

Illinois Moratorium and Capitalist Hypocrisy



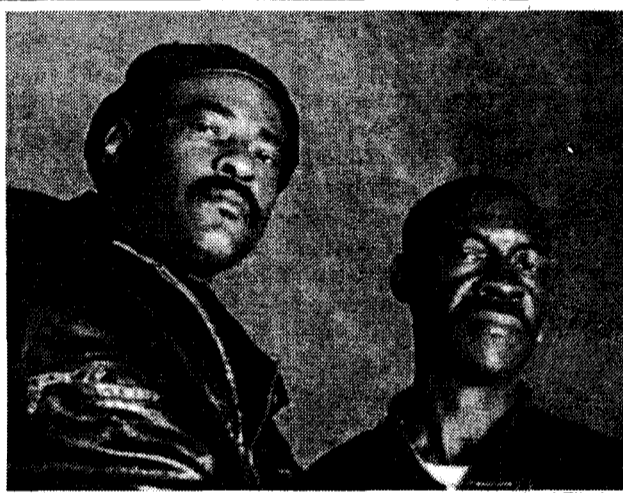
Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!

On January 31, after the thirteenth case came to light of a death row inmate in Illinois who had been falsely convicted, Republican governor George Ryan announced a state moratorium on executions pending a "review" of death penalty procedures. In the following two weeks, the Philadelphia City Council called for a moratorium in Pennsylvania, with hearings scheduled in the state legislature, and the U.S. Department of Justice announced plans to review the federal death penalty for racial bias.

It is a testament to how flagrantly unjust this system is that this Republican governor, a supporter of the death penalty, felt compelled to call a temporary halt to executions. The string of innocent men condemned to death and the repeated cop corruption and frame-up scandals in Chicago, Philadelphia and Los Angeles, the NYPD's sadistic torture of Haitian immigrant Abner Louima and the street execution of Amadou Diallo—all this and more starkly reveal the racist nature of capitalist injustice.

With a death count of 14 executions so far this year and 98 last year, the assembly line of death is moving at the fastest pace in over half a century. In stepping up the rate of executions and throwing ever more people into prison, the capitalist rulers seek to contain and suppress the explosive contradictions at the base of this society produced by the growing gap between the tiny handful of filthy rich and the masses of workers and oppressed.

To a man, the presidential contenders of both capitalist parties, the Democrats and Republicans, support the death penalty. As governor of Texas, George W. Bush has presided over 119 executions, while an adviser to Florida governor Jeb Bush last month exclaimed, "What I hope is that we become more like Texas. Bring in the witnesses, put them on a



Paul Elledge



AP

Top: Texas execution chamber. Majority of death row inmates are black and Hispanic. Dennis Williams (left), Verneal Jimerson and Anthony Porter, among the 13 released from Illinois death row after proving their innocence.

gurney, and let's rock and roll." At a February 16 press conference, President Clinton intoned: "I think Governor Ryan did the right thing, and it was probably a courageous thing to do, because a majority of the American people support capital punishment, as I do." Clinton explicitly rejected a moratorium at the federal level.

The Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act enacted by Clinton in 1996 gutted the *habeas corpus* right of state prisoners to have federal courts review their convictions and vastly expanded the federal death penalty, giving a green light to the state's execution mills to go full speed ahead. Now, Attorney General Janet Reno is using the federal laws to push for the first death penalty case in Washington, D.C. in nearly 30 years. Capital punishment was repealed in that city in 1980, and residents decisively rejected moves to have it reinstated in a 1992 referendum. Meanwhile, the Feds are demanding the death penalty for Buford Furrow, the fascist who went on a murderous rampage in Los Angeles last summer. The rulers use the cases of such despicable killers in order to build popular support for the death penalty, whose targets are overwhelming minority and poor people.

Less than a year ago, Ryan spurned

appeals for a moratorium following the release of Anthony Porter, a black man who had spent 16 years on death row—at one point coming within two days of a scheduled execution—until a Northwestern University journalism class proved his innocence. In 1998, a Northwestern University conference on "wrongful convictions" featured thirty exonerated death row inmates who told the story of their ordeals. One was Ronaldo Cruz, who endured three trials based on lying cop testimony before he was finally released after one of the cops admitted that Cruz's "confession" was a lie.

On top of the 13 already freed, Ryan now faced the prospect that ten more inmates sent to death row by the notorious Chicago Police Department—whose frame-up machine has been repeatedly exposed in the past few years for regularly extorting "confessions" under torture—might have their convictions overturned. Ryan's decision to call a moratorium also spared embarrassment to Democratic Party kingpin and Chicago mayor Richard Daley, who presided over many of those frame-up convictions when he served as state's attorney.

More broadly, a section of the bourgeoisie is worried that the high-profile exposures of a series of bogus death row convictions will undermine the

F. Carter Smith

"authority" of the state's killing machine; while opinion polls continue to show a majority in favor of the death penalty, that support has declined since 1996 from 77 percent to 64 percent. Moreover, in recent years the case of Pennsylvania death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal—whose defense has been taken up by trade unionists, black people and youth in this country and around the world—has thrown a spotlight on the racist death penalty.

Our rulers want to kill Jamal because they see in this eloquent journalist, MOVE supporter and former Black Panther Party spokesman the spectre of black revolution, defiant opposition to their system of racist capitalist injustice. Jamal is the most prominent death row inmate in America today, yet the Philadelphia City Council resolution for a moratorium conspicuously omitted any reference to him. Mumia has demonstrated his innocence beyond the shadow of a doubt. But what does this matter to the capitalist rulers? In the 1993 *Herrera* decision, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that executing an innocent man was not unconstitutional.

As Marxists, we stand for the *abolition* of the death penalty on principle. We do not accord the state the right to say who shall live and who shall die. We look not to the capitalist courts and politicians but to the mobilization of the social power of the working class to free Mumia and abolish the racist death penalty. However brief the Illinois moratorium may be, and whatever reasons the Illinois state authorities had in imposing it, a curtailment of state-sanctioned murder is something Marxists welcome. But even in France and other capitalist countries where there is no death penalty, it does not change the fundamentally racist and oppressive nature of bourgeois class rule.

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Revolution vs. Counterrevolution in Germany, 1989-90

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Beware European Union Social Democrats— Forge Multiethnic Revolutionary Workers Parties!

Austria: Down With Racist Demagogue Haider!...6

ISO Political Exclusion Backfires

The ostentatiously reformist International Socialist Organization (ISO) usually excludes us communists from their public events and meetings. But open political debate is vital among groups claiming to represent the left. Those who want to fight for socialism must hear the political contention among leftists in order to decide which strategy to follow. This will serve to advance the fight for socialist revolution. On the night of February 8 at a public meeting at New York University of the ISO's group "Campaign to End the Death Penalty," they got a lesson in workers democracy. And it came

NYC Anti-Death Penalty Meeting

from members of the Campaign who were disgusted at the ISO's political exclusion and *censorship*.

The event was billed as a discussion on the fight against the death penalty. It featured Lawrence Hayes, a former Black Panther Party member and death row inmate who was recently freed after proving his innocence. When our comrades approached the event, they were told by ISO members that we were not allowed

inside. We protested but, unable to enter, we began distributing our literature outside the meeting hall and talking to people. We met two members of the Campaign who could not believe that we were being excluded, but when we explained that the ISO fears and loathes political debate, the two members grew angry and led us up to the event with the intention of having us enter and speak.

When we entered the room, this time totally unmolested, Lawrence Hayes was already speaking. He was followed by a speaker from the ISO. The contrast between the two was quite graphic. Hayes had enough clear-sightedness to say outright that what is necessary is a movement for socialism. He was scathing in his criticisms not only of right-wing politicians who push the death penalty, but also of Democrat Bill Clinton who has expanded the power of the state to kill to unprecedented levels. On the other hand, the ISO speaker simply enthused over the Illinois moratorium on the death penalty (see article on page 1) and went on to gush over how Clinton recently said that he might just consider perhaps, maybe, looking into the possibility of a similar federal moratorium on the state's machinery of death. The word "socialism" was not deemed fit to utter by this ISO member. The ISO's big shtick that night was to pass around a petition demanding a "Moratorium Now" to be sent to Clinton!

When discussion began, one of the Campaign members who thought we had a right to speak stood up and announced, while ISO leaders looked on in dismay, that we were there in opposition to the death penalty and that people in the room should listen to what we had to say. He then ceded the floor to one of our supporters, who explained that the racist death penalty is a direct legacy of chattel slavery in America and the defeat of Radical Reconstruction following the Civil War. We saluted Lawrence Hayes' struggle for freedom and raised the necessity of fighting to free death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. The struggle against the death penalty is part of the broader fight against racist American cap-

italism; we emphasized that what is necessary is not impotent petitions but a mobilization of the multiracial proletariat on behalf of Jamal and against the racist death penalty. He brought up the October 23 anti-Klan mobilization—which the Spartacus Youth Club helped to build and organize—as an example of what we mean when we talk about the mobilization of the social power of the working class on behalf of all the oppressed. And, as ISO members cringed, we described their role as stooges for the Democratic Party's defense of the Klan's "right" to "speech"—which amounts to defending the Klan's "right" to murder and organize for murder. We explained that the death penalty and the cops and courts who enforce it are part of the capitalist state apparatus which cannot be reformed, but must be smashed through workers revolution. While the ISO opposes the death penalty, it is on purely liberal grounds. For example, they think the cops, who are the armed defenders of capitalist law and order, are part of the working class, if only they would "rebel collectively"!

The ISO has a problem. Fearing exposure by revolutionaries, they think they can seal us off from their membership. But every once in a while, they also attract the critical thinker who wonders what is so dangerous about the excluded Spartacists. It is precisely this critical thinker, so essential for any genuine socialist organization, that the ISO fears and wants to drive away (or dumb down). For our part, we would like the ISO members to know that they are welcome to come to our events. Of course, we will scathingly polemicize against their political program of warmed-over liberalism. Polemics, which an ISO leader decided to the Campaign member as "squabbles," are an essential part of being a communist, if for nothing else than to justify a group's independent existence. Speaking back in 1967 to students of the New Left, the Marxist intellectual Isaac Deutscher gave a piece of advice that we would like to pass on to members of the ISO and the Campaign to End the Death Penalty: "All human thinking and all human organization is subject to differentiation. Whether you like it or not, 'squabbling' is the stuff of life; do not be contemptuous of it." ■

Marxism and the State

In calling for cosmetic "reforms" in the face of blatantly racist cop terror and court frame-ups, bourgeois liberals seek to buttress the authority of the inherently racist apparatus of capitalist state repression. Such calls are echoed by reformist "socialists," who sow illusions that justice can be found in the capitalist courts and that the capitalist state can be reformed to serve the interests of workers and the oppressed. As outlined in the platform adopted at the First



TROTSKY



LENIN

Congress of the Communist International in 1919, Marxists understand that the capitalist state must be smashed through a socialist revolution which erects in its place a workers state.

The conquest of political power by the proletariat means destroying the political power of the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie's mightiest instrument of power is the bourgeois state apparatus with its capitalist army led by officers of the bourgeoisie and landed aristocracy, its police and security forces, its judges and jailers, preachers, government bureaucrats, and so forth. The conquest of political power does not mean merely a change of personnel in the ministries. Instead, it means destroying the enemy's state apparatus; seizing real power; disarming the bourgeoisie, the counter-revolutionary officers, and the White Guards. It means arming the proletariat, the revolutionary soldiers, and the workers' Red Guard; removing all bourgeois judges and organizing proletarian justice; abolishing the rule of reactionary government officials; and creating new organs of proletarian administration. The key to victory for the proletariat lies in organizing its power and disorganizing that of the enemy; it entails smashing the bourgeois state apparatus while constructing a proletarian one....

The proletarian state is an apparatus of repression like every other, but it is wielded against the enemies of the working class. Its purpose is to break and eliminate the resistance of the exploiters, who use every means in a desperate struggle to drown the revolution in blood. The dictatorship of the proletariat, which openly gives the working class the favored position in society, is at the same time a provisional institution. As the bourgeoisie's resistance is broken, and it is expropriated and gradually transformed into a part of the work force, the proletarian dictatorship wanes, the state withers away, and with it, social classes themselves.

