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America's Racist Reality

A Black woman in Los Angeles said to reporters, "I told my son that things were going to be better for him, to use the system." She added, referring to the appalling judicial acquittal of the police thugs who brutally beat Rodney King, "Now what do I tell him?"

Across the nation, politicians, pundits and even police commissioners called the verdict an aberration, a breakdown of the U.S. legal system which could never occur in *their* city. Bronx D.A. Robert Johnson said it was "no reflection on the New York City Police Department." They are all lying.

What happened in Los Angeles only reveals the true face, the ugly reality of "law and order" in the United States. The courts and cops are the enforcement arm of capitalism. The system in its entirety is

inherently, inescapably unjust. It viciously and routinely discriminates on the basis of race and class.

Reality is answering the Black mother's question: warn your child that the system, which at present still claims that it is possible for Blacks to be treated equally and to rise in society, is a snare and a delusion. Those who still believe in the myth because they see no way out are tragically in for a sad awakening.

Ironically, the very thing that makes the Rodney King case seem unusual in fact proves the opposite. The videotaped evidence of police brutality was so starkly clear that American public opinion, white as well as Black, was outraged by the jury's decision. But that doesn't mean that other cases of cop

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The Divide-and-Conquer Election

There is no greater proof of capitalism's inability to control noxious air pollution than the current presidential campaign. No wonder the most popular candidate has been "none of the above."

As we write during the primaries, George Bush's popularity has fallen by half in the year since the Gulf War. But recently his chances improved — not because the voters like him any better, but they've now got a whiff of his rivals.

The story so far: Bush's main Republican challenger attacked the "Washington establishment" and did well at first only to collapse afterwards. As for the Democrats, as soon as they got a front-runner, the polls showed that even his supporters thought him the least lousy of a rotten lot. With the speedy withdrawal of Wall Street's entry and "labor's candidate," a new inside "outsider" puffed himself up, but then that gas bag also burst. All along, uncommitted slates collected big fractions of the vote, often beating major candidates. Even bigger numbers stayed home on primary day.

And then a new independent candidate pops up whose major advantage is that nobody knows him. But he has the billions to convert that asset into vague popularity.

The great majority of Americans have not given up on elections as the way to achieve their needs and hopes. Not yet. But they are bitter over governmental policy. They want decisive changes, and they're not getting them. Neither the candidates nor their parties seem to reflect the "ordinary citizen's" deepening concerns and fears. The underlying reason is that what they really want they will never get from bourgeois elections.

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Fourth International Organization Expands

At a February conference in New York, the international tendency founded in 1987 by the League for the Revolutionary Party (LRP) of the U.S. and the Workers Revolution Group (WRG) of Australia welcomed into its ranks a new affiliate — the Swedish group in formation, Förbundet för ett Revolutionärt Parti (FRP: League for the Revolutionary Party). The expanded current decided to call itself the Communist Organization for the Fourth International (COFI).

The winning of a new group in Sweden is one reflection of the fact that our long uphill fight for the re-creation of the Fourth International has made real headway in the past year.

We publish here two statements by Swedish comrades outlining their reasons for joining.

From Maoism and Hoxhaism to Trotskyism

In Sweden, one effect of the crisis and crumbling of the so-called "Marxist-Leninist" or "anti-revisionist" movement was a drift by a small number of militants towards Trotskyist positions. The roots of that process can be traced back to the 1977-78 split between the Stalinist ruling classes of China and Albania.

Regardless of the real causes behind that conflict, it was expressed on the Albanian side in ideological terms and was understood that way by the various "M-L" organizations around the world. The Albanian ruler Enver Hoxha criticized the Maoist "three worlds" theory [that the world consisted of three categories of countries: the two superpowers, the remaining imperialist countries, and the countries victimized by imperialism]. Hoxha denounced this theory as class collaborationist and condemned the scheme put forward by the Chinese Stalinists for allying with the U.S. and other Western imperialists against the Soviet Union. Instead, he declared both superpowers to be equal and advocated a stand like that of Lenin toward the two blocs in World War I.

Hoxha declared that a break with Maoism was the necessary continuation of the struggle against "Soviet revisionism." This led to a split among the "M-L" organizations, with a left-Stalinist, pro-Hoxha current breaking away from the more rightist mainstream. The breakaway groups repudiated social chauvinism and the Maoists' neglect of the working class. At least in Sweden, the split took place along class

lines, with the few workers who had been recruited to Maoism now rallying around Hoxhaism.

In some countries, a dynamic developed towards scrutinizing critically the popular-frontist practices of Stalinism, since central Maoist ideas had been based on the Comintern's popular-front line of the mid 1930's. The Albanian Stalinists had not simply defended against imperialism the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, the Islamic regime in Iran, ZANU in Zimbabwe, the Argentine military junta during the Malvinas war, etc., but had given these bourgeois regimes *political* support. This raised the question of the "three worlds" theory again, with the dissident Hoxhaites calling for a break with a large part of the Stalinist heritage "in order to carry the break with Maoism through to the end." Leading this critique was the Marxist-Leninist Party (USA), supported by the Marxist-Leninist Party (formerly the MAP/ML) of Nicaragua and a number of individuals expelled from the Hoxhaite parties in Portugal, New Zealand and Sweden in 1983-85.

The Swedish group called itself the Communist League of Norrköping, changing its name to the Marxist-Leninistiska Förbundet (MLF: Marxist-Leninist League) in 1989. It published the journal *Röd Gryning* (*Red Dawn*).

The international current was forced, by the logic of its stance and the circumstances of its origin, to go further and further leftward in an anti-Stalinist direction. Developing a left-centrist position, it partly repudiated the theories of socialism in one country and of necessarily separate stages in the revolution in non-imperialist countries. This was done not as a conscious effort, but piecemeal, empirically; and it was in fact only the Swedish group that recognized the consequences and began to draw Trotskyist conclusions.

One obstacle to accepting Trotskyism was that the majority of groups styling themselves Trotskyist insisted that the Stalinist states were workers' states. But when the Swedish group came across Tony Cliff's theory of state capitalism, it drew the conclusion that adopting Trotskyism would mean not dropping the "M-L" notion of state capitalism, which the ex-Hoxhaites still adhered to, but merely revising it. The Swedish MLF embraced the Cliffite theories of state capitalism and the "deflected permanent revolution," but balked at the concepts of party building and the "downturn" promoted by Cliff's International Socialism tendency. On these topics they vacillated toward the ideas of Nahuel Moreno. The result was a strange, eclectic combination of political ideas.

Another problem with the Marxist-Leninist League of Sweden was its organizational deterioration. The expulsions from the Hoxhaite party meant a transformation from a cadre organization to a small study group. For most members,

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Revolutionary Workers' Councils in Kurdistan

'Bread, Work, Freedom and a Shoras Government!'

When Iraqi Kurdistan erupted in rebellion against Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist party regime in the wake of the Gulf War in February 1991, it was universally portrayed as bourgeois nationalist uprising. But there is another side to the story. We have learned that a revolutionary workers' council movement seized control of key cities and towns: there were over 50 workers' councils (shoras) in Suleimania, 46 in Hawlir, 6 in Kirkuk and more in other towns. Our headline was the slogan of this magnificent workers' movement.

Reports written in Kurdish and Farsi that document the shoras movement and recently reached the West are being translated into English under the auspices of our Australian comrades, the Workers Revolution Group. We present here sections of two articles which describe how the movement exploded across South Kurdistan in March 1991.

THE TRADITION OF WORKERS' SOVIETS

The Kurdish workers' shoras stand in the great tradition of the world working class. It started with the soviets created by Russian workers in their 1905 and 1917 revolutions. Councils were created by revolutionary Spanish workers in the 1930's, by Hungarian workers in 1956, by Polish workers in the mass upsurge of 1980-81. Most recently there have been echoes by the Soviet miners in 1989 and 1991. Workers' councils are the vehicle for the proletariat's independent self-



organization as a class. They are an implicit threat to the continued class rule of capitalism.

The Kurdish shoras make clear the central role of the working class in the Iraqi uprising. The reports also make clear the counterrevolutionary sabotage by the bourgeois nationalist organizations, the Kurdish Democratic Party led by Masoud Barzani, and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan of Jalal Talabani. The KDP, PUK and others were grouped together in the Kurdish Front (KF).

In several places, however, the KF was displaced by working-class-based organizations. A "large part of the shora movement" decided that it "didn't recognize the KF's authority," deciding to follow the general assembly of the workers' shoras instead.

The authors of the first document were leftists belonging

to Kurdish armed units in Suleimania. The document paints a picture of conditions in Iraq before the invasion of Kuwait: inflation out of control, unemployment, vicious national oppression of the Kurds. The left grew in size, but the Kurdish nationalists ignored "the everyday conditions of the people." After the invasion of Kuwait, inflation went through the roof, but still the KF stood aside. "They even put a stop to the activities of the peshmergas," the nationalist guerrillas.

A rebellion dominated by Shi'ite Islamic religious sentiments broke out in southern Iraq shortly after the Gulf war ended. This was the spark for uprisings across Iraqi Kurdistan as well. We quote extensively from the first document:

The Suleimania Shoras

When the South exploded on February 29, it had a big effect on Kurdistan. The KF had been set to hold a demonstration [in Suleimania] at 1pm on March 7. After setting up armed units, we commenced the Suleimania uprising at 8am on March 7. By March 8, although the security headquarters had still not been occupied, we organized a march which covered the entire city with 11 banners that proclaimed:

- Choose as your representatives conscious and upright people!
- Make the shora the base for your long-term struggle!
- Revolutionary people! The achievements of the revolu-

tion have been at the cost of your own blood. Don't waste it!

- Class consciousness is the arm of liberation!
- Revolutionary people, set up your own shoras!
- Long live the authority of the shoras!
- Women are the arm of the revolution! Now they have a clear role to play. No obstructions must be put in the way of their participation!
- Unconditional and unfettered political freedom!
- Forward to the right of self-determination for the Kurdish people!

Two banners were hung from the hospital calling for blood donors and asking people not to loot.

Until March 8 there was no PUK base. The shora movement swiftly proclaimed itself, seizing the initiative. The num-

ber of shoras increased rapidly until there were 54 district shoras altogether.

There were also workers' shoras: the city council workers' shora, the cigarette workers' shora, the chicken factory shora, the Mamoraby company's shora, the power industry shora, the Semini company shora, and the shora at the hospital.

THE SHORAS' ACTIVITIES

1. Every shora had its own radio station and broadcast its own programs on its publications, poetry and the needs of local people.

2. Each shora set up medical posts where blood could be donated to the hospital and used to treat local people.

3. Each shora had a number of committees to deal with the media, the militia, medical matters, administration, finance, general assistance and law; and committees to deal with relations between shoras and with foreign relations.

4. Shoras controlled the method of struggle.

5. The shoras organized meetings in localities. But not all of them were able to hold a general meeting.

6. The building of a militia for resistance purposes.

7. The shoras were elected to work on some public matters.

8. On March 16, the anniversary of the massacre of Halabja, the shoras stirred the entire city into action, even threatening the [authority of the] KF.

9. On March 17, a general meeting of all the shoras took place at the Majid Bug shora to elect a supreme shora covering Suleimania city.

10. On the 18th, the KF called for disbanding the shoras.

11. At 2pm, there was a meeting of shora delegates. At 9pm it was decided to condemn the KF's declaration.

12. On the morning of March 19, a meeting of shora delegates and the KF was held. At the same time, a rumor spread that shora delegates had been arrested and their activities curtailed. The shoras organized a demonstration in front of the KF's base, the former "Peoples' Culture House" of the Ba'athist party.

13. On March 20, a march was organized against the KF's call to disband the shoras.

From the start, the KF wanted to take over all the city's institutions and rebuild them. In that period, the crisis was over political power, which is why the shoras became the center for class struggle, meaning women's struggles, unem-



ployment, free elections for representatives, overall authority for the city's affairs, etc.

At the time, the shoras' struggle was against the bosses — the big directors, administrators — and the old administration, of which workers had bitter memories. But the KF wanted to give the bosses back their jobs.

Later on, these people [the dismissed bosses] brought with them KF peshmerga squads to obstruct and prevent the general assemblies of the factory workers. [Some bosses] even attacked some shoras and wanted to close them down. But the shora movement ignored the threats of the KF until the day the cities were retaken by the regime's forces.

1. The terrorist institutions that the Ba'athist party had strengthened and continually regenerated over 23 years broke down in a short time, and there is no way they can be rebuilt.

2. It has made Kurdistan and Iraq a political society. Everyone has become political — men, women and even young children, of all classes. *Class struggle has been put on the agenda.*

3. The shora movement was the bright star of the uprising, because it declared that it was the bearer of the interests of the workers and exploited in the cities and villages.

It did not try to bargain away the achievements of the revolution. It was against any form of inequality, against nationalism, religion and social backwardness. It did not want to cool down the uprising in the public's heart, despite all the errors made and the lack of clarity.

LACK OF COMMUNIST LEADERSHIP

Here ends our extensive quotation from the first document. It then enumerated the "weak points of the uprising," specifying that the principal activists were not organized in a "communist political organization." This enabled the bourgeois nationalists of the KF to reassert themselves.

A similar point is made in the second document, the "Statement from a Suleimania Workers' Council":

It was due to both the philosophical attitude of the bourgeois nationalists . . . as well as the lack of a workers' communist party representing the vanguard of different sectors of the workers' movement, that the uprising couldn't continue and that stopped us in our tracks. This was the weakest point of the revolutionary workers' movement at the time of the uprising.

We salute our fellow workers in Kurdistan for their initiative, courage and achievements. The lesson they draw that the prime necessity is to build a proletarian communist party conforms with the history of the entire working-class movement.

We know from other sources and documents that the shoras included Arab workers along with Kurds. As well, as opposed to the KF, the Suleimania shoras opposed imperialism in Iraq and around the world. ●



How the Left Restores Capitalism

The USSR was dissolved in December by the presidents of its constituent republics, following the seizure of power in Russia by Boris Yeltsin and the pro-bourgeois camp after the disastrous Stalinist coup last August. These linked events have sent the pseudo-Trotskyists into turmoil. Their convolutions demonstrate once again not only the falsity of the "orthodox Trotskyist" (Pabloite) theory that the Stalinist states are workers' states — but its complete absurdity.

Not surprisingly, various believers in the "deformed workers' state" formula have gone different ways. Some think

third party, the bureaucrats. We have said for years that the post-Trotsky workers' state theory amounted to a variant of third-campism. Now the BT makes it reasonably explicit.

The BT's formula leads them to say that they would have defended the Stalinist putsch (and thereby the state), even though the workers didn't. Well, the workers had it right. The putschists were the immediate danger to the working class: they had already banned independent workers' actions and organizations; they threatened to wipe out the democratic openings won under Gorbachev. Yeltsin & Co.

Moscow, 1991. Working people sift garbage for food. Is this a workers' state or the legacy of decadent capitalism?



the ex-USSR is no longer a workers' state; others say *it is* but certain East European countries aren't; some still hold the old faith for all. Typically, few criticize the theoretical methods of the others, even though their conclusions are so vastly different. That's because all have abandoned even the pretense of making their "theory" square with Marxism.

WORKERS ABANDON "WORKERS' STATE"

So far, four organizations we know of have dropped the workers' state title for specific East European states (aside from East Germany, which all agree is now capitalist). The first to do so in response to the coup was the Bolshevik Tendency. They said right away that Yeltsin's counterrevolution was decisive. But their explanation exposes the whole fraud:

Now over the last few years there was a strong movement toward the resolution of the contradictions in the Soviet degenerated workers state in favor of capitalism. But there were also a number of serious obstacles to the reimposition of capitalism in the Soviet Union, the major obstacle being the fact that the privileges of the Stalinist bureaucracy were tied to the command economy and the system of centralized planning. (1917 West, Spring 1992.)

So when Yeltsin took power with the aim of ousting the Stalinists and ending their privileges, there went the state. Note that it's not the *workers* who were the major defenders of the "workers' state." This means that the Stalinist state belonged neither to the workers nor the capitalists but to a

wanted the same goals but couldn't achieve them right away. A temporary bloc with the pseudo-democratic forces during the fighting was called for.

Of course, anyone who thought the USSR was a workers' state *should* have backed the coup, incompetent though it was, in order to prevent the triumph of the more urgently pro-bourgeois forces within the bureaucracy. Better a collapsing "degenerated workers' state" than none at all. But that just shows the craziness of a formula that tells you to support the workers' executioners.

The BT presents a picture of one class state turning into another while the repressive forces, Lenin's "bodies of armed men" that defend a specific class's interests, remain the same. Like all proponents of deformed workers' states, the BT has rediscovered the reformist theory of the state.

NEITHER A WORKERS' NOR A BOURGEOIS STATE?

Next to make the theoretical turn was the British Workers Revolutionary Party and its affiliated Workers International. The WRP/WI belatedly seized on the counter-coup to declare the Soviet "workers' state" dead:

The collapse of the 'coup' was the collapse of those elements in the Stalinist bureaucracy which looked to rule in the old way, on the old basis. This creates a unique, unprecedented situation. The state apparatus is no longer an instrument for the defense of the nationalized property. In this sense, today's state in the USSR is not a workers' state, degenerated or otherwise. But at the

same time, this state has not been replaced by a capitalist state and the nationalized property relations have not been replaced by capitalist social relations. . . .”

(*The International*, Nov. 1991.)

