

Death Penalty: Barbarism U.S.A.

Illinois Moratorium, New Hampshire Repeal Vote
...As Executions Mount

Gerald Davis

Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!

For the first time since the U.S. reinstated capital punishment in 1976, a state legislature has voted for abolition of the death penalty. The May 18 repeal vote in New Hampshire came only months after Republican Illinois governor George Ryan declared a moratorium on executions in that state in January. Ryan's announcement came after the widely publicized releases of 13 death row inmates who had proved their innocence. Fully half of all Illinois death sentences that have been appealed have been reversed in favor of a new trial or sentencing hearing. Throughout the U.S., 87 death row prisoners—one for every seven executed—have been found innocent since 1977. And those 87 are only the tip of the iceberg. Many of them, like five of the 13 in Illinois, were exonerated only on the basis of recently developed DNA testing, the expense of which alone puts it out of the reach of most prisoners.

It is a measure of how capricious, wanton and racist the application of the death penalty is in the United States that Ryan, a supporter of capital punishment, now says he will not proceed with executions without a "100 percent guarantee" against wrongful convictions. The Illinois moratorium and the New Hampshire vote, along with the dozens of resolutions against the death penalty passed in cities around the country, are a measure as well of concerns among sections of the ruling class that the "authority" of the state's killing machine is being undermined by continuing exposures of death row frame-ups.

The death penalty stands at the apex of the apparatus of capitalist state repression in the U.S., and that apparatus of repression has been heavily bolstered by the Democratic and Republican parties in recent years in order to contain the ex-



Chicago, November 1998: PDC-initiated labor/black mobilization to free Mumia Abu-Jamal. Death penalty stands at apex of capitalist machinery of repression.

plosive contradictions generated by the growing gap between the handful of filthy rich and those at the bottom. The rate of executions is now at its highest level in 50 years. And the "alternative" of life imprisonment proposed in the New Hampshire bill amounts to a living death. Over two million people now fill the jails and prisons—largely a result of the racist "war on drugs"—accounting for *one-fourth* of the world's prison population.

We oppose the death penalty for the guilty as well as the innocent. We do not accord the state the right to decide who shall live and who shall die. We welcome the Illinois moratorium, however brief it may be, and any other measure curtailing state-sanctioned murder, just as we oppose all moves to expand and intensify the repressive powers of the capitalist state. Nothing short of a workers revolution will do away with the capitalist

state, which is a machinery of organized violence to defend the rule of the capitalist exploiters against those whom they exploit and oppress.

The death penalty is a barbaric legacy of medieval torture, a system of legal murder that reinforces the brutalization of society in all respects. And in racist America, ruled by the imperialists who have slaughtered countless millions around the world in defense of their profits, the primary victims of this brutality are black people.

It is no accident that the states of the former Confederacy lead the way in legal lynching. Texas alone accounts for over a third of all executions carried out nationally since 1977. Capital punishment in the U.S. is rooted in the system of slavery, when black slaves were considered chattel, the private property of the slaveowner. The Constitution counted a black person as three-fifths of a human being. The Slave Codes prescribed torture or death for hitting a white man in self-defense or for any other act deemed "insolent" or a challenge to the slaveholders. In the 1857 Dred Scott decision, the Supreme Court decreed that the black man "had no rights which the white man was bound to respect." While the slave system was smashed by the Civil War, the struggle for

continued on page 4

**Persecuted by FBI, Witchhunted
by Liberal Civil Rights Leaders**

**Robert F. Williams:
Fighter Against
Klan Terror...6**



Militant



Outrageous Persecution of Mumia Supporters

In an ominous attempt to cripple the defense of death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, a federal court in Philadelphia in late April imposed outrageous sentences against seven Mumia supporters following their conviction on sham charges issuing from a civil disobedience action last summer. Among the 13 special restrictions handed down as part

of one-year supervised probation was a ban on any contact with Jamal, thinly disguised as forbidding association with “felons.”

In a May 24 protest letter to Attorney General Janet Reno, the Partisan Defense Committee declared:

“This prosecutorial vendetta is solely intended to silence Mumia and his sup-

porters to prepare the way for his legal lynching. Such activists as Clark Kissinger, a prominent advocate for Mumia, and Frances Goldin, Mumia’s literary agent, were slapped with draconian repression to stop their efforts on behalf of this innocent man and compelling voice for black freedom. Mumia’s supporters have been forbidden to contact him, cannot leave New York without permission from a probation officer, must surrender their passports, submit to house searches, list all persons they associate with and turn in financial records to the courts. All of this for an infraction the legal equivalent of a traffic ticket!...

“The prosecution of his supporters with such a vengeance is a testament to the fact that the effort to execute Mumia Abu-Jamal is supported by the highest levels of the American ruling class and its agents of repression. We demand hands off all Mumia supporters. Drop all the charges and all the restrictions!”

Mumia’s powerful death row commentaries have been instrumental in galvanizing international support behind his cause. It has been a longstanding aim of the Fraternal Order of Police (F.O.P.), which has spearheaded the drive for Mumia’s execution, to muzzle him and keep his writings from being published—and that is what is behind the ban on prison visits by Frances Goldin. Jamal’s latest collection of writings, *All Things Censored*, includes the radio commentaries he had prepared for broadcast in 1994 on National Public Radio, which caved in to pressure from the F.O.P. and refused to air Mumia.

The judicial persecution of Jamal’s supporters stems from a mass arrest of 96 protesters last July 3 at the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia. One pretext used by the cops for wading into the demonstration was a bogus bomb scare concocted by the Philadelphia police. In their drive to execute Jamal and intimidate the growing ranks of his supporters, the F.O.P. and its allies have long sought to smear Mumia’s defenders as “terrorists” or “crazies.”

In a blatant violation of their rights to free speech and assembly, protesters were dragged off en masse by federal Park Rangers. All those arrested were issued summonses for “failing to obey a lawful order,” an infraction classified as a petty offense. Those with the temerity to demand a trial were convicted—often on the basis of blatant lies by the cops. The Park Rangers were unable even to identify some of the defendants.

Goldin holds Mumia’s power of attorney and handles his finances; Kissinger is a leading spokesman for Refuse & Resist! (R&R) and speaks regularly at Mumia defense rallies. Now they must supply a detailed accounting of their financial affairs every month to the court, giving the state access to information related to Mumia’s defense. Even Kissinger’s wife, who was not a defendant, was confronted by FBI agents at her workplace demanding that she produce financial records from the past ten years for a federal grand jury!

A protest statement distributed on May 17 by R&R to solicit support for the convicted protesters denounces the Feds’ prying into the Kissingers’ financial records as “a giant fishing expedition...that further exposes the role of the federal government in attempting to execute Mumia and silence the movement in his defense.”

But R&R’s actions are counterposed to that understanding. An 18 January R&R Internet posting uncritically reported the conclusion of a delegation that had met with Justice Department officials: “to broaden and deepen the international campaign to save the life of Mumia Abu-Jamal with a focus on President Bill Clinton and Attorney General Janet Reno.... We must say to them: the evidence is in your hands.” R&R also promotes the call for a new trial for Mumia, which is premised on the belief that the bourgeois courts can be pressured to be “just.”

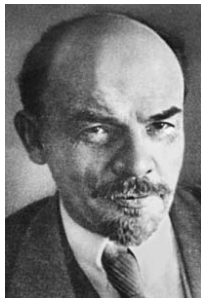
Mumia is innocent and should be free. The power to win his freedom is centered in the multiracial labor movement, which in taking up this fight will strike a blow against the entire capitalist system which is predicated on the brutal exploitation of labor and rooted in the racist oppression of black people. Drop all charges against Mumia’s supporters! Free Mumia now! Abolish the racist death penalty!■



TROTSKY

The State: Organ of Class Rule

As Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels first laid out, it is the historic task of the working class to sweep away the whole system of capitalist exploitation and oppression and usher in a classless, egalitarian society. Key to mobilizing the proletariat in its class interests is the Marxist understanding that the state—consisting at its core of cops, courts and prisons—does not represent society as a whole, as liberals argue, but exists to defend the rule of the dominant class. The capitalist



LENIN

state must be smashed through a socialist revolution and replaced by a workers state which expropriates the bourgeoisie and erects a planned, collectivized economy. The victory of the proletariat on an international scale will lay the basis for the dissolution of all classes and thus eliminate the need for any apparatus of repression.

Whilst the capitalist mode of production more and more completely transforms the great majority of the population into proletarians, it creates the power which, under penalty of its own destruction, is forced to accomplish this revolution. Whilst it forces on more and more the transformation of the vast means of production, already socialised, into state property, it shows itself the way to accomplishing this revolution. *The proletariat seizes political power and turns the means of production into state property.*

But, in doing this, it abolishes itself as proletariat, abolishes all class distinctions and class antagonisms, abolishes also the state as state. Society thus far, based upon class antagonisms, had need of the state. That is, of an organisation of the particular class which was *pro tempore* [for the time being] the exploiting class, an organisation for the purpose of preventing any interference from without with the existing conditions of production, and, therefore, especially, for the purpose of forcibly keeping the exploited classes in the condition of oppression corresponding with the given mode of production (slavery, serfdom, wage-labour). The state was the official representative of society as a whole; the gathering of it together into a visible embodiment. But it was this only in so far as it was the state of that class which itself represented, for the time being, society as a whole: in ancient times, the state of slave-owning citizens; in the Middle Ages, the feudal lords; in our own time, the bourgeoisie. When at last it becomes the real representative of the whole of society, it renders itself unnecessary. As soon as there is no longer any social class to be held in subjection; as soon as class rule, and the individual struggle for existence based upon our present anarchy in production, with the collisions and excesses arising from these, are removed, nothing more remains to be repressed, and a special repressive force, a state, is no longer necessary. The first act by virtue of which the state really constitutes itself the representative of the whole of society—the taking possession of the means of production in the name of society—this is, at the same time, its last independent act as a state. State interference in social relations becomes, in one domain after another, superfluous, and then dies out of itself; the government of persons is replaced by the administration of things, and by the conduct of processes of production. The state is not “abolished.” *It dies out....*

With the seizing of the means of production by society, production of commodities is done away with, and, simultaneously, the mastery of the product over the producer. Anarchy in social production is replaced by systematic, definite organisation. The struggle for individual existence disappears. Then for the first time man, in a certain sense, is finally marked off from the rest of the animal kingdom, and emerges from mere animal conditions of existence into really human ones.

—Friedrich Engels, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* (1880)

WORKERS VANGUARD

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



EDITOR: Len Meyers

EDITOR, YOUNG SPARTACUS PAGES: Anna Woodman

PRODUCTION MANAGER: Susan Fuller

CIRCULATION MANAGER: Mara Cadiz

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

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

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

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

The closing date for news in this issue is May 30.

No. 737

2 June 2000



Quirk Family

Memorial Meeting for Mary Van De Water-Quirk 1954-2000

Saturday, 3 June 2000 at 3:00 p.m.

International House of Chicago, University of Chicago
1414 East 59th Street (Dorchester Avenue Entrance)
For more information, call (312) 454-4930

Sierra Leone: All British/UN Troops Out Now!

The following statement was issued by our comrades of the Spartacist League/Britain on May 16. While Revolutionary United Front leader Foday Sankoh has since been arrested, the British/UN imperialist presence in Sierra Leone has deepened.

Over a week ago the Labour government launched a military invasion of Sierra Leone, dispatching 1,500 combat troops including 700 paratroopers, Royal Marine commandos, Gurkhas and SAS “special forces.” The troops are supported by a heavily armed armada offshore made up of the aircraft carrier *Illustrious*, a helicopter carrier the *Ocean*, Harrier fighters and bombers, while other reinforcements are on their way. The invasion of this small West African country was supposedly to evacuate European civilians, but upon arrival in Freetown British troops immediately took over the airport and paratroopers began patrolling the streets.

