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Re-Create
the Fourth International

U.S. Imperialism Out of the Balkans!

by Arthur Rymer

The imperialist war ended in an imperialist occupation. In the aftermath of the 11-week bombing campaign, the big losers are the workers and peasants of Serbia and Kosovo: thousands were killed and their countries were devastated. NATO is the claimed winner, although it did not even attempt to achieve its stated goal of preventing the "ethnic cleansing" of Kosovo Albanians. But it did carry out its real aim: showing the world that any country that defies imperialism is subject to being pulverized.

Nevertheless, all is not well for imperialism. The war exposed serious cracks in the unity of the NATO bloc and opened wide divisions between the Western powers and both Russia and China. It also accelerated the destabilization of the Balkans — another result it was supposed to prevent.

Contrary to claims that its bombs were aimed only



NATO terrorist missiles rained down on civilian targets in Belgrade.

against the Serb military, NATO clearly targeted non-military bridges, roads, electricity and water services, plus practically every major factory in the country — on top of the numerous "accidents" that killed hundreds of Serb and Kosovo civilians. Despite its vaunted "smart" missiles, after the very beginning of the war NATO deliberately used cluster bombs that shred human beings with shrapnel.

The "peace" agreement is equally a lie. NATO is occupying Kosovo under a United Nations fig leaf. The Kosovo Albanians, in whose name the war was fought, will be denied their demand for national independence. Serbia retains a paper sovereignty, but in reality Kosovo will become an imperialist protectorate — as Bosnia became in 1995 and Albania and Macedonia are in effect also today. The Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA, or UCK in Albanian), NATO's war-

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LRP/COFI Report

FREE MUMIA!

LRP and COFI supporters have been busy on this front. A COFI supporter in Melbourne was instrumental in building a support committee for Mumia Abu-Jamal, which held a successful demo there on April 24. In the U.S., we attended and intervened at demos and conferences in New York, Chicago, Washington and Rochester as well as several Philadelphia events. An LRP supporter in Durham, NC helped get Mumia defense work off the ground there.

At many events we circulated a bulletin, *Revolutionary Strategy to Unite Our Struggles*, which related the campaign to free Mumia to the fight against police brutality and the larger questions of exploitation and racism. We have been particularly active in trying to build labor support for Mumia in both New York and Chicago.

At a Mumia defense conference at City College in New York in February, campus security guards did their best to wreck the effort by provoking activists; they arrested 4 participants including 2 ISO supporters, an LRPer who had come to their defense and an organizer from HERE. Eventually all charges were dismissed.

At this conference, an LRP supporter in the transit union was a featured speaker at the workshop on Labor and Mumia. He discussed the fight waged in 1992 to force his local leadership to defend a trackworker, James Frazier, falsely accused of assault by cops who had in fact shot him in the head. Pressure did produce some union support for Frazier — leading not to a full victory but to an acquittal on most charges. Far greater pressure must be placed on union leaders today to support Mumia.

A heated floor discussion followed. A Spartacist attacked the LRP for pressuring union bureaucrats, claiming that this is *counterposed* to trying to defeat them. The LRP comrade pled “guilty” to the charge. He elaborated, as we have done frequently, that revolutionaries favor making demands on leaders when we must and ousting them when we can — i.e., when we can split their base from the pro-capitalist top. But when we do not yet have the forces to *replace* the current misleadership, a policy of mass struggle requires successful pressure on the leaders. It is essential for demonstrating the need for revolutionary leadership.

At the Washington D.C. Mumia conference in February,

we intervened at the police brutality workshop, a panel led by supporters of the ISO and their Campaign to End the Death Penalty. Their militant speeches concluded with calls for continual activism and fighting for reforms like civilian review boards. The LRP raised the need for demands on the mass organizations in order to build effective mobilizations; we also spelled out clearly the need for socialist revolution to smash the system that promotes racism. Our comments were well received by militants in the audience — but denounced by ISOers who, in typical and manipulative fashion, parodied our Marxist views as a call for immediate armed revolution. However, they made no criticism of a local Democratic pol who had spoken ad nauseam from the panel.

The Chicago LRP participated in a spirited “Youth for Mumia” march on June 13 organized by Refuse and Resist along with local high school students. Our speaker focused on the link between the state’s determination to murder Mumia and the recent police killings in Chicago. As elsewhere, we raised the need to combat the union and Black misleadership in order to achieve a truly mass mobilization to free Mumia.

FIGHT POLICE TERROR!

The LRP has joined many actions and meetings over police brutality in New York and Chicago. We quickly issued a number of leaflets in both cities as events erupted, as well as a special pamphlet. (See the articles on page 40.)

In New York, Rev. Al Sharpton captured the central leadership of protests after the Diallo murder, but several different coalitions called separate protests without offering a political alternative. The most disappointing was a meeting called at the Health Care Workers’ Union 1199 on March 29 to form a “Network Against Police Violence.” Despite paper endorsements by families of the victims, Sharpton, Manning Marable, Minister Conrad Muhammed and several Democratic politicians and union leaders, the Network was composed mainly of ISOers. The event attracted about 50 people. A list of demands was undemocratically foisted on the attendees by the ISO. Some were OK, but the list included completely diversionary slogans like a call for a Civilian Complaint Review Board, residency laws to force New York cops to live in the city, and the hiring of more cops of color.

LRPers from the floor warned that because Sharpton and other Democratic politicians were raising meaningless reforms, it was important that this meeting oppose such a program, not adopt one just like it. We explained both the

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Defending Mumia: Mass Mobilization is Key

The struggle to free Mumia Abu-Jamal is moving into its final stretch. To the racist capitalist state this Black political prisoner, a well-known fighter against racism, police brutality and other injustices, is a key enemy who must be destroyed.

Incarcerated following his false conviction for the murder of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner in 1982, Mumia has retained his steadfast opposition to the system in general and the racist anti-worker police in particular.

As a radical journalist, his exposure of the racist Philadelphia police was the main reason he was targeted for a frame-up. Despite 17 years on death row, a treatment including a 23-hour-a-day lockdown from Monday to Friday and a complete lockdown on weekends, Mumia has continued to speak out on every police atrocity — from Amadou Diallo to Tyisha Miller — and on many other issues.

No wonder the capitalist class recognizes Mumia not only as a militant Black but as a class enemy. No wonder the Fraternal Order of the Police and all their ruling-class friends in high places have organized a fund-raising and media assault on Mumia and his supporters that is unprecedented in recent times. This attack has even escalated: in April, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* carried out a media campaign composed of false allegations and innuendo designed to severely hamper fundraising by the Black United Fund, which handles donations for Mumia's defense. The authorities have refused to allow Mumia urgently needed medical attention.

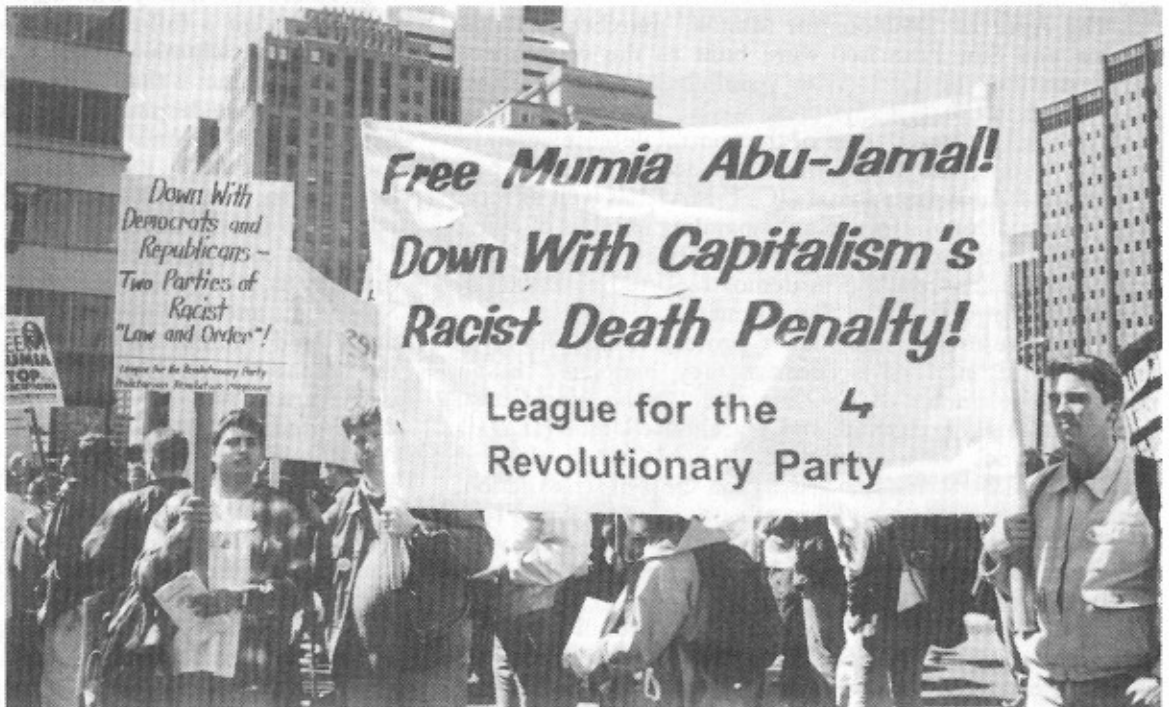
DEFENSE EFFORTS

At the April 24 rally for Mumia in San Francisco, actor Ed Asner said: "Not since the Scottsboro Boys, not since the Rosenbergs, have we had such a nationwide controversy as exists over Mumia Abu-Jamal's death row incarceration."

Yes, just as with Sacco and Vanzetti in the 1920's, the Scottsboro Boys in the '30's and the Rosenbergs in the '50's, this is an historic case in which the ruling class is politically conscious of the need to railroad its victims by any means necessary. The difference is that the American working class, which was mobilized in great numbers around Sacco and Vanzetti and the Scottsboro Boys, is not conscious of what is at stake now.

The capitalists and their armed thugs want to show Blacks and the working class that radical opposition won't be tolerated. This reality has turned Mumia into a living symbol

of the fight against the murderous capitalist police. If a movement can win his freedom despite all the forces ranged against him, that would be a serious blow against police brutality as well as the death penalty. It will be a huge step



in the struggle to free all political prisoners. And it would encourage the working class to make a bolder fight against all the attacks coming down from bosses, politicians and police.

In April, Mumia's lawyers filed a writ of certiorari before the U.S. Supreme Court, focusing on Mumia's exclusion from the courtroom during his original trial and his lack of adequate legal representation at that time. A denial of this writ is expected in the fall. Lead attorney Leonard Weinglass said, "We could be looking at a very dangerous situation at the end of 1999 or early 2000." (For more information, check the web site www.mumia.org. If you have no web access, you can write to the LRP.)

Also ominous are two recent Supreme Court decisions on other death penalty cases. One, *Jones v. U.S.*, reviewed the sentencing provisions of the Federal Death Penalty Act of 1994 for the first time, holding that jurors in death penalty cases do not have to be instructed clearly about the consequences of their failing to choose between life imprisonment or death. More relevant to Mumia, *Strickler v. Greene* upheld a lower court ruling that the state of Virginia was not negligent for concealing exculpatory evidence in a death penalty case. The Court held that even if the evidence had been disclosed, the outcome probably wouldn't have changed.

APRIL 24

This article will focus on major questions facing activists fighting for Mumia's freedom, a discussion we began in our last issue.

According to virtually everyone who has any sense of "justice" American-style, including Mumia's lawyers and defense organizations, mass mobilization is the absolute key to victory. A stay of execution was won in 1995 in large part because of national and international mobilizations for Mumia. A lower level of mobilization continued in subsequent years until the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruling last October, which rejected Mumia's final state appeal. At that point a high gear effort went into effect.

The April 24 "Millions for Mumia" marches in Philadelphia and San Francisco were built as the centerpiece demonstrations of 1999. With parallel demonstrations in many cities internationally, these were the culmination of months of effort on the part of the central defense committee for Mumia, the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal (ICFF-MAJ), as well as local coalitions and committees in an expanding number of cities. As a whole, the effort was fueled overwhelmingly by left organizations and resulted in demos reported as 20,000 in Philadelphia and 15,000 in San Francisco.

There were also some labor protests which, however limited, were impressive because they happened in an overwhelming climate of labor inaction. On the West Coast, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) reportedly declared a "stop-work" for Mumia on the day shift on April 24. While this activity fell short of strike action, combined with the participation of workers at the San Francisco rally it was still an inspiring step forward. (As well, Brazilian teachers in the state of Rio de Janeiro declared one hour stop-work meetings on April 23 related to Mumia.)

Nevertheless, it has to be said that the overall success of the campaign has been limited so far. The April Philadelphia rally was supposed to have a momentous effect. While the protest reached numbers well above previous Philly rallies for Mumia, it remained far short of what is needed to halt his execution. It attracted many white anarchist-minded youth, but other youth, particularly from the working-class, were not evident. While more Blacks participated than at previous events, there were still many layers of Blacks and Latinos, and workers in general, not involved.

The protests for Mumia in Philly over the weekend of July 4 drew only a few hundred people — not good as a test of the strength of the movement in the wake of April 24.

HOW TO MOBILIZE MASSES

Our point is not to downgrade the effort made but to look at it soberly in relation to the tasks ahead. The LRP has participated energetically in the defense work, joining the local coalitions in New York and Chicago. (See the COFI/LRP report in this issue for more details.) But the Mumia campaign cannot grow exponentially based on word of mouth alone. A more massive action for Mumia requires the forces of the trade unions and other major organizations to be mobilized in a way that hasn't yet happened.

Here is one concrete example of the problem. Through efforts of the Workers to Free Mumia Committee in New York, which the LRP was participating in, a motion was passed overwhelmingly in two citywide hospital workers' union (1199) delegate assemblies last winter to demand a mass mobilization of union forces for Mumia:

The 1199 Delegates Council reaffirms support for the freedom of Mumia Abu-Jamal and encourages all union members, families and friends to attend the Millions for Mumia rally on April 24 in Philadelphia and the mass

meeting on February 26 at New York's Town Hall.

The Council recommends the following measures to the 1199 Executive Council:

- **To publicize these events to the members through the magazine, printed notices, phone-banking and at delegate and chapter meetings, and to orient the organizers to help mobilize member participation.**
- **To subsidize bus transportation to Philadelphia for members and family who wish to attend the rally.**
- **To assign a full-time staff member to coordinate the union's participation in these events.**

The problem is that 1199 paid for buses and took credit for them — but despite this motion, few 1199ers made the trip. President Dennis Rivera didn't use the power of his position to convince members to turn out, as he does when he wants to. It was left up to a few individual activists to sign people up for the buses.

What could have been done? At the rally against police brutality in New York on April 15, neither Rivera nor Al Sharpton, another nominal supporter of Mumia, even mentioned Mumia or the April 24 mobilization — even though the Mumia protest was just a few days away and the issues are so clearly linked! No literature about Mumia distributed by 1199 or Sharpton's National Action Network. A vigorous call by Rivera, Sharpton or other influential leaders could have grabbed the attention of the ranks of working-class participants against police brutality.

The LRP and some other leftists there did of course have Mumia literature. But neither we nor even larger left groups can have the same effect as union or other leaders who lead big numbers of working people. That is why it is important to place demands on them.

Alleged progressives like Sharpton and Rivera cannot be expected to respond energetically to Mumia's case unless they are forced to. Yearning for mainstream respectability, the last thing they want is to be closely associated with a Black militant who is supposedly a "cop killer," no matter that he is innocent of the charge. While the forces of racism and reaction go all out to polarize support for the Fraternal Order of Police by painting Mumia as the devilish enemy of law and order, Sharpton, Jackson, Rivera and others who claim to support his case refrain from really trying to galvanize forces by telling it like it is.

LEADERS RESPOND TO MASS PRESSURE

History has shown that when pro-capitalist leaders — liberal politicians or union heads — have mobilized masses, it is in response to pressure from an existing movement of the working class. There has not yet been a major resurgence of class struggle in this country. This factor, not the presence or lack of clever organizing tricks, is fundamentally responsible for producing a mass mobilization or not. Working-class upheavals have rocked countries from South Korea to Indonesia, driven by the international economic crisis; the U.S. will not remain immune. But recognizing the political scene, the question is what can be done now.

Despite the small size of left forces at the moment, the layer of activists around the Mumia case — in the unions, the anti-police brutality movement, the civil rights organizations, etc. — is not an insignificant force. Even in the absence of a big class struggle scene in the U.S., if more pressure was exerted within these organizations — particularly by the committed cadre of leftist and Black nationalist groups — concrete action could be the result. Such interventions would

also have the effect of weakening the grip of the current misleaders over the workers' movement, an important aspect of the struggle to build the kind of big fightback that *could* change the overall political scene.

Pressure on popular leaders who could mobilize masses is more necessary than ever now. As a small group, the LRP will continue to do what we can. But we urge other organizations to also carry out such an effort.

CHANGE OF OFFICIAL SLOGANS

Unfortunately, most of the activist forces do not agree with this strategy. On January 23, an invitation-only "Emergency Leadership Summit Meeting" was held in New York. Hosted by Manning Marable of the Committees of Correspondence, the meeting selected an official leadership for April 24 and other national actions, including July 4 in Philly and mobilizations in multiple cities the week of September 25. The national coordinating committee consists of Pam Africa of the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, Herman Ferguson of the New Afrikan Liberation Front (co-chair of the Free Mumia Coalition in New York), Clark Kissinger of Refuse & Resist and the Revolutionary Communist Party, Monica Moorehead of the National Peoples' Campaign and the Workers World Party, Joan Parkin of the Campaign to end the Death Penalty and the ISO, Jeff Mackler of Socialist Action, Mark Taylor of Academics for Mumia and Steve Wiser of the Bruderhof communities.

According to the published web site report, the leadership agreed that a "broader" movement was necessary to stop Mumia's execution and win his freedom. But what precisely did this mean? In order to achieve broadness, it was decided to make "Stop the Execution" and "For a New Trial Now" the only official demands for April 24, leaving out "Free Mumia" and "Abolish the Death Penalty." The stated intent of the decision was to expand support beyond opponents of the death penalty or people convinced that Mumia should be free.

We support the official demands as well as a number of others. But the real question in dispute was strategy. This decision was an attempt to broaden the movement in a particular direction, and not a radical one. Some claim that the aim was to build more working-class participation, since the less radical demands can appeal not only to conservative union leaders and preachers but also to masses of conservative workers. But such workers will not be the next layers galvanized for Mumia in any case.

Many Black and Latino working-class people have turned out for demonstrations against police brutality. While the bulk of protestors do not yet see themselves as radicals or revolutionaries, clearly these protestors, the youth especially, would not have problems with slogans to free Mumia and to end the death penalty. Orienting to these layers of the working class is what the LRP has been arguing for. As we noted in PR 58:

Our class is far more than the small unionized fraction of the workforce: it includes the employed, the unemployed and youth. ... Over the past few years, time and again

Black and Latino workers and working-class youth have poured into the streets in outrage against racist atrocities. ... Revolutionaries would pose Mumia's defense as a way for everyone who opposes police brutality to come together across the country in a mass protest.

But the emergency summit decision attempted to gear the campaign to the leadership of mainstream organizations (from the Democratic Party to Amnesty International and even "progressive" union leaders). Such leaders, it was hoped, could be seduced into playing a bigger role for



Mumia if concessions on the official demands were made. As it turned out, some (but not all) of these organizations *did* play a role — but only from the podium.

Sam Jordan of Amnesty International spoke at Mumia conferences and on April 24. Yet no one challenged him over why his organization refuses to defend Mumia as a political prisoner (Amnesty supports him only as a potential victim of the death penalty). More critically, organizations like Amnesty International are paper groups; their endorsement is useful but they can hardly build a movement of fighters. It is correct to include them in the campaign, but to orient or depend on them is a mistaken strategy.

Democratic Party figures like Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton failed to show up, as usual. The union contingents in Philadelphia were quite small, and although there certainly were other workers at the demo, they hadn't been organized to come as workers. Neither union representatives nor rank and file workers of any type spoke from the platform as part of the working class.

The official decision did not, it turned out, dictate that organizations were required to limit their literature to the two official slogans — although a number of left representatives, like Steve Bloom of Solidarity in New York and Joan Parkin of the ISO in Chicago, tried unsuccessfully and opportunistically to push that notion after the Summit meeting.

Further, anyone at Mumia Coalition meetings or conferences in various cities or the April 24 demos could see that Free Mumia, Stop Police Brutality, Abolish the Racist Death Penalty and even calls for revolution predominated on ban-

ners and placards. These are clearly views that galvanize demonstrators for Mumia, whether they are members of left organizations or not.

VACUOUS CALLS FOR BROADNESS

A number of left organizations who have taken a leading role in the campaign abstain from challenging mass leaders who fail to mobilize masses. In our previous issue we criticized the views of Jeff Mackler of Socialist Action. Here we note the opinion of another campaign leader, Clark Kissinger of the RCP. Right before April 24, Kissinger wrote:

We must soberly assess that we are still not at the level where the government feels that it would be simply too dangerous for it to proceed with its vicious plan to execute Mumia. So we have to think about what it really means to "take the struggle to a whole new level." (*Revolutionary Worker*, April 25.)

A promising start, But after the event, Kissinger repeated his question — and gave only the pretense of an answer.

We face a real challenge: how to get things to a level — a higher level — where we can actually compel the political establishment to back off their murderous plot. . . . To go to that higher level, we have to assess both our real strengths and achievements, as well as our weakness. (*Revolutionary Worker*, June 20.)

What followed was an uncritical review of the April 24 event, including overstatements such as "The power structure must reckon with the fact that Mumia has inspired a whole generation," and "The turnout from Philly's Black community marked an extremely important development." (The latter assertion is simply not true.)

As well, Kissinger points to the need for more "defiant" action, but misjudges the evidence:

Historically such actions have ranged from the mass civil disobedience arrests in New York around the killing of Amadou Diallo to the ways in which the people of Los Angeles expressed themselves after the cops who beat Rodney King were acquitted.

The equation of Sharpton's passive civil disobedience with the L.A. riots is false, but even so, the response of an

urban rebellion in Philadelphia is wishful thinking under current circumstances. And Kissinger does not even think of fighting for strike action. He concludes:

Every organization that is opposed to the execution will be challenged — and empowered — to both do things that involve and activate their own constituencies in their own ways, as well as to reach out broadly in society.

This generic call for more broadness ends the article without the promised sober assessment of weaknesses as well as strengths. There is no discussion of the absence of the ranks of labor and other mass organizations. Not one leader or organization is named to be challenged to do more.

ULTRA-LEFT SECTARIANISM

On the other side, one group, the Spartacist League, used the summit decision as an excuse for actually withholding support for the April 24 protest altogether! *Workers Vanguard* approvingly reported the speech of a Spartacist supporter at one of their events as hostile to April 24:

I have here a flyer for a planning meeting for April 24; it says, "Race for Justice, New Trial Now." How about somebody telling the truth, that there's no way that Mumia's going to get justice in the courts. It's going to be exactly the same frame-up bullshit that happened the first time. So start there, tell the goddamned truth! (April 16.)