So-called democracy, that is, bourgeois democracy, is nothing but a veiled dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. The highly touted general "will of the people" is no more real than national unity. In reality, classes confront each other with antagonistic, irreconcilable wills. But since the bourgeoisie is a small minority, it needs this fiction, this illusion of a national "will of the people," these high-sounding words, to consolidate its rule over the working class and impose its own class will on the proletariat. By contrast the proletariat, the overwhelming majority of the population, openly wields the class power of its mass organizations, its councils, in order to abolish the privileges of the bourgeoisie and to safeguard the transition to a classless, communist society.

—"Platform of the Communist International" (March 1919), reprinted in *Founding the Communist International* (1987)

WORKERS VANGUARD

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Defend Arrested Charleston ILA Members!

As we reported in "Charleston ILA Battles Racist Union-Busting Assault" (WV No. 728, 28 January), on January 20 an army of cops in Charleston, South Carolina attacked hundreds of members of International Longshoremen's Association Local 1422 as they were picketing a scab ship. Coming only three days after Local 1422 had mobilized a contingent for the huge protest in Columbia, the state capital, against the Confederate flag of slavery and Klan terror, the cop assault underscores how racism and "open shop" union-busting go hand in hand.

Following the police attack, four ILA members face indictment on trumped-up felony charges which could mean years in prison. In a February 17 letter to the Partisan Defense Committee, Dockworkers Defense Fund spokesman and Local 1422 president Kenneth Riley stressed the urgent need for funds for legal defense: "I believe strongly that the arrested longshoremen are innocently caught up in a political prosecution.



Smith/Post and Courier

January 20: ILA Local 1422 picket attacked by state and local cops.

They need and deserve the best possible defense."

An injury to one is an injury to all! The PDC has donated to the Dockworkers Defense Fund, and we urge all our readers to do likewise. Send contributions to: Dockworkers Defense Fund, c/o Robert J. Ford, Treasurer of the Fund, 910 Morrison Drive, Charleston, SC 29403.

California's Prop 21 Targets Black, Latino and Immigrant Youth

OAKLAND—On the eve of the March 7 primaries in California, racist demagogues backed by both parties of the ruling class are pushing Proposition 21, the so-called "Gang Violence and Juvenile Crime Prevention Act," whose purpose is to unleash the brutal machinery of state repression against poor, immigrant, black and Latino youth. California state referendums over the past decade have been a spearhead for similar measures nationally: from the systematic destruction of affirmative action and the purge of minorities from California universities (Prop. 209) to the deprivation of "illegal" immigrants from access to food stamps, school lunches and health care (Prop. 187), to the "Three Strikes Initiative" (Prop. 184) which mandates, among other things, that individuals with two convictions for specified "strike crimes" receive a sentence of 25 years to life upon conviction of any subsequent felony, regardless of its seriousness.

The ruling class has again chosen the "Golden State" as its laboratory of cop terror and racist reaction. Prop. 21 would extend the use of the racist death penalty, increase the scope of the "Three Strikes" law, and condemn younger and younger kids to rot in California's vast and expanding prison system for the rest of their lives. Prop. 21 would also allow prosecutors to send minors to adult courts without a hearing before a juvenile court judge, and require that youth as young as 14 be tried as adults in specified cases. Vote no on Prop. 21!

Prop. 21 continues the bipartisan racist "war on drugs" carried out against the workers and poor; its context is the sinister intensification of state repression and economic misery on all fronts. While the capitalist rulers enjoy their vaunted economic boom, poverty devastates the inner cities. Working-class and minority youth confront the prospects of either slave-wage, dead-end jobs, unemployment, or the concrete walls of a prison cell. The slashing of affirmative action ripped away the opportunity for higher education offered to a few. Nationally, 2 million people are behind bars. In Los Angeles County, minority youth arrested for a violent felony are significantly more likely to be transferred to an adult court and sentenced to confinement than white youth arrested for the same crimes. And black youth are 18.4 times more likely than whites to be sentenced by an adult court



Butow/SABA

Prop. 21 would intensify police reign of terror against ghetto and barrio youth, extending use of death penalty and requiring children as young as 14 to be tried as adults in specified cases.

**Break with the Democrats—
Fight for a Multiracial Revolutionary
Workers Party!**

to confinement. The juvenile detention facilities are hellholes. At California's largest facility in Chino, inmates were routinely beaten, shot at close range with riot guns, and forcibly injected with anti-psychotic drugs.

While slashing funds for schools, billions are poured into the prison system. Police-state terror reigns in the ghettos, and the growing ranks of fascist scum are emboldened to murder, like last summer's shootings at a Jewish day-care center in L.A. Daily in the press come more revelations of a massive conspiracy of evidence fabrication and racist frame-ups by the star thugs in the LAPD's "anti-gang" division. What "justice" for black and Latino youth means in America is exemplified by L.A. cops shooting a "gang member" while he was handcuffed.

Among the most sinister elements of Prop. 21 is the further extension of criminalizing "gang-related activity"—a racist

code word for poor black, Latino, and Asian youth. Police will be given carte blanche to terrorize the barrios and ghettos. Already under current state law, any group of three or more kids who dress "alike," hang out together and do anything the police choose to regard as "criminal" is classified as a "gang." Remember the First Amendment promise of "freedom of association"? Clearly this country's rulers think it doesn't apply to today's youth, especially if they're working-class and minorities.

The "gang member" database maintained by California police agencies already has over 300,000 names! Prop. 21 would further broaden the definition of "gangs," require extra jail time for "gang affiliation," and add "gang-related" murder to the already long list of "special circumstances" mandating the death penalty. And vandalism would become a felony for as little as \$400 worth of property damage (instead of \$50,000), bringing down the state's machinery of human destruction on youth who paint graffiti or break a window.

Even middle-class high school students in "good" neighborhoods are victimized by the intensifying regimentation of youth. From dress codes and curfews to the anti-smoking, anti-booze, anti-drug and anti-sex campaigns, the state increasingly intervenes in the lives of all young people. Preventing access to birth control and abortion and imposing 1950s-style "family values," the state callously assaults the rights of youth and seeks to enforce submission to authority. We say: Cops out of the schools! Government out of the bedrooms!

The liberal opposition to Prop. 21, from the ACLU to the Third Eye Movement and Critical Resistance Youth Force, has worked overtime to paint it as "Pete Wilson's Attack on Youth" in order to build support for the Democratic Party, which is equally a party of racism and war. Prop. 21, written by former Republican governor Wilson, is backed by the current Democratic Party governor Gray Davis, who recently signed a law legislative insiders say was designed to meet Prop. 21 halfway (*Oakland Tribune*, 19 December 1999). The liberals and the so-called "leftists" who follow behind them into the Democrats' camp have to close their eyes to reality when they paint the Democrats as any less an enemy of working people, minorities and youth. In fact, the Democrats have been hand in glove with the Republicans in beefing up the forces of state repression, pushing the anti-drug witchhunt, backing "boot camps" supposedly to fight "youth crime," working to deflect popular outrage over cops gunning down black and Latino "suspects." Clinton's vow to "end welfare as we know it" has led straight to starvation and homelessness for welfare mothers and their children. Some "lesser evil"!

Liberals oppose Prop. 21 on the grounds that "youth crime is already lower," accepting the legitimacy of Prop. 21's racist terms of debate. They are echoed by reformists like the International Socialist Organization, which opposes the death penalty by arguing, "It doesn't stop crime" (from a flyer by the ISO's group Campaign to End the Death Penalty issued at UC Berkeley). And Socialist Action discovers cothinkers amongst the professionals of capitalist state repression: "Those who understand what creates crime and what prevents it understand that this initiative is not going to lower crime; that's why the Chief Probation Officers of California are against

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Spartacus Youth Club Class Series

BAY AREA

Thursday, March 2, 7 p.m.

Class-Struggle Fight for Black Freedom

UC Berkeley, Dwinelle, Room 179
Information and readings: (510) 839-0851
or (415) 395-9520

CHICAGO

Saturday, February 26, 3 p.m.

Imperialism, War and the Class Struggle

328 S. Jefferson St., Suite 904
(near Clinton stop on Blue Line)
Information and readings: (312) 454-4930
or spartacist@iname.com

NEW YORK

Tuesday, February 29, 7 p.m.

**Revolution vs. Reform:
The Russian Revolution—How the Working Class Took Power**

NYU, Thompson Center, Basement
238 Thompson St. (near W. 3rd St.)
Information and readings: (212) 267-1025

TORONTO

Thursday, March 9, 7 p.m.

How the Russian Revolution Liberated Women

U of T, International Student Centre
33 St. George St. (north of College St.)
For room and information: (416) 593-4138
Email: spartcan@on.aibn.com

VANCOUVER

Tuesday, March 7, 7 p.m.

For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

University of British Columbia
Student Union Building, Rm. 215
Information and readings: (604) 687-0353

**Visit the ICL
Web Site!**

www.icl-fi.org

Spartacist Forums

**Racist Democratic Party Hustles Black Vote
Down With the Confederate Flag of Slavery!**

Saturday, February 26, 4 p.m.

Emmanuel Presbyterian Church, Geneva Room
3300 Wilshire Blvd. (at Berendo)

LOS ANGELES For more information, call (213) 380-8239

Hear update on the fight to free Mumia Abu-Jamal

**Seattle WTO Protests Pushed
Anti-Communism, American Chauvinism**

**Defend China Against Imperialism
and Capitalist Counterrevolution!**

Thursday, March 2, 7 p.m.

University of Chicago, Cobb Hall, 5811 S. Ellis Ave.

CHICAGO For more information: (312) 454-4930

Revolution vs. Counterrevolution in Germany, 1989-90

We publish below the first part of a presentation given at Spartacist League public meetings in New York, Chicago and the San Francisco Bay Area in late January and early February. The speaker was comrade Steffen Singer, editor of Spartakist, publication of the Spartakist Workers Party (SpAD), German section of the International Communist League.

PART ONE

On November 8, 1999, on the tenth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, there was a talk show on German TV with Mikhail Gorbachev, former head of the Soviet Union; Helmut Kohl, ex-chancellor of German imperialism; and U.S. ex-president Bush. They were chatting about how they organized the counterrevolution in East Germany (DDR) in 1990 and Gorbachev said:

"We changed our point of view on the process of unification of Germany under the impact of events that unfolded in the DDR. And an especially critical situation came about in January [1990]. In essence, a breakdown of structures took place. A threat arose—a threat of disorganization, of a big destabilization. This began on January 3 and [went] further almost every day."

On January 3, 1990, 250,000 people came to an anti-fascist, pro-Soviet, pro-socialist mobilization at East Berlin's Treptow monument, which was built to honor the Red Army soldiers who died in the struggle to free Berlin from the fascists. They came in protest against the desecration of that monument by fascists in late December 1989. And it was we Trotskyists who initiated that united front. We distributed 130,000 leaflets to East Berlin factories, working-class neighborhoods, city train stations and especially* to foreign workers. And we said:

"The vile desecration of the Memorial to the Fallen Soviet Heroes in Treptow on December 28 provokes disgust and outrage among millions of workers and broad layers of the population of the DDR. This provocation is directed as well at our workers state, which was built on the ruins of Hitler fascism."

We warned: "Resurgent fascism is still an extremist fringe phenomenon. It would again threaten all mankind as soon as the first crises in a reunified *Grössdeutschland* [Greater Germany] appear. Today, however, the SPD/SDP [the Social Democracy in West and East Germany] is the chief instrument to bring about such a Greater Germany. Throttling the hydra-headed fascist monster now is to blunt this Social Democratic penetration." We stressed that "Social Democracy is the Trojan horse of counterrevolution!"

And we demanded: "For united workers militias under the control of workers and soldiers councils! Workers and Soldiers councils to power! For a Leninist-egalitarian party!... Full citizenship rights for foreign workers! For economic revitalization through central planning under workers councils! No sell-out of the DDR.... For a red soviet Germany!"

It was the factory workers who were the backbone of that mobilization. At first the SED/PDS (Socialist Unity Party/Party of Democratic Socialism), the East German Stalinist ruling party, refused to join the call for a demonstration. But when they realized that the East Berlin factories stood behind our call, Lothar Bisky, a leader of the SED/PDS, told us, "You have the workers," and they were forced to take up the call for the demonstration.