There are two immense problems with this position. First, if it really was Yeltsin's counter-coup that did away with the “workers' state,” then since the Stalinists were the only ones defending “the old way” of state power (however badly), any serious worker, all the more so any Marxist, should have supported the August coup. But the WRP/WI joined the fight to defeat it. They seem to have chosen the correct course pragmatically, but what is the point of a “theory” that cannot tell you the right side to support at the moment of counterrevolution?

Second is the notion that the USSR is not yet capitalist. The WRP tries to anticipate obvious objections from Marxists by asserting that to paste on “fixed labels” (like the class nature of a state) is the method of “normative sociology.” That is in fact a swipe at Trotsky, who reacted with shock when two of his followers asserted that the USSR was “Not a Workers' and Not a Bourgeois State.” This, he said, was “a new attempt at revising the class theory of the state,” an echo of the “lamentable experience of the old revisionists.” (*Writings 1937-38*, p. 61.) The only thing to be added about the WRP's similar attempt is that its revisionism is not new.

If the WRP/WI took ideas seriously, they would either defend the state in which capitalist relations have not yet been re-established, or else reject a theory that places them on the wrong side of the class line. Instead they call the class nature of the state indeterminate.

SPARTACIST INDETERMINACY

The indeterminacy excuse was invented years ago by the Spartacist Tendency to account for East Europe in the 1940's, when the popular front regimes became “deformed workers' states” without a workers' revolution. The Spartacists later expressed a similar view about Nicaragua under the Sandinistas. The idea is pure centrism, blaming your own vacillation on the supposed ambiguity of class rule.

The problem has now recurred in the case of Poland. In 1989 the Spartacists said Poland under Solidarity was still a workers' state, because the armed state apparatus was then in the hands of Stalinist ministers. When that changed, they said nothing. But after the Yeltsin counter-coup in Russia they disclosed that “in Poland . . . the state is capitalist from top to bottom, [but] a capitalist class has not yet congealed.” (*Workers Vanguard*, Aug. 30, 1991.) When and how did the old workers' state give up the ghost and this “top to bottom” capitalist state appear? No explanation.

Finally, in its March 30 issue *Workers Vanguard* revealed that Poland had turned capitalist when Lech Walesa became president in December 1990. This, of course, raises more questions than it answers. Why did it take the Spartacists a year and a half to notice that the counterrevolution had triumphed? How did the class nature of the state change over so gradually and peacefully? How come the “proletarian” Polish army, which the Spartacists had hailed when it crushed the working class in 1981, retained the same unpurged officer corps under capitalist President Walesa? The Spartacists ought to send Walesa a telegram of protest for not playing according to Marxist rules.

The Spartacists disdain to explain how there can be a capitalist state without a capitalist class. For years they baited us for characterizing the Stalinist states as capitalist: where are the capitalists? We made clear in articles and in our book on Stalinism that the capitalists were the ruling bureaucracy, the embodiment of the exploitation of the proletariat.

But now the Spartacists face the same question and have no answer. In reality, theirs is another third-camp theory in disguise.

BELATED LIQUIDATION

The latest contender in the disappearing workers' state sweepstakes is the U.S. Workers League, affiliated with the Australian Socialist Labour League — both outfits chiefly noted for their despicable routine of slander and court suits against other leftists. Buried in one of the innumerable and interminable speeches of David North that fill the pages of the WL's *Bulletin* is the following death announcement:

In the aftermath of the events of the past month, which marked the climax of the politics pursued by the bureaucracy since the advent of Gorbachev to power in March 1985, it is necessary to draw the appropriate conclusions from the juridical liquidation of the Soviet Union. It is impossible to define the Confederation of Independent States as a whole, or any of the republics of which it is comprised, as workers states. (*Bulletin*, Jan. 10.)

Further along, we learn that Poland and Czechoslovakia have not been workers' states for some time. (Unlike the WRP, the WL does acknowledge that they have become capitalist.) Yet the WL had failed to notify its readers of these epochal events when they happened. A few weeks before North's declaration on the Soviet Union, the tardy WL was mocking the WRP for implying that capitalism had already been restored in the USSR. (*Bulletin*, Dec. 20.)

Such inconsistency has a long tradition. The decaying Fourth International recognized the East European “workers' states” years after they were allegedly created in the 1940's. For all these folks, finding or losing a workers' state every now and then seems to be a matter of only casual import.

What reason did North give for his change of heart? “The new states are actively engaged in the destruction of the old forms of property. They are concentrating their efforts on the growth of a bourgeoisie — and, in fact, the new bourgeoisie is emerging out of the very bowels of the old Stalinist bureaucracy.” True, but except for the pace the same could be said of Gorbachev, or, for that matter, of Jaruzelski in Poland ten years ago. Indeed, the process started when Stalinism came to power. But now it hits the headlines, where even the politically blind can see it.

North concentrates on one phrase, the “juridical liquidation of the Soviet Union.” Trotsky used the same words over half a century ago. Commenting on Stalin's new Soviet constitution of 1936, he wrote that its electoral “system of bourgeois democracy” was a matter of “juridically liquidating the dictatorship of the proletariat” — i.e., the workers' state. (*The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 261.) In fact, Stalin's constitutional change deprived the working class of more rights than did Yeltsin's a half century later. By North's logic, the end of the workers' state occurred long ago. If juridical liquidation is the final straw, capitalism has now been restored twice.

STILL A WORKERS' STATE?

Ernest Mandel, the leading theorist of the “deformed workers' state” formula after World War II, remains a die-hard in sticking to the concept despite its heightening contradictions. He has a new book out incorporating the latest twists of his unstable theory (*The Fallacies of State Capitalism*, Nov. 1991).

In a previous article (“Death Agony of a Deformed Theory,” *Proletarian Revolution* No. 38.) we noted Mandel's belated conversion to the danger of bourgeoisification (the “restoration” of capitalism), which he had denied for years.

But his eyes remain closed. He argues that "the framework necessary for understanding the socio-political struggle that has taken place in the USSR over the last sixty years" is the "three-way struggle" among the Stalinist bureaucracy, the bourgeoisie and the working class. And so it was, especially when the Stalinists ousted the bourgeoisie in the USSR (1928-33) and in East Europe (1945-48). But today the bureaucracy has lost its capacity to rule or to stay independent of the bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, Mandel writes (p. 51):

It remains to be seen whether the three-way struggle continues (we think it will), or whether, as many commentators and tendencies believe, the nomenklatura will go over into the camp of the international bourgeoisie lock, stock and barrel and become its resident junior partner . . .

"It remains to be seen"! Are not Yeltsin's supporters, ex-bureaucrats all, totally in the camp of the international bourgeoisie? Are not Stalinists everywhere re-christening themselves benign social democrats and supporting privatization and pluralism? Are not even the hard-line bureaucrats in Russia swearing their devotion to capitalist economics, albeit more temperately than the Yeltsinites? Of course they are. So where is the independent bureaucracy? In Havana, perhaps? Just wait till tomorrow.

One might hope that people with a three-way struggle theory would fight vigorously for working-class independence

from bourgeoisie and bureaucracy. But Mandel's followers in the United Secretariat have done no such thing. Instead, they have backed various "democratic" alliances with pro-bourgeois forces, including Walesa's *government* in Poland and the right-turning *government* in Czechoslovakia. (See *Proletarian Revolution* Nos. 36 and 38.) Their theory suggests an irreconcilable schism among the rulers because "democracy" rather than class exploitation is their central guide to action.

Mandel's three-way struggle conception is yet another version of the underlying third-camp nature of deformed workers' state theories. And such theories, starting with Max Shachtman in the 1940's, lead directly to the support of one ruling-class side or the other. With the BT and the Spartacists it is the Stalinists; with Mandel it is the "democrats."

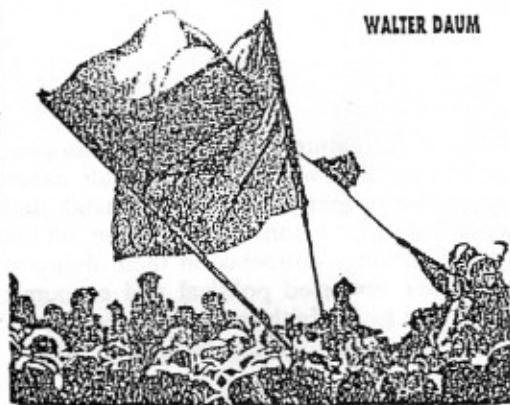
CENTRISM, NOT TROTSKYISM

In their headlong rush to abandon or buttress their workers' state notions now that the formula has proved ludicrous, the pseudo-Trotskyists are grasping at legal and technical straws. Despite the differences, all have a common thread: "counterrevolutions" can take place without the violent overthrow of one ruling class by another. A greater travesty of Marxism is unimaginable. In reality, the real counterrevolution occurred in the late 1930's, when a "preventive civil war" (Trotsky's term) was waged by the Stalinists against the working class; it wiped out every vestige of

THE LIFE & DEATH OF STALINISM

A RESURRECTION OF MARXIST THEORY

WALTER DAUM



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Bolshevism in the Communist Party and the state, and consolidated a section of the bureaucracy as a capitalist class. For a full analysis, we refer readers to our book, *The Life and Death of Stalinism*.

The revival of the reformist theory of the state by the workers' statist is not explicit. As centrists, they naturally disguise their reformist conceptions as vacillation or indeterminacy. We sympathize with their desire to avoid straightforward language, but as that great "normative sociologist" Leon Trotsky taught us, Marxists, unlike centrists, must call things by their right names.

POST-STALINIST AUSTERITY

The theoretical sloppiness of the self-proclaimed Trotskyists is no joke. The situation facing the working classes is deadly serious. The ex-Soviet economy is now on the same road as its former satellites in Eastern Europe: towards more private property, mass unemployment and stratospheric consumer prices. The living standards of the working class are under an all-out assault, aimed at squeezing higher profits to salvage a decaying economy.

Soviet and East European workers have resisted the attacks through strikes and protest demonstrations. But they

before Gorbachev, several East European rulers tried to reform their system by introducing bourgeois methods without undermining the bureaucratic hierarchy.

But when the post-World War II boom of world capitalism ended, the Eastern bloc's crisis became drastic. The workers' revolt in Poland in 1980-81 made desperate steps necessary. Sections of the statified capitalist ruling class seized the opportunity to become bourgeois by acquiring private or previously statified property. The economies collapsed and severe depression has set in.

The Stalinist states, as now should be obvious to all, were not progressive as compared to Western capitalism. They could neither develop the productive forces consistently nor advance the living standards of the working class. On top of this, the "restoration" of capitalism means the imposition of depression-level austerity.

This route has been endorsed by Western experts and statesmen as well as Eastern rulers. For good reason: driving down living standards of Eastern workers is necessary for maximizing the surplus value extracted by imperialist interests. It is also a weapon for doing the same in the West.

In the post-Stalinist countries, the ruling classes are in turmoil. Extreme rival nationalisms are rampant. In the eco-



Goods for sale in private store cost far too much for Soviet retirees. Ruling class turned from statified to private capitalism to super-exploit working class.

have generally followed leaders who either backed the anti-worker "reforms" of the Yeltsins and Walesas or who retain illusions in the Stalinists. An indispensable tool for proletarian defense is the construction of working-class parties independent of all the capitalist forces. That means authentic communist revolutionary parties. For this a clear-sighted Marxist analysis of the fall of Stalinism is vital.

The key to understanding the post-Stalinist developments is to see that Stalinism was a system of statified capitalism, built on the carcass of the Soviet degenerated workers' state. In smashing the remnants of the workers' state, the Stalinists re-established exploitation of the working class through wage labor but were unable to destroy every facet of the working-class gains achieved through the 1917 revolution. The Stalinist system became a deformed and inefficient variant of capitalism, unable to use the full bag of capitalist tricks to extract surplus value.

Stalinism spread to East Europe and China after World War II through conquest and revolution. But after initial periods of rapid development and rabid exploitation, massive working-class resistance led to economic stagnation. Even

conomic sphere there is infighting between the bourgeois mafias and Stalinist bureaucrats who got their private hands on slices of former state property, on the one hand, and those who still run still-statified means of production, on the other. With the rulers lacking confidence in their ability to hold power and in their imported political and economic theories, and the workers losing faith in the regimes, opportunities are rife for building genuine communist parties. ●

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Election

continued from page 1

Certainly it's not that the office being sought is powerless. The soon-to-be-elected president will have to deal with momentous events at home and abroad. He will preside over the only remaining military superpower. His decisions spell life or death for millions: the so-called third world slides deeper into starvation and slavery; the former Stalinist empire has collapsed into a market "solution" that is no longer marketable; the world economy stands at the brink of a major depression. Most important to the voters is the floundering economy, the growing unemployment and decaying living standards at home. Surely the White House should be able to do something decisive!

Yet aside from phony-sounding populism, what has the primary campaign been about? Adultery, draft-dodging, pot-smoking, corruption — penny-ante issues all. Voters are looking for big answers that aren't being offered. No wonder the electorate is holding its nose. Like Bill Clinton, real people are afraid to inhale.

THE ROLE OF THE PRESIDENCY

The morality issues that have dominated the campaign are trivial. But they do serve a purpose: they afford the candidates practice in lying, cover-up, backstabbing and ass-kissing — habits in which the winner will have to be an accomplished expert in order to responsibly conduct the affairs of state once in office.

All U.S. presidents oversee the super-exploitation of the globe. All must say they wish the end of layoffs and poverty at home, while of necessity they have to maintain these conditions. All since Hoover have waged war somewhere on the planet — and so have ordered working-class men to massacre others, as well as women and children, who have done nothing to deserve it. And they have all blatantly lied about their deeds. Such is bourgeois morality.

The voters are right to be concerned about the candi-

dates' obvious lack of integrity. Their mistake is to consider such corruption and hypocrisy to be an individual matter, not an absolute necessity of capitalist politics. Consequently many expect virtues that are desirable from a human standpoint but are in fact disqualifications for the presidency.

While voters are currently disaffected, they do not yet see that the real purpose of presidential elections is to choose which leader and policy is best for capitalism at this juncture, not for "the people." Elections are the arena in which the ruling class periodically determines its strategy towards the rest of us. Abroad, will the war against Washington's imperialist rivals be cold, cool or hot? Will U.S. imperialism dominate the post-Cold War world? At home, should the attack on workers and oppressed people be accelerated or moderated?

THE POLITICAL CHARADE

For a real understanding of the electoral process and this year's issues, we turn to Ernest Hollings, an outspoken Democrat on the Senate Budget Committee. He wrote:

It has been a classic election-year set piece: the Democrats stick it to the rich and the Republicans bully-rag the Democrats for raising taxes. . . .

This charade nicely serves the election-year purposes of Democrats and Republicans. But it grossly *disserves* a nation starving for economic leadership. The gamesmanship is all the more disgraceful when you consider that both parties essentially agree on the shape of an economic package.

Then he tells us what both parties in fact stand for:

***Capital gains, everybody gains.* It is silly to tout a capital gains tax cut as the holy grail and equally silly to demonize it. Most of us appreciate that if a cut is structured to reward long-term investments, it can make a difference. Democrats on both Congressional tax-writing committees have voted unanimously for cuts in capital gains taxes. Indeed, the Ways and Means Committee's plan would be even more generous than the President's.**

Too bad if you thought that Republicans (plus Paul



Distrust of politicians is high in 1992 campaign. Voters aren't taking bull from presidential candidates either.

Tsongas) were for lowering taxes for the rich while the Democrats opposed such rip-offs. As Clinton, the Arkansas populist, stated in a *Time* interview, he and Tsongas, the Wall Street lobbyist, "agree on our general [economic] approach." He called it an "investment as opposed to consumption-based strategy" — as if the problem with the U.S. economy is excessive consumption by working people.

But let us continue with Senator Hollings, just in case you thought the Democrats at least favored a bit more government support for the needy:

A Democrat could have delivered President Bush's State of the Union message: he's for a boost in Head Start, in the Women, Infants and Children nutrition program, Pell grants for college students, highway spending and more.

Or at least that the Democrats aren't as uptight about government spending. But as Hollings says:

Goose the economy, not the deficit. All must agree on this: with a whopping 20 percent of outlays going to pay interest on the \$3.8 trillion national debt, the anti-recession package must not add a dime to the deficit.

That is, pay off the banks and financiers, and screw the working people. Then the good Senator sums up:

Given the remarkable extent of Democratic-Republican agreement, why are we being so disagreeable? Let the Democrats pass their plan, and let the President have his veto. Then let's move a truly bipartisan plan through Congress this month.

Hollings is complaining not about the political charade he so accurately describes. On the contrary, he accepts the electoral need to lie to the public: he is a Democrat. The problem is that the charade is going on too long and is interfering with the necessary program they all agree on.

THIRD-PARTY FAKERS

The stench from the Democrats is so strong this year that some on the left have been drawn to third party orientations. Leftists have been cheerleaders for the National Organization for Women, which promised to build a party independent of the Democrats and Republicans; and for the labor officials who have organized Labor Party Advocates (LPA). But both of these efforts are non-combatants in the present campaign. Their leaders are searching for "pro-choice" or "pro-labor" Democrats to chase after.

NOW held a large rally in Washington on April 5 awash with Democratic pols. It didn't even bother with third-party soft soap for the masses there, although it did "inaugurate" its new party that weekend. LPA raised not a murmur against the AFL-CIO's initial endorsement of Senator Tom Harkin, who is so tied to the health insurance vampires that he couldn't offer a national health plan, the demand most on working people's minds. LPA's silence was even more deafening over labor's second choice, Clinton — the notoriously anti-labor Governor who *during the campaign* apologized for General Motors' planned layoff of 70,000 workers and applauded workers' competing with each other over who can give bigger concessions to the bosses.

