

Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants!

Down With Capitalist Rulers' War Against Blacks, Immigrants!

The labor/black mobilization that rode the KKK out of New York City on October 23 brought to bear the social power of the working class, acting in its own interests and independently of the government and the Democratic and Republican parties of capital, in defense of all the oppressed. As we wrote then, "That same power, those same forces which stopped the Klan from riding can organize the unorganized and unemployed, can mobilize in defense of the masses in the ghettos and barrios, can crack the 'open shop' South—itsself a product of KKK anti-union terror" (WV No. 722, 29 October).

Initiated by the Partisan Defense Committee, the class-struggle legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League, this united-front mobilization provided a glimpse of the kind of fighting workers party needed to lead the working class in struggle against the attacks of the capitalist rulers and against the very system of capitalist exploitation. It brought to life the connection between labor's fight and the fight for black freedom. Black oppression is the cornerstone of racist American capitalism. There is no road to eliminating the special oppression of black people other than the working-class conquest of power, and there will be no proletarian



New York City, October 23: Labor's power can and must be mobilized in struggle against black oppression, anti-immigrant chauvinism. For a revolutionary workers party that champions the cause of all the exploited and oppressed!

WV Photo

revolution to end class exploitation unless the working class actively takes up the fight for black rights.

Just as they use anti-black racism to divide the working class, the capitalist rulers, aided and abetted by the labor bureaucracy, foster anti-immigrant chau-

vinism to pit native-born workers—black as well as white—against immigrants. This was clear last week when racist NYC mayor Rudolph Giuliani seized on the despicable refusal by some cabbies to pick up black passengers to launch a police vendetta against the city's

all workers. Labor must demand: **No deportations! Full citizenship rights for all workers, "legal" or "illegal"!**

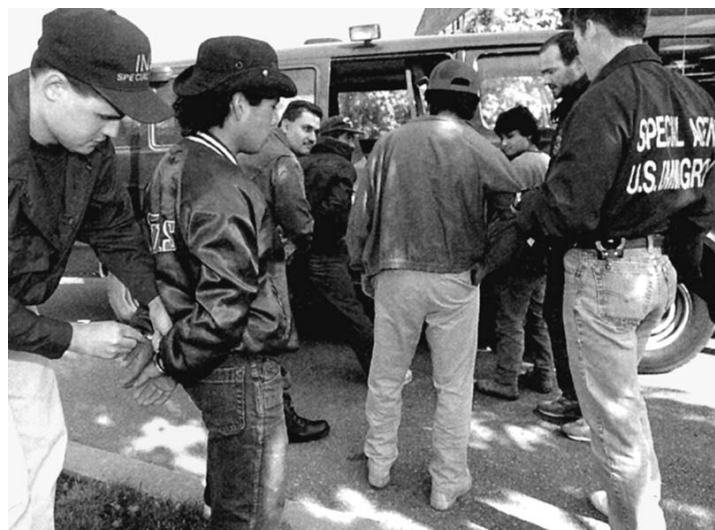
We publish below a presentation on the fight against anti-immigrant racism by Spartacist League Central Committee member Joseph Seymour at SL forums in New York City and the San Francisco Bay Area this fall.

* * *

In March 1991, four white Los Angeles cops brutally beat a black motorist named Rodney King, whom they had stopped for a traffic violation. They repeatedly kicked him and hit him with a baton as he lay writhing on the ground. This was in no way an unusual LAPD practice. And certainly no one would have predicted it would lead to events of some historic importance. But it did.

A bystander happened to take a videotape of the beating. And when it was shown to millions on television throughout the U.S. and, indeed, around the world, the public response was one of shock and outrage. The L.A. authorities were sufficiently embarrassed by this

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INS immigration cops round up Latino immigrants. Labor must oppose racist deportations, fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants.



WV Photo

Defend Chechen Independence!

Defeat Russian Invasion of Chechnya!...7



New York City, 1939

Trotskyists Mobilized 50,000 Against American Nazis

Printed below is a report, excerpted from *Socialist Appeal* (24 February 1939), of a mass protest against the Nazis organized by the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party.

An imposing, fighting demonstration of fifty thousand workers assembled near Madison Square Garden on Monday evening to protest the first big fascist mobilization in New York City.

In addition to the fifty thousand demonstrators who responded to the call of the Socialist Workers Party for a labor rally against the fascist concentration, official police estimates given to the press counted another fifty thousand among the spectators. With few exceptions, the latter made clear their sympathy with the aims and slogans of the demonstrating thousands. With a brutality recalling the days of Czarist Cossacks, 1,780 of Mayor LaGuardia's police, the largest number of cops ever collected in the city against a

single demonstration, slugged and trampled under horses' hooves scores of workers in an unsuccessful attempt to break up the demonstration. From 6 pm until 11, the workers engaged in a series of bitter clashes with the police.

Size Exceeds All Hopes

The size of the workers' counter-demonstration far exceeded the expectations of even the most optimistic.

Efforts had been made on all hands, prior to the Nazi meeting, to minimize the significance of the call issued by the Socialist Workers Party, to smother it by a campaign of silence, and to sabotage it directly.

Supercilious critics of the "Trotskyists" in the social-democratic camp sought to dispose of the counter-demonstration by ridicule and disdainful talk of our alleged insignificance. Neither the Socialist Party of Norman Thomas nor

the Social-Democratic Federation would take any cognizance of the call for the demonstration, much less endorse it. They were nowhere to be found in the demonstration.

CP Role Despicable

The Stalinists played a particularly despicable role, which aroused widespread bewilderment and confusion in their own ranks, which contain thousands of workers who really want to fight against Fascism.

On the day of the demonstration, all that the Daily Worker had to say was its report of a speech in favor of democracy by acting Mayor Newbold Morris. Not a single word about the "Trotskyists," or their call. It would have been a little embarrassing even to such brazen pen-slaves as Stalin employs in New York to write, on this occasion, diatribes against the "Trotsky-fascists"!

Rank and File Comes

Rank and file Stalinists, perplexed and irritated by the criminal sabotage of their officialdom, but nevertheless determined to demonstrate "unofficially" against the Nazis, whom they realize to be the menace they are, came to our rally by the thousands.



No less gratifying was the fact that one of the banners borne in the demonstration signified that the youth organization of the Thomasite Socialist Party had come to the anti-Nazi rally in spite of the shabby indifference of the party elders.

Equally inspiring was the contingent of Negro workers who came spontaneously to the tumultuous gathering, bearing their own posters and placards, including one signed by the Universal Negro Improvement Association.

Thousands Cheer SWP

The placards and posters of the Socialist Workers Party were uplifted amid the cheers of thousands. Almost simultaneously, on both streets, which by this time were choked to capacity by huge crowds reaching from Broadway to 8th Avenue, a spontaneous drive was launched to get through the police lines and into the immediate Garden area.

Action began on 48th Street. From the corner of 8th Avenue where a solid line of mounted cops was stationed, stirrup

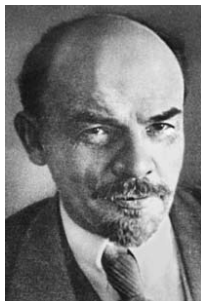
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TROTSKY

The Fight Against National Oppression

International unity of the working class against the capitalists can be realized only through intransigent struggle against national oppression. While opposing all nationalism, the Bolshevik Party of V.I. Lenin fought for the right of self-determination for the myriad oppressed nations in the tsarist empire, and implemented that right after the October Revolution of 1917. Capitalist counterrevolution, prepared by decades of nation-



LENIN

alist Stalinist misrule, has once again brought the question of national self-determination to the fore in the lands of the former Soviet Union, and elsewhere.

Socialists cannot achieve their great aim without fighting against all oppression of nations. They must, therefore, unequivocally demand that the Social-Democratic parties of the *oppressor* countries (especially of the so-called "Great" Powers) should recognise and champion the *oppressed* nation's right to self-determination, in the specifically political sense of the term, i.e., the right to political secession. The socialist of a ruling or a colonial nation who does not stand for that right is a chauvinist.

The championing of this right, far from encouraging the formation of petty states, leads, on the contrary, to the freer, fearless and therefore wider and more universal formation of large states and federations of states, which are more to the advantage of the masses and are more in keeping with economic development.

In their turn, the socialists of the *oppressed* nations must unfailingly fight for complete unity of the *workers* of the oppressed and oppressor nationalities (this including organisational unity)....

Imperialism is the epoch of the constantly increasing oppression of the nations of the world by a handful of "Great" Powers; it is therefore impossible to fight for the socialist international revolution against imperialism unless the right of nations to self-determination is recognised. "No nation can be free if it oppresses other nations" (Marx and Engels). A proletariat that tolerates the slightest coercion of other nations by its "own" nation cannot be a socialist proletariat.

— V.I. Lenin, *Socialism and War* (July-August 1915)

WORKERS VANGUARD

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

EDITOR: Len Meyers

EDITOR, YOUNG SPARTACUS PAGES: Alan Wilde

PRODUCTION MANAGER: Susan Fuller

CIRCULATION MANAGER: Mara Cadiz

EDITORIAL BOARD: Barry James (managing editor), Bruce André, Ray Bishop, Jon Brule, George Foster, Liz Gordon, Walter Jennings, Jane Kerrigan, James Robertson, Joseph Seymour, Alison Spencer

The Spartacist League is the U.S. Section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

Workers Vanguard (ISSN 0276-0746) published biweekly, except skipping three alternate issues in June, July and August (beginning with omitting the second issue in June) and with a 3-week interval in December, by the Spartacist Publishing Co., 299 Broadway, Suite 318, New York, NY 10007. Telephone: (212) 732-7862 (Editorial), (212) 732-7861 (Business). Address all correspondence to: Box 1377, GPO, New York, NY 10116. E-mail address: vanguard@tiac.net. Domestic subscriptions: \$10.00/22 issues. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Workers Vanguard*, Box 1377, GPO, New York, NY 10116.

Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.

The closing date for news in this issue is November 23.

No. 724

26 November 1999

Celebrate NYC Victory Over Klan Benefit for Class-War Prisoners Organize for Jamal's Freedom

The labor/black mobilization that rode the KKK out of New York City on October 23 was an important victory for all workers and the oppressed, not least those imprisoned for fighting against racist capitalist oppression. Join the PDC in the 14th annual Holiday Appeal fund drive to celebrate the anti-Klan victory and help build a powerful movement for freedom for Mumia Abu-

Jamal and all class-war prisoners.

The Holiday Appeal helps sustain the PDC's monthly stipend program for 16 class-war prisoners and provides extra funds for holiday gifts for them and their loved ones, a tradition dating back to the International Labor Defense of the 1920s. This is not charity but an act of solidarity with those behind bars—their fight is our fight!

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For more information:
(312) 454-4931

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ILWU Local 34 Hall
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Young Spartacus

Decatur, Illinois

Thousands Protest Racist Crackdown on H.S. Students

CHICAGO—On September 17, at Decatur's Eisenhower High School, seven black youth were engaged in the American institution of fighting at a football game. As football fights go, this one was rather benign. No weapons were pulled and no one was injured. The Decatur School Board's response was to expel all seven students for two years under a "zero tolerance" policy, which denies these kids an opportunity to complete their education and have any kind of future. At the first signs of protest by the Decatur black population, the racist school board proceeded to spit in the faces of the protesters by calling on the state to arrest all seven students almost two months after the incident, hitting four of them with felony "mob action" charges. Drop the charges against the students! Reinstate them now!

This racist provocation has been met with justified outrage by Decatur's black population, which has been on the receiving end of racist cop assaults, Klan terror and unemployment for many years. In segregated Decatur, blacks make up less than 17 percent of the population. But because many white children attend private or parochial schools, black children make up over 40 percent of the public schools. Today, when even the promise of some kind of public education is increasingly taken away by a racist ruling class that sees no use in educating youth for whom they can provide no future or jobs, many black people saw these expulsions as the final straw. As one Decatur resident put it, "The last thing you do to a black kid is kick them out of school. They've already got two strikes against them—they're young and they're black" (*Daily Southtown*, 15 November). And when black youth are on the streets, they are prey to the other "tracking system" of the bourgeoisie—railroaded into jail by the racist cops.

On Sunday, November 14, some 3,000 overwhelmingly black working people converged on Decatur to protest the racist expulsions. The fact that a thousand of them came down on 28 buses from Chicago, traveling for over three

Decatur, November 14: Some 3,000 people, many from as far away as Chicago, protest racist expulsion of black high-school students. Jesse Jackson sought to channel anger into toothless electoral politics.

Young Spartacus



hours, is a measure of the increasing anger of the black population against the continuing racist assaults of the ruling class. Scores of *Workers Vanguard* were sold at the rally based on the successful October 23 anti-Klan mobilization and the headline "Class-Struggle Fight for Black Freedom." But missing at the November 14 rally was any organized presence of the trade unions or the kind of revolutionary leadership evident on October 23. This is the type of leadership needed to lead a genuine struggle against the vicious assaults of the racist bourgeoisie, which have ranged from cop shootings to the "war on drugs" to the overhauling of public schools into police pens complete with metal detectors and armed cops.

Recognizing the outrage the expulsions inspired, Democratic Party honcho Jesse Jackson moved in to diffuse it into toothless electoral politics, leading the November 14 rally with such slogans as "Save the Dream: Leave No Child Behind." Behind Jackson's maneuvers is the Democratic Party machine, which is as committed as the Republicans to the savage repression of black people in this country. Jackson cynically denied that the expulsions had anything to do with race, saying, "This is not so much about black and

white as it is about wrong and right" (*Chicago Defender*, 9 November).

But these protests have laid bare the racial polarization in the city. The same KKK outfit that the October 23 labor/black mobilization ran out of NYC rallied in Decatur at the same time as the November 14 Jackson-led protest, ominously drawing a racist howling mob of 200. It is a telling indictment of the black Democrats that the Klan and their supporters were able to mobilize for racist genocide while thousands of black working people marched only five miles away.

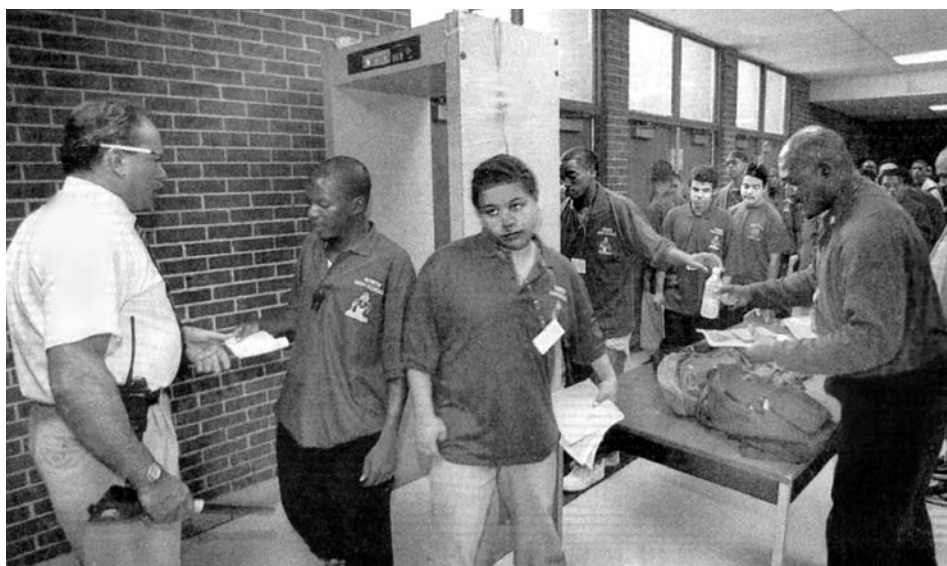
The racist American ruling class has waged a continuous war against black America, slashing jobs and education and criminalizing an entire generation of black youth through the criminal "justice" system. And this has been done with the full and active participation of black "leaders" like Jackson and Al Sharpton who fully cheered on the "war on drugs," a racist war on the ghettos and barrios. But it does not have to be this way. There is a way to fight back. Only five years ago, Decatur was the center of the Illinois "war zone."

Major and hard-fought strikes and lockouts rocked the city, state and country, and drew in the integrated labor movement from the area's key unionized industries, from Caterpillar to Bridge-stone-Firestone and Staley. Our 1994 labor/black mobilization in Springfield against the Klan's racist provocation against Martin Luther King Day struck a powerful chord among workers in the "war zone." But the strength and militancy shown by the workers was dissipated by a trade-union leadership committed to the poison of protectionism, the sanctity of capitalism and the racist Democratic Party.

