

South Africa ANC Regime: Enforcer for Imperialist Plunder

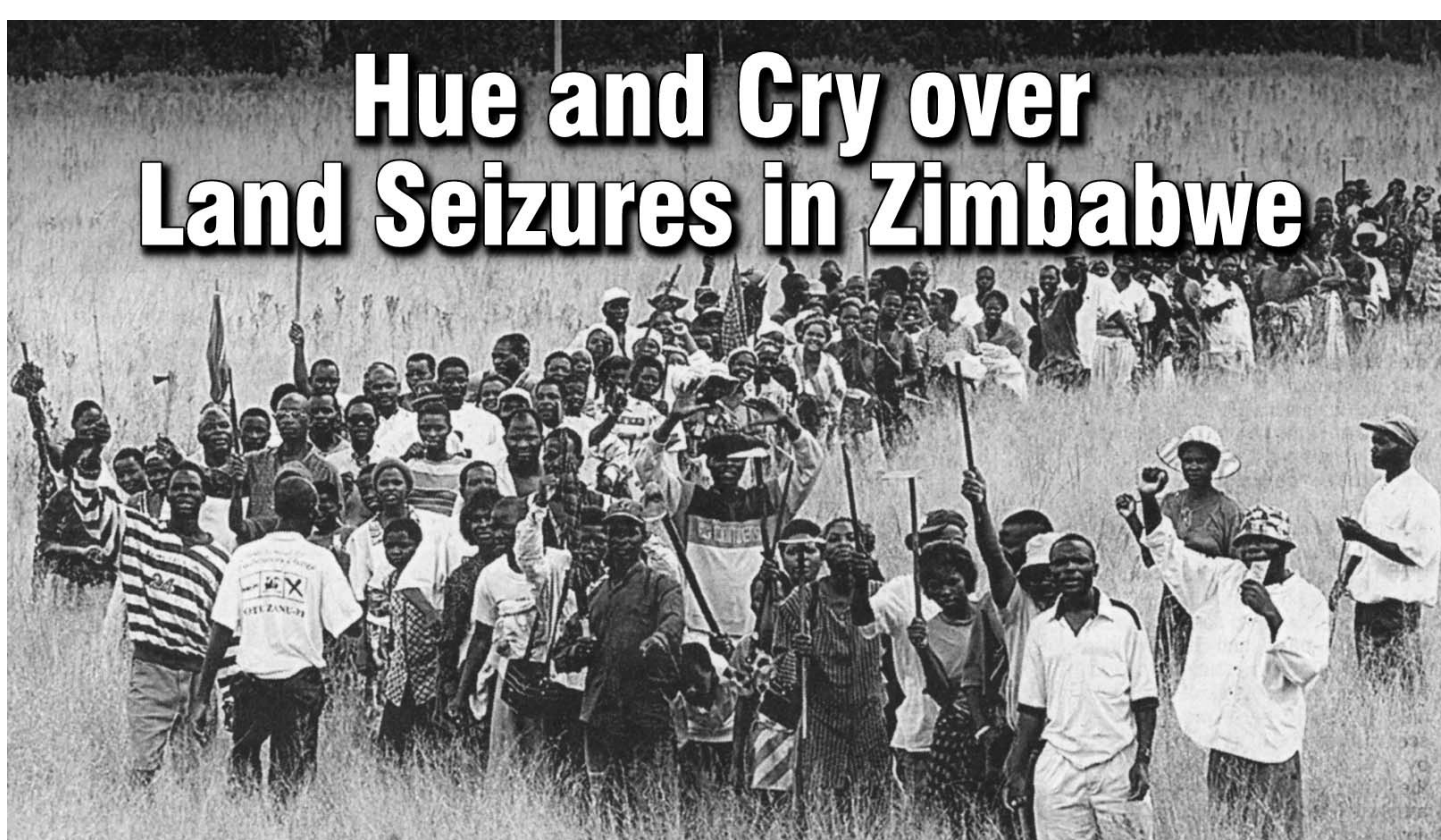


Reuters
ANC's Thabo Mbeki with Al Gore
last year.

JOHANNESBURG—U.S. president Clinton's visit to sub-Saharan Africa in late August highlighted imperialist concerns over growing instability in the region. Clinton sought to bolster the newly elected regime in oil-rich Nigeria—a linchpin and regional gendarme in West Africa—having just dispatched hundreds of U.S. troops to train the Nigerian military. In central Africa, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire) are torn by civil wars. At the southern end of the continent, in Zimbabwe, massive social unrest among both the urban working class and the rural population—fueled by nearly a decade of austerity measures imposed by the capitalist ZANU-PF government and dictated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF)—has threatened to spill over into neighbouring South Africa, the economic giant of sub-Saharan Africa.

In response to this sharp crisis, ZANU-PF president Robert Mugabe has cynically exploited the burning land hunger of the more than six million Zimbabweans who live on marginal rural lands, while about 4,500 white farmers own 70 percent of the best land. Seeking to maintain its grip on power in the face of a challenge by the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), the bourgeois-nationalist Mugabe regime orchestrated the seizure of some 1,200 white-owned farms by self-styled veterans of Zimbabwe's war of independence against British imperialism and the former white-supremacist regime. Though relying on electoral support from the urban masses, particularly the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), the MDC is a stalking horse for the white farmers and their imperialist backers, who have screamed like stuck pigs over the land seizures. In "infringing" on private property, however hypocritically, Mugabe is playing a game unsanctioned by the white capitalists and British and U.S. imperialism.

While the crisis in Zimbabwe has cooled down since parliamentary elections in June—in which the MDC made a strong showing though ZANU-PF retained control of Parliament—the South African bourgeoisie has good reason to fear the "contagion effect" of the Zimbabwe land seizures. The land question is explosive throughout the region. With the dismantling of the legal structure of apartheid in 1994, the white-supremacist regime was replaced by the bourgeois-nationalist African National Congress (ANC) of Nelson Mandela and his successor, President Thabo Mbeki. But the economic basis of the old apartheid system—the superexploitation of black



Alexander Joe

Land occupation in Zimbabwe. A few thousand wealthy whites own 70 percent of country's best land, while six million rural blacks scrape by on marginal plots.

labour—remains intact. While a thin layer of black capitalists have made it onto the ANC's "grave train," the overwhelming majority of the black masses live in desperate poverty in the countryside or in segregated townships, where unemployment ranges above 50 percent. Presiding over the immiseration of the South African masses alongside the ANC are its partners in the "tripartite alliance," the COSATU trade-union bureaucracy and the South African Communist Party (SACP).

The first law passed by the ANC-led capitalist government supposedly allowed black families to reclaim land that had been stolen from them under apartheid. Yet the government has redistributed a mere 3 percent of the land, leaving 80 percent in the hands of the white minority, which makes up only 13 percent of the total population.

Meanwhile, white farmers and hired mercenaries from the Executive Outcomes "security" firm rove the countryside maiming and murdering with impunity, as blacks are increasingly evicted from white-owned lands they have worked for generations.

The land occupations in Zimbabwe have resonated strongly in South Africa. An ANC spokesman vowed that South Africa "will not go the way of Zimbabwe." As the land seizures continued, the value of the South African rand plunged to a historic low, until Mbeki promised to "take all necessary steps to ensure that the breaking of the law comes to an end" if land occupations erupted here. In a visit to the Zimbabwean capital of Harare last spring, Mbeki quietly twisted Mugabe's arm to announce that he would try to bring the land occupations to a halt.

In this the ANC leader was acting not only on behalf of the neo-apartheid bourgeoisie but of the major imperialist powers as well, particularly the Blair Labour government in Britain, Zimbabwe's former colonial master. Most vitriolic in their racist and chauvinist denunciations of Zimbabwe were former Labour "lefts" like Foreign Secretary Robin Cook and his aide Peter Hain, who was a prominent anti-apartheid activist in the 1980s. London sent SAS special forces to southern Africa and prepared a "rapid reaction force" to move in to "protect" British passport holders, who make up more than a third of Zimbabwe's 70,000 whites. On Britain's prompting, the European Union imposed economic sanctions against Zimbabwe.

There is more at stake for the imperialists and their junior partners in Jo'burg

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Young Spartacus

**The ISO and the Nader Campaign
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Defend NAMBLA!

BOSTON, September 1—For over 20 years since its inception, the North American Man-Boy Love Association (NAMBLA), which describes its goal as “to end the oppression of men and boys who have mutually consensual relationships,” has been repeatedly witchhunted. The Spartacist League has consistently defended this small, beleaguered group against state repression and media smears. These witchhunts have often been abetted by “mainstream” gay groups. Now NAMBLA faces a \$200 million lawsuit in a federal court in Massachusetts based on the outrageous claim that a NAMBLA Web site “incited” the brutal murder of ten-year-old Jeffrey Curley of Cambridge three years ago. We oppose this sinister effort to bankrupt and crush NAMBLA, which would, if successful, establish a dangerous precedent in punishing free speech. Yesterday, the American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts announced its intention to defend NAMBLA in federal court.

Two men were arrested for the murder, convicted and sentenced to life. But the civil suit filed in May by attorney Lawrence Frisoli on behalf of Curley’s parents targets NAMBLA, seven men alleged to be NAMBLA members and its Web site provider at the time. The entire sensationalist witchhunt against

NAMBLA rests on such tenuous details as the claim by the boy’s parents that one of the convicted men stopped at the Boston Public Library hours before the murder to log onto the NAMBLA Web site and had publicly available NAMBLA literature in his home.

Despite the hysterical claims of book-burning reactionaries and feminists, literature does not lead to violence. Similar “incitement” arguments have been used against “pornography,” including magazines like *Playboy* and *Penthouse*, claiming they encourage men to rape women. We opposed those reactionary attacks, too. The lawsuit has already served to silence NAMBLA, whose Web site was dropped like a hot potato by Verio Inc. and then by a second Internet service provider.

The lawsuit is motivated by patently ideological aims. Robert Curley is a vocal advocate of the death penalty in one of the few states which has not enacted it and a racist who earlier filed a suit against a “diversity training” program at work. Frisoli is the scion of a family which has been a reactionary force in Cambridge politics for decades. Frisoli bombastically claimed that he filed the “class-action lawsuit” on behalf of the supposed “thousands of children who are raped each year by NAMBLA members,” according to the

Boston Herald (12 July), and ranted in response to yesterday’s ACLU announcement: “We allege an ongoing criminal conspiracy for the rape of children in America.... They’ve been hiding behind the First Amendment for a long time” (*New York Times*, 1 September).

Such vile lies, and laws (such as New Jersey’s “Megan’s Law”) which call for publicizing names and addresses of “sex offenders” released from prison, are an incitement to terror. In Britain, lynch mobs encouraged by reactionary legislation enacted by the Blair Labour government and armed with a hit list of “suspected paedophiles” provided by a tabloid “name and shame” campaign have been firebombing houses, terrorizing families and attacking people. Now, a similar terror campaign is underway in Italy, stoked in particular by Alessandra Mussolini’s fascist National Alliance.

In a letter to the *Cambridge Chronicle* (24 May), a NAMBLA spokesman wrote: “NAMBLA has survived for 20 years under conditions of extreme repression by functioning openly and within the law. NAMBLA is probably the most investigated organization in America. An FBI report submitted to Congress verified that NAMBLA could not be found to do anything illegal.” The group is essentially a publishing collective, mainly printing excerpts from works by Walt Whitman and William Shakespeare and other literature, as well as historical essays on figures from gay history. As the letter noted, “NAMBLA opposes laws that punish consensual relationships. It has always taken the strongest stand possible against any violence, sexual or otherwise, against children.”

But this simple truth runs counter to the hysteria about sex—homosexuality in particular, and sex involving young people above all—which dominates this brutal, Puritanical capitalist society. This past spring, the Massachusetts Board of Education fired two workers and a consultant because they ran a seminar on AIDS at the annual Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network conference at Tufts University. The March 25 workshop, called “What They Didn’t Tell You About Queer Sex and Sexuality in Health Class: Workshop for Youth Only, Ages 14-21,” provided a useful service to those most in need of answers and most likely to be sexually active—and predictably drove reactionary groups crazy. A spy from the “Parents Rights Coalition” secretly taped the workshop and sent copies to the media.

Certainly, there is much real violence perpetrated against youth. But the peri-



WV Photo

Marxists oppose reactionary “age of consent” laws. State has no business interfering with consensual sexual activity.

odic anti-sex witchhunts are a distraction from and cover for vicious and growing poverty and its attendant frustration and violence, much of it perpetuated within the family, the chief institution for the oppression of women and youth in class society. How much “child abuse” has been created by the near abolition of publicly funded childcare and welfare? By the return of contagious diseases in inner cities? By the hideously inadequate public school system? By parental “squeal rules” designed to prevent young women from obtaining abortions? By racism, religious obscurantism and enforced ignorance about sex, including fear and guilt about gay sex? Organized religion, along with the “sacred” family, is an invaluable social prop to enforce conservatism, inculcate submission and thus maintain capitalist exploitation.

Marxists understand that the oppression of homosexuals is a by-product of women’s oppression. The emancipation of women requires a workers revolution and the creation of a planned economy, which will lay the basis for replacing the family through collectivized childcare and household functions. On the question of intergenerational sex, as we wrote in opposing earlier media witchhunts against NAMBLA (WV No. 571, 12 March 1993):

“‘Age of consent’ laws are not aimed at protecting children but at imposing abstinence and guilt on youth who wish to have sex.... Attempts to portray sex between older and younger people as equivalent to child molestation are aimed at enforcing social conformity and reactionary sexual mores, and are in no way related to protecting the interests of youth.”

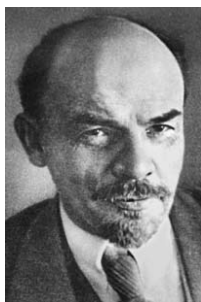
The guiding principle for sexual relations should be that of effective consent, nothing more than mutual agreement and understanding as opposed to coercion. The state has no business interfering. Stop the witchhunt against NAMBLA!■



TROTSKY

Leon Trotsky, Revolutionary Fighter

Leon Trotsky was murdered 60 years ago, on 21 August 1940, by an assassin of Stalin’s secret police. We excerpt below a statement issued two days later by the Central Executive Committee of the Communist League of China, section of the Fourth International, and published by the then-Trotskyist U.S. Socialist Workers Party. Under the unrelenting pressure of imperialism, decades of Stalinist treachery led



LENIN

to the final undoing of the October Revolution. We honor the memory of this great revolutionary leader through our struggle to reforge a Fourth International Trotsky would recognize as his own, as the necessary instrument in the fight for new October Revolutions.

By the death of Leon Trotsky, the workers and oppressed peoples of all the world, including China, have lost their most gifted and ardent champion. Tirelessly and selflessly and without thought for his personal welfare or safety, he battled for more than forty years in the cause of the downtrodden and oppressed. To this great liberating struggle he brought a diversity of talents rarely given to a single man. Together with Lenin he led the Russian Revolution to victory and created the Red Army which fought off its enemies. Despite the later degeneration of the Soviet state, he continued its most able revolutionary defender and labored indefatigably for its revival by promoting the cause of the international socialist revolution. He kept undeviatingly to this course in the face of streams of slander, monstrous frame-ups and continual threats against his life by the Kremlin clique and their hired agents.

The hand of Stalin, guiding the hand of the assassin who encompassed his death, has brought the career of the great revolutionist to a premature end. In his writings and labors, as well as by his exemplary life as a man and a revolutionist, Leon Trotsky has bequeathed a rich heritage to the international proletariat and all the oppressed. Under the banner which he unfurled and so bravely upheld until his last breath—the banner of the Fourth International—his great work will reach fruition. This will be an imperishable monument to Leon Trotsky, who lived and died for the emancipation of mankind.

—*Socialist Appeal*, 28 September 1940

WORKERS VANGUARD

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Free All Class-War Prisoners!

Ohio 7: Fighters Against Imperialism, Racism

Jaan Laaman, Raymond Luc Levasseur, Thomas Manning and Richard Williams have spent the last 15 years or more behind bars, class-war prisoners of the vengeful American bourgeoisie. These leftist activists were part of the Ohio 7, who were convicted for their role in a radical group that took credit for bank “expropriations” and bombings in the late 1970s and ’80s against symbols of U.S. imperialism such as military and corporate offices. Before their arrests in Ohio and Virginia in 1984 and 1985, they were targets of massive manhunts throughout the East Coast and Midwest. Their children were kidnapped at gunpoint by the Feds and interrogated. The government piled one sentence atop another, intent on keeping the Ohio 7 imprisoned until the day they die.

The Partisan Defense Committee recently received a letter from Laaman, one of 16 class-war prisoners who receive



Paul Shoul

Ohio 7 (from left): Jaan Laaman, Richard Williams, Barbara Curzi-Laaman, Carol Manning, Tom Manning, Pat Gros Levasseur, Ray Levasseur.

monthly stipends from the PDC, reporting his transfer to Walpole state prison in Massachusetts from the federal penitentiary at Leavenworth, Kansas. Only one

and a half of five boxes of Laaman’s belongings ended up at Walpole, with years of personal writings and textbooks for a correspondence course missing. He was not allowed to say goodbye to the many other political prisoners he had befriended at Leavenworth over the last 12 years. He was not able to see his brother, who arrived from Estonia on a prearranged visit after almost 50 years of separation. On August 7, Laaman writes, he was placed in “what’s termed ‘max end population’” in Walpole, where prisoners “are locked in our cells (called single cells here) 22-1/2 hours daily.”

