

The

June 2000

No. 8

\$2

Internationalist



Not Nationalist Protectionism vs. "Globalization" **For Socialist Revolution** **to Sweep Away Imperialism!**

Police-State Repression from Seattle to D.C.



Reuters

Austria: Sinister Fascist Behind Rightist Regime . . . 20
Mexico: UNAM Strike and Workers Revolution 41

Brazil: Workers Mobilize for Mumia 80
Army Death List Against Worker Militants 59

Australia \$2.50, Brazil R\$2, Britain £1.50,
Canada \$2.50, France 10F, Germany DM 3,
Italy L3.000, Japan ¥200, Mexico \$6,
South Africa R5

In this issue...

Navy Get the Hell Out of Vieques Now! Independence for Puerto Rico!	3
Mad Dog Racist Mayor and Kill-Crazy NYPD Enforce Capitalist Rule	7
Police State Repression from Seattle to D.C.: Fight for Socialist Revolution to Sweep Away Imperialism	10
New Ecuadoran Government: Made in U.S.A.	16
Sinister Fascist Haider Behind Rightist Government in Austria	20
Social-Democratic Blinders: Pseudo- Trotskyists on Haider	35
Mexico: The UNAM Strike and the Fight for Workers Revolution	41
El Mexe: Rebellion in Hidalgo	50
UNAM Strike: Worker-Student Defense Guards Formed	53
Brazilian Steel Company Assault on Six-Hour Day	57
Army Death List Targeted Brazilian Worker Militants	59
ICL on Puerto Rico: Lies in the Service of Social Chauvinism	69
KKK Besieged by 8,000 Angry Protesters in New York	72
ILWU West Coast Port Shutdown Showed Labor's Power in Fight to Free Mumia	74
Brazilian workers Mobilize for Freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal	80

Front page photo: Seattle police fired tear gas and rubber bullets at anti-WTO protesters, 30 November 1999.

Subscription blank graphic based on a poster by V.A. Rodchenko, *Books* (1925).

Special Supplement

Mexico: The UNAM Strike and the Fight for Workers Revolution

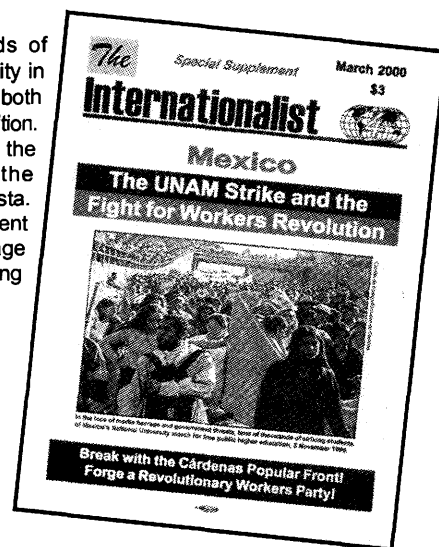
March 2000

US\$3

For ten months, tens of thousands of students occupied the largest university in Latin America, facing repression by both the PRI government and the PRD opposition. This special supplement documents the development of the strike and the intervention of the Grupo Internacionalista. In addition to the articles in the current issue of *The Internationalist*, this 64-page special supplement includes the following articles:

- Mexican Cops Launch All-Out Attack on UNAM Strike
- Bourgeois Holy Alliance Against the UNAM Strike
- "Operation Provocation"
- Mexico UNAM Strike: Mobilize Worker-Student Defense!
- UNAM Strike Sends Aid to Yugoslav Workers
- Following Brutal Cop Attack: Defend, Extend the UNAM Strike!
- The Battle for UNAM: Student Strike Under Siege
- Mexico: For Workers Offensive to Smash the Capitalist Assault!
- Mobilize Working-Class Action to Smash Terror Attacks on UNAM Strike!
- Mexican Student Strikers Demand Freedom Now for Mumia Abu-Jamal!
- Protest Bloody Police Attack Against Student Strikers in Mexico!
- Mexico City Cops Assault Student Protest at U.S. Embassy
- *Workers Vanguard's* "Virtual Reality"
- ICL/GEM Pull Their Hands Out of the Boiling Water
- Lies By the Bushel
- The GEM Tries to Censor Trotskyism...in the Trotsky Museum

Order from/make checks payable to: Mundial Publications, Box 3321, Church Street Station, New York, NY 10008, U.S.A.



Visit the Internationalist Group on the Internet

<http://www.internationalist.org>

Now available on our site are:

- Founding Statement of the Internationalist Group
- Declaration of the League for the Fourth International
- Articles from *The Internationalist*
- Articles from *Vanguardia Operaria*
- Articles from *El Internacionalista*
- Marxist readings

The Internationalist

A Journal of Revolutionary Marxism
for the Reforging of the Fourth International

Publication of the Internationalist Group,
section of the League for the Fourth International

EDITORIAL BOARD: Jan Norden (editor), Abram Negrete,
Buenaventura Santamaría, Marjorie Salzburg, Socorro Valero.

The Internationalist (ISSN 1091-2843) is published bimonthly, skipping July-August, by Mundial Publications, P.O. Box 3321, Church Street Station, New York, NY 10008, U.S.A. Telephone: (212) 460-0983 Fax: (212) 614-8711 E-mail: internationalistgroup@msn.com Subscriptions: US\$10 for five issues.

No. 8



June 2000

Puerto Rican Labor: Shut Down All U.S. Bases!

Navy Get the Hell Out of Vieques Now! Independence for Puerto Rico!

MAY 5—At 3 a.m. yesterday, federal agents launched their long-threatened raid on the camps of resisters occupying the United States Navy's bombing range on the island of Vieques, off Puerto Rico, arresting more than 200. Among those arrested was Lolita Lebrón, jailed for a quarter century for the 1954 Nationalist attack on the colonial rulers in the U.S. Congress. Also detained were U.S. Congressional representatives Luis Gutiérrez and Nydia Valázquez, several other bourgeois politicians engaging in electoral grandstanding and clergymen. While U.S. Marshals and FBI agents, backed up by the "Grupo de Choque" shock troop of the Puerto Rico Police, made short shrift of the civil disobedience on the tiny island, their action set off protests throughout Puerto Rico and in various U.S. cities. Thousands of students went on strike at campuses in Rio Piedras, Ponce, Mayagüez and Arecibo, as hundreds of protesters including trade-unionists clashed with police outside Fort Buchanan in Guaynabo and others besieged Fort Allen in Juana Díaz.

U.S. president Clinton and his top cop Janet Reno, who ordered "Operation Access to the East" (a/k/a "Vieques Storm"), congratulated themselves that the "removal" of the protesters had gone peacefully. What comes next is hardly peaceful: the Navy has announced it will resume maneuvers there within two weeks. The protesters had taken over the Vieques range a year ago after a civilian guard, David Sanes Rodríguez, was killed by two bombs that hit an administration building. This killing brought to the boiling point the massive discontent over the American military's high-handed contempt



Cops attack demonstrators outside Fort Buchanan in San Juan, Puerto Rico, as they protested U.S. raid on island of Vieques, May 4.

for the population of this Caribbean island colony. Opposition to the Navy's continued bombing is so pervasive that on February 21, over 150,000 marched in the largest-ever protest demonstration in San Juan demanding "peace for Vieques."

But the clash over Vieques is a small part of a larger battle over U.S. military and colonial domination of Puerto Rico, and it will not be won by pacifist tactics of "civil disobedience" and "moral witness." This Caribbean island nation has been under the boot of Yankee imperialism since Washington conquered it in 1898, replacing Spain as the colonial power. For Washington, Puerto Rico is a giant aircraft carrier in the middle of what they consider an American lake, a pivot for U.S. intervention throughout Latin America. Defeating such a powerful enemy poses the need for an internationalist perspective of proletarian revolution throughout the Americas rather than the dead-end class collaboration of Puerto Rican nationalism.

The Internationalist Group, section of the League for the Fourth International, demands that the Navy get the hell out of Vieques, that all U.S. military installations in Puerto Rico be shut

**Defend Cuba Against Counterrevolution!
Smash Imperialism Through Socialist Revolution!**

down, that U.S. troops be withdrawn from Haiti and the U.S. naval base at Guantánamo be returned to Cuba! Upholding the program of the Third (Communist) International and Trotsky's Fourth International, we call for unconditional independence for Puerto Rico and all colonies. In this region carved up by the U.S., British, French, Spanish, Danish and Dutch colonial powers, today dotted by tiny, economically unviable island countries, we advocate a voluntary socialist federation of the Caribbean. Above all, we fight to smash imperialism through international workers revolution, in which the more than two million Puerto Ricans on the U.S. mainland, concentrated in the center of world finance capital, New York, can play a key role.

For more than 60 years, the residents of the "isla nena" (baby island) of Vieques have been sandwiched between a bombing range and an ammunition dump, condemned to poverty due to the destruction of its fishing industry and the impossibility of developing tourism where the Navy practices its amphibious landings and "precision" bombing. Vieques residents have a significantly (27 percent) higher cancer rate than residents of the "isla grande" of Puerto Rico, which many attribute to the contamination from the vast quantities of munitions dumped on the island. Particularly suspect are the "depleted uranium" (U-238) bombs which have been linked by some researchers to the "Gulf War syndrome." As a result, a large majority of Puerto Rico's population has demanded "Not one more bomb, Navy out of Vieques!"

The Pentagon has insisted that it must keep the range to carry out live-ammunition assaults and bombing practice. Clinton, however, promised to close the range after 2005 if the local population votes against it in a referendum. In a crude attempt to bribe the impoverished local people, the White House proposed to give them \$90 million in federal aid. This was enough to buy the support of Puerto Rico's pro-statehood governor Pedro Rosselló, whose feigned opposition to the bombing was a bargaining chip to advance his political ambitions on the U.S. mainland. But it didn't dent the opposition of those who have to live and die under the bombs.

A former Republican Defense Department official has written that "The Navy Doesn't Need Vieques," pointing out that the Navy claims its "privilege to shell Puerto Rican beaches by right of conquest

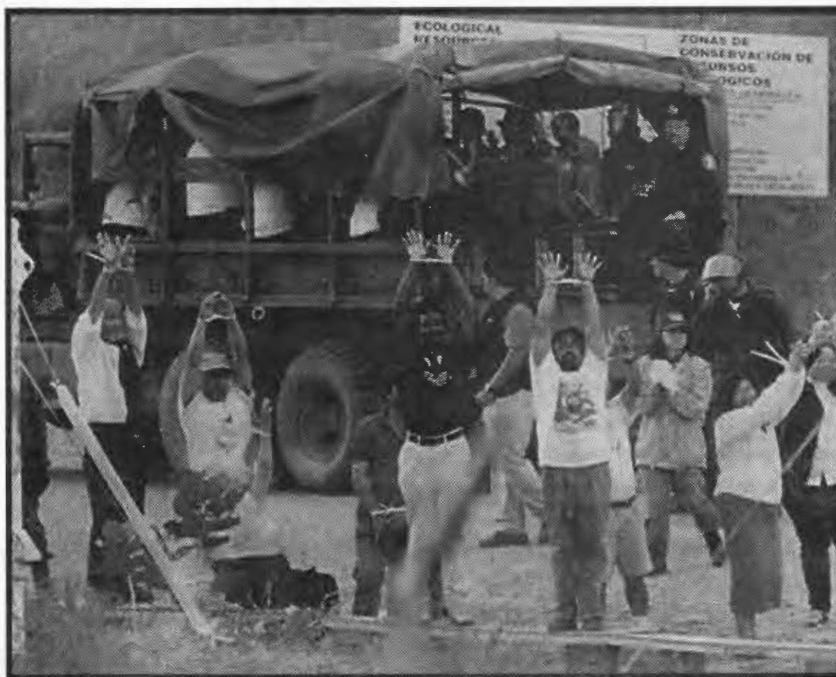
(1898 and all that) — a right it has not claimed on, say, Martha's Vineyard, which would otherwise be an excellent substitute for Vieques, with equally lovely beaches" (*New York Times*, 2 May). This points to the central fact that the fight over this tiny island cannot be separated from the broader battle over Puerto Rico's "status." The bombing of Vieques is only one aspect of the colonial oppression of the Puerto Rican people, and of the military domination that affects every aspect of the island's life.

The protests were initiated by Rubén Berríos of the small bourgeois-nationalist Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP) and have included local leaders of the Popular Democratic Party (PPD), which for many years was the dominant capitalist-colonialist party on the island. But while the PIP advocates formal political independence, Berríos & Co. made clear during the 1993 referendum campaign that they support continued U.S. economic and military domination, vowing to maintain the bases that occupy fully 13 percent of Puerto Rico's territory. The PPD is the architect of the "commonwealth" colonial status, which is falsely called a "Free Associated State" in Spanish although Puerto Rico is neither free, nor associated, nor a state. The *populares* were the party that brutally repressed the 1950 Nationalist uprising, as well as amassing secret police dossiers (the infamous *carpetas*) for the FBI on tens of thousands of Puerto Ricans.

The battle over Vieques has been fought on a lowest common denominator basis in order to facilitate a *class-collaborationist alliance* subordinated to the colonial and imperialist bourgeoisie. A key role has been played by the Catholic church hierarchy and the religious leaders of other denominations. Last February, when the ecumenical council of church leaders called the march in San Juan, they insisted that it be limited to the demand of "peace for Vieques" and that the only flags be white.

The Puerto Rican nationalists and reformist "socialists" who have been active in building protests around Vieques duly obeyed the bishops' injunction. Recently, while protesters were camped out on Vieques beaches, the archbishop hobnobbed with Admiral Green, as the "spiritual" and military leaders of U.S. colonial domination exchanged their respects.

In the last couple of days, there has been a good deal of bewailing the "loss" of New York arch-



U.S. federal agents arrested over 200 occupying U.S. Navy bombing range in Vieques, training ground for imperialist war. AP

bishop O'Connor, including among clergymen involved in the Vieques protests. This cardinal of counterrevolution was a chaplain for the Marine Corps in Vietnam, giving his pastoral blessing to Washington's dirty colonial war. At a rally for Vieques last December 5 at the Federal Building in Manhattan, a protest leader insisted that demonstrators were "not anti-American," "not against the armed forces," and not even against the Navy! Likewise appealing to U.S. patriotic sentiment, Democratic New York City councilwoman Margarita López speaking yesterday at a vigil outside the armed forces recruiting station in the Bronx hailed the Puerto Rican soldiers' blood spilled in Korea and Vietnam. Proletarian revolutionaries, in contrast, point out that Puerto Rican soldiers were used as colonial cannon fodder in those counterrevolutionary wars. We defended North Korea and Vietnam against U.S. imperialism, demanding "All Indochina Must Go Communist!"

Instead of presenting the struggle as that of 9,000 beleaguered island residents against a Washington bureaucracy, the battle should be waged as a class struggle against imperialist militarism. Vieques is where U.S. expeditionary forces practised storming ashore prior to invading Grenada in 1983 and Panama in 1989. In the 1991 Persian Gulf War, this is where U.S. pilots practiced their "surgical" bombing techniques so they could send "smart bombs" right down the air shaft of a civilian bomb shelter in Baghdad, killing hundreds of women and children. Here is where they honed their skills so they could accurately bomb a maternity hospital and the Chinese embassy in last year's U.S./UN/NATO war on Yugoslavia.

Puerto Rico is now home to the U.S. Army South, headquartered at Fort Buchanan, a key component of the U.S. Southern Command, formerly based in the Panama Canal Zone. The Roosevelt Roads Naval Station now hosts the HQ of the Special Operations Command South, as well as several Special Forces detachments. These "counterinsurgency" forces are now being secretly deployed against leftist guerrillas in Colombia under the cover of Washington's "war on drugs," the same banner under which a war has been waged against black and Latino ghettos and barrios in the U.S. The fight over Vieques should be waged as a battle to drive out the whole huge apparatus of Yankee imperialist militarism, linking it to the fight against cop repression



Over 150,000 protesters marched for Vieques in San Juan on February 21.

AP

in the U.S. as well.

The battle should be fought as a *class* struggle, mobilizing the power of the Puerto Rican working class and workers in the U.S. and internationally. The Grupo de Choque that stood guard outside Campo García on Vieques are the same brutal riot cops who were deployed by Governor Rosselló against the telephone workers' strike in 1998. And Puerto Rican workers have real power. Much has been made of the fact that the Roosevelt Roads naval base consumes vast quantities of water while scores of municipalities in the eastern part of the island have severe water shortages in the summer. By the same token, the water workers union has the power to turn off the tap to this key military installation. Likewise, the electrical workers union (UTIER) has the power to black out the island. But the key question is leadership, and despite occasional left-sounding pronouncements from these union leaders, in reality they are all defenders of capitalism.

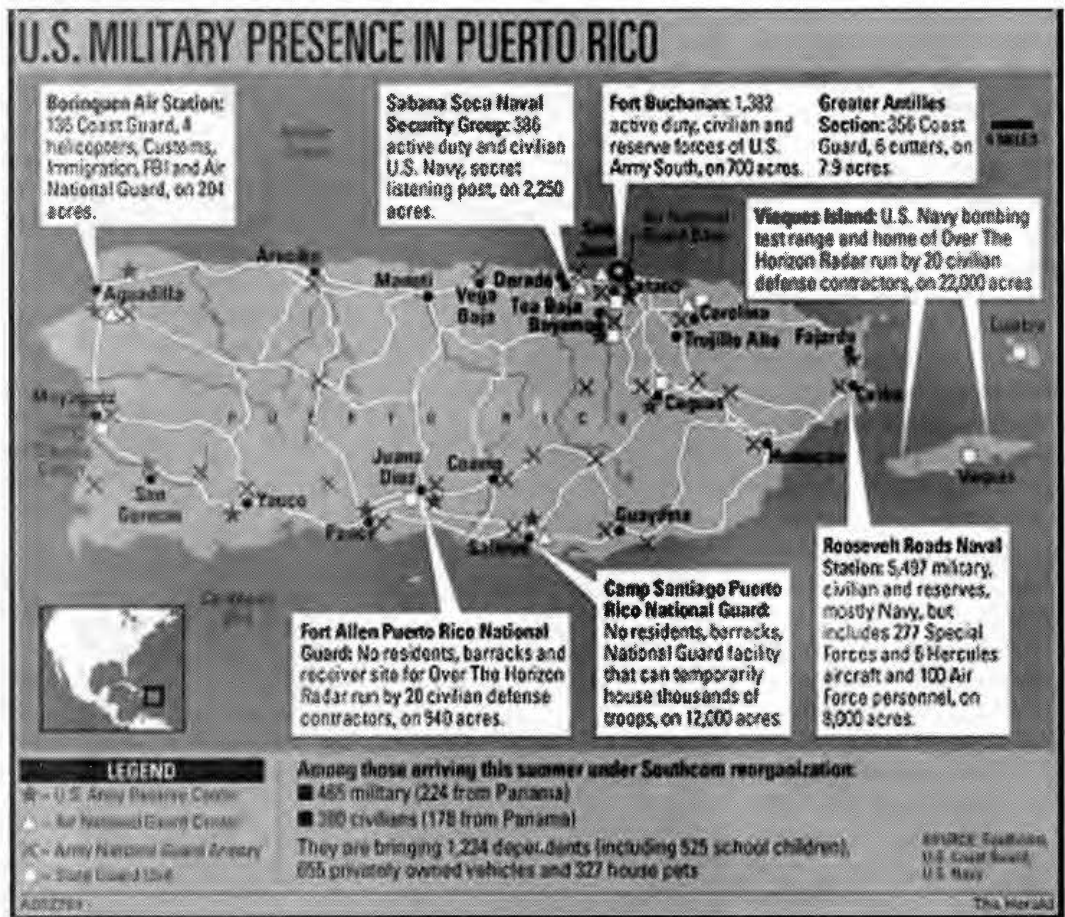
The Frente Socialista, a coalition including the Movimiento Socialista de los Trabajadores (MST—Socialist Workers Movement) and the Taller de Formación Política (TFP—affiliated with the pseudo-Trotskyist United Secretariat), called for a strike by University of Puerto Rico students and for protesting outside Fort Buchanan. But beyond this, these self-proclaimed socialists did *not* call for *workers* strike action to protest the military/police invasion of Vieques. FS leaders have been the object of attacks by the colonial government, and must be defended against bourgeois repression. But the fact remains that they have not fought for political independence from the bourgeois elements leading the protests and from the capitalist state.

Dangerous reformist illusions that the capitalist repressive apparatus can serve the interests of the working people are pushed by pseudo-socialists in the U.S. who have been active in Vieques protests. Most notable is the Workers World Party (WWP), and the International Action Center led by it. The WWP has been campaigning for months to get the Clinton administration to send in its police forces to rescue the child Elián González from the Miami gusanos who were holding him hostage in order to stage a counterrevolutionary provocation against Cuba. *Workers World* (27 April) demanded "that Attorney General Janet Reno end the ongoing delays and enforce the decision that Elián be-

longs with his father....” Yet barely a couple of weeks later, WWP bleats that the U.S. “is sending federal agents and military troops against peaceful civilian demonstrators” in Vieques (IAC press release, 4 May). Communists and class-conscious workers do not look to the bourgeois state but to the power of the working class to enforce the interests of the exploited and oppressed.

Other “socialists” and even some claiming to be Trotskyists capitulate to imperialism by abandoning the demand for independence for Puerto Rico. This is the case of the Spartacist League/International Communist League (SL/ICL), the Shachtmanite League for the Revolutionary Party (LRP) and the Cliffite International Socialist Organization (ISO). More specifically, they refuse to forthrightly raise this elementary call for putting an end to colonial domination, instead seeking to dodge the issue by limiting themselves to calls for the “right to independence” (SL) and “self-determination” (LRP) or the “right to self-determination” (ISO). From the time of Lenin and Trotsky, genuine Bolsheviks have declared that defending the right of self-determination means calling unconditionally for *independence for all colonies*. The Third International made an uncompromising stand on this question a condition for membership, and the Trotskyist Fourth International specifically called for Puerto Rico’s independence as a blow against Yankee imperialism. So, too, did the SL/ICL until a couple of years ago, when as part of its increasing abandonment of the Trotskyist program it ostentatiously declared, “We do not currently *advocate* independence for Puerto Rico, not least because the vast majority of the population there is not in favor of it at this time” (*Workers Vanguard*, 11 September 1998).

