

## Down With U.S. NAFTA Rape of Mexico!



Andrés Garay



Daniel Aguilar

As polarization of Mexican society increases, bourgeois rulers step up cop/army repression. While PRD leader Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas celebrates July 6 election as mayor of Mexico City, his victory will change nothing for workers and peasants.

# Mexico: For Workers Revolution!

MEXICO CITY—The outcome of the July 6 elections was a measure of the fragility of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) which has ruled the country with an iron fist for 70 years. Deeply corrupt and increasingly discredited, the PRI regime, currently headed by President Ernesto Zedillo, has seen its virtual monopoly of political power shattered. The party lost its majority in the Chamber of Deputies, the lower house of Congress, as the “leftist” Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) and the right-wing National Action Party (PAN) garnered 26 and 27 percent of the vote respectively. The PRI also lost control of a number of key state governments. Most significantly, PRD leader Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas won a resounding victory in the first-ever election for Mexico City mayor, the second most important political post in the country and a platform from which to campaign for the next presidential elections.

Cárdenas’ victory was welcomed by millions of Mexico’s downtrodden and dispossessed. But its occasional “populist” rhetoric notwithstanding, the PRD is a bourgeois-nationalist party which props up the system of capitalist exploitation and imperialist domination. The Grupo Espartaquista de México (GEM), section of the International Communist League, opposed any electoral support to the PRD.

In the past couple of years, particularly since the financial collapse which came in the wake of the imposition of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), Mexican workers have seen their real wages plummet by 50 percent. The official minimum wage currently amounts to barely \$3 a day, and millions of workers can’t even count on that. The NAFTA “free trade” rape of Mexico has devastated much of the

### “Left” Builds Illusions in Bourgeois-Nationalist PRD

country’s medium and small industry, leading to skyrocketing unemployment in the cities and ever more desperate poverty in the countryside. Beginning with the Zapatista uprising in Chiapas when NAFTA was imposed on New Year’s Day 1994, peasant guerrilla insurgencies centered in the rural southern states have shaken the country.

Since splitting from the PRI a decade ago, Cárdenas has postured as an advocate for the poor and an opponent of escalating imperialist subjugation. Yet the election outcome was greeted positively not only by Mexico’s plebeian masses. An editorial in the *New York Times* (8 July) enthused over the result of the ballot and an article in the *Wall Street Journal* made clear the reaction of U.S. financial circles, quoting a spokesman for Standard & Poor who said: “I don’t think the PAN or the PRD will push for anything radical.” The Mexican stock market soared to new highs.

In part, the Yankee imperialists are putting a good face on the crumbling of the PRI, which has been Washington’s favored instrument for neocolonial repression of the Mexican masses for decades. But at the same time, the ossified PRI is increasingly seen by farsighted bourgeois elements as a liability in keeping the lid on the country’s seething social contradictions. This is what is behind the spate of cynical “exposés” by the U.S. recently of big-time drug runners high up in the Mexican state and military apparatus. Under the guise of the “war on drugs,” the Pentagon has been funneling massive shipments of arms and equipment to its neocolonial lackeys throughout Latin America in order to suppress peasant insurgencies

and other threats to capitalist stability.

The crisis of the “one-party” PRI regime was symbolized by the death on June 21 of Fidel Velázquez, who for half a century headed the corporatist Mexican Labor Federation (CTM), a key prop of PRI rule. As the PRI has unraveled, the PRD has come forward as a useful safety valve and alternative face for bourgeois rule, seeking to contain a restless working class which has increasingly started to escape the control of the mechanisms which have straitjacketed it for so long.

Despite the presence of numerous former leftists, the PRD is not in any sense even a reformist workers party (i.e., a *pro-capitalist* party which is based on the organized workers movement) but a bourgeois-nationalist formation. Cárdenas broke from the PRI in 1987 in order to posture at a return to the “good” old days before that party abandoned its pretense of independence from U.S. imperialism. Cárdenas recognized that class peace was threatened by the massive destruction of jobs in light industry when protective tariffs were lifted (presaging NAFTA), by the spectre of massive dena-

tionalizations and by large-scale expulsions of peasants from the land. But the Cárdenas forces promise only to make the draconian austerity dictated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) more palatable, while offering the masses the sop of anti-Yankee nationalism.

In a pre-election visit to Wall Street in early May, Cárdenas impressed leading financiers by his “statesmanlike” demeanor. Said one, “He didn’t say anything that would cause investors to run out frightened.” On the eve of the elections Cárdenas promised that “a government of the PRD should give a lot of confidence to investors” by cleaning up corruption. Backing up his words was the PRD’s record since it gained control of Ciudad Nezahualcoyotl, a huge working-class suburb of Mexico City. In his first six months in office, the PRD mayor laid off a third of the municipal workforce while buying new weapons for the cops.

Such actions are neither an accident nor a “betrayal,” as the opportunist “left” which supports the Cardenistas would have it. The PRD is fundamentally no more capable than the semi-bonapartist PRI regime of resisting the demands of the U.S. imperialist masters that the Mexican government starve its “own” people for the greater profits of Wall Street. In colonial and semicolonial countries, characterized by “combined and uneven

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### Young Spartacus

## 150 Years of the Communist Manifesto... 8



# Australian PDC Protests Arrest of Black Panther

We publish below a July 11 letter by the Partisan Defence Committee in Australia to Acting Minister for Immigration Amanda Vanstone protesting the arrest and threatened deportation of former U.S. Black Panther Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin during a speaking tour there last month. After spending four days in jail, Ervin's visa was restored and he was released by order of the High Court.

Ervin continued to be hounded by the government as he defiantly resumed his tour, addressing hundreds of people at meetings in Melbourne and Sydney. Hours after his departure from Australia, the right-wing government vindictively cancelled Ervin's visa—denying him the right to return—and labeled him an "excluded person." The government has also moved to further tighten its racist entry restrictions and curtail appeal rights for visitors and immigrants.

On Tuesday, July 8, visiting United States black activist Lorenzo Ervin was

seized by Australian authorities, thrown into solitary confinement in a Brisbane high-security jail and, according to his lawyer, assaulted in custody. Ervin is a former member of the U.S. Black Panther Party who has travelled to 22 countries, and recently completed a six-week tour of Britain. The day before his incarceration Ervin commenced a four-week speaking tour of Australia, hosted by the anarchist group Angry People. After protests across Australia and internationally, this morning the High Court ordered Ervin's release from jail but the victimisation continues; Ervin is now reportedly required to vouch for his "good character" and "show cause" why he should not be deported. **This is an outrage! The Partisan Defence Committee protests the jailing of Lorenzo Ervin and the continued threat of deportation. No deportation! Hands off Lorenzo Ervin!**

Lorenzo Ervin hijacked a plane from the U.S. to Cuba in 1969 at the age of 19

believing the U.S. police and FBI had issued "shoot to kill" orders against him under the FBI's COINTELPRO program which was designed to "neutralise" the Black Panthers and other radical groups; 38 Black Panther Party members were assassinated and many others jailed under COINTELPRO. Today Mumia Abu-Jamal, award-winning radical journalist and former Black Panther, is a political prisoner on death row in the U.S. and is fighting for his life. Mumia was framed up for a police shooting he did not commit and sentenced to death. The PDC and other activists are fighting for Mumia's freedom; in 1995 our campaign for justice for Mumia resonated around the world resulting in a stay of execution. Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the racist U.S. death penalty! Geronimo ji Jaga Pratt, another former Black Panther and COINTELPRO frame-up victim, has finally been released from jail after serving 27 years for a crime his jailers knew all along that he did not commit. Pratt's release is a vindication of the fight against systematic vicious injustice meted out to anti-racist activists and leftists by capitalist governments around the world.

The witchhunt of Ervin in Australia began with Pauline Hanson's fascist One Nation Party calling him a "proven terrorist" and demanding his deportation. Prime Minister John Howard and Acting Immigration Minister Amanda Vanstone then moved to deport Ervin, alleging that he is "not of good character," while the media kept up a barrage of descriptions of Ervin as a "terrorist" and "convicted hijacker and kidnapper." The motive behind this racist hysteria was stated succinctly by the Brisbane *Sunday Mail* (6 July): "Mr. Ervin said he was still an anarchist and black revolutionary committed to the defeat of white supremacy." Ervin was quoted as saying:

"I think it's for specific political reasons, to make me a whipping boy and to keep

me from being able to speak to the Aborigines, but also to be able to prevent me from going back from here and talking about what's happening."

—*Australian*, 9 July

The Howard government has escalated the racist, anti-working-class war against immigrants and Aborigines. The death toll for Aborigines in Australia's jails continually rises, while hundreds of mainly Asian immigrants are thrown into deportation camps. Obviously the White Australia policy continues and it is little wonder that the government fears international scrutiny. The allegation that Ervin is a "kidnapper" is bitterly ironic coming from the state which for decades kidnapped the children of the brutally oppressed Aboriginal people in order to "assist" the supposed "dying out of the race." Ominously, the same day as Ervin was arrested, Howard defended Australia's "race record" stating that he was "no longer prepared to accept unreasonable, ill-founded and uninformed criticism of the tolerance credentials of the Australian community" (*Age*, 9 July).

The attacks on Ervin recall the witch-hunt carried out against Aboriginal and union militants who were part of a thousands-strong demonstration which "invaded" Parliament House in response to a police attack on Aboriginal protesters in Canberra on 19 August 1996. The student editors of the *Rabelais* newspaper face the threat of long jail terms for printing articles the haughty capitalist rulers deem "unacceptable." Yet another hysterical campaign is now demonising anti-Hanson protesters as "violent," and particularly targeting leftist groups for supposedly "inciting to violence": a clear preparation for more police repression. The government hypocritically rants in defence of "free speech" for racists like Hanson and meanwhile continues to constrict the bounds of "acceptable" dissent, curtailing the democratic rights of the labour movement, minorities and the left.

The Partisan Defence Committee is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defence organisation which champions cases and causes in the interest of the whole of the working people. This purpose is in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League. We demand: **No deportation! Hands off Lorenzo Ervin!** ■

## Trotsky on the Communist Manifesto

Particularly in the wake of the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, it is more necessary than ever to reimplant in the working class the consciousness of its historic task: to seize state power in order to sweep away capitalism and lay the basis for a classless, egalitarian society. In 1937, four years after Hitler's rise to power and as Stalin's Third International was strangling the Spanish workers revolution, Leon



TROTSKY

Trotsky stressed in an introduction to the first Afrikaans edition of the Communist Manifesto of 1848, that the key to the future of humanity lies in the construction of revolutionary vanguard parties. Today the International Communist League fights to reforge Trotsky's Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution.

It is hard to believe that the centennial of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* is only ten years away! This pamphlet, displaying greater genius than any other in world literature, astounds us even today by its freshness. Its most important sections appear to have been written yesterday. Assuredly, the young authors (Marx was twenty-nine, Engels twenty-seven) were able to look further into the future than anyone before them, and perhaps than anyone since them....

We have already remarked above that according to Marx no social order departs from the scene without first exhausting the potentialities latent in it. However, even an antiquated social order does not cede its place to a new order without resistance. A change in social regimes presupposes the harshest form of the class struggle, i.e., revolution. If the proletariat, for one reason or another, proves incapable of overthrowing with an audacious blow the outlived bourgeois order, then finance capital in the struggle to maintain its unstable rule can do nothing but turn the petty bourgeoisie ruined and demoralized by it into the pogrom army of fascism. The bourgeois degeneration of the Social Democracy and the fascist degeneration of the petty bourgeoisie are interlinked as cause and effect.

At the present time, the Third International far more wantonly than the Second performs in all countries the work of deceiving and demoralizing the toilers. By massacring the vanguard of the Spanish proletariat, the unbridled hirelings of Moscow not only pave the way for fascism but execute a goodly share of its labors. The protracted crisis of the international revolution, which is turning more and more into a crisis of human culture, is reducible in its essentials to the crisis of revolutionary leadership.

As the heir to the great tradition, of which the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* forms the most precious link, the Fourth International is educating new cadres for the solution of old tasks. Theory is generalized reality. In an honest attitude to revolutionary theory is expressed the impassioned urge to reconstruct the social reality.

—Leon Trotsky, "Ninety Years of the Communist Manifesto" (October 1937)



LENIN

## WORKERS VANGUARD

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## Young Spartacus

### Rescind the Cuba Travel Ban!

We print below a letter by the New York Spartacus Youth Club denouncing the outrageous denial of the right of American youth to travel to Cuba this summer. Despite the ban, some 700 youths attended the World Festival of Youth and Students in Cuba.

27 July 1997

Steven Pinter, U.S. Treasury Dept.  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Pinter:

The New York Spartacus Youth Club vehemently protests the denial of travel licenses to 50 youths planning to attend the World Festival of Youth and Students in Havana, Cuba. This act not only cuts off these youth from expressing their solidarity with beleaguered Cuba, but is part and parcel of the U.S. government's far more sinister vendetta against the Cuban Revolution.

Arrogantly, the Treasury Department declares the Youth Festival not "within the scope of clearly defined educational activities." As Malcolm X frequently said, "Travel broadens." No doubt attendees of the Havana Festival would see firsthand the effects of U.S. imperialism's starvation embargo against the Cuban people, which would be very educational. The U.S. imperialists are not interested in edu-

cation, but in cranking up the economic and military heat against their imperialist rivals and those countries which have overthrown U.S.-supported capitalist regimes. In the U.S. this means increasingly squelching the democratic rights of workers, youth and minorities. This denial is part of a long anti-Communist policy of refusing passports to American leftists or visas to radical foreigners, thus denying political dissenters a basic democratic right.

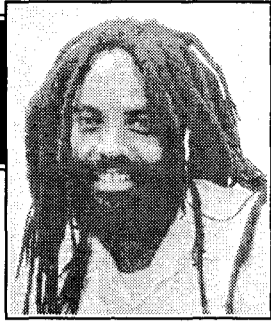
U.S. imperialism has tried to destroy the Cuban Revolution for more than three decades, through military invasions, CIA/*gusano* provocations and economic strangulation. We say: Cuba must not stand alone! We oppose the isolation of Cuba from the standpoint of defending the gains of the Cuban Revolution and the fight for socialist revolution internationally. The would-be participants in the World Festival of Youth and Students have the right to travel wherever they want. Rescind the travel ban! U.S. hands off Cuba!

Arthur Llewellyn

for the New York  
Spartacus Youth Club

cc: U.S. Organizing Committee for  
World Festival of Youth and Students in Havana, Cuba

## From Death Row, This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal



# Class War Against Youth

"Judges are products of the containment system.... The criminal justice system makes a lot of money for everybody, from the judge to the bailiff, from the bail bondsmen to the police, the sheriff's deputies, everybody. The neoslave, the young Black male, becomes the fodder, the raw material, for this industry-like profit-making system. The fodder is Black, and the beneficiaries—those who profit from the system—are white."

—Judge Joseph B. Brown, Jr., Shelby County Court, Memphis (quoted in Linn Washington, *Black Judges on Justice* [New Press, 1994])

Two brown boys shuffle into the cell to await their court date, their pants hanging down their behinds, their eyes straining to project a toughness that their tiny stature and beardless faces betray.

Their bright eyes search the tiny holding cell. One paces the five and a half foot long, four foot wide glass-doored cage, while the other sits on the hard, wooden slats of the bench, his eyes unfocused, inward looking.

The other sits, and they talk to each other, their shoulders hunched bespeaking their mutual fear.

All around them are men in their twenties, thirties and forties, their eyes narrowed into slits of dulled anger.

The two boys are 16, but they are certified as adults.

They are Munchkins in the Land of Giants, and they are entering a courtroom that sees its highest duty as flinging them into the netherworld of American gulags for as long as humanly (legally) possible.

For all intents and purposes, they are doomed. In an age when crime rates are in sharp decline, the youth

and adult rates of incarceration are skyrocketing.

The U.S. government's own statistical data shows these trends convincingly in *Correctional Populations in the United States, 1994* (U.S. Department of Justice, 1996) and *Criminal Victimization, 1973-95* (U.S. Department of Justice, 1997).

With regard to juveniles in U.S. jails, in 1990 the average daily population was 2,140. By 1993 that number was 3,400, or an increase of 59 percent. The actual one-day count of the nation's juvenile jail population is even more damning, especially when examined over time. The 1990 one-day count was 2,301, and by 1993 that figure rose to 4,300, or an increase of 87 percent. By 1994, that number swelled to 6,725, or 192.2 percent over the 1990 population figure (see *Correctional Populations in the United States, 1994*).