So 250,000 heard Trotskyism vs. Stalinism, the ICL vs. the SED/PDS. It was the first time since Trotsky was banned from the USSR and the Left Opposition



January 1990, East Berlin—Spartacists initiated 250,000-strong rally against fascist desecration of Treptow memorial to Red Army. Spartakist-Gruppen banner reads: "For a Red Germany of Workers Councils in a Socialist Europe!"

was destroyed there in the late 1920s that Trotskyists were able to address a mass audience in a deformed workers state. I quote from our comrade's speech:

"A political revolution has broken out and is growing in our midst, and we must defend it.

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

"That's right, stop the Nazis through a workers united front! We have to think further. Our economy is suffering from waste and obsolescence. The SED party dictatorship has shown that it is incompetent to fight this....

"Lenin said, 'Politics is concentrated economics.' The fight for the power to make these decisions and to run this country must lie in the hands of workers councils so that rational decisions satisfactory to the majority can be arrived at....

"The Soviet Union will certainly take the same road, and that would also assist us in jointly solving economic and political problems and in the defense of our states, our workers states, which are presently

transitional, broken from capitalism but certainly not yet socialist....

"We fight to forge a new workers party—of equal rights, equal duties—in the spirit of Lenin, Liebknecht and Luxemburg. Stop the Nazis through united-front action! Workers and soldiers soviets to power! Workers of the world unite!"

Counterrevolution Devastates Former DDR

The SED/PDS and Gorbachev were scared by the spectre of proletarian political revolution that Treptow represented. The last thing they wanted to see was the working class in political power in the DDR. They changed gears and came out openly for a capitalist *Anschluss* (annexation). As Gorbachev said on the TV talk show, describing a discussion at the time with DDR leader Hans Modrow:

"It was precisely at that moment when Modrow told me that I must say on that same day that if we had spoken up until then about some sort of treaty alliance of two states, Germans—the majority—today come out for unification of Germany.... That was when I said to him [Kohl] that we in the Soviet leadership

took as our point of departure that whatever form and whatever time period by which the unification of Germany took place—this was the right of Germans themselves."

As we had warned and fought against, counterrevolution devastated the former DDR: the whole of industry was leveled down, with mass unemployment of 20 percent or more, even worse for the youth. There are incessant, relentless attacks on the living standards of the working class in the West, a drive to break the power of the trade unions and to destroy industrial wage contract systems. Women have been especially hard hit—60 percent of them lost their jobs in the former DDR and there are attacks on abortion rights. The bourgeoisie wants to destroy the pension system, the education system, health care.

At the same time, increased racist state terror is used to split the working class. There are countless deportations of immigrants and refugees, even of youth born in Germany. There is a dangerous growth of the fascists, with day-to-day fascist murder and terror. And such a huge rise of anti-Semitism that the head of the Jewish community, who died some months ago, made sure he wouldn't be buried in Germany, because he didn't want his grave to be dynamited by fascists, as happened to the grave of his predecessor three times already.

In East Europe, the situation for the working masses is even worse. At the same time, throughout West Europe there have been huge militant struggles of the working class against these attacks by the bourgeoisie. So for the bourgeoisie's celebration of the tenth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, the capitalist Social Democratic-led government hired the most popular of the government-friendly writers and artists to come to the Brandenburg Gate, in the center of the German capital, Berlin. Only 15,000 turned out, compared to 2 million for the Millennium celebration, because the majority of the workers in Germany and Europe see nothing to celebrate.

On that TV talk show, Kohl wasn't very happy with what Gorbachev said. The bourgeoisie is pushing this big "death of communism" campaign, claiming that everybody supposedly yearned for capitalism in 1989-90, and the Treptow mobilization on January 3, 1990 doesn't fit into that campaign at all. Just one example: A big book was published



Kohl, Gorbachev and Bush: Architects of capitalist reunification celebrate ten years of counterrevolution which has devastated eastern Germany. Unemployed and homeless line up at Berlin soup kitchen.



with protocols of Kohl's negotiations in 1989-90; it was one or two thousand pages long. The protocols beginning with our call at the end of December 1989 for the united-front protest at Trep-tow up to the end of January 1990 were marked "secret" and were not reprinted.

At the same time, there's a sinister campaign by the bourgeoisie of Auschwitz to equate the DDR with Hitler's Third Reich. So at the sites of the former Nazi concentration camps, there are now exhibits about "crimes of the Red Army" and "for the victims of Stalinism," meaning mainly Nazis. And on the anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, the bourgeoisie's courts sent three former leading bureaucrats of the DDR to jail on yearlong sentences—because they were representatives of the DDR workers state—equating this to the Nuremberg trials.

What the bourgeoisie wants to disappear with this whole campaign is that in 1989-90 the question was posed: Revolution or counterrevolution. There was a revolutionary situation in 1989. Lenin defined a revolutionary situation as one in which the rulers cannot rule in the old way and the oppressed don't want to be ruled the old way. In October 1989, the ruling bureaucratic caste of the DDR collapsed; you had growing demonstrations and in late October SED leader Erich Honecker fell from power with the help of Gorbachev. And what developed in the East German deformed workers state was an incipient proletarian political revolution. The question was posed: Which class shall rule? The choices were either proletarian political revolution—i.e., the working class ousts the bureaucracy and takes political power into its own hands—or capitalist counterrevolution, i.e., the West German bourgeoisie takes over the DDR.

The October Revolution and the Stalinist Thermidor

A proletarian political revolution is what we fought for. This struggle must be based on the principled defense of proletarian property forms. To understand what happened in 1989 and how we fought for power, we have to go back to the Russian Revolution in 1917.

In 1914 the First World War broke out. This was an imperialist war over the re-division of the world. With the outbreak of the war, many of the parties of the Second International went over to the side of their own bourgeoisies. They were key in sending the working class of each country to slaughter their class brothers in the other countries. They became what Lenin called bourgeois workers parties, having a working-class base but a bourgeois program—i.e., they defended the interests and the rule of the bourgeoisie.

The horror of the First World War led the workers of the Russian empire to overthrow the tsar in the February Revolution of 1917. They built soviets, workers councils. The majority of the workers and soldiers at that point trusted the Mensheviks, who were the Russian social democrats. And the Mensheviks handed power back to the bourgeoisie. They built the Provisional Government in coalition with outright bourgeois parties, a popular front. The Mensheviks, who had the majority in the soviets, subordinated the soviets to the bourgeois government, with the aim of finally dissolving the soviets and creating a bourgeois parliamentary republic.

That meant continuing the war, to defend the property of the bourgeoisie, defending the factories against the workers and the big landowners against the peasantry. The Bolsheviks, having split from the Mensheviks much earlier, understood that the social democrats cannot be pressured to serve the interests of the workers, and fought instead to break the working-class base from their social-democratic leadership. The Bolsheviks called for the soviets to break with the bourgeoisie and for "All power to the soviets." But that's what the Mensheviks and the Menshevik-led soviets wouldn't do.

Over the course of struggle between February and October 1917, the workers

and soldiers became convinced that the Mensheviks wouldn't fight for their interests, wouldn't break with the bourgeoisie, no matter how much pressure you might put on them. The workers and soldiers broke with the Mensheviks and were won to the Bolsheviks. In October 1917, the Bolsheviks led the workers revolution; the soviets took power in an insurrection based on the armed working class and the soldiers smashing the bourgeois state.

The world bourgeoisie did everything to smash the revolution. A civil war of unprecedented scale ensued, with 14 capitalist countries invading on the side of the White Guards, the Russian counter-revolutionary armies. The Red Army, led by Trotsky, defeated them with the help of the working class in the home countries of the invading capitalist armies.

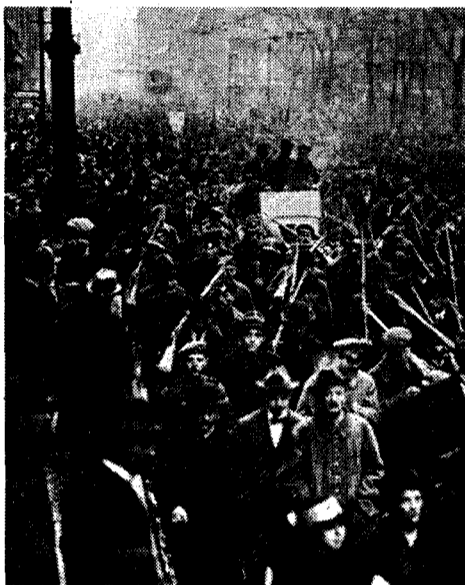
The Bolsheviks understood very well that backward Soviet Russia couldn't survive if it remained isolated. They saw October 1917 as the beginning of world

bureaucracy was based on the planned, collectivized economy; that's where they derived their privileges from. However, they didn't own the means of production, which remained nationalized. Bureaucrats would manage a factory but they couldn't own it; for example, they couldn't pass that factory on to their children. It was not a ruling class but rather an unstable bureaucratic caste. This bureaucracy had a dual nature: it was hostile to the working class, insofar as it had to defend its privileges and its rule against the workers. At the same time their bureaucratic privileges derived from the planned economy that issued out of the victorious October Revolution. Meanwhile, the world bourgeoisie was hostile to the Soviet bureaucracy and was uncompromisingly devoted to the destruction of the Soviet Union.

In 1924, Stalin came out with the counterrevolutionary dogma of "building socialism in one country," which stood

Dietz Verlag Berlin photos

Demonstration of armed workers and soldiers in 1918-19 Berlin uprising. Heroic Spartacusbund leaders Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, murdered by counterrevolutionaries in January 1919.



Willy Römer

revolution. It was necessary to extend the revolution to the advanced capitalist countries. That's why Lenin and Trotsky founded the Third International as the party necessary to lead the world revolution.

The Russian Revolution was an inspiration to all the oppressed, all over the world. At the end of the world war, a wave of revolutionary upheavals swept over Europe. Like their Russian counterparts, the social-democratic parties elsewhere in Europe acted to save the rule of the bourgeoisie from the working class. The newly founded Communist parties were too young and inexperienced to lead these revolutions to victory. In Germany, one of the most advanced capitalist countries, the revolutionary crisis was the most acute. The SPD used the Freikorps, a fascistic counterrevolutionary army, to drown the 1918-1919 Revolution in blood. They beheaded the young Communist Party (KPD), killing Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, the two outstanding revolutionary leaders of the German proletariat.

In 1923, an extraordinary revolutionary crisis shook Germany. The German workers looked to the KPD to lead them, but the leadership of the KPD looked to the left wing of the SPD to make the revolution and even joined them in a parliamentary, that is bourgeois, coalition government. When the KPD let this revolutionary situation pass, the workers in devastated Soviet Russia became demoralized, because it meant the continued isolation of the Russian Revolution. At the beginning of 1924, a conservative bureaucratic caste headed by Stalin took advantage of the situation and usurped political power, ripping it out of the hands of the proletariat. At this point, the people who ruled the USSR, the way the USSR was ruled and the aims the USSR was ruled for all changed.

It was a political counterrevolution, but not a social counterrevolution. The

180 degrees counterposed to the proletarian internationalism that inspired the October Revolution. The Third International was thus turned from a tool for world revolution into an obstacle to it. Its task was no longer to lead the workers to power, but to appease the imperialist bourgeoisies so that they would not attack the Soviet Union, so that "socialism" could be built there, but nowhere else. Trotsky led the Left Opposition in an uncompromising struggle against the degeneration of the Soviet Union and the Third International and defended the Bolshevik program against the Stalinists.

Soviet Union Crushed Nazi Germany

In Germany, the failure of the 1923 revolution gave rise to the fascists. They grew enormously in the late '20s and early '30s, when Germany was rocked by the Great Depression. Faced with a huge class polarization, the German

bourgeoisie unleashed the fascists. The working class wanted to fight. The SPD leadership didn't want to mobilize its working-class base because once the workers were set in motion against the fascists, they wouldn't stop at that, but would go on to sweep away the whole capitalist system that breeds the fascist scum. At the same time, the Communist Party refused to mobilize against the fascists in a united front with the SPD, to smash the fascists on the one hand and to prove the superiority of the communist program over the bourgeois program of the SPD on the other. Such united-front action would have enabled the Communists to rip the SPD's working-class base away from its treacherous leadership in the course of the struggle and thus open the road to a proletarian revolution. That's what the Trotskyist Left Opposition was fighting for.

