

## Amadou Diallo's Killers Walk Capitalist "Justice" Means Racist Murder

The February 25 acquittal of the four cops who cut down Amadou Diallo last year was no more an aberration of the capitalist "justice" system than was the death-squad-style execution itself. A columnist in the black New Jersey weekly newspaper *City News* (1 March) told the harsh truth: "While many say that the justice system did not work, it is patently not true. It worked, as it always does, in favor of four white cops who slaughtered Diallo."

From the Soundview section of the Bronx the night the verdict came down to Midtown Manhattan the next day and into the following week, thousands have taken to the streets to express their outrage and demand justice. But the Diallo case starkly illuminates that there can be no justice for black people and working people under this capitalist system—for the simple reason that it is organized against them. By the standards of bourgeois legality, the cops were not guilty of any crime when they gunned down the 22-year-old unarmed black man. They were doing the job they are paid to do under racist capitalism.

The sadistic police beating of Rodney King in L.A. in 1991 and the depraved sexual torture of Abner Louima in a Brooklyn precinct house in 1997 ultimately led to the conviction of some of the cops involved (including a March 6 conviction of three of Louima's torturers on federal "obstruction of justice" charges). Police beatings and torture are standard operating procedure. But those cops got caught out perpetrating acts that couldn't be justified under the bourgeoisie's "code of conduct" for the police. The cops who shot down Amadou Diallo were going by the book, and walked.

The judge instructed the jury that the cops had the right and duty to shoot Diallo in "self-defense" if they thought he was reaching for a gun when he pulled out his wallet. But if anyone had a right to use a gun in self-defense that night it was Diallo, who saw four armed white assailants rushing at him as he stood in the vestibule of his own apartment building. The prosecution did not make this obvious point in its case against Diallo's killers because they all agree that the capitalist state's monopoly of armed violence is sacrosanct.

Among those arrested in Soundview for protesting the night of the verdict was 23-year-old Malcolm Ferguson. Five days later, a cop shot Ferguson through the head at pointblank range barely two blocks from where Diallo had been executed. Ferguson's former employer bitterly declared, "This is the projects, but that doesn't make them animals." Mayor Giuliani and the cops said Ferguson

### Break with the Democrats— For a Workers Party to Fight for Socialist Revolution!



WV Photo

Up to 8,000 people marched through Midtown Manhattan on February 26 to protest acquittal of four cops who gunned down Amadou Diallo last year.

deserved to die because he had a rap sheet. Diallo got killed because he looked "suspicious." In the eyes of the racist cops, a black man in the ghetto is automatically on their hit list.

One Queens resident voiced a sentiment widely expressed in the wake of the Diallo verdict when she wrote to the *New York Times* (28 February), "As an African-American woman, I have just

had my belief system shattered. I can no longer believe that the institutions that are in place are there to protect me and mine." They aren't. The institutions in place—the cops, the courts, the prisons—are there to "protect and serve" the tiny class of capitalists who derive their wealth from the exploitation of the working people.

What is to be done? The preachers and

politicians who argue that the cops can be "reformed," that things would be different if there were more black and Latino cops, that the Feds are going to "clean up" the racist police are selling you a bill of goods. Their purpose is to try to preserve the authority of capitalist "law and order."

The truth is that there will be no end to police brutality until the capitalist system it serves is uprooted through a proletarian socialist revolution. The purpose of the Spartacist League and the Labor Black League for Social Defense is to build a party that represents the interests of the working class—championing the cause of black freedom and the rights of all those who have been consigned to the bottom of this society—and that will lead the necessary hard-fought struggle to establish the class rule of the proletariat. As the SL speaker said at a March 1 NYC forum on the lessons to be drawn from the Diallo trial:

"The answer to racist cop terror is the dictatorship of the millions of workers, with black workers in leading positions, over the few thousand capitalists, seizing the forces of production and building a socialist society—a society which will wipe out poverty, exploitation, hunger, homelessness, racial oppression and racist terror. The working class is the force that can establish such a society."

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Gutierrez/New York Times

March 1: Residents of Bronx Soundview neighborhood take to the streets in anger over cop killing of Malcolm Ferguson five days after Diallo verdict.



# Diallo Trial: Racist Killer Cops Acquitted

# There Is No Justice in the Capitalist Courts!

FEBRUARY 25—They shot down and killed Amadou Diallo, an unarmed black man, in a barrage of 41 bullets. And today these four cops, part of the Street Crimes Unit which rampages through the ghettos and barrios under the slogan, “We Own the Night,” walked out of court free men. The arguments by the attorneys for the police, the role played by the prosecution in whitewashing the cops, the judge’s four-hour instructions to the jury and now the verdict itself are all blatant statements of what we in the Labor Black League for Social Defense have been saying from the start: *There is no justice in the capitalist courts!*

Written in the blood of Amadou Diallo, the message is loud and clear. For the capitalist rulers of this society, the cops were simply “doing their job” as a racist

## No Illusions in Feds, Democrats! For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

Statement of the New York Labor Black League for Social Defense and the Spartacist League

occupying army in the inner cities. The rights of citizenship that are supposedly granted to all in this society under the U.S. constitution—the right to bear arms, to free speech and assembly—have been redefined to apply only to the cops whose purpose is to “serve and protect” the interests of the tiny rich, white minority who own and control the enormous wealth of this society against the vast majority at the bottom. It’s the 21st century version of the Dred Scott decision: the black population in the ghettos have no rights that the cops are bound to respect. And it’s one that vicious

racist mayor Giuliani is itching to enforce as he mobilizes his cops on full alert.

Al Sharpton is preaching that the federal government will intervene and turn this verdict around. Tell that to Abner Louima who has been made to relive his hideous torture at the hands of the cops on the stand of a federal investigation. The Democratic Party Clinton administration has poured thousands more cops onto the streets while condemning hundreds of thousands of women and children to starvation by “ending welfare as we know it.” And if you want to see an “investigation” by Janet Reno’s Justice Department look no further than the incinerated corpses of 86 men, women and children of the racially integrated Branch Davidian religious sect in Waco, Texas, who were sent to a fiery death on Reno’s order in 1993.

Sharpton’s appeals for “justice” to the agencies of capitalist injustice are designed to try to stupefy black people, the working class and all the opponents of cop terror. That’s what he did last year too when, together with other black Democratic Party officials and trade-union bureaucrats, Sharpton sought to channel

the mass outrage over the Diallo killing into electoral pressure politics. Sharpton and Dennis Rivera, president of SEIU Local 1199, came up with a ten-point program to “reform” the cops—including a demand that the killer cops get a raise in pay!

No one heard Sharpton or Rivera raise a peep in protest when New York transit workers, who were fighting to get their pay raised, were met with strikebreaking injunctions by Democratic Party state attorney general Eliot Spitzer and Republican mayor Giuliani. At the same time, the union tops are busy gladhanding police “unions” and organizing cops, prison guards and other armed servants of the capitalist state. We say: cops and prison guards out of the unions!

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

Against Sharpton and the labor misleaders who seek to tie the working class, black people and all the oppressed to their

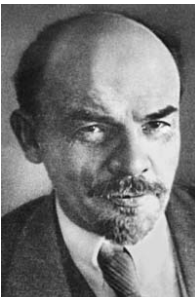
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TROTSKY

### Women’s Emancipation and Proletarian Power

*On 8 March 1917, International Women’s Day, a strike of women textile workers in Petrograd set off the revolutionary upsurge that culminated in the Bolshevik-led October Revolution and the creation of the first workers state. The Bolsheviks established full democratic rights for women and, understanding that the oppression of women is rooted in the institution of the family, sought to replace it through socialization of house-*



LENIN

*work and childcare. Impoverished and isolated, the young Soviet state was not able to fully realize these aims, which require a planned socialist economy on an international scale. The counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92, and the misery this has meant for women and the working class as a whole, underscores again that the fight for women’s liberation is an integral part of the struggle for new October Revolutions around the world.*

Bourgeois democracy proclaims in words a whole series of freedoms, but from the oppressed these freedoms are safeguarded by five locks and seven seals. Among other things, bourgeois democracy has often declared that people are equal irrespective of sex, creed, race, and nationality. Proudly has the pledge been given that under the bourgeois democratic system all are equals: women and men; whites, yellows, and blacks; Europeans and Asians; Buddhists, Christians, and Jews. In reality, the bourgeoisie has failed to carry out these pledges. During the imperialist epoch, there has been all over the world a terrible increase in racial and national oppression. But even as concerns women, bourgeois democracy is far from having realised equality....

The Soviet Power is the first to have realised such equality in all departments of life: in marriage, in the family, in political affairs, etc. In all things, throughout Soviet Russia, women are the equals of men....

We have learned above that the really important matter is not the right that is written on paper, but the possibility of realising a right in practice. How can a working woman effectively realise her rights when she has to devote so much time to housekeeping, must go to the market and wait her turn there, must do the family washing, must look after her children, must bear the heavy burden of all this domestic drudgery?

The aim of the Soviet Republic and of our party must be, to deliver working women from such slavery, to free the working woman from these obsolete and antediluvian conditions. The organisation of house communes (not places in which people will wrangle, but places in which they will live like human beings) with central wash-houses; the organisation of communal kitchens; the organisation of communal nurseries, kindergartens, playgrounds, summer colonies for children, schools with communal dining rooms, etc.—such are the things which will enfranchise woman, and will make it possible for her to interest herself in all those matters which now interest the proletarian man.

—Nikolai Bukharin and Evgeny Preobrazhensky, *The ABC of Communism* (1922)



WV Photo

23 October 1999: Labor/black mobilization rode KKK out of New York City, gave organized expression to accumulated anger over Diallo killing and other attacks on NYC workers and minorities.

## Mexico UNAM Strike

## Donate \$ to Free Student Militants!

MARCH 7—As we go to press, up to two hundred student strikers swept up last month in the Mexican government’s repression of the hard-fought UNAM strike still languish in jail. Yesterday, up to 250 students and parents occupied the main UNAM administration (rectory) building to dramatize the demand for the immediate release of the imprisoned strikers. The government deployed a Federal Police unit near the campus ready to break the occupation, and UNAM rector De la Fuente has threatened legal charges against the students. The International Communist League demands: Hands off the student protesters! Free all the UNAM strikers now!

The UNAM strikers, as well as activists from El Mexe teachers college (where villagers seized 68 cops after a police raid on the campus—see WV No. 730, 25 February) and high school students, have been imprisoned on a variety of serious, trumped-up charges for the “crime” of fighting to defend public education. Some face long sentences, and 86 high

school students arrested at the UNAM-affiliated Prepa 3 on February 1 still have not been released. Many of these students cannot make the exorbitant bail demanded by the government. Reports indicate that many of the prisoners are ill and are being denied medical attention, and that there have been incidents of torture.

The ten-month UNAM strike, provoked by the administration’s attempt to purge poor and working-class youth through tuition hikes, grew into a wider social struggle, spreading from Mexico City around the country. The tens of thousands of courageous students and workers who participated in the strike and in huge support rallies were fighting for all those oppressed and dispossessed by capitalism, and it is our revolutionary internationalist duty to raise funds to help get them out of Mexico’s dungeons. Every dollar you send could make a difference! Send contributions, earmarked “UNAM strikers,” to: Partisan Defense Committee, P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013.

## WORKERS VANGUARD

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# Forge a Trotskyist Party! For Workers Revolution!

## Indonesia at the Flashpoint

The following article is reprinted from Australasian Spartacist No. 170 (Autumn 2000), newspaper of the Spartacist League of Australia. Since this article appeared, former military chief Wiranto has been suspended from office.

