

Down With Racist U.S. Imperialism! For Socialist Revolution on Both Sides of the Border! Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants!

The following declaration was issued on March 24 and distributed the next day at a demonstration in Los Angeles of up to one million people, overwhelmingly Latinos, protesting proposed legislation that would further criminalize immigrants and create a racist border wall. The largest in an ongoing series of protests around the country, including high school walkouts, the L.A. demonstration was led largely by Catholic church officials and featured capitalist politicians such as Democratic mayor Antonio Villaraigosa.

As millions of impoverished Mexican and Central American immigrants risk their lives to find some means of livelihood in the U.S., the racist U.S. imperialist rulers are proposing a spate of new anti-immigrant measures. Each in its own way, the various proposed “reforms” would further strengthen the stranglehold of repression and regimentation implemented in the name of a bipartisan “war on terror.” The HR 4437 bill passed in the House of Representatives in December calls for building 700 miles of wall at the border and for making it a felony to even be an undocumented immigrant, or to assist one in any way. Two alternative proposals in the Senate would also tighten border control, albeit without a new wall, while creating massive “guest worker” programs that amount to indentured servitude.

The racist border wall proposal has provoked widespread outrage in Mexico. In the U.S., opposition runs the gamut from Latino organizations and the trade unions to the Catholic church hierarchy, Democratic Party liberals and even a section of the Republican Party. In Chicago this month, some 100,000 demonstrators marched against these measures. Further protests against HR 4437 are planned in other cities. As proletarian internationalist opponents of U.S. imperialism, the Spartacist League/U.S. opposes both the criminalization of immigrant workers and the legalization of indentured servitude. The SL/U.S. and the Grupo Espartaquista de México, sections of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), join in calling for the unity in struggle of the U.S. and Mexican proletariat. We demand: Down with racist anti-immigrant repression! No deportations! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!

Joint Declaration of the Spartacist League/U.S. and the Grupo Espartaquista de México



March 25: Some one million people demonstrated in downtown Los Angeles against racist immigration bill.

We start from the standpoint that only socialist revolution internationally can put an end to the growing immiseration of the toiling masses—both in dependent capitalist countries like Mexico and in the imperialist centers. Under capitalist imperialism, a handful of wealthy industrial powers strive to divide and redivide the rest of the world for their own aggrandizement, leading to neocolonial exploitation and imperialist war. As we explain in the ICL Declaration of Principles (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 54, Spring 1998):

“Modern capitalism, i.e., imperialism, reaching into all areas of the planet, in the course of the class struggle and as

economic need demands, brings into the proletariat at its bottom new sources of cheaper labor, principally immigrants from poorer and less-developed regions of the world—workers with few rights who are deemed more disposable in times of economic contraction. Thus capitalism in ongoing fashion creates different strata among the workers, while simultaneously amalgamating the workers of many different lands. Everywhere, the capitalists, abetted by aristocracy-of-labor opportunists, try to poison class consciousness and solidarity among the workers by fomenting religious, national and ethnic divisions. The struggle for the unity and integrity of the working class against chauvinism and racism is thus a vital task for the proletarian vanguard.”

The massive increase in immigration

from Mexico over the past period is a direct result of the imposition of the NAFTA “free trade” agreement in 1994, which forced millions of Mexican peasants out of the countryside and led to a huge increase in urban poverty. Close to 10 percent of the Mexican population now lives in the U.S., and the money they send home—some \$20 billion annually—is Mexico’s third-largest source of income. A 1991 joint statement of the Mexican, Canadian and U.S. sections of the ICL called to “Stop U.S. ‘Free Trade’ Rape of Mexico” and declared: “There is a burning need for an *internationalist* proletarian opposition which stands with the working class and impoverished peasantry of Mexico against the imperialist assault” (*Workers Vanguard* No. 530, 5 July 1991).

The fundamental divide in all capitalist countries is the divide between the working class, whose labor makes society run, and the capitalist class, which reaps enormous wealth from exploiting that labor. The Mexican rulers’ crocodile tears over the plight of Mexican immigrants is used to enhance the nationalist lie that exploiter and exploited share the same interests because “we are all Mexicans.” This is only a smokescreen to cover exploitation and oppression by the parasitic Mexican bourgeoisie, which serves as the local enforcer of imperialist domination. In 2004, the Mexican government arrested almost four times as many Central Americans—over 200,000—seeking transit to the U.S. as were arrested by the U.S. border authorities (*La Jornada*, 13 November 2005). The GEM opposes such attacks and calls for full right of transit as well as full citizenship rights for all those who want to stay in Mexico.

In the U.S., the most powerful and dangerous of the imperialist countries, the multiracial proletariat has a particular obligation to oppose the wars and depredations of the U.S. capitalist class. Defense of immigrant rights is necessary not only to fight the exploitation of the most vulnerable layers of the population. It is also crucial to reversing the decades-long decline of the trade unions, by enlisting immigrant workers, many of whom have a history of militant struggle, in the front ranks of the labor movement. Mexican immigrant workers can serve as a human bridge linking the struggles of the North American and Latin American proletariat.

Opposition to anti-immigrant racism in the U.S. is directly intertwined with the struggle against black oppression. It is particularly important to combat anti-immigrant chauvinism among U.S.-born black and white workers, while immigrant workers must grasp that anti-black racism

continued on page 2



Mexico City, March 7: Mass rally in solidarity with National Mining and Metallurgical Workers Union after government attack on union leader. ICL fights for class-struggle unity of U.S. and Mexican proletariat.



Immigrants...

(continued from page 1)

remains the touchstone of social reaction in the U.S. Black oppression is the cornerstone of American capitalism. It was the Southern slavocracy’s desire to extend slavery that partly motivated the 1846 invasion of Mexico, which resulted in the U.S. stealing half of Mexico’s territory. A workers government in the U.S. would return to Mexico certain predominantly Spanish-speaking areas along the border.

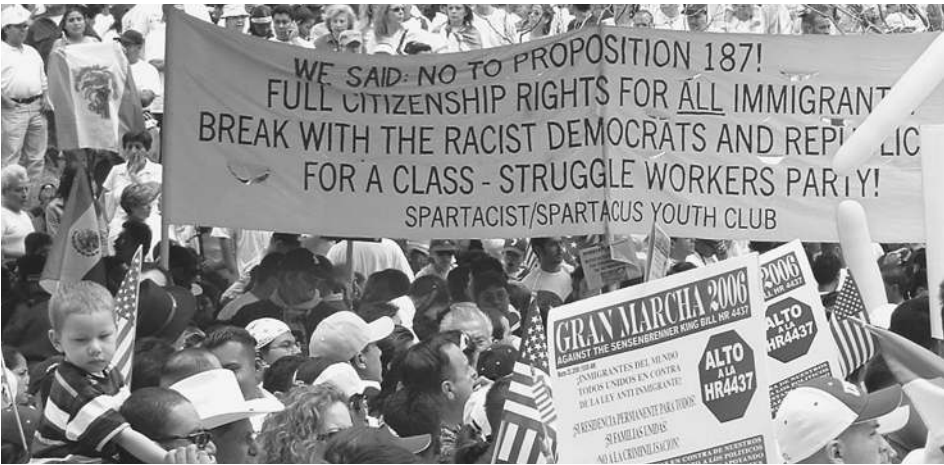
As expressed in the two Senate “guest worker” bills, the bourgeois opposition to the nativist racist mindset expressed in HR 4437 reflects the interests of employers reliant on low-wage, non-union labor, like Wal-Mart. The bill being fashioned by Republican Arlen Specter with the tacit support of the Bush White House includes criminalization of undocumented immigrants and their supporters. Unlike the Specter proposal, the bill co-authored by Republican John McCain and liberal Democrat Ted Kennedy holds out the promise of eventual permanent residency or citizenship for some “guest workers.”

Even without the proposed new criminalization provisions, in 2004 more than a million Mexicans were detained trying to enter the U.S. Intensified border repression, whether carried out by the hated *la migra* or vigilante terror gangs like the Minutemen, simply forces desperate immigrants to seek more dangerous and deadly routes. In 2005, at least 279 bodies were found near the Sonora-Arizona border alone. U.S. college stu-

dents Daniel Strauss and Shanti Sellz were recently arrested in Arizona for attempting to transport several severely dehydrated immigrants to a hospital and face up to 15 years in jail and fines of \$250,000 for “conspiring to traffic” immigrants (*Proceso*, 12 March). Drop all charges against Strauss and Sellz!

“Use ’em, abuse ’em and send ’em back” has long been the motto of U.S. capitalists, who have seen Mexico and other countries as a vast reservoir of cheap labor to be tapped in order to drive down wages in the U.S. The current “guest worker” legislation is reminiscent of the notorious *bracero* program of 1942-64, under which thousands of “temporary” Mexican workers, denied the most elementary rights, were brought in to slave in agribusiness. Former *braceros* and their families are still trying to get wages never paid them.

What is needed is a class-struggle mobilization to *organize the unorganized* into the unions with full rights and protections. The potential for this was seen in the widely popular strike by Southern California supermarket workers—black, Latino and white—in 2003-2004. Had the union tops made a concerted effort to extend the strike nationally and to enlist Teamsters truck drivers in halting shipments to the supermarkets and warehouses, that strike could have ended in a resounding victory and paved the way for an organizing drive against Wal-Mart. A successful drive to organize Wal-Mart would have an immediate impact in Mexico, where the corporation is the largest private employer.



WV Photo

Los Angeles, March 25: Spartacist banner at massive demonstration for immigrant rights.

But instead of mobilizing union power in defense of immigrants, the union tops embrace one or another of the capitalists’ anti-immigrant “reforms,” particularly favoring their so-called “friends” in the capitalist Democratic Party. This policy of class collaboration, sacrificing labor’s interests on the altar of capitalist profitability, flows from the labor bureaucracy’s support for the capitalist system and its identification with the “national interests” of U.S. imperialism. This program has led to defeat after defeat, leaving the U.S. labor movement weaker today than at any time since the early 1900s.

When NAFTA was first proposed in the early 1990s, the AFL-CIO bureaucracy denounced it from the standpoint of chauvinist protectionism, railing against Mexicans “stealing American jobs.” The Teamsters bureaucracy, today a component of the “Change to Win” breakaway from the AFL-CIO, is notorious for its chauvinist campaigns against Mexican truckers on U.S. roads. The leaders of two other leading “Change to Win” unions—the heavily immigrant SEIU service employees union and UNITE HERE hotel, restaurant and garment workers union—support the McCain-Kennedy plan for a new *bracero* program.

For its part, the AFL-CIO bureaucracy has waffled on McCain-Kennedy. Rejecting guest worker programs, AFL-CIO executive vice president Linda Chavez-Thompson declared in a March 1 statement: “We propose that if employers can demonstrate a real need for outside workers, these workers should be allowed into our country with the SAME RIGHTS AND LABOR PROTECTIONS as any U.S. citizen.” This leaves it to the capitalists to determine who will be let in and under what conditions they will remain. Opposed to a program of class struggle, the labor tops look to the capitalist state to defend the rights of workers and immigrants. The unions should use their power to fight for full citizenship rights for *everyone* who makes it into this country.

A class-struggle perspective requires an uncompromising fight for the class *independence* of the proletariat from all wings of the capitalist exploiters. In the U.S., that chiefly means breaking the ties that bind labor to the Democratic Party, which occasionally postures as “friends” of labor, immigrants and black people to better hoodwink the exploited and oppressed. The Democratic Party avidly embraced Bush’s “war on terror” and now proclaims itself the party most capable of prosecuting this “war,” which was never more than a pretext for imperialist adventures abroad and ripping up democratic rights at home. Indeed, it was Democratic president Clinton who enacted the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act, which calls for deporting even longtime permanent residents for trivial offenses committed years earlier. Under Clinton’s “Operation Gatekeeper,” a border wall was built to seal off San Diego. Break with the Democrats! For a workers party that fights for a workers government!

