

Killer Cops on the Loose



Herppich/Cincinnati Enquirer



Stafford/Cincinnati Enquirer

Cincinnati erupted in angry protests, including one outside police headquarters on April 9 (left), following shooting of Timothy Thomas, fifteenth black man killed by cops since 1995.

Cincinnati: Racist Hellhole Boils Over

When 19-year-old black laborer Timothy Thomas went out to buy a pack of cigarettes shortly after midnight, it was the last time his fiancée and three-month-old son would see him. Chased into an alley by a gang of cops, in the early hours of April 7 Thomas became the fourth victim in five months of the Cincinnati Police Department's war on the ghettos, and the 15th since 1995. The cops claim they went after Thomas because of outstanding warrants—for driving without a seat belt and other misdemeanors. Among the signs carried by hundreds of protesters who took over an April 9 City Council meeting was one reading, "No Seatbelt = Death."

The killing of Timothy Thomas touched off a long-simmering explosion of outrage, as protests swept across the city for days. Declaring a state of emergency and a dusk-to-dawn curfew, Democratic mayor Charles Luken flooded

Drop All Charges Against Arrested Protesters!

black neighborhoods with phalanxes of riot cops, including special units of the State Highway Patrol along with the thousand-strong city police force, and even threatened to call for a deployment of National Guard troops. SWAT teams barricaded off entire blocks, while helicopters swooped over the streets.

When a thousand protesters rallied outside police headquarters after the City Council meeting, the cops attacked them

with tear gas and shotguns firing "beanbags" filled with lead shot. On April 14, the cops again fired beanbags into the crowd outside Thomas' funeral, which included children and the elderly. A white teacher who was shot twice said, "It was like a drive-by shooting. All of a sudden, out of the blue, several police cars screeched to a halt at that intersection, jumped out of cars and just immediately started shooting people with their

shotguns. No warning. No nothing."

In a matter of days, some 850 people had been rounded up in the police dragnet, overwhelmingly for curfew violations. While the killer cop was given a paid vacation on "administrative leave," the local prosecutor set up a special task force to go after protesters. Over 60 people have now been indicted, including on felony riot charges which could mean years behind bars. In an April 18 protest letter to Luken and the prosecutor, the Partisan Defense Committee demanded: **Drop all charges against anti-cop-terror protesters! Release all of those still held!**

The 1992 plebeian upheaval in Los Angeles triggered by the acquittal of the cops who beat Rodney King punctured the "New World Order" triumphalism of the American bourgeoisie following the capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union. Coming as the bubble

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Defend the Gains of the Cuban Revolution!

Bay of Pigs, 1961: U.S. Imperialists, You Lost!

We join the Cuban masses this month in celebrating the 40th anniversary of their victory over U.S. imperialism's mercenaries at the Bay of Pigs. The attempted invasion of Cuba by CIA-backed forces on 17 April 1961 was an early salvo in U.S. imperialism's drive to overturn the Cuban Revolution.

The CIA trained the invasion force of some 1,500 Cuban counterrevolutionaries in a Central American training camp, while scraping together a "government in exile" in Miami composed of reactionary *gusanos* (worms). But when "Brigade 2506" hit the beaches of Playa Girón and Playa Larga in the Bay of Pigs, they didn't trigger the popular uprising against Fidel Castro that they had expected. Instead, the invasion sparked an upsurge of support for the revolution by the Cuban working people who heroically defended their country. While the U.S. Navy aircraft carrier and warships that had escorted them

remained offshore, the *gusanos'* landing boats and communications ship were smashed to smithereens by the tiny Cuban air force. The American air support that the CIA had promised never arrived. Within 64 hours, the invasion force was crushed.

It was during the Bay of Pigs attack, at a funeral demonstration for the victims of an American air strike that preceded the landing, that Castro for the first time proclaimed the "socialist" character of the Cuban Revolution. When Castro's petty-bourgeois guerrilla forces marched into Havana on

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Editorial Letras Cubanas

Cubans protest U.S.-sponsored Bay of Pigs invasion by *gusano* counterrevolutionaries, 1961.



Mass Protests Against “Free Trade” Confab

Drop All Charges Against the Quebec City 400!

The following letter was sent by the Canadian Partisan Defense Committee to Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and Quebec premier Bernard Landry on April 23.

The Partisan Defense Committee—the legal and social defense organization associated with the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste, Canadian section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)—denounces in the strongest terms the brutal police violence orchestrated and unleashed by your governments against pro-

testers at the Quebec City Summit of the Americas on April 20-22. We protest the arrest and detention of more than 400 protesters, including of CLAC spokesman Jaggi Singh, seized by disguised and unidentified officers and thrown into an unmarked van. We demand the immediate release of Singh and all the hundreds arrested. Drop all the charges!

Protesters have reported extreme police brutality both at and well away from the “security wall” which encompassed much of Old Quebec. One protester is in criti-



Reuters

Cops attack anti-globalization protester in Quebec City.

cal condition in hospital after being shot in the throat with a plastic bullet. Another suffered eye injuries after being struck in the face by shrapnel from an exploding tear gas canister. Riot police tear-gassed and shut down a medical center, forcing everyone out at gunpoint and stripping them of their medical supplies. Many of those held in Orsainville prison report being denied contact with lawyers.

The massive police onslaught in Quebec City has ripped away capitalist Canada’s mask of “tolerance” to reveal the naked dictatorship of the bourgeois ruling class. It has shown how the capitalist state is not neutral, but is the armed and dangerous defender of bourgeois property and order. If the scales fell from the eyes of many protesters with illusions in “Canadian democracy” this weekend, that is all to the good.

In what does your democracy consist? Lethal force, in the form of plastic bullets! Tear gas canisters fired into medical aid stations! Water cannon, bloody beatings, arbitrary arrests. All this to protect your discussions toward a Free Trade Area of the Americas, i.e., the “free trade” rape of workers and the poor throughout Latin America by U.S. imperialism and its Canadian junior partner. This is the “freedom” you and your bourgeois friends hold out to the working masses of Cuba—excluded from the summit because uniquely in this hemisphere it threw off the imperialist yoke through social revolution. We will continue to oppose all your efforts to destroy

the gains of the Cuban, Chinese and Vietnamese revolutions through bloody capitalist counterrevolution.

The repressive onslaught in Quebec City is unequalled in this country since the armed occupation of Montreal by Canadian troops in October 1970, which was aimed at quelling widespread struggles for national and social liberation in Quebec. Today, we note the natural solidarity between the Anglo-chauvinist Canadian government and the sovereignist Parti Québécois when faced with a challenge to bourgeois order and property. For too long have the struggles of the working people of English Canada and the oppressed nation of Quebec been crippled by the reactionary logic of Anglo chauvinism and the Québécois nationalism which it has fueled. The brutal state attacks on workers and youth this weekend show concretely the need for the working people to break from their “own” bourgeois rulers and enter on the road of internationalist class struggle. For our part, we advocate Quebec independence so that the workers in both nations can come to see you, the capitalist rulers, as the enemy, and not one another.

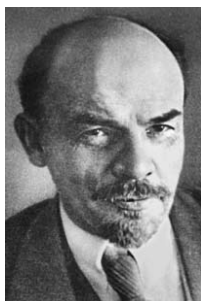
Once again, we demand the immediate release of all protesters and the dropping of all charges against them. In the proletarian internationalist tradition that “an injury to one is an injury to all” we will help to publicize these atrocities to the working classes throughout the Americas and beyond. ■



TROTSKY

For Proletarian Revolution to Smash Imperialism!

In commemorating May Day, the international workers holiday, we publish the following excerpt from a May Day speech by James P. Cannon, leader of the then-Trotskyist U.S. Socialist Workers Party (SWP), given shortly after his release from prison. Along with 17 other Trotskyist leaders, Cannon had been imprisoned for the SWP’s revolutionary opposition to U.S. imperialism in World War II. Today, the Spartacist League/



LENIN

U.S. seeks to forge the revolutionary workers party needed to render the working class conscious of its task as the gravedigger of U.S. imperialism, reactionary bastion of the international capitalist system of exploitation, oppression and war.

We are approaching the one-hundredth anniversary of the *Communist Manifesto*, the first great document which proclaimed the coming downfall of capitalism and the inevitable victory of the proletariat. Today, ninety-seven years later, it remains our program and our banner. Nothing is clearer in the world today than this: that the failure of the workers to carry out the historic mission imposed upon them by the decline of capitalism does not and cannot bring any relief or prosperity for them but only a continuation of enslavement and devastating wars which in the present period of the death agony of capitalism grow ever more monstrous in devouring mankind....

Out of the imperialist war that lasted nearly six years, the people of the whole world are the victims. And they are the victims not of a mistake of this or that statesman or general and not of this or that bad will of some maniac in power. They are fundamentally the victims of the capitalist system, which is in its death agony, and which is incapable of maintaining peace or prosperity in the world and cannot but continue to plunge the world into one holocaust after another until the masters of the future take control of society and institute a rational system....

This is the revolutionary epoch and we, as the heralds of the revolution, have every right to confidence in the future. Power will decide it. The two greatest powers in the world today face each other on the continent of North America, in the United States of America which, as Trotsky once expressed it, is the foundry where the fate of mankind will be forged. Two powers face each other: one, the power of American imperialism, the present master of the world, and the other is a still greater, although not yet conscious power, the American proletariat, whose power is greater than that of American imperialism and greater than that of any force in the world, once it becomes conscious of its own social position and potentiality.

—James P. Cannon, “The End of the War in Europe” (1 May 1945), reprinted in *The Struggle for Socialism in the “American Century”* (1977)

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VANCOUVER

The Chinese Revolution, Chiang Kai-shek and U.S. Imperialism

22 January 2001

To the Editorial Board:

Joseph Seymour's piece on imperialism in *WV* No. 750 is as usual a marvelously instructive and entertaining tour de force. I just have one criticism. He characterizes Chiang Kai-shek at the end of WWII as a "puppet" of the U.S. I disagree. It was precisely because Chiang refused to be a puppet that the U.S. declined to risk upheaval in the military and at home by sending him enough military assistance to resist Mao's People's Liberation Army. During the last phase of WWII, Chiang's hope was that the U.S. and Britain would conduct the final drive against Japan by building up forces in China and moving against Japan from the west, instead of the Pacific approach from the east, thus allowing the Guomindang to be supreme in postwar China. But there was great distrust of Chiang on the part of the American command, particularly on the part of George Marshall, who was constantly irritated by Chiang's refusal to kowtow to his American big brothers. After the Japanese surrender, the Soviet-armed People's Liberation Army began its rapid ascendancy. As the threat of civil war loomed, the Americans pressured Chiang to make compromises with Mao, the Americans being willing to settle for a coalition government of both the nationalists and the Stalinists (talk about utopian!), thinking the Stalinists were really just left-talking Nationalists and unable at any rate to sovietize China. When Chiang resisted American recommendations for compromises, Marshall threw in the towel, advocating a "pox against both houses" approach. As the sinister Madame Chiang and her many wealthy American friends desperately but unsuccessfully campaigned for U.S. intervention, the ever more popular People's Liberation Army swept over northern and eastern China, driving the capitalist government off the continent to Taiwan. Once having bloodily established its grip over the Taiwan population, Chiang settled into a tight relationship with the U.S., becoming a true puppet, because the U.S. was his only defense against conquest by the People's Liberation Army and his only hope for eventual counterrevolution. Had Marshall and the Truman government been confident in Chiang's subservience in 1946-47, they would have risked popular protest at home to seize China, one of the main prizes of World War II. Douglas MacArthur, for his part, counted on a future war to grab China, a plan foiled, at least temporarily, by the Chinese and Koreans' heroic resistance to imperialism in the Korean War, and then again later by the Vietnamese.