**Australasian  
SPARTACIST**

FEBRUARY 10—Indonesia is a mine-field on the verge of explosion. Two years ago the brutal 30-year military dictatorship of Suharto fell amid great social turmoil. Desperate to stabilise their rule, the bourgeoisie, under pressure from the imperialists, stage-managed an election last June. Five months later, after much horse trading, Abdurrahman Wahid, former leader of Indonesia's largest Islamic organisation, Nahdatul Ulama, was installed as president. The Javanese chauvinist Megawati Sukarnoputri and Muslim leader Amien Rais, "opposition" politicians who served as props for the military dictatorship, are now vice president and chairman of the "People's Consultative Assembly" respectively. Suharto is gone, but imperialist subjugation, the repressive bourgeoisie and their bloody military thugs remain.

On January 31, with Wahid in Europe drumming up foreign aid, an official government inquiry announced its "discovery" of what has been known to all: the then-chief of the armed forces, Wiranto, along with other high-ranking officers, was responsible for "meticulously, systematically and on a large scale" terrorising the people of East Timor. The Indonesian military and the capitalist class they serve are indeed drenched in the blood of countless victims, from the torture and murder of students, leftists and workers to repeated massacres in East Timor, Aceh and elsewhere.

From afar Wahid responded to the "finding" by demanding Wiranto resign from his "civilian" cabinet post as Coordinating Minister for Political Affairs and Security—in return for a pardon and "forgiveness." Ignoring Wahid's repeated pleas, Wiranto has refused to step down. With the possibility of a coup in the air, the widespread belief that the military was loosening its grip on society is revealed for what it is, a fiction.

Indonesia is riven by national, religious and class divisions. The devastating 1997-98 economic crisis and brutal International Monetary Fund (IMF)-dictated austerity catapulted **100 million people** into dire poverty. Under conditions of extreme impoverishment enforced by the yoke of imperialist exploitation, this



**Christian-owned buildings on island of Lombok burned down by Muslims amid communalist atrocities on both sides. Two years after fall of dictator Suharto, Indonesia continues to be rocked by ethnic bloodletting, national struggles and clashes between cops and student protesters demanding democratic reforms.**



prison house of peoples, artificially held together by military repression, threatens to fracture on the faultlines created by over three centuries of brutal Dutch colonialism and upheld by the domestic ruling class since independence. Fuelled by resentment of the Javanese-centred bourgeoisie, long-simmering struggles against national oppression are boiling over. In Aceh, at the northern tip of Sumatra, where the army has killed thousands in the last decade, one million demonstrated for independence last November. At the other end of the sprawling archipelago, in West Papua (Irian Jaya)—annexed by Indonesia in 1963—pro-independence demonstrators who raise their flag have been shot by the army. At the same time

savage communalist bloodletting has broken out in Ambon and other parts of the Moluccas.

The Australian-led military occupation of East Timor has strengthened the grip of imperialism in the region while greatly intensifying Javanese nationalism. We of the Spartacist League, Australian section of the International Communist League, say "Australian/UN Imperialist Troops Out of East Timor!" Opposing all imperialist intervention in East Timor, above all that of our "own" imperialist ruling class, we fight for internationalist unity of the

proletarians of the region against the capitalist rulers. In Indonesia this means forging a Trotskyist party that combats the dominant Javanese chauvinism and the subjugation of all the national and religious minorities while opposing imperialist intervention. Independence now for East Timor!

### Indonesia and Permanent Revolution

Student activists in Indonesia call for "reformasi," i.e., for a parliamentary bourgeois democracy. But in economically backward, dependent countries saddled by imperialist exploitation and grinding poverty, this is a pipedream. In imperialist countries such as Australia or America, bourgeois democracy is predicated on some of the plunder extracted from countries like Indonesia being used to bribe sections of the population, purchasing a degree of (temporary) class and social peace. As Leon Trotsky, a leader with V.I. Lenin of the 1917 workers revolution in Russia, explained in *Marxism in Our Time* (1939): "In its expanded manifestation bourgeois democracy became, and continues to remain, a form of government accessible only to the most aristocratic and the most exploitive nations. Ancient democracy was based on slavery, imperialist democracy—on the spoliation of colonies."

But capitalism has created its potential gravedigger in the proletariat. The working class in Indonesia has grown explosively in recent decades. Starting in the mid-1980s, huge factory zones were built—largely by foreign capital—transforming rural towns and small cities in East and West Java and northern Sumatra into massive concentrations of industrial production. In recent years these workers, including a vital component of militant women, have begun to flex their muscles. Waves of strikes marked Suharto's May 1998 ouster, as well as the June 1999 elections, often in the face of severe state repression. In December 8,000 workers at two Nike factories in Tangerang protested for larger holiday bonuses and the right to elect their own union leaders while 3,000 garment workers in Semarang, East Java, demonstrated for higher wages.

The combative, young Indonesian proletariat urgently needs a revolutionary Trotskyist leadership, a party like the Bolsheviks, which can point the way

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### Spartacist Forums

#### Diallo Trial: Racist Killer Cops Acquitted— There Is No Justice in the Capitalist Courts!

Thursday, March 9, 6:30 p.m.

Laney College, Room A140

**OAKLAND** For more information, call (510) 839-0851 or (415) 395-9520

#### Women and the French Revolution— A Marxist Analysis

Thursday, March 23, 7:30 p.m.

NYU School of Law, Vanderbilt Hall  
Rm. 218, 40 Washington Sq. South  
(near Sullivan St., take any train to W. 4th St.)

**NEW YORK CITY** For more information, call (212) 267-1025

Saturday, March 25, 3 p.m.

The New St. Clair Restaurant  
93 Smith St., Brooklyn  
(at Atlantic Ave., take any train to Borough Hall)

### Spartacus Youth Club Class Series

#### BAY AREA

Thursday, March 16, 7 p.m.

**Russia October 1917:  
The Working Class Takes Power**  
UC Berkeley, Dwinelle, Room 179  
Information and readings: (510) 839-0851  
or (415) 395-9520

#### CHICAGO

Saturday, March 11, 3 p.m.

**The Russian Revolution:  
The Working Class Comes to Power**  
328 S. Jefferson St., Suite 904  
(near Clinton stop on Blue Line)  
Information and readings: (312) 454-4930  
or spartacist@iname.com

#### NEW YORK

Tuesday, March 21, 7 p.m.

**Trotskyism vs. Stalinism:  
The Revolution Betrayed**  
NYU, Thompson Center, Basement  
238 Thompson St. (near W. 3rd St.)  
Information and readings: (212) 267-1025

#### TORONTO

Thursday, March 23, 7 p.m.

**Anglo Chauvinism and Canadian  
Capitalism: Why Marxists Advocate  
Quebec Independence**

U of T, International Student Centre  
33 St. George St. (north of College St.)  
For room and information: (416) 593-4138  
or spartacan@on.aibn.com

#### VANCOUVER

Tuesday, March 21, 7 p.m.

**Pro-Capitalist NDP Rules  
for the Bosses—Leninism vs.  
Social Democracy**

University of British Columbia  
Student Union Building, Rm. 215  
Information and readings: (604) 687-0353

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# Revolution vs. Counterrevolution in Germany, 1989-90

We publish below the concluding part of a presentation given at Spartacist League public meetings in New York, Chicago and the San Francisco Bay Area in late January and early February. The speaker was comrade Steffen Singer, editor of Spartakist, publication of the Spartakist Workers Party (SpAD), German section of the International Communist League. Part One was published in WV No. 730 (25 February).

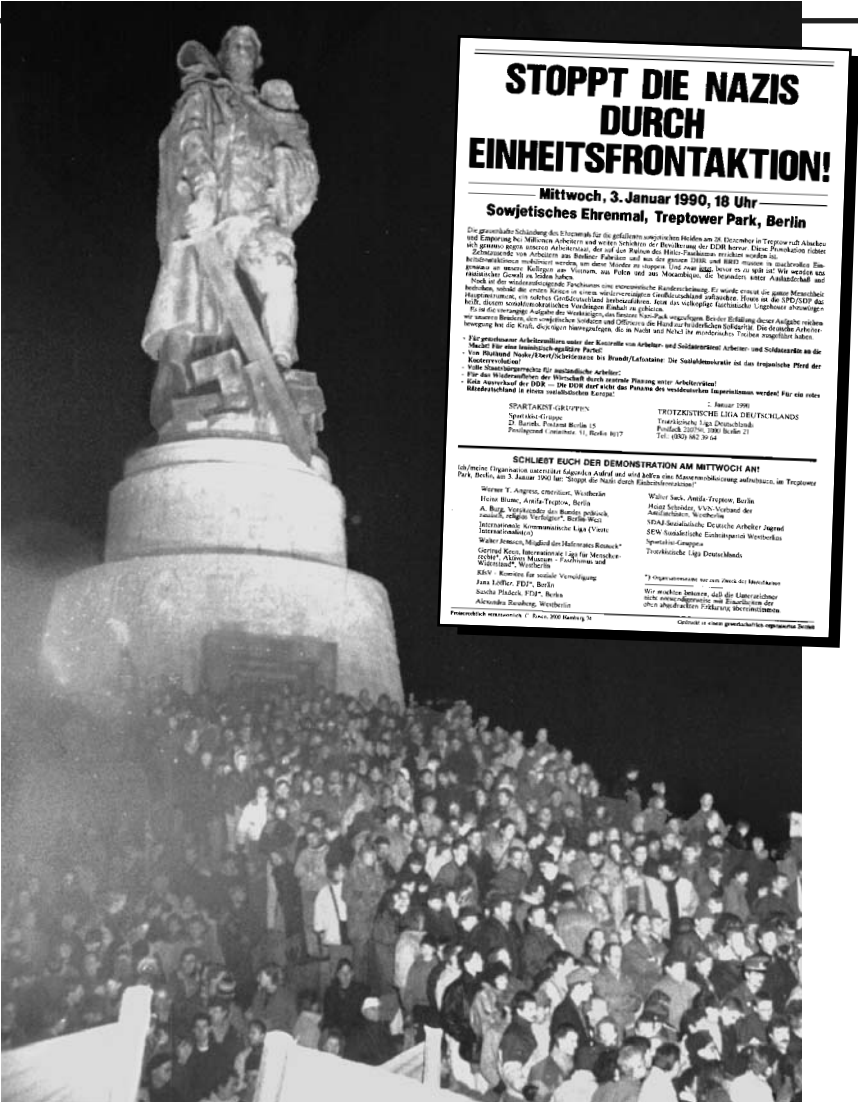
## PART TWO

In our intervention in East Germany [DDR] in 1989-90, we called for a new Leninist-egalitarian party. In early December 1989, there was a week-long extraordinary party congress of the SED [Socialist Unity Party], the Stalinist ruling party. They threw out the old leadership and added to their old name “Party of Democratic Socialism” (PDS). This strengthened the illusion of many pro-communist workers and rank-and-file SED members that the SED/PDS, as it was now called, was reformable. But it wasn’t. The new heroes of the new leadership—Gregor Gysi, Lothar Bisky and Hans Modrow—were the Social Democrats Karl Kautsky and Eduard Bernstein, who opposed and fought against the Russian Revolution and derailed the 1918-19 German Revolution. We called for a Leninist party to cut against that.

By the term “egalitarian,” we made clear that we were opposed to bureaucratic privileges, that we didn’t want to reform the old SED, but that we meant a genuinely communist party of the working class. You might wonder why we didn’t simply call for a Trotskyist party. The Stalinists had spread the lie for decades that Trotsky was a social-democratic—or even fascist, and I don’t know what else—counterrevolutionary. We got letters from students and workers saying “We agree totally with what you write and also want to fight for that, but how can you call yourselves Trotskyists?” To combat and expose the lies spread by the Stalinists, we put out an issue of *Spartacist* [German-language edition No. 14, Winter 1989-90] titled “Trotskyism: What It Isn’t and What It Is.”

