

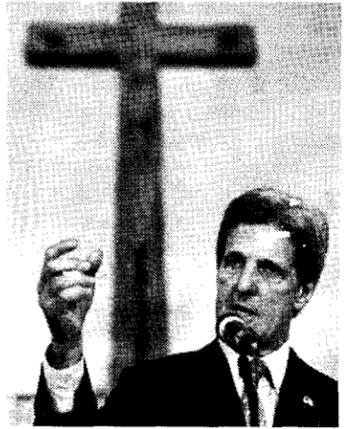


Scull/Newsweek

Elections 2004

Religion,

Racism and Reaction



AP

**Break with the Democrats!
We Need a Revolutionary Workers Party!**

The Bush cabal that occupies the White House is fanatical, arrogant and believes it is doing the work of God. One would think the U.S. were some kind of theocratic state given all the heavy emphasis on religion. Newspaper articles detail how God supposedly told evangelist Pat Robertson that the Iraq war would entail heavy casualties. Bush supporters testify that they believe that through Bush, "God is in the White House." There is an open disdain for facts and reality. A *New York Times Magazine* (17 October) article by Ron Suskind describes how a senior Bush advisor told Suskind that "guys like me were 'in what we call the reality-based community,' which he defined as people who 'believe that solutions emerge from your judicious study of discernible reality.' I nodded and murmured something about enlightenment principles and empiricism. He cut me off. 'That's not the way the world really works anymore'."

Suskind points out that Bush does not have to claim that he is ordained by God; others do it for him. He quotes zealous Bush supporter Hardy Billington declaring, "God gave us this president to be the man to protect the nation at this time."

"We may be that generation that sees Armageddon," Ronald Reagan infamously remarked. Though Reagan was probably thinking of a nuclear showdown with the Soviet Union, today many religious fundamentalist leaders are predicating their positions on the Near East, particularly Israel/Palestine, on a desire for an apocalyptic battle of titanic proportions in the region. This has led to an unholy alliance between the Zionist neocons and the largely Protestant fundamentalist right in the U.S. The two groups have drawn together in spite of the anti-Semitism of the bible-thumpers—Pat Robertson, for example, an ardent supporter of Israel, assigns Jews a role in his imagined conspiracy spelled out in his book *The New World Order* that reminds one of the lies in the anti-Semitic screed *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.



Rick Kopstein



Tiernan/Newsday

New York City: Local 1199 SEIU home health aides strike rally in June, demanding better wages and health coverage (top). Some 2,000 people march across Brooklyn Bridge in May in support of legalizing gay marriage.

These Christian fundamentalists want to see Armageddon, even if it means nuclear war in the Near East; they want to see the "Second Coming" and the end of the world. And they know to play on the deep religiosity that pervades this country, where, according to a recent Gallup Poll, some 42 percent of Americans describe themselves as "born again" or evangelical Christians. It is not an accident that gay marriage is blown up into some huge supposed threat to civilization as we know it, pushing the ever-popular

hot buttons of American religious mania and sexual hysteria.

The fanatical religiosity of the Bush administration, its war-crazed policies, its supreme imperial arrogance and its attacks on the rights of labor and black people have produced a sharp polarization in this country. "When it comes to policy," the *New York Times* (26 October) noted, Bush "has done more than any president in recent history to advance the agenda of Christian social conservatives. On domestic issues, he has opposed

same-sex marriage, favored restrictions on abortion and imposed limits on embryonic stem cell research. He has promoted vouchers for religious schools and shifted money for sex education and reproductive health programs to those that instead promote abstinence." The Bush administration is certainly a pack of crazed woman-hating, anti-black, anti-gay bigots.

It is understandable that many would see Kerry as some kind of "lesser evil" to the Bush gang—it's not so much that people are voting for Kerry but that they're voting against Bush. But from the standpoint of the interests of the working class, black people and the oppressed, the capitalist Democratic Party of John Forbes Kerry (who if elected will be the third-richest president in history) is no alternative. Kerry just wants to better and more rationally (for the capitalists) administer American imperialism abroad and repression at home to further the exploitation of working people for capitalist profit. Although basing their electoral support on different sectors of the population—which can often be very hostile to each other—both Republicans and Democrats at bottom are, as Gore Vidal puts it, "two right wings" of one party, the "Property Party."

Kerry wants to "win" in Iraq, projecting that troops may stay four more years. He supports Israel's concentration-camp walls going up around Palestinian communities. He wants to wage a more effective "war on terror" at home, which would mean more repression of immigrants, black people and labor. And, whatever his personal beliefs, he has not shied away from pandering to the religious vote. The *New York Times* (25 October) notes: "Mr. Kerry demonstrated a wide liturgical reach, quoting from Matthew, James, John, Luke, the Ten Commandments and 'Amazing Grace' before recalling for cheering Jews in Boca Raton how he once shouted 'the Israeli people lives' in Hebrew atop Masada."

It is a measure of how loathsome the Bush regime is that Kerry—a man who voted for the war in Iraq, a man who wants to increase American troop strength by 40,000 men, a man who voted for the USA-Patriot Act—is seen as an alternative. The problem, though, is fundamentally not one of individual candidates but

continued on page 10



Bush and Hitler?

27 September 2004

WV,

Do me a little favor. Come up with an article, analysis, on just why the coming presidential election is *not* like the election in Germany which ended in Hitler's victory, *not* analogous.

Cuz damn near every "anybody but Bush" person I talk to is convinced it is analogous, like the Democratic Party is analogous to the German Social Democrats of that time, with that German CP refusing (by Stalin's orders) to bloc with the Social Democrats, even calling 'em social fascists, as they today call or imply Bush as fascist.

So get on with that article, critique! I'll then fling it in the faces of those "anybody but Bush" folk, those having a helluva time making *distinctions*, like between current USA and Germany of '32.

And just now recalling—ya *did* go into this *seeming* analogy a few years back, though in just a sentence or two. This time make it—okay?—a *full-length* writeup.

S.C.

WV Replies:

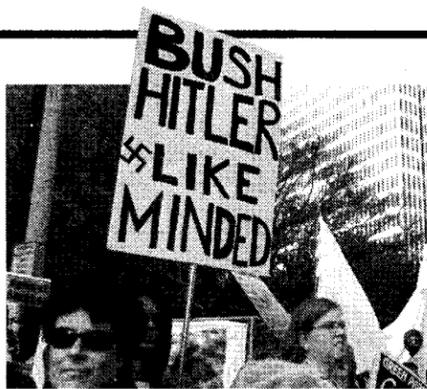
Bad as he is, George W. Bush is not the harbinger of American fascism. Fascism is a mobilization—not in the halls of Congress but in the streets—of the

crazed petty bourgeoisie and lumpen-proletariat, whipped into a frenzy to physically destroy the mass organizations of the working class. Normally, the bourgeoisie keeps the fascists in reserve as a last resort, but it turns to them when the repressive organs of the state are incapable of containing explosive class conflict in periods of capitalist crisis. In this country, the face of fascism is seen in the Ku Klux Klan, the white-supremacist militias and their ilk.

The Spartacist League has a long history of organizing working-class-centered mobilizations against the fascists where and when they have raised their head. And at every step, we have had to mobilize *against* sabotage by the capitalist Democratic Party and its supporters on the left. In New York City, where we initiated a mobilization on 23 October 1999 against the KKK that brought out thousands of people, Al Sharpton and other Democratic politicians filed court papers seeking to allow the Klan to mobilize for race-terror in the name of defending their right to "free speech."

In our response to a similar letter from S.C. about a year ago, printed in WV No. 816 (26 December 2003), we wrote:

"Contrary to what S.C. implies, the Republican Party is not a fascist party; nor is the capitalist Democratic Party,



Indymedia

Antiwar protest in San Francisco, January 2003.

unlike the German Social Democratic Party, part of the workers movement. Moreover, Trotsky's point in Germany was not *electoral support* to the Social Democrats, which implies an endorsement of their political program. He argued for a fighting united front—a series of *actions*—between Communist and Social Democratic workers organizations to defeat the fascists, in the course of which the Communists could make clear to the Social Democratic ranks that only the Communists had the program that could make the necessary socialist revolution."

The fight against the fascists is not a matter that can be addressed through elections; it requires the independent mobilization of the power of the working class and all the oppressed. This was made crystal clear in the 1932 elections in Germany that S.C. refers to. In the various elections that took place that year, the Nazis never came close to winning a majority. But the powerful German proletariat was disoriented and demobilized by the craven refusal of its leaders to mobilize to smash the fascists in the streets. In November 1932, the last "free" election in the Weimar Republic, the Communists and Social Democrats combined to poll almost 1.5 million votes more than the Nazis. However, the capitalist rulers, who called the shots, had decided that stability could not be achieved without bringing the Nazis into the government. In January 1933, President von Hindenburg appointed Hitler as chancellor, setting the stage for the Nazi *führer* to assume dictatorial powers two months later. Ironically, Hindenburg had been elected the previous year with the support of the Social Democrats, who touted him as a "lesser evil" against Hitler.

The Bush administration has undeniably been exceptional in the extent to which it has succeeded in shredding bourgeois-democratic rights and rolling back gains of the working class and all the oppressed. But the fact is that this regime's assaults on democratic freedoms, and its "war without end" against "terrorism," have been carried out within the framework of *bourgeois democracy*. The way to fight the continued evisceration of such rights was demonstrated in Oakland on 9 February 2002, when the Partisan Defense Committee and the Bay Area Labor Black League for Social Defense initiated a united-front protest against the USA-Patriot and Maritime Security Acts. This demonstration brought together the struggles of immigrants, blacks and organized labor in opposition to the government's anti-immigrant hysteria. Meanwhile, the same Democratic pols who sought to undercut working-class mobilization against the fascists in the streets of NYC in 1999 lifted not a finger as political dissent was criminalized during the Republican National Convention this summer. Working people are betrayed by those who retail the lie that democratic rights can be defended by voting for the Democrats, the party which, in the aftermath of September 11, voted overwhelmingly for the USA-Patriot Act. John Kerry has promised that he will "finish the job" in Iraq and that he will be more aggressive than Bush in pursuing the "war against terror," which we have repeatedly pointed out is in reality a war against workers, blacks and immigrants.

The Bush gang has been so heavy-handed and provocative—not only against the oppressed in this country and against weak countries like Iraq but also against the European capitalist powers—that even a significant chunk of the ruling class in this country is ready for a change. But while Kerry talks about tinkering with Bush's tax cuts for the super-rich, he and his party are just as firmly committed to the rule of those same super-rich. This is why today we call to break with the capitalist parties and build a workers party to fight for a workers revolution, which alone can provide workers democracy. ■

For New October Revolutions!

November 7 (October 25 in the old Russian calendar) marks the 87th anniversary of the Russian Revolution, led by the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky. Despite its degeneration at the hands of the Stalinist bureaucracy, which ultimately resulted in capitalist restoration in 1991-92, the Bolshevik Revolution was a world-historic victory for working people and the oppressed internationally. We print below excerpts from an article by American Communist leader John Reed on Bolshevism, first printed in 1919 in



TROTSKY



LENIN

Workers' World, a newspaper aligned with Reed's Communist Labor Party.

Bolshevism is the Social Revolution to which Socialists have looked forward for more than half a century. It is the inevitable struggle which must accompany the transition of society from Capitalism to Socialism. It is the final battle of the workers of the world for power to end forever the tyranny of class rule, and the misery of exploitation....

In Socialism the working class for the first time based its aspiration to freedom on scientific fact. Bolshevism is Socialism put into practice. Today the workers are becoming conscious of their power and ability to win the world for Labor. They always had the power, and sometimes the wish. But they lacked the will and the knowledge of the way. Bolshevism is the will and the way....

Bolshevism is practical. It does not assume that the capital class is going to be legislated out of power without a fight. Power is based on private ownership. In order to secure power the workers must control capitalist property, and abolish ownership. This they can only do by the Dictatorship of the Proletariat....

The Socialist Commonwealth is not born without fearful birth-pangs—the Proletarian Dictatorship. Russia today is not a Socialist Commonwealth—nor does it pretend to be. There is a Proletarian Dictatorship, engaged in conducting the final struggle of the working class against the capitalist class—not, however, its own capitalist class, for that has been conquered, but International Capitalism. Until International Capitalism is overthrown, Proletarian Dictatorship will not, cannot end....

