

The

May-June 2002

No. 13

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Internationalist



For Arab-Hebrew Workers Revolution!

Israel's Genocidal Blitzkrieg



Scott Nelson/Getty Images

Defend the Palestinian People!

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Front page photo: Palestinian prisoners and
Israeli tank, Ramallah, April 2002.

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by V.A. Rodchenko, *Books* (1925).

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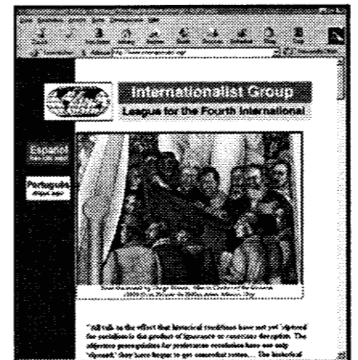


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The Internationalist



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for the Reforging of the Fourth International**

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No. 13



May-June 2002

From Afghanistan to Iraq – Defeat U.S. Imperialism's Terror War!

Israel's Genocidal Blitzkrieg

APRIL 19 – Survivors dig through the ruins of Palestinian cities reduced to rubble by the Israeli army bent on wanton destruction. Rescue workers and family members claw with their bare hands under piles of collapsed concrete to pull out corpse after corpse and a few barely breathing bodies from the wreckage. For three weeks now, the Zionist military machine has ground on relentlessly, systematically destroying the camps where refugees from earlier Israeli wars were condemned to a miserable existence. Thousands have once again become refugees in their own land. Having earlier used Israeli sharpshooters to murder children “armed” with nothing but rocks in the face of Israeli tanks; having already systematically bombed the offices of the Palestinian Authority (PA) with U.S.-made F-16s and rockets and methodically assassinated well over a hundred Palestinian fighters, this time the Israeli butchers used U.S.-supplied Apache helicopter gunships to mow down anyone that moved and sent in armored bulldozers to knock down buildings with people trapped inside.

The bloodthirsty Israeli rulers have carried out a monstrous war crime. They did so after getting the OK of the United States. While diplomats at the United Nations wring their hands and pass empty resolutions about a “vision” of a Palestinian state, the Palestinian people are being mercilessly slaughtered. The carnage goes on, day after day, as U.S. secretary of state Colin Powell shuttles between Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon and PA chairman Yasir Arafat. American president George Bush grotesquely demands from his Texas ranch that Arafat, who is trapped by Israeli tanks in his besieged Ramallah office, “use his security forces” to “prevent” terror attacks! The bourgeois media in the U.S. dutifully reproduce the White House line, allowing the Israeli forces to carry out their dirty war without TV cameras and journalists to record the horror until well after the fact. If some newspapers in Europe show a little more of the hideous crimes that are being carried out, it is only because their imperialist rulers want to maneuver a little to get out from underneath the Americans’ thumb.

What is taking place in the Near East is part of a broader war drive by the United States and its allies to enforce an imperial *pax americana* on the peoples of the world. As Israeli tanks pound the West Bank, U.S. bombers continue to bomb Afghanistan while NATO “peacekeepers” patrol the occupied country. U.S. special forces have been dispatched to hunt down Muslim bands in the Philippines. Hundreds of U.S. troops de-

Defend the Palestinian People!



Marco di Lauro/AP

Reminiscent of the Warsaw Ghetto: Israeli troops stop Palestinians trying to leave the besieged city of Ramallah on the occupied West Bank, March 28.

For an Arab/Hebrew Workers Republic in a Socialist Federation of the Near East

fend oil pipelines and fight leftist guerrillas in Colombia, where death squads hired by U.S. corporations assassinate unionists. A U.S.-backed coup d'état fizzled in Venezuela, but Washington keeps pushing for “regime change” in that oil-rich country while Wall Street bleeds Argentina dry. On the domestic front, thousands of immigrants of Near Eastern origin are rounded up and held incommunicado as the U.S. adopts police-state methods to go after the “enemy within.” Now George Bush is gearing up for an all-out attack on Iraq, proclaiming “I made up my mind that Saddam Hussein has to go.” Bush II is intent on nailing down the “New World Order” that Bush I declared following the Persian Gulf war and amid the collapse of the Soviet Union and the deformed workers states of East Europe. If today Iraq and North Korea top Bush’s “axis of evil,” tomorrow it will be China and Cuba.

On April 20, demonstrations will be held in Washington, D.C. “against war and racism” and for “resistance to the Bush

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Defend the Palestinian People – Defeat Israel's Genocidal Blitzkrieg!

**Drive Zionist Army/Settlers Out of the Occupied Territories!
For Arab/Hebrew Workers Revolution!**

**Defend Afghanistan, Iraq Against Imperialist Attack!
U.S./NATO Out of the Near East and Central/South Asia!**

The following statement was issued by the League for the Fourth International on March 30.

The Israeli government has launched a *genocidal war* against the Palestinians. Its purpose is to “decapitate” the Palestinian Authority, to kill thousands of those who oppose Israel’s brutal rule, and to “ethnically cleanse” key areas of the West Bank and Gaza by driving out tens of thousands of Palestinians who are already refugees in their own country. The Zionist leadership under war criminals Ariel Sharon, Binyamin Ben-Eliezer and Shimon Peres has received a green light from the United States government to carry out this terrorist war. The U.S. and its NATO allies meanwhile are keeping Afghanistan under the iron heel of occupation as they prepare a new war against Iraq.

The League for the Fourth International issues an urgent call to defend the Palestinian people against the Zionist “final solution”! Drive the Zionist occupiers (army and settlers) out of the West Bank and Gaza – Bring down the Zionist state through Arab/Hebrew workers revolution, in a socialist federation of the Near East! We call on the world working class to mobilize to defeat the terrorist “war on terrorism” launched by the bloodiest state terrorists of all, U.S. imperialism, which has wantonly slaughtered millions of Vietnamese, Koreans, Iraqis and Serbs as it seeks to rule the world. Defend Afghanistan and Iraq against imperialist occupation and attack! U.S./NATO out of the Near East and Central Asia! Defeat imperialism through international socialist revolution!

The nuclear-armed Zionist madmen have cornered Yasir Arafat in his offices, declaring him an “enemy” and “terrorist” as they prepare to assassinate or seize the chairman of the PA, the sham “government” set up to enforce the Oslo “peace” accords. The League for the Fourth International warned last July that the Israeli rulers were preparing total war on the Palestinian people. Now they have launched a war of extermination. Sharon & Co. seized upon the hideous Islamic fundamentalist indiscriminate terror attack that killed two dozen Israelis during a Passover ceremony in Netanya in order to carry out the attack they have been planning for weeks. Israeli troops and secret police have already murdered more than 1,000 Palestinians and carried out targeted assassinations of more than 100 on their hit list. But the Zionist garrison state has already begun to crack under pressures. Already more than 350 Israeli army officers and soldiers have refused duty in the Occupied Territories, and a

number have been jailed. We demand that Israel release all Palestinian prisoners of war and Israeli “refuseniks”!

March 30 is Land Day, the annual commemoration of the 1976 massacre of Israeli Arabs fighting against the seizure of their lands by the Zionists. Today a far greater slaughter of Palestinians is being carried out under the jackboot of the Israeli rulers, who openly imitate the Nazis as they seek to drive out and annihilate Palestinian fighters. As they seized refugee camps earlier this month, Israeli occupation forces called out all adult Palestinian men, blindfolded them and wrote numbers on the wrists and foreheads of many, as Hitler’s SS earlier did to the Jews in Auschwitz and other extermination camps. Today the Zionists are turning the West Bank and Gaza Palestinian ghettos into a giant concentration camp. And they are readying their arsenal of hundreds of nuclear bombs and biological weapons for a full-scale Near East war, to carry out the “transfer” (mass expulsion) of tens or hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their lands when the U.S. launches its attack on Iraq.

The answer to the Zionist and imperialist slaughter is not the dead end of nationalism, but international proletarian revolution. The Hebrew and Palestinian Arab peoples are thrown together in a narrow corner of the Near East, both having the right to national existence, democratic rights which cannot be equitably realized under capitalism. A Palestinian “mini-state” in barely a fifth of historical Palestine will be at best a glorified bantustan, a low-wage labor reserve for the Israeli capitalists. Just as the Oslo “peace process” led to the expansion of Zionist settlements in Palestinian territory, the new Saudi “peace” plan is really a war plan to help pave the way for a U.S. assault on Iraq. Israeli rulers imagine they can force the Palestinian Arabs to surrender if they only use enough brutality. Yet the Zionists have only succeeded in making the Occupied Territories into a slaughterhouse for Palestinians and Israel into one of the most dangerous places for Jews on the entire planet, as their occupation generates new suicide bombers every day. The only road to genuine peace in the Near East is to unite Hebrew and Arab working people in a common struggle against the genocidal Zionists and the reactionary kings, sheiks, emirs, generals and nationalist rulers—all of whom are or have been the lackeys of Washington—and sweep away imperialism through international socialist revolution. This requires building Leninist-Trotskyist workers parties in the fight to reforge the Fourth International. ■



Palestinian woman wanders in rubble of the main square of the Jenin refugee camp, site of Israeli army massacre, April 15.

Israel's Genocidal...

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Administration's so-called 'war on terrorism.' The speakers' podiums will feature the usual line-up of pacifist preachers, dissident Democrats, Green and rainbow liberals, and pro-capitalist union bureaucrats calling for "butter instead of guns." Yet the U.S.' present terrorist war is not just "Bush's war." Recall that Democrat Clinton dismembered Yugoslavia – first taking Bosnia, then Kosovo – and set up the Hague Tribunal to mete out "victor's justice" to the vanquished, all in the name of "human rights." The *bipartisan* imperialist war being waged by the twin parties of American capitalism will not be defeated by appeals for justice and democracy at the annual spring popular-front "peace crawl." The rulers of the American empire only understand the language of power, and they can only be brought down by mobilizing a greater power, the power of the imperialists' "wage slaves" without whose labor the capitalist system of exploitation cannot function.

Meanwhile, in predominantly Muslim countries from North Africa across the Near East to South and Southeast Asia, there have been tumultuous protests against Israel, its U.S. backers and servile Arab bourgeois regimes. In Italy, France, Germany and other European countries, tens of thousands have poured into the streets to demonstrate against the war on the Palestinians. Yet the justified outrage is being channeled into attacking false enemies and appealing to false "allies." By blaming "the Jews" for the crimes of the Zionist warmongers, Arab nationalists and Islamic fundamentalists accept the terms of the bloody Israeli rulers, who falsely speak in the name of all Jews worldwide and whose hold over the Hebrew working people is based on the claim that their very existence depends on the expansion of this militaristic racist state. By appealing

to the United Nations, the European Union, NATO to bring "peace" to the Near East, liberals and reformist pseudo-socialists in the West are building deadly illusions in the bombers of Baghdad, Belgrade and Kabul.

The Internationalist Group and League for the Fourth International call to drive the Israeli army and settlers out of the Occupied Territories and bring down the Zionist state through Arab/Hebrew workers revolution. Upholding the internationalist program of the Russian Bolsheviks under V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky, we stand for defense of Afghanistan and Iraq against imperialist attack, and demand that the UN, EU, NATO and U.S. imperialists

get the hell out the Near East, Central, South and East Asia, Latin America and wherever they send their marauding forces. To *defeat the imperialists' terror war and their Zionist allies* requires the revolutionary mobilization of the power of the working class, from the semicolonial countries to the imperialist citadels in Europe, the U.S. and Japan, in *internationalist class war*. This requires sharp combat against nationalism, pacifism and reformism, breaking with all the capitalist parties and building revolutionary workers parties throughout the world. The slaughter taking place in the Palestinian ghettos and the Afghan mountains underlines that the oppressed peoples of the world will not be free until imperialism is smashed through international socialist revolution.

The Zionist Iron Heel

Throughout the territories occupied by Israel in the 1967 war, as well as inside the Israeli borders established by expelling more than 800,000 Arabs in 1948 (the so-called "Green Line"), this cataclysm has made virtually the entire Palestinian Arab population burn with hatred against their oppressors. Claiming to strike back against suicide bombers, Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon and his "Labor" party henchmen have ensured that thousands of Palestinian youths will take the place of those who have been killed or jailed. This is not a mistake by the Israeli rulers or an unintended consequence: they have repeatedly sought to *provoke* indiscriminate terror attacks in order to justify their far deadlier assault on the Palestinian people. Their ultimate aim is to drive out the Arab population from its homeland and to slaughter any who would resist. This is the "transfer" policy of mass expulsions which has been the *modus operandi* of the Zionist war criminals since the birth of Israel. It is the purpose of the *genocidal* onslaught unleashed by the "hawk" Sharon and the "dove" Peres in their Passover war.

The West Bank cities of *Jenin* and *Ramallah* have been smashed to smithereens by the Zionists just as the Nazis laid waste to *Guernica* in Spain and the Czech town of *Lidice* in the name of "collective punishment." This is a new massacre on the scale of the carnage Sharon unleashed at the Palestinian refugee camps of *Sabra* and *Shatila* in Lebanon in 1982. In each case, the horrendous slaughter of hundreds of civilians symbolized bloody regimes bent on terrorizing and wiping out whole populations. And don't forget the U.S. imperialists who slaughtered Korean refugees at *Nogun-ri*, massacred Vietnamese villagers at *My Lai* and napalmed countless hemlets, murdering millions in order to "save them from Communism," bombed waterworks in Baghdad and a children's hospital in Belgrade in the name of "human rights," and terror-bombed Kabul in the name of a supposed "war against terrorism." Taking their cue from Washington in claiming to go after terrorists, the Israeli rulers have in fact targeted the entire Palestinian population in a terrorist blitzkrieg against the West Bank. At this moment a new massacre is being prepared as scores are trapped in a church in *Bethlehem*.

The parallels between the Zionists' war on the Palestinians and the Nazis' war on the Jews are inescapable. The annihilation of West Bank cities is exactly the kind of operation that Hitler's SS and Wehrmacht repeatedly undertook against Jewish ghettos in cities they conquered in Poland and the Soviet Union during World War II. The Israeli army followed the same procedures, encircling the cities with tanks, preventing the escape of Palestinian residents, leading away all men over the age of 16 in handcuffs and blindfolded and even, until it was revealed in the press, writing numbers on their foreheads and wrists. The Israeli Gestapo, the Shin Bet secret police, went around with lists of "suspects" to be apprehended. Hit squads roam the area carrying out assassinations. And the kind of desperate, heroic resistance put up by Palestinian fighters in besieged Jenin, Ramallah, Nablus and Bethlehem ranks together with the fight by Jewish fighters in Warsaw and Vilna.

The resemblance is hardly accidental. Robert Fisk of the British *Independent* (30 March) reported that in February, an officer of the "Israeli Defense Force" (IDF) told the newspaper *Ma'ariv* that he advised his men to study the tactics adopted by the Nazis in the Second World War. "If our job is to seize a densely packed refugee camp or take over the Nablus casbah, and if this job is given to an (Israeli) officer to carry out without casualties on both sides, he must before all else analyse and bring together the lessons of past battles, even – shocking though this might appear – to analyse how the German army operated in the Warsaw ghetto." This was fully in line with the government's policy. Sharon told the Israeli Knesset (parliament) at the beginning of March that the Palestinians must be "hit hard," "they have to be hit" and "badly beaten," and "Only after they are beaten will we be able to conduct talks.... They must be beaten: the Palestinian Authority, its forces, and the terrorists.... We have to cause them heavy casualties" (*Ha'aretz*, 5 March).

The day before Sharon's Knesset speech, justice minister Meir Sheerit, a reputed "moderate" in Sharon's Likud, told the cabinet: "We must stop playing around, and we must deal with

the Palestinians with an iron fist – no games. And if that doesn't help, we have to use even harsher steps and declare a full-scale war against them, and what will be, will be" (*Ha'aretz*, 4 March). That cabinet meeting decided to reoccupy the refugee camps and to again besiege Arafat's HQ in Ramallah. Norman Finkelstein, author of *The Holocaust Industry*, notes that "Israelis across the political spectrum recoil in outrage at such comparisons" with Hitler's Nazis. His advice is that "if Israelis don't want to stand accused of being Nazis they should simply stop acting like Nazis" (*CounterPunch*, 17 April). But that is too much to ask of the Zionists, for their drive to create a Zionist Reich called *Eretz Israel* requires them to act like Nazis.

Sharon's "Grand Plan"

The Israeli government pretends that the current offensive was a response to the horrific suicide bombing of a Passover

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seder at a hotel in Netanya which killed 25 Jews attending a religious ceremony. This is a lie, the operation was planned long beforehand. The immediate trigger was not an indiscriminate terror attack but increasingly effective blows by Palestinian fighters against the IDF in the Occupied Territories, even blowing up Israeli tanks which the Israeli military had thought impregnable. It was because Israel was losing the war of attrition known as the second *intifada* (uprising) which it provoked in September 2000 that the Zionists decided for a blitzkrieg (lightning war).

We warned nine months ago that "Behind all the talk of non-existent cease-fires, the sudden trips by top U.S. officials to the Near East and Israeli calls to 'remove' (assassinate) Yasir Arafat lies the fact that the Zionist leaders are systematically gearing up to launch a full-scale attack on Arafat's Palestinian Authority" ("Israeli Rulers Prepare for All-Out War," *The Internationalist* No. 11, July 2001). The actual program now being carried out was laid out in a plan presented to Sharon's cabinet last July by Army chief of staff Shaul Mofaz, titled "The Destruction of the Palestinian Authority and the Disarmament of All Armed Forces." According to a news agency dispatch based on the well-informed intelligence newsletter *Jane's Foreign Report* (12 July 2001):

"Israeli generals have updated plans for an all-out assault to smash the Palestinian authority, force out leader Yasser Arafat and kill or detain its army...."

"The assault would be launched at the government's discretion after the next big suicide bomb attack in Israel that causes widespread deaths and injuries, citing the bloodshed as justification.

"According to Foreign Report, the generals envisage a military operation of up to one month. Estimated Israeli casualties would be measured in the hundreds. Palestinian losses would be in the thousands.

"By the end of the operation, the generals believe Arafat would either have left or been forced to leave the West Bank and Gaza Strip. His closest allies would be either dead or also out of the area.

"The Palestinian armed forces, estimated at some 40,000, would be disarmed, and either dead or held in detention camps.

"A suicide bomb attack would provide the necessary motive for Israeli troops as well as enabling Israeli ambassadors and other officials to tell concerned countries that military action was a justified response....

"As for international reaction, that would be too little, too late."

— AFP, 12 July 2001



Internationalist Group and Revolutionary Reconstruction Club in April 6 march across Brooklyn Bridge. Sign in Arabic says: "Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants."

The IDF would require the mobilization of 30,000 troops to carry out this plan: the precise number mobilized at the end of March. This is not just a contingency plan but a detailed blueprint of the Israeli war of extermination currently under way.

Sharon's "grand plan," as *Foreign Report* (21 March) called it recently, includes a second stage after the planned Israeli "victory." He would offer to withdraw from parts of the West Bank in exchange for the stationing of Israeli forces on the Jordan River, and constructing a strategic "buffer zone" on the Palestinian side of the "Green Line" and along strategic roads crisscrossing the West Bank from which Arabs would be removed. According to *Ha'aretz* (4 March), "the planned buffer zone has some 400,000 Palestinians living in 108 villages and towns." To disguise this carving up of the West Bank, there would be an "exchange of territory," in which Israel would slice off several heavily Arab areas. According to *Foreign Report*, Sharon "will get rid of a substantial number of Israeli Arabs, who comprise 20 percent of Israel's population. Some 7 percent of them would be transferred to the Palestinian Authority." *The goal of Operation Defensive Shield is murderous "ethnic cleansing" on a massive scale.*

That's the plan, so how to set it in motion? Here Sharon relied on a time-tested method: he "unleashed" Hamas (see "How the Zionists Use Hamas as a Tool of Provocation," page 12). In the aftermath of Sharon's September 2000 Al Aqsa provocation, the Islamic fundamentalists stepped up their suicide bombings against Israeli civilians. However, world attention was focused on the West Bank where Palestinian children were being gunned down by IDF sharpshooters. Hamas made an agreement with Arafat to put a stop to the bombings, and they in fact ceased for several months. But the Israeli leaders were bent on launching all-out war against the Palestinian Authority, and they needed another provocation. So on November 23, Israeli security forces assassinated Hamas leader Mahmud Abu Hunud. Even right-wing Israeli journalist Alex Fishman wrote in *Yediot Achronot* (25 November 2001): "Whoever gave a green light to this act of

liquidation knew full well that he is thereby shattering in one blow the gentlemen's agreement between Hamas and the Palestinian Authority; under that agreement, Hamas was to avoid in the near future suicide bombings inside the Green Line [Israel's pre-1967 border]." Within days, Hamas predictably began launching attacks on Israeli civilians.

Finally, there was the March 27 bombing at Netanya. For days, there were leaks in the Israeli press that the army was preparing an assault on the West Bank; meanwhile, the Zionist leaders announced they were concerned about the possibility of a terrorist bombing on Passover, and security measures were ratcheted up to the highest level. Sharon banned Arafat's participation at an Arab summit in Beirut, but the Arab leaders went ahead and endorsed a Saudi "peace" proposal offering full recognition of Israel in exchange for a return to the pre-1967 border. That night, like clockwork, a Hamas bomber triggered an explosive device in a coastal hotel near Tel Aviv after walking right in the front door. That he could have avoided a security check at the entrance or anywhere in the heavily patrolled city is almost inconceivable, but the Israeli leaders got the bombing they needed. The Saudi peace offer was forgotten and Operation Defensive Shield was launched to destroy the remnants of Arafat's sham government, with the cooperation of Hamas. And the Hamas bastion of Gaza remains untouched.

The predictable response of desperate Palestinian fighters following the Israeli massacres on the West Bank will be to launch more "martyrs' operations," that is, suicide bombers seeking to demoralize "the enemy" by blowing up as many Israeli Jews as

possible. Liberal and conservative imperialists and Zionists wring their hands about how barbaric it is to have to fight people who are willing to die, claiming that Palestinians have some peculiar "culture of death" – the same line used by the U.S. in Vietnam. The "culture," which the IDF just reinforced, is the despairing response of people so subjected to random killing by Israel that many figure they're going to die soon anyway, and they might as well take some Israelis with them. Yet by directing their attacks against Jews and Israelis in general (including causing casualties among Israeli Arabs), Palestinian nationalists and Islamic fundamentalists hideously mimic the Israeli rulers who target the entire Palestinian Arab people for death and destruction.

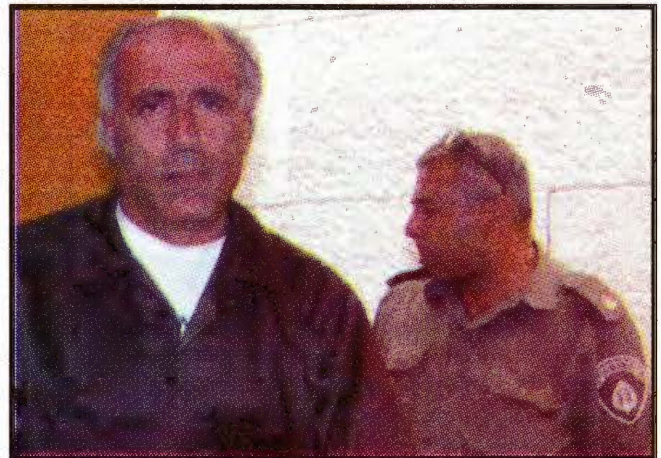
The Zionists used the Netanya attack, which was so convenient for their purposes, to whip up war fever. As proletarian internationalists, Marxists reject individual terrorism as a program of despair and categorically oppose all forms of indiscriminate terror which randomly target an entire population. Such actions against an "enemy people" reflect the logic of nationalism. It is the ultimate logic of Zionist nationalism and of Palestinian Arab nationalism, but the Zionists have vastly superior means to carry out *their* ultimately genocidal program. What is happening in Palestine today is not a "clash" between two nations but an uprising by the oppressed which is being ruthlessly put down by the oppressors. In such a fight, Marxists stand squarely on the side of the subjugated people fighting for their freedom, while politically combating Islamic fundamentalists and secular nationalists whose program can only lead the Palestinian masses to bitter defeat. Ultimately, they all aim at cutting a deal with imperi-

Kidnapped and Jailed for 16 Years for Exposing Israel's Nuclear Arsenal

Free Mordechai Vanunu!

Mordechai Vanunu, the courageous Israeli nuclear technician who in 1986 revealed the huge number of nuclear weapons in the arsenal of the Zionist state, made a rare and brief appearance in court May 13. For years, Vanunu was held in solitary confinement, denied contact even with other prisoners. Now he is demanding permission to meet with his lawyers and to have access to the transcripts of his rigged "trial." After the closed-door session, his lawyer Avigdor Feldman denounced the absurdity of denying him the right to read the record of his own trial.

Vanunu was convicted as a "traitor" and "spy" by the Zionist courts, but for the working and oppressed peoples of the world, he is a hero. In 1986 he revealed to the London *Sunday Times* the vast scope of Israel's secret nuclear arms program. Until then it had been widely rumored that their nuke force consisted of 15-20 warheads. With numerous photographs he showed that Israel had built an extensive plutonium factory underneath the Dimona nuclear reactor. From the information he provided, it was clear that the Israelis had at least 100 to 200 atomic bombs (nuclear fission weapons) as well as some H-bombs (fusion weapons). Since a dozen nukes would be sufficient to take out every Arab capital, it was evident that



Mordechai Vanunu in court last month.

with this kind of stockpile Israel had something far larger in mind: a thermonuclear Armageddon.

We demand that Mordechai Vanunu be immediately freed. The war criminals and mass murderers who rule the Zionist state are prepared to go to tremendous lengths to silence his voice and those of any who dare to mention their ability to unleash a radioactive holocaust.

Today the United States has declared Iraq to be part of an "axis of evil," alleging that Saddam Hussein might be trying to obtain atomic, biological or chemical (ABC) weapons of mass

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alism, yet the emancipation of the impoverished masses of this vital region with its vast resources is impossible without breaking the imperialist stranglehold through socialist revolution. And that requires the joint efforts of the Hebrew and Arab working people against all their capitalist rulers, under the leadership of an *internationalist* workers party.

Bring Down the Zionist Garrison State from Within

Under the intense pressure of the last year and a half, the Israeli political spectrum has moved sharply to the right. But the pressure of the *intifada* and the Israeli government's brutal military response has begun to produce fissures in Israeli society. In mid-February some 15,000 people rallied in Tel Aviv, demanding that Israel "get out of the territories" and return to negotiations. More recently, in the middle of the army's assault on Jenin and Ramallah, marches by several thousand Israeli Jews and Arabs were brutally beaten by police as they sought to bring truckloads of food to the besieged Palestinian towns.

Most significant has been the escalating number of *refuseniks* in the Israeli army who are refusing to serve in the army of occupation in the West Bank and Gaza. Already some 415 Israeli officers and soldiers have signed the *refusenik* petition issued in late January, and 38 of them have been jailed for their action – the largest number ever in the history of Israel. Several of them have also made powerful statements condemning the occupation. Already last summer, David Hahm-Herson, a reserve captain, issued an open letter from the military prison where he is being held:

"I am a soldier in the Israeli army, imprisoned for refusing to take part in repression, arising from a sense that it is out of the question to be a Jew, the son of a people of refugees, and yet repress a people of refugees.

"I am concerned because I know that the [Palestinians'] terrible hatred toward me is justified. This hatred has led to horrifying and perverted manifestations, like the young suicide bombers, but we create the conditions that lead to this monstrosity.

"The Palestinian population is being subjected to starvation, denial of medical treatment, demolition of homes, and economic strangulation. I will take no part in these war crimes, nor will I serve as a fig leaf for them."

–quoted in the *Village Voice*, 22 August 2001

Yet despite the growing cracks in the Zionist edifice, the protests are small compared to the tens of thousands of Israelis who demonstrated in the early 1980s against the invasion of Lebanon under prime minister Menachem Begin (and his war minister Sharon). The reason is simple: groups like Gush Shalom (the Peace Bloc) and Peace Now are all Zionists, as were the large majority of '80s "peace" demonstrators. The Lebanon campaign was seen as a military adventure, unnecessary to Israel's defense, that turned into a quagmire. Moreover, at that time the "Labor" Zionists were in opposition to Begin's Likud cabinet. Today, "Labor" is part of Sharon's cabinet (with Binyamin Ben-Eliezer as "defense" minister), and the sheer scope of the Palestinian uprising as well as the suicide bombings has convinced even "left" Zionists that the survival of *their state* is at stake.

Zionist "doves" inevitably become Zionist "hawks" when the chips are down, sometimes grotesquely so. Recently, historian Benny Morris (who had earlier exposed some of the Zionist lies about the 1948 expulsion of the Palestinian refugees) came out for "ethnic cleansing" of the Palestinian population. In an interview in *Yediot Aharonot* (23 November 2001) Morris said: "What happened in '48 was inevitable. If the Jews wanted to establish a state in Eretz Israel, which would be a bit

Israel Targets Children



Israeli police arrest child for throwing rocks, Nablus, June 2001

Palestinian youths have been a particular target of the Zionists' military machine. 8- and 9-year-olds have been regularly gunned down for having stones in their hands to throw at tanks. More than two-thirds of the deaths were caused by live bullets to the head or the chest.

Since the beginning of the *intifada* (uprising) in response to Sharon's provocation at the Al Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem in September 2000, some 285 Palestinian children have been killed by the Israeli military and settlers; 42 have been killed since the launching of the Israeli assault on the West Bank beginning March 29.

In addition, more than 7,000 children have been injured, and over 700 were arrested prior to the current Israeli invasion. Reports indicate that about 10-15 percent of the more than 5,000 Palestinians who have been arrested in recent raids are under the age of 18. There are numerous reports of torture. Many are being held at the Ketziot concentration camp in the Negev desert, and another 190 are held in three prisons in Israel.

We demand the freeing of all of the thousands of victims of Zionist repression!

–Statistics from Defense for Children International/Palestine Section, Report on Israeli Practice Toward Palestinian Children to UN Committee on Torture, 8 May 2002.

larger than Tel-Aviv, moving population was necessary. I don't see it as morally wrong." He added, "We cannot acknowledge the [Palestinians'] Right of Return." As for solutions, he saw two options: "Either annexation of blocks of Arab townships [in Israel] to the Palestinian or to neighbouring Arab states; or that the Arabs would wish to leave the country." In an article in the London *Guardian* (21 February), Morris was even more explicit:

"If the refugees are allowed back, there will be godawful chaos and, in the end, no Israel. Israel is currently populated by 5 million Jews and more than 1 million Arabs (an increasingly vociferous, pro-Palestinian irredentist time bomb). If the refugees return, an unviable bi-national entity will emerge and, given the Arabs' far higher birth rates, Israel will quickly cease to be a Jewish state. Add to that the Arabs in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and you have, almost instantly, an Arab state between the Mediterranean and the Jordan river with a Jewish minority."

In an interview with *Ha'aretz Weekly* (1 March), writer Amos Oz was positively foam-flecked in his calls for "ethnic cleansing" of the Palestinians: "If it comes down to: I'm uprooted from my house and you take it from me, or you are uprooted from your house and I take it from you, then it's preferable for me to remain and for you to be uprooted. And if it's going to be that you live and I die, or I live and you die, then it's better that you die. Because, like I said, our backs are to the wall. In such a war, backs are really up against the wall" (quoted by Nizar Sakhnini in *Indymedia Israel*, 3 March). The "refusenik" soldiers ultimately share this outlook, even as they courageously refuse to police the Occupied Territories. Their petition states that they were "raised on the principles of Zionism" and were "the first to carry out any mission" in order to "protect the State of Israel," and while they "shall not continue to fight beyond the 1967 borders," they "shall continue serving in the Israel Defense Forces in any mission that serves Israel's defense."

So long as opposition in Israel is wedded to the existence of a "Jewish state," it will always capitulate to the hard-line Zionists. But as Israel becomes mired in a seemingly endless battle with a desperate Palestinian population whose backs are literally to the wall being torn down by IDF bulldozers, the hold of Zionism on the Hebrew population can crack. Already, emigration is sharply increasing. Some 200,000 Jews left Israel for the recent Passover holidays, and many have reportedly not returned. In fact, many Hebrew-speaking working people reject the genocidal program of extermination and expulsion of the Palestinians and do not want to live forever in a garrison state at war with all its neighbors. But today they are trapped within the confines and logic of Zionism.



Karel Prinsloo/AP

Over 50,000 at Tel Aviv peace demonstration, May 11. Many Israelis don't want to live under siege forever, but continue to support the Zionist state, which is inherently oppressive to Palestinians and produces war after war. For Arab/Hebrew workers revolution!

For Class War Against the U.S. Imperialist War!

In the United States and Europe, the current protests against the Israeli war on the Palestinians are also dominated by social-pacifist programs with the illusory aim of reforming their respective imperialist powers to serve the interests of justice and peace. In Washington on April 20, the "A20 Stop the War" coalition calls for "government funding for programs to benefit the economic victims of the 9-11 attacks and the recession," "increased funding for non-military-based financial aid for education, etc." A competing group, the "International A.N.S.W.E.R. Coalition" calls to "Stop Bush's War at Home and Abroad," raising demands for "money for education, housing, jobs and healthcare – not for war and corporate giveaways." These are typical pacifist "popular fronts" such as the Vietnam "peace movement," which tie labor, the left and opponents of imperialist wars to the dovish wing of the imperialist bourgeoisie. Each has their favorite ruling-class politicians, black Democrat Al Sharpton for the A20 coalition (which is dominated by the Green Party, a minor capitalist party), former U.S. attorney general Ramsey Clark for A.N.S.W.E.R.

Various self-proclaimed socialist groups support the different coalitions. A20 Stop the War includes the Communist Party, Democratic Socialists of America and various smaller social-democratic groups including Socialist Alternative, Left Turn and the International Socialist Organization. The ISO occasionally tries to put on a left face, writing in its paper (*Socialist Worker*, 19 April) that "those who call for Washington to 'do more for peace' in the Middle East are wrong. Whether or not the U.S. finally tightens the leash on Sharon, the aim of Palestinian self-determination requires a movement that not only confronts Israel, but also its main sponsor – U.S. imperialism." But this is simply eyewash, for in

practical terms the ISO is part of the A20 coalition which calls for a "U.S. foreign policy based upon social and economic justice" and whose call to action urges "Congress and the President...to promote global justice in order to make the world safe for all of us." The fact is that social democrats like the ISO *always* seek to pressure "their own" capitalist rulers rather than raising a revolutionary program to smash imperialism through socialist revolution.

The different reformist groups present slightly different programs for Israel-Palestine, but always in purely bourgeois-democratic terms. Workers World Party, which runs the A.N.S.W.E.R. coalition and the International Action Center, declares that "all who truly stand for justice and against war must rally to the side of the Palestinians," by which they mean not only militarily defending the Palestinian people against the Israeli attack but also politically supporting the bourgeois nationalist program of "the Palestinian resistance" which "represents for the Arab people in general their own aspirations to finally be free of oppression in the form of neocolonialism" (*Workers World*, 11 April). Not a word about socialist revolution, of course. Instead, the WWP essentially supports the call for a Palestinian "mini-state" in the Occupied Territories, and justifies the "determined campaign of suicide resistance bombings" which target the general Israeli population, arguing that this shows "that after 35 years there is no way to eradicate the struggle."

The ISO, for its part, declares that "The only way to escape from these contradictions is to return to the perspective of a democratic and secular Palestine, with equal rights for all." Yet this call, which used to be the program of the PLO before it dropped it in the early 1970s in favor of a West Bank/Gaza "mini-state," explicitly denies equal *national* rights for Palestinian Arabs and the Hebrew population living in what is today Israel. Far from escaping from the contradictions posed by the existence of two nations in a single, tiny land, it pretends to ignore them and in reality means an Arab-majority *capitalist* state. Knowing well the misery they have wreaked on the Palestinians, Israeli Jews naturally would fear a reversal of the terms of oppression were they to become a minority people. The only way out of these contradictions is to break the capitalist framework, through common struggle for a socialist revolution by both the Arab and Hebrew working people. But naturally none of the reformists raise this call, for their real politics are *tailism* after the various existing bourgeois and petty-bourgeois leaderships rather than forging an proletarian revolutionary vanguard.

In Europe, various leftist groups are calling for intervention by the European imperialists. The French Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR), which falsely pretends to be Trotskyist, marched at the head of an April 6 demonstration behind a large banner calling for "an international protection force for the Palestinians." At the same time, French "socialist" prime minister Lionel Jospin (himself a former pseudo-Trotskyist) called for an "international force to interpose and observe" events in the West Bank. The idea that the European powers (as opposed to the American "superpower") would somehow "protect" the Palestinians is grotesque. These are the same imperialists who are currently running an "international peacekeeping force" in Afghanistan to police the cities while the U.S. bombs the countryside, and who have turned Kosovo and Bosnia into NATO pro-

tectorates. But the LCR is consistent in its reformism – it called for "United Nations" intervention in Yugoslavia just as the UN was covering for the NATO bombing of Belgrade.

