

U.S. Out of Iraq Now! Hands Off Iran!

Imperialists Escalate Bloody Iraq Occupation

President Bush's January 10 announcement that the U.S. will dispatch over 20,000 more troops to Iraq in a "surge" to subdue Baghdad will mean even more death and destruction in the living hell that U.S.-occupied Iraq has become. Bush's speech also stepped up U.S. threats against Iran. As revolutionary Marxists in the belly of the imperialist beast, the Spartacist League, U.S. section of the International Communist League, demands the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Iraq and Afghanistan. *U.S. hands off the world!*

Dispensing with all pretenses that the Iraqi government is anything but a puppet regime, Bush informed Congressional leaders that he had told Iraqi prime minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki: "This has to work or you're out." The day before Bush's speech, U.S. troops along with Iraqi soldiers swarmed onto Baghdad's Sunni-dominated Haifa Street, slaughtering dozens. Immediately following Bush's speech, U.S. forces seized five Iranian officials in two separate raids in the northern Iraqi city of Irbil, during which an Iranian diplomatic mission was attacked. The raids were so provocative that they even angered local Kurdish officials who are front-line agents of the U.S. occupation.

Bush's desperate "plan" to send more troops into the Iraqi quagmire is being openly opposed by large sections of the U.S. bourgeoisie, including in Bush's Republican Party, who see his policy as damaging to U.S. imperialism's interests. Senate Democrats plan to introduce a non-binding resolution opposing Bush's plan. While a few Democrats threaten to deny funding for additional troops, Ted Kennedy made clear that by the time a request for funds arrives in Congress, "The horse will be out of the barn" and the Democrats will vote yes. Indeed, the first contingent of new troops has already arrived in Iraq.

Last year's Democratic electoral victory represented a mid-term correction by the bourgeoisie. For the ruling class, the fact that more than 150,000 U.S. troops are stuck in a losing situation in Iraq means that the military is greatly overstretched, undermining Washington's ability to array its forces against more strategically important targets, from the mullahs' Iran to the deformed workers states of North Korea and especially China. And Bush's "faith-based" gambles have only sunk the imperialists even



AP

deeper in the Iraq morass. The Shi'ite-dominated government in Baghdad isn't too happy with the U.S. troop buildup, which might impede the mass killings and expulsions of Sunnis.

Iraq's Sunni population erupted in anger over last month's "legal" sectarian lynching of Saddam Hussein, a onetime henchman of U.S. imperialism. On January 15, the al-Maliki government hanged two former Hussein aides, including his half brother, who was decapitated during the execution! The bloody U.S. war and occupation have utterly destroyed what was a relatively advanced Near Eastern country and have unleashed communal

slaughter on all sides. Thousands of Iraqis are dying each month, and hundreds of thousands have fled their cities and towns, many for neighboring countries.

And now the U.S. imperialists, as well as the Sunni-dominated states of the Near East, seek to curb the Tehran government's growing influence and power in Iraq and the region, in large part a product of the U.S. occupation. Bush has charged Iran and Syria with supporting Iraqi insurgents and threatened to "interrupt the flow of support from Iran and Syria." In an expression of the opposition to Bush inside the bourgeoisie, Zbigniew Brzezinski, former national security advisor



AFP

U.S. occupation troops in Iraq, December 2006. Military buildup announced by Bush includes sending second aircraft carrier battle group to Persian Gulf to join USS Eisenhower (above), threatening Iran.

under Jimmy Carter and a key fixture of Cold War II, pointed out in a *Washington Post* (12 January) op-ed piece: "The commitment of 21,500 more troops is a political gimmick of limited tactical significance and of no strategic benefit.... The other alternative [to withdrawal], perhaps already lurking in the back of Bush's mind, is to widen the conflict by taking military action against Syria or Iran."

Provocative war moves against Iran are well under way. Bush has ordered a second aircraft carrier strike force to the Persian Gulf, including cruise-missile-firing ships, to threaten Iran. Patriot missiles have also been sent to the region. And the *London Times* (7 January) reports that Israel has plans to destroy Iran's uranium enrichment facilities using "bunker buster" nuclear weapons.

We say: *U.S. hands off Iran!* In the face of imperialist nuclear blackmail and with continuing threats of attack, Iran *needs* nuclear weapons and adequate delivery systems as deterrence. In the event of a military attack against Iran by the U.S., or by Israel or other forces operating on behalf of the imperialists, we declare: *The international proletariat must stand for the military defense of Iran.* At the same time, as Marxists we give not one iota of political support to the reactionary mullah regime in Tehran.

Meanwhile, earlier this month, at least one U.S. gunship fired on people in the southern tip of Somalia. The attack targeted

continued on page 10

Break with the Democrats— The Other Party of War and Racism! For a Class-Struggle Workers Party!



Support the Class-War Prisoners!

The Partisan Defense Committee received the following letters from class-war prisoner Jaan Laaman and Ray Luc Levasseur, who was released from prison in 2004. Laaman and Levasseur were imprisoned in the mid 1980s after they and five others—the Ohio 7—were con-

victed for their roles in a radical group that took credit for bank “expropriations” and bombings against such symbols of U.S. imperialism as military and corporate offices. From a proletarian standpoint, the actions of these leftist activists against imperialism and racist

injustice are not a crime. These courageous fighters should not have served a day in prison.

The PDC is grateful for these letters, which were sent in support of its December 2006 Holiday Appeal. The annual Holiday Appeal, which raises money for the PDC’s Class-War Prisoners Stipend Fund, was focused this time on the urgent fight to free death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. The PDC’s program of regular stipends is a concrete expression of solidarity with those imprisoned for standing up to racist capitalist repression. To support the work of the Partisan Defense Committee, send contributions to: PDC, P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, NY, NY 10013; call (212) 406-4252.

* * *

Nov. 28, 2006

Let me wish everyone Happy Holidays and warm RED Season’s Greetings!

The Partisan Defense Committee needs, wants and deserves your support. 2006 marks the PDC’s 21st straight year of concretely supporting some of America’s long held political prisoners. I myself have been a PDC class war prisoner receiving a regular bi-monthly stipend of support, year after year for I think, 20 years now. Additionally in moments of specific need (in my case for legal expenses this past year and for educational expenses some years ago), the PDC stepped forward also.

Material support is important in a real day to day, do I have enough stamps or toothpaste, sense. Political support and informing the public about political prisoner events and issues, is also very important. The PDC under its own banner and through the Workers Vanguard, is an important source of support for us. As political prisoners we need and want this support, so your support of the Partisan Defense Committee is an important and meaningful political statement.

To learn more about and interact with political prisoners in the U.S., and to hear our thoughts on ongoing world events, you can check out 4strugglemag, which I edit, at: <http://www.4strugglemag.org>. Issue 8 is just out.

**FREEDOM IS A
CONSTANT STRUGGLE!
RED SEASON’S GREETINGS**

Jaan Laaman,
Ohio 7 anti-imperialist
political prisoner

* * *

10 December 2006

My grandmother began working in textile mills when she was 13 years old. My grandfather went into those mills when he was 14 years of age. My parents left school at 16 to work in the mills. My turn came when I was 17. I didn’t know about class war back then, I only knew about survival and that my people—the French Canadian workers—were being shortchanged. We had no political nor economic power and we paid for it by operating the machines that enriched others.

Two years ago I was released after 20 years in prison. For 20 years the government kept me in their worst cages for political offenses—actions taken against imperialism’s obscene manifestations of violence and exploitation.

While in prison it was always a challenge to marshal support among the left, the Partisan Defense Committee stepped up when others faltered. The PDC, for many long years, provided needed funds to me and my family, for which I will always be grateful.

I encourage you to donate what you can, large or small, to enable the PDC to continue its solidarity work. Any donation translates to direct support for our political prisoners.

Free Mumia Abu-Jamal & all political prisoners.

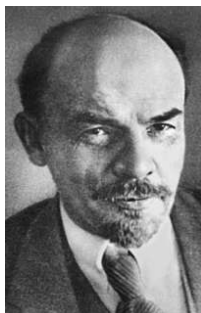
Ray Luc Levasseur



TROTSKY

Honor Lenin, Liebknecht and Luxemburg!

In the tradition of the early Communist International, this month we commemorate the “Three L’s”: Bolshevik leader V. I. Lenin, who died in January 1924, and German revolutionary Marxists Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, who were assassinated in January 1919 by the reactionary Freikorps as part of the Social Democratic government’s suppression of the Spartakist uprising. The following passage is from Luxemburg’s The Crisis in the German Social Democracy, which



LENIN

was written in April 1915 under the pseudonym Junius while she was imprisoned for her revolutionary opposition to interimperialist World War I. Luxemburg and Liebknecht were at that time leaders of the revolutionary wing of the German Social Democracy, whose chauvinist leaders supported German imperialism in the war. The two went on to found the Spartakusbund and, in late 1918, the German Communist Party.

Socialism is the first popular movement in the world that has set itself a goal and has established in the social life of man a conscious thought, a definite plan, the free will of mankind. For this reason Friedrich Engels calls the final victory of the socialist proletariat a stride by humankind from the animal kingdom into the kingdom of liberty. This step, too, is bound by unalterable historical laws to the thousands of rungs of the ladder of the past with its tortuous sluggish growth. But it will never be accomplished, if the burning spark of the conscious will of the masses does not spring from the material conditions that have been built up by past development. Socialism will not fall as manna from heaven. It can only be won by a long chain of powerful struggles, in which the proletariat, under the leadership of the social democracy, will learn to take hold of the rudder of society to become instead of the powerless victim of history, its conscious guide.

Friedrich Engels once said: “Capitalist society faces a dilemma, either an advance to socialism or a reversion to barbarism.” What does a “reversion to barbarism” mean at the present stage of European civilization? We have read and repeated these words thoughtlessly without a conception of their terrible import. At this moment one glance about us will show us what a reversion to barbarism in capitalist society means. *This world war* means a reversion to barbarism. The triumph of imperialism leads to the destruction of culture, sporadically during a modern war, and forever, if the period of world wars that has just begun is allowed to take its damnable course to the last ultimate consequence. Thus we stand today, as Friedrich Engels prophesied more than a generation ago, before the awful proposition: either the triumph of imperialism and the destruction of all culture, and, as in ancient Rome, depopulation, desolation, degeneration, a vast cemetery; or, the victory of socialism, that is, the conscious struggle of the international proletariat against imperialism, against its methods, against war. This is the dilemma of world history, its inevitable choice, whose scales are trembling in the balance awaiting the decision of the proletariat. Upon it depends the future of culture and humanity. In this war imperialism has been victorious. Its brutal sword of murder has dashed the scales, with overbearing brutality, down into the abyss of shame and misery. If the proletariat learns *from* this war and in this war to exert itself, to cast off its serfdom to the ruling classes, to become the lord of its own destiny, the shame and misery will not have been in vain.

—Rosa Luxemburg, *The Junius Pamphlet: The Crisis in the German Social Democracy* (1916), reprinted in *Rosa Luxemburg Speaks* (Pathfinder Press, 1970)

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From Death Row, This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal

The Other Army



While media pundits and politicians bum rush the mike about President George W. Bush's plans to "surge" U.S. troop forces in Iraq, little is being said about another army there.

By this I refer not to the British, who, as the junior partners in this nefarious occupation, have contributed a significant number of troops to this operation, nor to the other so-called 'coalition of the willing', most of whom have only sent token numbers.

I mean the private armies, known best by the term "contractors"—men (mostly) who work for private corporations, who are often heavily armed, and who number some 100,000.

They often wear camouflage fatigues—and many are paid six-figure salaries!

Remember the notorious scandal of Abu Ghraib prison? While the fate of 7 low-level soldiers (and one female general) is generally well-known, there is rarely discussion (and rare still, legal action) on the actions of contractors. Such people played a key role in Abu Ghraib—and play vital roles everyday in Iraq, separate and apart from the U.S. military, or any governmental structure.