Bolshevism is Socialism arrived at the point of social revolution—at the dictatorship of the proletariat foretold by Karl Marx.

—"John Reed on Bolshevism," *Workers' World*, 5 September 1919

WORKERS VANGUARD

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No. 835

29 October 2004

Come to the Courthouse! Defend Lynne Stewart!

This week, leftist attorney Lynne Stewart takes the stand in her own defense against the government's sinister terrorism smear, which could send her to prison for up to 40 years. We urge our readers to help pack the courthouse in a show of solidarity with Lynne Stewart and her co-defendants Mohammed Yousry and Ahmed Abdel Sattar. The trial resumed at 9:00 a.m. on Monday, October 25, in United States District Court, 40 Foley Square in New York City, courtroom 110.

As the attorney for sheik Omar Abdel Rahman, a reactionary Egyptian cleric imprisoned for life on charges stemming from the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center, Lynne Stewart, and her co-defendants, are themselves now charged with aiding and abetting terrorism. In the permanent shadow of the heinous 2001 destruction of the World Trade Center in lower Manhattan, the prosecution has outrageously been allowed to present even Osama bin Laden as a "witness," showing the jury old videotapes of bin Laden which have nothing to do with Stewart, Yousry or Sattar, yet tar them, by lyingly



AP

implied association, as "terrorists."

The prosecution of Lynne Stewart, her translator and her paralegal is a frame-up that threatens everyone. If attorneys can't provide legal defense for the accused without being accused of the crimes themselves, then everyone's right to legal defense from government prosecution is threatened. *Workers Vanguard* has covered this case and its broader implications (see WV No. 829, 9 July for our latest article) and will cover Stewart's defense in upcoming issues of the paper. Come to the courthouse! Make a donation to the Lynne Stewart Defense Committee, 350 Broadway, Suite 700, New York, NY 10013.

25 Years After

Greensboro Massacre: We Will Not Forget!

On 3 November 1979, in broad daylight, nine carloads of Klansmen and Nazis drove up to a black housing project in Greensboro, North Carolina, where an anti-Klan rally was gathering. With cool deliberation, the killers took out their weapons, aimed, fired and drove off. Five union officials and organizers and civil rights activists—supporters of the Communist Workers Party—lay dying in pools of blood. Ten others were wounded or maimed for life. The Greensboro Massacre was the bloodiest fascist attack in the U.S. in decades.

Greensboro was a conspiracy of the fascists and their capitalist state patrons. From the outset, the fascists were aided and abetted by the government, from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms agent who helped train the killers and plot the assassinations, to the “former” FBI informer who rode shotgun in the motorcade of death and the Greensboro cop who brought up the rear. When the two-minute fusillade ended, the cops moved in to arrest the survivors for “rioting.”

Signe Waller, widow of Greensboro martyr Jim Waller, recounted, “The FBI had men going around the textile mills and showing people pictures, asking for their identification. Many of the pictures were of people who were later killed in the Greensboro Massacre, and one of them was Jim’s” (*The Carolinian Online*, 18 October). Two successive all-white juries acquitted the killers of all charges, affirming once again the meaning of “justice” in this racist capitalist country.

Carried out during the Democratic Carter administration, the Greensboro Massacre was the opening shot of what would be the Reagan years’ war on labor and blacks. When the Klan announced it would “celebrate” this massacre on November 10 in Detroit, the Spartacist League initiated a labor/black mobilization that drew over 500, many of them black auto workers, who made sure that the Klan did not ride in the Motor City. In organizing the protest we had to overcome opposition from the union and black misleaders and face down a ban on anti-Klan marches ordered by black Democratic mayor Coleman Young. In city after city over the following years,



1979: Five supporters of the Communist Workers Party, including union organizers, were shot and killed by Klan and Nazi terrorists, abetted by cops and Feds.

when KKK and fascist provocations have been threatened, we have repeatedly brought out core battalions of black and labor militants who understand we can’t ignore the fascists and Klan—we must stop them.

In recent years, efforts to commemorate the Greensboro Massacre have been directed toward establishing a “Truth and Reconciliation Commission,” which was empanelled in June, and on November 13 a march “for Justice, Democracy and Reconciliation” will be held in Greensboro. The commission is modeled on the South African commission, which has served to whitewash the crimes of apartheid-era butchers and to assure a peaceful transition to neo-apartheid rule under the ANC (African National Congress), which continues the superexploitation and oppression of the black and other non-white masses.

The Greensboro Massacre was racist murder. The truth is that no justice can come from the same capitalist

American Trotskyism, wrote in “The Red Month of November” (*Labor Defender*, November 1927):

“A red stream runs through the month of November, marking in its course many struggles of the working class of this country, here with defeat there with victory, always with inspiring record of working class courage, exemplary in its noble devotion to the cause of the oppressed, magnificent incidents of solidarity and self-sacrifice, instructive milestones along the difficult road to liberation. It is a record to sharpen the hatred of labor to jailors and assassins, to increase the respect and pride we have for our fighters.”

We remember and honor the Greensboro martyrs by fighting for the freedom of imprisoned victims of capitalist state repression, like death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. We honor them by fighting to build a revolutionary workers party that will fight to put the working class in power through a socialist revolution that will make sure there will be no more Greensboros. ■

Editorial Note

Army Reservists Refuse “Suicide Mission”

U.S. Out of Iraq!

On October 13, 18 reservists of the 343rd Quartermaster Company refused to drive their trucks, bearing jet fuel of questionable quality, from the Tallil air base in the relatively secure Shi’ite south of Iraq into the current inferno of resistance around Baghdad. Their reasons were both mundane and compelling. Assigned to drive decrepit vehicles without a semblance of armoring and denied other military support or even radios to communicate should they encounter difficulties, the 18, led in their resistance by a 24-year Army veteran, Staff Sgt. Michael Butler, saw their mission as a potential death march. For months, members of the company had complained to their officers, the “chain of command,” about these conditions. That mattered not. The view of assorted experts polled by the ever-so-objective *New York Times* (17 October) as to whether soldiers can justly disobey such an order was encapsulated most succinctly by Eugene R. Fidell, a teacher of military justice at the Harvard Law School: “The short answer to the question is no.” The “chain of command” is much like the one in the tank of a toilet: once pulled, the fundamental motion is down.

The fact that two of the targeted leaders of the 18 reservists are black men is

not surprising. Though the American military is volunteer, its ranks are made up largely of working-class, black and minority youth who join overwhelmingly for economic incentives (what is known as the “economic draft”). And within that context, black soldiers have historically been saddled with some of the most dangerous, and dirty, work. For the capitalist rulers, whether in pursuit of imperialism abroad or profits at home, the lives of black working people are utterly expendable. At the same time, with a stretched military where reservists in their forties are called up for duty, and where those whose tours of duty have expired are forced to remain in Iraq (what the military euphemistically calls “stop-loss”), there is palpable resentment among the troops. The *New York Times* (24 October) quoted a lance corporal saying, “The funny thing that we laugh at sometimes is that the terrorists and us want the same thing. We don’t want to be here and they don’t want us here.” It is because they want their loved ones back home that military families have been prominent in antiwar demonstrations in the U.S.

We have a side in the current occupation, as we did during the war—against bloody U.S. imperialism. We say, “De-

fend the peoples of Iraq against U.S. attack!” and call for the immediate, unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Iraq. Not one person, not one penny for the imperialist military! Insofar as the Iraqi forces on the ground aim their attacks against the occupation forces, we stand for their military defense against U.S. imperialism, no matter how reactionary the politics of these Iraqi forces may be. Every blow inflicted against the occupation forces is in the interest of workers and the oppressed around the world, as well as being in the interests of those soldiers who despise the predatory and imperialist cause for which they have been mobilized in Iraq.

At the same time, we do not groove on the deaths of American soldiers. Whatever the political sympathies of the reservists who disobeyed their orders, their act represented a cry of the cannon fodder refusing to be the cannon fodder. And it is historically the refusal to die that has sparked some of the most heroic resistance by soldiers to their imperialist militaries.

The ongoing bloody military offensives against rebellious cities in Iraq are in the service of suppressing an anti-occupation struggle that is just and defensive. For his part, Kerry, who opposed the Vietnam War many years ago—at a time when significant sections of both parties acknowledged it had become a *losing* war for the



Mildred McHugh joins other military families at June press conference in support of Michael Moore film *Fahrenheit 9/11*.

U.S.—now stands as the candidate who, more vigorously than Bush, would “finish the job” in Iraq. The situation requires the forging of a working-class party in the U.S. to marshal the forces of all those opposed to injustice, exploitation and oppression to overturn the bloodsoaked imperialist order. **Defeat U.S. imperialism through workers revolution!** ■

London: Anarchist Protests Enrage Social Democrats

Uproar at European Social Forum

LONDON, October 24—The European Social Forum (ESF) came to London last weekend, bringing in over 20,000 people, overwhelmingly from continental Europe. But those who bought into the standard ESF promise that “another world is possible” found themselves trapped in “Ken’s World.” That is Ken Livingstone, New Labour’s Mayor of London. This event was bankrolled, orchestrated and tightly controlled by the Mayor’s office with the able assistance of supporters of Socialist Action who are highly paid executives in his administration and the unpaid services of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). This “anti-capitalist” shindig was so tame that it was endorsed by the labour statesmen and House of Lords hopefuls of the Trades Union Congress (TUC). At the recent Labour Party conference the TUC tops were instrumental in defeating a motion calling for withdrawal of British troops from Iraq.

Amidst the ongoing carnage in Iraq under the savage occupation by U.S. and British imperialist forces, a plenary session on the opening day of the ESF featured a stooge of the imperialists’ stooge government, Sobhi Al-Mashadani, representing the Iraq Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU). The IFTU achieved notoriety at the Labour Party conference as a shill for Tony Blair and British imperialism. Invited by British trade-union bureaucrats, IFTU representative Abdullah Muhsin’s intervention was key to defeating the motion calling for early withdrawal of British troops from Iraq. In an (undated) open letter to “trade union delegates at the Labour Party conference,” Muhsin argued that “the multinational force is there to help our democracy” and opposed the call for the early withdrawal of troops, saying it “would be bad for my country, bad for the emerging progressive forces, a terrible blow for free trade unionism, and would play into the hands of extremists and terrorists.”

Now the IFTU was being trotted out at the ESF for a session calling to “End the occupation of Iraq!” Small wonder that enraged Iraqi exiles and others kicked up a storm of protest against Al-Mashadani. As Iraqi novelist Haifa Zangana, who had encouraged people to protest, argued: “If he is the trade union secretary he should have been elected by the workers but he has been appointed by the government. He is part of the puppetry” ([London] *Guardian*, 18 October).

In the aftermath, the TUC issued a public statement condemning “the attempts of a few to prevent the views of Iraqi trade unionists from being heard.” While

even this labour apologist for imperialist occupation has the right to be heard—and to be vigorously challenged—as proletarian revolutionary internationalist opponents of the imperialist occupiers, our sympathies lie with the protesters. At the same time we can’t help but note that there were no protests against the British trade-union tops like Dave Prentis of Unison, who also spoke at the ESF. Prentis was among the union bureaucrats who invited the IFTU to the Labour and



London, October 17: Some 75,000 march in opposition to imperialist occupation of Iraq.

TUC conferences. These labour lieutenants of capitalism were the real shills for British imperialism—and hardly for the first time: It was their votes that saved Blair from embarrassment at the Labour Party conference by defeating the motion opposing the occupation.

A Very British Coup

The following night a group of 150-200 anarchists staged their own “palace coup” at Alexandra Palace, the citadel of Livingstone’s ESF. Marching into a meeting where Livingstone was scheduled to speak, the anarchists got on the platform, hoisted banners reading “Ken’s Party War Party” and “Another World Is for Sale.” Various anarchist speakers addressed the assembled for about half an hour, protesting about harassment by Livingstone’s cops and the FBI seizure of Indymedia servers in Britain and elsewhere (see *WV* No. 834, 15 October). A statement was also read out by Babels Co-ordinators, an organisation of voluntary interpreters, which protested that some of their fellow interpreters were barred from entering

Britain due to the racist immigration policies of the Labour government.

