

## U.S. Imperialists Cheer on Israeli Terror in Gaza

# Zionist Mass Murder



## Defend the Palestinian People! For a Socialist Federation of the Near East!



AP photos

**Top: Israeli tank advances at Gaza border, January 8. Left: Palestinian woman weeps over dead relatives after Israeli missile strike in Gaza, January 8. Right: Funeral in Jabaliya refugee camp for 14 of some 40 Palestinians killed by January 6 Israeli bombing of UN school where hundreds of Gaza residents were taking refuge.**

JANUARY 13—Some 1,000 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, nearly half of them women and children, have been slaughtered in little more than two weeks of Zionist terror, with over 4,300 wounded. The carnage began December 27 with round-the-clock air assaults that turned virtually all of the Gaza ghetto into ash and rubble, with streets littered with limbs of Palestinians dismembered by Israeli bombs and missiles. Under the pretext of responding to Hamas's (largely ineffec-

tual) rocket attacks on nearby Israeli towns, the Zionist butchers—armed with U.S. warplanes, helicopters and missiles—have already slaughtered nearly twice as many Palestinians as during the first whole year of the Palestinian uprising that began in September 2000.

A week after the December bloodbath began, Israeli stormtroopers began their ground invasion. Over 10,000 troops of one of the most highly mechanized and powerful military machines in the world have torn a swath of terror and destruction through Gaza, split the Strip in two and are now poised for an invasion of the cities. *It is vital for the international proletariat to stand for the military defense of Hamas against Israel without giving that*

*reactionary Islamic fundamentalist outfit any political support. Down with U.S. aid to Israel!*

Israeli officials declared that there was “no humanitarian crisis” in Gaza; indeed, to the Zionist rulers, Palestinians are nothing more than *untermenschen* (“sub-human,” as the Nazis described those whom they enslaved and exterminated). The leaflets that Israel drops warning Palestinians to flee are a cruel reminder that Gaza's residents have nowhere to flee from what is essentially a concentration camp surrounded by an electrified fence, a sealed border with Egypt and the Mediterranean Sea. Israel has bombed schools, mosques and United Nations refugee centers—as the Zionists have

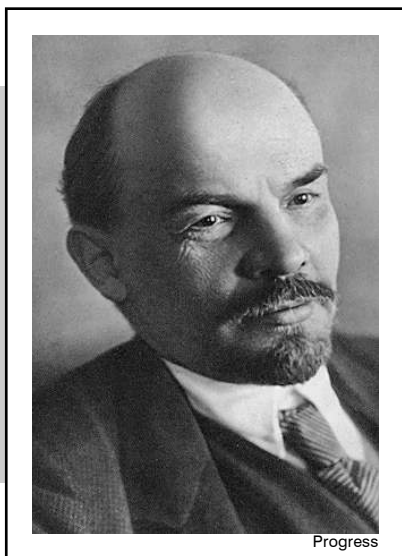
done in the past. On January 6, over 40 Palestinians taking refuge in a UN school in Jabaliya were killed by Israeli bombardment. Two days earlier, Israeli military forces shelled a house in Zeitoun, southeast of Gaza City, after telling over 100 Palestinians to take shelter there, killing up to 30. Human Rights Watch has accused Israel of using U.S.-made white phosphorous shells, which burn the flesh down to the bone. Israel used white phosphorous during the 2006 war in Lebanon and the U.S. used it in Iraq during the 2004 attacks on the city of Falluja.

Meanwhile, in the West Bank, the Palestinian population has been sealed off by an apartheid wall and subjected to a

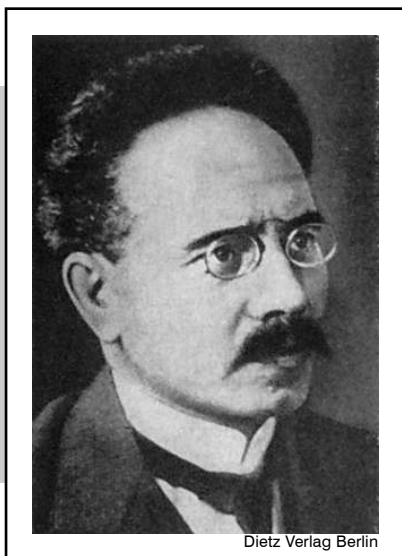
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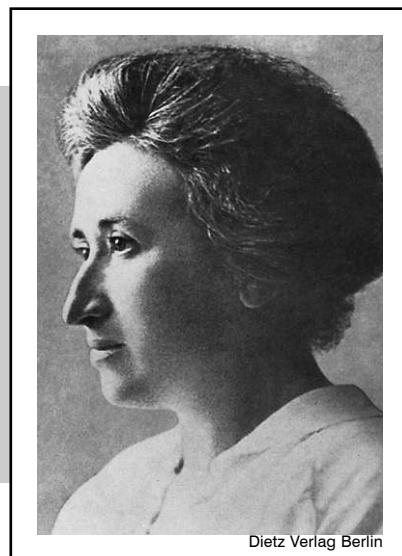
# FOR THE COMMUNISM OF LENIN, LIEBKNECHT AND LUXEMBURG!



Progress



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In the tradition of the early Communist International, this month we commemorate the “Three L’s”: Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin, who died on 21 January 1924, and revolutionary Marxists Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, who were assassinated 90 years ago on 15 January 1919 by the reactionary Freikorps as part of the Social Democratic government’s suppression of the Spartakist uprising. Lenin’s determined struggle to forge a revolutionary vanguard party was key to the victory of the Russian Revolution of October 1917. In contrast, the German Communist Party was founded only over New Year’s 1919—two weeks before its principal cadres were murdered—with slim roots within the proletariat. The murder of Luxemburg and Liebknecht deprived the young, inexperienced Communist Party of its authoritative revolutionary leadership, helping to shipwreck the 1918-19 German Revolution and weakening the party when it faced later upheavals, such as the aborted 1923 German Revolution.

We reprint below a 13 January 1945 article from the *Militant*, newspaper of the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party, titled: “Liebknecht and Luxemburg—Heroic Martyrs in the Workers Struggle for Socialism.” The mention of the burial of the Third International at the end of the article refers to its formal dissolution by Stalin in 1943; it had become an agency for promoting the Stalinist bureaucracy’s class-collaborationist treachery long before.

\* \* \*

On January 15, 1919—twenty five years ago—the German proletariat was robbed of two of its greatest revolutionary fighters, Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. They were assassinated in the streets of Berlin by Junker hirelings of the Social-Democracy. But neither the ideas nor the tradition of personal heroism bequeathed by these Marxists of the First World War could be slain. Their names will be inscribed in flaming letters when the mighty German working class again rises against its oppressors to find the

path to peace and security under the red banner of international socialism.

Intransigent opponents of capitalist war, both Liebknecht and Luxemburg fought persecution and imprisonment to lead the workers of Germany in the struggle for socialist liberation. Son of the founder of the German Social-Democracy, Karl Liebknecht first proved his stature as early as 1906 when he delivered a series of lectures against capitalist militarism to a Socialist Youth organization. He was sentenced to 18 months in prison for their subsequent publication.

When World War I broke out, Liebknecht was a member of the Reichstag. The Social-Democratic party to which he belonged opportunistically swung over to support of the war. But Liebknecht adhered to the principles of Marxism. At the December 2, 1914 session he broke the discipline of the Social-Democratic Reichstag group and voted against war credits, thereby taking his place amongst the leaders of international socialism. With Rosa Luxemburg, Clara Zetkin and Franz Mehring, he founded “Die Internationale,” first illegal organ of the German revolutionists.

At the magnificent May Day demonstration he organized in Berlin in 1916, Liebknecht denounced the imperialists and called upon the German working class to intensify the fight against its main enemy—the capitalist class—at home. He was arrested, secretly tried, and sentenced to four and a half years’ imprisonment.

## “Red Rosa”

Rosa Luxemburg, fiery orator, gifted writer, theoretician and activist, conquered physical frailty to become one of the most eminent of revolutionists. Born in Czarist Poland, a political refugee at the age of 18, she devoted all her tremendous talents to the cause of socialism. She secured German citizenship and fought the growing reformist tendencies and the revision of Marxism promoted by the Bernsteinists in the German Social-Democracy. Understanding the problems and strategy of the workers’ movement,

she saw in the Russian revolution of 1905 the vitality and strength of the masses. She met the outbreak of war in 1914 by calling upon the German workers to refuse to shoot down their French brothers. Like Liebknecht, she was imprisoned.

Tireless and undaunted, Rosa was able even in prison to smuggle out articles for “Die Internationale.” She also wrote the famous “Junius” pamphlet, circulated throughout Germany, explaining that the victory of either side—German or Allied—would necessarily lead to another world slaughter, and urging the masses to end the scourge of war by taking power from the plutocrats and organizing a workers’ republic.

In prison Rosa received the great news of the Russian Revolution. She burned with indignation over the Brest-Litovsk peace forced by Germany upon the Bolsheviks. She accused the pro-war “socialists” of responsibility for this crime because of their degrading submission to the Junkers. The Russian Revolution deeply inspired her. Enemies of the October Revolution have tried to construe her criticism of the Bolsheviks as an opposition to the Russian Revolution. This is false. It was as one of them that she criticized some of their tactics.

In 1918 came the revolt of the Kiel sailors and soldiers of Berlin. One of the very first acts of the revolutionary workers and soldiers was to throw open the prison gates to free Liebknecht and Luxemburg. The Social-Democratic traitors strove to persuade the Kaiser to remain. Failing to save the monarchy, hating and fearing Bolshevism above everything else, they then strained all their efforts to establish a bourgeois republic and prevent the workers from taking power. The Social-Democracy particularly feared the Spartakus Bund, organized in 1918 by Liebknecht and Luxemburg, which came out as an independent party with the slogan “All Power to the Workers’ Councils.”

## Organize for Power

Conscious of their tasks and the pressure of time, Liebknecht and Luxemburg

began to organize the German Communist Party with haste. Rosa edited “Rote Fahne” (Red Banner) and wrote the program for the party in complete agreement with the program of Lenin and Trotsky. But events moved too rapidly. The advanced workers were pressing forward. The German Communist Party, just emerging from the Spartakus group, was still too weak to take power.

The leadership of the Social-Democracy, holding the reins of government, did everything in its power to crush the revolution in its infancy. Leaflets were circulated demanding the death of Liebknecht and Luxemburg. Large rewards were offered for their capture. On Jan. 15, 1919, they were arrested and murdered.

In his call for the formation of the Third International to carry out the socialist tasks betrayed by the Social-Democracy (April 23, 1917), Lenin singled out for praise the handful of internationalists who upheld the banner of Marxism through the storm of the First World War.

“The most outstanding representatives of this trend in Germany,” wrote Lenin, “is the Spartakus Group or the Group of the International to which Karl Liebknecht belongs. Karl Liebknecht is one of the most celebrated representatives of this trend and of the new and genuine proletarian international...Liebknecht alone represents socialism, the proletarian cause, the proletarian revolution. *All* the rest of German Social-Democracy, to quote the apt words of Rosa Luxemburg (also a member and one of the leaders of the Spartakus Group) is a ‘stinking corpse’.” After their martyrdom Lenin acclaimed Liebknecht and Luxemburg as “the best representatives of the Third International.”

Last year the Third International which had likewise degenerated into “a stinking corpse” was formally buried by its executioner, the counterrevolutionary Stalin. Today only the Fourth International founded by Trotsky carries on the struggle for international socialism in the revolutionary spirit of Lenin, Liebknecht and Luxemburg. ■

## Letter

### A Clarification on Sam Marcy and Henry Wallace

11 January 2009

To WV:

Our article, “Why Marxists Oppose Capitalist McKinney/Green Party Campaign” (WV No. 919, 29 August 2008), stated: “It’s not surprising that the tendency within the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in 1948 that wanted to support Wallace was grouped around Sam Marcy, who later went on to form the Workers World Party [WWP].” A letter by comrade Reuben Samuels in the same issue characterized debate on

Wallace at the SWP’s February Plenum as “the 1948 fight with the Marcyites.” Actually, while Marcy later wrote a document stating that he advocated support to Wallace at the 1948 Plenum, the available documentary record shows that he did not play a leading role at the time. But there were groups of other leading SWPers who wanted to either give critical support to or work within the capitalist Wallace “third party movement” (for a fuller discussion of our opposition to capitalist

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## WORKERS VANGUARD

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# Germany: SPD in Deep Crisis



Willi van Ooyen of Die Linke and Andrea Ypsilanti of SPD call for Die Linke-backed SPD-Green government in Hesse, Germany. Right: Police under Berlin SPD-Die Linke government attack squatters in June 2005.



