

Democrats, Republicans—Enemies of Workers, Minorities

For a Workers Party to Fight for Socialist Revolution!



Economist

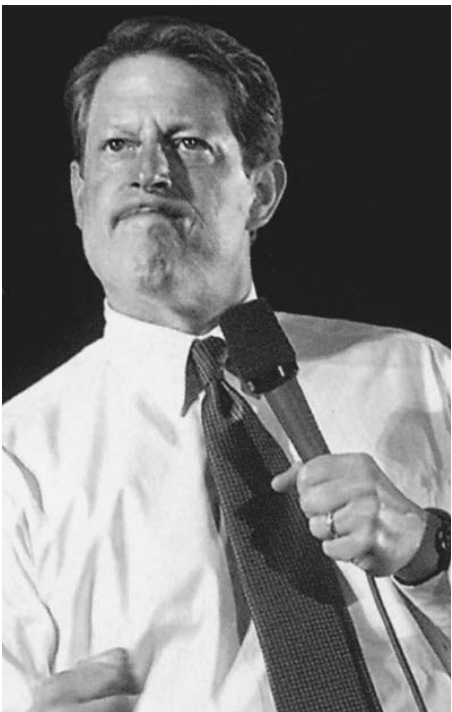
Millennium Elections:

Deadheads Deadlock

White

House

Scramble



AFP

NOVEMBER 13—For many millions of working people in this country, just earning enough to get by every day is a scramble. Now we are witness to the spectacle of a scramble between the heir of a Texas oil dynasty and the scion of Tennessee’s political aristocracy over who gets to occupy a 130-room mansion at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. As the immediate future of the imperial presidency—the American equivalent of the monarchy—teetered on whether the holes in a few thousand voting cards had been properly punched, Palm Beach, Florida became the epicenter of American politics.

The morning after the polls closed, both Democrat Al Gore and Republican George W. Bush dispatched an army of lawyers to Florida. Speaking at a White House press conference, Clinton said: “The American people have now spoken, but it’s going to take a little while to determine exactly what they said.” Five days and three recounts later, there is still no president-elect and the number of undecided states seems to be increasing daily. After lecturing Gore not to drag the elections into the courts, Bush himself moved for a federal court injunction to stop a manual recount in Palm Beach. In turn, the Gore team berated Bush for trampling on the racist banner of “states’ rights” the Republicans hold high.

As Gore supporters organized a series of “pro-democracy” protests around the country, Democratic stalwart Jesse Jackson barnstormed through Florida to build support in the streets for Gore’s battle for the White House. Thousands of Jewish retirees, some bearing the numbers tattooed on their wrists in Hitler’s concentration camps, were incensed that their votes for Gore ended up being tallied for hereditary clerical-fascist Pat Buchanan. And there was justifiable rage among black voters, many of whom were stopped by police roadblocks, prevented from entering polling stations or denied a ballot because they had served time years earlier, even if they had a voter registra-

tion card. Fully 13 percent of black men are today disenfranchised because of felony convictions.

Playing on the felt sense of racist disenfranchisement, Jackson intoned: “The right to vote came out of Selma in blood.” But the hard-fought, bloody struggles waged by black people to win the most elementary democratic rights are channeled by the likes of Jackson into support for the party of the old Southern slavocracy, of Dixiecrat segregation, of the speedup on death row, of the destruction of “welfare as we know it.”

Echoing Jackson is the reformist International Socialist Organization (ISO), whose already threadbare pretensions to socialism are completely exposed by their awe of the bourgeois state and its “democratic” trappings. Having campaigned for capitalist Green candidate and Democratic shill Ralph Nader, who is persona non grata among liberals for apparently having thrown the election to Bush, the ISO is now aggressively agitating to get Gore in. An ISO leaflet distributed at a pro-Democratic Party rally in San Francisco on November 11 demands: “Respect the

popular vote!” and pleads, “We want democracy.”

This *is* capitalist democracy, which is nothing but a screen for the *iron dictatorship of capital*. Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin polemicized against a far more erudite opportunist, German Social Democrat Karl Kautsky, only a year after the Bolsheviks led the first victorious workers revolution in history in his 1918 *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*. Lenin explained:

“Bourgeois democracy, although a great historical advance in comparison with medievalism, always remains, and under capitalism is bound to remain, restricted, truncated, false and hypocritical, a paradise for the rich and a snare and deception for the exploited, for the poor....

“Even in the most democratic bourgeois state the oppressed people at every step encounter the crying contradiction between the *formal* equality proclaimed by the ‘democracy’ of the capitalists and the thousands of *real* limitations and subterfuges which turn the proletarians into *wage-slaves*. It is precisely this contradiction that is opening the eyes of the people to the rottenness, mendacity and hypocrisy of capitalism. It is this contradiction that the agitators and propagand-

ists of socialism are constantly exposing to the people, *in order to prepare them for revolution!*”

The Spartacist League stands for the forging of a working-class party like the Bolshevik Party to overturn, by socialist revolution, the rotting capitalist order. Accordingly, we stand in implacable opposition to the dual parties of capitalism, as well as to the petty-bourgeois would-be reformer of the “excesses” of Wall Street, Ralph Nader. *Break with the Democrats—For a workers party to fight for socialist revolution!*

Corpse Wins in Missouri

Maureen Dowd captured some of the flavor of Election 2000 in her column in the *New York Times* (9 November). Bush couldn’t “even properly steal the election in a state run by his brother,” she remarked, while “the Gore campaign, run by a Chicago Daley, has now declared war over banana republic voting oddities. And the WASP Corleones have gone to the mattresses. The surest sign that the Family means business is that Poppy has recalled his old consigliere, James Baker, to duel against Warren Christopher in a legal battle of the \$1,500 suits.” Dowd observed:

“The most banal race in history has produced the most electrifying election in history, with the presidency dancing on the head of a pin for mere handfuls of votes, precisely because the matched set of dauphins were so inadequate and indistinct that they were preordained to collide on the runway.”

Aptly enough in a society saturated with religious humbug, both major candidates in this millennial election proclaimed themselves “born again.” But they couldn’t top former Missouri governor Mel Carnahan, who won a Senate seat two weeks after he died in a plane crash. With Gore looking to be out of a job, we’re surprised no tabloid ran the headline, “Stiff Wins in Missouri, Loses White House.” Liar and crook “Tricky Dick” Nixon was resurrected as the patron saint of constitutional honor and a profile in courage for forsaking the White House in 1960 after the Daley machine in Chicago stole the ballot for John F. Kennedy with the votes of several thousand dead people. (None of the pundits report what old man Joe Kennedy,

continued on page 12



Build PDC Holiday Appeal for Class-War Prisoners!

“Every war has its hazards: the class war more than any other, for the organized workers wage it for the largest stakes in all the world’s history—for the Earth and all its fruits, for the complete expropriation of the present-day ruling class.... The ruling class today is the capitalist class. They maintain themselves in power by force and violence. They make the laws according to their own class interests. The revolutionary movement is a menace to their system. Therefore it is an outlaw movement. Everyone who takes an active part in the

struggle for the liberation of the working class takes a chance of going to prison.”

—James P. Cannon, “The Political Prisoners” (May 1921), reprinted in *James P. Cannon and the Early Years of American Communism*, (Prometheus Research Library, 1992)

It is in the spirit of class solidarity evoked by James P. Cannon that the Partisan Defense Committee is holding its 15th annual Holiday Appeal for Class-War Prisoners. In 1986, the PDC revived a tradition of the International Labor Defense (ILD) and its founder and early leader James P. Cannon of sending



TROTSKY

Political Revolution Needs Trotskyist Leadership

The fight to defend China and the other deformed workers states against imperialism and to oust the Stalinist bureaucracies whose policies pave the way for counterrevolution requires the leadership of Trotskyist parties. The June 1953 East German workers uprising against the Stalinist Socialist Unity Party (SED) regime marked the first incipient political revolution. Michel Pablo’s International Secretariat (I.S.), whose revisionist course led to the destruction of the Trotskyist Fourth International in 1951-53, denied the need for a conscious revolutionary vanguard, looking instead to sections of the bureaucracy to defend the interests of the workers. The then-revolutionary Socialist Workers Party refuted this liquidationist perspective and upheld the Trotskyist program, breaking with Pablo. We stand on that struggle in our fight to reforge the Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution.

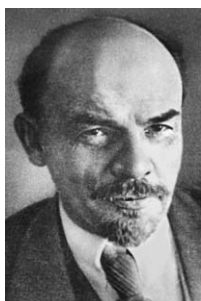
The proposition that no significant segment of the bureaucracy will align itself with the masses against its own material interests does not mean that the bureaucracy would not manifest deep cleavages under the impact of an uprising. Such disorganization, disintegration and demoralization was observable in East Germany. But the function of a revolutionary policy is to organize, mobilize and help lead the masses in their struggles, not to look for and even less to bank upon any breaks in the bureaucracy....

Much is made of the split in the bureaucracy, although no definite conclusions are drawn from this development. It is clear that the SED bureaucracy became panic-stricken and differences set in on how best to handle the situation and that the movement found sympathy and support among certain elements in its lower ranks. This happens in every revolutionary uprising and it would be wrong to deny or ignore such developments.

But the question is: what place and significance do they have in the process of the revolution? They are not and cannot be the decisive factor or the central line of the struggle. The IS preoccupation with these subordinate aspects of the struggle tends to shift the axis of revolutionary strategy from the mobilization of the workers as an independent class force relying on their own strength and organs toward reliance for leadership from elements within the bureaucracy. The excessive attention given to the differentiations and splits within the bureaucracy, the embellishment of their concessions, the failure to stress their repressive and counter-revolutionary role, can be explained only by illusions that, under pressure from below, a section of the Stalinist leadership will head the movement for the liquidation of Stalinism, at least in its earlier stages.

There is a sharp break with the traditional Trotskyist concept of the decisive role of the independent mass movement under its own revolutionary leadership.

—Socialist Workers Party, “Against Pabloist Revisionism” (November 1953); reprinted in “International Committee Documents 1951-1954,” *Education for Socialists* (March 1974)



LENIN

monthly stipends to class-war prisoners as an expression of solidarity.

The Holiday Appeal campaign helps to sustain the PDC’s monthly stipend program for 16 class-war prisoners and provides extra funds for holiday gifts for them and their families. This is not an act of charity, but rather the duty of fighters against injustice to those inside prison walls as we struggle for their freedom.

Mumia Abu-Jamal, December marks 19 years of Mumia Abu-Jamal’s imprisonment. Former Black Panther, award-winning journalist, “Voice of the Voiceless,” MOVE supporter—Jamal was framed up on false charges of killing a Philadelphia cop and sentenced to die for his political beliefs and defiance of the racist capitalist order.

This August federal judge William Yohn rejected four “friends of the court” briefs in support of Jamal’s *habeas corpus* petition to have his conviction overturned which were filed by the NAACP, the National Conference of Black Lawyers, the ACLU and British Members of Parliament, among others. Yohn dismissed these briefs—which pointed to racist jury-rigging and other blatant frame-up procedures in Jamal’s 1982 trial—as “unnecessary and unhelpful.” Jamal’s supporters have been met with an escalating campaign of harassment and repression. The crusade to kill Jamal is designed to sanctify the state’s machinery of death.

Jamal continues to fight from behind bars with biting commentaries which are published in newspapers across the country. Mumia’s books such as *Live from Death Row*, and *All Things Censored* are searing indictments of this racist injustice system. Jamal’s case has won support from death penalty abolitionists, labor and anti-racist fighters internationally. When Pennsylvania governor Thomas Ridge ordered Mumia’s death in 1995, international mass protests stayed the executioner’s hand. The PDC calls on working people, minorities, youth and all opponents of racist capitalist repression in the U.S. and around the world to raise the cry: **Freedom Now for Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!**

Jerry Dale Lowe, United Mine Workers (UMWA) member framed up on federal charges in the July 1993 shooting death of a scab contractor in Logan County, West Virginia. The scab was part of a convoy leaving the mine, shot in the back of the head from the direction of the bosses’ thugs. Lowe was singled out by authorities because he was a militant defender of the picket line. For the “crime” of defending his union, Lowe was sentenced to nearly eleven years in jail in Ashland, Kentucky with no possibility of parole.

Ed Poindexter and Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa, former Black Panther supporters and leaders of the Omaha Nebraska Committee to Combat Fascism. Victims of racist FBI COINTELPRO operation, framed up for an explosion in 1970 which killed a cop. Both were convicted on the basis of perjured testimony, sentenced to life and have now spent more than 30 years apiece in jail. Nebraska Board of Pardons refuses to lessen sentences so that they can be considered for parole. Poindexter is at Lino Lake, MN and Mondo is at Lincoln, NE.

Jaan Laaman and Ray Luc Levasseur were arrested in 1984 and ’85 and



Jennifer Beach

Mumia Abu-Jamal

are radical activists with a shared history of opposition to racism and imperialism. Sentenced to 45 years to life under RICO conspiracy laws on allegations of bank expropriations and bombings targeting symbols of U.S. imperialism in the late ’70s and ’80s. Jaan Laaman has been transferred to a vindictive lock-down in South Walpole, MA. Ray Luc Levasseur is in Atlanta, GA.

Hugo Pinell, the last of the San Quentin 6 still in prison. Militant anti-racist, leader of prison rights organizing along with George Jackson, who was murdered by prison guards in 1971. In prison for over 30 years. Currently serving a life sentence at the notorious Pelican Bay prison in California.

Eight MOVE members are in their 23rd year in prison. They were sentenced to 30-100 years after the 1978 police attack on their Philadelphia home, falsely convicted of killing a police officer. **Chuck Africa** and **Michael Davis Africa** are imprisoned at Graterford; **Debbie Sims Africa**, **Janet Holloway Africa**, **Janine Phillips Africa** at Cambridge Springs; **Edward Goodman Africa** at Frackville; **Delbert Orr Africa** and **William Phillips Africa** at Dallas. Recently, the MOVE political prisoners’ PCRA petition to overturn their frame-ups was denied.

Jamal Hart, Mumia’s son, was sentenced in 1998 to 15½ years on bogus firearm possession charges, targeted for his prominent activism in the campaign to free his father. Although Hart was initially charged under Pennsylvania laws, which would have meant a probationary sentence, Clinton’s Justice Department intervened to have Hart thrown in prison. He is not eligible for parole. Hart is at Fairton, NJ.



WV Photo

Jerry Dale Lowe

Contribute Now! All proceeds from the Holiday Appeal will go to the Class-War Prisoners Stipend Fund. Send your contributions to: PDC, P.O. Box 99, Canal St. Station, New York, NY 10013; (212) 406-4252.

The PDC is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization that champions cases and causes in the interests of the whole of the working people. This purpose is in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League. ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

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



EDITOR: Len Meyers

EDITOR, YOUNG SPARTACUS PAGES: Anna Woodman

PRODUCTION MANAGER: Susan Fuller

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The closing date for news in this issue is November 14.

No. 746

17 November 2000

Benefit for Class-War Prisoners

Organize for Jamal’s Freedom

New York

Saturday, December 2
6 to 10 p.m.

AFSCME District Council 1707
75 Varick St. (at Canal)

For more information:
(212) 406-4252

P.O. Box 99, Canal St. Sta.
New York, NY 10013

Chicago

Sunday, December 3
3 to 8 p.m.

United Electrical Hall
37 S. Ashland (at Monroe)

For more information:
(312) 454-4931

P.O. Box 802867
Chicago, IL 60680

Bay Area

Sunday, December 3
1 to 4 p.m.

Centro del Pueblo
474 Valencia, San Francisco

For more information:
(510) 839-0852

P.O. Box 77462
San Francisco, CA 94107

SPONSOR: PARTISAN DEFENSE COMMITTEE

Fuel Protests, Workers' Interests and Ecology

2 October 2000

To the editors:

I recently came across your front-page article on the recent oil crisis ("Fuel Protests Rock Europe," *Workers Vanguard* [No. 742], 22 Sept. 2000) and was amazed at its shallow, thoughtless treatment of an all too serious problem. Contrary to your article, there was little about the recent round of fuel protests that can be considered progressive. They were indeed "petty-bourgeois," as you point out, which is to say ignorant, parochial, and socially reactionary, little more than road rage on a new and unprecedented scale. Rather than "clearly in the interests of the working class," their goal of lowered fuel taxes would undermine conditions for the working class, not to mention the poor and the great portion of the middle class.

Even at British levels, the price of motor fuel covers only a portion of the social and environmental costs of driving, everything from air pollution and global warming to infrastructure wear and tear, highway accidents, and the cost of traffic delays. Cutting taxes would merely widen the gap between the real and the nominal price of gasoline. Since such "externalities" are displaced virtually in their entirety onto the back of the toiling masses, the results would be classically self-defeating. Workers would pay less at the pump, but would wind up paying a good deal more in other, less immediate ways. The poorest and hence the most vulnerable would wind up paying the most of all.

