



## Suharto on the Ropes—Beware Imperialist Schemes for New Dictatorship!

# Indonesia: For Workers Revolution!



AFP photos

Protest by University of Indonesia students against dictator Suharto. Anger over police/military terror, IMF austerity triggered plebeian upheaval against U.S.-backed dictatorship.

MAY 19—After more than three decades of tyrannical military dictatorship, ushered in by the slaughter of a half million workers, peasants, Communists and ethnic Chinese in 1965-66, the reign of Indonesian strongman Suharto appears to be coming to an end. Months of skyrocketing inflation and unemployment resulting from the economic crisis racking Southeast Asia have led to growing turmoil throughout the country. The anger exploded in the past two weeks, when the government imposed draconian cuts in subsidies for fuel and other necessities—jacking up prices by as much as 70 percent—as part of the austerity measures

### Down With the Generals! Down With Anti-Chinese Pogroms! Independence for East Timor!

dictated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

When troops shot dead six student protesters from Jakarta's elite Trisakti University last Tuesday, this provoked a plebeian upheaval which left hundreds dead and wide swathes of the capital in

smoldering ruins. Fearing for their safety, the IMF vultures and imperialist bankers who have sucked the lifeblood out of Indonesia's toilers temporarily withdrew their personnel from the capital. The desperately poor slum masses particularly targeted the mansions and businesses of

the president, his family and cronies. But the looting of stores and shopping malls also spilled over into murderous attacks against Chinese merchants and homes. There are clear indications that these pogromist assaults were encouraged by the regime itself, which has time and again channeled popular outrage into anti-Chinese racism.

Suharto, returning from a conference in Egypt, revoked some of the cuts while flooding the streets of Jakarta with thousands of troops. As the dictator temporizes, calls for his resignation multiply. From the slums of Jakarta to the

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## U.S. "War on Drugs" Means Global Terror

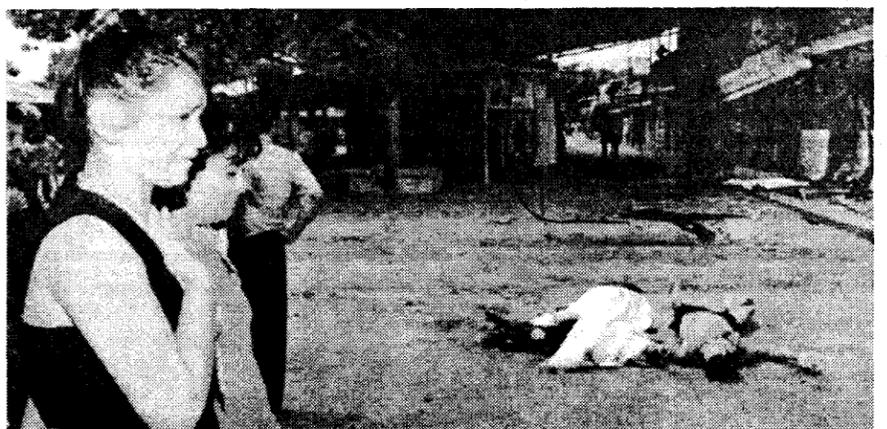
# Death Squad Massacres in Colombia

The murder of some two dozen peasants in the Colombian village of Puerto Alvira on May 4 cast a stark light on the escalating war of terror being waged by U.S.-backed military forces in that South American country. Many of those killed, who included children only five years old, were doused with gasoline and set ablaze. This was the third massacre perpetrated by death squads in peasant villages in less than two weeks.

And on May 8, even as Colombian president Ernesto Samper was hypocritically condemning "paramilitary violence," his own troops gunned down at least 25 members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) in the vicinity of Puerto Alvira. Dozens of peasants were also killed by death squads in the same area last July.

U.S. imperialism stands directly behind this grisly, and growing, slaughter of peasants and leftist guerrillas in Colombia. The country is crawling with Pentagon "advisers," CIA operatives, Green Berets and other "counterinsurgency" units, as well as U.S.-supplied helicopter gunships. In late March, only

*continued on page 2*



Agudelo/EI Tiempo

Some two dozen peasants in Puerto Alvira were slaughtered by Colombian death squad, May 4.



# Colombia Massacres...

(continued from page 1)

weeks before the most recent massacres, the Clinton administration called for a sharp increase in military aid to Colombia, supposedly aimed at eliminating the Colombian cocaine and heroin trade. As we wrote last year: "The 'drug war' has become Yankee imperialism's latest fig leaf for beefing up the forces of repression against peasant and working-class unrest in Latin America, while at home it has meant an escalation of racist police terror in the ghettos and barrios" (WV No. 664, 21 March 1997).

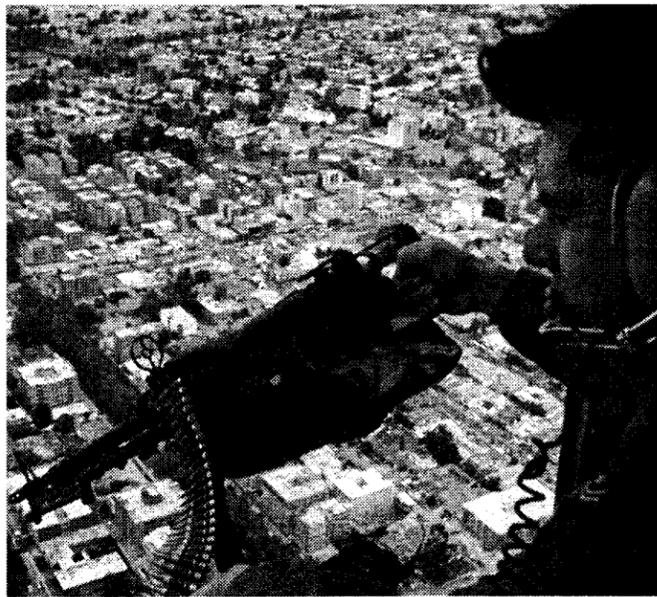
Colombia offers prime evidence of the real purpose behind Washington's global "war on drugs." Only a year ago, Clinton was denouncing Samper for being "soft on drug traffickers." But with the FARC and another leftist guerrilla organization, the National Liberation Army (ELN),



AFF

gaining strength and with imperialist oil interests in the country increasingly threatened, the U.S. has been funneling ever more arms and "advisers" to the Colombian regime. Clinton's latest aid request came just days after the FARC inflicted the worst defeat on the Colombian army and its U.S. advisers in decades, as the leftist guerrillas killed up to 80 soldiers of an elite, Pentagon-trained counterinsurgency unit during a

**Clinton drug czar McCaffrey visits Bogotá as U.S. pours in "advisers" and helicopter gunships.**



Richard Emblin

24-hour battle in the southern province of Caqueta.

The FARC and ELN now control as much as half of the countryside. A recent *U.S. News and World Report* (May 11) headlined its article, "Is Colombia Lost to Rebels?" Republican Congressman Benjamin Gilman rails about the spectre of a "narco-state" and Clinton drug czar General Barry McCaffrey denounces the FARC and ELN as "narco-guerrillas." In fact, the U.S.-backed military and death squads are linchpins in the Colombian drug trade. The head of the anti-communist paramilitary alliance that perpetrated the Puerto Alvirra massacre and many others, the "United Self-Defense Units of Colombia," is himself a leading member of the country's new landowning "narco-bourgeoisie." These death squads murdered over 3,300 peasants in the first nine months of 1997 alone, while more than a million have been driven from their homes.

Meanwhile, trade unionists and leftist militants are increasingly targeted by government repression and right-wing terror. On April 21, public sector unions held a nationwide 24-hour strike to protest the assassination of Eduardo Umana, a respected human rights lawyer killed for defending jailed leaders of the USO oil workers union. Less than three weeks later, two oil workers were murdered and a USO leader narrowly escaped assassination, provoking a protest strike by 7,000 USO members against the state-run Ecopetrol company. Colombia's capitalist rulers have been selling off the country's oil wealth to "multinational" giants like British Petroleum and Occidental Petroleum, themselves reported to be key backers of the right-wing paramilitary butchers.

A November 1996 Human Rights Watch report—"Colombia's Killer Networks: The Military-Paramilitary Partnership and the United States"—makes it clear that the surge in death-squad terror is directly linked to a recent CIA and Defense Department program to create clandestine "intelligence networks" in Colombia. Over the past decade, Washington has poured a staggering \$500 million—half of all U.S. military aid to Latin America—into Colombia, much of it going to supply the army units most notorious for perpetrating massacres. More than 9,000 Colombian officers, including armed forces chief Gen. Manuel José Bonett, got their training in torture and "neutralization" of leftists at the "School of the Americas" (more accurately known as the "School of the Assassins") now located at Fort Benning, Georgia.

U.S. imperialism's keen interest in Colombia also derives from that country's strategic location just south of Panama and the Canal Zone. The U.S. slaughtered thousands in its 1989 invasion, supposedly to arrest Panamanian strongman and former CIA "asset" Manuel Noriega for running drugs. Panama's role in the drug trade has only increased since then. Meanwhile, the country is being used as a staging area for the U.S.-backed war against the Colombian insurgents. Washington has been scheming for ways to get around the 1977 Panama

Canal Treaty, which stipulated the return of all U.S. military facilities there to Panamanian control by the year 2000. Although the U.S. Southern Command was transferred to Miami last year, Clinton announced the creation of a vast, new "drug war" command center in Panama, to be manned by as many as 3,000 U.S. troops.

As many as 30,000 people have been killed in Colombia since the mid-1980s. Yet the armed struggle of the peasant-based leftist insurgents is aimed simply at pressuring the country's capitalist rulers into a "power-sharing" agreement based on negotiating a settlement over questions such as land reform, the sell-off of state-owned enterprises and "independence" from U.S. imperialism. As the U.S.-brokered "peace" in El Salvador makes clear, such an agreement only promises further immiseration and repression for the worker and peasant masses. The fight for national and social emancipation requires an internationalist proletarian vanguard party built in political struggle against all variants of petty-bourgeois nationalism and peasant guerrillism. As we wrote in "U.S. 'Drug War' Means Imperialist Terror" (WV No. 664, 21 March 1997):

"What is needed above all is the forging of revolutionary workers parties armed with the Trotskyist perspective of permanent revolution: to break the chains of imperialist domination, the proletariat—standing at the head of the peasantry and all the oppressed—must seize state power from the weak and venal local bourgeoisies and seek to extend socialist revolution to the U.S. imperialist heartland."

As Marxist internationalists, the Spartacist League seeks to bring down U.S. imperialism from within through proletarian revolution against the rapacious American bourgeoisie. A revolutionary leadership of the workers movement would mobilize the multiracial proletariat to oppose cop terror in the ghettos and barrios carried out under the guise of the racist "war on drugs"—calling for decriminalization of drugs—and to combat anti-immigrant racism. We demand: Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!

Against the chauvinist, pro-imperialist AFL-CIO tops, we fight for international workers solidarity and for common class struggle by workers throughout the Americas. The millions of Mexican, Central and South American workers in the U.S. can serve as a living bridge between the struggles of the Latin American proletariat against the depredations of Wall Street and the International Monetary Fund and the fight for socialist revolution here. **Down with death squad terror! U.S. hands off Colombia!** ■

## Indonesia and Permanent Revolution

*As mass protests sweep Indonesia, the imperialist powers are angling to replace the discredited Suharto dictatorship with a more reliable capitalist regime. Any such "solution" promises only to continue the impoverishment and repression of the worker and peasant masses, oppression of women and subjugation of national and ethnic minorities. What is needed is a Leninist vanguard party to lead the vibrant, young proletarian,*



TROTSKY

*standing at the head of all the oppressed, in socialist revolution against the imperialist-backed bourgeoisie. This is the road of permanent revolution elaborated by Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky in drawing the lessons of the victorious October Revolution of 1917 and the defeated 1925-27 Chinese Revolution.*

Not a single one of the tasks of the "bourgeois" revolution can be solved in these backward countries under the leadership of the "national" bourgeoisie, because the latter emerges at once with foreign support as a class alien or hostile to the people. Every stage in its development binds it only the more closely to the foreign finance capital of which it is essentially the agency. The petty bourgeoisie of the colonies, that of handicrafts and trade, is the first to fall victim in the unequal struggle with foreign capital, declining into economic insignificance, becoming declassed and pauperized. It cannot even conceive of playing an independent political role. The peasantry, the largest numerically and the most atomized, backward, and oppressed class, is capable of local uprisings and partisan warfare, but requires the leadership of a more advanced and centralized class in order for this struggle to be elevated to an all-national level. The task of such leadership falls in the nature of things upon the colonial proletariat, which, from its very first steps, stands opposed not only to the foreign but also to its own national bourgeoisie....

The above developed views regarding the special character of the "bourgeois" revolutions in historically belated countries are by no means the product of theoretical analysis alone. Before the second Chinese revolution (1925-27) they had already been submitted to a grandiose historical test. The experience of the three Russian revolutions (1905, February and October 1917) bears no less significance for the twentieth century than the French revolution bore for the nineteenth....

The regime of the proletarian dictatorship, by its very nature, however, could not limit itself to the framework of bourgeois property. The rule of the proletariat automatically placed on the agenda the socialist revolution, which in this case was not separated from the democratic revolution by any historical period, but was uninterruptedly connected with it, or, to put it more accurately, was an organic outgrowth of it. At what tempo the socialist transformation of society would occur and what limits it would attain in the nearest future would depend not only upon internal but upon external conditions as well. The Russian revolution was only a link in the international revolution. Such was, in broad outline, the essence of the conception of the permanent (uninterrupted) revolution. It was precisely this conception that guaranteed the victory of the proletariat in October.

