

## U.S. Sets Up Capture of Kurdish Leader for Turkish Regime

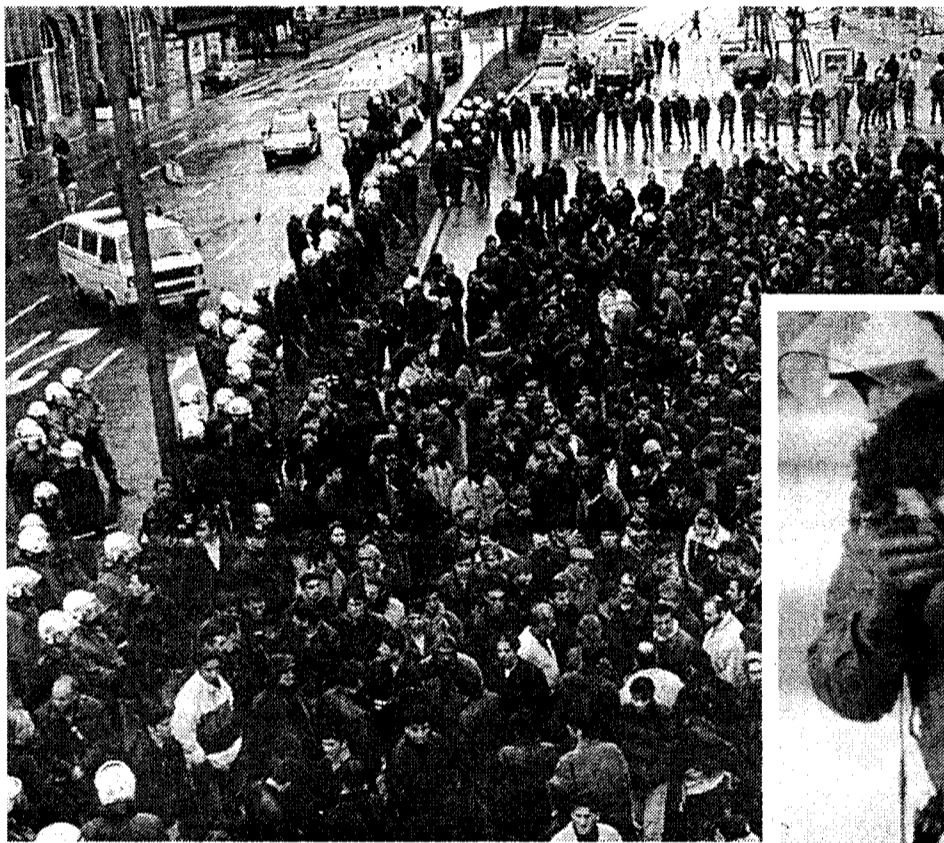
# Freedom for Öcalan!

The kidnapping and arrest in Kenya of Kurdish nationalist leader Abdullah Öcalan on February 15 by Turkish security forces aided by the U.S. placed his life in immediate peril. With Öcalan seized, the Turkish regime carried out mass arrests of Kurds in southeast Turkey and launched military attacks in northern Iraq against Öcalan's Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). Leaflets were dropped from planes with photos of Öcalan blindfolded and humiliated by being forced to pose in front of Turkish flags. Actively supported by its NATO allies—the U.S., Germany, Italy and France—Turkey has carried out a 14-year war against the oppressed Kurdish population that has left some 30,000 dead, totally destroyed 3,500 villages and forced more than three million Kurds to flee their homes.

In response to the provocative seizure of Öcalan, and in the face of the deadly revenge which the blood-drenched Turkish dictatorship intends to extract as punishment for the Kurdish people's struggle, the PKK organized emergency protest demonstrations worldwide. In a score of European cities, protesters rallied in large numbers outside embassies and consulates. An estimated 20,000 turned out in London on February 20, while some 50,000 demonstrated in Rome on February 24. PKK supporters also initiated protests in Canada and Australia.

In Germany, where it is illegal even to display the banner of the PKK, Kurdish protesters repeatedly took to the streets in cities across the country. The demonstrations were met with naked repression, with hundreds of Kurds rounded up by the cops and now in danger of deportation to the Turkish torture chambers. In Berlin on February 17, three Kurdish protesters were shot and killed (and a fourth died

**Defend Kurds Against Bloody State Terror!  
No Deportations! Full Citizenship Rights!  
For a Socialist Republic of United Kurdistan!**



Germany: Demonstrations protesting kidnapping of PKK leader Öcalan have been met with a wall of state repression.

AFP photos



ten days later) by Israeli security guards outside the Israeli embassy; 16 demonstrators were injured and over 100 reportedly arrested. The International Communist League demands: Drop all charges

against the Kurdish demonstrators! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!

The ICL has actively participated in the demonstrations to protest the persecution of Öcalan and the PKK and to

defend the national rights of the Kurdish people. At many of the protests, other left groups have been conspicuous by their absence, apparently willing to leave

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## No to the Veil! For Workers Revolution!

# Iran: 20 Years of Islamic Dictatorship

On February 11, Iran's ayatollahs marked the 20th anniversary of their reactionary rule. Twenty years ago, they culminated a wave of mass protests by overthrowing the country's despised autocratic ruler, Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, and ushering in a reactionary theocracy led by the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Since then, the Iranian workers and peasants, women, downtrodden nationalities and religious and ethnic minorities have suffered under the oppressive rule of the turbaned *ulema* (clergy), which has maintained its domination through naked state terror, devastating war

and the stifling strictures of the Koran.

As it does today, Iran in 1978-79 exemplified the Marxist conception of combined and uneven development. Side by side with a sizable, militant and strategic industrial proletariat were thousands of rural villages under the sway of the Shi'ite clerical caste. A chauvinist "prison house of peoples," Iran oppressed its non-Persian populations which constituted a majority of the country. At the very bottom of the social ladder were millions of hideously oppressed peasant women. All wings of the Iranian ruling class were subservient to a changing spectrum of imperialist overlords and patently incapable of accomplishing the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolutions achieved long ago in the West.

*continued on page 6*



Economist  
Iranian women march with portraits of "liberal" clericalist president Khatami. Current regime perpetuates horrible oppression of women symbolized by the stifling *chador*.



### Stop Deportation of L.A. Eight!

In a frontal attack on First Amendment rights, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled on February 24 that "illegal aliens" could be selectively targeted for deportation solely on the basis of their political beliefs and activities. In its ruling against the Los Angeles Eight—supporters of Palestinian national rights—the high court of racist American capitalism also upheld the restrictions contained in Clinton's draconian 1996 immigration "reform" law against federal court review of deportation orders, thus removing one of the slim chances immigrants have to challenge deportation, and ruled that the law could be applied retroactively.

With its ruling, the Supreme Court overturned two prior decisions by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in California, which held that the Clinton/Reno

"Justice" Department had singled out the L.A. Eight for lawful political activities. The Feds claimed that the eight were supporters of the radical-nationalist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). The state's vendetta against the L.A. Eight is an intersection of anti-immigrant racism and anti-communist criminalization of political beliefs. On a smaller scale, this recalls the infamous Palmer Raids of the early 1920s, when the U.S. rulers deported thousands of foreign-born Communists and syndicalists to purge the labor movement of radical influence. This went hand in hand with massive union-busting and a rise of social reaction generally, exemplified by the growth of the Ku Klux Klan.

The L.A. Eight—businessmen, students and working people with families—

Members of the L.A. Eight, targeted for support to Palestinian national rights, after arrest in 1987.



were arrested in dawn raids in January 1987 and charged under the McCarthyite McCarran-Walter Act with "advocating world communism." In 1990, with much hypocritical fanfare in Washington and in the media, Congress repealed the McCarran-Walter Act. But it was immediately replaced with a more sweeping law ordering deportations of those alleged to be supporters of "terrorist" groups. The Feds immediately seized upon this to step up their persecution of the L.A. Eight (see "Stop Deportations of the L.A. Eight!" WV No. 530, 5 July 1991).

America's racist rulers have consistently whipped up anti-immigrant witch-hunts to spearhead attacks on the rights

of all. In its decision denying protection against selective prosecution, the Supreme Court ruled on an issue that wasn't even addressed in the appeal before it, denying attorneys for the L.A. Eight the basic right to submit legal briefs or present arguments in their defense. In tandem with the 1996 "Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act," under which immigrants can be "tried" in "anti-terrorism" courts without ever knowing the charges against them, this is a direct attack on due process and on the rights of all those the capitalist ruling class deems "undesirable." We demand: Full citizenship rights for all immigrants, "legal" or "illegal"! Stop the deportations!



TROTSKY

#### The Capitalist State and Its Ideological Tools

*The capitalist class maintains its exploitation of the working class through systematic repression and ideological mystification. In Iran, these functions are manifested in the Islamic hierarchy, which serves as a central component of the state. In advanced capitalist countries such as the U.S., religion, education and the media also serve as adjuncts of the state, but their role is deliberately obscured through illusions in*



LENIN

*bourgeois "democracy." We fight to forge a Leninist vanguard party—based on the communism of Lenin and Trotsky—to break the working class from the grip of bourgeois ideology and instill in it the necessity to sweep away the capitalist state through proletarian revolution.*

The capitalist State is not only the largest and most powerful among bourgeois organisations; it is at the same time the most complex of these organisations, for it has a very large number of subdivisions, and tentacles issue from these in every direction. The primary aim of all this is to protect, to consolidate, and to expand the exploitation of the working class. Against the working class, the State can employ measures of two different kinds, brute force and spiritual subjugation. These constitute the most important instruments of the capitalist State.

Among the organs of *brute force*, must first be enumerated the army and the police, the prisons and the law-courts. Next must be mentioned accessory organs, such as spies, provocative agents, organised strikebreakers, hired assassins, etc....

Among the means of *spiritual subjugation* at the disposal of the capitalist State, three deserve especial mention: the State school; the State church; and the State, or State-supported, press.

The bourgeoisie is well aware that it cannot control the working masses by the use of force alone. It is necessary that the workers' brains should be completely enmeshed as if in a spider's web. The bourgeois State looks upon the workers as working cattle; these beasts must labour, but they must not bite. Consequently, they must not merely be whipped or shot when they attempt to bite, but they must be trained and tamed, just as wild beasts in a menagerie are trained by beast-tamers. Similarly, the capitalist State maintains specialists to stupefy and subdue the proletariat; it maintains bourgeois teachers and professors, the clergy, bourgeois authors and journalists....

In this manner the capitalist system ensures its own development. The machine of exploitation does its work. Surplus value is continually extracted from the working class. The capitalist State stands on guard, and takes good care that there shall be no uprising of the wage slaves.

—N. Bukharin and E. Preobrazhensky, *The ABC of Communism*, 1922

### Racist Court Throws Out Jamal Hart Appeal

In a display of sheer racist arrogance and political spite, the Third Circuit Court of Appeals in Pennsylvania has summarily turned down the appeal of Jamal Hart, son of death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. A featured speaker at rallies initiated by the PDC and the Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal, Jamal Hart found himself in the cross hairs of the racist Philadelphia cops and Feds as they step up their campaign for the legal lynching of his father. Last year, he was framed up and sentenced to 15 1/2 years in prison on bogus firearm possession charges. Hart's lawyers will now file a motion for rehearing in the Third Circuit and then petition for review in the U.S. Supreme Court.

In October 1996, police stopped Hart's car for allegedly going through a stop sign. The cops put a gun to his head, stomped on him while he was on the ground and then claimed to have found a .357 magnum in his waistband. The cop who "found" the gun was the same one who had taken a report on the theft of this very same gun...three and a half years earlier. Hart was initially charged under Pennsylvania law, which would have carried a probationary sentence. But Clinton's Justice Department took over the case in order to railroad him to prison under harsher federal penalty

guidelines. Hart is not eligible for parole.

The court's two-paragraph dismissal, which sneers that Hart's "arguments are clearly without merit," mirrors the contempt expressed in the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's denial of his father's appeal last October. The Third Circuit Court uttered not one word about Hart's claim that the takeover of his prosecution by the Feds was unconstitutional. Nor did it say anything in response to his charge that the cops' stopping and searching his car was a pretext, based on their knowledge that he was Mumia's son, to ensnare him. However, the court did act to refute Hart's charge that the trial judge's racist taunting of him as "boy" and telling Hart to "shut up" rendered his "impartiality" suspect! Hart's treatment by the courts brings to mind Mumia's 1982 frame-up "trial," in which he was silenced by Judge Albert Sabo whenever he tried to defend himself.

Those who promote illusions in the racist "justice" system by calling for a new trial for Mumia should consider the following: it is the Third Circuit Court, which just approved the sentence of his son to more than 15 years of prison hell, which will play a critical role in the outcome of Mumia's final appeal. Free Jamal Hart! Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the racist death penalty!

### A Victory for the Right to Organize

A small but significant victory has been won for the right to organize and distribute literature in the interests of labor and black rights. On December 17, charges were dropped against two trade unionists, Keith Anwar and Dan Smith, who were arrested outside a UPS facility in the Willow Springs suburb of Chicago as they were distributing *Workers Vanguard* and handing out flyers building for a November 21 labor/black protest demanding: "All Out to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!" Now, in a February 9 letter responding to a federal civil rights lawsuit filed by Anwar and Smith, the Willow Springs police department has acknowledged the First Amendment right "to distribute the *Workers Vanguard* and solicit donations therefrom."