The Spartacus Youth Clubs fight for free, quality, integrated public education for all. But, to realize even such an elementary demand, the power of labor must be unshackled from the Democratic Party and labor misleaders. This was given expression at the October 23 anti-KKK mobilization in NYC, where the social power of the labor movement was wielded in the interests of all the oppressed. As we wrote in "Class-

Struggle Fight for Black Freedom" (WV No. 723, 12 November), "Labor must fight to offer a future for the youth in ghettos and barrios other than that of poverty and prison. The unions need to win a living wage protected by a full cost of living adjustment. They need to establish union-run recruitment and training programs that will provide union jobs for all those who have been thrown on the economic scrap heap by this system. They need to fight for full employment and a reduction of the workweek with no loss in pay."

There are two clear and counterposed roads. The first is that of Jesse Jackson and the Democratic Party of slavery, racism and war. The other is ours: mobilizing the integrated labor movement— independent of the capitalists and their parties and marching at the head of all the oppressed—in a class-struggle fight for black freedom and against all forms of racist injustice. For this, what is necessary is the building of a revolutionary, multiracial workers party that acts as the tribune of the people, combatting all manifestations of chauvinism and racism. In such a party, doubly oppressed black workers, based on their strategic position in American society as the most heavily unionized sector of the proletariat, will necessarily play a leading role. By expelling the "Decatur 7," the racist school board wants to consign them to a future of courts and jails. Against such provocations by the bourgeoisie, the labor movement must fight against not only individual expressions of racist American injustice but the entire capitalist system that can offer no future for black youth. For black liberation through socialist revolution! ■



Wagner/Chicago Tribune

Chicago high school. Capitalist rulers have turned inner-city public schools into police pens with metal detectors and cops.

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After October 23 Anti-Klan Victory

Building the Revolutionary Youth Organization

At a meeting of the New York Spartacist League following the tremendous victory of the October 23 anti-Klan mobilization, a Spartacus Youth Club member declared, "Now I know I have joined the revolutionary party." The October 23 mobilization shook this city to its core and provided a lesson for those who want to struggle against the racist assaults of the ruling class about the social power of the working class as well as the profound importance of revolutionary Marxist leadership in social struggle.

Those who saw the importance of the leadership role played by the Spartacist League in building this victory are now joining the Spartacus Youth Clubs. The SYC is the training ground for young revolutionaries, and as such it played an important role in building the victory on October 23. Youth comrades mobilized contingents of students from universities and went to the campus workers to get endorsements from their unions and to mobilize their co-workers. The SYCs worked alongside the Spartacist League, the Partisan Defense Committee and the Labor Black League in the ten days of building for the demonstration on the streets of the city, and found a huge base of support for the call "All Out to Stop the KKK!"

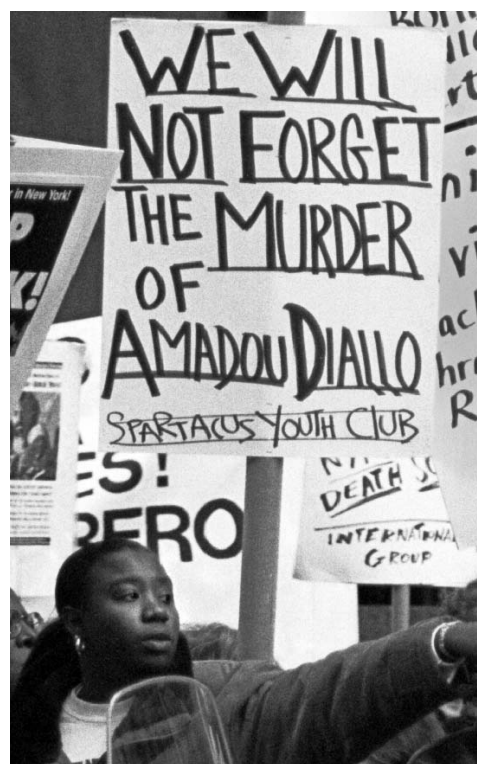
Workers and youth made the demonstration their own by building for it in their communities, schools, and workplaces. And now youth from very diverse backgrounds are joining the SYC—from high-school students to college students to young workers. Youth who saw the revolutionaries in action are joining us because they want to sweep away this racist capitalist system and they learned that the SYC struggles to mobilize youth and young workers for this fight. One new SYCer said: "So many of my friends used to talk about how someday we'll change this country, but it was more of an abstract thing, we would do 'something'—but this *is* the something. We're not just talking ideas, we're doing it."

The October 23 mobilization was not "spontaneous" as fake leftists like Workers World would have it; it required the conscious leadership of the revolutionary party to fight for a forum that allowed

outrage to be expressed in an effective show of social power. As a result, the workers and youth who were there came away with a sense of victory, and many of them also saw what it took to build the labor/black mobilization in the face of opposition by the courts, the bourgeois media, Democratic Party politicians and liberals, and even some ostensible left groups like the International Socialist

enormous differences between the organization, slogans, and speeches of this march and those of the IAC...showed me that even in a position of control the SL/PDC/SYC stand by their principles, which include fighting in the face of frantic opposition from the sellouts."

In periods of struggle, consciousness changes as the class forces in society are laid bare; simultaneously the need



Organization (ISO) that were eager to throw their forces behind the Democrats' diversionary "rally for tolerance."

As another new youth member wrote in her application letter, the demonstration "made very clear to me how stark the line is between a group like the SL and the other 'left' groups in this country. I needed to see the march, and be part of it, to understand that 'leadership' is not a dirty word, and is absolutely *crucial* if you're really interested in making a revolution." She also remarked on the tremendous differences between the PDC-initiated anti-KKK mobilization and the rally led by the Workers World Party's International Action Center (IAC) in Washington, D.C. this summer in response to a Nazi march. "Witnessing the

New York City, October 23: Spartacus Youth Clubs organized students and young workers behind social power of labor to stop the KKK.

Young Spartacus photos



for revolutionary leadership also becomes evident. When the economy becomes more volatile and unstable, when the imperialist leaders begin maneuvering toward another world war, mass unrest will come to the fore and we will need revolutionary leadership to guide the struggles of the proletariat in order to make a socialist revolution and end this system of exploitation forever. Many youth have come to understand what a revolutionary workers party is—now it is our job to continue to build it! As we saw on October 23, the time for revolutionary politics is not sometime in the future, it is now, because it is only through engaging in the immediate issues with our program, based on the political independence of the working class against the

capitalist ruling class, that we can move forward.

To the SYC, politics are not bloodless and academic debates. It is a life and death struggle for the working class to smash the capitalist state through socialist revolution and build its rule. One of the most powerful effects of being a communist is the polemical combat one enters into against ostensible leftists. The ISO is fully exposed for what they are: running dogs for the racist, capitalist Democratic Party who cover for the KKK; fake leftists who consciously reject the perspective of socialist revolution. Other groups like Progressive Labor thoroughly revealed their utter contempt for the working class by denying the social power of labor and instead opting for impotent adventures against the cops.

As another new SYC member put it, "Before I heard of the demo against the KKK, I'd heard of other political groups, leftist groups, but none of them really interested me. I'd heard of the Spartacist League, and I liked their views, but I

never really thought about it because I never thought of myself as being a member of any group. But when I really think of how I've been mistreated by the bourgeoisie, I felt that it was time enough for myself to take action and fight for a cause I felt was worth fighting for. As far as joining the SYC, I felt that I wanted to be with a revolutionary team that is fighting for the rights of oppressed people in general. And I feel that all the youth, in general, that feel the same views should come to the Spartacus Youth Club. It's important. Instead of sitting at home saying, 'I can't believe they did that, I can't believe they kicked these kids out of school because they were fighting at a game.' Instead of sitting at home, be about it, as they say."■

1939...

(continued from page 2)

to stirrup, they made a furious attack on the assembled demonstrators. Moving in both directions, one group of cops trampled down a throng of patriotic war veterans and cut their big American flag to ribbons, while another group smashed brutally into the mass of workers.

Masses Reform Ranks

Although the Cossacks made repeated sallies into the workers' crowd, the mass formed and reformed, stoutly determined to hold their own until they gathered sufficient strength to exercise their right to assemble and to picket whether the cops granted it or not.

Even a large gathering of workers cannot easily attain its objective unless these workers have been organized thoroughly in advance and trained to act in sharp coordination. It was evident, in other words, that for the complete success of such a demonstration a militant, organized Workers Defense Guard is indispensable.

Cops Attack

Just as the head of the march reached 47th Street, it ran smack into a newly-formed line of cops. Without a word of warning, they plunged into the parade, mounted cops in the lead, with rows of foot cops behind them. The horses were driven straight into the ranks of the marchers, first in the center of the street and then on the sidewalks. Shop win-

dows were shattered to smithereens, and workers wounded by the jagged splinters. Others went down under the horses, as is so graphically revealed by the sensational photographs which were published in the press. Clubs were drawn and swung freely and viciously.

This was not in Czarist Moscow, in Hitler's Berlin or Mussolini's Rome. No! This took place in the domain of "democratic" New York, under the administration of "progressive" Mayor LaGuardia, successful candidate of the American Labor Party in the last election!

Notwithstanding the assault, the lines of the march were still reformed. The parade turned down 47th Street and proceeded once more to Broadway. There a fresh attempt was made to organize a meeting at the Duffy Monument. But

another police concentration was on hand and a violent struggle ensued.

The workers refused to be shoved around. They had seen many of their comrades seriously injured and beaten. When the police sought to disperse the marchers, they encountered the stiffest resistance.

March Terminates

Finally, after breaking through the police line, the crowd drove through to 49th Street, where the march was terminated by an announcement from an SWP speaker whom the police, helplessly trying to break through the firm block of workers, sought in vain to reach so that he could be torn down from the taxicab he had mounted in order to address the marchers.■

On Their Knees for Anybody

ISO and Religion: The Opium of Opportunists

If religion is, in the words of Karl Marx, "the opium of the people"—aimed at stupefying the masses and keeping them chained to the capitalist order—the avowedly Marxist International Socialist Organization (ISO) is a big-time pusher. Last Easter in New York City, the ISO's "Campaign to End the Death Penalty" cosigned and distributed a leaflet urging people to "experience the power of Good Friday" at a meeting on "The Execution of Jesus Christ and the Death Penalty Today." In Poland, the ISO's cothinkers, Pracownicza Demokracja (Employee Democracy)—which is likewise affiliated to Tony Cliff's Socialist Workers Party in Britain—took their liberal refor-

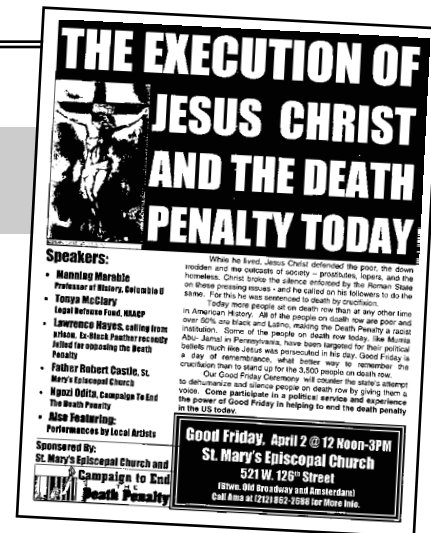
mullah-led movement against the Shah in 1978-79:

"It's very interesting to realize similarities between the years 1978-79 in Iran and 1980-81 in Poland. In both cases there was a struggle against the regimes, in both cases many of those struggling viewed the 'clergy' as their ally. In Poland as well as in Iran the movement was democratic to the core, although it was joined by people with extremely reactionary views, who masqueraded as friends of the common people. The movements in both Poland and Iran are united also by the aspect of liberation from dependence on a great power. Here from 'Soviets,' there from 'Yankees'."

In a similar vein, the Australian Cliffites last year glorified Indonesian Islamic

Solidarność in Poland.

The "liberation" movement of Ayatollah Khomeini cheered by the Cliffites put in power an Islamic fundamentalist regime, no less tyrannical than the Shah's, which imposed a reign of terror against leftists and national and religious minorities and enslaved women in the head-to-toe *chador*. A year later, the Cliffites howled with the imperialist wolves when Soviet troops moved into Afghanistan to suppress a CIA-backed Islamic fundamentalist insurgency there. And when the Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy pulled out the troops in 1989 as a gift to the imperialists, the ISO enthused over "the defeat of the Russians in Afghani-



Socialist Worker
Paper of the International Socialist Organization
May 1988

Just as socialists welcomed the defeat of the U.S. in Vietnam, we welcome the defeat of the Russians in Afghanistan. It will give heart to all those inside the USSR and in Eastern Europe who want to break the rule of Stalin's heirs.

But this does not mean giving

Anti-woman, anti-Communist Afghan mujahedin cutthroats, fêted by Reagan at White House in 1983, hailed by ISO social democrats.

mist perspective to the point of parody by calling for reform of that bastion of reaction, the Catholic church. Coming out for democratizing the College of Cardinals—the body which chooses the Pope—*Pracownicza Demokracja* (May 1999) wrote:

"Elected by a narrow group of unelected cardinals, the Pope doesn't tolerate any opposition to his decisions. On some questions he even claims to be infallible. The pride of the church and its strict hierarchy are far from the situation of the early Christian communities, which elected ordinary people as their bishops."

The Cliffites have a long history of genuflecting to the virulently anti-Communist, anti-Semitic and anti-woman Catholic hierarchy, stemming from their shared support to counterrevolutionary *Solidarność* (see "Polish Cliffites Whitewash Anti-Semitic *Solidarność* Priest: The Pope's Leftists," WV No. 679, 28 November 1997). But these social democrats are nothing if not ecumenical in tailing religious reaction, as an earlier article in *Pracownicza Demokracja* (January 1999) makes clear in linking the rise of *Solidarność* in 1980-81 to the Iranian

leader Amien Rais and grotesquely equated the student protests that toppled military dictator Suharto with the Islamic student mobs which "played a role in bringing down the previous Sukarno regime" in 1965-66, an anti-Communist bloodbath in which a million workers, leftists and peasants were slaughtered (*Socialist Worker* [Australia], 6 March 1998).

Why would self-styled socialists embrace reactionary religious movements? The Cliffites take their cue from the likes of Cold Warrior John Foster Dulles, who spoke in 1950 of the "common bond" between the "democratic" imperialists and the "religions of the East" which "cannot be reconciled with Communist atheism and materialism" (quoted in Paul Baran, *The Political Economy of Growth* [1973]). From their origin as a tendency in 1950 in the midst of the Korean War, the Cliffites have shared the imperialists' visceral hatred for the Soviet Union. Thus they have lined up behind any and all forces opposed to Communism—from sadistic Islamic fundamentalists in Afghanistan, Iran and Indonesia to the Vatican-backed

stan. It will give heart to all those inside the USSR and in Eastern Europe who want to break the rule of Stalin's heirs" (*Socialist Worker*, May 1988).

The victory of the Afghan *mujahedin*, who turned that country into a living hell for women, led in short order to the triumph of *Solidarność* counterrevolution, ushering in widespread immiseration, mass layoffs and an orgy of clerical reaction targeting women, including a ban on abortion. Yet the Cliffites, who even called themselves "Socialist *Solidarność*" in Poland until recently, continue to hail this counterrevolutionary movement

as "one of the greatest symbols of workers struggle on earth" (*Solidarność Socjalistyczna*, March 1997)!

In Iran in 1978-79, we said: "Down With the Shah! Don't bow to Khomeini! For Workers Revolution!" Against the imperialists and their counterrevolutionary lackeys, we Trotskyists fought for unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union and the East European deformed workers states, as we do today in regard to China, Cuba, North Korea and Vietnam. We declared: Hail Red Army in Afghanistan! Stop *Solidarność* counterrevolution in Poland! We called for proletarian political revolution—premised on defense of the collectivized, planned economy—to oust the sellout Stalinist bureaucracies.

We defended the gains of the October Revolution of 1917 because we fight for new October Revolutions around the world. It is from this programmatic standpoint, based on the interests of the working class independent from and counterposed to the capitalist class, that we organized the mass labor/black mobilization that rode the KKK out of New York City on October 23.