While the article doesn't explicitly *oppose* April 24, in fact the SL did not endorse it or, even more importantly, build for it. The article goes on to argue that calling for a new trial *automatically* means spreading illusions in capitalism and relying on the bourgeoisie instead of the working class. But in reality, the only way to free Mumia will be through a new trial forced by the pressure from the working class.

The Spartacists' *politically* sectarian claim is only an excuse for their *organizational* sectarianism. Since their defense front, the Partisan Defense Committee (PDC), lost its leading role in Mumia defense work, it appears that the Spartacists have lost interest into putting major resources into the case, even though the efforts are sorely needed. There wouldn't be any instant organizational gain or big credit.

There was a debate of sorts, mainly informal, within the

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Mumia movement over the official slogans. The Spartacist position was held by a number of independent militants, although to our knowledge no one else went so far as to oppose April 24 or other Mumia protests.

Lenin long ago explained that revolutionaries have to learn to utilize bourgeois institutions like elections and court trials. In Mumia's case, if a new trial were to be held, this will only happen as the result of mass pressure. *This would be a huge victory!* Of course, the mass pressure would have to be sustained in order to win a successful verdict. As well, with politically astute lawyers, a trial could be used to expose the bourgeois court system itself, in the way revolutionists use bourgeois elections to expose electoralism itself. But to think that at this time the bourgeoisie is going to free Mumia without going through at least the ritual of a trial, is fantasy.

Another reason why a new trial could have a positive outcome has been brought up by reactionaries who *oppose* the demand. An interview was recently published on Online Court TV with Dudley Sharp, vice president of Justice For All, an anti-Mumia grouping. According to the interviewer, who wanted to know why Sharp was dead set against a new trial despite his insistence on Mumia's absolute guilt,

Sharp does not acknowledge that a guilty verdict in a retrial would shatter the movement for Abu-Jamal. His apprehension may stem from increased anti-police sentiment after several nationally-tracked police brutality cases and tensions between minorities and police. The suspicion of widespread police corruption could be enough to obfuscate the issues at a new trial and possibly win Abu-Jamal an acquittal. ... Since Abu-Jamal's 1982 conviction, the nation has seen cases such as those involving Eleanor Bumpurs, Rodney King, and Abner Louima. Jurors today may be more likely to suspect police corruption and less tolerant of an alleged "blue wall of silence."

Moreover, given the recent conviction of a New York police officer in the Louima case, jurors appear increasingly likely to send a message in cases as controversial as Abu-Jamal's.

One cannot expect reactionaries to admit that Abu-Jamal is innocent. But nevertheless the point is well made that a retrial for Mumia would clearly put the police on trial as well — and that public feeling about police is shifting dangerously, from the point of view of the authorities.

There is no truth to the notion that the demand for a new trial inevitably raises illusions in the ultimate fairness of capitalist courts, although reformist leaderships will certainly raise them. Rather, new trials may reverse unjust decisions and free particular individuals under special circumstances — like an explosive mass movement — but that hardly proves that the system can mete out genuine justice as a rule!

The basic error of those who, even with good intentions, argue for Mumia's freedom *without* posing a new trial as the

vehicle is that they offer no ready alternative. There is none right now: neither mass revolution to overthrow the state nor a successful jailbreak through masterly guerrilla activity is on the immediate agenda. The *Workers Vanguard* article heavily implies that mass strike action is the answer but has to hold back from posing it as *immediately* possible. Revolutionaries must be able to point the way forward, and if the path goes through the bourgeois courts then we have to say so. Not to do so is sectarianism.

CHALLENGES CAN BE MADE

At the April 3 March against police brutality in Washington, D.C. Pam Africa stated that she was making a "challenge" to the NAACP and all other civil rights organizations present to mobilize buses full of members for April 24 in Philly. Her challenge clearly did not bring about the massive result she wanted. One problem was that she was not joined in this effort by others that day — like Ron Daniels, the organizer of the event, who has endorsed Mumia's struggle.

Another effort in this direction was made when Jesse Jackson visited Paris. According to a statement from the ICFF-MAJ, on June 21 a group of 50 Mumia supporters held up banners for Mumia as Jackson was scheduled to deliver a lecture to the American University. On behalf of ICFF-MAJ, Julia Wright handed him a letter, saying:

The anti-segregationist sit-ins that at the behest of Martin Luther King wrested so many civil rights victories back in the sixties were now, ironically, re-emerging to warn those very Democrats who claim to be King's heirs that they are all the more accountable and that they cannot fall asleep on the cushions of power or laurels covered with the blood of those who were killed with their eyes on *all* the prizes, including the supreme right not to be executed.

Activists with the opportunity to do so who don't challenge the mass leaders are contributing to the weakness of the movement they're supposed to be building. Temporary cooperation with middle-class organizations is often appropriate to fight for specific aims — like the demand for a new trial for Mumia. But mass working class action remains the key to Mumia's defense. Simply calling for more "broadness" masks that fact. Working-class struggle is the most practical way to force the courts to grant a new trial and free Mumia.

We as revolutionaries take the position of fighting for mass action, rather than tailing established "mass leaders" in the style of centrist leftists. It is also only through the struggles of the working class, including the fight against its current pro-capitalist misleaders in the trade unions and elsewhere, that a revolutionary party can be built. The key to freeing political prisoners and smashing the system of racist oppression and repression, brutality and exploitation is the socialist revolution to overthrow capitalism once and for all. ●

Marxism, Interracialism and the Black Struggle

A Proletarian Revolution pamphlet by Sy Landy

An overview of the Marxist understanding of revolutionary proletarian interracialism and the historical course of the U.S. Black struggle. The pamphlet discusses the idea of Black liberation through socialist revolution as the alternative to integrationism and nationalism, whose failure it analyzes in detail.

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Moratorium Debate in Illinois: **Abolish Capitalism's Racist Death Penalty!**

by Guy Lindsay

This year has seen one scandal after another shake the "criminal justice" system in Illinois and its use of the death penalty in particular. The May 17 release of Ronald Jones marked the *twelfth* case where a death row inmate's conviction has been overturned since the death penalty was reinstated in 1976. Cops beat Jones until he confessed to a 1989 rape and murder. His conviction was overturned only after DNA evidence proved his innocence.

The previous month saw the spectacular release of Anthony Porter after 16 years on death row for a double-murder he did not commit. Having come within 48 hours of execution in 1998 before he won a stay, Porter was only freed when university law students worked with the estranged wife of the real killer to trick him into confessing to the killing on videotape. Porter was originally convicted solely on the basis of the testimony of a witness who revealed later that cops had "threatened, harassed and intimidated" him into identifying Porter as the killer.

These cases followed the multi-million dollar settlement in 1998 of a lawsuit against the state of Illinois by four Black men wrongfully convicted of another murder.

Perhaps the most outrageous exposure of the role of police in framing death row inmates came in 1993, when Chicago police Lieutenant Jon Burge was fired from the department after it was revealed that he regularly tortured Black prisoners. Using various methods including beatings, suffocation, Russian Roulette and electrocution, Burge extracted numerous confessions — including those of ten Black men who remain on death row to this day!

ANGER BUT NO ACTION

Combined with recent cases of police brutality (see page 40), the scandals exposing the corrupt, racist and anti-working class nature of the death penalty have set the ruling class and its pro-death penalty politicians back on their heels.

These scandals presented a great opportunity to launch a mass struggle against the death penalty and other injustices. But the labor, community and political leaders with the power to mobilize masses have refused to do so. Pro-capitalist union leaders remain content to ignore issues of racism and repression with the argument that they are not union issues, so their silence is not at all surprising.

Perhaps more surprising has been the inactivity of local Black political leaders. Louis Farrakhan's Nation of Islam is headquartered in Chicago, but while noting the injustices of recent cases, it has, in typical fashion, not mobilized any protests against the death penalty. Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition/Operation PUSH is also headquartered in Chicago, and Jackson has even written a book against capital punishment entitled *Legal Lynching*; but he hasn't led a single protest against Illinois' death penalty. More "radical" local Democrats like Danny Davis and Bobby Rush have similarly dismal records.

Despite the lack of big demonstrations in response to these outrageous injustices, popular opinion nonetheless began to shift against the death penalty. Where public opinion polls routinely indicate over 75 percent support for the

death penalty in Illinois, polls now show that support for the death penalty in principle has declined by over 10 percent; a majority now favor at least a temporary halt on executions while the system is investigated.

A DEATH PENALTY MORATORIUM?

The scandals in Illinois are extreme examples that confirm the fundamentally racist, anti-working class nature of the death penalty (see page 9). Communists look to seize the momentum created by the recent scandals and join with broader forces to fight for the *abolition* of capitalism's racist death penalty. As in the previous struggles against police brutality, communists explain that we must build a fighting mass movement — and that this necessarily means fighting ruling-class efforts to co-opt mass anger with toothless promises and empty panaceas.

The importance of this approach has already been confirmed, as an effort to co-opt the struggle has come from liberal Democratic party politicians. In the wake of Porter's release, State Representatives Coy Pugh, Barbara Flynn-Currie and others introduced House Bill 723 calling for a twelve-month *moratorium* (a temporary halt) on the death penalty, during which time the House Judiciary Committee would form a commission "to study the laws and rules that establish and enforce the death penalty."

Considering the scandals of frame-ups and torture added to the regularly racist and anti-working class use of the death penalty, for liberals to talk only about a moratorium is grotesque. What would it take for them to oppose the death penalty — would they have to be framed and strapped to the electric chair themselves?

Any elected official sincerely committed to a defense of the oppressed would have immediately moved for abolition of the death penalty. But the politicians who sponsored House Bill 723 *never* conceived of the moratorium as even a step toward getting rid of the death penalty. Instead, it simply targeted possible "flaws in Illinois' administration" of it. The bill's lobbying packet states:

It does not call for an end to the death penalty. It does examine how racism, poverty and corruption of public officials have perverted the criminal justice system and lead to the condemnation of innocent people.

HB 723 does not make any moral assumptions regarding the death penalty. It does seek to protect the moral and ethical integrity of the State of Illinois by working to ensure a justice system which is impartial and uncorrupted.

HB 723 does not seek to repeal Illinois' death penalty laws. It does seek to eliminate corruption and discrimination in the administration of justice, factors which undermine the very foundations upon which the United States was built.

With their moratorium bill, *the liberal Democrats aimed to strengthen the death penalty* by quelling popular anger with a temporary halt to executions. During the moratorium, they would perhaps weed out other cases that could stigmatize the cops and courts — and then declare the death penalty fair and call for a resumption of executions.

So it was not surprising that death penalty advocates like Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley came out in support of the moratorium bill. (In his past position as Cook County State's Attorney, Daley had played a role in the frame-up of Anthony Porter.) Similarly, the normally pro-death penalty editorialists of Chicago's main bourgeois newspapers jumped onto the moratorium bandwagon.

Any court ruling or legislation that slows down or temporarily halts executions is a victory in the struggle against the death penalty. But revolutionaries have the duty to expose the dangers of the moratorium bill and show how its sponsors planned to use it. The League for the Revolutionary Party warned anti-death penalty activists of the trap that the pro-moratorium politicians were preparing. This was no time to cheer on the politicians; it was necessary to expose them to step up the struggle to abolish the death penalty.

This approach stood in stark contrast to the ISO (International Socialist Organization), which through its Campaign to End the Death Penalty plays a central role in struggles against the death penalty. Even though the ISO in its "theoretical" journal has repeatedly emphasized the importance of not compromising with liberals, in practice the ISO/CEDP uncritically supported the bill, even distributing the rotten legislative lobbying packet quoted above in an effort to build support for it. The CEDP argued:

We are only at the beginning of the fight for a moratorium. Our success will be measured on how well activists link the fight for a moratorium to a movement towards abolition. (*New Abolitionist*, April 1999.)

Indeed, the ISO/CEDP can be judged in this way. The link between the moratorium and abolition was the efforts of politicians to use the moratorium to *preserve* the death penalty. One can comb the pages of the ISO's *Socialist Worker* and the CEDP's *New Abolitionist* and find no such warning.

LIBERALS BETRAY THEIR OWN MORATORIUM

Once talk of a moratorium quelled popular outrage, Pugh agreed to cut the moratorium from the original 12 months to just 6 months. This made a mockery of the bill's pretension to obtain a thorough investigation of Illinois' death penalty and its 162 outstanding cases. Once the furor over the Anthony Porter case died down further, the liberals allowed the legislation to be stalled in committee. As public attention to the issue dwindled, so did the politicians' empty talk of a moratorium.

Thus the liberals' promise of a moratorium helped the ruling class weather the storm of outrage against the frame-ups of death row prisoners; it has enabled them not only to prepare future executions but to free the state from paying for past injustices.

Proof of this came in the trial of seven prosecutors and cops charged with framing two Latinos, Rolando Cruz and

***Proletarian Revolution* Fund Drive**

We are planning significant improvements in the presentation of future issues of *Proletarian Revolution*. Easier-to-read layout and better quality pictures are our immediate aim. To do this, we need to invest in new computer technology and graphics programs, and they are very expensive. To cover these expenses, we are appealing to readers of *Proletarian Revolution* to contribute donations to our magazine fund drive. Please help by sending what you can to:

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Alejandro Hernandez for the 1983 murder of Jeanine Nicarico. In order to frame Cruz and Hernandez, prosecutors suppressed the confession of a white convicted serial killer, Brian Dugan, and even hid DNA evidence proving that Dugan was the killer. In spite of overwhelming evidence of their guilt, the cops and prosecutors were found not guilty, two by decision of a judge, five by a jury. The courts could never have gotten away with such a decision had the liberals not used their moratorium talk to quiet mass anger.

WHICH WAY FORWARD?

The opportunity presented by the recent scandals in Illinois to build a mass movement against the death penalty has been allowed to slip away. The politicians again have the upper hand. To show the way forward in the struggle, we think two main points are crucial.

1. The struggle against the death penalty cannot be addressed separately from other questions of injustice — most importantly, police brutality. Brutality, corruption and increasing levels of repression under the banner of fighting crime are all different aspects of the same issue.

2. A campaign strong enough to overturn the death penalty will not be built by anti-death penalty groups without taking the issue to the organizations that can mobilize the masses (unions, civil rights and other community groups), and not without challenging popular leaders who can also mobilize thousands around these related issues. While pushing for action by union, political and community leaders and uniting with them when they do, revolutionaries and other militants must take every opportunity to warn that the pro-capitalist leaders cannot be trusted — as we saw with the liberals in Illinois. ●

The Death Penalty: Racist and Anti-Working Class

In 1972 the U.S. Supreme Court declared the death penalty a form of "cruel and unusual punishment" and outlawed it. This was not an act of moral leadership but one of many concessions the ruling class made to the mass struggles of the 1960's and early 1970's.

With the decline of those struggles, this decision was reversed in 1976. As various states resumed executions, prosecutors sought popular support by first executing high-

profile serial killers whom no one could sympathize with. But such executions hide the truth about the death penalty: it is the most blatantly racist and anti-working class aspect of the capitalist "justice" system.

RACIST

Who gets the death penalty is hardly determined by the crime they are supposed to have committed. In the hands of

judges, prosecutors, juries and lawyers, race and class overwhelmingly determine who is to be executed.

It is no coincidence that the vast majority of executions in the U.S. take place in the former slave-holding states of the Southern Confederacy — the death penalty is racist to the core. While Black people constitute 12 percent of the U.S. population, they represent 40 percent of death row prisoners. Including Latinos and others, people of color make up over half the death row population nation-wide.

The race of the victim is also crucial in determining which defendants get the death penalty. While half of all murder victims are Black, 85 percent of the murder victims in death penalty cases are white. Between 1976 and 1997, 84 Black defendants have been executed for killing a white person, but only 4 white defendants have been executed for killing a Black person. The death penalty shows clearly an overall truth about racist America: white lives are set a higher value than the lives of Black people.

Indeed the U.S. Supreme Court has admitted that the death penalty is racist. In its findings on the last major court case to take up the question, *McCleskey v. Kemp* in 1987 the court stated:

This evidence of racism is overwhelming, it's not refuted, but what are we supposed to do, declare the whole system unconstitutional?

ANTI-WORKING CLASS

If over 50 percent of those executed are people of color, 99.9 percent are poor. Often targeted as presumed criminals anyway, poor people charged with murder can rarely afford competent defense lawyers and usually have to use court-appointed lawyers who are most often incompetent and disinterested. For example, the Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy reported:

One-fourth of those under the sentence of death in Kentucky were represented at trial by attorneys who since had been disbarred or had resigned rather than face disbarment. (Richard Dieter, *With Justice for Few*.)

As former Florida death row inmate John Spengelink said, "Them without the capital gets the punishment."

And those with capital generally don't. Leave aside the fact that the world's biggest international terrorist, the U.S. government, is never charged with war crimes. And leave aside that capitalists are never charged with murder when they knowingly market products that kill or cause thousands of deaths via environmental pollution. Individual capitalists who murder directly do well also. Take, for example, the case of John du Pont, heir to the du Pont family fortune, who shot a man to death in 1996. Hiring the best defense lawyers

money could buy and exploiting the judge's feelings of ruling class solidarity, du Pont not only dodged the death penalty but even escaped jail; he was assigned to a low-security psychiatric institution for a handful of years.

Clinton Duffy, who as warden of New York's Sing Sing prison presided over almost one hundred executions, summed up: "I don't know of a wealthy person ever executed in the United States."

THE DEATH PENALTY AND THE "WAR ON CRIME"

Not surprisingly, the death penalty has been a key to the ruling class's racist "war on crime," and no politician has done more to push the death penalty than President Clinton. Clinton's 1994 Omnibus Crime Bill and 1996 Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, both passed overwhelmingly by Democrats and Republicans, greatly expanded the scope of the death penalty and severely limited the legal rights of defendants. The crime bill expands the number of federal crimes punishable by the death sentence from two to fifty-eight. The 1996 bill placed strict limits on death-row appeals. Under the new law, death row prisoners are limited to one *habeas corpus* appeal, which must be made within six months of sentencing — after that new evidence is inadmissible.

This only compounds the problem faced by defendants in state courts, most of which have strict time limits on presenting new evidence. In Texas, for example, defendants must present new evidence of their innocence within thirty days of conviction in order to be considered by the courts on appeal. And the federal courts will not be squeamish in rejecting the appeals of death row prisoners they know are innocent. For example, Texas death row inmate Leonel Herrera tried to introduce the fact that his brother had confessed to the crime he was condemned for. Yet the Supreme Court ruled that "actual innocence" was not "relevant" in Herrera's case, since he had filed past the thirty-day deadline. Herrera was executed in 1993.

THE FIGHT AGAINST THE DEATH PENALTY

In the hands of the capitalist ruling class, the "criminal justice system" victimizes and represses workers and poor, and it targets people of color for the worst injustices. The struggle against the death penalty is crucial not only for winning justice for its intended victims, but also for undermining the capitalists' state power and exposing its image of fairness.

In this struggle, workers can afford neither reformist illusions about moderating the violence of the capitalist state, nor "moral" pacifist sentiments that the death penalty and other forms of violence are wrong in general and at all times. The capitalists will not allow the working class to overthrow them without the most bitter struggle against the cops and military that shield their oppression and exploitation. The working class will be forced to defend itself and seize power by force of arms.

Following the workers' revolution, armed force — including the use of the death penalty — will be needed to defend the workers' state against counterrevolutionaries. But in the hands of a workers' state, such weapons of repression will be used in the interests of the vast majority of the exploited and oppressed, against the rich and powerful minority who want to return them to slavery. Only through such means will it be possible to build a new world of freedom, cleansed of all forms of violence. ●

LRP-COFI Now Online!

We are pleased to announce that the LRP-COFI is now online. Our website features basic documents of the LRP-COFI in English and German, as well as public statements, leaflets and news items that will help keep readers informed of our activities between issues of *Proletarian Revolution* magazine. Our website is at:

www.lrp-cofi.org

Surviving the ISO

by Joseph Andrews

Within the past few years, *Proletarian Revolution* has published two excellent articles by LRP supporters regarding their past connection with the International Socialist Tendency (IST), and their alienation from its corrosive, cynical politics. ("In and Out of the ISO" by Tony Goodes, in *PR* 50, and "In and Out of the German ISO" by A. Holberg, in *PR* 58). The experiences they describe are painfully familiar to me, as they would be to anyone who survived the Cliffites with even a scrap of Marxist principles left intact. Still, my experiences were different in many respects from those of both comrades. So perhaps my account will be useful in showing other ways in which the ISO presents an obstacle to building a revolutionary leadership.

Unlike Comrade Goodes, who had close contact with the leadership layer of the ISO, I spent all of my time in the ISO at geographically isolated college campuses, where I was encouraged to devote my time to building branches with an all-important "campus base." I was later to learn the problems of an orientation to relatively privileged students rather than to workers, working-class students and the oppressed. But the ISO did afford me the opportunity to work out my politics with the help of the Marxist classics. IS tendency literature and organizational events played a role.

The fact that I was in each case the first serious ISO member in my location, and like any would-be revolutionary I wanted to give my commitment organizational form, meant that I was to be groomed for a "leadership" role. But in the bureaucratic world of the ISO, this does not mean a fighter in the revolutionary vanguard of the working-class, but a hack capable of bringing large numbers of recruits into the organization on the lowest possible political basis. The contradiction between appearance and reality shaped my experience in the ISO, and eventually drove me out of it.

A CENTRIST ROUTE TO MARXISM

Despite the ISO's minimalist recruiting efforts, I did enter with some measure of elementary Marxist culture. Growing up during the Reagan years in a family of liberal Democrats, I had been trained to believe that a Democratic president would suffice for the salvation of humanity. That illusion was dashed by Clinton's support for the invasion of Somalia, the continued brutalization of Haitian refugees, and retreats on labor issues, Black equality and gay rights. I entered college looking for radical answers. The Spartacist League, which, like the ISO, holds to the cynical perspective of recruiting the future leadership of the working-class from among "de-classed" intellectuals on college campuses, exposed me in a distorted fashion to Trotskyism, and on my own resulting initiative I had undertaken study of the Marxist classics and revolutionary history.

Likewise, I encountered the Revolutionary Workers League by chance, and it took some time to realize they were decking radical middle-class politics in Trotskyist garb. With both of these centrist outfits, I was turned off by their dogmatic insistence on defense of the Soviet Union in the postwar period; I never could understand how anti-proletarian counterrevolutionary regimes could preside over "workers' states" for over half a century, any more than I could understand how bourgeois intellectuals could form the "workers' vanguard."

It seemed clear to me that to be a Marxist required nothing less than making a clear choice to take the side of the working-class and to fight daily for revolutionary consciousness. It was a daunting task which at first I did not accept. The spectacle of "Marxist" groups that were not doing this militated against any change in my attitude.