This is a chemically pure case of tailism as a pretext for not calling for freeing U.S. imperialism’s largest remaining colony. To pretend, as the SL/ICL now does, that to call for Puerto Rico’s independence means to “force” it on an unwilling population is a ludicrous subterfuge. The same argument could be used whenever communists hold a minority position. Moreover, their attempt to appeal to backward consciousness only lands them in further contradictions. Both the LRP and SL/ICL



call for U.S. military bases out of Puerto Rico. But if they don’t call for independence for the island colony, will they then call for U.S. military bases out of North Carolina, Idaho or Utah? The fact is that calling only for the *right* of self-determination or independence while refusing to call straight out for independence of the colonies is a *classic reformist program*. In fact, writing of Puerto Rico the SL/ICL today repeats, virtually word-for-word, the policy of the Stalinist French Communist Party on Vietnam in the late 1930s. The fact that it shares this position with social-democratic outfits like the LRP and ISO shows the direction of the SL/ICL’s centrist degeneration.

Genuine communists not only call for independence for the colonies, but link this struggle indissolubly to the fight for international socialist revolution. This means advocating a voluntary socialist federation of the Caribbean, the only way in which independence would not mean a descent into poverty like that prevailing in sugar and tourism islands such as the Dominican Republic and Haiti next door. Proletarian internationalists in Puerto Rico must fight tirelessly to defend Dominican and Haitian refugees against the raids by the INS *migra* cops and Puerto Rico Police. We demand full citizenship rights for all immigrants, independent of their birthplace, so that their “illegal” status does not offer police and employers an additional tool to victimize them. It is also crucial for Puerto Rican revolutionaries to defend Cuba against imperialism and internal counterrevolution. Against the narrow nationalist politics of the bureaucratic Castro regime,

continued on page 69

Drive Out Giuliani *and* the Clintons!

Mad Dog Racist Mayor and Kill-Crazy NYPD Enforce Racist Capitalist Rule

APRIL 20 –The rampaging racist police murder of racial minorities and immigrants in New York City keeps on going. On February 25, a court in Albany grotesquely absolved the four cops of an NYPD death squad that gunned down Amadou Diallo on the doorstep of his home in the Soundview section of the Bronx. Forty-one police bullets against this unarmed African immigrant, and the killer cops walk – this is the true face of the racist capitalist injustice system.

Five days later, only three blocks away from where Amadou was murdered, a squad of undercover police narcs chased down Malcolm Ferguson and executed him. The bourgeois media trashed the cops' latest victim as a "drug dealer," while covering up the fact that Malcolm was one of the hundreds of minority residents who protested in Soundview the night the racist Albany verdict was announced. It was a cold-blooded execution of another unarmed black man, aimed at all those who dared protest cop terror.

Two weeks later, the police terrorists struck again. Their next victim was Patrick Dorismond, shot point-blank in the chest outside a cocktail lounge in midtown Manhattan. The undercover cops had tried to nail this security guard in a drug sting, and when he told them to get lost, the trigger-happy cop shot him down. Patrick was the son of André Dorismond, the well-known lead singer for Haitian *compas* and *rampa* music groups. Mayor Rudolph Giuliani was so intent on backing up his kill-crazy cops that he tried to assassinate Patrick's character, saying he was "no choir boy." Actually, his anguished mother responded, he was a choir boy. "You can't libel a dead man," Giuliani cynically remarked.

Then, when thousands of Haitians came out on March 25 at Patrick Dorismond's funeral to express their outrage, the police unleashed a massive attack on the marchers. Twenty-seven were arrested, a number of the victims outrageously charged with beating cops. Erroll Maitland, a black reporter for WBAI, was beaten to the ground while he was broadcasting live on the air.



Haitian woman brutally manhandled by NYPD during the funeral march for Patrick Dorismond, March 25.

Maitland, who has a heart condition and whose son was killed by South Carolina police a few years ago, was sent to a hospital where he was handcuffed to the bed. When a young Haitian woman whose finger was crushed by metal police barricades went to the 67th precinct to lodge a complaint, she was charged with felony assault on a police officer.

Since then, the police killings of unarmed minorities keep on coming. It is obvious that this is not a few "rogue cops" out of control, it is a *system* of racist police terror directed in the first instance at oppressed racial minorities and immigrants. It is no accident that this terror is escalated when there is a massive increase in the immigrant population of New York. Today more than a third of the NYC population is foreign-born, the highest percentage since the 1920s. It is also part of a sharply increasing militarization of police forces throughout the United States. The NYPD terrorizes blacks, Latinos and Asians like an occupying army, as the Israeli state terrorizes Palestinians on the West Bank.

The burning question then is how to fight this systematic cop terror. There have been innumerable protest marches against

**No to Democrats and Republicans –
For a Revolutionary Workers Party!**

police brutality. Black Democratic Party politician Al Sharpton is once again staging his civil disobedience actions as he did last year following the cop murder of Amadou Diallo. At the same time, Sharpton appeals to the feds and the capitalist courts to clean up the cops' act. In response to the killing of Patrick Dorismond, he focused on suing over Giuliani's blatantly illegal release of sealed juvenile court records. Over the murder of Diallo he is demanding a civil rights investigation by the federal Justice Department, while also joining with Amadou's parents in filing a civil suit against the city.

Amadou's parents should get every cent they can from the murderous government that killed their son. But it is a dangerous illusion to think you can get justice for the oppressed against the capitalist police in the capitalist courts. Appealing to Janet Reno's Justice Department is to ask for justice from the very people who carried out mass murder at Waco, Texas in 1993, slaughtering almost 100 people, including more than two dozen children, in a racially integrated fundamentalist religious group. This is the same *injustice* system which let Diallo's killers go free, which absolved killer cop Livoti who murdered Anthony Báez, who absolved the killers of Hilton Vega, Anthony Rosario, Frankie Arzuaga, Aníbal Carrasquillo, Yong Xin Huang, Aswan Watson and countless other victims of NYPD terror.

It is deeply mistaken to focus solely on mad dog racist mayor Giuliani. Today's protest, initially called by the Haitian Coalition for Justice, is billed as a "Mass Mobilization to Oust Giuliani." Its appeal is titled "A Call to End Police Brutality, Stop Giulianism In Its Tracks!" Giuliani is a vicious killer with a fascist mindset, who is doing his best to turn New York into a police state. He has made City Hall a racist gated community. He has not one, but two high-tech bunkers to direct police operations against anything he perceives as a threat. Rudolph Giuliani is rightly the object of mass hatred among his victims. Yet the problem is not "Giulianism" but *capitalism*. The only way to end police brutality is through socialist revolution to sweep away this system built on the blood and toil of the exploited and oppressed working and poor people.

The Democratic and Republican parties are partner parties of racist American capitalism. Hillary Clinton, Giuliani's opponent in the current Senate race, has tried to make hay out of the anger directed at the mayor. In patented Clintonesque fashion, she pretends to "feel the pain" of the victims. But at the same time she calls for "compassion" for the killer cops, the lynchers who operate as the enforcers of capitalist law and order. Hillary Clinton was a vociferous proponent of U.S. imperialism's war on Yugoslavia last year, as the butchers of



Crowd at funeral march in Brooklyn, March 25, where they were set upon by NYPD cossacks.

Vietnam and Korea bombed Belgrade children's hospitals in the name of "human rights." Her husband, the Democratic president, regularly hobnobs with the Fraternal Order of Police, the same gang of uniformed murderers that is campaigning to execute former Black Panther and renowned radical writer/journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal. Today's protest, endorsed by a range of leftist, community and labor groups, includes among its sponsors Al Sharpton, who will also be a featured speaker this afternoon. Sharpton is a front man for Hillary Clinton, whose job is to round up black votes for the Democrats.

While vilified by the likes of Giuliani and the mainstream bourgeois press, Sharpton has always acted as a conscious agent of capitalism. This shameless operator acted as a police snitch for the NYPD "Black Desk" which spied on the New York 8 black nationalists and even mainstream black Democratic pols in the early '80s. Sharpton wore a wire for the feds at a time when Giuliani was the U.S. attorney for New York. He tried to whip up a racist backlash against Arab shopkeepers in Harlem and called for the election of racist Republican D'Amato, who referred to blacks living in housing projects as "animals." Last fall, Sharpton's National Action Center submitted a disgusting "friend of the court" brief supporting the supposed "right" of the Ku Klux Klan to march in the heart of Manhattan. Some of the reformist leftist groups co-sponsoring today's events, like the International Socialist Organization, actually spoke from Sharpton's platform October 23. But thousands of working people, minorities and other irate New Yorkers took to the streets and besieged the KKK, straining at police barricades to try to get at these fascist terrorists and drive them out of town.

It was liberal black Democratic mayor David Dinkins, a supporter of the Democratic Socialists of America, who hired 6,000 more cops during his term in office, which was begun by a sharp escalation in police killings of unarmed minority youth. The role of the Democratic Party in repressing Haitians should

be clear to all. It was Bill Clinton who ordered the U.S. Marines and Army into Haiti to install Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 1994. And Ray Kelly, who served as NYPD chief under Dinkins, was sent to Port-au-Prince to "professionalize" a new repressive police force under the U.S. colonial occupation. Today, Haitian premier Préval has called elections for May 21, while American troops have been stationed along the border with the Dominican Republic to prevent a mass exodus in case of "trouble" in this rigged neocolonial vote. And while Janet Reno conciliates the Cuban gusano scum in Miami staging a counterrevolutionary provocation over the child Elian, *Haitian children* rescued at sea are immediately deported to Haiti.

Many of the pseudo-leftist outfits like the ISO and Workers World Party which have taken up the issue of police brutality focus on one or another empty "reform" of the police. The old liberal standby of a civilian review board has become thoroughly discredited as the killer cops keep on marauding. At the time of the police torture of Haitian immigrant Abner Louima at the 70th Precinct stationhouse in August 1997, the WWP called for dissolution of the precinct. Following the murder of Amadou Diallo, the reformists focused on the demand for shutting down the Street Crimes Unit, the undercover hit squads which prowl the Bronx, Upper Manhattan and other minority neighborhoods, stopping tens of thousands of blacks and Latinos in a notorious example of "racial profiling." After the killing of Dorismond, Sharpton et al. pretended things would change if an end was put to "Operation Condor," the "antidrug" operation set up to provide overtime pay to hundreds of NYPD narcs while terrorizing minorities.

Such impotent "reform" demands could go on forever. In his various court suits, Sharpton pretends that it is a matter of inadequate cop training. One of the main chants in the protests following the acquittal of Diallo's murderers was "Police training 101, this is a wallet, not a gun," as if the killer cops had made a mistake. It's not a matter of training, but the very essence of the police as the enforcers of racist, capitalist order. What about the "Area Impact Teams" that murdered Malcolm Ferguson? What about the paramilitary police units that roused tenant squatters from the Lower East Side with an armored personnel carrier? What about the NYPD tanks for use against "riots," and its arsenal of M-16 automatic rifles? They are all part and parcel of the apparatus of racist, anti-working-class repression. This special body of armed men is one of the pillars of the capitalist state.

What is necessary is a mobilization of the working class, at the head of the oppressed minorities, in a struggle to sweep away the system of brutal exploitation that the police "serve and protect." In the immediate aftermath of the racist acquittal of the cops in the Diallo case, the Internationalist Group called to "mobilize the tremendous power of labor and minorities to Shut down New York City for Amadou Diallo!" Strike action by key NYC unions, such as the 33,000-strong Transit Workers Union and the hundreds of thousands of city workers in DC 37, was called for. The struggle against police brutality is a political fight, and must be a *class* fight. Directing it against the artificial construct "Giulianism" is a diversion from the revolu-

tionary task at hand. The recent appearance of outfits like the "Labor Party" and "Working Families Party" sponsored by sections of the pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy is merely a measure of how discredited the Democrats have become among unionists. It is necessary to build a revolutionary workers party, that fights against both the capitalist Democrats and Republicans, and for a socialist revolution.

The fight to stop police brutality must be a fight against every aspect of the oppression of minorities and working people. Police are particularly blatant in terrorizing immigrant communities because they know many are afraid to protest for fear of deportation. Against this repression aimed at keeping a whole layer of the population in thrall, the labor movement must fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants. A class-conscious workers movement would mobilize thousands in the streets to prevent INS *migra* cop raids on factories. It would respond with powerful labor action against every atrocity carried out by the capitalist rulers. As we wrote in the first issue of *The Internationalist* (January-February 1997):

"To fight the bipartisan, all-sided war on the poor and oppressed requires building a revolutionary workers party in the fight to reforge the Fourth International, to organize and lead the struggle for international socialist revolution to do away with the capitalist system and its racist cops and courts, from Johannesburg and Santo Domingo to New York. That is the way—the *only* way—to put an end to police brutality against minorities, poor and working people." ■

League for the Fourth International

Internationalist Group/U.S.

Internationalist Group, Box 3321, Church Street Station, New York, NY 10008, U.S.A.

Tel. (212) 460-0983 Fax: (212) 614-8711

E-mail: internationalistgroup@msn.com

Boston: write to P.O. Box 1710, Boston, MA 02205

Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil

Brazil: write to Caixa Postal 084027, CEP 27251-970, Volta Redonda, RJ, Brazil

Rio de Janeiro: write to Caixa Postal 3982, CEP 20001-970, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil

Groupe Internationaliste/France

France: write to MBE n° 128, 80, rue Legendre, 75017 Paris, France

LIV/Deutschland

Germany: write to Postfach 74 06 41, 22096 Hamburg, Germany

Grupo Internacionalista/México

Mexico: write to Apdo. Postal 70-379, Admón. de Correos No. 70, CP 04511, México, D.F., Mexico

Police-State Repression From Seattle to D.C.

Fight for Socialist Revolution to Sweep Away Imperialism!

Not Nationalist Protectionism vs. "Globalization"

From mass protests in Seattle against the World Trade Organization (WTO) summit late last year to demonstrations against the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank in Washington, D.C. this April, the campaign against "globalization" has dominated the left and labor movement in the U.S. Tens of thousands marched in the streets where they were met by massive police force and mass arrests: over 600 in Seattle, 1,300 in D.C. After seeing the WTO meeting collapse, the government from the White House on down was determined to show that the U.S.-dominated "international financial institutions" could meet in the capital of the American empire. Demonstration leaders, for their part, proclaimed victory for having drawn unprecedented media attention to their anti-WTO/IMF/World Bank protests. The police-state repression is a token of what U.S. rulers have in store for anyone who gets in the way of their "New World Order." Yet while fighting this, we must plainly state that behind the "progressive" rhetoric of the demonstration organizers is a program of chauvinist national protectionism.

The Seattle and D.C. protests have been portrayed in the bourgeois media and in much of the left press as protests against global capital. Prominent "rad-lib" commentators such as Noam Chomsky and Alex Cockburn have depicted them as the start of a new New Left, harking back to Students for a Democratic Society in the '60s. Most of the reformist and centrist pseudo- social-



Paul Joseph Brown/Seattle Post-Intelligencer

Demonstrator is pushed to the ground after climbing atop police armored personnel carrier in Seattle, 30 November 1999.

ists have been scrambling over each other to gain organizational influence in politically shaping what they see as a "new movement." There were plenty of youth in the demonstrations. Many came to protest against Third World poverty, sweatshops, ecological devastation and any symbol of "corporate colonial" domination. Some have embraced anti-imperialist rhetoric, and an anarchist "black bloc" was very visible. Yet who's setting the agenda is not radical-minded youth in the ranks but the pro-capitalist social democrats and labor bureaucrats who are the linchpin of this amorphous "coalition." And their program is: protectionism, anti-Communism and pressuring the Democratic Party to put a "human rights" face on U.S. imperialism.

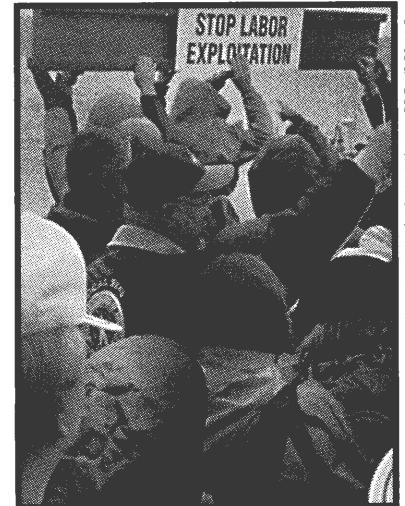
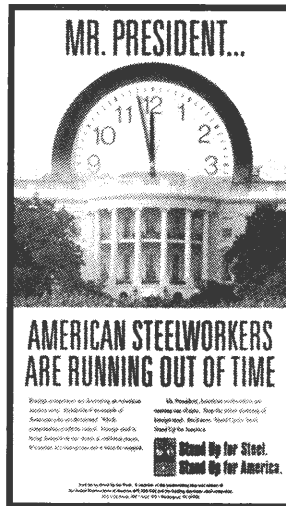
Various groups refer to the "diverse" character of the crowd in Seattle and D.C. One student interviewed by the *Washington Post* talked of "this strange coalition." The central fact in both cases was that youth and unionists, many of them sincerely internationalist-minded, were being cynically used to build support for a reactionary national-chauvinist program. The crowds were certainly diverse, and the bedfellows in this "coalition" are so strange that it can't last. In Seattle, when anarchist youth began trashing Starbucks, some of the "mainstream" (pro-Democratic Party) eco-liberals and anti-sweatshop activists formed chains in front of the Gap and other targets. Global Exchange leader Medea Benjamin remarked, "Here we are protecting Nike, McDonald's, the Gap and all the while I'm thinking, 'Where are the police? These anarchists should be arrested'" (*New York Times*, 2 December 1999). In fact, some of the self-appointed mar-

Know Your Class Enemy (and Coalition "Ally")

One of the top leaders of the anti-WTO protests, Lori Wallach of Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch, told Foreign Policy (Spring 2000) how their "coalition" dealt with anarchists at a McDonald's in Seattle:

"And these anarchist folks marched in there and started smashing things. And our people actually picked up the anarchists.... We'd walk him over to the cops and say this boy just broke a window. He doesn't belong to us. We hate the WTO, and so does he, maybe, but we don't break things. Please arrest him. And the cops wouldn't arrest anyone."

United Steelworkers' flag-waving protectionist propaganda in Seattle and Washington, D.C. Right: USWA rally dumps mock Chinese steel I-beam into the Seattle harbor.



United Steelworkers of America

shals physically seized some of the “troublemakers” and took them to the police, demanding they be jailed, and complaining when they weren’t (see box).

“Human rights” imperialism is a calling card of the Clinton administration, as it was of the anti-Soviet Cold War II launched by the last Democrat in the White House, Jimmy Carter. It was the ideological justification for the U.S./UN/NATO war on Yugoslavia. Indeed, many of those leading the anti-“globalization” protests supported that imperialist slaughter supposedly in favor of the human rights of Kosovo Albanians. (After NATO won, its Kosovo Liberation Army puppets have undertaken systematic “ethnic cleansing” of Serbs, Roma [Gypsies] and dissident Albanians from the province.) A key force behind the scenes is the Democratic (Party) Socialists of America. They play a prominent role in the “new” AFL-CIO leadership under DSAer John Sweeney and in environmental and “fair trade” outfits like Global Exchange. They want to clean up the blatantly chauvinist rhetoric that used to be the hallmark of the labor lieutenants of U.S. imperialism. So instead of the old ILGWU (ladies garment workers) “Buy American” jingles on the radio, now UNITE (clothing and textile workers) professes concern about starvation wages in (foreign) sweatshops, calling for a “living wage” to slightly raise labor costs overseas and thus make U.S. sweatshops more “competitive.”

Their particular target has been to block trade with China. Following the wave of counterrevolution that swept through East Europe and destroyed the Soviet Union, the imperialists’ next main aim is to restore capitalist rule in “Red China,” as the Cold Warriors called it. In fact, the Stalinist bureaucracy that has run the Chinese deformed workers state from the outset has sought “peaceful coexistence” with U.S. imperialism. At the height of the Vietnam war, in the early ’70s Mao Zedong himself offered China’s services as a cat’s paw for U.S. imperialism against the USSR and Soviet-allied Vietnam. The Beijing governing caste has gone a long way in opening the door to capitalist restoration, inviting in thousands of Taiwanese, Hong Kong and Western companies to exploit low-wage workers (many of them women) inside China. Although greatly weakened, key gains of the Chinese Revolution remain, notably collectivized industry, which the imperialists are determined to wipe out. But they have differences over how to do it: Clinton

and many on Wall Street want to “open up China” by including it in the WTO, undermining it from within by expanding capitalist production and privatizing or bankrupting state industry. Cold War hardliners, however, including the rabidly anti-Communist AFL-CIO tops, want to ratchet up imperialist pressure on China to produce a collapse.

Both in Seattle and in Washington, D.C., labor officialdom focused on bashing China. There were contingents demonstrating for a “Free Tibet,” a CIA favorite since the 1959 revolt it orchestrated there collapsed and the Nazi-educated Dalai Lama fled to India. Unions marched with signs saying “No Blank Check for China” and opposing “permanent normal trade relations” (PNTR) with Beijing. They denounced the use of prison labor in China, even though the U.S. has more people in jail than any other country – now over 2 million – and an AFL-CIO rep sits on the board of Federal Prison Industries, which runs more than 100 factories. U.S. prisoners working for private companies, some paid as little as 25 cents an hour, do everything from building circuit boards to sewing “made in the U.S.A.” labels on T-shirts! Against the AFL-CIO China-bashers who want to keep out Chinese products, Trotskyists defend Chinese workers against encroaching capitalist exploitation and layoffs by state industry, as well as demanding the liberation of the hundreds of Chinese workers arrested in the suppression of the 1989 Beijing uprising. We unconditionally defend the Chinese workers state against counterrevolution and imperialist attack, fighting for a *workers political revolution* to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy which is opening the door for capitalist restoration, not least through pushing to join the WTO.

