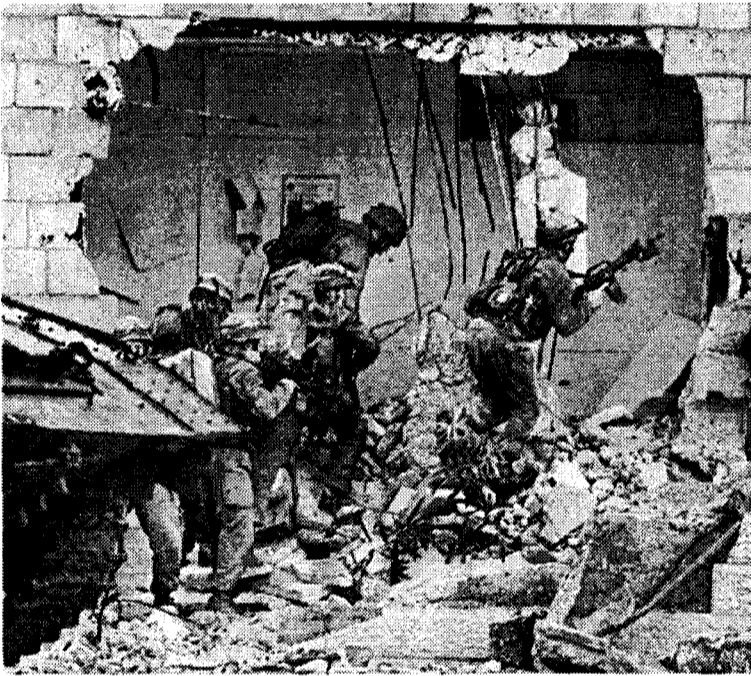


**No U.S./UN/EU Intervention in the Near East!  
U.S. Hands Off Iraq!**

## Defend the Palestinian People! All Israeli Troops, Settlers Out of the Occupied Territories!



Left: Israeli army assault on Palestinian Authority headquarters in Ramallah, March 29. Palestinian men rounded up in West Bank as Zionists reoccupy Palestinian ghettos.

APRIL 1—Following an Arab League meeting that refused to endorse U.S. plans for an attack on Iraq, Washington dispensed with its recent pretense of “even-handedness” toward the Palestinians, tacitly approving Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon’s invasion of one West Bank town after another. In Ramallah, home to 200,000 Palestinians and unofficial headquarters of Yasir Arafat’s Palestinian Authority (PA), whole areas have been reduced to rubble, 700 people arrested and dozens killed, at least five apparently executed “with a single coup de grace administered to the head or throat” (London *Observer*, 31 March). As Israel further tightens the noose around Arafat, now imprisoned in his darkened office with little more than a handful of supporters and a dying cellphone, Bush cynically chastises him for not doing enough to stop Palestinian terrorism! Now, Sharon has issued an open declaration of war against the Palestinian people.

Coming from the butcher of Sabra and Shatila, the Lebanese refugee camps where over 2,000 men, women and children were methodically slaughtered in 1982, Sharon’s statement is truly chilling. Israeli defense minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer, a leading spokesman of the

supposedly “dovish” Labor Party, warns that the only alternative to a “settlement” (i.e., complete submission by the Palestinians) is total re-occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. This would entail a bloodbath unprecedented even by the very bloody standards of Zionist repression during the 18-month-long Al-Aqsa Intifada, which has already seen over 1,100 Palestinians killed. Punctuating such warnings is the report in the Israeli press that a General Staff commander “said lately that the army could learn from the way the German troops operated in the Warsaw Ghetto” (*Ha’aretz*, 1 April).

The Zionist rulers certainly have “learned” from the Hitlerite exterminators of the Jewish people in Europe. The Nazi-like mentality of Sharon & Co. is of a piece with their genocidal aims—to lord it over a “Greater Israel,” if necessary, through the forcible expulsion or slaughter of the Palestinian Arabs. Mirroring this chauvinist outlook are the petty-bourgeois Palestinian nationalists and Islamic reactionaries who do not limit their attacks to the Israeli occupation forces—the military and their armed settler auxiliaries—but also carry out indiscriminate attacks against innocent Israeli civilians. Suicide bombings and the like are an expression of the Palestinians’ powerlessness and desperation in the face of the overwhelming might of the Zionist garrison state. Nonetheless, suicide attacks like Hamas’ bombing on Sunday of a Haifa restaurant managed by an Arab family and frequented by Jews and Arabs exem-

plified the hostility of nationalism and religious fundamentalism on both sides to what little social integration currently exists under apartheid-style Zionist rule.

As we stress in a 30 March Spartacist League/U.S. statement distributed at demonstrations that day in Washington, D.C. and other U.S. cities, the only road forward for the Palestinian Arab people lies through the *internationalist* mobilization of the Near Eastern proletariat, Arab and Jewish alike, as well as workers in the imperialist countries. Reformist groups like the International Socialist Organization (ISO) instead look to the American imperialists to “Stop Funding Israeli Terrorism,” in the words of an ISO sign at the Los Angeles demonstration. Who is the ISO appealing to? When it comes to support to the Zionist regime, Democrats like New York Senators Charles Schumer and Hillary Clinton are even more rabid than Bush, while California Senator Dianne Feinstein is co-sponsoring a bill to shut down the PA’s office in Washington and to seize its assets.

In Europe, fake-left groups like the French Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire explicitly call on the European Union (EU) imperialists or the United Nations to organize a “peace and protection force” or to impose economic sanctions against Israel. That is the aim of the civilian “protection force” now in Ramallah (headed by French anti-globalization campaigner José Bové), though those participating are undoubtedly personally courageous. Those who call for imperialist military

intervention or economic sanctions serve only to push workers, immigrants and other minorities into the embrace of their class enemy. What is urgently necessary is international protest action drawing on the power of the proletariat, from the heavily Arab and black auto workers in the Detroit area to the multiethnic industrial working class of France with its strategic Maghrebin (North African) component, to demand: Defend the Palestinian people! All Israeli troops and settlers out of all the Occupied Territories now!

It is a measure of desperation in the face of untrammled Zionist terror and the evident impotence of secular nationalists like Arafat that Islamist influence has grown among the Palestinian people, historically among the most cosmopolitan in the Near East. Many women at the March 30 protests in the U.S. and Canada, as well as at a 9,000-strong rally in Berlin, wore the *hijab*, the Islamic headscarf. Islamic fundamentalists like Hamas are deadly enemies not only of the Hebrew-speaking people but also of the Palestinian working masses. Just look at Algeria, where Islamic fundamentalists have carried out a reign of terror against trade unionists, secular intellectuals and unveiled women. The goal of Hamas is to subject women to the enslavement symbolized by the veil and *pardah* (seclusion in the home) and to otherwise impose a regime of religious reaction akin to Iran or Afghanistan.

Many supporters of the Palestinian  
*continued on page 9*



# Mass Labor Protest in Rome

The following report was written for Workers Vanguard by our comrades of the Lega Trotskista d'Italia, section of the International Communist League.

In the largest demonstration in Italy since the end of the Second World War, some 3,000,000 people took to the streets of Rome on March 23 to protest government attacks on the country's trade unions. Italy's largest union federation, the Italian General Confederation of Labor (CGIL), which called the protest, helped organize over 9,000 buses, 61 special trains, four ships, five airplanes and countless cars.

The right-wing government of media boss Silvio Berlusconi, Italy's richest man, is seeking to overhaul the country's labor laws, particularly going after Article 18, which provides workers some protection against arbitrary firings. Berlusconi is also proposing further pen-

sion cuts and threatening to privatize the country's schools and health care system. At the same time, an ominous racist law has been proposed by Gianfranco Fini of the Alleanza Nazionale—currently primarily an electoral vehicle but also heir of the historic party of Mussolini's fascism—and Umberto Bossi of the fascist Lega Nord, both governmental partners of Berlusconi. If approved, this law will make it impossible for immigrants without a job to stay in Italy, speed up deportations and severely restrict family reunifications. Most recently, the government issued a decree on March 28 giving it the authority to fire on any ship it suspects to be carrying "illegal" immigrants.

Against these fierce attacks, which target the majority of the population, hundreds of thousands of workers, including a significant sector of the immigrant

workforce, have held militant strikes and demonstrations in the past few months. The stability of the Berlusconi government is seriously in question, as an anti-Berlusconi movement has been burgeoning in the country for some months. Attendance at demonstrations against government austerity has continually exceeded expectations by many magnitudes, stunning their organizers as well as the government. Now, an eight-hour general strike by Italy's three biggest union federations, representing over 12 million workers, is projected for April 16.

The situation shifted abruptly following the March 19 assassination of Marco Biagi, an economist who was working as an adviser to the Labor Ministry in instituting its new anti-labor legislation. The Italian bourgeois press claims that the assassination was carried out by an offshoot of the leftist Red Brigades. In fact, many in Italy believe the assassination was a provocation by the government. Not only is there a long history of such provocations in Italy, but this particular killing has served as a convenient rallying point for the Berlusconi regime, which has used it to intensify the campaign of repression against leftists, particularly in Florence and Rome.

In response to the assassination, the CGIL trade-union bureaucrats changed the slogans of the March 23 Rome demonstration from opposition to government attacks on the unions to "Against Terrorism, For Democracy, For Rights" (referring to union rights currently under assault). The demonstration itself began with the playing of the Italian national anthem and the observance of a moment of silence in memory of Biagi. Earlier, the trade-union tops had called a reactionary strike against "terrorism" the day after Biagi's assassination in honor of this class enemy.

In response to the Rome protest, Umberto Bossi blamed the unions for Biagi's assassination, ranting: "First they killed him, now they are appropriating to themselves the victim." This statement has sparked outrage among workers throughout the country. Enraged union officials canceled talks with the government scheduled for March 26 and called for more demonstrations. CGIL head Sergio Cofferati is demanding that the government retract its accusation that the labor movement breeds terrorists. Reflecting worries in the bourgeoisie that Berlusconi & Co. are provoking upheavals, Italian president Carlo Ciampi praised the Rome demonstration as "the salt of democracy."



Rome, March 23: Three million protest government attacks on unions. AP

The capitulation of the pro-capitalist trade-union bureaucracy as well as mass reformist organizations like Democratici di Sinistra (DS—Democratic Left) and Rifondazione Comunista (RC) to Berlusconi's "anti-terror" campaign is deadly dangerous for the proletariat. The government's purpose is to divide and weaken the workers movement by targeting immigrants, anarchists and other leftists as "terrorists." A direct assault on the most militant sectors of the labor movement, the "anti-terror" drive is ultimately aimed at the whole of the working class.

The LTD'I intervened into the Rome protest with our revolutionary Leninist program, raising placards with slogans including, "Break the National Unity Against Terrorism!" and "For the Revolutionary Unity of the Working Class Against the Bourgeoisie!" In our discussions with workers and youth, we underlined how the trade-union tops did not raise the call for a strike when anarchist protester Carlo Giuliani was killed by the "carabinieri" police during last year's protests against the G-8 in Genoa.

continued on page 11



TROTSKY

## Marxism and Religion

Friedrich Engels, in his 1878 polemic *Anti-Dühring*, traced the material origins and historical development of religion from early human societies through to capitalist class rule. As Engels argues, religion, which serves both as solace for the miseries produced by class society and as an ideology justifying class domination, will disappear only with the realization of a classless communist society, the product of international proletarian socialist revolution.