The League for the Fourth International holds that the two nations living in the territory of Palestine both have democratic and national rights. Both the Palestinian Arab and Hebrew peoples have the democratic right to self-determination, that is to national existence, but this cannot be realized in an equitable and democratic way under the conditions of capitalist rule. One nation will seek to control scarce resources such as water, agricultural land, access to the sea, etc. And so long as a capitalist "Jewish state" exists it will inevitably be driven by the expansionist logic of Zionism to persecute its Arab citizens, subjects and neighbors.

Leon Trotsky long ago warned that the Zionist enterprise of Israel would be a death trap for the Jews. As proletarian internationalists who oppose all forms of nationalism, the Trotskyists today fight for an Arab/Hebrew workers republic in the framework of a socialist federation of the Near East. For decades the Spartacist League put forward the call for an Arab/Hebrew workers state as the product of joint revolutionary class struggle by the peoples of the entire region. Today this has disappeared from the pages of the SL's paper *Workers Vanguard* as part of the cascade of revisions of historic positions impelled by deepening historical pessimism.

Ultimately, the solution to the intractable national conflict and the liberation of the Palestinian people from the Zionist yoke (which also oppresses Hebrew workers) will depend greatly on struggles outside this narrow corner of the Near East. If the domination of Arab nationalism and Islamic fundamentalism can be broken in the course of revolutionary upheavals elsewhere in the region, it would have an electrifying effect in Palestine. This is far from impossible, for virtually every country in the area is dominated by a fragile and often decrepit bonapartist regime, whether ruled by oil sheiks or nationalist strongmen. Workers action against the Zionist war on the Palestinians and the imperialist terror war in Afghanistan is entirely possible. There have already been huge protests in Rome and Paris against the Israeli attacks. Meanwhile, some 3 million Italian workers demonstrated against the anti-labor program of the right-wing government of the sinister media magnate Berlusconi and the fascist Fini. If instead of going to Israel as a "witness," as the leader of the Italian metal workers federation did recently, the unions called for political strike action against the current wars they would receive a tremendous response.

But they will not, for the mass workers organizations are dominated by a reformist, pro-capitalist bureaucracy which knows well that their job is to keep the tremendous power of the proletariat in a straitjacket. An occasional one-day "general strike" aimed at pressuring the government is one thing, an all-out fight against the imperialist ruling class is something else altogether. To lead such a struggle it is necessary to build revolutionary workers parties throughout the imperialist and semi-colonial countries which fight to mobilize the working class independently of and against all the bourgeois parties. Such parties can only be built as part of the fight to forge anew a genuinely Trotskyist Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution. ■

How the Zionists Use Hamas as a Tool of Provocation

The following is an expanded version of an article published in the 19 April 2002 special issue of *The Internationalist*.

From its beginnings over a century ago, the object of the Zionist movement has been to create an ethnically and religiously exclusive "Jewish state" through conquering the land between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River. "A land without people for a people without land," was the slogan. But since Palestine was actually populated by Arabs, they had to be made to disappear, through selective or wholesale expulsion and massacres, such as is taking place now on the West Bank. To realize their program, the Zionists have often resorted to provocation, even against "their own people" – for example, the Mossad's 1951 bombing of the Baghdad synagogue, in order to provoke the flight of the Iraqi Jews (see "Zionist Terror and the 'Ingathering' of Iraqi Jews," *The Internationalist* No. 9, January-February 2001). And from Theodor Herzl, Ze'ev Jabotinsky and David Ben Gurion to Yitzhak Rabin and Ariel Sharon, the Zionists have always been prepared to "do business with" the worst anti-Semites, including Hitler's Nazis (see "Zionism, Imperialism and Anti-Semitism" in the same issue).

Following this logic, the state of Israel helped create and foster the growth the Islamic fundamentalists. It is by now well-known how U.S. intelligence agencies created Osama Bin Laden, using the Saudi-born Yemeni millionaire to recruit "holy warriors" (*mujahedin*) to fight against the Soviet army in Afghanistan, and how the CIA's dogs of war later slipped the leash, turning their religious frenzy against the "infidels" of the West. Similarly, and in close connection with U.S. operations in Afghanistan, Israeli leaders nurtured the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) as a counter to the secular nationalist Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), then allied with the Soviet Union. Even after Hamas turned to suicide bombing against Israelis, the Zionist authorities favored it over the PLO. Today, as the Israeli army is supposedly engaged in a war to root out the "terrorist infrastructure," it has not touched Gaza, the bastion of Hamas and origin of most of the suicide bombers. Moreover, Israel's military machine has deliberately provoked terrorist attacks by the Islamic fundamentalists which then become the excuses for its war on the Palestinians.

The Zionist leaders want anti-Semitic terror. They need attacks on Jews in order to tighten their hold on the Hebrew people in the Israeli garrison state and to solidify their support from the imperialists, without which Israel could not survive.

The 1967 war – in which the Israeli army seized East Jerusalem and the West Bank from Jordan, the Gaza Strip and

Sinai Peninsula from Egypt, and the Golan Heights from Syria – gave rise to a nationalist Palestinian opposition grouped together in the PLO. The largest single component was Fatah, headed by Yasir Arafat, a former member of the Muslim Brotherhood who became a protégé of Egyptian nationalist leader Gamal Abdel Nasser. The PLO also included smaller nationalist groups allied with Syria, as well as the Palestine Communist Party (PCP) and two groups that cloaked their nationalism in Stalinist rhetoric, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) of George Habash and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) of Nayef Hawatmeh. At the time of their founding, the PFLP and DFLP modeled themselves on the Vietnamese National Liberation Front and saw themselves as *fedayin* (guerrilla fighters) in a national liberation struggle.

In the Palestinian lands which the Zionists occupied in 1967, the *fedayin* completely dominated the resistance and remade the PLO, which had been founded by Nasser in 1964 as

the Palestinian nationalist umbrella organization. Nevertheless, the nationalist guerrillas were vulnerable in tiny Gaza, where nearly a million people are crammed into 140 square miles, most of it desert. For several years, the *fedayin*/PLO attacked Zionist military targets, achieving modest successes until the Israeli army laid siege to Gaza in 1971. Israel bulldozed hundreds of homes in the refugee camps and deported tens of thousands, including 15,000 suspected PLO fighters who were packed off to camps in the Sinai desert. As the Zionists brutally repressed the PLO, they sought to bolster the then-unimportant Islamic fundamentalist organizations centered around the Gaza-based Muslim Brotherhood.

Just as the CIA sought since the 1940s to foster Islamic-led counterrevolution in Soviet Central Asia (considered by the Cold Warriors to be the "soft underbelly" of the USSR), the Zionists believe that their aims

can be served by manipulating Islamic fundamentalist groups. One of the most important leaders of Hamas was a top operative in U.S. imperialism's anti-Soviet operation in Afghanistan. ABC News correspondent John Cooley, writing in the *International Herald Tribune* (13 March 1996), noted: "A key Hamas organizer was Abdallah Azzam. He was a tough, brilliant and charismatic Palestinian from Jordan. He supervised training for the CIA's Afghan guerrillas in Peshawar, Pakistan, where a car bomb killed him in 1989. In the earlier 1980s he toured the United States, recruiting Arab-Americans for the anti-Soviet jihad in Afghanistan."

The Israelis sought to use the Islamists in order to wield the club of religion against the alleged "godless Communists" in the PLO. In the CIA-funded "holy war" against modernizing nation-



The Internationalist special issue on Israeli assault on West Bank.

alists and Soviet troops in Afghanistan, revolutionaries stood foursquare with the Red Army, while pro-imperialist "leftists" cheered Washington's mujahedin. Today, the American ISO criticizes the U.S. government for "hailing Islamists in Afghanistan as 'freedom fighters' against the old USSR" (*Socialist Worker*, 12 April). In an act of historical falsification worthy of Stalin's own photo editors, it seeks to airbrush out the fact that the anti-Soviet ISO also hailed the Islamists at that time.

In 1978 the Zionist government sought out Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, the leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, and helped him found an Islamic social works organization, Mujama. According to a study by Beverley Milton-Edwards, *Islamic Politics in Palestine* (Tauris, 1996):

"In 1978 Israel's civil administration in Gaza encouraged Sheikh Yassin and his colleagues to submit an application to register the Mujama as a charitable society. Permission was granted[;] as such official [recognition] was frequently denied to other Gazans during this period, the decision was viewed with suspicion by the local political community. Although the Mujama described itself as a charity, the Israelis were well aware of its political aspirations.... When the Mujama started to exert its influence over already existing institutions as a means to undermine the nationalists, the Israelis stood by."

With Israeli collusion, Mujama set up the Islamic University of Gaza, to inculcate students with anti-PLO propaganda. The Mujamists chanted, "How can uncovered women and men with Beatle haircuts liberate our holy places?" Students who were insufficiently convinced of the anti-PLO line were brutally attacked, and sometimes acid was thrown in their faces.

Mujama professed to be an education and charitable organization, but its real purpose was to attack PLO-allied institutions such as the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRC), a welfare and health care organization. In 1979, Mujama lost a municipal election in Gaza to the PRC, and appealed to the Israeli government to overturn the results! When the Israelis balked, knowing that overt Zionist support would have exposed Mujama as their tool, the Islamists took action.

"A demonstration then started out from the grounds of the [Islamic] university. Most of the people involved in the march and subsequent attacks were Mujama supporters. The demonstrators, ignoring the Israeli army soldiers stationed along their way, set off in the direction of the PRC building. According to Shalom Cohen, 'Thousands of demonstrators took to the streets shouting Allahu Akbar (God is great), down with Communism, long live Islam.'

"During the demonstration the Mujama militants attacked cafes, video shops and liquor stores. When they arrived at the offices of the PRC they set the building on fire. The offices were destroyed, including approximately 80 per cent of the books in the library... Throughout the attack the Israeli authorities failed to intervene."

The PRC issued a statement denouncing the complicity of the Israeli forces:

"The tacit approval of the authorities, if not their actual connivance in what happened, was displayed by their attitude of non-interference. While they usually display

great alertness to combating even peaceful demonstrations of young students within schools, here they stood indifferently watching a violently destructive demonstration marching to its objective."

At the time of the *intifada* of 1988, the second main Muslim fundamentalist organization in Palestine, Islamic Jihad, had been weakened by Zionist repression. Seeking to capitalize on the upsurge of militant protests by Palestinian youth, Hamas emerged from Mujama's ranks as its fighting organization. While PLO supporters preferred mass action, Hamas specialized in shootings, often of Israeli army personnel. Yet at the height of the *intifada*, Sheikh Yassin and Dr. Mahmoud Zahar of Hamas would meet with the likes of then-defense minister Yitzhak Rabin, while meetings with the PLO were prohibited by law. As Milton-Edwards notes:

"The relationship between Hamas and the Israeli authorities was, however, at its strongest during the second year of the Intifada. The Israelis had been quick to extend legitimacy and status to Hamas in an attempt to marginalise the PLO. Leaders of Hamas were regularly filmed at meetings with top-level Israeli officials and the message the Israelis were sending out was that they regarded Hamas as the type of people with whom they could work....

In addition the Israelis continued turning a blind eye to the large amounts of money coming into the country destined for Hamas coffers, while at the same time actively stopping the flow of PLO funds in support of the Intifada."

In May 1991, following George Bush I's murderous war against Iraq, U.S. ally Saudi Arabia diverted all monies – reportedly \$28 million per month – from the PLO to Hamas. This was punishment for Arafat's support for Saddam Hussein and a reward for Hamas' condemnation of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait (which Hussein had informed the U.S. ambassador about beforehand), the pretext for "Operation Desert Slaughter." Hamas, as far as the Zionists and the U.S. imperialists were concerned, was an asset.

But it was the Oslo "peace process" that gave Hamas its chance to win support in the Palestinian population: while the PLO was clamping down on any opposition to the accords with its myriad police forces, organized in cooperation with the CIA and Israel's Shin Beth, Hamas began carrying out indiscriminate bombings of civilian targets. Some of these actions were suicide bombings, in which a *mujahid* (holy warrior) would blow himself up in a crowded Israeli bus or market place. Between 1994 and 1998, Hamas killed around 150 Israeli civilians in this way. With Arafat closely tied to the Zionists and their U.S. backers, Hamas made temporary alliances with dissident factions within the PLO, and gained a reputation as "militants." Many of its new supporters did not agree strongly or at all with the Islamic goals of Hamas, but they were revolted by the apparent collaboration with the Zionists by leaders of Fatah, Arafat above all. By its double strategy of "negotiating" with the PLO and building up Islamic fundamentalism, Israeli rulers succeeded in fostering sometimes deadly rivalries among the Palestinian political leaders.

This has very occasionally been reported (and quickly buried) in the bourgeois press. Thus a 24 February 2001 UPI dispatch noted:

"Israel and Hamas may currently be locked in deadly com-

bat, but, according to several current and former U.S. intelligence officials, beginning in the late 1970s, Tel Aviv gave direct and indirect financial aid to Hamas over a period of years.

"Israel 'aided Hamas directly – the Israelis wanted to use it as a counterbalance to the PLO,'" said Tony Cordesman, Middle East analyst for the Center for Strategic Studies....

"An Israeli Embassy defense official, asked if Israel had given aid to Hamas replied: 'I am not able to answer that question....'

"Asked to confirm a report by U.S. officials that Brigadier General Yithaq Segev, the military governor of Gaza, had told U.S. officials that he had helped fund 'Islamic movements as a counterweight to the PLO and communists,' the Israeli official said he could confirm only that he believed that Segev had served back in 1986."

The Zionists also periodically provoked Hamas into carrying out a terrorist action against Israeli civilians whenever they were trying to derail peace talks with the PLO or to launch a broad attack on the Palestinians. A favorite tactic is to launch an attack on a prominent religious shrine. In September 1990, Zionist fundamentalists held a provocative march on the Al Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem, predictably leading to an outburst of protest which was then bloodily suppressed by the Israeli police and army, leaving at least 21 dead. Israeli leaders were chomping at the bit to use the impending U.S. war on Iraq as a pretext to drown the first *intifada* in blood. At the time, George Bush I told Likud prime minister Shamir to cool it because he needed Arab support for his war. At the end of September 1996, the government of Likud prime minister Netanyahu provoked a slaughter of Palestinians by opening a tunnel under Al Aqsa, in order to undercut U.S. president Clinton's plans for negotiations with Arafat. And then, once again in September 2000, there was Sharon's provocative promenade in front of Al Aqsa, accompanied by 1,000 top Likudniks and 3,000 police and troops. This set off the second Palestinian *intifada* and with it a new wave of Hamas bombings, the latest being the Passover massacre at Netanya which provided the trigger needed to launch Israel's "Operation Defensive Shield."

Liberal commentators who admit that Israel created Hamas sometimes maintain that it is Israel's "Frankenstein monster," which got out of control and now has supposedly become Zionism's fiercest opponent. On the contrary, Israel's rulers continue to cynically provoke Hamas terror as a way of pushing their "final solution" against the PLO and all Palestinians. The Zionists have engineered the Palestinian "opposition" they want. ■

Free Mordechai Vanunu!

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destruction and asserting a U.S. right to "inspect" (i.e., to spy on) any Iraqi installation. This is the supposed justification for the second Persian Gulf War on Iraq that George Bush Jr. is preparing to launch later this year. Yet Israel already has enormous quantities of atomic, biological and chemical weapons.

At the time of Vanunu's spectacular revelations, experts concluded that Israel had the sixth largest number of nuclear weapons in the world. Since then the Israeli arsenal has grown

to "as many as 400 nuclear weapons with a total combined yield of 50 MT [megatons]" (*Jane's Intelligence Review*, 9 January 1997), putting it on a par with France or China. This fact alone gives a measure of the extent to which this tiny country is a garrison state, whose whole economy and very existence are centered on military production, repression and war. Moreover, the Israeli rulers are demented enough to use their arsenal. They regularly bomb Lebanon, as well as launching air strikes at Syria, Iraq and Libya and dispatching commandos throughout the region.

Naturally you don't see the imperialists demanding that their Israeli allies open up their plants for inspection, much less threatening to annihilate the country if they refuse (as they always have). In fact, the Pentagon itself is openly preparing to use "tactical" or "mini-" nuclear weapons against Iraq, as part of Bush's announced policy of launching a first strike against those on his enemies list. And Israel's nuclear arms industry is specializing in just those kinds of weapons.

Vanunu's reports and extensive photographs showed that Israel had undertaken an elaborate nuclear program, going far beyond the primitive "gun bombs" that the U.S. used to murder hundreds of thousands of Japanese at Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. His data showed that Israel had boosted devices, neutron bombs, warheads deliverable by Israel's U.S.-supplied F-16 jets and warheads deliverable by Israel's own Jericho missiles. The sophistication of the devices indicated that Israel had been carrying out secret testing, violating the supposed nuclear test ban. One known instance occurred in September 1979, when Israel and the apartheid regime in South Africa carried out a joint nuclear test over the Indian Ocean.

More recently, Israel has acquired three Dolphin Class 800 submarines from Germany which would give it "second strike" capacity with nuclear-tipped cruise missiles. Its F-115I jet fighters, "purchased" from the U.S. with U.S. aid, have a 4,000 kilometer range. The Israeli military is reportedly preparing to target Iran, with the intention of taking out its nuclear facilities, just as Israeli bombers struck at Iraq's Osirak nuclear reactor in 1981. (Iraq's nuclear power plants are regularly inspected by the International Atomic Energy Agency, unlike Israel's reactors.) Their plans include using secret base facilities in Oman, while their newer missiles (Jericho II and Offeq-3) have the capability of reaching Teheran.

An arsenal of this scope inevitably raises the question of what it is to be used for. Israeli scientist Avner Cohen, author of *Israel and the Bomb* (Columbia: 1998) says that Israel "must be in a position to threaten another Hiroshima to prevent another holocaust." Because his book documented the secret Israeli nuclear program with quotes from many high-level participants, the Israeli Mossad has been tailing him and he has been threatened with arrest if he returns to Israel. American journalist Seymour Hersh wrote similarly a decade ago in his book *The Samson Option: Israel's Nuclear Arsenal and American Foreign Policy* (Random House: 1991) that the purpose of this bomb was as an ultimate deterrent, to threaten to blow up the entire region in case Israel faced a danger to its existence. The fact that such doomsday scenarios are the "official" justi-

fiction for their supposedly non-existent nuclear arsenal indicates how far Israel's rulers would go in desperation. Like Hitler's visions of a *Götterdämmerung* (twilight of the gods), they are prepared to take the whole world with them. Unlike Hitler, the Zionist madmen have the bomb.

But that "Samson option" is far from the only, or even the main reason for the existence of Israel's massive nuclear weaponry. They intend to use it. A study by Colonel Warner D. Farr of the U.S. Army, published by the U.S. Air Force Counterproliferation Center at the Air War College of the USAF Air University at Maxwell AFB in Alabama, "The Third Temple's Holy of Holies: Israel's Nuclear Weapons," concludes that Israeli leaders are serious about using their atomic arms. Of the various reasons given for Israel's nuclear arsenal, he writes, "The most alarming of these is the nuclear warfighting. The Israelis have developed, by several accounts, low yield neutron bombs able to destroy troops with minimal damage to property." He notes that a retired Israeli officer recommended the U.S. use "non-contaminating" (!) tactical nuclear weapons in the first Persian Gulf War. And he cites reports of Israeli talk of "micronukes" and "tinynukes" that would be "very useful for hardened deeply buried command and control facilities."

Colonel Farr points out that Israel's nuclear program grew out of its "desires of regional power," going back to its 1956 alliance with Britain and France in attacking Egypt to seize the Suez Canal, "a first attempt at regional hegemony." He asks:

"Would a right-wing military government decide to employ nuclear weapons recklessly? Ariel Sharon, an outspoken proponent of 'Greater Israel' was quoted as saying, 'Arabs may have the oil, but we have the matches.' Could the *Gush Emunim*, a right-wing religious organization, or others, hijack a nuclear device to 'liberate' the Temple Mount for the building of the third temple?"

While he concludes the chances are "small," Farr quotes a 1997 article noting that the Israeli army "repeatedly stressed the possibilities of, and the need to guard against, a religious, right wing military coup."

But with the present Israeli regime, no military coup would be needed. Nor are the "liberal" Zionists any better. In fact, "Labor" Party foreign minister Shimon Peres, who together with Yasir Arafat received the Nobel Peace Prize for the ill-fated Oslo agreement for a "peace process" that was all process and no peace for the Palestinians. The reputed "dove" Peres was the godfather and "guiding hand" of the Israeli nuclear weapons program for many years, securing an agreement from France to assist Israel in developing a nuclear capability following the debacle of the 1956 Suez invasion. "Labor" prime minister Levi Eshkol was in office in 1967 when Israel completed and armed its first two A-bombs, and ten days later launched its war with Egypt and other Arab powers. Another Labor Party prime minister, Golda Meir, led the country in the 1973 war when Israel hurriedly assembled 13 atomic bombs and armed its Jericho I missiles and F-4 fighters to deliver them. (This threat, and the Soviet response, led Nixon to intervene to negotiate a truce, while pouring the latest U.S. weaponry into Israel.)

And, of course, diminutive Israel could not have developed such a giant nuclear program without support from imperialist sponsors. First the French supplied much of the technical know-how and essential resources (such as heavy water and uranium). As early as 1960, the CIA reported that Israel was developing a nuclear weapons facility at Dimona. In the mid-'60s, several hundred pounds of enriched uranium were secretly shipped to Israel by Zalman Shapiro, a Zionist sympathizer at the University of Pennsylvania. And in the 1980s, Israel purchased 800 krypton, the ultra-high-speed electronic switching devices that serve as triggers for nuclear bombs, from a U.S. supplier. But although U.S. vice-president Dick Cheney declared during his visit to Israel this spring that American and Israeli strategic interests were "identical," the Zionist Israeli nationalists have their own interests and pursue them with a vengeance.

This came to light over Vanunu's revelations. Based on the size of Israel's reported arsenal and its successes in developing long-range rockets, the then-Trotskyist newspaper *Workers Vanguard* (31 November 1988) headlined "Zionist Madmen Target Russia." We asked:

"Is this a joint operation with Washington in preparation for nuking the Soviets?... Or are the Israelis preparing to go solo? The Zionist madmen could very easily – and perhaps deliberately – trip over the trip wire for World War III."

It turns out that Israel was indeed targeting Russia. In his Air War College article, Colonel Farr noted that "American born Israeli spy Jonathan Pollard obtained satellite-imaging data of the Soviet Union, allowing Israel to target accurately Soviet cities. This showed Israel's intention to use its nuclear arsenal as a deterrent political lever, or retaliatory capability against the Soviet Union itself." Or, as Israel in fact did, as a device to blackmail the Soviet Union during the worldwide campaign to "free Soviet Jewry." Many of the Jewish Soviet citizens they sought to "free," such as Nathan Sharansky who later became a rightist ideologue, were working or had worked in the Soviet defense industry. After emigrating, not a few later went to work for the Israeli military machine.

Mordechai Vanunu performed a valuable service to the exploited and oppressed and the future of humanity by exposing the Zionist nuclear doomsday machine. Vanunu, a Moroccan-born Jew, was sympathetic to the plight of the oppressed Arab population of Israel, and campaigned for equal conditions and admissions for Arab students at Israeli universities. He worked for ten years at the Dimona reactor, but grew increasingly disenchanted. At the time when he was dismissed, along with hundreds of other employees, he had applied to be a candidate member of the Rakah, the official Israeli Communist Party. He later evolved toward religion and converted to Christianity. But always he acted as an honorable and courageous fighter for humanity. We call for his freedom and urge others to do so as well: he fought for us, we must fight for him!

Contributions to the campaign for Vanunu's freedom can be sent to the U.S. Campaign to Free Mordechai Vanunu, P.O. Box 43384, Tucson, AZ 85733, U.S.A. And send letters to: Mordechai Vanunu, Ashkelon Prison, Ashkelon, Israel.

Raids Terrorize Immigrant Communities – Imperialist War at Home

Mobilize Labor to Free the Detainees!

Photos: Sue Kellogg

The Internationalist Group and the Revolutionary Reconstruction Club of Bronx Community College marched in a joint contingent at a March 23 protest for “Labor Solidarity with Immigrant Detainees” in Brooklyn, New York. The demonstrators marched on the Metropolitan Detention Center, which holds some of the estimated 2,000 seized in the feds’ racist dragnets since September 11, hundreds of whom are still being held incommunicado, denied contact with lawyers and family members. Since the beginning of the year, the U.S. has expanded this war repression by going after 600,000 immigrants scheduled for deportation, particularly some 30,000 of Near Eastern origin. Arab male students have been singled out as a special target.

A contingent of twenty Latino workers from the greengrocer organizing campaign of UFCW Local 1500 enthusiastically picked up many of our chants, including: “*Libertad, libertad, a los detenidos ya*” (Free the detainees now), “*La lucha obrera no tiene fronteras*” (The workers struggle has no borders) and “*Luchar, vencer, obreros al poder*” (Fight, win, workers to power). Our contingent linked class-struggle defense of immigrants to the struggle to defeat the capitalist rulers, their imperialist war abroad and their attacks on workers “at home.”

For a number of weeks, there have been regular Saturday protests at the detention center. Protesters demand to know the names of those being held, and what they are charged with, information which the government refuses to divulge. In fact, not one of those arrested after September 11 has been charged with anything in connection with the World Trade Center attack. But they are still being held as part of the government’s war at home.

The protest of several hundred on March 23 was called by a range of unions, including locals of AFSCME, CWA, Mail Handlers, SEIU and the City University of New York (CUNY) teachers’ union, the Professional Staff Congress. The participation of organized labor in struggles against anti-immigrant

attacks is crucial. Immigrant rights, black rights, labor rights – this is a single fight, as underlined by the sinister March 27 Supreme Court ruling that companies cannot be forced to give back pay to undocumented immigrants who are fired in defiance of the government’s own labor laws.

A first step in mobilizing labor against the assault on immigrants came with the militant united-front rally of November 28 against the anti-immigrant “war purge” at CUNY. Initiated by the Internationalist Group, it drew endorsements and support from area unionists and workers associations, and the participation of contingents of immigrant workers. (See the Internationalist pamphlet, *Defend Immigrant Students – Stop CUNY’s “War Purge”!*) Later on the West Coast, a February 10 protest in Oakland, California against the USA Patriot Act and Maritime Security Act’s attacks on dock workers and immigrants was initiated by the Partisan Defense Committee and endorsed by the ILWU longshore union and others (including the IG).

But the American labor bureaucrats, with their deep-going allegiance to “their own” capitalist rulers, are very far from carrying out a real mobilization of the ranks to defeat the witch hunt, free the detainees, and win full citizenship rights for immigrants. Instead, they tie the unions to Democratic Party politicians like liberal Brooklyn Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez, a favorite at labor rallies, who issued a fulsome statement of support last fall to Bush’s “war against terrorism” (“Velázquez Praises President’s Mission,” 20 September 2001). The war on immigrants, workers rights and civil liberties is the domestic component of the terrorist “war on terror” waged by the Republican/Democrat partner parties of U.S. imperialism.

It will take the class-struggle leadership of a revolutionary workers party to wage an all-out fight to defend immigrant workers. As Hispanic deli workers chanted together with our internationalist contingent: “Asian, Latin, Black and White – Workers of the World Unite!” ■

Defend Immigrant Students!

Smash the Racist War on CUNY!

As the City University of New York (CUNY) widens its attack against working-class, minority and immigrant students, the need for a powerful mobilization capable of defeating these racist attacks is increasingly clear. The war on CUNY is part of a broader assault on city workers, as the new administration of Mayor Michael Bloomberg threatens drastic budget cuts and layoffs and kept New York City teachers working without a contract for a year and a half. What is urgently needed is to unite mass, militant student protest with the power of the New York's multi-racial working class, which requires a sharp break with all the capitalist politicians.

We print below the speeches by Aubeen López of the Revolutionary Reconstruction Club at Bronx Community College, and Abram Negrete of the Internationalist Group, at the February 27 "speakout" organized by the Student Liberation Action Movement (SLAM), the student government at the Hunter College campus of the City University of New York. This was a protest against CUNY's anti-immigrant tuition hike, cuts in the Tuition Assistance Program, imposition of a "technology fee" and other attacks on minority and working-class students. The comrades stressed the need for a revolutionary program to fight for free higher education for all.

Various liberal professors and pressure groups such as the NYPIRG "public interest" satellite of the Democratic Party have focused on lobbying the City Council and the state legislature in Albany. While putting a "student power" spin on it and organizing some demonstrations, SLAM and the CUNY4All coalition have essentially the same agenda, and express open hostility to a strategy based on mobilizing the power of the working class.

One "solution" put forward by the liberals in response to CUNY's attack on immigrants is to support bills introduced by New York assemblymen Peter Rivera and Adriano Espaillat which would effectively exclude a large number of "undocumented" immigrants. They would require New York high school or equivalency degrees from students who have already graduated from high school; the Espaillat bill would also require a minimum of three years' presence in the state. It is typical of liberals and reformists to seek to cut a deal at the expense of the most vulnerable and oppressed sectors of society.



Some 300 students, faculty, unionists, leftists and opponents of war on Afghanistan in united-front protest initiated by the Internationalist Group against purge of immigrant students by the City University of New York (CUNY), Hunter College, November 28.

Aubeen López: I'm speaking on behalf of the Revolutionary Reconstruction Club, which is dedicated to promoting Marxism and fighting all types of oppression. We would like to address CUNY's ongoing attacks on immigrant students, and now the TAP cuts and the elimination of the "final semester free."

Last week I read an e-mail from a member of the Internationalist Group. It describes the existence of a gap between those of us who are willing to fight for *no* discrimination, and those who are willing to settle for *some* discrimination. The letter starts by describing two bills being proposed by Democratic Party politicians Rivera and Espaillat. As members of the Democratic Party these men's loyalties lie with the ruling class. Their proposals mean that only those "undocumented immigrants" who fit the criteria of the bills can attend school. Hence, supporting these bills amounts to accepting some form of discrimination.

To this idea that we should accept "less" discrimination instead of "more," the e-mail states that what should be fought for is the principle of no discrimination whatsoever. As a group opposed to all oppression, we will not settle for any form of discrimination, especially not for the sake of pursuit of the so-called "practical."

How's this for practical: what about students at each CUNY campus electing representatives that could coordinate protests? But no, this is not what the people who speak of "practical action" have in mind. In fact, their talk amounts to pleading to a decaying bourgeoisie as opposed to mobilizing the power of the

Sue Kellogg



Revolutionary Reconstruction Club at November 28 Hunter College rally against anti-immigrant “war purge.”

working class. But every day, the bourgeoisie makes it clear that it is the past, an embodiment of yesterday which once was a revolutionary force.... Today, it is a greedy, hypocritical and anti-scientific class of murderers. Only the working class represents the future. Only the working class can be counted on to fight for even a basic democratic right such as universal education.

We reaffirm our commitment to fighting this attack, on the basis of a principled working-class program. We have no interest in following the bourgeoisie’s Democratic Party. What is key in fighting for democratic rights such as universal education is not the Democratic Party, but a revolutionary vanguard party like that of the Bolsheviks in 1917.

When protests against CUNY’s anti-immigrant war purge began, they were led by those of us who are committed to stopping the racist attack dead in its tracks. It was led by those of us committed to defending all immigrants, as part of the fight to defend all workers and oppressed people. It was the Internationalist Group that set this powerful tone, and we of the Revolutionary Reconstruction Club and others who took up the challenge. Now we are told by those who arrive late, as they tend to do, to make way for the “practical,” to stake victory to the same bourgeoisie which is behind these attacks on immigrants and education, as opposed to the rising proletariat which has every interest in defending these rights, and makes up the overwhelming majority at CUNY.

We are asked to give up this powerful force, as well as the truth that fuels our fight: that this is part of a bigger and broader attack. We are asked to put down our arms and kneel before the decaying bourgeoisie and its partners in crime at CUNY and the Democratic Party. To plead for mercy; but mercy is not in our hearts, and we won’t let down our guard. We will stand taller than before, and fight against *all* discrimination.

The new attacks do not change the need to bring in the working class against this assault. They only prove the correctness of what our speaker, Leslie Marcos, said at the November 28 Hunter demonstration: “Within CUNY, the so-called ‘war against terrorism’ manifested itself as an anti-immigrant ‘war purge,’ including the increased tuition hike aimed directly at immigrant students and workers.” This was proven absolutely correct, as was her observation that CUNY was counting on no resistance, and if this appeared to be the case, they would not only intensify their attacks on immigrant students but would extend them to all students. We cannot continue seeing each attack as an isolated incident. Doing so can only help CUNY’s attempt to divide and conquer, and end in defeat. We cannot afford to fail.

The strategy of mobilizing the working class therefore is not just the only way forward, but has taken on a new edge of urgency. The clock is ticking.

Abram Negrete: I would like to bring you greetings from students at the occupied Preparatory School Number 8 at the National University of Mexico (UNAM), which was occupied over the past two days in a continuation of the struggle against the attack on education and on working-class students. Our comrades there point out that we need to unite internationally, because the attack on education is in the most literal sense an international attack from Europe to Asia, Latin America and here in the United States.

This morning a number of us went to the court appearance of Miguel Malo, vice president of the student government at Hostos Community College [a largely black and Hispanic CUNY campus in the Bronx]. CUNY is trying to put this brother in jail for protesting against yet another in the chain of racist and anti-working-class attacks by the CUNY administration. His “crime,” like that of other students, was to protest cuts in Spanish and bilingual programs there. Hostos student leader Oscar Paul is also under attack [by a campus disciplinary board].

I think it has become clear that “first they came for the immigrants.” They – the CUNY administration and the capitalist politicians, both Democrats and Republicans, who stand behind them – made a very cynical calculation. They thought people would stand by or look away and do nothing while CUNY carried out its salami tactics of cutting off first one group and then another, through divide and conquer. They used the attack on immigrant students as a wedge to open up further attacks that have been spoken of today. It is extremely clear that this is in fact a war on CUNY – it is a racist war on CUNY. And when you have a war, you need to have a serious struggle if you want to defeat the people who are waging war on you. What is going to be required to defeat these attacks is a head-on struggle.

Meanwhile, the Democratic Party politicians and the liberals, and the people who follow them, have been busy trying to bury the protests in powerless lobbying, to lobby the same politicians who have carried out this attack as part of their imperialist war – because this attack on the immigrant students here at CUNY was explicitly and directly a part of the American ruling class' war against Afghanistan, which they are now trying to spread to many other countries. This is simultaneously a war against the working class in the United States, minorities, democratic rights and basic civil liberties. It is the same war which has locked up at least 1,500 Arab and South Asian people, detained – for example in the Detention Center in Brooklyn – with no charges whatsoever against them. And thus as part of our fight to *defeat* the U.S. imperialists, both the Democratic and Republican heads of their monster, and all of the effects of their war, we demand the immediate freeing of those detainees.

Now, there is and can be no justice so long as the criminals who rule the United States and the rest of the capitalist world remain in power. The *only* way to achieve any measure of justice will begin on the day that we bring those criminals to justice under a revolutionary government of the working class.

And I think it's extremely important to know who our enemies are, and who our fake friends are. Some plugs were put in earlier today for the bills introduced by Rivera and Espaillat. I brought some signs; I have kind of a long one here, that says: "Not Exclusionary Bills for 'Less' Discrimination (Democrats Rivera and Espaillat), But NO Discrimination."

It's the same kind of logic that says you shouldn't fight for women's unrestricted right to abortion, you should only fight for the right to abortion for some women sometimes; or you shouldn't fight against apartheid head-on, you should fight for some rights for some groups under apartheid; or you shouldn't challenge Jim Crow in its fundamentals and its essence, you should haggle over how much apartheid, or how much Jim Crow, or how much racist discrimination there will be. What we are saying is that there must be no discrimination of any kind; it must be smashed – and in order to carry this out, a real struggle is going to have to be waged.

Now protests and speakouts are important, but we must say the truth and face facts: these folks, these guys, *they* – the CUNY administration... which I've had the opportunity to see in court, at the City Council and in their own Board of Trustees meeting – will not be defeated just by protests and marches. It will require stopping the machinery of CUNY, stopping the functioning of CUNY. It's going to require sit-ins, it's going to require building occupations, it's going to require the kind of struggles that won open admissions in 1969. Those were mass, militant struggles that drew in the working class and the unions in this city – that's what won open admissions, and we have to win open admissions and free tuition again.

