed but also the unity of the interests of labor and the fight for black freedom in America.

But the perspective of the organizers of the "Millions for Mumia" protests and their "labor committee" hangers-on is precisely the opposite. Behind the call for a new trial is a political program premised on the belief that the capitalist state can be reformed and that the bourgeois courts can be pressured to be "just." By centering the struggle on reliance on the capitalist state to free Mumia, it is directly counterposed to a mobilization of working-class power.

The Policy of the Class Struggle

Working-class militants, fighters for black freedom and leftist youth who have enlisted in Mumia's cause must learn the lessons paid for by the blood and struggles of the past. In particular, they can learn from the writings of James P. Cannon, who led the early Communist Party's International Labor Defense (ILD) as it campaigned to free immigrant workers Sacco and Vanzetti—anarchist militants who had been framed up and were ultimately executed on phony murder charges amid mass arrests and deportations of reds and immigrants under the Palmer Raids. In his 1927 article "Who Can Save Sacco and Vanzetti?" Cannon laid out the counterposition between the sort of liberal appeals pursued today by those who focus on a "new trial" for Mumia and the principles of non-sectarian class-struggle defense on which the PDC bases itself:

"One policy is the policy of the class struggle. It puts the center of gravity in



WV Photo

Reformists push illusions in "fair trial," but there is no justice in the capitalist courts. Jamal defense attorney Rachel Wolkenstein was arrested during sham 1995 Philadelphia court hearing.



Susan Schary

the protest movement of the workers of America and the world. It puts all faith in the power of the masses and no faith whatever in the justice of the courts. While favoring all possible legal proceedings, it calls for agitation, publicity, demonstrations—organized protest on a national and international scale....

"The other policy is the policy of 'respectability,' of the 'soft pedal' and of ridiculous illusions about 'justice' from the courts of the enemy. It relies mainly on legal proceedings. It seeks to blur the issue of the class struggle.... It tries to represent the martyrdom of Sacco and Vanzetti as an 'unfortunate' error which can be rectified by the 'right' people proceeding in the 'right' way."

It is that second policy which is pursued by a host of left groups—Workers World (WWP), Socialist Action (which is a major force behind the April 24 march in the Bay Area), the International

cutors, are at the core of the capitalist state. This is not some "neutral" agency which serves society as a whole but rather, as Friedrich Engels wrote over a century ago in *The Origins of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, "an organization for the protection of the possessing class against the non-possessing class." To achieve social justice and equality, to put an end to exploitation and oppression, requires the smashing of the capitalist state through proletarian revolution and its replacement by a workers state which ushers in an egalitarian socialist society.

The reformists take their cue from bourgeois liberals who paint the frame-up of Jamal as a "miscarriage of justice," in the same way as they try to pass off the heinous police killing of Amadou Diallo

case! Only the truly naive or completely cynical would conceive of expecting justice for Mumia from a Democratic Party administration which has dramatically increased the number of crimes punishable by death while loosening legal constraints on the state's executioners.

For Bloom et al., the "American mainstream" they seek to reach out to are those squeamish liberals who can't tolerate the call for Jamal's freedom; these types want a new trial simply so that they can rest easy that the state will be executing—or at least imprisoning for life—a man they believe has been "proven" guilty. In this regard, the organizers of the April 24 protest have not only dumped any opposition to the racist death penalty but even give it back-handed support. This was put quite baldly in the "What We Can Do to Build the Struggle" column that accompanied an article by Bloom in the January/February 1999 *Against the Current*, which appeals: "Demand a new trial for Mumia Abu-Jamal and that no execution take place until after a new trial is held!"

As Mumia himself wrote after he was granted a stay of execution in August 1995: "Let us utilize this precious time to build a stronger and broader movement, to not 'stay' one execution, but to halt them all! *Down with the racist U.S. death penalty!*" The PDC has fought for united-front demonstrations to *free Mumia*—at times including Democratic Party liberals—but on the basis that all participants also agree with the slogan "Abolish the racist death penalty!" As Marxists, we do not accord the state the right to determine who lives or dies.

It was an international outpouring of social protest that stayed the executioner's hand in 1995. As the scheduled date of execution neared, the PDC initiated emergency united-front protests, centered on bringing to bear the power of organized labor, in New York City, Chicago and Oakland, as well as in Canada and Australia. The protests drew hundreds of trade unionists and were endorsed by dozens of unions and labor officials and a range of other organizations. Such united-front actions allow not only for the greatest possible unity in struggle but also for the free debate of contending strategies and programs, which is vital to advancing the



WV Photo

ILWU International president Brian McWilliams addresses emergency protest for Jamal, Oakland, June 1995.

Socialist Organization (ISO) and Solidarity, to name a few—which champion the call for a new trial as the centerpiece of their efforts around Mumia. Renouncing the fight to win the proletariat to a revolutionary struggle against capitalist injustice and oppression, they preach the reformist notion that the capitalist state can be pressured to act on behalf of workers and the oppressed.

This reformist outlook is a flat repudiation of the Marxism such groups occasionally claim to uphold. The courts, along with the cops, prisons and prose-

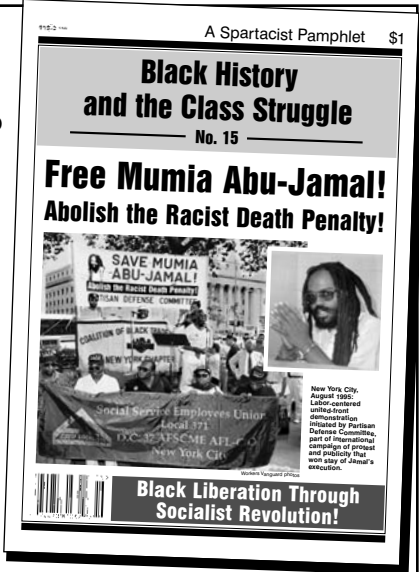
as an "aberration" in an otherwise just system of "democracy." Reporting on an "Emergency Leadership Summit Meeting" held in New York City in January, Solidarity's Steve Bloom approvingly wrote in *Against the Current* (March/April 1999): "Everyone who spoke from the podium sounded a similar theme: We must build a broader and more inclusive movement, one which reaches out to the American mainstream." Bloom even favorably cites a petition to Clinton's Justice Department to carry out a federal "civil rights" investigation of Mumia's

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consciousness of the working class and anti-racist youth.

Motivating its call for a new trial, *Workers World* (18 February) tries to draw a parallel with the Scottsboro case of the 1930s, writing: “What will it take to stop the execution and win a new trial for Abu-Jamal? Mass protests. That’s the lesson of the Scottsboro Nine trials.” The Scottsboro defendants—nine black youth framed up on rape charges in the Deep South—won *two new trials*, only to be sentenced to death in the Jim Crow courts each time. Although mass protests initiated by the ILD stayed the executioner’s hand, the last of the Scottsboro Nine was not released from Alabama’s prison hell until 1950. And the liberal NAACP *boycotted* the Scottsboro defense at the outset, finally getting involved only in order to block growing Communist influence among black workers.

Or take the case of boxer Rubin “Hurricane” Carter. Framed up on false murder charges in the mid-1960s for his advocacy of the right of black armed self-defense, Carter finally won a new trial in 1976 after an international protest campaign. When he was convicted anew, the liberals fled his cause and Carter spent another decade in prison for a crime he did not commit.