LENIN

All religion, however, is nothing but the fantastic reflection in men's minds of those external forces which control their daily life, a reflection in which the terrestrial forces assume the form of supernatural forces. In the beginnings of history it was the forces of nature which were first so reflected and which in the course of further evolution underwent the most manifold and varied personifications among the various peoples.... But it is not long before, side by side with the forces of nature, social forces begin to be active—forces which confront man as equally alien and at first equally inexplicable, dominating him with the same apparent natural necessity as the forces of nature themselves. The fantastic figures, which at first only reflected the mysterious forces of nature, at this point acquire social attributes, become representatives of the forces of history. At a still further stage of evolution, all the natural and social attributes of the numerous gods are transferred to *one* almighty god, who is but a reflection of the abstract man.... We have seen repeatedly that in existing bourgeois society men are dominated by the economic conditions created by themselves, by the means of production which they themselves have produced, as if by an alien force. The actual basis of the reflective activity that gives rise to religion therefore continues to exist, and with it the religious reflection itself. And although bourgeois political economy has given a certain insight into the causal connection of this alien domination, this makes no essential difference. Bourgeois economics can neither prevent crises in general, nor protect the individual capitalists from losses, bad debts and bankruptcy, nor secure the individual workers against unemployment and destitution. It is still true that man proposes and God (that is, the alien domination of the capitalist mode of production) disposes. Mere knowledge, even if it went much further and deeper than that of bourgeois economic science, is not enough to bring social forces under the domination of society. What is above all necessary for this, is a social *act*. And when this act has been accomplished, when society, by taking possession of all means of production and using them on a planned basis, has freed itself and all its members from the bondage in which they are now held by these means of production which they themselves have produced but which confront them as an irresistible alien force; when therefore man no longer merely proposes, but also disposes—only then will the last alien force which is still reflected in religion vanish; and with it will also vanish the religious reflection itself, for the simple reason that then there will be nothing left to reflect.

—Friedrich Engels, *Anti-Dühring* (1878)

## WORKERS VANGUARD

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5 April 2002

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Out of the Occupied Territories!  
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# Religion and the Development of Capitalism

New York  
28 March 2002

To: *Workers Vanguard*

Dear comrades,

"Salman Rushdie's Verses for Imperialism" (WV No. 772, 11 January) is a powerful polemic against the liberal opponents of Islamic fundamentalism in the Near East and Asia who have signed on to U.S. imperialism's "war on terror." However, in asking "how does one explain the vast socioeconomic gulf between the United States and Canada on the one side and the countries of Latin America on the other," the article wrongly posits that the differences in economic development between these countries have no roots in the doctrines and cultural attitudes of Catholicism. Such an assertion is ahistorical and one-sided, ignoring the connection between religious ideology and the development of capitalism.

Writing in the 1892 Introduction to the English Edition of *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, Friedrich Engels noted that as Europe emerged from the Middle Ages the nascent bourgeoisie collided with the feudal system and that:

"The great international centre of feudalism was the Roman Catholic Church. It united the whole of feudalised Western Europe, in spite of all internal wars, into one grand political system, opposed as much to the schismatic Greeks as to the Mohammedan countries. It surrounded feudal institutions with the halo of divine consecration. It had organised its own hierarchy on the feudal model, and, lastly, it was itself by far the most powerful feudal lord, holding, as it did, fully one-third of the soil of the Catholic world. Before profane feudalism could be successfully attacked in each country and in detail, this, its sacred central organisation, had to be destroyed."

Engels goes on to note that the class most directly interested in the struggle against the Roman Church was the bourgeoisie and that the struggle against feudalism took on a religious guise. This battle led to the Protestant Reformation, the rise of Calvinism and the English Revolution, and culminated in the great French Revolution. In contrast, Catholic reaction, wholly embraced by the Spanish monarchy, played a *major* role in retarding capitalist development in Spain and its colonies.

Spain was the first of the great unified absolutist monarchical states to arise in Europe. But unlike the other great monarchical states in Europe, the Spanish monarchy did not serve to pave the way to the rise of the middle classes. As Marx noted: "In Spain, on the contrary, while the aristocracy sank into degradation without losing their privilege, the towns lost their medieval power without gaining modern importance" (Karl Marx, *Revolutionary Spain*, 1854).

The long struggle (La Reconquista) over almost eight centuries against Moorish domination imbued Spanish Catholicism with a messianic crusading militancy not to be found in the rest of Western Europe. The first monarchs of unified Spain (Aragon, Castile and Granada), Ferdinand the Catholic and Isabella I, relied on Catholicism as the ideological glue to unify and cement the nation to the new monarchy. Abandoning the feudal nobility, the church threw its lot in with the monarchy, and through the instrument of the Spanish Inquisition became a powerful tool for enforcing monarchical absolutism. The Jews (1492) and then the last of the Moors (1609) were expelled, with the forced converts to Christianity, the so-called "New Christians," being the main objects of Inquisi-

torial persecution. The country was thus deprived of much of its economically vital and cultured populace, and subjected to a reign of terror that stultified intellectual life. While most of the expelled Jews made their way to the Ottoman Empire, others wound up in the Low Countries (which were soon to become heavily Protestant) where Joseph de la Vega, a Dutch Sephardic Jew, penned the first book on the workings of the stock market in the 1600s. Spanish mercantile capitalism was stunted and

its retrograde monarchical power were unable to reverse the country's decline.

It was the legacy of Spanish economic and political backwardness, complete with the Inquisition, that Spain bequeathed to its Latin American colonies. Thus, at the beginning of the 19th century the populations of Mexico and the United States were about equal. But that was all that was equal. In America, as Engels noted, "feudalism was unknown, and society at the very beginning started from a bourgeois basis." Mexico in contrast was

activity or cleverness, but upon circumstances uncontrollable by him. It is not of him that willeth or of him that runneth, but of the mercy of unknown superior economic powers; and this was especially true at a period of economic revolution, when all old commercial routes and centres were replaced by new ones, when India and America were opened to the world, and when even the most sacred economic articles of faith—the value of gold and silver—began to totter and to break down. Calvin's church constitution was thoroughly democratic and republican; and where the kingdom of God was republicanised, could the kingdoms of this world remain subject to monarchs, bishops and lords?"

"In Calvinism," Engels went on to point out, "the second great bourgeois upheaval found its doctrine ready cut and dried." Engels was referring to the English Revolution and attendant civil war (1642-1649), whose whole course bears out his analysis. There is a very



University of California, Santa Barbara



Theodore de Bry

Left: Spanish Inquisition's reign of terror stultified country's intellectual life, economic vitality. Pizarro (depicted above) and others extended legacy of Spain's backwardness to Latin America.

decisively subordinated to the parasitic, tribute-extorting and reactionary Catholic monarchy.

The consolidation of the Spanish state took place under the reign of the Hapsburgs, beginning with Charles V (1516-56), also crowned the Holy Roman Emperor in 1519, and continued by his son Phillip II (1556-98). These were the glory days of the Spanish state, when the Inquisition and the colonization of Latin America marched hand in hand. The ambitious Hapsburg monarchs spearheaded the Counter Reformation across Europe, a rearguard action against the rise of capitalism expressed religiously in the Reformation. Under the Hapsburg monarchs Spain waged war across Europe for empire and Catholicism, an enterprise acknowledged by the Papacy's custom of addressing the Spanish king as his "Most Catholic Majesty."

Spain waged wars in the Mediterranean against the Ottoman Turks, in Italy and France (assisting the Catholic cause in the wars of religion and also waging wars against the Catholic French monarchy), against the Protestant Reformation in Germany, in the Low Countries and against England. Under Phillips III and IV this continued, with Spain participating in the Thirty Years War. But by the reign of Phillip III Spain was in a decline. For a century Spanish blood and treasure (extracted from its New World colonies) had been drained by the Hapsburg monarchs in pursuit of their wars to maintain and extend empire and defeat the Protestant powers. The drain of capital was ultimately so acute that Spain's internal circulating currency was copper—at a time when Spain controlled Potosí, one of the world's most productive silver mines, in what is now Bolivia! At sea, powerful Spanish Armadas were crushed by both the English and the Dutch. On land the Spanish *tercios* were the most feared infantry in 16th-century Europe. But by 1643 they were definitively defeated by French troops at Rocroi. Ultimately, the archaic political economy of Spain and

mired in semi-feudal backwardness. The Mexican Revolution of 1810-1821 did not mark the victory of bourgeois trends over outmoded and essentially semi-feudal modes of production, but instead had to content itself with the removal of all vestiges of Spanish colonial tributary despotism and its attendant bureaucratic monarchical centralism.

In the 1860s, Lincoln won in the American Civil War and Juarez was the victor in the war against the French occupation of Mexico. But the outcomes were very different. The victory of the North in the American Civil War opened the road to an explosion of immigration and capitalist industrial development. The victory of Juarez (whose earlier revolutionary struggle was aimed at ending the impediments to capitalist development by forces centered on the reactionary Mexican Catholic church) was merely the antechamber to the rule of Porfirio Díaz, who in his decades-long reign sold as much of Mexico as he could to the highest imperialist bidders.

The false assertion that ideology cannot serve as a brake on capitalist development effectively cancels out any notion of interaction between ideological superstructure and material base, and is anti-Marxist. In his battles with anti-Marxist opponents—who falsely equated Marxism with vulgar economic determinism—pioneer Russian Marxist Georgi Plekhanov wrote very intelligently and persuasively on the role of superstructure and its interaction and effects on the course of historical development and its underlying motor force—the corresponding productive forces of society.

For capitalism to take root you needed at least an accommodating ideology and consciousness. Writing on Calvinism, Engels noted in his introduction to *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*:

"Calvin's creed was one fit for the bold-est of the bourgeoisie of his time. His predestination doctrine was the religious expression of the fact that in the commercial world of competition success or failure does not depend upon a man's

rich body of historical studies that illustrates and elucidates these developments, most notably the writings of Christopher Hill and also, for example, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* by R.H. Tawney.

But with the rise of imperialism in West Europe, America and Japan in the early 20th century the independent industrial development and modernization of the rest of the world was foreclosed. Instead the colonial and semi-colonial countries remain mired in economic impoverishment and cultural backwardness, all reinforced by imperialism. But as the Rushdie article notes, recognizing the role of imperialism in the Third World "does not exculpate the indigenous ruling classes of those countries."

From World War I on, and before in Egypt, Arab nationalism represented the attempt to modernize countries of the Near East. But that road was blocked by imperialism. Instead, the region became British and French protectorates and, later, objects of the world market mainly orchestrated from the United States. The imperialists, the nationalists and the Islamic fundamentalists *all* conspired against the working classes of these countries coming to power. The Stalinist-led Communist Parties of the region threw their lot in with the nationalists as part of the supposed "two stage revolution," leading to massive defeats and wholesale massacres of the proletariat.

The failure of Arab nationalism, and the continued brutal depredations of imperialism, led to the rise of Islamic fundamentalism with religion here serving as a solace for the seemingly unchangeable miseries and horrors of daily life.

Comradely,  
George Foster

P.S. Today the most backward religious zealots populating Latin America are the fundamentalist Protestant missionaries from the United States. In contrast, "liberation theology," Catholics appear relatively benign. ■

# Down With Vigipirate! Down With SP-CP-Green Government's Racist Campaign!

## Open Letter to Lutte Ouvrière on French Elections

The upcoming May 5 French presidential elections are taking place in a context of social polarization in the country. Since coming to power in 1997, the popular-front government of Socialist prime minister Lionel Jospin, which includes the French Communist Party (PCF) and the Green Party, has led a campaign of deportations of immigrants and brutal police repression against minority ghettos. After the September 11 attacks, the Jospin government immediately moved to intensify the despised "Vigipirate" campaign, a massive mobilization of the police and military to sow terror in minority communities. Both Jospin and his neo-Gaullist bourgeois opponent, current president Jacques Chirac, are pushing "security"—i.e., racist repression against immigrants and minorities—as the dominant theme. At the same time, the Jospin government is widely hated among working people in France for its austerity, layoffs and attacks on pensions and social services.