Of Laaman’s imprisoned comrades, Williams is at Lompoc, California, Manning is in a prison hospital recovering from a botched hip replacement operation and Levasseur was recently moved to an Atlanta prison after years in the infamous ADX facility at Florence, Colorado— notorious for its high-tech control units where prisoners are subjected to enforced sensory deprivation and other sadistic practices. Manning was also convicted of “felony murder” for defending himself against a state trooper who tried to kill

him. Barbara Curzi-Laaman, Patricia Gros Levasseur and Carol Manning were all released from prison some years ago.

Already imprisoned on multiple charges, in 1989 Williams and Ray and Pat Levasseur were charged under sedition laws dusted off by the Feds and tried again for the same alleged crimes for which they had been jailed. After the longest “seditious conspiracy” trial in American history, all three were acquitted. This was an important setback to the government’s attempt to make all leftist political opponents into outlaws. During that trial, Ray Levasseur described how he and Manning, like many young men of their generation, developed revulsion for the bloody crimes of U.S. imperialism while serving in Vietnam. Levasseur recalled his working-class origins in the textile mills and shoe factories of rural Maine and his later radicalization:

“I went to Vietnam and I served a full tour of duty.... I saw another side of U.S. foreign policy. Bombings, killings, search and destroy, devastation, poverty, hunger. I was part of a foreign occupation Army.... I came back enraged by what I saw.”

The Feds’ vendetta against the Ohio 7 goes back to 1976, when they were members of the Sam Melville/Jonathan Jackson Unit and the United Freedom Front which, as Levasseur put it in a January 1992 statement, “called for the release of political prisoners and POW’s from U.S. prisons. This call, accentuated through the use of explosives, was integrated with other issues such as independence for Puerto Rico, an end to apartheid, and support for liberation movements in Central America.” Levasseur observed bitterly how much of the left had abandoned them:

“The real deal with those that renounce us and retreat from trials and prison battlegrounds is that we are seen as anti-imperialists with guns....

“Much of the North American Left suffers from myopia on this issue of political prisoners. It affects their value judgments. They place our value at nil.”

From the standpoint of the proletariat, the actions of Levasseur and his comrades against imperialism and racist injustice are not a crime. As the PDC has said from the time the Ohio 7 were first persecuted by the capitalist state, these courageous fighters should not have served a day in prison and should be free now.

In a February 1939 article, Bolshevik revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky denounced the sort of cowardly, legalistic attitude which is today displayed by

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Defend Rexford Weng!

Black Unionist Shreds Confederate Flag in Florida

Striking a blow for opponents of racism everywhere, on July 4 Rexford Weng, a 79-year-old black retired trade unionist, tore down and shredded a Confederate flag flying in front of the Marion County government office complex in Ocala, Florida. It was the second time this year that the Confederate rag had been torn from its pole, in defiance of the county’s commissioners who have repeatedly turned down requests by black residents and others to remove this hated symbol of slavery. Rexford Weng was charged with two counts of “criminal mischief” and could face up to a year in jail and a \$1,000 fine. This man is a hero, not a criminal! Drop the charges now!

The Concerned Citizens of Marion County, of which Rexford Weng was the treasurer, has been campaigning to take down the Confederate flag there. Weng told *Workers Vanguard*, “Black people are paying taxes for their own insult. I am enraged at that because that flag represents almost 400 years of enslavement of our people, and that is why I tore that flag down.”

Weng retired to Florida after nearly 30 years as a trade unionist in Boston, Massachusetts. Then a member of the Amalgamated Meatcutters union, Weng was the first black member of the Massachusetts State Central Labor Council. Weng told WV that in the 1970s, amid the racist mobilizations against court-ordered busing to end segregation in the Boston schools, his fellow delegates at a State Labor Council meeting “booed me off the stage” because he defended busing. Weng remarked that “the racism up there is just as bad as it is in the South.” But what is different about Florida, as he noted, is that “this is a right-to-work law state.” In the “open shop” South, the panoply of anti-union “right to work” laws is part of the legacy of entrenched racist discrimination, enforced by police and Klan terror, which has long served to crush efforts

to build integrated unions.

But recently across the states of the former slavocracy, there has been renewed social struggle, from union organizing drives and strikes to anti-racist protests. A particular focus has been the struggle against the hated Confederate flags which state legislatures raised again during the 1950s and ’60s in racist defiance of the civil rights movement. The largest demonstration, in Columbia, South Carolina in January, drew over 50,000 people, carrying signs reading “Your Heritage Is My Slavery.” This spring in Florida, nearly that many came out in Tallahassee to protest Governor Jeb Bush’s plan to end affirmative action in university admissions and state contracting jobs.

In an attempt to placate the black community, Marion County commissioners agreed to donate some property and a stone base for a monument honoring the black slaves. While calling this “a small victory,” Weng made it clear that there would be no compromise on the Confederate flag: “Our position is that flag has to come down definitely. That is our position and it hasn’t changed and it won’t change.”

We solidarize with Weng’s action, which recalls our own 1984 campaign that brought down a Confederate flag flying in San Francisco Civic Center. Against the resistance of the Democratic Party administration of then-mayor and now U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein, the Spartacist League and Labor Black League for Social Defense repeatedly mobilized to tear down that racist banner. Wearing the uniform of a Union soldier, a black SL supporter scaled the 50-foot flagpole and shredded the Confederate flag, hurling it to the ground where it was burned.

Send donations for Rexford Weng’s legal defense to: Concerned Citizens of Marion County Legal Defense Fund for Rex Weng, c/o St. Paul’s AME Church and Christian Academy, P.O. Box 2223, Ocala, FL 34478.

Spartacist/SYC Events

The Brouhaha Over “Globalization”

The Main Enemy Is the U.S. Imperialist State!

**No Vote to Nader—Protectionist, China-Basher, Union-Buster!
For a Workers Party that Fights for Socialist Revolution!**

Saturday, September 16, 3 p.m.

BOSTON

Harvard University
Science Center, Lecture Hall E

For more information: (617) 666-9453

Chinese Workers Revolt Against “Market Reforms” Defend the Gains of the Chinese Revolution!

Thursday, September 21, 7:30 p.m.

NEW YORK

Columbia University
Hamilton Hall, Room 302
116th and Broadway

For more information: (212) 267-1025

Down With National Chauvinism! For Quebec Independence! Quebec—Thirty Years After the “October Crisis”

Saturday, September 30, 7:30 p.m.

TORONTO

Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre
427 Bloor Street West (near Spadina)

For more information: (416) 593-4138

The Main Enemy Is at Home! Beware the Fraud of “Human Rights” Imperialism

Saturday, September 30, 3 p.m.

VANCOUVER

Britannia Community Centre, Room L4
1661 Napier Street (off Commercial Drive)

For more information: (604) 687-0353

Near East, 1950s

Permanent Revolution vs. Bourgeois Nationalism

Part one of this article, which we conclude here, was published in WV No. 740 (25 August).

The most powerful working-class upsurge in the Near East in the years immediately following World War II came in Iran. Tudeh (Masses), the pro-Moscow Communist party, already had significant roots in the proletariat, developed over

Part Two

two decades of largely clandestine work, and grew spectacularly as the war came to a close. By 1944, Tudeh had 25,000 members. It established a Central Council of the United Trade Unions (CCUTU) of Iran, which by 1946 claimed 400,000 members. Tudeh's strength was then concentrated in northern Iran since it consciously discouraged organization of the British-occupied south, especially the volatile Khuzistan oil fields, in line with Stalin's opposition to social struggle in the "democratic" imperialist countries and their colonies.

Nonetheless, at the close of World War II Iran had clearly reached a prerevolutionary situation in which Tudeh could have taken power. The CCUTU was effectively a government in northern Iran—collecting taxes, providing police and judicial functions, etc. Further, the Soviet military presence in northern Iran provided an enormous impetus to social upheaval. But for Stalin, Tudeh and the Iranian proletariat were simply bargaining chips to be expended in his vain pursuit of "peaceful coexistence" with Anglo-American imperialism.

The occupation of northern Iran by the Soviet Army in late 1945 led to the establishment of autonomous republics in Iranian Azerbaijan and Kurdistan where, in addition to establishing national rights, significant social reforms were carried out. But the Kremlin withdrew its forces in early 1946, sacrificing the republics in Azerbaijan and Kurdistan in the hope of obtaining oil and gas concessions from the Shah. The deal Stalin proposed contained the implicit pledge that Tudeh would use its great authority in the proletariat to enforce class peace, and that pledge was soon fulfilled as Tudeh threw away a revolutionary opportunity.

In July 1946, in response to attempts by the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC) to break the pro-Tudeh unions following a successful strike by refinery and oil field workers in predominantly



July 1958: Mass demonstration in Baghdad, as Iraqi officers' coup toppled British-imposed monarchy. Opportunity for proletarian revolution was derailed by Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy and Iraqi Communist leadership.

For a Socialist Federation of the Near East!

Arab Khuzistan, the CCUTU called a general strike. After bloody street fighting erupted between Arab workers and non-Arab workers, fanned by the AIOC, Tudeh militias took over the key city of Abadan. But the Tudeh leadership, at the urging of the government, dispatched the party's general secretary and the CCUTU's first secretary to Abadan to call off the strike even though the workers' demands had not been met. As a reward for this treachery, three Tudeh members were brought into the government. A scant two months later, the Tudeh ministers were purged and when the CCUTU responded with a one-day general strike,

hundreds of its activists were arrested, its headquarters occupied and its paper banned.

Iran 1953: Proletarian Revolution Derailed

Having derailed one revolutionary opportunity, Tudeh again found itself in a position to overthrow the despised ruling oligarchy during the oil nationalization crisis under the regime of Mohammad Mossadeq. In 1949 Mossadeq, a wealthy aristocrat and landowner, led opposition in the Majlis (parliament) to a new agreement with the AIOC. By 1951, he was calling for outright nationalization of oil. Mossadeq's National Front was an unstable alliance of Western-oriented bourgeois technocrats with a religious wing led by the Shi'ite clergy under Ayatollah Kashani, temporarily united by the demand for nationalization of the AIOC and opposition to the British and the Shah.

Tudeh initially did not rally to Mossadeq, as the Stalinists were apprehensive of his ties to Washington. But Tudeh was forced by its combative proletarian base to lead huge strikes and demonstrations demanding nationalization. In April 1951, Abadan was paralyzed by a general strike which involved bloody clashes with the army. Frightened by the wave of proletarian militancy, the Shah appointed Mossadeq prime minister and the AIOC was nationalized. As the world oil cartel

responded by boycotting Iranian oil, gradually strangling the economy, Washington turned its back on Mossadeq.

When Britain announced a boycott of Mexican oil in 1938 following the nationalization of imperialist oil interests by the regime of General Lázaro Cárdenas, Trotsky wrote in defense of the Mexican action, "The expropriation of oil is neither socialism nor communism. But it is a highly progressive measure of national self-defense," while stressing that "the international proletariat has no reason to identify its program with the program of the Mexican government" ("Mexico and British Imperialism," June 1938). Likewise, it was the duty of revolutionaries to defend the nationalization of the AIOC in Iran while refusing to grant an iota of political support to the bourgeois-nationalist Mossadeq regime. Communists would have sought to mobilize the working class in independent struggle against the yoke of imperialist subjugation by advancing demands like the expropriation of all imperialist holdings and moving to set up councils of workers and poor peasants to vie for state power. But as the wave of proletarian radicalism continued to mount, Tudeh led the toiling masses into political support for the bourgeois National Front. When Mossadeq resigned in protest against the Shah's refusal to grant him increased powers, Tudeh led a July 1952 general strike in Teheran that forced the Shah to recall Mossadeq.

During 1953, Iran was in the throes of acute class polarization. The international oil boycott pushed the bourgeoisie and sections of the petty bourgeoisie into opposition to Mossadeq while deteriorating economic conditions drove the plebeian masses to desperation. Ayatollah Kashani and his followers split from the National Front and threw their support to the Shah. Thousands of workers flocked into Tudeh and its trade-union organizations in search of a revolutionary solution to the massive contradictions of Iranian society. Demonstrations called by Tudeh vastly outnumbered those called by the government.

When the Shah attempted to arrest Mossadeq in August, Tudeh brought tens of thousands of its supporters into the streets. Tudeh could manifestly have taken power, but the Stalinists looked to Mossadeq to carry through the "democratic revolution." Instead, Mossadeq called on the army generals, who were working closely with American military advisers and the CIA to bring him down, to crack down on Tudeh. The military takeover was prepared by a mobilization organized by the ayatollahs, who filled the streets of Teheran with their clerical-fascist thugs.

The army generals cracked down on Tudeh, and then turned against the Mossadeq government. This marked the beginning of a savage police state that would systematically and ruthlessly crush Tudeh as a mass party, forcing it underground for nearly two decades. But Tudeh's Stalinist leadership only deepened its criminal opportunism. As strikes by oil workers shook the Shah's regime in late 1978, Tudeh lined up behind the drive for power by Khomeini and the Islamic clergy, helping pave the way for a



Nationalization of Anglo-Iranian Oil in 1951 provoked imperialist retaliation, touched off proletarian upheaval throughout Iran.

massive bloodbath against leftists, trade unionists and Kurds. Against an array of fake leftists in Iran and internationally who cheered on the Khomeiniite mobilizations, we raised the call: “No support to the mullahs! Down with the Shah! Workers to power!”

The 1958-59 Revolution in Iraq

Only five years after the CIA-sponsored coup in Iran came the most powerful demonstration yet of the revolutionary capacity of the working class in the Near East, as the fall of the Iraqi monarchy in 1958 touched off a huge proletarian upsurge. Armed, highly organized and led by the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP), the working class literally had power within its grasp. Yet the opportunity was squandered by the ICP’s Stalinist leadership under direct orders from Moscow. Derailed by the class-collaborationist policies of the ICP leadership, which tied the workers to the nationalist officers in power, the Iraqi revolution was drowned in a wave of bloody repression.

Already in 1948, the Iraqi Communist Party had been the dominant force in a nationwide upsurge—including mass mobilizations and strikes such as the

Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq [1978]).

The subservient Iraqi regime was the linchpin of the anti-Soviet Baghdad Pact, which was deeply unpopular among all layers of Iraqi society. When Britain, France and Israel invaded Egypt in 1956 in response to Nasser’s nationalization of the Suez Canal, the Iraqi CP launched a campaign against the government that triggered mass uprisings in the Communist strongholds of Najaf and Hayy. In the city of Najaf, a wave of CP-led protests in November 1956 culminated when demonstrators drove the police from the city’s streets. Troops were called in but fraternized with the demonstrators. The movement in Najaf provoked a wave of strikes and demonstrations which swept Baghdad, Mosul, Kirkuk and other cities. In Hayy the next month, the ICP led a virtual armed insurrection. Armed workers took over much of the city, firing on police from windows and rooftops, but were driven back when they tried to storm the seat of local government. Revolutionary committees and “people’s guards” organized resistance and erected barricades at key points in the city. Police reinforcements were brought in to crush the



Illustrated London News

Teheran, 1951: Stalinist Tudeh party subordinated militant Iranian proletariat to bourgeois-nationalist Mossadeq regime.

Communist-led strike of oil workers near Haditha—against the presence of British military bases. The upsurge was finally brought to an end by a government crackdown. Hundreds of Communists were arrested, and ICP leader Fahd and two other members of the Political Bureau were publicly hanged.

Not only was the Iraqi CP the most proletarian Communist party in the Near East but it also had a significant component of national, religious and ethnic minorities. From its creation in 1934, the ICP called for the Kurdish right to independence. The party sought to recruit Kurdish workers and published a press in Kurdish. By the early 1950s, fully one-third of the party’s Central Committee was composed of Kurds. But as Stalinists throughout the Near East sought to cement ties with Arab nationalists in opposition to the American-dominated Baghdad Pact alliance, the Iraqi CP “Arabized” its line. In an August 1955 declaration, the leadership criticized its previous stance “that there exist two main national groups in Iraq” and flatly declared that “the fraternal Kurdish people has no interests which are incompatible with the interests of any of the Arab countries” (quoted in Hanna Batatu, *The*

revolt in Hayy, and two Communists were hanged in the public square.

Two years later in July 1958, a revolutionary upsurge was touched off when the Iraqi Free Officers movement overthrew the British-installed monarchy. Upon hearing the news, hundreds of thousands of Baghdad’s dispossessed poured into the streets screaming their joy and their hatred of the royal family. From the outset, the ICP threw its support behind the government headed by Brigadier Abd al-Karim Qassim, whom the Stalinists hailed as “Sole Leader.” Qassim sought to play off the well-organized ICP against the pan-Arab nationalists in the officer corps as well as the Ba’ath Party, who were clamoring for Iraq to merge into Nasser’s newly formed United Arab Republic. As in Syria, the drive for unity with Egypt was motivated by the desire of the Ba’ath and other Arab nationalists to use Nasser’s authority and Egypt’s anti-Communist laws to break the growing power of the Iraqi Communists.

