

## Down With Repression of Student Demonstrators!

# Iran: Mass Protests Shake Islamic Regime

AUGUST 3—Shouting “death to dictatorship,” tens of thousands of students across Iran took to the streets for six days in early July in the largest protests since the blood-drenched mullahs came to power in 1979. In Teheran, as many as 25,000 students faced the iron bars, chains, clubs and tear gas volleys of the cops and the truncheons and automatic gunfire of Islamic fundamentalist militias. Dozens of student activists were injured in the nationwide protests, some 1,400 arrested and many others forced into hiding. Hundreds remain behind bars, some threatened with charges punishable by death. The international workers movement must urgently demand: **Free all student protesters now!**

The recent turmoil began with open skirmishing within the theocratic regime between the hardline wing under Ayatollah Ali Khatami and the “moderate” wing under President Mohammad Khatami. Hours after a July 8 protest by 200 Teheran University students against increased press censorship and the banning of the pro-Khatami newspaper *Salam*, police and fundamentalist Hezbollah thugs stormed a dormitory. As students were beaten in their sleep or thrown from windows, as many as eight were killed. The next day, 10,000 students demonstrated in Teheran to de-



Riot police were unleashed against student protests in Teheran in July. Cops and fundamentalist thugs killed at least eight, while dozens were injured and 1,400 arrested.

## For Workers Revolution!

mand the ouster of the national police chief and to appeal for support from Khatami, who was elected in 1997 largely thanks to the votes of youth and women. But the students’ growing disillusionment soon became evident when they chanted, “Khatami, where are you? Your students have been killed.”

Dissatisfied with the token dismissal of two senior police officials responsible for the raid on the university, protesters tried to storm the interior ministry building on July 13. The following day, the mullahs brought out tens of thousands of soldiers, government workers and bazaaris (the small merchants who are the clerics’ tra-

ditional base) in a countermobilization against the students. Faced with a threat to the Islamic regime, Khatami quickly closed ranks with his hardline rivals, denouncing the students as rioters with “devilish aims” who “intended to attack the foundations of the system and lead the country into anarchy” (*New York Times*, 14 July).

The student demonstrations have tapped into widespread popular opposition to the theocracy. A bystander at the July 13 protest said, “I just want to get rid of the filthy regime. Anything would be better than these clerics, even the worst criminals.” Fed up with the dictates of the reactionary *ulema* (clergy), many students want the all-pervasive morals police to butt out of their lives and are demanding that draconian restrictions on sexual freedom and freedom of expression be lifted. After riding to power on a wave of protests against the hated tyranny of the Shah in 1979, the Islamic hierarchy instituted an equally tyrannical regime

which dealt out bloody repression against workers and leftists, enslaved women in the stifling head-to-toe *chador* and perpetuated the murderous subjugation of Kurds, Arabs and other national and religious minorities. The Islamic regime used the squalid, nationalist war with *continued on page 12*

## South African Workers Battle Austerity, Union-Busting

JOHANNESBURG, August 3—Hundreds of thousands of hospital workers, teachers and government workers across South Africa poured into the streets last week in the first major strike against the government of African National Congress (ANC) president Thabo Mbeki, who was elected in June to replace retiring ANC leader Nelson Mandela. Since the elections, massive retrenchments (layoffs) have been announced in almost every sector of the workforce. From Durban and Cape Town to Bisho in the Eastern Cape to Pretoria and Johannesburg, the union-busting “privatization” and “restructuring” policies of the Mbeki government

are being challenged by thousands of workers whose very livelihoods and lives are at stake. Yesterday, union leaders agreed to new talks with the government but threatened new strikes if the wage offer is not improved.

In terms of the number of workers involved, the two-day public sector walk-out is the biggest labour action in South Africa since the ANC replaced the white-supremacist regime five years ago. When Mandela was elected the country’s first black president in 1994, this was hailed as the end of the hated apartheid system and the beginning of black majority rule. However, the *economic basis* of apartheid—the superexploitation of black labour by the white capitalist class and its senior partners on Wall Street and in the City of London—remains. What had changed—and it was a significant change—was that the bourgeois-nationalist leaders of the ANC were co-opted as

the black front men for the masters of the Jo’burg stock exchange. We wrote at the time: “The rigid structures of apartheid may be gone, but white supremacy remains, and will remain until the racist capitalist system is overthrown by the working people who produce its superprofits” (“South Africa Powder Keg,” *WV* No. 603, 8 July 1994).

That the conditions of the black masses remain as desperate as ever was underscored by the industrial murder last week of 18 miners in a methane gas explosion in a Carletonville mine shaft. Black life is cheap in the eyes of the mining magnates! Meanwhile, unemployment stands at nearly 40 per cent, and is far higher in black townships like Soweto. Millions more are consigned to wretched poverty in the rural areas.

Mbeki, Mandela’s hand-picked successor, is even more blatant in his support to big business and hostility to the



Pretoria, July 30: Hundreds of thousands of public sector workers nationwide went on strike against ANC government.

black trade-union movement. Its rhetorical appeals to the masses notwithstanding, the ANC is a capitalist party external to the workers movement that would not shrink, if necessary to defend its class interests, from seeking to smash the trade unions. Trying to play the unemployed off against the employed, ANC spokesmen blame “greedy,” “overpaid” *continued on page 13*



# Protests Over Vieques Bombing Range All U.S. Troops, Bases Out of Puerto Rico!

Chanting “Navy—Murderers,” some 50,000 demonstrators marched on the huge Roosevelt Roads Navy base in Puerto Rico on July 4. This was the largest in a series of protests demanding the removal of the U.S. Navy bombing range on the Puerto Rican island of Vieques in the wake of the April 19 practice bombing which killed a Puerto Rican security guard and seriously injured four other people. The protests have continued, including one on July 17 against the presence of a U.S. guided missile cruiser in San Juan Bay. The protesters were brutally attacked by baton-wielding riot police and U.S. Navy sailors using fire hoses.

Outrage against the bombing atrocity is so widespread that even New Progressive Party (PNP) governor Pedro Rosselló, a pro-U.S. toady, was compelled to call for shutting down the Navy complex on

Vieques. While U.S. imperialist chief Clinton suspended the bombing runs and ordered a special commission on the status of the Vieques base, the U.S. has made it clear that it is not about to shut down the bombing range. Navy Secretary Richard Danzig insists that Vieques is “irreplaceable,” calling it the Pentagon’s “most important center of military training.” Appearing before Clinton’s commission, a Navy spokesman prated, “We are very proud of our legacy in Vieques” (*Hoy*, 12 July). This legacy of U.S. colonialism in Puerto Rico is written in blood: it includes the 1937 Ponce massacre and the assassination and imprisonment of countless independence fighters over the last century.

The Navy presence in Vieques since 1941 exemplifies U.S. imperialist arrogance and contempt for the Puerto Rican masses. Two-thirds of the tiny island is

off limits to the 9,600 inhabitants. With farmers driven off the most fertile land and fishermen excluded from most of the island’s fishing areas, nearly three-quarters of the population lives in poverty. Navy jets carry out practice bombing runs with live ammunition. When the question of transferring these live bombing runs to an island in Chesapeake Bay was raised during 1981 Congressional hearings, Admiral Keanny objected because that island was “closed three months of the year to protect the migration of the geese that inhabit it.” The U.S. imperialists have no such concerns for the welfare of the Puerto Rican people. With cancer rates on Vieques already inexplicably high, last February Navy pilots “accidentally” fired 263 shells tipped with depleted uranium.

Now that the U.S. Southern Command—American imperialism’s headquarters for military intervention in Latin America—has moved from Panama to Puerto Rico, the imperialists are expanding the already huge military presence there. The military controls 13 percent of Puerto Rico’s scarce land, including the Roosevelt Roads naval station, the hemisphere’s largest. Puerto Rico has long been key to U.S. military designs, serving as a staging ground for U.S. aggression in the Caribbean, from the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba to Santo Domingo in 1965 to Grenada in 1983. The U.S. military presence in the region is aimed at enforcing imperialist subjugation of the semicolonial peoples throughout Latin America and is a dagger in particular against the Cuban bureaucratically deformed workers state. It has also served as a training base to prepare for the terror bombing of Iraq in 1991 and of Serbia this year. ***U.S. military out of the Caribbean! For unconditional military defense of Cuba against imperialism and internal counterrevolution!***

“Citizens” of the U.S. with no right to vote in federal elections and no represen-



WV Photo

**SL contingent at July 7 New York City protest in defense of Puerto Rican nationalist prisoners.**

tation in Congress, Puerto Ricans are politically dispossessed, discriminated against economically, linguistically, racially and culturally. With more than half the population living below the U.S. poverty level, Puerto Rico’s working people are exploited as a low-wage labor pool by capitalists who invest in industry on the island.

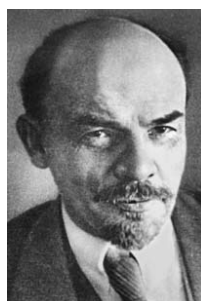
The outrage over the Vieques bombing demonstrates the Puerto Rican masses’ deep resentment against their colonial oppression. But the petty-bourgeois nationalist leaders of the protests over Vieques have sought to use the demonstrations as a lever for pleading with Washington for a kinder, gentler colonialism. Even though Rosselló’s PNP calls for a *greater* U.S. military presence in Puerto Rico, according to *Diario* (26 July) Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP) leader Colón Martínez “emphasized that even the annexationist governor  
*continued on page 14*



TROTSKY

## Imperialist War and Opportunist “Socialism”

*The vote by the German Social Democracy on 4 August 1914 at the onset of World War I for war credits for the German imperialist state signaled the definitive collapse of the Second International into opportunism. Denouncing this class treason, Russian Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin fought to rally those elements opposed to social-chauvinism behind the call for a revolutionary Third International, which came to fruition*



LENIN

*two years after the Russian October Revolution of 1917, the world’s first successful workers revolution. This year, social-democratic parties actually led many of the West European governments prosecuting the U.S./NATO war of imperialist domination against Serbia, with the avid support of the reformist and centrist left. We fight to build the indispensable instrument needed to lead new October Revolutions internationally to defeat imperialism: a reformed Trotskyist Fourth International.*

The gravest feature of the present crisis is that the majority of official representatives of European socialism have succumbed to bourgeois nationalism, to chauvinism. It is with good reason that the bourgeois press of all countries writes of them now with derision, now with condescending praise. To anyone who wants to remain a socialist there can be no more important duty than to reveal the causes of this crisis in socialism and analyse the tasks of the International....

Advocacy of class collaboration; abandonment of the idea of socialist revolution and revolutionary methods of struggle; adaptation to bourgeois nationalism; losing sight of the fact that the borderlines of nationality and country are historically transient; making a fetish of bourgeois legality; renunciation of the class viewpoint and the class struggle, for fear of repelling the “broad masses of the population” (meaning the petty bourgeoisie)—such, doubtlessly, are the ideological foundations of opportunism. And it is from such soil that the present chauvinist and patriotic frame of mind of most Second International leaders has developed. Observers representing the most various points of view have long noted that the opportunists are in fact prevalent in the Second International’s leadership. The war has merely brought out, rapidly and saliently, the true measure of this prevalence....

The Second International did its share of useful preparatory work in preliminarily organising the proletarian masses during the long, “peaceful” period of the most brutal capitalist slavery and most rapid capitalist progress in the last third of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. To the Third International falls the task of organising the proletarian forces for a revolutionary onslaught against the capitalist governments, for civil war against the bourgeoisie of all countries for the capture of political power, for the triumph of socialism!

—V.I. Lenin, “The Position and Tasks of the Socialist International”  
(November 1914)

## WORKERS VANGUARD

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No. 717

6 August 1999

## Letter

### On the Iraqi Communist Party

19 July 1999  
Chicago, IL

Dear Comrades:

The article on Kurdistan in WV No. 716 (9 July), “Trotskyism vs. PKK Nationalism,” refers to the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) of 1959 as “this powerful force for social revolution.” I assume this was the result of sloppy editing and that the quoted expression was meant to refer to the Iraqi/Kurdish *working class*.

However, the rest of the paragraph that follows tends to support this misstatement. It is incredibly soft on the ICP, depicting it in terms applicable to the Chinese Communist Party of Chen Duxiu instead of a Stalinist formation steeped in class collaborationism from its inception. There’s no way this party could have mobilized “its working-class base to take state power in its own name,” nor did it need any orders from Moscow to scuttle a revolution. The ICP did what its program said it should do, what it had been trained to do for 25 years. The ICP was an *obstacle* to revolution, not its potential leadership.

It is moreover quite inappropriate to talk about the ICP’s large Kurdish component without mentioning the party’s less than stalwart defense of Kurdish national rights. The ICP did make a couple of formal statements supporting Kurdish self-determination: at its inception in 1935 and in 1953, when it called for “the right

of self-determination, including that of secession, for the Kurdish people.” Those are the only documented instances I know of (though admittedly I’m no expert). Despite these isolated pronouncements, the ICP, according to Walter Laqueur (*Communism and Nationalism in the Middle East*), generally attacked the goal of an independent Kurdish state, saying the Kurdish question was part of the Iraqi question. And in 1961 the CP at first supported Iraqi strongman Qassim’s suppression of a Kurdish uprising before swinging around to supporting some version of “autonomy” (Chaliand, ed., *People Without a Country: the Kurds and Kurdistan*).

Comradely,  
Anderson

#### WV Replies

Anderson is quite right. For more on the history of the Iraqi CP, see “Iraqi Rulers’ Bloody Road to Power,” (WV No. 511, 5 October 1990). ■

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WORKERS VANGUARD

# After Holding Out for 117 Days

# Newport News Strike

# Scuttled by USWA Tops

After 17 weeks on the picket lines, members of United Steelworkers (USWA) Local 8888 at Newport News Shipbuilding in the Virginia Tidewater area voted to return to work on July 30. In the midst of the U.S.-led NATO war of imperialist domination against Serbia, the strike shut down production at the only shipyard in the country which builds and repairs nuclear-powered aircraft carriers. This integrated, industrial union held firm in the racist, “open shop” South in the face of brazen company attempts to foster a scab back-to-work movement and an anti-union barrage by the local capitalist press. The very length of the walkout demonstrated the strikers’ determination to defend their union and win their demands. But this determination was squandered by the pro-capitalist USWA leaders, who refused to mobilize the workers’ power on the picket lines and instead relied on appeals to capitalist politicians and the government, finally shoving a sellout settlement down the throats of the workers.

The anti-union media is pushing the lie that strikes don’t pay, with the Newport News-Hampton *Daily Press* (27 July) gloating that “striking workers will surely ask themselves whether the 16-week sacrifice was worth it.” In fact, after 117 days of struggle and sacrifice, with many workers forced to get by on the meager strike benefits provided by the USWA International tops, the sellout was met with widespread opposition. Barely half of the local’s more than 8,000 members bothered to vote on the settlement, and of those nearly 40 percent—some 1,700—voted to reject the contract and continue the strike.

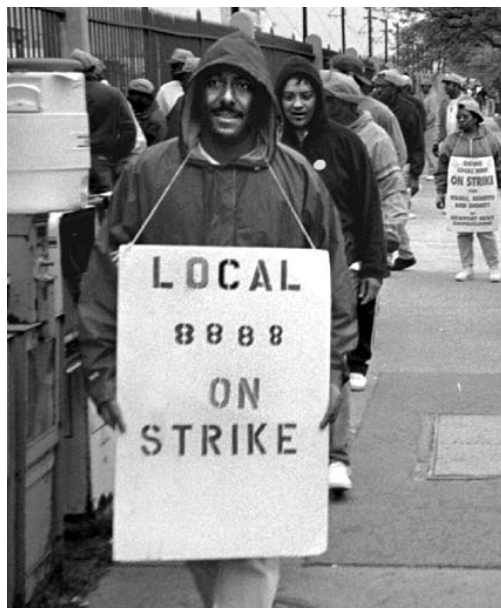
The real lesson of this strike is the burning need to fight for a new labor leadership based on a program of class struggle, not class collaboration. From the outset, *Workers Vanguard* stressed the need for mass, militant picket lines to shut down the shipyard. We emphasized the importance of taking up the fight against racist discrimination, writing (“Victory to Newport News Shipyard Workers!” *WV* No. 711, 16 April):

“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’.”

The Navy shoveled millions of dollars to the Newport News bosses during the strike, including payments for strike-breaking security guards and for busing scabs into the yard. Several weeks before the strike ended, government mediators

moved in to make it clear that the walkout had to come to a halt. The aircraft carrier USS *Enterprise* was scheduled to begin repair work in August. The government wanted that work to go ahead, and the USWA tops saluted.