In his first campaign for the mayor’s seat in London, Livingstone backed a massive police assault on young May Day 2000 “anti-capitalist” protesters who had suitably and irreverently decorated a statue of imperialist butcher Winston Churchill. This didn’t stop the likes of the SWP, Workers Power and the Socialist Party from campaigning for Livingstone, who has subsequently vastly augmented

the notoriously racist London police force. During the mayoral election campaign this summer, the SWP’s Lindsey German stood as a candidate for the Respect Coalition, and once again called for second preference votes to Livingstone. Back in the days when he was known as “Red” Ken, Livingstone played footsie with Gerry Healy’s Workers Revolutionary Party, which played a central role in the anti-Communist witchhunt of miners union leader Arthur Scargill, feeding former prime minister Margaret Thatcher’s efforts to smash the militant miners union on the eve of its heroic 1984-85 strike. Today a lighter shade of red, Livingstone has been welcomed back into the fold of Blair’s New Labour Party as its Mayor of London, from which seat he aimed to bust a strike by London Underground subway workers this summer, calling on RMT members to cross their own picket lines.

Presumably having been tipped off about the protest, Livingstone didn’t show his face at the Alexandra Palace meeting. Incensed that the anarchists had rained on Livingstone’s and their parade, leading SWPer Weyman Bennett, who chaired the meeting, tried to violence-bait and race-bait the anarchists. But even the bourgeois *Guardian*—which had special status as “media partner of the ESF” and thus was hardly sympathetic to the protest—noted (18 October) that “Saturday night’s storming of the stage by several hundred people denouncing mayor of London Ken Livingstone for hijacking the event reflected genuine anger about the way the event had been organised.” After their half-hour political protest the anarchists led a walkout from the ESF and the meeting continued.

For our part, we have to give the anarchists an “A” for audacity for protesting Livingstone and trying to lead a walkout from the bureaucratic reformist circus of the ESF. At the same time we have to point out that they are hardly an alternative politically, and certainly not to the “authoritarianism” they claim to disdain. On the contrary, when it comes to anti-communist exclusion, the anarchist group—known as the Wombles proved them-

selves to be more than equal to the bureaucracy and thuggery of the SWP whom they so despise. As soon as our comrades set up a literature table outside the Wombles’ alternative event, “Beyond ESF,” at a North London campus, the organisers shut it down, grabbing our papers and telling us to get “that Spartacist shit” out of here. They howled anti-communist abuse and, with no sense of irony, condemned us as “authoritarian” while hounding us out of the grounds of a public campus. Nonetheless we defend *them* against the forces of the capitalist state and the scurrilous charges being hurled by the SWP.

Blood Line in Genoa

In the aftermath of the ESF, Alex Callinicos in *Socialist Worker* despicably revived the slander campaign against the anarchists that blamed them for the police-state violence that led to the murder of protester Carlo Giuliani in Genoa in 2001. He writes: “There was a downside to the ESF. There were a few ugly incidents that marked the re-emergence of the anarchist Black Block whose thuggish behaviour during the Genoa protests of July 2001 played so disastrously into the hands of the police” (*Socialist Worker*, 23 October). As exposed in a 19 October statement by the Italian COBAS unions, marshals at the October 17 ESF demonstration sponsored by the SWP-dominated Stop the War Coalition called the cops on anarchists and others who wanted to inform the crowd that anarchists had been arrested on the way to the march. From their vantage point at the front of the march, representatives of the COBAS unions wrote:

“The closing rally for the European Social Forum in London has been deeply marred by the intolerable behaviour of the British Organising Committee, and in particular by the forces that dominate it: the Socialist Workers Party, Socialist Action (the group behind London’s Mayor Ken Livingstone) and some trade unions. Several hundred young people coming from the ‘autonomous spaces’... were coming to the demonstration when the police attacked them making four arrests (two Italians and two Greeks).

“Despite the insistent requests from the Italian delegation at the head of the march to demand their liberation, the British Committee did not say a word.

“At the end of the march, when trying to give news of these events from the stage, we discovered that access to this was restricted to the British Committee....

“At this point the young people previously surrounded by police were trying to access the stage, upsetting the stewards of the rally, who called the police provoking further arrests, bringing the total to a number of nine.”

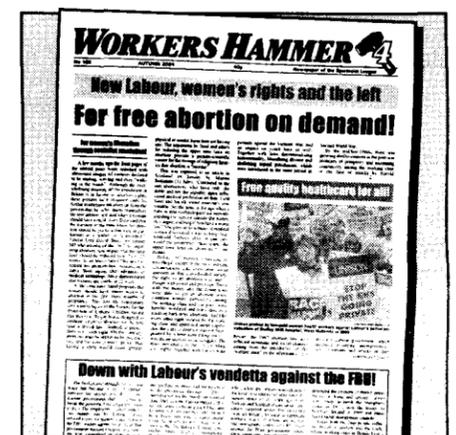
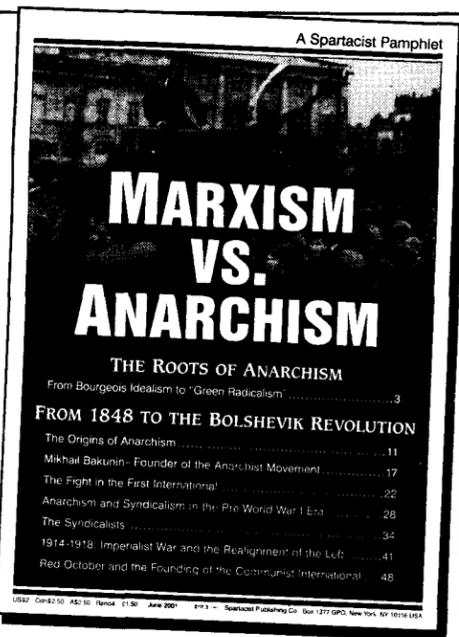
continued on page 11

This pamphlet presents a comprehensive historical analysis of the origins of anarchism and the views of its leading figures through the 1871 Paris Commune and the split in the First International. Later articles discuss the pre-World War I period and the impact of the war, the 1917 October Revolution and the founding of the Communist International on the anarchist and syndicalist movements.

The first article addresses radical youth today who, in an ideological climate conditioned by the so-called “death of communism,” are drawn to all variants of anarchism. Green radicalism and left liberalism. The pamphlet is dedicated to the fight to win a new generation to revolutionary Marxism, the communism which animated Lenin and Trotsky’s Bolshevik Party.

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Young Spartacus

High School Students Drive Military Recruiters Off Campus

Chicago

This article is based on a report by a Spartacist comrade on an October 5 meeting at Senn High School, a heavily immigrant and minority public school on Chicago's North Side.

It's not every day you get to drive the military off campus! Around 800 students, parents, teachers and other activists poured into the auditorium of Senn High School, where Colonel Rick Mills, alderman Mary Ann Smith and Chicago Public Schools (CPS) Deputy CEO David Pickens were trying to sell a proposal to turn part of Senn into a naval academy. They encountered more than they bargained for when the angry audience drove the military out of the meeting.

There are already two high schools that are military academies around the city—the most notable one being the predominantly black Bronzeville; on Chicago's South Side, whose signature is strict discipline, with students parading around in military uniform. As in many other cities, there are also Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) programs in many of the high schools.

The auditorium was filled with indignant students, parents, some youth from the Revolutionary Communist Party-built Not In Our Name (NION) and our comrades from the Chicago SYC and Spartacist League. Many people were standing up holding protest signs in different languages (a reflection of the diversity of the high school). A group of youth marched through the auditorium holding their signs up high. While most signs were calling to "Save Senn" and "Protect Diversity," there were signs against the occupation of Iraq and the "Renaissance 2010" plan, a program designed to close down the 100 "worst performing" schools in the city (i.e., poor and predominantly black) and replace them with union-busting charter schools (see "Charter Schools: An Attack on Public Education," *Workers Vanguard* No. 825, 30 April).

The CPS official was first to speak, receiving catcalls and scattered shouts until the principal calmed everyone down. The military guys didn't come in

uniform so it was not immediately clear who the colonel was when he got up to speak; once it became apparent, the boos began. SYCers shouted, "Military off campus!", "ROTC off campus!" and booed as he tried to speak. One parent got up and shouted something that no one could hear, but the whole audience knew he was going after the military so they broke out into loud applause.

Realizing his attempts to "talk sense" to the crowd were going nowhere, Colonel Mills decided to show a Navy promotional video. As soon as it started we

tary entourage stormed out, and the place went up in cheers! Jesse Sharkey, a teacher at the school and a writer for the International Socialist Organization's (ISO) *Socialist Worker*, later wrote on Savesenn.org: "I personally appealed to Alderman Smith and David Pickens that I would help restore order in the meeting if they would take community questions and comments." But most of the parents and students were less inclined to compromise.

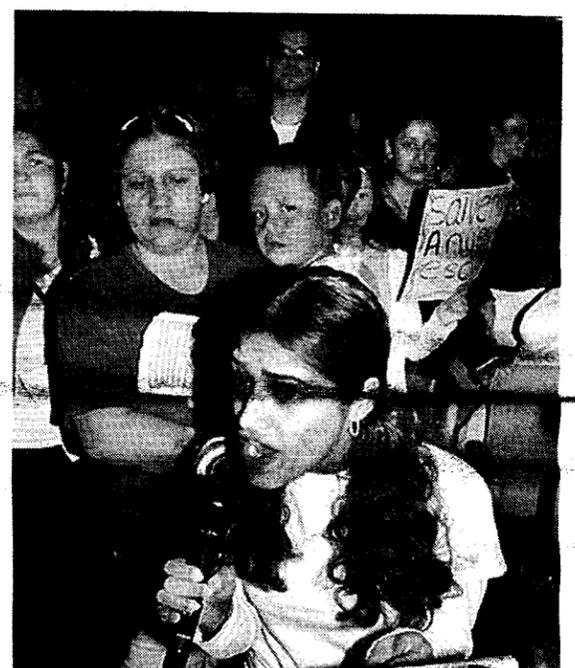
Sharkey started chairing an open mike. Many of the students and parents spoke

cation. He concluded by saying that it is necessary to build a revolutionary workers party that can lead the socialist revolution.

We in the Spartacist League and SYC fight for the working class to break from all parties of capital. NION and the ISO, both of whom had members in attendance, proved during the antiwar movement that they do just the opposite. All the antiwar protest organizers (International ANSWER, NION, United for Peace and Justice—a coalition which includes both the ISO and NION) worked to turn the demonstrations into platforms



Hundreds of outraged students and activists pack Senn High School auditorium, protesting planned takeover of part of school by Navy.



began chanting "Turn it off!", which was taken up by people around us. Soon the auditorium was filled with the chant: "We say no!" They were forced to stop the video temporarily. Somehow the principal managed to quiet everyone down. They turned the video back on, and we started chanting again. Soon the entire audience was in an uproar; we all joined in chanting "We say no!" Some people in the front stood up and turned their backs to the video and signaled for everyone to do the same. Within minutes, still chanting, everyone's back was turned.

The alderman was fuming, the video was stopped and the official meeting broke down. The colonel and his mili-

passionately against the plan. The comments were largely focused on saving Senn, but many speakers also tied in broader remarks against the occupation and the military. When we got our turn, SYC member Tim Valentine began by saying that we are opposed to the militarization of Senn, and that the audience should commend themselves for driving off the military. He argued that you can't rely on the Democrats to stop the militarization of Senn, and that it is Democratic mayor Richard Daley pushing the attack on public education. He called for free quality education for all and spoke about the need for the working class in Chicago to take up the fight to defend public edu-

for the liberal wing of the Democratic Party—the party of Hiroshima, Nagasaki and the escalation of the Vietnam War. Democratic "doves," the Green Party and independent capitalist politicians like Ralph Nader—the ISO's candidate of choice in 2000 and 2004—talk peace only to get antiwar youth off the streets and into the voting booth.