Keith Anwar, a member of Chicago Amalgamated Transit Union Local 308, told WV, "Contrary to the wishes of UPS and its cops, the working class has the right to organize. This is important for anyone who seeks to mobilize the power of labor against exploitation and injustice." Anwar and Smith, a member of the Service Employees International Union, were assaulted and illegally detained by UPS security, acting in concert with the local cops who dispatched nine squad cars. This was intended as a message of intimidation to all those seeking to link the struggle for black rights to the power of the multiracial working class. It came amid a national campaign led by the Fraternal Order of Police aiming to silence Mumia's supporters to pave the way for

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## WORKERS VANGUARD

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EDITOR: Len Meyers

EDITOR, YOUNG SPARTACUS PAGES: Jacob Zorn

PRODUCTION MANAGER: Susan Fuller

CIRCULATION MANAGER: Mara Cadiz

EDITORIAL BOARD: Ray Bishop (managing editor), Bruce André, Helene Brosius, George Foster, Liz Gordon, Jane Kerrigan, James Robertson, Joseph Seymour, Alison Spencer

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# Young Spartacus

## SYC Speakouts Demand:

# U.S./UN/NATO Hands Off the Balkans!

Last week, Spartacus Youth Clubs at the Berkeley and Los Angeles campuses of the University of California held protests against U.S. imperialist threats to bomb Serbia. The attempt by the imperialists to enforce a dictated "settlement" of the nationalist conflict between the Kosovo Albanians and the Serbs came amid stepped-up terror bombing of Iraq by the U.S. and Britain and the kidnapping of Kurdish nationalist leader Abdullah Öcalan by Turkey, with help from its American patrons. While the bombing of Serbia was put on hold when the Kosovo delegation at the "peace" talks in France did not go along with U.S. Secretary of State Madeline Albright's diktat, the imperialists remain poised for intervention in the Balkans, including a NATO occupation of Kosovo.

Slogans raised by our comrades at the protests included: "Capitalism Equals War, Racist Terror! For Workers Revolution!" and "U.S. Imperialism—World's Biggest Terrorist!" Our revolutionary opposition to the U.S. capitalist rulers stands in stark contrast to the rest of the left, which chases the reformist chimera of pressuring the imperialist bourgeoisie to rein in its terror. Thus the International Socialist Organization's newspaper *Socialist Worker* (12 February) opines that the Kosovo settlement proposed by the U.S. "doesn't address the roots of the conflict." Only the ISO could come up with this subhead: "NATO Bombs Won't Stop the Killing"! As if the U.S./NATO imperialists do anything but perpetuate bloody nationalist divisions in the service of dominating the semicolonial countries!

We print below slightly edited excerpts

from an SYC speech at the February 22 Berkeley speakout.

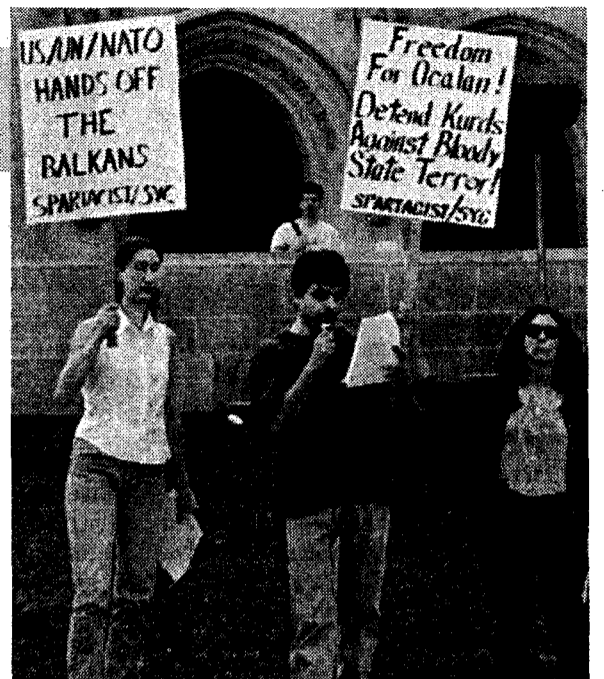
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This weekend, the U.S. came within mere hours of a threatened bombing of Serbia and has already mobilized thousands more troops to be sent to the region as part of a so-called "peacekeeping force." But U.S. imperialism is not a force for good in the world! For all the harping doubletalk about "human rights," coming most strongly from so-called leftists and liberals (really war hawks and cheerleaders for U.S. imperial domination of the world), the U.S. has no real interests in any sort of democratic rights at home or abroad, but only in the profits of its own ruling class.

The wave of terror from the Balkans to Iraq is not simply a policy but the inherent nature of modern capitalist imperialism. Under pretexts such as "human rights," "democracy" and "autonomy," the U.S. seeks to control markets and resources, carve up the world into semicolonial nations under its thumb, and maintain the upper hand against trade rivals such as Japan, Germany and France.

U.S. military interventions in countries like Haiti and Somalia have done nothing for the workers of these countries and everything for the power of the U.S. bourgeoisie. The northern "no-fly zone" in Iraq was ostensibly instituted to protect Kurds. But when the Turkish state—a U.S. strongman in the Near East—massacres and imprisons its own Kurdish population, the U.S. showers it with aid, especially when the Kurdish nationalists

February 24 SYC protest at UCLA. Below: Baghdad neighborhood devastated by December U.S./British terror bombing of Iraq.



Young Spartacus



AFF

threaten to disrupt U.S. plans to run the Azerbaijan oil pipeline through Turkey. It's no coincidence that Turkey chose now, directly following the latest wave of U.S. terror bombings, to cross Iraq's border again so that it can demolish the Kurdish population there as well. People cynically attributed the U.S. attacks on Iraq to Clinton's impeachment hearings. But Congress took a day off from those hearings to unanimously give him their support. We say: From Iraq to the Balkans, Down with U.S. imperialist butchery!

In the late 1980s and early '90s, nationalism was used as a wedge to destroy the Yugoslav and other deformed workers states throughout East Europe and the degenerated Soviet workers state. Today, nationalism serves an equally sinister role, dividing the workers of various nationalities against one another and fostering the illusion that their "own" bourgeoisie is their ally, rather than their direct class enemy. There can be no resolution of the national question in the Balkans under capitalism—that is, if you don't count genocide.

The atrocities have come from all sides, Albanians and Serbs, Croats and Muslims alike. If any group seems to be the most bloody today, that is only because it is the strongest. And all their acts combined still pale in comparison to those of the United States, the only country to ever use the atom bomb in a war and which killed over two million Vietnamese workers and peasants in the Vietnam War. And then there were America's Japanese internment camps in World War II, the bloody wars throughout Latin America. And the list goes on, but this is a short speech.

U.S. imperialism doesn't care a bit about the bloodletting and terror in the Balkans. In fact, the imperialists set it in motion! Now, they want to reassert their dominance over this region and over the

world. Their goal is to establish stable nationalist regimes, under their own respective thumbs. This would be all the better to control resources and exploit workers. What the U.S. really fears is that continued conflict in the region, which it wants to end simply by killing everything that moves, will lead to a larger imbroglio, involving both Greek and Bulgarian claims over neighboring Macedonia. This would then heighten tensions between Greece and Turkey, two important U.S. allies. All of this could begin to chip away at the U.S. imperialists' status as top dog in the world pecking order of exploiters and butchers. U.S./UN/NATO and all imperialist troops: Out of the Balkans! U.S. get your bloody hands off the world! Defend Serbia against imperialist attack!

The only way to end U.S. imperialism abroad is through socialist revolution at home. There's only one class in the world with the power to take on the bourgeoisie—and that's the working class. But today, workers are chained to their class enemy by the labor misleaders who channel their anger and discontent back into the Democratic Party of capitalism, racism, and war. The Spartacus Youth Clubs seek to win students to revolutionary politics and provide a training ground for future communists to change the world. Join us in our struggle! Imperialist forces out of the Balkans! ■

### Spartacus Youth Club Class Series

#### BOSTON

#### The Fight for Communism and the Class Struggle Today

Next classes: March 17, *Revolution vs. Reform: The Russian Revolution and How the Working Class Took Power*; March 24, *Trotskyism vs. Stalinism: The Revolution Betrayed* Wednesdays, 7 p.m.

College of Arts and Sciences Rm. 323B, Boston University 725 Commonwealth Ave.

Information and readings: (617) 666-9453

#### NEW YORK

#### Revolutionary Marxism: The Fight for a Socialist Future

Next classes: March 9, *Revolution vs. Reform: The Russian Revolution—How the Working Class Took Power*, Room 517 March 23, *Trotskyism vs. Stalinism: The Revolution Betrayed*, Room 511 Alternate Tuesdays, 8 p.m.

NYU, Loeb Student Center

Information and readings: (212) 267-1025 or spartacus.club@nyu.edu

#### BAY AREA

#### Revolutionary Marxism Today

Next class: *The State and Revolution* UC Berkeley Date and Time to be announced Information and readings: (510) 839-0851

#### TORONTO

#### Capitalism, Communism and the Fight for Revolution

Next class: Tuesday, March 9, 7 p.m. *Independence for Quebec!* International Student Centre, 33 St. George St. (North of College St.) Information and readings: (416) 593-4138

#### VANCOUVER

#### Capitalism, Communism and the Fight for Revolution

Next classes: March 10, *Women's Emancipation and the Struggle Against Imperialism*; March 24, *Independence for Quebec!* Alternate Wednesdays, 7 p.m.

UBC, Buchanan Building, Room B330 Information and readings: (604) 687-0353

### SYC Demonstration

Monday, March 8, 5 p.m.

### CIA Off Campus!

University of Chicago  
in front of Ida Noyes Hall  
(59th and Woodlawn)

For more information: call (312) 454-4930

# Öcalan...

(continued from page 1)

Kurdish immigrants to stand alone in the face of repression. Our comrades have widely distributed a declaration issued on February 18 by the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany (SpAD), where Turkish and Kurdish immigrant workers are a strategic component of the industrial working class. This declaration was issued in Turkish, German, Italian, French and English.

The capitalist governments in Europe, mostly headed by social democrats, seized on the militant protests to further foment racist hysteria against immigrants and to intensify police-state measures. In Berlin, all demonstrations were initially banned outright. The cops seized anyone with dark eyes in the vicinity of demonstration sites—a chilling reminder of the genocidal Nazi Third Reich. Social Democratic (SPD) interior minister Otto Schily has spearheaded a media campaign to brand the banned PKK and the Kurdish people as a whole as "terrorists." Simultaneously with its crackdown on the PKK, the SPD-Green Party regime imposed arbitration to seal a wage pact for Germany's largest union, IG Metall, heading off the prospect of a class battle in which German, Turkish and Kurdish workers would have challenged the capitalists and their government in united strike action.

At a February 25 rally and march to the Turkish consulate in Melbourne, Australia, Labor Party senator Kim Carr blatantly lied, telling the crowd that his party and the social democrats in Europe supported the Kurdish people. A speaker for the Spartacist League of Australia, demanding the dropping of all charges against arrested Kurdish protesters, pointed out that the state Labor government in New South Wales sent its cops to viciously attack and arrest Kurdish protesters. In Europe, our comrade noted, Labor's social-democratic counterparts dish out the same treatment on behalf of their capitalist masters.

Pointing to Australian imperialism's support for Washington's war against the heroic Vietnamese peasants and workers, and the Australian government's complicity in the U.S.-led attacks against Iraq today, our comrade criticized the PKK and the Australian fake left for their program of trying to pressure the imperialists to be "friends" of the oppressed. Fending off efforts at political censorship, the SLA speaker was cheered by many in the crowd when he called the imperialists the enemy of liberation. When he counterposed our call to free Öcalan now to the talk of a "fair trial" for the PKK leader "under international supervision," protesters started chanting, "Freedom for Öcalan." The discomfited chairman of the rally thanked the SLA speaker for his "interesting" remarks, adding, "Apologies to Kim Carr"!



Hamburg, February 20: Thousands of Kurdish Öcalan supporters join demonstration on behalf of U.S. death row prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. Spartakist sign in Berlin, outside Greek consulate occupied by Kurdish protesters, demands "Freedom for Öcalan!"

The petty-bourgeois nationalist PKK calls on the United Nations and imperialist powers to broker a "political solution" to the Kurdish question in Turkey. Many signs and speakers at the various demonstrations expressed the same illusions in NATO, the UN or the European Union. But the imperialists are the godfathers of the Turkish militarist government. At many of the protests, demonstrators pointedly avoided criticizing the U.S., even though Washington pressured its European allies to refuse Öcalan haven and

throughgoing social revolution can liberate the toiling masses from the yoke of imperialism and capitalist exploitation. Even to achieve the democratic right of national self-determination for the Kurdish people requires uprooting capitalist rule throughout the entire region where the Kurds are concentrated. The Kurdish masses must look to an alliance with the Arab, Persian, and Turkish proletariats, who in turn must be won to actively championing the Kurdish right of self-determination.



1991 march by striking Turkish and Kurdish coal miners joined by women, carrying portrait of Atatürk, founder of Turkish republic. Defense of oppressed Kurds is critical to united class struggle against Turkish rulers.

played the key role in setting up his arrest. The U.S. imperialists are dead set against any expression of Kurdish national rights as this would weaken their Turkish ally—which has played a key role in the American terror bombing campaigns against Iraq—and destabilize the oil-rich region.

The PKK's nationalism is a dead end for the Kurdish people and their aspirations for national liberation. Only a

The potential for united class struggle was shown in the 1991 strike of 48,000 coal miners in Zonguldak, Turkey, carried out by both Turkish and Kurdish workers on the eve of the imperialist Gulf War against Iraq, which inspired solidarity strikes in Kurdish eastern Anatolia as



well as among Turkish workers. Significantly, the miners reportedly raised the demand for the right of Kurds to use their own language.