Key to the fight for revolutionary reunification of Germany, to forge workers and soldiers councils and a new Leninist-egalitarian party, was the struggle for proletarian internationalism against all forms of nationalism and racism. There were quite a number of foreign workers in the DDR from Vietnam, Cuba, Mozambique, Angola, Poland. But they had no citizenship rights. They had to live separately from the rest of the population, and although they formally received the same wages, these were not always paid. If a Vietnamese woman worker in the DDR became pregnant, she was sent back to Vietnam. That was the antithesis of the kind of workers state the Bolsheviks had built and that we are fighting for. One of the first laws enacted in Soviet Russia after the revolution was that everybody who lived there and did not exploit workers or peasants had full citizenship rights.

We raised the call, “Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!” This was key to fighting against racist divisions within the working class. In our daily paper *Arprekorr*, we published internationalist greetings in several languages: Vietnamese, Portuguese, Polish, Spanish and also in Russian. These workers could also provide a living bridge to build the party and carry the revolution to their home countries. For that very reason, the Cuban



**250,000-strong protest in January 1990 at Soviet war memorial in East Berlin's Treptow Park was initiated by Spartacist's call, "Stop the Nazis Through United Front Action!" Below: German nationalists in Dresden mobilized for capitalist reunification under slogan "Germany One Fatherland."**



Der Spiegel

Stalinists ordered all Cuban workers and students in the DDR to return to Cuba, so they would not become infected with proletarian political revolution and the idea of rule by workers councils. Also critically important was our unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union. There was deep pro-Soviet sentiment. The Red Army had smashed the Nazi regime and it was essential for defense against NATO.

But the resonance of our program was not restricted to East Germany. Immigrant workers from Turkey are a strategic sector of the West German working class, concentrated in strategic industries. And they are much more alienated from the West German Social Democracy [SPD], which strengthens the racist divisions in the working class fomented by the bourgeois society the SPD defends. To give an example: our West Berlin office was in the headquarters of a Turkish immigrant group called Halkevi. They gave us a big part of their office because they understood that a reunified German imperialism would mean greatly increased German nationalism and racist

terror. A successful proletarian political revolution in the East, to the contrary, would have been a big blow against racism and a big step and inspiration for a social revolution in West Germany.

Another aspect of our proletarian internationalist struggle was our call for the revolutionary unity of the German, Polish and Russian proletariat. Our work toward the Red Army was one part of that perspective, to carry the program of Lenin and Trotsky back into the Soviet Union. One has to understand that the DDR was faced with West German imperialism, one of the strongest imperialist powers in the world, and its army, the second-strongest in NATO. The Red Army and the DDR army were on the front line facing NATO.

We had a really good reception at Red Army barracks, where we were met with great interest and openness. Although I have to tell you the sales were not easy. One of our sales teams went to one of the barracks—they sneaked into it or made a deal with the officers—and went from room to room. The soldiers were very interested and happy, so we easily sold out of our literature. At the same time, in

every room they would dig out a bottle of vodka and you would have a drink toasting internationalism, and one for the defense of the Soviet Union and so on. So in the end, the team was not only sold out but totally drunk and none of the comrades can remember anymore how they made it home. We were later invited to hold forums in Red Army barracks for officers and soldiers. Our perspective of bringing Trotskyism to Soviet workers and soldiers turned into flesh and blood.

Very important was the struggle against anti-Polish chauvinism, which there was quite a lot of. You have to know that the DDR was economically one of the strongest of the East European deformed workers states. There was this kind of really backward consciousness, like “We are the best, the others just can’t work right, they cannot organize things, they are lazy,” and all this kind of garbage. Our internationalist greetings to Polish workers was very important. In May 1990 we also published a “Letter to Polish Workers” which was distributed in both East Germany and Poland. A group coming out of the Polish Stalinist party’s youth organization got a hold of it. They wrote us back, we came into contact with them, and out of that emerged our Polish section, the Spartakusowska Grupa Polski.

Key to our approach to Polish workers was our uncompromising struggle against the counterrevolutionary CIA- and Vatican-sponsored Solidarność, which posed as a union—by the way, the only “union” the imperialists ever liked. They had just come to power in the summer of 1989 and led a counterrevolution. Just imagine the impact on East German workers of strikes breaking out in Poland at that time against the attacks on the working class because of the counterrevolution. Or vice versa, how a successful proletarian political revolution would have inspired the Polish working class to overthrow Solidarność. There was a tradition going back to Rosa Luxemburg, one of the outstanding revolutionary leaders of the German working class, who was of Polish Jewish origin and also a leader of the revolutionary Polish workers party.

### The Revolutionary Newspaper

In his 1902 polemic *What Is To Be Done?*, Lenin explained that the newspaper is the collective organizer of the revolutionary party. That’s what you could see in real life with our daily *Arprekorr* and biweekly *Spartakist*. With the first *Arprekorr* coming out in the beginning of December, by late December a big part of our work was to send bundles and bundles of each issue out to all parts of the DDR. We sold 10,000 to 12,000 *Arprekorr* a day. Those were average sales.

Around our mobilization for the Treptow demonstration in January 1990, one comrade arrived in the East German city of Rostock, went into a hotel and gave a speech on the necessity for united-front actions against the fascists and for the rule of workers and soldiers councils. The comrade said that’s why the hotel workers should give us access to a typewriter and paper, and we need a printer. There was a huge discussion pro and con. A maintenance worker came over and told us, “Room 300 something. There’s a typewriter. And I know where to get paper for the leaflet.” That’s the way our leaflet for Treptow got printed in Rostock. When going back to his car, our comrade found an *Arprekorr* on the windshield. It became clear: we have a Spartakist Gruppe in Rostock. What we had to do was to

find them and organize the organizers of those distributing *Arprekorr*, as the core of the new Leninist-egalitarian, i.e., revolutionary Trotskyist party. We had to train them to build and extend the Spartakist Gruppen.

At the same time, as I mentioned before, we also brought out a new issue of *Spartacist* with the title “Trotskyism: What It Isn’t and What It Is.” This pamphlet was a polemic against the Stalinists and also against the fake Trotskyists, some of whom intervened in the DDR and all of whom supported counter-revolution. We call these groups centrist, i.e., “revolutionary in words, opportunist in deeds.” In a pre-revolutionary situation, the importance of the struggle against centrism is even greater than at other times. As new layers of workers and youth get politicized, it is especially urgent to unmask the centrists, so that nobody gets fooled by the pseudo-revolutionary rhetoric with which they sell their reformist program.

One such centrist group is Workers Power, which split from Tony Cliff's British Socialist Workers Party in the early 1980s. While Workers Power intervened in February 1990 in the DDR, their Irish group at that time had a headline, "Down With Stalinism, Down With Imperialism." This revealed a classic "third camp" position—i.e., drawing an equal sign between the capitalist states and the deformed workers states—which meant support for counterrevolution. They were busy hailing attacks on Stasi headquarters—the East German secret police—by

should overthrow them if not the proletariat? Well, they bitterly attacked us for not having invited the SPD, the Trojan horse of counterrevolution, onto the platform at Treptow! Of course we did not! To give you one more point: the Social Democracy at that time was busy demonstrating alongside the Nazis in the south of the DDR, waving the German flag and jointly screaming “Germany—united fatherland!” That’s where the appetites of the BT lay.

## The Spartakist Gruppen

Within a week or two of the first issue of *Arprekorr* coming out, it was distributed in all the major cities in East Germany. Those who distributed it did so out of agreement with what we fought for. The role of the paper as the collective organizer of the party was seen explosively in 1989-90. What was most important was to really organize these distributors, establish communications, train them politically, because the Spartakist Gruppen were the means to build the revolutionary party necessary to lead the political revolution. They were a means to translate the power of our program via the power of organization into state power, into the working class ruling society. The first Spartakist Gruppe was founded on December 21, 1989 in Berlin.

It always requires internal fights to reorient the party in a new political situation. One of the slogans in this fight was “Everything is possible in the DDR!” This was the plain truth. In East Berlin, we got our office by going to a cultural



Jürgens/Ost und Europa

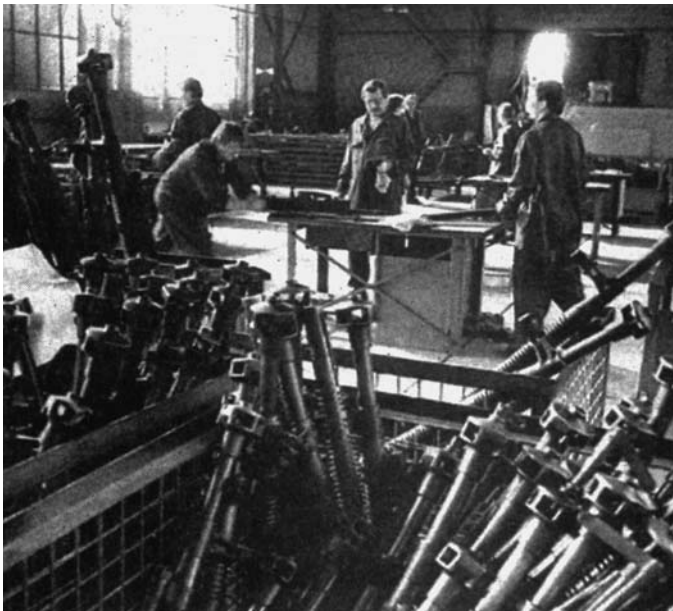
Fearing proletarian political revolution, East German Stalinist regime disbanded *Kampfgruppen* factory militias (above), turning their machine guns into scrap.

the most right-wing elements including outright fascists. That was in the middle of January, after Treptow, when there was the huge anti-Communist offensive by the West German Social Democracy and by the whole bourgeoisie. Workers Power also demanded the immediate withdrawal of the Red Army. All of the fake Trotskyists ended up supporting the counterrevolution.

Then there is a group called the Bolshevik Tendency (BT), a clot founded by embittered ex-members who deserted our organization in the heat of the second Cold War in the early 1980s. They said that there was no incipient proletarian political revolution and declared the Stalinists to be the main enemy. But who

center and speaking to the workers there. They discussed the matter and gave us a whole floor for only a symbolic rent. They decided that a counterrevolution would surely mean the end of that cultural center. To prevent that, they would give us rooms and telephones.

Another example. We came very close to being at the Treptow demonstration without our newspapers. There was a big traffic jam at the border of West and East Berlin, and our truck with the freshly printed *Arprekorr* got stuck. So our comrade got out of the truck and walked up to the East German border guards and said, "We are the Spartakists. We have to go to this Treptow demonstration and our truck with our papers got stuck up there



AF

[illegible]

Hirndorf/ZB

**Spartakists distributed internationalist greetings in Russian to Soviet soldiers and in Vietnamese, Polish and Spanish to foreign-born workers. Above: A Vietnamese and a Cuban worker in an East German shoe factory.**

in this traffic jam. We must get these papers to the demo on time!" The Spartakists and *Arprekorr* were already well known among the soldiers. They told us, "Drive out of the lane. Over there is the road for the diplomats; take that route and we'll guide you." So the paper did arrive on time at the demo site. This illustrates what a revolutionary situation looks like: everything is upside down. Everything is possible that yesterday seemed out of the question. And consciousness changes rapidly.