Traffic on British roadways, for example, is already at crisis levels. Yet cutting fuel prices would stimulate demand, resulting in yet more cars and congestion. So what would you have Tony Blair do to accommodate the overflow—build more highway overpasses through already devastated inner cities? How would that benefit workers forced to live in such neighborhoods? "In an industrial society," you state, "cars are not a luxury but are essential for vast numbers of workers to get to work." Is your memory so short that you forget the millions of urban jobholders who made their way to work each morning in the old Soviet Union without private cars, but via state-of-the-art mass transit? As industry progresses in China and India, will cars become essential for workers in those countries also? If so, what will the world do with one or two billion more cars as motorization approaches U.S. levels? What will happen to pollution in already smog-filled Asian cities? What will the consequences be in terms of global warming?

Any socialist government attempting to clean up the mess that capitalism has left behind will find that it has no alternative but to raise fuel taxes and other highway fees as it moves to tackle the problem of pollution, global warming, chronic congestion, and suburban sprawl. There is simply no way to address such costs without "internalizing" them in the price of driving. Workers are right to be angry—not to mention alarmed, frightened, disgusted, etc.—at plunging social conditions. But the way to rectify such conditions is not to encourage more traffic by slashing fuel prices, but to channel revenue into more efficient forms of transport, everything from trolleys, subways, and bicycles to high-speed rail and the new mag-lev systems under development in Germany and Japan. It is not easy to tell working-class drivers that they will have to pay more at the pump. But real leaders don't shrink from the truth, no matter how difficult.

Britain, the country that invented the steam locomotive, meanwhile has some of the worst mass transit in Europe. The U.S., which once had the biggest, fastest, and most technologically advanced rail

system in the world, is now forty years behind Europe and Japan and is losing ground with each passing day. Hardly a month goes by without a major Amtrak accident, while it currently takes more than an hour longer to travel by rail from Boston to New York than it took in the 1950s. Instead of shoring up the Fordist system responsible for such abysmal conditions, the time is long past due to abandon the Model T and its various offspring and move on to something a bit more sophisticated. Pleasant, walkable



AP

communities are not just for rich suburbanites to enjoy in places like New Canaan, Connecticut. Workers deserve them too, as I'm sure you'll agree.

Sincerely,
Daniel L.

WV Replies:

Daniel L.'s letter is a good example of how radical environmentalism leads to support for anti-working-class austerity and serves the interests of the capitalist class and its state. The main beneficiary of the policy he advocates, high gasoline prices, is one of the most rapacious capitalist combines in modern history, the world oil cartel of the Rockefellers and Saudi monarchy.

Even more fundamentally, the real question posed by the fuel protests had nothing at all to do with tax policies and transport economics. The idea that Blair refused to reduce gasoline taxes out of concern for traffic congestion, air pollution and global warming is fatuous nonsense. His real concern was upholding the *authority of the capitalist state* when challenged by *effective (and illegal) mass action* against its policies. That this was indeed the main issue was clearly stated by Blair: "No government committed to the democratic process can rewrite its budget in response to pressure on the street" (*Wall Street Journal*, 14 September).

It is unusual for small businessmen like truckers and farmers to engage in actions aiming to disrupt the economy in order to force a change in government policy. However, the stoppage of production and distribution, through strikes and other labor actions, is the basic means by which the working class defends itself against capital. Blair and the British ruling class in general feared that giving in to the fuel-tax protests would encourage a new wave of *labor* militancy, perhaps even a return—horror of horrors—to pre-Thatcher levels. This concern was spelled out in an editorial in the *Economist* (15 September), the house organ of the City of London financiers:

"This week's scenes brought back memories of the 1970s, when groups of angry militants seemed capable of bringing the British economy to its knees, and of breaking governments into the bargain.

Arguably, the biggest single gain of the Thatcher years was to transform this state of affairs.... Confident in their ability to rule, British governments were able to take a long-term view of the economy, rather than being at the mercy of the mob. If this legacy is not to be squandered, Mr Blair must show that 'direct action' cannot sway his government."

As partisans of the working class, our support to the fuel protests was not primarily motivated by questions of tax policy and transport economics. The stakes were far weightier than that. But Daniel

expense of other necessities. The fuel protests were overwhelmingly popular among working people in Britain and elsewhere in Europe even though they were greatly inconvenienced.

It is true that the car is an extremely inefficient means of transportation, especially in urban areas. It is also true that the burning of hydrocarbons like gasoline is bad for the atmosphere. But it does *not* follow, as Daniel L. contends, that a future workers government, operating a planned socialist economy, would solve



Reuters

British cops move against protester (left), guard Esso tanker leaving fuel depot as popular outcry over high gas prices shook Labour government in September.

L. is also dead wrong about transport economics. He writes that "cutting fuel prices would stimulate demand, resulting in yet more cars and congestion." No, it doesn't work like that at all.

Demand for gasoline is, in the terminology of bourgeois economists, "extremely inelastic"—i.e., it is little affected by price changes. The rich for whom cars are simply a luxury couldn't care less about the price of gas—unless they happen to own shares in Shell or Exxon. But in the advanced capitalist countries of West Europe and North America, the automobile is central to the economic and social life of large sections of the working class as well as the petty bourgeoisie. Most people who drive to work would either spend hours longer getting to their jobs, or could not get there at all, by public transit. They use their cars for shopping and other *necessary* activities. Many parents need their cars to pick up their children after work from day-care centers or schools. Such people will pay more for gas, at the

these problems by ever-higher taxes on gasoline and presumably on cars as well.

A socialist economy would provide cheap or free, efficient mass transit in urban and suburban areas. It would also provide cheap and frequent rail and air travel between cities. This would greatly decrease the volume of car traffic. There would therefore be no need to economically penalize those people who chose to own and operate cars by imposing special taxes on them. Furthermore, Daniel L. assumes that the basic auto technology is unchangeable. It is technically feasible even now to produce non-polluting cars. But the big auto manufacturers and other capitalists don't see that as profitable.

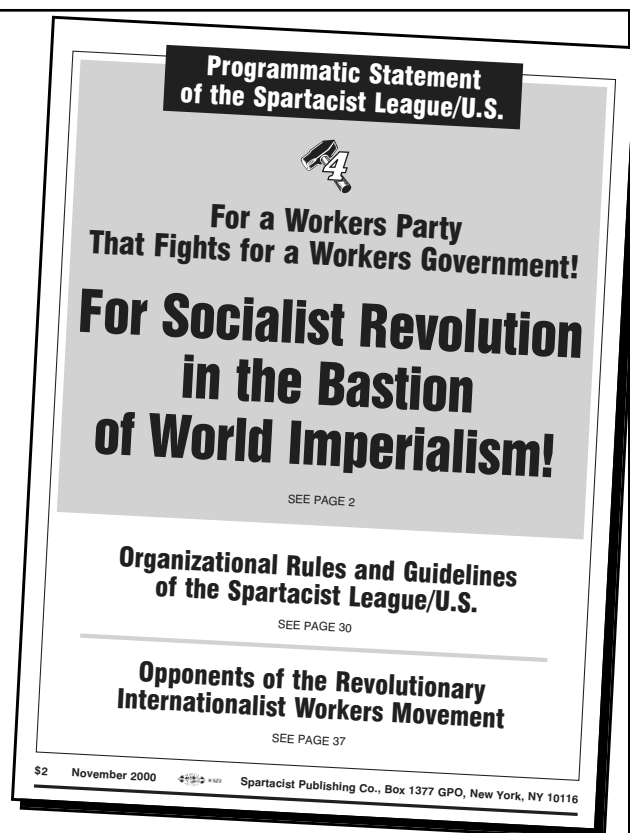
The aim of socialism is *not* to impose on the population a greater degree of economic austerity and a more restricted way of life in order to prevent the further deterioration of the environment. Rather it is to develop and utilize new technologies to make life better and easier, more interesting and diverse without harming the environment. ■

Just Out!

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IG: Still Looking for a Few Good Stalinist Bureaucrats

The fight against capitalist counter-revolution in China is of paramount importance for anyone opposed to the depredations of world capitalism. The International Communist League fights for unconditional military defense of the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state against capitalist/imperialist attack and against internal counterrevolutionary movements.

The 1949 Revolution overthrew capitalist-landlord rule and liberated the country from imperialist bondage—an enormous victory not only for the Chinese workers and peasants but for the proletariat internationally. But the gains of that revolution, stemming from the creation of a planned, collectivized economy, are increasingly threatened as the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) bureaucracy invites imperialist and overseas Chinese capital into the country, opening up entire areas to capitalist exploitation. Simultaneously, the Beijing regime has launched attacks on the “iron rice bowl” that once guaranteed every worker a lifetime job, housing, health care and education.

More than two decades of pro-capitalist “market reforms” have augmented and emboldened the forces of capitalist counterrevolution within and outside the country. They have also provoked a growing wave of strikes and protests by Chinese workers and peasants in defense of their livelihoods against the ravages of capitalist “market reforms.” The resistance by the combative proletariat is what stays the hand of the Beijing bureaucracy in its drive to extend even more concessions to imperialism.

The bureaucracy whose policies are paving the way for capitalist counterrevolution is simultaneously preparing the ground for a new revolutionary proletarian explosion—not a *social* revolution which would overturn the economic foundations of society as in 1949 but a *political* revolution to oust the parasitic ruling oligarchy and place power in the hands of workers, peasants and soldiers councils (soviets). What is urgently needed is a Leninist-Trotskyist party to lead the proletariat to take political power and to link this to the fight for socialist revolution in

South Korea, Japan, the U.S. and the rest of the capitalist world.

This revolutionary perspective is derived from Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky’s struggle against the bureaucratic caste which usurped power in the Soviet Union through a political counterrevolution in 1924. The October Revolution was carried out by a class-conscious proletariat

of the military victory of Mao Zedong’s peasant-based CCP over the weak, corrupt bourgeois-nationalist Guomindang of Chiang Kai-shek. The Chinese bourgeoisie was not destroyed as a class but fled to Taiwan and elsewhere. Mao’s CCP had no perspective of workers revolution—and indeed the atomized Chinese proletariat played no direct role

destroyed the Soviet Union in 1991-92. This world-historic defeat for the proletariat was inflicted in the absence of any organized resistance by the Soviet working class, which was atomized and bereft of a revolutionary anti-capitalist leadership, its consciousness poisoned by decades of Stalinist nationalism and lies. The misery and devastation that resulted

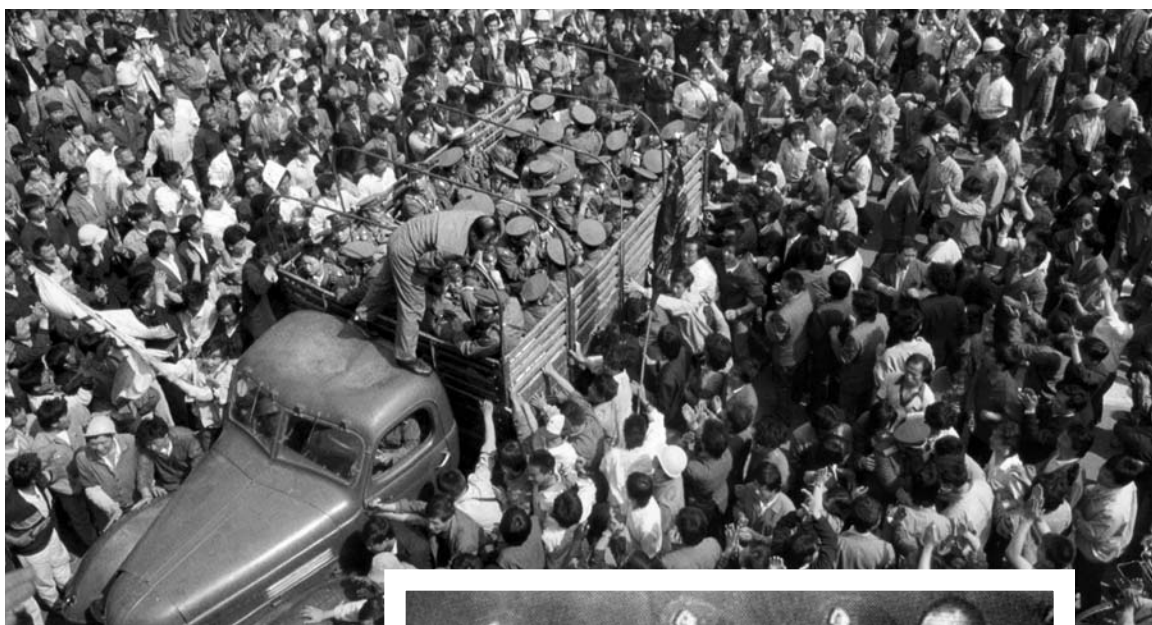
can be glimpsed in the fact that three-fourths of the Russian population now lives below or slightly above the poverty line, that 50 to 80 percent of school-age children are classified as having a mental or physical defect and that male life expectancy has plummeted. This calamity only underscores the burning necessity for the Chinese proletariat to defend itself and the rest of the society against this threat by cleaning out the Beijing bureaucracy.

Lawyers for Stalinist Sellouts

This Trotskyist perspective is very far removed from that propounded by a centrist outfit called the Internationalist Group (IG), whose core consists of former WV editor Jan Norden and a handful of others who defected from our party in 1996. Demoralized under the impact of the counterrevolutionary defeats in the USSR and East Europe, they increasingly abandoned a proletarian revolutionary perspective and instead sought to accommodate alien class forces, beginning with remnants of the treacherous Stalinist bureaucracy that sold out the East German (DDR) deformed workers state to West German imperialism. When the IG got around to addressing the question of China in an article titled “Where Is China Going?” (*Internationalist*, November-December 1998), its central point was to absolve the Stalinists of primary responsibility for the victory of counterrevolution in East Europe and the Soviet Union and to extend a similar amnesty to the Beijing bureaucracy.

To this end, the IG’s article included some fancy editing of Trotsky’s 1938 Transitional Program. Quoting from the section on “The USSR and Problems of the Transitional Epoch,” the IG includes a paragraph on the call for “freedom of the trade unions and the factory committees” and, after an ellipsis, one on the call for “a revision of *planned economy* from top to bottom in the interests of producers and consumers.” Located in one of the paragraphs that the IG disappears is Trotsky’s call for soviet democracy and the demand “*to drive the bureaucracy and the new aristocracy out of the soviets.*” Pounding the “delete” key, the IG obliterates the understanding expressed in the Transitional Program that “the chief political task in the USSR still remains the *overthrow of this same Thermidorian bureaucracy.* Each day added to its domination helps rot the foundations of the socialist elements of the economy and increases the chances for capitalist restoration.”

Positing that the Stalinist bureaucracy—or a section of it—is inherently wedded to socialized property, the IG argues: “Our strategy for political revolution is based on mobilizing the working class for communism. At the same time,



Peter Turnley

Workers, students fraternize with troops called in to suppress 1989 Tiananmen uprising which marked incipient political revolution against Stalinist regime. Following bloody suppression of protests, Beijing singled out workers for repression.



AP

iat led by Lenin and Trotsky’s Bolshevik Party, which saw the seizure of power as the first step toward world socialist revolution. The isolation of the Soviet Union, the failure of a revolutionary opportunity in Germany in 1923 and the general restabilization of the imperialist order laid the basis for the degeneration of the October Revolution with the rise to political power of a bureaucratic caste headed by Stalin.

The social transformation in China was carried out from above as a result

in the revolution. The result was a bureaucratically deformed workers state, modeled on the Soviet Union after its Stalinist degeneration.

The Stalinist bureaucracy preached the idiocy that socialism—a classless, egalitarian society based on material abundance—could be built in a single country. In practice, “socialism in one country” meant opposition to the perspective of workers revolution internationally and accommodation to world imperialism, which sought nothing less than the destruction of the USSR. This nationalist outlook reflected the narrow interests of the bureaucracy, a brittle, contradictory caste resting parasitically upon the collectivized economy, which it was at times compelled to defend in order to preserve its own privileged position.

The growth of the planned economy laid the basis for the development of the USSR from an economically backward country into the world’s second-largest industrial and military power. At the same time, the enhanced privileges this afforded to the petty-bourgeois bureaucracy encouraged sections of this layer to increasingly identify with the capitalist world. In *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936), Trotsky unambiguously stated: “Will the bureaucrat devour the workers’ state, or will the working class clean up the bureaucrat? Thus stands the question upon whose decision hangs the fate of the Soviet Union.”

Trotsky’s question was answered in the negative as capitalist counterrevolution



Xinhua

Chinese war heroes hailed by North Koreans celebrating 1953 cease-fire. Less than a year after 1949 Revolution, Chinese troop entry into Korean War was critical in stopping U.S. imperialist onslaught against North.

Defend China Against Imperialism, Counterrevolution! For Proletarian Political Revolution!

we seek where possible to split sections of the bureaucracy.” This revisionist perspective was refuted nearly 50 years ago by the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in a 1953 document titled “Against Pabloist Revisionism”:

“The proposition that no significant segment of the bureaucracy will align itself with the masses against its own material interests does not mean that the bureaucracy would not manifest deep cleavages under the impact of an uprising.... But the function of a revolutionary policy is to organize, mobilize and help lead the masses in their struggles, not to look for and even less to bank upon any real break in the bureaucracy.”

