

Democrats: Partners in Bush's "War on Terror"

U.S. Imperialism's Torture Machine

As it prepares to approve the nomination of Michael Mukasey as Attorney General, the Democratic-led Congress has been putting on a cynical display of concern over the government's increasing surveillance of the population and its use of torture against "terror suspects." A big part of the backdrop to Mukasey's confirmation hearings in the Senate Judiciary Committee last week was the revelation by the *New York Times* (4 October) of secret Justice Department memos authorizing torture. One of those documents, an early 2005 memorandum, explicitly authorized the CIA to use a combination of painful psychological and physical techniques such as simulated drowning ("waterboarding"), potentially fatal head slapping and freezing temperatures. Those memos were the brainchild of Alberto Gonzales, who resigned as attorney general in August.

As a federal judge, Mukasey gave the Feds just about everything they wanted in the "terror" cases that came before him, going back years before the September 11 attacks. During the Judiciary Committee hearings, Mukasey upheld every aspect of the Bush administration's "anti-terror" policies, from waterboarding to the overall vast expansion of presidential powers. Following a script as predictable as a *Gilligan's Island* rerun, a handful of Democrats on the confirmation panel postured as standing up for civil liberties. But the Democratic Party at every level has championed the "war on terror" that has served as a pretext for the murderous occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq and for a war on the rights of us all "at home."

Even as they whine that government spying exceeds the president's authority, Congress votes to give him that authority. In responding to earlier revelations of government memos endorsing torture, which further tarnished U.S. imperialism's image abroad, Congress passed a law giving Bush & Co. a way out by redefining torture. Even when Congress adopted a law in 2005 prohibiting "cruel, inhuman and degrading" treatment—i.e., nominally upholding the U.S. Constitution—the Justice Department responded by issuing another secret memo declaring all CIA interrogation methods legal. The courts, meanwhile, have given their imprimatur to virtually every repressive measure demanded by the imperial presidency.

To many liberals and reformist leftists, the Democrats' failure to counter the Bush gang's repressive policies is a sign of their spinelessness. In fact, the Democratic Party of U.S. imperialism is running to recapture the White House largely on the basis that it is better equipped to prosecute the "war on terror." In fact, the Bill Clinton administration helped pave the way for



AP

the current assault on civil liberties.

In the aftermath of the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing by white right-wingers, the Clinton White House enacted the "Omni-bus Counterterrorism Act" under which immigrants and all "aliens" could be subjected to star chamber proceedings in secret trials without any charges being presented. The Clinton administration also pushed through the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, which greatly expanded the number of crimes punishable by death as part of a general escalation in the use of the racist death penalty. While Bush's Republicans are openly a party of racist, anti-labor reaction and all-sided bigotry, the Democrats posture as "friends" of workers, black people and immigrants, and end up doing the same thing.

The Feds' current anti-terrorist database of over 235,000 files is made up of such

lists as the FBI's Violent Gang and Terrorist Organizations File adopted by the Clinton administration in October 1995 ostensibly to crack down on youth gangs. The intended result was an even fiercer reign of racist cop terror against the ghetto and barrio masses. In opposing the anti-immigrant witchhunt following the September 11 attacks, we warned that the massive expansion of police powers would also pose a further threat to black people, working people and the entire populace.

The September 11 attacks gave the capitalist rulers a golden opportunity to ratchet up their repressive powers. But such moves were already well under way, as can be readily gleaned from the latest dust-up over domestic spying by the National Security Agency (NSA) abetted by the telecommunications companies that participated in the wiretapping and "data mining" of customers' records. Joseph



AFP



Getty

Hundreds detained without charges continue to languish in U.S. prison camp in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. Senator Hillary Clinton (above, at September 2006 press conference) promotes Democrats as more effective than Bush's Republicans in carrying out reactionary "war on terror."

Nacchio, former chief executive of Qwest Communications International, recently revealed that the NSA had approached his company to assist in its wireless surveillance program *six months before* the September 11 attacks. Believing the program illegal, Nacchio turned them down.

When the NSA program was revealed in December 2005, the Democrats vowed to rein it in. After months of hearings, subpoenas and other posturing, Democratic Congressional leaders let a new law, which gave Bush even greater powers than he had initially sought, sail through committees, putting up virtually no resistance to its passage in August. The Democrats then complained that they

continued on page 10

The Development and Extension of Leon Trotsky's Theory of Permanent Revolution....6



At “Labor Conference to Stop the War” Workshop Labor Opportunists, Renegades Embrace Bill Logan

In the last issue of *Workers Vanguard* we printed the preface to the recently published International Communist League bulletin “The Logan Dossier,” documenting the facts and findings leading to the expulsion of one Bill Logan from our international tendency in 1979 as a “proven, massive liar and a sexual sociopath who manipulated the private lives of comrades for reasons of power politics and his own aberrant appetites and compulsions in the guise of Marxism” (see “The Logan Dossier,” WV No. 900, 12 October). Among his crimes, Logan used his organizational position as chairman of our Australian section to break up couples and to try to force a young woman to get an abortion and, failing that, to give up her baby. Today, Logan heads up a dubious outfit calling itself the International Bolshevik Tendency (BT). As we wrote in “The Logan Dossier”: “In publishing the documentary record of the Logan trial, we aim to make clear to a new generation of leftists that the likes of Logan have no place in the workers movement.”

Yet at an October 20 Bay Area “Labor Conference to Stop the War,” Logan masqueraded as a bona fide “workers’ leader” from New Zealand. He participated in a workshop on “Class Struggle and the

War” chaired by Jack Heyman, an executive board member of International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 10 and the central chairman of this “labor conference.” Logan retailed stories of “historical examples of workers political action against imperialist war.” To hear this man, who apes all the attitudes of class privilege and imperialist elitism of the long-decayed British empire, cynically intone the Wobbly slogan “An injury to one is an injury to all,” which the ILWU adopted as its own, was an outrage. A Spartacist League speaker intervened to expose this revolting and dangerous fraud: “I am offended and disgusted that this man, Bill Logan, is welcomed at this conference. He has committed crimes against communist morality and against working people.”

Heyman tried to interrupt our speaker and defended Logan against what Heyman called “personal slanders.” Far from slander, our exposure of Logan’s crimes is an elementary *defense of the workers movement*. Yet sitting silent through Heyman’s attack on our speaker was none other than Internationalist Group (IG) leader Jan Norden. When he was still a leading member of our organization, Norden powerfully and rightly indicted Logan as “a criminally socio-

pathic individual who should be removed from all working-class organizations and other working-class organizations should be warned” (“On the Logan Regime Part III,” *International Information Bulletin* No. 16, November 1983, which is available to the public). Now, taking the floor not long after our comrade at the conference, Norden’s only mention of Logan was a brief, oh-so-comradely criticism of Logan’s description of a 1930s Australian labor boycott of pig iron to Japan as an example of working-class struggle against war. Thus, Norden joined the labor opportunist Heyman and the renegades of the BT in legitimizing the twisted monster Logan as part of the workers movement.

When Norden and his small coterie of followers defected from our organization in 1996, Logan’s BT hoped to woo them on the basis of shared hostility to the Spartacist League, the BT’s central animating principle. At the time, Negrete, a present leading member of the IG, responded on behalf of the Norden group: “I personally witnessed the BT’s lies,

provocative behavior and unashamed orientation to the white labor aristocracy from the beginning.... The bottom-feeding scavengers of the BT live off anti-communism.” (Negrete’s 25 July 1996 “A Note on the ‘Bolshevik’ Tendency” was included in the Norden group’s anti-Spartacist diatribe, *From a Drift Toward Abstentionism to Desertion from the Class Struggle*.) But politics makes for strange bedfellows and common bottom feeders.

In its propaganda, the IG issues thundering cries for the defeat of U.S. imperialism, promoting its credentials for “uniquely” calling for labor strikes against the war. But the real face behind the IG’s bombast is the trade-union opportunist Jack Heyman, a buddy the IG shares in common with Logan’s BT. There was much mutual flattery among them as Logan saluted Heyman for his role in “militant labor actions,” while the IG promoted Heyman’s conference as a potential “important step toward bringing to bear workers’ power against the imperialist war” (“ILWU Dock Workers Under Attack,” *Internationalist*, October 2007). Far from pointing to the mobilization of the power of labor against the brutal occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan, this conference was little more than a talk shop for a bunch of sometimes left-sounding bureaucrats and a gaggle of reformists and liberals to peddle their wares in the shadow of the Democratic Party, the other party of U.S. imperialism.

In his remarks at the opening plenary session, Tim Paulson, the head of the San Francisco Labor Council, gave the game



TROTSKY

For New October Revolutions!

November 7 (October 25 by the old Russian calendar) marks the 90th anniversary of the workers revolution led by the Bolshevik Party of V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky. Despite the subsequent Stalinist degeneration of the Soviet workers state, culminating in its counterrevolutionary destruction in 1991-92 by Boris Yeltsin’s imperialist-backed forces, the October Revolution was the international proletariat’s greatest conquest. As historic American Trotskyist leader James P. Cannon stressed in 1939, it shows



LENIN

the way forward in the struggle to sweep away the capitalist-imperialist system.

The Russian question has been and remains the question of the revolution. The Russian Bolsheviks on November 7, 1917, once and for all, took the question of the workers’ revolution out of the realm of abstraction and gave it flesh and blood reality.

It was said once of a book—I think it was Whitman’s “Leaves of Grass”—“who touches this book, touches a man.” In the same sense it can also be said, “Who touches the Russian question, touches a revolution.” Therefore, be serious about it. Don’t play with it.

The October revolution put socialism on the order of the day throughout the world. It revived and shaped and developed the revolutionary labor movement of the world out of the bloody chaos of the war. The Russian revolution showed in practice, by example, how the workers’ revolution is to be made. It revealed in life the role of the party. It showed in life what kind of a party the workers must have. By its victory, and its reorganization of the social system, the Russian revolution has proved for all time the superiority of nationalized property and planned economy over capitalist private property, and planless competition and anarchy in production.

—James P. Cannon, “Speech on the Russian Question” (October 1939), printed in *Struggle for a Proletarian Party* (1943)

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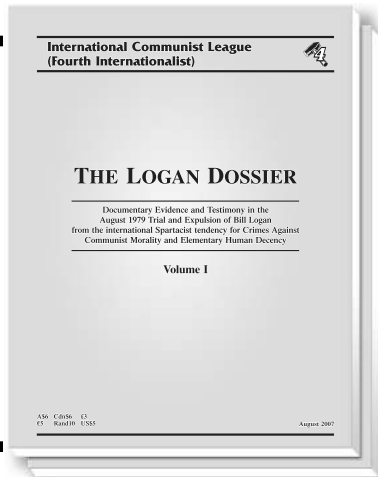
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Spread the word! Contact the PDC for copies of *The Fight to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal* — *Mumia Is Innocent!* This pamphlet arms activists in the struggle for Mumia’s freedom by presenting the political basis of the state vendetta against Mumia and the 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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Northites' Scab Line on UAW

away as to what kind of “labor action” was being promoted here. Appealing for trade unionists to join the labor contingent at the October 27 antiwar protest in San Francisco, initiated by the ANSWER coalition and United for Peace and Justice around the social-patriotic call to “Bring the Troops Home,” Paulson boasted that this contingent would have as its speaker Democrat Barbara Lee, “the first and bravest of all the Congressional people.” Such “unity” with the parties of the capitalist class enemy has long meant going after the revolutionaries by any means necessary. Trotting Logan out at this conference was a calculated provocation orchestrated by his BT, not only against the Spartacist League but against the workers movement as a whole. But for the IG, embracing Logan, the revolting antithesis of the liberating goals of Marxism, was the admission price, happily paid, into the pro-Democratic Party “anti-war” swamp in the Bay Area.

