



Repudiating Our Position on Haiti Earthquake A Capitulation to U.S. Imperialism

The following statement was issued on 27 April.

In its articles on the Haitian earthquake, *Workers Vanguard*, the newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S., committed a betrayal of the fundamental principle of opposition to one's "own" imperialist rulers. In addition to justifying the U.S. imperialist troops as essential to the aid effort, these articles polemicized against the principled and correct position of demanding the immediate withdrawal of the troops. This line was carried in a number of presses in other ICL sections [including *Australasian Spartacist*], becoming the de

Statement of the International Executive Committee of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)

facto line of the International Communist League. Without a public accounting and correction, we would be far down the road to our destruction as a revolutionary party. *From the beginning the only revolutionary internationalist position was to demand that all U.S./UN troops get out of Haiti!*

In our article in *WV* No. 951 (29 January) [reprinted in *ASp* No. 208, Autumn 2010], repeated in subsequent issues of the newspaper, we baldly stated:

"The U.S. military is the only force on the ground with the capacity—e.g., trucks, planes, ships—to organize the transport of what food, water, medical and other supplies are getting to Haiti's population. And they're doing it in the typical piggish U.S. imperialist manner. We have always opposed U.S. and UN occupations in Haiti and everywhere—and it may become necessary to call for U.S./UN out of Haiti in the near future—but we are not going to call for an end to such aid as the desperate Haitian masses can get their hands on."

The International Executive Committee of the ICL repudiates this betrayal of our revolutionary program. As stated in the *SL/U.S.*

Programmatic Statement: "We unconditionally oppose all U.S. military intervention—and U.S. military bases—abroad, and defend the colonial, semi-colonial and other smaller, less developed countries in the face of U.S./UN attack and embargo."

Even in very belatedly raising the call for "All U.S./UN Troops Out of Haiti Now!" in *WV* No. 955 (26 March), we continued to evade and reject the principle

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ALP Government's War on Refugees Fuels Racist Terror

For a Class-Struggle Fight Against Racist Capitalism!

Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants!

In early April, the federal Rudd Labor government suspended the processing of new asylum claims by Sri Lankan and Afghan refugees and signalled its intention to ramp up deportations. Australian Federal Police (AFP) were dispatched to tighten security at the overcrowded Christmas Island detention centre where over 2,000 "illegal" refugees are imprisoned behind razor wire. A week later Rudd reopened the notorious Western Australian Curtin detention centre with the intention of interning those refugees subject to the freeze. Closed in 2002, the brutal conditions in this desert hellhole had previously sparked repeated desperate protests by detainees. We oppose Labor's mandatory detention policy and demand the closure of the hated detention camps! We say: Asylum for all those fleeing right-wing repression! No deportations! *Full*

citizenship rights for all who have made it here!

The government declared it suspended claims because of "changing circumstances" in Sri Lanka and Afghanistan, saying it will review the situation in three and six months respectively. This whitewashes the ongoing horrendous brutality inflicted by the imperialists, including Australia, and the neocolonial regimes they support. The imperialist-backed Sinhala-chauvinist Lankan government has waged a decades-long bloody war against the Tamil minority. In the wake of its final murderous offensive last year, which destroyed the remnants of the Tamil ministe, some 80,000 Tamils reportedly still languish in horrific internment camps. We have long defended the just cause of the oppressed Tamil people and champion their right to self-determination. In Afghanistan, under the banner of the "war on terror," the escalating bloody imperialist occupation has seen thousands of Afghans maimed and slaughtered. Australian troops are up to their necks in the carnage, including in an attack which killed five children in February 2009. *All U.S., NATO, Australian imperialist troops and cops out of Afghanistan and Pakistan!*

The xenophobic hysteria beat up over

desperate refugees arriving in "Australia's waters" by boat—risking their lives in dangerous journeys—belies the small numbers overall, a tiny fraction of refugees worldwide. With the bourgeois press screaming about a "great flood" of asylum-seekers and the Opposition leader, Tony Abbott, accusing the prime minister

of losing control of the country's borders, Rudd has gloated that his government has deported hundreds of "illegal" immigrants. As the next federal election looms, the Labor government is pushing all the hot buttons, with recent budget outlays of \$1.2 billion for "border protection" and

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Tamil asylum seeker helped aboard Russian carrier from stranded vessel near Cocos Islands, early May. Earlier five Tamils perished while seeking rescue. Those who survived are subject to ALP government's three-month suspension of all new Sri Lankan asylum claims.

Capitulation...

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of opposition to the U.S. imperialist occupation of neocolonial Haiti. Moreover this article stated: "As we made clear in our article, 'Haiti Earthquake Horror: Imperialism, Racism and Starvation' (WV No. 951, 29 January), while we were not for the U.S. military going into Haiti, neither were we going to demand, in the immediate aftermath of that horrific natural disaster, the immediate withdrawal of any forces that were supplying such aid as was reaching the Haitian masses." In fact, our earlier article had not clearly stated that we were not for the U.S. troops going in nor did it even call the U.S. military takeover what it was.

The U.S. military invasion was designed to provide a "humanitarian" face-lift to bloody U.S. imperialism and was aimed at securing U.S. military control in Haiti

and reasserting American imperialist domination over the Caribbean, including against imperialist rivals like France. In failing to oppose the invasion, we also ignored the particular danger this posed to the Cuban deformed workers state (as well as to the bourgeois nationalist-populist regime of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela). We accepted Washington's line that the provision of aid was inextricably linked to the U.S. military takeover and thus helped to sell the myth peddled by the Democratic Party Obama administration that this was a "humanitarian" mission. Our statement that "it may become necessary to call for U.S./UN out of Haiti in the near future" (emphasis added) amounted to giving conditional support to U.S. military intervention. As one leading party comrade argued, the only difference between the position we took and August 4, 1914, when the German Social Democrats voted war credits to the German imperialist rulers at the outset of the First World

War, is that this was not a war.

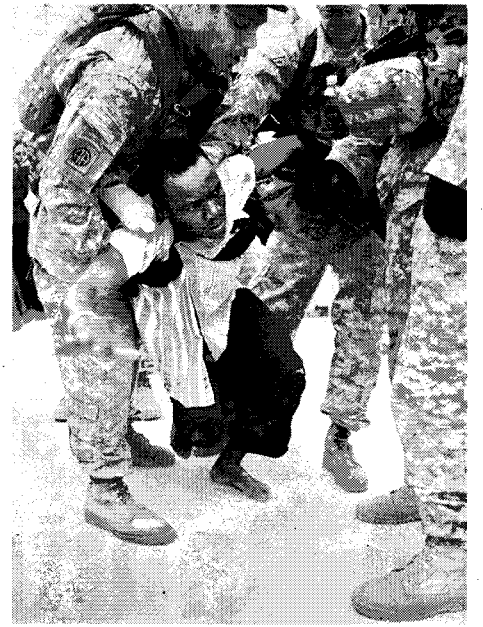
Thus we gutted the revolutionary internationalist essence of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution linking the fight for social and national liberation to the struggle for proletarian state power both in neocolonial and in more advanced countries. This means educating the proletariat in North America, and internationally, that its class interests lie in actively championing the fight against the imperialist domination of Haiti. Instead our articles did the opposite, promoting illusions in U.S. imperialist "democracy" as the savior of the Haitian people. We all but echoed Barack Obama as he dispatched imperialist combat troops, including elements of the 82nd Airborne Division and a Marine expeditionary unit. One doubts that we could so easily have taken such a position if the Republican Bush administration were still in the White House.

In its latest article, "SL Twists and Turns on Haiti" (*Internationalist*, 9 April), the centrist Internationalist Group (IG) writes: "While support to imperialist occupation is a small step for reformists, who only seek to modify imperialist policies rather than to bring down the imperialist system, in the case of the SL/ICL it should be harder to digest." Indeed it is. For its part, the IG treated the earthquake as an opening for revolution in Haiti, asserting: "This small but militant proletariat can place itself at the head of the impoverished urban and rural masses seeking to organize their own power, particularly at present where the machinery of the capitalist state is largely reduced to rubble and a few marauding bands of police" ("Haiti: Workers Solidarity, Yes! Imperialist Occupation, No!" *Internationalist*, 20 January).

Instead of simply exposing the IG's Third Worldist fantasies, we concentrated in our polemics on zealous apologies for the U.S. imperialist military intervention, a position to the right of the IG. These centrist apologists for Third World nationalism quite correctly characterized our position as "social imperialist"—socialist in words, support for imperialism in deeds. This is a bitter pill to swallow. Only through a savage indictment of our line can we avoid the alternative of going down the road that led the founders of the IG to defect from our organization in the pursuit of forces other than the proletariat. In their case, this has ranged from remnants of the Stalinist bureaucracy that sold out to imperialist counterrevolution in the DDR to Latin American nationalists and left-talking trade-union bureaucrats.

In the context of polemics with the IG, *Workers Vanguard* misused the authority of the revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky in order to alibi support to an imperialist occupation. In his 1938 article "Learn to Think," Trotsky argued that one should not always put a minus where the bourgeoisie puts a plus. He was referring not to a military occupation force but to instances where an imperialist government might send military aid to anti-colonialist fighters. Moreover, Trotsky's reference in this article to workers fraternizing with an army called in to fight a fire manifestly did not refer to a situation like Haiti where U.S. imperialist troops were invading a neocolonial country, an act which **Leninists unconditionally oppose on principle.**

However, neither do revolutionaries foster illusions in such non-military aid as capitalist governments may provide. In responding to the U.S. imperialist invasion of Haiti following the earthquake, we would have done well to look to the position of our Australian section in 2005 responding to the imperialist "aid" intervention in Indonesia, specifically the secessionist province of Aceh, following the tsunami. Demanding "Australian/all imperialist military/cops get out of Aceh now!" an article in *Australasian Spartacist* titled "Australian Imperialists Seize on Tsunami Catastrophe" (No. 190,



Reuters

Port-au-Prince, Haiti: U.S. soldiers seize man during distribution of food coupons, 1 February.

Autumn 2005) indicted imperialist aid programs. The article pointed out that "whatever short-term benefit a part of them may provide to a small number of oppressed people," such aid is "always aimed at reinforcing neocolonial subjugation of the Third World masses."

The "Politics of the Possible"

From the time of our tendency's inception as a left opposition within the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in the early 1960s, we have recognized that national isolation must in short order destroy any subjectively revolutionary formation, not least one subjected to the pressures of operating in the heartland of world imperialism, the United States. Genuine proletarian internationalism means disciplined international collaboration, without which we cannot successfully counter the powerful pull of nationalist opportunism.

The handmaiden to our embellishment of U.S. imperialist intervention was the abrogation of international democratic centralism. The role of propaganda as the scaffolding of a revolutionary party is to publish **the line of the party as decided through discussion and motions by the party leadership.** Prior to going into print opposing the call for "troops out of Haiti" in WV No. 951, the SL/U.S. Political Bureau and the International Secretariat (the resident administrative body of the IEC) abdicated responsibility by not holding an organized discussion and vote, instead setting our line through informal consultation. However, once the line was published in *Workers Vanguard* it was picked up by many of the ICL's other sectional presses, indicating that there was little initial disagreement.