In Mexico, bourgeois nationalism is the chief means binding the exploited to their exploiters. It was the nationalist PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party), not the clerical reactionary PAN (National Action Party) of “free mar-

ket” exponent Vicente Fox, that pushed through the NAFTA agreement in the early ’90s. And the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), which is today the chief exponent of populist nationalism, does not even oppose NAFTA.

While the PRD has not yet gotten its chance to devastate living standards as have the PRI and the PAN, its populist nationalism is but another means of administering capitalist/imperialist exploitation. In the context of the tragic death of 65 miners in an explosion caused by the bosses’ criminal thirst for profits, PRD presidential hopeful López Obrador joined Fox in denouncing the miners union, accusing its leaders of being “contract dealers.” Break with all the bourgeois parties—PAN, PRI, PRD! For a workers party that fights for socialist revolution!

Our model is the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, which replaced the rule of the capitalists and landlords with that of the working class and raised high the banner of world socialist revolution. Despite the Stalinist degeneration that ultimately opened the door to capitalist counterrevolution in 1991-92, the Soviet Union demonstrated the power of a planned, collectivized economy in providing employment, education, health care and decent living conditions. When put to the service of all humanity, the enormous wealth and productive resources extracted by the U.S. bourgeoisie from the sweat and blood of working people in the U.S. and around the world would provide an enormous impetus for the advance of all mankind. But that requires the smashing of the capitalist state and the expropriation of the rapacious U.S. bourgeoisie through proletarian revolution.

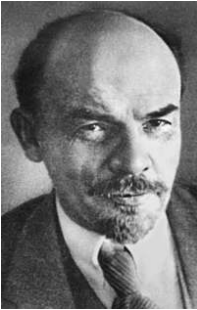
The counterpart to the nationalist myth of “we are all Mexicans” is the idea that there is no class struggle in the U.S. The December strike by largely black and immigrant transit workers in New York, which crippled the world center of finance capital, refuted that notion. The multiracial U.S. working class is potentially the most powerful ally of Mexican workers. The SL/U.S. and the GEM are dedicated to forging revolutionary workers parties on both sides of the border as part of the fight to reforge Trotsky’s Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution. ■



TROTSKY

Imperialist Capitalism and the Trade Unions

In an unfinished article found after his assassination by a Stalinist agent in 1940, revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky described the role of the pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy in subordinating the unions to the bourgeois state. The struggle for the independence of the working class from the capitalist political parties and state agencies is key to the fight for proletarian socialist revolution.



LENIN

Monopoly capitalism is less and less willing to reconcile itself to the independence of trade unions. It demands of the reformist bureaucracy and the labor aristocracy, who pick up the crumbs from its banquet table, that they become transformed into its political police before the eyes of the working class. If that is not achieved, the labor bureaucracy is driven away and replaced by the fascists. Incidentally, all the efforts of the labor aristocracy in the service of imperialism cannot in the long run save them from destruction.

The intensification of class contradictions within each country, the intensification of antagonisms between one country and another, produce a situation in which imperialist capitalism can tolerate (i.e., up to a certain time) a reformist bureaucracy only if the latter serves directly as a petty but active stockholder of its imperialist enterprises, of its plans and programs within the country as well as on the world arena. Social reformism must become transformed into social imperialism in order to prolong its existence, but only prolong it, and nothing more. Because along this road there is no way out in general.

Does this mean that in the epoch of imperialism independent trade unions are generally impossible? It would be fundamentally incorrect to pose the question this way. Impossible are the independent or semi-independent reformist trade unions. Wholly possible are revolutionary trade unions which not only are not stockholders of imperialist policy but which set as their task the direct overthrow of the rule of capitalism. In the epoch of imperialist decay the trade unions can be really independent only to the extent that they are conscious of being, in action, the organs of proletarian revolution.

—Leon Trotsky, “Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay” (August 1940)

WORKERS VANGUARD

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

DIRECTOR OF PARTY PUBLICATIONS: Ray Bishop
EDITOR: Alan Wilde
EDITOR, YOUNG SPARTACUS PAGES: Rosemary Palenque
CIRCULATION MANAGER: Barry James

EDITORIAL BOARD: Helene Brosius (managing editor), Kathleen Harris (letters editor), Linda Jarreau (production manager), Bruce André, Bonnie Brodie, Jon Brule, Helen Cantor, Ed Clarkson, Paul Cone, George Foster, Walter Jennings, 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 skipping the last issue 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. Domestic subscriptions: \$10.00/21 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 28 March.

No. 867

31 March 2006

ESPARTACO

PUBLICACION DEL GRUPO ESPARTACISTA DE MEXICO
MEXICO \$2.00

Los ataques derechistas de Fox y las tareas de la clase obrera:
¡Romper con AMLO y el PRD!
¡Forjar un partido obrero!

Publication of the Grupo Espartaquista de México

No. 24, Summer 2005
\$.50 (24 pages)

Subscription: \$2 for 4 issues
(includes Spanish-language *Spartacist*)

Order from/pay to:
Spartacist Publishing Co.
Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

Mass ATU Meeting Authorizes Strike, Bureaucrats Turn Tail

Dump Binding Arbitration!

MARCH 27—Fed up with years of management abuse and attacks on their working conditions, some 2,000 members of the Chicago Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 241 turned out for a March 6 meeting and overwhelmingly authorized a strike on or after April 9. Working without a contract for most of the last six years, the bus drivers, mechanics and servicers of Local 241 want to wage a struggle against the arrogant Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) bosses. Workers leaving the meeting told WV salesmen that many waited in line for up to two hours to vote to authorize a strike even knowing that the vote was already one-sidedly in favor (although hundreds left before voting). The final count was 1,029 for and only 11 opposed.

The new Local 241 leadership under President Darrell Jefferson called for the vote in response to the CTA's practice of "rostering." Under this brutal scheduling method, which is in effect at two garages, many drivers work split shifts spanning more than 13 hours while getting only eight hours' pay. "Rostering" guts seniority rights and cheats workers out of overtime pay. It is an indictment of the CTA's wage scale that full-time transit workers can't make ends meet without working heavy overtime. Further fueling workers' anger are the CTA's union-busting demands to extend part-time work to mechanics and to create a special category of part-time workers with no benefits. The CTA also seeks to make mechanics work *eight years* to reach top pay and to increase pension contributions from all workers.

Showing that his strike talk was just cynical posturing, Jefferson submitted the "rostering" issue to binding arbitration only eight days after the strike authorization vote. Many union members say that they support the new leadership or at least want to "give them a chance." But Jefferson is not fundamentally different from his predecessors in Local 241, who had kicked the union contract to binding arbitration. Long a weapon in the bosses' anti-union arsenal, binding arbitration is designed to stop strikes and leaves union members with no say in the final deci-

sion. The supposedly "impartial" arbitration boards are in reality stacked against the union. Dump binding arbitration!

The unions' power to fight against the bosses derives from their ability to halt production and transportation, based on the workers' strategic role in the economy. Local 241 provides a vital service, operating about one million passenger trips each weekday. A strike against the CTA would turn the Loop (downtown Chicago) into a

The union tops' allegiance to the Democrats is a consequence of their support for a capitalist profit system that constantly seeks to drive down wages and working conditions at home and carries out imperialist wars and occupations abroad. What's necessary in the ATU, as in the entire U.S. labor movement, is a fight for a class-struggle leadership that rejects the lie of labor-management partnership and uses the weapons of class struggle. Such a lead-



ATU Local 241 members at downtown Chicago contract rally, January 2003.

parking lot. ATU Local 308 (rail) and the 16 craft unions at the CTA are also working without contracts. The transit unions should revive the traditional fighting labor slogan: No contract, no work!

Just as binding arbitration ties the workers' hands in order to keep class peace, the labor officials' support for the Democrats—and sometimes other capitalist politicians—ties the union movement to the class enemy. While the Republicans openly spit in the face of workers, black people and the mass of immigrants, the Democrats lie to labor and minorities while carrying out their attacks against working people and the poor. Even as CTA chief Frank Kruesi, a crony of Democratic Chicago mayor Richard Daley, is hammering the union, ATU and AFL-CIO officials mailed letters to Local 241 members asking them to go to the polls for the Democratic Party primary.

ership must be based on the political independence of the working class. Break with the Democrats! For a workers party that fights for a workers government!

Sensing the frustration of the ATU membership with their leaders, Teamsters officials have attempted off and on for several years to raid Local 241. But the Teamsters bureaucrats, who are guided by the same class-collaborationist outlook that defines the ATU tops, are no alternative. A successful Teamsters raid would break up the relationship between ATU locals 241 and 308, which represent nearly 90 percent of unionized CTA workers. The two locals have a history of joint contract negotiations and struck the CTA together for four days in 1979. Joint action by the ATU locals can pave the way for one industrial union of all transit workers, including those in the craft unions, that fights for more full-time jobs with full benefits and seniority rights for the entire membership.

The Local 241 tops held the strike authorization vote a week after the Teamsters filed petitions claiming that they had the signatures of 3,000 CTA workers seeking a representation election. It was

the Local 241 tops' fear of losing their jobs that induced them to even pay lip service to the need for a strike. Until recently, the ATU International had deprived Local 241 members of a voice in their union and effective representation on the job by keeping the local in trusteeship for more than two years. The International sent out-of-town officials to Chicago to help oppose the Teamsters raid. Many members would be pleased if the bureaucrats had that much enthusiasm for fighting the company!

Transit workers have told WV that the question of the legality of a strike has been a hot topic in the bus barns ever since the strike authorization meeting, where Jefferson said that unlike former local leaders, he rejected the idea that transit strikes were illegal. But then Jefferson turned to binding arbitration, during which strikes are banned by state law. As we wrote last year in "Democrats Turn the Screws on Chicago Transit Workers" (WV No. 845, 1 April 2005): "The only strike that is 'illegal' is a strike that loses. The relationship of forces between capital and labor—not words on paper—is what determines the outcome of class struggle, and the question of working-class leadership weighs heavily in that balance."

Workers say that some ATU officials are arguing that the Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100 strike in New York City last December proves that illegal strikes don't work. In fact, Transit workers *crippled the center of finance capitalism* by walking off the job in defiance of the state Taylor Law's ban on public workers strikes. But with strikers up against both the transit bosses and the courts and cops of the capitalist state, the TWU International stabbed them in the back while the city labor tops left them out to dry. And just as the strikers were feeling their power, the Local 100 leaders demobilized the strike and sent workers back without a contract (see "Union Busting and Capitalist 'Democracy'," page 4, as well as the special 6 January WV supplement, "NYC Transit Strike: Union Power vs. Class Collaboration").

A successful fight against the CTA's union-busting attacks would be a blow against the poverty and despair of the black and Latino neighborhoods of Segregation City. Working for the CTA has long been seen as a good job in Chicago, but for years the transit bosses have ratcheted up their drive against wages and working conditions. A fighting ATU, with its largely black membership, could draw behind it the working class and poor of the inner city. Last spring's threatened mass layoff of drivers was accompanied by plans to again slash the inadequate bus service to a number of black and Latino neighborhoods. The ATU should fight for free, quality mass transit!

The only way to put an end to the exploitation and racial oppression of this society is to put an end to the capitalist profit system itself. It is only through a workers revolution that a planned economy can be established in which the tremendous resources of this society will be placed at the service of those who labor, providing a future for generations to come. Through intervention into class and social struggle and political combat against labor's pro-capitalist misleaders, we fight to build the multiracial workers party that is the necessary instrument for proletarian revolution. ■

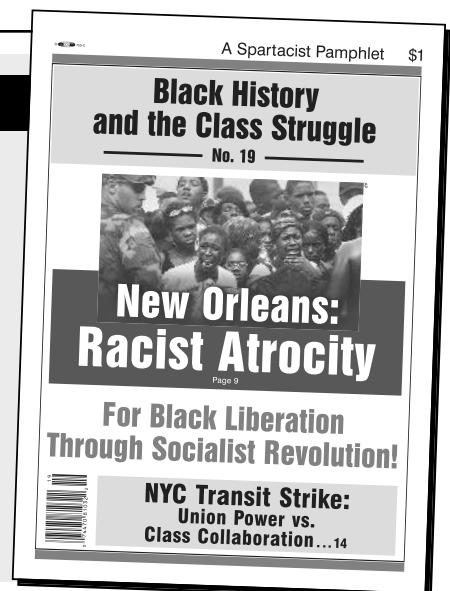
Just Out!

