

## U.S. Out of Iraq Now!

# U.S. Imperialism's Torture, Inc.

The grotesque photos flashed around the world from Abu Ghraib prison in U.S.-occupied Iraq have totally demolished the official Bush line that the U.S. went in to “liberate” Iraq and institute “democracy.” This “liberation” is now identified with a young American woman soldier holding a groveling, naked Iraqi prisoner tethered to a leash like an animal. The photos only partially expose a small part of the terror and atrocities which in fact are meted out daily to U.S. imperialism’s victims worldwide, as well as inside the U.S. itself. From the prison camp in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba to the death rows of Texas; from systematic mass murder and torture of Vietnamese liberation fighters in the CIA’s “Operation Phoenix” program in Vietnam to the death squads in Latin America; from Britain’s Long Kesh prison to the basements of French colonial Algiers; from Chile’s Santiago Stadium to Israel’s Ashkelon: an awful network of torture and death, going back in time, spans the world. These are not “aberrations.” They are the conscious policies of imperialist and neo-colonialist ruling regimes, who routinely and necessarily use terror and degradation as tools to maintain their power.

The Democratic Party is trying to exploit widespread revulsion at the newly exposed sexual abuse and torture by American troops and mercenaries in Iraq to fuel their campaign to take over the White House from Bush. In reality, the crimes and destruction for which U.S. imperialism is known worldwide were chiefly carried out under Democratic Party administrations: the A-bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki; the reduction of North Korea to rubble in a war carried out under United Nations aegis in the early 1950s; the napalming and systematic devastation of Vietnam; the terror bombing of Serbia under Clinton in 1999.

In the Iraq war, the International Communist League forthrightly took a side for the military defense of Iraq, without giving any political support to Saddam Hussein, against U.S. imperialism. Under the brutal U.S. military occupation today, every blow against the U.S. and its dwindling “coalition of the willing” is objectively in the interests of workers worldwide. At the same time, we steadfastly oppose the communalist violence carried out by clerical reactionaries and remnants of the Ba’athist regime. The crucial force that must be mobilized politically to strike a blow against the U.S.

occupation of Iraq is the multiracial proletariat at home. U.S. out of Iraq!

No people ever subjugated by an imperialist army, and certainly no black person in America, could have been surprised by the widespread debasement of prisoners by American forces in Iraq. It’s no accident the killers and sadists of Abu Ghraib include former U.S. cops and prison guards, domestic enforcers of U.S. state terror against poor, black and working people and immigrants. Reports from Abu Ghraib specify that one prisoner was raped and sodomized with a broomstick—exactly like Haitian immigrant Abner Louima was in a New York City police station in 1997. One of the torturers at Abu Ghraib, Specialist Charles Graner Jr., is a guard at Pennsylvania’s notorious SCI Greene prison where America’s foremost black political prisoner, Mumia Abu-Jamal, is held on death



Relatives of Iraqi prisoners protest outside Abu Ghraib prison, May 5, demanding “Occupiers leave our country!” Below: U.S. troops routinely round up and brutalize population in Iraq.

Saman/Newsday

AP



row. That prison was the scene of a 1998 abuse scandal over guards beating and sadistically humiliating prisoners. In a 3 May column, Mumia writes: “The horrific treatment of Iraqis at Abu Ghraib has its dark precedents in the prisons and police stations across America.”

The American imperialist state, already a prison house for blacks, in the name of

its “war on terror” has exported and vastly expanded its own arsenal of terror, now employed on a world scale without even the hypocritical pretense of “legality.” Anthony Lewis, a liberal who believes that the U.S. should act in accordance with its purported commitment to the rule of law, wrote: “President Bush has made clear his view that law must bend to what he regards as necessity. National security trumps our commitments to international law. The Constitution must yield to novel infringements on American freedom.” On the other end of the spectrum is the rabid apologist for Zionist terror, Alan Dershowitz: “[We could use] a torture warrant.... I would talk about a nonlethal torture, say, a sterilized needle underneath the nail, which would violate the Geneva Accords, but you know, countries all over the world violate the Geneva Accords” (CNN, 4 March 2003). Warrant or not, Maj. Gen. Miller, chief of detention first in Guantánamo and now in Iraq, testified that “special interrogation techniques...must be approved,” i.e., torture is permissible.

As the scandal exploded, Bush’s Secretary of State Colin Powell, overseer of the 1991 mass slaughter of fleeing Iraqi troops on the “highway of death” in the first Gulf War, compared the prison abuse to the 1968 My Lai massacre in Vietnam in an interview on CNN, as just one of those deplorable things that happen in war. It’s obscene that this mass murderer is allowed to weep public crocodile tears for the hundreds of Vietnamese men, women and children slaughtered—after mass rape, sodomy, torture and maiming—by U.S. troops in the village of My Lai. In My Lai, the American ruling class pinned the blame on low-level “rogue” soldiers and amnestied the most senior officers involved. General Koster, the division commander in overall charge of the troops in My Lai, watched the entire massacre from the air and radioed orders to Lieutenant Calley in the village. Calley was merely as high up the chain of command as the American government was willing to go.

A major goal of the Bush administration in invading and occupying Iraq was to overcome the “Vietnam syndrome,”

*continued on page 10*



## The Civil Rights Movement

### A Marxist Analysis

SEE PAGE 4



# South Africa: Protest ANC Government Crackdown on Leftists and Landless Peoples Movement!

JOHANNESBURG—The African National Congress (ANC) capitalist regime is hysterically celebrating ten years of democracy and freedom and has inaugurated a president. Behind the democratic facade is the closed fist of repression targeting leftist opponents of ANC privatisation and a social movement fighting for land for the millions of landless in neo-apartheid South Africa. With the ANC falsely claiming a mandate after the recent election (with only 32 percent of the electorate voting!) and President Thabo Mbeki having enlisted in George Bush’s “war on terror,” this state persecution is ominous and *ultimately aimed at the working class as a whole*. It must be protested both within South Africa and internationally. *An injury to one is an injury to all!*

On Human Rights Day, 21 March, the Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF) sought to protest outside the dedication ceremony of the new Constitutional Court building where Mbeki was to speak. Members of the APF were arrested *not* at the Constitutional Court but at various gathering sites and taxi ranks around Gauteng Province including Soweto, Hillbrow and Pretoria. Their “crime” was their intent to express their opposition to prepaid water meters, utility cutoffs and privatisation policies of the ANC. Increasingly, in the “new” South Africa, constitutional rights stand for nothing when you challenge the capitalist status quo. Some 52 APF members were identified and arrested because they were wearing the distinctive red APF shirts. They were held for four hours

and released after paying a fine. They faced a court date on May 5, where the state dropped the charges. A number of bystanders were arrested simply for wearing red and being in the vicinity of departure points. Bail conditions have been designed to restrict the freedom of movement of APF organisers. There is also a high court interdict restricting members of the APF from coming within 50 meters of the Johannesburg Waterworks in Soweto.

The members of the APF were detained and denied their rights because of the slanderous and dangerous accusation regarding a protest at Johannesburg mayor Amos Masondo’s house in 2002. Then, the mayor’s security guards wantonly and without provocation fired on an unarmed crowd protesting water and electricity cutoffs in Soweto. Despite the protesters being hounded by the courts for almost a year, *no* charges were made to stick, which exposes the baseless violence-baiting pretext of the state. Masondo and the ANC are making it maximally difficult for the APF to organise protest within Johannesburg.

On April 14, election day, some 60 members of the Landless Peoples Movement (LPM) were prevented from entering Johannesburg where they were to press their call for a boycott (“no land no vote”) of the elections. They were kept in holding cells for a night and had to pay R300 bail after being charged with contravening election laws. An LPM spokesman said some members were “subjected to interrogation, harassment and physical violence” while in detention. The LPM’s threat to occupy white-owned farms has caused a great deal of distress in the ANC and in South Africa generally, where the spectre of Mugabe’s land seizures in Zimbabwe is an all-purpose bogeyman. The Freedom of Expression Institute, an organisation that monitors attacks on civil liberties, has said that the APF and LPM are “effectively banned organisations in Johannesburg.”

Especially since the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development, where both groups protested against ANC policies, they have been subject to intensified scrutiny and provocation by the National Intelligence Service (NIS). It is illusory and dangerous to rely on the constitution or on the so-called “progressive” credentials of the bourgeois-nationalist ANC. There is a yawning chasm between the constitutional pretensions of the ANC and the ugly reality on the ground.

Validating the “liberation” claims of the government is the South African Communist Party/Congress of South African Trade Unions (SACP/COSATU) in their Tripartite Alliance with the ANC. The powerful unions in this country have the power to stop state repression when not chained to the ANC through the class collaboration of SACP/COSATU. While with the assistance of SACP/COSATU

the ANC parades as a liberation movement in power, they are in fact black front men for the capitalist class, which remains, as it was under the old apartheid system, overwhelmingly white. And they have proved time and again their willingness to use the apparatus and instruments of repression against the working class, the left and militant students. In late April, Wits (University of Witwatersrand) students brought the campus to a standstill to protest the cutting of financial aid packages to needy students by *50 per cent*. The university administration called the cops, and 12 students were arrested and face charges of “public violence” under the 1993 Gathering Act, the same law used against the APF. Drop the charges against Wits student protesters! The courts, cops and laws are the means by which the ANC insures the supremacy of the Randlords and neo-apartheid capitalist rule. *Down with the Tripartite Alliance! Mobilise working class power to defend the right to assemble and organise! Down with the ANC’s anti-terror legislation!*

The APF reflects a vacillating posture toward the ANC. Common to leftist elements and groups within the APF is a shared history of class collaboration with the ANC at one stage or another. APF leader Trevor Ngawane is himself an expelled ANC councilor. The Cliffite Keep Left! yet again called for a vote for the capitalist ANC in the recent elections. The Taaffeite Democratic Socialist Movement (DSM) spent 20 years inside the ANC before it “discovered” it was a capitalist party in 1996. While some APF spokesmen called for a boycott of the elections, during early Iraq antiwar protests, the APF shared a platform with ANC bigwigs, thereby legitimising the antiwar pretensions of the capitalist ANC. The APF and their constituent groups function as left tails of bourgeois nationalism and see their role as being that of left pressure on the ANC-led nationalist popular front for structural adjustments within the confines of capitalism.

Spartacist South Africa’s opposition to the ANC is principled and unstinting. The only way to end the incessant attacks on the working class and impoverished, to provide jobs for all and land to the landless is through socialist revolution in South Africa led by the powerful South African working class in struggle against the ANC, which since 1994 has been the primary political agent of the white capitalist class, and all those who push illusions in it. Such a revolutionary struggle requires the building of a Trotskyist vanguard party, which will be a tribune of the people. We are dedicated to this task. Despite our political differences with the APF and LPM, we call on all opponents of capitalist state repression, the left and labour to defend victimised militants.