It is not just "progressives" who go along with NOW and LPA. A good many who consider themselves Leninists and Trotskyists, no less, are enthusiasts. (Some have even enlisted in the radical bourgeois campaign of Ron Daniels, director of the Rainbow Coalition controlled by Jesse Jackson during his Democratic presidential runs in the 1980's.) Whatever criticisms they make, they never inform their fellow workers that they, as opposed to these flytraps, advocate overthrowing capitalism, not reforming it. Nor do they mention the elementary Bolshevik position that bourgeois elections cannot

fundamentally change the system.

That most workers today have self-defeating illusions in the electoral process is tragic. For people who claim to be communists to foster such illusions in the electoral process, not to mention parties committed to preserving the capitalist system, is criminal.

DIVIDE AND CONQUER

A significant aspect of the primaries has been the constant appeal by all candidates to the "middle class." This is a standard way to refer to the working class without naming it. Its prominence in this campaign reflects the politicians' intent to deepen the hostility of the better-off, more skilled, largely white workers against the worse-off layers of the working class — particularly Blacks, women and other oppressed groups. Using the term "working class" would suggest the common interest between these layers, all of whom are losing under the bosses' attacks.

In the post-World War II decades, much of the working



A MESSAGE FROM AUSTRALIA

class (largely excluding working women and minorities) won a few crumbs out of U.S. imperialism's super-profits gained from world domination. In the 1960's, the Black urban rebellions gained promises of civil rights and social programs. But in the late '70's and the '80's, the bourgeoisie started to take back many of these gains to prop up its falling profit rates. And with their profits, they declined to invest in domestic productive manufacturing, instead engaging in an orgy of financial speculation and militarist empire-building.

In the '90's the U.S. bourgeoisie has begun to realize that its long swill at the profits trough, plus its dedication to military as opposed to industrial production, have cost it the economic leadership of the world. For months, the leading Democratic candidates, Clinton and Tsongas, boasted of their farsighted economic programs, proclaiming their intent to "make America competitive" again. This not only meant chauvinist Japan-bashing in the campaign, but a continued domestic austerity policy, a crackdown on the wages and conditions of all workers.

What the capitalists have won back through layoffs, speed-up and other concessions has so far proved insufficient to restore profit rates. A far deeper attack is necessary. Divide and conquer is the weapon the bosses and their politicians use.

That is why both Bush and Clinton inveigh against "wel-

fare" and advocate "workfare" programs. These schemes divide employed from unemployed workers and union from non-union. They deepen the oppression of the poorest layers by forcing them to work at slave wages, while also undermining the wages of the unionized workers.

It is a myth that people do not want increased government services. Suffering already, they do not want the additional burden of paying for them. This justified feeling has been twisted, for the moment, into an attack on socialism and social spending. And as the anger against the rich grows, bourgeois demagogues ride the sentiment in order to turn it more sharply against the masses' own interests.

Hence the flag-waving against Japan and other economic competitors that permeates the campaign. This drill is another effort to turn workers against each other along national and racial lines. The most strident perpetrators on this score were Harkin and Jerry Brown, the allegedly "pro-worker" contenders.

LABOR MOVEMENT CONTAINED

Both the Democrats and Republicans are ruling-class parties whose voting bases include many workers and petty-bourgeois people. Both have the task of incorporating these bases: using them to slit their own throats. The Democrats play the key role here because they attract, especially in the depths of crises, the decisive urban industrial proletariat which has the power to shut down the entire economy and its production of profits.

For all their peace pretensions, the Democrats are the party that led the U.S. into its big wars. Playing the card of nationalism, the Democrats beat the tubs for active "internationalism" — trade and political confrontation. They lean on the sections of the capitalist class most interested in economic warfare. They attract the allegiance of workers who mistakenly see protectionism as helpful. It is no accident that so many Democrats are among the leading Japan-bashers. Their demagogy, designed to turn workers' protests toward jingoism, is laying the ideological soil for the next world war.

The movements which the Democratic party has done the most to destroy are the labor and Black movements. In the 1930's, "progressives," including the right-wing social democrats but especially the Communist party, had enough strength within the labor aristocracy to bloc with the liberals in the American version of the Popular Front. They succeeded in acting as Roosevelt's social policemen, keeping the working class from going beyond the Democrats.

After the war the rebellion re-ignited. There was again sentiment for a Labor Party, and again it was derailed by the progressives. The CP and its allies detoured the movement into a third capitalist party behind Henry Wallace. And with the outbreak of the Cold War, the social democrats helped steer the workers back to the Democrats.

In the Cold War prosperity-bubble years, the unions became even more bureaucratized. Labor officials still had to lead mass strikes, and given the temporary prosperity, they won wage gains and fringe benefit promises. The bureaucracy succeeded in diverting the remaining working-class motion from the political front.

With the resurgence of the economic crisis in the early 1970's, workers once again began to move. The bureaucracy had strengthened itself through its interpenetration with government and was able to channel the strike outbreak. Some strikes, denied official recognition, became wildcats and faced isolation and government repression. Others were made official but still kept isolated by union tactics.

Above all, the union bureaucrats championed electoralism as preferable to strikes. It was perfectly true that the

working class needed a political alternative, since the state had intervened heavily into the economy and the unions. As well, hours and wages could not be seriously improved in one plant or industry — it has to be across the board. But the unions were tied to the Democrats, who had nothing to offer.

Today the labor bureaucrats are caught in their own trap. Not one of the candidates is a recognizable "friend of labor." Harkin was a fake, Clinton an enemy, Brown simply a maneuver to get a brokered convention to stop Clinton. But then they'd be left with the likes of Mario Cuomo, a pseudo-liberal whose actual record in New York State paralleled Reagan's in Washington.

BLACK REBELLION QUELLED

The Black movement's drive for civil rights was stalled by the early 1970's. The government was giving Martin Luther King's followers less and less. Black power forces were on the rise, but the real social movement was taking place in the urban ghettos. Only Malcolm X had reflected the heartbeat of this movement, which threatened to transcend all the middle-class leaderships — the integrationists certainly, but even the nationalists. Malcolm's search for an anti-imperialist solution was terminated by his assassins.

The ghetto rebellions of the 1960's produced gains: jobs for at least a layer of Blacks, access to college education, the possibility of higher incomes. To quell the eruptions, the ruling class sought to stimulate the growth of a middle-class professional leadership tied to welfare programs and reform institutions, which the government expanded in the Black communities under pressure from the riots. These institutions, not surprisingly, were thoroughly linked to the traditional party of urban America, the Democrats.

BLACK POLITICIANS USED

Against this scenario, the most advanced Black activists realized that liberation required massive political action to challenge the government. Radicalism from the white bureaucratic unions seemed unlikely. Hence the efforts toward Black working-class action, like the Revolutionary Union Movements in Detroit and some sections of the Black Panther party. Hence also the variety of conferences aimed at producing a national Black party. But the masses of Black workers were more aware of the nature of the system than many radical leaders. If you're demanding reforms within the system rather than revolution (except in rhetoric), it makes sense to orient toward a party that wields power. Thus the radical third-partyists soon retreated back into the Democratic party, together with the traditional integrationists.

Still under pressure, the ruling class turned more toward Black politicians. Black leaders wanted more say within the power structure, to carve out a larger share of the pie distributed through state agencies. In reality these officials, reflecting the reality of decaying capitalism, were needed to remove past gains, once the movements had subsided and the masses were re-tied to electoralism.

A good example is Andrew Young, Martin Luther King's former aide and Jimmy Carter's ambassador to the U.N., who was mayor of Atlanta in the early 1980's. Before his election, voters had rejected a sales tax increase by a wide margin. But after Young campaigned for it as mayor, a sales tax referendum passed, supported now by poor blacks who were bound to be hurt by it. And then the sales tax boost was accompanied by a parallel cut in property taxes for businesses and homeowners. (See *Socialist Voice* No. 19.)

That scenario would be very familiar to New Yorkers who elected the Black "friend of labor" and "socialist" David Dinkins mayor in 1989, only to find that his tax and budget

State of the World Economy

With capitalism officially triumphant over socialism, we thought we would present a few figures, collected from various reliable sources, showing what the glorious New Order means for the inhabitants of our capitalist world.

According to the U.N., the average growth of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita slowed from 3.2 percent annually in the 1960's, to 1.9 percent in the 1970's, to 1.2 percent in the 1980's. But in 1991, global economic growth was zero in absolute terms, so the per capita GDP has fallen. This is the first year that the world economy has shrunk since the 1930's.

In East Europe and the USSR, output fell by 9.5 percent; it fell 6.3 percent in 1990. In the "developed market economies" (the industrial powers, like the U.S.) as well, output grew by only 1.4 percent in 1991 (down from about 2.5 percent in 1990), thereby falling per capita.

Around the world, 14 million children under 5 years old die yearly. According to UNICEF, half a million of these deaths are due to the debt crisis alone. Also, 100 million children between ages 6 and 11 do not attend school. 80 million work at hard labor. In the U.S., 5.5 million kids under twelve — 12.8 percent — go hungry.

In 1990, "developing countries" repaid \$1.5 billion more than they got in new funds. For the least developed countries, with one-quarter of the world population, GDP per capita fell in the 1980's in absolute terms.

Historically, in 1900 the GDP per capita gap between the richest and poorest countries was 8 to 1; in 1987 it was 36 to 1. And remember, GDP per capita is an average that masks great class inequalities.

Moreover, in the 1980's 75 percent of the population of the non-Stalinist countries lived in countries where per capita GDP was declining with respect to the industrial powers. Adding the decaying Stalinist economies only worsens the figure. Economic inequality has reached its highest levels in history.

Because of the industrial countries' much larger economies, the global slowdown is due more to economic crisis in the North than to long-term poverty of the South (the "third world"). Nevertheless, the chief feature of the world economy today is not the recession in the North, nor the West's triumph over the East, but the advancing wave of mass poverty in the South, a veritable economic holocaust. But it is rapidly moving North and East.

policies coincided perfectly with Wall Street's demands.

THE JACKSON JIVE

Jesse Jackson rode to leadership among Blacks by championing the "movement" under worsening economic conditions. With great dynamism, he campaigned both in 1984 and 1988 to register more Blacks and keep them snared in the Democratic party. He also appealed to white workers with a populist message. Despite the illusions of leftists who lined up behind him to "build the movement" or at least a third party, Jackson had no such intention and made his plans perfectly clear. (See *Proletarian Revolution* No. 21.) Jackson succeeded in burying the incipient movement. The Democratic party, as always, proved a death-trap.

As a consequence, neither the labor nor Black struggle exists as a genuine *movement* today. There is anger among both workers and Blacks, especially among Black workers. But the masses have not yet found a direction.

In a sense, the Democratic Party has succeeded in its mission too well. By destroying the social movements that it misled, it also destroyed the reason for its own influence. If you're going to get austerity no matter whom you elect, why choose Democrats? (As the April elections in Britain showed, if you're going to get a Tory program no matter whom you vote for, choose the real Tories, not half-assed substitutes.) And why bother voting?

George Bush's openly racist campaign in 1988 scared the Democratic politicians: their party was becoming too closely identified with Blacks. This year Jackson gave another demonstration of party loyalty: he stayed out of the race. Due to his success in burying the movement, the real questions of racism have been too easily ignored in the primaries.

Under these circumstances, the media have hailed Clinton's supposed new coalition of Blacks and whites as an interracial miracle. The *New York Times* said after his victory in the Florida primary with 75 percent of the Black vote:

That one figure gives healthy evidence, probably for the

first time since Robert Kennedy's Indiana primary campaign in 1968, that it is politically possible to bring poor blacks and blue-collar white voters together. It is finally possible for Americans to transcend racial division and look instead to mutual interests. (March 11.)

What drive! When the bourgeois press hails working-class interests, watch your wallet. Here we have a victorious "alliance" between Blacks and whites (both groups made up largely of workers, contrary to the *Times*) based on no struggle and no common program. They just voted for the same candidate — and very few of them at that. While some Blacks did support Clinton in Michigan and Illinois, most stayed away in droves, recognizing the reality of the new integrated bloc they're officially part of. Clinton's coalition comes as the reward of ignoring Blacks and the need to help defend them from mounting discrimination and racist attacks.

Clinton's hypocrisy in attacking "welfare" while prating about racial harmony marks the exact conjuncture of present-day capitalism. Anti-Black sentiment is being marshalled, but it is not yet time for a nakedly racist attack.

REPUBLICANS AND FASCISTS

The Republican party's main base, aside from the handful of top capitalists, has been the upwardly mobile petty bourgeoisie. It has also attracted an element of the working class which accepts that the bosses should be in charge. But in times of *accelerating* crisis it also ensnares workers looking for an alternative to the Democrats' betrayal.

A significant portion of Reagan's vote came from disaffected white workers who normally vote Democratic. For them this was not a conservative turn but a radical leap. Based on racist ideas and the prominence of Blacks in the Democratic party, their vote was nevertheless an attempt to break from traditional politics. A revolutionary working-class alternative, clearly showing that capitalism is the enemy, is the way to win such people from reaction and racism.

The failure of mass left parties to challenge capitalism

has allowed the radicalization produced by the world economic crisis to take right-wing forms in many countries. Ultra-reactionary and even neo-fascist organizations are growing ominously in Western and Eastern Europe. In the U.S., this trend gave the majority of white votes to David Duke in Louisiana. His program, populist and ultra-right, still carried an openly pro-capitalist message, not the demagogic anti-capitalism characteristic of Nazism and fascism.

Duke, indisputably a Nazi and Klan leader, chose to present himself as a mere ultra-conservative to try for the governorship of Louisiana. He ran in favor of "free enterprise"; his menacing line demanding white "equality" was not accompanied by lynch mobs or a mass mobilization. The right-

by the proletarian movement that its party apparatuses will welcome alliances with untamed reactionary forces. To preserve itself, capitalism is quite capable of shedding the skin of democracy and resting on a pseudo-radical fascist movement. It has happened elsewhere; it can happen here. Since the bourgeoisie knows that electoralism in reality is a sham, it is high time the working class understood this truth too.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

With the economy hovering near a full-scale depression and the labor and Black struggles bottled up by hopeless leaderships, there is no short-cut to salvation. Capitalism itself is the real organizer of the working class. Upheaval is



Billboard has David Duke's politics right, despite his efforts to run as a respectable reactionary.

wing "populists" have not yet built a social movement, but Duke obviously intends to do so when times are riper.

The Duke campaign sharpened the electoralism question. Most of the left has no presence in Louisiana and got away without a clear policy, but some "progressive" journals did hint that it would be good to vote for Duke's Democratic rival. That was Edwin Edwards, a particularly sleazy bourgeois politician who offered nothing to the low-income whites who fell for Duke. Edwards was the big business candidate; he won because the bosses, not yet ready for a Duke, threatened higher unemployment for Louisiana if Duke got in.

Trying to "stop Duke" with Democrats is futile. Just as Carter's attacks on working people set the stage for Reagan, continued austerity under the Democrats will only ripen the conditions that breed fascism.

Duke's success propelled Pat Buchanan to run in the early Republican primaries to win back the right-wing leadership. Buchanan did capture the growing anger of the Republicans' petty-bourgeois base against the upper-class center of the party symbolized by Bush. Interestingly, Buchanan, a man with long establishment conservative credentials, adopted a populist facade to reach the masses. He even endorsed Social Security, previously denounced as "socialistic." And his America Firstism and Japan-bashing were a switch from free-market politics. Still, as soon as he had driven Bush to the right and pulled the rug from under Duke, he went into slow motion. His role now is to strengthen the party so that it continues to incorporate movements that imperil capitalist institutional life.

There will come a time when capitalism is so threatened

inevitable. The task of authentic communists is not to build new capitalist parties or pro-capitalist labor parties, but to fight those who will mislead and entrap the coming movements. To do so we have to build the nucleus of a revolutionary workers' party.

When capitalists, liberals and bureaucrats are doing their utmost to divide the working class, when phony electoral combinations are the only form of "unity" offered, the only alternative is to unite workers in mass action against the system. Such action means a general strike.

We have argued that workers need a *political* alternative. But that does not mean accepting the bosses' electoral deception. It means working-class activity. A general strike can succeed where local, divided strikes are too weak to win. It can prevent concessions and layoffs, win decent health care and keep wages ahead of inflation. However, we tell our fellow workers that such a strike will mean confrontation with the capitalists, their politicians and their state apparatus. A general strike informs the working class of its true force; it also poses the question of which class holds state power.

A confrontation between classes is inevitable. The ruling class will have its armed thugs and fascist bands when it needs them. The future fascist movement will also use the electoral platform to proselytize for its real strategy of genocidal action, not lever pulling. Undoubtedly the future communist movement will also use elections as Lenin urged — to raise working-class consciousness and teach the danger of the electoral trap. If we are to thwart fascism and win masses to the goal of a truly human society, the working class must have its forces and party leadership ready as well. ●

Racist Reality

continued from page 1

violence don't exist or are less vicious — just that they remain hidden, covered up by the police, prosecutors and the media. Do you seriously believe that if your child is brutalized by the law tomorrow that he or she will get the same public support King has today?

POLITICAL OPPORTUNISTS

Further evidence is clear if you look at the reactions of the politicians — opportunists all in this election year. Of course, reactionary racists like Pat Buchanan claim the trial was fair. And the smarmy occupant of the Whitewash House, as yet unable to find a Willie Horton angle, equivocated on the question of whether justice was done until he concluded that it was electorally smart to claim anguish.