## Left Party: No Alternative!

The following article is translated from Spartakist No. 174 (November 2008), newspaper of the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

### SPARTAKIST

The SPD [Social Democratic Party] is in crisis. With its working-class base deserting to Die Linke [The Left party], the new leadership is desperately trying to reconsolidate its links to the trade unions in order to keep them compliant to the anti-working-class measures of the Grand Coalition [coalition government of the SPD and Christian Democrats (CDU) since 2005]. This was highlighted by a secret meeting of SPD leaders with chairmen of the IG Metall (IGM) [metal workers union], about which the *Rheinische Post* (24 September 2008) reported: “SPD representatives expressed their ‘dismay’ that Left Party members in the trade unions were able to organize their ‘crusade against the SPD’ out of union offices.” According to the same article, the IGM tops agreed to be more aggressive in publicly attacking Die Linke, while the SPD promised to refrain from passing further anti-union laws. The anger at the base of the unions was reflected in the reaction to this report by an IGM shop steward from a large auto factory: “It would be a disgrace if the union got into horse-trading with the SPD here.... It better watch out not to fall on its face—a lot of union members are followers of Die Linke and have turned their back on the SPD by now.”

The SPD is riven between serving the bourgeoisie in the government, on the one hand, and the objective interests of its base in the working class and the unions on the other. As the *Communist Manifesto* (1848) explains, “The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.” The present, capitalist society is fundamentally divided into two classes whose interests are irreconcilably counterposed: The proletariat produces the wealth of society in industry, transportation, etc., while the capitalists, who own the means of production, appropriate this wealth and extract their profits through the exploitation of labor. Due to its position in the production process, the proletariat is the only class with both the material interest in liberating the socialized process of production from the fetters of private ownership and developing it on the basis of a collectivized economy for the benefit of all, as well as the social

power to carry out this revolution. The social democracy—the SPD, Die Linke and the trade-union bureaucracy—seeks to reconcile the workers with capitalism and chains them to their “own” exploiters. The more the social contradictions between the workers and capitalists are sharpened, the more untenable the situation of the social democracy will become.

The attempts by the now-deposed SPD chairman, Kurt Beck, to reconcile the SPD’s working-class base with “Agenda 2010,” “Hartz IV” and similar attacks [on social welfare programs and workers’ living standards] only increased the discontent in both wings of the party. This came to a head in spring [2008] after elections in the state of Hesse, where the SPD’s lead candidate, Andrea Ypsilanti, got an unexpectedly high result by campaigning more or less in opposition to the unpopular policies of the CDU-SPD national government. She announced she would form a minority government there with the support of Die Linke.

At the end of July 2008, the SPD’s party court of North Rhine-Westphalia decided in favor of the expulsion of SPD right-winger Wolfgang Clement after Clement had publicly spoken out against Ypsilanti in the elections and indirectly supported the arch-reactionary CDU president of Hesse, Roland Koch. In the sequel, the party tops lined up behind Clement, while the trial was referred to the highest party court. As the former “super-minister” under [Gerhard] Schröder [SPD chancellor from 1998 to 2005], he is rightfully hated in the working class as architect and outspoken advocate of “Agenda 2010.”

When the workers at the Opel [auto plant] in Bochum struck against threatened layoffs in 2004, Clement scornfully rejected appeals from the party base for support and denounced the strike as senseless. The treasurer of the SPD local in Bochum-Hamme complained angrily: “We worked our asses off for years in election campaigns, and when he went to Berlin we hoped that he could do something for us” (“He Never Was a Social Democrat,” *stern.de*, 31 July 2008).

Now, following Beck’s removal, Schröder’s old guard is back at the head of the SPD. This is meant to signal to the bourgeoisie that the party is well suited to continue to administer German imperialism. From sending the Bundeswehr [German army] to take part in the imperialist U.S.-led NATO war against Serbia in 1999, to the massive attacks on the unions and social benefits, to plans for the deployment of the Bundeswehr domestically and a universal strengthening of the state repressive machinery, the SPD-Green government and now the CDU-SPD government have done a lot to advance capitalist class interests on the backs of the working class, ethnic minorities and all the oppressed.

The SPD’s new candidate for chancellor, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, is not just any Schröder crony. As head of the chancellor’s office during the “Red-Green” government, he personally managed German imperialism’s participation in the racist “war on terror.” He was responsible for deciding (and then trying to cover up) the fates of Murat Kurnaz, Khaled El-Masri and who knows how many others

of Muslim descent—whom the U.S. and German governments branded as “terror suspects” and then tried to “disappear.” Steinmeier made sure that Kurnaz suffered for years in the hell of the Guantánamo torture camp, even blocking his return to Germany in the face of repeated U.S. offers between 2002 and 2005 to release him. Even in 2007, after this atrocity had been made public and came before an investigative body, Steinmeier told *Spiegel* (27 January 2007): “I wouldn’t decide differently today.”

That large sections of the working class, particularly the lower and middle levels of the trade unions, are turning away from the SPD, which they have historically viewed as their party, represents a major shift in Germany’s political landscape. Up to now this has been mainly expressed in the electoral successes of Die Linke, which was formed by a fusion of the West German SPD-split WASG [Electoral Alternative for Work and Social Justice] with the East German ex-Stalinist PDS [Party of Democratic Socialism]. On the one hand a product of the massive disillusionment and anger at the base of the SPD, on the other Die Linke is the means by which a section of the trade-union bureaucracy seeks to contain that anger within the framework of social-democratic reformism. This was very clearly expressed in the call for the founding of one of the WASG’s precursors, the ASG, in March 2004: “Many citizens are turning their backs on politics and feel disappointed with the SPD, but don’t see themselves represented by any

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Strike at Opel auto plant in Bochum in 2004. Right: Demonstration against SPD-Green attacks on social welfare programs and workers’ living standards in Berlin, November 2003.

## For a Multiethnic Revolutionary Workers Party!



# Germany...

(continued from page 3)

other party. We see in this a danger for the stability of our democracy.”

For communists, the crisis of the SPD is an important and positive development. Since 1914 the SPD has been the most important agent of the German bourgeoisie within the workers movement and the main obstacle to proletarian revolution in this country. The problem is that the consciousness of the workers who are turning away from the SPD is marked by the bourgeois lie that there is no alternative to capitalism. This prevailing consciousness is above all the result of the counter-revolutionary destruction of the DDR [East Germany] and the Soviet Union, which is presented by the bourgeoisie and its social-democratic lackeys as inevitable and celebrated as proof of the supposed superiority of capitalism. As we explained in the ICL’s “Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program”:

“Trotsky’s assertion in the 1938 Transitional Program that ‘The world political situation as a whole is chiefly characterized by a historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat’ predates the present deep regression of proletarian consciousness. The reality of this post-Soviet period adds a new dimension to Trotsky’s observation.... Marxism must once again win the allegiance of the proletariat.”

Die Linke is infused with bourgeois “death of communism” ideology and is just as loyal to this capitalist system of exploitation as the SPD, but would prefer to have more crumbs from the capitalists’ profits to toss to the workers. Both the SPD and Die Linke are what Lenin called bourgeois workers parties, i.e., parties with a working-class base but a pro-capitalist leadership and program. For a revolution in this country to succeed, these parties must be split along the class line that runs through them, and the working-class base must be won to a Leninist party.

The consciousness of the workers will be changed in the course of *class struggle*, which is inevitably generated by capitalism and its crises. Through class struggle the working class can win confidence in its own social power, overcome the divisions created by racism, chauvinism and other bourgeois prejudices, and grasp the need to stand at the forefront of all the oppressed in an all-sided struggle against this whole exploitative system. Decisive is the conscious intervention of communists to bring Marxist consciousness into the working class and forge a multi-ethnic revolutionary workers party in order to deepen and connect these struggles, pointing to the necessary overthrow of capitalism. Today the task consists of gathering and steeling the core of such a party, based on the program of Trotskyism—authentic Marxism. For this purpose we carry out an uncompromising political struggle against reformist illusions propagated by supposed Marxist organi-

zations—from Stalinists like *Junge Welt* and the DKP [German Communist Party], to the pseudo-Trotskyists of marx21, Gruppe Arbeitermacht (GAM) and Sozialistische Alternative (SAV). These groups work overtime to strengthen illusions in Die Linke among workers and youth, and with their left cover for parliamentary reformism and rotten class collaboration they are an obstacle to raising and developing class consciousness.

## European Left Preaches “Death of Communism”

The crisis of the SPD has developed parallel to dramatic changes in mass reformist parties throughout West Europe. The majority wing of the old Italian Communist Party, which split in the early ’90s, has passed through social democracy and, with its fusion [in 2008] with Prodi’s Christian Democrats, now appears to have become an outright bourgeois party. Meanwhile, the social-democratic Rifondazione Comunista (RC), formed by the minority wing, is now in a severe crisis following its participation in two different Prodi-led popular-front governments. The French Communist Party (PCF) has likewise collapsed dramatically. In Britain, starting in the mid ’90s Tony Blair’s Christian “New Labour” leadership has proceeded to break from its proletarian base, a process that, while unfinished, has gone some way down the road toward transforming Labour from a bourgeois workers party into something



analogous to the capitalist Democratic Party in the U.S.

In different ways, these developments reflect the effects of the capitalist counter-revolutions that between 1990 and 1992 destroyed the deformed workers states of East Europe and ultimately the degenerated workers state of the USSR. Feeling the wind in their sails, the capitalist rulers proclaimed the “death of communism” as the ideological accompaniment to their onslaught against the trade unions, increased racist state repression

**Die Linke leader Oskar Lafontaine criticizes SPD attacks on workers’ living standards but subordinates working class to capitalist state and promotes nationalist protectionism.**



and murderous plundering of the neocolonial countries. In West Europe, a central aim of the capitalists has been the dismantling of social benefits of the so-called welfare state—concessions granted in the context of the Cold War to contain the powerful workers movements and keep them from “becoming red”—in order to better compete with their imperialist rivals (especially the U.S. and Japan). The massive attacks have been carried out in large part by capitalist governments in which reformist parties participated, which has led to massive anger at the base of these parties. At the same time, the bourgeoisie has reduced the share of the super-profits that it expends on maintaining a privileged layer of the working class, the aristocracy of labor,

ment processes are taking place, in fact worldwide. Since the collapse of the Eastern Bloc, the old dividing lines—catchphrase: where do you stand on the Soviet Union?—are no longer decisive” (“Between Trotsky and Lafontaine,” *Junge Welt*, 16 May 2006). So, the October Revolution is “no longer decisive.” Sound familiar? This regurgitation of the “death of communism” ideology is not surprising coming from Linksruck: Its forebears were expelled from the Fourth International because they publicly refused to defend North Korea and the Soviet Union against the imperialists in the Korean War. In 1991, it cheered the victory of Yeltsin’s counterrevolutionary forces in the Soviet Union with the words: “‘Communism has failed,’ declare our newspapers and TVs. It is a fact which ought to delight every socialist” (*Klassenkampf*, September 1991).

Last year, Linksruck formally dissolved itself in order to better submerge in Die Linke in the form of “marx21.” Janine Wissler, one of their supporters, was voted into Die Linke’s six-person parliamentary fraction in Hesse, and Christine Buchholz is a member of the national party’s executive leadership. Wissler’s enthusiasm in rallying Die Linke for support to a minority government led by Ypsilanti so favorably impressed *Spiegel* that the magazine happily noted of Die Linke’s parliamentary fraction in Hesse: “Not long ago, some of them dreamed Lenin’s dream of the world revolution. But in the meantime, they seem to have internalized the legendary slogan of Franz Müntefering: ‘Opposition is crap’” (“Münte statt Lenin” [Münte Instead of Lenin], *Spiegel*, 22 September 2008). What this bourgeois magazine cynically calls the “dream of world revolution” is for marx21 nothing but the stuff of occasional Sunday speeches. Their talk of “building extra-parliamentary resistance” is also empty phrasemongering, since in fact they just offer more of the same reformist parliamentary cretinism. The result is to further demoralize those who are dissatisfied with capitalism and fed up with social-democratic treachery.

This wretched “Realpolitik” is integrally linked with marx21’s and the other Cliffites’ virulent hostility to the Soviet Union and other states where capitalism had been overthrown. This hostility also unites them with the various pseudo-Trotskyists, whatever their different formal ideological shadings are. In reunified capitalist Germany, a key index of loyalty to the system of capitalist exploitation is the attitude to the ever-present anti-DDR witchhunt. The anti-Communist campaign by the SPD, along with CDU and FDP [Free Democratic Party], in response to Die Linke’s offer to support Ypsilanti, served not only as an electoral club against Die Linke, but more importantly as a test of Die Linke’s “reliability” for the capitalist rulers. Thus the Hesse SPD demanded of Die Linke, as precondition for accepting its offer to tolerate its government, both the “clear recognition of our constitutional order and our parliamentary democracy” as well as a distancing “from every form of bondage and human rights abuses as were practiced, e.g., in the DDR, including the shoot-to-kill orders, Stasi surveillance and restrictions on the freedoms of opinion, elections and travel.”