The USWA misleaders did everything to keep the picket lines small and weak,



WV Photo

**Newport News strike was derailed by pro-capitalist USWA bureaucracy. Union militants protest sellout deal outside July 23 union meeting.**

allowing scabs, contractors and military personnel to stroll into the yard. Instead of organizing mass pickets to shut down every gate, the union tops bused strikers to Washington to lobby capitalist Democratic Party politicians and Navy brass and sent them to Richmond to plead with company stockholders. One 36-year supply worker told *WV*, “A lot of people got fed up.”

A victorious strike by this heavily black industrial union could have paved the way for union organizing throughout the racist “right to work” South. The potential to forge unity in struggle between black and white workers was expressed by a white machinist with 18 years in the yard who said, “If nothing else comes out of this strike, I saw whites and blacks come together, talking and exchanging views. I never saw this very much before.”

At a raucous mass union meeting where the offer was announced one week before the vote, International president George Becker was shouted down by angry workers yelling, “Let’s talk money!” Local 8888 president Arnold Outlaw tried to justify the contract offer with the claim that “there was nothing left to get out of Newport News Shipbuilding except their guts.” In fact, Newport News is rolling in profits, pulling in over \$66 million last year, while workers’ wages have been frozen for the past six years. Against the initial union demand for a \$10-an-hour wage raise over three years, the contract provides for an average wage increase of \$3.10 spread out over five years, amounting to a *28-cent-an-hour* increase for each year from the time wages were frozen in 1993 until the end of the new 58-month contract. Meanwhile, workers will have to pay nearly twice as much for health insurance as they did before.

To garner the support of older workers for the contract, the union leadership got a gradual increase in the maximum pension from \$506 to \$900 a month for workers who reach age 62 with 30 years on the job. But as one rigger said, “Except for

the pension, everything else is like what the shipyard wanted.” Meanwhile, union members report that layoffs of 1,100 workers are expected by this fall, as the *Daily Press* (25 July) crows that the settlement “will not derail a cost-cutting agreement between Newport News Shipbuilding and the Navy.”



Nakamura/Virginian-Pilot

Worse yet, the contract perpetuates the company’s discriminatory practices against blacks and women, as well as against younger and unskilled workers. Three new higher “specialist pay grades” have been created which, like the current “merit” pay raises, will be awarded to workers at the discretion of the

racist Newport News management. As one machinist commented, “Seventy percent of management decisions are race-related.” In a blow against younger workers, those hired after 1995 will lose two and a half days’ vacation per year. Further fostering divisions among union members, the USWA officials agreed to allow scabs to remain on the job while the company gets to recall workers over 28 days, meaning older and skilled workers will return first. As one worker said bitterly, “I don’t like the way we’re going back into the yard. We all walked out together, we should go back *together*.”

A number of strikers stood outside the entrance to the July 23 union meeting with signs reading, “Vote No! Don’t Be Tricked!” One militant distributed a leaflet during the vote the following week condemning the terms of the settlement. Proclaiming “‘Vote No’ to 3rd Class Contract,” the leaflet concluded with the appeal: “Our livelihood deserves greater compensation for continuous efforts that we put into building the greatest ships and subs on the planet.” Newport News workers certainly deserve a much better contract for the arduous and skilled work they do. But this statement in the leaflet adopts the language the bureaucrats used to push patriotic appeals to the government, thus acting to derail the strike. As we wrote in our initial article on the strike, “The ‘national interest’ is the *class* interest of the bourgeoisie.”

Militants who seek to cohere an alternative within the union to the USWA misleadership which sold them down the river must understand that at the core of the union bureaucracy’s treacherous policies is its class-collaborationist lie that U.S. workers share common interests with their capitalist exploiters against workers overseas. To prepare for the struggles ahead, it is necessary to fight for a leadership based on the understanding that the workers of all countries have the same class interests, and that the American bourgeoisie is the greatest enemy of the working class the world over. Break with the Democrats! Join us in the fight to forge an internationalist, class-struggle workers party committed to sweeping away this profit system of union-busting, racist hell and imperialist war through a socialist revolution which places the multiracial proletariat in power. ■

## Spartacist Forums

**Mobilize Mass Labor Protest Against Racist Cop Terror!  
No Illusions in Feds, Civilian Review Boards, Capitalist Courts!**

**There Is No Justice in Capitalist America  
Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!**

**Saturday, August 7, 3 p.m.**

University of Illinois at Chicago  
Circle Center Rm. 509, 750 S. Halsted  
For more information: (312) 454-4930  
spartacist@iname.com

**CHICAGO**

**Thursday, August 19, 7:30 p.m.**

322 W. 48th St., Club Room  
(Take E or C train to 50th St., bet. 8th & 9th Ave.)  
For more information: (212) 267-1025  
nysl@compuserve.com

**NEW YORK CITY**

**25 Years After the Defeat of Busing:  
Boston Schools—Separate and Unequal**

**Free, Quality, Integrated Education for All!**

**Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!**

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Central Square YWCA, 7 Temple Street, Cambridge

**BOSTON**

For more information: (617) 666-9453

**U.S./UN/NATO Out of the Balkans Now!**

**The Fraud of “Human Rights” Imperialism**

**Saturday, August 28**

Time and place to be announced.  
For more information: (213) 380-8239

**LOS ANGELES**

**Thursday, September 2**

Time and place to be announced.  
For more information: (415) 395-9520 or  
(510) 839-0851

**BAY AREA**

### CORRECTION

The photo caption in the front-page article “Iran: 20 Years of Islamic Dictatorship” (*WV* No. 708, 5 March) misidentified the prominent portrait carried by Iranian women in the photo. The portrait is of leading clericalist hardliner Ayatollah Khamenei, not President Khatami.



## Students, Workers Protest IMF Austerity Attacks on Education

# Mexican Government Threatens Crackdown Against Mass Student Strike

JULY 30—The student strike at Mexico City's National Autonomous University (UNAM)—with some 270,000 students, the largest university in the Western Hemisphere—has now gone on for more than a hundred days. Their fight against the devastation of public higher education by an austerity plan dictated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has won widespread support among the working class. Crucial in this strike has been the support of the STUNAM campus workers union and the powerful Union of Electrical Workers (SME), whose members have joined in guarding the barricades of the striking students. On July 26, tens of thousands of students and workers flooded Mexico City's huge central square, the Zócalo, in a demonstration of support for the UNAM strike endorsed by 43 unions and social organizations.

Our comrades of the Grupo Espartaquista de México (GEM), section of the International Communist League, and its Juventud Espartaquista (JE) youth group have distributed thousands of leaflets calling for workers defense of the UNAM strike, stressing the need to go beyond the walls of the campus and mobilize the active support of the industrial proletariat in order for this struggle to end in victory. Workers' defense based on the tremendous social power of labor is a key question today in the strike. The bourgeois parties and the media have been trying to isolate the strike, spreading rumors of impending repression and raising the spectre of the bloody 1968 massacre of student protesters. Ominously, the government has deployed 5,000 of the newly formed elite Federal Police in Mexico City, and students confront constant provocations around the campus.

In advancing our revolutionary and internationalist program to defend public education and defeat the bourgeoisie's attacks on the working class, our comrades have warned against illusions in the current misleadership of the student movement and both the official trade unions tied to the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and the "independent" unions, and their subordination to bourgeois nationalism. The chief representative of this nationalist ideology today is the "leftist" Party of the Demo-



Mexico City, July 26: Tens of thousands of workers and students march in solidarity with UNAM student strike.

## For Workers Defense of the Strike! No Illusions In Bourgeois-Nationalist PRD!

cratic Revolution (PRD) of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, who is currently mayor of Mexico City. The bourgeois-nationalist PRD is no less committed than the PRI of President Ernesto Zedillo to imposing the austerity plans dictated by the IMF and the Mexican ruling class, including through bloody state repression.

While our comrades fight to extend the strike to the proletariat, the Morenoite Partido Obrero Socialista (POS) has scandalously called to *end the strike*, arguing in a July 3 leaflet by its Juventud Socialista youth group: "After more than 70 days the movement is worn out, tired and weak. It is a fact that we cannot count any more on the presence of contingents of the electrical workers in our mobilizations." This despicable strike-breaking call was issued just as electrical workers joined the student barricades! As our comrades pointed out in a July 26 leaflet (which is excerpted page 10), in attempting to sow demoralization among the students, the POS is doing the bidding of UNAM rector Francisco Barnés' campus administration and the state.

Posing an immediate danger to the UNAM students and the workers who have joined them on the barricades are the Auxilio UNAM campus cops organized in STUNAM. The Internationalist Group (IG) claims in print (and in English Internet postings for foreign consumption) to fight for cops out of the unions. But where it counts, in the heat of this struggle at UNAM, the IG has taken a cowardly dive on this crucial question. Thus

at a July 6 assembly involving STUNAM workers in the school of philosophy, an IG spokesman failed to say a word about the cops. It was the JE which raised the demand, "Auxilio UNAM out of the STUNAM!" Thus the IG stands exposed (again) as cynical centrists whose only use for Marxism is to camouflage their capitulation to alien class forces.

Mexican workers and youth committed to fighting against the whole system of capitalist austerity and injustice need an authentic Leninist-Trotskyist party. Our comrades of the GEM/JE are dedicated to the construction of such a party. We reprint below a July 5 GEM/JE leaflet.

### Joven Espartaco

**No Illusions in the PRD—Forge a Revolutionary Workers Party!  
For Workers Defense of the UNAM Strike!**

The strike by tens of thousands of students—supported on the picket lines by the STUNAM workers—is entering its third month, the longest in the history of the university. Barnés & Co.'s attempt to put an end to the strike by piecing the students off with "voluntary" tuition failed miserably. The solidarity shown by the STUNAM workers as well as the support for the strike among broader layers of the proletariat have so far discouraged an open show of force by the capitalist rulers against the students. Now, however, Barnés has issued an ultimatum demand-

ing that the strike end by 7 July and ominously inviting the intervention of the police. What is urgently posed is the defense of the striking students by the organized workers movement.

The bourgeois-nationalist PRD is no less wedded to enforcing IMF austerity than the PRI or PAN [the right-wing National Action Party]. Zedillo has openly railed against the student strike as "brutal aggression." While disguising itself as a "friend" of the student strike, the PRD has used its influence over the newspapers *La Jornada* and *Proceso* to further the sinister campaign to smash the strike, fingering student leaders as "ultras." Cárdenas was also cited in *La Jornada* (23 June) as saying "the police of the Federal District will not act against the university students, because the UNAM is a federal institution and therefore it should be the federal police" who smash the students. Thus, Cárdenas is in no way opposed to state repression. In fact, he has shown his real face on several occasions, using his riot police to repress the teachers of the CNTE union and striking students. On 3 July, *La Jornada* reported that Cárdenas' Federal District govern-

ment had warned that the administering of the admission test for new applicants to UNAM would be "carried out without incidents, and in the case that those take place they will 'act immediately in terms of the law'." Facing the presidential elections next year, the PRD would prefer to maintain a base among those students and youth who have illusions that it is somehow more "progressive" than the other capitalist parties, but it *must* prove itself capable of administering the capitalist state.

*It is in the interest of the working class and all of the oppressed to mobilize in defense of the UNAM strike! Organized contingents of trade unionists could prevent the forces of the state from carrying out brutal repression against the students!* On 2 July, members of the SIT-UAM campus workers union at Metropolitan University staged a one-day strike in solidarity with the UNAM strike. The mobilization of key industrial unions such as the SUTERM and SME electrical workers along with transport and communication workers in defense of the strike would be a powerful display of workers power in the face of austerity, privatizations and the general assault by the ruling class at the behest of their U.S. imperialist masters and the International Monetary Fund on the living conditions of the working people.

The present attack on public education centered at UNAM is part of this broader ruling-class assault. At the same time that it seeks to further restrict access to higher education for the sons and daughters of

### NOTICE

**Workers Vanguard skips alternate issues in June, July and August.**

**Our next issue will be dated September 3.**

the proletariat, the bourgeoisie is seeking to privatize the electricity companies, leading to mass layoffs and the weakening of the SME and SUTERM unions. The potential for a social explosion in Mexico against the dictates of IMF austerity has not been lost on the bourgeoisie internationally. Thus, the *New York Times* (25 June) carried a major article on the strike, noting that it reflected resistance to “Mexico’s decade-old shift away from a costly welfare state toward lean government and private enterprise.” If it is able to isolate the students and use state repression to defeat the strike, the rulers will have made an example to broader sections of the working class and oppressed: this is what is in store for you if you fight.

We in the Juventud Espartaquista, youth group of the Grupo Espartaquista de México (GEM), have participated in the protests, including building occupations, barricading and guarding occupied buildings, spreading the strike in its initial days to the Universum Museum, where the director and the university lawyers tried to intimidate and force the museum guides to scab on the strike. Here the active support of the STUNAM workers was decisive in shutting down the museum. We have also fought to win students in the course of this strike to a revolutionary, internationalist, *proletarian* perspective. During the U.S./NATO war in the Balkans, we gave the workers and students at the UNAM a concrete way to solidarize with Yugoslav workers under imperialist attack, collecting money from the STUNAM workers and students for the workers of the bombed Zastava auto plant in Serbia as part of the ICL’s participation internationally in a fund drive initiated by the Italian COBAS trade union. On May 18, comrades of the Juventud Espartaquista addressed—and received support from—the General Council of Delegates (CGR) of the STUNAM about the campaign for material aid. We called for the defeat of imperialism through workers revolution and for the military defense of Serbia while giving not one iota of political support to the butcher Milosevic.

The pseudo-left tails of the bourgeois-nationalist PRD have actively opposed linking the students’ struggle to the social power of the working class. This was clear when the student misleaders of the General Council of the Strike made a meaningless paper endorsement and then consciously refused to mobilize the masses of striking students to join with the workers at the huge May Day march. It is clear as well in their pushing of utopian schemes to turn the university into an institution for social progress—a “liberated zone” in the midst of misery and repression—and of the myth of students as a “vanguard,” which serves to isolate the students. Such fatuous student vanguardism also reflects petty-bourgeois contempt for the working class.

As Marxists, we understand that the university is an important pillar of bour-



AP  
**PRD leader Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas (above, right) with PRI president Ernesto Zedillo. As Mexico City mayor, Cárdenas has mobilized riot police against striking teachers, protesters, street vendors.**

geois society and that its primary function is to train the future administrative, technical and cultural personnel for the capitalist system. (The universities are by no means essential. When it has to, the bourgeoisie can do without universities or students. That’s why during the Second World War the universities of the combatant countries were shelved while the war was being prosecuted from 1939-45. For all intents and purposes, there were no schools, no students and nobody noticed.) The democratic demands we advance for education are inextricably linked with the understanding that only when the system of capitalism is destroyed through the seizure of state power by the working class led by a revolutionary party will the basis be laid for genuine equality in all spheres of society. We call for full open admissions made economically meaningful by providing all students with a living stipend! While defending against further attacks on access to higher education, we are not for upholding the status quo of automatic entry to UNAM only by a select number of relatively privileged high schools. For every 10,000 students entering UNAM each year, more than 90,000 are rejected, while the courses, the workrooms, the books and other materials are so expensive that it is practically impossible for working-class youth to enter. We are opposed as well to groveling appeals for “dialogue” with the rectory [administration]. Abolish the rectory! Nationalize all the private universities under teacher-student-campus worker control!

The question for militant students is: with whom will you ally—the working class or the bourgeoisie in the form of the nationalist PRD? Our answer is: for the proletariat! The other self-proclaimed Marxist organizations have taken the other side.

## The PRD’s Fake-Socialist Tails

It is suicidal to believe that the bourgeois PRD will prevent a repeat of the bloody massacre of hundreds of students in 1968 by the joint efforts of the city police and Mexican army or the shooting and killing of tens of students during the “Jueves de Corpus” on 10 July 1971 by the government death squads known as

*halcones* (hawks). But pressuring the PRD is at the center of the strategy of the fake-left. In an interview in *Proceso* (27 June), Partido Obrero Socialista (POS) leader Cuauhtémoc Ruíz stated: “The Cárdenas government must understand that it needs to be more flexible in the way of implementing the law.” The POS can certainly not be trusted to advance the interests of the working class: while it capitulates to the national bourgeoisie “at home”—even calling for state intervention in the unions and for unionization of the cops—abroad it has proven itself to be a group of “Pentagon socialists.” Thus, the POS’ international Morenoite tendency (LIT) lined up with the Vatican and CIA in supporting anti-Semitic Polish Solidarność, just as in Afghanistan it supported the imperialist-backed *mujahedin*—notorious for killing teachers who instructed women to read and write—against the Soviet intervention. In sharp contrast to this rabid anti-Soviet organization our international tendency, guided by the authentic program of Trotskyism, stood for the unconditional military defense of the USSR when it existed. Today, we

defend the existing deformed workers states—Cuba, China, Vietnam and North Korea—against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution. We call for a proletarian political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracies and a return to the road of Lenin.

