



Teamsters Face Down UPS Bosses

Unchain Labor's Power!

The following article was originally published in a Workers Vanguard supplement dated August 27.

The two-week strike by 185,000 workers at United Parcel Service—the biggest nationwide strike in the U.S. in decades—evoked a sympathy for labor's cause not seen in this country for years. Millions of working people saw themselves in the overwhelmingly part-time UPS workers, who do backbreaking jobs for miserable wages. The UPS Teamsters strike broke the pattern of crushing defeats for labor over the past two decades. In its wake, many now see the possibility of fighting to get some of their own back from the profit-bloated corporations.

"What the UPS workers mostly want is the simple right to work full time," wrote the *Washington Post* (10 August). Indeed, under this capitalist system, which is based on the exploitation of labor, what more elementary right can there be for the worker than the right to a job? Yet while the bosses rake in record profits, for working people in America today's supposedly booming "employment" economy is increasingly defined by being "downsized" into part-time, contract or "contingency" labor. Downward pressure on wages is also maintained by massive speedup and the virtual elimination of the eight-hour day, as full-time workers are forced to work upwards of 60 hours a week. At the same time, wide layers of the ghetto poor have been tossed right out of the labor market and are now treated as a totally expendable population who should work for nothing in slave-labor "workfare" schemes or just die.

It is a real statement on the condition of organized labor in the U.S. that a strike which won relatively modest economic gains for the workers—at the price of thousands of layoffs which will intensify the already grinding, dangerous pace of work for UPS workers—is so widely perceived as such a victory. Nonetheless, the consciousness that it is possible to win something, anything, against the bosses is important. So is the recognition of the social power of the organized, multiracial working class. By the mere fact of withdrawing their labor power, the UPS strikers demonstrated the potential power of the working class that lies in its numbers, organization and discipline, and most decisively the fact that it is labor that makes the wheels of profit turn in capitalist society. Faced with the loss of millions in profits, UPS climbed down from its "last, best, final offer."

In the midst of the strike, some thousands poured onto the streets of New York City in protest against the brutal and sadistic cops who sodomized a black Haitian immigrant with the wooden handle of a toilet plunger, ripping apart his intestines. In a later rally outside the police precinct in Brooklyn, Haitian immigrants were joined by American blacks, Hispanics, Hasidic Jews and others. Here was a powerful statement against the capitalist rulers who foment racial and ethnic hatred to keep those at the bottom divided

For a Workers Party That Fights for All the Oppressed!



UPS Teamsters joined by other trade unionists at Georgia strike rally, August 14. UPS strike evoked broad sympathy among working people and the poor across the country. Kuntz/Reuters

Those Who Labor Must Rule!

and pitted against each other. And in the tens of thousands of black, Hispanic and immigrant workers who manned the picket lines during the UPS strike could be seen the potential for linking the power of labor to the anger of the dispossessed masses in the ghettos and barrios.

But translating the widespread sentiment of victory in the UPS strike into an aroused and struggling labor movement—mobilized in defense of its own

class interests and the interests of blacks, immigrants and all those at the bottom of this society—is at bottom a political question. As V.I. Lenin, leader of the 1917 Russian workers revolution, said: politics is concentrated economics. The fundamental starting point must be the understanding that this society is divided between two hostile classes: workers who are forced to sell their labor power in order to survive and the property-owning

capitalist class to whom their labor power is sold. The interests of these two classes are irreconcilably counterposed.

International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) president Ron Carey says the UPS strike was about labor's "fight for the American Dream." This echoes Jesse Jackson's sermon on UPS picket lines in San Francisco where he told strikers, "If there's a downturn share the pain...in *continued on page 5*

Enlightenment Rationalism and the Origins of Marxism

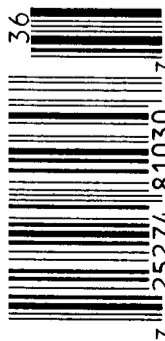
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As Teamsters Score Victory over UPS, Clinton Goes After Unions

Government Hands Off the Teamsters!

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Rainbow Coalition Censors Anti-Racist Protesters

Down With Park Service Gag Rules!

SAN FRANCISCO—As Proposition 209, the racist California measure passed last November outlawing all affirmative action programs in public education and government hiring and contracting, became law on August 28, thousands turned out for a "Save the Dream" march and rally headed by Jesse Jackson. But minorities, youth and workers who came to the rally in San Francisco's Crissy Field to protest the assault on affirmative action were subjected to outrageous censorship by the Rainbow Coalition organizers, who sought to keep all protest within the bounds of the capitalist Democratic Party. Anyone with signs or literature not carrying the Rainbow Coalition's imprimatur was marched off to a tiny area in the parking lot surrounded by police

barricades and under the watch of Park Service Smokies which was called—can you believe this—the "Free Speech Zone" (also known as the "First Amendment Zone")!

As some 5,000 marchers approached the field, Spartacist League supporters were distributing the latest issue of *Workers Vanguard*, with an article on the bloody cop killing of a Chinese American man in Rohnert Park, California. A Rainbow Coalition staffer approached our supporters demanding that we "voluntarily" segregate ourselves in the "Free Speech Zone." When we refused to submit to this scandalous censorship, a Park Service ranger at the behest of the Rainbow Coalition escorted us out of the rally. Outside the "Free Speech" intern-

ment area, another cop handed us a sheaf of papers—a "Special Use Permit for Public Assembly/First Amendment Activities"—under U.S. Department of the Interior letterhead. The cops threatened us with a citation for distributing our revolutionary literature when we refused to fill out the First Amendment "permit" and enter the police pen.

Red wasn't the only color the Rainbow types didn't like. Not only were other left groups, like the Freedom Socialist Party and the Revolutionary Communist Party, harassed by the cops and organizers, but so were Green ecology activists and apparently even individuals who brought their own hand-lettered signs.

Jesse Jackson and San Francisco Democratic mayor Willie Brown, the leaders of this hoax of a rally, seek to divert the outrage of youth, minorities and workers into dead ends like perpetual lawsuits and votes for your local Democrat. Tailing behind and seeking to pressure these "progressive" capitalist politicians are various "socialist" groups. The Revolutionary Workers League's "Coalition to Defend Affirmative Action By Any Means Necessary" (BAMN) postures as a "militant" alternative. But in practice, BAMN's talk of "militant actions" to prevent the implementation of Prop. 209 means sowing illusions in Jackson as something other than a hustler for the Democratic Party. Thus, BAMN pleaded with Jackson to lead "building occupations, student strikes, and highway shutdowns...that can smash the attack on affirmative action." And the International Socialist Organization, while building at San Francisco State for the August 28 march, shared a podium with Jackson without once expressing opposition to—or even mentioning—the Democratic Party.

The Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth Clubs have fought the racist

assault on affirmative action, which represents a racist purge of higher education. But the affirmative action programs established in response to the protests and upheavals of the 1960s were at best a limited gain for a tiny percentage of minorities and women. We fight for jobs for all and for free, quality, integrated education for all—for open admissions with no tuition.

Unlike those who channel opposition to Prop. 209 into Jesse Jackson's Democratic Party, we fight to link the struggle with that of the multiracial labor movement. The successful Teamsters strike against notoriously racist UPS gave a taste of the social power of the working class, which when unleashed can defeat the war being waged against immigrants and minorities. We raise the call: Break with the Democrats—Build a revolutionary workers party! ■

The Trade Unions and the Fight Against Wage Slavery

Already at the time of the First International in the mid-19th century, when trade unions had just begun to emerge, Karl Marx argued that it was necessary for the unions to go beyond the narrow confines of struggles over wages and working conditions and to challenge the entire system of wage slavery and all-sided capitalist oppression. The subsequent development of imperialism provided the material basis for the capitalists to



TROTSKY



LENIN

co-opt and buy off the top layers of the trade-union officialdom as a privileged stratum which acts as the bourgeoisie's political police inside the labor movement. To transform the unions into organs of struggle against the capitalist system requires the leadership of a revolutionary workers party forged in political combat against the labor traitors.

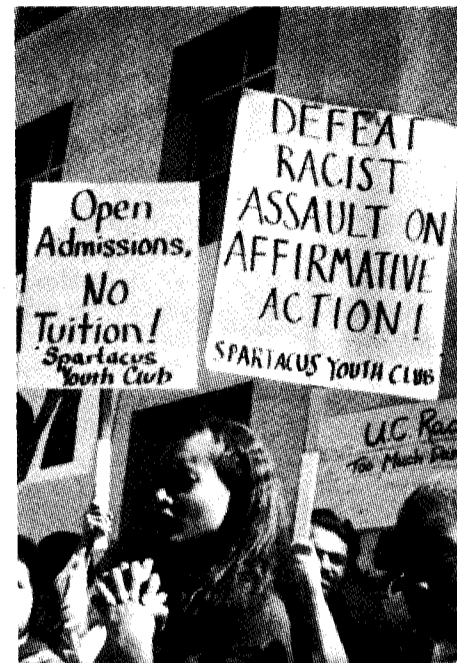
Capital is concentrated social force, while the workman has only to dispose of his working force. The *contract* between capital and labour can therefore never be struck on equitable terms, equitable even in the sense of a society which places the ownership of the material means of life and labour on one side and the vital productive energies on the opposite side. The only social power of the workmen is their number. The force of numbers, however, is broken by disunion. The disunion of the workmen is created and perpetuated by their *unavoidable competition amongst themselves*.

Trades' Unions originally sprang up from the *spontaneous* attempts of workmen at removing or at least checking that competition, in order to conquer such terms of contract as might raise them at least above the condition of mere slaves. The immediate object of Trades' Unions was therefore confined to everyday necessities, to expedients for the obstruction of the incessant encroachments of capital, in one word, to questions of wages and time of labour. This activity of the Trades' Unions is not only legitimate, it is necessary. It cannot be dispensed with so long as the present system of production lasts. On the contrary, it must be generalised by the formation and the combination of Trades' Unions throughout all countries....

Too exclusively bent upon the local and immediate struggles with capital, the Trades' Unions have not yet fully understood their power of acting against the system of wages slavery itself. They therefore kept too much aloof from general social and political movements....

Apart from their original purposes, they must now learn to act deliberately as organising centres of the working class in the broad interest of its *complete emancipation*. They must aid every social and political movement tending in that direction. Considering themselves and acting as the champions and representatives of the whole working class, they cannot fail to enlist the non-society [non-union] men into their ranks. They must look carefully after the interests of the worst paid trades, such as the agricultural labourers, rendered powerless by exceptional circumstances. They must convince the world at large that their efforts, far from being narrow and selfish, aim at the emancipation of the downtrodden millions.

—Karl Marx, "Instructions for the Delegates of the Provisional General Council" (August 1866)



Young Spartacus

Protest at UC Berkeley against racist rollback of affirmative action, 1995.

Spartacist Events

BOSTON

Eyewitness Report:
Cuban Revolution in Danger

Saturday, September 27, 7:30 p.m.
Place to be announced

For more information: (617) 666-9453

CHICAGO

Spartacus Youth Club Class Series
Alternate Saturdays, 2 p.m. Next classes, September 6: **The Marxist Program**; September 20: **The State**; 328 S. Jefferson, Suite 904

Information and readings: (312) 454-4930

MADISON

China on the Brink: Workers Political Revolution or Capitalist Enslavement?

Saturday, September 13, 2 p.m.
Memorial Union, UW-Madison (see "Today in the Union" for room location)

For more information: (312) 454-4930

NEW YORK CITY

Racist Cops: Armed Fist of Capitalist Rule Unchain Labor's Power—Those Who Labor Must Rule!

Friday, September 5, 7 p.m.
122 West 27th Street, 10th Floor (between 6th and 7th Avenues)

For more information: (212) 267-1025

SAN FRANCISCO

Spartacus Youth Club Class Series
Alternate Thursdays, 6 p.m. Next class, September 11: **Origins of Marxism and the Marxist Program**; San Francisco State University, Student Union, Room C114

Information and readings: (415) 777-9367 or (510) 839-0851

Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste Forums

TORONTO

China on the Brink: Workers Political Revolution or Capitalist Enslavement?

Saturday, October 4, 7:30 p.m.
St. Paul's Centre, 427 Bloor Street W.

Spartacus Youth Club Class Series
Alternate Wednesdays, 7 p.m. Next class, September 24: **The Principles of Marxism**; International Student Centre, 33 St. George Street
Information and readings: (416) 593-4138

VANCOUVER

Eyewitness Report
South Africa: The Struggle for Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution

Friday, October 3, 7:30 p.m.
Britannia Community Centre, Room L4, 1661 Napier St. (off Commercial Drive)

For more information: (604) 687-0353

WORKERS VANGUARD

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Texas Prison Gauntlet of Terror

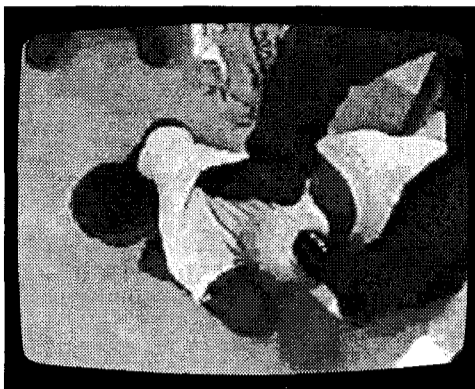
The rampaging prison guards at the Brazoria County Detention Center, shown on video beating, kicking and pepper-gassing defenseless prisoners while spewing racist epithets, lacked only the white sheets of the KKK. In the half-hour tape shot at the Houston-area jail in September 1996, men lying on the floor are bitten by attack dogs, stomped on and shocked with stun guns and cattle prods wielded by the sheriff's "emergency response team." That these sadistic thugs knew they were being filmed—for a "training video"—underscores that this kind of racist torture goes on all the time in jails and prisons across the country.

The prisoners had been shipped to the jail from Missouri as part of a lucrative business run by state and county governments and private prison outfits, who make a hefty profit by cramming dozens to a cell and denying them adequate food and medical care. The video had been in the hands of prison authorities for nearly a year. After spurning hundreds of complaints by prisoners and their families, only when the video was aired on CNN did government officials feign shock over their hired hands' brutality. In a cynical attempt at "damage control" aimed at counteracting the growing public outcry, Missouri has recalled all its prisoners from Texas, and Texas officials from Gov. George Bush Jr. down are blaming the private company, Capital Correctional Resources, which runs part of the Brazoria County jail (as well as several others) under contract from the state.

The federal government jumped in to announce an FBI investigation into "possible violations of the prisoners' civil rights." But the vicious beatings and killings which go on every day in jails and prisons around the country have been stoked and fomented right from the top of the ruling class, as both Democratic and Republican politicians demand ever tougher measures in the racist "war on crime." In Georgia, the state "corrections" commissioner has personally led a "tactical squad" garbed in black uniforms which regularly drags prisoners from their beds in the middle of the night, shackling and beating them.

From chain gangs to convict labor, the racist rulers are ever more openly bringing back barbaric practices rooted in Southern slavery and Jim Crow segregation. In Alabama, prisoners are strapped to a "hitching post" for hours in the blazing sun without food or water, while in Maryland and Wisconsin ghoulish new 50,000-volt "stun belts" are now replacing leg irons to shackle prisoners in chain gangs. In California, it has become routine for prison guards to shoot inmates dead when fights break out, and many prisons in the state are surrounded by lethal electrified fences.

Video Shows What Happens All the Time



Footage shows Brazoria County, Texas prison guards torturing inmates with electric cattle prod and attack dog.

Brazosport Facts

In the last 15 years, largely fueled by the "war on drugs," the number of people in U.S. jails and prisons has *quadrupled*, to *1.63 million* last year, with the overwhelming majority of prisoners black or Hispanic. In the nation's capital, fully half of all black men between the ages of 18 and 35 are either behind bars, on parole or otherwise in the clutches of the criminal "justice" system. As wide swathes of industry have been closed down or moved to lower-wage regions and decent full-time jobs become ever scarcer, the prison system has become America's fastest-growing "industry." This includes the boom in private prisons, from the Texas facility to the notorious jail for "illegal" immigrants in Elizabeth, New Jersey. Meanwhile, prison authorities have increasingly become slave-labor contractors, hiring out inmates to work for pennies an hour for private corporations.

Faced with the widening chasm between the filthy rich and the desperately poor, the bourgeoisie aims to contain the contradictions seething at the base of society through massive reinforcement of the repressive apparatus of the state—the cops, courts and prisons. The current crackdown on "juvenile offenders" pushed by Democrat Clinton is designed to ensnare black and Hispanic youth in the racist injustice system at ever younger ages. With one in seven black men effectively disenfranchised as "felons," the shell game of allowing the working class to vote every four years for the Republicrat oppressor of their choice is more of a sham than ever.

An integral part of the all-sided intensification of repression is the speedup on death row. Across the country, the machinery of death is in high gear, revved up by the gutting of *habeas corpus* appeals and a Supreme Court which has ruled that racism in sentencing, or

even outright innocence, is no bar to being executed. More people are scheduled to be executed this year than at any time since 1935. Texas leads the pack, with 25 death row inmates killed so far this year. Even as the number of executions escalates, the federal government makes ever more crimes punishable by death, while states like New York which long resisted it have now revived the death sentence. We say: *Abolish the racist death penalty!*

As with the hand-wringing calls for "investigations" following the release of the Texas prison video, the capitalist rulers occasionally make a hypocritical pretense of "cleaning up" their system of institutionalized terror. This summer, 26 years after the 1971 Attica prison massacre in upstate New York, a jury awarded \$4 million in damages to former inmate Frank Smith. In putting down the prison revolt, then-governor Nelson Rockefeller ordered a massacre in which 43 people were killed and more than 90 injured. The settlement was the result of a lawsuit by over a thousand mostly black and Hispanic prisoners who had been burned with cigarettes, threatened with castration and death and forced to run naked over broken glass through a gauntlet of club-wielding screws in the aftermath of the massacre.