We cited this statement in our polemic “IG on China: Looking for a Few Good Stalinist Bureaucrats” (WV No. 715, 11 June 1999).

A rejoinder to our article posted on the IG’s Web site in August does not even attempt to address this central programmatic difference. Instead, claiming that “the ICL can’t figure out who led the counterrevolution in East Europe and the USSR and who is leading the counterrevolution in China today,” the IG intones:

“For any genuine communist, it’s vital to understand the difference between the treacherous misleaders of the working class (the Stalinists, social democrats and various reformist and centrist pseudo-socialists) and the *class enemy* (the bourgeoisie). What does the ICL’s talk of political revolution in China mean if they can’t tell Chinese workers where and how to direct their blows?” (emphasis in original)

The IG fundamentally rejects Trotsky’s understanding that the bureaucracy would *devour* the workers state if it is not overthrown, instead preaching reliance on (a wing of) the Stalinist ruling caste to resist capitalist restoration. While genuflecting to the Trotskyist call for political revolution, *the IG denies the very purpose of political revolution*: to overthrow the Stalinist “treacherous misleaders” who undermine defense of the collectivized economy against the class enemy and would devour the workers state. Against Trotsky and all historical experience, the IG implies that the danger of counterrevolution comes solely from outside the bureaucracy and that the Chinese workers should *not* direct their blows at the “treacherous misleaders.” Last February, some 20,000 molybdenum miners in Liaoning province rose up in a three-day protest against the regime’s plans to sell off pieces of their state-owned mine and shut down others, even battling People’s Liberation Army troops. What does the IG make of this protest and others, where the workers are “directing their blows” *against the Stalinist officials*, as well as against the foreign capitalist exploiters in the “Special Economic Zones” and other “free market” enterprises?

In his writings on the Spanish Civil War in the 1930s, Trotsky made short shrift of the kind of argument now raised by the IG in its insistence that only the “class enemy” and not the Stalinists could “lead the counterrevolution.” Responding to those who sought to amnesty the treachery of the centrist POUM, which capitulated to the Spanish popular front, by laying the blame for Franco’s victory on the imperialists, Trotsky asserted:

“It is simply ridiculous to justify the defeat by references to the military intervention of Italian fascists and German Nazis, and to the perfidious conduct of the French and British ‘democracies.’ Enemies will always remain enemies. Reaction will always intervene when-



AP

DDR prime minister Modrow, Soviet president Gorbachev led way for counterrevolution in East Germany by approving annexation by West German imperialism. German nationalists in Dresden mobilized for capitalist reunification under slogan “Germany One Fatherland.”

ever it can. Imperialist ‘democracy’ will always betray. This means that the victory of the proletariat is impossible in general!”

—“Once Again on the Causes of the Defeat in Spain” (March 1939)

The August IG screed, headlined “Stalinists *Led* the Counterrevolution? ICL Between Shachtman and Trotsky,” makes a lying amalgam between the ICL’s program for political revolution—premised on military defense of the deformed workers states—and the position of groups in the tradition of Max Shachtman, who broke from Trotskyism in 1940 by abandoning unconditional defense of the Soviet Union. Aware of our insistence on the need to cohere a Chinese Trotskyist cadre, and of our attempts to aid this effort by translating key ICL documents into Chinese, the IG aims to spike this development by stigmatizing the ICL as some sort of Stalinophobic “Shachtmanites” while passing off its defense brief for the Stalinist betrayers as “Trotskyism.” Taken as good coin, the IG’s revisionism could only disorient leftist opponents of the Beijing Stalinist regime, reinforcing deep illusions held by many that a wing of the Beijing bureaucracy—represented by those looking back to the Mao regime as an egalitarian alternative to the current bureaucracy under Jiang Zemin and Zhu Rongji—can be relied upon to resist capitalist restoration.

Counterrevolution in East Germany

To camouflage its strategic orientation to the Stalinist bureaucracy, the IG’s latest diatribe throws out numerous quotes from Trotsky. But not once does the IG mention the central point of *The Revolution Betrayed*: “On the road to capitalism the counterrevolution would have to break the resistance of the workers; on the road to socialism, the workers would have to overthrow the bureaucracy. In the last analysis, the question will be decided by a struggle of living social forces, both on the national and the world arena.” It was this understanding that guided the work of the ICL in East Germany and the former Soviet Union and which we apply to the fight against counterrevolution in the remaining deformed workers states of China, Cuba, North Korea and Vietnam.

The terminal phase of the destruction of the East European and Soviet workers states was signaled by Mikhail Gorbachev’s withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan in 1989, which delivered Afghan women to the CIA-backed

mujahedin cutthroats and encouraged the imperialists to test the Kremlin’s resolve in the defense of the East European deformed workers states. We said then that it was better to fight imperialism in Afghanistan than counterrevolution in Moscow. As the ICL wrote in our “Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program” (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 54, Spring 1998): “The Kremlin abetted by the East German Stalinists led the counterrevolution in the DDR, rushing to hand the country over to the Fourth Reich. The Kremlin bureaucracy under Gorbachev carried out its ultimate, terminal betrayal, declaring that socialism had been a doomed utopian experiment and proclaiming the superiority of the capitalist market system. The disintegrating

become the organized political/military locus of the political revolution. Faced with this threat, in late December the SED regime demobilized and disarmed the *Kampfgruppen* and began disbanding army units where soldiers councils had arisen.

On 3 January 1990, a quarter-million people turned out in an anti-fascist, pro-Soviet mobilization at East Berlin’s Trep-tow monument. This action, initiated by the German Spartakists and then taken up and built by the SED, protested the fascist desecration of a memorial honoring Red Army soldiers killed in the struggle against the Nazis. In this united-front demonstration, Trotskyists addressed the working-class base of the ruling SED with our program against capitalist re-



Spartakist

East Berlin, January 1990: Spartakist speaker addresses 250,000-strong anti-fascist Treptow mobilization as SED chief Gregor Gysi looks on. Fearing organized proletarian resistance to capitalist reunification, SED tops sped up sellout of DDR workers state.

CPSU spawned openly counterrevolutionary gangs led by Boris Yeltsin who acted as the open agent of U.S. imperialism in the restoration of capitalism.”

While every other left tendency on the planet capitulated to the ideological pressure of imperialist anti-Communism, the ICL fought in defense of the Soviet degenerated workers state and the East European deformed workers states. As Stalinist rule entered its terminal stage from Berlin to Moscow, we mobilized our forces to fight against capitalist counter-revolution and for proletarian political revolution.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, the ICL dispatched all available resources to the DDR to intervene into the unfolding political revolution. Our German section initiated a network of Spartakist Groups in East Germany and published a daily newspaper, *Arprekorr* (“Workers Press Correspondence”), with the purpose of mobilizing the proletariat to smash the drive toward capitalist *Anschluss* (annexation) by the West German imperialists. In response to our propaganda, soldiers councils began forming in the East German army. With the ruling Stalinist Socialist Unity Party (SED) collapsing and its party and trade-union organizations in the plants beginning to disintegrate, the armed factory *Kampfgruppen* (fighting groups) which had been formed to extend bureaucratic control in the factories had the very real potential to

unification, calling for “No sellout of the DDR! For a red soviet Germany! For a Leninist-egalitarian party!”

Demonstrating a knack for sowing confusion—a typical vice for centrist organizations which are revolutionary in words and opportunist in deeds—the IG’s August 2000 article asks, “If the SED Stalinists were leading the counterrevolution, what were the Spartakist Workers Party and Spartakist-Gruppen doing up there as speakers at the 3 January 1990 anti-fascist mobilization at the Soviet war memorial together with the SED leadership?” What our comrades were doing was acting on the ABCs of Leninism. We engaged in a united-front action with the SED in defense of the DDR workers state, in the course of that waging *political combat* against the SED misleaders, aiming to split the SED’s proletarian base and win it to the Trotskyist party.

Treptow was the decisive turning point, posing for the first time the possibility of organized working-class resistance to capitalist reunification from the worker base of the SED (which began calling itself the Party of Democratic Socialism—PDS). The Stalinists renounced the Treptow mobilization as the imperialists and their West German Social Democratic (SPD) henchmen raised a hue and cry over the Trotskyists’ denunciation of the SPD as the “Trojan horse” for counterrevolution. Frightened by the spectre of proletarian political revolution that

continued on page 6



Vladimir Kibachich



Heroic Soviet spy Ignace Reiss’s 1937 declaration in favor of Fourth International, printed in Left Opposition’s bulletin, proclaimed: “Only our victory—that of the proletarian revolution—will free humanity of capitalism and the USSR of Stalinism.”

IG...

(continued from page 5)

Treptow represented, Gorbachev and the SED-PDS leadership came out openly for capitalist *Anschluss*. The collapsing Stalinist regime agreed to speed up elections in East Germany, which West German chancellor Kohl’s Christian Democrats won in March, marking the decisive victory of counterrevolution.

Where Was Gorbachev?

To back up its revisionist assertion that the bureaucracy did not represent an internal force for capitalist restoration, the IG rails against our supposed “anti-Marxist claim that *the Stalinist bureaucracy led the counterrevolution in East Germany*.” The IG’s August article claims that we “adopted, after the fact, the position of various pseudo-Trotskyist Stalinophobes who used this as ‘theoretical’ justification for sidling up to the bourgeoisie and its direct agents who actually did lead the counterrevolution in the DDR (Kohl’s Christian Democrats and Brandt’s Social Democrats), the Soviet Union (Bush’s man Yeltsin) and East Europe (such as Solidarność, the Polish company union for the Vatican and CIA).”

Conspicuously missing from this list are Gorbachev and the SED-PDS, whose treachery is thereby given a complete amnesty by the IG. Ten years after the event, Gorbachev himself spoke to his



Reuters

Left: Chinese officials join Pratt & Whitney execs in ground-breaking for capitalist enterprise in Chengdu. Right: Women workers in Hubei province protest layoffs. “Market reforms” which undermine collectivized foundations of Chinese deformed workers state have also sparked wave of workers’ struggle.



Ming Bao

NATO imperialists, East Germany had a huge Soviet troop concentration, which was the dominant military force there. By the time the SED regime collapsed in the fall of 1989, the Kremlin was no longer committed to maintaining Soviet military and therefore political dominance in the DDR. As he agreed to hand the East German workers state over to West German imperialism, Gorbachev ordered the withdrawal of Soviet troops.

The ICL fought to win Soviet soldiers and officers in East Germany to the fight for proletarian political revolution in the

without thereby providing political cover for their class treason, as the IG does. Some (but not all) of the Stalinist tops paid a price for their illusions in capitalist “democracy.” As we have pointed out, these betrayers were tried by the wrong class for the wrong crimes.

In his autobiography, *Man Without a Face* (1997), former DDR spymaster Markus Wolf, himself a one-time Gorbachevite, nailed Gorbachev for refusing to demand amnesty for Wolf and other DDR leaders in arranging terms for annexation with West Germany’s rulers: “His overriding concern now was to keep his image bright in the West, having conveniently forgotten that he too had once been a Communist. The West Germans were prepared to discuss immunity for those who had worked for East Germany, but when the matter arose briefly at the meeting, Gorbachev waved his hand and told Kohl that the Germans would manage this problem sensibly themselves. It was the Soviets’ ultimate betrayal of their East German friends, whose work for over four decades had strengthened Soviet influence in Europe.”

Stalinism: Vanguard of Counterrevolution in Spain

Summarizing our intervention into the East German events, the main document adopted at the ICL’s Second International Conference in 1992 stated:

“As Treptow later showed, from the beginning we were in a political struggle with the abdicating Stalinist regime over the future of the DDR. While we were calling for a government of workers councils, the Stalinists were consciously acting to prevent a workers insurrection by demobilizing all army units that had formed soldiers councils as a result of our early propaganda. Although shaped by the disproportion of forces, there was in fact a contest between the ICL program of political revolution and the Stalinist program of capitulation and counterrevolution.”

—“For the Communism of Lenin and Trotsky!” *Spartacist* (English-language edition) No. 47-48, Winter 1992-93

Norden & Co. voted for this appraisal when they were members of our party. But under the ideological pressures generated by capitalist restoration, Norden was increasingly driven by an opportunist appetite to adapt to social-democratic remnants of the East German Stalinist bureaucracy. This adaptation was given flagrant public expression in a January 1995 speech at Berlin’s Humboldt University aimed at members of the Communist Platform (KPF) grouping in the PDS, which had been growing in electoral support.

Because the KPF was then being threatened with expulsion from the PDS, Norden believed that it was ripe for a “revolutionary regroupment.” To accommodate these Stalinist has-beens, Norden denied the ICL’s role as the conscious vanguard in the German events of 1989-90, repeatedly intoning that “the key element was missing, the revolutionary leadership.” He described the Stalinist leadership as “paralyzed” and asserted that “a proletarian political revolution was necessary, which no one among the SED tops, nor in the critical currents

among the party cadres, could even conceive of at the time.” Far from being paralyzed, the SED tops did everything within their power to prevent a proletarian insurrection—which they knew would be aimed against them. (This speech is published in our publicly available ICL *International Bulletin* No. 38, “Norden’s ‘Group’: Shamefaced Defectors from Trotskyism,” June 1996, which documents the fight against Norden’s revisionist course.)

Appealing to the Stalinists’ “anti-fascist” credentials, Norden told his audience that “the Soviet Union sent only limited amounts of munitions during the Spanish Civil War, because it didn’t want to directly go against the blockade decreed by the imperialist ‘democracies’.” This is a flagrant whitewash of Stalin’s role in strangling the Spanish Revolution in the late 1930s and handing victory to Franco’s fascist Falange. The Stalinist apparatus was mobilized internationally to suppress and gun down Trotskyists, left-wing anarchists and militant workers in Spain in the service of the capitalist popular-front government. In his 1940 article “The Class, the Party, and the Leadership,” Trotsky wrote of the Stalinists in Spain: “They were the fighting vanguard of the bourgeois-republican counterrevolution” (*The Spanish Revolution* [1973]). In other words, they were the *leaders* of the counterrevolution (that, as Norden & Co. presumably know, is what “vanguard” means).

The Dual Nature of the Stalinist Bureaucracy

As a rationale for his orientation toward the KPF, at a meeting of the ICL International Secretariat later that year Norden talked of the Stalinists’ “attachments” to the workers state and argued, “Precisely those attachments present us some of the opportunities and contradictions that we have to exploit, for example with the Communist Platform.” Norden was here speaking of “attachments” to a workers state—like a mosquito to a lost host—which had been destroyed five years earlier with the help of the KPF Stalinists!

This notion of “attachments” is a complete revision of Trotskyism. Trotsky explained that the Stalinist bureaucracy is not a possessing *class* but a parasitic *caste*. While resting on and deriving its privileges from proletarian property forms, this petty-bourgeois layer simultaneously acted as a transmission belt for the pressures of the imperialist-dominated world market on the workers state and was not irrevocably committed to the defense of the collectivized economy. In *The Revolution Betrayed*, Trotsky wrote: “Since of all the strata of Soviet society the bureaucracy has best solved its own social problem, and is fully content with the existing situation, it has ceased to offer any subjective guarantee whatever of the socialist direction of its policy. It continues to preserve state property only to the extent that it fears the proletariat.”

Turning Trotsky’s materialist understanding of the contradictory nature of the bureaucracy on its head, the IG *continued on page 14*



Spartakist

Spartakist Workers Party demonstrates in Berlin, July 1992, in defense of former DDR head Erich Honecker, brought back from Russia for anti-Communist show trial by German Fourth Reich. Stalinist betrayers were tried by the wrong class for the wrong crimes.

central role in capitalist reunification and singled out the importance of the Treptow mobilization, telling a TV audience last November: “We changed our point of view on the process of unification of Germany under the impact of events that unfolded in the DDR. And an especially critical situation came about in January [1990]. In essence, a breakdown of structures took place. A threat arose—a threat of disorganization, of a big destabilization. This began on January 3 and went further almost every day.”

The Soviet bureaucracy’s role in the counterrevolution in the DDR was crucial. Seeking to throw up a smokescreen around this key fact, the IG’s August article asks, “If the Soviet Army was leading the counterrevolution, why didn’t the ICL call for withdrawal of the Soviet troops?” This is as stupid as it is cynical. It was Gorbachev who called the shots in East Germany. Soviet troops were not mobilized to suppress a workers rising, but were essentially restricted to barracks. As *the* frontline state against the

DDR *and the USSR*, issuing Russian-language greetings to them and distributing our Trotskyist propaganda in Soviet Army barracks. (For a detailed account of the ICL’s struggle in Germany, see “Revolution vs. Counterrevolution in Germany, 1989-90,” WV Nos. 730 and 731, 25 February and 10 March.)