In Abu Ghraib, around the exact time of the events that are now infamous and historic, *all* of the interpreters at the prison worked for one U.S. company—Titan Corp.

At the same time (as of Jan. '04), over 1/2 of all interrogators and analysts worked for a Virginia-based company—CAGI International.

As novelist-essayist Joan Didion noted in a recent edition of *The New York Review of Books*:

"There are now, split among more than 150 private firms, thousands of such contracts outstanding. Halliburton alone had by July 2004 contracts worth \$11,431,000,000.

"Private firms in Iraq have done more than build bases and bridges and prisons. They have done more than handle meals and laundry and transportation. They train Iraqi forces. They manage security. Contract interrogators from two firms, CAGI International (according to its web site 'a world leader in providing timely solutions to the intelligence community') and Titan ('a leading provider of comprehensive information and communications products, solutions, and services for National Security'), were accused of abuses at Abu Ghraib, where almost half of all interrogators and analysts were CAGI employees. They operate free of oversight. They distance the process of interrogation

from the citizens in whose name, or in whose 'defense,' or to ensure whose 'security,' the interrogation is being conducted. They offer 'timely solutions.'" [Fr.: Didion, Joan, "Cheney: The Fatal Touch," *The New York Review of Books*, October 5, 2006, p. 56.]

More than any other war in U.S. history, big companies are making big bucks by privatization of almost everything. Indeed, in a very real sense, it can be said that even torture was privatized—as shown by the allegation that Abu Hamid, a Titan employee, hired to do interpreting at Abu Ghraib, reportedly raped a 15-year old boy there.

Titan held contracts worth an estimated \$657 million. CAGI had contracts in the tens of millions, at least.

Speaking of Halliburton (where Vice President Dick Cheney was CEO), it proceeded to run up so many bills that it overcharged the U.S. government by more than \$1 billion! *One Billion!*

Halliburton, by the way, provided U.S. service members with contaminated drinking water—and charged Army folks \$99 to wash their laundry—and didn't get it clean!

No matter what Bush ultimately decides, a private army continues to roam Iraq, answerable only to their bosses. Armed to the teeth, they are a private army for business.

Who says war is bad for business?

7 January 2007

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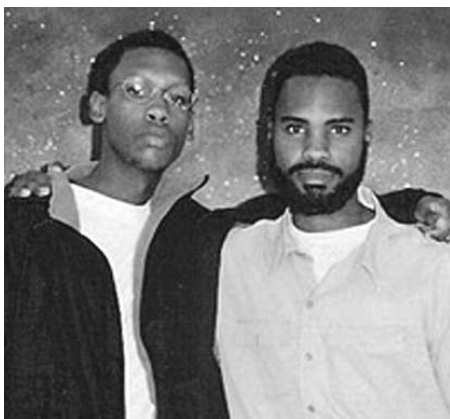
If you wish to correspond with Mumia, you can write to: Mumia Abu-Jamal, AM8335, SCI Greene, 175 Progress Drive, Waynesburg, PA 15370.

Habeas Corpus Appeal Filed Free Jamal Hart!

On December 20, Jamal Hart filed a *habeas corpus* petition in the United States District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania that could set the stage for his release from prison. Hart, son of death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, was sentenced in 1998 to 15½ years on bogus firearms possession charges, framed up for his prominent activism in the campaign to free his father. Although Hart was initially charged under Pennsylvania laws, which would have meant a probationary sentence, Clinton's Justice Department intervened to have him thrown into prison under federal laws.

In a January 15 letter to the Partisan Defense Committee, Hart, who was recently transferred to the federal penitentiary at Schuylkill, Pennsylvania, explained, "The state of Pennsylvania labeled me as an armed career criminal due to 3 felony charges I was convicted of. However, after thorough research by prison officials here at FCI Schuylkill, it has been revealed that an assault conviction I was accused of in 1995 DOES NOT EXIST and should not have counted in the first place. Due to this blatant miscarriage of justice, I should have been sentenced to the original sentence range of 6 years 5 months to 8 years instead of the dreadful 15 years to life."

From the outset, the PDC has con-



Monique Code
Jamal Hart (right) with his son, Jamal Hart Jr.

demned the prosecution of Jamal Hart as a racist political frame-up. Hart should never have spent one day in jail. He has already been locked up for eight years. If Hart's *habeas corpus* petition is granted, it would mean a reduction of his sentence, and he would finally be released for time served.

Hart has requested that letters be sent to the court demanding that his petition be granted and that he be released. Write to: Judge Edwin M. Kosik, U.S. District Court, 235 N. Washington Ave., P.O. Box 1148, Scranton, PA 18501. *Free Jamal Hart now!* ■

JOIN THE CAMPAIGN!

Funds are urgently needed for legal defense!

Make a contribution today, payable to "National Lawyers Guild Foundation" (earmarked for "Mumia") and mail to: Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal, P.O. Box 2012, New York, NY 10159.

Organize protest! Pass motions in your unions, campus, community and religious organizations demanding Mumia's freedom. Get your union or organization to make a contribution and join rallies and protests for Mumia. Publicize Mumia's case in your union or organization's newsletter.

Spread the word! Contact the PDC for copies of *The Fight to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal—Mumia Is Innocent!*

This pamphlet arms activists in the struggle for Mumia's freedom by presenting the political basis of the state vendetta against Mumia and the explosive evidence which completely destroys the more than two-decades-long frame-up of this eloquent fighter for black freedom. It is available for \$1. Get the PDC button: "Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!"—\$1 each. Order the PDC video, *From Death Row, This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal*—\$10 for DVD, \$15 for VHS. Bundles of the 4-page brochure, *Mumia Is an Innocent Man: Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!*—\$2 for 25 copies. Order from/make checks payable to Partisan Defense Committee at our New York City address below.



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Young Spartacus

Defend the Victims of State Repression in Mexico!

We print below a translation of a December 21 leaflet issued by the Juventud Espartaquista, youth group of the Grupo Espartaquista de México, section of the International Communist League, protesting the arrests and torture of members of the teachers union and their sympathizers in Oaxaca. Last May the teachers in Oaxaca, one of the poorest states in Mexico, struck for decent wages. Up to 80,000 teachers participated in combative demonstrations demanding greater resources for public education and raising slogans against the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) government. Their struggle rallied the support of workers and poor people in Oaxaca and throughout Mexico. Teachers and their supporters occupied the center of the city of Oaxaca and successfully beat back several police attacks. Subsequently, the federal and local police unleashed brutal repression, rounding up protesters and dismantling the barricades (see "Protest Bloody Crackdown in Mexico!" WV No. 882, 8 December 2006).

As of January 12, some of those detained in Nayarit, Tlacolula and Miahuatlán prisons have been released on bail, but the charges against them have not been dropped. Dozens of people, including Flavio Sosa and other prominent leaders of the Popular Assembly of the Peoples of Oaxaca (APPO), remain imprisoned. Reports of torture and sexual abuse of prisoners continue to be publicized, including of the rape of 15 men held in Nayarit prison.

* * *

After more than five months of militant struggle, an indication of how much the Oaxacan masses are fed up with the misery and racist oppression in which they live, Oaxaca has been turned into the scene of a merciless witchhunt against leftist activists and the general population. Following the brutal state repression on November 25 against a peaceful march of the APPO and its sympathizers—which demanded the ouster of the bloody governor Ulises Ruiz Ortiz, freedom for political prisoners, and the withdrawal of the PFP [Federal Preventive Police]—the PFP and state police circle the streets like vultures and illegally search houses for APPO mem-

bers and sympathizers. Some 60 people have been "disappeared" at this time. Approximately 300 people have been detained who have suffered, to a lesser or greater degree in different cases, beat-

ings, torture, threats of being "disappeared," sexual abuse, etc. In addition, arrest warrants have been issued for around 300 other people, many of them teachers belonging to Section 22 of the SNTE [National Educational Workers Union]. Dozens have been released but still face trial.

On Monday, December 4, four leading members of the APPO—among them the brothers Flavio and Horacio Sosa Villavicencio—were arrested by the PFP in Mexico City after traveling there to demonstrate their desire to continue negotiations with Gobernación [the Ministry of the Interior]. Their arrest was a gross and calculated ambush. Flavio and Horacio are in the maximum security prison of Altiplano—formerly La Palma—accused of a ridiculous list of crimes such as sedition, kidnapping, battery and robbery, among others. Three more leaders of the APPO were arrested as they left an SNTE meeting in Oaxaca on December 18.

The Juventud Espartaquista solidarizes with the struggle of the Oaxacan masses against state repression and emphatically protests the abuse suffered by the detained. In defending the activists in the

Oaxaca struggle, we are also defending the right of the left and workers movement as a whole to exist and struggle. We of the Juventud Espartaquista say: **Drop all the charges! Immediate and unconditional freedom for all the arrested! PFP and army out of Oaxaca! There is no justice in the bourgeois courts!**

Among those arrested in Oaxaca are at least five students from the UNAM [National Autonomous University of Mexico, centered in Mexico City]: Carmen Fernández Xicoténcatl and Julieta Cruz Cruz, both sociology students in the School of Political and Social Sciences; Sacramento Delfino Cano Hernández, student at the School of Philosophy and Literature; Christian Marcel Cebolledo Gutiérrez, student at the Economics School; and Edith Coca Soriano, student at the School of Advanced Studies—Iztacala. These students did nothing more than solidarize with the teachers in Oaxaca—and their allies in the APPO—who, in one of the poorest states and while receiving miserably low salaries, struggle under horrendous conditions to provide education to children who often do not even have enough to eat.

Carmen, Julieta and Sacramento were violently detained on November 30 during an illegal search of a private home in the city of Oaxaca. After having been "disappeared" for two days, they are currently imprisoned in Miahuatlán on spurious charges of carrying illegal arms, robbing a truck, criminal association, impersonating a public official, attempted bribery, and assault with a sharp instrument against the police who detained them. For his part, Christian was kidnapped and tortured for several days after his capture on November 25 by the PFP in Oaxaca. He was threatened with being raped, burnt and flung from a helicopter. He is now imprisoned in a maximum security prison in the state of Nayarit, facing ridiculous charges like obstructing arrest, sedition, arson and criminal association.

Women have suffered particularly brutal treatment, illustrating the fundamentally anti-woman nature of the capitalist state, in which women must accept a condition of submission and imprisonment in the home. One woman teacher at [Metropolitan Autonomous University] UAM-Xochimilco had two fingers cut off in a beating carried out by the PFP. Another woman activist was beaten unconscious. The 34 women arrested on November 25 had their heads shaved. When they were imprisoned in Tlacolula, Oaxaca, they were subjected to abusive interrogations. Their tormentors put clubs between their legs and threatened to rape them.

The PAN [ruling National Action Party] beast is very dangerous. After his dubious electoral victory and militarized swearing-in, Felipe Calderón has combined the arrests of the main leaders of the APPO with a state of siege in Oaxaca, with the goal of obliterating the Oaxacan social movement. The sedition charge against Flavio Sosa and others is an attempt to outlaw social protest. With this Calderón intends to send a sinister message, both to the leftist activists and to his bourgeois opponents in the PRD

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Above: Federal police attack demonstrators in Oaxaca City, 25 November 2006. Below: Families of those arrested protest outside Tlacolula prison, demanding release of teachers and APPO supporters.

Octavio Vélez



Free All Oaxaca Prisoners Now! Drop the Charges!

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Information and readings: (604) 687-0353
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LOS ANGELES

Thursday, February 1, 6 p.m.

Video Showing: **From Death Row, This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal**

University of California, Los Angeles
Haines Hall, A78

For more information: (213) 380-8239
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Wednesday, January 24, 6:30 p.m.

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Toronto SYC Exposes Apologists for Imperialism

The following article is reprinted from the *Young Spartacus* pages of *Spartacist Canada* No. 151 (Winter 2006/2007). Sonali Kolhatkar and James Ingalls, authors of *Bleeding Afghanistan and apologists for U.S. imperialism*, recently completed a tour publicizing their book in the U.S. and Canada.