Jim M.

WV Replies:

The statement Jim M. objects to is in the following paragraph from our article "U.S. Imperialism: Deadly Enemy of World's Working People" (*WV* No. 750, 19 January):

"The Second World War in East Asia was fought between the U.S. and Japan basically over which of the two imperialist powers would subjugate and exploit China. When the U.S. defeated Japan by A-bombing Hiroshima and Nagasaki, America's rulers believed they had won China. They had a puppet regime, headed by Chiang Kai-shek. But a few years later, Chiang's forces were defeated by the peasant-based 'red' army of Mao Zedong."

Jim M.'s argument that Chiang Kai-shek, the bourgeois-nationalist dictator of China before the 1949 Revolution, was not a U.S. puppet until he and his Guomindang (GMD) cronies fled to Taiwan is more than a matter of correcting historical inaccuracies. There are important programmatic ramifications as well. As we explained in "The Origins of Chinese Trotskyism" (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 53, Summer 1997), the International Communist League maintains that in World War II Chiang's

war against the Japanese occupiers, which had broken out in 1937. Trotskyists gave no *political* support to the GMD, instead seeking to prepare the working class to overthrow Chiang Kai-shek's shaky dictatorship and replace it with proletarian rule. But Trotsky had already noted in 1940, in the "Manifesto of the Fourth International on the War and the Proletarian World Revolution," that "the war in eastern Asia will become more and more interlocked with the imperialist world war." The Trotskyist position was one of revolutionary defeat-



Camera Press

Mao Zedong's People's Liberation Army attacks Guomindang forces in Manchuria in civil war during the late 1940s.

nationalist forces became subordinated to U.S. imperialism's war to conquer Asia. There was, therefore, no basis for Trotskyists to continue giving military support to Chiang's armies against the Japanese occupation forces. If Chiang *was not* a U.S. puppet and *was* fighting Japanese imperialism, then the working class was duty-bound to give military support to the struggle to defeat China's imperialist oppressors.

Before the U.S. entered World War II, Trotskyists did militarily support China's

ism toward all the imperialist powers in World War II, a war over who would get to subject, oppress and exploit the world. At the same time, Trotskyists fought with every means at our disposal for the unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union, a bureaucratically degenerated workers state. This also meant giving no political support to the bureaucratic regime and opposing Stalin's alliance with the "democratic" imperialists. In practice, that alliance meant subordinating the interests of the proletariat to



General Stilwell, commander of U.S. forces in China, awards medal to Chiang Kai-shek, 1943.

Wide World

those capitalist governments.

After the outbreak of the Pacific War in December 1941, the military victory of Chiang's China would no longer be a victory for China's independence from imperialist domination but rather merely a factor in deciding *which* warring imperialist power would conquer China. Put differently, Japan's defeat would not be China's victory, but America's victory over Japan *and* China. The day Pearl Harbor was bombed, Chiang ran to the American military representatives in his capital city of Chongqing (Chungking) to propose joining with the Western imperialists in defense of Singapore, the Philippines, Hong Kong, Burma, the Dutch East Indies and, of course, China—all areas the U.S. wanted. Chiang wanted maximal American involvement and moved *closer* to the U.S. after its entry into the war, aiming to avoid rousing the peasantry and the working class in the struggle against Japan and to free up his troops against the peasant guerrilla forces of Mao's Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

The U.S. Called the Shots

To say that Chiang was not a U.S. puppet during World War II amounts to saying that he was fighting Japan independently of U.S. control. But the chief of staff of the Chinese armed forces was the American general Joseph Stilwell. Chiang's warplanes were supplied and manned by Americans, and China's air bases served as bases for U.S. imperialism. In Burma, Chiang's troops fought under the British general Alexander.

The issue of whether the Chinese war against Japan had been subsumed by the interimperialist World War II was debated in the Chinese Trotskyist movement at the time and was the subject of a series of polemics in the U.S. in 1942 between the then-revolutionary Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and Max Shachtman's Workers Party (WP). The SWP argued for a continuation of the previous line and repeatedly asked: "Does [China's] struggle play an *independent* role? If it does, we support it." They implied that "independent" was a function of how many troops the U.S. happened to have on the ground. Their polemic avoided the decisive issue: it was the U.S. that determined strategy and how the Chinese forces were to be used.

Shachtman had broken from Trotskyism in 1939-40 by renouncing unconditional military defense of the Soviet degenerated workers state. During WWII, the WP was a left-centrist formation which, having abandoned Soviet defensism, would later move sharply to the right with the onset of the Cold War. But in 1942, the WP was able to note that the SWP, through militarily supporting Chiang, was defending an ally of its "own" bourgeoisie. While the SWP took a revolutionary defeatist position in WWII, its line that Japan was the main enemy in China could not help but imply that the U.S. was a lesser evil. The SWP position was a step in the direction of

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Spartacist/SYC Regional Educationals—Saturday, April 28

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2 p.m.

Eyewitness Reporter from Quebec Anti-FTAA Protests

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Cincinnati...

(continued from page 1)

bursts on the “boom” economy—which saw the rich getting richer and the poor getting even more desperately poor—Cincinnati reveals the social tinder building up in the ghettos, the barrios and the factories. It also serves to expose the hypocrisy of U.S. imperialism’s “democratic” pretenses as it seeks to impose its diktats around the world. In the wake of the recent U.S. spy plane provocation, Cincinnati was big news in the Chinese media, with a front-page headline in *People’s Daily* reporting, “Curfew Hits Cincinnati After Riots.”

“Johannesburg on the Ohio”

An article in the *Knoxville News-Sentinel* (15 April) observed, “Behind the riots is a discord between police and blacks that dates to the Civil War, when Cincinnati became a hotbed for runaway slaves.” In the early 1920s, the city was the bridgehead for the northward expansion of a resurgent Ku Klux Klan, and Ohio was arguably the strongest bastion of the genocidal “Invisible Empire,” with an estimated 400,000 members and control of almost every city administration. In recent years, the KKK has tried to erect a cross in downtown Fountain Square every Christmas. In 1992, anti-fascist protesters tore down and trampled over this symbol of lynch mob terror. Last Christmas, the KKK cross was erected with the implicit backing of the Democratic mayor, claiming he wanted to avoid a “free speech” fight in the courts.

Such racist reaction is buttressed by a climate of all-sided social bigotry, from rampant anti-abortion violence and clinic bombings in the 1980s to the pro-Hitler ravings of Cincinnati Reds owner Marge Schott. Simon Leis, the sheriff who led the 1990 police raid shutting down an exhibit at the Contemporary Arts Center by the late gay photographer Robert Mapplethorpe, and enforced a ban on selling *Playboy*, is still around.

Cincinnati is a racist hellhole where the intersection of race and class is starkly evident. The Kerner Commission Report on the 1968 ghetto upheavals after Martin Luther King Jr.’s assassination noted: “Almost one out of every eight Cincinnati Negroes was unemployed. Two of every five Negro families were living on or below the border of poverty.” Since then conditions have only gone downhill. The one big plant in the area, Norwood GM, shut down in the 1980s. Around the same time, the GE plant in Evendale, which once employed over 20,000 people, started shifting its manufacturing and assembly operations for jet engine components to non-union facilities in the South. Most of the remaining manufacturing jobs in the city are in small, non-union factories. Unemployment among black people is now three and a half times that among whites. In the Over-the-Rhine neighborhood where Thomas was gunned down, over 90 percent of residents live below the poverty level, and nearly half depend on paltry government handouts to survive.

This “northern-most Southern city” is one of the most segregated in the U.S. This, too, has only gotten worse since ’68. As whites moved to the suburbs, the



Cincinnati Enquirer



Keating/Cincinnati Enquirer

Angela Leisure with picture of her son, Timothy Thomas.

black proportion of the city’s population jumped from 27 percent to 43 percent today. Fully 90 percent of public school students are black. One black resident calls Cincinnati “Johannesburg on the Ohio”; another, a retired Air Force officer, wrote in a letter to the *Cincinnati Enquirer* (13 April): “Of all the places my career has taken me—and having spent five years in the South as a college student—Cincinnati is the most covertly and many times overtly racist city and community at large I know.” Notably, the upheaval spread beyond Over-the-Rhine, Walnut Hills and other impoverished areas to middle-class black neighborhoods like Pleasant Hill and Bond Hill.

Addressing local officials at an April 17 City Council meeting, one woman exclaimed, “When I look at you, I think you may be the KKK in disguise,” “the same old slave masters,” “the Gestapo of Hitler’s regime.” This is barely an exaggeration. On April 18, Fraternal Order of Police (F.O.P.) chief Keith Fangman met with Mississippi “Nationalist Movement” Klansman Richard Barrett, who then held a press conference in which he called on Cincinnati residents to “stand by your policemen” and urged the cops to adopt the motto, “You loot, we shoot” (*Cincinnati Post*, 19 April). Cincinnati cops hardly need this “advice.” In the midst of the upheaval, Fangman denounced black protesters as “terrorists” and defended five years of police lynchings by ranting, “We can’t help it that these suspects committed violent acts.” Fangman charged that Luken had “inflamed this community” with his tepid criticisms of “racial profiling,” underlining the cops’ bonapartist appetite to slip the leash of even nominal civilian control.

Break with the Democrats!

In a column on Cincinnati in the *New York Times* (19 April), Bob Herbert wrote of “an explosive expression of the rage among blacks that had built up from years of hateful treatment at the hands of the police, public officials and other influential figures.” Herbert concluded: “It’s time for everyone to recognize the need for a smarter, more effective response to these evils than a riot.” Smashing a few downtown windows and looting a handful of stores will, indeed, not ameliorate the plight of the ghetto masses. But what Herbert means by a “smarter, more effective response” is the shell game of Democratic Party electoral politics which have long been used to try to contain the anger of the inner cities and chain the power of the multiracial working class to the capitalist class enemy.

The outrage against the cops *does* need an organized political expression. Not one aimed at strengthening the hand of the Democrats, the political tool of the very capitalist class that cops “serve and protect,” but one which would provide a proletarian class axis that can weld the social power of the multiracial working class to the anger of the ghetto. The multiracial proletariat had a direct and immediate interest in championing the defense of Cincinnati’s black populace against the police onslaught. Notably, the only other times the Highway Patrol was called out

was in efforts to break truckers strikes in December 1973 and February 1974, and the National Guardsmen who killed four Kent State antiwar protesters in 1970 had originally been deployed against a Teamsters strike. In the face of the police invasion of the ghettos, a labor leadership worth its salt would have fought to mobilize organized protest action centered on the city’s 90,000 unionized workers, many of them black, drawing in contingents of labor from around the region and standing at the head of the ghetto masses and all opponents of cop terror.

But the trade-union bureaucrats, who are already out on the hustings for the Democrats for the 2002 Congressional elections, maintained a criminal, if all too



Herppich/Cincinnati Enquirer

Some 850 people were rounded up in police state of siege in Cincinnati ghettos. Drop all charges now!

typical, silence. And the powers that be called on the black Democrats, preachers and liberals to try to keep a lid on things and restore capitalist “order.” Typically, a 17 April statement by the American Civil Liberties Union, which had just joined with the Cincinnati Black United Front in a federal lawsuit documenting three decades of police racism, urged “calm and restraint” on the black populace and denounced “violence, looting and random acts of mayhem.”