Brigadier David Richards, commander of the British military force, effectively took command of the United Nations troops there as well as of the Sierra Leone national army which is to be merged with Kamajor, a murderous pro-government militia. Revolutionaries take no side in the sordid civil war between the forces loyal to the present government of President Kabbah and the “Revolutionary United Front” (RUF). Both sides perpetrate heinous violence against the impoverished population.

The British military are now preparing to “take the war to the rebels.” Their



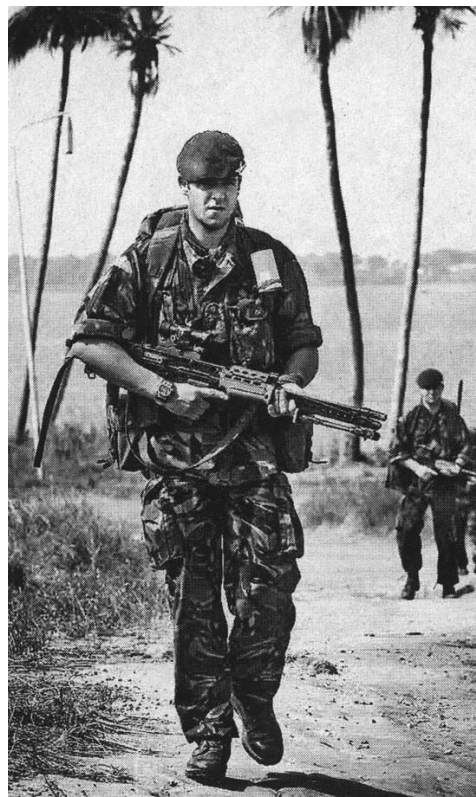
UN and British troops invade Sierra Leone. British imperialists seek to assert control over diamond-producing former colony.

which has nothing to do with “human rights” and everything to do with capitalist greed and hypocrisy. The Spartacist League/Britain, section of the International Communist League, demands: All British troops out of Sierra Leone now! Down with Labour’s neo-colonial invasion!

Nothing could be more cynical than the pretence by British imperialism, who plundered and enslaved Africa for cen-

resources, and the root of the conflict is over who controls the vast profits. What bothers the British imperialists, and the UN who have 9,000 troops on site, is not the “human rights” record of the rebel RUF but the fact they control the diamond-producing areas centred on Kono and Koidu from which they earn some \$200 million a year. In fact it was when UN troops attempted to move into the RUF-controlled diamond-mining areas that 500 troops were captured. Some were killed, most are still missing. In the past the government forces were supported by Nigerian troops while Liberia, a neighbouring country, has supported the RUF. The threat of renewed civil war in Congo could engulf several African countries and fighting has broken out again between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Colonialism artificially created borders in Africa dividing up ethnic groupings. The spilling over of ethnic conflicts to neighbouring countries has been a fairly common feature in recent years.

Internationally, rivalries among imperialist powers have heated up in the post-Soviet world where the dominant powers are no longer restricted by united opposition to the Soviet Union which was a degenerated workers state. Its destruction by counterrevolution in 1991-92 had disastrous impact, not least in Africa which became even more impoverished as aid from the Soviet Union dried up. Imperialist rivalries lead to wars, the outlines of



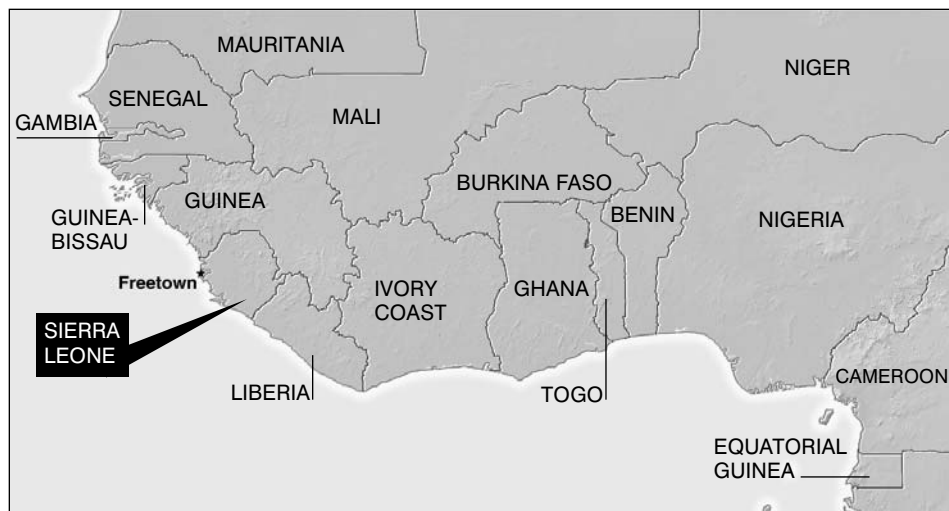
Reuters

which can be seen in the “scramble for Africa” now taking place over the continent’s vast resources. U.S. imperialism is sending Jesse Jackson as its black front-man while Richard Holbrooke, the U.S. representative to the UN, is touring Africa to drum up support for more UN troops.

The British military presence in Sierra Leone partly reflects fears that the UN will lose credibility because its forces—mainly African and Asian troops—sent to enforce a British/U.S.-brokered “peace” deal last year were no match for the RUF. The UN is a den of imperialist thieves and their victims which represents the interests of the dominant world power, the United States, and its allies. In Somalia in 1993, racist UN “peacekeeping” troops gunned down and massacred civilians including women, children and the elderly. The UN also presides over sanctions against Iraq which have killed over 1.5 million people. UN troops are imperialism’s *official* mercenaries in blue helmets, and whether the soldiers hail from the U.S., Canada, Ireland, Bangladesh or Nigeria their purpose is to guard the interests of the imperialists. We say: All UN troops out of Sierra Leone!

The only way to end imperialist plunder of the Third World is through workers revolution in the imperialist heartlands. The Spartacist League is dedicated to building a revolutionary workers party, forged in the heat of class struggle, which

continued on page 9



intention is that Sierra Leone forces will do the frontline fighting while British and UN troops will provide back-up. Labour Foreign Secretary Robin Cook has threatened: “If our troops are attacked, they will fight back, I don’t want the rebels to be under any misunderstanding about that” (*Guardian*, 12 May). If ministers seem a little vague about what role the troops will play, it is only because they would rather have black African troops bear the brunt of the casualties.

The same racist Labour government whose cops kill blacks in police custody with impunity and was forced to admit to “institutionalised racism” in the forces of capitalist “law and order” now dispatches troops to shoot down blacks in Africa. This capitalist government which rams through privatisations and plant closures, throwing thousands of workers in Britain on the scrap heap, now rushes troops to a former colony to secure control of the diamond wealth for the capitalist class.

Working people and minorities in Britain have no interest in this invasion

turies, that their military occupations are undertaken under the rubric of “human rights imperialism,” which was the pretence for waging war to insert an imperialist military presence in the Balkans. Britain’s relationship with Sierra Leone is called imperialism, which is not a policy but, as Lenin described it, the highest stage of capitalism, in which competing capitalist powers struggle to redivide the world among themselves. This necessarily involves keeping poor countries in poverty while a small number of giant companies based in the richer countries control the world market and make vast profits.

The invasion of Sierra Leone is a continuation of Labour’s position in 1998 when they used mercenary dogs of war such as Sandline International to prop up the Kabbah government. This country, one of the world’s poorest, has been devastated by a nine-year-long civil war which has killed upwards of 75,000 people and mutilated countless others. But Sierra Leone has tremendous diamond

WORKERS HAMMER

Marxist newspaper of the
Spartacist League/Britain

£3/1 year

International airmail rate: £7 or US\$10

Order from/make checks payable to:

Spartacist Publications

PO Box 1041, London NW5 3EU, England

Spartacist Publishing Co.

Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116



Death Penalty...

(continued from page 1)

black equality was betrayed by the victorious Northern bourgeoisie. In the Jim Crow system of rigid segregation which issued out of the defeat of Reconstruction in the South, official state murder was supplemented by the extralegal terror of the KKK.

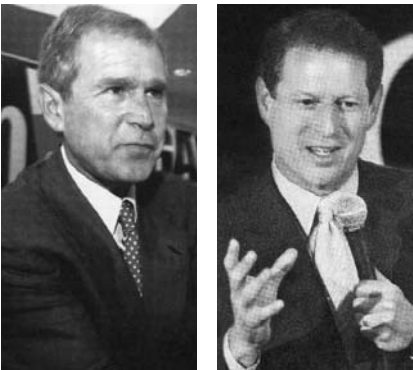
More than two-thirds of the thousands executed between 1930 and 1967 were black. And with 98 people put to death last year, the rate of execution is nearly what it averaged in those years, when Jim Crow reigned supreme in the South. In the 1987 *McCleskey v. Kemp* case, the U.S. Supreme Court examined and acknowledged overwhelming evidence of the racist application of the death penalty, only to conclude that this was “irrelevant” and that such bias is an “inevitable part of our criminal justice system”—meaning that it was all too relevant to the workings of this *injustice* system. Nearly half of the more than 3,600 men and women on death row today are black.

As ever more cases come to light of innocent people put to death, popular support for the death penalty is at its lowest point in two decades. Noting that Ryan’s moratorium “once would have represented a remarkable political risk,” the *Wall Street Journal* (21 March)

the reformists of the International Socialist Organization (ISO). The call of its Campaign to End the Death Penalty for “Moratorium Now, Abolition Next,” which is emblazoned on the cover of the *International Socialist Review* (Spring 2000), puts it *to the right* of the Republican-majority New Hampshire legislature, which voted for “abolition now.” A recent Internet posting (25 May) by a disgruntled ISO supporter makes clear what is behind the ISO’s refusal to call for abolition: “The ISO leadership instructed members NOT to argue for the abolitionist position in the interests of standing on ‘common ground’ with supporters of the death penalty on the question of the ‘moratorium.’ This took the form of a concrete slogan raised by the ISO: ‘Moratorium Now, Abolition Next.’... It is transforming our meager forces into the ground troops of Democratic Party hacks like Jesse Jackson and others.”

Racist Legal Lynching

Texas is emblematic of the rigged scales of capitalist “justice.” Court-appointed lawyers for indigent defendants are commonly known to sleep through their trials, while the state appeals court is notorious for almost never overturning death penalty convictions. James Beathard was executed in Texas last December for the murder of a family of three based solely on the testi-



Berman/Sipa Lutzky/Washington Post

The politics of death: presidential candidates Bush and Gore, supporters of legal lynching.



Commercial Appeal

governor, Jeanne Shaheen, who immediately vetoed the bill abolishing the death penalty. Gore’s formal nomination will be presided over by Democratic Party national chairman Ed Rendell, a former Philadelphia mayor who as D.A. in 1982 railroaded Mumia to death row. And Pennsylvania governor Tom Ridge, who has twice ordered Mumia’s execution, is a leading prospect to be the running mate for Republican Bush, who himself has overseen 127 executions since 1995.

