

PAN Victory After 70 Years of PRI Rule

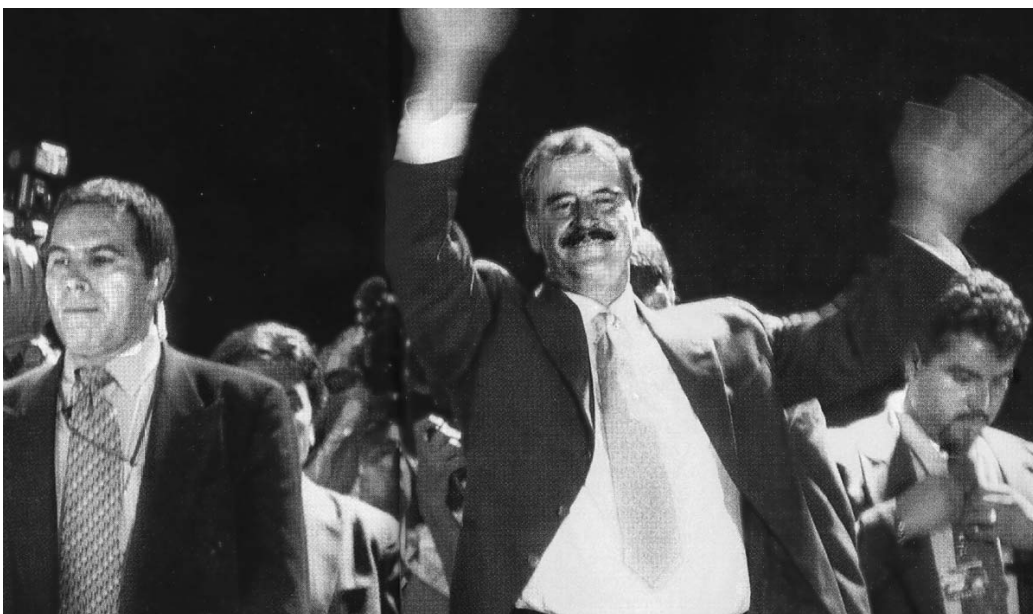
Wall Street's Candidate Wins Mexican Elections

"A Crowning Defeat: Mexico as the Victor," "Markets Hail Election Outcome," "Mexican Revolution." This was the triumphant reaction of the U.S. imperialist press to the outcome of last month's presidential elections in Mexico. For the first time since its inception 71 years ago, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) was ousted from the presidency, losing to right-wing National Action Party (PAN) candidate Vicente Fox Quesada by 43 to 36 percent. Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas of the left-talking bourgeois Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) took 17 percent of the vote.

For the Yankee imperialists and Mexican bankers, Fox, former chief of Coca-Cola's Mexican operations, is "the real thing." Unlike the candidates of the PRI and PRD, which both claim the nationalist mantle of the Mexican Revolution of 1910-20, Fox openly proclaims his goal of expanding NAFTA, U.S. imperialism's "free trade" rape of Mexico. Following the election, the Mexican stock exchange rose over 6 percent, the peso has been steadily rising against the dollar, and Mexican government bond ratings have been upgraded, reflecting imperialist expectations of greater opportunities for plundering the country. Wall Street looks to Fox to deliver on such longstanding goals as the privatization of Mexico's lucrative electrical, oil and petrochemical industries.

For seven decades, the PRI and its forebears sought to ensure social stability for its imperialist patrons, incorporating trade unions and peasant organizations into the party's massive bureaucratic machinery and unleashing bloody terror against workers and the poor. Generations of leftists, rural activists and militant union leaders have been murdered, kidnapped, imprisoned and tortured by the country's notoriously brutal police forces, military squads and *caciques* (rural bosses), with the military and financial support of the U.S. The PRI's rampant corruption, abject subservience to Washington and open election-stealing left it widely discredited and undercut its usefulness in maintaining social stability. Having lost confidence in the PRI, the U.S. rulers threw their support to Fox.

Many who voted for Fox did so as a protest against the PRI's long, brutal and corrupt rule, not out of ideological devotion to the PAN's reactionary Catholic program. Fox also received support from dozens of influential leftist intellectuals



Sergio Dorrantes



Victory of right-wing PAN candidate Fox in presidential elections presages attacks on combative Mexican proletariat, women, peasants. Thousands of striking teachers protested in Mexico City in June against outgoing PRI president Zedillo.

No Illusions in PRD Nationalism— For Socialist Revolution Throughout the Americas!

who in prior elections would have stumped for the PRD. Seeing no chance for Cárdenas to be elected, they threw in their lot with Fox and echoed the imperialists in hailing the election of this clericalist bigot as a victory for "democracy."

The PRI's loss is a major event which underscores the *fragility* of bourgeois rule in Mexico. While the PAN victory pres-

ages vicious attacks on women and gays and poses major attacks on Mexico's combative proletariat, Fox may find that running the bourgeois state is a lot harder than running Coca-Cola. Mexico has been racked by widespread social unrest. Along with the EZLN Zapatista peasant insurgency, which broke out in Chiapas in 1994, is a longstanding guerrilla war by

the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP) in Guerrero. The yearlong UNAM student strike in Mexico City which ended in February polarized society, as masses of working people mobilized to support the struggle to defend public education. In the past few months, schoolteachers and Aeroméxico flight attendants, among others, have waged militant strikes against imperialist-dictated government attacks. The potential power of the Mexican working class has been augmented by the massive growth of industry through increased imperialist investment, especially in the north. In 1999 alone, a million new jobs were created in the *maquiladora* region along the U.S. border, where workers toil for miserable wages and face brutal anti-labor repression.

Based on the principle of the political independence of the proletariat against all wings of bourgeois nationalism, the Grupo Espartaquista de México (GEM), Mexican section of the International Communist League, declared "Not one vote for the PRI, PAN or PRD!" (see article, page 11). The GEM fights to build a Leninist-Trotskyist party in Mexico to lead the combative working class, marching at the head of all the oppressed, to the revolutionary conquest of power.

The PAN and Catholic Reaction

The roots of the PAN are in right-wing reaction to the Mexican Revolution. In 1926, Catholic forces enraged by anti-clerical provisions of the constitution—particularly those mandating secular education—fomented a peasant-based civil war, the "Cristero revolt." The war lasted over two years and cost 80,000 lives, ending in an uneasy truce brokered by the American government. The PAN, which is linked to the sinister, right-wing international Catholic group Opus Dei, was organized in 1939 as the political expression of Cristero ("follower of Christ") ideology. The PAN trumpeted the virtues of Franco's Spain; its members wore blue shirts like Franco's fascist Falange.

Fox was educated by Jesuits in the state of Guanajuato, the center of the Cristero revolt. Early in his campaign, he unfurled the Cristero banner of the Virgin of Guadalupe and repeatedly let rip their old battle cry, "If I advance, follow me! If I hold back, push me! If I retreat, kill me!" But in order to split votes away from the PRI

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Dearborn, Michigan

10,000 Protest Killing of Black Man by Security Guards

On July 5, some 10,000 people, overwhelmingly black, rallied outside the Fairlane Mall in Dearborn, Michigan to protest the racist killing of Frederick Finley by Lord & Taylor security guards. Finley, a 32-year-old black man, was leaving the department store with his family on June 22 when guards accused his eleven-year-old stepdaughter of not paying for a \$4 bracelet. When Finley tried to prevent the guards from grabbing the girl, they put him in a chokehold, forced handcuffs on his wrists and throttled the life out of him as his family watched in horror.

It is a measure of the outrage of black people against the brutality regularly meted out in racist America by the cops and security guards, who act as auxiliaries to the police, that thousands mobilized in Dearborn, historically a bastion

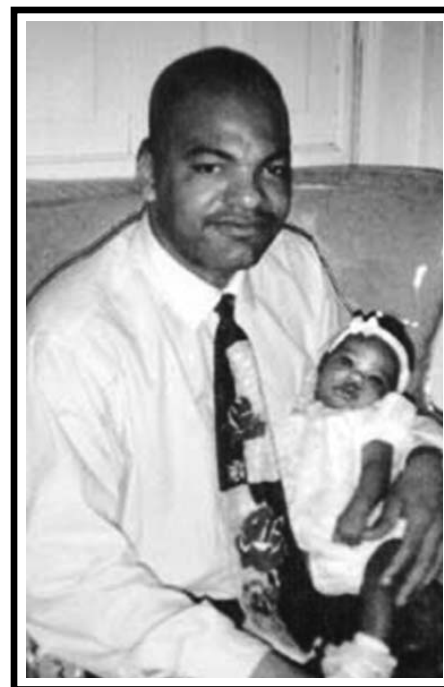
of racist reaction. In the 1920s and '30s, the anti-Semite and arch-segregationist Henry Ford kept the town lily-white while fostering the development of a nearby all-black town, Inkster. Although it now has a large Arab American community, Dearborn's population is still less than 1 percent black. Protesters recalled being thrown out of the city's parks during the 1980s because of an ordinance barring "nonresidents," that is, black people. The Fairlane Mall was boycotted several years ago for its racist discrimination. "They follow you around in the stores, just waiting to pounce," said one protester. "Now they're showing us our lives aren't even worth a \$4 bracelet" (*New York Times*, 7 July).

As expressions of fury over Finley's killing began to resound in the region around Dearborn, Democratic Party offi-

cials and black liberals like Michigan Congressman John Conyers and Al Sharpton moved in to try to subvert this anger and channel it into votes for Democratic politicians. This is exactly what Sharpton attempted to do last year as New York City boiled with rage over the execution-style killing of West African immigrant Amadou Diallo by the NYPD. Worried that the raw fear and hatred of the cops could have ignited a social explosion, Sharpton and his Democratic allies put forward a ten-point program to "reform" the police—including a demand to hire more minority officers. Four of the five security guards responsible for Finley's death, including the one who actually killed him, *are* black. Many security guards are hired out of the ghetto for little more than minimum wage. But like the cops, they are hired as guardians of capitalist property and profit.

Black, Latino or white, cops and security guards are enemies of working people and minorities. Outfits like the Pinkertons have a notorious history of strikebreaking and anti-labor terror. At the same time, labor misleaders are busy organizing police and other armed servants of the capitalist state into the unions. We say: Cops, prison guards, security guards out of the unions!

Sharpton and Conyers are demanding that Janet Reno's Justice Department investigate Finley's killing. But the would-be investigators are them-



Frederick Finley

no credit

selves perpetrators of racist atrocities! The Democratic Party Clinton administration has poured thousands more cops onto the streets while speeding up executions on death row. After a lengthy "investigation," the Feds exonerated themselves earlier this month for the horrific 1993 incineration of more than 80 men, women and children of the integrated Branch Davidian religious sect near Waco, Texas.

The calls for federal intervention have been coupled with demands that security companies and the police stop "racial profiling." As outrage over cop terror swells across the country, such demands have been taken up by a wide spectrum of capitalist politicians. But so-called "racial profiling" is the *racist reality* of capitalist America, where every black man is a moving target for the cops. The aim of these politicians is merely to clean up the

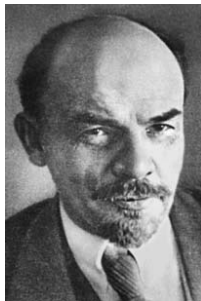
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TROTSKY

The Fraud of "Left" Bourgeois Third Parties

Today, many self-styled socialists are pushing Ralph Nader, head of the bourgeois Green Party, as a "left" alternative to the Democrats and Republicans. In an earlier "third party" effort, at the onset of the anti-Soviet Cold War in 1948, former Democratic vice president Henry Wallace ran as a "peace" candidate for the Progressive Party, which was largely organized by the Stalinist Communist Party. At the time, in an



LENIN

internal discussion in the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party, James P. Cannon emphasized that the Progressive Party was a capitalist party and that any support to it was counterposed to the fight for a revolutionary party of the American proletariat.

When we speak of developing the independent political action of the workers, our fundamental aim is to build the revolutionary party of the workers because that alone correctly and truly expresses working class independence. Our labor party policy is not a principle at all but a tactic designed to serve the larger principle, designed to advance class consciousness and provide an arena and a means of expanding and developing the revolutionary party and popularizing its program....

It would be very, very bad and demoralizing if we would allow for a moment the anti-war demagoguery of Wallace to be taken by any member of our party as something preferable to the blatant aggressiveness of Truman and Marshall. That would be nothing less than the preparation of the minds of party members for "lesser evil" politics—based on the theory that one kind of capitalist tactics in the expansion of American imperialism is preferable to another, and that the workers should intervene to support one against the other.

If I read the documents correctly, the argument is made by the Chicago comrades that the capitalists do not support Wallace and therefore it is not a capitalist party. I think it is quite correct that all, or nearly all, of the monopoly capitalists at the present moment oppose Wallace. That is not decisive at all as to the class character of the party. The class character of the party is not determined by the class that supports the party at the moment but rather by the class that the party supports. In other words, by its program. That is the decisive line....

The class character of the party is determined first by its program; secondly by its actual policy in practice; and thirdly by its composition and control.

—James P. Cannon, "Electoral Policy in 1948," reprinted in the Young Socialist Alliance pamphlet "*Peace*" *Politics vs Revolutionary Politics* (February 1971)



Nearly 10,000 turned out on July 5 in Dearborn protest against chokehold killing of Frederick Finley by department store security guards.

AP

WORKERS VANGUARD

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Troubled Waters for “Socialists” Who Cheered Counterrevolution

The following article is reprinted from *Workers Hammer*, newspaper of the *Spartacist League/Britain*. It was distributed earlier this month at *Marxism 2000*, a week-long annual event held by the *British Socialist Workers Party*.

WORKERS HAMMER

Following the demise of its founder-leader Tony Cliff, the reformist Socialist Workers Party (SWP), the largest self-styled “socialist” organisation in Britain, is in deep crisis. A bitter factional struggle has erupted between the SWP and its American satellite, the International Socialist Organization (ISO). Internal opposition groups have sprung up within the SWP’s “International Socialist Tendency.” As revealed in the ISO’s March 2000 *Internal Discussion Bulletin* and elsewhere, the questions posed in the present fight include Tony Cliff’s “theory” of “state capitalism”; policy over the Balkans War; the SWP’s “turn” to electoralism; the approach to protests against “globalisation,” as well as the organisational liquidation of various Cliffite outfits internationally such as their South African group’s disappearance into the South African Communist Party.

For its part, the SWP leadership has responded to internal dissent by dissolving every branch in Britain and Ireland and reorganising them as “campaign units.” Oppositionists such as the “Sverdlov” grouping in the U.S. have seized mainly on the lack of internal democracy—which is infamous. Indeed, the British left is full of former “oppositionists” tossed out of Cliff’s organisation. Just as the gangsterism of the SWP against its opponents on the left is the “method” by which it seeks to resolve the contradiction between the “socialism” it claims to stand for and the abject reformist content of its actual work, the lack of internal democracy is the internal reflection of this same contradiction.

At the heart of the current crisis in the Cliffites is the Russian question. A 28 May Internet posting by Sverdlov reported: “There is not a single comrade inside the ISO—for example—that can defend the state-cap theories since the fall of Stalinism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.” He added that there is very little insistence on such theories as a precondition for membership. The reason for this is obvious: ten years after the fall of the Berlin Wall and close to a decade

after the final undoing of the October Revolution of 1917, the resulting catastrophe for the proletariat and oppressed in those countries and around the world is there for all to see.

The origins of the SWP lie in Cliff’s refusal in 1950 to defend the North Korean and Chinese deformed workers states against a counterrevolutionary war led by Washington, whose main imperi-

Labourite “democratic” imperialism. The Cliffites absurdly claim that capitalist counterrevolution in Eastern Europe and the former USSR represented merely a “step sideways.” As we explained in the recent issue of our international theoretical journal, *Spartacist*:

“Today Cliff’s U.S. followers unabashedly declare: ‘The revolutions in Eastern Europe were a step sideways—from one

But it’s not by any means what a new generation impelled into opposition against the imperialist wars, racist terror, attacks on the rights of women, poverty, immiseration and the growth of the fascists that were the results of capitalist counterrevolution want! The SWP’s triumphalism over the “death of communism,” its perspective of cashing in on its “anti-Stalinist” credentials in the wake of



Cliffites hailed Yeltsin counterrevolution which ushered in misery and hunger for working people, national and ethnic minorities. ICL fought to mobilize Soviet workers in defense of gains of October Revolution.