Recently, during the Balkans war, the POS and the centrist Liga de Trabajadores por el Socialismo (LTS), a split from the POS, lined up with Clinton & Co.’s rallying cry over “poor little Kosovo,” which was the imperialist cover for their massacre against the Yugoslav workers. Comrades of the Juventud Espartaquista intervened in the forums called by the POS during the strike to expose their pro-imperialist policy. During the UNAM strike, the LTS and its front group Contracorriente have explicitly echoed the United Nations and its UNESCO arm in advising the Mexican bourgeois state on its investment policy, advocating that 8 percent of the GNP be devoted to education (*Estrategia Obrera*, 9 June)! It should not be forgotten that it was under the fig leaf of the UN that U.S.

*continued on page 11*

## SYC Statement of Solidarity with UNAM Strikers

*The following is a July 31 statement by the Spartacus Youth Clubs.*

The Spartacus Youth Clubs (SYC)—youth clubs of the revolutionary Trotskyist Spartacist League, U.S. section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)—stand in solidarity with your fight against attacks on public education at UNAM. We pledge in advance to mobilize protest here should the Mexican government follow through on its threats of brutal police and military repression of the student strikers and their working-class defenders.

Over the last few years, the racist U.S. ruling class has carried out a concerted purge of working-class, black, Latino and immigrant youth from university campuses through exponential increases in tuition costs and the abolition of affirmative action and other programs that offered limited access to “higher education” by black and minority youth. Against these attacks the Spartacus Youth Clubs have fought for free, integrated education for all, raising the demands for open admissions, no tuition and a state-paid stipend for all students. Struggles against the attacks on access to university education have been met with repression and arrests by campus administrations, demonstrating their role as the representatives of the bourgeoisie. The SYCs say: Abolish the campus administration! The universities should be run by those who work and study there!

Like our comrades at UNAM of the Juventud Espartaquista, youth group of the Grupo Espartaquista de México, Mexican section of the ICL, we have emphasized the necessity for students to ally with the social power of the multiracial proletariat in the fight against attacks on education. We salute the mobilization of the campus workers and the powerful electrical workers unions, among others, in defense of the student strikers. This will be a powerful lesson to bring to the unions and student protesters in the U.S.

The attempts to eliminate free access to UNAM for many more thousands of youth is part of the intensification of the exploitation of the Mexican working class and oppressed implemented by the Mexican bourgeoisie in line with the dictates of its U.S. imperialist masters through the IMF and NAFTA. As revolutionary internationalists we fight for common class struggle by U.S. and Mexican workers against the U.S. imperialist beast and its PRI, PRD and PAN lackeys in Mexico. We fight to win students and young workers to the perspective of building the revolutionary workers party necessary for the victory of socialist revolution which alone can lay the material basis for securing an education and future for the children of the working class and oppressed. As part of this fight, we stand in solidarity with your struggles. Victory to the UNAM strike!



Dorantes Archive

**Mexico City, October 1968: Troops were called out against student demonstrators as hundreds were massacred.**



# Capitalist Russia in the “New World Order”

Part One of this article appeared in WV No. 716 (9 July).

The October Revolution of 1917 created in Russia a workers state governed by soviet democracy and led by a communist vanguard party. The Bolsheviks understood that an isolated workers state—moreover, an economically weak and backward one like Russia—could only survive for any length of time by spreading the revolution internationally.

Revulsion to the mass slaughter of the first imperialist world war combined with the inspiration of the Bolshevik Revolution produced revolutionary turmoil throughout Europe, centrally Germany, between 1918 and 1923. However, the kind of steeled proletarian vanguard party which Lenin had built in tsarist Russia did not exist elsewhere in Europe. Given the weakness and inexperience of the Communist parties, the European bourgeoisies were able to restore order—

## PART TWO

with the indispensable aid of the social-democratic parties.

Thus Soviet Russia emerged from the Civil War bled white, its industry in shambles, internationally isolated and besieged by world imperialism. Not only the Bolshevik leadership but the mass of Soviet workers understood that extension of the revolution was critical, particularly the seizure of power by the German proletariat. The definitive defeat of the anticipated German revolution in 1923, due to the conscious counterrevolutionary policies of the Social Democracy and the incapacity of the Communist leadership, led directly to the ascendancy of a conservative and nationalistic bureaucracy in the Soviet workers state. Trotsky later explained in his 1940 “Letter to the Workers of the USSR”:

“The October Revolution was accomplished for the sake of the toilers and not for the sake of new parasites. But due to the lag of the world revolution, due to the fatigue and, to a large measure, the backwardness of the Russian workers and especially the Russian peasants, there raised itself over the Soviet Republic and against its peoples a new oppressive caste, whose leader is Stalin.”

The nationally limited interests of this new parasitic caste were encapsulated in the utopian nationalist slogan of “building socialism in one country,” which transformed the Communist International from an instrument for world socialist revolution into an obstacle to that goal. In opposition to Stalin, Trotsky insisted on the Marxist understanding that the creation of a socialist society entails a level of economic productivity higher than that of even the most advanced capitalist economies. That requires an internationally planned economy, since the seizure of power by the proletariat in one country could not eliminate the pressures of the world capitalist market.

In 1938, the Transitional Program, the founding document of the Trotskyist Fourth International, stated:

“The USSR thus embodies terrific contradictions. But it still remains a *degenerated workers’ state*. Such is the social diagnosis. The political prognosis has an alternative character: either the bureaucracy, becoming ever more the organ of the world bourgeoisie in the workers’ state, will overthrow the new forms of property and plunge the country back into capitalism; or the working class will crush the bureaucracy and open the way to socialism.”

Trotsky believed that the contradictions embodied in the Soviet Union were so intense that they would be resolved,

one way or another, in the historic short run. Yet the Stalinized USSR would survive for another five decades—a significant and momentous period in modern world history. What accounted for the unexpected longevity of the Soviet bureaucratically degenerated workers state? And why in the end did capitalist counterrevolution triumph, not proletarian political revolution?

The heroic and successful defense against the Nazi German invasion by the workers and collective farmers of the USSR—at a cost of some 27 million lives—generated a deep and broad sense of Soviet patriotism, albeit infected with the Russian nationalism promoted by the

orbital flight by the cosmonauts demonstrated that Soviet science and technology had attained world-class levels in key fields. Third World colonial revolutions—in particular the Cuban revolution of 1959-60—vastly enhanced the prestige of the Soviet Union in world politics to the detriment of U.S. imperialism.

In 1960, Khrushchev challenged the capitalist West, “We will bury you,” proclaiming that the USSR would not only achieve global dominance over Western capitalism but also “full communism” in 20 years. He was here expressing the false consciousness of the Kremlin oligarchy. Such views also had a resonance in Soviet society, where wide layers of

embodiment of economic affluence and modernity.

## Behind the Disintegration of the Kremlin Bureaucracy

In 1964, the often impulsive Khrushchev was ousted in a Kremlin coup by a more conservative faction led by Leonid Brezhnev. The 18-year Brezhnev reign was one of unusual stability following the tumultuous Khrushchev period and the cataclysmic upheavals of the Stalin era. Yet beneath the surface immobility of Soviet society, pressures were building which would shatter the Kremlin bureaucracy a few years after Brezhnev’s death.

The first half of the Brezhnev period saw both a decline in Soviet economic dynamism and an increase in Moscow’s standing in the international political arena. With American imperialism bogged down in the long, losing counterrevolutionary war in Vietnam, the USSR was able to achieve strategic nuclear parity in the early 1970s. The effects of the Vietnam War, including Washington’s hope of using Moscow to broker a sell-out by the North Vietnamese Stalinist regime, led to the short-lived triumph of Brezhnev’s “détente” policies.

However, the rough military parity which the USSR achieved vis-à-vis the United States in this period did *not* correspond to its underlying economic strength. In fact, the country was experiencing a slowdown in the growth of total output and labor productivity. In 1971, a young but influential intellectual with the prestigious Institute of World Economy and International Relations in Moscow gave a lecture in which he argued that the Soviet Union was not going to economically overtake the capitalist West in any politically meaningful time period. The intellectual who debunked the then official ideological line was until recently Russia’s prime minister, Yevgeny Primakov.

The young Primakov was merely voicing what his political masters were thinking. The Brezhnevite bureaucracy—corrupt, complacent, cynical—had ceased to seriously promote the prospect of “building socialism” in the USSR. While continuing to pay lip service to the Stalinized version of “Marxism-Leninism,” its real, functional ideology was “superpower” nationalism. The Kremlin leaders’ ultimate goal was to achieve mutually recognized spheres of influence and friendly collaboration with Washington in determining the course of global politics.

But as the Soviet Union came to be viewed merely as a contending world power, “Soviet patriotism” increasingly came to be identified with Great Russian nationalism, reinforcing the line pushed by Stalin already during World War II. This, in turn, strengthened tendencies toward anti-Soviet nationalism in the non-Russian republics of the USSR, not least among the bureaucracies administering those republics.

The Brezhnevite notion of a Soviet-American global co-dominion was in its own way just as illusory as the old Stalinist dogma of “building socialism in one country.” Shortly after the Vietnam War ended in 1975, American imperialism launched a new Cold War offensive against the Soviet Union. It was begun by Democratic president Jimmy Carter under the slogan of “human rights,” brought to fever pitch after the Soviet military intervention against CIA-sponsored Islamic reactionaries in Afghanistan in December 1979, and



Above: Young workers at May Day demonstration in Petrograd, 1917. Below: Members of Trotskyist Left Opposition forced into Siberian exile by Stalin commemorate anniversary of October Revolution in late 1920s.

Basil Blackwell Inc.



Kremlin bureaucracy. The Stalin regime acquired a national legitimacy it had not previously possessed. In the late 1940s, the spirit of patriotism, self-sacrifice and working for the common good animated the reconstruction of the war-devastated economy.

After Stalin’s death in 1953, his successors, principally Nikita Khrushchev, ended and denounced the worst excesses of Stalin’s mass terror and promised that henceforth the Soviet state would be governed by “socialist legality.” The Khrushchev years, from the mid-1950s through the early ’60s, marked the last period of official “socialist” idealism in the USSR. The country experienced exceptionally high rates of economic growth and a corresponding improvement in living standards. The Soviet launch of the first satellite, Sputnik, and the first manned

the population maintained socialist aspirations, while believing the bureaucracy’s lie that a classless society of abundance could be constructed in the USSR without overthrowing capitalism in the advanced industrial countries. Decades of Stalinist betrayal of revolutionary opportunities abroad had served to reinforce the lie of “socialism in one country,” inculcating in the Soviet proletariat the view that socialist revolution in the U.S. and other imperialist countries was a utopia.

Over time, the continuing gulf between the official “socialist” character of the Soviet state and the actual conditions of Soviet society would produce a profound political disillusionment among the working masses. And a new generation of bureaucrats and intellectuals would come to envy and then seek to emulate the capitalist West, which they viewed as the

escalated by his right-wing Republican successor, Ronald Reagan.

Dimitri Simes, an anti-Communist intellectual who emigrated from the Soviet Union to the U.S. in the 1970s, recently summarized American policy in Cold War II:

“The combination of American support for anti-Communist insurgents from Afghanistan to Nicaragua, steady increases in the U.S. defense budget, and the successful deployment of American intermediate-range nuclear missiles in Europe—notwithstanding a major Soviet ‘peace offensive’—demonstrated to the Kremlin that the USSR had to deal with an adversary of renewed determination and power.”

—*After the Collapse: Russia Seeks Its Place as a Great Power* (1999)

The Kremlin leadership thus faced greatly increased military and political pressure from American imperialism at a time when the inner weaknesses of the Soviet economy, governed and deformed by bureaucratic commandism, were becoming more acute. For decades, Soviet industrial development had been based on *extensive* growth, basically the construction of new factories drawing upon surplus labor from the countryside. By the early 1970s, the Slavic core of the USSR was fast exhausting the basic resource for extensive growth, namely, surplus labor. Further economic development became critically dependent upon *intensive* growth, i.e., raising the productivity of the existing labor force.

A shift from extensive to intensive growth would have required massive investment not only in new industrial technology but also in training and retraining the workforce to utilize the new technology. At the same time, Washington’s Cold War II offensive was forcing the Kremlin leaders to substantially increase military expenditure lest the Soviet Union become vulnerable to an American nuclear first strike. In order to avoid provoking popular unrest, the Brezhnev regime was unwilling to cut consumption. What it cut instead was investment in new plant and equipment. In the last Brezhnev years, Soviet economic growth slowed to a crawl.

Looking at the world in the early 1980s, more critical and generally younger elements of the bureaucracy and intelligentsia judged that the USSR had become dangerously overextended in seeking to be a global “superpower” on a par with the United States. In response, the new leadership under Mikhail Gorbachev which took over the Kremlin in 1985 introduced market mechanisms into the collectivized economy—a program dubbed *perestroika* (restructuring)—and pursued a policy of all-round conciliation of Western imperialism and retreat in the international arena.

**Gorbachev’s Perestroika: Prelude to Capitalist Counterrevolution**

Shortly before he was named general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Gorbachev stated: “Only an intensive, highly developed economy can safeguard a reinforcement of [our] country’s position on the international stage and allow her to enter the next millennium with dignity as a great and flour-

ishing power” (quoted in Anders Aslund, *How Russia Became a Market Economy* [1995]). Gorbachev’s initial response to what he later described as “the era of stagnation” under Brezhnev was the 1987 plan for “Fundamentally Restructuring Management of the Economy.” Individual enterprises (except in the military sector) were allowed to decide what to produce and in what quantities; managers were given the power to cut wages and bonuses and to fire “redundant” workers; the subsidization of consumer goods and services was largely eliminated. We wrote at the time:

“Within the framework of Stalinism there is an inherent tendency toward economic decentralization as an *alternative to workers democracy*. Since managers and workers are not subject to the discipline of soviet democracy, a section of the bureaucracy sees subjecting the economic actors to the discipline of the market as the only answer to the Soviet Union’s serious economic problems.” [emphasis in original]

—“Where Is Gorbachev’s Russia Going?” *Spartacist* (English-language edition) No. 41-42, Winter 1987-88

Gorbachev’s initial economic program could be termed neo-Bukharinism. Nikolai Bukharin was the principal leader and theoretician of the Right Opposition to Stalin within the Kremlin bureaucracy in the mid-late 1920s. Bukharin and Stalin transformed the New Economic Policy (NEP)—which had been initiated by Lenin as an expedient measure following the dislocations of the Civil War and which the Bolshevik leader frankly described as a necessary retreat—into the *sine qua non* of their domestic policy. Thus Bukharin advocated a “socialist mixed economy,” promoting agricultural development based on the kulaks, relatively well-to-do peasant proprietors. The nationalized industrial enterprises were to be governed by market relations and cal-



**Soviet military parade in Moscow. While falsely claiming heritage of Marx and Lenin, Kremlin bureaucracy’s real ideology was “superpower” nationalism.**

culations of profitability. These policies emboldened the kulaks, leading to a grain strike which threatened the cities with starvation. It was this crisis which ultimately led Stalin to break with Bukharin and embark on the forced collectivization of agriculture and forced-march industrialization in the late 1920s.

In writing of the Gorbachevite intelligentsia which openly identified with and



Simon and Schuster

adulated Bukharin, we noted (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 43-44, Summer 1989):

“Gorbachev’s USSR is in economic development a far cry from the Soviet Union of 1928-29. But if the Bukharinites had prevailed and the NEP had continued, it is an open question whether there would even be a Soviet Union today. The policies of the Gorbachevites pose the question of whether there will be a Soviet Union tomorrow.”

There is no reason to doubt that Gorbachev genuinely believed that the combination of market-oriented economic measures, political liberalization (called

for the Soviet “experiment” derived from his Stalinist past. He is quite favorable toward Gorbachev, whose general political outlook he shares.

Hobsbawm implies that *perestroika* might have achieved its stated goals if Gorbachev’s political and economic policies had been implemented and orchestrated in a more orderly way:

“What drove the Soviet Union with accelerating speed towards the precipice, was the combination of *glasnost* that amounted to the disintegration of authority, with a *perestroika* that amounted to the destruction of the old mechanisms that made the economy work, without providing any alternatives; and consequently the increasingly dramatic collapse of the citizens’ standard of living. The country moved towards a pluralist electoral politics at the very moment that it subsided into economic anarchy.”