SPARTACIST CANADA

The “Grass-Roots Anti-Imperialist Network” (GRAIN) sometimes postures as an alternative to the mainstream, Canadian-nationalist antiwar coalition in Toronto. But anyone who bought GRAIN’s anti-imperialist rhetoric was in for a shock at their September 21 University of Toronto debut feting Sonali Kolhatkar and James Ingalls, authors of a new book, *Bleeding Afghanistan*. In the meeting Kolhatkar argued that the U.S. should stay in Afghanistan to ensure stability before they “just cut and run” (shades of George Bush!). In their book Kolhatkar and Ingalls declare: “The occupation of all foreign troops should end, *but only after disarmament is complete and Afghans feel safe in their own country* [emphasis in original].” And they openly call for “an international military occupation of Afghanistan” consisting of NATO and the UN. One has to ask: what kind of leftists would promote such unabashed pro-imperialist lackeys?

GRAIN’s banner at the meeting read “Canada Out of Kandahar.” But in promoting this duo, GRAIN failed in the most basic duty of anyone claiming to be anti-imperialist. In contrast, we revolutionaries of the Spartacus Youth Clubs say: U.S./Canada out of Afghanistan now! No UN intervention! We welcome military blows suffered by the occupation forces while giving no political support to



U.S. paratroopers near Gardez, Afghanistan.

the reactionary Islamic “resistance” forces. Above all, we fight to mobilize the workers of this country in class struggle against their capitalist exploiters at home.

Kolhatkar and Ingalls are supporters of the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) and codirectors of the Afghan Women’s Mission (AWM), an American political front and financial conduit for RAWA. This pedigree is utterly consistent with their non-opposition to the imperialist occupation of Afghanistan. AWM’s website

reads like an ad for a bourgeois charity. Donations, it explains, are not tax-deductible in Canada; no, AWM doesn’t accept American Express; and here’s how to sponsor an Afghan orphan. They actually write that “The US could have bombed fewer villages [!] and killed fewer civilians [!!!].”

As for the RAWA feminists, they are neither revolutionary, leftist nor even genuine champions of women’s rights. In 2001, as the U.S. was raining bombs on Afghanistan, RAWA openly lobbied for

UN imperialist “peacekeeping” forces to intervene and they supported the reinstatement of the former king, Zahir Shah, who was ousted in 1973. Backing imperialism and its agents has defined RAWA since its formation in 1977. In December 1979, the Soviet Union sent troops to Afghanistan at the request of the secular and modernizing government of the People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), which came to power in 1978. The PDPA was besieged by a bloody, imperialist-backed Islamic insurgency, the *mujahedin*. RAWA stood not with the Soviet intervention, which brought the only hope of emancipation to the hideously oppressed women of Afghanistan, but with the CIA-bankrolled “Afghan resistance.” To this day, virulent anti-Communism is their calling card, opening doors in the corridors of bourgeois power and the wallets of Western feminists and liberals.

Trotskyists Hailed the Red Army in Afghanistan

The PDPA’s reforms—land distribution, freeing women from the *burqa* (the head-to-toe “veil”), reducing the bride price and providing education for women and girls—sparked a ferocious rebellion by landlords, tribal chiefs and mullahs. Indeed, the rights of women were central to this war, making it unique in modern history. When the Soviet army rolled in, we declared: “Hail Red Army! Extend social gains of the October Revolution to Afghan peoples!” Sending troops into Afghanistan was an unambiguously progressive act, cutting against the grain of the Soviet Stalinists’ search for “peaceful coexistence” with imperialism. It underlined our Trotskyist understanding that

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We print below the speech, edited for publication, given by Richard Elle of the Spartacus Youth Club at the Partisan Defense Committee’s 21st annual Holiday Appeal for Class-War Prisoners in Chicago on 10 December 2006.

The Chicago SYC is actively fighting to make Mumia’s case known throughout the city. We’re making presentations about Mumia’s case to campus youth groups and university classes. We speak about how Mumia’s case is important and stress that it is vital that other groups and individuals fight for his freedom. To throw the net out wider, we’re doing radio interviews—like at Chicago State University, where we presented Mumia’s case and asked those who were listening to get involved, to come to the Mumia rally we held in October, and to today’s event. We understand that the fight for Mumia is critical because black oppression is the bedrock of American capitalism. Black people will not be free until capitalism has been overthrown through a victorious workers revolution. Mumia Abu-Jamal, decorated journalist, black radical and eloquent speaker for the oppressed, is precisely who the rulers of this country fear the most. To them, he represents the spectre of black revolution, and that is why for him they reserve their ultimate punishment, the death penalty.

Because we fight for socialist revolution, the SYC fights against U.S. imperi-

“For Socialist Revolution in the U.S. and Internationally!”

SYC Speaker at Chicago Holiday Appeal

alism. When the U.S. was bombing Iraq, we took a side by calling for the defense of Iraq. We understand that war is not the policy or preference of one or another capitalist politician. War is an essential part of capitalism as it sets out to conquer new markets and entrenches its political interests abroad. The Workers World Party (WWP), the International Socialist Organization (ISO) and the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) built demonstrations using pacifist demands like “No blood for oil!” or “Money for schools, not for war!” These demands do not make clear that war is a *systematic* necessity of capitalism, but instead turn the crimes of blood-soaked U.S. imperialism into a “bad decision” at the hands of a few individuals.

It should be remembered that the Iraq war began with bipartisan support. Both the Democrats and Republicans agreed that the slaughter of Iraqis was necessary—any differences between them amounted to simple tactical differences. We intervened to make crystal clear that the fight against war is a fight for social-

ist revolution. While the WWP, ISO and RCP aimed to build the “broadest possible unity” by blurring the issue of *class*, we fought to win more revolutionary-minded elements to our understanding of the centrality of working-class struggle against U.S. imperialism, as part of leading the way to a socialist future.

Last February at the University of Chicago, four activists were arrested for protesting military recruiters. Two of them were SYC supporters. We say, “Not one person, not one penny, for U.S. imperialism!” The SYC calls for the unconditional and immediate withdrawal of the U.S. from Iraq and Afghanistan. To bring the struggle against the imperialist military to the universities, actions like the February protest are important, necessary and exemplary.

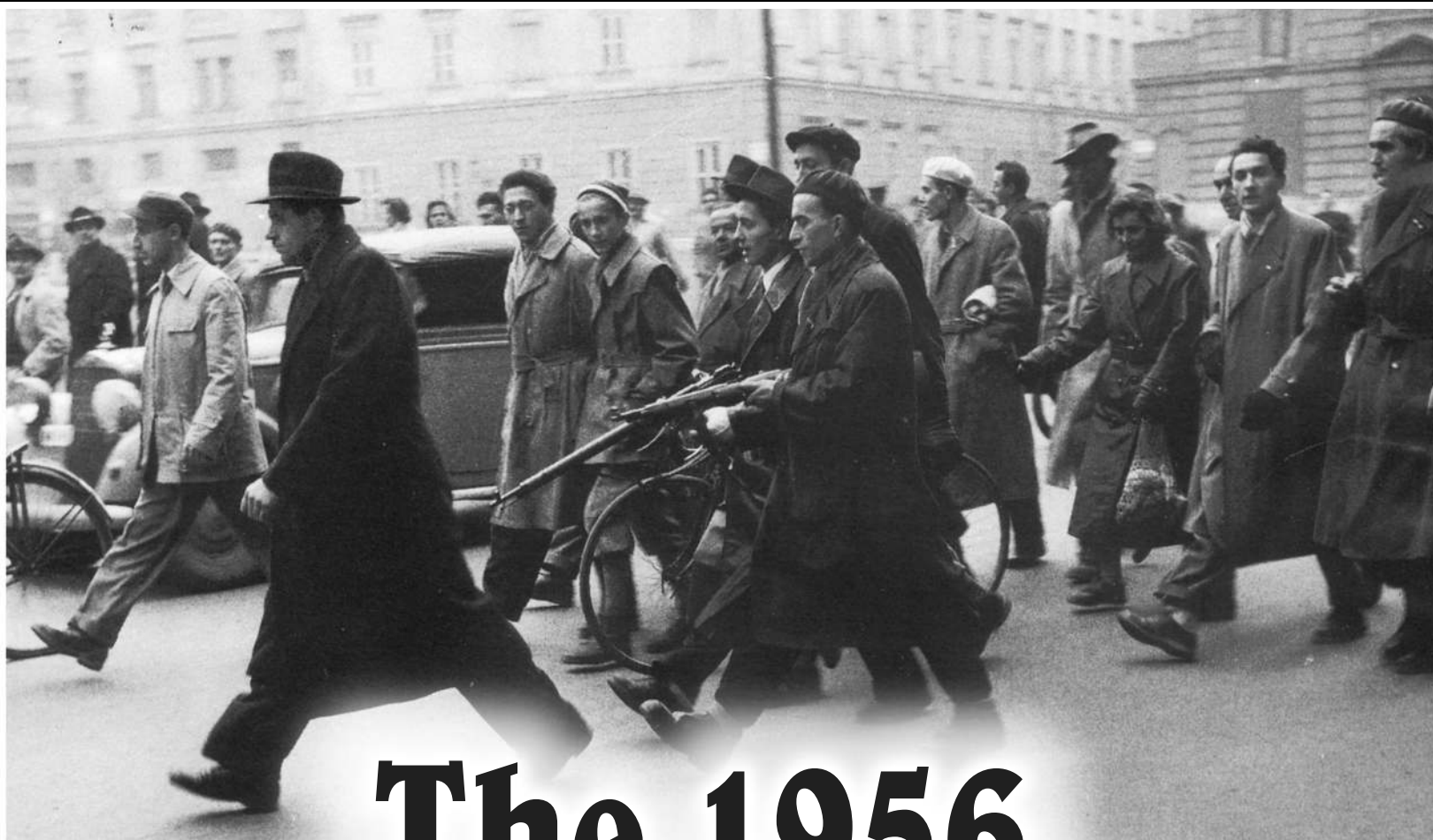
We sprang into action to defend the arrested and beat back the university administration’s attack against our right to free speech. We organized a united-front protest. The central demands of our demonstration were: “Drop all charges against

the anti-military recruitment protesters now! Administration hands off! No disciplinary actions!” We issued statements and wrote letters to the administration and the campus press. Over 40 individuals and organizations endorsed our demonstration, and 70 people came in our defense because they too understood that “an injury to one is an injury to all.”

When students moved to express their opposition to the U.S. war machine, the administration tried to send the message that if we stepped out of line, we would be crushed. But in the end, our united front succeeded, and we won—all of the charges were dropped.

But how are Iraq and Mumia related? As Leninists, we believe that the state is an instrument of political rule of one dominant class over another. The *capitalist* state takes actions in the interest of the *capitalist* class. In the same way that the many peoples of the neocolonial world will forever be under the brutal thumb of U.S. imperialism so long as there is international capital, the lives of Mumia and other brave fighters for the oppressed will forever be in danger so long as racist U.S. capitalism rules over us all. That is why the SYC fights for socialist revolution in the U.S. and internationally. So, if you want to fight to get rid of capitalism and open the road to human freedom, check out the SYC. ■

Workers Political Revolution Against Stalinist Rule



BBC Hulton

The 1956 Hungarian Revolution

This part concludes the article, Part One of which appeared in WV No. 883 (5 January).

As we noted last issue, the 1956 Hungarian Revolution had an enormous impact on the left internationally. It touched off a deep crisis in many Stalinist parties and had a major impact on Trotskyist organizations.

PART TWO

In the U.S., the Hungarian events led to the consolidation of a left opposition in Max Shachtman's Independent Socialist League (ISL) and its youth group, the Young Socialist League (YSL). The Shachtman tendency had broken from Trotskyism in 1940, refusing to defend the Soviet Union in World War II and developing the position that Stalin's Russia was a new exploitative form of class society, "bureaucratic collectivism." Following their break with Trotskyism, the Shachtmanites pursued an uneven 18-year-long course to full-blown social democracy, culminating in their liquidation into Norman Thomas' Socialist Party in 1958.