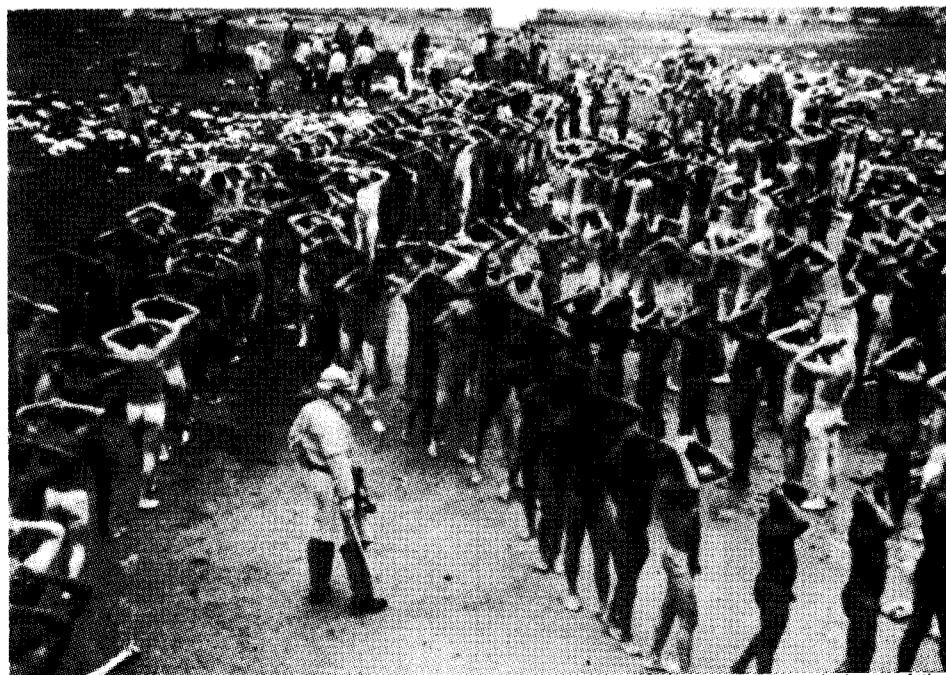
In denouncing the horrendous bloodbath at Attica in the first issue of *Workers Vanguard* (October 1971), we recalled the 1913 Ludlow massacre, also the handiwork of the Rockefeller family; when 21 striking Colorado coal miners, their wives and children were killed. In our article, we also condemned the leadership of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) for "organizing" some 10,000 state prison guards and cops, declaring: "No union can represent both workers and the sworn servants of the capitalist class, the police and prison guards."

Today, as AFSCME, Teamsters and other union bureaucrats, hungry to increase their dues base, step up efforts to recruit cops, prison guards and security guards, AFSCME alone includes *60,000*

"correctional employees." Virtually every issue of the union's journal is filled with glowing articles about prison guards and advertisements for union "workshops" on topics like "gang control" inside the prisons. AFSCME president Gerald McEntee reprehensibly hailed the draconian crime bill signed into law by Clinton in 1994, mandating over \$30 billion in new prison construction and other measures, as a "major victory" for the union (*Public Employee*, November/December 1994). This is a slap in the face to every working person, not least the tens of thousands of black and Hispanic members of AFSCME. It is more necessary than ever to reiterate that the armed thugs of the capitalist state have no place in the labor movement.

Reformist waterboys for the labor traitors, like the International Socialist Organization (ISO), join in fostering illusions that cops and prison guards can be the allies of working people (see "ISO: Looking for a Few Good Cops," *WV* No. 664, 21 March). The ISO recently supported work actions by security guards at New York City's World Trade Center and at the New School for Social Research, while its Canadian affiliate last year supported a "strike" by jail guards in Toronto, even hailing the "militant reputation" of "correctional workers" (*Socialist Worker* [Canada], 6 March 1996). Championing another such "strike" against a cutback in prison funding, the Canadian *Socialist Worker* (17 April 1996) admitted that prison guards function as one of the "oppressive arms of the state" but nevertheless claimed that they "must be supported in this particular struggle against the government because a victory for the guards would be a victory for all of us."

Every "victory" for cops and prison guards means more untrammelled racist terror on the streets and in the jails. As Marxists, we aim to imbue the working class with the understanding that the apparatus of torture and murder which is the core of the capitalist state cannot be reformed but must be swept away through socialist revolution. ■



Attica, 1971: Prisoners stripped and herded into the yard following massacre ordered by Governor Rockefeller.

5 SEPTEMBER 1997

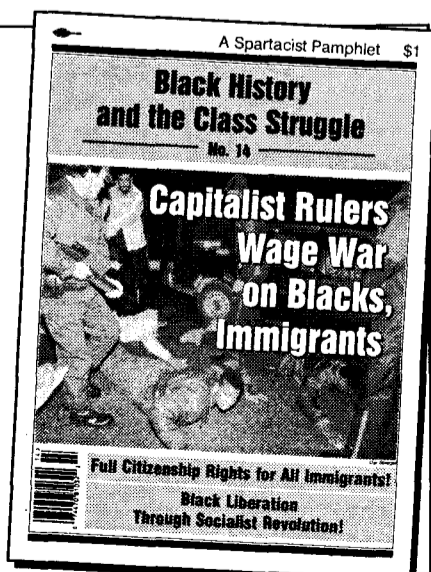
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- Farrakhan and the Sudan Slave Trade
- Black Churches Torched Across the South Mobilize Labor/Black Power to Smash Racist Terror!
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Government Hands Off the Teamsters!

Feds Void Carey Re-Election, Ban UPS Pilots Strike

AUGUST 31—No sooner had the ink dried on the tentative agreement ending the 15-day strike by the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) against UPS than the federal government stepped in to void the 1996 re-election of Ron Carey as IBT president and order a new election. Upholding the principle of complete independence of the workers movement from the capitalist government, the Spartacist League opposes any form of government intervention into the Teamsters or any other union. Labor can and must clean its own house through political struggles *inside* the unions. State intervention is flatly *counterposed* to the fight for union democracy and waging class struggle against the capitalists. Government hands off the Teamsters!

The government's intervention has



WV Photo

UPS pilots' refusal to cross Teamster picket lines was key to winning strike.

nothing to do with allegations of financial chicanery by Carey and everything to do with its decades-long vendetta against the Teamsters. The capitalist state, which represents the interests of the corporations, fears the potential power of the Teamsters to shut down the country, from in-city and national trucking to the major ports and airports. The government's only interest in intervening into the affairs of the Teamsters or any other union is to cripple their ability to fight for the interests of their members by directly subordinating the unions to the government and dictating how they are run.

Carey was himself first elected IBT president in December 1991 as a result of a court "consent decree"—braintrustered by Carey's backers in Teamsters for a Democratic Union—placing the union under federal supervision. Having let the anti-union enemy in the front door in the first place, Carey is now himself being bitten by the feds. Meanwhile, James Hoffa Jr., Carey's opponent in last year's election, is calling for even *stronger* government intervention. Hoffa complains that the federal union "overseer," Barbara Zack Quindel, should have barred Carey from running in the new election and "should have annulled the election sooner, rather than waiting until after Mr. Carey led the teamsters in the strike against United Parcel Service" (*New York Times*, 30 August).

Hoffa is now demanding that Quindel be replaced by former Democratic president Jimmy Carter, who earned the hatred of trade unionists for invoking the anti-labor Taft-Hartley Act in a failed attempt to break the 1977-78 United Mine Work-

ers (UMWA) national coal strike. The UMWA president at the time, Arnold Miller, had been elected in 1972 on the wings of a "reform" movement, "Miners for Democracy," which appealed to the capitalist courts and the Labor Department of Republican president Richard Nixon to "clean up" the union. During the strike, the Miller regime collapsed in the face of the determination of the miners, who defied Carter's strikebreaking injunctions and repeatedly burned Miller's sellout contract proposals before they finally went back to work after 110 days (see the Spartacist pamphlet, *The Great Coal Strike of 1978*).

That the state is the *enemy* of the labor movement was demonstrated yet again on August 26 when the National Mediation Board announced that UPS pilots represented by the Independent Pilots Association, whose contract expired in December 1995 and who are currently voting on a new agreement, would be banned from striking until 1998! The ruling came just three days after UPS had made its "last, final" contract proposal. The pilots' honoring of the Teamsters picket lines was key to shutting UPS down, and Carey has said that in return his members would respect the pilots' picket lines. The threat of another strike gave the pilots enormous leverage against UPS. But the government, acting on behalf of the UPS bosses who lost over \$600 million during the Teamsters strike, wants to make sure that the company is not shut down again, especially during the peak Christmas season. They also don't like the idea that union power might be spreading.

Democratic president Clinton wasn't willing to pay the political price of openly breaking the Teamsters strike through a Taft-Hartley injunction. Like the arrogant UPS bosses, Clinton probably assumed that the strike would collapse with part-timers crossing the picket lines. Faced with an utterly solid strike, Clinton employed Secretary of Labor Alexis Herman and the National Mediation Board to twist the arm of the Carey leadership into marathon talks that got the strikers back to work without a vote on the new contract. Now Clinton is using the same mediators to stop the pilots from striking. We say that the pilots should defy this outrageous government edict and that the Teamsters should back them up all the way.

Solidarity Wins Strike

By all accounts, UPS was counting on the Teamsters being internally weakened

UPS workers remained solid throughout the strike, defeating company's attempt to cripple Teamsters union.



Reuters

by the charges against Carey—which were initially raised by the Hoffa forces and carried forward by the federal overseer—to force major concessions out of the union, especially the company's demand to withdraw from the Teamsters' multi-employer pension plan. UPS was also hardlining it against the key union demand to convert 10,000 part-time inside jobs to full-time jobs, as well as for substantial across-the-board wage increases.

However, what UPS (and for that matter, probably Carey himself) did not count on was the solid support for the strike by nearly all UPS workers, both part-timers and full-time drivers. *This solidarity, above all else, was the decisive factor that defeated the attempt by UPS to cripple the Teamsters union.* This determination was most evident among the part-time loaders and sorters who, because of the multi-tier wage system initiated in 1982 with the approval of the Teamsters leadership, had the most to gain from a union victory. Going into the strike, drivers were paid well over twice the part-time starting wage of \$8 an hour and nearly twice as much as the average \$11 an hour earned by more senior inside workers.

With its back to the wall and suffering huge losses in revenues, UPS was forced to grant across-the-board wage increases of \$3.10 an hour, with an additional \$1 an hour for part-timers. However, the union leadership seriously compromised

by permitting UPS to spread these increases and other provisions over a *five-year* contract, thus assuring UPS "labor peace" for an extended period. In addition, the poverty-level starting wage for part-time workers—which hadn't changed since 1982!—was only increased by a miserable 50 cents an hour.

But a potentially significant gain appears to be the creation for the first time at UPS of a new category of full-time jobs for inside workers, who make up some 60 percent of the workforce. A reported 10,000 part-time jobs are supposed to be converted to full-time over the life of the contract. However, according to the *New York Times* (22 August)—and with the full version of the new contract still not available—there may be a lot of fine print that qualifies this important gain. The first is that workers in these new full-time jobs will be paid some \$5 an hour less than the drivers.

More importantly, the new contract apparently gives UPS a free hand in deciding not only *who* gets the new jobs, but *where* those jobs will be located, allowing the company to exclude whole cities. Without union control of promotion to full-time based on *seniority*, UPS will be able to exercise any kind of discrimination it chooses. In a company already notorious for its racism against minority workers, one can expect that UPS will continue to set workers against each other while excluding black, Hispanic and immigrant workers, women and known union militants from the new jobs.

The number of new full-time jobs does not fundamentally affect the overall proportion of part-time workers at UPS. Nevertheless, an important wedge has been driven into the UPS part-time slave-labor system. Further struggles will be necessary to institute union seniority and to fight for full-time jobs for all UPS workers. For union control over hiring! Equal pay for equal work! We call for a *union* fight against racism at UPS—no reliance on the bosses' courts and government!

For Class-Struggle Leadership!

While the economic gains of the UPS strike are relatively modest, the fact that this was a *winning* strike that backed

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In 1977-78 coal strike, miners burned sellout contract and told Democrat Carter to shove his Taft-Hartley injunction.

Unchain Labor...

(continued from page 1)

good times share the gain." But this whole system is based on the extraction of surplus value, i.e., profit, from those who labor. The purpose of the capitalists who are in a dog-eat-dog competition with each other, particularly internationally, is to increase their profits through the increasing exploitation of the working class, not to "share the wealth" with labor. The fact that working people, blacks, immigrants, the young, the aged have been taking all the pain while not making any gains is precisely due to a labor leadership which is guided by the view of a "partnership" between the working class and the exploiting class.

The UPS strike never transcended the framework of business unionism. Crying that it was "illegal" for strikers to stop management scabs, the union leaders mandated porous picket lines which the company could have literally driven a truck through if it had made good on its threat to hire thousands of scabs. There was not one demand made by the bureaucrats aimed at redressing the vicious racist harassment of black, Hispanic and immigrant workers who are regularly tracked into the dirtiest and most dangerous jobs with little or no chance of promotion. The union tops' refusal to wage a fight against such conditions has led many of these workers to look for "justice" in the racist, anti-union capitalist courts.

Much was made of John Sweeney's offer of \$10 million to the Teamsters strike fund, a fraction of what the AFL-CIO poured into Clinton's re-election campaign. But labor solidarity is not \$55 a week in strike pay and a telegram of support. UPS pilots demonstrated some real support by respecting the strikers' picket lines and the Teamsters had better do the same if the pilots go on strike.

Now Carey, Sweeney and the rest of the labor officialdom are thanking Democratic president Clinton because he didn't bring down strikebreaking legislation! Rail workers at Amtrak whose right to strike was denied by Clinton before their contract had even expired surely don't share the same appreciation. And how about the Teamsters themselves? The ink had barely dried on the settlement with UPS when the government ordered new leadership elections in the Teamsters. IBT "old guard" spokesman James Hoffa Jr. is now calling on the feds, under whose aegis Carey himself was installed, to remove the current president from office. We say: Government hands off the unions!

The Enemies of Labor

The union bureaucracy sees "allies" in the agencies of the class enemy—the government, the cops, the courts. This class collaborationism stands behind the series of broken strikes and broken unions that have racked the organized labor movement. In the U.S., the main obstacle to successful class struggle against the capitalists is the allegiance to the Democratic Party of the labor bureaucracy as well as of a majority of the working class itself. For American workers, this support to the Democratic



UPS picket line in Rhode Island attacked by cops. These armed thugs of the racist capitalist rulers have no place in the unions!

Party reflects the absence of elementary class consciousness. The Democratic Party portrayed by the labor bureaucrats as a "lesser evil" is, no less than the Republicans, a capitalist party which cannot serve the interests of the workers.

The U.S. is the only industrial country in the world where the workers have not historically had their own independent political party, reflecting in some way, even on a reformist basis, the conflicting interests of labor and capital. Yet the social-democratic labor parties that exist in other countries are based on the illusion that the way to advance the cause of the workers is through the electoral process. History has shown that the working class cannot simply lay hold of the existing apparatus of the capitalist state; rather, that state must be smashed and replaced by one serving the cause of the proletariat.

A genuine workers party must be based on the understanding that only through their mass mobilization in struggle can the workers fight for their interests and in defense of all the oppressed. The best workers party in history was the Bolshevik Party led by V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky, which led the workers of Russia to power in the October Revolution of 1917, creating the first workers state in history. The Spartacist League is fighting to build such a party, forged in sharp political struggle against the pro-capitalist labor misleaders and based on the Marxist understanding that the capitalist profit system must be rooted out and replaced by workers rule.

It was this revolutionary understanding of the class struggle that imbued the pitched class battles in the streets of Minneapolis in 1934 which forged the Teamsters as a powerful industrial union. These strikes, which twice shut down the city, were led by "reds," Trotskyist militants. Speaking of "The Great Minneapolis Strikes," James P. Cannon, a founding leader of American Trotskyism, underlined the political program which lay behind those victories:

"All modern strikes require political direction. The strikes of that period brought the government, its agencies and

its institutions into the very center of every situation. A strike leader without some conception of a political line was very much out of date already by 1934. The old fashioned trade union movement, which used to deal with the bosses without government interference, belongs in the museum. The modern labor movement must be politically directed because it is confronted by the government at every turn. Our people were prepared for that since they were political people, inspired by political conceptions. The policy of the class struggle guided our comrades; they couldn't be deceived and outmaneuvered, as so many strike leaders of that period were, by this mechanism of sabotage and destruction known as the National Labor Board and all its auxiliary setups. They put no reliance whatever in Roosevelt's Labor Board; they weren't fooled by any idea that Roosevelt, the liberal 'friend of labor' president, was going to help the truck drivers in Minneapolis win a few cents more an hour. They weren't deluded even by the fact that there was at that time in Minnesota a Farmer-Labor Governor, presumed to be on the side of the workers.

"Our people didn't believe in anybody or anything but the policy of the class struggle and the ability of the workers to prevail by their mass strength and solidarity. Consequently, they expected from the start that the union would have to fight for its right to exist; that the bosses would not yield any recognition to the union, would not yield any increase of wages or reduction of the scandalous hours without some pressure being brought to bear. Therefore they prepared everything from the point of view of class war. They knew that power, not diplomacy, would decide the issue. Bluffs don't work in fundamental things, only in incidental ones. In such things as the conflict of class interests one must be prepared to fight."