This is an accurate capsule description of conditions in the Soviet Union, centrally Russia, in the final years of the Gorbachev regime (1989-91). But it does not explain why these conditions resulted in capitalist counterrevolution. Why didn’t the combination of gravely weakened governmental authority and worsening economic conditions lead to the overthrow of the Kremlin bureaucracy by the working class, followed by the restoration of the soviet democracy (based on workers councils) which existed in the first years after the revolution and the re-establishment of centralized economic planning on a rational basis?

Hobsbawm, predictably, does not even consider this as a possible alternative. But for revolutionaries the failure of the Soviet proletariat to act independently in its own interests at this critical moment in modern world history is a decisive question. Six decades of bureaucratic misrule in the name of “building socialism in one country” had produced a deep political cynicism among the working masses of the Soviet Union. As we wrote in late 1992 after the counterrevolutionary regime in Russia was consolidated:

“Atomized and bereft of any anti-capitalist leadership, lacking any coherent and consistent socialist class consciousness, skeptical about the possibility of class struggle in the capitalist countries, the Soviet working class did not rally in resistance against the encroaching capitalist counterrevolution.”

—*How the Soviet Workers State Was Strangled* (August 1993)

**Trotskyists Said: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!**

The potential for such resistance could be seen in the huge spontaneous strikes against the effects of *perestroika* which erupted in the summer of 1989 in the strategic Ukrainian Donbass and Russian Kuzbass coal fields, marked by the emergence of elected strike committees and mass workers assemblies. But in the

*continued on page 8*

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(continued from page 7)

aftermath of the strikes, pro-imperialist elements moved in to take advantage of the vacuum of leadership and gained influence for Yeltsin among a minority of miners, while the bulk of the Soviet working class remained passive as the forces of counterrevolution surged ahead.

Two years later, in August 1991, Yeltsin seized on an abortive coup attempt by the “gang of eight,” former Gorbachev lieutenants to launch an openly counterrevolutionary countercoup with the backing of the Western imperialists. The “gang of eight,” whose pathetic “coup” crumbled within three days, sought not to reverse the drive toward capitalist restoration but rather to more tightly control it and to maintain the USSR as a unitary state. But it was the ascendant Yeltsinite forces who represented the immediate danger of imperialist-backed counterrevolution. In a statement distributed by the tens of thousands in the Soviet Union, the International Communist League proclaimed, “Soviet Workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!” (reprinted in *How the Soviet Workers State Was Strangled*). With a new, capitalist state apparatus not yet consolidated, we Trotskyists called for a proletarian political revolution to sweep away the capitalist-restorationist Yeltsin regime and institute a government based on soviet democracy and Bolshevik internationalism.

In contrast, the pseudo-socialists who who had capitulated to imperialist anti-Sovietism throughout Cold War II in the 1980s embraced the forces of “democratic” counterrevolution arrayed behind Yeltsin. Openly proclaiming its place on the barricades of counterrevolution, the centrist British Workers Power (WP) declared: “No matter what the socially counterrevolutionary nature of Yeltsin’s programme, no matter how many spivs and racketeers joined the barricades to defend the Russian parliament, it would be revolutionary suicide to back the coup-mongers and support the crushing of democratic rights” (*Workers Power*, September 1991). Chief among the “democratic rights” WP was defending here was the right to capitalist exploitation!

Labour-loyal to the core, at bottom WP opposed the Stalinist bureaucracy from the standpoint of parliamentary (i.e., bourgeois) democracy, albeit with a veneer of working-class rhetoric. To justify this social-democratic line, WP characterized the bureaucracy as seamlessly reactionary, rejecting the Trotskyist understanding that this was a brittle, contradictory caste resting parasitically atop the socialized foundations of the workers state, which it was at times compelled to defend. This contradictory character was evident even in the last years of the Brezhnev regime, with the Soviet military intervention into Afghanistan against a CIA-backed insurgency by woman-hating Islamic reactionaries. It was reflected as well over the question of Soviet support to the 1984-85 British miners strike, which was backed by old-time Stalinists like then Soviet foreign minister Andrei Gromyko and opposed by younger elements around Gorbachev,



Heikes/U.S. News & World Report

Rabid Cold Warrior Ronald Reagan toasted by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, who pursued policy of all-round retreat before U.S. imperialism.

then number two in the Kremlin regime. Stalinophobes like WP invested the call for political revolution with a meaning diametrically counterposed to the revolutionary-internationalist program advanced by Trotsky for *defense and extension* of the socialized foundations of the Soviet workers state. Polemicizing in 1939 against a petty-bourgeois opposition—which had reneged on unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union—within the then-Trotskyist U.S. Socialist Workers Party, Trotsky stressed:

“We must not lose sight for a single moment of the fact that the question of overthrowing the Soviet bureaucracy is for us subordinate to the question of preserving state property in the means of production in the USSR; that the question of preserving state property in the means of production in the USSR is subordinate for us to the question of the world proletarian revolution.”  
—Leon Trotsky, *In Defense of Marxism* (1973)

For WP, conversely, the preservation of the collectivized economy was decidedly subordinate to the overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy. Thus, in the name of “anti-Stalinism” WP embraced the forces of pro-imperialist counterrevolution.

The Stalinist Bureaucracy and Capitalist Restoration

The passivity of the Soviet working class in the face of encroaching capitalist counterrevolution allowed the intelligentsia to occupy the center of the political stage. Hobsbawm, like many other Western commentators, attaches great importance to the “free market” dogmatism which swept up young Russian intellectuals in the last Gorbachev years: “The appeal of the ultra-radical Thatcherite or Reaganite free-market ideology to the young intellectual reformers was that it promised to provide a drastic but also an *automatic* solution” to the prevailing economic problems. This is true only in the most superficial and academic sense. Hobsbawm appears to have forgotten the basic Marxist precept that *being determines consciousness*, including the false consciousness which serves as an ideological mask and self-justification for class exploitation and oppression.

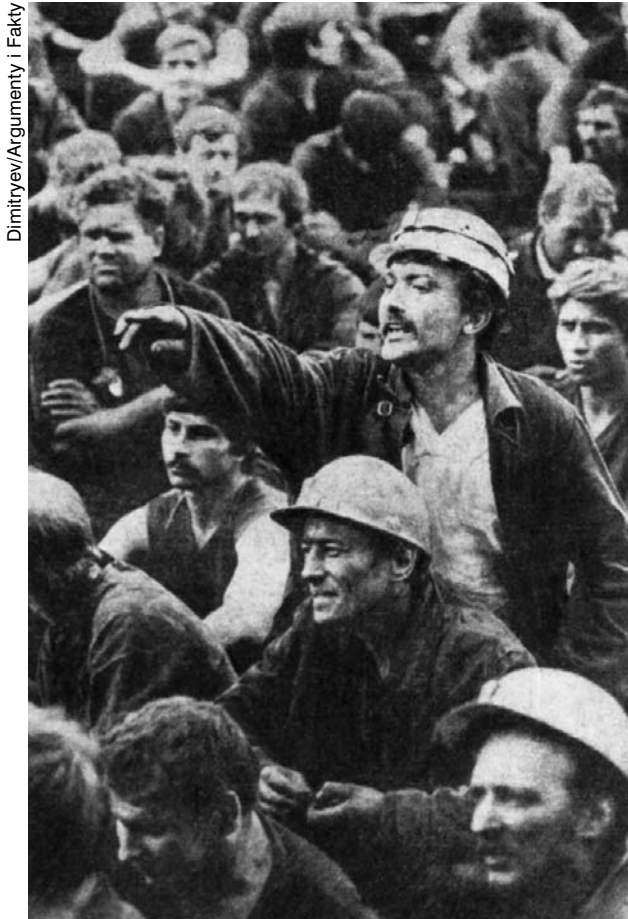
A classic example of false consciousness was the role of Calvinist Protestantism in the early development of capitalism in West Europe. Calvinist doctrine maintained that some men are predestined from birth to be saved, others to be damned. But how could one identify god’s chosen few—the elect—this side of the grave? Calvinist doctrine answered: by their worldly success. Rich English,

Scottish and Dutch merchants did not see themselves motivated by greed and a desire for a luxurious life. In amassing wealth, they believed they were doing god’s work and demonstrating they were members of the elect.

Young intellectuals and apparatchiks in Gorbachev’s Russia wanted to lead the good life like their Western social counterparts who drove BMWs, wore Armani suits and took winter vacations in the Caribbean. These appetites generated a corresponding false consciousness, in this case the idealization of a capitalist market economy as one maximizing efficiency and productivity.

The “free market” intellectuals served as the ideological shock troops of the counterrevolution. The commanding offi-

Massive 1989 Soviet miners strike against effects of Gorbachev’s market-oriented “reforms” demonstrated potential for proletarian resistance to encroaching capitalist counterrevolution.



Dimitryev/Argumenty i Fakty

cers came from a different but related—in many cases biologically—social stratum. Looking back at the Gorbachev period from the vantage point of Yeltsin’s Russia, the British journalist Bruce Clark points out that the “democratic” opposition was more complex and self-interested than was depicted by the Western media at the time:

“Right from the start, the devotees of liberal democracy were only one part of the

kov dropped out and cut a deal with Sobchak to become his deputy!

Commenting in retrospect on this incident, Bruce Clark writes that “Shcherbakov represented a part of the Soviet élite which was badly disillusioned with both doctrinaire Marxism and the self-serving Party machine; he spoke for the high-technology sector of the defense industry.” But why would top administrators in the Soviet military-industrial complex make common cause with pro-Western elements like Sobchak and Yeltsin?

There’s a cynical American saying: “If you can’t beat ’em, join ’em.” In a sense, the restoration of capitalism in Russia was a logical outcome of the Stalinist doctrine and policy of “peaceful coexistence” with capitalist imperialism. By the late 1980s, substantial and influential elements of the bureaucracy had come to the conclusion that the planned economy—as mismanaged by them—was inherently inferior to capitalism. These bureaucrats decided that their best interests lay in becoming partners with Western, centrally American, imperialism. Thus it was that veteran Soviet military men supported or at least accepted not only the dismantling of the collectivized economy but also the breakup of the USSR.

[TO BE CONTINUED]



Spartacist

Yeltsin’s counterrevolutionary barricades in Moscow, August 1991 included racist swine carrying Confederate flag. Russian-language ICL statement after Yeltsin’s coup proclaimed, “Soviet Workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!”





# Union Tops Agree to Give Away the Store for Willie Brown

# Smash Racist, Union-Busting Attacks on S.F. Transit Workers!

SAN FRANCISCO—Municipal Railway (MUNI) transit workers are the targets of a vicious racist, union-busting mobilization orchestrated by the Bay Area rulers. The decades-long campaign against the majority-black MUNI drivers has been heated white-hot as the capitalists have made it a central issue in the upcoming mayoral elections. Eager to enhance the re-election prospects of black Democratic mayor Willie Brown, the officials at the head of the drivers' Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 250A have now "reopened" the union's contract a year early and agreed to hand the bosses on a platter many of their key union-busting demands.

The capitalist media has been whipping up a lynch-mob atmosphere aimed at isolating and demoralizing the union, with such screaming headlines as "Muni's 236 Crash-Prone Drivers" (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 16 June) and "SF Workers Rake in Fat-Cat Wages" (*Chronicle*, 29 May). Drivers who are subjected to high rates of on-the-job injuries from the decayed equipment are scapegoated for the shoddy state of a transit system starved by the capitalists of funding, maintenance, equipment, personnel and training for over 20 years.

Racist abuse from hostile petty-bourgeois passengers is pervasive. It is common for black women drivers to have epithets like "black b----" hurled at them. Drivers face assaults not only from lumpen elements but from the cops: we remember how black MUNI driver Greg Wiggins was crippled by a beating from the SF cops in 1988 while driving his bus.

In this inflamed atmosphere, Mayor Brown, the financial district capitalists and a mob of enraged yuppies called "Rescue Muni" joined together in June to put a union-busting amendment to the city charter on the November ballot. If passed, it would create a new Transit Authority to clear the road for a crackdown on the union and to increase management's power to discipline workers. Goals for "on-time performance" and "service delivery," along with incentive bonuses and merit pay, would undermine seniority and open the door to further speedup, harassment and favoritism targeting militants, minorities and women for discrimination.

The bureaucrats at the head of the TWU, far from seeking to mobilize the workers to fight this assault, initially *embraced* the union-busting initiative on the grounds that it was not as bad as Rescue Muni's original draconian proposal. Now, with the "reopening" of the con-

## Break With the Democrats! Forge a Class-Struggle Workers Party!

tract, it turns out that TWU officials had agreed to introduce some of Rescue Muni's worst demands in the union contract themselves.

According to the *Chronicle* (27 July), this includes heightened discipline for so-called "missouts," which the bourgeoisie in its anti-union propaganda has lyingly portrayed as a cushy union "perk." Missouts typically occur when drivers can't make it in time to *the minute* to pick up their "outfit"—route, transfers, etc. These *unpaid* absences are subject under the current contract to progressive discipline, from a warning the first time in an eight-month period to a five-day suspension the third time and so on. Now the union tops have agreed to a two-day suspension the

become a target of the capitalists nationwide. Last year, Philadelphia transit workers struck against a full-scale union-busting offensive by the SEPTA bosses, holding solid for 40 days before the strike was scuttled by the TWU Local 234 leadership (see "Philly TWU Tops Scuttle SEPTA Strike," WV No. 694, 31 July 1998). The new head of San Francisco MUNI, Michael Burns, was imported by Brown fresh from strikebreaking duty as a leading boss at SEPTA.

### Capitalist Vendetta Against MUNI Drivers

The 1934 San Francisco General Strike that resulted in the unionization of longshoremen on the West Coast also estab-

lished San Francisco as a "labor town" and the Bay Area as the pro-union center of political culture in California. "Bloody Thursday," commemorating the strikers who were shot to death by strikebreaking cops in that struggle, is still observed annually by the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU). But following the capitulation by longtime ILWU head Harry Bridges to the introduction of containerized shipping and handling in 1961, San Francisco ceased to be a historic port city with its unionized working-class character. All the longshore work now takes place across San Francisco Bay in the Port of Oakland, which has the storage space and railroad connections for speedy transshipment.

San Francisco has become little more than a commercial, financial, and high-tech/communications mecca crawling with money-grubbing stock-market speculating yuppies who view Bill Gates as role model and demigod. With their arrogant petty-bourgeois outlook, they resent and despise the unionized municipal workers, whose wages remain relatively higher than for workers in the private sector, where unions have been decimated and low wages and high productivity help fuel the economy and the yuppies' jobs. As their disposable income drives up the price of housing beyond the reach of working people who are being forced out, these anti-working-class yuppies and their employers have come to view San Francisco as *their* city, and city workers as overpaid menials. It is also a city where historic hostility to black people has kept the black population down to 8 or 9 percent. This is broadly the background of the intense hostility directed at the integrated, unionized MUNI transit workforce.

In going after the transit workers, the bourgeoisie is taking aim at *all* unionized municipal employees. The transit union is a particular target of the SF rulers for its history of militancy during a wave of city workers strikes in 1974-76. In 1974, a near-general strike of city workers began with the SEIU service employees, then spread to the hospitals and closed the sewage treatment plant. At the height of the strike, MUNI, BART and AC Transit workers shut down all public transit in and to the city. The capitalists' response was Prop. L, which attempted to ban strikes by city workers, known as the "Feinstein amendment" after Dianne Feinstein, then president of the Board of Supervisors who went on to become mayor and is now a U.S. Senator. At that time, the Spartacist League initiated a



Hafalia/S.F. Chronicle  
**Democratic Party mayor Willie Brown with newly appointed MUNI chief Michael Burns (right) in March. Anti-union media blitz fuels crackdown on transit workers.**

first time, ten days the second and firing the third.

Additional provisions will reportedly force drivers to accept route changes during their shift and institutionalize a system called "proof of payment" (POP), which eliminates the second driver (who collects fares) from MUNI light rail trains. A 250-strong enforcement agency is being set up to roam the trains issuing \$76 tickets and harassing black and immigrant youth. Drivers are supposed to swallow this major weakening of the union in exchange for a small wage increase which would bring the annual raise in the four-year contract up to a modest 3.4 percent.

Transit unions in urban centers have

lished San Francisco as a "labor town" and the Bay Area as the pro-union center of political culture in California. "Bloody Thursday," commemorating the strikers who were shot to death by strikebreaking cops in that struggle, is still observed annually by the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU). But following the capitulation by longtime ILWU head Harry Bridges to the introduction of containerized shipping and handling in 1961, San Francisco ceased to be a historic port city with its unionized working-class character. All the longshore work now takes place across San Francisco Bay in the Port of Oakland, which has the storage space and railroad connections for speedy transshipment.