STUDENTS IN STRUGGLE

It was the dynamics of the struggle which finally forced the choice upon me. Government austerity measures at my state university were kicking the stuffing out of working-class students, especially Blacks and Latinos. Reactionary student politicians were demagogically attacking the few remaining affirmative action programs in an attempt to set white students against minorities. And the administration had set upon any signs of organized dissent with the full force of the Campus Police. In this climate spontaneous struggles broke out, which at their peak involved thousands of students in the occupation of the Administration building. But they went down to defeat and the arrest and guilty pleas of three student militants on charges of assault.

Despite a history of socialist political activity at the school, the left had degenerated to the point where the only socialist grouping remaining was the mostly-moribund Democratic Socialists of America. Confronted by struggle, they succeeded only in disgracing the name of socialism by trying to downplay any notion of combating racial oppression, in an attempt to cater to the more backward of white students.

The leadership which did succeed in placing itself at the head of the struggle was a group of Black and Latino student politicians, vaguely nationalist in their sympathies and ideology, whose whole political perspective derived from manipulating the mass anger of their "constituents" in order to win token concessions and influence with the administration. (Some were quite good at this, and may well have bright futures in Democratic Party politics.) There was no better proof of this than in the demands raised.

The worst example was the demand for an unspecified "impartial" body to investigate the conduct of the Campus Police. This turned out to be the only demand that was "won" — the administration suggested the county District Attorney, and the leadership cheered. Later, during the winter break, when the DA announced charges against three leading militants, the leadership denied for the record that they had ever demanded this sort of investigation.

It struck me that the decisive test of the struggles' success would be whether this blatant attempt at victimization was halted. I remembered a few things that Marx and Lenin had said about the real role of the state, that it was not an impartial arbiter of competing claims, but the enforcer of the capitalist order. The sooner militants realized this the better off we'd be. And a leadership which posed an obstacle to such consciousness by supporting the DA investigation that led to the arrests, refusing to call a mass meeting to organize a defense and tailing the defendants' lawyers, was a leadership that had to be replaced — the sooner the better.

HOW NOT TO BUILD A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

For these very good reasons, I made a very bad move: I joined the ISO as soon as I met them. That one could even do this struck me as bizarre; it seemed to me that becoming

a professional revolutionary would require more political training than signing a membership card. But they had played up their Leninist credentials to me. The ISO did not hold the pro-Stalinist views of the other groups I had met, and the building of a revolutionary leadership seemed urgent. When these "Leninists" told me that it all hinged on my rapid joining, I wasn't about to argue.

In dealing with the existing leadership of the struggles on my campus, my instinct was to return to the new semester with guns blazing, exposing their dreadful handling of the tasks of defense. But my higher-ups in the ISO informed me that this would be "sectarian," and "ultra-left," since we needed to work in a united front. I was all for a united front, in the sense that Trotsky taught — a united struggle in which revolutionaries would openly criticize the leaders of the other groups involved, when they limited or betrayed the struggle. Still, deferring to greater experience, I backed down, and instead "lobbied" with the misleaders to take a more militant stance. I wrote articles in the student press advocating mass action, but taking care not to mention anyone who was preventing it from taking place.

Returning in the Spring semester to see that their friends had been arrested and apparently no real effort was being made to defend them, the once-militant students who had pushed the struggle forward became demoralized, and decided to return to their studies. It took us in the ISO months to realize that the "leaders" we were lobbying had long since ceased to lead much of anyone, and neither were we. Upon my graduation shortly thereafter, it was clear that my initial expectations of political gains had been disappointed, and that the ISO's political strategy had played a small part in the overall disintegration of left politics on campus. Despite this, no balance sheet was made, apart from concluding that paper sales, contact work, and flyering should have been pursued more aggressively.

TURN TOWARD LABOR

As Marx once said of history repeating itself, "the first time is tragedy, the second time farce." Farce is an accurate description of my next attempt to "build a branch." When I joined the ISO, I was already on my way to graduate school at a thoroughly elite institution in an area where the ISO had never had any supporters. Once there, I found myself in the absurd position of trying to sell *Socialist Worker* at campus bus stops, seeking out the "progressive students," the "needles in the haystack" who could be won to socialism — but finding only the bus drivers interested in reading it. Inviting these Black workers to student meetings at a notoriously upper-class and racist institution was not the way to win them, but I was perplexed that they did not come!

In the wake of the Teamsters' United Parcel Service strike, the ISO was intensifying its turn toward labor (see "ISO's Right Turn Toward Labor" in *PR* 51). But on the basis of the training I had received, I had no idea how to win politically-minded workers to revolutionary, working-class politics — especially since the newspaper I was selling did not have anything of the sort inside.

Indeed, many things which I took for granted when I was in the ISO sprung from cynical, anti-worker assumptions shared in common with the organization. My early qualms that *Socialist Worker* talked down to its readers were dismissed as the squeamishness of a petty-bourgeois intellectual; I was told that "if we want workers to understand us," then it was necessary to write for them as though they understood

nothing. I swallowed this cheap, condescending justification.

When I first joined, I thought I would be taught how to propagandize for socialist revolution within the working class; instead, I was told, it was necessary to "build a campus base" where people were supposedly more receptive to socialist ideas. At the time, this didn't seem so far off to me. Towards the end of my tenure in the organization, efforts were being made to become less "stagist" in relating "campus work" and "labor work." But the cynical notion that workers are incapable of comprehending very much remains a hallmark of the ISO's approach. It didn't seem possible, but the tone of *Socialist Worker* has been dumbed down even further.

Thus, for me, joining the ISO did not represent the end of my past allegiance to middle-class politics, but its highest stage. To join the proletariat and its struggles with my heart, mind and soul — to become a Marxist — was not possible within the confines of accepting ISO politics, despite my best intentions. This is not merely a matter of composition or social milieu, but a matter of political method.

TACTICAL SECRETS OF THE FLIP-FLOP

My first inkling of the real character of ISO politics came on the issue of NAFTA. Comrade Goodes has already written about the ISO's shameful refusal to oppose NAFTA when it first became an issue. Until Fall 1997, I was unaware of what the ISO's position on NAFTA was; I naively assumed that it cohered with my own position of internationalist defense of Mexican workers against the imperialist assault.

However, a recent recruit and I were invited to the "pre-convention discussion" session at the ISO branch nearest us. We had not yet mustered the membership level necessary to send a delegate, nor could we afford to attend as observers, so this was the closest we would get to a glimpse of the broader political debates within the organization. Not all the pieces of the pre-convention discussion bulletin had arrived to us yet, and it did not even include any information regarding NAFTA. So I was quite surprised when it was casually announced that, on the basis of some supposedly "internationalist" statements made by Sweeney in Mexico, it was now OK for us to publicly oppose NAFTA on an internationalist basis, since we would no longer appear to be lining up with the nationalists and racists. An article to this effect was first published a few weeks later.

It seemed to me that in the first place the ISO had tailed the reactionary nationalist bureaucrats by abstaining from combating them politically in the anti-NAFTA struggle. Now they were tailing reformist bureaucrats such as Sweeney — and painting him in shades of red to boot! The only way to set things straight would be by renouncing the past abstentionism and exposing in our public press exactly the kind of pro-capitalist all-American nationalist that we said, internally, Sweeney really was. I intended to write an article to that effect for the next internal bulletin. But between the National Convention in October '97 and my resignation in March '98, not a single issue of the Internal Bulletin appeared, not even to publish the minutes of the convention for the benefit of comrades unable to attend. In any case, I let it slide, because I was too busy "building the branch."

I thought I would have an opportunity to raise the issue of NAFTA in late January, at the National Committee meeting, since our branch had finally succeeded in reaching the minimum number of dues-paying members for me to attend as a delegate. (That I didn't think of raising it in the branch was indicative of the extent to which I had ingested the hack-

like, "don't-worry-the-new-members-about-controversy-just-get-them-to-sell-SW" attitude which was expected of "branch leadership.") No discussion documents were issued prior to the meeting.

Instead, the night before, as delegates were flying and driving into Chicago from around the country, we were handed a four-page document from the steering committee denouncing various branches for missing opportunities to implant the organization into the working class, and attributing it all to the pernicious influence of alien-class forces on the mid-level cadre (i.e. the delegates to this very meeting). The fact that this was propounded by the very same leadership which had steadily propagated the notion of the "campus base" for fifteen years without interruption was mentioned by no one, and the entire weekend was composed of self-flagellating recitations of the errors made, the petty bourgeois tendencies manifested at the branch level, and so on. Indeed, it punctured many of the illusions about the sturdiness and discipline of the organization which I had been fed and which, as "branch leaders," we were charged with propagating to the rest of the membership. The spectacle was hardly encouraging, and it worked against any serious consideration of political questions, NAFTA included.

INTERNATIONALIST FACADE

Many other cracks appeared in the facade of this supposedly Marxist tendency. When I first joined the ISO, I was impressed by the list of sister organizations in around twenty countries, on every continent. My understanding of the Marxist tradition meant that I valued very highly the formation of a revolutionary international. So when the German section soon disappeared from the list, I wanted answers. I was told that they had entered into the Jusos, the youth group of the Social Democratic Party. I knew from the history of the Trotskyist movement that entry into mass reformist parties was a tactic not to be taken lightly, and from the history of the German left that the Jusos had been a transmission belt for youthful radicals to make their way into establishment politics. So I did the unthinkable — I demanded an explanation. I was told they had done it in order to get rid of an old leadership "that didn't know how to relate to anyone." The explanation seemed insufficient, but there was no means for me to learn more. Nothing, of course, was said about the fact that there are now three different Cliffite groups in Germany. (For the full story, see Cde. Holberg's article.)

Later, some months prior to the National Committee meeting, the Belgian and French groups disappeared from the list. This was especially troubling, as this had happened just before the emergence of a massive rebellion by unemployed workers in France which in some cases had inspired solidarity strike action by the employed. So I raised the question at the NC meeting. I was told that there had been some unspecified tactical disagreements with the British SWP leadership, and nothing more. It was only after I left the ISO that I learned that the SWP leadership, impressed with the German section's recruitment figures since its social-democratic entry, had ordered these sections to duplicate the turn. For refusing, they were unilaterally expelled from the tendency. Some of the Belgians have since fused with the similarly-opportunist Militant organization. The French ex-Cliffites, so far as I can tell, simply dissolved and disappeared from political life.

I also learned, after leaving, that there had been recent

deep splits in the Canadian, Australian, and South African organizations. The Canadians broke in half, with the "New Socialist Group" heading mainly rightward, over questions of perspectives for the class struggle and party building, while the South Africans had divided over nothing less than electoral support to the bourgeois ANC! (See PR 50 for the sordid background.) As for the Australians, I'm not sure even they know the reasons for their split.

Despite all this, I still labored under the potent illusion that, whatever the weaknesses of the various sections of the IST, the British SWP had succeeded in building itself into a genuine revolutionary workers party, and that the ISO now faced a task which had been accomplished by the British comrades: transforming a propaganda group with middle-class composition into the beginnings of a mass workers' party. But the fact that internationalism was taken so lightly by both the ISO and the SWP leaderships, that we were kept in ignorance of the activities and issues confronting so many of our comrades abroad, told me something was amiss.

THE FACADE SHATTERS

The more I came into contact with the leadership of the ISO, the more I realized that the programmatic agreement I thought I had with the ISO, and that existed between the

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF STALINISM

A Resurrection of Marxist Theory
by Walter Daum

The Marxist analysis of Stalinism that makes today's events understandable and shows the working-class way forward.

A thoughtful, and indeed in many ways, an ideologically exciting book. Whether you accept its main thesis or not, and . . . this reviewer does not, it will still challenge your presuppositions and force you to rethink your ideas from top to bottom in the most rigorous way. And unlike most would-be Marxist texts these days, it is written in intelligible English, which is no small gain as well.

Al Richardson, Revolutionary History

The analysis of Stalinism as a "deformed capitalist state" made by Walter Daum is very persuasive. The idea that it was a particular form of state capitalism because of its origins in a defeated workers revolution has much to commend it. . . . Read this book by all means. . . . But heed our "health warning." His aim . . . is not to give Trotskyism a decent burial: on the contrary, he wants to revive the corpse and give it a facelift.

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P.O. Box 3573, New York, NY 10008-3573.

ISO and the revolutionary Marxist tradition, was strained at best. In its place, loyalty to the apparent organizational gains of the IST kept me in place, although increasingly confused as to the next step.

In retrospect, the decisive blow came at the ISO's East Coast Conference in February '98. In front of an audience composed of ISO members and close contacts, two members of the steering committee gave speeches denouncing U.S. imperialism in the Middle East, and singing to the heavens the praises of the "socialist alternative." At no point was it mentioned that achieving this might actually require a revolution, or a revolutionary party. Nor was the point raised by any of the ISO speakers, who, toeing the new line of trying not to "alienate the workers with talk about theory," told a series of anecdotes whose main thrust was to depict the working-class as mere victims of capitalist depredations.

It was left to an LRP member speaking from the floor to raise this question, and to ask, "Does the ISO think so little of the working-class that it chooses to hide this?" The only response provided by the ISO was appalling. The gist was to accuse the LRP of "not doing anything," denouncing it for its small size, and bragging about the influence the ISO had achieved as a result of downplaying revolutionary propaganda. I had hardly expected this response, but I should have.

Afterwards, I was not exactly ready to break from the ISO, but I was curious to read more of what the LRP had to say, and wanted to buy a copy of *Proletarian Revolution*. However, one of the contacts I had brought with me was already doing so, and as "branch leader" I was charged with seeing to it that she was saved as soon as possible from the "poisonous" influence of such "insane sectarians," by any means necessary! My contact with the LRP would have to wait a few months.

HOW NOT TO MAKE A REVOLUTIONIST

I emerged from this charade broken, my faith in myself and the ISO shattered, and resigned within a matter of weeks. I did so on no clear political basis, but instead on personal grounds, claiming that I still held to ISO politics for the most part, but had given way to a heavy pessimism which made it impossible for me to work. Had I realized the problems were political, I would have tried to wage a fight over key issues, both to clarify the political issues and to see if others shared my concerns. Still, my time in the ISO had the advantage of helping me develop the habit of trying to think in political terms. It was not long before I determined that my pessimism had been politically grounded.

Realizing this, though, was a task which I could not accomplish within the ISO's ranks. So far I have focused on the "drama" of political struggles and disputes, and the growth of my doubts. But life in the ISO was consumed much more with the daily comedy of "building a branch." It was a comedy of maddeningly optimistic recruitment targets, endlessly revised; of swallowing the hateful condescension of liberals only to chase after them, membership cards in hand; and of adjusting one's sales tactics every two weeks to the newest lowest-common-denominator headline on the paper.

This sort of breathless activism, justified when necessary with misquotations of Lenin ("Open the gates of the party."), is in fact an insidious form of bureaucratism. If you have exhausted yourself running in place, you have no energy left to consider a change of course, let alone argue for it. As with all forms of bureaucratism, in addition to genuinely confusing comrades, it accommodates two personality types most read-

ily: climbers and the spineless. From such characteristics socialist revolutions are not made.

LRP: THE REAL MARXIST ALTERNATIVE

The ISO does its best to inculcate into its members a sectarian refusal to even listen to the arguments of its political opponents. Since the main opponent tendencies I was familiar with (e.g. the Spartacists, the Workers World Party) had capitulated in whole or in part to Stalinism, I was in no rush to get to know them intimately. But since I had no higher cadre immediately overseeing me and making sure I read ISO-permitted literature only, I was at liberty to investigate, and I did. In this fashion I found out a number of ugly truths. For example, the ISO's steady support for Teamsters for a Democratic Union had gone so far as to fail to criticize the TDU call, in the early '90s, for the consent decree that first brought the government into the Teamsters union. When the government brought down Ron Carey in punishment for the UPS strike, the ISO issued pro forma denunciations of government intervention on "Marxist" grounds, but never an honest accounting of how the government intervention came about. (See "Government Out of the Teamsters" in *PR* 56.)

Practice is of course related to theory. Hence I saw it as necessary to go beyond disavowing the more contemptible practices of the Cliffites and investigate the IST's theoretical problems. I was dimly aware that COFI was seen as a "state capitalist" tendency, but was unaware of the extent to which their politics differed in real essentials from the Cliffites'.

I attempted at first to acquaint myself with the positions of groups within the Soviet-defensist milieu, to see if any tendencies had avoided capitulation to Stalinism. None could answer my main question: how is it possible to say that "deformed workers' states" were established by anti-proletarian counterrevolutions, without revising the basic class standpoint of Marxism? As I found out, the LRP has done the theoretical work necessary to answer the question: it is not possible, and neither is it possible, as the Cliffites seem to think, to prepare the working-class for the necessary seizure of power by hiding revolutionary politics behind a screen of paeans to "ordinary people."

I have met a number of former ISO members, and the vast majority of them have shifted decisively to the right. Many have become cynical, middle-class careerists once more; the ones who remain active in left politics tend to belong to such Democratic-Party-Advocates groupings as the Committees of Correspondence, the Labor Party, or the Democratic Socialists of America. That I did not follow this oft-traveled path myself is attributable to a combination of my own subjective identification as a Trotskyist, and the intervention of the LRP. Similarly, with its combination of Marxist posturing and reformist practice, in the face of future mass struggles, the ISO itself is likely to be torn apart leftward and rightward.

Today, there are a number of subjectively revolutionary young people drawn to the ISO by its militant veneer. As I was, they are dragged daily in the wake of each of its opportunist tactical shifts, yet retain an understandable loyalty to an organization which helped awaken them to political life. They would do well to grab hold of a steady rudder: read *Proletarian Revolution* and other LRP literature, enter into correspondence with us and struggle alongside us, and fight to re-create the revolutionary Marxist tradition and the party of the working-class vanguard. ●

South Africa:

The ANC's 'Last Chance' Election

by Matthew Richardson

June saw South Africa's second national election since the end of apartheid. The ruling African National Congress (ANC), now led by Thabo Mbeki following Nelson Mandela's retirement, received an overwhelming 66.36 percent of the vote, winning 226 of the 400 seats in the national assembly. This fell just one seat short of the two-thirds majority necessary to change the constitution, but the ANC could easily gain the support of another party in order to make such changes if it wished to. The ANC won control of seven of the country's nine provinces, forming a coalition government with the reactionary Inkatha party in KwaZulu/Natal, while being forced into opposition in the Western Cape by a Democratic Party/New National Party coalition. Socialist and other "radical" opponents of the ANC failed to win any significant support.

Most commentators have seen the continued massive electoral support for the ANC as evidence of its unchallenged authority in the eyes of the masses. However, the truth is that the big vote for the ANC belies mass dissatisfaction with the results of the ANC's first term in office. This holds the potential to be transformed into mass struggles against the ANC government in the next period.

Winnie Mandela summed up the ANC's problem. Rallying support for the ANC, she adapted to the masses' anger in order to convince them to vote for the ANC, asking not for another chance, but a *last* chance. Speaking of the ANC leadership, she said:

The picnic is over now. . . . This time we cannot blame the past and apartheid for the failures of government. . . . If we fail now, it will be our fault.

MASS DISAFFECTION WITH ANC

In the last issue of *Proletarian Revolution* we presented a detailed analysis of the ANC's first term in office. We explained how it was the mass revolutionary struggles of the 1980's that brought apartheid to its knees and forced its rulers to negotiate a transfer of power to the ANC. The ANC represents the interests not of the masses but of the black petty-bourgeoisie and bourgeoisie in particular, and of the entire capitalist class on which they depend. The ANC's commitment to capitalism has led it to betray every promise it made to the masses throughout the anti-apartheid struggle and during its 1994 election campaign. Instead, the ANC has turned to imposing austerity and intensified exploitation on the masses who have supported it, in the interests of capitalist profitability. The masses' rewards for their years of heroic struggle against apartheid have been growing mass unemployment, homelessness and an AIDS epidemic that has already infected approximately 30 percent of the population.

By 1998, widespread disaffection with the ANC was clear. Numerous motions were passed in unions and community organizations denouncing the ANC's austerity economic program, known as GEAR. Riots sporadically broke out against evictions and forced repayment of debts for rent, electricity and water. The masses' changing attitude toward the ANC was even registered by bourgeois polling. In 1994 around 75 percent of people surveyed thought the ANC

government was "headed in the right direction"; but four years later that figure had declined to 43 percent. Surveys of voters a year before the election indicated that the ANC would struggle to win 50 percent of the electorate's votes.

Considering the radical political consciousness and organizations built by the masses in their struggle against apartheid, these conditions presented a tremendous opportunity for the masses to break from the ANC and chart a new course of struggle. And yet they overwhelmingly voted for the ANC in the June elections. Why?

WHY DID THE MASSES VOTE ANC?

The working class's power is not found in elections, but in its struggles in the factories and streets. From motions to end the COSATU union federation's alliance with the ANC, to calls for mass actions against ANC policies, workers across the country tried to find a way forward in struggle against the ANC's betrayals. But every attempt has so far been sabotaged by the union and community organization leaders, most of whom are members of the Communist Party (SACP). Socialist in words, but pro-capitalist in deeds, the SACP is aligned with the ANC, with many SACP figures also acting as ANC leaders and parliamentarians. Radical workers have been censored and victimized for speaking out against the ANC. Larger numbers have been confused by the SACP's argument that while the ANC has adopted some anti-working class policies, workers should support the ANC even more and pressure it to adopt pro-working class policies.

The ANC/SACP have been able to avoid an explosion of struggle against their betrayals because the workers have not found a credible alternative leadership from their own ranks that is able to lead the struggle forward. While ANC/SACP bureaucrats' attacks on radicals have damaged the left's influence, most of the left's problems are of its own making. Indeed, the far left in South Africa has largely collapsed. As we explained in the last edition of *PR*, socialist groups which held illusions in the ANC have become demoralized and disoriented. This can only have encouraged demoralization among the radical workers that looked to these groups for political leadership. And the one socialist group that has taken revolutionary positions in the struggle, the Workers International Vanguard League (WIVL), has failed to seize the opportunities presented to rally the most politically advanced workers to its banner.

The failure of any socialist group to build itself as a credible alternative to the ANC/SACP leaders in the workers' mass organizations doomed any attempt by them to pose as an electoral alternative. Opportunities to launch mass struggles against the ANC having passed, the masses now saw no choice but to try to defend their interests through the elections. The way was opened for the ANC to campaign for another chance to deliver on its promises.

ANC CAMPAIGNS FOR "ANOTHER CHANCE"

To win popular support, the ANC turned again to left-wing rhetoric in its campaign. Its campaign avoided any concrete reference to the policies of its first five years in office, but went to great lengths to sympathize with the lack

of improvements in the masses' lives and promised significant changes in the ANC's next term. Written by SACP leader Jeremy Cronin, the ANC's election manifesto never once mentioned GEAR, but declared that "We share your impatience to overcome the decades-old crisis of unemployment, crime and poverty"; he promised that the ANC's next term in office would be "five years of accelerated change." ANC campaigners explained that its plans for improving the masses' conditions were hampered during its first term in office by resistance from the old apartheid bureaucracy, political parties and the bosses, and that its second term would be one of "delivery."