In early 1933, Hitler came to power without even a shot being fired. The fascists smashed all working-class organizations, the Communist Party, the SPD, the trade unions. Then they started the Holocaust, the killing of six million Jews and millions of homosexuals, Roma (Gypsies) and Communists. In 1941, the Nazi regime invaded the Soviet Union, trying to get one-sixth of the world back under the yoke of capitalist exploitation. We Trotskyists unconditionally militarily defended the Soviet Union. But we had no side in the war *between* the imperialist powers, instead struggling for their overthrow through international proletarian revolution. And it was the Red Army, despite Stalin, that smashed the Nazi regime. Nearly 30 million Soviet citizens gave their lives.

After the victory of the Red Army, the Stalinists expropriated capitalism—for their own reasons and with their own methods—in East Germany and East Europe. Faced with imperialist Cold War hostility, the Soviet bureaucracy abolished private property in those countries occupied by the Red Army in East Europe—to bring the new regimes into accordance with that of the USSR. So the series of post-war social transformations were not carried out as a conscious act of the proletariat like the Russian Revolution of 1917, but from the top down with military-bureaucratic means, after the earlier capitalist states had been smashed as a result of the war. The political regimes of all the deformed workers states in the post-war period were qualitatively the same as in the USSR after decades of Stalinist degeneration. This included Yugoslavia, China, North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba, where the differences, if any, were quantitative. The expropriation of the means of production is a progressive measure which we defend. But, as Trotsky argued when the Red Army moved into eastern Poland in late 1939, such expropriations are not the key political criteria, unless a change in property relations leads to a rise in the consciousness and the organization of the proletariat. From this decisive point, he wrote in *In Defense of Marxism*, the "politics
continued on page 10



Yevgeni Khaldei

Victorious Red Army tramples Nazi swastika, Austria 1945.

Beware European Union Social Democrats— Forge Multiethnic Revolutionary Workers Parties!

Austria: Down With Racist Demagogue Haider!

We publish below an edited translation of a leaflet issued on February 18 by the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany (SpAD), section of the International Communist League. The SpAD distributed this leaflet the next day at a protest of nearly 300,000 people in Vienna against Jörg Haider's openly racist Freedom Party (FPÖ). Following the FPÖ's entry into a coalition government with the People's Party (ÖVP) earlier this month, mass protests have taken place not only in Austria but throughout West Europe. The presence of the FPÖ in the government poses a sinister threat to the Austrian working class, immigrants and other minorities. At the same time, the political thrust of these protests is to restore to power the Socialist Party (SPÖ) which long administered the racist, capitalist Austrian state. As for the SPÖ's posture of representing a bulwark against Haider, the social-democratic ex-chancellor of Austria, Viktor Klima, declared last month that "he would not categorically exclude in the future forming a coalition" with the FPÖ if that's what it takes to get back in power (*L'Humanité*, 26 January).

As the leaflet details, various reformist and centrist groups have seized on opposition to the FPÖ in order to fall in behind the social-democratic rulers of their own imperialist countries, just as they backed their own rulers in the U.S.-led imperialist war of domination against Serbia last year. While Tony Cliff's British Socialist Workers Party (represented in the U.S. by the International Socialist Organization) calls for support to the European Union (EU) in order to tail the Blair Labour government, its German sister group, Linksruck, explicitly backs German imperialism and the government of Social Democratic (SPD) chancellor Schröder. In a leaflet distributed at a February 19 protest in Berlin, Linksruck argued: "Because Haider is a fascist, he must be isolated—thus Schröder is totally right to threaten Austria with sanctions.... The blockade of the European Union is strengthening the resistance movement against this racist and anti-social government."

This is unabashed support to the aim of the European imperialist powers, with Germany at the head, to cohere the EU as a military and political force following the creation of a unified currency under the terms of the 1992 Maastricht Treaty. Following the Balkans War, Germany and the other EU states moved rapidly to establish a unified European military force as a counterweight to the U.S.-dominated NATO alliance. Now, as the *New York Times* (20 February) notes, anti-

For a United Socialist States of Europe!

Haider statements by German and French leaders "reflected a growing determination to turn a union that was long essentially a trade bloc into an ever closer political community with some aspects of a federal state." In imposing sanctions against the FPÖ's entry into the Austrian government, German imperialism and its

less than three years ago in implementing the Schengen accord aimed at keeping Slavic and dark-skinned immigrants out of racist "Fortress Europe."

As rivalries among the major imperialist powers—the U.S., Germany and Japan—intensify, we Marxists, proletarian internationalists, stand in steadfast



February 19, Vienna: 300,000 protest Haider's racist FPÖ. West European social democrats have seized on FPÖ's entry into Austrian government in drive to strengthen European Union imperialist bloc.

partners are asserting a precedent to dictate policy to other EU member states.

The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (11 February) quoted in the leaflet gives a hint of how the Social Democrats' "anti-fascist" rhetoric is used to further the ambitions of German imperialism:

"The Holocaust and 'never again' are becoming the code words for the founding myth of a European nation.... Germany has participated in a war for the first time since 1945, led by a left government. The reason given was to stifle a new fascism in the Balkans.... In connection with the European left, he [Schröder] works toward the Europeanization of the Holocaust. This eases the burden on the Germans, especially when they, together with their European partners, kick the Austrians in the shin."

While ordering the first German expeditionary force into the Balkans since Hitler's Wehrmacht, at home the Schröder regime which cynically intones "never again" is perpetrating racist terror and deportations against Turks, Kurds and other "non-Germans." Indeed, the same EU governments which now hypocritically denounce the FPÖ for its pronounced anti-immigrant racism joined

opposition to our "own" imperialist rulers and declare: "The main enemy is at home!"

* * *

Many leftists and workers are taking to the streets to demonstrate against Haider and the FPÖ, an extremely racist and reactionary party. Haider and his cronies demonstrate their fascist views, for example celebrating the "orderly employment policy" of the Nazis. Now, with the FPÖ in the government, the SPÖ is trying to portray itself as the defender of "democracy," while for decades itself carrying out racist state terror against immigrants and refugees and actively preparing the way for the FPÖ. One only has to think of the brutal murder of refugee Marcus Omofuma in April 1999 by the SPÖ cops and the massive deportations, often to certain death. Encouraged by this SPÖ-led racist state terror, in the mid-1990s Austrian Nazis began a wave of terror against immigrants, refugees, Roma and Sinti [Gypsies] and leftists.

The capitalist governments of Europe, most of which are led by social demo-

crats, imposed a hypocritical bilateral boycott against the ÖVP/FPÖ government of Austria at the ministerial level. At the same time, Nazis were marching through the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin, protected by the cops of the SPD/Green government. These governments are pursuing the same racist policies against immigrants, refugees and Roma and Sinti that the FPÖ intends to carry out. In an article on February 2, the *Frankfurter Rundschau* put its finger on it: "If it were a question only of this, the EU would have to keep an eye on German minister of the interior Otto Schily." The current deportations of 180,000 Balkan refugees will be continued and intensified by the SPD/Green government and also the PDS [Party of Democratic Socialism]-supported state governments—in cooperation with the "boycotted" FPÖ ministers.

For almost 50 years without interruption, the racist SPÖ has administered Austrian imperialism—the other successor state to the Third Reich—with which it is indissolubly bound. SPÖ president Adolf Schärf ran his 1957 election campaign on the slogan, "People who were once for Adolf are voting Adolf again this year." Today this SPÖ, behind the scenes, is leading the demonstrations against the ÖVP/FPÖ government, for their capitalist Austria. The vanguard for the SPÖ in this are the "leftist" and pseudo-Trotskyist groups such as the Communist Party of Austria, ArbeiterInnenstandpunkt [ASt], the [Cliffite] Linkswende and the newly formed Socialist Left Party (SLP), formerly the SOV [Taaffeites], all of whom want to make the SPÖ-led ÖGB [Austrian Trade Union Federation] fight for the continuation of class collaboration in an SPÖ-administered capitalism. That means the interests of the workers are subordinated to those of the capitalist exploiters.

In contrast we fight to bring down racist capitalism. For this, what is needed is a class-struggle leadership of the trade unions and the building of a new revolutionary workers party, which mobilizes the proletariat independently and in its own class interests. The social democratic trade-union bureaucracy, which the entire fake left supports, is a barrier to this. While the fake lefts want to tie youth and workers again to the social democracy, we fight to split the working-class base from these bourgeois workers parties.

The truth is that the social democrats see rightists such as Haider as a threat to European economic unity, which the European capitalist rulers know is necessary for the EU to compete successfully as an imperialist trade bloc against Japan and especially the United States. This is the reason for the sharp reactions especially of Belgium and France—which face strong fascist, extreme rightist, anti-Europe movements in their own countries—dangerous diplomatic sanctions which can lead to war.

The SPD's Bundestag [parliamentary] deputy fraction head, SPD "leftist" Ger- not Erler, hit the nail on the head: "In terms of foreign policy, it will be 'serious' if Haider tries to block the eastward expansion of the EU" (*Frankfurter Rundschau*, 27 January). An Austria dominated by Haider could block the expansion of the EU to eastern and southern Europe, which was one of the main reasons for the Balkan War led by the governing Social Democrats. The



AP photos

German SPD chancellor Schröder with French Socialist Party prime minister Jospin. Social democrats led European imperialist powers in U.S./NATO war against Serbia. German tank in Macedonia, near Kosovo border, March 1999.

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung commented on 11 February: "The anti-Haider action was born at the Stockholm Holocaust Conference. It was conceived in the Balkan War. From then on the lefts—above all the Germans—carried their Europe under their hearts, no matter where it beat." And Tony Cliff's fake-left Socialist Workers Party, British parent organization of Linkswende, appealed to their imperialism: "There should be no cooperation with the Freedom Party. We are supporting the European Union's position" ([London] Times, 3 February).

Meanwhile the social democrats all over Europe are using their campaign against Haider to wrap themselves in the flag of "anti-fascist" patriotism and to build chauvinist mobilizations in order to distract from their own attacks on the living standards of the masses. For instance, at a February 5 demonstration in Berlin, social-democratic leftists like Linksruck and the [anarchoid] Autonomes chanted, "Austria, Shut Up!" in front of the Austrian embassy and "U.S.A. Genocide Center!" in front of the U.S. embassy, while they strolled through the government district of the Fourth Reich without saying a word against German imperialism. And throughout Europe, the fake Trotskyists, who all supported the election of the social democrats, marched in lockstep with them, drums beating, just like in the war against Yugoslavia last summer. So Workers Power, British fraternal group of the ASt, which called to "Vote Labour" in the elections, demanded "Independence for Kosovo" and supported the UCK [Kosovo Liberation Army], a transparent cover for their support for the goals of their own British

ICL fought for revolutionary-internationalist opposition to U.S./NATO war of imperialist domination against Serbia.



The German-dominated EU is an unstable conglomerate of the European capitalists which is directed against the workers of Europe, non-European immigrants and the main international competitors of German imperialism, the U.S.A. and Japan. Because capitalism is organized on the basis of independent nation-states—which is the real cause of the repeated imperialist wars to redivide the world and also the real reason for the war in the Balkans last year—the perspective of a progressive European state, as preached by [French Socialist prime minister] Jospin and Schröder, is nothing other than a lying reactionary utopia. Imperialism, marked by the domination of finance capital, is the epoch of wars

form of a coalition between bourgeois parties and workers parties, where the workers' interests are subordinated to the interests of the capitalist ruling class) have been brought into power since the counterrevolution in East Europe and the Soviet Union with the explicit aim of destroying the "social welfare state." The capitalist rulers no longer feel obliged to guarantee workers in the West a higher living standard in order to compete with the social gains of the planned economies of the East European deformed workers states that emerged from the victory of the Red Army in the Second World War. After the last election, the ÖVP decided that the Austrian Social Democracy hadn't given them enough concessions and opted for the FPÖ.