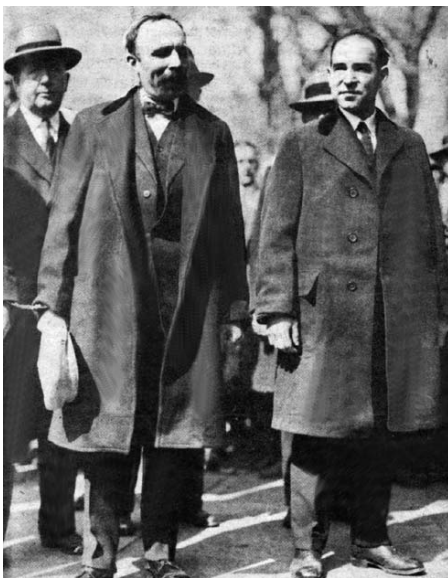
Democratic Party—Enemy of Labor, Blacks

In an article titled “How to Fight the Right,” *Workers World* (18 February) claims, “Instead of tying themselves to Democratic Party politics, Abu-Jamal’s supporters have taken the road of building an independent movement based on the power of the communities, workers’ organizations and progressive forces.” But just who are *Workers World* and the other forces behind the “Millions for Mumia” protests desperately trying to appeal to by making their demands palatable to the “mainstream”? Certainly not black youth or working people who have no trouble understanding there is no justice in the capitalist courts, which together with the cops are racist to the core. On the contrary, the politics of this so-called “independent movement” are deliberately designed to make them acceptable to Democratic Party liberals who embrace the bourgeois state and the capitalist “justice” system as their own.

This has been clear at numerous recent gatherings of Jamal supporters, including a March 6 “Millions for Mumia” conference at UC Berkeley heavily built by Socialist Action and the ISO. Among the panelists in a workshop on black liberation was former Oakland Democratic Party city councilman Wilson Riles Jr., who met no opposition when he called for life imprisonment without parole as an “alternative” to the death penalty. This is what the politics of the “lesser evil” come down to, accepting the alternatives offered by the bourgeoisie’s machinery of repression—in this case, a living death for Mumia and the 3,500 other prisoners incarcerated on the nation’s death rows. In the same vein, a recent leaflet by the ISO’s “Campaign to End the Death Penalty” for a March 17 New York City protest in defense of former Black Panther Lawrence Hayes raised the grotesque slogan “Hands off the parole system,” a call to maintain a system of virtual slavery for those released from prison before their full term.

Speaking out of the left side of its mouth in an article on “The Democrats and the Death Penalty” (*International Socialist Review*, Spring 1999), the ISO warns that support to the “lesser evil” Democrats “actually undermines the fight against the right.” Yet in hailing a resolution for a brief “moratorium” on executions recently passed by a committee of the Illinois legislature, the ISO argues to “keep up the pressure on weak-kneed politicians to stop them from backsliding any further” (*Socialist Worker*, 12 March). These social democrats see in capitalist politicians not the class enemy but rather allies who can “do the right thing” if only they are subjected to a bit of pressure.

How this misleads fighters against



oppression was addressed by the LBL spokesman at the SL Black History Month forum:

“The problem is that decade after decade in this country, every single time the workers, blacks and the oppressed have entered the road of struggle, sometimes quite courageously—like the civil rights movement, going up against the Klan and the cops and the whole goddamned machine at the risk of your life—every time the leadership diverted the struggle and the most conscious fighters right back into support for the Democratic Party.

“It’s not inevitable or automatic that people who enter the road of struggle against this brutal system have to end up in the Democratic Party. They get back there because people like the organizers of this [April 24] Mumia protest don’t tell the truth; they try to make out that ‘Well, you can gradually modify and reform and create better conditions for struggle’—and the best way to do this is to get so-called friends of labor back into office. What we really need to do is begin the difficult but extremely essential work of building a multiracial revolutionary workers party in this country.”

Forge a Revolutionary Workers Party!

Integrated unions representing millions of workers have gone on record in support of Jamal. That these millions have not been mobilized *in action* to combat this racist frame-up is the responsibility of the pro-capitalist trade-union misleaders, who fear calling their members into action to defend their economic interests, much less in defense of blacks, immigrants and others who are cast off to starve in the streets or locked away in prison hellholes. As an SL spokesman at the Berkeley labor workshop said, “The barriers to mobilizing labor in action for Mumia are the current labor misleaders, who shackle the unions to the class enemy, the Democratic Party. And it’s so-called leftists, like many on the panel today and in this room, who provide a left cover for these bureaucrats.”

Indeed, this labor workshop was headed by a veritable rogues’ gallery of putative “leftists,” many of them former members and supporters of the Spartacist League who have since made something of a career out of their hostility to our organization. This is merely an expression of their visceral hatred of our revolutionary program and purpose. Now this crew is trying to give a labor façade to the class-collaborationist politics that define the “Millions for Mumia” protests. To this end, at the labor workshop they were primed to go after the SL and PDC because we fight for the independent *class* mobilization of the proletariat against the capitalist exploiters and their agencies of repression.

Taking umbrage at our statement that the trade-union bureaucrats stand as an obstacle to such a mobilization of the working class, Jack Heyman, who posures as the left wing of the ILWU Local 10 executive board, later went on to declare that the PDC was a “sectarian” obstacle to Jamal’s defense. As supposed proof of this smear, Heyman complained that the PDC had refused to hand over the names of various unions and union officials who have endorsed our calls for labor-centered protest demanding Jamal’s freedom. A month earlier, the PDC had responded in writing to Heyman’s request

International Labor Defense led campaign of mass labor protest in 1920s to demand freedom for immigrant anarchist militants Bartolomeo Vanzetti and Nicola Sacco.



for such a list. As was noted in this February 10 letter: “Surely you must know that each endorsement we have requested and received is for a specific purpose and specific slogans.... These endorsements are not seen either by the PDC or by the union or union official as a standing endorsement for subsequent events and certainly not as a blank check or part of a ‘list’ to be passed around to any organization upon request.”

But the question itself, which had already been answered, was simply a red herring. If Heyman had truly wanted to know which unions had endorsed previous efforts by the PDC in order to pursue them for his own purposes, he needed to do no more than peruse the pages of *Workers Vanguard* where they are readily available. But that wasn’t and isn’t his purpose. Rather, the aim here is to go after the reds, in the service of the labor bureaucracy (whose seats Heyman et al. desire to fill) and of concealing the true nature of the capitalist state.

Another featured speaker at this labor workshop was Gerald Sanders. A professional anti-Spartacist who for some years was hooked up with the International Bolshevik Tendency, Sanders more recently has been plying his trade in the realm of electoral office-seeking. Now he wields his knowledge of the history of the revolutionary movement in the service of justifying appeals to the class enemy. Thus, at the Berkeley conference Sanders went to some trouble to try to find precedents for the call for a “new trial” from Cannon’s International Labor Defense, claiming that Cannon himself had raised this demand in the campaign for Sacco and Vanzetti. We’ll let Cannon answer this one himself. As he wrote following the denial of Sacco and Vanzetti’s appeal by the Massachusetts Supreme Court: “Only fools put faith in the courts of the enemy” (“From the Supreme Court of the Capitalists to the Supreme Court of the Laboring Masses,” May 1927).

Despite mass labor protests around the world on their behalf, Sacco and Vanzetti were ultimately sent to the electric chair. But in struggling for the lives and freedom of Sacco and Vanzetti, the working class gained an understanding that this is a class-divided society where the courts

serve the interests of the exploiters against the mass of the exploited and oppressed. To stand up on behalf of these two immigrant workers also meant a conscious rejection of the vicious racism that the ruling class uses to weaken and divide the working class.

In contrast, the “Labor Action Committee to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal,” which is animated by much of the same crew that headed the labor workshop at the Berkeley conference, obscures the class nature of the capitalist state, deep-sixes any mention of the Democratic Party and completely obviates the centrality of the fight for black liberation to the cause of the emancipation of all of labor. A leaflet put out by this committee calls on “workers, unions, labor organizations” to “Join Labor Contingent April 24th to Free Mumia!” Here they appeal to the unions to join the ILWU at the head of a demonstration whose whole premise is not the cause of mobilizing the social power of the multiracial working class for Jamal’s freedom but rather one which appeals to the agencies of the class enemy for “justice.”