In response to the prevailing pressures of the anti-Soviet Cold War, Shachtman's group, which became the ISL in 1949,

Hungarian insurgents arrest member of hated secret police during 1956 Revolution.

moved to the right throughout the 1950s. Though still claiming to be orthodox Leninists, the Shachtmanites' program in 1956 for Hungary—for a sovereign parliament based on free elections—amounted to a call for capitalist counterrevolution in the guise of "democracy." Had this program been carried out in largely peasant Hungary, it might well have given an electoral majority to the bourgeois clericalist Smallholders Party. This openly counter-revolutionary line was an important step in the Shachtmanites' liquidation into official American social democracy. A few years later, Shachtman himself supported President John F. Kennedy's Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba.

A left opposition led by Tim Wohlforth, Shane Mage and James Robertson resisted the ISL/YSL's capitulation to social democracy. In the course of this effort, these left Shachtmanites recognized that the events of the Hungarian Revolution affirmed Trotsky's position that the Stalinist bureaucracy was a parasitic caste as against Shachtman's "new class" theory (see "The Bankruptcy of 'New Class' Theories—Tony Cliff and Max Shacht-

man: Pro-Imperialist Accomplices of Counterrevolution," *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 55, Autumn 1999).

Having transcended left Shachtmanism, these youth fused with the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in 1958. An important section of the founding cadres of the SWP youth group, the Young Socialist Alliance (YSA), they found themselves again in a rapidly rightward-moving party. Robertson and Mage (the latter of whom subsequently abandoned Marxism) were among those comrades who emerged as the SWP's left opposition, forming the Revolutionary Tendency (RT). Beginning in December 1963, Robertson, Mage and other RTers were bureaucratically expelled from the SWP. This grouping was the embryo of what became the Spartacist League, which was founded in 1966. (Wohlforth—acting as a tool for Gerry Healy, head of the Socialist Labour League in Britain—provoked an unprincipled split in the RT in 1962 and went on to serve as Healy's toady as head of the Workers League. Wohlforth more recently emerged as an abject apologist for U.S. imperialism, calling in 1993 for American intervention

in Bosnia under the headline "Give War a Chance" [*In These Times*, 26 July 1993].)

Another consequence of the impact of the Hungarian Revolution on the left in the U.S. was the formation of a pro-Stalinist faction, led by Sam Marcy, in the SWP. The Marcy group, forerunners of the Workers World Party (WWP), provided a sophisticated apology for the suppression of the Hungarian Revolution. Unlike Stalinist hacks such as the Communist Party's Herbert Aptheker, whose book *The Truth About Hungary* portrayed the beginning of the revolution as the work of counterrevolutionaries organized by Washington, the Marcyites did not attempt to prove that the revolt was some deep-laid imperialist plot. The main Marcyite document, V. Grey's "The Class Character of the Hungarian Uprising" (*SWP Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 1957), begins: "On October 23 the students and workers of Budapest demonstrated for a liberalization of the totalitarian Stalinist regime. Contrary to their own desires, the demonstration was swiftly converted into a full-scale, nation-wide *counterrevolution* throughout Hungary" (emphasis in original).

If the workers and intellectuals in the decisive battleground of the uprising were against a counterrevolution, then how did such a "conversion" come about? Grey argued that the workers, lacking a revolutionary party, had no understanding of the need to defend the gains of the deformed workers state: "The only consciousness was for 'freedom'. But freedom from what?—Freedom to do what?... Their first duty was to keep the proletarian dictatorship. Apparently nobody understood this." The Marcyites' position boils down to the idea that, in the absence of a pre-existing Trotskyist leadership, the workers would inevitably accept the restoration of capitalism. In 1989, the WWP applied the same stance toward the Tiananmen events in China, denouncing this incipient proletarian political revolution as counter-revolutionary and acting as abject apologists for the Stalinist misrulers.

Polish Solidarność and the Lessons of Hungary

The central documents by Shane Mage in the factional struggle against the right-



September 1981: Solidarność leaders (left) kneel to Pope during first congress in Gdansk, Poland; Spartacist League protest against opening of New York office of Solidarność, company union for CIA, Vatican and Wall Street (above).

wing ISL/YSL majority were reprinted in the 1959 pamphlet *The Hungarian Revolution*, published by a forerunner of the YSA. Mage insisted that whether the collapse of Stalinist rule led to a workers government or to capitalist restoration would be determined by the political consciousness and leadership of the working class, specifically the ability of the workers movement to overcome and combat parliamentarist illusions and nationalist prejudices. This would be true even where there existed proletarian organs of dual power, as was the case in Hungary in 1956.

The heart of Mage’s argument was that “pure democracy” in East Europe—such as a sovereign parliament based on free elections—would likely lead to the victory of pro-Western, petty-bourgeois forces (such as the Hungarian Smallholders), who would in short order restore capitalist rule. Mage further pointed out that such counterrevolutionary parties need not call for nor effect the immediate denationalization of statified industry. Rather they would subordinate the nationalized economy to the interests of the domestic petty bourgeoisie and international capital.

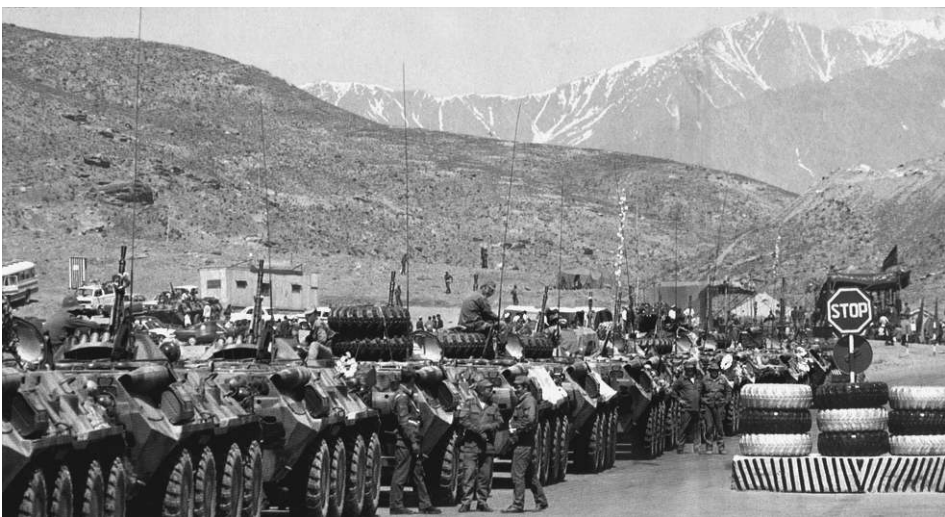
In this, Mage was following Trotsky, who wrote in his November 1937 “Not a Workers’ and Not a Bourgeois State?” (*Writings 1937-38*):

“Should a bourgeois counterrevolution succeed in the USSR, the new government for a lengthy period would have to base itself upon the nationalized economy. But what does such a type of temporary conflict between the economy and the state mean? It means a *revolution* or a *counterrevolution*. The victory of one class over another signifies that it will reconstruct the economy in the interests of the victors.”

Mage insisted that such a counterrevolution was *not* what had occurred in Hungary in October-November 1956. The effective organs of power were the workers councils, which expressed an, albeit confused, *socialist* consciousness.

The material in Mage’s pamphlet was a central element in our tendency’s understanding of the struggle for proletarian political revolution and our fight against the forces of “democratic” capitalist counterrevolution in the East European deformed workers states and the former Soviet Union. In Poland in 1980, striking workers lined up behind an opposition dominated by reactionary ultranationalists, Catholic clerics and pro-capitalist social democrats. In 1981, we published a pamphlet, *Solidarność: Polish Company Union for CIA and Bankers*, with excerpts from Mage’s documents under the title “‘Pure Democracy’ or Political Revolution in East Europe.”

Wielding the upper hand in the Solidarność “union” was a constellation of counterrevolutionary forces, the likes of which had been a distinctly subordinate element in Hungary in 1956. At its first national congress in September 1981, Solidarność consolidated on a program of capitalist restoration. Behind its call for “free elections” to the Sejm (parliament) stood the program of capitalist restoration under



Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1988-89 (above) abandoned Afghan peoples to mujahedin cutthroats, put fate of East European and Soviet workers states in the balance. Right: Soviet leader Gorbachev clinks glasses with West German chancellor Kohl in 1989, before fall of Berlin Wall.



the guise of parliamentary government.

In contrast to Hungary 1956, Solidarność was able to mobilize significant sections of the working class against the bureaucracy under the banner of right-wing reaction, symbolized by the Polish eagle and the Catholic cross. This was a direct consequence of the political bankruptcy of Stalinism. In Poland in 1956, 1970 and again in 1976, proletarian upheavals were headed off as the bureaucracy each time put forward a new leader who promised a new and better deal. At the same time, the Polish Stalinists strengthened the Catholic church in various ways, including by perpetuating a landowning peasantry. Having been disillusioned three times with “national-liberal” Stalinism, by the late 1970s the Polish working class was susceptible to being organized by clerical-nationalists who answered to the imperialists and the Vatican.

Solidarność’s counterrevolutionary bid for power was checked in December 1981 by General Jaruzelski’s coup, which was strongly backed by Moscow. Virtually the entire non-Stalinist left backed Solidarność, from the French Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire and other components of the pseudo-Trotskyist United Secretariat to the U.S. International Socialist Organization, then affiliated with the British Socialist Workers Party of the late Tony Cliff.

How such “leftists” distort reality in the service of their counterrevolutionary line on Poland can be seen in an article on the 1956 Hungarian Revolution in *Socialism Today* (November 2006), which is published by the Socialist Party (England and Wales), section of the Committee for a Workers’ International. The article compares the Hungarian workers, who were committed to the defense of socialism as they saw it, to Solidarność, writing of the latter that “some of its leaders retained a strong allegiance to the ideas of socialism.” Solidarność’s “allegiances”—including those of social democrats like Jacek Kuron who formed part of its leadership—can be gleaned from the fact that this was the only “union” beloved by Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher!

In sharp contrast to the Stalinophobic fake left, we fulfilled our class duty to unconditionally defend the Polish deformed workers state against capitalist restoration, emphasizing in *Workers Vanguard* No. 289 (25 September 1981):

“Solidarity’s counterrevolutionary course must be stopped! *If the Kremlin Stalinists, in their necessarily brutal, stupid way, intervene militarily to stop it, we will support this.* And we take responsibility in advance for this; whatever the idiocies and atrocities they will commit, we do not flinch from defending the crushing of Solidarity’s counterrevolution.”

In 1989, the Polish Stalinists abdicated governmental power in favor of Solidarność, which had won a landslide electoral victory that June. Thus Solidar-

ność formed the first of the capitalist-restorationist regimes in East Europe.

The Dead End of Stalinism

In Hungary, following the suppression of the 1956 Revolution, the Kremlin installed in power the liberal Stalinist János Kádár, who had been imprisoned and tortured under Rakosi. After an initial period of repression, Kádár set out to gain popular acceptance, or at least tolerance, for his regime by redirecting investment so as to rapidly raise consumption levels—a policy dubbed “goulash communism.” Kádár’s New Economic Mechanism anticipated the “market socialism” that would later characterize Deng Xiaoping’s China and Mikhail Gorbachev’s Russia. The Hungarian, Yugoslav, Polish and Czech governments borrowed heavily from Western banks, essentially mortgaging these countries to the imperialists. This set the stage for IMF-dictated austerity programs that took a knife to the living standards of the working people.

In the 1980s, petty-bourgeois “democrats” and nationalists became politically ascendant throughout most of East Europe, with the signal exception of East Germany. For its part, in 1989-90 the Moscow bureaucracy under Mikhail Gorbachev let it be known that it would abandon the East European Stalinist regimes to their fate. This followed Gorbachev’s treacherous withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, which abandoned the Afghan peoples to the mercies of CIA-backed *mujahedin* cutthroats right on the border of the Soviet Union. Thus the fate of the East European and Soviet workers states was put in the balance: either proletarian political revolutions to defend and extend the gains embodied in the collectivized economies or capitalist counter-

revolution, with its promise of all-sided social devastation.