The road to liberation of the Turkish toilers from the military-run dictatorship of the Kemalist bourgeoisie lies through the Turkish proletariat embracing defense of the Kurds against their "own" exploiters. As part of the multinational proletariat of the region, the Kurds can play a leading role in socialist revolution in Turkey and throughout the Near East. The key lies in forging an internationalist leadership modeled on Lenin's Bolshevik Party, which liberated the oppressed nationalities of the tsarist autocracy's "prison house of peoples" by leading the proletariat to power in the 1917 Russian Revolution.

We reprint below the February 18 declaration by the SpAD.

\* \* \*

On 15 February, the Kurdish PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan was abducted in Kenya in a night-and-fog action conducted by the Turkish secret service—reportedly in cooperation with the American CIA and the Israeli Mossad. Öcalan was kidnapped en route to the airport from the Greek embassy, then flown to the Turkish prison island Imrali and deposited in the notorious torture chamber of the Turkish murder regime. Ominously, all other prisoners have been removed from the island; evidently the Turkish state wants no eyes and ears to witness what they intend to inflict on Öcalan. While blustering about a "fair trial," Turkey refused to even allow Öcalan's lawyers into the country. Over the last 15 years, tens of thousands of Kurdish people were murdered in Turkey's gruesome war of annihilation which has destroyed more than 3,000 villages. As the leader of the guerrilla

# CSDN...

(continued from page 2)

the execution of this courageous spokesman for the oppressed.


UPS, notorious for its racist mistreatment of black workers across the country, is especially motivated to squash any attempt to mobilize labor/black power. It's no secret to Teamsters members that UPS desperately wants to destroy the union. To that end, the company beefed up its security forces after the successful 1997 strike, which broke a long chain of labor defeats. Since the strike, UPS has been breaking the terms of the contract in an attempt to weaken the union, provoking an eight-hour walkout by Teamsters in Chicago in December. Nationally, the federal government's takeover of the Teamsters is squarely aimed at crippling the ability of this union to wage any struggle on behalf of its members.

The capitalist rulers are mobilizing their forces for the legal lynching of Jamal, an innocent man. We must mobilize ours to free him. The November 21

Chicago rally for Mumia drew a hard core of black trade unionists. This showed the promise of mobilizing labor's social power in the fight for Mumia's freedom. Based on the only significant integration in racist America—the workplace and the factory floor—the trade unions have the potential to become battalions in the struggle against racism and exploitation.

\* \* \*

The Partisan Defense Committee is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization which champions cases and causes in the interest of the whole of the working people. This purpose is in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League. Contact the PDC: In New York: PDC, P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013-0099; phone (212) 406-4252; E-mail: 75057.3201@compuserve.com. In Chicago: PDC, P.O. Box 802867, Chicago, IL 60680-2867; phone (312) 454-4931. In the Bay Area, PDC, P.O. Box 77462, San Francisco, CA 94107-0462; phone (510) 839-0852. ■

**SPARTACIST**   
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struggle for Kurdish independence, Öcalan could now face the death penalty in Turkey. We Trotskyists of the Spartakist-Arbeiterpartei, German section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), demand: *Freedom for Öcalan!*

Across Europe, in Australia and in Canada, thousands of Kurds took to the streets and occupied embassies to protest the arrest of Öcalan. In acts of extreme desperation, young PKK supporters set fire to themselves. From Blair's Britain, to Jospin's France and D'Alema's Italy, to Schröder's Germany, the social-democratic rulers of Fortress Europe, all of whom refused asylum to Öcalan, unleashed a storm of police terror against the Kurdish protesters who are themselves now threatened with mass deportations to Turkey's torture chambers. Yesterday, three Kurdish protesters were shot to death by Israeli security guards in front of the Israeli consulate in Berlin; another 16 were seriously injured. These murders were abetted by the racist capitalist SPD/Green government, which mounted a massive police offensive against the PKK supporters and now obscenely scapegoats the victims for their own murders. The area around the SPD offices in Hamburg which was occupied by the PKK was turned into a war zone. More than a thousand Kurds were arrested by the German cops, hundreds more have been beaten, arrested, and "disappeared." Even the names of the murdered Kurds are being kept secret. We demand: *Drop the Charges! Free the Kurdish Prisoners! No Deportations! Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants! Down With the Ban on the PKK and the Kurdish Associations!*

Öcalan tried for months to get asylum in West Europe and appealed to social-democratic-led governments to mediate on behalf of the Kurds in Turkey. The struggle for Kurdish national independence has been repeatedly sacrificed by



German auto workers "warning strike" in Köln in February. Social-democratic union tops rushed to settle contract when national strike could have mobilized working class, including its militant Kurdish and Turkish component, at time of vicious repression against Kurds.

bourgeois nationalists in futile pursuit of support from imperialist powers and regional capitalist regimes, be it Hussein's Iraq or Assad's Syria. German imperialism, along with U.S. imperialism, is the godfather of the Turkish campaign of extermination of the Kurds, arming and training the death squadrons. Since the destruction of the degenerated Soviet workers state through capitalist counterrevolution, there has been an increase in imperialist rivalries to plunder the region's oil reserves. There can be no illusions in the rapacious imperialist powers whose only interest is increasing their own profit margins at the cost of enormous suffering and death of workers and oppressed around the world. U.S. bombers take off from the NATO base in Incirlik, Turkey to bomb Iraq back to the stone age. The German imperialists have once again stationed troops in former Yugoslavia where in World War II they murdered one-fifth of the population. The German air force, along with NATO allies, is now

preparing to launch air strikes against Serbia. We Trotskyists say: *Bundeswehr/ UN/ NATO: Out of the Balkans! Down With the UN Starvation Embargo Against Iraq! Defend Iraq Against Imperialist Attack! Turkish Army: Out of the Kurdish Territories Now!*

Today, most Kurds live in industrial centers from Istanbul to Berlin. It is the working class, including its strategic component of workers of Kurdish and Turkish background, which produces the entire wealth of society and has the power to smash the exploitative capitalist system. These workers can serve as a living bridge between the Kurdish struggle for independence and the fight for socialist revolution in the Near East, fighting to extend proletarian revolution to the imperialist heartland of West Europe. Unity across national and ethnic lines by the most class-conscious Kurdish, Turkish and German workers would be a powerful force in the struggle to emancipate all workers from capitalist exploitation. This

revolutionary, proletarian and internationalist perspective requires a sharp political struggle against the social-democratic misleaders—the SPD and PDS [Party of Democratic Socialism]—who organize state terror and split the workers through racist agitation and chauvinism. Only a Trotskyist party which mobilizes the Kurdish, Turkish and German workers against the imperialist divide-and-conquer politics of the ruling class and their social-democratic lieutenants in the labor movement will be able to systematically mobilize for socialist revolution and defeat all manifestations of nationalism and class collaboration.

The 25 to 30 million Kurdish people in the Near East constitute the largest nation in the world without a state of its own. Since the downfall of the Turkish Ottoman empire in World War I, the Kurdish people have been carved up primarily among four countries—Turkey, Syria, Iran and Iraq, with a small scattering of Kurds in the Caucasian republics of the former Soviet Union. The realization of an independent Kurdistan requires the revolutionary overthrow of at least four different capitalist powers in the region. This is the Trotskyist perspective of *permanent revolution*—that in the colonial and semicolonial countries in the imperialist epoch, only the proletariat in power can achieve the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. This perspective is counterposed to the illusions peddled by petty-bourgeois nationalists who appeal to the immediate oppressors of the Kurdish people and their imperialist godfathers. The fight for Kurdish national and social emancipation requires revolutionary leadership—the construction of Trotskyist parties rooted in the proletariats of the Near East and among the workers of Europe—a reformed Fourth International to struggle as the world party of socialist revolution. Building such a party is the task to which we are dedicated. *For a Socialist Republic of United Kurdistan!* ■

## Correcting a Misstatement on IG Opportunism

In our article "Brazil: Cardoso Regime Bleeds Workers, Poor" (WV No. 702, 4 December 1998), we incorrectly state that the April 1998 issue of *Vanguarda Operária* (VO), newspaper of the Brazilian Liga Quarta-Internacionalista (LQB), was "silent about recent struggles of the landless peasants." This was due to a failure to verify our translation of the April VO from the Portuguese original—a failure that goes against our standard practice.

The April VO does write about the struggles of the *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem Terra* (MST), the most prominent organization of landless peasants. Our misstatement sent the Internationalist Group (IG), U.S. affiliate of the LQB, into a frenzy, and they posted an article titled "WV's New Crop of Fabrications" on their Web site in December. The failure to note the paragraphs about the MST in the April VO has done a disservice to ourselves and our readers, undercutting our correct polemic and continued exposure of the deeply centrist and dishonest charlatans of the IG/LQB. For what they do say is far more damning than any omission.

The MST is a petty-bourgeois formation which supports the Brazilian popular front whose largest component party is Luiz Inácio "Lula" da Silva's reformist Workers Party (PT). In our previous article, we noted that "petty-bourgeois strata such as the peasantry cannot play an independent class role. They are inevitably pulled in the wake of either the bourgeoisie or the proletariat. With the Brazilian proletariat politically disarmed, the landless peasant movement is delivered, with Lula as the intermediary, to an impotent perspective of militant pressure politics."

While criticizing the MST, the IG/

LQB deliberately obscures the class character of this *peasant* formation. Thus it writes:

"In reality, all these groups [Stalinists, Morenoites, LBI, etc.] are mere appendices of the PT and as such, their activities in this electoral period will be fundamentally electoralist, even when they claim to be anti-electoralist.

"The case is similar with the Landless Peasants Movement (MST), which supports the PT's Lula for president and, at the same time as it backs occupations of landed estates in a dozen states, is turning increasingly to the electoral terrain. While it is hunted at gunpoint by the landlords' goons and the Military Police, the MST has gone hunting for votes.... Despite their sometimes combative tactics, in reality they are a transmission belt for the bourgeoisie through the PT, a bourgeois workers party." (Translation, ellipses and interpolations by the IG.)

But the MST is not a bourgeois workers party or akin to reformist and centrist left groups like the Stalinists or the pseudo-Trotskyist LBI. Nor is it simply "a transmission belt for the bourgeoisie through the PT." To be sure, it hustles votes for Lula's popular front, but its social base lies outside the working class. The peasantry is an extremely heterogeneous social layer, ranging from the most oppressed elements to wealthy rural exploiters. Peasant parties and formations tend to be highly volatile and transient but ultimately reflect the domination of its wealthier layers, which go along with the big bourgeoisie in all decisive cases. As Trotsky underscores in *The Third International After Lenin*, his scathing 1928 critique of Stalin's catastrophic policies in the failed Chinese Revolution of 1925-27:

"Those organizations which in capitalist countries label themselves peasant parties are in reality one of the varieties of bourgeois parties. Every peasant who has not adopted the proletarian position, abandoning his proprietor psychology, will inevitably follow the bourgeoisie

when it comes to fundamental political issues."

The IG/LQB's liquidation of the distinction between the proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie cited above is not an accidental misformulation. In its other reference to the MST in the same April 1998 article, VO again misleadingly presents the MST as an appendage of reformist forces *within* the proletariat:

"It is necessary to bring the working class the consciousness of the role it must play as leader of the peasantry's struggles. In practice the MST is following the reformist CUT [labor federation] leadership, which leads it to join in the internal struggles of politicians of the bourgeois class. Thus while in hundreds of places around the country landless peasants confront the police and landlord goons who try to expel them at gunpoint from the occupied lands, the political response of the MST is to participate in this rotten broad front [Lula's "Union of the People"] with the landlord Brizola, representative of the large landowners of Rio Grande do Sul, and Arraes, chief of the landowners of Pernambuco."

Peasant-based movements sometimes engage in militant confrontations with landlords and the bourgeois state. It is hardly surprising that naive radical-minded youth—or long-of-tooth but fatuous impressionists like Norden—are swayed by such episodic militancy, which stands out in comparison with the parliamentary legalism of reformist workers' leaders like Lula. It is therefore doubly important to be clear on the class character of peasant-based movements such as the MST or the Zapatistas in Mexico, and the crucial need to defend the class independence of the proletariat. As Trotsky again stresses in *The Third International After Lenin*:

"Had the vanguard of the Russian proletariat failed to oppose itself to the peasantry, had it failed to wage a ruthless struggle against the all-devouring petty

bourgeois amorphousness of the latter, it would inevitably have dissolved itself among the petty-bourgeois elements through the medium of the Social Revolutionary Party or some other 'two-class party' which, in turn, would inevitably have subjected the vanguard to bourgeois leadership."

This points to the core of the Trotskyist program of *permanent revolution* which asserts that in countries of belated development "the complete and genuine solution of their tasks of achieving *democracy* and *national emancipation* is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat as the leader of the subjugated nation, above all of its peasant masses" (Trotsky, "What Is the Permanent Revolution?" [1930]).