Some people may say this is pie in the sky, and I say they're full of it. I'll tell you why. Very concretely right now, the Bloomberg mayoral administration is carrying out vicious cuts against whole sectors of the working class. There was a speaker a few minutes ago from the welfare rights movement, and WEP ["workfare"]

workers have been viciously cut off the rolls after the scam that if you go through this so-called workfare program you're going to get a good job.

They are moving against other sectors of city labor. The bus workers in Queens are on strike right now. A large proportion of the working class here in this city are immigrants; they have a vital, direct and burning interest in their daughters and sons having an education. It is possible and necessary to mobilize them and bring them into this struggle.

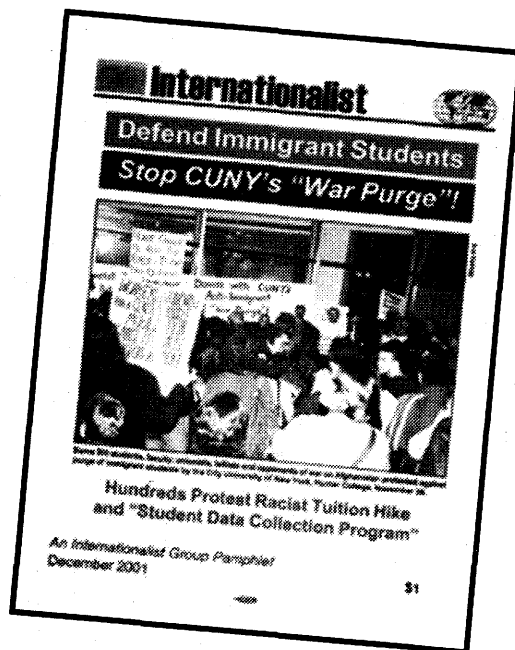
Smash the racist war on CUNY! Stop the "war purge" against immigrant students! Stop *all* the hikes, fees, cuts and acts of repression! Drop all the charges now against Miguel Malo and Oscar Paul! Open admissions and free tuition! Elect representatives from each campus to a CUNY-wide coordinating committee – that's how they did it at UNAM, by the way. And all of this is necessarily part of a program for a working-class solution, the only real solution, which is to overthrow the *cause* of all of this oppression, racism, misery and war through socialist revolution, building a revolutionary workers party to lead it. ■

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Down with the Racist Dragnet – Free All the Detainees Now! Stop the Anti-Immigrant “War Purge”!

We reprint below and on the following page excerpts from a joint International Women's Day (8 March) leaflet by the Internationalist Group and the Revolutionary Reconstruction Club (Bronx Community College) in New York City. The first part of the leaflet dealt with a student at the City University of New York (CUNY) who, along with her family, was detained in the government's anti-immigrant dragnet. She has since been released. They are among the “more than 300,000 foreign nationals” in the U.S. who have been targeted by the Immigration and Naturalization Service for deportation (New York Times, 5 January). In addition, more than 2,000 people of Arab and South Asian background have been detained as victims of the government's racial profiling since September 11.

We demand that the INS release the names of all those detained; we demand the immediate *freedom* of all the detainees – whom the government seeks to keep nameless and faceless. Mass protest must be mobilized against the vicious detentions and deportations. This must be linked to the fight to smash CUNY's anti-immigrant “war purge” and the escalating attack on all working-class and minority students. It must draw in thousands of CUNY students, and crucially it must draw in key sectors of the powerful working class of New York City.

Immigrants in this city are not powerless victims – they work in many of the most important sectors of the economy, from transport (subways, buses, taxis) to the hospitals, factories, greengrocer delis (undergoing a unionization drive) and service industries. Together with the rest of the multiethnic, multiracial working class – particularly black workers and others outraged by the grotesque ruling freeing three of the racist cops involved in the torture of Abner Louima – this gives them the *power* that must be mobilized to defeat the wave of racist attacks.

First the CUNY administration targeted immigrant students, more than doubling their tuition in a blatant attempt to drive them out. This served as a wedge for escalating attacks on all CUNY students through slashing the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) and slapping other fees on the overwhelmingly working-class and poor students – and that's just the beginning. City University officials and their big brothers in the FBI and INS think CUNY students are going to sit by and watch our classmates and friends seized in Gestapo-style dawn raids to be dragged away and deported. *We will not let them turn New York City into a new Manzanar and Tule Lake* (camps where Japanese Americans were locked up during WWII). And we demand to know what the CUNY

administration's role has been, when and where it has been visited by the FBI and INS, and exactly what it told them.

Make no mistake: despite the pious hypocrisy pumped out by Bush, Giuliani, Bloomberg and their Democratic partners in crime, the government's round-up of Arabs and those who “look like them” is encouraging violent attacks by racist hoodlums and nightriders. On Staten Island, a series of attacks on Arab-owned delis included the highly suspicious murder of Yemeni immigrant Hamoud Muharram on January 23. Meanwhile, as reported in the *Staten Island Advance* (14 February), 14 people, most of them Arabs, were arrested in coordinated police raids on delis on the island. And now there is the fire that has destroyed much of a Sikh temple in Queens, coming after many attacks against Sikhs, particularly cab drivers, in recent months.

The Internationalist Group and Revolutionary Reconstruction Club took the lead in initiating the united-front demonstration of several hundred students, workers and others at Hunter College on November 28 against the anti-immigrant “war purge.” We have stressed that the imperialist war abroad is at the same time a war against the working class, oppressed minorities, democratic rights and civil liberties within the U.S. We link the fight against the purge of immigrant students and deportations to the fight for *full citizenship rights for all immigrants*. We fight to mobilize the working class to *defeat* U.S. imperialism and *defend* the countries targeted by its war abroad – which the U.S. rulers are spreading from Afghanistan to the Philippines while revving up for a possible new assault on Iraq – and those targeted by its racist war “at home.”

In the fight against CUNY's anti-immigrant purge, we stress the need for mass, militant mobilization bringing in the power of the working class, and oppose all attempts to corral protest into powerless lobbying of the capitalist politicians who are the enemies of the working people. While liberal Democrats like Pedro Rivera and Adrian Espaillat put forward bills in the state legislature, which in the guise of “less” discrimination would actually mean excluding large numbers of immigrants from CUNY, we demand: *no discrimination, complete and total elimination of anti-immigrant tuition hikes, open admission and free tuition*. While these are simply the expression of the basic democratic right to education, a consistent fight for this is possible only as part of a program for a society based on human needs instead of capitalist profit – a program for socialist revolution, led by a revolutionary workers party that mobilizes workers power to put an end to all forms of discrimination and social oppression.

Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

On International Women's Day 2002, in the midst of the terrorist "war against terrorism" launched by U.S. imperialism and its NATO allies, women around the world are under attack. U.S. war propagandists use the hideous oppression of women under the Islamic-fundamentalist Taliban regime to justify the Pentagon's indiscriminate bombing which has killed more than 4,000 civilians in Afghanistan. Yet the Islamic-fundamentalist regime installed by Washington and led by the same bloody warlords who were the CIA's terrorist "holy warriors" against the Soviet-backed Kabul government in the 1980s continues to violently enforce the oppression of women. Afghan women are still imprisoned in the veil (the head-to-toe *burqa*), excluded from education, excluded from social labor, deprived of any rights and con-

demned to domestic seclusion. And when courageous women dare to demonstrate for their freedom, as they did in Kabul last November, they are brutally repressed by the new "democratic" rulers in imperialist-occupied Afghanistan.

In the 1980s, Trotskyists hailed the intervention of the Soviet Army in Afghanistan against the U.S.-recruited, financed, trained and armed terrorists who threw acid in the faces of unveiled women and shot down a planeload of children traveling to school in the Soviet Union. Today, Trotskyists call on the international working class to defend Afghanistan, Iraq and other countries on Washington's hit list and to defeat imperialism through international proletarian revolution. *For women's liberation through socialist revolution!*

Nigerian Woman Who Was Sentenced to Death for "Adultery" Safiya Hussain Freed After Protests

On March 25, after an international outcry, a Nigerian appeals court freed Safiya Hussain. However, it did so on technicalities, principally that the supposed crime took place before sharia (Islamic law) was introduced in the state. Thus other women will soon be facing death by stoning for "adultery."

Over the last several years, there has been an upsurge of Islamic fundamentalist and other reactionary religious mobilizations in Nigeria. The seething discontent of the impoverished masses of the largest country in Africa is being diverted into religious and ethnic strife, provoking riots that have left hundreds dead since last September. In the midst of the communal bloodletting encouraged by the competing cliques of military and "civilian" strongmen, in mid-October a 35-year-old woman and nursing mother, Safiya Hussain, was sentenced by an Islamic court in the state of Sokoto to death by stoning for the supposed "crime" of adultery. The only proof against Safiya is that she is unmarried and pregnant. "As for a woman who doesn't have a husband, but found to be pregnant, this shows she must have committed adultery," said state governor Alhaji Bafarawa, who declared her death sentence "irreversible."

The death penalty exposes the fraudulent "democratic" pretenses of the most "advanced" capitalist countries. In the United States, the state murder machine threatens to execute former Black Panther and renowned radical journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal, one of more than 3,000 prisoners on death row, the overwhelming majority black and Hispanic. The racist death penalty in the U.S. is legal lynching, and is in fact a product of slavery and Jim Crow segregation. In Nigeria the court which decreed the death of Safiya Hussain did so on the basis of the *sharia*, the medieval Islamic legal code. At the same time, Nigeria's bloody military rulers have murdered hundreds who have protested the deprivations of the giant U.S. oil companies Texaco, Chevron and others in the last decade, as well as slaughtering thousands in the Biafra rebellion of the 1960s. Whether wearing military epaulettes or civilian dress, the post-independence capitalist govern-

ments continue to bloodily suppress minorities, workers, women and any challenge to their rule under the old colonial laws.

Various "human rights" groups have made mild protests over the horrendous sentence against Safiya. But their priorities are dictated by the interests of imperialism. When the U.S. decides to attack Yugoslavia, Afghanistan or Iraq, only then will these outfits raise a hue and cry — in order to justify even more massacres by the U.S. and NATO. Trotskyists look instead to the working class, the social force that can sweep away the whole oppressive apparatus of capitalist justice, and to smash the death penalty. The Nigerian workers movement has the power. On January 16 and 17, tens of thousands of workers streamed into the streets of cities throughout the country to protest the government's anti-working-class price rises and privatization policies. Hundreds were arrested, including numerous labor leaders and leftists such as supporters of the Democratic Socialist Movement. We demand the immediate release and dropping of all charges against those arrested in the general strike!

But what the Nigerian working people lack is a revolutionary workers party, a Trotskyist party that can lead the struggle for socialist revolution. From South Africa, where Nelson Mandela and his successor Mbeki are now running a neo-apartheid regime on behalf of the racist mining bosses, to Nigeria where a succession of military rulers have suppressed the impoverished masses in the interests of the oil companies, black bourgeois rulers are only puppets of the racist imperialists. Trotskyists declare that "adultery" is not a crime. We defend women's right to consensual sexual relations, to free abortion on demand, to education, full participation in social labor with equal pay for equal work, at the same time as we defend homosexuals against discrimination and attack. Reactionary Islamic family codes in Africa and murderous attacks on abortion providers by Christian fundamentalists in the U.S. will only be abolished through international socialist revolution, led by a reformed Fourth International. ■

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Red Cross Building Destroyed by American Bombs, Kabul, 30 October 1991



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For a Class-Struggle Fight Against the Racist Union-Busters! Teachers Should Spearhead Strike by All NYC Workers

We Have the Power — Shred the Strikebreaking Taylor Law!

We print below a leaflet by the Internationalist Group issued on May 6. More than 2,000 copies were distributed to New York City teachers and their supporters, notably at a June 4 rally at City Hall of 25,000 students and teachers. A week later a deal was cut to raise wages while lengthening the work day. Meanwhile the NY state legislature approved a law for mayoral control of the schools. The battle over NYC public schools is far from over. Egged on by racist far-right think tanks like the Manhattan Institute, the plutocrat mayor is gearing up to assert his control by ripping up vital union gains. This fight cannot be ducked, it must be won.

After more than 17 months working without a contract, the need for a strike by New York City's 100,000 teachers and school staff is posed pointblank. Mayor Michael Bloomberg won't even pretend to negotiate unless he's handed control of the schools. Democrats and Republicans in Albany are engaging in their usual spring budget rites of endless delays and horse-trading. But instead of gearing up the United Federation of Teachers for an all-out strike to defeat the plutocrat mayor and his Wall Street backers, the UFT leadership is handing out signs saying, "I don't want to strike. Don't force me!" This is no way to win a strike. *We should be preparing to give 'em hell!* And not way off in the fall. *The time to strike is now!*

The UFT tops called a delegates assembly to endorse the state arbitration board's "fact finding" report as the basis for our demands. This board is not "neutral" and no friend of the teachers. It is appointed under the anti-union Taylor Law and is part of the machinery of state control of labor. It will only find the facts the capitalist rulers want to find. The fact is, they want to saddle us with a paltry (4 percent/5 percent) raise and all talk of parity with the suburbs is dropped. The fact is, the additional "6 percent solution" is no increase at all, but a lengthening of the school day that sets a dangerous precedent — 20 minutes now, how much next time? The fact is, they are still "investigating" introducing "merit pay," a racist union-busting scheme that will penalize teachers and

students in the most run-down schools in poor areas.

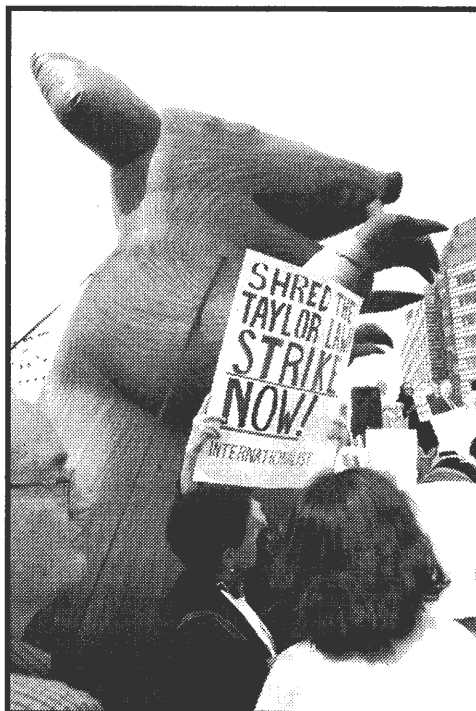
And the fact is that we have the power to defeat this attack. But that power is chained to the twin capitalist parties who are responsible for the sorry state of public education today. *The key to victory is to unchain the power of the working class.*

A strike is a class battle, and it requires serious preparation. It is a test of strength, determination and program for the union as we confront the employers and their state. The UFT is the largest union in New York City. The well over 10,000 teachers and other school workers who rallied in front of the Board of Education May 1 gave a taste of the power we have. And our fight is not an isolated one. Park workers, sanitation workers, transit workers, city workers of all categories are under the gun. To win this battle we have to mobilize the strength of all of NYC labor in powerful strike action. What's needed is not only to shut down the schools, but also to prepare to strike the subways and buses and all city services, and bring Wall Street to a grinding halt.

To do that, teachers at every school should *elect strike committees* to organize solid strike action; to mount *mass picket lines of hundreds, including students and parents*, at every school from Day One; and to report back to *mass strike assemblies*. The overall running of a strike cannot be left in the hands of the UFT bureaucracy, which has done everything it can to avoid one as it hoped to wheel and deal with one losing capitalist politician after

another. There should be a citywide *delegated strike assembly*, whose delegates are recallable at any time, and which joins together with other city workers unions in struggle. There should be a daily strike newspaper, distributed in tens of thousands of copies, not only to the picket lines but throughout the city. Above all, it's necessary to build a fighting leadership whose program is based on waging hard class struggle, unlike the present *misleaders* of NYC labor whose program of class collaboration has gotten teachers in the fix we are in today.

In any strike, the ruling class will use the vicious Taylor Law to jail striking workers and impose massive fines on the union and individual members. We can't buckle under the bosses' threats of jail, and we can't let them rob us blind. We *can* turn this strikebreaking law into a dead letter through massive mobilization that shuts the city down. When transit workers struck in 1980, the



At union rally in Brooklyn on May Day.

TWU tops figured they could just sit on their haunches and hold out. Wrong. It will take mass mobilizations that bring out tremendous support from the hard-hit working people of New York City.

A strike is a battle not only against Livingston Street and City Hall, but against the masters of American capitalism whose interest in “public” education is to make sure that the next generation of their “wage slaves” has the requisite skills and “discipline.” And it must directly go up against the capitalist state itself. The police are the armed fist of that state, enforcers of the racist “law and order” of capitalism that keeps the South Bronx, Harlem and central Brooklyn in conditions of poverty and misery. As head of the Municipal Labor Coalition, UFT president Randi Weingarten works hand-in-glove with the PBA, the enforcers of the “blue wall of silence” that covers up racist cop torture and murder of minorities such as Abner Louima and Amadou Diallo and scores of other victims. Cops are not workers, they are professional strikebreakers and racist killers. In a strike, we will be facing them on the other side of the barricades, literally. We demand police out of the unions, and out of the schools – schools should not be prisons.

You can be sure that in a strike there will be massive attempts to set poor minority and immigrant communities against the union. But despite daily teacher-bashing in the media, there is a tremendous well of support for teachers throughout the city. Parents know that teachers and school staff are fighting for their kids on a daily basis. We can defeat the bosses’ labor-hating, race-baiting propaganda by actively involving the working class and minority communities in a strike – *our fight is their fight*. We must make this real by demanding smaller class sizes, replacing

decrepit schools with modern facilities, opposing high-stakes compulsory testing that denies graduation and promotion particularly to minorities and immigrants, and actively recruiting minority teachers instead of using discriminatory certification tests to drive out PPTs with many years of experience, as the Board of Ed is now doing.

More than 85 percent of the students in NYC schools are “minorities.” In 1968, the Shanker bureaucracy fell into the trap of liberal mayor John Lindsay and the Ford Foundation, who schemed to set black communities against the UFT in the name of phony “com-

munity control.” While much of the left shamefully opposed that strike (which was sparked by the firing of local union officials) and supported scabbing, the UFT tops undermined the strike by inflaming divisions between the union and black working people.

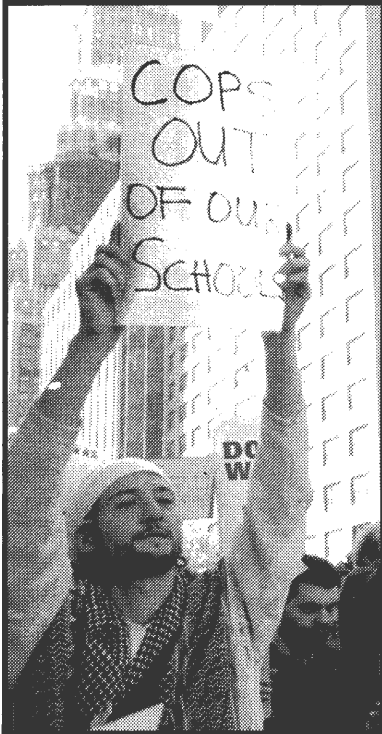
More than half the students in New York City’s public schools are foreign-born or from first-generation immigrant families. The UFT must champion the defense of these vulnerable communities. Last fall, City University officials ordered tuition more than doubled for “undocumented” immigrant students, who were grotesquely labeled a threat to “national security.” This has a direct impact on high school students. Some 2,000 immigrants, predominantly of Arab and Middle Eastern origin, have been jailed and held incommunicado following September 11. On March 23, a number of NYC unions joined in a labor solidarity march on the Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn where many detainees are held. Notable for its absence was the United Federation of Teachers. The UFT should mobilize to demand full citizenship rights for all immigrants and that all the detainees be freed.

Karl Marx wrote that every class struggle is a political struggle. The UFT leadership has been chasing after one losing Democratic Party politico after another: Hevesi, followed by Ferrer, and then Green. Their real policy was to wait until Giuliani was gone. So now Giuliani’s gone, and his successor Bloomberg is just as hard-nosed. It’s not a matter of personalities. The attacks on teachers are part of a broader offensive by city rulers against all NYC workers following the September 11 World Trade Center attack. Bloomberg, who spent \$75 million buying the mayoral election, claims the city doesn’t have the money to pay for wage raises, and orders \$300 million in cuts. Meanwhile, they’re handing out multi-million dollar incentives to landlords and Wall Street firms to keep their operations in Manhattan.

The UFT and AFT national leaderships are shot through with supporters of the Social Democrats USA, an outfit which supported the Reagan Administration’s *contra* war against Nicaragua and the anti-Soviet Cold War drive, from Poland to Afghanistan. Today they support the U.S. war on Afghanistan and endorse Israel as its tanks roll through the Occupied Territories. It’s necessary to break with the Democrats, Republicans and all capitalist parties (including the Greens and the “Working Families Party,” which is simply a shell for the Democrats). It’s necessary to build a class-struggle workers party, a party that would defend the Palestinian people, as well as Afghanistan, Iraq and any other country Bush places on his “axis of evil,” and fight to mobilize working people to defeat the imperialist war.

The several opposition caucuses in the UFT are either economist or narrowly focused on internal union politics. But the problems facing teachers and students are a direct result of capitalist policy, from the drive to privatize schools (such as the Edison Corp.) to the increasing corporate control of “public” education (e.g., Citibank’s Levy as NYC schools chancellor). In contrast, the Internationalist Group puts forward a program to “Defeat the Capitalist Onslaught Against Public Education!” (*The Internationalist* No. 10, June 2001). From waging a hard-fought strike to calls for a fundamental transformation of the educational system, the battles facing teachers today must be part and parcel of the struggle for international socialist revolution. ■

Cops Out of the Unions, and Out of the Schools!



Photos: Sue Kellogg

Popular Front Knifes Brazil Teachers' Strike

A bitter, 75-day strike by teachers in the Brazilian state of Rio de Janeiro has provided a fresh lesson in what happens when the workers movement is subordinated to a "popular front" with capitalist politicians. Beginning on March 6, the strike shut down 70 percent of the schools in the state and included an occupation of the governor's palace by furious strikers. But in order to avoid problems for the popular front led by the Workers Party (PT) of Luíz Inácio Lula da Silva in this presidential election year, Rio teachers – who work for less than US\$40 a week – were sold down the river.

The strike was carried out by the State Education Workers Union (SEPE), which represents approximately 40,000 teachers, staff and retirees. It demanded that the Wages and Job Categories Plan negotiated in 1986, but frozen for the past seven years, be honored. In 1999, on the initiative of our comrades of the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brazil (LQB), the SEPE launched work stoppages for freedom for U.S. radical black journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal. This call was subsequently incorporated into strike demands by other Rio unions (see "Brazilian Workers Mobilize for Freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal," *The Internationalist* No. 8 [June 2000]).

While it has a reputation as a relatively democratic and combative union, the SEPE is led by supporters of political tendencies with a long record of subservience to the bourgeoisie, among them the "left" wing of the PT and the PSTU (United Socialist Workers Party), a group that calls itself Trotskyist. Making his fourth bid for president in this year's elections, PT leader Lula Silva has offered the vice-presidential slot to the right-wing Liberal Party, in a move to reassure international financiers worried about Brazil's stability in the face of the continuing turmoil in neighboring Argentina.

SEPE leaders launched the strike against the administration of Rio governor Anthony Garotinho, partly in the hopes of embarrassing this leader of the bourgeois populist Demo-



SEPE

Rio teachers protest May 24. Key is forging class-struggle leadership in struggle against popular front.

cratic Labor Party (PDT) and benefit the PT. (The Rio PT "left" had objected to the alliance with Garotinho, which was imposed by Lula.) But when Garotinho left office to pursue his own presidential campaign, his post was occupied by the PT's second most famous figure: vice-governor Benedita da Silva, who achieved fame in the '80s as the first black woman elected to the Brazilian Congress. ("Anti-globalization" guru Medea Benjamin of Global Exchange, who recently coauthored a book on "Bené," says she "represents Brazil's 'new woman'.") Da Silva had been elected as part of the state-level popular front bringing together not only the PDT and PT, but former pro-Moscow and pro-China "Communists" as well.

As our Brazilian comrades noted in a bulletin of the Comitê de Luta Classista (CLC – Class Struggle Caucus), "the popular-frontist organizations leading the SEPE were dumbstruck by the attacks Benedita launched against the teachers, since the strike was only slated to last as long as Garotinho was in office. This 'terrible miscalculation' is the product of their whole policy of pressuring and advising the PT." The bulletin stressed the need to elect strike committees and spread the strike to all state workers as well as such powerful sectors as the oil workers, while noting that "the first step of a class-struggle leadership would be to break from the PT and the popular front" and help forge a revolutionary workers party to fight for socialist revolution.

The chickens came home to roost after 60 days of the strike, when angry teachers carried out a sit-in at the governor's Guanabara Palace in the city of Rio. The PT authorities promptly called out the Shock Battalion of Rio's Military Police, infamous for its massacres of street children, to dislodge the strikers. The press quoted a SEPE leader lamenting "We never expected this kind of authoritarianism from a PT government." They thought education would be "one of the priorities" for Benedita da Silva. Yet the new governor hard-lined it: "We are not in a position to negotiate or renegotiate anything at all," she said. She defended

continued on page 29



Vanguarda Operária

Comrade Cecilia, delegate at CNTE national teachers union congress in January, as she presented CLC motions calling for strike action to free Mumia Abu-Jamal and defending Afghan women, calling to defeat U.S./NATO war.

From Protest to the Struggle for Proletarian Power

Mass Upheaval Rocks Argentina Brazilian Workers Movement Under Attack

Not Populist Appeals Against “Neo-Liberalism” But Workers Revolution to Bring Down Capitalism

December 19 was a day of reckoning in Argentina. After four years of wrenching economic crisis, hundreds of highway blockades by thousands of unemployed workers, eight general strikes against the Radical “Alliance” government, while starving people from the shantytowns emptied supermarkets of food all over the country, the fury of a devastated middle class boiled over. Late in a day marked by demonstrations and looting, during which the police shot and killed 25 people and wounded another 400, Fernando De la Rúa decreed a state of siege. But the people of Buenos Aires did not back down. They went into the streets of the Argentine capital at midnight, banging pots and pans and demanding the resignation of the Radical Party president. By the next afternoon he was gone, leaving the terrace of the Casa Rosada by helicopter to avoid being lynched by the furious crowds besieging Argentina’s seat of government.

From that day on, the Buenos Aires population has repeatedly returned to the streets with its “*cacerolazos*” (pots-and-pans demonstrations) demanding the removal of presidents, ministers and the entire Supreme Court, all considered corrupt and “traitors.” The country had five presidents in less than two weeks. After Eduardo Duhalde took office, following closed-door negotiations by the leaders of the Justicialist Party (PJ – the populist party founded by General Juan Domingo Perón), there was a relative truce for several weeks. But when Duhalde announced that dollar-denominated bank accounts, which had been blocked since the beginning of December, would only be paid out in

This article is translated from Vanguarda Operária No. 6, January-February 2002, published by the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil, section of the League for the Fourth International.



One of the “*cacerolazos*” (pots-and-pans protests) in Buenos Aires, January 24, against the Supreme Court. The crowd chanted: “They must all go!”



Victims of police repression on December 20.

drastically devalued pesos, and then not until 2005, the popular response was not long in coming. On January 25, the first national “*mega-cacerolazo*” took place, demanding: “They must all go!” Police dispersed the march with tear gas, arresting scores of demonstrators, and the government cynically congratulated

itself on how “peacefully” the protest came off.

Meanwhile, in Brazil attacks have been mounting against the workers movement. At the end of the year the House of Representatives voted a bill which, if approved by the Senate, will abolish union gains concerning overtime, holidays, maternity leave, the “13th month” (annual end-of-year bonus), and other union gains which go back more than 60 years (what President Fernando Henrique Cardoso calls “the end of the Vargas era”). At the same time, the minimum wage will remain at R\$180 (US\$75) a month. The weekly magazine *Veja* fulminated against the “straitjacket of Brazilian labor laws,” which hinder the bosses from laying off workers with impunity.

Simultaneously there has been a wave of murder assaults on labor and peasants leaders. In September, the mayor of Campinas, the second largest city of the state of São Paulo, a member of the Workers Party (PT), was assassinated. In mid-January, the PT mayor of Santo André (also in São Paulo state) was shot to death after being kidnapped. Workers Party president José Dirceu and other deputies and PT leaders have received death threats. Also in January, José Rainha, one of the top leaders of the Landless Peasants Movement (MST), was gravely wounded by two shots in the back. The bourgeois press talks of actions by “gangs,” when everything indicates that what is involved is a resurgence of death squads.

From Buenos Aires to São Paulo, the social temperature has reached the boiling point. Opportunists of all stripes, reformists and centrists, declare that this is the result of “globalization” and “neo-liberalism.” From Duhalde’s PJ in Argentina to the Brazilian PT led by Luíz Inácio Lula da Silva, they call for changing the economic “model,” to give priority to “national interests.” Yet the current crisis is not the result of some economic policy, the product of the “Chicago Boys” or the International Monetary Fund, but rather reflects the fundamental contradictions of capitalism. The protectionist and populist policies pushed by bourgeois politicians Itamar Franco and Leonel Brizola or by the reformist Lula have been exhausted. There are no economic resources for a new period of Keynesianism, stimulating industrial production with deficit financing. In reality, these cham-



Belha

State of siege in Buenos Aires. Riot police called out on December 20 couldn’t stop mass protests. Opportunist left hails “revolutionary days” when key is to forge revolutionary vanguard party to lead struggle to workers revolution.

pions of *anti-globalization* are playing the game of Wall Street and certain sectors of the local bourgeoisie, and it is the workers who will reap the bitter fruits to come.

The social explosion which has convulsed Argentina has sent shock waves throughout the world. This is not a particular case, but a striking example of the free market economic policies under imperialist domination over the last two decades. Under the Radical Party government of Raúl Alfonsín, the Peronist Carlos

Reuters



From “dollarization” to “pesoization” and back.

Saúl Menem and the Radical Alliance president De la Rúa, Argentina has been the favorite pupil of the IMF. A decade ago, Menem effectively dollarized the economy of the republic on the Río de la Plata, fixing the Argentine peso at parity with the U.S. greenback. Suddenly hyperinflation plummeted... and the unemployment rate shot up. While federal and state governments ordered mass layoffs of workers, international investors flocked to the country, buying up nationalized industries (the airlines, telephone company, the YPF national oil company) and taking over the whole of

the banking sector. In Wall Street there was euphoria over the stratospheric profits; in the proletarian town of La Matanza in the sprawling urban areas surrounding Buenos Aires there was outrage over the spreading misery.

With the fall of the Soviet Union and the bureaucratically deformed workers states of East Europe, Yankee imperialism and its European partners bragged of their triumph over the feared communist threat. But today world capitalism confronts

an escalating economic crisis in the middle of a war. Now it must pay the piper for a decade of runaway speculation and a mythical "new economy."

The shock waves of the economic earthquake that had its epicenter in the Río de la Plata have spread to Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo and the rest of the Southern Cone of South America. The São Paulo capitalists boast of their "good luck" for having devalued the *real* earlier, making their companies more "competitive." In Argentina, populist politicians and sectors of the union bureaucracy are trying to divert the working-class anger with reactionary nationalist rhetoric and protectionist calls. As De la Rúa resigned, Argentine shoe workers demonstrated with signs accusing "Brazil" of "stealing Argentine jobs." They were echoing the U.S. steel companies and union bureaucrats who accuse Brazil of "dumping" steel (selling below the cost of production) due to the low cost of labor (i.e., the poverty wages paid in this country). Against this poison, it is necessary to struggle with the arms of proletarian internationalism, working-class solidarity based on a common struggle against capitalism and the ravages it produces among the exploited and oppressed.

The Argentine crisis has opened a potentially revolutionary situation. In Lenin's famous phrase, the rulers cannot go on ruling as in the past, and the ruled can no longer tolerate being ruled as before. But the big factor missing in this equation is a revolutionary leadership capable of organizing and leading the struggles of the exploited and oppressed to the taking of power by the proletariat. The most urgent task is to cohere the nucleus of a revolutionary workers party like that built by the Bolsheviks under Lenin and Trotsky. Such a vanguard party can only be built in the struggle to reforge a genuinely Trotskyist Fourth International. It must present a program of transitional demands to lead struggles towards international socialist revolution, the only real way out of the present excruciating situation.

It is clear to everyone that the debacle in Buenos Aires is rooted in an unpayable foreign debt. The "solution" put forward by Duhalde & Co. is to "pesoize" the dollarized economy while devaluating the Argentine peso, which has already fallen to 1.65 to the dollar. The Peronist leader presented his program with nationalist airs, complaining that neo-liberalism had turned Argentina into a "dominated country," as General Perón had predicted decades ago. But he is using this smokescreen to hide the fact that his devaluation policies are also the program of the IMF. For many years, the imperialist agency charged with imposing financial "discipline" insisted on maintaining dollar parity and on paying the debt, by carrying out drastic cuts in government spending. But given the scope of the economic crisis, the IMF changed its tune and criticized De la Rúa for not devaluating earlier.

The Radical leader didn't, because he knew that this would result in bankruptcy for the banks and many Argentine companies, forced to pay dollar-denominated debts with more and more pesos. That is exactly what Washington wants, in order to permit U.S. companies to buy up at bargain prices the economic infrastructure of the country. In Argentina, it wasn't American companies who bought up the privatized industries but European firms, with Spain in the lead. Now with devaluation, many of them will be forced to close their doors or leave the country. The sharks

of Wall Street will gobble up what's left.

Thus in order to save the working people of Argentina from ruin, it is necessary not only to repudiate the foreign debt but also to expropriate the banks and the rest of the key companies in the country, something no capitalist government is about to do, whatever nationalist rhetoric it may employ. Even a revolutionary workers government would have enormous difficulty in the face of the inevitable reprisals by imperialism in carrying out these essential steps which require international socialist revolution. Yet the bulk of the Argentine left is bound up in virulent nationalism, as it has been for more than half a century. In many of the protests the only symbol is the blue-and-white national flag, and the most common chant is "Argentina, Argentina!" But in order to win, a revolutionary struggle in Argentina must extend to the rest of the Mercosul (the Common Market of the Southern Cone). And it would have to spark struggle by North American, European and Japanese workers to defeat the imperialist octopus in its home countries.

It is also under the sign of nationalism that the centrist and reformist left capitulates to Peronism, as it has throughout the last decades (notably in the 1982 war over the Malvinas/Falklands islands when they supported the military adventure of the military dictatorship). Thus groups like the Partido Obrero (PO – Workers Party) of Jorge Altamira and the Partido de Trabajadores por el Socialismo (PTS – Socialist Workers Party) agree in calling the popular protests of 19 and 20 December "Revolutionary Days." What revolution?

Behind their praise of the initiative of "the masses," the fact is that these days resulted in a Justicialist (Peronist) government – that is, the same thieves who imposed dollarization of the Argentine economy are now imposing its "pesoization," while feathering their own nests. But this doesn't stop these pseudo-Trotskyist impostors from comparing the "*argentino*" with the 1969 "*cordobazo*," despite the fact that the latter was led by the auto workers of the industrial city of Córdoba and the "*cacerolazos*" are dominated by sectors of the middle class. Even in this case, when their protests are directed against the reactionary governments of the day, we must not forget that the first "pots-and-pans demonstration" was directed against the Unidad Popular of Salvador Allende in Chile in 1973.

All the main left groups in Argentina put forward one or another variant of a "democratic" policy, which seeks to solve Argentina's crisis within the framework of capitalism. On December 22, at the height of the "revolutionary days," PO signed a joint declaration together with the United Left (IU), dominated by Stalinist forces, calling for canceling the state of siege, non-payment of the debt, nationalization of the banks, restatification of privatized companies, etc., all carried out by a "workers and people's government." The label "people's" makes it clear that they are not talking of a revolutionary workers government, but rather a slightly more left version of a class-collaborationist popular front.

The "big fish" in the pseudo-Trotskyist swamp in Argentina are all agreed in calling for a "constituent assembly." Do they claim that there are still holdovers from feudalism in Argentina, a country without a peasantry (the rural settlements are almost all of agricultural wage workers)? Nor is Argentina under the boot

of a military dictatorship, having instead had a series of elected parliamentary governments. No, this slogan is expressing the desire of these opportunist groups to sidle up to the middle class on a "democratic" (i.e., bourgeois) and not a socialist basis. It is the current expression of the so-called "democratic revolution" preached by the late Nahuel Moreno – the godfather of the PTS, MAS and MTS – who raised this slogan echoing the anti-Soviet propaganda of the Reaganites in the 1980s.