A meeting of the I.S. on March 18 did at last vote to call for the immediate withdrawal of U.S. and United Nations troops. However, the motions adopted at that meeting, which became the basis for the article in WV No. 955, reaffirmed that "we were correct in not calling for the withdrawal of U.S. troops in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake." In stating that "the particular exceptional circumstances that obtained two months ago no longer exist," the motions also continued to insist that conditional defense of the U.S. military invasion was correct in the immediate conjuncture of a natural disaster. Moreover, while criticizing the formulation that the U.S. military was the only force on the ground with the wherewithal to deliver aid, the I.S. motions did not mandate a public correction of this statement. This kind of dishonesty was condemned by James P. Cannon, founder of American Trotskyism. In addressing a situation where the Trotskyist SWP at its 1954 convention needed to acknowledge mistakes, he noted: "You know, the Stalinists make more changes, and

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TROTSKY

Communism vs. Social-Patriotism

We reprint below excerpts from the "21 Conditions" for the admission of parties into the Third (Communist) International (CI), adopted by the CI's Second Congress in 1920. At the onset of World War I, the overwhelming majority of the leaders of the Second International went over to the side of their "own" bourgeoisies. This provoked sharp opposition from a small minority who held true to revolutionary internationalism—most significantly Lenin's Bolsheviks, who called for the building of a new international. Growing working-class opposition to the war and the inspiration of the October 1917 Russian Revolution sparked proletarian upheavals across Europe. Under the pressure of workers who looked to the leadership of the Communist International, various social-democratic and centrist formations like the Independent Social Democratic Party in Germany, the French Socialist Party and the Italian Socialist Party sought admission to the CI. The "21 Conditions" were aimed at winning the genuine revolutionaries within these parties while excluding not only the open social-patriots but also the centrists who masked their treachery with Marxist-sounding rhetoric.



LENIN

6. Every party that wishes to belong to the Communist International is duty-bound to expose not only overt social patriotism but also the duplicity and hypocrisy of social pacifism; to explain systematically to the workers that without the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, no international courts of arbitration, no treaties of any kind curtailing arms production, no manner of "democratic" renovation of the League of Nations will be able to prevent new imperialist wars.

7. Parties wishing to belong to the Communist International are duty-bound to recognize the need for a complete break with reformism and the policies of the Center and must conduct propaganda for this among the broadest layers of the party membership. Without this, no consistent communist policy is possible.

The Communist International demands unconditionally and as an ultimatum that this break be carried out at the earliest possible date. The Communist International cannot accept that notorious opportunists as, for example, Turati, Modigliani, Kautsky, Hilferding, Hillquit, Longuet, and MacDonald should have the right to consider themselves members of the Communist International. That could lead only to the Communist International coming to resemble in large measure the ruined Second International.

8. In countries whose bourgeoisies possess colonies and oppress other nations, it is necessary that the parties have an especially clear and well-defined position on the question of colonies and oppressed nations. Every party wishing to belong to the Communist International is obligated to expose the tricks of "its own" imperialists in the colonies, to support every liberation movement in the colonies not only in words but in deeds, to demand that the imperialists of its country be driven out of these colonies, to instill in the hearts of the workers of its country a truly fraternal attitude toward the laboring people in the colonies and toward the oppressed nations, and to conduct systematic agitation among its country's troops against all oppression of colonial peoples.

—"Theses on the Conditions for Admission," August 1920; reprinted in *Workers of the World and Oppressed Peoples, Unite! Proceedings and Documents of the Second Congress, 1920* (Pathfinder, 1991)

Australasian

SPARTACIST



For a workers republic of Australia, part of a socialist Asia!

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Down With Anti-Communist Law in Poland!



Berlin: Spartacists at 10 January demonstration with sign in Polish (centre) demanding "Down With the Ban on Communist Symbols in Poland!"

Spartakist

The following article, reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 958 (7 May), is translated from an article that originally appeared in *Spartakist* No. 183 (May 2010), newspaper of the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

SPARTAKIST

On June 8, Poland's right-wing government is set to implement an amendment to the penal code criminalizing the dissemination of "communist symbolism." Signed into law by the late president Lech Kaczyński last fall after a virtually unanimous vote in the Parliament, the new measure mandates up to two years in prison for anyone who "produces, perpetuates, or imports, stores, possesses, presents, carries or sends a printout, a recording or other object" carrying "fascist, communist or other totalitarian symbolism" for other than "artistic" or "research" purposes. As against the grotesque circus of "national unity" orchestrated in the wake of the arch-reactionary president's death, the ban underlines that the interests of the proletariat are counterposed to those of all wings of the Polish bourgeoisie. Having presided over the devastation of the lives and livelihoods of millions of working people in the past two decades, Poland's capitalist rulers now seek to criminalize anything pointing to the only solution to the plight of the working masses, the oppression of women, the imperialist exploitation and war and the anti-Semitism, chauvinism and bigotry that are endemic to capitalism: international proletarian revolution and the creation of a global socialist, egalitarian society.

The Polish ban is one of a spate of such measures threatened or implemented by capitalist governments in East Europe since the counterrevolutionary destruction of the bureaucratically deformed workers states. Hungary imposed a ban on communist symbols in 1993, as did Lithuania in 2009. There are moves afoot for similar bans in Estonia, Latvia and elsewhere. In 2007, the Czech government outlawed the Communist Youth Union because it called for social ownership of the means of production. More recently, Czech reactionaries have demanded that the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia, the third-largest parliamentary party, be outlawed as well.

Such blatant censorship is an embarrassment to the "democratic ideals" hypocritically espoused by bourgeois liberals. In 2008, the European Court of Human Rights overturned a prison sentence meted out in 2004 to Attila Vajnai, one of the leaders of the ex-Stalinist Hungarian Workers Party, for wearing a red star. And in January, a Czech court ordered the legalization of the Communist Youth Union.

It is an indictment of the ex-Stalinist social democrats of the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) that its deputies in the

Sejm, the lower house, having initially opposed the anti-communist amendment, then joined in voting for the legislative package that included the ban. Such opposition to the ban as SLD MPs [Members of Parliament] have expressed is confined to the legalistic framework of the Constitutional Tribunal.

Whether ultimately deemed "unconstitutional" or not, the purpose of such measures is to regiment the population and to intimidate all those who seek to fight against the injustices and ravages of capitalism. As George Toussas of the Communist Party of Greece aptly put it in a December 3 statement in the European Parliament, the Polish ban is "an act of provocation aimed at prosecuting anyone who offers resistance and fights for a better future." Poland's rulers will certainly not hesitate to attack as "communists" supporters of the SLD and other leftist groups or workers who engage in militant strikes and demonstrations. It is in the direct interest of every socialist, every trade unionist, every organization representing workers, women, gays, Jews, Romas [Gypsies], immigrants or other minorities—in Poland and internationally—to oppose this reactionary legislation.

The Nazi Holocaust: We Will Not Forget!

The drawing of an equal sign between fascism and communism by the reactionary ruling cabals of East Europe is grotesque. Communism, as exemplified by the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky and the Polish-Jewish revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg, expresses the historic and internationalist interests of the proletariat, based on the understanding that in liberating itself from capitalist exploitation and oppression, the working class must sweep away class society as a whole and construct a global order in which the nation-state and all forms of social oppression have been eliminated once and for all. Fascism, defined by ultranationalism, is a form of capitalist rule in extremis: when it feels its power and profits sufficiently threatened by an insurgent proletariat, the bourgeoisie finances the mobilization of enraged petty-bourgeois and lumpen mobs to crush the workers movement under the iron heel of genocidal social reaction. Fear and hatred of Communism has always been a central pillar of fascist ideology. For example, Hitlerite Germany's 1936 agreement with the Japanese militarists was called the "Anti-Comintern Pact."

The truth of the matter is that the anti-communists who today denounce "totalitarianism" by and large stood *with the Nazis* against "Jew-Bolshevism." Baltic nationalists openly declare themselves to be the heirs of the likes of the Estonian Forest Brothers, who abetted the Nazi Holocaust of millions of Jews, Roma and Soviet citizens. And the architects of Polish Solidarność, which spearheaded the drive for capitalist restoration throughout

the Soviet bloc, drew inspiration from nationalist, anti-Communist antecedents such as interwar dictator Jozef Pilsudski, who presided over a panoply of discriminatory measures against Jews, and the virulently chauvinist, overtly anti-Semitic National Democrats (Endeks).

While many Polish workers courageously opposed anti-Semitism as a tool of bourgeois reaction, the vast majority of Polish nationalists not only did nothing to fight against the Nazi "final solution" but, as with the Endeks, actually welcomed it, joining in pogroms of Jews both before and after Poland's liberation by the Soviet Army. In 1991, Prime Minister Jan Krzysztof Bielecki, a former Solidarność activist, declaimed that "45 years of communism had caused more damage to Poland than the Nazi occupation." (This beneficiary of "reborn" Polish capitalism is also known for saying: "The first million has to be stolen.") To Bielecki and his ilk, the slaughter of three million Polish Jews (as well as Roma and nearly three million other Poles), whose numbers included a large and vibrant component of the multi-ethnic revolutionary workers movement, was not at all "damaging."

In conjuring up allegations of tens of millions of victims of Communism, Polish reactionaries take a page from *The Black Book of Communism* published in France in 1997, which in turn borrowed not a little from the demented ravings of Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. Stéphane Courtois, the editor of the *Black Book*, railed in his introduction that "a single-minded focus on the Jewish genocide in an attempt to characterize the Holocaust as a unique atrocity has also prevented an assessment of other episodes of comparable magnitude in the Communist world."

Echoing this disgusting filth, the European Parliament last year proclaimed August 23, the anniversary of the 1939 pact between Hitler and Stalin that preceded the Nazi invasion of Poland and led to its division into German- and Soviet-dominated areas, as a "Europe-wide Remembrance Day for the victims of all totalitarian and authoritarian regimes." In fact, the roles played by Germany and the Soviet Union in Poland in 1939-41 only underlined the profoundly different class foundations of the two countries. While the Soviet forces in eastern Poland

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Workers Vanguard

New York, September 1981: Spartacists demonstrate in front of Solidarność office at teachers union headquarters, exposing Solidarność as company union for CIA, Vatican and Wall Street.

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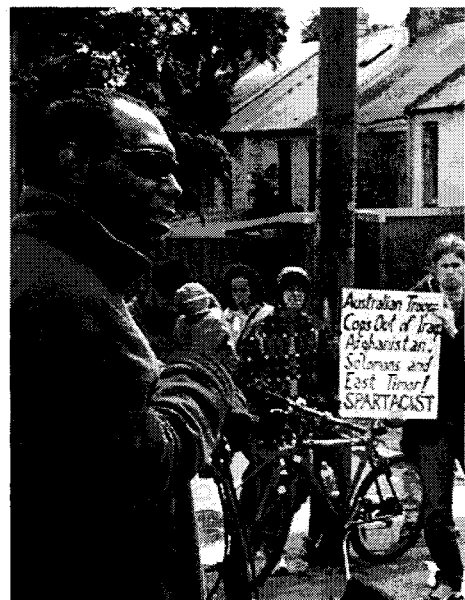
Spartacist Speaker at Melbourne Rally

Free Mumia Abu-Jamal, Lex Wotton and All Class-War Prisoners!

Printed below, slightly edited for publication, is a speech by a Spartacist League (SL) supporter to a 10 April Melbourne rally protesting the imprisonment and persecution of black U.S. political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. In a blatantly racist, political frame-up, Mumia was sentenced to death in 1982 on false charges of killing a Philadelphia police officer. He has been entombed on death row ever since.