The first sign of political revolution in this period occurred not in East Europe but in China, where events resembled the 1956 Hungarian Revolution in key ways. In May-June 1989, protest initiated by students in Beijing’s Tiananmen Square gained widespread support among the workers, who were angered by the sharply rising economic inequalities, rampant corruption and inflation encouraged by Deng’s “socialist market economy.” Under Deng over the previous decade, agriculture had been decollectivized and centralized economic planning had been weakened. The “iron rice bowl” of guaranteed lifetime employment and social benefits for workers was becoming rusted out.

Groups of young workers, some of them carrying posters with Mao Zedong’s picture, joined the huge demonstrations in Tiananmen Square, which spread throughout the country. As we wrote at the time, “It was the beginnings of a working-class revolt against Deng’s program of ‘building socialism with capitalist methods’ which gave the protests their mass and potentially revolutionary nature” (“Defend Chinese Workers!” WV No. 480, 23 June 1989). Initially, both rank-and-file soldiers and some senior military commanders refused to carry out orders to suppress the protests. Deng was finally able to find military units willing to carry out a massacre, which was directed primarily at working-class neighborhoods in Beijing rather than at the student protesters. As in Hungary in 1956, the key factor in China in 1989 was the absence of a revolutionary leadership such as that provided by Lenin and Trotsky’s Bolshevik Party, which led the 1917 Russian Revolution.

The ICL and the Fight Against Capitalist Counterrevolution

The events in China reverberated throughout East Europe, particularly in the German Democratic Republic (DDR) of East Germany. In autumn 1989, the DDR’s Stalinist regime collapsed, most graphically expressed by the opening of the Berlin Wall on November 9. East Germany at that time was engulfed in a developing political revolution. The impulses of the workers were directed not toward capitalist reunification with imperialist West Germany but toward building what they considered a decent socialist society on the foundations of the DDR’s nationalized economy. Meanwhile, as part of his conciliation of imperialism, Gorbachev pledged not to use the tens of thousands of Soviet troops stationed in East Germany to intervene militarily. All these factors created an exceptional opportunity to consummate a proletarian political revolution.

The International Communist League undertook the biggest sustained mobilization in our tendency’s history, drawing upon the personnel and other resources of all sections to intervene in Germany. We

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Trotskyist Speech at 1990 Treptow Protest

“Workers and Soldiers Soviets to Power!”



TLD speaker Renate Dahlhaus

The following is a translation of a speech by Renate Dahlhaus, spokesman of the *Trozkistische Liga Deutschlands*, to the mass anti-fascist rally in East Berlin's Treptow Park on 3 January 1990. Initiated by the TLD and the Spartakist Groups, the united-front rally protesting the desecration of a Soviet war memorial was taken up by the ruling Stalinist party, the SED, and drew 250,000 people. The speech was printed in the next day's issue of *Arprekorr* (*Workers Press Correspondence*), a near-daily newspaper launched by the TLD the previous month. This translation first appeared in a supplement printed in WV No. 493 (12 January 1990). In late January 1990, the TLD fused with the Spartakist Groups to form the *Spartakist-Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands*.

Comrades, Anti-fascists:

We will never forget that 20 million Soviet citizens gave their lives to smash Hitler's fascism. They must not have died in vain.

When the fascists committed their outrage here, the Trotskyist League and Spartakist Gruppen immediately took the initiative for today's demonstration. The fascists are raising their heads here in the DDR, in Erfurt, Dresden, Görlitz, Halle. What is urgently needed is the militant mobilization of the working people, including immigrant workers, comrades from Vietnam, Poland and Mozambique, to stop and to crush the fascist

beast while it is still small.

The Leninist united front, the workers united front that Trotsky fought for in the early '30s, was needed then and is needed today to stop the Nazis.

If the fascists are smashed they cannot make a bid for power. But that means that the working class must be organized and strong and a contender for power. The highest form of the united front in a revolutionary situation like we are going through today is the workers and soldiers soviet.

As long as capitalism exists there is a cycle of struggles which keep recurring. There is less of a material basis for fascists in the DDR because the natural base of fascism, capitalism, does not exist here today. A political revolution has broken out and is growing in our midst, and we must defend it.

Economic absorption and political incorporation by stages—which West German imperialism, aided by the SPD, seeks—can turn this political revolution into a social counterrevolution. This must not happen! It is necessary to fight against it!

That's right, stop the Nazis through a workers united front! We have to think further. Our economy is suffering from waste and obsolescence. The SED party dictatorship has shown that it is incompetent to fight this. East Germany urgently needs selective.... [Interjections] Comrades, learn to listen, learn what a united front means.

What is urgently needed is a selective

modernization of existing industry. With us in the DDR things are very different than in those countries, the other “socialist” countries which adhere to Stalin's concept of building “socialism in one country,” and demonstrate that it is a transparent stupidity. We have hard choices—we must understand the danger of being at the mercy of the world market.

Comrades, fighting against the sellout of the DDR means getting clear in our minds that we are not going to wind up at the mercy of the world market controlled by the imperialists and the Deutsche Bank. The means for selling out the DDR is the Social Democracy—that had better be known to us all.

Do not be deceived: the military threat of imperialism, which continues to be organized above all by the American ruling class, still persists. Yesterday, today and tomorrow they use direct and indirect military violence to achieve their aim.

This is directed centrally against the Soviet Union and everywhere that the capitalists have been eliminated as a class, or where imperialism hopes that it has an opportunity. The Soviet Union practices its own economic autarky which is not particularly beneficial to us and has led the Soviet Union into grave economic difficulties.

Lenin said, “Politics is concentrated economics.” The fight for the power to make these decisions and to run this country must lie in the hands of workers

councils so that rational decisions satisfactory to the majority can be arrived at. This can only be done through open and sometimes painful debates before the whole people. Perhaps our example will encourage the Soviet Union to take the same road. [Interjections]

Comrades, listen and learn that only through painful and open debates can the road to socialism be opened.

The Soviet Union will certainly take the same road, and that would also assist us in jointly solving economic and political problems and in the defense of our states, our workers states, which are presently transitional, broken from capitalism but certainly not yet socialist.

Comrades, as everybody knows, the power.... [Interjections] Comrades, as you know, the SED's monopoly of power has been broken. The masses are free to speak their minds. Learn to listen to them. It is only through the benevolent pressure of the Soviet Army that this has been made possible. What is lacking here is real organized conflicting political parties in struggle, a precondition for real workers democracy.

These are some of the concerns and some of the aims we seek to address as we fight to forge a new workers party—of equal rights, equal duties—in the spirit of Lenin, Liebknecht and Luxemburg. Stop the Nazis through united-front action! Workers and soldiers soviets to power! Workers of the world unite! ■

Hungary 1956...

(continued from page 7)

unconditionally opposed the capitalist reunification of Germany. We fought for political revolution in the East and socialist revolution in the West—for a red Germany of workers councils in a socialist Europe. To emphasize the need for internationalism, as opposed to narrow DDR nationalism, we published greetings in Russian to Soviet soldiers, linking the fight in the DDR to the struggle to defend the homeland of the October Revolution against imperialism and domestic counterrevolution. We also issued internationalist greetings in their languages to Cuban, Mozambican, Vietnamese and Polish workers in East Germany.

The impact of our program was seen in January 1990, when 250,000 turned out in a demonstration initiated by our German comrades and joined by the DDR's ruling party, the SED (Socialist Unity Party), to protest the fascist desecration of a Soviet war memorial in Berlin's Treptow Park. At Treptow, for the first time since Trotsky and his followers were expelled from the Soviet Union in the late 1920s, Trotskyists were able to address masses of workers under Stalinist rule (see article above).

The spectre of organized proletarian resistance to capitalist reunification alarmed West Germany's imperialist rulers, led by the Christian Democrat Helmut Kohl, and their front men of the Social Democratic Party, and they accelerated the drive for capitalist counterrevolution. The Stalinists in the Kremlin and in the DDR gave the green light for reunification.

Uniquely, our comrades of the newly founded Spartakist Workers Party ran unambiguously against capitalist restoration in the March 1990 East German elections. However, under the impact of the bourgeois offensive, the vanguard layers of the working class increasingly



Spartakist

East Berlin, 4 November 1989: Demonstrators demand, “For Communist Ideals—No Privileges” in early days of developing political revolution. Spartakist Workers Party campaign poster for March 1990 elections declared, “No to Capitalist Reunification! For a Germany of Workers Councils!”



despaired, particularly as the disintegrating Stalinists of the SED, which renamed itself the Party for Democratic Socialism, blatantly supported capitalist *anschluss* (annexation). The March elections were an overwhelming vote for capitalist reunification, with the vast majority voting for either Christian Democratic- or Social Democratic-based coalitions. This marked the victory of capitalist counterrevolution in East Germany.

It was the ICL alone which fought to the last against the drive for capitalist reunification led by the imperialists and their Trojan horse in the German Social Democratic Party. From the beginning, we were in a political struggle with the abdicating Stalinist regime and its program of capitulation and counterrevolution. While we were calling for a government of workers and soldiers councils, the Stalinists were consciously acting to prevent a workers insurrection. That included demobilizing army units that had formed soldiers councils, in part as a result of our propaganda.

The ICL also fought to the end in defense of the Soviet workers state. When Boris Yeltsin made his power grab in Moscow in August 1991, we put out a call titled “Soviet Workers: Defeat

Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!” This was the first statement widely distributed throughout the Soviet Union opposing Yeltsin's bid for power. It advanced a program for political revolution against capitalist restoration—for genuine workers soviets as organs of a new proletarian political power. But the Soviet working class—atomized and bereft of any anti-capitalist leadership, lacking any coherent and consistent socialist class consciousness, skeptical about the possibility of class struggle in the capitalist countries—did not rally in resistance against the encroaching capitalist counterrevolution, which succeeded in destroying the Soviet workers state in 1991-92.

The victory of capitalist counterrevolution was a profound, historic defeat for the world's working class and oppressed masses. Widespread poverty, disease and malnutrition quickly became rampant in East Europe and the former Soviet Union. With the USSR no longer providing a countervailing force, the U.S. imperialists have felt that they have a free hand to ride roughshod over whomever they please. The restoration of capitalist rule, particularly in the former Soviet Union, has also resulted in a massive, although uneven, retrogression in proletarian class con-

sciousness internationally. The working class has been pounded by the bourgeois rulers' “death of communism” ideological campaign and its attendant historical lies. In Hungary, the first order of business of the capitalist-restorationist parties that dominated the parliament elected in 1990 was to declare October 23, the anniversary of the 1956 Revolution, a national holiday celebrating “multi-party democracy” and “the independence of the motherland.”

The International Communist League is dedicated to the fight for new October Revolutions—crucially including in the U.S. and other imperialist centers—to sweep away the rotten capitalist-imperialist system and usher in an egalitarian socialist world order. Key to this perspective today is the unconditional military defense of China, the largest and most powerful of the remaining deformed workers states, as well as of Vietnam, North Korea and Cuba against imperialism and domestic counterrevolution. The urgent need is to win militants to the revolutionary program of Trotskyism—the fight to reforge the Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution. It is thus that we honor the Hungarian workers political revolution of 1956. ■

Afghanistan...

(continued from page 5)

the USSR was a workers state, despite Stalinist bureaucratic degeneration.