The imperialist overlords in Washington and London viewed with alarm the 1958 revolution which swept away the Iraqi monarchy, removing a main pillar of the Anglo-American anti-Soviet alliance in the Near East and threatening



Der Spiegel

U.S. president Eisenhower at 1959 Camp David summit with Soviet premier Khrushchev (right), who sold out Communist-led upsurge in Iraq to pursue “peaceful coexistence” with imperialism.

capitalist rule itself. American Marines from the Sixth Fleet were landed in Lebanon, and British paratroops were flown into Jordan in a menacing move aimed at the Iraqi masses.

By late summer a peasant insurrection was sweeping across the agricultural plains of Iraq as peasants burned landlords’ estates, destroyed the account ledgers and seized the land. The Communists made spectacular gains. But the forces of reaction were frantically organizing to try to crush the revolutionary wave. In March 1959, nationalist officers and the Ba’ath, backed by the large landowners and tribal chiefs, prepared to launch a counterrevolutionary coup starting from the city of Mosul. The ICP wrecked this scheme by organizing a demonstration of a quarter million people, triggering a plebeian upsurge that swept the reactionaries from the streets of Mosul.

Workers revolution was on the order of the day. A statement by the Ba’ath in the spring of 1959 noted with alarm that Communists dominated the labor unions, the peasants’ organization, the union of students, the popular resistance forces and the committees for the defense of the republic. But the Stalinist leaders rejected any notion of leading a workers insurrection to overthrow the capitalist state apparatus, seeking rather to become part of it, as prominent members or sympathizers of the ICP gained appointment to administrative and military positions. With the question of proletarian state power posed, all the ICP demanded was representation in the capitalist government. Mammoth rallies, some drawing over a million participants, were staged in Baghdad to support the Communist Party’s demand. Army units loyal to the ICP broke open arsenals and distributed weapons.

For the Soviet bureaucracy, even the ICP’s reformist appeal for a handful of ministers in the capitalist government was too extreme. Following Moscow’s orders, the ICP meekly abandoned its call for a coalition government when Qassim turned thumbs down in late April 1959. Marxist historian Isaac Deutscher underlined at the time how Khrushchev

sold out the Iraqi Communists to make his Camp David meeting with U.S. president Eisenhower more congenial:

“Most Western observers on the spot agreed that Kassem could hardly hold his ground against an all-out communist offensive. His own following was small, and he refused to try and rally the anti-communist forces which were intimidated and disorganized and for whose support Nasser made a bid when he attacked Kassem as a ‘communist stooge.’ “Then, in the summer, the communist offensive was suddenly called off—on urgent demands from Moscow. In Moscow reports about the rising revolutionary temperature of Iraq had caused alarm. Khrushchev refused to countenance a communist upheaval in Baghdad, afraid that this would provoke renewed Western intervention in the Eastern Mediterranean, set the Middle East aflame, and wreck his policy of peaceful coexistence. He was already reckoning with the prospect of his visit to Washington and was anxious to produce evidence of Soviet ‘goodwill’ in the Middle East.

“A bill of indictment against the Iraqi communist leaders was drawn up in Moscow and the Iraqi Party was ordered not merely to make its peace with Kassem, but to surrender to him unconditionally with only a minimum of face-saving.”

—reprinted in Deutscher, *Russia, China and the West* (1970)

Qassim and anti-Communist nationalists now took the offensive. In July, bloody encounters took place between Ba’athist gangs and Communists in Baghdad neighborhoods. ICP members were sacked from government posts and the military. Communist trade-union leaders were removed from their posts or rounded up by the police. In Kirkuk, in July 1959 the largely Kurdish CP organization turned an incipient revolt into a communalist massacre of Turkomans, prominent in the city’s commercial elite. The Kirkuk massacre was then used by Qassim as a pretext for suppressing the Communist Party. Yet the Stalinists maintained their prostration before Qassim, taking his blows without serious resistance. When a Kurdish separatist revolt broke out in the summer of 1961, the ICP denounced it as “serving imperialist designs.”

In February 1963, the Ba’ath was able to broker a military coup that brought down Qassim and unleashed the counterrevolutionary furies. Using lists of Communists supplied by the CIA, the Ba’ath Party militia, the National Guard, launched a house-to-house search, rounding up and shooting suspected CPers. An estimated 5,000 were killed in the Ba’ath’s bloody terror and thousands more jailed, many of them hideously tortured. Only the overthrow of the Ba’athists in November 1963 by their erstwhile military allies put a halt to the horror. When the Ba’ath returned to power in 1969, it took up where it had left off—with trials of Jews, Communists and sundry oppositionists while laying waste to the Kurdish regions.

The evident opportunity for a proletarian revolution in Iraq in 1958-59 was addressed last year in a polemical article on the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) reprinted from *Spartakist*, the press of the International Communist League’s German section. Noting that the ICP was

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Princeton University Press

Iraqi CP leaders head 1959 May Day march. Four years later, one-third of Central Committee was murdered by nationalist Ba’ath regime.

Young Spartacus

The ISO and the Nader Campaign:

How Fake Socialists Undermine Fight for Workers Party

The struggle to build a workers party that fights for the emancipation of the working class and oppressed is at the forefront for communists in the U.S. today. This means uncompromisingly exposing the nature of the capitalist state and its administrators, as well as the pro-capitalist trade-union misleaders, and pointing the way forward. In its theoretical journal, *International Socialist Review* (August-September 2000), the International Socialist Organization (ISO) declares: "Working-class political independence from capitalist parties has been a socialist principle for more than a century." But the ISO then proceeds to demonstrate just how elastic its relation-

ary workers party. They carry an editorial celebrating: "There Is a Choice in Election 2000"; an article in the same journal by longtime ISO honcho Joel Geier tries to justify their advocacy of a vote for this capitalist candidate; this is then followed by a "historical" piece by Paul D'Amato, which tries to give a Marxist gloss to their latest dive by using quotes from Marx, Engels, Lenin, Luxemburg and Trotsky that more often than not are an indictment of the ISO's politics.

We have already exposed the ISO's opportunism in "ISO Hustles Vote for Nader" (WV No. 739, 28 July). As we pointed out there: "In calling for a vote for Nader, the ISO peddles the illusion

is no choice at all for the working class.

Over 80 years ago, Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin neatly skewered the fraud of bourgeois democracy 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—this is the real essence of bourgeois parliamentarism." Rather than fighting to win anyone to a socialist perspective, the ISO is reinforcing the very illusions that have tied the American working class, through the agency of the trade-union bureaucracy, to the capitalist class and its parties, particularly the Democrats.

The ISO claims: "Elections cannot produce socialism, but they can produce socialists. They can raise the consciousness and fighting capacity of the working class and win greater numbers to radicalism and socialism." Socialists can run in elections—as we have several times—in order to gain a platform to disseminate their views among the working masses (see article on next page). The way a Leninist party raises the consciousness of the working class about its historic role in the fight against capitalism is to imbue it with confidence in its independent mobilization against the capitalist class and all its political parties; therefore, we do not give political support to any capitalist party. The Green Party has no ties to the working class; it is not even a reformist bourgeois workers party like the British Labour Party, which has a capitalist program but is organically tied to the working class through the trade unions. It is a capitalist party with a petty-bourgeois base whose environmentalism and fraudulent "anti-corporate" politics are hostile to the interests of the working class.

The role of capitalist third party movements in the U.S. has been to divert anger among the masses away from social protest and back into bourgeois electoral politics. And Nader's candidacy is no different. Nader seeks to refurbish the image of the capitalist electoral system, and in particular to channel those discontented with this society toward the Democratic Party. He is a shill for the Democrats who, in his own words, wants "to pull them in the right direction" (*LA Weekly*, June 30). And like Nader, the ISO sees his campaign as a tactic to pressure the Democrats. Geier notes in his piece, "Challenging the Parties of Corporate America: Nader 2000":

"The media try to convince us that the Democrats lose elections when they are not sufficiently moderate, or when they are 'too liberal.' But the truth is that the Democrats are losing workers' and students' votes that might cost them the election because they are too right wing. The unexpected popularity of Nader could shift the political balance and vastly increase the importance of the left in American politics. It is remarkable that such an important change has occurred in what seems to be just a few short months."

As evidence of "the political shift to the left in the country" Geier cites none other than the Teamsters bureaucracy led

EDITORIALS

There is a Choice in Election 2000

Challenging the Parties of Corporate America

Nader 2000

by JOEL GEIER

Today the concentration of wealth and its political power has reached an unprecedented level in the same entity. CEOs take away financial wealth of kind wealth of a billion dollars. Earlier this year it was \$100 million.

International Socialist Review

August-September 2000

In new articles, ISO tries hard to sell lie that one capitalist party is an "alternative" to the others.

by James Hoffa Jr., which, according to the ISO, "started the year by playing footsie with Buchanan and his racist nationalism, and have shifted to flirting with Nader on grounds that he represents the views of working people."

Hoffa has "flirted" with every one of the candidates. While youth demonstrated outside the Republican convention last month, Hoffa was inside being honored by the delegates. At the Democratic convention, he was given the status of a "super-delegate." This is hardly a "political shift to the left." Hoffa could one day stand shoulder to shoulder with Buchanan and then shift to Nader the next day because Nader shares the same economic nationalism and chauvinist protectionism of both Hoffa and Buchanan. All of them act in the service of U.S. imperialism by pushing anti-Communist diatribes behind which is the aim of destroying the gains of the 1949 Chinese Revolution. And all of them can equally denounce—and have denounced—"unsafe" Mexican truckers "stealing American jobs." Nader recently ranted: "You are driving along in Maine or Minnesota or Illinois, looking in the rearview mirror and there's a big Mexican truck bearing down on you with a driver who doesn't have to meet the same standards...that U.S. truck drivers have to meet" (*Chicago Tribune*, 25 June).

So, what are "socialists" doing supporting a capitalist candidate, and one who pushes vile anti-Mexican chauvinism? While the ISO frets that Nader "doesn't carry his anticorporate politics to their logical conclusion—to opposition to the capitalist system itself," they argue that "Nader's campaign evokes the promise of a radical third-party alternative not controlled by any section of the capitalist class.... It is raising the question of an independent working-class party." Geier writes:

"If Nader does well, it may create a situation that leads sections of labor to break from the Democrats. Meanwhile, it allows us to approach workers individually and to invite trade union locals to support Nader's anticorporate demands,



Downing/Reuters



AP

What do Nader, Hoffa and Buchanan have in common? Economic nationalism, protectionism, anti-communism. According to ISO, Teamsters president Hoffa Jr. with Nader (far left) shows national "shift to the left." Right: Buchanan at April 12 anti-China Teamsters rally in D.C.

ship is to any socialist principles, with article after article hustling the vote for bourgeois Green Party candidate Ralph Nader's bid for the presidency.

The current issue of *International Socialist Review* contains several articles frantically trying to justify their new line, but it is not difficult to see through this parody of Marxism and point out the ways that the ISO actually promotes *obstacles* to cohering a revolution-

that fundamental change in society can be achieved through capitalist electoral politics." Americans are taught from their first civics lesson in grammar school that the U.S. has the best, most democratic government in the world. Certainly, from the U.S. rulers' standpoint, it has its advantages. The "choice" in this two-party system is between two capitalist parties representing two wings of the same property party. In other words, there

Spartacus Youth Club Events

NEW YORK

Meet the Marxists

Saturday, September 9, 2 p.m.
299 Broadway, Suite 318

Class Series: Marxism—The Fight for Socialist Revolution

Thursday, September 28, 7 p.m.
Columbia University
Hamilton Hall, Room 302

For more information and readings:
(212) 267-1025

BERKELEY

Introduction to Marxism

Tuesdays, 7 p.m.
Starting September 12
U.C. Berkeley, 79 Dwinelle Hall

For more information:
(510) 839-0851

TORONTO

Marxism vs. Anarchism

Wednesday, September 13, 7 p.m.

Class Series: The Fight for Revolutionary Marxism

The Communist Manifesto:
A Guide to Action

Wednesday, September 20, 7 p.m.
International Student Centre
U of T, 33 St. George Street

For more information and readings:
(416) 593-4138

VANCOUVER

The Communist Manifesto: A Guide to Action

Wednesday, September 20, 6:30 p.m.
University of British Columbia

For room and more information:
(604) 687-0353

break with the Democrats, and prepare the ground for an independent working-class party.”

Anti-capitalism is not the “logical conclusion” of anti-corporatism. Nader’s anti-corporate rhetoric is easily and readily adopted by everyone from liberal youth disgusted by the dominance of big corporations in American society to rightist followers of Patrick Buchanan who fear that big corporations are driving out of business their small farms and businesses. It is at bottom the political outlook of a middle class feeling disenfranchised.

Capitalism is a system of production where profit is acquired by the capitalists through the exploitation of the working class. The working class, whose labor creates the wealth of society, has the numbers, organization, interest and power to fight and destroy the oppressive rule of capital. But to accomplish this historic act of universal emancipation, the working class must be imbued with revolutionary class consciousness, where the struggles of the workers become *class struggle*; the most advanced workers must become conscious of themselves as a single class whose actions are directed against the *entire* class of capitalists and their government. Such consciousness does not spontaneously emerge from the day-to-day trade-union struggles of the working class, which do not in themselves challenge the capitalist mode of production, but must be brought into the working class from outside, through the instrumentality of a revolutionary workers party.

The forging of a workers party in the U.S. that champions the cause of labor and all the oppressed will not be the product of electoral engineering nor will it be the product of a linear process of adding votes here and there. It will result from convulsive class battles and enormous social protests that counterpose the



WV Photos



NYC, 23 October 1999: Our labor/black mobilization that stopped the KKK was example of workers party in action; we organized in opposition to the Democrats, who tried to build a diversionary demo of “tolerance” for the Klan. ISO joined Dems and shared speaker’s platform with Latino Officers Association (below).

interests of labor directly to those of the capitalist class. It will not be built by “breaking” the *current* anti-communist union bureaucracy—which is a key component of the Democratic Party—from the Democrats, but rather by *replacing* that staunchly pro-capitalist misleadership with an anti-capitalist, class-struggle leadership.

A genuine workers party must be based on the understanding that only through

their independent political mobilization can the workers fight for their interests and in defense of all the oppressed. We look to the example of the Bolshevik Party of V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky, which led the workers of Russia to power in the October Revolution of 1917. We are fighting to build such a party, forged in sharp political struggle against all manner of reformism and opportunism, and based on the Marxist understanding that

the capitalist profit system must be smashed and replaced by workers rule. As we wrote in “Democrats, Republicans: Partner Parties of Racist U.S. Capitalism” (WV No. 739, 28 July):

“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!*”

Black Oppression and the Fight for Socialism

The U.S. today is the only advanced capitalist country lacking a mass workers party representing even a deformed expression of the political independence of the proletariat. The central enduring feature of American capitalism, shaping and perpetuating this backward consciousness, is the racial oppression of the black population as a race-color caste at the bottom of society. Black oppression with its profound and pervasive ideological effects is fundamental to the American capitalist order. Obscuring the class divide, racism has served to bind white workers to their capitalist masters premised on the illusion of a commonality of interest based on skin color.

To the ISO, the fight against black oppression is not a strategic question for the American workers movement because the ISO is hostile to the perspective of socialist revolution in this country. Inserted within Geier’s piece on Nader is a short, unsigned box titled: “Nader on Social Justice” that admits, “questions of social justice do not figure prominently in Nader’s campaign. Racism is rarely

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“Communist Views on Elections”

We print below an article from the January 1932 issue of *Young Spartacus*, newspaper of the youth group of the Trotskyist party of the time, the Communist League of America. The article appeared after the election of a member of the Young Communist League (YCL), John Bukas Jr., to the city council in Yorkville, Ohio. The YCL was the youth group of the Communist Party (CP). The Trotskyists at that time defined themselves as an expelled faction of the CP, having been expelled three years earlier after organizing within the CP to combat its Stalinist degeneration. This article sketches out the Marxist attitude toward participation in bourgeois elections, and explains how a revolutionary party uses the democratic forms of the parliamentary system to further our communist work.

The Young People’s Socialist League (YPSL) was the youth group of the social-democratic Socialist Party. Ramsay MacDonald, a founder of the British Labour Party and head of British Labour Party governments in the 1920s, joined with the Tories to head the 1931 “National Government.” This exemplar of social-democratic class treason is here contrasted with some early figures from the German Social Democrats—August Bebel, Wilhelm Liebknecht and Karl Liebknecht—as well as the Russian Bolsheviks.

* * *

Because of the early appearance of the first issue of *Young Spartacus*, we are able only at this late date to report the election of John Bukas, Jr., a member of the Y.C.L., to the city council of Yorkville, Ohio—a mining and steel town. The *Young Worker* (11-16-31) mentions

FROM THE ARCHIVES OF MARXISM

the election. We avail ourselves of this opportunity to discuss the role of Communists in elections in a capitalist country. The question of the class character of the state, the role played by Communists in a bourgeois government and the differences between the tactics of the Communists and the social democrats (Socialists) should be understood.