Die Linke predictably obliged. The

SPARTAKIST

**Berlin, January 11: Spartakist Workers Party of Germany protests attacks on Palestinians. Sign reads: “Palestinians Are Being Slaughtered in Gaza, But Today in Berlin, Klaus Lederer of Die Linke Promotes Zionist Butchers,” denouncing Lederer’s appearance at a “Solidarity with Israel” rally.**

which forms the main support of the social democracy.

In this situation, the fake socialists seek to fill the vacuum with various right-wing “regroupment” schemes. Having long since reconciled itself with the bourgeois order, the Pabloist Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR) in France is now formally junking the terms “revolutionary” and “communist” from its name to form a “New Anti-capitalist Party” in order to capitalize on the PCF’s collapse. In Britain, the Cliffite Socialist Workers Party (SWP, cothinkers of the German group marx21) openly opposed any pretense of “socialism” or even secularism in the founding of Respect, a thoroughly bourgeois electoral combination. Now, a couple of years later, Respect has undergone a split, and the SWP’s section bombed in the subsequent elections. Since then, the Respect parliamentarians who had allied with the SWP have decamped to Labour, the Liberals, and even to the conservative Tories!

The German pseudo-Trotskyists who are liquidating into Die Linke are pursuing the same kind of opportunist maneuvers that in other countries have often simply blown up in the faces of their sister organizations. Reformism is inherently nationally parochial, since at bottom it amounts to chasing after a wing of one’s *own* bourgeoisie.

These organizations see openings in the post-Soviet “death of communism” climate, which indeed *they* themselves helped to bring about by *supporting* capitalist counterrevolution down the line. When Die Linke formed a couple of years ago, Christine Buchholz of Linksruck (now marx21) expressed this view of the current period as follows: “The regroup-

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[trotskyist\\_vancouver@shawcable.com](mailto:trotskyist_vancouver@shawcable.com)

Cliffite Wissler gave the following explanation in an interview with *Junge Welt* (10 September 2008), in which she described the negotiations with the SPD and Greens as “friendly and pleasant”:

“We’ve already made it clear, repeatedly, where we stand on the DDR and the constitution. We don’t need to repeatedly come to terms with these things. By the same token we could also demand of the SPD that it comes to terms with its own mistakes. For example, that today millions of people have to live on 350 euros per month. Or that the SPD is responsible for the murder of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht.”

What glorification of capitalist “democracy”: Not only is the murder of the revolutionary heroes and founders of the KPD, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, prettified here as a “mistake.” But this SPD crime in the service of saving the German bourgeoisie from workers revolution is also equated with the founding and the very existence of the DDR, a bureaucratically deformed workers state which arose in half of Germany following the Red Army’s heroic liberation of Europe from Hitlerite fascism. In opposition to the Cliffites and other pseudo-Trotskyists, we defend the basic Trotskyist understanding of such states: The expropriation of the bourgeoisie and the collectivization of the economy embodied in the deformed and degenerated workers states represent, despite the political rule of a Stalinist bureaucratic caste, enormous *historic progress* over capitalism.

We of the International Communist League fought with all our forces to mobilize the working masses throughout the Soviet bloc to fight against capitalist counterrevolution. This would have meant the *working class* reckoning with the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracies, which after years of undermining the workers states and trampling on proletarian internationalism administered the treacherous sellout to imperialism. From fighting to give revolutionary leadership to the incipient political revolution in the DDR in 1989-90 to our call issued in August 1991 in the Soviet Union: “Soviet Workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!”, we heeded Trotsky’s warning of the “tragic possibility” that the Soviet degenerated workers state “will fall under the joint blows of its internal and external enemies”:

“But in the event of this worst possible variant, a tremendous significance for the subsequent course of the revolutionary struggle will be borne by the question: *where* are those guilty for the catastrophe? Not the slightest taint of guilt must fall upon the revolutionary internationalists. In the hour of mortal danger, they must remain on the last barricade.”  
—“The Class Nature of the Soviet State,” 1933

We stand for the unconditional military defense of the remaining deformed workers states of China, Cuba, North Korea and Vietnam against imperialism and internal capitalist restoration, and on this basis we fight for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracies. This program and the lessons of the struggle against counterrevolution in the Soviet bloc are key to breaking the multiethnic working class in Germany from the class collaboration and chauvinist protectionism pushed by the sellout trade-union tops in league with both social-democratic parties, the SPD and Die Linke.

**Down With Class Collaborationism!**

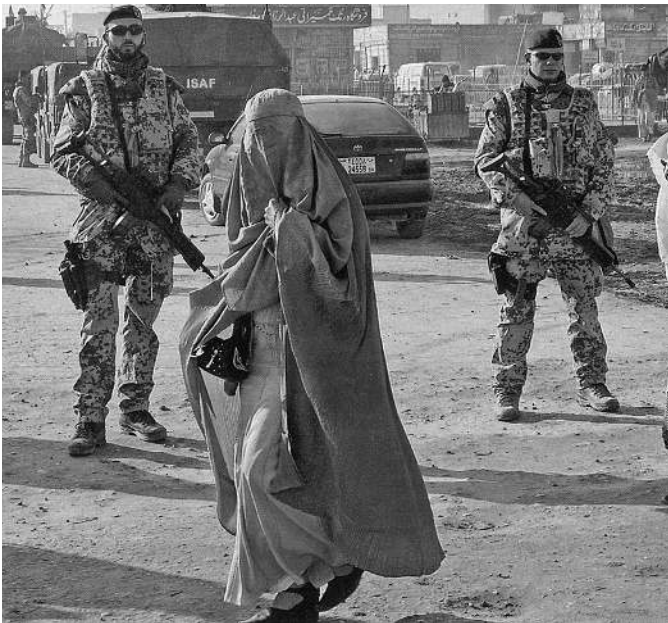
As doctors at the sickbed of capitalism, the Die Linke tops seek to enter capitalist coalition governments and carry out the bourgeoisie’s dirty work, which they promise will make capitalist exploitation “social.” This can be seen in their eagerness to support an SPD-Green government in Hesse, which [Die Linke co-chairman Oskar] Lafontaine & Co. see as a springboard for getting into other capitalist governments, including the federal government, over the course of the year. From Thuringia, where Die Linke has a good chance to come out as the strongest party, to the Saarland, where Lafontaine was SPD president from 1985 to 1998,

they hope to position themselves to be able to administer capitalism at the national level in coalition with the SPD and possibly the Greens after the 2009 elections. Especially against the backdrop of the financial crash and developing economic crisis, they seek to present themselves as suited for managing the crises of capitalism. They aim to advance the bourgeoisie’s interests through an alternative strategy for German imperialism, to act more independently of the U.S.

“State, intervene!” is the slogan of the “good old” social democracy mourned by Lafontaine and the pseudo-socialists, who complain that Schröder & Co. have betrayed this tradition in favor of “neoliberalism.” They promise to prevent the crises of capitalism and subordinate the economy to “democratic” control through the intervention of the bourgeois state. In reality, this serves all the better to subordinate the working class and its organizations to the state of the class enemy. Now the capitalist governments all over the world are intervening...tossing trillions of

office in 2001 in Berlin or voting for Die Linke in the *Bundestag* elections in 2005. At bottom, what they call for is just a more comprehensive intervention by the capitalist state in the name of “democratic” control of the banks. Typical of this is the following appeal to the Berlin government issued by the district chairman of Die Linke in Berlin-Neukölln, where pseudo-Trotskyists such as SAV and marx21 cavort: “Only a transfer of the financial institutions to public property offers the possibility for control by society over the tax money spent.” And just who is to provide the “possibility for control” on behalf of “society,” Lafontaine as finance minister?

They all support joining capitalist governments in principle, but want the *conditions* for this to be set higher than those of the Berlin coalition with the SPD (which is quite unpopular by now). The “maximum program” of organizations like the SAV is classic social-democratic reformism: a “socialist” majority in the bourgeois parliament and a “really democratic”



José Gribás

**German troops patrol streets of Mazar-al-Sharif in 2007, as part of U.S.-led occupation of Afghanistan.**

dollars and euros in tax money to the banks and credit institutions in order to nationalize the losses of the filthy rich finance speculators, while “Hartz IV” [social welfare] recipients here suffer and hundreds of thousands of blacks and poor people in the U.S. are driven out of their homes!

Although its *Bundestag* [German parliament] fraction voted against it, Die Linke fundamentally *supports* a bailout and demands protectionist measures. In the name of “protecting German industry,” the working class is being lined up behind its own imperialist bourgeoisie. This is *poison* for the consciousness of the working class, splitting it along national lines, and it is counterposed to the international class solidarity that is urgently necessary in order to lead hard class struggle against the capitalists and beat back the advancing attacks.

While Die Linke’s fraction in the *Bundestag* voted against the bailout—where its votes had no impact on the outcome anyhow—Harald Wolf, a Die Linke minister in Berlin, voted for it in the *Bundesrat* [upper house of parliament]. The Die Linke tops in Berlin have experience in bank bailouts. In 2002, right after its ministers had taken office in Berlin, the then-PDS fulfilled its election promises by passing the “Law for Shielding Risks” for the Bankgesellschaft Berlin, providing a guarantee of more than 21 billion euros for the losses of real estate speculators who had bet on a real estate boom in Berlin following the capitalist reunification. Just as is planned with the current megabailouts, this “socialism for the rich” was carried out on the backs of the working people, financed through massive cuts in public services, the shredding of union contracts, wage cuts, etc.

SAV, marx21, *Junge Welt* and various other “left critics” in Die Linke gripe about the leadership of the Berlin branch and its “neo-liberal” government policies in order to cover their left flank. In the end, this is just empty phrasemongering without consequences, since in practice their support is certain whenever it counts—whether voting the PDS into

capitalist government that can be pressured to make the rich pay. In this way, they strengthen reformist illusions among workers and youth and give left cover for the atrocities which are inevitably carried out by the social-democratic ministers in capitalist governments. As can be seen in Berlin, the result is the demobilization of class struggle in the face of capitalist attacks and a tremendous demoralization of trade unionists, the oppressed and the working class as a whole.

Against the reformists’ deception, Friedrich Engels explained long ago in his 1878 polemic *Anti-Dühring* that the *class character* of the state renders the elimination of capitalist crises impossible:

“But the transformation, either into joint-stock companies and trusts, or into state ownership, does not do away with the capitalistic nature of the productive forces.... The modern state, no matter what its form, is essentially a capitalist machine, the state of the capitalists, the ideal personification of the total national capital. The more it proceeds to the taking over of productive forces, the more does it actually become the national capitalist, the more citizens does it exploit. The workers remain wage-workers—proletarians. The capitalist relation is not done away with. It is rather brought to a head.”

In the course of the present crisis, this

fundamental insight has been confirmed by capitalist governments all over the world. The only way to end the crises, oppression and exploitation of capitalism is through proletarian revolution to smash the repressive capitalist state machinery and replace it with organs of working-class rule, ripping the ownership of the means of production out of the hands of the tiny, obscenely rich, capitalist exploiting class in order to reorganize society on a socialist basis. This is the dictatorship of the proletariat, the first, necessary step toward overcoming all class differences and the corresponding withering away of the state.

The attitude toward the bourgeois state is the fundamental line between reform and revolution: The reformist view that one can take hold of the existing state apparatus and administer it in the interests of the workers versus the Marxist understanding—as laid out by Lenin in *The State and Revolution* (1917) and *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky* (1918)—that the capitalist state apparatus must be smashed through proletarian revolution. Mobilizing the working class for this historic task requires a *class-struggle* program to fight *independently of the capitalist state* for the burning needs of the working class and all the oppressed. We are opposed on principle to running for or occupying the executive offices of the capitalist state, whether at the local, state or national level—mayor, state president, chancellor, federal president, etc.

As Rosa Luxemburg wrote: “The entry of a socialist into a bourgeois government is not, as it is thought, a partial conquest of the bourgeois state by the socialists, but a partial conquest of the socialist party by the bourgeois state” (“The Dreyfus Affair and the Millerand Case,” 1899). We differentiate sharply between the acceptance of executive offices and the revolutionary utilization of parliament. The former necessarily means administering capitalism—e.g., deploying the cops for strikebreaking or ordering racist deportations—and is therefore class betrayal. Bourgeois parliaments, on the other hand, can be used as a platform for propagating the communist program and exposing bourgeois democracy as a veil for capitalist rule.