Mumia was first targeted by the police and FBI in his teenage years as a Black Panther Party spokesman and later as a MOVE supporter and award-winning journalist known as the “voice of the voiceless” for his searing exposés of cop brutality and racist oppression. Since his rigged trial at the hands of notorious “hanging judge” Albert Sabo, the courts have consistently refused to hear the mountain of evidence demonstrating Mumia’s innocence, including the sworn confession of another man, Arnold Beverly, to the killing of the police officer. Mumia’s death sentence was overturned in 2001, but the Supreme Court vacated this decision last January, opening the way, once again, for his legal lynching to proceed (see “U.S. Supreme Court of Death Rules Against Mumia Abu-Jamal”, *Australasian Spartacist*, No. 208, Autumn 2010).

The SL has long championed Mumia’s case, particularly through the Partisan Defence Committee (PDC), a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defence organisation associated with the SL. We stand for pursuing every legal avenue on Mumia’s behalf while putting no faith in the “justice” of the capitalist courts and all faith in the power of the working masses. In the U.S. and internationally we fight to mobilise the social power of the multi-racial working class to demand freedom for this innocent man and abolition of the racist U.S. death penalty. We oppose the death penalty on principle and everywhere—for the guilty as well as the innocent. We do not accord the state the right to determine who lives and who dies. When Mumia faced a death warrant in August 1995, worldwide protests that included trade unions representing hundreds of thousands of workers played a crucial role in staying the executioner’s hand at the time.



Class-war prisoner Lex Wotton in 2007 addresses rally in his defence at Redfern, Sydney.

The 10 April rally, called by Anarchist Black Cross, the Melbourne Anarchist Communist Group and the Freedom Socialist Party (FSP), was built around the demands: “Free All Political Prisoners!”, “Mumia is Innocent! Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!” and “Abolish the Racist U.S. Death Penalty!” Speakers included individuals from the above groups, as well as the Indigenous Social Justice Association and Radical Women, which are both associated with the FSP. We in the SL attended and spoke at the rally in solidarity with all class-war prisoners and the fight to free Mumia. To this end we carried a PDC placard which called to “Mobilise Union Power to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!” and “Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!” However, we did not endorse the demonstration, a key reason being the classless, liberal rally demand to “free all political prisoners,” which draws no distinction between those who are victims of anti-working-class repression, and reactionaries (e.g. fascists) who sometimes also find themselves in capitalist jails. Consistent with this classless demand, the propaganda on the leaflet issued by the rally organisers made no reference to the need for a proletarian-centred struggle to free Mumia or the necessity to fight against the capitalist system as a whole.

In Australia we link the fight for Mumia’s freedom to the just struggles of immigrants, Aborigines and trade unionists against the repressive and deeply racist Australian capitalist state. Highlighting our opposition to racist terror against Aborigines we carried a placard calling for “Cops/military out of NT Aboriginal communities! For a class-struggle fight for Aboriginal rights!” Our speaker denounced the state persecution of imprisoned Palm Island Aboriginal community leader, Lex Wotton who was outrageously sentenced in 2008 to six years prison over the 2004 protest that erupted in response to a coroner’s whitewash of the brutal killing of Aboriginal man, Mulrunji Doomadgee, in the Palm Island police lockup. Linking together the struggles of Mumia, Lex and others we carried a placard “For union action to free Mumia, Lex Wotton and all class-war prisoners!” Against those who promote faith in the capitalist state we carried a sign demanding “No illusions in Royal Commissions—There is no justice in the capitalist courts!” Emphasising our revolutionary program, other placards included: “ALP rules for racist Australian imperialism! Break with Laborism! Build a revolutionary workers party!” and “Down with Racist Australian Capitalism! For Workers Revolution!”

Mumia Abu-Jamal, “voice of the voiceless,” is not simply on death row because of a few corrupt cops, a racist judge or an unfair judiciary. He was framed and sentenced to die because he represents the spectre of black revolt against a system that’s based on racist oppression. His case, like that of Lex Wotton, like that of Leonard Peltier [American Indian Movement leader who has spent more than thirty years in prison on frame-up murder charges], shows that fighters against oppression and all working people are up against a machine whose purpose is to



SL calls for mobilising the social power of labour to free Mumia Abu-Jamal (right) and all class-war prisoners at 10 April Melbourne rally.

suppress the working class and oppressed in defence of the power and the profits of the capitalist rulers. The core of this machine consists of the police, the military, the courts and prisons. And at the pinnacle of this systematic legal violence lies the death penalty, legalised murder. In Australia the death penalty has formally been abolished, but the fate of many Aborigines, from John Pat to Mulrunji Doomadgee, attests to the de facto existence of the death penalty in the jails and in the prison cells of White Australia.

This machine has a name and it is called the capitalist state. It has a purpose, and one purpose only. And that is to defend this irrational capitalist profit system, a system that cannot be reformed to serve the interests of the working class and oppressed. Now some people may tell you that Mumia needs a new or a fairer trial, or that perhaps police need to be subject to community control, or perhaps the government should carry out Royal Commissions to investigate racist police killings. I say beware of that! Those people who tell you that are selling you a bill of goods. And I include groups like the Freedom Socialist Party here in this category. What they are telling people to do is to look to the very state whose purpose is to enforce the subjugation of the working class and oppressed. And let’s be very clear, the 1987 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody in Australia, did *precisely* what it was designed to do—whitewash systematic racist police killings.

When the cops break workers’ picket lines, when they bash Indian students protesting against racist murder, when they raid the homes of Muslim people in the middle of the night in the name of the racist “war on terror,” those cops are doing their job! That’s what they’re paid to do! That is, the cops, the courts, the government are all part of the problem.

The solution lies with the working class, whose hands on the levers of production, transportation and communication give them the power to bring this capitalist profit system to a halt. The fact that those profits are derived precisely from the exploitation of the labour power of the working class gives workers an



Workers Vanguard

objective interest as well as the social power to do away with capitalism. The 1917 Russian Revolution proved that it can be done. The capitalist state can be overthrown. It can be smashed. In its place the working class can erect their own state, the prerequisite to paving the way toward a socialist society.

Now it’s palpable today that the working class do not have the social consciousness of their power or interest to do this because they are saddled with a Laborite leadership that imbues them with social backwardness, nationalism, reliance on the capitalist state. You only have to look today at the prostration of the union leadership in the face of the ALP government’s attacks against the working class and unions. The same capitalist Rudd government that enforces imperialist occupations from Afghanistan to Iraq to East Timor, carries out the occupation of Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory and wages war against Muslims, refugees.

To unleash the latent social power of the working class requires breaking the working masses from the politics of the pro-capitalist union tops and Labor Party. It needs the conscious intervention of revolutionary Leninists who go to the working class to point out that their emancipation from the chains of capitalist wage slavery requires a class-struggle fight in defence of *all* the oppressed. The Spartacist League fights to build the multiracial, internationalist vanguard party necessary to lead the working class to overthrow capitalism, to establish their own class rule. It is only this that can lay the basis for the elimination of the material roots of racist oppression and build an egalitarian socialist society based on a collectivised economy. The fight to free Mumia is the fight for black liberation, is part of the fight for a socialist revolution and the liberation of us all! Free Mumia and all class-war political prisoners! Down with racist Australian capitalism! Thank you. ■

Our comrade Joe Verret died on March 30 in Los Angeles after a four-year battle with leukemia. He was 64 years old. Joe fought to the end, enduring multiple bone marrow transplants and a final round of chemo in the hopes of seeing his daughter, Jasmine, graduate from high school in June. We join Jasmine and Joe's wife, Gloria, in grief for the loss of this deeply cultured fighter for humanity's future. Joe was a communist, a talented mathematician, a teacher by profession and a dedicated educator in the party. He was a founding member of the Spartacist League and a leading cadre of our organization from the day he joined in 1965.

Joe was instrumental not only in helping to recruit to the party many young people radicalized by the Vietnam War and other diverse currents of the New Left, but equally in training such recruits in Marxism and as members of a disciplined revolutionary organization. Like other young party leaders, he was active in various arenas of party work as the SL struggled to achieve political cohesiveness and national and international extension. Joe's ability to conduct himself as a Spartacist in a variety of situations reflected not only his strong character, but his hard recruitment on the Russian question and understanding of the need for a Leninist combat party.

Joe resigned in 2000 in Los Angeles, though he continued work with the Prometheus Research Library. As a sympathizer, he became increasingly close to the party again, especially as a valued mentor to the Los Angeles comrades. In April 2009, recognizing Joe's lifelong contributions and commitment to the SL, the Political Bureau voted him an honorary member of the SL/U.S.

Joe was born in New Orleans on 11 December 1945. His father came out of Cajun country, picked peppers on the Avery Island plantation and was later a member of the CIO's Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers union, where he was involved in a 1947 strike where black workers played a leading role. Joe's dad's stories about being a union member in the "open shop" Jim Crow South left a deep impression on him. Joe was always known by his comrades for his love of jazz, his talent for cooking, including rich, complicated New Orleans cuisine, and his infectious, ribald sense of humor. He and Gloria were famous for their hospitality.

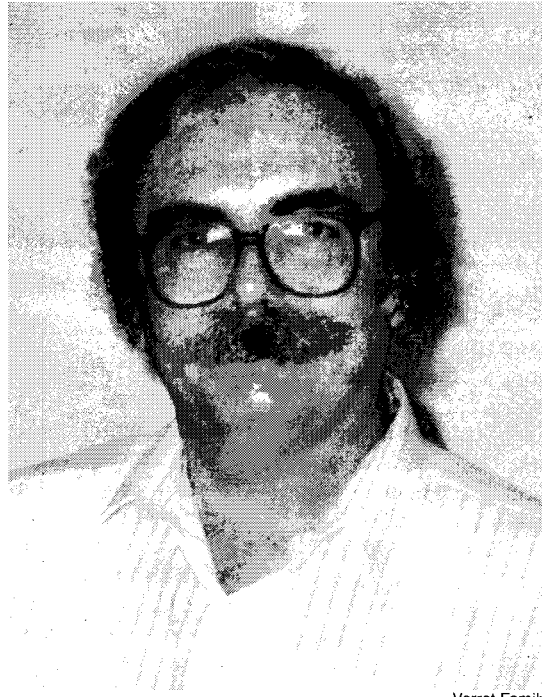
Joe was the linchpin of our work in the South, as well as a leader of our early international work. A long-time sympathizer of the Spartacist League in New Orleans recalled meeting Joe in 1971 when he helped to win her and her comrades to Trotskyism. As she described it, "We were the most unserious, politically illiterate, pot-smoking, shoplifting, horny, contentious and mismatched bunch of unreconstructed New Leftists you ever saw.... And here came Joe, telling us to spit out our gum, sit up straight, and do our homework." Joe was tough. "Rumor had it," our sympathizer in New Orleans wrote, that he "was part alligator." In fact, he was fondly known as "The Gator."

Even as the leukemia was taking its toll, he continued to contribute to party work, recommending books on everything from science and medicine to education and dialectics. Last year, he gave a class to the Los Angeles branch on the history of the SL's work in the South. Just weeks before his death, Joe attended a February 20 Spartacist public forum in L.A., where he engaged in political discussions with several of the young people who attended. Joe recently wrote two important articles for *Workers Vanguard*. "The Decline of New Orleans" (WV No. 945, 23 October 2009) contained a valuable critical appraisal of WV's propaganda on New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina and underscored the centrality of black longshore labor in the South. His "Notes on New Orleans" (WV No. 955, 26 March), which appeared in the last issue of WV, vividly demonstrated his intimate knowledge of the city.

Joe's erudition and breadth of knowledge were always at the disposal of the party, not least in educating younger comrades. Comrades in the L.A. branch often went to his house to discuss politics and books and watch movies from his enormous film library. These included highly political films on East Europe or the Near East as well as movies like *Southern Comfort*, set in the Louisiana bayou—"about my people," as Joe put it, flashing his trademark devilish grin.