As we have said since first taking up Jamal’s cause 13 years ago, his case illuminates what the racist death penalty is all about. Even the *Times* article acknowledged in a photo caption: “Mumia Abu-Jamal, the face of capital punishment in America.” Framed up and sentenced to death on false charges of killing a Philadelphia policeman, Mumia has presented mountains of evidence of his innocence. This makes no difference to the capitalist rulers who want Jamal dead because they see in this eloquent journalist, MOVE supporter and former Black Panther Party spokesman the threat of black revolution, a symbol of defiant opposition to racist oppression. *Free Mumia!*

Workers Revolution Will Smash State Killing Machine

With capital punishment so intertwined with black oppression—the bedrock of capitalism in this country—it is highly unlikely that the death penalty would be eliminated in the U.S., though it is not inconceivable. In fact, there was a hiatus in executions for almost a decade until 1977, and in 1972 the Supreme Court struck down existing death penalty laws as “wanton and freakish,” ordering states to rewrite their statutes. This move came in response to massive popular unrest, beginning with the civil rights movement of the 1950s and ’60s and then the mass protests against the imperialist war in Vietnam. At the same time, the racist rulers did not need an official death penalty to unleash the FBI’s murderous COINTELPRO campaign against the Black Panthers, 38 of whom were killed without benefit of even a frame-up “trial,” assassinated in their beds or gunned down on the streets by the cops.

Writing of the death penalty in Britain

nearly 150 years ago, Karl Marx condemned “any principle upon which the justice or expediency of capital punishment could be founded, in a society glorying in its civilization.... What a state of society is that, which knows of no better instrument for its own defense than the hangman” (“On Capital Punishment” [1853]). Today, in the epoch of capitalist decay, the barbarism of this system has only deepened. As the instruments of social control become increasingly more savage, even juveniles and the mentally impaired are being sentenced to death in growing numbers. Crime and punishment are defined in class terms: in the eyes of the bourgeoisie, when hundreds of workers die in a factory fire because the employer sealed up the fire exits, that is deemed an “accident,” not murder!

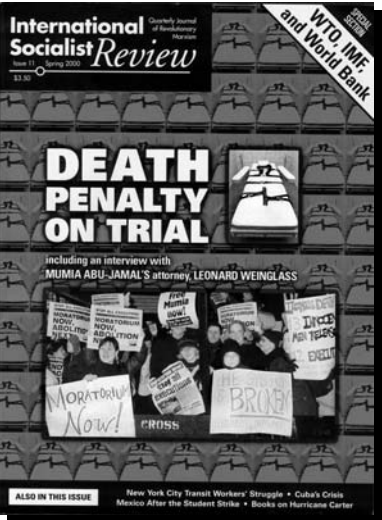
As we wrote in “State Butchers Gilmore” (WV No. 141, 21 January 1977), following the first execution in the U.S. after the Supreme Court decision bringing back capital punishment, the death penalty “is one among many proofs of the failure of capitalism in its death agony to fulfill its promise of a decent life.... The hangmen and firing squads will not be eliminated through civil libertarian reforms. Only the victorious prolet-



AP

Stop the legal murder of Shaka Sankofa (Gary Graham)! Despite massive evidence of innocence, he faces execution in Texas on June 22.

tarian revolution that overthrows the bourgeois state will abolish the death penalty for good and smash the prisons, in the course of rooting out the whole vicious cycle of crime, punishment and repression caused by capitalism.” ■



Spring 2000 issue of ISO journal. Reformist ISO stands to right of Republican-majority New Hampshire legislature, which voted for “abolition now.”

Ruder/ISR



reported that two-thirds of residents “expressed approval of Mr. Ryan’s action.” At the same time, there is widespread anger over systematic frame-ups and cop terror, from the LAPD Rampart Division’s routine frame-ups, torture and murder to the NYPD killing of Amadou Diallo and the exoneration of his executioners. With the cops increasingly viewed as “out of control,” the U.S. Justice Department has launched probes in recent years to “clean up” the more flagrant “excesses” of police departments from NYC to Buffalo, Pittsburgh and Los Angeles. Through such cosmetic measures, the capitalist rulers seek to maintain the pretense of “democracy” which masks their class dictatorship.

Aiding this effort in their own way are

many of a friend who accused him of being the sole killer. Three months later, the same prosecutor dismissed that testimony to win a death sentence against the friend for having himself carried out the killings, to which he confessed before Beathard’s execution. Even Texas prison officials who are supporters of Bush gasped when the governor claimed that “every person that has been put to death in Texas, under my watch, has been guilty.”

That innocence is no bar to execution was sanctified by the Supreme Court itself in January 1993, when it rejected an appeal by Texas death row prisoner Leonel Herrera to hear evidence that another man had confessed to the murder for which Herrera had been convicted. Four months later, Herrera was strapped onto a table and injected with lethal drugs. Now Shaka Sankofa (Gary Graham), a black man who was only 17 when he was sent to death row in 1981, faces execution on June 22 despite providing massive evidence of his innocence. *Stop the execution!*

In a *New York Times* (21 May) article on death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, Francis X. Clines writes: “Oddly, for all the moratorium talk, capital punishment has not yet emerged as an issue in this year’s presidential arena.” The politics of racism and death are at the core of American bourgeois politics. Clinton/Gore won the White House back for the Democrats in 1992 in large part through a campaign of outright racist displays aimed at winning the Southern white vote. This effort was symbolized by Clinton’s flying back to Arkansas in the middle of his election campaign to personally oversee the execution of a brain-damaged black man, Ricky Ray Rector.

It was New Hampshire’s Democratic



WV Photo

Racist cops act as executioners on the streets. Signs outside Brooklyn funeral of Patrick Dorismond in March recall some of many victims of NYPD terror.

A Spartacist Pamphlet 75¢

Black History and the Class Struggle
No. 2

On the Civil Rights Movement

August 1984

A Spartacist Pamphlet \$1

Black History and the Class Struggle
No. 14

Capitalist Rulers Wage War on Blacks, Immigrants

Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants!
Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

Black History and the Class Struggle No. 2: 75¢ (32 pages), **No. 14: \$1** (48 pages)
Make checks payable/mail to: Spartacist Pub. Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

Capitalist Counterrevolution Tramples Women's Rights

The following article is translated from the current issue of *Platforma Spartakusowców* (No. 11, Spring-Summer 2000), published by the *Spartakusowska Grupa Polski*, Polish section of the *International Communist League*.

At 6:30 p.m. on January 25 in the small city of Lubliniec near Czeszochowa, cops smashed their way into a gynecologist's office just as doctors were completing an abortion. The patient, a mother of four about 40 years old, and her physician and anesthesiologist were arrested by the cops and the two doctors now face criminal charges with penalties of up to three years' imprisonment!

This vicious police attack, threatening the life and health of a woman during a surgical procedure in the privacy of her doctor's office, underscores the profound contempt for women which permeates the Polish bourgeois state ten years after clerical-nationalist *Solidarność* spearheaded the restoration of capitalist rule. Nor is it accidental that this first police attack on a gynecologist's office was conducted not in a major city but in a small town in the economically devastated Slask coal mining region, plagued with poverty and mass unemployment amidst waves of privatization, pit closures and wholesale slashing of the social security system. The *Spartakusowska Grupa Polski* says: **Drop all charges against the Lubliniec doctors! Free abortion on demand! For women's liberation through socialist revolution!**

As our comrades of the *International Communist League* (then international Spartacist tendency) warned throughout the 1980s, banning abortion was a key aim of clerical-nationalist *Solidarność* from its inception, when it called for the right of the Catholic church to broadcast its poisonous anti-woman propaganda over state radio and television systems in August 1980. *Solidarność*, the yellow union for the CIA, Vatican and bankers, mobilized the forces of rampant clericalism and nationalism in Poland, helping pave the way for the capitalist counter-revolution which triumphed in the former Soviet bloc in 1990-92 and brought untold devastation to working people from Berlin to Vladivostok and beyond.

As we point out in the article "Polish Feminists and *Solidarność* Counterrevolution" (*Platforma Spartakusowców* No. 10, Fall-Winter 1999, reprinted as "Polish *Solidarność*: A Man's World," *WV* No. 724, 26 November 1999):

"This world-historic defeat for the working class has led to a vast increase in attacks on working women, from the sweatshops of Southeast Asia to anti-abortion terror in North America and beyond, and the unprecedented rise of woman-hating religious bigotry and enemies of basic human progress around the world."

We communists of the *ICL/SGP* stand on the record of our consistent fight against *Solidarność*-led capitalist restoration. We fought for the unconditional military defense of Poland and the other deformed workers states against imperi-

Poland: Free Abortion on Demand!

alist attack and internal counterrevolution. As communist partisans of the cause of workers, women and all the oppressed, we sought to mobilize the proletariat to defend these states—whose gains included abortion rights, free health care, education, full employment—which represented a tremendous conquest of the proletariat deriving from the October Revolution of 1917. At the same time, we

the helm of the capitalist government in 1993-97, they loyally carried out the same capitalist program as their *Solidarność* predecessors, including enforcing the abortion ban which crowned the *Solidarność* counterrevolution and escalating the racist deportations of Roma [Gypsy] refugees.

As Marx and Engels noted in the *Communist Manifesto* over 150 years



Chelkowski/Forum

Polish nurses protest against low wages outside parliament building in Warsaw last year.

fought for workers political revolution to oust the corrupt and discredited Stalinist bureaucracies of the USSR and East Europe, which were undermining these gains and opening the road to capitalist restoration. This program remains an urgent necessity which the *ICL* fights for today in the remaining deformed workers states of China, Vietnam, Cuba and North Korea.

In capitalist Poland, there is widespread discontent over the misery wrought by massive privatization, devastation of state health care and education, and unemployment and starvation wages. In place of the jobs and social benefits eliminated in the name of "international competitiveness," workers, women and youth are fed a steady diet of anti-communism, religious obscurantism, nationalism and anti-Semitism.

Many look to the ex-Stalinist Social Democrats as a parliamentary "defense" against the worst abuses of capitalist misery and clerical reaction. Yet when the Social Democrats themselves stood at

ago, "the executive of the modern State is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie." The regimentation of the working class, women and youth in the service of profits through the promotion of reactionary social norms is the common political program of *all* wings of the bourgeoisie. As communists we seek to show workers and the oppressed that what is needed is not a "change of government" but a *socialist revolution*—led by the working class at the head of all the oppressed—to sweep away the putrefying capitalist system itself. Those who labor must rule!

Fight for a Leninist Party!

Among those calling themselves "revolutionary socialists" in Poland nowadays are the Employee Democracy group, followers of [the late] prominent British reformist Tony Cliff, and the Revolutionary Left Current (NLR), co-thinkers of the late Ernest Mandel's United Secretariat. These self-styled "revolutionaries" seek to recruit youth to their reformist programs by (occasionally) claiming to oppose the oppression of women and defend abortion rights.

To conscious workers and radical youth who may be checking out the credentials of such organizations for the first time, we of the *SGP* say, "Buyer beware!" When the most elementary defense of the gains of working people, including abortion rights, was posed pointblank, these fakers stood *on the opposite side of the barricades* together with the most vicious enemies of women: from Pope Karol Wojtyla to Afghan Islamic fundamentalists to Yeltsin's Orthodox priests. From 1980 onward, under the banner of anti-communist "democracy," these "left" groups hailed the very clerical-nationalist forces who led the restoration of capitalism and have unleashed anti-abortion state terror and capitalist immiseration.

To this day, these same groups hail the reactionary woman-hating bigots of Krzaklewski's *Solidarność* as genuine "trade unionists in the government" (*Employee Democracy* No. 18, January 2000)!

For the *Solidarność* reactionaries of the AWS/UW [*Solidarność* Election Action/Freedom Union] coalition government, criminalizing abortion is only one step in the crusade for "family values" and "combatting the loss of morality among youth." As we wrote after the imperialist occupation of Serbia (in which Poland took an active part): "Together with squeezing ever greater profits out of the working class in the name of capitalist competition goes the need for 'moral' regimentation of the working class" (*Platforma Spartakusowców* No. 9, Spring-Summer 1999). While banning abortion and promoting anti-immigrant racism, clericalism and anti-Semitism, the capitalists now seek to criminalize an entire generation of working-class youth, by targeting everything from pornography to homosexuality to rock concerts and the Internet.