The fake-Trotskyist Lutte Ouvrière (LO) is running its presidential campaign on the basis of opposition to the popular-front government of Jospin. While opinion polls show Jospin and Chirac in a virtual dead heat in the run-up to the first round of voting on April 21, LO candidate Arlette Laguiller is credited with fully 10 percent of the vote, far outstripping the PCF which has 6 percent. The PCF is being punished by its working-class base for the party's continuing participation in a government of anti-worker austerity. In addition to declining electoral support, the PCF is also suffering splits and defections in its historic trade-union base, including among lifelong Stalinist cadre; the entire PCF fraction in the Renault plant in Cléon just publicly split to form its own independent group. In response to LO's electoral gains, the PCF has denounced Laguiller as a "spoiler," claiming that she is playing right into Chirac's hands. At the same time, the widespread hatred of the Jospin government has also profited the far right; the fascist Jean-Marie Le Pen is neck and neck with LO for the third place spot in the elections, also garnering about 10 percent of the vote.

We reprint below a 10 March open letter to LO by our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyiste de France, section of the International Communist League. LO is opposed to *this* exceedingly unpopular popular-front government, but has no opposition to class collaboration in principle. This is best expressed by Laguiller in her own words. At a March 17 campaign meeting of some 2,000 people in Paris, Laguiller concluded her remarks by urging her supporters "not to wait for the revolution" but to "impose it" because

"the bourgeoisie is so rich right now and so powerful that if it is seriously challenged it would prefer to share than to lose it all" (*Libération*, 18 March). Thus, for LO, the purpose of socialist revolution is to share power and wealth with the bourgeoisie! In opposition to LO's ref-

capitalism is vitiated by their capitulation to the French bourgeoisie's repressive anti-immigrant measures, their silence on the brutal Vigipirate campaign and their open support to reactionary police "strikes." That is why, as the open letter notes, so long as LO refuses to oppose

Seillière and other bosses who exploit the workers in the factories and that Jospin has the same policies as Chirac. In her plant bulletin editorial of 18 February Laguiller says unambiguously: "In the choice proposed to us, the workers do not have to lick the hands of their oppressors and they should vote neither for the right-wing politicians nor for the left ones" (*Lutte Ouvrière*, 22 February). For these elections LO is breaking with its frequent history of supporting the popular front (a coalition of reformist workers parties with bourgeois parties to administer capitalism, a coalition which we on principle refuse to support) to "fight the right" or the "far right." In this same issue of their paper, they have a eulogy of their late comrade Pierre Bois, in which they recall that he had refused to obey LO's own line of voting for Mitterrand in 1981. This is in contrast with Olivier Besancenot, the candidate of the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR), who stated a month ago "that he would personally vote 'for the left' because 'there is a difference between the left and the right'" (*Le Monde*, 1 February). This is consistent with the political line of the LCR, which has always supported the popular front of Mitterrand and then Jospin for more than 25 years.

But LO does not oppose the government because they are opposed to class collaboration: they empty their correct opposition of all its content by their tacit support to Vigipirate and their explicit support to the reactionary mobilizations of cops in November. LO's attitude on this question is all the more crucial in that "security"—i.e., the government's racist campaign against immigrants and their families—is at the center of the electoral campaign. The SP launched Jospin's electoral campaign by calling on the cops to throw Younis Trabelsi, an undocumented Libyan who was on hunger strike, out of SP headquarters in Rouen. As for the PCF, they are asking for a doubling of the security budget for the *banlieues* [working-class and minority suburbs]. In this context, LO's refusal to fight against Vigipirate represents a loyalty oath to the racist bourgeois order and to the anti-working-class austerity of the Jospin government. But if, in its campaign, LO came out clearly against Vigipirate and the cop terror, we would envision calling for voting for LO, without muting our criticisms of their program.

### Down With Vigipirate!

Racism against workers of immigrant origin, in particular those from North Africa, has always been poison used by the bourgeoisie (those who own the means of production—factories, machines, etc.—as their private property) to divide the working class. For the capitalists it's a good way to divide the workers—those who produce the wealth in the industry of this country—between "French" and "immigrants" (although many of the latter were born here). The French bourgeoisie seized on the criminal attacks of September 11 in New York to decree "national unity" against "terrorism" and to widen and deepen their racist campaign, and the working class is supposed to join in. In fact what's going on here is a racist war against all immigrants and above all against the substantial population of North Africans and youth of immigrant origin.

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"Anti-terror" patrol in Paris train station following September 11 attacks. Protest at St. Denis University in Paris against roundup of undocumented immigrant students, March 2000.



Le Bolchévik



ormist power-sharing schemes, in which the class interests of the workers will always be subordinated to those of their exploiters, we say that the working people who have created the wealth of this society can only enjoy the fruits of their labor when they achieve power through a socialist revolution and establish a society based on a planned collectivized economy and egalitarianism.

The LTF open letter to LO explains that opposition to the racist oppression of the large "immigrant" population—which includes second and third generation minorities—is key to opposing class collaboration and the politics of the French bourgeoisie. LO's posture of anti-

Vigipirate and reactionary cop mobilizations, the LTF cannot support their campaign.

Our letter to LO represents an important means of intervention into a situation where there is increased polarization and defiance of the implementation of capitalist austerity by popular-front or social-democratic governments which have held power throughout most of West Europe for the last five to ten years. Not only in France, but also in Germany, Britain and elsewhere, popular discontent, especially among the proletariat, has resulted in widespread disenchantment among workers and the emergence of a substantial minority casting their ballots with parties ostensibly to the left of the mainstream social democracy, such as LO in France. Our comrades in ICL sections throughout Europe have sought to intervene into these polarized arenas with our revolutionary program, fighting for the political independence of the proletariat and the forging of revolutionary workers parties to fight for workers power.

\* \* \*

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 Socialist Party (SP) leaders are from the same world as



Arlette Laguiller, presidential candidate of Lutte Ouvrière, is silent on government's Vigipirate campaign against minorities.



# As Oakland Police Thugs Face Trial

## Anger Mounts Over Cop Terror in Bay Area

OAKLAND—Three former cops face trial this month in what the Oakland *Tribune* (22 September 2000) called “one of the worst cases of Oakland police misconduct in decades.” The scandal broke after a disaffected rookie cop unveiled a gang of police thugs who terrorized black West Oakland and called themselves “the Riders” in unmistakable reference to the murderous nightriders of the KKK. Even after prosecutors threw out dozens of charges in an effort at damage control, the three were charged with more than 60 counts stemming from their savage beatings of handcuffed victims, planting drugs to frame them up and covering it all up with falsified reports. One of the many victims who courageously came forward to testify during a preliminary hearing last year, Delphine Allen, told of a harrowing night during which the “Riders” arbitrarily arrested him and repeatedly beat him until he had to be sent to the hospital.

Oakland’s black police chief, Richard Word, fired the three and their reputed ringleader, who has reportedly skipped the country. Democratic mayor Jerry Brown subsequently joined Word in pushing for an official probe, which one city official held up as proof that the cops can “police and investigate themselves.” Brown & Co. portray the fired cops as a few “bad apples.” But the four had been set loose on West Oakland in a special police campaign in the racist “war on drugs.” Altogether, 25 cops have reportedly been named in lawsuits by victims of Oakland cop brutality.

Far from being the exception, the racist terror exemplified by the “Riders” is the *norm* for the police, who are the hired thugs of the capitalist ruling class. Even as details of the “Riders” scandal were trickling out last April, Oakland cops beat to death a young black man, Jamil Wheatfall. Two months later in San Francisco, police gunned down Idriss “Scotty” Stelley, a mentally ill youth, in a barrage of more than 20 shots in a downtown theater complex.

Now, in the wake of the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center, the capitalist ruling class has dramatically escalated racist repression in the name of the “war on terror.” Taking first aim at immigrants, the government has rounded up more than 1,200 people of Near Eastern descent or Muslim faith for indefinite detention. Hundreds of immigrant workers have been fired and arrested or deported; thousands have been harassed. Polls of layers of the black population following September 11 show support for “racial profiling” of Arab and other immigrants. Black antipathy toward immigrants is encouraged by racial and ethnic hostilities fomented by the capitalist rulers and often echoed by black political misleaders. But as the Partisan Defense Committee and Bay Area Labor Black League for Social Defense wrote in their call for the February 9 labor-centered mobilization in defense of immigrant rights in Oakland:

“Assaults on the immigrant workforce have always gone hand in hand with stepped-up oppression of blacks and the persecution of the most militant workers. Don’t forget—here in California the anti-immigrant Proposition 187 led directly to the racist, anti-affirmative action Proposition 209 two years later.”

The Oakland protest mobilized more than 300 people—trade unionists, immigrants, blacks, youth and others—in opposition to the anti-immigrant witch-hunt and the Maritime Security Act, which threatens a racist union-busting purge on the waterfront. In building this demonstration, we sought to tear through the straitjacket of the capitalist rulers’ “national unity” campaign, whose aim is to regiment the population in the service

of U.S. imperialist depredations abroad and grinding exploitation of workers at home. We fought as well to break down the poisonous racial and ethnic divisions among the exploited and oppressed which the capitalists promote in order to maintain their power.

As the recent freeing of three of the four New York City cops jailed for the 1997 torture of black immigrant Abner Louima starkly shows, police terror against black people remains “as American as apple pie.” This was chillingly brought home in San Francisco on Janu-

But to mobilize labor’s social power in protest against cop terror and in the fight for black freedom, what is required is a political struggle within the unions against the trade-union tops who are bound to the capitalist class enemy, particularly in its Democratic Party face.

In the Bay Area, which has seen repeated protests against racist cop terror, the mounting anger is being diverted into worthless schemes for police “reform,” such as more “effective” civilian review boards. With the “Riders” trial looming, Oakland NAACP leader Shannon Reeves

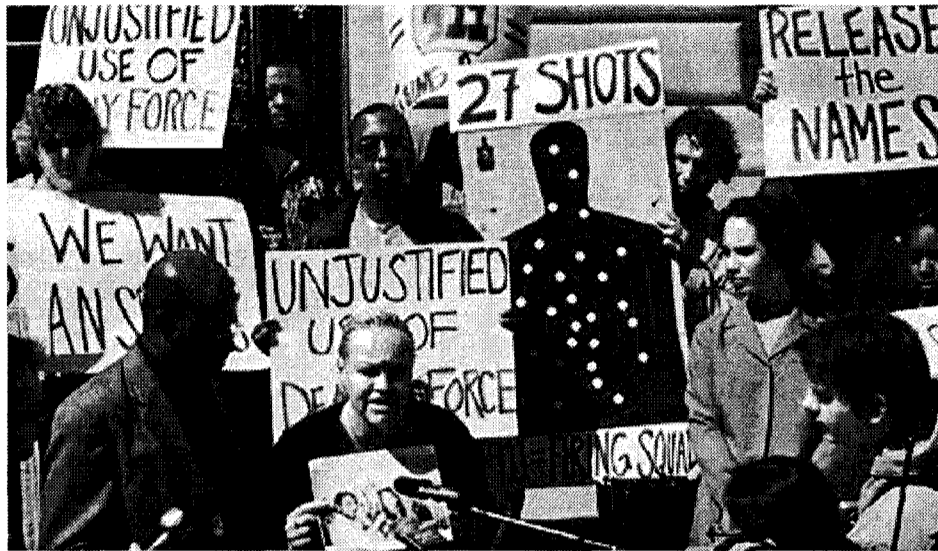
revolutionary opponents of liberalism. Its newspaper *Challenge* (16 February 2000) correctly noted that “PUEBLO’s reformist leadership tries to divert all efforts into working within Oakland’s CPRB (Civilian Police Review Board).” In its 23 May 2001 issue, PL made the rudimentary Marxist assertion that “racist cop terror is a necessary part of capitalist rule.” *Challenge* (20 June 2001) took to task an “Oakland Comrade” who submitted a letter baldly proclaiming: “I have also seen a few ‘good cops,’ those willing to stand up for principle.... What about police reform? Is it possible to organize within the police? What did the Bolsheviks do? What should be our strategy in mass organizations like PUEBLO?” *Challenge* correctly replied, “The primary function of all police departments is to protect the bosses’ criminal attacks on the working class, not to fight ‘crime.’ It’s almost like saying there were a few decent Gestapo cops; it really didn’t matter.”