It is precisely the need for a conscious proletarian vanguard that the IG/LQB obliterates. This is inherent to centrists, who thrive on militant-sounding rhetoric, the more so when this paper radicalism carries no practical obligations. The IG/LQB's criticism of other fake-left groups for capitulating to Lula's reformist bureaucracy is sheer hypocrisy coming from those who have crossed the class line by bringing the bourgeois courts into the SPPMVR municipal workers union in Volta Redonda. We published the hard facts about this. (See "Lies, Damned Lies and Anti-Union Lawsuits: IG's Brazil Fraud Exposed" and "Court Papers Prove They Sued the Union—IG's Brazil Cover-Up: Dirty Hands, Cynical Lies," WV Nos. 669 and 671, 30 May and 11 July 1997.) The IG/LQB has never answered our challenge to publish the public documents (court case numbers 30.831, 30.832, 30.833 on file in the Volta Redonda courthouse), which prove its class betrayal. Let workers see for themselves what side of the class line they stand on. ■

# Iran...

(continued from page 1)

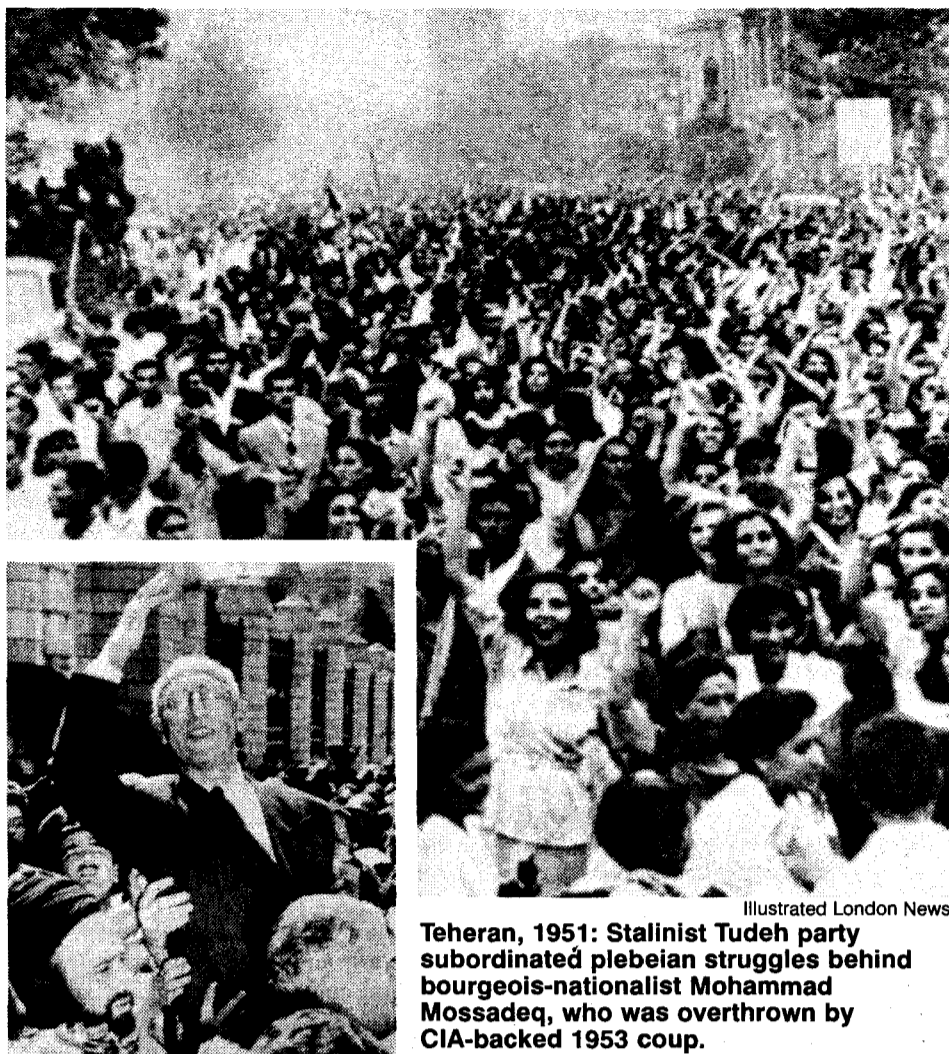
In these respects Iran resembled the tsarist empire on the eve of the Russian Revolution of 1917. But it lacked a revolutionary leadership like the Russian Bolsheviks, acting as a tribune of all the people in the struggle to lead the working class to the conquest of state power. Instead, the multiple discontents over the rule of the bloody-handed U.S.-backed Shah were channeled into support for a reactionary clericalist movement which brought Khomeini to power. This result was a bitter defeat for the proletariat.

The so-called "Islamic revolution" of 1979 represented a *negative confirmation* of Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky's concept of permanent revolution. In backward countries like Iran, whose economic and social development has been retarded by imperialist enslavement, the historic achievements of the bourgeois-democratic revolutions in West Europe and North America remain on the agenda: agrarian revolution, national independence and integration, social and economic modernization. From this, many self-styled leftists draw the utterly false conclusion that there must be a "two-stage revolution," with the first stage led by the "progressive" or "anti-imperialist" elements of the bourgeoisie and limited to "democratic" capitalist rule. With the proletariat subordinated to the bourgeoisie, socialist revolution is indefinitely postponed. But all wings of the bourgeoisie in such countries are too backward and dependent on imperialism to play any progressive role.

As Trotsky pointed out, it is only the proletariat, leading the peasant and urban plebeian masses, which can liberate the societies of Asia, Africa and Latin America from the chains of reactionary traditionalism and imperialist subjugation. In seizing state power and establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat, the workers of the backward countries will be compelled to institute socialist measures such as the expropriation of the means of production and the establishment of a planned economy. However, these revolutions will survive and flourish only if they are extended to the advanced countries of the West and Japan.

In 1978-79, the Iranian left, centrally the Stalinist Tudeh party, supported the forces of reactionary traditionalism, led by Khomeini, in the name of the "anti-imperialist" revolution. The reactionary character of the Islamic opposition was manifest from the outset, above all by its position on the woman question. The mullahs' hostility to the Shah's regime was fueled in good part by their visceral hatred of the Westernized attitudes and behavior of a thin layer of privileged Iranian women. The Shi'ite hierarchy feared that such "liberated" attitudes might seep down to the peasant women in the villages and working women in the cities, thereby undermining the harsh patriarchal character of Iranian society at its base.

Today, once again, powerful forces are undermining the oppressive traditionalism of Iranian society and the rule of its clericalist guardians. In the last few years,



Illustrated London News  
**Teheran, 1951: Stalinist Tudeh party subordinated plebeian struggles behind bourgeois-nationalist Mohammad Mossadeq, who was overthrown by CIA-backed 1953 coup.**

Topham Picture Library

Iran has been rocked by workers strikes and protests by women fed up with their slave-like status, symbolized by the suffocating *chador* (veil). Youth have begun to openly defy the conservative morality of the mosque and watch films or read books that the religious censors loathe as examples of Western "decadence."

In response, a campaign of terror has been mounted by the regime, sections of which apparently fear that even limited liberalization is setting in motion forces that may challenge mullah rule. The assassination of dissident writers and political figures is intended to intimidate all restless elements, and critical newspapers and journals are episodically suppressed.

Given the rampant disaffection in the society, the question is once again posed: which way forward for the Iranian masses? In the fight to forge a revolutionary Leninist-Trotskyist party—the indispensable requirement for successfully consummating a socialist revolution—the need to assimilate the lessons of 20 years ago looms large. And in confronting the past, Iranian workers and leftists must come to terms with the betrayals of a whole array of leftist organizations in Iran and abroad that tailed the clericalist movement in the heady days of the "Iranian revolution."

## Religious Reaction Ascendant

In 1978, fed up with the dictatorship of the butcher Shah, the Iranian masses defied the monarch's tanks and elite troops, taking to the streets in demonstration after demonstration, strike after strike. The Shah, in power since 1941 and backed to the hilt by U.S. imperialism, was hated for his massive apparatus of state repression, including the SAVAK

secret police, and the boundless corruption of his court. In the last years of his reign, the country's economic plight and the immiseration of vast layers of the population sparked widespread opposition. Exploiting this popular hatred, the massive and powerful religious hierarchy led by Khomeini created a mass movement that was supported by the merchants of the bazaar and heavily composed of semi-proletarian shantytown dwellers who had migrated to the cities but never broken their ties to the mosque.

For its part, the Iranian left used its authority to help chain the proletariat to the mullahs and helped heave into power a theocracy drawing its inspiration not from the twentieth century but from the seventh. Adamantly opposed to both reactionary alternatives—the Shah's Peacock Throne *and* the theocratic mullahs—the international Spartacist tendency (predecessor of the International Communist League) raised the slogan: "Down with the Shah, No support to the mullahs! For workers revolution in Iran!" We exposed the treacherous role of the Iranian left, especially the Tudeh party with its substantial proletarian base, which supported the Khomeiniite mass movement and prevented the emergence of a proletarian challenge to the rule of the hated Shah.

The massive protest wave reached its zenith between September 1978 and January 1979. On September 4, millions of demonstrators across Iran participated in rallies, including half a million in the capital of Teheran. Led by mullahs reading verses from the Koran, the protests had a decidedly religious character. Four days later, the Shah's Royal Guard fired upon an anti-government protest in Teheran, killing at least a thousand demonstrators in the worst massacre in decades. Undeterred by this carnage, the opposition continued to demonstrate; further clashes were reported in Teheran, Mashhad and other cities. The depth of popular defiance was reflected in protesters' open fraternization with the Shah's largely conscript troops.

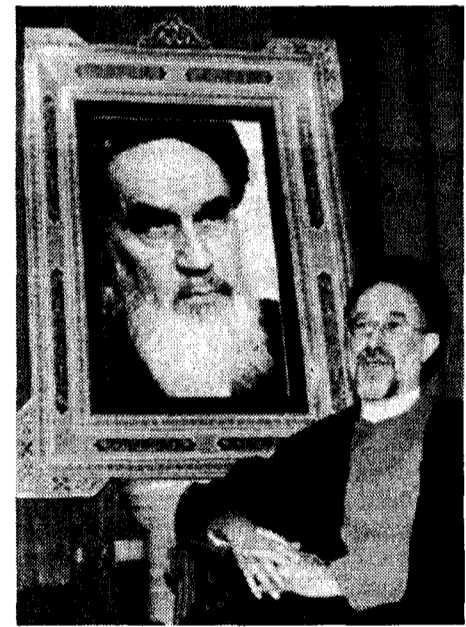
With the authority of the regime deeply shaken, the multinational proletariat of Iran began to enter the fray. In the first two weeks of October, Iran was rocked by strikes of bank workers, oil industry engineers and telephone and telegraph workers. Wage concessions could not stem the tide of this upsurge, as workers shut down schools, hospitals, the national airlines and the railroads. A more serious challenge to the monarchy was posed by the walkout of 30,000 workers at the Isfahan steel works. The strike wave took a qualitative leap with the walkout in the south-

western province of Khuzestan of 10,000 oil workers, many of whom were Arabs oppressed by the Persian-chauvinist monarchy. Meanwhile, the strikers had begun to raise political demands against the regime.

For decades, the oil workers had been in the vanguard of the Iranian class struggle. In 1946, 100,000 oil workers struck against the British oil monopolies, and another massive strike in 1952 sparked the movement to nationalize the industry. Time and time again, however, the workers were strangled by their historic leadership, the Tudeh party. In 1946, Tudeh broke the oil workers strike in return for three cabinet positions. During the tumultuous events that ended in the 1953 mullah-led, CIA-backed military coup against Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadeq, who had nationalized the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, Tudeh could have taken power but instead curbed its mass proletarian base in the hope that the aristocratic Mossadeq would carry out the "democratic revolution."

The ensuing savage repression and demoralization of the working class greatly weakened Tudeh. In the 1960s, a new generation of young leftist radicals, exemplified by the Fedayeen, turned to the guerrillaist strategy espoused by Mao Zedong and Che Guevara. Although their actions were heroic and self-sacrificing, both their stagist program and strategy of populist guerrilla warfare isolated these youthful leftists from the key strategic sectors of the working class.

As long as the Shah jailed, tortured and murdered Tudeh and other leftist militants, the Shi'ite clergy raised not a peep of protest. The Khomeiniite Islamic opposition arose in response to the 1963 "White Revolution," when the Shah began to make inroads into the mullahs' endowments and property and their con-



Economist

**As successor to regime of Ayatollah Khomeini, Khatami's Iran remains a hellhole for women and prison house of oppressed nationalities.**

trol over law and social mores. Given the bankruptcy of the feeble national bourgeoisie, the greatly reduced authority of Tudeh and the isolation of the leftist guerrillaists, the Shi'ite clergy developed into the only effective nationwide opposition.

Nonetheless, contrary to the claims of Iranian leftists who tailed Khomeini, much of the proletariat initially remained aloof from the mullah-led protests during 1978-79, while workers carried out powerful struggles such as a sit-down strike of 37,000 oil workers. By then, large sections of the Iranian proletariat had become urbanized and secularized by the workings of the capitalist system and rejected Khomeini's retrograde, reactionary program. For its part, the religious opposition was explicitly antagonistic to independent mobilizations of the working class. Indeed, during one wave of strikes, the bazaaris in Teheran—the mullahs' traditional merchant base—*opened* the city's main bazaar, which they had earlier shut down in support of mullah-led protests. More than the clerical-dominated demonstrations, it was the crippling workers strikes that brought down the Shah.

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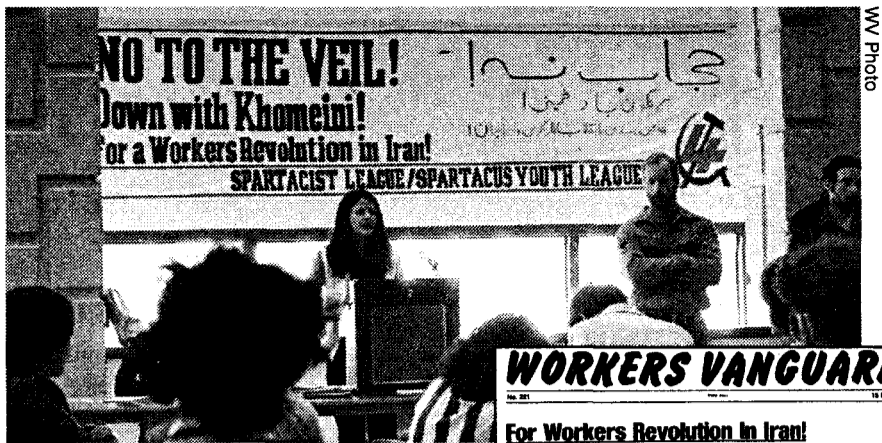
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In 1978-79, Spartacist forums and publications advanced perspective of revolutionary proletarian struggle against danger of "Islamic republic" as bloody Shah's regime fell.