Black History and the Class Struggle No. 19

Black History is sent to all Workers Vanguard subscribers.

\$1 (48 pages)

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



Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste Forum

Canadian Imperialists: Out of Afghanistan, Haiti!

Saturday, April 8, 7 p.m.
OISE, 252 Bloor St. West
University of Toronto
(at St. George Subway)

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

TORONTO



Chicago Historical Society



UAW

Union Busting and Capitalist “Democracy”

When New York City transit workers went on strike and crippled the financial center of U.S. imperialism last December, they had the entire capitalist government arrayed against them. Republican governor George Pataki and NYC mayor Michael Bloomberg railed against the 33,700 members of Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100, which was on strike with Amalgamated Transit Union locals 726 and 1056, and engaged in racist vilification of their leaders, calling them “thuggish.” Democratic state attorney general Eliot Spitzer issued anti-union injunctions under the state Taylor Law, which bans public workers strikes. As we wrote in “NYC Transit Strike: Union Power vs. Class Collaboration” (WV No. 861, 6 January 2006):

“Like every major strike, this was a bull-headed battle between labor and capital. On one side are the bosses, their government, whether run by Democrats or Republicans, and the repressive capitalist state apparatus, mainly the courts and cops.... On the other side, the workers have their own weapons: their numbers and power based on their collective labor at the workplace, and their union organization.”

The strike, which won broad support among working people and in the ghettos and barrios, should have led the entire labor movement to join with the TWU to challenge the Taylor Law. But Central Labor Council head Brian McLaughlin, United Federation of Teachers president Randi Weingarten and other city labor tops refused to even mouth support for the strike, much less mobilize their membership in the necessary solidarity action. Abandoned by the rest of the labor officialdom, facing fines and possible jail time, and with his phony “friends of labor” in the Democratic Party mainly ducking their heads, Local 100 president Roger Toussaint called off the strike after scarcely three days and sent workers back without a contract.

Weingarten & Co. didn’t even call to repeal the Taylor Law, at most saying that it should be “reformed” so that it can be used against the employers. But the entire purpose of the Taylor Law is to keep the public workers unions in chains. The catalyst for its enactment was the 12-day January 1966 NYC transit strike, which was carried out in defiance of the 1947 New York State Condon-Wadlin Act under which striking government workers could be fired en masse. That law was a direct reaction to a one-day general strike in Rochester in 1946, called in support of 486 government workers who had been fired for requesting union recognition, and a week-long teachers strike in Buffalo the following year.

On the eve of the 1966 transit strike,

For Class-Struggle Leadership in the Unions!

For a Workers Party That Fights for a Workers Government!

Above left: Chicago cops killed ten union members on strike against Republic Steel in “Memorial Day Massacre,” May 1937. Above right: Detroit auto workers sit-down strike that same year, part of wave of plant occupations that solidly established UAW and other new industrial unions.

then-TWU president Mike Quill famously ripped up an anti-strike court injunction. He went to jail rather than cave in, and died shortly thereafter. The union returned to work on the condition that there be no reprisals against strikers, and the TWU won large wage gains and other advances. The Condon-Wadlin Act, which was rendered a dead letter by the strike, was soon repealed.

Republican governor Nelson Rockefeller announced that he was “determined that this should never happen again.” This is the same governor who enacted the

infamous draconian drug laws that helped criminalize generations of black and Latino youth and who would order the racist massacre of rebellious inmates at Attica in 1971. The 1967 Taylor Law—officially the Public Employees’ Fair Employment Act—grew out of a commission appointed by Rockefeller to “make legislative proposals for protecting the public against the disruption of vital public services by illegal strikes, while at the same time protecting the rights of public employees.” The verbiage of evenhandedness was so much hot air. The Taylor Law

affirmed the right of public workers to engage in collective bargaining. But by banning strikes, the law is intended to make the unions fight their contract battles with both hands tied behind their backs.

The Taylor Law also created the Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) to intervene in contract disputes. Beneath the guise of “neutrality,” this governor-appointed agency is another weapon in the capitalist state’s anti-labor arsenal. The PERB is penalizing transit workers six days’ pay for their three-day strike under Taylor Law guidelines. On March 23, the PERB ruled to impose binding arbitration on the TWU following the membership’s rejection of a contract deal. For its part, the Toussaint leadership, which called the strike under pressure from the membership and in response to provocation by the transit bosses, is now pushing for a revote on the same rejected package.

The Fraud of Bourgeois Democracy

The massive fines levied against transit workers and the jail threats against their union leaders are an object lesson in the class nature of this “democratic” capitalist society. Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin exposed the fraud of bourgeois democracy in *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky* (1918), a polemic against German social democrat Karl Kautsky, who was a bitter enemy of the 1917 workers revolution in Russia:

“Take the fundamental laws of modern states, take their administration, take freedom of assembly, freedom of the press, or ‘equality of all citizens before the law,’ and you will see at every turn evidence of the hypocrisy of bourgeois democracy with which every honest and class-conscious worker is familiar. There is not a single state, however democratic, which has no loopholes or reservations in its constitution guaranteeing the bourgeoisie the possibility of dispatching troops against the workers, of proclaiming martial law, and so forth, in case of a ‘violation of public order,’ and actually in case the exploited class ‘violates’ its position of slavery and tries to behave in a non-slavish manner. Kautsky shamelessly embellishes bourgeois democracy and omits to mention, for instance, how the most democratic and republican bourgeoisie in America or Switzerland deal with workers on strike.”

Unions in the U.S. were built at the cost of the lives and livelihoods of thousands of workers in the course of bitter battles. From the Haymarket martyrs of 1887, hanged in Chicago for fighting for the eight-hour day, and the Ludlow, Colorado massacre of striking miners and their families by the Rockefeller clan’s hired guns in 1914, to the PATCO air traffic controllers fired for striking in 1981,



Bengiveno/NY Times

Top: TWU rally, 13 December 2005. Right: TWU Local 100 head Roger Toussaint (far right) and other labor tops with Democrat Basil Paterson (far left), cop “union” leader Patrick Lynch (third from left) four days before transit strike. Union bureaucrats embrace cops, Democrats as allies.



WV Photo

labor has confronted the capitalist state. It has also had to battle the state's Pinkerton and Ku Klux Klan auxiliaries. The bosses know that keeping unions out means billions in extra profit.

Time and again, workers have courageously defied anti-labor laws and court injunctions. Otherwise there would be no labor movement. This history amply demonstrates the Marxist understanding of the capitalist state as a machine of organized violence—consisting at its core of the military, police, courts and prisons—whose purpose is to protect the profits and power of the exploiters against the working people. “Democracy” in the U.S., as in other capitalist countries, is simply a facade for the dictatorship of the exploiting class. The U.S. rulers can afford this facade due to the obscene riches they’ve collected through brutal colonial plundering and other imperialist depredations.

The rulers seek to deceive workers with the notion that all citizens, whatever their class—from billionaire mayor Bloomberg to workers and homeless people—are “equal” under the law. But as French author Anatole France quipped in 1921, “The law, in its majestic equality, forbids the rich as well as the poor to sleep under bridges, to beg in the streets, and to steal bread.” Under capitalism, Lenin wrote in his polemic against Kautsky, democracy is “a paradise for the rich and a snare and deception for the exploited, for the poor.” Pointing to the lynching of black people then sweeping the U.S., the anti-Semitic persecution of French officer Alfred Dreyfus in the 1890s and other such examples, Lenin observed: “*The more highly developed a democracy is, the more imminent are pogroms or civil war in connection with any profound political divergence which is dangerous to the bourgeoisie*” (emphasis in original).

Preaching the virtues of the “democratic system,” the union tops mobilize the ranks for get-out-the-vote campaigns for Democratic, and sometimes Republican, politicians and for toothless lobbying efforts. For the unions to become instruments of militant struggle against the exploiters requires fighting against the politics of the labor bureaucracy, which places faith in capitalist politicians and state agencies.

To their credit, Quill and Toussaint defied anti-labor laws by leading transit workers on strike. But these exceptional acts ran against the grain of their own class-collaborationist outlook. Quill, who in the 1930s was associated with the Stalinized Communist Party (CP), was by the late 1940s an ardent red-baiter and became closely tied to the city’s Democratic machine. Toussaint, who is also tied to the Democrats, was elected in 2000 as the candidate of the New Directions outfit, which had treacherously used the bosses’ courts against union opponents. Notably, Toussaint did not call on the city labor tops to mobilize their ranks in support of the transit strike and never set up picket lines at other transit systems. The labor bureaucrats are quite aware that any such action would jeopardize their privileges and their connections with capitalist politicians.

Class Struggle vs. Class Collaboration: The 1930s

The model for the kind of “labor-friendly” administration the union tops seek was the 1930s New Deal government of Democrat Franklin D. Roosevelt. Liberals and labor tops in particular hail Roosevelt’s 1933 National Industrial Recovery Act (NRA), whose section 7(a) stated that workers have “the right to organize and bargain collectively.” An article by Bob Master and Hetty Rosenstein of the Communications Workers of America (posted on the Web site of the social-democratic *Labor Notes*), titled “No Short-Cuts: Mobilization and Politics Must Drive Labor’s Revival from the Bottom Up,” claims that the NRA and other New Deal laws “were a critical *pre-requisite* of the organizing success of that era” (emphasis in original). They write



Wide World

1943: Coal miners won strike in defiance of Roosevelt’s WWII no-strike ban. In name of imperialist war effort, Communist Party paper supported FDR’s strikebreaking moves.

that these laws “crucially opened up the space for workers to organize without fear of instantaneous police or military suppression.”

In fact, the NRA was enacted in the depths of the Great Depression to save the tottering banking system, forestall corporate bankruptcies and put capitalism on the road to new profits. A revival of the economy between 1934 and 1937 spurred massive labor unrest as workers began to feel their strength. A subsequent downturn was ended through the military buildup for World War II.

The purpose of Section 7(a) and other such regulations and laws, especially the 1935 Wagner Act, was to *head off* workers struggles by setting up and reinforcing labor boards and arbitration mechanisms. Even before the NRA took effect, miners union leader John L. Lewis, who compared the law to Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation, sent organizers into

militants, to prevail against the union-busting bosses and the capitalist state. Led by Trotskyists of the Communist League of America (CLA—precursor to the SWP) working through the AFL Teamsters General Drivers’ Local 574, the strikes began with a work stoppage by coal yard drivers in February. Mass picketing shut down the yards completely, winning union recognition in just three days.

This laid the groundwork for a general strike of drivers and warehousemen in May, which also won in short order. Local 574 dispatched flying picket squads to fight strikebreakers. A two-day battle in the City Market ended with the flight of the entire police force and special deputies in what strikers dubbed “The Battle of Deputies Run.”

The bosses retaliated by provoking a third strike in July, which lasted over a month. They were aided by Interna-



Minnesota Historical Society

Unionists battle strikebreaking cops and deputies during 1934 Trotskyist-led Minneapolis Teamsters strike.

the coal fields, shouting “The president wants you to join the union.” But Section 7(a) essentially repeated language already contained in such laws as the Railway Labor Act and the Norris-LaGuardia Act. As Art Preis of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) noted in *Labor’s Giant Step* (1964), “Labor already had that right to organize—whenever it exercised the right and fought to maintain it.” It took bitter, determined struggle for the mass union organizing drives to win.