As measured by the government's National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), the 1995 rape, robbery and aggravated assault rates were at a 23-year low. The FBI's Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) measured a similar trend in murder rates (see *Criminal Victimization, 1973-95*).

In the text of the latter report:

"In 1994, compared to 1973, the U.S. population was about as vulnerable to violent crime but significantly less vulnerable to property crime. From 1973 through 1994, the rates of violent crime victimization had intervals of stability, increase, and decrease, while the rates of property crime underwent a virtually uninterrupted decrease. The 1994-'95 decline in the violent crime rate was the largest single-year decrease ever measured in the total violent category."

One wonders; what is the relationship between the

crime rate and the incarceration rate?

The answer seems to be: very little.

The nation's incarceration rate appears to be driven, not by the crime rate, but by the needs of the prison-industrial complex.

The poor, the young, and the Black are unwitting fodder to feed the machine, like chickens on a McDonald's conveyor belt.

Gone is even the shallowest pretense of rehabilitation, with prison's economic imperative assuming its brute mastery of the game of life and death.

Those two young boys, unless they are very, very lucky, have in store for themselves years and years, perhaps decades, of brain-rotting, soul-smashing madness that they may, or may not, survive.

They will grow to a sullen manhood out of the scent or presence of women, in a sexual slaughterhouse.

They will enter a system that profits from their every hour of misery.

They will feed a system that calls itself "corrections," yet outlaws any education beyond a G.E.D.

They enter a man-made Hell, where the cold eye of the "Law" has deemed them to be men, while nature has determined they are what they indeed are: Boys.

Boys cast beyond the pale.

13 July 1997

© 1997 by Mumia Abu-Jamal

To join the fight to free Mumia and for the latest updates on his case, contact the Partisan Defense Committee, P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013-0099; phone (212) 406-4252. E-mail: 75057.3201@compuserve.com. Urgently needed contributions for Mumia's defense, which are tax-deductible, should be made payable to the Bill of Rights Foundation, earmarked "Mumia Abu-Jamal Legal Defense," and sent to the Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal, 163 Amsterdam Avenue, No. 115, New York, NY 10023-5001. If you wish to correspond with Jamal, you can write to: Mumia Abu-Jamal, AM8335, SCI Greene, 1040 E. Roy Furman Hwy., Waynesburg, PA 15370.

## Wheeling-Pitt Strike Derailed

# Steel Union Tops Beg Bankers, Let Strikers Hang

AUGUST 2—Yesterday, United Steelworkers (USWA) officials announced a tentative agreement to end the ten-month-long strike against Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel Corporation, centrally over the demand that the company restore the guaranteed pension which it ended over a decade ago. The battle by 4,500 steel workers against Wheeling-Pitt, which idled eight steel plants in Ohio, West Virginia and Pennsylvania, has been the longest steel strike in U.S. history.

Throughout that time, strikers and their families sank ever deeper into poverty, and towns like Mingo Junction, Ohio—where the largest of the plants is located—were turned into economic ghost towns. But the strikers remained solid. By

all accounts, not a single worker crossed a picket line and thousands of unionists from up and down the Ohio River Valley joined solidarity demonstrations for their brothers and sisters at Wheeling-Pitt. Yet despite their enormous sacrifice, the workers have been saddled with a deal which—though details have been left deliberately vague—includes the loss of one in five jobs and at best a paltry pension contribution by the company.

Far from harnessing the potential social power of organized labor, the union tops refused to employ class-struggle tactics like plant occupations to win the strike. Instead of organizing labor solidarity in struggle, the USWA bureaucracy ludicrously appealed to the bankers and bosses for "solidarity." In a June 26 press release, USWA president George Becker trumpeted a "streets and suites" strategy based on "sophisticated 'corporate campaign' techniques" to beg Mellon Bank, Merrill Lynch and other Wall Street investors to pressure Wheeling-Pitt's parent company to return to the bargaining table. During the summer, USWA bureaucrats, joined by AFL-CIO president John Sweeney, bused in groups of strikers for rallies outside sites like the New York Stock Exchange.

This "corporate campaign" farce by the AFL-CIO tops has been the death knell of one strike after another over the past decade or more—from the Hormel P-9 strike in the mid-1980s to the recent Detroit newspaper strike debacle. This strategy of defeat entails toothless consumer boycotts and lobbies outside

stockholder meetings. Occasionally, these impotent stunts are accompanied by stage-managed acts of "civil disobedience" by union officials. This is what Sweeney's "new" AFL-CIO passes off as "militancy."

The demoralizing impact of the AFL-CIO bureaucracy's defeatist strategy is reflected not only in the sharp decline in union membership. The number of strikes annually is now at the lowest level since World War II, while the length of the average strike has dramatically increased. Between 1950 and the mid-1970s, strikes generally lasted only four days. By 1985, the average strike was 38 days long. In 1993 and 1994, this figure rose to 53 days, long enough to ensure that many families were forced into dire poverty and had their homes repossessed. The "cor-

porate campaign" swindle run by the AFL-CIO traitors is the reason millions of workers today equate strikes with starvation. To turn things around requires sharp political struggle within the unions to oust the pro-capitalist bureaucracy.

The AFL-CIO misleadership *opposes class struggle* because it sees the world through the same lens as the capitalists and their government. The purpose of the union tops, aptly dubbed "labor lieutenants of the capitalist class" by early American socialist Daniel De Leon, is to ensure the subordination of the workers to the national interests of the enemy class. This collaboration with the capitalist rulers is codified in the labor bureaucrats' fealty to the Democratic Party. In recent years, as the U.S. bourgeoisie has ratcheted up the rate of exploitation to compete with its imperialist rivals abroad, the trade-union bureaucracy has ever more openly taken on the role of *policing* the labor movement on behalf of the capitalist class.

A stark expression of the union tops' identification with the interests of racist U.S. imperialism is their single-minded push for chauvinist protectionism against workers in Japan, China, Mexico and elsewhere. Thus, a recent editorial in the USWA's *Steellabor* (May-June 1997) features an anti-Communist tirade against "the loss of U.S. jobs" to "despotic" China and stars and stripes rhetoric hailing

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### Spartacist Forum

## Lessons from the History of the Black Panther Party

— A Revolutionary Marxist Analysis —

Speaker: Joe Sol, Spartacist League

Thursday, August 7, 7 p.m.

New York Law School, 47 Worth Street, Room B-300

NEW YORK CITY For more information: (212) 267-1025

# Italian Army Atrocities in Somalia Exposed

MILANO—Even as 2,500 Italian “peacekeeping” forces occupy Albania, Italy has been rocked by exposés of torture and murder in an earlier “humanitarian” military intervention, in the East African country of Somalia. After the weekly magazine *Panorama* published long-suppressed photos of racist atrocities by Italian troops in Somalia in 1993, several soldiers came forward to attest that they had personally witnessed the incidents and further documentation flowed in directly from Somalia. As the popular-front government of Prime Minister Romano Prodi tried to whitewash these imperialist crimes, hundreds of people joined in a June 15 protest in Rome organized by the Somali community and hundreds more demonstrated in Milano two weeks later.

On June 12, *Panorama* published June 1993 photographs of a Somali youth pinned to the ground under the boot of a soldier of the Folgore Brigade, the fascist-ridden “special forces,” while an officer attached electric cables to the youth’s testicles. The following week, the same magazine published grisly photos from November 1993 of a soldier shoving a flare gun into the vagina of a Somali woman who was tied to an armored vehicle. Other photos showed a group of women being whipped and the body of a Somali whose hand had been cut off.

Today the same troops who tortured and raped in Somalia are continuing the dirty work of Italian imperialism in Albania. The imperialist intervention in Albania, which also includes troops from France, Spain and other European countries, was cynically touted as providing “humanitarian aid,” but its real purpose is to disarm the population, halt the flow of Albanian refugees to Italy and consolidate an obedient client regime to enforce the exploitation of the Albanian masses by Italian capitalism. In a leaflet (translated in *WV* No. 666, 18 April) issued on the eve of the imperialist intervention last spring, the Lega Trotskista d’Italia (LTd’I), section of the International Communist League (ICL), demanded: “Italian imperialism, get your bloody hands off Albania! Full citizenship rights for the Albanian refugees and all immigrants!”

When a U.S.-led force, including troops from 18 countries, moved into Somalia under the fig leaf of United Nations sponsorship in late 1992, the ICL demanded: “Imperialist troops out of Somalia now!” Washington and its allies used the excuse of “humanitarian aid” and cynically called the mission “Operation Restore Hope.” Yet they brought rape, torture, and all the other barbarism that is inseparable from imperialist exploitation and bloody repression

of the colonial and neocolonial world. While liberals clamored for this intervention and various Western “socialists” provided a left cover for the imperialists’ “humanitarian” pretensions, it was clear from the outset that this occupation would inevitably mean racist atrocities against the Somali people.

American helicopter gunships massacred hundreds of unarmed men, women and children in the streets of the Somali capital of Mogadishu. One Italian soldier who recently came forward described a cold-blooded murder by U.S. troops in Mogadishu: “A Somali boy pointed a watergun at a truck of Marines. Three shots were fired from a rifle. Nothing remained of that boy.”

At the same time as the Somalia scandal was erupting in Italy, in Brussels the

Somalian being tortured by Italian troops in 1993.



Somali Land Mission

Italian military. The Prodi government appointed a “commission of inquiry” (which includes two generals!) in order to whitewash the crimes, while the minister of foreign affairs dismissed the torture and murder as “childish pranks!” This center-left government is dominated by the Party of the Democratic Left (PDS)

“nity” to oversee elections in that country. And while appealing for “limited and temporary legal papers” for Albanian refugees in Italy, the motion supported by the *Proposta* group called for “bringing criminal elements to justice and seeing to their expulsion.” Since in the eyes of bourgeois “public opinion” all Albanians are real or potential criminals, this amounts to supporting their deportation.

With *Proposta* covering its left flank, RC acts as an indispensable prop for the Prodi government, allowing it to carry out its imperialist depredations overseas and its racist and anti-working-class attacks at home. Since its election, the popular-front government has imposed one killer budget cut after another, repeatedly slashing medical care and pensions while increasing taxes, undermining safety regulations and instituting two-tier and even three-tier wage systems. Meanwhile, the “leftists” of the PDS and RC join the bourgeoisie in fomenting racist hysteria against immigrants and refugees. Last March, the Italian navy massacred 89 Albanian refugees, primarily women and children, when the warship *Sibilla* rammed a small boat that was taking them toward Puglia on the Italian coast. The survivors were then thrown into concentration camps and are threatened with deportation.

The recent atrocities in Somalia are but the latest chapter in the bloody history of Italian imperialism in the Horn of Africa. In 1890, Italian colonial troops in Somalia perpetrated a massacre of 400 people. Between 1935 and 1939, Mussolini’s troops murdered more than 700,000 people in the region, including through the massive use of poison gas. Mussolini’s German Nazi allies embraced this slaughter as a model. One of Hitler’s military officers wrote a study on the Italian rape of Abyssinia (Ethiopia) entitled “Military Aspects and Lessons of the First Colonial War of Annihilation.”

RC and the PDS wax indignant against any comparison between the Mussolini regime’s crimes and those of “democratic” Italian imperialism today. Whether under a fascist regime or with the trappings of bourgeois “democracy,” imperialism means brutal exploitation and oppression and bloody terror against colonial and semicolonial peoples. As the LTd’I recently wrote: “The army, together with the police, the courts, the prisons—the state power—is the system of force and violence which the capitalist class uses to maintain its class rule and defend private property. The capitalist army cannot be reformed or put to the service of the working class but must be split along class lines and replaced by the armed proletariat and soviet power according to the principle: Those who labor must rule” (*Spartaco* No. 50, March 1997). The LTd’I fights to build a revolutionary vanguard party in Italy as part of a reformed Fourth International, the world party of proletarian revolution. ■

## Imperialist Troops Out of Albania!



AP

Italian troops spearhead military intervention in Albania.

Belgian military command absolved two paratroopers who had been photographed roasting a Somali youth over a bonfire! In 1993, Belgian troops killed hundreds in the port of Kismayu, raping Somali women and throwing children into the Juba River to drown. Earlier, attempts by the Canadian high command to cover up murder and torture by units infested with KKK-type fascists provoked a scandal which brought down the defense minister and the head of the armed forces.

After *Panorama* published its photos of torture in Somalia, the Ulivo (Olive Tree) coalition government in Rome rushed to defend the “honor and reputation” of the

and actively supported by Rifondazione Comunista (RC), both heirs of the now-defunct reformist Communist Party.

RC leader Armando Cossutta lamely called for a “parliamentary inquiry,” “dissolution of the Folgore Brigade,” “resignation of the officers who commanded the unit” and for the president to “apologize to the Somali population” (*Corriere della Sera*, 14 June). RC would like to slap a few generals on the wrist while limiting responsibility for the crimes committed by Italian imperialism to the “reactionary nature” of a single military unit. They would like to disband the elite Folgore Brigade so the conscript imperialist army (“based on the Constitution”) would be better able to carry out imperialist repression in Albania, Bosnia and other countries. Last month, RC voted in the Italian parliament for extending the imperialist military occupation of Albania.

And within RC, the so-called “left wing” led by fake-Trotskyists Marco Ferrando and Franco Grisolia and grouped around the journal *Proposta*, has silently gone along with this open support to Italian imperialism’s military operations. Last April, this group voted in an RC leadership meeting for a majority motion which pleaded only to “delay the anticipated military mission” in Albania and called for “international observers of the UN, the OSCE [European “security” organization] and the European Commu-



Eidon/Reuters

Racist imperialist occupation of Somalia. U.S. soldier terrorizes Somali youth.

# Mexico...

(continued from page 1)

development," the most modern forms of concentrated industrial capitalist exploitation coexist with earlier forms of exploitation and oppression. In Mexico, elements of the Spanish colonial feudal heritage survive in the countryside—the *hacienda* (landed estates), peonage and the *tienda de raya* (stores that take scrip instead of money, to which many peasants are indebted for generations). In a country like Mexico, the national bourgeoisie is simply too weak and subordinated to imperialism to lead or support a fight to achieve basic democratic tasks, carry through an agrarian revolution, or break the yoke of imperialist subjugation.

The resolution of these tasks falls to the proletariat, through a socialist revolution which sweeps away the Mexican bourgeoisie, which has gorged itself on the blood of the plebeian masses, and through fighting to extend that revolution throughout the Americas, including to the powerful multiracial working class of the United States. This is the Trotskyist program of permanent revolution. The combative Mexican proletariat must enter the stage as a "class for itself"—fighting for state power—rallying behind it the most oppressed sections of the peasantry. The indispensable instrument for victory is a revolutionary proletarian party forged through intransigent struggle to break the working class and peasant masses from illusions in bourgeois nationalism. This means as well political combat against the reformists and centrists within the workers movement who actively foster illusions in the "left" nationalist PRD. The Grupo Espartaquista de México is committed to forging an internationalist Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party to lead the proletariat to power.

## Explosive Discontents Shake Capitalist Regime

Despite all the self-congratulation over a "democratic election," Mexico is anything but a stable bourgeois democracy. The electoral battering of the PRI, losing supporters both to its "left" and to its right, points to the sharp polarization of the country. The way for the PRI's electoral defeat was paved as legions of middle-level officials, professionals and small businessmen, among others, that were for decades the PRI's social base began to discreetly abandon it. As Cárdenas inherits part of the state machinery built by the PRI over the decades, with some cosmetic changes and new faces, the rightist PAN will be ready to capitalize on the fears of business owners and the discontent of the middle classes, whose savings were wiped out by the U.S.-engineered "peso crisis" and devaluation.

Recent mass protests in the capital by teachers reflect the growing desperation of the working class. The corporatist CTM's stranglehold over the proletariat has been coming unstuck, with a significant growth of "independent" unions and the formation of a breakaway "Forum for a New Trade Unionism" (*foristas*). Including the million-strong teachers union and the telephone and electrical workers unions, the *foristas* did not openly support the PRI in the last elections. And a couple of years ago, the PRI's slashing of funding and attempts to



PRD leader Cárdenas at meeting with Zapatista guerrilla leader Marcos (above). While petty-bourgeois EZLN looks to PRD as force for "democracy," Cárdenas stood by Mexican army as it bloodily suppressed peasant uprising in Chiapas and murdered captured rebels.

AFF

Castillo/Mic Photo Press



restrict access to higher education led to massive student protests.