Der Spiegel photos

alist ally was the British Labour government. Cliff’s bogus “theory” of “state capitalism” (promoted by earlier social democrats who had opposed the Russian October Revolution of 1917) was the rationalisation for this programmatic departure from revolutionary Trotskyism, the repudiation of unconditional military defence of the Soviet Union and those states where capitalism had been overthrown against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution.

Proclaiming themselves a “third camp,” which in fact placed them in the camp of their own bourgeoisie, over the years the SWP generalised their capitulation to

form of capitalism to another’ (*Socialist Worker* [U.S.], 23 April 1999). Don’t try this line on any Russian worker today. The unprecedented economic and social implosion now occurring in the territory of the ex-USSR is the real measure of just how historically *progressive* the planned, collectivized economy really was. In the chaotic conditions of post-Soviet Russia, the laws of capitalism have resulted in total economic collapse: production has fallen at least 50 percent since 1991, capital investment by 90 percent. Today a third of the urban labor force in Russia is effectively unemployed; 75 percent of the population lives below or barely above subsistence level and 15 million are actually starving....

“While clinging to their threadbare theories, the Cliffites and their ilk are oddly modest about their real contribution. The restoration of capitalism in the USSR and East Europe was the implementation of their program. Like Shachtman, who supported Washington’s Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba, Cliff & Co. did their utmost to seek to bring victory to U.S. imperialism in the Cold War, lusting for the bloodying of Soviet forces in Afghanistan, championing the ‘trade union’ credentials of Solidarność—instrument of the Vatican, Wall Street and Western social democracy for capitalist counterrevolution in Poland—and vicariously dancing with the black marketeers, monarchists and yuppies on Yeltsin’s barricades in 1991. *Socialist Worker* (31 August 1991) trumpeted Yeltsin’s victory: ‘Communism has collapsed.... It is a fact that should have every socialist rejoicing.’ Well, now the Cliffites have what they wanted.”

—“The Bankruptcy of ‘New Class’ Theories—Tony Cliff and Max Shachtman: Pro-Imperialist Accomplices of Counterrevolution,” *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 55, Autumn 1999

the destruction of the gains of the October Revolution, has in fact resulted in the present internal crisis.

We Are the Party of the Russian Revolution!

As revolutionary Trotskyists, we understand that the world’s first workers state succumbed to bureaucratic degeneration under conditions of hostile imperialist encirclement, the devastation of the proletariat through the Civil War against imperialist-backed counterrevolution and the failure of the revolution to spread internationally, particularly to the imperialist centres. Under these conditions, the nationalist bureaucratic apparatus headed by Stalin usurped political power from the proletariat in 1924, but did not destroy the socialised property relations. Stalin’s dogma of “socialism in one country” became the ideological justification for transforming the Communist parties internationally into bargaining chips in an illusory search for “peaceful coexistence” with imperialism. Trotsky and his followers fought to *unconditionally defend* the workers state issuing from the October Revolution *despite* the Stalinist caste, calling for a political revolution by the Soviet proletariat to overthrow that caste.

It was armed with this programme that the ICL mobilised our forces in a sustained intervention into the incipient proletarian political revolution in the DDR [East Germany] in 1989-90. We fought against capitalist reunification down the line, fighting for socialist revolution in

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Spartakist

East Berlin, January 1990: Spartacists initiated 250,000-strong rally against fascist desecration of Soviet war memorial in Treptow Park. We fought against capitalist reunification and for a red soviet Germany in a socialist Europe.

Cliffites...

(continued from page 3)

the West, while fighting to lead the East German proletariat in defence of the East German workers state and in political revolution against the Stalinists who would hand the DDR over to the imperialists. Later, in the Soviet Union we fought to mobilise the proletariat against the enveloping counterrevolution, distributing over 100,000 leaflets at factories and workplaces demanding: "Soviet Workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!" But in the absence of the revolutionary intervention by the working class, capitalist counterrevolution destroyed the deformed workers states in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union in 1989-92.

The "Russian question" is posed point-blank in China, where a class battle of immense importance is looming. The deepening of "free market" measures by the Stalinist bureaucracy is undermining the gains of the 1949 Chinese Revolution, which destroyed the rule of the landlords and the bourgeoisie and established collectivised property, a planned economy, and state monopoly of foreign trade. The Chinese proletariat, however, has witnessed the results of capitalist counterrevolution in Eastern Europe and the USSR and has responded to the attacks on these gains with convulsive class battles and



March 1999: Spartacist League/Britain protests NATO war against Serbia.

bloody Union Jack and the raising of the five-starred red flag of the People's Republic on July 1" ("China on the Brink: Workers Political Revolution or Capitalist Enslavement?", *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 53, Summer 1997).

Last November's Seattle demonstrations against the World Trade Organisation, while drawing in everything from right-wing supporters of Pat Buchanan

The idea that the world is governed by bodies like the WTO and IMF which trample on the "sovereignty" of the most powerful imperialist countries is both reactionary and absurd. The authority exercised by these bodies derives from the power of the *rival* imperialist states for which they function as agents. In presenting "globalisation" as a new development in which a handful of multinational corporations, the WTO, IMF and World Bank are responsible for the impoverishment of the masses of the "Global South," reformists today recycle the Social Democrat Karl Kautsky's myth of "ultra-imperialism" which Lenin debunked in his book *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*. Lenin wrote:

"Therefore, in the realities of the capitalist system, and not in the banal philistine fantasies of English parsons, or of the German 'Marxist' Kautsky, 'inter-imperialist' or 'ultra-imperialist' alliances, no matter what form they may assume, whether of one imperialist coalition against another, or of a general alliance embracing *all* the imperialist powers, are *inevitably* nothing more than a 'truce' in periods between wars. Peaceful alliances prepare the ground for wars, and in their turn grow out of wars."

Promoting the "spirit of Seattle," the Cliffites peddle the illusions that the IMF, WTO and other institutions can be reformed and the imperialist powers—the biggest exploiters of labour on the planet—can somehow be pressured to abolish sweatshops and impose "fair labour standards" globally. Correspondingly, the issues of domestic poverty, racial oppression and sweatshop labour are buried. Also buried are the nearly daily bombings and starvation blockade of Iraq, the NATO bombardment of Serbia back to the Stone Age and imperialist troops in the Balkans. These political verities would blemish the cosmetic of "human rights" painted by reformists and union misleaders on the face of U.S. and British imperialism. In contrast, the ICL fights to win workers and radical youth to

the consciousness that the class interests of the workers and the oppressed are diametrically opposed to those of the capitalists and the eradication of poverty, racism and war can only be accomplished through a socialist revolution led by a revolutionary Trotskyist party.

Balkans War: Flunking the Test in Britain and the U.S.

The Balkans War—the first major war in Europe since World War II—was a direct consequence of capitalist counterrevolution. The Yugoslavian deformed workers state was born out of World War II, when Tito's Communist Partisans successfully battled the occupying Nazi German Wehrmacht as well as the Croatian fascist Ustasha and Serbian royalist Chetniks. The victory of the multinational Partisan forces demonstrated that, despite centuries of ethnic conflict, unity of the South Slav peoples within the borders of Yugoslavia was possible—but *only on the basis of proletarian state power*. But the socialist and democratic ideals to which the Tito regime publicly appealed were undermined by the bureaucratic deformations and inherent limitations of Stalinism, with its programme of "building socialism in one country." Resurgent nationalisms were fuelled when "market socialism" was introduced; they would later be whipped to white-hot heat by the imperialists as a battering ram for the restoration of capitalism. The bloody communalist slaughter that ensued, by the Cliffites' lights, was just another "step sideways."

The NATO war against Serbia was a war of domination aimed at realising longstanding U.S. plans to insert a substantial U.S./NATO military presence in Serbia through subduing Milosevic. As Lenin stressed, in the case of an imperialist war against a small nation or semi-colonial people, it is the duty of the working class not only to fight for the defeat of one's "own" government but to defend the victims of imperialist aggression. That is the position of the ICL. Our international declaration on the war (issued 21 April 1999) said unambiguously: *Defeat imperialism through workers revolution! Defend Serbia against U.S./NATO attack! Down with the United Nations economic sanctions! ALL U.S./UN/NATO troops out of the Balkans!* Long before the imperialists and their leftist apologists cynically took up the cause of the Kosovo Albanians as a shibboleth for imperialist bombardment of Serbia, we championed the right of the Albanian people of Kosovo and western Macedonia to self-determination. With the onset of the imperialist war against Serbia, we Marxists recognised that the right of the Kosovo Albanians to secede—a democratic question—was subordinated to the need to militarily defend Serbia against U.S./Britain/NATO attack.

Blair's Labour government were aggressively pro-NATO "Atlanticists" and

Tony Cliff's SWP supported CIA-aided mujahedin cutthroats in Afghanistan, cheered Soviet withdrawal which meant death for women, leftists.

DPA



Socialist Worker
Paper of the International Socialist Organization
May 1988

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

mass protests. *Defend the gains of the Chinese Revolution! For proletarian political revolution!*

The Cliffites, in keeping with their origins, have lined up with the imperialists' anti-communist crusade against China. Speaking at a demonstration in defence of asylum-seekers on 24 June, leading SWPer Weyman Bennett attacked Chinese president Jiang Zemin as the Chinese "dictator"—the code word for bourgeois anti-communist forces who seek the destruction of the gains of the 1949 Revolution. Bennett went so far as to attack Labour minister Jack Straw for having allowed Jiang Zemin into Britain! How typical of slavish social democrats who embrace their "own" imperialist rulers' "democracy" against the hard-won conquests of the working class!

When British imperialism finally had to surrender Hong Kong to the Chinese deformed workers state in 1997, *Socialist Review* (June 1997) stated: "Socialists should neither mourn nor celebrate the handover of Hong Kong. In the short term very little will change for the majority of the population—Hong Kong will be as undemocratic and exploitative a society as it has ever been." The British seized the island in 1841 during the first Opium War and ran it as a virtual police state—and a haven for crooks and warlords fleeing the Chinese Revolution—until forced to pull out. In contrast, we said at the time: "Trotskyists can only cheer as the rotted British Empire loses its last major colonial holding with the lowering of the

to anarchoid youth and spokesmen for the Mexican Zapatista peasant-guerrilla movement, were dominated by the anti-communist, rabidly nationalist AFL-CIO trade-union bureaucracy. The Seattle protests were marked by foam-flecked speeches denouncing Chinese "slave labour," by signs promoting the CIA's "Free Tibet" crusade and by the dumping of Chinese steel into Puget Sound. AFL-CIO head Sweeney railed against a "trade deal with a rogue nation" while trade-union placards demanding "People First Not China First" mingled with banners such as one screaming "For the Basic Human Rights in Vietnam—Kill the Red Evil."

The SWP, noting the absence of a sea of ISO banners at the event, has denounced the ISO for flunking the "test of Seattle" and there has been much back-and-forth about how deeply to capitulate to the "movement" as it is. Meanwhile, the ISO has evidently felt pressure from other quarters, running articles like: "Why China-Bashing Hurts U.S. Labor" (*Socialist Worker* [U.S.], 3 March). In part this reflects the fact that some youth are repelled by the vicious anti-communism of the trade-union tops, but it is also a plea to the Sweeney bureaucracy not to damage the Democrats too much by feeding "the right"—i.e., the Republicans. The ISO said as much: "If the labor movement plays into this campaign, it will simply give a 'progressive' cover to the labor-hating Buchanans and Helmses" (*Socialist Worker* [U.S.], 7 January).

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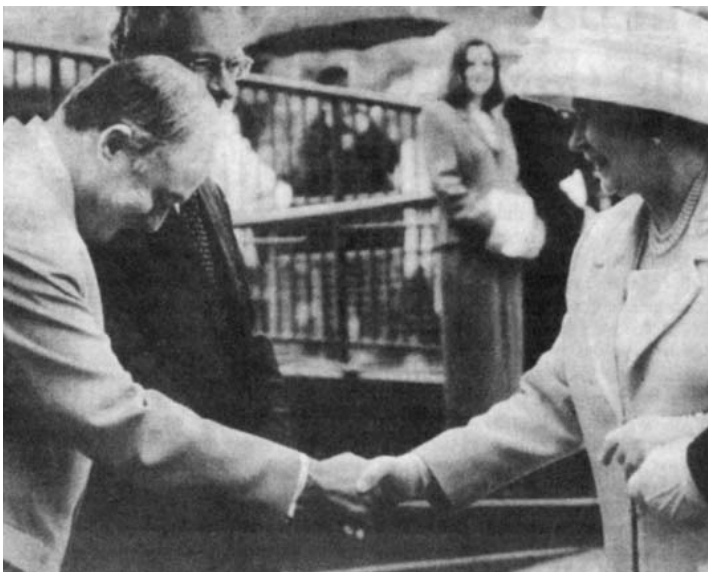
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much of the fake left lined up foursquare behind the war cry “poor little Kosovo.” Thus you had the right-centrist Workers Power (WP) outfit supporting the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and participating in a “Workers Aid for Kosova” demonstration on 10 April 1999 which was shot through with slogans like “NATO Good Luck” and “NATO Now or Never.” Workers Power and other Labourite groups sponsored an 11 May meeting which featured two unvarnished pro-NATO speakers, one of whom, a rabid pro-Albanian nationalist, announced that anyone who didn’t support NATO should stay home (see *Workers Hammer* No. 169, July/August 1999). And when Serbia was bombed into submission, as NATO tanks rolled in and ground troops occupied Kosovo, Workers Power cheered: “The working class must welcome the ending of the attempted genocide against the Kosovar people and, if it fully materialises, the return of all the refugees to their homes” (*Workers Power*, June 1999). What has “fully materialised” under NATO occupation is a reversal of the

alist den of thieves” and their victims. None of the Cliffite sections called for the defeat of imperialism, nor do they call for imperialist troops out of the Balkans. They capitulated to different forces depending on their national terrain. As interimperialist rivalries increase in the post-Soviet period, rivalries earlier suppressed in the common pursuit of the destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state, such national differences in opportunist appetites can only intensify. With the Cliffites’ squabble over the Balkans War now public knowledge, Workers Power has made a pitch to dissident Cliffites *from the right*. By WP’s lights, the ISO did not support the KLA enough; they write that their “support for self-determination was entirely platonic. They seem to have been scared off such a position by the SWP’s argument that the KLA was in league with imperialism” (*Workers Power*, June 2000). The fact that they were in league with imperialism certainly doesn’t “scare off” Workers Power! To the contrary, WP goes on to make an appeal specifically based on the Cliffites’



Independent

British SWP joined rest of Labourite left in promoting London mayoral campaign of Ken Livingstone. “Red Ken,” shown bowing to the queen, saluted Blair government’s terror bombing of Serbia, praises racist cops.

1991. In 1998 they brought their “theory” into line with their practice and decided that the *state* in the USSR (but not the economy) had become capitalist in 1927, thus reverting back to their Cliffite origins. Of a piece with this is WP’s nonsensical discovery of “moribund workers states.” Simply put, WP is the horrible example of those who try to stake out a posture nominally to the left of the Cliffites, but fail to make a complete break on the key programmatic question: the Russian question. (See “‘Death of Communism’ Centrists,” *Workers Hammer* No. 161, March/April 1998.)

Anti-Sovietism Abroad Means Class Betrayal at Home

James P. Cannon, in his “Speech on the Russian Question” given during the 1939-40 factional struggle against Shachtman/Burnham, said: “Defensism and defeatism are two principled, that is, irreconcilable positions.... Defensists at home were defeatists on Russia. Defensists on Russia were defeatists at home.” And indeed, every tendency that has abdicated from the Trotskyist position of unconditional military defence of the degenerated and deformed workers states has ended up reconciling themselves with their own bourgeoisie.

This has been fairly dramatic in the case of the British SWP. Thus, during the 1984-85 miners strike, the most significant battle waged by the British proletariat in decades, Cliff boasted that SWP members in steel plants were crossing miners’ picket lines. In response to a question by a Spartacist supporter, Cliff said:

“On the question of our steelworkers crossing picket lines. We have steelworkers in Redcar who cross picket lines. We have three steelworkers in Scunthorpe, they cross picket lines. We have a steelworker in Ravenscraig who crosses picket lines. We have a steelworker in Llanwern who crosses picket lines....”