—James P. Cannon, *The History of American Trotskyism* (1944)

Today, the Teamsters union is led by Carey and his "reformers," who came to power through the intervention of the capitalist state. Appealing to the feds to "clean up" corruption in the union, this treachery was dressed up as winning "democracy" for the union ranks.

To be sure, the "old guard" leadership was plenty corrupt. But that isn't why the government went after the Teamsters. The feds' aim was to break the ability of

the Teamsters, potentially one of the most powerful unions in America, to shut the country down. The capitalist rulers' war against the Teamsters goes back to the vendetta waged by Democrat Bobby Kennedy in the 1950s, when the IBT under Jimmy Hoffa launched a campaign for a national over-the-road contract. That Carey and his backers delivered the union into the hands of the capitalist state is about as corrupt as you can get. And it is directly counterposed to the aim of union democracy—the fight for the workers to select a leadership which will fight for their class interests *against* the employers and their state.

In modern capitalism, the unions confront a highly centralized class adversary. The government is simply the executive committee for the capitalist class as a whole. The capitalist state is the enemy of the working class, organized both to prevent it from struggling in its own interests and ultimately to prevent the workers from smashing the system of private property and taking power themselves. Therefore the *only* interest the government has in the unions is to weaken them and reduce their capacity to struggle. By upholding capitalist class rule, the leadership of the AFL-CIO acts to transform the unions from fighting instruments of the workers into an extension of the capitalist state power to discipline and moderate the struggles of the workers.

This is ABC for Marxists. Yet Carey's government-sponsored election as Teamsters president was hailed by a host of groups calling themselves "socialist." Prominent among these is the International Socialist Organization (ISO). In a special *Socialist Worker* (June-July 1997) UPS strike supplement, the ISO cheers: "The elections of Teamster General President Ron Carey in 1991 and 1996 are victories for everyone who wanted to see a more democratic, fighting labor movement." In fact, the ISO actively supports Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU), which catapulted Carey into office. In 1987, the TDU literally wrote—and sent to the Justice Department—the blueprint for the government plan to "reorganize" the union.

Implicitly acknowledging widespread hostility among the Teamsters ranks to government intervention, the ISO tries to cover its tracks with a cynical sleight of hand. In its strike supplement, TDU leader and prominent ISO supporter Pete Camarata is quoted as saying, "TDU was opposed to government control of unions." However, in the very next breath, the ISO praises the "independent" government board which ran the Teamsters elections for ensuring "the first-ever democratic vote." Quintessential social democrats, the ISO sees the capitalist state as a "class-neutral" instrument which can be pressured into serving the interests of the workers. By the same token, the ISO sees evidence of working-class militancy in "strikes" by prison guards. In this, too, the ISO is faithful to the IBT leaders, who have been "organizing" cops into the union.

This is obscene! The cops aren't workers, they are the armed fist of the capitalist rulers. Their job is to "serve and protect" the property and power of the bosses who live off the exploitation of labor. Teamsters should know what role the police play only too well. During the 1994 national freight strike, cops busted heads and arrested strikers for trying to stop scabs. L.A. Latino trucker Jesse Acuna was only recently released from prison after being thrown behind bars for defending a Teamsters picket line. Numerous UPS workers were also arrested during the recent strike. *Drop all the charges!*

The police, prison guards, security guards and legions of "private" strike-breaking outfits are the biggest "growth industry" in America. This increase in the forces of repression is aimed at heading off any protest against the increasingly raw exploitation and oppression of those at the bottom of this system. But for the labor bureaucrats, organizing the

continued on page 6

Minnesota Historical Society



THE ORGANIZER

VICTORY!

Settlement Goes Through!

Vote for 574 in the Elections
Make Minneapolis a Union Town

Class war on the streets of Minneapolis as Trotskyists lead 1934 general strike which helped forge Teamsters as powerful national industrial union. Daily strike bulletin, *The Organizer*, hailed workers' victory.

Unchain Labor...

(continued from page 5)

cops and the screws is the means to increase their flagging dues base.

Labor Lieutenants of Capital

The class traitors who currently run the unions long ago separated themselves from their working-class base. In the words of early American socialist leader Daniel De Leon, the top union officials serve as the "labor lieutenants of the capitalist class." So strong are the bureaucrats' ties to the capitalist order that they have renounced the very means by which the unions were built. Those unions were built in *opposition* to the bosses' cops and courts. Leaders, then, went to prison and died for the union cause. Strikes were virtual wars. Now the union tops call for "informational" picket lines, impotent consumer boycotts, moral witness "protests" at stockholder meetings, corporate campaigns...anything except the hard class struggle that is necessary to win even in defensive battles.

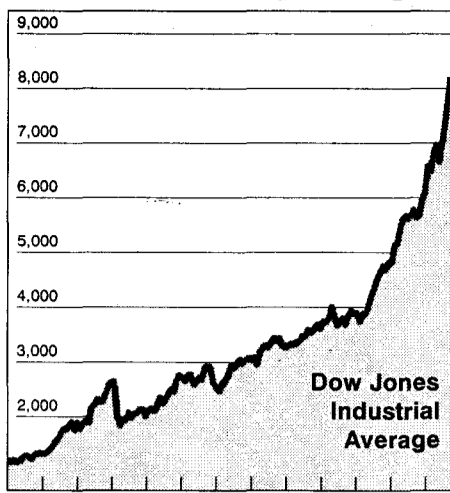
The Minneapolis strikes were won by bringing to bear the weapons of labor that lie in its collective strength. Picketing was organized on a mass basis to keep out scabs. Carloads of flying pickets were dispatched to deliver a clear message to the operators of scab trucks that picket lines mean don't cross. Effective

interimperialist slaughter. For their opposition to the imperialist war, 18 Trotskyist leaders, including Minneapolis Teamsters militants, were prosecuted and jailed for treason under the Smith Act. Aiding and abetting the government was the IBT bureaucracy, which sent Jimmy Hoffa into Minneapolis to purge the Trotskyists from the union.

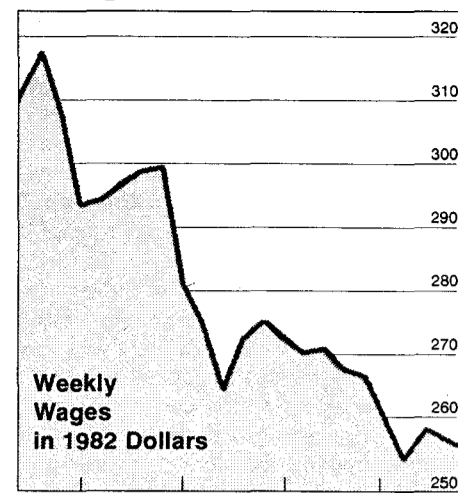
The arrest of the "Minneapolis 18," which outrageously was backed by the pro-Roosevelt Communist Party, presaged the Cold War purges of the late 1940s and early '50s. After five years of "no strike" pledges imposed by the labor bureaucracy during World War II, the year 1946 saw the biggest strike wave in the history of the country. The following year, the union-busting Taft-Hartley Act was passed. The purge that was then launched not only destroyed whole unions but beheaded the labor movement by systematically removing some 25,000 of the most militant union members, including the Communists and socialists who had been key leaders and fighters in the CIO organizing drives.

The "red purge" laid the basis for the fusion of the AFL craft-union federation with the CIO in 1955. The first president of the AFL-CIO, George Meany, bragged that he had never walked a picket line. Thus was created the post-war anti-Communist leadership which has presided over the steady decline of union power to the point where only

Stocks Rising, Wages Falling



Source: Datastream/ICV



Source: U.S. Department of Labor

the trade unions can become the instruments of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat."

Mobilize Labor and Its Allies!

The fruits of the racism, anti-Communism and class collaborationism of the labor bureaucracy have been seen in the sharp decline in union membership and wages and the deepening immiseration of the ghetto masses. The union tops have agreed to multi-tier wage systems and a massive expansion of part-time labor. Such schemes pit one section of the workforce against another, furthering the exploitation of black, immigrant and younger workers while making older, mainly white workers more vulnerable to being replaced entirely. While millions of blacks and immigrants have been condemned to starvation, disease and death by the destruction of social welfare programs, the AFL-CIO officialdom has not lifted a finger in protest. Now thousands of formerly unionized jobs are being filled under slave-labor "workfare" programs.

Enough! The situation is crying out for a real drive to organize the unorganized. Not the bureaucrats' despicable mooted bids to organize separate "workfare" unions as low-wage ghettos to feed their dues base, but a class-struggle fight for full union wages, benefits and protection *for all!* Down with two-tier wages! Equal pay for equal work! Combat unemployment through the fight for a shorter work week at no loss in pay!

Even to realize the most basic right—to a job at decent pay—leads directly to challenging the capitalist profit system. In the 1938 Transitional Program—a system of demands linking the felt needs of the workers to the fight for proletarian state power—Trotsky noted amid the devastation of the Great Depression:

"The question is one of guarding the proletariat from decay, demoralization, and ruin. The question is one of life or death of the only creative and progressive class, and by that token of the future of mankind. If capitalism is incapable of satisfying the demands inevitably arising from the calamities generated by itself, then let it perish."

Many of the AFL-CIO misleaders openly support racist anti-immigrant laws in the name of defending American workers from the influx of "cheap labor." But the treacherous policies of the bureaucrats created a huge reservoir of "home-grown" cheap labor. Refusing to defend the rights of immigrants, they have simply opened the door for the capitalists' rapacious exploitation of foreign-born workers who literally have no rights. The labor movement must demand: Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!

While they scream about the "outsourcing" of jobs abroad, for years the bosses have been shipping jobs, not to Mexico or Taiwan, but to the "open shop" American South. The last, feeble attempt to organize the South—obscenely called "Operation Dixie"—was in the 1950s. But that was immediately shipwrecked on the shoals of the red purges, racism and the bureaucrats' ties to the Democratic Party. In many cases, to get the "reds" the labor bureaucrats worked to destroy already existing Southern unions that were largely Communist Party-led and had a huge black

membership. Meanwhile, the bureaucrats' loyalty to the Democrats made them incapable of organizing the South, which would have meant a fight *against* the Jim Crow white-power structure, which was run by the Dixiecrats and their Ku Klux Klan auxiliaries.

Here is a monument, in the negative, to the understanding that there can be no effective defense against union-busting unless the labor movement becomes the champion of black rights. The burning cross which was ignited by plant managers in Alabama a few years back to "discourage" workers from joining a union testifies to the crucial need for integrated labor action against racist terror to break the "open shop" South.

The Spartacist League has initiated labor-centered mobilizations—bringing to bear the power of black and white workers at the head of mobilizations of all the intended victims of Klan terror—that have successfully stopped the fascists in a number of cities. In these mobilizations could be seen the powerful combination of black and red: labor united in its own defense and in defense of all the oppressed under a communist leadership. At the time of the Civil War, Karl Marx captured a fundamental truth of American society in his statement that "Labor cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded." Union rights and black rights will go forward together or fall back separately.

The forcible subjugation and segregation of much of the black population at the bottom of this society is an essential foundation stone of American capitalism. At the same time, the capitalist rulers have fomented racial hatred and made the color bar a fundamental dividing line in this country in order to obscure the irreconcilable class divide between labor and capital. Once supplying a "reserve army of labor" to be employed when the bosses needed them, the ghetto poor have been discarded by a ruling class that no longer needs their labor power. But black workers remain a significant component of organized labor, integrated into strategic sections of the proletariat in whose hands lies the power to break the chains of capitalist exploitation and racist oppression. As we wrote in the Spartacist pamphlet, "Capitalist Rulers Wage War on Blacks, Immigrants" (*Black History and the Class Struggle* No. 14, January 1997):

"The road to black freedom lies in the struggle to shatter this racist capitalist system through proletarian socialist revolution, and the power to do that lies with the multiracial working class. But this power cannot and will not be realized unless a class-struggle labor movement actively champions the cause of black liberation and is mobilized in defense of the rights of immigrants and all the oppressed. The key to unlocking the chains, forged by the trade-union misleaders, that shackle labor to its exploiters is the political struggle to build a revolutionary internationalist leadership of the working class."

Labor's Fight Is International—Workers of the World Unite!

The union tops see the world through the same lens as the capitalists and their government. Complaining that workers in other countries are "stealing" American jobs, the labor bureaucrats tie the interests



Washington Post

Spartacist League initiated 5,000-strong labor/black mobilization that stopped KKK march in Washington, D.C., November 1982.

use was made of the "secondary boycott" as unionized truckers refused to handle cargo shipped by scab labor. Twice the organized power of labor brought Minneapolis to a grinding halt in a general strike. These battles presaged the plant occupations of the great CIO organizing drives later in the 1930s.

But it wasn't just the militant and "illegal" tactics of mass picketing and sitdown strikes that built the unions. The Trotskyists who led the Minneapolis strikes organized women workers and the wives of strikers to take part in the class battle. They organized the unemployed and through fighting for their rights brought them in behind the strike. The later organizing drives in auto, steel, meatpacking and other industries broke down the traditional Jim Crow system as blacks poured into the ranks of the newly organized industrial unions. As a result, during that period the black ghetto masses identified with the labor movement.

Yet the reformists, the social democrats and the Stalinist Communist Party, channeled the turbulent class battles of the 1930s into support for Franklin D. Roosevelt's Democratic Party and its "New Deal" coalition, which included the diehard Dixiecrat segregationists of the Deep South. This coalition aimed at co-opting the unions through a series of government regulatory boards and, more broadly, at buying "class peace." During World War II, the labor misleaders served to enlist working people in the

about 10 percent of the industrial workforce remains organized.

Meany and his successors were among the most rabid proponents of the interests of U.S. imperialism around the world, from the Cold War against the Soviet Union to Washington's dirty war against the Vietnamese workers and peasants. While fostering support for military adventures against the peoples of the "Third World," in the U.S. the labor misleaders were virulent in their denunciations of the Black Panther Party and any militant struggle against the racist status quo.

As Leon Trotsky wrote in 1940 at the time of the "New Deal," modern monopoly capitalism demands of the reformist labor bureaucracy "that they become transformed into its political police before the eyes of the working class." As a result of the unprecedented mass struggles which built the CIO, the government began setting up a series of legal restrictions to limit the power of the working class. Ever since then the tendency has been for the unions, through their bureaucratic leadership, to grow more closely together with the capitalist government itself. Stressing as primary the call for "complete and unconditional independence of the trade unions in relation to the capitalist state," Trotsky noted:

"The trade unions of our time can either serve as secondary instruments of imperialist capitalism for the subordination and disciplining of workers and for obstructing the revolution, or, on the contrary,

of the working class in the U.S. to maintaining the competitive edge of American imperialism. Carey and the rest of the AFL-CIO officialdom are now trying to wield the UPS strike to mobilize labor against any extension of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

Labor *should* be mobilized in opposition to NAFTA—but not on the basis of “stars and stripes” chauvinism and racist job-trusting protectionism exemplified by recent IBT protests against Mexican truckers. We oppose NAFTA as a “free trade” rape of Mexico, under which the U.S. rulers are increasing their profits and power through the superexploitation of Mexican workers. There should be a drive to organize the workers in the giant U.S.-owned *maquiladoras* in northern Mexico. This cause would be mightily assisted by, for example, solidarity strikes by the unionized workforces of these same corporations in the U.S.

The AFL-CIO’s protectionism, particularly against Japan, is part and parcel of lining U.S. workers up behind their “own” bourgeoisie in the face of escalating interimperialist rivalry. This is a dangerous business. Trade wars lead to shooting wars, as has been demonstrated in the two world imperialist conflagrations in this century. More immediately, “yellow peril” racism has played a big role in derailing class struggle. This was clearly seen in the defeat of the strike against Bridgestone-Firestone in the central Illinois “war zone” a couple of years back, where instead of building mass pickets the union bureaucracy pushed appeals to the U.S. government against the company’s Japanese owners.

The strike against UPS, close to half of whose workforce is employed outside the U.S., underlined that labor’s fight must be *international*. Transport unions in Europe were planning solidarity demonstrations and Filipino workers mounted a labor protest against UPS in Manila. The watchword of the working people must not be the deadly trap of defending “American jobs” against foreign competition, but the words which Karl Marx inscribed in the *Communist Manifesto* 150 years ago: “Workers of the world, unite!”

For a Workers Government to Expropriate the Bourgeoisie!

An op-ed piece in the *New York Times* (17 August) titled “Turning Point for Labor?” noted:

“Occasionally strikes take on a significance beyond the specific company and union involved in the conflict. The outcome of such strikes can define the balance of power between worker and management in the entire society.”

On the negative side of this balance sheet, the author pointed to the destruction of the PATCO air traffic controllers union by the Reagan government in 1981. The entire membership of the union was fired and PATCO leaders were led off to prison in shackles.

Today it is widely recognized that the smashing of PATCO opened the door to the wholesale onslaught against the unions while the rich got richer and the poor got poorer. But at the time, the labor misleaders did nothing in defense of PATCO. The Spartacist League raised



Ruben R. Ramirez

Strikers at RCA Thomson maquiladora plant in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, February 1995. AFL-CIO misleaders push racist protectionism. What’s needed is international labor solidarity in struggle.

the call: “Labor: Shut Down the Airports!” Machinists and Teamsters had the power to bring the country to a grinding halt—the union leadership just had to say the word, the ranks were ready. Instead the labor traitors hid their refusal to fight behind impotent rallies and appeals for a consumer boycott.