We intervened in this conference with our revolutionary program against imperialist war. We also urged participants to join us in labor-centered protest action to free death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, and a number of people signed on to a Partisan Defense Committee statement demanding that this innocent man be freed. We are committed to arming the working class with the consciousness, confidence and fighting spirit needed to wage real combat against the imperialists and their dirty wars against the workers and oppressed of the world. Our exposure of Logan’s crimes is part of that commitment. As we wrote in the preface to “The Logan Dossier”:

“We strive for a society in which all forms of social oppression, exploitation and degradation—the warped byproducts of material scarcity—will be things of the past. To this end, we seek to make the proletariat—though shaped by the deformities of capitalist class rule—conscious of its historic role as the gravedigger of the capitalist system, and of class society as a whole. Power politics, lying and sexual manipulation are antithetical to this purpose.... There is no place for the likes of a William King Logan in our movement.”■

What kind of organization, writing about the recent United Auto Workers (UAW) strike against General Motors, “would advise workers, should the UAW come to their plant, to vote to keep it out” and state that “joining the UAW would not advance workers’ interests one iota”? Our readers could be excused for thinking that such an appeal would come from the professional union-busters of the National Right to Work Committee. No, these were the words of the “Socialist Equality Party” (SEP) in an October 12 posting on their World Socialist Web Site. And they were in direct response to the fundamental point we made in “Victory to the UAW Strike!” (WV No. 899, 28 September) that “organizing the unorganized is crucial to the very survival of the UAW.” The SEP (formerly Workers League, WL) are political bandits who like to pass themselves off as Trotskyists. And when it comes to labor struggle, this outfit is nothing but scab “socialists.”

More than a decade ago, SEP (then WL) honcho David North declared in a speech that “to define the AFL-CIO as a working class organization is to blind the working class” (*Bulletin*, 10 January 1992). The Northites soon showed what this line meant in practice when they openly apologized for scabs who crossed UAW picket lines in the long and bitter Caterpillar strike in the mid ’90s. Today they oppose union organizing in non-union auto plants, offering the rationale that the sellout contract pushed by the UAW tops following the short-lived GM strike marked “the open transformation of the UAW into a business.” Throw in some rhetoric about “globalization,” and this all adds up to a “radical” veneer for siding with the bosses, who spend billions each year on thugs and spies, lawsuits and advertising campaigns to keep unions out.

To pass off their anti-union line, the

Northites willfully conflate the trade unions—the basic defense organizations of the working class—with their misleaders, aptly characterized more than a century ago by the Marxist Daniel De Leon as “labor lieutenants of the capital-

July 1993), David North’s speech writing off the unions came right after U.S.-backed Boris Yeltsin formally dissolved the USSR in December 1991. North seized on this to announce the death of the Soviet workers state. Revolutionary

**September 24:
UAW picket line
at GM plant in
Flint, Michigan.
SEP political
bandits join
bosses in
calling to keep
UAW out of
non-union plants.**

Ryan Garza/Flint Journal



ist class.” The union tops must be thrown out and replaced by a new, class-struggle labor leadership. This surely is not where the SEP is coming from. In the early 1970s, when struggles against the Vietnam War and for black rights had shaken the U.S., the Workers League called on the reactionary AFL-CIO chief George Meany to “build a Labor Party” and offered a program for such a party that said not a word about the war or about the fight against racial oppression!

A primary preoccupation of the union tops at the time was to work in league with the State Department in the Cold War against the Soviet Union. The Northites joined right in, tailing every CIA-sponsored force arrayed against the Soviet degenerated workers state and East European deformed workers states, from the Afghan *mujahedin* to Polish Solidarność. As we noted in “Workers League vs. the Unions” (WV No. 580, 16

leader Leon Trotsky had aptly compared the Soviet Union under Stalinist rule to a giant labor organization that must be defended against the capitalist enemy despite its misleaders. North grotesquely inverted Trotsky’s analogy to write off the organized labor movement along with the Soviet Union.

We exposed the SEP’s union-busting line at a talk at New York City’s Tamiment Library on October 12 by Bryan Palmer, author of a recent biography of American Trotskyist leader James P. Cannon. Following comments from longtime WL/SEP leader Fred Mazelis, a Spartacist League speaker pointed out:

“The SEP, which supported every imperialist-inspired force in destroying the gains of the 1917 Revolution, now come out against trade unions entirely and tell workers not to vote for the UAW should the organizing drive come to their factory. There is a word for that and it begins with ‘s’ and it ends with ‘b’.”■

Prepare Now for Emergency Protests!

Mumia Abu-Jamal Is an Innocent Man! FREE MUMIA NOW! Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!

On May 17, the Third Circuit Court of Appeals heard oral arguments in Mumia’s case, and there could be a decision at any time.

If the Third Circuit Court of Appeals rules to uphold the death sentence or denies Mumia’s appeals for a new trial or a new hearing, the PDC and LBLs call for protests the day after the decision.

BAY AREA

14th and Broadway, Oakland
Near the Federal Building

4:30-6:30 p.m.

(On Monday if the decision falls on Fri.-Sun.)

More info: (510) 839-0852 or pdcbayarea@sbcglobal.net

NEW YORK CITY

Federal Building

Broadway between Worth and Duane Sts.

Weekday: 5-7 p.m.

Saturday: 1-4 p.m.

More info: (212) 406-4252 or (212) 267-1025
or partisandefense@earthlink.net

CHICAGO

Kluczynski Federal Building

Northwest corner of Jackson and Dearborn

Weekday: 4:30 p.m.

Saturday: Noon

More info: (312) 563-0442 or chicagopdc@sbcglobal.net

TORONTO

360 University Ave.

Across the street from the U.S. Consulate

between Dundas (St. Patrick station) and

Queen (Osgoode station)

Weekday: 6 p.m., Weekend: 1 p.m.

More info: (416) 593-4138 or pdctoronto@bellnet.ca

LOS ANGELES

**U.S. Federal
Courthouse**

Weekday: 5 p.m.

312 N. Spring St.

**Westwood
Federal Building**

Saturday: 1 p.m.

11000 Wilshire Blvd.

More info: (213) 380-8897 or partisandefense-la@sbcglobal.net

VANCOUVER

**University of British Columbia
Student Union Building**

South Plaza

Weekday: Noon

More info: (604) 687-0353 or
trotskyist_vancouver@shawcable.com

U.S. demonstrations are sponsored by the Partisan Defense Committee and the Labor Black Leagues.

For information on Berlin, Hamburg, London, Mexico City and Paris demonstrations: www.partisandefense.org

Subsequent to the PDC’s call for protests, the Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition (NYC) has publicized the following actions, in the event of a negative decision, to take place the next day:

Philadelphia: 13th and Locust. Call (267) 760-7344 for information.

New York City: Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. State Office Bldg. (125th Street and Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Blvd.) Weekday: 5 p.m., Saturday: 1 p.m.

Join the PDC contingent three Saturdays after the decision at the National Demonstration in Philadelphia called by International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal

Young Spartacus

Why They Can't Wait 'til 2008 RCP Maoists "Serve the People" ...Up to the Democrats

Every few months, yet another desperate statement proclaims that the world can wait no longer to "drive out the Bush regime." The author of these statements is the World Can't Wait (WCW) campaign of the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP). Not coincidentally, WCW held its first major event a year prior to the 2006 midterm elections and staged rallies around the country in October 2006, right on the eve of those elections. The WCW, among others, proposes that Bush should be driven out through impeachment. Impeachment by whom, one might ask? Answer: by the Democratic Party majority in the House of Representatives.

World Can't Wait's "fight the right" preaching is laced with perfunctory warnings such as the one in WCW's "The Call to Drive Out the Bush Regime": "There is not going to be some savior from the Democratic Party." Translation: the WCW wants to mobilize people to put further pressure on the Democrats to end Bush & Co.'s reign in the upcoming presidential elections. In a nutshell, WCW is all about dressing up pro-Democratic Party pressure politics with outraged rhetoric and orange bandannas. These politics were already amply demonstrated in the RCP's earlier work in the antiwar "movement" via its Not In Our Name (NION) organization, which we have exposed in numerous articles, including in "Revolutionary Communist Party: Revolutionary in Name Only" (WV No. 823, 2 April 2004). *Refusing to stand for the military defense of Iraq against the U.S. imperialist war*, the RCP opted to "unite all who can be united," not least open representatives of the bourgeois Democratic Party and the Green Party, in its NION coalition. Protests of the RCP's membership, who claimed a blazing response would be forthcoming, to the contrary, there was no response to our polemic. Not surprising; as we will show below, the RCP has a long track record of refusing to take a forthright stand against the depredations of U.S. imperialism. Moreover, the RCP is not just a garden-variety reformist organization in thrall to a wing of its "own" bourgeoisie. It has a particularly sordid record as Maoist apologists for the most venal acolytes of Washington across the globe.

Lacking anything to *politically* distinguish itself from the left-liberal swamp, and since apparently the world will in fact wait, the RCP has amped up its quirky cult of personality around RCP chairman and founder Bob Avakian. Voluble speeches from "Chairman Bob" occupy vast swaths of their paper. RCP chapters organize showings of excerpts from his *eleven-hour* DVD. And if that isn't enough, you can sign on to "Engage! A Committee to Protect and Project the Voice of Bob Avakian." But the effusive emptiness that is the RCP's current stock in trade doesn't stop at their great leader. WCW co-founder and RCP spokesperson Sunsara Taylor recently wrote a breathless "Reporters Notebook from Coachella," gushing that the reunited



Jonathon D. Colman
Got Democrats? RCP's World Can't Wait at March 17 march on Pentagon. Inset: WCW T-shirt dresses up pro-Democratic Party pressure politics.

lineup of Rage Against the Machine at the festival "will certainly play in favor of humanity" (*Revolution*, 27 May). And if music isn't your thing, then you can always get excited about secondary colors. Thus the WCW's initiative, "Declare It Now," hopes "a groundswell of orange can turn into a groundswell of hope and danger—a groundswell that rises up from below and has the potential of sweeping Bush from office before his term is up" (www.declareitnow.com). Given that they've claimed black and neon green in the past, it seems the only color the RCP doesn't want to be associated with is red.

Making this crystal clear, not only the RCP's WCW but also the reformist, anti-Communist International Socialist Organ-

ization (ISO) signed a petition to Bush and Cheney advocating that: "The most effective way to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons would be to closely monitor its nuclear energy program, and to improve diplomatic relations—two tasks made much more difficult by threatening to bomb Iranian territory" (see "ISO, RCP to Bush: Disarm Iran, 'Lead the Way to Peace,'" WV No. 870, 12 May 2006). Confronted with this petition at the Los Angeles stop on this spring's "Mission of a Generation—Stop the War Now: Drive Out the Bush Regime" speaking tour, Taylor spluttered that what the petition was about was the "most effective way to defend Iran from developing nuclear weapons," and

of course in her personal view "nobody should have nuclear weapons." Well, we think that nuclear weapons are a part of the necessary defense of those countries in which capitalism has been overthrown—China, Cuba, Vietnam and North Korea—as well as for those dependent capitalist countries in the cross hairs of U.S. imperialism, such as Iran. We say that Iran *needs* nuclear weapons to deter imperialist attack. In the event of a military attack by the U.S. or any country acting on its behalf, we call for military defense of Iran while giving no political support to the mullah regime.

The RCP/WCW invokes the spectre of "fascism," claiming that Bush & Co. could "remake society very quickly, in a fascist way, and for generations to come" ("The Call to Drive Out the Bush Regime," undated, 2005). Such bombast is a very cynical tactic, and by no means a new one, to pimp for the capitalist Democratic Party (presumably the "anti-fascist" wing of the ruling class). There can be no doubt that Bush & Co. have done much to shred such gains as were won, through social struggle, over past decades. But their impulse toward bonapartism is nothing new for bourgeois rule—in fact they have used many of the laws and practices of the imperial presidency introduced by Democratic administrations before them.

In any case, this is hardly fascism—a form of bourgeois rule requiring the destruction of all workers organizations, often accompanied, as in the case of Nazi Germany, by the genocide of whole peoples and minority populations. Moreover, the fight against fascism requires the mobilization of the working class, including armed workers defense guards, to smash that threat, preferably in the egg, and to struggle for the seizure of state power against the capitalist rulers whose system spawns fascism, just as it does war, racism, poverty, national and racial oppression. The strategy of allying with a wing of this ruling class is treacherous, and historically has been proven to be so. (For more on this see the Spartacus Youth League pamphlet *The Stalin School of Falsification Revisited*.)

Should there be any doubt about the RCP's "anti-fascist" (read: anti-Bush) "unity" with the supposed enlightened bourgeoisie, we can report that at the Columbia University stop of the "Mission of a Generation" tour, Sunsara Taylor grotesquely concluded her speech by proclaiming a desire for unity with those who stand for the principles on which America was founded. As one of our comrades pointed out at that meeting, one of America's founding "principles" was chattel slavery.