—Tony Cliff, London public meeting of the SWP, 23 August 1984

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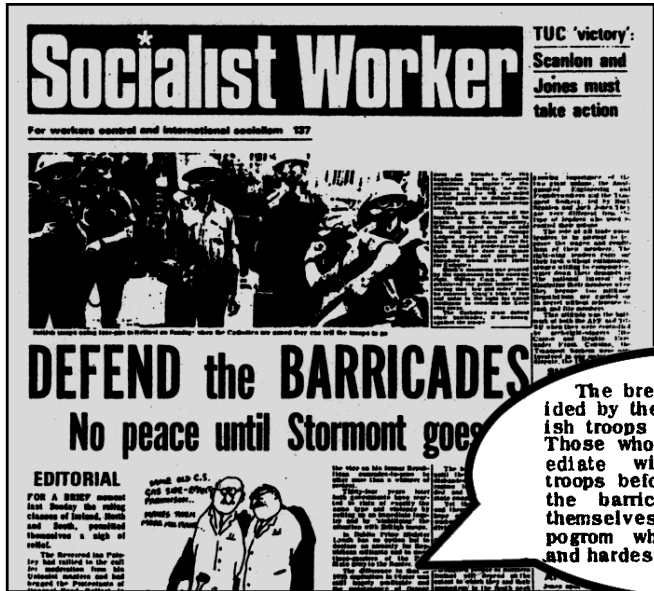
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Cliffites hailed introduction of British imperialist troops into Northern Ireland by Labour government, September 1969. Three years later, troops gunned down 14 Catholics in “Bloody Sunday” massacre.

The breathing space provided by the presence of British troops is short but vital. Those who call for the immediate withdrawal of the troops before the men behind the barricades can defend themselves are inviting a pogrom which will hit first and hardest at socialists.

terms of oppression and the insertion of a mammoth NATO military presence in Serbia!

The SWP’s position was somewhat different. Accommodating to [Labour “left”] Tony Benn, whose preference was for Europe over U.S.-dominated NATO, the SWP did not join the “poor little Kosovo” chorus. Instead, leading SWP member Alex Callinicos joined a host of others, including Alain Krivine of the French LCR [Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire], in signing a letter which called for a “policing operation” against Serbia to be run by the European imperialist-dominated Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Published in *Socialist Review* (June 1999), this read in part:

“NATO is not the only or above all the best fulcrum for an agreement. One could find the elements of a multinational police force (embracing notably Serbs and Albanians) in the ranks of the OSCE to enforce a transitional agreement.”

The SWP’s stance was also convenient for the Greek Cliffites. The Greek bourgeoisie for its own reasons are not keen advocates of the Albanian national aspirations. Furthermore, as in Italy, class-struggle opposition to the war in Greece was often channelled by reformists into anti-Americanism, a cheap substitute for and an obstacle to proletarian internationalist opposition to imperialist war.

While the SWP capitulated to Bennite Labourism in Britain, the ISO in the U.S., where there is no Labour Party to capitulate to, bent to the prevailing pressure of “human rights imperialism,” arguing for self-determination for Kosovo during the bombing. According to the SWP, the ISO “failed the test of war” not least because it made “a big deal of the UN,” which “pissed off the soft pacifists, and so the movement stayed small and dominated by the wrong people.” When the ISO protests they did not make a big issue of the UN—we can on this one occasion back up their story. It is the ICL which opposes the UN—under whose auspices the Korean and Persian Gulf Wars were carried out—on principle as an “imperi-

support for the CIA-backed *mujahedin* cutthroats in Afghanistan against the Soviet Army:

“What about the SWP’s enthusiastic support for the Afghan Mujahidin in the 1980s? Not only were they arch reactionary Islamists, based on the tribal-feudal landowners, funded by Saudi millionaire princes: they were supplied with stinger missiles and trained by the CIA, on a scale that makes the US support for KLA look grudging in the extreme.”

Workers Power are so far to the right today that they disappear the fact that it was over Afghanistan that they broke—partially but to the left—from Cliff’s “state capitalism” and recognised the USSR was a “degenerate” [*sic*] workers state. While WP joined the imperialists and their Labour lieutenants in *opposing* the Soviet military intervention against the CIA-backed Islamic fundamentalists in Afghanistan, it also claimed it would be “tactically wrong...to demand the immediate withdrawal of Soviet troops” (*Workers Power*, February 1980).

The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan posed the Russian question pointblank. We said “Hail Red Army!” and “Extend the social gains of the Russian Revolution to the Afghan peoples!” We recognised that the class character of the USSR meant that the Red Army opened the possibility of social progress to this hideously backward country where the *mujahedin* waged a “holy war” to murder unveiled women and teachers for the “crime” of teaching girls to read.

The withdrawal of Soviet troops by Gorbachev was a betrayal which led to the victory of the barbaric Taliban. And it was the direct precursor to the Soviet bureaucracy’s ultimate betrayal, handing over first the Eastern European deformed workers states and then the USSR to capitalist counterrevolution. For its part, despite its nominal adherence to some version of the Trotskyist position on the Russian question, WP backpedalled from its earlier partial break with Cliffism. Thus it supported counterrevolution at every opportunity, from Polish Solidarność through to Yeltsin’s barricades in

Young Spartacus

Break with the Democrats! No Vote to Nader! We Need a Workers Party!

The following was issued as a leaflet by the Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth Clubs on July 17.

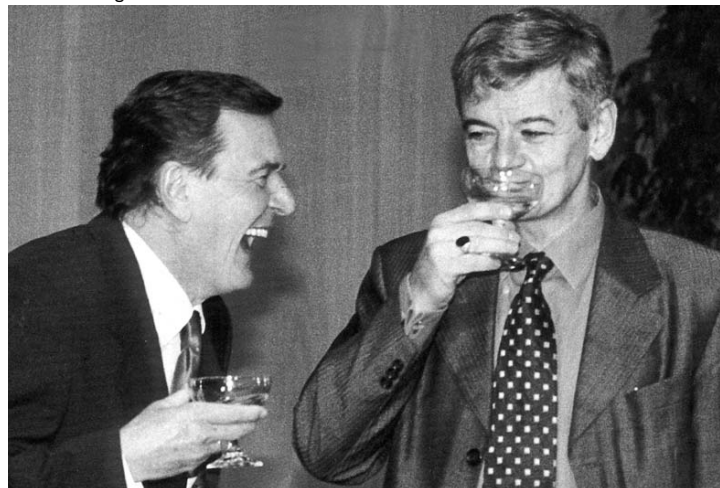
In its “Where We Stand” column, under the heading “Revolution Not Reform,” the International Socialist Organization (ISO) writes, “We do not support candidates of capitalist parties like the Democrats or the Republicans.” But in practice, the ISO is writing its real “Where We Crawl” column as it calls for a vote to Ralph Nader, the capitalist Green Party presidential candidate. A July leaflet by the ISO titled “Should New Yorkers Vote for Ralph Nader?” declares: “A vote for Nader is part of the rebirth of activism and a fighting opposition to the racist and greedy policies of the people who have run this country for far too long.” Don’t buy it!

Nader is appealing to disaffected youth as an “independent” candidate who is pro-choice, an opponent of the death penalty and “corporate greed” and an “alternative” to the Democrats. But his campaign is designed to refurbish the image of the capitalist electoral system, and in particular to channel those discontented with this society toward the Democratic Party. Nader himself says so baldly. In an interview with *LA Weekly* (30 June), Nader declared that his campaign is “going to be a real hammer on the Democrats. It’s going to pull them in the right direction.” Echoing this perspective, an ISO leaflet building for the protests at the Democratic National Convention in L.A. asks: “How can we use protests to change the policies of the Democrats?”

The Green Party is a *bourgeois* party. It embraces capitalism, seeking only amelioration of what it perceives as corporate excesses and the ecological consequences of large-scale modern industry. It proposes to achieve its goals through democratic reforms and state regulation, i.e., by strengthening the capitalist state. The Greens’ anti-industrial stance is fundamentally anti-working-class and their vision of society is a reactionary petty-bourgeois utopia, a yearning for a long gone pre-industrial age, an America of small farms and small businesses.

In Germany, there is a real commingling of Green Party ecologists and the far right, whose anti-immigrant racism is promoted on grounds of combatting overpopulation and attendant “environmental destruction.” The nominally pacifist German Green Party, in coalition with the majority Social Democratic Party, admin-

J.H. Darchinger



ISO Hustles Vote for Nader

Where We Stand

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM
Reforms within the capitalist system cannot put an end to oppression and exploitation. Capitalism

Socialist Worker

21 July 2000

We do not support candidates of capitalist parties like the Democrats or the Republicans.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers’ state based on councils of workers’ delegates and workers’

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The Presidential election was shaping up to be politics as usual with Gore and Bush representing corporate America—and ducking the real issues—until Ralph Nader stepped in.

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Is he just going to spoil lesser-evil Al Gore's chances against Bush, or is Nader's challenge part of a bigger movement for social change that will never come from the Democrats?

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ISO junks its paper position against support to capitalist politicians to push bourgeois Green Party candidate and China-bashing protectionist Ralph Nader.

isters the capitalist government. Together, these parties directed Germany’s military in the U.S.-led NATO bombing of Serbia in last year’s Balkans War. Early this month, Mexico’s Green Party ran in bloc with the rightist clerical-reactionary National Action Party (PAN) which won the presidency.

Against the ISO, we oppose political support for any bourgeois party or candidate in principle. The complete and unconditional independence of the working class from all parties and agencies of the capitalist class is the necessary precondition for any struggle against capitalism. The working class and the oppressed cannot take a single step forward toward liberation if locked in an embrace with the political parties of the capitalist class enemy. We fight to build the revolutionary workers party—inde- pendent of the capitalist class and all its political representatives—as the necessary instrument for the emancipation of

humanity through socialist revolution.

In calling for a vote for Nader, the ISO peddles the illusion that fundamental change in society can be achieved through capitalist electoral politics. Over 80 years ago, V.I. Lenin, leader of the victorious 1917 Russian Revolution, neatly skewered this fraud in his book *State and Revolution*: “To decide once every few years which member of the ruling class is to repress and crush the people through parliament—that is the real essence of bourgeois parliamentarism.”

From time to time, the ISO finds occasion to invoke the legacy of Lenin and the Russian Revolution. But in fact, since its inception the ISO has been defined by its embrace of the imperialists’ drive to destroy the remaining gains of the Russian Revolution which were embodied in the former Soviet degenerated workers state. The ISO hailed the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union and the deformed workers states of East

Europe, where capitalist restoration has resulted in catastrophic declines in the living conditions of the working masses. In opposition to the Trotskyist fight for the unconditional military defense of those states where capitalism was overthrown, the ISO came up with the bogus theory that these workers states—as well as the remaining ones in Cuba, China, Vietnam and North Korea—were “state capitalist.” This is simply a rationalization for embracing the purported “democracy” of their “own” bourgeoisie.

Today the ISO seeks to distance itself from the China-bashing of anti-communist labor bureaucrats like James Hoffa Jr., concerned that it could damage the Democrats by feeding “the right,” i.e., the Republicans, and “give a ‘progressive’ cover to the labor-hating Buchanans” (*Socialist Worker*, 7 January). Now, the ISO is giving its own “socialist” cover to China-basher Nader, who heavily campaigned against China’s entry into the World Trade Organization.

We oppose the WTO’s entry into China! We fight for the unconditional military defense of the Chinese deformed workers state *against* imperialism and internal counterrevolution. The 1949 Chinese Revolution destroyed the rule of the landlords and the bourgeoisie and established collectivized property, a planned economy and state monopoly of foreign trade. We fight for proletarian political revolution against the Chinese Stalinist bureaucracy, which has undermined these gains and is opening the door to imperialist economic penetration. The ISO stands on the other side of the barricades, lining up with the imperialists’ anti-communist crusade against China, Cuba, North Korea and Vietnam.

In a February 21 statement announcing his candidacy for the Green Party’s nomination, Nader declared: “The unconstrained behavior of big business is subordinating *our democracy* to the control of a corporate plutocracy” (emphasis added). Capitalist democracy is nothing but the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. The façade of “democracy” is designed to obscure the fact that the capitalist state is an instrument of organized force and violence—consisting at its core of the police, army, courts and prisons—for maintaining capitalist property and profits through the suppression of the working class and the oppressed and fending off foreign challenges.

As Marxists know, and all historical experience has demonstrated, the working class cannot reform the state and use it in its own interest but must create its own state, a workers state, through a socialist revolution that smashes the power of the bourgeoisie. The ISO instead seeks merely to tinker with this state machinery of repression, as demonstrated, for example, by the work of their Campaign to End the Death Penalty front group, which for fear of alienating bourgeois politicians subordinates any demand to abolish the death penalty to the more “acceptable” call: “Moratorium Now.”

The ISO frets that Nader “resists taking up critical social issues like racism

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Reuters

German Green leader and foreign minister Joschka Fischer, sipping champagne with SPD prime minister Gerhard Schröder, aggressively promoted German imperialism’s role in NATO air war against Serbia.

Democrats...

(continued from page 16)

and trade protectionism, Nader is *to the right* of the Clinton/Gore White House. Echoing the pro-capitalist AFL-CIO bureaucracy, he attacks the Democratic and also Republican leaderships for being “soft” on Communist China. Nader campaigned heavily against Congressional passage of Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) with China, saying that “passage of PNTR will also eliminate a crucial lever in the advancement of democracy and human rights in China.”

In the mouths of U.S. imperialism and its spokesmen, “democracy” and “human rights” are codewords for *capitalist counterrevolution* in China. The 1949 Chinese Revolution ripped the country out of the hands of American imperialism and destroyed the rule of the rapacious land-

strating against the hideous impoverishment and exploitation of the people of the “Global South,” the Seattle protests were *politically dominated* by the AFL-CIO tops who combined flagwaving trade protectionism with anti-Communist China-bashing. They made foam-flecked speeches about “slave labor” in China and demonstratively dumped a load of mock Chinese steel into Puget Sound. The AFL-CIO bureaucracy and Nader oppose China’s entry in the WTO from the standpoint of anti-Communism and “America first” protectionism. We oppose imperialist economic penetration of China by the WTO and other agencies from the standpoint of defending the social gains of the Chinese Revolution.

Despite his “anti-corporate” rhetoric, Nader himself insists that his program is compatible with the traditional interests of the American state. Ever economically minded, he proposes to cut military

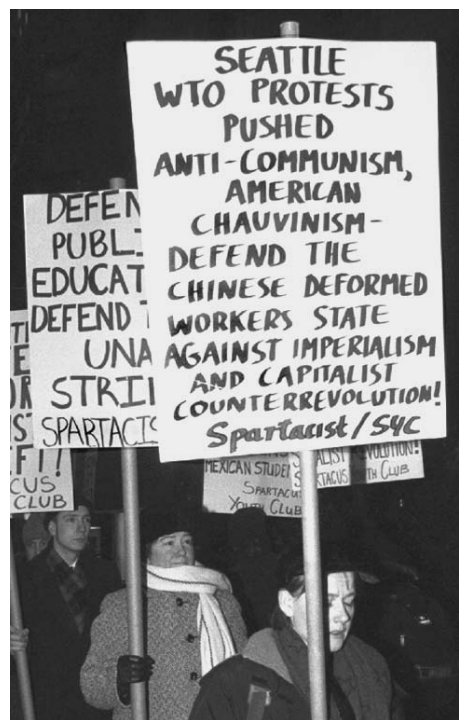
Social Democrats (SPD) in the national government of Germany. German Green leader Joschka Fischer is foreign minister of the most powerful capitalist imperialist state in Europe. Fischer, who used to posture as some kind of pacifist, was one of the most bellicose supporters of the American-led NATO air war against Serbia last year. And in order to improve the international competitiveness of Germany, the SPD/Green government is attacking the living standards of the working class even more harshly than its right-wing Christian Democratic predecessor.

When the SPD/Green government was formed in late 1998, the Green Party in New Jersey enthused: “We want to express our congratulations to the members of Germany’s Green Party upon taking the historic step of entering a coalition government with the Social Democratic Party.” It is, however, unlikely that the U.S. Greens will emulate the success of their German cousins. More likely, they’ll experience the same fate as other small “left” bourgeois third parties in the past, notably the 1948 Progressive Party, and the petty-bourgeois Peace and Freedom Party in the 1960s.

With the onset of the anti-Soviet Cold War, in 1948 the Progressive Party ran Henry Wallace, a former Democratic vice president under Franklin D. Roosevelt, as a “peace” candidate against the Democrat Harry Truman. Wallace claimed to represent the genuine New Deal tradition of FDR. The Progressive Party, with a thoroughly liberal program, was largely organized and financed by the Stalinist Communist Party. Two years later, the erstwhile “peace” candidate Wallace supported American imperialism in the Korean War. And by the 1952 elections, almost all the supporters of the Progressive flock with the Communist Party pushing for the Democrat Adlai Stevenson against the Republican Dwight Eisenhower.