After the auditorium was pretty much cleared out, a comrade peeked into the auditorium and saw a small crowd of angry, primarily minority, youth and, lo and behold, the colonel in the middle—he had crept back in and was now in a heated discussion. One young woman angrily denounced the colonel and told him to f--- himself; the other youth burst into cheers. Outside, we continued to sell our paper and distribute the SYC Ten Point Program, talking with youth and parents about how these attacks take place in the context of the American ruling class's increasing imperialist aggression internationally and the "war on terror" at home. As was shown by these hundreds of angry parents, teachers and students who sent the colonel and company packing, many people have less than no desire to kill or be killed for U.S. imperialist interests. *U.S. military: hands off Senn High School!* The Spartacus Youth Clubs fight for free, quality, integrated public education for all! Defeat the racist assaults on affirmative action—no to cutbacks! Kick military recruiters off high school and college campuses! Down with the U.S. colonial occupation of Iraq! ■

UNITE HERE Strike Support Rally Endorsers

26 October 2004

To the editors of *Young Spartacus*:

In the otherwise very fine article in WV No. 834 about our work building the united-front rally on October 7 at City College of San Francisco (CCSF) for victory to the UNITE HERE hotel workers strike, there was one regrettable omission. While the article described the types of groups that endorsed the rally, it did not list them all by name. This is the list of endorsers in full:

Adam Fetterman, Vice President of Finance, Associated Students Council of CCSF*
Alan Fisher, Executive Board Member, American Federation of Teachers, Local 2121*
Chris Kendrick, Treasurer, Anarchist Library, CCSF*
La Raza Unida, CCSF*

Labor Black League for Social Defense, Oakland
L. Paz, Department Chair, Philippine Studies Department, CCSF*
PEACE, Philipinos for Education Arts Culture and Empowerment, CCSF
Maxwell Raynard, President, Anarchist College, CCSF*
Revolution Youth
Arjuna Sayyed, Vice President of Cultural Affairs, Associated Students Council of CCSF*
Spartacus Youth Club
Darren Villegas, Treasurer, La Raza Unida, CCSF
Women United, CCSF

*Organizational affiliation for identification purposes only.

Comradely,
Spartacus Youth Club at CCSF

The Struggle Against Parliamentarism, Sectarianism Communist Policy in Bourgeois Elections

We print below a slightly edited educational presentation given by comrade Mary Ann Clemens to the Bay Area Spartacus Youth Club on 21 October 2003. Though delivered at the time of the California gubernatorial recall election last autumn, the material comrade Clemens presented is quite relevant to the upcoming general elections and beyond. The presentation fleshes out our own use of the tactic of critical support in California last fall. At the time, we wrote in WV No. 810 (26 September 2003):

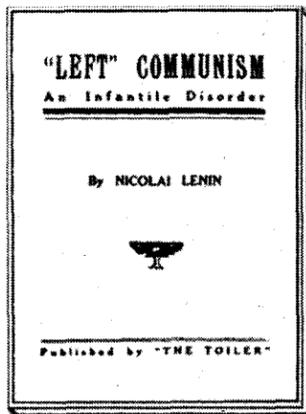
"We originally decided to abstain on the recall because we want neither to support a capitalist politician, in this case the Democratic governor, nor to implicitly support a capitalist (likely Republican) replacement. The SWP's election platform, which presents, in however crude a way, a working-class line, allows us to make concrete and clear-cut our opposition to Davis while at the same time expressing our opposition to the Republicans' attempted electoral coup."

* * *

In preparing this class, in view of the party's attitude and our change in position on the California recall election, it occurred to me that we are dealing with much more than the lessons of Lenin's "Left-Wing" Communism: An Infantile Disorder. This book, and our recent experience, raise the question of the ABCs: What is communist work? What is our job about? These questions were fought out in the newly formed Communist International (Comintern) and its developing member parties. So I thought it would be helpful to start by giving a brief idea of where the American party came from.

1919

1919 was a busy year in the international workers movement. It was the height of the wave of post-World War I international labor radicalism, inspired by the Russian October Revolution. The "Spartacus" uprising of revolutionary workers took place in Germany; the short-lived Hungarian Soviet Republic was founded and crushed. The Communist International was founded. Amid the wave of strikes that swept through the U.S. was the Seattle general strike. The



PA. Otsup
Lenin wrote "Left-Wing" Communism: An Infantile Disorder for Second Comintern Congress (1920) to guide interventions into mass reformist workers parties—including use of electoral tactics—to split them, win workers to communism.

bourgeoisie paid back these struggles in kind, with massive repression. As a result of the "Palmer raids," a centerpiece of the American ruling class' "red scare," the government imprisoned large numbers of militant leftists and labor activists and deported numerous foreign-born leftists under the infamous "criminal syndicalism" laws. The bosses played the race card for all it was worth, too. The year 1919 saw the Chicago anti-black pogrom, as well as many others across the country. In Chicago, the backdrop was a bitterly fought organizing drive in the meat-packing industry, during which the bosses used racism as a wedge between black and white workers.

There was tumult in the socialist movement in 1919. A major realignment of the left was taking place around this time all over Europe. In the U.S., the left wing split precipitously from the American Socialist Party (SP). In this country, Louis Fraina was one of the two main figures in the American left-wing socialist milieu. He founded the Communist Party of America (CPA). Seven foreign-language federations from the SP dominated his organization. The workers in this organization didn't speak much Eng-

lish—the membership were Lithuanians, Ukrainians, Letts (Latvians), Estonians, Poles, Russians, etc., who had grown up in the clandestine conditions of heavy-handed repression in the tsarist empire. The other leading figure was the radical journalist John Reed, and James P. Cannon, the future American Trotskyist leader, soon joined him. Reed's organization was the Communist Labor Party (CLP). The problem was that they had split from the SP too soon, cutting themselves off from a layer of socialists, many of whom could have been won over to communism by a resolute political struggle within the Socialist Party.

Sterile Ultraleftism

They were for class struggle, all right, but the politics of both of these young communist groups can be characterized as sterile ultraleftism. They had been much influenced by two Dutch social-democratic "left-wingers," Anton Pannekoek and Hermann Gorter, and by Daniel De Leon of the American Socialist Labor Party.

So what did the CPA and CLP do? In response to the vicious assaults of the Palmer raids, they went underground and

denied any possibility of ever working as a legal party. Second, the CPA and CLP refused on principle to work inside the reactionary trade unions and instead called for forming ideologically untainted "red" unions (a policy known as "dual unionism"). Their line on trade unions was pretty much "Destroy the AFL!" The American Federation of Labor's program was "partnership" between the capitalists and the workers. Now, the AFL's base was among the skilled crafts. As a rule, it did not try to organize the unskilled in mass industrial unions, and many of the AFL's unions discriminated against black workers.

Third, the CPA and CLP refused to fight for partial demands in the course of the struggle for socialism and regarded that as trimming their program. And last but not least, they were bitterly antiparlamentarist—they wouldn't be caught dead in the same room with a member of Congress, much less think of running for legislative office. These politics were quite similar to those of Amadeo Bordiga, a left-winger in the Italian SP who became an early leader of the Italian Communist Party and who played an important role at the Second World Congress of the Communist International.

The still separate organizations selected Fraina and Reed as delegates to the Second Congress. First Reed and then Fraina took off on the months-long, dangerous trip to Moscow. In the meantime, the struggle for the fusion of these two American groups and against their ultraleft politics raged at the urging of Lenin and the Communist International. The Comintern had to win this fight if a Communist Party was to be built in the U.S. James P. Cannon was the first of the American leaders who began to get it. He gave a powerful speech against dual unionism at a U.S. convention in May 1920. And at that convention, the CLP and a split from the CPA fused to form the United Communist Party. This is a month before the Second Congress and a month before Lenin published "Left-Wing" Communism.

The Second Congress of the Communist International

News of the fights going on in the U.S. didn't reach Moscow until the Congress was in full swing. So Reed and Fraina both hit town in a fighting mood, each operating with an agenda to "get the franchise" from the Comintern as the official U.S. section. Reed was hot to wage battle against the Comintern's position in favor of working in the reactionary trade unions. He argued with the Comintern leadership and proposed from the floor of the Congress a change in the agenda, so the discussion on parliamentarism would come before that on the trade unions and shop committees. He also wanted English added as an official language for this point. His motion was defeated on the floor, but, in fact, the agenda was reorganized pretty much as he proposed. As for the reports, the Comintern leadership requested that Reed prepare a report on the Negro question in the U.S. Fraina got the assignment to make the report on the trade-union question.



Lake View Press



Chicago Historical Society

1919 strike wave in U.S., inspired by Russian Revolution, was answered by severe state repression, racist reaction. Left: IWW militants deported following Palmer Raids. Race riots in Chicago helped break union organizing drive (right).

Bourgeois historians like Theodore Draper like to portray the whole debate with Reed as an emotional power struggle. But the discussion on the American black question that the Comintern leadership insistently organized with Reed as reporter was also a historic moment in the development of American Communism. The Bolsheviks struggled with the American Communists to make a complete break from the indifference to black oppression and even outright racism of significant elements of the Socialist Party. They taught the Americans that the struggle to address the black question was the key to the American revolution. The Comintern leadership exhibited great skill in using the American delegates as resources in the struggles over the great questions before them. They changed the agenda of the American delegates, guided the trade-union discussion carefully and gave Reed quite a different and unique responsibility. The international leadership saw to it that he gave the Congress and the American Communist movement the best he had to offer.

Bolshevik leader Nikolai Bukharin's report at the Second Congress of the Comintern, the "Theses on the Communist Parties and Parliamentarism" and the intervention of the Bulgarian delegate, Shablin, are well worth reading. Bukharin, in explaining the theses, counterposes the previous epoch, the rise of industrial capitalism in Europe in the last decades of the 19th century, to the new epoch of imperialism. Bukharin explains the process of bureaucratization of the Socialist parties toward the end of the last epoch. The parties focused increasingly on getting more and more votes and putting more socialist delegates in parliament, to force through more and more reforms to improve the living standard of the working class.

In the epoch of the rise of capitalism, "parliament to a certain extent accomplished a historically progressive task as a tool of developing capitalism," as the theses on parliamentarism state. It was indeed in the capitalists' interests that the working class should at least be able to reproduce itself, which in the epoch of early capitalism was not always the case. Take the Polish-speaking linen weavers in Silesia just before the 1848 Revolution. They were squeezed dry by the rapacious German Junkers, their feudal overlords; their cottage industry was ruined by the competition of mechanized weaving, particularly in England. So they came out of their hovels and dank cellars, starving, freezing, in rags, barefoot, filthy, racked by epidemics, rose up, smashed everything in sight, including the looms, and ransacked the Junkers' great houses. After the bloody suppression, the Prussian government inspectors noticed that the majority of adult males in the region were



Brown Brothers

John Reed, 1917, shortly before going to Russia to report on unfolding workers revolution.

physically incapable of...serving in the army. So in this epoch it was possible to fight for major, lasting reforms. This is where, for example, fights originated, later waged by the German socialists, against child labor, for protective legislation for women, for disability insurance, for a shorter workday, universal suffrage, etc.

But gradually, the Socialist Party apparatuses, with a large fraction of their leading cadre respectably sitting in parliaments and with intimate ties to the pro-capitalist trade-union tops, grew together with state agencies. Daniel De Leon, for all his sectarian politics, was a great political leader of his time, and he commanded considerable respect from Lenin—De Leon coined the term we use today, "labor lieutenants of the capitalist class," to characterize the trade-union bureaucrats. Bukharin puts it like this: "What the reformists refer to as a growing over into socialism was the working class and the workers' organizations growing over into the bourgeois state apparatus" (*The Communist International in Lenin's Time—Proceedings and Documents of the Second Congress* [1920], [Pathfinder, 1991]). More precisely, the politics of the bureaucratized leaderships became a component of capitalist rule, clothed in the criminal myth that socialism was attainable by gradually taking over capitalist society through sheer numbers—by socialist delegates "taking over" parliament.

From the Russian 1905 Revolution to World War I

With the 20th century, Europe entered the epoch of wars and revolutions—the imperialist epoch marked by the decay of capitalism. The Bolsheviks under Lenin had forged a programmatically hard party through struggles over more than a decade, and they definitively broke from the mainstream and right-wing Social Democrats in 1912. In contrast, according to the model of a socialist party put forward by German Social Democrat Karl Kautsky, the "party of the whole

class" was supposed to encompass all political tendencies of the proletariat, including reformism. Between 1905 and 1914, the European workers organizations fractured and regrouped within their parties into three main camps. In the right-wing camp were those who had become servants of the capitalist system, and on the left, there were those, looking to the 1905 Revolution in Russia, who had become instruments of the class struggle. And in the middle was the "center," led by people like Karl Kautsky, who acted as a barrier between the base and revolutionary Marxism. The Social Democratic parliamentary fractions reflected that polarization.