It is embarrassing to have to point this out. Black oppression has its roots in the earliest days of slavery. After the Civil War, the second American Revolution, smashed the slave system, in 1877 the promise of black equality was betrayed by the Northern bourgeoisie in favor of an alliance with the former Southern slavocracy. The



RCP's World Can't Wait and ISO signed petition advising Bush and Cheney how best to disarm Iran, "lead the way to peace."

special oppression of the black population serves the interests of the capitalist rulers, who use black workers as a reserve army of labor, last hired and first fired, and use anti-black racism to divide and weaken the working class as a whole. The native fascists of the Ku Klux Klan are the legacy of the betrayal of Radical Reconstruction. Their terror, which has helped keep the South an open shop region, has also made an imprint in the recent proliferation of nooses threatening black people at workplaces and schools across the country. Clearly, calling for the unity of the workers movement with the racist American capitalist class is like calling for unity between slave and slave master. The Spartacist League has organized to interdict fascist provocations through the united-front mobilization of labor/black power, requiring a political struggle against the Democratic Party and its labor lieutenants within the trade unions. We have produced a series of publications on this strategic question for the third, socialist, American Revolution, along with many articles in *Workers Vanguard*. (For reference, see our *Black History and the Class Struggle* series.)

As revolutionary communists, Spartacus Youth Club members seek to break leftist youth from the illusion that capitalism can be reformed to serve the interests of working people and the oppressed, and to win them instead to the fight for social-



Reuters

Members of Afghan women's militia with Soviet rifles at 1989 rally in Kabul. Right: Spartacist contingent at 1980 anti-draft rally in Washington, D.C. We hailed Red Army against U.S.-backed Islamic reactionaries in Afghanistan, opposed anti-Soviet war drive.



Young Spartacus

Permanent Revolution," page 6.) Today, we defend the bureaucratically deformed workers states of China, Cuba, Vietnam and North Korea. We fight for new October Revolutions in the capitalist countries. For its part, the RCP has written off those states in which capitalism has been overthrown as "capitalist" countries, as it earlier wrote off the Soviet Union as "social imperialist" and sided with reactionary forces against the USSR—from CIA-backed mullahs in Afghanistan in

against the advanced white nations—a category that definitely included Russia. "There is no doubt that the New Left's preference for Mao's China over Khrushchev/Brezhnev's Russia was based largely on a healthy subjective impulse. The Russians' frank espousal of 'peaceful coexistence' was condemned as a cowardly attempt to conciliate American imperialism at the expense of the insurgent colonial peoples.... The New Leftists drawn to Maoism wanted passionately to create an egalitarian and just society; the apologists for the Kremlin did not."

However, Mao shared the Stalinist dogma of building "socialism in one country," which has always meant opposing proletarian revolutions internationally in an attempt to conciliate the imperialists. In 1972, Mao welcomed Nixon to Beijing while the U.S. bombed Hanoi, cementing an alliance with U.S. imperialism that manifested itself in China's increasingly nakedly counterrevolutionary foreign policy moves. Those who followed Mao through the increasingly transparent and immediate betrayals now lined up behind U.S. imperialism against the USSR, undergoing a corrosive process which made them much different political animals than the subjective anti-imperialists who formerly inhabited the New Left zoo. As revolutionary Trotskyists, we fought against the betrayals of both the Beijing and Moscow bureaucracies, calling for internationalist unity, demanding that China not act as a cat's paw for the U.S. imperialists.

Meanwhile, Maoists in the U.S., hopelessly compromised over China's alliance with their "own" rulers, underwent a series of splits and implosions following the death of Mao and, in 1977, the ascendance of Deng Xiaoping, twice purged as a "capitalist roader." The RCP would later split itself, and would come to regard the former "socialist" China as capitalist. As we wrote at the time of the RCP's split:

"It is notable that both Avakian and Jarvis [Avakian's factional opponent in the RCP] understand that China's foreign policy—defined first and foremost by the alliance with U.S. imperialism against the USSR—is Pandora's box. Had they undertaken a conscious conspiracy to divert attention away from the atrocities which have shaken the American Maoist movement (Peking's support to U.S./

South Africa in Angola, its courting of the bloody Pinochet dictatorship in Chile, China's scandalous backing of the Shah of Iran, and its repeated calls for a strong NATO), the silence could scarcely be more complete.... Of course, this discretion is indeed the better part of valor for the RCP, which like any other Maoist sect would have an uncomfortable time determining where to locate a 'degeneration' of Chinese foreign policy. From Sukarno's decimation of the [pro-Chinese] Indonesian CP to Bandaranaike's massacre of Ceylonese youth rebels, the Maoists never allowed bloody repression to dampen their enthusiasm for 'anti-imperialist' dictators so long as they maintained friendly state relations with China."

—"RCP Splits!" WV No. 190, 27 January 1978

This left the RCP without a country. The winds of Cold War II were blowing hard against the Soviet Union, as the U.S. rulers rearmed under Democrat Jimmy Carter's "human rights" crusade. The RCP was bankrupt in the face of such reality: it had taken a stand on the serious question of the *class* nature of both China and the Soviet Union not on the basis of any Marxist analysis, but rather simply on the basis of anti-materialist and increasingly cynical loyalty to Mao's wing of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) bureaucracy. Thus, it wrote off the gains of the 1949 Revolution on the basis that the Gang of Four did not prevail in an intra-bureaucratic fight within the CCP, just as it had parroted the line following the Sino-Soviet split that the Soviet Union became capitalist due to a speech by Khrushchev criticizing the bureaucratic "excesses" of J.V. Stalin. This is a cruel parody of scientific socialism, of revolutionary Marxism.

RCP Today: Fruits of Betrayal

The RCP has evolved into essentially a "death of Communism" left-liberal outfit which likes to indulge in "revolutionary" rhetoric, having long ago jettisoned any pretense to revolutionary purpose. It has even sunk so low as to denounce the heroic victory of the Vietnamese workers and peasants against U.S. imperialism, writing that: "When the NLF did 'win,' when the U.S. was driven out, when the

continued on page 11



UPI

U.S. imperialism's killers flee Vietnamese Communist victory, Saigon, April 1975. RCP Chairman Bob Avakian says U.S. defeat was "not good."

ist revolution. The Democrats, like the Republicans and the Greens, are a party of the capitalist class, competing in the elections to administer a government that is nothing but the capitalists' executive committee. No matter which capitalist party is in power, the rule of the capitalist class is defended by the capitalist state—an apparatus of repression made up of the cops, courts, prisons and military—which is wielded against all the oppressed and exploited. By posing as a friend of labor, minorities and other oppressed groups, the Democratic Party plays an important part in preserving illusions in capitalism. For the same reason, it has historically been the preferred party to administer the imperialists' wars and adventures, from World Wars I and II, to Kennedy's machinations against Cuba, to the Vietnam War.

Our model is the Russian October Revolution of 1917. In that revolution, the working class, under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky, seized political power in its own name, expropriated the capitalists and landlords and established workers rule over one-sixth of the globe. Through the imperialist-backed capitalist counterrevolution in 1991-92, we stood for the unconditional military defense of the USSR and for proletarian political revolution against the ruling nationalist, bureaucratic caste that undermined that defense through its policy of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism. (For further explanation, see "The Development and Extension of Leon Trotsky's Theory of

the 1980s to apartheid South Africa-backed mercenaries fighting heroic Cuban troops in Angola in the 1970s.

Old Garbage in New Pails: RCP's Roots of Class Betrayal

Who are these RCP people, so rhetorically bombastic and so tamely in the wake of the "Anybody but Bush" pro-Democratic politics? For a start, far from undertaking the necessary study and assimilation of the lessons of the Bolshevik Revolution, the RCP's leadership and program were founded in *hostile rejection of such a revolutionary, proletarian and internationalist road*. "Chairman Bob," now enervating more young people with his warmed-over liberal-Maoist double-talk, is a product of the New Left, and among the more unsavory of its products. We can only provide here a capsule description of the RCP (formerly Revolutionary Union), which emerged from Students for a Democratic Society. As we noted in the introduction to the 1976 Spartacus Youth League pamphlet *China's Alliance with U.S. Imperialism*:

"New Leftists were attracted to the Maoism of the Cultural Revolution period [1966-1976], not because it seemed the continuity of orthodox Stalinism, but because it seemed the highest expression of ascetic repudiation of the spoils of imperialism and of the 'Third World' nationalist-populist fervor toward which the student New Left looked as the impetus for the world revolution. People's China was seen as the vanguard of the non-white, 'Third World' poor struggling

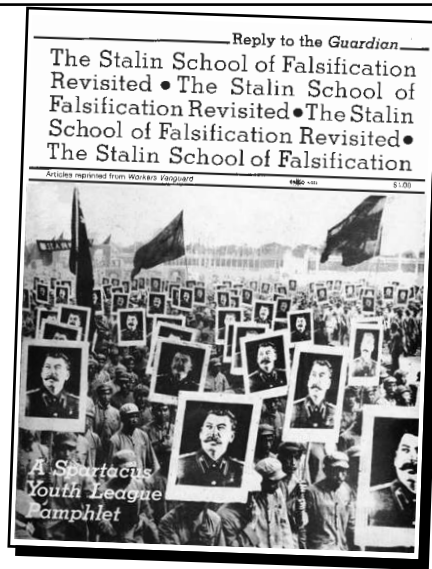
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The Development and Extension of Leon Trotsky's Theory of Permanent Revolution

This month marks the 90th anniversary of the Russian Revolution led by the Bolshevik Party of V. I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky. The October Revolution was the defining event of the 20th century. Spurred especially by the carnage of World War I, the working class took state power, establishing the dictatorship of the

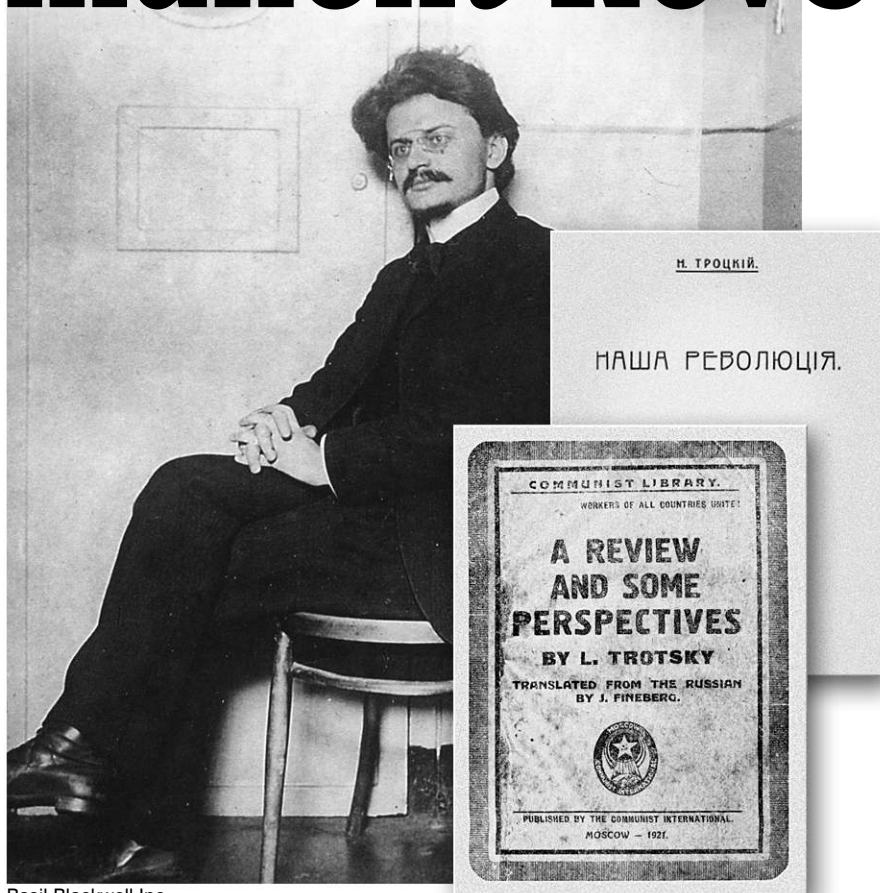
PART ONE

proletariat. In doing so, the multinational proletariat of Russia not only liberated itself from capitalist exploitation but also led the peasantry, national minorities and all the oppressed in driving out feudal tyranny and imperialist bondage.

The young workers state carried out an agrarian revolution and recognized the right of self-determination of all nations in what had been the tsarist prison house of peoples. The soviet regime took Russia out of the interimperialist world war and inspired class-conscious workers in other countries to try to follow the Bolshevik example. The Third (Communist) International, which held its inaugural congress in Moscow in 1919, was founded to lead the proletariat internationally in the struggle for socialist revolution.