The Communists recognize the present day state—whether it be a republic, monarchy, or a Fascist dictatorship—as the organ of the capitalist class for the suppression of the working class. The essence of the state presents itself to us largely as the army, the navy, the police, the state militia, the courts, in short, the coercive forces, with which the bourgeoisie attempts to prevent the working class from overthrowing the existing order of things.

Can, then, a Communist participate in a bourgeois government in the capacity of a director? The answer is: No. Participating in the work of the government, i.e., taking a seat in the ministry or cabinet, means only one thing—to aid in the suppression of the working class. This the Communist cannot do.

The Socialists In Action

It is in the tactics pursued in this respect that the bourgeois character of the social-democratic parties reveals itself most vividly. The Socialist MacDonald and his “Socialist Government”, (as the Nov. 1st issue of *Free Youth* (Y.P.S.L.) so proudly called it), used the armed forces of the British bourgeoisie

to suppress the Indian masses. Likewise in Germany the socialist ministers and the socialist police chief revealed their class affiliation by using the police to shoot down the workers during the May Day demonstration of 1929.

The workers do not recognize the police as their allies. The policeman’s club and soldier’s bayonet, whether used to suppress a strike of the food workers in New York, the copper miners in Colorado or the masses of Nicaragua, are recognized as the weapons of the enemy class. The directors of these weapons—the capitalist state—receive and deserve the hatred of the class conscious workers.

The conclusions are clear. The social democracy, having the viewpoint and outlook of the petit bourgeois, often takes an active part in a capitalist government. The Communists, representing the working class, cannot do so.

The Communist Methods

“But”, objects the newcomer to the Communist movement, “I have seen the Communist party on the ballot, and have heard of the election of Communists to the German and French legislatures. Would not this indicate at least a desire to participate in a bourgeois government?” The answer is No. The purpose of the Communist is to use the elections, and the wide publicity given to the doings of the legislature, as a means of making known the demands of the revolutionary vanguard to the working class as a whole. When the Communist addresses the

“honorable” ministers, he is availing himself of the opportunity to reach, not the ministers, but the great masses of workers whom the Communist party otherwise does not reach. Of course the Communists will struggle against reactionary measures and for such social legislation which would benefit the workers. They will bring the demands of the workers to the attention of everyone; expose the class character of the state, present the need of a workers’ state and the path to Communism. These were the tactics employed by Bebel, the elder and younger Liebknecht, and the Russian Bolsheviks. These are the tactics of the revolutionary Communist against the petty bourgeois socialist.

John Bukas, Jr., has such a task thrust upon his shoulders. Progressive social legislation tending to alleviate the sufferings of the workers of Yorkville should be advocated by him, not merely in the chambers of the city council, but also wherever the workers gather, in the streets, in the workers’ halls, etc. But never should he foster the illusion that through elections the workers will be able to permanently better their conditions. On the contrary, he should expose the sham of capitalist democracy and stress the necessity of social revolution as the way out.

In conclusion, the present state being the organ of suppression of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie, the Communist should do all in his power to lay bare its workings, and to work for its overthrow and elimination. The elections and participation in the capitalist legislative bodies are means through which the Communist party attempts to influence the widest ranks of the workers and win them for its program. ■

South Africa...

(continued from page 1)

and Pretoria than a relative handful of white-owned tobacco plantations. Mugabe has 12,000 troops in Congo, who control some key diamond-producing areas in Kasai, a mineral-rich province where South Africa's De Beers has been displaced. The many-sided war there, involving Laurent Kabila's government troops, a half dozen rebel armies and as many expeditionary forces from surrounding countries, has temporarily prevented the imperialists from getting their hands on the country's fabulously rich diamond and other mineral reserves. The United Nations is currently considering the deployment of a "peacekeeping" force to Congo, in which South Africa has already announced it intends to play a prominent role. The UN and Britain already have occupation forces in Sierra Leone, another diamond-rich country. **Imperialist hands off Congo! All U.S./UN/British troops out of Africa!**

South Africa holds the key to the future of all of sub-Saharan Africa. Under the rule of the capitalist ANC, this means continued brutal exploitation and oppression of South Africa's black, coloured and Indian working masses by the white racist bourgeoisie and enforcing imperialist plunder throughout the region. Under a black-centred workers government, South Africa's industrial and mineral wealth would be used to develop the vast resources of the region for the benefit of the former colonial slaves. Spartacist South Africa, section of the International Communist League, fights to forge the Bolshevik party needed to lead the proletariat, drawing behind it the rural landless and all the oppressed, in a socialist revolution that breaks the power of the bourgeoisie and expropriates capitalist industry and the large landowners. For a socialist federation of southern Africa!

MDC: Stalking Horse for White Landholders, Imperialists

Conditions for Zimbabwe's working people have continued to worsen since the Mugabe regime imposed IMF-dictated austerity measures in 1991. Massive plebeian protests in late 1997 culminated in a general strike called by the ZCTU that December, followed by another in March 1998. Mugabe's dispatch of 12,000 troops—from a country with a total population of 12 million—to Congo further inflamed hostility to his regime, as he sells his country's youth as cannon fodder to keep Kabila in power in return for diamond and mineral concessions for him and his ZANU-PF cronies.

Earlier this year, Mugabe tried to push through a constitutional reform which would have essentially made him president for life, while proposing a land distribution scheme to mobilize his peasant base against urban opposition. When Mugabe's referendum failed because of opposition led by the MDC, ZANU-PF encouraged an escalation in the land seizures. Fearing that they will lose their jobs if the large commercial farms are broken up, the 350,000 black agricultural labourers and their families—who account for one-eighth of the total popu-



Economist

January 1998: Protests against food price increases and other IMF-dictated austerity measures imposed by Zimbabwe president Mugabe (right) were dispersed by police gunfire. Months of protests included two general strikes.



AP

lation—have been driven into the arms of the MDC, and their own exploiters.

Founded last year under the leadership of ZCTU head Morgan Tsvangirai, the MDC has openly sought ties with the imperialist powers and opposes the land seizures. Last spring, when Britain threatened to pull out a military training mission, the MDC urged London to keep the troops in place as a "guarantee" of "democratic government" (UPI, 17 April). MDC leader Tsvangirai was joined by a number of prominent Tory politicians, a former U.S. assistant secretary of state and racist South African politician Tony Leon in a letter to the London *Times* (13 April) denouncing the Mugabe regime. In Zimbabwe, the MDC's supporters in-

ISO spokesman Munyaradzi Gwisai was even elected to Parliament for the openly pro-imperialist MDC in the Highfield area of Harare. While whining that the MDC "played into Mugabe's hands in the rural areas by lining up with white farmers," the SWP cheered that "the MDC's victories will give confidence to sections of workers" (*Socialist Worker* [Britain], 1 July).

While themselves ensconced in the party of the big farmers and industrialists, the Cliffites in their MDC election campaign called for "seizure of big farms without compensation," "tax the rich to fund the poor" and "power to workers and the poor," pretending that the MDC can be won to this pro-

undated). An election statement on the back of this leaflet urges a "vote for MDC which was started by workers and the poor."

ISO: Economism in Service of Pro-Imperialist Reaction

Even the most abjectly pro-imperialist reformist workers party, like the British Labour Party, is organically based on the labour movement. Not so the MDC, which was bankrolled from the start by the white capitalists—who determined its policy on fundamental issues—operating in an alliance with the pro-capitalist ZCTU bureaucracy. The MDC grew out of the 1997-98 upheaval. A *Mail & Guardian* article (17 December 1997) headlined "Zim's 'Unholy Alliance': Black Workers, White Farmers" pointed to "an unlikely consensus between Zimbabwe's newly assertive trade unions, who brought the country to a grinding halt last week for the first time in half-a-century, and white farmers whose domination of the land appears doomed by looming nationalisation." A more recent *Mail & Guardian* (11 April) reported:

"White support is proving crucial to the opposition. The party will not say how much money it has raised, or from where. But the head of its campaign in Mashonaland West's 10 constituencies, Duke du Coudray, concedes that a significant proportion of campaign funds comes from white-owned businesses."

An integral part of this unholy alliance is the ISO, which boasts of being "a socialist pressure group affiliated to the MDC" (*Socialist Worker* [Zimbabwe], January 2000). By their own admission, the Cliffites are playing a very real role in providing a left cover to lure militant workers into the MDC, thus tightening the political chains that bind Zimbabwean workers to their capitalist exploiters and imperialist overlords. How do self-styled socialists end up as brokers for neocolonial domination?

The starting point for the Cliffites, Workers Power, et al. is not revolutionary Marxism but trade-union economism, a programme limited to advancing the economic interests of the working class within the framework of capitalism. In an imperialist "democracy" like Britain, this economist programme translates into support for the parliamentary vehicle of the trade-union bureaucracy, the Labour Party. But in semicolonial countries like Zimbabwe, there is no room for a parliamentary-reformist social democracy. The national bourgeoisie is too weak and subordinated to imperialism, and the class contradictions in society are thus posed too sharply, to allow for labour reformism. Thus trade-union economism ends up directly allying with the bourgeois nationalists or, in the case of the MDC and the ZCTU labour bureaucracy, the white capitalists and imperialists themselves.

Frederick Chiluba of Zambia (formerly Northern Rhodesia) is reportedly viewed as a model by MDC leaders. A former head of the Zambia Congress of Trade Unions, Chiluba came to power in 1991 as leader of the Movement for Multiparty Democracy, a lash-up of trade-union leaders and bourgeois politicians. The hated Chiluba regime has been notorious for corruption, IMF-imposed austerity and brutal repression. The economic and political conditions which have led to such movements are in part the result of



AP

UN imperialist "peacekeeping" force in diamond-rich Sierra Leone.

clude a prison torturer who served under the former white-supremacist regime of Ian Smith's Rhodesia (Zimbabwe's colonial name), and Smith himself, who once ranted, "I don't believe in black majority rule ever in Rhodesia—not in a thousand years." Smith and his like deserve revolutionary justice from a workers tribunal for the butchering of African men, women and children during his rule.

Rubbing shoulders with this notorious racist pig in the MDC are the avowed "revolutionaries" of the International Socialist Organisation (ISO), Zimbabwean supporters of the tendency founded by the late Tony Cliff, led by the British Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and including the Keep Left grouping buried inside the SACP. (While the American ISO has been at loggerheads with the SWP of late, it was no less enthusiastic about the MDC's recent electoral gains.)

gramme (*Socialist Worker* [Britain], 1 July). The right-centrist Workers Power group in Britain also calls for pressuring the MDC, lecturing: "The workers, through their unions and other grass-root organisations, need to overturn the MDC's land programme" (*Workers Power*, July/August 2000). To justify such appeals, the MDC is depicted as a social-democratic party, which the Cliffites in particular claim the white landowners have only recently begun to support.

Thus a Zim ISO leaflet issued before the elections talks of "the need for workers and the poor to be at centre of the MDC and to make sure that the party puts workers interests at the fore and not the capitalist ideas that are now being propagated by the current middle class/capitalist leadership of the party" ("Mistake to Cancel the May Day Rallies—Now Prepare for General Strike!")



Reuters

Election rally of Movement for Democratic Change (left), headed by trade-union leader Morgan Tsvangirai (right). Zimbabwean Cliffites help chain black workers to imperialist-backed party of white landowners.



no credit

the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union. During the Cold War, bourgeois-nationalist regimes in Africa were able to jockey for financial aid between Washington and Moscow. Today, the imperialists see no need to subsidise these regimes, which have been forced to sell off nationalised industries and subject the masses to even deeper privation.

The appearance of bourgeois opposition parties in some way connected to the trade unions in post-colonial countries is a reflection of massive discontent among workers with capitalist governments formed by former national liberation movements which, once in power, necessarily carry out the dictates of imperialism. Such discontent is expressed today in South Africa in the growth of a semi-syndicalist mood among militant workers fed up with the betrayals of the reformist SACP as a co-administrator of the capitalist state. A few years ago, a number of leading trade unionists, notably including Moses Mayekiso, called for the formation of a workers party in opposition to the ANC/SACP.

But a party narrowly based on defence of the economic interests of unionised workers cannot advance a programme to address the all-sided social oppression facing the urban and rural masses. Not surprisingly, Mayekiso and many of his fellow “workerists” were ultimately won over to the SACP. Even a substantial and permanent improvement in the living conditions of the workers in such countries can only be achieved by overthrowing the capitalist order and replacing it with a planned, collectivised economy. What is needed is a revolutionary workers party which does not simply defend the particular interests of the working class, especially its better-paid unionised sector, but fights as a tribune of the people to eradicate all forms of national and social oppression.

For Permanent Revolution!

Many of the Western fake leftists who today support the pro-imperialist MDC against Mugabe hailed him as an “anti-imperialist” a generation earlier. In the 1970s, Mugabe’s ZANU and the rival ZAPU of Joshua Nkomo waged a guerilla war against the Smith regime, simultaneously engaging in murderous feuds with each other. While extending military support to the struggle against white-supremacist rule, we warned that these petty-bourgeois formations sought to *work out an accommodation with capitalism, not to destroy it*. At the 1979 Lancaster House conference in Britain, Mugabe and Nkomo set a “willing seller, willing buyer” scheme for land redistribution, offering ample compensation to those whites who agreed to sell, while poor blacks got the most barren tracts. Such land clauses were put in the Lancaster House Constitution by Britain with the full blessing of Mugabe, just as bourgeois property rights are enshrined in the new South African constitution.

When Mugabe came to power in 1980, we wrote: “In every respect the ‘Marxist’ Mugabe has demonstrated in no uncertain terms that he is a loyal lackey for imperialism—from his ‘good neighbor’ policy toward South Africa to the recent strikebreaking” (“Strikes Hit Zimbabwe-Rhodesia,” WV No. 256, 16 May 1980). Two decades of Mugabe’s rule has offered proof in the negative of Trotsky’s theory of permanent revolution: The replacement of the old white colonial elite by a black bourgeois governing party has done nothing to resolve the fundamental democratic and social questions after years of British colonial rule and white-supremacist domination in the former Rhodesia. The few white-owned farms which were taken over since 1980 were handed to ZANU-PF stalwarts.

Under imperialism, “nation-building” necessarily means one tribal or ethnic group dominating the others. A few years after taking power, Mugabe, from the dominant Shona group, unleashed a bloody attack against the Ndebele people in Matabeleland, who made up Nkomo’s base. Meanwhile, last year Zimbabwe’s Supreme Court ruled that women could

not inherit land and argued that such discrimination is “in the nature of African society.” Unemployment stands at over 50 percent, while the country has among the highest rates of people with AIDS in the world. Mugabe openly espouses vile anti-gay bigotry. For his part, Mbeki denies even that AIDS is caused by the HIV virus. Yet while the Western media hypocritically criticise such backward views, the imperialists refuse to provide the drugs and money to assist the many millions of HIV-infected people in Africa.

In countries such as Zimbabwe and South Africa, the burning democratic tasks such as agrarian revolution, equality for women and tribal/ethnic minorities and breaking the yoke of imperialist subjugation can only be realised through the Trotskyist programme of permanent revolution: the seizure of state power by the proletariat standing at the head of the peasantry and all the oppressed. In the imperialist epoch, the bourgeoisie in countries of belated capitalist development, tied by a thousand threads to the imperialist rulers and fearful above all of its own proletariat, is unable to resolve these tasks historically associated with the bourgeois-democratic revolutions of the 17th and 18th centuries in West Europe and North America.

The current land seizures have reportedly extended beyond the war veterans mobilised by ZANU-PF to include homeless township dwellers and even railway workers. The aspiration of the dispossessed peasantry of Zimbabwe to reclaim the land that was stolen from them can be a powerful motor force for proletarian revolution. But as Trotsky explained in his 1929 work *The Permanent Revolution*:

“The realization of the revolutionary alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry is conceivable only under the political leadership of the proletarian vanguard, organized in the Communist Party. This in turn means that the victory of the democratic revolution is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat which bases itself upon the alliance with the peasantry and solves first of all the tasks of the democratic revolution....

“The dictatorship of the proletariat which has risen to power as the leader of the democratic revolution is inevitably and very quickly confronted with tasks, the fulfillment of which is bound up with deep inroads into the rights of bourgeois property. The democratic revolution grows over directly into the socialist revolution and thereby becomes a *permanent* revolution.”

— *The Permanent Revolution and Results and Prospects* (1969)

This is the perspective, confirmed by the experience of Lenin and Trotsky’s Bolshevik Party in the 1917 Russian Revolution, which is fought for today by Spartacist South Africa. Especially in a small country like Zimbabwe, a socialist revolution would inevitably and almost immediately pose the task of its international extension—in the first instance to neighbouring South Africa, which supplies most of Zimbabwe’s petrol and electrical power, and beyond that to the imperialist centres.

In some measure thanks to the ISO, the lineup of class forces in Zimbabwe is the exact opposite of what Marxists seek to achieve: The working class, instead of leading the peasantry against the capitalists and landowners, is in their tow against the landless peasant masses. And the peasantry, in turn, has been mobilised by the Mugabe regime against the agricultural and urban proletariat with the cynical promise of achieving what the masses fought to win in the independence struggle: land.