Outside GRAIN's meeting, our comrades distributed a 2002 polemic written as RAWA was being fawned over by the left and U.S. congressional committees. As we wrote:

"Socialist-minded youth in the West might try to imagine that they are at the University of Kabul in 1979 as the Soviet Army rolls in to beat back the CIA's Islamic rebels. Look across the border to Soviet Central Asia: there are schools, factories and hospitals. Women, regarded as human beings instead of property, are not bought and sold in marriage. They are doctors, engineers and political leaders. No matter what indices you check—life expectancy, infant mortality, literacy—the differences between the two societies are measured in centuries, not decades. Do you don a *burqa* and follow [RAWA leader] Meena Keshwar Kamal into Pakistan to join the Islamic insurgents based there, or do you join a militia to drive out and destroy the *mujahedin* enslavers of women? Do you defend the Soviet Union, or support imperialist counterrevolution? Are you for or against the liberation of women from feudal barbarism?"

—"RAWA Afghan Feminists Back Imperialist Reaction," *Workers Vanguard* No. 776, 8 March 2002

We sought to pose these issues during the discussion period at GRAIN's meeting. But the oh-so "inclusive" GRAIN organizers, who listened politely to their pro-imperialist guests, disrupted and tried to cut off our speaker. Ingalls did respond, however, declaring that no one he ever met in Afghanistan supported the Russian intervention. Given the bloodbath that ensued when the PDPA government fell in 1992 following the Soviet withdrawal three years earlier, this is hardly surprising. As our comrade called out, "Yeah,

they've all been murdered!" Ingalls to the contrary, for liberated women, modernizing intellectuals and leftists the Soviet intervention opened up vistas of liberation.

In 1989, the treacherous Soviet bureaucracy of Mikhail Gorbachev pulled out the Red Army in a futile attempt to appease U.S. imperialism. Facing a continued insurgency, more than 15,000 women joined PDPA militias, taking up arms to defend not only the rights they had won but their very lives. We offered to organize an international brigade to fight alongside them. The PDPA asked us instead to raise funds for the civilian victims of the siege of Jalalabad. Our international campaign raised over \$44,000 (U.S.). Events have bitterly verified our warning that the Soviet pullout would mean a bloodbath for Afghan women and leftists, and the Stalinist bureaucracy's betrayal in Afghanistan was the direct precursor to capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union itself in 1991-92.

Liberal Eclecticism vs. Revolutionary Marxism

GRAIN's meeting plunged into controversy almost from the start. The first speaker on the panel was a self-described representative of a Maoist party in Afghanistan who went after RAWA's support to Western imperialism—only to solidarize with their anti-Communist denunciation of the Soviet intervention as "imperialist." Such is the political bankruptcy of Maoism. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the Chinese Stalinists, beginning under Mao, openly allied with the U.S. imperialists against the Soviet Union. In Afghanistan, this obscene policy saw Maoists enthusiastically backing the *mujahedin* cutthroats.

As the meeting unravelled, speakers including GRAIN members pointed to Ingalls and Kolhatkar's failure to call for imperialist troops out of Afghanistan.



Young Spartacus

Spartacus Youth League at 1980 anti-draft demonstration in Washington, D.C. Trotskyists hailed Red Army intervention against U.S.-backed Islamic reactionaries in Afghanistan.

GRAIN leaders Lisa Schofield and Dan Freeman-Maloy squirmed in politically impotent silence. GRAIN members may be discomfited by the RAWA debacle, but this is no aberration for this group. Last winter these activists helped coordinate a tour for Patrick Elie, former Secretary of State for National Defence of Haiti. Elie supported the new Haitian government's call to keep UN imperialist forces in Haiti. In March 2005 at protests against the occupation of Iraq, these activists (at the time the June 30 Organizing Committee) distributed a leaflet which advised: "learn whether your mutual funds invest in [Canadian-based arms manufacturer] SNC Lavalin, and urge divestment." Their call, "No to profiteering, war and occupation!" boiled down to the most abject liberalism.

How is it that a group claiming to be *anti*-imperialist ends up giving a left cover to openly *pro*-imperialist forces? This is a class-divided society in which a tiny minority of exploiters, the capitalist class, lives off the toil of the working class. Yet the working class, concentrated in production, has the power to overthrow the capitalist system; this requires the leadership of a revolutionary workers party. Rejecting these central Marxist premises, GRAIN ends up tailing forces that are alien to the interests of working people and the oppressed. Amorphous and politically eclectic, they make noises against the effects of the present system, but who could believe them capable of fundamentally challenging it?

To GRAIN, "imperialism" is a buzzword that can mean almost anything. This is contrary to the Marxist understanding that imperialism is a *system*—the highest stage of capitalism—in which monopolies and finance capital dominate every

aspect of economic life and the most powerful capitalist states vie to control and re-divide the world. For those looking for a way to struggle effectively against imperialism, there can be no better starting point than studying the history and lessons of the 1917 October Revolution. One-sixth of the globe was ripped from the hands of the imperialist exploiters, the capitalist class was expropriated and the foundations laid for a rational planned economy that was not based on private property or profit. For eight decades the Soviet Union stood as a massive obstacle to the imperialists.

Even after Stalin's nationalist, conservative bureaucracy usurped political power from the Soviet working class, the expropriation of the bourgeoisie remained an accomplished fact. We Trotskyists unconditionally defended the Soviet Union against capitalist counterrevolution, and we fought for a proletarian political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy—the same program we uphold today in regard to the remaining states where the class rule of the bourgeoisie has been smashed: China, North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba.

The Spartacus Youth Club intervenes in the social struggles of today with a perspective for the future. We seek to build an organization capable of bringing revolutionary consciousness to the working class, and of leading it to seize power from the most powerful, violent and well-organized ruling class in history: the imperialist bourgeoisie. For revolutionaries in Canada, this means in the first instance fighting to mobilize workers in struggle against the rulers on Parliament Hill and Bay Street. *Anti-imperialism abroad means class struggle at home!* ■



Friends of Afghanistan Society

Afghan women mobilize to fight against CIA's *mujahedin* cutthroats.

Oaxaca...

(continued from page 4)

[left-nationalist Party of the Democratic Revolution], that he means to intensify armed repression against all those who oppose his designs. On Wednesday, December 6, the PGR [attorney general's office] leaked information that 79 previous investigations against AMLO [former PRD presidential candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador] are still active (*La Jornada*, 9 December 2006). (For more information about our position on the *desafuero* [removal of immunity] of AMLO, see the GEM leaflet of 7 April 2005, "Down with the *desafuero* of López Obrador! Break with the PRD and the other bosses parties! For the political independence of the working class!" [reprinted as "Mexico: Down With Fox's Attack on Mayor López Obrador!" in WV No. 846, 15 April 2005].) According to the Ministry of the Interior, its priority is for the country to "have a lesser volume or number of movements that disturb social peace" (*La Jornada*, 8 December 2006). This is why the budget

for the armed forces has been increased by 2 billion pesos—reducing the resources for public education by 4.5 billion pesos—and why 10,000 troops have been transferred from the army to the PFP. Calderón's cabinet is notorious for being infested with all sorts of genocidal repressors and religious obscurantists (such as the ex-governor of the state of Jalisco, Francisco Ramírez Acuña, known, among other things, for his brutal repression in May 2004 against anti-globalization protesters in Guadalajara, or Eduardo Medina Mora, who as SSP [Secretary of Public Security] was one of the main architects of the murderous repression in Atenco, Lázaro Cárdenas and Oaxaca).

In the face of this, a large part of the working class and oppressed see the PRD, with AMLO at its head, as representing their interests. But this bourgeois party is only different from the PAN and the PRI to the degree that it seeks to base itself on the support of the working class and oppressed in order to more efficiently subjugate them and carry out a program against the interests of the proletariat. The PRD seeks to co-opt the

struggle in Oaxaca and the struggle to free the Oaxaca prisoners, but won't hesitate one minute to use the forces of repression against those who today support it. This is what it did during the UNAM strike in 1999, against the workers of Sicartsa [in April the PRD-led government in Michoacán sent state police against striking steel workers], or the peasants of Atenco this year, among many other examples. The bourgeois state—whose core is the police, the army, the courts and the prisons—cannot serve the interests of the exploited and oppressed, no matter which party or person is ruling. It is necessary to smash the bourgeois state through social-revolution.

The APPO, the Oaxacan teachers and all those who struggle against the depredations of capitalism—such as our five imprisoned university brothers and sisters—must not face this state onslaught by themselves. It is in the interests of the entire workers movement to fight for the immediate freedom of all the activists imprisoned in the struggle in Oaxaca. It is necessary to mobilize the immense power of the industrial working class,

which is derived from its relationship to the means of production, through strike actions to defeat the current government attack. Students must join with the working class' immense power to struggle. We call on workers, youth, student collectives and the oppressed in general to mobilize in defense of the APPO and its sympathizers. *An injury to one is an injury to all!*

We must combat all illusions in the bourgeoisie and its parties—PRI, PAN and PRD—as well as the nationalist ideology that they promote. The dividing line that matters for the workers and oppressed is the class line, not the border between countries. It is necessary for the exploited and oppressed in Mexico to ally with the powerful multiracial U.S. proletariat, whose important Latino immigrant component forms a human bridge between the oppressed on both sides of the Río Bravo. We struggle to forge revolutionary-internationalist workers parties capable of leading the struggle for world socialist revolution—the only way to stop the brutal repression and oppression against workers and the oppressed on a global level once and for all. ■

Rail Workers...

(continued from page 12)

fired rail workers was led by Democrat Jesse Jackson Sr., who has publicized these cases. Jackson’s complaint is that the company is “misusing the law.” He is demanding Congressional hearings to determine when workers are enough of a “security risk” to lose their jobs. In fact, the Democrats are trying to outdo the Republicans in implementing draconian “anti-terror” laws. One of the first acts of the newly elected Democratic House was to pass a “domestic security” bill that, among other things, would pour more police and other security forces into the ports and airports while tightening cargo inspections.

The threat to labor posed by beefing up “port security” can be seen with the final rules for the Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) program announced by DHS two weeks ago. Under TWIC, which is to take effect first in the maritime industry, millions of transportation workers would have to acquire a biometric ID card—at a high price—to keep their jobs. As the *New York Times* (14 May 2006) noted, the TWIC card would be “an identity card equivalent of a maximum security prison. Not only would it be tamperproof, it would eventually allow transportation workers to be positively identified by a fingerprint in less than half a second.” Earlier government papers describe the program as a prototype for a mandatory identification and personal tracking system covering the entire traveling public.

It will take up to 20 months, beginning in March, for the TWIC system to be fully operational nationally. Some 750,000 longshoremen, truckers and other port workers will have to submit to an immigration status review and extensive criminal background checks. Any felony conviction in the last seven years for a range of offenses, from fraud to unlawful gun possession and drug possession with intent to distribute, could mean the end of a worker’s livelihood.

A particular target of the “security” crackdown is the large number of non-union port truckers and, on the Gulf Coast, day laborers on the docks who are immigrants. In a nationally televised spectacle reminiscent of the highway chase of O. J. Simpson in 1994, on January 7 federal, state and local police agencies converged on the Port of Miami, where an Iraqi-born port trucker who was

just trying to do his job was harassed at a terminal gate. His vehicle was then pursued before he was arrested with two others of Near Eastern descent.

Unionizing the port truckers is crucial to the defense of immigrant workers and to the very survival of the (West Coast) International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), the International Longshoremen’s Association (ILA) and all port unions. But this requires fighting against the chauvinist policies of the labor tops. For example, the ILWU leadership has encouraged the government to screen truckers more vigorously at terminal gates—an invitation for greater repression against all waterfront workers.



Oakland: February 2002 labor-centered protest initiated by Partisan Defense Committee and Labor Black League against “war on terror” repression and anti-immigrant crackdown.

For labor to prevail against the anti-union onslaught, it must mobilize its power in defense of all workers—union and non-union, black and white, “legal” and undocumented immigrants. At a speech in Chicago in October, DHS Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) chief Julie Myers openly threatened unions with a heavily immigrant membership. According to the *Nation* Web site (3 January), Myers blurted out that the government needed to examine unions that crossed the line between “charitable assistance and the unlawful employment of aliens.” By pushing through TWIC in maritime, the government is trying to set up a waterfront version of the massive anti-immigrant drag-

net directed against airport workers—“Operation Tarmac”—that resulted in the firing of many hundreds of workers and the arrest of 1,058 on immigration-related charges between 2002 and 2004.