As for Bill Clinton, the voters' anger gives him his chance to defend the Black victim in this case. Does anyone believe that if the evidence hadn't been so visible and the voters so upset, that this public executioner of Black prisoners would have done anything but mumble judiciously — if not side with "law and order"? Significantly, Clinton said:

It is obvious that lurking beneath that verdict there is this huge, gaping feeling that the system is broke and unresponsive and unfair. (*New York Times*, May 1.)

That is, the real problem with the Los Angeles jury is not that the system itself was shown to be fundamentally racist, but that it has been exposed as such to so many Blacks and whites. The nakedness of the racist decision is the problem. Perceptions must be changed.

As our article on the elections explains, American capitalism since the 1970's has been trying to put a Black facade on government in areas where Blacks are potentially volatile. The ruling class was terrified by the urban riots in the 1960's. It made concessions, opening up jobs and educational opportunities. It tried to turn Blacks away from the streets into the election booths.

But as the economy crumbled, the system undermined the gains grudgingly given in the past. Black mayors, police chiefs and other officials were elected to do what whites could not so easily get away with in waging capitalism's war against Black and working-class living standards. Black faces announced the steady closing of the promised opportunities.

The advent of Black officials in major cities did not stop cop brutality, as the Michael Stewart, Eleanor Bumpers and Phillip Pannell cases in the New York area alone testify. And the daily, routinely racist treatment of Blacks by the police and the courts still goes on.

RIOTS NO ANSWER

In truth, the cops have to be a little more careful for the moment, but the real change is cosmetic. The politicians want the cover put back on because they fear a Black explosion. No matter what position they take on the King case itself, they are united in wanting to quell the riots.

Revolutionary communists, on the other hand, white as well as Black, solidarize fully with the anger sweeping the ghettos. We enthusiastically support the protest demonstrations breaking out in city after city. We unconditionally defend the rioters from police attacks. The demonstrations and riots show that Blacks are not just victims but fighters.

Because riots do scare the ruling class they may win small gains, but they are no answer to racism. They don't tar-

get the real enemy: capitalism. This lack of focus permitted gangs in Los Angeles to take advantage of the popular anger and attack, even kill, innocent people — Black, Latino, Asian and white. They played into the hands of the L.A. cops, who at first deliberately stayed away from the riot areas. The LAPD hoped to turn Blacks toward killing Blacks and white passers-by, so that the media would picture Blacks as fratricidal savages and a menace to white society. Thus they could recapture public opinion.

The bourgeoisie, from George Bush to L.A.'s Mayor Bradley, quickly denounced the destruction of "life and property," as if the two are equal. Petty looting is nothing compared to the looting of the working class carried out for years by Reagan-Bush, the Democratic congress and mayors and private capitalists. Impoverished schools and hospitals destroy more lives than the gangs of Los Angeles ever did.

In the 1960's, ghetto riots produced gains, when U.S. capitalism was still in its post-war prosperity bubble and could afford concessions. Many whites, although hostile to the riots, believed that Blacks had a right to fight for better jobs and education. In contrast, today the economy is decaying, and the rulers are unwilling to yield. They are all the more eager to turn whites against Blacks, promoting the absurd idea that Blacks are "getting everything" — good jobs, government handouts, you name it. The Black struggle desperately needs to go beyond riots, and it can.

BLACKS AND THE UNIONS

In the 1930's, if a social explosion like this spring's had occurred, everyone would have expected the new, militant labor unions to play a major role. Today no one bothers to ask what the unions are doing — they're cringing. Yet for all their weaknesses, their potential power is still enormous. And Blacks play a crucial role in the unions through their numbers and their location at the heart of production, government work and the major cities.

With a leadership committed to the true interests of the working class, the unions could win social demands like in the 1930's. They could lead non-union and unemployed workers in the struggle for full employment and an end to racist attacks. General strikes are the counter to the divide-and-conquer tactics of the ruling class.

In Los Angeles there are strong aerospace, longshore and municipal unions. After the acquittal of Rodney King's torturers they could have led a general strike demanding the immediate ouster of racist cop chief Daryl Gates, D.A. Ira Reiner and the police perpetrators. Labor leadership by militant Blacks and their working-class allies could have used the union organizations to mobilize for armed self-defense of the Black community against trigger-happy cops and other thugs. The time was ripe for such actions, especially because of the shared outrage among many whites over the King injustice.

Today American capitalism still wants its mask of racial fairness. The King verdict is an embarrassment. However, to keep sucking working-class blood it has to deepen exploitation. This can only be done by dividing workers, by whipping up racism against Blacks. If mass united working-class action does not stop it, capitalism's daily brutality is guaranteed to become more vicious and more open.

As the economic crisis intensifies, the system reveals itself as the real barrier to the aspirations of Blacks and all workers. The only way we can rise is as a class, through socialist revolution. The riots today are a demand for a new path. Black and white workers must accelerate the struggle to create a revolutionary leadership and an authentic communist party, before it is too late. ●

For a Worker-Student Strike!

We reprint here a leaflet distributed by the LRP at a student rally outside a Democratic candidates' debate at Lehman College, a branch of the City University of New York (CUNY), during the primary campaign.

This rally is a protest against business and politics as usual. CUNY students and workers are fed up with year-in, year-out budget cuts and tuition hikes. We're here to tell the candidates that we don't believe their lies. We know our heads are on their chopping block.

New York State ranks 47th in the nation in the proportion of tax revenues going to public higher education, yet the public universities are getting some of the deepest cuts. Why? CUNY's 200,000 students are the sons and daughters of the working class. Many are working their way through college themselves, often full time. CUNY is their hope for a life out of poverty. The majority of the working class in New York today are Blacks and Latinos, the first victims of austerity as the country teeters on the edge of depression.

That is why CUNY is under the axe. The attack is part of a broad assault on education, health care, transit, youth programs, child care, abortion rights — everything that working people of all races need to make life tolerable. This victimization comes after a decade of the super-rich wallowing in the public trough, including getting lopsided federal and New York tax cuts. The capitalist class that runs the country, in the midst of an economic crisis, is determined to sacrifice our lives to save its wealth and power.

LESSONS OF PAST STRUGGLES

What can be done? All our "leaders," from Dennis Rivera to Jesse Jackson, tell us that registering to vote is the answer. Even those leading the fight against the racist and deceitful ouster of Prof. Jeffries by City College say the same thing. Voting and court suits are the "high road": strikes and sit-ins are "not our style."

But what good is this "high road" if it only leads to more Cuomos and Dinkinses? Malcolm X said that the Democrats were a party of racism and war. Today we can confirm that ten times over — and add austerity to the list.

Look at the recent student struggles. The citywide protest in 1989 forced Governor Cuomo to rescind that year's tuition increase. The victory was won, not by letter-writing and lobbying, but by a multi-racial march of 10,000 angry students, cheered by workers from Wall Street to Midtown. It was mass action that forced Cuomo to retreat.

Last spring, cutbacks and tuition hikes again loomed. Hundreds seized campus buildings in outrage. But this time they failed. The strike leaders confined their actions to a small number of activists and restricted decision-making to a tiny handful. Under the illusion that holding buildings would be enough to win, the leaders didn't see that mass action, not individual heroics, was critical. Their sit-tight strategy played right into Chancellor Reynolds' divide-and-conquer scheme.

More to blame were the bureaucrats of DC 37, the PSC and the other unions whose members keep the city

running. Unwilling to engage in a real fightback, they tried to turn workers against students by saying that canceling the tuition increase would mean layoffs. Workers were told there's not enough money; besides, the cuts won't be as bad as they say. Under this far-sighted leadership, jobs were lost and essential services were cut below already bare-bones levels.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

First let us learn the prime lesson of U.S. politics: Democrats, like Republicans, are servants of Wall Street, not the people who vote for them. David Dinkins, "the people's candidate," extended Reagan and Cuomo's brutal cuts. The only "public services" his budget defends are more cops and more jails. Brown and Clinton are no different. They offer economic programs favoring "investors" — the capitalists. They all backed the Gulf War that slaughtered hundreds of thousands to teach the people of the world that the U.S. is boss.

Electoralism is no solution. The twin-party politicians, no matter who votes for them, are bought and paid for by the capitalists. The only alternative is working-class action. For example, the New York transit workers just overwhelmingly voted down their proposed new contract, with its insulting wage offer and health cutbacks. To win something better, they will have to strike. If other unions joined them in a city-wide general strike, that would be a fightback that could stop the attack on the working class in its tracks.

FOR A ONE-DAY STUDENT-WORKER STRIKE!

What about students? A *real* student strike, joined by tens of thousands, would have a major impact on all working people. Why not organize, as a start, a one-day student strike, prepared on every campus by teach-ins, rallies and leafleting? We should set the date — and ask the unions of New York to join us to defend *their* needs and ours.

Imagine the transit workers, hospital workers, municipal workers, and students all protesting *together* against the austerity budget! Suppose hundreds of thousands of us marched on Wall Street! In 1980, Mayor Koch called the general strike a "nuclear weapon," the only true words the man ever uttered. Last spring, Cuomo sneered at CUNY student actions by saying others had as much or more reason to oppose his budget. "If they all protested, they could make the CUNY protest look like a breakfast meeting."

Cuomo was trying to turn workers against students, but he had a point. If we all got together, workers and working-class students, Blacks, Latinos, Asians and whites, we could paralyze this city and state. It would give Wall Street, Cuomo, Dinkins & Co. more than indigestion for breakfast.

When workers learn their real power, they will not stop there but will go on to fight for a general strike that challenges the very existence of the capitalist system. This is why today we work to build a revolutionary party to fight in the interests of all workers to get rid of the real problem, the capitalist system that exploits and oppresses us. ●

Showdown in New York Transit

Subway and bus workers in New York have been without a contract since April 1991. This March the 32,000 members of Transport Workers Union Local 100 overwhelmingly rejected a contract promoted by President Sonny Hall.

The TWU is the most powerful union in New York, given business's dependence on the public transit system. Its members form a broad cross-section of workers, Black, Latino and white. A working-class fightback led by transit could turn around the political climate and put an end to the capitalists' austerity policies.

Before the first contract vote, thousands of transit workers took to the streets to protest Hall's sellout. In February, TWU workers shut down the Brooklyn Bridge and marched on union headquarters, where the bureaucrats called the cops to protect them from the workers. On March 3, another big rally stampeded though midtown Manhattan to the union hall, blocking traffic along the way.

This fighting spirit stood in sharp contrast to the defeatism of bureaucrats in every municipal union. With massive cutbacks in public services coming down from Albany (the state capital) and City Hall, the unions barely react, wasting time endorsing one or another anti-labor Democrat for U.S. president. Mired in electoralism, the unions play sitting duck, waiting for the capitalists to pick them off one by one.

The transit workers' No vote and the actions preceding it were promoted chiefly by New Directions, a leftist-led "rank and file" opposition group that increased its share of Local 100 executive board seats in last year's elections. We will show below how New Directions squandered its opportunity to lead a significant workers' victory.

As we write in late April, Hall and the transit bosses, under Governor Mario Cuomo's brokerage, have agreed to a new contract not much different from the first. Members are faced with the choice of voting Yes or accepting binding arbitration that could make the deal even worse. New Directions has been plain confused: on the executive board, some voted No, others abstained and one was fooled and said Yes.

THE SELLOUT LAST TIME

Local 100's militancy this year was a significant turnaround. The bureaucracy has spread a defeatist outlook since 1980, when it purposely called a strike to lose. President John Lawe said that workers had to strike every ten or fifteen years to "blow off steam." Accordingly, Lawe expended workers' energy in a strike that demoralized the union.

Transit strikers were kept isolated from the rest of the city's working class; no effort was made to spread the strike. This allowed labor-hating Mayor Koch to pose as the cham-

panion of New York workers against the disruption of their lives by selfish strikers. Then Lawe called off the strike prematurely to make defeat inevitable. An opportunity for leading the way to a general strike, which Koch called a "nuclear weapon," was lost.

As a result, transit workers got not only a bad contract but also huge fines under New York's Taylor Law, which prohibits public employees from striking. Lawe created an atmosphere in the TWU and other unions against the use of the strike weapon. One of Lawe's closest associates in organizing this defeat was then-Vice-President Sonny Hall.

SONNY HALL THE MILITANT?

Normally a complacent bureaucrat, Hall switched tactics. With the union facing a cut-off of health benefits on May 1, he called for a strike vote, stealing the thunder from the New Directions opposition, which preached caution and delay.

The big difference between 1980 and today was Hall's contract defeat. His hold over the union is weaker than Lawe's. Given the explosive atmosphere, Hall was in no position to pull the same act as before. If he tried to use a strike to defeat his members, it could easily get out of hand.

So why did he talk strike? For years he had ranted that anyone who wanted a strike was insane. But Hall is neither militant nor insane — just desperate to hold on to power. He used the health benefits cut-off and the threat of a losing strike to scare members into accepting a rotten deal like the one they already rejected.

Hall's new contract proposal contains the same medical cutbacks as the defeated contract. The committee he sent around to "prepare the membership" for a strike vote consisted mostly of the same flunkies who backed the first contract. Hall said their main task was to explain the Taylor Law to the ranks. How can the same people who constantly tell workers they're too weak to strike and take on the Taylor Law possibly "prepare" the union for a strike?

Meanwhile Hall begged Albany and the transit bosses for help to defuse his own members. He complained on TV that the impasse wasn't his fault. "I've been forced into this strategy by the internal pressure," he wailed in the *New York Post* (April 21), adding that a strike would be a disaster. Hall aimed both to undermine the momentum for a strike — and to avoid responsibility for his sellout by claiming that he was ready to strike but the workers weren't.

AIMLESS 'NEW DIRECTIONS'

Hall got away with these maneuvers because he grasped that New Directions was afraid to take the lead for a strike.

A Little Poison from Sonny Hall's Friends

"... The reality is that Hall is at least as concerned about a challenge to his leadership from deep within the union as he is about unresolved differences with the Transit Authority; indeed, there may be little Hall can do to prevent a work stoppage. ...

"The 35,000-member Local 100 — the heart and soul of the TWU — has *already* voted to reject a contract with the TA that can only be described as generous ... Nevertheless, members rejected the pact — largely at the urging of a dissident faction within Local 100 known as New Dimensions.

"Not a lot is known about New Dimensions other than that it's targeted Hall's leadership and that it appears to be

animated by a hard-left ideology and an orientation on race. (Hall is white; many in the New Dimensions leadership are black.)" (From a *New York Post* editorial, April 23.)

The *New York Post* doesn't know a hell of a lot about New Directions: it doesn't know its name, it doesn't know that it's not hard-left, it doesn't know that the one thing New Directions has to its credit is that it's interracial and has never played the race card against Hall or anyone else.

As the most reactionary daily paper in New York, the *Post* never needs to know facts. What it knows is that it wants working people to be screwed and that whipping up anti-Black bigotry is a terrific way to accomplish that goal.

This gave him the initiative and let him posture as an activist.

After their contract vote victory, New Directions had the support of hundreds of workers and the attention of tens of thousands, but they dropped the ball and called time out. They didn't even try to implement their own half-measures like "Contract Action Committees." All they did was talk of unspecified "action" during the Democratic Convention in New York. But by July health benefits would have been lost for two months, and the contract struggle could be over.

On April 9, Hall hoodwinked New Directions by ramming through an executive board vote approving new contract proposals, including his health care sellout. Hall claims

that "No one wants a strike. We're not saying strike. We can hurt them in other ways, but I can't discuss that right now." (Times, March 19.)

Even when New Directions was running against Hall, their approach was to postpone struggle, not to organize it. First, democracy, then — who knows? For example:

New Directions proposes a number of steps — direct election of vice-presidents and organizers by the members of the divisions they represent, a sharp reduction in the salaries of elected officers and appointed staff, elected stewards throughout the local, local-wide membership meetings — to make it possible for the member-

New York transit workers protest contract. They said strike, bureaucrats and opposition said no.



the board vote was unanimous. New Directions members deny this.

The next week New Directions leader Tim Schermerhorn debated Hall in the New York Times offices — why not in front of the membership? In the debate, Hall "broached the idea of a walkout" because of the health plan deadline. Schermerhorn disagreed: he "said that he did not think the union was prepared now to go on strike." (Times, April 15.)

Of course the union wasn't prepared. Its leadership and its official opposition have been bad-mouthing the idea of a strike all along. When the workers voted down the contract, Hall said a strike could only be the last resort, and his opposition was even more negative. Cecile Clue, a New Directions leader and executive board member, told the press

ship to re-gain control of the union. When the membership is in charge we can map out a winning strategy for eliminating pension inequities and nullifying the threat of Taylor Law fines. (Hell on Wheels, October 1991.)

Why is it so hard to say clearly that the way to beat the Taylor Law is to win a strike so decisively that the law is made inoperative? Underneath, New Directions accepts the bureaucrats' outlook that workers are too weak to win.

New Directions is backed by a wide array of leftists, including supporters of the rank and filist Solidarity, the "Trotskyist" FIT and the ex-Maoist Marxist-Leninist Party. Yet in a leaflet addressed to transit riders, the bulk of New York City's workers, they vaguely urge making corpora-

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Teamster Rank & Filism: Bogus Victory

The election of Ron Carey to the presidency of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) last fall has been hailed as a milestone for democracy. In particular, many socialists, including those who claim to be revolutionaries, gushed over Carey and acclaimed his victory as a confirmation of their strategy of rank and filism.