Indeed, while the ANC's manifesto promised "a better life for workers" as well as "a better life for business," the ANC's popular digest of its manifesto deleted the latter and only referred indirectly to business when referring to "mobilizing investment to meet [the masses'] needs" and emphasizing vague aims like "jobs for all at a living wage." The ANC also ran candidates with left-wing reputations in the most radical working-class areas. In Gauteng, for example, the province which has Johannesburg as its capital and is the home of the most class-conscious workers, the ANC ran COSATU leader and SACP figure Sam Shilowa.

To emphasize its supposed commitment to really deliver in its second term, the ANC declared its aim to win the two-thirds majority of votes needed for it to have the power to change the constitution. The implication was that with this power the ANC would be able to remove any barriers to improving conditions for the masses.

Aware that it would have to continue its austerity policies after the elections, the ANC was careful not to raise expectations too high. Mbeki reassured the capitalists that the ANC would not change the constitution even if it did achieve a two-thirds majority. Not surprisingly, the ANC's election manifesto did not set a single target for house building, social service expansion or job creation.

Seeing no alternative to the ANC, and hoping that with a huge majority the ANC would be pressured to deliver improvements, the masses turned out in great numbers to vote for the ANC: close to 90 percent of those registered voted.

THE WIVL

The Workers International Vanguard League ran only in the elections in the Western Cape province, of which Cape Town is the capital. Originally planning on running a national campaign, the WIVL was prevented from doing so by high registration charges.

The WIVL ran on an openly revolutionary communist program. Its manifesto explained that the only way for workers to put an end to their exploitation and suffering is with socialist revolution:

In this election campaign, and indeed afterwards we will continue with the main task of mobilizing the working

class against the capitalist class so that exploitation ends for all time. ... Many still have illusions in parliament and it is our duty to help unmask it. This state is not ours but an instrument of violence against the working class. ... The only way out of the cycle of worsening poverty, suffering and violence is to overthrow this rotten capitalist system and build in its place socialism. ... To achieve this the working class needs to be organized in its own revolutionary party that is independent of the capitalist-imperialists. This will have to be an international party uniting the working classes of the world — the rebuilt Fourth International.

The WIVL's manifesto also raised a number of demands including nationalization, public works to address the crises in health care, education and unemployment, land redistribution, as well as demands addressing women's and immigrant rights. (We will be glad to provide interested readers with a copy of the full text of the WIVL's manifesto.)

The LRP supported the WIVL's campaign. Because of its principled program and its correct positions on major questions in the class struggle, we hoped the WIVL's campaign would help rally workers to the cause of building a revolutionary party. However a principled socialist program does not necessarily mean a successful election campaign.

The WIVL received only 672 votes in the Western Cape elections. This is a very poor result considering that in the 1994 elections the WIVL won 855 votes in spite of having only recently emerged from being a purely underground organization, and that in the 1996 local government elections in Cape Town the WIVL increased their vote to 1,780 from a significantly smaller electorate.

We lack much information necessary to accurately assess the WIVL's campaign. Tampering with the WIVL's votes cannot be ruled out, and the WIVL certainly suffered a lack of funding and support. Nonetheless, we are, unfortunately, not totally surprised by the WIVL's poor performance. As we reported in the last *PR*, the WIVL seems to have been stagnating since we first came into contact with them in 1995. Then, they were a fast-growing group with a strong base of members and supporters in the working class and an apparently serious commitment to developing its political program from the basic revolutionary positions it had arrived at, to a full revolutionary Marxist theory and worldview.

Today, however, we see no evidence of any growth and perhaps an overall loss of worker members. More troubling are the symptoms of political stagnation. The WIVL has failed to produce a regular propaganda paper capable of organizing and educating its members as political leaders, and has not advanced the development of its own program or worldview at all in the last five years. And while the WIVL's manifesto declared its commitment to building the Fourth International and holding political discussions with like-minded groups internationally, it has so far failed to follow through on that commitment with the only group it has felt politically close to, us in the LRP.

Under these conditions, the WIVL could not possibly have been able to organize and train its members with the political knowledge necessary to win revolutionary-minded workers in its campaign. We hope the WIVL will take stock of this failure and use the next period to clarify its views, and organize and train its members as cadre.

THE COMING STORM

No revolutionary can be pleased that the masses have

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been left to place their hopes in the ANC. But considering the defeats the masses have suffered since 1994, and the widespread demoralization reported by many observers, it is heartening that the working class is still sufficiently mobilized and politically alert to vote in such numbers. This shows the potential for the masses to turn to struggle when they find their hopes again betrayed by the ANC.

A clash between the working class and the ANC government and the capitalists it serves is a certainty in the next period. Weak and vulnerable to the spreading crisis in the world economy, South Africa's economy is actually shrinking by 1 percent per year, a figure that could get worse as the price of gold (which even at current low prices represents almost 20 percent of GDP) continues to fall.

The capitalists' only answer to this crisis is intensifying exploitation. Standing in the way of this are the gains won by the masses' past struggles, most importantly the COSATU unions. The ANC and bosses will no doubt try to weaken

workers' resistance by attacking different groups of workers at different times. But an overall confrontation is inevitable. For example, the ANC is planning an offensive of forced debt repayments and house and land evictions in its next term which will surely trigger community struggles. The ANC may hope that such attacks pave the way for an assault against the hardcore of the working class in the big factories and mines.

The ruling class is well aware that a showdown between the masses' expectations and the capitalists' need for austerity points toward an explosion of struggle. Newly elected president Thabo Mbeki admitted last year, "If, in time, the majority of the black population sees that no real change has occurred, one must expect the people will rebel."

The coming struggles will demand that a new leadership of the masses be forged that can break the grip of the ANC/SACP and lead the struggle forward. Revolutionaries must understand that they have little time to prepare. ●

Rigged Again?

In our coverage of South Africa's first post-apartheid elections in 1994, we showed that the elections were rigged, with the ANC's approval, in order to prevent the ANC from winning enough votes to rule alone. Overall, the ANC feared that with an overwhelming majority, it would have no excuse not to implement the masses' demands for wealth redistribution and social service development. In KwaZulu/Natal, the ANC sought to forge a ruling-class alliance against the masses with the murderous counter-revolutionary Inkatha party of Gatsha Buthelezi by rigging the vote to insure Inkatha's victory.

Newsweek magazine reported at the time:

The nation's top electoral official admitted that the final voting margins resulted at least partly from backroom negotiation . . . "Let's not get overly squeamish about it," said Johann Kriegler, chairman of the Independent Electoral Commission. The parties, he said, "are in a power game with each other, and if they want to settle [claims of vote fraud] there's nothing wrong with it ethically or legally." (May 16, 1994.)

Likewise London's *Financial Times* (May 10, 1994):

Perhaps that was just as well, for it gave the political leaders the excuse to do their own kind of reconciliation: sharing out power more as they thought the voters ought to have done, than as they probably did; providing what one political insider called a "designer outcome" . . .

Nelson Mandela himself admitted:

I feel very relieved we did not get the two-thirds majority, because already tensions were building up that we were going to write our own Constitution. (*New York Times*, May 7, 1994.)

ANOTHER "DESIGNER OUTCOME"?

The result of this year's election shows signs of similar rigging, though the politicians and journalists have learned better than to admit it again. In spite of the ANC's reassurances that it would not change the constitution, the capitalists in South Africa and internationally were made nervous by the ANC's campaign for a two-thirds majority.

While they overwhelmingly supported a strong ANC victory that would give the ANC the authority to continue with its pro-capitalist policies, they worried that a two-thirds majority would raise the masses' expectations. Michael Heme, of Lehman Brothers stockbrokers in London, said:

If they end just a shade short of the two-thirds majority, then it would almost be the perfect result for the market . . . Not only do you avoid the complications that two-thirds involves, but you've got the overwhelming mandate for Mbeki and the type of policies that have been pushed through over the last few years. (*Reuters*, June 4, 1999.)

Polls shortly before the vote consistently predicted that the ANC would safely win a two-thirds majority with around 68 percent of the vote, and that Inkatha's vote would fall by almost half. The counting of the first 10 million votes (66 percent of the total) confirmed these predictions. The ANC was receiving two-thirds of the vote, a margin that was expected to grow as the remaining votes were counted.

Then transmission of the vote count was halted for almost a day because of "technical glitches." When reporting resumed, the ANC had mysteriously fallen to 66.36 percent, 0.3 percent below the two-thirds majority, little different from the final result. South Africa's *Business Day* mockingly summed up:

The new SA's electorate is truly wise beyond its (five) years. The almost unbelievably precise results it delivered in the past two general elections is proof. . . . The outcome could not have been more suitable, all round, if it had been devised through old fashioned horse trading. It was, as [Democratic Party election commissioner Michael] Moriarty says, "the perfect fluke." Again. (June 9.)

All circumstantial evidence suggests that the elections were again rigged to prevent a result that would raise the masses' expectations for a better life. The capitalists' willingness to violate their precious "democratic principles" is only a foretaste of the dictatorial methods they will use against the masses' struggles.

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history of civilian review boards and residency laws and how such panaceas had in reality proved powerless to curtail police attacks. As well, the call for more cops of color was building illusions rather than aiding our fellow workers — people of color in particular — in understanding that no cops can be trusted. To support the *right* of Blacks to become police or anything else is simply a matter of demanding equality and opposing discrimination. To actually *advocate* that anyone become a cop is unprincipled.

We also pointed out that if the Network was to be any kind of alternative it should explicitly oppose Sharpton's demand for a pay raise for cops. At the next meeting, the audience had shrunk to a handful. While the ISO did revise their program to oppose a raise for cops, they left the rest intact. At one point, they exposed their dishonest method by admitting that they agreed with our arguments — but that such demands were necessary to “get people involved.” Since then, the Network has died its inevitable death. Unfortunately this experience only confirmed our belief that building a genuine fighting organization against police brutality will have to overcome fake-revolutionary groups like the ISO as well as expose the rotten role of establishment Democratic Party politicians.

NEW YORK TRANSIT

TWU Local 100 President Willie James gave the membership a rotten contract the last time around, and New Directions (ND), the so-called “rank and file” caucus in the local, did not mobilize seriously to defeat it either.

In conjunction with his sellout deals, James has allowed management to frame and fire Roger Toussaint, the elected chair of the Track Division Union Committee. Then James & Co. removed him from his union post — on the grounds that he was no longer an employee! The resulting outcry from transit workers, including demonstrations which LRPers helped build, helped force James to re-instate Toussaint in his union post. Unfortunately and typically, ND and Toussaint also filed a law suit in the bosses' courts *against* the union, a strategy we actively oppose. We will, however, be supporting further actions for Toussaint's reinstatement.

The LRP also participated in demonstrations against the introduction of workfare into the transit system. We are working for unity between union and workfare workers and a fight for full union wages, benefits and protection for all workers. *Real Jobs, Not Workfare!* Send in for our leaflet.

CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK (CUNY)

The LRP held two forums at City College in the spring, on police brutality and the war in Kosovo. Our weekly discussion group is studying Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution*. If you're interested in joining, call us.

A fight over the issue of CUNY security guards is brewing. A news story came out in the spring revealing that CUNY security had 100,000 rounds of ammunition (roughly one bullet for every two students) and was buying more. At City College specifically, the guards don't carry their guns because of a successful mobilization against armed guards on campus two years ago — but it was learned that they

have kept guns all along in their lockers.

Given widespread anger over this and security's harassment of the February Mumia conference, a militant worker on campus who is a friend of the LRP won a motion in DC 37 Local 374 for a meeting on this issue, which the LRP helped build. About 30 people attended, including workers, teachers, students and leaders of several staff unions. The meeting decided to send a joint union letter to the college president expressing outrage at the presence of guns on campus and the arrests at the Mumia conference. This struggle must develop further in order to thwart plans for increased repression of campus activities.

The CUNY Board of Trustees voted in May 1998 to eliminate remedial courses at senior colleges. A lawsuit forced them to re-vote this issue in January, but they voted the same way. Since then, an even more conservative chairman has been appointed, Herman Badillo, who was one of the driving forces behind the vote and has mayoral aspirations. If this plan doesn't get reversed, many students (roughly 67 percent of all CUNY students need some form of remedial help) will be forced to go to already overcrowded community colleges. This will lead to making senior colleges more middle-class and more white. It will also likely mean shutting down some campuses and wholesale layoffs.

The faculty union (PSC) has mildly opposed this attack, while other campus unions (DC 37 and the Teamsters) have ignored the issue. The LRP joined more radical faculty and students at a number of demos and teach-ins this past spring and we will look to build this struggle further this fall.

Hillary Clinton was the main commencement speaker at City College in June. The LRP approached the ISO and SLAM (Student Liberation Action Movement) for a joint protest — but to little avail. We then posted a leaflet denouncing the decision to honor her. At the graduation ceremony, a few students did organize a small but effective protest over the Kosovo war, but the opportunity for a bigger demonstration was unfortunately missed.

EUROPE AND ANTI-WAR ACTIONS

The LRP gave a forum on U.S. police brutality and the special oppression of Blacks at the Lutte Ouvrière festival in France in late May. We also joined a German COFI comrade at two protests at the European Union summit in Cologne as well as a number of forums. Documents in German relating to COFI activities there are now on our website (or upon request for those without access.)

COFI comrades in Germany and Australia have participated in a range of protests against the U.S. war on Serbia. In the U.S., we attended meetings and demonstrations in N.Y., Washington D.C., Chicago and Durham, NC.

FORUMS AND EDUCATIONALS

The LRP has hosted an increased number of forums and educationals in this period. Topics have included affirmative action, current struggles in Russia, the Kosovo war, the labor scene, police brutality and community control. We will be forming new study groups in New York, Chicago and Washington in the coming period. If you are interested in joining a group to discuss articles in *Proletarian Revolution* magazine or other topics of interest, let us know! As always, copies of our bulletins and leaflets are available upon request. ●

New York Workers Flex Muscles

by Bob Wolfe

For the first time in years workers in New York City are expecting real gains. Working-class anger has been fueled by two seemingly unrelated factors: the continuing atrocities perpetrated by the police, and major scandals in the city unions. Given this, the New York labor bureaucrats have had to put on a militant display. Unlike in the past, they joined in the protests against police brutality. (See our article on page 40.) And they are making far more noise on their usual scene, the economic front.

Randi Weingarten, president of the city teachers' union (the UFT) and chair of the Municipal Labor Council, summed up their thinking in a speech before labor leaders:

If economic bad times called for shared sacrifice, why shouldn't prosperity mean shared gains? If not now, in the midst of one of the strongest and the longest boom markets in our country's history, then when?

That in fact was part of the bureaucrats' line at a big demonstration they built on May 12. In a massive display of the potential power of the working class, 50,000 workers assembled near City Hall to oppose threatened budget cuts and demand decent contracts in the upcoming negotiations. Although the rally was organized by these pro-capitalist, pro-Democratic Party labor leaders, it reflected a turn in the mood and consciousness of the working class. Revolutionary-minded fighters can now look forward to the opportunities presented by a new wave of class struggle ahead. And such struggles will be critical. For in fact the boom that the bureaucrats point to cannot last — and any policy of "shared sacrifice" will spell doom for the working class.

BUREAUCRATS DEFLECT ANGER

During the past year, top leaders of the largest municipal union, AFSCME District Council 37, were sent to jail after revelations of rampant corruption and the voting fraud which they committed to push through the 1995 contract. (See "Hands Off DC 37" in *PR* 58.) Workers became furious that a five-year contract deal they had actually rejected was shoved down their throats by their own leaders. Meanwhile Mayor Rudolph Giuliani has been running around the country boasting that the city has a huge surplus of over \$2 billion — not only from Wall Street winnings but also from jobs, wages and benefits taken away from city workers.

Thus for the union hacks, the May 12 rally was an attempt to get out ahead of the angry ranks and to regain some credibility. Yet while union leaders declared they would accept no more double-zero contracts and railed against the budget attacks by Giuliani and Governor Pataki, they raised no struggle perspective. They pushed the feeble strategy of relying on the good will of those capitalists who fear that Giuliani's confrontational method could provoke mass unrest.

The combined outrage of union workers and the Black and Latino communities could indeed be the spark for an explosive movement uniting the entire city working class. This is especially true because the most powerful unions in New York have large proportions of Black and Latino workers in their ranks. No wonder that on May 12 the pro-capitalist leaders did their best to deflect workers' anger instead of posing a mass struggle that could take advantage of the mayor's vulnerability. They pointed instead to the voting

booth, even though there are no major elections this year.

On top of this, they shared the podium with the racist cop "union," the Policemen's Benevolent Association — scum who had spent months rallying in support of the police killers of Amadou Diallo. What an insult to the working class of New York, especially people of color who have been demonstrating against these same cops for months. But this was no accident. The prominent presence of the PBA is a signal from the union leadership that it has no intention of carrying forward a real struggle against police brutality — or in fact any kind of class-conscious working-class action. *In New York and everywhere, cops must be driven out of the unions!*

LABOR COLLABORATION WITH GIULIANI

For the last 25 years, New York has been in a constant state of financial crisis. Since 1975, when the post-World War II boom ended and the first shock waves struck, every city administration has threatened the working class with layoffs and service cuts. In 1993, the Republican Giuliani defeated the city's first Black mayor, David Dinkins, in a racially polarized election. While austerity measures had continued under the Democrat Dinkins, Giuliani promised Wall Street that he was prepared to go much further in attacking the working class. Appealing to the racism of white middle-class layers and labor aristocrats, Giuliani dressed his anti-worker program in rhetoric about "cleaning up New York."

Giuliani, a former federal prosecutor, trumpeted a racist law and order philosophy. His get-tough policy aimed to intimidate Black and Latino workers above all. Police brutality sharply escalated, as seen most dramatically in the brutal torture of Abner Louima and the barrage of 41 shots that gunned down Diallo.

While most union leaders had supported Dinkins, they offered little opposition to Giuliani. During his first term, DC 37 leaders responded to the threat of layoffs by accepting buyouts — workers were paid one-time lump sums to give up their jobs. Thousands of jobs were lost, and the remaining workforce was pushed to work harder to keep up with demands for increased productivity. Their disgraceful acceptance of slave-labor "workfare" took place even before Clinton signed the federal end-welfare bill.

Giuliani, like Dinkins, slashed city union jobs and increased the police force. Having forced the unions to accept cutbacks, he then cut deals with the bureaucrats. His best pals were Stanley Hill and Sandra Feldman, who then headed DC 37 and the UFT. Hill and Feldman signed a letter written by Giuliani asking the state to help the city save money by reducing mandated welfare and Medicaid benefits! Hill also betrayed city hospital workers in DC 37's Local 420: hospitals were explicitly omitted from the no-layoff deal with Giuliani for other city workers. This in turn fortified attacks on services at Harlem Hospital and elsewhere.

The bureaucrats' collaboration with Giuliani reached a low point with the fixing of the vote in 1995 on the DC 37 contract, which included a two-year wage freeze and other givebacks. After Feldman was embarrassed when the teachers voted down their parallel contract, DC 37 leaders rigged the ballot in order to dodge the same fate. As a result of the fraud, once DC 37 passed the contract, teachers voted to approve the deal they had previously beaten. With the

pattern set, the other unions fell into line.

Giuliani's main concern was to buy labor peace while openly attacking the more vulnerable sections of the working class. Before he reached his high point of unpopularity with the Diallo murder, he was already launching persistent attacks — on welfare mothers, squeegee men, panhandlers, immigrant street vendors, taxi drivers and City University (CUNY) students, to name a few sectors.

Even so, the collaboration continued. Hill and other bureaucrats endorsed the Republican for re-election in 1997. Dennis Rivera, president of the hospital workers' union 1199, also played ball and refrained from opposing his re-election. DC 37 officers who backed the mayor got a few perks and favors in return. As *Daily News* columnist Juan Gonzales observed:

City Hall has been using its control of jobs to punish opponents among the union leaders and reward supporters. The only problem is that too many of City Hall's supporters are turning out to be crooks.

Revelations of the fraud in DC 37 exploded in 1998, shaking up the labor scene in New York. In addition to fixing the 1995 contract vote, DC 37 bureaucrats were engaged in embezzlement, kickback schemes and other forms of corruption. Many face indictments, and Hill was forced out of office. AFSCME national president Gerald McEntee put DC 37 under trusteeship, appointing Lee Saunders to run the 120,000-member union.

Weingarten & Co. have called on Giuliani to put aside money for labor increases, apparently feeling that the mayor should reward them for their past services on his behalf. While other city labor leaders have been all too willing to let Hill and DC 37 take the entire blame for the 1995 contract sellout, they all helped Giuliani stick it to the ranks. But Giuliani has rejected the bureaucrats' pleas, insisting that pay raises will be tied to productivity increases and more job cuts.

MAY 12 — BEGINNING OR END OF STRUGGLE?

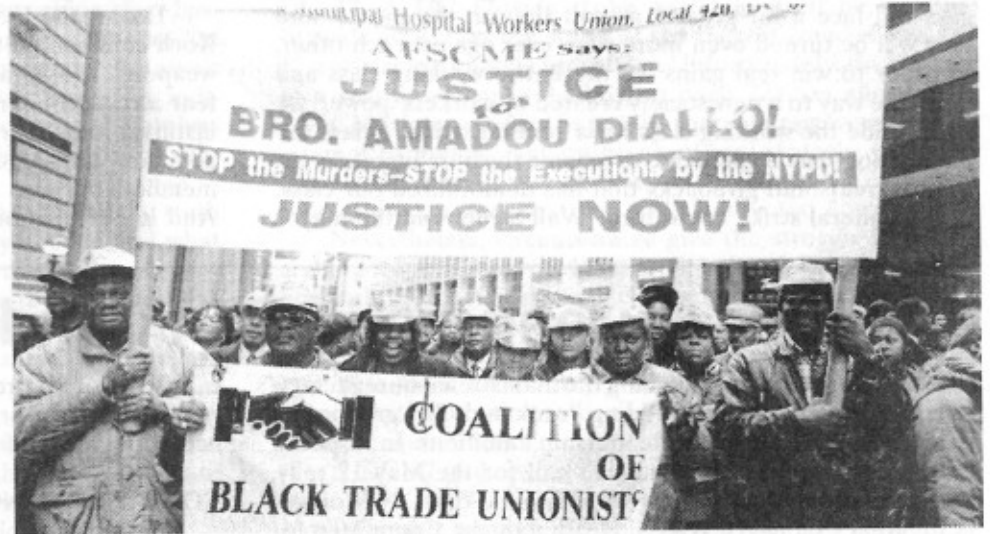
At the rally, there were plenty of militant statements by top bureaucrats like Brian McLaughlin, president of the city Central Labor Council. But these were empty: McLaughlin and the CLC were among those who had supported Giuliani's re-election. And in 1998, when 40,000 construction workers staged an angry strike and disruptive rally in midtown Manhattan on June 30, McLaughlin made a groveling apology to Giuliani. Some militant.