—Leon Trotsky, "Revolution and War in China" (January 1938)



LENIN

## WORKERS VANGUARD

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## Down With Anti-Immigrant Chauvinism!

# Sierra Club Eco-Racism

For several years, California has been on the leading edge of the wave of anti-immigration racism in the U.S. The passage of the state's anti-immigrant Prop. 187 four years ago helped spur passage of the immigration "reform" bill—with the backing of both the Democratic and Republican parties of capital—which was signed into law by Clinton in 1996. More recently, the California-based Sierra Club, one of the country's oldest, largest (and most bourgeois) environmentalist organizations, became embroiled in a highly publicized dispute over an explicitly anti-immigrant proposal. While this racist measure was ultimately rejected last month, it demonstrated the deeply reactionary underpinnings of the "environmentalist" movement.

Sierra Club members were faced with two proposals on immigration and population control. The openly racist "Alternative A" called for an "end to U.S. population growth" including "through reduction in net immigration." "Alternative B" called for limiting global population growth without taking a formal position on U.S. immigration policy, reasserting a position which the Sierra Club first adopted in 1996.

Nevertheless, Alternative B bought into the racist anti-immigrant frenzy by calling to slow down immigration "by encouraging sustainability, economic security, health and nutrition, human rights and environmentally responsible consumption" in underdeveloped countries. In other words, Third World peoples should stay at home to suffer the untrammelled exploitation, poverty and oppression meted out by the imperialist rulers of this world. In its opposition to Alternative A, the New York Sierra Club whined that immigrants only "indirectly" hurt the environment as the "result of their participation in the American economy" (*City Sierran*, Spring 1998).

One way or another, *all* environmen-

talists embrace the false premise first put forward by Thomas Malthus in his 1798 tract, *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, that there are too many people on the planet and not enough resources. Unlike "right to life" bigots and other religious reactionaries, Marxists do not promote unlimited population growth; we recognize that the resources of this planet are not infinite. But our fight is for socialist revolution internationally to expropriate the capitalist exploiters and to introduce a planned economy to vastly *expand* productive capacity. Only in this way can the needs of the world's masses begin to be met on the road to building

with jobs and housing. With the notable exception of the few primitivists, who firmly advocate closing America's borders, few have faced this contradiction."

—*Green Delusions: An Environmentalist Critique of Radical Environmentalism* (1992)

With the capitalist rulers' anti-immigrant drive in full steam, that "contradiction" almost split the country's most venerable environmentalist organization down the middle.

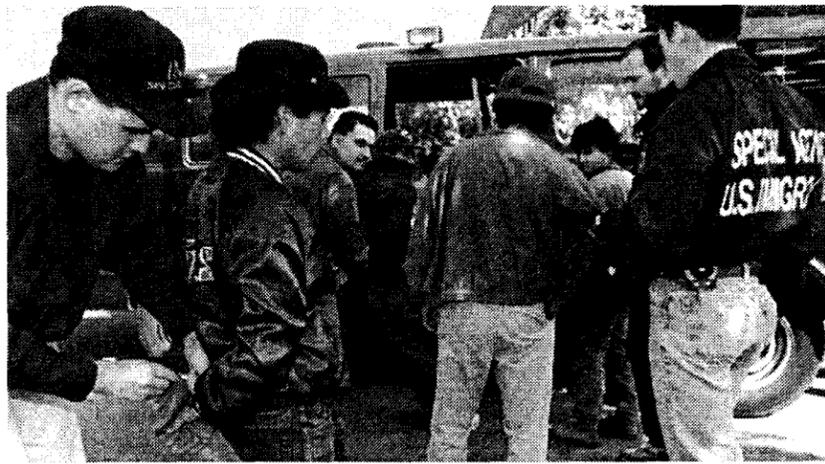
Radical youth drawn to environmentalism are no doubt horrified that the "green" movement can encompass open racists. But there is a solid logic to such eco-racism. Environmentalists view tech-

tal groups would have much in common with right-wing Republican Patrick Buchanan" (*Socialist Worker*, 27 March). But the environmentalists' class hostility to the proletariat is nothing new. The turn-of-the-century conservationist movement expressed the interests of influential elements of the native white American bourgeoisie and upper petty bourgeoisie, who wanted to preserve the country's diminishing wilderness areas for their own enjoyment. "Love of nature" became an important component of American bourgeois-nationalist and nativist ideology.

Prior to the 1960s, almost all significant conservationist and environmentalist legislation had been enacted early in the century under the administration of Theodore Roosevelt, the most bellicose of U.S. imperialist rulers, who also pressured Japan into prohibiting further emigration to the U.S. The present-day American environmentalist movement was formed in the 1970s by an organic fusion, so to



WV Photo



Gropp/Sipa

Marxists seek to mobilize proletariat in defense of immigrant rights against racist INS round-ups and deportations.

a classless communist society of abundance, where the organization of production and environmental and population issues can be addressed in a rational way. And in the U.S. as well as internationally, defense of the rights of immigrants and all the oppressed is key to mobilizing the proletariat in revolutionary struggle against the capitalist exploiters. *Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!*

When the votes were finally tallied in late April, 60 percent of the Sierra Club chose the liberal bourgeois hypocrisy of Alternative B over in-your-face racism. The environmentalist luminaries backing Alternative A included Paul Watson, co-founder of Greenpeace, and former U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson, initiator of Earth Day. Joining them was Prop. 187 co-author Barbara Coe and the racist "Federation for American Immigration Reform" (FAIR), which promotes the organization of anti-immigrant "citizen's militias" at the Mexican border. Also on board was one Garrett Hardin, an advocate of "eugenics"—the pseudo-science of selective human breeding which was pushed by Hitler's Nazis—who recently declaimed, "It would be better to encourage the breeding of more intelligent people rather than the less intelligent" (quoted in *Slingshot*, Spring 1998).

The association of such virulent racists with the environmentalist cause had the liberals of the *Nation* (18 May) complaining that "it looked as though the Sierra Club was in danger of being hijacked." But the immigrant-bashing outburst in the Sierra Club was not the result of some plot by "outsiders." As one Alternative A supporter pointed out, already in 1988 the Sierra Club advocated immigration limits in order to achieve "population stabilization" in the U.S. Several years ago, liberal environmentalist Martin W. Lewis pointed out:

"As would-be progressives, eco-radicals can hardly call for migration restrictions without appearing racist, yet as nature lovers they abhor the kind of development necessary to provide newcomers

nology and "overconsumption," not the capitalist system of exploitation and poverty, as the problem. If increased industrial production can only ruin the planet and there isn't enough to go around, then it's necessarily a question of deciding who loses out.

Many anarcho-greens who protest that capitalism, not over-population, is "killing the planet" end up extolling the ecological virtues of poverty. A Bay Area anarchist newsletter posits that the environmental "impact of an immigrant family, for example, living in a one-bedroom apartment and using mass transit pales in comparison to that of a wealthy family living in a single family home with two cars" (*Slingshot*, Spring 1998). This "less is better" mantra could not possibly find resonance among the oppressed neocolonial masses whose exploitation by the domestic capitalist rulers and the imperialists means miserable poverty and squalor. Indeed, "self-restraint" is the program cynically preached by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank as they impose starvation austerity on workers and peasants in Indonesia, South Korea and elsewhere in the Third World.

The environmentalists' reactionary message of less consumption for the impoverished Third World masses is combined with petty-bourgeois hostility for the working class in the advanced countries. This is seen not only in their disdain for the fight against the brutal conditions of capitalist exploitation, such as job speedup and other attacks impairing the health and very lives of workers, but in incidents such as tree "spiking" in the 1980s, where to save some trees from logging companies environmentalist "radicals" directly threatened workers in the lumber industry with serious injury or death.

Even so, the reformists of the International Socialist Organization (ISO) expressed astonishment that the august Sierra Club would consider an openly racist anti-immigrant policy: "You wouldn't think that leading environmen-

tal groups would have much in common with right-wing Republican Patrick Buchanan" (*Socialist Worker*, 27 March). But the environmentalists' class hostility to the proletariat is nothing new. The turn-of-the-century conservationist movement expressed the interests of influential elements of the native white American bourgeoisie and upper petty bourgeoisie, who wanted to preserve the country's diminishing wilderness areas for their own enjoyment. "Love of nature" became an important component of American bourgeois-nationalist and nativist ideology.

Prior to the 1960s, almost all significant conservationist and environmentalist legislation had been enacted early in the century under the administration of Theodore Roosevelt, the most bellicose of U.S. imperialist rulers, who also pressured Japan into prohibiting further emigration to the U.S. The present-day American environmentalist movement was formed in the 1970s by an organic fusion, so to speak, between the old bourgeois conservationists represented by the Sierra Club and certain currents of New Left petty-bourgeois radicalism.

Marxism is fundamentally counterposed to the bourgeois ideology of the environmentalists, who care more about trees than humans. It is the capitalist profit system and the bourgeois nation-state which are the real barriers to the rational development of the world's productive forces. The capitalists' insatiable drive to increase profit margins has certainly created massive problems of pollution and destruction of the environment. But a much greater and immediate threat to mankind is the intensification of rivalries among the imperialist powers, which earlier this century led to two devastating world wars and now threatens the ultimate destruction of humanity through a third, nuclear inter-imperialist war.

It will take proletarian revolution internationally, leading to a vast *increase* in energy and technology, to secure for the Third World masses the basic things that most working people in industrialized countries take for granted: electricity, literacy, clean water. A socialist planned economy would invest massively in research and development to produce the most labor-saving and energy-efficient technology. Only economic planning on an international scale, with massive transfers of technology to the backward countries, can provide the bridge to narrowing and eventually overcoming the vast gulf in standards of living separating the peoples of Africa, Latin America and much of Asia from the imperialist centers of the U.S., West Europe and Japan.

The Spartacus Youth Clubs look to recruit revolutionary-minded youth who hate the bigotry and exploitation of capitalism. What's needed is a Marxist understanding of class society, and with that the commitment to building a Leninist party to fight for proletarian revolution and a communist future which will put an end to degradation, racism and poverty. ■

### Spartacist Forums

#### LOS ANGELES

**IMF Austerity in Southeast Asia—  
War Ships in the Persian Gulf  
Defeat U.S. Imperialism  
Through Workers Revolution!**  
Friday, May 29, 7 p.m.

Hollywood United Methodist Church  
6817 Franklin Avenue  
(Highland Ave. exit off 101 Freeway)  
For more information: (213) 380-8239

#### SAN FRANCISCO

**IMF Austerity in Southeast Asia—  
War Ships in the Persian Gulf  
Defeat U.S. Imperialism  
Through Workers Revolution!**  
Saturday, May 30, 7:00 p.m.

Unitarian Church, 1187 Franklin Street  
For more information: (415) 777-9367 or  
(510) 839-0851

#### Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste Forum

#### TORONTO

**For Women's Liberation Through  
Socialist Revolution!  
Women's Liberation  
and Islamic Reaction**  
Saturday, June 6, 7:30 p.m.

St. Paul's Centre, 427 Bloor Street West  
(just west of Spadina subway)  
For more information: (416) 593-4138

# Workers Power Back to "Third Camp"

## "Death of Communism" Centrists

The following is reprinted from *Workers Hammer* No. 161 (March-April 1998), newspaper of the *Spartacist League* Britain.

### WORKERS HAMMER

Following the December 1979 Red Army intervention in Afghanistan, the imperialists fired the opening shots of their Cold War II drive to destroy the Soviet Union. Marching in lockstep behind the anti-Soviet war drive, most left groups accelerated their headlong rush to the right. In contrast, the Workers Power (WP) organisation used the occasion to announce its repudiation of the anti-Soviet "third camp" position inherited from Tony Cliff's organisation, from which WP had split five years earlier. Rejecting Cliff's ignorant "theory"—derived from buying into the "democratic" credentials of British imperialism—that the Soviet Union was "totalitarian" and "state capitalist," WP declared that it had come over to Trotsky's understanding that the Soviet Union under Stalinism was a degenerated workers state.

Yet, in practice, WP never drew the programmatic conclusions of Trotsky's analysis: unconditional military defence of the Soviet Union and the other deformed workers states against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution. WP joined the imperialists and their Labour lieutenants in opposing the Soviet military intervention against CIA-backed Islamic fundamentalists in Afghanistan, while claiming it would be "tactically wrong...to demand the immediate withdrawal of Soviet troops" (*Workers Power*, February 1980). And when Polish Solidarność made its power bid in late 1981, WP acknowledged that it was an openly counterrevolutionary movement backed by the Pope, the CIA and Western bankers, but supported it anyway.