The false pretenders to Trotskyism also agree in hailing the organizations of the *piqueiros* (picketers) and now the neighborhood assemblies as some kind of soviets. Yet the soviets were workers councils which served as the framework for the workers insurrection and later for constructing the dictatorship of the proletariat. The picketers' assemblies, as important as they have been in organizing protests such as the highway blockades, consist mainly of unemployed workers. The "popular assemblies" in the neighborhoods bring together above all elements of the ruined petty bourgeoisie, who are being asphyxiated for lack of access to their blocked bank accounts. Who has not been present at the mass protests are the industrial workers, the principal force that must be mobilized in order to carry out a socialist revolution.

Obviously, this is due to the stranglehold of the Peronist bureaucrats on the union movement. While divided into several federations (CGT, CGT Rebelde, CTA), all the main leaders are part of the "Justicialist" movement founded by General Perón. But the opportunist left is an accomplice in this domination of the labor movement by a bourgeois party. None of the main Trotskyist groups carries out real opposition work in the unions. As PO does with its "Workers Pole," they prefer to make alliances with dissident bureaucrats, forming "combative" coordinating committees with the heads of the CTA rather than forging a communist opposition that fights to defeat the entire pro-capitalist bureaucracy of the workers movement.

In Brazil as well, the reformists seek to respond to the attacks on the workers movement while respecting the bourgeois framework. The leadership of the CUT union federation claims to be fighting the labor law "reform" by organizing

strikes...to pressure the Senate! Instead, the Trotskyists call for extending the struggles from Argentina to Brazil and the rest of Latin America up to Wall Street.

Solidarity with the Argentine workers! Forge a revolutionary internationalist leadership!

Unite the struggles of Argentine and Brazilian workers! For permanent revolution!

Against the UCR (Radicals) and PJ (Peronists) in Argentina, Against Cardoso and the Popular Front in Brazil – Workers to power!

In Argentina: form workers councils, fight for a workers government!

Smash the imperialist debt – For socialist revolution from the Southern Cone to the U.S.!

For a federation of workers republics of the Southern Cone! For the Socialist United States of Latin America!

Forge Trotskyist parties in Brazil and Argentina! Re-forge the Fourth International!

Brazil Teachers' Strike...

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the decision to call out the Shock Battalion to "protect" palace functionaries "as well as strikers" (*Diário do Vale*, 7 May).

Stunned when the governor they had dreamed of for so long, with her "democratic and popular" program, kicked them in the teeth, the SEPE leaders pushed hard to end the strike, bringing to heel representatives of the PT "left" and the PSTU. Militants of the LQB and CLC, who played a significant role throughout the strike, were key among those leading opposition to a sellout at a mass strike meeting in Rio on May 21. Pressured by the leadership, 600 teachers voted to call off the strike, while 500 voted to continue. As the CLC bulletin had noted, "the popular-frontist leadership does not want to cause problems for Benedita and Lula." Their sellout of this long and bitter struggle underlines a fundamental point: defense of the most basic needs of the working people requires a sharp break from every form of class collaboration. ■

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Federal Judge Upholds Frame-Up Conviction, Orders New Hearing on Death Sentence

Battle Escalates for Jamal's Freedom

Mobilize Workers Power to Free Mumia Now!

JANUARY 9—Beginning 20 years ago, when Mumia Abu-Jamal was shot and nearly killed by the Philadelphia police, then framed for the killing of a cop and railroaded to Pennsylvania's death row, his case has summed up the racist essence of American capitalist "justice." The former Black Panther and crusading journalist was marked for death by a brutal local regime that for decades has run Philly like a police state, and by the FBI's program of disruption and provocation (COINTELPRO) that gunned down scores of black radicals, from Malcolm X to Fred Hampton. If the state murder machine has been held off so far, it has been out of fear of the consequences, as support for Mumia's cause has grown steadily and spread around the world. Today, he is by far the best-known prisoner facing execution in the U.S. and the focus of the struggle against the barbaric and racist death penalty internationally.

Now, after years of legal appeals and mobilizations in the streets, on December 18 a federal judge for the first time declared that the death sentence against Jamal was the product of judicial misconduct. Judge William Yohn ruled that the jury had been falsely instructed that unless they unanimously agreed to any mitigating factors, they were required to return a sentence of death. The ruling instructed state courts to hold a new sentencing hearing within 180 days or the sentence would automatically become one of life imprisonment. Headlines announced that Mumia's death sentence had been overturned. Philadelphia police and prosecutors fumed. Yet this narrow decision accepted only the most limited point raised in Jamal's appeal, one which could easily be overturned on appeal. The judge dismissed out of hand the other 28 issues raised, 20 of them violations of Jamal's constitutional rights, as well as *endorsing his frame-up conviction and refusing to hear dramatic new evidence of his innocence.*

The Internationalist Group and League for the Fourth International have campaigned from our inception to free Mumia and abolish the racist death penalty. We have repeatedly warned against any illusions in the capitalist courts, and called instead to mobilize the power of the working class against the racist injustice system. The IG/LFI has taken the lead in initiating working-class action for Mumia's freedom: in 1999 our Brazilian comrades sparked work stoppages demanding Mumia's freedom by teachers in the state of Rio de Janeiro; later that year, bank workers and the state CUT labor federation made freedom for Mumia an official demand in strikes. Today we warn: *this ruling does not lift the threat of Mumia's execution.* It must spur efforts to mobilize the working class and the op-



© Lou Jones

Mumia Abu-Jamal

pressed to free this courageous fighter against injustice from the claws of the capitalist state that seeks to silence his powerful "voice of the voiceless" forever.

Ruling Aims to Cut Off Liberal Support

If Judge Yohn's ruling stands, at best Jamal would be condemned to the slow death of "life" behind bars. Meanwhile, his death sentence can be reinstated on appeal. Philadelphia district attorney Lynn Abraham, a rabid advocate of the death penalty and sworn enemy of Jamal, has declared that she is appealing the ruling. Another ominous possibility is that a new sentencing hearing could again order his execution. Furthermore, the federal judge refused to hear any testimony, including from Mumia himself. He instructed state courts not to take a deposition from a new witness, Arnold Beverly, who has confessed that he (along with another hired gunman) shot Philly policeman Daniel Faulkner in a mob hit, and that Mumia had nothing to do with it. Yohn also refused to hold an evidentiary hearing. Under the 1996 federal law designed to speed up executions, this was the last point at which evidence of Jamal's innocence could be introduced.

The judge's ruling was entirely political, aimed at sectors of the ruling class that are uneasy about the death penalty, but who uphold the capitalist legal system and are not about to defend a black revolutionary accused of killing a cop. Speaking on behalf of the haughty local bourgeoisie, an editorial in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* (19 December) titled "Never Free Mumia" wrote of Yohn's decision, "Good move, judge." With a stroke of the pen Yohn "scrubbed cop-killer Mumia Abu-Jamal's role as poster child for the growing opposition to death row," which should "put an end

to his distracting presence as an international rallying cry against a flawed U.S. capital punishment system." Meanwhile, the *Inquirer* chortled, Jamal would stay "locked away for life in a prison cell with a view of the sun through iron bars."

Yohn's decision was also calculated to undercut support from liberals who are wary of proclaiming Mumia's innocence – as this would indict the entire system – and ask only for a new trial to clear up the blatant "travesty of justice" (as a February 2000 Amnesty International report put it) of his 1982 frame-up. The *Inquirer* editorial wrote: "To expect the hardcore 'Free Mumia' folks to just fade away is asking too much, of course. But here's a hope that the less radical fringe begins to see Abu-Jamal for what he is: a cop-killer who's a distraction from the real issues and concerns surrounding the death penalty." By this reasoning, the "new trial" folks could be quieted by the idea that at least Mumia would get a new sentencing hearing and might not be executed.

The "new trial" crowd includes Jamal's former lawyers, Leonard Weinglass and Dan Williams, who sabotaged his case by refusing to present the evidence they possessed of his innocence, and criminally aided the prosecution by labeling Beverly's confession not credible. Commenting on Yohn's ruling, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* (21 December 2001) wrote: "That partial victory is probably the best the defense can expect, specialists in criminal and constitutional law say. 'It is highly unlikely' Abu-Jamal will ever get another trial, said Daniel L. Williams, a former Abu-Jamal defense lawyer." Williams, who last year published a vile "insider account" smear job of Jamal's defense titled *Executing Justice*, seeks to build his own reputation as a "responsible" and "credible" death penalty lawyer by greasing the skids of Mumia's execution.

Many of the left groups who have taken up Mumia's case (including Workers World Party, International Socialist Organization, Socialist Action and others) have also couched their protest calls in terms designed to appeal to liberals, centering on the demand for a new trial. Thereby they have helped reinforce illusions in the racist court system, which will now come back to haunt Mumia as liberal support "fades away."

One group which has denounced the "new trial" program of the liberals and reformists is the Spartacist League. The Partisan Defense Committee, associated with the SL, played an important role in publicizing Mumia's case and in the legal defense, until PDC staff counsel Rachel Wolkenstein had to resign from the defense team in mid-1999 over Weinglass/Williams' refusal to present evidence of Jamal's innocence in the federal appeal. Yet in its December 18 statement announcing "Jamal Death Sentence Reversed," the PDC wrote that the Philly D.A. and the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) "fear that the explosive new evidence of Jamal's innocence...could finally be heard in a court of law." While ritually pledging no faith in the capitalist courts, it failed to warn of illusions in a new trial, or simply a new hearing, which Yohn's ruling was tailored to encourage.

Certainly, any breach in the previously solid wall of judicial stonewalling must be used to wage a vigorous defense of Mumia in the courts. Jamal's new legal team of Marlene Kamish, Elliot Grossman, Nicholas Brown and Michael Farrell are appealing

Yohn's ruling to the federal circuit court while seeking a new Post-Conviction Relief Appeal (PCRA) hearing in Pennsylvania courts. The Philadelphia D.A.'s office is worried that any hearing that involves selecting a jury and hearing evidence, even if it is limited to sentencing, could be explosive. They would be arguing to execute Jamal, whose case is known worldwide, when the actual killer has made a detailed confession. They also fear that if Mumia is not silenced by the executioner's needle, his powerful writings will continue to inspire his readers with the passion to fight against oppression. But this only makes Mumia's persecutors more dangerous. They know it is *their law*, it is *their state*, and they will use it to serve *their class interests*.

It is necessary to warn against dangerous illusions in the capitalist justice system. We must drive home that the supposed "partial victory" of Yohn's decision is a frontal attack on the fight for freedom for Mumia, who is innocent of the frame-up charges and is on death row solely because of his revolutionary convictions and eloquent defense of the downtrodden and oppressed. We must explain that the *killers with state power* will stop at nothing, *unless they are stopped by a greater power that threatens their fundamental class interests*. And we must organize that power, the strength of the multiracial, international working class, to bring the capitalist state murder machine to a grinding halt.

Mumia's Appeal Spiked by Clinton's Law

The judge's 272-page decision, couched in elaborate legalisms, is a vivid demonstration of how there is no justice for the exploited and oppressed in the capitalist courts. In particular, the liberal judge repeatedly denies Mumia's right to a hearing of the evidence of his innocence by citing the 1996 Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act (AEDPA). This law, pushed through Congress by Bill Clinton in the wake of the Oklahoma City federal building bombing, was designed to drastically limit federal appeals by defendants sentenced to death by state courts. (Southern Democrat Clinton campaigned on the death penalty, returning to Little Rock, Arkansas during the 1992 presidential race to preside over the execution of a mentally impaired black prisoner, Ricky Ray Rector.) Under AEDPA, death row inmates get only one chance for a federal *habeas corpus* appeal, in which they are *presumed guilty until proven innocent*, while they are systematically blocked by a series of legal impediments from obtaining proof of their innocence.

Jamal's *habeas corpus* appeal argued that the testimony of the state's two key witnesses who accused him was rigged by the cops, that other witnesses swore prostitute Cynthia White was not even at the scene, that taxi driver Robert Chobert originally told police he saw the shooter flee from the scene, and that White and Chobert were given favors by the police (allowed to work and drive illegally) in exchange for incriminating Mumia. It cited the testimony of Veronica Jones, who admitted changing her testimony in exchange for prosecutors' dropping charges against her in another matter. The appeal cited five witnesses who reported a man or men fleeing from the scene of the shooting (Jones, Chobert, William Singletary, Dessie Hightower and Deborah Kordansky), thus exonerating Mumia who was severely

wounded and unable to move. It cited the report of the policeman who was with Jamal the entire time in the hospital and who never reported any concocted "confession" until months later after coaching on the eve of the trial.

In all these instances, Yohn dismissed the appeal because according to the AEDPA "a determination of factual issue made by a State court shall be presumed to be correct." This means that Jamal's attorneys could not simply raise "reasonable doubt" about such "facts" but had to prove that they were false – and moreover that had the facts in question been known "no reasonable juror" would have found him guilty – simply in order to have a hearing on the issue!

Singleary's testimony is dismissed on the grounds that the PCRA court ruled it "not credible"; the same for Hightower. The fact that Jones recanted her 1982 trial testimony and reported that police had coerced her is dismissed on the grounds that the PCRA court found her "incredible and worthy of little or no belief." (Yohn adds, "I do not say that the cold paper record compels the conclusion that Jones was incredible," but only that the court did not "unreasonably" reject her testimony!). The PCRA court's refusal to hear Jones' testimony that police offered to let her "work the streets" without interference as they had done with Cynthia White is upheld, on the ground that anything to do with White was "outside the scope" of the hearing. As for requests for any police or prosecution documents about Jones, the PCRA court held that Jamal's lawyers hadn't proved coercion, and the only evidence of the existence of police files (which could prove it) was Jones' testimony, which the court dismissed: request denied!

The fact that the same Judge Albert Sabo ran the 1982 trial and then came out of retirement to preside over the PCRA hearing is presented as an "additional advantage" to "observe the demeanor of all witnesses." The fact that Sabo was an undersheriff for 16 years and a retired member of the Fraternal Order of Police, that he removed Jamal from the courtroom for virtually the entire 1982 trial, that he sentenced more men to death than any other judge in the country, that 29 out of 32 defendants he ordered executed were non-white, that he has been reversed more than any other judge in the country, that he quashed Jamal's subpoenas, blocked testimony, repeatedly threatened and even jailed Jamal's attorneys, was clearly biased against Jamal and even admitted his bias, and therefore should not have heard the 1995-96 appeal – all this is dismissed simply because the state supreme court dismissed it. (More recently, Pennsylvania courts have refused to hear the damning testimony of Philadelphia court reporter Terri Maurer-Carter, who during Mumia's 1982 trial heard Judge Sabo remark "I'm going to help them fry the n---r.") In any case, Yohn writes, Jamal "may not now raise post-conviction proceeding errors." When can these be raised? Under Bill Clinton's 1996 Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, never.

Among the points cited in the federal appeal was the fact that the prosecutor indicted Mumia on political grounds. The prosecutor cited Jamal's quotation of Mao Zedong's statement that "political power grows out of the barrel of a gun" and the Black Panther Party slogan "All power to the people!" as supposed proof that he was a killer. In his summary, the district

attorney said the policeman Faulkner had been in the armed forces and "comes back from war and is faced with a war on the street." (Yohn called this remark "ill-advised" but okay). Moreover, the prosecution did everything possible to eliminate blacks from the jury in Jamal's 1982 trial, rejecting at least eleven black jurors. (This objection was dismissed on the grounds that there was no evidence of how many blacks were in the original jury pool.) A training video from the Philly D.A.'s office was submitted, in which prosecutors were told to strike blacks in preemptory challenges, and how to do it. (Rejected, because the man in the video wasn't prosecutor Joseph McGill who tried Jamal's case.) Evidence was provided from other trials by prosecutor McGill that he used preemptory strikes in a racially discriminatory manner. (Rejected, because it should have been raised in the PCRA and it is too late now.) A ten-year study of the Philadelphia district attorney's office showed that blacks were systematically excluded from juries. (Rejected, because it covered the period 1983-93, and Jamal's trial was in 1982.)

The only one of 29 points presented in Jamal's appeal that Yohn agreed to was that the instructions to the jury illegally gave the impression that they had to *unanimously* agree to any mitigating circumstances, and otherwise they were required to return a sentence of death on the grounds that Faulkner was a police officer. Of all the points raised, this was the narrowest. Why accept this single point? First, to give the appearance of reasonableness: if it is overturned on appeal, defenders of the U.S. judicial system will say that at least one judge granted one of Mumia's points. Beyond that, there is evidently an on-going dispute within the bourgeois judiciary over this. Pennsylvania courts have repeatedly okayed jury instructions intended to force juries to return death sentences; these have in several cases been overturned by the federal court, whereupon the state courts do it again.

The only other point where Yohn even gave half an inch to Jamal's legal defenders was on the question of racial exclusion from the jury. He rejected all their charges, but allowed them a "warrant" to appeal. This is simply a public relations ploy: even if Mumia's lawyers can provide the numbers, it will make no difference. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1986 (*Batson v. Kentucky*) that proving "mere disparity of number in the racial makeup of the jury, though relevant, is inadequate" to prove discrimination. This is of a piece with the 1987 Supreme Court ruling in the case of *McCleskey v. Georgia* that the dramatic racial disparity in the number of blacks and Latinos sentenced to death compared to the tiny number of whites is *irrelevant*. The underlying "principle" was that put forward by Chief Justice Roger Taney in the 1857 *Dred Scott* decision, namely that blacks had no rights which a white man was bound to respect. This was a fundamental legal underpinning of the slave system, and it continues today in the form of the racist death penalty.

Philadelphia: The Capital of Capital Punishment

Yohn's ruling was on the October 1999 federal *habeas corpus* appeal submitted by Jamal's previous lawyers, Weinglass and Williams, which did not assert Mumia's innocence.



Video of Arnold Beverly confession shown at Mumia rally in Philadelphia, 8 December 2001.

Weinglass and Williams also refused to present the evidence proving that Mumia is not guilty of the frame-up charges on which he has been imprisoned for two decades, almost all of it on death row. Even though, under the draconian AEDPA law, many of the legal objections they raised are automatically excluded unless they prove the defendant innocent, they instead limited Jamal's appeal to the welter of irregularities in the rigged trial. And now we have the preliminary verdict on that supposedly "smart" legal strategy: virtually all the points were rejected, as the federal judge upheld the federal law whose purpose is to speed up the death row conveyor belt to the execution chamber. Finding out the truth was irrelevant, Yohn declared, as long as the denial of Jamal's rights was "reasonable."

Jamal's new legal team, headed by Marlene Kamish and Eliot Grossman, is appealing federal district judge Yohn's ruling to the Third Circuit Court of Appeals. They also submitted in July 2001 a new appeal to the state courts which begins: "Petitioner Mumia Abu-Jamal is innocent." It presents the signed confession of Arnold Beverly, admitting that he and another paid triggerman had shot policeman Faulkner. Beverly's deposition explains, "I was hired, along with another guy, and paid to shoot and kill Faulkner," who "was a problem for the mob and corrupt policemen because he interfered with the graft and payoffs made to allow illegal activity including prostitution, gambling, drugs without prosecution in the center city area.... Jamal had nothing to do with the shooting." This, together with statements by Jamal, his brother William Cooke and a former FBI informant, Donald Hersing, demonstrated conclusively that Mumia is innocent of the charges.

Yet innocence and even proof of innocence are not enough to save a prisoner from the executioner. As Mumia himself pointed out, Shaka Sankofa was innocent and had the proof, yet he was killed by the state murder machine. Already, a Pennsylvania judge has refused to hear Beverly's confession, as Yohn instructed the state courts not to.

So why did Jamal's former lawyers refuse to present the evidence of his innocence? In an affidavit submitted to the federal court last July, Rachel Wolkenstein of the Partisan Defense Committee explained: "Attorney Weinglass insisted that Beverly's

account was incredible and implausible.... Co-counsel Williams argued that if accepted, Beverly's account would mean that police had knowingly framed an innocent man, and Williams asserted that it was 'unbelievable' that police or the prosecution would do that." Unbelievable, incredible, implausible? On the contrary, all around the country, the police knowingly frame innocent people all the time, including and in particular in homicide cases. Recently a Tampa, Florida man, Juan Melendez, who had spent 17 years on death row was ordered freed, the 99th person since 1973 who was sentenced to die and later exonerated. In his case, another man made at least four confessions to the crime, but none were admitted as evidence.

In Philadelphia in particular, Beverly's confessions of a mob rub-out to cover up cop corruption is utterly believable, credible and plausible. The "city of brotherly love" was run for years as a little police state by police commissioner and later mayor Frank Rizzo. Philly was "Rizzotown," and he acted like a Bull Connor (the notorious top cop in Birmingham, Alabama during the civil rights movement) north of the Mason-Dixon line. His racist cops staged the 1970 raid on the Philadelphia Panthers, when Mumia was minister of information, in which black men were lined up naked in the street. He staged the 1978 assault by 600 police on the commune of the predominantly black MOVE organization in Powelton Village. He vowed to get reporters like Jamal who exposed this police atrocity (and became a MOVE supporter). It's not just Rizzo: Philadelphia is where on Mother's Day 1985 police got the permission of black Democratic mayor Wilson Goode to drop a bomb from a helicopter on the MOVE house on Osage Avenue, setting off a firestorm that killed eleven MOVE members (including five children) and burned out an entire city block of 61 homes.

Philadelphia has a tight local ruling class that runs the city like a Southern town. Philly became the "capital of capital punishment" under District Attorney Lynne Abraham, who argues that no innocent person was ever sentenced to die. "No prosecutor in the country uses the death penalty more," wrote a *New York Times Magazine* (16 July 1995) article featuring her. Abraham was the arraignment judge when Mumia was jailed. The Philadelphia D.A. at that time (1981) was Ed Rendell, later to become mayor and then head of the national Democratic Party. His wife, Marjorie Rendell, sits on the federal Third Circuit Court of Appeals. The assistant D.A. who prosecuted Mumia in the 1982 trial, Joseph McGill, is working as an attorney for the Fraternal Order of Police representing its members against charges of bribery and brutality. Sabo became the most notorious hanging judge in the country. Ronald Castille, who as Philadelphia D.A. prevented Mumia from getting a new trial in 1989, became a member of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court with the support of the FOP.

Philadelphia also became the capital of police abuse, as one could expect in a virtual police state. It's not about individual corrupt cops taking payoffs, but a whole system. At least three federal investigations exposed rampant police corruption and brutal abuse of minorities in Philly over the last quarter century. A 1979 Justice Department suit against the city and Rizzo provided 271 pages listing thousands of people who had been shot or beaten by the police. A Philadelphia Bar

Association study the same year determined that 299 killings by Philly cops between 1970 and 1978 were clearly illegal. In 1995, as Governor Ridge signed Jamal's death warrant and his appeal was being heard, the newspapers were filled with stories about an FBI investigation going back several years centering on police manufacturing of evidence, lying in court and setting up victims (including a 53-year-old grandmother). "Scores, possibly hundreds of bogus arrests may be overturned," reported the *Philadelphia Inquirer* (28 June 1995).

It's believable, all right. The credibility of the charges brought in Jamal's new appeal is not why his former attorneys refused to touch them. It was *their* credibility with the bourgeois legal system they didn't want to jeopardize. While lawyers are pledged to defend the interests of their clients, a trust that Weinglass and Williams horrendously betrayed as they stabbed Mumia in the back, they are also sworn in as "officers of the court." They can be disbarred or refused the right to representation in the courts, as President Clinton has discovered. But more fundamentally, they are an integral part of the bourgeois "justice" system, which defends the interests of the exploiters and oppressors by meting out injustice to the exploited and oppressed. To argue that Mumia was framed by the police, prosecutors and courts as well as by the FBI – *as he was* – would mean indicting the capitalist state. That they would not do, because like the whole layer of liberals, radlibs and reformists who only call for a "new trial," Weinglass and Williams peddle the illusion that you can get justice in the courts. Bottom line: they *support the state* that is hell-bent on silencing Mumia Abu-Jamal forever.

There Is No Justice for the Oppressed in the Capitalist Courts!

In every major political defense case over the past century, there has been a fundamental cleavage between revolutionaries and liberals. The former defend the victims of injustice by fighting against the capitalist state that is the victimizer. The latter want to "play by the rules," following a legalistic defense "strategy" that is doomed to defeat because it doesn't take on the real enemy. In the case of the anarchist workers Sacco and Vanzetti who were executed in 1927 at the height of the post-WWI "red scare," there were two defense committees, one led by the International Labor Defense (ILD) headed by James P. Cannon (who became the founder of American Trotskyism) and linked to the Communist Party, the other by the American Federation of Labor, who accused the ILD/CP of trying to get Sacco and Vanzetti killed by continuing to demonstrate in the streets. In the defense of the "Scottsboro Boys" in the early '30s, the liberals of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) bitterly denounced the CP-led defense for calling worldwide demonstrations on behalf of the nine Alabama black youths framed up and sentenced to die on charges of raping two white women.

In some cases this sharp class counterposition has reached the point of open warfare. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) poses as the biggest defenders of free speech, even defending fascist terrorists like Ku Klux Klan lynchers and Nazis on this bogus argument. Yet the ACLU expelled one of

its founders, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, from its board of directors at the beginning of World War II for being a member of the CP. It also refused to defend Julius and Ethel Rosenberg at the height of the post-WWII McCarthyite witchhunting because they were accused of treason (spying on behalf of the Soviet Union) during the anti-Soviet Cold War. While decades later, anti-Communist liberals continue to inveigh against the Rosenbergs, we consider them heroes and honor their memory. In the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal, Amnesty International for a number of years refused to defend him, saying that someone accused of killing a cop couldn't be a "prisoner of conscience."

The liberals who have called for a new trial for Jamal but refuse to call for his freedom have become increasingly venomous in recent years. Following a *Vanity Fair* (August 1999) smear piece, written by a publicist for Philadelphia mayor Rendell, in early 2000 *Nation* columnist Marc Cooper went on the warpath against Mumia and "Mumiaphiles," "professional Mumiacs" and the like, all the while claiming to oppose the death penalty and calling for a new trial. The liberal cyber-McCarthyites of *Salon* have published articles like "Try Him Again," denouncing "Millions for Mumia," "More Mumia Madness," etc. while bemoaning "Mumia's all-or-nothing gamble" (*Salon*, 15 June 2001), in which they attack Jamal for firing his "crack legal team headed by veteran attorney Leonard Weinglass." More recently there is one Gerald Nicosia, who is writing a book on Mumia's case, is a confidant of Dan Williams, and also floated the "Mumia did it" lie. Nicosia was good friends as well with Jeff Mackler of Socialist Action and the rest of the Bay Area popular-front "new trial" crowd.

The whole reformist milieu – whether openly social-democratic, Stalinist or pseudo-Trotskyist (ISO, WWP, RCP, SA, FSP) – has geared its appeal on Mumia's case to this layer of the liberal intelligentsia because that's what they always do. Their standard *modus operandi* is to form lowest-common-denominator coalitions on whatever demands are acceptable to the bourgeois liberal milieu. During the Vietnam War it was the social-patriotic call to "Stop the War" and "Bring Our Boys Home." In the late '90s, while waving "Free Mumia" posters to appeal to radical youth, they focused their protests on the demand for a new trial to rope in liberals. Now the treachery of Weinglass and Williams (who refused to proclaim Jamal's innocence in the *habeas corpus* appeal) and federal judge Yohn's ruling (calling for a new sentencing hearing) puts the reformists in a bind. Many of their liberal "allies" and "friends" may abandon ship as the battle for Mumia's life and freedom reaches the crucial hour, just as the popular-front "progressives" left the CP high and dry with the onset of the Cold War.

Mobilize the Power of the Working Class to Free Mumia and Smash the Racist Death Penalty!

The Sacco and Vanzetti, Scottsboro and Rosenberg cases gained wide international support because they synthesized the evils of "democratic" U.S. imperialism: the anti-immigrant "red scare," lynch law in the segregationist South, McCarthyism. Because they intersected vital interests of the American capitalist ruling class, these struggles could only be truly fought on the

basis of revolutionary politics. It is the same with the fight to save Mumia Abu-Jamal. His persecution is the continuation of the U.S. government's war on the Black Panther Party, which left 38 Panthers dead. It was a direct result of the COINTELPRO persecution of black radicals and leftists. Now, in the context of Washington's "war on terrorism," the Bush administration has heralded the "return of COINTELPRO" (as if it ever left us). Added to the secret trials for immigrants, elimination of appeals for death row prisoners and other innovations introduced by the Clinton Democrats, there are now military tribunals with no appeal and no defendants' rights, warrantless wiretapping, government-authorized assassinations, a push to introduce a national ID card and a host of new police-state measures. U.S. rulers are gearing up for war, internally as well as externally, and for them Mumia symbolizes the "enemy within."

But despite the swaggering displays of high tech prowess, U.S. capitalism is not the all-powerful juggernaut it makes itself out to be. The imperialist butchers can be defeated, through powerful *class* struggle by the workers and oppressed of the world. Wall Street is shaky following the collapse of the high technology "bubble" economy. A giant corporation like Enron suddenly goes bankrupt, ripping up the life savings of thousands of its employees. Millions of Argentine workers are reduced to living from soup kitchens by the policies of the IMF and the U.S.' "non-NATO ally" government in Buenos Aires. While the Pentagon's stealth fighters have demonstrated that they can hit the broad side of an Afghan mountain, the U.S. could soon see its nuclear-armed Indian and Pakistani "allies" at war with each other. And despite Bush Junior's sky-high opinion poll ratings, the patriotic fervor is only skin deep. The working class is already uneasy as unemployment shoots up dramatically even as the stock market rebounds, anticipating sharply increased profits due to layoffs and declining wages. *The fight to free Mumia must be part of a revolutionary struggle against the whole fragile edifice of U.S. capitalism.*

The Internationalist Group and League for the Fourth International renew the call we made in 1999 for an international mobilization of workers power to free Mumia Abu-Jamal. Brazilian workers can strike a blow against their own oppression by again undertaking work stoppages for Jamal, on an even larger scale, and extend the fight to Buenos Aires, where tens of thousands of Argentine workers mobilized on behalf of Sacco and Vanzetti in the 1920s. Workers and students fighting against the starvation policies of the devaluationist Peronist government and the IMF can strike a blow against the imperialist bloodsuckers by mobilizing for Mumia. South African unions, groaning under the "free market" capitalism of the African National Congress under Mandela and his successor Mbeki, have for years called for Mumia's release; now is the time to put industrial muscle behind those calls. Italian workers battling a rightist government including fascist ministers should raise the fight for Mumia's freedom in mobilizing against the war on Afghanistan. Ukrainian coal miners, Indian leftists, European workers and youth battling social-democratic war mongers should join the fight to free Jamal and to abolish the barbaric death penalty to their struggles against domestic repression and imperialist war.

The struggle inside the United States to mobilize labor in fighting unity with oppressed minorities to demand freedom for America's No. 1 class war prisoner is key. West Coast and East Coast dock workers are facing a combined government/employer onslaught in the name of "security"; this threatens such keystones of labor strength as the union hiring hall. The energy that went into defending Charleston, South Carolina longshoremen should be mobilized on behalf of Mumia. It is vital that the fight for Jamal's freedom be extended to the black and Latino population of America's inner cities, where efforts so far have produced a weak response. As recent events have underscored, what's required is not pressuring the liberals to pressure the government but a frontal *class* struggle against the capitalist system which has launched a war against immigrants, blacks, working and oppressed people around the world. We fight to break the workers and oppressed from the Democratic and Republican parties of death and to build a revolutionary workers party, as part of the struggle to reforge the Fourth International.

The fight against the racist death penalty must be part of a broader struggle against the capitalist society that produced it. In an article on capital punishment published in the *New York Daily Tribune* (17 February 1853), Karl Marx asked rhetorically, "what a state of society is that which knows of no better instrument for its own defense than the hangman"? Lenin's Bolsheviks fought against the death penalty, which was used by the tsarist autocrats to terrorize the Russian population in times of war and peace. Today, many protesters at demonstrations for Mumia chant, "No justice, no peace." This is an appeal to the capitalist state to produce justice for the oppressed – something that cannot happen. With the bloodiest executioner among U.S. governors now sitting in the White House – serial killer George Bush who personally sent 152 inmates to their deaths – the European bourgeoisies wag their fingers at Washington over the death penalty. Yet for U.S. rulers, legalized state murder is an important component of their arsenal for war on the home front, where the chasm between rich and poor grows ever wider, as it seeks to impose its global domination.

In mobilizing to free Mumia, we have pointed out that this case is no aberration but the normal workings of a system that regularly metes out injustice to racial minorities, immigrants, leftists, workers and anyone else deemed a threat by the ruling class it protects. The racist death penalty in the U.S. is rooted in this history of chattel slavery, KKK "lynch law" and Jim Crow segregation; today it goes hand in hand with "racial profiling" and police executions in the streets. Marx and Lenin underscored that law reflects the actual economic conditions of society: so long as we live in a society divided into classes, in which the ruling class organizes the state to defend its interests and survival, "justice" will necessarily be *class justice*. What is necessary in the midst of the present imperialist war is to wage *class war* to impose *proletarian justice*, to sweep away the hangmen and the machinery of state murder through international socialist revolution. That is the road to freeing Mumia Abu-Jamal and sending the barbaric, racist death penalty to the dustbin of history! ■

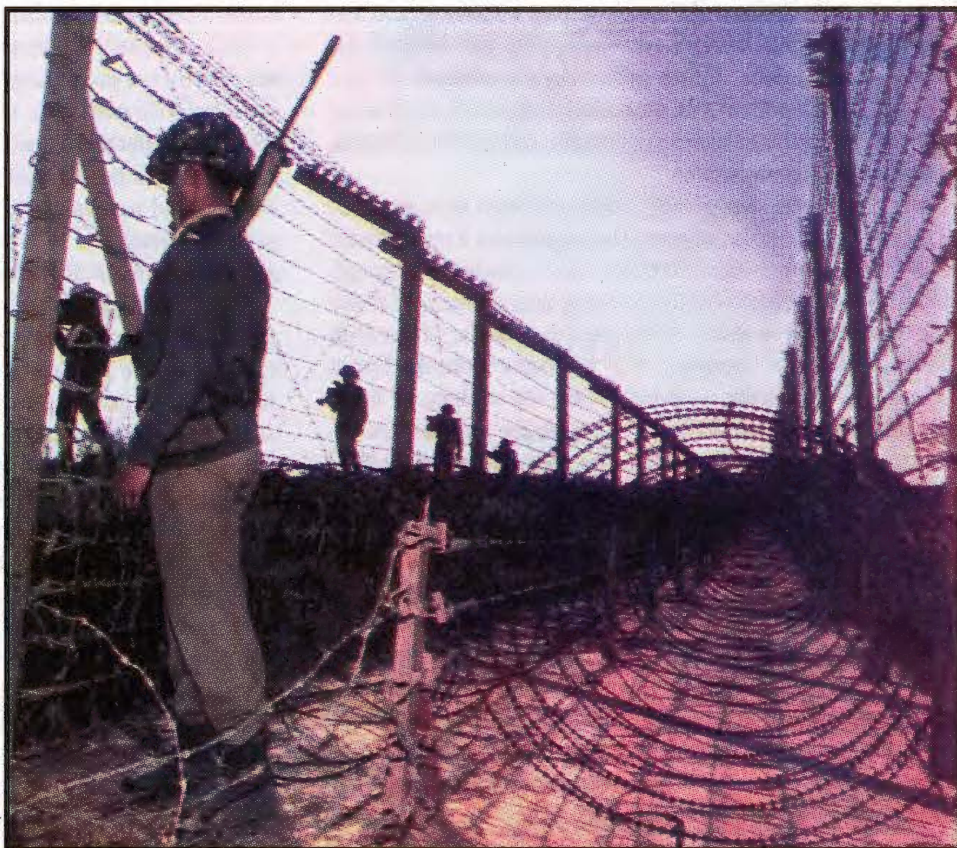
India-Pakistan For Workers Revolution Against the Chauvinist Warmongers!

As the U.S. and NATO terror-bomb Afghanistan in the name of fighting "terrorism," the two regional capitalist powers (India and Pakistan) which signed onto the imperialist war drive are at each other's throats. Beginning in January, more than one million Indian and Pakistani troops have been mobilized to the frontier. Heavy cross-border artillery shelling has killed hundreds of peasants and soldiers on each side.

The immediate object of the dispute is the predominantly Muslim land of Kashmir, which has been divided since the 1947 partition of the Indian subcontinent by the departing British colonialists. Indian and Pakistani rulers have already fought three wars. Today the right-wing Hindu communalists in power in Delhi and the Islamic fundamentalist military regime in Islamabad are armed with atomic weapons. A fourth India-Pakistan war could quickly escalate to a nuclear conflagration killing millions.