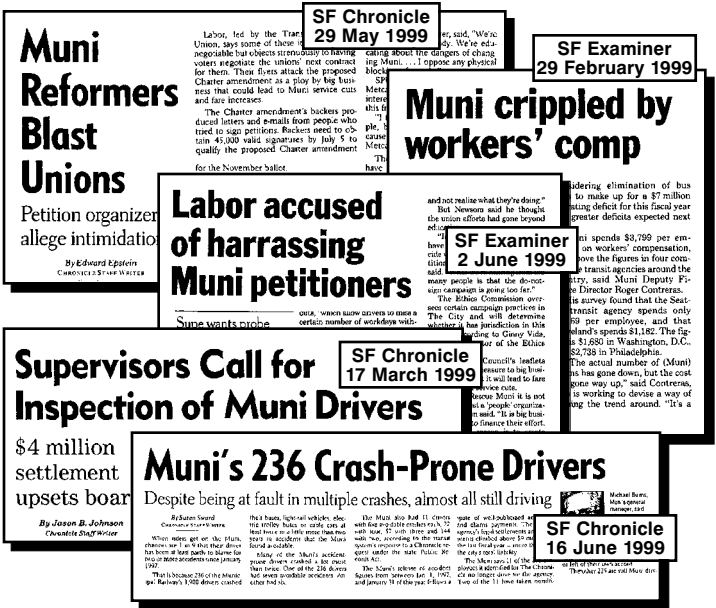
San Francisco has become little more than a commercial, financial, and high-tech/communications mecca crawling with money-grubbing stock-market speculating yuppies who view Bill Gates as role model and demigod. With their arrogant petty-bourgeois outlook, they resent and despise the unionized municipal workers, whose wages remain relatively higher than for workers in the private sector, where unions have been decimated and low wages and high productivity help fuel the economy and the yuppies' jobs. As their disposable income drives up the price of housing beyond the reach of working people who are being forced out, these anti-working-class yuppies and their employers have come to view San Francisco as *their* city, and city workers as overpaid menials. It is also a city where historic hostility to black people has kept the black population down to 8

Labor Action Committee calling for mass labor action to stop Prop. L.

MUNI workers were also central in the subsequent 1976 city craft workers strike, when the drivers went out in solidarity. After the craft workers were defeated with the connivance of the Central Labor Council—which had endorsed Democratic mayor George Moscone—City Hall moved on the transit workers. The president of Local 250A at the time, Larry Martin, acquiesced to a package with a small wage increase but big cuts in benefits, while a massive array of anti-union propositions were passed. The city was unable to crush the union. But in the wake of those powerful strikes, the union leadership was broken and tamed by the blowback from succeeding Democratic Party administrations.

It was largely to bring down the public employee unions that the city's business and financial establishment backed Brown as mayor in 1995, after term limits forced him to leave his former job as speaker of the state assembly. The capitalist clout behind Rescue Muni is the Committee on Jobs (COJ), which donated nearly \$30,000 to get their amendment on the ballot, and the San Francisco Planning and Urban Renewal Association (SPUR). Both COJ and SPUR were major movers in the anti-union charter amendments of 1976, and SPUR boasts that there has been only one city workers strike since. COJ is the political arm of capitalist San Francisco, representing the city's 30 biggest corporations, like the Bank of America, Pacific Gas and

*continued on page 11*



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## To Mobilize the Power of the Working Class: Break with Bourgeois Nationalism!

# For Joint Strike Action by Workers and Students!

We translate below the concluding section of a GEM/JE leaflet issued on July 26.

The main obstacle to the fight for socialism in Mexico today is bourgeois-nationalist ideology and illusions in its main representative: the bourgeois PRD of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas. This ideology pretends to disappear all class lines and paint everyone simply as “Mexicans” through pseudo-populist rhetoric about the “people,” “civil society,” etc. We frequently encounter the belief that there is no class struggle north of the Río Bravo. This type of lie is pushed by the bourgeoisie and its lieutenants in the workers movement to maintain the divisions within the world proletariat. In fact, the Mexican proletariat has a most powerful ally in the North American working class, and the destiny of this country is indissolubly linked to that of the U.S. In fact, the U.S. working class has recently waged key struggles, like the UPS strike almost two years ago and at General Motors last year. These strikes marked a break in the series of defeats the American workers had suffered since the Reagan years, a change to a favorable mood in the proletariat. Now there is a very important strike in the Virginia shipyard where submarines and aircraft carriers of the U.S. imperialist navy are built and repaired. This strike exploded in the midst of the imperialist massacre against Serbia and in the center of the racist “open shop” American South.

Most countries of South America have been shaken by convulsive struggles of the working class. Bolivian workers are struggling against IMF-imposed austerity and face brutal repression by the police. Ecuador was recently paralyzed for 12 days by a strike by transport workers and other sectors which succeeded in turning back a gas price increase. On July 14, thousands demonstrated in Chile against privatization of the docks in the port of Valparaíso. Workers in Mexico and internationally will remain shackled to their “own” bourgeoisies until they break from nationalist ideology and see clearly the division of society into antagonistic classes and who their real allies are.

We oppose the imperialist plunder of NAFTA and privatization plans which are an attempt to increase the rate of exploitation of the workers and the profits of the capitalists. Our revolutionary and internationalist defense of the working class and

its struggles is counterposed to the poison pushed by the union bureaucracy, which sells the false ideology of unity of the workers and the bosses. The way that nationalism ties workers and the oppressed to their exploiters becomes very clear when one glances at the SME official journal *Lux*; we find call after call to fight for the “fatherland” alongside the capitalist masters. In issue 481-482, we find an article, “Massive ‘No!’ to the Privatization of Electricity,” which says: “Overflowing the Zócalo, United Against Tuitions at UNAM. They Shouted Until

ing it under tight control, a control that is now beginning to break.

The entire campaign of the SME against privatization has been based on bourgeois nationalism and has been consciously planned by the union’s leadership to avoid a class-struggle mobilization. Thus, the SME called a strike several months ago demanding a salary increase. But the bureaucracy accepted the crumbs offered by the company and withdrew the call for a strike, according to *Lux*, so as “not to mix this conflict with the actions undertaken by the union



Workers protest anti-union privatization of electricity companies. Pro-capitalist union leaders derail class struggle through nationalist politics tying workers to Mexican bourgeoisie.

Their Voices Became Raucous: “The Fatherland Cannot Be Sold!” We communists declare: proletarians have no fatherland! Proletarians of all countries, unite!

Among those who “overflowed” the Zócalo, *Lux* mentions some top SME, STUNAM and CNTE union leaders, together with the cream of the crop of the PRD, like Muñoz Ledo and Felix Salgado, who “join their voices in the war cry: ‘They shall not pass...!’” The *Lux* article ends by saying that this massive demonstration recalled the years 1938 and 1960. That’s the dream of the union bureaucracy: return to the golden years of the state populism of the PRM/PRI under Lázaro Cárdenas, who succeeded in co-opting the workers movement and keep-

ing it under tight control, a control that is now beginning to break. The entire campaign of the SME against privatization has been based on bourgeois nationalism and has been consciously planned by the union’s leadership to avoid a class-struggle mobilization. Thus, the SME called a strike several months ago demanding a salary increase. But the bureaucracy accepted the crumbs offered by the company and withdrew the call for a strike, according to *Lux*, so as “not to mix this conflict with the actions undertaken by the union

against privatization”—as if the workers’ standard of living had nothing to do with the bourgeoisie’s privatization offensive! It is in itself key and very significant that the electrical workers—considering the university strike to be their struggle too—are guarding UNAM facilities. But the working class has not shown its real power because the bureaucracy’s plans are otherwise: they want to appear as “radical” and “militant,” to have greater power to pressure the bourgeoisie to preserve their privileges while at the same time keeping the working class down. That’s why the electricians are *not* on strike. A one-day work stoppage by the electricians would have a much bigger impact than the students’ three-month strike. Yet this “radical” façade of the SME bureaucracy has made them very popular among the union’s rank and file, and that is why it is all the more important to unmask it.

Leon Trotsky explained in his article

“Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay”: “The trade unions of our time can either serve as secondary instruments of imperialist capitalism for the subordination and disciplining of workers and for obstructing the revolution, or, on the contrary, the trade unions can become the instruments of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat.... In the epoch of imperialist decay, the trade unions can be really independent only to the extent that they are conscious of being, in action, the organs of proletarian revolution.” In reality, the only way out of the bourgeoisie’s privatization offensive is socialist revolution, which requires a fundamental instrument: a revolutionary party—the combat organization of the proletariat, its historic memory.

History has shown that the working class, solely by means of its own effort and daily experience, cannot spontaneously develop a consciousness higher than trade-union consciousness; that is to say the need to unite in trade unions for the economic struggle against the bosses and the government. But trade-union consciousness is bourgeois consciousness. Trade unionism, in and of itself, does not question the capitalist mode of production, but only seeks to improve the immediate conditions and wages of the workers in struggle against individual bosses. As Leon Trotsky wrote in his book *Lessons of October*: “Without a party, apart from a party, over the head of a party, or with a substitute for a party, the proletarian revolution cannot conquer.”

We Spartacists understand that the dominant ideology in every society is that of the ruling class. The struggle for a revolutionary party in Mexico is inextricably linked to the struggle against nationalism, male chauvinism, homophobia, anti-Semitism and xenophobia. The woman question in particular is key to proletarian revolution in Mexico. With women constituting an important section, a revolutionary party cannot triumph in its efforts unless it is able to gain the confidence and active participation of women. In such a Catholic country, the struggle for women’s rights is also key to combatting the deeply ingrained male chauvinism in the proletariat itself. The question of abortion, in particular, is fundamental. Thus, Spartacists call for: Free abortion on demand! Women’s liberation through socialist revolution! Full democratic rights for homosexuals!

As American Trotskyist James P. Cannon said: “Our party is a party of the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. The proletarian revolution is the only solution of the labor problem and all our work must lead to this goal.” That is the basis of our politics. Break with the bourgeoisie—No illusions in the bourgeois PRD! Forge an international Leninist-Trotskyist party! For new October Revolutions! Join the Grupo Espartacista de México! ■

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# S.F. Transit...

(continued from page 13)

Electric, the Pacific Stock Exchange and PacTel. Brown in turn is closely tied to COJ and its executive director Mark Mosher, who was an honored guest at Brown’s election victory party at the ILWU Local 10 hall.

It was Rescue Muni’s charter amendment drive this spring which gave Brown the opportunity to play the role of soft cop in the campaign against the MUNI drivers. First he set up a “task force” to provide its own “MUNI reform” proposal with the active participation of the TWU officials. Then he engineered a “compromise” initiative which eliminated some of the most provocative elements of the Rescue Muni measure—like ending overtime pay after 8 hours a day—while retaining the core of the attack on the drivers.

This was then given a favorable reception by the TWU tops, allowing Brown to proudly announce, as the *Chronicle* (14 June) reported, that “his longtime supporter, Larry Martin, international vice president of the Transport Workers Union, had recommended the pact.” Drivers at one bus barn told WV salesmen that they planned on giving their union officers hell for signing on to the deal. Having caught heat from the members, TWU officials later publicly equivocated, with Martin saying, “We need to touch base with our members before we take a position” (*San Francisco Examiner*, 22 June). Now they have agreed to carry out many of the attacks with or without the election initiative.

**Labor Tops Bow Before Brown**

Throughout his term, Brown has implemented the rulers’ racist anti-working-class attacks, from a vicious campaign against the homeless to a union-busting “workfare” program forcing largely minority unemployed people to work in MUNI and other municipal jobs at half or one-third union wages and with no bene-

fits. The kill-crazy SF cops, who endorsed Brown for mayor, regularly terrorize black and Hispanic neighborhoods.

Yet Brown, the city’s first black mayor, is himself a target of the yuppie racist backlash, with the capitalist press and current mayoral opponent Clint Reilly baiting him as a creature of “big labor.” A classic Democratic Party liberal, Brown cultivates a reputation as a supporter of black and union rights while being owned by the big downtown financial interests who brought him in.

Brown’s predecessor, racist ex-police chief Frank Jordan, could never have gotten away with what Brown is doing to the MUNI drivers today, precisely because of the active complicity of the union misleaders who embrace this enemy of the workers as a “friend of labor.” The labor bureaucracy, from Labor Council head Walter Johnson on down, fell all over themselves to support Brown for mayor because he would at least listen to them. In exchange for the illusion of access to the halls of power, the union tops deliver up the vote to Brown along with a bottomless capacity for compromise and concession at the expense of their members.

The bureaucrats want their members to believe that the workers are helpless to respond to these attacks and must surrender hard-won gains. This is a lie. Transit workers are in a position to mobilize behind them not only the great potential power of the Bay Area labor movement but broad layers of the oppressed—blacks, Latinos, immigrants—who are also on the receiving end of racist capitalism. In 1997, workers at BART tied regional transportation in knots with a strike for equal pay for equal work—a demand which resonated widely among workers and minorities in the face of an anti-union furor by white yuppie commuters.

The majority black MUNI drivers union forms a critical human link between the power of the multiracial labor movement and the besieged ghetto and immigrant population. While the capital-

ists pour money into BART to serve the largely white suburbs, the bulk of MUNI’s riders are working people, including blacks, Latinos and Asians. A demand by the union for *free mass transit* would mobilize support from workers and minorities throughout the Bay Area.

The workers’ ability to defend themselves against the capitalists’ attacks is hobbled by the bureaucrats’ fealty to the Democratic Party, and particularly to Brown. The union tops know that Brown is in the pocket of big business, but with their program of class collaboration they too seek to be friends of big business. The union bureaucrats’ support to the Democratic Party, which is at the political core of their program of class collaboration, is the main obstacle to waging class struggle. It is necessary to oust the current pro-capitalist labor misleadership through a political struggle within the unions aimed at forging a new leadership based on the politics of the class struggle and complete independence from the capitalist class enemy, its parties and its cops, courts and government.

## Progressive Labor—“Red” Rhetoric For Sellouts

Supporters of the Progressive Labor Party (PL) have long been active in the drivers union. Despite its red “communist” rhetoric, PL oscillates between tailing the union bureaucracy and writing off the unions altogether—in both cases accepting the stranglehold of the pro-capitalist bureaucracy and giving up on any possibility of mobilizing these mass organizations of the proletariat in class struggle.

An undated leaflet signed by “Transit Workers Against the War,” which was distributed at a June 5 San Francisco demonstration against the Balkans war and subsequently featured in PL’s *Challenge* (23 June), declares: “After years of underfunding and mismanagement, MUNI needs change. BUT the main function of this Ballot Proposition is to keep Downtown Corporations from paying for the

transit system.” Wrong—its purpose is *union-busting*. This leaflet reflects the longstanding perspective of PL’s supporters in MUNI of pressuring the union bureaucracy to pressure the capitalists to pay their “fair share.” Such utopian “tax the rich” schemes amount to no more than calls to move the money around in the ledger book, leaving intact the profit system.

During the 1996 Oakland teachers strike, PL refused to call for building picket lines, refrained from condemning scabbing and opposed the main demands of the strike, for higher wages and smaller class size. PLers parroted the Alameda Central Labor Council and the school board which claimed that any gains for teachers could come only at the expense of other workers (see “How PL Caves In to Racist Bosses,” WV No. 645, 10 May 1996). Capitulating to the racist purge of higher education, PL has refused to defend affirmative action, calling it “A Weight On The Fight Against Racism” (*Challenge*, 7 February 1996). PL also wallows in the reactionary social outlook of more backward sections of the working class. Thus when gay student Matthew Shepard was tortured to death by bigots last year, *Challenge* (4 November 1998) grotesquely declared that the “gay-bashing movement” and the “gay-rights movement” are “two sides of rulers’ fascist coin.”

The Spartacist League fights to forge a revolutionary workers party which will act as a tribune of the people, championing the fight for full equality for blacks, women and gays and full citizenship rights for all immigrants, uniting all the oppressed behind the proletariat in the struggle to overthrow this capitalist system. The elementary needs of workers and the oppressed—jobs for all; quality, integrated housing and education for all; an end to racist oppression and cop terror—cannot be met short of a socialist revolution which expropriates the bourgeoisie and establishes a planned, collectivized economy under workers rule. ■

# Mexico...

(continued from page 5)

imperialism and its allies carried out the slaughter of Iraqi people in the 1991 Gulf War.