As if in response to their masters' call, the fake leftists of the Mandelite splinter group NLR II have put together a loose bloc with the Stalinist KMP and the Morenoite GIPR in order to explicitly *oppose* organizing workers in resistance to these attacks of the bourgeoisie. As they sneer in their "Bulletin of the Opposition" No. 1 (Fall 1999-Winter 2000):

"The basic field of activity must be the living conditions of workers, activity in the trade unions.

"There must be no concentration on secondary issues—to ascribe to national, sexual and racial minorities, or students, any ability to make changes in the system is simply wrong and unserious."

Buying hook, line and sinker the bourgeois lie that "communism is dead," these phoney "revolutionaries" turn their backs on Lenin's teaching in *What Is To Be Done?* that the ideal for revolutionary Marxists is not "the trade-union secretary, but *the tribune of the people*, who is able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears, no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects; who is able to generalize all these manifestations and produce a single picture of police violence and capitalist exploitation; who is able to take advantage of every event, however small, in order to set forth *before all* his socialist convictions and his democratic demands, in order to clarify for *all* and everyone the world-historic significance of the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat."

In contrast to the fake leftists who give a "Marxist" veneer to the reactionary poison of bourgeois ideology in the working class, the *ICL/SGP*, following Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks, proudly inscribes on our banner the fight for the liberation of women and all the oppressed as part of the struggle for new October Revolutions! ■



Der Spiegel

Lech Walesa (left), founder of Polish Solidarność, 1980. Vatican-sponsored Solidarność counterrevolution drove women out of jobs, eliminated right to abortion.

Platforma SPARTAKUSOWCÓW 4

WIOSNA-LATO 2000

O wyzwolenie kobiet poprzez rewolucję socjalistyczną!

O bezpłatną aborcję na żądanie!

Wyciąć wszystkie oskarżenia wobec lekarzy z Lublina!

Platforma Spartakusowców
No. 11, Spring-Summer 2000
\$1 (28 pages)
Order from/pay to:
Spartacist Publishing Co.
Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

Robert F. Williams: Fighter Against Klan Terror

[illegible]

WORKERS VANGUARD

essarily play an exceptional role, led by a multiracial proletarian vanguard party.

The activities of Williams and the Monroe NAACP were symptomatic of the large and growing militant left wing of the Southern civil rights movement. This tendency was centrally expressed in the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the main organization of young black and also white radicals in the South. By the early 1960s, SNCC militants were derisively calling the moderate Martin Luther King “De Lawd.” King’s liberal pacifism was totally discredited by the Northern ghetto rebellions of the mid-’60s, especially by his *support* to the police repression of the impoverished black youth who took to the streets in an outpouring of rage against racist cop terror and the hellish conditions of ghetto life. At this juncture, a new SNCC leadership under Stokely Carmichael raised the slogan of “black power” which inflamed, and was intended to inflame, bourgeois liberal opinion. While signifying a rejection of liberal integrationism, in the absence of a proletarian perspective this slogan also pointed to growing pseudo-nationalist despair over the possibility of integrated social struggle.

Our own political tendency originated in and was in part shaped by this tumultuous period. The Spartacist League began as the Revolutionary Tendency (RT) in the once-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP), which was then moving rapidly to the right. We recognized that here was a historic, but fleeting, opportunity to recruit the best of a generation of young black militants to revolutionary socialism (Trotskyism) in the course of the mass struggles they were leading. We wrote in an oppositional document, “The Negro Struggle and the Crisis of Leadership” (1963):

“The rising upsurge and militancy of the black revolt and the contradictory and confused, groping nature of what is now the left wing in the movement provide the revolutionary vanguard with fertile soil and many opportunities to plant the seeds of revolutionary socialism. Our task is to create a Trotskyist tendency in the broad left wing of the movement, while building that left wing....

“We work in these movements because we want to fight racism in practice as well as in theory, because we know that it is only through the socialist revolution that racism can be wiped out. To build the revolutionary vanguard is to participate in and build the revolutionary leadership of the *current* struggles of the working class—of the fight for Negro liberation.”

—reprinted in “What Strategy for Black Liberation? Trotskyism vs. Black Nationalism,” *Marxist Bulletin* No. 5 (Revised)

This is the perspective of *revolutionary integrationism*. Our fight to mobilize the multiracial proletariat in struggle against every manifestation of racist oppression is based on the understanding that genuine equality can only be achieved through the assimilation of black people into an egalitarian *socialist* society. American capitalism is rooted in the bedrock of black oppression. There can be no social revolution in this country without united struggle of black and white workers led by a multiracial vanguard party, and there is nothing other than a workers revolution which can at last realize the historic struggle for black equality and freedom.

In the absence of revolutionary leadership, the mass black struggles of the 1960s—first in the South and then the North—led to no more than minimal and token gains which have since largely been reversed. “Moderate” civil rights leaders, personified by Jesse Jackson, became the black front men, centrally through the Democratic Party, for the white power structure. Black militants like Robert F. Williams and later the Black Panther Party leaders were subjected to murderous state repression, while many black radicals who did not find their way to a proletarian revolutionary perspective ultimately made their peace with racist American capitalism. In a founding document of the SL, “Black and Red—Class Struggle Road to Negro Freedom” (*Spartacist* No. 10, May-June



Muhammad Speaks

Muhammad Speaks cartoon lambasted M. L. King for supporting repression of 1965 L.A. Watts upheaval. King (second from left) and other liberal civil rights leaders, here with Democratic president Kennedy in 1963, preached reliance on federal government.

1967), written as the “black power” movement was already moving in a hard nationalist direction, we warned that “the slogan ‘black power’ must be clearly defined in *class*, not racial terms, for otherwise the ‘black power’ movement may become the black wing of the Democratic Party in the South.” That is precisely what happened.

As a new layer of youth is drawn to the militancy exemplified by Malcolm X and others, the former black radicals and

lina into a family with a tradition of activism and self-defense. His grandfather, Sikes Williams, was a radical activist in the integrated Populist-Republican alliance in the 1890s, publishing a small newspaper, *People’s Voice*. Branded a “radical,” targeted by white racists, Sikes Williams kept a loaded rifle close at hand, a rifle passed on to Robert F. Williams by his grandmother.

In 1941, while working on a New Deal National Youth Administration job, 16-

mobs abetted by the cops. The UAW tops offered little more than pious wishes to end racial discrimination and a self-congratulatory pat on the back that the bloodshed had not entered the plants. In contrast, the then-Trotskyist SWP’s *Militant* (3 July 1943) called for determined union action in defense of the black masses, noting that “the native fascists would be cowering in their holes, demoralized instead of triumphant, had the union leaders called out the veteran flying squadrons to defend the Negro people.”

After serving in the army, Williams used his benefits under the G.I. Bill to attend a number of Southern colleges, which were, of course, segregated at the time. When the benefits ran out, he was forced to quit college and look for work. He found it difficult to make a decent living in a country where black men were proverbially “the last hired and the first fired.” At the same time, he was already being hounded by the FBI because he “had used communist words and slogans like ‘freedom’ and ‘democracy’ and ‘justice’.”

This is a statement of how the capitalist rulers see as a revolutionary challenge even an assertion by black people of the very purported “principles” on which the American republic was founded. The fight for black freedom does indeed require the shattering of this system which is rooted in the forcible segregation of the majority of the black population at the bottom of this society, to be used as a reserve army of labor when the capitalists need them and increasingly deemed to be a “surplus population.” At the same time, the racist ideology which accompanies black oppression is wielded by the exploiters to weaken and divide the working class as a whole.

When the Korean War broke out in the early 1950s, Williams enlisted in the Marines. His outspoken opposition to racism in the Marine Corps antagonized his white officers, and after a year he was given a “dishonorable discharge.” Like many of the black soldiers who went through World War II and the Korean War, Williams left the service determined

continued on page 8



Spartacist League fought to win 1960s black radicals to revolutionary proletarian perspective. Top left: Leaflet distributed after 1967 cop riot in Newark, New Jersey. Top right: 1966 founding document laid out program for revolutionary integrationism.

reformist leftists seek to corral them back into the Democratic Party fold. That was the purpose of the nationalist and reformist organizers of the Black Radical Congress conference in Chicago two years ago, as they tried to convince the hundreds of youth who turned out that Malcolm was at one with King. Similarly, Socialist Action’s Nat Weinstein (who played a leading role in the SWP as it went over to reformism in building class-collaborationist “antiwar” coalitions with Democratic Party politicians during the Vietnam War) claimed: “King’s campaign for economic justice for poor people, especially in the South, and Malcolm X’s angry Black nationalists coming from the North, was a dangerous threat to capitalism. Both currents were on a course toward each other and toward a freedom movement with a powerful anti-capitalist spin” (*Socialist Action*, August 1997).

It is necessary for the present generation of young black workers and students to learn not only the true story of the heroic struggles waged by Williams and other black radicals in the South in this period but also about the *limits and contradictions* of the “black power” militancy which they represented.

Organizing Black Self-Defense in the South

The son of a boilermaker, Williams was born in 1925 in Monroe, North Caro-



Spartacist

year-old Williams organized a strike to protest racist discrimination. This courageous act won him an FBI file marked “Security-C,” meaning the Feds branded him a Communist. Two years later he moved to Detroit, finding work in the Ford defense plant and becoming a member of the militant United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 600, where he came in contact with members of the SWP and the Communist Party. Williams was caught in the middle of the 1943 racist riot in which 25 black people were killed by white

Spartacus Youth Club Class Series

LOS ANGELES

Wednesday, June 21

Defeat U.S. Imperialism Through Workers Revolution!

Location and readings: (213) 380-8239

VANCOUVER

Saturday, June 24, 3 p.m.

National Chauvinism Is Poison to Class Struggle! Independence for Quebec!

La Quena, 1111 Commercial (at Napier)

Information and readings: (604) 687-0353

**Visit the ICL Web Site!
www.icl-fi.org**

BAY AREA

Saturdays, 3 p.m.

1634 Telegraph Ave., Oakland

June 3 & 24: **Basic Marxism**

Information and readings: (510) 839-0851 or (415) 395-9520

NEW YORK CITY

Saturdays, 2 p.m.

299 Broadway, Suite 318

(2 blocks north of Chambers St.)

June 10: **Workers of the World Unite! Marxism: The Fight for Socialist Revolution**

June 24: **The Russian Revolution—How the Working Class Took Power**

Information and readings: (212) 267-1025

Williams...

(continued from page 7)

to break down Jim Crow barriers at home. In his autobiographical account *Negroes With Guns* (1962), Williams writes: “When I got out of the Marine Corps, I knew I wanted to go home and join the NAACP.”

The NAACP Williams found was not the militant vehicle for fighting black oppression he expected. Faced with an upsurge of KKK terror aimed at crushing the nascent civil rights struggles, the black middle-class professionals in Monroe abandoned the NAACP. By the time Williams joined, the branch was in the process of dissolution, and it wasn’t long before the presidency fell to him by default. Williams recalled, “They elected me president and then they all left.”

Turning first to the black vets, Williams rebuilt the chapter with the working-class blacks who were held in contempt by the middle-class NAACP. “One day I walked into a Negro pool-room in our town, interrupted a game by putting NAACP literature on the table and made a pitch. I recruited half of those present.... We began a recruiting drive among laborers, farmers, domestic workers, the unemployed and any and all Negro people in the area. We ended up with a chapter that was unique in the whole NAACP because of working class composition and a leadership that was



John Herman Williams

Williams and wife Mabel in Havana, 1961, practicing with pistol given to him by Fidel Castro.