The source of the worldwide assault on union gains and social programs for the poor and working people is not “globalization” of production, as the labor lieutenants of U.S. capital and national-reformists everywhere proclaim. Whether their aim is to “save American jobs” or to defend fast-disappearing European “welfare states,” even as they attack the WTO, IMF, World Bank and “transnational corporations,” they make low-wage “foreign labor” the enemy. By focusing on a cabal of anti-democratic “international financial institutions,” they divert attention from the *system of capitalist exploitation*. With their populist appeal, they make common cause with some of

the most reactionary labor-haters and fascistic elements. And in pressuring the Clinton administration to adopt labor and environmental trade "safeguards," they seek to use U.S. power against imperialist rivals and semi-colonial countries and to promote counterrevolution, notably in China. The origin of the current onslaught against the working people around the globe is *capitalist imperialism*, and it will take *international socialist revolution* to sweep it onto the garbage heap of history.

N30: The "Battle of Seattle"

Washington officials saw the "Millennium Round" of negotiations at the World Trade Organization meetings beginning last November 30 as a chance to pull off a free trade coup. They would showcase export-oriented Seattle, home of Boeing Aircraft, Microsoft and Starbucks coffee bars, while twisting arms of European, Japanese and Third World trade negotiators to lower tariffs (particularly those affecting U.S. products). "Meanwhile, carefully choreographed street protests would enable President Clinton to nudge the delegates into taking action against such excesses of the global economy as child labor and pollution," commented the *New York Times* (5 December 1999). Instead, the streets of Seattle turned into a surreal battle zone, with clouds of tear gas and riot cops in Darth Vader outfits firing rubber bullets loaded with pepper spray point-blank at the "No to the WTO" protesters.

On November 30, tens of thousands of demonstrators managed to prevent the WTO meeting, as a huge labor rally moved downtown to link up with a second march by the Direct Action Network. The International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) staged a work stoppage at all West Coast ports in support of the WTO protests. After cops rioted and anarchists trashed Starbucks and Nike Town, city authorities declared a civil emergency. Seattle was put into lockdown, as National Guard troops and armored personnel carriers were brought in to enforce a "no demonstration zone." The trade negotiators, after being trapped in their luxury hotels for hours, began squabbling. In the end, they left town without achieving anything or even issuing a final communiqué. The "Clinton Round" was dead. Anti-WTO demonstrators cheered.

The result was an instant mythology of the "Battle of Seattle" in which capitalist top hatters were laid low by a revolt of the plebeian masses. Internationally, many were buoyed by the dramatic unrest in the heart of the "single superpower" which has been arrogantly lording it over the rest of the world. Mexican leftist intellectuals hailed the "revolt of the globalized against the globalizers." The French liberal establishment daily *Le Monde* (5 December) declared Seattle "A Victory for Poor Countries and Citizens' Movements." In the U.S., left liberals were ecstatic. *The Progressive* (January 2000) proclaimed: "In Seattle, we witnessed an event of historic importance: the first coordinated mass revolt in the United States against global capitalism in the modern era. No less than that."

Clinton's well-laid plans certainly went up in smoke. The impact of the anti-WTO protests was magnified by sharp fights of the U.S. vs. Europe and Japan over agricultural subsidies, and of the U.S. and European imperialists vs. their semi-colonial satraps over labor "safeguards." The talks broke down

because Washington could not enforce its "consensus" on the other capitalist rulers. Beyond the inter-imperialist rivalries and clashes of the national interests of the world's bourgeoisies, the demonstrations against the WTO were hardly a revolutionary mobilization aimed at bringing down capitalism on a global scale. Rather, they were animated by a reformist utopia of returning to a more "national" capitalist framework.

There was lots of pageantry in the streets, but while international in scope it was far from internationalist politically: demonstrators in monarch butterfly outfits and sea turtle suits objecting to Mexican fisheries' nets; tree-squatters opposed to clear-cutting forests for timber to export to Japan; José Bové, the French farmer, distributing Roquefort cheese and inveighing against McDonald's; Tibetan monks and anti-Communists dressed up as Chinese Red Army soldiers; thousands of union members in union jackets carrying signs like "Fair Trade Not Free Trade"; farmers demonstrating to preserve the family farm against multinational grain and agricultural chemical giants like Cargill and Monsanto.

Demonstration organizers called it a "festival of resistance," a phrase picked up by much of the left, seeking to cover up the numerous contradictions. In reality, the Seattle protests were street theater for protectionism.

Calls for "fair trade," however they are packaged, whether with the Steelworkers' stars-and-stripes appeals to "Stand Up for Steel, Stand Up for America," or ILWU longshoremen's left-sounding calls to "Stop Corporate Globalism," are appeals for protectionist trade restrictions, setting U.S. workers against their class brothers and sisters around the world. The objections to Chinese entry into the WTO were virulent Cold War anti-Communism and chauvinist "defense" of "American jobs." Even the eco-green protests were protectionist: why protest logging and not the environmental damage caused by U.S. oil companies, like Exxon in Alaska?

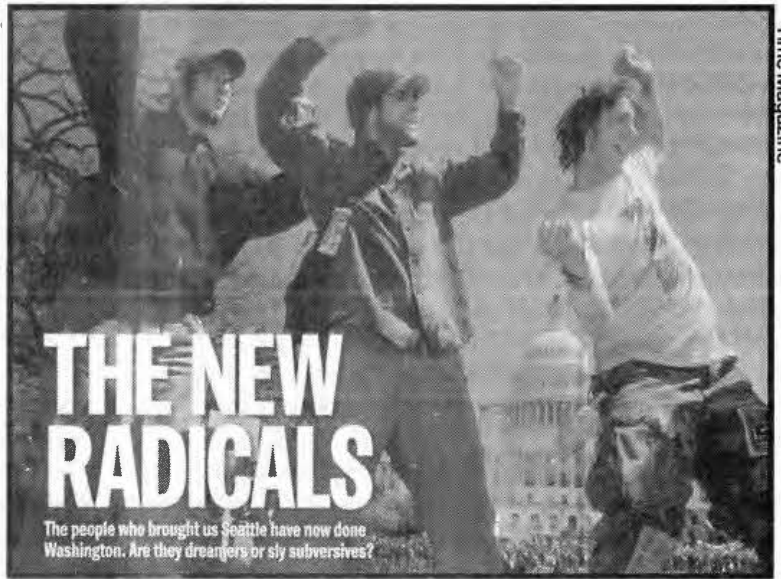
Moreover, far from being a frontal assault on the Clinton administration's trade policies, *the protests were in fact planned in coordination with the government*, from the Democrat in the White House to the Democrat in Seattle's city hall. How could it be otherwise, since the main organizers were labor and environmental groups that are two of the main Democratic Party "constituencies"? Organizers of the Direct Action Network, the Ruckus Society and Global Trade Watch repeatedly met with the Seattle Police to work out modalities for the choreographed civil disobedience. AFL-CIO leader Sweeney even had "a private meeting with Clinton" where he urged the U.S. president to get the WTO to adopt enforceable labor rights. Sweeney reported that Clinton said "he's all for it. But he said he's having a tough time with the developing countries" (*New York Times*, 3 December).

In fact, despite the recent lobbying showdown between the White House and the AFL-CIO over permanent trade relations with China, last fall Sweeney endorsed a letter together with 34 heads of companies and trade groups that *approved* the U.S. bargaining objectives for the WTO meetings: "We support the emphasis by the United States on increasing market access," the letter said (*Washington Post*, 29 October). And Clinton did his part. At Seattle, he ostentatiously praised the demonstrators, saying "what they are telling us in the



International Brotherhood of Teamsters

Anti-"globalization bloc extends from fascist Pat Buchanan (above) to radical youth shown by *Time* magazine (right) whooping it up at April 12 Teamster anti-China rally Buchanan addressed.



Time Magazine

streets" is that the WTO has to be "open and accessible." And in an interview with the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* (1 December), Clinton said the WTO should develop "core labor standards" which should become part of every trade agreement and subject to "sanctions" if they are violated.

So here was the top U.S. labor bureaucrat pressuring the commander-in-chief of U.S. imperialism to use his clout to bring the capitalist rulers of semi-colonial countries to heel, which Clinton agreed to. While denouncing corporate "globalization," the AFL-CIO demands for "labor standards" are a protectionist device to support American capitalism, and these demands were wielded by the American president as an imperialist big stick. Labor-populist rhetoric in the service of imperialism: this was the bottom-line political line of the "battle in Seattle."

The Seattle demonstrations against the World Trade Organization were not politically supportable by proletarian internationalists. Trotskyists fight not for national trade controls but for a global planned socialist economy. We oppose China's entry into the WTO because it would hurt Chinese workers and sharply increase counterrevolutionary pressures. We seek not to push the Clinton administration into imposing labor and environmental "safeguards," but to sweep away imperialism through international workers revolution.

The "AFL-CIA": Teamsters, Turtle-Lovers and Rabid Anti-Communism

Acting as an instrument of U.S. imperialism is nothing new for the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations bureaucracy, which was forged in the post-World War II "red purge." Widely known in Latin America as the "AFL-CIA," it got its nickname by aiding Washington in destroying leftist unions from France to El Salvador, acting as labor operatives in CIA plots to overthrow elected governments from Cheddi Jagan in Guyana in 1959 to Salvador Allende in Chile in 1973. It was a spearhead of the anti-Soviet Cold War, boycotting grain shipments to the Soviet Union and financing the counterrevolutionary Polish nationalist Solidarność in the 1980s.

Under its new chief John Sweeney, the AFL-CIO has been

updating its image – but not its fundamental aims. Today its protectionism is presented in eco-green and multi-hued multicultural colors – although there's still plenty of red-white-and-blue flag-waving. Various leftist groups pretend that the labor marches are a sideshow to the street action by radical youth. But labor played a key role organizationally in bringing out thousands of union members, as well as politically by giving the Seattle and D.C. demonstrations a "mainstream" aura. They were a big reason why, as the Maoist *Revolutionary Worker* (7 May) quoted an exultant California youth, "the impact of Seattle reverberated way past the radical left" reaching "status quo people."

Just how decisive labor officialdom's role was could be seen in the aftermath of the WTO meetings. The front page of the 24 February *Seattle Weekly* headlined, "Seattle's New Revolutionaries." It reported on plans by the Direct Action Network to shut down Bill Gates' Microsoft headquarters in suburban Redmond to celebrate the anniversary of Seattle's 1919 general strike. "But the Microsoft protest was scaled back from blockade to street theater when labor withdrew its support," the alternative weekly reported. The giant puppets were there, but without a mass turnout of unionists in the streets they were a non-event.

The anti-globalization "coalition" with student youth and environmental groups is a key part of the union tops' makeover. The AFL-CIO statement on the Washington, D.C. protests began: "Union members joined green-haired students dressed as sea turtles...." Speaking at the April 16 rally at the Eclipse, labor federation vice president Richard Trumka declared: "Let them know that we are indeed Teamsters and turtle-lovers, students and Steelworkers and we are protesting together." But this "coalition" extends even further to include the fascist Pat Buchanan, who donned a union jacket and spoke at an April 12 Teamsters demonstration protesting administration plans to grant normal trade relations to China. At that rally, Buchanan got a big cheer when he said he would tell Chinese trade negotiators, "You stop persecuting Christians, you stop threatening my country, or you guys have sold your last pair of chopsticks in any mall in the United States."

When liberals and reformist pseudo-socialists talk about

a “new movement” and “new coalition” they are participating in a political bloc that extends to this American nativist, immigrant-bashing Hitler apologist. Speaking on the same platform with Buchanan at the Teamster rally was the “independent socialist” (DSA) Representative Bernard Sanders of Vermont, who denounced foreign labor driving Americans out of high-paying union jobs. So did Democratic liberal Senator Paul Wellstone of Minnesota and Congressman David Bonior of Michigan at the AFL-CIO anti-China rally later that day. “Thousands of Americans fought and died in Korea to stop the Chinese Communists,” declared United Steelworkers leader George Becker. The next night at a candlelight vigil opposite the White House, Becker proclaimed in vintage Reaganese, “China is the evil empire.”

A graphic example that captures the essence of this “left-right” bourgeois-reformist coalition: in Seattle, the Steelworkers mobilized heavily to protest about Chinese steel (China is

the largest steel producer in the world today, edging out the U.S.). They poured USWA members into town, and drove around a truck with a billboard proclaiming: “The WTO: Destroying Millions of American Jobs!” A high point of their schedule was a show on the Seattle docks. “Hundreds of Steelworkers were joined by more than a thousand student protesters at the port of Seattle yesterday where they dumped mock steel I-beams into the water in a demonstration

aimed at dramatizing the continuing crisis of steel being dumped into the American market,” said a USWA statement.

Today the union tops claim they oppose normal trade relations with China out of concern for the fate of Chinese unionists and the low wages of Chinese workers. In fact, they are trying to keep out Chinese steel and to prevent Boeing from building more airplanes in China. And they sell this protectionist line with the “yellow peril” racist poison and Cold War anti-Communism pushed by Buchanan. The *New York Times* (14 April) reported that union members attending the AFL-CIO anti-China rally were opposed to a deal that would “steal the jobs that are the backbone of the American middle class,” and quoted demonstrators “asking our leaders to keep our jobs in our country.” That is the chauvinist program of the “new coalition” against globalization.



AFL-CIO protectionism declares war on these Chinese steel workers at Wuhan Iron and Steel plant. Women workers are first hit by mass layoffs and encroaching capitalism.

James Levitt/Impact Visuals

A16: “Seattle East” in D.C.

The demonstrations in Washington, D.C. culminating in the April 16 (A16) attempt to shut down the annual meeting of the International Monetary Fund were largely a replay of the Seattle protests against the WTO. While the Mobilization for Global Justice signs outside the IMF and World Bank were a little less openly protectionist, since those are not seen as trade bodies, the anti-China message was pervasive, from the virulently protectionist April 12 labor rallies to the April 16 mega-rally in the Ellipse.

The Washington police, meanwhile, had more than four months to review the Seattle fiasco and buy at least \$1 million in new riot control equipment. The police-state repression was massive. The *Washington Post* (2 April) reported: “Some protesters think they are being watched. They are correct. Police are monitoring the Web pages.” And going around trying to intimidate

organizers, and getting American University and George Washington University authorities to throw “outsiders” out of dorms and off campus, and closing down several Kinko’s copy centers to prevent the reproduction of leaflets, staking out homes of activists, “monitoring the movements of nearly two dozen self-proclaimed anarchists” (*USA Today*, 13 April), etc.

On Friday April 15, the Washington Metropolitan Police and agents of the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and

Firearms (BATF) raided demonstration headquarters, rousting several hundred protesters. On Saturday, when a demonstration protesting the “prison-industrial complex” and calling to stop the execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal headed toward the Department of Justice, D.C. cops boxed them in and arrested at least 635. On Sunday, police concentrated on perimeter defense of the World Bank headquarters, skirmishing with demonstrators all day. On Monday they arrested more than 400 in ritual civil disobedience, bringing the total to more than 1,300 jailed during the weekend.

The reformist left hailed the continuation of the “spirit of Seattle,” but lamented that the D.C. protests didn’t have the impact of the earlier “no to the WTO” demonstrations. The Maoist Revolutionary Communist Party, Stalinoid Workers World Party and social-democratic International Socialist Or-

ganization made virtually identical disclaimers about the AFL-CIO's April 12 China-bashing rally and the presence of Hitler apologist Buchanan, acting as if this had nothing to do with the main event. The WWP and ISO simultaneously complained that the labor tops hadn't mobilized for the weekend, while the RCP hailed the April 16 rally of "15,000 people of many diverse views" (including AFL-CIO China-bashers Trumka and Becker).

The China issue crystallizes the popular-front class collaboration of the reformists. The ISO denounces "China bashing" by the fascistic Buchanan, but doesn't say a word about the China-bashing by DSA social democrats. And no wonder, for the ISO has long participated in the imperialist anti-Communist anti-China chorus, even proclaiming their defense of Taiwan, the refuge of the butcher Chiang Kai-shek and his Kuomintang. On the other hand, Workers World vociferously proclaims its "political support" for Stalinist-ruled China and the "right" of the Beijing bureaucracy to join the WTO, which will escalate the drive to capitalist restoration, at the same time as the WWP assiduously builds the "anti-globalization" mobilizations whose main target is China. Opportunism, as Trotsky noted, is always national in scope.

Seattle has exacerbated a simmering transatlantic feud among the followers of the recently deceased Tony Cliff, whose calling card is the profoundly anti-Marxist theory of "state capitalism" in the former Soviet Union. Cliff & Co. used this shibboleth to justify hailing every imperialist-backed force for counterrevolution from the Afghan mujahedin to Polish Solidarność in the 1980s to Yeltsin-Bush counterrevolution in the USSR in August 1991. The British Cliffites have now accused their American cohorts, the ISO, of "fail[ing] to mobilize significantly for the great Seattle protest" and "play[ing] down the significance" of the event—in other words, even the ISO's breathless tailism was insufficient for them. The ISO screamed that the British were interfering in their national bailiwick. Since the Cliffites pride themselves on not having an international organization, the rift between the two groups is primarily expressed by the withdrawal of writers and delegations from each other's publications and events.

A few on the left have tried to distinguish between the Seattle and Washington, D.C. demonstrations. The Spartacist League, which characterized Seattle as a "protectionist circus," wrote of the D.C. protests:

"The student youth who converged on Washington over the weekend did not share this flag-waving enthusiasm for trade protectionism and belligerence toward China. Most hadn't even heard of the April 12 China-bashing rally, which was organized by many of the same union officials who provided organizational backbone for the anti-IMF/World Bank protests. SL/SYC comrades encountered little overt anti-Communism except for a few pockets of right-wingers like the 'Free Tibet' crowd and sold hundreds of copies of *Workers Vanguard*...."

—*Workers Vanguard*, 21 April

Certainly most of the student youth who showed up in Washington on April 16-17 weren't motivated by protectionism or flag-waving anti-Communism. But that was undoubtedly true of the motivation of many if not most of the youth who participated in Seattle as well. It's quite possible that many

of those protesting outside the IMF/World Bank meetings didn't know about the China-bashing rallies earlier in the week. But it is opportunistic prettifying of the anti-IMF/World Bank demos for the SL to pretend that the youth were in a world apart from this. A *Time* (24 April) photo shows radical youth cavorting at the April 12 Teamster event where Buchanan and others were spewing out anti-Communist protectionism.

In its latest article, the Spartacist League consciously tries to avoid a political characterization of the overall D.C. mobilization. And the fact is that the anti-IMF/World Bank mobilization was characterized by the same perspective of national protectionism and imperialist "reform" as was the anti-WTO mobilization. What's going on here is that the Spartacist League is engaging in another political flip-flop. Over Seattle, the SL Political Bureau had voted a motion on November 4:

"not to participate in, or sell at, the protests against the World Trade Organization in Seattle on November 30, which are a circus — including ecology types, those battling 'genetically modified' food, the Reform Party and others — all dominated by national chauvinism, racist protectionism and counterrevolutionary attacks on the Chinese deformed workers state."

—quoted in *Workers Vanguard*, 10 December 1999

Evidently after some internal "rectification" over the self-isolating position of refusing to sell their press in Seattle, having decided to sell in Washington, *WW* had to opportunistically distinguish "Seattle East" from its model, even though the same ecology types, Reform Party candidate Pat Buchanan, national chauvinism, racist protectionism and counterrevolutionary attacks on the Chinese deformed workers state were no less present in D.C.

And then there was the misnamed Bolshevik Tendency, a centrist grouping which ever since its founders fled the Spartacist League at the start of Cold War II has followed the "discipline" of labor officialdom, including participating in and even organizing scabbing (on other unions' strikes). In a 7 December statement, the BT described the Seattle demonstrations as "politically heterogeneous," claiming that "the AFL-CIO bureaucrats were unable to politically hegemonize the protests." The statement referred to an IWW banner at the Steelworkers rally reading "Capitalism Cannot Be Reformed," as well as other anti-capitalist slogans. It omitted that the USWA rally was hard-core protectionism, which ended by dumping mock Chinese steel beams into the harbor!

The BT notes that the ILWU longshoremen carried out a several-hour West Coast port shutdown in solidarity with the anti-WTO protests. It doesn't mention that ILWU leader Brian McWilliams in a speech to the November 30 AFL-CIO rally in Seattle called for "fair trade," which is at bottom a call for protectionist trade limitations. For these laborites whose program for every situation is a ubiquitous "united front," thus perverting this Leninist tactic into an opportunist strategy, the Seattle protests were politically characterized as "populist internationalism with reformist illusions." The reformist illusions are those of the BT, for the bourgeois ideology of populism is always national in character.

continued on page 38

Alliance with Capitalists and Officers = Defeat for Working People

New Ecuadoran Government: Made in U.S.A.

The following is a slightly abridged translation of an El Internacionalista leaflet issued on January 27. Together with the previous leaflet of January 16, hundreds were sold to immigrant workers in New York's garment district, as well as internationally.

The new Ecuadoran government of Gustavo Noboa, which took office on January 22 after former president Jamil Mahuad fled the country, is literally a regime *made in U.S.A.* Installed by direct order of the White House in response to the "peaceful uprising" of Indian organizations and populist military officers, it immediately announced it would push through Mahuad's plan for "dollarizing" the economy. Its program: opening the flood-gates for massive pillage through wholesale privatizations. Under the aegis of U.S. imperialism and headed up by Noboa, a representative of the Guayaquil coastal oligarchy, the Ecuadoran bourgeoisie is preparing a new onslaught against the exploited and oppressed of this country, already submerged in unbearable poverty. One of the new government's first steps was to unleash a wave of repression.