On January 21, 1990, we founded the Spartakist Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands, a fusion between the Spartakist Gruppen and the Trotzkistische Liga Deutschlands. The SpAd took up the struggle against the counterrevolutionary cam-

Gysi would get up for the SED/PDS and basically say: We are as scared about Treptow as you are, we also didn't like what the Trotskyists said and what happened, it was a mistake to call for the Treptow demonstration. Modrow of the SED/PDS, then head of the DDR government, announced plans to found a new secret police. I'll let you figure out yourself against whom that was to be directed. Then, at the end of January, Modrow openly proclaimed, "Germany—united fatherland!"

The effect on the most advanced workers was devastating, because they still clung to the SED/PDS and hoped that it would be kind of an obstacle to counterrevolution. Trotsky had already explained, regarding the Spanish Revolution, that workers do not easily break with the party that brought them to political life. The Stalinists knew that and played for time. At the same time, the SED/PDS opened all the gates to let the German bourgeoisie in. Whole factories were sold out, with the most advanced workers being placed on a fully paid “zero hour workweek,” i.e., laid off. The bourgeoisie pumped billions of deutschmarks into the DDR.

Our propaganda also shifted its emphasis to highlight the need for resistance against the concerted drive to stampede the East German working class into counterrevolution. Again and again we ran the headline, “No to Capitalist *Anschluss*!” We said: No to counterrevolution! Organize against the sellout of our factories! Who gives the directors and other Stalinist bureaucrats the right to sell factories that don’t belong to them but to us, the working class?

Against the counterrevolutionary perspective of capitalist unification of Germany, we provided a revolutionary perspective of the unity of the German and Russian proletariat, which was also meant to counter the deeply wrong belief among many East German workers that the West German working class lacked any revolutionary capacity. They would tell us that maybe a revolution in West Germany is possible, but not today or tomorrow, and we have to act today. If we rise up, we will immediately be confronted with powerful West German imperialism, NATO, the fascists and so on.

The Soviet Union was anything but stable. On the one hand, there were

*continued on page 10*

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(continued from page 3)

This is the program that was proven in flesh and blood by the Russian Revolution of 1917. As Trotsky wrote:

“The regime of the proletarian dictatorship, by its very nature, however, could not limit itself to the framework of bourgeois property. The rule of the proletariat automatically placed on the agenda the socialist revolution.”

Further, if the revolution is not to be militarily or economically strangled it must be extended internationally, above all to the imperialist centres.

Preaching that the workers and oppressed must support a fictitious “progressive” wing of the domestic capitalist class (supposedly represented by the president, Sukarno), the leadership of the millions-strong Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) suppressed worker strikes and militant peasant struggles, and lulled the masses with the illusion that Sukarno would protect them. This fatal program of “two-stage” revolution politically disarmed and demoralised the working class, leading directly to their slaughter. The army and fanatical Islamic gangs, directly aided and abetted by the American CIA and the Australian ASIS security forces, massacred over *one million* Communists, workers, peasants, women’s activists and ethnic Chinese (see “Lessons of Indonesia 1965,” *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 55, Autumn 1999). All other experiences of “two-stage” revolution, from China 1927 to Chile 1973, also prove that instead of the “first stage” opening the road to socialism



Reuters

it means the massacre of communists. There never is a “second” stage.

Draconian IMF and World Bank dictates, the imperialists' loans to "stabilise" Indonesia, the U.S.'s warnings to the generals against military coups, all underscore the dependent nature of the Indonesian ruling class. The fine words about "democracy" are meant to cover the fact that the imperialists want political stability so they can continue to rob the vast natural resources of Indonesia.

Resource-rich and strategic Aceh province is a particularly lucrative prize both for the imperialists and the domestic bourgeoisie. It took a bloody 30-year war before the Dutch managed to finally conquer Aceh, historically a Muslim stronghold. This was the one place in Indonesia the Dutch utterly failed to reconquer even for a short time after World War II. In the early 1950s, shortly after the establishment of the Indonesian republic, Aceh went into a four-year armed rebellion against the central government.

Between 1989 and 1992, at least 2,000 Acehnese were killed by the Indonesian army with many more tortured, raped and

The UN's referendum in East Timor has encouraged independence movements in both Aceh and West Papua to demand referendums too. Following the huge November pro-independence pro-



AFP

tests in Aceh, Wahid announced there might be such a vote but quickly backtracked in the face of vehement protest from Javanese-chauvinist politicians, the army and the police. Now his line is that independence for Aceh and West Papua is “non-negotiable.”

## Religious Fundamentalism and Communal Bloodletting

Now the government is proposing a vote in Aceh on a proposal to give Islamic law even greater official power

The rise of religious fundamentalism as a mass movement in countries like Indonesia is a reactionary reflection of both the absence of a communist alternative and the manifest bankruptcy of nationalism. Feeding off despair and frustration fuelled by the 1997-98 economic crisis, a multitude of Islamic parties have formed seeking to head off the anger and struggles of the workers. The nationalism pushed by the Java-centred Indonesian bourgeoisie is heavily intertwined with Islamic reaction which particularly targets women and the largely Christian Chinese minority. Two years ago horrific anti-Chinese pogroms swept the country, often instigated by the bloody imperialist-trained armed forces and fuelled by the rising tide of political Islam. As we wrote then:

*"It is urgently necessary that the proletariat as a class enter the arena of struggle fighting for its own historic interests and as champion of all the oppressed."*

Religious fundamentalism has also been consciously promoted by the imperialists as an anti-Communist bulwark. The slaughter of the PKI in 1965-66 was

spearheaded by Islamic fanatics including from Nahdatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah in alliance with the army and with the aid of the imperialists. To this day, Megawati and Wahid, until recently the head of NU, have staunchly refused to criticise this horrific massacre. Their silence underscores that above all they fear the insurgent proletariat and will use whatever means necessary to suppress their struggle.

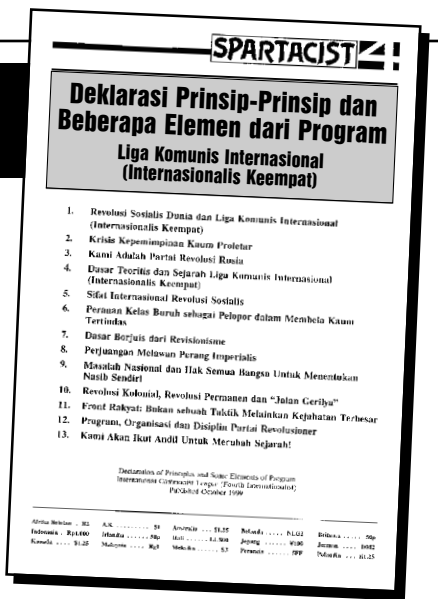
In Ambon and the other islands of Maluku province, the bloody legacy of Dutch colonialism is all too evident. Communalist bloodshed between Christians and Muslims (each about one-half the population) has seen several thousand killed in the last year. The Moluccas were the first part of the Indonesian archipelago to be conquered by the Dutch, who expelled the Portuguese in the early 1600s. Indigenous Ambonese became nominally Christian, made members of the Dutch Reformed Church by decree. In the late 1800s the Dutch began recruiting Ambonese to fight their colonial battles elsewhere in the Netherlands East Indies. One of the most serious Dutch-backed regional rebellions against the new Indonesia republic was the proclamation of the "Republic of the South

# Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program

## International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)

**\$1** (16 pages)

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Moluccas” in April 1950.

Today, the Indonesian army reportedly sides with Muslims while the police tend to take the part of the Christians. Meanwhile Islamic clerics have kept the communalist flames at white heat, ranting that the very existence of Muslims in Indonesia, who comprise 90 percent of the population, is in danger. A huge demonstration in Jakarta on January 7 heard foaming-at-the-mouth clerics vowing to send shock troops into Ambon while calling for *jihād* against Christians. Amien Rais, former leader of Muhammadiyah (Indonesia’s second-largest Islamic organisation) and well-known for his anti-Chinese, anti-Christian bigotry, joined the frenzy, threatening, “Religious law teaches a life for a life, an ear for an ear, an eye for an eye.... Ethnic and religious cleansing by our Christian friends will surely draw a reaction.” For their part, Ambonese Christian groups are calling for the imperialist powers, including the former Dutch colonial masters, to intervene!

### No to Class Collaboration! For Working-Class Independence!

In Indonesia, the militants of the People’s Democratic Party (PRD) have fought with courage under conditions of severe repression. However, the PRD are petty-bourgeois nationalists whose program begins and ends with “*reformasi total*,” i.e., a “reformed” capitalism. Thus they have always tailed sections of the bourgeoisie while hoping to pressure them to be more democratic. In the June 1999 elections the PRD sought

“a united front with other parties against the common enemies...to generate the strongest possible movement against the regime and force the major opposition parties—the National Mandate Party of Amien Rais, the National Awakening Party of Abdurrahman Wahid and [Megawati’s] PDI-Struggle—to take a more consistent stand for *reformasi total*.”

— *Green Left Weekly*, 2 June 1999

Now that the very forces they backed have formed the government, the PRD hopes merely “to force Gus Dur [Wahid] to prove himself to the people” (*Green Left Weekly*, 8 December 1999).

The PRD has consistently supported Megawati Sukarnoputri, even calling to “distribute Mega’s pictures or writings” (*Free Indonesia* No. 1, 1998). A vicious Javanese chauvinist, Megawati upheld the bloody 1975 annexation of East Timor, calling for East Timor’s incorporation into Indonesia as the 27th province. Today, like Wahid, she stands for the continued subjugation of Aceh and West Papua.

The PRD, on the other hand, says they support East Timor’s independence. But this is false: they support the imperialist occupation! For years they have demanded that the imperialist powers, the brutal oppressors of billions the world over, carry out “multinational peacekeeping operations under the auspices of the UN” in East Timor.

Javanese chauvinism and pro-imperialism are death to any possibility of uniting the proletariat in struggle against capitalism. Presenting Megawati as some kind of “lesser evil” and hailing the imperialists in East Timor as does the PRD, tailed by virtually the entire Australian fake left, proves that these forces are enemies of the liberation of the masses from the chauvinist, communalist Javanese-centred Indonesian rulers and their imperialist overlords.

### Laborite Opponents of Proletarian Revolution

Indeed, virtually all the Australian fake left led, organised and cheered on the chauvinist mobilisations and union bans last September whose purpose was to demand the racist Australian state send troops to East Timor. In the tow of the pro-imperialist Labor Party and union bureaucracy, these “leftists” aid the strengthening of imperialist domination in the region, above all in Indonesia. Social-chauvinist pimps for the Australian imperialists, these people have the

gall to claim they represent Marxism.

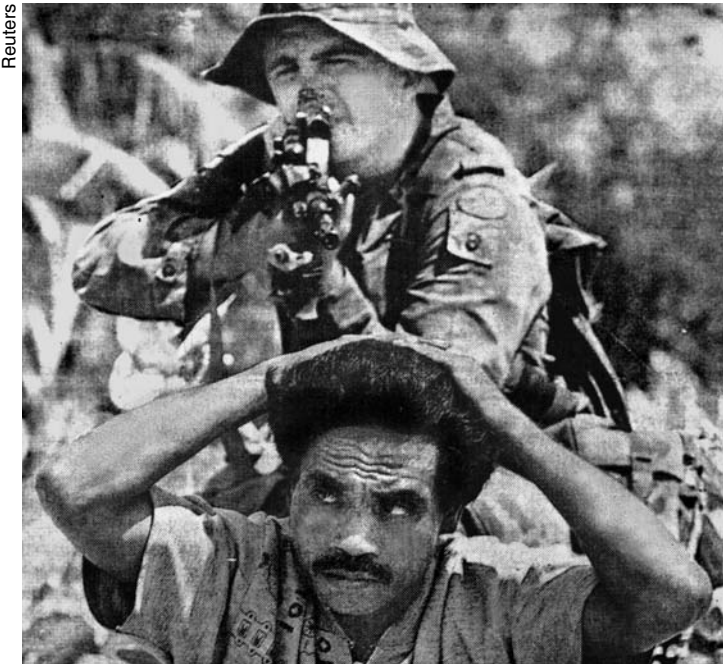
The Democratic Socialist Party (DSP) ranted the loudest and longest for the Australian imperialist occupation of East Timor. Now their front group ASIET (Action in Solidarity with Indonesia and East Timor) is an official United Nations-registered non-governmental organisation (NGO) there. The UN—a den of imperialist thieves and their victims—has been deliberately fostering the growth of NGOs as a hedge against socialist revolution.