The 1982 WP pamphlet, *The Degenerated Revolution*, codifying their line "change," is a chemically pure expression of Trotsky's description of centrism as "crystallised confusion." Thus, while recognising that capitalism had been overthrown in the Eastern European countries under the post-World War II Soviet occupation, Workers Power called these "counterrevolutionary social overturns." As the winds of Cold War II blew increasingly hot, WP moved farther to the right. In 1990, Workers Power called on anti-Communist Tory prime minister Margaret Thatcher to give arms to the fascist-infested Lithuanian Sajudis. The same year, it played an active part in pushing the anti-Communist witchhunt, orchestrated by the MI5 secret police, against National Union of Mineworkers head

Arthur Scargill, who was hated by the British bourgeoisie not only for leading the heroic 1984-85 miners strike but for denouncing the anti-Soviet war drive and rightly calling Solidarność "anti-socialist" (see "Workers Power Caught with Russian Fascists, Thatcher's Scabs," *WH* No. 116, September 1990). In August 1991, WP supporters literally stood on the barricades of counterrevolution in Moscow alongside Yeltsin's imperialist-backed forces.

Having joined Yeltsin in dancing on the grave of the great 1917 October Revolution, Workers Power and its international, the League for a Revolutionary

of counterrevolution which did indeed smash the Soviet degenerated workers state and the bureaucratically deformed workers states of Eastern Europe. But more than that it reflects how deeply Workers Power drinks from the "death of communism" well of the imperialist bourgeoisie.

### Burying the Legacy of the Russian Revolution

The "Russian question" has been the defining political question of the 20th century and the touchstone for revolutionaries. We Trotskyists stood at our posts and fought to preserve and extend

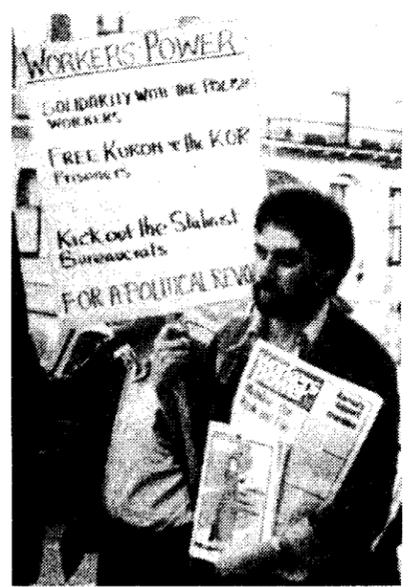
tence. Thus a leading supporter of the USec in Italy asked: "Does it still make sense for militants, history apart, to bow down before the writings of the Russian revolutionary?... I don't believe that one can think of a socialist project for the 21st century that starts from the paradigms of Leninism and Trotskyism."

The LRCI's new "theory" is correspondingly the codification of their repudiation of the fight for proletarian revolution. They stridently call to "smash the Stalinist state" while on the home front operating as the most cringing, servile apologists for the maintenance of capitalist rule in its social-democratic face. In



Der Spiegel

Workers Power called for "solidarity" with CIA/Vatican-inspired anti-Communist Polish Solidarność in early 1980s, now embraces imperialist "death of communism" lie.



Workers Hammer

Communist International (LRCI), have now brought their "theory" into line with their practice. In an article by Mark Abrams and Helen Watson titled "Stalinist Bureaucracy—Marxist Theory and the State" (*Trotskyist International*, January-June 1998), which is no less pompous than it is ignorant, WP argues that a bourgeois state was restored in the Soviet Union in 1927. The deformed workers states in Eastern Europe are said to have been created "without the smashing of the bourgeois state apparatus." Trotsky is taken to task for not calling to smash the Soviet state under Stalin, and Trotsky's whole analysis of the class character of the Soviet Union is openly repudiated.

The anti-Communist conclusion of WP is explicit:

"In the Soviet Union the smashing of the Stalinist state machine had been a programmatic necessity ever since the counter-revolutionary political expropriation of the working class by the Stalinist caste. In Eastern Europe such a task was necessary from the moment of their creation as workers' states."

This is a convenient alibi for the fact that the LRCI lined up behind the forces

of the revolutionary gains of the working class embodied in the proletarian property forms of the former workers states. We understood that the fight for workers to seize political power from the anti-revolutionary Stalinist bureaucracy—as part of the struggle for world socialist revolution—was the only real defence of these gains.

Hiding between the legs of their "own" imperialist rulers, virtually every other tendency on the left howled against the Soviet Union. Tony Cliff's Socialist Workers Party (SWP) rejoiced in Yeltsin's coming to power, declaring, "Communism has collapsed" (*Socialist Worker*, 31 August 1991). The LRCI's Fourth Congress produced a manifesto, headlined "A New Dawn for Humanity" (*Workers Power*, October 1997), which likewise celebrated the victory of the forces of counterrevolution: "These movements brought an end to decades of Stalinist dictatorship. All genuine revolutionaries rejoiced at the downfall of these bureaucratic, totalitarian monstrosities."

With their "new" theory on the class character of the Soviet state, Workers Power is part of a stampede of pseudo-Trotskyists who have joined the imperialists in trying to bury the legacy of the Russian Revolution and with it the "spectre" of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Al Richardson, editor of the British journal *Revolutionary History*, now suggests the Russian Revolution was "premature," or a "false start." Expressing his own cynical attitude to revolutionary history, Richardson sneers at "the present debate between supporters of the workers' state theory and the proponents of state capitalism as a puerile exercise, unworthy of the attention of serious Marxists, as well as being a waste of time and effort" (*In Defence of the Russian Revolution: A Selection of Bolshevik Writings 1917-1923* [1995]).

The United Secretariat (USec), which falsely claimed for many years to be the continuators of Trotsky's Fourth International, is now ditching any such pre-

"Marxist Theory and the State," Workers Power declares that what existed in the Soviet Union and the deformed workers states of Eastern Europe was "the bourgeois form of the state machine and the proletarian content of the social relations of production defended by this machine." This ignorant gobbledygook makes a mockery of the most elementary Marxism in order to serve the purpose of Workers Power's prostration before Labourite social democracy. Its idea of a "new dawn" for the working class in Britain was the election of Tony Blair's virulently anti-working-class Labour government.

As we wrote in our article "Workers Power's 'United Front' with Counterrevolution" (*WH* No. 160, January-February 1998):

"Specifically against the German Social Democrat Kautsky, who opposed proletarian revolution, Lenin said that 'the proletariat cannot simply win state power in the sense that the old state apparatus passes into new hands, but must smash this apparatus, must break it and replace it by a new one' (*The State and Revolution*). By asserting that workers states could come into existence without smashing 'the bourgeois form of state apparatus,' the latter-day Kautskyites of Workers Power reveal their true programme—pushing social-democratic parties like the Australian Labor Party or the British Labour Party into getting rid of capitalism."

### The Degeneration of the Russian Revolution

Counterrevolution in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe represented an unparalleled defeat for the working masses in these countries and the entire world. It has led to an escalation in the oppression of the semicolonial peoples, fratricidal nationalist war in the now capitalist states of the former Yugoslavia and USSR and a dramatic increase in racist terror throughout Europe. It has exacerbated the rivalry among competing imperialist powers, thus pushing the world closer to imperialist war. And it has led to a dramatic retrogression in the political consciousness of the working class and



WV Photo

Trotskyists hailed 1979 Soviet intervention against imperialist-backed Islamic reactionaries in Afghanistan, organized support for besieged women and leftists following Kremlin's treacherous 1989 withdrawal.



leftist youth, who are bombarded with bourgeois ideology that "socialism is impossible" and "communism is dead."

The International Communist League fights to complete the task begun by Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik Party when they led the working class to victory in Russia in 1917—to pursue the class struggle to a victorious conclusion, with state power embodied in workers councils around the world. In a period conditioned by such colossal defeats for the international proletariat as capitalist counterrevolution in the homeland of the October Revolution, the disproportion between our purpose and the current political consciousness of the working class, youth and the left internationally is great. Unlike those self-proclaimed leftists who disparage Leninism and the lessons of the Russian Revolution, we hold on to the dearly bought lessons of the past as part of our fight to be the revolutionary leadership that can rearm the proletariat with the consciousness of its historic interest in the struggle for new October Revolutions.

For the first and only time in human history, the Russian Revolution took the Marxist programme of proletarian revolution out of the realm of theory and gave it living reality, creating a society where the proletariat ruled through its own class dictatorship. The Bolshevik Revolution was a beacon to the workers of the world. The Bolsheviks understood that socialist revolution in the imperialist countries was essential to the survival of the proletarian dictatorship in Russia, and saw the Russian Revolution as the opening shot in the overthrow of capitalism internationally, expecting it to be quickly followed by workers revolutions elsewhere.

The defeat particularly of a revolution in Germany in 1918-19 and imperialist hostility to the fledgling Soviet republic, which was invaded by 14 capitalist armies, led to prolonged isolation of the workers state in a very backward country. Writing in 1921, Lenin noted: "The workers' state is an abstraction. In reality we have a workers' state with the following peculiar features, (1) it is the peasants and not the workers who predominate in the population and (2) it is a workers' state with bureaucratic deformations" (cited in Trotsky, "From a Scratch—To the Danger of Gangrene," 1940). In 1922, Lenin urged Trotsky to take up the fight against the increasing bureaucratisation of the Bolshevik Party. Particularly following the failure of a second revolutionary opportunity in Germany in October 1923 and the consequent demoralisation of the Soviet proletariat, quantity turned into quality, as the bureaucratic layer headed by Stalin usurped power from the proletariat through a *political counterrevolution*.

In his retrospective analysis of the triumph of the Stalinist bureaucracy over the Trotskyist Left Opposition, Trotsky wrote:

"Socially the proletariat is more homogeneous than the bourgeoisie, but it contains within itself an entire series of strata that become manifest with exceptional clarity following the conquest of power, during the period when the bureaucracy and a workers' aristocracy connected with it begin to take form. The smashing of the Left Opposition implied in the most direct and immediate sense the transfer of power from the hands of the revolutionary vanguard into the hands of the more conservative elements among the bureaucracy and the upper crust of the working class. The year 1924—that was the beginning of the Soviet Thermidor."

—"The Workers' State, Thermidor and Bonapartism" (1935)

In 1924, the Stalinists repudiated the internationalist programme of Lenin's Bolsheviks and adopted the nationalist dogma of "socialism in one country," which Workers Power barely mentions. Instead, echoing the position of Tony Cliff, it claims that the qualitative degeneration of the Russian Revolution occurred in 1927. Like Cliff, Workers Power declares that this signalled the restoration of a capitalist state in the Soviet Union. WP disingenuously asks why "did



Workers Hammer

**British Workers Power at 1990 London protest in support of fascist-infested Baltic counterrevolutionaries.**

Trotsky never argue that the Stalinist state machine should be 'smashed' in the course of the political revolution?"

The answer is quite simple. Unlike Cliff and WP, Trotsky understood that the degeneration of the Russian Revolution was *political* and did not signify a social counterrevolution. That the Stalinist bureaucracy ruled through massive repression and terror was not a reflection of any change in the class character of the Soviet Union but rather of the fact that the bureaucracy was based on an enormous contradiction. Trotsky described the Soviet bureaucracy as a brittle, privileged and parasitic *caste* that is "recruited, supplemented and renewed in the manner of an administrative hierarchy." As Trotsky insisted, the "bureaucracy derives its privileges not from any special property relations peculiar to it as a 'class,' but from those property relations that have been created by the October revolution, and that are fundamentally adequate for the dictatorship of the proletariat" ("The Class Nature of the Soviet State," 1933).

The Trotskyist programme was very clear: unconditional military defence of the Soviet Union against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution, and proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy. "*Unconditional defence*" meant explicitly that this defence was not conditional upon the prior overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy. Trotsky used the term proletarian political revolution to make clear that what was necessary was not a new form of class rule, but a change in the political character of the regime which exercised the dictatorship of the proletariat. The bureaucratic caste had to be overthrown and genuine workers democracy—through the rule of soviets—restored.

Trotsky carefully distinguished such a political revolution from a social revolution to overthrow capitalism, which would require the smashing of the existing state apparatus. In a workers political revolution, said Trotsky, "what will be involved is not an armed insurrection against the dictatorship of the proletariat but the removal of a malignant growth upon it."

### Trotsky vs. the Predecessors of Workers Power

Trotsky waged a tireless political struggle against those who claimed that capitalism had been restored in the USSR or that a new exploiting class had consolidated power. According to WP, "The smashing of the Stalinist state machine had been a programmatic necessity ever since the counter-revolutionary political expropriation of the working class by the Stalinist caste." Ridiculing earlier anti-Marxist renegades who, using the vulgar rhetoric of "democracy," claimed that Stalin had replaced the dictatorship of the proletariat with the "dictatorship over the proletariat," Trotsky wrote:

"The most widespread, popular, and at first sight, irrefutable argument in favor of the non proletarian character of the present Soviet state is based upon the reference to the strangulation of the liberties of proletarian organizations and to the almightiness of the bureaucracy....

"Such enticing reasoning is constructed not upon a materialistic analysis of the process as it develops in reality but upon pure idealistic schemas, upon Kantian

norms. Certain noble 'friends' of the revolution have provided themselves with a very radiant conception of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and they are completely prostrated in the face of the fact that the real dictatorship with all its heritage of class barbarism, with all its internal contradictions, with the mistakes and crimes of the leadership, fails entirely to resemble that sleek image that they have provided. Disillusioned in their most beautiful emotions, they turn their backs to the Soviet Union."

—"The Class Nature of the Soviet State"

Workers Power's line that a capitalist state was restored in the Soviet Union in 1927 is simply a rehash of the same social-democratic methodology that Trotsky refuted 60 years earlier. Indeed, its "new theory" bears some resemblance to the bureaucratic collectivism of James Burnham, who with Max Shachtman headed a petty-bourgeois opposition in 1939-40 inside the then-Trotskyist American Socialist Workers Party to the programme of unconditional military defence of the Soviet Union.