But PL tramples all over the basic Marxist understanding of the police by actively working *within* PUEBLO, whose Web site unambiguously proclaims its intent “to offer a progressive alternative to overly punitive and ineffective public safety policies.” PL thus provides a left cover for those who reinforce bourgeois consciousness by preaching the reformability of the police. Such illusions can only disarm the struggle to sweep away the system of racist police repression.

Much of the black population understands that the institution of the police is not in place to serve them. On the other hand, the race-caste oppression of black people in this society ensures that many live in ghetto hellholes where life is cheap and the “enemy” is the gang-banger, the pimp and the dealer. Today’s liberal reformers of ghetto life are frequently black activists who have been co-opted by the bourgeois powers that be to keep things cool. Waves of outrage against cop terror are followed by penny-ante, meaningless liberal “reforms,” with the ghetto masses receding into bitterness and despair.

The only successful working-class socialist revolution to date, the October Revolution of 1917, was led by the Bolshevik Party of V. I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky, which fought to raise the consciousness of the working class by *combating* the illusion that the capitalist state machinery can be wielded in the interests of the toilers. Of no less importance, the Bolsheviks recruited strongly from among the oppressed minorities in the tsarist “prison house of peoples” and had among its cadres and leaders Jews, Poles, Georgians and Azerbaijanis. Under Bolshevik leadership, the multiethnic working class seized power, smashing the capitalist state and forging a workers state that laid the foundations of a planned, collectivized economy, the prerequisite to social equality and progress.

In the U.S., where the bedrock of capitalist rule is the special oppression of black people, it is doubly important that black militants play a central role in leading a revolutionary workers party. Without such leadership, it will not be possible to decisively break the political ties that bind the working people and oppressed black and Hispanic masses to the capitalist Democratic Party. It is precisely through such a leadership that the power of labor can be welded to the anger of the ghettos and barrios in order to uproot this whole system based on exploitation and oppression and enforced by racist cop brutality. When those who labor rule, we will begin to build an egalitarian socialist society where racist terror and oppression will be eliminated once and for all, and the tremendous wealth of this society will be used to provide a decent life for all. ■



Marsh/Indymedia



Twin/Indymedia

**Mother of Idriss Stelley, killed in hail of cop bullets, addresses September 2001 press conference outside SF City Hall. Oakland protest against police killing of Jamil Wheatfall, May 2001.**

ary 21, Martin Luther King Day, in an incident that has provoked widespread outrage locally. Shortly after midnight, police with drawn guns assaulted five black youth aged 12 to 14 outside their homes in heavily black Hunters Point, throwing them to the ground, groping two girls and severely beating 14-year-old Jerome Brown for daring to question them. As frantic parents and neighbors gathered, one cop snarled at the mother of one of the victims: “As long as you people are here, we will act like this.”

Like the “Riders,” the SFPD thugs were simply “doing their job” as a racist occupying army in the inner cities. Along with the courts, prisons and armed forces, the police are at the core of the capitalist state, whose role is to protect the property, profits and rule of the capitalist class. And in racist America, this necessarily means terror against black people. Two years ago in New York, following the acquittal of the cops who gunned down African immigrant Amadou Diallo, the New York Spartacist League and Labor Black League issued a statement pointing out:

“There will be no end to police brutality short of the destruction of the system of capitalist exploitation and racist oppression which the cops serve as armed guard dogs. But a protest based on the organized muscle of the labor movement would give the cops and their capitalist masters some pause. More importantly it would serve to imbue the working class with the understanding that its interests are inseparably linked to the defense of the ghettos and barrios and the fight for black freedom.”

has organized a series of public hearings on police abuse designed to let angry residents let off steam, announcing that “it is not our mission to have a beat-up-on-police session” (*Montclarion*, 22 February). In San Francisco, the MLK Day assault came two weeks after “an agreement for better cooperation between the Police Department and black community leaders” spearheaded by the NAACP was signed (*Oakland Post*, 13 January).

For its part, the liberal People United for a Better Oakland (PUEBLO) has been pushing to revamp Oakland’s discredited civilian review board, whose real job is to whitewash the cops. Outrage over the rampant racist terror of the Oakland police in the 1960s, out of which the Black Panther Party developed a large following, led to the creation of the city’s first review board. As continued police atrocities eroded its credibility, the board has been repeatedly “reformed”...until again discredited. PUEBLO now calls for “independent” investigations to “restore the public’s faith and trust in the Oakland Police Department.”

PUEBLO and other reform outfits like the Ella Baker Center, with its associated groups PoliceWatch and Let’s Get Free (formerly Third Eye Movement), preach that the cops can be something other than paid enforcers of the racist capitalist order. PUEBLO is aided in sowing this illusion by fake-left groups like the self-proclaimed “revolutionary communists” of the Progressive Labor Party (PL).

In its rhetoric, PL often comes off as

# Young Spartacus

## Big Brother's Little Sisters Run to "The Man"

# Feminists Ban Marxists from Chicago Conference

INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence, a national feminist organization founded two years ago, held its second "Color of Violence" conference from March 15-17 at the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle Center. Called on the theme of "Building a Movement," the conference attracted hundreds of people, but the INCITE! leadership made certain it didn't include any reds.

INCITE! may appear to the left of the typical bourgeois feminist group simply by numbering racial oppression, police terror and imperialism among the forms of "violence against women of color."



Reuters

**"Woman of color" Condoleezza Rice, member of Bush team busy directing "war on terror" at home and abroad.**

But like the Black Radical Congress and Critical Resistance with whom they share supporters (such as rad-lib academic Angela Davis), INCITE's radical rhetoric doesn't go one step beyond the bounds of Democratic Party pressure politics. Tellingly, conference organizers wasted little time before contacting the cops and building administrators to remove Spartacist supporters from the premises after our revolutionary program for women's liberation received a warm welcome from a number of people at the Saturday workshops, including one—ironically enough—on "State Violence Against Women of Color."

The next morning, the SYC hit the pavement outside the Circle Center with a statement protesting the cop-enforced censorship of our political views. Six conference organizers scurried outside to shepherd the incoming crowd away from us. Still, we distributed some 300 copies of our statement, asking people to read it and decide for themselves why the cops were called on conference attendees. Much to the dismay of INCITE's junior McCarthys, many did. Our statement is printed below.

\* \* \*

Did you buy a *Workers Vanguard* this weekend? Then you better watch out for Big Brother (and Sister) who have declared this revolutionary newspaper of the Spartacist League illegal, unsafe and just not nice! Accused of the "crime" of

telling people that bourgeois feminism is no answer in the fight for women's liberation (guilty as charged), the Spartacist League/Spartacus Youth Club were banned from the conference Saturday and physically escorted out of Circle Center! Hiding behind the lie that our Marxist discussions were creating an "unsafe environment" for the conference attendees, the organizers called the campus cops and had our interracial team of women and men thrown out! "Unsafe environment?!" Calling the cops into a conference attended by many non-citizens caused a genuine threat to the conference participants. The liberal organizers were threatened when attendees snapped up over 100 pieces of our communist literature, thus being exposed to a revolutionary perspective (GASP!). By calling in the state, they put scores of women in the cross hairs of the capitalist state! But that's what happens when you seek common cause with the powers-that-be against the communists. The haunting spectre of a 19-year-old red selling a paper sent them running to the "man." So much for "empowerment of women!" Anti-communist expulsion is a statement of loyalty to the capitalist, imperialist order at home and abroad. John Ashcroft would be proud.

As part of their absurd justification to ban us, the Carrie Nation wannabes accused one of our male comrades of "smelling like alcohol." This provocative smear serves to hide the fact that this exclusion was political, plain and simple. It is no accident that the only people banned from the conference this weekend were the revolutionary Marxists. For instance, a fundamentalist Muslim organization, IMAM, was welcomed. Like all religions, the Islamic religion is anti-woman to its core. Politics breeds strange bedfellows. Let's be clear, their attempt to silence us is based on the politics that we put forward. In 1979, we hailed the Soviet Red Army intervention into Afghanistan. For the first time the question of bringing Afghanistan into the twentieth century was posed, laying the basis for extending the gains of the Russian Revolution for women. Women were educated, allowed into the workforce and given guns to fight for their own liberation against the CIA-backed mullahs. The Stalinist bureaucracy's pullout of the Red Army was a betrayal of the people of Afghanistan, women in particular. Internationally, the feminists and fake left sided with their own bourgeoisie against the Soviets. RAWA, part of today's conference, has been in the forefront of the pro-imperialist outcry. Today they call for the reinstatement of the monarchy and denounce the Soviet imposed rights of "having a boyfriend or dancing in a nightclub" (*Z Magazine*, January 2002).

As the brutal bombing campaign rages against Afghanistan, we say: U.S./UN/NATO Out of Afghanistan and Central Asia Now! For Class Struggle Against the Imperialists at Home! "National unity" is a lie because it ties the exploited with their exploiters. The capitalist system is based on the ruthless exploitation of the many by the few. Bush and company have seized on the criminal attack of the World

Trade Center as a way to terrorize the American population. The "war on terrorism" means war on blacks, immigrants and labor! As Bush jigs into town for St. Patrick's Day, those leading the conference are doing their part in silencing revolutionary opposition to racist American imperialism.

What the conference organizers find particularly hard to swallow is our opposition to the Democratic Party, a capitalist party of war and racism and our forthright program of revolutionary action. It is not enough to criticize Bush. That's easy. It was the Clinton administration that axed welfare and threw tens of thousands of single mothers out onto the streets, that incarcerated more people than any other administration before them and that filled the streets with hundreds of thousands of additional cops to terrorize the ghettos and barrios. The Republicans are the party of repression, the Democrats of hypocrisy. What is needed to even begin to address the genuine liberation of women, blacks and all the oppressed is the fight against the capitalist system. We need our own party, a multiracial, revolutionary workers party to fight for a workers government. Capitalism cannot be reformed into a just society. Imperialism is not an administrative policy subject to pressure. The feminist organizers of this conference feel "unsafe" because we expose their support to capitalism, expressed in the pipe dream that the imperialists can be pressured into acting in the interests of the oppressed. Bourgeois feminism obscures the main division in society, which is the division between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie not men versus women. Sorry, but "woman of color" Condoleezza Rice, helping to carry out the brutal war against Afghanistan is not *our* sister. We seek to mobilize our *class brothers and sisters* in the fight for women's liberation through socialist revolution. Not until we build an egalitarian, socialist society can you even begin to truly lay the materialist basis for the liberation of women.

The same is true for the brutal oppres-

sion of blacks in this country—the bedrock of American capitalism. Segregated at the bottom of society, blacks are integrated at the point of production and are fated to play a strategic role in leading the American working class on behalf of all the oppressed. Oppression cannot be compartmentalized into "sectors," and to do so only plays into the hands of the bourgeoisie. Every attempt to separate these specially oppressed groups from their economic roots leads to reliance on the class enemy in the form of the Democrats and the capitalist state. They preach "separate but safe." We seek to unite all the oppressed under the common banner of revolutionary Trotskyism. The real question at hand is how to get rid of the system that breeds oppression, the capitalist system, and mobilize the social power of the working class. ***Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!***

Our demonstration in Oakland on February 9 gave a taste of a workers party in action. This was the first time anywhere that organized labor was mobilized to flex its muscle in defense of its immigrant brothers and sisters under the U.S. rulers' "war on terrorism." Hundreds of unionists, blacks, Latinos and youth came out under the slogans "Anti-Terrorist Laws Target Immigrants, Blacks and Labor!", "No to the USA-Patriot Act and Maritime Security Act!" and "Down With the Anti-Immigrant Witchhunt!"