On the morning of Friday, January 21, thousands of Indian demonstrators surrounded the National Congress; as they approached the building, soldiers let them through. Shortly thereafter, the formation of a "Civilian-Military Junta of National Salvation" was announced, made up of Antonio Vargas, leader of CONAIE (Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador), former Supreme Court chief justice Carlos Solórzano and Col. Lucio Gutiérrez. Gutiérrez, who had served as adjutant to former presidents Bucaram and Alarcón, headed a group of colonels and other mid-ranking military officers. After Gutiérrez declared that the executive, legislative and judicial branches had "ceased to be recognized" and announced the formation of the junta, Vargas, "visibly moved, stated that the important thing [was] that the Armed Forces had maintained their total unity" (*La Hora* [Quito], 22 January). As midnight approached, General Carlos Mendoza, chief of the armed forces' Joint Command that hours earlier had ordered president Mahuad to resign "in order to avoid a social explosion," replaced Gutiérrez in the junta triumvirate.

Yet the new junta did not have the support of Washington, which demanded "stability" and continuity. In a series of late-night phone calls, imperialist spokesmen together with the Organization of American States (their "ministry of colonies") and several of their regional associates threatened the new junta with



AP photos



Gustavo Noboa (above), Ecuadoran president by grace of the high command. Below: Col. Lucio Gutiérrez with Indian leader Antonio Vargas of the short-lived civilian-military junta.

"international isolation." General Mendoza immediately dissolved the triumvirate and turned power over to Noboa, Mahuad's vice president. The general underlined the necessity to restore "order and confidence," avoid isolation and maintain "the hierarchical structure which must exist in the country's best institution," the same armed forces hailed hours earlier by the head of the CONAIE.

**Against the Capitalist Onslaught,
For International Socialist Revolution!**

Thus the imperialist overlords provided another lesson in how they make and unmake governments in their "backyard." The episode recalled the comment by former CIA agent Philip Agee, who remarked in a famous *Playboy* interview, after the publication of his 1975 blockbuster *CIA Diary*: "We ran over Ecuador like a steam roller. It was like living a fantasy of absolute power."

Noboa's swearing in was carried out post-haste in the Armed Forces Headquarters. Among his first declarations, the sixth president in four years emphasized his commitment to following through with dollarization and maintaining the state of emergency decreed by his predecessor in the Carondelet presidential palace. Dripping with racist contempt towards the Indian population, he said: "We will not accept, in the name of anything at all, that one ethnic group seeks to impose its cosmovision on us" (*La Jornada* [Mexico City], 24 January). After shedding a few tears and complaining that the events leading to his removal were worthy of the Mexican comedian Cantinflas, Mahuad expressed his complete support for Noboa, who also received the rubber-stamp approval of Ecuador's Congress.

CONAIE's leader Vargas complained bitterly that "ex-general Mendoza betrayed the people and the nation." In reality, those who deceived and betrayed the oppressed masses were the "people's" leaders like Vargas and opportunist "left" organizations which from the outset sought an alliance with the bourgeoisie and the military. The interests of the working people, whose mobilizations included an oil workers' strike, were sacrificed on the altar of "national unity." In line with the program of class collaboration, the proletariat was dissolved into the "people" in general. In our January 16 leaflet we pointed out that the Ecuadoran toilers faced a fundamental problem:

"The current wave of protests, like those of previous years, is dominated by the populist, bourgeois and nationalist politics of a 'popular front' of class collaboration. And this, even in the event of 'victory,' means more of the same, as occurred in 1997 when the government of Abdalá Bucaram was overturned by a general strike which put in another regime of hunger and repression."

In the face of the crackdown decreed by the Noboa government, the workers movement must defend all the victims of bourgeois repression and demand the immediate cancellation of arrest orders against Vargas, Luis Villacís of the Frente Popular, Juan José Castello of the Movimiento Popular Democrático, and others. At the same time, to break the chain of betrayals and deceptions the urgent task is to draw the lessons of a long series of struggles which have been frustrated, to break sharply with the reformist leaderships and organizations and forge the instrument of victory for the working people: a revolutionary, internationalist workers party based on the genuine communism of Lenin and Trotsky.

A Streetcar Named Plunder

As the declarations of the newly installed Noboa made clear, the program of "dollarization" and privatization was not simply a lifeboat for the shipwrecked government of Mahuad, but a plan backed by a range of key imperialist figures. On January 16 a secret meeting was held between representatives of the Ecuadoran government, the International Monetary Fund, the Inter-Ameri-

can Development Bank and the Mediterranean Foundation of Domingo Cavallo, architect of the dollarization of Argentina under the government of Carlos Menem. The objective, reported the *Miami Herald* (17 January), was "to help the government draw up a detailed proposal on how to dollarize." This took the form of the Law for the Economic Transformation of Ecuador, known as the *Ley Trolebús* (Streetcar Law), unveiled by Mahuad three days before he was forced to flee.

Dollarization means an even further exacerbation of mass poverty. But this is only the beginning. The program also includes hikes in the price of gasoline, telephone service, electricity and other services, in a situation in which the minimum wage is insufficient to buy even one quarter of the basic subsistence basket of goods and services. The *Wall Street Journal* (23 January), mouthpiece of finance capital, revealed a key piece of the imperialist blueprint:

"If Mr. Noboa succeeds in dollarizing Ecuador's economy, the country would be forced to raise funds to cover a fiscal deficit and a serious banking crisis by quickly selling assets, says Agustín Hurtado, an adviser to Ecuador's Finance Ministry. Mr. Noboa 'will have to start a plan of very aggressive privatizations and very soon,' he says."

Despite the relatively small size of the Ecuadoran economy, there are several state-owned enterprises that would represent a big haul for investors and speculators. The country's oil industry has been valued between \$15 billion and \$20 billion, while the telecommunications and electricity sectors are worth approximately \$3 billion and \$7 million respectively. For their part, Wall Street's Ecuadoran junior partners see the new president as an ideal representative of their interests:

"Noboa's central power base is a sort of 'holy alliance' to which the economic elites of Quito and Guayaquil are putting the finishing touches. The president has the blessing of the business community as well as part of the financial sector which avoided falling into disgrace because of the worst economic crisis the country has ever had. This is their payback to Noboa for sticking with dollarization...."
—*Clarín* (Buenos Aires), 24 January

In other words, *dollarization, privatization and militarization* will be the watchwords for a *régimen sacadólares*—a regime of unfettered plunder which will bleed the country dry by massively shipping dollars to offshore accounts. They will seek to combine the last word in dollarized "modernity" with unbridled intensification of the racist oppression of the indigenous masses. As the U.S. economist Paul Krugman observed in the *New York Times* (19 January), by using Ecuador as "a sort of guinea pig for economic nostrums," the United States is preparing its response to the next "great financial crisis like the ones that struck Mexico in 1994 or Asia in 1997." The project of dollarizing its Latin American neo-colonies is part of its push to consolidate its trade bloc in the face of growing inter-imperialist rivalries.

Against the Bourgeoisie and Its Army, For Socialist Revolution

The "uprising" which installed the short-lived civilian-military junta highlighted the emergence of a layer of colonels and other members of the bourgeois officer corps who adopted a

dissident position tinged with a vague populist ideology. Military populism has a long history, not only in Ecuador—notably under general Rodríguez Lara (1972-76)—but also in many other parts of Latin America, from the regimes of Getúlio Vargas in Brazil (1930-45, 1951-54) to those of Gualberto Villarroel in Bolivia (1944-46), Velasco Alvarado in Peru (1968-75) and many others.

In an article entitled “Ecuador: A Testing Ground” (*La Jornada* [Mexico City], 22 January), political commentator Guillermo Almeyra put forward a “left” apology for military populism, going so far as to claim: “Grassroots nationalism, whether it be civilian or military, is necessarily anti-imperialist.” In reality, nationalism—capitalist ideology par excellence—has been used for imperialism’s benefit as a weapon to enslave, divide and conquer the working people, from the 1930s Chaco War between Bolivia and Paraguay to the border conflict between Ecuador and Peru.

One of the supposedly positive examples Almeyra cites is “the alliance between the People’s Assembly with constituent functions and the nationalist government of general Torres” in Bolivia (1970-71). But this popular front of the Altiplano, which wound up including everyone from military populists to the Communist Party and Guillermo Lora’s Partido Obrero Revolucionario, became historically notorious precisely because it *opened the door for the bloody coup of general Hugo Banzer* (who rules again today as president of a “democratized” Bolivia). There is a long history of *coronelazos* (colonels’ coups) in Latin America, but the disastrous effects of the opportunist left’s capitulation to uniformed populists are not limited to this continent: they were brought home with particular clarity in the mid-’70s Portuguese “Revolution of the Carnations.”

The role of military populism everywhere is to *subordinate the masses to the bourgeois state*, chaining and disarming them, and the outcome is to *strengthen the imperialist stranglehold*. Against the bourgeois officers, revolutionaries must prepare the formation of workers and peasants militias, which in a revolutionary situation would link up with committees of rank-and-file soldiers (workers and peasants in uniform) to smash the officer corps and destroy the entire “institution” of the capitalist armed forces, in a socialist revolution.

The events in Ecuador raised comparisons to the situation in Venezuela. Many spokesmen for the domesticated and disappointed “left” also sow illusions in the Venezuelan regime of Hugo Chávez. In fact, in the calls in Ecuador to dissolve the three branches of government and mobilize a civilian-military alliance against corruption, there were echoes of the demagoguery of Chávez and his Constituent Assembly. Yet Chávez’ is a 100 percent capitalist regime which chains the workers, will not hesitate one second before repressing them, and takes pains to woo imperialist investors.

For the Ecuadoran workers and peasants, suffering under the burden of the foreign debt, the real nature of Hugo Chávez’ regime is shown in his December 23 declaration—in the midst of the torrential rains and mudslides which devastated Venezuela—that payment of the debt is “*sacred*.” For his part, Chávez’ foreign minister José Vicente Rangel stressed: “Despite the heavy losses and the enormous impact [the disaster] will have

on the economy...the nation complies and continues to comply with foreign debt service payment commitments” (AP, 24 December 1999).

In Ecuador, the Stalinists have been among the most assiduous purveyors of illusions in the armed forces and “democratic” capitalists. Just before the “uprising,” the Partido Comunista Marxista-Leninista de Ecuador (PCMLE) helped set the stage for the civilian-military junta, declaring:

“Out with Mahuad, and in his place we believe it is opportune to constitute a Patriotic Government of National Unity, which guided by an anti-crisis program with a sovereign and patriotic content, and which defends and attends to the needs of the people, will be made up of the popular organizations, sectors of the small and medium producers (artisans, industrialists, representatives of the countryside), democratic political sectors, democratic elements of the Armed Forces and Police, progressive sectors of the churches, and by no means those who have been part of prior governments responsible for current living conditions.”

—*En Marcha*, 10-16 January

This yearned-for alliance with “democratic officers” is the most perfect expression of the bankruptcy of the Stalinist program of “two-stage” revolution. The “democratic/anti-imperialist” stage means turning the workers and Indian peasants over to their civilian-military hangmen.

As we stressed in our January 16 leaflet, advanced workers and youth who want to put an end to capitalist misery must embrace Trotskyism, the revolutionary Marxism of our time, as the urgent task is to build a genuine revolutionary vanguard party. The liberation of Ecuador’s indigenous masses from their centuries-long oppression, the liberation of the black workers of the coast (and of the Chota Valley), of the oil workers, of working women, of all the oppressed and exploited, will not be achieved through civilian-military populism with its Stalinist tail, but through international socialist revolution.

The following are translated excerpts from the El Internacionalista leaflet of 16 January 2000.

The Deadly Trap of Class Collaboration

Behind the call to overthrow the current government and install a “people’s parliament,” the leaders of the current protests present a program for remaining within the framework of the capitalist system. In fact, CONAIE president Antonio Vargas demands that power be taken by “a junta made up of one military officer, one religious leader and one civilian, to replace the Executive Branch” (*Página/12* [Buenos Aires], 16 January). Expressing the outlook of desperate small proprietors, he demands that the banks provide loans to “create micro-enterprises.” Yet the poverty in Ecuador’s countryside and cities can in no fashion be ended through tiny plots of land and small businesses. The Ecuadoran toilers urgently need class-struggle politics and a revolutionary program. *There is no solution within the capitalist system*. Yet what the “left” has offered them is in reality the antithesis of genuine communism.

After the capitalist counterrevolution which destroyed the Soviet Union, and the disappearance of Ecuador’s old pro-Mos-

cow “Communist” (in reality, Stalinist) Party, the largest force on the “Marxist” left has been the PCMLE, inheritor of the Maoist variant of Stalinism. The PCMLE leads the Movimiento Popular Democrático (MPD), which has a significant presence in Congress and heads the teachers union as well as much of the student movement. The MPD has also been the target of repression, for example the murder of its leader Jaime Hurtado, the country’s only well-known black politician.

The MPD and PCMLE put forward the slogans of “people’s power” and an “anti-imperialist democratic revolution,” in line with the Stalinist dogma of two-stage revolution.... What this means in practice has been shown with particular clarity in Ecuador. On 11 March 1999, the MPD published the manifesto of the “People’s Congress,” in which it played a central role, saying “we call on the Church, the media, the Armed Forces, the universities and polytechnic schools, the businessmen, the social forces and democratic political forces in order to promote a genuine NATIONAL ACCORD which will urgently allow us to confront the crisis.”

Seven days later, teachers union head Stalin Vargas, one of the main spokesmen for the MPD and PCMLE, justified these groups’ forming a pact with the government in the midst of a teachers strike, saying: “The Government’s accord with a very representative majority bloc is important, because Mahuad had to retreat” from austerity measures (*El Comercio* [Quito], 19 March 1999). These words echo today as a cruel irony of the opportunist policy of deceiving the workers in the service of the ruling class.

Meanwhile, Stalinist nationalism manifested itself in a most repugnant form over the war between Ecuador and Peru for the Tiwinza region in the Amazon. In a May 1999 declaration, the PCMLE underlined that the conflict as well as the agreement to end it “seek to consolidate the governments of Mahuad and Fujimori.” Yet at the same time it cries out “Our territory was given away”! The declaration denounces the government for “accepting peace at any cost” in the peace treaty signed with Peru in October 1998, saying this showed “the anti-patriotic nature” of the governing coalition, which accepted a “new territorial reduction...a cruel blow to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the nation.” The MPD even boasts of having organized a “Patriotic Conference in Defense of National Sovereignty.”

Defending “its own” bourgeois fatherland in an identical way, on the other side of the border the Maoist Communist Party of Peru (Sendero Luminoso) upholds Peruvian nationalism. First it observes that the border conflict is used by both governments to “silence opposition to their nefarious plans.” And then it turns right around and says: “We alert the entire people that the fascist, genocidal dictatorship, which sells out the fatherland because of its desires and the pressure of imperialism, is once again plotting to give away part of our fatherland’s territory” (declaration of the PCP Central Committee, February 1998).



Indians protesting Mahuad government confront riot cops, January 19.

Thus, with chauvinist calls to defend “our territory” in an uninhabited jungle, the Stalinists help their respective bourgeoisies pit Ecuadoran and Peruvian workers against each other, trampling the watchword of Marx and Engels’ *Communist Manifesto*: “The workers have no fatherland.... Proletarians of all countries, unite!”

The Program of Permanent Revolution

Against class collaboration and the Stalinist lie of “two-stage revolution,” we fight for the Trotskyist program of *permanent revolution*. In countries of belated capitalist development, “democratic” tasks—such as agrarian revolution, emancipation from the imperialist yoke, and the liberation of indigenous peoples, who make up at least 40 percent of Ecuador’s population—can only be accomplished through the seizure of power by the proletariat, supported by the poor peasants.

At the same time, it is clear that the workers of Ecuador cannot solve their problems alone. Despite all the verbiage about the “Bolivarian dream,” the weak bourgeoisie proved incapable of uniting the region; it fragmented it and sought constantly to divide the workers with the weapon of nationalism. Yet the growing difficulties of Latin American capitalist regimes present important opportunities for uniting the workers across national boundaries.

To survive, a revolution in Latin America must extend to the empire to the North. A symbol of this potential is the “human bridge” of immigrant workers who constitute a dynamic and growing part of the U.S. working class. In a situation where Ecuador’s minimum wage is less than \$62 a month, and given the collapse of many industries and traditional artisan activities, some 400,000 Ecuadorans have emigrated in the last two years. Many have made the dangerous trip to North America, which usually costs at least \$7,000.

Far from landing in a golden paradise, those who succeed in making it to the U.S. encounter pitiless exploitation in gar-

continued on page 71

Social Democrat/Christian Democrat Coalition
Paved the Way – No New Popular Front!

Sinister Fascist Haider Behind Rightist Government in Austria

On February 4, a new coalition government of the conservative Catholic Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) and the fascist Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) of Jörg Haider – infamous for his provocative approval of the Third Reich – was sworn into office. The result was international uproar, a diplomatic "boycott" of Austria by the European Union and a massive wave of protest in Austria itself, culminating in the largest anti-government demonstration in post-war Austrian history, over 250,000, in Vienna on February 19. The long-ignored Alpine and Danube republic suddenly became the center of world attention. Along with this has come a heated debate on the left over whether Haider and his FPÖ are merely "ordinary right-wing populists," as a host of reformists and centrists maintain, or, as *The Internationalist* warns, a fascist threat to working people, immigrants, Jews and leftists.

The ÖVP/FPÖ coalition regime is the second European government of its type since 1945. The reappearance of governments with participation of fascist parties is a direct consequence of the counterrevolutionary wave which destroyed the Soviet Union, swept through Eastern Europe in 1989-1992 and led to a rise of racist reaction throughout the continent. In Italy in 1994, the fascists of Gianfranco Fini's National Alliance were part of the government of right-wing media magnate Silvio Berlusconi, which aimed at establishing a "strong state" capable of pushing through massive cuts in wages and social benefits. But Berlusconi's coalition, inherently unstable, proved to be incapable of disciplining the Italian working class, and was soon replaced by a "center-left" government which vowed to carry out economic "reforms" destroying decades of union gains. Now that the popular front has run out of steam, Berlusconi and Fini are once again waiting at the door to finish the dirty work.



Austrian chancellor Wolfgang Schüssel (left) and his shadow chancellor, Jörg Haider (right), leader of the fascist Freedom Party (FPÖ).

In both cases, direct governmental participation by barely disguised fascist forces marks a shift in capitalism's governing arrangements following the end of the anti-Soviet Cold War. In Italy, a regime crisis was set off by the unraveling of the Christian Democratic Party that had run the country since World War II. The new Austrian government, coming after three decades of the Social Democratic Party (SPÖ) in office, the last 13 years in coalition with the ÖVP, marks a turning point for the postwar Second Republic. Whatever the particular governmental constellation, Austrian political life since 1945 has been dominated by the "Proporz", the proportional sharing out of cabinet posts and government jobs between the two large "people's parties," the SPÖ and ÖVP. After joining the European Union (EU) in 1995, the introduction of the Euro at the beginning of 1999 and the U.S./UN/NATO imperialist war on Yugoslavia next door in the Balkans last spring, this comfortable condominium of a provincial backwater was no longer adequate for Austria's bourgeoisie.

What comes next? Haider proclaims his support for no-holds-barred "free enterprise," vowing to privatize all of Austria's still

Forge a Trotskyist Party –
For a Revolutionary Workers Government!

sizeable state economic sector. While slyly avoiding the responsibility of a ministerial post (and even, for international consumption, pretending to step down from the formal leadership of his party), Haider has offered the FPÖ as the cutting edge of a massive onslaught on wages, pensions and welfare benefits. "At bottom Haider is right," says Lorenz Fritz, general secretary of the Austrian Union of Industrialists, hailing the "long overdue reforms" like privatization and official Austrian entry into NATO which the ÖVP/FPÖ coalition government promises. Fritz traveled to Berlin to set German bankers and industrialists straight on the issue (*Frankfurter Rundschau*, 24 February).

The ÖVP's decision to ally with the FPÖ meant an acceleration of the racist anti-working-class attacks of the previous class-collaborationist regime. Despite the hypocritical condemnation by Austria's imperialist partners of the EU, the coalition with Haider's FPÖ represents a new step in the legitimization of fascist and fascist parties, in this smug little imperialist state left over from the collapse of the Habsburg monarchy's Austro-Hungarian empire. While many simply equate fascism with Nazism and Greater German imperialism, it should be remembered that Austria also had another strain of domestic fascism. The Second Republic, which Haider vows to replace with a Third Republic, is a successor both to the German Third Reich (to which it was willingly annexed in 1938) and the Austrian First Republic, whose demise in the mid-'30s was marked by the domination of "Austro-fascism."

The bourgeois press has tried to calm the waters, claiming that Haider "apologized" for his infamous and provocative praise of Nazi rule. Yet as recently as this February, the FPÖ leader told the Hamburg daily *Die Welt* that only "individual" members of the Waffen-SS made "mistakes," and he has blamed the international uproar on a Jewish conspiracy in Washington. Austrian Social Democrats along with various reformist and even centrist leftists claim that the "Haider phenomenon" is just a case of a "protest vote." Where are Haider's stormtroopers? they ask, claiming that his is just a parliamentary party. Many incredibly compare Haider's FPÖ with Margaret Thatcher's Conservative Party in Britain, or at most equate it with Umberto Bossi's Lega Nord in Italy or Hitler apologist Pat Buchanan in the United States. The "socialist" electoral-cretinists are buying Haider's electoral disguise!

The FPÖ is analogous to the German Republikaner, Le Pen's National Front (FN) in France or Fini's National Alliance (AN—formerly MSI) in Italy—all of them fascist parties whose main public activity is electoral participation. Far from being mere

For All-Out Workers Mobilization to Smash Racist Terror and Privatization Onslaught!