The Cliffites, having made their accommodation with "democratic" capitalism, oppose the perspective of workers revolution and restrict their program to the fight for "democracy." In the U.S., this makes them a tail of the Democratic Party liberals, for whom the main danger on October 23 was not the KKK but the mobilization of the working class—led by open reds—against the racist terrorists. Doing the capitalist Democrats' dirty work, the ISO social democrats went so far as to share a platform with the cops and to help provide a platform for the KKK lynchers. Against the fake-left apologists for religious reaction and racist capitalism, we in the Spartacus Youth Club fight to win youth to the struggle to build the revolutionary workers party that will lead the working class and all the oppressed to liberation through socialist revolution. ■

Spartacus Youth Club Events

BOSTON

The Fight for Communism and the Class Struggle Today

Alternate Saturdays, 2 p.m.
December 4: **Trotskyism vs. Stalinism**
Tufts University, Mayer Campus Center, Friedman Room (219)
Information and readings: (617) 666-9453

CHICAGO

Revolutionary Marxism: The Fight for a Socialist Future

Saturdays, 3 p.m.
December 11: **Black & Red—The Class Struggle Road to Black Freedom in a Workers America**
328 S. Jefferson St., Suite 904 (near Clinton stop on Blue Line)
Information and readings: (312) 454-4930

LOS ANGELES

Organizer's Eyewitness Report:
Labor/Black Mobilization Rides KKK Out of New York City!
Black and Red: Class-Struggle Road to Black Freedom
Thursday, December 2, 12:30 p.m.
Pasadena City College, Bldg. C-253
1570 E. Colorado Blvd. at Hill Ave.
For information: (213) 380-8239 or lasyc@ucla.edu

BAY AREA

Next class: **Leninism and the Fight for a Revolutionary Party**

Thursday, December 2, 7 p.m.
UC Berkeley, Room 222 Wheeler
Information and readings: (510) 839-0851

NEW YORK CITY

Revolutionary Marxism: The Fight for a Socialist Future

Alternate Tuesdays, 7:30 p.m. at NYU
November 30: **For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!**
Student Events Center, Rm. 305
5 Washington Pl. (at Mercer St.)

Video showings on campus: "**From Death Row, This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal**"
NYU: Monday, December 6, 7:30 p.m.
Student Events Center, Rm. 608
Columbia: Tuesday, December 7, 8 p.m.
Information and readings: (212) 267-1025

TORONTO

Smash the Capitalist System of Racism and War!

Wednesday, December 1, 7 p.m.: **The Revolutionary Party and Its Program**
U of T, International Student Centre
33 St. George St. (north of College St.)
Information and readings: (416) 593-4138



—January 1979

THE FORM-RELIGIOUS THE SPIRIT-REVOLUTION!

Iran is a fabulously wealthy country. It earns billions of dollars each year through oil. It earns millions more from natural gas, of which it holds the world's second largest reserves. Yet its people are among the world's poorest. The vast majority of Iranians have gained absolutely nothing from all that wealth.

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Abbas/Gamma-Liaison

ISO cheered Khomeini's "Islamic revolution," which enslaved women in veils, carried out mass executions of workers, leftists, national minorities.

Polish Solidarność: A Man's World

The following article is translated from Platforma Spartakusowców No. 10 (Fall-Winter 1999), published by the Spartakusowska Grupa Polski (SGP), Polish section of the International Communist League.

In 1982, when Western bourgeois feminists, social democrats and pseudo-leftists were howling with the likes of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher for “Solidarity with Solidarność,” our comrades of the International Communist League (then the international Spartacist tendency) alone warned of the danger this Vatican/CIA-sponsored outfit posed to women:

“Walesa likes to boast a madonna lapel pin, symbolic of Solidarność’ close ties to the Catholic church. The historic role of that institution in keeping women tied to the family hearth, Polish pope Wojtyla’s aggressive campaign against abortion, the strong pro-family attitudes of Solidarność—can these forces be the liberators of Polish women? Never!

—“Solidarność: A Man’s World,” *Women and Revolution* No. 24, Spring 1982 (a translation of this article appears in *Platforma Spartakusowców* No. 6 [1997])

The SGP was founded on the programmatic heritage of the ICL in counterposing the communist program to the forces of capitalist reaction, exemplified by our slogan “Stop Solidarność Counterrevolution!”

The restoration of capitalist rule brought women everything we warned about *before* Solidarność took power from the discredited Stalinist bureaucracy—and not just in Poland. It was the bankers’ favorite “union,” after all, that spearheaded the restoration of capitalism throughout East Europe and the Soviet Union, culminating in 1989-92 in the destruction of the USSR and the deformed workers states of the former Soviet bloc. This world-historic defeat for the working class has led to a vast increase in attacks on working women, from the sweatshops of Southeast Asia to anti-abortion terror in North America and beyond, and the unprecedented rise of woman-hating religious bigotry and enemies of basic human progress around the world.

The collective property forms of the October Revolution, extended to Poland after World War II, laid a basis for the right to free education, full employment and social gains which benefited women. But the parasitic bureaucracy in the Polish deformed workers state, which like its counterpart in the USSR wielded political power under the reactionary myth of “socialism in one country,” coddled the Catholic church for decades and glorified the reactionary institution of the family. In the 1930s, Russian revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky illuminated the basis of such contradictions in *The Revolution Betrayed*, his powerful analysis of



Gamma-Liaison

Solidarność leader Lech Walesa with Vatican sponsors. Right: anti-abortion mobilization in Warsaw, 1997. Capitalist counterrevolution ushered in full-scale onslaught against women’s rights.

the USSR. Trotsky underlines the promise which Soviet power held out for the liberation of women and the material obstacles to its realization:

“The October revolution honestly fulfilled its obligations in relation to woman. The young government not only gave her all political and legal rights in equality with man, but, what is more important, did all that it could, and in any case incomparably more than any other government ever did, actually to secure her access to all forms of economic and cultural work.... The revolution made a heroic effort to destroy the so-called ‘family hearth’—that archaic, stuffy and

sectors: minorities, women and youth.

Today, a decade after the victory of Solidarność counterrevolution, the desperate situation of women in Poland has begun to create ferment in the small and isolated milieu of Polish feminism, particularly among younger women. This became public in June when a young feminist academic, Agnieszka Graff, published an article questioning the “mythology” of Solidarność in relation to women. Entitled “Patriarchy After Sexmisja” (*Sexmisja* is the title of a popular film from the late 1980s), this piece subse-

be shocking, even iconoclastic,” writes Graff, “is that the great burst of freedom that was Solidarność represented, on the symbolic plane, the rebirth of the patriarchal order, which had been disrupted by the totalitarian system.”

Graff’s admission that Solidarność was anti-woman from day one, coming nearly a decade *after* that reactionary movement led the restoration of capitalist misery, is no consolation for millions of Polish women. Despite the view from the writer’s ivory tower, there was nothing “symbolic” for millions of Polish working women about the effects of capitalist misery, unbridled clericalism and anti-abortion bans introduced by Solidarność-led capitalist counterrevolution.

But even this academically-couched feminist “thesis”—in the context of massive attacks on women by the current Solidarność-derived AWS/UW government—was like putting a stick in an anthill. After her article appeared, “post-Solidarność” feminists rushed to disavow her criticisms of Solidarność, even while ostensibly “defending” her against “Mother Poland” reactionaries like M. Wielowiejska. While Graff has made no public comment on Solidarność since her article appeared, when an SGP speaker intervened at an October 19 public meeting on feminism in Warsaw, pointing out that women’s oppression in Poland today “is the direct result of the restoration of capitalism led by reactionary Solidarność,” it was Graff herself who rushed to bureaucratically silence our comrade, later commenting that she “loves capitalism.”

While the reactionary nature of “Solidarność” is today no secret, Graff’s exposure of the mythology of “good old Solidarność,” whatever her own intentions, likewise exposes the bourgeois feminists and fake leftists who throughout the 1980s tailed Solidarność counterrevolution in Poland, later complaining of its supposed “degeneration.”

The Logic of Feminism

Indeed, the bourgeois feminists’ only quarrel with the capitalist society restored by Solidarność in Poland is that it has denied them full access to the boys’ club of ruling-class power. As Maria Janion, probably Poland’s most prominent academic feminist, complains: “When it was no longer a question of ‘solving the crisis of the nation’ but of power, privilege and money, Solidarność turned its back on women, letting them know quite clearly that their presence was not welcome” (*Gazeta Wyborcza*, 3-4 July).

The logic of feminism is to draw a sex line where Marxists draw a class line. Expressing the aspirations of a thin layer of relatively privileged women, in practice feminism identifies its interests not in the overthrow but in the preservation and

continued on page 13



Kalbarczyk/Agentur Focus



January protest by nurses against low wages outside parliament building in Warsaw.

stagnant institution in which the woman of the toiling classes performs galley labor from childhood to death....

“It proved impossible to take the old family by storm—not because the will was lacking, and not because the family was so firmly rooted in men’s hearts.... Unfortunately society proved too poor and little-cultured.... You cannot ‘abolish’ the family; you have to replace it. The actual liberation of women is unrealizable on a basis of ‘generalized want.’ Experience soon proved this austere truth which Marx had formulated eighty years before.”

In contrast to the Stalinists’ accommodation of reactionary social norms, Trotsky fought for spreading the revolution internationally, especially to the economically advanced countries of West Europe, as the only means of providing the material basis for completing the liberation of women that the October Revolution began.

Capitalist Restoration Targets Women

It’s no accident that the new capitalist state consolidated in 1989-91 by Solidarność aimed its first blows at women, most notably with the ban on abortion. But this was soon followed by attacks against miners, whose resistance to capitalist immiseration transformed itself into a gigantic strike wave in defense of their workplaces. In reality, the bourgeoisie and its capitalist state always herald offensives against the working class as a whole with attacks on its most vulnerable

quently sparked a raging controversy in the pages of the bourgeois daily *Gazeta Wyborcza*. Graff makes some telling points on the profoundly anti-woman political culture of the new capitalist state in Poland, which she terms a “youthful, aggressive patriarchy.” Commenting on the rout last March of a proposed constitutional equal rights amendment in parliament, Graff points to:

“A conviction of the AWS [Electoral Action Solidarność] right shared, in my opinion, by a large part of UW [Freedom Union] and, despite appearances, the SLD [ex-Stalinist social-democratic Democratic Left Alliance], ...which runs more or less as follows: Discrimination—which really should be called ‘the natural differences between the sexes’—has always been with us, and will always be. This is as it should be. It’s a good thing. It’s what our young Polish democracy is all about. Under communism there were women tractor drivers and abortion, but now it’s back to normal. Poland is Poland, men are men and women are women.”

—*Gazeta Wyborcza*, 19-20 June

The article then goes a step further, pointing to the misogynistic foundations of Solidarność *from the very beginning*. As she points out, during the shipyard strikes of August 1980 which gave rise to Solidarność, reactionary attitudes played a significant role: “In order to make these moods perfectly clear, a slogan was painted on the wall of the striking Gdansk shipyard: WOMEN, DON’T BOTHER US, WE ARE FIGHTING FOR POLAND.” “My thesis, which may

Publication of the Spartacist Group of Poland



Platforma Spartakusowców
No. 10, Fall-Winter 1999
\$1 (28 pages)

Order from/pay to:
Spartacist Publishing Co.
Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

Defend Chechen Independence!

Defeat Russian Invasion of Chechnya!

More than 200,000 Chechen men, women and children have already been driven from their homes, many stranded without adequate food or shelter in a freezing no man's land on the border, as Russia's new capitalist rulers once again wage a war of mass terror against Chechnya. The besieged capital of Grozny has been subjected to constant bombing for weeks, including an October 21 missile strike on the downtown central market which killed some 140 people, while Russian forces have now overrun and occupied Chechnya's second largest city, Gudermes. Russian president Boris Yeltsin and the military high command are out to avenge their humiliating defeat in the 1994-96 Chechen war, which resulted in de facto independence for this traditionally Muslim region in the northern Caucasus. Echoing the language of the Nazi Holocaust, Russian general Leonid Ivashov declared: "There should be a final solution to the problem of Chechnya" (*Moscow Times*, 25 September).

At the same time, in Moscow and other Russian cities a murderous pogromist hysteria has been whipped up against not only Chechens but all dark-skinned people from the Caucasus and Central Asia. The slogan "kill the blacks" is scrawled on walls around Moscow. "These people will certainly be destroyed," declared Yeltsin's latest chief henchman, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, as he announced "Operation Whirlwind" against the Chechens.

Behind the chauvinist hysteria lie the mercenary appetites of Russia's new capitalists. The main pipeline from the rich oil fields in and around the Caspian Sea runs through the breakaway Caucasian republic. More broadly, Yeltsin's Russia is intent on asserting its imperialist appetites in the "near abroad," the former Soviet republics of the Caucasus and Central Asia which had been part of the multinational USSR before its counter-revolutionary breakup in 1991-92.

With revolting hypocrisy, the U.S. and the other Western powers which only months ago joined in bombing Serbia back to a pre-industrial era—deliberately targeting bridges, railways, factories—criticize Russian brutality in the Caucasus and strike a posture of "humanitarian" concern for the Chechens. But there is more than hypocrisy at work here: U.S. imperialism has strategic interests in this oil-rich region. On November 18, even as Clinton and other Western leaders chastised Yeltsin at a meeting of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe for his treatment of the Chechens, the U.S. concluded a deal involving Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkey for a new oil pipeline that would not go through Russian terri-



Russian tanks advance on Chechen capital of Grozny. Terror bombing has driven over 200,000 Chechens from their homes.

tory. The *New York Times* (19 November) reported: "The main significance was that it would draw the new nations near the Caspian, which were part of the Soviet Union only a decade ago, away from Russia and give the United States greater influence in the region."

Particularly in the wake of the U.S./NATO war of domination against Serbia last spring, when Moscow watched Washington arrogantly assert its global "superpower" dominance, Russia's rulers are ever more desperate to hold on to every kilometer of "their" territory. When they started bombing Chechnya in late September, they pointed to NATO's air war against Serbia as a precedent and a model for their actions.

However, post-Soviet Russia's ambitions to be an imperialist power are frustrated by the deepgoing economic and social disintegration generated by capitalist counterrevolution. The central government wields little authority and regional political bosses act as powers unto themselves. After years of corruption, with troops scrambling just to keep from starving, the Russian Army has grown so demoralized that some officers in the northern Caucasus were found to be selling conscript soldiers as forced laborers and even into outright slavery (*Kommer-sant*, 2 September). Now the army is out to resurrect its authority through a war of conquest in the Caucasus.

As we fought to the end to defend the gains of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution against capitalist restoration, the Interna-

tional Communist League warned that capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union and East Europe would embolden the U.S. imperialist butchers and lead to economic devastation and bloody fratricidal slaughter within the former bureaucratically degenerated/deformed workers states. Today the masses of East Europe and the former USSR struggle for survival while the economic catastrophe provides fertile ground for the spread of every sort of reactionary, racist poison.

When the Russian Army invaded Chechnya in late 1994, we proclaimed: "Smash Yeltsin's Invasion of Chechnya!" (WV No. 614, 13 January 1995). We wrote:

"The International Communist League stands for *defeating the invading Russian forces*, whose attempt to subjugate the Chechens can only bring mass terror to this Caucasian people. Furthermore, Chechen resistance is severely weakening would-be Tsar Boris' dictatorial regime, thereby creating a potentially favorable opportunity for the working people of Russia, of all nationalities, to defend themselves against the economic devastation wrought by the capitalist counterrevolution."

Today, we likewise call for military defense of Chechnya against Yeltsin's Russia, without giving an iota of political support to the bourgeois-nationalist and Islamist Chechen forces. **Defeat Russia's invasion—Defend Chechnya's independence! Down with pogromist terror against Caucasian and Central Asian peoples in Russia! For united working-class action against the Yeltsin regime of capitalist immiseration and Great Russian chauvinism! For proletarian socialist revolution throughout the lands of the former Soviet Union!**

Russian Rulers Incite Anti-Chechen Hysteria

Despite overwhelming superiority in manpower and armaments, the Russian military was defeated in 1994-96 by fierce Chechen resistance. Young Russian conscripts, starved and frozen in the trenches, quickly became demoralized fighting this dirty colonial war. They were led by officers who were often as corrupt as they were brutal. The Chechen forces steadily improved their firepower with weapons captured and in some cases purchased from the Russian Army.

When the war ended with a negotiated agreement in mid-1996, about 70,000 civilians and up to 3,000 Chechen fighters had been killed. Hundreds of thousands of refugees fled the region, many of them ethnic Russians whose homes

were destroyed by the Russian Army. On the other side, 6,000 Russian soldiers were sent home in body bags and another 20,000 were wounded.

The imperialist media depict Chechnya and other historically Muslim regions of the former Soviet Union as always having chafed under the thumb of "Soviet imperialism." In fact, despite the mismanagement and Russian nationalism of the Kremlin Stalinist bureaucracy, under Soviet rule the peoples of the Caucasus and Central Asia achieved literally centuries of social and economic progress. In an informative article on Chechnya in *New Left Review* (September/October 1999) written just before the recent Russian invasion, Georgi M. Derluguian states: "In the 1960s, Soviet Central Asia and the Caucasus were commonly described as the showcase of modernization, and it was no mere propagandistic claim."

What drove secessionist movements in the region was the counterrevolutionary collapse of the Soviet Union. Derluguian notes:

"The oil deposits of Chechnya have been nearing depletion since the late 1970s. Its rusting industrial parks, the decrepit infrastructure and the badly strained social services were almost paralyzed by the generalized bankruptcy of the Soviet economy even before the war devastation of 1994-96."