Widespread outrage earlier this year over the persecution of Claudia Rodriguez for defending herself against rape threw an unusual spotlight on the oppression of women in this deeply male-chauvinist society. The grip of the Catholic church, a feudal remnant, over Mexican society means that women are brutally oppressed, particularly in the countryside. The ban on abortion—supported by a section of the PRD leadership—leads to the deaths of thousands of women each year as a result of botched illegal operations. At the same time, women have become an increasingly significant component of the proletariat in recent years, with 35 percent of all women of working age now in the labor force. This is even more true in the foreign-owned *maquiladora* plants near the U.S. border, where young women compose as much as 90 percent of the workforce in some factories. Working women's organizations have been emerging in these areas.

Much of the countryside is under a military state of siege, as the army has massacred peasants mercilessly in its war against the Zapatista (EZLN) guerrillas in Chiapas and the EPR (Popular Revolutionary Army) concentrated in Guerrero. With the PRI no longer having to take sole responsibility as a result of the PRD's electoral victory, the government may well push for a final military "solution" to the peasant insurgencies.

In Mexico City and above all in the working-class suburbs, the army has aug-

mented the police in joint operations to intimidate the impoverished population, while private paramilitary groups mushroom. Iztapalapa, a populous working-class neighborhood, has been subjected to a virtual state of siege by thousands of cops and troops. Meanwhile, Washington's militarization of the U.S. border, including demonstrative cold-blooded shootings of would-be immigrants, has narrowed that safety valve for desperate people seeking to flee the misery and hardship exacerbated by NAFTA.

There is certainly ample tinder for social conflagration in Mexico. The working class has grown explosively in recent years, from an earlier base limited largely to the extractive industries. *Maquiladora* workers in particular exemplify a layer which is characteristic of semicolonial countries generally, from Asia to Latin America: a new, young working class being subjected to intense exploitation, lacking basic union protection but also not subject to the control of any well-oiled machine of reformist co-optation. These workers are as well a concrete embodiment of the necessity to link up working-class struggles on both sides of the Río Bravo/Rio Grande.

Mexican society is highly unstable and increasingly polarized. Yet there has been no proletarian challenge to capitalist class rule. The reason for this lies in the continuing hegemony of bourgeois nationalism which, pointing to the plundering imperialists to the north, ties the masses to the illusion that they can join with some "anti-imperialist" section of the bourgeois class enemy in a fight for "democracy." While the radical peasant forces during the Mexican Revolution of 1910-17 were defeated, the victorious bourgeois forces found it necessary to co-opt the mantle and rhetoric of the Revolution to legitimize their regime. The nationalists seek to convince the workers that only "Yankee imperialism"—and not the Mexican bourgeoisie as well—is their enemy, cutting against the crucial need to ally with workers in the U.S. and elsewhere in order to defeat capitalism. In particular, the growing Latino sector of the U.S. proletariat, especially in the Southwest, can be a human bridge linking the struggles of the Mexican and North American workers.

Against the bourgeois nationalism

pushed by the trade-union bureaucrats and self-styled "socialist" groups, the GEM fights to win the working masses to an understanding of the fundamental identity of class interests of the proletarians of all countries. The hold of nationalist ideology in Mexico is reinforced by the treachery of the U.S. labor bureaucracy, which suppresses class struggle and instead pushes virulently chauvinist protectionism and fans the flames of anti-immigrant racism. In its fight to build a revolutionary party of the working class in the United States, the Spartacist League/U.S. denounces the NAFTA "free trade" rape of Mexico and seeks to mobilize the multiracial proletariat in defense of the rights of immigrants and all the oppressed. We fight to reforge a Trotskyist Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution.

## No Support to Bourgeois Nationalism—For Permanent Revolution!

As revolutionary Marxists, we are opposed in principle to any political support to bourgeois formations, such as the PRD in Mexico or the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa. This question is fundamental to a historic split in the workers movement, between those who fight for proletarian power and those who place their hopes in a "progressive" or "anti-imperialist" wing of the capitalist class.

In the early years of this century, the great Russian revolutionist Leon Trotsky developed the theory of permanent revolution as a projection of the likely course of revolutionary development in tsarist Russia. Understanding that the Russian bourgeoisie was incapable of leading a democratic revolution against the reactionary autocracy, Trotsky held that the revolution would be proletarian socialist in character. This was counterposed to the Menshevik view that the revolution would occur in distinct stages, beginning with a democratic revolution which would be limited to placing the liberal bourgeoisie in power.

In the 1917 October Revolution, under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party, the working class of Russia proved the validity of the theory of permanent revolution. The weak bourgeoisie, tied to domestic reaction and international imperialism, was incapable of a revolutionary struggle to accomplish the tasks associated with bourgeois-democratic revolutions in the epoch of rising capitalism (e.g., national independence, agrarian revolution). The proletariat was the only class capable of taking leadership of the nation to sweep away the tsarist autocracy and surviving feudal remnants. For this, the revolution had to be at the same time and from the outset a socialist revolution, establishing a dictatorship of the proletariat—workers class rule—which expropriated the bourgeoisie and sought to promote proletarian revolutions elsewhere, especially in the advanced imperialist countries.

Drawing the lessons of the Chinese Revolution of 1925-27, whose bloody defeat was ensured by Stalin's insistence that the Communist Party liquidate into the bourgeois-nationalist Guomindang (Kuomintang), Trotsky generalized the theory of permanent revolution as applicable to all colonial and semicolonial countries. As we will see, the common thread of reformist and centrist opportunism in such countries today is the rejection of this perspective in favor of the Menshevik/Stalinist schema which politically ties the proletariat to a section of the bourgeoisie in the name of "two-stage" revolution. History has shown what this treacherous schema means in practice: in the first stage the proletariat rallies behind the liberal bourgeoisie, and in the second stage the liberal bourgeoisie massacres the communists.

## Trade Unions in Semicolonial Countries

In many countries with mass reformist workers parties, as in West Europe, a favored form of class collaboration is the popular front, an electoral coalition

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## Spartacist Forums

### Eyewitness Report

## South Africa: The Struggle for Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

• Nationalism Is the Enemy of Women's Liberation  
• For a Black-Centered Workers Government! • Forge a Bolshevik Party!

LOS ANGELES

SAN FRANCISCO

UC BERKELEY

Saturday, August 23, 4 p.m.  
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6817 Franklin Avenue  
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Thursday, August 28, 6 p.m.  
Location to be announced.  
For more information: (415) 777-9367

Thursday, September 4, 7 p.m.  
Location to be announced.  
For more information: (510) 839-0851

# Mexico...

(continued from page 5)

tying the workers organizations to bourgeois parties. In cases like Nelson Mandela's South Africa, with its "tripartite alliance" of the ANC, the Communist Party and the COSATU trade-union federation, such cross-class coalitions can take the form of a *nationalist popular front*. However in Mexico, the subordination of the proletariat to the bourgeoisie has been particularly naked, with the trade-union movement *directly tied to bourgeois nationalism*. As in many semicolonial countries, Mexico has not seen the development of even a reformist mass party of the working class (like the British Labour Party, the French Communists or the German Social Democrats). In the 1930s the workers were organized into *corporatist* unions (directly linked to the state) and considered the "worker sector" of the PRI and its predecessors. This reflected also the particular destiny of the defeated Mexican Revolution of 1910.

In his unfinished 1940 manuscript on "Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay," Trotsky quite precisely described the relations between the proletariat and a bourgeois-nationalist regime which claims to oppose the depredations of imperialism:

"Colonial and semicolonial countries are under the sway, not of native capitalism but of foreign imperialism. However, this does not weaken but, on the contrary, strengthens the need of direct, daily, practical ties between the magnates of capitalism and the governments which are in essence subject to them—the governments of colonial or semicolonial countries. Inasmuch as imperialist capitalism creates both in colonies and semicolonies a stratum of labour aristocracy and bureaucracy, the latter requires the support of colonial and semicolonial governments, as protectors, patrons and, sometimes, as arbitrators....

"The feebleness of the national bourgeoisie, the absence of traditions of municipal self-government, and the pressure of foreign capitalism, and the relatively rapid growth of the proletariat, cut the ground from under any kind of stable democratic regime. The governments of backward, i.e., colonial and semicolonial countries by and large assume a Bonapartist or semi-Bonapartist character; and differ from one another in this, that some try to orient in a democratic direction, seeking support among workers and peasants, while others install a form close to military-police dictatorship. This likewise determines the fate of the trade unions. They either stand under the special patronage of the state or they are subjected to cruel persecution."

The death of CTM "dinosaur" Fidel Velázquez brought to the surface frictions long contained at the top of this *charro* (bureaucratic) federation and in the umbrella Congress of Labor (CT). Since the early 1980s, with the so-called "debt crisis" and the beginning of brutal plans for mass layoffs and reprivatizations of nationalized industries, the old CTM unions lost much of their social base and their privileges. But their ties to the old regime were so strong that they preferred to lose part of their power rather than seek a greater distance from the regime. The implementation of NAFTA was another blow at the position of these *charros*, who in many cases became simple *pistoleros*,



Ruben R. Ramirez

**Militant women strikers at RCA Thomson maquiladora plant in Ciudad Juárez, February 1995.**

finks or labor contractors.

The early 1990s saw a rabid bourgeois offensive against union organizations, even including the loyal CTM unions which had flourished under the shelter of state corporatism. The jailing of oil workers' leader Joaquín "La Quina" Hernández was one crude example of bourgeois union-busting against the *charro* unions themselves. The attacks on so-called independent or dissident unions at Cananea, Ford and Volkswagen and the SUTAU bus workers union in Mexico City were even more brutal.

The unraveling of the PRI stranglehold on Mexican political life and the emergence of the *foristas* and unions independent of the corporatist CTM (and the increasing "unreliability" of even some of the CTM unions, shown for example by their defying the ban on May Day demonstrations in recent years) will certainly arouse the hopes of the plebeian masses for some alteration of their desperate situation. But in the absence of a revolutionary party fighting for the political independence of the working class, the workers and their organizations will continue to be pawns for the parliamentary ambitions of bourgeois-nationalist politicians. As Cárdenas seeks to generate a more "populist" and "national" face for this regime of bourgeois austerity, he can count on political support from "independent" unions. While organizationally independent of the PRI-loyal CTM, these unions are no more politically independent of capitalism than the unions in the United States, which are tied to the capitalist Democratic Party.

Likewise the peasant-guerrilla movements see in Cárdenas their only hope of mitigating the brutal repression. Yet the PRD explicitly solidarized with the armed forces against the Zapatistas in 1994 and later condemned the EPR as it was being encircled by the army in Guerrero. Now Gustavo Landeros, a brigadier general on the PRD's National Executive Committee, has again declared that "the Mexican Army in Chiapas has acted in conformity with the law" (*El Fianciero*, 2 July). Thus does the PRD underline its loyalty to the capitalist state and the repressive institutions for safe-

guarding capitalist property (the cops, army, jails, courts)—the "special bodies of armed men," as Engels called them—which constitute the core of the state.

Meanwhile, the organizations of the Mexican "left" act as a last line of defense for bourgeois nationalism, seeking to pull back into the fold those class-conscious workers looking for a socialist alternative to the politics of the PRI/PRD. From the inception of Cárdenas' movement, these groups have fostered the deadly illusion that the PRD is (or can be "pressured" to behave as) a friend of the workers and the leader of the fight for "democracy." Today, euphoria over the PRD's victory



Cambio 16

**Impoverished shantytown outside Mexico City. To fight deepening immiseration of Mexican masses requires sweeping away capitalist rule.**

agitates and excites the reformist and centrist left, which prattles about the "exceptional" character and the "mass influence" of the PRD, thereby justifying their own capitulation to this bourgeois party.

## Opportunist Leftists in the Shadow of the Bourgeois PRD

In Mexico, the Stalinist Communist Party, consistently applying their policy of subordination to the class enemy in the name of "democracy" and "anti-imperialism," simply liquidated outright into bourgeois nationalism without leaving any trace. And various pseudo-Trotskyist groups have for years sown illusions in the advent of a "democratic revolution" headed by the Cárdenas "opposition to the PRI." If, in this election, they did not call for a vote to the PRD it was only because Cárdenas had so openly backed away from his "anti-imperialist" rhetoric by embracing NAFTA and wooing Wall Street.

One example is the Mexican supporters of the United Secretariat (USec) of the late Ernest Mandel. After a whole section had already simply liquidated into the Cardenistas, the Mexican USec group disintegrated after supporting the PRD in the 1994 elections, as one wing went over to the petty-bourgeois Zapatistas. Recently, the USec remnants—joined by leftovers from the defunct Stalinist organization—regrouped in the Liga de Unidad Socialista (LUS). The LUS signed a joint declaration for the elections with

the Morenoite Partido Obrero Socialista-Zapatista (POS-Z) calling for "voiding the ballots." That declaration contains a long-winded, resentful discourse against Cárdenas' promises to carry out the austerity policies demanded by the U.S. imperialists.

That this alienation from Cárdenas is tactical and temporary is shown by a LUS statement upholding their political support to the PRD in 1994: "On that occasion, the democratic and revolutionary sectors, tacitly supported by the EZLN, bet on the 'useful vote' and it was given to Cárdenas" (*Umbral*, March 1997). Pretending that the PRD was ever something other than the tame bourgeois-nationalist "opposition" that it is, the LUS now laments that it "has become an integral part of the Mexican political system, rather than remaining firm as a revolutionary refuter and challenger of the same."

While the Morenoites didn't vote for the PRD in 1994—costing them a split in which half of their group, now UNIOS, went for Cárdenas—they nonetheless backed the PRD in a more indirect fashion. The POS-Z called at the time for a vote to the petty-bourgeois Zapatistas, although as was predictable the EZLN decided not to run in the elections in order not to take away votes from the PRD. Now the POS-Z shouts with joy, "22 million against the PRI" (*El Socialista*, July 1997), and proposes a program for "democratic revolution" under a Cárdenas government.

In practice, these "Trotskyists" all serve to tie the proletariat to the bourgeois

"opposition" with various "leftist" rationales, backing Cárdenas either directly or through building illusions in the Zapatistas, who represent the most radical current expression of bourgeois nationalism. While defending the EZLN/EPR against murderous state repression, Marxists give no *political* support to such peasant-based petty-bourgeois formations. These groups are in essence nothing more than petty-bourgeois liberals with guns, seeking to pressure the existing capitalist state to be more "democratic." Relying on an atomized peasantry with no coherent class interests, the guerrillaist strategy, however courageous its supporters, is incapable of breaking the chains of capitalist and imperialist enslavement.

A somewhat more leftist version of the same fundamental politics promoted by the POS-Z and LUS is presented by a centrist split from the Morenoites, the Liga de Trabajadores por el Socialismo (LTS). The LTS is allied with the Argentine Partido de los Trabajadores por el Socialismo and is currently linked to the Workers Power grouping in England. The LTS' favored device to cozy up to the bourgeois PRD is to discover the existence of a popular front around Cárdenas, although it is unable to explain what are the components of this "popular front." This enables the LTS to orient to Cárdenas in the guise of looking for a purported "working-class" sector of the PRD. Just as the other centrists now distance themselves somewhat from



**Former Mexican president Lázaro Cárdenas (center), father of current PRD leader. While defending his nationalization of foreign-owned oil companies in the 1930s, Trotskyists gave no political support to this bourgeois nationalist.**

Cárdenas; the LTS complains that the PRD provides “democratic” covering” for the PRI regime (*Estrategia Obrera*, May 1997). But in a joint leaflet with the LTS to striking teachers earlier this year, the LTS did not so much as mention, much less denounce, the PRD! Yet it was because the PRD did not want any mass unrest in the run-up to the elections that the mobilizations around the teachers strike were stopped.

Under certain circumstances, revolutionists can raise the demand that workers organizations in a popular front break their alliance with the bourgeoisie. But the PRD is not a popular front. The LTS sleight of hand therefore dissolves into calling upon Cárdenas to break with the big bourgeoisie and the imperialists and lead the workers in struggle! When Cárdenas raised a few tepid criticisms of the then-impending NAFTA pact four years ago, the LTS proclaimed: “If he declared himself against the Agreement, it would be necessary to demand not that he sign a paper but that he call on the mobilization of the Mexican workers” (*Alternativa Socialista*, September-October 1993). While claiming that this demand would “unmask him before the masses,” the LTS was itself fueling the masses’ illusions in Cárdenas as an “anti-imperialist” workers’ leader.

### IG Discards Permanent Revolution

At bottom, these politics are a repudiation of the Trotskyist program of permanent revolution in favor of a fictitious “anti-imperialist united front” with one or another section of the nationalist bourgeoisie. At the tail end of the syphilitic chain of subordination to Mexican bourgeois nationalism is a new entrant on the political scene: the “Internationalist Group” (IG), formed a year ago by a small group of defectors in the U.S. and Mexico expelled from our international party. In earlier articles, we have characterized the fundamental politics of this outfit as “Pabloism of the second mobilization,” noting that they look “to adapt to various non-revolutionary forces” (“Potemkin Village Idiocy,” *Espartaco* No. 9, Spring-Summer 1997; translated from *WV* No. 663, 7 March).