In 1968 many youth, radicalized and impelled toward the left by the Vietnam War, rallied to the Peace and Freedom Party, which was largely built by self-described socialist groups, among them the International Socialists, predecessor of the International Socialist Organization (ISO). To be sure, the PFP was far to the left of Nader’s Greens. The PFP ran as its presidential candidate the well-known liberal baby doctor Benjamin Spock. Four years later, the Peace and Freedom Party was moribund, with most of its supporters campaigning for the Democratic “peace” candidate George McGovern against the Republican Richard Nixon.

Through the agency of the trade-union bureaucracy and black liberals, the Democratic Party has tied the working class and oppressed black minority to the American capitalist order by offering a program of liberal reforms, or at least presenting itself as a “lesser evil” to the Republicans. “Left” bourgeois or petty-bourgeois third parties, by channeling discontent into electoral pressure politics, *strengthen*—they do not weaken—the Democratic Party as a political agency for



WV Photo

Trotskyist ICL calls for unconditional military defense of gains of 1949 Chinese Revolution.

the exploitation and oppression of working people at home and abroad.

The Left, the Democratic Party and the Elections

The Los Angeles and Philadelphia police departments have been preparing for the demonstrations, readying thousands of riot cops. Both cities have denied most rally permits, while making sweeps to remove the desperate homeless population in order to “clean up” the streets. The wanton racist brutality of the police was captured on a videotape broadcast earlier this month which showed a horde of Philadelphia cops descending on a black man, Thomas Jones, and nearly beating him to death after firing 42 shots at him. A few days later, AMTRAK police in Philadelphia shot and killed a black homeless man.

The Philly and L.A. cops have launched a massive spying operation against protesting organizations. In a column in the *Los Angeles Times* (13 July), Republican mayor Richard Riordan promised massive repression against demonstrators, fulminating against “anarchists whose sole intent is violent disruption.” Many protesters have vowed to rally regardless of whether permits are granted or not.

Several self-styled “socialist” organizations building for the demonstrations, such as the ISO and Socialist Alternative, have called for a vote to Nader, pushing the lie that he represents a “break” from the capitalist Republicans and Democrats. After initially issuing some criticisms of Nader, the ISO did an about-face, trumpeting Nader in a July 7 *Socialist Worker* headline as “An Alternative to the Republocrats” (see “ISO Hustles Vote for Nader” page 6).

Meanwhile, Socialist Alternative (formerly Labor Militant), the American offshoot of the British Militant Labour group and its Committee for a Workers

continued on page 8



AFP photos

Top: April 12 Teamsters protest in Washington, D.C. against China trade deal. Below: November 1999 Seattle WTO protest. AFL-CIO bureaucracy uses demands for international labor and environmental standards to push protectionism, anti-Communism.



lords and capitalists. China became a workers state based on a collectivized economy, albeit one deformed by the rule of a Stalinist bureaucratic caste. Ever since, the U.S. rulers have pursued the restoration of capitalist exploitation, which would turn the most populous nation on earth into a gigantic sweatshop. The Spartacist League/Spartacus Youth Clubs call for: *Unconditional military defense of China against imperialism and internal counterrevolution!*

The deepening of “market reforms” by the Beijing bureaucracy encourages the forces pushing for capitalist restoration, both inside and outside China. The Chinese working class has responded to attacks on their jobs and living conditions with convulsive mass struggles and protests. *For proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy!*

Nader calls his campaign the embodiment of the “spirit of Seattle.” At one level, the protests against the World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting at Seattle last fall were a political zoo with everyone from black-masked anarchists trashing Starbucks coffee shops to the sinister right-wing demagogue Pat Buchanan. While most of the youth were demon-

spending by a third, arguing that this is now feasible because “our enemies,” the former Soviet Union, were defeated. The destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state by capitalist counterrevolution was a world-historic defeat for the working class and the oppressed internationally. Today, Nader maintains that two-thirds of the present Pentagon war machine is sufficient for the red-white-and-blue to dominate the world, presumably including, if called for, military action against the People’s Republic of China.

Someone might argue: How can you call the Green Party a capitalist party when Nader denounces “big business” and spokesmen for corporate America are certainly hostile toward and contemptuous of the Greens? Unlike the Democrats and Republicans, the Green Party is not financed by corporate executives and other men of wealth. That’s because it’s small and uninfluential.

To understand the allegiance of the American Green Party to the capitalist order, just look at its successful German cousins. Originating as a relatively small “radical” opposition, the German Green Party is now the junior partner of the

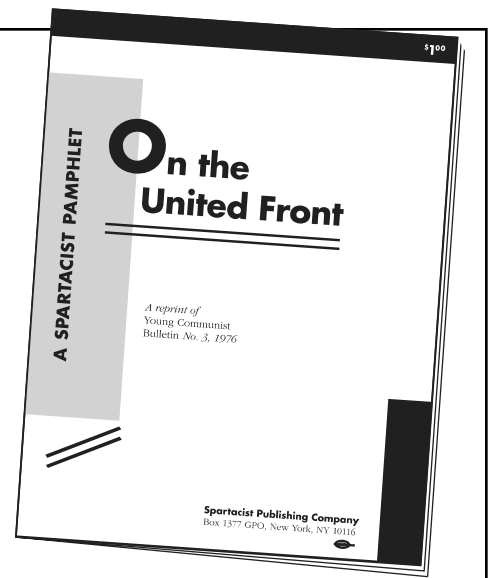
On the United Front

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Democrats...

(continued from page 7)

International, has supported Nader from the get-go, heralding him as a “pro-labor, pro-consumer and civil rights advocate” and describing the Greens as “a left-wing third party on the rise, spoiling campaigns for Democrats” (*Justice*, June/July 2000). Socialist Alternative argues that by endorsing Nader, they will put pressure on the “Labor Party” to “run candidates.” The “Labor Party” is a phony operation comprised of a few trade-union bureaucrats and fake leftists which from its inception acted to funnel discontent among trade unionists back into the Democratic Party (see “Why ‘Labor Party Advocates’ Doesn’t Advocate a Labor Party,” WV No. 622, 5 May 1995). Socialist Alternative’s ultimate goal is to build an American equivalent of the British Labour Party, an openly pro-capitalist workers party whose government has unleashed a barrage of attacks on the unions, blacks, immigrants and youth.

Uncritically retailing the labor tops’ anti-Communism and chauvinism, *Justice* (June/July 2000) ran excerpts of a speech by United Auto Workers president Stephen P. Yokich, who has been in the forefront of the AFL-CIO’s anti-China crusade, praising Nader for his opposition to the House’s recent China PNTR vote, calling him a candidate “who will take a stand based on what is right.” The Democratic Party-loyal union tops use the Nader campaign as a pressure tactic on Gore to push “buy American” economic nationalism.

Among those reformists not supporting Nader is Socialist Action (SA). *Socialist Action* (July 2000) writes: “The capitalist candidates for president are united in putting the class interests of the capitalist system first. Working people need to break decisively with these parties in order to even begin to make a change that will benefit and assure justice to ourselves, the majority.” Socialist Action’s posture as opponents of the Democrats is belied by its role in building liberal protest coalitions which subordinate themselves to demands that would appeal to Democratic politicians, including in the fight on behalf of death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal (see article, page 9).

From its inception in the early 1980s, the ostensibly Trotskyist SA has been defined by its service as waterboys for the pro-imperialist labor bureaucracy and its backing of every counterrevolutionary force arrayed against the Soviet Union. Turning their anti-Communism against China, a *Socialist Action* (June 2000) article titled “Why AFL-CIO lost the China trade vote” criticizes the labor tops’ “protectionist agenda” but asks: “Why did AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney limit labor’s protests to lobbying, though admittedly more vigorous lobbying than is usual from the labor

officialdom.” Thus SA chastises the AFL-CIO leadership for *not mobilizing enough workers behind their anti-Communist attacks on China*.

Sounding far more radical than such pseudo-socialists, the anarchists appeal primarily to hostility toward existing authority. As such, they attract youth repelled by the “respectable” politics of the AFL-CIO leadership, the Democratic Socialists of America (of which AFL-CIO chief John Sweeney is a leading member), Nader’s Green Party and the

of financial markets, the growth of internationally competitive manufacturers in East Asia and Latin America—but has become a new form of bourgeois *ideology*. With the destruction of the Soviet Union and proclaimed “death of communism,” the bourgeoisie envisages a return to an idealized version of the pre-1914 capitalist imperialist order. This was an era in which the European powers, and to a lesser extent the United States and Japan, exercised direct colonial rule over tens of millions of toilers throughout the



WPVI-TV

The American capitalist state in action: July videotape broadcast shows Philly cops pummeling black man nearly to death.

like. Most anarchists would say that they have nothing in common with the flag-waving patriotism of the labor bureaucrats or the pallid liberalism of the Greens. We went to Seattle, they would say, for “direct action,” e.g., trashing Starbucks. For this they were strongly denounced by the labor chiefs and respectable liberal types.

The North American Anarchist group plans to hold a national meeting in Los Angeles at the same time as the Democratic convention and plans to participate in the protests. But the anarchists have *no program for revolutionary change* with which to oppose the politics of the AFL-CIO tops, Nader’s Greens or, for that matter, the liberal wing of the Democratic Party. All they offer is a *posture* of angry defiance toward the powers that be. By building for and cheering protest activities politically dominated by the likes of John Sweeney and Ralph Nader, in actuality they help build support for the chauvinist protectionism and liberal reformism which they claim to disdain.

The Brouhaha over “Globalization”

A key phrase in the Nader campaign and other expressions of current left-liberal activism is opposition to “globalization.” What is this all about? The now-fashionable term “globalization” is not simply descriptive of certain quantitative changes in the world economy over the past few decades—greater integration

globe. Today, the ideologues of “globalization” project a world in which capitalist property “rights,” whether in New York or New Delhi, are no longer threatened by social revolution, national liberation struggles or inter-imperialist war. (For a Marxist analysis of this question, see the Spartacist pamphlet, *Imperialism, the “Global Economy,” and Labor Reformism* [September 1999]).

The bourgeois ideological offensive expressed in the term “globalization” is directed not only against the left but, in the U.S., also against traditional “welfare state” liberalism. Supposedly, it is no longer possible to expand unionization, improve wages and working conditions and introduce new social programs because big corporations will simply shift their operations to low-wage Third World countries. Thus it is not only communism which is proclaimed “dead” but also liberal reformism as exemplified by FDR’s New Deal in the 1930s and Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society programs in the 1960s. It is not only Karl Marx who is declared irrelevant to the 21st century but also the liberal economist John Maynard Keynes. The now-dominant bourgeois economic ideology, confusingly called “neoliberalism,” maintains that government policies aimed at promoting greater social equity are either ineffective (because of “globalization”) or harmful.

Against “free market” and “greed is good” ideologues, liberal intellectuals denounce “globalization” for cruelly exploiting the peoples of the Third World and accelerating the destruction of the earth’s environment. These ideas are conveyed by liberal high school teachers to their social studies classes and by liberal college professors in humanities and social science departments. Understandably, then, these themes have become the main focus of political activism among liberal, mainly white middle-class youth. Many, often from affluent families, don’t like the fact that the clothes they buy are made by young girls in Indonesia working for 12 or 14 hours a day and earning less in a year than an American might spend on a new video game.

In the past few years, students across the country, particularly at “elite” universities like Harvard, Yale and Duke, have staged protests, sit-ins and rallies against the hideous conditions of sweatshop labor, especially in Southeast Asia and Central America. A major demand at “the battle of Seattle” was for the WTO to adopt and enforce a code of interna-

tional labor standards and environmental standards. And the main demand at an anti-“globalization” demonstration in Washington, D.C. in April was for the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank to cancel the debts of Third World countries.

AFL-CIO Tops: Labor Lieutenants of U.S. Imperialism

Youth involved in these actions genuinely desire to better the wretched conditions of the toilers in the neocolonial countries. The AFL-CIO leadership, if it had its way, would shut down half the factories in Indonesia and South Korea condemning tens of millions of working people in these countries to utter destitution. Yet in the name of anti-“globalization,” the youthful protesters have been led to make common cause with the American labor bureaucracy. How is this to be explained?

Such youth look to the American government as the main agency for bringing good to the rest of the world. They want Washington to use the threat of import protectionism, and be willing to implement that threat, in order to force countries like Indonesia, Thailand and El Salvador to improve the conditions of their own people (e.g., abolishing child labor). One could term this a form of “human rights” imperialism.

The AFL-CIO tops don’t give a damn about the Third World poor, and turn their back on sweatshop workers in the U.S. as well. The labor bureaucracy acts as the capitalists’ political police inside the working class, including by championing American imperialist war efforts from Korea and Vietnam to Iraq and the Balkans. The union tops’ class collaborationism is seen as well in their calls for trade protectionism. Protectionism is chauvinist poison, serving to bind working people in the U.S. to their “own” exploiters against workers in Latin America, Asia and elsewhere.

The labor tops cynically use the demand of international labor standards and environmental standards, which they know will never be met, as a justification for their protectionist program and to gain support for it among the middle-class liberals. In effect, they argue: since there is no enforceable code of international labor standards, American workers face “unfair competition” from low-wage countries. So we have to “buy American.” In this way the likes of AFL-CIO chief Sweeney and Ralph Nader *manipulate* the humanitarian concerns of idealistic youth for reactionary ends.

There is a big contradiction between the issues that have impelled thousands of youth to join the protests against the WTO and IMF—miserable wages, sweatshop conditions, child labor, poverty—and illusions that the U.S. imperialist state can serve as the agency for bringing “human rights” to the exploited masses of the world. American imperialism is the biggest enemy of the world’s working people and oppressed—the purveyor of untold misery, fratricidal nationalism, racism and war in the pursuit of profit and competitive edge against its imperialist rivals. On the home front, it has viciously ratcheted up the exploitation of the American working class, driving down wages, destroying working conditions and smashing unions. This is accompanied by the increasingly hideous oppression and degradation of the black and Latino masses in the inner cities.

Speaking of the “racial and class divides” that “were uncomfortably evident during the spectacular mass protests in Seattle and Washington, D.C.,” an article in the *Village Voice* (25 July) titled “Color Blind” notes:

“While the demonstrations electrified activists across the country, the fact that the ranks of protesters were overwhelmingly white has itself sparked protest. As radical black scholar Robin D. G. Kelly, puts it, ‘The lack of people of color involved in these demonstrations is a crisis.’”

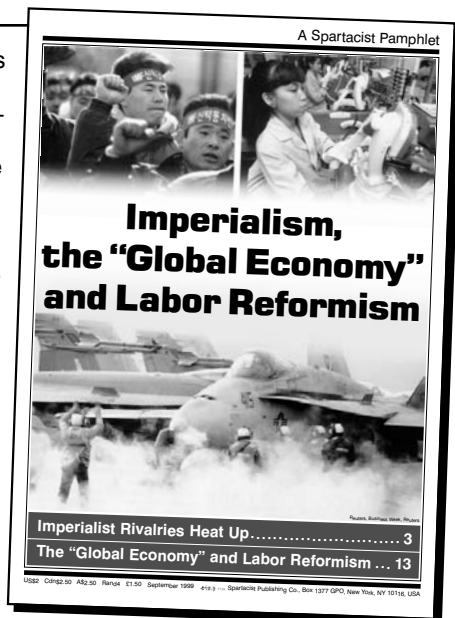
This pamphlet assesses recent changes in the world economy in a historical perspective, from the origins of modern imperialism in the late 19th century through the capitalist counterrevolution in East Europe and the former USSR and its aftermath. Reformist ideologues of “globalization” seek to obscure the role of the capitalist nation-state and the danger of inter-imperialist war which is inherent in capitalism, while amnestying the refusal of the labor bureaucracies to wage class struggle against their respective bourgeoisies.

Exploitation, poverty and social degradation can be eliminated only through proletarian revolutions in the imperialist centers as well as the neocolonial countries, laying the basis for an international planned socialist economy.

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A Spartacist Pamphlet

Imperialism, the “Global Economy” and Labor Reformism

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Capitalist Democrats, Republicans: Parties of Racist Legal Lynching

Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!