In all the European countries, bourgeois nationalism is leading to a sharp increase in racism against the dark-skinned and East European immigrant populations of Europe. They are confronted with mass deportations and state as well as fascist violence. Immigrants, who as "guest workers" are no longer needed to do the low-paid dirty work, are being thrown out, while [immigrant] youth of the second generation are treated with contempt by the rulers. Without a job and without a future, they are feared by the ruling class as socially explosive. Throughout Europe, capitalist regimes governed by supposed "socialists" turn their cops loose to terrorize these youth.

Racist oppression is inseparably linked to capitalist exploitation. While the bourgeoisie is trying to drive up the rate of exploitation, the immigrants are not only victims of deportations, but are also used as a convenient scapegoat for unemployment and impoverishment. Racism against immigrants is the battering ram for attacks on the whole working class. The working class and minorities must advance their interests together, or they will be beaten back separately. The workers movement must fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants and refugees.

The immigrant sections of the working class in West Europe are not just victims, but an important component of the forces that are capable of smashing the racist capitalist system. But the mobilization of the power of the integrated working class demands a political struggle

against the social-democratic leaderships in the workers movement, which serve as a transmission belt to channel racist poison into the working class. For a revolutionary, multiethnic workers party!

Haider and his followers are seen as kindred spirits by fascist types all over Europe: Le Pen in France, the NPD in Germany and the Lega Nord and Alleanza Nazionale in Italy. Haider's FPÖ is purely an electoral machine and does not correspond to what Marxists understand by fascism. Reactionary views alone do not define fascism. A number of Margaret Thatcher's advisers thought Britain should have allied itself with Germany against the Soviet Union in World War II and otherwise had fascist views. As Trotsky explained in "Whither France":

"Finance capital is obliged to create special armed bands, trained to fight the workers.... The historic function of fascism is to smash the working class, destroy its organizations, and stifle political liberties when the capitalists find themselves unable to govern and dominate with the help of democratic machinery."

In a situation in which there are no fascist mobilizations in the streets and the main question is the participation of the FPÖ in the government, the slogans "Stop Haider," "Strike Now" can only be a call for extraparlimentary action for a new parliamentary coalition, that is, a "more militant" call to replace the FPÖ with the SPÖ.

That is how, in 1994, the conservative Berlusconi government in Italy was brought down by a general strike and replaced with a capitalist popular-front government, which continued and intensified racist state terror and attacks on the working class. Now in Austria, the fake left is cynically urging on the working class, doing the donkey work of pulling the parliamentary ambitions of the social democracy out of the mud. "Strike now!" says the SLP, ASt calls for a general strike and Linkswende says: "That is our perspective—the Berlusconi solution."

Imperialism is not a bad policy, as the fake-Trotskyist groups want us to believe, but the highest stage of capitalism, which is based on the private ownership of the means of production by the few who exploit the proletariat and oppress the majority of the population. That is why it necessarily generates war, racism and misery. The fascists are the extreme expression of the interests of the bourgeoisie and are their reserve army against the proletariat. Therefore the fight against fascism must be linked to the fight to topple the capitalist system of exploitation.

We stand for workers revolution from New York to London and Paris to Berlin and Vienna. The social democrats and their leftist hangers-on stand in the way. If the fascists are the last reserve of capitalism in extremis, the social democrats (including ex-Stalinists and associated remnants) with their politics of class collaboration are the next to last reserve, a safety valve for imperialism. Only the destruction of capitalism through workers revolution and the construction of the United Socialist States of Europe as part of a worldwide socialist society can lay the basis for a development of the productive forces which will truly benefit mankind. For the reforging of the Fourth International! For new October Revolutions worldwide! Join us! ■



Berlin police manhandle Kurdish immigrant. Capitalist governments in racist "Fortress Europe" have stepped up persecution and deportation of immigrants.

imperialism in the war against Yugoslavia. Now these social-chauvinists write about the FPÖ/ÖVP coalition: "The new coalition will launch massive attacks on workers' rights and huge cuts in public spending. First in line, of course, will be Austria's migrant workers and refugees." They disappear Tony Blair's Labour government at the precise time when its campaign against refugees is fueling deadly attacks.

and revolutions. With the world already divided up among the major capitalist powers, war is ultimately their only means to redivide markets and spheres of influence. As proletarian internationalists we demand: *Down with racist fortress Europe! Down with the treaties of Maastricht and Schengen! For the United Socialist States of Europe!*

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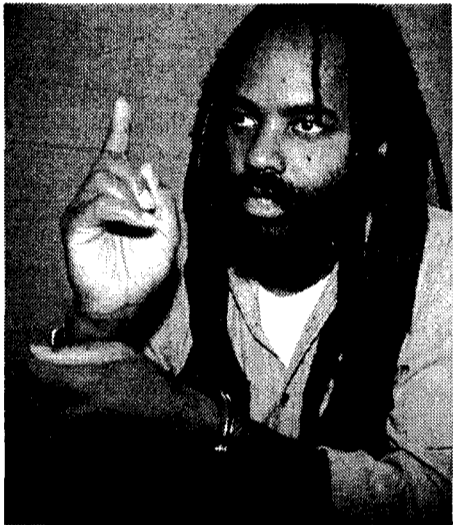
Death Penalty...

(continued from page 1)

We seek to infuse the proletariat with the understanding that it will take nothing short of a workers revolution to sweep away the barbaric institutions of the capitalist state which—with the cops, courts, prisons and military at its core—is nothing other than an apparatus of organized violence for the repression of workers and the oppressed in defense of the profits and power of the property-owning ruling class. And in racist capitalist America, the fight against the death penalty and state repression necessarily means championing the cause of black freedom. *Free Mumia now! Abolish the racist death penalty!*

From Lynch Law to "Legal" Lynching

The promised study of racial bias in federal death sentences by Clinton/Reno's Justice Department should not take more than five minutes—because fully two-thirds of the 21 federal death row inmates are either black or Hispanic! This is an even higher proportion of minorities than on state death rows around the country, where 43 percent of all inmates are black. In the notorious 1986 *McCleskey* decision, the Supreme



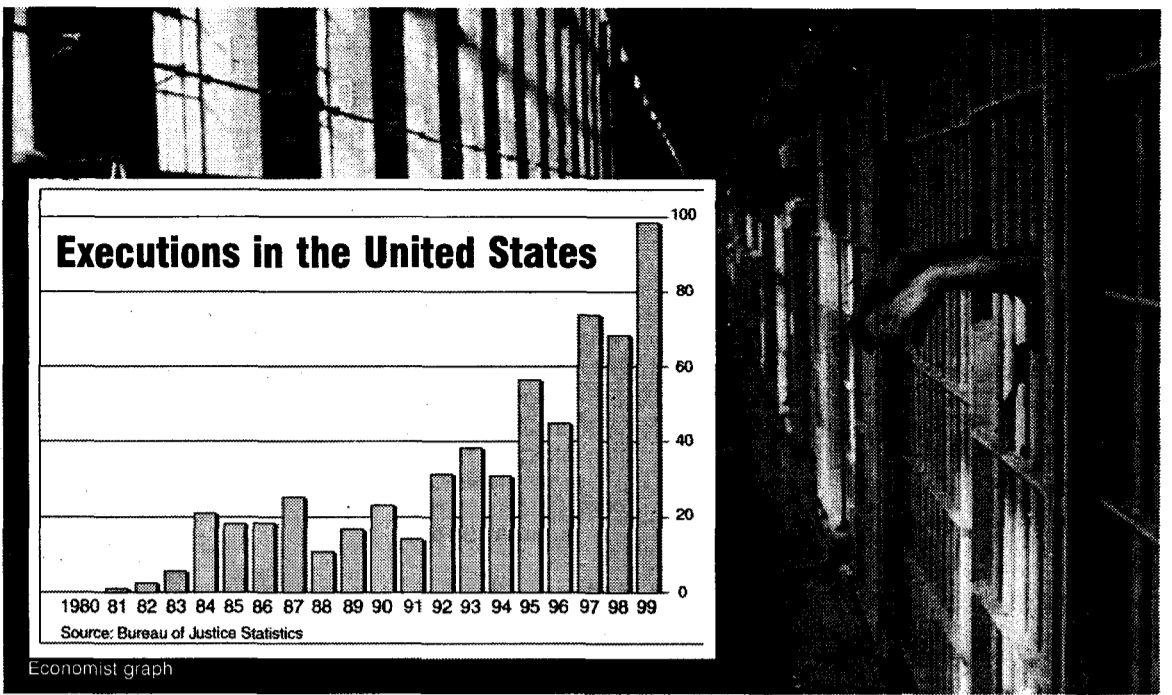
Terry/Gamma-Liaison

Mumia Abu-Jamal

Court acknowledged the massive amount of evidence proving racism in death penalty cases and then ruled that it is legally "irrelevant," warning that any challenge to this system would "throw into serious question the principles that underlie our entire criminal justice system." It is precisely because capital punishment in the U.S. is so intertwined with black oppression—the bedrock of capitalism in this country—that makes it highly unlikely, though not inconceivable, that America's rulers would abandon the death penalty. It is no accident that the states of the

Speedup on death row is part of broader intensification of capitalist repression in U.S.

Cambell/Time



former Confederacy lead the country in the pace of legal lynching. The death penalty in the U.S. is rooted in the legacy of chattel slavery. Under the early Slave Codes, "rebellious" slaves were killed with impunity. It took a bloody Civil War to smash the slave system, but the Northern capitalists betrayed the promise of black freedom. The withdrawal of the last Union troops in 1877 ushered in the era of lynch law, with over 5,000 black people murdered by lynch mobs from the late 1800s onward. As "legal" lynchings gradually supplanted open mob terror, more than two-thirds of the thousands executed between 1930 and 1967 were black.

The speedup on death row is only the tip of the iceberg of an all-sided intensification of capitalist state repression. Behind it all is the deepening immiseration of the ghetto masses and sharp attacks on the living standards of the working class. As we wrote in "Lock-down U.S.A." (WV No. 618, 10 March 1995):

"A couple of statistics sum it up. Over a million manufacturing jobs were lost in the U.S. in the 1980s, on top of the wholesale destruction of whole swathes of Midwest industry the decade before. For every place lost on the assembly line, one has been added in the prisons....

"With nothing to offer the masses of black poor and working people but ever-deeper degradation and immiseration, the capitalist ruling class is intent on extinguishing any sign of protest with brute force."

Conditions have only continued to worsen under Democrat Clinton. Despite the vaunted "boom economy," real income for the poorest 20 percent of the population has gone down in recent years. The American capitalist state is a killing machine, from court-ordered executions in the nation's death chambers and summary executions by cops on the streets to

the murderous bombing of civilian populations overseas aimed at imposing U.S. imperialist domination around the world. Meanwhile, this capitalist system condemns millions in the U.S. to a slow death through homelessness, starvation and lack of medical care while American corporations suck the lifeblood out of super-exploited toilers in Third World countries. In all this, the Clinton administration has been even more vicious than its Republican predecessors—axing welfare, flooding the inner cities with more cops, launching one imperialist military adventure after another.

Under Clinton, the prison population has grown by hundreds of thousands, this month passing the two million mark. America now houses *one-fourth* of the world's prisoners, and half of these inmates are black. The U.S. has a higher rate of black incarceration than even South Africa did under apartheid rule, and today that rate is over *six times* that of South Africa. When a federal judge in New York last month finally awarded a miserly \$8 million settlement to nearly 1,300 survivors of the 1971 Attica prison massacre who were beaten and tortured in the brutal cop assault which left 43 dead, the *New York Times* commented: "Inevitably, time dulled Attica's shock effect. A 'lock 'em up and throw away the key' attitude has sent the prison population skyrocketing.... The New York State prison population today is approaching 72,000, compared with 12,500 in 1971." The concern expressed by this liberal mouthpiece reflects the view of a section of the American capitalist class that the cost of prison construction is spiraling out of control.

The capitalist rulers view an entire generation of ghetto and barrio youth as permanently unemployable "outcasts," a surplus population with no prospects of work and no need for schooling, medical care or decent housing. Instead, young men and women are swept up from the ghettos and barrios and thrown behind bars. All 50 states now have laws allowing prosecutors to try juveniles as adults, like black 13-year-old Nathaniel Abraham, tried for murder in Michigan last fall.