As KKK terror swept the South, two white racists assaulted two black women in separate attacks in Monroe. Their acquittal outraged the city’s black population. Williams responded to the court whitewash by telling reporters:

“We cannot rely on the law. We get no justice under the present system. If we feel that injustice is done, we must right then and there on the spot be prepared to inflict punishment on these people. I feel this is the only way of survival. Since the federal government will not bring a halt to lynching in the South and since the so-called courts lynch our people legally, if it’s necessary to stop lynching with lynching, then we must be willing to resort to that method.”

—quoted in Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie*

For refusing to retract his statement, Williams was suspended as Monroe chapter president by the NAACP national

many from out of state—but were constrained from defending themselves because of the philosophy of “nonviolence” promoted by King’s Southern Christian Leadership Council (SCLC) and the NAACP tops.

As white mobs rioted in downtown Monroe, a white couple drove into the black neighborhood. Recognized as driving around town with a racist banner the day before, they were stopped by angry blacks. Suspecting a provocation, Williams intervened and escorted the couple into his house to protect them. Almost immediately, white racists drove by with guns blazing as black residents defended themselves. At this point, the local chief of police phoned Williams, threatening that in 30 minutes he would be hanging in the courthouse square. Fearing for his life, Williams and his family fled Monroe and made their way north. The FBI charged him with kidnapping the white couple whom he had rescued. After living underground for several months, Williams and his family managed to get to Cuba.

In the face of unrelenting U.S. imperialist hostility in the aftermath of the overthrow of the corrupt Batista dictatorship by Castro’s peasant-based guerrilla forces, in 1960 the petty-bourgeois Castro government expropriated the domestic and foreign capitalists, creating a workers state, albeit one bureaucratically deformed from its inception in which the workers were denied political power. Williams had previously visited Castro’s Cuba, where he was “made to feel that I was a member of the human race for the first time in my life.” Though Williams had never professed a belief in communism, he particularly hailed the gains made by black people in the Cuban Revolution. That this black militant could find in Castro’s Cuba not only a refuge from U.S. government persecution but also a platform to attack racist American society helped dispel anti-Communist prejudices among American radicals.

However, by the mid-1960s, the Castro bureaucracy, following the lead of the Brezhnev regime in the USSR, its main protector, was pushing for better relations with Washington in the name of “détente.” Williams’ scathing attacks on liberal Democrats and mainstream black leaders like King thus became an embarrassment for the Cuban Stalinist regime. Cuban officials began to obstruct his activities and demanded that they be allowed to censor his newsletter and radio program. In 1966, Williams went to China, where the Mao Zedong regime was still posturing as a militant opponent of American imperialism. In 1969, Williams returned with his family to Michigan, where after years of court battles, he finally got the Feds to give up their efforts to imprison him.

The Black Revolt and Origins of the Spartacist Tendency

Williams was not guided by a proletarian class perspective. According to Tyson, Williams’ disillusionment with Castro’s Cuba took on an anti-Communist coloration, allegedly telling one black radical who was inspired by the Cuban Revolution that the answer to black oppression lay with “more Nat Turner than whitey’s Marxism-Leninism.” At the same time, Tyson documents how during Williams’ years in Monroe he worked on several occasions with the SWP, in the Fair Play



New York Times

Four young girls murdered in 1963 Birmingham Klan bombing, commemorated in memorial at 16th Street Baptist Church.

not middle class” (*Negroes With Guns*). Within two years the once defunct branch numbered some 300 members, with black women comprising the largest group among the new recruits.

Following the summer 1957 drowning death of a black child—blacks were allowed to swim only in local creeks—the Monroe NAACP began efforts to desegregate the only public swimming pool in town. Tyson recounts how the campaign drove away their white liberal supporters; the prospect of an integrated swimming pool touched the very core of racist pathology in the South—“race-mixing,” particularly the fear that white women might become sexually attracted to black men. A local KKK leader warned that a black person going to a white swimming pool “is looking for a funeral.” Klansmen from throughout the state descended on Monroe, burning crosses and driving through the ghetto in armed caravans escorted by the cops. On several occasions, the racists fired into the house of Monroe NAACP vice president Dr. Albert Perry, who along with Williams and others was deluged with death threats.

Williams and his NAACP comrades organized to defend Perry’s house—wearing steel helmets and armed with M-1’s, Mausers and German semi-automatic rifles. On one occasion, when a KKK motorcade opened fire on Perry’s home Williams and his men greeted the nightriders with a hail of gunfire from behind sandbag fortifications and earthen entrenchments. The fascist vermin turned tail and ran. As Williams put it, “the Klan didn’t have any more stomach for this type of fight. They stopped raiding our community.”

leadership. NAACP head Roy Wilkins launched a redbaiting campaign which culminated at the organization’s 1959 convention that was to make a final decision on Williams’ case. Recognizing that Williams had substantial support at the base of the NAACP, Wilkins trotted out luminaries like Republican New York governor Nelson Rockefeller, Jackie Robinson and Martin Luther King to denounce him. With Southern cops and Klansmen beating and killing black people with impunity, King argued that “violence” by blacks “would be the greatest tragedy that could befall us.” Williams refused to cave in, concluding the speech before his suspension was upheld with a defiant roar: “I am a man and I will walk upright as a man should. *I will not crawl!*”

Tyson notes that the many black militants who supported Williams included Malcolm X, who after their meeting in 1958 regularly invited Williams to speak at his Harlem Mosque No. 7. According to Williams, Malcolm would tell the congregation “that our brother is here from North Carolina, and he is the only fighting man that we got and we have to help him so he can stay down there.”

Williams Flees to Cuba

The NAACP actions didn’t silence or stop Williams’ efforts. In the summer of 1961, Monroe became a major focus of the Freedom Rides, a campaign across the South to integrate restaurants and other public facilities. That same summer, renewed protests to desegregate the municipal swimming pool were met by a brutal racist backlash. The young protesters were savagely attacked by Klansmen and other white-supremacists—

for Cuba Committee and earlier in the infamous 1958 “Kissing Case,” where they joined with black radical attorney Conrad Lynn in defending two black children who had been charged with rape for being kissed by a white girl. Among the SWPers who were sent to work with Williams in Monroe was Price Chatham, who became a supporter of the RT.

Tyson makes clear his view that the role of white leftists was simply to support the struggles of black militants. Tyson approvingly reports that at its 1957 convention the SWP “proclaimed the need for an independent African American political leadership—preferably one that also had ties to the NAACP—‘to determine the program’ for themselves and ‘to make it theirs’.” The SWP majority resolution did indeed envision support to separatist demands and also supported the call for federal troops to protect black people in the South (see “In Defense of Revolutionary Integrationism,” *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 49-50, Winter 1993-94).

By the late 1950s and early ’60s, the revolutionary fiber of the historic party of American Trotskyism had been sapped by a decade of political isolation during the McCarthyite Cold War period. Reflecting the pressures of liberal public opinion as well as illusions among the black masses, the SWP called for federal government intervention to enforce court-ordered school desegregation, first in Mississippi in 1955 and two years later in Little Rock, Arkansas. And U.S. president Dwight Eisenhower did send troops into Little Rock. Not surprisingly, this resulted in the crushing of local black self-defense efforts, which was indeed the chief aim of the federal intervention. The SWP’s support for federal intervention provoked considerable internal opposition, and for a time the party leadership backed off from this reformist position.

The SWP’s growing accommodationism was opposed from within the party, though Tyson does not address this. Richard Fraser, a veteran Trotskyist who originally developed the perspective of revolutionary integrationism, fought for a counterposed “Resolution on the Negro Question” and argued at the 1957 convention:

“The critical problem of the moment, the crisis of leadership in the Negro movement, revolves around the question of reformism or revolution....

“The [majority] resolution does not differentiate. It supports the basic line of the religious pacifist leadership.... The differentiation will come as a result of our being able to inject the revolutionary proletarian program into that struggle.”

Fraser opposed the SWP’s initial support to the deployment of federal troops in Little Rock, arguing in a letter later that year (reprinted in *Prometheus Research Series* No. 3, “In Memoriam Richard S. Fraser” [August 1990]):

“The entire Negro community of Little Rock, numbering 25,000, was poised and ready for action. Their eagerness to participate in the struggle at times *overflowed in dramatic eruptions....*

“The demand for Federal Troops to the South is revealed in action, not as an adjunct to but as a substitute for the organized action of the masses and is counterposed directly to it.”

As many civil rights militants were moving to the left in the early ’60s, the SWP was moving rightward, in effect denying the need for a revolutionary Marxist program and a vanguard party to implement it. Thus the SWP abstained on principle from the Southern civil rights struggle, refusing to vie for leadership and instead seeking only to influence and pressure the existing leadership. The 1963 resolution “Freedom Now” asserted that “the logic of the Negro struggle inevitably leads it into socialist channels.” In practice, the SWP became sideline cheerleaders for the mainstream civil rights leaders like King, as well as radicals like Robert F. Williams and black nationalist critics like Malcolm X.

Standing on Fraser’s program of revolutionary integrationism, the Revolutionary Tendency was born in opposition to the SWP’s centrist departure from Trotskyism. We fought, as we do today,

Sierra Leone...

(continued from page 3)

is necessary to lead the working class and oppressed in the overthrow of British imperialism. We seek to mobilise the multiethnic proletariat in the fight for working-class rule. For this we must convince the working class of the need for irreconcilable opposition to Labour. Our strategic task is to split Labour and to win its working-class base to our revolutionary programme and party.

Labour has a long tradition of colonial butchery in the service of the Empire. Blair's spokesmen are ostentatious in showing just how aggressive they can be when fighting for British imperialism. Their arrogance stems from the belief that their attacks on the working class and minorities, as well as imperialist wars, will generate less opposition than when the same attacks are carried out by a Tory government. In the Balkans War last summer, Blair howled loudest for blood as the world's most powerful countries joined forces to bomb Serbia. In Zimbabwe, Robin Cook evidently believes he is overlord of colonial "Rhodesia" as he upholds a condition imposed by Britain at the time of independence which protected land owned by white settlers from land reform.

Labour is also responsible for the fact that British planes have terror-bombed Iraq (together with U.S. planes) almost daily since December 1998. They sent British troops to Northern Ireland in 1969 and, of course, under Blair's imperialist "peace" fraud they will stay



Len Kumalo

Massive public workers' protest in Johannesburg, South Africa in October. South African workers revolution is key to emancipation of sub-Saharan Africa from imperialist domination.

there—indeed the paratroop regiment strutting through Freetown were the killers of 14 unarmed demonstrators on Bloody Sunday in Derry in 1972. We say: British troops out of Northern Ireland now! British and all imperialist troops out of the Balkans! During the Balkans War we called for defeat of imperialism through workers revolution and for military defence of Serbia, without giving an iota of political support to the Milosevic regime. Above all, we stressed the need to forge Leninist vanguard parties to lead the proletariat

in overthrowing the imperialist rulers through socialist revolution.