In fact, the bureaucrats have adopted the most reactionary strategy possible: reliance on bosses, Democrats and cops. 1199's Rivera has repeatedly told meetings of health care workers that the bosses are not the enemy, but rather allies in opposing budget cuts. Reporting that this is the strategy of the other union leaders as well, the civil service newspaper, *The Chief*, pointed to the futility of this approach:

Ms. Weingarten and AFL-CIO New York City Central Labor Council President Brian McLaughlin said they intended to rally business leaders to their cause. But the likelihood of that happening, and of it effecting Mr.

Giuliani's position, seems remote. (April 30)

Previous public relations campaigns by city unions have squandered millions in dues that could have been used to build strike funds. 1199 is on that road again with expensive TV ads against Pataki's cuts. But Transport Workers Union Local 100 president Willie James took it on the chin when he called a union-wide referendum to approve a \$60 charge per



Hundreds of outraged Black workers joined protests over cop killing of Amadou Diallo. Police brutality is a union issue!

member for an ad campaign as contract negotiations approach: the move was overwhelmingly rejected.

Appealing to bourgeois good will fits the assumption that city union bureaucrats are gearing up for arbitration, not strike action. In this spirit, *The Chief* commented:

The unions' best hopes may lie in either the PBA or the UFT going into arbitration to make the case for decent wage hikes, and coming out with a pattern the other unions might then replicate.

It would be sickening if the bosses' hired thugs, the cops, became the contract pace-setters for city workers. This would mean another effort by the bureaucrats to reconcile the city's most oppressed workers with their day-in-and-day-out enemies — right after the union-based "March for Reconciliation" on April 15 in response to the Diallo killing, where they had raised the obscene demand of a pay raise for cops.

As they did at the May 12 rally, the bureaucrats aim to use the contract battles to push for support to the Democrats. With everything pointing to a Giuliani run for the Senate next year, they are looking to rally their members to the banner of the liberal favorite, Hillary Clinton.

No matter that Democrats in New York and Albany, along with the Clintons in Washington, have joined to slash social services and undermine the standard of living of the working class. In fact, Medicare cuts are being proposed by Clinton as we write. Rivera, a former vice-president of the state Democratic Party, had to admit in an 1199 newsletter his party's role in slashing Medicare funding for health care:

Our hope is in the Democrat-controlled State Assembly, which has the power to reject Pataki's budget. But Assembly Democrats are saying they'll agree to \$625 million in cuts. And that's before real negotiations on the budget are even started.

Rarely has labor's Democratic Party strategy been so obviously self-defeating.

STRATEGY TO WIN

There is a major question facing the working class and oppressed at this time. Will the new spirit developing among workers be allowed to create a united, fighting defense against the current attacks, a defense which could stop the long retreat? If not, every sector — including union and non-union workers, Blacks and Latinos, immigrants, women and gays will face a far greater assault than in the past — and they will be turned even more than ever against each other. In order to win real gains for the entire working class and point the way to a new society created by workers' power, we fight inside the working class for a general strike. This is the mass action that is needed to overcome the bureaucrats' legacy of retreats and givebacks that has demoralized our class.

A general strike could force Wall Street and the mayor

to halt the decades-long war they have been waging. Unity of the struggle against attacks on labor and the struggle against police brutality and other racist attacks can be forged through united strike action like a general strike which could win real victories. That's one reason why the LRP fought in unions for a pledge to launch a one-day general strike whenever any further police atrocities occur. (See page 38.)

During the 1980 New York City transit strike, Mayor Ed Koch commented that a general strike was labor's "nuclear weapon," too devastating to ever be used. That's exactly the fear a revolutionary working-class leadership would want to instill in the bourgeoisie, and that's the power our class genuinely has. A general strike could mobilize not just union members but also non-union workers and the unemployed. And in our opinion, a successful general strike would point

Bureaucratic Rank and Filism

With scandals weakening the mainstream bureaucracy, lesser bureaucrats are building "rank and file" groups in a bid for support for their leadership ambitions. In response to the Central Labor Council's call for the May 12 rally, several union opposition groups formed the City Workers for Real Change (CWRC). Headed by the Committee for Real Change (CRC) in DC 37, the CWRC includes groups from the TWU (New Directions, which holds a large minority of Executive Board seats), the AFT (the New Action Caucus), the building maintenance workers' Local 32B-J (whose long-time boss Gus Bevana was also recently ousted for gross corruption), the CUNY staff union (the New Caucus), and other city unions.

The CWRC called a public meeting on May 7, a few days before the labor rally. About 100 unionists took part, including many from left groups like Solidarity and the International Socialist Organization (ISO) who are in these unions. The CWRC issued a leaflet for the meeting which listed a number of very good demands to fight for in the coming contract struggles: increasing wages, ending workfare, restoring open admissions at CUNY and opposing privatization. But any worker who hoped to hear from the CWRC leaders a program of militant action to win these demands would have been sorely disappointed.

This became clear when an LRP supporter challenged the CWRC to fight for their own program by calling for strike action and by opposing the Central Labor Council's effort to use the May 12 rally to build support for the Democrats. As we wrote in our leaflet for the meeting:

So we ask the CWRC: how do you intend on leading a struggle to win these demands? What actions do you think will be necessary? Why won't you use the opportunity of the big May 12 rally to at least advocate that unions prepare to strike until these demands are won? That's the least any leaders who want real change would do.

In response to the LRP challenge, Charles Ensley, president of DC 37's Local 371 and reportedly a candidate to take over the DC 37 leadership, evaded the issue by arguing that before you can discuss strike action you have to organize the rank and file. This has the reality of class struggle backwards. If officials like Ensley, who has headed his local for about 15 years, had been articulating the workers' needs and helping the ranks fight, the organization he

calls for would already be in place. It is the struggle for real change that organizes workers, not the maneuvers of backroom leaders.

NO "REAL CHANGE"

Given the obvious reluctance of the meeting's organizers to discuss any action, a leftist supporter of New Directions sheepishly asked what the CWRC was planning for May 12. Treading softly, he suggested a leaflet of unspecified content. Yet even this feeble attempt to save face was shot down by the bureaucrats. He was told that building the May 12 rally and putting thousands in the street was the only statement needed! But if that's the case, why should any worker bother with these second-rate bureaucrats? At least the tops can bring out tens of thousands when pressed.

Thus the committee for "real change" proved itself absolutely no alternative to the current union bureaucrats who talk about winning good contracts while opposing any plan of striking to win them. The bankruptcy of the CWRC leaders should come as no surprise to those familiar with their record in the unions. At a time when the government is heavily intervening into unions to defeat workers' struggles, CRC leaders Ray Markey and Mark Rosenthal, both heads of DC 37 locals, opened a federal lawsuit against DC 37. (The dangers of this strategy are detailed in our article "Government Out of the Teamsters" in PR 56.) By tying the workers' movement to the bosses' "justice" system, the CWRC and CRC show that, for all their rhetoric, they do not base their strategy on rank and file mobilization.

Another example: the CUNY New Caucus in 1998 opposed its union leadership's decision to stay neutral in the New York State governor's race, thereby in effect endorsing Gov. Pataki's re-election. The New Caucus proposed instead a vote for the Democratic candidate, Peter Vallone — a lackluster party hack who promised budget cuts in advance of the election, and who stood out as the only statewide Democratic candidate to support Giuliani's racist crackdown on the Million Youth March.

While organizations of rank and file workers in favor of a militant struggle in the coming contract negotiations are needed in all the unions, the rank and filists of the CWRC will not show the way forward.

the way forward to the only permanent solution, socialist revolution. It would prove to workers everywhere that our class has the power not just to halt the bosses' attacks but to challenge the capitalist system that exploits the many for the benefit of the few.

Thus we argue for a general strike strategy because it both meets the objective *needs* of the class struggle and utilizes the real objective *power* that the working class has. However, we must recognize the very mixed sentiments of city workers. Especially because of the leadership betrayals they've seen, workers have real fears about strikes by individual unions. At this moment they hardly see themselves capable of launching a united general strike. But these subjective factors are subject to seemingly sudden change — especially if revolutionary workers intervene to tell the truth to our fellow workers about what is really needed and what is possible, in order to combat the fears truthfully.

Toward this end, revolutionary workers must intervene in concrete struggles, including those inside particular unions, to fight for any possible gains — at the same time that we openly propagandize for the general strike. The present situation provides a ready link between advocating union-wide struggles and strikes and the possibility of a general strike. The contract situation of two of the most significant unions, the TWU and DC 37, are cases in point.

CONTRACT BATTLES AHEAD

Historically, transit workers have had one of the most militant unions in New York. This is in large part due to the tremendous power they hold, given the centrality of public transit in New York City. A transit strike alone shuts down much of the city's economy and sends a scare through the bosses; linked to the other unions, it could be even more explosive. Unfortunately, the legacy of the 1980 strike that the TWU leaders sabotaged means that even militants are reluctant to strike. In recent contract struggles, the LRP has fought against not only the union leadership but the out-bureaucratic New Directions crew, which has refused to draw the clear conclusion that strike action is required to win important gains (despite making occasional hints).

This year the TWU will be negotiating in December, ahead of the other city unions. With growing pressure on the bureaucrats to deliver some real gains, even Local 100's sellout president James woke up: after refusing for months to specify a single contract demand, he called for a 10 percent wage hike — and even said the union might have to strike!

REVOLUTIONARY HISTORY

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James is a phony who cannot be trusted. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake not to take advantage of his weak position to place demands upon the leadership to take action or be thrust aside. The LRP has already been raising the need for a strike in the TWU. Given the attitude of city workers, a TWU strike could spark a general strike.

The next opportunity for building a united response is in DC 37. A DC 37-wide strike would in itself be a virtual citywide strike. As the scene of the biggest fraud crime, DC 37 workers are looking for justice. Unfortunately, the absence of a real movement (see box on page 22) has allowed the AFSCME international to put the union in receivership in an attempt to prevent any outbreak of real struggle. Saunders has all but buried any notion of a fight with Giuliani to reopen the contract that the ranks had voted down.

Nevertheless, circumstances give the struggle in DC 37 a sharp edge. In particular, the fight to defend the public hospitals makes it possible to challenge leaders in DC 37 who claim to be progressives — including Local 420 head Jim Butler, who still postures as more of a militant than other DC 37 leaders. DC 37 as a whole is in a position to lead a popular struggle that can win support in the Black and Latino communities.

A DC 37 strike would also raise the possibility of bringing in 1199. 1199 is now the largest union in New York, with a considerable number of public employees, as a result of its affiliation with the Service Employees International Union. While most 1199 members are not employed by the city, Rivera has played a leading role in both the police brutality struggle and the May 12 event. Forever posturing as a progressive — in fact openly critical of DC 37 sellouts in the past — he would be hard pressed not to join in strike action if others went out. By so doing 1199 would also widen the issue to Pataki's hospital budget cuts.

REVOLUTIONARY PARTY LEADERSHIP

Among the factors that cause workers to fear strike action, none is more potent than the fact that workers have been sold out in past labor battles and, for good reason, do not trust their leadership. Where "new" leaders have recently replaced old, they have done nothing different. All these leaders are vulnerable now and are more open to challenge than in the past. We fight for strikes where possible and for our overall general strike strategy, but we do not claim that even such big actions themselves can be the whole answer.

In all the unions, the most militant class-conscious workers need to build a revolutionary socialist party that stands for the overthrow of the racist, exploitative and oppressive capitalist system. As long as the current union leadership holds the reins of power, the ranks will face an uphill struggle and will be constantly threatened with sellouts, even under the best of circumstances. But that is not all. A decent life for all workers, especially the most oppressed, cannot be won by even the best union contract. The attacks are coming not just from the bosses but from the government, the police and every arm of this racist anti-worker system. Only a revolutionary party can offer a lasting alternative because it fights for an overthrow of the whole society and its replacement by a workers' state with a socialist program.

LRP supporters are active in the TWU, 1199 and other unions raising proposals for action against the attacks by bosses and cops. We are working to build revolutionary party caucuses in the unions. We encourage all workers to contact us and discuss the way forward. ●

Kosovo

continued from page 1

time ally, is to be "demilitarized"; that may mean that elements of the KLA will become a police force to discipline anti-NATO Kosovars, like the PLO in Palestine. Meanwhile, NATO looks on while KLA-led thugs engage in ethnic cleansing of Kosovo Serbs and Roma ("Gypsies").

As working-class revolutionaries, we stood for the defense of Serbia against NATO's assault: defeating imperialism, the main oppressor of people on the world scale, was the main issue. Despite our military support, we gave no form of political support to the bourgeois regime of Slobodan Milosevic in the rump state he created out of former Yugoslavia. We also stood for Kosovo's right of national self-determination. But given the KLA's subordination to NATO, we withdrew military support for it. (See page 30 for the Marxist methodology underlying these positions.)

SOVEREIGNTY VS. HUMAN RIGHTS

The Kosovo war was a significant step in establishing a new level of imperialist domination. According to bourgeois international law, military intervention over what is officially a part of Serbia would have been illegitimate without U.N. approval. (In the build-up to the Gulf war in 1990, the U.S. made an enormous show of getting U.N. backing, based on the principle that Iraq had violated Kuwait's sovereignty.) In the case of Kosovo, however, Russia and China would have vetoed the Kosovo war in the Security Council, given their wariness of Western power. To dodge their veto, the U.S. turned to NATO — and NATO thereupon committed a gross violation of national sovereignty in bourgeois terms. The nominal excuse for war was Serbia's rejection of the Rambouillet accord, which would have granted NATO occupation rights over all of Serbia, not just Kosovo.

The foreign minister of Poland, now a NATO country, is Bronislaw Geremek, who started his political career as an adviser to the Solidarity movement in 1980, where he worked to limit and defeat the workers' more radical demands. Now he serves imperialism openly. This war, he said during NATO's 50th anniversary conference in May, is "the first signal of the coming century," in which "relations between nations can no longer be founded on respect for sovereignty — they must be founded on respect for human rights."

Of course, the imperialists' humanitarian pretensions are pure hypocrisy. They condemned Milosevic as a "Hitler" and

Terminological Notes

1) We use the name Kosovo, the Serbo-Croatian spelling, because it is the most common in English. In Albanian the name is Kosova.

2) Officially, "Serbia" means only the larger component of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, changed from the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia under Milosevic. (The other component is Montenegro.) We often use the name Serbia for the entire country, to reflect both the reality of Serb domination and the fact that "Yugoslavia" today is no longer the country of the Southern Slavs, as the name asserts, since the other Slavic republics — Bosnia, Croatia, Macedonia and Slovenia — all seceded.

war criminal for his treatment of the Kosovars, yet they tolerate and encourage brutal oppression when it suits them: Turkey against the Kurds, Israel against the Palestinians, Russia against the Chechens, for example. The U.S.'s real interest in the Balkans is to maintain imperialist power generally — and in particular assert hegemony over its rivals (notably Germany), over subordinate junior partners like Russia, and above all over the masses of working people everywhere who are increasingly restive in the face of the mounting world economic crisis.

IMPERIALIST DOMINATION

Because of the growing unrest, imperialism needs to find new methods of asserting its domination. That, fundamentally, is what the Kosovo war is about.

Until World War II, the colonial powers could intervene in their own empires as they saw fit. Afterwards, during the Cold War, the U.S. and USSR both asserted their right to use their muscle in their own "back yards."

The U.S. kept its Cold War leadership over rivals like Germany and Japan who were gaining economic strength, because the "Russian threat" loomed large and the U.S. held military superiority in the "West." Even before the USSR finally collapsed, its economy was becoming visibly weaker; by the early 1980's the U.S. had to wage a propaganda (and occasionally military) offensive against lesser devils like Libya and Iran. This served to keep military power in the forefront and preserve the U.S.'s imperial leadership.

When the USSR finally went under, world imperialism lost a major prop to its rule; Soviet Russia used its pseudo-socialist credentials to help keep "third world" upsurges within capitalist bounds. With Russia gravely weakened, the U.S.'s main rivals became Japan and German-led Europe, both of which seemed to be economically gaining on the Americans — especially in view of their new opportunities in Pacific Asia and East Europe, respectively.

Saddam Hussein, a former imperialist lackey, raised the first major challenge to the New World Order proclaimed by U.S. President Bush. In response to his invasion of Kuwait, the U.S. mobilized all its imperialist allies, including Russia, to smash Iraq for its temerity and to reassert U.S. control over Persian Gulf oil. The Americans even twisted the arms of Japan and Germany to pay for the war. "Free market" capitalism reigned triumphant. And among the imperial powers, the U.S. was militarily unchallenged.

Today, world capitalism stands on far shakier grounds. The free market has proved itself collapsible in East Asia and Russia. Japan's economy has stagnated for a decade, and Europe seeks to escape its doldrums by adopting forms of supra-national unity. For the moment, the U.S. feels itself more powerful economically as well as militarily; it is seeking new ways to defend its predominant imperial role. Clinton, in contrast to Reagan and Bush, has pushed ahead on the economic front even more than the military; the U.S., for example, has aggressively used the new "globalized" trade rules to gain an edge on its rivals. Kosovo presented the U.S. with an opportunity to establish a new world order — based not on a three-way imperialist balance of power but on unchallenged U.S. domination in every sphere: military, economic and political.

Hence the American assertion of the "right" to intervene within sovereign countries. Initial steps in this direction were taken when Reagan mined the harbors of Nicaragua, when Bush invaded Panama to arrest Manuel Noriega, when

Bush and then Clinton tried to occupy Somalia, when Clinton bombed Afghanistan and Sudan last summer, and when the U.S. and Britain resumed bombing Iraq last fall.

Another precedent now being ironed out is the case of Chilean ex-dictator Augusto Pinochet, who was charged by Spain and arrested by Britain for crimes committed in Chile. The U.S. objected when European powers chose to champion human rights over national sovereignty in order to prosecute Pinochet. One problem was that the U.S. itself was complicit

in Pinochet's crimes. More importantly, the U.S. reserves to itself the right to decide when sovereignty can be violated.

(The U.S.'s objections aside, as internationalists we opposed the demand for extradition of Pinochet by Britain to Spain — not only because the bourgeois state is no repository of justice, especially for one of its arch-thugs, but also because such a decision by imperialist powers embodies the assertion that they have the arbitrary right to deal as they wish with "third world" nationals. In place of slogans for

Our Man in Belgrade

Destabilization in the Balkans accelerated a decade ago, when the Stalinist regimes were ousted. The U.S. first sought to establish imperial hegemony by holding Yugoslavia together as a regional junior partner. When this failed, the U.S. looked back two strongmen, Milosevic in Serbia and Franjo Tudjman in Croatia. Either way, the aim was to deepen the exploitation of the region by extending private ownership and wiping out working-class gains.

Richard Holbrooke, the U.S. envoy in charge of negotiations over Bosnia, called Milosevic "a man we can do business with." Dirty business: in 1995, the U.N. looked the other way when the Bosnian Serbs with Milosevic's backing sacked the Muslim town of Srebrenica; in turn, the U.S. collaborated with the Croatian cleansing of Serbs in Krajina, while Milosevic looked the other way — so that relatively compact ethnic borders could be forced on intermingled populations. (See PR 50.) Today's "Hitler" was once, as the British *Guardian* reporter Martin Woollacott put it, "Our Man in Belgrade."

Milosevic has indeed been a useful junior partner. A former industrial boss and banker himself, when the economic crisis hit Yugoslavia's statified capitalist economy hard in the 1980's, he agreed to the imperialist financiers' demand for shock therapy: a stringent austerity policy that victimized Yugoslavia's workers above all, including the world's worst-ever inflation. The "Milosevic Commission" of 1988 advocated opening the Yugoslav economy to greater imperialist penetration, justified on the grounds that the "world market and world competition represents the strongest generator of economic operation." Milosevic also urged Yugoslavs to overcome their "unfounded, irrational and ... primitive fear of exploitation" by foreign capital. (See Lenard Cohen, *Broken Bonds: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia*, 1993; p. 56.)

Milosevic rose to the top by beating the drums for Serb nationalism. That was a necessary tactic to defeat the multi-ethnic Yugoslav working class, which had fought a thousand strikes against the regime's austerity. A key step was his cancellation in 1989 of the autonomy within Serbia that Kosovo had been granted in 1974. This deprived the Albanian Kosovars — the great majority of the population of 2 million — of democratic rights. For example, public education in the Albanian language was eliminated.

As a result, an unofficial referendum in 1990 indicated that 90 percent of the Kosovo population favored an independent republic. Challenging Serbia's rule, the Albanian Kosovars set up parallel social structures, including a "government" headed by the bourgeois pacifist Ibrahim Rugova, and their own schools. Funds for this protest

came from a widely honored 3 percent "tax" on the earnings of Kosovar workers living abroad. When the resistance turned from pacifism to armed struggle in early 1988, Milosevic turned to ethnic cleansing, whose methods his military and paramilitary thugs had mastered in Croatia and Bosnia.

But that didn't mean that the U.S. turned against him. According to Peter Gowan in the March/April *New Left Review*, when the Kosovo Liberation Army surfaced, the U.S. proposed a "Turkish or Colombian-style counter-insurgency operation" combined with an offer of autonomy for Kosovo within Serbia to the moderate Kosovar leaders:

It would, in effect, involve an alliance between the U.S. and the person whom the Americans had built up as the Saddam Hussein of the Balkans: Slobodan Milosevic. From March to September 1998, the Clinton Administration nevertheless pursued this strategy, combining rhetoric and cosmetic actions against Milosevic with effective acquiescence in the autonomy plus counter-insurgency approach.

By early 1999, however, the U.S. had found a better idea: use Milosevic as an excuse to assert American domination in Europe by way of a NATO war. Even then, however, the U.S. placed its hopes on Milosevic. The war began as "bombing lite," targeting only remote air defense installations — in order to give Milosevic the opportunity to back down under the threat of overwhelming force. When he refused, then started the terrorist bombing of civilian targets. The masses were victimized to show the world that Milosevic, like Noriega in 1990 and Saddam Hussein in 1990-91, would not get away with stepping over the bounds that imperialism has set for him.

In May the imperialist powers persuaded their puppet War Crimes Tribunal to indict Milosevic. When a peace deal seemed likely, this produced a little problem for the West: would they actually try to arrest Milosevic? *New York Times* correspondent R.W. Apple put the problem this way:

A senior Administration official, speaking on condition that he cannot be identified, acknowledged, "That is not going to happen." On the one hand, Mr. Milosevic has been indicted in The Hague as a war criminal; on the other, he is for the moment NATO's indispensable partner in the effort to stabilize Kosovo. (June 5.)