Today, the imperialist bourgeoisie’s rapacity is further driven by the counter-revolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union. The world’s first workers state, issuing from the Bolshevik-led October Revolution and erected on the foundations of a centrally planned and collectivized economy, was an enormous step forward for humanity. These gains were undermined by the Stalinist bureaucracy which usurped political power from the working class in the early 1920s. *Like the labor bureaucrats in this country*, the Stalinists bartered away the workers’ gains to appease the imperialist rulers, ultimately paving the way for the utter destruction of

the Soviet bureaucratically degenerated workers state. Capitalist counterrevolution has meant a catastrophic assault on the conditions of working people in the former Soviet Union, leading to nationalist slaughters and massive impoverishment. This has also meant intensified attacks on working people internationally, as the chief imperialist powers—the U.S., Japan and Germany—seek to drive down wages and slash social benefits to increase their competitive edge.

Two possible roads lie before the working class. There is the revolutionary

were allowed across the picket lines. Their demands for the strike were to simply add a few dollars and jobs to what the Teamsters bureaucracy called for, conspicuously omitting any demands addressed to the crucial need for the union to fight against racist harassment and discrimination. Insofar as the ISO even pretended to offer an “alternative” to the Carey leadership it was to appeal for building a “rank-and-file” movement to simply pressure the bureaucrats.

But having supported the election of Carey, which was brought through the intervention of the capitalist state, what alternative could the ISO have to offer to the class collaborationism of the labor bureaucrats? Rather than the desperately necessary task of struggling to bring revolutionary consciousness to the working class, the ISO reinforces the stranglehold of the treacherous misleaders of labor who keep the working class trapped within the framework of capitalist exploitation.

The mobilization of the proletariat in pursuit of its own class interests requires a political struggle against the pro-capitalist labor tops. This is integrally linked to the fight for a workers party based on the program of the class struggle, a party whose purpose is not to serve as an electoral shill for the Democrats—like Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers bureaucrat Tony Mazzocchi’s “Labor Party” sham—but to give revolutionary leadership to the struggles of the workers in the fight for a workers government to expropriate the bourgeoisie and construct an egalitarian socialist society.

When those who labor rule, the tremendous wealth of this society will be used to provide a decent life for the working people, the poor, blacks, immigrants, the young, the aged. The fight for black freedom will be realized in the overthrow of the rule of American capital. When the workers have the industrial wealth that is now being squeezed out of the working class for the profits of the bosses, we will begin to build a planned socialist economy on an international scale. Then we can right some historical crimes and pay off some debts, like some of tens of billions of dollars to the Vietnamese and others whose countries have been maimed under the passing treads of American tanks and the bombs of American planes. As for “compensation” to the people who lined their pockets with fat profits while driving everyone else to ruin, the victorious proletariat can offer to those who don’t get in its way that they too will have the right to honest labor and will live to see their grandchildren prosper in a truly humane society. ■

strategy proposed by us Marxists. In the course of sharp class struggle and through the instrumentality of a revolutionary party that patiently educates the working class in the understanding not only of its social power but of its historic interests, the workers will become conscious of themselves as a class fighting for itself and for all the oppressed against the *entire* capitalist class and its government. Or there is the continuation of the bureaucrats’ acquiescence to what is possible and “practical” under capitalism, which over the past two decades and more has led to disaster. Despite their “socialist” pretensions, the latter view is one amply shared by reformist groups like the ISO.

At best what the ISO offered during the UPS strike was simply more “militant” trade-union struggle, and barely that. They were among the loudest in the bureaucrats’ game of shouting “shame” at scab trucks which a few minutes later

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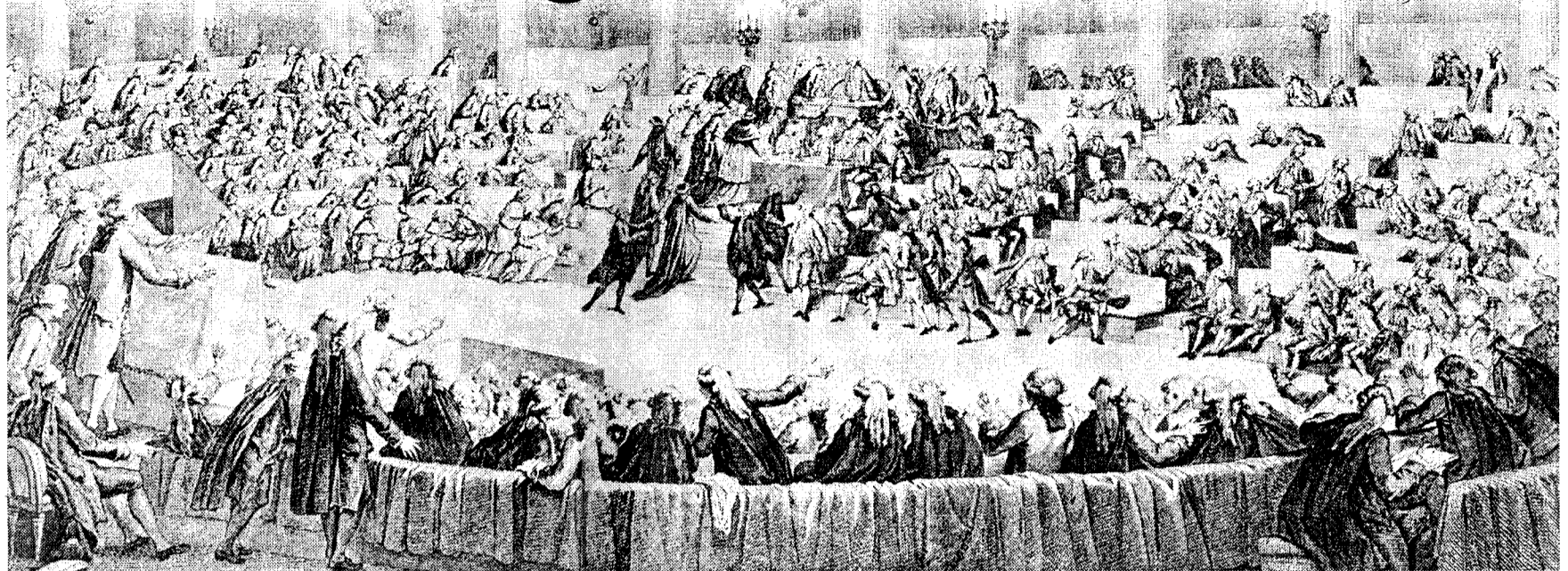
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Enlightenment Rationalism and the Origins of Marxism



Meeting of the Constituent Assembly established during the French Revolution which swept away the old feudal order.

Musée Carnavalet

PART ONE

We print below the first part of a presentation on the Enlightenment given by Spartacist League Central Committee member Joseph Seymour this summer as part of a series of internal SL classes on the origins of Marxism.

The great Russian writer Leo Tolstoy was raised as a nobleman on a country estate. To stave off the boredom of this rustic existence, the young Tolstoy and his brother devised a series of physical and mental challenges. One of these was to stand in a corner and *not* think of a white bear. It can't be done. Under those circumstances, you have to think of a white bear.

In studying and discussing Marxism today, we face a similar kind of mental impossibility. We cannot *not* think of the recent major developments in the world which have radically altered and affected popular conceptions about communism. Capitalist counterrevolution has triumphed in the former Soviet Union and East Europe. Capitalism is making deep inroads in what used to be called "Red China." Stalinism, which for decades was popularly identified with communism, has disappeared as a significant political current in the world. The overwhelming majority of ex-Stalinists, whether or not they still call themselves communists, have become social democrats or in some cases, as in Russia, bourgeois nationalists.

We now operate in an ideological climate in which the "death of communism," that is, of the program and principles of Marxism and Leninism, is widely

accepted. We've seen the recent emergence of significant leftist tendencies which do not claim the Marxist tradition in any sense—anarchists and Greens in Europe, nationalist-populists like the Mexican Zapatistas in Third World countries.

What passes for the left in this country these days is even more remote from scientific socialism or scientific anything. It's all too common to encounter a college or high-school student at a defense rally for Mumia Abu-Jamal or at a labor rally, such as that for the Watsonville farm workers last month, who talks about the importance of spirituality, who argues that modern industrial technology threatens the future of the human race and all higher life forms on earth. We thus find ourselves defending the basic principles of materialism and scientific rationality, the very idea of historical progress.

The bourgeois ideological offensive around the theme of the "death of communism" has been extended back, and logically so, to the rational humanism of the 18th-century Enlightenment. The most prominent liberal intellectual who was centrally involved in the capitalist counterrevolution in East Europe was the Czech Vaclav Havel. He is now president of the Czech Republic. Addressing a prestigious international economic conference a few years ago, Havel stated:

"The modern era has been dominated by the culminating belief, expressed in different forms, that the world—and Being as such—is a wholly knowable system governed by a finite number of universal laws that man can grasp and rationally direct for his own benefit. This era, beginning in the Renaissance and developing from the Enlightenment to socialism...was characterized by rapid advances in rational, cognitive thinking...."

"It was an era of ideologies, doctrines, interpretations of reality, an era in which the goal was to find a universal theory of the world, and thus a universal key to unlock its prosperity...."

"The fall of Communism can be regarded as a sign that modern thought—based on the premise that the world is objectively knowable, and that the knowledge so obtained can be absolutely generalized—has come to a final crisis. This era has created the first global, or planetary, technical civilization, but it has reached the limit of its potential, the point beyond which the abyss begins. The end of Communism is a serious warning to all mankind. It is a signal that the era of arrogant, absolutist reason is drawing to a close."

—New York Times, 1 March 1992

Havel is quite right that socialism, including the scientific socialism of Marx and Engels, is at the intellectual level a logical culmination of the rational humanism of the Enlightenment. For example, we refer to the Marxist or Leninist theory of the state, that the state is an instrument by which the propertied classes hold down the exploited classes. Three-quarters of a century before the *Communist Manifesto* and a century and a half before Lenin's *State and Revolution*, Holbach, a leading Enlightenment thinker—they were called *philosophes* in France—wrote:

"By a vice common to all governments, the most numerous part of nations is usually the most neglected; it would seem that societies were formed only for the Princes, the Rich, and the Powerful; you would swear that the people enter into association only to spare those who are already the most fortunate the trouble of working."

—quoted in Harry C. Payne, *The Philosophes and the People* (1976)

We consider ourselves international-

ists. That is, we reject and oppose the concept of national interest and instead fight for the interests of the working people throughout the world and ultimately for the future of humanity. The underlying attitude that was later called internationalism originated in the Enlightenment. The very first of the *philosophes*, Pierre Bayle, set the tone: "I am a citizen of the world, I am not in the service of the emperor or the king of France, I am in the service of the truth." Similarly, the radical German poet and dramatist Friedrich Schiller declared in the late 18th century: "I write as a citizen of the world who serves no prince. I lost my fatherland at an early age and exchanged it for the wide world."

In preparing for this educational I've read a fair amount of Enlightenment literature, most of it for the first time. And the thought which kept recurring to me was being transported back to the old neighborhoods in which I lived as a child. You're aware that the world has changed a lot and that you've changed a lot. Yet there is a deep feeling of familiarity, a sense that the changes you've undergone have been organic.

So I approach this educational, and the next one on the Hegelian left, like a trip in a time machine back to the world before Marx, then on to the world in which he was born and raised, which conditioned his thoughts and which he changed so radically and profoundly that it is difficult for us to recapture the previous eras.

Marx and "Natural Rights" Leftism

As soon as Marx entered the political stage in the 1840s, it was recognized by his fellow leftists that he had something *new* and important to say. While still a young man in his twenties, Marx became the principal figure in the German communist movement. He and Engels also became influential figures in the left wing of the British Chartist movement, the first mass working-class party in history. The *Communist Manifesto* was first published in English in 1850 on the front page of the *Red Republican*, the newspaper of the Chartist left.

Seasoned revolutionaries much older than Marx, veterans of numerous insurrections and other mass struggles as well as sundry adventures, recognized Marx's superiority in the field of social and political theory. What accounted for the immediate and profound impact of Marx's ideas on the communists, socialists and other radical leftists of his time?



Revolution vs. counterrevolution: 1920 Soviet poster shows Lenin sweeping away kings, capitalists and priests; Russian Orthodox priest on Yeltsin's barricades, August 1991.



Der Spiegel

An answer to that question was given by Moses Hess, a leading German communist, in a letter written to a colleague:

"You can prepare yourself to meet the greatest philosopher now living, perhaps the only one.... Dr. Marx (for that is the name of my idol) is still quite a young man, about 24 years of age at the most, and he is about to deal the finishing stroke to medieval religion and politics. He combines the most profound philosophical seriousness with a cutting wit. Imagine for yourself Rousseau, Voltaire, Holbach, Lessing, Heine and Hegel, united in one person—and I say *united*, not just thrown together—then you've got Dr. Marx."

—quoted in Werner Blumenberg,
Karl Marx (1972)

For leftists in the late 20th century, however, this appreciation of Marx raises more questions than it answers. Exactly *how* did Marx combine the ideas of Voltaire, Rousseau and Hegel, thinkers who were not only very different from one another but contradictory in their basic premises and views? And why was a new theoretical doctrine which synthesized the different tendencies of the Enlightenment with the philosophy of Hegel considered to be of prime importance for the communist movement and radical left of that time?

The terms "left" and "right," like much else in the modern world, originated in the French Revolution. They referred to the seating arrangements in the Convention, the revolutionary parliament which governed the country after the overthrow of the monarchy. Those groups and factions which sat farther to the left were further to the left. Makes sense. Nonetheless it is logical and useful to extend the terms "left" and "right" back to earlier historical eras. Thus one can speak of left-wing groups such as the Levellers and the Diggers in the English Revolution and Civil War of the mid-1600s.

For roughly two centuries, from the English Revolution until the Revolutions of 1848, the difference between right and left at the theoretical level centered on what was considered by both sides to be the original, fundamental and immutable nature of man. The right maintained that man was inherently evil and in the absence of a strong repressive state, backed by the church, society would degenerate into murderous anarchy, a war of all against all. The left maintained that man was naturally good but had been deprived by certain social institutions, above all religion and property. Thus Rousseau, the dominant intellectual influence on the left before Marx, stated: "Man is naturally good and that it is by institutions alone that men become evil."

Polemics between left and right in the age of the Enlightenment centered on demonstrating that proposition on the one side or, on the other, that the inherent evil in man was only held in check by social institutions. For example, right-wing ideologues pointed to the fact that large numbers of people attended public executions, often involving horrible torture and mutilation, as proof of the innate cruelty of men, especially the men of the common people. The left, represented by Rousseau and Diderot, responded that the common people much preferred to attend fairs and plays, to engage in games and sports than to watch their fellow men being killed and tortured.



Jean Huber

Left: Engraving depicts Enlightenment philosophes, including Voltaire, Condorcet and Diderot. Right: Dedication to the contributors to Diderot's monumental Encyclopaedia, featuring Diderot and d'Alembert.



Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris

The right maintained that only fear of eternal punishment in hell prevented men from murdering, raping and pillaging at will if they thought they could escape punishment in this life. The left countered that it was religious fanaticism that was the greatest cause of mass murder throughout history. Voltaire, who was a quite competent historian by the standards of the day, estimated that since the time of Jesus Christ almost 10 million Christians had been massacred by other Christians in the name of Christianity. Small wonder he declared: "Every sensible man, every honorable man, must hold the Christian sect in horror."

Incidentally, there's a nice anecdote about Voltaire as he lay dying. A Catholic priest thought that at last the world-famous heretic would repent of his sins and embrace the true faith. He came up to Voltaire's deathbed and said, "Will you finally renounce the devil?" Voltaire looked up at him and replied: "Father, now is not the time to make new enemies."

The Development of Scientific Socialism

The principal Enlightenment work advocating and expounding a system of communism was *The Code of Nature* by Morrelly, who asserted:

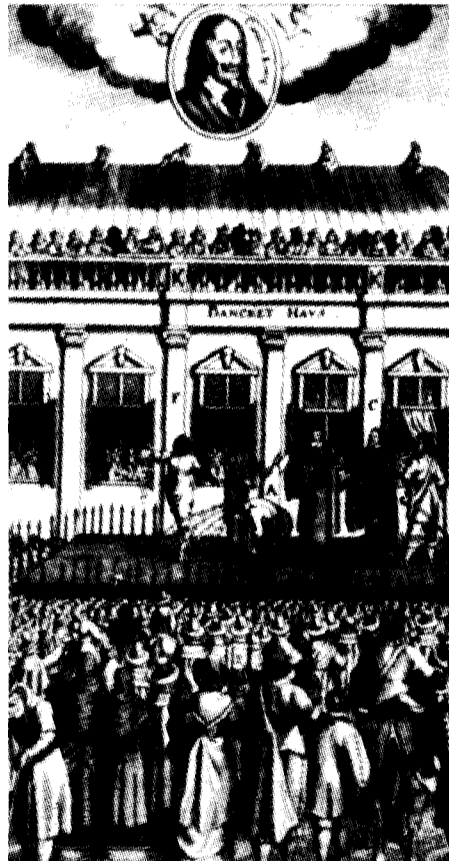
"While natural law is fully operative, crime is unthinkable. If man is free of the tyranny of private property, it is quite impossible for him to be a wrongdoer, a thief, a murderer, or a marauder. Abolish private property and its attendant evils and men will not need to arm themselves for attack or defense. There will be an end to savage passions and savage deeds."

This was the basic theoretical premise underlying the communist and socialist movements prior to Marx and was expressed in different ways by Robert Owen and his followers, the Saint-Simonians, the Fourierists and the like.