*Drop all the charges! Stop the persecution of APF and LPM! Defend the left and workers movement! ■*



TROTSKY

## Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution

*In 1953, when legally enforced segregation was still the rule in the South, American Trotskyist Richard S. Fraser gave two lectures explaining the unique role of racist oppression in underpinning the entire course of the development of American capitalism. He put forward the perspective of revolutionary integrationism—the fight for full political and social equality of black people in American society necessarily tied to the*

*struggle for an egalitarian socialist society. He counterposed this revolutionary program both to bourgeois liberals, and also to those in the Stalinist Communist Party and within his own then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party who argued that American black people were a separate nation. The Spartacist League carries forward Fraser’s pioneering work and lifelong struggle for a third American revolution.*

The racial division of society was born with capitalism and will die only with the death of this last system of exploitation. Before capitalism there was no race concept. There was no skin color exploitation, there was no race prejudice, there was no idea of superiority and inferiority based upon physical characteristics.

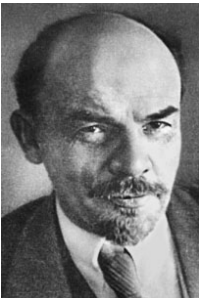
It was the advent of Negro chattel slavery in the western hemisphere which first divided society into races. In a measure the whole supremacy of western capitalism is founded upon this modern chattel slavery. The primary accumulation of capital which was the foundation of the industrial revolution was accrued largely from the slave trade.

The products of the slave system in the early colonies formed the backbone of European mercantilism and the raw materials for industrial capitalism. The three-cornered trade by pious New England merchants, consisting of rum, slaves and sugar cane, was the foundation of American commerce. Thus Negro slavery was the pivotal point upon which the foundations of the U.S. national economy were hinged....

But capitalism, even in the southern United States, has created the conditions necessary for its own destruction. It has disrupted the old agrarian pattern, undermined the privileged white middle class, thus weakening the whole fabric of social repression. It has created great industries, proletarianizing white, urbanizing black. This process has centralized the Negro community in positions of great strategic advantage in large city communities, whereas before they were dispersed over the countryside. Capitalism has likewise created the conditions for the overthrow of race prejudice by working class solidarity.

It falls upon the shoulders of the proletarian revolution, in which the American workers will join together with the Negro people in the abolition of capitalism, to uproot the Jim Crow system. It is our task to build the party to lead that revolution: the Socialist Workers Party.

—R.S. Fraser, “The Negro Struggle and the Proletarian Revolution,” in “In Memoriam—Richard S. Fraser,” *Prometheus Research Series* No. 3 (1990)



LENIN

## WORKERS VANGUARD

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

DIRECTOR OF PARTY PUBLICATIONS: Alison Spencer  
EDITOR: Alan Wilde  
EDITOR, YOUNG SPARTACUS PAGES: Michael Davissou  
PRODUCTION MANAGER: Susan Fuller  
CIRCULATION MANAGER: Jeff Thomas  
EDITORIAL BOARD: Rosemary Palenque (managing editor), Bruce André, Ray Bishop, Jon Brule, Karen Cole, Paul Cone, George Foster, Liz Gordon, Walter Jennings, Jane Kerrigan, Len Meyers, James Robertson, Joseph Seymour  
The Spartacist League is the U.S. Section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).  
*Workers Vanguard* (ISSN 0276-0746) published biweekly, except skipping three alternate issues in June, July and August (beginning with omitting the second issue in June) and with a 3-week interval in December, by the Spartacist Publishing Co., 299 Broadway, Suite 318, New York, NY 10007. Telephone: (212) 732-7862 (Editorial), (212) 732-7861 (Business). Address all correspondence to: Box 1377, GPO, New York, NY 10116. E-mail address: [vanguard@tiac.net](mailto:vanguard@tiac.net). Domestic subscriptions: \$10.00/22 issues. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Workers Vanguard*, Box 1377, GPO, New York, NY 10116.  
*Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.*  
The closing date for news in this issue is 11 May.

No. 826

14 May 2004



Indymedia

August 2002: Landless Peoples Movement protest at World Summit conference in Johannesburg.

## Columbia Graduate Students Battle Union-Busting Administration

NEW YORK, May 9—Striking against the arrogant, union-busting campus administration for union recognition, the graduate students who work as teaching assistants, research assistants and instructors at Columbia University have been out for three weeks. Comrades from the SYC have walked the picket lines of the Graduate Student Employees United/United Auto Workers Local 2110 (GSEU/UAW), attended strike rallies and urged students to take the side of the graduate student workers.

As a result of the strike, numerous classes and discussion and lab sections have not met. Still, as the university moves into finals, the majority of classes are continuing. The campus should be shut down! No papers should be graded; no classes should meet for finals; workers should refuse to work.

The clerical workers in UAW Local 2110 went out on a one-day sympathy strike on May 6. The picket lines swelled with the crucial addition of the support staff. The GSEU also secured the assurance of the Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 241 leadership that its members would honor the picket lines on that day. But the Local 241 leadership did not inform its membership, who largely crossed the early morning picket lines that the GSEU set up. However, many maintenance workers and groundskeepers of TWU Local 241 were clearly not happy with doing so, and came out to the strike rally at noon.

This sympathy strike is a small example of what the SYC means when we call for extending the GSEU strike. It shows there is broad campus support for the graduate students. SYCers on the picket line and an SYC supporter in the GSEU have argued that strikes are won by bringing the social power of labor and its allies to bear against the bosses. At rallies and on the picket lines, our comrades have raised signs calling for shutting down the campus and making the elementary point: "Picket Lines Mean Don't Cross!" As an SYC leaflet widely distributed to striking students and their supporters (reprinted in WV No. 825, 30 April) argues:

"We say that there should be a boycott of *all* classes, both on and off campus, and united action to build picket lines that nobody crosses. Students must forge an alliance with campus workers, from maintenance workers in TWU 241 to cafeteria workers in SEIU 1199, to extend the strike campus-wide as well as with UPS and postal service workers to stop deliveries."

While students do not, as such, wield much social power in society as a whole, they have a crucial leverage in campus strikes due to their numbers on campus coupled with their obvious importance to the university. As the *Columbia Spectator* noted on April 28, "Columbia recognizes that undergraduates play a major role in the success of the strike. The University has a problem if graduate students won't teach, and an even bigger problem if students won't go to class." Public



May 6 GSEU strike rally, joined by clerical staff on sympathy strike, other campus workers, student supporters and SYC, outside Columbia administration building.

## Shut Down the University! No Reprisals!

school teachers unions have long recognized this and when on strike frequently ask parents and students to boycott classes and participate in picket lines.

This sympathy strike cuts against the grain of the overall strategy of the GSEU leadership, which is to appeal to the good graces of the administration rather than mobilize the potential allies of the graduate students. AFL-CIO president John Sweeney spoke to a strike rally on April 28, imploring Columbia to "rise above the petty, vicious concerns of higher education" and "join [the union] in a stand for higher principles." UAW Local 2110 president Maida Rosenstein followed him with a speech praising the Democratic Party politicians who were the majority of the speakers at the rally, while Sonny Hall of the TWU stood nearby, prominently sporting a "John Kerry for President" button.

The trade-union bureaucracy has pursued a policy of what they call the "porous picket line." This policy does not treat picket lines as the battle lines of class struggle, but rather as a publicity campaign, a point of moral pressure aimed at shaming and annoying the administration into submission. The union leadership justifies this strategy with the stated fear of raising any demands that might turn those faculty and students who are currently lukewarm in their support of the GSEU against the strike. In practice, this has meant that the union has made virtually no demands for concrete solidarity from sympathetic professors and students. At most, professors have been asked to move classes off campus, which does little but save Columbia on electricity. Indeed, GSEU has indicated that it

thinks students should continue to attend classes, professors should continue to teach, and support staff should continue to work.

The union leadership's wooing of and stated reliance on Democratic Party politicians is integrally linked to the "porous picket line" strategy. The union leadership works overtime to line up these Democrats to speak to their rallies in the hopes that they will put pressure on the

1999 to Democratic Party politicians aiding the AFL-CIO bureaucracy's sellout of striking transit and grocery workers in California earlier this year. Everything that the labor movement has ever won has come through hard struggle, not through the good graces of capitalist politicians and the bosses.

The result of the GSEU leadership's strategy is clear if one peers through the gate down College Walk. Students scurry as usual to the library; campus groundskeepers and maintenance workers walk or drive by; clerical staff emerge around noon for their lunch breaks; professors head to their offices, classes and review sessions—and those teaching off campus differ only in the length of their walk. With the union's blessing, even those sympathetic to the strike are largely engaging in strikebreaking activity by keeping the university running. The union leadership even advised one campus worker who has been honoring the strike to go back to work.

The "liberal" administration has not budged from its initial position of refusing to recognize a graduate student union. One should not be surprised at this. The fight for union rights is a fight *against* the administration. One clerical worker in UAW

Local 2110 told SYCers on the picket line that, if not for the union, she probably never would have gotten a raise in her 15 years on the job. Further, the ruling class has a significant interest in what goes on at Columbia, which performs many services for the capitalists. Columbia is an elite institution with a nearly **\$4.3 billion** endowment, sky-high tuition and a layout that physically resembles a fortress "guarding" the stu-

Democratic Party city councilman Bill Perkins addressing GSEU picket. Union leadership's faith in capitalist politicians is obstacle to mobilizing power of labor and its allies.



administration. The Democratic Party is a party of capital as much as the Republicans, and it is therefore squarely against militant class struggle and workers' victories. The Democrats, on all levels of government, have a long and sordid history of containing, co-opting and repressing labor struggle. Examples abound, from New York State attorney general Eliot Spitzer issuing anti-union injunctions against New York City transit workers in

dents and the relatively affluent Morningside Heights neighborhood from surrounding Harlem. Wall Street and corporate law firms are chock full of Columbia graduates. In 2003, the U.S. government gave Columbia \$13 million for weapons research alone.

As the *Columbia Spectator* aptly noted in a 3 May editorial, Columbia is collaborating with the anti-immigrant

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## No Reliance on the Democratic Party!



# The Civil Rights Movement

## A Marxist Analysis

We print below the presentation given by comrade Paula Daniels at a Spartacist League forum in New York City on February 21, slightly edited for publication.

On the same weekend in mid April 1960, two youth groups held their founding conferences. In Philadelphia, the YSA (Young Socialist Alliance) was founded on a program of revolutionary Marxism: Trotskyism. However, its parent group, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), was quickly degenerating into reformism. In Raleigh, North Carolina, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was coalescing under the auspices of Martin Luther King's group, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). SNCC was a heterogeneous group of Southern black college students motivated by the blossoming student sit-in movement against segregation. Political ferment was brewing in America and youth would be springing into action around the country. Behind the story of these two politically different groups was the promise of future intersection of black and red, revealing the revolutionary potential of the burgeoning civil rights movement.

The civil rights movement shook this country to its core and like any deep-rooted social struggle, it didn't just fall from the sky. There has to be a whole lot of social kindling piling up to set a whole country on fire. This was a mass, trans-class movement. An entire generation of youth, black and white, was politicized. A whole layer of youth was breaking beyond the bounds of capitalism as they groped for answers. In the South, hundreds of thousands of black people were mobilized, confronting the totalitarian, racist police state that they had lived under for three-quarters of a century since the defeat of Radical Reconstruction, the brief period after the Civil War when the promise of fully integrating blacks into American society existed. When Reconstruction was smashed with the Compromise of 1877 and the Union Army withdrew from the South, Jim Crow, the brutal system of strict racial separation, codified in law and enforced by a reign of terror, took hold. Despite having the formal right to vote, black people were kept from exercising that right by bogus literacy tests with impossible questions like "how many bubbles on a bar of soap?"; by the poll tax; and through violence and intimidation—including murder.