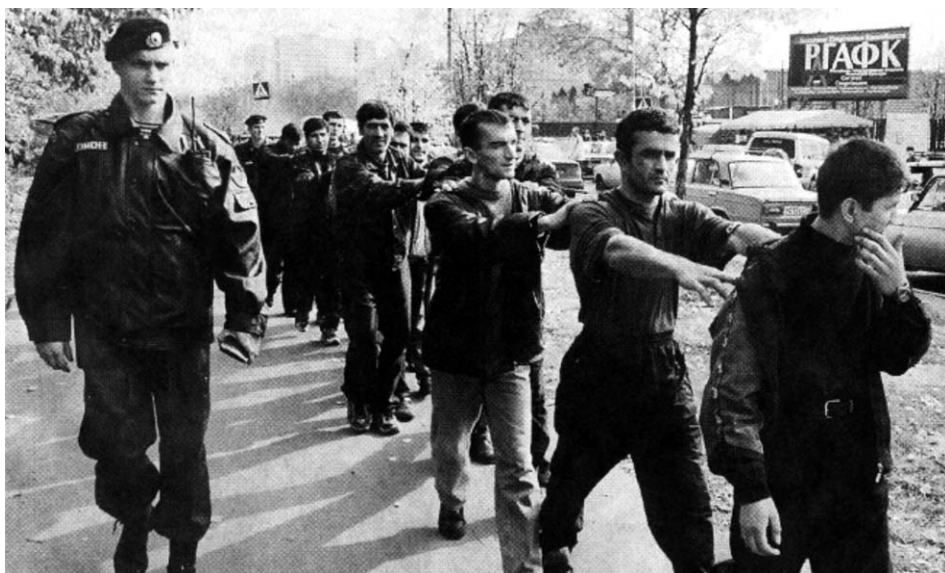
When the USSR existed, many Chechens found work in Soviet industrial centers, which suffered from chronic labor shortages. But "the collapse of the Soviet economy closed this valve." Petty entrepreneurs then turned Chechnya into what Moscow officials called a "criminal free trade zone" for trade with Near Eastern countries. Following its defeat in 1996, Russia moved to cut off this trade in order to bring Chechnya to its knees.

In withdrawing its forces, Moscow implicitly accepted Chechnya's claim to independence. However, it was agreed that the country's formal status would remain indeterminate for five years. While the end of the war was welcomed by the mass of the Russian people, the military high command, the security forces and other so-called "power ministries" in Moscow waited and prepared to avenge their humiliating defeat by the Chechens and to reassert Moscow's rule in the Caucasus. Reportedly, some Russian generals are now threatening a coup if Yeltsin/Putin, in response to Western diplomatic pressure, cut a deal with the Chechen leaders.

The Russian devastation of Chechnya destroyed what little authority was exercised by the central government in Grozny. The "destruction of modern institutions inherited from the Soviet past" and the "brutalizing effects" of the war, as Derluguian puts it, forced the population to "seek the favour and protection of various warlords." The region was beset by rival guerrilla groups, usually based on clan loyalties and espousing Chechen nationalism and Islamic fundamentalism. The growth of Islam was a devastating blow for many Chechens, "whose hard-won social status, skills, lifestyle and expectations—all developed in the modern urban environment—became devalued or simply useless."

Last August, a group led by Shamil Basayev, a leader of the 1994-96 war who garnered a quarter of the vote in Chechnya's presidential elections in 1997, made a foray into neighboring Dagestan, a part of the Russian Federation, with the declared intent of setting up an Islamic state. There was little support for Basayev's fundamentalist adventurers in Dagestan, which is far more ethnically diverse than Chechnya

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Dark-skinned people in Moscow have been rounded up and deported in the tens of thousands in pogromist onslaught against Caucasians and Central Asians.

Immigrants...

(continued from page 1)

that they prosecuted the cops for assault. However, a judge decided that the cops could not get a fair trial before a jury of their peers in L.A.—there were too many blacks, Latinos and Asians. So the trial was held in an affluent, very white suburb called Simi Valley 40 miles north of central L.A.

Some black people from L.A. attended the trial hoping to see that justice was done. But justice was not done. When the “not guilty” verdict was announced, a middle-aged black woman who was there said: “I am not given to riot. But just you watch, something’s going to break.” And break it did. Blacks in the South Central L.A. ghetto took to the streets in what would be officially called the largest “civil disturbance” in recent U.S. history. At its end, 45 people were dead, mostly blacks killed by the cops, and billions of dollars in property was destroyed.

At the heart of South Central is the neighborhood of Watts. Almost three decades earlier, in 1965, the arrest of a black motorist in Watts triggered one of the first of the ghetto rebellions which shook America in that turbulent period. Watts became a symbol, a synonym as it were, for the angry black ghetto. Now, once again, South Central had become an angry black ghetto. But it had become something else, too: an angry Latino barrio.

Large-scale immigration had radically changed the ethnic make-up of South Central and adjacent neighborhoods. The residents of these newly formed barrios took to the streets along with black people. In fact, more Latinos were arrested than blacks, though most of those killed were blacks. Of the Latinos arrested, 80 percent were foreign-born; 25 percent had been in the U.S. less than two years. A white journalist of far from liberal views described them as “desperately poor young immigrants who had fled poverty or political repression in Central America and Mexico, lived in conditions of hideous overcrowding, and worked for subminimum wages under constant fear of deportation. Mothers did not hesitate to take food, clothing and diapers from half-looted and unguarded stores” (Lou Cannon, *Official Negligence: How Rodney King and the Riots Changed Los Angeles and the LAPD* [1997]).

For the moment, a shared hatred for the cops and more generally the “white power structure,” as it was called in the 1960s, overcame the traditional antagonisms between rival black and Latino street gangs. Spray-painted on the wall of a building in South Central was the slogan: “Crips Bloods Mexicans together forever tonite 4/30/92.” The Crips and Bloods are L.A.-based black gangs.

Capitalist Exploiters Foster Racist Divisions

The recent immigration into Southern California had another impact, a very ugly one. Black and Latino looters especially targeted shops owned by Korean immigrants. They couldn’t burn down the Parker Center—the LAPD headquarters. It was too well guarded. They couldn’t burn down the Bank of America or Wells Fargo headquarters. So in their anger and



frustration, they turned against local shopkeepers whom they saw as outsiders, of an alien nationality and economically better off than themselves.

Moreover, the sense of unity between blacks and Latino immigrants against the white racist powers that be did not long survive the suppression of the riots by the police, the National Guard and the U.S. armed forces. Self-declared spokesmen for the black and Hispanic communities engaged in hostile competition over government money earmarked for rebuilding South Central and the other damaged neighborhoods. And in doing so, they used the same kind of demagoguery as white racists.

A black real estate operator, Danny Bakewell, headed up an outfit called Brotherhood Crusade Black United Front, which was crusading for more black-owned businesses. At one point Bakewell confronted some Latino construction workers cleaning up South Central. He physically pulled one of them off a tractor and baited them in pidgin Spanish: “*Vámanos a la casa. No trabajo. Andale.*” In English: “Let’s go home. No work. Get going.”

Bakewell’s opposite number was a Mexican American businessman, Fernando Oaxaca, who boasted that Latinos “are people who still believe in themselves and still believe in the American dream. They deserve help in building a new L.A. because they will take the ball and run with it. They have not thrown up their hands and said, ‘Feed me,’ the way so many blacks have.”

So just a few months after the black and Latino poor took to the streets expressing their solidarity as oppressed peoples against their oppressor, self-styled black and Latino leaders sought to pit blacks and Latinos against one another over a handful of government-funded jobs. And two years later, half of all black voters supported California Proposition 187, a reactionary measure to deprive “illegal” immigrants of public health and their children of public education.

This is a clear example of a basic contradiction in all capitalist societies and especially this American capitalist society. The structure and operation of the capitalist system at times impel workers



Protests against California anti-immigrant Prop. 187 in Los Angeles, November 1994. Sign at head of convoy of Latino truckers at Port of L.A. reads: “Long Live the Immigrant Workers’ Struggle—United Against Racism and Discrimination.”

WV Photos

to overcome racial, national and religious divisions and engage in common struggle against their exploiters. But, of course, the exploiters don’t want that to happen. So the ruling class—through the educational system, the media, the churches, their political parties, Democratic and Republican, as well as the labor bureaucracy—foments divisions within the working class along racial, national and religious lines.

White and also black working people are told that there will be more and better jobs available for them if “illegal” immigration is halted and immigrants who are here illegally deported. White working people are told that their taxes can be cut 10, 20, 30 percent if the government ends welfare for the black poor.

In many labor strikes you will see black, white and Hispanic workers walking the picket lines together. In some cases, they’ll stand shoulder to shoulder confronting the cops who are trying to bring scabs through the picket lines. They’ll go out to a bar together and get drunk and curse the bosses, curse the cops, curse the local government officials.

Yet six months later some of these same white workers will vote for capitalist politicians—Republican or Demo-

the working class toward united struggle against capitalist exploitation, ultimately for socialist revolution. For this to succeed, we have to fight the powerful forces seeking to divide the working class along racial and national lines.

Here is how Marx defined the difference between communists and other tendencies in the workers movement in the *Communist Manifesto*:

“The Communists are distinguished from other working-class parties by this only: 1. In the national struggles of the proletarians of the different countries, they point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality. 2. In the various stages of development which the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie has to pass through, they always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole.”

These Marxist principles are reflected in the slogan “Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants!” on one of the Spartacist League signs in this room.

Debsian Socialism and Black Oppression

In the United States today, it is generally held that race, not class, is the most fundamental division in American society. This view is expressed on the left by

Socialist Party leader Eugene Debs (center) organizing his 1920 presidential election campaign from behind prison walls.

Socialist Party



crat—who openly appeal to anti-black racism, who run on a platform of “welfare reform” and “getting tough on crime.” “Welfare reform” is a code word for kicking poor black women and their children into the streets. “Getting tough on crime” means putting ever larger numbers of young black men behind bars. And many black workers will support black Democrats who call for “getting tough” on “illegal” immigration.

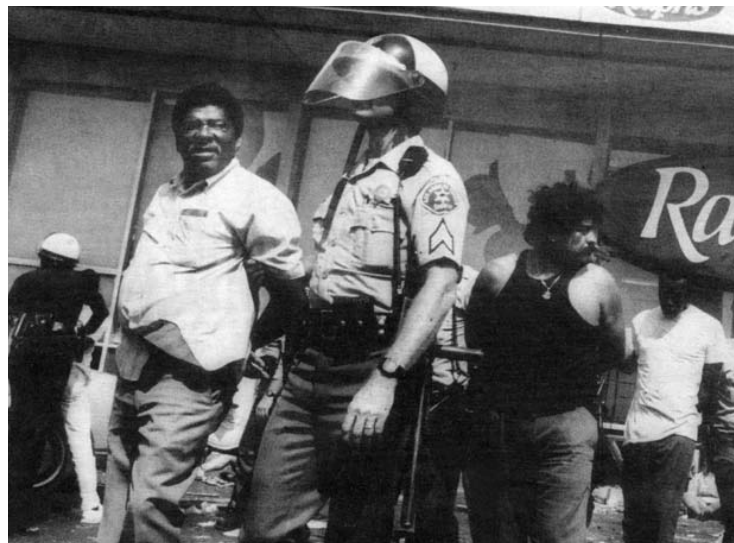
Which tendency—that toward working-class unity in the struggle against capitalist exploitation or toward antagonistic divisions along racial and ethnic lines—will prevail in the historic long run? For class unity to prevail it is necessary to build a revolutionary vanguard party modeled on the Bolshevik Party which Lenin built in the Russian tsarist empire at the beginning of this century.

Liberals tend to condemn the concept of a vanguard party as elitism. But we are not alien to the working class, seeking to impose our goals from the outside. Rather we represent in a conscious and consistent way the powerful *inner* tendency of

the term “people of color,” which has become fashionable among left-liberals and radicals over the past decade or so. This is not simply a neutral description of those ethnic groups which are or are deemed to be nonwhite.

Behind the term “people of color” is a political outlook and implicit program. First, it says something about the people of no color, namely, whites. It says that no significant section of the white population, including white workers, can be expected to fight the racist oppression of people of color. Secondly, it holds that all people in the U.S. considered to be nonwhite have or should have common interests and a strong sense of solidarity with one another—to put it crudely, that a black auto worker or a Mexican agricultural laborer has fundamentally more in common with a Chinese American real estate mogul or Indian immigrant doctor than with a construction worker of Irish or Italian lineage.

Interestingly, there was a time when exactly the opposite view was prevalent on the American left. In the early years of



Steve Appleford

Racist cop roundup, Los Angeles, 1992, as black and Latino poor joined in explosion of outrage over acquittal of cops who beat black motorist Rodney King.

this century, before World War I and the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, most American leftists held that the working class should have a colorblind proletarian socialist consciousness. The best-known exponent of this view was Eugene V. Debs, the most prominent and widely respected socialist leader of the day.

I'm going to discuss Debs' position on race and class in the U.S. not because I think any of you subscribe to a similar view. I'm sure you don't. But because the old Debsian position was the polar opposite of the current "people of color" notion, it illuminates the basic fallacy of the latter.

Unlike many of the right-wing Socialist leaders of his time, Debs was in no way a racist. In fact, he fought against the exclusion of black workers from the trade unions, which was then a common practice. Debs believed the racist oppression of black people could be eliminated only after the socialist transformation of American society. And if black workers were to contribute to that transformation, they had to think and act solely in their role as workers, disregarding that they were also members of an oppressed racial caste.

In 1903, Debs put forward a motion to a Socialist Party convention, which stated:

"We declare to the Negro worker the identity of his interests and struggles with the interests and struggles of the workers of all lands, without regard to race or color or sectional lines; that the causes which have made him the victim of social and political inequality are the effects of the long exploitation of his labor power; that all social and race prejudices spring from the ancient economic causes which still endure, to the misery of the whole human family, that the only line of division which exists in fact is that between the producers and the owners of the world—between capitalism and labor."

In explaining and motivating this position, he used the following argument:

"What social distinction is there between a white and a black deckhand on a Mississippi steamboat? Is it visible even with the aid of a microscope? They are both slaves, work side by side, sometimes a bunch of black slaves under a white 'boss' and at other times a herd of white slaves under a black 'boss'."

—Jean Y. Tussey, ed., *Debs Speaks* (1970)

The kindest thing one can say about this was that Debs was abysmally ignorant of the social and racial realities of the American South. There were *no* black bosses in the South at that time, or in the North for that matter, ordering white workers about. But Debsian socialists and other leftists were blinded to social reality by their dogmatic belief that the workers could not unite to overthrow capitalism unless they had an identical political consciousness, unless they thought of themselves only as workers. So they viewed what would today be called ethnic or race consciousness as a purely negative factor, as something that had to be overcome and transcended on the road to a socialist transformation.

There was no understanding that black workers or Mexican workers had fewer illusions in and ties to the existing bourgeois order. For example, many Irish workers had brothers, uncles or cousins who were cops. But this was not true of black or Mexican workers at the time. More generally, there was no understanding that workers of an oppressed people were more likely to support the overthrow of the existing social system not only to end their exploitation as workers but also to end their oppression as a distinct people.

Leninism on the Black Question

Underlying the Debsian concept of a colorblind socialist consciousness was an idealization of working-class consciousness in a more general sense. The basic aim of a socialist party was seen as imbuing the large majority of the working class with a high level of socialist consciousness, a level which in reality is only possible in a socialist society, in fact, several generations into a socialist society.

This is a central difference between Debsian socialism and Leninism. Lenin-

ists understand that the very structure of capitalism produces different levels of social and political consciousness within the working class, ranging from communist consciousness to the most reactionary forms of racist and chauvinist bigotry and religious obscurantism, with all gradations and variations in between. And one of the most important factors determining more advanced or more backward consciousness is whether a worker is a member of an oppressed nationality or people or of an oppressor nationality. (For more on the difference between Debsian socialism and Leninism in this regard, you can read American Trotskyist leader James P. Cannon's "The Russian Revolution and the American Negro Movement" in his *The First Ten Years of American Communism*.)

We often describe ourselves as the party of the Russian Revolution, the first

blacks were slated to play an exceptional role in an American proletarian revolution. Thus in 1939 he stated in discussions with his American comrades:

"If the workers' aristocracy is the basis of opportunism, one of the sources of adaptation to capitalist society, then the most oppressed and discriminated are the most dynamic milieu of the working class.

"We must say to the conscious elements of the Negroes that they are convoked by the historic development to become a vanguard of the working class."

The Notion of "People of Color"

The mass black struggles beginning with the Southern civil rights movement in the late 1950s and culminating in the ghetto rebellions in the Northern cities in the 1960s in *one sense* vindicated Trotsky's view that blacks were the most dynamic, the most radicalized section of

view of American society logically leads to quite pessimistic conclusions as far as blacks are concerned. After all, black people make up only 10 or 12 percent of the population. If the dominant white "nation" supports racist oppression and, moreover, economically benefits from it, then what hope is there for blacks? They can either emigrate or they can accept and adapt to a society that is separate, hostile to them and unequal. The right-wing nationalism of Louis Farrakhan is a logical conclusion of a "two nations" view of American society. In practice, Farrakhan's program consists in driving Asian shopkeepers out of the ghettos and replacing them with blacks. This is called "black capitalism" or "black economic empowerment."