Joe's political life began during the tumultuous days of the civil rights movement and Vietnam-era New Left radicalism. He was shaped by his struggle for integration in the South. Joe was a member of the

Joe Verret



Verret Family

1945-2010

Young People's Socialist League (YPSL), the youth group of the Socialist Party. He then joined the American Socialist Organizing Committee (ASOC), an off-spring of YPSL's left wing. But as a fervent defender of the Vietnamese workers and peasants' struggle against U.S. imperialism, he left ASOC, which refused to call for victory to the National Liberation Front in Vietnam. He found the Spartacist tendency through a *Guardian* ad for *Spartacist* No. 1. Joe joined in 1965 and was elected an alternate member of our Central Committee at the SL's founding conference in 1966.

Joe was widely known and respected in the New Orleans left. The small group of comrades he led there were often involved in united-front defense work, including with black militants on the left wing of the Southern civil rights movement. The Deacons for Defense and Justice, formed in Louisiana in 1964, organized armed self-defense patrols to protect civil rights workers and black neighborhoods against KKK terror. New Orleans comrades visited Bogalusa chapter head Charles Sims in 1965. They raised funds for the Deacons, out of which came the slogan, "Every dime buys a bullet."

The New Orleans comrades held a united-front defense protest with SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) in 1968 to protest the cop killing of a black youth, after the NAACP called off a planned march. The protest came on the heels of Martin Luther King's assassination, and a massive police presence was expected. Our comrades contacted Charles Sims and requested assistance. As Joe recalled in his class for the L.A. comrades: "It's us and SNCC and it's like hundreds of cops are circling the demonstration.... I don't think we would have done it without the Deacons; we would have just probably gotten beaten up."

As communists working in the Deep South, our New Orleans comrades were subject to exceptional state surveillance and repression. The New Orleans Local was penetrated by three state agents almost simultaneously. The agents did their best to elicit "evidence" that the SL was engaged in or advocated violent or illegal activities. But as detailed in the 1967 Louisiana Joint Legislative Committee on Un-American Activities Report No. 9, "The Spartacist League and Certain Other Communist Activities in South Louisiana," all the agents had to admit that they never heard anyone in our organization so much as joke about violence. An internal party circular at the time noted that "the report is not a bad recruiting pamphlet for us" as it shows us to be genuine Marxists committed to socialist

revolution and working-class rule.

As the organizer of the New Orleans branch, Joe was a special target of threats. As he later told the L.A. comrades: "I can tell you that when I would get death threats, I would be afraid. I spent weeks checking around the hood of my car to make sure it hadn't been wired for bombs. But it's a question of how you manage your fear, and the party's program is what gives you the ability to manage that."

Joe was elected to the Central Committee as a full member in 1969. That same year, at the height of the Vietnam War, he was drafted into the Army, following the SL's policy laid out in "On Draft Resistance: You Will Go!" (*Spartacist* No. 11, March-April 1968). Counterposed to the largely student "Hell no, we won't go!" protesters, as Marxists we understood that if drafted, forced to choose between the military and either prison or fleeing the country, we would join our class brothers and sisters in the military and try to win them to our class-struggle program. To that end, Joe and other comrades published *G.I. Voice* beginning in 1969, urging soldiers to exercise their democratic right to protest against U.S. imperialism's dirty war.

Joe, a well-known red, was kept in basic training in Louisiana for a year. He often recalled how two officers once took him on a long drive into the bayous, where he thought he was going to disappear. At the end of 1970, Joe was sent to Vietnam for a six-month call-up. Shortly after he arrived there, his weapon was taken away from him and he was put on desk duty.

Throughout his political life, Joe intervened on a broad range of domestic and international questions in the party. This included playing an important role in the party's work on the fight for black liberation. In 1974, at the Fourth National Conference of the Spartacist League, he served on the Black Commission. A year earlier, he had written a key document on the Russian question, focusing on guerrilla movements and the formation of the deformed workers states. Joe also played a prominent role in a 1985 internal party discussion on slogans against apartheid in South Africa.

In 1979, at our First International Conference, Joe was elected as a full member of the International Executive Committee, the leading body of the international Spartacist tendency, now International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist). In the late '70s and early '80s he played a leading role in both our Canadian and British sections, including serving as National Chairman of the Trotskyist League of Canada. Joe's key fights in that section were "centrally against a narrow circle existence," as one comrade there recalled, and on the Russian question as Cold War II heated up. He was also a member of the Central Committee of the Spartacist League/Britain.

Joe was also stationed with the Spartacist League of Australia and New Zealand for several weeks in 1980 as a representative of the International Secretariat. After further international work, he returned to the U.S. in 1981 and served on the SL/U.S. Political Bureau during his brief stay in our center.

Joe led our former Atlanta Local from 1983 until 1996. In Atlanta, he was part of the leadership of a Partisan Defense Committee-initiated labor/black mobilization of 3,500 to counter a Klan provocation against Martin Luther King Day on 21 January 1989. Joe always had a hard-nosed sense of social reality in America, a product of being a communist fighter in the South. In a speech after a 1987 Democratic Party-led protest against the Klan in the racist backwater of Forsyth County, Georgia, Joe declared: "What you need is a modern-day version of General Sherman's army.... What you need is a workers government, in which the working class rules and intransigently goes after smashing racist reaction. And it's not necessarily going to be pretty." (Joe's speech is printed in "Anger Over Racist Attacks Derailed in Georgia," WV No. 421, 6 February 1987.) In 1996, Joe transferred to Los Angeles, where he spent the rest of his life.

"He came out of the bayou but rejected all backwardness," as Gloria put it on a Web site set up in Joe's memory (memorialwebsites.legacy.com/joeverret). We will miss Joe. We will miss his fine mind, his depth, his tenacity, warmth and wicked-humor. But we also deeply appreciate that his role in educating and training Trotskyist cadres will continue to help our cause of building a revolutionary workers party as a section of a reformed Fourth International—the cause to which he dedicated his life.

Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 956, 9 April

Poland...

(continued from page 3)

encouraged the expropriation of the capitalists and large landowners, the Nazis in western Poland erected concentration camps for leftist workers and intellectuals and corraled the Jews into ghettos. As Leon Trotsky succinctly noted in a January 1940 article directed against a "Third Camp" opposition led by Max Shachtman that had reneged on defense of the Soviet Union, "Why was it chiefly revolutionists, 'democrats,' and Jews who fled from there [Nazi-occupied Poland], while in eastern Poland—it was chiefly the landlords and capitalists who fled?" (Trotsky, "From a Scratch to the Danger of Gangrene," *In Defense of Marxism*).

From the standpoint of proletarian internationalism, a diplomatic agreement with German imperialism was no different in principle from Stalin's earlier, and later, agreements with the "democratic" imperialists of France, Britain and the U.S. The real crime of the Stalin regime was its *conciliation* of imperialism in the name of building "socialism in one country," which meant betraying proletarian revolution, as in Spain and France in the mid 1930s. Stalin's beheading of the Red Army in the bloody purges of the late 1930s served to critically undermine the military defense of the Soviet degenerated workers state when Hitler's armies invaded in June 1941. But, despite Stalin, the Red Army went on to smash Nazi

Party was banned in "independent" capitalist Poland (which was in fact utterly dependent on French and British imperialism). Throughout the party's existence, until its dissolution by Stalin in 1938, the heroic Polish Communists who fought underground for the cause of the proletariat were subjected to imprisonment, torture and murder. Against nationalists of all stripes, we proclaim the historic slogan of the Communist International of Lenin and Trotsky: *For the revolutionary unity of the Polish, Russian and German proletariat!*

Anti-Communism: Spearhead of Social Reaction

The counterrevolutionary destruction of the Polish deformed workers state and the restoration of capitalist class rule in 1989-90 ushered in widespread unemployment and immiseration and the intrusion of anti-Semitic and anti-woman Catholic reaction into every sphere of society. Millions of women were driven out of social production and forced back into the stifling confines of the kitchen. The unconditional right to abortion was overturned; day-care facilities for children were eliminated; secular education and the separation of church and state were demolished as crucifixes and religious instruction were imposed on schools. For large numbers of working people, the "magic of the market" meant emigrating abroad in an attempt to secure some sort of livelihood.

Anti-communism goes hand in hand with broader social reaction. This is



Der Spiegel

1945: Poles greet Soviet Red Army troops following liberation of Poland from Nazi scourge.

Jaruzelski is being tried by the wrong class for the wrong crimes. For proletarian revolutionaries, the suppression of Solidarność counterrevolution was no crime. From the moment Solidarność consolidated around an open program of capitalist restoration at its first national congress in September 1981, we Trotskyists declared: Stop Solidarność counterrevolution! (see Spartacist pamphlet, *Solidarność: Polish Company Union for CIA and Bankers*). In this we were opposed by an alliance ranging from the Vatican and the CIA to the German Social Democracy (SPD), the New York City teachers union of Albert Shanker and Yetta Barshevsky (Max Shachtman's widow) and the bulk of the fake-Trotskyist left. We fought for a proletarian political revolution to replace Stalinist misrule with the rule of democratically elected workers soviets committed to a perspective of international proletarian revolution. We condemned the Polish Stalinist bureaucracy for its betrayals, for its nationalism and conciliation of imperialism abroad and the church at home, for its lies and bureaucratism, which ultimately drove much of the historically pro-socialist proletariat into the arms of clerical reaction in 1980-81. Then in 1989-90, the Stalinists sold out the deformed workers state to Solidarność and its imperialist backers. We say: *Hands off Jaruzelski and other former Stalinist officials!*

In a creditable protest against the anti-communist ban posted on its Web site (www.kompol.org, 26 September 2009), the Communist Party of Poland (KPP) stated: "We strongly oppose efforts to equate fascism—which, based on racism, led to the bloodiest war in history thanks to the implementation of a plan to exterminate millions of people—with communism, which is built on the principles of social justice, and which defeated the genocidal fascists thanks to the utter dedication to struggle and sacrifice of countless millions of men, women and children. Despite even the most brutal repression we will not stop in our struggle for the victory of socialism, nor turn from the road to a victorious communist destiny!"

But what the KPP means by "communism" is not the proletarian internationalism of Marx and Engels and the Bolsheviks but its nationalist antithesis, codified in the Stalinist dogma of "socialism in one country." In their own ways, the SLD and the KPP are both decomposition products of the former Stalinist bureaucracy and its sham "people's democracy." Where the SLD exalts (capitalist) "democracy," the KPP glorifies Stalin.

Unlike reformists and liberals, we do not call on the bourgeois state to ban the fascists. Such calls, premised on illusions in the good offices of bourgeois democracy, will inevitably be used against the left and the workers movement, which is the main target of capitalist state repression. For instance, a law criminalizing a

fascist group in West Germany in the early 1950s was used a few years later to ban the Communist Party there. And a recent Czech court ruling banning the fascist "Workers Party" is now providing further ammunition to those who want to ban the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia. We look to the mobilization of the proletariat, standing at the head of all the potential victims of fascist terror, to sweep the fascists off the streets.

While the class rule of the bourgeoisie is not threatened right now, the world recession underlines the truth of Marx's analysis that capitalism is a crisis-ridden system. The right-wing parties governing Poland have been in power for a number of years. But Poland is hardly a stable bourgeois democracy, and though socialist revolution is not imminent, this decadent, third-rate bourgeoisie has good cause to fear a reawakening of the once pro-socialist Polish proletariat. Notwithstanding that sections of the working class had been intoxicated by clerical-nationalist Solidarność, when the first Solidarność government tried to implement its "free market" attacks on the working class in 1990 it was met by a wave of strikes and was soon replaced by a government led by the social-democratic SLD. Even now, despite 20 years of official anti-Communist hysteria in every sphere of public life, half the population continues to support the December 1981 state of emergency imposed by Jaruzelski. "God, Honor and Fatherland," the watchwords of Polish reaction, ring hollow to a generation of youth raised amid the glorification of capitalist greed and fawning capitulation to the NATO imperialists.