The American South at the time of the civil rights movement was a real anomaly. You had a region in the most

advanced capitalist country in the world that was not run like a bourgeois democracy. Jim Crow's political and legal superstructure was much more akin to the South African apartheid system. Many blacks worked the same land as their slave forebears. A big difference was that some were employed in industry—particularly steel and longshore. So why was such a repressive apparatus needed? Why did it take a life and death fight to gain simple recognition of democratic rights for some 13 million American citizens?

The answer goes straight to the heart of what we Marxists call the black question. No single question has politically and socially shaped this country more than that of black oppression. The decision to supply the slave labor force with men, women and children kidnapped from the African continent and thereafter branded by their skin color is something that impacts on the very essence of American society today. Since their arrival, blacks have been an integral part of the economy, while forcibly kept at the bottom rungs of society. As such, black people in America are a race-color caste, doubly oppressed as workers and blacks, and triply oppressed in the case of black women. Any revolutionary organization worth its salt must take on the question of the special oppression of black people. It is as fundamental to U.S. capitalism as the exploitation of labor and the

inherent drive for war.

Racism is a crucial tool used by the U.S. ruling class to keep the working class divided, creating an enormous obstacle to united struggle against the common class enemy—the bourgeoisie. Racism provides a scapegoat for the ills of capitalism, and, crucially, a reserve army of labor to be employed or shoved aside depending upon the system's need. That is what we mean when we talk about a material basis for black oppression. Black oppression is not just a question of racist ideas, and that's why liberal integration, the notion of fully incorporating blacks into a capitalist society, will never achieve racial equality.

Black oppression cannot be rooted out short of smashing the capitalist system and constructing an egalitarian socialist society—that is the core of our program for *revolutionary integrationism*. This unique perspective is based on the pioneering work of Richard Fraser, to whom we owe a great deal, most notably for his 1955 document (written while he was in the SWP), "For the Materialist Conception of the Negro Question."

Precisely because blacks constitute the most exploited layer of the working class, which is the only force, because of its social organization and power to stop production, capable of shattering the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, the black question is a strategic question in the fight for proletarian revolution in this country. The

workplace is one of the few integrated places in the U.S. Because of their position as the most oppressed, often the most experienced and conscious section of the working class, revolutionary black workers will play an exceptional role as a key component of an integrated revolutionary party.

### Black Freedom Struggle Smashes Cold War Consensus

The story of the civil rights movement is not just about tearing down Jim Crow, which is no small thing, to be sure. It's about the failure of liberal integration, and it is a vindication, albeit in the negative, of our program of revolutionary integrationism. The black masses demonstrating in the streets, those for whom the American Dream was more of a nightmare, crashed through the ideological conformity of the Cold War McCarthyite period, sharpening the contradictions of capitalist society and exposing the crisis of revolutionary leadership.

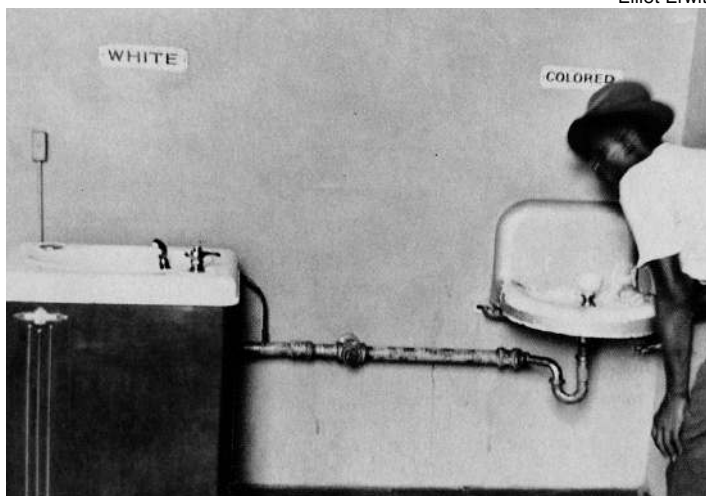
To understand what triggered the intense social struggles of the 1950s and 1960s you have to look back to the previous two decades, during which both American politics and black life were transformed by the social and class struggles of the 1930s and 1940s. You have to look at the rise of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) in 1936-1937; and the role played by the Communist Party (CP) in union and black struggles. Despite their formal (and incorrect) position that black people constituted a separate nation in the U.S., the CP carried out some very fine and courageous work on the question of black rights and integration. From CIO union organizing drives and campaigns on behalf of the unemployed, to their work with brutally oppressed sharecroppers in the South and the international campaign to free the Scottsboro Boys—nine black youths framed up on charges of raping Southern white women—the CP gained a foothold in black communities. (The Scottsboro case was initially shunned by the NAACP, earning them the nickname "National Association for the Advancement of Certain People.")

At the same time, black workers were joining the industrial workforce in droves and migrating to the North as the manpower need created by two world wars and immigration restrictions provided job opportunities and the possibility to escape the lynch rope in the South. The CIO not only organized integrated, industrial unions (with varying degrees of success) but, often led by socialists and including many black organizers, intervened in the social struggles of the day, fighting for integration, voter registration and against lynching. For the first time, blacks were integrated into unions alongside white workers on a large scale.

The urbanization, industrialization, increased education and political consciousness of black Americans would have profound implications as the U.S. entered World War II. The black population that was drafted into the Jim Crow military to defend "freedom and democracy" in the early 1940s was not of the same cloth as those drafted during World War I. While most American blacks supported the war, there were strong reservations. As one black man put it: "I was really ashamed of myself the day Pearl Harbor was hit. When I heard the news I jumped up and laughed. 'Well sir,' I said,



Young civil rights activists in Ohio before departing for Mississippi as part of SNCC's 1964 "Freedom Summer" project.

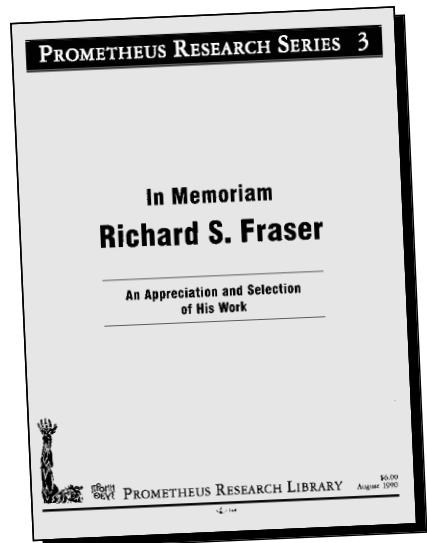


1948: Black World War II vets return to fight for their rights at home (left). Segregated drinking fountains in North Carolina, 1950.

‘I don’t guess the white folks will say colored people can’t fly airplanes from now on. They sure slammed the hell outa Pearl Harbor’.”

The “Double V” campaign was heralded in black communities across the country. It stood for “victory against the Axis Forces abroad, victory against discrimination at home.” The problem, of course, with this campaign was that it was premised on patriotic support to the war, taking a side with the American imperialists. Revolutionary Trotskyists took no side in this interimperialist slaughter, except, crucially, for unconditional military defense of the Soviet degenerated workers state. The Stalinized American Communist Party, in contrast, threw their support to President Roosevelt and the war effort, which meant breaking strikes and betraying the black equality struggle in pursuit of patriotic unity with the capitalist rulers in the war.

Though contradictory, the “Double V” campaign did signal a growing sentiment to fight for black rights at home, and civil rights became central to American politics for the first time since Reconstruction. One thing that forced the bourgeoisie to take notice was the fact that racial tensions threatened to impede the war effort. In 1943, from March to May alone, racist strikes against upgrading the positions of black workers resulted in the loss of nearly 2.5 million man-hours of war production. By the war’s end, I think it’s



**Marxist analysis of black oppression by veteran American Trotskyist Richard Fraser. Available for \$7 (includes postage). Order from/pay to: Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116.**

safe to say that the racial status quo had been qualitatively altered. Over a million black troops served in the military and millions more worked in defense jobs, gaining crucial skills and union membership. They had “served their country” and thought they were entitled to a better life.

But far from coming home to jobs and better conditions, the black troops came home to ghettos in the North and a racist police state in the South. All troops, black and white, came home to depression-level wages, inflation and layoffs which triggered the biggest strike wave this country has ever seen. As the ’40s drew to a close, blacks were first to be fired, Rosie the Riveter was back in her apron, and the Russian question was foremost in



Danny Lyon

**SNCC militant Willie Ricks (center) addresses rally in Atlanta, Georgia, in early 1960s.**

American politics with the onset of the Cold War. The anti-Communist witch-hunts purged the unions of reds and leftists, and installed a generation of labor leaders who cut their teeth on driving out these radicals. These unions would no longer go out and fight for broader issues or challenge the powers that be.

The existence of the Soviet workers state played no small part in the U.S. bourgeoisie’s growing anxiety over Jim Crow. The glaring discrimination and disenfranchisement of blacks had become an international embarrassment to those proclaiming to be the leaders of the “free world.” The escalating civil rights movement and the brutal attacks on blacks fighting for basic democratic rights were a daily staple in the international press and were featured prominently and frequently in the Soviet press. This posed a real problem, with the U.S. posturing as the protector of “freedom” as it jockeyed for the allegiance of the non-aligned countries. In May 1946, acting Secretary of State Dean Acheson wrote:

“While sometimes these pronouncements are exaggerated and unjustified, they all too frequently point with accuracy to some form of discrimination because of race, creed, color, or national origin. Frequently we find it next to impossible to formulate a satisfactory answer to our critics in other countries...the existence of discrimination against minority groups in the United States is a handicap in our relations with other countries.”

When President Truman was forced to adopt a mild civil rights plank in his 1948 re-election campaign, the Dixiecrats, led by Strom Thurmond, broke away in reaction to this and formed the States Rights Party. (You get a very clear picture of what Trent Lott really meant when he recently longed for “what might have been” had Thurmond won the election in ’48.) When the Cold War became a hot war in Korea, massive casualties and the need for fresh troops provided the impetus to finally carry out the 1948 order to desegregate the armed forces. Upon returning home, black veterans with military training and industrial skills were damned if they were going to accept the same old racist crap and Jim

Crow humiliation and terror. It was this proletarian core that composed the ranks of the early civil rights movement.

### Federal Troops Serve the Bosses’ Interest

The historic Supreme Court *Brown v. Board of Education* decision was announced on May 17, 1954. With the striking down of the *Plessy v. Ferguson* “separate but equal” decision of 1896, the door was opened to integrate public schools. The reaction among the Southern segregationists was as violent as it was swift. May 17 was dubbed “Black Monday”; Klan membership reached its highest levels in many years; White Citizens Councils were formed and a campaign of organized terror was unleashed to keep blacks “in their place.” When I say organized terror, I am talking about from the highest-ranking Southern officials on down.