While Jesse Jackson today decries the "prison-industrial complex," two-thirds of all prisoners are doing time as a result of the racist "war on drugs" which was avidly promoted by Jackson with his "Up with hope, down with dope" crusade. One-third of all black males in their 20s are either in prison, on parole or on probation; one in seven black men has lost the right to vote as a result of a felony conviction. Underlining the brutality of prison conditions is the tacit condoning of rape of prisoners by other inmates, which is often wielded as a threat by cops and prison guards against those in prison.

It is in labor's direct interest to actively take up the defense of the ghetto and barrio masses. The same cops who rampage through the inner cities are also deployed to bust up strikers' picket lines. "Work-fare" slave labor schemes which victi-

mize the black poor are also wielded as a battering ram against municipal workers unions around the country. Prison labor is also increasingly being used as a club against unionized workers. From shrink-wrapping Microsoft software to booking TWA airline reservations, thousands of prisoners are now toiling for private companies at pay rates as low as 23 cents an hour.

The volatility at the base of this society is evident, from the solidity and widespread popularity of the 1997 Teamsters strike against UPS to the massive outpouring of anger in NYC last year over the Diallo killing. But black Democrats like Jackson and Al Sharpton act to police the ghetto masses on behalf of the capitalist rulers. And the pro-capitalist labor tops seek to quell or contain any struggles by the working people, chaining the unions to the capitalist Democratic Party. The AFL-CIO misleaders have already pledged to spend record amounts of union monies this year to get Democratic Party enemies of labor elected. Meanwhile, the labor tops devote considerable efforts to "organizing" cops and prison guards into the unions. Cops are not workers; they are the racist, strikebreaking thugs of the capitalist class. Cops and prison guards out of the unions!

It is necessary to forge a class-struggle leadership which will lead struggles on behalf of workers and the oppressed, not bind labor hand and foot to the class enemy. And that means a leadership committed to the complete and unconditional independence of the unions from the capitalist state and the capitalist political parties. We fight to forge a multiracial revolutionary workers party which will link the power of labor to the anger of the ghettos. *For black liberation through socialist revolution!*

Death Penalty Democrats and Reformist Illusions

The Fraternal Order of Police (F.O.P.), which has spearheaded the crusade to see Jamal killed, ludicrously claims on its Web site that no innocent person has ever been executed in the U.S.! More level-headed bourgeois spokesmen for the death penalty acknowledge occasional "tragic mistakes" in order to paint them as "aberrations" from an otherwise "just" system. Meanwhile, liberal opponents of the death penalty like Jesse Jackson argue that it is too costly and ineffective and offer "alternatives" like life imprisonment without parole—a living death.

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A chief call of such "reformers" is the demand for a better public defender system for defendants in capital cases. To be sure, the overwhelming majority of capital defendants get only the most minimal legal defense, an aspect of how this system is rigged from top to bottom against working people and minorities. But in seeking to ensure that "justice is seen to be done," the liberals hope to bolster the authority and powers of the apparatus of capitalist repression by removing the most blatant excesses and "restoring trust in the system."

In this, they are assisted by the reformist "socialists." Rejecting the struggle to bring revolutionary consciousness to the proletariat, these opportunists promote the illusion that the capitalist state can be pressured to dispense justice and otherwise serve the interests of workers and the oppressed. In practice, they embrace the same conclusions as the bourgeois liberals.

Thus the International Socialist Organization (ISO), which has been begging the Illinois governor for a moratorium since last March, now hails Ryan's move as proof that "organizing can force the poli-

ticians—even a Republican hack like George Ryan—to act" (*Socialist Worker*, 4 February). The ISO's Campaign to End the Death Penalty echoes the liberal argument that the death penalty is not "effective"; a Chicago leaflet promoting a February 3 meeting complains about "the failure of the death penalty here"! Who this is aimed at is made explicit in an Internet announcement for a February 14 press conference by Chicago Campaign organizer Alice Kim, who grotesquely pleaded, "Have a heart this Valentine's Day, President Clinton. Stop all federal executions!" In New York City, a Campaign leaflet likewise calls for a February 21 "rally aimed at pressuring Gore and Bradley to heed the growing national tide for a moratorium on executions."

There was a national moratorium on executions in the 1970s, and its purpose was precisely to address the "failure" of the death penalty in order to make it more "effective." Seeking to defuse massive popular unrest, beginning with the civil rights movement of the 1950s and '60s and then the anti-Vietnam War protests, in 1972 the Supreme Court declared existing death penalty laws to



WV Photo

Chicago, 28 November 1998: PDC-initiated, labor-centered protest for Jamal. Multiracial proletariat must be mobilized in fight to free Mumia, abolish the death penalty.

be "wanton and freakish" and ordered the states to rewrite the statutes. The statutes were rewritten, and four years later, with the mass protests a thing of the past, the Supreme Court quickly ended that "moratorium" and gave a green light to resume the killings.

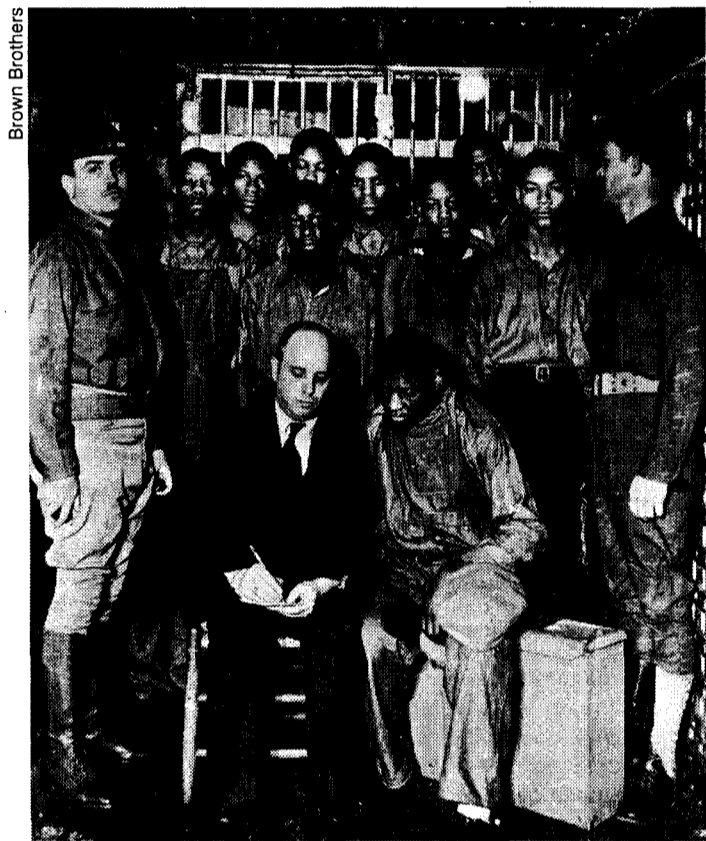
Of a piece with the ISO's appeals to the racist bourgeoisie for a moratorium is the call for a "new trial" for Mumia raised by the ISO, Socialist Action, Workers World Party and a host of other opportunist leftists. This call is the reformists' pledge of allegiance to keep the fight for Jamal's cause safely within the confines of liberal bourgeois—i.e., Democratic Party—politics, while sowing illusions in the "justice" of the capitalist courts. In this way they seek to win support from capitalist politicians who would be all too happy to see Jamal reconvicted in a less obviously rigged proceeding than the travesty which sent him to death row in 1982. A column by Salim Muwakkil in *In These Times* (12 December 1999), mouthpiece of the Democratic (Party) Socialists of America, features the following statement in large print in the middle of the page: "We may never know whether Abu-Jamal is innocent or guilty because he was never given due process."

The opportunists' clamor for a new

trial may well have succeeded in hoodwinking some youth who want to fight for Mumia's freedom into thinking a second trial is a necessary *legal* step to that end. This is a lie. If a judge did grant Jamal's *habeas corpus* appeal, that would automatically overturn his conviction. If there were then to be a new trial, it would only come about because the prosecution demanded one in order to *reconvict* Jamal.

From the time we first took up Jamal's defense, the Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee have fought for a perspective centered on mobilizing the social power of the working class independent of the capitalist state and politicians. As we wrote in a PDC statement after the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear Jamal's appeal last October (WV No. 721, 15 October 1999):

"Mobilizing labor's power in a successful fight to win Jamal's freedom would strike a blow against the capitalist rulers who use the same frame-up methods, spying and terror wielded against Jamal and other fighters for the oppressed to smash picket lines and victimize militant unionists. Labor/black protest to free Mumia and abolish the racist death penalty must be infused with the understanding that to end racist capitalist injustice once and for all requires a socialist revolution which smashes the capitalist state and places the proletariat in power." ■



Brown Brothers

Scottsboro defendants, nine black youth framed up in Alabama on bogus charges of rape in 1931. International defense campaign saved them from legal lynching.

Mexico...

(continued from page 12)

schools, were arrested during a sit-in in front of the governor's mansion in the regional capital of Pachuca. Over 800 students from other schools who had joined the sit-in were summarily deported to their states of origin, some as far away as Guerrero and Chiapas. Facing the army of police at El Mexe, the student strikers appealed for help to the UNAM General Strike Council (CGH), which sent a delegation. The Grupo Espartaquista de México, section of the International Communist League, demands the immediate, unconditional release of all arrested militants throughout Mexico!

The "battle of El Mexe" was launched when several thousand people (including the town's mayor!) surrounded the school, demanding freedom for those arrested in both attacks, as well as in earlier incidents. When the cops refused, the angry crowd took action, trapping the *granaderos* inside by blocking the exits with tree trunks and setting several police cars ablaze. The terrified thugs attempted to flee by diving into sewage canals, but the villagers, armed mostly with only sticks and stones, captured over sixty cops, stripped them down to their underwear and marched them 5 kilometers into the town square! Displaying their captives, the furious townspeople demanded: "Free the arrested or we will set these *pinche* cops on fire!" Meanwhile, parents and students retook the school and discovered a police arsenal including grenade launchers. The government had

lyingly claimed the cops were unarmed.

Thrown into a panic by the humiliating drubbing received by their thugs, the PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party) government of Mexico appealed to Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas' PRD (Party of the Democratic Revolution) to use its influence for the cops' release. The mayor of the town, a PRD member, convinced the crowd not to kill the cops, while the state PRD disavowed any involvement. A negotiating committee made up of the Hidalgo government secretary, the regional PRD leader, the mayor and a student leader was formed, and an agreement was reached to free the nearly 400 student prisoners in exchange for the captured cops. Their arrested comrades freed, the villagers sang the "*Internationale*"—but then returned the captured arms arsenal to the government which will surely seek revenge for its humiliating defeat.

While the overwhelming government repression in Mexico City has reduced the struggle there to embers of resistance, the revolt in Hidalgo shows these have the power to reignite, sparking upheavals in other parts of the country. As an El Mexe student declared at a February 19 UNAM assembly, "Everything indicates that El Mexe has become an UNAM on a small scale, where the students are once again repressed." Hundreds of El Mexe strikers still face charges such as "rebellion" and grand theft. What is urgently necessary now is labor-centered, non-sectarian, class-struggle defense of the arrested militants.

The PRI government wants to use the UNAM crackdown to round up the left, in order to behead upcoming broader

political struggles. Meanwhile, the PRD seeks to turn the PRI's unpopular attack on the UNAM strike into a victory in the upcoming elections. But the PRD, which controls the Mexico City government, is no less a bourgeois party than the PRI—it has sent its riot cops to attack the UNAM strike just as viciously. Many of the more radical students have seen the treacherous role of the PRD, but turn instead to the petty-bourgeois guerrillists of the EZLN (Zapatistas). This is not an alternative, but simply a more radical version of nationalism. Unlike the Zapatistas, who as "liberals with guns" seek to use the PRD to pressure the bourgeois state for concessions through negotiations, we Spartacists fight for the proletarian

to lead the oppressed and dispossessed masses of Mexico to power.