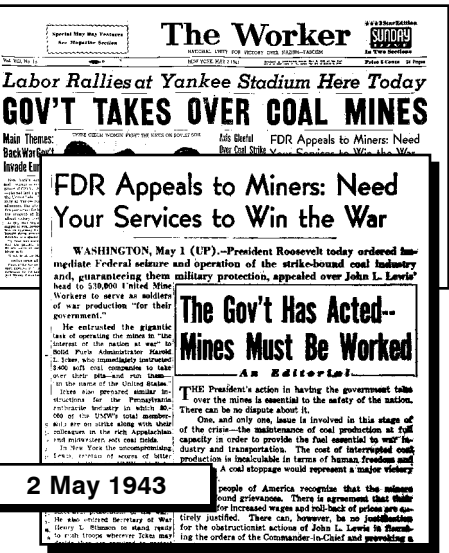
Combined with the victory of fascism in Germany, the impact of the Depression sowed the seeds for a leftward radicalization of the U.S. working class. The year 1934 saw three citywide strikes: one led by Communists in San Francisco, the Trotskyist-led Minneapolis Teamsters strikes, and a general strike led by left-wing socialists in Toledo. Further struggles over the next few years led to the formation of the CIO industrial unions, in many cases under the leadership of self-described communists or socialists. A key tactic was the sit-down strike, with workers occupying a factory or warehouse in open defiance of capitalist property rights.

The Minneapolis strikes demonstrated the ability of labor, led by class-struggle

tional Brotherhood of Teamsters president Daniel Tobin, a reactionary craft unionist and notable FDR supporter, who started a red-baiting campaign against the strike leadership. Local 574 organized support among women, the unemployed, farmers and professionals. CLA leaders James P. Cannon and Max Shachtman flew in to help produce a daily strike paper, *The Organizer*, which countered the lies of the capitalist press.

Despite the imposition of martial law and the strikers’ exhaustion, the third strike solidly established the union and the authority of its leadership. Previously an open-shop town, Minneapolis became a solid union town. The 1934 strikes also spurred the growth of the Teamsters into a powerful, national industrial union. Tobin, meanwhile, repeatedly tried to drive Trotskyists out of the union leadership. This was achieved only through the government’s Smith Act prosecution of SWP leaders—including those involved in the strikes—in the early 1940s for their opposition to U.S. imperialism during World War II.

The Trotskyists’ tactics flowed from their revolutionary Marxist program and its crucial component, the independence of the working class from the capitalist



state and its politicians. Summing up the experience, Cannon wrote in *The History of American Trotskyism* (1944):

“The strikes of that period brought the government, its agencies and its institutions into the very center of every situation. A strike leader without some conception of a political line was very much out of date already by 1934. The old fashioned trade union movement, which used to deal with the bosses without governmental interference, belongs in the museum. The modern labor movement must be politically directed because it is confronted by the government at every turn. Our people were prepared for that since they were political people, inspired by political conceptions. The policy of the class struggle guided our comrades; they couldn’t be deceived and outmaneuvered, as so many strike leaders of that period were, by this mechanism of sabotage and destruction known as the National Labor Board and all of its auxiliary setups....

“Our people didn’t believe in anybody or anything but the policy of the class struggle and the ability of the workers to prevail by their mass strength and solidarity.”

New Deal Labor Wars

The AFL craft-union federation, which had lost substantial ground between 1920 and 1933, grew slowly (even compared to company unions) in the course of the upsurge of labor struggle. The citywide strikes in 1934, which broke craft boundaries and grasped the weapon of class struggle, pointed to the need for a broader union organization structure. And the fact that the strikes had been led by leftists alarmed AFL leaders like John L. Lewis, who was determined to cut off Communists and Socialists from gaining leadership of the radicalized workers. Lewis became the founder of the Committee for Industrial Organization (later renamed the Congress of Industrial Organizations), which formalized its break with the AFL in 1938. Despite his political conservatism and contempt for union democracy, Lewis was at the same time a more far-sighted bureaucrat who perceived the need to organize industrial unions in the mass production industries (steel, rubber, auto, etc.).

1935 also saw the passage of the Wagner Labor Relations Act. While the AFL officials hailed the Wagner Act as the “Magna Carta of Labor” because of its nominal recognition of union rights, its purpose was to set up mechanisms for integrating the unions into the capitalist state. The NRA, which was voided by the Supreme Court in 1935, had only flirted with that task. The Wagner Act stated in its preamble that its goal was to remove “sources of industrial strife and unrest” and gave the newly created National Labor Relations Board wide powers to determine which unions would be recognized as bargaining agents. During the Cold War beginning in the late 1940s, these powers were used to destroy leftist-led unions.

The New Deal’s facade of cooperation between labor and capital offered no protection against violent strikebreaking. Preis observed, “The Wagner Act proved no more effective than section 7(a) in protecting the workers’ right to organize and bargain collectively. It took a couple of million workers in the 1936-37 sit-down wave to actually seize that right by the

continued on page 11

French Trotskyists Say: Down With Racist “First Employment” Law! Defend Ghetto Youth!

We print below a translation of a March 15 supplement of *Le Bolchévik*, newspaper of the Ligue Trotskyiste de France, section of the International Communist League.

LE BOLCHEVIK

State repression and intimidation of demonstrators protesting the First Employment Contract (CPE) grow more intense every day, with a growing number of arrests. **Freedom now for all protesters! Drop all charges!** The riot cops are tear-gassing and beating students, just as the state last November went after the youth of African and North African origin from the working-class districts who revolted against daily racist oppression and the death at the hands of the cops of two youth fleeing a police checkpoint in Clichy-sous-Bois. For these youth as well **we demand they be immediately freed and all charges dropped!**

The CPE would impose a two-tier system for workers, with a probation period of two years for those under 26 years old. Young workers, whatever their social or ethnic origins, will find themselves at the mercy of their employers: if just once they refuse to work overtime, if just once they go on strike or are seen discussing with a union activist, if they get pregnant, and so on, they are likely to be shown the door. This measure seeks to weaken the union movement even more and to prepare new attacks targeting all workers. That's why the whole working class has a direct stake in beating back this new attack.

The first targets of the CPE are the suburban ghetto youth who already experience massive unemployment, permanent racist segregation in hiring, education and housing, and constant cop harassment. The so-called “equal opportunities” law, of which the CPE is just one component, also anticipates suspending if not eliminating the family allowance for parents of youth who skip school or “because of



Students and unions march in Paris on March 18 against anti-youth employment law.

any other difficulty linked to inadequate parental authority.” In other words, this law targets the poorest layers of the population, especially those of working-class origins and most particularly families headed by single parents of immigrant origin. [Prime Minister Dominique] de Villepin said as much in his TV interview on March 12, seeking to appease the students and more generally to divide the youth by saying that this measure is aimed at the unemployed ghetto youth and that (white) students, with their qualifications, will continue (!) to receive permanent contracts. **Down with the CPE! Down with the racist “equal opportunities” law! Down with the racist Vigipirate police checks! The workers movement must defend the ghetto youth!**

The CPE is all about undermining the integrity of the working class by reinforcing the divisions between young and old and between dark-skinned youth of non-European origin and those of European origin. It's an attempt to manipulate youth, especially those from the ghettos, against the trade unions themselves. To repel this attack, the workers movement must overcome the narrow limits of trade unionism and confront head-on the special oppression of immigrants and of French-born youth of North African and African origin. The workers movement must fight racist segregation in housing, education and hiring. **For the division of**

all the work among all workers, without loss in pay, on permanent contracts! Not only is the capitalist system incapable of resolving unemployment, but it is the system itself that produces a layer of the permanently unemployed in order to increase the exploitation of all workers. Any serious struggle on this question poses the question of overthrowing the whole capitalist system by workers revolution.

The union leaders and the social democrats—mostly the Socialist Party (PS) but also the Communist Party (PCF)—oppose the CPE, while also trying to put a brake on workers' strike actions. That's why the second major union mobilization was called for March 18, a Saturday. But back in November, these same union bureaucrats didn't lift their little finger to defend the youth under siege in the ghettos. As for the PS and PCF, at the height of the revolt, they were calling for the bourgeois state to “re-establish order,” with the PS even openly supporting the “state of emergency” in order to defend “their” republic. So now when these same misleaders angrily decry [Interior Minister Nicolas] Sarkozy/de Villepin's anti-youth attacks and the government's sending in of the riot police against student protesters, it only serves to underline once again their gross hypocrisy and opportunism and their conciliation of racist oppression. **In fact it was their support to the government against the ghetto youth revolt**

that emboldened de Villepin to launch his CPE and “unequal opportunities” law in January.

Behind the social-democratic leaders' anti-CPE radicalism are of course their electoral ambitions for 2007. At last they see a way to try and wipe out the memory of [PS prime minister Lionel] Jospin's “Plural Left,” the previous popular-front government (that is, a government of the PS and PCF together with small bourgeois parties like the Chevènementists, the Left Radicals and Greens). It was Jospin's “Plural Left” that last time around introduced its own brand of minimum-wage youth jobs, put in place the university “reform” and re-launched the racist Vigipirate identity checks. The social democrats, especially the PCF, peddle the lie that they have supposedly learned their lesson, and if they are elected they'll be out there defending the interests of workers, immigrants and youth. But administering the capitalist system means first and foremost defending the interests of their “own” bourgeoisie and its rate of profit against foreign capitalist rivals—which means heightened exploitation of workers and more oppression at home, in the ex-colonies, in East Europe and beyond.

The students must turn to the working class. They should place no confidence in the anti-CPE proclamations of some university presidents, who carry out their ministerial directives to cut budgets, lay off workers and privatize the auxiliary services [cafeterias, cleaning]; they hire campus security and call in the cops, etc. Students' potential allies on campus are not the university presidents who represent the capitalists, but the campus workers and teachers. Capitalism isn't a set of policies from which its rulers can pick and choose; it's a system rooted in the exploitation of one class by another, and the ruling class wields its riot cops, its courts and prisons to try and ensure that this relationship of forces remains in effect. The role of the universities is to train the next generation of ideologues and administrators to run the capitalist system. Students have the choice to either conform—or to rally to the cause of socialist revolution.

The CPE is the latest in a line of anti-worker, anti-youth attacks, and it must be defeated. But even if it were, the capitalists would take the offensive again with new attacks. To finish once and for all with such “flexibility” measures, intrinsic to capitalism, it's the system itself which must be destroyed. We are fighting to build a revolutionary workers party—multiethnic and internationalist—whose goal is to lead the working class in socialist revolution. And that means combatting the politics of those, including the many student activists amongst the Communist Youth and the UNEF student federation, who spout their “fight the right” rhetoric today to pave the way tomorrow to yet another **capitalist** popular-front government led by the PS and PCF.

In May '68, the students' actions sparked a three-week workers general strike, mobilizing millions of workers in the streets, but also importantly at first, in factory occupations. It was those strikes and factory occupations which shook up the ruling class not only here in France but across the world. But in the absence of a revolutionary party, the strikes were demobilized and betrayed, chiefly by the Stalinist Communist Party which, thanks to its influence within the working class, was ultimately able to save the skin of the French bourgeoisie.

But today is not 1968. Now that the degenerated Soviet workers state was destroyed in 1991-1992, the capitalists around the world are stepping up their offensive to demolish workers' gains,

continued on page 11



Paris, March 23: Plainclothes and riot cops attack and arrest protester following student demonstration.

U of C United-Front Rally Demands: Drop Charges Against Anti-Military Recruitment Protesters!

CHICAGO, March 21—Over 70 students and faculty at the University of Chicago came out to a March 8 rally to demand: “Drop all charges against the anti-military recruitment protesters now! Administration hands off! No disciplinary actions!” The Spartacus Youth Club initiated this united-front demonstration in defense of four protesters arrested by campus cops at the U of C’s Reynolds Club on February 21 during a protest against Marine recruiters. Jeremy Cohan and Ben Fink were arrested for rightfully standing their ground in the face of the campus administration’s demands that they end their protest against the Marines, while SYC supporters Tom Discepolo and Brian Stapleton were arrested for leading chants of “Administration hands off!” and “Recruiters off campus!” in Cohan and Fink’s defense. All four face prosecution on bogus charges of disorderly conduct.