The October Revolution was a stunning confirmation of the theory and perspective of permanent revolution developed by Trotsky. In his 1906 work *Results and Prospects*, Trotsky projected that because Russia, despite its economic backwardness, was already part of a world capitalist economy that was ripe for socialism, the workers could come to power there before an extended period of capitalist development. Indeed, the workers would *have* to come to power if Russia was to be liberated from its feudal past. At the heart of the Bolsheviks' success in 1917 was the coming together of Trotsky's program of permanent revolution with Lenin's single-minded struggle to build a programmatically steered and tested vanguard party against all manner of reconciliation with the capitalist order.

Just before *Results and Prospects* appeared, the 1905 Russian Revolution had shaken the tsarist empire to its foundations and brought to the fore an intense debate over the future course of revolutionary developments. Russia was an imperialist power but also the weakest link in the imperialist chain, saddled with an absolutist monarchy, an encrusted



Basil Blackwell Inc.

Leon Trotsky in jail in aftermath of 1905 Revolution. Trotsky's 1906 *Our Revolution* (top inset) included *Results and Prospects*, which explained theory of permanent revolution and was republished under title shown (bottom inset) in Moscow in 1921.

landed aristocracy and a huge Russian Orthodox state church.

The young, vibrant bourgeoisies of 17th-century England and 18th-century France had stood at the head of the urban and rural populace in bourgeois-democratic revolutions that swept away similar feudal-derived fetters on modern capitalist development and would give rise to an industrial proletariat. But the late-emerging Russian bourgeoisie—subordinated to foreign industrialists and bankers, tied by a thousand threads to the aristocracy—was weak and cowardly, fearful that it, too, would be swept away should the worker and peasant masses rise up against the tsarist autocracy.

Addressing this contradiction, Trotsky argued, as he later summarized in the August 1939 article “Three Conceptions of the Russian Revolution” (also known as “Three Concepts”):

“The complete victory of the democratic revolution in Russia is inconceivable otherwise than in the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat basing itself on

the peasantry. The dictatorship of the proletariat, which will inescapably place on the order of the day not only democratic but also socialist tasks, will at the same time provide a mighty impulse to the international socialist revolution. Only the victory of the proletariat in the West will shield Russia from bourgeois restoration and secure for her the possibility of bringing the socialist construction to its conclusion.”

As the Bolsheviks anticipated, the October Revolution inspired proletarian upheavals in Europe, particularly Germany, as well as anti-colonial and national liberation struggles in Asia and elsewhere. But despite the revolutionary ferment, the proletariat did not come to power in any of the advanced capitalist countries of the West. Russia, bled white by imperialist war and the bloody Civil War that erupted a few months after the Bolsheviks took power, remained isolated. Conditions of great material scarcity produced strong objective pressures toward bureaucratism. The failure to consummate an exceptional opportunity for socialist revolution in Germany in 1923 allowed a restabilization of the world capitalist order and led to profound demoralization among Soviet workers. This facilitated a political counterrevolution and the rise of a privileged bureaucratic caste around Joseph Stalin.

In late 1924, Stalin promulgated the dogma of “socialism in one country.” This flouted the Marxist understanding that socialism—a classless society of material abundance—could only be built on the basis of the most modern technology and an international division of labor, requiring proletarian revolutions in at least a number of the most advanced capitalist countries. Stalin and his henchmen suppressed proletarian democracy and, over the years, transformed the Communist International from an organizer of the world socialist revolution into its antithesis, strangling revolutionary possibilities abroad in hopes of convincing world imperialism to leave the USSR alone. The Stalinist degeneration of the Soviet workers state and the Comintern did not go unopposed. Taking up the Bolshevik banner of revolutionary pro-

letarian internationalism, Trotsky and his supporters fought against the nationalist dogma of “socialism in one country.”

Decades of Stalinist treachery, lies and bureaucratic mismanagement eventually opened the gates to the imperialist-sponsored forces of capitalist restoration, culminating in the counterrevolutionary overthrow of the Soviet degenerated workers state in 1991-92. The workers state erected by the October Revolution no longer exists. But it remains vital for class-conscious workers and leftist intellectuals to study the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, the world proletariat's greatest success and imperialism's greatest defeat ever.

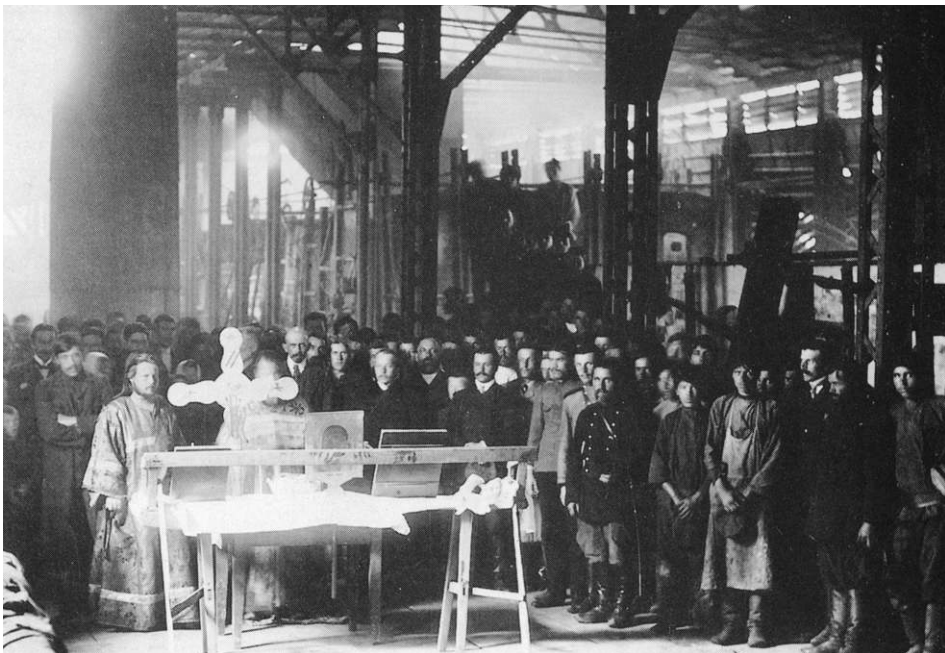
From Tsarist Russia to Post-Apartheid South Africa

Trotsky formulated his theory in regard to tsarist Russia. But history would demonstrate that the conditions that made Russia ripe for the proletarian seizure of power in 1917 would be replicated in their broad outlines in even more backward colonial and semicolonial countries, as imperialist capitalism extended its tentacles into ever more remote regions of the globe. This was seen decisively in China, where a young urban proletariat had emerged in the years during and after World War I. But unlike the Bolshevik Revolution, the Chinese Revolution of 1925-27 went down to bloody defeat. The crucial reason, as we will detail later in this article, is that the proletariat was subordinated to the bourgeoisie instead of fighting for power in its own name and leading the mass of the peasantry. Drawing the lessons of that defeat, in *The Third International After Lenin* (1928) and *The Permanent Revolution* (1929), Trotsky generalized the theory of permanent revolution to all countries of belated capitalist development in the imperialist epoch.

The validity of this revolutionary perspective has been repeatedly demonstrated in the decades since. Dozens of former colonies have achieved independent statehood, including through heroic and protracted national liberation struggles. But none have managed to defy the laws of Marxist materialism: Short of the dictatorship of the proletariat there can be no liberation from the yoke of imperialist domination and mass poverty. And across Latin America, revulsion over imperialist-dictated neoliberal austerity measures has been channeled into support for a new layer of bourgeois nationalist populists, from Hugo Chávez in Venezuela to Andrés Manuel López Obrador in Mexico. Despite their “anti-imperialist” and even “socialist” rhetoric, the bourgeois nationalists are committed to defense of the capitalist order, which necessarily means subordination to the world imperialist system.

Or look at post-apartheid South Africa. Unusually in this period in which the apologists for imperialist exploitation have officially decreed communism to be dead, tens of thousands of South African working-class militants continue to rally around the red banner of the hammer and sickle, the emblem of the Soviet workers state that issued out of the October Revolution. But the South African Communist Party (SACP) tramples on the lessons of the October Revolution, centrally the need for a vanguard party intransigently opposed to all wings of the bourgeoisie and committed to the struggle for proletarian state power and revolutionary internationalism.

In 1994, the election of a government led by the African National Congress (ANC) of Nelson Mandela marked the



Hoover Institution

Orthodox church service at plant in the Urals at turn of 20th century. Tsarist regime, factory owners sought to inculcate religious conservatism among workers to undercut growing labor unrest.

end of decades of white-supremacist rule. In the name of the martyrs of Sharpeville and Soweto and the many thousands of others who had given their lives in the struggle against apartheid, the ANC proclaimed a new era of emancipation in which the black and other non-white masses would no longer be consigned to segregation, degradation, murderous repression and grinding poverty. But the reality is that the ANC-led government presides over *neo-apartheid capitalism*, based on the same social foundations as the former regime: the brutal exploitation of the overwhelmingly black proletariat by a tiny class of fabulously wealthy white capitalist exploiters (though now including a few black front men).

The SACP, a longtime ally and component of the ANC, hailed the advent of a “national democratic revolution” that would grow over into socialism. The Communist-influenced leadership of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU)—formed in bitter labor struggles that demonstrated the immense social power of the black proletariat and heralded the death knell of apartheid rule—joined the SACP in a Tripartite Alliance with the bourgeois-nationalist ANC. Thirteen years on, the bourgeois Tripartite Alliance government breaks workers strikes and unleashes cops on rebellious township youth. The black African masses are no nearer to social and national emancipation, much less socialism.

Russia on the Eve of the 1905 Revolution

In his book *1905* (written between 1908-09), Trotsky described Russia’s enormous contradictions at the start of the 20th century: “The most concentrated industry in Europe based on the most backward agriculture in Europe. The most colossal state apparatus in the world making use of every achievement of modern technological progress in order to retard the historical progress of its own country.” Investment from Europe (primarily France) had created a new urban proletariat in large-scale, state-of-the-art industrial concentrations in St. Petersburg, Moscow and the Urals. While this industrial proletariat constituted less than 10 percent of Russia’s population, it was concentrated in economically strategic enterprises. The percentage of Russian workers employed in factories of more than 1,000 employees was higher than in Britain, Germany or the United States. Yet the tsarist autocracy, the counterrevolutionary gendarme for all of Europe’s ruling powers, rested on a landed gentry that lived and breathed in a prior epoch.

Such conditions of “combined and uneven development” make the proletariat a uniquely revolutionary force in even the most backward capitalist countries in the imperialist epoch. Russia would not, and could not, simply repeat the experience of ascendant capitalism in England or France. Trotsky explained in “Three Conceptions of the Russian Revolution”:

“The development of Russia is characterized first of all by backwardness. Historical backwardness does not, however, signify a simple reproduction of the development of advanced countries, with merely a delay of one or two centuries. It engenders an entirely new ‘combined’ social formation in which the latest conquests of capitalist technique and structure root themselves into relations of feudal and pre-feudal barbarism, transforming and subjecting them and creating a peculiar interrelationship of classes.”

The immediate prelude to the 1905 Revolution was the defeat of Russia’s Pacific Fleet at Port Arthur in Manchuria in late 1904 by nascent Japanese imperialism. This emboldened bourgeois liberals to timidly urge greater civil liberties. But down below, larger forces were stirring. These came spilling out on the morning of Sunday, 9 January 1905. When a January 3 strike over firings at the massive Putilov metal works in St. Petersburg began to spread, a legal labor organization led by Father Gapon, a radical Russian Orthodox priest, tried to dissipate the growing class confrontation by organizing a procession to humbly petition the tsar for reforms, including an eight-hour



Archambault/U.S. News & World Report

Combined and uneven development in Mexico: GM plant in Matamoros (left), impoverished slum children.



Cambio 16

day, the separation of church and state and a constituent assembly.

Dressed in their Sunday best, well over 100,000 workers with their families set off for the Winter Palace, the seat of the autocracy. In what came to be known as Bloody Sunday, the tsar ordered troops to open fire. Over 1,000 were slaughtered and almost 4,000 wounded. Russia exploded. By October 1905, a massive series of strikes culminated in a general rail strike and the formation of the Petersburg workers council (soviet), which elected Trotsky as its chairman in November.