As part of an escalation of government attacks following the mass protests for immigrant rights last spring, the DHS has cranked up pressure on employers to fire workers whose Social Security numbers do not match government records. In a December 12 raid at six Swift & Co. meatpacking plants, armed ICE agents stormed the plants and hauled off 1,282 workers in groups shackled together. In Greeley, Colorado, the agents faced a furious protest by arrested Swift workers’

families. Most of the workers are members of the United Food and Commercial Workers union. The display of force by the state was meant to intimidate immigrants and trade unionists who would fight for their rights.

Immigrant workers, including the undocumented, are an integral and increasingly important component of the U.S. working class as well as a living link to workers in their countries of origin. When 90 percent of Los Angeles-area port truckers stayed away from the job last May Day as part of nationwide protests and work actions, the ports there were severely congested for a week. Anyone who has made it into the U.S. should have the same rights as those born here.

The labor movement must fight against deportations and demand: **Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!**

For a Class-Struggle Fight for Black, Immigrant Rights!

Far from mobilizing labor’s power against the anti-union security crackdown, the pro-capitalist union tops have themselves signed on to the “war on terror.” Some, like the Teamsters leadership, scold the government for not implementing TWIC fast enough. The ILWU bureaucracy has opposed background checks of its members but at the same time appeals for fair play from the bosses and their government, asking that they only act on “legitimate anti-terrorist concerns” (ILWU *Dispatcher*, May 2006). Last February, the ILWU, ILA and Teamsters bureaucracies joined with Democratic Party politicians in a frenzy over the proposed takeover of some terminal operations at six U.S. ports by Arab-owned Dubai Ports World. Such “America first” chauvinism is part and parcel of the union tops’ activity as the “labor lieutenants” of the capitalist class.

The fight for the rights of workers, immigrants and black people will either go forward together—independent from and opposed to the capitalist class and its government—or fall back separately. This understanding was key to a 9 February 2002 united-front rally in Oakland, initiated by the Bay Area Labor Black League for Social Defense and the Partisan Defense Committee, in opposition to the USA Patriot Act, Maritime Security Act and anti-immigrant witchhunt. The protest included a core of black ILWU members for whom this action was a conscious break with the widespread sentiment whipped up by the bosses and racist demagogues that immigrant workers and black workers are competitors. The point must be to unite the entire working class in struggle against the capitalist enemy. The Oakland rally was a small but real step in breaking through the lie that workers and their exploiters have a common “national interest.”

The current “security” crackdown underlines the need for a political struggle within the trade unions, the only significant racially integrated institutions in the U.S., to break from the Democrats and build a class-struggle leadership, one that champions the cause of black freedom and the defense of immigrant rights. The working class needs its own party to fight for a workers government. Those who labor must rule! ■

Iraq...

(continued from page 1)

Islamic forces fleeing Ethiopian troops who had acted as American proxies—and in the service of Ethiopian interests—in unseating the Islamic Courts regime in Mogadishu. According to the British Oxfam group, some 70 nomadic herds- men were killed in air strikes by both Ethiopia and the U.S. A small contingent of American troops was also sent into Somalia, supposedly to check on who was killed in the air strikes. This was the first known time that U.S. troops have entered the country since Somali militiamen shot down two Black Hawk helicopters and killed 18 soldiers, prompting the U.S. withdrawal in 1994. *U.S. stay out of Somalia!*

Reform or Revolution

Opponents of imperialist depredations must understand that there can be no real struggle against imperialist war without a struggle against the capitalist system that foments such wars. Mass slaughter is the concentrated expression and ultimate logic of capitalism, a system that daily condemns countless numbers around the world to death by malnutrition, lack of medical care and industrial murder. In the U.S., the attacks on working peoples’ living conditions, the swelling black and Latino prison population, the rot-

ting social infrastructure—all these are expressions of the “normal” brutal workings of the capitalist system. The rulers’ horrendous murder-by-abandonment of black people and the poor in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina signified that in the interests of the masses of this society, the capitalist profit system must go.

What is necessary is the forging of a revolutionary workers party that fights to overthrow the capitalist system through socialist revolution. Such a party can be built only through politically combatting those who retard the political consciousness of the working masses by preaching that this system can be reformed to serve their interests. Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky in *The Permanent Revolution* (1930) described “the boundary that separates Marxism from opportunism, the revolutionary from the pacifist position”: “*The struggle against war is decided not by pressure upon the government but only by the revolutionary struggle for power.*”

In the lead-up to and during the March 2003 invasion of Iraq, we raised the calls: “Defend Iraq against U.S./British Imperialist Attack!” and “For Class Struggle Against U.S. Capitalist Rulers!” We took a side militarily with semicolonial Iraq against the imperialist invaders, while politically opposing Saddam Hussein’s bloody capitalist regime. We stated that the foremost means to defend Iraq was not on the military plane, given the colossal

American military advantage, but through class struggle, particularly in the U.S. As we predicted, the initial war led to easy victory, while the subsequent occupation has become an intractable mess for U.S. imperialism. Our revolutionary perspective requires fighting against the policies of the pro-capitalist labor misleaders who chain the proletariat to its capitalist class enemy, not least through their support to U.S. “national interests.”

Today we continue to defend the peoples of Iraq against any U.S.-led attack and repression. Insofar as the forces on the ground in Iraq aim their blows against the imperialist occupiers, we call for their military defense against U.S. imperialism. Every blow struck against the imperialist occupiers is a blow against the enemy of workers and the oppressed. At the same time, we are vehement political opponents of the Islamic fundamentalists, remnants of the Ba’ath regime and other forces carrying out sectarian carnage.

The day after Bush’s “surge” announcement, the liberal-reformist left responded with protests around the country aimed at egging on the Democrats to resist the escalation. A chant raised at a rally in New York City’s Times Square said it all: “Stop the killing! Stop the war! What the hell is Congress for?” National antiwar demonstrations are planned for January 27 in Washington, D.C., and San Francisco. Whether organized by United

for Peace and Justice (UFPJ), ANSWER, World Can’t Wait (WCW) or the Troops Out Now Coalition (TONC), the program of these mobilizations offers nothing but the lie that capitalist imperialism can be made to be peaceful and to serve the needs of the masses.

These coalitions and the reformist left groups that have built them—the International Socialist Organization (ISO), Workers World Party (WWP), the Party for Socialism and Liberation, the Revolu-

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NYC...

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an instrument for organized violence to ensure the rule of one class, the capitalists, over the working class. It is the cops' job to enforce the conditions that make life in this society a nightmare for the black masses: huge rates of unemployment, decrepit public housing and schools, hospital closings, mass incarceration of youth. As a New York Spartacist League leaflet distributed on December 16 and at other protests stated: "The hard truth is that the only way to eliminate police brutality is to do away with the system of racist American capitalism, for which the 'gang in blue uniforms' is the front line of defense" (see "50 Rounds: NYPD Killers," WV No. 882, 8 December 2006).

The stated intent of the Fifth Avenue march was to call to "shop for justice"—a meaningless consumer boycott of ritzy stores. The real purpose of the march organizers was to dissipate anger by pushing "reform" schemes intended to clean up the cops' bloody image and thereby preserve the authority of capitalist "law and order."

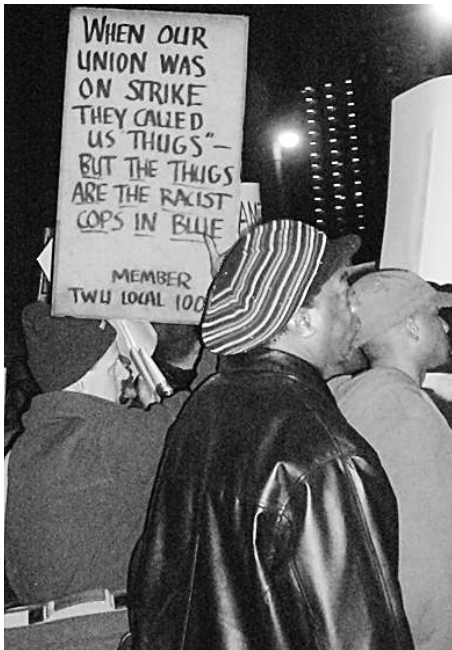
The march leaders raised a laundry list of proposals, the likes of which have been repeatedly raised in the past, including after Amadou Diallo was killed by the NYPD in a hail of 41 bullets in 1999: more "cultural sensitivity" training, strengthening the Civilian Complaint Review Board, more women and minority cops. The city has had some form of civilian complaint process since 1953, proof enough that civilian review boards serve only to whitewash the cops while providing the illusion of accountability. As for more minority police, the vice squad that gunned down Sean Bell was already a "rainbow coalition" of black, white and Latino cops. March organizers also called for the U.S. Justice Department, which oversees the entire racist "justice" system, to issue annual reports on police misconduct and demanded better salaries and benefits for the cops!

Anger over cop terror does need an organized expression—one that can weld the anger of the inner city with the social power of the multiracial working class. New York City got a taste of that power in December 2005, when subway and bus workers in Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100 struck for three days in defiance of the state Taylor Law, which bans public workers strikes, and crippled the finance capital of the U.S. A labor-centered protest against police terror would give the cops pause. More importantly, it would serve to imbue the working class with the understanding that its interests are inseparably linked to the fight for black freedom, which requires the overthrow of the capitalist system

through proletarian revolution.

At a Partisan Defense Committee fundraiser for class-war prisoners held the day after the Fifth Avenue protest, Tom Cowperthwaite, a spokesman for the Labor Black League for Social Defense and a member of TWU Local 100, pointed out: "A lot of New Yorkers know that what happened to Sean Bell and Timur Person could happen to any one of them. They've been to plenty of marches like the one yesterday. Many realize that *union protest* and *strike action* by unions like TWU Local 100, the Teamsters, ATU [transit workers], DC 37 [city workers], 32-BJ [building service workers] and 1199SEIU [health care workers] would pack more punch than any such pro-Democratic Party rallies." Sean Bell's mother is herself an SEIU member and his father is a retired Local 100 member.

Cowperthwaite held up a sign he carried that was warmly received by marchers: "When Our Union Was on Strike They Called Us Thugs—But the Thugs Are the Racist Cops in Blue." He said,



WV Photo

December 6 NYC protest against Sean Bell killing.

"It's going to take political struggle within the unions to forge a class-struggle leadership that will break with the Democrats and all capitalist parties, that will defy strikebreaking laws like the Taylor Law, that will link the power of labor to the just rage and aspirations of the ghettos and barrios."

Opposing a class-struggle perspective, the reformist left has offered its own schemes to clean up the cops while prostrating itself before Democratic Party pols. Along with the black nationalist December 12th Movement, the International Socialist Organization (ISO) calls for firing Police Commissioner Ray Kelly. Perhaps the ISO would prefer Harold Hurtt, Houston's black police chief,

who has singled out destitute Katrina evacuees as responsible for a rise in crime in his city. With sheer cynicism, the ISO admits that swapping chiefs will do nothing but says you have to call for this anyway as a "first punch," just as "firing Rumsfeld didn't end the occupation of Iraq, but it was an important victory for the antiwar movement" (*Socialist Worker* online, 5 January). No doubt the ISO and other reformists, whose "antiwar movement" was based on appealing to Bush's Democratic Party opponents, took heart in Rumsfeld's departure. But they should try selling this line to the peoples of Iraq, who now face an escalation of the murderous U.S. occupation under his successor.

At the Fifth Avenue march, the Workers World Party (WWP) carried signs calling to "Disarm the Police." The WWP pushes the ludicrous notion that under sufficient popular pressure, the capitalists can be induced to disarm the guardians of their system of exploitation and oppression. In the protests over Sean Bell's killing, the WWP has promoted Brooklyn city councilman Charles Barron, whose occasional radical rhetoric and past membership in the Black Panther Party gives him more "street cred" than currently possessed by Al Sharpton, a former WWP favorite who wore a wire for the Feds in the 1980s.