Exactly: a war criminal is NATO's indispensable partner. It would not be at all surprising if one day "our man in Belgrade" — whether Milosevic or his replacement — joined forces with NATO to teach the Albanians the same lesson that the Kosovo War of 1999 was meant to teach the Serbs.

Pinochet's extradition raised by Chilean left exiles and British leftists, we raise "Death to Pinochet!" and "Workers Must Bring Butcher Pinochet to Justice!")

The Kosovo war set a new precedent. As soon as the cease-fire was signed, Clinton said that the war was a model for future "humanitarian" interventions. He hedged a bit — "where we can" — but was obviously gloating over the new Clinton doctrine that points toward a Monroe Doctrine for the entire world.

RULING-CLASS DIVISIONS

The imperialists had to intervene in Kosovo if they hoped to block the spread of mass upsurges, both nationalist and working-class. As well, the European powers feared even larger numbers of refugees emigrating across their borders. NATO's claimed "concern" for the refugees is obscene, given their history of persecuting both refugees and immigrants within their own borders.

Some on the left narrowly attribute NATO's war to the Balkans' alleged importance in controlling oil pipelines from the Caucasus, the former Soviet region whose oil resources Western corporations are eager to take over. But the imperialists' concerns are broader: they want to stabilize the Balkans in order to expand their international super-exploitation generally. A successful struggle for independence in Kosovo could have triggered similar unrest in Macedonia, which would have drawn Bulgaria and Greece into the conflict. As well, a Kosovar victory might inspire the Kurdish resistance, which would bring "disorder" once again to the vital Middle East.

A major dispute among the imperialists was whether to use ground troops. This would have been a necessary move if the real aim of the war had been to rescue the Kosovars from ethnic cleansing. But NATO confined its campaign to bombing from three miles up — to minimize their own casualties, and also to make clear that, pretexts aside, they're not troubled by slaughtering hundreds of civilians.

The ruling classes' contempt for the masses of people eventually came out in the open. The *Toronto Globe and Mail* of May 26 quoted U.S. Air Force Lieutenant-General Michael C. Short, the head of the air campaign, cynically explained how the Serb-in-the-street should think:

If you wake up in the morning and you have no power to your house and no gas to your stove and the bridge you take to work is down and will be lying in the Danube for the next 20 years, I think you begin to ask, "Hey, Slobo, what's this all about? How much more of this do we have to withstand?" And at some point, you make the transition from applauding Serb machismo . . . to thinking what your country is going to look like if this continues.

Clinton originally promised not to use ground troops except as an occupying force. Such a declaration was necessary because of the "Vietnam syndrome" — the fear of domestic unrest if U.S. lives are lost in a far-off war. He later retreated from that vow, but the problem remained.

As it was, NATO's failure to compel Serbia to capitulate immediately brought out major divisions in the U.S. ruling class. In April, the House of Representatives defeated (by a tie vote) a resolution to endorse Clinton's air war; it also voted by a large majority to demand Congressional authorization before ground troops are sent. But the ruling class ignored the War Powers Act, adopted after Vietnam, which requires Congress's approval within 60 days for any U.S. military engagement abroad. When a few Representatives went

to court to have the war declared illegal, the judge dismissed their case. Imperialism needs an imperial presidency, not even the facade of democracy, for its military operations.

The oppositional politicians are mainly Republican, but their stance is similar to that of the liberal Democrats against the Vietnam War 30 years ago: they have no principled objection to an imperialist war strategy. (Congress voted \$15 billion for the military, far above Clinton's requests, even though it failed to endorse the war.) Henry Kissinger, former Secretary of State and an architect of the Vietnam War, said, accurately, that "The ill-considered war in Kosovo has undermined relations with China and Russia and put NATO at risk." (*Newsweek*, May 24.)

The inability to win universal public support in the U.S. and much of Europe was a major obstacle. The Clintonites did not explain very loudly that the war was paid for out of Social Security funds and the "surplus" from the food stamp program (which exists only because so many needy people have been driven away from welfare under the Clinton-Gingrich "reform" bill of 1996). As the war went on, conditions for greater working-class opposition were simmering, but not yet boiling.

INTERNATIONAL DISPUTES

In Europe, Britain's prime minister, Tony Blair, a champion of Britain's status as number-one lapdog to the American master, campaigned noisily for NATO to expand the war. Germany and Italy, on the other hand were most directly affected by Yugoslav and Albanian immigrants and opposed any major escalation.

Germany has extensive interests in the Balkans, East Europe and Russia. Its government tried hard to avoid any damage to relations with Russia. In particular, the U.S. wants to prevent a German-Russian bloc, which could potentially pose an economic and military threat to U.S. hegemony. The U.S. made a point of sabotaging early peace efforts by its European allies and Russia.

There were also disputes over which imperialist institution would lead the military forces that will occupy Kosovo. The U.S. insisted on NATO, which gives it the predominant say and keeps a hammerlock on Germany. France, citing the Bosnian precedent, at first preferred the U.N., where it has a Security Council veto; although by lining up with the U.S. at Rambouillet, the French government squandered the opportunity for an independent European imperialist position. Russia and China of course insisted on the U.N. The initial peace settlement fudged the issue, and it was apparently the U.S. and British insistence on their interpretation that caused Serb military commanders to balk and the end of the war to be delayed. In the end, the U.S. won out.

It is not just a coincidence that the governments of France, Germany and Italy are all headed by social-democrats. Just as Clinton brought the reactionary "Reagan revolution" to new levels with his welfare, crime and immigration bills, the expansion of imperialist militarism could not have occurred without "left" governments in office to deflect mass opposition. Nevertheless, all these regimes were internally divided, largely because of growing opposition to the war's bloody effects.

German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer, once a far-left anti-Vietnam War activist, was pelted with red paint at the convention of his once-pacifist Green Party. The Social-Democratic Party also squabbled over the war; former prime minister Helmut Schmidt was among those against, and

Finance Minister Oskar LaFontaine resigned on the eve of the war to protest Germany's second-fiddle role to the U.S. Nevertheless, the Kosovo war has set the stage for German military leadership in Europe: Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder has tried to erase the Nazi-heritage label and allow Germany to act as a "normal" imperialist country — by bombing and occupying weaker neighbors.

In Italy, anti-war opposition was fueled by that country's direct involvement: most NATO bombing runs took off from Italian bases (and it was discovered that NATO planes were dropping live bombs into the Adriatic Sea, where they got caught in fishing equipment). A hundred thousand people, including 182 members of the Italian parliament, marched in Rome against the war. Prime Minister Massimo D'Alema, formerly a Communist, was compelled at one point to call for a halt to the bombing.

Among the lesser NATO powers, Greece has historic ties to Serbia through the Christian Orthodox church, but despite complaints about the bombing, its government did not use its veto in NATO to stop the war. On May Day, over 10,000 protesters denounced NATO and burned American flags outside the U.S. embassy in Athens. Greek rail and port workers went on strike to prevent NATO military shipments from reaching NATO's bases in Macedonia. Turkey, which has traditional ties to the largely Muslim Kosovo Albanians, at first denied NATO the use of its bases. But later Turkish planes joined the bombing of Serbia, while others continue to bomb Kurds in Turkey and Iraq.

China was outraged at the "accidental" bombing of its embassy in Belgrade; it has a long history as a victim of Western imperialist aggression, and this was another example of contemptuous treatment. Intentional or not, the bombing drove home the reality that the Kosovo war was a blow against China's current ambitions to muscle closer to great-power status.

The most significant international dispute was between the U.S. and Russia. Russia all along was begging to be treated with the respect due to a great power, in particular as the patron of Serbia. But its economic collapse makes it dependent on the good will of Western financiers and governments, and the U.S. insisted that Russian emissaries serve as errand boys to pass ultimatums on to Milosevic. In the end, the Russian government capitulated and handed Serbia over. But nationalist politicians and military leaders objected loudly. The unexpected race by a small Russian force to seize the Pristina airport after the peace settlement, and the comical denials by Clinton and NATO that it meant anything at all, showed that all the delicate negotiations had resolved little. By embarrassing Russia to assert its control of the occupation, the U.S. has set the stage for further conflict.

In all its disputes with Russia, China, Italy and Germany, the U.S. insisted on having its way, with minor concessions. It has made clear to its rivals that it is as much a bully as an ally. Thus, while imperialism as a whole has gained strength, and the sovereignty of weaker countries has been compro-

mised, the hostilities among the imperialist powers and their allies have come further to the fore.

The U.S. economy is not immune to the spreading international crisis. And the European powers now more clearly see their need for military independence from the U.S. The arrogant and gloating U.S. will not go unchallenged for long.

NATIONALISM IS NO ANSWER

Nationalism is a deadly weapon when wielded against the working class. We already noted that Milosevic rose to power by playing the Serbian nationalist card in order to overcome the unity in struggle of Yugoslav workers. But the nationalism of the oppressed is no alternative for the proletariat. The bourgeois nationalist KLA, in signing the Rambouillet



German troops enter Kosovo. Germany's first use of troops abroad since World War II aims to shed Nazi past to enhance criminal imperialism today.

agreement with the imperialist powers in March and supporting the NATO war, actively joined the imperialist side. The KLA in effect abandoned its campaign for national self-determination in favor of accepting, at least temporarily, the prospect of an imperialist protectorate.

As far as we know, the KLA has no formal political program aside from independence for Kosovo. It was reportedly formed from several factions, including Stalinist followers of the once Maoist ruler of Albania, Enver Hoxha. Another group, according to Chris Hedges of the *New York Times*, consists of "sons and grandsons of rightist Albanian fighters," both those who sided with the Nazis in World War II and those had battled the Serbs in the World War I-era Balkan wars. (*Foreign Affairs*, May/June 1999.)

Whatever its origins, the KLA expanded because of the Serb regime's crackdown and the flood of refugees out of Kosovo. It acquired a stock of arms when the government of Albania collapsed in the pyramid-scheme scandal of 1997. Once it surfaced with armed attacks on Serb police forces in Kosovo, it was labeled "terrorist" by both the U.S. State Department and Rugova, in line with the anti-KLA strategy cited above. The German left paper *Die Junge Welt* reported

that members of the KLA were assassinated in Germany in the 1980's by the Yugoslav and German secret services; this eliminated most of the Hoxha wing's leaders.

DISPUTES IN THE KLA

Some Western leftists have charged that the KLA was a creation of the CIA. No serious evidence for this charge has been produced; at best it is a gut reaction against anyone who lines up with U.S. imperialism. There are also charges that the KLA gets funds from drug dealers, and these may be true. According to the *Wall Street Journal* (May 20), the KLA gets little aid from NATO or from the Kosovar tax levy, which is controlled by more moderate bourgeois elements.

Under heavy pressure from the West, and undoubtedly hoping that an imperialist alliance would bring it to power, the KLA signed Rambouillet, even though this treaty called for disarming the KLA and made only vague assertions about a referendum in Kosovo over independence. Adem Demaci, a former KLA leader who had served three jail terms in Serbia for a total of 29 years, quit in protest and opposed the NATO attacks. Demaci said that the Serb and Albanian peoples must act jointly against imperialism; he called for self-determination for Kosovo, with full rights for the Serb minority. (He had argued before the war for an independent Kosovo to be federated with Serbia and Montenegro in a new Balkan state.)

Demaci opposed NATO's war, and for this he was labeled a traitor and threatened with execution by the new KLA leadership under Hashim Thaci. The pro-NATO Thaci began his political career in a student group backed by the Hoxha regime. During the war, he appointed as the KLA's military chief one Agip Ceku, an Albanian who had led the Croatian forces that brutally cleansed the Krajina region of several hundred thousand Serbs in 1995. Thaci accepted the "peace" plan, but it is not clear whether more radical KLA leaders will go along.

It turns out that the KLA played an essential role in NATO's military victory. According to the *New York Times*: **The Kosovo Liberation Army ... emerged as an important element of NATO's strategy. The Serbs initially frustrated NATO by hiding, hunkering down and trying to ride out the air war.**

The Albanian partisans changed that by trying to infiltrate Kosovo from their bases in Albania about two weeks ago. The light-armed insurgents were a poor match for the heavily equipped Serbian military, which had tanks, armored personnel carriers and artillery, and the offensive fizzled.

But Serbs had to mass in the open to take on the guerrillas, making them vulnerable to allied attacks from the air. In recent weeks, Serbian forces near the Albania-Kosovo border have taken a heavy pounding. (June 5.)

The KLA served as NATO's auxiliary in the war against Serbia, but NATO is still worried that elements of it will not play along with its assigned role as hired hands for the occupation.

We remain in favor of national self-determination for the Kosovars. Even though independence is no solution for a tiny, economically backward nation, Trotskyists side with the oppressed in any struggle against imperialism and other forms of oppression. Self-determination for Kosovo cannot be achieved by siding with NATO. But the Kosovars' right to self-determination must be defended by the working class in Serbia — and by workers in the U.S. and the other NATO

countries, who have no reason to accept their rulers' insistence that Kosovo remain part of Serbia and under imperialist control.

The eruption of murderous national chauvinism, on the one hand, and the deals made at the expense of the Albanian Kosovars by their bourgeois nationalist leaders (both the pacifist Rugova and the guerrillaist KLA), on the other, prove again that nationalism is no solution to oppression: it is a deadly enemy that inevitably betrays the masses to imperialism. The only way out of the Balkan chaos is proletarian socialist revolution leading to a socialist federation of the Balkans. This has been the program of communists since the time of the Balkan Wars.

LEFT ADVOCATES FOR IMPERIALISM

As internationalists, the prime task of revolutionaries is firm opposition to the greatest enemy of the exploited and oppressed here and abroad, U.S. imperialism, and its advocates in the working class and on the "left." In working for its military defeat, we also sought to separate support for Serbia against imperialism from the chauvinist and racist anti-Albanian line pushed by Serb nationalists, and by those on the left who act as their shills in the name of Marxism.

In the U.S., almost the whole spectrum of liberal politicians favored Clinton's war — including "progressive" figures often admired on the left: Minnesota Democratic Senator Paul Wellstone, Chicago Black Democratic Congressman Danny Davis (a New Party favorite) and Vermont "socialist" Congressman Bernie Sanders. Also among the warmongers were Bogdan Denitch, a leader of the Democratic Socialists of America, and *Nation* columnist Christopher Hitchens — both of whom called for ground troops instead of high-altitude bombing, allegedly to save the Kosovars. These socialist-imperialists called for sacrificing the lives of thousands of working-class youth, disproportionately Black and Latino, in the interests of imperialism.

Backhanded endorsement of the imperialist war, in the form of continued support for the KLA after its subordination to NATO, was provided by several left organizations. One of the worst was the "Marxist-Humanist" *News & Letters* group, whose articles denounced NATO for not sufficiently aiding the KLA or stopping the Serbs — but did not call for an end to NATO's war on Serbia, a country which it demonized as an "outright fascist power."

On the other side, some leftists try to bolster their opposition to imperialism's war by covering up the crimes of Milosevic and Serbian nationalists. The most prominent builder of anti-war protests has been the International Action Center, a front group for the Workers World Party. Several of its demonstrations highlighted Serb nationalists chanting "Kosovo is Serbia," a slogan that denies the rights of the majority Albanian population. The WWP claims, falsely, that the Albanian liberation struggle is solely a creation of the U.S. and Germany; it labels the KLA "terrorist" but defends the far greater terrorism of the Serb forces:

The Yugoslav military, which is fighting for the life of its state against a U.S.-backed invasion force, cannot be held responsible for this brutal ground war and the inevitable flow of refugees. (*Workers World*, April 15.)

And it denounces those on the U.S. left who speak out not only against the war but also against Serbia's oppression: **Here in the United States, the power most responsible for this monumental violence against a small country, hysterical denunciations of the Yugoslav leadership are totally**

inappropriate and merely help the Pentagon bombers.

Collaboration with ethnic cleansing is par for the WWP's pro-Stalinist course. The WWP endorsed the Soviet suppression of the Hungarian revolution in 1956 and the "Prague spring" of 1968, the Polish Stalinists' smashing of the Solidarity mass workers' movement in 1981 and the Chinese regime's attack on thousands of workers and students at Tienanmen Square in Beijing in 1989. Any attack on national or working-class right is OK with the WWP, if committed by rulers with socialist pretensions or out of favor with the West.

For all its socialist pretensions, at its rallies the WWP inevitably feature Ramsey Clark as the main speaker. Clark, who was U.S. Attorney General during the Vietnam War, now campaigns regularly against American military interventions. But he still has faith in the United Nations and pushes this alternative imperialist institution as the solution to international problems. The "anti-imperialist" WWP never challenges his liberal imperialism in public or in its paper.

The major U.S. organization that opposed both NATO's war and Serbia's oppression of Kosovo is the ISO (International Socialist Organization). The ISO's approach was to reduce the politics of the anti-war struggle to the lowest common denominator, in the hopes of re-creating the mass anti-Vietnam war movement of the 1960's and '70's. (This movement, many of whose participants drew revolutionary conclusions from their struggle to halt an imperialist war, was held to a reformist program by a coalition of liberal and left leaders; see *PR* 45.) Thus the ISO's special 6-page section of the April 9 *Socialist Worker*, characterized NATO and the U.N. as incompetent peacekeepers, not imperialist warmakers.

The ISO later moderated its level of opportunism. They started calling NATO "imperialist" as the bombing campaign got nastier, but still kept their slogans safely within the bounds of petty-bourgeois pacifism. Never once did they extend "Stop this War!" and "Stop this Madness!" to "Defend Serbia" or "Defeat NATO."

The ISO's parent is the British Socialist Workers Party, which played a leading role in the much larger anti-war movement there. Despite the SWP and ISO's paper endorsement of Kosovar self-determination, they did not defend this right in public along with anti-NATO slogans — a shameful betrayal of the oppressed. The SWP, as always, capitulates to

the left wing of the British Labour Party, which took a pro-Serbian and predictably pacifist line.

One of the SWP's main leaders, Alex Callinicos, doubles as an academic, and in this capacity he signed a statement that rejected a NATO occupation of Kosovo — in favor of one by "a multi-national police force (embracing notably Serbs and Albanians) in the ranks of the OSCE to enforce a transitional agreement." The OSCE is the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, an imperialist outfit whose sole advantage is that the U.S. is not part of it.

Similar calls for OSCE and U.N. intervention were raised by the LCR (Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire), the French section of the United Secretariat founded by the late



Beijing: Large student protest against NATO bombing of Chinese embassy.

Ernest Mandel. Worse, the LCR also called for an economic and military blockade of Serbia, a grisly prospect, given the genocidal U.N. sanctions against Iraq. It also promoted a "multinational force under U.N. control" to "guarantee and oversee on the ground" a peace agreement — another capitulation to imperialism.

There is no solution to world domination by imperialism through any capitalist institution. For the working classes of the world, the only way forward is the building of revolutionary proletarian parties as part of an international party for socialist revolution. Immediate tasks toward this end include acts of international class solidarity and solidarity with oppressed nations and populations. This means absolute opposition to NATO's war and defense of the right of the oppressed to self-determination. The only solution to the profusion of small states in a region like the Balkans is a socialist federation of workers' states.

Proletarian liberation from capitalism is a task for our class itself — not for benevolent middle-class emancipators who wish to push benighted workers to act in the interest of imperialists or lesser capitalist rulers. Only by exposing the reality of the imperialist system and all its institutions can a genuinely proletarian revolutionary international be built. ●

**U.S./NATO/U.N. Imperialists: Out of the Balkans!
For the Right of Kosovo to National Self-Determination!**

COFI Documents in German

Die Politische Resolution der "Kommunistischen Organisation für die Vierte Internationale"; Die ungelösten Widersprüche des Tony Cliff; Was hat man "Was tun?" angetan?; Zwanzig Jahre LRP; Lenin, Luxemburg und die Partei; Über die Epoche des kapitalistischen Niedergangs; PKK am Ende des Weges?

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Self-Determination and Military Defense: The Marxist Method

by Sy Landy

In the United States and several other countries, racism is the scourge of the working class. In many other places, like the Balkans, national oppression plays a similar role: it is used by demagogues to set working people at each others' throats, to prevent a united working class from confronting the capitalists in a powerful class struggle that could put an end to oppression and exploitation once and for all.

In this epoch of imperialism, capitalism only survives because of its ability to oppress, divide and superexploit. That is why understanding the communist strategy to end national oppression is a vital necessity for every working-class person.

LENIN ON SELF-DETERMINATION

The key Marxist theory on the "national question" was developed by Vladimir Lenin, the founder of the Bolshevik Party and leader of the Russian revolution of 1917. Lenin fought both political opponents and even his own comrades to establish that defense of the right of national self-determination was a central plank in the communist platform.

Self-determination means the right of an oppressed nationality to secede from the state that rules over it and either create its own independent nation-state or join another nation-state. It is a bourgeois-democratic right, but it is denied by pre-capitalist rulers and by the imperialist powers in capitalism's epoch of decay.

Lenin's major aim was unity of the working class within national boundaries and between advanced and colonized countries. As a general rule, he didn't *advocate* actual secession: that depended on the concrete situation. A Marxist centralist to the core, he stressed the advantages of large states with integrated industrial and financial ties. Nevertheless, if the proletariat was to win the colonial masses to its side, oppressed nations' *right to secede* had to be defended.

Lenin also stressed that revolutionary consciousness and national chauvinism are incompatible. Defense by communists of the rights of oppressed peoples was also a vital element in fighting chauvinism in the working classes of the imperialist countries.

Thus, in the course of their struggle, the workers and peasants in the oppressed countries would see that workers in the imperialist country were their allies, and that their nationalist bourgeoisie — not just the imperialists — was their enemy. Advancing the right of self-determination could open up the class struggle within the oppressed country, so that the indigenous capitalists could no longer hide their own exploitative role behind the obvious exploitation and political domination by the imperialists.

After the Bolshevik revolution and the wider horizon it created for anti-colonial struggles across the world, Lenin looked more favorably on independence as the way forward in Asia and Africa; it was a path to internationalist unity of the toilers in the struggle against imperialism.

Like Marx, Lenin saw the nation as a historically necessary and progressive step in the development of capitalism. Prior to the First World War, he emphasized the need for oppressed nations to overcome pre-capitalist barriers. Consolidation of bourgeois nation-states would allow the widest possible range and the greatest stability for accumulation of

capital and the further development of the forces of production, including the working class itself. A stage was necessary in which the proletariat would fight for self-determination as part of a struggle for "consistent democracy."

However, such a stage was never an end in itself. The class struggle remained the dominant issue, determining whether defense of self-determination was appropriate in a given situation. Lenin urged an alliance of the proletariat in the developed capitalist countries with the masses in the colonies and semi-colonies initially led by bourgeois nationalists. Proletarian revolution in the developed countries, which were potentially capable of producing abundance sooner than the underdeveloped lands, was the key aim. But the brewing revolutions in the colonial world could prove decisive in smashing the global grip of the reactionary bourgeois system which had spread everywhere.