The South was politically dominated and ruled by the Democrats, *the* party of racial segregation since the Civil War. Your local sheriff or mayor was likely to belong to the Democratic Party as well as the virulently racist White Citizens Council or the Klan. Over the last 30 years the Democratic Party has developed a facade of an ally to blacks and labor, but what it actually is, is the historic party of war and racism, no less committed to maintaining a brutally racist, capitalist system than the Republicans.

In 1957, when the court ordered the desegregation of Little Rock, Arkansas’ Central High School, Governor Orval Faubus (a Democrat) called out the state’s National Guard to block these black school kids. Once again, all eyes were riveted on the South. In the USSR *Pravda* stated, “The reports and pictures from Little Rock show graphically that [Secretary of State John Foster] Dulles’ precious morals are in fact bespattered with innocent blood.”

The SWP was already abandoning its revolutionary program. It called for federal troops to intervene in the South to protect the black students, a flat-out appeal for reliance on the state in the face of growing resistance by blacks. Throughout the worst violence perpetrated against civil rights protesters, the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations sat on their hands and did nothing until blacks fought back! *That’s* when the troops rolled in—to smash black self-defense! The question was posed: rely on the government or fight for a proletarian-centered struggle of the black masses. Against illusions in federal intervention, a revolutionary party would have fought for organized self-defense of the civil rights movement in Southern cities and to link the struggle to the power of labor, North and South. The state is not neutral. It exists to militarily defend the rule of the capitalist class and consists of “armed bodies of men”—cops, courts, prisons and the army. Reliance on the government is not only ineffective—it’s dangerous!

By the mid 1950s, the tensions and

frustrations of the American black population were coming to a full boil. The brutal lynching in the South of black Chicago teenager Emmett Till allegedly for whistling at a white woman in the summer of 1955 gained international attention and underscored the terror under which blacks lived. Only a few months later, Rosa Parks got “tired of being pushed around” and refused to give up her seat on that bus in Montgomery, Alabama. The Montgomery bus boycott campaign set off a movement that would polarize American society for more than a decade. It took a full year of enormous personal sacrifice and hardship on the part of black, working-class Montgomery, but by the following December Montgomery buses were integrated. And once again, the Southern racists embarked on an escalated campaign of terror.

### The Dead End of Democratic Party Liberalism

It was at this time that a 26-year-old preacher, Martin Luther King Jr., entered the scene. The civil rights movement was dominated by a black middle-class, pacifist leadership tied to the Democratic Party with the sole aim of pressuring the Democratic Party administrations of John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson to grant formal legal equality to blacks in the South. King became the spokesman for reliance on the federal government, preaching Gandhian passive resistance. He peddled the lie that through peaceful, pressure politics all things are possible. When things got hot, he rushed in to cool things out, quell the militancy and contain the struggle—this is the same role that Jesse Jackson Sr. and Al Sharpton play today. This layer was, and still is, crucial in keeping the masses in check, leaving black struggles tactically and politically disarmed.

There’s an absurd lie pushed by left groups like the International Socialist Organization and Socialist Action, among others, that toward the end of his life King was moving toward socialism or radical politics. King’s growing opposition to the Vietnam War was in line with the growing layer of the bourgeoisie that began to express concern about the mounting American losses. (This is John Kerry’s concern in Iraq today.) King’s main criticism was that the U.S. was spending money overseas and not at home where it “was needed.” In fact, he viewed the civil rights movement as “an issue which may well determine the destiny of our nation in its ideological struggle with communism.” (Hardly a leftist statement!)

The postwar economic changes and the GI bill meant that for the first time there was a wide layer of black youth attending colleges in the South. They were inspired by the success of the Montgomery bus boycott. Sit-ins and protests at segregated facilities began popping up. The one that ignited youth around the country began on Monday, February 1, 1960 in Greensboro, North Carolina, when four black college students from North Carolina A&T College sat down at a segregated

*continued on page 8*



AP

**Official black leaders like Martin Luther King (left) contained militant struggle for black rights in service of Kennedy White House.**



AP

**Malcolm X, one of America’s great truth-tellers, called 1963 march the “Farce on Washington.”**



# French Elections: Trotskyists Give Critical Support to Gauche Révolutionnaire

The French regional and local elections of March 28 were a major setback for conservative president Jacques Chirac. In a clear plebiscite against the government's racist, anti-working-class policies, all regions of the country except Alsace and Corsica were won by coalitions led by the opposition Socialist Party. The electoral defeat came despite attempts by Chirac and his interior minister, Nicolas Sarkozy, to restore "national unity" by whipping up "anti-terrorist" hysteria. In the wake of the terrorist bombings in Madrid, they ratcheted up Vigipirate, a campaign of racist cop terror against dark-skinned workers and deportation of undocumented immigrants, to a higher level than even in the period following September 11. But it didn't work.

Two years ago, neo-Gaullist Chirac was elected president with the support not only of the right-wing parties but also the Socialist Party (PS), the Communist Party (PCF) and even Alain Krivine's Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR). They lined up behind Chirac, supposedly to prevent the election of the other second-round candidate, the fascist Jean-Marie Le Pen. Subsequently, these same organizations signed a call for a demonstration on 14 December 2002 against the U.S. invasion of Iraq, which promoted unity with Chirac against George Bush by declaring: "The French authorities and the parliament must use all available means to prevent a war against Iraq." The Chirac government was strengthened by such political support as it waged a campaign to slash retirement benefits for public employees.

Last October, the LCR and Lutte Ouvrière (LO), another group falsely claiming to be Trotskyist, spearheaded the expulsion from high school of Alma and Lila Lévy for wearing the Islamic headscarf. This helped pave the way for Chirac's racist law banning young women in headscarves from the schools. On March 6, two weeks before the first round of the local and regional elections, LO spokeswoman Arlette Laguiller demonstrated in Paris "against the headscarf at school" side by side with Socialist Party bigwig Jack Lang and Corinne Lepage, the head of Chirac's electoral slate in Paris. The Ligue Trotskyiste de France (LTF), section of the International Communist League, has forthrightly opposed the headscarf as a symbol of the oppression of women while campaigning against the racist expulsions which fuel racial divisions in the working class.

Behind the electoral defeat of the Chi-



Le Bolchévik

**LTF in February 14 demonstration against Chirac's racist law banning young women wearing the Islamic headscarf from school.**

rac government lies the danger of a new class-collaborationist alliance between the PS, the PCF and bourgeois forces like the Greens and the ultra-nationalists led by Jean-Pierre Chevènement. The goal of such a popular-front alliance would be to set up a capitalist government like the one in power from 1997 to 2002 under Socialist prime minister Lionel Jospin, whose anti-immigrant and anti-working-class attacks prepared the way for the current right-wing government.

In the recent local elections, the LTF gave critical support to the Gauche Révolutionnaire (GR—Revolutionary Left), the French affiliate of Peter Taaffe's Committee for a Workers' International (CWI), which presented a candidate in the Rouen 5th canton [municipal district]. The GR took a clear position against the racist headscarf campaign and drew a crude class line by running against the out-of-power popular front and independently of the LCR and LO. The LTF offered to distribute the GR's electoral leaflet and to give them a financial contribution of 50 euros, but the GR leadership rejected both proposals. So the LTF in Rouen distributed hundreds of our own campaign leaflets at the local university campus and at a March 20 demonstration on the eve of the elections. We are gratified that the GR obtained a respectable 184 votes, 4 percent of the votes cast.

The GR in France adopts a profile which is to the left of most of their sister organizations in the CWI. With a former member of the LTF in its leadership and based in Rouen, a city where the LTF is

well known, the GR is constrained to occupy a slot between the Trotskyism of the LTF and the crass opportunism of the LCR and LO. Thus, while a hallmark of the Taaffeites internationally is their position that cops are "workers in uniform," the GR was the only group in France, besides the LTF, that did not support the police "strike" (more accurately, riots) in November 2001 against the Guigou law introducing the legal presumption of innocence. At their recent day school in Rouen, it was a cadre of their Belgian group who defended the Taaffeite line on the police, much to the dismay of their younger members and to the embarrassment of their French cadre, who sat in stony silence. Challenged on the Taaffeites' refusal to call for the withdrawal of British troops from Ireland, the response was...further silence.

Seeking to capitalize on the fact that the PS and PCF are today so discredited, the GR prates about the need for "a new workers party," but what they are talking about is explicitly *not* a revolutionary party. GR members never fail in private discussions to label the LCR and LO as "reformists," but GR sees these same parties as central to its new "workers party." While standing independently in the local elections, GR ran in the regional elections on the LO-LCR electoral slates—criticizing them for limiting themselves to an electoral alliance and not committing themselves to building a new party.

Meanwhile, if the GR in France calls for building a non-revolutionary "workers party," their Taaffeite comrades in the U.S. support the bourgeois candidate Ralph Nader!

The GR justifies their perspective of building a revolutionary party in stages by citing Leon Trotsky's 1938 call for a labor party in the U.S. This is a blatant falsification. For Trotsky, the labor party slogan was not an alternative to building a communist vanguard party, but a means of furthering that task. The demand on the union bureaucracy (or a section of it) to form a labor party was raised in a particular historical context: the economic crisis, the great strikes in the mid 1930s and the formation of the CIO industrial unions. Trotsky argued that the mass industrial unions, defensive organizations of the working class, were clearly confronted with the need for independent political action. At the same time, he underlined that the labor party slogan was inseparable from the fight for a revolutionary program:

"Are we in favor of the creation of a reformist labor party? No....

"It can become a reformist party—it depends upon the development. Here comes in the question of program. I mentioned yesterday and I will underline it today—we must have a program of transitional demands, the most complete of them is a workers' and farmers' government. We are for a party, for an independent party of the toiling masses who will take power in the state."

—"Discussion in Mexico City" (April 1938), in *Leon Trotsky on the Labor Party in the United States*

One can see in Brazil what the GR's perspective for a "workers party" comes down to: their Brazilian comrades of Socialismo Revolucionario were for a long time buried in Lula's Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT—Workers Party), including during the first year of the PT's participation in the capitalist government. The GR criticizes the LCR because Miguel Rossetto, a member of the USec's Brazilian affiliate, participated in Lula's government as minister for agrarian development. But the GR hailed Lula's election as a "first victory" (*L'Egalité* No. 99, January-February 2003). The GR now claims that its Brazilian comrades have joined the Democratic and Socialist Movement for a New Party whose aim is to build a new workers party. This "new" PT, whose most well-

## Militant Labour's Touching Faith in the Capitalist State

This 1994 pamphlet counterposes the revolutionary politics of the International Communist League to the reformism of the Committee for a Workers International (CWI) led by the Militant Labour organization in Britain.

Includes the entire text of Gauche révolutionnaire/Jeunesses communistes révolutionnaires pamphlet, "The International and the State," with a reply by the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

**Published in English and French**

\$1 each: English edition (32 pages), French edition (34 pages)

**Order from/make checks payable to:**

Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116



AP

**July 1997: Catholics in Portadown, Northern Ireland under siege by British forces. Taaffeites refuse to call for withdrawal of British troops.**





# Civil Rights...

(continued from page 5)

Woolworth’s lunch counter. They returned the following day with 30 people. More than 60 joined them on the third day, including some white students from Greensboro College. By Thursday, hundreds of black students had joined the growing demonstrations and protests.