The centrist Internationalist Group (IG) has lived up to our characterization of them as “Pabloites of the second mobilization.” (Michel Pablo’s tailing of alien class forces and liquidation of the Trotskyist parties into Stalinist and social-democratic organizations in the post-World War II period destroyed the Fourth International as a force for international revolution.) During the UNAM strike, the IG has called for student-worker unity and class struggle, all very combative-sounding. What they do not do, however, is fight for the necessary instrument for leading the proletariat and the oppressed in struggle against the capitalist system: the revolutionary party. And the IG’s rhetoric for ever more struggle is belied by what it does *in practice*. Thus, the IG has taken up our class slogan “Auxilio UNAM out of the STUNAM!” But its own comrades committed an act of *class treason* in Brazil by dragging a union through the bourgeois courts on three occasions, as we revealed in an article in our newspaper (“IG’s Brazil Cover-Up: Dirty Hands, Cynical Lies,” *Espartaco* No. 10, Autumn-Winter 1997 [translated from WV No. 671, 11 July 1997]). The IG’s Brazilian cohorts used the courts against the union in an effort to maintain their posts in a cop-infested union, having run on a slate led by an ex-cop! Their actions are very much counterposed to the task of building the kind of revolutionary party needed to lead the working class to the realization of its historic role—the destruction of capitalism and the establishment of workers rule.

When a contingent of STUNAM work-

ers marched at the April 23 demonstration against the fees, we told them of the IG’s betrayal in Brazil. Workers began shouting at the IG things like “Get out of here!” “It is a question of principle not to sue a union!” and “If you want to control a union, you have to work with the workers, not ask for a little help from the state!” So much for the IG’s pretenses to “militancy”!

Obscuring the class nature of the PRD, the IG invokes the existence of a “Cardenista popular front,” as the LTS did for many years. The popular front is a precise Marxist category to characterize a bourgeois formation, a coalition of bourgeois and reformist workers parties. An example was the Unidad Popular in Chile, consisting of the bourgeoisie, Allende’s Socialists and the Communist Party. In Mexico, bourgeois-nationalist ideology is the fundamental instrument for subordinating the workers movement to its capitalist exploiters. There is no mass workers party in Mexico. The IG concocts a supposed working-class sector of the PRD, by which it means a mass of discontented sectors like bank debtors, peasant organizations, slum inhabitants, Zapatistas, etc. They do so in order to prettify the PRD—which is nothing more than a bourgeois-nationalist party. In this way, the IG capitulates to the current level of consciousness of the working class and evades the necessary fight for a revolutionary Trotskyist party to combat nationalism and struggle for the complete political independence of the proletariat.

Meanwhile, the IG has the gall to absurdly attack the GEM/JE as nationalists because we used the words “national sovereignty.” Have they renounced Mexico’s sovereignty vis-à-vis the U.S.? Their stupid slander does give us an opportunity to reiterate the Trotskyist theory of permanent revolution upon which our revolutionary program in Mexico is based. The IG extracted our reference to

national sovereignty from the following paragraph:

“The authentic emancipation and the national sovereignty itself of Mexico toward U.S. imperialism is determined not by which bourgeois politician is going to win the coming elections, but rather which social class—the bourgeoisie or the proletariat—will lead this country. We Trotskyists base ourselves on the Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky’s program and theory of the permanent revolution, which explains that in semicolonial countries like Mexico no democratic or national liberation revolution led by the bourgeoisie, of the type of the Great French Revolution, can be accomplished.... So, the only possible revolution in Mexico and in the semicolonial world is of the socialist kind. And this can only be under the leadership of the proletariat, the powerful industrial working class as the leader of all the oppressed people.”

—Grupo Espartaquista de México leaflet, “Libertad inmediata a los cinco profesores del SNTe!” [Immediate Release of the Five SNTe Teachers!], 18 January

It is this program of revolutionary Marxism that we in the GEM/JE fight to bring to the workers and students strug-

gling today. Throughout Latin America and the United States, there have been recent outbreaks of strike struggles and student unrest. The counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union has encouraged the bourgeois rulers to attack the working masses in the imperialist centers as well as in the semicolonial world. As internationalists, we understand that the Mexican working class has powerful allies in the American and Canadian proletariat, where our comrades struggle to smash imperialism from within the belly of the beast. As the Mexican section of the International Communist League, the GEM seeks to win the best fighters among students and youth to the side of the international proletariat and to win the most advanced elements of the working class to the party which fights for socialist revolution.

Today, the student strike has gone as far as one can go within the framework of student vanguardism. The state is poised to unleash its machinery of repression against the students. We repeat our urgent call: for a workers mobilization to defend the UNAM strike! ■

## Espartaco



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# Iran...

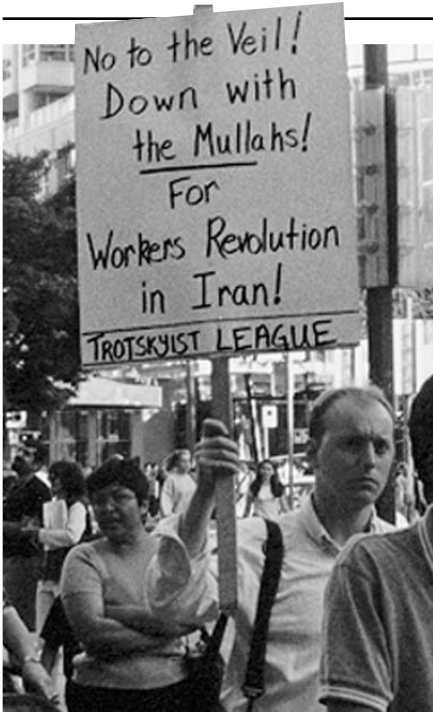
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Iraq—which lasted from 1980 to 1988 and bled an entire generation of young men—to consolidate its hold on society and strengthen poisonous Persian chauvinism.

The current generation of Iranian youth—fully two-thirds of the population is younger than 25 years old—did not live through the 1979 upheaval. The recent student demonstrations crystalized a broad sense that this is the beginning of the end for the ayatollahs’ regime. While the powerful Iranian proletariat did not bring its social might to bear during last month’s demonstrations, there have been numerous strikes in recent years against mounting unemployment and nonpayment of wages. As revenue from the export of oil has been cut by more than half since 1976, provoking a deep economic crisis, the average annual income has plunged from \$2,600 to \$1,800. The strategically powerful oil workers have carried out repeated strikes in the past decade. Among more recent labor actions reported on the Fedayeen (Minority) Web site was a May 1 strike at the Mobarakeh steel works.

The burgeoning crisis in Iran cries out for a revolutionary vanguard party to lead the proletariat, standing at the head of all the oppressed, in a socialist revolution which sweeps away the theocratic regime and capitalist class rule. Such a party must be steeled in the lessons of the bloody defeat of 1979, lessons which the contemporary Iranian left has refused to learn. In 1979, the Iranian left—centrally the Stalinist Tudeh party with its substantial proletarian base—worked to subordinate the working class, whose strikes and protests were instrumental in the downfall of the Shah monarchy, to the reactionary clericalist movement led by Ayatollah Khomeini. What was necessary was the independent mobilization of the proletariat in a struggle for its own state power. The International Communist League’s predecessor, the international Spartacist tendency, raised the call: “Down with the Shah! No support to the mullahs! For workers revolution in Iran!”

Today again, what is posed is the independent mobilization of the proletariat against all wings of the Islamic theocracy and the Iranian bourgeoisie. In a backward, dependent country like Iran, the historic achievements of the classic bourgeois-democratic revolutions in West Europe and North America remain on the agenda. Only under the dictatorship of the proletariat can there be agrarian revolution, the separation of church and state, the liberation of women and the emancipation of national, ethnic and religious minorities from the Persian-chauvinist prison house of peoples. Proletarian power in Iran must necessarily be linked to a perspective of international socialist revolution, particularly in the imperialist centers, if it is to survive and develop on the road to socialism. This is



Spartacist Canada



the Trotskyist program of permanent revolution. As we wrote earlier this year in “Iran: 20 Years of Islamic Dictatorship” (WV No. 708, 5 March):

“No fundamental social liberation will be accomplished short of a revolution shattering the entire power structure of capitalist and pre-capitalist social relations. A Marxist intervention in this fluid situation would seek to crystalize revolutionary proletarian opposition to mullah rule and combat illusions that liberal reformers, not to mention clerics like Khatami, will satisfy the masses’ desire to throw off the yoke of an oppressive dictatorship.”

## Pro-Imperialist Democrats in “Socialist” Garb

Khatami’s reputation in the West as a “reformer” is due in no small part to the fact that he is a vocal advocate of reopen-



Teheran auto plant. Iranian proletariat, standing at the head of all the oppressed, has the power to sweep away reactionary Islamic theocracy and capitalist class rule.

ing Iran to U.S. imperialist penetration. While Washington was more than willing to work with Teheran in sponsoring anti-Soviet *mujahedin* cutthroats in Afghanistan in the 1980s, the U.S. has maintained punitive sanctions against the Islamic regime since the 1979 takeover of the U.S. embassy in Teheran. With the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92 and the renewed imperialist scramble to stake out oil and natural gas fields in the Persian Gulf region, a

British USec (top left) and U.S. ISO hailed Khomeini’s 1979 “Islamic revolution.” Spartacists warned that mullah rule would mean bloody repression against workers, women, religious and national minorities.

significant section of the American ruling class has become increasingly exasperated at losing out on investment opportunities in Iran. Washington sent out unmistakable signals of support to Khatami against the hardliners.

Illusions in the “democratic” pretensions of the imperialist rulers were evident at protests in solidarity with Iranian students held in various cities in the U.S., Canada and West Europe last month. A prominent slogan at a July 15 demonstration in Los Angeles was “United Nations Pay More Attention,” appealing to the agency which has served as a fig leaf for imperialist slaughter from Korea to Iraq to the Balkans. Avowed socialists joined in promoting “humanitarian” imperialism. At a July 17 protest in Toronto, Joe Flexer, leader of Socialist Action, the



they blocked with the mullahs against the monarchy.

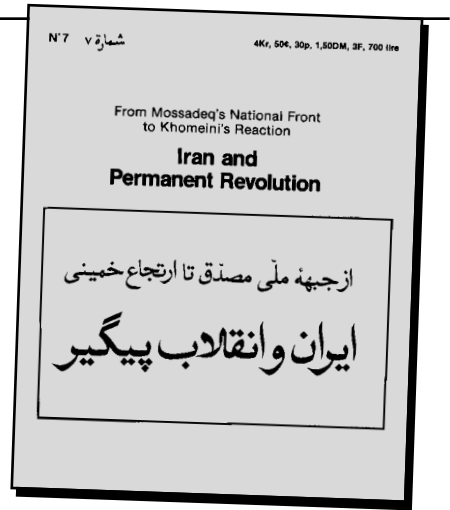
Virtually the whole of the left internationally likewise supported Khomeini’s “Iranian Revolution.” Then USec spokesman Ernest Mandel promoted the mullahs’ accession to power in 1979 as an expression of “partial bourgeois democracy” and “the beginning of a process of permanent revolution” (see WV No. 237, 3 August 1979). *Socialist Challenge* (15 February 1979), the newspaper of the British USec group, waxed poetic about “liberated Tehran” and exulted in a front-page headline, “Iran: A New Power is Born.” British USec leader Brian Grogan even boasted that he had joined in chants of “Allah akbar” (“god is great”) during a demonstration in Teheran.

Tony Cliff’s British Socialist Workers Party (SWP), represented in the U.S. by the International Socialist Organization (ISO), continues to genuflect before Islamic reaction to this day. In 1979, the ISO hailed the Khomeinist “revolution,” headlining one article: “The Form Religious, The Spirit—Revolution” (*Socialist Worker*, January 1979). Following Khatami’s election, the ISO praised him as a liberal alternative to the “conservatives,” claiming that his presidency “promised to be a significant break after 19 years of Islamic rule” (*Socialist Worker*, 14 August 1998)—Islamic rule whose introduction they cheered!

More recently, the SWP’s “Marxism ’99” confab in London last month featured presentations on “Iran 1979” and “Islamic Fundamentalism” which lauded the virtues of Islamic reaction. The speaker on 1979 rehashed the left’s “anti-imperialist” whitewash of the mullahs with the line that the “Iranian Revolution” had removed from power Washington’s key ally in the region, the Shah. But the “anti-imperialist” mullahs then proceeded to bloc with U.S. imperialism against Soviet troops in Afghanistan—as did the anti-Communist Cliffites themselves. At the second workshop, the speaker went on about how Islamic fundamentalists mobilize people against the state. This grotesque statement came even as government-sponsored fundamentalist thugs in Teheran were throwing student protesters out of windows! In fact, in 1979 the Khomeinists took over the same capitalist state previously administered by the Shah—including its secret police, torture chambers, etc.—and wield it to this day against the working class, the left and national minorities.

## “Two-Stage Revolution”—Policy of Bloody Defeat

The Worker-communist Party of Iran (WPI), which has organized a number of protests internationally in solidarity with the Iranian students, has sought to strike a “left” stance, raising the call for a “Socialist Republic in Iran!” and speaking of the need for a “workers state.” But this socialist rhetoric is belied by the WPI’s own appeals to the imperialist bourgeoisie. A July 14 leaflet on Iran by the WPI in Los Angeles declares that “the entire regime should be put on trial for crimes against humanity.” And a WPI leaflet titled “Against the Terrorist Islamic Regime in Iran!” distributed in Canada last January called for an international tribunal to try the leaders of the Islamic Republic and the closure of the Iranian embassy in Canada. These are thinly disguised calls for the sort of imperialist “war crimes tribunal” which the United Nations has set up for the Balkans.



ICL advanced revolutionary-proletarian program at July 13 Vancouver protest and others internationally in defense of Iranian students. To order ICL Farsi-language pamphlet, send \$.50 to SPC, Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116.



Indeed, some years ago an article “In Defense of the Demand for Independence for Iraqi Kurdistan” by WPI leader Mansoor Hekmat in the Farsi-language *International* (June 1995) explicitly looked to the UN to oversee a referendum on Kurdish independence.

Seeking to tail pro-imperialist liberals, the WPI has been particularly sensitive to our revolutionary criticism. Thus, after a Trotskyist League comrade speaking at a WPI-initiated protest in Vancouver on July 24 polemicized against their appeals to the imperialists, some WPI supporters threatened to exclude our speakers at future rallies. Now more than ever, it is crucial to pursue a clash of opinions on which way forward in Iran.

The WPI’s appeals to “democratic” imperialism are in line with its stagist politics. Although the WPI claims to oppose the Menshevik/Stalinist scheme of two-stage revolution—which postpones the socialist revolution to an indefinite future while subordinating the proletariat to the bourgeoisie in the struggle for a “first stage” limited to capitalist democracy—in practice it operates firmly within that framework. A July 13 WPI statement in Farsi to Iranian workers declaims: “It was your strikes that brought the Shah’s military regime to its knees.” Workers strikes were indeed instrumental in bringing down the Shah, but what the WPI obscures is that the proletariat did not play an independent class role; it was *politically subordinated by the Tudeh and other reformists to the Khomeinists*. And a 1990 pamphlet titled “A Brief Look at the Situation of the Working Class in Iran,” which was written by the WPI’s predecessors of the Communist Party of Iran and is still distributed by the WPI, not only says that the “working class was the backbone of the revolutionary movement” in 1979 but maintains that there was a “revolutionary period” right up to 1981, two years after the mullahs had consolidated power over the corpses of militant workers, leftists and Kurds.

The WPI’s view that democracy can be achieved under capitalism in Iran is also clear in its programmatic statement, “A Better World” (1994). While claiming not to strive for a reformed capitalism, this program contains a massive laundry list

of reformist demands addressed to the Iranian ruling class and asserts: “Our aim is to force the existing system to recognize and abide by the unquestionable rights of the working people.” While the WPI stands out among Iranian left groups for prominently raising the key question of women’s emancipation and calls for legalization of abortion, it capitulates to religious backwardness by denouncing “the act of abortion,” arguing that it displays “the inherent contempt for human life in the present system.”

Under the impact of the crisis gripping Iran today, the WPI recently underwent a substantial split. However, from the documents which we have been able to read and from discussions with members from both sides, there do not appear to be fundamental differences on key questions of strategy. The minority claims to stand on “A Better World” and also apparently adheres to the WPI’s position that the Soviet Union became “state capitalist” in the late 1920s, a theoretical justification for its refusal to call for unconditional military defense of the Soviet degenerated workers state when it existed. This was a decisive question of proletarian class strategy, particularly in a country bordering on the former Soviet Union.