A bevy of black Democrats like NAACP head Kweisi Mfume and New York City’s Al Sharpton came to Cincinnati with the same purpose. Mfume “appealed to rioters to end their violence,” reported the *Cincinnati Post* (13 April). Sharpton called on George Bush to get personally involved, while Mfume boasted that Attorney General John Ashcroft “has assured me it is a priority for him.” For years, Mfume, Sharpton & Co. issued similar appeals to the Clinton administration, even as it put tens of thousands more cops on the streets. But nothing could more starkly highlight the bankruptcy of the black liberals’ reliance on the federal government to put an end to police racism than the fact that they now look to an attorney general who openly embraces the slaveholding Confederacy!

On the eve of Thomas’ funeral, a meeting of local black politicians and preachers called on the city to put “community resource workers” on the streets “to assist in calming frustrations and possible civil disobedience” (*Cincinnati Enquirer*, 13

April). A day earlier, as several dozen black officials and clerics tried to contain an outraged crowd in the face of blatant police provocations, one young man screamed, “I’m getting tired of getting up every morning and finding out someone else I knew has been murdered by the police! Then they send you and the ministers down here to try to talk to us!”

Enlisting as auxiliaries to the black Democrats were fake leftists like the International Socialist Organization, Refuse & Resist, Solidarity and Anti-Racist Action (ARA). An 11 April statement, “Position on Cincinnati Police and Protests,” signed by these self-styled “Marxists” or (in the case of ARA) “anarchists,” openly peddles the lie that the cops are some kind of neutral agency which should represent the will of the people. Asserting that the police department “is supposed to be an agency of civilian government,” the statement appeals for an end to the cops’ “military-style operations not only against the African American community, but also against any other citizens who engage in peaceful protests.” Along with the usual appeals for “an absolutely Independent Citizens’ Police Review Board,” they say: “The Cincinnati Police Department is sick with racism, violence and irresponsibility, and it needs to be revamped from the top down. New people and ideas should be brought in.”

The whole history of the Cincinnati police department is testimony to the absolute absurdity of the notion that the cops can be reformed into operating as anything other than the armed enforcers

of capitalist class rule against the working class and oppressed. Even the bourgeois *New York Times* (16 April) noted in an article headlined “Despite Report After Report, Unrest Endures in Cincinnati” that the city has had any number of federal investigations of its police force and nothing has changed.

Eleven years after the Kerner Commission, a 1979 mayoral panel concluded that police and city officials “neither really care nor are willing to do anything about reported incidents of misconduct.” That May, after cops had gunned down four black people and four white cops had also been killed, police “protesters” surrounded City Hall with 60 cruisers, locked the doors and threw the keys into a pile outside police headquarters. In the upshot, the city armed them with .357 magnums and “hollow point” bullets.

The 1979 “review” was followed by two federal consent decrees in 1981 and 1987 and yet another “review” in 1995. Black cops were brought in—“new people with new ideas”—and now make up a quarter of the force. Cincinnati has also had two black mayors since 1968, and Democrat Luken earlier served as mayor in 1984-90, while his father was elected to a term in 1971. Cincinnati already has a “review board”; racial profiling was “outlawed” last March. None of this has stopped the cops from carrying out their bloody reign of terror, nor could it, for the fundamental reason that the violent repression of the working class and oppressed is what the cops are hired to do.

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Feds Uphold Frame-Up of Militant Miner

Free Jerry Dale Lowe Now!

On March 30, a U.S. District Court in Charleston, West Virginia turned down an appeal by United Mine Workers (UMWA) militant Jerry Dale Lowe, who has served more than five long years in an Ashland, Kentucky prison. Lowe is behind bars for only one reason: he stood with his union brothers and sisters and defended their picket lines during a seven-month strike at Arch Mineral's Rufner mine in 1993. For this he was framed up and sentenced to eleven years on bogus charges of "interfering with interstate commerce" stemming from the shooting death of a scab contractor. When a U.S. magistrate granted a motion two years ago allowing Lowe to show that he had had ineffective legal counsel in his trial, Lowe and his family held a glimmer of hope that he might be granted a new trial. "Jerry and I are almost totally devastated by this latest ruling," wrote Lea Lowe, his wife, in a letter to the Partisan Defense Committee.

Lowe's September 1994 trial was a complete farce. When prosecutors realized that they had no evidence to convict Lowe under state law, the Feds concocted the "interstate commerce" charge, even though one appeals judge later acknowledged that there was no evidence that the scab truck had ever been used outside the state. As Lowe told *Workers Vanguard* at the time, the "interstate commerce" charge was a sledgehammer aimed against any effective picketing: "You won't even be able to stand on the side of the road to talk to anybody, not even to ask them to honor



WV Photo

Lea and Jerry Dale Lowe, before his imprisonment for defending his union.

a picket line. That would be affecting interstate commerce according to them and you're just liable to go to jail."

Before the shooting, Lowe had sold the gun that prosecutors said he had used to kill the scab, and professional strikebreakers from Elite Security had been firing their guns on the day of the shooting. But Lowe's lawyer failed to call three ballistics experts who were prepared to testify that there was no evidence to match the bullet that killed the scab to the gun in question.

Lowe's frame-up was a blow aimed at the entire labor movement, and it should have been met with a mobilization of union power from the moment of his arrest. As he pursues his fight for freedom, mass union protests should be organized in the streets of Charleston to

demand: Free Jerry Dale Lowe now!

An injury to one is an injury to all! That is the watchword on which the UMWA was built. Working below ground, miners know just how their work and their very lives depend on fellow miners, just as effective union struggle requires ironclad solidarity. A picture of Jerry continues to hang in his UMWA Local 5958 union hall, and delegates at last year's UMWA national convention applauded in a strong show of support when Skeeter Lowe made a speech to the convention about the case of his cousin.

But the top UMWA leadership—both under Richard Trumka, who was president at the time of the Rufner strike, and under current president Cecil Roberts—has not lifted a finger to mobilize the

union's power in Lowe's defense. The union bureaucrats' failure to wage a fight to defend union jobs, conditions, work rules and benefits has led to the continual erosion of the UMWA, forcing the sons and daughters of union miners to take jobs in non-union mines. Instead of the hard class struggle which built the UMWA and the CIO industrial unions, the "new" AFL-CIO bureaucracy under John Sweeney pursues the same old losing policy of class collaboration, crawling to the capitalist politicians and throwing union support behind the Democratic Party. Emboldened by the bureaucracy's capitulations, the capitalist state is now going after Trumka, currently secretary-treasurer of the AFL-CIO, as part of a Justice Department vendetta against former Teamsters president Ron Carey and other union officials initiated by the Clinton administration.

The latest ruling against Lowe—like his conviction—underlines that the cops, courts and prosecutors are part of an entire machinery of frame-up repression. The same machinery of repression that put Lowe behind bars also threatens five black Charleston, South Carolina longshoremen with five years in prison for a militant picket line last year and regularly consigns hundreds of thousands of black men to lives of prison hell in a racist "war on drugs." The persecution of Lowe and the Charleston Five point to the purpose of the capitalist state as an instrument for defense of the profits and rule of the capitalist class against the working class. We urge all opponents of anti-labor repression to take up the cause of Jerry Dale Lowe and all class-war prisoners.

Jerry Dale Lowe is one of 17 class-war prisoners in the stipend program of the PDC. Please write to him at: Jerry Dale Lowe #044-93-088, L Unit, Federal Correctional Institution, P.O. Box 6001, Ashland, KY 41105.

The 11 April statement also calls on the city government to "investigate" and "take action to ameliorate" the "economic and social needs of the African American community." The conditions faced by the black population are built into American capitalism, which is premised on the segregation of black people as a race/color caste at the bottom of this society. The absurd notion that the government, locally or nationally, can or would do something about this speaks to the depth of the illusion promoted by the opportunist "leftists" that the capitalist state can be made to serve the interests of working people and the oppressed. The police cannot be reformed. They are at the core of the capitalist state, hired thugs whose job is to protect the property, profits and rule of the bourgeoisie against the working class. And in America, where black oppression is the cornerstone of the system of wage slavery, that necessarily means terror against black people. The truth is that there can be no end to police terror until the capitalist system it serves is uprooted through a socialist revolution.

Forge a Revolutionary Workers Party!

Speaking of the 15 black men killed since 1995, Angela Leisure, Timothy Thomas's mother, said: "These people might have been insignificant in y'all's life, but they were significant in our lives" (*Cincinnati Enquirer*, 10 April). In the eyes of the capitalist rulers, the better part of a generation of black people has indeed become insignificant, and dispensable. Behind the capitalists' bipartisan war on black people is the calculation that large swathes of the ghetto population, formerly used to provide a reservoir of unskilled labor for industry, are no longer needed, deemed a "sur-

plus" population to be brutalized, terrorized and blown away by the rampaging cops. As we stated in the Spartacist League/U.S. Programmatic Statement, "For Socialist Revolution in the Bastion of World Imperialism!":

"In racist America, class exploitation has always been wrapped in the envelope of raw racism. Today, the desperate conditions of life—rotten schools and rotting housing, no health care, low-wage jobs—that were visited first on blacks and immigrant workers are increasingly a reality for the working class as a whole.

"As long as workers are pitted against each other in competition for a limited pool of jobs, the necessary consequence will be a divided and weakened labor movement. We seek to unite employed and unemployed—black and white—workers in common struggle around common demands. We call for union hiring halls, with special union-run programs aimed at reaching out to and training minorities, linked to the fight for jobs for all, demanding that the available work be divided at no loss in pay among all those capable of working. Against 'workfare' schemes which undermine municipal unions by drafting the ghetto and barrio poor to work as slave labor in formerly unionized jobs, we demand equal pay for equal work—union wages with full union protection. We demand a massive program of public works at union wages—for quality, integrated housing and schools, for free quality health care for all, for the reconstruction of deteriorating urban infrastructure and social services."

Black workers still constitute a strategic component of the multiracial proletariat, more heavily unionized than white workers. Under the leadership of a revolutionary workers party, black workers can provide a living link to join the fuming anger of the ghettos to the social power of the proletariat and will play a vanguard role in the fight for socialist revolution which will eliminate the whole system of class exploitation and racist repression which the cops "serve and protect." ■

Cuba...

(continued from page 1)

New Year's Day, 1959, they were not intending to carry out a social revolution. But a workers state was consolidated, though bureaucratically deformed, in the summer and fall of 1960, as the Castro regime responded to economic sanctions by the Eisenhower administration with the expropriation of property owned by U.S. and Cuban capitalists. The creation of a collectivized economy brought enormous gains to the Cuban people, such as free medical care, jobs, housing and education—gains which are today increasingly threatened. The Cuban Revolution delivered a massive blow to racist discrimination against black people, who had been the lowest of the low under the U.S.-backed, mafia-infested Batista puppet regime. As Trotskyists, we call for unconditional military defense of the Cuban deformed workers state—just as we defend China, North Korea and Vietnam—against imperialist attack and capitalist counterrevolution.

The Bush administration, which is packed with Reaganite Cold Warriors, has pledged to pursue a tough line on Cuba, including maintaining the economic embargo strangling that country. The embargo against Cuba was imposed under Democrat Kennedy in 1962 and was deepened under Clinton. We say: Down with the imperialist starvation blockade! But ending the embargo is not the answer to Cuba's problems. Indeed, many bourgeois liberals argue to end the embargo as a step on the road to restoring capitalism in Cuba. With Canadian and European firms investing heavily in Cuba, growing sections of the American bourgeoisie are arguing for a less belligerent line toward the Castro regime.