A large contingent of black students headed up by the A&T football team marched to downtown Greensboro and met up with a gang of white racists intent on stopping them. “Who do you think you are?” the racists snarled. “We’re the Union army!” replied the youths. That statement truly captured the sentiments of many who would soon become involved in the growing civil rights movement. Here it was, almost 100 years to the day that the Emancipation Proclamation was issued, and racist abuse, segregation and terror were still mainstays of black life in the U.S. While not articulated in so many words, this expressed the burning desire to finish the unfinished business of the Civil War, the fight for full racial equality.

Within only two months of the Greensboro sit-in, 50,000 black students across the South followed their lead. The Woolworth protests also spread to the North, radicalizing white youth, too. Just one month after the Greensboro sit-in, the youth of the SWP, soon to become the Young Socialist Alliance (YSA), organized the first Northern Woolworth picket lines. Some of these youth became the founding cadre of the Spartacist League. These Trotskyist youth organized and took part in marches, demonstrations and sit-ins across the country, drawing thousands of students out to fight against segregation and race hate.

It wasn’t just the racists and the cops they had to watch out for. There were instances when their “left” opponents actually fingered them to the cops at these pickets! In New York, the Young Socialist comrades formed the New York Youth Committee for Integration, seeking to draw in all forces who wanted to join the civil rights struggle. They struggled continually against groups such as the Socialist Party’s youth group, the Young People’s Socialist League (YPSL), and the Communist Party that set up separate organizations in hopes of drawing militant youth away from the reds. Their pickets featured only “approved signs” and they denounced revolutionary youth for “confusing the issue” by raising broader points (much like our opponents say about us today). These reformists offered invaluable help in politically derailing the demonstrations in the North.

## Liberal Pacifism Serves Capitalist Rule

Like many students entering the civil rights struggle at the time, SNCC’s founding membership was not particularly leftist or pro-communist. In fact,



UPI  
**1967: U.S. Army troops called in to suppress mass ghetto rebellion in Detroit; 43 people were killed, over 7,000 arrested.**

SNCC harbored illusions in the democratic ideals of America and believed that it could pressure the federal government to intervene on their behalf against the segregationist power structure in the South. It’s hard to believe that this organization, founded on passive resistance, calling for love over hate and idolizing King, would go on to become the left wing of the civil rights movement. From the start they exhibited real courage in the work involved in door-to-door voter registration in rural backwaters and “freedom rides” in the Deep South. The climate was one of enormous danger—there were constant threats, beatings. Activists were shot at regularly. James Chaney, Michael Schwerner and Andrew Goodman, murdered by the cops and the Klan in the summer of 1964, are the most well-known martyrs—but they were not only the ones killed.

There was no doubt culture shock on both sides. How often in this racist country do you have 70-year-old black women sharecroppers working side by side with white students from Harvard or Berkeley in a common struggle? These were the kind of things, so beyond the norm, that made this a unique opportunity for the intervention of a revolutionary party. Historically, common struggle is a quick avenue toward breaking down previously held prejudices and backward attitudes. Male and female, black and white, these were the shock troops, the vanguard of the Southern civil rights movement, taking on areas, particularly in Mississippi and southeast Georgia, that no one else dared touch.

By the summer of 1962, SNCC had undergone a dramatic evolution in its politics, culture and personnel. Bitter experience fueled their leftward trajectory, teaching them firsthand that the white liberal leaders were a lot closer to the Dixiecrat racists than they were to the civil rights activists. They watched as the Feds stood by taking notes while protesters were beaten bloody. The Kennedy brothers did nothing—or worse, colluded with the Southern segregationists—being far more interested in preventing a split with their party brethren in the South. When Kennedy was elected with the help of the black vote, hopes were high that he would intervene on behalf of civil rights. Time and again he showed complete indifference, at best. At one point, shortly before the March on Washington, he told King, “I don’t think you should be totally harsh on Bull Connor [the notoriously brutal racist Birmingham sheriff]. After all, he has done more for civil rights than almost anybody else.”

As the nature of the Democratic Party became clearer and King’s subservience to it ever more exposed, young militants were repelled from liberalism. SNCC radicals began referring to King as “De Lawd” after his intervention into protests in Albany, Georgia, where blacks fought back in the face of a Klan mobilization. King denounced this black self-defense and demanded a “day of penance.” Fannie Lou Hamer, at the time a 45-year-old sharecropper, captured the sentiment of

many civil rights activists when she denounced “these middle-class Negroes, the ones that never had it as hard as the grassroots people in Mississippi. They’ll sell their parents for a few dollars. Sometimes I get so disgusted I feel like getting my gun after some of these schoolteachers and chicken-eatin’ preachers.”

Carrying guns was not a matter of principle or political strategy for most black Southerners—the sheer violence in the South made this a question of survival. There was growing disgust with King’s “wear the enemy down with our capacity to suffer.” The movement was getting out of the control of the liberal, pacifist leadership. Robert F. Williams, a Korean War vet, was notable as a courageous proponent and organizer of black armed self-defense against Klan terror in Monroe, North Carolina. He was eventually driven out of this country to avoid bogus kidnapping charges and went into exile in Cuba. The Deacons for Defense and Justice formed in Louisiana and spread. Some in SNCC “carried” despite an official ban. To this day the campaign for “gun control” remains aimed at disarming the population, especially workers and blacks. We are opposed to gun control. We say, *gun control kills blacks!*

It wasn’t just the fight at home that was shaping political attitudes. The world was undergoing momentous changes, which for the next few years would continue to fuel raging debates, dramatically influencing consciousness and the course of events. From independence movements in Africa to the Chinese, Cuban and Vietnamese social revolutions, the world was in ferment. That these revolutions and liberation struggles were occurring in non-white nations gave birth to a growing identification among American blacks with the struggles of non-white peoples around the world. The South African call for “One Man, One Vote” was picked up by SNCC. This is the atmosphere in which

political youth were forming their ideas and attitudes. But there was no revolutionary party to win the best fighters of this generation to Marxism!

## Spartacist Forebears Fight for Class-Struggle Road to Black Freedom

Inside the SWP, the Revolutionary Tendency (RT)—the core of the future Spartacist League—fought for the party to seize the opportunity to recruit black Trotskyist cadre to their ranks. The majority’s position was that *no* SWPer was needed in the South at all, since SNCC would become revolutionary on its own in the course of the struggle. A black RTer, Shirley Stoute, received a personal invitation from SNCC’s executive secretary, James Forman, to work with SNCC in Atlanta. The SWP sent down a majority agent to spy on her when she went. Among those she was contacting was Stokely Carmichael! Within about a month she was called back to New York, prevented from returning South and not allowed to give her SNCC comrades any statement as to why.

The RT fought this criminal non-intervention, pointing out that the way to build the revolutionary vanguard necessarily meant participating in and building a revolutionary leadership in the *current* struggles of the working class—the fight for black liberation. They put forward a series of demands linking this struggle to broader struggles of the working class in general and addressing immediate needs such as the need for organized self-defense using the tactics of Robert F. Williams as well as union organizing drives, particularly in the South.

The RT pointed out that the SNCC leadership and other radicals would not come to a Marxist program simply by virtue of their militancy—the intervention of a revolutionary party was necessary. The rising upsurge and militancy was contradictory and confused, and this was an enormous opportunity for the intervention of a revolutionary party. The RT fought for the creation of a Trotskyist tendency within the left wing of the civil rights movement. After a bitter political fight on this and other questions, the RT was expelled from the SWP, going on to form the SL in 1966.

The spring and summer of 1963 witnessed a wave of civil rights demonstrations throughout the North and South, unprecedented in both size and intensity. It was estimated that there were over 20,000 arrested, 10 deaths and 35 bombings in 1963 alone (among them the 16th Street Baptist Church bombing which killed four young girls). The footage of blacks being attacked by police dogs, beaten and brutally knocked down with fire hoses in Birmingham was seen around the world. After three years of intense and dangerous work, SNCC had succeeded in registering only a small percentage of the black voting-age population. The events in Birmingham, now



John Herman Williams  
**Robert F. Williams (center, standing) organized armed black self-defense in Monroe, North Carolina in 1957.**

### Texas

## Group Formed To Help Arm Negroes

AUSTIN — (AP) — Mark Klein, Cornell University student, said today a group is being organized to aid the Deacons for Defense and Justice, which he described as an armed Negro self-defense group.

He said the Deacons have chapters in Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi.

The Austin group will be called “The Committee to Aid the Deacons,” Klein said. He said it will raise money for the Deacons.

Klein, who is in Austin for the summer, is the spokesman for the group.



Spartacist  
**Spartacist raised call for organized, armed self-defense for blacks, mid 1960s. August 1965: Clipping from FBI file on Spartacist campaign to raise money for Deacons for Defense and Justice who defended their communities and civil rights activists from Southern white racist terror.**



nicknamed “Bombingham,” prompted renewed calls for a march on Washington as a means to pressure Kennedy to stop his foot-dragging on the question of civil rights legislation.

We are taught that the March on Washington was the culmination of a series of victorious marches led by King. In fact, it was here that King helped engineer a “mass” political defeat for the cause of black liberation, treacherously tying it to the Democratic Party. At first, SNCC wanted to march on the White House and the Justice Department, but when Kennedy, who was staunchly opposed to the march, caught wind of this, everything changed. Malcolm X caught the moment well in a speech in Detroit a few months after the march (he was still in the Nation of Islam at this time), when he dubbed the march the “Farce on Washington”:

“It was the grass roots out there in the street. [It] scared the white man to death, scared the white power structure in Washington, D. C. to death; I was there. When they found out that this black steamroller was going to come down on the capital, they called in Wilkins; they called in Randolph; they called in these national Negro leaders that you respect and told them, ‘Call it off.’ Kennedy said, ‘Look, you all letting this thing go too far.’ And Old Tom said, ‘Boss, I can’t stop it, because I didn’t start it.’ I’m telling you what they said. They said, ‘I’m not even in it, much less at the head of it.’ They said, ‘These Negroes are doing things on their own. They’re running ahead of us.’ And that old shrewd fox, he said, ‘Well if you all aren’t in it, I’ll put you in it. I’ll put you at the head of it. I’ll endorse it. I’ll welcome it. I’ll help it. I’ll join it.’”

And that’s exactly what happened. Kennedy called King and other civil rights leaders into his office, and he read them the riot act. The march was immediately moved to the Lincoln Memorial. Only approved signs were allowed to be carried, all speeches had to be approved and no “subversives” would be allowed to speak. John Lewis, national chairman of SNCC, was forced to censor his speech. What they wouldn’t allow is telling...

“We cannot depend on any political party for both the Democrats and Republicans have betrayed the basic principles of the Declaration of Independence.... We will march through the South, through the heart of Dixie, the way Sherman did. We shall pursue our own ‘scorched earth’ policy and burn Jim Crow to the ground—nonviolently. We shall crack the South into a thousand pieces and put



WV Photo

**23 October 1999: Labor/black mobilization against KKK in NYC. Fight for black freedom is central to emancipation of labor and all the oppressed.**

them back together in the image of democracy.”

In the aftermath of this censorship and groveling before the Democrats, in response to King’s “I have a dream” speech, SNCC members started wearing buttons reading “I Have a Nightmare.” But they still hung onto some illusions.