However, from Tudeh to the Fedayeen, the Iranian left subordinated the interests of the proletariat to the supposedly "anti-imperialist" mullahs. In contrast, we raised the Trotskyist banner of workers revolution:

"The strike battles now being waged by the Iranian workers could be the basis of the independent mobilization of the proletariat as a competitor for power with Khomeini, not as cannon fodder for the mullahs. In the imperialist epoch, the democratic tasks of freeing oppressed nationalities, agrarian revolution, and breaking down imperialist domination can be carried out only under the leadership of the Iranian proletariat. But these urgent democratic demands require the establishment of a proletarian dictatorship for their success, not the dissolution of the working class into the petty-bourgeois masses. Only a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party can win the proletariat to this perspective and lead it to victory."

—"Down with the Shah! Don't Bow to Khomeini!" (WV No. 221, 15 December 1978)

The victory of the Shi'ite *ulema* came about in alliance with a section of the Shah's officer corps. Although Khomeini first went after the Shah's state apparatus and executed former SAVAK torturers, he wasted no time in suppressing non-Persian nationalities and ethnic minorities and women. On International Women's Day, 8 March 1979, a demonstration of tens of thousands was dispersed with bullets by Khomeini's Islamic marshals. Forces of the "Islamic revolution" began to wage bloody war against the Kurds and in May, government troops killed several Arab protesters in Khorranshahr who were fighting for a larger share of oil revenues for their region, the use of Arabic as a semi-official language and local autonomy.

Soon the mullahs used the fascistic *hezbollahis* to go after leftist organizations, while the new government shut down dozens of opposition newspapers. In the years to come, the regime would destroy the Iranian left, executing its leaders and supporters *en masse*. By 1982, 50 executions a day had become normal. Meanwhile, Khomeini's Pasdaran (Islamic Revolutionary Guard) went on a rampage—entering homes, conducting searches and making arrests—while "Mobile Units of God's Vengeance" enforced Islamic dress codes in the streets. Women accused of adultery were stoned

to death. And in 1980, the Iranian regime began its squalid eight-year border war with Iraq, sending hundreds of thousands of soldiers to their deaths.

In general, Western liberals paid scant attention to the reign of terror by the Islamic fundamentalist regime in Iran except on the occasion when it targeted the well-known writer Salman Rushdie, a secular intellectual of Indian Muslim background living in Britain. When in 1989 Rushdie brought out *The Satanic Verses*, a novel satirizing Islam, Khomeini declared on Iranian radio that Rushdie and "all those involved in its publication who were aware of its contents, are sentenced to death." If the mullahs' regime publicly threatened to



kill a world-famous writer and his publishers in West Europe and North America, imagine the totalitarian thought control they imposed in Iran itself.

#### Cracks in the Clerical Façade

After two decades of clerical rule, the Iranian masses have begun to chafe at the bit of naked state repression. Yearning for change, in 1997 they elected a new president, Mohammad Khatami, whom the bourgeois media have consistently eulogized as a "reformer" pitted against the old-line mullahs. Following Khatami's election, Hollywood films became popular, while the Ministry of



1985: Marshes of Basra, Iraq strewn with bodies during squalid eight-year Iran-Iraq border war.

Culture and Islamic Guidance ceased demanding that film scripts be pre-approved. The ban on dozens of books was lifted. From *Time* magazine to the German weekly *Der Spiegel*, the world press has remarked on the appearance in public of women wearing nail polish on their toes and on the appetite among youth for Leonardo DiCaprio T-shirts. After the nightmare of Khomeiniite terror, such changes are testimony to the desire of Iranians to free themselves from the suffocating hold of the theocratic dictatorship.

But most significant are the workers' struggles of recent years. In December 1996, a fight for basic trade-union rights began with a two-day oil workers strike. Several weeks later, the regime's "Revolutionary Guards" lashed out at more than 2,000 oil workers and their supporters at a demonstration in front of the oil ministry in Teheran, arresting hundreds and banning the union (see "Support Iranian Oil Workers' Struggle!" WV No. 663, 7 March 1997). This action followed earlier oil workers strikes in 1990, 1991 and 1992. The 1991 walkout of tens of thousands of workers was the first all-out strike in the oil industry since the 1978 strikes.

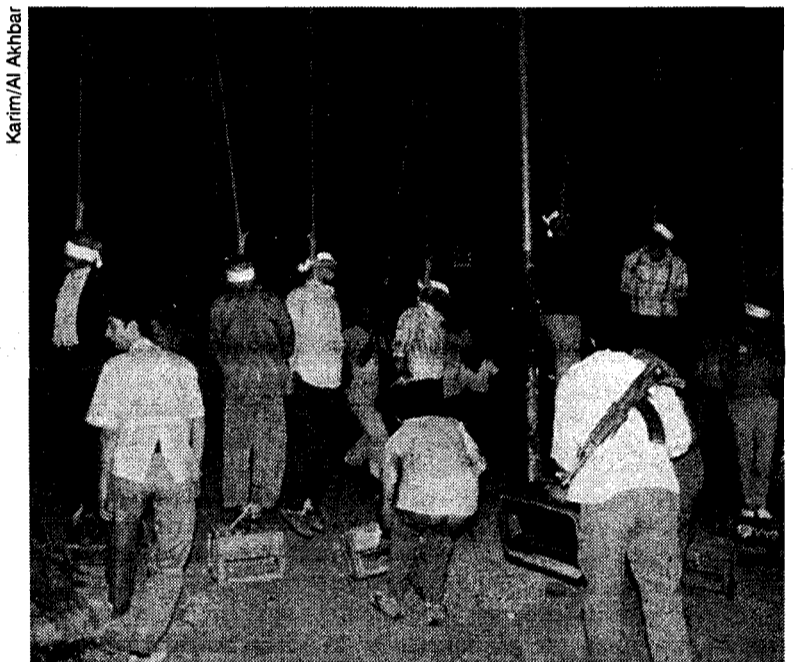
Facing an economic crisis with high unemployment and inflation, and anxious that the pressures accumulating at the base of society could reach the boiling point, the Iranian rulers have been forced to grant piecemeal concessions. Khatami, who was installed to serve as a pressure valve, has enjoyed substantial

The Khatami regime's blatant perpetuation of women's oppression speaks volumes about this "reformer." The *hijab* (headscarf), mandatory in all public places, has been upheld by Khatami's advisor on women's affairs as the "superior national dress of the women of Iran." Cosmetics are forbidden, as are showy and glittery objects, jewelry, headbands and neck scarves. Even eyeglasses fall under these strictures! While women who dress "immodestly" may no longer be punished with 74 lashes of the whip, as previously, they may be imprisoned for up to two months. "Sexual misconduct" continues to be punishable by stoning to death. Banned from higher education in 91 of 169 fields and compelled to attend segregated classes, women are slaves to their husbands and brothers. According to *Z Magazine* (October 1998), prior to his election Khatami declared:

"One of the West's most serious mistakes was the emancipation of women, which led to the disintegration of families. Staying at home does not mean marginalization. Being a housewife does not prevent a woman from having a role in the destiny of her people. We should not think that social activity means working outside the home. Housekeeping is among one of the most important jobs."

Not just a hellhole for women, Khatami's Islamic theocracy continues to be a prison house of summary executions, disappearances and torture. Continuing Khomeini's terror against religious minorities, police last September carried out massive raids and arrests against members of the Bahai faith, a

Pseudo-socialists such as International Socialist Organization (top left) and Socialist Workers Party hailed Khomeini's "victory" even as his regime murdered leftists, national minorities.



support from youth and women rebelling against the hold of the clergy. But he himself is a former minister of culture and Islamic guidance whose religious credentials were approved by the Council of Guardians, a body of clerics and judges chosen by the supreme religious leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

No friend of the oppressed national minorities such as the Kurds, Khatami is also a vocal advocate of reopening Iran to U.S. imperialist penetration. His presidency has coincided with a growing conviction among important sections of the American bourgeoisie that the time has come to improve relations with Iran. Although Washington has occasionally had relations with the ayatollahs' regime over the years—for example, supplying both Iran and Iraq militarily during the 1980s border war, bleeding one side and then the other—relations between the U.S. and Iran have been generally hostile since 1979, when Islamic militants seized the U.S. embassy in Teheran. However, since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991-92, which has led to intensified inter-imperialist rivalries and an escalating worldwide struggle over oil, the U.S. has gradually sought a rapprochement with Iran to bolster its position in this strategic region. In 1997, U.S. oilmen were incensed that a lucrative deal for Iranian natural gas went to their foreign competitors. Khatami aims to increase Iran's leverage by taking advantage of heightened international antagonisms and strengthening ties with the U.S.

religious group with wealthy entrepreneurial connections which the mullahs have long persecuted in order to divert anger away from their own oppressive rule. And just as Khomeini waged a border war against Iraq, Khatami engaged in his own saber rattling last year by mobilizing hundreds of thousands of troops to threaten Taliban-ruled Afghanistan.

Restless young Iranians have dared to defy the state power. When the Iranian national soccer team tied Australia in November 1997, patriotic fans went wild in the streets. The *Los Angeles Times* (23 December 1997) reported:

"Public dancing is banned, but many people danced, even on the tops of buses. Men and women are not supposed to mix, but they did. Some women threw off their scarves and let their hair free, violating decency in the eyes of the country's conservative rulers. And the regime's enforcers, the religious shock troops called the *basij* and the *komiteh*, were told to back off when they dared to intervene."

"They tried to stop things and they got their butts kicked," recounted one excited youth. "Everybody pushed them. They ran away and came back with more but couldn't do anything!"

By all accounts, clerical rule has become brittle and vulnerable. Nevertheless, the prevailing political consciousness is highly contradictory and the volatile situation remains unpredictable. While many youth dislike the grip of the mullahs, they cling to Islam while maintaining enormous illusions in the "freedom" and "easy life" of racist-American

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# Iran...

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capitalism. Although a thin layer of women from wealthy and influential families may wear modern Western clothing along with their *hijab* and a few even hold seats in the Majlis (parliament), the masses of peasant and working women are just as much slaves to age-old reactionary traditions as their grandmothers and great-grandmothers.

No fundamental social liberation will be accomplished short of a revolution shattering the entire power structure of capitalist and pre-capitalist social relations. A Marxist intervention in this fluid situation would seek to crystallize revolutionary proletarian opposition to mullah rule and combat illusions that liberal reformers, not to mention clerics like Khatami, will satisfy the masses' desire to throw off the yoke of an oppressive dictatorship.

## Fake Trotskyists Bow to Islamic Reaction

In 1978-79, a party of Marxist revolutionaries in Iran would have struggled to fracture the ayatollahs' sway over the mass movement. Although the international Spartacist tendency was largely external to the situation in Iran, we sought in a propagandistic way to raise a revolutionary proletarian perspective. In *WV* No. 215 (22 September 1978) we wrote:

"The hundreds of thousands who are now marching behind the mullahs are by no means all Muslim fundamentalists. Many are primarily motivated by hostility to the real crimes of the shah. Many leftist workers have probably joined what they view as a potentially successful opposition to the hated regime. But the masses, particularly the workers, who are now supporting the Khomeinis and Shariatmadaris can and must be won away from the present Islamic reactionary offensive in favor of a *social revolutionary* opposition to the shah."

In contrast to this perspective, virtually the entire left worldwide lined up behind the forces of religious obscurantism. The ex-Trotskyist U.S. Socialist Workers Party (SWP) claimed that Khomeini's "firm opposition to the Shah and the Shah's 'modernization'" was "progressive" (*Militant*, 17 November 1978). Progressive? Khomeini was an ardent chauvinist who loudly called for a *jihād* (holy war) against all non-Persians. He consolidated his power by massacring the Kurds, forcing women to don the stifling *chador* or *hijab* and filling his prisons with homosexuals, leftists and trade unionists. For the SWP, the *chador* even became a symbol of "liberation." In contrast, we Spartacists have always demanded: No to the veil! The SWP reformists continue to serve as unabashed lobbyists for the reactionary Iranian regime—last year they appeared at a Teheran book fair adding their voices to Khatami's anti-women tirades against make-up by pushing a work titled *Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women!*

Echoing the SWP's craven capitulation



1980: U.S. national security adviser Brzezinski at Khyber Pass, as Washington armed Afghan mujahedin cutthroats in war against Soviet Army. Today, Taliban enforces Islamic rule in Afghanistan through barbaric "punishments."



to religious reaction on the ground were their cothinkers of the Iranian Socialist Workers Party (HKS). Even after Khomeini took power and began to bloodily suppress the left, the HKS—itsself a victim of mullah terror—continued to claim the "Islamic revolution" as its own. It even ran in elections in August 1979 for an Islamic "Assembly of Experts" whose job was to rubber-stamp Khomeini's constitution. The HKS wrote at the time: "This constitution must defend the gains of the revolution and extend them.... The new constitution must pave the way for the establishment of such a government of the oppressed majority" (*Kargar [Worker]*, 8 August 1979). In reality, the purpose of Khomeini's constitution was to institutionalize the reactionary rule of the *ulema*.

Much of the left justified supporting the mullahs with the claim that the "Iranian revolution" was "anti-imperialist," slanderously accusing us Trotskyists of taking pro-imperialist positions because we told the truth about the oppressive mullah regime and called for workers revolution. Far from being anti-imperialist, Khomeini joined with the U.S. in backing the bloodthirsty Afghan *mujahedin* in the crusade against "godless communism" after the Soviet Red Army intervened in the Afghan civil war in late 1979.