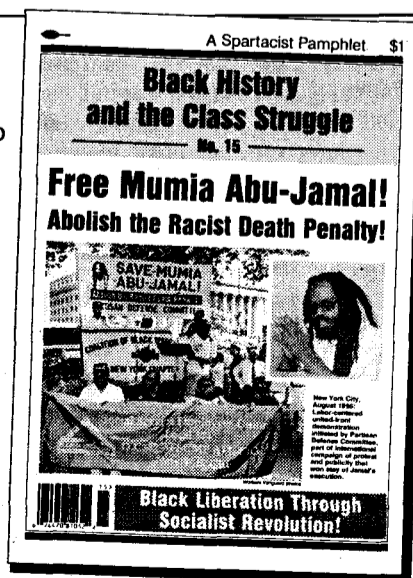
The urgent demands and needs of Mexico's impoverished workers and peasants—for agrarian revolution, education, health care, etc.—cannot be fulfilled by the corrupt and venal Mexican capitalist class, beholden to U.S. imperialism. Even the most minimal reforms, like those the students at El Mexe are seeking, demand the Trotskyist program of permanent revolution. The Trotskyists of the GEM fight to build a Leninist vanguard party that can lead the workers and peasants of Mexico to power, smashing the capitalist system of oppression and opening the way to proletarian revolution throughout the Americas. ■

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Germany...

(continued from page 5)

of Moscow, taken as a whole, completely retains its reactionary character and remains the chief obstacle on the road to the world revolution."

Gorbachev's "Market Reforms"—Prelude to Counterrevolution

We unconditionally militarily defended the Soviet degenerated workers state and the East European deformed workers states against imperialism and internal counterrevolution. Unlike under capitalism, the established planned economies didn't seek to maximize profits but to maximize the general output of products. So there was a social system that workers in capitalist countries could only dream of. In the DDR, there was no unemployment or homelessness. And, for instance, my mother who oversaw herds as a child could study and became an electronics engineer.

Ninety percent of women in the DDR had jobs, and to make that possible there was a large system of kindergartens; there was a so-called "baby year," i.e., you would get a year off work, fully paid when your child was born; there were meals at school for all children, and so on. At the same time, the Stalinists would preach reactionary family values and after work, women had to do the so-called second shift of housework. The population of the DDR was over 95 percent atheistic—there was simply no material basis for religion. Even today, as a leading bourgeois paper complained, the church cannot gain ground in the former DDR and is looked at with hostility.

At the same time, the Stalinist bureaucracy sought to suppress any independent



Incipient proletarian political revolution in East Germany in June 1953 was suppressed by Soviet tanks. East Berlin workers appealed to workers in the West: "We're cleaning house in Pankow, you sweep out the crap in Bonn."

against factory, industry against industry in the struggle for resources and customers. It pitted industry against consumers in the drive to produce not what was needed but what was profitable. It fueled nationalism and the breakup of the USSR, pitting the richer, more industrial regions against the more backward, less industrialized ones. These "reforms" dramatically exposed the appetites of a wing of the bureaucracy to secure its uncertain economic privileges by devouring the workers state piecemeal and to try to themselves become a property-owning class.

At the same time, to appease the U.S. imperialists, Gorbachev withdrew the Red Army from Afghanistan in 1989, delivering Afghan women to the cut-throats of the CIA-backed mujahedin. We called this a betrayal and made an offer to the Afghan government to organize an international brigade to fight against the

League of Germany, then the German section of the ICL, in its intervention into this incipient proletarian political revolution to give revolutionary leadership to the East German working class. In the course of this intervention, the biggest the ICL had ever undertaken, we had one-third of our membership on the ground there. We threw in everything we had.

On December 8, we brought out the first issue of *Arprekorr*, Workers Press Correspondence, a daily newspaper to serve as the collective organizer for the vanguard of the working class and the means to build the party necessary to lead the proletarian political revolution. It got a huge reception. In all cities, groups of youth or workers sprang up, distributing *Arprekorr*, whom we organized into the Spartakist-Gruppen, Spartacist groups.

For a Red Germany of Workers Councils!

We intervened with our program for a red Germany of workers councils, for revolutionary reunification through proletarian political revolution in the East to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy and for socialist revolution in the West to overthrow the bourgeoisie. We understood that Germany was divided by a class line, and that the question was: Revolutionary or counterrevolutionary reunification. So we made our opposition to the latter clear by our slogan "No to the sell-out of the DDR!" From that standpoint we fought for one part: in East and West and were opposed to a two-party conception, one for East and one for West Germany. We toured members of the East German Spartakist-Gruppen through the Ruhr area, the industrial heartland of German capitalism.

In the DDR we encountered a contradictory form of false consciousness which was based on the lies and deceptions of Stalinism. This populist worldview substituted false categories like "peace-loving countries," "progressive peoples" or "wings" of imperialism for a revolutionary worldview based on a class-struggle perspective. People in the DDR thought we live in this protected "socialism in half a country" and out there is an essentially unchangeable, hostile world without class contradictions. Our program for a revolutionary reunification cut against that, but there was widespread skepticism about the possibility of a socialist revolution in West Germany.

During this same period in West Germany the bourgeoisie, with the help of the social-democratic trade-union bureaucrats, averted a strike by the powerful metal workers union by granting the workers a huge wage increase. Such a strike could have powerfully exploded this false consciousness that a revolution in West Germany is impossible and that there are no class contradictions.

The possibility of political revolution in the ex-DDR was posed decades ago. In 1953, with the death of Stalin, the East German workers saw revolutionary opportunities and started a proletarian political revolution. East Berlin metal workers demonstrated through West Berlin demanding a metal workers



Spartakist

ICL literature table at May 1991 meeting of Soviet officers and soldiers in former DDR to commemorate anniversary of Red Army victory over Nazi Third Reich.

thinking and any independent political expression of the working class, so the working class was atomized and politically disarmed. There was an overgrown secret service called the Stasi, spying on the working class and those they perceived to be opponents of the regime.

Despite the Stalinist bureaucracy, because of the planned economy the Soviet Union made huge strides forward, which however were achieved at terrible cost and sacrifice by the Soviet working masses. But still the economy lagged significantly behind those of the most developed capitalist countries in productivity of labor. In the '70s and '80s it became clear that the old bureaucratic methods of extensive capital investment and borrowing of technique, which in the past had achieved great results, though at great social and economic overhead, had reached their limits. The USSR was gripped by a relative economic stagnation. As Trotsky observed in 1936 in *The Revolution Betrayed*: "Under a nationalized economy, quality demands a democracy of producers and consumers, freedom of criticism and initiative—conditions incompatible with a totalitarian regime of fear, lies and flattery."

So Gorbachev, then leader of the bureaucracy of the Soviet Union, introduced so-called "market socialism reforms." "Market socialism" meant giving up centralized planning, and introducing capitalist market mechanisms into the planned economy. It meant pitting factory

mujahedin. They declined that offer, so we instead collected money for the city of Jalalabad, which was fighting against a siege by the *mujahedin*. We said at the time that it was better to fight imperialism in Afghanistan than counterrevolution in Moscow.

Fall of the Berlin Wall

In the summer of 1989, there was a big outflow of DDR citizens to the West, ripping big holes out of the planned economy. At that time, as part of his "market socialism" reforms, Gorbachev announced that the Soviet Union would sell oil and raw materials only at world market prices and currencies to the other deformed workers states.

It became clear that the DDR could no longer go on in the old way. At the beginning of October 1989, demonstrations started and grew week by week. Honecker wanted to use the army against the demonstrators, but Gorbachev and the Soviet Army command in the DDR said no. In late October, Honecker fell. On November 4, 1989 there was a million-strong demonstration in East Berlin. There you saw many pro-socialist banners and slogans like "For Communist Ideals," "Against Privileges," "Found Workers Councils," and so on. Five days later the Berlin Wall came down.

The ICL's International Executive Committee immediately met and 24 hours later the first leading comrades flew into Germany, to support the Trotskyist

government and telling their class brothers in the West: We'll clean up East Berlin, you clean up Bonn (then the capital of West Germany). Then Soviet leader Khrushchev mobilized Soviet Army tanks, which saved the East German Stalinists at that time.

In the incipient proletarian political revolution that began in the fall of 1989, we called for the founding of workers and soldiers councils, like those in Russia in October 1917. Workers from factories came to us, asking how to do that. Well, in a factory you would elect delegates who are recallable, who don't get paid more than the average worker and who are responsible to decide policy in the workers councils, i.e., how to prevent the sell-off of a factory, how to stop the fascists and protect neighborhoods of foreign workers, and ultimately how to govern the whole society. These councils would come to be the organs of the proletarian dictatorship, deciding what to produce, how much to produce, etc.

In the DDR there were factory militias, the *Kampfgruppen* (fighting groups). They had been set up to prevent another 1953, but they saw themselves as defenders of the workers state on the factory level. There were detachments in every factory, with access even to heavy armaments, like artillery and tanks. In November 1989, when the SED party organizations disappeared at the factory level, the *Kampfgruppen* had the very real potential to become the crystallizing point for a proletarian political revolution.

My father was in the *Kampfgruppen*. Around 1988, they didn't only train how to defend their factory against saboteurs or to fight an invasion by NATO, but also how to break up demonstrations. There was great uneasiness about that. My father told me his detachment didn't like that at all. In early October 1989, when I went to my first demonstration, you would check out before you joined a demo what the *Kampfgruppen* units were discussing among each other, to check out if they were ready to move against the demonstration. They were not. So it was a pretty conscious decision by the Stalinists to dissolve these units in early December 1989 and thus to disarm the working class.

Because of our propaganda, units of the East German Army, the National People's Army, founded soldiers committees. Some of these committees circulated *Arprekorr* inside the army. It was those units the panicky Stalinists dissolved. While at the Treptow demonstration, a delegate of a soldiers committee heard our speech and went up to the stage, saying "You call for soldiers councils—Well, here I am, I want to speak." But the Stalinists would not let him speak. We recruited a number of comrades in East Germany out of such soldiers committees.

[TO BE CONTINUED]



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Diallo Trial...

(continued from page 12)

sentenced to poverty and misery by a system that no longer has any use for them as a reserve army of labor. But the fundamental purpose of the machinery of capitalist state repression—the cops, the courts, the prisons—is to suppress the social power of the one force in this society that does have the power to prevail against racist American capitalism—the multiracial working class. The identity of interests of labor and the ghetto and barrio masses against capitalist state repression was brought home with a vengeance last December with the massive assault on the Transport Workers Union (TWU), when both Giuliani and the Democratic state attorney general brought down court injunctions outlawing even use of the word “strike” while thousands of cops surrounded transit locations.

Giuliani—who turned Harlem into an armed camp occupied by thousands of cops in response to a “Million Youth March” by a couple of thousand people two years ago—now has the entire New York police force on full alert to “respond” to any outbreak of protest over the Diallo verdict. The capitalist rulers are dead set on preventing the sort of upheaval of multiracial plebeian outrage that erupted in Los Angeles in 1992 following the acquittal of the cops who beat Rodney King. When the LAPD and National Guard occupied South-Central L.A., leaving at least 58 dead in their wake, work stoppages and mass mobilizations to solidize with and defend the black community as the LAPD looks to spill more blood to ‘celebrate’ their racist victory over Rodney King” (WV No. 551, 15 May 1992).

Bourgeois commentators noted at the time that the L.A. upheaval which



WV Photo

Spartacist League/Labor Black League at March 1999 New York City Hall protest over Diallo killing.

enthusied: “They’ve got more Bronx jurors here in Albany than they would’ve had in The Bronx” (*New York Post*, 2 February). Liberal columnist Jimmy Breslin had a much better take than this supposed “black community leader” when he wrote in a *Newsday* (16 February) column:

“To have the trial go on without race as the central issue is like having a sky without stars.

“Yet that is what they are doing with this case. They act as if it is only normal for white cops to shoot a black like Amadou Diallo....

“If Diallo were white and living at 215 East 68th Street, would he have been shot for looking out the door?”

For his part, Sharpton pushes illusions that whatever happens in Albany, justice for Diallo’s killers will be dispensed by President Bill Clinton’s Justice Department and the federal courts. Even as the travesty in Albany is taking place, Haitian immigrant Abner Louima is being tormented as though he were the criminal in

case of Diallo and countless victims of racist cop terror before him illustrate, there is no justice in the capitalist courts.