Acting like colonialist masters in Africa is the corollary of Labour's racist capitalist rule at home. Government spokesmen orchestrated a racist frenzy against refugees and immigrants—many of whom come from the Balkans, Africa and other areas ravaged by poverty and war—which led to a dramatic increase in racist violence. To workers facing job-slashing such as in car manufacturing, Labour and the trade-union bureaucracy offer nothing but chauvinist demonstra-

tions waving the bloody Union Jack, the emblem of racist exploitation. Social chauvinism and nationalism are integral to the programme of Labour and the union bureaucracy whose role is to tie the working class to the capitalist masters. We seek to mobilise workers in struggle against the Labour government and in particular to fight for *full citizenship rights for all immigrants!*

The key to social and economic progress and development in sub-Saharan Africa is the Trotskyist programme of permanent revolution. In some areas an industrial proletariat exists only in marginal pockets; however, oil workers in Nigeria, dock and rail workers in Kenya and miners in Zambia represent a strategic industrial workforce. It is the challenge of an international revolutionary party to transform this sector into a human link to the workers movements of the Near East and especially the industrial proletariat of South Africa who are key to a revolutionary perspective on the entire continent. Mobilised against their capitalist exploiters, these vanguard layers can launch a struggle to emancipate the cruelly oppressed men and women throughout Africa through the seizure of power by the proletariat and the extension of socialist revolution to the imperialist centres. This requires the construction of Leninist vanguard parties, part of a re-forged Fourth International. The purpose of the ICL is to build such parties to lead the struggle against imperialism and its neo-colonial regimes. The Spartacist League fights for proletarian revolution to bring down British imperialism. ■

for unconditional military defense of the Cuban Revolution, but we opposed the SWP's political support to the Stalinist Castro regime, which marked its abandonment of a proletarian revolutionary program. Instead, we fight for an internationalist regime based on workers democracy, requiring a proletarian political revolution to overthrow the Stalinist bureaucracy. Against the SWP's capitulation to black nationalism and tailist abstentionism, we fought for a Trotskyist intervention as the eruption of black struggle opened up new historic opportunities for the recruitment of black cadre.

Many of the SNCC activists had experience working with leftist groups and were open to a revolutionary perspective. Black RTer Shirley Stoute received a personal written invitation to work with SNCC in Atlanta. The SWP majority had to accede, but called her back to New York within a month on a pretext and refused to let her return. Thus as the SWP leadership tailed popular black figures, they actually forced militant party cadre out of this critical work. In a July 1963 document titled "For Black Trotskyism" (reprinted in *Marxist Bulletin* No. 5 [Revised]), "What Strategy for Black Liberation? Trotskyism vs. Black Nationalism"), the RT asserted:

"Our leadership means the revolutionary class struggle program carried out by revolutionists in the mass movement, fused into the revolutionary party. Just as trade unionists will not join the revolutionary party if they do not see it as essential to winning the struggle, so Negro fighters for liberation will not join the party on any basis other than that the *only* road to freedom for them is the revolutionary socialist path of struggle through the combat army."

The recruitment of a substantial layer of black Trotskyist cadre would have had an enormous impact on the course of subsequent struggles, not least as a wave of militant wildcats broke out in Detroit and other cities beginning in the late

1960s. But the RT resolutions were voted down and shortly thereafter we were expelled from the SWP. Even though small, the Spartacist tendency fought to intersect the growing militant left wing of the civil rights movement. Against *both* the liberal pacifism of King and the growing tendencies toward nationalist separatism, we stood for revolutionary integrationism, summarized as follows in "Black and Red":

"The vast majority of Black people—both North and South—are today workers who, along with the rest of the American working class, must sell their labor power in order to secure the necessities of life to those who buy labor power in order to make profit. The buyers of labor power, the capitalists, are a small minority whose rule is maintained only by keeping the majority who labor for them divided and misled. The fundamental division created deliberately along racial lines has kept the Negro workers who entered American capitalism at the bottom, still at the bottom. Ultimately their road to freedom lies only through struggle with the rest of the working class to abolish capitalism and establish in its place an egalitarian, socialist society....

"Because of their position as both the most oppressed and also the most conscious and experienced section, revolutionary black workers are slated to play an exceptional role in the coming American revolution."

We advanced the call for a "Freedom Labor Party" as the axis to link the exploding black struggle to the power of labor, North and South. With it we posed a series of transitional demands to win militants to this class-struggle perspective: for "A Southern Organizing Drive Backed by Organized Labor," "For a Workers United Front Against Federal Intervention" and for "Armed Self-Defense." And we translated this into practice by organizing aid—with the slogan "Every Dime Buys a Bullet"—for the Deacons for Defense and Justice. The Deacons were black veterans who organized armed defense squads—beginning in Jonesboro and Bogalusa, Louisiana—to protect civil rights activists there.

Fundamentally, we sought to bring to black militants the understanding that the working class, which is racially integrated at the point of production, is the only class with the historic interest and social power—derived from its role in production—to sweep away the system of exploitation and racist oppression. Black workers form a strategic part of the labor movement. Armed with a revolu-

tionary socialist program and organized by a communist vanguard party, black workers can lead backward, even racist, white workers in battles against the ruling class.

Standing as an obstacle to this perspective is the AFL-CIO bureaucracy, which is committed to the capitalist system and seeks to prevent the working class from posing any challenge to capitalist class rule. The mass struggles for black equality had the potential to pose such a challenge. Thus both racist Cold Warriors like then AFL-CIO chief George Meany and social democrats like the UAW's Walter Reuther—who paid lip service to the cause of civil rights—did all they could to oppose any mobilization of labor power in the black freedom struggles of the 1960s and to help crush black militancy. This treachery served to turn a layer of black militants, who identified the working class with its racist, pro-capitalist misleaders, to the dead end of nationalism, which ultimately led them back into the Democratic Party.

Today, nearly four decades later, while a small minority of black people have

made their way into a precarious existence in the middle class as a result of affirmative action programs and other measures that were won in the civil rights movement, conditions for the mass of the black population are worse now than they were in the 1960s.

In opposition to the liberal reformism and support to the Democratic Party pushed by the official black leaders, many of whom first came to prominence in the civil rights movement, we seek to build a workers party to fight for a workers government which will expropriate the capitalist class and use the enormous productive resources of this society for the benefit of those who labor to produce them. Such a party can only be built through breaking workers and minorities from Democratic Party electoralism across the board. A planned, collectivized economy would rebuild the infrastructure of American society, providing jobs, quality, integrated housing, schools and hospitals for all. Thus will the material foundations be laid for black freedom, through the full integration of black people into society and the eradication of all social inequalities. ■

SPARTACIST LEAGUE/U.S. Local Directory and Public Offices

National Office: Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116 • (212) 732-7860
Web site: www.icl-fi.org • **E-mail address:** vanguard@tiac.net

Boston

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

Chicago

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

Public Office:

Tues. 5-9 p.m.
and Sat. 12-3 p.m.
328 S. Jefferson St.
Suite 904

Los Angeles

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

Public Office:

Sat. 2-5 p.m.
3806 Beverly Blvd., Room 215

New York

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

Public Office:

Tues. 6:30-8:30 p.m.
and Sat. 1-5 p.m.
299 Broadway, Suite 318

Oakland

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

Public Office:

Sat. 1-5 p.m.
1634 Telegraph, 3rd Floor

San Francisco

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

Public Office:

Sat. 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
564 Market St., Suite 718

TROTSKYIST LEAGUE OF CANADA/LIGUE TROTSKYSTE DU CANADA

Toronto

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

Vancouver

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

NOTICE

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

Our next issue will be dated June 30.

Colombia...

(continued from page 12)

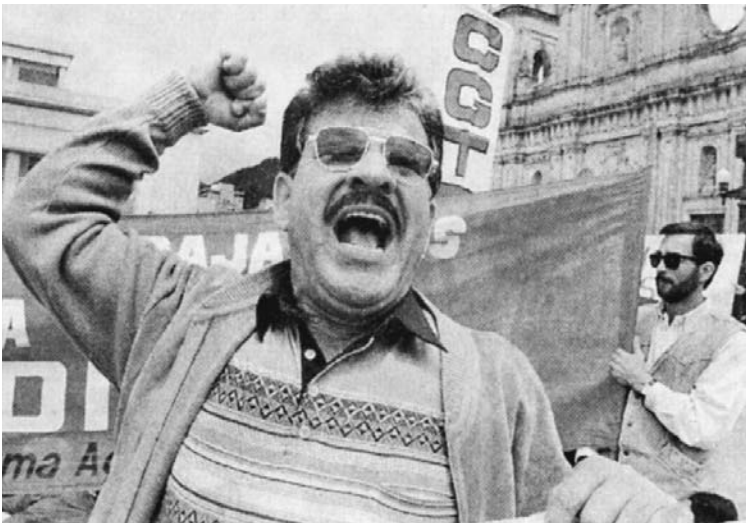
new kind of criminal, “narco-guerrillas.” McCaffrey calls on the right-wing governments of Peru, Ecuador, the Dominican Republic and elsewhere to form an anti-guerrilla alliance, recalling the notorious “Operation Condor” of the 1970s in which countless thousands of leftists were killed in a coordinated campaign of terror orchestrated by the CIA and Chilean dictator Pinochet.

Working-Class Struggle Against IMF Austerity, Death Squad Terror

Even the U.S.-backed regime of Andrés Pastrana admits that the death squads are intimately connected to—and in many cases composed of—members of the country’s military and police establishment, who are armed, trained and supervised by U.S. advisers. Union members, human rights workers, lawyers and popular journalists—anyone deemed a “guerrilla sympathizer” or union organizer—are on their hit list. In the first three months of this year, even as the regime was engaged in “peace” negotiations with the FARC, over 400 peasants were slain with unspeakable brutality in 85 massacres by *paras* and army units.

In February, some 300 *paras* attacked the town of El Salado in Bolívar province, first torturing villagers in the town’s basketball court and then hacking 28 people’s heads off with machetes. While the FARC was meeting with Pastrana’s representatives in Spain in February, days after the El Salado massacre, *paras* attacked the northern jungle town of Ovejas, beheading more than 20 villag-

Combative Colombian working class has mounted massive protests against IMF-dictated austerity and privatization.



unions’ demand for the government to stop making debt payments to the imperialist bloodsuckers of Wall Street and the IMF.

Last summer, Pastrana’s government militarized oil installations in the northeast as part of an ongoing crackdown on the USO petroleum workers union as well as the ELN, which frequently sabotages oil pipelines. Under this state repression and terror, union membership has dropped from 20 percent to 7 percent in the last ten years. However, unions representing public sector, energy and oil workers remain powerful.

More union leaders are assassinated in Colombia each year than anywhere else in the world—many of them by *paras* whose known supporters include multinational oil corporations like Occidental and Shell determined to prevent labor unrest and protect their facilities and pipelines. Over the past 15 years, around 3,000 unionists have been killed by *paras*, with 93 slain just in the last six

lies with the many-millioned Colombian working class standing at the head of the struggles of the oppressed peasant masses and indigenous peoples for liberation. Yet while the FARC seized a hydroelectric plant in solidarity with last fall’s general strike, at best these petty-bourgeois guerrillas see the proletariat as simply an auxiliary to their aim of being granted a share in the capitalist rule of Colombia. Far from having any kind of “socialist” perspective—which the FARC still occasionally proclaims—the interests of this peasant-based movement are fundamentally hostile to the working class. As we wrote of the insurgencies in Central America in the 1980s, which made far more claim to being some kind of leftist challenge to imperialism than do the present-day Colombian guerrillas:

“As a mass of petty-bourgeois small commodity producers, the peasantry does not have the collective strength and the independent class interest of the proletariat. There is no characteristic peasant mode of production, much less a ‘socialist peasantry’ and therefore the peasantry cannot *lead* a social revolution. But the vast peasant masses are driven by a thirst for land, and to get it they will even follow a guerrilla band, or the revolutionary working class, *if* these forces can demonstrate the ability to defeat the oligarchy and its army. Once they have their plots that will end the peasants’ role as a revolutionary factor. For instance, in Bolivia, where the peasants became landowners in 1952 as the result of an extensive land reform, they became allies of the army *against* the workers in the so-called ‘military-peasant pact.’ Peasant militias were even sent into the mines to massacre the combative tin miners. Thus a peasant-based guerrilla war, although directed initially against a landlord-capitalist oligarchy, contains within it the seeds of a restabilized capitalist regime. But even though numerically small, the urban working class in backward capitalist countries as in Central America can become the revolutionary vanguard, by placing itself at the head of a stormy agrarian revolt in the struggle for a workers and peasants government, for the dictatorship of the proletariat.”