However, the large majority of blacks do not support Farrakhanite right-wing nationalism, nor do white liberals and leftists. They want a progressive solution to the oppression of blacks and other nonwhites, but within an ideological framework which sees *race not class* as the basic division in American society. And here, I think, is the origin of the concept of "people of color."

Even in the 1960s, before the big influx of immigration from Latin America and East Asia, the U.S. population did not consist solely of European-derived whites and African-derived blacks. There were also Asians. There were Latinos, most of whom were physically distinguishable from European-derived whites—in the case of Puerto Ricans by African ancestry, in the case of Mexicans by American Indian ancestry. And there were Native Americans. So if the concept of a "black nation" is expanded into a "nonwhite nation," then the balance of demographic and presumably political forces becomes more equal. Thus it's become commonplace to say that California has become or is about to become a "majority minority state," with the total number of Latinos, blacks, Asians and Native Americans exceeding non-Hispanic whites.

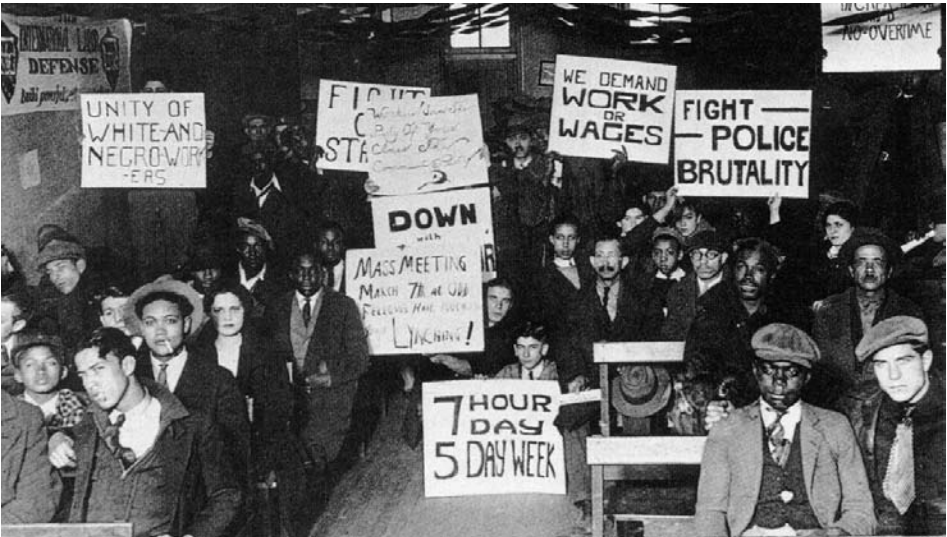
Basically, the concept of "people of color" is an ideological construct designed to get around the perceived ingrained racism of whites. Implicit and sometimes explicit in this concept is the view that the class differences within the white population are not such that white workers will oppose the racist oppression of nonwhite peoples. But this concept has no more correspondence to American social reality than the old Debsian notion that there were no significant differences between white and black workers in the American South.

I live in the Oakland-Berkeley region of the San Francisco Bay Area, an area in which all major components of "people of color" are well represented. I have a part-time job as a bookkeeper in a methadone clinic in the North Oakland-South Berkeley ghetto, where most of the clients are black people who work at marginal, minimum-wage jobs or are hustlers, prostitutes, people who are in and out of prison. My dentist is a second-generation Japanese American, and there

continued on page 10

Evicted Southern sharecroppers, as 1930s Depression made millions homeless and jobless. Workers organized by Communist Party prepare for demonstration outside White House, 1930.

Underwood & Underwood



and to date only successful proletarian revolution in history. While this revolution was made in Russia, it was not made solely for Russia nor solely by Russians. Non-Russians, members of the many oppressed peoples of the tsarist empire—Jews, Georgians, Poles, Latvians—played an exceptional role in the leadership of the largely ethnically Russian working class and other toilers. Leon Trotsky, who with Lenin was co-leader of the Bolshevik Revolution, addressed this question in his *History of the Russian Revolution*:

"Since the intelligentsia of the oppressed nationalities—concentrated as they were for the most part in cities—had flowed copiously into the revolutionary ranks, it is not surprising that among the old generation of revolutionaries the number of non-Russians was especially large. Their experience, although not always of a high quality, made them irreplaceable when it came to inaugurating new social forms.... At a moment of deep historic change, the bulk of a nation always presses into its service those elements which were yesterday most oppressed, and therefore most ready to give expression to the new tasks. It is not that aliens lead the revolution, but that the revolution makes use of the aliens."

In working, from his enforced exile in Mexico in the 1930s, with his American supporters to build a revolutionary vanguard party in the U.S. as part of the struggle for a new Fourth International, Trotsky applied the same conceptual approach to blacks in the U.S. as the Bolsheviks had to non-Russian peoples in the tsarist empire. He recognized that

American society, the most hostile to the existing bourgeois order. However, these struggles were led not by communists but by petty-bourgeois elements espousing either liberal or nationalist politics. And they took place outside of, and in some cases were counterposed to, the organized labor movement.

These struggles led to a significant change in the prevalent ideology of American liberalism and also of much of the American left, which tends to mirror in a more radical form liberal ideology and politics. Liberals could not, of course, recognize that the oppression and impoverishment of the black masses was fundamentally rooted in the structure of American capitalism. Instead they blamed it on the racism of the white population of all social classes and maintained that this racism reflected the economically privileged position of the white population.

This view received official sanction from the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, headed by the liberal Republican governor of Illinois, Otto Kerner, which was set up in the late 1960s to study the underlying causes of the ghetto rebellions. Its basic conclusion was: "Our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal." This view of American society was restated in the early 1990s by white liberal intellectual Andrew Hacker in *Two Nations: Black and White, Separate, Hostile, Unequal*.

In one sense, such a "two nations"

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Immigrants...

(continued from page 9)

are a lot of Asian Americans and Asian immigrants in the medical profession in California.

The clinic where I work and my dentist's office are only three or four miles apart. But they constitute totally different and separate social worlds. There is no sense of common identity and solidarity between a Japanese American medical professional and a black ghetto youth. Likewise, there is no sense of identity between a Puerto Rican welfare mother in the South Bronx and an Indian immigrant computer programmer.

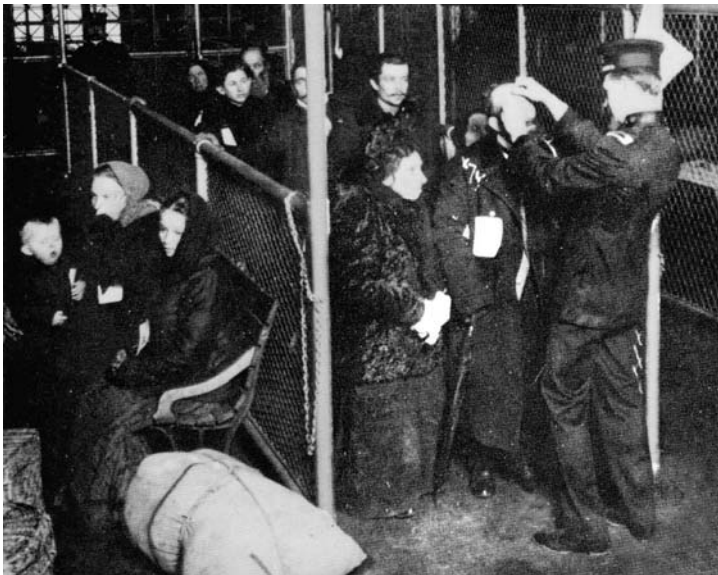
Latinos: Race and Class Divisions

The fallacy of amalgamating blacks, Latinos and Asians as "people of color" can be seen clearly if we look at rates of intermarriage. Intermarriage is both the best index of the *hardness* of racial, national and religious divisions at the base of society and the principal social mechanism for integration across those divisions. And here the difference between blacks on the one hand and Latinos and Asians on the other is striking, even among the younger generation who might be expected to be more liberal about marriage.

In 1990, only 6 percent of black men between the ages of 25 and 34 had non-Hispanic white wives and 2 percent of black women had white husbands. By contrast, 31 percent of U.S.-born Latinos in this age group—both men and women—had non-Hispanic white spouses, 36 percent of Asian American men had white wives and 45 percent of Asian American women had white husbands. It is true that Asians and Latinos are considered not white in this society and suffer accordingly. But they are deemed a lot less "not white" than blacks.

Moreover, the difference in intermarriage between blacks and Hispanics is not only quantitative but also *qualitative* in its economic effects on the children of such marriages. In 1990, the average annual income of Mexican American men in the Los Angeles area was \$31,000 compared to \$48,000 for non-Hispanic white males. Thus a Chicana married to a non-Hispanic white will have a husband who earns *50 percent more* on average than a Mexican American. Her white in-laws are likely to have accumulated three or four times more wealth than a Latino family. Her children, consequently, are far more likely to have the financial means for a college education. And in the present-day U.S., a college education is the main social mechanism for advancement from the working class into more affluent petty-bourgeois strata (professionals, corporate managers, government bureaucrats). Also, in the large majority of cases such children will *not* be raised in Spanish-speaking or bilingual households and thus will *not share* the main common feature of the otherwise highly diverse Hispanic population in the U.S. Culturally, they will be like non-Hispanic whites.

The *opposite* is the case for the children of mixed black-white marriages. There is no distinction between mulattos



Underwood & Underwood

Immigrants arrive at Ellis Island, 1913. As need for immigrant labor dried up, capitalists stopped flow of immigration from East and South Europe in mid-1920s.

and blacks in the U.S. as there is in the Caribbean and South America. As one left-wing Puerto Rican intellectual put it, on the mainland unlike the island, "one drop of black blood makes you black." The children of interracial couples, however light-skinned, will be viewed and treated in this society as black.

This points to the fallacy of the very notion of a cohesive pan-Hispanic minority, much less of a "people of color," in this country. Since many Puerto Ricans (and Dominicans) are manifestly of black African origin, they directly encounter the hard racial divide in American society. Economically, they tend to be far worse off than many other Hispanics in the U.S. Politically, because all Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens they tend to be less concerned with American immigra-

ican immigrants, who arrived between 1900 and 1930, do not even speak Spanish and have few personal ties to the millions of post-1965 immigrants. A Mexican immigrant in Southern California or Texas is far more likely to encounter a Chicano as a sweatshop boss than as a protective relative.

Immigration and Nativist Reaction in American History

Closely related to the concept of "people of color" is the idea that large-scale immigration, especially from Latin America, is going to radically alter this country's ethnic make-up and consequent political balance of forces. A liberal Latino intellectual, Roberto Suro, recently came out with a book, *Strangers Among Us: How Latino Immigration Is*

Los Angeles, 1931: Mass deportation of Mexican workers amid intense anti-Mexican racism fueled by widespread unemployment.



SouthWest Organizing Project

tion policies and more concerned with the future of the island colony's relations with the U.S. At the other extreme politically and economically are the Cubans, centered on rich and middle-class émigrés from the 1959 Cuban Revolution who have been welcomed here by the anti-Communist U.S. rulers.

Even among the Mexican-derived Latinos who now make up about 65 percent of the Hispanic population in the U.S., there is a clear and politically important division between third- and fourth-generation Mexican Americans (Chicanos) and Mexican immigrants (Mexicanos). Many of the descendants of the first wave of Mex-

Transforming America, in which he argues that Latino immigrants and their children will provide the demographic basis for the renewed dominance of liberalism in American political life. Along similar lines, the editor of the bilingual journal *Latina* says that while the slogan of the civil rights movement was "We shall overcome," the slogan of Latinos should be "We shall overwhelm."

This attitude is based on and bolstered by projections that over the next few generations, the Hispanic population will become an ever larger percentage of the total population. For example, a study by the semi-official National Research Council projects that by the middle of the next century, 26 percent of the U.S. population will be Hispanic, 14 percent black, 8 percent Asian and only slightly over half white.

How are these figures arrived at? The key assumption is that the present high level of immigration, running about 800,000 annually, will continue. In a pamphlet in the mid-1990s, Suro presented immigration from Latin America as a kind of unstoppable demographic tide:

"Immigration to the United States now represents a huge and well-established demographic force with its own dynamic.... Having encouraged the development of this human flow over the past thirty years, the United States will be hard-pressed to change its direction with a one-shot overhaul of immigration laws."

—*Watching America's Door: The Immigration Backlash and the New Policy Debate* (1996)

This is radically false. Immigration is not a demographic force with its own dynamic; it is a matter of government policy which is changeable and reversible and has often been changed and reversed over the course of American history. For example, in two periods in modern American history—in the early 1930s and again in the mid-1950s—the U.S. government effected the massive repatriation of Mexican immigrants along with their American-born children. Immigration policy is usually determined by the interplay of different factions and interest groups within the ruling class. But it can also be affected by mass working-class struggle against the capitalists and their state.

Immigration poses a basic contradiction for the American ruling class. On the one hand, large-scale immigration, by expanding the pool of exploitable labor, especially at the low end of the wage spectrum, enables capitalists to maximize their profits. At the same time, large-scale immigration is seen by America's rulers as a potential threat—if not in the present then in future—to their political and ethnic-cultural dominance.

In 1990, the average annual income of Salvadoran and Guatemalan immigrant males in the Los Angeles area was \$11,000 compared to \$48,000 for non-Hispanic whites, a difference in the rate of exploitation of roughly 5 to 1. Throughout the rest of the U.S. as well, Latino immigrants do the hardest, dirtiest, most menial jobs for minimum or subminimum wages. A town supervisor in Huntington, Long Island, a suburb of New York City, stated: "If we didn't have this population, the dishes and silverware in our diners probably wouldn't be clean" (*New York Times*, 21 May).

But Latino immigrants are not automatic dishwashing machines in human form. They can and do fight back against their capitalist exploiters. They organize unions and battle the cops on picket lines. In Southern California, immigrants from Mexico and Central America have been in the forefront of labor militancy, and they also joined with blacks in the 1992 L.A. upheaval. So the American ruling class is worried, and rightly so, that Latino immigrants and especially their American-born children can make a lot of trouble for them.

There's a recurring pattern in American history that periods of large-scale immigration are followed by periods of nativist reaction. The beginnings of industrial capitalism in this country in the 1840s saw mass immigration by Irish Catholics and Germans. And this provoked a strong nativist reaction the following decade. A major party called the American Party, generally known as the Know-Nothing Party, emerged demanding not only a radical reduction in immigration but an extension of the residency period required for immigrants to become citizens from five to fourteen years.

This nativist reaction was politically defeated by liberal elements in the ruling class represented by Abraham Lincoln. Significantly, the man who assassinated Lincoln, John Wilkes Booth, had been a supporter of the Know-Nothing Party before he became a supporter of the slaveholding Southern Confederacy. Because the anti-immigrant nativism of the 1850s was politically defeated, there are a lot of descendants of Irish and German immigrants in the U.S. today.

But the next time around, the outcome was very different. After gold was discovered in California in the late 1840s, there was a sudden massive increase in the demand for labor. And California's newly wealthy capitalists met that demand by importing labor from China. Chinese immigrants accounted for 80 percent of the workers who built the Western branch of the transcontinental railroad after the Civil War. This was very hard, dangerous work in which over 1,200 Chinese laborers were killed.

However, after the railroad was built whites from the rest of the country poured into California and other Western states, and a massive and violent anti-Chinese

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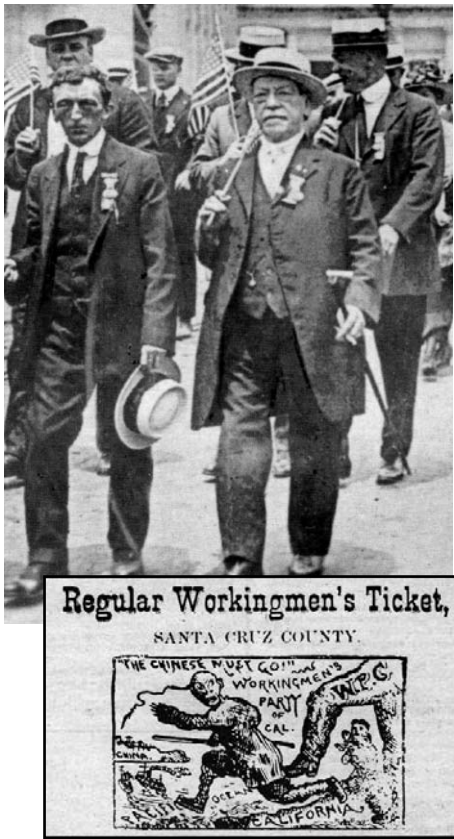
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Brown Brothers, Public Affairs Press
Chauvinist labor lieutenants of capital: AFL leader Samuel Gompers (right) excluded black workers from unions, while California Workingmen's Party formed in 1870s demanded: "The Chinese Must Go!"

reaction set in. Mobs attacked Chinese communities, wantonly killing men, women and children. And in 1882 Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, cutting off further immigration of laborers from China. The same pattern was then repeated with regard to immigration from Japan.