Those looking for a way out of the stultifying dead end of this decaying capitalist order will find it in the authentic communism of the Three L's—V. I. Lenin, Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. As the 1990 founding statement of the Spartacist Group of Poland, section of the International Communist League, stated (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 45-46, Winter 1990-91):

"A Trotskyist party must be a tribune of the people, championing all victims of oppression. The drive to restore capitalism revives and intensifies all the 'old crap' of the prewar social order, from reactionary clericalism to Pilsudskiite nationalism and anti-Semitism....

"Polish Trotskyists must seek to reclaim the best traditions of the Polish workers movement, forged in the struggle against national chauvinism. This is exemplified by Rosa Luxemburg, a Polish Jewish communist and leader of the revolutionary German proletariat. Reviling Luxemburg for her internationalism, Stalin never trusted and finally liquidated the Polish CP, which was the first to come to the defense of comrade Trotsky by asserting in 1923 that 'the name of Comrade Trotsky is insolubly connected with the victory of the Soviet Revolution, with the Red Army, with communism'."

**Down with the anti-communist ban!
Forward to a red Poland of workers councils as part of a Socialist United States of Europe! Reforge Trotsky's Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution! ■**



Fidlych/Agencia Gazeta

Walbrzych, Poland: Unemployed men risk their lives to scrounge for coal.

Germany. Genuine Bolsheviks, including the Polish Trotskyists who went to their deaths in the Warsaw Ghetto, fought for the unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union while opposing all the imperialist combatants, including the "democratic" Allied powers, for whom World War II was a struggle for redivision of colonies and spheres of exploitation. And we honor the 600,000 Soviet soldiers who died liberating Poland from the Nazi scourge.

From Walesa to Kaczyński, Solidarność and its heirs have always made an anti-Soviet cause célèbre of the 1940 Katyn massacre of Polish military officers near Smolensk, Russia. As we wrote in a 1981 article in *Workers Vanguard*: "Revolutionary Marxists do not support the indiscriminate killing of the bourgeois officer caste any more than that of factory owners or bourgeois politicians. (Those personally responsible for crimes and atrocities against the working masses are another matter; they will certainly be subject to revolutionary justice.) *Nevertheless, Katyn is not a crime against the Polish working people.* These were the military officers of a fascistic, anti-Semitic dictatorship which regularly butchered workers and even bourgeois dissidents" ("Pilsudski and Counterrevolution in Poland," *WV* No. 293, 20 November 1981).

Anti-Communism and anti-Semitism were part and parcel of Polish nationalism from well before the Hitler-Stalin pact. Almost from the moment of its birth in December 1918, the Polish Communist

exemplified by the fact that the current anti-communist ban is linked to measures aimed against pornography, sexual activity involving youth under the age of 15 and other such "crimes without victims." These measures are linked to a vile witchhunt targeting the right of adults and youth to engage in mutually consensual sexual relations, with the Polish bourgeoisie screaming for pedophiles to be imprisoned and "chemically castrated." We are against any government intrusion into consensual sexual relationships. *Down with the criminalization of pedophilia! Down with the reactionary concept of "age of consent"! Priests, cops and prosecutors out of the bedroom! For the unrestricted right to abortion—Free abortion on demand!*

The proposed ban on communist symbols would generalize and legitimize the reactionary vendetta that has been a hallmark of capitalist restoration in Poland. The right wing continues to pursue a witchhunt against the former Stalinist officials of the People's Republic of Poland. Earlier this year, the government cut pensions for former employees of the old state security apparatus, including even office cleaners and clerks. Wojciech Jaruzelski, who stood at the head of the Stalinist regime that suppressed a counterrevolutionary bid for power by Solidarność in December 1981, is again on trial on criminal charges. Former ZOMO anti-riot police last year received prison sentences of up to six years for the shooting deaths of nine miners in Katowice during the 1981 state of emergency.

Apologists for French Neocolonialism in Africa

France: NPA Social Democrats Support Military Coup in Niger

The following article, reprinted from Workers Vanguard (No. 959, 21 May 2010), was translated from Le Bolchévik No. 191 (March 2010), newspaper of the Ligue Trotskyste de France, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

LE BOLCHEVIK

On February 18 a military coup d'état took place in Niger, one of the world's poorest countries. This landlocked country in the Sahel region contains major uranium mines, operated for 40 years by the French Areva nuclear power conglomerate (and its predecessors), which gets almost half its annual uranium supply from Niger. Uranium is a strategically important metal especially for French imperialism with its nuclear power plants and atomic bombs. The country of Niger, whose independence French premier Charles De Gaulle engineered in 1960, remains solidly in the French neocolonial African backyard—commonly referred to as *Françafrique*—which was officially declared to be a thing of the past by French president Nicolas Sarkozy and Gabon's president Ali Bongo, whose father Omar ruled Gabon for 42 years.

As it happens, the president of the capitalist state of Niger, Mamadou Tandja, had had the nerve to want to renegotiate prices with Areva and tried to get the support of the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state as a counterweight to French imperialism. In the eyes of French imperialism, that's a crime far more serious than physically liquidating a few opponents or dissolving parliament: Tandja was reportedly locked up in a military camp somewhere.

What has changed regarding *Françafrique* is not so much that Tandja didn't find himself immediately riddled with bullets. It is that, above all, there is now a French social-democratic organization (which used to call itself "far left" and even "Trotskyist") that supported the military coup that deposed Tandja. Indeed, the New Anti-Capitalist Party (NPA) of Olivier Besancenot has just published an article in *Tout Est à Nous* (25 February) that, starting with the title ("Niger—A Counter-Coup d'Etat"), blames the villain Tandja for what happened to him after he anti-democratically dissolved parliament and extended his own mandate by a phony plebiscite. The article goes on: "The president's dealings had been condemned by the International Community...and called by many a constitutional coup d'état." The "International Community" complete with capital letters is apparently the name the NPA now gives French imperialism, its government led by Sarkozy and [Foreign Minister Bernard] Kouchner, and France's allies. Despite the orders of the "International Community," an unrepentant Tandja "wanted to maintain the Sixth Republic (that was autocratically installed)" according to the NPA, which goes on to denounce "these maneuvers by Tandja to maintain himself in power and his obvious commitment to blocking negotiations



AFP

Members of new military junta gather in Niamey, Niger, in February. Right: Olivier Besancenot, spokesman for French New Anti-Capitalist Party, which hailed military coup.



François Lafite

with the opposition."

The NPA hails the military intervention, giving advice to the Quai d'Orsay [France's Foreign Office] and to the new dictator of Niger, Salou Djibo, who claims that he wants to organize elections and draw up a new Constitution: "Some observers see this putsch as an opportunity to put an end to the drift toward autocracy.... If the purpose of the coup was to rid the country of the dictatorship, they should go all the way and not let themselves be overtaken by the vertigo of power as happened in Guinea, Chad and Togo...." And they continue: "Confronted with a looming famine, the abandonment of [dispossessed] local populations, particularly the Tuaregs, and the curse represented by its mineral wealth, Niger must take advantage of this turnaround in the situation. To that end, a hands-off policy is necessary and the Manichean discourse of silence or intervention must be rejected."

According to the NPA, Niger's "curse" isn't the yoke of French imperialism but the country's mineral riches! No matter how obscenely pro-imperialist these declarations are, don't expect them to stir up any indignation in the NPA's ranks. The NPA is a deeply social-democratic organization and as such is based on the union bureaucracy and the aristocracy of labor (and also, markedly for the NPA, the bohemian petty-bourgeoisie) who are bought off by the imperialists. For that the imperi-

alists draw in particular upon the superprofits they have reaped from their colonies and neocolonies, such as the plunder of Niger for more than a century. As Lenin explained in 1915 in "Socialism and War":

"Opportunism and social-chauvinism stand on a common economic basis—the interests of a thin crust of privileged workers and of the petty-bourgeoisie, who are defending their privileged position, their 'right' to some modicum of the profits that their 'own' national bourgeoisie obtain from robbing other nations, from the advantages of their Great-Power status, etc."

The NPA's crowning argument for lining up behind its own bourgeoisie is the question of "democracy." It was in the name of the struggle for "democracy" that the NPA's predecessor, Alain Krivine's Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire, supported the pro-capitalist counterrevolutionaries of Solidarność in Poland in the early 1980s and then supported the right-wing bourgeois politician Jacques Chirac in the 2002 [French] presidential elections. From that to supporting a military junta in *Françafrique* is but a short step which the NPA took very blithely.

Democracy is nothing but a convenient guise for the bourgeoisie to hide its own bloody dictatorship against the classes and social layers that it exploits and oppresses. In disappearing the principal question—democracy for which class?—the NPA comes out unconditionally for the rule of the bourgeoisie—democratic if possible,

but not necessarily—and always opposes the dictatorship of the proletariat (which after all is only democratic for the workers and the oppressed). Lenin wrote in his polemic against the renegade Kautsky:

"There is not a single state, however democratic, which has no loopholes or reservations in its constitution guaranteeing the bourgeoisie the possibility of dispatching troops against the workers, of proclaiming martial law, and so forth, in the case of a 'violation of public order,' and actually in case the exploited class 'violates' its position of slavery and tries to behave in a non-slavish manner."

The NPA reaches the height of the grotesque by supporting a military junta in Niger, which it presents as a step toward the restoration of "democracy." If the NPA sees democracy in pink and green colors in France [i.e., the social democracy and the Greens], apparently according to them khaki is just as good a color for Africa! After a hundred years of French imperialist atrocities in Niger and the whole region, these countries endure horrendous and growing poverty. There is almost no working class in that whole part of Africa, which means that these countries lack the only social force that can lead all the oppressed in smashing the imperialist yoke once and for all and fight for an international socialist revolution. In fact, the West African immigrant workers in France can play a strategic role and serve as a living bridge between the struggle for revolution in France and in these countries. This makes it all the more vital to fight in France itself against the depredations of French imperialism overseas, and to overthrow capitalism here and throughout the whole world. Only then can we begin to remedy the ravages of imperialist oppression and lay the bases for a society of plenty based on a collectivized and internationally planned economy. *French imperialism out of Africa!* ■

SPARTACIST (English Edition) SPRING 2009

Women and Revolution

Women Workers and the Contradictions of China Today

SPARTACIST 4

NUMBER 61 ENGLISH EDITION SPRING 2009

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Immigrants...

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\$1.9 billion for "national security." Of Australian imperialist Defence operations, "border protection" rates equal third in the allocation of personnel. Labor ministers declared "Protecting Australia's borders from threats of terrorism, people smuggling, organised crime...is a top priority for investment by the Rudd government" (*Australian Financial Review*, 12 May).

Draconian legislation currently in parliament takes aim at "people smugglers" and those who provide material support. Recounting the alarmed response of some lawyers to the legislation, one journalist wrote: "A modern-day Oskar Schindler would be jailed for up [to] 10 years under the Rudd government's proposed crack-down" (*Age*, 28 April). The laws will potentially target anyone who aids refugees, including immigrants, community organisations and leftists such as those targeted for arrest in AFP and immigration raids in 2004 (see "Hands Off RAC Activists! Drop the Charges Now!" *ASP* No. 190, Autumn 2005). Further strengthening repressive "war on terror" laws, the new legislation also expands the powers of ASIO and other spy agencies to conduct phone taps and satellite surveillance. ASIO agents will be able to carry weapons, the overseas spy agency, ASIS, gains new powers to conduct paramilitary operations in other countries, while a new "criminal intelligence fusion centre" will integrate information from the AFP, taxation office, Centrelink and other agencies.