U.S. president Bush would like to dampen the squabbling between his regional satraps. But denunciations of the nuclear danger are the height of hypocrisy coming from the imperialist power which is the only country ever to use atomic weapons in war, annihilating Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. Today the most dangerous warmongers are those in Washington who falsely pose as "peacemakers." The League for the Fourth International has called for revolutionary defeatism on both sides in this new India-Pakistan conflict, while defending the right of self-determination for Kashmir and all the oppressed peoples of the region and fighting for a socialist federation of South Asia (see "Imperialists' Terror War Spreads," page 40).

We print below two articles by Revolutionary Fourth International, a small group of Indian Trotskyists in Calcutta that sympathizes with the LFI. The second article (beginning on page 38), concerns the communalist slaughter instigated by the Hinduist right-wingers that broke out in the state of Gujarat in late February, leading to anti-Muslim pogroms which have taken more than a thousand lives.



Mustafa/AFP

A million soldiers are poised for open war along the India-Pakistan border.

India-Pakistan Conflict

The following is translated from Revolutionary Fourth International, March 2002.

Even before a formal declaration of the end of the imperialist invasion of Afghanistan, the possibility of further war is being visualized in the Indian subcontinent. Those who aligned with imperialism in the name of fighting against terrorism are presently mobilizing army columns against one another. Alongside the military mobilization, they are quarreling in various international forums and diplomatic events, brandishing military threats while the U.S. secretary of state and high-level diplomats travel to India and Pakistan, Indian and Pakistani ministers go to the United States, British prime minister Mr. Tony Blair runs about, etc. As the situation changes daily, it is always problematic to definitely foretell what will happen. But in any case, as concerns the improvement or deterioration of India-Pakistani relations, the main factor has always been the balance and tug-of-war between the great powers internationally. Today, India and Pakistan are both

AP (left) and AFP (right)



Pakistan's Ghauri II missile (left) and India's Agni missile (right).

placed in the circle of U.S. imperialist domination. This perspective is very important to understanding the present tensions in India-Pakistani relations.

Kashmir

Kashmir is the focal point of the India-Pakistan tension and tug of war. The last 50 years' history of the Kashmiri peoples is the history of domination and coercion by the reactionary ruling classes of India and Pakistan. While the Indian ruling class would like to drown the freedom struggle of Kashmir in blood, the Pakistani ruling class seeks to occupy Kashmir, saying Muslims are a single nationality.

India declares, "Kashmir is an inseparable part of India." This is not true, since the accession of Kashmir was conditional, and according to the agreement, would be finally determined by a popular referendum. On the other hand, the claim that all Muslims are a single nationality, as declared by the late

leader of the Muslim League, Mr. [Mohammad Ali] Jinnah, or today's *jihadis* (partisans of Islamic holy war), is also not true. By looking at Bangladesh, which was separated from Pakistan, it is possible to understand the history of Kashmir. In spite of the latter being a Muslim-dominated state, Jinnah and the Muslim League had no foothold in Kashmir, and they [the Kashmiris] did not want to join Pakistan.

In this article, we do not intend to explain all the facts of Kashmir's history. But to provide a perspective to understand Indian-Pakistani relations, we present a few comments.

Kashmir was divided in two in 1947. Later, during the three wars between India and Pakistan, the people of the Indian sector of Kashmir side did not support Pakistan at all. The reason was that the freedom movement of Kashmir was a nationalist and secular movement. But after 50 years of continuous provoca-

tions by India and Pakistan, today that situation is somewhat changed. In the Indian sector of Kashmir, among those who fight against India there are three separate tendencies: pro-independence, pro-Pakistan and *jihadis*. If they gained independence from India an internecine war would be posed between those favoring joining Pakistan and pro-independence forces..

We demand the immediate withdrawal of the Indian army and security forces and of the Pakistani army from the areas of Kashmir they occupy: Let the population of Kashmir decide, free of the "persuasion" of bayonets.

Border Tension

The decision of India and Pakistan to undertake military mobilization along the international border is not independent, reflecting only their will. If the military mobilization of India depended only on the decision of the Indian government, then we would have seen such army mobilization some years ago. It did not happen because the balance of power was not in favour of India internationally.

In the last decade, since the fall of the USSR, India has been increasingly close to U.S. imperialism and Israel. On the other hand, the [Islamic] fundamentalists emerged due to the interest of the United States and Pakistan. The U.S. aim was to preserve its dominance and increase its influence in the former Soviet republics and over the oil reserves in Central Asia. Then came the war on Afghan soil against the fundamentalist Frankenstein which they created, leading to the present government in Kabul, which came to power with the aid of imperialism. The repressive actions by [Pakistani prime minister] Musharraf against the *jihadis* are due solely to U.S. imperialist pressure. But Musharraf's grip is not consistent, and his control over Pakistan is not secure. The fundamentalists and *jihadis* have considerable influence in the state and army of Pakistan.

So far imperialism seeks to avoid war among its regional partners. But in such a tense situation, it is not possible to say that the development of events will remain within the limits drawn by imperialism. At present, clearly both the Indian and Pakistan governments are maneuvering for maximum support from the United States as arbiter in the context of the imperialist war on Afghanistan (which both fulsomely support).

National Chauvinism and the Role of the Trotskyists

It may be that the end result of the border tension between India and Pakistan will be an outbreak of total war. In the present tensions, there is a sinister brandishing of aggressive nationalist militancy in both countries. At present in India, the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party, presently in office at the head of a coalition government) and their allies want to keep up aggressive nationalist hysteria for winning assembly elections. At the same time, it is equally important for the Indian bourgeoisie to cover up the increasing economic crisis from the view of the people. This is no less true for Pakistan. All the Indian bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties have joined in this aggressive nationalist hysteria.

The parliamentary left (such as the CPI, CPM, CPIML and others) mildly criticize it, but if war breaks out, then we can

continued on page 39

Build Working-Class Defense Guards to Fight Against Communalist/Fascist Barbarism!

—translated from Revolutionary Fourth International, March 2002.

Seeing the barbaric events which have occurred in some parts of India including Gujarat in recent days, it can feel as if India is a slaughterhouse. People burned alive, cars stopped and torched with passengers inside, burning homes and their occupants, stabbing, raping, plundering – all these are barbaric events. They recall the Nazi barbarism of Germany during the Second World War. In India, such types of barbarism have occurred in the past, and everything is prepared for the future. In fact, the fascist RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh – National Volunteer Corps) and their mass organisations have begun to carry out their programme for making India into a Hindu state, through the movement to build the temple to [the Hindu god] Ram and the destruction of the Babri mosque in Ayodhya.

As a part of that programme, the RSS along with its associated organization VHP (World Hindu Council) and its regional organisation Bajrang Dal, etc. called for the building of the Ram temple to begin on 15 March (the “*kar seva*” or temple construction). With this aim, they began gathering their fascist thug forces in Ayodhya from all over India. Their aim is to instigate nationwide communal conflict as occurred in 1992, and to build mass support for their activities. Revolutionary Trotskyists categorically oppose the movement for building a Ram temple through the destruction of the Babri mosque, since this programme is contrary to the interests of the working class, and at the same time it will shatter the class unity of the working class along communal lines.

Over the last decade there has been a qualitative change in the nature of communal clashes. Today “communal riots” mean planned murder or massacre or pogrom. The leader of this pogrom is the fascist RSS and their gangs. On the other hand, from the opposite side, communalist forces like the Islamic Sevak Sangha Jamat-i-Islami are keeping pace with those fascist forces.

Recently, we have seen this communal barbarism and pogroms in the killing fields of Gujarat, in a pre-planned phenomenon. As they traveled for *kar seva*, cadres of the RSS and VHP were spreading tension. With their inflammatory comments threatening shop owners and plundering, they started the communal tension and clashes. Growing out of this, the Sabarmati express train was burned. Murdering by burning of the train is clearly barbarism. But capitalising on this barbarism, the RSS, VHP, Bajrang Dal, etc. showed even greater barbarism through a pogrom against the Muslim community. In fact, they wanted this,



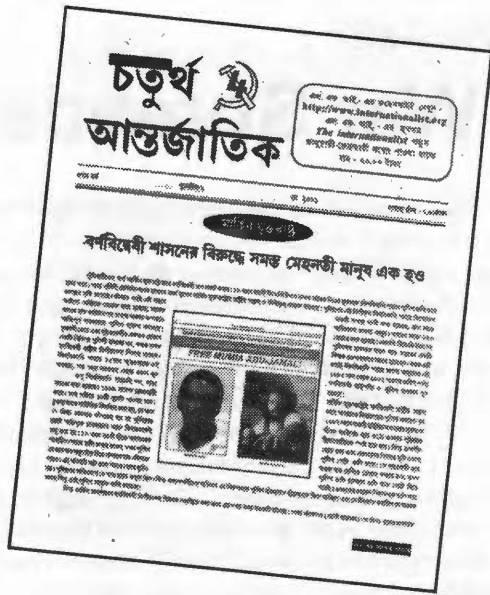
Manish Swarup/AP

Soldier stands guard while Muslim family searches rubble of their home destroyed by Hindu chauvinist pogrom in Ahmedabad, March 3. Reformists call on army to repress rioters, although police joined in attacks. Trotskyists call for ethnically integrated workers defense guards.

so that due to their provocations, anywhere an event would take place, they would make use of this event to continue their fascist and communalist-barbaric actions. Recall a decade ago, the Rath Jatra activities led by of BJP leader L.K. Advani [now India’s home minister, in charge of the police, who marched from Gujarat to Bihar to carry out *kar seva*] led to 43 riots or cases of anti-Muslim slaughter.

In every instance, the RSS and BJP provoked those incidents. In 1992, following the destruction of the Babri mosque, communal pogroms and conflicts took place all over the country and nearly 3,000 men and women were murdered. One after another, they are instigating pogroms against Muslims, Christians and Dalits [the caste of “untouchables”]. In the face of this, it must be realised that without a disciplined, country-wide communist party, it is impossible to counter them. Therefore, it is crucial to build a revolutionary communist party based on Marxism, Leninism and Trotskyism. In order to stop the barbarism of the RSS and all types of pogroms, today the working class must advance shoulder to shoulder. Hence our call to build workers defence guards, based on the working class and labouring masses in various religious communities.

Those who look to the state and its repressive apparatus to counter the RSS’s fascist activities and planned massacre are living in a fool’s paradise. As in many other communal clashes in Gujarat, the police and state machinery were either inactive or they participated along with RSS or VHP. During the Mumbai [Bombay] riots, the police participated with the fascist outfit Shiv Sena. In Uttar Pradesh, police always joined



Revolutionary Fourth International, in Bengali, published in Calcutta.

with Hindu communalist forces in the communal clashes. Moreover, this time it was clear that the Gujarat state government [headed by RSS leader Narendra Modi] directly cooperated with the fascists. At the same time, the central government indirectly assisted the Gujarat government. Thus one can see that both the central and state governments had a direct interest regarding this barbarism.

It is as clear as water that the present central budget is a call to war against the working class and labouring masses. They need such types of incidents in order to divert the rage of the working people against the budget. Through army mobilisation in the border regions, they have tried to whip up national-chauvinist hysteria, but this did not produce the desired results for the BJP and its partners in the recent state assembly elections. So the BJP decided to step up their aggressive *hindutva* (Hinduist) line. Those who have been rallied by the fascists are nothing but a petty-bourgeois mass. Lacking a revolutionary way out, those people joined with the fascists in the face of the assault by the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois state (economic assault, poverty, unemployment, etc.). As an intermediate class they can be won to revolution, but when they see no prospect for revolution they join with the fascists.

Today the bourgeoisie is seeking to build a police state through the the POTO (anti-terrorism), POCO (anti-crime) and other anti-working class laws, carrying out attacks one after another. The working class and labouring masses must understand that one cannot oppose and resist these attacks along the path of popular fronts and forming popular-front governments. Thus the urgent task of the working class to advance the revolutionary working-class movement against capitalism. Only in this way is it possible to resist communal and fascist barbarism. ■

India-Pakistan...

continued from page 37

definitely say that they will stand with the Indian capitalist state, as they have done in the past, while making "left" criticisms. In fact, they have no kind of revolutionary internationalist orientation for the destruction of capitalism and the capitalist state, because they are carrying on their popular-front politics and forming governments. In [the 1940s], they acted in the role of agent of British imperialism in the name of the popular front, and aligned politically with Congress and the Muslim League in the name of a "two-stage revolution."

As Trotskyists we believe that the working class must uphold the banner of revolutionary politics against these various types of revisionism. In 1946, the Trotskyists of the BLPI (Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India) fought for independence and mobilized the working class in support of the Indian naval mutiny. Continuing that tradition, today Marxist revolutionaries of both countries should stand up against this aggressive nationalism (national chauvinism) of their "own" countries in this acute situation and must uphold the banner of proletarian internationalism.

If a war is started, then revolutionaries must fight for the defeat of the capitalist state and capitalism, and must call for preparing revolutionary insurrection. As revolutionary Trotskyists we call on the soldiers of both countries to turn their arms against their "own" bourgeoisie from the standpoint of socialist revolution. Working-class power should be mobilized against military movements of their "own" country, linked with the struggle for the defense of bureaucratically deformed workers states (China, Cuba, North Korea, Vietnam) from the imperialist aggression. At the same time, this struggle will clear the path for political revolution to overthrow the Stalinist bureaucracy in those countries. This path is the path of socialism, the path of Leninism and Trotskyism.

For this reason a Trotskyist party must be built which will work for the reconstruction of Trotskyist Fourth International for the aim of global revolution. ■



Sue Kellogg

Internationalist Group supporters in June 8 demonstration in Brooklyn, New York against the war and detentions.

U.S./NATO Out of Afghanistan and Central Asia!

Imperialists' Terror War Spreads

- Next Up: Philippines, Iraq, Somalia...?
- Revolutionary Defeatism on All Sides in an India-Pakistan War!
- For International Socialist Revolution!

JANUARY 26 – From the time the first American bombs fell on Afghanistan, it was barely five weeks until the chaotic bands of U.S.-backed warlords from northern Afghanistan drove into Kabul unopposed on November 13. In the space of a few days, the troops of the Taliban regime withdrew to the south, abandoning their stronghold of Kandahar in early December and melting away into the mountains along the Pakistan border. Leaders in Washington and London were triumphant. Pentagon spokesmen proclaimed the success of their “new war” strategy: “pinpoint” bombing with special forces troops on horseback using laptop computers to call in air strikes. But the imperialists’ *Blitzkrieg*-like “victory” is by no means definitive, and will only bring further suffering to the Afghan peoples while setting the stage for more war around the globe.

Class-conscious workers throughout the world must fight to defeat the imperialists and defend Afghanistan, Iraq and any other country targeted by the U.S./NATO war.

As U.S. forces direct “mopping-up” operations in the countryside, and a British-led NATO “peacekeeping” force patrols Kabul, it’s clear that Western occupation forces won’t be exiting Afghanistan any time soon. An “interim government” headed by U.S. puppet Hamid Karzai and filled with minions of the former king Zahir Shah (deposed in 1973) was formed at talks in the former West German capital of Bonn. While this

warlord/monarchist lash-up got reluctant backing from various elements of the fractious “Northern Alliance,” it has little support among the Pashtun majority in the South. One gang of Islamic fundamentalists has replaced another, and Afghan women are still imprisoned in the head-to-toe *burqa*. Meanwhile, there is no sign of the Taliban leader, Mullah Omar, or George Bush’s nemesis Osama bin Laden, despite “Wanted Dead or Alive” posters and a multi-million-dollar bounty.

This hasn’t stopped the imperialists from forging ahead with their “global war on terrorism.” The U.S. keeps on bombing Iraq (three times in the last week) as it has done regularly since the Persian Gulf war a decade ago. Washington hardliners threaten to topple Saddam Hussein, even though the CIA thinks its bought-and-paid for Iraqi “opposition” isn’t up to the job. Deputy U.S. war secretary Paul Wolfowitz pointed to Somalia as a “lawless country” that fit the bill for a second “anti-terrorist” strike. Yemen was another likely target. The Pentagon wants to lift restrictions on aid to the Indonesian army imposed by Bill Clinton and unleash the murder machine of former dictator Suharto. But tops on their list is the Philippines, where a joint command has been formed between the U.S. and the local army. Some 650 American troops (Army Green Berets and Navy Seals) are slated to be “in-country” soon, more “advisors” than the United States had in Vietnam in the early 1960s.

But while U.S. special ops teams pay Afghan mercenaries to comb the caves looking for Taliban and “Al Qaeda” fighters gone to ground, full-scale war could break out between India and Pakistan, both of which are nuclear powers. The Indian government has closed the 1,800-mile border, hundreds of thousands of troops have taken up battle positions on both sides, scores of

soldiers and civilians die in daily skirmishing in Punjab and Kashmir, and rockets capable of delivering nuclear warheads have been readied. The current governments in Islamabad and Delhi are client regimes of the United States; both of them back the imperialist war in the name of fighting “terrorism,” and each is jockeying for influence with Washington. Yet General Musharraf and Prime Minister Vajpayee are connected to Islamic fundamentalist and fascist Hindu communalist forces respectively, which are eager to trigger a conflagration. U.S. president Bush’s war on Afghanistan could ultimately send all of Central and South Asia up in flames.

U.S./NATO occupation forces could take losses from skirmishes with remnants of the Taliban in the forbid-



U.S. killer elite: 101st Airborne launches assault near Gardez, March 2002.

ding Afghan mountains, or suffer another fiasco as in Mogadishu, Somalia in 1993. The crucial force is the working class – from South Asia to Latin America to the imperialist centers in Japan, Europe and North America – to bring down the blood-thirsty capitalist rulers who are waging a terrorist war in the name of “anti-terrorism.” Their war is also directed against working and oppressed people at home, as police-state measures are enacted in countries from India and Australia to France, Germany, Canada and the United States. In the U.S. we demand the release of the more than 1,200 mainly Near Eastern detainees

being held incommunicado by the government. Initially targeting immigrants, Washington’s longer-term aim is to rip up fundamental democratic rights and set the stage for an assault on unions, the left and anyone else identified as the “enemy within.” This onslaught cannot be fought by petitions and appeals to the bourgeoisie for more “humane” policies. We say: Not pacifism or nationalism, but *class war against the imperialist war!*

The imperialist governments and media say this is a war against terrorism. In fact, it is a terrorist war. According to a careful counting by University of New Hampshire professor Marc Herold, at least 3,742 civilians were killed by U.S. aerial



Marco di Lauro/AP

Women in the “new” Afghanistan. Shrouded in *burqas* (the head-to-toe “veil”), women lined up for United Nations aid are beaten by a soldier of the U.S.-allied Northern Alliance.

bombing in Afghanistan from October 7 to December 10 (“A Dossier on Civilian Victims of United States’ Aerial Bombing of Afghanistan: A Comprehensive Accounting”). Since then, more than 270 deaths have sent the civilian toll over 4,000. In addition, there were the hundreds of Taliban prisoners slaughtered by U.S. bombing of the fort at Mazar-i-Sharif in late November, and hundreds more who suffocated while being transported in sealed containers. Even some liberal commentators have pointed out that these numbers considerably exceed the 3,000 people killed in the indiscriminate September 11 attack against the World Trade Center in New York. And while the military talks of supposedly unintended “collateral damage,” a Pentagon official said of an attack on a farming village, “the people there are dead because we wanted them dead” (“Who Will Count the Dead? U.S. Media Fail to Report Civilian Casualties in Afghanistan,” *MediaFile*, December 2001).

The imperialist governments and media say this is a war to free women from oppression. The wife of the U.S. president, Laura Bush, went on radio in mid-November using the plight of Afghan women under the Taliban as an argument for the war; she was followed by Cherie Blair, wife of the British prime minister. Yet almost simultaneously when some 200 women courageously gathered in the center of Kabul uncovered by the imprisoning veil, they were prevented from marching by the new U.S.-backed regime on the grounds of “security” (AFP, 20 November). In fact, only a small minority of women in the capital have dared to uncover their faces as the brutal oppression of women continues under the new Islamic funda-



Attica in Afghanistan: soldier of “Northern Alliance” steps over bodies of some of the several hundred Taliban prisoners wantonly slaughtered by U.S. bombs during revolt at Mazar-i-Sharif fortress, 28 November 2001.

mentalist rulers. News stories talk of universities being opened to women, when in fact only a few score will be admitted. And no one even talks of the right to free abortion on demand, of free childcare, of equal pay for equal work. It will take international socialist revolution to free Afghan women!

That will require the mobilization of the working class throughout Central and South Asia, led by internationalist communist parties, to overthrow the capitalist (and in the case of Afghanistan semi-feudal) rulers, achieving fundamental democratic rights and undertaking socialist tasks through workers and peasants governments, and extending the socialist revolution to the imperialist centers. This Trotskyist program of permanent revolution is sharply counterposed to the Stalinist purveyors of the myth of "socialism in one country." In the 1980s, Trotskyists hailed the Soviet intervention against CIA-backed Islamic fundamentalists in Afghanistan, which cut against the Stalinists' pipedream of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism. We likewise denounced the ignominious Soviet withdrawal in 1989, which set the stage for the demise of the USSR and the East European deformed workers states in 1989-91.

Today, as the capitalist governments of India and Pakistan threaten to engulf the region in nationalist war, Trotskyists stand for *revolutionary defeatism on both sides*. We call on Indian and Pakistani workers and soldiers to "turn the guns the other way," against the reactionary Hindu communalist BJP government of India and the Muslim-militarist government of Pakistan. Working-class power through strike actions and other means should be mobilized against the military movements, which threaten to plunge the subcontinent into a fourth Indo-Pakistani war since the bloodbath of partition. Trotskyists call for the right of self-determination for Kashmir, annexed to India against the wishes of its predominantly Muslim population in 1948, as well as for all the oppressed peoples and nationalities of India and Pakistan. At the same time proletarian revolutionists fight uncompromisingly against the Islamic fundamentalists and Hindu chauvin-

ists, as well as against the nationalist-populist capitalist parties. We fight for workers republics joining Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Kashmir, Nepal, Lanka and Tamil Eelam, etc., in a socialist federation of South Asia.

The takeover of Kabul and Kandahar and the occupation of Afghanistan by NATO forces is not the end of the war but merely the opening shots, for U.S. imperialism has proclaimed a *global* war. On the eve of the bombing of Afghanistan, Vice President Cheney remarked that the "anti-terrorist" war declared by the White House "may never end. At least, not in our lifetimes." The Republican White House rejects the former Democratic administration's mantra of "nation-building," which Clinton used to justify U.S. aggression from Somalia to Yugoslavia. The Bush gang more openly pushes "empire-building," not only against "rogue states" (like Iraq or the North Korean deformed workers state), but also against its European imperialist rivals. London is content to once again station its troops in the Afghan capital, as it did a century and a half ago as it waged the "great game" with tsarist Russia for control of this pivotal region. Washington wants more: it is in the process of setting up military bases in Tadjikistan and Kyrgyzstan, to encircle now-capitalist Russia and keep its hand on the spigot of Central Asian oil (while letting its NATO "allies" get bogged down in "peacekeeping").

Would-be cowboy George W. Bush would see himself sitting high in the saddle. With the "war on terrorism," the Bush White House thought it had found just the ticket to overcome domestic unease about the illegitimacy of this president, "elected" by a 5-4 vote in the Supreme Court, to cow the Democrats, regiment the population and get European and Russian leaders to toe the line. A cheap and easy "win" in Afghanistan would leave them sitting pretty. But American capitalism is not as all-powerful and stable as its cynical rulers make out. Houston oil-and-gas giant Enron, until mid-October the seventh-biggest company in the U.S. and by far the biggest corporate backer of Bush, has dramatically crumbled to dust, its stocks worth less than 1% of their former value. One of the top five accounting firms, Andersen, is on the verge of collapse. Meanwhile, Argentina, the star pupil of the International Monetary Fund, which effectively "dollarized" its economy a decade ago and followed every IMF directive to the letter, has been ruined. Swept by mass protests of the starving unemployed and the pot-banging middle class whose bank deposits have been confiscated, the country had five presidents in less than two weeks.

For Yankee imperialism, bent on world domination, the implosion of Enron and explosion of Argentina threaten to eclipse the Afghan war. But as Lenin repeatedly emphasized, capitalism will not collapse on its own. The objective conditions for world socialist revolution are more than ripe. What is key is the "subjective factor," forging a revolutionary party in an authentically Trotskyist Fourth International to sweep away the capitalist system which can only produce more misery, more war, racial oppression and economic crisis, from Afghanistan and South Asia to the imperialist heartland. ■

Romeo Ranoco/Reuters



U.S. Special Forces troops arriving in Zamboanga, Philippines, January 24.

Netherlands: Fortuyn Death Cements All-Party Anti-Immigrant Front

Mobilise the Power of Labor, Immigrants and Youth Against the Bourgeoisie's Racist Offensive!

Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants and Their Families!

The following statement by the League for the Fourth International in the Netherlands was issued on May 10.

In death, as in life, Pim Fortuyn fans the flames of racist reaction. His assassination on May 6 has been above all the occasion for a nauseating display of "national unity" in which the man who openly proclaimed his opposition to legal equality before the law, who condemned women to domestic slavery is praised as a "democrat," his death an assault on "democracy." Fortuyn was the spearhead in the Netherlands of the imperialist war drive supported by all the bourgeois and reformist parties, which means stepped-up police repression against immigrants and the whole working class on the domestic front. We are facing an accelerating reactionary racist movement that's gathering steam with the complicity of all the bourgeois and reformist parties. They suspended the election campaign to downplay their "differences" with Fortuyn while attempting to recuperate a section of his Lijst Pim Fortuyn. The myth of Dutch "tolerance" and "consensus" has been exploded. Not so much by the assassination itself as by the racist offensive and anti-leftist witchhunt, which Fortuyn led, and which his death has accelerated.

We revolutionary Marxists shed no tears for the racist demagogue Fortuyn. It is necessary to underline this point in view of the shameful, cowardly reaction of much of the "left" who have rushed to add their condolences. Fortuyn was the most flamboyant advocate of the anti-working class austerity measures de-



Martin Meissner/AP

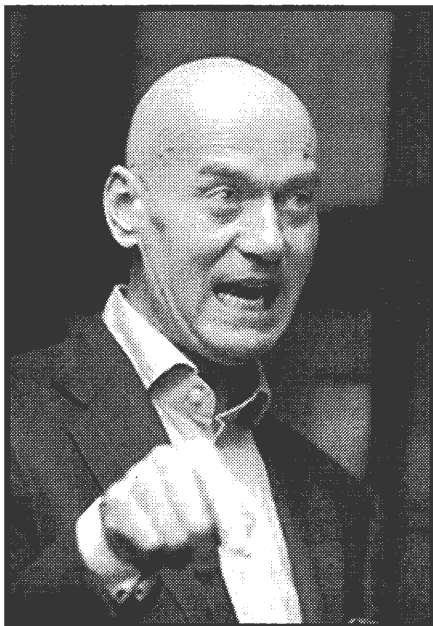
Riots by Fortuyn supporters, among them skinheads, in The Hague, May 6.

creed by the ruling class, declaring "not a penny more for health care or education," calling for laying off a quarter of state employees and for purging the WAO (disability insurance) lists. He manipulated fears about "insecurity" in the aftermath of September 11 and channeled them against Moslem immigrants with his infamous statement that Islam was "backward" and his call for closing the borders.

Attacks on individuals symbols of capitalist oppression, while sometimes the acts of deranged persons, have always been rejected by Marxists as being ultimately a strategy of despair, which targets representatives of this system rather than the system itself. Just as Fortuyn replaced the fascist Hans Janmaat (head of the "Center Democrats") for a time as the manipulator of racist hysteria, the ruling class can and will find a new figure to serve as tribune for its anti-immigrant campaign. There is no substitute for the organization and political mobilization of the workers and oppressed against racist terror and capitalist exploitation.

The scenes of mourning in Rotterdam have offered a platform for all kinds of racist filth. On the night of the shooting outright fascists participated in the rioting at The Hague. During the "silent march" on 8 May, fascist Center Democrats chanted, " Hamas, Hamas, gas blacks." So much for the illusion that black Surinamese or West Indians would be excluded from the crusade against "Islam"—in reality this is an all-sided racist crusade.

De Telegraaf was quick to point the finger at the far left; the fascist NVU (Netherlands People's Union) called for a ban on leftist groups. Fortuyn's supporters blamed the ruling so-



Pim Fortuyn

Fascism, Bonapartism and Police Terror in Italy

In Genova, Italy last summer the government of Silvio Berlusconi imposed a veritable police state on tens of thousands of demonstrators protesting against the meetings of the heads of state of the eight leading capitalist powers (the Group of 8). On July 20, carabinieri (paramilitary national police) charged into a peaceful demonstration and as protesters scattered, they shot an “anti-globalization” demonstrator, Carlo Giuliani, in the head, rolled over him twice with a police vehicle and drove off. It was an execution. That night squads of riot police broke into the Diaz school which housed many protesters and the independent media center that was sending out news of the dem-

onstrations. The blood-stained walls recorded the horrors that took place as scores of youth were brutally clubbed and hauled off to holding pens. As they were carrying out the attack, the cops repeatedly shouted “Viva Il Duce!” (Mussolini) and “Viva Pinochet!”

Italy is the West European country where the connection between fascists, police-state terror and a drive toward a bonapartist “strong state” stands out in sharpest relief. This is no accident, because for decades Italy simultaneously had the most solidly implanted fascist party and the largest Communist Party. The Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI), which regularly got 5 percent of the vote, was founded in 1946 by the remnants of the Salò Republic, the last redoubt of Benito Mussolini at the end of World War II. In 1993 the MSI renamed itself the Alleanza Nazionale (AN) under the leadership of Gianfranco Fini, who declared the new party to be “post-fascist.” Yet despite the superficial face-lift and a split two years later of a tiny group nostalgic for the old days, the AN is essentially the same party as its fascist predecessor.

In 1994, the AN got over 13 percent of the vote, and joined the government of rightist media magnate Silvio Berlusconi with five ministers. (In Naples, the niece of the Duce, Alessandra Mussolini, got almost 47 percent.) However, a series of massive workers strikes and judicial investigations of government corruption and conflicts of interest stymied the first Berlusconi government. The “Ulivo” (Olive Tree) popular front led by the social-democratic rump of the old Communist Party, the Democratic Left (DS), was elected two years later and, dependent on the parliamentary support of Rifondazione Comunista, it proceeded to



Carlo Giuliani, executed by carabinieri in Genova, 20 July 2001.

push through many of the anti-worker “reforms” that the right-wing Berlusconi couldn’t get passed. As the working class became demoralized, Berlusconi’s Forza Italia won elections in March 2001 in alliance with Fini’s AN and Umberto Bossi’s Lega Nord, a right-wing populist regional party.

The AN was given the ministry of the interior, in charge of the numerous police forces. The fascist minister, Claudio Scajola, immediately began setting up special squads armed and trained for civil war. The carabinieri who shot Carlo Giuliani were brought up from the south, after being trained by Los Angeles sheriffs in military tactics used to suppress the 1992 L.A. upheaval. Hundreds of arrested protesters were sent to a prison camp outside Genova where they were tortured by the GOM prison riot cops, notorious for their fascist leanings and for carrying out massacres of inmates at Sassari and Secondigliano. Prisoners who refused to sing the fascist anthem *Falco* were beaten. On the day of the attack, fascist vice-premier Fini himself was in the Genova police headquarters following the situation.

This is not to say that the bourgeois “democrats” and reformists aren’t capable of unleashing police terror – on the contrary. The plans for the Genova summit were begun under the previous popular-front government, and only a few weeks earlier the police of social-democratic Sweden gunned down an anti-globalization protester in Göteborg. As corporate mergers set off a new wave of layoffs and union gains are under attack throughout Europe, social-democratic and liberal parties are enacting draconian laws against immigrants and criminalizing leftist and labor demonstrations. In Italy, *il*

cavaliere Berlusconi is an aspiring Bonaparte rather than a fascist; he was a member of the infamous P2 network whose influence extended throughout the political, military/police and business hierarchies. But while Berlusconi holds the baton, in a country like Italy – where ties between fascists and the secret services go back decades (the head of P2, Licio Gelli, was Mussolini's envoy to Göring's SS) and played a key role in the government's "strategy of tension," such as in the 1980 bombing of the Bologna train station that killed 85 – the heirs of Mussolini in the government play a key role in implementing police-state measures.

As Fini's Alleanza Nazionale was preparing to enter the government last year, the Italian section of the International Communist League, the Lega Trotskista (LTd'I), declared that the AN "historical descendants" of the fascist MSI were "essentially an electoral phenomenon, no different from the Austrian FPÖ of Jörg Haider." Certainly, "terrorist groups nostalgic for Mussolini commit frequent acts of fascist terror and violence, in the first place against immigrants and other minorities, the weakest strata of the proletariat," they allowed, "but they are still far from having the strength to directly attack the organized workers movement"

(*Spartaco*, April 2001). So because the terror is directed mainly at immigrants and other minorities, AN isn't fascist according to the LTd'I! This is not only an astounding chauvinist statement but a falsehood as well. In fact the fascists' victims aren't only immigrants, as was dramatically shown in Genova only a few weeks later.

But not only in Genova, and not only by fascist-infested police. In December 2000 one Andrea Insabato exploded a bomb at the offices of the leftist daily *Il Manifesto* in the center of Rome. The bomber was formerly close to the fascist terror



Militarized police armored cars and cavalry in Genova, July 2001. Rightist Berlusconi government, including the fascist Alleanza Nazionale, is pushing drive for a "strong state." Reformist left participates, approving new repressive measures.



Cristiano LaRuffa/La Presse

group Forza Nuova and more recently the anti-Semitic Militia of Christ; in the 1970s he had participated in an armed assault on a Communist Party office. Insabato was a regular at rallies of Fini's Alleanza Nazionale, and the week before planting the bomb he was photographed at a fascist demonstration greeting Haider during a visit to Italy (see photo). That provocation was opposed by a mobilization of several thousand leftists shouting at Haider "fascist" and "*Nazi raus*" (Nazi get out). But for the LTd'I, the AN and Haider's supporters are not fascists but only "electoralists" (with bombs?)

Italian Workers Have the Power to Smash the Fascists and Cop Terror

Massimo Pinca/AP



Millions of Italian workers went into the streets to fight anti-labor laws, but they are shackled by reformist misleaders. Above: Workers rally in Milano during April 16 general strike; flag of syndicalist COBAS.

La Repubblica



Andrea Insabato, who bombed leftist newspaper *Il Manifesto* in December 2000, shown a week earlier at fascist demo greeting Jörg Haider in Rome.

The police-state repression, and the role of the fascist AN in carrying it out, did not end with the uproar over the bloody cop terror in Genova. This past May 31, the police raided two dozen homes of militants of the Cobas/SLAI syndicalist organization. The accusation: membership in an organization with subversive aims (Article 270), and offense to a public official (Article 342), for chanting “carabi-

nieri – police – assassins”). Immigrants are particularly targeted with the passage on June 4 of a racist immigration law. Immigrant workers play an increasingly important role in Italian industry, notably in steel, and they have mobilized and even struck against the attacks on them. But they must not stand alone.

The Italian workers movement has the power to crush the fascists, but it is paralyzed by the reformist union and party bureaucrats, in particular those of *Rifondazione Comunista*, who bind it to bourgeois “allies.” Last fall, teachers and others struck against Italy’s participation in the war on Afghanistan and the attacks on labor at home. In February, March and April of this year there were escalating protests against the Berlusconi government culminating in an April 16 general strike that brought out 13 million Italian workers and 3 million demonstrators against the government’s anti-labor reforms. But this tremendous power and energy were dissipated by the reformist union and party leaders who are trying to breathe some life into the moribund *Ulivo* popular front. The key to defeating the drive for a “strong state,” whose central purpose is to break the power of the Italian workers movement, is to build a genuinely Trotskyist vanguard which can tell a fascist party when it sees it, recognizes the danger of bonapartism and knows how to defeat it – through international socialist revolution. ■

**No to Chirac and Le Pen!
Sweep Away the Fascist Thugs May 1!
Boycott the Elections May 5!**

France 1935-2002: Popular Front Opens the Door to Fascist Reaction

APRIL 26 – The outcome of the first round of the French presidential elections sent shock waves around the world. After a lackluster campaign in which the main candidates of the right and “left” ran on barely distinguishable programs, those who came out ahead at the polls were the conservative incumbent president Jacques Chirac and the fascist Jean-Marie Le Pen. “Socialist” prime minister Lionel Jospin finished third with barely a sixth of the votes. As preliminary vote totals were announced on television, many stared in disbelief; in Paris and other cities, thousands of youth



Claude Paris/AP

Demonstration in Marseille against National Front, April 24. Popular front diverts hatred of the fascist Le Pen into votes for rightist Chirac, who poses as savior of France.

surged into the streets to say “No to Le Pen.” Protests soon grew to tens of thousands and continued during the week; mass demonstrations are scheduled for April 27, April 28 and May 1. Meanwhile, calls are multiplying to get the largest possible score for Chirac in the second-round runoff elections on May 5. But voting for any candidate of a bourgeois party or class-collaborationist coalition will not stop the fascist menace. *It is necessary to mobilize the power of the working class to boycott the electoral circus of the bourgeoisie and sweep away the fascist thugs of capital.*

Youth, immigrants and militant workers are rightly outraged at the ominous showing by the fascist National Front

(FN). Le Pen and his cohorts are not a “current of opinion” but the political front for racist shock troops of reaction who would annihilate immigrants, the left and labor. *They must be crushed* before it is too late. But the utterly correct desire to put a stop to these racist killers is being manipulated into building support for the notoriously corrupt rightist Chirac in the name of “defense of the Republic.” “Vote for the crook, not the fascist,” say demonstrators’ signs. The League for the Fourth International warns that this call for a “Republican front” against the National Front is a dead-end. Chirac will implement much of the reactionary program of Le Pen, just as the reformist Jospin took up the racist campaign theme of “security”

***Fight for Workers Revolution!
Build a Real Leninist-Trotskyist Party!***

DOSSIER ON FRENCH ELECTIONS AND THE NATIONAL FRONT

AP



Nothing "ex-" about these fascists. Skinheads march before screen showing National Front *Führer* Le Pen at 1 May 2002 FN mobilization in Paris.