As Cannon wrote in “A Living Monument to Sacco and Vanzetti” (October 1927), written after their execution:

“In this act of assassination the ruling class of America shows its real face to the world. The mask of ‘democracy’ is thrown aside.... It is the vengeful, cruel and murderous class which the workers must fight and conquer before the regime of imprisonment, torture and murder can be ended. This is the message from the chair of death. This is the lesson of the Sacco-Vanzetti case.”

Our fight to free Mumia and all class-war prisoners is an integral part of our struggle to forge a Leninist vanguard party to lead the multiracial working class to power. Such a party must be based on the understanding that the fundamental division in this society is between the wealthy capitalists who own the means of production and the workers who produce all the wealth, that the state exists to protect the profits and rule of the bourgeoisie. Such a party must act as a tribune of the people, recognizing that the socialist liberation of labor from the chains of capitalist exploitation is inextricably linked to the fight for black freedom. *Free Mumia now! Abolish the racist death penalty! ■*

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James P. Cannon and the Early Years of American Communism

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Newport News...

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fed up with being underpaid and over-worked in dangerous and demanding conditions. A nuclear fueling worker who makes only \$12.59 an hour said bitterly: “There’s real suffering going on here. It’s tearing families apart.”

It can take up to 20 years to make top pay under the company’s multi-tiered wage scheme. Workers on the same job can be in different pay categories, and they cannot reach the top of their wage scale except through further raises based on “merit”—at the foremen’s discretion. This setup is designed to drive down the wages and conditions of all workers by pitting workers against each other over wages and job assignment. And in this deeply racist society, such a system means rampant discrimination against black and also women workers.

One picketer described to a *Workers Vanguard* team how the shipyard was run like a plantation. The workforce is majority black, and some 40 percent of workers are women. The arrogant, racist management—and there are almost as many white-collar managers as there are workers—is virtually all white, laced with former Navy officers. The Navy, historically the most racist arm of the U.S. military, oversees and inspects work at the yard every step of the way.

The strike is widely popular in the area.

Bitter three-month strike by Newport News shipyard workers in 1979 defied racist cop terror.



Asher/Daily Press

UPS Teamsters and Bell Atlantic telephone workers have refused to cross picket lines. Indeed, this strike involves many of the issues in the August 1997 UPS Teamsters strike, which broke a long pattern of losing strikes and showed a new fighting spirit in the labor movement. Local 8888 is demanding an across-the-board raise of \$3.95 an hour over three years as well as improved health and pension benefits. The pension is so low—topping out at \$506 a month for a 30-year worker—that it barely covers rent payments for retirees.

But not a single contract demand addresses the rampant company discrimination against black and women workers. This discrimination has to be tackled

head-on if the union is to carry out a solid strike and defeat inevitable attempts by management to divide the workers. The USWA tops’ failure to take on these questions directly undercuts the union’s potential to galvanize trade unionists and black people throughout the Tidewater area to join strikers in the mass pickets needed to win. And workers must not be taken in by the “America first” flag-waving of the USWA International bureaucracy, which will leave them disarmed as management and the government try to break the strike by appealing to the “national interest.” *Victory to the Local 8888 strike!*

Build Mass Militant Pickets!

Strikers are largely fighting to regain ground lost with the 1995 contract, which froze wages and cut vacation days. Waves of layoffs led to worsening working conditions. Driving the message home, the shipyard president produced a videotape telling workers that if they didn’t like it there they could go take a minimum wage job at the Hardee’s fast food chain! The company’s arrogance backfired, as huge numbers of workers—including many whites who formerly had softer jobs—began joining the union during aggressive recruitment drives. Despite Virginia’s viciously anti-union “right to work” laws, the level of union membership among hourly workers in the shipyard has climbed from 50 percent to 83 percent in the past four years.

While the 1979 strike was eventually sold out by the USWA tops, it established the local as a single industrial union encompassing all categories of workers. In contrast, workers at most unionized shipyards in the U.S. are divided among ten or more craft unions. This places Local 8888 in a strong position to fight the company’s racist divide-and-rule schemes. That strength must be reinforced through demands like equal pay for equal work. In racist America, and especially in the non-union South, labor’s struggle can only move forward by taking up the fight against racist oppression. Significantly in this Southern city, the WV team saw not a single confederate flag—not even a bumper sticker—on or near the picket lines.

The union membership has shown it is geared up for a fight. This strike will be won or lost on the picket lines. That means mobilizing mass militant picket lines drawing in all of Tidewater labor—including the thousands of ILA longshoremen, Teamsters and unionists at Norfolk Naval Shipyard and private shipyards like Norshipco. Even before the strike began, the company, the cops and the bosses’ media launched an anti-strike propaganda offensive screaming about strikers’ “violence” in 1979. That strike was plenty violent, but it came from the cops’ side, as police launched tear gas attacks and unleashed dogs against strikers.

The USWA tops are buying into the bosses’ anti-union violence-baiting. Early on, the USWA International moved in to take direct control of the strike in order to police the union ranks. Two key drive-in gates remain open, allowing managers, engineers, painting and sandblasting contractors, as well as Navy inspection personnel, to waltz into the plant. Picketers told WV that non-union shipyards have been busing in scabs to join the handful of

scabs from the Newport News yard. *This scabbing can and must be stopped, through mass pickets that no one dares cross!* But the USWA bureaucracy refuses to mobilize mass pickets because that would mean a confrontation with the capitalist government and its scabherding cops, and therefore with the labor tops’ friends in the Democratic Party.

Meanwhile, the suits in the USWA bureaucracy have set up a paltry strike benefits fund which will only go to those the bureaucracy deems “neediest,” making strikers and their families beg for relief. This can only hurt the union by causing dissension among the membership and playing into any back-to-work movement promoted by the company. The USWA International should be pouring in massive amounts of money to support the strikers.

The USWA tops claim that the federal government will back the workers because they work for military industry. This is a false and dangerous illusion. As soon as the strike started, federal labor officials announced that the Clinton White House could seek a strikebreaking court order under the Taft-Hartley Act if it decided that the walkout would “imperil the national health or safety” (Newport News-Hampton *Daily Press*, 6 April).

The pro-capitalist AFL-CIO misleaders claim the Democrats are “friends of labor.” But the Democrats are no less a party of the capitalist class than are the Republicans. Whichever party administers it, the capitalist government is at bottom an apparatus of repression—including the cops, the courts, the prisons and the military—*against* the working class and the oppressed on behalf of the wealthy handful who live off the profits extracted from exploiting workers.

“National Interests” Are Capitalist Interests

Pushing American “national interests,” the USWA International replaced strikers’ hand-lettered picket signs with red-white-and-blue printed placards and planted American flags at picket locations. The bureaucracy has also printed t-shirts for strikers reading, “Our ships defend the country. The union defends us.” The purpose of the U.S. military is to enforce the “right” of American capitalists to exploit workers overseas just as the same ruling class sucks the lifeblood out of the workers at home. The “national interest” is the *class* interest of the bourgeoisie. It is the “national interest” that the government will invoke if it decides to use its war against Serbia as a pretext to break the shipyard strike. It is in the class interests of the U.S. proletariat to oppose the imperialist military adventures of this government and the capitalist ruling class it represents. The war against tiny Serbia is part of the American bourgeoisie’s ruthless drive for world domination. That is why we Marxists call for defense of Serbia against U.S./NATO terror bombing.

Fittingly, one of the projects ground to a halt by the strike is the building of the aircraft carrier *Ronald Reagan*, named for the president whose crushing of the 1981 PATCO air traffic controllers strike opened the door to a series of wrenching defeats for labor. That action showed how the government uses the watchword of the “national interest” to *bust unions*. PATCO leaders were dragged away in shackles when the union used its power to cripple air transportation. But it did not have to be that way. If the Machinists and other unions had thrown up pickets, they could have shut down the airports and defeated Reagan’s union-busting. But the Machinists leadership, under the phony “socialist” William Winpisinger, refused to strike, sending PATCO to defeat.