These imperialists seek to flood the Cuban economy with U.S. dollars and strengthen the forces of counterrevolution from within. A grotesque reflection of this was a recent delegation to Cuba of former Kennedy aides, ex-CIA agents and *gusano* veterans of the Bay of Pigs fiasco, who met with Castro and other Cuban officials.

Today, Playa Girón is the site of a battlefield museum marking that historic defeat of U.S. forces, where visitors can view the wreckage of downed planes and captured U.S. war matériel. A billboard on the approach road blazons, "Playa Girón—The First Imperialist Defeat in Latin America." At a recent mass rally in Havana, Castro declared, "We dare to predict that a gigantic Girón awaits the imperialists." In reality, the Cuban Stalinist bureaucracy under Castro, wedded to the nationalist dogma of "socialism in one country," has consistently worked to block the spread of revolutions that could have ended Cuba's isolation as the only workers state in the Americas.

Particularly since the 1991-92 counter-revolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, once Cuba's economic lifeline and chief international ally, the Castro regime has increasingly opened the country to imperialist economic penetration. This has meant a large increase in inequality, particularly targeting the black population. We call for workers political revolution to oust the nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy and put political power in the hands of the working class. Key to the defense of the Cuban Revolution is the struggle for proletarian power throughout Latin America and internationally, especially in the belly of the imperialist beast, the U.S. Above all, we fight to build the revolutionary workers party necessary to lead the American proletariat to victory in that struggle. ■

1963 Birmingham Church Bombing: We Will Not Forget!

Feds Abetted Klan Terrorists

During the civil rights movement of the 1960s, some 60 bombings rocked Birmingham, Alabama as it acquired the name “Bombingham.” There is one bombing in particular burned into public consciousness in this country. The date: 15 September 1963. It was a little past ten in the morning when Cynthia Wesley, Carole Robertson and Addie Mae Collins, all age 14, and 11-year-old Denise McNair left their Sunday school class in the 16th Street Baptist Church and went downstairs to put on their choir robes. Fifteen sticks of dynamite exploded and ripped through the church. The four young girls were killed and mutilated and 22 others injured by the blast, the murderous work of the Ku Klux Klan.

The trial of Klansman Thomas Blanton Jr. for the bombing is now underway in Birmingham. The trial of his fascist cohort, Bobby Frank Cherry, has been postponed because of a medical report declaring that he is mentally unfit to stand trial. The bombing of the church, which had been the headquarters for mass protests in the struggle for integration, was coldly calculated murder, aimed at terrorizing black people into submission. That this trial should come 38 years after this heinous crime is itself an indictment of racist American capitalism. The truth is that the federal government, FBI and local law enforcement knew who the killers were the whole time.

The FBI knew because *their* man, well-paid FBI informant Gary Rowe, led the notorious Eastview “Klavern” in Birmingham. The *New York Times* wrote in 1978 that Rowe was involved in “most major incidents of Klan terrorism that occurred in Alabama while he was on the bureau’s payroll.” Rowe aided Robert Chambliss—“Dynamite Bob”—in the church bombing. Yet it was not until 14 years after this act of racist terror that the Klansman Chambliss was convicted and sent to jail. Gary Rowe’s FBI-sanctioned reign of terror included the murder of white civil rights worker Viola Liuzzo, cut down on the Selma-Montgomery highway in 1965.

Gary Rowe was not an exceptional case but representative of the symbiotic relationship between government forces and fascist organizations. As Patsy Sims relates in *The Klan* (1978): “In the mid-sixties FBI informants held top-level leadership roles in seven of the then fourteen Klan groups and headed one state organization. At one time in 1965, nearly

two thousand of the FBI-estimated ten thousand Klan members were its own informers.” These “informers” acted as loyal dual agents of both organizations, keeping the Feds well informed of Klan activity while perpetrating race-terror. In fact, evidence against Thomas Blanton will be given by “former” Klansman and FBI informant Mitchell Burns, to whom Blanton said after the bombing, “They

’60s in Birmingham. As far back as the 1920s, the coal and steel barons of Birmingham utilized the Klan to promote hostility between the immigrant Catholic and American-born Protestant workers to ensure that “there was no danger of union solidarity even among whites, let alone across color lines.” Faced with union organizing and growing Communist influence, the Klan “redefined its mission

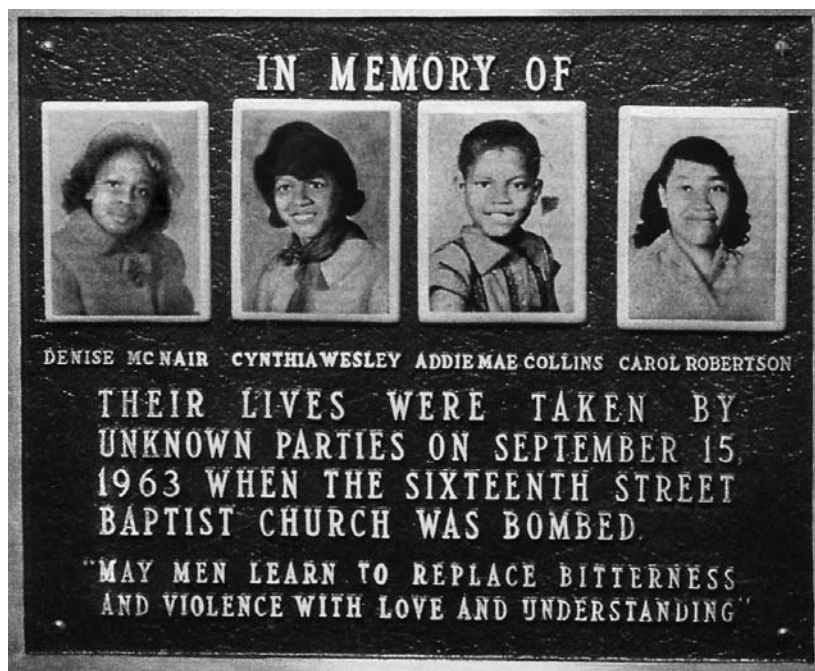
the proletariat. We advocated organized armed self-defense against the racist nightriders, publicizing and materially supporting such groups as the Deacons for Defense in Louisiana, and opposed the intervention of federal troops, whose purpose was to put down militant black struggles.

That purpose was on full display in the aftermath of the 16th Street Church bombing. Horrified black residents rushed to the church past riot police armed with shotguns. The Commissioner of Public Safety, Bull Connor, and his forces of racist “law and order” moved in with a 16-wheel “riot tank.” A black teenager, Johnny Robinson, was shot in the back by police for allegedly being among a group that had hurled stones at racists driving through the area flying Confederate battle flags. Another black youth was shot by racist thugs while riding his bicycle. Five hundred National Guardsmen were sent to Birmingham that night by segregationist governor George Wallace to intimidate and terrorize the black population.

The black community rose up in outrage. Armed street patrols and observation posts sprang up. Black people took up sticks, rocks, knives and bottles to defend themselves against the racists. It was the spectre of armed black self-defense which motivated President Kennedy to deploy troops in Birmingham...in the black areas only. As Malcolm X said at the time, “They didn’t send those troops in to protect Negroes. Because Negroes had been the victims of brutality for several weeks. They sent troops into Birmingham, Alabama, only when the lives and the property of the white racists and segregationists in Alabama were being threatened” (“Malcolm X Speaks Again,” recorded in April 1964).

The current trial is one of several, beginning with the 1994 conviction of Byron De La Beckwith for the 1963 assassination of Mississippi civil rights leader Medgar Evers, to revisit the rampant Klan terror of that period. These trials reflect a desire by the racist rulers to close the book on a history of Klan terror which to this day clouds the image of the “New South.” A *Washington Post* (22 May 2000) columnist wrote that what has changed in part is that “white and black business leaders are trying to

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New York Times

Plaque memorializes four young girls murdered in Ku Klux Klan bombing of church which served as organizing center for Martin Luther King Jr. in Birmingham civil rights struggle.

ain’t gonna catch me when I bomb my next church.”

The acknowledged mastermind of the 16th Street Church bombing was Georgia fascist J.B. Stoner, who served a minimum sentence beginning in 1983 for the bombing of the Bethel Baptist Church in Birmingham 25 years earlier. He shared a prison cell with Robert Chambliss until the latter’s death in 1985. It is regrettable that the two were never integrated into the heavily black mainstream of the Alabama prison population—so the cause of genuine justice would have been quickly served.

A new book by Diane McWhorter, *Carry Me Home—Birmingham, Alabama: The Climactic Battle of the Civil Rights Revolution* (Simon & Schuster, 2001), thoroughly documents the “long tradition of enmeshment between law enforcers and Klansmen” during the turbulent period of the civil rights movement of the

during the 1930s as a union-fighting organization. It had built up its largest membership in fifteen years during the CIO’s organizing drives of 1937.”

The collaboration between the Feds and the fascists did not end in the ’60s, nor was it limited to Birmingham. In the November 1979 massacre of five leftists at an anti-Klan rally in Greensboro, North Carolina, the government from the outset aided and abetted the KKK/Nazi death squad. An agent of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms helped train the killers and plot the assassinations; a “former” FBI informer rode shotgun in the motorcade going to the murder site; a Greensboro cop brought up the rear.

Black Democrats and liberals promote the lie that the federal government under John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson waged a fight for black rights in the South. But FBI collusion with the KKK is not and was not a matter of aberrant rogues directed by reactionary throwbacks like J. Edgar Hoover. It was *government policy*, directed by the likes of liberal darling Robert F. Kennedy, attorney general at the time. In 1963, he authorized wiretaps on Martin Luther King Jr. as part of a years-long FBI campaign, which included spreading gossip about King’s personal life in an attempt to drive him to suicide.

The liberal civil rights leadership represented by King subordinated the fight for black equality to their strategy of reliance on the Democratic Party and the federal government, even though the Feds were up to their necks in Klan terror and COINTELPRO disruption of the civil rights movement. In the 1966 Spartacist League document “Black and Red—Class Struggle Road to Negro Freedom” (reprinted in *Marxist Bulletin* No. 9), we wrote that “the struggle for black freedom demands the total break of the Negro people from the Democratic Party” and raised the call for a South-wide Freedom Labor Party to link the fight for black freedom with the class struggle of



UPI photos

Feds were complicit in KKK terror: FBI “informer” Gary Rowe worked with Klan in bombing of 16th Street Baptist Church.

**Programmatic Statement
of the Spartacist League/U.S.**

**For a Workers Party
That Fights for a Workers Government!**

**For Socialist Revolution
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Zionist Murder Machine

Defend the Palestinians! Israel Out of the Occupied Territories!

APRIL 22—On the very day Jordanian emissaries arrived in Tel Aviv on a “peace” mission last week, Israeli warplanes attacked a Syrian radar site in Lebanon—the first such attack in five years—killing three soldiers. Hard on the heels of this war provocation, on April 17 Israeli troops and tanks briefly occupied the northern chunk of the Gaza Strip, which is under the supposed control of Yasir Arafat’s Palestinian Authority. Three days later, Israeli police staged a provocative raid at one of the holiest of all Muslim shrines, the Haram al-Sharif (Temple Mount) in Jerusalem, as Palestinians were leaving Friday prayer services.