Roland Schlager/APA

State Police (Stapo) haul away protester in early February as Austria erupts with mass protests against clerical-conservative/fascist coalition regime.

parliamentary machines, they serve as a "respectable" cover for the fascist terror squads. Both in Austria and Germany, the Nazi bombers work in symbiosis with the largely electoral parties that share their fascist politics. Haider is the most successful of this sinister milieu in hiding in the sheep's clothing of provincial electoralism. But this is only a disguise, and the teeth are already showing. *Instead of lulling workers, immigrants, women, Jews and leftists by assuring them that the FPÖ is just a run-of-the-mill conservative "populist" party, or looking for "solidarity" to the European Union imperialists who terror-bombed Yugoslavia, revolutionary Marxists must warn that the new ÖVP/FPÖ government is preparing for class war on the working people. Haider & Co. can be defeated only through the struggle for socialist revolution throughout Europe.*

EU "Sanctions": Imperialist Terror Bombers Moralize

In the Austrian elections of October 1999, Haider's FPÖ received 27 percent of the vote, a few hundred votes ahead of the ÖVP and not far behind the SPÖ (33 percent). Much has been written about the FPÖ's electoral gains since Haider took over its leadership in 1986, and about his "populist" appeal. It is even claimed that the FPÖ has become "the party of the working class" after the SPÖ lost some 230,000 votes to Haider. In reality, the core of the FPÖ's support has always been the petty bourgeoisie—the urban middle classes, from traditional shopkeepers to high tech yuppies, as well as the peasantry. Haider's rhetoric against "red bureaucrats," "layabouts," "late-sleepers" and the like is

geared to such layers.

But the battering ram for Haider's electoral rise is virulent racism, the endless attacks against alleged Albanian welfare cheats, Rumanian pickpockets, Polish swindlers, etc. FPÖ election posters routinely call for an end to "Überfremdung" ("over-foreignization"), a favorite term of Nazi propagandist Goebbels. FPÖ parliamentary deputies thunder against "Umvolkung," a supposed "population switch" in which "decent Austrians" are being replaced by immigrant "spongers."

The bourgeois press has noted that Austria is the seventh richest state in the world per capita, and unemployment is "only" 6.7 percent. Nonetheless, the SPÖ election campaign rhetoric that "Austria never had it so good" failed to convince. The FPÖ and ÖVP waged a fear campaign, stressing Austria's common border with four states that are up for admission to the European Union: Slovenia, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Widespread anti-Slavic sentiment among Austria's German-speaking population goes back over a century. Prejudice against the Slovenian minority is particularly acute in the southeastern province of Kärnten (Carinthia), where Haider is governor. And the claim to be defending "Western Christian civilization" against Islam goes back to the 16th century, when "the Turk" (the Ottoman Empire) was "stopped at Vienna's gates." Together with rampant anti-Semitism, this poisonous mixture is a culture medium for fascism.

Since the early '90s, "European integration" – which will not result in a supranational state, but rather a continental economic bloc under German imperialist hegemony directed against the U.S. and Asia – has particularly meant coordination among the national bourgeoisies to bar their frontiers to Third World and Balkan refugees. Austria established strict quotas for immigrant labor in 1993 and in October 1998 reintroduced entry visas. At the same time, it mobilized several thousand soldiers to guard its frontiers. Now Austria's borders are watched over by infrared sensors, with army helicopters rushing to the scene of any "intrusion." With the elimination of most internal passport controls under the EU's Schengen Treaty, Austria has become the southeastern bastion of a racist "Festung Europa" (fortress Europe).

Austrian Imperialism Back in the Balkans



Bundesheer

Austrian contingent (AUCON/KFOR) of NATO occupation force in Kosovo, here patrolling bridge at Mitrovica, flashpoint of Albanian-Serb tensions, earlier this year. Austrian troops were part of German sector, now are under U.S. command.

ghettoizing some 740,000 mainly Turkish and ex-Yugoslav immigrant workers and their families without legal rights.

In view of the fact that every European capitalist government, whether of the right or the "left," is similarly deporting refugees, unleashing racist police terror against immigrants, dismantling social programs while beefing up their war machines, the EU's diplomatic boycott of the new Austrian government is of course rank hypocrisy. Indeed, yuppie fascist Haider published an article in the *Daily Telegraph* noting the "amazing similarities" between his program and that of yuppie social democrat Tony Blair's "New Labour" (notably dismantling the welfare state, hard line against refugees and immigrants). But Haider is whipping up enraged petty-bourgeois elements for ruthless terror against "foreigners" and the organized working class.

Despite the talk of imperialist "European unity," what's most notable about the EU "boycott" is its largely cosmetic quality. Blair's Britain has paraded its indifference and German Green foreign minister Fischer has kept channels open to the ÖVP, while superciliously lecturing Vienna that the German Fourth Reich, presumably unlike Austria, has "overcome" its Nazi past – so now the Luftwaffe can bomb Belgrade with abandon!

According to the conservative *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (11 February) the diplomatic boycott was "conceived in the Balkan war," i.e., the U.S./UN/NATO imperialist attack on Yugoslavia. No doubt it is useful for the EU in the name of "human rights" imperialism to refurbish its "democratic" cre-

Those refugees who manage to get in face redoubled racist cop terror. On the eve of last year's elections the ÖVP/SPÖ government launched "Operation Spring," rounding up some 70 black Africans for deportation. The deadly consequences of such raids were illustrated by the case of Marcus Omofuma, smothered and beaten to death by Austrian cops during his airborne deportation. Also in 1999, the racist popular-front SPÖ/ÖVP government further hardened up the already restrictive laws on citizenship. As in Germany, Austrian citizenship is based on "blood" (ethnicity) and not territoriality,

dentials by wagging its collective finger at Haider for his overtly pro-Nazi remarks. But it is not Haider's racist filth or even his admiration of the Waffen SS which provokes "concern" among Europe's capitalist rulers. Rather, it is his continuing anti-EU demagoguery. And despite the lamentations of "leftist" and rightist defenders of Austrian "national sovereignty" against the EU, Austria is not Serbia. Even after the loss of three-quarters of its territory with the demise of the Habsburg empire in World War I, Austria is an imperialist power in its own right, albeit a minor one.

Austria's military collaborates closely with NATO and, as in two world wars of the last century, it is a stepping stone for German imperialist domination of the continent. The tiny country's sizeable war industry (based on the former Hermann Göring Works, nationalized by the imperialist Allies after the war to keep the USSR from seizing the installations as war reparations) has long been a major supplier of tanks and military weaponry to Third World dictatorships, notably Argentina and Chile in the 1970s. "Neutral" Austria served as a base for anti-Soviet operations in the Cold War, culminating in the 1989 opening of the Hungarian border for East Germans (in which a leading protagonist was Count Otto von Habsburg). Today Vienna is a hub for imperialist operations in southeastern Europe. An Austrian, Wolfgang Reitsch, is the High Representative running the imperialist protectorate in Bosnia, where Austrian troops are stationed. Last fall, Reitsch spoke together with Hamin Thaçi of the NATO puppet UCK (Kosovo Liberation Army) in a meeting organized by the SPÖ and hosted by the Austrian Bank.

Although Austria still maintains the fiction of "neutrality," Austrian troops have participated in the NATO occupation of Kosovo from the outset. After establishing a beachhead in Dürres in Albania, as the Yugoslav army withdrew, elements of the Austrian Bundesheer (federal army) rushed to Pizren to join up with the German Bundeswehr. The previous SPÖ/ÖVP cabinet authorized an Austrian contingent including infantry and an armored ranger brigade with a total strength of 500 soldiers, as part of the German sector. Recently the contingent was transferred to eastern Kosovo, where under U.S. command it has been authorized to take part in all military actions, including offensive ("preventive") missions (*Profil*, 8 May).

France, Belgium and Italy led the EU chorus for diplomatic "sanctions" over Haider, because these countries possess sig-

nificant fascist parties whose existence poses a thorny problem for bourgeois conservatives. In the last French elections, the question of allying with the National Front threw the Gaullists into turmoil. Yet the German Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU) – and indeed most of the European conservative bourgeois press – are in favor of the Vienna coalition, arguing that government responsibility will teach Haider moderation. Meanwhile, Haider has been sitting in the Regional Committee of the European Community for the last year. After a "decent interval" to overcome public "Haider shock," one can rest assured that the European bourgeoisies will drop their moral pretenses and get back to the usual horsetrading and backstabbing of imperialist diplomacy, just as they did over the Waldheim affair in the mid-'80s, when the UN general secretary and former Austrian president was revealed to be a Wehrmacht intelligence officer implicated in Nazi war crimes.

More basically, the EU sanctions are an ideological cover for "human rights" imperialism. They are ultimately preparation for new wars and great power blackmail in East Europe and elsewhere. The moralizing social democrats and Greens in Paris and Berlin are imperialist terror bombers, responsible for murdering and starving people from Baghdad to Belgrade. The anti-immigrant racist repression and deportations in Austria, in turn, mirror conditions throughout capitalist West Europe, while the program of the rightist FPÖ/ÖVP government in Vienna to dismantle the *Sozialstaat* (welfare state) is a sharpened expression of the austerity cut-

backs ordered by the EU in all its member states in preparation for launching the Euro common currency. In the fight against the FPÖ fascists and their ÖVP clerical-conservative coalition partners there can be no "solidarity" with the EU.

Friedrich Engels once remarked that the small nations of Europe often serve as political laboratories for the great powers. So too with Austria today, the entry of the FPÖ into a government coalition is a sinister development for the world proletariat. What is required is a fight to drive out all the bourgeois parties and to break the stranglehold of the Social Democracy, which for decades has loyally administered the affairs of state of Austrian capital. Nor can the fight be limited to tiny Austria. Events there are a harbinger of coming class battles elsewhere in Europe, most immediately in Italy. To successfully lead a struggle for Europe-wide socialist revolution requires above all the forging of a Bolshevik-internationalist leadership.



Helene Waldner/Profil

Chauvinist FPÖ 1999 election poster uses Nazi phrase, calling to "Stop Over-Foreignization!"



Social Democratic-led February 19 Vienna protest against ÖVP/FPÖ coalition. No "solidarity" with EU imperialist war criminals!

Popular-Front Protest and Police Repression

The Austrian bourgeoisie and Social Democracy are chiefly concerned to demonstrate to world bourgeois opinion that Austria is "democratic." In a January 31 statement, the head of the Austrian Union Federation (ÖGB), Fritz Verzetnitsch, remarked: "The behavior of the FPÖ must not lead foreign countries to characterize Austria and her people as radical right-wingers." Verzetnitsch added that "FPÖ voters cannot be generally categorized as right-wing radicals." This is not about the fact that Haider's party has picked up a lot of protest votes, or merely flattering the FPÖ electorate, some of whom used to vote SPÖ. The Social Democrats complain only of Haider's "intemperate" language because they largely share his policies of closing Austria's borders to immigrants and refugees, and have no intention of mobilizing genuine class struggle against the new government's assault on the working class. The SPÖ/ÖGB has been a mainstay of the Nazi-infested bourgeois Second Republic, instrumental in the creation of the FPÖ as a catch-basin for "ex"-Nazis and in making it parliamentarily respectable.

Before the elections Haider had declared that SPÖ interior minister Schlögl was "his man in the cabinet." Just as the Mitterrand popular front paved the way for the rise of Le Pen's fascist FN in France, and the German SPD's 1992 decision to gut the right of asylum gave the green light to anti-"foreigner" skinhead pogroms in Rostock, the Austrian SPÖ/ÖVP's anti-immigrant repression made Haider's racist demagoguery ever more respectable. Meanwhile, in failed coalition talks with the ÖVP, the Social Democrats tried to out-bid Haider & Co. in anti-worker cutbacks, agreeing to raise the retirement age from 60 to 62 years, introduce tuition in education, slash pensions, cut subsidies to the state railroads and prepare wholesale privatization of the state sector. In addition, they promised to accelerate Austria's entry into NATO.

But the international uproar over Haider proved a useful tool for the SPÖ to position itself as the "democratic" opposition,

pressuring the ÖVP to live up to its "Christian values" and repudiate the coalition with the FPÖ. To avoid focusing on the new government's austerity and privatization program or its racist terror, the *leitmotiv* of the huge April 19 Vienna demonstration "against the black-blue coalition" (the colors of the ÖVP and FPÖ respectively) was concern over Austria's international reputation. The demonstration call highlighted: "We are for an Austria that productively cooperates with the EU.... We are for an Austria that is not led into total isolation." To underline the point, many demonstrators waved blue EU flags.

An earlier (February 1-2) protest and occupation of the ÖVP headquarters called "For a humane Austria and against a coalition pact of the ÖVP and the FPÖ." In effect, these demos were calling for a return to the Social-Democratic/Peoples Party (SPÖ/ÖVP) "grand coalition" whose bankruptcy led to

the growth of Haider's party. Other alternatives put forward by some groups were a smaller popular front with the bourgeois Greens, or a minority Social Democratic government (which would in fact rely on parliamentary "toleration" by the right). Such popular-front demonstrations serve to divert opposition into the dead-end of bourgeois coalition politics.

There was and is plenty of opposition to Haider among the intelligentsia (one of Haider's favorite targets), anti-racist youth and sections of the trade-union movement, such as the railway workers whose jobs are directly threatened by the ÖVP/FPÖ's privatization schemes. Throughout February and into March there were almost daily demonstrations against the new rightist coalition government. Yet despite the anger and militancy of some of these protests, they were ultimately channelled into the massive February 19 demonstration which was politically dominated by the Social Democracy.

The Social Democrats acted through such organizations as SOS-Mitmensch, which has specialized in toothless "anti-racist" protests alibiing the racist SPÖ/ÖVP coalition which previously ruled the country. After the May 1999 police murder of Omofuma, SOS-Mitmensch rushed to advise the government on how it could more "humanely" deport refugees, by giving pre-flight medical check-ups and sending along "companions" from "non-governmental organizations" on its deportation charters!

On February 19, SOS-Mitmensch demonstration organizers gave full support to the police, which attempted to isolate contingents of radical youth, some of whom were brutalized. Before the march, a group from the Left Student Association of Tübingen in Germany was attacked by cops of a black-uniformed "Cobra" special police squad. The ninja cops slammed the students against the wall, then took them into a nearby house to continue the beating in private, taking their shoes and warning them to get out of town.

During the march, the Staatspolizei (Stapo – state police) unsuccessfully tried to separate off a contingent of semi-anar-

chist Autonomen from Berlin, beating several participants. Afterwards, as demonstrators were dispersing, the Stapo went on the offensive. Groups were bottled up in narrow streets of the city center as cops sprang out of police buses to beat them. In one case, some managed to flee into the nearby Burgtheater where the prominent intellectuals were swearing to “resist” the new coalition. But in the face of a police attack on Autonomen, it took a lengthy debate before the liberal celebrities would even agree to send out a commission to see what was going on in the streets! And this was only a mild taste of what is to come under the clerical-conservative/fascist coalition government.

From the moment it took office, the new regime immediately began to step up repression. In particular the Vienna riot cops (WEGA), notoriously full of FPÖ fascists, have again and again attacked leftist contingents in the course of the anti-Haider demonstrations. In one case, on March 2, which was captured on film, masked cops in plain clothes pulled two leftists out of a taxi at gunpoint in order to bundle them into an unmarked car. The parallel to “disappearances” carried out in Chile or Argentina was unmistakable and no doubt intentional. It turned out the cops were from a new “anti-crime” squad (SEK) to which cops from various police sections are recruited on a voluntary basis.

In line with the FPÖ’s election campaign, immigrants are a particular target of the mounting police action. On March 8, cops stormed offices of the Green Party in Vienna – without a search

warrant – which house a counselling center for refugees. They had allegedly received an “anonymous telephone call” reporting a black African with a pistol there. Eight refugees were rounded up for deportation. On May 3, an African immigrant was found dead under mysterious circumstances in a Vienna jail. And on May 20, when several hundred protesters gathered after hearing that police had shot a man to death in his car (supposedly while looking for drugs, although no drugs were found), riot cops trapped demonstrators in central Vienna’s narrow streets and began beating them mercilessly.

Nazis and Clerical Fascists in Austria

The new rise of fascism under Jörg Haider has historical roots that go back to the origins of the Austrian state. ÖVP chancellor (prime minister) Wolfgang Schüssel has reportedly declared, “I am not Dollfuss and Haider is not Hitler” (quoted in

Jungle World, 8 March). But Schüssel protests too much, for he is indeed the political heir of Engelbert Dollfuss (a portrait of this clerical-bonapartist dictator, who crushed the working class and outlawed its organizations after a four-day civil war in 1934, still hangs in the meeting room of the ÖVP parliamentary fraction). As for Haider and the FPÖ, they are the political heirs of both the Austrian Nazis and the “Austro-fascists” of the 1930s.

From the beginning of the 19th century, Austria was the focal point of European reaction. Under Count Metternich, the 1815 Congress of Vienna gave rise to a counterrevolutionary “Holy Alliance” of the dynastic Great Powers of Europe. A liberal bourgeoisie appeared in the Austro-Hungarian Empire for but a moment, during the abortive bourgeois revolution of 1848. It quickly rallied to the Habsburg monarchy, fearing mobilization of the plebeian masses. Toward the turn of the century, as the Austrian Social Democracy became a mass workers party, the dominant force in Austrian bourgeois politics was that of Catho-

lic reaction. Its most “popular” representative before the First World War was anti-Semitic demagogue Karl Lueger, three times mayor of Vienna, and his Christian Social Party. Hitler later declared that he had learned his anti-Semitism from Lueger. To this day there is a major street named after Lueger in the city center!

In this constellation, there was little political space for a so-called “third force” between Catholic reaction and Social Democracy. The secular/anti-clerical bourgeoisie



AWID

Vienna riot police, stronghold of Haider fascists, attack demonstrators at February 4 protest against ÖVP/FPÖ government.

and petty bourgeoisie oriented toward *Anschluss* (incorporation) into the no less reactionary German Reich. Thus the 19th-century Deutschnationaler Verein (German national union) of von Schönerer – which the FPÖ sees as its political ancestor – was anti-Semitic, anti-Slav and anti-Catholic. The principal historian of Austrian fascism commented: “Since the days of Georg von Schönerer, the *Burschenschaften* [student fraternities], *Turnerschaften* [athletic clubs] and many similar clubs possessed a *völkisch* [racial/nationalist] and anti-Semitic ideology to a far greater extent than was the case in Germany” (F.L. Carsten, *Faschismus in Österreich* [1977]).

Even before the end of the First World War, the multinational Austro-Hungarian empire had disintegrated. The German-speaking rump, which after the war became Austria, was barred by the imperialist victors from uniting with Germany for 20 years. Until 1934 there was a deadlock between the numeri-

cally strong Austrian Social Democracy – which despite its “Marxist” and even “revolutionary” rhetoric, mobilized in 1918 to prevent proletarian revolution and stabilize a *bourgeois* republic – and the forces of clerical reaction. Under the leadership of Archbishop Piffel and the priest Ignaz Seipel (who became chancellor in 1920), the Christian Social Party ran the national government while the Social Democrats administered “Red Vienna.” In 1927, the Social Democrats’ *Schutzbund* (Republican Guard) clashed with police, leading to a general strike and pitched battle against the fascist Heimwehr (Home Defense Force). The conservatives’ hold was shaken, and two years later they amended the constitution to strengthen the executive’s powers.

In March 1933, shortly after Hitler took power, Seipel’s successor Dollfuss shut down parliament and proceeded to rule by decree. He founded the Fatherland Front to draw in the Heimwehr, which was closely tied to Mussolini’s Italy. (The chief of staff of this fascist militia was Waldemar Pabst, the Freikorps officer who in January 1919 murdered Communist leaders Rosa Luxemburg



Institut für Zeitgeschichte (Vienna)

Social Democrats’ *Schutzbund* (Republican Guards) march in Vienna, 1926.



ÖBV

Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss, speaking at September 1933 mass rally, declared clerical-corporatist regime “under strong authoritarian leadership.”

and Karl Liebknecht on orders of the Social Democratic Ebert/Noske regime in Berlin.) The Communist Party (KPÖ) and *Schutzbund* were banned. In February 1934 Dollfuss moved against the Social Democracy. The workers militias of the *Schutzbund* fought heroically, but were crushed by the army. Their SPÖ leadership had no stomach to lead a decisive battle for power: they simply called a general strike and waited.

The military’s Defense Handbook later summed up the fighting:

“The attitude of the revolutionaries was on the whole one of biding their time, and was geared only to the defense of arms depots and to their most important strongpoints. This undeniably facilitated the counterattack by government security forces, operating under concerted command.”

– quoted in Ilona Duczynska, *Workers in Arms: The Austrian *Schutzbund* and the Civil War of 1934* [1978]

Unfortunately, the *Schutzbund* leaders were far from being revolutionaries. Army artillery bombarded the workers housing projects such as Karl-Marx-Hof for days. Hundreds were killed and 10,000 arrested. After the defeat of the working class, Dollfuss moved to consolidate a “Christian corporate state,” what became known as “Austro-fascism.” But his attempts to “out-Hitler” the Austrian Nazis failed, and a few months later Dollfuss was assassinated during an abortive Nazi putsch.

His successor Kurt Schuschnigg presided over a bonapartist regime with shrinking popular support. Carsten noted, “The regime hung on, because it had help from abroad, principally from Italy and because the forces of the church, the executive, the army, the police and the bureaucracy supported it.” The Nazis had won the support not only of the *Burschenschaften* and *Turnerschaften* but also of large sections of the Heimwehr. Schuschnigg had to agree to Nazi participation in the government and in 1938 there was no significant resistance to *Anschluss*, the incorporation of Austria into the

Third Reich. The Catholic hierarchy had given up its Austrian clerical state and made its peace with the Nazis. Indeed, hundreds of thousands greeted Austrian-born Hitler on his triumphant entry into Vienna.

Altogether, 688,000 Austrians were members of the NSDAP (National Socialist German Workers Party – the Nazi party), a quarter of the entire adult population. Austrian participation in the Nazi Holocaust was even more pronounced. Although Austria accounted for only eight percent of the population of the Third Reich, Austrian Nazis provided one-third of the personnel of the SS extermination machine – among others Adolf Eichmann, who organized the mass deportation of millions of Jews to the extermination camps; his right-hand man Alois Brunner, responsible for the massacre of 50,000 Jews in Thessaloniki, Greece and 25,000 from France’s Drancy concentration camp; and Franz Stangl, the commandant of Treblinka. Some 180,000 Austrians joined the Waffen-SS, notorious for its massacres in East Europe and the Soviet Union. More than a thousand Austrian policemen participated in the *Einsatzkommandos* (Nazi death squads) – and kept their jobs after 1945 (as did the Austrian policeman who arrested Anne Frank in Amsterdam).