(code word for cop attacks on youth and immigrants in the name of fighting "crime").

Working people, immigrants and youth must say *no to Chirac and Le Pen*, and *break with the reformist social-democrats and pseudo-communists who paved the way for this lurch to the right*. The answer to the fascist danger will not be given by voting for an arch-conservative for president or building a "united left" for the legislative elections. "Popular fronts" of reformist workers parties with small bourgeois "left" formations such as the Greens and Left Radicals bind the workers and oppressed to their class enemy. Class-conscious workers must instead build a revolutionary workers party on the Bolshevik program of Lenin and Trotsky. And the next time Le Pen tries to parade his racist thugs – on May 1, when FN paramilitary units provocatively march under the nationalist symbol of Joan of Arc in opposition to the international workers day – *the racist vermin should be swept from the streets of Paris by an overwhelming force of organized workers power!* And the day of the vote, there should be *workers demonstrations and strikes repudiating the capitalist electoral farce* which offers the "choice" between two reactionary millionaires.

The first-round election results were a stunning slap in the face to the popular-front government which has been in office for the last five years. Like Tony Blair's "New Labor" government in Britain, Jospin's government of the "plural left" carried out the program of the right. Jospin undertook more privatizations than his conservative predecessor, joined the U.S. and NATO in waging imperialist war on Yugoslavia and Afghanistan, and unleashed police persecution of immigrants and youths in the bleak suburban housing projects symbolized by Operation Vigipirate. The vote for Chirac and Le Pen was also part of a right-wing

wave across Europe with fascist parties brought into coalition governments in Austria and Italy, as well as big votes for parties of virulent anti-"foreigner" chauvinism in Switzerland and Denmark. In the Netherlands the party of immigrant-basher Pim Fortuyn threatens to make advances in upcoming legislative elections. As corruption scandals multiply, the stage is set for a new "Stavisky affair" as in the early 1930s, when fascist and royalist militias in France joined forces to attack the workers and the left.

Underlying this ominous advance of rightist reaction is the persistence of double-digit joblessness for more than a decade under social-democratic or popular-front governments of the left in much of West Europe. As anger burgeoned among workers, youth, teachers, the unemployed and other hard-hit sectors, all the parties of Jospin's government suffered losses in the April 21 first-round French presidential vote. The reformist Communist Party (PCF), whose vote fell to under 3.5 percent, is heading toward extinction. On the

other hand, three candidates claiming (falsely) to be Trotskyist garnered more than 10 percent of the ballots between them. Yet the more than a million votes each for Arlette Laguiller of Lutte Ouvrière (LO) and Olivier Besancenot of the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR), and the candidacy of the Parti des Travailleurs (PT), far from presenting a revolutionary opposition to the class-collaborationist popular front, were essentially a protest vote intended to "send a message" and put pressure on Jospin & Co. to shift to the left. These candidacies did not present a class opposition to the imperialist war and its internal front (the campaign about "security"); at most they sought a more "social" and "independent" policy for French imperialism. (See "France: Racist War Elections" in this issue, page 51).

The government of the "plural left" was put in office in order to drain off the working-class militancy which dramatically exploded in the massive strikes of December 1995. Once it has rendered its service to capital of demoralizing the working class, it is unceremoniously dismissed by the ruling class. This is the history of a century of popular frontism, from Millerand at the beginning of the 1900s to Mitterrand and Jospin at the end. As we wrote in our article "Popular Front Chains the Workers" (*The Internationalist* No. 2, April-May 1997):

"In reality, such coalitions with the bourgeoisie – the classic example being the Popular Front which arose in the 1930s – serve above all to strangle the struggles of the workers and oppressed against their exploiters and oppressors. Far from blocking the fascists, the popular front serves as a roadblock to revolution, and thus prepares the way for the victory of capitalist reaction. Defending the fundamental Marxist principle of the political independence of the working class, Trotskyists call for *proletar-*

DOSSIER ON FRENCH ELECTIONS AND THE NATIONAL FRONT

ian opposition to the popular front and no vote to any candidate of class-collaborationist coalitions."

In the 1930s, the Popular Front cabinet of Léon Blum dissipated the revolutionary energies of the general strike of June 1936; nine months later, police massacred anti-fascist protesters at Clichy. As disenchantment spread among the workers, Socialist premier Blum gave way to the bourgeois Radical Edouard Daladier, who in turn was relieved of duty by the bonapartist dictatorship of Marshal Henri-Philippe Pétain. Today Jospin cedes to Chirac, with Le Pen waiting in the wings.

The former paratrooper and torturer of Algerian independence fighters Jean-Marie Le Pen is an admirer of Pétain's World War II regime at Vichy. Le Pen praises the trinity "Work, Family, Fatherland," which was the watchword of Hitler ally Pétain's "French state" that replaced the Third Republic and "Liberty, Fraternity, Equality." The FN Führer has also infamously declared the Nazi Holocaust of Jews a mere "detail of history" while proclaiming the "inequality of races." The FN program calls for authorizing police to shoot whenever they feel endangered, bringing back the death penalty, the "effective expulsion of clandestine immigrants" and that "legal immigration will be totally prohibited." He has taken up the "anti-globalization" banner in the name of national sovereignty, wants to rescue Quebec and Louisiana from Anglo-Saxon influence, and calls to organize a "national guard of volunteers" (i.e., storm troopers). The areas where FN influence has risen have seen attacks on Jewish synagogues and cemeteries, as well as against North African immigrants. The fascist danger represented by Le Pen is very real.

Leon Trotsky warned in his article, "France at the Turning Point" (March 1936): "The People's Front, the conspiracy between the labor bureaucracy and the worst political exploiters of the middle classes, is capable only of killing the faith of the masses in the revolutionary road and of driving them into the arms of the fascist counterrevolution." A few months later, in July 1936, as the Francoists were rising up against the Spanish Popular Front, Trotsky also warned against those centrists and left-talking reformists who "peddle their wares in the shadow of the Popular Front." Today, the parliamentary cretinists of LO, LCR and PT work the fringes of the latter-day popular front, and as the latter has lost steam, the outcome is the ascent of the fascist Le Pen. The League for the Fourth International warned of this danger in refusing to give electoral support, however "critical," to any of the fake-Trotskyist candidates whose program consisted of pressuring Jospin & Co. to the left. Instead, it's necessary to prepare a revolutionary struggle to replace the bourgeois parliamentary government of the "plural left" with a workers government based on workers councils (soviets).

Now the sizable pseudo-Trotskyist organizations are squirming because their little game blew up in their face. Most of the criticism directed against them is utterly cynical: the ex-Maoist editor of *Libération*, Serge July, lectures Laguiller about lack of commitment to "democracy" because LO still claims to support the dictatorship of the proletariat; the Communist Party denounces Trotskyists for opening the door to fascism by present-

ing candidates (the PCF also ran its own candidate). Now the PS is rent by internecine squabbling; the PCF is bankrupt (financially and politically) and moribund; and the LO/LCR/PT are building "anti-fascist" protests in the streets to raise votes for Chirac. Laguiller begins her April 22 statement on the election: "I do not call for abstention on the second round of the presidential election." That means vote for... who? She doesn't say, but anyone can decipher her call. LO calls for "broad participation" in all the demonstrations against Le Pen and the far right, but claims it won't support those whose aim is to support Chirac or a "Republican front." Yet that is precisely the purpose of all the marches, whether they say so explicitly or not.

For its part, an April 22 statement by the Political Bureau of the LCR goes on about how the vote for Le Pen is a "political earthquake" causing "traumatism" for millions of people. It ends by saying, "We understand the voters who are voting for Chirac in order to oppose Le Pen," while lamely adding that the LCR doesn't think that Chirac is the "rampart" to battle the far right. The LCR statement attacks the FN chief for his support of privatization and anti-social legislation, but says nothing about his racist attacks on youth and immigrants. With their calls for a new "party of the working people" (or of the "world of labor"), LO and the LCR are clearly chasing after former PCF voters who backed Le Pen. With their demonstrations under the watchword "*tous ensemble contre Le Pen*" (all together against Le Pen), they are organizing extraparliamentary support for the "Republican front" for Chirac, with only the most transparent fig leaf of "independence" from the candidate of big capital. While Jospin warns of violence if protests continue, the tame parties of the "far left" pointedly do not call for driving Le Pen's thugs off the streets. We, on the other hand, call for dispersing the fascist bands and boycotting the phony elections.

What happens next in France will have repercussions throughout Europe. If battalions of workers cleanse the streets of Paris of the DPS and UMI private armies of the National Front, if there are strikes and demonstrations against the electoral farce on May 5, the impact will be felt immediately in Italy, for example, where more than 3 million workers have struck and demonstrated against the vicious anti-labor measures of the rightist government of sinister media magnate Berlusconi and the fascist Fini. But if a couple of weeks of demonstrations are followed by a big vote for Chirac, it will only strengthen the reactionary right. Above all, the bankruptcy of the reformist PCF and the PS, with its legions of ex-pseudo-Trotskyists, and the tailist pressure politics of the LO/LCR/PT underline the necessity of building a real Leninist-Trotskyist party of the proletarian vanguard. Vague talk of a "party of the working people" means a pot pourri of every variety of opportunist and a lowest-common-denominator reformist program. This may provide a home for burned out 68ers but cannot possibly lead the multiethnic working class of France and Europe in a revolutionary fight for power. A genuinely communist party which fights for a Socialist United States of Europe can only be built in the struggle to reforge the Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution. ■

For Class War Against the Imperialist War!

Racist War Elections in France

**Down with the Anti-Worker, Anti-Immigrant Popular Front!
No Support to the Fake Opposition of Lutte Ouvrière!
For a Workers Government!**

The following article is translated from a May 2002 supplement to L'Internationaliste, French language publication of the League for the Fourth International.

APRIL 14 – With the approach of the presidential elections, a dramatic gap has appeared: the population says in numerous surveys that it is tired of a campaign in which it sees no difference between the main candidates, while on the other hand the parties, from right to left, are only interested in the poll numbers. Despite the whole bourgeois political circus there are burning questions at stake — but they are not being addressed in the French electoral debate. **France is an imperialist country at war:** more than 500 French troops are occupying Afghanistan while in France the forces of “law and order” are going after immigrants, considered the “enemy within.” **But no candidate and no party, even of the so-called “far left,” is opposing this imperialist war.**

Throughout the world, the terrorist “war against terrorism” is spreading and claiming its share of victims. In Afghanistan, the imperialists have become entangled in a morass of their own making. The puppet government set up under the auspices of NATO in Bonn is not even capable of guaranteeing order in Kabul; the rest of the country is being carved up by the Pushtun warlords, armed and paid by U.S. imperialism, and the gangs of the Northern Alliance. French paratroopers and their “military-humanitarian” helpers of Médecins sans Frontières installed themselves in Mazar-i-Sharif in December, backing General Dostam who massacred hundreds of prisoners just before their arrival. In March, French Super-Étendard and Mirage fighter jets participated in the bombing of Taliban positions in the southern part of the country. And the war is far from over.

In the Near East, the Zionist regime is laying waste to Palestine with its full-scale offensive whose aim is to drive out thousands of Palestinians and to decapitate the Palestinian Authority. While they are building a “European fortress” to keep out immigrants and refugees, the imperialist governments of the European Union (EU) are posing as “defenders” of the martyred Palestinian people. U.S. imperialism’s plans to overthrow Saddam Hussein are criticized in Europe where the German and French imperialists are worrying about their own interests in the region. But that is as far as they go.

All this against the background of growing inter-imperialist tensions. After the “Socialist” minister of foreign affairs Hubert Vedrine denounced the American “hyperpower,” the conservative Chirac, a former “Harvard Boy,” thunders against the “vassalization” of Europe. The Euro (which is really the Deutschmark in drag) was launched on January 1 to compete

with the U.S. dollar as the reserve currency of capitalist high finance. Then the EU countered American steel tariffs — the beginning of a veritable trade war in which the trans-Atlantic “sound of marching boots” can even be heard in the editorial offices of *Le Monde*.

Yet all of this is absent from the presidential campaign. The consensus between the “right” and the “left” around the interests of French imperialism — which has always been the basis of their “cohabitation” — is the reason. But the imperialist war is very much present in these elections. It is there behind the revolting, openly racist bidding contest over “security” (crime). What this has meant in practice, from the outset, is reinforcing police powers, in which the “Vigipirate” campaign [raids and identity checks directed against immigrants] is only the tip of the iceberg. The government’s racist campaign is the home front. The armed bands of capital — the police, gendarmes — maraud in the streets, en masse, in uniform, without respite. And the recent disgraceful attacks on synagogues will unleash torrents of amalgams between the immigrant suburbs and “Islamic terrorism.”

The government of the “plural left” presided over by Lionel Jospin — which includes the Socialist Party (PS), the French Communist Party (PCF), the Greens and (initially) the Citizens Movement (MDC) — is a classic popular front. This class-collaborationist alliance between reformist workers parties and bourgeois parties took over from the Balladur-Chirac government which was deeply shaken by the mass strikes which broke out among public employees during the winter of 1995-96, in an attempt to divert workers’ anger and to avoid a new social explosion which could again threaten the power of the bourgeoisie.

The balance sheet of this government includes six million people today living below the poverty level, four million earning less than the minimum wage. Temporary work is expanding. The “reforms” introduced by the popular front have turned into attacks on the working class: the “Aubry Law” on the 35-hour workweek did not create jobs; instead it blocked wage gains, increased the intensity of work and legalized “flexibility” (read: layoffs). Today, the “Socialist” prime minister Jospin can hardly distinguish himself from his rival, President Chirac.

As working conditions deteriorate, the feeling that the popular front has betrayed them has been expressed first of all in the frittering away of the working-class base of its “Communist” partner, leaving the field open for the three “Trotskyist” candidates, particularly Arlette Laguiller, spokesman for Lutte Ouvrière (LO). But this “far left” has remained true to its cynical policy of pressuring the bourgeois government to throw some crumbs to the workers and oppressed. The PCF as well as the union bu-

Patrick Kovarik/AP



Jacques Chirac (left) and Lionel Jospin during a military ceremony at Vincennes, January 25.

reaucrats immediately signed on to the “anti-terrorist” holy union, nor does the “far left” oppose it. LO, even while saying that this “is not our war,” refuses to call for the defeat of French imperialism and to mobilize the working class to stop the war machine. In the pages of *Lutte Ouvrière* these days one can read the denunciations of the “American bombing” of Afghanistan, but there is no call for the withdrawal of the French troops who are keeping “order” in NATO’s Afghan protectorate.

The Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR), for its part, signed together with the PCF, the Greens and other “partners” in the government of the left an “Appeal to Public Opinion” which echoed the imperialist war propaganda against “terrorism” and called on the United Nations and “international law” to “identify, arrest and try the authors of the [September 11] attack”. The LCR even declared that “one can only rejoice” upon the arrival in Kabul of NATO’s Afghan allies (LCR leaflet, 17 November 2001). Today, Alain Krivine’s party calls for dispatching imperialist troops (European, not American, of course) to the Near East, as it already did in 1999 in the Balkans. On April 6, the LCR marched in Paris at the head of a demonstration behind a giant banner calling for sending an “International Protection Force for the Palestinians.” Meanwhile, Jospin himself proposed the sending of an “international observation and interposition force” to the West Bank. A survey by *Libération* (4 April) revealed that among the bourgeois candidates to the presidency, all are “in agreement to become more involved” in the Near East.

To call on the European imperialists, the butchers of the Serb people who keep Kosovo and Bosnia under the NATO protectorate; who have joined in the bombing of Afghanistan alongside U.S. imperialism and who today keep “order” in Kabul and Mazar-i-Sharif; who inundated Algeria and Indochina with the blood of hundreds of thousands of their inhabitants in order to crush their struggles against colonialism — to call on these war criminals as an “alternative” to the U.S. is to sing the praises of one’s own bourgeoisie and to prepare a bloody defeat for the Palestinians. In contrast, the League for the Fourth International demands, U.S., NATO, UN, out of the Near East, Central Asia and the Balkans! Defend Afghanistan and Iraq — Defeat imperialism! For international socialist revolution!

Nor does this far left, LO as well as the LCR, oppose the “security” hysteria of the bourgeoisie. Instead they try to turn the racist campaign in a more “social” direction, with appeals (to the bourgeois state) to prohibit layoffs, to ban evictions, etc. — a flimsy “bulwark” against the ravages of capitalism. The attacks on the working class in France, of which a sizeable component are immigrants, are closely linked to the “anti-terrorist” imperialist war and the attacks on democratic rights, against “immigrant” youth [most of whom have lived all their life in France] and against the undocumented. A general counterattack against this assault requires overcoming the racist divisions which weaken this working class in fighting against racist terror. For that it is necessary to build a Trotskyist party worthy of the name, based on a revolutionary class-struggle program. At bottom, the crisis of the proletariat is the crisis of its leadership.

All-Around Chauvinism

For decades, this country has known a cycle of popular-front governments of the left followed by the return of a vengeful right. Each time the popular front accomplished the “dirty work” of demoralizing the workers and opening the door to the fascists with its anti-immigrant campaigns. This time, the right-wing bourgeois parties are divided, and its candidate is dragging a heavy millstone of accusations of corruption. But the spectre of reaction is far from being excluded.

The jubilation on the “far left” about the high scores Laguiller is getting in the public opinion surveys is accompanied by worry that “Arlette” may not be the “third man” after Chirac and Jospin. Their parliamentary cretinism has reached such a level that the fascist danger of Le Pen is not taken seriously because of his difficulty in obtaining the 500 endorsement signatures (from public officials) necessary for his candidacy. Laguiller even “discussed” with the *Führer* of the National Front on television, and LO has long denied that Le Pen and his troops are fascist. But he’s back in the saddle again, surpassing his former deputy and rival Bruno Mégret, and today he is credited with some 10 percent of the intended voters.

As for Jean-Pierre Chevènement and his Citizens Movement (MDC), the “Republican pole” of the former minister of the interior brings together royalists and other reactionaries, deserters from fascism and social democracy, and former Stalinists yearning for “national sovereignty.” “I don’t ask anyone where they come from,” this aspiring Bonaparte explained (*Le Monde*, 20 November 2001). Indeed. Chevènement’s electoral program denounces “national masochism” and the “campaigns of repentance” — a bald appeal to those who are nostalgic for “French Algeria.” The man who has the backing of most of France’s free masonry has always promoted chauvinism, appealing to those who are disappointed in the left and the right, whether it is by persecuting immigrants as the head of the national police, or by resigning from the Mitterrand government to protest against the Maastricht Treaty (which set up the European Union).

His pretense of leading an “anti-globalization” movement gives him a “leftist” tint, and the presence in his ranks of a former leader of the LCR, François Morvan, is not entirely accidental. While Jospin flirts with the “Tobin tax” on capital “speculation” (a proposal for a 1 percent surcharge on financial transactions)

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and Olivier Besancenot, the LCR candidate, makes “anti-globalization” one of the axes of his campaign, the movement represented by ATTAC (a parallel popular front tying a large part of the “far left” to the Gaullists and other bourgeois forces) embodies the resentment of French imperialism towards its American competitor. In fact, Besancenot was not alone at the “anti-globalization” summit in Porto Alegre, Brazil – the only time foreign affairs entered the French election campaign – not only the Greens but Chirac’s conservative Gaullist RPR took part!

Sailing in the same “anti-globalization” currents, the ultra-reformist Parti des Travailleurs (PT – Workers Party) led by Pierre Lambert, whose candidate in these elections is Daniel Gluckstein, is trying to position itself by accusing Jospin of “taking his orders from Washington, Brussels and the multinationals” ... rather than from Paris. Five years ago the PT, which emerged from the pseudo-Trotskyist OCI (Organisation Communiste Internationaliste), joined together with the die-hard Stalinists of Coordination Communiste to form Committees for Revoking the Maastricht Treaty – an external appeal to the Chevènement crowd. Today, the centerpiece of the PT program is an appeal to “reconquer democracy” in the name of a “sovereign constituent assembly of the people”!

For her part, although Arlette Laguiller make a pretense of communist orthodoxy in criticizing ATTAC and other tendencies which “are not people who want to overthrow capitalism” but instead want to “manage capitalism,” it’s hardly because LO is leading any truly internationalist struggles for socialist revolution (a phrase which, moreover, cannot be found in its election vocabulary). On the contrary, its campaign is aggressively limited to the “hexagon” (France), and utterly foreign to anything that might lower its vote totals. Of course, washing one’s hands of anything happening outside of France doesn’t present any alternative to French chauvinism.

A French Blair

In front of a Jospin election rally in Lille, his goon squad confiscated leaflets of striking nurses and orderlies. The strikers are demanding the hiring of more personnel – which Mr. Prime Minister finds “insulting” ... A little farther on are the undocumented immigrants. Five years ago the candidate Jospin invited their spokesmen to appear on his platform; today, encircled by cops, they chant: “We want papers, not promises.” At Marseille on March 21, his thugs went so far as to beat up several undocumented demonstrators. After Act-Up demonstrated on March 9 at a rally, chanting at him, “AIDS, Africa, Jospin is a racist” (his promises of financial aid to combat this scourge have turned out to be just as empty as his other promises), Jospin organized a star-studded team of ex-“Trotskyist” personalities like Cambadélis and Filoche to “prevent” this sort of disturbance. And in Lille we saw the result.

Another star of the Socialist Party “left” and another deserter from pseudo-Trotskyism, Julien Dray, the great Taliban-basher, got the job of ripping up the “Guigou Law” (declaring that prisoners are “presumed innocent” until convicted) – one

of the most basic democratic rights. Dray vituperates against “*angélisme*” (bleeding hearts) and the PS promises to break with “taboos” by criminalizing all the youth in the suburbs. In reality, these “taboos” never existed! Every popular front – under Jospin as well as Mitterrand – has produced a long list of immigrants assassinated with impunity by the cops.

The latest to date is a youth of North African origin, Moussa, shot down on January 2 near the Porte de Clichy in Paris: he was killed by a bullet from a Baretta machine pistol to the right forehead. A young immigrant living in Les Mureaux district, he was “presumed guilty” and executed on the spot. At his burial, the police carried out provocations against the MIB (Movement of Immigrants and the Suburbs).

The MIB presents itself as the spokesman for the angry youth of the impoverished suburbs – “We want a job, not a bullet in the back!” They know that they can expect nothing from the “left.” In contrast to SOS-Racisme, which rapidly became a creature of social democracy, the MIB has refused the money of the state. It also knows, as one of its militants put it in a radio interview with Canal Sud, that the Muslim population is subjected to aggression every day because of the amalgam with Islamic terrorism.” But the MIB confines itself to demonstrations for a minimum of justice in favor of the victims of the killer cops. This layer of youth lacks the power of the working class. Freed of the chains of class collaboration, this power could be mobilized for full rights of citizenship for all immigrants and their families, against the racist terror of the bourgeois state and its fascist auxiliaries.

The End of the PCF?

PCF leader Robert Hue is certainly a seedy character, but he is only a reflection of his reformist party, which appears to be in the final stages of its death agony. During a union demonstration in Paris on March 13, Hue was berated by demonstrators who took him to account, quite loudly, for the participation in the anti-worker government of Jospin by “Communist” ministers such as Gayssot, the transport minister who buried the 1997 road haulers strike and turned his back on the fired workers of AOM/Air Liberté. What is new is the number of workers who rebuked him and above all that there was no reaction in defense of Hue – who had to flee in shame from the demo. It is clear that the CGT leadership, in order to protect its apparatus which is threatened by the disaster facing the Communist Party, no longer wants to be associated with the losers of the PCF.

Hue promises that he will get from Jospin “a different policy of the left,” “a new, really left experience.” Not a very believable promise, any more than the threat not to join a “center left” government. Jospin answered him in advance: “I am not changing course.” The PCF ministers’ five years of participation in the government have demonstrated, once again, that they only act as guarantors for the anti-labor attacks of the popular front.

A symptom of the decline of the PCF is the multiplication of self-proclaimed communist candidates independent of the party.

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Thus in Marseille, Charles Hoareau (leader of the CGT unemployed committee) and his "red hots," intend to campaign in the legislative elections. But the opposition to the "mutation" of the PCF is hardly coherent – some aren't even opposed to joining the Jospin government, they only want to bargain for a better price for their participation. Others hark back to the "revolutionary" Communist Party ... of its 16th Congress in 1964.

First off, it is necessary to understand that the "mutation" of the PCF didn't come about today, or yesterday, but back in 1935, when the party – already suffering from the gangrene of Stalinism – sank into reformism, supporting national defense and the popular front. With this decisive step, dictated at the time by the diplomatic need for class collaboration of the Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy (with its conservative nationalist delirium about building "socialism in one country"), the PCF went over to reformism, becoming another cog in the wheel of capitalist domination, a second social democracy. From that moment on, despite its "Marxist-Leninist" rhetoric, the "Communist" Party had no other strategy than joining bourgeois governments – eternal popular frontism. Going through "Eurocommunism" in the 1970s, outstripped by Mitterrand's PS in the '80s, with the collapse of the Soviet Union at the beginning of the '90s, the PCF lost its reason for existence. From there to its dissolution it's only a matter of time.

Lutte Ouvrière's Opposition to the "Plural Left": A Fraud

It is Lutte Ouvrière which has benefited today from this situation, not the LCR or the PT. Laguiller (who, moreover, declined to mention Trotskyism at all in her recent book *My Communism*) has resuscitated her call to "recreate a political party which really defends the political and social interests of labor" (in her election speech at the April 10 rally). She explicitly stated, in her rally at Lille on April 8, that she "defends the program abandoned by the Communist Party," that is, the program of reforming (and thus preserving) the capitalist state...

LO will certainly attract voters from the PCF, but also some youth seduced by the façade of integrity, of not being sullied by the government left and of "anti-capitalist" militancy. At the same time, with its sub-reformism and its mentality of "poor whites," LO offers a rather unattractive face for those who want to fight against products of capitalism like unemployment, racism or fascism, and anyone who can see further than the narrow horizon of the hexagon.

Today, LO's so-called "opposition" to the PS is its stock in trade – this is what feeds it and sustains its growth. To take the measure of its "radical" discourse against the government left today one should recall its position at the time of the "pink wave" in 1981, when LO called to vote for Mitterrand "without illusions but without reservations." Its stance toward the popular front fluctuates in a totally opportunist fashion, following the sentiment of working people. It has no principled position of opposition to class collaboration.

Its position on the second round (of the presidential elec-

tion) is all smoke and mirrors. It is not a call not to vote for Jospin, but rather the absence of a slogan. Reaffirming in Lille that she would "not issue any call for how to vote" on the second round of the elections, Laguiller insists: "I will not call either for abstention, nor of course to vote for Chirac or to vote for Jospin." But the LO strategists are well aware that roughly two out of three voters who vote for "Arlette" on the first round will give their ballot for Jospin on the second. This wheeling and dealing gives a measure of LO's cowardice and opportunism: Do what you want, they say in effect. We the rrrrevolutionaries wash our hands of it. If you vote for Jospin, it will be your fault." As always, LO pins the responsibility for defeats on the backs of the workers, not on their sellout leaders. At bottom, as far as they are concerned, the working class has the leadership it deserves.

What Program for What Struggles?

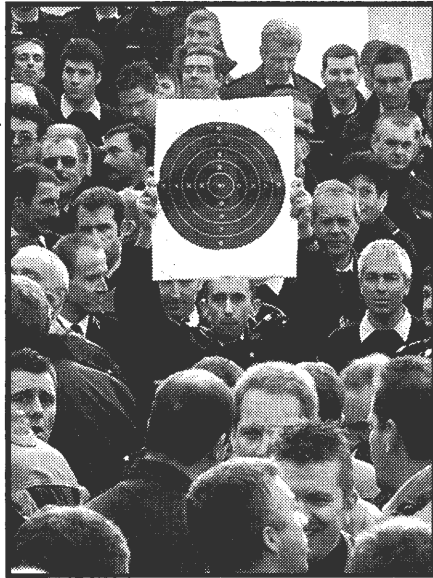
On every decisive question for the proletariat (war, racism, the popular front) LO capitulates before the bourgeoisie. The program which it puts forward for building its party is not the revolutionary program of Trotskyism but its overtly reformist "emergency program." "Tax the bosses' profits" or the "shareholders' fortunes" in order to "redistribute social wealth and finance jobs." In short, "Make the rich pay." LO reproaches the government for "putting itself at the service of the bosses," and "offering gifts to the employers." As if the capitalist government could be anything other than the executive committee of the propertied class!

The calls to prohibit layoffs just come down to a policy of pressuring the popular front. Jospin talks vaguely of "zero SDF" (homelessness) ... by 2007. In 1995, he talked of "zero layoffs" – we know this refrain. Laguiller responded on France 2 TV on March 19: "Let the government begin today by prohibiting evictions which may take place in the coming weeks and will create more homeless people." And just who is going to "prohibit" the evictions? The cops?

Behind LO's rhetoric about how the workers can expect nothing from the elections there isn't the slightest concrete perspective for the class struggle. In all of 2001, when layoffs again made deep inroads, workers at each company fought alone. These struggles immediately posed the central question of the leadership of the working class. The reformists did everything to prevent the necessary working-class offensive against the capitalist system which is the cause of this distress. Of course, Laguiller visited the workers of Moulinex, LU-Danone, McDonalds in Seine-Saint-Denis, but only to make election propaganda.

Lacking a revolutionary leadership, the workers combativity, often born of despair (as at Moulinex, where they were fighting for 80,000 francs severance pay), can only lead to the acceptance of planned layoffs and giving in to the blackmail of takeover artists who buy up failing companies. LO's response has been little different than that of the CGT or the PCF, whose overall answer has been to call demonstrations to exert parliamentary pressure. (All this agitation has only produced the lamentable

Christophe Ena/AP



Christophe Ena/AP

Left: Bonapartist mobilization of uniformed gendarmes (militarized police), December 2001, protesting law of “presumed innocence.” LO approved demands by gendarmes for bullet-proof vests and their mobilization for more racist terror. Right: training exercise of European police corps for civil war, January 2002.

Michelin amendment, which permits layoffs once negotiations have been started for a 35-hour workweek.)

Over the winter of 2001-2002, public employees were hit in turn, particularly the hospital workers, as a result of the consequences of the ill-fated Aubry Law (on the 35 hour week). Of course, LO didn't call to extend these struggles. Nor did it raise the transitional demand of a sliding scale of hours and wages, to divide up the available work among all the workers, without a cut in pay. This demand could not be satisfied by any capitalist government. As Leon Trotsky noted, the sliding scale of wages and working hours prefigures a socialist planned economy. A system of transitional demands would not only strike at private property and the economic laws of the capitalist market, it would also serve to mobilize the masses for workers revolution and the establishment of a workers government, based on soviet organs of workers power. Elected strike committees, which can be recalled at any time, could be the embryo of soviet power. But LO didn't raise the slightest hint of such a program.

LO Capitulates Before the Cops and Racist Terror

To vote for LO in this election is obviously nothing other than a protest vote without any perspective of struggle. “By voting for Arlette Laguiller, make them fear labor” warns *Lutte Ouvrière* (15 March). “The ballot can upset the owners and comfort the workers,” Laguiller declared at the Mutualité meeting hall in Paris on March 17. But it is necessary to overthrow the capitalists and not warn them or “disturb” them, and for that the proletariat does not need to be “comforted” but to be armed with a revolutionary program. But even while accepting that, some will ask themselves the question: isn't a vote for LO at least a way of drawing a class line against the popular front in power, even in a deformed way? The answer is decidedly “no.”

It happened that LO launched its presidential campaign just at the moment that reactionary mobilizations in the streets by the

police and gendarmes broke out. These bonapartist mobilizations sought to free the cops and the military from the last remaining “civilian” constraints. What did LO say? *Lutte Ouvrière* No. 1742 (7 December 2001) proclaimed in a two-page spread: “Police, Courts, Gendarmes... The Government at Odds with Its Own Services.” “The police understood how to make their ‘boss,’ the minister of the interior, retreat,” LO declared triumphantly. Their paper goes on to explain (you almost think you are reading a “Republican” school textbook) that “the police, but also the gendarmes, carry out functions which are useful for the whole of society”! Like what? Breaking strikes, busting up demonstrations, driving out immigrants? But pay attention, says LO, these “guardians of law and order” are not only there for the automobile drivers and swimmers, they are “also” (!) guardians of the capitalist order!! After this little lesson in distorted Marxism, *Lutte Ouvrière* ends up **applauding** these “struggles”:

“...they made a demonstration that can be helpful to all labor, by showing that, in order to make themselves heard by the employer-state, it can be effective to demonstrate in the street.”

In its following issue, *Lutte Ouvrière* (14 December 2001) headlined: “Toward a Contagion of Social Demands? Now Is the Time, Let's Go!” That is also the headline of the editorial by Arlette Laguiller, which begins:

“After the concessions to the gendarmes over the weekend of December 8-9, the press became worried: what if this gave some ideas to other layers of wage earners to raise demands in turn? Sure, that would be a good thing.”

The editorial goes on with a tear-jerking portrayal of the “working conditions” of the armed bands of capital:

“Even if they [the gendarmes] are not among the worst-off employees, their demands, as well as those of the police, are at least in part well-founded, not only at the level of wages, but also concerning their equipment, such as bullet-proof vests or mini-computers.”

So, "all together now" with the cops demanding bullet-proof vests! "Let's go!" signed... Arlette. The teachers who were beaten during their demonstration in Nantes at the beginning of March, the family of Moussa will appreciate this... Cynical LOers know perfectly well that the protest was not about "working equipment" but about the Gigou Law, "a text which the police and now the gendarmes seized on to show their discontent" (*Figaro*, 6 December 2001). **This was a mobilization for even more racist terror.**

It is not surprising that LO is incapable of taking a clear position against the hysteria over "security" (crime). It even sermonizes, in an article about the murder of Moussa, to youths who "prefer their buddies in the housing projects to school" (*Lutte Ouvrière*, 18 January). On this occasion, LO characterized the police as "arrogant," but they never call them *racist*. Hardly surprising either that LO *refuses to denounce Vigipirate* – a veritable act of racist war, which is at the heart of the political situation today.

LO is often to be found in the trail of, or even at the head of racist measures taken by the capitalist state; for example, in 1992 it participated in the expulsion of a Muslim girl who was wearing a headscarf at Villeneuve-la-Garenne, on the pretext of the threat of "Islamic fundamentalism." Throughout its history, LO has shown a scandalous insensitivity to racist oppression. At best, on the rare occasions when it participates in anti-racist demonstrations, argues in favor of the right to vote for immigrants or defends the undocumented, it only sees racism as unfortunate ideas. It is incapable of counterposing a proletarian perspective of struggle, based on the social power of the working class, against racist segregation and terror.

For Genuine Trotskyism!

Ironically, some groups which claim to stand to the left of

the three large pseudo-Trotskyist formations, such as Pouvoir Ouvrier, the French office of the League for a Revolutionary Communist International (LRCI, led by the British Workers Power), end up criticizing them from the right, deploring the multiplicity of candidates.

The same tune is coming from the public minority in LO which puts out *Convergences Révolutionnaires*. It criticizes the LO leadership for not having negotiated a common candidate with the LCR. The minority – whose documents for the last congress of LO at least have the merit, compared to the majority, of talking about something other than possible candidates and hoped-for results in the elections – even states its desire for the defeat of the imperialists in the present war. But this defeatism in words is rendered null in deeds by its scheme for uniting all "Trotskyists," including the open social-patriots of the LCR.