The SWP hailed Khomeini as an "anti-imperialist leader" because he opposed Washington's longtime ally, the Shah. Ernest Mandel of the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat (USec), to which the SWP was then associated, went even further, proclaiming that Khomeini's Iran was a "partial bourgeois democracy." The USec got so carried away by the mullah-led "mass movement" that one of its leaders, Brian Grogan, bragged about chanting "Allah akbar" ("god is great") during a demonstration in Teheran!

The Shah's "modernization" consisted of paper-thin cosmetic reforms benefiting only a narrow layer of the extremely privileged. Plebeian hatred of this layer fuelled consolatory religious sentiments among the oppressed. In the face of religious backwardness, we insisted that the "social force of clerical reaction in Iran today is a product of economic retardation imposed upon that region by imperialism and that the masses will be emancipated from the chains of religious obscurantism only upon the economic

foundations of proletarian revolution" (*Spartacist* No. 27-28, Winter 1979-80).

Both the SWP and the Mandelites rejected in practice the Trotskyist understanding that in the imperialist epoch only the working class, led by a vanguard party, can institute revolutionary change. Standing in the anti-Trotskyist tradition of Michel Pablo, whose program of tailing the Stalinists and social democrats as an alternative to building a revolutionary party destroyed Trotsky's Fourth International in the early 1950s, the USec ended up tailing the "Islamic revolution" as a substitute for proletarian revolution.

## The Cliffites: The Prophet's "Socialists"

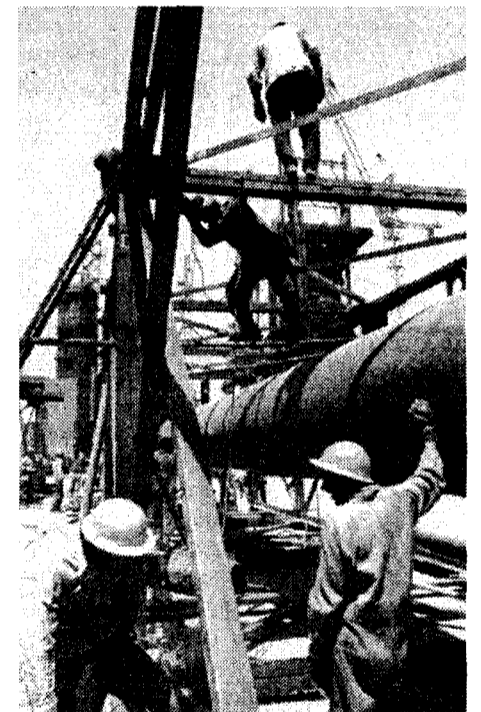
The SWP and the USec were hardly alone in bowing miserably to Khomeini. Joining it were the anti-communists of Tony Cliff's British Socialist Workers Party, which similarly justified its support to the mullahs by claiming that they were "anti-imperialist." The January 1979 issue of *Socialist Worker*, newspaper of Cliff's U.S. International Socialist Organization, unabashedly hailed Khomeini's "mass movement" and tried to put a socialist gloss on religious reaction, headlining one article: "The Form—Religious, The Spirit—Revolution." Not surprisingly, this outfit last March grotesquely defended the presence of agents of the Islamic Republic at an International Women's Day fair in Toronto, accusing leftist protesters, including our comrades of the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste, of having staged a "racist assault" for driving the agents away.

The International Socialist Organization (ISO), Cliff's U.S. affiliate, has come right out and praised Khatami. While acknowledging Khatami's clericalist roots, they push the illusion that he is some sort of liberal alternative to the "conservatives" and claim that his presidency "promised to be a significant break after 19 years of Islamic rule" (*Socialist Worker*, 14 August 1998). What nerve! After dressing up Islamic rule as revolutionary in 1979, they now try to cover their tracks by whining that it's time for a change. They write: "Since taking office, Khatami has made good on some of his promises." What these dishonest cynics don't say is that Khatami has promised to strengthen the Islamic dress code, a symbol of the continued enslavement of women.

Although the Cliffites may wish to tone down their enthusiasm for mullah rule now that it has become unpopular among Iranians, since 1979 they have generalized their support for Islamic reaction, applauding vile and retrograde movements such as the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) in Algeria and Muslim fundamentalists in Indonesia. In 1992, at the onset of the Algerian civil war between the mass-murdering bonapartist military regime and Islamic fundamentalists who have perpetrated a horrendous bloodletting against women, secular intellectuals and trade unionists, the Cliffites proclaimed that the FIS "reflects the rise of revolutionary feeling" (*Socialist Review*, February 1992). In the same vein, they have lined up behind Islamic reactionaries in Indonesia, who engage in heinous pogroms against the Chinese and Christian minorities. The Australian Cliffite newspaper, *Socialist Worker* (6 March 1998), declared that Indonesian Muslim leader Amien Rais could create

"a rank and file revolutionary movement in the army, to split it from below."

After the bourgeoisie proclaimed the "death of communism" following the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union and the East European deformed workers states in the late 1980s and early '90s, the British Cliffites, abjuring even the pretense of a proletarian-centered strategy, published a 60-page article by Chris Harman titled "The Prophet and the Proletariat" (*International Socialism*, Autumn 1994). Repeating the Cliffites' justification for supporting Khomeini, Harman treated Islamic fundamentalist movements as some sort of radical petty-bourgeois nationalist formations that "have taken up anti-imperialist slogans and some anti-imperialist actions." To the contrary, Islamic fundamentalism has flourished because of the abject failure of "Third World" bourgeois nationalism to alleviate

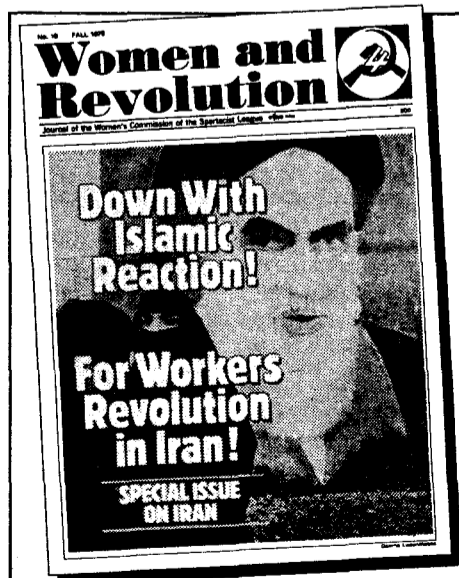


Workers in Iranian oil industry form strategic part of the proletariat.

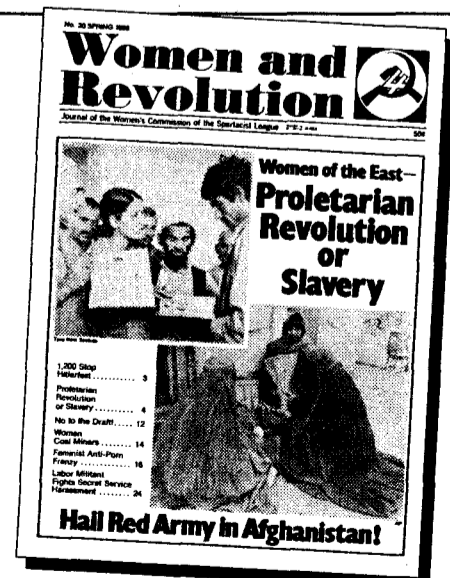
the sufferings of the masses and in the absence of a recognized communist alternative. As we pointed out in "Third Camp' Social Democrats Pander to Islamic Fundamentalism" (*WV* No. 613, 30 December 1994), militant Islam from Iran to North Africa is "hardly a reflection of 'anti-imperialism,' as the Cliffites would have it, but rather of despair and reaction, which both emotionally and in its sociological base has much in common with Hitler's 'National Socialism.'"

Far from being "anti-imperialist," Islamic gangs in Indonesia, together with the military, overthrew the bourgeois-nationalist regime of Sukarno in 1965, inciting an anti-Communist massacre that slaughtered more than half a million people. It was the CIA that supplied the Muslim fanatics with lists to hunt down Communists. This was no accident: in 1950, at the dawn of the Cold War, future U.S. secretary of state John Foster Dulles stated that there was a "common bond" between imperialism and the "religions of the East," whose "spiritual beliefs cannot be reconciled with Communist atheism and materialism."

Anti-communism serves as a common bond between the Cliffites and Islamic fundamentalism. During the Cold War, Cliff and his supporters backed every conceivable anti-communist movement



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the world over—from reactionary, anti-Semitic Polish Solidarność to Afghan counterrevolutionaries. Cliff himself broke from Trotskyism in 1950 when he refused to defend China and North Korea against U.S. imperialism during the Korean War, justifying this betrayal by claiming that these deformed workers states were “state capitalist.”

In Afghanistan, the war against “god-less communism” converged ferociously with Islamic fundamentalism as part of the drive to destroy the Soviet Union. In 1979, the Soviet Red Army intervened in the Afghan civil war on the side of a left-nationalist government that had tried to implement such reforms as lowering the bride price and establishing literacy programs for girls. When Afghan rebels launched a war to maintain women as virtual chattel slaves, the U.S. imperialists showered these medievalist counter-revolutionaries with arms to weaken the Soviet state. The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and the imperialists’ hysterical response were the opening shots of Cold War II, to which the Cliffites reacted by cheering on the Afghan *mujahedin* cutthroats and encouraging the imperialists to escalate their proxy war against the Soviet Union.

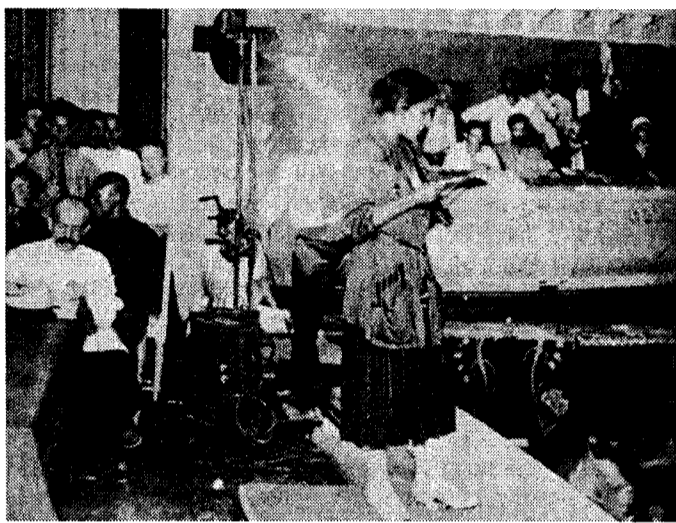
Against the likes of the Cliffites, we proclaimed: “Hail Red Army in Afghanistan! Extend Gains of the October Revolution to Afghan Peoples!” Recognizing that the incorporation of Afghanistan into the Soviet Union would have represented a tremendous step forward for the deeply oppressed Afghan masses—and especially Afghan women—we swam against the stream of imperialist reaction, to which the Cliffites, in their own modest way, actively contributed. Our forthright defense of the Red Army intervention in Afghanistan flowed from our understanding of the Soviet Union as a degenerated workers state, whose Stalinist bureaucracy usurped the political power of the working class while still resting on the socialized property forms established by the 1917 October Revolution. We defended the Soviet Union against internal counterrevolution and imperialist attack, fighting for proletarian political revolution to overthrow the Stalinist usurpers and reestablish the revolutionary workers democracy of the early Soviet state under Lenin and Trotsky.

Rather than decisively defeat the religious fundamentalists, the Soviet bureaucracy treacherously withdrew its forces from Afghanistan in 1989 to appease the imperialists, giving the CIA-backed reactionaries the run of the country and emboldening the forces of capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union itself. Today, life in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan has regressed to the point that public executions and amputations in Kabul Sports Stadium are almost weekly occurrences. Forced to wear the head-to-toe *burka*, a tent-like veil with only a screen-covered opening in front of the eyes, women are doomed to a life of abject isolation. The *Los Angeles Times* (22 October 1998) reported that the Taliban

“relies on an extreme interpretation of Islam to mete out punishments for such sins as drinking, gambling, drugs, watch-



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ing television and listening to music. Women are prohibited from wearing white socks, because they draw attention to ankles. Homosexuals are buried under toppled walls of brick. Adulterers are killed with stones.”

Today, ostensible socialists like the Cliffites who clamored for a Soviet defeat in Afghanistan have their direct result: Taliban barbarism.

#### WPI: Anti-Clerical Reformists

One left group that protested against the agents of the Iranian government invading International Women’s Day in Toronto last year was the Worker-communist Party of Iran (WPI). Last September, in united-front protest demonstrations in New York City, Vancouver, London, Berlin, Hamburg and Sydney, sections of the ICL joined with the WPI during Khatami’s visit to the UN in denouncing the blood-drenched Iranian regime. However, while roundly despising Islamic clericalism, the WPI capitulates to it in myriad ways.

While the WPI does not formally endorse the Menshevik/Stalinist schema of two-stage revolution, it nonetheless operates within that conceptual and programmatic framework. This is indicated by its analysis of the overthrow of the Shah. A 1990 pamphlet titled “A Brief Look at the Situation of the Working Class in Iran,” which was written by the WPI’s predecessors of the Communist Party of Iran (CPI) and is still distributed by the WPI, claims that the “working

class was the backbone of the revolutionary movement and the workers’ nationwide strike were the most radical blows struck at the Shah’s regime.”

Workers strikes were indeed instrumental in bringing down the Shah. However, the proletariat did not play an independent class role but was *politically subordinated by its misleadership to the Khomeinists*. To claim that the workers played a vanguard role among the “revolutionary masses” in 1979 is wishful thinking and a de facto capitulation to the Islamic reactionaries.