The doctrine of natural law and natural right by its very nature, so to speak, posits that all men of all social classes, as members of the human species, have the same basic values and common interests. The task of the communist movement, so conceived, was to enlighten men as to their true nature and interests. The principal organization of German

communism in the 1840s was the League of the Just, which changed its name to the Communist League around the time Marx joined it in 1847. Its main slogan was "All men are brothers."

Thus the early communist and socialist movements were marked by a fundamental contradiction between their actual



National Portrait Gallery, London

Beheading of Charles I in 1649 during the English Revolution led by Oliver Cromwell.

social character and their theoretical doctrines. These movements were *in fact* movements of the artisan proletariat and in England also of the early industrial proletariat. They were *in fact* movements of class struggle against the new bourgeois order. But they espoused a trans-class doctrine, inherited from the Enlightenment, of universal moral regeneration through a return to natural law and natural right.

Marx resolved this contradiction. When he joined the Communist League

he objected to its slogan, "All men are brothers," saying there were some men whose brother he was not and had no desire to be. Instead he proposed the slogan: "Workers of all countries unite."

Fundamentally, Marx changed the theoretical basis of communism from natural right to the historical development of society, centrally the interaction between the development of productive forces and the class struggle. Society is not governed by natural law but is the self-creation of mankind. Thus society has its own laws which cannot be reduced to biology and instinct, such as the instinct of self-preservation. All societies which have ever existed, from old Stone Age hunter-gatherers to the Europe of early industrial capitalism, are compatible with the biological make-up and instinctual needs of *homo sapiens*. Otherwise they couldn't exist. One is reminded here of Gore Vidal's response to religious bigots who claimed that sex between males was "unnatural." If it were unnatural, he said, you couldn't do it.

The social nature of man—and that is what people mean when they speak of human nature—*changes* over the course of history and is, moreover, class differentiated. An infant born into a family of bankers and an infant born into a family of weavers have similar biological constitutions and needs. But they soon acquire different social natures appropriate to their antagonistic class roles. The five-year-old son or daughter of a banker thinks and acts differently from the five-year-old son or daughter of a weaver.

Existing societies can neither be justified nor condemned by appealing to universal natural rights which supposedly stand higher and are more powerful than existing social institutions and attitudes. As Marx later wrote: "Right can never be higher than the economic structure of society and its cultural development which this determines" ("Critique of the Gotha Programme" [1875]).

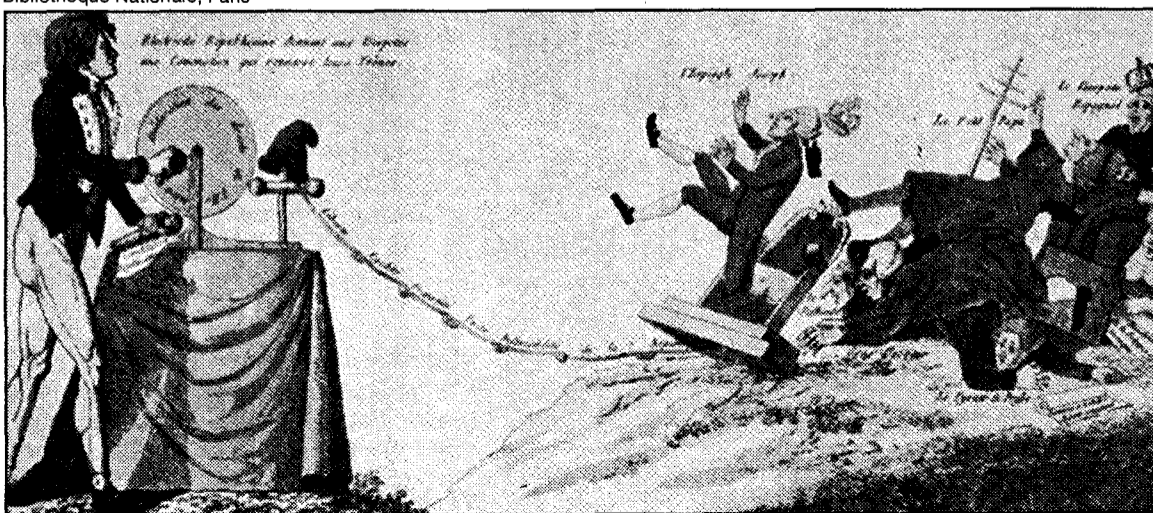
To understand the complex relationship of Marxism to the rational humanism of the Enlightenment one has first to consider the Enlightenment, itself a complex movement with different and contradictory tendencies and its own course of historical development.

The Enlightenment and the Revolution in Science

The Enlightenment was an expression at the intellectual level of the three basic factors which transformed Europe from a feudal social order ruled by a landed nobility to a capitalist, though not yet industrial, economy in which the dominant class was the mercantile bourgeoisie. First and foremost in this transformation was the rapid and continual development of science and technology. Secondly, there was the global extension of European power and influence through colonial conquest and commerce. The third major factor was the bourgeois revolution at the political level—the overthrow of

continued on page 10

Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris



Cartoon published in 1800 shows how "electricity" of French Revolution will spark overthrow of thrones of Europe.

Enlightenment...

(continued from page 9)

the absolutist monarchies, the last political form of the rule of feudal nobility—and their replacement by governments representing ascendant mercantile capitalism. The Enlightenment was the link at the intellectual level between the English bourgeois-democratic revolution in the mid-17th century and the French Revolution at the end of the 18th century.

The Enlightenment was in its original and central axis a defense of science against religious obscurantism and religious-sanctioned dogmatism. In the late Middle Ages the writings of the ancient Greek philosophers, above all Aristotle, on the natural world acquired a status almost on a par with the writings of the early church fathers. And while some of Aristotle's ideas about the natural world were right, many were wrong, such as the notion that the sun revolved around the earth. Thus scientific progress required a critical attitude toward the so-called wisdom of the ancients.

The birthplace of modern science was northern Italy during the Renaissance of the 16th and early 17th centuries. The cities of this region—Florence, Milan, Genoa, Venice—were the first major European polities to be ruled by the mercantile bourgeoisie. It was, as they say, no accident that the age in which the Florentine banking house of the Medicis dominated the financial life of Europe was also the age of Galileo and Leonardo da Vinci.

However, the scientific revolution which began in Renaissance Italy was crushed under the weight of the Catholic Counterreformation. Thus the scientist and radical humanist philosopher Giordano Bruno was burnt at the stake in Rome as a heretic. Galileo, the greatest physicist of the day, was threatened with torture by the Inquisition, unless he recanted his view that the earth revolved around the sun rather than the reverse, which he did. At the social level, the Counterreformation represented a counter-offensive by the feudal nobility of Spain, France and Italy against the bourgeois-dominated cities of northern Italy, a region which then fell into political, economic and cultural decline.

The center of capitalist economic dynamism and the new bourgeois culture then passed to the Protestant countries of northern Europe, especially England. The grandfather of the Enlightenment was not a dissident and persecuted intellectual but a one-time lord chancellor of England, Sir Francis Bacon. Writing in the early 17th century, Bacon maintained that observation and experiment were the only means to acquire knowledge of the natural world:

"Man, being the servant and interpreter of Nature, can do and understand so much and so much only as he has observed in fact or in thought of the course of nature: beyond this he neither



Cabasson

Galileo faces the Inquisition, forced on pain of torture to recant his heretical view that the earth revolved around the sun.

knows anything nor can do anything. "Neither the naked hand nor the understanding left to itself can effect much. It is by instruments and helps that the work is done, which are as much wanted for the understanding as for the hand. And as the instruments of the hand either give motion or guide it, so the instruments of the mind supply either suggestions for the understanding or cautions. "Human knowledge and human power meet in one, for where the cause is not known the effect cannot be produced. Nature to be commanded must be obeyed....

"It is idle to expect any great advancement in science from the superinducing and engrafting of new things upon old."

This is an attack on Aristotelian dogmatism.

"We must begin anew from the very foundations, unless we would revolve forever in a circle with mean and contemptible progress."

—*Novum Organum* (1620), excerpted in Isaac Kramnick, ed., *The Portable Enlightenment Reader* (1995)

Bacon's work was one of the first and certainly the most influential to project the possibility of *unlimited* progress in scientific discovery and technological innovation, and by implication in the development of society in general. It is precisely here that the term "progress" became a central concept of European intellectual life.

At the same time it is important to emphasize that the Enlightenment represented a *transition* to a thoroughgoing materialism; it was not an expression of it. The most influential Enlightenment figures rather sought to reconcile scientific empiricism and a belief in god. Thus the great English physicist, Isaac Newton, used his immense intellectual authority to prop up the authority of the Anglican church, the state church of England. He argued "that the Motions which the Planets now have could not

spring from any natural Cause alone, but were impressed by an intelligent Agent."

Religion and the Enlightenment

While Newton sought to reconcile science with an established Christian church, the mainstream of the Enlightenment developed a new quasi-religious doctrine which was later called deism. The role of god was limited to creating the world and setting the laws of nature, including human nature. The standard analogy for the deist conception of god

tion was thus presented and justified as a kind of natural theology, the study of god's work and god's laws in nature.

All of the big names of the Enlightenment—Newton, John Locke, Voltaire, Rousseau, Thomas Jefferson—not only rejected atheism but were positively hostile to it. The explanation for this lies not so much on the plane of philosophy as on the plane of politics. A belief in the existence of a god-given natural order was regarded as necessary to uphold the authority of the existing social order. If the common people ceased to believe in god, it was argued, they would feel free to rearrange social and economic relations at the expense of the propertied classes. A modern historian, Margaret Jacob, explains quite well why the founding fathers of the Enlightenment, Newton and Locke, were so insistent that the laws of nature must also be the laws of god:

"In general the adherents of the Newtonian Enlightenment can be identified as proponents of the new science and natural philosophy who insisted on the existence of a supernatural being separate from nature, and who also held the concomitant social assumption that the deity imposes order in nature and society, his function resembling that of a strong, but not arbitrary, monarch.... Without the postulate of a deity—however remote—it seemed that there could be no order in nature or society, and that inevitably, therefore, strong yet enlightened monarchy offered the only viable form of political organisation in the various nation-states of Europe."

—*The Radical Enlightenment: Pantheists, Freemasons and Republicans* (1981)

However, the attempt of Enlightenment thinkers to reconcile science and religion was a failure in social and his-

Eighteenth-century English explorers in Tahiti. Left-wing Enlightenment thinkers like Diderot and Condorcet opposed European colonialism.



Library of Decorative Arts, Paris

is that of a "divine watchmaker." For a watch to exist it has to be made by a skilled craftsman. But once a watch is made, its mechanisms are permanently fixed. The hands cannot suddenly revolve in the opposite direction. Similarly, the laws of gravity cannot suddenly be reversed and bodies repel rather than attract one another. Scientific investiga-

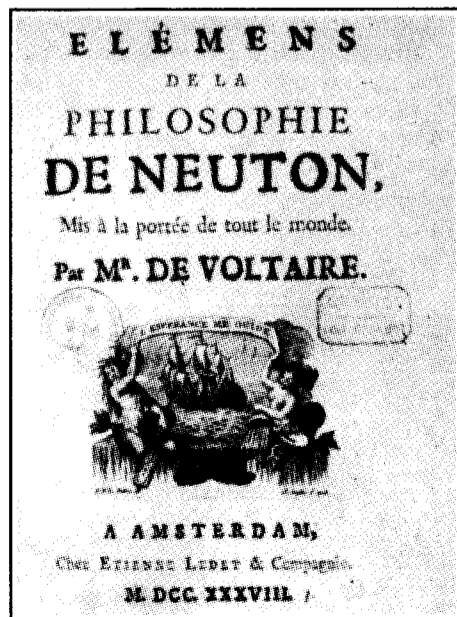
tory terms. Obviously, deism did not replace Christianity as the religion of the masses. It was the doctrine of an intellectual elite and is today known only through historical scholarship. Deism with its concept of a watchmaker god could not fulfill the *social function* of religion which Marx later described as "the opiate of the people."

Religious opiate works at two levels. First is the promise of an afterlife. No matter how unhappy, miserable and tragic one's life, one could hope for eternal happiness through piety, faith and obedience to god's laws. Religion also offers the prospect of divine, that is, supernatural, intervention on behalf of the devout this side of the grave. A religion without a heaven and hell, a god that is indifferent to the individual fate of believers is not a religion many people will choose to practice or a god many people will choose to worship. As my old Jewish grandmother would have put it: "Who needs it?"

French peasants and English yeoman farmers in the age of Voltaire and Locke went to church, prayed to god in the belief that this would bring them good harvests, that when their children became sick, they would get well and not die. If a French peasant or English farmer came to understand that better harvests required improved agricultural



James Macardel



Musée Carnavalet

Seventeenth-century English scientist and mathematician Isaac Newton (left), whose ideas were introduced in France by Voltaire (right).

techniques, that curing their sick children required medical science, they would regard belief in god as superfluous.

The attraction of religion lies precisely in its *supernatural* character. The concept of a natural religion, as it was sometimes called, is socially irrelevant. In historical retrospect, the deism of the Enlightenment served as a transition from traditional Christianity to atheism and thoroughgoing materialism. In this sense Vaclav Havel is quite right: the effective message of the Enlightenment was the power of the scientific method to unlock universal prosperity. And here I want to emphasize universal.

On Non-European Peoples and Cultures

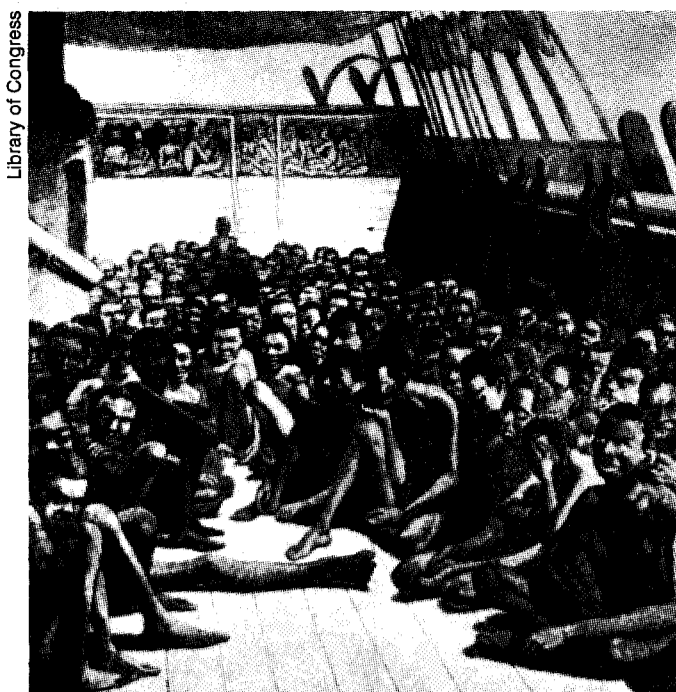
It was standard for adherents of the Enlightenment to declare themselves citizens of the world. But to regard oneself as a citizen of the world, one has to know the world or at least know about the world. The global extension of European power and influence through colonial conquest and trade confronted educated men with a wide diversity of non-Christian cultures from primitive, pre-class peoples such as North American Indians to ancient civilizations like Persia and China.

Those thinkers who were critical or hostile toward Christian orthodoxy, the privileges of the feudal nobility and political and economic inequality found a powerful reinforcement for their views in non-European cultures. Thus the North American Indian tribes were manifestly egalitarian and democratic in comparison with Europe. All men carried arms and went to war on an equal footing. Chiefs were chosen on the basis of personal capacity, not hereditary right. There was no aristocracy or class of serfs among the Huron Indians of French Canada in the age of Voltaire and Rousseau.

Enlightenment thought was also reinforced by certain aspects of advanced non-European civilizations. For example, many different religions were practiced in China and were tolerated by that state. The first major European account of China, Marco Polo's *Travels*, published in the 14th century, emphasized the accepted diversity of religion there precisely because it was unknown and unthinkable in the states of Christian Europe.

A major component of Enlightenment literature—by Montesquieu, Voltaire, Diderot and others—was a savagely critical view of European society as seen through the eyes of non-Europeans. Montaigne, a 16th-century forerunner of the Enlightenment, wrote a famous essay on cannibals. In it he recounts how a cannibal in Brazil was captured and taken to France, where he learned the French language and became acquainted with French society. When someone asked him what he thought of France, he replied that there he had seen many admirable and wonderful things, but one thing he didn't understand. He sees rich people bloated with fat, jeweled rings on

Black Africans aboard slave ship bound for the American colonies.



Library of Congress

their pudgy fingers, and at the same time he sees starving beggars in the streets. How come the starving poor people didn't kill and eat the fat rich people? A very primitive conception of communism, but not a bad impulse.

Diderot wrote a tale about Tahiti in order to attack the sexual repressiveness of Christian, especially Catholic, Europe. He has a Tahitian elder denounce French Catholic colonialism for perverting the healthy sexuality of his people:

"But a little while ago, the young Tahitian girl blissfully abandoned herself to the embraces of a Tahitian youth and awaited impatiently the day when her mother, authorized to do so by her having reached the age of puberty, would remove her veil and uncover her breasts. She was proud of her ability to excite men's desires, to attract the amorous looks of strangers, of her own relatives,

priest], who stands near to you and listens to me, has spoken to our young men, and I know not what he has said to our young girls, but our youths are hesitant and our girls blush. Creep away into the dark forest, if you wish, with the perverse companion of your pleasures, but allow the good, simple Tahitians to reproduce themselves without shame under the open sky and in broad daylight."

—"Supplement to Bougainville's 'Voyage,'" (1772) in Denis Diderot, *Rameau's Nephew and Other Works* (1964)

As you may surmise, Diderot was big into sex. In fact, he wrote a pornographic novel which is one of his few works available in English translation and still in print. You can buy it at Barnes & Noble.