In its election leaflet, the Zimbabwean ISO calls for extending the land seizures and dismisses concerns about the breakup of the commercial farms, mainly tobacco plantations which account for 40 percent of the country’s export earnings, enthusing: “Throughout Africa and Asia small-scale farmers are the mainstay of agriculture.” This is the outlook of a petty-bourgeois democrat, at best. The difference between large-scale, capital-intensive agriculture and small-scale, subsistence farming—an increase in productivity measured in orders of magni-

Powerful South African proletariat holds key to emancipation of sub-Saharan Africa from capitalist exploitation, imperialist domination.



tude—is the difference between affluence and starvation. While seeking to provide leadership to the struggles of the poor peasants for land as part of the revolutionary overthrow of the big capitalists and landlords, the proletariat advances the goal not of an equality of poverty but of an egalitarian communist society based on enormous leaps in human productivity. In his “Principles of Communism” (1847), Friedrich Engels explained:

“It follows from all this that the antithesis between town and country will likewise disappear. The carrying on of agriculture and industrial production by the same people, instead of by two different classes, is, even for purely material reasons, an essential condition of communistic association. The scattering of the agricultural population throughout the country, alongside the crowding of the industrial population in the big towns, is a state adequate only to an undeveloped stage of agriculture and industry, an obstacle to all further development, which is making itself very perceptible even now.”

From the standpoint of a collectivised, planned economy, it makes no sense to divide Zimbabwe’s large, productive, white-owned farms into small, unproductive plots. The conflict which has currently come to the fore between smallholding peasants and the agricultural proletariat can only be equitably resolved in a *revolutionary* fashion, that is, by the expropriation of the landed estates and imperialist holdings. Soviets of farm labourers and poor peasants would democratically determine which lands would be maintained as state farms and which would be distributed to individual peasants. A workers state would encourage poor peasants to join together in cooperative farms by providing tractors and other technology. In South Africa, which has no peasantry to speak of, a revolutionary workers government would simply expropriate the highly mechanised and capital-intensive commercial farms. Only under an expanding collectivised economy, based on a perspective of proletarian revolution in the advanced industrial countries and an international planned economy, could the necessary resources and technology be provided to

liberate rural workers from backbreaking labour while absorbing in industry or construction those former peasants and agricultural workers no longer required to work the land.

For a Black-Centred Workers Government in South Africa!

Explaining why Mugabe fell out of favour with the imperialists, a South African government think-tank analyst wrote: “Many African and European governments, and the United States, consider the presence of Zimbabwean troops an impediment to the establishment of their own strategic presences in Congo. The unilateral intervention of Zimbabwe in support of Kabila has never been appreciated by those who wish to do away with the Kinshasa government. It is Zimbabwe’s presence in Congo which led to the IMF and the World Bank, under the influence of the US, halting all loans to Mugabe” (*Sunday Independent*, 25 June). Mugabe’s ZANU-PF government has since teetered on the brink. Petrol queues snake through towns, power cuts loom and foreign currency reserves are virtually depleted.

The Mbeki regime has played a prominent role in trying to pressure Mugabe to withdraw from Congo, which would open the road for South African investors, who are positioned for major extension into central Africa. The ascendance of a layer of ANC politicians as black front men for white capitalist rule, not only in the government but in such major mining conglomerates as Anglo American, has facilitated South Africa’s push to join the renewed scramble by the imperialist powers to divide up the African continent’s vast resources. Under the ANC government, the racist South African bourgeoisie, as a junior partner of U.S. and British imperialism, has sharply increased capitalist investment in southern and central Africa.

Acting under the auspices of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the ANC regime invaded Lesotho in 1998 with the aim of securing

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**Hate Trotskyism,
Hate the Spartacists**

— a bulletin of opponent material

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Vanguard League**

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Reprinted from Workers Vanguard No. 667, 2 May 1997

**"Open Letter to the Spartacist League by the
National Central Committee of the Workers
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Reprinted from an unpublished letter, 1 October 1997

**"A Reply to the Workers International
Vanguard League"**
By Spartacist South Africa, 18 July 1998

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South Africa...

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the Highland Water Projects, a strategic source for all of Gauteng, South Africa’s industrial core. Now Mbeki is ready to join in enforcing the Lusaka Accord which would balkanise Congo under the aegis of the UN, whose earlier “peace-keeping” mission in that country presided over the CIA’s assassination of nationalist leader Patrice Lumumba in 1961. But the South African army is so rife with racists that black soldiers have taken to shooting white officers, as at Tempe military base. Reflecting concern over the reliability of the army in military combat, bourgeois press reports ask: “Will our sons come home in body bags?”

More fundamentally, the South African bourgeoisie’s regional ambitions have to reckon with a powerful and combative proletariat at home, which is chafing under the attacks of the ANC regime. The COSATU trade-union federation issued out of convulsive struggles under the apartheid regime, which ultimately led to its downfall. But the COSATU leadership soon came under the influence of the reformist SACP, which has historically been heavily intertwined with the ANC and ties the strategic core of the black proletariat to the bourgeois-nationalist ANC. In response to the land seizures in Zimbabwe, an April 25 statement by the COSATU tops declared: “It is crucial, both for that country and the entire Southern African region, that stability and the rule of law is installed in Zimbabwe.”

Echoing these labour lackeys of neo-



Reuters

South African AIDS activists demonstrate in Durban for access to medication. Millions in southern Africa are dying from AIDS while capitalist rulers promote bigotry and imperialists deny needed medications.

apartheid capitalism is the pseudo-Trotskyist Workers International Vanguard League (WIVL) in Cape Town. While arguing that the MDC is “no friend of workers,” the WIVL whines about the ANC government’s “quiet diplomacy approach” toward Mugabe and its failure to “condemn his attacks or the land invasions” (*Workers International News*, July 2000). WIVL should just say openly that they want the squatters off the white farms and a return to the “rule of law”!

What really worries the ANC and its tails is maintaining the “rule of law” in South Africa, where millions of impoverished black people, many with family ties to the urban proletariat, languish in desperate poverty in the rural hinterlands. More than 100 white farmers were killed last year, many of them in the

northern KwaZulu-Natal area where attacks on white farmers are openly acknowledged to be a form of “indirect” land redistribution. The *Sunday Independent* (23 April) editorialised:

“Just as Zimbabweans need to turn to the land for food and survival security, so are many black South Africans losing hope that they will ever be accommodated in an economy driven by international dictates. These marginalised people are returning to the rural areas to find patches of land large enough to feed their families. But they are being forced higher and higher up the mountains towards stony ground. When they look down into the fertile valleys, what do they see? White farmers. That’s the future reality that South Africans must face now, before it is too late.”

It is not only the land question that unites the Zimbabwean and South African masses. The Ndebele people, for

example, reside on both sides of the border, artificially drawn to suit the interests of the British colonialists. Moreover, Zimbabweans make up a sizable proportion of the migrant workers who slave in the mines and on the land in South Africa. These workers face constant harassment, roundups and deportations by the state and terror attacks from anti-immigrant vigilantes, and are used as scapegoats by the nationalist ANC for massive unemployment. At the same time, the migrant workers are a living link between the South African proletariat and workers throughout the region. It is crucial that the labour movement take up their defence against state repression: Down with the “Operation Crackdown” witchhunt! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!

We fight for a socialist federation of southern Africa, in which there will be an equal place for all the myriad peoples of the region, including those whites who accept the rule of a government based centrally on the black proletarian majority. This struggle is linked to a perspective for proletarian revolution internationally, to open the road to the social and economic emancipation of the continent. The enormous industrial and mineral resources of South Africa will not be limited to “nation-building” south of the Limpopo River, but will be harnessed to the task of aiding the impoverished masses of the entire continent to escape from famine and desperate poverty. The fight to build a South African Bolshevik party is inseparable from the struggle to reforge an authentically Trotskyist Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution. ■

ISO...

(continued from page 7)

mentioned.” Nader’s studious avoidance of black oppression in America is not accidental, but stems from his promotion of American capitalist “democracy” as a force for progress both in the U.S. and abroad. Nader emphasizes his economic nationalism and chauvinist protectionism in order to appeal to conservative, right-wing voters. This leaves little room for even making a pretense of addressing social questions like the oppression of black people under the boot of racist American capitalism at home. But the ISO in effect dismisses this as a “personal flaw” and publishes an article that is an *apologia* for Nader!

Grotesquely, they write: “Blacks are rightly suspicious of, and hold back from, movements that are silent or passive about the struggle for Black equality.” But not the ISO! They advise Nader “to make institutional racism a central component” of his political campaign, else he will lose the black vote. The 18 August issue of the ISO’s *Socialist Worker* carries an interview with a black woman supporter of the Green Party in an attempt to make him appear more attractive to black voters. To the ISO, Nader’s evasion of the

question of black oppression may be “an unacceptable political defect,” but it certainly is not going to make them think twice about their support to him.

In pushing the vote for Nader, the ISO attacks black radical Malcolm X. The ISO claims in Geier’s piece that not supporting Nader means abstaining from “having to contend for leadership among people just opening to radicalism,” and they condemn Malcolm X as an example of this:

“Many self-described revolutionaries in the 1960s held themselves aloof from the civil rights movement because it was pacifist, Christian, for integration into capitalism, and allied with liberalism and the Democratic Party. Malcolm X provided radical cover for them, criticizing from the outside the imperfect struggle of a real movement. Malcolm was forced to admit his mistake and break with conservative abstentionism.”

What the ISO hates about Malcolm X is that, as a voice for black self-defense against race terror, he represented a militant fighter against black oppression who did not bow to the dictates of the racist Democratic Party. Malcolm X told the truth and denounced Martin Luther King Jr., Bayard Rustin, et al., as the “Uncle Toms” who counseled the suffering black masses to “turn the other cheek” in the face of murderous racist attacks perpetrated by the Dixiecrats, the Southern

Pre-WWI German Social Democrat Eduard Bernstein, prominent proponent of theoretical ideology for reformism within workers movement, is echoed today by ISO leader Joel Geier in renouncing independence of the proletariat in favor of building the broadest possible “movement.”



Verlag Kurt Desch



WV Photo

Democrats. Despite the limitations of his black nationalist outlook, he saw clearly the hypocrisy of Northern white liberal Democrats like John and Robert Kennedy who “came to the aid” of blacks by sending the FBI, federal marshals and the National Guard—not to suppress the racist mobs but to clamp down on the struggles of black people. It was Malcolm X who rightly declared, “A vote for a Democrat is a vote for a Dixiecrat.” But to the craven ISO, opposition to the racist Democratic Party is tantamount to “abstentionism.”

Central to the fight to build a workers party in the U.S. is the fight for black freedom by the multiracial working class, and that will not happen so long as the proletariat is tied to any party of the ruling class, whether it be the Republicans, Democrats or Nader’s Greens. Black workers are integrated into strategic sectors of the industrial proletariat, which has the power to shatter the capitalist system. Because of their double oppression as workers and blacks in racist America, black workers have the most to gain from workers revolution and will be in the front ranks of the fight for socialism. Won to a revolutionary program, they will be the living link fusing the anger of the dispossessed ghetto masses with the social power of the multiracial working class under the leadership of a revolutionary workers party.

We fight for *revolutionary integrationism*, for the construction of a multiracial workers party that fights against every manifestation of racist oppression and for the full integration of black people into a socialist, egalitarian society. The ISO

and other reformist groups are *not* a step in that direction, but an *obstacle* to combating the bourgeois ideology which shackles the working class to its capitalist enemy.

The ISO’s support for Nader stems from their opportunism. They sensed his “unexpected popularity” and did an about-face, dropping their earlier line critical of him (*Socialist Worker*, 12 May) and becoming his staunchest supporters on the left in the hopes of gaining a few recruits. They do not challenge the illusions of youth who might be attracted to Nader out of revulsion for the Democrats and Republicans, but rather cater to and reinforce these illusions. They have no perspective for building a revolutionary workers party because they have no perspective for socialist revolution. The ISO is a reformist organization that, far from fighting for socialism, merely stands for surface modifications of the decrepit capitalist system.

Polemizing against Eduard Bernstein in 1879—who would later renounce the Marxist program for social revolution—Marx and Engels aptly captured the politics that best define the ISO today (one of those quotes that also appear in D’Amato’s “historical” piece):

“The programme is not to be *relinquished*, but merely *postponed*—for some unspecified period. They accept it—not for themselves in their own lifetime but posthumously, as an heirloom for their children and their children’s children. Meanwhile, they devote their ‘whole strength and energies’ to all sorts of trifles, tinkering away at the capitalist social order so that at least something should appear to be done without at the same time alarming the bourgeoisie.” ■

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Workers Reject Sellout Contracts

Bay Area Transit Workers Confront Racist Union-Busting

SAN FRANCISCO, September 4—Members of Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 250A launched an overtime ban in the MUNI transit system here this weekend after twice defiantly voting down a contract. Only eight out of two thousand drivers have broken the ban, which has massively disrupted transit in the city. The contract rejection is a stinging repudiation of the Local 250A officials, who recommended the deal, after having reopened the contract last year in surrender to a racist campaign against the heavily black and female MUNI drivers union. That anti-union barrage led to the passage of Proposition E last November, which cleared the road for a crackdown on the union by creating a new Municipal Transit Authority (MTA) and mandating increased disciplinary powers for management, speedup goals for service and “on-time performance,” and incentive bonuses and “merit” pay which undermine seniority.

On the same day TWU members turned down their contract, bus drivers in Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 192 on the other side of the Bay voted against their new contract offer, rightly seeing they faced the same union-busting drive taking place in San Francisco. AC (Alameda County) Transit drivers told WV that anger focuses on a draconian “absenteeism control” provision under which it will be much easier for workers to be fired. One older driver said, “If we both went out on strike that would open someone’s eyes”; another said, “We could shut down the Bay Area”; a third complained that the “leaders fight against us getting together.” When Local 192 voted to authorize a strike on August 30, a number of MUNI drivers who came out to urge a joint strike were not allowed into the meeting. Now the Local 192 tops have rejected appeals by MUNI drivers for their union to join the overtime boycott.

In Los Angeles, three unions representing drivers, mechanics and clerks are faced with a crucial contract battle as a 60-day “cooling off” period imposed by Democratic governor Gray Davis expires. The L.A. Metropolitan Transit Authority’s aim is to break up this unionized workforce through “privatization” of bus lines in areas such as the San Fernando Valley and the elimination of gains achieved by the unions over decades. Particularly in this historically “open shop” city, it is crucial for all of labor to rally behind the transit unions against union-busting.

The capitalist media blame SF transit workers for deteriorating service which is the result of incompetent management and starving the system of everything from money to drivers to buses. With private sector unions in the city already severely weakened, the capitalist establishment is out to cripple the transit unions as a crucial part of its drive to raise profits by cutting all workers’ living standards.

MUNI workers have a history of militancy which has been neither forgotten nor forgiven by the wealthy white capitalist elite which runs San Francisco. The MUNI drivers last went out in 1976, in solidarity with the city craft workers strike. Thanks to the treachery of the union tops, that strike was defeated, but the TWU was not crushed. In the aftermath, the city exacted a range of contract concessions from MUNI drivers and pushed through an array of anti-union ballot propositions. The big downtown financial interests have pursued

their vendetta against the TWU through successive Democratic Party city administrations, Mayor Willie Brown’s being only the most recent. Brown joined with the yuppie, anti-union “Rescue Muni” operation in denouncing the overtime ban. Yet the union tops embrace this capitalist politician as a “friend of labor.”

San Francisco was once a port city that was heavily unionized, the product of the historic 1934 General Strike which resulted in the unionization of longshoremen on the West Coast. As shipping moved out of the city to the containerized facilities and transshipment connections of the Port of Oakland, yuppies moved into SF, drawn by jobs in finance, high tech or media/communications. While a good proportion of MUNI riders

redbaited Murray and his wife, Ellen, a MUNI driver.

That contract was voted down by a resounding margin of almost four to one. When Local 250A president Ray Antonio, with the backing of International rep Larry Martin, came back with a slightly modified version of the same contract a month later, it was also rejected, this time by a two-to-one margin. Now the MTA has extended the deadline to September 24, to give the bureaucrats one more chance to ram the contract through. If not approved then, the old contract is automatically extended for one year.

One longtime driver told WV, “Muni operators’ union representation has sold us out, from the International rep all the way down. Management’s got them in

state power and the creation of a workers government that rips the productive forces of society out of the hands of the capitalists and institutes a planned socialist economy run by workers councils.

Mobilize the Power of Bay Area Labor!

Unionized city jobs have been one of the few places where black workers can get decent, relatively well-paying jobs. Though black people make up less than 10 percent of SF’s population, more than half of MUNI drivers are black. Many younger drivers are Asian or Latino, as an influx of immigrants has made this a “majority minority” city. Particularly in the face of the capitalists’ racist campaign against MUNI drivers, it is crucial to understand that the fate of the entire working class depends on championing the defense of *all* the oppressed. Black oppression is built into the very foundations of American capitalism: the fight for black liberation and for the emancipation of all workers go hand in hand.

With regional transit broken up into a patchwork of different agencies, the need is posed for a joint struggle by all transit workers—beginning with MUNI and AC Transit, drawing in Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) and backed up with the power of the longshore and Teamsters unions—wielding the social power workers have to withdraw their labor and shut down the flow of profits. This would lay the basis for one industrial union of all Bay Area transit workers. And such a concerted struggle would be welcomed by the vast majority of working people, blacks, Latinos and all the oppressed, whose living standards have been slashed and working conditions eroded while profits soar and the racist cops run rampant.