Between the 1880s and the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, the United States became the strongest industrial power in the world, surpassing Britain and Germany. This required a huge increase in the supply of labor, which was met by Southern and East European immigrants who were traditionally Catholic. After World War I, a strong nativist reaction spearheaded by the Ku Klux Klan developed against this new immigrant population. Most people think of the Klan as a Southern-based organization which targets black people. But in the 1920s, the Klan grew most rapidly in the Midwest, in states like Ohio and Indiana, agitating against South and East Europeans as well as blacks.

In 1924, a new immigration law established so-called "national origin" quotas. In the following year, the number of immigrants fell from slightly over 700,000 to slightly under 300,000, a **60 percent drop**, and further immigration from East and South Europe was effectively reduced to a trickle.

The onset of the Great Depression in the early 1930s saw an intense wave of anti-Mexican agitation in the Western states. Racist demagogues attacked Mexicans for "stealing" jobs. In this period, almost half a million Mexicans were repatriated by local and state authorities and the federal government. For example, the county of Los Angeles organized spe-

cial trains to take so-called *repatriados* back to Mexico. And their American-born children, who were legally U.S. citizens, of course, had to go with them.

After World War II, the U.S. continued to pursue a highly restrictive immigration policy. The 1952 McCarran-Walter Immigration and Nationality Act perpetuated the racist "national origin" quotas. The only exception was refugees from Communist countries, which is how the anti-Castro Cuban counterrevolutionaries got in.

At the same time, the U.S. government was very tough on illegal immigration in this period. In the mid-1950s, there was a military-style campaign called Operation Wetback, headed by a retired army general. In two years, 1.3 million Mexicans were rounded up and deported.

The New Immigration: Causes and Effects

In the 1960s, the political conditions affecting immigration policy changed and, more importantly, in the '70s the economic conditions changed. The openly racist character of American immigration law, along with legalized racial segregation in the South, was an embarrassment for U.S. imperialism in its Cold War against the Soviet Union, especially in the newly independent countries of Asia and Africa. The American ambassador to India, for example, found it hard to explain why Indians could not become citizens in the bastion of the "free world" while anyone from Britain, India's former colonial ruler, could become a naturalized American citizen easily. So in the mid-1960s, around the same time that federal civil rights legislation was enacted, immigration law was changed to eliminate the "national origin" quotas. However, the overall quota remained fairly low.

The liberalization of immigration law occurred as American manufacturers began to face stiff competition from Japan and Germany and U.S. economic growth slowed. In the mid-1970s, there was a short but quite sharp world economic downturn. Profits fell, the stock market fell.

In response, American capitalists launched a concerted effort to intensify the rate of exploitation of labor. They demanded and got from the union bureaucrats "giveback" contracts with lower wages and benefits. They established two-tier wage systems with young workers earning less for doing the same job as older workers. They shifted production from the unionized North and Midwest to the non-union South and to low-wage countries in East Asia and Latin America.

From the standpoint of the American ruling class, these policies were very successful. A few weeks ago, the *New York Times* (5 September) ran an article, "Gap Between Rich and Poor Found Substantially Wider." In 1977, the average after-tax income of the poorest 20 percent of American households was about \$10,000. Today, adjusting for inflation, it's only \$8,880, a 12 percent decline. The real income of the next poorest 20 percent of American households has fallen by almost 10 percent. By contrast, the income of the top 20 percent has increased

by almost 40 percent and that of the top 1 percent by almost 120 percent!

One of the factors behind these figures has been the massive exploitation of immigrant labor, legal and "illegal." In the early 1980s, there was a difference on immigration policy within the right-wing Republican administration of Ronald Reagan. One group favored large-scale immigration as a means of driving down labor costs. Another group opposed it on racist grounds, for diluting the "white" majority of the American nation. At the time, the first group had the upper hand. Reagan personally shot down a proposal for tamper-proof identity cards for all citizens and legal residents—kind of like the old South African pass system. He also opposed stiff penalties for employers who knowingly hire undocumented immigrants. That's not surprising since the biggest employer of undocumented Mexican immigrants is California agribusiness, which was a major Reagan financial backer.

There's a hackneyed saying that politics makes strange bedfellows. Well, in the 1980s immigration politics really did make strange bedfellows. Latino rights groups led by leftist radicals, who enthused over Castro's Cuba and Sandinista Nicaragua, worked hand in hand with Reaganite business lobbyists to oppose anti-immigrant legislation promoted by the AFL-CIO labor bureaucracy and black liberal Democrats like the late Texas Congresswoman Barbara Jordan.

However, since the early '90s the pendulum of bourgeois politics has been swinging ever more strongly toward anti-immigrant nativism. Thus in 1996 Congress passed and Clinton signed into law the Illegal Immigrant and Immigrant Responsibility Act, which beefed up the repressive forces of the Immigration and

that there is no scientific basis for long-term or even medium-term projections of the Hispanic population, because this is critically dependent on the level of immigration (or repatriation), which will be determined through *future political struggle*.

For Class Struggle Against Anti-Immigrant Racism

To paraphrase Marx, our task is not just to understand the world and predict the course of future development, but to *change* the world and the course of developments. The Illegal Immigrant and Immigrant Responsibility Act—just like anti-union laws such as the Taft-Hartley Act—does *not* represent the democratic will of the American people. These laws represent the will of the capitalist class and are used against the working people, even if most workers in the U.S. do not now understand that.

We seek to mobilize the working class, centrally through the trade unions, to defend immigrants against both government and fascist attacks. No less important is to fight against the superexploitation of immigrant labor—both legal and "illegal"—through the unionization of these increasingly important sections of the American proletariat. This program obviously means confronting the capitalists and their political agents in the Democratic and Republican parties, the company goons, the cops, the National Guard, the whole repressive apparatus of the American state.

But there is also a powerful force opposing working-class struggle *within* the labor movement—i.e., the pro-capitalist bureaucracy of the AFL-CIO—especially through its ties to the Democratic Party. By way of example, a recent issue of *Workers Vanguard* (No. 719, 17

Protest last March against INS-ordered mass firing of undocumented Mexican workers in Yakima, Washington. Attacks on immigrant workers are aimed at weakening entire labor movement.



Naturalization Service (INS) and signaled a new get-tough policy. In the next two years, almost 300,000 immigrants were deported, more than twice as many as in the prior two years, including many who had been living and working in the U.S. for years. Also subject to deportation under the new laws are legal residents convicted of crimes, even misdemeanors like driving under the influence of alcohol.

Earlier this year, INS agents in Yakima, Washington—a city in the central agricultural region of the state—forced the owners of food-processing plants and warehouses to fire nearly 600 Mexican workers who did not have the proper legal documents. These men and women, many with small children, suddenly lost their livelihoods and face desperate economic straits. The INS agent in charge of the Yakima operation declared: "We want to send a message south to Mexico that things are not like they used to be" (*U.S. News & World Report*, 15 March).

This is happening under economic conditions of supposedly unprecedented "prosperity." Imagine what will happen when the economy turns down, especially in a deep and prolonged depression. There will be enormous pressures to completely militarize the border with Mexico, to deport or otherwise force the repatriation of the 5.5 million "illegal" immigrants now in the U.S. We're likely to see an increase in violent right-wing and fascist attacks on Latinos and Asians as well as blacks. All of this underlines

September) contains an article, "Chinese Immigrant Workers in Racist America," which details how the leadership of the UNITE textile and clothing workers union has connived with the employers to perpetuate sweatshop labor in New York City and Los Angeles. An effective struggle against the capitalist class and its state also requires a political struggle to oust the incumbent trade-union bureaucracy and replace it with a leadership committed to fighting for the interests of the working class and all sections of the oppressed.

But our program is not limited to defending the working class and the black and Latino poor against the efforts to make their conditions even worse than they already are. As long as the capitalists have their state, their army, their police, their FBI and CIA, these will be used against the exploited and oppressed at home and abroad—the incineration of the Waco Branch Davidians by the FBI, the New York cops pumping 41 bullets into the young African immigrant Amadou Diallo, the terror bombing of Serbia by the U.S. Air Force.

So we want to take the state and its armed forces away from them. We're fighting for a socialist revolution which will smash the capitalist state and erect in its place a workers state and an American Red Army. That's our long-term goal. And if that sounds good to you, you should join us. It will be a long, hard fight, but I assure you it will be challenging. ■

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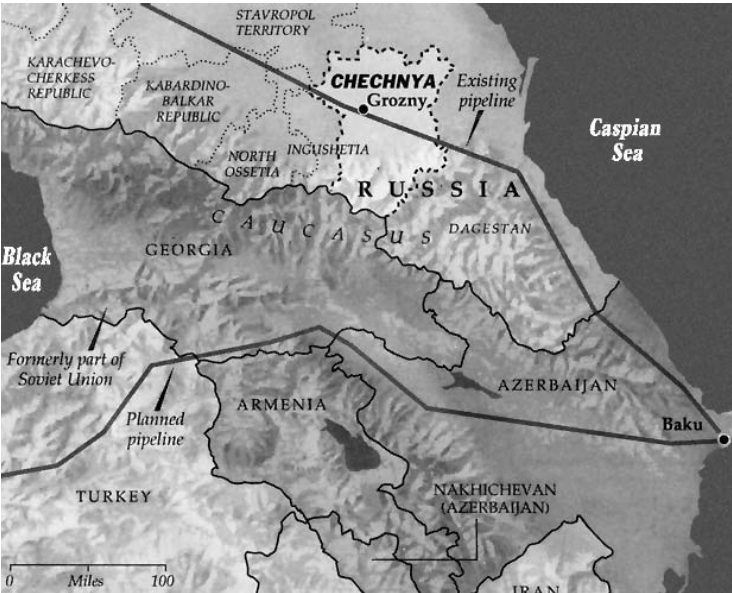
Chechnya...

(continued from page 7)

—including a sizable Slavic population—and relies on Moscow for economic subsidies. A prominent Dagestani intellectual, Nabi Abdullaev, asserted: “The last thing the Dagestanis want is to be ruled by Chechnya” (*Financial Times* [London], 29 September). After a few weeks of hard fighting, Basayev’s guerrillas pulled out of Dagestan.

Around the same time, Moscow and other Russian cities were rocked by a series of explosions in shopping malls and apartment buildings, in which over 300 people were killed. The Russian authorities naturally claimed—without any evidence—that Chechen “terrorists” were responsible for these atrocities. Basayev vehemently denied any involvement. Chechen president Aslan Maskhadov, as well as a number of prominent Russian political figures like former presidential contender Aleksandr Lebed, contended that the bombings were the work of the Russian security forces.

Whoever was behind these indiscriminate terrorist attacks, what is certain is that the bombings were used by Russia’s rulers to organize racist pogroms against dark-skinned people from the Caucasus and Central Asia and to launch a new war against Chechnya. Moscow mayor Yuri Luzhkov, who aspires to replace Yeltsin as president, ordered all non-permanent residents to “re-register.” While police engaged in a mass roundup, Russian civilians were urged to set up vigilante groups to look for “suspicious” people. Tens of thousands have been targeted for deportation from the Russian capital as



New York Times

Capitalist rivalries over huge Caspian oil reserves: Russian-controlled pipeline passes through Chechnya; Washington brokered deal for alternate route through Turkey.

lot further than before in carrying out a truly genocidal massacre of the Chechen people.

There are now over 100,000 Russian troops in and around Chechnya, and the military buildup is continuing. Even according to the notoriously understated casualty figures of the Russian defense ministry, 600 Russian soldiers have already been killed or wounded by Chechen forces. Maskhadov, a former colonel in the Soviet Army and senior commander of the Chechen forces in 1994-96, vowed: “We will protect our land and Russia, if it comes in to occupy it, will be annihilated.” At the same time, Maskhadov has appealed to Moscow for negotiations while scrambling for a deal brokered by the Western imperialist powers, including “peacekeeping forces under the aegis of the international community” (*Kommersant*, 5 October).



Souza/Chicago Tribune

Kosovo city of Pec devastated last spring in U.S./NATO war of terror against Serbia.

well-armed police units on the streets and in subway stations routinely harass and terrorize anyone who looks Caucasian or Central Asian; many others have been beaten and stabbed. Luzhkov orchestrated a similar pogrom in late 1993, when over 13,000 people were driven out of Moscow in one week.

Down With Great Russian Chauvinism!

Under the pretext of demanding that Maskhadov suppress the Chechen “terrorists,” Moscow began air strikes across Chechnya in late September. A week or so later, the Yeltsin regime clearly signaled its intent to conquer and subjugate Chechnya by declaring a handful of kept Chechen politicians ensconced in Moscow to be the “sole legitimate authority” in the Caucasian republic. An invading force of 30,000 Russian soldiers occupied the northern plain of Chechnya, then crossed the Terek River, encircling and bombarding Grozny. Former Russian prime minister Sergei Stepashin, who played a key role in directing the previous invasion of Chechnya, now warns: “In order to win this war, you have to destroy the entire male population of Chechnya” (*Moscow Times*, 4 November). In their present desperate mood, the Russian military commanders could go a

Since the earlier Chechen war, tensions between Washington and Moscow have risen sharply—reflected over the war against Serbia and the furor in the U.S. over corruption in the Russian banking system—as have the extent and intensity of anti-Western Russian nationalism. In 1994-96, the U.S. staunchly supported Yeltsin’s invasion of Chechnya in the name of preserving Russia’s “territorial integrity.” Clinton even grotesquely compared Tsar Boris to Abraham Lincoln leading the North in the American Civil War against the secessionist Southern slaveholders. Today, however, the U.S. is looking to NATO partner Turkey, rather than Russia, as a regional gendarme in protecting its interests in the Caspian oil fields. American and also West European ruling circles are worried that the Kremlin’s latest Chechen adventure will destabilize the entire Caucasian region.

In one sense, diplomatic pressure from Washington and European NATO capitals adds fuel to Russian nationalist demagoguery which can now combine traditional Russian chauvinist subjugation of the Caucasian peoples with a posture of defiance of American global dominance. In 1994-96, the war against Chechnya was sharply criticized by anti-Yeltsin factions among Russia’s new capitalist exploiters, especially the pro-Western

advocates of “free market” economics. But today the “democrats” of the Yabloko party generally march in lockstep with the Yeltsin gang and the strident anti-Western nationalists of the “red-brown coalition.” Lashing out at Western critics of the Chechen adventure, Yabloko press spokesman Vladimir Brogin-sky exclaimed: “There was aggression against Russia and Russia is answering that aggression.”

Predictably in the forefront of the racist anti-Chechen campaign in Russia is the so-called “red-brown coalition,” a bloc of former Stalinist “patriots” and traditional Slavophile nationalists and fascists. The most prominent component of this bloc is Gennady Zyuganov’s grotesquely misnamed Communist Party-Russian Federation (KPRF), a thoroughly bourgeois-nationalist party whose stock in trade is Great Russian chauvinism. In 1996, the KPRF spearheaded chauvinist opposition to the treaty ending the Chechen war. This year, in late September the KPRF and its allies organized a demonstration in St. Petersburg (formerly Leningrad) which included such slogans as “Chechens—Out of Leningrad!” and “Clean the Foreigners Out of Peter.”

Joining in the chorus of “Russia, One and Indivisible” are the self-styled Trotskyists of David North’s International Committee for the Fourth International (ICFI). A 3 September piece by Sergei Smolin on the Northites’ Russian-language Web site, titled “Russian Troops Wage Successful Military Action Against Islamic Separatists in Dagestan,” read like a Moscow defense ministry communiqué: “The formation of an Islamic state on the territory of Dagestan under the control of armed bandit formations would throw the entire region into a position of severe isolation.” While the Northites are now sharply critical of the Russian invasion of Chechnya, the bottom line remains the same: they refuse to make any unambiguous statement in defense of Chechnya’s right to self-determination against Great Russian chauvinism.

At the time of the last Russian invasion of Chechnya, the Northites polemicized *against* our military defense of the Chechen people (see *Hate Trotskyism*, *Hate the Spartacist League* No. 11, “David North’s ‘ICFI’: From Support to Capitalist Counterrevolution in the USSR to Great Russian Chauvinism” [October 1997]). In the name of opposing “bour-

geois nationalism” among oppressed peoples, these charlatans uphold the territorial integrity of *capitalist Russia*. Today the Northites declaim, in a 21 August piece on their Web site, “The same powerful centrifugal forces that brought about the end of the Soviet Union now place the integrity of the Russian Federation in question.” But when the Soviet Union still existed, the Northites supported every counterrevolutionary nationalist movement that helped bring about that end, from Polish Solidarność to the fascist-infested Baltic nationalists to the CIA-sponsored Afghan *mujahedin*.