These latest incitements, aimed at drowning in blood the eight-month-old uprising in the Occupied Territories, are only to be expected from a government headed by Ariel Sharon, the genocidal butcher of the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in Lebanon in 1983. But from the

The Zionist rulers are fully capable of carrying out a massacre of Palestinians on a genocidal scale. It is urgently necessary for working people around the globe, especially here in the U.S., Israel’s chief imperialist patron, to rally to the defense of the Palestinians. As the Zionist butchers bleed the Palestinian people, U.S. imperialism continues to bomb and starve the Iraqi people. **Down with the bombing and starvation blockade of Iraq! U.S. imperialism out of the Near East! All Israeli troops and settlers out of the Occupied Territories!**

Intent in their own way on quelling the Palestinian uprising, Arafat and the Arab bourgeois regimes have appealed to the U.S. to pressure its Israeli junior partners back to the bargaining table. As well, they have sought intervention by the European imperialist powers and the United Nations. Such calls have found an echo among Palestinians desperate in the face



AFP

recently, has played a prominent role in organizing campus groups demanding “divestment” from Israel by U.S. universities and corporations, while itself raising the demand: “End All U.S. Aid to Israel!” (*Socialist Worker*, 2 March). A 27 February flyer by one of these campus groups, Students for Justice in Palestine at UC Berkeley, included a barely veiled call for direct U.S. imperialist intervention: “The US has done too little for justice and human rights for the Pal-

political godchildren of “democratic” imperialism’s counterrevolutionary crusade against the Soviet Union during the Cold War era. In an interview in the ISO’s *International Socialist Review* (December 2000-January 2001), a supporter of the left-nationalist Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) observed (without comment from the ISO), “Just like everywhere else, what happened in the Soviet Union, what happened in the Eastern Bloc affected us.” The collapse of the Soviet Union removed the props from under Palestinian and other petty-bourgeois nationalist movements which were given diplomatic and material support by the Kremlin. As long as the Soviet Union existed as a counterweight to U.S. imperialism, Arafat’s Palestine Liberation Organization (including the DFLP) and the Arab bourgeois regimes were able to jockey for advantage between U.S. imperialism and the USSR.

But the ISO *hailed* counterrevolution in the Soviet Union. When Washington’s man Boris Yeltsin took power in August 1991, the British *Socialist Worker* (31 August 1991) cheered, “Communism has collapsed.... It is a fact that should have every socialist rejoicing.” Indeed, these social democrats aided the victory of imperialist-backed capitalist counterrevolution to the extent that their small forces allowed—from supporting Islamic fundamentalist cutthroats fighting Soviet troops in Afghanistan to lining up with the Pope and CIA in support of Solidarność clerical reaction in Poland.

The collapse of the Soviet Union paved the way for the ignominious U.S.-sponsored 1993 “peace” accord between Israel and Arafat. With the heroic *Intifada* (uprising) of the Palestinian masses

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AP

1993 Rabin-Arafat “peace” accord sponsored by Clinton set stage for intensified Zionist repression. Gaza house destroyed by Israeli troops.



Reuters

“selective elimination” of leading Palestinian militants by Israeli death squads to the expansion of fortified Zionist “settlements” in the West Bank, Sharon’s policies are a continuation of those carried out by the government of “Labor” prime minister Ehud Barak. In fact, Sharon’s foreign minister is foremost Labor Party “dove” Shimon Peres. In his own brief stint as prime minister in 1996, Peres launched “Operation Grapes of Wrath,” a terror-bombing campaign against Lebanon whose victims included some one hundred civilians incinerated by missile strikes on a United Nations refugee camp near the village of Qana.

Over 400 Palestinians have been murdered since September, many of them children, and well over 10,000 wounded, many of them permanently paralyzed. Earlier this month, Israeli tanks systematically demolished over 30 homes in the Gaza town of Khan Yunis, killing two people, in a pre-dawn attack grotesquely named “Operation Enjoyable Song.” Augmenting this bloody repression, which has failed to cow the Palestinian masses, Israel’s rulers have escalated their long-standing “closures” of the Occupied Territories in an effort to *starve* the population into submission. Arab towns and villages have been sealed off with troops, barricades and trenches, while the army and rampaging mobs of fascistic settlers destroy Palestinian farms and olive groves. As if to underscore this starvation policy, Zionist troops yesterday brutally beat a group of liberal Israelis who had brought contributions of food and supplies to one West Bank village.

of the murderous Zionist juggernaut.

They have also been cynically promoted by self-styled “anarchist” and academic guru Noam Chomsky. In a 26 October 2000 posting on the Independent Media Center Web site, Chomsky stresses the need to remove “doctrinal blinders” in “the most important country” as “a prerequisite to any constructive reaction to the mounting chaos and destruction” in the Occupied Territories. What this typically opaque and obscurantist passage by the learned professor means was made crystal clear soon after, when Chomsky joined with others in a statement whining, “We are appalled by the lack of action by Western governments to stop the slaughter” (*Socialist Worker* [Britain], 13 January).

Joining Chomsky in signing this appeal were Paul Foot and Alex Callinicos, prominent leaders of the British Socialist Workers Party (SWP). In France, the SWP’s cothinkers explicitly called for “sanctions against the state of Israel by the French and European governments” in a leaflet signed by them and others for an October 28 demonstration in Paris last year. On the part of European leftists, such calls for Britain and France to play a more aggressive role in the Near East as against U.S. imperialism are directed to the very powers who were once the colonial overlords of the region and who waged a war in league with Zionist Israel against Nasser’s Egypt in 1956 in order to reclaim the Suez Canal.

In the U.S., the reformist International Socialist Organization (ISO), which was allied with the British SWP until

estonian people.” In fact, the U.S. has done plenty—arming the Zionist butchers of the Palestinian people to the teeth! This appeal to the mass murderers responsible for the slaughter visited on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Korea and Vietnam speaks volumes about the ISO’s faith in the democratic pretensions of U.S. imperialism.

In fact, these social democrats are the

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California

U.S. Spy Plane Provocation Spurs Anti-Chinese Racism

Imperialism abroad means racism at home. The U.S. spy plane provocation against China and the holding of the American crew on Hainan for eleven days unleashed an orgy of China-bashing in the American media reminiscent of late 19th century “yellow peril” xenophobia. The intensification of anti-Chinese bigotry accompanying Washington’s increased belligerence toward the Chinese deformed workers state in recent years was exemplified by the vicious frame-up and imprisonment (until the government’s “case” collapsed) of Los Alamos scientist Wen Ho Lee.

Earlier this month, talk show hosts at radio station WQLZ in Springfield, Illinois called for interning Chinese Americans the way the government locked up Japanese Americans in concentration camps during World War II, or sending anyone of Chinese descent back to “their country.” In San Francisco, radio talk show host Don Bleu at Star 101.3 FM followed an anti-Chinese diatribe by calling a restaurant in China and mocking the person who answered. And it wasn’t just “shock jocks.” A convention of the Amer-

ican Society of Newspaper Editors opened with a grotesquely racist skit by the Capitol Steps satirical troupe, while “the room full of top editors, predominantly Caucasian, laughed heartily” (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 14 April). The most graphic example of this racist filth was a cartoon by the nationally syndicated Pat Oliphant chock-full of bigoted anti-Chinese stereotypes. The cartoon was run by the *Oakland Tribune* and a number of other San Francisco Bay Area newspapers.

Anti-Asian bigotry has an especially sharp edge in California, with its large Asian population and its long history of racist restrictions and attacks against Chinese, Japanese, Filipinos and others. As Philip Ting, president of the Organization of Chinese Americans in San Francisco, pointed out in a letter protesting the racist Don Bleu which was quoted in the *San Francisco Chronicle* (14 April), “Xenophobic climates lead to persecution, hate crimes and murder.” Only months ago, five Korean American students at the University of California’s Davis campus were assaulted in their apartment by 15 white thugs. Earlier this month, KKK fly-

ers appeared on campus targeting members of a multiracial slate in student government elections.

Joining in the anti-China frenzy are U.S. imperialism’s labor lieutenants. The misleaders of the United Association of Union Plumbers, Pipefitters and Sprinkler Fitters poured \$500,000 into radio ads during baseball games urging a boycott of Chinese products “until the servicemen and women are released.” Combining protectionist chauvinism with anti-Communist China-bashing, the pro-capitalist labor tops from AFL-CIO president John Sweeney on down promote the interests of the U.S. capitalist ruling class and betray those of the workers they claim to represent. This is poison to the struggles of the working class in the U.S. and internationally. In contrast to the chauvinist, pro-imperialist labor bureaucracy, the Labor Black Leagues, which are fraternally allied with the Spartacist League, stand for mobilizing the masses of minority and working people in militant struggle against the brutal system of racist oppression that is capitalist America.

We print below an April 12 letter by

the Bay Area Labor Black League for Social Defense to the *Oakland Tribune* protesting Oliphant’s cartoon.

* * *

The disgusting anti-Chinese cartoon strip on your April 11 Opinion page uses every racist stereotype to smear Chinese people. It is of a piece with a long and sordid history of racism against Asians in California, from the “anti-coolie” pogroms which culminated in the Anti-Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 to the incarceration of 120,000 Japanese Americans during World War II. Just last October, five Korean Americans were beaten up at UC Davis.

This kind of chauvinism and bigotry has always been used to perpetuate divisions in the working class which keep us from fighting the exploitation and oppression of American capitalism and lays the basis for attacks on *all* nonwhite people in the U.S.

Your cartoon appears in the context of the American spy plane provocation against China. The increased bipartisan belligerence toward China is not in the interests of workers here. The Chinese ripped their own country out of the hands of warlords, capitalists and foreign powers in 1949. Despite the bureaucratic deformities that deprive the Chinese workers of political power, the planned, collectivized economy puts the wealth of society in the hands of the workers. Workers in the U.S. must join our call for unconditional military defense of this critical gain of the Chinese Revolution and protest against attempts by the U.S. ruling class to reconquer China for imperialist plunder. ■

On Maoism and the Peasantry

The following is a contribution, edited for publication, by a supporter of the International Communist League.

Many leftist Chinese youth who are critical of the pro-capitalist “reforms” promoted by the current regime under Jiang Zemin and Zhu Rongji look back to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) under Mao Zedong as revolutionary. Upholding Mao’s peasant-guerrilla strategy, many express the view that after the defeat of the 1927 Revolution, Mao and the CCP had “no choice” or “did the right thing” in abandoning the proletarian centers and organizing the peasantry. This is not a tactical or military question but a fundamental difference with our Trotskyist program.

It is the ABCs of Marxism that the peasantry, because it is scattered, backward and internally divided into different layers, cannot play an independent role but must follow either the bourgeoisie or the proletariat. Only the working class, due to its numbers, organization and discipline given by its relation to the means of production, has the ability and interest to overthrow capitalist rule internationally and end all forms of exploitation. Leon Trotsky’s theory of permanent revolution was proven by the victory of the 1917 October Revolution in Russia and, in the negative, by the defeat of the Second Chinese Revolution of 1925-27. Trot-



L'Illustration/Sygma

Left: Workers militia in Shanghai on eve of 1927 Guomindang massacre. After defeat of 1925-27 Revolution, CCP abandoned urban proletariat. Right: Mao Zedong reviewing peasant guerrilla forces.



JAF

sky explained that in countries of belated capitalist development, such tasks as agrarian revolution, modernization and national emancipation, which resulted from the bourgeois revolutions in an earlier period, cannot be resolved in the epoch of imperialism except through the dictatorship of the proletariat leaning on the peasantry. Furthermore, development toward socialism cannot be sustained without extension of the revolution to the imperialist centers.