In another attempt to alibi the Stalinist sellouts, the IG article relates an exchange with Spartacist League members: “How could the SED lead the counterrevolution, we challenged, when the entire SED Politburo from Erich Honecker on down ended up in the jails of the German Fourth Reich?” How could Chilean Socialist president Salvador Allende end up dead in 1973 during General Augusto Pinochet’s military coup after having appointed Pinochet and preaching reliance on the “constitutional” military? We defended those elements of the former East German Stalinist bureaucracy who were targeted for counterrevolutionary “justice” by the reunified Fourth Reich of German imperialism, but

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Young Spartacus

Mexico City: Spartacist Youth Speak Out in Solidarity with UNAM Workers

We reprint below a leaflet by the Juventud Espartaquista (JE), youth group of the Grupo Espartaquista de México (GEM), section of the International Communist League. The leaflet was distributed at an emergency speakout called by the JE on October 31 at Mexico City's National Autonomous University (UNAM). Calling on students to support the possible strike by the campus workers union, STUNAM (Union of Workers of the National Autonomous University of Mexico), the speakout attracted the attention of more than 100 students. Fifty militant STUNAM workers came into the plaza before we started, chanting "Huelga, huelga!" ("Strike, strike!") and provided the megaphone for a joint speakout. Completely absent was the rest of the campus left (Internationalist Group, En Lucha, LTS/ContraCorriente).

After the majority of delegates at a strike council meeting on October 30 voted against a strike, pro-strike workers were so angry at their union leadership that some told us they would burn their ballots rather than vote on the contract the following day. During the ten-month UNAM student strike last year, STUNAM provided crucial solidarity by manning the picket lines, donating money and refusing to work during the strike-busting federal police occupation of the campus ordered by the governing party, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and supported by the city government run by the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD). The GEM/JE also participated in the picket lines and building occupations, fighting to win students to ally with the power of the working class. Against illusions in the sometimes left-talking bourgeois-nationalist PRD, the GEM/JE fought for the construction of an international revolutionary workers party independent of the capitalist state.

Ever since the imposition of U.S. imperialism's North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994, which further immiserated the working class, peasants and poor, Mexico has been racked by social unrest. This has been heightened by the recent presidential elections won by the right-wing National Action Party (PAN) which shattered the grip of the PRI, the ruling party of the past 70 years (see "Wall Street's Candidate Wins Mexican Elections," WV No. 739, 28 July).

With the handing over of the presidency less than one month away, the PRI is losing its grip on the machinery of the state, as well as its direct ties with most of the unions. The bourgeoisie is worried about how it is going to control the working class. If president-elect Vicente Fox moves to push through his plans—which include privatizations and reactionary social measures—as promised, more explosive social struggle is likely. The GEM/JE seeks to win the best fighters

among student youth and in the working class to build a revolutionary workers party that can lead the fight for socialist revolution in Mexico. That fight must be waged with an internationalist perspective linking the class struggle in Mexico to the fight for proletarian revolution in the U.S. This is also the perspective of the Spartacist League/U.S. and Spartacus Youth Clubs.

* * *

Today more than 20,000 STUNAM workers at UNAM are on the eve of a strike to demand a 50 percent wage in-

creased buildings and maintain UNAM's facilities. A solid strike is needed to win; one with picket lines that keep the campus entirely shut down. *Picket lines mean don't cross!*

Free, quality education should be a right for everyone. After ten months of a student strike which shook Mexico City, many students who long ago learned at the ends of the PRD government's billy clubs that the PRD is a force against social struggle and progress are now studying Marxism because they want to go beyond simple pressure politics and fundamentally transform society. The com-

month before Fox of the reactionary PAN takes over the reins of the government, the STUNAM strike has the potential to ignite a broader social struggle against the imperialist-dictated austerity measures, including privatization of strategic industries such as oil and electric, and against the reactionary attacks on women and homosexuals.

The national government of the PRI, and the PRD's Mexico City regime, both exist to uphold capitalist power while each fears the possibility that the working class could escape the restraint of their misleaders—the union bureaucrats—and struggle for workers power. Thus, the government declares strikes "nonexistent" or takes them over, and Rosario Robles, the leader of the PRD government in Mexico City, threatens to use the force of state repression against the current demonstrations. The function of the bourgeois state—the police, courts and army—is to maintain the domination of the exploiting class over all the oppressed. The arms of the capitalist state reach right into the university through the Auxilio UNAM, whose presence within STUNAM is a threat to its very existence. Auxilio UNAM employees are police and do not belong in the unions that are the organizations of struggle for the working class. The Juventud Espartaquista demands: *Auxilio UNAM—Out of STUNAM! Police off campus!*

In the end, only the destruction of the capitalist system can solve the problems and needs of workers and all the exploited and oppressed. Key to this is the complete *political independence* of the working class from the capitalist class, their state and their parties: the PRI, PAN and PRD. The belief that it is possible for a progressive wing of the bourgeoisie to fight the starvation austerity dictated by Wall Street and Washington has prevented the working class from using its power to liberate itself and all of the oppressed. Against bourgeois nationalism the Juventud Espartaquista fights to win students and youth to a life of struggle on the side of the working class to construct an egalitarian socialist society. *Forge a revolutionary, proletarian and internationalist party! Victory to the STUNAM strike!* ■



Duilio Rodriguez

Mexico City: March protesting federal police occupation of UNAM last February. STUNAM workers provided vital support to student strikers.

crease. The university administration has offered an insulting 10.5 percent raise to these workers struggling to get by in a Mexico where workers' purchasing power continues to fall while the capitalists' profits soar. A STUNAM strike would be the first major workers' struggle in Mexico City in many years. Workers have already demonstrated their will to fight on numerous occasions: the flight attendants strike which was taken over [by invoking a national emergency law], the recent Volkswagen strike in Puebla—declared "nonexistent" by the capitalist government—and protests by workers of the former PRI bastion FSTSE [federal public employees union] demanding the *bono sexenal* [traditional bonus paid every six years].

The function of universities is to educate and as a result, in contrast with factories, they do not produce large profits for the bourgeoisie. Students, as a petty-bourgeois sector, can play a disproportionately important role but only if they act in support of the workers strike. The militants of the Juventud Espartaquista understand that "support" means not simply words, but action. A strike means shut it all down: *Nobody works! Nobody goes to class!* Classes should be canceled: *No off-campus classes!* Students should come to the university to strengthen the picket lines, not to cross them. Now is the time to put into practice support to the workers who operate the buses, clean the

battery of the students who, in the fight for education for everybody, took over campus buildings, organized marches and expelled the PRD from the CGH [student general strike council] last year was impressive. Nonetheless, a complete shut-down of campus, whether initiated by student protest or workers strike action, does not interfere with the profits of the capitalist class. To hit the capitalists where it hurts, the strike must be extended beyond the campus walls. Coming as it does a

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The Fight for Black Liberation— Key to American Socialist Revolution

The following is a class given by SYCer Quincy Levinson at NYU last spring.

When an Albany court acquitted the four police officers who shot and killed Amadou Diallo in New York, no one disputed that the cops fired 41 shots at the unarmed black man as he stood in the vestibule of his apartment. However, it was never the cops, but rather Diallo, who was on trial in Albany. The courts displayed the belief that a black man living in the ghetto is inherently dangerous and should be killed if he so much as flinches when a group of gun-toting white thugs come at him. So how does this grotesque, racist slaying—and the accompanying whitewash verdict—relate to capitalism, and why is it that the fight for black freedom must be linked with the fight against capitalism itself?

Revolutionary integrationism, which is our program, concerns the process of making a revolution which takes up the struggle for black rights every step of the way. It means making the fight for black freedom a *class* fight. The demonstration we organized to drive the Ku Klux Klan racist killers out of New York City on 23 October 1999 is a good example of this. We organized a labor/black mobilization with the understanding that transit workers, for example, have the power to shut down the city. That's the power of the working class: the proletariat is the only group with the social power and objective interest to abolish the rule of capital. It *must* be mobilized on behalf of the oppressed in order to give the rulers pause and ultimately overthrow them. In that demonstration, we mobilized the working class and its allies *independently* of the enemies of the working class and black people, most notably those in the Democratic Party, against a group of hooded racist killers.

Black people are what we call a race-color caste (as opposed to a nation, a class, etc.); they are segregated at the bottom of society on the basis of skin color, yet are integrated into the proletariat. Black people form a strategic part of the American working class and have historically been its most militant layer.

The state is the repressive institution that is composed at its core of armed bodies of men (the cops, army, etc.), which systematically targets black people for special abuse in this country. The

state, as Marxists understand, exists for the sole purpose of maintaining class rule through repressing the oppressed layers of society. It cannot be reformed; it must be smashed through a proletarian revolution. In a racist country like the United States, in which black oppression *benefits* the ruling class, the state naturally targets black people for special abuse. Witness Amadou Diallo, witness Mumia Abu-Jamal, witness the thousands of black men and women humiliated, jailed and even killed by the capi-



Military History Institute

Gun crews of a battery of "Corps d'Afrique" at Port Hudson, Louisiana in 1863. Black soldiers demonstrated exceptional heroism during the Civil War.

talist state. The state is an institution of naked oppression for the benefit of the tiny minority which rules this country.

The rest of the left, explicitly or implicitly, rejects this. I recently heard a member of the International Socialist Organization (ISO), in defending his group's incessant pleas to the capitalist state, assert that "the cops can be pressured" if only "movements" get big enough and loud enough. This is flatly wrong. The cops that shot down Amadou Diallo were *doing their job*, which is a key component of the racist policy of running roughshod over the ghettos.

Our basic premise is this: black freedom in any form can only come about through a socialist revolution that sweeps away the racist capitalist system; and, by the same token, the struggle for the emancipation of labor in the United States can only move forward if the working class is mobilized to fight for black freedom. The question of anti-black racism is not merely another social question; it is a strategic question for the next American revolution, which must be socialist. The idea that race, rather than class, is the fundamental dividing line between people in America is a clear fallacy. It was a Latino cop who put a bullet through the head of Malcolm Ferguson, a young black man, in New York earlier this year. The cops that burst in on Ferguson were operating as part of the bourgeois state in running roughshod over the ghetto population. Capitalism creates all sorts of problems for all sorts of people, but to understand the oppression of black people is to

understand the nature of this particular capitalism. Such an awareness is the crucial step to grasping how to send American capitalism unceremoniously on its way to oblivion.

The capitalist class is particularly adept at employing divide-and-rule tactics. The Democratic Party, which is a party of racism and war, attracted millions of workers—South and North—into a poisonous alliance first with the slavocracy and later with a wing of the capitalist class through a hard appeal to racism.

black people in America.

Race is in no sense a meaningful biological differentiation. The genetic variation within any given ethnic group is as diverse as between one group and another. A peculiarly American paradox may help to illustrate the point as well. In the United States, it is considered quite possible for a white woman to give birth to a black child but not for a black woman to give birth to a white child. Although, presuming one parent of European descent and one parent of African descent, there is, on the basis of ancestry, no less reason to call such children white, they are considered black for specific historical reasons related to anti-miscegenation laws that date from the slavery and Jim Crow eras. Now, this is not to say that race is not real, only to say that it is a *social*, not a biological reality. In order to understand race and racism—which clearly arose in the U.S. as a *consequence* of the social differentiation of black people under slavery—we must understand the system that created these distinctions in the first place.

The origins of racism lie in the slave system that dominated the American South for almost 250 years. However, the creation of a doctrine of racial supremacy, although it rested on a system of slavery, cannot be simply explained by a reference to slavery. After all, there have been numerous class societies in which the subordinate class was not viewed as inherently inferior on the basis of race. American racism had its birth at the same time as the Enlightenment and the spread of bourgeois democratic ideals. In the face of the glaring contradiction between a doctrine stressing the rights of man and the widespread holding of men (not to mention women and children) in a state of slavery, the slavocracy developed a conception of race, declaring that the differences between "white" and "black" people were inherent and that black people, for reasons of biology or the design of god, were inferior. Thus, the slaveowning class could make an exception to the generally declared rights of man, at least ideologically, in justifying their holding of slaves.

So how did slavery end, and why, almost 135 years after Appomattox, do we still raise the cry: "Finish the Civil War!"? At the same time as slavery spread westward, so did the capitalist system that had come to dominate the North. The two systems, one based on slavery, the other—Northern capitalism—based on what was called "free labor" in contradistinction to slavery, inevitably came into conflict. In a capitalist society such as the American North, workers own their labor power, which they sell on the market—this is called getting a job. Under slavery, in which a slave's *person* and thus his labor power is owned, the economy inevitably works quite differently. Since slaveowners could not fire their slaves and had to maintain them at least minimally at all times, there was no incentive to develop labor-saving techniques of the sort that allowed the Agricultural and Industrial Revolutions to take place. Since the number of workers required to work a plantation was not thinning, no significant workforce was freed to take industrial jobs. Thus, the South remained overwhelmingly agrarian even as the North began to develop significant industry. These two systems were utterly counterposed to one another and inevitably came into conflict. It took a civil war to resolve the contradictions



Young Spartacus

New York City: Thousands demonstrated last February against acquittal of cops who killed Amadou Diallo.

that arose from these two antagonistic systems of production.

This is a very important point with profound implications for the present. Slavery did not collapse of its own accord, or because of “moral suasion” on the part of Northern Abolitionists, but because of a social revolution that *smashed* the slavocracy, the Civil War. The radical Abolitionists like Frederick Douglass, John Brown and Harriet Tubman knew that “moral suasion” (the idea that you could persuade the slave holders to give up slavery because it was immoral) was doomed to failure and that it was going to take a revolution with the mass participation of blacks themselves to end slavery. No ruling class has ever given over its power and privileges without a fight. That is why it’s going to take a third American Revolution, a workers revolution, to free the wage slaves of today.

Fighting the Civil War was the last truly progressive act that the capitalist class in the U.S. ever did. It was a massive, bitter struggle, out of which the modern United States was born. In the wake of the defeat of the Confederate armies, the Northern bourgeoisie introduced a program called Reconstruction, designed to bring the South into line with the North’s economy and corresponding social system. For several years, roughly 1868 through the early 1870s, in a period called Radical Reconstruction—named after the radical wing of the Republican Party—genuine democratic gains were achieved: universal manhood suffrage, free public education, the large-scale suppression of race-hate terrorists like the KKK and so forth, which were brought about through the presence of large num-

“Exodus from Dixie,” drawing by Robert Minor, June 1923. In early 20th century, large numbers of black people fled the South for Northern industrial jobs.



bers of Union troops allied with both the tender mercies of racist “Redeemer” governments and a wave of racist terror. Meanwhile, the Northern capitalists sent the troops withdrawn from the South to bloodily smash the railway strike.

Thus, the birth act of the modern American capitalist state came with a simultaneous upsurge in racist terror and union-busting violence. From 1877 onward, as black people were increasingly drawn into the capitalist economy, they were also increasingly segregated at the bottom of society, as Jim Crow segregationist doctrines penetrated American society North and South. That, in short, is why black oppression is the bedrock of American capitalism.

One historian has described the decades following Reconstruction as the “nadir

time in which nationalists like Marcus Garvey, whose “Back to Africa” movement held the allegiance of millions, were prominent in the black community, the Communist Party began to do systematic work among the black masses. This paid off in the 1930s. American Trotskyist Jim Cannon wrote, “The Communist Party, aggressively championing the cause of the Negroes and calling for an alliance of the Negro people and the militant labor movement, came into the new situation as a catalytic agent at the right time.” I would highly recommend that those interested in the story of how the Communist Party gained and lost a strategic layer of black cadre look at Robin Kelley’s *Hammer and Hoe*. The point I want to get across is that the Bolsheviks were the ones who injected an understanding of the strategic nature of the black question into the American Communist movement and that it did make an impact.

If I can jump ahead a few decades, the Spartacist League was born in part because we saw the black question as one of crucial importance. While our fore-runners were still in the Socialist Workers Party, they objected strongly to that party’s abstention from the civil rights movement, which in effect conceded leadership to the liberals. They fought for a sustained intervention into the struggles of black people in the early 1960s with a revolutionary, working-class program of revolutionary integrationism: the fight for the full integration of black people into an egalitarian, socialist society. That program, by the way, is the one we stand by today.

In times of struggle, black people in the United States have historically fought for integration into American society in the fullest possible sense, not to break away into a separate nation, which would not be a viable entity anyway. However, these struggles for equality have been frequently co-opted into Democratic Party channels by liberal misleaders such as M.L. King, Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton, who constantly strive for more “enlightened” policies from the government.

There’s a great deal of mythology surrounding the civil rights movement and Martin Luther King, who gets pre-

sented as this sort of messiah who single-handedly created and led the civil rights movement. (An ISOer once asked me incredulously, “What, you guys have differences with *Martin Luther King?!?*”) The truth is, the civil rights movement did not end the oppression of black people. Now, this isn’t to say that the struggles of millions of people weren’t brave or in many ways admirable but rather to say that you won’t get racial equality under capitalism. After all, we live in a society in which nearly a million black men are locked into the burgeoning jail system, in which black people are increasingly marginalized in all areas of life. The civil rights movement managed to smash the Jim Crow system in the American South (which was an acute foreign policy embarrassment for the U.S., anyway) and force a few reversible concessions out of American capitalism, but it did not change the conditions that shape the oppression of black people in the United States, which come from capitalism.