The current popularity of the war against Chechnya among Russians is superficial and likely to be short-lived if a prolonged war and occupation leads to mounting Russian casualties. The Moscow office of the Soldiers’ Mothers Committee reports hundreds of calls from women throughout Russia asking advice on how to keep their sons in the army from being sent into combat in the Caucasus. Urging parents to “protect their sons from the state,” one member of the committee says, “We are choosing between life and death” (*Moscow Times*, 6 October). Meanwhile, the working people continue to chafe under the whip of mass



In late 1994, International Communist League called for military defense of Chechnya against earlier invasion by Russian Army.

unemployment and immiseration ushered in by capitalist counterrevolution.

What is needed to galvanize proletarian opposition to capitalist Russia’s robber barons and chauvinist butchers is a revolutionary workers party steered in Bolshevik internationalism. As we wrote in our article at the beginning of the first Chechen war almost five years ago:

“Today the peoples of the Caucasus—a patchwork of ethnic and linguistic groups—again face a Russia pursuing imperialist aspirations to control the region’s wealth and borders, while the local national bourgeois and petty-bourgeois forces attempt to get rich through deals with competing imperialist backers. An internationalist, revolutionary workers movement fighting for a democratically planned, egalitarian economy and true equality between the peoples of this region could rally the working masses of all the Caucasian peoples to overcome the raging fratricidal national conflicts. An authentically communist, Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party must be forged in sharp struggle against all variants of nationalism, and in particular against the chauvinism of the Great Russian oppressor.” ■

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For Socialist Revolution to Sweep Away Yeltsin Counterrevolution!

August 1993

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Solidarność...

(continued from page 6)

defense of the capitalist order—directly against the objective interests of the vast majority of working-class women, to whom all the rhetoric about “sisterhood” does not apply. Hence, during the 1980s, self-avowed feminists, especially in the West, had no problem expressing “solidarity” with the likes of Karol Wojtyla and the Vatican, hailing—in the name of “democracy”—the most reactionary woman-hating forces on the planet, in order to re-enslave Polish women to the “democracy” of Wall Street, Frankfurt and the City of London.

The same principle was likewise graphically evident during the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan, the only example of a contemporary war in which the enslavement of women was a central question. When Moscow intervened militarily in 1979 to prevent its left-nationalist client regime from falling to the Islamic reactionaries armed and organized by U.S. imperialism, we raised the slogans: Hail Red Army in Afghanistan! Extend social gains of the October Revolution to Afghan peoples! Feminists at that time excoriated our straightforward defense of Afghan women, rallying around the imperialists’ campaign against “Soviet expansionism.” Today, it is the horribly oppressed women of Taliban-ruled Afghanistan who pay the price for the bourgeoisie’s “victory over communism” hailed by bourgeois feminists and phony “leftists” alike (see “Afghanistan: Hell for Women,” *Plat-*



Polish workers fighting for wage increase blocked trains with burning tires, May 1995. Capitalist counterrevolution has led to immiseration of working people.

forma Spartakusowców No. 9 [Spring-Summer 1999], translated from WV No. 654 [25 October 1996]).

Speaking primarily to a younger generation of women who have no stake in prettifying the reactionary nature of Solidarność, even a bourgeois feminist like Graff couldn’t avoid the simple fact that the older generation of feminist and pseudo-leftist champions of “democracy” refuse to acknowledge to this day: Solidarność was bad news for Polish women. Nonetheless, their pro-capitalist program makes feminists inherently blind to the obvious link between the deteriorating situation of women and the destruction of free health care, education and other

social services which, despite the deformities of Stalinist bureaucratic rule, benefited women under the Polish People’s Republic.

For a Leninist Party, Tribune of All the Oppressed!

Disgusted with the prevailing atmosphere of nationalism and anti-woman “family values” and clerical reaction of capitalist Poland, many radically-minded young women feel some identification with feminism—all the more so as “feminists” are singled out for particular scorn not only by reactionaries of every stripe but also by most of the country’s “liberal” media.

As Marxists, we believe that the liberation of women can only come about through the overthrow of the capitalist property relations which form the material basis for women’s oppression. Our position is set out clearly in our “Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program” [*Spartacist* (English-language edition) No. 54, Spring 1998]:

“The ICL fights for women’s liberation through socialist revolution.... Revolutionists are the most consistent champions of women’s elementary democratic rights such as free legal abortion and ‘equal pay for equal work.’ The reactionary social climate aggravated by the collapse of the Soviet Union and the concerted campaign to roll back ‘welfare state’ protections of the masses has brought a sharp rise in anti-sex, anti-woman and anti-homosexual bigotry. We oppose all laws against crimes without victims, including those which criminalize homosexual or other consensual sexual activity, prostitution and drug use.

“The oppression of women, the oldest social inequality in human history, goes back to the beginning of private property and will not be abolished short of the abolition of class-divided society....

“While fighting against every manifestation of bourgeois injustice, we oppose sectoralism, which denies the possibility of consciousness transcending an individual’s own experience of oppression, and fight to unite the vanguard of all oppressed social layers behind the proletariat in the fight for socialism.”

We Spartacists seek to build a Leninist vanguard party which acts as a tribune of all the oppressed in leading the proletariat to the conquest of power. For the separation of church and state! Priests and cops out of the bedrooms and schools! For free abortion on demand! Women’s liberation through socialist revolution! ■

Homeless...

(continued from page 16)

starving masses for bread with the infamous, “Let them eat cake!” Today, Giuliani sneers, “Streets do not exist in civilized cities for the purpose of people sleeping there. Bedrooms are for sleeping.” But a society which does not provide housing, food and jobs for all is *not* civilized—it’s a capitalist hell that needs to be swept into the dustbin of history through a workers revolution.

These latest attacks are not just the expression of the unbridled contempt for the masses of this city in which Giuliani openly glories. They express the class interests of the masters of this capitalist society. The ranks of the homeless ballooned with the job-slashing, union-busting attacks carried out under the Democratic administrations of racist pig Ed Koch and black liberal David Dinkins. Hundreds of thousands were thrown out of their homes as greedy landlords jacked up the rents, their apartments taken by yuppie Wall Street lawyers and stockbrokers. Despite today’s hoopla about the economic “boom,” masses of working people in the center of world finance slave away at minimum-wage McJobs, one paycheck away from being cast out into the streets.

The bipartisan destruction of welfare further swelled the ranks of the homeless, among them some *one million chil-*



Jonathan Lipkin/Impact Visuals

NYC cops brutalize black youth as capitalist rulers wage war on the poor.

dren across the country. Meanwhile, from Clinton to Giuliani the capitalist rulers implemented police-state measures aimed particularly at blacks and immigrants. Thousands more cops now maraud the streets of America, which has the largest prison population of any industrialized country—the result of the racist “war on drugs” championed by Democrats and Republicans alike.

In racist America, class exploitation has always been wrapped in the envelope of raw racism: the percentage of blacks living below the official poverty line is more than triple what it is for whites.

The message of Wall Street and the city’s rulers is clear: under the system of racist capitalism, the lives of minorities and the poor are cheap. The assault on welfare and the reign of cop terror are aimed first and foremost at the ghetto masses, whom the capitalist rulers increasingly see as a “surplus population.” The capitalists’ drive for ever greater profits requires maintaining a layer of unemployed as a drag on wages for the entire working class, while at the same time cutting social services for those thrown on the scrap heap, forcing them into “workfare” to replace formerly unionized workers.

Giuliani has shown a great talent and lust for sticking it to those unable to defend themselves—from welfare recipients to hot dog vendors. But the capacity of the city’s labor movement to wield its social power was demonstrated last year when 40,000 construction workers stood down Giuliani’s cops and shut down midtown Manhattan for hours. With their contract expiring next month, New York’s transit workers could bring the city to a screeching halt, mobilizing behind them not only the rest of the unionized workforce but the unemployed in the ghettos and barrios, CUNY students and the rest of the population fed up with incessant, grinding attacks.

That social power must be mobilized in struggle at the head of all the oppressed. Against the joblessness, poverty and homelessness endemic to capitalism labor must fight to: *Expropriate the greedy*

landlords! Seize luxury housing and give it to the homeless! For a massive program of public works—high-quality integrated housing, schools, libraries, hospitals for the working people and poor! Unionize “workfare” workers with full union wages, benefits and protections! For union-run recruitment and training programs that will provide union jobs for all those who have been thrown on the economic scrap heap of this system! Jobs for all—For a shorter workweek with no loss in pay!

The Partisan Defense Committee-initiated labor/black mobilization that stopped the KKK on October 23 demonstrated how the power of labor can be brought to bear on behalf of the oppressed. This independent mobilization of labor and minorities was built in opposition to the Democratic Party and its black front men such as Al Sharpton. Opposing the anti-fascist mobilization and supporting the Klan’s “right” to rally for genocide, Sharpton & Co. demonstrated their class allegiance to the racist capitalist rulers and opposition to any mobilization of the city’s working people and minorities in their own defense.

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

The working class has the numbers, the organization and the power to win all those things the ruling class expropriates for itself—health care, education, decent housing, abortion rights. What is lacking is the kind of leadership necessary to fight—a leadership of the unions that doesn’t bow down to the bosses’ laws, parties and state agencies, a workers party that doesn’t respect the property “rights” of the bourgeoisie. We need a workers party that fights for a workers government to rip the means of production from the capitalist class and institute a planned socialist economy that operates not for the profit of a few greedy exploiters but for the working people who produce the wealth of society. That is the kind of workers party that the Spartacist League is fighting to build. ■

SPARTACIST LEAGUE/U.S. LOCAL DIRECTORY

National Office: Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116 • (212) 732-7860

Boston

Box 390840, Central Sta.
Cambridge, MA 02139
(617) 666-9453

Chicago

Box 6441, Main PO
Chicago, IL 60680
(312) 454-4930

Los Angeles

Box 29574, Los Feliz Sta.
Los Angeles, CA 90029
(213) 380-8239

New York

Box 3381, Church St. Sta.
New York, NY 10008
(212) 267-1025

Oakland

Box 29497
Oakland, CA 94604
(510) 839-0851

San Francisco

Box 77494
San Francisco, CA 94107
(415) 395-9520

TROTSKYIST LEAGUE OF CANADA/LIGUE TROTSKYSTE DU CANADA

Toronto

Box 7198, Station A
Toronto, ON M5W 1X8
(416) 593-4138

Vancouver

Box 2717, Main P.O.
Vancouver, BC V6B 3X2
(604) 687-0353

NYC Transit...

(continued from page 16)

administration, the array of Democratic Party politicians who worked to provide a platform for the Klan lynchers—then it can roll right over the Taylor Law and the other weapons in the bosses’ strikebreaking arsenal! On October 23, the social power of labor was mobilized by Marxists to drive the KKK out of NYC. Transit workers need that kind of class-struggle leadership—one which understands that the capitalist state, its cops and courts are not neutral but instruments of repression against the working class, that the Democratic Party is no “friend of labor” but is as much a representative of the class enemy as Giuliani’s Republicans.

That mobilization also showed how the power of the multiracial working class can be wielded in defense of the rights of all the oppressed. A transit strike could galvanize the besieged masses of the ghettos and barrios behind the power of labor. A key demand must be opposition to racist, union-busting “workfare.” The TWU must actively take up the defense of these impoverished welfare recipients who—with the connivance of the labor bureaucrats—are being drafted into working at formerly unionized city jobs for pennies. *Organize these workers into the union with full union wages, benefits and protections!*

“Workfare,” initiated under Democratic president Clinton with his pledge to “end welfare as we know it,” is a centerpiece in the American rulers’ all-sided assault on the living standards of the working class and poor. What kind of future do working people and their sons and daughters—particularly black and other minority workers—have in this country? Millions of decent-paying industrial jobs have been slashed, while young workers are tracked into low-paid jobs under two-tier wage schemes and the poor are forced into “workfare.”

Where are good jobs to come from? In New York City alone, tens of thousands of jobs are needed to deal with the palpable decay in the city’s infrastructure, to build new hospitals, housing and schools, to repair streets and bridges. Simply in order to have a safe, efficient mass transit system, many thousands more jobs need to be created for necessary and long-neglected maintenance work, to provide full crews on the subways, to put more trains and buses into operation. And quality mass transit—like health care, 24-hour childcare and all public services—should be free. *Rip out the turnstiles!*

This city—and the society as a whole—should be run in the interests of the working people who built it and keep it running! But for that to happen, the working people need their own party, whose aim is to break the power of the capitalist rulers and reclaim the wealth that has been ground out of the exploitation of the workers by establishing a workers government committed to building an egalitarian socialist society. Those who labor must rule!

Democrats Are Enemies of Labor Struggle

Older TWU members bitterly recall the last strike, in 1980, when the union shut down transit for eleven days only to see the John Lawe leadership—with the complicity of the “dissident” opposition—call off the strike and ram through a giveback contract just as the strike was starting to cost the city rulers. At the time, the union-hating *New York Post* called it “the most devastating strike in the city’s history.” It could and should have won. But the union tops handed it over to Wall Street on a silver platter, leaving the union and every striker to pay massive fines under the Taylor Law.

After years of demoralizing sellouts by the pro-capitalist bureaucracy, the membership has no confidence in the current leadership to wage a winning strike. Three years ago, James rammed through a contract deal, cooked up behind the backs of the membership, freezing wages

for two years and allowing management to replace unionized cleaners jobs with welfare recipients. Meanwhile, the New Directions (ND) “opposition” is at this very moment suing the union in the same courts which will impose the Taylor Law in the event of a strike.

For years, the leadership of the TWU and the municipal unions have hidden behind the Taylor Law as an excuse for opposing strike action. But as the 1966 transit strike showed, such laws can be turned into scraps of paper. Mike Quill engineered plenty of dirty deals with management and Democratic Party politicians in his time. But at least he under-



Victorious 1966 transit strike shut down NYC, ripped up strikebreaking Condon-Wadlin Act. Thousands of strikers protested outside City Hall to demand release of union officers arrested for defying court injunction.

stood a union leader occasionally had to *lead a strike*. When a judge had him arrested for refusing to capitulate to the strikebreaking Condon-Wadlin Act, Quill retorted: “The judge can drop dead in his black robes and we would not call off the strike.” The strike won and the Condon-Wadlin Act became a dead letter. This victory reverberated throughout the NYC labor movement, and New York transit jobs were probably among the best municipal jobs anywhere in the country for years after.

Failing to break the strike with Condon-Wadlin, the bourgeoisie retaliated two years later by bringing in the Taylor Law. In place of jail sentences for union leaders, the rulers decided that going after the union’s treasury and the members’ pockets was more effective in outlawing strike action. Reflecting pressure from the membership, James has been making noises about defying the Taylor Law, saying in a recent radio interview, “I am not afraid of any man named Taylor.”

At a press conference at the beginning of negotiations, James was flanked by top national, state and city labor bureaucrats, including AFL-CIO chief John Sweeney. These labor tops “proposed asking all union members in the city to help pay any fines the transit workers might face if they strike” (*New York Times*, 28 September). These labor traitors with their loser mentality serve to sow demoralization and defeatism by pledging in advance to roll over in the event of Taylor Law fines. A precondition for any strike settlement must be: *No reprisals or fines!* A successful strike could *smash the Taylor Law*. Solidarity action by other unions is critical to winning a transit strike and defeating strikebreaking efforts, but that doesn’t mean getting unionists to shell out money to the bosses’ government. In the first instance, a transit strike must be immediately extended to the Long Island Rail Road, Metro North, PATH and the private

bus lines. But this is the furthest thing from the minds of the AFL-CIO bureaucrats, who have made their careers out of playing by the bosses’ laws and serving as the labor lieutenants of their capitalist masters.

The political expression of the union bureaucracy’s ties to the capitalist order is their allegiance to the Democratic Party. This was clear on May 12, when tens of thousands of city workers poured into the streets to express their anger over years of wage freezes and job-slashing. But the union tops organized this rally not as a display of labor’s social power against the city’s rulers but as a political

West Side, Scott Stringer, running point, the whole of the state Democratic Party establishment—from racist “law and order” Senator Charles Schumer and black state comptroller Carl McCall on down—organized to try and stop any independent mobilization of the working class. Instead, they worked to channel outrage against the Klan into bourgeois electoral politics, in this case through a disgusting “demonstration for tolerance”—for the KKK.