Nor did Austrian capitalists do poorly out of *Anschluss*. The Nazi economic takeover of Yugoslavia relied heavily on Austrian businessmen, who had large holdings in the region, and on Austrian military officers like Kurt Waldheim. Key sections of Austrian industry, such as the iron and steel industry in Linz and truck construction in the Steiermark, were built with slave labor. In 1938, 70,000 Jewish apartments and 25,000 Jewish-owned businesses were “Aryanized” in Vienna alone. Yet upon the liberation of Vienna by the Soviet army in March 1945, the Allied powers whitewashed the Austrian bourgeoisie with what was to be the *Lebenslüge* (vital lie) of the Second Republic: Austria was declared “Hitler’s first victim” rather than an enthusiastic participant in the Third Reich. Instead of writing a new constitution, occupation authorities restored the 1920 constitution, as amended in 1929 – the very constitution used by Dollfuss to install a clerical-fascist regime. “Austro-fascist” ex-premier Schuschnigg, jailed by Hitler following *Anschluss*, was rebaptized by the U.S. after the war as an “anti-fascist”!

Haider’s Takeover of the FPÖ: Fascists Consolidate

After a brief period of postwar cosmetic “denazification”, a Union of Independents (VdU) was formed in 1949, becoming the Freedom Party (FPÖ) in 1956. Its very purpose was to be a right-wing electoral outlet for former Nazis, the *Ehemaligen* (“ex’s”), covered up by a thin layer of free-market “liberals” opposed to any state controls on capital. The VdU’s first chairman was Anton Reinthaller, a top leader of the Austrian NSDAP, an SS commander and minister in the 1938 Nazi government of Seyss-Inquart, which enabled Austria’s absorption into the Third Reich. Reinthaller’s successor and first head of the renamed Freedom



Der Spiegel

Hitler triumphantly enters Vienna after *Anschluss*, March 1938.

Party was Friedrich Peter, an unrepentant (“I went willingly...serving the Fatherland was never a disgrace”) veteran of the notorious First Infantry Brigade of the Waffen-SS, which massacred more than 10,000 Jews, Communists and partisans in the Soviet Union. Liberal VdU founder Herbert Kraus quit the FPÖ after its 1956 convention, declaring:

“This party convention is the confirmation of a long-prepared ‘takeover’ by a tiny circle of extreme right-wingers and former Nazi leaders. The moderate representatives in the VdU who remain in the FPÖ have been reduced to insignificance.... The FPÖ’s official declarations of ‘renunciation of extremism’ and being a ‘party of the center’ arise out of the need for camouflage which has become quite urgent.” –quoted in *Handbuch des österreichischen Rechts-extremismus* (1993)

Former SS man Peter was eventually replaced by Norbert Steger, the first FPÖ chairman who had no Nazi past. Particularly during the party’s “liberal” interlude, it was heavily involved in parliamentary maneuvering with the Social Democrats. The SPÖ in fact first suggested setting up the VdU, seeing it as a useful instrument to drain votes from the Catholic clerical People’s Party. In 1962-63, the Socialists funnelled 1 million schillings (the Austrian currency) in trade-union money to the FPÖ. In 1970, Chancellor Bruno Kreisky bought FPÖ support for his Socialist minority government by passing an election reform favoring small parties. A formal coalition in the mid-’70s was blocked by the revelation of FPÖ leader Peter’s war criminal past, but by the early ’80s the Socialists brought the Freedom Party under Steger into the cabinet. Even then, FPÖ defense minister Friedhelm Frischenschlager provoked a scandal in 1985 when he shook the hand of Nazi war criminal Walter Reder after Reder’s release from an Italian prison.

If the West German Free Democrats also served as a haven for Nazi war criminals (and in the last decade the FDP has thrown off a fascistic/reactionary wing with ties to Haider), its Austrian counterpart never had anything but a thin “national liberal” veneer. And this cover was blown off in 1986 when Jörg Haider led a successful putsch against Steger. This took



First FPÖ leader Friedrich Peter, veteran of infamous Waffen-SS brigade that massacred 10,000.

drunken pro-Haider delegates cursing their party leader Steger as a “*Jud*” (Yid) who should have been sent to the gas chambers. (Steger was not Jewish.) A public opinion researcher described the crowd:

“Those party functionaries who grew up in the dull reactionary milieu of myriad ‘Home Services,’ ‘Defense Fighters,’ ‘Sports Leagues,’ dueling fraternities, Teutonic phrases, Germanic chauvinism and historical distortion, the bizarre subculture of former Nazis, incorrigible ex-party comrades, nauseating veterans rituals – this inferior type of functionary who by his own emphatic statement would enthusiastically ‘march off to Russia again, at any time’ under a man like Jörg Haider, that spectrum that has right up to today given the FPÖ the reputation of being a party of the ex’s, the unregenerates, of shrill national conservatism, discovered in Jörg Haider its long hoped-for *Führer*.” –quoted in *Handbuch des österreichischen Rechts-extremismus*

Jörg Haider was born into the provincial Austrian milieu of fascist reaction. His father was one of the very first Austrian Nazis, joining the Hitler Youth in 1929 and the SA storm troopers in 1932. He participated in the 1934 attempted Nazi putsch against the Dollfuss regime and fled to Bavaria, returning after *Anschluss*. Haider’s mother was a member of the Nazis’ Bund deutscher Mädel (League of German Maidens). After the war, his parents joined the VdU and then the FPÖ. Now a millionaire, Jörg Haider lives from the income of a huge (38,000-acre) estate in Kärnten, inherited from a great uncle who extorted it from Jews fleeing the Nazis. Haider Jr. began his political career in 1965 as a provincial leader of the Freedom Youth Ring. (The associated Freedom Student Ring carried out the fascist bombing campaign against Italy in the South Tirol, dubbed the “children’s crusade.”) Haider later joined the Austrian

place amid the Austrian chauvinist backlash against international “interference” when it was revealed that Kurt Waldheim, Austria’s freshly elected president and former UN General Secretary, was another Nazi war criminal. Coming at the height of this scandal over Austria’s fascist past, the FPÖ convention where Haider’s coup took place was a cauldron of Nazi rhetoric, with

Turnerbund, the athletic association notorious as a breeding ground for fascists. Discovered by SS man Friedrich Peter, he began his rise to power in the FPÖ.

Haider would later claim that his notorious statements about the Third Reich were only playing up to the FPÖ’s “beer-hall Nazis,” a bunch of nostalgic geriatrics. On the contrary, they are the long-held convictions of a Nazi fascist whose “opportunism” consists of later issuing meaningless apologies for the gullible. As a 16-year-old Haider wrote an essay published in the fascist *Deutsche National-Zeitung* under the title “Austria Remains German.” His emphatic 1991 statement in the Kärnten provincial parliament that “in the Third Reich they had a proper employment policy, which your government in Vienna can’t even get together” was no slip of the tongue. This was a main theme of the Austrian Nazis in 1933-34 when his father was pasting Nazi leaflets on the walls. The remark temporarily cost Haider his position as provincial governor of Kärnten, but while for international consumption he “excused” his remarks, he insists that everything he said was true. His comment is still echoed by FPÖ members at party rallies (“Haider in the Witches’ Cauldron,” *Profil*, 13 March).

The list of Haider’s provocative remarks about the Third Reich is endless. In October 1990, addressing an annual meeting of World War II veterans at Ulrichsberg, including SS officers he said, “Our soldiers were not criminals, at most they were victims.” His 1995 statement to a group of Waffen-SS veterans praising them as “decent people of good character” who “remain true to their convictions” was not an isolated remark; a few months later, he again insisted that “The Waffen SS was part of the Wehrmacht [German army] and hence it deserves all honor and respect of the army in public life” (*ak*, 16 March). In February 1995 Haider boycotted ceremonies marking the 50th anniversary of the liberation of Mauthausen, referring to the concentration camp in upper Austria where genocide was carried out against Roma and Sinti (Gypsies) as one of the “punishment camps of National Socialism.” This statement, implying that the concentration camp victims (including many Communists and Socialists) deserved their fate, again was no slip: for years, Austrian Nazis and FPÖ supporters have inveighed against the “Mauthausen swindle.”

Haider’s “slips” are then elaborated by the likes of FPÖ ideologue Andreas Möltzer, whom Haider has put in charge of Kärnten’s cultural affairs. As editor of the magazine *Zur Zeit*, Möltzer was responsible for an article by one Hans Gamlich in its June 1999 issue in which Gamlich claimed that the Nazi gas chambers were a “myth” and called the 1941 Nazi attack on the USSR “an emergency preventive action” for the “defense of Europe” (from June 1999 report by the Documentary Archive of the Austrian Anti-Fascist Resistance [DÖW]). This putrid swamp would not be complete without David Irving, the fascist pseudo-historian and guru of German Nazis, who in 1986 gave a lecture in Graz sponsored by the Freedom Academic Union, an FPÖ front group, to denounce the “Auschwitz lie.” The FPÖ’s *Kärntner Nachrichten*, long edited by Möltzer, declared itself “eager” for discussion of Irving’s “thought-provoking theses” (cited in Hans Henning Scharsach’s biography, *Haiders Kampf* [1992]).

The FPÖ does not restrict itself to fascist historical “revisionism” – its propagation of Nazi lies is a preparation for action. Haider’s base has always been the province of Kärnten, which contains Austria’s largest national minority, more than 30,000 Slovenians. The rabid anti-Slavic racism of the German-speaking population earned it the title of the “Führer’s most faithful district” after *Anschluss*. In the 1970s, FPÖ fascists in the Kärntner Home Service and Kärntner Defense League carried out a campaign of intimidation and threats against “Slovenization.” World War II anti-Nazi resistance fighters in the region were denounced as “Tito Communists,” bilingual signs were destroyed in the so-called “local sign storm” and Slovenes were forced into segregated schools. Leading the anti-Slovenian campaign was Haider’s ideological godfather, the FPÖ federal deputy from Kärnten Otto Scrinzi, a former Nazi, SA Sturmführer and virulent anti-Semite who remarked that “I was always on the right, even in the NSDAP.”

Haider vainly tries to deny that the FPÖ is anti-Semitic or anti-black, even getting himself invited to a Martin Luther King Day event in New York this January where he sat on a dais with prominent Orthodox Jewish rabbis and Mayor Giuliani. Five years earlier, after a trip to Namibia he told an FPÖ audience that he had visited “former German Southwest Africa” to “check out a little about what living together with blacks is like when they are in the majority. Even there they can’t get anything together. It’s a hopeless case.” The FPÖ has been anti-Semitic from birth. In 1965, the year Haider joined the Freedom Youth, there was an uproar over anti-Semitic tirades by Vienna Nazi professor Taras Borodajkewycz, who denounced the German-Polish communist Rosa Luxemburg as a “Jewish rabble rouser,” and Kurt Eisner, leader of the short-lived 1918 Bavarian soviet republic, as a “coffee house Jew.” The Freedom Student Ring defended Borodajkewycz, chanting “Long live Auschwitz!” “Jews Out!” and fighting street battles with Socialist students in which an anti-fascist pensioner was killed.

For the last decade Haider has talked a lot about “Austria for the Austrians,” mainly as a bludgeon against Slavic, Turkish and other “non-Aryan” immigrant workers and refugees. But as of October 1996 Haider was still openly calling for the “maintenance of German nationality” (quoted in Brigitte Bailer-Galanda/Wolfgang Neugebauer, *Haider und die Freiheitlichen in Österreich* [1997]). The FPÖ’s definition of “nationality” is Nazi-style *Blut und Boden* (blood and soil) racism. A bizarre expression came from the second deputy chairman of the Federal Assembly, FPÖ businessman Thomas Prinzhorn, who claims that immigrants in Austria are receiving free hormone treatments to boost their birth rate! FPÖ literature warns of “black African asylum seekers with designer suits and mobile phones” who “deal in drugs undisturbed” (*New York Times Magazine*, 30 April). Such hate propaganda, the posters against *Überfremdung* (“over-foreignization”), the phobia about *Umvolkung* (“population replacement”), are incitements to racist violence. The 14 percent of Austria’s population that are immigrants are already subjected to frequent official harassment and police raids; with the FPÖ fascists now in office, the stage is set for anti-immigrant pogroms.

Haider’s Plans for a Bonapartist “Strong State”

Those who deny that Jörg Haider is a fascist – claiming that he is just a media savvy populist politician, a “mediocre populist” (*Berliner Zeitung*), a “rabid populist” (*Tageszeitung*) or a “mildly xenophobic” populist, “democrat” and “freedom lover” who “would never hurt anyone” (!) as the *New York Times* would have you believe – deliberately ignore the program of the FPÖ and its *Führer*. These are not just a bunch of backwoods types yodelling in the Alps in their *Lederhosen*. Two of its ministers notoriously own castles (Social Welfare Minister Sickl and Finance Minister Grassler) while Haider himself is a wealthy estate owner. They speak not for the “little man,” as the FPÖ pretends, but for the most hardline reactionary sectors of big capital.

For almost a decade, Haider has been calling for the installation of a “Third Republic” – i.e., for an end to the Second Republic. This, he insists, is “no slogan” but a whole program for a “free republic” that would require a “total reform of constitutional law.” And what would that be? The FPÖ pamphlet *Auf dem Weg in die Dritte Republik* (On the Road to the Third Republic), provides a blueprint for a presidential regime, greatly augmenting the powers of the executive, shrinking parliament and adding a pseudo-democratic cover through frequent plebiscites, a practice popularized by Napoleon Bonaparte and Louis Napoleon to legitimate their dictatorial regimes, and a favorite of Hitler. In short, it is a program for a bonapartist *strong state*.

The FPÖ program bears striking resemblances to that of Austro-fascism of the 1930s. A recent essay article in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (13 May), the organ of the Swiss bankers, points out that the current Austrian constitution “determines what is the term of office of the president, also defines the length of the parliamentary legislative period, but has no clause establishing how long the government shall rule and when its mandate ends.” Theoretically, the author posits, there could be a government without parliament. This is no abstract possibility: it was on the basis of this same constitution that Dollfuss dismissed the Austrian parliament in 1933, vituperating against the corrupt *Parteienwirtschaft* (economy dominated by parties), to install a regime controlled by the executive. Today, Haider denounces the *Proporzstaat* (state based on proportional division of posts among the parties), calling for abolition of the office of prime minister, the concentration of power in the hands of a president not responsible to parliament, slashing in half the number of deputies, and amalgamation of the ministries of the interior and defense into a super-ministry of security.

In the guise of a “trimmed-down state” in accordance with “neo-liberal” orthodoxy, this is a program for an authoritarian regime aimed at rooting out the “internal enemy.” FPÖ theoreticians, steeped in the history of the Third Reich, are well aware that following the death of von Hindenburg, Hitler similarly fused the offices of president and prime minister. In a more direct parallel, following the defeat of the Austrian workers in February 1934, Christian Social prime minister Dollfuss drew up a “total constitutional reform” and installed the Austro-

fascist corporatist regime aimed at eliminating the organized power of the working class. Unthinkable today? Think again. Today the FPÖ makes "foreigners" into scapegoats for economic crisis, as the Nazis did with Jews. Haider has called for the deportation of one-third of all foreign-born workers in two years; already immigrants and leftists are being targeted by FPÖ-controlled police. The new regime is gearing up for class war against the Austrian proletariat. That is why the FPÖ has been brought into office by the Austrian bourgeoisie.

Dollfuss' corporatist state based on Catholic social doctrine called for occupational groups to "participate in political opinion-making and to overcome the class struggle by joining together employees and employers." Today, Haider vows to impose a "social *Volksgemeinschaft*" (national/racial community) "without class struggle and professional/occupational conflicts." The FPÖ explicitly aims at breaking trade-union power. Collective contracts for whole sectors of the economy would be replaced by company-by-company agreements, with unions excluded. The 1993 FPÖ theses for political renewal called for: "Priority for freedom of individual and plant-level agreements by repressing party-political-oriented social partners and trade unions." On May Day 1997 Haider declared that "The ÖGB [Austrian Trade-Union Federation] is only an association, and it will be again reduced to that level."

To compete with the ÖGB unions, the FPÖ is building its own "professional associations." As Brigitte Bailer-Galanda and Wolfgang Neugebauer of the Documentary Archive of the Austrian Resistance note, "The parallels to the labor policy of Le Pen's National Front are inescapable" (*Haider und die Freiheitlichen in Österreich*). Although they have little strength among workers, the Haider fascists are strong among the police: in the WEGA (Vienna riot police), the FPÖ pseudo-union won 80 percent in a representation election; the police unit dealing with "foreigners" is another FPÖ stronghold. Once in office, the FPÖ is going after the state social welfare and insurance system with a vengeance. Public outpatient clinics are to be closed and handed over to private businessmen. The FPÖ social welfare minister Elisabeth Sickl (reputedly close to neo-Nazi groups) has made a top priority of raising individual co-payments in outpatient clinics, hospitals and prescription drugs as well as slashing coverage for long-term illnesses. In February, students and workers occupied the ministry in protest.

A particular focus of the FPÖ is to send women back to the home to have more Austrian babies. Haider opposes women working, denounces "the feminist illusion of self-emancipation of the woman and mother through an occupation" as a "fatal error," opposes "letting children be raised and educated by strangers," and calls for the state to "encourage women to fulfill their most fundamental desire," which is, he says, to dedicate themselves to raising their children. So for the FPÖ *Führer*, the Nazis also had a proper women's policy, namely "*Kinder, Küche, Kirche*" (children, kitchen, church)! And again, the new coalition government is moving to implement this line through tax breaks for non-working wives and "children checks" in a program titled, "Courage to Have a Child." The women's ministry was liquidated and placed under Social Min-

ister Sickl, who declared on taking office that her task was to put an end to "over-emancipated, frustrated single mothers."

In the guise of "restructuring" the welfare state they are dismantling it. As for the FPÖ's plans to move toward an authoritarian strong state, this too is not abstract. Haider recently caused an uproar by calling for "sanctions," including "removal from office" for officials who "violate the interests of the state." Such office-holders could include the federal president, he opined. The justice minister (who is also Haider's personal lawyer) thereupon declared that this call for sanctions against "traitorous official representatives" was "worth following up." This call, virtually labeling federal president Klestil a *Vaterlandsverräter* (traitor to the fatherland), came only a couple of weeks after Vienna FPÖ leader Hilmar Kabas called the head of state (and coalition partner) a "bum." And back in February, FPÖ bigwig Thomas Prinzhorn threatened to beat the president bloody for mildly expressing reservations about the ÖVP/FPÖ alliance. Such ominous outbreaks portend stormy times ahead in Austria.

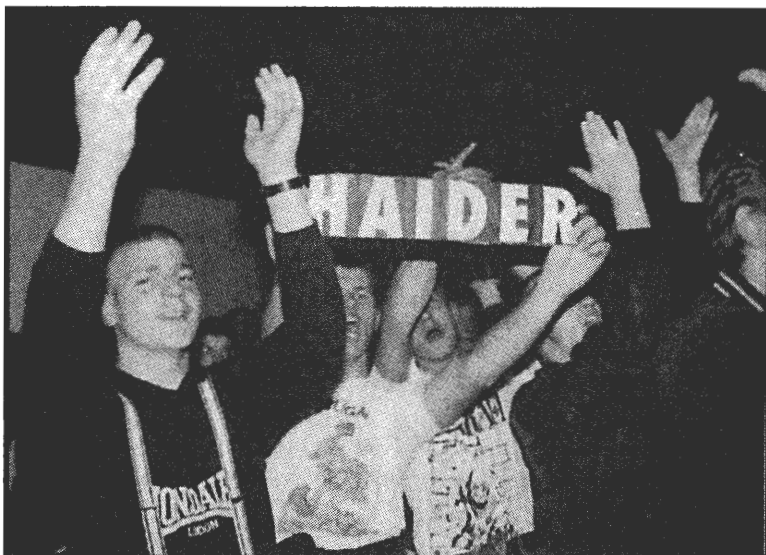
FPÖ and Fascist Terror

One of the main arguments of those who blindly claim that the Austrian Freedom Party is not fascist is that it doesn't have a private army like Hitler's SA and SS thugs. But the fact that Haider wears Reeboks (and even does ads for them) instead of jackboots, or that Fini in Italy sports double-breasted suits instead of Mussolini's black shirts, does not make these fascists into "democrats." While Haider calls for a "flat tax" to replace the progressive income tax, his party is not just a bunch of ultrarightist tax protesters like Poujade in France in the 1950s or Bossi's Lega Nord in Italy today. This is just Haider's "necessary camouflage." Although the FPÖ has gotten a lot of protest votes lately against the encrusted SPÖ/ÖVP *Proporz*-regime and it is not a mass party, it is a cadre party of some 40,000 members, and its cadres are shot through with Nazis, both neo- and not-so-neo. When Bossi's boys stage a provocative action these days, they often dress up in medieval uniforms holding pikes; when many "Haider fans" go at it, what they have in their hands are bombs.

Bailer-Galanda and Neugebauer have written of the period since Haider's takeover of the party that, "Since 1986 right-wing extremists and neo-Nazis have seeped into the FPÖ (and in many cases risen within it) to such an extent that we must speak of an integration of traditional right-wing extremism into the FPÖ; only the activist wing, neo-Nazis of the Küssel, Ochsenburger und Honsik type remain today outside of the FPÖ, and even here the boundary lines are blurred" (*Haider und die Freiheitlichen in Österreich*). Indeed, Gottfried Küssel, founder of the VAPO (Volkstreue Ausserparlamentarische Opposition), one of the most violent Nazi groups, was an FPÖ candidate in 1980. Gerd Honsik, leader of the "People's Movement Against Over-Foreignization" and author of a book titled *Hitler Absolved*, is also a former FPÖer who declared in 1988, "There are absolutely no substantive differences. I would absolutely go back to work in the FPÖ" except that it might be awkward for Haider.