The WWP calls Barron a "Black revolutionary and anti-imperialist fighter" (*Workers World* online, 14 August 2006). In fact, he is a capitalist Democratic Party politician, one of several who flanked billionaire Republican mayor Bloomberg when he appealed for "dialogue" after Bell's killing. Barron says, "If we don't get an indictment, there is going to be an explosion!" (WNYC News, 22 December 2006). His role is to get ahead of any such explosion in order to *contain* it. In the latest effort in that regard, Barron and the December 12th Movement are organizing a protest march to the United Nations, portraying that den of imperialist thieves and their victims as a vehicle for justice.

Providing a veneer of Marxist orthodoxy, the Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL), a WWP split product, notes the historical role of the police as protectors of private property in class society in a *Socialism & Liberation* (January 2007) article titled "Police Brutality, Cops and Capitalism." The PSL writes, "As long as this society is built on racism and exploitation, cops will do their job of repressing and terrorizing us, especially in the most oppressed communities. No reform is going to change that basic mission." But this statement of fact is just window-dressing for the PSL's utterly reformist program, which centers on the fatuous demand for "community control" of the police.

Under the rubric of the "self-organization of the oppressed communities against police occupation," the PSL calls for committees to "monitor every

police action" whose "recommendations should be enforced." Socialist Alternative (SAIt), which is affiliated to the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI), similarly calls for "independent, elected labor-community bodies to investigate charges of police abuse and review police activities with powers to meaningfully punish misconduct."

These reformists promote the dangerous illusion that the capitalist rulers can be compelled to cede control of the police to the exploited and oppressed masses—the very people the cops are paid to repress. Their "community control" rhetoric obscures the *class divide* in this society and serves to reinforce the ties of the oppressed masses to Sharpton, Barron & Co., who act as overseers in the ghettos for the racist capitalist rulers. Trampling on the class line, SAIt/CWI even embrace the cops as "workers in uniform." The racist, strikebreaking cops are the guard dogs of the class enemy. We say: cops, prison, security guards, out of the labor movement!

Serving to divert the outrage of black youth over cop terror, the separatist New Black Panther Party (NBPP) calls for boycotting "nonblack businesses." It also demands that liquor stores and strip clubs be shut down—a call to "clean up" the ghetto for the capitalists and their racist cops. The NBPP's reactionary garbage, which pits black people against Arabs, Asians, Jews and others, is poison to the cause of multiracial class struggle. The organization's very name is a fraud. The original Black Panther Party, a nationalist group that emerged in the 1960s by organizing black self-defense against police terror, at least saw itself as fighting for social revolution, although it rejected mobilizing the integrated working class to sweep away the capitalist system. Thirty-eight Panthers were killed by the police and FBI in the government's drive to destroy the organization (see "Class Struggle and the Fight for Black Liberation," WV No. 870, 12 May 2006).

The fight for justice for the countless victims of cop terror demands the independent mobilization of the working class and the oppressed against the Democratic and Republican parties of capital. Integral to that task is combating the illusions in American democracy—the political shell for the dictatorship of the U.S. capitalist class over the working class and the poor—that are reinforced by reformist "leftists." As Marxists, we fight to forge the revolutionary workers party that is essential to leading the multiracial proletariat in the overturn of the murderous capitalist system. Nothing short of a socialist revolution that smashes the capitalist state machinery and replaces it with a workers state—where those who labor rule—can disarm the killer cops and open the road to black liberation. ■

tionary Communist Party (RCP)—have all along sought to build an "antiwar movement" premised on pleading with the imperialist rulers to stop acting like imperialists. Countering such liberal-pacifist nonsense, a resolution adopted during World War I, an interimperialist war, by a conference of exiled Russian revolutionary Marxists in Switzerland that included Bolshevik leader V. I. Lenin explained:

"Pacifism, the preaching of peace in the abstract, is one of the means of duping the working class. Under capitalism, particularly in its imperialist stage, wars are inevitable....

"The propaganda of peace unaccompanied by a call for revolutionary mass action can only sow illusions and demoralise the proletariat, for it makes the proletariat believe that the bourgeoisie is humane."

—"The Conference of the R.S.D.L.P. Groups Abroad," February 1915

None of the reformist left groups that presented themselves as the best builders of the antiwar movement came out for the military defense of Iraq during the 2003 war; their aim was not to mobilize the working class on the side of the Iraqi peo-

ple and for the defeat of U.S. imperialism. Now the reformists seek to revive the "antiwar movement" that went splat when its purpose was better served by working for a Democratic Party victory in the mid-term elections. Debra Sweet, national director of the RCP's World Can't Wait, explicitly laid out the politics of the "antiwar movement." Speaking of the new Democratic majority in Congress, she said: "We'll give them a couple of months or a few weeks to see what they come up with, but if they don't do something very decisive around the war and these other issues, I think there will be trouble" (*Washington Post*, 3 January).

Defeat Imperialism Through Workers Revolution!

The reformist left's entire opposition activity consists of working within the framework of the capitalist order, which leads them to grotesquely embellish the fraud of bourgeois democracy. Workers World's TONC is calling for a protest in D.C. on March 17 where at the end of the day, "instead of getting back on our buses and heading home we must be prepared to stay in Washington to make sure

that Congress votes no." Along the same lines, the ISO opines in *Socialist Worker* (8 December 2006): "The long dormant antiwar movement must take to the streets to remind this country's ruling elite that they ultimately must answer to the people they govern." The reality obscured by these reformists is that the "ruling elite"—i.e., the capitalists—have armed forces, cops, courts and prisons to defend their profits and rule, over which they throw a "democratic" veil in order to hide their class dictatorship.

As the other party of war and racism, the Democrats aim to redirect U.S. imperialism's energies to better serve the rulers' interests. Their "first 100 hours" in Congress were carefully calibrated to constitute a more effective "war on terror." As the *Washington Post* (3 January) put it: "Nowhere in the Democrats' consensus-driven agenda is legislation revisiting last year's establishment of military tribunals and suspending legal rights for suspected terrorists. Nor is there a revision of the civil liberties provisions of the USA Patriot Act, a measure curbing warrantless wiretapping by the National Security Agency or an aggressive confrontation

of the president on his Iraq war policies." New House legislation, based on recommendations of the bipartisan 9/11 Commission, ramps up "security" measures on the home front. Meanwhile, the Democrats trumpet their pitiful increase in the minimum wage that keeps impoverished workers impoverished. The Democrats' agenda: Money for war and "homeland security" repression, and peanuts for the poor.

As revolutionary Marxists, we see the problems encountered by U.S. imperialism as an opportunity to promote struggle by the multiracial American proletariat against the capitalist rulers at home. It is the road of class struggle that points the way toward smashing imperialism from within, through socialist revolution. If there is to be a future for coming generations of working-class and minority youth other than one of grinding exploitation, joblessness, mass imprisonment or use as cannon fodder, if the impoverished masses of the world are to have a future other than starvation and slaughter, this whole system must be torn up by its roots and replaced by a rational, planned economy under workers rule internationally. ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

Black, Immigrant Rights Go Hand in Hand Protest “War on Terror” Firing of Rail Workers!

JANUARY 15—Some 70 mostly black employees of H&M International Transportation at Union Pacific and CSX rail yards in Chicago were fired in late 2006 after the company invoked supposed Department of Homeland Security (DHS) guidelines barring ex-felons from holding such jobs. In recent background checks, the workers, many of whom are members of Teamsters locals 705 or 710, had disclosed nonviolent felony convictions on

Chicago

their records, just as they had done when they were first hired. A lawyer for some of the fired workers said at a protest today that she has received calls from bus and airport workers across the country who have been fired for similar reasons.

The Partisan Defense Committee has protested the firings to the rail companies and wrote today in a letter to the Teamsters: “The government has made it clear that the firing of these 70 railroad workers under the pretext of Homeland Security is just the beginning. All labor must mobilize to defend the Chicago Teamster railroad workers, and protest this attack that threatens us all.” The Spartacist League warned immediately following the September 11 terrorist attacks that the repression directed first against mainly Muslim immigrants would be wielded against black people, the labor movement and the population as a whole. Now, in the name



Twelve of the fired H&M International Transportation rail workers at Chicago PUSH headquarters, December 23.

of the “war on terror,” the government is particularly targeting black workers.

Notably, the felonies cited were largely for possession of drugs or unlicensed guns. We have always opposed the racist “war on drugs,” which has criminalized generations of minorities. We defend the right to bear arms. We also call for the decriminalization of drugs as part of our opposition to all so-called “crimes without victims.” Gun control and laws against drug possession bolster the repressive powers of the capitalist state, particularly against

minorities and working people. The capitalists’ repressive apparatus has been massively enhanced through the “war on terror.” Thus, while transportation bosses have for years used drug testing to weed out union militants and intimidate the workforce, now they are also using the “anti-terror” witchhunt to that end.

The “war on terror,” supported by both the Democratic and Republican parties of capital, has served as a pretext for imperialist rampages in Afghanistan and Iraq and for a wide-ranging assault on demo-

cratic rights at home. Under the same rubric, capitalist governments the world over have carried out their own assaults on working people and immigrants. In the British government’s crackdown on “terror suspects” following the criminal 2005 bombings of the London subway and bus systems, Jean Charles de Menezes, an electrician from Brazil who had nothing to do with the attacks, was executed by police on the subway with seven shots to the head.

In racist America, background checks threaten further devastation for unionized black workers, who were hit especially hard by the deindustrialization of the Northeast and Midwest beginning in the 1970s. The loss of jobs in steel, auto and other industries was accompanied by the skyrocketing incarceration of young black (and Latino) men, mainly as a result of the “war on drugs.” At current rates, as many as one in three black men in the U.S. will be imprisoned at least once. Background checks give the same government that is responsible for this onslaught on the black masses the final say on who works and who doesn’t. This is a real, present danger to the black transit and longshore workers who make up a significant percentage of those unions’ membership.

Democrats Push “Security” Crackdown

A January 2 protest of some 150 people that demanded the rehiring of the
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NYC: Outrage Over Racist Cop Shootings

New York City continues to seethe over the NYPD killing of Sean Bell, a young black man from Queens who was gunned down outside his bachelor’s party on November 25. Tens of thousands of protesters, overwhelmingly black working people and youth, filled 20 blocks of Manhattan’s Fifth Avenue on December 16 in a march organized by Al Sharpton and other Democratic Party politicians as well as labor officials. It was billed as a silent protest. But the crowd repeatedly burst into chants counting off: “One, two, three...” up to 50—the number of rounds that an undercover squad fired at Bell and his companions, Trent Benefield and Joseph Guzman.

Protesters were furious that police marauded through

Queens following Bell’s killing and smashed into homes under the guise of looking for a mythical “fourth man” with a gun—an attempt to cover the cops’ bloody tracks by making criminals out of their victims. In the three weeks after Sean Bell’s death, the NYPD shot five more men, killing two: black teenager Timur Person and Anatoly Dmitriev, a 62-year-old Russian immigrant shot down only hours after the Fifth Avenue march ended. On January 7, 38-year-old black Brooklyn resident Blondel Lassegue died



Stanley Rogouski

December 16: Tens of thousands thronged Manhattan streets in outrage over NYPD killing of Sean Bell.

after police shocked him with a high-voltage Taser gun.

Anger over police violence has been spreading throughout the U.S. This was seen in Houston after police in November pulled over a car driven by a black professional football player, Texans’ lineman Fred Weary, and knocked him to the

ground with a Taser jolt...for changing lanes without signaling! In New Orleans, seven cops face murder or attempted murder charges for killing two people and wounding four others attempting to flee the ravages of Hurricane Katrina.

The daily humiliations and raw racist terror meted out by the police is integral to the systematic oppression of black people that is rooted in the bedrock of American capitalism. The cops, courts, prisons and armed forces make up the core of the capitalist state,
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Beware Police “Reform” Schemes— For Labor Protest Against Cop Terror!