In an attempt to quell the upheaval, the tsar issued the October Manifesto, granting a constitution and a limited legislature. The bourgeoisie, terrified of the independent power of the proletariat, eagerly embraced the Manifesto and joined the camp of open counterrevolution. At the same time, the tsar unleashed the Black Hundreds reactionaries in a nationwide pogrom against the Jewish population. Some 4,000 Jews were murdered and 10,000 maimed. This attempt to derail the revolution was courageously combatted by a broad range of socialist organizations that formed armed defense guards. Industrial workers, especially the mainly Russian rail workers, played an important role in defending Jews. Significantly, in St. Petersburg there were no pogroms because the working class showed its determination in advance to defend the Jewish population.

In Moscow, a general strike grew into an armed uprising of the proletariat, with

pitched battles on barricades all over the city. Lenin considered the Moscow insurrection of December 7-19 the high point of the revolution. The determination of the insurrection undermined the loyalty of the tsar’s troops. It took over a week to put down the insurrection and crush the workers’ fighting units. Over 1,000 were killed, followed by a campaign of arrests and executions.

The experience of the St. Petersburg Soviet was of historic importance. Originating as a joint strike committee composed of delegates elected from their factories, the soviet soon began to act as an alternative center of power. After the soviet was crushed, Trotsky and other of its leaders used their trial as a platform to disseminate revolutionary ideas.

The Petersburg Soviet existed for 50 days, the Moscow barricades far less than that. But the impact of the 1905 Revolution was world historic (see “The Russian Revolution of 1905,” WV No. 872, 9 June 2006). It sent fear into the hearts of the European ruling classes and galvanized the revolutionary wing of international Social Democracy (as Marxists called themselves at the time). It spurred anti-colonial movements throughout Asia and resonated through the workers movement internationally, including in the U.S., where the revolutionary syndicalist Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) was founded that year. In Russia, crucially, it illuminated the programmatic differences between the Bolshevik and Menshevik factions of the Russian Social Democratic Labor

Party (RSDLP), which would end up on opposite sides of the barricades in 1917.

Plekhanov and the Origins of Russian Marxism

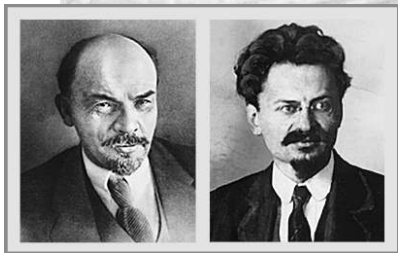
Organized Russian Marxism originated in 1883, centering on Georgi Plekhanov’s break from the dominant populist current to form the small Emancipation of Labor group in exile. The Narodniks (populists) were often heroic in their pursuit of a revolution against tsarist autocracy. Valiant but futile efforts to “go to the people” and reach out to the benighted peasant masses were followed by courageous but no less futile acts of terror against tsarist officials.

The Narodniks followed a tradition that stretched back to the 1825 Decembrist rising by military officers who sought to emulate modernized bourgeois Europe. But the Russian populists of the second half of the 19th century did not wish to follow the West European model of capitalist development. Instead, they envisioned a uniquely Russian socialism based on the *mir*, the traditional communal peasant land. But while the peasantry had a history of spontaneous, volatile explosions of collective rage, its outlook and aspirations were those of the petty proprietor, not the coherent and collectivist class interests of the urban proletariat. Moreover, as Plekhanov demonstrated in his seminal Marxist polemic against populism, *Our Differences* (1884), the peasant *mir* had already begun to disintegrate under the

continued on page 8

Spartacist Forums Salute the 90th Anniversary of the

1917 Bolshevik Revolution



The Struggle for World Socialist Revolution Today

NEW YORK CITY

Saturday, October 27, 5 p.m.
6 Harrison Street, Manhattan
(#1 train to Franklin, west on Franklin to Hudson, 1 block south to Harrison)
(212) 267-1025 • nysl@tiac.net

SAN FRANCISCO

Thursday, November 8, 7 p.m.
Centro del Pueblo
474 Valencia Street
San Francisco
(close to 16th St./Mission BART)
(510) 839-0851
slbayarea@sbcglobal.net

TORONTO

Wednesday, November 7, 7 p.m.
Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre
427 Bloor Street West
(1 block west of Spadina Station)
(416) 593-4138 • spartcan@on.aibn.com

LOS ANGELES

Saturday, November 10, 5 p.m.
Mount Hollywood
Congregational Church
4607 Prospect Avenue
(1 block east of Vermont, close to Vermont/Sunset Red Line Station)
(213) 380-8239 • slsycla@sbcglobal.net

VANCOUVER

Wednesday, November 7, 6 p.m.
University of British Columbia
Student Union Building Room 213
(604) 687-0353
trotskyist_vancouver@shawcable.com

CHICAGO

Saturday, November 17, 5 p.m.
Reynolds Club–South Lounge
(2nd floor)
University of Chicago
5706 South University Avenue
(312) 563-0441
chicagospartacist@sbcglobal.net

Hear an Update on the Case of Mumia Abu-Jamal

Permanent Revolution...

(continued from page 7)

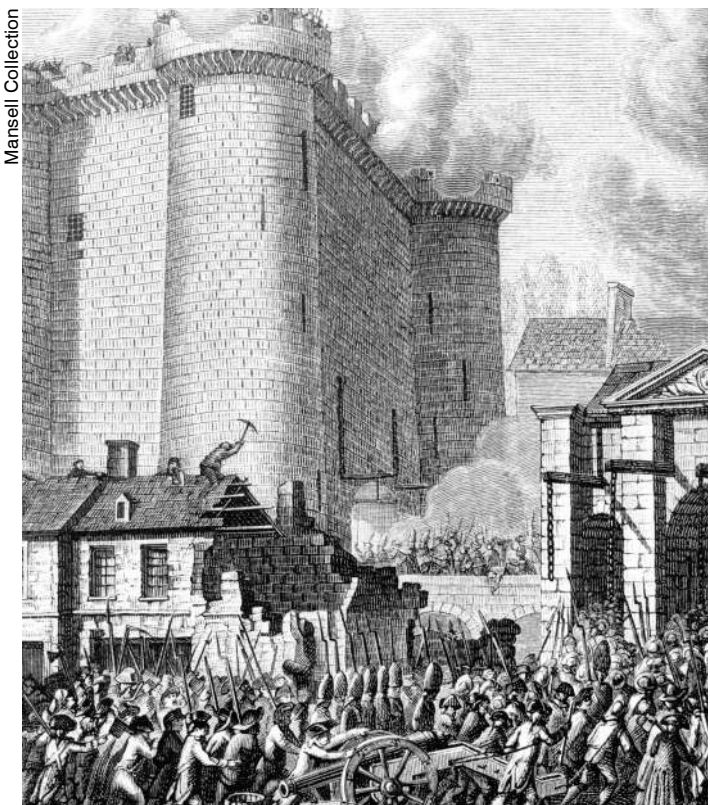
impact of capitalist market relations. In fighting to popularize Marxism among radical intellectuals of his day, Plekhanov produced a Russian translation of Marx and Engels’ *Communist Manifesto*, which outlined the proletariat’s role as the most revolutionary class in history. “The history of all hitherto existing society,” declared the *Manifesto*, “is the history of class struggles.” Classes are defined by their relationship to the means of production. Capitalism created dynamically expanding and globally organized means of production and commerce. But the private ownership of those socially organized means of production and the barriers imposed by the bourgeois nation-state became in their turn shackles on the development of the productive forces. The proletariat’s place in production—and the fact that it has only its own labor power to sell—makes it the only class with both the material interest in liberating and expanding socialized production based on a collectivized economy and the social power to carry out this revolution. Plekhanov anticipated that capitalist development would soon lead to the emergence of a significant industrial working class. About “the rising proletariat,” he declared: “They, and they alone, can be the link between the peasantry and the socialist intelligentsia; they, and they alone, can bridge the historical abyss between the ‘people’ and the ‘educated’ section of the population. Through them and with their help socialist propaganda will at last penetrate into every corner of the Russian countryside. Moreover, if they are united and organised at the right time into a single workers’ party, they can be the main bulwark of socialist agitation in favour of economic reforms which will protect the village commune against general disintegration.... *The earliest possible formation of a workers’ party is the only means of solving all the economic and political contradictions of present-day Russia.* On that road success and victory lie ahead; all other roads can lead only to defeat and impotence.” —*Our Differences* (1884), reprinted in *Selected Philosophical Works*, Vol. 1

Plekhanov succeeded in winning some of the best of the populists to Marxism. Among the formative figures in the Eman-

ciated with the reformist current around Eduard Bernstein in Germany.

The 1903 Bolshevik-Menshevik Split

In 1900, the second generation of Russian Marxists (represented by Lenin and Martov) coalesced with the founding fathers (Plekhanov, Pavel Axelrod, Zasulich) to return Russian Social Democracy to its revolutionary traditions as embodied in the original Emancipation of Labor program. The revolutionary Marxist tendency was organized around the paper *Iskra* (Spark), and Lenin became its organizer. *Iskra* provided, for the first time, an organizing center for a Russian Social Democratic party, one from which Lenin directed work in Russia to win over local Social Democratic committees from Economism or, if necessary, split them. Lenin’s *What Is To Be Done?* (1902) was a scathing polemic against the Economists’ attempt “to *degrade* Social-Democratic politics to the level of trade union politics!” Against this, Lenin argued that the workers party must not act as a labor auxiliary to bourgeois liberalism but as a “tribune of the people.” Such a party must agitate against injustice among all layers of the population and render the proletariat conscious of the need to become the ruling class and to reconstruct society on socialist foundations. By the time of the RSDLP’s Second Congress in July-August 1903, the Economist tendency was a small minority. Though the Iskraists walked into the Congress with a solid majority, beneath the seeming unity were considerable differences between the “soft” Martov, who favored a greater role for non-Iskraists in a unitary party, and the “hard” Lenin. These differences exploded over the first paragraph of the RSDLP’s rules defining who was a member. Martov’s draft defined a party member as one who “renders it regular personal assistance under the direction of one of its organizations.” For Lenin, membership was defined “by personal participation in one of the Party organizations.” This narrower definition was motivated by a desire to exclude opportunists and weed out dilettantes attracted to the RSDLP precisely because of its loose circle nature. With the support of the Economists and the Jewish Bund, Martov’s formulation carried. But when the Economists and the Bund walked out of the Congress, Lenin’s “hards” gained



14 July 1789: Depiction of storming of Bastille prison and garrison by Parisian working people at onset of Great French Revolution.

to reconciliation with the defeated Economists. Alexander Martynov, formerly the main exponent of Economism, became the Mensheviks’ main theoretician. As we elaborated in the 1978 Spartacist pamphlet *Lenin and the Vanguard Party*, the 1903 split did not represent Lenin’s final break from the Social Democratic concept of the “party of the whole class,” in which all political tendencies claiming the banner of socialism, from avowed reformists to revolutionaries, coexist. Nonetheless, 1903 marked the *beginning* of such a break, the first step in the construction of a vanguard party led by a cadre of professional revolutionaries. The 1905 Revolution, though it was defeated, became “the laboratory in which all the fundamental groupings of Russian political life were worked out and all the tendencies and shadings inside Russian Marxism were projected,” as Trotsky would put it in his article, “Three Conceptions of the Russian Revolution.” Trotsky observed:

“Precisely because of her historical tardiness Russia turned out to be the only European country where Marxism as a doctrine and the social democracy as a party attained powerful development even before the bourgeois revolution. It is only natural that the problem of the

there cannot even be talk of a direct battle between the proletariat and other classes for political power.... The proletariat is fighting for conditions of bourgeois development. The objective historical conditions make it the destiny of our proletariat to inescapably collaborate with the bourgeoisie in the struggle against the common enemy.” This basic line was upheld by all the Menshevik leaders, including Plekhanov. “They should not have taken to arms,” was his epitaph on the 1905 Moscow insurrection (quoted in Lenin, “Lessons of the Moscow Uprising,” 29 August 1906). “We must cherish the support of the non-proletarian parties...and not repel them from us by tactless actions,” Plekhanov stated, to which Lenin pointedly replied that “the liberals and landlords will forgive you millions of ‘tactless’ acts but will not forgive you a summons to take away the land.” Quoting the above exchange, Trotsky explained in “Three Conceptions of the Russian Revolution”: “Plekhanov obviously and stubbornly shut his eyes to the fundamental conclusion of the political history of the nineteenth century: whenever the proletariat comes forward as an independent force the bourgeoisie shifts over to the camp of the counterrevolution. The more audacious the mass struggle all the swifter is the reactionary degeneration of liberalism. No one has yet invented a means for paralyzing the effects of the law of the class struggle.” For his part, Lenin accepted that the struggle for political freedom and the democratic republic in Russia was a necessary stage that would not undermine “the domination of the bourgeoisie” (*Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution*, 1905). But, crucially, Lenin had no illusions about some “progressive” character of the Russian bourgeoisie, categorically ruling out that it could consummate its own revolution: “They are incapable of waging a decisive struggle against tsarism; they are too heavily fettered by private property, by capital and land to enter into a decisive struggle. They stand in too great need of tsarism, with its bureaucratic, police, and military forces for use against the proletariat and the peasantry, to want it to be destroyed.... ‘The revolution’s decisive victory over tsarism’ means the establishment of the *revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry*.” Lenin wrote of such a dictatorship: “At best, it may bring about a radical redistribution of landed property in favour of the peasantry, establish consistent and full democracy, including the formation of a republic, eradicate all the oppressive features of Asiatic bondage, not only in rural but also in factory life, lay the foundation for a thorough improvement in the conditions of the workers and for a rise in their standard of living, and—last but not least—carry the revolutionary conflagration into Europe.” In his 1906 article, “The Proletariat and Its Ally in the Russian Revolution,” Lenin argued that “the crux of the Russian Revolution is the *agrarian* question.” He knew, as Trotsky observed in “Three Conceptions,” that “in order to overthrow czar-



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Left: Georgi Plekhanov, founder of Russian Marxism. Right: V. I. Lenin (seated at center) and Julius Martov (seated at right) with other leaders of League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class, St. Petersburg, 1897.