The FPÖ's ties to fascist terrorists go back to before the

DÖW



Skinhead "Haider-fans" during FPÖ'S 1993 "Stop immigration" referendum petition campaign. Nazi letter-bomb campaign against immigrants followed while Austria instituted quotas.

early 1960s. In particular, the layer around Haider got its initiation as bombers in the fascist campaign to "free South Tyrol" from Italy. This was begun by Norbert Burger, a former Nazi soldier, who was at the time head of the Free Students Ring (RFS) and a member of the FPÖ. Their aim was to carry terror deep into Italy, mainly by bombing mailboxes, killing almost 30 people. Their most spectacular planned action was aimed at blowing up Rome's railroad station in 1962, but the bomb went off prematurely and Burger's boys got caught. One of them was Rainer Mauritz, editor of the RFS paper, who was jailed by an Italian court for arson. By 1993, Mauritz was a district leader of the FPÖ in Lower Austria. This history is detailed in Hans-Henning Scharsach's book, *Haider's Clan: Wie Gewalt entsteht* (1995), which examines the deep interconnection between the FPÖ and the Nazi groups specializing in terror bombing and thug violence.

In 1992, the Freedom Party was implicated following arrests of neo-Nazis of the paramilitary group "Trenck," linked to a fascist "academy" used to train cadres for the FPÖ. In particular, Haider's party has been the focal point for neo-Nazis involved in a letter-bombing campaign against immigrants and leftists in the '90s. This campaign, showing the deadly sophistication of the extra-parliamentary fascist milieu in Austria, began following the FPÖ 1993 referendum campaign (slogan: "Austrians first") for putting a stop to immigration. In response to the fascist-inspired anti-"foreigner" hysteria, the Socialist-led government sharply tightened residency requirements and imposed immigration quotas. The wave of terror began that December with ten different bombs sent to a refugee counseling center, an Islamic immigrant aid group, and Vienna mayor Helmut Zilk (whose left hand was blown off), accused by Nazis of bringing in thousands of immigrants. In 1994 the targets shifted to the FPÖ bastion of Kärnten, hitting an immigrant center and bi-lingual Slovenian school.

The first dead came in February 1995 as a bomb in the town of Oberwart killed four Roma. They had attempted to remove a

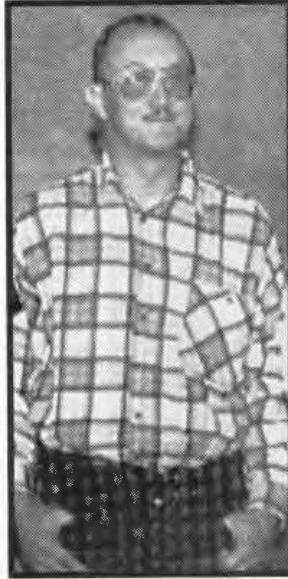
booby-trapped racist poster planted near the Roma ghetto. The next day, a sanitation worker in the neighboring, predominantly Croatian town of Stinatz was severely wounded by a bomb placed in a garbage dump. The bombings were accompanied by communiqués with abstruse references to the wars between the Habsburg monarchy and the Turkish Ottoman Empire. Their language was so reminiscent of that of Austrian fascist students, that the police felt obliged to conduct a search of the office of one such publication, *Aula* (formerly edited by Haider intimate Mölzer). But the bourgeois state did its best to shield the fascist terrorists, in the process revealing a web of complicity. The head of the State Police declared in December 1993 that Austrian Nazis were incapable of carrying out such a logistically complicated action and that Serbs must be responsible. Using this pretext, the Stapo placed wiretaps on the phones of more than a thousand Yugoslavs living in Austria.

It was not the Austrian police, but rather the Czech border police who detained the first real suspects, Peter Binder and Franz Radl, members of the underground Austrian Nazi organization VAPO. Rifles, pistols and nitroglycerine were found in their car. Searches in two apartments belonging to Binder turned up "the most complete collection of weapons" ever confiscated by the police since 1945, including assault rifles, machine guns, hand grenades, bazookas and 20 kilos of TNT (*Standard*, 13 December 1993). The next year, another fascist outfit, the "Kameradschaft Babenberg," was discovered in possession of a fully operational T-34 tank! Binder, described by his parents as a "Haider fan," was in charge of "security" for the FPÖ's racist 1993 referendum, in which the VAPO energetically collaborated, as did the entire neo-Nazi milieu. Radl, who was also active in the referendum campaign, was an election observer for the FPÖ. But despite abundant evidence against them, in a travesty of a trial in December 1995 the pair were acquitted.

The bombings continued, so the police came up with another candidate, this time a "crazed loner," one Franz Fuchs. Fuchs was then convicted of having carried out all 28 bombings, all by himself. Never mind that no explosives laboratory was ever found, that linguists and historians doubted he was capable of the academic language of the communiqués. All the more remarkable, this past March Fuchs (who had blown off both hands planting a bomb) managed to supposedly hang himself in his closely watched prison cell. As for Haider, the FPÖ leader in classic style tried to blame the victims of the terror, saying of the 1995 Oberwart killings of Roma and Sinti: "Why don't you write about the backgrounds of the victims' families? What about drugs and what about the criminal record of the family members?" (quoted in *Antifaschistische Nachrichten* No. 21, 1998). This was the line of German fascists like the DVU about the 1992 firebombing in Mölln which killed three members of a Turkish family.

After two eco-anarchists died trying to blow up a power line, the FPÖ mounted a frenzied campaign claiming that Oberwart was a leftist terrorist plot. In particular, they went

Rogue's Gallery of Jörg Haider's Nazi Auxiliaries



Hate poster of Austrian "extra-parliamentary" Nazi group VAPO. Above, from left: Peter Binder, VAPO member and security chief for FPÖ's 1993 anti-immigrant referendum campaign; VAPO leaders Hans Jörg Schimanek (son of FPÖ provincial deputy) and Gottfried Küssel (FPÖ candidate in 1980 elections).

after the anti-fascist journalist Wolfgang Purtscheller, who has often been the victim of police repression. In another case, in 1992, two functionaries of the FPÖ youth group were picked up for desecrating a Jewish cemetery in Eisenstadt, where 80 graves were scrawled with swastikas, SS symbols, "Sieg Heil!" and "Sieg Haider!" Again Haider's party tried to blame it on the left. Yet the fact is that there is a deep interpenetration between openly Nazi outfits and the FPÖ, which tries to hide its fascist politics in "populist" clothing. We have focused on a few cases here, but the 1993 Handbook of the Austrian Far Right quoted earlier lists more than three dozen FPÖ functionaries who are tied to "right-wing extremism." As Purtscheller pointed out in his book, *Aufbruch der Völkischen: Das braune Netzwerk* (1993), the splitting up of the Nazi milieu into small units is a conscious strategy, partly to get around legal bans on advocating Nazism. The pseudo-populist FPÖ deals with the parliamentary scene while shadowy outfits do the bloody work. In fact, numerous FPÖ candidates are former members of banned Nazi groups.

In the course of the 1990s letter-bomb terror, a good deal was revealed about links between the fascists and the police. The VAPO boasted of having the names, addresses and telephone numbers of arrested leftists after demonstrations. FPÖ members in the "right-wing extremist" department of the police told the Nazis about police informants in their ranks, and the fascists were tipped off about impending police searches, as a high police official had to admit. We have referred earlier to the strength of the FPÖ's yellow "union" in the Vienna police. This interpenetration with the organs of capitalist state repression is important in understanding the FPÖ.

There is no single blueprint for the relations between fascist political parties and combat groups. Hitler's SA

(*Sturmabteilung* – storm troopers), the NSDAP's paramilitary squad, was not the universal model. The German *Freikorps* were not tied to any one fascist group. In some cases (the French *Ligues* and the Austrian Heimwehr of the '30s), it was World War I veterans and paramilitary groups which created fascist parties. In Europe today, Le Pen's National Front, with its several-thousand-strong DSP militia and professional hit squads, is unique. With the partial exception of the youth group of the NPD, none of the larger German fascist parties – Republikaner, Deutsche Volkunion (DVU) – have directly enrolled the murderous bands of lumpenized skinheads in their ranks. But particularly the Republikaner have had strong organizations inside the police.

The Austrian fascists in their various forms represent a deadly threat to the whole working class. The character of the FPÖ, never simply another parliamentary party, is illustrated by the men chosen by SPÖ Interior Minister Olah in the 1950s to organize anti-Soviet guerrillas in the framework of NATO's "Gladio" secret army. (This was to be a clandestine "stay-behind" anti-Communist outfit of saboteurs in case "the reds" took over West Europe, as Washington then feared.) The "Gladiators" included Karl Kowarik, a Nazi since 1930, SS officer since 1938, founder of the VdU and a FPÖ functionary (his son later became an FPÖ Vienna city councillor). The core of this force, later camouflaged as an athletic and hiking association, came out of strikebreakers employed against the mass strikes of 1950. Similarly in Italy, leading fascists played a key role in Gladio, along with the P-2 "Masonic lodge" which orchestrated the 1970s "strategy of tension" in which fascists carried out numerous bombings that the state then tried to blame on the left. Though the scale was smaller in Austria, the pattern was the same.

Break with the Popular Front! Forge a Revolutionary Workers Party!

Although the FPÖ has made significant electoral gains and is now part of a coalition government, Austria is not on the eve of a Nazi takeover. Rather, the Austrian bourgeoisie has called upon the services of Haider's fascist party to mobilize the petty bourgeoisie along with the police apparatus to serve as a battering ram to shatter the organizational strength of the workers movement. In a similar fashion, Italy's capitalist rulers in 1994 brought in Fini's fascist NA as they sought to ram through economic "reforms" that would destroy union gains won in the explosive workers struggles of the "hot autumn" of 1969. The Austrian capitalists, too, are out to rip up the cozy social-democratic welfare state constructed during the anti-Soviet Cold War to ward off the "red menace." It's not enough to crush a strike, as Thatcher did with the British miners in 1984-85, to "tame" the unions. They want to tear down the whole structure of institutionalized class collaboration, from social insurance and the Arbeitskammer plant councils to statified industry. They want a strong state to wage class war, and are looking to the FPÖ to lead the charge.

Can fascists participate in a parliamentary government of the capitalist state? They not only can, they have done so. For example, in 1930, when Hitler was swearing his loyalty to the constitutional order, the German NSDAP joined the conservative provincial government of Thüringen. It was the first time the Nazis were entrusted with governmental responsibility and a milestone in the Nazis' acceptance by big capital. Hitler's representative, Wilhelm Frick, even received the post of Interior Minister. But Frick did not yet attempt what Göring carried out three years later – the merging of the Nazi storm troopers into the police apparatus in order to carry out mass terror against the proletariat. Frick contented himself with harrassing "degenerate" artists and intellectuals, also one of Haider's first targets for attack.

As for the argument raised by some who falsely present themselves as Trotskyists that Haider's "free market" economics represents something different from "classical fascism," this is not Marxism but rather the bourgeois liberal/social-democratic theory that fascist "totalitarianism" means state control of the economy. As Trotsky pointed out, "Fascism is a specific means of mobilizing and organizing the petty bourgeoisie in the social interests of finance capital" ("Bonapartism and Fascism," July 1934). The particular economic program which monopoly capital seeks to enforce against the working class depends on the economic and political conditions. Mussolini and Hitler came to power promising to privatize state and municipal utilities, which they did. At the turn of the new century, when the bourgeoisie is focused on axing the welfare state, the economic program of Haider's yuppie brand of fascism reflects the present interests of Austrian capital.

The Austrian bourgeoisie feels a sense of urgency precisely because of its relatively small size. Austria was not part of the Common Market, and up until it joined the European Union in 1995 everything from milk products to steel was

protected by high tariffs. Private capital was largely restricted to small firms, while much of the productive capacity was in the hands of the state's giant ÖIAG (Austrian Industrial Holding Company). The 1994-95 OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) economic survey of Austria noted that in 1987, of the 20 largest Austrian firms 11 were state-owned (with 69% of total employment), and 6 were foreign "multinationals," leaving only three in private hands (employing barely 8 percent of the workers). And this doesn't even include the state-owned banks, post and telephone, railroad, airline, power and social services sectors, in addition to the government bureaucracy itself.

Austrian capitalists desperately want to loot this huge productive apparatus, because if they don't they will soon be gobbled up by much larger, mainly German firms as the merger and acquisition wave rolls through Euroland. The way has already been prepared for them by the SPÖ/ÖVP coalition, which slashed the number of state-owned companies from 139 in 1988 (producing 22 percent of the gross domestic product) to 79 in 1995 (17 percent of the GDP). But the big ones such as VÖEST (steel), ÖMV (oil) and ÖBB (railroads) are still there, although with private capital "participation." As the new government's anti-labor plans become clear, the FPÖ is losing popularity among backward workers (support for its scab "union" in May elections to the Arbeitskammer [labor "parliament"] elections in Vienna fell from 16 percent in 1994 to 9 percent today), while the SPÖ is trying to refurbish its image with "days of action" by ÖGB unions around the country. The Austrian economics minister told Swiss bankers, "destructive behavior by the unions would pose a much greater danger than the EU sanctions" (*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 11 May).

While the Social Democrats may be recovering votes, they are obstacles to the knock-down, drag-out battle needed to defeat the capitalist onslaught. Far from opposing privatization, which will mean massive job losses, the SPÖ calls for "sensible privatization," and describes the sell-off of state industry over the last decade as "a success story." Even the Communist

Fascism and Parliamentary Illusions

"The whole matter lies in the fact that the pogrom 'essence' of fascism can become palpable only after it comes to power. And the task consists precisely in not permitting it to attain power. For this, one must understand the strategy of the foe and explain it to the workers. Hitler is straining to his utmost to bring the movement outwardly into the constitutional channel. ... Hitler's constitutionalism serves not only to keep the door open for a bloc with the [bourgeois] Centrists but also to fool the Social Democrats, or to put it more correctly, to make it easier for the leaders of the Social Democracy to fool the workers.... Under the cover of the constitutional perspective which lulls his adversaries, Hitler aims to reserve for himself the possibility of striking the blow at a convenient moment."

– Leon Trotsky, *What Next? Vital Questions for the German Proletariat* (January 1932)

Party denounces only the “privatization excesses of the ruling forces,” and calls for restoring the previous state ownership (Steirermark KPÖ statement, 27 April). But nationalized enterprises under capitalism are still governed by the laws of the market, including layoffs and wage losses for the workers. In the face of privatization attempts, class-conscious workers must lead a fight for *expropriation of the capitalist class*, occupying the plants and placing them under *workers control*. A situation of dual power would be posed and a frontal collision with the fascists and their clerical-conservative coalition partners, while the labor bureaucracy would see its sinecures threatened. This only underscores the urgent necessity of ousting the present misleaders and forging a *revolutionary workers party* to lead the class struggle against the bourgeois state.

Such a party would put forward a *transitional program* such as presented by Trotsky’s founding program of the Fourth International in the 1930s, to provide “a bridge between present demands and the socialist program of the revolution.” Rather than a catalogue of demands for contract negotiations, this should be a guideline for sharp class struggle “unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat.” Where reformists like the KPÖ and various pseudo-Trotskyists call for a 35-hour week as an answer to unemployment, Trotsky called for a *sliding scale of wages and hours* to divide the available work among all hands. Going beyond simple reforms, this poses the need for a socialist planned economy to guarantee employment for all. A transitional program for workers revolution must champion all the oppressed. In view of the anti-woman policies of the FPÖ, a Trotskyist party would place special emphasis on a fight for *full integration of women into social production, equal pay for equal work, free 24-hour day care centers and free abortion on demand*. We fight for *women’s liberation through socialist revolution*.

Immigrants and refugees are particularly threatened by the fascist/clerical conservative regime, and a revolutionary leadership must mobilize the power of labor in their defense. Many supposed “leftists” in Austria barely deal with this question, aside from a few empty words about “fighting racism.” This must be made concrete or it is a lie. In every country, the League for the Fourth International fights for *full citizenship rights for all immi-*

grants: everyone here has a right to stay with full legal equality. Given the mounting police raids and the history of fascist terror against “foreign” workers, it is necessary to organize *worker/immigrant defense guards* backed by the power of the unions, particularly for areas with African, Roma and Slavic immigrant populations. Labor should also demand an immediate *full stop to all deportations* and an *end to the militarization of the borders*. This will pose a sharp confrontation with the anti-immigrant hate campaigns of the FPÖ.

A class-struggle workers mobilization to smash the government’s vicious union-busting, immigrant-bashing, anti-woman offensive inevitably poses a frontal showdown with the capitalist state. The several pseudo-Trotskyist groups in Austria call for a general strike as their crowning demand. In particular, they all tout the example of Italy 1994 as an example to follow. Workers Power enthuses over “the marvelous example of the Italian workers who brought down the coalition government of millionaire media magnate Silvio Berlusconi with Fini’s Alleanza by means of mass demonstrations and strikes” (LRCI statement, 8 February). The Berlusconi/Fini government was indeed brought down after repeated workers mobilizations against pension cuts in the fall of 1994, including a four-hour nationwide protest strike that October which brought out more than three million people. But the Italian reformist misleaders used these workers’ struggles as extra-parliamentary pressure to install a popular-front government of “progressives” to do the dirty work for capital.

When Berlusconi resigned and was replaced by former Bank of Italy governor Dini – who as finance minister drew up the pension-cutting plan – the reformists cried victory. The PDS (Party of the Democratic Left, social-democratic successor to the defunct Communist Party) openly supported the new austerity program, while Rifondazione Comunista (RC) called off its parliamentary obstruction tactics. The Dini government enacted several of the austerity measures the Berlusconi government failed to implement. And in the winter of 1995-96 the Italian bourgeois state ruthlessly escalated its racist war on immigrants, supported not only by the fascist NA, the racist populists of the Northern League, but also the PDS and RC. In Austria, bringing back the SPÖ/ÖVP coalition or even a mini-popular front of the Social Democrats and Greens would only tie the hands of the workers, sabotaging their struggle in the name of an “alliance” with the bourgeoisie.

The constellation of pseudo-Trotskyist grouplets including ArbeiterInnenstandpunkt, Der Funke and Linkswende have only tactical differences with the SPÖ and KPÖ. They are but “extraparliamentary” auxiliaries of past and future popular fronts. Linkswende baldly declares, “Yet voting the blue/black government out and a red/green coalition in would represent a qualitative improvement. This is what we must fight for” (*Linkswende*, April 2000). But a “red/green” government is exactly what is in office in Germany today, which is not only pursuing racist terror and capitalist austerity, but also carried through Germany’s first direct participation in war since 1945 as part of the war on Serbia. The Fourth Reich of German imperialism is back in the Balkans,

continued on page 40

Jaqueline Godany/Profil



Metal Workers chief Nürberger (left), ÖGB leader Verzetnitsch: Social Democratic labor lieutenants of Austrian capital.

Social-Democratic Blinders: Pseudo-Trotskyists on Haider

With a zeal worthy of the Austrian Tourism Office, the overwhelming bulk of the so-called “far left” has been devoting a good deal of their propaganda to “proving” that Jörg Haider’s Freedom Party (FPÖ) is neither fascist nor fascistic. Various pseudo-Trotskyists in the tow of Social Democracy present more or less interchangeable arguments. A spokesman for the United Secretariat (USec) group in Austria, Sozialistische Alternative (SOAL), calls the FPÖ “right-wing extremist,” although admitting it has fascistic “elements.” The reasons for his reserve are curious: “It [the FPÖ] has no mass organizations and has never attempted to build any. And it has a very weak party structure and very few members. The members and sympathizers of the FPÖ have no possibility of collaboration and decision-making” (*Avanti* No. 59, March 2000)! No mass organizations? What about the FPÖ student groups, fraternities, academic, “free union” and professional groups? Forty thousand FPÖ members is not negligible, particularly in a small country like Austria. As for the impossibility of collaboration in decision-making, have these “participatory democrats,” followers of the late Ernest Mandel, never heard of the *Führerprinzip* (the Nazis’ “leader principle”)?

In an earlier article, the same SOAL spokesman is more categorical: “Yet no social forces exist in Austria – and the FPÖ isn’t one – which represent a self-contained worldview which would identify its supporters as Nazis” (*Die Linke*, 22 October 1999). An interview with another spokesman for the Austrian USec group tells readers that “the programme of the Freedom Party is very far from being a Nazi programme,” and instead is “a radical neo-liberal programme – a Thatcherite programme.” The FPÖ, he assures us, “is not supported by capital either in Austria or internationally.” And to top it off, he categorically guarantees that “The Freedom Party rules out violence or fascist methods in this period – they are focused on growing through elections” (*International Viewpoint*, April 2000). These social democrats wouldn’t recognize the fascist beast until it rears up on its haunches and unleashes on a mass scale the violence that Haider-cops and Haider-fans are now selectively dealing out to immigrants and leftists in Vienna.

A February 8 declaration on Austria by the League for a Revolutionary Communist International (LRCI), the international organization of the British Workers Power group, starts out with the assertion that the FPÖ is not a fascist party. Its explanation is the same as the Mandelites’: because the “free market” program of the FPÖ “is the programme of a Thatcher – not of a Hitler.” A February 10 statement by Workers Power’s Austrian group, ArbeiterInnenstandpunkt (ASt), declares that the new ÖVP/FPÖ government means, “The suppression of social partnership will continue.” Just more of the same?! The February issue of *ArbeiterInnenstandpunkt* elaborates, saying that like Thatcher, the new government “wants to wreck the welfare state, sell off public property and weaken the trade unions.” Not only does this whitewash the FPÖ fascists, it misleads Austrian workers

about the enormity of the mounting danger facing them. The same article grotesquely tells readers that “For now the police hardly dare to intervene (at least not until now!).” Despite ASt’s comforting assurances, in the subsequent days the Staatspolizei went after radical demonstrators with increased ferocity.

What’s posed is far graver than the Austrian bosses discontinuing cozy class-collaborationist arrangements with the Social-Democratic (SPÖ/ÖGB) top brass, canceling some social programs and intensifying pressure on labor. The spokesmen for Austrian capital are declaring war on workers, immigrants, women, youth and anyone else they consider a “burden” on profits. As for Haider, he doesn’t just want to weaken the unions, he’s out to destroy them.