A commonly heard argument is that Mao led a successful revolution, so doesn’t that prove that he was right? We are often baited by Stalinists who say that Trotskyists never led a revolution. In fact, we did: the October Revolution. The Bolsheviks were animated by a proletarian, revolutionary, internationalist perspective, quite different from that of Mao’s Stalinist party.

Mao didn’t intend to overthrow capitalism. Up to the 1949 Revolution, he was for “New Democracy” and sharing power with the bourgeoisie. Despite these intentions, China became a workers state. The capitalist state collapsed and the bourgeoisie fled to Taiwan and elsewhere. The proletariat, without a party, was not a contender for power in its own right. And the Soviet Union existed as a lifeline. It was only under these conditions that a peasant revolution could overthrow capitalism. Even then, the workers state was deformed from its inception. With the counterrevolution in the USSR, the narrow historical opening in which petty-bourgeois forces were able to overturn local capitalist rule has been closed. We need to explain why we fight for new October Revolutions and don’t take the Chinese Revolution as our model. From the beginning, the bureaucratic caste sitting atop the Chinese deformed workers

state was an obstacle to the necessary extension of the revolution.

Mao was not an original thinker; the victory of the revolution was not due to any creativity on his part. “New Democracy” was simply Menshevism, i.e., the class-collaborationist program of political support to the bourgeoisie. Nor was Mao without responsibility for the defeats of 1925-27. Mao was the head of the Peasant Department of the bourgeois-nationalist Guomindang, into which the CCP had liquidated on the orders of Stalin’s Comintern. Mao was responsible for holding back the peasants from land seizures. This was consistent with the CCP’s later advising the Indonesian CP to carry out a course of “two-stage” revolution which led to bloody defeat in 1965.

Just as nationalist in its outlook as the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union, the Beijing regime joined with U.S. imperialism in an anti-Soviet alliance sealed by Nixon’s meeting with Mao in Beijing in 1972. Mao’s nationalist policies were rooted in the anti-revolutionary Stalinist dogma of “building socialism in one country,” which was antithetical to the Marxist understanding that a socialist—i.e., classless—society could only be constructed on an international basis. Mao’s successors are also wedded to the framework of Chinese

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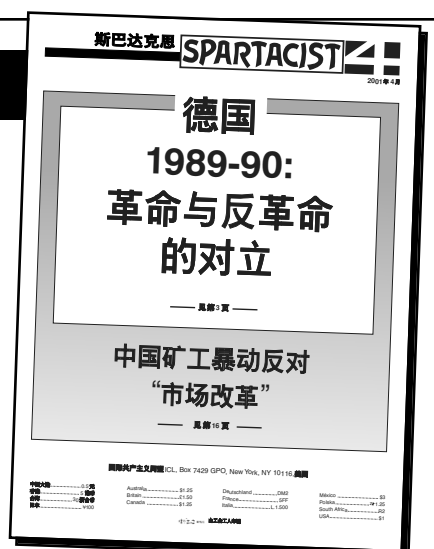
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Chiang...

(continued from page 3)

social-patriotism, linked to its advocacy of a “proletarian military policy” (PMP) in WWII. Initiated by Trotsky, the PMP involved the call for the trade-union movement to control military training during the war. The PMP was at best a utopian appeal for workers’ control of the bourgeois state; at worst, it provided the basis for accommodation to the “democratic” imperialists in the “war against fascism” (see Prometheus Research Library, *Prometheus Research Series* No. 2, “Documents on the ‘Proletarian Military Policy’”).

Shachtman’s *New International* (June 1942) correctly stated “that with the spread of the World War to the East, the just struggle for national independence of China has been decisively *integrated* into and *subordinated* to the reactionary inter-imperialist war and that it can therefore no longer be supported by the revolutionary Marxists.” But Shachtman nowhere mentioned the one military force in China which was fighting Japan independent of imperialist command and control: the CCP armies. In opposition to the Stalino-phobic Shachtman group, a correct Trotskyist position was to call for military victory to the CCP guerrilla forces.

The Pacific War and the Chinese Revolution

What of Chiang’s “refusal to kowtow” to his American patrons? There certainly were conflicts, but these must be seen in the context of Anglo-American war aims. British strategy was to defeat Germany before Japan. U.S. strategy was to use Chinese troops under American command and with American air power and logistical support to tie Japan down in China while the U.S. took islands in the Pacific as a basis for a future invasion of Japan. This strategy depended on the GMD army to do the actual fighting on the ground.

The GMD, however, wanted to deploy its best divisions not to fight the Japanese army but to surround CCP-controlled areas. For Chiang, emerging from the defeat of Japan as “Supreme Commander” of an American-dominated China depended on the CCP’s peasant armies being wiped out. It is true, as Jim M. writes, that Chiang hoped for a Normandy-style Allied invasion of China, and from there an assault on Japan. The point is that Chiang wanted the *U.S.* to fight the Japanese. He avoided using his own troops, endlessly called for a full-scale U.S. invasion of China and complained of inadequate American military commitment. Wrangling with Washington because it hasn’t invaded your country enough does not constitute an inde-

pendent struggle! Stilwell continually complained that Chiang refused to commit his troops to battle. But U.S. president Roosevelt upheld Chiang, feeling that his troops were usefully tying down the Japanese army in China, and Stilwell was eventually dismissed. What was important is that it was Roosevelt who decided.

One can be a puppet of the U.S. and still cause the master some trouble. No one would doubt that the Thieu-Ky regime in South Vietnam before the triumph of the Vietnamese Revolution in 1975 was a puppet of U.S. imperialism. But that regime was also a constant source of irritation to its Washington paymasters, not least due to its utter venality, and one of Thieu’s predecessors, Ngo Dinh Diem, was assassinated while in office courtesy of the CIA.

Jim M. correctly states that China was seen by the U.S. as one of the main prizes of World War II. But he also writes that U.S. plans to assert control of the country, including through a GMD-CCP coalition government, were waylaid when the Truman administration did not adequately back Chiang because it was not “confident in Chiang’s subservience.” This greatly underestimates factors that constrained U.S. imperialism in that period, not least the fear of “upheaval in the military and at home” to which Jim M. refers.

Following Japan’s defeat, the U.S. was simply not in a position to support Chiang with the kind of military force needed to defeat the CCP armies and mainly hoped to avoid a civil war which the GMD might lose. The American military was already occupying Japan and parts of Europe. But the main constraints were political. The U.S. population had just been mobilized to fight in what was called a “war against fascism.” How were the U.S. rulers now going to mobilize for a war against ravaged, impoverished



Life

In treacherous pursuit of coalition government, Mao toasts Chiang at 1945 talks brokered by Washington.

U.S. Trotskyist newspaper reports postwar protests by American troops kept in Philippines and elsewhere.

19 January 1946



China, one of its “allies” against Japan? In some areas, U.S. troops kept overseas even after Japan’s surrender carried out mass demonstrations—including one of 4,000 soldiers in Manila on Christmas Day, 1945 and another of 20,000 there two weeks later—demanding that they be sent home. It was also not possible at that juncture for U.S. imperialism to drum up support for invading China on the basis of anti-Communism. It would take a good three years of virulent Cold War campaigning against the “red menace,” along with the purging of Communists and militants from the unions, for Washington to wage such a war in Korea beginning in 1950. And that war was none too popular on the home front.

The U.S. urged Mao to submit to Chiang, and urged Chiang to invite Mao to Chongqing for talks, which took place in August 1945. The U.S. offered to oversee a coalition government led by Chiang. Chiang had no objection to the American role in this scheme. Mao, for his part, had no objection to this component either. Mao was more than willing to assure the Chinese bourgeoisie of its continued class rule, under Chiang’s leadership, but was unwilling to relin-

quish his armies to Chiang, who continued attacks on CCP positions. Mao explicitly called for the formation of a bourgeois coalition government with the GMD in his 1945 essay “On Coalition Government.” But Chiang, at the head of a corrupt and tottering regime, dared not risk a coalition with the CCP.

In China, even as the U.S. mediated talks between the CCP and GMD, Washington continued providing military support to Chiang. Herbert Feis captured the negotiations well:

“The Communist leader stayed in the Chinese capital about a month, arguing the Communist cause. While he was there, American planes and ships were moving government troops and officials into the vital ports and cities of east and central China; and government and Communist forces were engaged in frantic skirmishes all over the provinces of North China.”

—*The China Tangle* (1953)

Earlier in August 1945, the U.S. imperialists had incinerated 200,000 people in the A-bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in order to demonstrate to the world—above all to the Soviet Union—that they would stop at nothing in their drive for global domination.

With the onset of the Cold War, the U.S. soon discarded the notion of a negotiated settlement in China. As civil war broke out in late 1947, the CCP began land distribution to strengthen mass support for its People’s Liberation Army (PLA). The PLA had been hugely assisted by the Soviet Army, which swept Japan out of Manchuria in 1945 and handed over captured armaments to Mao’s forces. As the cities fell in the last phase of the civil war, the bourgeoisie fled, mainly to Taiwan with Chiang. The result was a social revolution, but one that was bureaucratically deformed from its outset with the proletariat excluded from political power.

No one ever said that all puppets serve their masters equally well. Stilwell would not have considered Chiang a proper puppet at all. But in the crucial matter of whose interests Chiang served, there is no question of who pulled the strings. ■

nationalism as they pursue pro-capitalist “market reforms,” as we point out in “Whither China? ‘Market Socialism’ and the Legacy of Mao” (WV No. 743 and 745, 6 October and 20 October 2000).

Claiming that abandonment of the proletariat was correct because the peasant revolution was successful liquidates the revolutionary role of the proletariat and the need for a vanguard party. The CCP, under the direction of the degenerating Comintern, did not admit that the smashing of the 1925-27 Revolution was a defeat. After having refused to lead the proletariat to build organs of dual power in a revolutionary period, they flopped to being fatuous optimists and claimed it was only a trough in the revolutionary wave. The defeated and demoralized proletariat didn’t rise to the call of the CCP, again inspired by the Comintern, to take power in the Canton Commune in December 1927. Not having a sober assessment, the CCP chased other forces and abandoned the struggle for the working class entirely. The peasantry can at times be more volatile than the proletariat, but that doesn’t

change its class nature.

Had the Bolsheviks reacted with the same impressionism to the defeat of the 1905 Revolution, October would not have been possible. Instead, they knew how to retreat, preserving their cadres and organization and preparing for the revival of the labor movement which they knew would come. Trotsky fought for this in China after the defeat of 1927. The Left Opposition opposed the CCP’s abandonment of the cities and fought for leading the proletariat in defensive struggles, using democratic demands such as for a national assembly based on universal suffrage, the eight-hour day, etc. As Trotsky wrote in his September 1932 letter, “Peasant War in China and the Proletariat”:

“The Chinese Stalinists have acted otherwise. During the revolution of 1925-27 they subordinated directly and immediately the interests of the workers and the peasants to the interests of the national bourgeoisie. In the years of the counter-revolution they passed over from the proletariat to the peasantry....

“The party actually tore itself away from its class.”

The Chinese Trotskyists fought heroically to maintain the revolutionary program and proletarian orientation under Guomindang tyranny, Japanese occupation and Stalinist repression. Under these pressures, they did suffer political erosion, for example Chen Duxiu’s abandonment of defense of the Soviet Union against imperialism during World War II.