Splitting the Socialist parties wasn't so

always bought into the myth of universal pro-war enthusiasm in the European population at the outbreak of World War I, and exaggerated the extent of the hysterical social-patriotism and social-chauvinism. The tops of the European Socialist parties and the trade unions linked arms with the bourgeoisie in this orgy after 4 August 1914. The skilled workers, who constituted an important part of the base of the German SPD, were most prone to the SPD leaders' logic that "we are defending our national borders as the borders in which to build German socialism," etc. But the pro-war outpouring *did not* include the broad industrial working class. In the 1990s, a couple of books came out examining working-class response in Germany to the outbreak of the war. The newspaper reports and photographs of big *pro-war* demonstrations in the major cities, the proletarian concentrations, show only the *upper classes* and reactionary students! The workers remained tense but subdued, since their leaders, including the left-wingers in the Socialist parties, were in disarray. Without leadership, the workers eventually became demoralized. (See Jeffrey Verhey, *The Spirit of 1914: The Myth of Enthusiasm and the Rhetoric of Unity in World War I Germany* [PhD thesis, University of California at Berkeley, 1991].) But even after the Socialist leaderships' betrayal and the mass slaughter of the war, the Socialist parties retained impor-



German revolutionary Karl Liebknecht authored 1915 statement "The Main Enemy Is at Home!"



Dietz Verlag Berlin

easy. When the war broke out on 4 August 1914, the revolutionary Karl Liebknecht in the German parliament on the first round voted with the rest of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) fraction to support the government's war credits. He had to overcome his shock at the prospect of breaking party discipline. The class line now separated the program of reformism from the revolutionary ideas of the left wing. His subsequent "No" votes expressed determination to remain true to the interests of the working class. But the European socialist left wings were at that time unable to draw the organizational conclusion and strike out anew. They lacked a clear understanding of the new epoch, the new tasks before the party, a new conception of the party on the Bolshevik model, that is to say a revolutionary vanguard party fighting for working-class state power.

The question of how revolutionary consciousness develops divided many of the ultralefts in the Social Democratic parties from the Communists. They believed that spontaneously, as Clara Zetkin quoted one German left-winger, "the working class will create for itself the revolutionary class party and the leadership that it needs" when the revolutionary wave rises. Not only the German left, but members of the socialist left in other countries as well, had to be broken from these conceptions through a series of political struggles waged by Lenin and the Comintern.

Parentetically, I believe that the official history of the workers movement

tant parts of their revolutionary-minded working-class base.

In each country the splits toward the Comintern were different. But in general, the new Communist parties founded beginning in 1918 and 1919 were heterogeneous and contained two or three mutually antagonistic future parties. In most cases, the task before the Comintern in 1920 was to get real Communist parties out of the mishmash. That meant propelling programmatic struggles forward in these parties, so that the revolutionary-minded left wings could coalesce and rid the party of its centrists and pro-capitalist reformists and opportunists. At the other end, there was the American party, dominated by sectarian abstentionist politics and ultraleft wings or independent formations such as in Italy, Germany and the Netherlands.

Bolshevik Position on Participation in Parliaments

The point the Comintern Congress had to make clear regarding "revolutionary parliamentarism" was that it was the antithesis of the parliamentarism of the Second International, the international grouping of social democrats that had included both revolutionaries and reformists, from which the Communists had split. The Bolsheviks explained at the Congress that the obvious primary concentration of a Communist Party's work is among the working and oppressed masses. But parliamentary work constitutes a legitimate *auxiliary* arena of work

continued on page 8

Spartacus Youth Club Class Series

BOSTON

Monday, Nov. 8, 6:30 p.m.

Lenin's State and Revolution

Harvard University, Room TBA
Information and readings: (617) 666-9453
or e-mail: bostonsyc@yahoo.com

TORONTO

Wednesday, Nov. 10, 6:30 p.m.
The Russian Revolution: How the Working Class Took Power For New October Revolutions!

York University Student Centre
Room 315C
Information and readings: (416) 593-4138
or e-mail: spartacan@on.aibn.com

LOS ANGELES

Saturday, Nov. 6, 2 p.m.
The State and Revolution

3806 Beverly Blvd., Room 215
Information and readings: (213) 380-8239
or e-mail: slsycla@sbcglobal.net

CHICAGO

Alternate Tuesdays, 7 p.m.
Nov. 2: **Marxist Materialism vs. Liberal Idealism**

University of Chicago
Cobb Hall, Room 107
5811 S. Ellis Ave.
Information and readings: (312) 563-0441
or e-mail: spartacist@iname.com

NEW YORK

Tuesday, Nov. 9, 7:30 p.m.
Black Oppression—Bedrock of American Capitalism: For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

Columbia University
Pupin Hall, Room 325 (116th and Broadway)
Information and readings: (212) 267-1025
or e-mail: nysl@compuserve.com

Visit the ICL Web Site:
www.icl-fi.org

Parliamentarism...

(continued from page 7)

that must be used as a multiplier to make the revolutionary program known and respected. Parliament is for us a forum to be used as Karl Liebknecht did, to pose every question from the standpoint of the interests of the working class and oppressed, so that our program reaches millions. When you read "Left-Wing" Communism and documents such as the "Organizational Resolution" ("Guidelines on the Organizational Structure of Communist Parties, on the Methods and Content of Their Work," adopted by the Third Congress of the Comintern, 1921, Prometheus Research Series No. 1 [1988]), there is a big emphasis on the combination of illegal and legal work. You have to remember that for the Bolsheviks, working under conditions of illegality, their participation in the Duma (the Russian parliament) was the main arena of legal work where members of the Bolsheviks could be publicly identified with the party.

The Bolsheviks recognized that the tsarist Duma was an impotent talk shop. As the Comintern theses put it, "Under present-day conditions of unbridled imperialism...parliament has been transformed into a tool of lies, deceit, violence, and enervating drive" whose reforms have lost all significance for the working masses. Nevertheless, Lenin explains that the Bolsheviks almost *always* participated in some way in the Duma elections throughout the years before the proletarian revolution. In September-November 1917, they took part in the elections to the capitalist government's Constituent Assembly—on the eve of the October Revolution. Rarely during these years—such as in the events that culminated in the outbreak of the unsuccessful 1905 Revolution—was the tactic of boycott correct. In 1906, the Bolsheviks abstained, and Lenin fought for the party to recognize this as an error. A formative struggle took place in 1907-09 against the ultraleft Bolsheviks, known as the Boycotters, over participating in the elections at a time when it was crucial to use the Duma as an agitational platform while the party retrenched in a reactionary period. The Bolsheviks *always* worked out a position on the Duma elections, developed the tactics for participating, ran candidates, called conferences, demonstrations and on and on.

The objective situation before the party in every election is obviously different. The point is, *there was no recipe for the Bolsheviks then, and there are no recipes for us now. We have to figure it out, each time.* This is of course true in general, not only in working out how to intervene in a bourgeois election campaign. And this raises the ABCs of communist work. Making the commitment to join, the movement and become a Bolshevik means that in addition to learning the history of the workers movement, you must learn to struggle with today's reality constantly and form an opinion as a communist. To do that you must inform yourself. Read the papers—the *bourgeois* papers. Listen to the news from NPR and BBC, from the point of view of a communist.



Roger Viollet

Party leaders at Second Comintern Congress, 1920. From left: Serrati, Trotsky, Paul Levi of Germany, Comintern president Zinoviev.

The "Organizational Resolution" from the Third Congress of the Comintern states:

"For a communist party there is no time when the party organization cannot be politically active. The organizational exploitation of every political and economic situation, and of every change in these situations, must be developed into organizational strategy and tactics."

— "Guidelines on the Organizational Structure of Communist Parties, on the Methods and Content of Their Work," Prometheus Research Series No. 1

Communists have a compass, the revolutionary program, and the leadership in whatever task, be it in the trade unions, be it in running candidates for parliament, must be guided by that program:

"The art of communist organization consists in making use of everything and everyone in the proletarian class struggle, distributing party work suitably among all party members and using the membership to continually draw ever wider masses of the proletariat into the revolutionary movement, while at the same time keeping the leadership of the entire movement firmly in hand, not by virtue of power but by virtue of authority, i.e., by virtue of energy, greater experience, greater versatility, greater ability."

The resolution closes with an admonition for every cadre to keep sight of our historic goals:

"The communist organizer regards every single party member and every revolutionary worker from the outset as he will be in his *future historic role as soldier* in our combat organization at the time of the revolution. Accordingly, he guides him in advance into *that nucleus and that work* which best corresponds to his future position and type of weapon. His work today must also be useful in itself, necessary for today's struggle, not merely a drill which the practical worker today does not understand. This same work, however, is also in part training for the important demands of tomorrow's final struggle."

The Italian Party at the Second World Congress

The Italian party badly needed sorting out. The leadership under Giacinto Serrati, who had led the party into the Comintern, was refusing to break with the reformist right wing. (In fact, Serrati remained adamant and when the CP split the next year, he went with the reformists.) In addition, they had an ultraleft opposition led by Bordiga that he had named the "Communist-Abstentionist" faction, also

known as the "Left Abstentionist Opposition." Bordiga performed a very useful function at the Congress, giving a minority report on parliamentarism. His arguments served as a good foil for the discussion on ultraleftism.

Bordiga's reaction to the Bolsheviks' position on parliamentarism, understandable since the reformists were still in the party, was, "What? More of the same? No way!" This was just a knee-jerk reaction to the shameful betrayal of the pre-war right Social Democrats, and to bourgeois ideology that paints "political activity" as existing in parliament and nowhere else. He did not have the Bolsheviks' conception of the party, which he regarded more or less as a product of Russian exceptionalism. He did not understand how consciousness is formed and changes in class society. For him, the revolution must first destroy parliament. Then, so to speak, the Communist revolutionaries, kind of courageous adventurers, march through the factories with the red flag, calling for the proletarian revolution to galvanize the masses for the final struggle. But real events, real class and social struggles and real participation in such fights change consciousness among the working class.

So at the Congress Bordiga was subjected to hard political criticism when he objected that it was impossible to say anything in the Italian Chamber of Deputies, that work there was impossible and traitorous by definition. Bordiga maintained that parliamentary democracy is obsolete, etc., etc. Bukharin said:

"Comrade Bordiga says it is technically impossible to make use of parliament, but he must prove that. No one will say that under tsarism we had better conditions in our Duma than exist today in the Italian Chamber of Deputies. No one has tried to speak in the Italian chamber in the necessary way. Why then do you assert, a priori, that it is impossible? Try it first—create some scandals; let them arrest you; have a political trial in the grand style. You have done none of that. This tactic must be developed to an ever higher degree. And I maintain that this is possible."

—The Communist International in Lenin's Time—Proceedings and Documents of the Second Congress

The Dutch left had also long maintained that parliamentarism was "politically obsolete." Lenin made a simple, realistic distinction: bourgeois parliamentary democracy is in fact "historically obsolete." But in terms of social and political reality, it is far from obsolete as long as millions of workers are voting for bourgeois candidates. As long as that is true,

"...participation in parliamentary elections and in the struggle on the parliamentary rostrum is *obligatory* on the part of the revolutionary proletariat *specifically* for the purpose of educating the backward strata of *its own class*, and for the purpose of awakening and enlightening the undeveloped, downtrodden and ignorant rural *masses*. Whilst you lack the strength to do away with bourgeois parliaments and every other type of reactionary institution, you *must* work within them because *it is there* that you will still find workers who are duped by the priests and stultified by the conditions of

rural life; otherwise you risk turning into nothing but windbags."

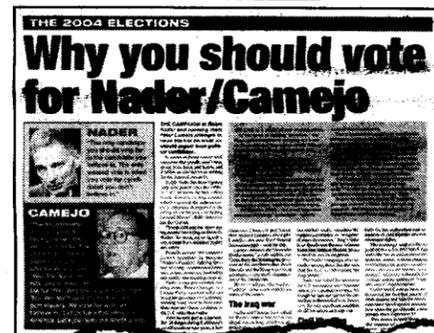
—V.I. Lenin, "Left-Wing" Communism: An Infantile Disorder, 1920, Collected Works Vol. 31 (1966)

The Task of Communists

On the question of "dual unions" and the refusal of many ultralefts to work in the reactionary trade unions, Lenin pointed to the source of their error. They equated the pro-capitalist tops of the unions with their base—which consisted then as now of various strata of workers whom the communists are obligated to reach.