THE EPOCH OF DECAY

With the outbreak of World War I, Lenin concluded that capitalism had entered into its epoch of decay — an epoch of revolution and the transition to socialism, but also of counterrevolution and imperialist wars for re-dividing the world. The chief barrier facing the working class was no longer pre-capitalist feudalism but capitalist imperialism. The productive forces in the advanced countries — above all, the proletariat — were now mature enough so that capitalism was fully ripe for socialist revolution; potential abundance could be spread across the world.

Lenin continued to stress the importance of the struggle for bourgeois-democratic rights as a means by which, over time, the whole bourgeois era in human development could be transcended by socialist revolution. However, the idea of the democratic struggle as a separate stage gave way more and more to the primacy of the socialist revolution as a means to carry out the democratic demands, thus laying the basis for the Bolshevik revolution of 1917. For example, in 1915 he wrote a passage that comes close to Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution:

We must combine the revolutionary struggle against capitalism with a revolutionary program and tactics on all democratic demands: a republic, a militia, the popular election of officials, equal rights for women, the self-determination of nations, etc. While capitalism exists, these demands — all of them — can only be accomplished as an exception, and even then in an incomplete or distorted form. Basing ourselves on the democracy already achieved, and exposing its incompleteness under capitalism, we demand the overthrow of capitalism, the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, as a necessary basis both for the abolition of the poverty of the masses and for the complete and all-round institution of all democratic reforms. ("The Revolutionary Proletariat and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination," *Collected Works*, Vol. 21.)

The fight for the right to self-determination, as for other democratic demands, was meant to free, educate and politically unify the proletariat — outside of the oppressed nation as well as within. In the course of the struggle, and with the guidance of Marxists, the limits of capitalism would become apparent. The proletariat developing within the colonial and

semi-colonial lands, led by the already mature working classes of the advanced capitalist countries, could choose the road to socialist revolution. The fight for democracy and equality was also a means to win the support of the peasantry, a critical factor especially in the colonies and semi-colonies.

Since socialism was now on the international agenda, the national development of capitalism in the colonized world through anti-colonial struggles was now only *relatively* progressive. No longer was it necessary for human progress that nascent capitalists have a sheltering nation-state to enable them to grab a larger share in the exploitation of the workers and peasants at home.

In contrast to the national bourgeoisies, for the masses nationalism meant achieving the better conditions they saw the imperialist nationals enjoy. But economically unviable nations produced by imperialist domination could not possibly create such equality. Therefore communists had to stress their opposition to the trap of nationalism itself. They had to expose the contradiction between the nationalism of the bourgeoisie and the transient nationalism of the masses, so that its opposite, internationalist consciousness, could grow.

The anti-colonial revolutions could link up with socialist working classes in the West through a joint struggle against the common enemy, imperialism. Lenin saw national independence as a *political* goal that could be achieved by colonial peoples. That was one of his disagreements with Rosa Luxemburg on the national question. He agreed with her that genuine *economic* independence was impossible in the epoch of imperialism; new bourgeois nation-states were not viable as means toward real independence. For Lenin, any fleetingly progressive significance retained by nationalist sentiment among the colonial masses was due to the fact that this was the form of their political awakening.

The right of an oppressed people to self-determination is a principle. But for Marxists, all bourgeois-democratic rights are subordinate to the overriding principle of the international working-class revolutionary struggle. Principles are of course not transhistorical or immutable; but when they are subordinated, that can only be for a moment in time and with due preparation for the fact that the step will have consequences to guard against.

INTERNATIONALISM VS. NATIONALISM

To sum up, Lenin saw the defense of the right to self-determination as a principled programmatic weapon, designed to help achieve revolutionary socialist consciousness. In situations where independence was desirable, Lenin initially thought that the development of new bourgeois national states was progressive in comparison with pre-capitalist conditions. Later, as the new epoch developed, he stressed that nationalist consciousness in colonial countries was progressive in the passing sense that it awakened political awareness among the masses of the need to fight the common enemy of imperialism.

These views never made Lenin a nationalist, no more than supporting bourgeois national development versus feudalism made Marx a capitalist or a nationalist. Marx and Lenin only gave transient support to national movements, even when they saw them as necessary and progressive. They were only a means to their real and explicit goal, proletarian internationalism.

For Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, defense of the right to self-determination was ultimately a means to strip away and expose every alien class force and every pro-bourgeois answer to the yearning of the masses for equality and a decent life. Only the proletarian-led socialist revolution could solve the desperate problems which beset humanity.



Kosovar refugee camp during war. Today, Serbs and Roma are "cleansed."

In the broadest but most basic sense, therefore, the Bolsheviks wielded the weapon of national self-determination to achieve a fundamentally *anti-nationalist* goal. It was a means to convince masses that nationalism and nation-building fundamentally were dead-ends, and that the proletarian socialist revolution was the true answer. The line between the democratic aspirations of the masses and the nationalist goals of the bourgeois misleaders was sometimes difficult to draw in actual struggles, yet it was absolutely vital to do so.

Lenin and Trotsky at the dawn of the 20th century were assimilationists (integrationists), like Marx and Engels before them. (Marx, for example, had urged the Czechs to abandon the vestiges of their separate language and culture and become German.) In East Europe and elsewhere, new nationalities were being formed within the borders of various states. As centralists, they hoped that the new states would be as large and inclusive as possible, congealing the myriads of infinitely sub-divided minuscule groupings of people that existed throughout the Balkans and Slavic East Europe. The process of bourgeois revolutionary development demanded that national states homogenize these dispersed peoples into more uniform nations, as had been done in Western Europe.

The Marxists' centralist goal remained in the new epoch of imperialism, even when detours to get there had to be taken. Advocating the right to national self-determination was not meant to create a multitude of nation-states but

rather to prove to the oppressed masses that the proletariat of the dominant countries defended their rights. Only that defense made internationalist working-class unity possible.

WHAT IS A NATION?

Self-determination is the right of an oppressed nationality to secede; other democratic rights pertain to oppressed non-national groups. But what is a nation?

The terms we use today to describe various peoples have altered over time. "Race," "nation," "nationality" and "caste" had certain separate meanings but were also used interchangeably by ordinary people along with scholars and Marxists. Marx even referred to the proletariat as a "race" upon occasion. Lenin and Trotsky both pointed, as another example, to the "German nation," meaning the nationality, and to the "German race," meaning the same thing. In one essay on self-determination, Lenin refers to the Jewish people in Poland as a "caste" — and a few pages later as a "nation." Yet he was opposed to the right of self-determination for Jews because they were not a separate nation from either the Polish or the Russian nation.

It would be a mistake to dismiss the interchangeability of the terms our forebears used as a simple matter of confusion or imprecision — although that element existed. Reality itself was "imprecise." Race/racism and nation/national chauvinism were creations of early capitalism. (See our pamphlet *Marxism, Interracialism and the Black Struggle*.) The congealing of various groups of people under those rubrics was far from complete in most of the world — in the minds both of the people concerned and of observers. Marxists did not decide in advance that such groups would inevitably harden into the specific nations, races, castes, ethnicities and nationalities that we know today. The relative hardening coincided with the unfolding of imperialism as the new epoch developed.

Under Lenin's tutelage, Stalin gave what later became regarded as the classic Marxist "definition" of a nation: "a historically evolved stable community of language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture." Trotsky also subscribed to this definition. But such a definition must be taken as a model, an abstraction; it was a vital norm if the reality of the process of nation-building was to be understood. The historically unfolding process could not be frozen in time by a definition. The most important concrete question was the developing consciousness of the particular people. Did an oppressed people see the territory that they lived on as their national homeland? For example, Jews living in the Pale did not regard that territory as their specific homeland but as part of Poland where they had lived since the 13th century.

In the late 1930's Trotsky advanced the idea of historically developed consciousness as the basis for determining whether Blacks in the American South were to become a nation. He expected a national consciousness to emerge when the massive struggle that he predicted broke out. His method, rooted in the Russian experience, was correct, even though his actual understanding of the consciousness and the future direction of Black people in the Black Belt was wrong.

TERRITORIAL CONSCIOUSNESS

In sum, 1) to determine that applicability of self-determination rights, a concrete understanding of a group's territorial consciousness and the likely direction of political events is necessary; 2) we cannot fatalistically assume that an oppressed group will or should develop national consciousness.

To further illustrate these points, we can look at the colonial revolutions after World War II, which raised the question of self-determination for several emerging African states where national identification was weak. In many African countries, as in India, there was no common language or culture. Yet the divisions imperialism had created were real. A degree of economic and political integration existed within the specific countries; coupled to the broad historical trends, this led to a certain national consciousness. That, plus a Marxist assessment of the overall direction of the international class struggle, dictated our defense of the right to self-determination for the national liberation struggles.

Within these post-colonial nations, of course, there were



Abdullah Öcalan, leader of Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), condemned to death by Turkey. COFI joined protests against police state trial. Leninists defend Kurdish self-determination and an independent Kurdistan.

many ethnic differences. It would have been wrong, however (with certain limited exceptions), to accept these differences as a legitimate basis for separate nations; that would have played directly into the hands of the imperialists. Imperialism attempted, often successfully, to divide and conquer the oppressed by playing on differences that existed but were not fatalistically determined to fulfill themselves in the minds of the peoples themselves.

THE CASE OF KOSOVO

Coming late to capitalism with a severely deformed bourgeois revolutionary development, the Balkan region, like Africa and India, is far more atomized linguistically and culturally than the West. In the absence of revolutionary internationalism, the atomization process has now re-emerged — and in Western Europe as well. In the Balkans too, while it is necessary to defend the rights of oppressed peoples, a carte-blanche policy of self-determination for every tiny group could only exacerbate unnecessary splits in the proletariat. Worse, if such a policy were extended to a non-oppressed people, its effects would be devastating.

We stand firmly for the right of self-determination for oppressed nations — where that nationhood is determined by history and the development of the people's conscious attachment to a given nationally-understood territory. For example, the national consciousness of the Kosovars is clear, whether or not they prefer an independent Kosovo or unity with Al-

bania. For most of the period since the Great Powers awarded Kosovo, with its Albanian majority, to the Serbian kingdom rather than to Albania in the diplomatic haggling during the Balkan Wars of 1912-13, Serbia has ruled oppressively over the Albanian Kosovars. As an illustration, Leon Trotsky, then a war correspondent, wrote in 1913:

The Bulgars in Macedonia, the Serbs in Old Serbia, in their national endeavor to correct data in the ethnographical statistics that are not quite favorable to them, are engaged quite simply in systematic extermination of the Muslim population (*The Balkan Wars*, p. 286.)

National self-determination for the Kosovo Serbs, on the other hand, does not apply, for they are not an oppressed people but rather part of the Serbian nation as a whole. Marxists, of course, defend the democratic and human rights of the Serbian minority within an independent or Albanian Kosovo. But arguments that Kosovo is "traditionally Serbian" are both false historically and irrelevant to the consciousness of the vast majority of the population. And they feed into imperialism's divisive manipulation.

During the Kosovo war, some on the left argued that the Albanians' capitulation to NATO had invalidated Kosovo's right to national self-determination. The Spartacist League is most explicit. They declared that they had defended the Kosovars' right to form an independent state — "until the ethnic Albanian Kosovo Liberation Army . . . became nothing but a pawn of NATO imperialism's war aims." (*Workers Vanguard*, April 2.) While this would be a legitimate reason to deny military support to the KLA, denying the right of the people to self-determination is something entirely different.

Trying to give its rejection of self-determination a Marxist pedigree, the Spartacists claimed that Lenin had denied Poland's right to secede from Tsarist Russia during the First World War: "In the context of inter-imperialist war, Lenin rightly argued that calls for Poland's independence only served as a 'democratic' cover for German imperialism." (*Workers Vanguard*, May 28.)

This is a typical Spartacist distortion. Lenin in fact warned that Polish nationalist calls for independence during the war served imperialism, both German and Russian. He urged Polish socialists to "work for the unity of the proletarian struggle in both small and big countries without putting forward the slogan of Polish independence for the given epoch or the given period." But he added that Russian and German socialists "would remain internationalists . . . by demanding for Poland unconditional 'freedom to secede'." (*The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up*, July 1916.)

The Spartacists believe that in order to defend a people's right to self-determination, Marxists must also agree with

their choice of independence. Lenin's effort to separate the mass base from the nationalist misleaders thus becomes simply a means to tail those misleaders. And when the Spartacists don't agree, they abandon defense of the democratic right, which inevitably leads to tailing the oppressors. Indeed, that was Lenin's point when he vehemently argued during the war for the Poles' (and others') right to self-determination. Here is one of several examples:

If the socialists of Britain do not recognize and uphold Ireland's right to secession, if the French do not do the same for Italian Nice, the Germans for Alsace-Lorraine, Danish Schleswig and Poland, the Russians for Poland, Finland, the Ukraine, etc., and the Poles for the Ukraine — if all the socialists of the "Great" Powers, i.e., the great robber powers, do not uphold that right in respect of the colonies, it is solely because they are in fact imperialists, not socialists. (*The Question of Peace*, July-August 1915.)

The same can be said of American socialists who do not uphold Kosovo's right to independence, especially since that right is denied today by U.S. imperialism.

MILITARY SUPPORT

Self-determination is rarely granted by imperialism without the threat of a fierce struggle, political and military. When the national struggle is controlled by bourgeois or petty-bourgeois leaderships, precise tactics are necessary. Leninists use the tactic of "military-technical support" in defense of a non-communist leadership fighting the same oppressor. This can involve enabling that leadership to get arms and other tactical aid from any source it can. That is, for a moment in time, each for their own reasons, communists and non-communists aim their guns (literally or figuratively) not at each other but at a common enemy.

Military support to a non-working-class leadership means that we have no political agreement with it. Leninists have given military support over the century to the Russian counterrevolutionary "socialist" Kerensky against the Tsarist General Kornilov, to the reactionary Ethiopian emperor Haile Selassie against Italian imperialism, to the murderous Chiang Kaishek in China against Japanese imperialism, to the bloodthirsty General Galtieri of Argentina against the British imperialists, and to the criminal Saddam Hussein against U.S./U.N. imperialism — to name only a handful of enemies of the working class who for a historical moment were forced to fight on the right side. Likewise, we can, at appropriate times, give military support to the KLA or to Milosevic's regime against the momentarily dominant oppressor. They are nothing more than the masses' unwilling and very temporary "allies".

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Since military support in the sense described implies no political agreement, we sometimes refer to our policy as "military but no political support." For that reason, in general we do not call for a "military victory" by non-proletarian elements if that would imply support for their taking state power or for their war aims. The importance of this distinction may be seen again in the example of the Spartacists, who called for the military *victory* of the FMLN in El Salvador, advocating state power for a class-collaborationist front; we advocated only military *support*, for the defeat of imperialism. (See *PR 14*.) The tailist Spartacists effectively endorsed a popular front coalition trying to win state power from the pro-imperialist regime. Genuine Marxists reject class collaboration and give no political support to any capitalist government.

In some other situations, like the war between NATO and Serbia, we did call for military victory over the imperialists — because here the term implied only defeat of the imperialists and not the raising of a new bourgeois contender to state power. Victory might result in keeping Milosevic in power, but especially given the political divisions in Serbia, that was not guaranteed nor was it our intention. (Our support for Kosovar self-determination was clearly in opposition to Milosevic's war aims.)

It may be that for lack of resources we can offer no actual military or technical support. Then the slogan becomes a propaganda statement, a means to begin to convince enough workers of our method so that in the future more tangible offers of military assistance will be possible.

We emphasize that we give military support when the treacherous misleadership in question is actually fighting the oppressors. We support only those military blows which are struck against the common enemy. As Trotsky pointed out in advocating military support for the bourgeois Republic against Franco's fascists in the Spanish Civil War, we know that many of the weapons sent may be used against us and the masses. But in the acute situation which demands our aid, we have no choice but to take a very real risk.

There are specific circumstances, like those in which the Bolsheviks gave military defense to Kerensky's Provisional Government, where the misleaders are not actually fighting the enemy but where we give such support. A crucial feature of the military support tactic, as with the defense of self-determination, is to expose false leaderships to their base in the masses. The Bolsheviks' military defense actually served to show the workers of Petrograd that they and not the Provisional Government defended the masses and their soviets.

Use of military support has become more frequent in the post-World War II period. The world proletariat suffered mass defeats because of social democratic and Stalinist betrayals, including the suppression of the post-war working-class revolts. Therefore workers have had to face revolutions of the oppressed generally led by pro-capitalist misleaderships; military support has been one important tactical means of intervening in self-determination struggles.

PROBLEMS OF MILITARY SUPPORT

Given the nature of the leaderships of national struggles, they may make deals with imperialism. It is then necessary to assess whether it is the imperialists who determine the results of the struggle. For example, although Cuba received aid from Russia and was economically tied to its imperialism, the balance of concrete relations between the two on the world scene did not allow the USSR to treat Cuba as a semi-colo-

nial pawn. Therefore, when U.S. imperialism attempted to invade Cuba in 1961 (and in all its subsequent attacks), we stood for the defense of Cuba and the defeat of the U.S. The same was true in the U.S. war against Vietnam. Likewise, although the ANC in South Africa received concrete support from a number of European imperialist powers, we did not drop our military support for the struggle against apartheid.

MILITARY SUPPORT IN KOSOVO

Still, some situations do demand the withdrawal of military support — when the leadership has effectively subordinated its struggle to the goals of an imperialist bloc. That was the case with the Bosnian leadership in 1995 (see *PR 50*), and with the Kosovo Albanian leadership (both Rugova and the KLA) against the Serbian regime. Our organization originally gave military support to the KLA in the fight against national oppression by the Serb regime. (*PR 57*.) We withdrew support at the point when the KLA effectively became NATO's auxiliaries.

It remained necessary, however, to support the military defense of the Kosovar people against Serbian ethnic cleansing. We also allowed for military support to KLA forces that were specifically defending civilians from Serb attacks. Not to do so would have meant joining the side of oppression. But since there were no anti-Serb armed forces not subordinated to NATO and imperialism, we stood for the general military defense of the Serb forces against the KLA while the KLA was fighting on NATO's side. Sometimes in battle the distinction is far from clear, but Marxists must learn how to make such concrete determinations.

In some situations, there are different organizations claiming the leadership of the masses. If there is more than one leadership which could be given concrete military or technical aid, naturally our aid would go to working-class organizations if they exist. In the Nicaraguan struggle against the U.S.-backed *contras*, we advocated sending aid to Nicaragua's trade unions rather than to the bourgeois Sandinista government. (*PR 25*.) If such organizations do not exist, we favor aiding groups whose struggle is objectively the most concretely hurtful to imperialism. In the Angolan revolt against Portuguese imperialism in 1975, we militarily supported the MPLA rather than to UNITA (see *Socialist Voice* No. 1). This choice was not based on any political agreement but an estimate that the MPLA was moving toward real struggles against imperialism at the time.

Military support is a limited tactic; defense of the right of self-determination is both a tactic on a grand scale — and a principle. Tactics on the battlefield of class warfare are generally variable and flexible. Principles are guides to action, not abstract moralisms hewn in stone for eternity. Nevertheless, history has shown that they should only be violated rarely — and that even then, with great caution and open warnings that the consequences are highly risky.

In broad outline, what governs our willingness to extend military support in self-determination struggles is the state and direction of the overall international class struggle against imperialism. Above all, we determine our tactics and principles — and when and if to apply them — with reference to our fundamental strategic aim of socialist revolution. Does the act enhance our ability to defend our class and to raise its consciousness in the oppressed and oppressor nations, in the region and throughout the world? In sum, does it help re-create the vanguard of proletarian consciousness, the authentic Fourth International? ●

Chicago Cops

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ings. Both victims were young Blacks who, in the words of Jesse Jackson, were "full of potential." Russ was a former Northwestern University football player about to graduate on June 18; Haggerty was a computer programmer with strong ties to the church. That both were upwardly mobile young people not only made it more difficult for the cops to run their usual slanders, it also drove home the peril that any Black person in a car faces when stopped by police.

Reform leaders elsewhere have raised the demand for more Black cops as an answer to police violence in the Black community, since racist white cops are the main perpetrators of police violence against victims of color. The Chicago shootings expose the fraud of this demand. They are a grim reminder that in the final analysis, the color of the uniform is more decisive than the color of the cop.

In Black communities, Black cops are often under pressure to be violent — to prove themselves to white cops and the department. Ronald Hampton, executive director of the National Black Police Association in Washington, pointed out this reality:

The perception that gets drummed into everybody's head is that everyone in a black community is dangerous. Even people of color start believing the myths. If you're a black police officer who wants to be successful, who wants to get ahead, you're going to take on the thinking of the institution. ... To black people, policing in America goes back to slavery. And so people tend to be skeptical of a young person who joins the police force. They'll say, "He's part of the system now." (New York Times, June 19.)

Indeed, people who say this are right. Cops are cops, regardless of skin color. As long as they serve a system whose laws are intended to keep down the working class and oppressed, they are all enemies of the working class and oppressed. It is not a question of the individual character of the officer, although the police force does tend to attract the most reactionary elements.

In fact, some U.S. cities besides Chicago already have more "diverse" departments (including Los Angeles, which was forced to hire and promote specific numbers of Blacks and Latinos under court order), and their records are gruesomely equivalent to New York's today. Also, minority officers are better represented in the upper echelons of the L.A. and Philadelphia departments — two of the most notoriously racist in the country.

The fact that hiring more Black cops is no answer to police brutality does not mean that revolutionaries don't support the deocratic *right* of Blacks to be cops or to run for office in the bourgeois state. More importantly, we defend Black and Latino cops against racist attacks by white cops, as part of the fight against racism.

POLICE COVER-UP

Chicago Police Superintendent Terry Hillard, a Black man, was appointed by Democratic Mayor Richard Daley in an effort to quiet anger over police brutality. Hillard got the job following the uproar over the savage beating of Jeremiah

Mearday, an 18-year-old Black youth, by two cops in 1997.

At the time, the reform leaders, including Black Democratic Party officials and the Reverend Paul Jakes (who now leads the marches over the Russ and Haggerty murders) called for more Black cops and getting rid of the "bad cops." At demonstrations in support of Mearday, an LRP-led chant, "The Whole Barrel's Rotten!," became popular among the marchers. (See PR 56.)

Unfortunately, the efforts around the Mearday case were allowed to dissipate. Daley and top cop Hillard have actively worked to cover up the crimes. Hillard overturned charges in six torture cases despite evidence produced by his own Office of Professional Standards and has helped bury charges



against cops responsible for the murder of Jorge Guillen, who was choked to death by cops three years ago. Already, the police have ruled the shooting of Russ to be justified.

Whether in Chicago, New York, Los Angeles or elsewhere, the same reform demands aiming at derailing real mass struggle continue to crop up. After every incident, there are probes and investigations, a few personnel changes and a whole lot of crocodile tears from politicians like Mayor Daley. And in the end, the murders and beatings continue.