The Chinese proletariat never really recovered from the defeat of 1925-27. Had there been a recovery of trade and industry, as Trotsky had hoped for, things might have been very different. This was an entirely reasonable perspective in 1928-29. Trotsky didn’t have a crystal ball. Revolutionary opportunities necessarily come, but not always in the country and time you happen to be in. That’s why we have an international. The bitter lessons of the defeat of the Second Chinese Revolution were instrumental in winning over a section of American Communists to Trotskyism, centrally including James P. Cannon.

Trotsky pointed out in his 1932 letter that the proletariat and peasantry have radically different consciousness. The

working class is potentially internationalist, under the leadership of a Leninist party; the peasantry is parochial. Trotsky uses examples from the history of the Russian Revolution to illustrate this: peasant guerrilla armies which had fought well to defend their land against a return of the landlords came into conflict with the Soviet power. They had to be disbanded, with their best elements assimilated into the Red Army. The CCP’s liquidation into the peasantry is reflected in the nationalist policies of the Chinese deformed workers state.

Those educated under Stalinist tutelage have been schooled in a very distorted version of “Marxism.” Stalinism dissolves the difference between the proletariat and peasantry into “toilers” or “the people.” It teaches collaboration between the workers and their oppressors, the “national bourgeoisie.” This is all in the service of “building socialism in one country,” an anti-Marxist program. In order to win militants to the program of proletarian revolutionary internationalism, we have to fight very hard against these conceptions. ■

South Africa...

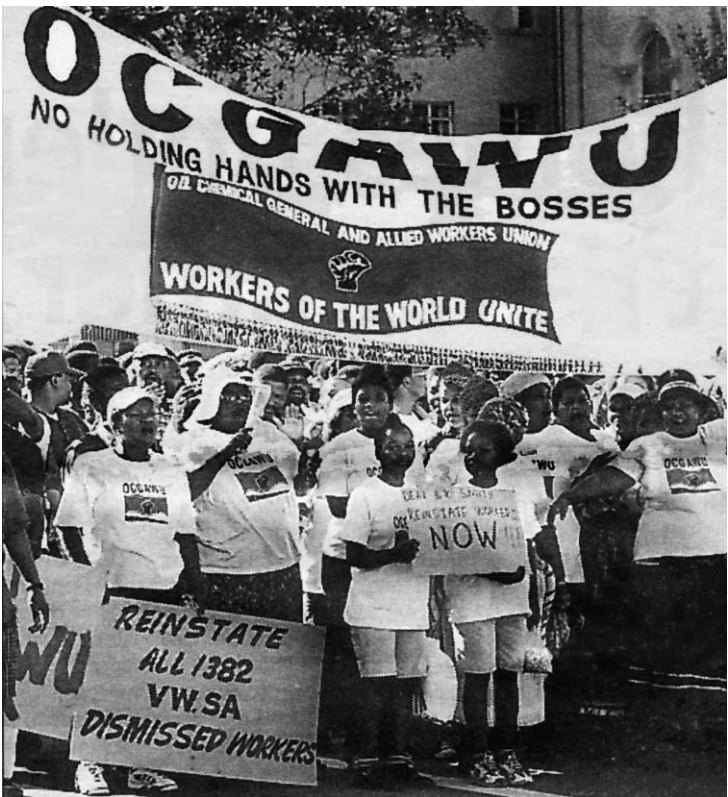
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to 1913-1916 laws to reserve 87 percent of the land to white ownership. Worried that hostilities on the land may explode, the haughty *New York Times* (31 March) recently advised a review of the 1997 “rural protection plan,” because it relies on “a network of armed, mostly white commandos, many of them police and army reservists from the apartheid era, who have been implicated in vigilante crimes against blacks, including murder.”

For many South Africans, there’s plenty of similarities between the repeated police sieges in Alexandra and the days of grand apartheid [the legal underpinnings of the apartheid system, e.g., the Pass Laws and Group Areas Act], when anti-apartheid activist Moses Mayekiso (now ex-SACPer turned “black empowerment” capitalist) was jailed under the pretext of leading a township revolt in Alex. Forced evictions and forced removals are burned into the memories of the nonwhite masses of South Africa. Among the most brutal crimes committed by the apartheid regime were forced removals like those carried out in Johannesburg’s Sophiatown and Cape Town’s District Six. By some estimates, 3.5 million South Africans were forcibly removed from urban and rural land by the apartheid government between 1960 and 1982. The apartheid government moves to level squatters and unwanted residents produced major battles with the black masses. This was a key element in the 1984-86 township revolt, which also sparked the biggest and longest rent strike in South African history. For good measure, black township dwellers also stopped paying property taxes, electricity bills and municipal service fees.

As communists, we defend the struggles of the township residents and squatters on the land against the capitalists and their state. However, such struggles in themselves offer no solution to the desperate need for housing for the black masses. But there is a social force with the social power, numbers, organisation and immediate interest to defend the struggles of the townships where they live and die—the predominantly black working class. Especially under conditions in which 40 percent of the black labour force is unemployed, the working class cannot improve or even defend the economic conditions simply at the level of trade-union struggle.

It is urgent that the workers movement fight against all forms of social oppression such as the murderous attacks on squatters. To implement this revolutionary perspective, class-conscious workers led by a revolutionary Trotskyist party must struggle to oust the labour lieutenants of capital—whether in COSATU or rival NACTU and FEDUSA federations—replacing them with a revolutionary leadership fighting for socialist revolution. This requires a break with bourgeois nationalism—the illusion that all black African people have *common* interests. The SACP, long a part of the core bourgeois-nationalist ANC leadership, today encompasses everything from leading elements of the capitalist state



Mail & Guardian

At labor rally earlier this year, trade unionists demand reinstatement of strikers fired by Volkswagen South Africa last year.

apparatus and outright bourgeois nationalists to labour bureaucrats and militant workers looking for a revolutionary perspective. As revolutionary Trotskyists, we seek to break the working-class base of the SACP from its reformist misleadership. Key to this strategy is forging in South Africa a Leninist vanguard party that champions the interests of all the oppressed and exploited.

Black Oppression and Nationalist Demagogy

Now 100 years old, Alexandra is one of the oldest townships on the Witwatersrand. It covers a one-square-mile pit shrouded by a blanket of heavy smog from thousands of lung-choking paraffin fires. For many, episodic floodings during summer rains, where shacks are washed away, is part of life. There is no real sewage system in place. Many people are still subjected to the bucket system, where faecal matter sits in bins awaiting erratic collection. Hunger, cold and poverty make fertile ground for death and diseases like cholera.

Yet the outbreak of cholera was of little concern to the neo-apartheid rulers in August last year with the first reported cases in the eastern part of KwaZulu-Natal province. Residents there were given a bottle of bleach and counselled to boil water. With the imminent spread of the disease throughout the country, the ANC responded with a string of criminal denials. After the first cases were reported in Gauteng, the ANC further denied it, until a girl died at Thembisa Hospital on the East Rand. After positive test results for cholera bacteria in the Jukskei River, authorities cordoned off the river, but not one resident was notified of cholera, regardless of the fact that children play in the waters of the contaminated Jukskei and churches conduct baptisms there. Since August, over 183 people in the country have died and more than 86,400 cases have been reported, with many more going unreported because people lack access to clinics for treatment.

Cholera is caused by bacteria which

lodge in the intestine; it is spread by the contamination of water supplied with human faeces. It is a preventable disease—control sewage and make the water safe and you have effectively stopped the scourge of cholera. In this desperately poor country, you can’t fight cholera without the material resources to build river dams and water purification plants. But there’s no incentive for the bourgeoisie of Sandton and Houghton who have access to clean drinking water to fund safe water for the black masses. Capitalism is interested in the protection of public health in so far as is necessary for its own profit and safety. For example, while AIDS ravages millions in southern Africa, the Mbeki government denies the disease is caused by HIV. Yet as protests



Alexandra, 1986: funeral march for three youth killed by apartheid forces during township revolt led by militant unionist Moses Mayekiso, now a “black empowerment” capitalist.

increase, the ANC-led regime hypocritically postures as taking on the imperialists and giant drug manufacturers who refuse to provide the treatment and money to assist those infected with AIDS.

Like capitalist regimes everywhere, the ANC resorts to repressive measures and divide-and-conquer policies to pit the oppressed against each other. Alexandra residents dumped into Braamfischerville were greeted with placards reading “Go back to Alexandra” as thousands from Soweto who’d already been promised houses since 1996 found themselves still waiting on some housing ministry list. Armed police now surround the area in the guise of “protecting” Alexandra people from Sowetans. Different layers of the oppressed are put at each other’s throats to deflect anger from the real enemy: neo-apartheid capitalism, under which the overwhelming majority is kept in desperate poverty and blacks remain on the bottom.

This was demonstrated in Alex as government police thugs lined up South African citizens against recent immigrants from Zimbabwe. Cops demanded proper identity documents, deporting those who could not prove citizenship. Housing ministry spokesman Dumisani Zulu ranted about unruly “invaders” causing housing delays in order to play resi-

dents against this layer of squatters. Immigrants from neighbouring states are used as scapegoats for the lack of decent housing and jobs, with many assaulted and sometimes even killed by raving mobs. At the same time, the migrant workers are a living link between the South African proletariat and workers in the region and have long made up a sizeable component of labour, especially in the mines and on the land.

To defend the interests of workers and the dispossessed masses, it is necessary to challenge and politically combat the anti-immigrant poison pushed by the divide-and-rule policies of the white racist bourgeoisie and its black political front men. It is crucial that the labour movement take up the defence of immigrants against state repression. We Trotskyists fight for the forging of a Leninist party that acts as a tribune of the people, defending all of the oppressed and exploited in the struggle for proletarian state power. Only such a revolutionary party can cut through the rising ethnic hatreds born of the horrendous poverty produced by capitalist superexploitation. Spartacist South Africa, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), fights for full citizenship rights for all immigrants! We fight for a socialist federation of southern Africa, in which there will be an equal place for all the myriad peoples of the region.

“Left” Apologists for ANC Government

Weeks after the Jukskei forced removals, Keep Left!, affiliate of the British Cliffite Socialist Workers Party, ran a picture of the brutal attack with a caption asking: “Why is a people’s government treating people this way?” (*Keep Left!*, March 2001). Keep Left!, which has always pushed a vote to the ANC in elections, seeks to refurbish them as repre-

senting “the people.” In their article, they obscenely call on the very ANC regime that attacked the poor to come to their rescue: “The cholera crisis in Alex will require the government to clean the river and build proper roads and houses for people, a promise that the government has so far failed to carry out.” So far? The Mbeki government has, in fact, dispensed its promise—to defend the property rights of the white capitalists. The Cliffites’ role is to deflect growing anger away from the bourgeois-nationalist ANC and channel it into “pressuring” *their government* to fight for the oppressed.

Elsewhere the article opines, “It was shocking to see a democratic government responsible for scenes that reminded us of apartheid removals. How did this turn into such a confrontation?” Leninists ask: Democratic for whom? Capitalist democracy worldwide is a democracy for the rich. Keep Left! seeks to reform neo-apartheid capitalism and is an obstacle to militant struggles for the basic needs of the working masses because this necessarily means politically confronting the ANC-led bourgeois state.

Just prior to the brutal cop violence against Alex squatters and residents, Keep Left! printed without comment a “Red Reports” dispatch about battles over housing (*Keep Left!*, February 2001) from

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(continued from page 7)

It is a measure of how flimsy the ISO's pretensions to socialism are that it stands to the right even of "left" Palestinian nationalists. The DFLP activist inter-

Reuters

“Labor dove” Shimon Peres joins with right-wing hawk Ariel Sharon in “national unity” government aimed at crushing Palestinian masses.