The AFL-CIO labor tops also use trade protectionism to line workers up behind the interests of the capitalists, as seen in the recent campaign by the USWA bureaucracy for quotas on steel imports from Japan, South Korea, Russia and elsewhere. Amid escalating trade wars among competing capitalist powers, such protectionist campaigns pit American



Washington Post

November 1982: 5,000-strong, Spartacist-initiated labor/black mobilization which stopped KKK from marching in Washington, D.C. Black unionists from Virginia Tidewater area played key role.

Basque...

(continued from page 5)

the Basque people will gain their freedom from the French imperialists—who brutally oppress their own Basque population as well as other national and ethnic minorities in France—or from the German bourgeoisie which annihilated Guernica. In recent months, the Aznar government has obtained collaboration from both France and Germany in the “fight against terrorism.” In return for expelling ETA suspects, the French government has demanded tough action against “Islamic fundamentalists” and closing the door on immigrants from the Maghreb [North Africa] and elsewhere. Fortress Europe targets not only desperate asylum-seekers, like Kurds fleeing Turkish army terror, but also the national minorities in the European Union itself. Herri Batasuna’s maximum program is the so-called KAS Alternative, which calls only for amnesty and a new statute for the four Basque provinces in Spain.

Behind the repression in the Basque country is a far-reaching assault on the working class of the whole country, as the Spanish bourgeoisie seeks to carve out a niche in racist Fortress Europe. As in other European countries, the system of social welfare is being dismantled in the wake of the collapse of the USSR and the deformed workers states of East Europe. A large-scale privatization plan has caused mass layoffs in a country

which already has the highest rate of unemployment in West Europe. In the Basque country, the destruction of industry and economic decline have exacerbated nationalist sentiments. There has been a flow of capital out of Euskadi, with many Basque industries moving to more profitable markets. Unemployment is almost 25 percent higher than in the rest of Spain and reaches a shocking 53.4 percent among youth under 24.

The working-class struggles of the 1930s and the 1970s demonstrated that resolution of the national question in Spain is inextricably linked with the struggle for workers power throughout the peninsula. Trotskyists defend the right of self-determination for the oppressed nationalities of the Spanish state, which means their right to form separate states. Only a Leninist vanguard party defending this democratic right will be able to unite the Basques and Catalans with workers throughout the country—as well as with workers across the Pyrenees in France—in a common struggle for workers revolution which sweeps away the heritage of Francoism by overthrowing the Spanish bourgeoisie, including its Basque and Catalan components, and establishing a workers government.

Down with the witchhunt against Basque nationalists! Release the Mesa Nacional [National Command] of Herri Batasuna! Defend the right of self-determination for the Basque people! For a Trotskyist party in Spain as part of a reformed Fourth International!■

U.S./NATO...

(continued from page 1)

are being targeted by anti-personnel cluster bombs which rip through homes and barns maiming and murdering civilians. NATO bombing has also devastated Pristina, the capital of Kosovo. Washington talks of “collateral damage,” but the aim of the NATO bombing is precisely to *sow terror* among the Serbian population. Among the “military targets” singled out for attack have been large numbers of factories and bridges—including one which was a monument to Serbs and Jews killed by the Nazi Holocaust—devastating the livelihoods of the working people and cutting off commerce with neighboring countries. Today, in a deliberate act of terror, a video-guided missile cut a passenger train in half in Grdelica, Serbia, incinerating three cars and killing some ten people.

With Serbia’s Slobodan Milosevic refusing thus far to capitulate to NATO diktat, Washington has mooted the possibility of using Yeltsin’s Russia as a “soft cop” to impose a deal on Belgrade, as it did following NATO air strikes against the Bosnian Serbs in 1995. But this is overshadowed by continuing preparation for a NATO ground invasion. The flood of propaganda in the Western media about the plight of ethnic Albanian refugees is aimed at providing a “human rights” screen for the U.S./NATO war of terror and building up popular support for a ground war.

This war is not about the Kosovo Albanians. It is a war of domination aimed at realizing longstanding American plans to insert a substantial U.S./NATO military presence in Serbia through subduing, or if necessary dislodging, Milosevic. That is what is behind the proclamations by Western spokesmen, even those who initially opposed Clinton’s Balkans adventure, that NATO must win this war at all costs if it is to preserve its “credibility.” Today, the Pentagon approved NATO’s request for hundreds more warplanes, bringing the total deployment to nearly 1,000 planes. A former member of Clinton’s National Security Council argued bluntly, “If this mission fails, NATO fails.”

The interests of Serbia’s working class are objectively counterposed to those of the new capitalist ruling class which exploits them. But this is a war of imperialist aggression against a tiny country about the size and population of Ohio. Like the continuing bombing and starvation blockade of Iraq, it is a bloody message from America’s rulers that they will stop at nothing to prove they are top cops of the world. It is in the urgent interest of workers and the oppressed in all countries—especially in the U.S.—to oppose by words and deeds the war aims of all members of the NATO alliance in the Balkans and to strive for the defeat of

their “own” capitalist rulers. As we emphasized in a Spartacist League/U.S. statement at the beginning of the war (WV No. 710, 2 April):

“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.”

The brutal killing of black African Amadou Diallo by four New York City plainclothes cops has sparked broad outrage against cop terror. Meanwhile, even amid the cacophony of patriotic war fever being drummed up by the mass media, 9,200 workers have gone on strike against Newport News Shipbuilding in Virginia, which produces and services the Pentagon’s nuclear aircraft carriers. It is the task of Marxist internationalists to bring to the proletariat the understanding that imperialist terror abroad goes hand in hand with racist terror and union-busting at home. The Spartacist League, U.S. section of the International Communist League, is fighting to build the multiracial revolutionary workers party needed to lead the proletarian overthrow of this entire system based on racism, exploitation and war.

“Humanitarian” War Propaganda

Since the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92, Washington has sought to redefine the aims of NATO, originally established as an anti-Soviet military alliance, to serve as a vehicle for reinforcing U.S. military power in Europe. The purpose here is to better position U.S. imperialism in the face of growing competition from its major capitalist rivals, Japan in the Pacific and Germany in Europe. When Germany, seeking to reclaim its former sphere of influence in the Balkans, instigated the breakup of the former multinational Yugoslav deformed workers state by promoting independent Croatian and Slovenian states in the early 1990s, the U.S. immediately moved into the region to stake out its claim. Thus, Washington sponsored the Islamic nationalist forces in Bosnia, orchestrated the 1995 NATO air war against the Bosnian Serbs and engineered the Dayton “peace accords” which imposed a massive NATO military presence in Bosnia.

Nonetheless, Serbian strongman Milosevic has remained a thorn in the side to U.S. imperialism, both politically and militarily. Reviving the rhetoric of the Cold War, former U.S. ambassador to NATO Robert Hunter denounces Milosevic as “Europe’s last Communist thug.”

officials is to ensure the subordination of the workers to the national interests of the enemy class. This collaboration with the capitalist rulers is codified in the labor bureaucrats’ fealty to the Democratic Party—and it has led to an unending string of defeats for organized labor.”

Labor Must Champion the Fight for Black Freedom

The class battle at the Newport News shipyard, one of the biggest industrial concentrations in the South, can be a gateway for organizing this “open shop” region. One of the signs carried by picketers read, “Support the Avondale Workers.” Avondale Industries, which has a merger pending with Newport News Shipbuilding, has refused to accept a 1993 union recognition vote in its Gulfport, Mississippi shipyard won by the AFL-CIO Metal Trades Council. It is a measure of the horrendous conditions faced by workers in the South that many Newport News workers drive up to two hours, including from North Carolina, to work in one of the very few major unionized industrial facilities in the region.

Unionization of the South is a crucial



Young Spartacus

March 29: Spartacus Youth Club speakout at UC Berkeley stressed proletarian-internationalist opposition to U.S. imperialism.