In the name of the “Islamic revolution,” the Khomeinists set up *shoras* (councils) after taking power in order to consolidate their hold over the restive masses. Yet the CPI pamphlet views these as bona fide workers councils representing an oppositional force to the Islamicist regime. In fact, it maintains that there was a “revolutionary period” right up to 1981. This

notion accepts in practice a two-stage schema, implying that the workers had their big chance *after* the victory of the mullahs. Lacking a Marxist program and faith in the revolutionary capacity of the proletariat, which can only become conscious of its fundamental class interests when led by a Leninist-Trotskyist party, the WPI minimizes the leading role of the mullah opposition and shortchanges the central task of the working class during the Shah’s death agony: *to steer an independent course in irreconcilable opposition to Khomeini’s Islamic movement*.

The WPI does not pose the indispensability of proletarian leadership because it looks to bourgeois forces fundamentally hostile to the working class to carry out “progressive” policies. For example, the WPI’s sister group in Iraq demands that the United Nations oversee a referendum on Kurdish independence, a call elaborated by WPI leader Mansoor Hekmat in the article “In Defense of the Demand for Independence for Iraqi Kurdistan” in the Farsi-language *International* (June 1995). The UN is an imperialist den of thieves and their victims, a fig leaf for imperialist wars and interventions from North Korea in 1950-53 to the Balkans today. The devastating embargo of Iraq, which has caused the deaths of a million and a half people, including hundreds of thousands of children due to malnutrition and disease, has been carried out since 1991 under UN auspices. We say: Defend Iraq against U.S./British imperialism! Down with the UN starvation blockade! In contrast to the illusion that the UN can be pressured to act in the interests of the oppressed Kurds, we fight to link the struggle for Kurdish self-determination with working-class struggles in Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran. We call for a Socialist Republic of United Kurdistan, which requires that these four capitalist states be smashed through workers revolution.

In the context of the partial and tenuous openness in Iranian society and the recent killings of Iranian writers and politicians, the WPI in Canada expressed gross illusions in imperialism. In a January leaflet titled “Against the Terrorist Islamic Regime in Iran!” the WPI demanded a trial of the leaders of the Islamic Republic before an international tribunal, the closure of the Iranian embassy in Canada and the expulsion of its representatives. By raising such demands, the WPI lends credence to the democratic pretensions of the imperialists and calls on them to act as cops of the world. The WPI’s kowtowing to the imperialists represents a thorough-

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Australasian Spartacist

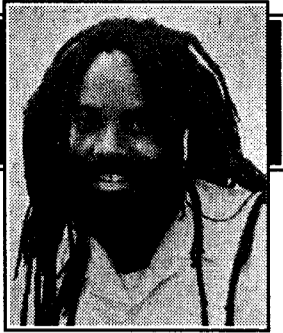
Australian Spartacists join WPI supporters in united-front demonstration to support striking Iranian oil workers, January 1997.

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# From Death Row, This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal



## Legalized Cop Violence

"When a gang member is beaten by persons unknown in a mixed neighborhood, and the black gangs begin terrorizing whites, it is called racism, a bunch of cops can ride through black neighborhoods all day beatin' ass, and call it law, when a bunch of blacks beat one of these cops' ass it's called mob violence."  
—John Africa (May 1967)

A young woman, engulfed in diabetic coma while sitting in her car, is repeatedly shot by a corps of cops, who say they are threatened by the young woman. Tyesha Miller, of Riverside, California becomes a statistic.

A young man sitting in his car in North Philly is surrounded by a phalanx of armed cops, whose guns are pointed at him from all points. He is ordered to raise his hands. When he does so, he is shot to death by one of the cops, who insists he thought he saw a gun. The 18-year old is unarmed. Dontae Dawson becomes a statistic.

An emigrant from the West African nation of Guinea comes to America, taking an apartment in New York's Bronx Borough. When four NYPD cops approach his door, reportedly because of a suspected rape (he was not a suspect) he is shot at 41 times. Nineteen shots hit him. Amadou Diallo was unarmed, and will never return to West Africa.

In case after case after case, in city after city, from coast to coast, such cases arise with alarming regularity, worsened by the realization that, in most cases, cops who have committed these acts, that if committed by others would constitute high crimes, will face no serious prosecution, if any prosecution at all.

They are, the corporate media assures us, "just doing their jobs," "under an awful lot of pressure," or "in fear" and therefore justified in what they do. In the language of the media, the very media that makes its millions off of the punishment industry calling for the vilest sentences known to man, turn, in the twinkling of an eye, into paragons of mercy, who lament that the "fine young men" who "served their community" are in "trouble," or have "suffered enough."

The suffering of the slain, because they are young, and Black, are all but forgotten in this unholy algebra that devalues Black life, while heightening the worth of the assailants because they work for the state.

The worse lie that is often trotted out when such cases occur is when politicians and media people sing the praises of such people, who are called, by virtue of their jobs, "public servants." Since when have servants (of any kind) acted in the vile, arrogant, monstrous manner that many of these cops do in Black, Hispanic and poor communities? Since when have such servants been in the position to slaughter, shoot, humiliate, and imprison the very public that they are sworn to serve?

They are servants, if at all, of the political structures of which they are a part, not of the people. They are servants, if at all, of the state. They serve the interests of capital, of the wealthy, of those who run this system from their bank vaults and corporate offices.

They do not serve the poor, the powerless, nor the uninfluential.

They never have.

They are an armed force organized to protect the interests of the established, and those who own capital. The history of labor in this country is splattered by the blood of trade unionists who were beaten, shot and crushed to the earth for striking against the trusts, combinations, and megacorporations of capital. Who did the beating? The shooting? The crushing? The cops, who served the interests of a state that declared, as did the Supreme Court, that unions were "criminal conspiracies," and that "The Constitution was...based upon the concept that the fundamental private rights of property are anterior to government and morally beyond the reach of popular majorities" [from Frances Fox Piven & Richard A. Cloward, *The New Class War: Reagan's Attack on the Welfare State and Its Consequences* (1982), citing Beard, C. A., *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States* (1965)].

Capital's voice (the media) and their agents (the politicians) unite in a chorus of support for their legalized killers, who bomb babies with impunity (remember May 13, 1985—Philadelphia!), who shoot unarmed kids in their cars, and unarmed African emigrants, whose only capital crime is being Black in modern-day America.

This legalized violence that they do daily proves that violence is not a problem to the system—when it is their's against the people.

This awful crime must cease.  
10 February 1999

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**Urgently needed contributions for Mumia's legal defense, which are tax-deductible, should be made payable to the Bill of Rights Foundation, earmarked "Mumia Abu-Jamal Legal Defense," and sent to the Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal, 163 Amsterdam Avenue, No. 115, New York, NY 10023-5001. If you wish to correspond with Jamal, you can write to: Mumia Abu-Jamal, AM8335, SCI Greene, 1040 E. Roy Furman Hwy., Waynesburg, PA 15370.**

## Iran...

(continued from page 9)

going revision of the Marxist view of the state. Marx, Engels and Lenin insisted that the state consists of bodies of armed men entrusted with the defense of a particular class' property interests. The bourgeois state, defending the interests of capitalist private property, cannot be reformed or wielded by the workers to achieve liberation; it must be smashed through workers revolution and replaced by the dictatorship of the proletariat.

### Workers Rule: The Key to Women's Emancipation

A crucial goal of permanent revolution in a country like Iran is the emancipation of women from traditionalist, patriarchal shackles. While the WPI calls for the equality of women, it has a thoroughly reformist conception of how to champion women's rights. The WPI's insistence in the programmatic statement "A Better World" (1994) that it does not strive for a reformed capitalism and that "the realization of the most elementary rights and liberties require bringing down the inhuman and reactionary Islamic Republic regime" is belied by its massive laundry

list of reformist demands addressed to the ruling class and its statement that "Our aim is to force the existing system to recognise and abide by the unquestionable rights of the working people."

Furthermore, several WPI demands dealing with women, children and the family are openly reactionary. Thus the WPI rails "against the act of abortion," holding that abortion is "testimony to the self-alienation of people and their vulnerability in the face of the deprivations and hardships that the existing class society imposes on them." Presuming that women choose to have abortions only because of "cultural and economic pressures," the WPI echoes right-to-life fanatics by arguing that abortion displays "the inherent contempt for human life in the present system." Although saying that the decision to have an abortion rests with women alone, the WPI nevertheless calls for state counseling to dissuade women from the procedure. The clerical-reactionary nature of this demand can be seen in Germany, where state-mandated counseling centers run by the Catholic and Protestant churches intimidate women into bearing unwanted babies.

The WPI also backs "age of consent" laws against consensual sexual activity

between adults and "underage" persons, demanding that such activity be outlawed and that adult perpetrators be prosecuted. This reactionary position, like its anti-abortion stance, vividly shows that despite its criticisms of religious obscurantism, the WPI is firmly wedded to bourgeois morality on the crucial question of the family. We fight for free abortion on demand and the abolition of reactionary "age of consent" laws, which reinforce puritanical sexual mores and seek to regiment children, adolescents and everyone else in the service of god and country.

The WPI ignores the role of the family as the key institution of bourgeois society for the oppression of women and the transmission of conservative social values to the younger generation. The WPI never ventures beyond the demand for "full equal rights and status for women and men in the family" and even calls for the "prohibition of imposing housework or specifically housekeeping duties on the woman in the family." This is sheer utopia: housework and child rearing are *intrinsic* to the role of women in the family. The emancipation of women from the daily drudgery of hearth and home will only come about when the proletariat conquers state power and establishes a socialist society, which will lay the material basis for the replacement of the institution of the family through collective childcare, kitchens and other social institutions. *Women's liberation through socialist revolution!*

In the countries of the East, the question of women's oppression is one of the most powerful motive forces of socialist revolution. Indeed, when the Bolsheviks arrived in Central Asia in the years following the October Revolution, it was among women that they found the main point of support for their program and won their key cadres. The same holds true for Iran. A Leninist-Trotskyist party, championing women's rights against the age-old stranglehold of religion and the family, will find its most loyal and courageous fighters among women.

In the wake of Khomeini's rise to power, we held forums across the U.S.

under the title "No to the Veil! Down with Khomeini! For a Workers Revolution in Iran!" Defying attempts by Iranian Muslims and Maoists to violently disrupt these meetings, the speaker, a Near Eastern Trotskyist of Muslim origin, told the simple truth that the veil is a prison, "a symbol of women's oppression under Islam and an instrument of that control" ("Fatima Khalil Tells the Truth on Iran," *WV* No. 230, 27 April 1979). She cited Trotsky's "Perspectives and Tasks in the East" (April 1924) on the prominent place of Eastern women in the revolutionary struggle for social emancipation. These words highlight one of the crucial tasks of the ICL in struggling to build revolutionary vanguard parties in the semi-colonial world:

"And this, moreover, means that the Eastern woman, who is the most paralyzed in life, in her habits and in creativity, the slave of slaves, that she, having at the demand of the new economic relations taken off her cloak, will at once feel herself lacking any sort of religious buttress. She will have a passionate thirst to gain new ideas and new consciousness which will permit her to appreciate her new position in society. And there will be no better communist in the East, no better fighter for the ideas of the Revolution and for the ideas of Communism, than the awakened woman worker." ■

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# Racist Cop Terror...

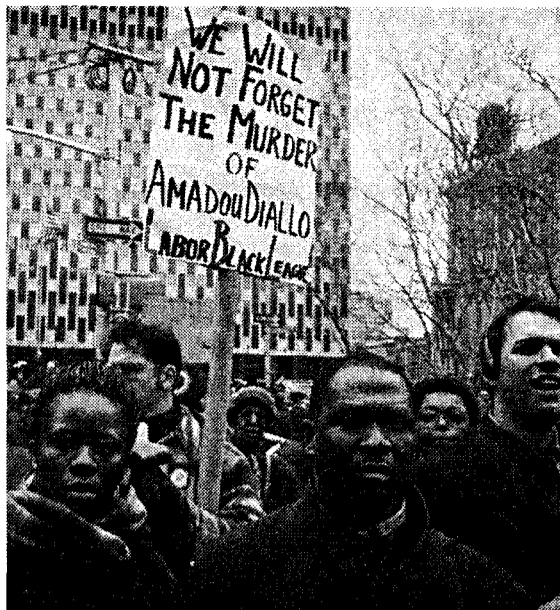
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thousands of black, Hispanic, white and Asian workers, the city's unions—from transit workers and city and hospital workers to Teamsters—can unite the power of those whose labor makes this city run with the anger of the ghettos and barrios. Yet the union tops have uttered barely a peep to protest the cops' racist reign of terror, much less made any effort to organize the necessary mass protest actions.

Small wonder, when one takes a look at who sits atop these unions—for example, Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100 chief Willie James is himself a former cop! James, together with former AFSCME District Council 37 head Stanley Hill, supported Giuliani's re-election in 1997. Meanwhile, hospital workers union District 1199 leader Dennis Rivera is a top state official of the Democratic Party. The housebroken opposition to Giuliani's favorite labor leaders, exemplified by the TWU's "New Directions," looks to the capitalist courts and other agencies of the class enemy to advance the unions' cause. If labor's power is to be mobilized in defense of its members, it should be obvious that it must be independent of the capitalist parties and the agencies of the state.

The same cops who terrorize the ghettos break picket lines. Far from mobilizing the unions against police terror, the AFL-CIO bureaucracy aggressively seeks to "organize" the cops—the racist, strike-breaking guardians of capital—into the unions. Police "unions" are not unions; they are nothing other than the political expression of paramilitary cop bonapartism. This was chillingly shown recently when the Policemen's Benevolent Association threatened to stage a provocation against a public meeting in Manhattan's Town Hall in defense of black death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal.