The only road to genuine social and economic modernization, to freeing Iranian women from enslavement, to winning the right of national self-determination for the Kurds and the myriad other oppressed nationalities lies through the smashing of capitalist class rule in Iran. As Leon Trotsky explained in *The Permanent Revolution* (1930):

“With regard to countries with a belated bourgeois development, especially the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the theory of the permanent revolution signifies that the complete and genuine solution of their tasks of achieving *democracy and national emancipation* is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat as the leader of the subjugated nation, above all of its peasant masses.... “The dictatorship of the proletariat which has risen to power as the leader of the democratic revolution is inevitably and very quickly confronted with tasks, the fulfillment of which is bound up with deep inroads into the rights of bourgeois property. The democratic revolution grows over directly into the socialist rev-



WV Photo

## NYC Protest Demands: Free Öcalan!

A spirited united-front demonstration demanding “Free Abdullah Öcalan!” and “End the Death Penalty!” was held in New York City on July 30, protesting the Turkish regime’s death sentence against the Kurdistan Workers Party leader who had been abducted with the connivance of Israeli and U.S. intelligence agencies. Among those joining the protest were the American Kurdish Information Network, Palestine Education Society, Spartacist League, Freedom Socialist Party (FSP) and other left organizations.

Warning of the deadly danger of looking to the imperialists to achieve

justice for the oppressed, the Spartacist speaker noted that the FSP, in a *Freedom Socialist* (April-June 1999) editorial, “displays its touching faith in the imperialist murderers as a possible ally of the oppressed Kurds, proclaiming that ‘of all the betrayals of the persecuted Kurds, those by the U.S. have been perhaps the most wounding’.” In contrast, he continued, the SL fights “to build a revolutionary workers party that will mobilize the working class in defense of all the oppressed and lead the fight for new October Revolutions throughout the world! For a Socialist Republic of United Kurdistan! Free Öcalan!”

olution and thereby becomes a *permanent* revolution.”

This revolutionary perspective was summed up by a Spartacist spokesman at a July 17 Los Angeles protest in support of the Iranian students: “Above all, what is needed in Iran today is an internationalist Leninist-Trotskyist party that stands on the heroic traditions of the Bolshevik

Party of Lenin and Trotsky and the 1917 Russian Revolution. Such a party would imprint upon its banner the liberating program of permanent revolution and mobilize the multiethnic Iranian proletariat in struggle to smash the bloody Islamic dictatorship. Hands off the student protesters! For workers revolution in Iran!”■

## South Africa...

(continued from page 1)

workers—who have to support families and relatives on slave-labour wages—for the lack of money for hospitals, schools and social services. This bourgeois lie is in the service of outright union-busting and increased exploitation.

The principal unions engaged in the current strikes are part of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), encompassing the main body of the organized black proletariat. The leadership of COSATU is dominated by the South African Communist Party (SACP), which has long been closely allied to the ANC and holds key ministerial posts in the capitalist Mbeki government, which we characterize as a nationalist popular front. Thus the COSATU tops have *limited the effectiveness* of the public sector strikes by maintaining token picket lines and keeping “essential services” running. Nurses and cleaning workers at Johannesburg General Hospital and elsewhere told WV salesmen that they were kept working by the union leadership, with their participation limited to noontime rallies during their lunch break.

In fact, for the overwhelming bulk of the population, there are no decent essential services now, neither hospitals, schools nor social services. The unemployed township youth and dispossessed masses would readily rally behind the public sector workers if the unions wielded the potential social power they have.

The bourgeois-nationalist leaders of the ANC tie the black, coloured (mixed-race) and Indian toilers to their white capitalist exploiters. In turn, the SACP

ties the strategic core of the organised black proletariat to the ANC. In order to maintain their credibility with the most class-conscious and militant workers, the COSATU tops were forced to respond to the government attacks by calling these strikes while carefully limiting their effectiveness. At the same time, Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, Mbeki’s minister of public services and administration and a member of the SACP central committee, is running point for the government’s vicious onslaught against the working class and oppressed. Moleketi announced the government policy of “no-work, no-pay” while baiting the workers that “if you are engaging in strike action it is very clear that you are willing to consider a sacrifice.” The strikes are aggravating the class contradictions within the SACP—what Lenin called a bourgeois workers party—which encompasses outright nationalists and government ministers, labour reformists and workers at the base looking for a revolutionary perspective. Under pressure from rank-and-file workers, some SACP shop stewards are now demanding that COSATU cease its support to the Mbeki government.

In the lead-up to the strike, on July 23, tens of thousands of workers across South Africa took to the streets in a show of defiance to the arrogant capitalist rulers and their insulting “final” offer of a 6 per cent wage increase. At the Pretoria rally that day, we Trotskyists of Spartacist South Africa, section of the International Communist League, intervened in the march of over 30,000 workers—many of them women—with our revolutionary programme for working-class power. In discussions, we emphasized the urgent necessity of building an internationalist

revolutionary workers party—a vanguard party that fights for the emancipation of the working class and the oppressed from capitalist exploitation—and for the programme of permanent revolution to achieve genuine national and social liberation. Concretely, in South Africa we fight for a black-centred workers government in which there will be a place for coloureds, Indians and those anti-racist whites who support the democratic rule of the black majority.

At the demonstration were thousands of cops organised in the Police and Civil Rights Union (POPCRU), including a contingent from Middleburg, where the cops have attacked picketing workers in the month-old Columbus steel strike, seriously injuring two and jailing almost 200. We say: cops, prison guards, security guards out of the unions!

At the Pretoria labour protest, the reformist fake left such as supporters of the Socialist Workers Organisation (SWO)—affiliated with the British-centred, left social-democratic tendency of Tony Cliff—deceived the workers with the lie that cops are “workers” and black cops are better than white cops. The strikebreaking assaults by the police in Middleburg could not make it clearer that, black or white, the cops are the bosses’ thugs! Frustrated at their inability to seal off our revolutionary Marxist politics, the SWO resorted to a transparent attempt to egg on the police to attack our comrades by shouting about our opposition to the presence of cops in the unions. The Cliffites’ reactionary pro-cop line dovetails with their reformist line that the bourgeois state can be pressured to serve the interests of the oppressed and exploited. More directly, it underscores their political loyalty to the bourgeoisie.

Thus both in 1994 and 1999, these fake lefts gave electoral support to the bourgeois-nationalist ANC which serves the Randlords and attacks the workers.

The key to victory for the combative and powerful South African proletariat is the forging of a revolutionary leadership—a Bolshevik workers party—which struggles on behalf of all the exploited and oppressed. In one of the most unequal societies in the world, today the working class, youth, women, immigrants are being brought face to face with the naked truth: that the growing black bourgeoisie, because of their own class interests, are filling their pockets along with their white capitalist partners while the masses remain hungry, homeless, sick and ragged. As a weak and dependent ally of world imperialism in a relatively backward capitalist country, the bourgeois ANC is committed to upholding the system of superexploitation intrinsic to neo-apartheid capitalism.

Only the proletariat armed with the programme of permanent revolution can carry through the fight for elementary bourgeois-democratic tasks—from full citizenship rights for all immigrants to agrarian revolution and an end to the oppression of women by reactionary tribal practices—through socialist revolution and the creation of a black-centred workers government: the dictatorship of the proletariat standing at the head of all the oppressed. A proletarian revolution isolated within South Africa’s borders could not long survive hostile imperialist encirclement and thus necessarily requires international extension. In our fight for proletarian state power against the rapacious South African bourgeoisie, we recall the words of the early South African communists: We want all!■

# Mumia...

(continued from page 16)

eight-page smear job by Buzz Bissinger reports a claim that seven years ago, during a prison visit by one Philip Bloch, Jamal “confessed” to the 1981 killing of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner. Of all the fabricated jailhouse “confessions” used to frame up innocent people, this is surely one of the more ludicrous. In Bloch’s tall tale, Jamal supposedly answered “Yes” after Bloch asked, “Do you have any regrets about killing the officer?” Nothing more. For years Bloch breathed not a word of the supposed confession.

In a response from death row, Jamal described the *Vanity Fair* article as a piece of “snuff journalism,” stating, “A lie is a lie.” Jamal pointed out, “Once again we hear about a so called confession, but instead of two months later this comes over a decade later.... If ever one needed proof of the state’s desperation here it is.”

This is not the first time that a “confession” has been manufactured by those seeking Jamal’s execution. Having no evidence to convict Jamal for Faulkner’s shooting, police and prosecutors made into a central pillar of their case a “confession” Jamal supposedly loudly made that night as he lay near death on the hospital floor. This story was cooked up more than *two months later*, following a round table meeting between police and prosecutors. It completely contradicts the written report submitted within hours of the shooting by Gary Wakshul, an officer who was with Jamal from his arrest and at the hospital, which stated that Jamal “made no comments.”

At the round table meeting, Wakshul came up with the fabricated confession



Shadd/Philadelphia Inquirer

**Philly cops besiege hospital workers union hall, denouncing union support to Jamal and screaming for his execution, 1995. Today, *Vanity Fair* sells “confession” hoax in service of deadly cop vendetta.**



story. This was later echoed by Officer Garry Bell, who described himself as Faulkner’s best friend. This was the first time that Bell reported a confession, even though he was in the hospital with Jamal the night of the shooting, where he brutalized and threatened to kill him. Bell would later say he was too “shocked” to remember that Mumia confessed! To cover up the mammoth holes in their story, prosecutors dredged up hospital security guard Priscilla Durham to claim she reported the confession to a supervisor the day after Jamal’s arrest. This too was only reported to the police two months later. The supervisor’s purported written report of Durham’s statement has never been produced.

At Jamal’s 1995 Post-Conviction Re-

lief Act (PCRA) hearing, Wakshul was asked about the flat contradiction between his original report and his later statement that Jamal had confessed. Wakshul incredibly responded that he hadn’t recognized the “importance” of the purported confession until the round table meeting. Now, as if following the same script, Bloch feigns surprise at the reaction to his story by telling the *Philadelphia Daily News* (13 July), “I didn’t see how important this was.”

This latest bogus confession was orchestrated to be immediately picked up by newspapers across the country, and ABC-TV’s *20/20* used it to reprise the brief for the prosecution it first aired last December. With a new warrant for Jamal’s execution imminent, it is aimed as a pre-emptive strike against the millions internationally who have rallied to his defense. Tens of thousands marched in “Millions for Mumia” protests in Philadelphia and San Francisco on April 24, while Evergreen College defied the Fraternal Order of Police (F.O.P.) and the governor of Washington by honoring Mumia at its June 11 graduation ceremony.

Repackaged for the glitzy *Vanity Fair*, the piece by Bissinger—a longtime publicist for Philadelphia’s Democratic mayor Ed Rendell, the D.A. at the time of Jamal’s 1982 frame-up trial—is nothing but a rehashing of the Big Lies used by the F.O.P. in its sinister campaign to demonize Mumia and marginalize his supporters. Thus, Bissinger retails the story of the “eyewitnesses” who supposedly identified Jamal as the shooter and other “evidence” coerced or manufactured by the police and prosecution. The *fact* is that every shred of the D.A.’s case has repeatedly been demolished, including at the 1995 PCRA and subsequent hearings. At least five eyewitnesses from five different vantage points told police that they saw a black man flee the scene, including one who identified him as the shooter. This could not have been Jamal, who was found at the scene bleeding profusely after being shot in the chest. The medical examiner reported that Faulkner was “shot with .44 cal[ibre],” while Jamal’s legally registered gun was a .38 calibre.

Bissinger’s “open and shut” case also relies on the “eyewitness” identification of Robert Chobert, a convicted arsonist. According to the prosecution account, Chobert was brought to the police wagon holding Jamal and identified him as the shooter as soon as the van doors were opened. This *could not* have happened. In pre-trial hearings, Inspector Alphonso Giordano, the highest ranking officer on the scene, revealed that Chobert could not have seen Jamal’s face. Under cross-examination by Mumia, Giordano testified that upon opening the wagon’s door, “All I could see was the back of your head, or the top of your head.”

As the lead cop on the scene, Giordano was the first to begin fabricating the “evidence” for the frame-up of Jamal. A

commander of Philadelphia’s notorious Stakeout unit at the time of the 1969-70 police raids on Black Panther Party offices, Giordano was more than familiar with Jamal. The night of the killing, he ordered that Jamal, who was near death, be taken to the Police Administrative Building for interrogation. After relenting and allowing Jamal to be taken to the hospital, Giordano was the first to manufacture the claim that Jamal had confessed to killing Faulkner. Yet even among the rogues’ gallery of “witnesses” for the prosecution, Giordano’s word was evidently considered too suspect to call him to testify at Jamal’s 1982 trial. Immediately following Jamal’s conviction, Giordano resigned from the Philly police force and four years later was convicted for taking tens of thousands of dollars in bribes.

The tale of a confession was just one more strand in the police/prosecution web of lies used to railroad Jamal to death row through a trial marked by racist jury-rigging and in which Jamal was even deprived of the right to be present in the court which would decide whether he lives or dies.

Bissinger regurgitates the prosecution lie that Jamal, a founding member of the Philadelphia Black Panther Party, was not targeted by the cops for his political activities. Proving otherwise are over 800 pages of FBI reports documenting surveillance, harassment and attempts by the Feds and Philly police to frame up Jamal. Likewise, Bissinger denies that Jamal was an outspoken critic of police brutality as a journalist. Widely respected for his searing exposés of police repression, Jamal was among the “new breed” of journalists threatened at a press conference by notorious racist mayor Frank Rizzo following the August 1978 cop siege of MOVE’s Powelton Village home. Subsequently, Jamal was known for his staunch defense of MOVE against the unrestrained racist terror of the Philly cops, which culminated in the 1985 firebombing of MOVE’s Osage Avenue home that killed eleven people, five of them children.

The capitalist rulers want to kill Jamal because he represents defiant opposition to their system of racist oppression. Joining in their sinister campaign is the dubious Philip Bloch. Portraying himself as a prison reform do-gooder and an opponent of capital punishment, Bloch is providing his services to the F.O.P.’s Justice for Daniel Faulkner Inc., whose Web site is nothing but a bald promotion of the racist death penalty, including the patently false claim that not one of the thousands of people executed in the U.S. this century was innocent. Slithering from interview to interview, Bloch has joined Maureen Faulkner as poster boy and girl for racist legal lynching.

Bloch told Bissinger he wants to counter “the level of hatred that’s being aroused in people towards the police.” This at a time when thousands across the country have demonstrated their outrage at the epidemic of racist police killings, from the death-squad-style execution of Amadou Diallo in New York City to the Chicago cops’ recent deadly rampage against black youth. Even Clinton’s Justice Department has felt compelled to launch investigations into ten different police departments. The Philadelphia cops were themselves the target of a Justice Department lawsuit three years before Mumia’s trial. Recent exposures of the Philly frame-up system, with its blatant planting of evidence, coercion of witnesses and racist jury-rigging, led to hundreds of convictions being thrown out.

Describing Jamal as “the most famous prisoner not simply in America but perhaps in the entire world,” Bissinger sprinkles his smear piece with complaints about the benefit concerts, protests, letters of support and what he calls the “foreign-dignitary dilemma,” i.e., the numerous luminaries and political figures abroad who have expressed their support for Jamal. Over the years, millions of trade unionists, minorities and leftist youth around the world have taken

# Puerto Rico...

(continued from page 2)

Rosselló has united with the campaign for ending military operations there.” Indeed, the PIP has made it amply clear that an independent capitalist Puerto Rico would be quite willing to maintain U.S. bases if the price was right.

We fight for the right of self-determination for Puerto Rico, the principal remaining colony of the U.S., and support the complete political freedom of advocates for independence to agitate and organize in favor of secession. At the same time, we seek to mobilize the

multiracial proletariat on the U.S. mainland to combat all manifestations of national chauvinism, against “English only” racism, against imperialist military and economic oppression, against the U.S. bases which threaten not only the working people of Puerto Rico but proletarians throughout the region and especially in Cuba. We fight for the release of Puerto Rican nationalist political prisoners as an urgent cause for the North American proletariat.

The Puerto Rican bourgeoisie is too weak, corrupt and tied to imperialism to wage a struggle for national liberation. The only road to breaking imperialist subjugation and eliminating poverty is through proletarian revolution, not only in Puerto Rico, but throughout the Caribbean and above all in North America. This is the perspective of permanent revolution, as first outlined by the great Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky.