Many of those demonstrating outside the Republican and Democratic Party conventions will be there to protest the threatened execution of black political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. The forces of racist “law and order” represented by both these capitalist parties are itching to see this innocent man strapped to the execution gurney. Indeed, the same police-sponsored forces who have been screaming for his execution have promised a countermobilization in Philadelphia. They want this outspoken fighter against racist injustice silenced forever, because they see in Mumia—an eloquent journalist, MOVE supporter and former Black Panther Party spokesman—a personification of defiant opposition to their system of racist oppression.

The depravity of the racist U.S. ruling class was in plain view last month with the execution of Shaka Sankofa (Gary Graham), a young black man who had demonstrated overwhelming evidence of his innocence. In this decaying capitalist system which offers no future to millions of inner-city black youth, the death penalty, the mass incarceration of black men and the elimination of welfare represent the bourgeoisie’s impulse to genocide. The death penalty stands at the apex of



Young Spartacus

Revolutionary Contingent at May 13 San Francisco rally called for mobilizing labor’s social power to free Mumia, opposed reliance on racist capitalist courts and politicians.

the machinery of repression wielded by the capitalist rulers against workers and minorities. We oppose the death penalty in principle—for the guilty as well as the innocent. We do not accord the capitalist state the right to decide who shall live and who shall die.

While supporting all legal actions on his behalf, since taking up Jamal’s cause over 13 years ago the Partisan Defense Committee and Spartacist League have fought for a strategy centered on mobilizing *the power of labor* on his behalf. We demand: Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!

Abolish the racist death penalty!

This is *not* the perspective and purpose of the Workers World Party, Socialist Action (SA), Refuse & Resist and sundry others mobilizing for the conventions who promote the deadly illusion that the capitalist state can be pressured to act on behalf of the workers and oppressed. This is encapsulated in their main demand, “New Trial NOW!” Many of those who have rallied on the streets for Mumia have been led to believe that this slogan is identical to the call for his freedom, because only through a retrial can he be freed. But a new trial—conducted in the same racist courts that railroaded him to death row—could well result in a new conviction.

So why do these various “left” groups call for a new trial? Because they want to appeal to liberals and bourgeois Democratic politicians who *oppose* unconditional freedom for Mumia, who is branded in the capitalist press as a “convicted cop killer.” As Solidarity’s Steve Bloom put it, they want to reach out to the “American mainstream.” This is a code word for liberals who might support a new trial because of the blatant bias in the original one. Such liberals seek to paint the frame-up of Jamal as a “miscarriage of justice” in the same way they try to pass off the heinous killing of Amadou Diallo by the New York police as an “aberration” in an otherwise just system of “democracy.”

Despite their disclaimers, the liberal and reformist left groups organizing the Mumia protests see the Democrats as fundamentally different from and better than their Republican counterparts. Thus the International Socialist Organization, Revolutionary Communist Party and Workers World Party have reserved the epithet *continued on page 12*

It is hardly surprising that black and Latino youth are not particularly drawn by protests against conditions of misery and poverty in other countries which never address these same conditions which are a daily fact of life in the destitute inner cities of this country. For those who are on the receiving end of terror and brutality at the hands of the cops, the idea of the U.S. capitalist state as an agency of “justice” and “human rights” is, to say the least, a foreign one. Nor could anarcho “direct action” in the streets have a whole lot of appeal for black and Latino youth who know what awaits them if they get thrown in jail.

Among some of the organizers of the protests against the WTO and IMF, a whole lingo has been developed to alibi why they don’t address racial oppression or other “social issues.” They argue that so-called “identity politics” have been supplanted and subsumed by the struggle against the corporate “global economy.” This is simply a convenient, and revolting, justification for their own view of the inherent benevolence of the racist American capitalist state. For the upcoming protests against the Republican and Democratic conventions, some are scrambling to take up issues relevant to “people of color.” But the bottom line of these protests politically is no different, that is, to reinforce illusions in the American imperialist state.

The fight against the special oppression of the black population in the U.S., the majority of which is forcibly segregated at the bottom of this society, is central to the destruction of American imperialism, which is the *source* of the depredations against the working people and oppressed masses of the world. The defense of immigrant rights is also crucial to breaking down the racial divisions that are wielded by the capitalist ruling class to obscure the irreconcilable *class* divide between those who labor and the small minority who live off of the exploitation of labor.

Many youth who have joined in the protests against “globalization” see the working class as their ally. But this

“movement” is being used by liberals like Nader to reinforce the chains that shackle the working class to the capitalist system which is the source of imperialist depredations. Youth who genuinely want to see an end to the misery produced by capitalist imperialism must be won to the understanding that the working class is the key agency for revolutionary change with the social power to end this system of exploitation and oppression.

The American Imperialist State Is the Main Enemy

In announcing his candidacy for the Green Party nomination in February, Nader declared: “The unconstrained behavior of big business is subordinating our democracy to the control of a corporate plutocracy that knows few self-imposed limits to the spread of its power to all sectors of our society.” But the American state is *not* “our democracy.” It is the agency of the American capitalist class, the primary political/military instrument of the Wall Street banks and Fortune 500 corporations.

The men who run these banks and corporations also organize and profit from the superexploitation of the so-called Third World. The sweatshops in Indonesia, Thailand and El Salvador are subcontractors for Nike, Sears and Macy’s. The government and local capitalists of Southeast Asia and Latin American owe tens of billions of dollars to Citicorp, Chase and other banks—debts which are repaid out of the blood of the worker and peasant masses. The core of the American state—the Pentagon military machine—serves to *protect* the interests of American capital abroad.

This can be clearly seen in the case of Mexico. Among its other disastrous effects, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) meant economic destruction for Mexican peasant smallholders who could not compete with the much cheaper and better-quality produce, centrally corn, imported from the highly mechanized farms of the American Midwest. The very day that NAFTA came into effect, New Year’s 1994, saw a major

leftist-led peasant uprising in the impoverished southern Mexican state of Chiapas. The bloody suppression of the uprising was actively aided by the Clinton/Gore White House. In the first months of 1994, the Pentagon provided the Mexican army with an additional 3,000 military vehicles, including armored personnel carriers, jeeps, trucks and tanks. At the same time, hundreds of U.S. troops were sent to Guatemala in the region bordering Chiapas.

The role of the American military in Mexico may not be that well-known in the U.S. But the U.S.-led NATO air war against Serbia last year was the bloody face of “human rights” imperialism for all to see. Most American liberals and many self-styled leftists *supported*, to one degree or another, the Pentagon’s devastation of this small Balkan country in the name of “humanitarian” concern for Kosovar Albanians. It is telling that at the Seattle anti-WTO protest, held just months after the war, there was a deafening silence about this atrocity committed by the *American* government under the Democratic administration of Clinton/Gore.

The liberal and leftist opponents of “globalization” not only deny that the American state is the political instrument of the American capitalist class. They now contend that “transnational” corporations control the world mainly through international institutions like the IMF and WTO. Thus “our democracy,” in Nader’s words, is being subverted and threatened. It is precisely in defense of “American sovereignty” and economic nationalism that the left liberal Nader joins hands with the right-wing demagogue Pat Buchanan. Fundamentally, *both* Nader and Buchanan are classic populists, putting forward a petty-bourgeois appeal to the “little guy” that big capital can be controlled through the “democratic” capitalist state.

The idea that the WTO, IMF and World Bank are powers unto themselves is both reactionary and absurd. These international agencies act at the behest and in the interests of the major capitalist

powers, and are in fact largely controlled by the U.S. And in recent years they have increasingly become arenas in which the conflicting interests of American, German and Japanese imperialism are played out.

As far back as the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848, Karl Marx observed that the productive forces of capitalism had outgrown the nation-state forged by the bourgeoisie during its rise to power. In his 1916 book *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, written in the throes of the first interimperialist world war, Lenin explained that by the beginning of the 20th century the global economy had become dominated by a small number of developed imperialist states representing different gangs of capitalists, organized in giant industrial monopolies, trusts and banks, fighting among themselves over who gets to loot the rest of the world. Particularly since the destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92, there has been a sharp escalation of such interimperialist rivalries, as evidenced in the breakup of the Seattle WTO talks and the moves by Germany and Japan to build up their military strength vis-à-vis the United States.

Rather than fighting to shatter illusions in U.S. imperialism and the capitalist state, the reformist left reinforces these illusions by pushing the lie that the inequalities that thrive under capitalism can be eliminated short of workers revolution. As we wrote in “IMF Protests: Beware the Fraud of ‘Human Rights’ Imperialism!” (WV No. 734, 21 April):

“The eradication of the poverty, racism and war endemic to capitalism can only be accomplished by the one revolutionary class in this society, the working class. Because of its central role in capitalist production, the proletariat as a class has the power to sweep away the capitalist system and lay the foundations of a socialist society—based on an international planned economy providing material abundance for all. This requires the instrumentality of a revolutionary workers party to render the proletariat conscious of its historic tasks and lead it in revolutionary struggle against the exploiters. That is the purpose of the Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth Clubs. Join us!” ■

Not One Vote for the PRI, PAN or PRD!

For the Political Independence of the Proletariat!

We reprint below excerpts from a special supplement to *Espartaco* (June 2000), newspaper of the Grupo Espartaquista de México.

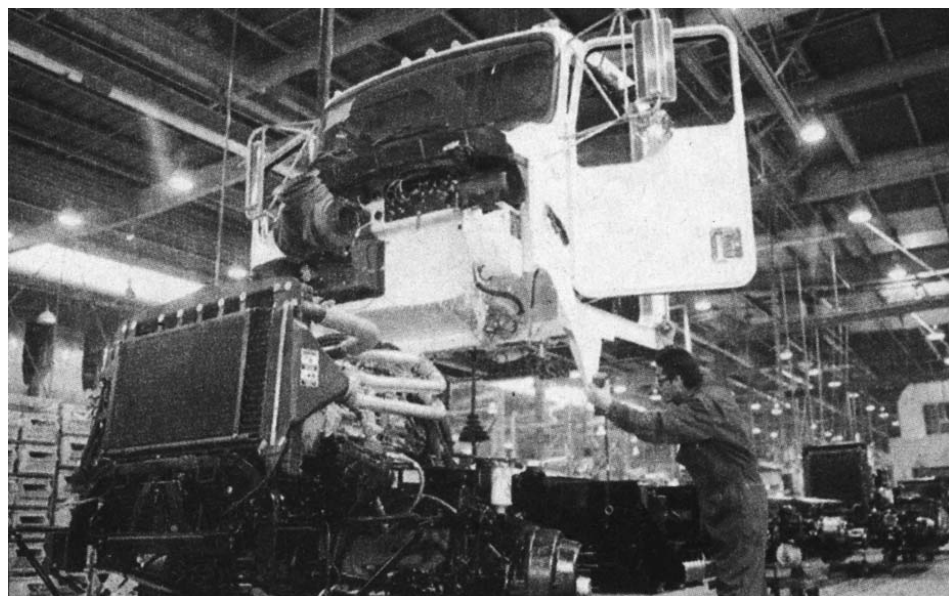
Mexico is at the point of social explosion. The corporatist stranglehold which the PRI [Institutional Revolutionary Party] has exercised over the Mexican workers and peasants for over half a century is crumbling in the face of growing social discontent. For the first time the rule of the party which has run the country since the Mexican Revolution is really challenged, but there is no major party

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which challenges capitalist rule or offers a road forward for the working class. The PRI, the PAN [National Action Party], the PRD [Party of the Democratic Revolution] and their hangers-on all seek to deflect seething working-class unrest through the trap of bourgeois nationalism, pretending to erase the fundamental division of society between the capitalist exploiters and the working people who create the wealth but are denied the fruits of their labor.

The essential backdrop to the political turmoil in Mexico is the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the intensification of IMF-imposed measures of austerity: the privatization of the banks and the telephone system, attacks on public education, against social security, the devastation of agriculture, increased taxes, increasing attacks on trade unions and a fall of 70 percent in the standard of living of the working class. As we stated in a joint declaration of the Trotskyist League of Canada, Spartacist League/U.S. and the Grupo Espartaquista de México against NAFTA in 1991: “Yankee imperialism wants to turn Mexico into a giant *maquiladora*, or free trade zone—‘free’ of unions, and ‘free’ for capital. Far from ‘freeing’ trade internationally, the pact is aimed at setting up a private hunting preserve for the American imperialist bourgeoisie, their Canadian junior partners and their lackeys in the Mexican ruling class.” Down with NAFTA, U.S. imperialist free-trade rape of Mexico!

According to the World Bank, between 54 and 58 percent of Mexicans live in a situation of “poverty” or “ultra-poverty.” Meanwhile the stock exchange is up over 4,000 percent over the last 20 years. The peasantry is being ruined by competition



David Aleman

Imperialist investment in Mexico has led to huge growth of proletariat in vehicle assembly and other heavy industries.

Forge a Leninist-Trotskyist Workers Party!



Ruben R. Ramirez

Militant women strikers at RCA Thomson *maquiladora* plant in Ciudad Juárez, February 1995.

with more efficient American agribusiness; the Zapatistas [EZLN] continue to control part of Chiapas while the Army and PFP [Federal Preventive Police] are massing for an assault, this time insisting that Chiapas has supposedly become a major highway for drug traffic from Central America. We say: Hands off the EZLN! Army/PFP out of Chiapas!

The capitalist press insists noisily on the “democratic transition” as the solution to the evils that affect Mexican society. But no fundamental change in society can come about through an electoral vote. At the root of poverty in Mexico, as in the rest of the so-called “Third World,” is a world capitalist economy dominated by a few imperialist banks and corporations centered in the United States, Europe and Japan. The Mexican ruling class acts as junior partners to the imperialist colossus to the north. And all the capitalist parties—PRI, PRD, PAN, PARM, PVEM, Democracia Social, etc.—agree on the defense of the capitalist system of production for profit, which necessarily means to maximize the profits of the

imperialists and their local bourgeois lackeys through the sweat and blood of the Mexican toiling masses. They only argue about what is the best mixture of lies, repression and social reaction to use in establishing a new façade for their brutal system of exploitation of “cheap” Mexican labor.

There is no choice for the proletariat in this electoral farce. The GEM, Mexican section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) follows the same position Trotsky outlined in the journal *Clave* on the 1939 Mexican presidential elections:

“Some readers ask us what is the policy of our journal in the presidential campaign. We answer: Our journal does not take part in the struggle of candidacies. It is not due, of course, to the anarchist prejudice against participation in politics.... No. We are for the more active participation in politics by the workers. But for independent participation. In Mexico, at present, there is no workers party, no union developing independent class politics and capable of pushing an independent candidacy. Under these conditions, the only thing we can do is limit ourselves to Marxist propaganda and to the preparation of the future independent party of the Mexican proletariat.”

—“*Clave* and the Election Campaign,” *Clave* No. 6, March 1939

The task of communists is to fight for the political independence of the proletariat, and today this means fighting against the widespread illusions among the working class that the PRD represents some kind of “lesser evil” to the PRI and the clerical-reactionary PAN. The GEM and the ICL fight to forge the revolutionary workers party capable of leading the proletariat to the seizure of state power, in Mexico and around the world.

For Permanent Revolution!

In countries of belated capitalist development like Mexico, the national bourgeoisie is too weak and tied by a thousand strings to imperialism; it fears the threat the proletariat and oppressed masses pose to its private property much more than it desires to free itself from the imperialist

yoke. Therefore, the bourgeoisie cannot resolve the burning democratic demands of the masses—such as the land question, political democracy, national liberation—formerly associated with bourgeois revolutions such as the French Revolution. But capitalism creates its own gravedigger, the proletariat, the force capable of accomplishing the democratic tasks, but only on condition that it draw behind it the peasants and other oppressed masses and establish its own class dictatorship, abolishing the system of capitalist exploitation.

The GEM fights to build the revolutionary Trotskyist party in Mexico today to raise the working class to the consciousness of its historic task. In the process of mobilizing around its own interests, the working class must struggle for a thoroughgoing agrarian revolution, for the establishment of political liberties, for an end to the horrendous oppression of the indigenous, for free public education and for an end to the imperialist yoke which sucks the lifeblood from the workers and peasants. In this, its ally is not some mythical “anti-imperialist” section of the bourgeoisie, but the powerful U.S. proletariat, as well as workers and oppressed throughout the Americas. A victorious socialist revolution in Mexico could not stand alone against the imperialist armies of the United States; it would of necessity have to seek to extend itself to the major imperialist centers, appealing to the proletariat to throw out their own capitalist exploiters.