**The Fight for a Leninist Vanguard**

In September, the SAV announced that it would now also join Die Linke in Berlin and the East, a move which elicited resistance from Die Linke’s national leadership. In fact, this newest maneuver underlines what we earlier said in 2006 about their candidacy, which at the time was in opposition to the PDS in Berlin: They don’t represent any fundamental *class* opposition to the pro-capitalist Linke/PDS/WASG tops. Thus, [SAV spokesman Lucy] Redler and other SAV supporters defended themselves as follows: “The independent candidacy was not harmful to the party, as was even attested by a bourgeois court, which reversed the removal of the WASG state leadership by the WASG national leadership” (*sozialismus.info*, 22 October 2008). These reformists are *proud* of having gotten a

*continued on page 6*

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Germany...

(continued from page 5)

certificate of approval by the courts of the class enemy! We denounced this wretched crossing of the class line at the time: “The legal complaint by the Berlin SAV/WASG against the WASG national leadership provided the capitalist state with legitimation for this incredible interference into a left organization and therefore did much worse damage to the left and workers movement than it would have had the Berlin WASG not been able to take part in the elections.”

The “entrism” maneuvers of SAV, marx21 and the others in Die Linke are grossly opportunist. Leninists seek to deepen the contradictions between the aspirations and objective interests of the working-class base on the one hand and the policies and actions of the social democratic leadership on the other. We want to win the working-class base to our program and to the building of a revolutionary party, in *counterposition* to the SPD and Die Linke, in the course of mobilizing for class struggle and the exposure by the communist vanguard of social-democratic treachery. In the framework of this strategic perspective, various tactical options are open to an intelligent revolutionary organization, to be employed according to the objective circumstances. These tactics and their implementation flow from the strategic necessity of splitting these parties along class lines: At all times we maintain strict *programmatic* independence from *all* wings of the social-democratic bureaucracy.

This has absolutely *nothing* to do with the activities of the pseudo-Trotskyists in and around Die Linke, for the simple reason that they all oppose the perspective of forging a Leninist vanguard party to lead the multiethnic proletariat at the head of all the oppressed in the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism. Instead, they help subordinate workers and youth to one or another wing of the pro-capitalist leadership (right now, this is primarily Lafontaine, who employs somewhat more leftist phrases), in order to “pressure” Die Linke and its capitalist coalition governments “to the left.” Redler, for example, explained that it is the SAV’s aim, “as Marxists” within Die Linke, to help “build a strong socialist wing in Die Linke that will reject government participation as in Berlin” (*Junge Welt*, 12 September 2008).

Then there are those like Gruppe Arbeitermacht (GAM), which weighed in with an article in its *Infomail* (21 September 2008) on the SAV’s entrism in Die Linke, in which they make some rather orthodox-sounding criticisms. For example, accusing the SAV of “veiling the true character of this party,” the GAM calls Die Linke a “bourgeois workers party.... The noncommittal socialist phrases which are occasionally uttered don’t change this

at all.” In reality, the GAM is disgruntled that the SAV didn’t go along with its Network Left Opposition (NLO) at the time of the WASG’s fusion with the PDS: “This policy exposes not only the SAV’s typical centrist wavering; this policy also boycotted the opportunity, with the NLO, of building up a nationwide structure that could become a pole of attraction for leftist, militant anti-capitalist forces.”

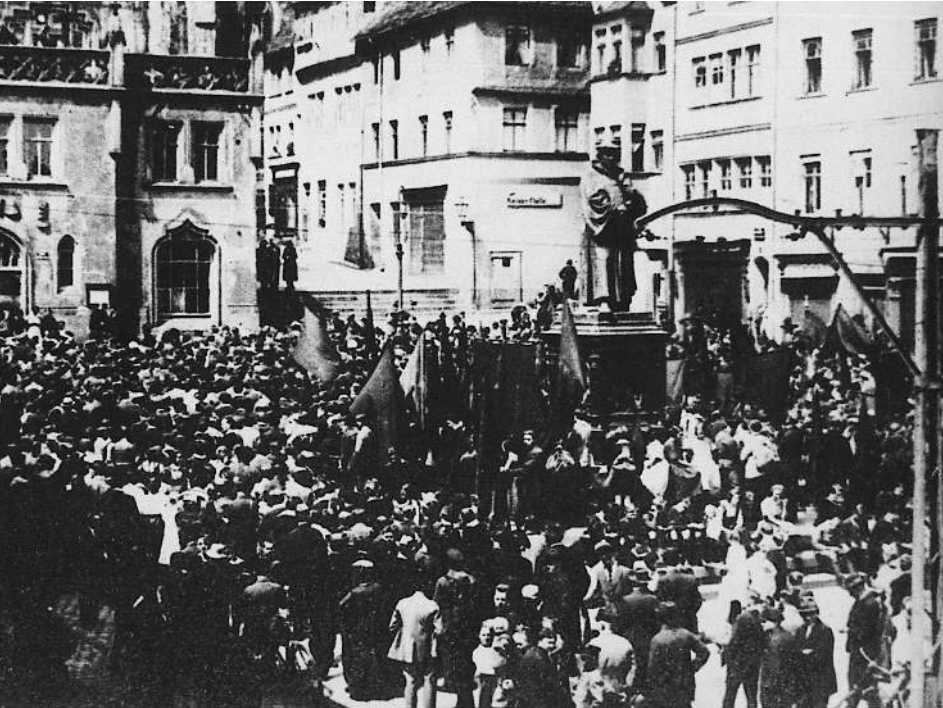
The NLO was a lash-up of a number of fake-socialist grouplets which, like the GAM, preferred to build a pressure group on Die Linke from *without*. As for their reformist faith in the capitalist state, it was hardly any different from Die Linke or the SAV. For example, the NLO’s founding “Felsberg Statement,” for which the GAM is full of praise, supported entering “nice” capitalist governments: “The new party does not enter governments that carry out cuts in social services, lower contract standards or wages in

part of the workers movement at all) that “can be moved to the left” is their reason for existence. This was as clear as daylight when WP split in 2006, with two factions that differed over whether to tail the popular-frontist Social Forums (i.e., a *bourgeois* formation) or the Labour Party “lefts” in Britain [see *Workers Hammer* No. 196, Autumn 2006]. And notwithstanding the “radical” rhetoric with which it berates the SAV about the character of Die Linke as a “bourgeois workers party,” for the GAM this simply means *always voting for them*. Right up until the formation of the WASG, the GAM perennially voted for the SPD, including in the 2002 national election after four years of the racist, anti-working-class SPD-Green government of the Balkan butchers Schröder and Fischer. When it counts, the GAM always ends up on the same side as the SAV, the side of social democracy and “democratic” imperialism. While the inter-

tive offices (see “Down With Executive Offices!”, *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 60, Autumn 2007, as well as “A Trotskyist Critique of Germany 1923 and the Comintern,” *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 56, Spring 2001). One of the clearest indications of the huge revolutionary potential in Germany in 1923 was that the SPD lost control over the mass of the German working class. Amid the severe economic dislocation and hyperinflation, the reformist party and union bureaucracies were unable to function; they became paralyzed. The workers deserted them in droves, and, attracted by the beacon of working-class emancipation of the October Revolution, they decided it was time to give the communists a chance. But the KPD leadership failed the test of revolution. Having reined in the revolutionary strivings of the working masses earlier in 1923, it climbed down without a fight on the eve of a planned insurrection in October.

Instead of organizing the struggle for proletarian power, at bottom the KPD leadership under Heinrich Brandler banked on the illusion that the left wing of the Social Democracy could be induced to become a “revolutionary” ally. This strategy was codified in the misuse of the “workers government” slogan, which for the KPD had come to mean something other than the dictatorship of the proletariat—increasingly, it meant a coalition government with the SPD on the basis of the bourgeois parliament. This was an opportunist and self-defeating revision of the understanding of Lenin’s and Trotsky’s Bolsheviks in 1917 that a workers government would be achieved by the overthrow of the bourgeois state apparatus and the forging of a new state power founded on workers councils (soviets). This revision found its culmination in October 1923, in the entry of the KPD into coalition governments with the SPD in the states of Saxony and Thuringia and in their subsequent calling off of the insurrection, a craven adaptation to the coalition partners of the SPD “left.”

Afterward, Trotsky began to evaluate the reasons for the 1923 defeat and to draw the lessons. This included a sharp criticism of the then-leadership of the Comintern for its wavering in the face of the development of this excellent revolutionary opportunity, and it also led to an implicit self-criticism of his own earlier, administrative approach. Trotsky stressed in *Lessons of October* (1924): “Without a party, apart from a party, over the head of a party, or with a substitute for a party, the proletarian revolution cannot conquer.” *There are no “impossible” situations for the bourgeoisie; if a revolutionary party does not act, the bourgeoisie will regain control.* Such was the outcome in 1923 in Germany. A multiethnic revolutionary workers party is indispensable to successfully end, once and for all, the rule of the German bourgeoisie that has brought so much bloody misery to the world’s working masses and oppressed. We fight to cohere the nucleus of that party, based on the program of the SpAD, as part of reforging the Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution. *Join us!* ■



Regional gathering of German Communist Party youth organization in Eisleben, spring 1923. Germany, with its highly organized, pro-socialist working class, offered best opportunity to extend 1917 Bolshevik Revolution internationally.

public services, or lengthen the working hours of the employees.” When the “Network” burst apart after less than a year because half of them wanted to join Die Linke, the GAM itself admitted that the NLO was politically bankrupt and had no reason to exist. Fundamentally, the GAM’s framework is no different than the SAV’s: pressuring the social democracy to the left. It just exhorts the SAV that this course is not realistic toward Die Linke, complaining that “the SAV doesn’t [draw] the conclusion that Die Linke is a consolidated reformist party (and not one that is open or can be moved to the left).”

For the GAM and its international cothinkers, Workers Power (WP) [in Britain], the search for a wing of the social democracy (or even formations that aren’t

national allies of the SAV bragged about their efforts [in the Soviet Union] following Yeltsin’s coup in August 1991 to convince workers who wanted to mobilize against the counterrevolutionary rabble to go home, supporters of Workers Power literally stood on Yeltsin’s priest- and capitalist-ridden counterrevolutionary barricades.

The Lessons of October

The 1917 October Revolution could not have succeeded without Lenin’s leadership and the existence of a steeled Bolshevik Party, which was the product of a split from the reformists (Mensheviks) and years of struggle against their influence in the working class. We have also drawn the lessons of the defeat of the post-World War I revolutionary wave in Germany, particularly the aborted German Revolution of 1923. Drawing a critical balance sheet of the 1923 German Revolution has been critical for us in clarifying the Leninist attitude to execu-

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Financial Crisis: Bankruptcy of Capitalism  
UCLA, Bunche Hall, Room 2173  
Information and readings: (213) 380-8239 or e-mail: slsycla@sbcglobal.net

CHICAGO

Tuesday, January 27, 7 p.m.  
The October Revolution of 1917  
University of Chicago, 1116 E. 59th St. Harper Memorial Library, Room TBA  
Information and readings: (312) 563-0441 or e-mail: chicagosyc@hotmail.com

VANCOUVER

Thursday, January 22, 6 p.m.  
Why China Is Not Capitalist  
University of British Columbia Student Union Building, Room 42U  
Information and readings: (604) 687-0353 trotskyist\_vancouver@shawcable.com

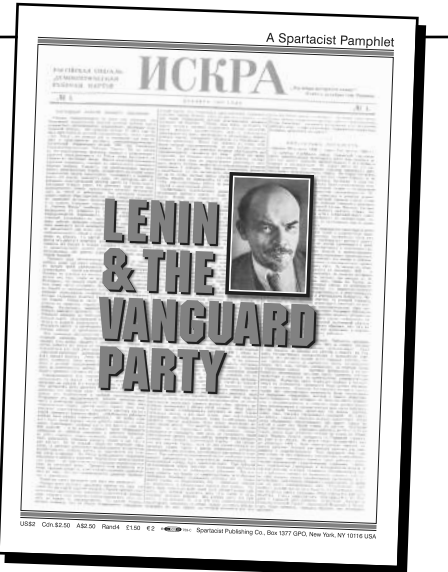
TORONTO

Wednesday, January 28, 6:30 p.m.  
Marxism and the Struggle Against Religion  
U of T, Sidney Smith Building Room 2114, 100 St. George Street  
Information and readings: (416) 593-4138 or e-mail: spartcan@on.aibn.com

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First published in 1978, this pamphlet provides a detailed historical and theoretical account of Lenin’s struggle for a vanguard party. Includes: “In Defense of Democratic Centralism” and “The Fight for a Leninist Vanguard Party”  
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# Gaza...