Under the impact of bourgeois triumphalism over the “death of communism,” the quintessentially petty-bourgeois IG despairs of the fight for a revolutionary party to lead the proletariat in the conquest of state power. Instead, they seek to prettify the existing consciousness of the workers and to convince themselves that, somehow, revolutionary struggles are imminent and can triumph without revolutionary leadership.

In order to attack the ICL, an IG leaflet (5 May) titled “To Fight the Popular Front You Have to Recognize That It Exists” takes the same tack as the centrist LTS, insisting at great length on the existence of a vaguely defined “Cardenista popular front.” At one point they seem to imply that the National Democratic Convention (CND)—an assembly called by the Zapatistas two years ago as an overture to the PRD—proved the existence of a popular front. Elsewhere, they point to the candidacy on the PRD slate of SUTAU union lawyer Benito Mirón Lince and to the “several union speakers” who spoke alongside Cárdenas at the May Day rally of the Intersindical (dissident unionists). By the same logic, one could even more forcefully define the PRI as a popular front or, for that matter, the Democratic Party in the U.S. Or what about the Peronists, the main party of the Argentine bourgeoisie, which controls a majority of the unions there?

In a July 25 Web posting, the IG again denounces the GEM for “now denying there is a *popular front* around Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas’ Party of the Democratic Revolution.” It is self-serving in the extreme for the IG to claim that the ICL’s principled opposition to the bourgeois-nationalist PRD constitutes a “new line” in any sense of the term. But the anti-Spartacist diatribes of the IG have been a sometimes useful goad to re-examining



Opportunist left has fostered illusions in “left” bourgeois nationalism. At 1988 rally, Mexican USec spokesman cheered: “Viva Cárdenas!”

and clarifying our past propaganda.

When Cárdenas’ grouping emerged from the PRI, it didn’t bring with it any section of the PRI unions. In contrast to the Stalinists and other reformists, who capitulated to Cárdenas and his Democratic National Front (FDN), we sharply denounced the class-collaborationist character of the FDN, and later the PRD. However, it was wrong to characterize the Cardenistas at any point as a popular front, as we did on a number of occasions over the years. The FDN had been merely the electoral vehicle for the consolidation of a new bourgeois party, the PRD. Perhaps we should thank the IG for its emphatic centrist refusal to call things by their right names, thereby help-



New York City protest against bloody army repression in Chiapas, 1994.

ing us to sharpen up the analytical and terminological underpinnings of our own uncompromising revolutionary political line.

What can be the *purpose* of the IG’s insistence on the supposed existence of a “popular front” around the PRD? It is perhaps instructive to consider that Stalin justified the suicidal liquidation of the Chinese Communists into the Guomindang by baptizing that bourgeois-nationalist party a “bloc of four classes.” Writing of this in *The Third International After Lenin* (1928), Trotsky said:

“The celebrated idea of ‘workers’ and peasants’ parties’ seems to have been specially created to camouflage bourgeois parties which are compelled to seek support from the peasantry but who are also ready to absorb workers into their ranks. The Kuomintang has entered the annals of history for all time as a classic type of such a party.”

In the process of seeking to defend its characterization of the Cardenistas as a popular front, the IG in effect liquidates any distinction between the proletariat—which Marxists understand is the only class with the social power and consistent class interest to *lead* the fight against capitalist class rule—and petty-bourgeois forces. Thus the IG lists the organized working class as just one more of an amorphous series of “rebellious sectors” as it speaks of “the subordination to the PRD of a whole range of trade-union, peasant, student, slum dwellers”, women’s and other organizations which do not form an organic part of that party.” Where we say clearly that the PRD is a bourgeois-nationalist party and

explicitly counterpose the need for a revolutionary party of the proletariat, the IG opens the door to discovering a hoped-for substitute for the revolutionary proletariat in student radicals, insurgent peasants or whatever is in motion at a given moment. Indeed, with this line the IG could define the petty-bourgeois guerrillaists of the EZLN as part of the workers movement.

Denying the centrality of the proletariat is tantamount to renouncing the program of permanent revolution. Indeed, it is notable that in its May 5 statement—its first piece of propaganda in Spanish—the IG “forgets” to say anything about the strategic importance of *permanent revolution* for countries like Mexico, which are subordinated to imperialism. They mention it at all only to complain that we denounced them for “forgetting” it in their earlier articles. As we observed in “Potemkin Village Idiocy” in reference to the IG, “Those who reject this perspective necessarily end up promoting or apologizing for cross-class blocs—popular fronts—with sections of the ‘national’ bourgeoisie in the name of an ‘anti-imperialist united front.’” To dump permanent revolution is a necessary precondition to the efforts at centrist “regroupment” with one or another denizen of the pro-PRD swamp which lie ahead for the IG in Mexico.

In an earlier polemic, the IG took exception to our having pointed to the heritage of feudal peonage in the Mexican countryside. In our response, in “Potemkin Village Idiocy,” we pointed out that the only reason for the IG to bridle at this elementary Marxist observation is to shed the theory of permanent revolution. We noted that in practice this position “can only mean that the revolutionary proletariat and its vanguard party cede leadership of the struggle around this [agrarian revolution] and issues such as debt peonage and racism against the Indian peasant population to peasant-guerrilla populists like the Zapatistas.”

The IG’s repudiation in practice of the fight for the class independence of the proletariat in semicolonial countries was sharply expressed in the issue which prompted it to bring its centrist politics out into the open and break from the ICL. This was their passion to serve as

apologists for the Luta Metalúrgica/Liga Quarta-Internacionalista group of Brazil (LM/LQB), with which the ICL formerly had fraternal relations. After losing a base in the steel workers union in the industrial city of Volta Redonda, the LM group turned to the municipal workers union, whose members include a large contingent of the murderous racist *cops*. Despite having no members in the union at the time, the LM/LQB became advisers to a grouping within its leadership and helped to braintrust a “leftist” slate of candidates whose (minimally distributed) electoral platform referred abstractly and in passing to the danger of cops in the unions but said nothing about the cops in *this particular union!* Moreover, the LQB went on to drag this union through the capitalist courts (see “Caught in a Web of Lies,” page 14).

### Forge a Proletarian Vanguard Party!

Revolutionary Marxists must fight for class-struggle unions, organized on the basis of industrial unionism and politically independent of the capitalist state and the capitalist political parties—not only the fairly decrepit PRI but equally the more dynamic and popular PRD. This includes as well a struggle to oust cops from the Mexican labor movement, including in “independent” unions like the Mexico City UNAM university workers and teachers union. The fight for genuine independence of the workers organizations from the bourgeoisie requires the forging of a revolutionary workers party.

The proletarian vanguard must lead the fight against all manifestations of social oppression, serving as a “tribune of the people.” We fight for free abortion on demand as part of the struggle against the brutal oppression of women. This is integrally linked to the struggle to lift the heavy hand of the Catholic church, which foments reaction and bigotry throughout Mexican society, and to the call for full rights for homosexuals. Against the growing moves to turn the universities into elite preserves of the ruling class, we fight for open admissions and a living stipend for all students. Centrally, a revolutionary workers party must rally behind the proletariat the downtrodden rural masses, particularly including the deeply oppressed indigenous peoples. The working class must be mobilized to defend peasants against eviction by large landholders, and to lead a struggle for a thoroughgoing agrarian revolution.

The social power of the working class can be liberated only when the workers themselves, led by their revolutionary party, break the chains of subordination to bourgeois politics and the bourgeoisie’s reformist lieutenants, who tie the workers’ consciousness to the interests of the “national” bosses. Inculcating in the working class the need to embrace the program of permanent revolution and proletarian internationalism is the task of the communist proletarian party that Trotsky fought to build, in sharp struggle against every variety of reformist and centrist obstacles. That is the struggle of the International Communist League. ■

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# Young Spartacus

We publish below an edited transcript of a presentation by Spartacist League Central Committee member George Foster at an SL regional educational in New York City earlier this year.

The *Communist Manifesto* of 1848 opens with the statement that a spectre is haunting Europe, the spectre of communism. Today the world's bourgeoisies, particularly the American, would have you believe that communism is dead and that mankind is at the "end of history." The imperialists of course are still celebrating the recent destruction of the Soviet Union, ignominiously served up to them by Stalinism. But if you strip away their ideological hype and examine their deeds, we see the capitalist rulers are still haunted by the October Revolution of 1917, by that same old spectre of 1848. For the greatest confirmation of the *Manifesto* was precisely the Russian October Revolution of 1917, a revolution which inscribed on its banner the *Manifesto's* concluding slogan: "Workers of the World, Unite!"

Communism is far from dead. One need only examine the pathology of contemporary capitalism through the prism of the *Communist Manifesto* to see the great prescience of this document, which marked the programmatic founding of modern communism.

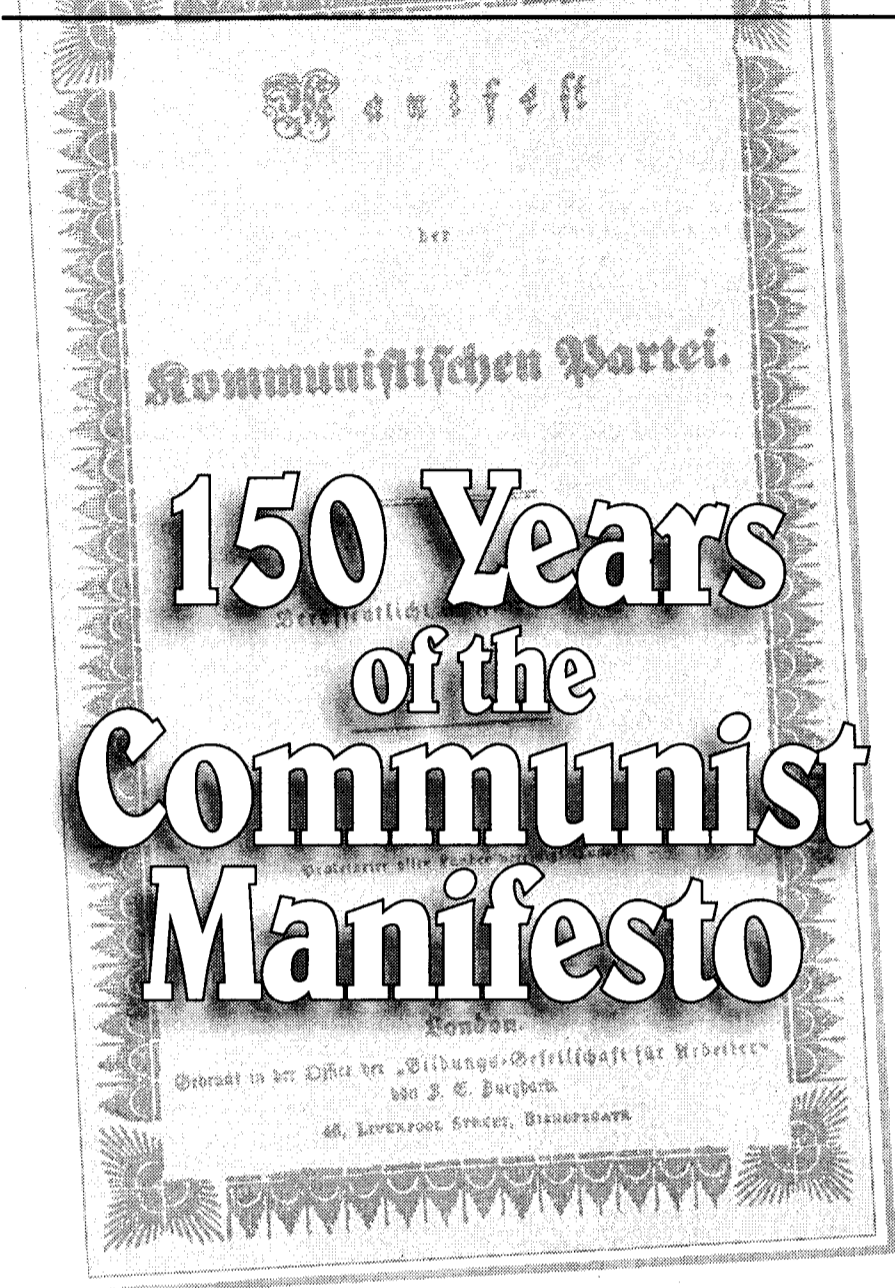
Thus in this supposed period of the "death of communism," the Chicago police are actively campaigning to reconstitute their Red Squad, a unit that was formally disbanded some years ago. The example is trivial, but nonetheless characteristic of the current period. Since the destruction of the Soviet Union, the capitalists everywhere have been running amok, feeling there is nothing to restrain them. In an expression of intensified interimperialist rivalry and competition, the bourgeoisies have been ratcheting up the rate of exploitation of the working class across Europe, North America, Asia and Latin America. This has led to accelerating impoverishment of working people around the world, as the few grow even richer.

Hand in hand with this accumulating social tension, we see another feature of present-day capitalism—a massive increase in the forces of state repression. In the United States, this vastly augmented police apparatus has become a patently parasitic and self-conscious layer, part of an immense system of capitalist injustice which has consigned a whole generation of minority and immigrant youth to the hellholes of prison. More and more, the bourgeoisie cultivates chauvinism and racism to divide and weaken the working class and to sap its revolutionary will. And commensurately, there is a sinister resurgence of extreme reaction in the form of fascist bands, capitalism's last line of defense. The bourgeoisie's real motto is not that "communism is dead"; it's "October 1917—never again!"

## Origins of the Communist Manifesto

The *Communist Manifesto* is one of the first two mature works of Marxism and the founding document of the communist movement. It was commissioned in November 1847 by the Communist League, a small international organization of proletarian-artisan communists, as its statement of principles. The most famous account of the genesis of the *Manifesto* is one written in 1885 by Marx's lifelong collaborator and comrade-in-arms, Friedrich Engels. The Bolshevik David Ryazanov, founder of the Marx-Engels Institute in Moscow, gave an amusing synopsis of this account in

## SPARTACIST EDUCATIONAL



his short 1927 book, *Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels*:

"Engels' story can be summarised as follows: Once there lived Marx and Engels, two German philosophers and politicians, who were forced to abandon their native land. They lived in France and they lived in Belgium. They wrote learned books, which first attracted the attention of the intelligentsia, and then fell into the hands of the workers. One

fine morning the workers turned to these two savants who had been sitting in their cloisters remote from the loathsome business of practical activity and, as was proper for the guardians of scientific thought, had been proudly awaiting the coming of the workers. And the day arrived; the workers came and invited Marx and Engels to enter their League. But Marx and Engels declared that they would join the League only on condition that the League accept their programme.



The *Manifesto* was published as the revolutions of 1848 erupted across Europe. Workers defend barricades in Frankfurt, Germany.

The workers agreed, they organised the Communist League and forthwith proceeded to authorise Marx and Engels to prepare the *Communist Manifesto*."

What Ryazanov objects to in Engels' account is that it overlooks the very persistent organizational efforts from 1845 onwards, especially by Marx, to win proletarian communists to his and Engels' views. In addition to being very far-sighted thinkers, both Marx and Engels were active revolutionists who early on had links to the forebear of the Communist League, the League of the Just. Engels had also sought links with militant workers gathered in the Chartist movement in Britain, where he had done ground-breaking work on the conditions of life of the proletariat under modern capitalism.

Particularly as their ideas began to solidify in 1845-46, Marx and Engels sought out working-class communists with the aim of forging an organization around those ideas, an organization that from its outset was to be built upon an international foundation. One should understand that at the time there was a clear distinction drawn between communism and socialism. Socialism was considered a bourgeois doctrine, identified with the various experimental/utopian and reformist schemes of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideologues. The communists clearly defined themselves as those who were for the revolutionary overthrow of the existing order and for the establishment of an egalitarian society. The communism of that era originated in a far-left split from French Jacobinism, exemplified by Gracchus Babeuf and Filippo Buonarroti.

The League of the Just consisted of workers, mainly exiled German artisans, located in London, Brussels, Paris and a few outposts in Germany. These were not mainly modern proletarians working in large-scale mechanized factories. But nonetheless, and to their credit, they were won over to Marx and Engels' conceptions of the nature of modern capitalist society. The League of the Just had inscribed on its banner the slogan, "All Men Are Brothers!" When it embraced Marx's standpoint and transformed itself into the Communist League, it adopted the *Manifesto's* ringing call, "Workers of the World, Unite!"