It's become common to attribute to Enlightenment thinkers such as Voltaire



Frederic Remington

Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson's secretary, and William Clark sought to enlist Native American Indian cooperation in trading ventures during 1805 expedition to Pacific Ocean.

of her own brothers. In our presence, without shame, in the center of a throng of innocent Tahitians who danced and played the flute, she accepted the caresses of the young man whom her young heart and the secret promptings of her senses had marked out for her. The notion of crime and the fear of disease have come among us only with your coming. Now our enjoyments, formerly so sweet, are attended with guilt and terror. That man in black [that is, a Catholic

and Rousseau the concept of the "noble savage." This is a distortion of Enlightenment thought, usually hostile in intent. Neither the term "noble savage" nor the underlying concept was employed by major Enlightenment thinkers. They did not idealize primitive peoples nor consider them in general morally superior to contemporary Europeans. Thus in the very work in which Diderot exalts the sexual permissiveness of Tahitians he condemns the barbaric practices of other primitive peoples, such as female genital mutilation and human sacrifice. More fundamentally, Enlightenment thought regarded advances in science and technology as the key to human progress. Thus it did not and could not hold up technologically backward cultures, however attractive in many ways, as a social ideal.

The best representatives of the Enlightenment—Diderot, Condorcet, Tom Paine—were categorically opposed to European colonial subjugation or other forms of domination over non-European peoples, such as the enslavement of black Africans. Diderot has his Tahitian elder voice a passionate indictment of French colonial conquest in the name of natural rights:

"You are neither a god nor a devil—by what right, then, do you enslave people?... You are not slaves; you would suffer death rather than be enslaved, yet you want to make slaves of us! Do you

believe, then, that the Tahitian does not know how to die in defense of his liberty? This Tahitian, whom you want to treat as a chattel, as a dumb animal—this Tahitian is your brother. You are both children of Nature—what right do you have over him that he does not have over you?"

The concept of natural law and natural right logically leads to the idea of the equality of all peoples, that there are no superior and inferior peoples, no progressive and reactionary peoples, no people who should dominate or who should be dominated. The real world, however, is *not* governed by ideas and logic but by class interests and class conflict. Thus important figures in the Enlightenment such as the Englishman David Hume, a Tory and political rightist, and Thomas Jefferson held that blacks were inherently inferior to whites. Jefferson wrote of blacks:

"Comparing them by their faculties of memory, reason, and imagination, it appears to me that in memory they are equal to the whites; in reason much inferior, as I think one could scarcely be found capable of tracing and comprehending the investigations of Euclid; and that in imagination they are dull, tasteless, and anomalous."

—*Notes on the State of Virginia* (1787), excerpted in *The Enlightenment Reader*

Jefferson had to believe something like this to justify his role not merely as an individual slaveowner but as a political leader of a class of slaveowners. Jefferson took over from Enlightenment thinkers such as Montesquieu, who had opposed slavery, only those doctrines compatible with the interests of the American Southern slaveowners and he rejected those doctrines which were not. The case of Jefferson underscores the basic fallacy of Enlightenment rationalism: the belief that reason and respect for scientific knowledge can transcend class interest.

While right-wing elements in the Enlightenment like Hume and Jefferson pointed to the superiority of European civilization in the field of science and technology to justify the subjugation of non-European peoples, the left wing of the Enlightenment not only opposed colonialism but held that Europeans had a responsibility to share their scientific and technical knowledge in an *entirely benevolent manner* with other peoples. Thus Condorcet wrote:

"Survey the history of our settlements and commercial undertakings in Africa or in Asia, and you will see how our trade monopolies, our treachery, our murderous contempt for men of another color or creed, the insolence of our usurpations, the intrigues or the exaggerated proselytic zeal of our priests, have destroyed the respect and goodwill that the superiority of our knowledge and the benefits of our commerce at first won us in the eyes of the inhabitants. But doubtless the moment approaches when, no longer presenting ourselves as always either tyrants or corrupters, we shall become for them the beneficent instruments of their freedom."

—*Sketch for a Historical Picture of the Human Mind* (1793-94), excerpted in *The Enlightenment Reader*

It is no accident that this vision of universal prosperity and enlightenment was written during and under the impact of the French Revolution.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

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The Struggle for Revolutionary Leadership Lenin and the Vanguard Party

We are pleased to announce the publication of a slightly edited and expanded edition of *Lenin and the Vanguard Party*. The core of the pamphlet, originally published in 1978, is a series of articles by Spartacist League Central Committee member Joseph Seymour tracing Lenin's struggle to build a proletarian vanguard party, from the beginnings of organized Marxism in tsarist Russia in the 1890s to World War I. Supplementing this series are two articles by other leading members of our tendency. "In Defense of Democratic Centralism," included in the original edition, consists of excerpts from a 1973 speech by James Robertson to a conference of a short-lived West German group, Spartacus (Bolschewiki-Leninisten), which was typical of radicalized young West European intellectuals at the time who saw themselves as Trotskyists. Added to the original pamphlet is a presentation to a 1995 Spartacus Youth Club gathering in the Bay Area by Al Nelson, titled "The Fight for a Leninist Vanguard Party," which provides a historical and political summation of the question of the Leninist party.

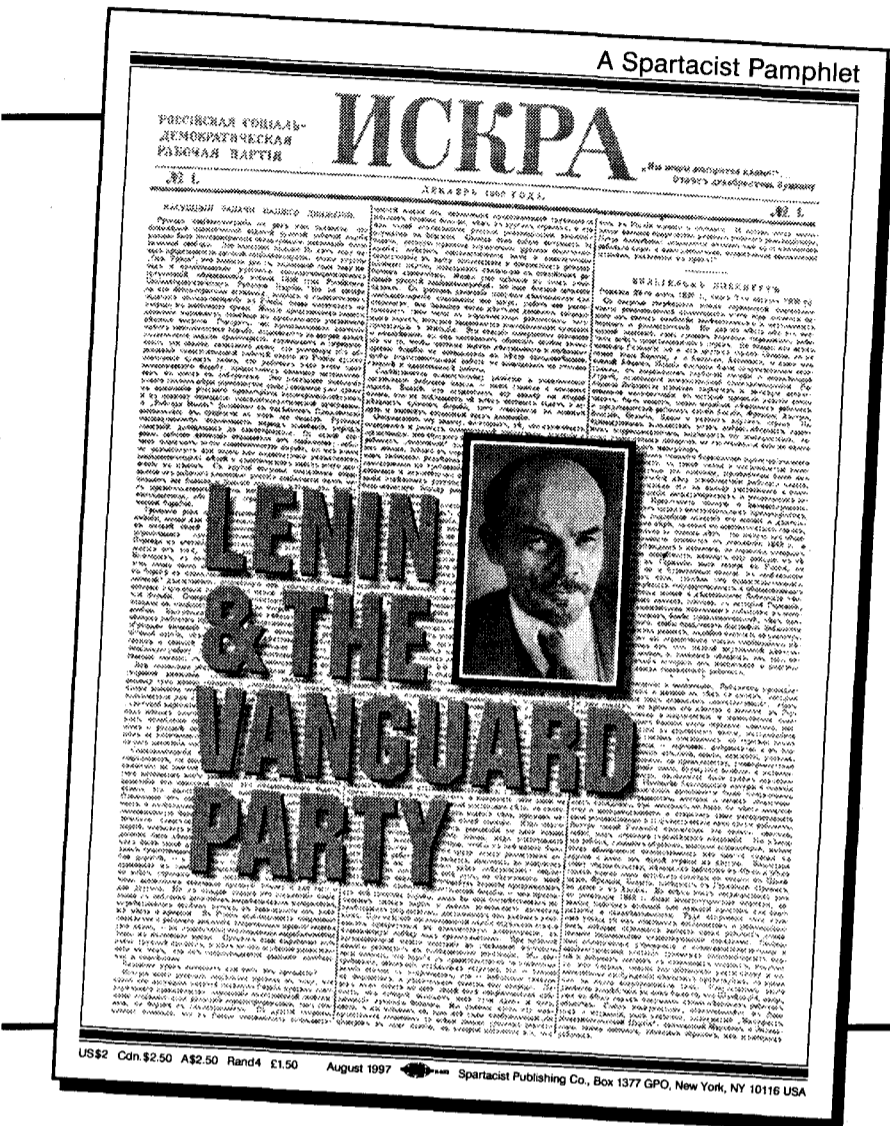
The indispensable role of a Leninist vanguard party in leading the struggles of workers and the oppressed was decisively demonstrated by the 1917 Russian Revolution led by Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik Party. As we wrote in the preface to the new edition:

"We of the International Communist League fight for new October Revolutions. In reissuing *Lenin and the Vanguard Party* we intend to arm those who seek to oppose this system, which is based on the exploitation and oppression of the many by the few, with the program desperately needed to eradicate it. Serving as the memory of the working class, imbuing the proletariat and the new generations of youth with the historic lessons of those who fought before them, is a vital purpose of the vanguard party, necessary to lead the working class to new victories."

Particularly in the case of a pamphlet which is substantially polemical in content, its reissue after a significant length of time poses problems of comprehension and relevance for younger readers. The positions, views, stock of knowledge and terminology prevailing on the left invariably change. In many cases, the groups and tendencies polemical against have adopted a very different political stance or have disappeared entirely. The pamphlet nonetheless remains a valuable pedagogical introduction to the history and development of Leninism for youth drawn to radical causes whose notions of the Communist movement are largely derived from bourgeois public opinion, college courses, etc.

The difference between the political conditions and climate of opinion in the post-Vietnam War period, when *Lenin and the Vanguard Party* was written, and the post-Soviet world of today is especially great. During the 1970s, it would have been very unusual to find a serious left-wing activist, whether in San Francisco, Paris or Calcutta, who did not own a copy of Lenin's *What Is To Be Done?* Today, virtually all major left-wing currents have adapted to the bourgeois ideological climate defined by the supposed "death of communism," while youth drawn to struggles against social oppression generally have little knowledge of Leninism or the history of the Bolshevik Party and Communist International.

The bitter, victorious struggle by the heroic workers and peasants of Vietnam against U.S. imperialism produced a sharp radicalization, especially among student youth. In North America and West



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Europe, one saw a proliferation of Maoist and ostensibly Trotskyist groups. It is now little known or appreciated that the most significant expression of black radicalism in the U.S. in that period—the Black Panther Party of Huey Newton, Bobby Seale and Geronimo Pratt—labeled itself a "Marxist-Leninist" party. In the neocolonial countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, many left-wing nationalists likewise claimed to be building Leninist-type vanguard parties.

Lenin and the Vanguard Party did not primarily address the perversion and falsification of Leninism by Stalinists (including the Maoists) or more leftist variants of petty-bourgeois nationalism. Rather it was centrally concerned with a different current of revisionism which emerged in the mid-1970s. This period saw the beginnings of a rightward turn in Western imperialist countries which a few years later would lead to the anti-Communist frenzy of Cold War II. Reacting to the changing political climate, certain groups claiming the Trotskyist tradition promoted a social-democratic "reinterpretation" of Lenin, asserting that the Bolshevik leader was really committed to building an inclusive mass workers party containing both reformists and revolutionaries. Such a view was put forward by the British section of Ernest Mandel's United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

A broadly similar version of Lenin's position on the party question was trumpeted at the time by the tendency led by Tony Cliff, centered on what is now the Socialist Workers Party in Britain and represented in the U.S. by the International Socialist Organization. Beginning with Cliff's refusal to defend the Chinese and North Korean deformed workers states against imperialism during the Korean War, this tendency has always been a left social-democratic grouping

habitually appealing to Cold War anti-Communism. At the same time, Cliff has sought to adapt to the changing political fashions among leftist student youth in West Europe and North America. In the early 1970s, a "Bolshevik" posture was most fashionable in this milieu. Hence in 1975, Cliff came out with a sympathetic three-volume study of Lenin which, however, portrayed the Bolshevik leader in Cliff's own image as an eclectic left-reformist.

The immediate purpose in publishing *Lenin and the Vanguard Party* was to counter this current of social-democratic revisionism through careful historical study. In practice, Lenin built in Russia a programmatically homogeneous revolutionary vanguard party. However, it was not until and under the impact of the first imperialist world war that Lenin theoretically generalized the *concept* of a vanguard party of the working class and sought to extend it on an international scale. In its central theme, this pamphlet traces the *development* of Lenin's ideas

on the party question from that of a revolutionary social democrat to the founding leader of the Communist International.

In this regard, the pamphlet's discussion of Rosa Luxemburg's initial opposition to Bolshevism is especially significant. A brilliant Polish Marxist, Luxemburg was a major figure in the left wing of the socialist workers movement in both Germany and the Russian Empire. Her 1904 polemic against Lenin, "Organizational Questions of Russian Social Democracy," has subsequently been exploited for anti-Communist purposes, both on the left and in bourgeois liberal circles. In contrast to Karl Kautsky—the official theoretician of "orthodox" Marxism at the time, who later became a virulent opponent of the Bolsheviks—"Red Rosa" remained a revolutionary until her murder in 1919 at the hands of German reaction (in collaboration with the Social Democratic leaders). However, a careful analysis of Luxemburg's 1904 polemic demonstrates that her opposition to the Bolsheviks in that period was based on the *same theoretical premises* as that of Kautsky: the social-democratic concept of "the party of the whole class" and a belief that the overthrow of the tsarist autocracy in Russia would be followed by a lengthy period of *bourgeois* democracy.

The Russian October Revolution of 1917, prepared and made possible by the entire previous development of the Bolshevik Party, marked the highest political level yet attained by the international proletariat. However, the failure to extend the revolution to the advanced capitalist countries, in large part due to the absence of communist vanguard parties similar to the Bolsheviks, led to the isolation of Soviet Russia in a world dominated by hostile imperialist forces. This isolation conditioned the bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet workers state under Stalin and his heirs. Undermined for decades by Stalinist bureaucratic rule and confronted by powerful imperialist states, in 1991-92 the Soviet Union was destroyed through a capitalist counterrevolution.

The aftermath has seen a capitalist offensive against the working class and oppressed peoples throughout the world and a corresponding reactionary ideological climate. Under these conditions, it is crucially important to convey to a new generation of militant workers and leftist intellectuals *how* this capitalist system of exploitation, oppression and impoverishment can be overthrown and replaced by a just and egalitarian society based on the highest levels of science and technology. It is in the context of this broad purpose that we have republished *Lenin and the Vanguard Party*. ■



Lenin at First Congress of Communist International, March 1919.

Brazil: The LBI and Police "Strikes"

Cops Out of the Unions!

Earlier this summer, a wave of police "strikes" spread through a dozen states in Brazil. In an ominous show of force, these armed thugs of the capitalists and wealthy landowners rampaged through the cities, demanding more money for their murderous terror. For the workers movement, there can be no question of extending any support to these deadly mobilizations by the guardians of capitalist class rule. This is particularly clear in Brazil, where even by the standards of Latin America's death-squad-infested bourgeois regimes, the cops are notorious for raw racist terror, continuing the dirty work of the military dictatorship which ruled the country for two decades beginning in 1964.

Coldblooded massacres of black street children and landless peasants are commonplace. Death squads intimately linked with the Military Police (PM)—an "elite" police force under the control of state governors—murder as many as five street children *every day* with impunity. In 1992 in São Paulo alone, police killed some 1,200 people. A few months ago, Military Police there were captured on video killing a passenger in a stopped car. And last year, at least 19 peasants were massacred in Eldorado dos Carajás by a PM regiment, not one of whom has been convicted in the bourgeois courts for this atrocity! Now, the cops have staged riots all over the country, particularly in the desperately impoverished states of Ceará and Alagoas in the overwhelmingly black Northeast.

The cop "strikes" were one of the key issues taken up at the sixth national congress in August of Brazil's CUT trade-union federation, which was attended by an International Communist League reporting team from *Workers Vanguard* and *Espartaco*, journal of the Grupo Espartaquista de México. The CUT originated in a wave of militant strikes in the late 1970s which paved the way for the downfall of the dictatorship and proclaims its commitment to "the historic interests of the working class" and "the transformation of Brazilian society in the direction of democracy and socialism." The CUT is aligned with the reformist Workers Party (PT) of Luiz Inácio "Lula" da Silva, and delegates to the congress included representatives of virtually every group in Brazil which claims to stand to the left of the PT.

Yet far from denouncing the cop rampages as a deadly threat to the workers

movement and the deeply oppressed black masses, the CUT leadership supported the police "strikes," endorsing pro-cop demonstrations in many cities. Nor was there a peep of opposition to this treacherous line from any of the numerous self-styled "revolutionaries" seated as delegates at the congress. This included, despite its pretensions to "orthodox Trotskyism" and its paper opposition to the police "strikes," the centrist Liga Bolchevique Internacionalista (LBI), which is associated with the Argentine Partido Bolchevique por la Cuarta Internacional (for more on this group, see "Discussions Between the ICL and the PBCI of Argentina," *International Information Bulletin* No. 31, October 1992).