The protests which have taken place against the killing of Diallo have to date been dominated by Democratic Party politician Al Sharpton. In recent years, Sharpton—a fink for the FBI in the 1980s—has masqueraded as an opponent of police brutality. But every time he cynically voices condemnation of racist cop atrocities, he works to divert social protest into treacherous appeals to the racist capitalist government. Following the Diallo killing, Sharpton called for federal intervention to bring "justice," intoning that "We are not anti-police, we are anti-police brutality." While Sharpton calls for putting more "teeth" into the Civilian Complaint Review Board and for residency requirements for police, he opposed even reducing the size of the police



Left: February 9 NYC protest against racist police killing. The next day, vendors demonstrated at City Hall against Giuliani's broad-gauged assault on population.



force when he ran for mayor in 1997.

The purpose of liberal schemes to "reform" the police is not to stop or even restrain cop terror but to whitewash the system of racist, anti-labor repression. The cops, courts and prison system are at the core of the capitalist state—the repressive apparatus protecting the property, profits and rule of the tiny minority which owns the wealth of society and is intent on squeezing labor to maximize profits. The U.S. bourgeoisie is building prisons at the rate of *one every week*, primarily targeting minority youth caught up in the bourgeoisie's racist "war on drugs"; someone is arrested on drug charges in this country *every 20 seconds!* Both the Democrats and Republicans have supported the all-sided buildup of repressive powers in an effort to contain the massive discontents bred by this system of grinding exploitation and oppression. While Giuliani rode into City Hall on a wave of racist cop reaction against black Democrat David Dinkins, it was Dinkins who put thousands more cops on the street even as the rolls of city workers were slashed.

Liberal illusions in the "reformability" of the police have also been pushed in leaflets put out by the reformist left in response to the Diallo killing. Thus the Workers World Party, which supported Sharpton's 1997 mayoral bid, calls for "community control of the police" and the Communist Party for "civilian control." The International Socialist Organization chimes in with a call to "stop police brutality" through "the kind of fight that pressures the politicians." The reformists, following behind the pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy, act to blind working people and minorities to the role of the police and the Democratic Party as agencies of the class enemy which cannot be pressured into serving the interests of the exploited and oppressed.

Today, the labor movement is increasingly hamstrung by the intervention of

the capitalist state—the courts, the cops, the Labor Department "overseers"—into the unions. Desperately needed is a political struggle for the independence of the working class from all the agencies of the capitalist rulers. As the New York Spartacist League wrote in an 8 February leaflet (see "NYPD Death Squad," WV No. 707, 19 February):

"The power of the multiracial labor movement must be brought out in force to protest racist atrocities like the killing of Amadou Diallo. But as long as labor is tied to the class enemy through the Democratic Party, the unions cannot and will not be mobilized to actively champion the cause of black liberation and the rights of immigrants and all the oppressed. There must be a political struggle inside the unions against the labor bureaucracy whose overt and fundamental loyalty to the capitalist class and its dual parties, the Democrats and

Republicans, makes the union tops bitter enemies of any struggle that challenges the capitalist exploiters and their state."

We fight to unleash the power of labor to defend the real interests of the multiracial working class and all the oppressed. We fight for a new, class-struggle leadership of the unions, the force with the potential social power and fundamental class interest to teach the cops that their marauding racist terror will not go unanswered. But the racist brutality of the cops, in the service of the capitalist rulers, cannot be ended short of the smashing of the bourgeois state through proletarian revolution. The necessary instrument to unite the working class in revolutionary struggle against the class enemy is a multiracial workers party which acts as the "tribune of the people" in mobilizing to sweep away this capitalist system. ■

# Geronimo...

(continued from page 12)

organized terror and repression against perceived challenges to racist capitalist rule. As we wrote in "Geronimo Out After 27 Years in Prison Hell" (WV No. 670, 13 June 1997):

"Justice in America is neither blind nor does it carefully weigh the evidence on balanced scales. The courts, like the cops and prison system, are part of the capitalist state, which is not a neutral body but exists to administer the exploitation of the working class by the handful of rulers who own the wealth of society. By its nature, the capitalist judicial system is based on racial discrimination and class bias."

Despite the overwhelming proof of Geronimo's innocence, it took five *habeas corpus* petitions before Judge Dickey finally ruled in his favor, reversing the frame-up conviction on the limited grounds that the prosecution had concealed evidence that its main witness, Julius Butler, was a cop/FBI/D.A. informant. In over a dozen hearings throughout his years in prison, Geronimo was consistently denied parole because he would not confess to a crime he did not commit, nor renounce his espousal of the cause of black freedom. As with the escalating vendetta against death row

political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, every new piece of evidence of Geronimo's innocence was met with more government lies that he was guilty, accompanied by heightened repression seeking to silence Geronimo and prevent the truth from seeing the full light of day.

There are to this day many class-war prisoners in America's jails, guilty only of the "crime" of having fought against racist oppression—Ed Poindexter, Mondo we Langa, Hugo Pinell and Sundiata Acoli, to name a few. Mumia Abu-Jamal, who was targeted by the same COINTELPRO operation that stole 27 years of Geronimo's life, has become a symbol of the racist injustice inherent in American capitalism. Geronimo is finally free, but it would be obscene to speak of "closing the book" on this hideous frame-up. While there is no way to rectify the vicious actions of the ruling class and its state against him, the Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee will continue our efforts to mobilize the social power of the multiracial working class to demand freedom for all class-war prisoners. This is a crucial part of the struggle to forge a revolutionary workers party committed to the fight for a workers government, which will put an end to the entire system of racist capitalist injustice. ■

## Contents include:

- Mumia Abu-Jamal's Life of Struggle
- Court Hearings: New Evidence of Frame-Up
- From Death Row, This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal "La Amistad and American Law"
- The Frame-Up of Mumia Abu-Jamal
- For Non-Sectarian, Class-Struggle Defense!
- Death Row Speedup Targets Minorities
- Philly Cops' Reign of Terror
- Desperation, Segregation and the "Ebonics" Controversy
- Down With "English Only" Racism!
- Coleman Young: From CIO Union Organizer to Overseer for Auto Bosses

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## Black History and the Class Struggle

No. 15

### Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!

New York City, August 1996: Labor-centered united-front demonstration initiated by Partisan Defense Committee, part of international campaign of protest and publicity that won stay of Jamal's execution.

### Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

## International Women's Day Forums

For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!  
**The Communist Fight for Women's Liberation in the Muslim East**

Saturday, March 13, 7 p.m.

The Women's Building  
 3543 18th Street, San Francisco

**BAY AREA**

For more information:  
 (510) 839-0851 or (415) 777-9367

## Trotskyist League/Spartacus Youth Club Public Meeting

**Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!**

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International Student Centre  
 33 St. George Street (north of College St.)

**TORONTO**

For more information: (416) 593-4138

# WORKERS VANGUARD

## The State Stole 27 Years of Former Black Panther's Life

# — Victory! — All Charges Dropped Against Geronimo!



Geronimo ji Jaga

WV Photo

For the past 30 years, 27 of them spent in a series of California prisons, former Black Panther Party leader Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt) fought to overturn his frame-up conviction for a murder that state officials always knew he did not commit. Last month, that struggle finally came to an end. On February 16, the California Court of Appeals upheld the June 1997 decision by Judge Everett Dickey overturning Geronimo's 1972 conviction for the murder of Caroline Olsen and granting a new trial. The following day, Los Angeles district attorney Gil Garcetti grudgingly

announced that there would be no trial—his office was finally ceasing its efforts to send Geronimo back to die in the prisons where he has spent more than half of his life.

As the Black Panther minister of defense in Los Angeles, Geronimo was one of the prime targets of the FBI's murderous COINTELPRO vendetta against black and leftist activists. Thirty-eight Black Panthers were killed and hundreds more locked away as the Feds and local police forces acted on FBI chief J. Edgar Hoover's blunt admonition: "The Negro youth and moderate[s]

must be made to understand that if they succumb to revolutionary teachings, they will be dead revolutionaries." FBI documents from 1969 record their designation of Geronimo as a "Key Black Extremist" for being an effective leader of the Panthers.

Having failed to execute Geronimo in a December 1969 raid on L.A. Panther headquarters, the FBI/LAPD used fink Julius Butler to frame him up for the murder of Olsen on a Santa Monica tennis court the year before. As early as 1985, former FBI agent Wesley Swearingen testified he had

seen three sets of wiretap logs confirming that at the time of the murder Geronimo was 400 miles away in Oakland, attending Panther meetings which were under heavy surveillance. The FBI then claimed those wiretaps had been lost. Now, even as Garcetti throws in the towel, he refuses to acknowledge what millions around the world have long known: that Geronimo is an innocent man. For Garcetti to admit this would expose the American system of injustice, once again revealing the bourgeois state to be an instrument of

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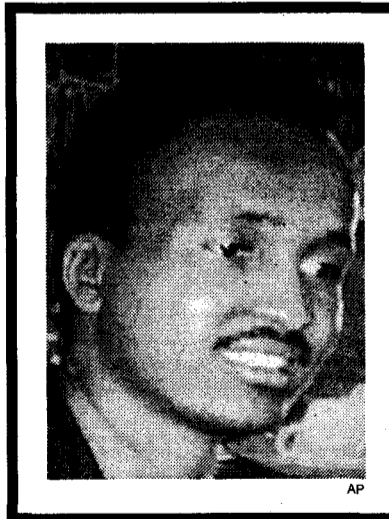
## Outrage Over NYPD Killing of Amadou Diallo

# For Labor Protest Against Racist Cop Terror!

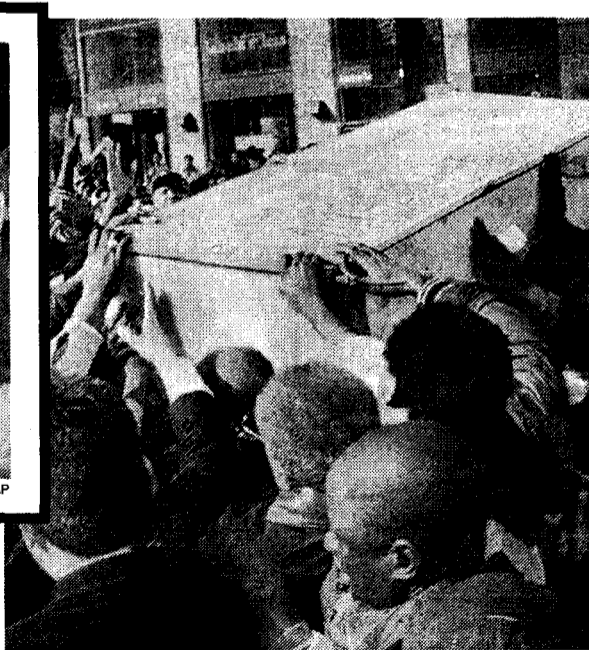
NEW YORK CITY—Outrage over the racist police killing of Guinean immigrant Amadou Diallo on February 4 continues to smolder throughout this city, which has increasingly taken on the cast of an urban police state under Republican mayor Rudolph Giuliani. Almost every day since four thugs from the NYPD's "elite" Street Crime Unit fired 41 bullets at Diallo, there has been a protest against the killing. The impact was felt as far away as Guinea, where Diallo's funeral was accompanied by protests in both the capital of Conakry and his family's village.

What the reign of cop terror means in New York's ghettos and barrios was seen again just last week, when cops opened fire on another unarmed black man, a transit worker, in response to a "domestic disturbance," as his mother screamed, "Please don't shoot, he's unarmed." As if to ensure that no one be able to survive such an assault, the police commissioner announced plans following the Diallo killing to arm the NYPD with the even more lethal hollow-point bullets.

As with the depraved cop torture of Haitian immigrant Abner Louima in 1997, public revulsion at the NYPD's wanton brutality has extended well beyond the besieged black and Hispanic population. In his *New York Times* (21



Thousands poured out for February 12 funeral in Manhattan for Guinean immigrant Amadou Diallo.



Williams/NY Daily News

February) column, Bob Herbert, who has often reported on racist cop violence, noted that "criticism of misconduct by the police can now readily be heard in most neighborhoods across the city." One reason for this is that youth of all races are frequent targets of arbitrary police abuse. Herbert quotes Brooklyn high school teacher Ellie Weiss, whose students are often harassed by the police: "It really,

really bothers me that my kids think this is a normal thing."

Masses of New Yorkers are not only outraged by NYPD atrocities like the Diallo killing but are increasingly fearful of becoming a statistic themselves. Last September, Giuliani ordered the police occupation of a Harlem neighborhood. Intimidating and threatening those attending or even passing by the "Million Youth

March" organized by black nationalist demagogue Khallid Muhammad, the cops finally attacked the platform. Giuliani has widened the scope of his "zero tolerance" police crackdowns beyond the barrios and ghettos, where the cops have always acted as an army of occupation, to go after everyone from cab drivers and street vendors to people who just want to preserve public garden space. And now police have been given the authority to seize vehicles of anyone simply charged with "driving while intoxicated" and to sell them back to their owners...if they're lucky! In defending this measure, Giuliani pronounced:

"Let's say somebody is acquitted, and it's one of those acquittals in which the person was guilty but there is just not quite enough evidence beyond a reasonable doubt. That might be a situation in which the car would still be forfeited."

Here Giuliani openly expresses the appetite for police bonapartism, where the cops act not only to arrest but to judge and penalize—often by way of a 9mm gun—without even the window dressing of "accountability."

The widespread outrage over the Diallo killing and the cops' increasing brazenness cries out for massive social protest centered on the power of the multiracial labor movement. With their tens of

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