The reason that the ISO and other fake-leftist groups lionize the liberal wing of the civil rights movement is because they at bottom agree with the liberals. That’s what we saw on October 23. Whereas the Spartacist League sought successfully to mobilize the multiracial working class in this city against a pressing danger, the ISO sat on their hands until the Democratic politicians like Sharpton moved to spike our demo with a diversionary rally that offered to *share a sound permit with the Klan*; then they joined the Democrats’ rally! The Democrats, fearing what would happen if communists organized the working class in its own interests (which would inevitably cut into their shell game), moved to obstruct the labor/ black demo. The Democrats and fake leftists like the ISO showed where their true loyalties were (and are) on that day.

Of course, another wing developed within black politics in the 1960s around the ill-defined phrase “Black Power.” The best of these militants found their way into the Black Panther Party. There was a lot to be said for the Panthers. They hated U.S. imperialism and sympathized with the Vietnamese Revolution and had no

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Spartacist

Spartacist League fought to win 1960s black radicals to revolutionary proletarian perspective.

bers of Union troops allied with both black and white Republicans in the South.

This social revolution, which emancipated the slaves (in large part due to the aid of hundreds of thousands of black men who enlisted in the Union army), remains incomplete. The Northern capitalists sold out their black allies in the South. Having succeeded in smashing their rivals in the slaveholding class, the Northern capitalists’ interests began to diverge from those of the black freedmen. In 1873, the worst depression in American history up to that point ravaged the American economy, which halted postwar industrial expansion. Moreover, a massive strike wave in 1877, prominently featuring railway workers throughout the nation, put the fear of god into the capitalist class.

In addition, Northern Republicans and black freedmen answered the crucial question of what should replace slavery quite differently. The former slaves generally wished to carve their own farms out of the plantations, a move at which the Northern capitalists balked, as it would have cut deeply against the notion of private property in capitalist society and set what would have been, for the capitalists, a dangerous precedent.

In this context, the Republicans, the party of the Northern capitalists, agreed to a compromise with the Democratic Party of the racist ex-slaveholders. In return for the presidency, the GOP agreed to withdraw the last Union troops from

of race relations” in America, and one can readily understand why. Blacks were subjected to increasing racist attacks in the form of assaults on democratic rights like voting, the rise of Jim Crow segregation and attacks on their persons in the form of lynch mobs which eventually would spread as far north as Duluth, Minnesota.

The story doesn’t end with the collapse of Reconstruction, however. Gradually in the late 1800s and more rapidly in the early 20th century, large numbers of black people left the South to take industrial jobs in the urban centers of the North and West, fleeing from the near peonage of sharecropping, lynch mobs and the omnipresence of Jim Crow *de jure* racism. Black people who moved North began to be integrated into the working class, especially in unskilled jobs, even as they faced pervasive social discrimination and ghettoization.

The Communist movement in the United States came with difficulty to appreciate the strategic importance of the black population through prodding from the Comintern. Many blacks were pouring into industrial jobs by the early 20th century and coming to form an important part of the working class. The old Socialist Party had, at best, subsumed fighting black oppression into fighting the capitalist system as a whole and, at worst, tolerated vicious racists within its ranks. That changed when the Bolsheviks managed to convince the leaders of the American party that the black question was a strategic one for the American revolution. In a

Rally by striking Verizon phone workers in Newark, NJ last August. We seek to mobilize the social power of the integrated working class in the fight for black liberation.



WV Photo

UC Berkeley: Forum on Prison Labor Progressive Labor Crawls for Nader

In the week preceding the presidential elections, the Progressive Labor Party (PL) organized an event at the University of California at Berkeley called "Prison Labor Forum and Discussion" in conjunction with liberal student groups on campus, including Students for Nader and the Green Party. One would have thought that PL, with their omnipresent slogan, "Fight for Communism," would at least have pretended to be the radical voice in this liberal student milieu by using their hollow red rhetoric to try to establish themselves as the "communists" on campus. But instead of a debate between Naderites and PLers, what took place was a forum with PL members crawling on their bellies, shamelessly courting the Greens and Nader supporters to join in their "mass movement."

PL's presentation was verbatim from their pamphlet *Prison Labor: Fascism U.S. Style*, which is basically a lot of statistics and numbers, and only in the last 20 seconds did their speaker say, almost in passing, that we "need to fight for communism, and if you guys want to find out how to, you should check out PL." They barely used their magic word, "fascism" (which they use to describe almost everything that's not PL), and appeared no better than Angela Davis on a bad day. Mostly, they explained the rise of prison labor as something the corporations pressure for in order to compete in the international market, but left out any mention that the capitalist state—cops, courts, prisons and military—is the machinery for the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie over the working class and oppressed and cannot be reformed. That's how they're reaching out to Naderites: on simple opposition to "corporate greed."

After PL's presentation, an SL member intervened, pointing out that the "anti-prison labor" movement is designed to be

a liberal facade to reform capitalism: "Prisons are not new; the only real solution is the end of capitalism through a workers revolution." He also noted that when it comes to state repression against gays, PL—which stands in the Stalinist tradition of revoltingly portraying the family as the "fighting unit for socialism"—has nothing to say in opposition. A Naderite came to PL's rescue, defensively complaining that "just because they don't defend gays doesn't mean they're against them!" This fits well with Nader's position that the issues of homosexuality and women's rights are "gonadal politics."

In their paper *Challenge*, PL wrote that Nader is trying to "trick people who are disgusted with aspects of capitalism into supporting the system" (20 September). But at the Berkeley event their speaker said, "We don't think it's screwed up to vote for Nader; we actually agree with him on some things." He, and then later

other PLers as well, simply opined that voting is not enough, that people must organize to fight against capitalism—needless to say, no mention of the working class or even the phrase "workers revolution." When PL finally got around to criticizing Nader—only *after* the representative from Students for Nader left the room—their speaker mentioned Nader's nationalism and protectionism, but never did PL identify Nader with the class he represents: the bourgeoisie. On the contrary, PL's speaker said Nader should have told the L.A. transit workers to strike, and that he's wrong when he says the U.S. is the most democratic country in the world. All of this as though Nader has a character flaw—not a program counterposed to the interests of the working class.

The Spartacus Youth Club understands that Nader's real role in the presidential campaign was to channel voter discontent right back into bourgeois electoral poli-

tics. The Green Party's overt goal during the campaign was to pressure the Democrats into becoming more "progressive," even establishing "vote-swapping" deals among supporters that would allow Naderites to vote for Al Gore in hotly contested states and still have the Green Party come up strong nationally, to send a message to the Democrats that its liberal wing is discontented. The Democratic Party is a capitalist party, and together with the Republicans it governs the capitalist state and all its murderous apparatuses specifically to oppress the working class and keep the bourgeoisie in power. Unlike PL, the SYC really does fight for a communist future; our activities and propaganda are aimed at winning militants to the side of the working class, understanding that the multiracial workers party that can lead this revolution will be built in hard class struggle, not through the empty rhetoric that is a cover for PL's reformist politics. ■

Buchanan, Nader Also Push Racist Nationalism

The 2000 elections have become President. Mrs. Foster is a member of the platform.

Nader Keeps Protestors Within Bosses' Electoral System

Ralph Nader isn't trying to steal votes from Al Gore. Nader is doing what he can to win the election.

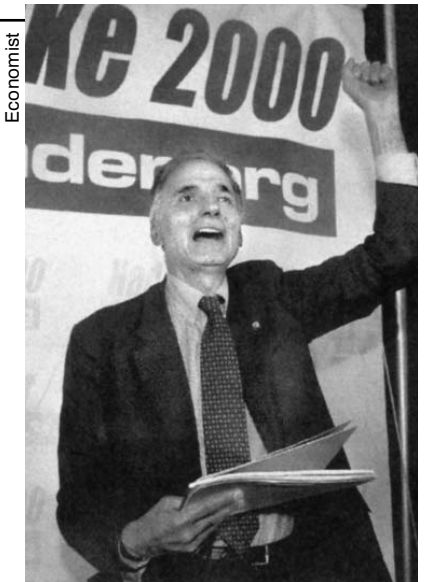
Nader Maintains Electoral Dead-End

This year's presidential electoral circus includes several candidates besides Gore and Bush. The Green Party's Ralph Nader and the Reform Party's Pat Buchanan are the best-known "other candidates." Buchanan is an open fascist whose campaign is based on attacking immigrant workers as the "cause" of problems caused by capitalism. Nader basically ignores racism and pushes nationalism in the campaign against the World Trade Organization (WTO) and openly spreads anti-communism in the campaign against China joining the WTO. But Nader's main aim is the impossible dream of majoring on the negative.

CHALLENGE

6, 20 September, 1 November 2000

For all the left-sounding criticisms of Nader that PL prints, they zipped their lips in the presence of Greens at Berkeley forum on prison labor.



Black Liberation...

(continued from page 9)

truck with the Democratic Party. But the Panthers saw the revolutionary class in society not as the multiracial proletariat, which alone has the social power to overturn capitalism, but as the ghetto lumpen-proletariat, the chronically unemployed and the like. Their lack of attachment to a class with real social power left them as sitting ducks when the Feds launched COINTELPRO, which murdered and framed up countless black militants in the late 1960s and on into the '70s. Under the

pressure of severe government repression, the Panthers shattered, with many of their numbers dead or languishing in jail and with many others, such as Bobby Seale, finding their way back to the Democratic Party.

People like Louis Farrakhan and Khalid Muhammad are more representative of black nationalism today than the Black Panthers. Unlike the Panthers, they make no pretense of being anti-capitalist or in any sense leftist, and they peddle the most reactionary ideas about Jews, Asians, Arabs, homosexuals and others. It is the goal of such people to exploit their "communities" themselves rather than leave it to others. Instead of offering a solution to the problems that black people face, they offer a combination of religious palliatives, pro-capitalist cheerleading and a firm dose of hard-edged bigotry. These people are absolute poison to the struggle for black equality, and we must oppose them uncompromisingly.

This country cries out for a revolutionary workers party that can weld the power of labor to the anger of the inner cities in order to uproot the whole capitalist system through socialist revolution. In struggle, bonds of solidarity and comradeship will be forged between white and black. Not in "sensitivity training," but in the common struggle against our common enemy, white workers will overcome the backwardness and prejudice that this society teaches. When those who labor rule, we will begin to build an egalitarian socialist society where racist terror and oppression, having no material basis or purpose any

longer, will be eliminated once and for all. We want a workers government that can take the means of production out of the hands of their greedy, corrupt owners and create a planned economy which collectivizes the means of production. The tremendous wealth of this society, if expropriated from the hands of the rapacious exploiting class, can provide a decent life for working people, blacks, immigrants, the young and the old. To get there takes revolutionary leadership.

The Spartacist League is the embryo of the kind of revolutionary workers party needed to finish the Civil War and open the road to black freedom through socialist revolution. Our program provides the way forward, but we could certainly use some youth who are interested in joining the multiracial working class in the struggle for a socialist America. So if you're young, socialist and opposed to all forms of exploitation, you should look into the Spartacus Youth Club. ■

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TWU Elections...

(continued from page 16)

against the union and \$25,000 against individuals the first day of a strike, with those fines doubling every day thereafter. As we wrote in “We Need a Workers Party!” (WV No. 726, 31 December 1999):

“The government’s union-busting orders and the army of cops deployed to enforce them—flooding the streets and subway stations and surrounding bus barns and subway maintenance yards—are a naked expression of what the capitalist state is all about: a machinery of repression against the working class. These cop-enforced court orders also laid bare the class nature and commonality of class interests of the dual parties of capital, the Democrats and Republicans, in the face of any challenge by the working class to the bosses. And they revealed that the existing leadership of the labor movement serves as labor auxiliaries of and political police for the capitalist rulers.”

The union ranks were angry and defiant in the face of this naked union-busting, as thousands turned out for mass meetings on December 14 to vote for a strike. But James & Co. worked hand in glove with Giuliani, Spitzer and the transit bosses to enforce the anti-strike injunctions; union reps even brought dozens of NYPD thugs into the meeting to “protect” them! ND boosted its fortunes by portraying themselves as critics of the James faction’s crude betrayal. But despite the fact that ND controls key subway divisions and nearly half the Local 100 executive board, “opposition” leader Tim Schermerhorn openly pushed a defeatist line weeks before the contract expiration—*opposing* a strike as long as the union was under the James leadership. ND cynically adopted a more militant posture only after thousands of combative TWUers turned out for two union rallies weeks before the contract deadline.

Many transit workers remember that ND at least challenged the injunctions in court, while James’ lawyers blocked with the city administration in a move to secure a permanent injunction. Outside the courtroom, however, ND never defied—and in fact enforced—these union-busting diktats. Presiding over the December 14 meetings, ND let the injunctions be read—to the boos and hisses of the ranks. Faced with thousands of workers demanding strike action, ND tried to funnel the outrage into an impotent protest outside the union hall, where hundreds of cops were deployed to “protect” the executive board. At a protest march the next day, ND instructed the several hundred workers present to not even talk about striking. Seeking to deflect Giuliani’s redbaiting tirades and his equation of striking with Marxism, ND went out of its way to demonstrate its patriotic loyalty to the bosses, featuring an American flag on the speaker’s platform at the protest!

Now Melendez, stealing a page from Giuliani, has resorted to redbaiting ND leaders associated with socialist groups. This has long been a favored weapon of the bosses in attacking labor. The anti-Communist purges carried out by the pro-imperialist labor tops in the late 1940s and ’50s—the domestic expression of the Cold War against the Soviet Union—crippled the unions for decades, driving out the reds and other militants who had built the industrial unions and brought black workers into their ranks.

TWU members have told WV that in campaigning at transit locations, Toussaint emphasizes that ND was not for striking last year but only for extending the contract deadline, i.e., working under the terms of the old contract and spitting on the traditional TWU slogan, “No contract, no work!” This comes as no surprise. Mobilizing for strike action and appealing to all of NYC labor to back up the TWU would have meant directly challenging the very courts ND relies on to boost its position within the union bureaucracy. It would also have meant

LAPD Fires Rubber Bullets at Protesters

We publish below a letter sent by the Partisan Defense Committee on October 28 to Los Angeles district attorney Gil Garcetti and chief of police Bernard Parks.

We protest the potentially deadly police assault last Sunday against a demonstration called by the October 22nd Coalition to Stop Police Brutality. The LAPD unleashed a barrage of rubber bullets into the crowd, hitting one woman in the eye and injuring a dozen other people, including an eight-year-old girl. A journalist videotaping the police rampage was clubbed by a cop on horseback and then arrested when he sought medical attention. Legal observers were rammed by police motorcycles.

The use of rubber bullets, which can be lethal at close range, first against protesters outside the Democratic National Convention in L.A. this past summer and again now, underscores the escalating repression meted out by this capitalist government, evident first and foremost in the occupying armies of police in the ghettos and barrios. It is telling that protesters carrying portraits of Tyisha Miller and others killed by the



Friedman/L.A. Times

Los Angeles, October 22: Protest against police terror surrounded by riot cops, who attacked demonstrators.

police were met by a hail of rubber bullets. This brutal assault took place as the city faces multimillion-dollar lawsuits stemming from the LAPD assassination, torture and frame-up machine centered in the Rampart Division.

The pretext for the LAPD rampage was that protesters sought to march behind LAPD headquarters, as *prear-*

ranged with the police. One protester, who was shot in the leg, said, “All we were doing was walking and chanting when the cops shot us.” Four protesters were arrested on bogus charges, including one who faces felony charges for assaulting a police officer. We demand that all charges be dropped immediately!

taking on the supposed “friends of labor” in the capitalist Democratic Party which, from Spitzer to Hillary Clinton, pushed the bosses’ union-busting vendetta.

At the time, ND amnestied the Democrats by aiming all its fire against Giuliani and saying nothing about Spitzer and Clinton. More recently, Toussaint

and D.A. into the union, miffed only that the Labor Department wouldn’t push for indictment.

SA coyly notes at the very end of the article, “Court suits against the union and even management are no substitute for the necessary task of mobilizing the rank and file to fight.” No substitute?

ship. We will support ND against the Hall/James crew.”

Josephson’s election flyer calls for organizing “workfare” workers and to “mobilize for the fight against police brutality and other racist attacks,” though there is not a word on the broader fight against the racist oppression which is rooted in the American capitalist system. The LRP cadre were earlier leaders of an organization (Revolutionary Socialist League) that *opposed* busing for school integration in Boston in 1974. Last year, the LRP sneeringly dismissed the mass labor/black mobilization initiated by the Partisan Defense Committee on October 23 which brought out up to 10,000 trade unionists, black people and others to ride the KKK out of NYC. At the same time, they boosted as “the genuine anti-Klan action on October 23” a rally of “tolerance” for the KKK organized by the state Democratic Party machine which offered to share a sound permit with the racist killers and was aimed at spiking the anti-Klan mobilization.