Everything the working class and oppressed have ever won was the result of militant class struggle. Women and blacks will be a key component of the revolutionary leadership of a multiracial, Leninist vanguard party on the road to a socialist future. We urge those of you interested in Marxism and leading a fight against capitalism to check out the Trotskyist program of the Spartacist League/Spartacus Youth Club. Join us—we have a world to win! ***Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution! Down With the Anti-Communist Expulsion! Subscribe to Workers Vanguard, the paper they don't want you to read!*** ■



VAAP

**Women workers demonstrate in Petrograd, 19 March 1917. Banner reads, "As Long as the Woman Is a Slave There Can't Be Freedom—Long Live Women's Equality." After working class took state power in October, Bolsheviks moved rapidly on pledge of full social equality for women.**



Dinesh D'Souza, slavery apologist and all-purpose Reaganite pig, appeared at Columbia University's Law School on February 27 to push U.S. imperialism's "war on terrorism" in a speech titled "Why They Hate Us: America and Its Enemies." To refute the racist, pro-imperialist filth he spews, the Spartacus Youth Club called for a united-front protest outside the Law School based on the demands: "Protest Dinesh D'Souza, Racist Ideologue of U.S. Imperialism! U.S./UNINATO Out of Afghanistan, Central Asia, the Persian Gulf and the Near East! Down With the Racist Anti-Immigrant Witchhunt! Defend Black Rights!"

The SYC built for the protest on campus and in work throughout the city. Campus activists and student organizations, including the president of Liga Filipina at Columbia University and the African Student Union of Hunter College, professors and left groups endorsed our united-front call. Notable for its refusal to endorse was the International Socialist Organization (ISO), whose actions during this campaign are a case study in opportunist accommodation to liberalism.

At a protest organizing meeting it had called, the ISO ludicrously objected to the inclusion of anti-imperialist slogans among the united-front demands we put forward because this would "raise the bar too high," frightening away liberals who might oppose D'Souza but not the imperialist slaughter that he cheers. This might seem strange to those who heard an ISO spokesman at a February 20 speakout at Columbia state, "I think it's really important that everyone who's interested in fighting racism fight the war abroad because that's a war allowing racist attacks." The D'Souza protest leaflets that ISO members did distribute failed to raise any slogan against U.S. imperialism, even though this was the topic of D'Souza's speech!

In its press, the ISO can pontificate on "Why we oppose all U.S. interventions" (*Socialist Worker*, 2 November 2001), but on the ground the ISO "fights" against the war in Afghanistan by building liberal "peace" coalitions that aim to pressure the imperialists to be kinder and gentler. For example, the ISO endorsed the April 20 "Stop the War" march on Washington. This mobilization centrally calls for "a U.S. foreign policy based upon social and economic justice, not military and corporate oppression," a demand premised on the deadly illusion that the racist American ruling class can act in the interests of workers and the oppressed.

Our protest, exposing the vile bigot D'Souza, was also aimed at winning students to the understanding that only international workers revolution can end racist oppression, class exploitation and imperialist war. The very purpose of a united front is to mobilize in common action around specific demands, while each organization puts forward its own political program. Such political debate advances

# New York City SYC Leads D'Souza Protest



Young Spartacus

the development of revolutionary consciousness. Fear of confronting communists politically is exactly why the reformist ISO tries routinely to exclude the SYC from their "public" events.

Clearly, the ISO was bothered by the widespread attention and support accorded our campaign against D'Souza. Showing they felt pressure from our criticism of their dive on the war, the ISO came to our protest with slogans that took up imperialism: "D'Souza's racism feeds the war machine" and "The D'Souza agenda: racism, imperialism, war." These slogans sound rather more militant than the ISO's perennial call for "Money for jobs, not for war," which treats imperialist wars as some kind of aberration or excess that the capitalist system could choose to eliminate in favor of other, more humane "priorities." The ISO contingent briefly joined the demonstration, but fled when we chanted: "1, 2, 3, 4—Time to finish the Civil War! 5, 6, 7, 8—Forward to a workers state!"

The ISO's gyrations over our D'Souza protest are a measure of the contradiction this group faces when they seek to posture as opponents of American imperialism. The ISO's staunch anti-communism led them to line up in the first place on the same side as D'Souza in openly supporting the CIA-backed *mujahedin* cutthroats as "freedom fighters" against the Red Army in 1980s Afghanistan. Later, the ISO would declare they "welcome the defeat of the Russians in Afghanistan" (*Socialist Worker*, May 1988).

In contrast, we hailed the Soviet military intervention, which represented the

only hope for emancipation of the hideously oppressed women of Afghanistan. This action by the Moscow Stalinists was one of their few truly progressive acts, both as a basic measure in defense of the homeland of the October Revolution and as the first step to extending the gains of the USSR's planned, collectivized economy to the Afghan peoples. Despite gross mismanagement by the repressive Stalinist regime, collectivized property and the planned economy were the material basis

for guarantees of full employment and social benefits for the whole of the working people.

Opposition to imperialism means defending those gains the international working class already has made. The Stalinist bureaucratic caste sitting atop the workers state sabotaged that defense by conciliating imperialism but was constrained in its actions by its mortal fear of the proletariat. We Trotskyists fought politically, to the limits of our small forces, to rally the working class of the former USSR and East Europe to defend the social gains embodied in these states, to rise in political revolutions to oust the sellout Stalinists who declared "communism has failed" and in the end handed power back to the imperialists. Today, we defend the remaining deformed workers states of Cuba, China, North Korea and Vietnam against imperialist attacks and internal counterrevolutionary forces.

The ISO (and many others) proved to be "Cold War socialists." Alongside the U.S. State Department, they rode the coattails of reactionary forces, like Solidarność in Poland and the Afghan *mujahedin*, that tried and ultimately did succeed in fomenting counterrevolution in East Europe and the Soviet Union. That the ISO is not now in a hurry to boast of its contributions to this outcome testifies to the devastating effects of counterrevolution: massive impoverishment of the working class, hideous "ethnic cleansing," frontal assaults on the rights of women, wholesale destruction of basic health care and public education.

We stand in the tradition of the October 1917 Russian Revolution, in which the working class, led by the Bolshevik Party, amid the bloody chaos of imperialist war took state power away from the capitalist class and established its own class rule. Today, we fight to break the grip of the imperialist system around the globe once and for all as we seek in struggle to cohere a worldwide revolutionary party to lead new October Revolutions. ■



Young Spartacus

## Harvard Protest Against Racist Ideologue

The united-front picket against racist ideologue David Horowitz, a cohort of Dinesh D'Souza, initiated by the Boston Spartacus Youth Club at Harvard University on March 14, was joined by some 20 people. The protesters, including individuals from the Black Men's Forum and the Harvard Living Wage campaign and two members of Progressive Labor, mobilized outside Horowitz's speech at the Science Center under the demands: "Protest David Horowitz, Racist Ideologue for U.S. Imperialism! Defend Black Rights! Down With the Anti-Immigrant Witchhunt! U.S. and All Imperialist Troops Out of Afghanistan and Central Asia!"

The SYC's call for the protest sparked widespread debate on campus, especially among black students, which escalated when Horowitz took out a paid ad in the *Harvard Crimson*

on March 11 with the outrageously racist title: "Harvard U: No Republicans Or Conservatives And (Few) White Christians Need Apply." This revolting screed echoed Horowitz's grotesque claims from his campus tour last year that blacks actually benefited from slavery and that racism no longer exists (except against "Whitey").

Horowitz's current speaking tour is part of a calculated *provocation*, a neo-McCarthyite campaign by right-wing organizations to witchhunt all those who oppose U.S. imperialism's war on Afghanistan. By exercising our right to free speech and defending the targets of his vicious "fifth column" terrorist-baiting, the SYC led a militant, organized protest that politically refuted Horowitz's right-wing garbage and sought to win youth to the cause of black freedom through socialist revolution.

### Spartacus Youth Club Class Series

#### BAY AREA

Alternate Saturdays, 2 p.m.

April 6: **Revolutionary Opposition to Imperialism**

1634 Telegraph, 3rd Floor, Oakland  
Information and readings: (510) 839-0851

#### LOS ANGELES

Alternate Saturdays, 2 p.m.

April 6: **The Fight for a Revolutionary Workers Party**

April 20: **The Russian Revolution Betrayed and the Struggle of the Left Opposition**

3806 Beverly Blvd., Suite 215  
Information and readings: (213) 380-8239  
slsycla@cs.com

#### CHICAGO

Alternate Tuesdays, 6 p.m.

April 9: **Finish the Civil War! Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!**

University of Illinois at Chicago  
104 Stevenson Hall, 701 South Morgan St.  
Information and readings: (312) 563-0441  
spartacist@iname.com

#### NEW YORK CITY

Alternate Tuesdays, 7 p.m.

April 9: **Defend China Against Imperialism, Counterrevolution! For Workers Political Revolution!**

Columbia University (116th and Broadway)  
Hamilton Hall, Room 306  
Information and readings: (212) 267-1025

# France...

(continued from page 4)

The LTF reacted immediately after September 11 by opposing domestic repression and upcoming imperialist "reprisals." In a 13 September leaflet we denounced the implementation of reinforced Vigipirate. When the war against Afghanistan broke out we called for breaking the reactionary and racist national unity and for class struggle at home against the capitalists and their government. We defended Afghanistan against imperialist attack and today we say: **U.S./French/UN troops out of Afghanistan!** The anti-woman reactionaries of the Taliban were from the beginning the protégés of imperialism; in 1979 we hailed the Soviet intervention against the fundamentalist *mujahedin*, because the Soviet intervention opened up a real possibility of liberation for the oppressed masses of Afghanistan, especially the women. In contrast, our opponents enlisted in the anti-Soviet Cold War campaign, with LO going so far as to characterize the Soviet intervention in headlines as "Russia's Vietnam," thus putting it on the same plane as the bloody war lost by the French and American imperialists.

One strike here against imperialism, against Vigipirate and in defense of the population of North African origin would have more impact than a thousand demonstrations calling for the racist French imperialists to support the Palestinian Arabs. But what did LO say on Vigipirate? Nothing. Not a word in their press for six months. When we queried Arlette Laguiller about it recently, far from saying that she opposed Vigipirate, she tried to minimize Vigipirate by saying that this was the "normal" functioning of capitalism. As Trotskyists we fight against "normal" police terror, while LO minimizes it to justify its economist refusal to mobilize the working class against this cop terror. Beneath its silence LO hides a capitulation to the special powers of the capitalist state represented by Vigipirate, the Law on Daily Security and the "anti-terrorist" agreement of the European Union. Try telling the youth in the *banlieues* that nothing changed for them after September 11! Try telling it to the undocumented immigrants, for whom deportations have increased by at least 30 percent! All those who would really want to fight for the interests of workers and oppressed peoples must oppose this growing terror and racist state repression. All these "anti-terrorist" measures ultimately target and serve to intimidate the working class, which is fed up with layoffs, privatizations, threats to pensions, speedup, etc.

## Cops Are Not Workers in Uniform but the Watchdogs of Capitalist Order

While being silent on Vigipirate, LO enthusiastically and promptly stated its solidarity with the police "strikes" last fall. These were reactionary strikes



September 2001: LTF protests imperialist intervention in Afghanistan. Sign at right reads: "Down With Vigipirate! Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants!"

against the Guigou law on presumption of innocence. As we noted in our polemic against LO on this subject (*Le Bolchévique* No. 158, Winter 2001-2002):

"LO explains: 'the police, but also the gendarmes, carry out functions that are useful to society as a whole, by doing security tasks that are necessary to collective life, for lousy wages' (*Lutte Ouvrière*, 7 December 2001). One would think we are in a scene from 'Cordier, Judge and Cop' [TV show]! The 'usefulness' of the cops is to attack picket lines, terrorize youth of immigrant origin in the *banlieues* and hunt down the undocumented immigrants. What 'usefulness' can the mortal enemies of the workers movement have except to guarantee capitalist 'security' and private property?"

In response to our arguments on this question, Arlette Laguiller in her forums in Le Havre and Creil claimed that LO's support to the police was a Bolshevik tactic straight out of the Russian Revolution of 1917. She maternally advised us to re-read Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution*. What chutzpah! It is in this book in particular that Trotsky explains the difference between the army and the cops, during the February 1917 revolution:

"Toward the police the crowd showed ferocious hatred. They routed the mounted police with whistles, stones and pieces of ice. In a totally different way the workers approached the soldiers.... The police are fierce, implacable, hated and hating foes. To win them over is out of the question."