The defeat of a corrupt, gangster-ridden leadership in the country's largest industrial union underscores the deep discontent in the working class. Still, Carey's election was neither a fundamental victory for the workers nor a vindication of rank and filism. As we will show, this strategy ends up defending bureaucracy rather than the ranks' interests.

Carey won the election with 48 percent of the vote, centered in the South and West. R.V. Durham, the hand-picked successor to outgoing president William McCarthy, took 33.2 percent; and Walter Shea, leader of a disaffected section of the old line bureaucracy, got 18 percent. In

addition to the presidency, Carey supporters also won a huge majority on the union executive board and had earlier won elections in important locals in Boston and in Los Angeles.

The election was brought on through the intervention of the federal government. Through the use of the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organization (RICO) Act, the Justice Department had mounted increasing pressure on the union leadership. One result was that, in exchange for avoiding prosecution, the union tops agreed to a convention of elected delegates and direct election of the presidency on terms imposed by the state. The election itself was then monitored and supervised by the government.

The driving force behind Carey was the Teamsters for a Democratic Union. TDU was founded in the 1970's as a "rank-and-file opposition." A large role was played by socialists, notably people now around the Solidarity organiza-

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Transit

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tions and the rich pay "their fair share of taxes," as if fairness is a possibility under capitalism. They regret that riders may be inconvenienced by job actions, but they say nothing about other unions and workers joining in the struggle to advance their interests too.

LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL

In the *Times* debate, Hall said of New Directions that its "special agenda of political hard-core, deep socialism feeds on the pain and blood of workers which has been caused by a failed Washington policy and a greedy, selfish management." That the bosses cause pain and blood is true; we wish the socialism part were, too. For that's the kind of leadership needed if unions are to climb off their backs.

Throughout the contract struggle, the LRP argued for a winning strategy. In the rallies against the contract we handed out placards saying "Vote No — Strike!" After the vote we initiated popular petitions within the union to recall Hall and his team. We raised the slogan, "For a Winning Strike!" and linked it to calls for membership strike committees and mass mobilizations.

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tion. Today most left groups support TDU but have little influence compared to the entrenched Solidarity activists.

TEAMSTER POWER

For decades the IBT has been a symbol of the best and worst in American labor. In the early 1930's it was a weak, corrupt, craft-based organization. But through the stirring mass actions of that decade, notably the Minneapolis General Strike and the eleven-state over-the-road campaign, the Teamsters became a militant mass organization. These actions were in large part conceived and led by revolutionary Trotskyists — who stood not for rank and filism but for vanguard party leadership of the working class.

With governmental help, however, the bureaucracy tightened its grip on the union. Over the years the Teamsters became identified with racketeering, corruption and suppression of basic membership rights that was violent and heavy-handed even by bureaucratic standards. Members, no matter how unhappy with the thugs on top, put up with them because they delivered on wages and to a degree on benefits. While such gains were not distributed equally, workers at the core of the IBT's power, trucking, got enough to sustain the Teamster reputation for clout.

The IBT was also known for its decentralization, in the sense that it was crisscrossed by independent power brokers and rival jurisdictions. But contract bargaining in trucking grew more centralized over the years. The crowning achievement was the Master Freight Agreement (MFA), a joint contract with trucking companies reached under Jimmy Hoffa. The MFA won gains through the threat of a nation-wide strike, which could have tied up not only trucking but much of the entire country's production.

Since then the union's position has largely unraveled. In

The transit contract and the budget attacks underscore the crisis of leadership facing the working class. Workers need to build a revolutionary party to fight for all our interests and defeat the capitalist attacks. We cannot continue to fight in isolated struggles. We cannot allow the capitalists to pick us off union by union. That is why the LRP calls for uniting all workers in a general strike.

Transit bosses and Sonny Hall both argue that "there is no money" for a good contract. Sure, the state and city coffers are empty — after Governor Cuomo slashed taxes for the rich, and the banks have been handed billions of tax dollars for interest on the public debt. A general strike movement would help politicians "find" funds for public works and social services (just as Franklin Roosevelt was forced to reverse field in the 1930's after winning the presidency with a "balance the budget" campaign denouncing Herbert Hoover as a spendthrift.) Revolutionaries would go on to demand canceling the public debt and expropriating the banks.

A general strike of all workers, public and private, employed and unemployed, union and non-union, not only could defeat the capitalist attacks but would show the workers their true strength as a class. It would show workers how to fight for political power and would point the way to the only real permanent defense of the workers' interests — a socialist revolution that builds a society based on the needs of the working people. ●

the last ten years, the number of workers covered dropped from half a million to under 200,000. (The IBT, including its non-trucking units, has lost 800,000 members). The leadership has been unwilling and unable to combat the imposition of two-tier wage scales and the farming out of work by unionized companies to non-union subsidiaries ("double breasting"). The last contract negotiated only added impetus to companies willing to work outside the MFA.

Democratic party administrations had attempted to hobble the powerful Teamsters, allegedly because of its gangster ties. Hoffa's imprisonment was only the high point of government penetration into union affairs. It is no accident that the IBT leadership coddled the openly anti-labor Republicans. Reagan, Bush & Co. enjoyed this backing even as they actively pursued policies like deregulation that undermined the union's power. And the leadership's Republicanism did not prevent the government from using the union's growing weakness to finish the job by "cleaning up the Teamsters."

The less the Teamsters tops delivered, the more they flaunted their multiple astronomical salaries, outlandish perks and luxuries and reactionary and criminal pals. Their arrogance reached a height of vulgarity at a convention party costing \$650,000 of members' money. Then-president Jackie Presser had his 300-pound carcass brought in on a gilded sedan chair, supported by four "centurions." (Presser died under indictment for embezzlement, singing to the feds.)

Leaders like Presser had performed well for the bosses by selling the workers out. But the environment was changing. Deregulation, cut-throat competition and increased cost-cutting have been the bosses' menu. The old system of extortion, kickbacks, etc., didn't satisfy their thirst for profits.

The government's real fear was that the super-compromised bureaucracy couldn't contain a mobilized membership fighting to turn back the bosses' attacks. From this view, what was needed was an up-to-date misleadership with enough legitimacy to pre-empt and hold off any mass movement — in an industry whose stability is critical for the capitalist system as a whole.

THE REFORM FORCES

Enter the oppositional collection of officials, out-bureaucrats, self-styled rank-and-file reformers and leftists. Ron Carey, for example, built his power base in Local 804 in New York, representing United Parcel Service workers; he has been president for over 20 years. As many of his supporters picture it, he was not so much a union official as a knight in shining armor. He stood up to constant threats from the bureaucracy and the mob. He paid himself less than the French chef at Teamsters national headquarters. We are told

for his campaign as well as his "reform, honesty and democracy" credentials. At the same time he has been free to associate with and curry support from more conservative elements in the bureaucracy. This is a classic example of how the union bureaucracy manipulates its supporters on the socialistic left, a point we will return to.

Carey and the TDU have both relied heavily on the capitalist state to implement their agenda. For years TDU has called for federal intervention to clean up the union. Both they and Carey pursued suits against the union in the courts.



New Teamster chief Ron Carey during campaign. He'll be reaching out to old-liners more than members soon.

he lives in a modest house with only an above-ground swimming pool, eats tuna sandwiches, drives rather than flies, and (for those who find this virtuous) is even an ex-marine.

According to Carey's enthusiasts, the contracts he negotiated were no masterpieces, but they were better than the giving away of the store at the top. Even this is debatable, however. In the 1974 UPS strike, despite the ranks' militant fight and rejection of concessions, Carey rammed through a contract that established a precedent of replacing full-time with part-time workers.

All the hoopla about Carey's virtues, real or imagined, has obscured the fact that he has no significant alternative strategy. Instead, he presents a vague program of bread and butter improvements, a dose of democracy and cleaning up the union. All this is necessary, but it does not add up to a genuine dismantling of bureaucracy or privilege. Carey flamboyantly announced the reduction of the president's salary from \$225,000 to \$175,000, but that is still a hell of a lot more than the average Teamster will ever see.

Carey was part of the Teamster tradition of voting Republican. He now says, "I want to support politicians who believe in organized labor and want to provide some fairness in the collective bargaining arena. Make no mistake about that." Great, now we get the Democrats.

The TDU has become a force of around 10,000 in the union, including a number of elected officials. Like Carey, TDUs have stood up to the attacks and threats of the Teamster bureaucracy as well as company bosses. But also like Carey, they have raised only a vague program of union reform and democracy. They steadfastly resist the notion that anything other than this is needed to defend the Teamsters or workers in general against the crusade of capitalist attacks.

While Carey courted TDU's support during the election, he did not himself join it. Only the most naive would believe this was not a calculated decision. Carey needed activist supporters to provide the organizational network and legwork

Now of course the state has obliged in a big way. TDU welcomed the RICO intervention, protesting only the government's attempt to control the union directly.

GOVERNMENT IN THE UNIONS

Whatever the immediate pretext, the state is motivated to intervene in the unions in order to protect and extend capitalist control over labor. At best this is done to contain the ranks, at worse to actively suppress them. Because we fight for the independence of the working class, communists have always opposed state intervention into union affairs even when it is covered by "benign" claims.

For example, the Trotskyists in the 1930's opposed the Wagner Act, despite the fact that this federal statute granted concessions to labor organizing. They understood that the Act's intention was to substitute time-consuming and controlling channels like the National Labor Relations Board to mass, militant independent labor action. And this was the NLRB acting "fairly" under mass pressure from workers. Today, with the bosses on a prolonged offensive, the NLRB increasingly backs efforts to bash organizing drives and weaken union rights.

A closer look at the state's recent role in the Teamsters shows its real motivations. In place of corrupt union bosses, federal administrators milked the union of millions of dollars. They have veto power over union spending, hence over the union's power to run a major strike (should Carey even want to). The feds originally tried to replace the Teamster tops with trustees rather than elected officers, retreating only when all sections of the union opposed this. During the election, court-appointed officers backed efforts by company bosses to harass, discipline and even fire Teamster dissidents for obviously political reasons.

Count on the state in the future to perform a more openly oppressive role in the Teamsters. The reformist opposition's reliance on it has set a dangerous precedent and

miseducated the members about what to expect from the general staff of the ruling class.

THE FRAUD OF RANK AND FILISM

The "rank-and-file" strategy hailed by the left has many variants. What they have in common is the insistence that the workers' needs are primarily organizational: once the ranks go through the necessary stage of reforms and union democracy, only then will they be able to think seriously about what program the union and the working class should be fighting for. Here is how a prominent spokesman for rank and filism — Dan LaBotz, author of *Rank and File Rebellion: Teamsters for a Democratic Union* — puts it in *Solidarity's* journal:

The strategy argued that ordinary workers and union members, whatever their political ideology, tended by virtue of their place in the productive process and in society to be potentially more radical than the union leaders. Put simply and crudely, better to be with a group of rank-and-file workers who considered themselves to be Republicans than to be with a group of union officials who considered themselves to be Democrats or even socialists, because the rank-and-file workers would be driven by the circumstances to struggle against the system, while the union officials would tend to seek the comfort zone. (*Against the Current*, March-April 1992.)

Sure, there's no hope in relying on union bureaucrats. But many bureaucrats were once honest rank and filers, even subjective socialists. It's not that leadership automatically means corruption and bureaucratism. But a union leadership that accepts capitalism inevitably moves in that direction, since it cannot satisfy the members' needs.

Notice that LaBotz is writing here for those who favor "struggle against the system" while centering his strategy around workers "whatever their political ideology." Rank and filism means precisely that activists who see themselves as socialists fighting the capitalist system will consciously avoid telling "ordinary workers and union members" that socialism is the answer. Let "circumstances" drive the masses to struggle; once we're in office we'll tell them they have to go beyond that. Maybe.

This strategy at its best ignores the vast differences of political consciousness among workers and makes advanced workers concede to the backward. Most workers are not socialists, and the leftists know that pro-capitalist politics entraps workers into supporting the bosses' interests. The rank and filist solution is to avoid revolutionary politics and limit the struggle to union reforms. It seems a way out of the dilemma, but it only tightens the trap.

No wonder rank and filists invariably end up supporting a section of the bureaucracy. After all, if all you have is a limited trade union program, it can best be carried out by people with the connections, resources and prestige that come with bureaucratic posts. Some years ago the *Solidarity* ideologues recognized that they were changing their "pure" rank and filism to its inevitable consequence: joining forces with dissident union leaders. Thus we get Ron Carey, who does not even pretend to be a rank and filist or an opponent of capitalism.

Of course, union organizing and decent contracts must be fought for. But a program restricting itself to such reforms is essentially pro-capitalist, protecting the existing relations of labor and capital. The fact is that politics — confrontation with state power — is unavoidable. This is obvious in the IBT today and is true for labor across the board. In this period in the U.S., mass strikes to take on the state are

what's needed. The independent class movement of workers is the way they discover their real interests and their capacity to change the system.

The rank and filist strategy is especially bankrupt in today's crisis-ridden economy. Union struggles aimed at limited gains for a narrow section of the working class have flourished in the past decade and a half. The only hope is to mobilize workers in a political struggle against the bosses' system and state. Workers *are* driven by conditions to resist, but they will not arrive at an anti-capitalist program if those who lead them and claim to stand for revolution have long kept silent.

'CRITICAL SUPPORT' FOR CAREY

One tactic sometimes used by communists is "critical support" for workers' candidates in a union or governmental election. We use it when workers are in motion against the bosses or sellout bureaucrats but are following a reformist leadership which revolutionary forces are too small to contest. We join with the workers fighting the system and support their choice out of class loyalty. But we say openly that the pro-capitalist leaders will inevitably betray their hopes; we put forward the revolutionary alternative.

The critical support tactic was not possible in the IBT election. While anger against the sellout leadership was widespread, it did not take the form of a movement captured by the Carey forces. At the start activists talked about "worker apathy." In the end Carey did not win an actual majority of votes, and only a small percentage of members voted. Overall, only 15 percent of the membership voted for him.

And when the left backed Carey its support was hardly "critical." For example:

Even if Carey wanted to change everything, he couldn't do it alone. Nor could Teamsters for a Democratic Union. But Teamster workers could use Carey's victory to begin such a fight, which is the real promise for the future. (*Spark*, Dec. 16.)

There is no hint here that workers who want to "change everything" will have to fight in opposition to Carey, not join him in his reformism.

The International Socialist Organization likewise took some potshots at Carey, but not because he is a reformist obstacle to revolutionary consciousness or even to genuine reform. They objected that he wasn't rank and filist enough — and are incredibly vague about what to expect from him:

Carey's method is to organize a leadership staff that is competent and on top of business rather than to organize the rank and file to take up the fight on the shop floor. . . . How Carey responds to initiatives from below will determine whether his election to the leadership can go beyond the limits of business unionism. (*Socialist Worker*, Jan. 1992.)

The ISO is in effect calling for a benevolent Bonapartist leader who listens to the ranks, learns from and cares for them and is ready to fight. The model is the John L. Lewis of the 1930's; what they'll get will undoubtedly sell out far sooner than Lewis did. As Lewis himself remarked when criticized for using leftists to organize workers, "Who gets the bird, the hunter or the dog?"

LaBotz agrees that "it remains to be seen what Carey and the reform forces in the Teamsters will accomplish in the next few years." But at the end of his article he sounds a more pessimistic note:

Carey and the reformers are themselves now top union leaders, and all of the conservatizing and bureaucratic tendencies emanating from the very nature of the union

and from the pressures of the employers will work on them as they once worked on their opponents. Those tendencies can be resisted by turning the entire Teamsters union into a crusade, a revival and a social movement.

How come Carey's enthusiasts didn't think of that *during* the campaign? Or warn *in advance* that a new "stage" would be necessary? To do so would have meant breaking their uncritical alliance with Carey and cost TDUers their influence at the top. And remember, these are comments in the left press. In the practical "non-sectarian" work in the unions, even the concerns raised here were less likely to be heard.

No doubt there are differences between Carey and the old-line bureaucracy. The Teamsters' open links to the mob and the intensity of bureaucratic repression will be moderated. The IBT will begin to look like a normal bureaucratic union with an honest, reform image.

One obstacle is that many old-line bureaucrats are still firmly entrenched, particularly in the middle and lower levels. Another obstacle is Carey himself, who after an initial "crusade" period to cement the ranks' loyalty, will likely move to accommodate the more compliant old liners. We have heard that Carey has already begun to limit TDU's influence at the

top. Very possibly. TDU will have a major problem in mobilizing the ranks to fight back when the chasm widens, since it has no program of its own distinguishable from Carey's.

TDU itself now includes elected officials with all the conservatizing privileges of office LaBotz cites, and there is open debate over what sort of "opposition" role it should play. Carey will undoubtedly use the TDU apparatus to deal with his entrenched opponents and will predictably win some of them to his own machine. Like the bosses and the government, Carey does not want to see an independent movement of the ranks. While TDU hasn't built one, the members who look to it have that potential. Undercutting TDU will really mean undercutting the militants it misleads.

It is tragic that many well-intentioned, courageous militants have been drawn into the trap of rank and filist reformism. But the trap can be broken. The capitalist attack will inevitably provoke a powerful response by the proletariat. In these circumstances, with the building of a revolutionary leadership inside and outside the unions, the best elements can be won to a communist alternative. To do so will take a fight not only against the openly pro-capitalist officials like Ron Carey and worse, but against the pseudo-socialist rank and filists wailing that the time is never ripe. ●

Left Jabs

COMMUNISM RECONSIDERED

From an interview with Todor Zhivkov, the former Stalinist dictator of Bulgaria:

"If I had to do it over again, I would not even be a Communist . . .," said Mr. Zhivkov as he sat in his granddaughter's luxurious villa on a hillside above Sofia. (*New York Times*, Nov. 28, 1990.)