ASIO and ASIS secret police agencies are a threat to ethnic minorities and all workers, unionists and leftists. These agencies exist to subvert, at home and abroad, through provocation and violence, the organisations of the workers and oppressed, and ultimately serve the bourgeois rulers' efforts to prevent workers revolution. Along with the military, cops, courts and prisons, they are an integral component of the repressive capitalist state apparatus. This state exists to defend the private property and rule of the capitalist class against the workers and oppressed, enforcing exploitation and racist oppression. It cannot be reformed to act in the interest of workers and the oppressed; it must be smashed through socialist revolution and replaced with a workers state.

The capitalist system is based on the brutal exploitation of all labour. The ruling



February 2009: Afghans dig graves for those killed in air strike in Herat province, west of Kabul. Under ALP government more than 1,500 Australian troops help enforce bloody U.S.-led imperialist occupation in Afghanistan.

class inflames racial and ethnic hostilities to keep the working class divided and thus hinder class struggle so as to ensure a greater extraction of profit. Just as immigrant workers are brought in during economic booms to provide a source of low-wage labour, the current rise in anti-immigrant attacks worldwide is exacerbated by the global economic crisis and its attendant soaring unemployment. While the Australian capitalist bosses express optimism at having supposedly avoided the worst of the economic crisis, the working masses are being ground down with job casualisations and speed-ups leading to escalating workplace injuries and fatalities. Youth face high levels of unemployment and figure significantly among the tens of thousands that are homeless. Rising numbers of desperate poor face extreme hardship and poverty, from single mothers and their children, to the sick and disabled and elderly. Meanwhile, the military/cop occupation of Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory has deepened the brutal oppression of the Aboriginal people. Now the Rudd government is widening the racist quarantining of welfare payments in these communities to all welfare recipients in the Territory and threatens to extend it nationwide.

Amidst this widespread capitalist decay and oppression, which engenders resistance from workers and the oppressed, the

ALP government is coming down hard against the unions. Spearheading these attacks is the witchhunting Australian Building and Construction Commission (ABCC) which has become even more aggressive in using its ASIO-style powers to target the CFMEU construction union and militant unionists with state repression. CFMEU member Ark Tribe continues to face a jail term for refusing to attend a compulsory ABCC interrogation. We say: Drop the charges against Ark Tribe! Down with the ABCC and all union-busting! Defend the unions!

Down With Racist Protectionism and Nationalism!

The struggle for the unity and integrity of the working class against chauvinism and racism is a vital task for the proletarian vanguard. We do not seek to tinker with the capitalist system by advising the bourgeoisie on an alternative immigration policy. Our party's perspective is to mobilise the multiracial working class in struggle against all the government's racist immigration laws, from mandatory detention to the wretched ban on immigrants receiving social security benefits. We call for full citizenship rights for all immigrants as part of the struggle to advance the class consciousness and solidarity of the working class, preparing it for the necessary revolutionary fight to end capitalist class rule. Unlocking the social power of the multiracial working class will take a political fight against the current pro-capitalist trade-union misleaders who have shackled the working class to their exploiters, particularly through pushing poisonous protectionism and loyalty to the capitalist state. A particularly grotesque example of such fealty to racist capitalist rule is the Maritime Union of Australia leadership's backing of the Labor government's "border protection" measures (see "Full Citizenship Rights For All Immigrants!" *ASP*

No. 207, Summer 2009/10).

At the same time, reflecting the pressure of their multiracial working-class base, some union leaders feel compelled at times to speak out against the excesses of capitalist oppression. Recently twenty unions and organisations, including the ACTU, the peak union body, signed a letter to Kevin Rudd opposing the government's reopening of the Curtin detention centre, attacks on refugees and the bipartisan demonisation of asylum seekers. However far from promoting the class interests of the proletariat, the letter rebukes Rudd for forsaking capitalist Australia's supposed "fair-go" spirit! This is a Laborite whitewash of racist White Australia capitalism, which was founded on the bloody dispossession of Aborigines and exclusion of "non-whites," particularly from Asia and the Pacific region! While today Australia is no longer "lily white," the unabating murderous oppression of Aborigines and incarceration of refugees in detention centres stands precisely in this White Australia tradition. In their letter the union tops promote jingoistic garbage, calling on Rudd to "back the words in our national anthem," and push illusions in the supposed "humanitarian" credentials of the United Nations (UN), urging the government to uphold its "international obligations."

Since its inception the UN has been an imperialist den of thieves, their victims and intended victims. From the Korean War to the sanctions imposed on Iraq it has served as a "legal" fig leaf for imperialist slaughter and oppression. The UN-starvation blockade of Iraq leading up to the 2003 imperialist war and occupation killed more than one and a half million Iraqi civilians. In 1999, the Laborite trade-union leaders, with the support of much of the reformist left, aggressively campaigned for Australian imperialist troops to go to East Timor under the UN umbrella. The Australian-led UN occupation there has meant racist state terror and brutal imperialist exploitation. We say: *Australian troops/cops out of East Timor and the Solomons!*

The precondition for successful working-class struggle against the racist capitalist system is the complete political independence of the proletariat from the capitalist exploiters. But joined at the hip with their Labor Party parliamentary "mates" the union tops act to uphold the capitalist system. The ALP is a bourgeois workers party, thoroughly bourgeois in its program, leadership and outlook while based on the trade unions. In power, the state and federal Labor governments administer the capitalist state in the interests of Australian capitalism.

Last year the Victorian Labor premier, John Brumby, utilised a surge of murderous terror against Indian students, centred in Melbourne, to beef up police numbers and increase their powers. As Brumby and police spokesmen sought to deny that racism was endemic to the attacks, the cops meted out severe repression against Indian students who mobilised to protest

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Defend the Palestinian People!

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Britain

The following article appeared in *Workers Hammer* No. 210 (Spring 2010), newspaper of our comrades of the *Spartacist League/Britain*.

WORKERS HAMMER

We print below a 13 March letter sent to the Home Office by the Partisan Defence Committee, a class-struggle, legal and social defence organisation associated with the Spartacist League. The letter protests the conviction and jailing of youth, mainly Muslims, who took part in London protests against Israel's war on Gaza a little over a year ago. There will likely be more such sentences as more cases come before the courts.

Comrades of the Spartacist League/Britain and other International Communist League (ICL) sections internationally participated in protests while the Zionist mass murder machine pounded the Gaza ghetto

in air assaults followed by a devastating ground invasion, terrorising and killing Palestinian men, women and children. The ICL called for the working class internationally to stand for military defence of Hamas without giving that reactionary Islamic fundamentalist outfit one iota of political support. We demanded: Defend the Palestinian people! All Zionist troops and settlers out of the West Bank and East Jerusalem!

Unlike the Zionists and indeed the anti-Semitic Islamic fundamentalists, we do not equate the Zionist state with the Hebrew-speaking people, who have the right to self-determination as well as the Palestinian people. The Israeli/Palestinian conflict is one of interpenetrated peoples: two peoples laying claim to the same piece of land. Under capitalism, the exercise of national self-determination by one will necessarily be at the expense of the other. As long as the national principle prevails, the oppression of the Palestinians, who are the weaker side, can only worsen. As Marxists we seek to bring the

class question to the fore, insisting on the need for proletarian revolutionary parties to fight for workers revolutions to shatter the Zionist state from within and to sweep away the mullahs, colonels, sheikhs and all the other capitalist rulers. Defence of those subjugated by the imperialists around the globe demands the pursuit of class struggle in Britain, the US and other imperialist centres, pointing towards a proletarian struggle for power.

For Arab/Hebrew workers revolution!
For a socialist federation of the Near East!

We protest the outrageous convictions and sentences meted out to youth arrested during the December 2008-January 2009 London protests against Israel's slaughter in Gaza. Reportedly of 119 arrested, some 26 have so far been sentenced and 22 sent to jail for terms ranging from eight months to two-and-a-half years, for such trivial acts as throwing placards. The arrests followed months of surveillance by the police, who descended on homes like stormtroopers in dawn raids during

which family members were handcuffed in separate rooms.

These youth, almost all Muslims and many under 20 years old, were expressing justified rage at the bloodbath carried out by the Zionists in Gaza. Israel's war left 1400 Palestinians dead and thousands injured, and reduced most of Gaza—already essentially a concentration camp surrounded by an electrified fence, a sealed border with Egypt, and the Mediterranean Sea—to ash and rubble. The jailings for protesting this atrocity underline British imperialism's solidarity with the Zionist butchers.

Judge John Denniss, in handing down the sentences at Isleworth Crown Court in Middlesex, has stated his intent to send a message of "deterrence." The message, broadcast loud and clear in the convictions and sentences, is one of naked state racism otherwise known as the government's "war on terror," which is an anti-Muslim witch hunt. In fact the judge reportedly relied on the precedent of the draconian sentences handed out to young Asians jailed for defending their communities from rampaging fascists in Bradford in 2001. Then too such "lessons" were delivered in the form of six-year prison terms for throwing stones. The fruit of this poison relentlessly dished up by the Blair and Brown Labour governments is the growth of the fascist BNP and their spin-offs, the English Defence League, who parade their anti-Muslim filth.

We demand: **Free the jailed protesters now! Drop all the charges!** ■

the terror (see "Racist Terror Sparks Indian Student Protests" *ASP* No. 206, Spring 2009). Later it was revealed that police were circulating homophobic and racist emails including an image depicting the torture of an immigrant. No aberration, similar racist practices were exposed in the military in 2007, while in 2000 soldiers at a Townsville military base dressed up as fascist Ku Klux Klan members and humiliated non-white soldiers. Meanwhile the many reports of terrifying police violence against African immigrant youth in Melbourne point to the terror that immigrants and indigenous people routinely suffer at the hands of the vicious Australian capitalist state.

Fascists Feed Off Rudd Government Racism

The anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim xenophobia whipped up under the ALP government's nationalist "border protection" and "war on terror" frenzy has fuelled racist attacks on the streets against immigrants and Aboriginal people, such as Kwementyaye Ryder, bashed to death in Alice Springs last year by five white thugs. Concomitantly, the racist climate has emboldened fascistic outfits such as the Australian Protectionist Party (APP), who spew vile filth, blaming Africans, Muslims and immigrants for unemployment, crime and a myriad of social problems that are the product of the decaying capitalist system. An 11 April APP rally attacking refugee rights outside Sydney's Villawood Detention Centre was predictably protected by the cops who blocked 150 anti-racist, pro-refugee protesters from marching to where the APP were gathered. Just days earlier, on 9 April, when white-supremacists threatened to stage an "action against immigration and Islam" in central Melbourne they were met with a counter-mobilisation of some 300 anti-racist protesters, including unionists and leftists. The handful of skinheads and other thugs who showed up didn't dare carry out their provocation—a good thing!