In providing a left cover for pro-capitalist “oppositions” like ND which are nothing but a new layer of slicker labor fakers, opportunists like SA and the LRP strengthen the hold of the Democratic Party on working people. The LRP itself has repeatedly crossed the class line internationally by refusing to defend the Soviet Union or today China, Cuba and other bureaucratically deformed workers states against imperialism and the threat of capitalist counterrevolution.

Transit workers need a *class-struggle leadership* that would seek to not only lead its own membership against “workfare” slave labor and other racist, anti-union attacks but to mobilize the power of the union to fight on behalf of the unorganized and all minorities, initiating aggressive organizing drives and demanding that “workfare” recipients receive union wages with full union protection and benefits. There needs to be a fight for *jobs for all* and for union control of hiring and training programs to fight discrimination against black, Latino, immigrant and women workers. The union should be in the forefront of organizing mass protests against the epidemic of cop terror in the ghettos and barrios that accompanies the racist cutbacks. What’s needed is a multiracial revolutionary workers party that will mobilize the unions as fighting battalions for the working class and all the oppressed and lead the struggle for socialist revolution right here in the bastion of world imperialism. ■

New Directions’ answer to Giuliani redbaiting was to prove loyalty to bosses by waving stars and stripes at December 15 rally last year.



was a featured speaker at a campaign meeting for Green Party candidate Ralph Nader, a small-time capitalist politician running as a shill for the Democrats. While screaming over credit card expenses of a few grand, ND does not raise a peep about the *hundreds of thousands* of dollars thrown into the coffers of the Democratic Party every election year by the TWU bureaucracy. When it comes to “corruption,” there is nothing more corrupt than inviting the capitalists to meddle in the affairs of the union and supporting the political parties of the class enemy! Workers need a party that fights for *their* class interests and in defense of all the oppressed. *Break with the Democrats—Forge a workers party!*

Reformist “Socialists” and Government Intervention

A number of reformist “socialist” outfits are backing ND in these elections. One such group is Socialist Action (SA), which has a long track record of backing pro-government “reformers” like ND and the Teamsters for a Democratic Union and former Teamsters president Ron Carey—i.e., labor traitors who have climbed into union office with the help of the bosses’ government. In an article headlined “TWU Rebels on Verge of N.Y. Union Takeover?” *Socialist Action* (October 2000) favorably reports on all of ND’s recent moves to invite the Feds

Bringing the capitalist government into the unions is counterposed to the very purpose of union democracy—the open debate over conflicting strategies in order for the workers to select a leadership which will fight *against* the employers and their state. As Bolshevik revolutionary Leon Trotsky emphasized in a 1940 article, “Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay,” under pro-capitalist leadership the unions are characterized by their “drawing closely to and growing together with the state power.” The precondition for any real struggle by the unions is the *complete independence of the labor movement from the capitalist state*.

Running for vice chairman in the Track Division of Local 100 is Eric Josephson, a self-described socialist and supporter of the League for a Revolutionary Party (LRP) who claims to have a “program of militant mass struggle.” But Josephson’s program does not offer a class-struggle alternative to James/Melendez or New Directions, and he does not merit a vote from TWU members. In a 19 October leaflet titled “TWU Elections Can Show Way to Mass Fightback,” Josephson quite correctly says that “the program which ND is really enthusiastic about is, of course, filing lawsuits.” Then he says, vote for them anyway: “Despite our differences with ND, we stand with our co-workers’ desire for a new Local leader-

Elections...

(continued from page 1)
who earned his respectable fortune running booze during Prohibition, offered Nixon at the private meeting they had shortly before Nixon conceded.)

Dowd’s editors at the *Times*, authoritative mouthpiece for the American capitalist class, were not so amused. In its editorial the day of her column, the traditionally pro-Democratic *Times* urged Gore to back down: “This is a time for both presidential candidates, their advisers and their parties to proceed with extreme caution—a caution merited by the danger that events could lurch suddenly toward political or constitutional crisis. The tradition of regular, reliable elections and orderly transition of power is one of the glories of American democracy.” The next day’s editorial repeated the message in stronger terms. A headline in the *Times* (9 November) Business section declared: “Wall Street Wants a Winner: Be It Bush or Gore.”

With profits in the “boom economy” starting to get shaky and with the policies of the dual parties of capital virtually indistinguishable, Wall Street does not much care which gang of politicians runs the government. Cheering on the bipartisan gridlock in Washington, one investment banker said: “The background economics remain superb, and if you want to keep those unmolested, this political outcome is the best that you could have.” But particularly coming less than two years after the Clinton impeachment nearly provoked a constitutional crisis, the last thing the bourgeoisie wants is a protracted wrangle that might damage the crown jewels of American “democracy”: the two-party system and an orderly succession to the imperial presidency.

Nor does such indecision help the standing and image abroad of the “world’s only superpower.” Hysterical liberals in the U.S. invoked the U.S.-financed “pro-democracy movement” that ousted Serbia’s Milosevic in promoting the campaign against Bush. How about if Serbia had tried to buy the American elections lock, stock and barrel? Or as one Italian newspaper put it, why not send in Iraqi officials to supervise the recount in Florida?

AFL-CIO Tops: Labor Lackeys of the Capitalists

That Gore ended up running neck and neck with Bush after trailing in the opinion polls by double-digit figures a few months ago was in good part because of the massive effort by the AFL-CIO leadership and black Democrats like Jesse Jackson to deliver the labor and black vote. Both labor and blacks have gotten nothing but the shaft from Clinton and could expect nothing more from Gore. But the AFL-CIO tops poured more than \$56 million in union members’ dues into the Gore campaign—on top of the many thousands of man-hours for canvassing, poster and phone banks—while seeking to squelch any labor struggle that might jeopardize the Democrats’ electoral prospects.

When 47,000 Los Angeles county workers in SEIU service employees union Local 660 walked out last month,

coinciding with a popular month-long strike by city transit workers, the Democrats and their allies in the labor bureaucracy had it called off after one day. Jackson then rushed to L.A. to preach the virtues of “reconciliation” with management and help get the transit workers back on the job.

Gore was able to garner some 90 percent of black votes primarily because of widespread fear that under the Republicans things would be even worse. Yet the Clinton/Gore administration, no less than the Republican administrations that preceded it, represented the raw face of racist reaction, from the elimination of welfare and intensified police terror in the ghettos and barrios to the increase in legal lynching. The mass civil rights movement of the 1950s and ’60s eliminated the poll tax and Jim Crow segregation in the South and won basic democratic rights for black people such as the right to vote. But the present conflict over the election results in Florida has highlighted that in large parts of the South—and not only there—many blacks are still effectively prevented from voting.

Whipping up racial and ethnic hatred has long served the capitalist rulers by obscuring the irreconcilable class divide between labor and capital. Once supplying a “reserve army of labor” to be employed when the bosses need them, the ghetto poor have largely been discarded by a ruling class that no longer needs their labor power. But just as the forcible subjugation and segregation of the black population at the bottom of this society is



L.A. transit workers strike rally in September. Labor tops, Jesse Jackson brought popular strike to an end in service of Gore campaign.

in the oppression of the black masses—and a thin, brittle layer of corrupt, pro-capitalist union bureaucrats. The AFL-CIO tops do nothing to oppose the savage attacks on the poor, blacks and immigrants. For the unions to become fighting organizations in defense of the interests of all the working people, these labor lieutenants of the capitalist class must be replaced with a class-struggle leadership.

Reagan Republicans and “New Democrats”

Reagan’s smashing of the PATCO air traffic controllers union in 1981, shortly after taking office, ushered in almost two decades of defeats for the labor movement, defeats for which the treachery of the AFL-CIO bureaucracy was in large

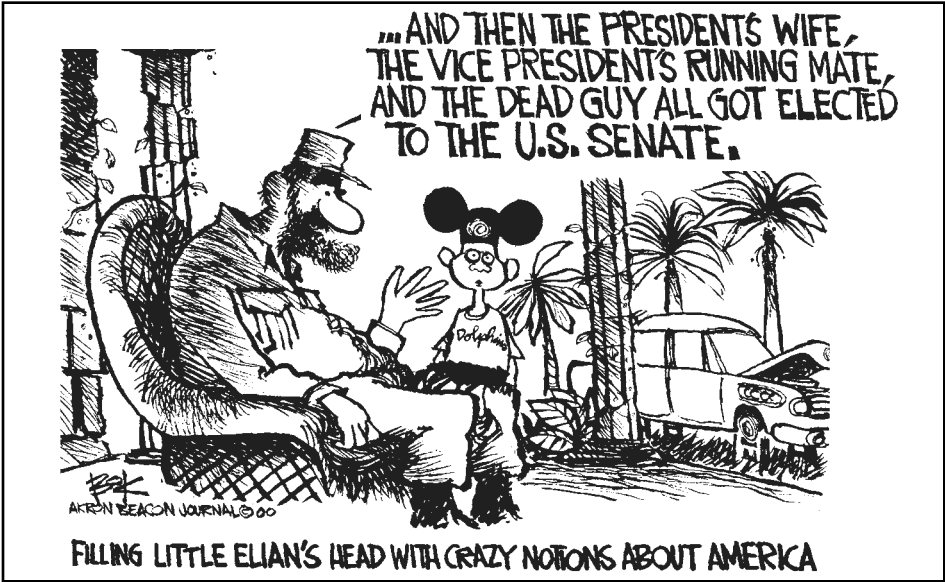
Reagan and defeated by George Bush in the 1980s, the Democrats presented a slate eight years ago composed of two Southerners, Clinton and Gore, to win back the White House by making overt appeals to racism and deliberately distancing themselves from labor.

In the present election, “New Democrat” Gore could not be effectively attacked by the Republicans as beholden to “special interests,” i.e., labor and blacks, since he manifestly was not. And to drive the point home, Gore selected as his running mate Connecticut Senator Joseph Lieberman, who stridently attacked Clinton over a consensual sexual affair, opposes affirmative action and supports reactionary school voucher programs. For his part, Bush has sought to present himself as a “moderate” or “centrist” somewhat removed from the Christian fundamentalist right wing of the Republican Party.

Nonetheless, the Texas governor stands for the same reactionary social program although presented in a slicker way. A Bush presidency would certainly pose a threat to the right to abortion. In many parts of the country, abortion has become virtually unavailable because of the forced closings of abortion clinics as well as the murder and intimidation of doctors. The de facto suppression of the right to abortion has continued unabated under Clinton, whose “pro-choice” stand won him the women’s vote and the White House. Nonetheless, the abolition of legal abortion would be a huge defeat. Wealthy women can always fly off to London for an abortion, but not those who are “barefoot and pregnant.” We fight for free abortion on demand as part of free, quality health care for all.

In an article titled “God’s Country” in the *New York Review of Books* (2 November), liberal writer Joan Didion pointed out that Bush retains close ties to the Christian fundamentalist camp, particularly through an adviser named Marvin Olasky. Olasky authored the book *Compassionate Conservatism*, whose title Bush adopted as his campaign theme, which calls for replacing government social programs by religious charity outfits. Bush asserts, “Sometimes our greatest hope is not found in reform. It is found in redemption.” When Bush told the *Austin American-Statesman* in 1993 that those who do not believe in Christ will go to hell, Olasky later explained: “Jews don’t believe in Christ; therefore, Jews don’t go to heaven.” These are the types Lieberman promotes when he demands a more central role for religion in American public life.

For his part, Gore declared, “Freedom of religion does not mean freedom from religion,” while Lieberman invoked god 13 times in 90 seconds of his nomination acceptance speech. These flagrant appeals to religion were somewhat toned down later in the campaign. While the U.S. stands far above any other advanced capitalist country in being permeated with religion and mysticism, there is also strong sentiment within the population against further religious intrusion into public and private life. Thus, there was overwhelming opposition to the drive to impeach Clinton as people saw the danger of the long arm of the “sex police” extending into their bedrooms. In the



Akron Beacon-Journal

an essential foundation stone of American capitalism, it is also its Achilles’ heel. Black workers remain a significant component of organized labor, integrated into strategic sections of the proletariat in whose hands lies the power to break the chains of capitalist exploitation and racist oppression. The road to black freedom lies in the smashing of the capitalist system in which black oppression is rooted.

As opposed to the dead end of support to “lesser evil” Democrats, we stand on the perspective of revolutionary integrationism, fighting against every instance of discrimination and for the full integration of black people into an egalitarian socialist society. What stands in the way of unleashing the power of the American proletariat is backward consciousness—most profoundly the deep racism rooted

measure responsible. However, while the number of strikes in recent years stands at an all-time low, those that have taken place have been both broadly popular and have resulted in economic gains for the workers—from UPS in 1997 and GM Flint a year later to Verizon and L.A. transit this past summer.

There have also been mass black protests in the South, for example, against the Confederate flag in Charleston, South Carolina in January and in defense of affirmative action in Tallahassee, Florida in the spring. Furthermore, a new generation of left-liberal student youth have taken to the streets protesting the ravages of “free market” capitalism around the globe, which they identify with institutions like the International Monetary Fund and World Trade Organization. However, these protests have been channeled by their organizers into support for the Democratic Party or its “left” auxiliary, Nader’s Green Party.

Another aspect of the breakup of the Reagan era is the so-called “centrist convergence” of the Democrats and Republicans. The main reason the presidential vote was so close is that both Gore and Bush were competing to occupy the same space at the center of the bourgeois political spectrum. In the previous two presidential elections, the Democrats’ strategy was centered on winning back the “Reagan Democrats”—Southern whites and white ethnic constituencies in the North which had defected to the Republicans as part of a racist backlash against the minimal gains achieved by blacks in the 1960s. Having been trounced by Ronald

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elections, well-financed ballot initiatives in California and Michigan in favor of school voucher programs—an attack on public education and on the principle of separation of church and state—were defeated by two-to-one majorities. Also, a number of propositions aimed at curbing the “war on drugs” were passed, notably one in California against prison terms for minor drug possession charges.

The Fraud of American “Democracy”

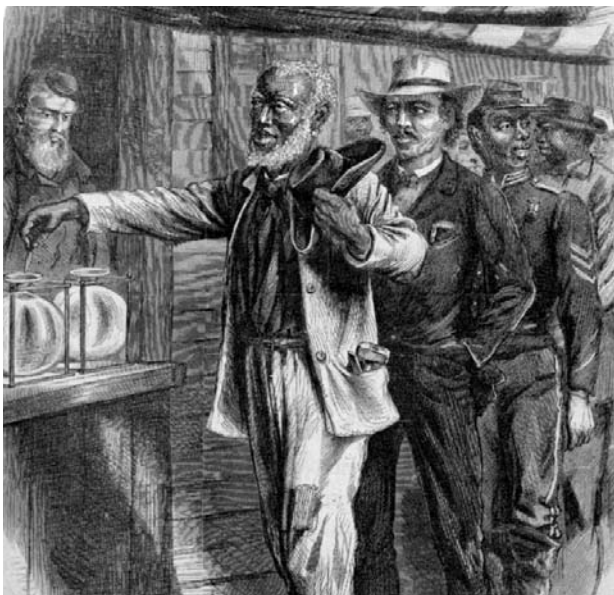
Since the initial returns showing Gore as the likely winner of the popular vote and Bush the likely winner of the electoral vote—and thus of the presidency—there has been a hue and cry by some Democrats to do away with the Electoral College. In her first political pronouncement after winning a New York Senate seat, Hillary Clinton vowed to sponsor a constitutional amendment to abolish it. Likewise agitating for its abolition is the social-democratic ISO. As its liberal audience lashes out at the Green candidate and his supporters for likely blowing Gore’s chances, the ISO squirms, “Nader Isn’t to Blame” (*Socialist Worker*, 10 November). Having backed this capitalist politician whose aim was to prod the Democratic Party in a slightly more liberal direction, the ISO now even more openly embraces the Democratic Party. Had Bush won the popular vote and Gore the Electoral College—and that was certainly possible—the liberal Democrats and their reformist hangers-on would definitely *not* be screaming for its abolition.

As defenders of democratic rights, Marxists of course favor direct popular vote as against the Electoral College, just as we favor proportional representation, whereby political parties would be represented in Congress in relation to their strength among the voters, as is the case in many parliamentary democracies. But this does not mean they are any less the dictatorship of capital. With its appeals for “true democracy,” what the ISO seeks to do is prettify and reform the American capitalist state. As we note in the newly published Programmatic Statement of the Spartacist League/U.S.: “Structural bonapartism (the ‘imperial presidency’) is built into American democracy.” Against the illusions promoted by the ISO and other opportunists that this “democratic” state can be pressured into acting in the interests of workers and the oppressed, we uphold the Marxist understanding elaborated in the 1938 founding Declaration of Principles of the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party:

“The belief that in such a country as the United States we live in a free, democratic society, in which fundamental economic change can be effected by persuasion, by education, by legal and purely parliamentary methods, is an illusion. In the United States, as in all capitalist nations, we live, in actuality, under a capitalist dictatorship; and the possibilities for purely legal and constitutional change are therefore limited to those which fall within the framework of capitalist property and social relations.... “Since the capitalist state is the political instrument of capitalist dictatorship, and since the workers can carry out socialization only through the conquest and maintenance of political power, the workers must, as the necessary political phase of the change of ownership and control of the productive mechanism, take control of state power through the overthrow of the capitalist state and the transfer of sovereignty from it to their own workers’ state—the dictatorship of the proletariat.”