As part of our defense campaign, the SYC issued a statement on February 27 calling on students to protest these arrests and stating: “We urge students to protest military recruiters as part of the struggle against the brutal occupation of Iraq and the entire imperialist system. Military recruiters off campus now!” (“Drop Charges Against U of C Protesters!” WV No. 865, 3 March). In addition to building widely on campus for the defense rally, the SYC has also circulated a petition demanding that the charges be dropped and has written to the campus newspaper, the *Chicago Maroon*.

More than 40 individuals and organizations endorsed the March 8 united-front rally, including faculty, students and student groups, such as the Environmental Concerns Organization (ECO). Speakers at the rally included three of the arrested protesters, Jeremy Cohan and the two SYC supporters, as well as Professor Robert J. Richards, who gave voice to widespread faculty outrage over the arrests. Not surprisingly, some organizations that hate the SYC’s Marxist politics, such as the fake-socialist outfit Spark and the anti-communist liberals of the campus ACLU and Amnesty International, refused to endorse.

March Separately, Strike Together

For a communist organization, the united front is a *tactic*:

“The dual nature of the UF [united front] is captured in the CI [Communist International] slogan, ‘March separately, strike together.’ Each participant in the UF retains its organizational identity; agreement in the UF need pertain only to the details of the specific action to be carried out and can only be reached through unanimous agreement. Another slogan which captures the dual nature of the UF is ‘freedom of criticism, unity in action.’”

—“On the United Front,” printed in *On the United Front* (1976), a Spartacus Youth League pamphlet

Within this framework, the SYC sought the endorsements of all who understood that the right to free speech on campus was under serious attack at the U of C. As Joe Feinberg, a member of the 49th Street Underground (a self-described “anti-capitalist group”), said at the rally: “There used to be a slogan in the labor movement that a lot of people have forgotten these days that went ‘an injury to one is an injury to all.’ So to me it’s not an



U of C, March 8: SYC-initiated united-front protest in defense of anti-military recruitment protesters.

issue of whether I agree with the people who are endorsing this. I don’t agree with everything the Spartacus Youth Club says, or anyone else, but that’s why we come together to debate things, discuss things.”

For the SYC, building the biggest and broadest united-front defense goes hand in hand with seeking to win youth to our revolutionary Marxist perspective. At the rally, arrested protester and SYC supporter Brian Stapleton spoke to the connection between our fight against the military on campus and our broader program:

“We were out protesting the military recruiters because as communists, we are opposed to bourgeois militarism on principle, including the imperialist armed forces recruiting on high school and college campuses for their murderous wars and occupations abroad. We recognize that war is essential to the capitalist system, where imperialist nation-states compete for control of resources and spheres of influence. It is only through international socialist revolution that the material and political roots of bourgeois militarism can be destroyed, and the foundation laid for the construction of an economy based upon human need rather than profit.

“The same goes for military recruiters on campus. While it’s a great thing that student protests may succeed in temporarily kicking recruiters off campus, they will keep coming back so long as the imperialist army exists. The fact that the Supreme Court just unanimously upheld the Solomon Amendment shows that the bourgeoisie is intent on keeping schools open to its military recruiters.”

Defend Free Speech on Campus! No Reliance on the Administration!

The administration and its mouthpiece, the *Chicago Maroon*, have attempted to justify the outrageous arrests by slandering the four protesters. We have successfully fought against the attempts to malign Jeremy Cohan and Ben Fink for their obvious satirical political theater in carrying a swastika-marked sign that read “Don’t join the Marines—join the American Nazi Youth Corps” during their protest against the Marines.

We have also fought the many slanders aimed particularly at the SYC. According to the *Maroon* (24 February), the director of the Office of the Reynolds Club and Student Activities, Sharlene Holly, “said

they [supporters of the SYC] escalated the protest and created a dangerous environment.” This was exposed by Leah Olm who spoke for ECO at the defense rally: “As somebody who was there when the protesters were arrested in the Reynolds Club last week, the charges by the administration that the Spartacus Youth were creating an unsafe environment are erroneous and ridiculous.”

In response to the support our vigorous defense campaign has gained on campus, the *Maroon* published its own smear-job in a March 3 editorial slandering the SYC as “disrupters” whose ideas “have no content except shock-values.” The *Maroon* was compelled to print an SYC letter in response on March 7, which stated: “In reality, what the *Maroon* calls ‘disruption’ is Marxist student activists fighting for the program that only socialist revolution can end the exploitation and oppression endemic to capitalism. The *Maroon* edi-

tors find this idea ‘shocking’.”

For the U of C administration, the “life of the mind” is acceptable as long as opponents of U.S. imperialism don’t speak their mind. If they do, they’re shut up through cop repression. We warn students that these arrests and administration actions are not aberrant, for either universities in general or the U of C in particular. As an SYC speaker stated at the rally:

“The Spartacus Youth Club does not rely on the administration to protect free speech on campus. We understand that the administration’s role is to maintain this university as a pillar of capitalist society. The U of C is complicit in the crimes of U.S. imperialism and were the brains behind Nagasaki and Hiroshima, which killed hundreds of thousands of innocent people. The U of C is also the leading landlord in Chicago’s largely black South Side. Its private army of campus cops have been terrorizing black residents of the surrounding neighborhoods for decades. It is no surprise that the outrageous racist ‘ghetto party’ happened at this campus. This is also the campus where black student Clemmie Carthens was beat up by the UCPD after they saw him hugging a white girlfriend at night, and the charges pressed against the cops have been dismissed. We want cops off the campus!”

The administration stated in a February 28 letter to an SYC supporter that it “has decided to ask the Cook County State’s Attorney’s Office to dismiss the criminal charges against you.” However, the protesters are still facing charges. In addition, in a meeting with the administration, we were told there would be no university discipline. Still, the administration made its attitude clear in its letter: “The University believes that your conduct was disruptive and that your arrest on the charges was appropriate under these circumstances.” So far the administration’s hand has been stayed, but defenders of the student protesters need to hold them to their word. An April 5 court date has been set for the protesters. We urge all students to mobilize to fill the courtroom in support of the anti-military recruitment protesters. ■

Spartacus Youth Club Events

BAY AREA

Thursday, April 20, 5 p.m.

**Finish the Civil War!
For Black Liberation Through
Socialist Revolution!**

SF State University, Rosa Parks F
Information and readings: (510) 839-0851
or e-mail: sycbayarea@sbcglobal.net

BOSTON

Saturday, April 22, 3 p.m.

**The Russian Revolution and the
Emancipation of Women**

Boston University, College of Arts and
Sciences, Room 320
725 Commonwealth Ave.
(BU Central Stop on Green Line B)
Information and readings: (617) 666-9453
or e-mail: bostonsyc@yahoo.com

CHICAGO

Tuesday, April 4, 7 p.m.

Meet the Marxists

University of Chicago, 104 Cobb Hall
5811 S. Ellis Avenue
Information and readings: (312) 563-0441
or e-mail: chicagospartacist@sbcglobal.net

LOS ANGELES

Saturday, April 8, 2 p.m.

**After the Revolution:
Economic Planning and
the Communist Social Vision**

3806 Beverly Blvd., Room 215
(near Beverly/Vermont Red Line Station)
Information and readings: (213) 380-8239
or e-mail: slsycla@sbcglobal.net

NEW YORK

Wednesday, April 5, 7:30 p.m.

**Defend China, Cuba, North Korea
and Vietnam Against Imperialism
and Counterrevolution!**

For Workers Political Revolution!
Columbia University, 703 Hamilton Hall
116th Street and Broadway
(take 1 train to 116th St.)

Information and readings: (212) 267-1025
or e-mail: nysl@compuserve.com

**Visit the ICL Web Site:
www.icl-fi.org**

Revolutionaries and World War II

We reprint below the second and concluding part of an edited version of the presentation given by Comrade Olly Laing at a Spartacus Youth Group forum in London on 22 October, which appeared in the Young Spartacus pages of Workers Hammer No. 193 (Winter 2005-2006), newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain. The first part of this presentation appeared in WV No. 865, 3 March.

PART TWO

Though the Leninist position of revolutionary defeatism of all the capitalist powers was the main thrust of Trotskyist policy during World War II, there was a political deviation from this perspective. Based on their hatred of fascism, the British and American working classes were overwhelmingly supportive of the conscription drive and war effort against Nazi Germany. By 1940 the Nazis had occupied most of Western Europe in a matter of months and stood across the Channel—less than 30 miles from Britain. There was enormous pressure on the American and particularly the British Trotskyists to accommodate to the misguided consciousness amongst the workers—pushed by the reformists such as the Labour Party in Britain—that they must support their so-called “democratic” bourgeoisie in a war against the fascist powers. The “Proletarian Military Policy” (PMP), first adopted by the American SWP in September 1940, was a partial capitulation to this consciousness.

It’s a fact that Trotsky authored the first expression of what became the PMP. However, he was murdered by a Stalinist

WORKERS HAMMER

assassin shortly before its formal adoption and didn’t have the chance to defend or reconsider the PMP in the debate raging within the Fourth International. Observing the rapid advance of the Nazi armies in Europe, Trotsky saw how the European bourgeoisies had given up the fight and accommodated the Nazis very easily. This



Soviet soldiers raise red flag over Berlin’s Reichstag, 1945. Red Army smashed Hitler’s Third Reich.

military training from the capitalist state itself, would direct its anti-fascist and democratic sentiment against its “own” imperialist rulers. But this underestimated the extent to which the British and American imperialists would use the facade of a democratic crusade against fascism to further their own war aims: a facade which the PMP complemented. We of the ICL are unique today in opposing the PMP. And now I’ll tell you why.

The central demand of the PMP was to call for trade-union control of the compulsory military training being carried out by the imperialist state, with “federal funds for the military training of workers and worker-officers.” The implication that working-class organisations could control a function of the bourgeois army was

tions and the rule of the bourgeoisie against any threat to its order, including the working class—the ultimate potential threat. These oppressive institutions cannot be reformed to act in the interests of the workers. They must be smashed and replaced by organs of working-class rule through a socialist revolution. Revolutionaries fight for democratic rights for the soldiers within the bourgeois military, and for the forming of soldiers soviets, or councils, to further a split within the army, with the rank-and-file soldiers coming over to the side of the workers in a socialist revolution against the bourgeoisie. And if the working class is conscripted, revolutionaries will go into the military with the rest of their generation in order to further this split. But this does not mean revolutionaries support the imperialists’ conscription drive and war effort.

Calling for the funding of military training, even if under the control of the trade unions, the PMP was in brazen opposition to the slogan of revolutionaries in the first world war: “Not a man and not a penny” for the imperialist military. It went against the elementary Leninist revolutionary defeatism during interimperialist war that the main enemy was the working class’s “own” imperialist bourgeoisie. Ultimately the PMP could only be for the trade unions to control and to make more efficient the American and British imperialist war effort.

Trotsky was wrong in his support for the PMP in 1940—in fact his and the Fourth International’s positions in the build-up to and early months of World War II are the most effective polemics against the PMP. In his 1934 polemic “War and the Fourth International” Trotsky tears apart the bleatings of reformists about the need to support the bourgeoisies of the

democratic countries in order to fight fascism. He wrote:

“The sham of national defense is covered up wherever possible by the additional sham of the *defense of democracy*. If even now, in the imperialist epoch, Marxists do not identify democracy with fascism and are ready at any moment to repel fascism’s encroachment upon democracy, must not the proletariat in case of war support the democratic governments against the fascist governments? “Flagrant sophism! We defend democracy against fascism by means of the organizations and methods of the proletariat. Contrary to the Social Democracy, we do not entrust this defense to the bourgeois state.... And if we remain in irreconcilable opposition to the most ‘democratic’ government in time of peace, how can we take upon ourselves even a shadow of responsibility for it in time of war when all the infamies and crimes of capitalism take on a most brutal and bloody form?”