Putting on a “left” face as sucker bait, the DSP has run a series of articles in which they criticised the Indonesian PKI for having “subordinated itself to the bourgeois nationalists” (*Green Left Weekly*, 3 November 1999). What chutzpah! The DSP subordinates itself to White Australia *imperialism*. Cheering the Australian imperialists and promoting the PRD’s petty-bourgeois class-collaborationist nationalism in Indonesia is precisely the logic of the DSP’s explicit repudiation of the revolutionary Trotskyist program of permanent revolution.

The International Socialist Organisation (ISO) endorsed “troops in” marches and was especially ecstatic over the social-democratic trade-union tops’ anti-Indonesian actions. Whatever their occasional rhetoric about “revolution”—usually directed to places far away—at home they call for votes to the Labor Party, subordinating themselves to the anti-immigrant, pro-imperialist social democracy whose fundamental loyalty to “democratic” capitalism they share. When it comes to Indonesia, however, they feel the need to sound a bit more “leftist” so they write about the need to “give the democratic struggle the dynamic of ‘permanent revolution’” (*Socialist Worker Review*, November 1999). Far from advocating the dictatorship of the proletariat, by this the ISO merely means adopting demands like “Cut the arms budget, feed the starving” in order to “take liberal slogans and give them a socialist twist.”

Like the PRD, the ISO promoted deadly illusions in the “opposition” forces, claiming that Rais and Megawati could lead a “rank and file revolutionary movement in the army, to split it from below” (*Socialist Worker*, 6 March 1998). At the same time they retrospectively embraced the anti-Communist Islamic mobs that spearheaded the 1965 slaughter, lauding 1998 protests “at the University of Indonesia in Jakarta, where students once played a role in bringing down the previous Sukarno regime”! The ISO and their international cothinkers have long portrayed Islamic reaction as an “anti-imperialist” and “revolutionary” alternative. As we warned years ago, the ISO’s “policy is suicidal for themselves and any workers, youth or women unfortunate enough to be influenced by them” (“‘Third Camp’ Social Democrats Pander to Islamic Fundamentalism,” WV No. 613, 30 December 1994).

The right-centrist Workers Power (WP) likes to keep a tiny step to the left of the ISO. They quote Trotsky on “permanent revolution” and criticise the PRD for



**Australian soldier terrorizes East Timorese civilian in Dili. Imperialist troops out of East Timor!**

advocating, in WP’s words, “first democracy and then later the overthrow of capitalism” (*Workers Power*, November 1999-January 2000). Two years ago they even said, “Only a revolutionary Workers and Peasants government...could really dismantle the New Order and guarantee the masses both democratic and social rights” (*Workers Power*, February-April 1998). But WP’s claim to uphold the anti-imperialist program of permanent revolution is *repudiated in action* by their support to the chauvinist anti-Indonesia union bans and their joining “troops in” demonstrations.

Marching alongside pro-imperialist forces in Australia (while claiming to oppose them), for countries such as Indonesia WP peddles the class-collaborationist program of the “anti-imperialist united front” (League for a Revolutionary Communist International, *Trotskyist Manifesto*, 1989). Flatly counterposed to the program of permanent revolution which insists above all on the political independence of the working class, the “anti-imperialist united front” ties the workers to their domestic capitalist class enemy. This is exactly what led to the horrible slaughter of 1965. Like the PRD, WP aims to pressure the bourgeoisie, calling “to turn Wahid’s words about raising living standards into action.” WP fatuously writes that the Wahid regime “needs to appear reformist to demobilise the masses through parliamentary means” and is “not a pre-cursor to another dictatorship” (*Workers Power*, November 1999-January 2000). Such faith in the blood-drenched Indonesian capitalists and the imperialists is criminal.

### Towards the Indonesian Revolution!

Support to “democratic” imperialism has long been the hallmark of all these pseudo-socialists. They worked as the

ideological foot soldiers in the imperialists’ drive to restore capitalism in the Soviet Union and East Europe, and hope to do the same in China today. We Trotskyists oppose our “own” ruling class and seek its overthrow through workers socialist revolution, and we have *always* defended those states where capitalism has been overthrown. Unconditional military defence of the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state—as well as North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba—against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution is a cornerstone of revolutionary struggle. Today China is on the brink as the Stalinist bureaucracy is rushing headlong to capitalist restoration. Proletarian revolution in Indonesia would powerfully aid the fight to mobilise the Chinese workers in a proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist traitors. Defeating the drive to restore capitalism in China is in turn vital to the proletariat of Asia.

The necessity of a proletarian, international program and party is highlighted by the ever more intense rivalries of the imperialist powers. No longer bound by common anti-Soviet hostility, the U.S., Germany and Japan, along with Australia, Britain and others, are all striving to assert their “interests,” including in and around Indonesia. Twice in the last 100 years the imperialists have plunged humanity into world wars, slaughtering untold millions for the “right” to extract fabulous profits in the dependent countries and for a redivision of the plunder between them. As Russian Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin explained, imperialism is the epoch of capitalism in its death agony—interimperialist war is inevitable until and unless the proletariat seizes power.

The fate of the Indonesian proletariat—and of all humanity—hinges on one overriding factor, the need for revolutionary leadership. The International Communist League fights to build Leninist vanguard parties around the world from Indonesia, the Philippines and China to the U.S., Germany, Japan and Australia as part of a reformed Trotskyist Fourth International. As we concluded in “Forge a Trotskyist Party! For Workers Revolution! Lessons of Indonesia 1965”:

“The Indonesian military and their imperialist backers sought to bury communism in 1965. But the ineradicable contradictions of imperialist capitalism draw new generations of workers and youth into struggle. Out of these layers must be cohered the nucleus of a Leninist vanguard party, fusing declassed revolutionary intellectuals with class-conscious workers. Such a party, based on an internationalist program and taking as its starting point the historically based understanding that the proletariat and the bourgeoisie have no class interests in common, must finally break the chains of dependent capitalism by leading the proletariat to power at the head of all the oppressed.” ■

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# Diallo...

(continued from page 1)

But in order for it to do this, it must be transformed from a class *in* itself into a class *for* itself. This can happen only by means of a revolutionary party utilizing all available methods to raise the class consciousness of the workers by increasing their trust in their own forces, by destroying their illusions, by reinforcing their revolutionary will and self-confidence, and by organizing the overthrow of all the forces standing in the way of the conquest of power.”

If any justice is to come out of the killing of Amadou Diallo, it would be that a new layer of youth and black and working-class militants is won to the program of proletarian revolution.

## Capitalist State: Machinery of Violence

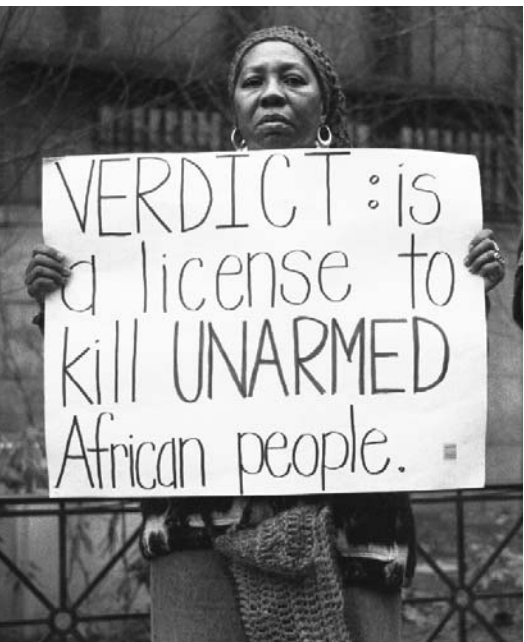
Cheering the Albany decision, Giuliani unleashed an army of cops against protesters, arresting over 150 in the course of the week following the Diallo verdict. We demand that all charges against arrested protesters be dropped immediately. Giuliani revels in unleashing police-state terror against the ghetto and barrio masses. But this certified racist pig was preceded in City Hall by a whole string of Democratic Party mayors, from the no less racist Ed Koch to black liberal David Dinkins, who presided over a reign of cop terror. Dinkins assured his Wall Street masters that the city’s minority and working people



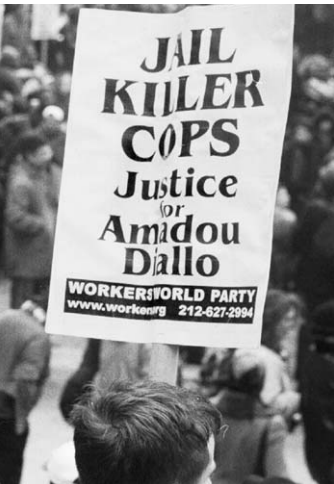
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color of their skin, and police believe they are unfairly targeted by their communities because of the color of their uniforms, we have another bridge to cross.” This theme was also played the same day in a speech by Hillary Clinton at New York’s Riverside Church. This expression of bourgeois concern over increasing popular mistrust of the police points to why the Democrats are the preferred political tool of the capitalists for keeping black and working people in line—because they cloak their attacks on the black population in the rhetoric of “racial harmony.”

**Cops attack protester at February 26 NYC demonstration. Diallo verdict has underscored that there can be no justice for black people under racist capitalism.**



WV Photo



WV Photos



**While black liberals call on Clinton/Reno to “clean up” NYPD, reformists demand that capitalist rulers punish their hired killers, promoting illusion that the bourgeois state can serve interests of the oppressed.**



Harrry/U.S. News & World Report

would “take it from me,” hiring thousands more cops to carry out racist “law and order” while slashing thousands of unionized jobs from the city payroll. And the Democratic Clinton White House has done more even than its Republican predecessors to build up the forces of racist repression, from putting thousands more cops in the inner cities to the vast increase in the prison population and the continuing speedup on death row.

Appearing alongside Jesse Jackson and others on March 5 in Selma, Alabama on the 35th anniversary of the bloody attack on civil rights protesters there, Bill Clinton declared, “As long as African-Americans and Latinos anywhere in America believe they are unfairly targeted by police because of the

It is precisely the role of Jackson, Al Sharpton and other black Democrats, who posture as opponents of police brutality, to keep the ghetto masses chained to the capitalist system through the capitalist Democratic Party. Sharpton placed himself at the head of the protests over Diallo’s killing last year in order to contain the seething anger and channel it into Democratic Party pressure politics. Today, from Sharpton to nationalist demagogue Sonny Carson, the self-styled “black community leaders” are trading in the blood of Amadou Diallo to garner black votes for Hillary Clinton’s Senate bid against Giuliani. Denouncing the “reverends and leaders,” one caller to black NYC radio station WLIB exclaimed, “We’re being killed off day after day and they talk about keeping calm!”