SNCC launched Freedom Summer, a massive voter registration push, the following year. By the time of the Democratic Party convention, SNCC activists had a list of **80,000** blacks who had tried to register and weren’t allowed to! They had all these people sign protest ballots and went to the Democratic Party National Convention in Atlantic City as the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. Their aim to get seated at the convention in place of the traditional all-white delegation was quashed by Lyndon B. Johnson, who hoped to maintain his party’s lock on the Southern racist vote, abetted by Northern liberals like Hubert Humphrey and anti-communist labor leader Walter Reuther. This was a watershed. James Forman said: “Atlantic City was a powerful lesson, not only for the black people of Mississippi, but for all of SNCC and many other people as well. No longer was there any hope, among those who still had it, that the federal government would change the situation in the Deep South.”

This opened a precious window of

opportunity: illusions in the Democratic Party and in reform were shattered, and black nationalism, born of the defeat of the liberal civil rights strategy, had not yet sealed off white militants and leftists from black militants. Radical youth, some not so young, shaped by the previous years of intense social struggle, were looking beyond the framework of capitalism for answers.

The struggle spread to the North. Blacks in the North had “equality under the law” but still faced the raw racism of this country. When King and SNCC came to Chicago to fight for equal housing and black equality, they were met by racist mobs. With no program beyond pressuring the racist capitalist state, with no program to fight the causes of racial discrimination rooted deep in the economic and social structure of capitalist society—King and the civil rights movement hit a wall; the program of liberal integration had gone as far as it could. Fueled by desperation and despair, the Northern ghettos erupted. From Watts to Detroit, Cleveland and Chicago, U.S. troops stormed the ghettos, brutally smashing the upheavals. It was here that King’s conditional pacifism was fully exposed. In the wake of the Watts riots he said, “It was necessary that as powerful a police force as possible be brought in to check them.”

It is the job of revolutionaries to raise

the existing consciousness, not run with the status quo as our opponents do. Not just say what is; say what can and must be. The newly formed Spartacist tendency undertook some exemplary work in this period, defending those victimized and fighting for a revolutionary program, but we did not have the forces nor the authority to have a significant impact. We fought to intersect the “black power” militants. Our call for a “Freedom Labor Party” was in direct counterposition to the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party that sought to pressure the Democrats. Our campaign for organizing aid for the Deacons for Defense and Justice was carried out under the slogan “every dime buys a bullet.” But by and large a generation of politicized youth accepted the premise that blacks and whites must fight their own fight—accepted the sectoral politics that are still very much with us today.

So now it is 50 years after *Brown v. Board of Education*, a half-century since the civil rights movement began, and what has changed? The most important gain is the smashing of legal segregation. Legal, formal democratic rights were obtained. The South today is a long way from the South of the 1950s. The gains are real and important—but *partial and reversible*. Fundamentally, the situation for blacks in this country is *more segregated* and getting worse. Industry has been decimated, leaving blacks, especially black youth, in staggering levels of unemployment without a future. Many of the attacks associated with Bush today, the budget cuts, attacks on affirmative action, the slashing of welfare and jobs and increased state repression were put in place and carried out by the Democrats. Once again, there is an enormous amount of social kindling building up around the country. At some point, perhaps in the not so distant future, something is going to ignite it.

It is our purpose to build the party that will give that struggle political direction. Only through the intervention of a multiracial, Trotskyist party, providing *the* essential ingredient of revolutionary leadership can the fight to get rid of this capitalist system once and for all be won. Our commitment to carrying out the revolutionary integration of blacks in this country is codified in our call to finish the Civil War and fight for black liberation through socialist revolution. We will settle for nothing less. ■

# Transit...

(continued from page 12)

discipline, gutting minimal union grievance procedures. This constitutes a grave attack on the unions’ very purpose: the defense of the workers against the bosses. “Arbitrary firings based solely on management’s interpretation of someone’s off-the-cuff comment hand the bosses a tool against union militants and ‘undesirables’ like minorities and immigrants. Added to this is the sinister attempt to recruit workers to inform on each other in the name of ‘preventing violence.’ The result is a mechanism to purge the unions reminiscent of the McCarthyite witch-hunt of the 1950s, substituting a trumped-up fear of violence for the red-scare anti-communism of the anti-Soviet Cold War.”

In defense of Carlos Blackman, Local 100 officials have filed a grievance, held rallies at 240th St. drawing union members from other work locations and divisions, and is reportedly filing a lawsuit to stop the company’s drive to fire Blackman. The groundswell of support for Blackman transcends ethnic, racial and national divisions within the workforce.

When the TWU Local 100 president Roger Toussaint was a Track Division chairman in 1999, the NYCT bosses attempted to railroad him. In response, hundreds of workers rallied to demand his reinstatement. As we wrote at the time, “The TA’s firing of Toussaint is a vicious attack against the entire union and must be fought” (“Reinstate Victimized New Directions Supporter! Down With New Directions Anti-Union Court Suit!” WV No. 715, 11 June 1999). The

case was widely publicized and the scandal plagued the company while generating support for Toussaint, whom we defended while criticizing his and New Directions’ traitorous strategy of suing Local 100 and their union opponents in the bosses’ courts. Yet despite his personal history of victimization, which was fought by fellow workers, Toussaint has not used his office to make a public statement in defense of Carlos Blackman. What’s necessary is an all-out mobilization of Local 100. Instead, Toussaint and the Local 100 top brass appear to be relying on the stacked deck of “binding arbitration” and the capitalist courts to win back his job.

Like the rest of the AFL-CIO officialdom, the TWU pro-capitalist bureaucracy stands on the program of class collaboration, which means subordinating the interests of the workers and tying them to the capitalist system, mainly through their support to the Democratic Party. In the eyes of the NYCT and all capitalist exploiters, resistance to exploitation and oppression is a “crime,” but they are the criminals whose brutal system must be swept away by socialist revolution, led by a multiracial class-struggle workers party. Local 100 is the powerhouse of labor in New York City. With a class-struggle leadership based on mobilizing the social power of the union, attacks like the one against Carlos Blackman would be met with the united force of the union in defense of itself. An injury to one is an injury to all! Mobilize the whole union to defend Brother Blackman! ■

**Labor Black League for Social Defense Discussion Group**

**U.S. Out of Iraq! UN Stay Out!**

Saturday, May 15, 4:00 p.m.

1634 Telegraph Avenue, Third Floor

For more information: (510) 839-0851 or e-mail: slbayarea@sbcglobal.net

**BAY AREA**

**Spartacus Youth Club Forum**

**Defend the Palestinian People!**

**All Israeli Troops and Settlers Out of the Occupied Territories!**

**For a Socialist Federation of the Near East!**

For more information: (312) 563-0441  
e-mail: spartacist@iname.com

**Wednesday, May 19, 7:00 p.m.**

University of Chicago  
Cobb Hall, Room TBA  
5811 South Ellis Avenue

**CHICAGO**

**Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste Forum**

**“National Unity” Fuels Anglo-Chauvinist Bigotry**

**Labor Upsurge Sweeps Quebec**

**Independence for Quebec!**

Saturday, May 15, 7:00 p.m.

Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre  
427 Bloor Street West  
(1 block west of Spadina Station)

For more information: (416) 593-4138  
e-mail: spartcan@on.aibn.com

**TORONTO**

# Torture, Inc....

(continued from page 1)

i.e., popular opposition to foreign military adventures as a result of the humiliating defeat of the U.S. in Southeast Asia three decades ago. But Iraq is not Vietnam and the Vietnam War was not merely horror inflicted by U.S. imperialism. The U.S. was defeated in a social revolution by the heroic Vietnamese, whose struggle freed their country from the yoke of imperialist subjugation and capitalist exploitation.

Now a welter of politicians, Republicans and Democrats alike, howl about who is “losing Iraq,” as the dread words “swamp” and “quagmire” are resurrected in *New York Times* editorials. Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry, who previously acknowledged that atrocities were committed by U.S. forces during the Vietnam War, now hopes to backpedal his way to the White House, whitewashing U.S. war crimes in Southeast Asia and pledging to up the number of American troops in active service.

Especially in the U.S., the pictures of sexual abuse have done real damage to the Bush administration because its core constituency is the Christian right. These are the same people who pushed the Meese Commission in 1986 against pornography during the Reagan/Bush Sr. administration and tried to bring down Clinton with a “sex scandal.” Now they’re shocked that they’re confronted with photos on the nightly news and in every tabloid of a young white woman soldier from West Virginia behaving like an actress in an S&M porno film.

While the sexual psychosis and breathtaking hypocrisy of this lot tempts one to dismiss the religious fundamentalists as kooks, they are deadly serious and their views have impact on the world. An estimated 15-18 percent of U.S. voters belong to Christian fundamentalist churches, as does Attorney General John Ashcroft and other powerful political figures. The intersection of religion and policy is driven not least by the fundamentalists’ desire to hasten the second coming of Christ. There is a convergence between the Christian right and the pro-Zionist neocons on U.S. policy in the Near East, for different purposes.

Influential sections of the American ruling class—e.g., the *New York Times*—are now calling for the firing of Pentagon chief Donald Rumsfeld for bearing ultimate responsibility for the crimes in Abu Ghraib. Bush dressed down Rumsfeld, *not* because of torture in the Iraqi prison, which there had been reports of for a full year, but only because he didn’t know there was photographic evidence. In his testimony before the House and Senate, Rumsfeld stated that the worst is yet to come. The axing of Rumsfeld, despite Bush’s pledge to “stand by his man,” could happen but would in no way change the U.S. policy of mass murder



**American soldier Lynndie England humiliates and abuses prisoner in Abu Ghraib prison. Torture is U.S. policy, directed from the highest level. Right: Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld tours Abu Ghraib with Brig. Gen. Janis Karpinski, head of Military Police brigade in charge of prison, September 2003.**

and torture in Iraq. There will be no justice served until *all* the war criminals and commanders, from Bush and the Pentagon chiefs to their underlings as well as their Democratic Party counterparts, are swept from power through a proletarian socialist revolution.

## U.S. “War on Terror” Targets Everyone

By now the whole world has seen the photographs of naked, hooded, sexually abused detainees, subjected to practices that purposefully violate the deepest taboos of Muslim society. With great bravery, former prisoners are now speaking out, despite the great shame they experienced. “Then the interpreter told us to strip,” one man told the *New York Times* (5 May) about his ordeal. “We told him: ‘You are Egyptian, and you are a Muslim. You know that as Muslims we can’t do that.’ When we refused to take off our clothes, they beat us and tore our clothes off with a blade.”

After Seymour Hersh in the *New Yorker* (10 May) and CBS-TV’s *60 Minutes II* blew the lid off the atrocities in late April (though CBS suppressed the news for two weeks at the direct request of the Pentagon), an early March 53-page “secret” report on a military investigation of Abu Ghraib by Major General Antonio M. Taguba, “Article 15-6 Investigation of the 800th Military Police Brigade,” finally hit the Internet on May 5 (available on National Public Radio’s Web site [npr.org](http://npr.org), among others). It offers chillingly matter-of-fact details on the general’s findings: “That between October and December 2003, at the Abu Ghraib Confinement Facility (BCCF), numerous incidents of sadistic, blatant, and wanton criminal abuses were inflicted on several detainees.” The report also stated that prisoners were brought to Abu Ghraib by “Other Government Agencies (OGAs) without accounting for them, knowing their identities, or even the reason for their detention.” They were called “ghost



AP photos

detainees,” who at one point “were moved around the facility to hide them from a visiting International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) survey team.”