—“Workers Revolution vs. the Guerrilla Road,” WV No. 325, 11 March 1983

Drugs and Imperialist Hypocrisy

Following several successful military offensives against the government, the FARC had become the de facto government of a vast rural area in southern Colombia, near the borders with Peru and Ecuador. A year and a half ago, unable to defeat FARC militarily, the Pastrana government formally ceded control of the area, which has become known as “Farclandia,” to the guerrillas. Last July, the FARC launched a nationwide offensive, attacking army units in eleven provinces and advancing within 25 miles of Bogotá, prompting the government to call for negotiations. In April, the government handed over a second, smaller zone in the north to the ELN. Pastrana’s negotiations with the FARC, like previous government moves to negotiate with the guerrillas, were opposed by Colombia’s U.S. imperialist masters, who favor headline military terror.

For the impoverished peasantry of Colombia and throughout the region, coca leaf farming has been one of the only ways they can eke out a living. Attempts to encourage them to plant other crops have failed, both for economic reasons and because of the constant U.S.-sponsored spraying of toxic

chemical defoliants. Daily flights by a fleet of over 65 airplanes and helicopters flying out of three separate airbases—reminiscent of the U.S. use of the carcinogenic defoliant Agent Orange during the Vietnam War—rain poisonous herbicides over homes, schools and hospitals, killing livestock and contaminating water sources.

Meanwhile, the big money in drugs is reaped by the Colombian bourgeoisie, its army and the *paras*, who operate openly as the “United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia” (AUC) under the leadership of drug lord Carlos Castaño (whose chief bodyguard did two stints at the School of the Americas).

And their U.S. masters are the biggest hypocrites of all: U.S. government agencies have long been the biggest drug-runners in the world, going back to World War II when the Office of Strategic Services, predecessor of the CIA, made deals with Corsican heroin traffickers and heroin-dealing U.S. gangster Lucky Luciano to prevent Communists from gaining political support in postwar France and Italy. Against the 1949 Chinese Revolution, the CIA funded the anti-Communist Guomindang in part with Burmese opium. Similarly, during the U.S.’ dirty, losing Vietnam War, the CIA used Laotian Hmong tribesmen to deliver opium, shipping it out on the CIA’s Air America. During the 1980s, the CIA ran heroin to fund the Islamic fundamentalist *mujahedin* fighting the Soviet-backed government of Afghanistan. And after the Sandinistas came to power in Nicaragua in 1979, the CIA traded drugs to arm the counterrevolutionary *contras*.

Just recently, the head of U.S. military anti-drug operations in Colombia, Colonel J. C. Hiatt, and his wife confessed to running their own drug-smuggling operation, shipping cocaine home in diplomatic pouches! This is merely the analog of what most every cop in the American ghettos does after a bust: first confiscate the drugs, then sell them. And of course the Hiatts’ sentences were nowhere near as severe as those meted out to the hundreds of thousands of black and Hispanic youth ensnared by the “war on drugs” in the U.S.

FARC: Reformists with Guns

Clinton’s military aid package is a five-fold increase over last year’s, which was already a threefold increase over 1998, adding up to a 3,500 percent increase in aid since 1993—a military buildup which has been compared to the early years of the Vietnam War. We defend the FARC and the ELN against the terror of the imperialists and their local henchmen. But the situation in Colombia today does not remotely resemble that in Vietnam, where the U.S. imperialists were faced with a social revolution by the heroic workers and peasants. Calling for military victory to the forces of the North Vietnamese deformed workers state and the South Vietnamese National Liberation Front, the Spartacist League demanded, “All Indochina Must Go Communist!”

Today, even while the U.S. pours in military aid to the Colombian regime, the head of the New York Stock Exchange on a recent visit to Farclandia invited FARC leaders to “visit the New York Stock Exchange so that they can get to know the market personally”! As one journalist who spent some time with the FARC’s legendary leader, Manuel “Tirofijo” (“Sureshot”) Marulanda, put it: “His agenda is not a social revolution but only the sort of social justice that globalization increasingly seems not to take into account” (*New York Times*, 19 July 1999). And, after a recent visit with Marulanda, America Online cofounder and chairman emeritus James Kimsey quoted the guerrilla leader as acknowledging that “Communism is dead” (*Washington Post*, 15 March).

This echo of the imperialist bourgeoisie’s “death of communism” lie by the FARC leader *does* reflect that in the absence of the existence of the Soviet degenerated workers state as a curb against the untrammelled ambitions of



President of NY Stock Exchange embraces FARC leader in Colombia last summer. FARC petty-bourgeois nationalists seek “power-sharing” under capitalist rule.

ers. In April, in the oil-producing center of Tibú, northeast of the capital city of Bogotá, death squads massacred 21 people and gravely wounded another five.

In Colombia, where nearly half the population is officially below the poverty level, there is a rising tide of working-class struggle against a devastating economic downturn, austerity measures imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and a drive to privatize state-owned industries. Last fall, a general strike called by the three union federations brought out some 1.5 million workers and basically shut down the country, but was called off after two days of ferocious police attacks and arrests of strikers and union leaders. The U.S.-backed regime reacted especially violently to the

months. Outraged protest against this anti-union murder campaign should be a rallying point for unions internationally, and especially in the U.S. But the American labor bureaucracy is so tied to the imperialist aims of the ruling class that instead they’re wrapped up in an anti-Communist campaign against China. International workers solidarity is anathema to the AFL-CIO labor traitors—its American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD) played a key role in helping U.S. imperialism smash trade unions in Latin America for more than 40 years and is hated by workers throughout the region.

The power to overthrow the brutal rule of the Colombian bourgeoisie and break the grip of its U.S. imperialist overlords

WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League

- ☐ \$10/22 issues of *Workers Vanguard* (includes English-language *Spartacist* and *Black History and the Class Struggle*) international rates: \$25/22 issues—Airmail \$10/22 issues—Seamail
- ☐ New ☐ Renewal
- ☐ \$2/6 introductory issues of *Workers Vanguard* (includes English-language *Spartacist*)
- ☐ \$2/4 issues of *Espartaco* (en español) (includes Spanish-language *Spartacist*)

Name _____

Address _____

_____ Apt. # _____ Phone (_____) _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

737
Make checks payable/mail to: Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

McCaffrey...

(continued from page 12)

Committee, McCaffrey crowed, “Once we had them bottled up, up here at the causeway, there was no way out.”

As he closed in on the retreating Iraqis—soldiers and civilians alike—McCaffrey opened up on the defenseless victims, claiming that he was under attack. According to Hersh, the 24th Division’s operations officer described the battle as “a giant hoax. The Iraqis were doing absolutely nothing.” As he told McCaffrey, “There was no incoming” weapons fire. Another senior U.S. officer told Hersh that “a colleague had overheard McCaffrey urge his commanders on the command radio net ‘to find a way for him to go kill all of those bastards’.” The fact that the Iraqis were in full retreat and posed no threat to the American forces was confirmed by CIA and military analysts in the command headquarters who reviewed the events at Rumaila. One Gulf War tank gun loader told Hersh that he and his fellow soldiers were part of “the biggest firing squad in history.”

Before the main forces under McCaffrey’s command began their all-out attack on the retreating Iraqis, gut-wrenching atrocities had been carried out by his troops. In an example cited by Hersh, several hundred surrendering Iraqis were taken prisoner and seated in rows in the desert surrounded by their captured vehicles, which included a clearly marked hospital bus. American commanding officers were informed of the location of these prisoners, many of whom were wounded. The unit that had captured the Iraqi POWs was ordered out of the area, and shortly afterward the prisoners were machine-gunned by another unit of the

Iraqi soldier killed in 1991 U.S. Persian Gulf slaughter. Retired General Barry McCaffrey, overseer of “drug war” terror from U.S. ghettos to Latin American countryside, ordered massacre of retreating Iraqis following cease-fire.

Ken Jarecke



AP



24th. One soldier quoted by Hersh said, “They knew there were prisoners there. They knew they were unarmed. They knew the hospital bus was there.”

Hersh provides graphic accounts of other examples of wanton killing of fleeing Iraqis by the 24th Division. One comes from a senior sergeant who stated that “the day after the ceasefire, he saw an American combat team open fire with machine guns upon a group of Iraqis in civilian clothes who were waving a white

sheet of surrender.”

The total number of Iraqis killed by McCaffrey’s forces at Rumaila will never be known. Army reports claimed that 700 tanks, armored cars and trucks were destroyed, but the dead were quickly buried, and no accurate count of the victims, who included civilians and children, could be made. With bloodcurdling pride, McCaffrey described his work as “one of the most astounding scenes of destruction I have ever participated in.”

McCaffrey even sent out “scout” troops after the killing spree to recover Iraqi and Soviet flags as “war trophies.”

This barbarism was not simply the result, however, of the personal character of a butcher like McCaffrey, a career military officer and gung-ho Vietnam War veteran. McCaffrey told his troops after the bloodletting that their actions were “probably the single most unifying event that has happened in America since World War II.... The upshot will be that, just like Vietnam had the tragic effect on our country for years, this one has brought back a new way of looking at ourselves.” This is exactly what the American rulers wanted when they spent months planning and assembling their massive military juggernaut against Iraq.

Republican George Bush was president and commander in chief of the U.S. armed forces during Operation Desert Storm, but it was Democratic presidential candidate Bill Clinton who campaigned against Bush in the 1992 elections on the grounds that he had ended the Persian Gulf War *too soon*. At the time, we reported on the war crimes of imperialism in Operation Desert Storm, from the 20 January 1991 bombing of the baby formula factory on the outskirts of Baghdad to the 13 February 1991 incineration of hundreds of women and children civilians crowded in Baghdad’s Amiriya bomb shelter.

The mass murder of Iraqis and the destruction of the country’s infrastructure continues today under the decade-long United Nations starvation blockade that has claimed the lives of more than 1.5 million people. Eight years of the Clinton and Gore administration’s continued bombings and the blockade of Iraq make them no less guilty of mass murder and destruction than McCaffrey.■

U.S. imperialism, the various guerrilla organizations throughout Latin America have largely abandoned even the pretense of cloaking themselves in the mantle of “socialism.” Instead, as in the case of the Salvadoran FMLN which is now fully party to the rule of the capitalist oligarchy in that country, the bourgeois-nationalist program behind the façade of “pick up the gun” guerrillaism is blatant.

As we wrote in our “Theses on Guerrilla Warfare” (*Spartacist* No. 11, March/April 1968), at a time when guerrillaism was being heralded as the road to power for the working people and oppressed masses of the so-called “Third World” by a variety of leftists, from the Maoists to Ernest Mandel’s United Secretariat:

“The ‘national liberation’ armed-struggle programs of the guerrilla movements are not at all socialist. Certainly, they start out as ‘anti-imperialist’ and even ‘anti-capitalist.’ However, as a guerrilla movement grows, the petty-bourgeois need to attract ‘influential’ allies and to compromise with the ‘progressive’ bourgeoisie against the military apparatus defending imperialist property will tone down the guerrillas’ ‘anti-capitalism.’ The nationalist reformism of the guerrilla movement will be more blatantly portrayed in its actions and program when it has gathered enough strength to pose as the sole protector of the ‘fatherland.’ Such a program at best promises—barring the destruction of the guerrilla movement—a reordering of the national economy through the state infrastructure, and by no means the socialist reconstruction of society.”