Sharpton and Jackson plead for the Clinton administration to bring civil rights charges against Diallo’s killers and to launch a federal investigation to “clean up” the NYPD. From Los Angeles to Philadelphia to New York, there have been many such investigations and commissions which have recommended and implemented police “reforms.” But as shown by the burgeoning exposés of the LAPD’s racist frame-up machine, these “reform” schemes do not change anything fundamental and are not intended to; their purpose is to refurbish the authority of the police and to make the apparatus of repression more effective.

It is the role of the trade-union bureaucracy to maintain illusions among the ranks of labor that this is a “democracy” with equal rights for all which the cops and courts are duty-bound to uphold. It is a telling indictment of these labor lieutenants of capital that not a peep of protest was heard from a single

police reform—including a pay raise for the racist, strikebreaking cops the union misleaders embrace as “union brothers.”

Whatever its “democratic” trappings, the bourgeois state is in fact a dictatorship of the handful of capitalists who own the means of production and amass fabulous profits out of the blood and sweat of the working people, the vast majority of the population. The police, military, courts and prisons form the core of this state, an institution of organized violence acting as the executive committee of the capitalist ruling class.

With the stock market hitting new

heights, the gap between the rich and the mass of the population continues to widen at an ever greater pace. As the capitalists drive down the living standards of the working class to maximize their profits, they need a stronger state to try to contain these explosive contradictions. More than 100 years ago, Karl Marx’s son-in-law Paul Lafargue exposed the real workings of capitalist “democracy” when he wrote: “In bourgeois society, the more considerable becomes the amount of social wealth, the smaller becomes the number of individuals by whom it is appropriated. The same takes place with power: in proportion as the mass of citizens who possess political rights increases, and the number of elected rulers increases, the actual power is concentrated and becomes the monopoly of a smaller and smaller group of individuals.”

The Constitution of this country was originally meant to apply to white, male, Protestant freeholders—that was the group accorded the rights of a “citizen.” It took a bloody Civil War and bitter social struggles to win the extension of the rights of citizenship for black people, working people and women. Correspondingly, the capitalist state has sought to curtail and diminish these rights.

The massive expansion of gun control measures in recent years is aimed at disarming the population and asserting the state’s monopoly of armed force. The same ruling class which creates “elite” cop squads like the Street Crime Unit that killed Amadou Diallo and lets them rampage through the ghettos with 16-round semiautomatics denies the right of self-defense to the population, especially black and working people. Increasingly, the right to bear arms enshrined in the Second Amendment is a right extended only to the racist cops.

That the cops are uniquely granted a license to kill points to the Marxist understanding that they are part of the “special bodies of armed men” at the core of

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**San Francisco, Washington, D.C.**

**Drop All Charges Against 348 Arrested Jamal Defenders!**

*The Partisan Defense Committee sent the following protest letter to U.S. attorney general Janet Reno and San Francisco district attorney Terence Hallinan on March 1.*

We demand that all charges be dropped immediately against the 185 people arrested in Washington, D.C. and the 163 arrested in San Francisco in civil disobedience protests on February 27 in defense of death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal.

The mass arrests of opponents of the death penalty are fully in keeping with the policies of the Clinton administration. The Clinton White House has presided over a vast expansion of the federal death penalty and has encouraged the massive increase

in the rate of executions nationally.

The arrests of Jamal’s supporters came as the Supreme Court hears an appeal contesting the provision of the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, signed by President Clinton in 1996, which guts the right of *habeas corpus*. Meanwhile, the attorney general’s office is today pushing for the use of the federal death penalty in the Carl Derek Cooper case in the District of Columbia, which would be the first capital case in the city in 30 years.

We demand immediate freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal and abolition of the racist death penalty. Drop all charges against the 348 protesters now!

the state, standing above society in order to enforce the rule of the dominant capitalist class over the proletariat. Building on the work of Friedrich Engels, Karl Marx’s comrade-in-arms, V.I. Lenin, leader of the 1917 Russian workers revolution, stressed in his book *The State and Revolution*: “If the state is the product of the irreconcilability of class antagonisms, if it is a power standing *above* society and ‘alienating itself *more and more* from it,’ it is obvious that the liberation of the oppressed class is impossible not only without a violent revolution, *but also without the destruction* of the apparatus of state power which was created by the ruling class.”

We Need a Workers Party!

At the February 26 protest in Midtown Manhattan the day after the Diallo verdict, the banner carried at the head of the Spartacist League/Labor Black League contingent read, “There Is No Justice in the Capitalist Courts! Break with the Democrats! Build a Workers Party to Fight for Socialist Revolution!” In contrast, the reformist “socialists,” from the Communist Party (CP) to the Workers World Party (WWP) and the International Socialist Organization (ISO), sow illusions in capitalist justice and tail the Democrats.

The CP’s *People’s Weekly World* (4 March) champions Democratic Congressman John Conyers’ proposed “Law Enforcement Trust and Integrity Act”—which includes the usual litany of calls for federal oversight of police and such-like—and grotesquely pleads, “In Amadou Diallo’s memory, register and vote against Giuliani.” In the same vein, the Committees of Correspondence explicitly appeals to Attorney General Janet Reno to “condemn” the policies of the NYPD while calling for a “vigorous affirmative action program” to recruit more minority cops—like the Latino cop who killed Malcolm Ferguson!

The main slogan raised by the WWP on February 26 was “Jail Killer Cops!” while the ISO chimed in with the call, “Jail the Racist Thugs in Blue.” This appeal to the capitalist rulers to chastise their racist killers for doing their job reflects the view of the ISO/WWP opportunists that the capitalist state can be pressured to serve the interests of workers and minorities. The Progressive Labor Party (PL) presents a more radical face, rightly saying that cop terror “will end only when an armed and communist-led work-

No Justice...

(continued from page 2)

class enemies, particularly as represented by the Democratic Party, the Labor Black League has a fundamentally different perspective based on mobilizing the power of *our* class, the multiracial labor movement. Massive protest and strike action by New York’s powerful and integrated working class—transit, hospital, city and hotel workers—would give an organized political expression and social power to the outrage of the inner cities against cop terror.

There will be no end to police brutality short of the destruction of the system of capitalist exploitation and racist oppression which the cops serve as armed guard dogs. But a protest based on the organized muscle of the labor movement would give the cops and their capitalist masters some pause. More importantly it would serve to imbue the working class with the understanding that its interests are inseparably linked to the defense of the ghettos and barrios and the fight for black freedom.

The Labor Black League for Social Defense stands for mobilizing the masses of black, minority and working people for integrated struggle against the brutal system of race and class oppression that is capitalist America. We fight to build a leadership that is based on a program of *class struggle*—the understanding that the interests of the working people are

California: Down With Props 21 and 22!

On March 4, some 100 youthful demonstrators rallied in San Francisco against California Propositions 21 and 22. Prop. 21 would extend use of the death penalty and require children as young as 14 to be tried as adults in specified cases (see “California’s Prop 21 Targets Black, Latino and Immigrant Youth,” WV No. 730, 25 February). Prop. 22, the focus of a sinister anti-gay drive, states that “Only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California.”

We print below the speech given at the rally by a Bay Area Spartacus Youth Club member. When he denounced Democratic Party mayor Willie Brown and supervisor Tom Ammiano, the rally organizers cut off power to the microphone. The comrade finished his remarks, however, to cheers and applause from the crowd.

\* \* \*

Down with reactionary Proposition 21! Down with reactionary Proposition 22! Down with the bourgeoisie’s “family values” anti-sex witchhunt! Down with the racist war on drugs—really a racist war on blacks and immigrants! The ruling class in America is on the offensive—and in capitalist society the rich exploiters are always on the offensive! They want to throw black and minority kids in jail because they don’t have jobs for them, because they don’t want them and they’re afraid that they

ing class seizes state power” (*Challenge*, 16 February) while a March 1 *Challenge* article denounces “Sharpton and the other liberal mis-leaders.” Only three months earlier, PL eagerly promoted a homeless protest organized by Sharpton and other “liberal misleaders” as an electoral rally for the Democratic Party. The contradiction between PL’s red rhetoric and its reformist practice is a measure of the despair it shares with all opportunists over the revolutionary capacity of the proletariat.

At bottom, all these groups reject the necessary struggle to bring revolutionary consciousness to the working class, either openly tailing Democratic Party liberals and pro-Democratic Party labor bureau-

irreconcilably counterposed to those of their capitalist class exploiters and their political parties, be they Democrats or Republicans.

That kind of leadership was seen in action last October 23 at the head of the nearly 10,000-strong mobilization that ran the Klan out of New York City. Initiated by the Partisan Defense Committee and heavily built by the Labor Black League and the Spartacist League this mobilization, centered on the power of labor, standing at the head of blacks, immigrants, gays and all the intended victims of Klan terror, was an example of a workers party in action. Standing on the other side of the barricades, working overtime to stop this independent mobilization of the working class, was Al Sharpton and the Democratic Party establishment who preached “tolerance” for the KKK lynchers. Now, Sharpton and the black preachers counsel tolerance for cop brutality telling black people to turn the other cheek and pray.

It is through the leadership of a workers party that the power of labor will be welded to the anger of the inner cities to uproot a system based on exploitation and oppression enforced by racist cop brutality. When those who labor rule we will begin to build an egalitarian socialist society where racist terror and oppression will be eliminated once and for all and the tremendous wealth of this society will be used to provide a decent life for the working people, blacks, immigrants, the poor, the young, the aged.■



WV Photo

can spark social protest. And despite being a key part of the working class, as last hired and first fired, blacks are increasingly treated as an expendable population in racist capitalist America, and subject to the ruling class’s sinister urge to genocide.

They’re going after women’s rights, after abortion, after homosexuals. Proposition 22 by its very existence is a bigoted incitement to murder more Matthew Shepards and more Billy Jack Gaithers. The capitalists need “family values” and religious reaction. They need the family as a basis for social reaction; they need the bourgeois fam-

ily as a basis for inheritance. And they want to line us up so we’ll all salute when they march us off to the next imperialist war.

We need to break with the Democrats and Republicans—they’re both parties of capitalism! It’s Bill Clinton who created “don’t ask, don’t tell.” It’s Bill Clinton who signed into legislation the Effective Death Penalty Act. Tom Ammiano and Willie Brown here in San Francisco did their best to attack black workers with the “Rescue Muni” [transit] plan. Black rights, gay rights, workers rights—same struggle, same fight! Workers of the world, unite!

crats or writing off the unions as a whole as “fascist” as does PL. We fight to forge the revolutionary party needed to win the proletariat to an understanding of its role as the gravedigger of the capitalist system and defender of the rights of black people and all the oppressed. This program was given concrete expression in the mass labor/black mobilization led by the Partisan Defense Committee and Spartacist League to stop the Klan on October 23. Despite the efforts of the Democrats and reformist leftists like the ISO to stop that mobilization, up to 10,000 trade unionists, blacks, immigrants and youth turned out on October 23 and drove out the KKK killers. As we wrote in “Labor/Black Mobilization Rides KKK Out of NYC” (WV No. 722, 29 October 1999):

“It galvanized the anger against the marauding, racist cops which exploded earlier this year over the killing of black African Amadou Diallo by the NYPD. It gave expression to the hundreds of thousands in this city—from unionized workers to immigrant cab drivers and hot dog vendors, CUNY students, artists, AIDS victims—who have had it with Giuliani’s mini-police state. It demonstrated an alternative to the Democratic Party politicians, their black front men and labor flunkies, who worked as feverishly to try to demobilize any independent outpouring of the working people and all the enemies of Klan terror as they had done to contain the protests over the Diallo

killing within the confines of electoral pressure politics....