The PMP went against the entire nature of Trotsky and the Fourth International’s otherwise heroic and revolutionary defeatist intervention into the war. In the “democratic” imperialists’ colonies the Trotskyists went nowhere near the PMP. Within a few weeks of Britain’s announcement that India was at war with the Axis powers, 90,000 workers were on strike against the war in Bombay, with strikes and mass meetings in Calcutta and elsewhere. If the Trotskyists had

demanding, during this strike wave, that the British imperialists fund military training under trade-union control so that the Indian masses could “fight fascism” and defend British “democracy,” it would have meant their virtual dissolution into the British administration. This most starkly demonstrates the absurdity and the anti-internationalist parochialism of the PMP. It only had application for the Anglo-American imperialist centres, not their enslaved colonies or, of course, the fascist and military dictatorships of the Axis powers.

In 1942 a gigantic movement for independence known as the “Quit India” movement swept the subcontinent. Inspired by Japanese military victories in Britain’s Far East colonies, barricades went up in the streets of Bombay and strikes erupted with millions shouting “Long Live the Revolution!” The British retaliated by killing thousands, bombing villages and internment tens of thousands in concentration camps. The Trotskyists of the Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India intervened heroically calling for “Down with imperialism! Down with the imperialist war!”

If British imperialism’s war effort had been damaged by colonial uprisings abroad and working-class struggle at home, it would have been a good thing for revolutionaries and the masses of the world—including the British working class. As our comrades pointed out in “Documents on the ‘Proletarian Military Policy’” [*Prometheus Research Series* No. 2, February 1989]: “*far better* that intense proletarian class struggle and colonial uprisings paralyze the British and American war effort, perhaps leading to transient German victories, than that the proletariat implicitly support the Allied armies by demanding better trained and equipped soldiers!”

The pamphlet goes on to explain:

“If mass popular opposition to the war had disrupted the British war effort, leading Hitler to attempt a Channel crossing (as it was, he never mounted a serious effort), the German



Artrage

Peasants rally under red flag in Punjab. British and Indian Communist parties subordinated the fight for Indian independence to support for British imperialism in WWII.

was particularly so in France whose bourgeoisie was, if anything, even more anti-Semitic than the German ruling class and wanted to smash the organised working class just as much. Generalising this experience, Trotsky predicted that the remaining “democracies” would soon appease Hitler or turn into military dictatorships, ripping off their democratic mask. This would quickly expose their reactionary character to the working class which, armed and with

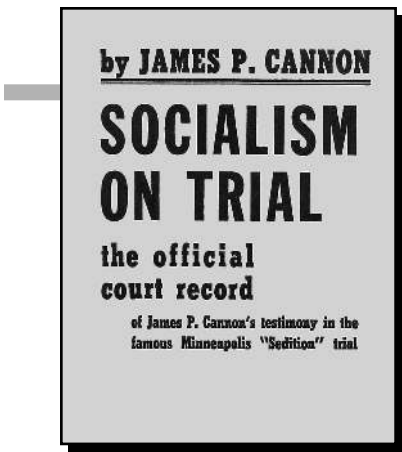
wildly utopian. It went against the Leninist understanding of the state. The military is part of the “special bodies of armed men” that make up the state. The police, prisons and army in a capitalist state are there to defend capitalist property rela-

Imperialism and the Myth of the “Democratic” War Against Fascism

conquerors would have inherited the problems of the British bourgeoisie, compounded by national resentment at the foreign invader. The colonial slaves of the British Empire would doubtless have taken advantage of a humiliating British defeat to declare their independence. It is not hard to imagine the revolutionary world scenario which would have ensued, infecting even the soldiers of the Wehrmacht [the German army], many of whom were sons of Social Democratic and Communist workers.”

For anyone who thinks winning the worker-soldiers of the German army over to the overthrow of Nazism is just wishful thinking, I should point out that 80,000 German soldiers were shot or hanged by Nazi authorities for insubordination or desertion during the war. As well as the Trotskyist cells I have already mentioned, there are other instances of proletarian resistance and solidarity within the German army that we know about. One example was reported by the American SWP’s newspaper, the *Militant*. It printed two letters in 1942 from a socialist worker drafted into the German army. He had spent three weeks in Warsaw at the end of 1941 where he had made contact with Jewish Bundists and Polish socialists, for whom he raised 500 marks from his underground resistance group upon returning to Berlin.

Many may think that the Trotskyist position of turning the imperialists’ second world war into a series of socialist revolutions against all the capitalist powers, even if courageous and principled, never had any chance of happening. But there *were* pre-revolutionary situations around the world during and because of World War II. Proving the policy of revolutionary defeatism correct, the military defeat of the fascist Italian bourgeoisie in 1943 led to the Italian working class rising up and taking their revenge against



Trotskyist leaders imprisoned under Smith Act during WWII for revolutionary opposition to U.S. imperialism. SWP leader James P. Cannon's trial testimony was published as a pamphlet (above).

ticularly the black GIs who faced vicious racist discrimination in the forces and at home, could have split the base of the armies from the officers, winning it over to the cause of socialist revolution. Stalin also allowed the British imperialists to crush the Greek Communist Party-led uprising at the end of the war. After the defeat of the Japanese imperialists, the Vietnamese Trotskyists—with a mass following amongst the workers—led the 1945 Saigon insurrection against the reinvading French colonialists who were supported by British forces. The uprising was put down and the Trotskyist forces massacred, not only by the French and British imperialists but above all by the Vietnamese Stalinists.

Even though the PMP was adopted in theory in America by the SWP, in practice—because it was utopian and because



Pioneer

that was conciliatory to social-chauvinist defensism of British imperialism. There is a flyer from the time for a meeting of the Workers International League. It says workers control of production is the answer to the chaos of the war effort. It doesn't mention any opposition to the imperialist war. At a 1943 Workers International League conference, one of its leading members, Ted Grant, went so far as to voice his support for an army of British imperialism. He declared: "We have a victorious army in North Africa and Italy, and I say, yes. Long Live the Eighth Army, because that is our army" (quoted in Sam Bornstein/Al Richardson, *War and the International* [1986]). Grant was talking at a time when there was working-class dissent in the Eighth Army. But it was still very much an army of British imperialism. Grant's statement is an example of the seeds of social-chauvinist and reformist perspectives that were to grow and contribute to producing the many Labourite outfits sometimes referring to themselves as Trotskyists in the decades since the war.

The Socialist Party: Parodying the PMP

Ted Grant went on to lead a reformist outfit called Militant, which was characterised by being deeply buried inside the Labour Party until it was thrown out in the early 1990s. The [British] Socialist Party of today has its origins in the Militant group and still holds to Militant's reformist social-chauvinist tradition. In a Socialist Party meeting a week after the 7 July [London] terrorist bombings, Socialist Party speakers, including its leader Peter Taaffe, participated in an orgy of social-patriotic ravings about the need for the working class to unite against terrorism and war. They said what was needed was for the trade unions to help in organising a campaign for this unity. This sentiment was repeated in its newspaper for the next four weeks in a row, with the front page spelling out such slogans as: "No to terrorism, no to war" and "Workers' unity against war and terrorism." We Marxists of the International Communist League of course condemn all terrorist attacks against innocent civilians. But this condemnation

does not mean echoing the British ruling class's own campaign for mobilising national unity "against terrorism," which is aimed at maintaining class peace and arming the state to the teeth with reactionary racist "anti-terror" legislation. The Socialist Party's demands for demonstrations to be built by trade unions and working-class organisations under the slogans "United against terror" and "United against war" conceal the fact that the biggest threat to the working class and oppressed at this moment in time is not terrorism but the "anti-terror" laws.

In providing a thin proletarian veneer for the ruling class's own aims of national unity in the "war against terrorism," it is as though the Socialist Party are acting out their own bizarre parody of the PMP. Instead of trade-union control of the war "against fascism," today they are practically calling for trade-union control of the "war on terror." The difference being, of course, that the PMP was a result of tremendous pressures on Trotskyists resulting from the Nazi victories and a desire of the working class to fight fascism. The Socialist Party's unity campaign against "terrorism and war" is the result of its standard reformist practice of shamelessly adapting to the most backward moods and fears within the working class which are conditioned by bourgeois scaremongering.

In contrast we communists of the Spartacus Youth Group and International Communist League base ourselves on the principles laid out by Trotsky at the founding conference of the Fourth International:

"To face reality squarely; not to seek the line of least resistance; to call things by their right names; to speak the truth to the masses, no matter how bitter it may be; not to fear obstacles; to be true in little things as in big ones; to base one's programme on the logic of the class struggle; to be bold when the hour of action arrives—these are the rules of the Fourth International."

This is our tradition and this is why we honour those Trotskyists in World War II who swam against the stream in the fight against imperialism—fascist and "democratic"—and the struggle for socialist revolution, the only road for the liberation of humanity. A struggle which today we fight to carry forward. ■



WV Photo

Spartacist-initiated contingent at January 2003 antiwar demonstration in San Francisco.

Mussolini and his ilk. They seized arms and formed workers councils, creating a pre-revolutionary situation against the capitalist order. Similar revolutionary opportunities occurred with the defeat of the Nazi-collaborator regime in occupied France. But it was the betrayals of Stalinism which strangled these revolutionary opportunities. Desperate not to see the overthrow of capitalism by workers revolution in the West, the Stalinist bureaucracy ordered the re-emerging Communist parties in Italy and France to instruct the workers to disarm and join the governments of the supposedly progressive "democratic" bourgeoisie.

Had the workers made their revolution, under the kind of leadership the Trotskyists were fighting to build, there was every chance that the working-class conscripts of the American and British armies in Italy and France would have refused to crush them and indeed supported them. A revolutionary appeal to these soldiers, par-

the American Trotskyists *did* focus on opposing the American imperialist war effort—it never came to anything.

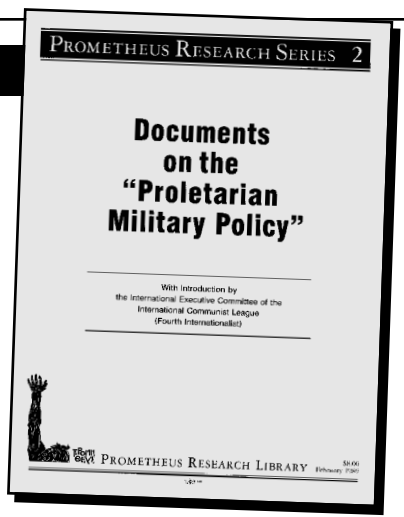
There were two Trotskyist groups in Britain at the start of the war: the Revolutionary Socialist League and the Workers International League. The Revolutionary Socialist League opposed the PMP, correctly arguing that it was a concession to social-patriotism. The Workers International League, however, embraced it—though there was opposition to it within the party. The Workers International League remained revolutionary defeatist towards British imperialism in its activities. It highlighted British atrocities in its colonies during the war and called for their immediate unconditional independence. It actively supported strikes and made clear in a headline from its newspaper *Socialist Appeal*: "Capitalist Second Front will crush European Revolution." But its support for the PMP did blunt its revolutionary propaganda and provided for a current

Prometheus Research Series No. 2

Includes "Trotskyist Policies on the Second Imperialist War—Then and In Hindsight," an introduction by the International Executive Committee of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) plus documentary material, including resolutions from the founding conference of the RCP in Britain (1944), SWP (U.S.) resolution on the "Proletarian Military Policy" (1940) and Max Shachtman's 1940-41 polemics.

\$9 (includes postage) 102 pages

Make checks payable/mail to:
Spartacist Pub. Co., Box 1377 GPO
New York, NY 10116



Protests...