That's news? Most people with luxurious hillside villas don't think too highly of communism.

SPARTACISTS DEFENDED

In an old but unreputed article, the Spartacist League opposed ending limitations on immigration to the United States:

However, on a sufficiently large scale, immigration flows could wipe out the national identity of the recipient countries. . . . Unlimited immigration as a principle is incompatible with the right to national self-determination . . . (*Workers Vanguard*, Jan. 18, 1974.)

Now comes a word of support from unsuspecting allies in the struggle for retaining the "national identity" of imperialist countries:

Does the United States, does any nation, have a moral right to preserve its identity? If our answer is yes, then we have the right to open up this issue and re-evaluate our immigration law without fear of the crippling charge of racism.

That's from Lawrence Auster of the right-wing American Foundation to Control Immigration. It was cited approvingly by Patrick Buchanan in the *New York Post*, Aug. 17, 1991.)

'DEMOCRATIC LEFT' UPENDED

From an April conference announcement and fundraising letter from the Campaign for Peace and Democracy:

The presidential campaign is upon us, and the national foreign policy debate seems to be sinking to new depths. The Pentagon calls for a bizarre Pax

Americana; President Bush once again threatens military intervention in the Middle East; Democratic front-runner Clinton often sounds like he has no real quarrel with Bush's foreign policy. . . .

We are excited about the way the conference is coming together, and hope very much that you can join us. Among the outstanding participants are U.S. Rep. Major Owens . . .

In case it occurs to you to wonder which dismal candidate the outstanding Congressman Owens is supporting for President, take one guess. You play with the Democrats, you get the Democrats.

LABOR PARTY CHAMPIONED

From *Workers Power* (Britain), April 1992, on the British elections:

In the aftermath of Labour's fourth successive election defeat the question is posed point blank: what kind of party does the working class need to turn the tide? . . . We need a party that fights for what workers need, not what the capitalists can afford. Anybody who tells us that Labour can be turned into the kind of party workers need has got to be joking.

From *Workers Power* (Britain), April 1992, on the American elections:

The U.S. working class is faced with its perennial weakness: the lack of a class based workers' party which can defend its interests against the capitalists. . . . U.S. workers should not vote Democratic in the coming presidential elections, but fight for a united front to present a workers' candidate. . . . North American workers and the trade unions must take urgent steps to form a workers' party, and revolutionary socialists must fight to win that party to revolutionary answers to the crisis.

Workers Power, perennial supporters of the British Labour Party despite its imperialist and class-collaborationist horrors, has always advocated a labor party for U.S. workers. Perhaps the comrades should read their own paper!

Stalinism in Trotskyist Guise: Spartacists Back ANC/SWAPO Repression

In the coming period it is more than likely that the success or failure of the socialist revolution on a world scale will hinge upon events now unfolding in South Africa.

In that country the African National Congress (ANC) is dickering with the reactionary de Klerk regime over the formation of a new capitalist government. It is no longer possible for an openly white supremacist administration to maintain the rule of capital in the face of a powerful, undefeated Black proletariat infused with socialist ideas. Therefore, a new political superstructure dappled with Black faces is vital for the bourgeoisie. In their efforts to provide that facade, the ANC leadership, reflecting the outlook of the small Black middle class and the upper layers of the petty bourgeoisie, must rely on the threatening mass of Black labor. It has no other weapon to wield at the bargaining table.

However, Nelson Mandela and the other ANC leaders must maneuver adroitly during the negotiations, as they did during the past years of struggle. Not only do they have to haggle with the regime; they also have to be wary of the Black workers. Very wary indeed, for the same tidal wave that strikes terror into the hearts and minds of the white bourgeoisie could sweep them away too.

For this reason the ANC leaders have for many years virtually embraced the South African Communist Party. At the July 1991 ANC conference, the SACP gained about half the elected positions on the executive committee. This doesn't make the ANC more radical. On the contrary, like Stalinists everywhere, the SACP uses its influence within the working class to channel the class's power and put it at the disposal of the pro-capitalist ANC leadership.

The ANC/SACP alliance has continually sought to placate world imperialism. Washington, London et al — and Moscow in its day — nervously played their part in urging the apartheid regime to negotiate. The fragility of the international economy and the explosive potential of the South African work force give them the same fear that motivates de Klerk, Mandela and the ANC/SACP. A revolutionary upheaval in Johannesburg and Pretoria, challenging capitalism itself, would rock the entire world.

THE ROLE OF STALINISM

Stalinism, like social democracy, has served as a major weapon of counterrevolution. It reflected the outlook of radicalized sectors of the bureaucratic middle strata in economically less advanced countries, including the intelligentsia and the labor aristocracy. It stood for the maximum possible statification of capital in every country, presented in the name of socialism.

Acting within the workers' movement and revolutionary movements in general, it pursued a policy of class collaboration and popular frontism designed to prop up capitalist power. It carried out this mission only by cloaking itself in the vestments of Marxism and Leninism. It implanted itself in countries where bourgeois liberalism or traditional social democratic reformism could not win mass support.

But with Stalinism discredited in Europe, the middle-class agents of capitalism have to seek new disguises. Just as today's social democrats call themselves "democratic socialists" in a vain attempt to appear as a different breed, so too Stalinists sometimes claim the banner of Trotskyism.

U.S. readers will be aware of the Workers World Party, which for some years has carried out work the old CPUSA

is too feeble to do. The WWP was a split from the once-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party in the 1950's. Although initially radical in rhetoric and thus able to appeal to more revolutionary minded people than the CPUSA, it moved rapidly to the right, deepening its attachment to Stalinism and liberalism. It supported not only the Soviet smashing of upheavals in Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland but began to back Democratic Party politicians at home. Its leftist criticism of Stalinism dwindled, and it eventually dropped all public reference to its Trotskyist origins. It now pushes a liberal pro-capitalist program within the left. Its attraction for revolutionists is much diminished.

Far more radical-sounding is the Spartacist tendency, which has been traveling the same road but more slowly. The Spartacists still retail whole chunks of "Trotskyist" rhetoric and still verbally oppose Stalinism. However, long ago they equated Stalinism with communism by politically endorsing the Vietnamese Stalinists (through the slogan, "All Indochina Must Go Communist"). Later they applauded the Stalinists' crushing of the working-class movement in Poland. While they nominally oppose popular frontism, a hallmark of Stalinists, they advocated state power to popular frontists in El Salvador (see our issue No. 14 for details) and swore allegiance to the popular front regime in Afghanistan.

Birds of a Feather

The Trinidad paper *Vanguard* (May 27, 1991) reported that former police and secret service agents from Eastern Europe — folks the Spartacists regarded as bastions of their "workers' states" — have been welcomed into the police, army and intelligence units of South Africa. According to the Soviet weekly *Argumenty i Fakty* (March 1991), "they have developed a reputation of being more hard-working than white South African officers and are more 'resolute' about putting down unrest in black areas."

Like the WWP, the Spartacists identify with the hard-line Stalinist bureaucrats in the ex-USSR, in their struggle against the more openly pro-bourgeois Yeltsinites. They are drawn into a popular front with pro-capitalist Stalinists and their Czarist and even fascist allies like Pamyat. Capitulating to these forces fools the Spartacists into believing that they have built a barrier against liberalism. But the popular frontist politics inherent in all Stalinism, hard and soft, makes a capitulation to reformism and liberalism inevitable as well.

Last summer the Spartacists issued an article that tried via cover-up and outright deceit to undermine efforts for international solidarity with Black militants in South Africa and Namibia. The militants were under attack from pro-bourgeois forces — the liberal ANC/SACP and its Namibian ally, SWAPO. We issue this reply to refute the Spartacists' slanders and as a further defense of the solidarity campaign.

SWAPO & ANC MILITANTS FIGHT FOR JUSTICE

Former SWAPO militants who had been imprisoned and tortured by the security apparatus of PLAN, the SWAPO guerrilla organization abroad, returned to Namibia in 1989 and called for an international inquiry into the abuses of the SWAPO leadership. (See *Proletarian Revolution* No. 36.) In

Britain, the call for an inquiry was supported by both the journal *Searchlight South Africa (SSA)* and the Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP).

In the U.S., only the LRP took up the campaign. We not only spoke for the democratic right of these fighters to an open hearing but also argued that a full exposure of the facts would demonstrate an important political truth — that the violent repression of the ranks was linked to SWAPO's nationalist leadership's need to conciliate imperialism. Publicity about past atrocities would also help to break illusions that the pro-capitalist SWAPO could represent a path of liberation for the masses.

Less than a year later, ANC negotiations were already mimicking the capitulations previously enacted by SWAPO, albeit on a grander scale. And ANC ex-detainees had started making their way back to South Africa, reporting that they too had endured horrific atrocities while imprisoned abroad — under the whip of the corrupt security apparatus of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), the ANC's external guerrilla organization.

Again, in the U.S. only the LRP supported their call for an inquiry. Originally we had sent requests to many left-wing organizations asking them to support and publicize the campaign of the SWAPO ex-detainees. We then published appeals in this magazine on behalf of the ANC ex-detainees as well. The response was a stone wall of silence.

The bulk of the left has patronizingly and uncritically

In all cases, the Spartacists manage to end up on the side of the ANC and SWAPO leaders and against their victims.

THE WINNIE MANDELA TRIAL

The Spartacists condemn the kidnapping and murder of 14-year-old James (Stompie) Moeketsi Seipei in 1988 by members of Winnie Mandela's "football club" without casting any blame in her direction. "We are not in a position to know really what happened." They add, "Beyond the question of Winnie Mandela's responsibility in this murky and grisly affair, the murder and trial crystallized the discontent of upwardly mobile middle-class forces in the ANC" who oppose the militancy that she represents.

But there certainly was evidence linking Mandela to Moeketsi's murder — and to other crimes for which she was never tried. More evidence emerged this April. Her driver, John Morgan, renounced the alibi he had given for her trial. He then testified that she was 200 miles away when the assault took place. Now he says he was at the scene and saw Mandela herself beating Stompie and three other victims. Such new, incriminating reports were no doubt a reason for the marital separation requested by Nelson Mandela.

Even at the time, her defense strategy was self-incriminating. Her entire case was that Stompie was beaten for allegedly having had homosexual sex with a priest. Mandela supporters outside the courthouse carried placards with slogans like "homosexuality is not Black culture" — as if



To South African workers, socialism means freedom. To Spartacists it means support for Stalinist repression.

tailed nationalists — above all the ANC and SWAPO — for years. Aside from their organizational sectarianism, however, we saw no reason why a supposedly hard-core anti-nationalist group like the Spartacist League didn't respond. (We had sent requests both to their newspaper and the Partisan Defense League, the Spartacist-sponsored organization which campaigns on behalf of political prisoners.)

The Spartacists eventually gave their "reasons" in an article "Uproar Over Winnie Mandela Trial, ANC/SWAPO Prisoners." (*Workers Vanguard*, Aug. 2, 1991.) This scurrilous piece attacks the campaigns against the ANC and SWAPO atrocities, especially the efforts by *Searchlight South Africa* and the WRP. It also vilifies groups who have publicized the Winnie Mandela scandal. (We refer readers to *PR* No. 39.)

homosexuality was sinful and abusive by nature, not the beating to death of a child! If she was innocent or could have appealed to anti-de Klerk militants for support, why resort to this reactionary defense?

For the Spartacists, the question of her innocence or guilt, in what was clearly an atrocity having nothing to do with militancy or opposition to the middle class, is of small concern. It is only her association with militant action that counts. That link is supposedly proved by her defense of necklacing (killing suspected collaborators with burning tires) and her association with "the plebeian youth who fought the army and police during the 1984-86 township revolt, who crudely enforced the many boycotts and were the shock troops of the ANC's campaign to 'make the townships

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ungovernable.'” However, by *WV*'s own admission, the militancy demonstrated by the township youth had degenerated completely in the past five years:

Murderous feuding is common in outfits based on militaristic organization of the lumpenproletariat, particularly in periods of defeat when they often turn into simple gangs. This phenomenon is also common among defeated guerrilla armies, which after they no longer have the perspective of seizing power tend to degenerate into banditry. In South Africa, some of the same idealistic youth who in '84-86 courageously fought against the apartheid state, a couple of years later had become disillusioned and were using the same methods against each other.

One can certainly conclude from the evidence that Stompie's murderers, members of a gang controlled by Winnie Mandela, were completely degenerate thugs. But characterizing Mandela herself is a different matter. Her responsibility goes beyond individual acts of brutality. As a political leader she was precisely one of those responsible for the "disillusionment" and corruption of more than one generation of potential revolutionaries. That's something *WV* never points out.

SUPPORT FOR NECKLACING

SSA totally opposes all necklacing as undemocratic violence, and their liberal argument gives *WV* an easy target. However, *WV* draws a sharp line between what the "comrades" did before and after 1986, an equally false perspective. The only answer for revolutionaries, both in 1984 and now, is to fight for a genuine alternative in which workers' organizations and the masses can decide such questions.

Given that the working class was not so empowered, we can only defend necklacing on a case-by-case basis. This means we defend getting rid of traitors who actively support the South African regime by any means necessary. But we oppose necklacing and all violence when used against opponents of the ANC line who are clearly part of the anti-



Despite marital and political differences, Winnie and Nelson Mandela are still bound by their commitment to keep down the working class.

apartheid struggle. Both types occurred in 1984-86. Unlike *WV*, we state that acts of repression against leftists had to be opposed during the township uprisings.

WV's blanket support for necklacing in 1984-86 indicates indifference at best, for example, to the ANC rampage against members of AZAPO, a more radical Black organization, after Ted Kennedy's visit to South Africa in 1985. AZAPO protested U.S. imperialism and Kennedy's visit so successfully, and their protest had so much resonance among the Black population at large, that he couldn't even visit Soweto. It was a tremendous embarrassment to the ANC-

created UDF, which afterward used its *Radio Freedom* station to call on its followers to eliminate "the third force." What followed was the murder of scores of AZAPO supporters across the country. Anyone who didn't support the ANC, whether an AZAPO supporter fighting racism and imperialism or a figure in the apartheid state, was the enemy.

The Spartacists refuse to admit that repression of other leftists has been a significant factor all along. In particular the degeneration of the "young comrades," which they bemoan, was due specifically to their *Stalinist* rather than revolutionary training: they were taught to slander or physically destroy all perceived political enemies, left and right, with equal verve (at best). In fact, deliberate confusionism over who is a left-wing opponent, as opposed to a genuine reactionary in league with the South African state, is part and parcel of Stalinist methodology, and as we shall see, also of the Spartacists'.

DO LIBERALS OPPOSE WINNIE MANDELA?

One thrust of the Spartacists' line is that because liberals oppose Winnie Mandela, naturally workers should side with her. "From Johannesburg to London, the furor over the 'Winnie trial' coincides with the imperialist triumphalism over the 'death of Communism' and Bush's 'New World Order'." They note that liberals have "responded to the daily barrage of 'ANC atrocities' in the rabidly anti-Communist yuppie [British] *Independent* to distance themselves from one-time allies." That is, liberals distance themselves from Winnie Mandela in order to distance themselves from the SACP. It is also interesting that, in the Spartacists' book, reports of Stalinist crimes amount to anti-communism. Again they imply that Stalinism equals genuine communism.

Apparently the information liberals publish doesn't have to be dealt with. One can't help wondering if the Spartacists would deny Trotsky a hearing or dismiss him as another "Stalinophobe," since he appealed to liberals like the philosopher John Dewey in order to publicize a "barrage of Stalinist atrocities," as *WV* puts it.

On the other hand, *WV*'s line that all liberals opposed Winnie Mandela is far from true. Many have supported her steadfastly. Ted Kennedy once called her "a woman of extraordinary faith and love of God and country," noting that she demonstrated "gentleness and firmness, in a touching but meaningful way." And many who distance themselves from her today had supported her for years, before this case tarnished her reputation among them. No liberal tears were shed about several other murders or the dozens of acts of torture against leftists and the common thuggery which she and her gang had been associated with for years.

Liberals who now decry "Black on Black violence," a racist concept to begin with, are sickeningly hypocritical. At this level, exposing Mandela's betrayal of Blacks is just a phony way of promoting compromise with the apartheid regime. (As well, the "Winnie Scandal" was undoubtedly exploited by the state, which seizes any opportunity to justify its racism.) However, this impetus was tempered by the embarrassment the Winnie Mandela affair was causing to Nelson Mandela, the liberals' (and de Klerk's) last, best hope.

WHAT ABOUT THE WORKING CLASS?

By the end of the trial, both wings of the ANC had to distance themselves from Winnie Mandela — not just to appear respectable in the eye of the bourgeoisie, as *WV* states, but also because of her declining credibility among the Black population at large. She was badly defeated in a bid to head the ANC's Women's League, and even Nelson Mandela declined to attend the last part of her trial.

But what about the views of the working class? *WV* mentions only the lumpen and the middle class. There is much evidence that workers, as well as the great mass of impoverished and unemployed Blacks in South Africa with which they overlap, had been fed up with Winnie Mandela's arrogant reign of terror in Soweto way before the trial. For example, her house was burned down by students upset about the rape of a high school girl by a member of the "football club" in 1988. After Stompie Moeketsi's murder, even leaders of the pro-ANC Mass Democratic Movement and United Democratic Front had to speak out against her.