No Illusions in the Bourgeois-Nationalist PRD!

The main obstacle to the acquisition of revolutionary consciousness by the working class is bourgeois nationalism—which pretends to erase all class divisions in society—and illusions in its principal exponent: the PRD of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas.

A slew of opportunists, revisionists and centrists continue to aid Cárdenas’ attempt to keep the Mexican working masses corralled behind the dead end of nationalist populism by painting his PRD in “progressive” colors. Among the most ardent are the self-proclaimed Trotskyists of the Militante group, who have been buried in the PRD for years. On May Day they appeared with a headline reading: “PRD: Victory Will Be Assured Only with Militant and Truly Left Politics”—advising Cárdenas how to best deceive the working class! Unable to defend their role as PRD lackeys in front of their own young militants, they violently assaulted members of the GEM. The crucial question for the socialist revolution in Mexico is the fight for the *class independence* of the proletariat and we Spartacists uniquely fight for that. Militante’s physical violence [see “Gangsterism in the Service of the PRD,” WV No. 736, 19 May] is a desperate attempt to cover up their excruciating contradiction: they are

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NOTICE

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

Our next issue will be dated August 25.

Mexico...
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and PRD, Fox, who was guided by former Clinton campaign adviser Dick Morris, subsequently took pains to downplay both his reactionary Catholic clericalism and his free-market schemes, telling the Mexico City daily La Jornada, "In the end, the one who governs is Vicente Fox, not the PAN!" Fox claimed that he had no plans to privatize the electrical, oil and petrochemical industries and vowed to uphold the secularism embodied in the constitution. He also toned down his rants that schools should teach Catholic "values," his virulent opposition to abortion and his condemnation of homosexuality as "a degenerate act which goes against human nature."

Since 1938, when President Lázaro Cárdenas (father of the PRD leader) nationalized the oil industry, any politician advocating selling it off would have been committing political suicide, accused of being a "vendepatrias" (seller of the fatherland) and provoking the powerful oil workers union. The nationalization of oil was met with enormous pressure from the imperialists, including a boycott of Mexican oil exports, aimed at restoring their holdings. Writing from his Mexican exile, Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky wrote in defense of the expropriations by the Cárdenas regime:

"Without succumbing to illusions and without fear of slander, the advanced workers will completely support the

up to now. Following the elections, the corporatist Mexican Labor Federation (CTM) and Congress of Labor (CT), which have long served as key props of PRI rule, announced the formation of a "front of unions" including the National Workers Union (UNT) federation, the SME electricians and other unions not affiliated with the PRI.

Fox's victory has raised expectations particularly among Mexico's desperate petty bourgeoisie. Fox campaigned by promising he would wipe out crime and corruption, improve the country's infrastructure, double spending on education and provide better health care. He spouted utopian visions of eliminating wage differentials between the U.S. and Mexico through developing industry—conveniently overlooking the boot that U.S. imperialism has firmly planted on the neck of the very dependent Mexican bourgeoisie. A corollary of the subordinate interdependence of the Mexican economy with that of the U.S. is that any economic dislocation north of the border will impact with great severity on Mexico, with disastrous effect on the living conditions of working people and the poor.

The free marketeer Fox is a stalwart supporter of NAFTA. In a country where real wages have plummeted 75 percent in the last 12 years, the implementation of NAFTA in 1994 has widened the gap between rich and poor in Mexico more than in any other Latin American country. With the products of American agribusiness flooding Mexican markets,



Museo Nacional de Historia, Museo Cristero
Reactionary Catholic PAN has roots in 1920s "Cristero revolt" against anti-clerical measures associated with Mexican Revolution. Banner reads: "Long Live Christ the King."

Mexican people in their struggle against the imperialists. The expropriation of oil is neither socialism nor communism. But it is a highly progressive measure of national self-defense."
—"Mexico and British Imperialism" (June 1938)

At the same time, Trotsky stressed, "The international proletariat has no reason to identify its program with the program of the Mexican government."

Ever since then, the PEMEX oil monopoly—Mexico's largest company, estimated to be worth some \$40 billion, and the linchpin of the country's economy—has been the target of imperialist designs. Only days after Fox's election, he justified the faith of his Wall Street patrons by announcing his intention to introduce legislation to scrap restrictions on the full privatization of petrochemical plants and to open up PEMEX and CFE (Federal Commission of Electricity) to private initiative.

Moves to denationalize oil and electricity could detonate an explosion among workers in those industries, whose PRI-affiliated unions have kept them in check

the already impoverished peasantry has been ruined. Malnutrition, disease and illiteracy are on the rise, especially in the less-industrialized south. Fox's vision of a North American common market encompassing Canada, the U.S. and Mexico, if implemented, would be a garage sale for U.S. capital to further loot the Mexican economy. His populist-sounding schemes are to be financed through increased imperialist investment and "reforms" eliminating exemptions on sales taxes that benefit the poor.

Fox's victory underscores the crucial need to mobilize the Mexican proletariat in defense of the rights of women, whose vicious oppression is reinforced by the grip of the Catholic church on the society, particularly in the countryside. Immediately following the election, the Mexican Episcopal Conference, an organization of top Catholic clerics, announced it would "take advantage of Fox's triumph" to push for religious teachings in the public schools, while the anti-abortion bigots of Pro Vida have called for legislation forcing pregnant teenagers to get married.

Los Angeles: Popular strike last spring by overwhelmingly Latino janitors, part of growing component of immigrant workers in American labor movement.



The ban on abortion, which is also supported by a section of the PRD leadership, leads to the deaths of thousands of women each year as a result of botched illegal operations. At the same time, women have become an increasingly significant component of the proletariat in recent years, with 35 percent of all women of working age now in the labor force. In the foreign-owned maquiladora plants, young women compose as much as 90 percent of the workforce.

Accompanying attacks on women is the anti-gay bigotry prevalent in Mexico. With homosexuality perceived as a threat to the patriarchal family, especially in this Catholic country, anyone assumed to be gay can be targeted for brutal beatings and even murder. Declaring AIDS to be a gay disease, the church has campaigned against condom use, condemning possibly millions of young men and women to death. Even ostensible leftists frequently hurl anti-gay slurs. Against such bigotry, the GEM champions the democratic rights of homosexuals and calls for free abortion on demand as part of our program for women's liberation through socialist revolution.

For Revolutionary Internationalism!

Whoever occupies the presidential palace is sitting atop a volcano of social discontent. As evidence of the turmoil in Mexican society, in February villagers in Hidalgo state seized 68 cops who had violently raided a teachers college occupied by student strikers.

The electoral loss of the PRI, which had managed the bourgeois state through highly centralized bonapartist rule, will

only add to the instability of the government. Despite its loss, the PRI still controls the governorships of 19 of Mexico's 32 states. Though it won the presidency and has become the largest party in the legislature, the PAN did not capture a majority in the Senate or House of Deputies. The PRD captured the mayoral election of Mexico City, the second most important executive post in the country, although the PAN now dominates the city legislature. To implement his policies, Fox will have to find bloc partners among either the PRI or PRD legislators.

Not surprisingly, Fox immediately announced he has no intention of purging the government bureaucracy—a huge apparatus of 3.5 million civil servants whose power, prestige and very jobs depended on PRI rule—and plans to co-opt prominent PRIistas into his cabinet. Fox also announced plans to make the country's police forces more "efficient," including by creating a Ministry of Security and Justice modeled on the American FBI. Ten days after the election, Fox met with Mexican secretary of defense Enrique Cervantes and naval secretary Lorenzo Franco to map out plans to deal with the EZLN and EPR guerrilla insurgencies.

Attacks on the unions, peasants, women and others by Fox, who is openly identified with the U.S. imperialist bloodsuckers, will serve to spark renewed nationalist sentiments and will particularly feed illusions in the PRD, which is painted by the bulk of the Mexican left as a "left" alternative to the PAN and PRI.

The PRD was formed in the late 1980s

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Mexico...

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after Cárdenas, a principal leader of the PRI, split from the ruling party. In 1994, the PRD, which supported the imposition of NAFTA, solidarized with the federal government’s attack on the Zapatista insurgents. When the Mexican economy crashed in 1995, impelling tens of thousands of workers into the streets to defend their living standards, the PRD joined the PAN and PRI in a pact to stabilize the government. Cárdenas appealed to the Clinton government for a bailout which was subsequently adopted, giving the U.S. virtual control over the Mexican economy.

For many UNAM militants, illusions in Cárdenas were crushed when the PRD-run Mexico City government unleashed its riot cops in brutal assaults on the student strikers. The PRD subsequently claimed to defend the student strikers against PRI repression. But when Cárdenas made a campaign speech at UNAM in June, several hundred angry students protested by shouting, “Cárdenas out of UNAM!” Although Cárdenas initially announced the PRD’s refusal to collaborate with a PAN government, a Reuters (23 July) dispatch on a PRD leadership meeting reports that “Cárde-



AP

Workers protest threat to privatize electricity companies. Union tops derail class struggle through nationalism tying workers to Mexican bourgeoisie.

nas changed his tune on Fox” and “said the PRD had to work with the PAN in Congress.”

To mobilize the powerful Mexican proletariat against their exploiters and oppressors requires a political struggle

against all wings of bourgeois nationalism, which binds the workers to the Mexican bourgeoisie. The urgent needs of Mexico’s impoverished workers and peasants—for agrarian revolution, education, health care, jobs—cannot be ful-

ISO for Nader...

(continued from page 6)

unless pushed—and he won’t draw a sharp line to divide himself from the right-wing Reform Party campaign of Pat Buchanan.” Indeed, when it comes to protectionism and China-bashing, Nader simply presents the liberal face of Buchanan’s poisonous economic nationalism. Even liberal columnist Anthony Lewis, in a cynical piece to drum up support for Al Gore, noted in a letter to Nader published in the *New York Times* (8 July): “Your protectionist stance has put you in bed with some of the most reactionary forces in this country. You are a twin of Pat Buchanan on the issue.” The congruence between Nader and Buchanan when it comes to pushing economic nationalism and the sovereign power of the U.S. imperialist state leaves little

room for even making a pretense of addressing those who are ground under the boot of racist American capitalism at home.

Nader studiously avoids mention of racial oppression because it doesn’t fit with his promotion of the U.S. imperialist state as an agency for “democracy.” In his Green Party nomination acceptance speech on June 25, Nader patriotically opined: “The WTO undermines our legitimate local, state and national sovereignties which enable America to lead the way in worker, consumer, environmental standards.” In fact, U.S. imperialism is the most vicious exploiter of labor and the biggest enemy of the working people and oppressed masses of the world.

The ISO shares Nader’s outlook of government reform to give murderous U.S. imperialism a more “human” face by hawking the lie that imperialism can be pressured to be a force for “democracy” internationally. When U.S. imperialism led the NATO aerial war against Serbia

last year under the pretext of “protecting” Kosovar Albanians, the ISO was begging U.S. imperialism to send “aid” to Kosovo rather than bombs. We called for the defeat of U.S. imperialism through workers revolution and the defense of Serbia against the NATO bombers without giving one iota of political support to the Serb nationalist Milosevic regime.

Nader’s campaign is the political expression of the so-called “spirit of Seattle”—protectionism, China-bashing and the revolting promotion of U.S. imperialism as a vehicle for bringing aid to the world’s downtrodden. Tens of thousands of youth demonstrated in Seattle and Washington, propelled by revulsion against hideous poverty and oppression which they perceive as being the creation of “globalization.” But the myth of a new “global economy” is designed to obscure the central role of U.S. imperialism as the source of poverty, war and oppression around the globe. The WTO and IMF are not powers unto themselves but

act in the interests of the major capitalist powers. Imperialism is not a set of bad policies which can be reformed. It is the highest stage of capitalism where imperialist states like the U.S. compete for world domination, fighting among each other over who gets to loot the rest of the world.

Perceiving that many youth are attracted to the Nader campaign, the ISO does not challenge their illusions but rather caters to and reinforces them. If you want to fight to end the capitalist system of exploitation, war and racial oppression, don’t buy into the electoral game being sold to you by Nader and his ISO backers which is aimed at corraling disaffected youth behind the Democratic Party. We say: Break with the Democratic Party of war and racism! No vote for Nader! Join with us in fighting to build the revolutionary workers party to overthrow the rule of capitalist imperialism and build an egalitarian socialist society!■

Jamal...

(continued from page 9)

“Executioners’ Ball” for the Republican National Convention but not for the Democratic conclave in L.A. A leaflet put out by the L.A. Coalition to Stop the Execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal raised the slogan “Call the Democrats to Account!”—as if the Democrats could be made accountable to the working class and

black oppressed. No less than the G.O.P., the Democratic Party is accountable only to Wall Street bankers and Fortune 500 CEOs.

The chairman of the Democratic National Convention is Ed Rendell, a former Philadelphia D.A. who was personally and directly accountable for the racist frame-up of Mumia. Some of the groups organizing the L.A. protest are calling on the Democrats to remove Rendell from his prestigious position at the convention. Who are they calling upon to remove Rendell? Clinton and Gore’s 1992 and 1996 White House campaigns strongly supported the death penalty, with Clinton flying back to Arkansas during the 1992 race to personally oversee the execution of a brain-damaged black man. Gore chose the week before Sankofa’s execution to reaffirm his support to the death penalty, intoning, “Mistakes are inevitable.”

Striking a pose in opposition to the bourgeois parties, *Socialist Action* (July 2000) states that “it is really hopeless to look for abolition of the death penalty from either of the two ruling parties.” While on paper SA says it doesn’t support the Democrats, these reformists have been instrumental in adopting and pushing the “new trial” slogan whose very purpose is to subordinate demonstrations in defense of Mumia to what is acceptable to liberal Democratic politicians. This class-collaborationist strategy

is counterposed to mobilizing labor’s power in the fight for Mumia’s freedom.

Unions representing millions of workers around the world have expressed their support for Jamal’s cause. In the U.S., there is strong sympathy particularly among black workers with Mumia’s fight. The labor bureaucracy has in its own way been forced to respond to this pressure from its base. For example, the California Labor Federation convention on July 18 adopted a resolution calling “upon the President of the United States to intercede and order a new trial” for Mumia. Mumia will never be freed by appealing to bour-

geois politicians for “justice.”

In the fight to free Mumia, we stand for a class-struggle strategy—for protest strikes and other militant labor-centered actions against the capitalists and their state. In seeking to mobilize the unions in Jamal’s defense, we aim to suffuse the working class with the consciousness of its historic interests in fighting for all of labor and the oppressed against the *entire* capitalist system. As a strategic component of the proletariat, black workers will play a key role in the socialist revolution which is needed to root out racial oppression.■

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Cliffites...

(continued from page 5)

the height of the racist frenzy against immigrants instigated by Labour and Tory leaders, Livingstone denounced Roma (Gypsies) and promised to employ more cops to clear beggars off the streets. For its part, the LSA pleads for “an end to the racism and corruption of the Metropolitan police,” a backhanded way of giving anti-racist credentials to the racist Labour government, implying that whitewash inquiries can end racism in the cops.

SWP’s Support to British Troops in Ireland

Revolutionaries in Britain have a special responsibility to oppose British imperialism in Northern Ireland. We call for the unconditional, immediate withdrawal of British troops from Northern Ireland and fight for a proletarian internationalist perspective of workers revolution against British imperialism, the Orange Statelet in the North and the clericalist state in the South. From the time it was first mooted we have opposed all illusions in Labour’s imperialist “peace” deal, which is a fraud and is premised on the British Army presence remaining in place.

Not so the SWP. Its press carries headlines such as “Peace Hopes Now Under Threat in Northern Ireland” and whines: “The Tories, their press and the Unionist bigots must not be allowed to wreck the peace” (*Socialist Worker*, 4 September 1999). When the Labour government (including Tony Benn) sent the troops into Northern Ireland in 1969, the SWP supported it. For years they have denied this, lyingly claiming that it’s all just a fabrication by the Spartacists. Tony Cliff’s autobiography, however, brazenly admits it:

“The editorial in *Socialist Worker* of 11 September 1969 said: “‘Defend The Barricades/No Peace Until Stormont Goes’ “‘*The breathing space provided by the presence of British troops is short but vital. Those who call for the immediate withdrawal of the troops before the men behind the barricades can defend themselves are inviting a pogrom.*’ “‘The moment the honeymoon between the troops and the Catholic population came to an end, early in 1970, we then raised the slogan ‘Troops Out’ as a central demand.”