(continued from page 12)

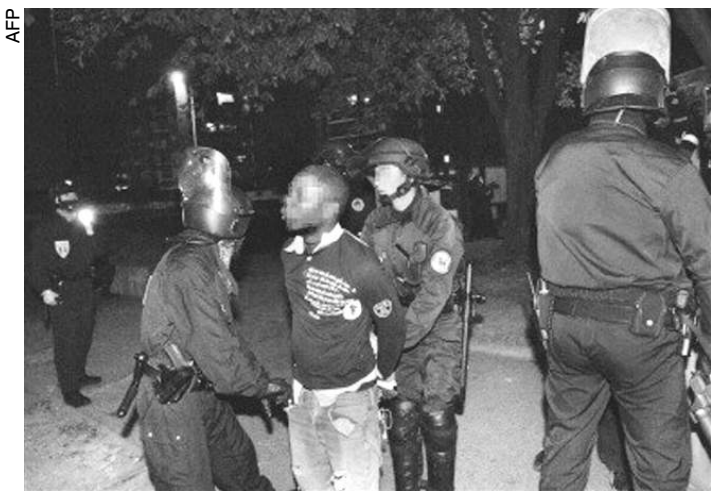
came in the 1960s and '70s from the countries of France's former colonial empire, especially from North Africa and, more recently, West Africa. The LTF demands full citizenship rights for *all* who have made it to France, including undocumented immigrants and asylum-seekers!

The reformist working-class leaders, whose sights are trained on presidential and legislative elections next year, are seeking to put together a new popular-front coalition. The popular front is a class-collaborationist alliance between mass parties of the working class, such as the PCF and PS, and bourgeois parties, such as the Greens or the grouping around ultra-nationalist Jean-Pierre Chevènement. This treacherous policy subordinates the working class to the class enemy, undercutting class struggle and demoralizing the proletariat.

The multiethnic French working class *can be* mobilized against racist attacks. On 9 November 2005, in Bobigny, a working-class suburb of Paris, a demonstration that had been called by the trade-

parties of the popular front. A small but telling example of this point was seen at a Rouen student assembly on March 24 when our comrades introduced a motion calling for "freeing all students and *banlieue* youth arrested now! And to lift all charges against them!" This motion was initially favorably received by the bulk of the 150 students at the assembly. It was the "far left," acting as the fighting vanguard of the racist popular front, that ensured the defeat of this elementary statement of unity between the students and the ghetto youth.

A speaker for Gauche Révolutionnaire (GR), affiliated to Peter Taaffe's British-centered Committee for a Workers' International (CWI) and Socialist Alternative in the U.S., called on the students to enlist the support of the police in demanding the release of those arrested. This expressed the CWI's notorious position that the bosses' cops are "workers in uniform." GR's call provided an entry for a speaker from the UNEF student association, which is supported by the PS and Alain Krivine's Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire, to openly defend the cops for doing their job when they arrested "*casseurs*." A counterposed motion, which avoided explicitly defending the *banlieue* youth, was passed



30 October 2005: Cops arrest youth in Paris suburb during crackdown against ghetto rebellion that swept France.



Stuttgart, Germany: Recent public workers demonstration against government attempt to increase workweek from 38.5 hours to at least 40.

union leaders around economic demands became focused instead on the racist cop terror that was sweeping the ghettos. At the demonstration were workers from the Citroën auto plant in Aulnay-sous-Bois, where the workforce is largely of immigrant origin. Several of them underscored the link between the layoff of 500 temporary workers the previous month and the revolt in the minority housing projects of that same city.

It could not be clearer that the fight against the bosses' anti-labor attacks must place at its center the defense of the minority population against racist terror and discrimination and that this in turn requires a political struggle against the

with the support of the entire "far left," including some of the anarchists present.

Some of these anarchists later admitted to our comrades that they had made a mistake in not supporting our motion. At a March 27 meeting of the student assembly in Rouen, upon our comrades' initiative a motion was passed demanding the exclusion of police from the protests and calling for cops "out of the labor unions and the workers movement!"

At a student assembly in the Paris suburb of St. Denis on March 24, where our comrades also argued for defense of the *banlieue* youth, a speaker from Lutte Ouvrière (LO) explicitly defended the use of goon squads to physically exclude

LE BOLCHEVIK
LEAGUE OF THE PROLETARIAT OF FRANCE
LEAGUE COMMUNISTE INTERNATIONALE (QUATRIEME-INTERNATIONALISTE)
Trimestriel
N° 175 - Mars 2006
6,00 EUR

A bas la loi raciste sur l'«égalité des chances» visant les jeunes des banlieues!
A bas le CPE!

PCF, LCR veulent canaliser les protestations vers l'élection d'un nouveau «front populaire» capitaliste

Cinq mille lycéens des banlieues et étudiants, avec des délégations syndicales, manifestent à Paris le 16 mars contre le CPE.

22 mars - Cyril Foray, militant du SUD-PTT, est entré la vie et la mort après avoir été sauvagement brutalisé par les CRS lors de la manifestation syndicale du 16 mars, et plus de 150 personnes ont été arrêtées ce jour-là. Mais de Villeneuve de la Garenne on appelle à une journée de grève et de manifestation le 28 mars. Il est crucial que la classe ouvrière mette son poids dans la balance pour repousser les attaques de gouvernement. Pour mobiliser l'industrie privée

avec son importante composante de travailleurs immigrés et de jeunes dont les parents ou grands-parents sont originaires du Maghreb et d'Afrique, il faut mettre en avant la lutte contre la terreur raciste du gouvernement. Au contraire, les partis sociaux-démocrates, qui ont soutenu la répression, il y a quelques mois contre les jeunes, cherchent à limiter désormais la lutte à la demande de retrait du CPE. On voit donc l'apogée la réaction de la bourgeoisie qui, en faisant disparaître la question de la terreur raciste, ainsi que le rôle du PS et du PC, sont en train de reconstruire l'unité d'un prochain gouvernement capitaliste comme la «gauche plurielle» de Jospin-Balladur. Cela pour la question d'une nouvelle direction pour la classe ouvrière, une direction révolutionnaire. A bas le collaborationisme de classe! Pour ne point arrêter notre

A bas la directive antisyndicale Bolkestein!
...page 16

Le Bolchévik
Publication of the Ligue Trotskyiste de France
Subscribe! **\$5 for 4 issues**
Includes *Spartacist* (French edition)
Order from/make checks payable to: Spartacist Publishing Co.
Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

Just Out!

LTF literature table at March 18 student protest.

WORKERS VANGUARD
Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League

☐ \$10/21 issues of *Workers Vanguard* (includes English-language *Spartacist* and *Black History and the Class Struggle*) international rates: \$25/21 issues—Airmail \$10/21 issues—Seamail

☐ \$2/6 introductory issues of *Workers Vanguard* (includes English-language *Spartacist*)

☐ \$2/4 issues of *Espartaco* (en español) (includes Spanish-language *Spartacist*)

☐ I would like to contribute \$ _____ to the production of *Workers Vanguard*.

Name _____

Address _____

_____ Apt. # _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (____) _____ E-mail _____

867

Make checks payable/mail to: Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

Union Busting...

(continued from page 5)

seizure of hundreds upon hundreds of factories and other places of work.” 1933 to 1938 were the years of the most ferocious assault on American labor in its history, with hundreds of workers killed and tens of thousands arrested or otherwise victimized. In the 1937 “Little Steel” strike, led by the CIO Steel Workers Organizing Committee, police killed ten workers near the gates of Republic Steel in South Chicago in what became known as the “Memorial Day Massacre.” When Lewis called Roosevelt to protest, the president declared “a plague on both your houses.” The governors of Indiana and Ohio dispatched militia units to disperse pickets.

On the part of the CIO tops, including the social democrats and Stalinized Communist Party, the New Deal coalition was a *betrayal* of the interests of the working class. It headed off the evident possibility of forging an independent workers party—a perspective fought for by the Trotskyists—by corralling workers behind phony Democratic “friends of labor.” Under the umbrella of the Democratic Party, the CIO tops were joined to not only the liberal wing of the capitalist class in the North but also the Southern Dixiecrats, whose rule was buttressed by KKK terror against black people and unionists.

For the CP, political support to Roosevelt and the Democratic Party was the application on U.S. soil of the “Popular Front” strategy adopted by Stalin’s Comintern in 1935 following Hitler’s rise to power. Hitler was allowed to seize power without a shot being fired as a result of the betrayals by both the reformist German Social Democracy and the Communist Party. The German CP criminally refused to fight for a united front with Social Democratic workers against the Nazis, based on the Stalinist Third Period idiocy that the Social Democracy was the “left wing” of fascism. Making an about-face, the Stalinists put forward the class-collaborationist strategy of the Popular Front—i.e., coalition with the “progressive” bourgeoisies around the world.

Leon Trotsky, co-leader with Lenin of

the October Revolution, commented in his unfinished 1940 essay “Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay” (written shortly before his assassination by a Stalinist agent), “The rise of the CIO is incontrovertible evidence of the revolutionary tendencies within the working masses. Indicative and noteworthy in the highest degree, however, is the fact that the new ‘leftist’ trade union organization was no sooner founded than it fell into the steel embrace of the imperialist state.”

U.S. imperialism’s mobilization for World War II further solidified the ties of the labor bureaucracy to the state. The labor leadership agreed to wartime wage controls and a no-strike pledge. In support of the imperialist war effort, the CP even opposed A. Philip Randolph’s proposed 1941 “March on Washington” for black rights. John L. Lewis broke from Roosevelt and in 1943 led the miners on strike in defiance of the no-strike pledge. But Lewis’s break was in the direction of the Republicans.

For Proletarian Class Independence!

Emerging victorious after the war, the U.S. rulers shortly afterward launched the Cold War against the Soviet Union. At home that meant the purge of reds and other militants from the unions and anti-Communist hysteria throughout society. After a strike wave in 1945-46, the biggest in U.S. history, social-democratic labor tops like the United Auto Workers’ Walter Reuther joined with the government in driving out Communists, Trotskyists and other militants who had built the CIO. Resistance to the purge was undermined by the CP’s previous betrayals, such as their support to the Smith Act prosecution of Trotskyists and their enforcement of the WWII no-strike pledge.

The witchhunt was codified in the 1947 Taft-Hartley Act, which had the dual aim of driving reds from the unions and banning militant union tactics. Among the actions outlawed were secondary boycotts or sympathy strikes, which had played a crucial role in the formation of the unions, and strikes by federal government employees. New York’s Condon-Wadlin Act banning public workers strikes was passed the same year. Millions of unionists denounced Tart-Hartley as the “Slave

Labor Law,” and when the bill was passed on 23 June 1947, over 200,000 miners walked out in Pennsylvania, Alabama, Ohio, Virginia and West Virginia. Lewis was moved to declare that the labor movement would have been better off if neither the Wagner nor the Taft-Hartley Acts had ever been passed.

The following year, Democratic president Truman, who had made a show of vetoing Taft-Hartley knowing he would be overridden, invoked the law against the miners, packinghouse workers and other unions. Injunctions banned particular strikes, penalized picketers, or, in the case of the International Typographical Union, which was striking five Chicago daily newspapers, prohibited uttering words in furtherance of a strike. In 1999, a Taylor Law injunction against the TWU similarly barred unionists from voicing the word “strike.”

A further blow against labor was struck with the 1959 Landrum-Griffin Act, aimed primarily at shackling the power of the Teamsters by banning provisions in union contracts giving workers the right to refuse to handle struck goods. The law authorized sweeping government and court powers to intervene in union affairs and finances—a legal sledgehammer that threatened the whole labor movement. In the name of union democracy, the law’s “Bill of Rights” section encouraged legal actions against the unions by protecting members who sued their union from being disciplined. The law has been used repeatedly to drag the government and courts into the unions in the name of fighting “corruption” (see “Association for Union Democracy: Lawyers for Government Union-Busting,” WV No. 738, 30 June 2000).