Vezenberg and Co.

icipation of Labor group was the former Narodnik Vera Zasulich, who was hailed throughout Europe for her heroism in attempting to shoot the St. Petersburg chief of police in 1878. Other Narodniks eventually consolidated into the main party of bourgeois liberalism, the Constitutional Democratic Party (Cadets), and the petty-bourgeois Socialist Revolutionaries (SRs). The Marxist propaganda circles in Russia connected with Plekhanov turned to mass agitation in the mid 1890s, when a young Lenin and Julius Martov first came to the fore. At the same time, a reformist wing developed. This tendency, dubbed Economism by Plekhanov, limited its agitation to elementary trade-union demands while passively supporting bourgeois liberal efforts to reform tsarist absolutism. Beginning around 1897-98, Economism became the dominant tendency among Russian Social Democrats. Hostile to orthodox Marxism, the Economists were loosely asso-

a slight majority. (Bolshevik is derived from the Russian word for “majority,” while Menshevik comes from “minority.”) The decisive split came over the election of a new *Iskra* editorial board. When Lenin’s proposal carried, Martov and his followers refused to serve on the editorial board or Central Committee. Plekhanov supported the Bolshevik faction but soon broke with Lenin and threw in his lot with the Mensheviks, who thus regained control of *Iskra*. Lenin would spend the years between the 1903 split and the 1905 Revolution (and afterwards) waging a fierce struggle against those within the Bolshevik faction—as well as those outside it, such as Trotsky, who opposed Lenin in the split—who sought to reconcile the two factions. While the political differences between Lenin and Martov were unclear to most in 1903, their significance quickly grew. The logic of the factional struggle drove the Mensheviks further to the right, leading

correlation between the struggle for democracy and the struggle for socialism was submitted to the most profound theoretical analysis precisely in Russia.”

Three Concepts of the Russian Revolution

The Mensheviks, the Bolsheviks and Leon Trotsky put forward three distinct conceptions of the coming Russian Revolution. Pointing to Russia’s backwardness, the Mensheviks insisted that the working class could only be an appendage to the liberal bourgeoisie, which was supposedly striving to establish a democratic republic. In early 1905, Martynov codified this orientation to the liberal bourgeoisie in his pamphlet, *Two Dictatorships*. The Mensheviks’ chief tactician, Pavel Axelrod, spelled this out at the 1906 RSDLP “Unity Congress”: “The social relations of Russia have ripened only for the bourgeois revolution.... In the face of the universal deprivation of political rights in our country,

ism it was necessary to arouse tens upon tens of millions of oppressed to a heroic, self-renouncing, unfettered revolutionary assault that would halt at nothing. The masses can rise to an insurrection only under the banner of their own interests and consequently in the spirit of irreconcilable hostility toward the exploiting classes beginning with the landlords.”

For Lenin, the formula of the revolutionary democratic dictatorship remained algebraic. His outlines for a joint revolutionary dictatorship were not terms for an epoch of class peace but battle plans for an episode of class war extended to the international arena. The destruction of the Romanov gendarme would inspire European workers to take state power. They would then support the proletariat in Russia in doing the same.

Lenin’s formula was irreconcilably opposed to the Mensheviks’ tailing of the bourgeoisie. But it was inherently contradictory, projecting a dictatorship of two classes with conflicting interests. History would demonstrate that the tasks Lenin envisioned for the democratic dictatorship could only be carried out by the *dictatorship of the proletariat* resting on the peasantry, while the *formula* of the democratic dictatorship would be used by others to justify support to the bourgeois Provisional Government in 1917.

Trotsky’s theory of permanent revolution, initially formulated in collaboration with the Social Democrat Alexander Parvus just before the 1905 Revolution, was distinct from those of both the Mensheviks and Lenin, but far closer to the latter. Like Lenin, Trotsky saw that the Russian liberal bourgeoisie had no revolutionary capacities, declaring in *Results and Prospects*: “A national bourgeois revolution is impossible in Russia because there is no genuinely revolutionary bourgeois democracy. The time for national revolutions has passed—at least for Europe.... We are living in an epoch of imperialism which is not merely a system of colonial conquests but implies also a definite régime at home. It does not set the bourgeois nation in opposition to the old régime, but sets the proletariat in opposition to the bourgeois nation.”

In contradistinction to Lenin, Trotsky argued that the peasants could not play the role of an independent partner, let alone leader, in the revolution. Trotsky observed that peasant uprisings in Europe had brought down regimes, but this had never resulted in governments of peasant parties. In *Results and Prospects*, he noted that it was always in the towns where the first revolutionary classes arose that later overthrew feudalism. “If the proletariat does not tear power out of the hands of the monarchy nobody else will do so,” he declared. He emphasized, “*The proletariat in power will stand before the peasants as the class which has emancipated it.*” Later, Trotsky expanded his point in “Three Conceptions”:

“Finally, the peasantry is heterogeneous in its social relations as well: the kulak stratum [rich peasants] naturally seeks to swing it to an alliance with the urban bourgeoisie while the nether strata of the village pull to the side of the urban workers. Under these conditions the peasantry as such is completely incapable of conquering power.”

Subsequent Stalinist falsifications to the contrary, the difference between Lenin and Trotsky was not over whether the bourgeois-democratic tasks of the revolution could be skipped, or whether an alliance between the workers and peasants was necessary, but over the specific political form of that alliance. Trotsky stated: “The very fact of the proletariat’s representatives entering the government, not as powerless hostages, but as the leading force, destroys the border-line between maximum and minimum programme; that is to say, it *places collectivism on the order of the day*” (*Results and Prospects*). He wrote:

“It is possible for the workers to come to power in an economically backward country sooner than in an advanced country.... “In our view, the Russian revolution will create conditions in which power can pass into the hands of the workers—and in the event of the victory of the revolution it must do so—*before* the politicians of bourgeois liberalism get the chance to display to the full their talent for governing.”

At the same time, Trotsky stressed: “*Without the direct State support of the*

European proletariat the working class of Russia cannot remain in power and convert its temporary domination into a lasting socialistic dictatorship. Of this there cannot for one moment be any doubt. But on the other hand there cannot be any doubt that a socialist revolution in the West will enable us directly to convert the temporary domination of the working class into a socialist dictatorship.”

Karl Marx’s “Revolution in Permanence”

In developing his theory of permanent revolution, Leon Trotsky drew on the conclusions reached by Karl Marx following the defeat of the democratic revolutions in Europe in 1848-49, when he raised the formulation “revolution in permanence.”

In their March 1850 “Address of the Central Authority” to the Communist League, Marx and his co-thinker Friedrich Engels predicted that in a coming resurgence of revolutionary struggle, petty-bourgeois democrats would play the same treacherous role that the German liberal bourgeoisie had played in 1848. The 1848-49 revolutions were democratic uprisings aimed at bringing about political democracy and destroying feudal remnants. In Germany, this included the need to demolish the barriers that splintered the country into numerous small princely states and the Kingdom of Prussia and thus hindered the development of a national capitalist economy.

But what became clear as the revolutionary upheaval gripped Europe was that the bourgeoisies feared the prospect of an armed and mobilized proletariat more than they resented the remaining impediments to their domination presented by the landed nobility. The revolutionary masses were betrayed when the forces of the liberal bourgeoisie made their peace with the aristocracy.

Marx’s main point was that the proletariat must fight independently for its own aims against the petty-bourgeois democrats:

“While the democratic petty bourgeois wish to bring the revolution to a conclusion as quickly as possible, and with the achievement, at most, of the above demands, it is our interest and our task to make the revolution permanent, until all more or less possessing classes have been forced out of their position of dominance, the proletariat has conquered state power, and the association of proletarians, not only in one country but in all the dominant countries of the world, has advanced so far that competition among the proletarians in these countries has ceased and that at least the decisive productive forces are concentrated in the hands of the proletarians.”

Marx and Engels also recognized that without a revolution in Britain, Europe’s most industrially advanced country at the time, an isolated French or German revolutionary regime would soon be crushed by an alliance of British finance capital and the Russian tsarist army.

Notwithstanding the treachery of the bourgeoisie, the German proletariat was still too weak in 1848-49 to take power. As Trotsky later put it in his book *1905*, “Capitalist development had gone far enough to necessitate the destruction of the old feudal relations, but not far enough to advance the working class, the product of the new production relations, to the position of a decisive political force. The antagonism between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie had gone too



From left to right: Menshevik leaders Pavel Axelrod, Julius Martov and Alexander Martynov, Stockholm, May 1917.



Above: Barricades in Moscow during 1905 Revolution. Inset: 11 December 1905 issue of *Izvestia*, paper of Moscow Soviet, calls for armed uprising. Below: Leaders of St. Petersburg Soviet during 1906 trial. Inset: First edition of Petersburg Soviet’s *Izvestia*, 17 October 1905.



far to enable the bourgeoisie to assume the role of national leadership without fear, but not far enough to enable the proletariat to grasp that role.”

In his March 1850 Address, Marx commented, “That, during the further development of the revolution, petty-bourgeois democracy will for a moment obtain predominating influence in Germany is not open to doubt.” But the petty-bourgeois democracy showed itself to be incapable of taking power. In 1852 Marx wrote in his classic work, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*: “The peasants find their natural ally and leader in the *urban proletariat*, whose task is the overthrow of the bourgeois order.” In a 16 April 1856 letter to Engels, Marx stated emphatically: “The whole thing in Germany will depend on whether it is possible to back the Proletarian revolution by some second edition of the [16th century] Peasants’ war. In which case the affair should go swimmingly.” Lenin in 1918 pointed to this letter as a remarkable anticipation of the Bolshevik Revolution, and an exposure of the Mensheviks’ fake-Marxist schema for a supposedly inevitable bourgeois-led “first stage” of the Russian Revolution.

The German bourgeoisie was indeed incapable of carrying out a democratic

revolution. With the further rapid development of industrial capitalism, the main body of the German bourgeoisie formed an alliance with the Prussian landed nobility (the Junkers), which laid the basis for a “revolution from above” under the guiding hand of Chancellor Otto von Bismarck. Confronted with the power of the more advanced British and French bourgeois states, the reactionary Bismarck came to understand that only the industrial/financial bourgeoisie could transform Germany into a comparably advanced state and thereby ensure the survival and prosperity of the old landed classes as well. Thus the Prussian monarchy presided over the modernization and national unification of Germany through a *non-democratic* bourgeois revolution. As Engels wrote in the late 1880s:

“A person in Bismarck’s position and with Bismarck’s past, having a certain understanding of the state of affairs, could not but realise that the Junkers, such as they were, were not a viable class, and that of all the propertied classes only the bourgeoisie could lay claim to a future, and that therefore (disregarding the working class, an understanding of whose historical mission we cannot expect of him) his new empire promised to be all the stabler, the more he succeeded in laying the groundwork for its gradual transition to a modern bourgeois state.”

—*The Role of Force in History* (1887-88)

A similar development took place around the same time in Japan, where a section of the old warrior caste ousted the feudal regime in 1867-68 to build up the Japanese military and enable it to stand up to the encroachments of the Western powers. In the following decades, an industrial bourgeoisie and modern imperialist power were created in Japan. By the turn of the century, entry to the small club of imperialist powers that continues to dominate the world today had been shut to other emergent bourgeoisies. (For more on this, see “The Meiji Restoration: A Bourgeois Non-Democratic Revolution,” *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 58, Spring 2004.)