And in *What Next?* (1932), Trotsky added: "Consciousness is determined by environment even in this instance. The worker who becomes a policeman in the service of the capitalist state, is a bourgeois cop, not a worker." The LTF says: **Cops out of the unions!** LO, on the other hand, in their election propaganda, promises cops bulletproof vests. If LO wants to improve their working conditions, will LO also demand automatic rifles next time? Are they courting the police in the hope that the cops will vote for Arlette?

Another aspect of LO's fundamental

revisionism on the question of the state is that they accept money from this very bourgeois state that they claim they want to destroy (in small type). In her forum at Creil, Laguiller said she would accept money from Geneviève de Fontenay who organizes the Miss France beauty pageant, since that money would be deducted from the subsidy LO gets from the state for the elections. And that is a considerable amount. According to *Le Monde*, LO's electoral budget for the presidential elections only, for which they expect to be reimbursed by the state, is 12 million francs. This is the equivalent of their members' dues for two and a half years, according to the detailed account they send to the Minister of the Interior (see for example the *Official Journal of the French Republic*, 9 November 2000). They claim to oppose Jospin but accept his money! He who pays the piper calls the tune!

## The Struggle Against Racist Oppression Is Central in the Struggle Against Capitalism

In her electoral speeches Arlette Laguiller stated that she stands for social and political rights for the undocumented workers and immigrant workers in France. Very well. We say: **Full citizenship rights for all immigrants and their families!** We fight for this in the framework of our revolutionary perspective. Papers for everyone is a basic democratic right which must be fought for, but this must be broadened into a fight against the systematic racism which is rooted in the functioning of the capitalist system, originating in the French colonial domination of North Africa and its consequences. But for LO the cause of the undocumented immigrants is simply a question of democratic rights that their dear Republican France must grant. For us it is a question of addressing the systematic racial discrimination and segregation of the North Africans as manifested in chronic, astronomical unemployment in the ghettos, racial discrimination in hiring, jobs and housing, lack of schools and social services, and the whole legal system of "justice" with its police and courts who kill and jail dark-skinned immigrants and their children. It is the capitalist system itself that is at issue. What is necessary is to forge a real Bolshevik party to lead the proletariat in a struggle to defend all the oppressed against the capitalist system, a Leninist party that will be a tribune of the people, denouncing all forms of oppression.

As long as "French" workers accept the oppression of their dark-skinned class brothers, they will not be able to fight for their own historic interests. Racist oppression is at the heart of the French bourgeoisie's policies to divide and weaken the multiethnic working class and maintain its own rule. Workers of North African, African, Caribbean and other origin continue to be integrated in industry, particularly in private industry like automobile and construction, where they play a crucial role. Far from being only "victims," workers of immigrant origin have key social power for revolution

here, and also represent a living bridge toward revolution in their countries of origin.

Here again, LO's speeches on immigrant rights and their participation in demonstrations for undocumented immigrants are nullified by their silence on Vigipirate and their support to the cop mobilizations. Indifference to racial oppression is the direct consequence of a perspective of *class collaboration*. The fundamental method of reformists is to look for allies in one or another sector of "their" national bourgeoisie. In any case they are not looking for allies among the layers of the working class who are victims of special oppression.

## Reforms or Revolution?

It is striking that in Laguiller's electoral speeches and in her recent book, *Mon communisme* [My Communism] she never talks about workers revolution. Her whole program can be summed up as a series of measures that the government (of the left or of the right, but in any case capitalist) should take under the pressure of the workers. Her most famous slogan is to ban layoffs in companies making profits. This demand openly accepts the notion that capitalism could be rational, although as any Marxist knows it is a profit-driven system driving to reduce wages and impoverish the proletariat, a system which leads to periodic crises of "overproduction," i.e., mass unemployment. Capitalists resort to what Marx called "the reserve army of the unemployed" as a weapon against the workers movement and to drive wages down.

Against the reformist illusions sowed by LO in the capitalist state we demand: **A sliding scale of wages and working hours! All the work on hand should be divided among all existing workers without any reduction in wages! Organize the unorganized in unions! For professional training organized by the unions for oppressed youth and oppressed minorities!** In fact, demands such as these would mean extraparliamentary class struggle with factory occupations and establishment of factory committees. As Trotsky said in the Transitional Program (1938):

"Realizability' or 'unrealizability' is in the given instance a question of relationship of forces, which can be decided only by the struggle. By means of this struggle, no matter what its immediate practical successes may be, the workers will best come to understand the necessity of liquidating capitalist slavery."

## To "Always Side with the Workers" It Is Necessary to Break with the Racist Policies of the Government!

LO's positions on special oppression have been poisonous for a long time. With their bourgeois moralism they excluded the ACT-UP group from their fête in 1992, a typically homophobic action. They line up with the state against youth by opposing legalization of cannabis, a question which is used as a pretext for racist repression in the *banlieues*. They are indifferent to the fascist danger represented by Le Pen and the National Front: on February 4 Laguiller participated in a televised debate with Le Pen, thereby contributing to legitimizing his calls for racist murder, as if these were ideas one might "discuss."

There are times when such questions are in the center of political debate. Today Vigipirate and police repression, especially against *banlieue* youth, are at the center of French politics. Before the 1981 presidential elections, we considered giving PCF candidate Georges Marchais critical support because at that time the Union of the Left had collapsed and Marchais was running alone against the bourgeoisie (moreover, he was refusing to condemn the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan). So a vote for Marchais could have represented a class vote. But when the PCF attacked a dormitory housing immigrant workers from Mali with a bulldozer in Vitry-sur-Seine, we necessarily withdrew our critical support because a vote for Marchais would have meant support for this racist atrocity which was

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# Palestinians...

(continued from page 1)

people were stunned by the Arab League's refusal even to allow Arafat to address their summit by phone from his Ramallah prison. For all their lip service to the Palestinian cause, the Arab bourgeois regimes are bloody oppressors of their own working people and historic enemies of the Palestinians. Protests in solidarity with the Palestinians in Egypt, Jordan and Syria were suppressed with police batons, teargas and water cannons. In Jordan, the tiny Bedouin-derived ruling elite lords it over a population that is majority Palestinian, while in Lebanon and elsewhere hundreds of thousands of "stateless" Palestinians have languished in squalid refugee camps for three generations, denied even the right to work.

The inherently oppressive Zionist bourgeois state must and can only be swept away from within, through a proletarian revolution uniting Palestinian and Hebrew-speaking workers against the common class enemy. But social and national emancipation for the Palestinian Arab people requires as well the overthrow of the bourgeois order in Jordan, Egypt and the other Arab countries. In the struggle to forge the revolutionary internationalist workers parties needed to fight for a socialist federation of the Near East, the Hebrew-speaking proletariat must be broken from the reactionary chauvinism of the Israeli rulers and won to the defense of the Palestinians, and the Palestinians and other Arab workers must be broken from petty-bourgeois nationalism and Islamic fundamentalism.

\* \* \*

The following statement of the Spartacist League/U.S. was issued on March 30.

The international working class must urgently rally to the defense of the Palestinian people against the Zionist military terror machine. Seizing on the killing of 22 innocent Israeli civilians at a Passover Seder in the working-class town of Netanya by a Hamas suicide bomber—a criminal attack worthy of the murderous nationalist mindset of the Zionist rulers—Israeli prime minister Sharon unleashed hundreds of troops, dozens of tanks, and helicopters in an assault on Palestinian Authority headquarters in Ramallah, where Yasir Arafat has been confined since December. After a fierce firefight, Israeli troops occupied Arafat's compound, forcing the PLO leader into almost complete solitary confinement in a windowless room. Meanwhile, Israeli troops have made other incursions into Palestinian towns throughout the West Bank.

The Zionists' genocidal impulses were captured in the headline for an op-ed

piece by former prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu in the 29 March *Jerusalem Post*: "End Game." Sharon has called up more than 20,000 reservists for active duty in the Occupied Territories. Taking aim at the Palestinian Authority, which was created by the sham Oslo "peace" accords in order to police the Palestinian ghettos for the Zionist rulers, Sharon's bloody incursion into Ramallah could very well be a first step toward a complete Israeli re-occupation of the entire West Bank and Gaza Strip. The logic of reactionary Zionist nationalism has always been equivalent to Hitler's *lebensraum* ("living space"), i.e., the clearing of areas occupied by Israel of all Palestinians. The fascist settlers, armed to the teeth, are the advance guard of this policy. *The Spartacist League stands in defense of the Palestinian people against the Zionist*



WV Photo

Los Angeles: SL contingent at emergency March 30 protest in defense of Palestinians.

*occupiers! All Israeli troops and settlers out of the Occupied Territories now!*

The response of Palestinian spokesmen to this desperate situation has been to mount impotent appeals to everyone from the Arab bourgeois regimes to the United Nations, the European Union and the U.S. imperialists to rein in the Zionist butchers. In building for today's nationwide demonstrations in support of Palestinian rights, the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee makes a direct appeal to the Bush administration to "be actively engaged in the full implementation of International Law and UN Resolutions calling for an end of the Israeli Occupation and self-determination for the Palestinian people." It is a measure of the utter bankruptcy of any nationalist solution to the plight of the Palestinians to appeal to the U.S. imperialists who have bankrolled and armed Israel to the hilt and who, at home, are rounding up

and detaining hundreds of Arab and Muslim immigrants as part of the "war on terror."

It is widely recognized that Bush's recent turn to a diplomatic solution is purely in the service of a massive U.S. attack on Iraq. The latest Israeli attacks come in the wake of the Arab League meeting which opposed any U.S. attack on Iraq.

The United Nations is hardly an "alternative." It was the UN that ratified the very foundation of the state of Israel; whose troops oversaw the disarming of Palestinian militants who were then slaughtered at the hands of fascist Lebanese militias mobilized by Sharon at Sabra and Shatila in 1982; and which has sanctioned the more than decade-long starvation blockade of Iraq that has killed over one million people. As for the Euro-

pean powers, their current objections to Israeli and U.S. policies are simply in the service of trying to reassert their own imperialist interests in the region they once controlled. *All U.S./UN/NATO forces out of the Near East now!*

While the Arab League meeting in Beirut passed empty resolutions supposedly in defense of the Palestinians, the policy of the Arab regimes has always been to suppress Palestinian refugees in their countries. In 1970, some 10,000 Palestinian militants were slaughtered by the Jordanian monarchy in the "Black September" massacre. In fact, such support that exists for the Palestinian "right of return" by these regimes is aimed at driving the Palestinians out of these countries. Immediately following the 1991 Gulf War, the Kuwaiti regime expelled nearly 200,000 Palestinian workers and their families.

The Zionist occupiers and their imperialist backers have destroyed any semblance of a livable life for the Palestinians entrapped in the ghettos. Many feel like they have nothing left to lose and are prepared to strap their bodies with explosives to get the perceived "enemy," which in the minds of anti-Semitic outfits like Hamas includes the entire Israeli Jewish population. Indeed, the Zionists look to these atrocities to advance their aims. In fact, until Sharon's provocative visit to Al-Aqsa Mosque/Temple Mount, which set off the current *Intifada*, the wave of suicide bombings had all but disappeared. Now, not just Islamic fanatics but secular Palestinians, including women, see no other option than to immolate themselves and random others in suicide bombings. But such attacks only serve to seal any fissures in Israeli society, such as the recent protests among Israeli army reservists and their supporters against the occupation, and drive the Hebrew-speaking population into the arms of the Zionist nationalist madmen.