In fact, there can be no democratic resolution of the conflicting national rights of the Palestinian Arab and Hebrew-speaking peoples within the framework of a "secular, democratic"—i.e., capitalist—Palestine. And the ISO's vision of a "democratic, secular" Palestine is none too secular either. An article in their journal titled "Standing Up to Goliath" speaks breathlessly of the "inspiration" Palestinian fighters have drawn from the Islamic fundamentalist Hezbollah militia in Lebanon and enthuses over the "unprecedented unity between factions inside the PLO and Islamists outside the PLO." This is in line with the ISO's support to Islamic reactionaries from Afghanistan and Algeria to Iran and Indonesia in

“There is a sinister plot by shadowy forces that encourage the storming and occupation of unused empty houses. A group of criminal thugs conniving with the Democratic Alliance, who preach an anti alliance government message, always undermine government programmes.... This shows that there are some counter-revolutionary forces determined to bring about anarchy in Alexandra.”

While the fake left peddle illusions in a stable neo-apartheid bourgeois order, the ANC is responding to roiling discontents at the base of society with increasing use of police, army and private security companies, such as the Rooigevaar (“Red Ants”) in Alex. This can be seen with the crackdown in Pretoria and from mounting raids on immigrants under “Operation Crackdown,” with over 18,000 arrested so far. The ANC government is pushing a draconian Anti-Terrorism Bill aimed at silencing working-class militants, leftists and the oppressed. Meanwhile, the barbaric execution of a South African white woman, Mariette Bosch, in neighbouring Botswana, has brought renewed fervour to debate over bringing back the racist death penalty. As Marxists, we

For Permanent Revolution!

Seven years ago, when Nelson Mandela came into power, the ANC's much-touted Reconstruction and Development Programme promised a million housing units in five years. This was cynical demagoguery as a mere 11,000 houses were built. Many blacks, however, believed a new era of freedom had dawned and began constructing "informal housing" at a furious pace, extending far beyond proscribed township locations.

Significantly, in 1994 the hot seat of housing minister went to SACP leader Joe Slovo (now deceased). It was Slovo who declared the government was “committed to respect constitutional rights in land against any infringement and unlawful occupation. Squatting cannot be condoned.” Denouncing the “culture of nonpayment,” the ANC and SACP cadre who once led township revolts now collect rent for the Jo’burg banks. For

The struggle for housing and basic services is intensifying. As protest placards in Alex put it: "We are not going anywhere. We want houses." *What's needed is a fight by the proletariat to nationalise all urban land while launching a massive construction programme for racially and ethnically integrated, quality housing.* The bourgeois nationalists, who are tied by a million threads to imperialism and fearful of the proletariat, cannot even begin to address the burning democratic and economic demands of the oppressed masses. Economic and social modernisation and genuine national liberation can be achieved only through a proletarian revolution that proceeds with socialist construction as an immediate measure. Only the dictatorship of the proletariat, linked to international socialist revolution, can lay the basis for realising agrarian revolution, equality for women and tribal/ethnic minorities, breaking the yoke of imperialism. This is the Trotskyist programme of permanent revolution. In South Africa, we fight for a black-centred workers government in which

We stand in the tradition of the Bolshevik Party that led the working class of backward Russia to state power in 1917. The Bolsheviks conducted a campaign to mobilise all medical workers to combat epidemics like cholera and typhus. The Russian Revolution for the first time opened the road to get rid of oppression and inequality that pose obstacles to the applying of rational approaches to disease. The gains of the Russian Revolution could only hint at what a worldwide planned economy could do. The Bolsheviks under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky understood that while the October Revolution laid the basis for socialist construction, its ultimate success required the international extension of the revolution to wealthy and advanced industrialised capitalist countries to lay the material basis for free medical care and other vital needs. Today, the struggle for world socialist revolution must be waged as part of the fight to reforge the Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution. This is the purpose of Spartacist South Africa, section of the ICL. ■

(continued from page 6)

In reality, the corporate chiefs and capitalist politicians are trying to build a façade to mask brutal racist reality. All the talk about the “New South” is pure claptrap. Bomb threats against the 16th Street Baptist Church have increased in the years since the case was reopened. In Mississippi this month, the referendum to remove the Confederate emblem of slavery and Klan terror from the state flag was defeated. After the election of Selma, Alabama’s first black mayor last year, a statue of Confederate general and KKK founder Nathan Bedford Forrest was erected on city property (since removed) as a racist provocation. And to keep integrated unions out of the low-wage South, the employers use “right to work” laws, enforced not only by the

The true nature of the capitalist state is revealed with brutal, swift and deadly force when the capitalist class feels its rule challenged by a revolt of workers and the oppressed. It will take a workers revolution in this country to avenge the murder of four black girls in September 1963 and the countless other victims of racist terror before and after, so that black people can walk the streets of this country without fear and in dignity and freedom. ■

- South Africa Torn by AIDS Crisis
- South African Workers Battle ANC Union-Busting, Austerity
- South Africa ANC Regime: Enforcer for Imperialist Plunder

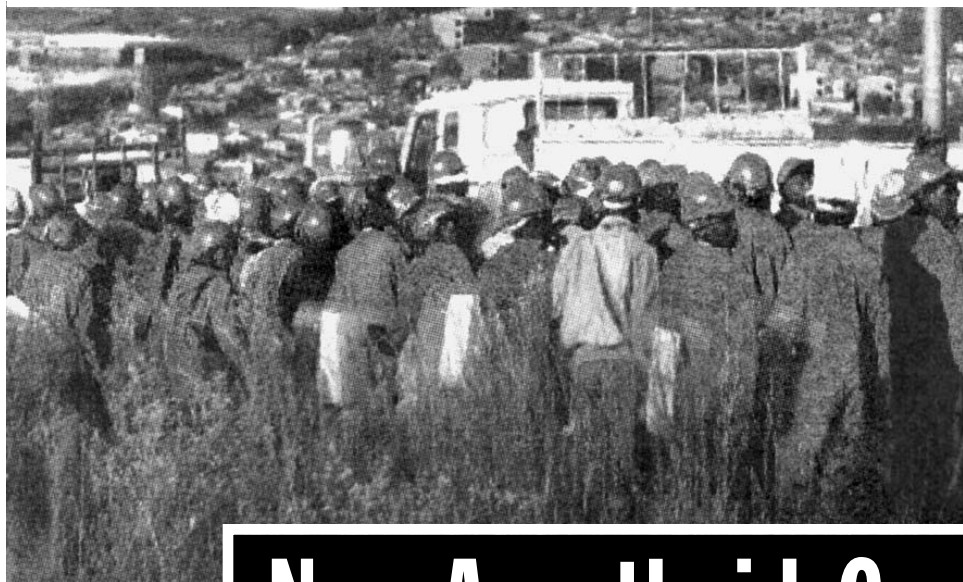
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South Africa

ANC Government Iron Fist in Alexandra Township



Nadine Hutton photos

Neo-Apartheid Cops Evict Thousands

We reprint below a leaflet issued by Spartacist South Africa on April 19.

As dawn broke over Alexandra township in northeastern Johannesburg on February 12, thousands of squatters and residents battled hundreds of cops to keep their homes. This brutal attack by the African National Congress (ANC)-led capitalist government brought to mind scenes of apartheid-era forced removals and police crackdowns. Cops backed by security thugs wielded crowbars to demolish shacks, throwing possessions onto the streets and relocation trucks. Women were dragged through the mud in desperate attempts to hold on to their goods. At least one man was shot and scores were injured as police fired rubber bullets, stun grenades and tear gas at scrambling residents. Dumped into transit camps in Diepsloot and Braamfischer-ville 30-40 kilometres away from their jobs and schools, the families crammed into makeshift shacks amid rubbish heaps, without sanitation or clean water. One resident of Alex bitterly remarked to the *Johannesburg Star* (13 February):

As government security thugs marched into Alexandra in February, township residents fought back to prevent demolition of their homes.

“We voted for this government because it was black and we thought it would look after us, but look how it is treating us—like animals, throwing us into the veld [open grassland].”

Homes of squatters and 20-year residents alike were destroyed under the pretext of public health concerns along the cholera-infested Jukskei River. The big lie pushed in the bourgeois media was that residents were being protected from cholera and that they’d be removed to better homes. These forced removals had nothing to do with stopping cholera and everything to do with stopping the expansion of Alex, which the bourgeoisie has long viewed as a menacing “black spot.” A mere two kilometres away lies plush Sandton, which hosts the Johannesburg Stock Exchange and leading banks.

Why did this come about? The answer came in President Thabo Mbeki’s “Throne Speech” to open Parliament, where he

announced that the government will proceed with its “urban renewal programme,” starting immediately with Alexandra. The government decided to push through relocations long before any signs of cholera. Mbeki’s [Rand] R13-billion “greater Alexandra redevelopment programme” promises at minimum *clearing of 34,000 shacks* in Alexandra, which he claims will open the way to new housing, roads and sanitation. This was touted in his usual “African renaissance” refrain as he concluded that “no African child should ever again experience hunger, avoidable disease and ignorance.”

Who believes any of this now? Last year, the government showed how much it cares about Alexandra squatters in the events surrounding the All Africa Games allocation of houses. The government promised that houses built to accommodate athletes from the Games would be allocated to poorer Alex residents. This was a cruel hoax as no Alex residents qualified for the necessary bank loans. Then the government auctioned the houses off to petty-bourgeois landlords and profiteers able to dish out between R15,000 and R50,000. Alex residents who occupied empty houses were driven out by heavily armed police.

The bourgeois-nationalist ANC is incapable and unwilling to provide the basic material needs like housing, health care or proper sanitation since it’s committed to the maintenance and development of South African capitalism, and within that building up a layer of black exploiters on the backs of the toiling masses. While there have been fundamental changes to the political superstructure, the economic basis of apartheid—a system of superexploitation of black labour by white owners of the country’s factories, mines and agricultural land—remains intact. This is a system of *neo-apartheid* ruled by black

front men of the bourgeois-nationalist ANC at the behest of the white capitalist class. Mbeki’s government is a *nationalist popular front* (“tripartite alliance”)—a coalition with the exploiters in which workers organisations are tied to the ANC-led capitalist government by the reformist South African Communist Party (SACP), which dominates the leadership of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). Backed by British and U.S. imperialism, the ANC in power suppresses the just aspirations of the oppressed masses.

The housing question remains a burning issue in South Africa as *one of four black people* lives in “informal settlements” or squatter camps. The figure is much higher in the urban areas. In places like Alexandra, amongst squatters you’ll find recent immigrants, migrant workers moving from one piece job to another, crowded in the tens of thousands in tin shacks and cardboard hovels to which they’ve been relegated. Meanwhile, the white neighbourhoods in Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban resemble the most affluent suburbs of North America and West Europe.

In the rural areas, more than five million blacks still live and work in slavery-like conditions, terrorised by white racist farmers. Frustrated expectations that housing and land would be returned to black people evicted in the apartheid-era land grab by whites has fuelled the volatile land issue in South Africa. Fearing Zimbabwe-styled land occupations, white farmers have systematically evicted tenants. Since 1994 when the ANC launched a “land reform” scheme, of more than 65,000 claims lodged for land restitution, only 0.81 percent have been transferred. Land restitution claims are only a small part of the land question when talking about genuine restitution for the black masses. The land question predates the apartheid regime removals and goes back

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Len Kumalo/Sowetan

Soweto residents in recent demonstration against threatened cutoff of electricity. Nonpayment of electric bills was part of township struggles against former apartheid regime.