The central task of the communists, from which the need for a vanguard party arises, is to bring communist consciousness into the class from the outside. Of itself, without this intervention of the party, the subjective factor in history, the working class cannot attain socialist consciousness spontaneously, but at most develops trade-union consciousness—which is still bourgeois consciousness. That means that their consciousness is limited to negotiating the terms of wage slavery as opposed to the consciousness of the need to overturn wage slavery. Because of the vastly differing conditions under which its members work, the consciousness of the working class is very heterogeneous. The layers in the working class range from the most politically advanced elements in the industrial proletariat to backward layers among whom religious obscurantism, racism and male chauvinism are rampant. This is because the bourgeoisie has a monopoly of social institutions to transmit its ideology to the entire population, and it pounds the entire population daily, hourly

Socialist Worker 24 September 2004



ISO crosses class line, supports capitalist politicians Ralph Nader and Peter Camejo.

through the media, the schools, religious institutions, sports. And above all, the ruling class uses the family to pass on subservience to authority, obedience, etc.

"Compromises" and Our Reformist Opponents

Young communists should study carefully the section on compromises in Lenin's "Left-Wing" Communism. The International Socialist Organization (ISO) obscenely baits us with it, using the book to justify their support of bourgeois forces and politicians like Ralph Nader.

Lenin points out that under capitalist imperialism, from the heterogeneity of consciousness arises

"the absolute necessity for the Communist Party, the vanguard of the proletariat, its class-conscious section, to resort to changes of tack, to conciliation and compromises with the various groups of proletarians, with the various parties of the workers and small masters. It is entirely a matter of *knowing how* to apply these tactics in order to *raise*—not lower—the *general* level of proletarian class-consciousness, revolutionary spirit, and ability to fight and win."

Now, the "changes of tack, conciliations and compromises" Lenin is talking about here are with "the various groups of proletarians." Lenin's point is that centrist and occasionally even reformist parties *vacillate* between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The effect of our tactics, such as our use of critical support in the California recall campaign last autumn, is to drive the wedge in precisely when an

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Young Spartacus

organization on the left turns (in its publicly stated program) toward the workers, and to combat those that are on their knees before the bourgeoisie.

In the recall election, with the exception of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), the ISO and all the other "left" groups oriented to the ruling class. They supported candidates committed to the reform of capitalism, to pressure the capitalists and their state to be nice to the workers and oppressed—the capitalist Green Party's Peter Camejo (an ex-fake Trotskyist), C.T. Weber (Peace and Freedom Party), etc., etc. We pointed out that their fanning illusions in such forces in no way represents the independent interests of the working class, raising the class consciousness of the youth and working class and their ability to fight, but instead lowers it. By giving critical support to the SWP's candidate, Joel Britton, we sought to draw toward us youth and workers whose heart was with the proletariat. Of course we know the SWP will turn around and plead with the bourgeoisie to make nicey-nice tomorrow, but what they wrote in their program for the recall elections, what they claimed to stand on, drew a crude class line, so that we could say, that's good, we can support that—not that we expect them to put their money where their mouth is. And in so doing, we could go into action, intervene, counterpose our own consistently working-class revolutionary program.

Cannon noted in *The First Ten Years of American Communism* that antiparlamentarism along the lines of the European ultralefts was present in a weaker form in the first program of the Communist Party in the U.S. But "that hodgepodge of ultra-radicalism was practically wiped out of the American movement in 1920-21 by Lenin." The American leaders were broken from the influence of De Leon and the Dutch ultralefts primarily by Lenin's "Left-Wing" Communism and by the Comintern theses and resolutions of the Second World Congress.

The American SWP in 1940

One of the readings for this class was the discussion printed in the *Writings of Leon Trotsky (1939-40)* between the SWP leadership and Trotsky. The fight, though on one level about electoral tactics, revealed adaptations to the anti-Communist Rooseveltian trade unionists, whom the SWP encountered in the course of their trade-union work.

Trotsky pounded the SWP's inexcusable abstention from the presidential elections dominated by Roosevelt:

"I see there is no campaign in the *Socialist Appeal* for a workers' candidate. Why haven't you proposed a congress of trade unions, a convention to nominate a candidate for the presidency? If he were independent we would support him. We cannot remain completely indifferent. We can very well insist in unions where we have influence that Roosevelt is not our candidate and the workers must have their own candidate. We should demand a nationwide congress connected with the independent labor party."

Trotsky pointed out that it was principled and could be tactically smart to sup-

port the American Communist Party's candidate, Earl Browder. After the Hitler-Stalin pact was signed, the American Communist Party (CP), like the Stalinists internationally, had dropped the social-patriotic line of their Popular Front period. Instead of looking for alliances with a wing of the bourgeoisie against fascists or "reactionaries" in general, they adopted an antiwar, anti-imperialist stance. That offered the Trotskyists an opening to drive a wedge into the contradictions of the Stalinist tops' politics.

Trotsky patiently explained how the International Left Opposition [precursor of the Trotskyist Fourth International] was not politically closer to the Socialist parties in 1933 than to the CPs in 1940, but that the Trotskyists had then entered the reformist SPs in a maneuver called the "French Turn," designed to win away their left-wing elements. (That maneuver was so successful in the U.S. that it gutted the SP for good.) Trotsky asked: Since the CP won't let the SWP enter it, why not conduct a similar maneuver from the outside?

Trotsky hammered the SWP for not exploiting the CP's contradictions, asking the delegation what kind of policy they wanted—negative or dynamic politics:

"If you are an independent party you must have politics, a line in relation to this campaign. If you had an independent candidate I would be for him, but where

let making the same political points. But the SWP delegation showed no positive reaction to any of these suggestions.

Trotsky asked a rhetorical question and answered it: "Why this lack of initiative?... It is a photograph of our adaptation to the Rooseveltians." He went over to a direct attack against the SWP's orientation to the "progressives":

"We are in a bloc with so-called progressives—not only fakers, but honest rank and file. Yes, they are honest and progressive but from time to time they vote for Roosevelt—once in four years. This is decisive. You propose a trade union policy, not a Bolshevik policy. Bolshevik policies begin outside the trade unions. You are afraid to become compromised in the eyes of the Rooseveltian trade unionists.... The danger...is adaptation to the pro-Rooseveltian trade unionists. You don't give any answer to the elections, not even the beginning of an answer. But we must have a policy."

Cannon asked at the conclusion of the discussion: "There has not been an approach to the Stalinists in years. Could it be possible?" The light was beginning to dawn, but we know that they didn't make the approach.

There was a lot at stake. Trotsky was trying to get the SWP leadership to see that their orientation to the Rooseveltian "progressives" in the trade unions was determining the politics of the party, and that the pro-progressive policy was paralyzing the party.



Spartacist-initiated 5,000-strong labor/black mobilization stopped Klan provocation in Washington, D.C., November 1982. Leading exemplary actions shows that our program can win victories for workers, oppressed.

is he? It is either complete abstention from the campaign because of technical reasons, or you must choose between Browder and Norman Thomas [the SP's candidate]. We can accept abstention.... We can proclaim that everyone is a faker. That is one thing, but events confirming our proclamation is another. Shall we follow negative or dynamic politics?... We must have our own politics. Imagine the effect on the Stalinist rank and file...."

But no matter what Trotsky suggested, the SWP leaders, shocked at the thought of politically going after the Stalinists, reacted with "but...but": The "peculiar" Stalinist movement was hated by labor militants. Giving them critical support would "discredit the Trotskyists in the labor movement." The Stalinists would only "betray again." "The CP is not a genuine workers' party." Cannon argued that "the progressives will hate us if we support the Stalinists," showing where the SWP's trade-union policy was oriented.

Trotsky presented one tactical possibility after another, to try to get the SWP leaders to see the great flexibility available to them: They could publish a manifesto directed at the Stalinist workers, but there was so far not "even one single word from you on policy in regard to the presidential election." The members of the party could write letters to the editor of the SWP supporters' trade-union newspaper in Minneapolis, the *Northwest Organizer*. Trying one last time, Trotsky said, OK, abandon voting for Browder; abandon a manifesto and produce a leaf-



1940 elections: CP dropped support for Roosevelt and ran Earl Browder on antiwar ticket, as shown in cartoon from its paper.

to the right particularly after the Hitler-Stalin pact, when defense of the Soviet Union wasn't so popular with petty-bourgeois intellectuals anymore. What Trotsky is fighting about with the majority was that they had some of the same political problems as the minority—they couldn't deal with the Communist Party. Their policy of adapting to the "progressives" in the unions disarmed them in the struggle against the Shachtmanites. If they had pulled off a maneuver like Trotsky was suggesting, it would have had an enormous impact not only on the Stalinist workers, but would have dealt a serious blow to Shachtman's credibility with the more serious youth as well.

If we are doing our job, we always have to look for the contradictions: where we can drive in a wedge to put forth our program positively. We are obligated to develop tactics that are a lever to move as much weight as possible in terms of consciousness, first of the most advanced, then of more backward layers of the working class and oppressed. The Comintern Organizational Resolution talks about layers of workers taking up Communist slogans and carrying them on to others. There are significant examples in our history of just that happening: at our anti-Klan mobilizations when the bus drivers or longshoremen take bundles of our leaflets to hand out, and certainly during the incipient proletarian political revolution in East Germany in 1989-90.

Even if the scale is smaller today and we are at the stage of party building where we are accumulating the cadre to man the necessary party posts for much larger struggles in the future, the program is the same. The injunction to work out effective Leninist tactics, to intervene in every politically charged situation, every social or class struggle, no matter how partial, is the same. ■

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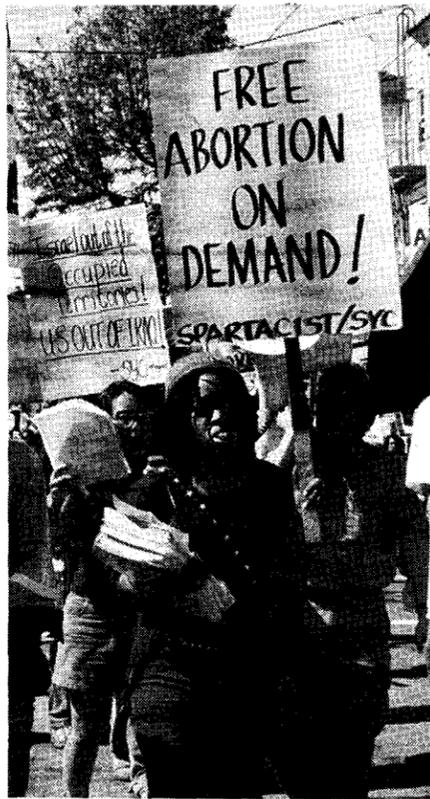
Elections...

(continued from page 1)

of a capitalist system based on exploitation and profit. On the question of religion, for example, we fight for the strict separation of church and state; religion should be a private matter and we oppose any intrusion by the government into people's personal lives; we call for free abortion on demand; we defend the right of gay people to marry. But under capitalism religion serves a purpose for the rulers; it is a means to enforce social conservatism and defend the existing status quo.

It is said that whom the gods would destroy, they first make mad; and here Bush has a considerable head start. Bush and his cohorts have simply proposed that "America the Good" will dominate planet Earth. This is quite mad and dangerous even as a fantasy. But to be sure, the motor force that drives such aspirations is not insanity but the *raison d'être* of the imperialist system, which is based on the drive to control the world's markets and sources of raw materials and cheap labor. This drive has intensified exponentially with the capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet degenerated workers state in 1991-92—a historic defeat for the world's proletariat. The Messianic and oddly demented policies of the Bush regime represent the logic of a capitalist class drunk on one success after another since the end of the Cold War. The U.S. is not only an imperialist power; it is the world's most powerful imperialist power.