Various putative leftists such as the International Socialist Organization and Workers World Party have called for a secular democratic state in Israel and the Occupied Territories. Positing a democratic solution within the framework of capitalism (with socialism removed to some far distant future) recalls the program of the Stalinist-led Communist parties in the region which posited a "two-stage" revolution—the first being to install the local ruling class in power supposedly to set the stage for socialist revolution. In reality, this played out in the Communist parties allying with the Arab nationalists, who subsequently massacred the Communists and their working-class followers. In contrast, Trotskyists have always fought for the political independence of the working class, which, as the tribune of all the oppressed, is the only force that can open the road to liberation from imperialist subjugation in the "Third World."

There can be no justice for the Palestinian people within the framework of capitalist rule. On the contrary, the system of private property and private ownership of the means of production necessarily contains within it the components of nationalism and religion, which make impossible the settlement of the conflicting national claims of the Palestinian Arab and the Hebrew-speaking populations. Only through the overthrow of both the Israeli bourgeoisie and all the Arab ruling classes can the right of national self-determination for these peoples and the many other peoples of the region be equitably realized. This necessarily calls for the leadership of internationalist Marxist workers parties, not least to defeat the intruding foreign imperialisms, particularly the American. *Defend the Palestinian people! For a socialist federation of the Near East!* ■

a pledge given to the bourgeoisie so that the PCF could again find its place in Mitterrand's popular front.

More recently, last year our British comrades gave critical support to the Socialist Labour Party (SLP) of Arthur Scargill. This was the only party openly campaigning against any support to Blair's Labour Party governing British imperialism. (The misnamed Socialist Alliance, supported by, among others, the British co-thinkers of LO—Workers Fight—and of the LCR, called for voting Labour wherever the Socialist Alliance was not themselves running.) Our comrades distributed the SLP's election propaganda door to door and on the street, calling for a vote to the SLP, while intervening in the SLP's public election meetings to polemicize against Scargill's narrow national reformism and Stalinism.

We are not anarchists who refuse on principle to consider participating in elections; in this way the anarchists evade the fight against workers' parliamentarist illusions, thereby abandoning the workers to Jospin, Hue and Laguiller. At the Creil meeting Arlette Laguiller told us that we had a contradiction because we consid-

ered giving LO critical support if they would oppose Vigipirate while at the same time characterizing LO as reformist. If the condition for critical support was having a revolutionary program, we wouldn't be able to support anyone unless we could immediately fuse with them! It may be appropriate to give critical support to a reformist party when that party is running independently of and in opposition to the bourgeois parties and bourgeois formations (which includes popular fronts). Critical support allows a Leninist organization to solidarize with workers who want to draw a class line, while showing these workers the crucial difference between a revolutionary program and a reformist program. Such a tactic can raise the consciousness of the working class toward a communist understanding of its historic task of *overthrowing* capitalism—a task to which reformism is an obstacle.

In spite of its call to oppose the government, LO finds itself tailing Jospin and Chirac when it capitulates to the climate of racist hysteria they fuel and which dominates the political life of this country. So long as LO does not oppose Vigip-

irate and the reactionary and racist cop mobilizations, the LTF cannot support LO's campaign. There is no party running in these elections presenting a candidate who represents in any real sense the workers' interests. We will nevertheless intervene in this election campaign fight-

ing to win the working class, minorities and youth to the understanding that they need a revolutionary internationalist workers party fighting to unite the workers struggles throughout the whole world to put an end to capitalist exploitation and racism once and for all. ■

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# Detainees...

(continued from page 12)

This understanding was key to mobilizing organized labor in defense of immigrants in Oakland on February 9 in a united-front rally initiated by the Bay Area Labor Black League for Social Defense and the Partisan Defense Committee, a social and legal defense organization associated with the Spartacist League. As the call for the protest explained:

"Just as the fight for black freedom is central to the liberation of all working people, the labor movement can only defend itself if it defends the rights of immigrants. In this country, the raw exploitation of labor has always come wrapped in the envelope of racial and ethnic-religious hostilities fomented by the capitalist rulers. Black oppression is the cornerstone of American capitalism. But black and immigrant workers are not helpless victims; they're a vital component of the multiracial working class."

The February 9 Oakland demonstration was the first time in the U.S. that organized labor was mobilized in defense of immigrants victimized in the U.S. rulers' "war on terror." Several unions from the U.S., Canada, Mexico and elsewhere

AFSCME Local 1407 city workers, SEIU New York State Council, Mailhandlers Union Local 300, CWA Local 1180 and NYC Labor Against the War, a group that includes several union locals and officials. Labor officials who spoke at the rally included Larry Adams, president of Mailhandlers Local 300, and Brenda Stokely, president of AFSCME Local 215, DC 1707.

The union endorsements and the presence of union tops at the rally reflect disgruntlement among the ranks against the domestic impact of the "war on terror." But to mobilize the multiracial proletariat in defense of immigrants, black people and all the oppressed requires a conscious struggle against the million and one ways the capitalist exploiters foster the racial and ethnic antagonisms that divide the proletariat and undermine its fighting strength. This also requires that the working class be mobilized independently of the parties of capitalist exploitation and racist reaction. This was hardly the perspective of the labor tops at the March 23 rally. However "progressive" their veneer, their worldview is defined by what is possible or "practical" within the confines of the capitalist system. Inevitably this means a program of class collaboration tying the working class to the parties of its capitalist class enemy, particularly the Democrats.

In contrast, in building for the Oakland February 9 demonstration we sought to imbue the working class with the understanding that its interests are irreconcilably counterposed to those of its capitalist masters, and that for labor to be mobilized in its own defense, it must actively champion the defense of immigrants, blacks and all the oppressed. As the Spartacist League speaker at the February 9 rally explained:

"The trade-union bureaucrats are the agents of the capitalists, and you can see that in particular by the role of the trade-union bureaucrats tying the working class to the Democratic Party. You cannot have a government that serves two masters. The workers and the capitalists have irreconcilable interests: the capitalists want to extract as much profit as possible, drive down wages, etc. The capitalists have a state to help them do this—the cops, the courts, the prisons—and then they try to scam you and say this is democracy. Well, it isn't a democracy, it's a ball and chain, and the trade-union misleaders telling you to vote for the lesser evil, they're the chain tying you to the ball. A class-struggle leadership in the trade unions must be forged, a leadership that knows who our friends are and who our enemies are. We need a workers party to fight for a workers government."

**Hands off Arab/Muslim immigrants! Anyone who has made it to this country should have the same rights as those born here. Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! Free the detainees!**

## For Class Struggle Against Capitalist Rulers!

Shortly after September 11, the Justice Department of Attorney General John Ashcroft expanded provisions for secret hearings in immigration courts in "special cases," closed to all but the victim and his attorney. In December Ashcroft, an open

**Prisoners captured by U.S.-led imperialist forces in Afghanistan and elsewhere face humiliating treatment, indefinite detention in U.S. prison camp at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.**



WV Photo

**Spartacist contingent at March 23 demonstration in Brooklyn, NY. Sign in Arabic demands "Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants!"**

endorsed the rally, including the powerful ILWU Local 10 longshore union in Oakland. Since then, several other demonstrations in defense of immigrants have been held, including a March 23 "NYC Labor Solidarity with Immigrant Detainees" rally. The protest was an adjunct to weekly rallies held outside the Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn which prominently featured black Democratic Party liberals like city councilman Charles Barron and Congressman Major Owens. In a particularly gross expression of acceptance of the framework of the racist immigration laws and the "war on terror," participants at these rallies have raised the call to charge the detainees or let them go!

Significantly, a number of unions endorsed the March 23 protest, including AFSCME District Council 1707 and

admirer of the Confederacy, announced that when it chooses, the government will just ignore an immigration judge's order to release someone arrested on immigration violations. Among the hundreds still imprisoned are dozens jailed on minor visa violations who agreed to "voluntarily depart" the U.S. months ago. To maintain a war atmosphere in which any rights may be forfeited, the government still refuses to even provide the names of those being held.

Scores of foreign nationals have already spent over 100 days in jail, with no end in sight. Among them is Rabih Haddad, a Muslim cleric and community leader living in Ann Arbor, Michigan, who has been held in solitary confinement at the Metropolitan Correction Center in Chicago for over four months. Haddad was picked up in December for overstaying his visa and denied bail, despite the fact that his application for permanent residency had been pending for eight months. Although Haddad had been outspoken in condemning the September 11 attacks, the government claims he has connections to a charity which supposedly provided aid to "terrorist" organizations.

The cruelty of the government's anti-Arab witchhunt was exemplified by the recent discovery of the remains of one young man, a volunteer paramedic, who died after he rushed to the WTC to help those trapped there. Upon seeing his name on flyers of potential terror suspects, his family desperately hoped that he had been detained in the dragnet. At the time, the gutter rag *New York Post* ran vile articles witchhunting this man who turned out to be a hero.

The pretext for the Gestapo-like raids against many immigrants is alleged connections to Al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations. But as the *Washington Post* (22 March) pointed out concerning the recent roundups of Arab immigrants in Virginia, government sources "cautioned that proving the case and any direct links to terrorism will be difficult." That comes as no surprise—nor is it of any concern to Bush & Co. who see no need to "prove" any case. Shortly after September 11, Bush announced that "terrorist" suspects can be tried in military tribunals where the formal rights accorded someone accused of a crime are nonexistent. This threat was directed not only at those detained in the U.S. but also at those captured in Afghanistan and elsewhere and currently detained at Camp X-Ray at the U.S. Naval Base at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

In response to outrage at the tribunals from across the American political spectrum, the Bush administration somewhat retreated from highlighting the tribunals, though not renouncing their use. Nonetheless, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld announced two weeks ago that the government has no intention of releasing

the rare individual who might get acquitted in one of these kangaroo courts. Instead, they will rot in prison until the "war on terror" is concluded, i.e., forever. This is the fate in store for the hundreds imprisoned at Guantánamo Bay. Many of the prisoners have resorted to hunger strikes to protest their brutal conditions, which include being held in open cages, manacled hand and foot, tortured and humiliated.

While today vulnerable immigrants are the main victims of the new draconian measures, these laws are aimed at the entire working class—indeed, potentially anyone who raises an oppositional voice. They are an indication that the bourgeoisie would seek to cast off any democratic trappings in the face of a perceived threat to its interests and class rule. Yet the reformist left and "progressive" trade-union tops peddle illusions that capitalism can be reformed to serve the interests of the workers and oppressed.

Several speakers at the March 23 "Labor Solidarity" rally in New York promoted the April 20 demonstrations called for Washington, D.C. to protest "war and racism." The protest headed by the Workers World Party's International ANSWER coalition pleads for "money for jobs, education, housing and health care—not war." These demands are based on the illusion that the capitalist rulers can be pressured into serving the interests of poor and working people. This is put more baldly by the other coalition mobilizing for April 20, which includes everyone from the ISO to the Green Party, whose demands peddle the pipe dream of "a U.S. foreign policy based upon social and economic justice, not military and corporate oppression."

No amount of reforms can fundamentally change the racist and oppressive nature of capitalism. To end racist oppression, exploitation and war and place the vast wealth of this society at the service of human needs requires establishing workers rule and abolishing the bloodsoaked capitalist system. Our February 9 rally in Oakland represented on a small scale what's needed: a revolutionary workers party that acts as a "tribune of the people" to defend all the oppressed, which is possible only with the understanding that we need to do away with the entire system of capitalist wage slavery. ■

## CORRECTION

In "Socialist Action: Hate Red Army in Afghanistan" (WV No. 777, 22 March), we incorrectly referred to the youth group of Socialist Action as the Young Socialist Alliance. Its name is Youth for Socialist Action.

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# Woomera Protest: Refugees Escape Australian Concentration Camp

**Drop the Charges Against Protesters and Detainees!  
Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants and Refugees!**

SYDNEY, April 1—In a stunning blow against the Australian government's barbaric treatment of asylum-seekers, 50 refugees from Iran, Afghanistan and elsewhere escaped from Australia's Woomera detention center on Friday, March 29, as hundreds of their supporters demonstrated outside. One fleeing detainee called out, "After two years I'm free!" Thirty-six have now been captured and could face prison terms of up to five years. Of 29 protesters facing charges, 15 are accused of "harboring" an escapee, which could bring a four-year prison term. All those who champion the rights of refugees and immigrants must demand: Drop the charges against all Woomera protesters now! Full citizenship rights for refugees and all immigrants! Close the concentration camps! No deportations!