Where do the interests of the working class lie? The bottom line is that Winnie Mandela has betrayed the working class and represents a danger to it. Shouldn't she be discredited as a leader of the struggle? Why does *WV* not call on the working class and anti-apartheid movement to take up that task — in place of the apartheid courts? In fact, the Spartacists don't even try to take an independent working-class position. To them Winnie Mandela is still representative of the left-wing of the ANC, which they support. They try hard to hang that support on her alliance with the township uprisings.

UNSCRUPULOUS AMALGAMS

It is not the purpose of this article to examine the politics of *SSA* or the WRP at length. Our support for the detainees' campaigns was never based on political agreement with either group, beyond the question of calling for an inquiry. But the Spartacists' misrepresentation of *SSA* on the question of Winnie Mandela is so bald that it can't pass.

WV states that *SSA*'s "main worry is that, for political reasons, the apartheid courts may not actually put Mrs. Mandela away." In fact *SSA* states exactly the opposite:

It is not possible to endorse the prison sentence that was handed down. Those who have seen those miserable prisons in South Africa from the inside or experienced the regime under which they are controlled cannot wish such treatment on the most miserable of human beings. . . . What Mrs. Mandela requires is not a prison sentence, but sympathy and understanding for what she has endured as a victim of apartheid, and as a person cut off from her husband and family. With this she also needs counselling to allow her to understand that what she has done is unacceptable. It is this that she finally has to confront. (*Searchlight South Africa*, No. 7)

There is a heavy dose of liberal do-goodism here, for sure, but underneath is a fundamentally correct position: the apartheid regime has no right to imprison Winnie Mandela! While we hold no brief for *SSA*'s politics in general (see our critique of their position on the Gulf War in *PR* No. 40, for example), it is especially foul to associate people who have honorable records in the anti-apartheid struggle and who suffered long imprisonment, torture and crippling with advocacy of apartheid's prison system. To Trotsky such amalgams were a favorite tool of "the Stalinist school of falsification."

Despite such unscrupulous misrepresentation, we cannot disagree with *WV*'s claim that the propaganda of *SSA* and the WRP is Stalinophobic. Of course, for the Spartacists everyone but themselves, the Stalinists and a few chosen Stalinoid liberals is Stalinophobic. But even a stopped clock is right twice a day.

In their material on SWAPO and the ANC, *SSA* and the WRP constantly and exclusively emphasize the threat of Stalinism, presenting the false illusion that Stalinists hold a monopoly on the use of violence against the left, intimating that pro-capitalist liberalism is a "lesser danger." In reality, Stalinism and liberalism are two faces of capitalism and there

is no lesser evil to choose between them. The long term bond between the ANC and the SACP is a case in point. (We criticize the WRP's conspiracy theory of Stalinism in "Healyism with a Human Face," *Proletarian Revolution* No. 37.)

DISPUTES AMONG NATIONALISTS

Workers Vanguard always refers to the battles between the different nationalist groupings as "infighting." Yes, at times the fights between different nationalist or left groupings are simply turf wars in which the working class should take no side. But when it is clear that ANC violence is an attack against a more left-wing movement, we recognize the need for *defense* against the ANC even if we refuse *political* support. Our reasons are not purely democratic, although we do defend the rights of all activists in the anti-apartheid movement to free speech.

While nationalism as an ideology is reactionary in all its variants, there is a tension between the pseudo-nationalism of the fundamentally liberal integrationist ANC and the frequently more radical nationalism of AZAPO, PAC and other "Black consciousness" forces. These groups' opposition to the current negotiations with de Klerk is a case in point. Even though this ideology is based on race rather than class lines, which ultimately points to acquiescence to capitalism (as with the ANC), the nature of South African society means that opposition to whites often coincides with opposition to compromise with the white power structure. That was the case with the Kennedy visit.

The conflict between Winnie Mandela and the other ANC leaders is hardly the class difference that *WV* implies. Nor is it likely to be the most important division in anti-apartheid politics in South Africa.

For example, there is a serious problem of reconciling the duplicate power structures of the internal and external ANC leaderships, now that they are all in the same country. Some of this is simply "turf war," some reflects medium-soft vs. extremely soft attitudes toward the negotiations and de Klerk. Fighters who were ready to shed their blood, albeit in a guerrilla struggle, are on the whole less likely to adapt to sellout deals. It is also possible that differences between AZAPO and the ANC, or within the Stalinist current in the ANC, may become a critical area for revolutionary intervention in South Africa.

However, the most crucial break is the demarcation between the leadership and the mass working-class base of a nationalist or liberal-reformist movement. This distinction is a hallmark of Bolshevik-Leninist politics. Tactics such as the united front are used both to advance the struggle and to split such formations along this decisive axis: the aim is to turn the working-class base against the capitulatory tops.

As opposed to the class-against-class approach of Trotskyism, Stalinists look to popular fronts, which tie the workers to an alliance led by pseudo-left liberals. Thus Stalinists (and other reformist socialists) search for "progressive forces" among the liberals as the key, as opposed to class divisions. And so they end up tailing pro-capitalist elements and seeking to subordinate the working class to them.

Searchlight South Africa and the WRP, by drawing the line against the Stalinists rather than the liberals, overlook the profound ties between these distinct trends within the middle class. The Spartacists draw the same line, only choosing the opposite side. Instead, the emphasis must be on the danger to the working class posed by the ANC as a whole — both its liberal and Stalinist wings.

SPARTACISTS SUPPORT REPRESSION OF MILITANTS

The axis of the Spartacist position is not proletarianism

but pro-Stalinism. This becomes even clearer in their attitude toward the torture of ANC and SWAPO dissidents abroad.

The ANC dissidents represented hundreds of youth from the Black Consciousness Movement, which had an impetus to the left of the ANC's integrationism. They had been forced into exile by the regime, and outside South Africa the ANC was the only force for them to join.

When the township uprisings began in 1984, it was an open question as to where revolutionary forces should be concentrated. The dissidents had long called for an ANC Congress to decide the question. The ranks felt that their military forces were too weak to sustain struggles in both Angola and South Africa successfully. Their protests also involved other issues, like corruption of the leadership involving diamond-smuggling and car theft rings, and the exploitation of women. Another issue was the demand to end the false arrest and torture of militants. This had been going on for years in order to eliminate dissension against how the ANC/SACP was running things.

Umkhonto we Sizwe was set up by members of both the ANC and the SACP in 1961, after the ANC was banned in-

THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR: THE VIEW FROM THE LEFT

Writing about the Spanish Civil War, Leon Trotsky pointed out that the 'witnesses, victims and participants' of the 'innumerable crimes committed on the Iberian peninsula by the international scoundrels in Stalin's employ' would 'carry with them everywhere their testimony', and predicted that the 'truth will become accessible to broad circles of the population in all countries.' Our aim is to let them speak through these pages.

Only one of the accounts in this book has ever appeared before in English. The contributions range across the whole spectrum of the non-Stalinist left, from Trotskyists (both official and dissenting), Brandlerites, the left wing of the POUM, Italian Maximalists, to left-wing Social Democrats, plus a number of studies by modern investigators who do not toe the Stalinist line.

For too long the views of the Stalinists on this issue have remained virtually unchallenged. This book challenges Stalinist orthodoxy by proving that the violence inflicted upon the non-Stalinist left during the Spanish Civil War was an essential part of the Popular Front strategy of the Communist International, and that by strangling the revolution that was occurring in Republican Spain, this strategy was directly responsible for the victory of Franco.

The Spanish Civil War: The View from the Left is an essential book for those who wish to learn the truth about the Spanish Civil War, and for those who wish to combat the baleful influence of Popular Frontism within the labor movement today.

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side South Africa. The clandestine organization was far more dominated by the Stalinists than was the above-ground ANC. As well, the SACP was better connected internationally to run an exile organization than was the ANC. From the beginning, the face that the young exiles protested against was the SACP's; there was no ANC as such abroad.

The dissidents' protest at Fazenda, Angola, in 1979 had been the impetus for the construction of the infamous Quatro prison camp. (See PR No. 38.) The majority of those protesters were taken to Zimbabwe, where they were ordered to fight alongside ZAPU against both the Ian Smith forces and the rival national liberation force, ZANU.

Cadres protested again in Zambia in 1980. Militants were detained, tortured or killed practically every time they demanded a Congress to discuss politics, the resignation of particularly corrupt officers, or any discussion of why the military struggle was "stagnating," as they expressed it. By the time of the 1984 mutiny, the dissidents had the support of the majority of guerrilla fighters in Angola; they had already endured years of such mistreatment by the ANC external leadership. (The document, *A Miscarriage of Democracy* by five detainees, is available to readers upon request.)

In our view it was necessary to side with the dissidents in general while raising an alternative program to nationalism, both to expose the leadership and to help the ranks see through the ideology of their class enemies. *WV*, on the other hand, condemns the mutineers and gives backhanded "critical" support to the ANC leadership:

While we are quite prepared to believe that the internal regime in the ANC camps was plenty brutal and arbitrary, revolutionaries can in no way solidarize with mutineers who refused to fight the South African army and called for an end to the war against the CIA-financed UNITA forces of Jonas Savimbi. At bottom, the mutineers' action reflected the nationalist politics to which the ANC recruited them.

A thoroughly dishonest argument. The Spartacists avoid mentioning the other protests and detentions, leaving the impression that the dissidents were pro-South African or cowards. In reality there was popular sentiment among the fighters in Angola to end the war against UNITA and to concentrate their forces *against South Africa*. Right or wrong, theirs was hardly a pro-apartheid position or an attempt to avoid the South African army. They were subjectively revolutionary militants caught in a nationalist ideological trap.

The Spartacists' cavalier attitude toward the brutality is justified by their view that repressing the ranks was correct. That is, they endorse the ANC/SACP's military discipline against a political uprising. Whereas for Marxists the tactic of military support to MK and the MPLA against UNITA implies no political support, the Spartacists use military support as a form of political endorsement of the ANC leadership. (As for solidarizing with people who wouldn't fight UNITA, the Spartacists' own record on that score is hardly unblemished. See below.)

After five years of torture and detention, some surviving detainees were released from the camp in Angola and transferred to Tanzania in September 1989. These former mutineers became extremely popular among the exile population in Tanzania, despite the fact that they had supposedly been "spies." In September 1989, two of them were elected by the ranks to the Regional Political Committee, the most powerful ANC body in Tanzania.

In October, the ANC/SACP arbitrarily dissolved this elected RPC, but the ranks voted not to participate in a dummy structure imposed by the leaders. Shortly thereafter, the SACP's Chris Hani and another leader showed up to for-

mally proclaim the exclusion of former mutineers from ANC structures. But the ranks' sentiment against the leadership and for their own voice in choosing a political leadership and strategy was clearly wide and deep. It cannot be seriously argued that the *mass* of exiled militants represented a reactionary trend. (In contrast, the few returning exiles who have joined right-wing groups must be condemned.)

Even the Spartacists can't seem to swallow the official ANC and SWAPO position that all the militants brutalized abroad in various episodes of conflict were spies. So when all is said and done, their article actually offers no reason for refusing to support the demand of the ex-ANC detainees for an independent commission of inquiry to uncover the truth. Why is this, if they're not just covering for Stalinist abuse?

After all, who represents the main danger of collaboration with the South African regime today: the dissidents who have returned to South Africa and are demanding a hearing to clear their names of "spy" allegations; or the MK commanders (and reported Stalinist hard-liners) like Joe Modise and Chris Hani who are working hard to integrate into the South African police force?

THE ROLE OF THE ANC'S MILITARY

WV does not mention the 1988 peace plan for Angola, a prerequisite for Namibia's nominal independence and the subsequent initiation of negotiations in South Africa. In it, Cuba and Angola agreed to a cease fire with South Africa, while both the Angolan MPLA popular frontist government and SWAPO pledged not to allow ANC bases to remain in either Angola or Namibia. The non-signatory U.S. was left free to continue aiding Savimbi. And South Africa got a deal with SWAPO, which now rules over a restive population in a South African neo-colony. The concessions given to the U.S. by Cuba and the MPLA were the basis for the elections in Angola this year, in which UNITA and MPLA are both supplicants for U.S. support.

While avoiding discussion of Cuba's political role, the Spartacists take pains to solidarize with Cuba's military accomplishments against South Africa. By contrasting this to their rendition of the MK dissidents' refusal to fight UNITA, they implicitly portray MK's military role in Angola as a glorious episode. In fact, MK accomplished nothing impressive militarily for decades, especially in Angola. Given the funds that flowed to the ANC from abroad (more than to any other liberation movement in history), plus the training, supplies and political backing received from the Soviet bloc, it must be asked why.

Speaking at an MK conference in August 1991, Modise made clear that military victory against the South African Defense Force had not been a serious goal. Despite some minor military achievements, MK's actions had been more on the level of "armed propaganda" and that its "serious shortcomings" required discussion.

Modise said that because most ANC cadre were outside of South Africa during the 1980's, "we could not effectively meet the clamor of the people to be defended." He blamed the "preoccupation within our ranks to flush out enemy agents" as well as the problem of the mutiny as reasons why "the people's endeavors were not prioritized as should have been the case." "We should ask ourselves," he added, "why we were not able to gain a foothold in the rural areas" and why "our attempts to involve workers and peasants in sufficient numbers fell short of our desired goals." (*The Militant*, Oct. 4, 1991.)

Although Modise covers his butt by partly blaming the mutiny, his self-criticism in effect admits that complaints about Umkhonto's strategy were justified! It makes the

Spartacists' siding with Modise & Co. against the dissidents look sick.

THE SWAPO-UNITA BLOC

In our article on the Namibian dissidents two years ago, we linked the repression of the ranks by SWAPO in the 1980's to its bourgeois nationalist politics. *SSA* has since published a two-part article which demonstrates convincingly how an earlier round of protests in 1974-1976 laid the basis for the repression in the '80's. ("The Kissinger/Vorster/Kaunda Detente: Genesis of the SWAPO 'Spy-Drama'," by Paul Trewhela, *SSA* Nos. 5 and 6.) This appeared before the Spartacist article, so they consciously chose to ignore it to be able to side with SWAPO's leadership.

In 1972, Southwest Africa (now Namibia) was shaken by the strike of the Ovambo contract workers, the most important in the country's history. The 1974 defeat of the Caetano dictatorship in Portugal, which had ruled neighboring Angola, added more fuel to the fire of revolution among Namibian youth. SWAPO's Youth League grew enormously. But between 1974 and 1975, the militants suffered intense repression at home; about six thousand were forced into exile and joined the SWAPO guerrillas (PLAN) in Lusaka, Zambia.

But by 1976 PLAN militants found themselves fighting against an explicit policy of collaboration with UNITA and the South African army *against* the MPLA and Cuban forces in Angola, a policy imposed by the PLAN military leadership. The basic reason for the collaboration was nationalist expediency. SWAPO had its military bases in Zambia and was directly accountable to President Kaunda and his army. Zambia in turn followed a "practical" course based on its dependency on South Africa.

By June 1976, over a thousand dissidents had been detained in Zambian detention camps, with SWAPO's approval, because of their *opposition* to this criminal collaboration with UNITA. The imprisoned dissidents were labelled "spies." Their "PLAN Fighters' Declaration" was issued in April 1976 after the arrests had begun. It condemned

people in the SWAPO leadership who are having farms, hotels, shops and bank accounts, that is why they are less interested in the liberation struggle. When we demand the National Congress where a clear, socialist line be drawn, they consider us enemies, this is because we believe that socialism is a better society. We are against exploitation of man by man and condemn in the strongest terms the exploitation of our mineral resources by foreigners. This is one of the reasons why they don't want the Congress to be held, because they know that in a socialist Namibia there will be no room for private owned shops, hotels, etc. (SSA No. 6, p. 42.)

This declaration, while expressing illusions in the MPLA as a force for socialism, also showed that it was the dissidents' own subjective commitment to socialism under the shell of their remaining nationalism that led them to defy SWAPO's military command. The same sentiment motivated the overwhelming majority of the MK protesters as well.

If *WV*'s main concern was the fight against the pro-U.S. and pro-South Africa UNITA rather than an apology for Stalinism, they would have to have supported the call for an inquiry into the treatment of the ex-SWAPO detainees.

THE SPARTACISTS' RECORD ON UNITA

Whatever their political weaknesses, the SWAPO dissidents were on the right side of the anti-imperialist line in Angola in 1976, opposite from the leaders. The Spartacists, on the other hand, vacillated. They supported the MPLA and UNITA (as well as a third force, the FNLA) against the

Portuguese colonial army, but took no sides in the war between the MPLA and its rivals:

But in the present highly unstable situation, where the Portuguese colonial apparatus is disintegrating and its army for the moment remains peripheral to the conflict, and where the civil war poses the possibility of tribalist genocide, we cannot categorically call for the military victory of one force over the others. (*Young Spartacus*, September 1975.)

Out of fear of "tribalism" and instability, the Spartacists chose neutrality, although they knew which side imperialism was on! South Africa had already begun its invasion against the MPLA, and, as the *Young Spartacus* article recognized, "the FNLA is subservient to imperialist stooge Mobutu of Zaire" and "UNITA . . . has the support of the apartheid government of South Africa and Zambia."

Two months later the Spartacists reversed field. But still they held that "the present war in Angola is not a national liberation struggle against U.S. imperialism." (*WV*, Jan. 16, 1976.) What had changed was that the USSR had sent military aid to the MPLA. Thus "the fighting in Angola is no longer a domestic civil war, but a 'war by proxy' between the U.S. and the USSR." The U.S.'s role could not convince the Spartacists to choose sides: only "defense of the USSR" tilted the balance for these proto-Stalinist opportunists to join the struggle against imperialism.