With 100,000 American troops based in West Europe and the U.S.-sponsored expansion of NATO to include three former Warsaw Pact countries (Hungary, the Czech Republic and Poland) on the western reaches of the former Soviet Union, Washington is now intent on extending its military tentacles to the last remaining holdout in East Europe—Serbia. British journalist Timothy Garton Ash, who launched his career in the 1980s as a press agent for Polish Solidarność and other anti-Soviet counterrevolutionary forces, laid out the scale of this operation in a piece in the London *Independent* (31 March):

“This is to take on not just a province of 2 million suffering people, but a whole region. It will mean an international commitment of at least 10 years, tens of thousands of military and civilian personnel, billions of dollars. But what is the alternative?”

“The alternative is for the mightiest alliance of democracies in the history of the world to be defeated on its 50th anniversary.”

Clinton claimed the air war was launched as a response to Serb “ethnic cleansing” of Albanians in Kosovo. The real reason is that Milosevic refused to accede to a NATO occupation. An article in the *San Francisco Chronicle* (7 April) reported: “Despite the appearance of impromptu intervention, the United States and its allies have actively prepared for this crisis. That it will almost certainly lead to ground intervention—to the Western occupation of Kosovo—has been quietly part of NATO’s policy assumptions since the mid-1990s.” Weeks before the bombing began, the U.S. and its NATO allies began concentrating more than 12,000 troops on the Macedonian border with Kosovo and moved the headquarters of NATO’s Rapid Reaction

Corps there from Germany. The U.S. has since deployed another 12 Stealth F-117A fighters and is moving in 24 anti-tank Apache helicopters and over 3,300 support troops equipped with surface-to-surface missiles, while 8,000 more NATO troops have been sent in to supposedly aid refugees. Albania has been turned into a NATO military base.

Clinton & Co. might well have miscalculated that Milosevic would capitulate to their demands after a few days of bombing. Now, with the prospect of a ground war posed ever more acutely, the U.S. rulers face a serious domestic obstacle in the persistence of the “Vietnam syndrome”—widespread popular resistance to the commitment of combat ground troops and significant American casualties which followed from U.S. imperialism’s dirty, losing colonial war in Vietnam. In the absence of any motivating ideology to justify a wider imperialist war against Serbia, the capitalist media have milked the sight of tens of thousands of ethnic Albanian refugees stumbling across the borders of Kosovo to bolster popular support in the U.S. and West Europe. It is abundantly clear that the current outpouring of refugees not only is no surprise, but was a calculated anticipated outcome of the NATO attack on Serbia.

This whole propaganda blitz reeks of the most transparent cynicism and hypocrisy. We don’t underestimate the ruthlessness of Milosevic and the Serb-chauvinist paramilitaries in dealing with the Albanians in Kosovo. But the Western governments—not least Germany, France and the U.S.—now clucking their tongues about Albanian refugees have been busily deporting hundreds of thousands of immigrants in recent years. After Western spokesmen railed for weeks about how Milosevic and Serb-chauvinist pogromists in Kosovo were “driving out” ethnic Albanians, when the exodus stopped last week, these same types screamed that Milosevic was “preventing” the refugees from “fleeing.” And even as TV newsmen grimly report that the streams of refugees contained only women, children and old men because the young men had been “taken away to some unknown fate,” the crowds seen in the background are filled with young men! As comedian Richard Pryor once said, “Who are you going to believe, me or your lying eyes?”

Fearful that the massive exodus of ethnic Albanians into the tiny impoverished multinational statelets of Macedonia and Montenegro could plunge the entire region into social turmoil, the NATO powers are making noises about taking in 100,000 refugees. Britain prepared to house its allotment in a former prison camp! But first prize for hypocrisy goes to the U.S., which was planning to stow its 20,000 “tragic refugees” from the freezing, mountainous Albanian border in the blistering hot and humid tent city in

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workers against their class brothers and sisters abroad and serve to bind workers in each country to their “own” exploiters. “America first” chauvinism is a deadly enemy of integrated class struggle. It emboldens the racist, anti-union Klan terrorists who believe the only “good American” is white, Anglo-Saxon and Protestant. It fuels attacks on immigrant workers. Protectionism serves not to “save American jobs” but to fatten the profits of the big corporations. That is why the major steel companies eagerly joined with the USWA in pushing through quotas on steel imports.

With its lie of the “partnership” of labor and capital, the union bureaucracy seeks to obscure the truth that the class interests of the workers are *counterposed* to those of their exploiters. As we noted in an exchange with a Machinists union official on the 1995 Boeing strike (WV No. 634, 1 December 1995):

“The labor bureaucracy is the top layer of the unions which long ago separated itself from its working-class base, and which sees the world through the same lens as the capitalists and their government. The purpose of these top union

task for the labor movement, and it means confronting head-on the racism that the ruling class uses to divide the working class and depress the wages of all workers. The integration of white and black workers at the point of production creates the basis for united class struggle, which must necessarily be linked to the fight for black freedom. The open shop and the KKK go hand in hand. This was graphically brought home in 1995 when supervisors at an Alabama Perdue poultry plant burned a cross on company property to intimidate 1,100 mainly black workers and defeat a Laborers organizing drive. The last concerted effort to organize the South, a campaign in the late 1940s obscenely titled “Operation Dixie,” foundered on the shoals of racism, the Cold War purge of reds and other militants from the unions, and the labor bureaucracy’s loyalty to the Democratic Party.

We need a class-struggle leadership of the unions, forged through political struggle against the pro-capitalist union bureaucracy which chains workers to the Democratic Party. In 1984, when ILA

longshoremen and other trade unionists, overwhelmingly black, mobilized in mass demonstrations to defend a busing plan for school integration in Norfolk, that struggle was sold out when Jesse Jackson flew into town to steer it into a Democratic Party voter registration drive. The defeat of school busing was a crystal-clear demonstration of the bankruptcy of looking to the capitalist Democratic Party as the “friend” of labor and blacks.

Two years earlier, longshoremen’s and naval shipyard unions in the Tidewater area played a key role in the 5,000-strong labor/black mobilization in Washington, D.C. in November 1982. Initiated by the Spartacist League, this mobilization stopped the KKK from carrying out a race-hate march targeting immigrants. With trade unionists championing the black masses and marching under the leadership of reds, this demonstration gave a vivid snapshot of the kind of multiracial revolutionary workers party needed to fuse the fight against the exploitation of labor with the struggle for black emancipation. ■

U.S./NATO...

(continued from page 9)

the American naval base at Guantánamo, Cuba—where even thousands of Haitian exiles used to living badly in that climate rioted because conditions were so intolerable. In the upshot, it appears none of the Western powers will take in a single Albanian refugee!

While the Western media have for years railed against Serbian “genocide” in Bosnia and now Kosovo, “ethnic cleansing” has been perpetrated by *all sides* in the fratricide among Serbs, Croats and Bosnian Muslims. In fact, the largest single act of “ethnic cleansing” was the brutal expulsion—on the eve of the 1995 NATO air strikes—of hundreds of thousands of Serbs by the Croatian regime of Holocaust apologist Franjo Tudjman with Washington’s connivance! The nationalist bloodletting in the former Yugoslavia was a direct result of capitalist counter-revolution, which dismembered that bureaucratically deformed workers state along national lines. Under capitalism, such forced population transfers are the way homogenous nation-states are carved out of formerly interpenetrated populations.

In any case, as a Jewish Holocaust survivor in Belgrade, who stressed that he is no supporter of either Milosevic or Serb attacks on ethnic Albanians, told the *New York Times* (9 April): “I don’t at all agree that this is genocide. There was no effort to exterminate an entire race—men, women and children—merely because of their religious or ethnic identity.” Condemning the NATO air war as a “criminal use of force, which is indiscriminate,” he added that he did not survive the Auschwitz death camp only to now die from an American bomb.