At the programmatic level, the LO minority hardly differs from the majority. Thus it criticizes the leadership's lack of initiative in the national demonstration against layoffs on 9 June 2001, while upholding the reformist-utopian slogan of calling on the capitalist state to prohibit layoffs. Nor is it opposed to the scandalous support for the cops' demonstrations.

Even more "revolutionary" are the *faux naïfs* (fake ingénues) of the Ligue Trotskyste de France (LTF), section of the International Communist League (ICL), whose programmatic intransigence is made of papier-mâché. An "Open Letter to Lutte Ouvrière" published by the LTF (10 March) begins by praising the LO campaign:

"In this election campaign there is only one candidate who seeks to draw a crude class line against the capitalist government: it is Arlette Laguiller, spokesman for Lutte Ouvrière. We agree with her when she says that the PS leaders are of the same world as the Seillières [Baron Seillière is head of the French employers' federation] and

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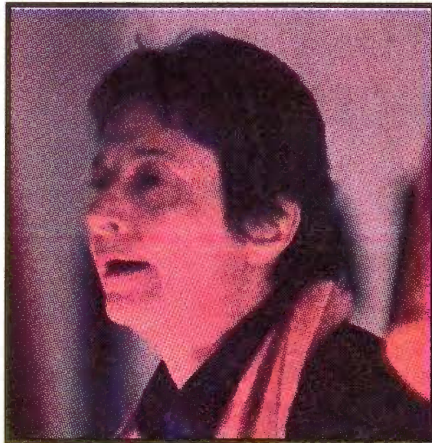
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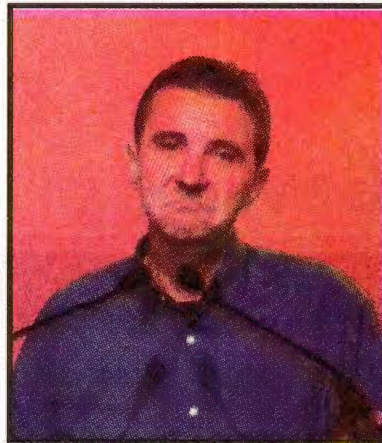
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Parlour-pink pseudo-Trotskyist candidates Arlette Laguiller (LO) and Olivier Besancenot (LCR).

other bosses who exploit the workers in the factories, and that Jospin carries out the same policy as Chirac.”

And so on for a whole paragraph favorably contrasting the LO candidacy with that of the LCR. LO claims that “For these elections LO is breaking with its frequent history of supporting the popular front...” In addition to being utterly false (the LO candidacy doesn’t draw a class line any more than it breaks with its past practices), this shameless flattery is a new tone for the LTF.

In 1986, at a time when the LTF was still revolutionary, it called for critical support to the candidates of LO, which had abandoned its previous policy of voting for Mitterrand on the second round of the 1981 elections. Five years on, the “pink wave” had run out of steam, and as good economists, LO applied the policy of “possibilism” to salvage the votes of disappointed workers. But the ferociously critical support of the LTF at that time was quite different from the sugary conditional critical support which it is offering today. The nature of the elections is also different. In 1986 there were workers’ protests against the bourgeois economic policy being carried out by Mitterrand, while today we are in the middle of an imperialist war, of which the racist war against immigrants is the “home front.” *LO does not oppose this war, but rather it participates in it.*

The LTF reminds us that in 1981 it had envisaged giving critical support to the Communist Party, which was standing candidates independently of the popular front, because it was isolated by the Cold War campaign. It also reminds us that it withdrew this support after a PCF mayor attacked a dormitory for African workers in Vitry with a bulldozer, a racist atrocity carried out with the aim of returning to the bosom of the popular front. This history is not without relevance in the current elections. Today, in the middle of an “anti-terrorist” imperialist war, the LTF poses as a “condition” for supporting LO that the latter should denounce Vigipirate, *knowing full well that LO had already applauded the bonapartist and racist cop demonstrations.* The LTF wants “Arlette” to come out “clearly” against Vigipirate. Maybe it will be satisfied with a sentence, or even a phrase, from the mouth of the candidate, which she could very well utter without changing a bit her “security” policy which tails after the PS, the PCF and all the bourgeois parties. But despite a frenetic mobilization, the LTF hasn’t been able to drag the slightest con-

cession, even a purely formal one, from the mouth of Laguiller.

The reality is that LO’s campaign is a repetition of the reformist campaigns of the PCF, as it recognizes itself. An article in the *Nouvel Observateur* (14 March) evokes the image of “Arlette’s proletarians” who will vote LO “because Jospin and the PCF are no longer interested in us.” It quotes a political scientist who observes that many of the votes for Laguiller will be in order “to pressure Jospin from the outside.” Chirac’s favorite sociologist, Emmanuel Todd, commented: “Laguiller’s success can be read as the need for real reformism.” And that is what the new LTF calls “drawing the class line.” In fact, its current condi-

tional critical support shares in the same opportunism as the rest of the “far left” which is fascinated by the electoral score of “Arlette.” The mildness of the “criticism” and the fervor of its support are explained by the political evolution of the now-centrist LTF toward LO positions. After all, both the LTF and LO did not call for the defeat of “their” imperialism in war and neither of them call for the independence of the French colonies, the DOM-TOM (overseas departments and territories), but only formulate pious wishes for the abstract “right to self-determination” – committing them to nothing.

The reality is that the candidacy of Arlette Laguiller tries to push the popular front to the left, and the conditional “critical” support of the LTF seeks to push LO to the left. For Lenin, electoral support by the revolutionaries for reformists had the purpose of “supporting them like the rope supports the hanged man.” But with its obsequious backing of LO, it is the LTF which ties itself to these reformists. What it is carrying out is centrist pressure politics – not the Trotskyist politics of intransigent struggle for the revolutionary independence of the proletariat which the League for the Fourth International fights for. Trotskyism still embodies proletarian opposition to the popular front in France, a heritage which is prostituted by organizations which abusively claim to be revolutionary but which in reality are auxiliaries of the popular front. It is necessary to unmask these organizations, whose candidates serve as a safety valve for the government, a short-lived protest vote. We must say clearly that these purveyors of parliamentary cretinism have taken their place in the baggage train of the popular front of war.

The central question remains today: in order to break the bourgeois offensive and prepare for victory, the working class and oppressed sectors need a Trotskyist party, armed with a program not to reform capitalism, but to destroy it by international socialist revolution. In order to win, what’s needed is a multiethnic vanguard workers party which will fight with intransigence against class collaboration in order to sweep away the reformist bureaucrats, a tribune of the people on the model of Lenin’s Bolshevik Party which will draw in the oppressed behind the working class. This party will be built in the struggle to reforge an authentically Trotskyist Fourth International, the world party of socialist revolution. ■

From Hindenberg to Chirac...

French Elections: Beware of Bourgeois Saviors of the Nation!

Build a Real Leninist-Trotskyist Party!

MAY 4 – On the eve of the second round of the French presidential elections, the bourgeoisie and the reformists who prop up capitalist rule are pulling out all the stops to get out a massive vote for the notoriously corrupt conservative Jacques Chirac against the sinister fascist Jean-Marie Le Pen. “*Votez l’escroc, pas le facho*” (Vote for the thief, not the fascist) has gone from a slogan on high-school students’ placards to being the marching orders of the ruling class. This in itself is a stunning indictment of the fraud of bourgeois “democracy.”

The goal of this operation is to get the highest possible vote for Chirac, in order to “save the honor of France” and to restore faith in a discredited political system. In the growing inter-imperialist tensions, France poses as the defender of human rights, supposedly less bellicose than the warmongers in the U.S. White House and Pentagon. That is difficult when a substantial portion of the French electorate votes for an immigrant-bashing xenophobe who calls for setting up “transit camps” for deportees.

So worried are French rulers that the vote for Chirac will not be overwhelming enough that the Constitutional Council ruled yesterday that it was not permissible for voters to wear surgical gloves and clothespins on their noses as a sign of distaste for the foul “choice” they are offered!

In an April 26 statement, the League for the Fourth International warned against illusions in the capitalist electoral shell game, arguing for worker-immigrant-youth mobilization to sweep the fascist thugs from the streets on May 1, the interna-

tional workers day, and for an active boycott of the electoral farce on May 5. A supplement to *L’Internationaliste* sold at the mammoth anti-Le Pen May Day march in Paris headlined: “1935-2002: The Popular Front Paves the Way to Fascist Reaction, Fight for Workers Revolution!”

While candidates making some pretense of Trotskyism gained over 10 percent of the vote in the first round on May 21, all of them, openly or tacitly, encouraged a vote for Chirac in the second round. In classic reformist fashion, they did so by opposing “abstention” and calling to “block the right” at the polls. This is in flagrant contradiction to the Bolshevik program of Trotsky and Lenin, who fought for the revolutionary independence of the proletariat from all the bourgeois parties.

The ultra-reformist Socialist (PS) and Communist parties (PCF) were even more explicit in ordering their supporters to cast their votes for Chirac. On April 29 the PCF issued a leaflet headlined “Alarm,” calling to “bar the way to Le Pen” by “putting a ballot for Jacques Chirac into the ballot box without any crossing out or distinctive sign.” But the debate at the PCF’s National Council the same day revealed that many of its supporters were not buying its line: “Numerous comrades reported reticence, even among politicized union women and men, even among youth who have been active in demonstrations against the far right in recent days, to choose ‘the thief over the fascist’.”

The daily *Libération*, close to the PS, has led the charge for voting Chirac, but even it had to report on April 30 that in the factories CGT metal workers were saying, “Blocking Le Pen means voting for Chirac, and that means intensifying what we undergo every day.” Never have discussions in the shops been so intense. “To vote for Chirac pisses many people off who think he should be in prison. And in the union, many said after the first round, ‘I’m not going to vote May 5’.”

The main argument put forward by the Stalinist PCF and social-democratic PS to convince their ranks to vote for Chirac, the candidate of the big bosses, is the traditional refrain of “the Republic in danger.” In calling for a “Republican front” to justify voting for the bourgeois “democrat,” they uncannily reproduce the reasoning of the German Social Democrats (SPD) who in March 1932 called for a vote for Field Marshall Paul von Hindenburg in the election against the Nazi Adolf Hitler. At the time, the Stalinist German Communist Party (KPD) ran its leader, Ernst Thälmann as the third major candidate.

At that time, many of the social democrats and bourgeois liberals who had opposed the World War I commander of the German Reichswehr when he was first elected president in

Franck Prevel/AP



Election posters for reactionary Jacques Chirac and fascist Jean-Marie Le Pen, Niort, France, May 3.

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1925 “now saw him as the savior of the Republic,” wrote William L. Shirer in *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich: A History of Nazi Germany* (1959). With the SPD machinery working at full throttle, the incumbent von Hindenburg got a bare majority against Hitler and Thälmann in the second round. Yet less than a year later, the re-elected imperial president named Hitler chancellor (prime minister) of the German Reich, allowing the Nazi leader to take power by parliamentary means.

In an April 1933 declaration to an international congress against fascism held in Paris a few months after Hitler’s takeover, Leon Trotsky wrote:

“Descending from one step to the other in pursuit of the ‘lesser evil,’ the Social Democracy ended by voting for the reactionary field marshal, Hindenburg, who in his turn summoned Hitler to power. Demoralizing the proletariat by illusions of democracy in decaying capitalism, the Social Democracy deprived the proletariat of all its powers of resistance.”

Today, calls on the workers to vote for Chirac against Le Pen in the name of “lesser-evil” politics will likewise undermine their power of resistance against the onslaught of capital. *Parliamentary finagling with bourgeois “democrats” is no barrier to the fascists, for they ultimately represent the same class interests. To stop the likes of Le Pen’s National Front and Hitler’s National*

Socialists it is necessary to mobilize the power of workers in united class action to sweep the fascist vermin off the streets, opening the way to proletarian revolution.

Certainly, the situation in the first years of the 21st century is notably different from the 1930s. Le Pen is not about to take power, though there is a general rightward shift of the bourgeois political spectrum across West Europe. All the more reason to warn against being seduced by calls to “save the nation” by voting for a right-wing reactionary. In fact, an electoral landslide for Chirac will not “defend democracy” but may whet the bonapartist appetites of the former deputy and successor to General Charles de Gaulle. In the wake of the first round voting, Chirac proclaimed a “Union for a Presidential Majority” as a vehicle for executive rule using the considerable powers conferred on the head of state under the Gaullist Fifth Republic to overrule a bothersome legislature with decrees and plebiscites.

And what program will this latest “savior of the (bourgeois) Republic” implement? Following the re-election of von Hindenburg, the voice of German capital, the *Berliner Bösenzeitung* (7 June 1932), declared: “This increasingly low level of existence is the only possibility for a revival of production and thereby for the lessening of unemployment. More work and simpler life—this is the unavoidable fate for Germany” (quoted in Robert Black, *Fascism in Germany: How Hitler Destroyed the World’s Most Powerful Labour Movement* [1975]). Both Hindenburg and Hitler shared this program for reviving German capitalism by intensifying the exploitation of German workers.

Today, the French bourgeoisie is not afraid of fascism but of a rebirth of the working-class militancy that burst forth in the 1995 mass strikes. The popular-front government of the “plural left” headed by Lionel Jospin was brought in to divert and dissipate that combativity. Now that its job is done, the popular front is tossed aside “like a squeezed lemon.” The head of the leading organization of French bosses, Medef (Movement of Enterprises of France), Ernest-Antoine Seillière, is demanding that companies have complete “freedom to fire” workers, that income and business taxes be drastically lowered and the costs of medical insurance be transferred to the workers, that the 35-hour work-week be abolished and the age of retirement be raised. Medef has endorsed Chirac for president, but its program is shared by both candidates on the second round.

Moreover, Chirac, Le Pen and Jospin have all supported the U.S./NATO terror war against Afghanistan. All of them backed the police-state measures against immigrants in France (codenamed Vigipirate) and the crackdown on “insecurity” which was the “home front” of that war. So did the smaller parties of the popular-front government (PCF, Greens, MDC, PRG). The pseudo-Trotskyist tails of the popular front (LO, LCR, PT) sought to pressure the government to the left and sidle up to the police rather than fighting to defeat the imperialist war at home and abroad. To fight the fascist threat and the war on the working class proclaimed by the leading voices of French capital, it is necessary to forge a genuinely Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party of the proletariat, not an opportunist imitation. ■



Imperial War Museum

To block rise of Hitler, Social Democrats voted for General von Hindenburg as president, who a year later named Hitler imperial chancellor (above).

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France: National Front ...

continued from page 72

A rather different tack was taken by the International Communist League (ICL) in the paper of its U.S. section, the Spartacist League (SL). In its 3 May issue, *Workers Vanguard* wrote:

"By outlook and history, Le Pen is a fascist. But like Haider's FPÖ [in Austria], Le Pen's National Front (FN) is currently scoring big gains primarily as an *electoral party*. Reactionary views alone do not define fascism. Contrary to fake leftists who cynically pretend that fascism is just around the corner in order to justify voting for Chirac, France is not currently besieged by organized fascist gangs attacking workers' picket lines or assaulting parliament as the French fascists did in the 1930s." [emphasis in original]

According to *WV*, the FN is not fascist but an "*electoral party*." It argues that "fascist terror against immigrants is not now rampant in France," if only because the government of the "plural left" was carrying out the kind of cop terror the fascists have called for. Interestingly, this was *not* the position taken by the ICL's French section. A 23 April statement by the Ligue Trotskyste de France (LTF), which *WV*'s commentary serves as an introduction to, declared that the popular-front government "Opened the Way to Le Pen's Fascists." It continued:

"Le Pen and the fascists don't represent 'bad ideas' that one can debate. Fascism is a program to wipe out the organized workers movement, send women back to the home and massacre 'immigrants,' Jews, minorities and homosexuals.... *Smash the fascists before they smash us! For worker/immigrant self-defense groups based on the factories!*"

So for *WV* Le Pen's fascist "outlook and history" and his "reactionary views" do not make his "electoral party" fascist. The statement of the LTF, however, draws the opposite conclusion: "Le Pen's fascists" "don't represent 'bad ideas'" but a mortal threat to the workers movement and the oppressed. Nowhere does it say that the FN is not fascist. This is no mere terminological question. After all, if the National Front is fascist, then Trotskyists would call to mobilize the power of the workers movement to disperse the FN troops on May Day, as we did in our 26 April article. The LTF statement did say softly that "what's necessary is mass mobilization to repulse this danger" of the FN march. *WV*'s introduction also raises the possibility of a labor mobilization, *but only in order to dismiss it*. After first arguing that, "If the PCF, LCR or LO – or the CGT trade-union federation – were serious about stopping Le Pen, they would fill the Place du Châtelet [starting point of the FN march] with organized union members hours before Le Pen's fascist thugs get there," it quickly adds: "They could stop the fascists before they start, but they won't do this" because the reformists fear independent mobilization of the working class more than they fear Le Pen.

So that's that – nothing to be done about it. But hold on a minute. A couple of paragraphs earlier, *WV* argued that the FN is an electoral rather than a fascist party – so where do "Le Pen's fascist thugs" come from? And what is this phenom-

enon of a far-right "electoral party" which is somehow different in character from its leader, who is "by outlook and history a fascist"? The National Front was founded in 1972 by the fascist group *Ordre Nouveau* (New Order) and has been headed since its creation by Le Pen. It is organized according to the *Führerprinzip*, the "leader principle" of Hitler's Nazis. Indeed, when some of Le Pen's principal lieutenants got out of line, led by Bruno Mégret whose roots are in the Catholic royalist/fascist tradition of Charles Maurras and *Action Française*, the result was a bitter split in 1998. (Mégret got 4 percent of the vote on April 21, making the combined fascist score 20 percent.) The idea that the FN has a different political character than Le Pen is absurd. The ICL is squirming as it tries to wriggle around the incontestable fact that the National Front is not just an electoral apparatus but a fascist party with a veritable private army of storm troopers.

Le Pen's Fascist Party a Mortal Threat to Immigrants, Workers, Women, Leftists

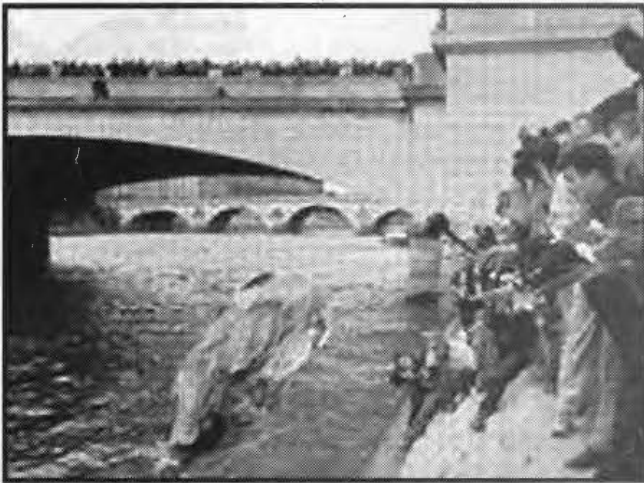
The claim that an "electoral party" cannot be a fascist party is a classic social-democratic thesis, reflecting the reformists' parliamentary cretinism. It recalls Trotsky's remark about Germany: "The workers had the right instincts and wanted to fight. But the Social Democrats held them back, promising to give the signal when Hitler should have finally abandoned legal methods." Hitler's Nazis played the bourgeoisie's electoral game, and only abandoned it *after* taking power. In order to dismiss any talk of a fascist danger in Europe, the ICL sets up a straw man. Whoever says the parties of Le Pen, Fini (of the Italian *Alleanza Nazionale*) and Haider are fascist must mean that "fascism is around the corner," claims *WV*, even while admitting that the Internationalist Group says that "Le Pen is not about to take power." "So does the IG [Internationalist Group] think Austria is fascist today?" it continues without a pause. If fascist parties are in the government in Italy and Austria, it asks snidely, where are the concentration camps?

The cynical editors of *Workers Vanguard* know perfectly well that we do not argue that Austria or Italy are fascist because of the presence of fascist parties as junior partners in coalition governments. But more fundamentally, the ICL's parliamentary blinders prevent them from seeing that while fascist dictatorship is not on the agenda, *there is a clear and present danger posed by the drive toward a bonapartist "strong state."* In recent years, the bourgeoisie as a whole and its reformist lieutenants in the workers movement have rammed through police-state measures across Europe, in the U.S. and throughout the capitalist world. The imperialists' current terrorist "war on terrorism" intensifies this push. The real danger represented by Le Pen and his ilk is that in various countries where they have a historical presence, the fascists act as the cutting edge of this drive.

What is fascism? For the Stalinists, it is simply a government or party of unbridled capitalist reaction. Thus they rou-



Photos: Eric Chaverou/Radio France (top) and AFP (bottom).



The National Front merely an “electoral party”? Demonstrators cast wreath into the Seine in Paris May 1 to pay homage to Brahim Bouarram, a 29-year-old Moroccan who was beaten and drowned by skinheads from the 1995 FN demonstration. Above, left: friend of Bouarram read a message to the crowd. Above, right: woman holds sign, “Le Pen has the blood of Bouarram on his hands. Le Pen has the blood of Algerian citizens on his hands. Put out the flames...”

tinely describe military dictators like Pinochet in Chile or Suharto in Indonesia as “fascist.” Their response, from the 1930s to today, is to call for a “popular front against fascism,” i.e., to politically bloc with the “democratic” bourgeoisie, whether in a formal coalition or voting for Chirac. But this obscures the essential character of fascist movements, from Mussolini’s black shirts and Hitler’s Nazi brown shirts to the white sheets of the American nativist fascists of the Ku Klux Klan or the “saffron” (Hindu) fascists of the paramilitary RSS in India – namely that they organize masses of ruined petty bourgeois into a battering ram against the workers movement and the oppressed. “Fascism unites and arms the scattered masses. Out of human dust it organizes combat detachments,” as Trotsky wrote in *Whither France?* (1934). And the way to fight this dangerous threat is not through class-collaborationist blocs but by revolutionary mobilization of workers power to shatter the fascist bands.

Fascism is not counterposed to participation in bourgeois electoral politics – it is a bourgeois political current after all, and most sizeable fascist movements have played the parliamentary game as they accumulated forces. The German Nazis’ growth consisted not only of shock troops of the Sturmabteilung (SA), but also in the mushrooming vote for the National Socialist German Workers Party. Just because they engage in electoral demagoguery does not mean they are not preparing for civil war. This is

amply proven by the example of Le Pen’s National Front. In the last French presidential elections, the FN’s campaign was punctuated by two racist murders by Le Pen’s fascist thugs: on 21 February 1995, FN gunmen opened fire on ten youth of North African origin, killing Ibrahim Ali; and on May Day in Paris, four skinheads from the FN march brutally beat Brahim Bouarram and tossed him into the Seine River where he drowned. In both cases the killers were connected with the National Front’s goon squad, the DPS (Department of Protection and Security). Those like the ICL and LO who portray the FN as simply an “electoral party” are sowing deadly illusions.

Right after the first round, Le Pen upped the voltage by declaring that he would set up “transit camps” and order “special trains” to ship immigrants out of the country. This inevitably recalled the *Transitlager* and *Sonderzüge* the German occupiers used to ship Jews to the death camps in WWII. But this is not mere rhetoric – the National Front’s “French preference” is a program for terror against immigrants. The murders of Ali and Bouarram are the most notorious racist assaults linked to the FN, but hardly the only ones. The attacks on largely immigrant workers’ hostels in Cannes and Cagnes-sur-Mer in 1988 were carried out by Nazis of the PNFE (French and European Nationalist Party), which was also implicated in the anti-Semitic desecration of a Jewish cemetery in Carpentas in May 1990. The PNFE has its own profile, concentration on skinheads and recruiting cops.

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But its leader at the time, Michèle D'Ara, was a municipal councillor in the town of Villepinte near Paris elected on the National Front ticket. Elements from the virulently anti-Semitic Oeuvre Française formed the FN's police "union" and have frequently taken part in DPS actions against leftists. The Groupe Union Défense (GUD), a campus-based fascist action group, has periodically had run-ins with the National Front, but also participates regularly in FN events, notably the annual May 1 Joan of Arc mobilizations.

The National Front is also up to its neck in the anti-abortion commandos who violently attack clinics and harass and intimidate women seeking to terminate an unwanted pregnancy. The first actions were carried out in the mid-'80s by SOS Tout Petits founded by Xavier Dor, a long-time member of the National Front. The second major group involved, Laissez-les-vivre, includes several members of the FN top leadership in its honorary presidium, including Bruno Gollnisch and Marie-France Stirbois. Its president, Emmanuel Tremblay, is part of the FN's women's front, the CNFE.

The most aggressive of the commandos, Trêve de Dieu (God's Truce), is part of Human Life International, headed by Paul Marx, who accuses "some Jews" of leading "the greatest holocaust of all time, the war on unborn babies," and whose German affiliate is run by the fascist Siegfried Ernst. In short, with its "family preference," the fascist National Front and its satellite operations are a clear and present danger to women as well.

The DPS' thug violence is so notorious that in 1998 the French National Assembly organized a commission to investigate it. They documented 68 cases of violent attacks by this goon squad, including 38 armed attacks. The actual number is considerably greater, since the police (who are heavily infiltrated by the FN) regularly hide the fascist links of many perpetrators, dismissing them as "common criminals" or describing assaults by the FN youth (many of them skinheads) as "clashes" between rightist and leftist demonstrators. The size of the DPS is estimated at about 3,000 men. They are usually seen in their "Outfit 1," marine blue blazers and gray trousers. But this is only the "respectable" façade of this paramilitary force. Anyone who thinks the DPS is a bunch of doddering family men acting as ushers for a party dedicated to ballots not bullets is in for a rude awakening. Within the DPS there are several hundred shock troops, the UMIs (Mobile Intervention Units), who dress in "Outfit 2," all-black riot uniforms of the Belgian police, with helmets, Plexiglas shields and clubs. This deliberately makes them almost indistinguishable from the official UMIs of the gendarmerie and CRS riot police.

On a number of occasions, these squads have attacked leftist protesters as police stood by in silent complicity. For example on 25 October 1996 at Montceau-les-Mines where a UMI squad of the FN confronted demonstrators of Ras l'Front (Fed Up with the Front), while a similarly uniformed UMI squad of the CRS was held in reserve. Or on 23 May 1997 in Vitrolles (a town con-



Jewish cemetery at Carpentas, France where in May 1990 fascists dug up body and impaled it, destroying 39 gravestones. Members of the Nazi PNF were tried for the desecration. Head of the PNF was municipal councillor elected on the FN ticket.

trolled by the FN), where FN thugs attacked human rights groups. And again a week later in Maintes-la-Jolie, when 50 FN thugs attacked 20 "far left" counterdemonstrators. (In that incident, Le Pen himself was photographed beating up the Socialist candidate, Annette Peulvast-Bergeal.) The DPS also carries out clandestine surveillance of opponents, opening mail and tapping phone lines. The National Front thugs have even occasionally attacked police with impunity, as on 21 October 1996, when several hundred FN demonstrators marched from a speech by FN leader Bruno Gollnisch to the Arc de Triomphe to stage a provocation. On orders of DPS chief Bernard Courcelle, the cop on duty was bodily seized and removed.

From the time of the National Front's founding in 1972 it had a strong-arm goon squad which was first formed by Roger Holeindre, who fought in the French army in Indochina and then Algeria. He was part of the terrorist apparatus of the OAS "secret army" that launched a wave of terror across France on the eve of Algerian independence in 1962. While leftist students were demonstrating in Paris in 1968 chanting for Ho Chi Minh, Holeindre led fascistic groups to support the U.S. puppet South Vietnamese regime. A former member of the DPS told how the hard core of this "parallel army" consisted largely of veterans of French military adventures in Africa. Their role was to "join groups of anti-FN demonstrators, single out the leaders and smash them. We didn't act openly but discreetly. We would drop off groups of three or four in the demos, grab the leaders, haul them off to the side, pound them and then disappear" (*Libération*, 13 November 1997).

The impunity of the National Front's paramilitary apparatus is a function of its close ties to organs of state repression (notably the army, police, gendarmes, CRS and secret services), and the private "security" companies and professional mercenaries that are their offshoots. The acronym DPS was deliberately cho-

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sen to resemble that of the military intelligence agency, the DPSD (Direction de la Protection et Sécurité de la Défense), of which Gollnisch is an active reserve officer. The man who turned the FN's goon squad into a serious paramilitary operation and named it the DPS, Bernard Courcelle, is also a former paratrooper and military intelligence operative. Courcelle was instrumental in extracting a group of French mercenaries led by his brother-in-law Bob Denard (a notorious mercenary and former member of the French presidential guard) from a botched coup they had carried out in the Comoro Islands. Courcelle's brother is the head of Groupe Onze France, a mercenary outfit which was also active in recruiting professional killers for Zaïre dictator Mobutu Sese Seko. Courcelle also employed DPS members as the security team for the Elf French oil company installations in Angola.

The ICL says blithely that "fascist terror against immigrants is not now rampant in France" while fascist-infested police have put immigrant areas under a state of siege. Meanwhile, the National Front has been terrorizing Africans for years, *in Africa*. The DPS and Courcelle in particular were up to their necks in genocidal wars from Rwanda to the Congo (Brazzaville). It is amply documented that the *interahamwe* Hutu militias in Rwanda were trained by the French army in 1992-93, before the outbreak of the genocide that killed hundreds of thousands of Tutsis in 1994, while numerous French mercenaries were running around the country. François-Xavier Verschave, editor of the African affairs magazine *Survie*, reports of the mercenaries that "They were all recruited from far-right milieus, notably the DPS." Future DPS chief Courcelle was in close touch with the "presidential cell" of the DPSD, which recruited scores of fascists and mercenaries to train death squads and prop up dictators. Le Pen's château, St. Cloud, is the former French residence of Emperor Bokassa of the Central African Republic. The National Front supplied the "dogs of war" to do the dirty work of France's neocolonial empire in Africa, while it was the conservative Chirac and the "socialist" Mitterrand who employed them.

Armies of Professional Strikebreakers

Courcelle claims that he banned guns in the National Front squads, although even the police admit that the FN thugs show up at demos with their car trunks jammed full of weapons. But he was up to his neck in arms trafficking, at least from the time he was stationed as a military officer in charge of security for the Luchaire arms manufacturer in the 1980s when the latter was smuggling arms to Iran (France's "Irangate"). In 1995-96, when he was head of the DPS, Courcelle organized a million-dollar arms deal with Chechen Islamic guerrillas led by Djukar Dudayev, involving AK-47s, high-power sniper rifles, rocket launchers, mortars and other arms supplied by a Belgian mercenary arms dealer based in Zagreb, Croatia. In addition, the FN controls a number of private security agencies with well-stocked arsenals. According to police reports, fully half the DPS members are employees of these rent-a-cop agencies.

Trotsky writes in the Transitional Program:

"The bourgeoisie is nowhere satisfied with the official

police and army. In the United States, even during 'peaceful' times, the bourgeoisie maintains militarized battalions of scabs and privately armed thugs in factories. To this must now be added the various groups of American Nazis. The French bourgeoisie at the first approach of danger mobilized semi-legal and illegal fascist detachments, including such as are in the army."

This is certainly true of the role of the National Front in France today. In whitewashing the FN, the ICL argues that "France is not currently besieged by organized fascist gangs attacking workers' picket lines" (*Workers Vanguard*, 3 May). Then how would they explain the FN commando of strikebreakers that attacked a picket of striking truck drivers in Vitrolles in 1997, leaving several truckers lying in a pool of blood? On the night of November 5, a squad of 20 thugs led by Patrick Bunel (connected with the private security agency Normandy and body guard of Bruno Mégret, whose wife was mayor of the town) – dressed in black, wearing hoods and armed with tire irons and baseball bats – assaulted strikers outside the depot of the TFE trucking company (see photo). Readers of *The Internationalist* may recall that this was the strike in which the ICL leadership initially *opposed* its French section putting out a leaflet. A few weeks later, the ICL expelled the comrades of the Permanent Revolution Faction, which had called for such an intervention in this first major workers struggle against the popular-front government of Jospin and his PCF transport minister Gayssot.

In another case in 1997, workers struck the Valéo auto headlight plant in Evreux (Eure) in April when plans were announced to shut it down. In response, in early June the management contracted with a private security company, OGS (Management and Security Organization) led by the mercenary Gonzague du Cheyron du Pavillon (a former member of the OAS), which supplied a squad of 80 thugs, including numerous DPS members, to block workers protesting the removal of the machinery from the plant. At one point the fascist goons tried to break through the workers' pickets, but trucks were turned back as the picketers heaved rocks at them. Earlier, in February 1997, the Normandy security agency sent a squad of 24 thugs led by fascists of the GUD to carry out an attack on the CGT union at a paper plant in Corbeil (Essone). All this in a single year. Only an organization utterly divorced from the proletariat and which has no interest in the workers' struggles could make *WV's* absurd claim.

European capitalists look with envy at the destruction of the British unions that began with Margaret Thatcher's breaking of the 1985-86 coal strike. As French bosses close one plant after another, French unionists are *constantly* facing gangs of professional strikebreakers linked to the FN/DPS and other fascist outfits. Among these "security companies" are the AGS, Embassy, Bègue Consultants, Éric SA, Groupe Onze International, Groupe Onze France, Normandy, OGS and SPGM. They supply the same thugs who beat up leftists and immigrants outside National Front demonstrations. In our article "Truckers Blockade France" (*The Internationalist* No. 4, January-February 1998), we noted that the fascist assaults on the strik-

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L'Humanité



French unions don't face "organized fascist gangs attacking workers' picket lines"? False. Striking truck drivers in Vitrolles (above) were assaulted by squad of National Front thugs during national road haulers' strike, 5 November 1997.

ing truckers at Vitrolles should have been answered by "an assembly of thousands of militant workers and immigrants from the Marseille area, forming workers defense squads to deal decisively with the racist terror squads." It was, and is, necessary to drive home Trotsky's call in the Transitional Program:

"The struggle against fascism does not start in the liberal editorial office but in the factory – and ends in the street. Scabs and private gunmen in factory plants are the basic nuclei of the fascist army. *Strike pickets* are the basic nuclei of the proletarian army.... In connection with every strike and street demonstration, it is imperative to propagate the necessity of creating *workers' groups for self-defense.*"

Mobilize Workers Power, Not Appeals to the Bourgeois State!

Many of those protesting against the National Front in France have called for it to be banned. This is the theme of the Gauche Socialiste, for example, which wants the FN to be outlawed on the grounds that it is not a democratic and republican party. GS spokesman Jean-Luc Mélenchon writes in *Le Monde* (29 May) that "the National Front must be banned. The law exists since 1936 permitting the dissolution of the fascist leagues, predecessors of the FN today." Mélenchon adds: "In France, racism and anti-Semitism are not considered opinions but crimes which are severely punished." The purpose of the 1999 French National Assembly investigation of the FN's goon squad, the DPS, and its paramilitary formations, the UMIs, was to consider whether they should be proscribed under this law allowing the government to dissolve organizations with "combat groups" or "private militias." The parliamentary socialists finally decided to do nothing, calculating that the 1998 split between Le Pen and Mégret would lead to the decline of both. Since that has not happened, the calls for action by the bourgeois state are again being heard.

Trotskyists have always opposed such political proscriptions in the hands of the capitalist rulers, warning that they will

inevitably use such bans to attack leftists and revolutionary working-class organizations. The French "anti-militia" law of 1936 was extremely broad, allowing the banning of groups which "provoke street demonstrations" and oppose the "republican form of government." Although initially used to outlaw Action Française, the Croix de Feu and the royalist Camelots du Roi, already by 1939 it was used to ban the Party of the Algerian People (PPA); in the mid-'50s, it was the basis for proscribing the Algerian National Movement (MNA), the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN) and the Algerian Communist Party. Following May 1968, this same law was used to outlaw the entire spectrum of the "far left," including the JCR, PCI and their successor, the LCR; Voix Ouvrière (predecessor of LO); the OCI (now the Parti des Travailleurs); a number of Maoist groups and several self-proclaimed revolutionary student groups.

At bottom, how to fight fascism is a *class* question. The answer of liberals and reformists to the National Front is to build class-collaborationist coalitions in the name of (bourgeois) "democracy." Ultimately this leads them to vote for the arch-reactionary bourgeois "democrat" Chirac and to push for increasing the repressive powers of the "democratic" capitalist state. Yet the bourgeois democrats open the door to the bonapartists and fascists, just as the 1930s popular front led to the Vichy government of Marshal Pétain. The capitalists use varying political forms to protect their interests, from monarchies to republics and bonapartist regimes. In quiet times they hold the fascists in reserve, perhaps even banning a few of the more notorious groups (which will then reform under a new name). But as the class struggle intensifies, the ruling class calls upon the reformists to form popular fronts to divert the workers from revolutionary aims. Hence the election of Socialist Lionel Jospin's government of the "plural left" following the mass strikes of November-December 1995. And ultimately they will call upon the fascists and other shock troops to use the methods of civil war to crush the organized workers movement and annihilate oppressed sectors of the population.