Last summer’s two-day general strike against Rosselló’s plans to sell off the state-owned Puerto Rico Telephone Company provided both a powerful demonstration of opposition to the island’s national subjugation and of the power of the Puerto Rican proletariat. But that strike was derailed by labor bureaucrats who subordinated the political independence of the working class to the program of bourgeois nationalism and tied the unions to bourgeois political and right-wing religious elements through a class-collaborationist front (CAOS). Marxists fight to break the working masses from the nationalist parties and their handmaidens in the trade-union bureaucracy as part of the fight to build a revolutionary workers party.

As we wrote earlier this year (WV No. 704, 8 January):

“We fight for the international class unity of the workers of Puerto Rico and the United States against both the U.S. capitalists and the local bourgeois overseers. Our struggle is for workers power—a victorious workers government of Puerto Rico will decide how they will exercise their national self-determination.”

**All U.S. troops, bases out—For the right of independence of Puerto Rico! ■**

## SYC Class Series and Events

### CHICAGO

Thursdays, 7 p.m.  
August 12: **Black Oppression and Revolutionary Integrationism**  
August 19: **Women’s Liberation Through Socialist Revolution**  
August 26: **The Revoutionary Party**  
328 S. Jefferson St., Suite 904  
Information and readings: (312) 454-4930 or spartacist@iname.com

### NEW YORK

Saturdays, 3 p.m.  
August 7: **Trotskyism vs. Stalinism: The Revolution Betrayed**  
August 21: **For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!**  
August 28: **Confronting the “Death of Communism” Myth: The Revolutionary Party in the Post-Soviet World**  
299 Broadway, Suite 318  
(1½ blocks north of Chambers St.)  
Information and readings: (212) 267-1025

### BERKELEY

Wednesday, 7 p.m.  
August 18: **Meet the SYC**  
Cafe Strada at College and Bancroft  
Time and place to be announced,  
UC Berkeley: **Eyewitness Account: Mass Student Protests in Mexico**  
For more information: (510) 839-0851



# UAW...

(continued from page 16)

report on UAW organizing efforts at the Vance DaimlerChrysler plant, “The union told management that it wouldn’t attack the company as anti-union or even pass out pro-union leaflets.” Instead, Yokich issued an appeal to Vance workers to “join our partnership” with the company. “As a corporate board member of DaimlerChrysler,” he wrote, “I can assure you that our company will respect your right to freedom of association” (*Detroit News*, 4 July). Here is the head of the union whose purpose is to defend the workers *against* the corporation speaking as a corporate representative himself!

There could be no clearer evidence that the pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy, a privileged stratum atop the union movement, sees the world from the same vantage point as the capitalists rather than from the standpoint of the workers they claim to represent. UAW members and all workers need a leadership that understands that the interests of labor and capital are directly *counterposed*, that any serious mobilization of union power threatens the capitalists and will bring the working class into a head-on confrontation with the bourgeois state, whether under a Republican or Democratic administration. This means an uncompromising fight for the organizational and political independence of the working class from the bourgeoisie, its state and its political parties.

## Protectionism: Poison to Class Struggle

Central to the UAW bureaucracy’s class-collaborationist program is its campaign for protectionist measures to defend the interests of American corporations against foreign competitors. Screaming that Japanese and other auto workers abroad were “stealing American jobs,” UAW leaders have for years joined the Big Three in demanding stiffer import quotas. The national chauvinism and anti-Asian racism pushed by the UAW tops is a deadly trap leading workers in the U.S. to support their own exploiters and the American bourgeoisie’s imperialist interests abroad, ultimately including new interimperialist wars.

The American auto manufacturers are far-flung international empires, employing hundreds of thousands of workers from Poland to South Africa and Brazil. Ford’s Visteon parts division, for example, has 81 plants employing 82,000 workers in 21 countries. Both Ford and GM are currently moving to begin modular production in their Brazilian operations before they introduce this scheme in the U.S. Reporting on a modular production plant GM is about to open in

Brazil, the *Wall Street Journal* (9 April) writes:

“Its plant, code-named Blue Macaw, is crucial to GM’s global strategy of building a profitable small car. Unlike traditional GM plants, the Blue Macaw plant will employ less labor by buying whole-car subassemblies, such as ready-made dashboards. If successful, GM plans to apply the Blue Macaw blueprint to several North American plants.”

Meanwhile, in the very homeland of the “Brazilian model,” 1,500 Ford workers at a plant outside São Paulo have gone on strike against a threatened closure aimed at moving production to a lower-wage region. A victory by the Brazilian workers will be a victory for Ford workers in the U.S. and internationally. Effective defense of UAW members’ interests against the corporations requires class-struggle solidarity with auto workers around the world. Such an internationalist perspective is counterposed to the flag-waving chauvinism pushed by Solidarity House, which is poison to class struggle.

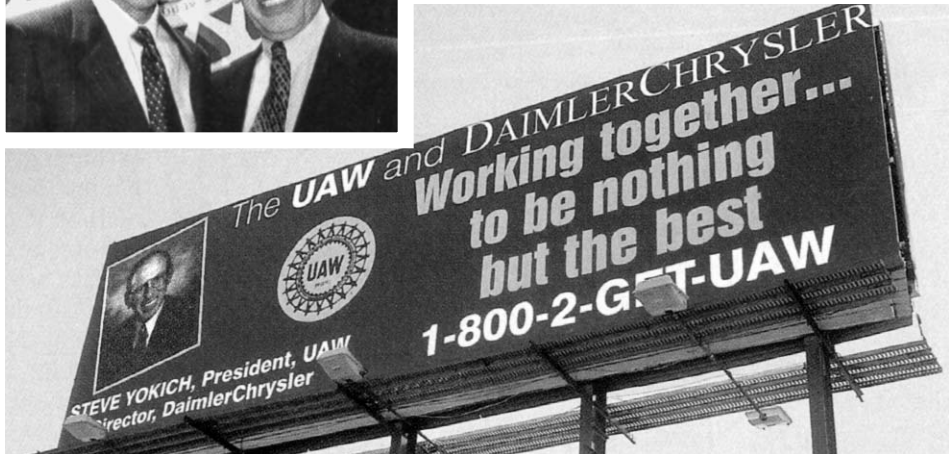
While railing against foreign competition, the AFL-CIO bureaucracy has presided over a drastic decline in wages and union membership in the U.S.—conditions which have encouraged Nissan, Toyota and other foreign auto manufacturers to set up production in the U.S., particularly the South. Meanwhile, not a single one of the foreign-owned “transplants” has been organized by the UAW.

William Jordan



UAW head Stephen Yokich with President Clinton. Pro-Democratic Party union bureaucracy pushes “partnership” with capitalists.

Mike Clemmer



Now, low-wage, non-union parts plants are cropping up around Detroit and other Northern cities under the very noses of the UAW tops.

Take Flint, where GM’s famed Buick City complex—site of the 1937 sitdown strike that built the UAW—locked its gates for good in June. For Buick City workers who haven’t gotten transfers to other GM facilities, there isn’t much out there besides a growing number of non-

union parts outfits where pay averages around \$8-10 an hour, less than half of what they made as UAW members. One young black worker in Flint told *Workers Vanguard* that such jobs are available only through temp agencies like the one that hired him. In a converted section of an old warehouse, where tubing is bent and brazed for use in automobile assem-

membership in recent decades will not come about through the contractual clauses pursued by the UAW tops which would supposedly bind the corporations to “neutrality” in unionization efforts. The UAW was organized through sit-down strikes, mass pickets, secondary labor boycotts (refusing to handle struck goods) and pitched battles with cops and company goons. Today, the union must be ready to mobilize its membership to defy strikebreaking court injunctions and laws banning militant labor actions and to prepare for an inevitable collision with the capitalist state—the cops and courts that enforce the bosses’ laws.

And especially in the South, no campaign to unionize the auto assembly and parts plants will succeed unless it takes up the fight for black equality as a central task. Organizing the “open shop” South necessarily and directly poses the need to mobilize labor to defeat the racist, union-hating lynchers of the Ku Klux Klan, who would be unleashed by the capitalists to suppress multiracial labor struggle. The Klan and the people behind them have always understood that unions mean racial integration.

The fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants is also a crucial part of mobilizing the power of labor in struggle against capitalist exploitation. Instead, the “America first” chauvinism pushed by the labor bureaucracy serves to fuel racist terror and the capitalist rulers’ attacks on Hispanic, Asian and other immigrant workers.

The first step to waging an effective struggle against the capitalists is to understand who your friends are and who your enemies are. That means breaking with any kind of “partnership” with the U.S. auto companies. The labor tops’ program of unity with the bosses means *dividing the working class* along racial and ethnic lines and pitting workers here against their class brothers and sisters in other countries. It also means setting older high-seniority workers against younger workers earning less money for the same kind of work, undermining the very basis of industrial unionism, which has always meant the struggle for equal pay for equal work and for uniform working conditions across the entire industry.

To unleash the power of labor in struggle against the bosses it’s necessary to fight for the political independence of the working class, which means breaking with the racist, anti-labor parties of capital, both Democrats and Republicans. Workers need their own party, one that fights for their class interests and the rights of all the oppressed as part of a program for socialist revolution. As we wrote in our article after the Flint strike:

“In the course of the class battles to come, a new leadership of the labor movement must come forward based on a program of militant struggle against the entire capitalist system. Out of such struggles will be forged a revolutionary workers party based on the Marxist understanding that the capitalist profit system must be rooted out and replaced by workers rule.”■

up Mumia’s cause, which has become the focal point in the fight against the barbaric, racist death penalty.

Behind the cops’ vendetta to kill Jamal is the drive by the capitalist rulers to beef up their arsenal of state repression—including the death penalty which stands at its pinnacle—against workers, blacks and immigrants. 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 entire history of the vendetta against Jamal by the cops, courts, media and the capitalist politicians of both the Democratic and Republican parties speaks against those who promote liberal illusions that Mumia can win his freedom through a “fair trial” in the capitalist courts or through pressuring the Democrats.

The power to win Jamal’s freedom lies in the multiracial labor movement, which in taking up this fight will strike a blow against an entire system predicated on the brutal exploitation of labor and rooted in

the racist repression of the black population. Freedom now for Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the racist death penalty!

\* \* \*

**Join the fight to free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Contact the PDC. 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.■**

bly, he toils nine and a half hours a day with only two 15-minute breaks—no lunch—for only \$5.50 an hour, and no benefits!

Sharply intensified exploitation over the past two decades, including the proliferation of multi-tier wage systems discriminating against women, minority and younger workers, have led to a vast rise in pro-union sentiment. Only 14 percent of workers—and barely more than 10 percent in the private sector—are currently unionized. Yet *Business Week* (19 July) recently reported with concern that the number of workers who want to belong to unions has more than doubled since 1984, the height of the union-busting Reagan years:

“If even half of the employees who say they favor union representation had been allowed to vote for unions, organized labor would represent as much as 35% of the American workforce today—the same share it held at the peak of its power in 1945.”

Doubling or tripling the number of workers organized in unions would cost corporate America literally hundreds of billions of dollars in increased wages and benefits. That is why, as this corporate mouthpiece itself points out, the employers have a huge arsenal of intimidation measures aimed at preventing workers from joining unions. American capitalists spend a billion dollars a year on lawyers and security outfits to keep unions out. And this is in addition to the plethora of “right to work” and other anti-union laws and the strike-breaking cops and courts.

## Mobilize Labor to Fight Racist Oppression!

The massive organizing drive needed to reverse the sharp decline in union

# WORKERS VANGUARD

## UAW Tops Push Sellout “Partnership” with Auto Bosses

# For a Class-Struggle Fight to Defend Jobs, Organize Non-Union Plants!

Last summer’s strike by 9,200 United Auto Workers (UAW) members at two General Motors parts plants in Flint, Michigan succeeded in strangling virtually the entire North American operation of the world’s biggest corporation. Taking on GM’s job-slashing “rationalization” drive and the company’s attempt to deliver a knock-out blow to the union, the strike ended effectively in a stand-off when it was called off by the UAW leadership after nearly eight weeks. Now, as the September 14 contract deadline nears for 388,000 UAW workers at the Big Three auto companies, a showdown looms over the unfinished business of that strike.

A recent article in the *Chicago Tribune* (13 June) noted, “GM is haunted by the 54-day stoppage last year that cost it \$2 billion and drove its share of the U.S. auto market to its lowest in decades.” The current contract struggle is the best opportunity in years to launch a fighting offensive against the auto bosses. Having raked in more than \$73 billion in profits since 1993, the Big Three are posting record sales figures for 1999 and do not want to see production and profits choked off through a strike.

Greedy for ever more profits, GM, Ford and DaimlerChrysler are on a crusade to increase productivity the old-fashioned way: by forcing fewer workers to do more work for less pay. The average workweek at Ford is already 49 hours, and higher still at DaimlerChrysler. This backbreaking work is carried out by an ever aging workforce, almost half of which will be eligible for retirement within the next five years. By spin-

ning off its Delphi parts division as a separate corporation in the spring, GM has positioned itself to introduce the so-called “Brazilian model” of modular production, which would shift much of the assembly work to lower-paid, younger

ers in the U.S.—some 930,000—is today near its all-time high, nearly 60 percent of these workers are not unionized. A solid strike of auto workers nationwide enforced by mass militant picket lines can reverse the companies’ anti-union,

ing drive necessarily means a concerted struggle against racist discrimination. Labor and black rights march forward together—or fall back separately!

In our article following last year’s Flint GM strike, which not only remained solid throughout but had thoroughgoing support of UAW members around the country, we wrote of the battle that looms ahead:

“The evident combativity of union members poses a collision with the greedy, union-busting corporations. But it also poses a clash within the UAW and other unions with the double-dealing labor bureaucrats, who have worked hand in glove with the capitalists and the government in overseeing the loss of hundreds of thousands of jobs and drastic cuts in workers’ standard of living. When an army gets ready to do battle with the enemy, it is important to prepare by taking stock of its fighting capacity, especially the question of leadership.”

—“For a Class-Struggle Fight Against GM Job Slashing!” WV No. 696, 11 September 1998

Well before the contract deadline, UAW president Stephen Yokich has already announced that a strike is “a million miles from our goal.” The UAW misleaders stand for class-collaborationist “partnership” with the capitalists at every level, from endorsing backbreaking speedup on the shopfloor to embracing the Democratic Party in the political arena. Rejecting anything that smacks of class struggle, today Solidarity House looks to organize non-union plants through cringing appeals for the “neutrality” of the companies.

According to a *Business Week* (26 July) continued on page 15



WV Photo

Flint workers rally during 1998 UAW strike which shut down General Motors operations in North America.

and often non-union parts workers while drastically reducing the number of workers needed at the unionized final assembly plants. Delphi meanwhile aims to extract massive concessions from its UAW workers in order to increase its “competitive” edge.

While the total number of auto work-

job-slashing offensive and launch the class-struggle drive needed to organize the non-union shops that now employ over half a million auto workers. With the bulk of these non-union operations—including the DaimlerChrysler plant in Vance, Alabama—located in the “open shop” South, a serious union organiz-

## Vanity Fair’s “Confession” Hoax

# Freedom Now for Mumia Abu-Jamal!

We print below a July 15 statement by the Partisan Defense Committee. Now Mumia Abu-Jamal, in a July 26 statement titled “Anatomy of a Lie,” has completely demolished *Vanity Fair*’s fabricated story that he confessed to Philip Bloch in 1992. Mumia quotes a letter to him by Bloch mentioning the movie *Incident at Oglala* on the frame-up of Native American Indian activist Leonard Peltier. Describing how a jury acquitted Peltier’s co-defendants, Bloch writes, “So—it is possible to get justice from a jury—not always—but sometimes. So, when you get a *new* trial—I think that there is a good chance of acquittal.” This letter was dated 17 July 1993—more than six months

after Bloch claims to have heard Mumia confess!

In his statement, Mumia points out: “Why write to a guy and write about *new* trials, or acquittals, if that guy confessed his guilt to you? Answer: Simple. There was no confession. Period.” Mumia continues:

“Did Bloch, like the cops of the 6th District, conveniently ‘forget’ this ‘confession’ also?”

“I don’t know, and frankly don’t care why he has now come forward. Perhaps he’s frustrated that he’s still a substitute teacher, and wants a push from friends in high places? Perhaps he seeks the warm glow of the limelight.

“Who knows? Who cares?”



WV Photo

New York City, October 1998: Emergency protest called by PDC after Pennsylvania Supreme Court denied Mumia’s legal appeal.

“By his own words, it proves he may not be a snitch, nor much of a traitor—but a liar.”

\* \* \*

The magazine *Vanity Fair* (August 1999) has added its glossy pages to the

cop-led campaign for the legal lynching of black death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal—a former Black Panther, eloquent journalist and supporter of the MOVE organization. An continued on page 14