There is an irreconcilable antagonism between the interests of the property-



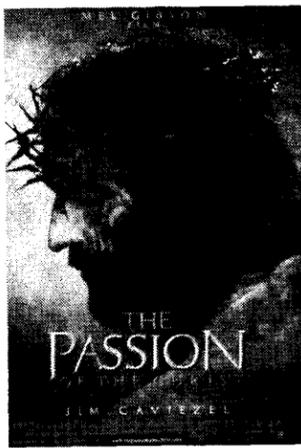
WV Photo

Spartacists raise fight for women's rights at San Francisco antiwar protest, March 2004.

owning bosses who exploit workers to obtain profits, and the workers themselves, who own nothing but their labor power and who create the wealth of society. Workers need their own party, which will fight not only for the interests of labor but for the rights of black people, women, gays and all the exploited and oppressed; a workers party that will fight to overturn capitalism, creating a workers government and a society based on production for human needs.

What's the Matter with Kansas?

In our review of *Fahrenheit 9/11* (WV No. 829, 9 July), we noted that Michael Moore's "populist outlook leads him to ignore the Bush administration's close ties to the Christian right, to take notice of which would mean acknowledging that Bush really has a popular base. The box office figures of *The Passion of the Christ*, remember, are real." It is a measure of the deep religiosity of this country



Newmarket Films

Lethal weapons: Mel Gibson's hit movie *The Passion of the Christ* and two-ton Ten Commandments monument in Alabama state judicial building reflect ominous rise of religious reaction.

that the biggest "cultural" phenomenon in the U.S. in 2004 was Mel Gibson's film—with all its anti-Semitic overtones—which earned over \$370 million in the box office and sold over four million copies in its first day out on DVD.

In a recent book titled, *What's the Matter with Kansas? How Conservatives Won the Heart of America* (Metropolitan Books, 2004), liberal Thomas Frank attempts to grapple with the resurgence of far-right religious fundamentalism as a major political force and with the apparently baffling lack of even elementary class consciousness among many blue-collar workers. While he reverses cause and effect, tending to see ideology as determining the lack of class struggle, and thinks the Democrats can be a solution, his "heartland" scream of outrage still captures something of the reactionary mess we're in today:

"The country seems more like a panorama of madness and delusion worthy of Hieronymus Bosch: of sturdy blue-collar patriots reciting the Pledge while they strangle their own life chances; of small farmers proudly voting themselves off the land; of devoted family men carefully seeing to it that their children will never be able to afford college or proper health care; of working-class guys in Midwestern cities cheering as they deliver up a landslide for a candidate whose policies will end their way of life, will transform their region into a 'rust belt,' will strike people like them blows from which they will never recover."

Earlier on, Frank complained:

"The trick never ages; the illusion never wears off. *Vote* to stop abortion; *receive* a rollback in capital gains taxes. *Vote* to make our country strong again; *receive* deindustrialization. *Vote* to screw those politically correct college professors; *receive* electricity deregulation. *Vote* to get government off our backs; *receive* conglomeration and monopoly everywhere from media to meatpacking. *Vote* to stand tall against terrorists; *receive* Social Security privatization. *Vote* to strike a blow against elitism; *receive* a social order in which wealth is more concentrated than ever before in our lifetimes, in which workers have been stripped of power and CEOs are rewarded in a manner beyond imagining."

What Frank describes may be more intense today, but this is how the capitalist politicians always work—they lie, cheat and steal.

Frank cites a pamphlet, *Is It a Sin for a Christian to Be a Registered Democrat Voter in America Today?* by a Wichita, Kansas, Christian and Republican ideologue. In fact, the growth of religion in mainstream politics in recent decades did not begin with the Republicans. It began with the Democratic Carter administration. And, like every rightward shift in this country, it was tied to a rise in racist reaction against black people.

The nomination of "born-again" Baptist Carter to head the Democratic Party ticket in the 1976 elections was not accidental. Carter openly proclaimed the virtues of "ethnic purity." Busing for school integration, having been defeated on the streets of Boston in 1974-75, was killed in city after city. Five leftist anti-racist



Getty

militants in Greensboro, North Carolina, were gunned down in broad daylight in 1979 by a group of Klansmen and Nazis led by an "informer" for the Feds.

Coming to power just after the defeat of U.S. imperialism by the heroic Vietnamese workers and peasants, the Carter administration kicked off a "moral" rearmament campaign—an onslaught of domestic social reaction and anti-Communist "human rights" campaign against the Soviet degenerated workers state. These policies reflected a consensus within the American ruling class, which sought to overcome widespread public mistrust of the government following the Watergate events that forced the resignation of Republican president Richard Nixon in 1974, and to refurbish the tarnished credentials and military might of U.S. imperialism after Vietnam.

The religious right provided the shock troops for the right-wing backlash against the limited gains made by women and black people in the 1960s and early '70s—that the likes of the clerical Catholic reactionary Patrick Buchanan call the "Culture War." The religious right mobilized not only against the gains but against the defiance of the racist status quo shown by those who struggled.

With the election of Reagan, both the assaults on black rights and the Cold War against the Soviet Union intensified. Reagan expanded the clandestine CIA operation launched by Carter to fund Islamic reactionaries in Afghanistan, turning it into the biggest covert operation by the CIA in American history. At home, Reagan's assaults on labor were exemplified by the 1981 smashing of the PATCO air traffic controllers union—using plans drawn up by the Carter administration. The fostering of religious reaction during the 1980s was so great that by the 1988 elections, Bush Sr., who was not an evangelical Christian, won the White House largely on

the basis of the evangelical vote.

The fact that Bill Clinton associated with blacks and actually had black friends has endeared him to many black people—a measure of the deep racial divide in this country. But the very selection of the Clinton/Gore ticket in 1992—two white Southerners—was designed to win back the White House through a campaign of appealing to the Southern, white racist vote. This was symbolized during the 1992 campaign by Clinton flying back to Arkansas to oversee the execution of a brain-damaged black man, Ricky Ray Rector.

Clinton promised to "end welfare as we know it"—and, in fact, accomplishing what his Republican predecessors could not do, actually did it. Clinton presided over a vast expansion of the death penalty and prison system, creating a huge national grid of cages for an unprecedented growth in the disproportionately black and minority prison population. The U.S. today has more people in prison, as a percent of total population, than any other country. In Iraq Clinton's policies killed far more men, women and children during the United Nations-sponsored starvation "sanctions" blockade and bloody bombing campaigns than Bush's invasion and occupation so far.

Both parties have shifted to the right, bringing reactionary social layers to political ascendancy. The fundamentalist Christian right is today mainstream, and provides a cover for the fascist fringe that terrorizes black people and guns down abortion doctors. As a political force, Christian fundamentalism represents backwardness and social reaction. It's anti-science, anti-evolution and pro-creationism. It's for prayer in public schools and the subjugation of women and children in the family: the antithesis of the values of the Enlightenment of the 17th and 18th centuries.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991-92, religious reaction in the U.S. grew, along with increasing attacks on the rights of workers, minorities and women. The removal of the USSR as the main enemy of U.S. imperialism has also meant that U.S. imperialism had to find a new enemy, which eventually, particularly following the September 11 attacks, became Islamic fundamentalism. The very fact that the line drawn in international politics is currently defined by a war against Islamic fundamentalism has served to galvanize Christian fundamentalism in the U.S. Bruce Bartlett, a domestic policy adviser to Ronald Reagan and a treasury official for Bush Sr., told Suskind in the *Times Magazine* article that the Christian fundamentalist Bush "is so clear-eyed about Al Qaeda and the Islamic fundamentalist enemy" because he has a "Messianic idea of what he thinks God has told him to do." Bartlett continued, "He understands them, because he's just like them." Indeed, Al Qaeda is Osama bin Laden's own "faith

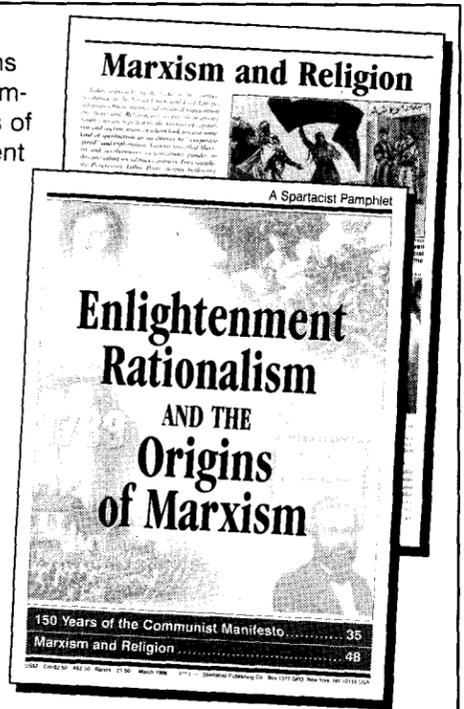
This pamphlet reprints presentations given by SL Central Committee member Joseph Seymour on the origins of Marxism in the French Enlightenment and in left Hegelianism.

Also included are "150 Years of the Communist Manifesto" and "Marxism and Religion."

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based" initiative, as well as a Frankenstein's monster that turned on its erstwhile masters.

For a Workers Party!

In the U.S., black people are always a central target of the very same forces that mobilize in opposition to abortion rights, gay marriage and any expression of social liberalization. This underlines that it is in the interest of black people to fight for the rights of gays, women and all the oppressed.

Because they are victims of unrelenting racial oppression, many black people sympathize with the struggles of other oppressed sectors of the population. But religiosity among black people also leaves them open to backward views on issues like abortion and gay marriage. A recent survey, for example, noted that support for Bush has increased among older, more conservative black people. In our article, "For the Right to Gay Marriage!" (WV No. 821, 5 March), we quoted a black Baptist minister who said, "If the K.K.K. opposes gay marriage, I would ride with them." But as we wrote in response, the minister "might saddle up, but it will be a short ride—the first target of this motley collection of nativist, anti-labor fascists is black people."

From the days of slavery to the present, the oppression of black people has been a fundamental feature of American capitalism. Black people are both segregated at the bottom of American society and integrated into the economy. If it is to fight for its own emancipation, the multiracial proletariat must take up the struggle for black freedom. The working class will transcend its divisions only through class and social struggle. Only by the common struggle of the multiracial working class under the leadership of a revolutionary workers party will a socialist revolution be made.

The working class needs such a party; but the primary obstacle to working-class unity in the U.S. has been the deep racial divide fostered by the American ruling class, which has served to retard the political consciousness of the working class. In this, the bourgeoisie is aided by the AFL-CIO tops, who do their best to



UPI



Corbis Hulton-Deutsch

Left: Outside historic 1925 Tennessee trial where Clarence Darrow (above) defended John Scopes for defying state law against teaching evolution. Tennessee ban was not overturned until 1968, as social struggles for black equality and against Vietnam War swept U.S.

corral the labor movement behind capitalist politicians, particularly Democrats, and the black politicians and preachers, who also do their utmost for the Democrats. At bottom, their message is deeply demoralizing: the *best* that workers, women and black people can do is vote once every four years for some cynical capitalist politician and then hope he

won't kick them around too much once he gets into office. A workers party will be forged only through class and social struggle independent of the capitalist parties.

The absence of such struggle helps account for the remarkable phenomenon that Thomas Frank eloquently documents in *What's the Matter with Kan-*

sas? With not much of a leftist movement in the U.S., the religious right has created a thoroughly bogus "class" argument against the "liberal elites." "Class" gets posed in the eyes of many in thrall to the toxic communion of the religious right not as bosses versus workers, but as the godly regular folks against the decadent, left-of-center, latté-drinking heathens who haunt art galleries in New York and Los Angeles.

The rise of religiosity in this country, particularly among working people, is directly related to the fact that most people in the U.S. can scarcely perceive a way to fight against the oppression and exploitation they suffer. (Frank, for example, notes that McPherson, Nebraska, the poorest county in the country, is solidly Republican.) As we wrote in "Marxism and Religion" (reprinted in the Spartacist pamphlet, *Enlightenment Rationalism and the Origins of Marxism*), modern religion is "a means both of oppression and of escape for the oppressed." Noting that "*Man makes religion, religion does not make man.*" Karl Marx explained:

"Religious suffering is at one and the same time the *expression* of real suffering and a protest against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the *opium* of the people.

"The abolition of religion as the *illusory* happiness of the people is the demand for their *real* happiness. To call on them to give up their illusions about their condition is to *call on them to give up a condition that requires illusions.*"

—"Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right" (1844)

We need to fight for a world of such material abundance that people won't need religion to make up for what they lack. And that is only possible through the overthrow of the capitalist order and the forging of a new socialist society that will open a new period of human development and lay the basis for the expansion of human freedom in all spheres. All the more necessary then, if humanity is to have any kind of future, to fight for what we want in this world. And the starting point for that is a break with the Democratic Party and a fight to build a workers party that will fight for socialist revolution. ■

Social Forum...