Social-Imperialists and “NATO Socialists”

Joining in the imperialists’ war cry over “poor, little Kosovo” is a broad spectrum of reformist and centrist “socialists,” ranging from Tony Cliff’s Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in Britain and its International Socialist Organization (ISO) in the U.S. to the Mandelite United Secretariat (USec) of Alain Krivine to the British centrists of Workers Power (WP) and then some. For years, we have noted that such groups are part of a *syphilitic chain* binding them to the mainstream social-democratic parties and thus to the imperialist bourgeoisies. Today, despite a pacifist veneer of opposition to the bombing, they march in lockstep behind the war aims of NATO imperialism and the social-democratic or popular-front governments whose election they welcomed.

This war demonstrates anew the truth of Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin’s characterization of the social democrats in World War I as “social-imperialists.” Former Labour “left” and supporter of the 1980s Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) Robin Cook is now foreign secretary of the British imperialist state. Former anti-nuke radical Joschka Fischer is now the bourgeois Green party’s foreign minister for the Fourth Reich of German imperialism. In fact, the “pacifist” Green movement of the early 1980s was above all an expression of resurgent German chauvinism, pushing (like the CND) both anti-Sovietism and anti-Americanism. Today, USec leader Krivine likewise acts as a mouthpiece for the interests of French imperialism, counterposing to the U.S.-dominated NATO intervention the call for a European imperialist expeditionary force in the Balkans (see article, page 11)!

Under the impact of a major war in Europe involving the imperialist powers, we are presented with the spectacle of erstwhile “revolutionaries” and “anti-imperialists” joining pro-imperialist war rallies. The centrist Workers Power joined the deeply Labourite Alliance for Workers Liberty in a February 10 “Workers Aid for Kosovo” rally in London dominated by NATO and Albanian flags and placards screaming, “NATO Good Luck” and “NATO Now or Never.” In Toronto, the

Mandelite Socialist Action group participated—until they were thrown out for their lip-service opposition to NATO—in a rally of ethnic Albanians which featured placards and speeches saying, “Thanks for your support, NATO.” And in Los Angeles, the ISO and the Stalinist Progressive Labor Party were seen selling their papers at a pro-bombing demonstration replete with signs reading, “NATO All the Way,” “It’s Time for Ground Troops” and “God Bless U.S.A.”

It could not be clearer that the fake lefts are now “NATO socialists” whose bottom line is *support to imperialist war aims in the Balkans*, despite the theoretical contortions they go through in trying to reconcile their lip-service opposition to NATO with their support to the separatist Kosovo Liberation Army, which is now simply a pawn of NATO. In a statement distributed at a March 30 public meeting in London, Workers Power claimed to defend the Serbs against NATO attack—“though not in Kosova which they have no right to occupy”! At the same time,



Workers Hammer

At “Workers Aid for Kosova” demo in London, April 10, Workers Power beats the drums for war on behalf of “poor little Kosovo,” the hypocritical cover for bloody imperialism. Demonstrators carried NATO flags and placards reading “NATO—Good Luck” and “Just Do It.”

WP urges the Albanian separatists “to take full military advantage of the imperialist bombing to drive out the ‘Yugoslav’ forces,” adding: “If [Clinton and Blair’s] primary concern were for the Kosovars they would recognise their statehood, and give the KLA the weapons to drive out the Serbian troops.” This is an unvarnished appeal to the NATO imperialists.

The way the imperialists and their hangers-on today use the Kosovo Albanians to justify their war aims is not new. During World War I, Britain and France justified their war against Germany in the name of liberating Belgium while Germany claimed to be fighting for the liberation of Poland from Russia. Speaking of the Workers Power types of his day, Lenin wrote in *Socialism and War* (1915): “The social-chauvinists reiterate the bourgeois deception of the people that the war is being waged to protect the freedom and existence of nations, thereby taking sides with the bourgeoisie against the proletariat.” While strongly supporting Poland’s right to self-determination, Lenin argued that raising this slogan in the context of an interimperialist war could only mean “stooping...to humble servitude to *one* of the imperialist monarchies” (“The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up,” July 1916). Similarly, the ICL called for the right of self-determination for the Kosovo Albanians against the Serb-chauvinist Belgrade regime until this question became subordinated to the defense of Serbia against the imperialist war buildup early this year (see “U.S./UN/NATO Hands Off the Balkans!” WV No. 706, 5 February).

Today, the fake-socialists not only stoop to the imperialists, but have acted as an ideological spearhead for imperialist intervention. This is the product of their years of support to Western imperialism against the Soviet Union in the name of “democracy” and “human rights.” In the early 1980s, the virulently anti-Soviet Cliffites and fake-Trotskyists like the USec and Workers Power joined in fervent support to CIA/Vatican-sponsored Polish Solidarność, which was in the forefront of the drive for capitalist restoration in East Europe. A decade later,

all these groups cheered on Yeltsin and his pro-imperialist “democrats” as they launched the counterrevolution which was to destroy the Soviet Union.

In the former Yugoslavia, a bureaucratically deformed workers state established after World War II, the planned economy laid the basis for an egalitarian, multinational society. The capitalist counterrevolution which engulfed East Europe led to the destruction of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1991-92 through a series of fratricidal wars aided and abetted by the Western imperialist powers. (See “Yugoslavia Ripped Apart in Nationalist Bloodbath,” WV No. 553, 12 June 1992.) As a former head of the Belgrade central bank responsible for instituting market-oriented “reforms,” Milosevic launched his political career by appealing to “Greater Serbia” chauvinism particularly against the Kosovo Albanians. In this, he embodied the link between capitalist restoration and nationalism. But Milosevic was not alone in this regard. His Croatian counterpart, Franjo

Tudjman, idolizes the World War II fascist Ustasha—a puppet of the German Nazis—and Bosnian leader Alija Izetbegovic is a rabid nationalist and Islamic reactionary. We opposed all sides in the fratricidal civil war, as part of our fight for proletarian revolution to overthrow all the nationalist regimes and forge a socialist federation in the Balkans.

The pseudo-leftist champions of anti-Communist “democracy” instead chose among the contending Balkan nationalists, predictably lining up with their own imperialist bourgeoisies and their social-democratic henchmen in supporting the anti-Serb forces. During the 1995 NATO air strikes, WP refused even on paper to defend the Bosnian Serbs against imperialism.

As long as the Soviet Union and the deformed workers states of East Europe existed, as Trotskyists, we called for unconditional military defense to them against imperialism and counterrevolution and called for proletarian political revolution to oust the nationalist Stalinist bureaucracies from Moscow to Belgrade. The triumph of capitalist counterrevolution in the homeland of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution was a world-historic defeat for the proletariat, bringing in its wake heightened interimperialist conflict and the growing danger of a new world war. While the reformists and centrists move ever closer to their own bourgeoisies, we fight for new October Revolutions to overthrow capitalist imperialism.

Anti-Imperialism Abroad Means Class Struggle at Home!

While the Workers World Party (WWP) in the U.S. has not lined up behind the imperialist hue and cry over Kosovo, its “antiwar” protests have been grotesque orgies of Serbian chauvinism, replete with Serbian monarchist flags and cries of “Kosovo is Serbia.” At the same time, WWP fosters the same illusions in the “democratic” pretensions of the American ruling class as the rest of the fake left. Thus, one prominent sign carried by WWP’s International Action Center at a protest read, “Clinton: How About a War Against Racism at Home.” In fact, Clinton has been carrying out a

racist war against blacks and immigrants at home—from axing welfare to putting tens of thousands more cops in the ghettos and barrios to ever more draconian anti-immigrant laws.