The Democrats dispatched Al Sharpton to be their black front man for the line of “tolerance” for the Klan among the city’s black population. Sharpton, joined by the publishers of the *Amsterdam News*, went so far as to file a “friend of the court” brief on the Klan’s behalf! Here, too, there was class consciousness operating: the black petty-bourgeois establishment, exemplified by the *Amsterdam News*, against the black working class. Serving as a labor front man for the Democrats’ efforts was Dennis Rivera, president of Local 1199 and a former top official of the state Democratic Party, joined by the Central Labor Council tops. But these misleaders did not prevail in their attempts to block the working people, who showed up in their thousands on October 23 to *stop* the Klan. What these workers demonstrated was the kind of power that labor has when mobilized in its own interests and against those of the capitalists and their government.

Class Struggle vs. Class Collaboration

Describing the class-struggle leadership provided by Trotskyist militants in the historic 1934 Minneapolis Teamsters strikes, which helped forge that union into a powerhouse of labor, James P. Cannon wrote:

“The policy of the class struggle guided our comrades; they couldn’t be deceived and outmaneuvered, as so many strike leaders of that period were, by this mechanism of sabotage and destruction known as the National Labor Board and all its auxiliary setups. They put no reliance whatever in Roosevelt’s Labor Board; they weren’t fooled by any idea that Roosevelt, the liberal ‘friend of labor’ president, was going to help the truck drivers in Minneapolis win a few cents more an hour....

“Our people didn’t believe in anybody or anything but the policy of the class struggle and the ability of the workers to prevail by their mass strength and solidarity.”

—*History of American Trotskyism* (1944)

So removed are the current labor misleaders from the workers they purport to represent that they have renounced the very means which built the industrial unions—militant mass pickets, sit-down strikes, solidarity strike action, defiance of anti-union laws and injunctions. This is typified by the James leadership of TWU Local 100. Having done nothing to prepare the union for a strike, James hired Ray Rogers, author of the “corporate campaign” diversion which ludicrously aims at shaming the bosses and company stockholders into sympathy for the workers they exploit. Beginning with his role in the disastrous defeat in 1986 of the seven-month Hormel meatpackers strike, Rogers has contributed to one lost strike after another.

Now TWU members are being directed to hand out Rogers’ fliers complaining to capitalist politicians that “corporate welfare cheats” are getting tax breaks. New York City is the financial capital of the world and the city politicians are nothing but flunkies for Wall Street and the banks. During the Big MAC financial crisis of the mid-1970s, the labor tops handed over hundreds of millions in union pension funds to bail out the banks, as Wall Street worked through Democrats in City Hall in axing 70,000 jobs and bleeding the city’s working people and minorities. Now James and Rogers want to persuade Wall Street to side with the TWU against...Wall Street! Lots of luck!

The TWU bureaucracy’s sellouts have only emboldened management to push for ever more concessions and givebacks. Transit workers are already fed up after three years in which the overall wage

From Death Row, This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal

A Shadow of Justice



News Item: Reputed mob figures Al Daidone and “Long” John Martorano were released from prison after 19 years imprisonment, after the Pa. Supreme Court affirmed the earlier decision of the Superior Court reversing their murder convictions in connection with the killing of labor leader John McCollough. A divided court ruled that prosecutorial misconduct in the case precluded a retrial.

The November 1999 decision of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, freeing Messrs. Daidone and Martorano made barely a flicker in the nation’s newslines. It is a local story, not worthy of the attention of a nation wrapped in hypnotic fascination with the upcoming elections.

But I think this story is of utmost importance. Here’s why.

Every fact that led to the reversal of their murder convictions was evident from the day that their trial transcript was typed up; when the arguments of the state prosecutor were made and recorded; long before the first appeal brief was written.

It took 19 years for the state’s highest court to rule that what happened in a Philadelphia courtroom so many years ago was unconstitutional, and that what prosecutors did was so fundamentally unfair

that no retrial could correct it.

For 19 years Daidone and Martorano were separated from friends and family, consigned to small concrete and steel enclosures for most of their days, with a sentence of life over their heads. For several years after their retrial was granted, the D.A.’s office fought to have them sent to Death Row, if reconvicted! In the two decades since their conviction, the trial judge, after at least one unsuccessful try at a higher judicial office, retired from the bench. Their former D.A. left the office, reportedly to represent state police. The head D.A. became mayor, left office and presently contemplates the governorship.

By utilizing the now common term, “prosecutorial misconduct,” local media reports underplay and obscure what went on in the courtroom almost 20 years ago. Prosecutorial misconduct is shorthand for evidence tampering, improper arguments to the jury, and using other unfair tactics to convict the two men.

Let me make it plain: In *Commonwealth of Pennsylvania vs. Daidone & Martorano*, prosecutors used false evidence, and even argued on the basis of such false evidence that a judge or jury should convict these two men of first degree murder, and send them to

prison for the rest of their lives. As it is, two men spent two decades in hell, and those who prosecuted them, using tactics that even the Pa. Supreme Court couldn’t swallow, moved on up through the system, got raises, raised families, or retired on cushy pensions.

In several American states, the 19 years that Messrs. Daidone and Martorano have already spent in state and county jails and prisons would constitute life sentences. They served the equivalent of life sentences, based on prosecutorial misconduct at their trials. After the passage of so much time, their freedom *looks* less like justice, and more like its pale shadow.

12 November 1999

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

Urgently needed contributions for Mumia’s legal defense, which are tax-deductible, should be made payable to the Bill of Rights Foundation, earmarked “Mumia Abu-Jamal Legal Defense,” and sent to the Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal, 163 Amsterdam Avenue, 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.

“increase” worked out to barely over 1 percent a year. Now the MTA has announced that funds for a contract settlement are limited because of its five-year, \$17.5 billion capital spending plan, predictably threatening to raise fares yet again. The transit bosses are demanding a four-year contract, as opposed to the current three-year pact. They also seek to expand “broadbanding,” rewriting existing rules to force workers to work in different job categories and in various locations. The MTA also aims to erode seniority rights by reducing “job picks” from twice to once per year and to undermine safety conditions by imposing a four-day week with exhausting ten-hour shifts.

The TWU bureaucracy has colluded with management as it victimized union safety officers for protesting safety violations. In the period leading up to the contract expiration, the bosses have tried to soften up the workforce by cranking up disciplinary actions for work-rule infractions—often made up out of whole cloth—and victimizing “troublesome” workers for “abusing” sick leave and through “random” drug testing. Among the union reps recently victimized by TA management are ND supporters Marty Goodman and Roger Toussaint.

It is no coincidence that such victimizations have increased as the composition of the workforce has become predominantly black and Hispanic. At the same time, minority and women workers are discriminated against in job promotion. **Defend victimized workers! Down with the anti-union drug/alcohol testing! Down with racist discrimination! For union control over hiring and upgrading!** Seniority rights are under attack through the use of “provisional workers,” who competently do their jobs for years and then are replaced by people who score higher on civil service tests. The union must demand: **Make provisionals permanent! For full pay and full system-wide seniority, dating from day one on the job!**

New Directions: Friends of the Capitalist Courts

James’ opponents in New Directions, who control nearly half the local executive board and a number of key divisions, seize on his betrayals to peddle outright defeatism toward a strike. While ND’s *Hell on Wheels* (November 1999) pleads for a “good contract—without a strike if possible,” ND leader Tim Schermerhorn

says openly, “I don’t want to see a strike in this situation” (*Chief-Leader*, 15 October). Indeed, ND has made a specialty of colluding with the capitalist courts which would be a chief weapon of MTA management *against* a strike, repeatedly bringing lawsuits against the TWU, most recently to secure a seat for themselves at the bargaining table.

It is rank treachery to go to the class enemy under any circumstances, and particularly on the eve of a class battle. ND’s latest court suit has provoked rip-roaring arguments among transit workers, who increasingly understand that what’s at stake here is surrendering control of the union to the very capitalist state that they may well be striking against in a month’s time. Government hands off the unions—Labor must clean its own house!

ND’s suit demonstrates what makes this ragtag group of opportunists tick, that is, advancing their own bureaucratic positions within the union. ND follows in the footsteps of the “dissidents” who greased through the 1980 sellout. Having spent five years filing court suits against the union, those “oppositionists” allowed the sellout to be rammed through despite their majority on the Local 100 executive board. Some of them, like Arnold Cherry and George McDonald, were rewarded with leading positions in the Local 100 bureaucracy.

While running to the capitalist courts, ND sees the racist, strikebreaking cops as allies of the workers, hailing as a “strike” a riot by Rikers Island prison guards a few years ago. Today, one of its chief demands in the current negotiations is for the Car Maintenance Division to “upgrade training” for Transit Property Protection Agents, i.e., the company cops! For his part, James brought foremen—management agents—into the TWU. We say: Cops and foremen out of the union!

Not surprisingly, among ND’s fans on the left is the reformist International Socialist Organization (ISO). Perhaps sensing the fighting spirit of the TWU membership, the ISO’s *Socialist Worker* (19 November) complains that “some leaders” of New Directions “have been slow to throw their weight behind a strike.” But just two weeks before in *Socialist Worker* (5 November), the ISO, which has supported ND for years, lauded the TWU bureaucracy’s hiring of Ray Rogers while uncritically promoting ND and its anti-strike leader Tim Schermer-

horn. The ISO itself has long championed Teamsters for a Democratic Union, which literally drew up the plan for the Justice Department’s takeover of that union. Currently, the ISO is sponsoring a public meeting in New York City with a veritable rogues’ gallery of “sue the union” types, including New Directions. For these social democrats, the maximum program is “democracy,” which means looking to the capitalist government and government-backed “reformers” to “clean up” the unions.

One self-styled militant within the TWU who claims to present an alternative to both the James leadership and New Directions is Eric Josephson, who is supported by the League for the Revolutionary Party (LRP). But for all the talk of “mass mobilizations” and “a winning strike strategy” in its “Transit Workers Bulletin” (16 November), the LRP’s entire perspective boils down to “militantly” pressuring one or the other wing of the pro-capitalist bureaucracy to fight. Thus, the LRP’s chief slogan is “Willie Said 10 Percent—Let’s Win 10 Percent!” What tepid criticisms the LRP has of New Directions center on complaints that it “rarely attempts to mobilize members,” barely mentioning ND’s history of attempting to “mobilize” the capitalist courts against the union.

The felt sense among transit workers that neither the James leadership nor New Directions offers any way forward points to the need for the strike and all negotiations with the MTA to be run by **elected strike committees**, made up of the most militant and trusted workers. Such militants must understand the bottom line for a winning strategy in this strike and any other: that the interests of the workers are *counterposed* to any reliance on the agencies and parties of the capitalist class enemy.

For a Workers Party—For a Workers Government!

With its heavily black and Hispanic membership, the TWU is ideally situated to link the power of labor to the anger of the ghettos and barrios. Yet, whether through embracing the racist cops or supporting “workfare,” the Local 100 bureaucracy acts to set unionized workers against the black and Hispanic poor. In pushing through the 1996 contract, the James leadership took on the role of overseers for the capitalist rulers’ union-busting, slave-labor “workfare” program.

Meanwhile, ND calls to “stop workfare in transit” without raising any concrete demands to defend these superexploited workers or bring them into the union. This amounts to a call to throw “workfare” workers out onto the streets.

All of this underscores what we wrote in 1996 in “NYC Transit ‘Workfare’ Deal: Enslaving the Poor, Busting the Unions” (WV No. 652, 27 September 1996):

“Any serious effort to beat back the all-sided attacks on workers, minorities and the poor necessarily entails a political struggle to oust the pro-capitalist union bureaucracy which ‘demands’ only what is acceptable to the racist ruling class. What is required is a fight for *jobs for all*—for a shorter workweek at no loss in pay—and full cost-of-living escalator clauses in union contracts. New York needs a *massive program of public works at union wages*—for quality, integrated housing and schools, for free quality health care for all, for massive reconstruction of roads, bridges and tunnels, for everything we need for a decent life. It is necessary to demand *equal pay for equal work*. The city wants to bring in hundreds of poor people to clean the filthy subway stations? Fine. They should be hired at *union wages with full union protection!* The TWU should lead a fight to *organize the unorganized!*”

The union bureaucrats work to bind the unions ever more closely to the bosses’ state and the political parties of capital. These labor traitors have increasingly transformed the unions into auxiliary instruments of the capitalist class for the subordination and disciplining of the workers. For the unions to be fighting organizations that actually defend the interests of the working class, it is necessary to forge a **class-struggle leadership**. Labor needs a leadership that knows workers’ interests are counterposed to those of their exploiters; that the Democrats represent the bosses just as much as the more openly anti-union Republicans; that the government—with its arsenal of anti-labor weapons like the Taylor Law—is nothing but the executive committee of the capitalist class.

The fight to mobilize unions and the oppressed in struggle needs a political expression: a revolutionary workers party. What was seen on the streets of New York on October 23 was a microcosm of such a workers party in action. A successful fight to defend and improve the present conditions of the working class can only be waged as part of the struggle to get rid of the entire capitalist system. ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

For Class-Struggle Leadership!

NYC Transit Workers: You Have the Power, Shut Down the City!

NEW YORK CITY, November 23—Thousands of transit workers packed Madison Avenue for blocks around Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) headquarters on November 17 to demonstrate their determination to reverse years of union-busting attacks and plummeting real wages. With the NYC Transit Authority (TA) alone running a \$400 million budget surplus, the 33,000 members of Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100 are well-positioned and ready for a fight as their contract expires on December 15. When Local 100 president Willie James chanted, “No contract, no peace!” at the rally, workers roared back, “No contract, no work!” Many raised clenched fists as they chanted, “Strike! Strike! Strike! Strike!”

TWU members know they have the power to shut down the financial capital of the world. They know that is what’s needed to win a hefty wage increase and stop management’s plans to intensify speedup and further attack working conditions by ripping up work rules and job classifications. A strike by this strategic, integrated union could mobilize support from all city labor—municipal workers, teachers, hospital workers—whose own contracts expire in the coming months. It would tap into the accumulated anger among NYC working people and minorities, who are fed up with being pushed around for years in the one-sided class war against workers and the poor. That anger was seen in the mass protests over the cop execution of Amadou Diallo earlier this year, in the turnout of 50,000 for the May 12 labor rally, in the thousands who came out on October 23 to rout the KKK killers.

Scores of transit workers actively built the October 23 labor/black mobilization initiated by the Partisan Defense Committee—which is associated with the

For a Solid Strike! Rip Up the Taylor Law!
No to National Guard Strikebreaking! Cops, Courts Out of the Union!
Down With Union-Busting “Workfare”! Organize “Workfare” Workers with Full Union Wages and Protections! Rip Out the Turnstiles—Free Mass Transit!



Transit workers showed determination to fight in thousands-strong rally outside MTA headquarters in Midtown Manhattan on November 17. October 23 anti-Klan mobilization initiated by Partisan Defense Committee demonstrated the kind of class-struggle leadership needed to win.



WV Photos

Marxist Spartacist League—to stop the KKK, and many hundreds more in this heavily black, Hispanic and immigrant workforce embraced that victory as their own. As one transit worker said, “We kicked the Klan out. Now we have to strike for a new contract.”

That’s right! To win, transit workers will have to take on the capitalist govern-

ment and the state Taylor Law banning public workers strikes. Today’s New York Daily News reports that “the city is quietly preparing a doomsday plan” in anticipation of a strike, including providing extra cops to protect scab buses and even calling out the National Guard on the phony pretext of needing to provide care for stranded commuters. Let Wall Street and

the city rulers try to run the trains and buses with bayonets! Any deployment of the National Guard to break a TWU strike should be met with a walkout of *all city workers*.

If labor was able to defeat the forces aimed at keeping it from riding the KKK out—the cops and courts, the Giuliani *continued on page 14*

Giuliani Bashes the Homeless

Seizing on a recent attack on a young woman by an unknown assailant in Midtown Manhattan, New York City mayor Rudolph Giuliani came up with the latest installment of his vicious war on the homeless. Two weeks ago, Giuliani revealed plans to throw thousands of men, women and children *out of the shelters and into the streets*. Now he’s declared the homeless in the streets will be arrested and thrown in the city’s newest shelter—Rikers Island prison.

Extending the work requirements of Clinton’s 1996 anti-welfare law, Giuliani demands that jobless people seeking refuge in shelters work at slave labor and that those who have jobs fork over

much of their meager wages as “rent.” Those who fail to comply will have their children ripped away from them and placed in foster care! Adding to the wanton cruelty of what Giuliani calls “the highest form of compassion and love,” the mayor ordered his scheme to be implemented in the dead of winter on January 1. The city rulers celebrate the millennium by decreeing a virtual death sentence against thousands of largely minority poor and disabled!

Over 200 years ago, just before the corrupt and bloated aristocracy was swept away in the French Revolution of 1789, Marie Antoinette dismissed the demand of the *continued on page 13*



Rentas/NY Post

Homeless family in Bronx seeking shelter for the night. Now Giuliani has escalated war on homeless, ordering evictions from shelters and mass arrests on the streets.



Paraskevas/Newsday