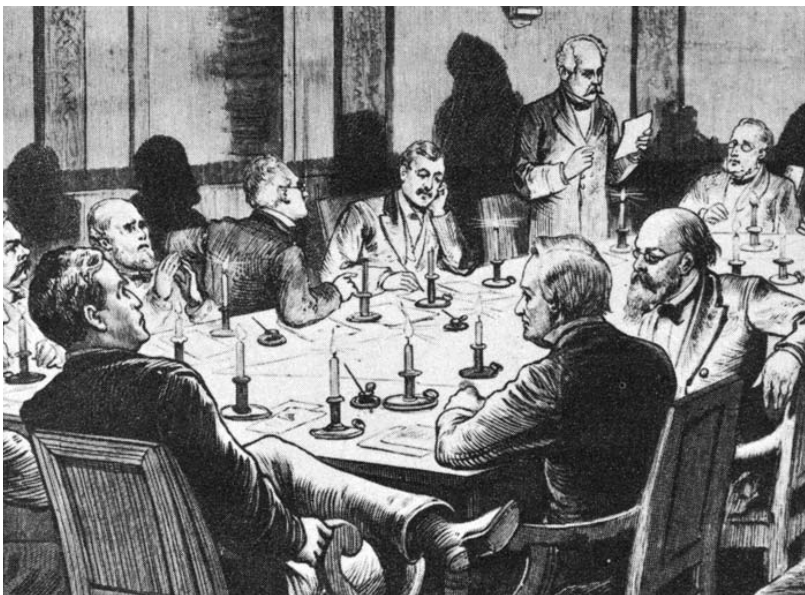
Whether the government is Democratic or Republican, or liberal or fascist, the capitalist state it administers remains a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie over the proletariat.

From the Supreme Court and the Senate to the Electoral College and the very office of the imperial presidency, which has appropriated much of the power originally accorded to Congress, the U.S. government is stacked with provisions designed to protect the ruling class *against* the masses. An op-ed piece on the Electoral College by Yale law professor Akhil Reed Amar in the *New York Times* (9 November) noted: “The college was designed at the founding of the



Harper's Weekly

Left: Blacks voting in the South in 1867 after smashing of slavocracy in Civil War. Right: 1876 election commission threw presidential vote to Republican Hayes in return for pledge to withdraw Union troops from South, sealing defeat of Reconstruction.



Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper

country to help one group—white Southern males.” At the Constitutional Convention in 1787, the slaveholding states demanded that their share of electoral votes be based on the number of residents with citizenship rights plus the number of slaves, who had no rights and were deemed to be chattel. Accordingly, slaves were each considered as three-fifths of a person for the purpose of apportioning electors. Under this system, a state like Virginia with its small voting population emerged with more than a quarter of the electors needed to choose a president. It took the Civil War to smash the slave system and extend the rights of citizenship to black males.

In the face of KKK lynch mob terror against the black freedmen in the South, the withdrawal of the last Union troops in 1877 sealed the defeat of Radical Recon-

struction. That betrayal of the aspirations of the black freedmen issued from the 1876 presidential elections, which threw the bourgeoisie into a political crisis. With a close election between Republican Rutherford B. Hayes and Democrat Samuel J. Tilden, Congress set up an electoral commission which eventually gave Hayes 185 electoral votes, including those in dispute in a number of Southern states, to 184 for Tilden. In return, the Republicans, representing Northern industrialists, promised to remove the last remaining Union troops in Louisiana and South Carolina and to revive the former slaveholders by providing financial assistance to rebuild the shattered Southern economy.



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The Compromise of 1877 was a prelude to the emergence of American imperialism, marked particularly by the 1898 Spanish-American War (in which the U.S. acquired its first colonial possessions). With it came the colonialist “White Man’s Burden” taken over from declining British imperialism and the “Great White Fleet” which sailed the world to flaunt American might. This was accompanied by Jim Crow segregation in the South, enforced by state and KKK race-terror, as voting rights—among many other things—were basically eliminated for black people. With the rise of the U.S. as a major world power came the strengthening of the imperial presidency, as America’s rulers

For Socialist Revolution!

could no longer have their wars and military adventures held up by the bother of seeking Congressional approval. This has been demonstrated in recent years in the ongoing terror bombing of Iraq, which *nobody* has thought might require a declaration of war!

The working class should strive to seize on even momentary divisions and confusion within the ruling class to press forward the class struggle to its advantage. The Gore-Bush feud is at this point more like a tempest in a teapot than a political crisis for the bourgeoisie. But it speaks to the class loyalties of the AFL-CIO misleaders that their principal concern is to maintain and refurbish illusions in capitalist “democracy” and ensure that a Democrat continues to be Commander

workers party, not a vehicle for bourgeois electoralism but a party based on the Marxist understanding that the capitalist profit system must be rooted out and replaced by a workers government.

A genuine workers party would base its strategy on the mass mobilization of the workers in struggle, for their interests and in defense of all the oppressed. A microcosm of such a workers party in action was seen on the streets of New York City on 23 October 1999, when the Partisan Defense Committee and Spartacist League brought out up to 10,000 trade unionists, blacks, Hispanics, gays and others behind the call: Stop the KKK! Here was a demonstration of the social power of the multiracial working class, standing at the head of all those the Klan has lined up in its sights and acting independently of the government and parties of the capitalist class. True to *its* class, the Democratic Party, acting in concert with the courts and the city administration of Republican mayor Rudolph Giuliani and with the avid support of the reformist ISO, tried to spike that labor/black mobilization, offering even to share a sound permit with the KKK killers. But the Democrats failed to deter the thousands who drove out the KKK.

The political battle required to build that mobilization in the face of fierce opposition from the state agencies and parties of the capitalists contains important lessons for all those who want to struggle against union-busting, racist oppression, poverty, homelessness, war and all the other hideous expressions of a system rooted in exploitation. Central is that the capitalist state is not neutral. It is the instrument for organized violence to ensure the rule of one class—the capitalists—over another class, the proletariat. The bourgeois state at its core consists of special armed bodies of men—the cops, the military, the prison system and the whole “justice” system—whose job is to protect the profits and rule of the capitalists and to repress the workers. All historical experience has shown that the working class cannot reform this state and use it in its own interests but must create its own state, a workers state. The revolutionary fight for proletarian state power is the only road to black freedom and the emancipation of labor and all the oppressed.■

“Blacks and Jews for Buchanan” ...not! November 9 West Palm Beach rally of incensed Democratic voters.

in Chief of U.S. imperialism. The labor bureaucracy’s support to the Democratic Party as a “lesser evil” is the political expression of its all-sided program of class collaboration. As strike after strike has demonstrated, the militancy of the base stands in direct contradiction to the treachery of the tops.

Reflecting the absence of political class consciousness in the American proletariat, the U.S. is the only industrial country in the world where the workers have not had their own independent political party, reflecting in some way, even on a reformist basis, the conflicting interests of labor versus capital. The Spartacist League fights to forge a revolutionary

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IG...

(continued from page 6)

maintains that the Stalinist regimes are committed to the defense of proletarian property forms—a notion clearly refuted by events themselves in 1989-92. Trying to use Trotsky to buttress its anti-Trotskyist argument, the IG's August Web posting quotes from the 1933 article "The Class Nature of the Soviet State," which notes that "the bureaucracy is indissolubly bound up with a ruling economic class"—i.e., the proletariat—and continues:

"Whether we take the variant of further successes of the Soviet regime or, contrariwise, the variant of its collapse, the bureaucracy in either case turns out to be not an independent class but an excrescence upon the proletariat. A tumor can grow to tremendous size and even strangle the living organism, but a tumor can never become an independent organism."

But here Trotsky directly refutes the IG: It was the bureaucratic "tumor" that *strangled* the Soviet workers state after decades of conciliating imperialism.

The IG goes on to cite Trotsky's description of the dual role of the Stalinist apparatus: "It defends the proletarian dictatorship with its own methods, but these methods are such as facilitate the victory of the enemy *tomorrow*. Whoever fails to understand this dual role of Stalinism in the USSR has understood nothing." Precisely. In response to imperialist Cold War in the late 1940s, the Kremlin bureaucracy overturned capitalist rule from above in part of East Europe occupied by the Red Army in the aftermath of World War II. In Yugoslavia, and a few years later in China, such overturns came as indigenous Stalinist-led peasant-based forces emerged victorious in civil wars in exceptional historical circumstances, i.e., the extreme weakness of the capitalist class and the absence of the proletar-



New York Times

Chilean Socialist president Salvador Allende as military coup topples popular-front government, September 1973. "Constitutional" officers invited into Allende's cabinet went on to slaughter tens of thousands of workers, leftists.

iat contending in its own right for social power. In all these cases, what emerged were deformed workers states based from their inception on excluding the proletariat from political power.

The overturns carried out by the Soviet bureaucracy in East Europe were effected not in pursuit of the interests of the international proletariat but in defense of bureaucratic caste rule in the USSR in the face of the implacable opposition of world imperialism. To maintain his wartime alliance with the "democratic" imperialists, Stalin ordered the disarming of the revolutionary-minded working class in Italy after the war and strangled the anti-capitalist revolution in Greece. As late as 1952, Stalin was prepared to sacrifice the DDR, offering up the prospect of a "neutral" reunified Germany in order to appease the U.S.-led NATO powers. In 1955, the Kremlin ordered the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Austria in a vain effort to curry imperialist favor.



Der Spiegel

Military officer Pal Maleter sided with pro-socialist insurgent workers in 1956 Hungarian Revolution. Demonstrators carry Hungarian flag with Communist symbol cut out. Trotskyist leadership, combatting nationalist and parliamentary illusions, was needed to lead workers councils to power.

Military defense of the degenerated/deformed workers states against imperialism, premised on the understanding that the collectivized property forms are the social foundation for a further development toward socialism, is a critical component of the program of world socialist revolution. This does not mean—and is in fact counterposed to—any political support to the Stalinists, whose class collaboration and conciliation of imperialism lead to the disarming of the forces of working-class revolution. Plainly stated, such political support is a betrayal of world proletarian revolution. It is precisely the crucial distinction between military defense and political support that the IG papers over.

We hailed the intervention of the Soviet Army into Afghanistan in 1979 and militarily supported the Polish bureaucracy's suppression of Solidarność' counterrevolutionary bid for power two years later. The Soviet troops who went into Afghanistan believed that they were fulfilling their internationalist duty. Cutting against the grain of "socialism in one country," this intervention provided a potential lever for a political revolution to oust the nationalist Moscow bureaucracy. At the same time, we warned from the outset that the Stalinist bureaucracy was perfectly capable of cutting a deal with the imperialists and pulling out of Afghanistan. And in Poland, we sharply denounced the Stalinist regime for driving part of the working class into the arms of anti-Soviet clerical reaction, underlining the urgency of proletarian political revolution.

Marxist Clarity vs. Centrist Confusion

The IG's incantation that the Stalinists cannot "lead the counterrevolution" because they constitute a caste and not a class is a political amnesty for these treacherous sellouts. In Germany, there was a powerful imperialist class in the West; in the case of China, there exists an overseas bourgeoisie which is a ruling class in waiting; but in the USSR, there was *no* capitalist class. It is a lying cover for the Stalinists to say, as does the IG in its 1998 article, that "it was Washington's man Yeltsin, in constant contact with U.S. president Bush, at the head of elements that had split from the Stalinist bureaucracy, who seized power in August 1991 and proceeded to destroy the Soviet Union." To say that Yeltsin "split from the bureaucracy" is to disappear the fact that the bureaucracy as a whole underwent a terminal collapse in this period. Yeltsin was still a leader of the tattered Communist Party when he became head of the Russian Federation in May 1990.

Indeed, as late as 1995, more than 75 percent of the leaders of capitalist Russia's regional and national governments were former members of the Soviet *nomenklatura* (ruling stratum) and 61 percent of the new mafia-capitalist ruling class had its origins in that stratum. In several East European countries, notably Albania, Bulgaria and Rumania, capital-



John Sadovy

ist restoration was effected under the leadership of the various Communist parties in the absence of "market reforms" and of any immediate imperialist military threat.

In China today, insofar as it is pushing market-oriented "reforms," conciliation of imperialism and repression of workers' struggles, the bureaucracy is leading the drive for capitalist restoration. Top elements of the bureaucracy and their offspring have entered into partnerships with American, Japanese and European capital, or with the Chinese bourgeoisie which was not destroyed as a class by the 1949 Revolution but was able to keep its cohesion by fleeing the mainland. At the same time, there is a crucial difference between the act of counterrevolution itself and the lead-up to it. In that sense, the Beijing regime is not committed to capitalist restoration and sectors of it might balk at the consequences, particularly in fear of the kind of devastation wreaked on the industrial and military power of the former Soviet Union and, in some cases, because of genuine concern for the current and future plight of the workers and peasants.

In Cuba, under direct, relentless pressure from Washington, including an American economic embargo, the Castro regime retains at least verbal opposition to U.S. imperialism. At the same time, bereft of the economic lifeline formerly provided by the Soviet Union, the Cuban Stalinists have adopted some "free market" measures and have encouraged significant and growing investment from Canadian and West European corporations, particularly in the tourist industry. In 1993, they also legalized the use of the American dollar, essentially allowing the creation of a parallel dollar economy—a huge concession to counterrevolutionary forces. Yet in reporting on a trip to Cuba immediately after this measure was adopted, Norden and his companion Stamberg crowed that "the Cuban Revolution is going to make it." This fatuous assertion makes light of such dangerous measures and can only reinforce illusions in "socialism on one island," obscuring the crucial necessity to link defense of Cuba with the fight for proletarian revolution in the U.S. imperialist "belly of the beast."

The 1956 Hungarian Revolution

During one internal ICL discussion on Germany in 1995, Norden claimed that we had looked for a "Reiss faction" in the DDR in 1989-90. He was referring to those like Ignace Reiss (Poretsky), a Polish Communist who had a high-ranking position in the Soviet intelligence apparatus. In publicly adhering to Trotsky's struggle against the Stalinist bureaucracy in the late 1930s, Reiss represented the potential for a communist opposition to Stalin within the cadres of the Soviet state. In a November 1995 document titled "A Reply to the German Question," Norden wrote, "I raised the 'Reiss faction'—a reference to Trotsky's point that the

bureaucracy, due to its dual nature, will split under the impact of a political revolution—in order to make the point, in particular regarding the Communist Platform, that *there was no such section of the bureaucracy in the DDR.*" Norden continued, "But the question of whether there was a 'Reiss faction' was not some kind of irrelevant or deviant issue that I invented. We didn't ignore the SED, the party of the East German bureaucracy and throw all its members into one bag."

So the ICL supposedly hunted for a "Reiss faction" only to come up empty-handed. This may have been Norden's idea in Germany, but it wasn't the ICL's. As comrade Joseph Seymour explained in a December 1995 internal document, "On Trotsky's Concept of a 'Reiss Faction' in the Soviet Bureaucracy" (reprinted in *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 55, Autumn 1999), Ignace Reiss represented a section of the Soviet bureaucracy in the 1930s which had experience in the pre-1917 revolutionary movement and had been involved in the Trotskyist or other oppositions to the Stalin faction during the 1920s. For Trotsky "a Reiss faction meant a genuinely communist opposition made up of seasoned cadres who understood and adhered to the principles of Bolshevism. In this sense the potential for a Reiss faction was specific to the Soviet Union in the 1930s. It is *not* a trans-historic concept applicable to all Stalinist bureaucracies in all times and places. There are no Chinese Ignace Reisses in Beijing today or Cuban Ignace Reisses in Havana. There are confused left Stalinists, yes, but not high-level functionaries who share *our* communist program."

It is precisely because the IG sees such confused left Stalinists as an instrument for political revolution that they "seek where possible to split sections of the bureaucracy." This statement in their 1998 article goes on to say: "This occurred in Hungary in 1956, for example, where the head of the army (Pal Maleter) and the head of the Budapest police (Sandor Kopacsi) went over to the insurgents." The passage also describes a similar development during the 1989 Tiananmen upheaval in China—which led to an incipient political revolution—when army units initially refused to suppress the mass protests in Beijing.