Burnham asserted that the Soviet Union had a non-capitalist economy, while claiming that a new "bureaucratic collectivist" exploiting class had taken power in the Soviet Union. This "theory" was later taken up by the Shachtmanites as an after-the-fact rationale for reneging on defence of the Soviet Union—in capitulation to liberal petty-bourgeois "public opinion"—at the time of the 1939 Hitler-Stalin pact.

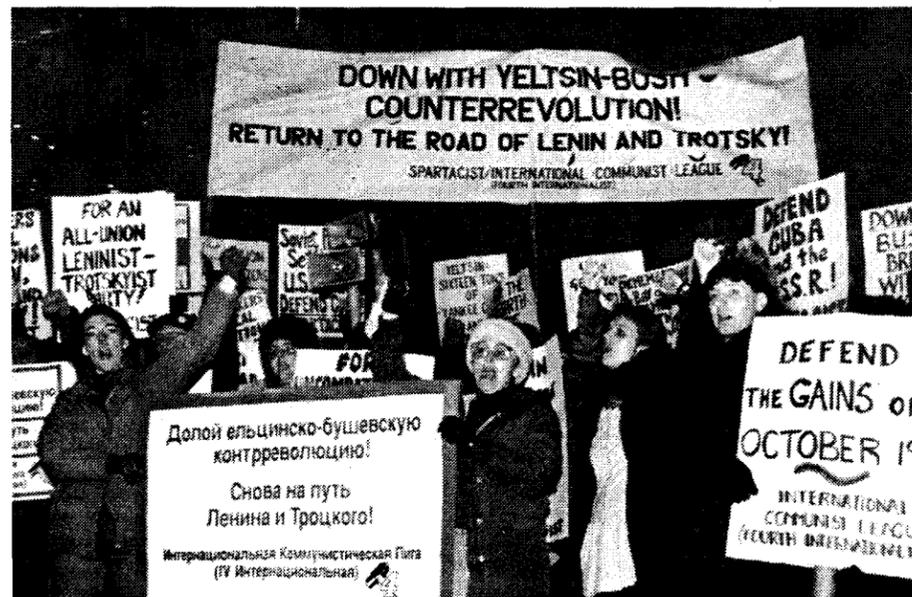
Similarly, Workers Power's belated "dis-

covery" that the Soviet Union became a "bourgeois" state in 1927 is a convenient rationale for its support for the forces of counterrevolution during Cold War II. It also serves to suggest that nothing decisive happened in 1991-92 when a capitalist state was indeed restored as a result of Yeltsin's imperialist-backed counterrevolution. Workers Power bragged about standing on Yeltsin's barricades among the rabble of "spivs and racketeers" in a "united front" for "democracy."

### Workers Power vs. the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

As far back as 1918, in *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, Lenin denounced German Social Democrat Karl Kautsky's support to capitalist "democracy" against the dictatorship of the proletariat: "It is natural for a liberal to speak of 'democracy' in general; but a Marxist will never forget to ask: 'for what class?'" The LRCI's "new" analysis revises the Marxist definition of the state by divorcing it from the property forms it defends. For Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky the state was an organ of class rule. The bourgeois state consists of "special bodies of armed men"—committed to the defence of capitalist private property. Through socialist revolution, the working class must establish its own rule—the dictatorship of the proletariat—by smashing the existing capitalist state apparatus.

continued on page 10



WV Photo

Der Spiegel



**SL/U.S. protest against 1992 Yeltsin visit to Wall Street paymasters. Workers Power joined reactionaries on barricades of counterrevolution in Moscow, August 1991.**

# Indonesia...

(continued from page 1)

White House and Wall Street, everyone knows that the dictator's days are numbered. The question is: what will replace him?

The imperialists are scrambling for a deal in which the military butchers agree to back some less discredited bourgeois political figures, either from Suharto's current entourage or the tame "opposition." This is the sentiment as well of wide sectors of the Indonesian bourgeoisie fed up with the way the notoriously corrupt Suharto clan has run the country into the ground. And among the protesters, particularly the students, illusions in a "democratic" wing of the military and civilian political establishment are rife.

Notably, armed forces chief Wiranto appeared at the funeral for the murdered students in Jakarta to express his apology, while his troops ostentatiously mingled with student protesters in the days after the massacre. But with the army threatening to prevent a mass student protest tomorrow, commemorating the struggle against Dutch colonialism, the waning days of the Suharto regime could yet see a massive bloodbath. And a leading spokesman for the ruling Golkar party talks of plans to replace Suharto with an "emergency committee" based on "built-in martial law"—a dire threat in the context of this blood-drenched dictatorship—particularly to crack down on "looters," i.e., the workers and urban poor. **We warn: A "reformed" Indonesian capitalist regime will be just as repressive and bloody as its predecessor and just as determined to force the country's toiling masses to pay for the capitalist crisis.**

The massive influx of imperialist investment in the last few decades has fostered the growth of a combative young proletariat, which has repeatedly engaged in strikes in recent years. Workers joined student protests in the North Sumatran city of Medan, and elsewhere public transport came to a halt as drivers went on strike. For now, however, the proletariat as a class has not entered the arena of struggle against the Suharto regime. It is urgently necessary for the working class to emerge as an independent revolutionary factor. This requires the forging of an internationalist vanguard party committed to leading the proletariat to the seizure of state power. **Down with Suharto! Down with the generals! For workers revolution in Indonesia!**

The proletariat must take its place at the head of the unemployed poor, the rural masses, women, the hundreds of brutally subjugated ethnic and national minorities in a struggle for socialist revolution against all wings of the capitalist class. This is the only way to satisfy the aspirations of the masses and break the stranglehold of imperialist exploitation and domination. Indonesia is a classic example of combined and uneven development, where modern capitalist industry coexists with deep backwardness. Drawing on the experience of the Russian

October Revolution of 1917, Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky explained in *The Permanent Revolution* (1930):

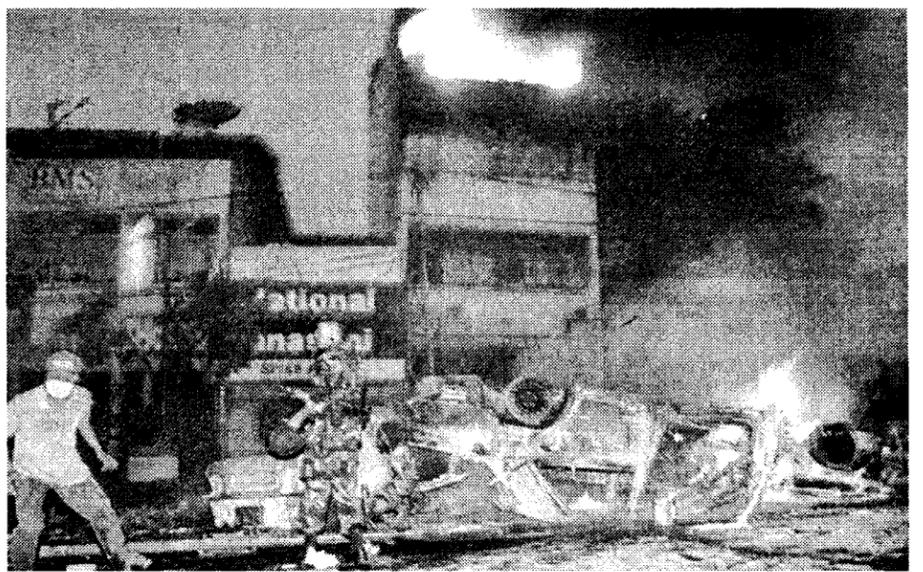
"With regard to countries with a belated bourgeois development, especially the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the theory of the permanent revolution signifies that the complete and genuine solution of their tasks of achieving **democracy and national emancipation** is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat as the leader of the subjugated nation, above all its peasant masses."

Proletarian revolution in the Indonesian archipelago would resonate throughout Southeast and East Asia, where hundreds of millions of working people are being crushed under the weight of brutal exploitation and IMF-imposed austerity. It would also be an enormous impetus to proletarian political revolution in China, where the nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy is driving headlong toward capitalist counterrevolution. The fight for a socialist Asia—for workers revolutions throughout the region, especially in imperialist centers like Japan and Australia—is a life-and-death question for proletarian militants in Indonesia. The U.S. and the other imperialist powers—which have armed Suharto to the hilt—would immediately seek to use their financial and military might to stamp out any challenge to capitalist class rule. The Spartacist League/U.S., section of the International Communist League, fights to mobilize the multiracial proletariat in struggle against the rapacious American bourgeoisie. **IMF, CIA, U.S. imperialism: Keep your bloody hands off Indonesia!**

## Washington Promotes "Democratic" Military Butchers

As the turmoil in Jakarta mounted, Clinton called for "political reform" and urged Suharto to "open a dialogue with all elements of the society," while organizing a high-level American military delegation to meet with their Indonesian counterparts, and conspicuously not with the current president. "It is important to maintain military-to-military contacts," explained U.S. admiral Prueher, commander in chief of the U.S. Pacific Command. "Indonesia is important to the United States, and it is in our interest that Indonesia gets through this."

From its braintrusting of the 1965 anti-Communist bloodbath, when the CIA provided hit lists to Suharto's butchers, to the arming and training of the dreaded Kopassus Red Berets notorious for the torture and killing of suspected political opponents, the U.S. has been a chief backer of the military regime (see "U.S. Trains Indonesian Death Squads," WV No. 688, 10 April). Today, the imperialists are intent on cohering a more stable and reliable regime capable of implementing the IMF's dictates and protecting the superprofits Nike and other corporations reap from the exploitation of starvation-wage Indonesian labor. Washington is also concerned with defending control of the strategic Malacca Strait separating Sumatra from the Malaysian peninsula, the quickest sea route between the Pacific and the oil-rich Persian Gulf.



Rioting last week left Chinese neighborhood in Jakarta in flames. Indonesian proletariat must combat anti-Chinese terror.

A measure of the level of imperialist apprehension over the spectre of "anarchy" in Indonesia was the fact that the U.S. mooted direct military intervention, declaring its readiness to send a flotilla of Navy ships, military helicopters and more than 10,000 troops to "evacuate U.S. citizens." Today's *Sydney Morning Herald* reports that a "team of military advisers" has been despatched to Jakarta and that "key sections of the Australian Defence Force have been placed on high levels of readiness, with naval helicopters being sent to Indonesia and RAAF [air force] crews put on rotation." And Japan, which is remembered for its brutal occupation when it briefly displaced the viciously racist Dutch colonialist regime during World War II, is organizing a military airlift of Japanese civilians. This would be the first time in postwar history that Japanese "self-defense" forces are unilaterally deployed abroad.

However, the imperialist powers' principal aim is to broker a political "solution" to the burgeoning Indonesian crisis. In an editorial headlined "Sunset for President Suharto," the *New York Times* (15 May) called for "a new government made up of trusted leaders" and held up the example of South Korea's Kim Dae Jung, who "persuaded citizens to accept measures that his predecessors could not." Kim, who was elected president last year largely on the basis of his record as an opponent of the former military rulers, was cultivated for decades by the CIA. Now he is administering the police-state regime and enforcing mass layoffs and IMF austerity. The imperialists' talk of democracy in Indonesia is nothing but a fig leaf for maintaining the brutal system of exploitation enforced through vicious military repression, buttressed as always by the U.S. and its British and Australian allies.

A class-struggle labor leadership would organize trade-union boycotts of arms shipments to the blood-drenched Indonesian military. Australian maritime workers have a history of such solidarity actions, from bans on Dutch shipping during the struggle for Indonesian inde-

pendence in the 1940s to a 1996 boycott demanding the release of imprisoned Indonesian workers leaders. Genuine internationalist solidarity with the Indonesian working masses requires a political struggle against the union misleaders who embrace the aims of their imperialist masters. The British Labour government has sent over 50 arms shipments to Suharto in the past year, while the Australian Labor Party recently voted against a Senate motion calling for the release of leftists in Suharto's dungeons.

And while the pro-capitalist American AFL-CIO labor bureaucracy bleats about "multinational" low-wage sweatshops in Indonesia and occasionally mouths "concern" for imprisoned trade unionists there, this is only in order to push protectionist chauvinism and to further the broader interests of American imperialism. What is needed is a fight to break workers and minorities from the capitalist Democratic Party of racism and war and the forging of a revolutionary workers party. **Imperialist hands off Indonesia!**

## "People Power" Fraud

Imperialist spokesmen have been churning out endless streams of propaganda glorifying the "people power" movement which led to the installation of Corazon ("Cory") Aquino in the Philippines in 1986. The *New York Times* (15 May) reports that "many Indonesians have become fascinated by the experience of the Philippines a decade ago in which mass demonstrations of 'people power' stopped the tanks of former President Ferdinand E. Marcos and persuaded soldiers to disobey his orders to shoot."

In fact, the "people power" mobilizations on the streets, heavily backed by the powerful Catholic hierarchy, were used as a vehicle for the U.S.-orchestrated removal of Marcos and the installation of a more credible and reliable government. Aquino's "people power" sham only succeeded because two top military leaders, Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile and Army Chief of Staff Fidel Ramos, swung to her support under direct prodding from Washington. The result was to consolidate the imperialists' control of their semi-colonial client state.