[TO BE CONTINUED]

U.S. Torture...
(continued from page 1)

had been stampeded into passing the bill, which was to be renewed after six months. Congressional leaders are putting together another bill that not only continues to authorize NSA spying but provides the telecom companies retroactive immunity from lawsuits for their role in assisting the government spying operation. As for Qwest's Nacchio, his reward for challenging the program's legality was prosecution for insider trading.

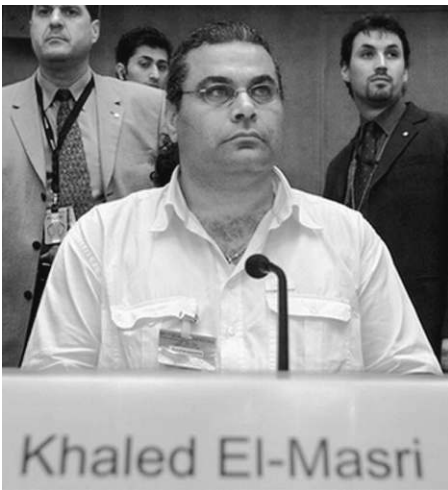
Courts Give Torturers Thumbs Up

Shortly before the start of the Mukasey hearings, on October 9 the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear torture victim Khaled el-Masri's appeal of a federal appeals court's dismissal in March of his lawsuit against former CIA director George Tenet. On 31 December 2003, el-Masri, a German citizen of Lebanese descent and the father of six young children, was picked up while on vacation in Macedonia and shipped off to a squalid secret U.S. prison in Afghanistan. There he was held in solitary confinement, interrogated and beaten before being dumped in a remote part of Albania in May 2004, never having been charged with a crime. In tossing out el-Masri's case, the appeals court subscribed to the government's assertion of "state secrets," agreeing that allowing el-Masri to challenge his abduction, imprisonment and torture would jeopardize "national security."

El-Masri's case recalls that of Maher Arar, a Canadian citizen born in Syria who was detained by U.S. authorities in September 2002 during a stopover in New York on his way back to Canada. Accused of being a terrorist, Arar was deported to Syria under the notorious policy of "extraordinary rendition," imprisoned there in solitary confinement and tortured for nearly a year before being allowed to return to Canada. After a Canadian judicial inquiry cleared Arar of any "terrorist" links, the Canadian government paid him \$10.5 million in January. But last year a federal court in New York City dismissed Arar's lawsuit against the Bush government demanding compensation and an apology. The court made this ruling on the grounds of "national security," which was defined as the "negative effect on our relations with Canada"! His appeal is scheduled for November 9.

An article in the London Sunday Times (7 October) by Andrew Sullivan, a one-time Bush supporter who admits that he originally believed the accounts of torture at Guantánamo had been "invented by the far left" or were "part of Al-Qaeda propaganda," shows how the lineage of U.S. "interrogation" techniques goes back to those used by the Nazis. Titled "Bush's Torturers Follow Where the Nazis Led," Sullivan's article notes that "Verschärfte

Vernehmung, enhanced or intensified interrogation, was the exact term innovated by the Gestapo to describe what became known as the 'third degree.' It left no marks. It included hypothermia, stress positions and long-time sleep deprivation." Commenting on this article, Frank Rich bemoans in his New York Times (14 October) column how "our humanity has been compromised by those who use Gestapo tactics in our war." What troubles such liberals is the damage of such exposés to the facade of American democracy across the world. For his part, former Democratic president Jimmy Carter intoned: "Our country for the first time in my life time has abandoned the



Khaled el-Masri at June 2006 German parliamentary hearing. A German citizen of Lebanese descent, el-Masri charges CIA in his kidnapping that led to months of torture in Afghanistan.

basic principle of human rights" (London Guardian, 11 October). It was under the banner of "human rights" that the Carter administration began to rearm U.S. imperialism in the late 1970s after its humiliating defeat by the workers and peasants of Vietnam. In doing so, it sought to overcome the population's deep mistrust of the government and aversion to further military adventures. The target of this buildup was the Soviet Union—a workers state under the rule of a Stalinist bureaucracy—which stood as a military counterweight to U.S. imperialism. Among the beneficiaries of the "human rights" campaign were the mujahedin cutthroats who received billions in CIA money and arms to fight Soviet soldiers in Afghanistan and whose hallmarks included throwing acid in the faces of unveiled women. The veterans of this "holy war" against the Soviet Union include Osama bin Laden, a Frankenstein's monster who later turned on his U.S. imperialist masters. As Trotskyists, the International Communist League fought to defend the Soviet degenerated workers state and East European deformed workers states against imperialist attack and domestic counterrevolution. The destruction of the

Soviet Union has left American imperialism militarily free to rampage unchecked from Iraq to Afghanistan. The only road to defeating the murderous imperialists for good is through a series of workers revolutions around the world, centrally in the belly of the U.S. imperialist beast.

Torture: As American as Apple Pie

Rich & Co. to the contrary, torture and inhuman brutality are not aberrations in the workings of American "democracy." As we noted in "U.S. Imperialism's Torture, Inc." (WV No. 826, 14 May 2004): "Capitalist society was born in blood; modern imperialism continues the brutal practices of mass murder, torture and humiliation that accompany exploitation of labor and the ceaseless struggle between competing imperialist forces to dominate the world. From the Belgian Congo killing fields of King Leopold and the massacres in the Philippines by U.S. troops in the early days of its imperialist expansion to the first concentration camps, created by the Spanish in Cuba and a little later used by the British in South Africa in the Boer War, to Japanese imperialist atrocities in China and Nazi Germany's Holocaust, imperialism has created a world in constant, cruel convulsions."

U.S. forces employed torture and killings on a mass scale in its counterrevolutionary imperialist wars, from Korea in the 1950s to Vietnam a decade later. The slaughters carried out in Iraq today by both U.S. military forces, their allies and mercenary outfits like Blackwater, along with mass roundups and detention in torture centers like Abu Ghraib, are likewise part of the "democratic" imperialists' store of counterinsurgency practices. From Afghanistan and Iraq to Guantánamo, we demand: Free the detainees!

Our comrades of the Spartacist League/Britain recently noted in "The Myth of British Imperialism as a Force for Peace" (Workers Hammer, Autumn 2007) that "the British imperialists pride themselves on their mastery of 'counterinsurgency' based on the experience of subjugation in their former colonies. This point is not lost on the US imperialists: General David Petraeus, who currently commands US imperialism's troop 'surge' in Iraq, recently published a 'counterinsurgency' manual drawing on the example of

Malaysia in the 1950s, where the British military crushed an anti-colonial revolt with unspeakable brutality." The article notes that in the effort to smash the Communist-led insurgency, the British rounded up about half a million mainly ethnic Chinese in concentration camps and carried out wanton massacres of villagers as well as beheadings.

It was no accident that the torturers at Abu Ghraib included former U.S. cops and prison guards. One of them, Specialist Charles Graner Jr., was a guard at Pennsylvania's notorious SCI Greene prison where America's foremost black political prisoner, Mumia Abu-Jamal, is held on death row. As Mumia wrote at the time, "The horrific treatment of Iraqis at Abu Ghraib has its dark precedents in the prisons and police stations across America" (WV No. 826, 14 May 2004). The widespread use of torture by many countries was noted by Henri Alleg, a respected member of the French Communist Party, at a recent rally for Mumia called by the Committee for Social Defense in Paris. The author of the 1958 book La Question, which recounted his imprisonment and torture by the French imperialists during the Algerian War, Alleg declared: "Today, I would say that in some ways it is worse...since it is no longer denied that there has been torture. Rather, laws are adopted that consider it normal!" (WV No. 900, 12 October).

The imperialists' depredations abroad and war on working people, blacks and immigrants at home must be met with the class-struggle mobilization of the proletariat—in the U.S. and internationally. The rulers of this decaying capitalist society are plenty dangerous. But they are also dependent on the labor of the working class for their profits. If mobilized independently of the capitalist parties and at the head of all the oppressed, the proletariat in its millions would be a powerful force in defense of its own interests and of the rights of immigrants, black people and others under attack. This perspective demands the building of a workers party—independent of and opposed to both the Democratic and Republican parties of capital—to lead the struggle to defeat the imperialists through socialist revolution. It is to that task that the Spartacist League is dedicated.■

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Racist Backlash...

(continued from page 12)

exists to protect the rule and profits of the capitalist class, which thrives on the racial oppression that serves to divide the working class and block united class struggle.

The same Department of Justice that Sharpton & Co. appeal to helped oversee the murder of 38 Black Panther Party members and railroaded hundreds of others to prison, as part of the FBI's COINTELPRO operations against black and leftist activists in the 1960s. Today this murderous state apparatus has been enormously strengthened by the increased powers that Congress—with bipartisan support—and the courts have given to the President, the military and the cops in the name of the “war on terror.”

The current rash of racist provocations has encouraged renewed calls for “hate crime” laws. These calls not only foster illusions in the racist cops and courts but bolster their repressive power. Similar measures have historically been wielded against the left, black militants and student radicals. For example, the Smith



Washington Post

Spartacist League initiated 5,000-strong labor/black mobilization that stopped Klan march in Washington, D.C., November 1982.

Act, passed in the lead-up to World War II ostensibly to go after domestic Nazis and their sympathizers, was used first against the Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party, and later the Communist Party.

Combatting illusions in the beneficence or neutrality of the capitalist state is crucial to unleashing the social power of the working class, a power which derives from

the fact that its labor produces the profits pocketed by the bosses. A taste of this power was seen in the December 2005 New York City transit strike, in which this multiracial union crippled the finance capital of the world. That strike demonstrated how the racial divisions fostered by the capitalist rulers can be overcome through class struggle. Labor's power must

be mobilized not only to defend workers' wages and benefits but to defend the rights of black people, immigrants and others oppressed by the capitalist ruling class. Standing in the way of such a mobilization is the trade-union bureaucracy, which supports the capitalist profit system and politically ties workers to the class enemy through allegiance to the Democratic Party.

We fight to break these political chains and to forge a revolutionary workers party, independent of and in opposition to the bourgeois state and its parties. Whether headed by the likes of Hillary Clinton or Barack Obama, the Democrats are the *other* party of racism, exploitation and imperialist war. As we put forward in the Programmatic Statement of the Spartacist League/U.S., “For Socialist Revolution in the Bastion of World Imperialism”:

“Despite the destruction of industrial jobs and erosion of union strength, black workers, who have a significantly higher rate of trade-union membership than do white workers, continue to be integrated into strategic sectors of the industrial proletariat, which alone has the power to shatter this racist, capitalist system. Won to a revolutionary program, black workers will be the living link fusing the anger of the dispossessed ghetto masses with the social power of the multiracial proletariat under the leadership of a Leninist vanguard party.” ■

RCP...

(continued from page 5)

government led by the Vietnamese Workers Party consolidated power over the whole country, the result was not good. It was not good for the people of Vietnam, because the influence of the Soviet Union and of revisionism increasingly exerted itself” (Bob Avakian, “Reaching for the Heights and Flying Without a Safety Net,” www.revcom.us, 2002).

In the face of the U.S. occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq, and war moves against Iran, the RCP has repeatedly refused to take a side against U.S. imperialism and for the military defense of its victims. They have been justifying this in part by borrowing a line from liberal academic Benjamin Barber's book, *Jihad vs. McWorld*, which argues that ethnic and religious fundamentalism (“Jihad”) and global capitalism (“McWorld”) are both threats to (capitalist) democracy. Bob Avakian argues, “What we see in contention here with Jihad on the one hand and McWorld/McCrusade on the other hand, are historically outmoded strata.... If you side with either of these ‘outmodeds,’ you end up strengthening both.” (“Why We're in the Situation We're in Today...and What to Do About It: A Thoroughly Rotten System and the Need for Revolution,” quoted in “America's Fascists Call for ‘Islamofascism Awareness Week’,” *Revolution*, 16 September).

Chairman Bob will recall, however, that the RCP sided with Islamic reaction—and the U.S. cold warriors—*when it counted*. In 1979 Soviet troops went

into Afghanistan to defend the regime of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, which was besieged by the forces of Islamic reaction because it had instituted reforms for women, including lowering the bride price. The U.S. imperialists ramped up their aid to the Islamic fundamentalists, in what became the largest covert CIA operation in history, on the Soviet Union's southern border. They funneled massive aid and military support to the *mujahedin*, barbaric champions of feudalism, illiteracy and the enslavement of women, in order to kill Soviet soldiers.