“What was seen on the streets of New York City on October 23 was a microcosm of a workers party in action, i.e., the working class mobilized in its own interests, acting independently of the government and parties of the capitalist class.”

Central to the political battle to build that successful mobilization was the understanding that the bourgeois state is not neutral but is an instrument to maintain the rule of one class—the capitalists—over another class, the proletariat. What was demonstrated in action was the social power of the working class. The October 23 mobilization gave flesh and blood to the understanding that the interests of labor are inseparably linked to the defense of the ghettos and barrios and the fight for black freedom. While the racist rulers have deemed an entire generation of black and minority youth a “surplus” population to be brutalized, terrorized and blown away by the rampaging cops, black people in their overwhelming majority form a strategic component of the multiracial working class. As part of the working class they will play a vanguard role in the fight for the victorious socialist revolution that will eliminate the system of class exploitation and racist oppression that the cops “serve and protect.”■

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# Germany...

(continued from page 5)

increasing nationalist tensions and counterrevolutionary movements, especially in the Baltic states. On the other hand, there had also been powerful strikes by the Siberian miners which rocked the bureaucracy, where soviets had been set up spontaneously and so on. We raised the slogan, “For a federation of the USSR and the DDR based on workers democracy!”

The March 1990 elections were a referendum on Yes or No to capitalist unification, i.e., yes or no to capitalist counterrevolution. We made clear that every organization had to take a clear position in front of the working class on that vital question. Our central point over and over again was a clear, unambiguous and loud “No!”

As a tactic to maximize the vote against counterrevolution as well as to break away pro-socialist workers from fake-left organizations which supported counterrevolution, and to split and regroup those left organizations that polarized under the impact of the upcoming referendum, we proposed the following no-contest agreement: if an organization is prepared to say clearly, publicly, unam-

our election placard hanging beside that of the conservative Christian Democrats, who at that time led the government in West Germany. We asked, what’s that? That’s not quite the party we like to be put next to. They told us: We either go for revolution, then we vote for you guys, or we go for capitalism and vote for the party that has the best connections and access to capital. This kind of polarization really gives you an idea about the desperation of the workers.

On March 18, 85 percent voted for either the Christian Democratic or Social Democratic-based coalitions, i.e., for capitalist reunification. We told the bitter truth to the working class internationally: “Fourth Reich Wins in DDR Vote.” Counterrevolution had won, which was a bitter defeat not only for the German working class but internationally. What followed—the introduction of the West German D-mark, the dissolution of the DDR army, police and so on—had basically been decided by that time. It was the SED/PDS that led the counterrevolution, it was the Social Democracy which was the Trojan horse of counterrevolution, and all the fake left supported counterrevolution. It was only the ICL that had fought against counterrevolution and given revolutionary leadership to the working class.



Rogner/Netzhauf

**February 1997 march against threatened job cuts in Ruhr industrial region came just before Social Democratic misleaders sold out huge miners strike. Unchaining German proletariat’s power requires struggle to split workers from SPD.**

in Germany. He put forward the ignorant and anti-Trotskyist perspective that there would be mass resistance by the working class, that the social-democratic, ex-Stalinist PDS would split, etc. This led to a series of adaptations and capitulations to the PDS, basically denying our role as the revolutionary leadership in 1989-90 as well as the PDS’ role as the counter-revolutionary leadership in the struggle.

This adaptation came to a peak in a January 1995 public forum in Berlin, where Norden stretched out his hands to the Stalinists in the PDS, ascribing to them “attachments” to the DDR—the DDR that was destroyed five years before. He claimed that the Stalinists couldn’t even “conceive of a proletarian political revolution” at that time. Not only could they, they had been haunted by its possibility after Treptow. Over and over again, Norden asserted that there was no revolutionary leadership in 1989-90. What, then, was the whole purpose of our intervention? Surely not to cozy up to the Stalinist bureaucracy.

Basically, Norden was capitulating to the “death of communism” campaign of the bourgeoisie and searching for forces other than the proletariat and programs other than our revolutionary Trotskyist program. The internal fight that subsequently took place against this revisionism was key to rearming our international in the struggle for new October Revolutions (see our *International Bulletin* No. 38, “The Norden ‘Group’—Shamefaced Defectors from Trotskyism”). Too politically cowardly to build a faction and carry on an open political fight for their positions inside our party, the Norden group organized their own expulsions in 1996 by breaking discipline. They then formed the Internationalist Group (IG). Soon thereafter, the IG confirmed its grossly opportunist character. They trumpeted a group of trade-union opportunists in Brazil called Luta Metalúrgica which has repeatedly committed *class treason* by dragging the Volta Redonda Municipal Workers Union into the courts in order to try to keep their supporter, an ex-cop, in the union presidency.

## Forward to New October Revolutions!

In the summer of 1990, the ICL initiated an internal discussion to assess our intervention in the DDR and deepen the lessons, as well as to understand the events further unfolding in East Europe and the Soviet Union. Events in the DDR did not unfold exactly as Trotsky had predicted. In 1933, in “The Class Nature of the Soviet State,” Trotsky wrote:

“The Marxist thesis relating to the catastrophic character of the transfer of power from the hands of one class into the hands of another applies not only to revolutionary periods, when history sweeps madly ahead, but also to the periods of counterrevolution, when society rolls backwards. He who asserts that the Soviet government has been *gradually* changed from proletarian to bourgeois is only, so to speak, running backwards the film of reformism.”

The transfer of power from the proletariat to the bourgeoisie in 1990 was surely catastrophic, and the German bourgeoisie did destroy the East German

workers state. However, Trotsky had also advanced the *prognosis* that a civil war would be required to restore capitalism in the Soviet Union and undo the deepgoing proletarian revolution. In the discussion, we noted that Trotsky had overdrawn the analogy between a social revolution in capitalist society and social counterrevolution in a deformed workers state. Whereas the capitalists exercise direct ownership over the means of production and are thus compelled to violently resist the overthrow of their system in order to defend their own property, the preservation of proletarian power depends principally on the *consciousness* and *organization* of the working class. Trotsky himself had stated this decisive factor in a number of writings. Two of the documents from this discussion, those by Joseph Seymour and Albert St. John, are published in *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 45-46 (Winter 1990-91).

This discussion prepared us to intervene in the Soviet Union and fight there to mobilize the working class against counterrevolution, which had been further strengthened by the Gorbachev-supported counterrevolution in the DDR. When Yeltsin made his coup in August 1991, we called on the workers in the USSR to mobilize to smash the Yeltsinite counterrevolutionaries. This coup opened the period of open counterrevolution; it was an event of central importance, but the question was not yet finally decided. We did not write off the USSR immediately but fought tooth and nail against the consolidation of the counterrevolution. The multinational Soviet working class got drowned by the counterrevolutionary flood because it was politically atomized as a result of the usurpation of political power by the Stalinists in 1923-24, paralyzed by CIA-supported, Yeltsin-friendly fake “free trade unions” as well as by the nasty chauvinist poison of the many Stalinist remnants. Thus Yeltsin was able in the coming months to consolidate a bourgeois state, finally destroying the workers state that issued out of the October Revolution.

Despite the campaign of the bourgeoisie, communism is not dead at all. It lives in the class struggles that capitalism itself inevitably creates and in the revolutionary program of Trotskyism. It’s the consciousness of the proletariat which is key in the struggle for revolution as well as in the struggle against counterrevolution. This consciousness does not come spontaneously but must be brought into the working class by the revolutionary party. As Trotsky explained in *Lessons of October*, drawing the lessons from the successful Russian Revolution in contrast to the failed German Revolution of 1923: “Without a party, apart from a party, over the head of a party, or with a substitute for a party, the proletarian revolution cannot conquer.” And our successful October 23 labor/black mobilization that rode the KKK out of New York City demonstrates the power of the proletariat when led by a revolutionary vanguard party and marching at the head of all the oppressed. Forward to new October Revolutions! That’s what the ICL is fighting for. ■



Spartakist

**June 1992 East Berlin march against reactionary West German abortion law. SpAD banner reads, “Capitalist Anschluss: Slavery for Women.”**

biguously and in writing that they oppose capitalist reunification, we would call on our supporters to vote for their candidates in places where we don’t run, and the other party would likewise call on its supporters to vote for our candidates where it doesn’t run. As it turned out, *we were the only ones who fought against capitalist counterrevolution!*

## Stalinism: Gravedigger of Revolutions

Under the impact of the bourgeois offensive, the vanguard layers of the working class increasingly despaired. To give an example, when we went to the city cleaning workers in Halle, we saw

The counterrevolution led the bourgeoisie to launch a triumphalist campaign over the supposed “death of communism.” One of their ideologues even proclaimed the “end of history.” At the same time, the counterrevolution has thrown back the consciousness of the proletariat worldwide. This is even more so because the counterrevolution was led from the inside, by the Stalinist bureaucracy. It was Gorbachev himself who proclaimed the superiority of capitalism over socialism.

Our party is not immune from the pressures of society. Jan Norden, a former leading member of the ICL, couldn’t face the grim reality of counterrevolution

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## SPARTACIST

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# South Africa...

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and must mobilise their social power in strikes against the capitalist government. However, especially in a society where organised labour represents only a fraction of the oppressed black masses, the working class cannot improve or even defend its economic conditions simply through trade-union struggle.

What's urgently posed is the fight for a party like the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky which led the workers of Russia to power in the October Revolution of 1917, a Leninist vanguard party representing the immediate and historical interests of the proletariat in its struggle against capitalist exploitation. Only a party with a programme *to overthrow capitalism and smash the bourgeois state* can consistently fight for workers' interests against the powerful forces of world capitalism.

Like much of COSATU, the leadership of NUMSA is dominated by the SACP, which for decades has been closely allied to the ANC and holds key ministerial posts in the capitalist Mbeki government. As the SACP hemorrhages members and loses its grip at the base, its treachery at the top becomes all the more stark. The VW strike took on not only increased exploitation of the VW workforce, but also the pro-capitalist trade-union leadership dominated by the SACP. The SACP—what Lenin called a bourgeois workers party—has a working-class base but a thoroughly pro-capitalist leadership and programme and encompasses outright nationalists, government ministers and labour reformists as well as workers looking for a revolutionary perspective. As revolutionary Marxists, Spartacist South Africa seeks to break the working class from its reformist SACP misleaders, building a multiracial Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party.

A serious struggle to confront and defeat the ANC-led bourgeois-nationalist regime requires the class independence of the proletariat, meaning above all independence from the capitalist state. The state—its cops, courts and army—is not neutral but rather is wielded by the bourgeoisie to suppress the working class and to protect the profit and property of the capitalists. After the firing of the VW strikers, the Uitenhage Crisis Committee, which represents the victimised workers, issued a statement on their demands and origins, which included a call for “mediation from an independent source that they have confidence in.” Mediation has become a standard code word for appeals to the bourgeois courts and strikebreaking “arbitrators.” Indeed, the Uitenhage Crisis Committee is reportedly considering a lawsuit against NUMSA. We oppose moves to sue NUMSA in the bosses' courts for reinstatement of the strikers. Dragging the workers organisations into the capitalist courts is a violation of the most elementary working-class principles. It's dangerous to presume one can fight the COSATU bureaucracy's subordination of the unions to the state by appealing to the courts of the capitalist class enemy.

The WIVL, which has been aiding the Committee, has a track record of spitting on the fight for trade union independence from the bourgeois state. The case of former Chemical Workers Industrial Union (CWIU) president Abraham Agulhas, a WIVL supporter, is only one example. Agulhas was suspended as a shop steward for a period of five years as a result of a witchhunt “against members and officials who rejected the ANC and SACP as parties who have sold out the working class,” according to a statement from WIVL supporters circulated to us. Agulhas and his supporters then went on to apply “for a declaratory order through the courts to declare us members” after the union kicked them out.