To carry off this charade, Washington had in Aquino a ready candidate with impeccable anti-Communist credentials and proven allegiance to the dictates of Washington. Aquino was a member of the landed aristocracy, owner of one of the country's largest estates. Her husband Benigno, who was assassinated in Manila in 1983, had long been groomed by the CIA as a potential replacement for the increasingly despised Marcos regime. A graduate of the CIA school in Quantico, Virginia, Benigno Aquino began his political career by participating in the suppression of the Communist-led Huk rebellion in the late 1940s and early '50s. He went on to serve as CIA "control" for a 1958 clandestine operation in North Sulawesi in Indonesia which was part of an ill-fated attempt to provoke secessionist revolts against the Communist-supported, left-nationalist Sukarno regime.

The Filipino masses are no less exploited and oppressed today than they



1986 "people power" fraud in Philippines steered opposition to hated Marcos dictatorship into support for CIA lackey Cory Aquino, whose regime enforced police-state terror against impoverished working masses.

**IMF, CIA, U.S. Imperialism: Keep Your Bloody Hands Off Indonesia!****Down With Suharto! Down With the Generals!  
For Workers Revolution in Indonesia!**

were under Marcos. The military butchers who served Marcos remain in place. The urban and rural masses are among the most impoverished in all of Southeast Asia. The myriad national and religious minorities, particularly in predominantly Islamic Mindanao, continue to suffer under the boot of police-state terror. We warned in 1986 that the replacement of the corrupt, brutal Marcos dictatorship with Aquino's "clean team" would mean "the substitution of one set of American lackeys for another. Marxists say: beware of coups 'Made in U.S.A.'" (WV No. 398, 28 February, 1986).

Whatever deal the imperialists and their Indonesian bourgeois lackeys cobble together will solve nothing, even in the short term. Whoever replaces Suharto will still have to push through the starvation policies demanded by the world bankers against an increasingly restive proletariat. And after decades of backing Suharto's iron dictatorship, Washington has no Indonesian equivalent of Kim Dae Jung waiting in the wings. Current vice-president Habibie, a fanatically anti-Chinese racist with ties to German imperialism, is very much a creature of his patron Suharto. "Moderate" generals like Wiranto are up to their necks in the blood of countless victims, from the slaughter of '65 to the ongoing torture and murder of leftists and worker militants to the repeated massacres of East Timorese independence fighters. "Opposition" politicians like Megawati Sukarnoputri—daughter of nationalist leader Sukarno, who was Suharto's predecessor—and Muslim leader Amien Rais have served as props for the military dictatorship.

**Class Collaboration:  
Road to Bloody Defeat**

Nonetheless, popular illusions in such figures pose an obstacle to the mobilization of the Indonesian proletariat. There is a syphilitic chain linking those who claim to speak for the proletariat and plebeian masses with the bourgeois "opposition" of Megawati and Rais, who in turn look to a wing of the military. Thus the left-nationalist People's Democratic Party explicitly calls for an alliance with Megawati and the Islamic PPP. The role of "moderate" Islamic leaders is typified by Rais—head of the 28 million-strong Muhammadiyah, the second-largest Muslim organization in the country—who appeals to the army to "protect the interests of the nation," hailing it as "the backbone of the community" (*Jakarta Post*, 18 April).

It is natural that these bourgeois politicians would look to the military butchers to "protect the interests of the nation." But those who promote such a perspective among the workers and urban poor are leading them to repeat the bloody defeat of 1965-66. Suharto came to power through an anti-Communist massacre carried out by the military and reactionary Islamic gangs, with the direct involvement of the American CIA and its Australian jackals. The terror which began in October 1965 crushed the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), which with three million members and 14 million supporters in trade-union, peasant, women's and youth organizations was the largest in the capitalist world.

This horrendous bloodbath was an object lesson in the deadly danger of class collaboration. Basing itself on the Menshevik/Stalinist schema of "two-stage" revolution—which amounts to mobilizing the workers to bring the bourgeois nationalists to power in the first "stage" and ends in the massacre of workers and Communists—the PKI opposed the fight for proletarian revolution. PKI chairman D. N. Aidit proclaimed: "Long live Sukarno! Long live the PKI!" With the full backing of its Stalinist mentors in Moscow and especially Beijing, the PKI preached "national unity" with the bourgeois-nationalist rulers, the Islamic establishment and the military officers. The PKI gained a number of cabinet posts in Sukarno's government, embracing his strategy of "Nasakom"—an alliance of bourgeois nationalists, Islamic groups and "Communists." This nationalist pop-

ular front chained the proletariat to its class enemy.

The PKI repeatedly banned strikes, suppressed peasant protests and preached confidence in Sukarno and his generals. Pledging to enforce "co-operation between the people and the Armed Forces, in particular the Police Force," the PKI helped strengthen the very apparatus of repression which would slaughter its followers. Following a counterrevolutionary coup in October 1965 led by Suharto, the generals struck out against the party, while Sukarno turned a blind eye to the massacre of his former allies. The PKI, and the proletariat and peasant masses who looked to it, remained paralyzed in the face of the terror. We wrote at the time: "The working people of Indonesia are now *paying with their blood* for the betrayal by the leadership of the 3,000,000-member, pro-Chinese Communist Party of Indonesia" (*Spartacist* [English edition] No. 5, November-December 1965).

In the aftermath, those leftists and liberal intellectuals who had escaped the slaughter found themselves locked away in Suharto's dungeons for decades. Twenty-five years later, PKI leaders were still being executed. Untold thousands of ethnic Chinese were also slaughtered in 1965-66. Following the massacre, Suharto closed down Chinese-language schools and newspapers and even banned Chinese writing. Ethnic Chinese are virtually banned from the political system, civil service and academia. At the same time, the fabulously wealthy Suharto clan has deeply entwined its interests with a tiny Chinese elite who control some 70-80 percent of the country's economy. This has served to make all ethnic Chinese, a predominantly Christian minority composing less than 5 percent of the population in the largest Islamic country in the world, convenient scapegoats for the abject poverty of the Indonesian masses. Yet throughout Southeast Asia, ethnic Chinese form an important part of the proletariat and have historically played leading roles in workers' struggles.

In February, Suharto got Islamic religious leaders to declare a "holy war" on "speculators," touching off renewed anti-Chinese attacks. In March, British ITN television news reported that a pogrom on the island of Lombok was organized by security forces. And the London *Sunday Times* (17 May) indicates that the same Kostrad military unit which is widely believed to have been behind the murder of the Trisakti University students also encouraged last week's rampage against Chinese homes and shops in Jakarta. Kostrad is commanded by Suharto's son-in-law, Lieutenant General Prabowo, an Islamic fanatic who formerly headed the notorious Kopassus. Shortly before that pogrom, Prabowo

ominously suggested that it was time for Indonesians to "take back control of their own economy." These incidents underline the need for Indonesian workers to champion the defense of the persecuted Chinese minority as part of the fight against their blood-drenched capitalist rulers.

**Indonesia and  
Permanent Revolution**

Bourgeois press reports have noted that the student protesters are supported by a wide array of forces, including some who themselves participated in the 1965-66 anti-Communist slaughter. The image of haughty IMF director Michel Camdessus standing over Suharto as the Indonesian strongman signed the world bankers' humiliating agreement served as a focus for "national unity." But underneath the shared outrage against Suharto and the imperialist bloodsuckers lie sharply counterposed class interests. Significant sections of the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie despise the regime for its corrupt nepotism: the Suharto family is reputed to have amassed a fortune ranging upwards of \$30 billion, *one-seventh* of the entire national economy. For the proletariat and urban and rural poor, the question is one of simple economic survival.

Unemployment has skyrocketed in the past year, leaving more than eight million jobless. Estimates indicate that by year's end nearly half of the workforce of 90 million will be making too little to meet their minimum daily needs. One mechanic in Jakarta described the latest upheaval as the result of "the big gap between the rich and the poor," adding: "We need to change the way the country is run." And an article in the *New York Times* (18 May) noted that in the slums of the capital, unemployed "idle young men sound less interested in political warfare than in class warfare." But the looting of shops amounts only to a primitive appropriation of some articles of consumption, when what is needed is the expropriation of the means of production.

In order that any of the deeply felt needs of the masses can be met, the proletariat must seize power from the national bourgeoisie, expropriating its holdings and those of the imperialists. Indonesia won formal independence under Sukarno's nationalists in 1949, after centuries under the boot of Dutch colonial rule. Under Dutch colonialism, there was scarcely anything resembling a modern proletariat. In the years immediately after World War I, Communist leaders Tan Malaka and Henricus Sneevliet pursued a futile strategy based on political blocs with and accommodation to "revolutionary nationalists." They carried out an entry into the bourgeois-nationalist (and anti-Chinese) Sarekat Islam and even defended pan-Islamism as corre-

sponding "to the national liberation struggle." In *The Permanent Revolution*, Trotsky wrote:

"Under the conditions of the imperialist epoch the national democratic revolution can be carried through to a victorious end only when the social and political relationships of the country are mature for putting the proletariat in power as the leader of the masses of the people. And if this is not yet the case? Then the struggle for national liberation will produce only very partial results, results directed entirely against the working masses. "A backward colonial or semi-colonial country, the proletariat of which is insufficiently prepared to unite the peasantry and take power, is thereby incapable of bringing the democratic revolution to its conclusion."

Today, Indonesia remains a neocolony of imperialism—a source of cheap natural resources and low-wage labor—seething with unresolved national and social contradictions. But what has changed is the emergence of a young proletariat which has indicated its potential power in a series of strikes beginning in the early 1990s, many of them in the Jakarta-Bogor-Tangerang-Bekasih industrial belt of central Java. This is the social force which can sweep away the military dictatorship and put an end to the brutal oppression of women and the subjugation of national and religious minorities. There is no democratic wing of the bourgeoisie, and there can be no genuine democracy under capitalism in backward, dependent countries saddled by imperialist exploitation and grinding poverty. The proletariat must be made conscious of its historic role as the leader of the dispossessed masses and the gravedigger of this system of capitalist exploitation. It is the task of a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party to bring that understanding to the working class.

Amid the deepening economic crisis in Southeast Asia, hundreds of thousands of immigrant workers have been savagely expelled from one country after another. Working-class militants must oppose all deportations and demand full citizenship rights for all immigrants. In Indonesia itself, hundreds of national and ethnic minorities suffer under the whip of the Java-centered bourgeoisie. This is particularly clear in East Timor, which has been the scene of one bloody military massacre after another. Proletarian revolutionaries in Indonesia must uphold the right of self-determination for oppressed nations. *Independence for East Timor!*

Against the schemes of the imperialists, the bourgeois "opposition" and the military to impose a new police-state regime—possibly with a new version of the hand-picked "parliament"—in Suharto's wake, we oppose the ban on political parties and call for a *revolutionary constituent assembly*. In raising this

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# Indonesia...

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slogan for China following the suppression of the 1925-27 Revolution by the bourgeois-nationalist Guomintang (Kuomintang), Trotsky explained how the fight for a constituent assembly must be linked to a perspective for proletarian power:

*"The Communist Party can and should formulate the slogan of the constituent assembly with full powers, elected by universal, equal, direct, and secret suffrage. In the process of agitation for this slogan, it will obviously be necessary to explain to the masses that it is doubtful if such an assembly will be convened, and even if it were, it would be powerless so long as the material power remains in the hands of the Kuomintang generals."*

Both under Sukarno and Suharto, the nationalist regime has imposed many of the dictates of Islamic law on women: abortion is banned, the woman's role as family housekeeper and domestic slave to her husband is enshrined in law. Suharto sought to achieve social stability by reinforcing the hold of conservative Islamic interests, making religious education compulsory in public schools and granting increased powers to Islamic courts. The role of Amien Rais points to the growth of Islam as a political factor, which can only be a force for reaction, particularly targeting women and religious minorities.

At the same time, this deepgoing oppression has impelled the new generation of women workers into the forefront of the class struggle (see "Women Workers and the Fight for Socialist Revolution: Indonesia Seethes Under IMF Austerity," *WV* No. 688, 10 April). The proletariat must fight for the separation of state and religion and against theocratic reaction, opposing all discrimination against religious minorities. We call for free abortion on demand and free quality health care for all as part of the fight for *women's liberation through socialist revolution*.

As in all underdeveloped countries, the Indonesian bourgeoisie is tied by a thousand strings to the imperialists and incapable of resolving the tasks associated with the European bourgeois revolutions of the 18th and 19th centuries, such as political democracy, agrarian revolution or national emancipation. In elaborating the program of permanent revolution, Trotsky stressed that in the epoch of imperialism these tasks can only be resolved through the proletarian seizure of power. To thwart imperialist intervention and overcome the economic backwardness of "Third World" countries, this must be integrally linked to a struggle for international socialist revolution, particularly in the advanced industrial countries.



**Spartacist League/Australia contingent at 1997 Melbourne protest against Suharto dictatorship.**

This perspective was confirmed in both the positive and the negative in the experience of the Soviet Union. The 1917 Bolshevik Revolution transformed backward Russia, a preponderantly peasant society and a prison house of oppressed peoples under the reign of tsarist despotism. But seven decades of Stalinist betrayal of revolutionary opportunities around the world, perpetrated in the name of "socialism in one country," finally led to the undoing of the October Revolution. This ultimate Stalinist betrayal only underscores the need for a revolutionary-internationalist program for proletarian power.