(continued from page 1)

deadly Israeli military occupation, including the shooting of demonstrators protesting the rampage in Gaza. Surrounded by 450,000 Zionist settlers who are backed up by thousands more troops, Palestinians are subjected to a series of military checkpoints and “Jewish only” roads that make travel between towns virtually impossible. *All Zionist troops and settlers out of the West Bank and East Jerusalem!*

The Zionists’ war on the besieged Palestinians is part of their drive for *lebensraum* (“living space,” the Nazi term for displacing those they conquered), which threatens to engulf the entire Near East in conflagration. The *New York Times* (11 January) reported that in 2007 Israel sought U.S. “bunker buster” bombs to take out what the Israelis believed to be Iran’s nuclear development sites. The *Times* said that the U.S. (for now) denied the request because it had its own program to undermine the Iranian regime. As we have repeatedly asserted, in the face of imperialist threats and blackmail, Iran needs nuclear weapons and adequate delivery systems to defend itself and deter an imperialist attack.

Predictably, the Bush administration has backed Israel’s onslaught against Gaza to the hilt. For his part, president-elect Barack Obama made clear his support for Israel’s attacks during the 2008 election campaign, stating during a visit to Israel: “If somebody was sending rockets into my house where my two daughters sleep at night, I’m going to do everything in my power to stop that. And I would expect Israelis to do the same thing.” Earlier, in January 2008, Obama wrote a letter to the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations on the eve of UN discussions on Israel’s blockade of Gaza since Hamas’s takeover of the Strip in 2007, a year after Hamas won the Palestinian legislative elections. Obama claimed that “Israel is forced” into imposing the blockade and that it “has the right to defend itself.”



Behind Israeli terror stands the far greater terror of U.S. imperialism, which has slaughtered hundreds of thousands in the bloody occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan. Obama has vowed to augment the Afghan occupation with 30,000 additional U.S. troops, while maintaining American forces in Iraq and ratcheting up threats against Iran and Pakistan. Referring to Obama’s “seeming reticence to comment on Gaza,” the reformist International Socialist Organization (ISO) complained that “Israel has nothing to fear from an Obama administration” (*Socialist Worker*, 9 January). Meanwhile, the Workers World Party (WWP) declared, “Obama’s Middle East policy is not fundamentally different from the policies of Bush or McCain” (*Workers World*, 15 January). Such declarations are rich coming from these organizations, whose entire political outlook is determined by what is “possible” under the capitalist system of exploitation and oppression. On the night of the U.S. presidential elections, the ISO threw a party in Harlem to “celebrate the end of far too many years of republican rule” and to discuss “what can activists do to press their demands on the next administration?” WWP, in

the very same issue cited above, declared that Obama’s election “was a watershed moment in U.S. history because it represented a breakthrough in the struggle against racism”!

The idea that one can expect “change,” including on Near East policy, from Obama and the Democrats is as obscene as it is absurd. Nearly every Democratic politician has lined up behind Israel’s war. New York governor David Paterson spoke at a pro-Zionist rally in New York City on January 11, while Democratic Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi sponsored a resolution in support of Israel’s onslaught—which passed by 390 to 5.

There have been protests in cities across the world against the bloodbath in Gaza—and against the pro-U.S. Arab regimes, such as that of Egypt, which has virtually sealed its border with Gaza. The Spartacist League/U.S. and other sections of the International Communist League have intervened into these protests to express our solidarity with the Palestinian masses and to put forward the only perspective—international socialist revolution—that can put an end to Palestinian national oppression. *The myriad peoples of the Near East will not know peace, prosperity or justice until bourgeois rule in the region is overthrown through a series of socialist revolutions.*

## For a Socialist Federation of the Near East!

Nearly a century ago, revolutionary Marxist leader Rosa Luxemburg declared that the choice facing humanity is “socialism or barbarism.” What the world is witnessing today in Gaza is an expression of the barbaric logic of capitalist imperialism and Zionist nationalism. For more than 60 years, Palestinians have suffered under the jackboot of Zionist Israel—an oppression that has intensified since the 1991-92 counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union. The collapse of the USSR, which acted as a counterweight to U.S. imperialism, deprived the late Yasir Arafat’s Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) of crucial diplomatic and



Above: March in Tel Aviv against Israeli assault on Gaza, January 3. Below: Demonstrators outside Egyptian consulate in Istanbul protest Gaza attack, January 5.



ily be at the expense of the other. So long as the national principle prevails, the oppression of the Palestinians, the weaker side, will deepen.

The national emancipation of the Palestinians—including the right of all refugees and their descendants to return to their homeland—necessarily entails workers revolutions to shatter the Zionist state from within and to sweep away the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Syrian Ba’athist bonapartists and the capitalist rulers of Lebanon—countries that all have sizable Palestinian populations.

The Arab bourgeois regimes have always been enemies of Palestinian national liberation. When the Arab armies went to war with Israel in 1948, it was not to “liberate” Palestine but to carve it up among themselves. Between 1948 and the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, the West Bank and Gaza were occupied by Jordan and Egypt respectively. And the Palestinians there remained politically dispossessed and subject to brutal repression. In the decade following the 1967 war, nearly 50,000 Palestinians were slaughtered by Arab governments, including some 10,000 militants killed by the Jordanian monarchy in the 1970 Black September massacre.

The solidarity of the Arab masses with the oppressed Palestinian people must be directed toward proletarian revolution against their own Arab rulers, who, whether bourgeois nationalists or Islamic traditionalists, are fundamentally the political agents of Western imperialism. If this does not happen, the intense and justifiable hostility against Israel and its American protector will serve to further strengthen the forces of Islamic fundamentalism, which posture as the “radical”

opposition to the mainly pro-Western Arab regimes. We look to the proletariat of the region more widely, such as in Egypt, which has been a center of working-class strikes and protests over the past several years. *For a socialist federation of the Near East!*

With some 50 percent of the Palestinian population living outside the Occupied Territories—in Jordan, Lebanon, Israel—the national liberation of the Palestinians demands a perspective of socialist revolution throughout the Near East, including within Israel, the most powerful and economically advanced country in the region. This means recognizing the right of the Hebrew-speaking people to national self-determination. In turn, breaking the Hebrew proletariat from their Zionist rulers requires that they champion the national rights of the Palestinians. We have no illusions that winning the Hebrew proletariat to this perspective will be an easy task. Indeed, it will likely require the victory of socialist revolution in one of the other Near Eastern states to break the Hebrew proletariat from Zionist chauvinism. This task is not made easier by the criminal indiscriminate terror bombings carried out by Palestinian forces against Israeli civilians, which drive the Hebrew population further into the arms of the Zionist rulers.

The Zionist state is not only a catastrophe for Palestinians—it *is also a death-trap for Jews*. As long as Zionist oppression of Palestinians continues, Israeli Jews will continue to be a target of hatred and outrage by the more than 100 million Arabs who surround them. It is only the working class of Israel—Hebrew and

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Le Bolchévik

Spartacists join international protests against Zionist bloodbath in Gaza. Left to right: San Francisco on January 10, New York and Paris on January 3. Sign in French reads: “Israeli Troops, Settlers Out of the Occupied Territories! Down With the American-European-Zionist Embargo Against Gaza!”

Gaza...

(continued from page 7)

Arab—that has the capacity to destroy the Zionist citadel from within. Israeli society is not a seamless reactionary mass. Some 25 percent of citizens live in poverty and income disparities are higher than in Egypt and Jordan. It is the false consciousness of religion and Zionist nationalism and racism—in the face of pervasive anti-Semitism—that is the glue binding the Hebrew proletariat to its Israeli ruling-class enemy.

Even in the face of the current anti-Arab hysteria and widespread support for the Gaza war, there have been anti-war demonstrations in Israel, including a 10,000-strong rally in Tel Aviv on January 3. Sephardic Jews, though overwhelmingly under the sway of right-wing and religious parties, suffer widespread discrimination and poverty. The Palestinian Arabs, nominally “citizens” who constitute 20 percent of Israel’s population, are consigned to segregated, impoverished areas and low-paid, unskilled jobs. On January 12, Israel’s Central Elections Committee *banned* two Arab political parties from running in next month’s elections.

It is vital to forge revolutionary Marxist parties throughout the Near East to unite the proletariat—Arab, Persian, Kurdish and Hebrew, Sunni and Shi’ite, Muslim and Christian—in struggle against imperialism and against the Zionists, mullahs, colonels, sheiks and all the other capitalist rulers. The conquest of power

by the proletariat in the Near East does not complete the socialist revolution, but only opens it by changing the direction of social development. But that social development can be consolidated only through the international extension of the revolution, particularly to the advanced, industrialized imperialist centers. Defense of those subjugated by the imperialists around the globe demands the pursuit of class struggle in the U.S. and other imperialist centers, pointing toward a proletarian struggle for power. The Spartacist League, U.S. section of the International Communist League, is committed to the fight to forge a revolutionary workers party to lead the multiracial proletariat in the struggle to sweep away U.S. imperialism through socialist revolution.

Zionist Rulers Supported Rise of Hamas

Our Marxist perspective is counterposed to those reformist socialists who reject the prospect of Arab/Hebrew workers revolution as utopian. Instead, they have vicariously cheered on one form or another of Palestinian nationalism. In 2002, when Israel was fighting the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank and pummeling the Jenin refugee camp, *Workers World* had no criticism of Arafat or his calls for Western imperialist intervention into the region. Instead, an 11 April 2002 article enthused that in the wake of the first *Intifada* in the early 1990s, “Washington and Tel Aviv were forced to recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization after 20 years of struggle,” calling

this a “victory they had won on the battlefield.” In fact, the outcome of that “victory” was the Oslo accords. Today, even as Palestinian Authority president Mahmoud Abbas, while condemning the bombing of Gaza, blames Hamas for the Israeli onslaught and has suppressed protests in those areas of the West Bank that his Fatah organization controls, one will find no word of criticism of Abbas, Fatah or the Palestinian Authority in the issue of *Workers World* (15 January) containing their statement, “Support Gaza Resistance!”

One will also not find a word of criticism of Hamas. In a similar vein, the British *Socialist Worker* (10 January) of the late Tony Cliff’s Socialist Workers Party carried an article headlined, “Hamas’s History of Resistance,” enthusing over Hamas as the “bearer of a tradition of Palestinian resistance.”

In reality, Islamic fundamentalists like Hamas and Islamic Jihad are vile anti-Jewish and anti-Christian religious bigots who seek to enslave women and extirpate any manifestations of social progress. Hamas is descended from the clerical-fascist Muslim Brotherhood, which became particularly prominent in Egypt in the late 1940s. Under the slogan “communism=atheism=liberation of women,” the Muslim Brotherhood mobilized a terror campaign against Communists and other secular forces. Hamas preaches the social segregation of women, the wearing of the *hijab* (Islamic headscarf) and anti-woman *sharia* law.

Far from embodying a “history of resistance,” Hamas was initially supported by Israel as a counterweight to the secular-nationalist PLO. In 1978, Menachem Begin’s right-wing government approved an application from Sheik Ahmed Yassin to license the Islamic Association, a front group of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. As an official charity organization, Yassin’s group received funding from Israel. In 1986, the former military governor of Gaza, Yitzhak Segev, said: “We extend some financial aid to Islamic groups via mosques and religious schools, in order to help create a force that would stand against the leftist forces which support the PLO.” Carrying out attacks on secularists and Communists, the Islamists engaged in neither political nor military

struggle against Israel. In the 1980s, the Yitzhak Shamir government set up conservative, tribal-based “Village Leagues” in the Occupied Territories. The Islamists became a force in these organs of collaboration. Israel’s rulers helped the Islamic Association gain control of the Islamic University of Gaza and a base among the intelligentsia, while funding welfare programs to help the fundamentalists win a base among the poor.

With the beginning of the first *Intifada* in 1987, the Islamists feared that if they stood aside they would lose their following. Hamas was founded in the spring of 1988 as an Islamist political movement with an armed wing. Hamas sought to fuse the national struggle, previously a secular movement containing a leftist component, with reactionary Islamic fundamentalism. It was only in the fall of 1989, after discovering that Hamas killed two Israeli soldiers, that Israel broke relations with the group.

For Arab/Hebrew Workers Revolution!

Out of utter desperation, many have called on the UN or European powers to engineer some kind of cease-fire in Gaza. This has been seized upon by reformist leftists, who always promote one imperialist agency or another as a potential supporter of the Palestinians. Olivier Besancenot, spokesman for the fake-Trotskyist Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire, denounced “the hypocrisy of the international community that votes tons of resolutions that they never apply” (*Le Monde*, 10 January). The toothless “cease-fire” resolutions that have passed the UN so far do not even call for lifting the starvation embargo against Gaza. Meanwhile, a leading spokesman of the French Communist Party has demanded that “European intervention forces are put in place between the belligerent forces” (*L’Humanité*, 30 December 2008).