In the 1960s, the Cuban Revolution was embraced as a brand new model of revolution based on guerrilla struggle. But the destruction of capitalist property relations by Castro’s petty-bourgeois government in 1960—a tremendous victory against U.S. imperialism—could only come about as the result of exceptional circumstances: the extreme weakness of the Cuban ruling class, the absence of a conscious proletariat fighting for its own interests, and the existence of the Soviet Union as a counterweight to imperialism. With the destruction of the Soviet Union and consequently no readily available lifeline against imperialist encirclement, the narrow historical opening for petty-bourgeois forces to overturn local capitalist rule has been closed.

At the same time, as exemplified by the Cuban Revolution, even under very favorable historic circumstances the petty bourgeoisie was *at most* capable of creating a bureaucratically deformed workers state—an anti-working-class regime whose nationalist adherence to the Stalinist dogma of building “socialism in one country” blocked the possibility of extending social revolution into Latin and North America and suppressed Cuba’s further development in the direction of socialism.

We stand for the unconditional military defense of the gains of the Cuban Revolution against imperialist attack and internal capitalist counterrevolution. At the same time, we fight for a proletarian political revolution against the Cuban Stalinist bureaucracy in order to place the working class in political power and to open the road to socialist development, which necessarily means fighting for proletarian socialist revolution throughout the Americas—particularly the overthrow of the rule of U.S. imperialism.

Class Struggle in South America

Colombia is only the most worrisome of many Latin American nations on the imperialists’ horizon. Washington policymakers currently refer to the region encompassing Colombia, Venezuela, Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia as the “arc of crisis.” This winter, Bolivia experienced its biggest political protests in more than a decade against a multinational consortium’s attempt to impose exorbitant rates for water on the poverty-stricken population, and the country’s rulers briefly declared a state of emergency as the British-based water pirates pulled out. In Peru, dictator Fujimori’s attempt to steal the elections a third time has provoked widespread protests and strikes.

Last year, Ecuador experienced massive protests including a general strike against the government, which declared its inability to meet its debts to imperialist bankers after faithfully trying to impose IMF demands that it raise gas prices by 100 percent, raise phone and electricity prices by 66 percent, freeze bank accounts and privatize state indus-

tries. In Brazil, workers have launched strikes against Ford and staged the largest ever anti-government demonstration in Brasília last fall. From Buenos Aires to Mexico City, unions have organized huge protests against privatizations and IMF-dictated austerity. Washington is also nervous that the populist and nationalist regime of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela—the number one supplier of crude oil to the U.S.—could provoke social unrest that could spin out of control.

What’s needed to end the Colombian bloodbath, and to throw off imperialist domination throughout Latin America, is the forging of revolutionary workers parties armed with the Trotskyist perspective of permanent revolution: the proletariat—standing at the head of the peasantry, the indigenous peoples and all the oppressed—must seize state power from the weak and venal bourgeoisies, necessarily seeking to extend socialist revolution to the imperialist heartland. Only in this way can the burning tasks of agrarian revolution, equal rights for blacks and indigenous peoples, education, health care, housing and full employment be achieved. To carry this out requires a struggle to win the working class away from the nationalism—purveyed by the fake left and the trade-union bureaucracy—that ties it to its bourgeois class enemy in the name of “anti-imperialism.”

The Russian October Revolution of 1917, led by the Bolshevik Party of V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky, embodied the revolutionary internationalist program we fight for. The Bolsheviks understood that the fate of the first workers state on earth depended on spreading socialist revolution to the advanced capitalist countries, making possible the elimination of want and scarcity and opening the road to a classless society. Writing in 1939, a year before his assassination by an agent of Stalin in Mexico, Trotsky wrote in “What Is the Permanent Revolution? Three Concepts of the Russian Revolution”:

“The perspective of permanent revolution may be summarized in the following way: the complete victory of the democratic revolution in Russia is conceivable only in the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, leaning on the peasantry. The dictatorship of the proletariat, which would inevitably place on the order of the day not only democratic but socialistic tasks as well, would at the same time give a powerful impetus to the international socialist revolution. Only the victory of the proletariat in the West could protect Russia from bourgeois restoration and assure it the possibility of rounding out the establishment of socialism.”

We fight to build Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard parties based on the program of permanent revolution in Colombia and throughout Latin America, as part of the struggle to reforge Trotsky’s Fourth International.■

Trotskyist League/SYC Forums

**25th Anniversary of the Defeat of U.S. Imperialism
by Heroic Vietnamese Workers and Peasants**
**The Vietnamese Revolution:
A Victory Against Imperialism**
Defeat U.S./Canadian Imperialism! For Workers Revolution!

Friday, June 9, 7:30 p.m.

International Student Centre, U of T
33 St. George St. (North of College St.)
(Subway: Queen’s Park or St. George)
For more information: (416) 593-4138

TORONTO

Saturday, June 10, 3 p.m.

Britannia Community Centre, Rm. L4
1661 Napier St. (off Commercial Dr.)
For more information: (604) 687-0353

VANCOUVER

WORKERS VANGUARD

“Drug War” Cover for Bloody Repression of Workers, Peasants

U.S. Hands Off Colombia!

Having wreaked death and destruction around the globe—from the 1998 bombings of Afghanistan and Sudan, to the terror bombing of Serbia and the occupation of Kosovo, to the ongoing bombardment and starvation of Iraq—Clinton’s “human rights” imperialism is increasingly focusing its deadly attentions on its “backyard,” Latin America. Seeking to augment the already massive U.S. military involvement in the Colombian government’s nearly 40-year-long “dirty war” to wipe out that country’s various guerrilla groups, the Clinton administration is pushing Congress to adopt a gargantuan \$1.7 billion military aid package billed as key to the global “war on drugs.”

This huge escalation in military aid to Colombia—already the third-largest recipient of U.S. aid, after only Israel and Egypt—has little to do with drugs and everything to do with asserting U.S. imperialist domination over Latin America. In Colombia, a peasant-guerrilla insurgency rages in over half of this oil- and mineral-rich, strategically located country. In the last decade, over 35,000 people have been killed in the Colombian “dirty war,” and more than 1.5 million people, mostly peasants, have been forced to flee their homes. The imperialists fear that social turmoil and civil war in Colombia could further “destabilize” a region already simmering with social struggle.

While in the U.S. the “war on drugs” has meant an escalation of racist police terror in the ghettos and barrios, in Latin America it has become Yankee imperialism’s latest fig leaf for beefing up the forces of repression against peasant and working-class unrest. Just as in Mexico, where massive U.S. “anti-drug” aid is aimed in large measure at wiping out the Zapatista rebels in Chiapas, Clinton’s military buildup in Colombia directly targets workers, leftists and peasants for even more terror at the hands of



Bodies of peasant guerrillas murdered in U.S.-backed war of terror by Colombian military. Right: Head of U.S. Southern Command with Colombian army chief.

the bloodthirsty army and its auxiliary right-wing paramilitary death squads, known as *paras*. The International Communist League demands: U.S. hands off Colombia!

Clinton’s “Plan Colombia” aid package, which includes Black Hawk helicopters, P-3 radar aircraft, heat-seeking weaponry and speedboats, would create three new “anti-drug” army battalions to be deployed in an operation called “Push into Southern Colombia”—the provinces of Putumayo and Caquetá which are controlled by the largest guerrilla group, the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia). The U.S. Special Forces would provide training and personnel, while U.S. intelligence agents would track down “suspected guerrillas.” The *Washington Post* (8 February) acknowledged that “this is a counterinsurgency strategy packaged as a counternarcotics program.” Since proclaiming the Monroe

Doctrine in the early 19th century, the U.S. has considered Latin America to be under its exclusive control. These U.S. war moves mark yet another chapter in the more than a century-long history of Yankee imperialist terror against the people of the Caribbean, Central and Latin America: stealing Panama from Colombia in 1903; invading Haiti in 1915 and again in 1994; the CIA overthrow of the Guatemalan government in 1954; the invasions of the Dominican Republic in 1964, Grenada in 1983 and Panama in 1991—to name only a few.

For the past several years, as the FARC and the smaller National Liberation Army (ELN) have gained strength, and with imperialist oil interests in the country like L.A.-based Occidental Petroleum feeling increasingly threatened, the U.S. has been funneling ever more arms and “advisers” to the Colombian regime. Long one of Washington’s

showcase Latin American “democracies,” Colombia is an archetype of “Third World” countries in which the weak ruling class, beholden to U.S. imperialism, relies on monstrous state repression from the U.S.-trained army and the *paras* to protect its privileges from the impoverished and increasingly combative workers and peasants. The Colombian army boasts of having more graduates than any other Latin American country from the U.S. Army’s notorious “School of the Americas” (known worldwide as the “School of the Assassins”), now located in Fort Benning, Georgia.

Clinton’s point man for increased involvement in Colombia is “drug czar” and Gulf War criminal Barry McCaffrey (see “Drug Czar McCaffrey, Imperialist War Criminal,” below), former head of the U.S. Army’s Southern Military Command (SouthCom), who’s created a

continued on page 10

“Drug Czar” McCaffrey, Imperialist War Criminal

Retired 4-star general Barry R. McCaffrey is Bill Clinton’s “drug czar” and a key administration architect of the U.S. “counter-insurgency” plan to militarily crush the peasant-based Colombian rebels. Now well-known liberal journalist Seymour Hersh has written an exposé for the *New Yorker* (22 May) showing why McCaffrey is an ideal candidate for orchestrating death squad terror in Colombia. Hersh documents the hideous war crimes that McCaffrey reportedly committed during the war on Iraq nearly a decade ago.

Hersh’s piece is detailed with the

accounts of soldiers from the 20,000-strong 24th Infantry Division commanded by McCaffrey who participated in a slaughter of retreating Iraqis trapped in southern Iraq on 2 March 1991 in the so-called “Battle of Rumaila.” Hersh also makes clear that the Pentagon was fully aware of McCaffrey’s actions and carried out a series of whitewashing investigations that they sat on for a decade. The pre-planned massacre at Rumaila was of a piece with the whole purpose of the Gulf War, which was to demonstrate U.S. imperialism’s willingness to carry out mass killing to assert its position as

the top cop of the world.

On 23 February 1991, a ground war was launched against Iraq. The U.S. refused Saddam Hussein’s offer of surrender on February 26. That night American surveillance detected a massive stream of Iraqi vehicles out of Kuwait headed back toward Iraq. In a deliberate display of modern barbarism, for 18 hours U.S. planes rained incendiary explosives on what the media called the “Mile of Death,” killing thousands who were fleeing for their lives.

The U.S.-led war on Iraq was one big series of war crimes effusively supported

by the Democrats and Republicans along with an obliging bourgeois press. During “Operation Desert Storm” against Iraq, the Spartacist League/U.S. fought on a revolutionary program calling to “Defeat U.S. Imperialism!” and “Defend Iraq!” We seek to mobilize the proletariat to smash American imperialism from within through workers revolution.

Until Seymour Hersh’s exposé, the acts of the 24th Division during the second day of the declared cease-fire between the Iraqis and the U.S.-led coalition of imperialist mass murderers had been largely unreported. As Hersh describes it, a route for the retreating Iraqi army to follow during the “cease-fire” that began on February 28—along the Lake Hammar causeway—had been carefully chosen by American military commanders. Fully aware of this, McCaffrey moved his troops to within striking distance of the causeway. In his own account two months later to the Senate Armed Services

continued on page 11