As a cover for its siding with U.S. imperialism, the RCP claims to have supported a mythical third force opposed to both the mullahs and the Soviets, while slandering the Soviet-backed government as a “tottering police state” engaged in “top-down brutality.” But the RCP's real enemy was the liberating Soviet troops, as made clear in a retrospective article in *Revolutionary Worker* (“The Hidden History of Women in Afghanistan,” 10 March 2002): “Revolutionary and progressive forces, including the country's Maoist organizations, threw themselves into the fight against the Soviet invaders.” No doubt, if such existed. What we wrote in “Afghanistan: Hell for Women” (WV No. 654, 25 October 1996), immediately after the Taliban took power, remains powerfully the case: “*The blood of every unveiled woman butchered by the Afghan fundamentalists is also on the hands of those leftist organizations internationally which lined up behind U.S. imperialism's anti-Soviet dirty war in Afghanistan!*” (emphasis in original)

As for Iran, prior to its open call to the

imperialist rulers to disarm this dependent country, the RCP has had various positions, none of them remotely Marxist. As part of China's alliance with U.S. imperialism, in 1971 the Beijing bureaucracy began to cozy up to the Shah of Iran for a Sino-Iranian rapprochement. While not as obsequious as some other (now defunct) U.S. Maoist outfits at the time in embracing this line, the RCP undertook the thankless task of simultaneously thundering against the Shah while covering for/denying China's blandishments.

On the eve of the mullah-led Iranian Revolution in late 1978, the RCP was busy covering for Khomeini, writing that “the Iranian people do not burn banks, porno theaters and Pepsi trucks because they oppose everything ‘modern.’ What they oppose is the U.S. domination of their country—and they attack all those things which *symbolize* this bloody tyranny.” Supposedly, across the board, leftists and clerical right-wingers alike were “rebeling against everything *reactionary* in Iran: imperialism and the Shah's regime.” (“Lies We're Fed About Iran,” *Revolutionary Communist Youth*, 7 December 1978). Once in power, Khomeini made good on his promises, slaughtering untold numbers of leftists (many of whom supported his rise to power) held in the former dungeons of the Shah; women, gays and religious minorities were also on the chopping block. Uniquely on the left, we of the ICL called for a class-independent way forward and raised the call: Down with the Shah! Down with the mullahs! For proletarian revolution in Iran!

Now Sunsara Taylor, writing in the RCP's newspaper *Revolution* (formerly *Revolutionary Worker*—spot the difference?), intones:

“As part of coming to power in 1979, these [the Ayatollah Khomeini's] theocratic forces presented themselves, and drew mass appeal, from an ‘anti-imperialist’

pose. While they had real conflicts with a particular U.S. regime (the Shah of Iran), Khomeini and his forces were reactionary theocrats, not leaders of an anti-imperialist struggle. The real tragedy, and lesson, of the Iranian revolution was that revolutionary forces joined in spreading the illusion that these were anti-imperialist forces to be aligned with and tailed.”

—“U.S. Imperialism, Islamic Fundamentalism...and the Need for Another Way,” 10 June

Paper really *will* take anything written on it! We can only paraphrase a comment attributed to Oscar Wilde: Hypocrisy is the homage vice pays to virtue.

Against the imperialist-backed counterrevolution in the former Soviet Union and East Germany, we Trotskyists struggled for our program—we stood at our revolutionary posts and fought tooth and nail. We did not prevail, and the destruction of the Soviet Union represented a massive defeat for the world's working class, destroying the industrial-military powerhouse of the non-capitalist world and throwing consciousness back. Today, we seek to prevent such a counterrevolutionary outcome in the deformed workers state of the People's Republic of China: the entire world working class has a stake in this fight! But the RCP has no such stake.

Rather, it has made peace with the capitalist rulers here in the belly of the U.S. imperialist beast, channeling youthful militants into its NIONs, WCW campaigns and other assorted devices aimed at “driving the Bush regime out.” Those youth who seek a revolutionary road, that of workers revolution to destroy this system of racism and war once and for all, who seek to learn from the lessons of history rather than from the mind-numbing pontifications of Bob Avakian, should seriously examine the politics and work of the Spartacus Youth Clubs. We have a world to win! ■

Spartacus Youth Club Events

CHICAGO

Tuesday, November 6, 7 p.m.

**Imperialism:
The Highest Stage of Capitalism**

University of Chicago
Harper Room 141
1116 E. 59th St.

Information and readings: (312) 563-0441
or e-mail: chicagospartacist@sbcglobal.net

NEW YORK CITY

Thursday, November 8, 7 p.m.

**The Russian Revolution:
How the Working Class
Took Power**

Spartacist Public Office
299 Broadway, Suite 318
(take any train to Chambers Street)

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

SAN FRANCISCO

Thursday, November 1, 6 p.m.

**South Africa:
Permanent Revolution vs.
“Two-Stage” Stalinist Betrayal**
SFSU Cesar Chavez Student Center
Room T-153

Information and readings: (510) 839-0851
or e-mail: sycbayarea@sbcglobal.net

LOS ANGELES

Thursday, November 8, 6 p.m.

The State and Revolution
UCLA, Haines Hall A78
Information and readings: (213) 380-8239
or e-mail: slsycla@sbcglobal.net

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Vicious Racist Backlash After Jena Protest

An onslaught of racist provocations against black people has swept the U.S. in the last month in a backlash against the September 20 demonstration in Jena, Louisiana, when as many as 50,000 poured out to protest Jim Crow “justice.” Nooses have been hung to terrorize black people at workplaces and at homes and schools from California to Connecticut. In Pittsburgh, black ironworker Errol Madyun found a noose at his workstation, and at a construction site in South Elgin, Illinois, a black worker looked up to find a noose above his head. In a highly publicized case, Madonna Constantine, a popular black professor at Columbia University Teachers College, found a noose hanging on the door of her office.

These incidents are an obvious, ominous echo of what happened in Jena, where three hangman’s nooses were placed on a so-called “white tree” at the local high school after a black student asked to sit there in August 2006. Following months of racist insults and threats, five black youth were charged with attempted murder following a scuffle with a white student, while the sixth was charged as a juvenile. Just days before the mass protest, 17-year-old Mychal Bell, the only one of the six students who had been continuously imprisoned since the school yard fight, saw his aggravated assault and conspiracy charges thrown out because he had been tried as an adult. Outrageously, the day after the demonstration he was denied bail. He was finally granted bail the next week only to be vindictively returned to custody on October 11 on the pretext that the school yard scuffle was a probation violation! **Free Mychal Bell now! Drop all charges against the Jena Six!**

In the lead-up to the mass Jena protest, a noose was found on a tree outside a black cultural center at the University of Maryland. Only hours after the September 20 demonstration, two young whites, one an admitted Klansman, provocatively drove through the nearby city of Alexandria, threatening people who had returned from the protest by dragging two nooses from their pickup truck, which contained a rifle and brass knuckles. A *Chicago Tribune* (24 September) article reported that white-supremacist Web sites have featured one racist provocation after another against the six youth and their supporters. Three days after the protest, a window display in defense of the Jena Six at the Chicago office of the Socialist Workers Party was defaced with racist and anti-gay slogans.

Make no mistake about it: the noose is a call to race terror, invoking the lynch rope that brutally killed thousands of black people in the century after the Civil War. “The hangman’s rope has become so prolific, some say, it could replace the

Free Mychal Bell Now!

Nazi swastika and the Ku Klux Klan’s fiery cross as the nation’s reigning symbol of hate,” wrote the *Washington Post* (20 October). Like the “N” word, the lynch rope embodies a program of white supremacy and violence against black people. This was illustrated on September 11, when a group of whites hurling

This fact was undeniably shown when thousands of black and poor people were abandoned in the face of Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Over 1,500 were killed and many thousands more displaced, including those who developed serious illnesses from living in FEMA trailers contaminated with formaldehyde. Today, the case of the Jena Six

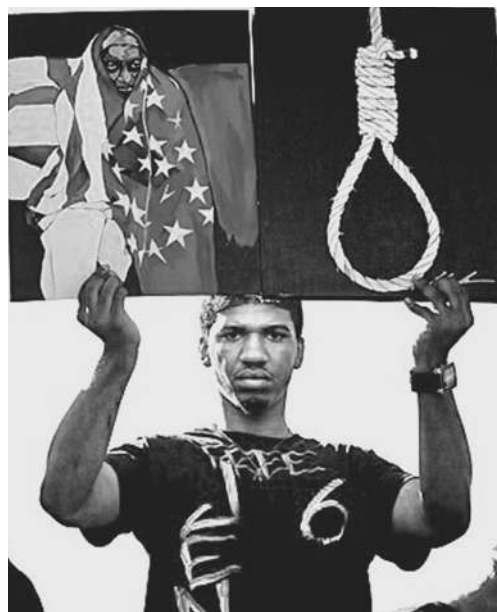


Daniella Zalcmán/Columbia Spectator

Above: Spartacus Youth Club joins October 10 protest at Columbia University after noose was hung outside office of black professor. Right: Protester at September 20 march in Jena, Louisiana, which drew up to 50,000.

the “N” word attacked black basketball players from the Borough of Manhattan Community College in lower Manhattan. Graffiti with the “N” word and other racist slurs have accompanied many of the nooses left in recent weeks.

The oppression of black people was built into the American republic from its inception. It took a bloody Civil War to smash the slavocracy and free the black slaves. But the Northern capitalists who had defeated the slaveowners betrayed the promise of black freedom, codified in the Compromise of 1877 which withdrew the last federal troops from the states of the former Confederacy and sealed the defeat of Reconstruction. The racist reaction, including waves of Ku Klux Klan terror, led to the establishment of the Jim Crow system of segregation. While de jure segregation was dismantled some 40 years ago in the context of mass struggles for black equality, the segregation of the mass of black people as a race-color caste at the bottom of society remains a cornerstone of American capitalism.



Getty

and the proliferation of nooses in the U.S. should further dispel the myth of the “end of racism.” The Spartacist League fights for the program of *revolutionary integrationism*. We seek to combat every manifestation of racist discrimination, fighting in particular to mobilize the social power of the integrated labor movement. At the same time, we understand that black liberation can be achieved only through the overthrow of the capitalist order and the integration of black people into an egalitarian socialist society. We say: **Finish the Civil War! For black liberation through socialist revolution!**

tarian socialist society. We say: **Finish the Civil War! For black liberation through socialist revolution!**

So many nooses have appeared in the New York area recently that the Harlem-based *Amsterdam News* (18 October) ran a headline, “Noose York City.” For starters, the unions must defend their members and teach the racist scum a lesson when nooses appear at workplaces. The potential for labor-centered struggle against racist attacks was seen in NYC in October 1999, when the Ku Klux Klan called a rally in downtown Manhattan to organize for racist terror. The Partisan Defense Committee, a class-struggle legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League, initiated an 8,000-strong labor/black mobilization that ran the Klan out of town. Black Democrat Al Sharpton, who postures as a fighter against racist injustice from NYC to Jena and beyond, went to bat for the KKK, filing a court brief on behalf of the Klan. The reformist International Socialist Organization did its part in the failed effort to block the labor/black mobilization, building a diversionary rally for “tolerance” that included Latino cops on its platform.

The outpouring of protest over the Jena Six case expressed widespread anger over the conditions of black life in this country, which in many respects have worsened since the 1960s, from unemployment and rotten schools and housing to rampant racist cop terror and the massive imprisonment of blacks and Latinos due to the “war on drugs.” The tens of thousands who came to Jena on September 20 included members of the United Auto Workers, International Longshoremen’s Association and other trade unionists. But as we described in “Jena Six: Racist ‘Justice’ U.S.A.” (WV No. 899, 28 September), “Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton, whose long-time role as ‘black leaders’ has been to quell social unrest, came down to Jena to preach reliance on the same ‘justice’ system that from the county sheriff on up is a machine of racial and class oppression.”

This was precisely the bankrupt strategy offered by Democratic politicians who used an October 16 hearing of the House Judiciary Committee as a platform to demand that George Bush’s Justice Department intervene in the Jena Six case. Bourgeois liberals push the deadly illusion that racist injustice is an aberration that can be set right by federal intervention. What the cops and prosecutors are doing to the Jena Six is normal operating procedure in racist capitalist America. The capitalist state—based on bodies of armed men such as the police, military, courts and prisons—
continued on page 11

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