The cops cannot be reformed. A fighting mass movement is necessary to force the government to rein in their hired thugs. This fight has to be a national struggle, since racist cop violence is a fundamental part of the capitalist system. As we explain in our article on police brutality in New York, in order to get rid of police brutality we have to get rid of the police force and the capitalist system itself. ●

Fight Police Terror!

**No Support to Capitalism's
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New York Cops

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outburst of mass protest and then died down, the Diallo shooting produced a strong and spreading feeling that the issue could not be allowed to fade away. There was a persistent outpouring of thousands of demonstrators in New York from February through April, virtually egged on by a racist and arrogant Mayor Rudolph Giuliani and his clueless puppet, Police Commissioner Howard Safir. These two stone faces repeatedly warned against "jumping to any conclusions" — although neither they nor the cops could offer any remotely believable justification for 41 bullets.

Meanwhile, a similar scenario of mounting protest developed across the Hudson River in New Jersey. Incident after incident of "racial profiling" of Black and Latino drivers led stand-by-your-cops Governor Christine Whitman to finally admit and denounce the practice, a short time after firing the superintendent of the New Jersey State Police, Carl Williams, for making blatantly racist remarks to the press. In late April, a grand jury indicted two New Jersey state troopers for tampering with key evidence in the 1998 shooting of four Black and Latino college students on the New Jersey Turnpike — for no apparent "crimes" other than "driving while Black" and "driving while Brown."

These indictments and prosecutions are bitter victories at best. For every Volpe that is punished, how many racist killer cops remain free?

The question answers itself with great frequency, unfortunately. In New York and New Jersey, the cops were not held back for long.

In Orange, NJ on April 11, a young Black man, Earl Faison, died in custody less than an hour after he was arrested for the killing of a Black police officer. He was the fourth Black man falsely arrested in the case.

In May, a sixteen-year-old Black youth, Dante Johnson, was shot and hospitalized in critical condition after an encounter with undercover cops in New York. According to his family, Dante had missed some parole sessions and simply ran in fear — as many do — when the cops approached. But the authorities had their excuses ready:

Police Commissioner Howard Safir said that the shooting of an unarmed 16-year old boy by a member of the Police Department's Street Crime Unit appeared to have been an accident. ... Commissioner Safir said, "You have to wonder why they're running, why they're out at 12:30 at night hanging out with a group of people with criminal records." (New York Times, May 28.)

Right. Black kids on the street are criminals, cops running around with guns drawn are legit. Ironically, the Johnson shooting occurred as Mayor Giuliani was testifying before the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights about his vast

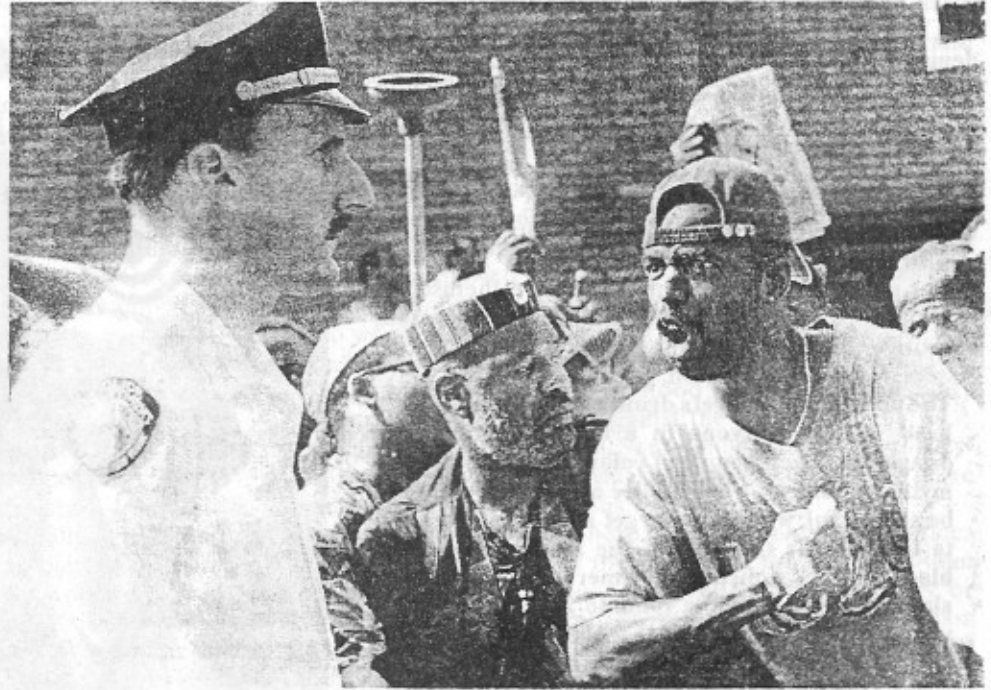
improvements in the New York Police Department.

And on June 2, four white policemen in New Jersey fired 27 shots at an unarmed Black motorist, Stanton Crew, who they claimed was driving erratically. So they killed him.

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE DEAD-END

Despite the plague of police terror, the leadership of the struggle in New York and New Jersey around Democratic Party politician Rev. Al Sharpton is pushing a program to reconcile the outraged protesters with the cops.

The initial protests following the Diallo shooting were



New York City: Protesters express outrage at police brutality.

angry outpourings of Africans, American Blacks, Latinos and a few whites. Sharpton railed against "systemic" police violence — when he had to reflect the explosive anger of demonstrators. But after this phase, he organized a series of civil disobedience activities at NYPD headquarters. These sit-ins focused on staged arrests of luminaries, including Democratic politicians, movie stars and other liberals. The "arrestees" typically shook hands with the arresting cops, who treated their "clients" with kid gloves.

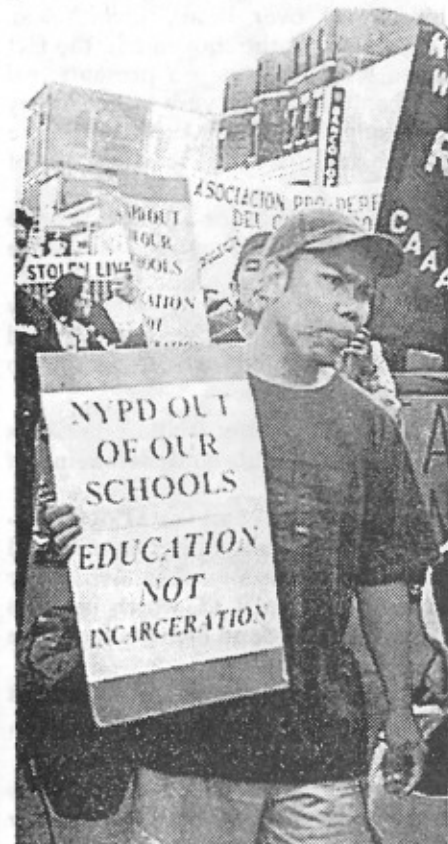
Continuing with this strategy, on July 3 Sharpton led hundreds of protestors to an intersection on the Atlantic City Expressway in New Jersey, where they blocked the high way for several hours to protest the racial profiling. He plans to resume such protests on July 17.

Civil disobedience is by nature a method alien to workers and oppressed people who know that dealing with cops and getting arrested is serious business. This strategy was particularly repugnant in light of the fact that immigrants (like many friends and compatriots who protested Amadou Diallo's murder) can't afford to get arrested even once for anything under Clinton's new laws without facing deportation.

As Marxists, we reject civil disobedience as an overall strategy exactly because we know that the capitalist state is inherently violent; it would be criminal to leave the masses as defenseless pawns. Of course, under some circumstances civil disobedience can be a useful tactic. The Blacks who directly

challenged Jim Crow segregation in the South in the 1960's through sit-ins at segregated stores were heroic; they faced real danger. But even then, it was no accident that the masses of Blacks tired of the thin rewards won by the civil disobedience strategy of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. The 1960's victories were won by the more explosive militancy of the ghetto uprisings.

With far less heroism than King, Sharpton relies on civil disobedience as a substitute *strategy* for militant mass action. In 1997, when 10,000 people had marched to City Hall to protest Louima's torture, Sharpton, at the time running for



NYC May 20: Protest against Giuliani's police occupation of public schools.

Mayor, told the crowd to go home and vote. He couldn't get away with that this time. Claiming that he was leading a "new civil rights movement," he in fact demobilized the masses, as the politicians and middle-class liberals took center stage for week after week of photo opportunities.

TEN-POINT PROGRAM

After the killer cops were indicted, Sharpton called off the daily sit-ins. He turned to a new diversion, a coalition of Democratic politicians, union leaders like 1199 Health Care Workers Union President Dennis Rivera, and religious figures like the conservative Cardinal O'Connor — the "New Yorkers for Law, Order, Peace and Justice." NYLOPJ had a Ten-Point Program including the usual liberal pap: hiring more minority cops (a demand already supported by Mayor Giuliani!), strengthening the civilian review board, and federal intervention. NYLOPJ also said, "Law enforcement officers are entrusted with an extraordinary responsibility and they should be compensated accordingly" — and therefore called for an across-the-board raise and increased benefits for cops!

The capstone event of this obscenely named "Law and Order" grouping was the April 15 "March for Justice and

Reconciliation." It was smaller than expected, given the million-dollar ad campaign and the large union presence that had been promised. The tone of the event was set by an endless series of Democratic politicians. Different speakers announced each of the ten points while farcically asking for an assent from the demonstrators, who were mainly not listening.

COVERING FOR THE COPS

As revolutionary workers, we in the LRP have been participating energetically in every possible protest against police brutality. But our tasks must go far deeper. Workers and youth must be armed with a scientific understanding of the role of police in the capitalist system in order to fight back effectively. We addressed this question directly in our new pamphlet, *Fight Police Terror!*, which was bought by hundreds of demonstrators during the months of protest:

In this racist society the most obvious difference is often between the race of the officer and the race or nationality of his victim. In actuality the main difference is one of class. The cops, although many come from working-class backgrounds, function as a separate body of armed men, agents of the bourgeoisie, who enforce capitalist law and order against the will of the majority of the population, the workers and oppressed, in order to maintain the stability of that system.

Our pamphlet explained the role not only of the cops but also of the leadership of the anti-police brutality movement: it works to hide the nature of the police because of its ties to the system. The racism and "law and order" bent of the Republican Party is well understood, so a key task of revolutionaries is to expose the role of Democratic politicians, even those seen as "progressive," as avid supporters of the police and the entire racist anti-worker system as well. This is the misleadership of the struggles at hand.

In the light of this analysis, the LRP warned from the beginning that Sharpton's ties to the system would result in a betrayal. We pointed to his inability to denounce the police as a whole, no matter how radical his rhetoric. When the Ten-Point Program appeared, we fought to expose it as a smokescreen of useless, rotten and and shopworn demands. (See the LRP report on p. 2.)

We also urge readers to read our pamphlet for a detailed analysis of the various reform schemes. Among its points:

- The call for an "independent" civilian review board is a hoax. A recent book by Human Rights Watch, *Shielded From Justice: Police Brutality and Accountability in the United States*, details the ineffectiveness of civilian review boards in cities across the country, including the most independent ones. Human Rights Watch argues that more funding and more cooperation between the boards and the police departments can make them work. But the only forces which have the power to decide and enforce punishment are the courts, and these are firmly tied to the capitalist state — which in turn depends on the police. Lacking prosecutory power, even the best remain impotent.

- "Independent" federal investigations are another standard demand. There have in fact been countless federal investigations and studies, including one after the Los Angeles riot of 1992 — with no beneficial results. The racist anti-working-class character of city police forces does not distinguish them from federal laws and policies. The laws that the police carry out anywhere are the laws that preserve capitalism and private property against the workers and poor.

Calls for federal investigation and intervention serve mainly to forestall local movements against police brutality by leading them to expect strong solutions that never happen.

In calling for federal investigations, reformist leaders are raising illusions in the Democratic Party. Sharpton, speaking to a rally on Wall Street on March 3, declared, "It is time for you to act like JFK did and help us deal with this outrageous situation." But the truth is that in the 1960's a very reluctant

Clinton Backed Racial Profiling

According to a recent report in the *Washington Times* (April 9), President Clinton, who has criticized racial profiling by police as a "morally indefensible, deeply corrosive practice," had insistently defended this racist practice when he was governor of Arkansas in the 1980's.

Under his plan, the "criminal apprehension program," state troopers were given the authority to stop and search vehicles based on a drug-courier profile of Latinos. When, after a lawsuit, a federal consent decree ended the practice, Gov. Clinton criticized the court's decision and even threatened to reinstate it despite the court's ruling. A federal judge later ruled the program unconstitutional.

The revelation of another incident in Clinton's racist record proves again the futility of relying on the Democratic Party, an equal partner of the "law and order" Republicans, to overcome racism in general and police brutality in particular.

Roberto Garcia de Posada, executive director of the politically moderate Hispanic Business Roundtable, noted that Clinton has been a strong supporter of racial profiling against Hispanics in the past. He commented,

He does not have the moral authority to lead a national campaign on this issue. If President Clinton truly meant what he said ... he should apologize to all those Hispanics who suffered this "morally indefensible" practice, which he publicly supported.

White House under John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson took only minimal steps after being threatened with massive marches and the huge revolts that swept the nation's ghettos. (Our pamphlet has more details.)

UNIONS ENTER STRUGGLE

We say openly that socialist revolution is the only way to end racism and police brutality. The armed force of the capitalist regime must be replaced by a working-class militia empowered by a revolutionary workers' state. But convincing our fellow workers of this can only be accomplished through the course of struggle. If all we do is expose reformist politicians and reform schemes, we can leave other militants feeling that we think nothing can be done until the day of revolution. That is why the LRP is seeking to build a fight within the unions, as well as in the community organizations, to dump the Ten-Point Program and adopt a real mass action policy against police brutality.

For many years the LRP has argued that the unions must be a focal point for the fight against police brutality. And for many years those we engaged with, Black and Latino militants above all, have had no reason to believe that the virtually comatose and reactionary AFL-CIO bureaucracy would have anything to do with the struggle against police brutality. After all, the unions don't even defend their members, even on the narrowest basis of getting good con-

tracts and fighting layoffs.

Today, in fact, the unions have entered the struggle. 1199's Rivera joined the Law and Order Coalition; and even the Central Labor Council, long paralyzed over the decades of attacks on New York workers, issued a statement pointing out that it owed it to its large constituency of Black and Latino workers to take a stand against police brutality.

Why did they do this? The labor bureaucracy is every bit as pro-capitalist and tied to the system as the Democratic Party, and an experienced partnership between politicians and union hacks in watering down and diverting the masses' fightbacks has been developed over time. Nevertheless, despite their intentions of diverting the movement, the fact that the unions have been forced to sign on presents real opportunities which must be utilized. The very fact that they have taken some steps means that raising the issue in the unions can now seem more realistic to at least a layer of workers looking for action.

The LRP has already begun a fight for a policy of strike action in the face of each incident of outrageous police brutality.

For example, at an emergency delegate assembly in New York on April 12 attended by over a thousand 1199 and Local 144 health care workers, an LRP supporter used the opportunity to raise the following motion:

Whereas the brutal murder of Amadou Diallo represents a threat and an attack on the rights and well-being of every worker in New York,

Whereas president Dennis Rivera and the 1199 leadership have joined the struggle against police brutality and are participating in the New Yorkers for Law and Order and Peace and Justice rally on April 15, which includes the obscene demand that the salary and benefits for police officers must be improved,

Whereas police violence is a systemic problem that requires a swift and determined response by all workers,

Be it resolved that:

1) 1199 calls on all unions and workers to pledge to launch a one-day general strike immediately when any such police atrocities occur.

2) 1199 opposes any calls for improving salary and benefits for police officers, and opposes the call for hiring more cops.

3) That President Rivera announce the passage of this motion at the rally on April 15.

But after the motion was raised, an 1199 executive vice president spoke against, signaling the delegates to vote it down, the standard operating procedure for the 1199 bureaucracy. Scandalously, none of the other leftists at the assembly rose to defend the motion in whole or even in part. Delegates who support the Workers World Party and the International Socialist Organization remained silent!

The motion was defeated, but this fight will surely continue. Openings provided by the union bureaucracy must be utilized. Tremendous pressure should continue to be exerted now to force the unions to take serious action against police brutality, and to drop all demands that placate the repressive police. We especially have to continue the fight, in the unions as well as the community organizations, for a *one-day general strike* to be called immediately when the next atrocity occurs. When there is a cop atrocity, the city should be shut down! A general strike, based on the power of workers to shut down the economy, is counterposed to the

passive civil disobedience and consumer boycotts perennially called by reformist leaders and ignored by the ruling class.

If unions were to put themselves on record now in favor of a general strike against the next incident of police brutality, that would strike fear into the hearts of the rulers



and do a lot more to rein in police terror than many days and nights of marching alone.

FOR MASS ARMED SELF-DEFENSE!

Part of the radicalization of the Black struggle in the 1960's was the move from passive civil disobedience tactics to the recognition of the need for armed self-defense. It was no surprise that Sharpton embarked on a national "anti-violence" tour with Amadou Diallo's mother, preaching that "our side should never be violent." Marxist revolutionaries, in contrast, advocate armed self-defense against police attacks. Like Malcolm X, we believe that the right of Blacks and others under attack to defend themselves is unquestionable in principle and necessary in reality. Toward this end, the League for the Revolutionary Party has always raised the need for defense guards against racist and anti-working class attacks. We say that in the near future it will be possible to call for such guards in specific situations, which in turn can represent the embryos of a future workers' militia. (See our pamphlet *Armed Self-Defense and the Revolutionary Program*.)

The LRP is known as an organization which advances a working-class revolutionary program and stands for united action of the entire class against the capitalist attacks. In situations like the police brutality attacks, calling on the unions for mass action in no way means telling oppressed workers to wait for white workers to join the struggle before efforts to organize self-defense can begin. No, we advocate the development of Black armed self-defense today. However, we also believe that as people of color move forward in militant struggle, white workers will also be won over. The vital goal of militias organized at the workplaces will become possible — especially in a city like New York, where the

largest unions are majority Black and Latino.

As a matter of principle we also defend the right to bear arms. The liberal "gun control" pap, pushed by the hypocritical Democrats in the wake of the Littleton murders, is meant to keep only the cops armed. (It took incredible gall for the Clinton Administration, the world's biggest arms dealer, to preach non-violence at the very time it was using weapons of mass destruction to commit mass murder in Serbia and Kosovo.) Yet it is a fact that working-class communities, especially Black and Latino communities, are unsafe — because of killer cops as well as lumpen elements who prey on the working class. Nevertheless, the Black Panthers won respect in the past for their relentless fight against gun control liberalism, and this heritage must be fought for and re-established.

REVOLUTIONARY LEADERSHIP IS KEY

Our experience in the past few months in the struggle against police brutality has reconfirmed our understanding that the key question is the fight for leadership. Struggles against police brutality will inevitably erupt again and again. But if there is no revolutionary force in place, pro-capitalist misleadership inevitably wins the day. With our small forces, we have already begun to get a real hearing. No pro-capitalist leadership has a program to end police brutality. Nor can capitalism provide jobs for all, health care and education for all and everything else that the masses always demand when a truly mass working class movement is allowed to develop.

Only an authentic revolutionary party can fight all the way against racism, joblessness, poverty and every other misery imposed by capitalism — because only a revolutionary party would not be tied to the interests of the capitalist system. The simple fact is that we can only increase our impact in today's struggles by increasing our numbers. That is why an active fight to build the party has to go on now and why workers and youth who agree with this must join with us to carry out the urgent tasks.

**Stop Police Terror!
Stop Racist and Anti-Immigrant Attacks!
Democrats and Republicans: Two Parties of
Racist Law and Order!**

**For Mass Armed Self-Defense!
Workers' Socialist Revolution is the Only Solution!
Build the Revolutionary Party of the Working Class!**

Letters Welcome

We invite readers of *Proletarian Revolution* to send letters to the magazine. Names will be withheld on request. Write us at: P.O. Box 3573, New York, NY 10008, USA; or e-mail to LRPNYC@earthlink.net.

PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

Summer 1999

New York: No Peace with Racist Police!

by Evelyn Kaye

Two extraordinary events took place in New York City recently. The four cops who shot and killed Amadou Diallo, an unarmed and completely innocent African man, were actually indicted for second-degree murder in late March, after refusing to testify to a Bronx grand jury. Then on May 25, Officer Justin Volpe, the ringmaster of the brutal torture of Haitian immigrant Abner Louima in 1997 (see PR 55) finally confessed to his crime after testimony against him by fellow officers.

"Justice" in the capitalist system is usually blind — to the crimes of racist cops. But these two cases were far more extreme than usual. Diallo was not just shot; he was mowed down in a barrage of 41 bullets by the already notorious Street Crimes Unit. *Amsterdam News* writer Richard Carter aptly named the killing "the mother of all New York police brutalities." The system was under enormous pressure to indict and convict — or face a likely mass riot.

And Louima's savage brutalization went far over the edge of everyday police conduct that "law and order" tolerates quite well. As *Time* magazine pointed out:

Suppose that on one fateful night in August 1997, New York City cop Justin Volpe had contented himself with pummeling Abner Louima with his nightstick instead of ramming a broom handle into Louima's rectum and then waving it in his face. Suppose that after that vicious assault, Volpe had not pranced around the precinct house with a blood-and-feces-stained stick, inviting other cops to examine it. There would be a good chance that we would never have heard of Louima and that Volpe would still be



LRP supporters rally against police brutality.

patrolling his beat in Brooklyn. (June 7.)

The Diallo and Louima cases, rather than proving that "the system works," show in fact that it "works" only in the most extreme and outrageous circumstances. Indeed, of the many cops who participated in or covered up the Louima torture, only one was convicted after Volpe confessed, three others were acquitted — and most were never even indicted.

STRUGGLE WINS LIMITED VICTORIES

The partial victories achieved are due to the mass struggle. Whereas the Louima case had originally roused an

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Chicago: Epidemic of Police Killings

Chicago police were running wild in June. In separate incidents over the weekend of June 4-5, two young Black victims were killed. La Tanya Haggerty, 26, and Robert Russ, 22, were both shot in traffic stops despite being unarmed. According to the cops, the officer mistook Haggerty's cell phone for a gun. Russ was allegedly trying to grab the cop's gun after police smashed his car window. In both of these cases, the killer cops were themselves Black.

Less than a week later, on June 11 police claimed that an unarmed man, Gregory Riley, died from natural causes during a drug arrest. Since then, the medical examiner has ruled it a homicide. In the week after, two more victims died in police custody.

The June wave of killings follows a record year for Chicago police shootings. Chicago cops shot 71 people in 1998, the most this decade. Fifteen of those people died.

KILLER COPS COME IN ALL COLORS

Nearly a decade after the Rodney King beating roused millions against police brutality, incidents of cop violence nationwide continue to mount. All the reform efforts made to placate mass anger, especially after the Los Angeles riots, have failed to prevent more murders and beatings in Black and Latino communities.

A case in point is the struggle over the June 4-5 shoot-

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