A DISINFORMATION CAMPAIGN?

As for the conflicts between the PLAN leadership and ranks in the 1980's, a central point of protest was the lack of military progress being made by the SWAPO forces in Angola, as well as charges of abuse, corruption, and lack of democracy — the same issue raised by the MK fighters. Yet *WV* dismisses the entire issue of the SWAPO detainees as a "disinformation campaign by South African security forces."

This dismissal is based solely on the fact that the book *Call Them Spies*, co-edited by former South African army major Nico Basson, was cited by the WRP's *Workers Press* and *Searchlight South Africa* in their articles on the SWAPO atrocities. Basson has since admitted that he was participating in a pro-South African scheme to "fuel fears of SWAPO" and that the plotters "exploited reports that the organization had imprisoned dissident members in Angola."

The fact that right wingers exploited a terrible scandal is no surprise, but Basson did not invent a false story. *Call Them Spies* contains a compilation of previously existing documents whose validity can be independently substantiated; it was not a false story made up Basson. (Our own articles used the reports by the detainees themselves.) To make an

obvious analogy, bourgeois anti-communists used the Moscow Trials to indict Stalinism, but that doesn't lessen the reality of Stalin's crimes.

As far as we can tell, *SSA* has been meticulous in verifying the information it publishes. On the other hand, it is easy for *WV* to criticize the WRP for sloppy and misleading handling of the facts. In our analysis, we rejected the sensationalized material in *Workers Press* and criticized at the time the WRP's electoral strategy in Namibia for crossing the class line. (*Proletarian Revolution* No. 36.) Of course, the Spartacists have a harder time countering popular frontism, since that they like to dabble in it themselves.

WV is correct that both *SSA* and the WRP fell into the trap of Stalinophobia. (As with the ANC, both Stalinists and liberals supported and funded SWAPO for years, although the Stalinists clearly dominated PLAN.) But Stalinophilia is no alternative. And that's the reason for the Spartacists' refusal to support any inquiry into what went on between the ranks and the SWAPO and ANC leaderships. They have adopted the Stalinist line that fundamental criticism of nationalist leaders is automatically pro-imperialist and racist. Thus *WV* concludes its hatchet job:

So now *Searchlight* and the Slaughterites [the WRP] have been exposed as willing, even eager conduits for lying disinformation by the white-supremacist apartheid regime.

There is nothing new in all this, nor is it unique to southern Africa. . . . In the modern era, European imperialists and their social-democratic lackeys have pointed to the crimes of Stalinism and nationalist movements to justify the suppression of national liberation struggles. French Socialists condemned the terrorist tactics of the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN) while the French army tortured FLN militants and killed a million Algerian Arabs and Berbers. The British Labour Party denounced the terrorism of the Mau Mau to support the "pacification" of Kenya by the British colonial army. Now Cliff Slaughter and the editors of *Searchlight* . . . have in the same way become "left" apologists for imperialist subjugation and mass murder.

There is a slight detail that *WV* overlooks in this incredible amalgam: namely, that the WRP and *SSA*, for all their serious political faults, are vocal opponents of South Africa's racism and crimes. The Spartacist League is consciously lying, loud and clear.

Neo-Stalinism depends on smearing revolutionary and far-left opponents as tools of the right, just as the old-time Stalinists labeled Trotsky a crypto-fascist. The method was criminal then and it is criminal now. ●



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International

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this led to a certain passivity in practice. The reality was fully revealed during the winter of 1989-90, when the upsurge by the Swedish working class placed active intervention, not just propaganda and minor activities, on the order of the day. The national secretary of the MLF, Alexander Gorowoi, and a few other comrades turned out to be the only activists. In fact they upheld a facade by continuing to issue *Röd Gryning* and acting in the name of the League.

The only solution to this state of extreme substitutionism was to dissolve the MLF, which all of its members (for opposite reasons!) agreed to do in July 1990. Since then most of the ex-members have become passive Cliffites or simply depoliticized. The exceptions have continued to be active in the working-class movement and to study Marxism.

The LRP's book, *The Life and Death of Stalinism*, played an important role in helping us come to grips with the fundamental class difference that exists between the "M-L" tradition, Cliffism and the left in general, on the one hand, and authentic communism, on the other, represented by the entirely different methodology and outlook put forward in that book. The decision to affiliate to the COFI and to build a Swedish section of it is the final outcome of a process of development away from counterrevolutionary Stalinism through left centrism to a proletarian class stand.

From Syndicalism to Trotskyism

Below is the text of a February 26 broadcast on the radio program of the Swedish syndicalists.

You are very welcome to this broadcast from the Stockholm Local Branch of the Central Organization of Sweden's Workers (the syndicalists).

My name is Mark Lynch and I have in fact decided to leave the syndicalists. So this is my last broadcast here on 88 MHz, and it feels kind of strange to sit in this studio for the last time. Since some of you know me, perhaps you would like to know why I am leaving the syndicalists.

Well, after about four years in this organization, I have realized that syndicalism is not a revolutionary ideology and that SAC will never be able to make the revolution in Sweden. A "revolutionary organization" that permits overt pro-imperialists and sympathizers of openly bourgeois parties to become members is of course no revolutionary organization at all.

The opportunist side of syndicalism — which is expressed, for example, in appeals to "idealist employers" to support the strike of the working class — also has a sectarian counterpart, namely the refusal to intervene in the really existing organizations of the working class (e.g., LO [the trade union federation]). A "revolutionary organization" which refuses to be where the workers are — that is, in LO — is of course no revolutionary organization at all. An organization of this type will never be able to make the revolution. It won't even be able to mobilize the working class for a general strike against austerity. Instead SAC prefers to proclaim "general strikes" of its own, in which not even the majority of its members participate.

No, comrades, all this is plain stupidity. There is almost no debate inside SAC about strategy and tactics in the revolutionary struggle, and if there is, it doesn't lead anywhere. To adopt binding resolutions on strategy is seen as authori-

tarian. To fill the organization with assorted pacifists, imperialists, councilors and members of the bourgeois Center Party in an incomprehensible hodgepodge is, on the other hand, libertarian and anti-authoritarian.

To the limited extent that members of SAC want to make a revolution, they think it can be done peacefully, by civil disobedience and anti-militarism. The workers will take over their factories, and that's that. Apparently no one understands that the bourgeois state must be smashed by an armed rebellion, and even those who (perhaps) understand this on a purely theoretical level support conscientious objection as the only relevant form of struggle against the military. A revolutionary organization that doesn't learn to shoot by using the conscription system to its advantage is of course no revolutionary organization at all.

The syndicalists betrayed the Spanish revolution because they didn't smash the bourgeois state. The only organization in the world, which actually has smashed the bourgeois state, which actually made a revolution, is the Bolshevik Party. I have come to the conclusion that the politics of the Bolshevik Party in most respects were correct, taking into account the concrete circumstances — e.g., civil war and economic disintegration — whereas the Russian anarchists, with their program of decentralization and continued war with Germany, threatened Soviet Russia with total collapse.

The Bolshevik Party was the only party which pursued a realistic policy. The anarchists, on the other hand, supported the Kronstadt rebellion, happily unaware that had the rebellion been successful, the right SR's would have come to power and given it away to the White Guards. Fascism would then have been a Russian word, not an Italian one.

One can also ask, what was the anarchist alternative to the NEP? Free elections of security stewards, perhaps? If SAC for some strange reason would take power in Sweden, it wouldn't be able to hold on to it.

Lately I have been studying various leftist currents and have come to the conclusion that the Trotskyist organization, the League for the Revolutionary Party in the USA, is the only really revolutionary organization. Therefore I have decided to leave SAC and instead commit myself to the building of a Swedish group in solidarity with the LRP. Thank you. ●

Fund Appeal

Proletarian Revolution magazine costs far more to print than it sells for. Our book, *The Life and Death of Stalinism*, is also subsidized. We are able to publish these, plus a variety of inexpensive pamphlets, only because of contributions of time and money by members and sympathizers of the League for the Revolutionary Party.

Our publications fight against the stream. They stand for the resurrection of authentic Marxism — the Marxism of proletarian revolution, key to the liberation of humanity. They wage war not only against open advocates of capitalism but also against the decadent leftists who fan the flames of cynicism inside our class.

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Haiti

continued from page 32

Given such a performance, why did the army overthrow Aristide? According to one apologist,

Aristide's program of moderate but adamant social reform has earned him the undying hatred of Haiti's economic elite, a clique that despises democracy and that historically has manipulated the army. This coup is the military expression of the elite's ardent refusal to share economic and political power with the Haitian people. (Amy Wilentz, *Haiti Insight*, Oct. 1991)

Of course, no ruling class in the world has ever "shared power" with working people. This myth, however, accurately reflects Aristide's role: to mislead the masses into thinking that with him in office they do share economic and political power with their exploiters. But during his rule, the only real reform he attempted was to institute civilian control of the army and to remove the hated rural police "section chiefs."

The passion for this reform came not from the government but from the masses. From the last days of the Duvalier regime, workers and peasants took the removal of section chiefs and Tontons Macoutes into their own hands. The usual form of mass retribution was execution by lighting a gasoline-soaked tire around the criminal's neck, a procedure known as *Père Lebrun*. Although only a few dozen such necklacings occurred under Aristide, the president used the threat demagogically to frighten his enemies in the armed forces.

Even after the coup, *Père Lebrun* continued. As in South Africa, without conscious proletarian leadership such action can easily be misdirected. (See p. 25.) The police have used popular outrage against the Duvalierists to cover their own crimes, and even have got crowds to kill opponents of the regime by falsely identifying them.

Yet the masses do need to use force to overcome their armed enemies. They cannot trust the bourgeois state's army, even if controlled by civilians. After all, the coup was engineered by army head General Raoul Cedras, whom Aristide had appointed. The army and police have to be smashed, by winning over soldiers and by military defeats. That means mass self-defense forces and militias under the control of unions, parties and other workers' organizations.

Aristide was not deposed because of his efforts on behalf of the masses. On the contrary, the reason was his inability to halt the mass struggles. Workers, unemployed, peasants and students continued to fight for wages, land, schools, hospitals and the complete uprooting (*déchoukage*) of the Duvalierist Macoute apparatus. Masses often marched onto the palace grounds demanding to speak to the president.

Thus despite its betrayals, the Aristide government remained a lightning rod for mass discontent. And so the bourgeoisie decided to get rid of him.

HAITI SINCE THE COUP

Under Cedras, the army seized power on September 30. On October 8 a puppet civilian government was installed under Prime Minister Jean-Jacques Honorat. Honorat acknowledges police and army persecution, explaining that these forces were themselves persecuted under Aristide.

Honorat holds that Haiti's bad name is caused mainly by the international press. To deal with this, his government has imposed hard restrictions on press movement. Thus the Bush administration can cast doubt on atrocity stories from Haiti because they are not confirmed by press accounts. In fact at least a thousand have been killed, including well known radio

personalities, politicians and members of trade unions and popular organizations.

Meanwhile Aristide has been visiting Washington and other capitals, soliciting support for his reinstatement. The U.S. has formally deplored the breach of the Haitian constitution and has feebly denounced the Cedras regime. The Organization of American States went further: it placed an embargo on Haiti until the return of Aristide. The OAS embargo is popular among the Haitian masses even though they suffer most from it, since it appears to be a weapon against their oppressors. But the U.S.-dominated OAS is no friend of the masses. Any government restored by the OAS, with or without Aristide, will serve imperial interests.

MACOUTE THREAT

The OAS arranged meetings between Aristide and his political opponents; these resulted in the February "national unity" accord, which again betrayed the Haitian masses. In return for a "timetable" for his return as president, Aristide assured his oligarchical opponents that they would control parliament. He also dropped his demand for the ouster of General Cedras and promised to leave the army alone. Many of his supporters, including the normally apologetic *Haiti Progrès* (February 26), justifiably called this a capitulation.

The final touch was Aristide's agreement to appoint René Théodore prime minister. Théodore, ex-head of the Communist Party of Haiti, was the first political leader to support the coup. For this he is admired by the Tontons Macoutes, who have embraced him as their candidate to give them a free reign of terror in the country once again.

The Macoutes evidently plan to re-enter Haitian politics with a vengeance. According to an Americas Watch report, a Macoute spokesman "called on 'all Tontons Macoutes' to mobilize against supporters of ousted President Aristide" over a new Duvalierist radio station. He specified:

We need to neutralize. . . all those who organize the chaos in this country. For this reason we have to find them. . . and crush them. When you do find them . . . you should know what to do. . . Go and do your job. . . Crush them, eat them, drink their blood.

The dispersal of the Tontons Macoutes was a palpable gain of the Haitian revolution. Aristide has now in effect offered his people as a sacrifice to these gangsters.

Aristide endangered his value to imperialism through the February deal. Not only did he disenchant many supporters; he also allowed his enemies to claim that everything he agreed to could be better implemented without his presence. So he has since wavered. He again calls for bringing Cedras to trial as a common criminal, an effort to regain credibility with the masses. But the U.S. now accuses him of reneging.

Working-class revolutionaries stand with Aristide's supporters in any struggle to restore his presidency. That is a simple question of self-determination: the people of Haiti have the right to choose their government without imperialist interference. This Leninist position of military/technical support means absolutely no political support to bourgeois politicians like Aristide or to the democracy facade; it means defense of the organizations and struggles of the workers and peasants, who are still tied to bourgeois nationalism.

Haiti's workers have not found the leadership they deserve. Time and again they are misled by charlatans who peddle illusions in bourgeois democracy and imperialist good will. Their heroic struggles need an authentic communist leadership that stands for overthrowing bourgeois rule, not preserving it. A socialist revolution in Haiti could spread throughout the region and shake the foundations of imperialism's world order. ●

PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

Spring 1992

Haiti: Liberation Betrayed

Nothing reveals the racist, anti-working class character of U.S. imperialism so starkly as its brutal treatment of the latest wave of Haitian refugees. After the military coup that overthrew president Jean-Bertrand Aristide last September, thousands of Haitians fled their island in leaky boats through shark-infested seas with inadequate supplies of food and water, seeking safety in the "land of liberty."

But liberty is a commodity available here primarily to the rich and white. Having helped to arm and orchestrate yet another massacre of the Haitian masses, the U.S. government sends Coast Guard vessels to intercept the refugees' boats and deposit them into concentration camps. There it interrogates its victims, forced to live like animals in cramped spaces. While even the Bush administration acknowledges the abusive record of the Haitian military, it denies the refugees political status. It claims they are only trying to better themselves economically — a deportable offense in the U.S.

FROM SLAVERY TO PSEUDO-DEMOCRACY

The truth is that the people of Haiti have been the most persistent fighters against political tyranny in the Western hemisphere — from two hundred years ago, when the first successful slave revolt ended colonial rule, to the 1980's, when revolution ousted the Duvalier dynasty. As if in revenge for its defiance, Haiti has been condemned by imperialism to be the poorest nation in the hemisphere, with the highest illiteracy rate and the lowest life expectancy. Imperialism imposed the 30-year Duvalier dictatorship with its Tonton Macoute gunmen, notorious for their wanton cruelty.

Six years after the revolution that brought down Baby Doc Duvalier, the Haitian masses continue to see their hopes frustrated. False promises of democracy and social change have given way to a series of military coups. Regimes change, but the harsh reality of oppression remains.

Nevertheless, Haiti's rulers have been unable to fully repress the mass struggles. Last year, mass mobilizations and general strikes forced General Prosper Avril from power. The ruling class, under U.S. supervision, was forced to call for a democratic election to keep the masses in check. But the U.S.'s chosen candidate, former World Bank official Marc Bazin, proved unpopular. In Father Aristide, a Roman Catholic priest who preached "liberation theology" in the slums of Port-au-Prince, the rulers hoped they had found a useful tool to dupe the workers and peasants. Aristide was elected with a 67 percent vote.

Even before taking office, Aristide took pains to assure U.S. officials and the Haitian army that he would reject radical measures and welcome foreign investment. In his nine months in office, he carried out these pledges. The masses had voted for higher wages, land to the peasants, rent reductions and expanded social services. What they got was an end to price controls on basic foods, the firing of 5000 public workers, devaluation of the currency, privatization of state industries and repayment of the foreign debt — \$800 million of which the Duvaliers had taken with them.

Just two weeks before his ouster, Aristide's ministers had signed a deal with the International Monetary Fund. In re-



turn for tens of millions of dollars in credits, the IMF forced the government to cut its budget to half of what it had been under the previous regime and increase tax and customs revenues from urban residents. To understand how Aristide retained his following, we quote from a report in the pro-Aristide newsletter, *Haiti Insight* (October 1991):

Hundreds of young activists associated with popular organizations were invited to a September 13 meeting in the National Palace where Aristide, [Prime Minister] Préval and the finance, planning and public works ministers explained the agreement and then answered questions and responded to criticisms. Such unprecedented openness went a long way toward reconciling Haitians, especially Aristide supporters, to accepting the accord.

Reading between the lines, there was obviously significant opposition to the accord, and the meeting failed to convince many. One reason why the explanation did not go down too well can be found in the report's summary of remarks by Finance Minister Marie-Michèle Rey:

She also made it clear that the accord did not involve a so-called structural adjustment, more commonly known as "austerity." Haitians have never benefitted from extensive state subsidies and social services — the very thing that IMF-enforced structural adjustments usually wipe out.

That is, since Haitians get practically nothing from their government already, the IMF's cuts won't take much away! The masses are truly blessed to have political theologians who can justify increased austerity in the name of liberation.

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