The Woomera protest is a dramatic example of the sharp polarization in Australian society over the government's brutal incarceration of asylum-seekers, which has caused hundreds of desperate refugees to threaten suicide, go on hunger strikes or even stitch their lips together in protest. Demonstrations against the mandatory detention of asylum-seekers have erupted throughout the country, and thousands have announced their willingness to shelter escaped refugees.

The Spartacist League/Australia and Spartacus Youth Club were among the 1,000 leftists, trade unionists and student activists from across the country who travelled to the Woomera concentration camp, located in a vast military "Prohibited Area" in the harsh South Australian desert. On Thursday night, before most protesters had arrived, cops attacked the "Woomera 2002 Festival of Freedom" camp, pulling up tents and threatening to force protesters into an enclosed sports oval. When the activists refused to move, the cops declared their protest "illegal" and in dead of night invaded the camp. But their Gestapo raid was foiled and they were driven off; the camp stayed put.

Late Friday afternoon, hundreds converged on the prison's five-metre-high perimeter fence. As the fence collapsed under their weight, protesters swarmed toward the detention center, using sand bags to weigh down the fence and cover the razor wire that topped it. When the third and final fence was breached, refugees flooded out, chanting "Freedom, freedom!" Fleeing to the protesters' camp, they were sheltered and given new clothes.

Riot police on horseback rode into the swarm of protesters, bloodying many. Cops sealed off the protesters' camp and imposed a virtual state of siege on the surrounding area, setting up roadblocks



Left: Refugees break out of Woomera Detention Center as supporters rally outside, March 29. Cops retaliated with brutal attack on demonstrators. AP photos

and searching the camp and cars. Inside the detention center, sadistic screws employed by Australian Correctional Services (owned by the union-busting Wackenhut firm) tear-gassed and beat detainees and reportedly put sleeping pills in their food to quell their protests.

The right-wing Liberal government of John Howard and his viciously racist immigration minister, Philip Ruddock, are threatening to deny visas to any who sought to escape. Joining in denouncing the protesters' "illegal action" was Australian Labor Party (ALP) leader Simon Crean, who reaffirmed his support to mandatory detention, a policy initiated by the Labor Party. The South Australia Labor government has vowed to use videotape footage to track down protesters. We demand immediate asylum for the thousands of imprisoned refugees!

In debates and discussions at Woomera, and in our public meeting there titled "A Revolutionary Strategy: For Working-Class Struggle to Defend Immigrants," our comrades put forward the perspective of mobilizing the social power of the organized working class, with its strategic immigrant component, to defend the refugees. Several trade unions donated money and equipment to the Woomera protest. These unions should be urgently mobilizing against the anti-refugee campaign. A political strike combining defence of immigrants with opposition to union-busting

would be a major step in pushing back the bosses' anti-labour attacks and proposed "anti-terror" laws, which are in the first instance aimed against immigrants but ultimately against the entire working class.

Our comrades also raised the urgent need to mobilize protest against the Zionist military terror machine, raising a motion in a "spokescouncil" meeting to defend the Palestinian people and demand that Israeli troops and settlers get out of the Occupied Territories. While claiming to support the motion, the International Socialist Organisation, along with the refugee advocacy group No One is Illegal, shunted it to the end of the meeting, ensuring that this necessary act of internationalist solidarity would be buried.

Even as its members engage in courageous protests, the reformist left's program is to appeal to the racist Australian capitalist state—through the agency of the ALP—to adopt more benevolent and "humane" policies. The capitalist rulers won't be swayed by appeals to their "morals," for their only "moral" calculus is the bottom line of profit. They whip up anti-immigrant racism to divide the working class, going after the most vulnerable first, so as to paralyse workers' ability to struggle.

Woomera captures in a concentrated form the brutality of this racist capitalist society. The town was built in 1947 during the Cold War as a site for rocket test-



ing and tracking devices like the Nurrungar spy station. These facilities served the imperialists' drive to destroy the former Soviet Union and became part of their machinations against the deformed workers states of North Korea, Vietnam and particularly China. Aboriginal communities around Woomera are terribly impoverished, while in nearby Maralinga, atomic bomb testing in 1950 irradiated the region and poisoned the Aborigines who lived there. This powerfully underscores the link between the fight against the vicious oppression of Aborigines and immigrants and the need to defend China and the other deformed workers states against imperialism.

Seizing on the "war on terror" to jack up its repressive apparatus, the Australian ruling class, like its counterparts everywhere, viciously witchhunts refugees and immigrants while using them as scapegoats for the unemployment inherent in capitalism. As *Workers Vanguard* No. 775 (22 February) wrote in "ICL Sections Mobilize Against Anti-Immigrant, Anti-Labor Attacks": "Our purpose is to win workers to the understanding that they must sweep away the entire capitalist system, to forge through education and struggle the vanguard party of the proletariat needed to achieve that goal. Our defense of immigrant rights is a vital part of our revolutionary internationalist program." ■

## Rome...

(continued from page 2)

And we ran across many workers and others who agreed with us. For example, a contingent of metal workers in a factory in the northwest Piemonte region told us that they had opposed the strike against "terrorism" and refused to participate in it.

We also distributed a supplement of our paper *Spartaco* headlined "Mobilize the Power of the Working Class to Defend Immigrants! Break with the Parliamentary Reformism of RC—Build a Revolutionary Vanguard Party!" Our call for "full citizenship rights for all immigrants and their families" was well received, especially by the contingents of immigrant workers.

In spite of the class-collaborationist politics of the reformist leaders, large sectors of the working class and youth are in

fact quite cold toward the perspective of "national unity" with the Berlusconi regime. Rifondazione Comunista demonstrated together with Alleanza Nazionale in Bologna the day after the killing of Biagi, but the rallies "against terrorism" organized by all the unions on March 26 in nearly every major Italian city saw the participation of less than 20 percent of the numbers in the Rome demonstration; and many of those who protested came out only because they believed the killing had been organized by the secret services or some other state agency.

The Italian proletariat has fresh experience of what unity with the bourgeoisie means. In 1994, similar working-class struggle led to the fall of the first Berlusconi government and opened the way to governments led by DS and supported for a period by RC. These anti-working-class popular-front bourgeois governments rolled back many gains the Italian working class had achieved in the after-

math of the "Hot Autumn" strikes and protests of 1969. These governments also participated in the U.S.-led NATO war against Serbia in 1999, cut pensions, introduced prison camps for immigrants and used all their authority to suffocate working-class resistance. In doing so, they paved the way for the current reactionary government.

During the Rome demo, one demonstrator, pointing his finger at a pole without a banner, said: "That's the current flag of the political left." He was expressing the very common feeling that none of the historic parties of the left represents the interests of the workers today. The LTd'I is committed to building a revolutionary workers party that will fight for the interests of the working class and oppressed, a party based on the experience of the most important victory ever achieved by the proletariat so far: the Russian Revolution of October 1917. ■

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# WORKERS VANGUARD

## Bush, Ashcroft Step Up Anti-Immigrant Crusade

# Free the Detainees!

The Feds come in the dead of night and in the bright light of day. Sometimes they knock, other times they just break down the door before hauling their victims off to a prison hell. The detained have no inkling of what, if anything, they are charged with. Their families have no idea where they are. It is considered "lucky" to get kicked out of the country—if not, you're destined to spend who knows how long behind bars. For thousands of young men of Arab and South Asian descent, this is life in post-9/11 America.

Bolstered by the September 14 War Powers Resolution, the racist roundup of these immigrants was the first step of the open-ended "war on terror" at home. Less than a month later, the U.S. imperialists began the military onslaught against backward, impoverished Afghanistan. For the U.S. rulers, the attack on the World Trade Center became the launching pad for asserting their dominance abroad and pushing through laws, orders and directives to be wielded against workers, immigrants and all the oppressed at home. Last December's jailing of over 200 striking New Jersey teachers, whose spokesman was vilified as "the representative of the Taliban," is a harbinger of what is to come for workers, just as the freeing of three of the NYPD cops involved in the 1997 savage beating of Abner Louima signals what's in store for black people.

At the heart of the government's draconian new measures is the USA-Patriot Act, which provides for indefinite detention of non-citizens deemed to be a threat to national security; expands the legal ability of the FBI to break into homes and offices to conduct secret searches; eliminates formal restrictions on CIA spying within the U.S.; gives the government power to designate domestic organizations as "terrorist" and deport any non-citizen who is a member or provides financial support; and authorizes broad wiretapping and Internet surveillance, allowing the government to monitor what Web sites an individual visits. Postal strikers who mobilize to stop scabs or who disable a scab truck could fall under the law's definition of "terrorists" as those who commit unlawful acts that "appear to be intended to intimidate or coerce a civilian population" or "to influence a policy of a government by intimidation or coercion."

Now the government is massively reorganizing its immigration agencies and

Jersey Journal



Spartacist contingent at Brooklyn protest against detention of Arab and Muslim immigrants, March 23.

WV Photo

## For a Workers Party That Fights for All the Oppressed!

laws to hunt down desperate immigrants who have been in this country for years, laboring in the most menial jobs. The Justice Department has issued orders to expel thousands of immigrants on the basis of deportation orders from many years back, creating a new computer database to facilitate deportations. This has created a climate of fear and terror among millions of immigrants in the U.S.

In the past month, hundreds of immigrants—janitors, dishwashers, cleaners and security screeners—have been arrested in airport "security" dragnets and lost their jobs. Pending in Congress is the Maritime Security Act mandating background checks in the name of "security"—a law aimed at purging the waterfront of blacks, Latinos and other immigrants and at undermining union power. With unemployed workers easily available, many private firms are summarily

canning those with the smallest misdemeanors on their record. Last week, the United States Supreme Court gave a nod to virtual slave labor by overturning a National Labor Relations Board decision ordering back pay for undocumented immigrants fired for taking part in a union organizing drive, ruling that they were forbidden by law to hold those jobs in the first place. This starkly highlights that the fight for immigrant rights is crucial to organizing the unorganized and building the labor movement.

More than 1,200 immigrants have been rounded up in the racist dragnet following September 11. Hundreds are still behind bars. After initially calling in 5,000 young men from Muslim countries for "voluntary" interviews, the Feds recently announced plans to interrogate 3,000 more. Two weeks ago, Treasury agents of the IRS and Customs bureau,

Paul Buck

assisted by local cops, raided 16 Islamic organizations and individuals in northern Virginia. In one case, agents broke into a woman's home and searched the house, handcuffing her and her daughter while holding them at gunpoint for five hours.

Administrations at more than 200 campuses have handed over foreign students' files to the FBI or INS. The City University of New York is implementing an anti-immigrant purge of the campuses by charging extortionate out-of-state tuition fees to those who can't prove their legal status. One City College student was arrested along with her entire family. Not surprisingly, the government vendetta has spurred on racist attacks on immigrants, especially Arab Americans, across the country. In the last three months, attacks in the New York City area have included the firebombing of several Pakistani delis and the racist murder of a Yemeni man in Staten Island. In Brooklyn, cops brutalized a Pakistani man as they taunted him with cries of "Taliban."

### Labor Must Fight the Anti-Immigrant Witchhunt!

As sinister as the new "anti-terror" measures are, what the government is actually able to get away with will be determined by the level of social struggle. What is crucial is to mobilize labor's social power in defense of immigrants, which requires tearing through the strait-jacket of "national unity" promoted by the U.S. capitalist rulers and breaking down the poisonous racial and ethnic divisions they promote to weaken the labor movement and maintain their rule.

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Immigrant detainees at Hudson County Correctional Center in New Jersey. Hundreds have been rounded up in Ashcroft's racist "anti-terror" sweeps.