Such shameless capitulation is characteristic of the Brazilian fake left, which peddles its wares in the shadow of the

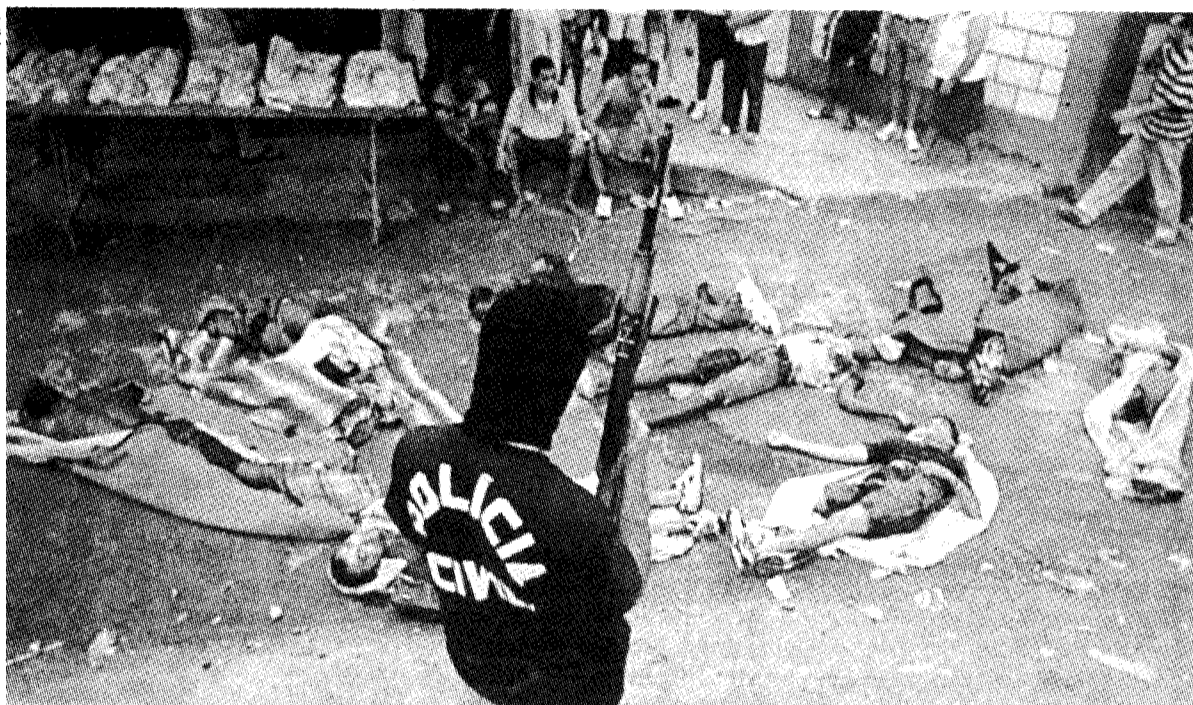
defense of the property and power of the capitalists and dedicated to safeguarding the exploitation of the working class and the oppression of women, blacks and indigenous peoples. The bourgeois state cannot be taken over and run in the interests of the proletariat; it has to be smashed through socialist revolution and replaced by proletarian organs of power.

The role of the police is to smash picket lines, to bloodily repress the movements of the *sem terra* (landless peasants) and to terrorize the overwhelmingly black urban *favelas* (shantytowns). Elements of the Military Police in the state of Minas Gerais last year showed how they "fought" for higher wages, as they systematically murdered black youths and threatened to continue until their demands were met. Now, insisting on more money for their massacres of pro-

ly revolutionary left. Indeed, the "high point" of the discussion was a speech by a "Trotskyist" cop (!)—one José Carlos Fernandes Neto, president of the civil police "union" in Alagoas and a supporter of O Trabalho, affiliated with the French Lambert group. Fake Trotskyists like the PSTU (followers of the late Argentine political adventurer Nahuel Moreno) and the TPOR (associated with the Bolivian current of Guillermo Lora) have also loudly proclaimed their "solidarity" with the police.

For its part, the centrist Partido Causa Operária (PCO, connected with the Argentine current of Jorge Altamira) occasionally advocates the "dissolution" of the Military Police—but only in order to replace them with "the creation of municipal police under the direct control of the population" (*Causa Operária*,

Police death squads are rampant in Brazil. Victims of cop "drug" sweep in Rio de Janeiro shantytown.



class-collaborationist popular front led by Lula's PT. Fostering the suicidal illusion that the bourgeois state can be pressured into serving the interests of workers and the oppressed, and that socialism can be achieved through a series of gradual reforms, the reformists look to the capitalist courts for "justice" and embrace the racist, strikebreaking cops as "workers" who belong in the trade unions. And, their occasional revolutionary verbiage to the contrary, the centrists take their cues from the reformist misleaders of the working class.

We as Marxists, however, know that the police are not workers, but rather the armed fist of the capitalist ruling class. Along with the courts, the prisons and the army, the cops are at the core of the bourgeois state, which in its essence consists of armed bodies of men committed to the

testing peasants, they have gone out on "strike" at a moment of mounting unrest among the *sem terra*. Police mobilizations and "strikes" necessarily have a bonapartist thrust, aimed at making these paid killers even more independent from society at large and enhancing their ability to carry out bloody repression without any interference. To even begin to cope with these crazed killers, it is elementary to demand: *Cops out of the unions!*

Centrists in the Shadow of Lula's PT

The CUT, representing a relatively young and combative industrial proletariat, was founded only in 1983, in an open break with the corporatist tradition of government-led labor federations. The CUT bureaucracy—as well as much of the "revolutionary" left—is heavily interlinked with Lula's PT, which contested the last two presidential elections in popular-front alliances with openly bourgeois parties and proclaims its fealty to Brazilian capitalism and the military/police establishment.

In addressing the police "strikes" during the first two days of the congress, CUT leader Vicentinho correctly labeled the cops the "armed fist of capital." But in the same breath, he hailed the recent cop actions for supposedly giving rise to the leadership of what would be a "popular police," which "would not repress workers and the population." With the police "fighting for better wages" in the face of stringent austerity measures, said Vicentinho, it was necessary to "unify the struggles of all public employees to combat imperialism's neo-liberal plan."

This call for workers to "unite" with their sworn class enemies was echoed across the spectrum of the supposed-

1 July). This parallels calls raised by liberals and reformists in the U.S. for "civilian review boards" or "community control," implying that the capitalists' hired thugs can be made to serve the interests of working people and the oppressed.

Class hatred for the cops should be basic not only for self-proclaimed Marxists, but for anybody with elementary working-class consciousness or with any experience of social struggle. Notably, our reporters found that it was among black delegates to the congress that opposition to the cop "strikes" was most pronounced. Brazilian reformists and centrists echo the bourgeoisie's myth of "racial democracy" and spit on the struggle against black oppression. The disgusting "colorblindness" and outright bigotry promoted by the fake lefts allows CUT bureaucrat Vicentinho (who is himself black) to pose as a champion of "racial justice."

An all too typical example was seen at the congress. When guest speaker William Lucy from the U.S. Coalition of Black Trade Unionists was about to give a report, a Morenoite trade-union leader got up to sneer that there were "more important issues" waiting to be discussed. A black supporter of Vicentinho rightly tore into the Morenoite, declaring that he was "sick and tired of waiting for discussion on the black question." Meanwhile, nobody challenged Lucy, an official of the AFSCME public employees union, on how his union "organizes" large numbers of cops and prison guards in the U.S.

In contrast to the open support to the cops by much of the rest of the left, the centrist LBI tries to look "orthodox," publishing a polemic against the PCO on this issue in its newspaper *Luta Operária* *continued on page 14*

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(April 1997). In a statement boldly headlined "No Support to the Strike of the PM!" a month before the CUT congress, the LBI declared:

"Any worker who already participated in a strike or a demonstration where there was a confrontation with the repressive forces of the state knows very well that the police are the armed fist of our exploiters, that better working conditions and better wages for them immediately mean more repression for us."

But these fine words are flatly contradicted by the LBI's own practice on the ground. As we have previously exposed in our press, in the SFP-MVR municipal workers union in Volta Redonda *the LBI has been behind a sinister operation on behalf of cops in the union, including a provocative invasion of a workers assembly by the murderous Military Police.*

Indeed, the spokesman of the pro-cop faction in the SFP-MVR, Artur Fernandes, was at the CUT congress as a delegate of the "Revolutionary Trade Union Tendency" (TRS), which the LBI, in its words, "promotes" as an "alternative to the CUT leadership." At the congress, the LBI hid its literature against the police "strike" while prominently promoting a call for "a strike of all public employees"—a statement which in the present context could *only* be interpreted as support to Vincentinho's appeal for unity with the police. Moreover, as our reporters noted:

"In more than ten interventions at the congress, they said *absolutely nothing about their 'principled position' on the cops and their 'strikes'*! Now, given the position of the CUT bureaucracy regarding these 'strikes,' this should have been *the* issue raised at the congress. This fundamental class line must be established for the basic health of the labor movement. Raising it would have rendered the Brazilian labor movement a great service, regardless of how unpopular the position may be today. But the LBI, their 'orthodox' position on the matter notwithstanding, had no intention of taking the heat for this, and writes things it does not believe in."

The LBI's lying cynicism was revealed also in a letter to the ICL calling on "all organizations with claims to revolutionary Trotskyism" to participate in a debate it would sponsor at the CUT congress on "the left's strategy for the Latin American and world revolution." Yet no one on the Brazilian left we spoke to knew of any such debate, and in fact it didn't happen.

The LBI presents a textbook definition of centrism: revolutionary in words, reformist in deeds. At a distance and informed only by their slick publications, one could erroneously think that the LBI is a serious contender for Leninism today. But *you are what you do*. An examination of the LBI's practice shows how its revolutionary rhetoric is a cover for securing its position in the syphilitic chain that ties the exploited to their exploiters through the mechanism of the popular front.

Courting the Class Enemy in Volta Redonda

The LBI's real politics are clear in the despicable role it has played in the Volta Redonda SFP-MVR municipal workers union through its man Fernandes, who has served as spokesman for the sizable number of *guarda* cops within the SFP-MVR and now runs the union. He was part of the *Municípios em Luta* (MEL) slate which was elected to the leadership of the union in November 1995, with Geraldo Ribeiro as president. The MEL slate was a lash-up of various political tendencies, including the LBI and the Luta Metalúrgica group (LM), now called the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil (LQB); Ribeiro was an LM supporter. Though including an abstract statement of opposition to the police, the MEL platform said nothing about the cops *inside the union* and in any case was distributed so sparsely that a majority of the municipal guard members voted for the slate.

When the International Communist League, which at the time had fraternal relations with LM, learned in early 1996

that the SFP-MVR was infested with cops, we urged LM to take up an urgent fight to oust the *guardas* from the union (see "A Break in Fraternal Relations with Luta Metalúrgica," WV No. 648, 5 July 1996). When LM finally took up this fight, there was a falling out between Fernandes and Ribeiro as the LBI's man came out fulsomely in support of the police. In a leaflet calling for a 13 March 1996 union meeting, Fernandes urged the membership to attend "in order to defend together the *guardas* in our assembly." One of Fernandes' goons then provoked an invasion of the meeting by Military Police armed with shotguns. In response, the ICL launched an international campaign for labor solidarity in defense of the SFP-MVR (see "Brazil: Police Hands Off Volta Redonda Union!" WV No. 642, 29 March 1996).

But even when LM responded to our



Protest against privatization by striking oil workers in Rio de Janeiro, May 1995.

insistent appeals to wage a struggle to oust the cops from the SFP-MVR, they tried to use this simply as a factional club against their rivals for the union presidency, eventually losing out to Fernandes. In June 1996, the ICL broke with the LQB over its refusal to fight to forge a Trotskyist vanguard and to break from its course of trade-union opportunism. The LQB then hooked up with the so-called Internationalist Group (IG), a handful of defectors from Trotskyism expelled from the ICL. Even when they were still in the ICL, those who went on to form the IG had sought to blunt our fight against LM's trade-union opportunism. Now, falsely claiming that the cops were "disaffiliated" from the SFP-MVR, the IG has been touting the LQB as principled fighters for the class independence of the workers movement. To maintain this façade, the new issue of the LQB paper denounces the recent police—"strikes" and calls for "struggle for the disaffiliation of any kind of police from the CUT."

This is all a cynical sham: neither the LBI nor the LQB gives one whit for the elementary Marxist principle of the class independence of the unions from the bourgeois state. This is clearly revealed by the fact that both sides have resorted to the capitalist courts in their squalid fight for control of the union (see "Court Papers Prove They Sued the Union—IG's Brazil Cover-Up: Dirty Hands, Cynical Lies," WV No. 671, 11 July). Inviting the courts into the labor movement is fundamentally no different than calling in the cops. The police serve as enforcers for court sanctions and the courts in turn act to uphold the cops' murderous attacks. Last December, a Brazilian court acquitted members of the police death squad which perpetrated the 1993 Candelária massacre in which eight street children were murdered. More recently, a judge essentially absolved five racist terrorists who last April burned alive Galvão Jesus dos Santos, a leader of the Pataxó indigenous people, in Brasília.

That the IG/LQB's claims of a "historic victory" over the cops in Volta Redonda is purely intended for international consumption is revealed by the fact that the LQB barely bothered to attend the CUT congress—much less to

wage a fight against cops in the unions—appearing only on the last day.

For a Trotskyist Party in Brazil!

The Trotskyist ICL has a proud record of struggle for the complete independence of the working class from the bourgeoisie and its state apparatus. We have consistently raised this issue in our work in Brazil and internationally, repeatedly stressing it in our correspondence with Luta Metalúrgica (see "The Fight for a Trotskyist Party in Brazil," *International Bulletin* No. 41, April 1997, published in English, Spanish and Portuguese). For example, in a 23 February 1996 letter to LM, we wrote:

"*Cops out of the labor movement!* must be written on the party banners of Trotskyists in Brazil and elsewhere. This is not an esoteric position of the ICL, but an expression of basic Marxism and even trade-union consciousness. It is the expe-

rience of the workers movement internationally, synthesized as program. If our position appears unique, it is only due to decades of Stalinist and social-democratic degeneration of the left and the union movement which has blurred the line between the proletariat and the bourgeois state, masking who is and is not the class enemy of the workers."

To raise the working class to the consciousness of its historic task of overthrowing capitalist rule through proletarian revolution, the first and most obvious thing is to fight for the proletariat to separate its organizations from the bourgeoisie's political parties and to oppose any intervention by its cops and courts.

Instead, through its man Fernandes in the SFP-MVR the LBI defends the cops, runs to the courts and capitulates to the nationalism and social reaction fostered by the Brazilian bourgeoisie. At the same time as Fernandes was opening up the SFP-MVR to deadly provocations by the Military Police, the LBI urged him to launch a political attack on the ICL by pandering to nationalist sentiments and backward prejudices. Thus, in a 1 March 1996 letter to Fernandes, the LBI scurrilously claimed that the ICL "dedicate themselves to an activity restricted to the social milieu of the rich middle class of imperialist countries where the struggle against the bosses regime is not at stake." Such diatribes are typical of the "anti-Yankee" nationalism which passes for "anti-imperialism" among the Latin American left.

Shortly after this, Fernandes distributed a leaflet to the union membership which included a *phony* ICL international directory—showing only our sections in the U.S., Britain, Canada and Japan—with the caption: "Would you credit the United States, Japan, England or other imperialist countries with wanting the true class independence of the workers?" This nationalist demagoguery identifies the workers of these countries with the capitalist rulers, thus writing off a revolutionary perspective for the proletariat in the imperialist centers. Instead of debating the real political differences between our organizations, Fernandes and his LBI tutors resort to lies, base Yankee-baiting and pandering to every form of social backwardness.

In the same March 1996 letter, the LBI wrote: "Spartacism limits itself to campaigns of a purely superstructural character (campaigns in defense of gays and lesbians, blacks) without linking them to any political class content nor to the daily struggles of the working class." And in another letter written later that month to an LM member "warning" him about the dangers of Spartacism, the LBI similarly decried "an orientation to personal interests, for example, the woman question, the question of homosexuals and the rights of blacks, detached from the class struggle of the workers." In both cases, the LBI carefully *avoided* making any positive statement about the need to combat racial and sexual oppression or anti-gay bigotry. Behind the "superstructural" doubletalk, this is an attack on us precisely for fighting to mobilize the workers movement around the burning issues of special oppression.

Centrists, even when they address the oppression of blacks, women and gays, carefully separate these "sectors" from their economist propaganda directed toward the workers. The LBI carries articles in its press on black and women's oppression, but this is sheer hypocrisy for a group which descends to the sort of vile baiting of the ICL quoted above. It is the likes of the LBI that Lenin was polemicizing against when he insisted that a revolutionary workers party must act as a tribune of the people. We are proud of bringing, for example, the campaign to save the life of Mumia Abu-Jamal to Brazil and initiating labor-centered rallies there and elsewhere to save this courageous fighter for black freedom. It is largely through our efforts that this cause has been taken up in the international labor movement. The LBI's indifference to the strategic importance of combatting special oppression as part of the fight for proletarian revolution goes hand in hand with its embrace of the racist police.

It is not surprising that in its July statement against the Military Police "strikes," the LBI advances the perspective, much like the reformist CUT bureaucracy, of "winning over" and "uniting" with these racist killers—"only" on the utterly absurd condition that these paid enforcers of bourgeois rule go over to the side of the workers and "subordinate" themselves to the leadership of the LBI:

"The workers can only unite with sectors of the Army, the corporals and rank-and-file soldiers of the PM and the army when these turn against the military hierarchy and discipline, place their weapons in the service of the mass movement and against the regime, refusing to suppress strikes, plant and land occupations or any other manifestation of the mass movement and subordinate themselves politically to the discipline of the mass organizations, under a class struggle and anticapitalist leadership."

This is like taking the side of Jack the Ripper, but only on the condition that he come out in defense of abortion clinics and join your party.

By willfully amalgamating the Military Police and the army—which can and must be split in revolutionary situations along class lines, winning over the proletarian and peasant-based ranks from the bourgeois officer corps—the LBI effectively amnesties the cops. As Trotsky wrote in the *History of the Russian Revolution* about the proletarian masses in February 1917:

"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."