Agulhas has since spearheaded the formation of a breakaway Oil, Chemical, General and Allied Workers Union (OCGAWU). Workers considering any

split away from COSATU into so-called “independent” groupings should beware: setting up such breakaway unions not only weakens the workers movement in its day-to-day struggle with the employers but also separates the more politically advanced workers from those who still have illusions in the ANC/SACP regime. We stand for the principle of industrial unionism—organising all workers in a given industry in one union on an internally democratic basis—in opposition to the formation of politically rival unions.

Furthermore, fake leftists like WIVL have no compunction when it comes to wielding the bourgeois state to intervene in the labour movement, so long as they



African Communist

**1995 South African Communist Party congress. SACP is an integral component of capitalist ANC-led government which breaks strikes, attacks township and rural poor.**

can rule their own fiefdoms. While defending Agulhas against victimisation, we sharply oppose his resort to the courts as a class betrayal. We in the International Communist League have fought internationally to keep the bourgeoisie's courts out of the internal affairs of the labour movement and oppose suing the unions as a point of principle. Labour must clean its own house!

The Workers International Vanguard League urges workers to focus on “trade union” issues alone. Their leaflet defending VW strikers mentions the ANC capitalist government only in passing, saving all the fire for the NUMSA leadership. It urges: “NUMSA workers, take control of your union! Down with undemocratic leadership! No holding-hands with the bosses!” Class-struggle leadership in the unions is not a question of “democracy” in the abstract, or simply one of “worker control.” At bottom, what is required is a many-sided struggle against the South African capitalist state now governed by the bourgeois-nationalist ANC. The working class, led by its vanguard party, must place itself at the head of all oppressed sections of society.

### For a Leninist-Trotskyist Party!

It's no accident that NUMSA, which routinely debates a motion to leave the “alliance” at its congresses, is at the heart of a renewed semi-syndicalist mood. This sentiment today draws on the earlier “workerist” current, an amalgam of quasi-syndicalist and left social-democratic politics emerging from the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU), from which NUMSA originated under leaders like John Gomomo and Moses Mayekiso in the late 1970s and early '80s.

While declaring their independence of and distrust toward the ANC, the “workerists” had no programme or perspective for leading the struggle against national oppression embedded in the apartheid system. And so they ended up by folding at COSATU's 1987 national congress and accepting the ANC's Freedom Charter, subordinating the unions to the very bourgeois-nationalist party they had previously criticised.

The inadequacy of the “workerist” current—with its sole focus on building a trade-union movement—has already been underscored by the simple fact that while

union struggles have pushed industrial wages up over the past 20 years, there's been no fundamental change in the structure of the South African economy, no closure of the apartheid wage gap, no end to the terrible impoverishment of the rural masses.

COSATU has never organised broadly the millions of agricultural labourers, who are (along with the miners) the most exploited and oppressed section of the South African proletariat. More generally, the union movement has paid little attention to the impoverished rural population, both in the former bantustans and on the white-owned farms where conditions are scarcely different from those

under the old apartheid system. Unemployment, widespread among all layers of society, cannot be combatted through trade-union action alone, but ultimately requires expanding industrial production at the highest levels, which will only happen through the socialist reconstruction of society.

Only a planned socialist economy, part of an international socialist society where capitalism has been swept away, can rid South Africa of its deeply rooted inequalities—raising up the township poor, the women oppressed in polygamous marriages and sold like chattel under *lobola* (money paid as a “bride price”) and the millions today eking out an existence on the bantustans, and alleviating the suffering of the millions dying from AIDS. The proletariat must place itself at the head of the struggle for the national liberation of black Africans, a struggle culminating in a black-centred workers government in which there will

be a place for coloureds, Indians and those anti-racist whites who support the democratic rule of the black majority.

Not only is simple trade-union struggle inadequate to the task of improving the conditions of the black masses, but underlying this strategy is the assumption that Mbeki's regime has ushered in a stable bourgeois democracy. Illusions in the bourgeois state are clearly seen in delegates' welcoming the cop “union” POPCRU at COSATU's national congress last August. From the ex-Stalinist SACP to the left nationalists and labour bureaucrats, most of the left push the lie that with more black cops, the police are part of “our” struggle.

This was certainly *not* the understanding in the late 1980s, when cops in the townships and bantustans were singled out for retribution by the outraged young black “comrades.” To be sure, at that time the cops, including black cops, were carrying out the orders of the white-supremacist government. Today, the cops take their orders from ANC leaders who claim to represent the oppressed black majority. But in reality the ANC ministers are just the political front men for the white capitalists, whether in Johannesburg or Frankfurt, and the cops—black or white—remain the armed thugs of the capitalist state. As the VW strike showed, this government has no qualms about mass firings and unleashing police force to attack black workers. Mbeki could just as soon imprison thousands of workers' leaders as Botha did in 1985, borrowing the same tactics and using the same state apparatus. Cops and security guards out of the labour movement!

South Africa, both under the former white-supremacist government and today under the bourgeois-nationalist ANC, confirms what Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution predicted: that in backward countries, economic and social modernisation and genuine national liberation can be achieved only through socialist revolution and its extension especially to the advanced capitalist countries of North America, West Europe and Japan. A workers revolution in South Africa would shake the capitalist world, finding an echo not only among the oppressed black masses in Brazil and the U.S. but also among the millions of union members, minorities and intellectuals who actively solidarised with the struggle against white-supremacist rule in the apartheid state. For the perspective of permanent revolution in South Africa to become a reality requires the forging of a proletarian, revolutionary, internationalist Leninist-Trotskyist party. This is what Spartacist South Africa, section of the International Communist League, fights for today. ■

International Communist League  
(Fourth Internationalist)

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# WORKERS VANGUARD

## ANC Government Escalates War on South African Workers

JOHANNESBURG—At the opening of Parliament in February, South African president Thabo Mbeki declared open war on the labour movement. His speech marked an escalation of ongoing austerity attacks against the overwhelmingly black proletariat, signalled last year by breaking the public sector workers strike. Singling out a recent wildcat strike at the Volkswagen auto plant in Uitenhage, Mbeki fumed: “Jobs, a better life for our people in the context of a growing economy and our standing in the eyes of the investor community cannot be held hostage by elements pursuing selfish and anti-social purposes.”

Despite Mbeki’s rhetoric about “black economic empowerment,” the *economic basis* of apartheid—the superexploitation of black labour by the white capitalist class and its senior partners on Wall Street and in the City of London—remains after six years of African National Congress (ANC) government, first under Nelson Mandela and now under his successor Mbeki. Not surprisingly, Mbeki’s speech, denouncing the VW strike as “illegal and unjustified,” won kudos from international finance capitalists. At the same time, South African Communist Party (SACP) leader Blade Nzimande called it a “very unifying speech.” This, too, is not surprising since the reformist SACP is united with the bourgeois-nationalist ANC in administering the neo-apartheid capitalist government.

Mbeki underscored the government’s commitment to promoting “black capitalism” at the expense of the black proletariat. Far from having redistributed wealth from the white racist bourgeoisie to the black masses, the ANC-led government has spawned a black bourgeois layer working in government, in the corporate offices of Anglo American and other Randlords, or pushing “black empowerment” schemes. While the black petty bourgeoisie has become increasingly satisfied by the “new” South Africa, at least 40 percent of the black labour force is unemployed, a figure far higher in townships like Soweto and Lamontville.

Mbeki personifies an aspiring black bourgeoisie derisively dubbed “the gravy train” by the black masses. These black exploiters join their more powerful white partners in sucking off the wealth of the country produced by the black workers. And the bourgeois-nationalist ANC is aided in this by the SACP and the Con-

### Down With Neo-Apartheid Capitalism! For a Black-Centered Workers Government!

gress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), which join in administering the capitalist government through the “tripartite alliance,” a nationalist popular front. From its inception, the “tripartite alliance” has sought to maintain

and a strategic job site in the impoverished Eastern Cape. The struggle at VW was sparked by a split within the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) local after 13 shop stewards in the Uitenhage plant were suspended by

company has the right to apply whatever means it believes are justified to get people back on the job” (*Dispatch Online*, 2 February). On February 4, VW fired 1,300 workers and suspended 150 others. This was followed by “Operation Beetle,” as 200 armed police occupied townships around the plant to suppress resistance. A police official declared: “The SA Police Service will not tolerate any form of intimidation in this type of situation.”

To justify the suppression of the strike and the mass firing, the bourgeois media played up the supposed role in the Uitenhage events of the Workers International Vanguard League (WIVL), a small Cape Town-based leftist group, implying that the workers action was instigated by “reds.” Along the same lines, an SACP Political Bureau statement branded the strikers as “opportunistic elements that seek to divide organised workers with pseudo-radical demagoguery.” The workers movement must defend the WIVL, other left-wing groups and union militants against red-baiting attacks by the ANC-led government and its political hatchet men.

The struggle to reinstate the 1,300 fired Volkswagen strikers is of vital concern for the South African workers movement and, indeed, for the international proletariat. The German auto giant, with its far-flung operations in production, distribution and marketing, is vulnerable to *international labour action*. And it is, of course, most vulnerable in Germany itself, a country with one of the largest, strongest and best-organised trade-union movements in the world.

#### Break with the “Tripartite Alliance”!

Workers are already voting with their feet against the ANC/SACP/COSATU “tripartite alliance” by abandoning its various structures. As black workers become increasingly disillusioned not only with the ANC but also the SACP, they view the unions as the only possible means of defence against the capitalist state and the bosses. Shop stewards now quit their posts rather than toe the COSATU bureaucracy’s pro-ANC line. Strikes break out without “official” say-so. Unionists leave COSATU for rival federations lacking ties to the “alliance.” A parallel and overlapping movement against the ANC/SACP leadership is spinning out splits in the mass organisations in the black townships, the “civics.”

Advanced workers hostile to the pro-capitalist leadership in the unions openly debate in local branch meetings, shebeens and pubs whether to fight within COSATU to break it from the “alliance” or whether to simply pull out of COSATU in a move toward “independent” unions. *COSATU should quit the alliance and get out of the government.* The unions can

*continued on page 11*



Peter Botha

**More than 4,000 workers at Volkswagen Uitenhage plant staged wildcat strike in January in defense of suspended NUMSA shop stewards. Workers were subjected to company lockout, cop attacks and mass firing.**

an “investor friendly” environment. We warned at the time of the public sector strike last fall that as a capitalist party external to the workers movement, “the ANC would not shrink from seeking to smash the trade unions if necessary to defend its class interests” (WV No. 718, 3 September 1999). Since coming to power in 1994, the ANC has made crystal clear its fundamental hostility to the needs and aspirations of the black masses.

Mbeki’s speech was meant to placate foreign investors shaken by the wildcat at Volkswagen SA—one of the largest ventures by outside investors in the country

the NUMSA leadership. On January 20, more than 4,000 workers downed tools to back the suspended shop stewards amid simmering conflicts over renegotiated holiday leaves, forced overtime and unresolved issues going back to 1996. The company management, explaining that “full production could not commence due to high absenteeism as well as the refusal by some employees to commence working,” then shut down the plant, in effect locking out the workers.

The NUMSA leadership openly backed the VW management, with union president Mtutuzeli Tom announcing that “the



**As capitalist government of President Thabo Mbeki wages war on black proletariat, riot cops are unleashed against taxi drivers protesting government attacks on their livelihood.**



Nadine Hutton