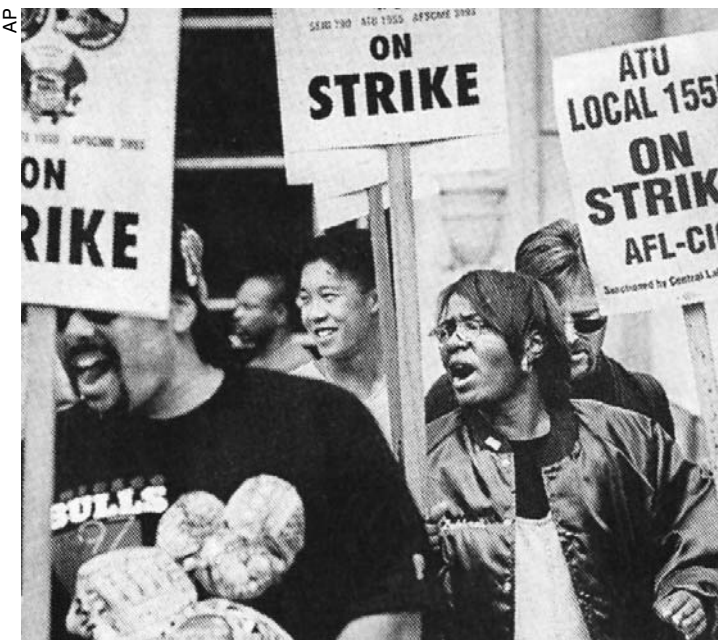
TWU bureaucrats are working overtime to squelch any talk of a strike, holding up the threat of mass firings under a city charter provision, instituted through a ballot referendum in response to the 1976 strike, which forbids strikes by city workers. Another 1976 proposition refers deadlocked pay disputes to a voter referendum, allowing the capitalists to mobilize petty-bourgeois voters against the unions. If you don’t have the right to strike, you don’t have unions! Unions themselves were once branded “illegal criminal conspiracies.” Everything of value the workers movement has won has been achieved by mobilizing the ranks of labor in hard-fought struggle on the picket lines: the entire history of labor victories is one long string of broken laws and defied court injunctions.

When New York City transit workers in TWU Local 100 geared up to strike last December as their contract expired, they were met with strikebreaking injunctions harking back to the turn of the century. These injunctions, brought down by both Democratic Party state attorney general Eliot Spitzer and Republican mayor Rudolph Giuliani, criminalized not only strike action but even advocacy of strike action. Local 100 head Willie James and TWU International president Sonny Hall not only bowed to the strikebreaking, but even used the police to intimidate the membership at union meetings.

Similarly, a strike by transit workers in San Francisco would immediately run directly up against the capitalist state, with “friend of labor” Brown acting as strikebreaker-in-chief. It is crucial to understand that the bosses’ state—the cops, the military, the courts—is nothing

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Combative BART union during 1997 strike against hated two-tier wage system. For one industrial union of all Bay Area transit workers!



are professionals with visceral class hatred and racist contempt for unionized city workers, the bulk of the riders are working people—black, Asian, Latino, white. Under MUNI’s so-called “proof of payment” system which eliminated the second driver on light rail trains, hundreds of cops harass black and immigrant youth, issuing \$100 tickets to passengers who can’t prove they paid the fare. If the transit unions emblazoned on their banners the call for free mass transit, they would win wide support from working people and the poor.

Labor Bureaucrats and the Democratic Party

At Local 250A meetings before the new contract was presented, the membership by all reports overwhelmingly demanded that *nothing* be given away. While the bureaucrats pretended to listen, they apparently had a deal already worked out and came back with a contract proposal gutting protections against arbitrary disciplinary firings, opening up union militants and minorities in particular to increased victimization.

According to MUNI drivers, barn meetings on the contract proposal erupted in an uproar when executive board member John Murray, to his credit, blew the whistle on this dirty deal, breaking an outrageous gag rule under which board members are not supposed to utter any criticism to the ranks. Reportedly, attempts by the bureaucrats to undercut Murray, a longtime supporter of Progressive Labor Party (PL), with a vicious redbaiting attack fell flat with unionists who are well aware of his views and see him as leading the opposition to the sellout. In an article on the overtime ban two days ago, the *San Francisco Chronicle* also

the pocket.” As we pointed out in “Union Tops Agree to Give Away the Store for Willie Brown—Smash Racist, Union-Busting Attacks on S.F. Transit Workers!” (WV No. 717, 6 August 1999), Brown has played a central role in going after the transit workers in the interests of the downtown capitalists organized in the Committee on Jobs. Yet the TWU misleadership refused to fight attacks on the union in order to promote his re-election. This is a clear example of how the bureaucrats’ fealty to the Democratic Party hobbles the workers’ ability to defend themselves against the capitalists’ attacks.

Constituting a privileged layer within the workers organizations, the labor bureaucracy supports capitalism and therefore sees its role as simply that of “pressuring” the ruling class for a few extra crumbs. And when the capitalists won’t give any, the labor tops shove concessions down the throats of their members with the line that they’re being “realistic.” From AFL-CIO chief John Sweeney to San Francisco Labor Council head Walter Johnson and the heads of the MUNI and AC Transit union locals, the bureaucracy’s program is to *subordinate* the interests of the working class to the interests of the bourgeoisie. Instead of mobilizing San Francisco unions to defend the MUNI drivers, for instance, Johnson & Co. are intent only on getting Democrats into office in hope of gaining influence in the corridors of power.

Integral to building a new, class-struggle leadership in the unions is the fight to break labor from the Democratic Party and to forge a multiracial workers party. Such a party is necessary to lead the working class in struggle, from defense of existing gains to the seizure of

Near East...

(continued from page 5)
"the most proletarian Communist Party in the Near East," we wrote:

"In the midst of the great social turmoil that ensued after the fall of the Iraqi monarchy in 1959, this powerful force for social revolution was betrayed by the Iraqi Stalinists and Moscow. Instead of mobilizing its working-class base to take state power in its own name, the ICP diverted the workers into supporting the bourgeois military officer Abd al-Karim Qassim."
—"Trotskyism vs. PKK Nationalism," WV No. 716, 9 July 1999

This utterly correct statement was denounced as "incredibly soft on the ICP" in a letter by K. Anderson published in the following issue ("On the Iraqi Communist Party," WV No. 717, 6 August 1999). Anderson asserted: "There's no way this party could have mobilized 'its working-class base to take state power in its own name.' ... The ICP was an obstacle to revolution, not its potential leadership." The WV Editorial Board replied, "Anderson is quite right."
In fact, this was very wrong, and was counterposed to the whole thrust of the article to which we referred readers in our



Abbas/Gamma-Liaison
Khomeini's "Islamic revolution" enslaved Iranian women in the veil. As fake lefts cheered Khomeini, we said: "Down with the Shah! Down with the mullahs! Workers to power!"

reply, "Iraqi Rulers' Bloody Road to Power" (WV No. 511, 5 October 1990). As we noted in an SL Central Committee motion adopted following an extensive internal discussion, "The statement in Anderson's letter that there was no way that the Iraqi CP 'could have mobilized 'its working-class base to take state power in its own name'" denies any contradiction between the proletarian base and Stalinist leadership. Thus any pos-

sibility for the intervention of a Trotskyist party to exploit this contradiction is eliminated and by extension any possibility of proletarian socialist revolution."

As the events in Iraq demonstrated, a revolutionary situation can, and generally does, emerge while much of the working class is still under the sway of reformist leadership. This in itself does not determine that social revolution must end in defeat, as Anderson's statement would logically imply. Rather the issue of proletarian victory or defeat hinges on whether the revolutionary vanguard can win leadership of the working masses from the reformist misleaders. During the Spanish Revolution and Civil War of the mid-1930s, Trotsky pointed out that the political consciousness of the Spanish proletariat in its mass was even higher than that of the Russian proletariat in 1917. What was lacking in Spain was a Bolshevik party, which Trotsky struggled unswervingly to create in the crucible of the revolution itself.

In the course of the internal discussion, one comrade emphasized the important difference between the Stalinist and social-democratic parties in terms of the nature of their appeal. He noted that the Moscow regime was seen "as the inheritor of the Russian Revolution, which people simply looked at and took without paying attention to the political counterrevolution that was consummated." Hence the Stalinist parties:

"were never simply equal to the socialist parties. That went on for a long time. It's only with the rise of 'Euro-Communism' and finally the elimination of the Soviet Union that the Stalinist parties became simply identical to the reformist parties. They always had an undifferentiated radicalism which set them apart, so that no black militant in his right mind would join the American Socialist Party but a lot of them joined the Communist Party."

It is notable that mass social-democratic parties, based as they are on illusions in imperialist parliamentary "democracy," never arose in the Near East or almost anywhere else in the colonial world.

In contrast, during the late 1930s and '40s Trotskyist nuclei in colonial countries like Indochina and Ceylon (Sri Lanka) gained a mass base at the expense of the Stalinists, whose embrace of the popular front and the subsequent wartime alliance of the Soviet regime with the "democratic" imperialists led the Stalinist parties to reject the struggle for national independence. Intervening in the social turmoil which accompanied the defeat and disarming of the Japanese occupation forces in Vietnam at the end of World War II, the Trotskyists were able to lead a proletarian insurrection in Saigon against the entry of British and French troops, while Ho Chi Minh's Stalinists collaborated with the "democratic" imperialists. Though bloodily suppressed by the imperialists (with the aid of the Stalinists), the Saigon insurrection provided a concrete example of how the



Quatrième Internationale

Vietnamese Trotskyist leader Ta Thu Thau. Trotskyists led 1945 Saigon workers insurrection as Stalinists welcomed return of "democratic" imperialist occupation forces.



intervention of a Trotskyist party in the proletarian upheaval in Iraq could have resulted in a socialist revolution smashing bourgeois rule there in 1958-59.

Anderson's letter represented a political departure which, taken to its logical conclusion, leads to the view that Stalinism is "counterrevolutionary through and through," i.e., that the Stalinist bureaucracy and Stalinist parties are purely and simply reactionary. This view has historically been embraced by reformists and centrists, for example the "International Committee" of Gerry Healy/David North, to jettison the Trotskyist position of unconditional military defense of the degenerated/deformed workers states (see "Anatomy of a Healyite Russia Hater—David North: Joseph Hansen's Natural Son," WV No. 456, 1 July 1988). Our small revolutionary vanguard is not immune from the powerful and pervasive alien political pressures of this post-Soviet period. What's crucial is the party's ability to correct mistakes, to clarify and resolve political differences through a thoughtful and thorough internal political debate according to our Leninist democratic-centralist norms. This particular discussion broadened and deepened our understanding of the development of the Communist movement in the Near East, examining a history of struggle to chart the course for fighters for new October Revolutions in the Near East today.

Marxists, Fake Leftists and Arab Nationalism

Amid the revolutionary turbulence in the Near East in the late 1940s and 1950s, the intervention of even a relatively small Trotskyist organization could have split the Communist parties, winning revolutionary-minded workers and intellectuals away from their Stalinist misleaders. This was the road to forging authentic Leninist vanguard parties in the region. But the perspective of forging a Leninist vanguard party is rejected by our opponents on the left, most of whom tailed the Arab nationalists.

Typical were the fake Trotskyists of the late Ernest Mandel's United Secretariat (USec), who hailed a mythical "Arab Revolution" to justify tailing after "left"-talking Arab nationalists, from military despots like Nasser to the petty-bourgeois nationalists of the Palestine Liberation Organization. The USec, in its consistent support for Palestinian nationalism, went from enthusing over indiscriminate anti-Jewish terror in the early 1970s to supporting today's "peace" deal between the PLO and Israel. The USec's support to Palestinian nationalism was conditioned by and consistent with its support for bourgeois-nationalist regimes.

When the Algerian independence struggle brought to power the petty-bourgeois nationalists of the National Liberation Front (FLN), Mandel's mentor, Michel Pablo, took a post in the capitalist government apparatus under FLN leader Ben Bella. The U.S. Socialist Workers Party, which had just passed over from Trotskyism to centrism, hailed the Ben Bella regime as a "workers and peasants government," suggesting that it was on the road to establishing a revolutionary workers government like the Bol-

sheviks in Russia. The Arab nationalist FLN pledged to preserve capitalist property, declared Islam the state religion and discriminated against the Berber minority. But the Pabloites maintained their political support even as Ben Bella bloodily suppressed a Berber revolt in 1963.

The USec's political support to bourgeois nationalists was "theorized" in a 1974 statement by its groups in the Arab region, published in English as "The Arab Revolution, Its Character, Present State, and Perspectives." Despite allusions to "socialist revolution" and even the "dictatorship of the proletariat," the USec placed itself on the same terrain as the Arab nationalists, declaring that "Arab national unity is the central task of the Arab revolution" and enthusing over its "revolutionary potential." The Pabloites' stock in trade is the notion of an objectively revolutionary "dynamic" pushing the masses toward socialism, thus obviating the need to forge a revolutionary vanguard party. But in the "Arab Revolution," the Pabloites saw a "dynamic" leading not to socialism but to the consolidation of a unified bourgeois state!

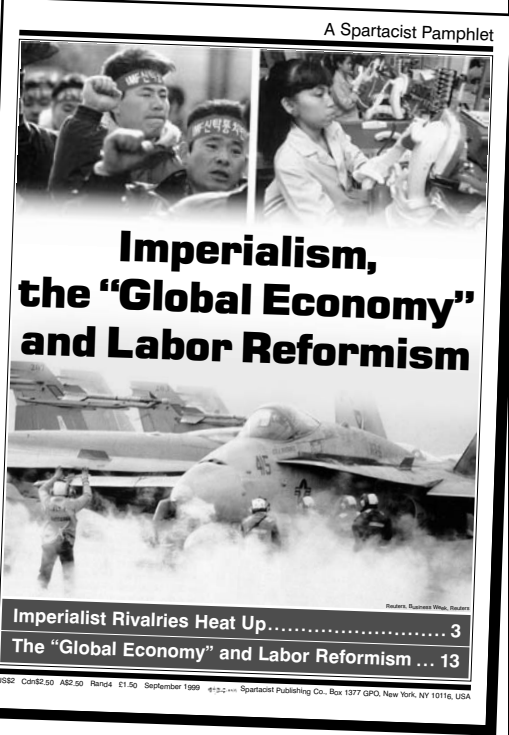
The Pabloites totally wrote off the possibility of winning the working-class base of the Stalinist parties in the Arab countries in opposition to their leaders' selling out revolutionary struggles through class-collaborationist alliances with Arab nationalists. Rather, the USec criticized the Stalinist betrayers for not capitulating enough to Nasser:

"The sectarian failure to understand the national question disarmed the Arab Communist parties, and above all the Syrian Communist Party, in their opposition to the Syrian-Egyptian union of 1958, which was in part directed against them. Instead of waging its democratic struggle in the framework of the union, the Syrian CP opposed the union as such, which isolated it completely from the Syrian masses and facilitated the repression that fell on it. Likewise, in opposing the union for the sake of supporting General Kassem, the Iraqi Communist Party lost a considerable part of its influence to the nationalists. In all these positions, the Arab Stalinist movement placed itself at the opposite pole of the nationalist movement, denigrating the national aspirations of the Arab masses in the name of a so-called class attitude, totally overlooking the revolutionary potential of the question of Arab unity."
—"The Arab Revolution, Its Character, Present State, and Perspectives"

The ostensible anti-Pabloites of Gerry Healy's "International Committee" likewise enthused over the "Arab Revolution" beginning in 1967, carrying this to its logical extreme in the coming years by acting as paid press agents for one or another Arab bourgeois regime (see "Healyism Implodes," Spartacist [English-language edition] No. 36-37, Winter 1985-86).

In contrast, we have always insisted that the idea of some transcendent, trans-class "Arab Revolution" was a mystification which impeded the genuine national and social liberation of the toilers of the Arab East. As we wrote following the 1967 Arab-Israel war: "Many so-called Marxists believe that the struggle for 'national liberation' of the Arab countries has merged with or even replaced the struggle for socialism in these countries. Accordingly they would replace the working class by petty-bourgeois cliques as the 'revolutionary agent' and view Nasser and other

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 interimperialist 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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militarists as the liberators of the Arab masses. Such support of classless ‘national liberation’ prolongs the slavery of the Arab masses to their own ruling class.”
—*Spartacist* No. 11,
March-April 1968

The Communist Road to Social Liberation

In the course of little more than a decade, the USec went from tailing the “Arab Revolution” of Nasser & Co. to hailing the “Islamic revolution” of the Ayatollah Khomeini—joined by virtually every fake-left group internationally. Prominent among these is the international tendency founded by the recently deceased Tony Cliff and led by the British Socialist Workers Party (SWP), represented in the U.S. by the International Socialist Organization (ISO). From the time of the 1950-53 Korean War, when Cliff broke with the Trotskyist movement over his opposition to unconditional military defense of the North Korean and Chinese deformed workers states against imperialism, the calling card of Cliff’s social-democratic outfit has been frothing Stalinophobia.