The Stalinist bureaucracy in Hungary shattered under the impact of the workers political revolution. The events in Hungary and Tiananmen Square point to the heterogeneity of the bureaucratic caste, which, lacking a class basis, can fracture in times of crisis. But those elements of the bureaucracy that sided with the workers did not by that token embrace the Trotskyist program. Pal Maleter and Sandor Kopacsi were heroic individuals who had fought as Communist partisans against Nazi occupation forces in World War II and were personally opposed to capitalist restoration. They remained, nevertheless, within the framework of Stalinist nationalism and "peaceful coexistence" with the imperialist world order.

Thus, Maleter served as minister of defense in the government of "liberal" Stalinist reformer Imre Nagy, which was catapulted to power by the revolution and soon overthrown by a Soviet military intervention that suppressed the revolution. The Nagy regime called for disarming the insurgent workers, appealed for United Nations intervention against the threat of Soviet military suppression and stood for parliamentary elections open to bourgeois parties. With the peasantry, largely under the sway of the Catholic church, constituting the majority of the Hungarian population, "free elections" would likely have resulted in a capitalist-restorationist government.

In their mass, the Hungarian workers were pro-socialist and the workers councils that sprang up moved against fascist elements and other reactionary forces; at the same time, many were infected with anti-Soviet nationalism and had illusions in "Western-style democracy." The establishment of a revolutionary regime based on the power of the workers coun-

cils required the leadership of a Leninist-Trotskyist party which would have fought against bourgeois-democratic and nationalist illusions among the workers and those who promoted them, including the “left” Stalinists. In the course of such political struggle, elements like Maleter might well have been won to the Trotskyist program.

Pabloism of the Second Mobilization

The IG’s search for a wing of the Stalinist bureaucracy to act as a surrogate for a Trotskyist leadership is a throwback to the revisionism of Michel Pablo’s International Secretariat in the 1950s, which led to the destruction of the Trotskyist Fourth International. When Imre Nagy’s Polish counterpart, Wladyslaw Gomulka, came to power there a few months later in what was called the “Polish October,” successfully diverting a workers rising, the Pabloites hailed “the leadership role played by the Gomulka tendency...a centrist tendency nonetheless moving to the left” (*Quatrième Internationale*, December 1956). At the head of the Stalinist regime, the “centrist” Gomulka soon moved to implement his program, making huge concessions to the freeholding peasantry and to the Catholic church and thus setting in motion the forces which would lead to Solidarność counterrevolution three decades later.

Despairing of the possibility of building Trotskyist parties in a “new world

reality” where Stalinist-led social over- turns had created deformed workers states in East Europe, Pablo declared that the Stalinists could “roughly outline” a “revolutionary orientation.” The Pabloites’ conclusion was to abandon the necessity of the independent mobilization of the proletariat under revolutionary leadership, liquidating their forces into Stalinist and, at times, social-democratic parties with the aim of prodding these reformists to the left. The Pabloites went on to liquidate into all manner of alien class formations, and were inexorably drawn to the “democratic” forces of capitalist counterrevolution, becoming cheerleaders for the likes of Solidarność and Yeltsin.

We have aptly described Norden & Co. as “Pabloites of the second mobilization”—with one significant difference. While the Pabloites were, at least, responding to successful overturns of the capitalist order, the IG amnesties the Stalinist bureaucrats who presided over historic defeats for the working class. Capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union and East Europe ushered in a historic retrogression in the political consciousness of the proletariat internationally, though not evenly or uniformly, marked by a revival of petty-bourgeois anarchism and even mysticism particularly among youth. Today, even most subjective leftists view as rather esoteric the idea that a proletarian revolution, like that successfully pursued by Lenin’s Bol-

shevik Party in Russia in 1917, is the key to the liberation of mankind. This does not at all rule out mass, militant struggles by the workers or other oppressed layers. The only way in which the regression in consciousness can be overcome and the working class can become a class *for* itself, i.e., fighting for socialist revolution internationally, is to reforge the Trotskyist Fourth International as the leadership of the working class, once again winning the allegiance of the proletariat to the banner of Marxism.

As we wrote in a document of the ICL International Executive Committee a few months before the defection of Norden & Co.: “Failure to recognize the period we are in and the necessary relationship of our small revolutionary vanguard to the proletariat, and the absence of the Soviet Union as an active and defining factor in politics, have led to disorientation and appetite to follow alien political programs and forces” (reprinted in “Norden’s ‘Group’: Shamefaced Defectors from Trotskyism”).

This was what happened to the Nordenes who, refusing to accept the lessons of these defeats, embarked on an opportunist course of promoting the illusion that the very PDS which had sold out the DDR would lead “mass resistance” against the ravages of *Anschluss*. Norden’s fantasy of “mass resistance” in the immediate wake of counterrevolution negated the critical factor of *consciousness* which only a Leninist vanguard

could introduce. Imbibing deeply from the wellsprings of capitalist counterrevolution, these elements fled the ICL and the struggle to build a world Trotskyist vanguard party.

Incarnated as the IG, they have sought instead to bloc with any number of anti-proletarian, anti-revolutionary forces, from Latin American nationalists to trade-union opportunists in Brazil and the U.S. At every step we have exposed and documented their opportunist capitulations (see, for example, “For the Right of Independence for Puerto Rico!” WV No. 704, 8 January 1999; “Lies, Damned Lies and Anti-Union Lawsuits: IG’s Brazil Fraud Exposed,” WV No. 669, 30 May 1997; and “Labor Opportunism, the Democratic Party and the Defense of Mumia Abu-Jamal,” WV No. 714, 28 May 1999).

Following the logic of his anti-Marxist course, in the early 1960s Michel Pablo became an official adviser to the “left” bourgeois-nationalist Ben Bella regime in Algeria, in which capacity he brain-trusted the subordination of militant workers committees to the government. Having abandoned the Trotskyist program and a proletarian compass and offered themselves up as unofficial advisers to all manner of opportunists and misleaders, Norden and his coterie would doubtless also be ready to serve as braintrusters for some pretty unsavory types. The possibilities are wide open as long as the minimum norm of being anti-Marxist is met. ■

Palestinians...

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battle.” Pursuing this one-sided war of terror with a vengeance, Israeli generals immediately promised that more assassinations would follow. According to the London-based Arabic newspaper *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat*, Israeli military intelligence has drawn up a list of some 400 Palestinian fighters targeted for assassination or arrest in the “autonomous” parts of the Occupied Territories nominally controlled by the PA. Within Israel’s pre-1967 borders, heavily armed cops with attack dogs have staged Gestapo-like late-night raids on Palestinian homes, breaking down doors and destroying furniture, Amnesty International reported last week. Hundreds of Israeli Arab “citizens,” among them children, have been arrested and beaten—many held without bail—on suspicion of joining protests in defense of their besieged compatriots in Gaza and the West Bank.

As expected, the Palestinian outcry against Abayat’s killing sparked a further escalation of Zionist terror in the Occupied Territories. By the end of one of the bloodiest weekends in the six weeks of the “Al Aksa *Intifada*,” some 200 Palestinians had been killed, many of them children shot through the head or chest. Referring to the protracted clashes between Palestinian guerrillas and Israeli troops which led to the Zionist occupation of Southern Lebanon in the early 1980s and repeated Israeli air strikes which drove hundreds of thousands from their homes, many now speak of the “Lebanonization” of the Occupied Territories. The Zionist rulers are entirely capable of carrying out a massacre of Palestinians on a truly genocidal scale. *Defend the Palestinian people! All Israeli troops and settlers out of all the Occupied Territories!*

As Palestinian youth with little more than rocks and slingshots confront the blood-drenched Israeli military juggernaut, desperate Palestinian protesters both in the Near East and in the diaspora overseas have appealed for “international intervention” to protect the population of the Occupied Territories from the Zionist killing machine. Now Arafat is explicitly calling for the United Nations to send in a 2,000-strong “peacekeeping” force, a demand raised at a Palestinian solidarity demonstration of tens of thousands in Rome on November 11.

Israel and its American imperialist

patron have no intention of allowing a UN intervention. But Palestinian militants must have no illusions in Arafat’s cynical appeal to this instrument of the imperialist robber barons and butchers. In 1982, faced with constant Israeli bombing raids over Beirut, Arafat likewise begged for imperialist intervention to protect Palestinian refugees and Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) fighters in Lebanon. U.S., French and Italian “peacekeeping” troops moved into Lebanon to *disarm* the PLO militants, overseeing the transfer of many to Tunisia. With the PLO fighters gone, in September 1982 Israeli troops surrounded the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in West Beirut and Israeli defense minister Ariel Sharon let loose the fascistic Lebanese Christian militias for a 36-hour orgy of killing, rape and torture. More than 2,000, mainly women, children and the elderly, were slaughtered, shot at close range. For the next eleven years, Arafat took refuge in Tunis, returning to Gaza after signing the U.S.-sponsored “peace” accord in 1993 which turned the PLO into enforcers of the Israeli occupation.

It was the UN that presided over the 1948 partition of Palestine under British colonialism, giving a green light to the Zionists’ forcible expulsion (“ethnic cleansing”) of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians whose children and grandchildren continue to live in squalid refugee camps throughout the Near East. Today the UN lends its imprimatur to the continuing starvation blockade which has killed some one and a half million Iraqis. *All U.S., British and UN imperialist forces out of the Near East! Down with the bombing and blockade of Iraq!*

The U.S. imperialists are already intervening in Israel/Palestine. The Apache helicopter that murdered Hussein Abayat was supplied by the U.S., which arms the Zionist state to the tune of a couple of billion dollars a year. Since 1993, the CIA has been training Arafat’s cops to terrorize Palestinian militants. On top of this, according to an article by Robert Fisk in the London *Independent* (6 November), the Center for Strategic and International Studies—“which has close links with the United States government”—last month issued a confidential report urging Israel and the PA “to conduct aggressive security operations for years to come” which “can have a high price tag in terms of human rights.” The report insists: “Effective counter-terrorism relies on interrogation methods that border on psychological

and/or physical torture, arrests and detentions that are ‘arbitrary’ by the standards of civil law.” It lays out in detail measures Israel has subsequently employed, from use of tanks to the sealing off of Palestinian towns to “the use of helicopter gunships and snipers” and concludes with the possible need for “forced evacuation” of Palestinians from “sensitive areas.”

The possibility of forced population transfer was indeed posed earlier this month in a plan by the Barak government for “unilateral separation,” which would entail entirely cutting off Palestinians in the Occupied Territories and effectively starving them. With Israel already barring entry to all but a handful of the 120,000 day laborers whose meager wages make up some 40 percent of total Palestinian income, the situation is increasingly dire. In an interview with the Italian newspaper *Il Manifesto* (8 November), Palestinian trade-union leader Shaher Saed said: “The situation is explosive, and many are hungry and desperate, and we fear the growth of fundamentalism.... Many factories around here have been destroyed and damaged.” Explaining that the Palestinian unions have appealed to no avail for help from trade unions in the region, many of which are in the grip of the Arab

capitalist regimes, Saed stated: “It seems that most don’t understand that it is as if we are in a big prison.”

Relying on the good offices first of the Arab capitalist regimes and then of U.S. imperialism, the petty-bourgeois nationalism of Arafat’s PLO has been a dead end for the oppressed Palestinian masses, serving only to drive many into the arms of anti-Semitic, anti-woman Islamic fundamentalist groups like Hamas.

The Zionist garrison-state must be shattered from within through Hebrew/Arab workers revolution. The Hebrew-speaking proletariat must be broken from the reactionary chauvinism of its capitalist rulers, and Palestinian workers from petty-bourgeois nationalism and Islamic fundamentalism. It is necessary to forge internationalist vanguard parties to lead the working masses of the region in sweeping away all the capitalist rulers—the Zionist butchers, Arab military bonapartists and sheiks and Persian imams. The conflicting rights to national self-determination for the Hebrew-speaking and Palestinian Arab peoples, as well as national emancipation for the Kurds and the many other oppressed nationalities of the Near East, can only be equitably realized in a socialist federation of the Near East. ■

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

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

Boston Box 390840, Central Sta. Cambridge, MA 02139 (617) 666-9453	Los Angeles Box 29574, Los Feliz Sta. Los Angeles, CA 90029 (213) 380-8239 Public Office: Sat. 2-5 p.m. 3806 Beverly Blvd., Room 215	Oakland Box 29497 Oakland, CA 94604 (510) 839-9851 Public Office: Sat. 1-5 p.m. 1634 Telegraph, 3rd Floor
Chicago Box 6441, Main PO Chicago, IL 60680 (312) 454-4930 Public Office: Tues. 5-9 p.m. and Sat. 12-3 p.m. 328 S. Jefferson St. Suite 904	New York Box 3381, Church St. Sta. New York, NY 10008 (212) 267-1025 Public Office: Tues. 6:30-8:30 p.m. and Sat. 1-5 p.m. 299 Broadway, Suite 318	San Francisco Box 77494 San Francisco, CA 94107 (415) 395-9520 Public Office: Tues. 6-8 p.m. 564 Market St., Suite 718

TROTSKYIST LEAGUE OF CANADA/LIGUE TROTSKYSTE DU CANADA

Toronto Box 7198, Station A Toronto, ON M5W 1X8 (416) 593-4138	Vancouver Box 2717, Main P.O. Vancouver, BC V6B 3X2 (604) 687-0353
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WORKERS VANGUARD

Arafat Appeals to United Nations Imperialists

Zionist Butchers Escalate War on Palestinians

NOVEMBER 13—Shortly before noon on November 9, two Israeli attack helicopters fired anti-tank missiles on a van carrying Palestinian Fatah activist Hussein Abayat, completely destroying it and killing two women standing nearby. This deliberate assassination, timed to coincide with a meeting in Washington between Clinton and Palestinian Authority (PA) president Yasir Arafat to discuss

yet another “truce,” underlined that the only “peace” the Zionist butchers have in mind is a peace of the graveyards.

Even an article in the Israeli newspaper *Ha’aretz* (10 November) said the assassination signified “almost a point of no return,” adding: “Placing Fatah leaders in the Israeli forces’ cross hairs is a clear attempt to have the outcome of the conflict determined in

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Reuters

Protester wounded by Israeli police. Some 200 Palestinians have been killed in past six weeks, many of them children.

Government Hands Off NYC Transit Union!

Sellouts, Traitors, Finks: No Choice in TWU Local 100 Elections

NEW YORK CITY, November 12—Some 35,000 members of Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100—a potential powerhouse of labor in this city—are set to vote in union elections later this month. Pitted against each other are rival wings of the Local 100 bureaucracy, all with proven records of sapping and sabotaging the union’s power. Totally discredited by its role as enforcers for government strikebreaking during last December’s pivotal contract battle, the incumbent faction has fractured into two competing slates, one headed by current president Willie James and a “Rebuild the Pride” slate led by a Surface Division vice president, Eddie Melendez, and backed by International president Sonny Hall. Riding high into the election is the New Directions (ND) “opposition” led by Track Division chairman Roger Toussaint, whose image among workers is bolstered by the bosses’ past efforts to fire him.

This election takes place in the wake of a series of union-busting victimizations by management and under the shadow of direct government intervention *at the behest of New Directions*. In recent months, ND has stirred up a “scandal” over a few thousand dollars in “unofficial” expenses on union officers’ credit cards. Its campaign flyers reprint newspaper headlines such as “DA Probing Transit Local Vote Petitions” and “Feds Probe Local 100 Expenses,” proudly recounting

ND’s successful attempts to get the Labor Department and Manhattan D.A. to comb through the union’s financial records. ND works closely with the sinister Association for Union Democracy (AUD), which specializes in bringing the unions under state control (see “Lawyers for Government Union-Busting,” WV No. 738, 30 June). Just weeks ago, detectives from the D.A.’s office drove off with allegedly fraudulent nominating petitions after ND/

AUD lawyer Arthur Schwartz demanded that the local’s “independent” election monitor safeguard them.

Indeed, ND’s stock in trade is using the courts and other government agencies as a club against its rivals, which serves only to further shackle the power of the union and place it under the thumb of the capitalist state. Such appeals to the agencies of the capitalist class enemy are proof enough why ND, despite its occasional

“militant” posture and talk of “democracy,” offers no alternative to James and Melendez. *Government hands off TWU Local 100! Labor must clean its own house!*

James, ND Enforce Strikebreaking Injunctions

Transit workers have *no choice* in these upcoming elections, and a look at what happened last December shows why. Fed up with decades of declining real wages and working conditions and intensifying harassment particularly targeting women and minority workers, thousands of subway and bus workers were ready to wage a fight. Working people and minorities throughout the city were looking to this heavily black, Latino and immigrant union to take on the arrogant Giuliani administration. But neither James nor ND had any intention of leading a strike, which would have meant a direct confrontation with the strikebreaking Taylor Law and the repressive machinery of the capitalist state, and with the Wall Street rulers and their politicians.

On December 14, hours before the contract expired, Mayor Giuliani and Democratic state attorney general Eliot Spitzer leveled court injunctions against the union that criminalized not only striking but even uttering the word “strike.” They vowed to destroy the union and bankrupt union members with fines of \$1 million

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WV Photo

Mass TWU rally in Manhattan last November in preparation for contract battle. Both wings of TWU bureaucracy enforced anti-strike injunction.