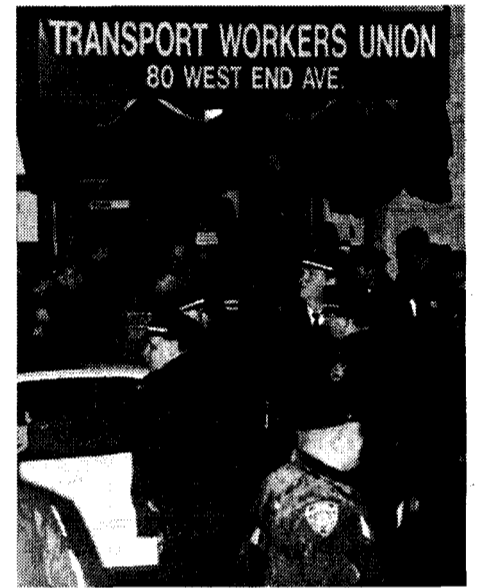
Break with the Democrats! Build a Workers Party!

This system of racist capitalist injustice cannot be cleaned up. The Diallo trial has been permeated with the contempt of the cops and their capitalist masters for the inner-city masses. The largely black and Hispanic working-class Soundview neighborhood where Diallo lived and died was portrayed as enemy territory, a “no man’s land.” The cops could have gone for a non-jury bench trial in the Bronx. But the judge that had been selected was a black woman. And the cops and their masters knew that even as a judge this black woman could easily have been on the receiving end of police harassment herself at some time. That’s when the trial was moved to Albany, where prisons are a cottage industry and the jury pool would come from a mostly white population with connections to cops and prison guards.

Every black person in New York City knows it could just as easily have been them as Amadou Diallo. That is why our call for labor protest against racist cop terror last year struck such a deep chord particularly among the ranks of the powerful Transport Workers Union, which includes thousands of black and Hispanic workers. But the union tops are so cravenly beholden to the capitalist rulers that they agreed to help enforce a strikebreaking injunction against their own union. If they are unwilling even to confront the capitalist state in defense of their own union, they can hardly be relied on to lead a labor mobilization against cop terror! When 50,000 city workers turned out last May 12 in the largest labor rally in NYC in decades, the labor bureaucracy used

that protest as a vehicle for promoting Democratic Party politicians and embracing the police “unions,” refurbishing the image of the racist strikebreaking cops in the wake of the Diallo killing. To unleash labor’s power requires a break with the capitalist Democrats and the fight for a class-struggle leadership of the unions committed to the forging of a workers party.

Black people are in their overwhelming majority working people. Working people need a party that fights for their interests, against strikebreaking and racist terror, against poverty and all-sided oppression—not a party that makes empty promises once every four years come election time, but a party that mobilizes labor/black power in the factories and on the streets. We need a party that understands that the fight against racist oppression means a fight to get rid of the capitalist ruling class which foments racism to divide the working class and maintain its profits and class rule. We need a party based on the understanding that the fundamental division in this racist society is not by skin color but between two counterposed classes—the small handful who own all the means of production and the vast majority who must sell their labor power in order to survive.



WV Photo

14 December 1999: TWU Local 100 headquarters surrounded by cops unleashed to enforce strikebreaking injunctions imposed by Mayor Giuliani and Democratic state attorney general Eliot Spitzer.

We need a multiracial revolutionary workers party with the understanding that the capitalist state cannot be pressured or reformed to serve the interests of the workers and the oppressed but rather must be smashed through a socialist revolution that sweeps away the racist capitalist system and erects in its place a workers government where those who labor rule. ■



January 17: Al Sharpton hustles black vote for Democratic Party Senate candidate Hillary Clinton, supporter of racist death penalty, axing of welfare.

resounded around the country was—as much about class as it was about race, reflecting the growing class divide. Today the gap between rich and poor has grown far wider. In a society where corporate CEOs flaunt salaries 150 times greater than that of the average industrial worker, the ruling class is well aware of the seething discontent that is building at the bottom. This is what lies behind the augmentation and increasing deployment of the forces of state repression—to keep a lid on any social struggle lest it spark a conflagration.

At the same time the capitalist rulers are determined to maintain illusions in the “democracy” of this system and in the capitalist state as some kind of “neutral” arbiter representing the interests of all. Preaching that message is the Reverend Al Sharpton. Far from opposing the police, Sharpton seeks to refurbish the image of the racist strikebreaking cops. The 10-point program of “police reform” he promoted during last year’s protests, along with Local 1199 head Dennis Rivera, was aimed at “cleaning up” the most flagrantly racist excesses of the NYPD in order to make the police a more effective force of capitalist “law and order.” This program even called for a pay raise for the cops!

Now, when four black people were selected for the Albany jury, Sharpton

a federal courtroom where his sadistic cop torturers are supposedly on trial.

Last year, Sharpton sought to contain the mass outrage over the Diallo killing through daily protests at One Police Plaza where various celebrities and Democratic Party politicians were led off in carefully stage-managed arrests that had all the reality of theater of the absurd. But now Sharpton is walking more of a tightrope as he seeks to win his spurs as a Democratic Party power broker, particularly in supporting the Senate bid of Hillary Clinton, a supporter of the racist death penalty and the axing of welfare whose campaign is also being promoted by the bulk of the NYC labor bureaucracy. Even such tame protests as those at One Police Plaza could upset this electoral apple cart. Outside the Albany courthouse, Sharpton declared: “We are coming to have prayer meetings, not civil disobedience.”

But as the ghettos and barrios seethe with anger, even attempts to blow off some steam could explode. The anger was evident when over 200 people turned out for a community meeting in Manhattan on February 17 organized by Sharpton’s National Action Network and other groups. But that anger was accompanied by demands for “a real police review board” and calls to jail the killer cops—i.e., appealing to the racist rulers to punish their own hired guns. As the

Prop 21...

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this initiative” (*Socialist Action*, February 2000).

Unlike liberals who strive to conjure a more “humane” façade for capitalist barbarism, we understand that brutal racial oppression is a foundation stone of American capitalism. Racism is an essential tool to keep black, white, Latino and Asian working people and youth pitted against each other so they won’t unite against the whole system.

As the rich get richer and the poor get poorer in today’s America, explosive pressures build at the bottom of society and the capitalists build up the repressive machinery of the state, with the racist death penalty at its pinnacle. The ultimate target is the working class, which has the social power, leading all the oppressed, to smash capitalist rule. Following the L.A. rebellion of 1992, when the oppressed multiracial urban population took to the streets in outrage over acquittal of the cops who beat Rodney King, the ruling class intensified police-state terror in the ghettos and strengthened the powers of

the INS to brutalize, imprison and deport immigrants. With minorities, unions and youth in their cross hairs, they are waging war against the rights and lives of all of us.

The question is: how to fight back and wage our own struggle for everything that working people and youth need and deserve? The capitalist state is not a neutral body that can be pressured to act in the interest of the oppressed, as the liberals believe, but an instrument based on special bodies of armed men—the cops, the courts, the prisons—for the repression of the working people in the interests of the handful of capitalists who appropriate the wealth created by workers’ labor. Defenders of labor, minorities, and democratic rights must oppose Prop. 21 and all other extensions of the murderous, racist, union-busting state apparatus. But it will take a socialist revolution to make possible what working-class and minority youth need: jobs for all, free quality education and health care, the end to exploitation and all forms of racial and social oppression. The Spartacus Youth Clubs fight to win students and young workers to the program of building the revolutionary, multiracial workers party essential for this struggle. Join us! ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

There Is No Justice in the Capitalist Courts!

Diallo Trial: Whitewash of Racist Capitalist Repression

FEBRUARY 22—A year after Amadou Diallo was killed in a hail of 41 bullets, the message from the Albany “trial” of the cops who gunned him down was put simply and bluntly: the cops were simply “doing their job” as a racist occupying army in the ghettos and barrios. Diallo was black, and thus he was automatically a suspect to the Street Crime Unit cops who are trained to shoot first and ask questions later and did just that to this unarmed man, guilty of nothing more than looking out his door. If Diallo had been killed with one bullet, he would simply have been another statistic in the racist “war on crime.” The problem for the rulers was that the volley of bullets that cut him down was potentially damaging to the authority of the forces of “law and order” beyond the inner cities. So they stage-managed a trial, moved it from the Bronx to Albany and scripted it to whitewash the cops. Whatever the verdict, the message is clear—being black in America means being branded a criminal to be targeted for harassment, brutality and death at the hands of the cops.

An editorial in the *Amsterdam News* by publisher emeritus William Tatum, titled “The Diallo Trial, or Cops Crying a River of Blood,” provides a measure of the fear and loathing of the racist cops among the black population as a whole. This voice of the black middle-class establishment, which only last October



January 31, Albany: Outrage over death-squad-style NYPD execution of Amadou Diallo at protest outside trial of killer cops.



AP photos

sought to keep black people in New York City in line by filing an *amicus* brief on behalf of the KKK’s “right” to organize for racist terror, today declares:

“Usually it has been our view that somehow justice would prevail, and we counselled our readers to give justice a chance. It was true in the murder of Michael Stewart, Gavin Cato, Eleanor Bumpers and Yusef Hawkins. We hoped against hope always that this criminal justice system would work in the best interest of everyone—at least once in a while. That has not been the case at all.

We have found us, as a people, on the business end of the kind of stick wielded by Justin Volpe in the sodomizing of Abner Louima.”

Tatum opines: “We will not do anything about it except yell, scream, shout, march and pray.” Here is an expression of the despair of the black middle class who thought that maybe they could make it in capitalist America and who have sought to keep the peace by corralling black people behind the Democratic Party. Last year, the black Democrats headed by Al

Sharpton desperately tried to quell the mass outrage over the killing of Diallo and channel it into electoral pressure politics. The Spartacist League and the Labor Black League affiliated with the SL fought for labor-centered mass protest. Warning “Beware Democratic Party Husters—Enemies of Labor, Blacks” (*WV* No. 710, 2 April 1999), we wrote:

“The mass outrage against the cops *does* need an organized political expression. Not one aimed at strengthening the hand of the Democrats, the political tool of the very capitalist rulers whose interests the cops ‘serve and protect,’ but one which provides a proletarian class axis that can weld the social power of the multiracial working class to the anger of the inner city through mass labor-centered protest against cop terror....

“There will be no end to police brutality short of the destruction of the system of capitalist exploitation and racist oppression which the cops serve as armed guard dogs. But a massive mobilization of labor would give the cops some pause.... Bringing that kind of social power to bear in a mass protest against cop terror would be a big step toward imbuing the working class with the understanding that its interests are inseparably linked to the defense of the ghettos and barrios and the fight for black freedom.”

Sharpton Fronts for Racist Rulers

Police terror in the inner cities is aimed at a population which has already been

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Hidalgo, Mexico Campus Strike

Villagers Seize Strikebreaking Cops

On February 19, the villagers of Francisco Madero, in the state of Hidalgo north of Mexico City, erupted in just outrage against the notoriously brutal and corrupt Public Security riot police dramatically seizing 68 cops who had violently

Free Jailed UNAM and El Mexe Militants!

raided a rural teachers college occupied by student strikers since January 5. The strike at the El Mexe Rural Normal School, against “reforms” which would force more than two-thirds of the student body out, was inspired by the months-long strike at Mexico City’s National Autonomous University (UNAM). The UNAM strike has sparked upheavals around the country despite intense government repression culminating in a full-scale invasion of the campus by federal police two weeks ago. But the student



AFP

Tepatepec, Mexico, February 19: Cops held in town square after villagers repulsed police attack on El Mexe student strikers, disarming cops and setting their cars ablaze.



El Sol de México

struggle that propelled the villagers to fight back was clearly just the tip of the iceberg, galvanizing seething discontent within Mexican society. As the father of one of the arrested UNAM strikers told

CNN News, “Instead of giving Mexico education, they are oppressing the country and forcing it into revolution.”

In the dawn cop attack at El Mexe, 176 students were arrested and hundreds of

people, including old women and children, were beaten by an army of 1,000 cops, only three hours after 750 other students, from El Mexe as well as other

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