Cold War anti-Sovietism and tailing the fundamentalists came together for the Cliffites over Afghanistan, where the imperialists used the mullah-led fight against the 1979 Soviet intervention to wage a proxy war against the Soviet Union. Washington armed and supported the fundamentalists’ reactionary *jihād* (holy war)—which was also supported by virtually all the regimes of the Near East. We forthrightly *hailed* the intervention of the Soviet Red Army in Afghanistan against the mullah-led forces, and we called for the extension to Afghanistan of the social gains of the October Revolution. The Soviet military intervention offered the possibility of opening

the road to emancipation for the hideously oppressed people of Afghanistan, just as the Kremlin’s withdrawal in 1988-89 paved the way for the bloody onslaught which was to follow.

But the Cliffites were foursquare on the side of reaction. In the U.S., the ISO proclaimed all-out support for the mullahs: “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” (*Socialist Worker*, May 1988). The Cliffites went on to enthusiastically embrace capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union, which has led to massive immiseration of the working people and fratricidal slaughter.

The war in Afghanistan underscored the centrality of the woman question in the Islamic East, both as a motor force for social revolution and as a rallying point for imperialist-backed reaction. At the onset of the war, the *New York Times* (9 February 1980) reported, “It was the Kabul revolutionary Government’s granting of new rights to women that pushed Orthodox Moslem men in the Pashtoon villages of eastern Afghanistan into picking up the gun.” On the other side, it was Afghan women, armed and organized in militias, who were among the most ferocious fighters in defense of the modernizing nationalist regime against the U.S.-backed *mujahedin*.

Even in the most advanced capitalist “democracies” of West Europe and North America, women remain deeply oppressed despite legal and political equality, subject to discrimination in jobs and wages, assigned as their primary role in society that of housekeeper and procreator, with fundamental rights like

abortion either denied or constantly under attack. Islam, largely because it is centered in semicolonial countries where social backwardness is reinforced by imperialist subjugation, has not had to adapt its repressive moral code and curb its secular power to the principle of formal political equality derived from the bourgeois-democratic revolutions in West Europe and North America.

While introducing the most advanced capitalist technique in such backward countries, imperialism bolstered the most reactionary and repressive aspects of semi-feudal society. Despite formal independence, the semicolonial bourgeoisies remain dependent on the imperialists and fearful of any challenge to their class rule by the proletariat standing at the head of the poor peasantry and all the oppressed. These bourgeois nationalists are hostile to women’s emancipation, which can only be achieved through a thoroughgoing socialist revolution which shatters capitalist property relations and all associated social institutions.

In turn, the fight against women’s oppression is a motor force for revolutionary struggle in such countries. Describing the newly won freedom of women in Soviet Central Asia in a 1924 speech to the Communist University for Toilers of the East, Leon Trotsky said:

“Even today we can still observe in the East the rule of Islam, of the old prejudices, beliefs and customs but these will more and more turn to dust and ashes.... And this, moreover, means that the Eastern woman who is the most paralysed in life, in her habits and in creativity, the slave of slaves, that she, having at the demand of the new economic relations taken off her cloak will at once feel herself lacking any sort of religious buttress; she will have a passionate thirst to gain new ideas, a new consciousness which will permit her to appreciate her new

position in society. And there will be no better communist in the East, no better fighter for the ideas of the revolution and for the ideas of communism than the awakened woman worker.”

The Near East is a cockpit of imperialist rivalries, pursued with the aim of controlling the vital oil reserves of the region. It is also a region of deep, all-sided oppression—of women, of national, ethnic and religious minorities, as well as homosexuals and others. At the same time, the last half century has seen the considerable growth of a modern proletariat in urban centers throughout the Near East. This industrial working class has the social power to lead the oppressed masses in struggle to overturn the capitalist order and open the road to socialism. The key is forging a revolutionary leadership of the proletariat, on the model of Lenin’s Bolsheviks who led the 1917 Russian Revolution, based on the theory and program of Trotsky’s permanent revolution.

The revolutionary overturn of capitalism cannot be limited to a single country. It must necessarily sweep away the bloody bonapartists in Syria and Iraq, the medieval fundamentalists in Iran and Sudan, the reactionary monarchies of Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states as well as the Zionist rulers of Israel. It must be an internationalist struggle linked to the fight for socialist revolution in the advanced capitalist countries of Europe and North America. This requires forging Trotskyist parties, which will reappropriate the rich history of joint working-class struggle in the Near East in the fight to win the working class of the region—standing at the head of the peasantry and numerous oppressed nationalities—to the banner of Leninist internationalism. For a socialist federation of the Near East! For world socialist revolution!■

Bay Area...

(continued from page 11)

other than the executive committee of the capitalist class as a whole. Its purpose is to repress the struggles of the working class and, ultimately, to prevent the workers from smashing the system of private property and taking power themselves.

PL: No Road to Revolution

The perspective put forward by PL’s *Challenge* (July 19) for MUNI workers is: “We need an organized leadership to pass a strike authorization vote, make strike preparations and send a new negotiating team back to the table from a position of power.” This is a start but it begs the principal question, which is the nature of the leadership needed to *win*. In a leaflet titled “No Contract, No Work!” distributed to transit workers recently, PL pointed to the capitalist government as the enemy of MUNI workers and talked of the power the working class has in its numbers and “the fact that we create everything of value in society.” Nowhere in this statement, however, does PL address the central political obstacle to unleashing that power: labor’s ties to the Democratic Party.

PL cannot lead a fight to break the unions from the Democratic Party, because it argues that both are simply capitalist institutions. An article in *Challenge* (3 November 1999) describes the involvement of PL supporters in the AC Transit union in “a rank-and-file caucus for union accountability and to organize class struggle” while declaring, “We have argued that the unions are in fact capitalist institutions ‘accountable’ only to AFL-CIO president John ‘Swine’ Sweeney and his pals on Wall Street.” But how can capitalist institutions organize class struggle on behalf of the workers? PL supporters in the unions are compelled to act in accordance with the objective fact that the unions are *workers organizations* even as they continue to insist that they are not, equating trade-union bureaucrats like Larry Martin with

capitalist politicians like Willie Brown.

PL’s political analysis of the situation facing the working class is that capitalist attacks on workers’ wages and benefits are the result of “fascism,” by which it means the day-to-day repression under capitalism. This leaves no room for understanding the function of the trade-union bureaucracy as an agency for policing the working class *from within*, which the capitalists prefer, when possible, to relying solely on naked repression. In fact, fascism means the total destruction of the workers organizations.

The unions must be defended as the only organizations for self-defense against the capitalists that workers currently have. Marxists call for the greatest unity of the workers against the capitalist exploiters while seeking maximum political clarity amid competing tendencies in order to win the most conscious workers to the revolutionary program. The job of communists in the unions is to wage a struggle to politically defeat the trade-union bureaucracy and replace it with a class-struggle leadership.

PL’s recent contract leaflet does not even mention the burning need for the union to take up the fight against racial and sexual discrimination in the face of a viciously racist campaign against the MUNI drivers. This disarms union militants opposed to the labor bureaucracy, whose commitment to capitalism means maintaining racial divisions in the working class. While PL supporters are often known as anti-racist activists, in its political program PL liquidates the struggle against the special oppression of blacks as a race-color caste into an abstract conception of working-class unity. This has led PL, for example, to renounce the defense of affirmative action, calling it “A Weight on the Fight Against Racism” (*Challenge*, 7 February 1996). And PL has never effectively taken up the cause of death row political prisoner and former Black Panther Mumia Abu-Jamal, refusing to defend him until recently.

The path to victory for the working class lies through the forging of a revolutionary workers party that champions

all the exploited and oppressed against the capitalist class enemy, fighting for full equality for blacks and women and for full citizenship rights for all immigrants. Such a revolutionary party must base itself on a program of transitional demands, linking the fight for the pressing needs of the workers today to the necessity for workers revolution. In this fashion the working class can lead all the oppressed in a victorious struggle for state power. That is the goal of the Spartacist League.■

Ohio 7...

(continued from page 3)

much of the left toward the Ohio 7. When Herschel Grynszpan, a Jewish youth who shot a Nazi official in the German embassy in Paris, was put on trial, Trotsky wrote in “For Grynszpan”:

“We Marxists consider the tactic of individual terror inexpedient in the tasks of the liberating struggle of the proletariat as well as oppressed nationalities. A single isolated hero cannot replace the masses. But we understand only too clearly the inevitability of such convulsive acts of despair and vengeance. All our emotions, all our sympathies are with the self-sacrificing avengers even though they have been unable to discover the correct road....

“People come cheap who are capable only of fulminating against injustice and bestiality. But those who, like Grynszpan, are able to act as well as conceive, sacrificing their own lives if need be, are the precious leaven of mankind.”

The politics of the Ohio 7 were once held by thousands of radicals during the heyday of the Vietnam antiwar movement and the New Left, who wrote off the possibility of winning the working class to a revolutionary program and saw themselves as an auxiliary to “Third World” liberation movements. But few put their words into action. Among those who did were the Weathermen, who like the Ohio 7 came out of the New Left Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). And like the Ohio 7, the Weathermen were spurned by the “respectable,” reformist left when the full brunt of government repression came

down upon them. Typically, the remnant of SDS dominated by the Stalinist Progressive Labor Party (PL) wrote in a 1970 leaflet titled “SDS: Mass Action Not Mad Bombings”: “We absolutely condemn and have nothing to do with terrorist bombings that only attack and intimidate the people!”

In our defense of the Weathermen against state repression, we noted: “The response of the vast majority of the ostensibly revolutionary organizations to the terrorists has been frighteningly lacking in basic solidarist impulse, a complex of outright gutlessness and infantile sectarianism which bodes ill for the left’s ability to fight back by political means against ruling-class repression” (“Terrorism and Communism,” *Spartacist* No. 17-18, August-September 1970). The class-struggle, nonsectarian defense policy of the PDC is based on the old Wobbly (Industrial Workers of the World) slogan: “An injury to one is an injury to all!”

In our fight to build a Bolshevik party to lead the multiracial proletariat to power in the imperialist “belly of the beast,” we seek to win to our revolutionary Marxist program militants with the dedication and courage of Jaan Laaman, Ray Levasseur and their comrades. Only a socialist revolution can overthrow the tyranny of this capitalist system that wants to murder Mumia Abu-Jamal, that locks up fighters like the Ohio 7 and that daily crushes striking workers and ghetto youth with its cops and courts.

* * *

Laaman and Levasseur are part of the PDC’s monthly stipend program. They along with Manning and Williams are also supported by the December 16 Committee. To learn about the PDC’s monthly stipend program and the fight to free all class-war prisoners: Partisan Defense Committee, P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013-0099; e-mail: 75057.3201@compuserve.com. To contact the December 16th Committee: Box 21073, 2000 SW College, Topeka, KS 66621; e-mail: dec16th@hotmail.com.■

Black Democrats...

(continued from page 16)

central concern is to preserve faith in the “justice” of American capitalist rule. On August 26, the rally organizers ensured that a tape of Mumia’s powerful voice would be heard by as few people as possible, playing it only after the vast majority of the crowd had dispersed. The reason for this was clear, as Jamal’s message included a stinging indictment of Clinton’s Democrats, demanding “When will African Americans learn that the two major parties are both parties of white supremacy and corporate control?” Mumia continued:

“No doubt, you’ll hear many climb to the rostrum and preach to you of the value of voting. You may even have some politicians come to you today promising the moon. But look at history. Bill Clinton, what some have called the nation’s first black president, savaged *habeas corpus* for the first time since the Civil War. So-called ‘welfare-reform’—his idea—has been a war on the poor.... Why vote for your own oppression? Why vote for death row? Why vote for DWB [driving while black]? Why vote for the prison-industrial complex?”

The political chains forged by the petty-bourgeois black “leaders” and the pro-capitalist labor bureaucrats that bind blacks and labor to the capitalist Democratic Party bind them as well to the racist oppression which is rooted in the American capitalist system. The racist cop terror which the liberals politely term “racial profiling” enforces the segregation of the mass of the black population at the bottom of this society. The fight for black liberation and the emancipation of the entire working class require the forging of a revolutionary workers party which champions the cause of all the exploited and oppressed in the struggle for proletarian state power. This is the revolutionary perspective the Spartacist League expressed in the banner at our literature table on August 26: “Break with the Democrats! Build a Workers Party to Fight for Socialist Revolution!”

Fake Left Pushes Democratic “Lesser Evil”

In contrast, several self-avowed “socialist” and “revolutionary” organizations came to the August 26 rally to gather under the Democratic Party tent, including the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), which is nominally running its own presidential candidate, James Harris. The SWP’s claim to stand for the political independence of the working class from the capitalist parties was belied by its uncritical efforts in building the Democrats’ rally. A statement issued by Harris ludicrously claimed that the Sharpton-led demonstration pointed “in the opposite direction from what the capitalist rulers and the Democratic and Republican parties are driving us toward” (*Militant*, 11 September)!

In recent months, the reformist Interna-

tional Socialist Organization (ISO) has turned its membership into virtual foot soldiers for capitalist Green Party candidate Ralph Nader. But the ISO knew that Nader, who doesn’t even make a nod to the black population—instead sneering that it is “divisive” to “focus on discriminatory injustice,” i.e., racism—would have little appeal to the overwhelmingly black crowd on August 26. So the ISO made its support for Nader invisible to all but those who bothered to buy its press. Instead, the ISO put forward its liberal “Campaign to End the Death Penalty” face, with a newsletter featuring black Illinois Congressman Jesse Jackson Jr. on the front page. All-purpose opportunists, the ISO simply tailors its politics of pressuring the Democrats to fit whatever crowd they are working. In D.C. they cheered Sharpton; on campuses they appeal to liberal youth to back Nader’s candidacy.

Cravenly adapting to the black liberals, the Progressive Labor Party (PL) distributed a leaflet announcing, “We critically support this march against racial profiling.” Headlined “Redeem the Dream: Fight for Communist Revolution!”, the

into the Democratic Party. Only approved signs were allowed, all speeches were censored, no “subversives” were allowed to speak. John Lewis, then a militant civil rights activist, was pressured into deleting a statement from his speech that the “party of Kennedy is the party of [Mississippi segregationist Senator] Eastland.”

The Fight for Black Freedom

The mass civil rights battles shook the bourgeois order in the U.S. In response, the capitalist rulers dismantled Jim Crow segregation in the South and granted formal legal equality. But this did not open a new period of black equality and advancement. Black oppression is rooted in the foundations of American capitalism. The hellish conditions of ghetto life—the chronic mass unemployment, decrepit housing and schools, racist cop brutality—could not and cannot be overcome by a new civil rights bill. Some 40 years after the March on Washington, conditions for the majority of the black population in this country are, by every index, even worse.

From the podium on August 26, Haitian immigrant Abner Louima, the victim

The question of building a party that represents the interests of black people is a central and urgent task in the fight for the liberation of the working class and all the oppressed from a system rooted in exploitation and racial oppression. As we wrote in response to Sharpton’s efforts to try to channel the mass protests against the cop killing of Amadou Diallo into support for the Democrats:

“That black people vote for a party that has done more to increase the misery of the ghetto masses and augment the powers of racist state repression than even its Republican predecessors reflects the absence of a political party that fights for them. Black people are in their overwhelming majority working people. They need a party that fights for their interests, against strikebreaking and racist terror, against ever more grinding exploitation and poverty and all-sided oppression—not a party that makes empty promises once every four years come election time, but a party that mobilizes labor/black power in the factories and on the streets. They need a party that understands that the fight against racist oppression means a fight to get rid of the capitalist ruling class which foment racism to divide the working class and maintain its profits and class rule. They need a party based on the



Rasasi Dais

Al Sharpton stumping for Hillary Clinton’s Senate campaign. NYC cops brutalize black youth as Democrats and Republicans wage war on the poor.



Jonathan Lipkin/Impact Visuals

leaflet captured PL’s trademark mix of “revolutionary” rhetoric and liberal politics. PL uncritically hailed the 1963 march, declaring: “Over 500,000 communists and non-communists in the Civil Rights Movement held a march... to declare a final offensive to abolish legalized segregation (Jim Crow-based capitalism).”

The 1963 March on Washington was originally planned to put pressure on John F. Kennedy’s Democratic Party administration to stop its foot-dragging on the Civil Rights Act. It was supposed to pass in front of the White House. Kennedy got wind of this and called in the “respectable” black civil rights leaders, headed by Martin Luther King, and read them the riot act. Orchestrated from the White House, the march became a giant liberal prayer fest to channel the masses back

of depraved sexual torture by the NYPD, and the parents of Amadou Diallo, who was gunned down in a hail of 41 bullets by New York cops, gave powerful and bitter testimony to the rampant cop terror in the inner cities. But the purpose of Sharpton et al.’s “Redeem the Dream” rally was not opposition to the racist cops—they were very clear on that one. Rather it was to reinforce illusions in the cops’ capitalist masters in the White House. On the eve of the rally, Sharpton met with Attorney General Janet Reno to demand that the government appoint an “overseer” of the NYPD and that it withhold funds from police departments which practice “racial profiling.” But it is this very administration that has poured millions into funding the thousands more cops who are terrorizing the ghettos!