Viewed narrowly from the Indonesian archipelago, prospects for consolidating proletarian rule in the face of imperialist hostility might appear bleak. But particularly given the economic turmoil in the region, especially in Thailand and Malaysia—which has strong linguistic and cultural links with Indonesia—socialist revolution in Indonesia would be a spark for class struggle throughout the Pacific Rim. The ties connecting the proletariat of these countries are embodied in the millions of immigrant workers in the region. South Korea is a tinder box, with its combative working class chafing under the prospect of millions of layoffs. And in Japan, the industrial power house of the region, the proletariat likewise faces mass layoffs as the bourgeoisie seeks to stem a deepening economic slump and financial crisis.

The fate of the Indonesian masses is particularly bound up with events in China. The Beijing bureaucracy bore direct responsibility for the Maoist PKI's disastrous course, a betrayal of socialist revolution which served only to further isolate the Chinese deformed workers state. Now the Chinese Stalinists are pushing rapidly toward capitalist restoration, provoking a wave of workers' struggles. The fight for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy and stop capitalist counterrevolution

is at the center of any revolutionary perspective in the region. It is crucial for proletarian militants in Indonesia and elsewhere to call for unconditional military defense of China and the other deformed workers states—North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba—against capitalist attack and internal counterrevolution.

## Forge a Leninist-Trotskyist Party!

Over the past decade, a number of independent trade unions have emerged out of workers' struggles. Many of their activists and leaders, such as Muchtar Pakpahan of the Indonesian Workers for Prosperity Union and Dita Sari of the Indonesian Center for Labor Struggles (PPBI), have faced repeated imprisonment. The PPBI is aligned with the People's Democratic Party (PRD), whose leader Budiman Sudjatmiko also languishes in prison. The international labor movement must demand: *Free Dita Sari and all leftist and trade-union prisoners!*

PRD activists have exhibited unquestioned courage in going up against a regime that has never countenanced more than the tamest "opposition." However, the leftist PRD advances a nationalist program which does not even pay lip service to socialism and seeks to tie Indonesia's toilers to an illusory "democratic" wing of the bourgeoisie. The PRD's occasional calls for independence for East Timor are couched as appeals to the imperialist United Nations to implement its bogus resolutions. And the PRD's own 1996 "Resolution on East Timor" calls not for the immediate withdrawal of Suharto's bloody occupation forces but to "reduce military operations and administration in East Timor." At any rate, this is all belied by the PRD's avid support to the Javanese-chauvinist Megawati, who demands the territory's incorporation as Indonesia's 27th province!

The PRD's bourgeois-democratic program necessarily leads it to look to the good offices of "democratic" imperial-

ism. In an interview with *Green Left Weekly* (11 March), newspaper of the Australian Democratic Socialist Party (DSP), PRD leader Sudjatmiko declared that "the dictatorship cannot guarantee free market reforms the US wants because of the nepotism and monopolies controlled by Suharto. So we have common interests in opposing this corrupt regime at this time." Such appeals to the imperialist butchers are common coin as well for the reformist DSP, which acts as press agent for the PRD. For years, the DSP has called on the racist Australian rulers to pressure the Suharto regime, while cheering UN imperialist occupations from Somalia to Cambodia to Zaire.

Meanwhile, the International Socialist Organisation (ISO) grotesquely retail imperialist propaganda equating the student protests against Suharto with the anti-Communist mobs which "played a role in bringing down the previous Sukarno regime" ([Australian] *Socialist Worker*, 6 March). These wretched reformists even promote illusions that Megawati and Rais could create "a rank and file revolutionary movement in the army, to split it from below." And the ISO's British patrons, Tony Cliff's Socialist Workers Party (SWP), have petitioned Labour prime minister Tony Blair to stop arms sales to Indonesia "in line with New Labour's 'ethical' foreign policy." This groveling before the racist, anti-union Blair government—whose idea of "ethical" policies means police terror against Catholics in Northern Ireland and threats to bomb Iraqi women and children—highlights the Cliffites' profoundly social-democratic politics. The SWP cheered the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, proclaimed itself "over the moon" when Blair was elected and supported the introduction of imperialist troops into Northern Ireland by an earlier Labour government.

We warn revolutionary-minded militants in Indonesia: beware these "socialist" apologists for imperialist terror, who buy into the bourgeoisie's lie that "communism is dead." In Indonesia, the military dictatorship and its imperialist patrons sought to ensure that anything smacking of communism was buried under a mountain of corpses. Nonetheless, a new generation of workers and radicalizing youth are being drawn into struggle by the ineradicable contradictions of capitalism. Out of this layer, through studying the dearly bought lessons of revolutionary Marxism, the nucleus of a Leninist vanguard party—fusing declassed revolutionary intellectuals with class-conscious workers—must be cohered. For new October Revolutions! Reforge Trotsky's Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution! ■

# Mumia...

(continued from page 12)

Ashley asks, "Why are so many so willing to donate so much money and energy to a case they seem to know so little about?" He seeks to portray Jamal's supporters as dupes who know little about his case, and hopes to drive away future contributors to Jamal's defense by depicting his fight for freedom as a money-making operation. The truth is simple. Millions of people around the world know Mumia was framed up. They know that Mumia had been in the cross hairs of the Philly cops and FBI because of his prominent role in the Black Panther Party as a teenager, because of his later support of the MOVE organization, because of his searing exposure of racist cop brutality and the American injustice system.

KGO-TV's attempt to scare away Mumia's supporters is also not new. After the PDC initiated a 1990 rally in Philadelphia, F.O.P. chief Richard Costello railed that Jamal's supporters were "misfit terrorists" deserving of an "electric couch." In 1994, National Public Radio capitulated to F.O.P. pressure and canceled a planned series of commentaries by Jamal. In 1995, Addison-Wesley

was subjected to a campaign of harassment when it published Jamal's *Live from Death Row*. Two years ago, witness Veronica Jones was even arrested while she testified on the stand at the hearings for Jamal. More recently, Mumia's son, Jamal Hart, was railroaded to prison for 15 years on bogus weapons possession charges for speaking out on behalf of his father. Meanwhile, state officials have intercepted and copied privileged legal communications and sent them to the governor's office.

In their efforts to isolate and silence Mumia and obstruct his legal defense, state officials have thrown him into their supermax-security, high-tech hellhole at SCI Greene. In March, draconian new regulations curtailing family visits and confiscating personal possessions provoked a hunger strike by 38 of the 111 prisoners on Greene's death row. Some of the new measures were subsequently rescinded ("Death Row Hunger Strike Ends," *WV* No. 687, 27 March). Jamal was forced to turn over some 16 boxes of personal materials, including legal papers.

Last December, SCI Greene counselor Robert DeBord resigned after coming forward with details confirming Jamal's description of this racist prison hell.

DeBord reported seeing bruised inmates coming from "attitude adjustment" sessions with guards, prisoners being routinely sent to the "hole" on fabricated charges and black prisoners subjected to constant racist abuse. Greene's superintendent has now been demoted and transferred and two of his lieutenants fired, while 42 guards face pre-disciplinary investigations on charges of brutality and racist abuse. KGO-TV's Ashley dismisses allegations that state forces coerce and intimidate witnesses. But DeBord himself described how he was threatened with being framed up and warned to "be careful in the parking lot" after he spoke out.

Jamal's prison writings eloquently describe the horrors of America's torture chambers and the plight of those on death row whom the bourgeoisie paints as "inhuman"—not least of all, Mumia himself—in order to justify its system of legal lynching. The intensification of racist state repression—the enormous growth in the overwhelmingly black and Hispanic prison population, the massive speedup in executions, the curtailment of *habeas corpus* appeal rights—is part of the bipartisan capitalist war on working people, minorities and the poor. It is necessary to bring the power of the multiracial proletariat to bear in the fight to free

Mumia and abolish the racist death penalty. We fight to forge a multiracial workers party to smash the hideous machinery of legal lynching and the whole apparatus of capitalist repression through socialist revolution.

\* \* \*

## FUNDS FOR MUMIA'S LEGAL DEFENSE ARE URGENTLY NEEDED!

If the Pennsylvania Supreme Court turns down his appeal, the next battleground on the legal front will be in the federal courts, involving massive new costs. Contributions for Mumia's legal defense should be made payable to the Bill of Rights Foundation (earmarked "Mumia Abu-Jamal Legal Defense") and mailed to: Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal, 163 Amsterdam Ave., No. 115, New York, NY 10023-5001. Contact the PDC—New York: PO Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013-0099, phone (212) 406-4252, e-mail: 75057.3201@compuserve.com; Chicago: PO Box 802867, Chicago, IL 60680-2867, phone (312) 454-4931; San Francisco Bay Area: PO Box 77462, San Francisco, CA 94107-0462, phone (510) 839-0852. ■

# NYC Transit...

(continued from page 12)

the bosses' state degrade the consciousness of the working class. Every class-conscious worker must demand the complete and unconditional independence of the labor movement from the capitalist government!

An object lesson in the danger of appealing to the state is provided by the government's sinister intervention into the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT). In a vindictive payback for the modest victory won by the Teamsters in last summer's strike against UPS, the federal courts overturned the results of the 1996 union elections and disqualified IBT president Ron Carey from running for re-election. After being catapulted into the union presidency in elections run lock, stock and barrel by the feds, Carey has now himself been bitten by the anti-union class enemy. The ostensible pretext for the courts' latest move, that Carey and his cronies were engaged in corrupt practices, had nothing to do with the real reason for the government's intervention. For decades, Democratic Party politicians in particular have pursued a vendetta against the Teamsters aimed at curbing the potential power of this union to wage class struggle. There is nothing more corrupt than tying the unions to the government of the exploiters. *Labor must clean its own house!*

To defeat the growing barrage of union-busting attacks requires a leadership committed to a program of class struggle, not class collaboration. At bottom, there is a fundamental identity between all wings of the labor bureaucracy, whether it be "old guard" bureaucrats like Sonny Hall and Willie James of the TWU, or "new voice" AFL-CIO president John Sweeney, New Directions and the pro-Carey Teamsters for a Democratic Union, whose calling card is also suing the unions. All of them subordinate the workers movement to the capitalist class and its state, while chaining the working class politically to the Democratic and Republican parties of capital. The fight to emancipate labor and all the oppressed can only go forward in the struggle to forge a multiracial, class-struggle workers party, which acts as a tribune of the people, in counterposition to the partner parties of capital.

## Mobilize the Unions Against Racist Attacks!

The "workfare" deal negotiated by Willie James in September 1996 came down hardest on the most vulnerable sections of the TA workforce, particularly women and younger black and Hispanic workers for whom cleaners' positions are often the avenue to better-paying transit jobs (see "NYC Transit 'Workfare' Deal: Enslaving the Poor, Busting the Unions," WV No. 652, 27 September 1996). AFSCME District Council 37 chief Stanley Hill was furious over this contract because it blew the cover off his own longstanding sweetheart deal with Giuliani, through which more than 20,000

formerly unionized municipal jobs were filled by welfare recipients.

The lie pushed by James, Hill & Co. that such slave-labor schemes would not threaten union jobs has worn increasingly threadbare as "workfare" expands and the number of layoffs climbs. Now Giuliani has announced layoffs of another thousand workers, overwhelmingly black and Puerto Rican, in the city homeless services. This comes on top of last month's decision to lay off over 900 AFSCME Local 420 hospital workers—many at Harlem Hospital, one of the few remaining city hospitals in minority neighborhoods—even as a thousand "workfare" recipients have been forced into such jobs.

But the slashing of unionized jobs and the attacks on welfare are not simply the

During 1966 strike, NYC transit workers vowed to defy strikebreaking court injunctions "till hell freezes over."



work of NYC's racist "law and order" Republican mayor. Thousands of city workers were laid off by Giuliani's predecessor, black Democrat David Dinkins. And it was Democratic president Clinton, working hand in glove with Congressional Republicans, who consigned millions of babies and mothers, poor people and immigrants, to starvation, sickness, homelessness and death with the bipartisan 1996 "welfare reform." The introduction of "workfare" is not simply intended to further savagely brutalize welfare recipients, who are disproportionately black, Hispanic and other minorities. This sinister program is endorsed by wide sections of the capitalist class, who seek to use the most impoverished, vulnerable layers of the population as a battering ram against better-paid, unionized workers.

Any labor leadership worthy of the name would seek to lead not only its own membership against these deadly attacks but would champion the millions of unorganized working people and minorities, initiating an aggressive campaign to organize the unorganized and demanding that "workfare" recipients receive union wages with full union protection and benefits. There needs to be a fight for *jobs for all* and for union control of hiring and training programs. The

unions should be in the forefront of organizing mass protests against the epidemic of cop terror in the ghettos and barrios which accompanies the racist cutbacks. The same racist cops who brutalized Haitian immigrant Abner Louima and daily gun down black and Hispanic youth also attack the picket lines of Teamsters and other striking workers.

It ought to be evident that the pro-Giuliani TWU leadership will not mobilize the union against racist oppression. But this is no less true of New Directions. When the James bureaucracy recently denounced a white ND member for calling a black Labor Relations official a "house n----," black ND presidential candidate Tim Schermerhorn defended this racist act! Use of this vile racist epithet, the battle cry of KKK lynch mobs, is

poisonous! The fighting power of the racially integrated labor movement can only be built by combatting the use of racial slurs and fighting to eradicate all forms of racial bigotry. But ND can't and won't do this: the April issue of ND's *Hell on Wheels*, devoted to the election campaign, does not even pay lip service to the fight against racism. And in 1990, New Directions hailed a "strike" by the racist, sadistic Rikers Island prison guards.