Fascists pose a deadly threat to immigrants and minorities as well as the organisations of the working class. Thriving in the mass poverty, nationalism and racism bred by capitalism, they are paramilitary shock troops of all-sided reaction; the last



Matt Murphy

Melbourne, 9 April: Hundreds rallied outside Flinders Street Station against threatened fascist rally. Spartacist League fights for mass union/minority action to crush the fascist scum.

line of defence of the bourgeoisie against working-class struggle. Crushing the fascists while they are small is a life and death question for the labour movement, not least its increasingly strategic immigrant component. We call for *union/minority mobilisations to stop fascist provocations*. As we explain in our programmatic statement: "Under revolutionary leadership, such mobilisations can provide a bridge between the felt need for self-defence and the historic need to end the threat of fascism by sweeping away the capitalist system through workers revolution" ("For a Workers Republic of Australia, Part of a Socialist Asia!", 1998).

However, instead of this proletarian-centred perspective to crush the fascists, the unsigned flyer building the 9 April Melbourne counter protest appealed for all to "Unite Against Racism" in a respectable "peaceful show of support," declaring Melbourne an "egalitarian" city! Egalitarian! What an amnesty of racist capitalism! Not only has the city witnessed escalating attacks on overseas students and police violence against dark-skinned immigrants, but when unions organised a mass picket of the West Gate Bridge construction project in 2009, hundreds of police were arrayed against picketers and their supporters and the unions were subsequently hit with more than \$1 million in fines. Capturing

the liberal, class-collaborationist framework of the reformists, Socialist Alternative (SAI) reported on the "Unite Against Racism" rally noting how they protested together with trade-union tops, the bourgeois Greens and religious leaders to "help make it clear that fascists and racists are not welcome" and not once mentioned class, capitalism or the fight for socialism.

For a Revolutionary Proletarian Perspective

In the 2007 federal elections, SAI, Socialist Alliance and the International Socialist Organisation (now Solidarity) all called for a vote to the capitalist Greens as a means to pressure the Labor Party, which they above all wanted to see elected to government. For purported socialists to call for a vote to any capitalist party is outright *class treachery*! Upholding the principle of class independence from the capitalist rulers and their parties, we said: "No vote to the bourgeois Greens!" Declaring the elections a bipartisan war on the working class and oppressed we also called for "No vote to the ALP!" Our 2007 election statement told the bitter truth that Rudd's ALP stood "openly committed to delivering more anti-union attacks, strong state repression and militarism." Putting forward the need to break with Laborism, we called for "a revolutionary workers

party to lead a class-struggle fight against racist capitalism!"

With the ALP government ratcheting up its war against workers and the oppressed on behalf of the capitalist rulers some union leaders are pushing support to the Greens, a dead end that ties workers to the capitalist class. Posturing to the left, the reformist Socialist Alternative have lately taken to criticising the Greens for supposedly abandoning "progressive stances on war, racism and workers' rights" (www.sa.org.au, 12 April). What a crock! SAI prettifies the history of this capitalist party in order to cover for their gaveling vote to them in the 2007 elections.

Notwithstanding their opposition to mandatory detention, the bourgeois Greens have for years helped whip up nationalist fervour through targeting "foreign ownership" and promoting "self reliance." Today they help foster the nationalist, anti-immigrant backlash by calling to cut Australia's immigration intake in order to keep Australia's population sustainable! Similarly, when Greens leader Bob Brown stated last July that his only "opposition" to Australian troops in Afghanistan was that they ought to be "retained for use within our region" he was merely reasserting a long-held Greens' position. Supporting the Australian imperialist military occupations from East Timor to the Solomons, the Greens have always been determinedly committed to the Australian capitalist system and its repressive state.

A real fight for immigrant rights in this country will only begin when the workers struggle based on their common interests as a class. Mobilising the social power of the trade unions to defend immigrants and minorities requires a political struggle against the Laborite nationalist and pro-capitalist trade-union bureaucracy. This means the fight for a revolutionary leadership in the unions. Such a leadership will be part of a multiracial proletarian Leninist vanguard party, the indispensable instrument for leading the working class, at the head of all the oppressed, in its historic task of sweeping away the racist capitalist system through proletarian revolution and replacing it with an international planned economy under workers rule. ■

Greece...

(continued from page 12)

ransacked the offices of an immigrant support network and raided cafes and homes in the Exarchia neighborhood, an anarchist stronghold, detaining dozens. While Papandreou denounced the "violence" of the demonstrators, a co-worker of those killed in the fire issued a widely disseminated statement revealing that the bank workers had been threatened with firing if they failed to show up for work and then were prevented from leaving when they attempted to do so. According to this worker, the building, which had no fire certificate, no sprinklers and no fire exits, was locked and even the Internet connection was cut. We demand that all charges be dropped against the anarchists and all other leftist protesters, including those arrested during the earlier general strikes!

While the PASOK government's attacks on working people are in large part dictated by the IMF and the major European powers, with imperialist Germany in the lead, the Greek ruling class is not just a minion of the EU; it is using this as an opportunity to crack down on the workers. Meanwhile, the arrogant German bourgeoisie has unleashed a chauvinist campaign against the smaller and weaker European economies. German capitalists have been sneering that Greece has been living "beyond its means," while a leading spokesman for German industrialists snidely suggested that Athens cut its



Athens: Cops attack 22 April rally during civil servants strike.

deficit by selling off some "uninhabited islands."

The government's threats and the repression have failed to intimidate workers. But a major obstacle to a class-struggle fight against the capitalists and their government is the Greek chauvinism pushed by the official leaders of the workers movement, including those of the Communist Party (KKE), who oppose the IMF and EU imperialist bloodsuckers on the narrow nationalist basis that they threaten Greece's national sovereignty. It is only on the basis of proletarian internationalism that the workers of Greece can be mobilized in revolutionary struggle in their own class interests at the head of all the oppressed. Today the bankruptcy of

the whole capitalist-imperialist system is clear, but what is lacking is revolutionary leadership to finally end exploitation, poverty, racism and war. For a Socialist United States of Europe! For world socialist revolution to establish an international division of labor in a planned socialist economy!

We reprint below a 28 April leaflet published by our comrades of the Trotskyist Group of Greece. It was distributed at two May Day demonstrations in Athens—one organized by the All Workers Militant Front (PAME), a trade-union federation associated with the KKE, and the other organized by the two largest trade-union federations, the private sector General Confederation of Workers of Greece

(GSEE) and the Confederation of Public Servants (ADEDY), both led by PASOK.

* * *

The attempts by the PASOK government to shift the bourgeoisie's massive debt burden onto the backs of the working people have led to furious resistance by tens of thousands of workers and pensioners. General strikes throughout Greece in February and March, as well as two days of strikes in April, repeatedly brought the country to a halt, closing down transportation, schools, banks and government offices. The workers' response to PASOK's savage "stability program"—imposed as a precondition for any bailout from the EU and the IMF—has been: "We won't pay!" In March, angry workers occupied government buildings, including the National Printing Office, where they sought to prevent the printing of the legislation bringing the austerity plan into effect. Olympic Airways workers closed down the central Athens artery of Panepistimiou for several days in protest against layoffs.

PASOK's "stability program" involves thousands of job losses, raising the retirement age and a massive increase in the cost of living resulting from wage cuts, tax increases and price hikes for gasoline and other necessities. The strikes and protests have clearly demonstrated the enormous potential social power of the working class. That power can and must be mobilized in the workers' own interests, to beat back the government's attacks but also to open up the possibility

Capitulation...

(continued from page 2)

more rapid and drastic changes, than any other party in history. But they never say: 'We made a mistake.' They always say: 'The situation has changed.' We should be more precise and more honest."

Menshevism often takes the guise of "realism" and "expediency." Looking to come up with a "concrete solution" in a situation where there was no such solution from a proletarian revolutionary vantage point, we capitulated. What our small revolutionary party had to put forward was a proletarian internationalist perspective for the liberation of Haiti, above all through opposition to our "own" imperialist rulers. In the immediate situation, the only concrete expression of such a program was negative—to demand that any and all Haitian refugees be allowed into the U.S. with full citizenship rights, to oppose any deportations of Haitians who

had made it here and above all to demand all U.S./UN troops out.

Our articles distorted reality in order to justify the American military presence. We correctly criticized the reformists for spreading illusions in the imperialist governments by demanding that they provide "aid, not troops" but our own response was worse. Our articles presented U.S. military intervention as the only "realistic" way for the Haitian masses to get "aid" and claimed demagogically that withdrawal of U.S. combat troops "would result in mass death through starvation." This was to treat the question not from the standpoint of Marxist program, but through the liberal lens of "disaster relief." Michael Harrington—the former leader of the Democratic Socialists of America and adviser to the "war on poverty" programs of Lyndon B. Johnson's Democratic Party administration—captured the core of such a social-democratic worldview with the expression, "the left wing of the possible."

The "politics of the possible" is a palpable pressure in the period of post-Soviet reaction, where revolution—or even, particularly in the U.S., militant class struggle—appears remote and there is an overwhelming absence of resonance for our political views. There is a yawning abyss between what we stand for and the consciousness of the working class and young radicals, even those who claim to be socialist. As we have noted, it has been very difficult to maintain our revolutionary continuity and very easy to have it destroyed.

The Fight to Maintain a Revolutionary Perspective

In fighting against the Cochranite opposition in the then-revolutionary American Socialist Workers Party in the early 1950s, James P. Cannon argued:

"The revolutionary movement, under the best conditions, is a hard fight, and it wears out a lot of human material. Not for nothing has it been said a thousand times in the past: 'The revolution is a devourer of men.' The movement in this, the richest and most conservative country in the world, is perhaps the most voracious of all.

"It is not easy to persist in the struggle, to

hold on, to stay tough and fight it out year after year without victory; and even, in times such as the present, without tangible progress. That requires theoretical conviction and historical perspective as well as character. And, in addition to that, it requires association with others in a common party."

—"Trade Unionists and Revolutionists," 11 May 1953

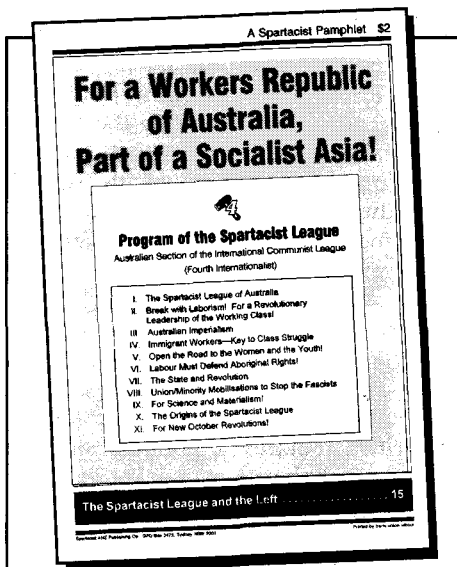
The example of the degeneration of the SWP from a revolutionary party through centrism to abject reformism is instructive. The party endured more than a decade of stagnation and isolation during the anti-Communist witchhunt. Seeing their role reduced essentially to a holding operation in the citadel of U.S. imperialism, aging party cadre like those in the Cochran wing gave up on a revolutionary perspective. The SWP majority under Cannon and Farrell Dobbs fought to preserve the revolutionary continuity of Trotskyism against this liquidationism. But they themselves were not immune from the deforming pressures that led the Cochranites to split.

Four years later, in 1957, the SWP supported the introduction of federal troops into Little Rock, Arkansas—the end result of which was the crushing of local black self-defense efforts against the howling racist mobs fighting school integration. Painting U.S. troops as reliable defenders of black people engendered significant opposition within the party in the 1950s, particularly from Richard Fraser whose program of revolutionary

integrationism as the road to black freedom in the U.S. we take as our own. But the wrong line was never corrected and the view of the U.S. imperialist army as the only "realistic" force to defend civil rights protesters in the Jim Crow South against racist terror deepened. By 1964 the SWP had adopted the grotesque campaign slogan, "Withdraw the Troops from Viet Nam and Send Them to Mississippi!" By 1965, the SWP had thrown overboard the last remnant of a revolutionary opposition to imperialism, promoting the reformist lie that a classless peace movement could stop U.S. imperialism's dirty war against the Vietnamese workers and peasants.