When New York City exploded in protests over the cop killing of Amadou Diallo, Sharpton and the black Democrats rushed in to try to contain them within capitalist electoral politics, coming up with a program for police “reform” aimed at preserving the authority of the strike-breaking, racist forces of the capitalist state. As 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 cities through mass labor-centered protest against cop terror.”

In the part of John Lewis’ speech that was censored at the 1963 march, he asked: “Where is our party? Where is the political party that will make it unnecessary to have Marches on Washington?”

understanding that the fundamental division in this racist society is not by skin color but between two counterposed classes—the small handful who own all the means of production and the vast majority who must sell their labor power in order to survive. That kind of party is a multiracial revolutionary workers party.”

An example of such a workers party in action was seen in New York City last October 23 in the nearly 10,000-strong mobilization—initiated by the Partisan Defense Committee and heavily built by the Spartacist League and Labor Black League—that ran the Klan out of New York City. Standing on the other side of the barricades and working overtime to try to stop this independent mobilization of the working class were Al Sharpton and the Democratic Party establishment who preached “tolerance” for the KKK lynchers.

The Spartacist League originated in the period of the civil rights movement and was shaped in that struggle. In opposition to both the liberal pacifism of Martin Luther King and the growing tendencies toward black nationalist separatism, we fought for a program of *revolutionary integrationism*—the fight for the assimilation of black people into an egalitarian socialist society. The road to black freedom lies in the struggle to shatter this racist capitalist system through proletarian revolution. The power to do that lies in the hands of the multiracial working class. But that power cannot be realized unless a class-struggle labor movement champions the cause of black liberation and breaks the chains, forged by the labor bureaucrats and black politicians, that tie working people and blacks to the parties of the capitalist class enemy. The purpose of the Spartacist League/U.S. is to build the revolutionary internationalist party that will lead the struggle for the class rule of the proletariat. Black liberation through socialist revolution! ■

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No. 15

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Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

NYC Transit...

(continued from page 16)

financial records from Local 100’s headquarters by “threatening to sue the union for violating the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act.” The so-called Landrum-Griffin Act of 1959, which was initially aimed primarily at shackling the powerful Teamsters union, has long been a favored weapon for anti-union lawsuits by Schwartz’s Association for Union Democracy (AUD), which also braintrusts other pro-court “reform” groups, like the Committee for Real Change in AFSCME District Council 37 and Teamsters for a Democratic Union.

Their own recent experience with court injunctions, let alone gut impulses, should convince NYC transit workers that the government’s only interest in meddling within the labor movement is to weaken the unions and reduce their capacity to struggle. The unified response of all bourgeois politicians against the TWU last December underlines yet again that the capitalist state—its cops, courts and military—is the executive committee of the capitalist class as a whole, the instrument for the suppression of the working class and oppressed. Yet about the only “principle” New Directions has ever held has been to run to the courts and other agencies of the capitalist state against its rivals in the union. The Marxist Spartacist League opposes *on principle* any intervention by the bosses’ government into the labor movement. As we wrote in a recent article on the AUD (“Lawyers for Government Union-Busting,” WV No. 738, 30 June):

“Bringing the courts into the unions is counterposed to the very purpose of union democracy: open debate over conflicting strategies in order for the workers to select a leadership which will fight for their class interests *against* the employers and their state. Self-proclaimed ‘oppositionists’ who take the unions to court are traitors to the working class who deserve the scorn of every worker. By their appeals to the bosses’ state, they prove that they are fundamentally no different from the corrupt bureaucrats they seek to replace. Labor must clean its own house!”

With the Feds breathing down their necks, Willie James and seven other top officials recently agreed to pay back some \$53,000 in credit card charges. James recently announced that he would not run for re-election, reportedly turning over the reins to Manhattan and Bronx bus (MaBSTOA) VP Gil Rodriguez. Rodriguez was so zealous in policing the union ranks on behalf of the capitalist courts last December that he even called out the NYPD to arrest two *Workers Vanguard* supporters for distributing an SL leaflet demanding “Defend Labor’s Right to Strike! Bust the Union-Busters! Break with the Democrats—For a Workers Party!”

NYC transit workers have *no choice* in the upcoming union elections. Both

WORKERS VANGUARD
No. 738, 30 June 2000

Association for Union Democracy
Lawyers for Government Union-Busting

On June 15, a federal court judge ruled that the government would not sue the union for violating the Landrum-Griffin Act of 1959. What led to this ruling? The court cited the fact that the government had not shown that the union was a threat to national security. The court also cited the fact that the union had a long history of peaceful activities. The court's decision is a victory for the union and a setback for the government.

From the Communist Party and the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) to the American Labor Education Organization (ALEO), the government has tried to use the courts to suppress the union. The court's decision is a victory for the union and a setback for the government.

Max Shachtman and Joseph P. Kamp are the authors of the book "The Union-Busters: How the Government Tried to Destroy the Teamsters Union." The book is available from the Workers Vanguard.

At transit workers rally on December 15, New Directions enforced injunction criminalizing advocacy of strike action. AUD sponsors anti-union court suits by ND. For more on AUD, order WV No. 738 from Spartacist Publishing Company.

wings of the present bureaucracy argue for reliance on the politicians and government agencies of the capitalists and oppose mobilizing transit workers in class struggle against management, which is itself a government agency. While New Directions looks to the Feds’ “anti-corruption” inquisition to boost it into power, several “old guard” VPs are pushing a scheme to split Local 100 into separate subway and bus locals in order to maintain their little fiefdoms and advance their own careers. From dragging the union into the capitalist courts to trying to reverse gains won through decades of hard-fought organizing struggles, the pro-capitalist union tops will do anything to hold on to their petty privileges.

The division of the union into separate bus and subway locals would be a devastating blow, sapping the power and unity of this industrial union and paving the way for one section to scab on the other in the future. James is also pushing a scheme to establish a separate division of the local for the cleaners, the lowest-paid section of the union. Some cleaners support this proposal because they have been treated like second-class citizens by the union leadership. Nevertheless, such a move would only weaken the defense of the cleaners by the union as a whole against company attacks by isolating them from the rest of the local, undermining the principle of industrial unionism.

Aided by the James bureaucracy, Giuliani launched a vicious redbaiting witch-hunt last December against New Directions as “Marxist” agitators. In fact, like their patrons in the AUD, the “leftists” in New Directions—which is hailed by reformist groups like the International Socialist Organization and Solidarity—are mainly demoralized social democrats who reject the fight to mobilize the working class in its own class interests and those of all the oppressed and instead promote the lie that the capitalist state acts (or can be made to act) in the interests of the working class.

In the February *Hell on Wheels*, Downs noted that “trampling on the free speech rights of transit workers was a bi-partisan effort” and said that “workers need a

political party of their own,” pointing as a model to the “Labor Party” sham set up a few years back as a shill for the Democrats. In fact, New Directions is no less wedded to the capitalist Democrats than the rest of the AFL-CIO bureaucracy. When the injunctions came down in December, ND denounced Republican Giuliani but did not raise a peep about Democrat Spitzer or Hillary Clinton’s explicit support for use of the strikebreaking Taylor Law against the union. And after the 18 cleaners were fired, ND counseled (in an April 25 leaflet) reliance on “a class action suit in Federal court” and “commitments from several elected officials to hold City Council investigation and public hearings.” ND did nothing to mobilize union power to defeat the victimizations. ND admits that “for weeks we bit our tongue and kept silent about the role 80 West End [Local 100 headquarters] was playing.”

The victimization of these largely minority and women cleaners is part of the racist and sexist discrimination wielded by the transit bosses at every turn. While ND attacks James for his 1997 sweetheart deal replacing unionized cleaners by slave-labor “workfare,” it calls only to “stop workfare in transit” without raising any concrete demands to



NYPD surrounded TWU headquarters on eve of contract deadline as Republicans and Democrats imposed strikebreaking court injunctions.



defend these desperately exploited welfare recipients. This amounts to a call to drive “workfare” workers out onto the streets. We call for bringing these workers into the union with full union wages and protections. Likewise, in its pandering to the most backward workers ND willfully ignores pervasive anti-immigrant, anti-woman and anti-gay bigotry in the workplace.

Many workers read *Hell on Wheels* simply because they are starved for any information about union activities and company attacks, including recent disciplinary atrocities. But what ND didn’t mention in the May “Discipline Issue” of *Hell on Wheels* is that it supports the presence of transit security guards (company cops) in Local 100, and naturally seeks their votes. The courts and cops are at the core of the capitalist state, which exists to maintain the class domination and profit system of a wealthy ruling minority against the working class and all the oppressed. *Cops, courts out of the union!*

While ND tries to make hay out of some TWU VP’s hefty bar tabs at an Irish pub in the Bronx, what’s really corrupt is the millions siphoned out of union dues that go into COPE slush funds for the Democratic Party. The bosses and their politicians don’t give a damn about “corruption” so long as the labor bureaucrats act to enforce “class peace” against a restive membership. On the contrary, the corruption and heavy-handed bureaucratism which infest the labor movement are by-products of the very role of the union officialdom, which is to police the working class on behalf of the capitalists. And ND is just as willing to do that job as is the James leadership. As we wrote in our AUD article:

“The ‘reformers’ preach ‘democracy’ in order to get themselves into positions of power; they oppose ‘corruption’ because they don’t have their own hands on the treasury yet; they occasionally pay lip service to ‘militancy’ because they have not yet had the opportunity to push through a sellout contract themselves.... “The struggle for union democracy and the mobilization of labor independently of and against the capitalists are directly linked to the forging of a class-struggle leadership in the unions and the fight for a revolutionary workers party.”■

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Sharpton's August 26 Washington, D.C. Rally

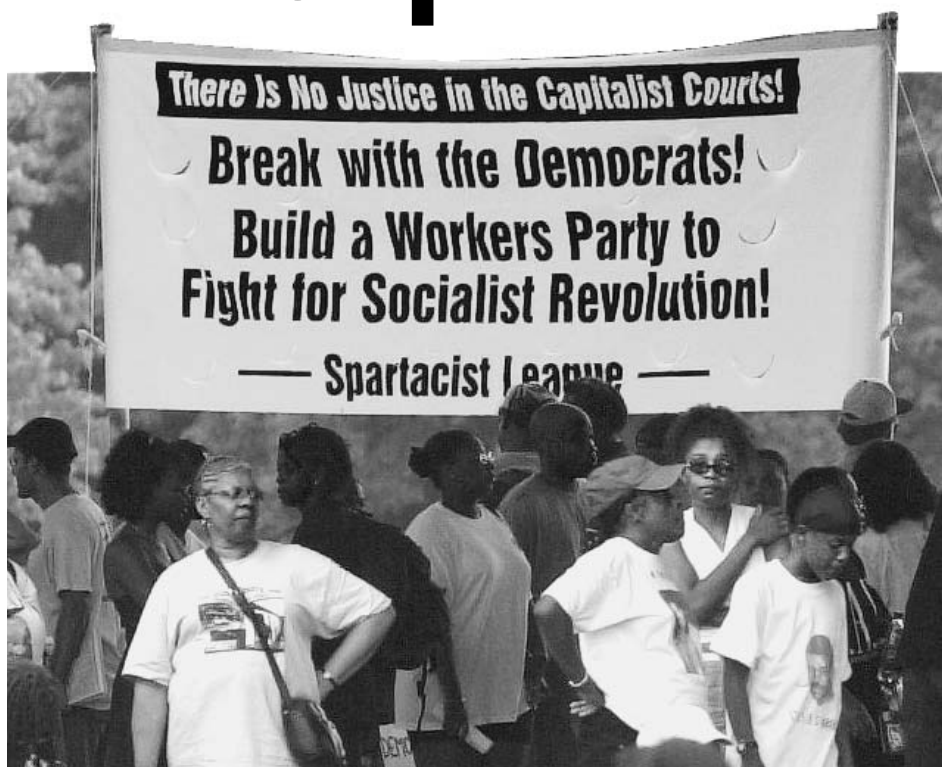
Black Democrats: Front Men for Racist Capitalist Rule

As part of their cynical shell game aimed at rallying the black population to vote for the Democrats in the November elections, former FBI fink Al Sharpton and his fellow black Democrats called a protest against police brutality in commemoration of the 1963 "March on Washington" at the Lincoln Memorial on August 26. Among the thousands of people who came out was a retired black school teacher who carried a placard reading "We Demand an End to Police Brutality Now!" It "has yellowed with age," he said, explaining that he had carried the same sign at the 1963 march.

In 1963, the liberal leadership of the civil rights movement used the March on Washington to try to contain the anger and militancy of the many thousands impelled into the tumultuous battles for black equality within the confines of bourgeois electoral politics, in particular tying the movement to the Democratic Party. As Malcolm X, who was scathing in his indictment of the 1963 march as the "farce on Washington," wrote:

"In 1963, one of their devices to let off the steam of frustration was the march on Washington.... In '64, what was it? The civil-rights bill.... What will they give us in 1965? I just read where they planned to make a black cabinet member. Yes, they have a new gimmick every year. They're going to take one of their boys, black boys, and put him in the cabinet, so he can walk around Washington with a cigar—fire on one end and fool on the other."

—"Prospects for Freedom in 1965," *Malcolm X Speaks* (1966)



WV Photo

Sharpton-led August 26 protest was aimed at hustling votes for Democratic Party. We fight for a multiracial workers party to champion cause of all the oppressed.

This year these fools for the Democratic Party, the black elected officials, were on stage trying again to hoodwink the black masses into seeing the Democrats as their "friend."

The message on the flyer building for the August 26 rally—"Vote in November to ensure justice for all!"—was brought home by a parade of Democratic Party

speakers, from Washington, D.C. mayor Anthony Williams to Clinton cabinet member Andrew Cuomo. Michigan Congressman John Conyers declared, "On November 7, let's turn this rally into the political clout that it takes in America to make change." Recognizing that Gore's selection of Joseph Lieberman—a virulent opponent of affirmative action—as

his running mate could present a problem in getting out the vote, Conyers tried to dress him up as a fighter for black rights, describing how in 1963 he marched along with "another young attorney...Joseph Lieberman."

Lieberman was a central architect of the "New" Democrats' strategy of appealing to the white racist vote to get back into power. Clinton/Gore rode into office in good part by putting the Democratic Party forward as the standard-bearer for racist "law and order." This was symbolized by Clinton's 1992 campaign, during which he returned to Arkansas to personally oversee the execution of a brain-damaged black man, Ricky Ray Rector. A *Washington Post* (27 August) article titled "Democrats Neutralize GOP's Edge on Crime" quotes a former prosecutor's statement at the time: "You can't law-and-order Clinton. If you can kill Rector, you can kill anybody."

At the D.C. rally, Sharpton raised the case of death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. Mumia was framed up and sentenced to die precisely because his eloquent and outspoken opposition to cop terror and racist oppression represented what the rulers of this country fear and loathe, the spectre of black revolt. We fight for Jamal's freedom as part of our fight for the abolition of the racist death penalty. But for the Democratic Party liberals and black politicians who call for a "new trial" for Jamal, the

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New Directions: Finks for Government Union-Busting Feds Hands Off NYC Transit Union!

TWU Elections: No Choice

NEW YORK CITY—In the months since Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100 was slammed with draconian injunctions against a threatened strike last December, the NYC transit bosses and the capitalist government have continued to wage nonstop war against this potential powerhouse of NYC labor. Earlier this year, the company carried out a mass firing of 18 unionized cleaners at the 240th Street shop, and then ransacked the office of the union rep there, who it also tried to fire. Now Labor Department agents are prying into the union's internal affairs with the

aim of bringing it directly under the thumb of the bosses' government.

The Local 100 bureaucracy under President Willie James worked hand in glove with the transit bosses, Mayor Giuliani and Democratic state attorney general Spitzer in enforcing their injunctions, which criminalized not only striking but even uttering the word "strike." The New Directions (ND) "dissidents," who control several key divisions in the local and nearly half the Executive Board, likewise opposed strike action, cynically talking more "militant" only after thousands of combative TWU members turned out for two pre-strike rallies. Even after mass meetings of thousands on December 14 voted to strike in defiance of Spitzer/Giuliani's injunctions, ND enforced the

government's dictates to the letter at a rally the next day.

Now, in order to further its prospects against the "old guard" in hotly contested union elections this December, ND has welcomed the Feds in to investigate "credit card abuse" by James and other Local 100 officials. Corine Scott-Mack, a former ND leader who defected to the James wing during the 1997 local elections, was briefly fired from her position as a vice president after an Executive Board hearing in May, for allegedly buying a few concert tickets and treating her staffers to a meal on the union's American Express account. Smelling an election year "scandal," ND clamored for government intervention from the get-go. Local 100 Executive Board member

Steve Downs declared in ND's *Hell on Wheels* (May 2000):

"We would prefer that any financial wrong-doing be cleaned up by the Executive Board. But, if the James team refuses to allow the Board open access to the expense account records, we will take the matter outside the union."

Another ND official, Conductors and Tower Operators chairman Mike Carube, told the *Chief-Leader* (19 May), a civil service newspaper widely read by city workers, "We want an outside audit, by the [Manhattan] District Attorney or someone else."

A few months later, the *Chief-Leader* (18 August) reported that ND presidential candidate Roger Toussaint and ND attorney Arthur Schwartz had secured

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