Such bitter hostility toward the police is completely alien to the LBI. In the July issue of their newspaper, they go a step further, advocating "the formation of red trade unions within the troops of the Armed Forces and the Military Police" and arguing that it is possible to do "patient political work" in the Military Police by building "communist cells together with the soldiers and the sergeants, who in their totality come from

NYPD...

(continued from page 16)

same time, the victorious UPS strike pointed to the power which can defeat *and bring down* this system of raw racist terror and vicious exploitation.

The question is how? Labor's social power cannot be unleashed if the working class is bound to the Democratic Party, which is no less a representative of the capitalist ruling class than the Republicans. Key to any class-struggle perspective is the fight for revolutionary leadership. It is the labor bureaucracy which ties the proletariat to its class enemies. In New York City, those union officials who don't actively promote Democratic Party politicians are instead in the hip pocket of Giuliani himself. Only through a political struggle against the pro-capitalist union tops can a revolutionary leadership be forged which champions the cause of working people and all the oppressed. The Spartacist League intervened at the August 29 protest to hammer home the need for a revolutionary workers party, selling over 900 pieces of literature and distributing hundreds more of our special *Workers Vanguard* supplement on the lessons of the recent Teamsters strike.

Liberals Push Impotent Cop "Reforms"

At the August 29 protest, when liberal Democrat Dinkins intoned that "the overwhelming majority of 38,000 officers on the [NYPD] force are good, honest men," there was an audible groan from the crowd. You don't have to be a Marxist to know that's a lie—that at their core, the cops are brutes and sadists. But it does take a Marxist understanding to

know that the cops are at the core of the capitalist state and that this apparatus of repression cannot be "cleaned up" but must be swept away through a thorough-going socialist revolution which places the working class in power.

Al Sharpton was cheered at the rally when he declaimed, "Crime has gone down everywhere in New York City except in the Police Department." But Sharpton's main pitch for combatting police brutality is to put more "teeth" in the Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB). The impotence of the CCRB is revealed in the fact that since its formation in 1993, while the number of complaints of police brutality has skyrocketed, fewer cops than before have received even a slap on the wrist. That is in the nature of such boards, whether or not cops serve on them, because their purpose is to *enhance* the credibility of the police—if necessary, occasionally going after a few supposed "rogue" cops—and to streamline the system of repression.

Sharpton, himself a former FBI fink, also pushes the call for more black cops. This is not surprising coming from Sharpton, who cut his teeth in politics by helping to organize vile boycott campaigns against Asian shopkeepers in the ghettos. But the call for more black cops doesn't exactly resonate among Haitian immigrants, who have had plenty of experience with the murderous terror of the all-black police force in Haiti. Indeed, Giuliani has given Sharpton's demand his own twist by replacing a number of white cops transferred out of the 70th Precinct with some of the black New York City cops who had been sent to Haiti to "train" the police there. Whether they are black or white, whether they live in Harlem or Westchester, it is the cops' job to repress



Some among the numerous victims of police killings recalled at March 1996 protest against police brutality outside New York City Hall.

proletarian families." Is this what the LBI had in mind when shotgun-wielding Military Police broke up an SFPMVR union meeting?! In demolishing similar illusions in the police promoted by the German Social Democracy when the danger of fascism loomed, Trotsky wrote: "The worker who becomes a policeman in the service of the capitalist state, is a bourgeois cop, not a worker" ("What Next? Vital Questions for the German Proletariat," January 1932).

While shamelessly apologizing for the "proletarian base" of the Military Police, the LBI has made a name for itself as the most "radical" proponent of armed confrontations with the cops by *sem terras* and *sem tetos* (homeless) involved in land occupations. In a word, these centrists are ready to fight to the last drop of blood...of the last landless peasant and homeless person.

Repudiating the fight for an internationalist Leninist vanguard party to lead the proletariat to power at the head of all the oppressed, the Brazilian fake left prefers to maneuver within the framework of Lula's Workers Party and the CUT bureaucracy. Although it did not call for a vote to the PT in 1994, the LBI does not oppose popular-frontism in principle and in fact supports voting for the PT when it

ran in a popular front in 1989. Abjuring open programmatic struggle, these groups frequently resort to setting up their "own" trade unions from which they expel political opponents. This serves both to weaken the workers movement and to obscure the fight for programmatic clarity. As we wrote earlier on Brazil (*WV* No. 648, 5 July 1996):

"While fighting for leadership within the unions, communists seek to build the strongest possible unity of the working class against the capitalist exploiters. The task of the communist vanguard, however, is to sharpen the differences between competing political tendencies in order to bring the workers to communist consciousness and assemble the cadre, through splits and regroupments, in a Leninist party whose purpose is to lead the workers to state power."

We fight to build a proletarian party based on the Trotskyist program of permanent revolution: in a country of belated development such as Brazil, only the working class has the historic interest and the social power, by seizing state power through a socialist revolution, to realize the unfulfilled tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, such as agrarian revolution. This is the task to which the ICL is dedicated as we fight to reforge an authentically Trotskyist Fourth International. ■

Racist Cops: "Guard Dogs of the Capitalist System"

We print below a speech given by SL spokesman Bruce André at an August 16 protest in Brooklyn against the police torture of Abner Louima.

The torture of Abner Louima is part and parcel of the attacks that the bourgeoisie is carrying out against poor people, blacks and all minorities. Everyone knows that Giuliani has unleashed his cops in this city. They feel free to commit any racist atrocity they want—and they're doing it. But don't forget that the problem is not simply Giuliani. The entire ruling class is behind these racist attacks and this racist terror.

A number of people have spoken here about the need for "justice." But if you want to know if you can get "justice" in this rotten system, look at Mumia Abu-Jamal. He must be freed. He's an innocent man, a former Black Panther who was framed up by the cops and is now facing possible execution.

The problem is not simply Giuliani. Don't forget that under Dinkins 6,000 more cops were brought in. Don't forget that it was under the Democrats that U.S. troops invaded Haiti in 1915

and massacred the *cacos* insurgents. The problem here is not just a few "rotten apples." The problem is the nature of the cops as guard dogs of the capitalist system.

The answer is not to simply get a police station closed, to have an inquiry or a civilian review board. What's needed is to mobilize the power of the working class against the capitalist system. Right now, there's a strike at UPS. There are almost 200,000 workers—integrated workers—with a lot of social power. And that's typical of the unions in this city, whether it's hospital, transit or city workers. It is the power of the integrated working class that can change things. There should have been delegations here from all the UPS pickets to demonstrate the power of the working class and put a stop to racist terror. But that requires a fight against the present leaders of the workers movement, who support capitalism. And that means a fight against the very foundations of the capitalist system, a fight by a revolutionary party for socialist revolution!

the ghetto masses and break workers' strikes; the liberals beseech them only to carry it out in a less overtly brutal and indiscriminate manner.

The reformist left, while occasionally offering some rhetoric about class struggle, fundamentally share with liberals like Sharpton the notion that the capitalist state can be "cleaned up" and made to serve the interests of minorities and the working class. Thus the Workers World Party, in a leaflet distributed at the Louima protest, called for "disarming the cops, conducting an independent investigation of the racist brutality inside of the 70th Precinct and giving the power to the people to establish community control of the police." To argue that the capitalist rulers would "disarm" their hired thugs and relinquish control over their repres-

sive forces is to sow the worst illusions in the reformability of the capitalist state.

In contrast, the Spartacist League intervened at the August 29 protest to advance a class-struggle strategy to fight racist repression, stressing the need for labor and minorities to break with the Democratic Party. As the SL leaflet distributed at the Louima protest stated:

"The Spartacist League fights to forge a revolutionary workers party which will champion the cause of all the oppressed, to unchain the social power of the multi-racial working class. Black and Hispanic workers, including Haitians and other immigrants, will play a crucial role in the workers revolution which is necessary to sweep away the entire system of racist capitalist repression. And in overthrowing capitalist rule in the U.S., the working class will break the yoke of imperialist subjugation of Haiti." ■

UPS...

(continued from page 4)

down a major U.S. corporation is extremely important, particularly after 20 years of relentless union-busting by the corporations with the aid of the government, the courts, the cops, and the proliferation of professional strikebreaking outfits. It's no secret why the capitalists have spent billions trying to smash unions. As noted in an article in the *New York Times* (31 August) headlined "On Payday, Union Jobs Stack Up Very Well," unionized jobs pay roughly 20 percent more than non-union jobs. Union members get benefits worth *four times* that of non-union workers and are 50 percent more likely to have health insurance.

The string of losses for the labor movement over the past two decades has been assisted by a bunch of weak-kneed union bureaucrats who wouldn't know *how* to win strikes. Instead, the union tops depend upon pressuring the enemies of labor like the Democratic Party—which no less than the Republicans represents the capitalists—and the government. All the while the labor bureaucrats play by the bosses' rules in refusing to unleash the unions' real power in mass picket lines and solidarity strikes.

But the courage and determination of the UPS strikers, despite the Teamsters tops' policy of utterly soft picket lines, shut down a major corporation from coast to coast, forcing it to surrender to demands it had rejected out of hand before

the strike. This lesson has not been lost on America's corporate rulers and their government, which are all trying to figure out what went wrong. But you can bet that this victory has also scared the hell out of the AFL-CIO bureaucracy—the "labor lieutenants of capital"—who have tried to justify their surrenders and betrayals of hundreds of combative strikes with the mantra that strikes are "old-fashioned" and "can't be won." UPS workers proved they were wrong.

The task now for workers across the country is to carry the momentum of this strike into their own unions and their own fights. But while starting on the picket lines, the struggle to reverse the last 20 years of defeats is going to take more than just union militancy. It's going to take a new kind of *political* leadership that knows that the interests of labor and capital are absolutely counterposed. It means breaking from the Democratic Party and forging in struggle a fighting workers party that not only knows how to win strikes, but also knows that "labor peace" will only come when the workers take state power. Those who labor must rule! ■

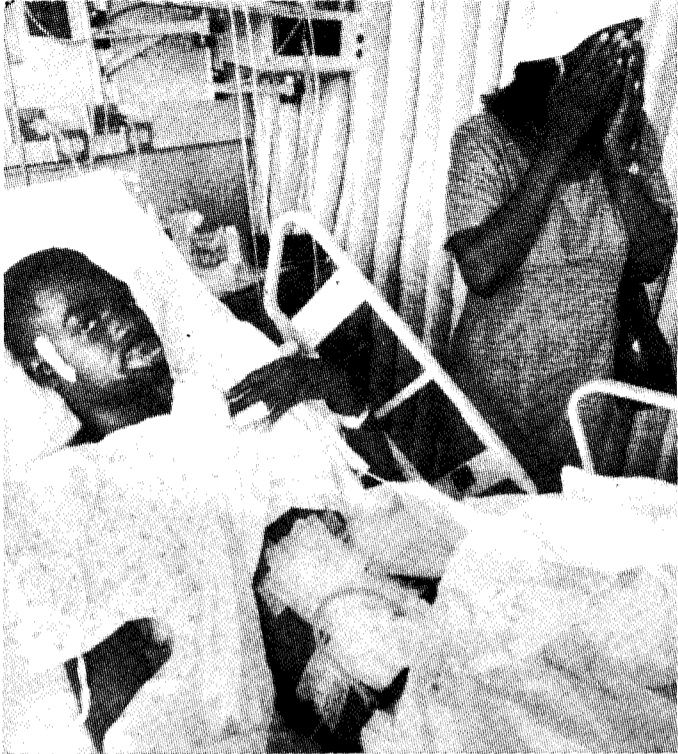
WV E-Mail Address

You can now reach *Workers Vanguard* by e-mail.
Our address is:
vanguard@tiac.net

WORKERS VANGUARD

Outrage Over Sadistic Attack on Haitian Immigrant

NYPD: Racist Torturers!



Monaster/Daily News



WV Photo

Thousands march across Brooklyn Bridge on August 29 to protest police torture of Abner Louima (left).

NEW YORK CITY, September 1—Thousands of protesters marched across the Brooklyn Bridge to City Hall on August 29 in the largest demonstration thus far against the sadistic cop torture of Abner Louima over three weeks ago. The 30-year-old Haitian immigrant remains in critical condition in a Brooklyn hospital with a punctured intestine and torn bladder. After being arrested while standing outside a Haitian dance club on the night of August 8, Louima was viciously beaten on the way to the 70th Precinct station. Once at the station, the cops dragged him into a bathroom, where they sodomized him with the wooden handle of a toilet plunger and then jammed it into his mouth, breaking his front teeth.

As they marched to City Hall, many of the protesters chanted, “PBA, KKK—different name, same game,” referring to the Patrolmen’s Benevolent Association. The overwhelmingly Haitian crowd was joined by other West Indian and American blacks, Hispanics, Asians and others, many of them wearing hats identifying them as union members. Speakers at the rally included two Asian women, one whose son was gunned down by police and the other herself a victim of police violence. As the rally dispersed, cops seized the opportunity to arrest over 100 demonstrators who had walked back over the bridge into Brooklyn. Ninety of those arrested still face charges. We demand: Drop the charges!

Along with the video exposé of routine torture of Texas inmates by prison guards, the hideous brutalization of Abner Louima drew international attention to the cop terror which is rampant across the U.S. But no one who lives in the city’s impoverished ghettos and barrios needed to see another grainy image on video of cops swinging their clubs into bleeding, defenseless black people to know that what happened to Abner Louima could have easily happened to them: or their

Democrats, Republicans— Parties of Racist “Law and Order”

loved ones. As they were carrying out their gruesome torture, one of the cops screamed at Louima: “It’s Giuliani time!” Republican mayor Rudolph Giuliani was catapulted to City Hall in 1993 in a campaign highlighted by a violent, racist riot by 10,000 cops who besieged the office of then-mayor David Dinkins, a black Democrat.

But what was done to Louima was so utterly gratuitous and depraved and the outcry over it so widespread that even Giuliani and the cops were on the defensive. Unlike countless other cases of police assault and killing, where the cops lyingly claim their victim was “resisting arrest” or “armed,” this time Giuliani felt compelled to put on a show of “cleaning up” the 70th Precinct, ordering the arrest of several of Louima’s tormentors and disciplining some of their superiors. The assault on Louima might never even have come to light had it not been for the courageous action of Magalie Laurent and another nurse at Coney Island Hospital, who refused to succumb to pressure from the police and hospital management to cover up for the cops.

Giuliani’s Democratic opponents seized on the outcry in their bid to replace him in November’s mayoral election. All three Democratic primary contenders—Ruth Messinger, Sal Albanese and Al Sharpton—were present at the August 29 protest. While Messinger and Albanese had until now vocally enthused over the NYPD’s brutal crackdown on “crime,” Sharpton has fueled his political career in recent years by posing as a champion of victims of NYPD terror and marched at the head of the protest. David

Dinkins was a featured speaker on the platform. But, as we wrote in an August 26 New York Spartacist League leaflet:

“Whether City Hall is being run by Democrats or Republicans, racist terror is standard operating procedure for the NYPD. No matter how many heads roll at the 70th Precinct, it will not change the fact that the cops are the armed enforcers of the racist capitalist system. The virtual police state of siege in the city’s ghettos and barrios is part and parcel of the intensification of racist repression by America’s capitalist rulers as they take the ax to welfare and other social programs, impose slave-labor ‘workfare,’ and drive minorities and all working people into ever deeper poverty.”

Racist Rulers’ War on the Ghettos and Barrios

Giuliani has been touted for his “quality of life” crackdown, with its policy of “zero tolerance” for even the pettiest alleged crime. But while Wall Street stockbrokers and bankers crow about how much safer *their* city streets are, in the ghettos and barrios this has meant giving free rein to the racist cops. Behind the glitz of the “New 42nd Street” is a policy of mass arrests for every conceivable offense, from taking up more than one seat on the subway to drinking in public. The *New York Times* has even taken to advising its largely white yuppie readership on what to do when they’re handcuffed by “New York’s finest.”

But for minority youth in particular, a brush with the cops can be a brush with death. Even Amnesty International was compelled to issue a report last year which documented “ill-treatment, deaths in custody and unjustified shootings” and condemned the police for “excessive

force amounting to torture or other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.” Even according to the NYPD’s own figures, the cops kill someone on average every ten days; in Brooklyn alone, 23 blacks, Hispanics and other minorities have been killed by cops since 1994. Liberal *New York Times* columnist Bob Herbert, who had the decency to refuse to serve on a whitewash commission set up by Giuliani after the Louima incident, has eloquently described the cop reign of terror. In a 21 August piece, Herbert wrote:

“Each time I hear that the attack on Abner Louima was an aberration, I think of Carlton Brown, who was left paralyzed from the chest down after officers drove his head like a battering ram into the bulletproof glass doors at the entrance to Brooklyn’s 63rd Precinct station house.... I think of the parents of young people killed by brutal officers, the sense of utter desolation that I’ve seen in the faces and heard in the voices of mothers and fathers who haven’t yet learned to speak of their children in the past tense.”

The rise in cop terror and killings, not only in NYC but from coast to coast, is aimed at intimidating the mass of the population, who have seen their living standards plummet while a handful at the top revel in soaring profits. With social struggle at an ebb, for years the city’s dispossessed and downtrodden have despaired of any way to fight back other than to embrace demagogic politicians like Sharpton and illusory schemes to “clean up” the cops. But the upsurge of anger over racist cop terror and the thousands of working people who turned out on August 29 came as this country saw the biggest strike in years, the solid Teamsters walkout against UPS. The brutal and gratuitous torture of Louima cast a sharp spotlight on this whole system of daily police brutality, underscoring what the cops are all about: they are armed thugs whose job is to violently suppress workers and minorities in defense of the capitalist rulers’ profits and power. At the

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