(continued from page 4)

We demand: Drop all the charges!

Despicable as the behaviour of the British Labourite left is, they hardly have a monopoly on appealing to or alibiing the forces of the capitalist state. In the aftermath of Genoa everyone from Susan George of ATTAC to Rifondazione Comunista to Alain Krivine of the French Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire howled against the anarchists, blaming the *victims* for the murderous violence of the capitalist state. As our comrades of the Lega Trotskista d'Italia wrote in a protest statement, "Berlusconi and the G-8: Imperialist Butchers!":

"With such statements these miserable misleaders prove their loyalty to the capitalist class and its police assassins and expose their attacks on 'globalisation' as rooted in social-chauvinist, reformist support to their 'own' bourgeoisies. Their 'movement' aims not to overthrow capitalism but to mask its monstrous reality."

—reprinted in *Workers Vanguard* No. 762, 3 August 2001

Indeed, from their inception in Porto Alegre, Brazil in 2001 the entire purpose of these social forums has been to take radical youth off the streets and to corral them behind the "democratic alternative" of promoting the electoral fortunes of out-of-power parliamentary reformists. The most notable beneficiary of this was Lula's Workers Party in Brazil, which is now in government viciously attacking the workers and peasants. The renegades of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International organised the first World Social Forum where they held mock "participatory budgets," designed to school

young radicals in administering the budget of the capitalist state. Now they have a minister in Lula's popular-front government that is administering budgets on behalf of the IMF and the World Bank while viciously attacking peasants in the countryside as well as blacks and ghetto poor in the cities.

On the eve of the war against Iraq the Florence ESF issued a resolution promoting the most grotesque illusions in the "peace-loving" credentials of their "own" imperialist bourgeoisies. It appealed to "all citizens of Europe and to all their representatives. Together let us stop the war on Iraq." It called on "all the European heads of state to publicly stand against this war, whether it has UN backing or not, and to demand that George Bush abandon his war plans" (*Weekly Worker*, 12 September 2002).

While there was plenty of bellyaching over how the London ESF was tightly controlled by Livingstone's office, amidst cries of "he who pays the piper calls the tune," the fact of the matter is that all of these gatherings have been bankrolled by various capitalist agencies and institutions (including by the Chirac government in Paris last year).

The Wombles got the number of the ESF in their call for "Beyond ESF," which says that these social forums simply "parallel the development of capitalist institutions of governance" and "merely asks for 'capitalism with a human face'." But while posturing as a genuine anti-capitalist alternative they reflect all the prejudices of Cold War anti-communism, chanting in unison with bourgeois democrats that "absolute power corrupts absolutely" and that state power was the original sin of the Russian Revolution. Their

call for building "autonomous zones" somehow free of capitalist exploitation buys into the myth that the oppressed can find liberation within the confines of bourgeois "democracy," i.e., the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. Rejecting what they view as the "Leninist tyranny" of a unitary revolutionary programme and party seeking to mobilise the social power of the proletariat for the conquest of state power, the anarchists are impotent in the face of the highly organised, ruthlessly efficient forces of the bourgeois state. The end result simply paves the way for a return to the "politics of the possible" espoused by the very social-democratic sellouts the Wombles claim to reject.

The Spartacist League/Britain and the Spartacus Youth Group intervened at this

ESF to win youth and others to a proletarian, revolutionary internationalist perspective. We recognise that the fundamental conflict in society is the conflict between capital and labour. Because of its central role in production, the working class is not just another "social movement" but has the social power to bring down the capitalist exploiters and their whole system of racism, national oppression and women's oppression as well as imperialist war. The proletariat has the power and the class interest to create a society based on collectivised property and a rational, planned economy, a workers state leading to a classless communist society and the withering away of the state. To achieve this we are dedicated to building an international Leninist-Trotskyist party. ■

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Police Terrorize Red Sox Celebrations

Boston Cops Kill Student

On October 21, the Boston cops gunned down Victoria Snelgrove, a 21-year-old Emerson College student majoring in broadcast journalism. Her "crime"? Nothing. Even the cops admit that. Snelgrove had watched the local team defeat the Yankees in the game that would carry the Red Sox to the World Series, and had afterward joined the 80,000 or so revelers in Kenmore Square with a friend.

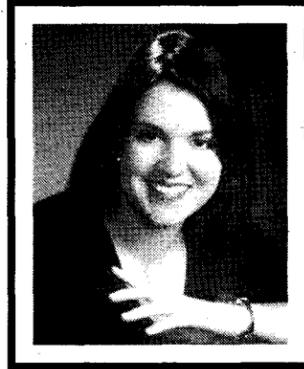
In response to typical post-game rowdiness, the Boston police surged into the crowd, escalating the situation dangerously. A scuffle developed near where Snelgrove was standing. A cop opened fire with "less than lethal" pepper-spray balls. The "less than lethal" projectile hit Snelgrove in the eye, wounding her fatally.

Boston cops bought the weapon that killed Snelgrove as part of their preparations for the Democratic National Convention protests, where they maintained a repressive atmosphere aimed at squelching protest. The cops also purchased a 10½-foot-tall tank-like armored vehicle capable of holding 30 riot cops. Using weapons similar to those wielded by the Boston police in Kenmore Square, in April 2003 the Oakland police opened fire on antiwar protesters and trade unionists on the Oakland docks, wounding many of the protesters, some seriously. Now the Boston police have withdrawn these guns in favor of guns that fire the pepper-spray balls at a lower velocity.



Thompson/Boston Herald

Throughout the Democratic and Republican convention protests, the cops in Boston and New York City carried out a massive repressive operation, arresting over 1,800 people for simply exercising their First Amendment rights. Particularly egregious is the case of black youth Jamal Holiday. While most of the demonstrators arrested during the protests against the Republican National Convention are now free, Holiday remains in jail, charged with assaulting a plainclothes cop who provocatively



AP

Riot officer aims pepperball gun, like one that killed Victoria Snelgrove, at Red Sox fans in Boston's Kenmore Square, October 21.

drove his motor scooter into a mass of protesters. Holiday's bail was reportedly upped from \$50,000 to \$250,000 recently, based in part on the fact that political literature was found in his home. Drop the charges against Holiday! Free him now!

In Boston, the cops and their bosses in City Hall are using an obscene action by the cops to justify further repression. After *pro forma* expressions of regret over Snelgrove's death, Police Commissioner Kathleen M. O'Toole and Mayor

Thomas Menino blamed "knuckleheads" and "punks" who, they claimed, had forced the cops' hand. This is a contemptible lie. Additionally, Mayor Menino has capitalized on Snelgrove's death to push puritanical measures down the throats of Boston's residents. Though stymied in his attempt to have alcohol banned in the Fenway Park area entirely during the World Series by bar owners worried about ruinous losses in revenue, area bars will now have a complement of cops in them. TV crews will be banned from the bars, supposedly for encouraging rowdiness. Those who cannot find a seat in a bar fairly immediately will not be allowed to wait outside and will be herded out of the area entirely. In short, the city has used lethal cop repression as a pretext for more cop repression.

Meanwhile, Boston University's Dean of Students, Kenneth Elmore, e-mailed the student body on October 22, ominously warning them in anticipation of the World Series: "In addition to any criminal prosecution, Boston University students involved in any illegal or inappropriate behavior will be subject to University judicial sanctions, including University expulsion."

As any resident of the ghettos and barrios in the U.S. knows, the cops kill. They act as enforcers for a system marked by the exploitation of working people and the oppression of black people, immigrants and others. Victoria Snelgrove is not the first victim of the killers in blue, nor will she be the last. At an October 24 protest against the police killing of Snelgrove in Boston, the Spartacist League carried a sign reading "Workers Revolution Will Sweep Away Police Terror—We Will Not Forget Victoria Snelgrove!" It is through the struggle to replace the racist, capitalist system with a just, socialist society that the police can be relegated to a barbaric past. ■

Court Shafts US Airways Workers

OCTOBER 24—On October 15, a U.S. bankruptcy court ordered US Airways workers to take a whopping 21 percent pay cut, a freeze or elimination of medical benefits, reduction or suspension of pensions, and to work longer hours and allow outsourcing of critical heavy base maintenance work to cheaper, i.e., non-union labor. The leadership of ALPA, the union representing the pilots, then quickly rammed through their own deal with US Airways, agreeing to an 18 percent pay cut. One airline worker told *Workers Vanguard* that bankruptcy has become the companies' preferred form of union-busting. By hiding behind the judge in his black robes, the bosses deflect mounting anger from the CEOs to the courts, and by implication to the union tops who bow to the courts.

The courts are the cover for the repressive force of the capitalist state. Laws protecting private property, laws effectively prohibiting union strike action (such as Taft-Hartley, Railway Labor Act) and court orders vitiating decades of hard-won union gains are enforced by the police, the prison system, and ultimately the army. Above all, the courts are used to repress those who challenge the rights of capitalist property and the exploitation of labor, or otherwise get in the way of the functioning of the capitalist system. The same cops and courts that

send thousands of unemployed black youth to prison are used to bust up picket lines, frame up militants, deport immigrant workers and escort scabs.

Every modern industrial economy needs a functional airline industry. Without the aid of the civilian airlines, domestic and international trade and production can't move rapidly, and not even the U.S. government could move its troops or military cargo for its bloody occupation of Iraq. Airline workers have tremendous potential social power, precisely because of their centrality to the economy. But this power has been sapped by the "labor lieutenants of the capitalist class" running the unions, who hogtie their own members by promoting illusions in the agencies of the capitalist class enemy, including the courts, and especially the Democratic Party. In this election year, the AFL-CIO brass from John Sweeney on down have squandered union funds to put Democrat John Kerry in the White House. In 1997, the AFL-CIO and pilots' union bureaucracy immediately acquiesced to President Bill Clinton's invocation of the Railway Labor Act against striking American Airlines pilots.

Labor has powerful weapons in its unity and collectivity, and for these to be used effectively requires conscious organization independent of the capitalist parties and capitalist courts. The unions were

built and struggles were won in defiance of the capitalist government and the bosses' laws. Every victory for black rights, for women's rights, for union rights, has been won through hard class and social struggle, not by crawling to the Democrats or beseeching the courts.

A union leadership worth its salt would counter the offensive by the companies and the capitalist state by mobilizing joint actions by all airline workers and coordinating international labor solidarity. To fight outsourcing of jobs to non-union labor, and to combat the non-union carriers that drive down the wages of all workers, it's crucial to *organize the unorganized* and fight for *equal pay at union wages for equal work!* Airline workers need a single industry-wide union of all workers, from baggage handlers to pilots, to facilitate industry-wide strike action to defend and extend union gains.

Five years after the deregulation of the airline industry, Continental in 1983 pioneered bankruptcy as the road to profit, using Chapter 11 to void union contracts. US Airways has now gone this route twice in two years; American has used the threat of bankruptcy to wrench concessions; United has been in bankruptcy for two years and is maneuvering for a second round of cuts; Delta says it may declare bankruptcy to slash labor costs;

ditto Northwest. Airline workers have moved their families several times just to keep a job, at ever lower wages, and thousands work second jobs just to put food on the table and avoid home foreclosures.

The companies whine that rising fuel prices drive up costs, but you won't see the courts ordering the profit-bloated oil companies to make up the deficit, or ordering the company CEOs to cut their wages or drop their golden parachutes! And it's not just the airlines—last month retired coal miners and their dependents in West Virginia were robbed of their pensions and health plans with a stroke of a judge's pen.

Enough! This anti-union offensive is also a clear and present danger to the entire public and an indictment of the irrationality of the profit-driven capitalist system. Who wants to board an airplane maintained by non-union, often unlicensed labor, flown and staffed by sleep-deprived pilots and flight attendants? And the U.S. air traffic control system is overstretched and antiquated. *This is a major public air disaster in the making.* It is desperately necessary to forge a new class-struggle leadership of the unions, and to forge a multiracial revolutionary workers party to sweep away the capitalist system and establish a rational, planned, egalitarian socialist economy, where those who labor rule. ■