When the *Manifesto* was commissioned in November 1847, everyone was expecting that Europe was about to erupt in revolution. Yet despite this widely felt sense of urgency Marx, as was apparently his wont, took some time to write this document. He was then living in exile in Brussels, while the leadership of the Communist League resided in London. In late January, they sent Marx a testy and impatient letter which read:

"The Central Committee hereby directs the District Committee of Brussels to notify Citizen Marx that if the *Manifesto* of the Communist Party, which he consented, at the last Congress, to draw up, does not reach London before Tuesday, February 1, further measures will be taken against him. In case Citizen Marx does not write the *Manifesto*, the central committee requests the immediate return of the documents which were turned over to him by the congress."

The letter and the *Manifesto* crossed in the mail, the latter arriving literally just in time for the outbreak of the expected revolution. It first erupted in Switzerland, spreading rapidly to Italy and Paris, and from there to the Rhineland, then Prussia, thence to Austria and Hungary.

The *Manifesto* was worth the wait. It really is the first systematic explication of scientific socialism, of what modern communism stands for. As Engels explained in 1883, the year Marx died, the basic thought in the *Manifesto*—



which "belongs solely and exclusively to Marx"—was the understanding that the "economic production and structure of society of every historical epoch necessarily arising therefrom constitute the foundation for the political and intellectual history of the epoch; that consequently (ever since the dissolution of primeval communal ownership of land) all history has been a history of class struggles, of struggles between exploited and exploiting, between dominated and dominating classes at various stages of social development; that this struggle, however, has now reached a stage where the exploited and oppressed class (the proletariat) can no longer emancipate itself from the class which exploits and oppresses it (the bourgeoisie), without at the same time forever freeing the whole of society from exploitation, oppression and class struggles."

The previous systems of egalitarianism, of primitive communism based on distribution, of the sundry utopian and reform schemes of various ideologues earlier in the 19th century, were superseded. The whole understanding of society was placed by Marx on a materialist basis.

### The Rise of Modern Industrial Capitalism

Marx's views did not spring from his brow ready made, but were the result of study, struggle and historical experience. Russian revolutionary leader V.I. Lenin noted that the three constituent parts of Marxism were classical German philosophy, classical English political economy, and French socialism as it was up to that time, including its organizational doctrines. That is to say, Marxism could not have arisen as a set of ideas at some earlier juncture of history, but rather grew both out of its historical antecedents and the real material conditions and struggles of the time, including those of the very new industrial working class.

Capitalism had been around in its mercantile form for well over two centuries before the *Manifesto* was written, but it was just then beginning to extend and transform itself outside of Britain into modern large-scale industrial manufacture ("machinofacture"), using instruments such as steam power to mass-produce goods in the factory system. In 1847, Britain had 850 miles of railroad. That was to increase by several orders of magnitude over the next 25 years.

The *Manifesto* makes the point that the history of all human society, past and present, has been the history of class struggle. The recognition of the role of class struggle was not a discovery of Marx. Bourgeois historians of the Great French Revolution had begun to view the class struggle as important in history. In a letter to his comrade Joseph Weydemeyer in 1852, Marx explained what his specific contribution had been:

"What I did that was new was to prove: 1) that the *existence of classes* is only bound up with *particular historical phases in the development of production*, 2) that the class struggle necessarily leads to *the dictatorship of the proletariat*, 3) that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the *abolition of all classes* and to a *classless society*."



During the 1848 revolutions, Marx and Engels used the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* as a platform for revolutionary politics.



The Great French Revolution of 1789: working women of Paris lead march on Versailles.

This is a very succinct summing up of the *Manifesto*. Commenting on this statement, Lenin observed that the theory of the class struggle is in fact acceptable to the bourgeoisie, that those who only recognize the class struggle are not Marxists but still operate within the bounds of bourgeois thinking and bourgeois politics. What is unacceptable to the bourgeoisie is Marx's recognition that this class struggle must lead to the dictatorship of the proletariat, and from there to the abolition of class society. This is the main distinction between the doctrines of Marx and those of the reformists and the various schools of bourgeois historiography.

### Dialectical Materialism vs. Idealism

Following publication of the *Manifesto*, Marx spent the rest of his years elaborating and refining and, where necessary, correcting the conceptions he had developed in the light of his subsequent experiences, struggles and study. Materialism is at the core of Marxism. Marx rejected all forms of idealism, the doctrine that thought is primary and the world is simply a reflection of thought. Religion, metaphysical idealism, social Darwinism, etc., are all in different ways expressions of the false consciousness of the ruling class and its various strata.

Engels succinctly summarized the anti-metaphysical, dialectical materialist outlook of Marxism:

"The world is not to be comprehended as a complex of ready-made *things*, but as a complex of *processes* in which things, apparently stable no less than their mind image in our heads, the concepts, go through uninterrupted change of coming into being and passing away."

Engels goes on to say, "But to acknowledge this fundamental thought in words and to apply it in reality in detail to each domain of investigation are two different things." Lenin put it a little more pithily when he observed that a formal knowledge of dialectics will help you to think about the world as much as a knowledge of physiology will aid your digestion of food.

To understand phenomena they must be examined in their concrete mediations, in their interrelationships, in their contradictions and development, in their totality. Thus the dialectical philosophy that Marx and Engels took from Hegel and firmly anchored in materialism accepts nothing as final, absolute or sacred. As Engels noted, in commenting on the revolutionary kernel contained in Hegel's philosophy, dialectics "reveals the transitory character of everything and in everything and nothing can endure before it except the uninterrupted process of becoming and passing away. And dialectical philosophy itself is nothing more than the mere reflection of this process in the thinking brain."

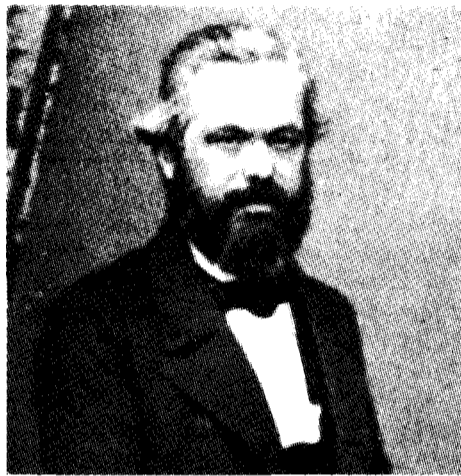
What Marx set out to do—and accomplished—was to bring the science of society into harmony with its materialist foundations. The bourgeoisie, particularly in its current state of decay and despair, does everything to obfuscate the point.

It is inconceivable that one could have Marxism without certain key developments in modern science and production. The proletariat is a historically deter-

mined class, one unknown in its modern form in previous historical periods. As Marx noted:

"In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces."

Marx stated that the sum total of the relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society. On this foundation arises a legal and political



Beard



Dietz Verlag Berlin

Communist revolutionaries Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, founders of scientific socialism.

superstructure and corresponding forms of social consciousness.

This is the fundamental discovery of Marx. You cannot really understand modern society or any society without adopting such a viewpoint. Marxism represents an enormous leap in human understanding. Previously the study of history had concentrated on the role of individuals or ideologies or religions. But such study really did not lay bare the dynamics and processes. For the first time, Marxism gave the working class the tools to understand society and to change it.

Thus in the *Manifesto* Marx cogently explains what capitalism is, how this new system came into being, and why and how it was revolutionizing the relations of production, revolutionizing the relations between people, revolutionizing the planet. The *Manifesto* focuses on the

capitalist organization of production in which labor power is treated as a commodity on the market. The workers have nothing to sell but their labor power, the capitalists have capital. Marx shows that the source of surplus value (profit) is really an appropriation of part of that labor power by the capitalists.

Commodity exchange per se does not generate surplus value. A commodity is exchanged for money, which is really concentrated labor power. But the profit made from the sale of that commodity does not come from the exchange itself but from the value of the labor invested in its production. A worker who works 12 hours a day has to work maybe six hours producing goods that when exchanged on the market will cover the cost of reproducing his labor. The other six hours of his work is solely for the benefit of the capitalist, who appropriates this surplus.

### The Revolutions of 1848

As I noted, the *Manifesto* appeared coincident with the onset of the great European-wide wave of revolutions in 1848, but nevertheless too late to have much of an impact on the actual course of events. When revolution erupted in Paris in late February, a frightened Bel-

gian government expelled the communist exiles living in Brussels. Marx and his comrades moved to Paris and began actively preparing for intervention into the revolutionary events that had quickly spilled over into Germany.

German workers had congregated in Paris in large numbers, and there were intense debates about how to intervene in the unfolding German revolution. One group, led by Georg Herwegh and the Russian anarchist Mikhail Bakunin, organized a revolutionary legion to invade Germany. Marx instead argued for revolutionaries to enter Germany individually in order to participate in the upheaval. Herwegh and Bakunin pressed ahead with their legion, which was soundly defeated at the border by Prussian troops. Meanwhile Marx, Engels and

*continued on page 10*



The cruel face of capitalist exploitation. Child labor in Britain during the Industrial Revolution.

# Communist Manifesto...

(continued from page 9)

their comrades proceeded as planned, with Marx and Engels ending up in Cologne, in the Rhineland.

Cologne was chosen for a number of reasons. The revolutionary upsurge was tolerated by the local bourgeoisie, who in fact petitioned the Prussian autocracy in Berlin to grant concessions. Cologne was the most developed part of Germany. It was also the site of the first radical political organ of the German bourgeoisie, the 1842 *Rheinische Zeitung* edited by Marx. All in all, it was the place which promised more freedom of action and a greater latitude for propaganda and agitation.

Rather than attempt the immediate organization of a communist party, Marx and Engels planned to utilize the radical bourgeois-democratic organizations as a means of cohering workingmen's circles. Thus during the initial period of the 1848 German Revolution, Marx and Engels blocked with and entered the extreme left wing of the bourgeois democracy. Acting as open communists, they managed to capture the central organ of the radical bourgeoisie, the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, transforming it into an organ of the German proletariat—a point that did not escape the notice of the bourgeois democrats. Within a few months, all of the paper's original stockholders had abandoned them.

Marx and Engels' orientation put them at organizational cross-purposes with the Cologne Workingmen's Union, which embraced most of the city's workers. It was led by a physician named Gottschalk, who, though not a communist, opposed any cooperation with the bourgeoisie. At the same time, Marx's supporters were also an active faction within this formation.

Marx and Engels expected the German bourgeois revolution to be the immediate precursor of a proletarian revolution. Their perspective, as outlined in the *Manifesto*, was to join hands in the first instance with the revolutionary wing of the German bourgeoisie "against the absolute monarchy, the feudal squirearchy, and the petty bourgeoisie."

The revolutionaries of the time, including Marx, based themselves on the experience of the Great French Revolution of 1789. The French Revolution was a protracted affair. From 1789, when the Parisian masses stormed the Bastille, the revolution moved through a series of increasingly radical stages. In 1792, the threat of an invasion by a counterrevolutionary coalition of European powers galvanized the population, leading to the proclamation of the Republic. The following year, the king was executed and the left-wing Jacobins came to power under conditions of revolutionary war. Marx and Engels believed that a democratic revolution and universal suffrage in the circumstances of 1848 would lead quickly to the rule of the proletariat and the expropriation of the bourgeoisie.

The course of the 1848 Revolutions



Rosspen

David Ryazanov edited an authoritative annotated version of the *Communist Manifesto*.



New York Public Library

1839 Chartist uprising in Wales, drowned in blood by British troops. Above: Chartist leader Fergus O'Connor.

was in fact quite different. In France, the peasantry voted in a reactionary government that provoked and then crushed the Parisian proletariat in the so-called "June days." Several thousand workers were killed, and more were imprisoned or exiled to distant penal colonies. Fear of the proletariat would in short order drive the French bourgeoisie into the arms of Louis Napoleon, who established a right-wing dictatorial regime in the aftermath of the revolution.

In Germany, as Marx noted in his December 1848 article "The Bourgeoisie and the Counterrevolution," the same fear led the weak bourgeoisie—which appeared late on the scene and mainly had its origins in the old aristocratic classes—into a compromise with monarchical reaction. Henceforward, the German bourgeoisie operated within the monarchical framework, seeking to introduce from above the reforms necessary to remove fetters on capitalist development.

Russia, which at the time was the great reactionary power on the continent, offered the Prussian kaiser money and troops to suppress revolution in Berlin. The kaiser turned down the troops—he had plenty of those—but did accept the money, and suppressed the revolution. In Hungary, Russian troops were accepted, and the revolution there was also suppressed.

Throughout 1848, Marx was using the pages of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* to advocate a war against tsarist Russia. It was his hope that such a war would have the same effect as the war of revolutionary France in 1793 against the European counterrevolutionary coalition—that it would galvanize and save the revolution. But 1848 was not 1793—everywhere in Europe the bourgeoisie feared the revolutionary wave, because in it they saw the proletariat.

While not rejecting the support of bourgeois democrats or severing ties with democratic organizations, in the fall of 1848 Marx and Engels shifted their focus and began to concentrate their energies on organizing the proletariat directly and independently. Still, as late as February 1849 Marx was arguing that the workers should vote for bourgeois democrats where they had no chance of electing their own representatives. But two months later, Marx and his supporters resigned from the District Committee of the Democratic Societies. Marx's subsequent efforts to organize a workers party were cut short by the victorious counterrevolution and he was forced to flee Germany.

## Drawing the Lessons of the Defeats of 1848

At the beginning of 1850 the central leadership of the Communist League—Marx, Engels, Schapper, Willich and Wolff—reassembled in exile in London. Despite the triumph of the counterrevo-

lution, they still believed that the revolutionary wave had not subsided and hoped for a new outburst of revolutionary struggle. In preparation for this, attempts were made to reorganize and reinvigorate the Communist League, particularly in Germany.

A balance sheet of the activities of the Communist League during the German Revolution of 1848 was drawn up in London in March 1850, in two circulars by Marx and Engels, both titled "Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League." These are extremely important and interesting documents in the history of communism. According to



Comblair

March 1871 uprising which ushered in the Paris Commune, hailed by Marx as the first "working-class government."

Ryazanov, Lenin was very fond of these documents, knew them by heart and used to delight in quoting from them.

The first, dated 5 March 1850, raised the idea of permanent revolution. The term "revolution in permanence" had originated in French Blanquist circles in the 1840s—signifying the successive radicalization of the revolution from the overthrow of the monarchical regime to the establishment of communism—though the underlying concept went back to Buonarroti. It was the 1850 circular, however, which later inspired Trotsky to extend and develop the theory of permanent revolution. Clearly critical of errors made by Marx and Engels during 1848, the circular noted:

"A large part of the members who directly participated in the revolutionary movement believed the time for secret societies to have gone by and public activities alone sufficient. The individual circles and communities allowed their connections with the Central Committee to become loose and gradually dormant. Consequently, while the democratic party, the party of the petty bourgeoisie, organized itself more and more in Germany, the workers' party lost its only firm foothold, remained organized at the most in separate localities for local purposes and in the general movement thus came completely under the domina-

tion and leadership of the petty-bourgeois democrats. An end must be put to this state of affairs, the independence of the workers must be restored."

The document emphasized that the "treacherous role which the German liberal bourgeoisie played in 1848 against the people, will in the impending revolution be taken over by the democratic petty bourgeois, who at present occupy the same position in the opposition as the liberal bourgeoisie before 1848." It concluded from this that "the relation of the revolutionary workers' party to the petty bourgeois democrats is this: it marches together with them against the faction which it aims at overthrowing, it opposes them in everything whereby they seek to consolidate their position in their own interests."

Referring to the democratic petty bourgeoisie's calls to improve the lot of the workers through welfare measures and by extending state employment, Marx and Engels wrote:

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

Marx and Engels denounced the "unity-mongering" of the petty-bourgeois democrats, who "strive to entangle the workers in a party organisation in which general social-democratic phrases predominate, behind which their special

interests are concealed and in which the particular demands of the proletariat may not be brought for the sake of beloved peace." More than 80 years later, in the 1930s, the Stalinists employed the same artifices under the rubric of the "popular front" to fend off workers revolutions in Spain and France. What Marx and Engels said of unity with the petty-bourgeois democrats of their day applied with equal force to the Stalinists' later popular-front betrayals:

"Such a union would turn out solely to their advantage and altogether to the disadvantage of the proletariat. The proletariat would lose its whole independent, laboriously achieved position and once more sink down to being an appendage of official bourgeois democracy."

Marx and Engels instead called for the creation of independent workers organizations—both secret and open—alongside the official democrats, adding: "In the case of a struggle against a common adversary no special union is required. As soon as such an adversary has to be fought directly, the interests of both parties, for the moment, coincide and, as previously, so also in the future, this connection, calculated to last only for the moment, will arise of itself."