It is grotesque to appeal to the European imperialists, whose bloody legacy of divide and rule laid the basis for the continuing misery of the peoples of the Near East. Following the collapse of the Turkish Ottoman Empire after the First World War, the British and French imperialists carved up the region. From Egypt to Syria and Iraq, they bloodily sup-

## International Communist League

(Fourth Internationalist)

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For a Socialist Federation of the Near East!

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دافعوا عن الشعب الفلسطيني!  
لتخرج إسرائيل من الأراضي المحتلة!

حمام الدم الصهيوني في غزة!

من أجل اتحاد فدرالي اشتراكي للشرق الأوسط!

المقال التالي ترجمة عربية لمقال نشر بصحيفة طليعة العمال العدد رقم ٩٢٧ بتاريخ ٢ يناير. طليعة العمال هي صحيفة العنصرية الاشتراكية فرع العنصرية الشيوعية الدولية (الرابعة كمية) بالولايات المتحدة

٣٠ ديسمبر ٢٠٠٨ — كيبيك معايرنا أن هذا يحدث في القرن الحادي والعشرين بينما كان العالم ينظر ولكنه يغفل صاندا. انبي انسان كم هو خطيئ الدم الفلسطيني " قال احد سكان غزة وشبكة الجزيرة للأخبار ٢٨ ديسمبر ٢٠٠٨. " ما يقرب من ٣٧٠ فلسطينيا قد قتلوا واكثر من ١٢٠٠ جرحوا منذ ان بدأت اسرائيل قصف قطاع غزة قبل ثلاثة ايام. لقد شهد اليوم الاول من الغارات الجوية اعلى حصيلة يومية للقائى في غزة منذ ان احتلت اسرائيل القطاع والضفة الغربية في الحرب العربية الاسرائيلية عام ١٩٤٧. اشارة الى ان اكثر من مائة طن من القنابل قد القيت على واحد من اكبر الاماكن كالمطبخ الاكل في غزة. رسميا لا توجد الغارات والقذات الا ان شبكة الجزيرة للأخبار ونشروا انباء عن الغارات في ذلك اليوم.



Oscar Grant...

(continued from page 12)

with the military and the prisons, as the core of a state whose purpose is the repression of the working class and oppressed by any means necessary. From the December 31 shooting of Robbie Tolan, who had been forced to lie down in the driveway of his family’s Houston-area home, to the killing of Adolph Grimes III, who was shot 14 times—12 times in the back—outside his grandmother’s house in New Orleans on New Year’s Day, racist cop terror runs rampant in capitalist America.

For its part, the International Socialist Organization (ISO) has responded to the spate of cop killings under Dellums’ “stop crime” reign with the argument that: “Rather than spending millions hiring more inexperienced cops, what would make a real difference in tackling crime would be to hit it at its roots—poverty—by rebuilding Oakland’s crumbling schools and providing decent-paying jobs that would give Black, Latino and poor Oakland residents a real opportunity” (*Socialist Worker*, 14 August 2008).

The ISO’s cringing faith in the capitalist rulers to provide money for jobs, education and health care at the expense of their repressive apparatus serves only to mask the true nature of this system. Those whose rule is based on exploitation shell out to those they exploit and oppress only what they can realize back in profit. And the racist rulers of America have no use for a whole generation of black youth who were once kept on the bench as a “reserve army of labor.” Now what U.S. capitalism offers them is jail, a slow death from disease, malnutrition and drugs, or a fast one, gunned down on the streets by the cops or killed in the prison execution chambers of America.

The situation cries out for revolutionary leadership, to organize the social power of labor and unite behind it all the oppressed in a struggle for state power that gets rid of the whole racist capitalist system and opens the road for genuine freedom for all. This is the class-struggle perspective put forward by the Bay Area Labor Black League for Social Defense, which is fraternally allied with the Spartacist League/U.S. We reprint below a January 12 statement by the Bay Area LBL on the execution of Oscar Grant.

\* \* \*

The election of Barack Obama as Commander-in-Chief of racist U.S. imperialism was heralded as a “breakthrough” that would “usher in a new era of race relations” in capitalist America, which was built on the bodies and blood of black slaves. But the brutal racist reality for black working people and poor was brought home on the Fruitvale BART sta-

tion platform in the early hours of the New Year in the coldblooded killing of an unarmed 22-year-old black man, Oscar Grant, by BART cop Johannes Mehserle. Tens of thousands of people have recoiled in horror and rage at the raw video footage of the killing taken by passengers on the BART train in the station. Grant, an apprentice butcher at an Oakland grocery store, is lying face down on the platform with his hands behind his back. He pleads for mercy, appealing that he has a four-year-old daughter. One cop has his knee on Grant’s neck when Mehserle pulls out his gun and shoots Grant pointblank in the back.

Oakland’s black Democratic Party mayor Ron Dellums and an assortment of preachers and elected officials are trying to put a lid on the outrage that has ignited among the black and Latino populations



WV Photo

Protest outside Fruitvale BART station against police killing of Oscar Grant, January 10.

of Oakland, whose youth have long been on the receiving end of police terror. Dellums, who made it his priority to put more cops on Oakland streets, appealed for “peace” and offered condolences. This is pure cynicism. When Dellums’ cops killed 20-year-old Gary King Jr. in September 2007, the mayor locked the door to City Hall against King’s aggrieved family and friends.

The body count of those killed by the Oakland cops since Dellums took office has continued to mount: 15-year-old José Luis Buenrostro-Gonzalez, shot and killed in broad daylight, March 2008; 71-year-old Casper Banjo, a black artist, killed the same month for having a toy gun; 27-year-old Mack “Jody” Woodfox, gunned down, August 2008.

Now calls are being raised for a citizens’ review board for the BART cops,

better police training and more accountability. The NAACP and others appeal to California’s top cop, Attorney General Jerry Brown, to investigate the killing. It was Brown who, when he took office in January 2007, had the former Black Panthers of the San Francisco 8 arrested on frame-up charges that had been thrown out over 30 years ago! We warn against deadly illusions that the police can be reformed. The purpose of cleaning up the cops’ image is so that these thugs in blue can more effectively do their job as the armed enforcers of capitalist rule, from operating as an occupying army in the inner cities to busting strikes.

The reverends and black elected officials who preach “peace” in the face of rampaging cop terror now condemn those who took their justifiable outrage to the streets of Oakland. The Labor Black

League for Social Defense demands that all charges be dropped against the 105 protesters who were beaten, tear-gassed, shot with rubber bullets and arrested by an army of riot-equipped cops!

The mass outrage against cop terror needs an organized political expression, and not one that strengthens the hand of the Democratic Party, the political tool of the very capitalist rulers whose interests the cops “serve and protect.” The Labor Black League for Social Defense fights to link the anger of the ghettos and barrios to the power of *our class*, the multiracial labor movement. Labor protest by the Bay Area’s powerful and multiracial unions—starting with the BART transit unions and including longshore, grocery, city and other workers—would provide the social power of a working-class political axis.

In 1992, when BART cop Fred Crabtree killed 19-year-old black youth Jerrold Hall with a shotgun blast through the back of his head, the Labor Black League initiated a protest in defense of Hall’s friend, John Henry Owens. Crabtree was never charged, while Owens was initially outrageously charged with being an “accomplice” to “murder”! The 60-strong LBL protest, which included many workers from BART and other Bay Area unions, pointed to the kind of social power that needed to be mobilized in protest against cop terror. The response of the BART union tops provided a stark example of the trade-union bureaucracy’s role in subordinating labor’s power to the agencies of the capitalist class enemy, from the Democratic Party to the racist killer cops. Disowning their own union members who protested the killing of Hall and the frame-up of Owens, the then-presidents of the two BART transit unions instead *stood in solidarity with the BART cop* as a “union brother” who was simply doing his job! Cops are not our class brothers, but our deadly enemies. They have no place in the labor movement! Cops, security guards and prison guards out of the unions!

The recent multiracial protests against the killing of Oscar Grant are an important statement against the vicious racial and ethnic hatreds whipped up by the rulers to maintain their profits through dividing and weakening the working class. Nevertheless, the hard truth is that there will be no end to police brutality short of the destruction of this entire system of capitalist exploitation and racial oppression. But a massive protest based on the organized muscle of the labor movement would give the cops and their capitalist masters some pause. And it would drive home the point that the interests of the working class are inseparably linked to the defense of the ghettos and barrios, the defense of immigrant rights and the fight for black freedom.

The Labor Black League for Social Defense stands for mobilizing the masses of black, immigrant and all working people in integrated struggle based on a program of *class struggle*—the understanding that the interests of the working class are irreconcilably counterposed to those of the capitalist class exploiters, their state forces and agencies and their political parties, be they Democrat, Republican or Green. We join with the Spartacist League in the fight to build a multiracial revolutionary workers party that will lead the way to uprooting this system of exploitation and oppression, which is enforced by racist cop terror. When those who labor rule, the tremendous wealth of this society, created by the working class, will be used to wipe out racial oppression and provide a decent life for the working class, blacks, immigrants, women, the poor, the young and the aged. ■

pressed one anti-colonial struggle after another. Both Britain and France joined with Israel in invading Egypt in 1956 after the Egyptian government nationalized the Suez Canal. And it was the French imperialists who played a key role in assisting Israel in its development of nuclear weapons.

For its part, the United Nations is an assembly of the imperialist powers and their semicolonial victims. The UN presided over the establishment of the state of Israel at the expense of the dispossessed Palestinian people in 1948. It was the UN that disarmed Palestinian fighters during Lebanon’s bloody civil war, setting up the 1982 massacre of some 2,000 civilians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps by Christian rightist forces directed by Israeli troops under the leadership of the (now-comatose) butcher Ariel Sharon. No to UN, European Union intervention!

Every “solution” to the Palestinian national question under capitalism either perpetuates the oppression of the Palestinian Arab people or envisions a reversal of the terms of oppression, denying the legitimate national rights of the Hebrew-

speaking people. The Arab nationalists and Islamists look to a “holy war” of the Arab peoples against Zionist Israel. Marxists fight to bring the class question to the fore, to mobilize the proletariat of the predominantly Muslim countries of the Near East in struggle against their own bourgeoisies. As V.I. Lenin, founder of the Bolshevik Party which led the only successful workers revolution in history, stated in 1913, “Marxism cannot be reconciled with nationalism, be it even of the ‘most just,’ ‘purest,’ most refined and civilised brand. In place of all forms of nationalism Marxism advances internationalism.”

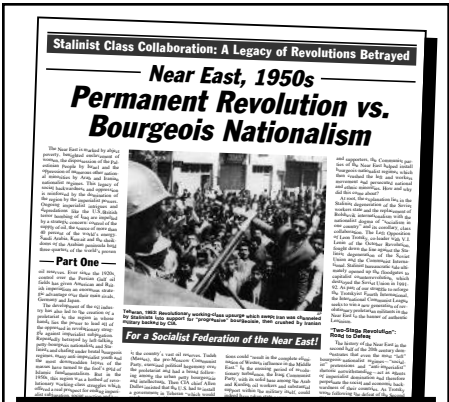
The 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, which laid the basis for the liberation of the tsarist empire’s many subjugated peoples, was a beacon of liberation for the oppressed throughout the world, inspiring anti-colonial revolts throughout the Near East. This legacy continued despite the Stalinist degeneration of the USSR. In 1958, Iraqi workers led by the multinational Iraqi Communist Party—which included Muslims, Jews and Christians, Arabs and Kurds—fought to make a revolution and came to the brink of power.

However, this and other revolutionary opportunities were betrayed by the Kremlin and the Stalinist-led Communist parties, subordinating the proletariat to an alliance with “progressive” bourgeois nationalists, who, once in power, launched a bloodbath against the Communist-led workers.

What is necessary is the forging of revolutionary Marxist parties throughout the Near East, built in opposition to all forms of nationalism and religious fundamentalism, and committed to the struggle for socialist revolution, which, on an international scale, can finally open the door to human equality and liberation. As we wrote in the International Communist League Declaration of Principles (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 54, Spring 1998):

“The victory of the proletariat on a world scale would place unimagined material abundance at the service of human needs, lay the basis for the elimination of classes and the eradication of social inequality based on sex and the very abolition of the social significance of race, nation and ethnicity. For the first time mankind will grasp the reins of history and control its own creation, society, resulting in an undreamed-of emanci-

pation of human potential, and a monumental forward surge of civilization. Only then will it be possible to realize the free development of each individual as the condition for the free development of all.” ■



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# Workers Party...