While the scandal has now become a major political issue internationally and domestically, in reality the torture and other crimes committed by U.S. and allied forces, first in Afghanistan and now in Iraq, have long been public knowledge and we have consistently reported on it in *Workers Vanguard*. As we go to press, more stories and reports of abuse and killings by U.S. forces around the globe, including possible CIA killings, from Afghanistan and Guantánamo and Iraq to detention centers here in the U.S., are beginning to pour out, from former prisoners and their families, from the Red Cross, from “human rights” agencies. It’s clear what is so far known is only the surface of a cesspool of consciously inflicted human misery. The U.S. has a policy of deporting prisoners to death, presumably preceded by torture, to countries such as Syria, Israel, Pakistan, Egypt and Yemen. In his 2003 State of the Union address, Bush made a chilling joke of it all. “Let’s put it this way: They are no longer a problem for the United States.”

The new “privatized” army of mercenaries comprises experienced CIA and Army thugs. CACI International is a CIA-connected “contractor” for prisoner interrogation and counterintelligence implicated in the Abu Ghraib scandal. Vance International, which provides security and guards for the U.S. in Iraq, has often been unleashed against striking labor on the home front. They terrorized and beat strikers and their families in the Pittston miners strike in 1993, the Caterpillar strike in 1994, and fractured a striker’s skull in the 1995 Detroit newspaper strike. The *New Yorker* (3 May) reported that Paul Bremer’s “Counselor for Iraqi Security Forces,” James Steele, who trained Iraqi cops last summer to “deal with terrorists,” is a veteran Reagan-era military adviser to the El Salvador regime’s anti-FMLN death squads, who was involved with Oliver North’s arms-to-the-Contras operation in Nicaragua, and was in Panama training cops when the U.S. invaded in 1989. The new military overseer of U.S. prisons in Iraq is the sinister former commander of the extralegal, Guantánamo Bay concentration camp, Major General Geoffrey Miller.

The hideous consequences of the Bush administration’s unprecedented assault on civil rights at home and murderous slaughter abroad are now becoming clear for all to see. A recent lawsuit against John Ashcroft’s Justice Department by two tortured Muslim men, picked up after September 11, asserts they were repeatedly strip-searched, shackled and slammed against walls and sexually assaulted in the Brooklyn detention center. We have fought to mobilize labor and its allies against the war in Iraq and against domestic terror against immigrants, in protests and rallies across the country. We have opposed the extralegal detention measures from the beginning of the massive post-September 11, 2001 “war on terror” assault. In an *amicus* brief

filed by the SL and Partisan Defense Committee on behalf of Jose Padilla, a U.S. citizen imprisoned in a military brig, we stated that the president’s power to declare a citizen an “enemy combatant” is consonant with the rationale of a police state. “Stripped of legalese, what the President asserts is nothing less than the right to disappear citizens.”

## Capitalism and the Atrocities of War

Capitalist society was born in blood; modern imperialism continues the brutal practices of mass murder, torture and humiliation that accompany exploitation of labor and the ceaseless struggle between competing imperialist forces to dominate the world. From the Belgian Congo killing fields of King Leopold and the massacres in the Philippines by U.S. troops in the early days of its imperialist expansion to the first concentration camps, created by the Spanish in Cuba and a little later used by the British in South Africa in the Boer War, to Japanese imperialist atrocities in China and Nazi Germany’s Holocaust, imperialism has created a world in constant, cruel convulsions.

After World War II, the U.S. inherited the tattered British and French imperial mantle in the Near East, to lord over what the poet laureate of British imperialism, Rudyard Kipling, had earlier demeaned as “lesser breeds.” Britain today, its forces in Iraq accused of brutality and killing scandals, keeps up in a reduced way its own torture arsenal, honed mainly in Northern Ireland, where the infamous Long Kesh wire cages and torture chambers were employed against Irish Republican militants. As for France, *Le Monde* (4 May) snottily front-paged a cartoon of an American boot crushing a man’s face in the dirt, with the caption “Repeat after me: DE-MO-CRA-CY!” Yet the French ruling class, former colonial occupiers of Vietnam (whose defeat at Dien Bien Phu occurred 50 years ago on May 7), has its own horrible history, not only in Vietnam but in Algeria, where revelations of mass torture and murder still haunt. And the French state metes out police terror daily to the large North African population in France itself.

Some apologists for the U.S. may use this history to claim, “Well, everyone does it, it’s just human nature.” No, it is not human nature, it is imperialist and neocolonialist policy. It’s true that Abu Ghraib itself was the dictator Saddam Hussein’s own prison where opponents of Hussein were brutalized. Uganda’s Idi Amin, Haiti’s “Papa Doc” Duvalier, El Salvador’s “Blowtorch Bob” D’Aubuisson (so named for his favorite interrogation device)—these names still have the power to shock, and they all were taught by their imperialist masters. For decades the CIA and U.S. military have trained right-wing regimes, especially in Latin America, in the techniques of torture to be used mainly against working-class militants and leftist organizers. Atrocities by capitalist and neocolonial regimes around the world abound; one example we highlighted is the arrest, imprison-



Ligato/Philadelphia Bulletin

**Philadelphia cops strip search Black Panthers in the streets during 1970 raid. The domestic face of U.S. imperialism is state terror against blacks, labor, left and minorities.**



ment and torture of homosexuals in Egypt’s prisons—see “Protest Anti-Gay Persecution in Egypt!” (WV No. 801, 11 April 2003).

But in fact “everyone” does *not* employ such barbaric methods. We communists denounce imperialist torture and murder as barbaric weapons of exploitation. Our goal is the liberation of the working class and all the oppressed from enforced inequality and exploitation, and we repudiate such methods. Communist military policy seeks to unite working-class and oppressed people across national boundaries, while crushing the ruling classes who drive their populations into war against each other. Marxism, a working-class, international and revolutionary political force, had its highest expression in practice so far in the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. The historical experience of Trotsky’s Red Army under conditions of civil war and imperialist invasion is a stunning refutation that torture and other atrocities are endemic to all armies.

In 1920 the army of capitalist Poland under the nationalist strongman Jozef Pilsudski, backed by Western imperialism, invaded the Soviet Ukraine. Captured Red Army men were routinely tortured before being killed. As the Red Army launched a successful counter-offensive, Leon Trotsky, head of the Red Army, issued an order on 10 May 1920:

“From all sectors of the Western and South-Western fronts come reports of unheard-of atrocities committed by Po-

lish White Guard forces upon captured and wounded Red Army men. They are tortured, beaten, shot and hanged.... These facts arouse justified fury and desire for vengeance in the heart of every warrior. Such vengeance is just. But it must be aimed at those who are really responsible for the dishonourable attack and the brutal atrocities—at Pilsudski’s Government, at the Polish gentry and the Polish bourgeoisie. It would, however, be wrong and unworthy of revolutionary fighters to take vengeance on Polish prisoners. No, the Red Army will show magnanimity towards a captured and wounded enemy.

“To a captured Polish Legionary, be he peasant or worker, we shall explain the criminality of his ruling classes. We shall enlighten his mind and make of him our best friend and cothinker, just as we did with our German, Austrian, Hungarian, Kolchakite, Denikinite [Russian White Army] and other prisoners-of-war.”

— *The Military Writings and Speeches of Leon Trotsky*, Vol. 3 (New Park Publications, 1981)

Of course, some atrocities did occur on the Red Army side, as the writer Isaac Babel who rode with the “Red Cavalry” in the 1920 Poland campaign exposed. In his story, *Argamak*, Babel recounts: “The Cossack Tikhomolov had killed two captured officers without authorization.... Squadron Commander Baulin came up with a punishment much harsher than anything the tribunal could have inflicted—he took Tikhomolov’s stallion Argamak away from him, and sent Tikhomolov off to the transport carts.”



WV Photo

**March 2002: Spartacist contingent at Brooklyn protest against detention of immigrants in wake of September 11.**

To do away with imperialist war, it is necessary to put an end to the capitalist system that breeds war. While all eyes are turned to the crimes committed by U.S. imperialism in Iraq, it is also necessary to bring sharply into focus the developing crime at home: anger and revulsion with the Iraq war is channeled by the trade-union officialdom and even ostensible socialists into the “anybody but Bush” campaign to put the Democrats back in power. This is a recipe to

keep the system running as it does—a system based on exploitation of labor, a system propped up by racial oppression, a system which breeds wars of conquest for the capitalist market irrespective of which bourgeois party rules. Our purpose is to forge the multiracial revolutionary workers party that will sweep the bloody capitalist class from power and put the wealth of this country into the hands of the workers who create it and to the service of humanity. ■

# Truckers...

(continued from page 12)

*Union-Tribune*, 6 May).

The situation cries out for a union organizing drive. The bosses claim that the truckers’ status as “owner-operators” makes unionization illegal, but labor has always made gains through hard class struggle, in *defiance* of the bosses’ laws. The longshore union leaders tell their members that the truckers don’t want to be in unions. Yet a South Asian trucker in Oakland expressed the sentiment that we found everywhere, “If a union official came to organize us, at least 98 percent of the workforce would say yes.” Port truckers in L.A. have fought hard on four separate occasions over the past two decades to unionize (see “Victory to L.A. Port Truckers!” WV No. 645, 10 May 1996). The *unionization of port truckers*, no matter which union carried it out, would forge working-class solidarity on the docks between longshoremen and truckers and tend to break through the divisions between immigrant and American-born, between black and white, young and old. The truckers also need a *union hiring hall* that ensures the equitable distribution of work and a standardized pay rate.

The Teamsters and International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), along with the International Longshoremen’s Association (ILA) on the East Coast, announced an alliance in December 2001 to make the ports “100 percent union,” but none of these unions has made a real effort to organize the truckers. Quite the opposite. The Teamsters rushed to disassociate themselves from the militant tactics of the truckers, telling the *American Shipper* (28 April), “We are not going to lend our name to something unless we have control over the agenda,” and instead presented a resolution to the Port Authority calling for “fair and equitable fuel price surcharges.” A few Teamsters bureaucrats came out to the rallies while *Teamster-organized “SeaLogix” truckers were seen working during the strike in and around the Maersk/Sealand terminal in Oakland*. So much for class solidarity! But then this comes as no surprise from a bureaucracy that has run a protectionist and chauvinist campaign against allowing Mexican truckers to enter the United States.

The leadership of the ILWU, whose members work closely with the port

truckers on a daily basis, is no better. The dispatch tape of the San Francisco Bay Area ILWU local requested that longshoremen go directly to their job locations so as to avoid running into the truckers’ protest, noting that the companies had already been informed! The ILWU leadership, which is fond of displaying the labor slogan “an injury to one is an injury to all,” should have instructed its members to honor the port truckers’ action.