The Feds assumed sweeping powers in the 1990s over the Teamsters, the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees and the Laborers unions, as well as a number of local district councils. In every case, the government filed or threatened to file a “racketeering” lawsuit, using the 1970 “Racketeer-Influenced and Corrupt Organizations” (RICO) law. Supposedly enacted to fight gangland crime, RICO became the government’s union-busting weapon of choice. In almost every case, Feds and prosecutors were aided by elements within the unions who filed law-

suits using Landrum-Griffin protections.

The Spartacist League has always stood on principle against suing the unions or otherwise inviting the capitalist state to intervene in union affairs. In contrast to virtually every other organization claiming to be Marxist, we gave no support to Arnold Miller, who won the presidency of the United Mine Workers in 1972 through a “reform” movement—Miners for Democracy—that relied on government intervention into the union. Similarly, we opposed Teamsters for a Democratic Union which, supported by *Labor Notes*, Socialist Action, the International Socialist Organization and other reformists, engineered lawsuits that paved the way for the government’s takeover of the union.

Currently, five TWU Local 100 vice presidents have lawsuits pending against the Roger Toussaint leadership of Local 100. Toussaint’s own past involvement in the union-suing New Directions caucus is consistent with his close relations with Patrolmen’s Benevolent Association (PBA) head Patrick Lynch, who has appeared regularly on TWU speaker’s platforms. The job of the cops is to safeguard the bosses’ profit system. The PBA and other police “unions” are enemies of labor and minorities. Cops, courts out of the unions! Labor must clean its own house!

By their appeals to the bosses’ state, union-suing “oppositions” and their ostensibly socialist supporters undermine the very purpose of unions—to defend workers from the bosses—and demonstrate that they are fundamentally no different from the corrupt bureaucrats they seek to replace. Labor needs a leadership based on the *independence* of the working class from the bosses’ state and political parties. Such a leadership would support the building of a workers party to lead all the exploited and oppressed in the fight for a workers government, under which industry will be ripped out of the hands of the capitalists and a planned, collectivized economy will be built, with production for social need and not private profit. As Trotsky wrote in his 1940 essay: “In the epoch of imperialist decay the trade unions can be really independent only to the extent that they are conscious of being, in action, the organs of proletarian revolution.” ■

France...

(continued from page 6)

including those achieved in the wake of May ’68, with the CPE being just one attack in the generalized onslaught to increase the French capitalists’ levels of profit as against their rivals. The counterrevolution in the former USSR has brought with it an enormous political demoralization of the workers, reinforced in France by the years of capitalist austerity governments headed by popular fronts (Mitterrand, Jospin), so that the working class currently does not see revolutionary socialism as a viable alternative to capitalism.

It wasn’t communism, but its parody, Stalinism, which arrived at a dead end. Despite its Stalinist degeneration, we defended the Soviet Union against imperialism and counterrevolution; we fought for a proletarian political revolution to throw out the Stalinist bureaucracy. For example, in East Germany in late 1989 and early 1990, we threw all our forces into fighting for a Red Germany of workers councils, in East and West Germany, and against capitalist reunification. This was counterposed to the role played by the so-called “leftists” of the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR), Lutte Ouvrière (LO), etc., who supported the counterrevolution and who now whine about the CPE and other consequences of capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union.

To break the vicious circle of capitalist governments of the right wing and of the popular front, it’s necessary to break with the reformists and expose these traitors. Instead, the so-called “far left” LCR spends its time trying to organize joint meetings and other unconditional proposals of

“unity in struggle” with the likes of [PS head] Hollande and [PCF head] Buffet. On March 11, right after the cop attack on the Sorbonne, [LCR leader] Besancenot again appealed to these same forces: “The youth mobilized against the CPE need the support and the solidarity of all the forces of the left, notably against the high-handedness and intransigence of the government. We propose a meeting, at the earliest opportunity, to prepare a united fight back against these latest government attacks.” The LCR’s crawling before the PS and other “left forces,” such as the bourgeois Chevènementists, in hopes of making them more combative can only fuel the worst illusions that the working class and militant youth have in the social-democratic traitors, and give a left cover to their ambitions to take advantage of the anti-CPE campaign for the 2007 elections. The price of the LCR’s appeal for unity with the PS & Co. today is to disappear the racist character of the “unequal opportunities law” and the fact that its main target is immigrant-derived and working-class youth in the ghettos.

Today the LCR works for the next PS-PCF government, but in April-May 2002, they used their influence in the massive multiethnic demonstrations of youth against [fascist demagogue] Le Pen to call for a vote to [President] Chirac. Thus they bear a share of responsibility for this reactionary right-wing government. LO opposed voting for Chirac, but their support to the racist law on the [Muslim] headscarf and their narrow economist intervention into the working class facilitate the attacks of Chirac, de Villepin and Sarkozy. These reformist organizations cannot struggle against racist oppression, much less lead the working class

toward its social emancipation, because their whole perspective is based on class collaboration.

A revolutionary workers party would combat such class collaboration. A revolutionary leadership of the unions would be seeking to mobilize the working class of this country against the CPE and the police repression of demonstrators. The working class is the source of all the profits that the capitalist class seizes for itself, and when the workers stop work and go

on strike, they have the power to shut down production and to stop the flow of profit. Through the defensive class struggles in West Europe and in other parts of the world, Marxism—the theory of scientific socialism and proletarian revolution—must again become understood and accepted as its own by the working class. We struggle to build international revolutionary workers parties to lead the workers to new victorious revolutions, as in October 1917 in Russia. ■

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

Web site: www.icl-fi.org • **E-mail address:** 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
bostonsyc@yahoo.com

Chicago

Box 6441, Main PO
Chicago, IL 60680
(312) 563-0441
chicagospartacist@
sbcglobal.net

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
slsycla@sbcglobal.net
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
nysl@compuserve.com

Public Office:

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

Oakland

Box 29497
Oakland, CA 94604
(510) 839-0851
slbayarea@
sbcglobal.net
Public Office:
Sat. 1-5 p.m.
1634 Telegraph
3rd Floor

San Francisco

Box 77494
San Francisco, CA 94107
slbayarea@
sbcglobal.net

TROTSKYIST LEAGUE OF CANADA/LIGUE TROTSKYSTE DU CANADA

Toronto

Box 7198, Station A
Toronto, ON M5W 1X8
(416) 593-4138
spartcan@on.aibn.com

Vancouver

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

WORKERS VANGUARD

Racist Hysteria Against Ghetto Youth: Tool to Derail Struggle Mass Protests Shake France

MARCH 28—The protests by workers and students rocking France have created the sharpest political crisis in years for the French bourgeoisie and the rightist government of President Jacques Chirac and Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin. Provoked by the government's attempt to impose a new measure, the First Employment Contract (CPE), stripping young workers of any job security, the protest movement has electrified workers throughout the European Union. This is especially the case in Germany, where the government is similarly trying to roll back the wages, rights and benefits won by the working class through decades of struggle.

In the seven weeks since the protests began, dozens of universities around the country have been occupied by students or shut down. The movement spread to the country's high schools and, in the last couple of weeks, to the decaying minority ghettos (*banlieues*) on the outskirts of France's cities. More importantly, the trade unions have played an active role in the protests. The massive and growing response against the CPE has led to divisions within the bourgeoisie, including opposition to de Villepin in his own party.

Today, some three million people were out on the streets throughout France. There were strikes by railroad, air transport and city transport workers in more than 70 cities. Teachers were heavily mobilized, with over 50 percent of high school teachers on strike. This was the widest strike mobilization since the beginning of the struggle against the CPE, affecting not only the public sector but also the private sector, including auto and other metal industries, with their heavily minority workforces. At the same time, the strikes were partial, with the Paris public transport system, for example, largely continuing to function. The government responded to the mobilizations with a heavy hand, with cops firing tear gas at protesters and carrying out at least 400 arrests. While union and student leaders threaten further protests against the CPE, the de Villepin government shows no sign of backing down.

In an attempt to divide and derail the protest and strike movement by pitting workers and student youth against oppressed minority youth, the government and the press have whipped up hysteria against "violence" by "*casseurs*" (hooligans), a racist code word for ghetto youth. The anger of the ghetto youth in the face of ceaseless police repression and rampant discrimination exploded in mass upheaval throughout France's ghettos last November. The racist hysteria against ghetto youth is being wielded by the authorities and their mouthpieces to try to disappear the bloody violence of the police. Cyril



Poujoulat/AFP/Getty

March 28: Workers and youth across France came out for mass protests against government's "First Employment Contract" plan. Above: Marseille. Below: Rennes.

No to a New Popular Front!

For a Multiethnic Revolutionary Party to Fight for Workers Rule!



AP

Ferez, a member of the SUD-PTT postal union, lies in a coma after being beaten by riot police during union demonstrations on March 18. Another demonstrator has also suffered head trauma at the hands of the cops. At the March 28 demonstration in Paris, the SUD trade-union federation carried a banner, in honor of Cyril Ferez, against repression and led the union contingents in the march.

There is an "air of manipulation," as the French expression goes, to the anti-*casseur* hysteria. One of the worst rampages supposedly carried out by "*casseurs*" took place in St. Denis at the same time that representatives of the left were planning a referendum to extend the vote in municipal

elections to immigrants. The police admit to using plainclothes cops to infiltrate student protests, supposedly to evict "violent" elements. Meanwhile, on March 14, fascists of the National Front and other outfits, armed with metal bars, attacked student protesters near the Sorbonne under the protective eyes of the CRS riot police.

From the start of the anti-CPE protests, our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyiste de France have intervened at demonstrations, student assemblies and trade-union mobilizations to stress the urgent need for the workers movement and the student protesters to embrace as their own the cause of the ghetto poor. However, the trade-union misleaders, the reformist Communist (PC)

and Socialist (PS) parties and their tails on the "far left" have aided and abetted the racist assault. In fact, as a 15 March supplement to *Le Bolchévique* pointed out (see "French Trotskyists Say: Down With Racist 'First Employment' Law! Defend Ghetto Youth!" page 6), "*It was their support to the government against the ghetto youth revolt that emboldened de Villepin to launch his CPE and 'unequal opportunities' law in January.*" Now the reformists have joined in railing against "*casseur violence*," and some protest organizers have even criminally called on the racist cops to throw ghetto youth out of the demonstrations.

At today's march in Paris, many contingents were surrounded by daisy chains aimed at keeping out youth from the *banlieues*. There were incidents of plainclothes cops stopping youth on the sidewalks from getting closer to the demonstrators in the streets. The SP-affiliated CFTD union federation announced from their loudspeakers their opposition to violence and their intention to fight against "hooligans" who might try to disrupt the demonstration. The LTF intervened in Paris and Rouen at today's demonstrations in opposition to the campaign against ghetto youth, selling over 150 copies of *Le Bolchévique* and distributing thousands of our 15 March supplement.

The government's First Employment Contract law creates a national two-tier system in which newly hired youth would become second-class citizens with no protections against layoffs for two years. The CPE is an attack on the entire workers movement as the bourgeoisie tries to use youth who are anxious about their future—unemployment in France tops 20 percent for 18- to 25-year-olds—to drive down wages and working conditions for all workers.

In particular, the CPE is directed against minority youth in the *banlieues* who are victims of cop terror, discrimination and massive unemployment (48 percent in the most recent census). The CPE is an amendment to the so-called "equal opportunity

law" that was passed as a direct response to the rebellion of ghetto youth last fall (see "Down With Racist Cop Terror! Ghetto Youth Upheavals Sweep France," WV No. 858, 11 November 2005). That law legalizes night work for 15-year-olds and allows apprenticeships starting at 14 years of age, making France the only European country other than Serbia where schooling is not mandatory up to the age of 15. While the racist capitalist media insists on referring to them as "immigrants," France's minority youth are mostly French citizens, born and/or raised in France. They are the children and grandchildren of immigrant workers who

continued on page 10