In the course of the election campaign, New Directions has been viciously rebaited by the James bureaucracy. In fact, there is *nothing* "socialist" about the ND program—the above-cited *Hell on Wheels* does not even call for a break with the partner parties of American capitalism, the Democrats and Republicans. Nor is this an accident. New Directions wants to convince its capitalist masters that it is just as capable as James, Hall & Co. of betraying the interests of the working class. And it is. Indeed, ND already controls a significant section of the Local 100 Executive Board and has repeatedly demonstrated its reliability to the bosses. While occasionally mumbling about being "forced to strike" as it bids for the union presidency, ND made clear its opposition to any struggle when mass outrage erupted over the 1992 contract sellout. As TWU militants demanded a mass meeting to plan a strike, ND leader Corine Scott flatly declared: "Nobody's talking strike here!" Underlining that there is little to politically distinguish the James crew from ND, Scott has now joined with the incumbents.

## Reformist "Socialists" vs. the Class Line

New Directions has been supported by a coterie of fake leftists, including Socialist Action and the International Socialist Organization. Reporting on ND's plans to appeal to the Labor Department, *Socialist Action* (February 1998) coyly notes that "in light of the ongoing frame-up and election disqualification of Teamster President Ron Carey by a federal review board, this strategy raises important issues for trade unionists." The article goes on to say, "Reliance on the bosses' government will be used as a convenient precedent when the state seeks to crack

down on trade-union activists."

Who is Socialist Action kidding? This outfit has been among the most enthusiastic supporters of both ND and the Carey wing of the IBT bureaucracy, i.e., labor traitors whose climb into union office has been premised on reliance on the bosses' government. Socialist Action's hypocritical "advice" to New Directions shows that these reformists are well aware of elementary principles of Marxism and consciously repudiate them to further their opportunist appetites. Their goal is not to lead the working class to socialist revolution, but to ingratiate themselves with an up-and-coming layer of trade-union fakers.

Claiming to oppose both the James leadership and New Directions is Eric Josephson, who is running for executive board in the track division as "a revolutionary socialist, a supporter of the League for the Revolutionary Party" (LRP). Saying he stands for a "program of mass action," Josephson calls for a general strike, a slogan which the LRP has mindlessly been repeating uninterruptedly for two decades! In fact, the LRP has crossed the class line numerous times in supporting forces like Polish Solidarność which, abetted by the imperialists, worked to destroy the Soviet degenerated workers state and the bureaucratically deformed workers states of East Europe.

Likewise, the LRP upholds the disgusting position of its forebear, the Revolutionary Socialist League, in *opposing* efforts to implement racial integration of the schools during the fight over busing in Boston in 1974-75. The LRP also projects that "revolutionaries" might be compelled to "join in common action" with anti-Semitic demagogue Louis Farrakhan. But the only actions which Farrakhan supports are those which promote capitalism and segregation, like the sinister use of Nation of Islam goons to defend a September 1996 meeting by Nazi David Irving in Oakland, California. All in all, Josephson merits not even the most critical support.

The TWU potentially has the power to shut down Wall Street and lead a class-struggle offensive in the interests not only of transit workers but all NYC workers and oppressed. But the precondition for any real struggle by the unions is the complete independence of the labor movement from the capitalist state. As emphasized by Russian revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky, the unions in this period can either play the role of secondary instruments of capitalist imperialism for the subordination and disciplining of the workers or become instruments of the revolutionary movement of the working class. The fight to mobilize the unions and the oppressed in struggle needs a political expression: not a phony "Labor Party" which acts as a shill for the Democrats, of the sort now being touted by sections of the AFL-CIO bureaucracy, but a *revolutionary workers party*. A successful fight to defend and improve the present conditions of the working class can only be waged as part of the struggle to get rid of the entire capitalist profit system. ■

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# Centrists...

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Lenin wrote in *The State and Revolution* that the state begins to "wither away" from the first day of the proletarian dictatorship. Workers Power points to the 1919 Russian Communist Party programme, which looked forward to the early replacement of the standing army by an armed people. Citing the fact that these norms were not realised in the Soviet Union, and that the state machine grew to monstrous proportions under Stalin, WP concludes that a capitalist state had re-emerged, describing this in language taken straight from the anti-Communist ideologues for "democratic" imperialism: "Soviet power had been comprehensively smashed or 'blown up' and replaced by the absolutist rule of a totalitarian bourgeois bureaucratic-military state machine, but one which drew the source of its power and material privileges from nationalised property and planned economy" (*Trotskyist International*, January-June 1998). Trotsky was scathing in his response to such arguments:

"To these gentlemen the dictatorship of the proletariat is simply an imponderable concept, an ideal norm not to be realized upon our sinful planet. Small wonder that 'theoreticians' of this stripe, insofar

The necessary prerequisite for the state to "wither away" is the abolition of class society, which cannot be achieved in the absence of proletarian revolution in at least several advanced capitalist countries. As Trotsky wrote in "Not a Workers' and Not a Bourgeois State?" (November 1937):

"The USSR as a workers' state does not correspond to the 'traditional' norm. This does not signify that it is not a workers' state. Neither does this signify that the norm has been found false. The 'norm' counted upon the complete victory of the international proletarian revolution. The USSR is only a partial and mutilated expression of a backward and isolated workers' state."

At times, WP contends that the Soviet degenerated workers state was simultaneously the dictatorship of the proletariat and the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie: "The dictatorship of the proletariat had taken the paradoxical form of a political dictatorship of 'a bourgeois state without the bourgeoisie' over the proletariat." It uses Trotsky's phrase "'bourgeois' state without the bourgeoisie"—deliberately omitting the inverted commas Trotsky placed around "bourgeois"—in his seminal analysis of the degeneration of the Russian Revolution, *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936). Trotsky used this expression in the same sense that it was used by Marx and Lenin—to explain the gen-



Yevgeni Khaldei

Victorious Soviet troops raised red flag over Berlin, 1945.

for this, it writes: "The legacy of Trotsky on the issue of the class character of the state machine in the USSR is at best ambiguous. Nowhere did he clearly point to the fact that, conceived in abstraction from the property relations defended by the bureaucracy, this state machine was bourgeois." Indeed, no Marxist could or would conceive the class nature of the state independent of the property relations it defends! Only for vulgar petty-bourgeois democrats like Workers Power is the question of property relations an abstraction!

In his 1937 polemic against Burnham's position that the Soviet Union was "neither a workers nor a capitalist state," Trotsky argued that "only the intrusion of a revolutionary or a counterrevolutionary force in property relations can change the class nature of the state." Trotsky went on to acknowledge that there are *temporary* cases where the economy and the state stand in contradiction: "In the first months of Soviet rule the proletariat reigned on the basis of a bourgeois economy.... Should a bourgeois counterrevolution succeed in the USSR, the new government for a lengthy period would have to base itself upon the nationalized economy. But what does such a type of temporary conflict between the economy and the state mean? It means a *revolution* or a *counterrevolution*."

The victory of Yeltsinite counterrevolution in the USSR led to exactly such a situation. But Workers Power, arguing that some industry remains in the hands of the state, ludicrously characterised the former Soviet Union as a "moribund workers state." At bottom, WP's view of "workers rule" derives from British Labourism, which equates "socialism" with nationalisation of the "commanding heights of the economy" under a *capitalist* parliamentary democracy.

### Workers Power vs. Trotsky on the Soviet Army

Seeking to justify its "support" to the Bolshevik Revolution on the basis of purely democratic considerations, Work-

ers Power makes much of the counterposition between a Red Army based on a militia system and a standing army. To do this, it presents tortuous and self-contradictory accounts of what happened in the October Revolution. One version quotes Trotsky: "The October revolution dissolved the tsar's army wholly and without leaving a trace. The Red Army was built anew from the first brick" (*The Revolution Betrayed*). This is followed by WP's claim that the Bolsheviks merely reformed the tsarist army:

"But almost immediately they were thrown into a civil war and the norm was compromised with the reality as they inherited it—the Tsar's army, with its ranks and general staff. Trotsky had to make use of this army. They did subject it to workers' control—party commissars supervising generals etc—as the next best bet in the circumstances."

This is tantamount to denying that the capitalist state was smashed and replaced by a new state power, the dictatorship of the proletariat. WP falsely presents Trotsky, the organiser of the Red Army, as an advocate of a pure militia system. For the same reason the state could not "wither away" overnight, the Soviet republic could not replace the standing army by a militia system. In *The Revolution Betrayed*, Trotsky pointed out that the militia (or territorial) system requires a "high economic basis" which could not be achieved within the confines of the Soviet Union. He wrote: "Granted the necessary material conditions, the territorial army would not only not stand second to the regular army, but far exceed it. The Soviet Union must pay dear for its defense, because it is not sufficiently rich for the cheaper militia system." But Trotsky never called for the abolition of the regular Soviet Army, which would have been tantamount to calling for the disarming of the degenerated workers state in the face of the imperialist powers.

While in *The Degenerated Revolution* WP at least recognised (in words) the need for a standing army to defend the Soviet workers state from attack, today it argues that "the formulation that the standing armies of the Stalinist caste



Basil Blackwell Inc.

Leon Trotsky, organizer of Red Army, rallying troops in struggle against counter-revolutionaries.

as they do not denounce altogether the very word dictatorship, strive to smear over the irreconcilable contradiction between the latter and bourgeois democracy."

—"The Class Nature of the Soviet State"

Trotsky insisted that the growth and consolidation of the Stalinist bureaucratic apparatus proved not that a capitalist state had been consolidated, but that building "socialism in a single country"—moreover a backward and isolated one—was a Stalinist *lie*. The material basis for socialism is the elimination of *scarcity*, which requires surpassing the highest level of development achieved by capitalist society. For this reason, socialism can only be achieved on an *international* basis.

eral necessity under the dictatorship of the proletariat to maintain a public force to regulate distribution while scarcity remains.

Trotsky noted that even in an advanced industrial country like America, a workers state could not immediately provide for everyone's needs: "Insofar as the state which assumes the task of socialist transformation is compelled to defend inequality—that is, the material privileges of a minority—by methods of compulsion, insofar does it also remain a 'bourgeois' state, even though without a bourgeoisie."

WP is forced to acknowledge that Trotsky's references to "bourgeois norms of distribution" in the Soviet Union did not mean that he considered the USSR a "bourgeois state." Castigating Trotsky

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have a dual character—'instruments of bureaucratic tyranny as well as defence' surrenders too much to the Stalinists, above all in the light of events since 1989." In short, Workers Power can see no class difference between the Soviet Army and the armed forces of imperialism. As for events since 1989, it was Workers Power who joined the West German imperialists in demanding the withdrawal of Soviet troops from East Germany. The withdrawal of these troops by Gorbachev was an integral part of the sellout of the former East German deformed workers state.

Trotsky described the restoration of the officer corps and the Cossacks as "one of the clearest expressions of the Thermidor." He was scathing in his denunciation of Stalin's disorganisation of the Soviet armed forces and his beheading of the military leadership on the eve of World War II. Nonetheless, writing in "The USSR in War" (1939) at the time of the Hitler-Stalin pact, Trotsky stressed that when Hitler turned his armies against the Soviet Union, the obligation of Bolshevik-Leninists was clear:

"Under these conditions, partisans of the Fourth International, without changing in any way their attitude toward the Kremlin oligarchy, will advance to the forefront, as the most urgent task of the hour, the military resistance against Hitler. The workers will say: 'We cannot cede to Hitler the overthrowing of Stalin; that is our own task.' During the military struggle against Hitler, the revolutionary workers will strive to enter into the closest possible comradely relations with the rank-and-file fighters of the Red Army. While arms in hand they deal blows to Hitler, the Bolshevik-Leninists will at the same time conduct revolutionary propaganda against Stalin preparing his overthrow at the next and perhaps very near stage."

Trotsky was unambiguous about which class should overthrow the bureaucracy—the proletariat. As he wrote in "Not a Workers' and Not a Bourgeois State?": "Stalin serves the bureaucracy and thus the world bourgeoisie; but he cannot serve the bureaucracy without defending that social foundation which the bureaucracy exploits in its own interests.... However, he carries through this defense with methods that prepare the general destruction of Soviet society. It is exactly because of this that the Stalinist clique must be overthrown. But it is the revolutionary proletariat who must overthrow it. The proletariat cannot subcontract this work to the imperialists." Subcontracting this work to the imperialists and other counterrevolutionary forces is exactly what Workers Power did.

### Workers Power and the Myth of the 'Stalinist State'

WP's description of the overthrow of capitalism in Eastern Europe is profoundly revisionist: "After the Second World War the Stalinist bureaucracy, far from smashing the capitalist state, simply took hold of the old apparatus of political domination and, utilising bureaucratic, military, police measures transformed/purged its structures.... In the first period this state, controlled by the Stalinists, was used to defend and rebuild capitalism, and then later the same state machine was used as a lever for the economic expropriation of the bourgeoisie." As we have noted, the idea that the bourgeois state can be taken over and used for the expropriation of the bourgeoisie is utterly reformist.