—A World to Win, Tony Cliff (2000) [emphasis ours]

Hardly a “central demand,” as the SWP’s pro-“peace hoax” propaganda proves, it is used by the Cliffites when expeditious. Thus, in the “Where We Stand” column of the *Irish* Cliffite newspaper there is a

call for troops out. But where it is not so popular to take this position—and where it counts to take it—no such call appears in the *British* paper. Now that the SWP is cosying up to Tommy Sheridan’s Scottish Socialist Party (SSP), a social-chauvinist outfit notorious for embracing [fascistic Loyalist killer] Billy Hutchinson of the Ulster Volunteer Force and for its refusal



Workers Hammer

Cliffite placard at April demonstration of British Rover auto workers reads: “Turn Birmingham into Seattle.” SWP actively built chauvinist protectionist mobilization.

to call for the withdrawal of the troops, it might not be expeditious, either.

Labour Reformism, National Chauvinism and Parliamentary Cretinism

The 1 April Rover demonstration in Birmingham, built by the trade-union bureaucracy and supported by Tony Blair, was characterised by flag-waving social-patriotism. The bureaucrats’ answer to the threatened job massacre was to call for “Save British manufacturing industry!” and “Save British Jobs!” thus lining up the workers with their “own” ruling class. As we said at the time: “Until such time as workers revolution rips it from their hands, British industry belongs to the bloodsucking capitalists. The working class has no country!” (*Workers Hammer* No. 172, Spring 2000). The SWP built and supported the demonstration. Thousands of their placards saying “Save Our Jobs/Occupy, Organise, Fight for the Right to Work/Renationalise Rover Now!” mixed freely with Union Jacks and other symbols of racist British imperialism, as well as placards giving vent to blatant anti-German chauvinism such as “We Won Two World Wars—Let’s Win the Third.” Indeed, while the demonstration reflected

anger and bitterness against BMW and the government, its political perspective was so alien to the actual interests of the working class that it had the full support of the Birmingham *Evening Mail*, an anti-trade-union rag.

For the SWP, which did not mention the patriotic character of the demonstration, eulogising it rather as “The great

jobs revolt”: “There were many brilliant things about Saturday’s march—like the fact that the Nazi National Front were turned away from joining the march by car workers stewarding the demonstration.” Members of the SWP might ask themselves what they’re doing building and supporting a demonstration that the NF wanted to join! (Twenty years ago, following the defeat of the steel strike, the fascist National Front marched through Corby on the slogan “British jobs for British workers.”)

In contrast to the nationalist demagoguery pushed by the bureaucrats who have presided over the jobs massacre, we advocate a class-struggle fight for jobs and better working conditions across national boundaries, which will necessarily challenge the entire capitalist system. Marx and Engels observed over 150 years ago that capitalism created a world market and in so doing laid the basis for proletarian internationalism. German workers face attacks from Schröder’s Social Democrats much as workers in Britain face from Blair. Throughout Europe, the strategic task for revolutionaries is to win workers to the understanding of the need for a complete break with the social democracy.

Trotsky aptly described social democracy as “the acceptance of a reformist opposition activity within the framework of bourgeois society and an adaptation to its legality—i.e., the actual training of the masses to become imbued with the inviolability of the bourgeois state” (*Lessions of October* [1924]). He could have been writing about the SWP and ISO today. While in Britain, the SWP’s “all the way with the LSA” is of a piece, in the U.S., the ISO has assigned the vast majority of its people to work in its Campaign to End the Death Penalty. While you can read in the ISO’s *International Socialist Review* (Spring 1999) that the ISO finds it “surprising that many opponents of the death penalty look to Democratic politicians as allies in the struggle to abolish capital punishment,” in fact the ISO does just that! A 25 May posting by one “Armand” in the recent welter of Internet traffic provoked by the ISO’s fracture with the SWP made clear just how much:

“People are so horrified that innocent people are being killed that they are ready to begin discussing abolition. But 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, collecting signatures for their petition on moratorium.”

Indeed, at a Chicago “town hall” meeting in May, Campaign spokesman Alice Kim sounded just like the Illinois Republican governor Ryan (who imposed a moratorium on executions) when she said: “There shouldn’t be a death penalty if there’s any chance that innocent people can be executed” (*Socialist Worker* [U.S.], 26 May). Meanwhile, aping the “fight the right” line pursued by the Stalinist Communist Party for decades, the ISO’s *Socialist Worker* runs screaming headlines like “The Bush Brothers’ Killing Machine” (21 January) and “Bush’s Killing Machine” (26 May) while consigning the occasional criticism of the Democrats to small print. In fact, *Socialist Worker* has devoted its efforts to enthusiastically touting Democratic Party politicians like Wisconsin Senator Russ Feingold. The 20 March *Internal Discussion Bulletin* boasts that “Jesse Jackson, Jr. is helping the Campaign” and that Feingold “contacted the Campaign in his effort to prepare legislation for a ban on the death penalty for federal crimes.”

As we wrote in “Death Penalty: Barbarism U.S.A.” (*Workers Vanguard* No. 737, 2 June):

“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.”

In its work on the death penalty, as elsewhere, far from advancing the struggle for socialism, the ISO serves to reinforce the grip of bourgeois consciousness—and in particular of the capitalist Democratic Party as a “lesser evil”—on those it influences.

Organisational Methods Serve Political Purpose

The difference between the Cliffite organisations and the sections of the democratic-centralist International Communist League is, to put it plainly, the difference between reform and revolution. The lack of international democratic-centralism in the SWP’s “international socialist tendency” has been the subject of recent internal discussion. As James P. Cannon explained:

“Democratic-centralism has no special virtue per se. It is the specific principle of a combat party, united by a single program, which aims to lead a revolution. Social Democrats have no need of such a system of organization for the simple reason that they have no intention of organizing a revolution.”

—“Leninist Organization Principles” (3 April 1953), reprinted in *Speeches to the Party* (1973)

While the SWP and ISO seek to tinker with the existing machinery of the capitalist system, veering from this “alliance” to that “campaign,” trotting after the Livingstones and Jesse Jacksons, we seek to build the Leninist vanguard party capable of leading the working class in smashing capitalism and establishing a workers government—the dictatorship of the proletariat.

We stand for unconditional military defence of China, Cuba, Vietnam and North Korea just as we fought to the bitter end from Berlin to Moscow in defence of the gains of October. In our fight for new Octobers, we are guided by Trotsky’s injunction, made in the last major political battle of his life against those who would turn their back on defence of the USSR:

“It is the duty of revolutionists to defend every conquest of the working class even though it may be distorted by the pressure of hostile forces. Those who cannot defend old positions will never conquer new ones.”

—*In Defense of Marxism* (1940)■

Dearborn Protest...

(continued from page 2)

image of American capitalism by curbing its excesses.

Appeals by Sharpton, Jackson and others for “justice” from the agencies of capitalist *in*justice are designed to delude black people and all opponents of racist cop terror. The cops cannot be “reformed.” They cannot be “controlled by the community.” There will be no end to police brutality short of the destruction of the capitalist system of exploitation and racist oppression which the cops and security guards are paid to serve.

Dearborn is directly adjacent to overwhelmingly black Detroit and is the site of the huge Ford River Rouge complex, a concentration of integrated union power. The tremendous power of the working class in this region was seen in the 1998 Flint strike which shut down the General Motors empire. Labor’s power must be mobilized in protest against cop terror as part of the fight for black liberation. As New York seethed over Diallo’s killing, we wrote in “Beware Democratic Party

Hustlers—Enemies of Labor, Blacks” (WV No. 710, 2 April 1999):

“The mass outrage against the cops *does* need an organized political expression. Not one aimed at strengthening the hand of the Democrats, the political tool of the very capitalist rulers whose interests the cops ‘serve and protect,’ but one which provides a proletarian class axis that can weld the social power of the multiracial working class to the anger of the inner city through mass labor-centered protest against cop terror.”

A protest based on the social power of organized labor would make the cops and security guards think twice before dispensing their terror. More importantly, it would serve to imbue the working class with the understanding that its interests are inseparably linked to the fight for black freedom. But such a program requires breaking the chains forged by the trade-union bureaucracy that bind labor’s power to the capitalist class enemy through the agency of the Democratic Party. We fight to build a revolutionary workers party that represents the class interests of the multiracial proletariat, championing the cause of black freedom and the rights of all the oppressed in the fight for a workers government. For black liberation through socialist revolution!■

Espartaco...

(continued from page 10)

a group which pretends to be Trotskyist yet serves as the donkey workers for a not even very leftist bourgeois party. Such actions prove that Militante may be of some service to its bourgeois masters in the PRD, but in no way serves the interests of the working class.

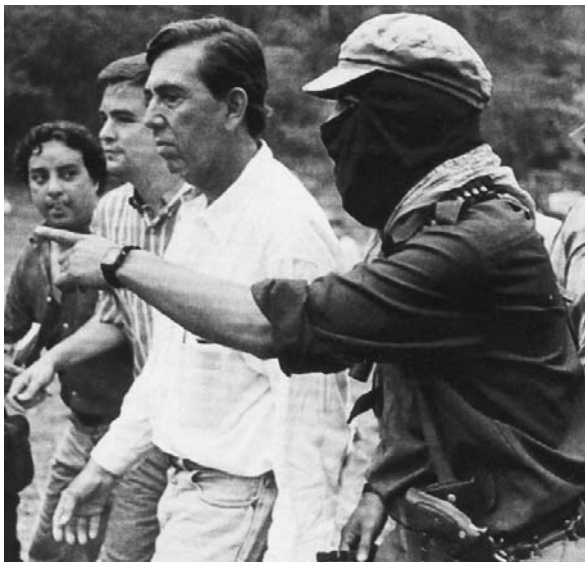
Some workers and students will undoubtedly remember the role of the so-called “Coalición Socialista” of the Partido Obrero Socialista (POS) and Liga de Unidad Socialista (LUS) during the UNAM strike last July, when they served as the direct agents of the PRD, trying to sell out the strike just when it was gaining the active support of thousands of workers. Today the Coalición Socialista (CS) is running the pathetic Aguilar Mora as an “independent” write-in candidate for president. There is nothing either “independent” or “socialist” about the CS campaign. Manuel Aguilar Mora’s LUS is a remnant of the fake-Trotskyist Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT), which virtually liquidated itself into Cárdenas’ campaign in 1994, while the POS ran a campaign to “vote EZLN” which was nothing but a backhanded way of supporting Cárdenas, as the EZLN itself called for a vote to anyone except the PRI!

And then there are the centrists of the Internationalist Group (IG), formed by a handful of defectors from our organization. Demoralized by the triumph of counterrevolution in the USSR and East Europe, losing confidence in the revolu-



AP

Military police mobilized against peasants in Chiapas, August 1999. PRD leader Cárdenas with EZLN guerrilla leader Marcos. While petty-bourgeois Zapatistas look to PRD as force for “democracy,” Cárdenas supported government’s bloody 1994 crackdown in Chiapas.



AFP

bourgeoisie. But the popular front is a specific form of class collaboration, in which mass reformist parties of the proletariat are allied with bourgeois parties and in which the presence of the direct representatives of the bourgeoisie provides the guarantee from the reformists to the capitalists that they will loyally serve the capitalist system. A clear example of a popular front was the Chilean Unidad Popular (UP), a coalition of the Communist and Socialist parties with the bourgeois Radical Party, which was elected in 1970. UP leader Salvador Allende proclaimed the “peaceful road to socialism,” but this alliance simply paved the way for Pinochet’s coup in 1973 and the massacre of tens of thousands of leftist workers and

The wretched European social-democratic parties are today leading popular-front governments all over Europe in an orgy of anti-immigrant and anti-worker austerity. Thus they do the bidding of the bourgeoisie which prefers to have them in power because they can put a “pro-worker” face on the budget cuts and attacks on the working class. These are *capitalist* governments, but the Socialist and Communist parties within them remain organizationally based on the working class despite their thoroughly pro-capitalist leadership and program. They are what Lenin aptly called bourgeois workers parties. In contrast, the PRD is now and always has been a bourgeois-nationalist party. In fact, the cur-

for the government’s regimentation of the working class on behalf of the Mexican capitalists (and therefore of their imperialist masters)” (*Cuadernos de El Internacionalista*, January 1999). Elsewhere they proclaim that the CTM is an agency for “police control over the workers” (*El Internacionalista*, March 2000). This takes some chutzpah coming from an organization whose main claim to fame is their struggle for leadership of the cop-infested municipal workers union of Volta Redonda in Brazil! In pursuit of this aim, the IG section in Brazil actually ran an ex-cop for president of the union, winning the majority of the cops’ votes. When their unprincipled bloc in the union fell apart, they dragged the union through the capitalist courts with multiple lawsuits. This is a matter of public record, yet the IG cries “slander” while refusing to publish the court papers (see “The IG Cover-Up in Brazil: Dirty Hands, Cynical Lies,” *Espartaco* No. 10, Autumn-Winter 1997 and WV No. 671, 7 July 1997).

Having been caught red-handed crossing the class line in Brazil, they now invent an imaginary “class line” between the CTM/CT and the SME/UNT in Mexico. Only after they lost control of the municipal union in Volta Redonda did the IG suddenly declare that the municipal workers union was no longer even a union at all (!) and declared that their former bloc partners who turned on them were now guilty of “police unionism,” making an analogy with the workers organizations set up by police agent Zubatov in tsarist Russia in the early 1900s. The IG now tries to make the same analogy between the Zubatov organizations and the Mexican CTM/CT (“Class Struggle Against ‘Police Unionism’ in Brazil,” *Internationalist* No. 7, April-May 1999). With their selective quotes from Lenin, the IG leads you to believe that the Bolsheviks refused to work in the Zubatov organizations. In fact, Lenin strongly condemned those who argued that revolutionaries should refuse to work in trade unions led by reactionaries:

“When Zubatov, agent of the secret police, organised Black-Hundred workers’ assemblies and workingmen’s societies for the purpose of trapping revolutionaries and combating them, we sent members of our Party to these assemblies. They established contacts with the masses, were able to carry on their agitation, and succeeded in wresting workers from the influence of Zubatov’s agents.”
—Lenin, “Left-Wing”
Communism: An Infantile Disorder (1920)

Lenin goes on to explain that the main leaders of the reformist trade unions in the imperialist centers were nothing but Zubatovs in another guise: “The Gomperses, Hendersons, Jouhaux and Legiens are nothing but Zubatovs, differing from our Zubatov only in their European garb and polish, and the civilised, refined and democratically suave manner of conducting their despicable policy.”

According to the IG, the unions that are controlled by the PRI are not unions; only those controlled by the PRD are working-class organizations. In other words, what



Reuters

Left: Mexico City riot cops attack youth protesting against mass arrests at Seattle WTO demonstrations and demanding freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal. Right: Students denounce Cárdenas at June election rally on UNAM campus, months after PRD-controlled city government launched cop attack on student strike.

tionary capacity of the proletariat, they defected from revolutionary Trotskyism in search of a substitute for the revolutionary proletariat and vehicles other than a Leninist-Trotskyist party to lead it (see *Espartaco* supplement, “A Shamefaced Defection from Trotskyism,” July 1996 [published in WV No. 648, 5 July 1996]).

At the center of the IG’s politics is a mythical Cardenista “popular front” which, they say, is the mechanism through which the proletariat is tied to the

students who were politically disarmed and delivered bound hand and foot to the forces of bourgeois reaction. But the main form of class collaboration in Mexico is bourgeois nationalism, not mass social-democratic parties which prop up capitalist rule through popular-front formations and deflect workers’ struggles from the factory to parliament. The IG seeks to hide this elemental truth because it seeks to paint the PRD in some kind of “progressive” colors.

rent governor of Nayarit was the joint candidate of the PRD and the PAN, and the PRD has held on-again, off-again negotiations with the clerical reactionaries in order to form an anti-PRI alliance. In Chiapas, the PRD and PAN are currently running on a joint slate. Some “popular front” that unites with the historic party of Catholic reaction!

The Fight Against Nationalism in the Unions

The IG bases its confusionist position that a popular front exists around the PRD by pointing to the support the PRD receives from the bureaucracies of the so-called “independent” unions like SME, STUNAM and the CNTE. Using the same logic, they would have to argue that a popular front exists around the PRI, since the CTM unions alone still represent some 500,000 workers. The PRI built its corporatist stranglehold using the ideological glue of nationalism, as well as thuggery and repression against all opposition. Today, it maintains its hold upon key sections of the proletariat, especially the oil workers. But the IG has no interest in prettifying the hated PRI. They “solve” the problem by proclaiming that “the CTM and the CT are not workers organizations but corporatist straitjackets

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makes the class difference between one union organization and another is which bourgeois party controls it.