Marxists do not call on the bourgeois state to outlaw racist and anti-Semitic propaganda, or to dissolve fascist organizations, for the capitalists' state power is the fundamental instrument for suppression of the exploited and carrying out racist oppression and such bans will inevitably be used against the left. We oppose gun control, even when it purports to disarm fascist militias, for such measures will inevitably be used to disarm the workers. The fascists will not be eliminated by the bourgeoisie, which protects them since it may need their services in the future. It is up to the workers movement to sweep these racist terrorists from the streets, shattering their union-busting goon squads and disarming their paramilitary forces by mobilizing the power of tens of thousands of workers that today can easily overwhelm the fascists, however sinister their plans and menacing their growth. But that requires forging a revolutionary communist leadership, a genuinely Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party of the proletariat. ■

In Centrist Drift Toward Lutte Ouvrière

How ICL Turns French Fascists Into Ballot-Box Rightists

JUNE 8 – During the three decades that it upheld the revolutionary program of Trotskyism, the Spartacist tendency/International Communist League (ICL) consistently held that France’s National Front (FN) was fascist. It defended this position tooth and nail against the likes of Lutte Ouvrière (LO), which claimed that the FN was just another right-wing party. The ICL’s French section, the Ligue Trotskyste (LTF), called a labor-centered mobilization against the FN and other fascists in Rouen in 1981. But in the recent spate of articles in the Spartacist League’s paper *Workers Vanguard* insisting that the FN is not fascist but an “electoral party,” this history is passed over in silence. And what about the fact that the LTF was still calling Le Pen’s party fascist as recently as April 23? Nothing but a shifty *WV* “introduction” that subtly “corrects” their French comrades’ leaflet. Moreover, it’s not just in France that the ICL is twisting itself into contortions as it vainly attempts to square its new line with the facts. All over Europe it has decreed that fascist parties are henceforth merely electoral. Thus in Austria, while admitting that Jörg Haider and his “cronies” hold “fascistic views,” they wrote that:

“Haider’s FPÖ is a purely electoral machine and does not correspond to what Marxists understand by fascism. Reactionary views alone do not define fascism.”
– *Workers Vanguard*, 25 February 2000

A year later, the ICL wrote on Italy:

“Alleanza Nazionale is the historical descendant of the fascists of the [Italian] Social Movement [MSI], but even though there is evident overlapping between the organization of [AN leader Gianfranco] Fini and [Lega Nord leader Umberto] Bossi and the squads who carry out acts of fascist terror in particular against immigrants, these organizations are at the moment essentially an electoral phenomenon, not different from the Austrian FPÖ of Jörg Haider.”
– *Spartaco*, April 2001

Now it’s Le Pen’s National Front that has undergone an “electoral” rehabilitation by the ICL. The LTF is just a little slow in getting with the program.

In each case, the ICL’s line change came just as the fascist parties in question made electoral gains and what should be done about them became a major issue. The reformist left, as usual, uses “anti-fascism” to mount popular-front protests. The now-centrist ICL, which has settled into a comfortable niche of abstract propagandism, decrees that the fascists have become an electoral party/machine/phenomenon, in order to justify no mobilization, and declares that anyone who says otherwise is playing the pop-front game. The unspoken logic is that if the FN, AN and FPÖ were fascist, then class-collaborationist “anti-fascist” coalitions would be a natural response: a classic case of opportunists standing in fear of their own

impulses. For authentic Trotskyists, recognition of the fascist character of the National Front means posing a *sharp fight to break the stranglehold of popular-frontism*, in order to mobilize the working class in powerful action to *crush the fascists*, before they become a mass movement.

This is not an isolated example, but an expression of the wholesale turn to the right by the ICL. In the French case, it is directly related to their conditional offer of critical support to the candidate of Lutte Ouvrière, Arlette Laguiller. The condition was that LO make a statement against the “Vigipirate” campaign of police persecution against immigrants. LO didn’t, of course, since they regularly tail after chauvinist sentiments, and the LTF’s offer remained suspended in air. But they spent the whole campaign trailing after Laguiller despite the fact that she and LO had fulsomely supported a bonapartist cop strike by the gendarmes last December! Now, as part of its right turn, the ICL has adopted LO’s electoralist position on the National Front, which it shares with other reformists, including the Socialist and Communist parties. For the social democrats, Stalinists and pseudo-Trotskyists alike, fascist parties are counterposed to electoral parties. After all, if they run against the FN in elections, and even debate Le Pen on TV (as Laguiller has done more than once), then the National Front must be part of the (bourgeois) constitutional order. Yet in Germany the Nazis ran in elections year after year, and Hitler took office by “constitutional” means.

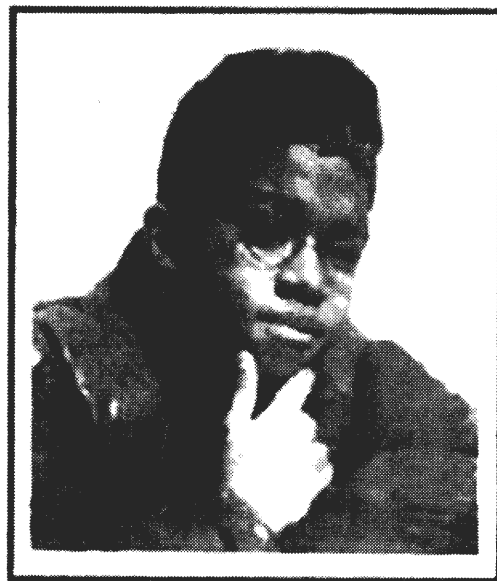
Symptomatic of the ICL’s new-found electoralism is its virulent attack on the League for the Fourth International for our call for an active boycott of the second round of the French presidential election, that is the “choice” between Chirac and Le Pen. Two succeeding issues of *Workers Vanguard* (17 and 31 May) have run articles attacking the LFI’s “ultra-militant posture” and “pseudo-revolutionary fantasies.” They claim that a call to boycott this “contest” between the reactionary Chirac and the fascist Le Pen “presupposes a level of class consciousness one would expect in a pre-revolutionary situation.” We are accused of ignoring “over one and a half million people, including large numbers of workers, [who] were demonstrating in the streets in support of the bourgeois ‘Republic’ – and the rightist Chirac!”

So instead of calling for dispersing the fascist thugs on May 1 and demonstrating against the electoral farce on May 5, as the League for the Fourth International advocated, a passive policy of electoral abstention would be more “in tune” with the workers? we asked in a heated discussion with supporters of the Spartacist League. How dare we accuse them of calling for abstention, the SLers replied indignantly. And in fact, *the ICL didn’t even call for no vote for Chirac or Le Pen*, so solicitous were

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AFP



Reuters

Left: FN leader Jean-Marie Le Pen (with his goons) attacks Socialist Party candidate Annette Peulvast during election campaign at Maintes-la-Jolie, May 1997. Right: Ibrahim Ali, shot and killed by fascist thugs putting up FN election posters in Marseille, February 1995. Le Pen justified this murder as “legitimate self-defense.” ICL says FN is not fascist but an “electoral party.”

they of the 1.5 million. Their 23 April statement had no slogans at all about the election. On a banner they called for “no unity with Chirac” (which even the Gauche Socialiste, a current of ex-pseudo-Trotskyist burnouts and other graduates of the “far left” in the PS, said as it called to “block the way to Le Pen”), plus a timeless, general call for “class struggle against the capitalist system.” Abstract propagandism anyone?

The ICL’s new line on European fascism is an expression of a profoundly defeatist outlook which despairs of winning the working class to revolutionary consciousness. *WV*’s bottom line is that the FN, AN, FPÖ and similar parties are not fascist because the bourgeoisie doesn’t need fascism, since the workers’ consciousness is so hopelessly backward that there is no danger of the workers taking power. (Of course, if that were true, the bourgeoisie wouldn’t need popular fronts either.) The ICL mouths incantations about the need to build a revolutionary party as a kind of talisman to ward off the need to intervene in the class struggle to build such a party. As Trotsky underscored in the Transitional Program, that would mean waging a real fight against popular-frontism and fascism in order to resolve the crisis of proletarian leadership, which is key to the future of humanity. But the ICL now says this central thesis of the founding program of the Fourth International is *dépassé*, that since the fall of the Soviet Union the central problem is the workers’ retrograde consciousness, not the counterrevolutionary leadership.

WV’s “hear no fascism, see no fascism” line is the smug complacency of a tendency which has lost its revolutionary will to fight. Its soothing lullabies and confusionist double-talk are the hallmark of centrists who have lost the Marxist rudder and are drifting on an opportunist course.

ICL Blames the Workers

We noted above that *Workers Vanguard*’s redefinition of the French National Front as an electoral rather than a fascist party is part of an operation which the ICL is carrying out across Europe. Yesterday *WV* said Haider’s FPÖ in Austria, Fini’s AN in Italy and Le Pen’s FN were all fascist; today it says they aren’t. Why not? “Since the French proletariat does not currently pose an immediate threat to the capitalist order, the capitalists are not about to resort to fascist dictatorship.” Therefore, “the FN’s success is an electoral phenomenon.” Ditto for Italy and Austria: the bourgeoisie doesn’t need fascism, therefore the fascist parties that are junior partners in those governments aren’t fascist any longer. So when did they cease being fascist? Judging by the timing of *WV*’s pronouncements, it’s when they made electoral gains or joined the government. Apparently for the ICL the answer to the question, “when is a fascist not a fascist?” is “when they get a lot of votes.”

WV’s “electoral” whitewashing of the European fascist parties is another result of the ICL’s new line (codified in its 1998 “Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program”) that the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state led to a fundamental retreat in working-class consciousness throughout the world:

“Trotsky’s assertion in the 1938 Transitional Program that ‘The world political situation as a whole is chiefly characterized by a historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat’ predates the present deep regression of proletarian consciousness.”

This passage was inserted in the ICL’s rewritten principles



Le Bolchévik

Back when the Spartacist tendency fought to mobilize the working class against French fascists. Left: Poster for 11 December 1981 demonstration to "Stop the Fascists!" in Rouen. Right: Ligue Trotskyste contingent. Banner reads: "Crush the Fascist Vermin! For Workers Self-Defense!" Now the ICL/LTF declares the fascists electoralists.

explicitly in order to contrast it to the declaration of the Internationalist Group that the central thesis of the founding document of the Fourth International holds true today. What the ICL is coyly saying is the very reason for existence of the FI is now *outdated*. It's no accident that virtually every revisionist tendency breaking with Trotskyism (Pablo, Cliff) has rejected the same key thesis of the Transitional Program. As we have noted: "Here the ICL is trying to give a *theoretical justification* for an abstentionist program, claiming that the problem is no longer a crisis of leadership but of the proletariat itself" (see "In Defense of the Transitional Program," *The Internationalist* No. 5, April-May 1998).

Now we have another expression of the same ICL line: since the working class is so besotted with backward consciousness, it poses no threat to the bourgeoisie, therefore the bourgeoisie doesn't need fascist dictatorship, therefore the fascists are no longer fascist but only an "*electoral party*" and we can all sleep easy because it is not necessary to seek to mobilize to sweep the National Front from the streets. It might be nice if on May Day the LO/LCR/PCF/CGT would occupy the FN's assembly point, but they won't, so that's the end of it. This "great leap backwards" argument idealizes proletarian consciousness prior to the fall of the USSR, which had long been quite reformist, hardly revolutionary or even centrist. But at bottom, it is the bourgeoisie's "death of communism" thesis dressed up in pseudo-Marxist terminology: they don't need fascism since there's no communism. Nice and simple, not to say simple-minded. And wrong. It is a bald-faced justification for opportunism.

ICL Alibis Lutte Ouvrière...

But while the ICL's reclassification of the fascists is international in scope, it is a tenet of Marxism that opportunism is national in character. *Workers Vanguard's* discovery that the National Front is no longer fascist is closely linked to the ICL's policy of offering conditional (not very) critical support to Arlette Laguiller, the candidate of Lutte Ouvrière in the French presidential election. Most of the "far left" in France and internationally was mesmerized by Laguiller's vote prospects, stumbling over each other as they offered their "critical" support. Reflecting this, the March 2002 "Open Letter" from the LTF effusively praised the LO candidacy (see our article, "Racist War Elections," *L'Internationale* supplement, May 2002, translated in this issue of *The Internationalist*). The LTF wrote in its letter:

"In this election campaign there is only one candidate who seeks to draw a crude class line against the capitalist government: it is Arlette Laguiller, spokesman for Lutte Ouvrière. We agree with her when she says that... Laguiller says unambiguously.... For these elections LO is breaking with its frequent history of supporting the popular front....," etc. This is markedly different from the way the ICL used critical support in the past when it stood on the revolutionary program of Trotskyism. Only after this long string of praise does the LTF open letter criticize LO's "tacit support" to the Vigipirate campaign of anti-immigrant repression and its "explicit support to the reactionary mobilization of cops." But then it quickly adds that if LO would just come out against Vigipirate and police terror, "we would envision calling for voting for LO, without muting our criticisms of their program."

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This isn't the Leninist tactic of critical support ("like the rope supports the hanged man"), ruthlessly exposing the opportunists' betrayals. It's an opportunist offer of conditional support with a few criticisms, which they wouldn't even have to "mute," since they were already quite muffled indeed. To begin with, the LTF made this offer *after* LO's scandalous support for the bonapartist police mobilization against the "law of presumed innocence" of arrested suspects, *after* LO's statement "the police, and also the gendarmes, carry out functions that are useful to the whole collectivity," and *after* Laguiller's editorial calling for bullet-proof vests for the cops! As we noted, the coverage of the "crime" issue in *Lutte Ouvrière* consisted mainly of criticizing youth in the housing projects for hanging out in gangs that trashed autos. And Laguiller's support to Vigipirate wasn't all that "tacit": back in 1995 she editorialized that "it is necessary to show this population [immigrants] that it has nothing to fear from the Vigipirate plan" (see our articles, "Workers, Immigrants: Crush the Fascist National Front!" and "Ex-Far Left in the Reformist Swamp," *The Internationalist* No. 2, April-May 1997).

No flabby statement by LO or Laguiller distancing themselves from Vigipirate or the cop mobilization could change that. The French presidential election was waged on the racist theme of "*insécurité*" (crime), demonizing immigrant youth. This was the home front of the imperialist war as French troops patrol northern Afghanistan and French planes bomb southern Afghanistan in conjunction with U.S. imperialism. The whole campaign put wind in the sails of Le Pen's fascist National Front. The fact is that LO did not call to defeat the imperialist war; it went along with the anti-"crime" campaign while praising the racist cops for their militancy; and it did not break with Jospin's popular front but only sought to pressure it to the left, while the LTF in turn sought to push LO to the left. That is why the League for the Fourth International declared, "Down with the Anti-Immigrant, Anti-Worker PS/PCF/Green Popular Front! No Support to the Pseudo-Opposition of Lutte Ouvrière! For a Workers Government!"

Responding to our call to boycott the second round of the elections, in which the fascist Le Pen faced off with the arch-reactionary Chirac, *Workers Vanguard* (17 May) attacks us for "pseudo-revolutionary fantasies" and an "ultra-militant posture." This is the classic language of ex-revolutionaries directing their fire at those to their left while seeking to cozy up to the "big fish" to their right. At the same time, they nonsensically claim that the LFI's "macho phrasemongering is simply a smokescreen for its fundamentally opportunist politics, posturing as the militant in-the-streets wing of the anti-fascist electoral 'unity' pushed by the French left in the tow of the popular front." The League for the Fourth International calls for boycotting the elections, the pseudo-leftists call (openly or tacitly) for support to Chirac; we politically oppose the popular front down the line, the reformists and centrists tail after it. To the ICL, these are fundamentally the same. How is that? Because we say the National Front is fascist — as the ICL insisted for three decades, and its French section

said right up to the April/May elections.

WV (17 May) rushes to defend the honor of LO against *The Internationalist*, which "simply equates LO and the LCR, falsely claiming that both are 'organizing extra-parliamentary support for the 'Republican front' for Chirac' (26 April) and 'openly or tacitly, encouraged a vote for Chirac in the second round' (4 May)." It claims we "lyingly denounced" the LTF's offer of "conditional critical support" to LO, and that we "instead simply dismissed LO because it has 'applauded bonapartist and racist police demonstrations'." In contrast, says *WV* solicitously: "We [the ICL] seek to win militants who are drawn to LO on the basis of its stated opposition to the popular front by *exposing* how that is contradicted by its tacit support to Vigipirate." Readers can see for themselves that we accurately described the LTF's opportunist offer to LO, and nowhere will they find a "stated opposition to the popular front" by LO, which *doesn't consider* the "plural left" a popular front at all. As for our supposed "lies" about LO's policy on the second round of the elections, the previous issue of *WV* (3 May) informed its readers that: "LO...comes out clearly against voting Chirac but then leaves the door open to...voting for Chirac."

Yet according to the 17 May issue of *WV*, LO "resisted the pressure to call for a vote to this rightist [Chirac] — for which it was reviled, hissed and booed." As a result, LO "could be well positioned to make gains" as the consequences of Chirac's victory are felt. Let's see what LO's intrepid "resistance" consisted of. On the day after the first round, Laguiller issued a statement beginning, "I do not call for abstention on the second round of the presidential election. I call on all workers and particularly those who voted for Le Pen not to vote for him, because in addition to being an enemy of labor he holds an ideology that must be absolutely condemned." In an editorial titled "The Choice Between the Plague and Cholera," she said that "It would be surprising if Chirac doesn't beat Le Pen, because he will certainly win with an enormous majority," but in such a "plebiscite" he would be portrayed as "the savior of democracy against fascism." Still, the editorial ends: "Of course, everyone must make the choice that seems most justified to him/her" (*Lutte Ouvrière*, 26 April). A call to oppose Chirac? Hardly.

Buffeted on all sides, LO eventually decided to call for casting a blank ballot on the second round, but this was in no way an opposition on principle to voting for a bourgeois candidate. Instead, they accepted the logic of casting a "useful vote," arguing only that Chirac didn't need the workers' votes to stop Le Pen. After going on about "Le Pen must absolutely not get the workers' votes," Laguiller wrote: "If on the one hand, Chirac is elected with the votes of the workers, the votes of the entire left, or if he is only elected with the votes of the right, that could change the future" (*Lutte Ouvrière*, 3 May). Chirac is going to get elected anyway, she reasoned, but if his vote is too big, he will think he has a mandate for his right-wing policies. LO's policy was *not* "no vote to Le Pen or Chirac," it was "No Vote for Le Pen, But No Plebiscite for Chirac," as an

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LO banner said on May 1. LOers understood very well what this meant. A supporter of the LFI selling *L'Internationaliste* in Paris on May Day reported: "LO was very much on the defensive. Several of them explained to me that if Chirac wasn't assured of winning on the second round, they would certainly call for voting for Chirac. And, they said, although Le Pen is probably a fascist, the National Front is not a fascist party...."

Even LO's eventual call for casting a blank ballot was a concession to the massive pressure to get workers to the polls for Chirac. "100% We Will Vote" declared thousands of signs on May 1. The ICL wants to make a qualitative distinction between the campaigns of the LCR and LO, yet the overwhelming majority of those who voted for the LCR or LO on the first round voted for Chirac in the runoff. Exit polls showed that 79 percent of those who voted for Besancenot (the LCR candidate) and 72 percent of those who voted for LO's Laguiller on April 21 ended up voting for Chirac on May 5; only 10 percent of LO's first-round voters cast a blank ballot. Maybe they didn't get the real party line, or maybe they did. Either way, these results give the lie to the myth of determined LO "resistance" to the pressure of the popular front. As for the LTF, it didn't even call for a blank ballot: its 23 April statement took no stand on what the workers should do on May 5. In a situation where the whole of France was polarized over this question, this is a stunning abdication by a party which claims to be revolutionary.

And it was not an oversight. In a polemical exchange with the Internationalist Group, a Spartacist League spokesman argued that we were just dismissing the million-plus workers who had demonstrated in the streets for the "Republic" on May 1 and who would not understand a call for a boycott. What a solicitous concern for staying in touch with the backward consciousness of the workers on which the ICL now builds its program! Certainly the LTF didn't risk offending such workers with its thundering silence about what to do on May 5.

"For the workers to *boycott* bourgeois elections presupposes a level of class consciousness one would expect in a pre-revolutionary situation posing the question of state power," decrees *WV*. But to call for the most combative sectors of the proletariat to actively oppose and even disrupt – i.e., to boycott – the run-off "election" in which the grotesque "choice" was between the fascist Le Pen and the crook Chirac, does not at all require a pre-revolutionary situation. The country was convulsed over what would happen on the second round; there was massive revulsion in the plants over this electoral farce. In our article on the eve of the second round vote, "French Elections: Beware of Bourgeois 'Saviors of the Nation'" (4 May), we quoted from reports to the April 29 national council of the PCF saying that "numerous comrades reported reticence," even among politicized workers and youth who demonstrated against Le Pen, "to choose the thief over the fascist." The pro-Socialist daily *Libération* (30 April) reported that many unionized workers said they were not going to vote on May 5.

Every day the press was filled with articles trying to gauge the sentiment in the country. Interviews were conducted on street

corners, on the metro, in factory cafeterias. *Le Monde* (24 April) reported from Calais that workers angry over the closing of their factory by the Danone conglomerate held Jospin responsible: "the rejection of the government among the employees of LU is total." The CGT delegate said, "Around me, I know many people who are doubtless not going to go out to vote on the second round. They are too discouraged." *Libération* (3 May) reported that in immigrant districts there was discontent over voting for Chirac. Psychiatrists were consulted on how left-wing voters should manage their pain in voting for a right-winger: "they could imagine replacing the name of Chirac on their ballot with the words 'defense of democracy'," or they could see it as a stick-up – a "forced choice: your wallet or your life." Sports stars (including soccer champion Zidane) gave a "red card to Le Pen," religious figures were mobilized to bless the "blocking vote." In some plants, unionists were planning to go in groups to the polls so no one would refuse at the last moment. With a stop at the bistro to fortify the spirits – i.e., they had to get drunk to vote for the crook.

Why all this angst if it was foreordained that everyone was going to dutifully troop to the polls to vote Chirac? Moreover, the huge discontent over this election was in the face of a solid wall of "vote Chirac" propaganda from virtually every part of the media and every party save the FN, with at most a barely audible murmur of dissent from LO (and judicious silence from the LTF). A revolutionary opposition that loudly called for no vote for either of the reactionary bourgeois candidates and for active opposition against this hoax would certainly have been widely denounced, but it could also have used this as a platform for authentic Trotskyism, demonstrating the bankruptcy of the popular front which paved the way for the fascists' advance. The ICL's pettifogging pedantry in denouncing our call for an electoral boycott prior to a pre-revolutionary situation recalls nothing so much as the centrist Karl Kautsky's opposition to calling for a general strike before the proletariat is ready to seize power (the ICL has the same line today), or the opposition of the French CP in 1934 to organizing workers militias against the fascist bands. In *Whither France?* Trotsky dissected the cynical excuses of those who opposed this urgent step:

"But the arming of the workers is only opportune in a revolutionary situation, which does not yet exist.' This profound argument means that the workers must permit themselves to be slaughtered until the situation becomes revolutionary.... A revolutionary situation does not fall from the skies. It takes form with the active participation of the revolutionary class and its party."

One can speculate on what the ICL figures it will get out of its shameless tailing after Lutte Ouvrière. Not so long ago, LO attacked Spartacist salesmen at the annual LO fête and banned the LTF from having a literature stand. It's worth noting that in the several articles on the French elections in the LTF and SL press there is not a word of criticism of the LO minority, which operates as a virtual party within the party, having a weekly column in *Lutte Ouvrière* and publishing its own bi-monthly

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magazine. And we can't help noticing that the LO minority has the *very same position on the nature of the National Front* as the ICL has now adopted, often in identical terms. Consider the following, from the LO minority's *Convergences Révolutionnaires* (May 2002):

"Up until now it has been only an electoral opening which has not led to the creation of a fascist party. The economic situation today does not compel the big bourgeoisie to finance far-right troops ready to fight it out with left or far-left militants, nor even to recruit whatever it takes to lay down the law in the housing projects. And up until now, even supposing that he will want to do so some day and he will find some troops here and there, Le Pen has never opted for carrying out strong-arm antics in the streets, confining himself to his ritual procession in honor of Joan of Arc every May 1."

Perhaps the LO minority and the LTF should have gone together on May Day to the ceremony commemorating the murder of Bouaram Brahim by skinheads from the '95 FN march to explain that this was only a "ritual procession" and the National Front is not fascist but "electoral."

... And Adopts LO's Line on Fascism (And Not Just That)

Back when they stood on the revolutionary terrain of Trotskyism, the ICL and LTF vigorously fought LO's prettifying of the National Front. In 1981, when the Ligue Trotskyste initiated a 400-strong mobilization to "Stop the Fascists" in Rouen, it denounced Lutte Ouvrière for boycotting this labor-centered action. An LTF banner proclaimed: "Crush the Fascist Vermin! For Workers Self-Defense!" A few years later, the LTF wrote:

"According to I.O., the National Front is not, of course, a 'fascist-type party.'... LO seems to think that Le Pen's speeches about the 'hierarchy of the races,' his slogans making immigrants responsible for unemployment, his appeals to 'strike down the dictatorship of the CGT and CFDT [union federations]' and to put an end to 'picket lines of North African strikers' are simply figures of speech, just like the 'Sunday socialism' speeches by Arlette.... Le Pen today is the spokesman for a *program* of anti-immigrant and anti-worker terror. It is not necessary to wait until his thugs go into action on a massive scale.

"The sad truth is that LO does not want to engage on the burning terrain of the struggle to organize massive workers mobilizations against racist terror and to crush the fascists."

—*Le Bolchévique*, May 1985, reprinted in the LTF pamphlet, *Lutte ouvrière: économicisme et étroitesse nationale* (1986)

The same could be said about the ICL and LTF today. From Brazil to France it calls to "pull our hands out of the boiling water" of the class struggle whenever things get too hot. And to justify this shameful abstentionist policy, it comes up with the very same arguments which have been the patented "method" of LO for decades.

In our article before the first round of voting in the French elections we noted, "The mild 'criticisms' and the fervor of its

support can be explained by the political evolution of the now-centrist LTF toward the positions of LO. After all, both the LTF and LO don't call for the defeat of 'their' imperialism in the imperialist war, and neither of them call for independence for the French colonies...." To this we can now add (presuming that the LTF has finally got the word from *WV* and will duly rectify its propaganda), they both agree that the National Front is not fascist but electoralist. But it is not merely an accumulation of common positions contrary to Leninism and Trotskyism on key questions. The ICL has increasingly come over to the anti-Trotskyist outlook and methodology of Lutte Ouvrière, which underlies the fact that LO has played hardly any role in any of the big mobilizations of the French proletariat and students from 1968 to 1995.

Thus LO played no leading role in the explosive mass strikes of public sector workers in France in 1995. Earlier that year, in the April presidential elections, Laguiller got 1.6 million votes, 5.3 percent of the total (an almost identical number and percentage as this year). In the campaign she made it clear that "I am not asking you to vote for a communist program," but only for an "emergency program" that could be agreed to by "all working women and men" (speech at Ile des Vannes in supplement to *Lutte de Classe*, May 1995). The bourgeois media was surprised by the unexpectedly large vote for Laguiller. But an analysis of the situation in France by LO written in late October declared that "the present period continues to be dominated by a demoralization of the working class" ("The Internal Situation," in *Lutte de Classe*, January-February 1996). While LO correctly pointed to the demoralizing effect of "the unemployment crisis on the one hand and disillusionment with the policy carried out by the left in government from 1981 to 1986 and from 1988 to 1993," their overall evaluation was seriously amiss, as would be seen a month later.

During the November-December 1995 strikes, LO militants did no more than act as union militants, calling at most to extend the strikes. Several million workers struck for over two weeks, with daily votes to continue the strike in workplace assemblies, punctuated by mass protests of hundreds of thousands every few days. After letting it continue for some time, on December 15, the CGT, FO and CFDT labor bureaucrats began their move to break the strike, sending the railroad workers back. In a speech at the Mutualité meeting hall in Paris that evening, Laguiller declared: "The social climate remains marked by demoralization and apoliticism, the consequence of the revulsion with politics provoked by the unity between the PS and PCF and their period in power." Thus at the very moment when the crisis of leadership was acutely posed, when it was urgently necessary to mobilize the workers against the pro-capitalist union bureaucrats, the LO leader instead attacks the "demoralization and apoliticism" of the working class! In a balance sheet of the strikes in January '96 LO went even further and declared, "the spearhead of the strike was not the determination of the workers, but that of the leaders of the union federations"!!

To buttress its claim that the French working class was demoralized, passive and apolitical in December 1995, *Lutte Ouvrière*

DOSSIER ON FRENCH ELECTIONS AND THE NATIONAL FRONT

Marc Garanger/Le Monde



Immigrant workers are key component of French proletariat. Above: Algerian auto workers at Renault-Billancourt plant near Paris in 1968. Fight against anti-immigrant repression is key to revolution.

cited the effect of defeats for the working class going back to the 1920s. "The collapse of the USSR and the crisis of the Stalinist movement opened a new stage in this retreat" ("International Relations," in *Lutte de Classe*, January-February 1996). This same argument is now presented by the ICL around the globe. For LO, this was not a new melody but a constant refrain going back to its origins as a tendency. It has always justified its program of economism and national narrowness by reference to the backwardness of the workers' consciousness. At bottom, this is the line that the working class has the leadership it deserves. And this outlook has always condemned it to irrelevance during the great upheavals in France, most notably in 1968. Just as the explosive student struggles were getting underway, *Lutte de Classe* (May 1968) published an article on "The Role of Violence Outside of History." When a number of leftist student groups and Vietnam committees took on fascist groups which had repeatedly attacked them following the Vietnamese Têt offensive, *Voix Ouvrière* (the predecessor of LO) wrote:

"The present battle waged against them [the fascists] by certain left-wing groups can only appear to the great majority of the workers as fights among students or as the settling of accounts between small political sects. In the best case, they can look upon the revolutionary left with sympathy. But in no way do they feel themselves involved in these 'Latin Quarter quarrels'."

Within days after this was published, the bankruptcy of VO's workerism was manifest as ten million French workers went on strike, an uprising directly sparked by the leftist student revolt. Of all the groups on the French "far left," VO played the least role in those events. And in the aftermath, they dismissed it all as not breaking out of the traditional mold:

"Can one say that the situation was revolutionary? It's a matter of words. The struggle in fact stayed within the bounds of traditional struggles.... The mistrust of the tra-

ditional organizations was not manifested concretely in such a movement to constitute independent organs of struggle. In this way, the situation was not revolutionary at any point."

—"Analyses de la révolution de Mai," *Lutte Ouvrière* (August 1968)

At the time when it represented revolutionary Trotskyism, the LTF commented on the role of VO/LO in 1968:

"There was no revolutionary party in 1968, and that is the principal reason for the defeat of May '68. But because there was no revolutionary party, does this mean that all was lost in advance? That nothing could be done? That would be a fatalist and defeatist vision....

"Voix Ouvrière, which then became *Lutte Ouvrière*, developed a defeatist position of this sort in the balance sheet just after '68.... At bottom, for VO, May 1968 could only take on a revolutionary character if there had been a revolutionary party or revolutionary organizations sufficiently strong and rooted that they could contest the control of the PCF. But because there was no revolutionary party, and because the revolutionary organizations were too minuscule, oh well, the only thing to be done in the end was to get the most out of 1968 at the economic level."

—from the LTF pamphlet *Mai 68: Révolution sabotée* (1982)

Now the ICL and LTF have adopted the outlook which led *Lutte Ouvrière* to irrelevancy in 1968. It will do the same for the ICL, LO and the LO minority tomorrow. In his key work, *What Is To Be Done?* Lenin insisted that the working class from its direct experience cannot achieve consciousness of its historic tasks and mission. For the proletariat to achieve revolutionary consciousness requires intervention "from outside" by a vanguard of professional revolutionaries drawing the lessons of the whole history of the class struggle. For the Bolsheviks Lenin and Trotsky, this was an argument for the urgency of building an authentic communist party through sharp intervention in the class struggle. Today the ICL makes a caricature of this Leninist thesis, standing it on its head and using it as an argument for passivity and flight from the class struggle.

The march of events in France and Europe today will hardly be determined by the pseudo-Trotskyist leaders who seek to divert opposition to the fascist National Front into the dead-end of popular frontism, and those who would lull the working class into complacency with electoralist lullabies. It is possible that opposition may arise within these organizations which falsely claim to represent the heritage of the Fourth International while junking its revolutionary program. Some would-be communists may revolt over voting for the arch-reactionary Chirac or pretending that the fascist National Front is not fascist at all. If so, they must begin by examining where such bankrupt policies come from, and where they lead. This requires confronting the history of struggles for authentic Trotskyism, not just in France but internationally. The struggle to sweep the Chiracs and Le Pens into the trashbins of history can only be waged through the fight to build real Leninist-Trotskyist parties through reorganizing the Fourth International. ■

Fascists, Conservatives and Reformists Push Police-State Laws

France: National Front and the Capitalist Drive For a “Strong State”

JUNE 8 – The presence of Jean-Marie Le Pen, *Führer* of the National Front (FN), in the run-off round of the French presidential elections stunned France and sent shock waves around Europe. The fact that a dyed-in-the-wool fascist could edge out Socialist prime minister Lionel Jospin in the first round of voting on April 21 was portrayed in the capitalist media as a stain on the national honor. Tens of thousands of high school students poured into the streets day after day to protest against Le Pen. The reformist left, from the Socialist (PS) and Communist (PCF) parties to the (not very) “far left,” cynically channeled this outrage into support for the notoriously corrupt conservative president Jacques Chirac. In the end, Chirac was re-elected with over 80 percent of the second-round votes. The fact that the “contest” for the highest office in the nation was waged on the slogan “Votez l’escroc, pas le facho” (Vote for the crook, not the fascist), speaks volumes about the fraudulent nature of bourgeois “democracy.” And the fact that the electoralist left ended up as vote-collectors for Chirac exposes the bankruptcy of their “lesser evil” bourgeois politics. Erstwhile fire-breathing “red 68ers” are today the palest parlour pinks.

Now the battle is on for the legislative elections, June 9. Even though Chirac got barely one-fifth of the votes on April 21, this won’t stop him from striking a pose as “savior of the nation,” affecting a cheap imitation of his former patron, General Charles De Gaulle, the bonapartist strongman who erected the presidential Fifth Republic. Le Pen’s National Front is expanding even as new witnesses come forward accusing him of torturing prisoners during the Algerian war for independence. While the former “plural left” tries to cobble together a “united left” to counter Chirac’s Union for a Presidential Majority, the princelings of the Socialist Party are jockeying over who will replace Jospin now that he has bowed out. The PCF is rent by internal squabbling and in a number of electoral districts, dissident Communist candidates are running against the official nominees. As for the ostensibly Trotskyist “far left” – notably Lutte Ouvrière (LO – Workers Struggle) and the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR) – after their presidential candidates got over 10 percent in the first round of the presidential election, three-quarters of their voters cast ballots for Chirac on the second round. And now that they have gotten used to “casting a useful ballot” (*voter utile*), their electors see no use in voting for the “far left” in the legislative elections: the combined LO/LCR score in recent polls has dropped



Michel Euler/AP

Homeless immigrants at Paris demonstration against Le Pen, April 27. Mobilize the multiethnic working class against all the capitalist parties to crush the fascists! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!

to under 4 percent.

The electoral turmoil and mass demonstrations have highlighted the question, what is the National Front? It was posed point-blank on May Day, the international workers day, when the fascist FN provocatively stages its annual mobilization at the statue of Joan of Arc. In 1995, a Moroccan youth was murdered by skinheads from the FN march. This year the popular-front left brought hundreds of thousands into the streets in a giant anti-Le Pen rally, not to cleanse the streets of the racist killers, but to get workers to vote for the arch-reactionary Chirac! In contrast, in a 26 April supplement to *L'Internationaliste*, published following the first round of the French elections, the League for the Fourth International called: “No to Chirac and Le Pen! Sweep Away the Fascist Thugs May 1! Boycott the Elections May 5!” Our article headlined: “France 1935-2002: The Popular Front Opens the Door to Fascist Reaction – Fight for Workers Revolution!” Against the class-collaborationist pseudo-Trotskyists, we called to “Build a Real Leninist-Trotskyist Party!”

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Break with the Popular Front! Build a Trotskyist Party to Lead the Struggle for International Workers Revolution!