The young SWP cadre in the Revolutionary Tendency who fought the party's degeneration were the founding leaders of our organization. Recognizing where the SWP went, and holding it up as a mirror of where we could go without correcting our mistakes and the outright betrayal of our revolutionary internationalist program in response to the Haiti earthquake, is part of the fight to preserve this continuity with Cannon's revolutionary party that extends back to Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks.

But the ability to make such a correction is hardly cause for celebration. It merely lays the basis for political rectification. We crossed the class line and the urgent necessity is to reassert and struggle to maintain the proletarian internationalist program of Leninism. ■



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Australian Section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)

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of a counteroffensive against the entire capitalist system of exploitation and oppression. A major obstacle to such a fightback, however, is the official leadership of the trade unions—both the pro-PASOK leadership of GSEE and ADEDY and the Stalinist-controlled PAME—which promotes class collaboration and Greek nationalism, thus tying the working class to their exploiters.

While seething anger at the base has forced the PASOK union bureaucrats to call strikes, they have repeatedly expressed their support for the government and its calls for sacrifices. ADEDY leader Papaspyros said: "The situation is hard for all of us, for the economy, for the government, for the working people, for the trade unions. Continuous analysis and evaluation is needed from all of us" (quoted in [Athens daily] *To Vima*, 14 February), while GSEE refused to take part in the strikes on April 21 and 22. The trade-union bureaucracy seeks to rally working-class support for the government by trading on the lie that PASOK is some kind of "socialist" party. In this they are aided by reformists like the Socialist Workers Party (SEK), who claim PASOK is a reformist workers party. It is no such thing. Since its inception, PASOK has been a bourgeois-populist party—an instrument of the class enemy no less than New Democracy.

It is necessary to forge a new, revolutionary leadership of the unions based on the understanding that there are no common interests between the proletariat and the capitalist bloodsuckers. Workers must fight for what we need, not for what the bosses say they can afford. The Greek capitalist class has brought the country to the brink of bankruptcy and is now determined to make the working class pay for the economic crisis. We say no! To hell with the government's "stability program"!

The kind of class-struggle leadership that we seek to build would fight for a series of transitional demands which, as Trotsky explained in the Transitional Program written in 1938, start from the current consciousness of the working class and its daily struggles against the bosses and the government and lead to the goal of proletarian revolution. According to a 21 March article in [national newspaper] *Eleutherotypia*: "The increase in unemployment exceeded 150,000 people at the end of 2009. In fact, it is much higher if you count those that work only a few hours per week." In the same article, Labor Minister Andreas Loverdos estimated that unemployment will shoot up to 12 percent in March. In reality, unemployment is higher still. "GSEE asserts that the [government] statistic of 11.3 percent is in real terms approaching 17.5 percent and the number of unemployed is 800,000 people" ([Athens daily] *Kathimerini*, 21 April). Unemployment has hit women and youth hardest. According to the National Statistics Service, unemployment is four times higher for women and around 25.8 percent among youth.

To combat mass unemployment, it is necessary to demand the sharing of available work, with no loss of pay, and a massive program of public works. To protect even their current living standards—already among the lowest in Europe—workers must demand that wages be indexed to inflation. To unmask the exploitation, robbery and fraud of the capitalist owners and the swindles of the banks, Trotsky argued that workers should demand that the capitalists open their books "to reveal to all members of society that unconscionable squandering of human labor which is the result of capitalist anarchy and the naked pursuit of profits." Raising the call for the expropriation of branches of industry vital for national existence, or the most parasitic of the capitalist rulers, Trotsky underlined

that such a demand must necessarily be linked to the fight for the seizure of power by the working class, as against the reformist misleaders for whom the call for nationalization was merely a prescription for bailing out capitalist enterprises.

In opposition to the capitalists and their reformist agents, Trotsky argued:

"If capitalism is incapable of satisfying the demands inevitably arising from the calamities generated by itself, then let it perish. 'Realizability' or 'unrealizability' is in the given instance a question of the relationship of forces, which can be decided only by the struggle. By means of this struggle, no matter what its immediate practical successes may be, the workers will best come to understand the necessity of liquidating capitalist slavery."

Down With National Chauvinism! For Workers' Unity Against the Bosses!

The fight to mobilize the working class in struggle for its class interests must include a struggle against all forms of discrimination. Key to forging the unity of the working class is the struggle against the racist oppression of immigrants. Immigrant workers, from Albania, South Asia, Africa and elsewhere, are a key component of the working class in Greece who must be drawn into common struggle alongside their Greek class brothers and sisters. To prevent the capitalists' scapegoating of foreign workers for the economic crisis, the workers movement must fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants! No deportations!

The virulent racism of the Greek capitalist state was recently demonstrated at the Independence Day parade in Athens on March 25, when a Greek special forces unit was filmed chanting racist slogans against Albanians, Macedonians and Turks. The video was later posted on YouTube and led to protests by Albanians in Athens. Chauvinism toward its Balkan neighbors and toward national minorities within its own borders is used by the Greek bourgeoisie, as it is by all the bourgeoisies in the region, to keep the working classes at each others' throats and to preserve the rule of capital. In our founding declaration the Trotskyist Group of Greece noted: "The defense of the rights of oppressed nationalities and immigrants is the only means by which the proletariat, consisting of workers of different ethnicities, can be united in the struggle for socialist revolution." Recognizing that the Macedonian question is a test of the authenticity of any group claiming to be internationalist in Greece, we wrote: "The TGG defends the national rights of the Macedonian minority in Greece, including their right to set up their own state or unite with the existing state of Macedonia. *For full democratic rights for national minorities in Greece! For a Balkan socialist federation!*"

Down With the Bosses' EU! For a Socialist United States of Europe!

The PASOK government's austerity program is a taste of what the bosses across Europe have in store for the working class as they seek to drive up the rate of profit. The condition for an EU/IMF "rescue package" for the Greek capitalists is a massive attack on the Greek workers.

As Marxists we stand in implacable opposition to the EU, an imperialist trade bloc within which the conflicting interests of the major European bourgeois states are expressed. The EU is also a vehicle for the European capitalists to cooperate with each other against the working class and against immigrants. Our opposition to the EU, based on proletarian internationalism, is counterposed to the attacks by the Greek Communist Party (KKE) on the EU, which are based on gross capitulation to Greek nationalism. In a 17 April article in *Rizospastis*, the KKE blatantly

expresses concern that the PASOK government might be undermining Greece's defense and worries about its borders with Turkey in the Aegean Sea, saying that KKE leader Aleka Papanicolaou "repeated the worries of her party that the country's deeper incorporation into the imperialist organizations and their plans has prepared the ground for compromises at the expense of the sovereign rights of the country and its defense capability." She added that "now we worry additionally

political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracies whose appeasement of imperialism undermined the defense of the workers states. That is today our program for the remaining deformed workers states—China, Vietnam, Cuba and North Korea.

The current world economic crisis is further powerful confirmation of the Marxist analysis of capitalist society and the need for socialist revolution to do away with the boom-bust cycle of capitalism and



Desperate immigrants seek to reach Greek island, May 2009.

for the Aegean Sea." And while the KKE-dominated PAME trade-union federation raises class-against-class slogans such as "Either with capital or with the workers," it simultaneously appeals for patriotism in banners proclaiming, "Rising Up Against Impoverishment of the People Is Patriotism." Such nationalism is poisonous to class consciousness and is counterposed to proletarian internationalism. It serves to pit workers in Greece against workers in other countries and reinforces anti-immigrant racism. Any effective struggle against the bosses' attacks must begin with the understanding that the workers have no country. What is needed is international workers solidarity across the EU against capital.

The EU was originally established as an adjunct of NATO as the U.S. sought to strengthen West Europe against the Soviet Union. Today it is an unstable adjunct to the economic, military and political priorities of the European capitalists. The International Communist League uniquely fought to the last for military defense of the Soviet Union and the deformed workers states of East Europe against imperialism and internal counterrevolution. We fought for workers

establish a rational, planned economy where production is for human need, not for profits for a handful of super-rich exploiters. No amount of tinkering with the existing system can wrench it into serving the needs of the proletariat and the oppressed.

As working people face ruin, the most that reformist groups like the SEK can put forward are pathetic appeals to the PASOK government to "tax the rich." Such schemes, advanced by reformists like the SEK, posit the possibility of radically redistributing wealth without getting rid of the capitalist system. The bourgeoisie has at its disposal cops, courts and troops—the armed bodies of men that constitute the core of the capitalist state—to wage war upon the working class in order to drive up profits. What's needed is a socialist revolution to overthrow the capitalist state and replace it with a workers state that will lay the basis for building a socialist society. For that you need to build a revolutionary workers party—a party like Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks—which will fight for a workers government. The TGG, Greek sympathizing section of the ICL, seeks to build such a party. ■

Available in Greek

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Greece

Down With PASOK Government's "Stability Program"!



Athens: Tens of thousands protest against government austerity program during 5 May general strike.

AFF

Forge a Multiethnic Revolutionary Workers Party! For a Socialist United States of Europe!

The following is reprinted from Workers Vanguard No. 959 (21 May), newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S.

As part of an economic bailout package introduced by Greece's European Union (EU) partners and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Greek prime minister George Papandreou has announced a new round of brutal attacks on the standard of living of that country's working population. The austerity measures imposed by Papandreou's Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) government include slashing public sector wages by 14 percent, cutting average pension benefits by 11 percent, raising the average retirement age by four years and jacking up the sales tax to 23 percent. Despite its name, PASOK is a capitalist party whose policies differ little from those of the right-

wing New Democracy, which has alternated with PASOK as the ruling party of Greece but was voted out in the elections of October 2009.

These all-sided capitalist attacks would be devastating to the living standards of the Greek masses, particularly the most vulnerable sectors, such as the poor, elderly and women. But thus far they have been met with stiff resistance by the country's combative working class.

As their part of the bailout deal, the EU and IMF committed an unprecedented sum—almost \$1 trillion—for loans to Greece, and potentially other heavily indebted EU countries like Portugal and Spain, to help them cover their budget deficits and refinance their debt. After months of blocking every proposal, the German government finally joined with

other EU powers to seal the deal after growing fears of a possible default by Greece, Spain and Portugal raised the spectre of a renewed, full-blown financial crisis in Europe. Greece's economic woes occur against the backdrop of the international economic crisis, which has also exposed the seething national antagonisms beneath the surface of European capitalist "unity" as embodied in the EU and the euro. In Europe, as elsewhere, each national ruling class is seeking to ratchet up the exploitation of its own working class, while simultaneously maneuvering to gain the advantage against its rivals.

The PASOK government's string of anti-working-class attacks has provoked a wave of militant strikes, including four one-day general strikes so far this year,

with a fifth one scheduled for May 20. The protest demonstrations during the most recent general strike, on May 5, were the largest since the fall of the Greek military junta in 1974. More than 150,000 marched in the streets of Athens, while large protests also occurred in other cities. As the government's measures were being debated, some protesters attempted to storm the parliament building in Athens' Syntagma Square but were beaten back by the hated riot police.

The death of three bank workers who suffocated in a fire caused by a Molotov cocktail thrown during the May 5 protest in Athens has been seized on by the government to unleash a wave of police repression directed in particular against anarchist and immigrant groups. Cops

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