Behind WWP’s absurd appeal to Clinton lies its longstanding strategy of seeking to pressure the Democratic Party of racism and war to act on behalf of workers and the oppressed. Meanwhile, black Democrats like Jesse Jackson whom the WWP reformists particularly look to are pushing hard to line up the black population behind Clinton’s Balkans adventure. This is of a piece with efforts by black Democrats to quell and divert anger over the Diallo killing. In a TV talk show this month hosted by right-wing fanatic Oliver North of “Contragate” fame, Jackson staunchly defended the U.S./NATO war against opposition from the isolationist North! When challenged why Clinton had done nothing in Rwanda, Jackson replied, “But you must remember we were in Haiti and Somalia.”

Black workers and leftist youth who might be swayed by the “human rights” propaganda over the Balkans should recall those earlier “humanitarian” imperialist interventions. In Haiti, the U.S. terrorized the black plebeian masses while protecting the death squad killers who had ruled the country as Washington’s henchmen. And after going into Somalia in 1992 with the phony justification of providing famine relief, U.S. forces proceeded to indiscriminately slaughter hundreds of men, women and children. The American occupation force was finally *driven out* of the country when Somalis began shooting back, ambushing an elite Ranger unit. When U.S. troops were sent in, we said, “U.S. Global Cops Out of Somalia!” (WV No. 565, 11 December 1992). In contrast, *Workers World* (31 December 1992) gave backhanded support to the imperialist intervention, writing that the U.S. Air Force “could have easily and inexpensively provided famine relief.”

Indeed, going by the American rulers’ logic, if bombing Serbia is supposed to bring “human rights” to Kosovo Albanians, why not bomb Ottawa to demand the national rights of the Québécois, or London to retaliate for the oppression faced by Catholics in Northern Ireland! And who will bomb Washington for the police occupation of the inner cities, racist oppression of blacks, the gunning down of desperate Mexican immigrants at the border?

Imperialism is not a policy, as the reformists and liberals would have it, that can be pressured to be “humane.” As Lenin noted in *Socialism and War*, “Imperialism is the highest stage in the development of capitalism,” with rival imperialist powers competing to control spheres of investment and exploitation. Murderous terror and wars aimed at ensuring the flow of profits to the American bourgeoisie from superexploitation of semicolonial workers abroad is an integral part of the same system which exploits and oppresses working people in the U.S. The bombing of Serbia by NATO warplanes, the routine killing and brutalization of black ghetto youth by the cops, police scabherding to break workers’ strikes—these are part and parcel of the global system of capitalist exploitation of which the U.S. is the linchpin. This system can only be brought down through proletarian revolution.

We fight to win workers and minorities to the understanding that the Democratic Party is no less a capitalist party of racism and war than the Republicans. To unchain the power of the proletariat glimpsed in recent strikes from UPS to Flint GM to the current walkout in Newport News requires the forging of a multiracial revolutionary workers party. In the United States, this workers party will come about only as a result of a political struggle within the unions against the pro-imperialist AFL-CIO labor bureaucracy, which ties the working class to the capitalist ruling class through its support to the Democratic Party. *Defend Serbia! Defeat U.S. imperialism through workers revolution!* ■

A Craven Capitulation to Imperialism on the Balkans

USec Says: Send In the Troops

While NATO imperialist bombardment ravages Serbia, one of the most repugnant capitulations before the capitalist warmongers by leftists internationally has been that of the late Ernest Mandel's United Secretariat (USec). Like much of the left, these social democrats masquerading as Trotskyists gave tacit support to the imperialist assault on Serbia in the name of defending the "national rights" of the Albanian Kosovars. But the USec went further than most, as its flagship French section, the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR), refused to call for the withdrawal of French and other imperialist troops from the Balkans. But they didn't stop there. Following the logic of their prostration before "human rights" imperialism, the LCR *openly called for imperialist military intervention in Kosovo* under the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)—a European-dominated military bloc—or the United Nations. This is the nationalist, anti-American line being pushed now by both the French and German governments in a clear attempt to minimize a direct U.S. role.

The NATO bombing of Serbia has provoked an uproar among considerable sections of the French bourgeoisie, which are apprehensive over the danger of destabilization in the Balkans and expanded U.S. power in the region. Socialist prime minister Lionel Jospin's government coalition has openly divided over the question as both the French Communist Party (PCF) and the bourgeois Movement of Citizens denounced the bombing and the leading role of the U.S. and NATO. Jospin's Socialists called for a meeting of European social-democratic parties—i.e., the ruling parties of most West European countries—to initiate a European conference on the Balkans.

The LCR's pronouncements on the war are a catalogue of contradictions reflecting their vestigial pretensions to Marxism in words and their opportunism in deeds. Swept up in the orgy of social-chauvinism buttressing the ruling class as it wages war in the Balkans, the LCR has stepped into line as capitalist Europe's little drummer boys, disguising imperialist slaughter as "justice" for Kosovo Albanians. The LCR's initial reaction to the imperialist bombing campaign was a March 25 declaration by Alain Krivine, who pleaded: "The left majority in parliament should demand an immediate end [to the bombing] and the withdrawal of the French commitment." Krivine continued: "The Belgrade regime must be isolated and the Kosovo people must be provided all the means, including military means, to defend their lives and impose their freedom." With the Kosovo Liberation Army having become simply an instrument of imperi-

alist war aims in the region, such a call to arm the Kosovo Albanians is nothing but backhanded support to NATO attacks against Serbia. As we previously wrote of Krivine's declaration, "The unity between these hypocrites posturing as an 'antiwar' movement and the imperialist warmongers themselves couldn't be clearer" (WV No. 710, 2 April).

One week later, the LCR Political Bureau issued a statement which pointedly refused to call for the withdrawal of French troops from the Balkans (*Rouge*, 1 April). The LCR leadership now virtually screamed for Serbia to be brought to heel: "No hesitation: The Milosevic regime must be fought as firmly as possible." Offering themselves as loyal advisers to the bourgeoisie, the LCR proposed an alternative to the bombing:

"There were other ways to act if one really wanted to force the Belgrade

contained yet another call for imperialist intervention, this time under the banner of the UN. Assuring its readers that "Our opposition to NATO is not based on primitive anti-Americanism," the LCR proposed an "accord" with Serbia based on an end to anti-Albanian repression, the return of refugees to Kosovo and "cooperation with the International War Crimes Tribunal to investigate the massacres":

"A multinational force under UN control must guarantee and oversee on the ground the application of such an accord. It would be a question of effectively defending the Kosovars, and this would have much greater legitimacy in Yugoslavia and internationally than the NATO bombing."

This is an undisguised call for military intervention in Kosovo by imperialist ground troops. The UN has been nothing but a fig leaf for imperialist militarism from the 1950-53 war against the North

World Wars I and II. Anyone who buys the lie of the French bourgeoisie's "friendly relations" should recall the Algerian War for independence, in which French forces slaughtered more than one million people and inflicted hideous tortures on thousands more in their defeated effort to prevent the Algerian people from smashing the bonds of French colonialism.

The LCR's disgusting social-chauvinism was echoed by other USec sections. In Ireland, a leaflet distributed on April 1 by Socialist Democracy called for "the arming of Milosevic's victims" and "building a broad solidarity movement" with the Albanian Kosovars. This harks back to the "Workers Aid for Bosnia" campaign, which the USec was mainly responsible for propagating internationally. Under the guise of providing humanitarian aid for the working class in Bosnia, Workers Aid was really a stalking horse for direct imperialist military intervention against the Serbs (see "What's Behind 'Workers Aid for Bosnia'," WV No. 604, 5 August 1994).

"Workers Aid" cynically used the plight of the multinational working class in Bosnia to promote imperialist support to the Bosnian Muslim government in the three-sided fratricidal war between Serbs, Croats and Bosnian Muslims. "Workers Aid" lobbied for the UN "peacekeeping" forces to secure "safe passage," especially through Serb-held territory in the northern corridor of Bosnia. USec members bragged that their supporters actually drove the convoy trucks. But this was nothing new for the USec, which did the same thing for Polish Solidarność in the early 1980s, running supplies "donated" by the CIA through its conduits in the German Social Democracy and other West European social-democratic parties.