This is a seminal document. And

Lenin's fondness for the 1850 circulars is not surprising, permeated as they are with revolutionary spirit and intransigence. In that regard, they remind me of Lenin's own writings on the lessons of the 1905 Moscow uprising, which are too little known. There he makes the point that the culmination of the Russian Revolution of 1905 was not the soviets nor the general strikes, but the Moscow workers going over to an insurrection against the tsarist autocracy. That was the real dress rehearsal for 1917.

In their 5 March 1850 document, Marx and Engels pointed to the necessity of arming the workers. In a clear change from their position of a year earlier, they also stressed the need for the workers to put forward their own candidates in elections—even when there was no chance of winning—in order to preserve the class independence of the proletariat, to gauge their own strength and to bring their revolutionary position and party standpoint to public attention. "If the German workers are not able to attain power and achieve their own class interests without completely going through a lengthy revolutionary development," Marx and Engels wrote, "they at least know for a certainty that the first act of this approaching revolutionary drama will coincide with the direct victory of their own class in France and will be very much accelerated by it." The document closes: "Their battle cry must be: the Revolution in Permanence."

Tellingly, there are two political tendencies who really don't like these two documents. One is the Mensheviks, who never transcended Marx's early tactics in 1848—to function as the extreme left wing of the bourgeois-democratic revolution—which accorded very well with their later schema of revolution by stages. The other tendency is the Stalinists, Mensheviks of the second mobilization, who found Marx's exposition on permanent revolution to be anathema to their anti-internationalist doctrine of "socialism in one country."

Thus, commenting on the first of the 1850 circulars, the famous Menshevik archivist Boris Nikolayevsky writes in *Karl Marx: Man and Fighter*: "Whether the document in all its details really represents Marx's ideas is difficult to decide." Basically, Nikolayevsky views the document as an aberration flowing from an unrealistic assessment of the revolutionary possibilities in Germany in 1850, noting that Marx's optimistic projections of a resurgence of revolution led him into a political bloc with "left" communists such as August Willich. To buttress his argument, Nikolayevsky remarks that Marx at the same time founded the Société Universelle des Communistes Révolutionnaires, which included not only the Communist League and the British Chartists, but also the followers of French insurrectionary Auguste Blanqui. According to Nikolayevsky, for whom Blanquism was nearly synonymous with Bolshevism:

"The fact that Marx accepted this kind of revolutionism, which he had condemned so violently both before and afterwards, and was so utterly foreign in every way to the essential nature of proletarian revolution, the fact that he formed an alliance with the Blanquists, proves better than anything else the extent to which his judgement had been affected by the breakdown of his immeasurable hopes."

In fact, what this comment graphically demonstrates is the chasm between Marx the revolutionary and Nikolayevsky the Menshevik reformist.

### From 1848 to the Paris Commune

It is important for comrades to appreciate the historic circumstances in which the *Communist Manifesto* was written, and that its authors extended their analysis based on the subsequent experiences and development of the class struggle. Thus, in grappling with the events which followed the 1848 French Revolution, Marx came to a more precise understanding of the bourgeois state than that contained in the *Manifesto*. In *The 18th*

*Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, completed in 1852, Marx wrote:

"This executive power with its enormous bureaucratic and military organisation, with its ingenious state machinery, embracing wide strata, with a host of officials numbering half a million, besides an army of another half million, this appalling parasitic body, which enmeshes the body of French society like a net and chokes all its pores, sprang up in the days of the absolute monarchy, with the decay of the feudal system, which it helped to hasten.... The first French Revolution, with its task of breaking all separate local, territorial, urban and provincial powers in order to create the civil unity of the nation, was bound to develop what the absolute monarchy had begun: centralisation.... Finally, in its struggle against the revolution, the parliamentary republic found itself compelled to strengthen, along with the repressive measures, the resources and centralisation of governmental power. All revolutions perfected this machine instead of smashing it."

Referring to this passage, Lenin wrote: "In this remarkable argument Marxism takes a tremendous step forward compared with the *Communist Manifesto*. In the latter the question of the state is still treated in an extremely abstract manner, in the most general terms and expressions. In the above-quoted passage, the question is treated in a concrete manner, and the conclusion is extremely precise, definite, practical and palpable: all previous revolutions perfected the state machine, whereas it must be broken, smashed." Marx had made the same point in 1871:

"If you look at the last chapter of my *Eighteenth Brumaire*, you will find that I declare that the next attempt of the French Revolution will be no longer, as before, to transfer the bureaucratic military machine from one hand to another but to *smash* it, and this is the preliminary condition for every real people's revolution on the Continent. And this is what our heroic Party comrades in Paris are attempting."

But even then, Marx did not have a clear idea of what would replace the bourgeois state which had to be smashed. That question was answered by the experience of the 1871 Paris Commune.

In 1870, the French bourgeoisie, led by the Louis Bonaparte of the *18th Brumaire*, was provoked into a war with Prussia. The rather attenuated calls of liberty, equality and fraternity by the French Bonapartists of the second mobilization were answered by the Prussians' artillery, cavalry and infantry. Following the decisive French defeat at the Battle of Sedan, a weak Republican government negotiated with the Prussians. Marx cautioned against a revolutionary uprising by the Parisian masses in reaction to this defeat, warning that it could only be a foolhardy adventure.

But the Parisian proletariat, with the German armies at the gates of the city and the government surrendering, rose up in a heroic act, threw out the very weak remnants of the bourgeoisie and instituted the first workers government in history. The Paris Commune lasted only a couple of months, but sufficiently long to establish that the workers cannot lay their hands on the ready-made machinery of the state to turn it to their purpose, but must instead smash it and replace it with a new type of government, a government of the working people organized collectively.

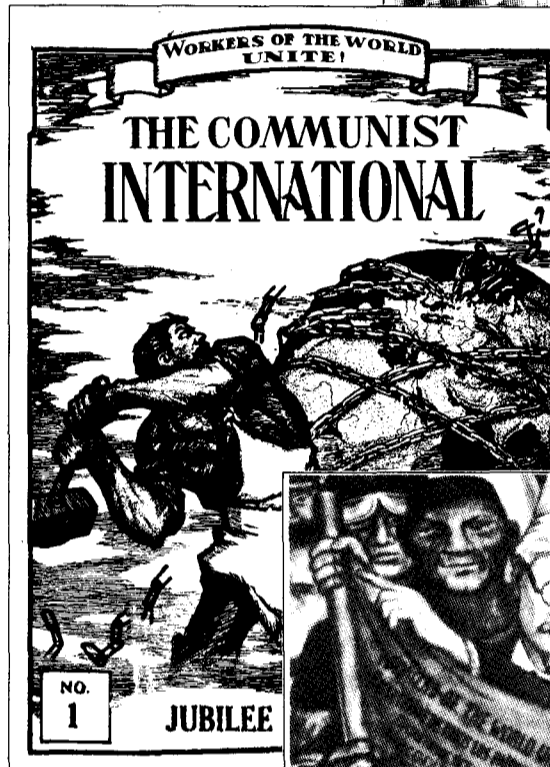
Thus the *Manifesto* gives us a general summary of history, which teaches us to regard the state as an organ of class rule and leads to the inevitable conclusion that the proletariat cannot overthrow the bourgeoisie without first winning political power. But a lot of the blanks had to be filled in by the concrete experiences of proletarian struggle.

### Marxism: A Guide to Action

In his "Ninety Years of the *Communist Manifesto*" (October 1937), Trotsky observed that "this pamphlet astounds us even today by its freshness." He enumerated a number of key points "which retain their full force today": the materialist conception of history, the theory of the class struggle, the understanding of capitalism as a specific stage in the eco-



"Workers of the world, unite!" Communists fight to forge world party of socialist revolution. From top: Founding of First International, 1864; congress of Second International's German section, 1875; publication of Third International, 1919; Leon Trotsky, depicted in Diego Rivera mural, founded Fourth International in 1938.



Diego Rivera

omic development of society, the tendency toward immiseration of the proletariat, the crises of capital (which include not only cyclical economic dislocations but also political crises and inter-imperialist wars).

It is the *Manifesto* which first taught the workers that the capitalist state is nothing but "a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie." It taught that every class struggle is a political struggle, as against the conceptions of the anarchists and syndicalists. It asserted, against the arguments of reformism, that the proletariat can't conquer power within the legal framework established by the bourgeoisie. It boldly proclaimed that the workers have no fatherland and that communists stand for the forcible overthrow of all existing conditions, for the socialist transformation of society, for internationalism, and for the withering away of the state. The contrast between the *Manifesto's* ringing call, "Workers of the World, Unite!" and the Stalinist doctrine of "socialism in one country" could not be starker.

For revolutionaries, Marxism is a living science and a guide to action, not a set of ossified dogmas to be repeated by rote. Thus Trotsky also spoke of what had to be modified in the *Manifesto* in light of experience, and also pointed to certain omissions. Contrary to Marx's prediction at the time, there was only a *relative* retardation of the productive forces of capitalist development. The

Revolutions of 1848 ultimately consolidated the economic rule of the bourgeoisie, although in a combined and uneven way. But there was an enormous expansion of productive forces up to the period before World War I. So there was a telescoping of the historical development of capitalism in the *Manifesto*.

What was also made clear by the experience of the Paris Commune was that without the leadership of a revolutionary party the working class can't ultimately wrest power from the bourgeoisie. (One of Marx's criticisms of the Commune was that it did not immediately take energetic measures for the breaking and suppression of bourgeois power.)

The *Manifesto* also did not deal with the interlinked questions of capitalist development and the degeneration of sections of the working class into a labor aristocracy. Marx certainly later became aware of this phenomenon in the case of the English working class, but hammering out the revolutionary party's relation to the trade unions, and their place in the struggle for revolution, required the experience of the workers' movement ranging through the October Revolution.

The *Manifesto* assumes a capitalism of free competition. Later, when Marx wrote *Capital*, he delineated the tendency of capitalist free competition to turn into its opposite, namely monopoly capital, which finds its current expression in imperialist finance capital.

continued on page 12

# Communist Manifesto...

(continued from page 11)

Trotsky further notes that the liquidation of the intermediate classes projected in the *Manifesto* did not happen. He points out that capitalism ruined more of the petty bourgeoisie than could be absorbed into the proletariat. And the capitalist state, itself a parasitic excrescence, self-consciously and artificially maintained a considerable petty-bourgeois layer. Aside from the vast layers of petty state functionaries and technicians, other examples are noteworthy. The Japanese bourgeoisie has for decades artificially maintained a large peasantry. In the U.S., the great Western water programs were undertaken by the bourgeoisie with the aim of drawing farmers to the region as a conscious alternative to building up an urban proletarian population.

Trotsky makes the point that legions of technicians, administrators, commercial employees—a whole new middle class—has grown up in a situation where capitalism's existence has been prolonged. He warns that this creates profound social contradictions, most sharply when this layer, facing ruin because of the economic impasse of capital, becomes a ready base for fascism.

Those of you who have read the *Manifesto* know that it contains a section with ten demands, demands that a quarter of a century later Marx and Engels were to criticize as "dated" and in need of revision. But as Trotsky points out, these demands constitute a revolutionary "transitional program" for their time, counterposed to the subsequent social-democratic conception of a "minimum program." As with Trotsky's 1938 Transitional Program, the aim was to advance a series of demands based on the objective needs of the proletariat, to mobilize them in struggle and to teach them the only conclusion: that the successful realization of these demands and of any hope for a real life for the working class depends on a workers revolution.

Trotsky also speaks of permanent revolution. Since 1848 the bourgeoisie has proven itself incapable of repeating the experience of the French Revolution of 1789. The complete sweeping away of all the feudal rubbish and the accomplishment of the historic tasks of the bourgeois revolution in the colonial and semicolonial countries is today the task of the working class. This was the conclusion Trotsky came to in tsarist Russia, with its weak and servile bourgeoisie and its preponderant peasant population. While the Mensheviks argued for subordinating the working class to the bourgeoisie, Trotsky recognized that the vast peasantry had to be mobilized behind the small but socially concentrated and cohesive proletariat, which was the only social force capable of carrying out even the agrarian revolution. Marx came to a similar conclusion in Germany in the mid-19th cen-

tury, at a time when the proletariat was a minority of the population, arguing that a socialist revolution would have to be backed by some second edition of the Peasant War.

Another weakness in the *Manifesto*, noteworthy by its omission, is the national question, particularly as it applies to the backward colonial and semicolonial countries. Early on Marx and Engels thought, incorrectly it turned out, that the more advanced capitalist countries could play a progressive role in places such as Mexico or Algeria. They began to change their views over the issue of Ireland, recognizing that workers revolution in Britain could not occur as long as Ireland is kept in bondage.

Section Three of the *Manifesto*, under the heading "Socialist and Communist Literature," is undoubtedly exotic to the



Workers and soldiers exchange banners in Petrograd on eve of 1917 Bolshevik Revolution.

contemporary reader, as it refers to organizations that have long, long since passed from the stage of history. But it's useful to go back and review this material. With the final unraveling of the October Revolution, we are currently in a period of a big setback for the world proletariat. As a consequence, there is a tendency for the proletariat to be thrown back to more primitive conceptions of social struggle. And certainly some layers of youth, while disaffected by the more gross excrescences of capitalist society, have no understanding of Marxism and tend toward vague utopian anarchoid sentiments not fundamentally different from those advanced by the precursors and early opponents of Marxism.

## Fight for New October Revolutions!

The finishing touches, in a way, on many of the conceptions of the *Communist Manifesto* and their implementation was really the October Revolution of 1917. And there's a reason for that. Lenin's Bolshevik Party grew up in a very unusual set of circumstances. Here was a party that had to confront a very wide-ranging and rapidly shifting series of challenges, from trade-union struggle to struggle against autocracy, that had to confront the national question in a large multinational empire. Periods of open revolutionary struggle, periods of exile, of underground work, of parliamentary

work gave to the Bolshevik Party a set of experiences that were far richer than those in West Europe.

Just as Marx was not born a Marxist, Lenin did not become a Leninist overnight, nor did the Bolshevik Party suddenly appear on the scene fully fledged and tested. If you study the history of the Bolshevik Party, you can see a development. Lenin worked his way through conceptions inherited from Karl Kautsky and the German Social Democracy to the conception of the Leninist combat party. And at every stage this was accompanied by sharp struggle, internal and external, in defense of the program of Marxism.

This process found its culmination in the 1917 October Revolution, which occurred at the weakest link in the chain of world imperialism, toward the end of World War I. And the lessons of this rev-

olution were codified in the early congresses of the Communist International. We very much are the party of the Russian Revolution, but we are also much more than that, because comrade Trotsky and the forces around him actually went on to struggle against a new phenomenon, the degeneration of the October Revolution. The Left Opposition was forged in struggle against the consolidation of the Stalinist bureaucracy, which itself was a direct consequence of the economic backwardness of Russia and the failure of the October Revolution to spread internationally.

So we are both the party of the Russian Revolution and the party of those who struggled to defend it against its Stalinist degeneration. The subsequent struggles of Trotsky—his generalization of the theory of permanent revolution based on the defeat of the Chinese Revolution in the 1920s, his elucidation of the tactic of the united front in the struggle against fascism in Germany, his struggles against the betrayals of the popular front in France and Spain in the 1930s—these all represent extremely valuable theoretical and programmatic accretions. Marxism is a living science. What is so remarkable about the *Manifesto* is that it retains so much of its vital relevance today. That is truly remarkable since it was written at the dawn of the age of modern industrial capitalism.

Today the Soviet Union is no more, and I think China is on the skids. The question posed there is who will prevail: the proletariat throwing off the Stalinist bureaucracy that is increasingly moving toward capitalist restoration, or imperialist-backed counterrevolution. Trotsky, in *The Third International After Lenin*, addressed what he thought was an unlikely theoretical possibility, but unfortunately one that we confront in significant aspects today. He wrote: "Theoretically, to be sure, even a new chapter of a general capitalist progress in the most powerful, ruling, and leading countries is not excluded. But for this, capitalism would first have to overcome enormous barriers of a class as well as an inter-state character. It would have to strangle the proletarian revolution for a long time; it would have to enslave China completely, overthrow the Soviet republic, and so forth. We are still a long way removed from all this." Not any more. And it raises

even more acutely the dangers of inter-imperialist war.