In the case of post-war Eastern Europe, the Soviet Army—the army of a degenerated workers state—was the decisive military power, the "special bodies of armed men," which smashed the Nazi war machine. Faced with imperialist hostility and the onset of the Cold War—specifically in the form of the West European Marshall Plan—the Soviet occupation forces expropriated the domestic capitalists and created bureaucratically deformed workers states. Likewise, in Yugoslavia, China, Vietnam and Cuba, under exceptional circumstances, petty-bourgeois guerrilla forces were able to establish deformed workers states, qual-

itatively the same as the degenerated Soviet workers state. But in each case the bourgeois state was smashed (see *Marxist Bulletin* No. 8, "Cuba and Marxist Theory").

WP's use of the term "Stalinist state machine" is simply an obscurantist version of Tony Cliff's position that the Stalinist bureaucracy was a new ruling class. In contrast, Trotsky understood that the bureaucracy was a deeply contradictory caste which rested on the proletarian property forms while serving as the transmission belt for the pressures of world imperialism in undermining those gains.

Falsifying history to suit its ends, Workers Power says that the Hungarian political revolution of 1956 "showed that the ruling Communist Party, the army, the secret police and the state administration



John Sadovy

As Hungarian proletariat rose up in political revolution in 1956, Stalinist bureaucratic caste split, with key elements like General Pal Maleter (far right) joining workers' side.

would act as agents of repression against any working class attempt to establish its own control over a state which claimed to be proletarian." In fact, Hungary 1956 showed that the bureaucracy was a brittle, contradictory caste, as the workers' revolt drew in its wake the majority of the army ranks and Communist Party cadres. Unlike Polish Solidarność in the early 1980s, the Hungarian workers *explicitly defended* the planned nationalised economy, establishing soviet-type workers councils and workers militias in every major industrial centre.

The Kremlin had to send in two waves of troops, who had been told that they were sent in to suppress Anglo-French imperialists or fascists. A first wave of Russian-speaking units had to be withdrawn after the Hungarian workers fraternised with them, winning many over to their cause. The essential element that was missing was a conscious proletarian vanguard party, which would have counterposed revolutionary internationalism to nationalist prejudices and illusions in the United Nations fostered by liberal Stalinists like Imre Nagy. Only such a party, based on the programme of unconditional military defence of the gains of all the degenerated and deformed workers states, could have successfully fought to win over the ranks of the Soviet Army in the fight for political revolution in Hungary and across Eastern Europe and the USSR.

More than 30 years later, the contradictions inherent in Stalinism were played out in capitalist counterrevolution. Under the pressure of the imperialist world market, the Stalinist bureaucracies introduced "market reforms," laying the basis for the full-fledged restoration of capitalism. Warning of this possibility in 1933, Trotsky wrote:

"In the event of this worst possible variant, a tremendous significance for the subsequent course of the revolutionary struggle will be borne by the question: *where* are those guilty for the catastrophe? Not the slightest taint of guilt must fall upon the revolutionary internationalists. In the hour of mortal danger, they must remain on the last barricade."

—"The Class Nature of the Soviet State"

In sharp contrast to WP and the rest of the fake left, in the hour of mortal danger, the ICL fought to the bitter end to defeat capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. In

1989-90, we mobilised our forces internationally to provide leadership to the incipient political revolution in the DDR and to stop the juggernaut of counterrevolution, raising the call "For a Red Germany of Workers Councils in a Socialist United States of Europe!" In late 1991, our supporters in the Soviet Union distributed tens of thousands of leaflets in Russian declaring: "Soviet Workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!" Today we fight to win the Chinese proletariat to the urgent perspective of proletarian political revolution to stop the galloping drive towards capitalist restoration there.

The demise of the degenerated and deformed workers states in the USSR and Eastern Europe is ultimately the responsibility of the Stalinist bureaucra-

cies, which undermined those states and destroyed any semblance of revolutionary consciousness among the working class. (For a further analysis see *Spartacist* No. 45-46, Winter 1990-91.) As Marxists we understand that the preservation of proletarian power depends for its survival on the political consciousness and organisation of the working class. In the Soviet Union, the traditions of the October Revolution had been systematically expunged from the memory of the working class and replaced by the nationalist outlook of the Stalinists, who made the lie of "socialism in one country" a self-fulfilling prophecy by betraying and helping to suppress revolutionary opportunities in the West. To the extent that they had any influence, fake-left groupings like Workers Power, the British SWP or the United Secretariat bear their share of the responsibility for politically disorienting the proletariat.

WP has now drawn the requisite "theoretical" conclusions from its scabberding role, retrospectively writing off the Soviet degenerated workers state more than six decades before its destruction. Shortly after its emergence from the Cliff group, WP entered into a brief "fusion" with Sean Matgamna's fake-Trotskyist outfit, which at the time was formally Soviet-defencist. To justify their merger, both sides dismissed the Russian question as a "tenth-rate question." As he liquidated ever more deeply into the Labour Party, Matgamna subse-

quently repudiated even lip-service to Trotsky's line on the Russian question, advising Workers Power that it should do likewise if it was not to follow the road of the dreaded "Sparts." Some two decades later, WP has completed the centrist circle and openly reverted to its "third camp" origins.

The utter repudiation by these groups of Bolshevism, the October Revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat is a reflection of the enormous impact this world-historic defeat has had on the consciousness of the proletariat internationally. Within our own party as well, we have had to wage sharp struggles against the disintegrative effects of this period of post-Soviet reaction. The former editor of our American newspaper *Workers Vanguard*, Jan Norden, who later defected

with a small coterie of other longtime comrades to form the Internationalist Group (IG), pushed a "regroupment" orientation to the geriatric remnants of the former East German Stalinist bureaucracy. Norden argued that these Stalinist has-beens maintained "attachments" to the former East German deformed workers state—which they had sold out!

Since defecting from our organisation, the IG has graduated to apologising for state intervention into unions in Brazil and promoting economist trade-union struggles as a back door to pressuring social democrats in Western Europe and "left" bourgeois nationalists in Latin America. Behind the IG's pollyannish enthusiasm over trade-union militancy lies the same denigration of the October Revolution as that of WP et al. By the IG's account, the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union was of such little significance that it has supposedly had no impact on the consciousness of the proletariat.

As Trotsky once noted, "Those who are incapable of defending conquests already gained can never fight for new ones." We stand with American Trotskyist James P. Cannon in proclaiming: "We are the party of the Russian Revolution." We fight to build Leninist-Trotskyist parties, which are essential to bringing revolutionary consciousness to the proletariat, to rearm it and lead it to its historic task—the fight for new October Revolutions. ■

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# WORKERS VANGUARD

## Giuliani Lackeys vs. Labor Department "Opposition" in TWU Election

# NYC Transit: Government Out of the Union!

As we go to press, balloting continues in hotly contested elections to determine the leadership of New York City Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100, whose 32,000 members keep the subways and buses of the country's financial capital running. For transit workers there is no real choice in these elections: both the incumbent leadership, headed by Willie James, and the "dissident" wing of the bureaucracy, the New Directions (ND) slate, have proven records of pursuing policies that undermine the union. James is a political ally of Republican mayor Rudolph Giuliani, who was elected as the cops' candidate, and is himself an ex-cop. In one of his first acts after taking over

the union presidency, in September 1996 James pushed through a contract with the Transit Authority (TA) to slash 500 unionized cleaners' jobs and replace them with slave-labor "workfare" recipients. No less sinister is New Directions, whose stock in trade is to use the capitalist courts as a club against its opponents in the TWU bureaucracy, thereby strengthening the grip of the capitalist state over the unions.

Indeed, the current elections were ordered by the TWU International under the guns of a threatened lawsuit by New Directions following an earlier ballot last December, in which James narrowly defeated ND candidate Tim Schermer-

horn. In an article in *Labor Notes* (February 1998), Steve Downs, a prominent ND spokesman on the Local 100 Executive Board, declared: "If necessary, New Directions will ask the Department of Labor to order a new election under outside supervision." New Directions has repeatedly dragged the union into the capitalist courts, including a \$12 million lawsuit for harassment against the TWU after James's predecessor, current TWU International president Sonny Hall, called out the cops against union members protesting the 1992 contract deal.

By inviting the capitalist courts to intervene in the internal affairs of Local 100, New Directions promotes the illu-

sion that the state is "neutral" and can be pressured into acting in the interests of working people. These are the same courts that imposed massive fines on the TWU in the wake of the 1980 transit strike for violating New York State's Taylor Law, which forbids strikes by public employees. As that one example illustrates, the capitalist state—the courts, cops and prisons—is the enemy of the working class, organized to prevent the workers from struggling in their own interests and particularly from smashing this system of private property and taking power themselves. Appeals by phony "opponents" like ND to  
*continued on page 9*

# Pennsylvania Death Row Hell Free Mumia Now!

## ABC-TV Smear Job: Brief for the Prosecution

As Mumia Abu-Jamal's appeal of his 1982 frame-up and false conviction for the killing of a Philadelphia police officer awaits a ruling by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, the forces of death have again geared up their Big Lie machine to soap up the lynch rope. Earlier this month, KGO-TV, ABC's San Francisco Bay Area affiliate, ran a two-part report which promised "a closer look at the facts of this case and the orchestrated campaign to turn a convicted killer into a folk hero." KGO-TV's rendition of the "facts" were lifted straight from the blotters of the cops who tried to kill Jamal on the streets of Philly in December 1981 and from the lying briefs of the

prosecutors who railroaded him to death row for a killing they know he did not commit.

Over the years, the fight for Mumia's freedom has been taken up by millions of trade unionists, minorities and leftist youth around the world. The case of this eloquent, outspoken and unbowed black activist and journalist—known as the "voice of the voiceless" for his radio commentaries and writings on behalf of the oppressed—has come to symbolize what the racist, barbaric death penalty is all about. At every critical juncture in this fight, the Fraternal Order of Police (F.O.P.), Pennsylvania prosecutors and their politician and media allies have

launched well-funded, orchestrated campaigns aimed at crucifying Jamal and slandering, harassing and intimidating his supporters.

The latest smear job by yuppie KGO-TV anchor Dan Ashley is nothing new. When thousands took to the streets and prominent voices internationally spoke out for Mumia following the signing of a death warrant by Pennsylvania governor Ridge in June 1995, the Philly District Attorney's office wrote a letter filled with lies about Mumia's case to actors Mike Farrell and Ed Asner in an effort to compel them to withdraw their support for Jamal. D.A. Lynne Abraham repeated this compendium of lies about Jamal's case in a *New York Times* op-ed piece later that summer, as press coverage of Jamal's kangaroo court hearing for a new trial—before the same Judge Sabo who had sentenced him in 1982—revealed to many how Mumia had been viciously framed up. The July 1995 PDC pamphlet, *The Frame-Up of Mumia Abu-Jamal*, thoroughly exposed the prosecution's hatchet job and stands as an effective rebuttal of the threadbare lies raised anew by KGO-TV.

Speaking for the prosecution, Ashley asserts: "Prosecutors had four eyewitnesses, three of which positively identified Mumia Abu-Jamal as the gunman who murdered Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner. They had ballistics evidence, a confession, and a defendant who offered no alternative theory of innocence."

**Fact:** Only one person claimed to have seen Jamal with a gun in his hand, "star" prosecution witness Cynthia White, a prostitute and police informant who re-

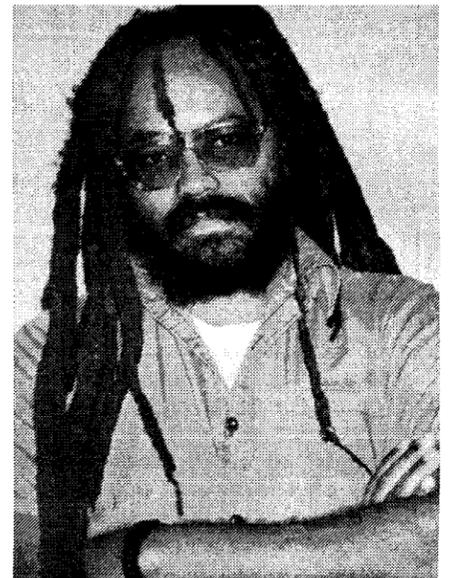
peatedly changed her story to suit the cops. Not one of the other witnesses even saw White at the scene of the shooting. Another "witness" was unable to identify Jamal. The third "eyewitness" initially said the shooter ran away, but changed his story under pressure by the cops. Four others saw someone flee the shooting as Jamal was on the ground with a bullet in his chest, one of them specifying that it was the shooter who fled.

**Fact:** The "ballistics evidence" did not even establish that Jamal's gun had been fired that night, let alone that Jamal had fired it. Jamal's gun was a .38 calibre; the Medical Examiner reported that Faulkner had been shot by a .44. The prosecution's own expert admitted the bullet recovered at the scene could not be matched to Jamal's gun.

**Fact:** The "confession" was bogus. The police officer who was with Jamal from his arrest to his medical treatment had filed a report stating that "the negro male made no comments." The claim that Jamal confessed at the hospital was first concocted two months after his arrest, as the result of a roundtable discussion organized by the prosecutor. A hospital security guard, Priscilla Durham, also subsequently reported having heard a confession the day after the shooting and claimed to have given the cops a handwritten report of it. The cops have never produced the report—because it doesn't exist.

**Fact:** Mumia Abu-Jamal is innocent. He did not get and cannot get a fair trial in the racist capitalist courts. Free Mumia now!

*continued on page 8*



courtesy MAJ



WV Photo

Union contingents marched with PDC in 1995 Philadelphia rally for Mumia Abu-Jamal. Mobilize the power of labor to free Mumia!