In August 1995, the U.S., Britain and other NATO powers embarked on a massive bombing attack against the Bosnian Serbs. A major pretext for the imperialist terror bombing was ensuring that food and other necessities were delivered to Bosnian cities designated as "safe havens," substantially the same program as "Workers Aid for Bosnia."

In sharp opposition to the fake Trotskyists beating the drums for war and fostering illusions in the benevolence of military action by the capitalist states of Europe now ruled by treacherous "Socialists" and former "Communists," we in the International Communist League act on the understanding that war cannot be abolished unless classes are abolished and socialism is created. In the crucible of World War I, Lenin broke with the so-called socialists of the Second International who repudiated Marxist proletarian internationalism by supporting their own ruling classes and preparing the proletariat for nationalist slaughter. The LCR's Krivine and the other products of the decomposition of the "class of '68" are now beating the drums for war in the Balkans and offering their services to the capitalist ruling class. Lenin exposed their predecessor, Karl Kautsky, in his 1915 pamphlet *Socialism and War*:

"Opportunism and social-chauvinism have the same politico-ideological content—class collaboration instead of the class struggle, renunciation of revolutionary methods of struggle, helping one's 'own' government in its embarrassed situation, instead of taking advantage of these embarrassments so as to advance the revolution."

Part of the struggle of the ICL to reforge Trotsky's Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution is to politically clear the road of these latter-day Kautskyites, the "stinking corpse of social democracy." ■



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USec supports Kosovo Liberation Army, pawn of NATO terror war against Serbia and openly promotes imperialist military intervention by European bourgeoisies.

regime to give Kosovo its freedom: The great powers have the means, if they so desired, to impose effective economic pressures and a military blockade of the Belgrade regime."

This is an appeal to hit Serbia with sanctions like those the imperialists imposed on Iraq. Since the 1991 Persian Gulf War, the imperialist starvation blockade has led to the death of well over one million Iraqis for lack of food and medical supplies.

The same issue of *Rouge* published a "Call By Public Figures" signed by LCR leader Daniel Bensaid, among others. Taking up the demand for an international conference on the Balkans, the call demanded an end to NATO bombing because it "is leading not only to a political impasse but to legitimizing the role of NATO outside of any international framework of control." This French nationalist call concluded with the demand for "a parliamentary debate on the future of French participation in NATO." But its key demand was for *intervention by military forces under the European-dominated OSCE*:

"NATO was not the only, and above all not the best, linchpin for an accord. The conditions for a multinational police force (particularly composed of Serbs and Albanians) could be found under the auspices of the OSCE to enforce a transitional accord."

The following issue of *Rouge* (8 April)

Korean deformed workers state to the racist colonialist occupations of Somalia and Haiti. Under UN auspices, U.S. and other imperialist forces slaughtered tens of thousands of Iraqis in the 1991 Desert Slaughter. The U.S. and NATO didn't even bother using the UN as a fig leaf in the current war against Serbia.

On April 6, the LCR co-sponsored a demonstration in the industrial town of Elbeuf with the PCF and the local CGT trade-union federation on the basis of unalloyed French chauvinism. The demands—"Stop the massacres in Kosovo," "Resume negotiations," and "For the right of peoples to self-determination"—didn't even make a pretense of seeking to mobilize the working class against the bourgeoisie's dirty war. The LCR and PCF carefully refused to demand that French or other imperialist troops get out of the Balkans. Calling NATO bombing of Serbia "a big failure," the protest call declared:

"In this war, France, at the initiative of the President of the Republic and the Prime Minister, has dropped its role as mediator to act as a 'gendarme' on the side of NATO, under the leadership of President Clinton. The involvement of our country represents a break with the friendly relations established over the past century in this part of Europe."

France's "role as mediator" in the Balkans was to join Britain as Serbia's main big-power allies against Germany in

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WORKERS VANGUARD

No Illusions in Capitalist Courts!

Mobilize the Power of Labor! Free Mumia Now!



WV Photo

Trade unionists joined Partisan Defense Committee contingent at August 1995 Philadelphia march for Mumia Abu-Jamal. Reliance on capitalist "justice" system is counterposed to mobilization of labor/black power to free Mumia.

The fight for Mumia Abu-Jamal's life and freedom is urgently posed! The Pennsylvania Supreme Court's rejection of Jamal's legal appeal last October, endorsing every aspect of the frame-up of this innocent man, brought the danger of a new death warrant a big step closer. Now Governor Tom Ridge has announced a new speedup in signing execution warrants for death row prisoners who do not have a formal stay of execution. Meanwhile, the Fraternal Order of Police and its bloodthirsty allies have escalated their campaign of intimidation against the growing ranks of Mumia's supporters, forcing the cancellation of a citywide high school teach-in in Oakland in January. But the police were foiled when they threatened to shut down a benefit concert at the New Jersey Meadowlands later that month, as over 17,000 turned out for Mumia.

The frame-up of Mumia Abu-Jamal has come to symbolize what the barbaric, racist death penalty is all about. The forces of "law and order," represented by both the Democratic and Republican parties of capitalism, want to see Mumia dead because they see in this eloquent journalist, MOVE supporter and former Black Panther Party spokesman the spectre of black revolution, defiant opposition to their system of racist oppression. They seek to execute Jamal in order to send a chilling message to all those who challenge vicious cop repression in the ghettos, who stand up for labor's rights on the picket lines, who protest imperialist mass murder from Somalia and Iraq to the Balkans.

The racist rulers' vendetta against Jamal has impelled millions of trade unionists, leftist youth, black people and



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other oppressed minorities in this country and internationally to demonstrate or speak out on his behalf. At the same time, the death squad style execution of black African Amadou Diallo by four NYPD cops has provoked widespread anger not only in New York City but around the country against the rampant cop terror which has turned the ghettos and barrios into occupied territories and filled the jails and prisons to overflowing with black and Hispanic men.

But just as black Democratic Party officials and labor bureaucrats are scrambling to try to contain the outrage against the racist cops by channeling it into electoral pressure politics, the organizers of the April 24 "Millions for Mumia" protests in Philadelphia and the Bay Area seek to obscure the real nature of the agencies of the capitalist state with the demand for a "new trial." The sham of appealing for justice from the capitalist courts was powerfully exposed by a trade-union supporter of the Bay Area Labor Black League for Social Defense, speaking during the discussion at a Spartacist League Black History Month forum there in February. She said:

"I have here a flyer for a planning meeting for April 24; it says, 'Race for Jus-

tice, New Trial Now.' How about somebody telling the truth, that there's no way that Mumia's going to get justice in the courts. It's going to be exactly the same frame-up bullshit that happened the first time. So start there, tell the goddamned truth!

"The second thing that needs to happen for Mumia is that the ranks of labor have got to be brought out in the streets and in strike action. It's the only thing the bourgeoisie understands—when their production is stopped. And an issue like Mumia becomes something that is a threat to them only when it radicalizes the one class in society that has the power to take on the capitalist class, the working class."

The International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) is calling for two-hour stop work meetings at all West Coast ports on April 24 in defense of Jamal. Despite the obvious efforts of the

ILWU bureaucrats to minimize the cost to the company, to pull the thousands of longshoremen coastwide off the job, even if only for a few hours, would be a powerful statement of the social power that can and must be mobilized in broader actions—from mass labor-centered protests to political strikes—for Jamal's freedom.

This country is a powder keg of seething discontent. The labor bureaucracy in the U.S. fears mobilizing the social power of labor in struggle against this whole capitalist system of racist injustice because they fear a movement that could escape their control. The union misleaders who keep the working people tied to their exploiters through the agency of the Democratic Party are an obstacle to

continued on page 6

Spartacist and Labor Black League supporters at Bronx courthouse protest against brutal cop killing of Amadou Diallo, March 31.



WV Photo

Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!