But as much as the bourgeoisie whistle in the dark about the death of communism, don't believe them for a moment, because the more farsighted of them don't believe it for a moment. If their line is, "October 1917—never again!" our line is, "Again and again and again—one, two, many October Revolutions." As revolutionary Marxists our object is not simply to understand the world, but to change it. But to be able to change it requires that we have an actual lever to effect a revolution, to rip up this rotten social system, which more and more threatens grave destruction if not extinction for mankind. That lever is a revolutionary workers party of the Leninist type, organized in a democratic-centralist Fourth International. Such parties cannot be simply proclaimed but must be forged in struggle.

And that requires a struggle as well against those who call themselves Marxists or Trotskyists while renouncing in practice the fundamental principles of the Marxist movement. Take, for example, the British Militant group, which now calls itself the Socialist Party. Their international resolution of a couple of years ago had three little propositions which showed a touching faith in the bourgeois order. The first was that a revolutionary party is not necessary because the workers will one way or another, through trial and error, find their own way. They go on to say that there'll be no nuclear war because the bourgeoisie is rational. And they also say there won't be any fascism, because the bourgeoisie experienced Hitler. All of this is presented within a very "orthodox" framework, yet it is a complete revision of everything Marxists understand about the state, imperialism and fascism.

Then there is David North's outfit, which currently styles itself the Socialist Equality Party. The Northites have taken to dismissing the unions as absolutely corrupt agencies of the bosses, in no way organizations of the working class. Yet the American bourgeoisie spends over one billion dollars a year in busting unions, breaking up organizing drives, breaking strikes, decertifying unions. They have a rather different appreciation of the question.

While promoting their scabberding, economist version of "class struggle," the Northites also spit on the struggle against black oppression. It is precisely because of the black question that the U.S., uniquely among advanced capitalist countries, does not have an independent class party of the proletariat, even of a labor-reformist type. In general, America's capitalist rulers have been very successful in playing the race card; it's the legacy of the unfinished Civil War for black freedom that contributes mightily to the political backwardness, if you will, of this country. We understand that the fight for black liberation is a strategic question for proletarian revolution in this country.

A century and a half has passed since the appearance of the *Communist Manifesto*, a period marked by many proletarian struggles. Our purpose in discussing the *Manifesto* today is the same as the purpose of its authors. Like Marx and Engels, our aim is to overthrow the old society and replace it with one that will open the road to the abolition of all class oppression.

Capitalism will not fall of its own accord—that's been clear since the 1917 October Revolution. If the Mensheviks and Bolshevik conciliators like Stalin had prevailed against Lenin in 1917, there would have been no Russian Revolution. And very educated pundits would be standing before you in halls of academia explaining how a revolution in Russia in 1917 was impossible. That really is the question of the subjective factor. There is no terminal crisis for the bourgeoisie—aside from nuclear war, perhaps—barring revolution. Comrades, they have to be thrown out. That's our job. ■

## Spartacist

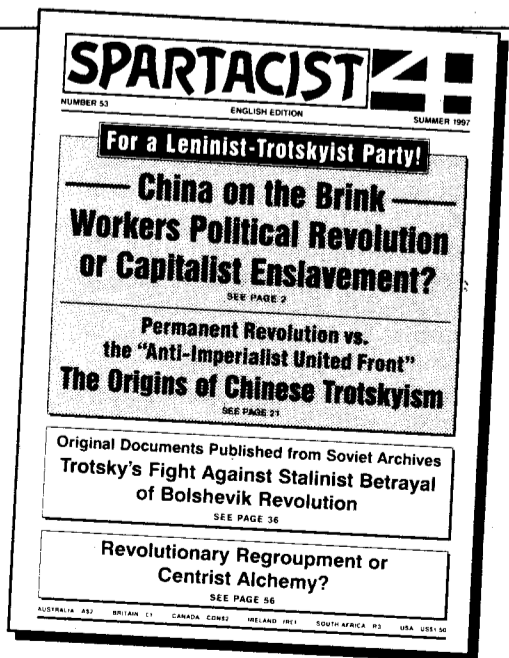
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# IG Lawyers for Brazil Betrayal

## Caught in a Web of Lies

Elaborating on our earlier exposure of class betrayals by the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil (LQB), last issue we ran an article categorically proving that the LQB had brought three lawsuits against the municipal workers union in Volta Redonda ("Court Papers Prove They Sued the Union—IG's Brazil Cover-Up: Dirty Hands, Cynical Lies," WV No. 671, 11 July). True to form, the LQB's fraternal affiliate in the U.S., the so-called Internationalist Group (IG), has responded by posting a long-winded blast of lies and bombast on their Web page aimed at covering over the LQB's violation of the fundamental class principle that the capitalist courts have no place in the labor movement.

The IG consists of demoralized defectors from Trotskyism, headed by former *Workers Vanguard* editor Jan Norden, who were expelled from the International Communist League (ICL) in June 1996. Since then, the IG has screamed that the ICL "deserted the class struggle" by breaking fraternal relations with the LQB the day before a 19 June 1996 meeting of the SFPMVR municipal workers union. According to the IG, the LQB had supposedly mobilized the ranks to attend this meeting to throw out the police who made up 10 percent of the union membership.

In the months since we first exposed the fact that the Nordenites' Brazilian allies had dragged the SFPMVR through the capitalist courts, the IG has been engaged in a shoddy "damage control" operation, admitting only as much as we knew and publicized at any point. In all their voluminous writings on the Volta Redonda union "struggle," including a supposedly authoritative "Dossier" issued

in February, they made no mention of court suits by LQB supporter and former SFPMVR president Geraldo Ribeiro, until we brought this information to the workers movement. Now they scramble to explain away a discovery we reported last month, that Ribeiro turned over internal union materials, including "bank statements, account books, statutes and minutes of union meetings to the bourgeois court."

"The answer is simple," remonstrates the IG in its July 25 Web posting, which claims that these materials "were demanded in the court suits these pro-cop elements [around Artur Fernandes] introduced to suspend and then remove Ribeiro as president of the SFPMVR." Even if they were "demanded," Ribeiro could have just said "no." Yet a WV reporter personally examined the court documents in Volta Redonda and saw internal union materials which were attachments to both the Fernandes faction's suits and Ribeiro's countersuits. Moreover, the Nordenites admit that "as part of his defense," Ribeiro "provided his lawyers with copies of bills." Even if the IG/LQB are taken at their word, that Ribeiro was only trying to defend himself against court suits brought by his opponents, that in no way excuses bringing *countersuits in the same capitalist courts*.

Throughout, the IG has tried to paint Ribeiro as a naive pawn, claiming that his lawyers sued the union without his knowledge and that he withdrew the suits on principle as soon as he discovered what was happening. But this was *seven months* after they were filed and widely reported in the local media. And in Ribeiro's own words, in a 30 January

leaflet by him which we just received from the LQB, he says that he allowed his countersuits to lapse only after the Fernandes faction withdrew its suit against him: "Faced with the *withdrawal* of the suit, Geraldo's two *DEFENSE* suits... have expired." The IG is fond of citing an unpublished letter to the local newspaper by Ribeiro, supposedly dated 26 July 1996, eleven days after his first suit was filed, rejecting "the intervention of the bosses' courts in the labor movement." But if Ribeiro only learned about the court suits in his name on July 26, why then did he go on to sign "power of attorney" documents for additional lawsuits on July 29 and again on August 6?

As we noted last issue, the LQB finally took up the campaign to oust the cops from the union—on our urging—but they never transcended trade-union opportunism. Proof of this is their use of the bourgeois courts against the union. In tearing apart the IG's web of lies, we reproduced the publicly advertised agenda for the 19 June 1996 union meeting, signed by Ribeiro, which *said nothing about the cops*. "Lie," the IG cries in its Web posting, arguing that "the first point on the agenda of the June 19 [1996] meeting is 'Report of the resolutions of the 1st *seminário* [conference] of the SFPMVR' held on June 13. The resolutions passed at that *seminário* called for removal of the police."

No, they didn't! The four resolutions in question were published in an 18 June 1996 issue of the LQB-sponsored union newsletter. The only one which even mentions the police is the third, which calls on the SFPMVR to "inform" the workers movement "about the involve-

ment of the [Fernandes] faction with the police, the bourgeoisie and the government." Following the resolutions, and separate from them, is the slogan, "Police Hands Off the SFPMVR and the Workers Movement!" Why "hands off" and not "out of" the union? Because the resolutions say nothing about expelling the police members of the union, and only protest external attacks on the SFPMVR by the cops (see "Military Police Invade Municipal Workers Assembly—Brazil: Police Hands Off Volta Redonda Union!" WV No. 642, 29 March 1996). As we wrote last issue in noting that the union agenda for the 19 June 1996 meeting made "no mention of removing the cops from the union. Workers were not publicly mobilized for that purpose, and in fact it didn't happen."

What then of the IG Web posting's claim that the *seminário* resolutions stated that "the affiliation of *guardas* and police to workers' unions is incompatible with a class program"? Even this vague and general statement of position does not appear in the resolutions themselves. Charlatans that they are, Norden & Co. pull this quote—which is the only other reference to the police in more than a dozen paragraphs of economist verbiage—from the lengthy *preamble* to the resolutions—not what was resolved. The Ribeiro/LQB faction did *not* call to remove the cops but for "Suspension of all members of Artur's faction." This is what was later voted at the 25 July 1996 union meeting and, as we showed in our previous article, it is what one of Ribeiro's lawsuits demanded that the court enforce. This underscores what we wrote last issue, that Ribeiro and Fernandes were involved in a squalid struggle for control of the union in which both sides resorted to the capitalist courts and neither side stood on class principles.

The latest IG Web posting coyly quotes Lenin's injunction, in defense of their man Ribeiro, "to be wary of lawyers and not to trust them." That warning certainly applies to the Nordenite lawyers for class treason. ■

## Steel...

(continued from page 3)

"America's mission in the world" to promote "freedom and democracy." In a similar vein, calls for trade protectionism against Japan, including evoking the old World War II battle cry "Remember Pearl Harbor," were instrumental in sinking the Rubber Workers (URW) strike against Bridgestone-Firestone a couple of years ago, in the course of which the URW merged with the USWA.

For years, the Stalinists of the Communist Party and their supporters in the labor bureaucracy promoted the sham of the "anti-monopoly coalition," a domestic version of the class-collaborationist "popular front" strategy which was used to strangle workers revolutions in other countries. Under this formula, the Stalinists argued for subordinating the proletariat to an alliance with the "progressive" industrial bourgeoisie against the big bankers and monopolists. In practice, this meant support to the capitalist Democratic Party as supposed "friends of labor." It is a measure of the venality of today's USWA and AFL-CIO brass that they have inverted this treacherous formula to the even more bizarre notion that the proletariat should "unite" with the Wall Street bankers themselves!

For our part, we prefer the spirit captured in the old Wobbly song, "Banks of

Marble," whose chorus describes what will come after the workers join together and seize the means of production from the capitalists:

"Then we'll own those banks of marble  
And we'll open every door,  
And we'll share those vaults of silver  
That we all have sweated for."

To bring that day closer, the working class needs a revolutionary party that fights for all the oppressed, a party committed to smashing the rule of capital through proletarian revolution. ■

## Workfare...

(continued from page 16)

further weakened the unions. As tens of thousands of municipal workers and other public employees have been permanently laid off, their formerly unionized jobs have been filled by welfare recipients at a fraction of the cost. Now state and city governments are becoming slave-labor contractors for private industry, hiring out "workfare" recipients and also convict labor to hotel chains and other companies.

It is in the vital interest of the integrated labor movement to take up a fight in defense of the poor, mobilizing labor's social power to demand *jobs for all at union wages*. Yet the union misleaders are helping to *enforce* the vicious capitalist onslaught against the poorest and most vulnerable.

AFSCME District Council 37, the New York municipal union representing 120,000 workers, recently declared its intention to organize the city's "workfare" laborers. But the pro-capitalist union tops aren't talking about any kind of fight to extend union wages and benefits to these workers; rather they seek only to "organize" low-wage "union" ghettos to maintain their own dues base. It was DC 37 head Stanley Hill who cut

a deal with Giuliani allowing welfare recipients to take over the more than 20,000 formerly unionized cleaning and maintenance jobs which were eliminated as a result of budget cuts. And last September the leadership of the 33,000-strong Transport Workers Union, potentially the most powerful in the city, rammed through a contract which, when implemented, will allow the transit bosses to replace 500 full-time union jobs with "workfare" cleaners.

The death of Marsha Motipersad comes in the context of an all-sided onslaught against working people and minorities. This has been accompanied by an intensification of racist state repression across the board. Last year, more than a dozen black people were killed by cops in New York City alone. This April, the NYPD killed 16-year-old black youth Kevin Cedeño in Washington Heights—and the cop who shot him in the back was

named precinct "Cop of the Month."

The message is clear: under the system of racist capitalism, the lives of minorities and the poor are cheap. The assault on welfare and the reign of cop terror are aimed first and foremost at the ghetto masses, whom the capitalist rulers increasingly see as a "surplus" population. But, as we wrote in "Welfare-Bashers: Busting Unions, Starving the Poor" (WV No. 657, 6 December 1996), "These policies are creating enormous pressure at the base of society: people don't like the idea that there is no future for themselves and their kids. The need for socialist revolution to break the power of the corrupt, racist ruling class is posed ever more sharply today. What is needed is a revolutionary workers party that champions the cause of all the oppressed, a party which fights to sweep away this system of racism, repression and poverty, replacing it with an egalitarian socialist society." ■

### NOTICE

**Workers Vanguard skips alternate issues in June, July and August.**

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# Down With Anti-Asian Bigotry!

## Northern California Cops Shoot Down Chinese American

The anti-immigrant hysteria being pushed by Democratic and Republican politicians has fueled a rising wave of racist violence against Asians, particularly in California. In the early morning hours of April 29, police in Rohnert Park, a posh residential area north of San Francisco, shot dead Kuanchung Kao, a 33-year-old Chinese American. Responding to a 911 call of a "disturbance," the Sonoma County cops found Kao, a young computer engineer and naturalized citizen from Taiwan, standing in his own driveway, visibly angry at being forced to leave a local bar where he had suffered racist taunts. Thirty seconds after arriving at his house with sirens wailing, the cops shot him down in cold blood.

The cop who fired the fatal shot claimed he feared for his life upon seeing an Asian man waving a stick "in a threatening martial arts fashion." But Kuanchung Kao knew nothing of martial arts. Ayling Wu, Kao's wife, explained how she "tried to approach my husband to get the stick away from him, but the police officer told me to back off.... Then he shot my husband" (*San Francisco Examiner*, 25 May).

Wu, a registered nurse, was physically restrained by the police from administering first aid to her dying husband. Outraged by later police claims that they had administered CPR, Wu declared: "All they did was handcuff him behind his back. He was lying face down, and they just stood there." After killing him, the cops left Kao's body on public display in the driveway until noon the next day, repeating the outrageous racist treatment police accorded a black female murder victim in nearby Richmond last year. Meanwhile, the cops stationed themselves inside the Kao house, effectively keeping the family under house arrest.

Asians in the area have been subjected to a virtual state of siege by the police. Following the killing of Kao, a Sonoma County SWAT team in full battle gear raided the homes of an integrated group of Asian and white youth whose "crime" was to pose with legally owned firearms in photos to be used in an on-line Asian youth magazine. Kao was the eighth person killed in the last two years by Sonoma County cops. In February a Hispanic man, Salomon Hernandez, was gunned down as a "robbery suspect" as he was returning to a gas station to pay a bill.

Blacks and Hispanics have long been in the gunshots of deadly cop terror. What the killing of Kuanchung Kao points to is the growing rate at which Asians are being targeted for murderous police violence as well. Now, with anger mounting over the killing of Kao, a "Coalition Organizing for Police Accountability in Sonoma County" has been formed by various liberal organizations such as the NAACP, Copwatch, the Redwood Empire Chinese Association and the Japanese American Citizens League. The coalition is calling for an FBI investigation of the killing and for a police "civilian review" board.

Looking for justice to the FBI—the agency that led the murderous ruling-class vendetta against the Black Panther Party—and other agencies of the bourgeois state is a cruel hoax. Similarly, civilian review boards act only to refurbish the credentials of this system of injustice by occasionally giving the appearance of cleaning out a few "bad apples." The cops, along with the courts and prisons, are the armed fist of the capitalist ruling class. They cannot be reformed or otherwise held "accountable" to those they are meant to suppress on behalf of the racist ruling class.

The escalation of racist cop terror and the all-sided intensification of bourgeois state repression—from attacks on civil liberties to the speedup on death row—go hand in hand with attacks on welfare, jobs and working conditions, affirmative action and immigration. As the chasm between rich and poor widens, the capitalist rulers are intent on keeping a lid on the deepening social contradictions. Anti-Asian chauvinism in particular is driven by the American bourgeoisie's rivalry with its Japanese imperialist competitors in the Pacific Rim.