(continued from page 12)

and plan to send more troops to Afghanistan. Obama’s newly appointed cabinet was called by the *Wall Street Journal*, approvingly, a war cabinet. Among his advisors are bona fide war criminals Zbigniew Brzezinski, Madeleine Albright and many others. The mass murderers and torturers of blood-drenched U.S. imperialism are the enemies of working people and the oppressed worldwide.

Imperialist wars and racial, sexual and national oppression are not aberrations, but intrinsic components of capitalist rule. It is our elementary internationalist duty as revolutionary Marxists to demand the unconditional, immediate withdrawal of U.S. imperialist troops from Afghanistan, Iraq and Central Asia. We say, hands off Pakistan and Iran! In the lead-up to the imperialist attacks against Iraq and Afghanistan, we fought for the military defense of those countries while politically opposing the reactionary Taliban and Saddam Hussein’s bloody capitalist regime. Insofar as the forces on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan aim their blows against the imperialist occupiers, we call for their military defense against U.S. imperialism without giving them any political support. Such blows weaken imperialism and are in the interests of the working class. We stand for the defeat of imperialism through workers revolution.

Like his allies in the capitalist Democratic Party, such as Jesse Jackson, who hark back to the liberal-led civil rights

less than the Republicans, they are the class enemies of workers, black people, women, immigrants and all of the oppressed.

## For a Class-Struggle Leadership of the Unions!

There was a recent settlement in the Chicago sit-in by workers organized in the United Electrical union for severance pay, vacation pay and health benefits. Two hundred sixty courageous workers occupied Republic Windows & Doors. They weren’t fighting to keep their jobs. They were fighting because the plant was closing. They were fighting not to be dumped on the street like garbage, without any of their hard-won benefits in hand. The company has relented, but it will reopen elsewhere as a non-union outfit.

In the interests of domestic peace and tranquility, Democrats such as Jesse Jackson Jr., Luis Gutierrez, Rod Blagojevich—the ever-so-popular governor of Illinois—and Obama cynically postured as being on the side of the workers. The whole lot of them would drop their masks if there were sit-down strikes to save jobs and stop plant closings. The Flint, Michigan, sit-down strikers, in building the United Auto Workers in 1937, occupied the factories. The whole array of capitalist politicians, their cops and their state was hurled against these workers.

The relentless onslaught of union busting requires militant class struggle. Labor must play hardball to win. However, this requires a political struggle within the unions to replace the “die on your knees” trade-union bureaucracy with a leader-



Dholakia/Detroit News

**UAW strikers picket entrance to American Axle headquarters in Hamtramck, Michigan, 24 April 2008.**

the capitalist class, the labor bureaucrats who talk about “American jobs first.” Liberal Democrat Nancy Pelosi and her cabal were falling all over the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan counterrevolutionaries during the riots in Tibet last March. *Workers Vanguard*, the revolutionary Marxist newspaper of the Spartacist League and the flagship paper of the International Communist League, told the truth to the world’s working class: the hue and cry over Tibet, joined by an assortment of reformist leftists promoting “democracy” in China, was in reality a means of promoting capitalist counterrevolution.

counterrevolution in the former Soviet Union and the East European deformed workers states. Today, we Trotskyists of the International Communist League fight for the unconditional military defense of the remaining deformed workers states of China, Cuba, Vietnam and North Korea, and for workers political revolutions to replace Stalinist bureaucratic misrule with regimes of workers democracy and revolutionary internationalism.

## Racist Bosses’ Black Front Men

In his heavily censored 1963 speech at the March on Washington—a march that was rightly denounced by Malcolm X as the “farce on Washington”—Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee activist John Lewis, who today is a Democrat, asked: “Where is our party?” He said that the Democratic Party of John F. Kennedy was also the party of James Eastland, a rabid Mississippi segregationist. Today the Democratic Party is Lewis’s party, and he and other black ex-civil rights activists, including the likes of Maxine Waters, are front men and women for the racist capitalist system. They are the main beneficiaries of the civil rights movement, which was crippled and derailed by Martin Luther King’s “turn the other cheek” pacifism and by pro-Democratic Party liberalism.

The American imperialists have opened the door for their most trusted black servants, as shown by their promotion of Condoleezza Rice and Colin Powell, to prominent positions as architects of imperialist slaughter. Now Obama gets to be the head overseer on their plantation, that is, on the plantation of the modern-day slaveholders.

Upon his capture in 1859 after he led some 20 of his followers—white and black, slave and free—to a raid on the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, the great revolutionary insurrectionist John Brown declared: “You may dispose of me very easily—I am nearly disposed of now, but this question is still to be settled—this Negro question, I mean; the



Batdorff/Grand Rapids Press

**Above: Renters facing eviction after building foreclosure in Michigan last summer. Right: Job fair line in New York City, November 2008.**



AP

movement, Obama blames black people for their oppression. With his election, the message to black people is to shut up and take it, and to working people, it’s to sacrifice. Obama has talked a lot about rebuilding the infrastructure, but the solution to the fundamental ills of moribund capitalism isn’t a few band-aids, at best. It isn’t spraying perfume on a walking corpse. It’s the fight for a socialist planned economy that uses the talents and energies of society’s most important productive force: the working class.

For many black people, pride over Obama’s victory is bound up with the memory of centuries of black oppression in America—the legacy of black chattel slavery, struggles against racist Jim Crow segregation, racist cop terror and killings, desperate poverty, mass incarceration, and being the last hired and first fired. Sooner or later expectations in Obama will be brutally dashed. The growing gulf between the black petty bourgeoisie and the ghetto masses is a reflection of the sharpening class antagonisms in this society writ large. The class divide in the U.S. is unprecedented in its scope and carries with it potential social unrest. Like his black Democratic Party friend and associate David Dinkins here in New York, Obama reassures the capitalists, for a while at least, in the words of Dinkins, “they’ll take it from me.” The capitalist Democratic Party postures as the “friend of labor,” the better to deceive the working people and keep their struggles confined within the framework of capitalism. No

ship fighting uncompromisingly in the interests of the working class and the oppressed, independent of the capitalist parties.

Our class brothers and sisters are Mumia Abu-Jamal, Jamal Hart, the many MOVE prisoners, all the class-war prisoners entombed for their political beliefs, all those fighters imprisoned for standing up to the racist capitalist rulers. Our class brothers and sisters are immigrant workers. We fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants, for a labor-led fight against deportations, for international solidarity with the struggles of working people around the world. Our class brothers and sisters are working-class and poor women who face daily, rampant sexual discrimination and oppression. We fight for women’s liberation through socialist revolution; for mobilizing labor to champion women’s rights; for free abortion on demand; for equal pay for equal work; for free, quality, 24-hour childcare. We defend the right of gay marriage—and divorce—against its opponents, such as Obama, Hillary Clinton, Republican gay bashers and reactionary religious bigots. This flows from our perspective to build a Leninist vanguard party that fights to cleanse this world of all oppression and exploitation.

## Defend, Extend Gains of Chinese Revolution!

The Democrats are in the forefront of pushing anti-China chauvinist protectionism, backed by the labor lieutenants of

The imperialists have been emboldened by the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, a bureaucratically degenerated workers state, which was the most formidable counterweight to U.S. imperialism. U.S. imperialism is leading the charge toward the imperialist encirclement of China, from arming its bourgeois allies in Taiwan to its nuclear pact with bourgeois India. It pursues bloody restoration of capitalism in the remaining workers states.

We are the party of the Russian Revolution. We uniquely fought against capitalist

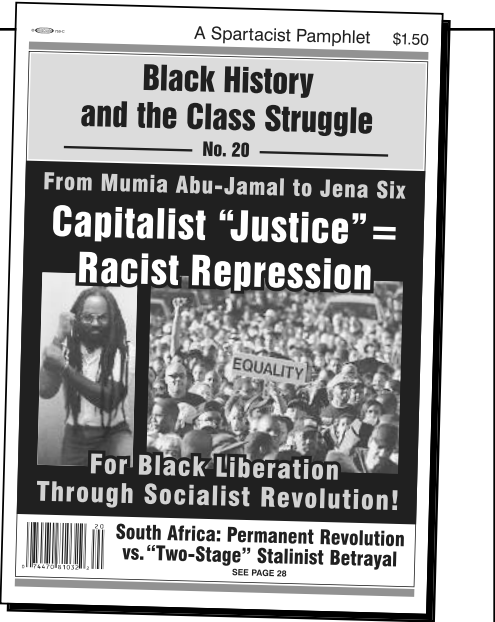
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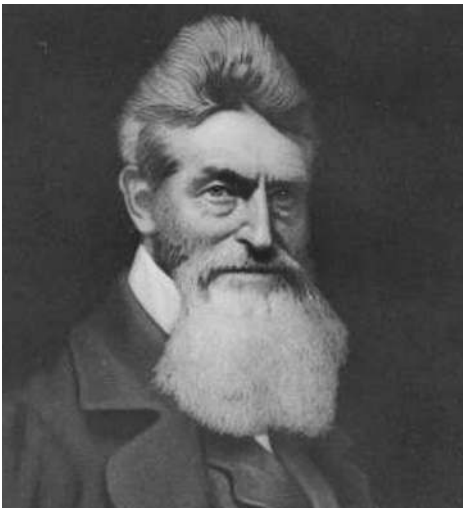
end of that is not yet.” The Civil War was the U.S.’s second bourgeois revolution, which finally settled the question of black chattel slavery. We pay homage to the revolutionary democrats of that era, the John Browns and the Frederick Douglasses and Harriet Tubmans, who were dedicated to the struggle for black liberation.

Douglass paid tribute to Brown, who “began the war that ended American slavery.” Douglass and Brown were long-standing political associates, but Douglass refused to go to Harpers Ferry on tactical grounds of feasibility. Douglass subsequently declared that he himself had been deficient in courage. Nonetheless, in the aftermath of Harpers Ferry, Douglass faced charges of “murder, robbery, and inciting servile insurrection.” He temporarily fled to Canada knowing that otherwise he would have been hanged.

Neither Brown nor Douglass appealed to the pro-slavery American Constitution. Their appeal was to the slaves to rise up and break their chains. We have Norman Marshall here with us to perform his tribute to John Brown—the great revolutionary abolitionist who was not only known as the Oliver Cromwell of his time, after the great 17th-century revolutionary who led the English Revolution against King Charles I, but also known by anti-slavery Frenchmen like Victor Hugo as the Spartacus of the U.S., after the Roman slave who struck fear in the hearts of the Roman slave masters.

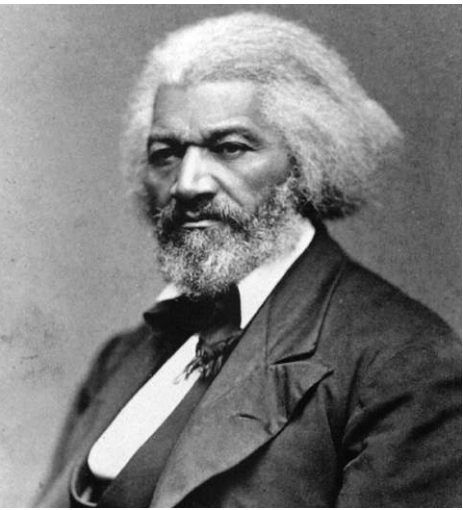
Finish the Civil War!

The promise of black equality was betrayed by the Northern capitalists during Reconstruction, which was ended



Schomburg Center

John Brown (left), Harpers Ferry martyr, and leading black abolitionist Frederick Douglass.



Frederick Douglass House

through political counterrevolution backed by Klan terror. Almost 150 years after Brown’s death this question still hasn’t been settled, and it can’t be as long as capitalism continues to exist. The oppression of the black masses as a race-color caste, forcibly segregated at the bottom of society but constituting a key component of organized labor, is the strategic question for proletarian revolution in the U.S. Our program of revolutionary integrationism, the struggle for the full assimilation of black people into an egalitarian socialist order, is based upon the understanding that black oppression is materially rooted in this capitalist system, and that black workers, as the most conscious and experienced section of the working class, will play an exceptional role in leading the working class to topple this brutal system.

The struggle for black freedom is an

inseparable part of the fight for the emancipation of the working class from capitalist exploitation. Contrary to the lies of bourgeois ideologists, white workers have common class interests with black workers, the ghetto poor and immigrant workers, not with the white ruling class. Militant class struggle can and will break down the color line. Many of us saw that in action during the powerful but brief New York City transit workers strike almost three years ago.