We don't put an equal sign between the CT/CTM and the SME, STUNAM and CNTE. The PRI *charros* [corrupt union bureaucrats] use their goons and hitmen to maintain their privileges, the same way Stalin annihilated whole generations of revolutionaries to the same end; but we Trotskyists did not write off the old Soviet Union as a workers state because of that, just as we don't write off the CTM unions today. The bureaucrats of the "independent" unions prefer, at this time, to use mainly other means to handcuff the working class and negotiate their own privileges with the bourgeoisie. Regarding the unions, we concur with Trotsky:

"In Mexico the trade unions have been transformed by law into semi-state institutions and have, in the nature of things, assumed a semi-totalitarian character."

And later on:

"From the foregoing it seems, at first sight, easy to draw the conclusion that the trade unions cease to be trade unions in the imperialist epoch. They leave almost no room at all for workers' democracy which, in the good old days when free trade ruled on the economic arena, constituted the content of the inner life of labor organization. In the absence of workers' democracy there cannot be any free struggle for influence over the trade-union membership. And because of this, the chief arena of work for revolutionists within the trade unions disappears. Such a position, however, would be false to the core. We cannot select the arena and the conditions for our activity to suit our own likes and dislikes."

—"Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay" (1940)

Our perspective is to bring revolutionary consciousness to the proletariat and to work in the trade unions, whether they are controlled by the PRI or the PRD, to struggle to break workers from the bourgeoisie and to build a revolutionary leadership of the proletariat. We look to build the strongest possible unity of the working class against the capitalist exploiters. Therefore, we are for industrial unions, i.e., everyone who works for the same employer should belong to the same union. We are against the division of the working class into competing unions based on different political tendencies. At the same time, the task of the communist vanguard is to make clear and sharpen the differences between the competing political tendencies to forge the cadres for a Leninist party.

The Dead End of Guerrillaism

When the Zapatista insurrection broke out against the implementation of NAFTA, its cry for "justice, land and democracy" was heard by the oppressed masses in Mexico and around the world. The bravery of the indigenous peasants of Chiapas has caused many young people to see in the EZLN an alternative to bourgeois rule. At demonstrations of CGH students, CNTE teachers and others, one can hear the slogan: "We are not yet guerrillas, but we soon will be!"

These illusions in the guerrilla road are a dead end. The entire history of the 20th century and of world economic development is one of the subordination of the village to the town. In Mexico and elsewhere, small peasant holdings have been replaced by vast agribusiness. Many former peasants have become agricultural laborers or have been driven off of the land and into the urban centers. Where a peasantry in the classic sense of small private landowners still exists, such as in the south of Mexico, it is a *petty-bourgeois* social layer, although peasants can be poorer than some workers. They have as their main aspiration the ownership of their own piece of land. The poor peasant is the indispensable ally that the working class must win in the struggle against capitalism; but, as history has shown, the peasantry is incapable of playing an independent role in the class struggle. As Lenin explained in

calling on workers to organize independently of the peasants: "We stand by the peasant movement to the end; but we have to remember it is the movement of another class, *not the one* which can and will bring about the socialist revolution" ("Revision of the Agrarian Program of the Workers Party" [March 1906]).

Guerrillas base themselves on the peasantry and the intelligentsia and are isolated from and sometimes hostile to the struggles of the working class. But the rural and urban petty bourgeoisie can only support the state of one or another of the two principal urban classes in modern society. As history shows, at the decisive moment the peasantry follows either the bourgeoisie or the proletariat. The thousands of manifestos the EZLN has issued over the years have made it abundantly clear that it simply seeks to pressure the



New York Spartacist protest against Mexican government crackdown on UNAM strikers, February 7.

bourgeoisie for reforms within the context of the supposed "transition to democracy" in Mexico. In May 1994, Zapatista spokesmen told Cárdenas, "If you take power and make a change we will support you." By the time of the elections that year, the EZLN was openly calling for a vote "against the candidates of the PRI."

In Yugoslavia, China, Cuba and Vietnam, petty-bourgeois guerrilla formations were able to abolish capitalism. But as we note in the International Communist League's "Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program" (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 54, Spring 1998):

"In Cuba, a petty-bourgeois movement under exceptional circumstances—the absence of the working class as a contender for social power in its own right, the flight of the national bourgeoisie and hostile imperialist encirclement, and a lifeline thrown by the Soviet Union—did overthrow the old Batista dictatorship and eventually smash capitalist property relations. But Castroism (or other peasant-based guerrilla movements) cannot bring the working class to political power.

"Under the most *favorable* historic circumstances conceivable, the petty-bourgeois peasantry was only capable of creating a bureaucratically deformed workers state, that is, a state of the same order as that issuing out of the political counterrevolution of Stalin in the Soviet Union, an anti-working-class regime which blocked the possibilities to extend social revolution into Latin America and North America, and suppressed Cuba's further development in the direction of socialism. To place the working class in political power and open the road to socialist development requires a supplemental *political* revolution led by a Trotskyist party. With the destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state and consequently no readily available lifeline against imperialist encirclement, the narrow historical opening in which petty-bourgeois forces were able to overturn local capitalist rule has been closed, underscoring the Trotskyist perspective of permanent revolution."

We live in a world conditioned by the historic defeat represented by the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union. As long as the USSR existed as a counterweight to the rapacious appetites of the capitalist powers, the imperialist centers sometimes felt forced to make concessions to the working class to pre-

vent any threat of social explosion. But after the counterrevolution in 1991-92 along with the destruction of the deformed workers states in East Europe, the bourgeoisie of the West has taken the offensive, launching savage attacks against the gains achieved by the working class through hard class battles.

This has also meant an uneven but real regression in consciousness for the international working class. As we wrote in the ICL "Declaration of Principles":

"Trotsky's assertion in the 1938 Transitional Program that 'The world political situation as a whole is chiefly characterized by a historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat' predates the present deep regression of proletarian consciousness. The reality of this post-Soviet period adds a new dimension to Trotsky's observation. The only way in which this regression can be overcome and the working class can become a class *for* itself,

i.e., fighting for socialist revolution, is to reforge an international Leninist-Trotskyist party as the leadership of the working class. Marxism must once again win the allegiance of the proletariat."

The ICL fights for the unconditional military defense of the remaining deformed workers states in China, Cuba, North Korea and Vietnam against imperialist attacks and internal counterrevolution. We also fight to build the Leninist-Trotskyist parties necessary to lead a proletarian political revolution to throw out the bureaucratic castes from power and replace them with regimes of democratically elected workers soviets which would seek to extend the gains of the anti-capitalist revolutions internationally. In China, the market-oriented reforms instituted by the Stalinist bureaucracy strengthen the internal and external forces who yearn for capitalist restoration. The restoration of capitalism in China would be a major defeat for the world proletariat. The Chinese proletariat is resisting capitalist "reforms" with militant strikes and protests. What's necessary is to forge a Trotskyist party to lead the struggle to defend and extend the gains of the Chinese Revolution. The triumph of the proletarian political revolution we fight for would advance the class struggle internationally, beginning with the powerful proletariats of Asia and especially the regional imperialist power, Japan.

Today much is made of the "new phenomenon" of the "globalization" of the economy, of "savage capitalism" and "neoliberalism," etc. In part, this is nothing new. It is imperialism, which Lenin analyzed in his book *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*. But today's "globalphobes" also argue that multinational corporations have escaped the control of the nation-states, and that rivalries between imperialist powers no longer exist. This is a myth. Far from having disappeared, interimperialist rivalries have increased, a direct result of the disappearance of the Soviet Union as a decisive factor and counterweight to imperialism on a world scale.

The fight against so-called "globalization" has thrown assorted Third World nationalists into an alliance with the most reactionary wings of bourgeois imperial-

ism under the general rubric of defending "national sovereignty" against the World Bank and the IMF. In Seattle last November, the Zapatistas participated alongside the AFL-CIO bureaucracy in demonstrations whose main demand was anti-Communist opposition to the entry of China into the World Trade Organization and the call for a more bellicose attitude on the part of U.S. imperialism toward the Chinese deformed workers state. Joining this anti-Communist alliance with the likes of the Teamsters leadership, which is leading a disgusting chauvinist campaign against Mexican truckers, didn't much bother assorted fake leftists like the so-called Liga de Trabajadores por el Socialismo (LTS) and the youth group ContraCorriente, for whom the "Battle of Seattle" has become the new rallying cry. Just as the LTS cheered the counterrevolution in the USSR and East Europe, today they say nothing about the urgent need for unconditional military defense of the gains of the Chinese Revolution (see "Imperialist Assassins Occupy Kosovo: All U.S./UN/NATO Troops Out of the Balkans Now!" *Espartaco* No. 13, Fall/Winter 1999).

Fight for an Internationalist Revolutionary Workers Party!

The belief that there is no class struggle north of the Río Bravo is widespread in Mexico. Meanwhile, the American proletariat is bombarded with chauvinist, protectionist poison about Mexican workers "stealing their jobs." This is the kind of lie that the bourgeoisie and their lieutenants in the workers movement push to keep the working class divided. The struggle for socialist revolution in Mexico and the United States is inextricably linked, among other things by the millions-strong Mexican proletariat now residing in the United States. As we said in the declaration on NAFTA: "There is a burning need for an *internationalist* proletarian opposition which stands with the working class and impoverished peasantry of Mexico against the imperialist assault. The Canadian, U.S. and Mexican sections of the International Communist League are dedicated to building a revolutionary vanguard that can unite the working masses of the continent in common class struggle." This means a hard political struggle against the chauvinist labor fakers of the AFL-CIO in the United States, and against the trade-union bureaucrats here in Mexico who tie the working class to the Mexican exploiters.

In contrast to all the "socialists" in word, we fight to build a revolutionary party capable of directing the proletariat to the seizure of state power. A party that, like Lenin's Bolsheviks, acts as a "*tribune of the people*, able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it takes place, no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects; he must be able to generalize all these manifestations to produce a single picture of police violence and capitalist exploitation; he must be able to take advantage of every event, however small, in order to explain his socialistic convictions and his democratic demands to *all*, in order to explain to *all* and everyone the world-historic significance of the proletariat's struggle for emancipation" (Lenin, *What Is To Be Done?* [1902]).

The party we Spartacists fight to forge is a proletarian party, because we understand that the working class is the only class with the social power and the historic interest to make a reality the liberation of all the oppressed through their own emancipation; it is an internationalist party because we know capitalism is a system of world exploitation, and that the working class, its gravedigger, is an international class with common interests in all countries; it is a revolutionary party because we are conscious that socialist revolution is the only alternative to capitalist barbarism. Come to our study circles! Subscribe to our press! Join us! ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

No Support to Bourgeois Green Candidate Nader

Democrats, Republicans: Partner Parties of Racist U.S. Capitalism

For the last eight years, the Democrats have occupied the White House, directly administering, in conjunction with the Republican Congress, the attacks of the U.S. ruling class on the masses of workers, blacks, immigrants, and youth. Abroad, Clinton & Co. have carried out a series of bloody reactionary wars and interventions under the hypocritical cover of “human rights,” from Somalia and Haiti to the Balkans, while maintaining almost daily bombing raids and the starvation embargo against Iraq. Central to the global aims of U.S. imperialism is to bring about capitalist counterrevolution in China.

The electoral campaigns of Al Gore and George W. Bush underscore that, as the writer Gore Vidal put it, there is really only one major party in the U.S.—the property party. It is therefore not surprising to see widespread disaffection with the Democrats, particularly among politically active liberal youth. Enter the reformist fake left to offer a valuable service to the capitalist rulers by diverting outrage and opposition provoked by the brutal, racist reality of capitalist America into the safe channels of electoralism and pressure politics.

The upcoming demonstrations at the national conventions of the Republicans in Philadelphia beginning July 31 and

Young Spartacus

the Democrats in Los Angeles two weeks later are likely to attract youth who want to express their anger against both these racist capitalist parties. But the purpose of these demonstrations, being organized or built by various ostensibly socialist and other leftist and liberal groups, is to corral these youth into a movement to pressure the Democratic Party. This is done either directly, mobilizing for Gore as the “lesser evil” against the Repub-



Spartacist League contingent at February NYC protest against acquittal of cops who gunned down Amadou Diallo. WV Photo

lican Bush, or indirectly, for those who can't stomach Gore, through pushing the candidacy of the bourgeois Green Party's Ralph Nader.

We oppose political support for any bourgeois party or candidate in principle and stand for the complete and unconditional independence of the working class from all parties and agencies of the capitalist class. The working class and the oppressed cannot take a single step toward liberation if locked in an embrace with political parties of the class enemy. **Break with the Democrats! No support to the Greens! Build a revolutionary workers party to fight for socialist revolution!**

We seek to win those who want to fight against racism, exploitation and imperialist war to the perspective and program of socialist revolution. The organization of society on the basis of production for the profit of the capitalist

class is an obstacle to human progress. At the same time, capitalism has created its own gravediggers—the working class, whose labor produces the wealth of society and which is the only class capable of reorganizing society on the basis of planned production for human need. The experience of the only successful workers revolution in history—the Russian Bolshevik Revolution of 1917—shows that the working class cannot lay hold of the capitalist state and use it for its own ends but must smash the existing state apparatus and forge a workers state to lay the foundations of an international socialist society.

The tying of labor and blacks to the Democratic Party has been the chief mechanism in this country for holding back the class struggle and politically subordinating working people and the oppressed to their class enemy. For the last eight years, the Democrats have been

spitting on black people while telling them they have no choice but to vote for the Democrats or expect worse from the Republicans. The bipartisan abolition of welfare, the gunning down of Amadou Diallo in a hail of 41 police bullets, the hundreds of thousands of black men consigned to prison hellholes are the bitter daily expression of the fact that black oppression is rooted in the very foundation of American capitalism. But the oppression of black people as a race-color caste also makes the struggle for black equality a powerful potential lever for social revolution. That fight must be linked to the social power of the working class, of which blacks are a strategic component, through a multiracial revolutionary workers party fighting to sweep away the entire system in which racial oppression is rooted.

Nader's Greens: A “Left” Capitalist Third Party

At first sight, Ralph Nader's Green Party looks like a radical party to the left of the Democrats, offering something for various elements of American society dissatisfied with the status quo. Union rights for blue-collar workers. Abortion rights for women. Progressive social policies such as abolishing the death penalty to appeal to liberal-minded intellectuals and students. Sharp cuts in military spending for those inclined toward pacifism. But there is one sector of society, namely black people, to whom Nader's Greens do *not* directly appeal. The Green program scarcely addresses the struggle against racist oppression. Only when pressured does Nader even pay lip service to black rights, such as opposing the racist “war on drugs.”

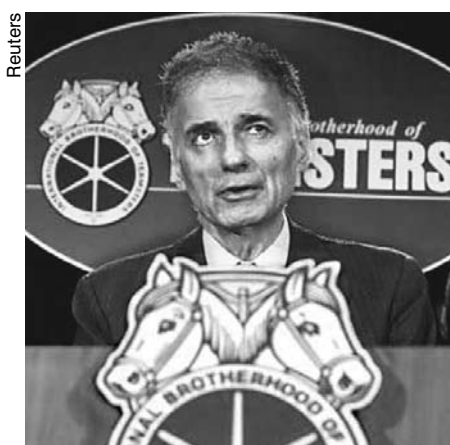
In reality, the Green Party platform is a version of what the liberal wing of the Democratic Party has been selling for decades. Even while running against Gore, Nader clearly states that his aim is to strengthen the Democratic Party vis-à-vis the Republicans. After interviewing him, the *New York Times* (1 July) reported that Nader “hopes his candidacy will energize turnout for Democratic candidates in close races for the House of Representatives, and thus help turn power over to House Democratic leaders, and away from the Republicans.” And the *Times* (23 July) reports that in speaking to a group of Ohio steel workers recently, “Nader said a central purpose of his candidacy was to move the Democratic Party left on labor and other issues.”

Moreover, on the key issues of China
continued on page 7



Almeida/NY Times

Left: Al Gore embraced by AFL-CIO chief John Sweeney after winning endorsement in October. Right: Ralph Nader addresses June Teamsters meeting in Washington, D.C. Labor tops shackle unions' power through support to capitalist parties.



Reuters