The National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium reported a 37 percent rise in "hate crimes" against Asians nationally in 1994-1995. In San Francisco in March, a white racist street gang, the Sunset White Boys, carved swastikas into the storefronts of Asian businesses in the Sunset District. Such "Yellow Peril" xenophobia has a long and bloody history in California, from the anti-Chinese pogroms of the 19th century to the herding of Japanese Americans into concentration camps during World War II.

Anti-immigrant hysteria helps set sections of the working class and the oppressed against each other while the fabulously wealthy few who rule this society tighten the screws of exploitation on the entire working class. In 1994, capitalist politicians succeeded in mobilizing many black people behind California's Proposition 187, a racist measure mostly targeting Latinos but also Asians, which is aimed at denying everything from welfare to medical care and education to "illegal" immigrants. Two years after its passage, Prop. 187 paved the way for Prop. 209, dismantling state affirmative action programs. Many Asians, cynically promoted as a "model minor-

ity" by racist media and politicians, were led to support this measure, which was aimed primarily at purging blacks (and also Latinos) from campuses and state jobs.

The rulers' divide-and-rule policies are poison to minorities and to the integrated labor movement. Aiding the capitalists' dirty work are those like Louis Farrakhan of the Nation of Islam, who promote bigoted campaigns to drive Asian shopkeepers out of the ghetto. Pushing the reactionary-utopian notion of "black capitalism," the Farrakhanites seek to become exclusive exploiters of their "own" people while offering their services to the racist capitalist masters as overseers of the increasingly impoverished black masses.

Recently, a wave of anti-Asian attacks inspired by this kind of racist poison has taken place in San Francisco's public housing projects. Southeast Asians have been repeatedly harassed, with one Vietnamese family driven out of the mostly black Alice Griffith "Double Rock" project by a bomb threat and assaults on their children by black youth. A Laotian family received similar treatment at the Portrero Hills project.

The road to overcoming such deadly divisions lies in multiracial class struggle against the whole system of capitalist exploitation and oppression. This requires a political struggle against the existing pro-capitalist misleaders of the labor movement. Acting to police the unions for the capitalist exploiters, the trade-union tops have whipped up flag-waving "Buy American" protectionism, particularly against Japanese and other Asian workers. This racist chauvinism led *directly* to the 1983 murder of Chinese American Vincent Chin in Detroit by white racists wielding baseball bats. The labor bureaucrats tie working people to the class enemy through support to the capitalist Democratic Party, refusing to mount any struggle against the attacks on their own ranks, much less in defense of oppressed minorities.

We fight to build a revolutionary workers party that will act as a tribune of the people, mobilizing the integrated labor movement to fight every manifestation of oppression and bigotry. To root out this whole system of cop terror and racist injustice requires a socialist revolution which sweeps away the rule of the capitalist exploiters. ■

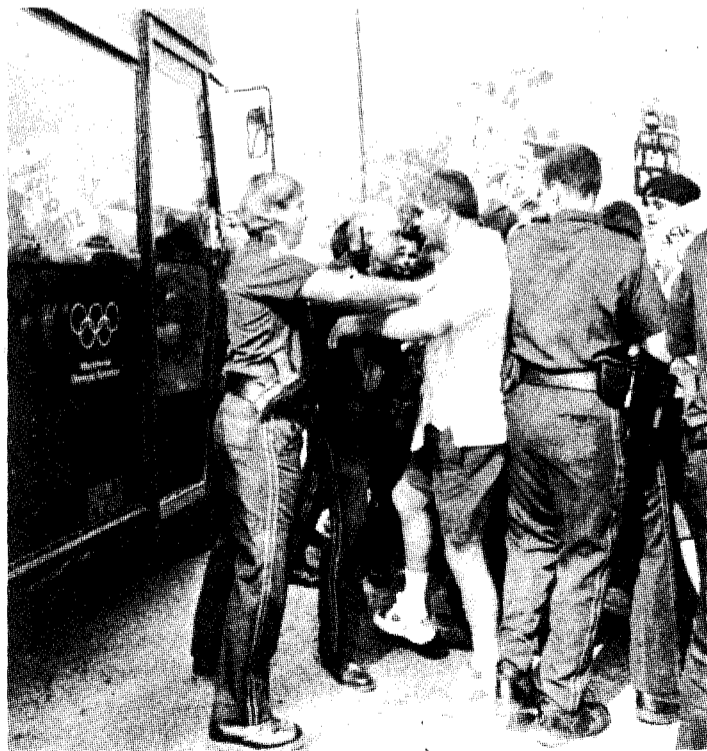
## UPS Strike...

(continued from page 16)

in Chicago and Boston have already had first-hand experience of this, as cops waded into the picket lines to attack and arrest picketers. Cops, as well as prison guards and "private" security guards, are enemies of the workers movement. Yet the IBT bureaucracy actively seeks to "organize" these racist killers and strike-breakers into the union. Drop the charges against the arrested strikers! Cops and prison guards out of the union!

Aiding and abetting the IBT bureaucracy are self-styled "socialists" like the International Socialist Organization (ISO), who are little more than press agents for Carey and government intervention in the Teamsters. The ISO hailed Carey's re-election, under the auspices of a federal "election officer," as a "welcome victory." This came as no surprise, since the ISO actively boosts the Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU), whose central strategy has always been to drag the union into the bosses' courts in the name of fighting "corruption." Indeed, the TDU literally wrote—and sent to the Justice Department—the blueprint for the feds' plan to take over the Teamsters. And like both Carey and the "old guard," the ISO supports the "unionization" of prison guards and other enemies of labor.

It is little wonder that the ISO's economist demands for this strike are designed



**Cops attack UPS strikers in Rhode Island. IBT tops "organize" cops, prison guards. We say: Cops out of the unions!**

to be just a half step more "militant" than those of the Carey leadership. Where Carey calls for narrowing the wage difference between full-time and part-time workers to \$11 an hour, the ISO ups the ante by demanding an immediate raise to...an \$8 an hour wage differential. What is needed is a fight for *full parity now in wages, benefits and working conditions for all UPS workers*. This is necessary not only to provide decent living conditions for all UPS

workers: the two-tier system enables the company to pit one section of the workforce against another—often along lines of race, sex and age—and thus weakens and ultimately threatens to destroy workers unity. Eliminating this division is crucial to the defense of the union itself. Down with two-tier wage scales—for a hefty pay raise across the board! Fight for jobs for all through a shorter work week at no loss in pay!

The evident support for the UPS strik-

ers within the labor movement must be turned into real solidarity on the picket lines, by building mass pickets to put an end to the company's moves to use legions of low-level management as scabs. This strike could also be a launching pad to unionize the many non-union delivery companies, notably Federal Express, and lay the basis for one powerful industrial union of postal and delivery workers. And if the labor movement took up the fight against racist discrimination and oppression, this would have an electrifying effect among black and Hispanic people around the country, serving to rally the ghetto and barrio masses in integrated class struggle.

But all of this requires a political struggle against the trade-union bureaucracy, which ties the workers to the capitalist class enemy and pushes racist protectionism—for example, the recent chauvinist IBT protests against Mexican truckers. As we wrote a few months ago in "Feds vs. Hacks in Teamsters Election: Government Out of the Unions!" (WV No. 661, 7 February):

"The interests of the working class are irreconcilably opposed to the interests of the capitalist class and its political parties, both Democrats and Republicans. The pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy must be swept away by political struggle within the unions as part of the fight for a revolutionary workers party that will champion the cause of the international working class and all the oppressed. Such a party would fight for a workers government to expropriate the means of production from the capitalist profiteers and create an egalitarian society." ■

# WORKERS VANGUARD

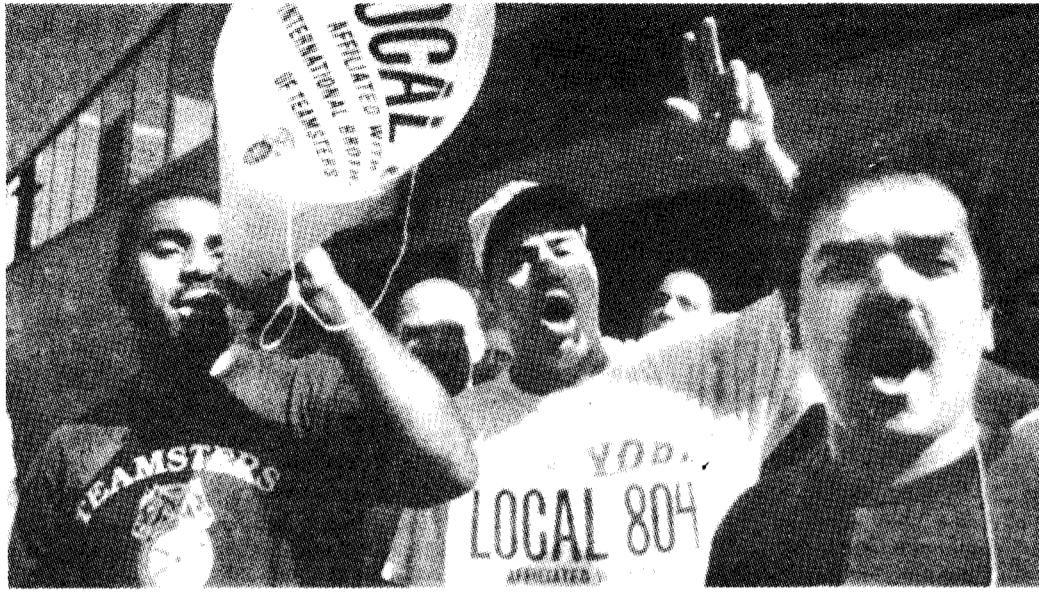
## Victory to UPS Teamsters Strike!

AUGUST 5—In the first national strike ever against United Parcel Service (UPS), 185,000 members of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) walked off the job at midnight Sunday. With picket lines set up at 2,400 UPS locations across the country, the strike has effectively crippled the giant parcel delivery company.

This is a crucial battle for all labor. As one worker on the picket line in Atlanta said, "We're striking for every worker in America. We can't have only low service-industry wages in this country." For 25 years now, the real wages of American workers have dropped dramatically with the imposition of two-tier and even many-tiered pay scales and as many full-time jobs have been replaced by low-wage, part-time positions. This has produced vastly increased profits for the capitalists amid ever greater poverty for millions of working people.

UPS, which raked in well over a billion dollars in profits last year, has been at the forefront of this drive: 60 percent of UPS workers are part-timers, many of them students and other youth forced to work horrible shifts at a breakneck pace. This huge part-time workforce also includes tens of thousands of women, black, Hispanic and immigrant workers, who are targets for racist and sexist abuse by UPS management. Part-timers start at \$8 an hour, less than half the full-time rate, and have not had a pay increase since 1982. They are also regularly laid off during "off-peak" periods. For many younger UPS workers, this strike is their first taste of class struggle.

A victory at UPS could turn around the string of defeats which has plagued the labor movement in recent decades. And a victory is eminently possible: UPS handles 80 percent of all package deliver-



Sotomayor/NY Times

Teamsters picket distribution center in New York City during first day of crippling, nationwide UPS strike.

ies in the country, and a solid strike would have a huge impact on wide sectors of the economy. Though the picket lines have only been up for two days, this strike has already resonated among workers everywhere. Notably, the 2,000 UPS pilots organized in the Independent Pilots Association announced from the outset of the strike that they would refuse to cross picket lines. At the Oakland airport, pilots walked the lines alongside drivers and package handlers. In San Francisco, nurses from the Kaiser Permanente health conglomerate—who are themselves embroiled in a fight against massive wage cuts—joined the Teamster picket lines with leaflets calling for solidarity. UPS picketers have also been joined by other IBT members.

Key to galvanizing the multiracial UPS workforce in a winning strike is the fight to mobilize the union as a whole to combat widespread and systematic racist harassment and job tracking by the com-

pany. Fed up with the refusal of the IBT officialdom to lift a finger in defense of minorities, many black UPS workers have been driven to embrace the liberal anti-labor NAACP's futile strategy of looking for justice in the capitalist courts. A victorious strike, taking up the cause of black and other minority workers—many of whom are ghettoized in the part-time workforce—would do more to fight racism at UPS than a million court suits.

It is necessary for UPS strikers to understand that the union cannot defend their interests if it is in any way tied to the employers and their government. For years, capitalist politicians, particularly Democrats, have waged a relentless vendetta to cripple the Teamsters union, finally placing it under direct government supervision in 1989. While President Clinton has denied any plans to impose a Taft-Hartley injunction for now, strikers must beware of any move

toward government strikebreaking. Feds' hands off the union!

The question of government intervention is directly related to one of the key issues in the current strike. For 50 years, the feds have been after Teamster pension funds. Now UPS wants to stop contributing to the union-controlled fund and set up its own.

The independence of the union from the capitalists requires opposition not only to direct government intervention but also a political struggle against those within the labor movement who have openly invited the feds to meddle in union affairs. IBT president Ron Carey was elected under the sponsorship of the Justice Department and with the backing of big business interests. And both Carey's "reformers" and the "old guard" around Jimmy Hoffa Jr. subordinate the interests of the

union to the employers by tying the Teamsters to the capitalist parties, the Democrats and Republicans.

The results of such class collaboration were seen in the February 1994 strike at UPS, which Carey folded after ten hours while regional bureaucrats tied to the "old guard" bowed to a court injunction and organized massive scabbing. Two months later, the IBT tops sold out a three-week national strike by 70,000 drivers and dock workers, abandoning strikers who had been victimized and arrested for defending their picket lines.

Marxists fight for the complete independence of the unions from the capitalist state and the bosses' political parties. The core of the bourgeois state is its armed bodies of men—the police, prison guards, army, etc.—whose job is to defend the interests of the ruling class by defending private property, protecting scabs and breaking strikes. UPS strikers

*continued on page 15*

## NYC "Workfare" Murder

While President Clinton trumpets the reinstatement of a tiny handful of food stamp programs and other benefits in the latest budget deal, the bipartisan axing of federal welfare programs last year has amounted to a death sentence for many minority, immigrant and elderly people. This is precisely what happened to Marsha Motipersad, a 50-year-old black woman who died of a heart attack on June 17 as a direct result of New York City's slave-labor "workfare" scheme.

Despite severe heart problems, Motipersad had recently been forced to begin working 22 hours per week in order to continue receiving about \$250 in monthly Home Relief benefits. "She did it to pay the rent," explained her son, "she did not want to be put out." The city administration *killed* Marsha Motipersad.

City Parks Commissioner Henry Stern claimed Motipersad had been assigned "light duty" in Coney Island by the Parks Department. But a co-worker described how she had to get up at 4:30 a.m. and take three buses to get to her assignment.

Her "light duty" consisted of working in a damp and poorly ventilated basement beneath a public toilet and picking up garbage on the beach and boardwalk under a hot sun.

City and state authorities cynically claim that their slave-labor "workfare" schemes aim to prepare recipients for real jobs by instilling "discipline" and a "work ethic." But Motipersad had worked for 17 years as a secretary for the Children's Aid Society before she had to retire in 1994. Her former employer told the *New York Times* (24 June), "She left her job because she couldn't work. She had two heart attacks. It doesn't make any sense."

With New York's Republican governor Pataki and NYC mayor Giuliani in the lead, state and city governments around the country have been implementing "workfare" schemes which force people, no matter how old or disabled, to perform physically demanding labor for next to nothing in benefits. The number of people in "workfare" programs nationally is expected to exceed *one million* within the

next two years. In New York City alone, some 38,000 welfare recipients have already been forced onto "workfare," including many who are in their fifties, and the city plans to raise that number to 100,000 by next year. Many are in dangerously poor health, victims of decades of grinding poverty. Many are immigrants with no education and little or no English, who are now being *punished* for being ill or having spent their lives raising their children.

Desperate over the prospect of being forced to rely on handouts from relatives and others, a number of immigrants faced with having their benefits cut off have committed suicide. Meanwhile, "illegal" immigrants have been denied access to virtually all social programs.

Seeking to deepen racial antagonisms within the working class, the capitalist rulers aim to sucker white workers into believing that the attacks on welfare programs are solely directed against black people and immigrants, who supposedly live off the hard-earned tax dollars of



New York Times

Marsha Motipersad

working people. This grotesque racist lie covers the reality that these attacks are part of an assault on the living standards of *all* workers. Through "workfare," the capitalist class and its politicians of both parties—Republicans and Democrats alike—have driven down wages and

*(continued from page 14)*