It was no accident that thousands of black and poor people were left to die in Hurricane Katrina. Millions of workers and, increasingly, middle-class professionals are losing jobs and homes and pensions under this so-called “sacred” private property system. The right to a job is, as the Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky once stated, “the workers’ most seri-

ous right.” We need a revolutionary leadership of labor that will mobilize the power of the working class. Such a leadership will organize the unorganized, fight for a shorter workweek with no cut in pay to spread the available work, fight for socialized medicine, for free quality health care, for massive public works programs, for unemployment benefits.

These struggles must ultimately lead to the fight for international socialist revolution, which requires the expropriation of the capitalist class without compensation, just like the expropriation of the Southern slaveholders during the Civil War. Just as you had to be a revolutionary abolitionist to be in the vanguard of the struggle to end black chattel slavery, today you have to be a communist, a revolutionary internationalist, a Trotskyist, to uproot the system of capitalist wage slavery. It is utopian to think that you can get the capitalists to reorder their priorities by pressuring them and/or appealing to their so-called conscience. They will put nothing before their class interests. Their class rule is enforced by their repressive bourgeois state apparatus, their cops, courts and military.

We don’t need the “audacity of hope” or pie-in-the-sky religious obscurantism, but a consistent revolutionary internationalist program. Our battle cry is for multiracial class struggle against all of the exploiters, no matter what their color or their sex, against the barbaric and anarchic and decrepit capitalist system! We say, free all class-war prisoners! Long live the struggle for international proletarian revolution! Workers of the world unite—you have nothing to lose but your chains!■

Sam Marcy...

(continued from page 2)

“third parties,” see “From the Archives of *Spartacist*: On Bourgeois ‘Third Parties’ and the 1948 Henry Wallace Campaign,” WV No. 918, 1 August 2008).

The predominant pro-Wallace movement grouping inside the SWP in 1948 was “the Chicago N.C. [National Committee] Members,” whose 21 January 1948 resolution on “The Wallace Third Party Movement” by Arne Swaback and two cothinkers in Chicago was printed in the SWP’s “Pre-Convention Discussion Material” *Internal Bulletin* (Vol. X, No. 2, April 1948). As the bitterly repressive winds of the first Cold War were blowing, Swaback and his supporters cited the “reactionary onslaught” against labor, claiming that “the Wallace Third Party movement...is the first concrete, although distorted, manifestation of contradictions engendered by the American imperialist aims.” The Chicago N.C. members claimed, wrongly, that “in its classic sense a third capitalist party could be conceived of only in the emergence of the pro-fascist or fascist party,” and since the Wallace movement obviously wasn’t fascist, therefore “leftward moving workers” would become the base, forcing it into becoming a labor party. While conceding Wallace was “a capitalist, and he admits it,” they wrote: “The movement rallying around his candidacy is something else. Either it is predominantly working class in character or it will disappear.” They concluded: “These are the important considerations upon which our party should base its decision to give critical support to the Wallace candidacy for the purpose of entering into active participation in this new movement.”

Another document in the bulletin, “Statement on Wallace Movement” by C. Charles, M. Weiss and M. Tanner (Charles Curtis, Murry Weiss and Myra Tanner Weiss) correctly stated: “The Wallace movement is a capitalist political tendency, at present resting nearly exclusively on Stalinist dominated unions and their political organs and Stalinist organizations.” Noting that the Wallace campaign “represents another obstacle to the independent labor party,” they nonetheless argued: “Our problem, and the central

question for the next period, is how to struggle against the capitalist and Stalinist influence in these formations. Can we do it from outside the Wallace organization? To a degree, but more effectively from within.” They argued for no support to Wallace himself, but stated: “There will be candidates from the labor movement and from the Negro and other oppressed peoples whom we should critically support.” A document by “Burton” argued similarly for participation in the Wallace movement without supporting Wallace. The February 1948 Plenum of the SWP upheld SWP leader James P. Cannon’s majority line of no support to Wallace, and the Chicago N.C. members withdrew their resolution.

As for Sam Marcy, five years after the 1948 debate, he wrote in “The Global Class War and the Destiny of American Labor” (SWP *Internal Bulletin* Vol. XV, No. 15, May 1953): “The Wallace movement was a progressive-radical movement in spite of Wallace.... It would *not* have been ‘crossing class lines’ to give critical support to Wallace. It would only have been supporting Wallace as Lenin said ‘a rope supports a hanged man.’ It would have been reaching out our hand toward elements of *our own class* we could not reach in any other way except through critical support of Wallace. (This, as everybody on the NC knows, was my position, and it flowed from the international orientation I also elaborated at that Plenum).”

Understanding the breadth of SWP internal opposition on this issue, Cannon’s majority response, which we’ve often quoted (“Election Policy in 1948,” February 1948), is even more impressive and well worth repeating—it is another of those defining fights whose successful outcome helped to ensure our existence as revolutionary Marxists today:

“The class character of the party is determined first by its program; secondly by its actual policy in practice; and thirdly by its composition and control. The Wallace party is bourgeois on all these counts; by its program, its policy and practice, its composition and control....Wallace is the, as yet, unacknowledged, candidate for the role of diverting the workers’ movement for independent political action into the channel of bourgeois politics dressed up with radical demagoguery which costs nothing. That is what we have to say, and that’s what we have to fight—vigorously and openly, and with no qualifications at all. We have to be 100% anti-Wallaceites. We



Pathfinder

James P. Cannon speaking at 1940 convention of the Socialist Workers Party.

have to stir up the workers against this imposter, and explain to them that they will never get a party of their own by accepting substitutes.”

Part of Cannon’s response to the internal opposition on Wallace was to propose that the SWP run its own candidates in the 1948 presidential elections, in order to counterpose the SWP’s revolutionary proletarian program to the pro-Democratic Party class collaborationism of the Stalinists. This was consistent with the previous practice of U.S. Marxists at the time. However, upon further historical examination, debate and discussion, we in the International Communist League have decided that we will not run for executive offices of the bourgeois state as a matter of principle. This is a corollary to Lenin’s works, *The State and Revolution* and *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, and a continuation of the work of the first four Congresses of the Communist International (see “Down With Executive Offices of the Capitalist State!” in the April 2008 ICL pamphlet, *The Development and Extension of Leon Trotsky’s Theory of Permanent Revolution*).

The documentary record available to us is thin on whether the Marcyites had become an established “tendency” by

1948. Speaking at a memorial for WWP cofounder Vince Copeland on 20 June 1993, Marcy did say: “I want to talk about the struggles that took place beginning with 1948. Our tendency had just been formed politically on the basis of strong conviction and commitment to preserve the revolutionary essence of the struggle, in particular as it began to develop around the global class struggle.” Much later, Lou Paulsen, a frequent contributor to *Workers World*, wrote a January 2003 Internet “Open letter to Dave McReynolds” that stated: “WWP was founded at the beginning of 1959.... If, however, you mean to refer to the point at which the Marcy-Copeland-Ballan tendency began to coalesce and express differences with the leadership of the SWP-US (whom you refer to as ‘the Trotskyists’) it would have to be 1948, when our future founders recommended participation in the presidential campaign of Henry Wallace.”

Claiming such an origin would naturally be more appealing to liberals than what we know as the definitive formation of Sam Marcy’s pro-Stalinist faction in the SWP: their response to the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, when a document by V. Grey (Vince Copeland) characterized the unfolding workers political revolution there as a “full-scale, nation-wide *counterrevolution*,” thus providing an apology for its suppression. The Marcyites’ condemnation of the Hungarian uprising—which posed the possibility of the democratic rule of workers soviets and the establishment of a workers government committed to the international extension of the gains of the Hungarian workers state—was part of their evolving Stalinoid class collaborationism. In 1989, WWP supported the suppression of the Tiananmen uprising in China, which was also an incipient workers political revolution.

Historically for Stalinists there’s no contradiction between sucking up to bourgeois liberals in the heartland of imperialism and sycophantic support to Stalinist regimes and their policies of “peaceful coexistence” with imperialism and anti-working-class repression. Both are ultimately based on their rejection of the need for the working class, led by a revolutionary vanguard party, to fight for international socialist revolution.

Comradely,  
H.C.

## Mobilize the Power of the Multiracial Unions in Protest!

# Oscar Grant Killed in Cold Blood by BART Cop

OAKLAND, January 12—Seething anger against rampant, and routine, humiliation and terror at the hands of the racist cops was ignited in Oakland, California, over the coldblooded execution of a 22-year-old black man, Oscar Grant, by a Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) cop on January 1. The killing of Grant was a shot literally heard round the world in multiple video clips by other passengers in the station which were streamed online.

“We Are All Oscar Grant,” declared signs and chants at a January 7 protest of more than 700 people—including blacks, Latinos, Asians and whites—outside the Fruitvale BART station where Grant was killed. Pointing to the Zionist military onslaught in the Gaza Strip, other signs called to “End Government Sponsored Murder in the Ghettos of Oakland and Palestine.” Rage and despair in the face of the tired appeals for “calm” and deadly illusions in “police reform” peddled by black elected officials and preachers exploded in the streets of downtown Oakland later that night. The Partisan Defense Committee—a class-struggle,



Johnson Family

Passenger video showed BART cop killing of Oscar Grant (inset).

Indymedia

non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League—sent a protest letter demanding that all charges be dropped against the more than 100 protesters who were

beaten and arrested by an army of riot-equipped cops.

While his cops fired tear gas and rubber bullets at protesters, black Democratic Party Oakland mayor Ron Dellums

promised to bring the Oakland Police Department into the “investigation” of Grant’s murder. That will be a gigantic boost to the cover-up machine that BART has already set in motion. In 2002, three cops from the notorious Oakland police gang, the “Riders,” which was unleashed as part of the racist “war on drugs,” were completely exonerated of 60 counts of savage beatings and frame-ups. Meanwhile, the Oakland cops continued to gun down young black and Latino men with impunity. In this case, the BART cop who killed Grant has opted to resign while the Feds and California attorney general Jerry Brown are intervening to try to keep a lid on “tensions.”

At the Oakland protest, placards from the ANSWER coalition, led by the reformist Party for Socialism and Liberation, called to “Jail Killer Cops!” In your dreams. The capitalist rulers are hardly going to jail their own police guard dogs. And, even if one cop were charged and imprisoned, it wouldn’t stop police brutality and terror. The cops serve, together

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## Break with the Democrats!

# For a Revolutionary Workers Party!

*In December, the Partisan Defense Committee—a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League—held its 23rd annual Holiday Appeal, which raised funds for the PDC’s program of sending monthly stipends and holiday gifts to 16 class-war prisoners and their families. Holiday Appeal events took place in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, the Bay Area and Toronto. Spokesmen for the Spartacist League, Spartacus Youth Clubs, Labor Black Leagues and the PDC addressed these benefits. In Chicago, one of the laid-off members of United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE) Local 1110*

*spoke about the courageous six-day plant sit-in at the Republic Windows & Doors factory in Chicago (see “UE Workers Win Severance Pay,” WV No. 927, 2 January).*

*More than 150 people attended the New York Holiday Appeal event, held on December 13 at the Nuyorican Poets Cafe. The benefit included the one-man play John Brown: Trumpet of Freedom, by George Wolf Reily and Norman Thomas Marshall (who performed the play). The following speech, edited for publication, was delivered at this event by SL Central Committee member Don Alexander.*

In about a month, U.S. imperialism’s first black Commander-in-Chief will

take office. The ascendancy to power of Democrat Barack Obama’s administration is no historic victory against racism, as the liberals and reformists say, but a victory for the bourgeoisie. Obama offers the capitalists a more effective means to implement their imperialist interests. His message of “national unity” patriotism is a program of lining up the working class behind the interests of its “own” ruling class. Who benefits? The capitalists. That’s why a significant section of the bourgeoisie put their money on him. In the face of worldwide capitalist economic crisis, Obama and the Democrats embraced, with minor modifications, the Bush administration’s plan to transfer

\$700 billion of taxpayers’ money to the banks and other financial institutions.

As Marxists we are fighting to build an internationalist revolutionary workers party like the one that the Bolsheviks built under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky, the one that led the workers to power in the October 1917 socialist revolution. That is our model: a vanguard party that is a tribune of the people. Such a party has no separate interests from the working class, but constitutes its most advanced detachment. It educates and organizes the most conscious workers and leads behind it all of the oppressed. We are opposed on principle to giving any political support to any capitalist party, whether the Democrats, the Republicans or the Greens. Unlike the reformist left, from the International Socialist Organization to Workers World, we were forthright in our opposition to Obama, Hillary Clinton, John McCain and Cynthia McKinney.

### Democrats: Party of Racism and War

The bloody U.S. imperialist occupation of Iraq, despite its much heralded and much ballyhooed surge, has bogged down and damaged U.S. imperialism’s credibility and tarnished its “democratic” pretensions. Obama and the Democrats want a more effective “war on terror”

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## For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!