*Organizing* the port truckers would greatly strengthen the ILWU, whose future is threatened by its increasing isolation and vulnerability as a small, skilled workforce. Even today, without being organized, the power the port truckers hold was clearly demonstrated in the effect its week-long action had on the Port of Oakland, the fourth-busiest port in the country: Union Pacific had to reroute its freight away from Northern California, while the NUMMI auto plant threatened to shut down manufacturing. ILWU backing for an organizing drive is crucial for the port truckers, just as the port truckers can make or break any attempt by longshoremen to shut down the docks.

Instead, the ILWU bureaucrats have sided with the anti-labor, anti-immigrant and anti-black “war on terror” against the overwhelmingly minority port truckers. In November 2002 when Congress passed and Bush signed the Maritime Security Act—which threatens the jobs of all port workers, especially immigrants—the ILWU bureaucrats signed on to the government’s “security” witchhunt, offering up their members to help police the ports, while ILWU International president James Spinosa vituperated against “unknown truck drivers” being “allowed free access to our work environment.”

A hand-written sign prominent at a rally at Banning Park outside Long Beach on April 30 said “No War”; in Oakland, almost every trucker strongly opposed the occupation of Iraq. The truckers we spoke to took a lively interest in broader political questions, from the five-month grocery strike in Southern California to our defense of the Cuban Revolution. Immigrant workers have brought with them traditions of class struggle and left-wing political views so vitally needed in the more politically backward American union movement.

The workplace remains the one place in this country that is integrated. Truckers in L.A. are largely Latinos, while in

Oakland there are also South Asians, Africans, Arabs, Iranians and Filipinos. In the absence of a union, ethnic divisions are often accentuated. Truckers have been targets of anti-immigrant chauvinism, while sometimes exhibiting bigotry toward blacks. But as one comrade remarked about the Oakland protest, “There was an effort by each ethnic group of truckers to reach out to the others in the speeches and in general; they kept stressing that they have to be fully united to win. It was a concrete expression of how class action works to tear down ethnic and racial divisions.”

To ensure such unity of the working class and its ability to use its potential social power requires a *political* struggle within the unions for a class-struggle leadership that would fight against the racial oppression of blacks and for the rights of women, as well as against anti-immigrant bigotry. What the current Teamsters, ILWU and ILA misleaderships have in common is a pro-capitalist outlook. Their belief in collaboration with the workers’ class enemy was nicely summed up by Ron Carver, assistant director to the Teamsters’ port division: “We have a history of advocating for our employers” (*Journal of Commerce*, 15 March).

An important lesson was learned in

Oakland on 9 February 2002, when the Partisan Defense Committee, the Labor Black League for Social Defense and the revolutionary Spartacist League initiated and built the first demonstration against the attacks on immigrants and in opposition to the Maritime Security Act pushed by the capitalists (both Democrats and Republicans) in the aftermath of September 11. The protest was actively built by ILWU Local 10 and by the SF Day Laborers. To organize it, we had to have a political fight against the ILWU International bureaucracy’s attempt to sacrifice the port truckers on the altar of “national security.” That day, we mobilized the power of labor independent from the capitalist parties and illustrated on a small scale what a revolutionary workers party would do—mobilize all the oppressed in a united struggle for workers power.

**Port truckers are asking for those who support their work action to come out for the court date for the three arrested on April 30 in L.A. The hearing is currently scheduled for June 23 at 8:30 a.m. at the Superior Court, 214 South Fetterly Avenue in East Los Angeles. The arrested truckers also request that protest letters be sent to: Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, State Capitol Building, Sacramento, CA 95814. ■**

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

Web site: [www.icl-fi.org](http://www.icl-fi.org) • E-mail address: [vanguard@tiac.net](mailto:vanguard@tiac.net)

**National Office:** Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116 (212) 732-7860

### Boston

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

### Chicago

Box 6441, Main PO  
Chicago, IL 60680  
(312) 563-0441

### Public Office:

Sat. 2-5 p.m.  
222 S. Morgan  
(Buzzer 23)

### Los Angeles

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

**Public Office:** Sat. 2-5 p.m.  
3806 Beverly Blvd., Room 215

### New York

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

### Public Office:

Sat. 1-4 p.m.  
299 Broadway, Suite 318

### Oakland

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

### Public Office:

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

### San Francisco

Box 77494  
San Francisco  
CA 94107

## TROTSKYIST LEAGUE OF CANADA/LIGUE TROTSKYSTE DU CANADA

### Toronto

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

### Vancouver

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

# WORKERS VANGUARD

## Reinstate TWU Local 100 Shop Chairman Carlos Blackman!

NEW YORK—On April 21, scores of Transport Workers Union (TWU) members rallied outside of the 240th St. subway car maintenance shop to protest the suspension of union shop chairman Carlos Blackman, a staunch fighter against abusive speedup and unsafe working conditions. In an ominous “workplace violence” frame-up, Blackman was suspended on March 8 because a supervisor claimed that he had heard Blackman discuss the February 27 shooting death of two supervisors at Coney Island Subway Yard. As Blackman told the *Chief-Leader* (30 April): “He says he overheard me saying to another worker that I was sorry for what happened to the two supervisors, but they deserved it for [firing] the worker charged with shooting them. That never happened.” Blackman added that a second Local 100 member can back up his account. We say: Drop the frame-up charges against TWU shop chairman Carlos Blackman! Reinstate him now with full back pay and his record wiped clean!

Blackman sticks up for the workers and that’s why the NYC Transit (NYCT) bosses want to get rid of him. Six months ago, Blackman temporarily halted unsafe repair work in the shop when fluid was leaking from one of the hydraulic jacks holding up an 80,000-pound subway car. Four years ago, Blackman stood up against the 240th St. bosses’ racist attempts to suspend or fire an entire crew of 18 cleaners, and he is still a party in a federal discrimination lawsuit against NYCT management at the dilapidated century-old repair shop. If they succeed in firing an elected shop chairman for nothing at all, then they will run roughshod over the

### Down With New York City Transit’s “Workplace Violence” Witchhunt!



Bryan/TWU Local 100

Carlos Blackman (center) with union brothers at Bronx support rally.

entire Local 100 membership by targeting every union militant on the pretext of “workplace violence” against the company! All this takes place in the context of the capitalist rulers’ “war on terror,” which is actually a war on immigrants, blacks and unions.

In a March 11 memo included with every worker’s paycheck, NYCT president Larry Reuter states, “There is no reason for and there will be no tolerance of harassment, intimidation, threats or bullying by anyone. Individuals who conduct themselves in such a manner will be

banned from the property and dismissed from service.” Workers at a pay line showed *Workers Vanguard* salesmen the memo and complained, “Now, you can’t even look at a foreman sideways or raise your voice without the threat of being fired.” Reuter’s “zero tolerance” is aimed exclusively at workers and the union. Supervisors who regularly hurl insults, including racist and anti-immigrant slurs, and demonstrate gross disregard for workplace safety and health go untouched every day of the week. The point of this harassment and intimidation is NYCT’s

drive for intensified production.

Just weeks ago, WV salesmen were told that a subway superintendent at the Coney Island Overhaul Shop harangued an assembly of mostly immigrant workers with the diktat, “No English, no overtime.” Muslim women bus drivers at Brooklyn’s Flatbush Depot have been disciplined and pulled from public service and their routes for wearing their Islamic headscarves. A few years ago, a black worker at the East New York bus maintenance shop had to fight for his job after standing up to the physical assault and racist slurs of a boss who (like all the others) was never “banned from the property and dismissed from service.” The bosses’ racism and anti-immigrant bigotry is designed to perpetuate divisions within the workforce to prevent the necessary working-class unity to counter their attacks. This is what the heavily black TWU workers describe as NYCT “plantation justice.”

The fight against the victimization of Carlos Blackman is a necessary struggle that TWU Local 100 must wage against the NYCT’s dangerous anti-union drive about “workplace violence.” As we wrote in “‘Workplace Violence’ Witchhunt Targets Unions, Minorities” (WV No. 695, 28 August 1998):

“The bourgeoisie’s manufactured hysteria about an ‘epidemic’ of ‘workplace violence’ serves to promote one of the most threatening new weapons of the capitalist employers against militants, minority workers and the very foundations of union organization. Anyone tagged as ‘potentially violent’ can be stripped of rights and treated as a criminal. The programs typically bypass union contract protections against arbitrary company

*continued on page 9*

## Support and Organize the Port Truckers!

OAKLAND, May 10—The truck drivers who transfer containers in and out of the busy Port of Oakland stopped work for one week, cutting the movement of containers by as much as 90 percent and leaving cargo piled up on the docks. Protesting the price of diesel fuel which has skyrocketed while load rates have remained unchanged, the Oakland port truckers are part of a growing national movement of truckers who vow to hold further protests and stop-work actions until they gain more pay per load. Truckers at Union Pacific’s Lathrop rail facility near Stockton, California also stopped work for over a week; a two-day stop-work action took place in Norfolk, Virginia on May 6 and 7. Further actions are projected for other ports across the country and in Canada.

Hundreds of truckers in Los Angeles and Long Beach staged protests on April 30. Three truckers parked their rigs on Highway 5, delaying the morning commute by three hours, while others slowed traffic to five miles per hour on the Harbor (110) Freeway, with a banner reading “The Rich Keep Getting Richer & the

Poor Keep Getting Poorer.” According to National Lawyers Guild attorney Jim De Maegt, at least three Latino port truckers in L.A. were arrested on misdemeanor charges. A picketer and a trucker face charges of battery and inciting to riot for attempting to stop a truck in Lathrop; four were arrested in Oakland on various trumped-up assault and vandalism charges. We demand that all charges be dropped now!

In the Port of Oakland, a group of 300 very loud and determined truckers rallied daily last week in front of the APL terminal and roving pickets marched to each gate, trying to stop trucks from getting in or out of the berths. The Port bosses initially tried to head off the work action by setting up a commission “to hear truckers’ complaints.” When that was rejected, the Port convened a meeting where some companies agreed to raise rates. But as a representative of the truckers told the *San Francisco Chronicle* (8 May), “You can’t have half the truckers go back to work and let the others hang.” Finally the Port got a court order on May 7 barring the protests from the terminal gates. Though



AP

Wilmington, California, April 30: Hundreds of port truckers protest rising fuel costs and demand higher pay per load.

truckers have now returned to work, they are still boycotting four trucking companies that refused to increase fuel surcharges and are vowing to strike again next month if promised rate increases do not materialize.

Those who service the ports up and down the West Coast are mostly short-haul drivers who must buy their own rigs and pay all associated expenses such as registration, fuel, insurance and maintenance costs in order to work. Port truckers were once organized and paid union wages. With the deregulation of the trucking industry in the early ’80s, combined with the general assault on

labor in the U.S., the port truckers now are paid by the load, often having to wait hours at terminal gates, and work 15-18 hours a day, with no union protection against the big shipping and hauling companies. As one trucker in Virginia expressed it during the Norfolk work action: “It’s a slow death. We can’t afford to shut down, but we can’t afford to continue to run, either.” She said she “earned” \$76,000 last year but was left with just \$15,000 after deducting her expenses. “I have no medical, I have no savings, I have no retirement, I have no dental. I can’t do it anymore” (*San Diego*

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