Why do alleged Trotskyists insist on minimizing the threat represented by the new regime? In part, ASt capitulates to backward consciousness in the working class. They write, “Many workers today don’t understand why there should be demonstrations against the FPÖ and ‘the fascists’.” And again: to say that “Haider is a fascist” is “completely incomprehensible for most workers” (*ArbeiterInnenstandpunkt*, February 2000). The ASt’s capitulation also means raising a purely economist program and failing to fight head-on the racism that Haider & Co. whip up. While the ASt article calls the FPÖ leader a “notorious racist,” it raises no concrete demands in defense of immigrants, at most raising an empty slogan of “Fight racism!” (In fact, several ASt statements say not a word about racism or immigrants, *solely* raising economic demands.) Downplaying this central issue is part of their program to focus opposition on building “Anti-Cutback Committees.”

More fundamentally, the LRCI/ASt perspective is that of tailing after the social-democratic bureaucracy. Since the SPÖ is now in opposition, they write, “therefore the possibility of strikes is greater.” And therefore, they add, “we must put the union and also party leadership under massive pressure, so that they undertake serious steps for struggle.” As an example, they suggest “sending delegations, petitions, faxes, e-mails and phone calls.” In other words, they are calling on militants to lobby the sellout bureaucrats to *make them fight*. This is an old standby for Workers Power, expressing the long tradition of pseudo-Trotskyists in Britain of acting as a pressure group on and in the Labour Party. This was the program of *Pabloism*, named after the head of the Fourth International in the late 1940’s and early ’50s, Michel Pablo, who called for deep entry into the reformist parties throughout Europe (mainly Stalinist CPs, but also the Social Democracy in Austria, Belgium, Britain and Germany). Authentic Trotskyism fights against this dead-end tailist policy and for an independent communist vanguard.

The LRCI is on record saying that no significant fascist parties exist in Europe today. A resolution on “Fascism in Europe” from its third congress (1994) claimed that neither the Italian MSI (now the National Alliance), nor the French National

Front, nor the German NPD, DVU or Republikaner are fascists, but at most “crypto-fascists” or even “conservative right-wing populists” (*Revolutionärer Marxismus* No. 13, Spring 1994). This is also the policy of both offshoots of the former Militant Tendency, Peter Taaffe’s Committee for a Workers International (CWI) – Sozialistische Linkspartei (SLP) in Austria – and the followers of Ted Grant who are organized as the Sozialistische Jugend–Linke in Austria. The Taaffeites say that the FPÖ is not fascist because it is a “purely electoral party,” although they admit that “Haider counts on keeping hold of the Nazis” (SAV essay, “Wohin geht Österreich?”). The Grantites give a schizophrenic description, trying to depict Haider as two different political figures:

“Not a few fascists and neo-Nazis also try to organize in the FPÖ or around it (e.g., the fraternities). Nevertheless, at the moment our main opponent is not the Nazi-Haider but the Haider who represents the section of the Austrian entrepreneurs for whom dismantling social and educational programs and democratic rights can’t go fast enough.”

–SJ-Linke pamphlet, *Was ist die FPÖ?*

While most of the Austrian far left hails the popular-front demos “against black-blue” (the ÖVP/FPÖ government) and denies that Haider is a fascist, the notable exception – the social democrats of the Tony Cliff persuasion, organized in Austria under the name Linkswende – only proves the rule. Linkswende and its German equivalent Linksrück call Haider a “Nazi,” for which Linksrück was even taken to court by Haider. Their parent organization, the British Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and its front group, the Anti-Nazi League, even demonstrate with placards saying “Haider is Hitler.” At the same time, they greeted the anti-Haider protests with delirious enthusiasm, since one of the calling cards of the Cliff tendency is organizing popular-frontist “anti-Nazi” coalitions with the clergy and bourgeois politicians which aim to sabotage any genuine anti-fascist class struggle.

The Cliffites call for “Anti-Haider Committees” and pin their hopes on pressuring the SPÖ to the left. Their propaganda is solely concerned with the new government’s austerity program and ignores the question of racist terror. The headline of the May *Linkswende*, “Stop the Bosses’ Government! ÖGB and SPÖ, Fight Instead of Waiting!” sums up their tailist, economist line. At the same time, these inveterate opportunists want to appeal to sections of the FPÖ voters. The SWP’s actual position is that *Haider is a fascist, but not the FPÖ*. An article in the SWP’s *Socialist Worker* (19 February) spells this out. The FPÖ, it writes:

“...is a coalition of different groups – from Nazis through Thatcherite businessmen to those who are simply disillusioned by the two main parties. The Freedom Party has its roots in the Nazi administration in Austria during the Second World War. It has swung between being a fascist party seeking votes and being a free market Austrian nationalist party. The Freedom Party can go in a number of directions. It can become a full-blown fascist movement, go towards a right wing Tory movement or split between its Tory and hardline fascist wings.”

The SWP’s multiple scenarios for the FPÖ explain nothing; they are before-the-fact justifications for a policy of opportunist zigzags. But don’t expect Marxist class analysis from the Cliff crowd, which considered the Stalinist-ruled USSR “state

capitalist” and hailed the ascendancy of counterrevolutionary Boris Yeltsin as a “revolution”!

At bottom, the USec, LRCI, Taaffeites, Grantites and Cliffites all put forward the social-democratic illusion that parties which profess allegiance to the constitution and mainly engage in electoral politics cannot be fascist. What, then, do they make of Hitler’s 1930 Ulm declaration, a way-station as he bid for bourgeois respectability, that “Our movement has no need of force”? Or Mussolini’s lying 1921 “peace pact” with the Italian Social Democracy, in which he promised to disarm his militias? Have these pseudo-Trotskyist parliamentary cretinists forgotten that *the Nazis came to office in a parliamentary vote*? While fascism in power means the destruction of parliamentarism, fascism on the road to power is perfectly capable of using the advantages afforded it by the parliamentary form of bourgeois rule. As Trotsky noted in his pamphlet *What Next? Vital Questions for the German Proletariat* (January 1932):

“Hitler is straining to his utmost to bring the movement outwardly into the constitutional channel.... Hitler’s constitutionalism serves not only to keep the door open for a bloc with the Centrists but also to fool the Social Democrats, or to put it more correctly, to make it easier for the leaders of the Social Democracy to fool the workers.”

To be sure, Trotsky pointed to the frictions between the bourgeoisie and the fascists, the bourgeoisie’s reluctance to turn over the governmental apparatus to these petty-bourgeois parvenus and thugs. He insisted that the fascist conquest of power would not be peaceful, looking at this from the point of view of the proletariat’s capacity to resist the fascist bands. The fascists almost never had to overcome any resistance from the bourgeois police or army. Though sometimes reluctantly, the bourgeoisie always called the fascists legally and “constitutionally” to power, and this decision was preceded by the decay of the other bourgeois parties, with whole sections (even the most “liberal”) going over to the fascists. Today, Haider’s acceptance as a “mainstream” politician reflects more the rightward shift of the bourgeoisie than any increasing “moderation” on his part.

ICL Joins “Haider Is Not a Fascist” Front

Now joining this sorry lot of *Verharmloser* (pooh-poothers) of the Austrian party of Hitler admirers and immigrant bashers is the centrist International Communist League (ICL), led by the Spartacist League/U.S. *Workers Vanguard* (No. 730, 25 February) states flatly: “Haider’s FPÖ is purely an electoral machine and does not correspond to what Marxists understand by fascism. Reactionary views alone do not define fascism. A number of Margaret Thatcher’s advisors thought Britain should have allied itself with Germany against the Soviet Union in World War II and otherwise had fascist views.” As readers can see, the SL/ICL repeats a variant of the line of the United Secretariat, Workers Power and the rest of the social-democratic Trotskyoid crowd. At the same time, it says not a word about the amply documented evidence of how Haider’s FPÖ has integrated in and around itself virtually the entire openly pro-Nazi milieu. The *WV* article and the February 18 leaflet by the SpAD (Spartakist Workers Party, the ICL’s German group) it reprints provide their readers no more information about the FPÖ than the bourgeois press.

DOW



WHO IN THIS PHOTO, ACCORDING TO THE ICL, ISN'T A FASCIST? Holocaust denier David Irving speaking to Vienna meeting in November 1989. Seated to his right is former FPÖ leader and chief of South Tirol fascist bombing campaign, Norbert Burger.

This line on Haider is a remarkable about-face for the ICL. The SpAD wrote in *Spartakist* (No. 115, November-December 1994) concerning the "pogrom essence of fascism":

"After the electoral successes of fascists in West Europe – most recently Haider's FPÖ – there were immediately massive attempts to downplay them as 'right-wing nationalists.' Even fake lefts are joining in, and in Germany groups like the MLPD [Maoists], BSA [Northites], Arbeitermacht [Workers Power] and Gruppe Spartakus [BT] claim that the Republikaner are not Nazis! The disastrous logic behind this denial of the daily terror against immigrants which emanates from the suit-and-tie-fascists is: as long as Nazis operate within the parliamentary framework, they aren't Nazis."

Today, the participation of the fascists in the Vienna government is a key element of a frontal assault on the working class by German and Austrian capital. Spreading illusions that Haider and his gang are nothing more than "purely electoral" racists – as the ICL does now, surreptitiously abandoning its earlier stand against the pseudo-Trotskyists who prettify the FPÖ because of its parliamentary façade – can only have the effect of lulling the masses, or anyone who gives credence to the ICL. And in fact, neither the SpAD leaflet nor the *WV* introduction put forward a program to mobilize the working class to smash the fascist threat, since according to them it doesn't exist.

Anyone who thinks that Haider and his FPÖ are just a bunch of Thatcherite free-marketeers playing to Austrian native-son nostalgia for Hitler is living in a dream world. In order to argue that the FPÖ isn't fascist, the ICL picks up a line from its favorite polemical target, the Cliffites, only ascribing "fascistic views" to Haider and his "cronies." So Haider's views don't call the shots in this notorious *Führerpartei*? Nonsense. And since the ICL now wants to distinguish between fascistic "view-holders" and actual fascists, what about the fascist propagandist (and FPÖ lecturer), David Irving? Holocaust denier Irving has always

peddled his "views" without having his own organization. For that matter, does the ICL/SL/SpAD still consider Waldheim a "fascist war criminal"? A decade ago, *Spartakist* (No. 72, 5 June 1990) sharply attacked *ArbeiterInnenstandpunkt* for claiming that the Austrian president was only an "ex-Nazi." Or what about Mr. Klan-in-a-suit, David Duke, the Louisiana "ex"-KKKer who decided he would get more mileage by putting on a suit and tie and campaigning as a Republican? Duke, Irving, Haider are all fascists, whatever their attire or electoral ploys.

As for separating the *Führer* from the party, the ICL will have a hard time inventing distinctions between the Haider-FPÖ and the German Republikaner under Franz Schönhuber or his successors. Neither have private militias – they don't need them for now since both have significant bases in the police, as well as like-minded Nazi thugs acting in tandem to do their dirty work – and both are fascist. Nor does publisher Fey's Deutsche Volkunion (DVU) directly organize fascist gangs. The main overt activities of all of these outfits are electoral. Does the ICL now want to argue that none of them are fascist? What about

Le Pen's National Front in France and Fini's National Alliance in Italy? Are these no longer fascist parties, contrary to what the ICL said for years, but only "fascistic types" as *WV* writes today? *The implications of the ICL's new line go far beyond Austria* – apparently it sees no fascist parties in West Europe today aside from the smattering of neo-Nazi groupings. Yet in the '90s, fascist attacks escalated all over the continent, particularly against immigrants. In Austria, the FPÖ is the *focal point* of this fascist reaction.

In the past, the ICL's political positions were expressed in action. The SL/U.S. mobilized to drive out the fascist Irving at the University of California. In 1989, the German section of the ICL called for mass worker-immigrant mobilizations to "Stop the Republikaner" in Berlin. They were victimized by the courts when assaulted by Republikaner thugs in the Berlin section of Moabit. The ICL launched an international campaign to "Defend the Moabit Anti-Fascists!" Perhaps they should have called to defend the "Anti-Fascistics," according to the ICL's new version of reality. Today, the ICL denies that Haider's FPÖ is fascist and does not seek to mobilize the workers against the new regime in Vienna on a class basis, in opposition to an SPÖ-led popular front. While in the U.S., the SL still calls demonstrations against Klan/Nazi provocations, which are a deadly threat however small their numbers, in Austria the ICL declares "there are no fascist mobilizations in the streets" and limits itself to Sunday speechifying about socialism in the by-and-by.

Workers Vanguard's latest exercise in revisionism may be motivated by a knee-jerk reaction to the popular-frontist demonstration in Vienna. The SpAD leaflet points out that since the central issue was FPÖ participation in the government, the February 19 demonstration was really "a call for extraparliamentary action for a new parliamentary coalition." While mouthing correct criticisms

continued on page 56

For Socialist Revolution...

continued from page 15

"Black Bloc": Liberals Under the Ski Masks

Following the WTO fiasco, the bourgeois press exploded with ominous articles about shadowy anarchists who communicate on walkie-talkies with supposedly sinister designs. "Dark Parallels with Anarchy Concocted in Oregon" headlined the *New York Times* (3 December). Reporters were urgently dispatched to Eugene, Oregon to track down John Zeran, said to carry on a correspondence with reputed "Unabomber" Ted Kaczynski. National magazines (*Harper's*, May 2000) published "Notes from the Underground" revealing the deeper meaning of tree-sitting and other arcane practices of "Radicals of the Pacific Northwest." But even though for the social-democratic organizers, things got a bit "out of hand" in Seattle, in fact they had planned all along for the presence of "direct action" contingents in their elaborate guerrilla theater. They figured that the black-clad "street warriors" would attract more press, which they did, and the eco-liberals could then distance themselves from anything deemed too radical, which they did.

As for the anarchists, they ultimately went along with the demands of their protectionist/imperialist reform bloc partners. In the weeks leading up to the April protests in Washington, an "A16 Revolutionary Anti-Capitalist Bloc" put forward a manifesto which in its earliest drafts said protectionism, China-bashing, etc. were not acceptable, and denounced attempts to impose the discipline of having "purely symbolic" demonstrations. But when Mobilization organizers objected, they toned down the final version of their manifesto to make it clear that they wouldn't get in the way of the "peaceful, legal" types: "We wish to support the larger anti-globalization movement by organizing our contingent. We do not intend to be divisive in any way...." After the D.C. protests, a "Message from Revolutionary Anti-Capitalist Bloc Militants to A-16 Participants" printed in the Eugene, Oregon *Insurgent* (April 2000) states:

"Overall, we managed to refrain from the overt property destruction seen in Seattle..., not because we consider this to be an invalid expression of protest, but rather to prove our sincerity in supporting the official A16 call to action and not trumping the participation of others."

The Bloc's Manifesto declared that "protectionism and national sovereignty pit the working class of each nation against each other," criticized calls for "fair trade" as "ignor[ing] the history of working peoples' struggle against wage slavery," and called in the anarchist tradition not only for abolition of capitalism but also of the state and "all forms of hierarchy." Yet in practice, in order not to be "divisive," the Black Bloc accepted the hierarchical discipline of the class-collaborationist bloc with pro-capitalist labor protectionists and bourgeois Democratic Party politicians. The reason is not just tactical but rooted in fundamental program. Calling to "sabotage wage slavery," the program put forward by the Revolutionary Anti-Capitalist Bloc does not go beyond guerrilla warfare against capitalist exploitation.

This puts them well to the left of the ISO/RCP/WWP reformists, but it is not a revolutionary program for the overthrow of capitalism by the international proletariat, which re-

quires its own revolutionary party to lead the fight for a workers state. It is by erecting a collectivized economy and achieving generalized plenty that the ultimate elimination of the state will be made possible under socialism. The anarchist collectives were attracted to the anti-WTO, IMF and World Bank protests not only because of their loose organizational structure, but also because of *political* affinity with populism. As Marx pointed out in polemics against Proudhon and Bakunin, at bottom anarchy is the political program of petty producers. It is not accidental that the bulk of the Russian Narodniks evolved from anarchists into bourgeois populists who sided with White Guard counterrevolution against the Bolsheviks.

For Proletarian Internationalism Against Nationalist Labor Populism!

While reformist and centrist left groups and anarchists have eagerly signed on to the "anti-globalization" mobilizations, this "new movement" was in fact generated by liberals and social democrats. Its best builders are liberal publications like *The Progressive* and *The Nation*, which has devoted special issues to the anti-sweatshop movement (7 June 1999) and the protests against the IMF and World Bank (24 April 2000). Indeed, the prominence of the media coverage given to the Seattle and D.C. protests reflects the fact that a section of U.S. bourgeois opinion would like to do away with or radically change these "international financial institutions." Right-wing Republicans have long criticized the IMF, but in recent months prominent liberal economists such as Paul Krugman and Joseph Stiglitz (former chief economist of the World Bank) have accused the IMF of worsening the 1997 Asian financial crisis with its austerity policies.

It's not unusual when a new generation becomes politically active for it to reflect bourgeois political currents. Nor does this mean that they are closed to revolutionary politics. When Students for a Democratic Society arose in the early 1960s it came out of a right-wing social-democratic current, the student group of the League for Industrial Democracy. Politically SDS was initially quite moderate, but it radicalized because it intersected the contradictions between U.S. professions of democracy and the McCarthyite witchhunt, Jim Crow segregation and the Vietnam War. Many of the youth who today have been attracted to the anti-WTO/IMF/World Bank mobilizations can be won to the understanding that what's needed is international socialist revolution to sweep away imperialism. But this can only be accomplished through sharp political struggle against the nationalist-populist politics of the protests against "globalization."

These politics are reflected in the very terms of the debate. When anti-WTO groups talk of "global corporate domination," many students may see this as code words for imperialism, as when their ex-Marxist professors talk of "post-colonial studies." But the social democrats who lead these protests are not objecting to *capitalist* domination – they want to introduce Keynesian government policies to specifically limit *corporate* power. When they object to "free market" politics it is because they are for a "social market economy," the social democrats' description of "welfare state" capitalism. When they issue radical-sounding denunciations of "global capital," they do so not from the standpoint of revolutionary socialism

but on the basis of a political program for *national capital*. And this is not just semantics: the bourgeois populism of the Seattle and D.C. protests has a long history.

One of the top leaders of the anti-WTO protests was Lori Wallach, who is the director of the Global Trade Watch project of Ralph Nader's Public Citizen. Nader is the presidential candidate of the bourgeois Green Party. In a lengthy interview with the liberal journal *Foreign Policy* (Spring 2000), Wallach described her politics as "progressive" as opposed to liberal. Coming from rural Wisconsin which was the home of Robert LaFollette's Progressive Party in the 1920s, her political self-definition has real content. Senator and later Governor LaFollette opposed the imperialist World War I from the standpoint of "prairie populism," a political current going back to the 1896 presidential campaign of William Jennings Bryan. This tradition lives on today in *The Progressive* magazine edited in Madison, Wisconsin.

Where Bryan at the beginning of the imperialist era declared that Midwestern farmers were being crucified on a "cross of gold" (the monetary gold standard), today's populists say that family farmers are being wiped out by the WTO. Then and now, by focusing on particular symbols of international capital they divert struggle away from the capitalist system. This reflects real economic interests. In her *Foreign Policy* interview, Wallach declared she was for "good trade" as opposed to "bad trade," meaning that "when a country or region truly has an advantage in something, it should be able to supply the rest of the world with that thing." China, by her standard, does not have a comparative advantage in producing blue jeans.

But Midwestern U.S. farmers do have a comparative advantage in producing milk products and grain (corn, wheat, soy beans), of which they are by far the most efficient producers in the world, thanks to climate, soil and a proportionately higher investment in machinery per worker than any other U.S. industry. This is nothing less than a call for industrialized U.S. agriculture to wipe out Mexican peasants, which is exactly what is happening under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)! And these are not just Naderite musings: Midwestern family farm groups prominently participated in the Seattle protests against the WTO.

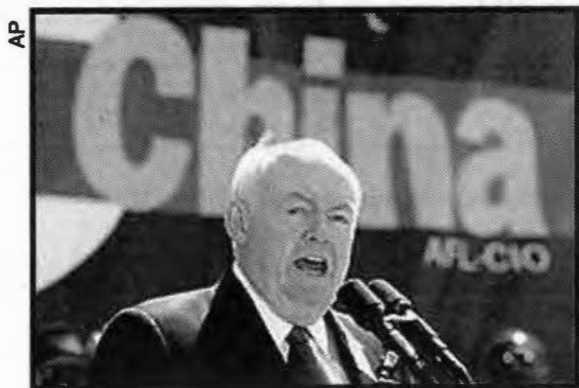
From its very inception, populism as a bourgeois political current in the United States has been directed against socialism. William Jennings Bryan ran for president in 1896 as the

candidate of the Populist Party and the Democrats in good part in order to undercut burgeoning support for the Socialist Eugene Debs, who had led the 1894 American Railway Union strike and was jailed for leading the 1895 Pullman strike. Labor-populism briefly became an important current in the AFL, particularly in the Midwest. Again following World War I, in 1923-24 LaFollette's Progressive Party won considerable support in the Chicago Federation of Labor against the Workers (Communist) Party. The Workers Party had opportunistically become involved in the Farmer-Labor Party movement, which sought LaFollette as its candidate, and the WP paid dearly for its failure to fight bourgeois populism head-on.

Today, as capitalism around the world intensifies attacks on labor and social programs for poor and working people, the labor bureaucrats and bourgeois "progressives" are pushing the fool's gold of protectionism. Despite its rhetoric against "corporate domination," this program necessarily takes aim at "foreign" workers. The Teamsters (both under Jimmy Hoffa, Jr. and his predecessor, the Justice Department-installed "reformer" Ron Carey) have successfully pushed to get Clinton's Department of Transportation to bar Mexican truck drivers from driving in the U.S. outside of border areas. The Steelworkers under George Becker got the U.S. to slap prohibitive tariffs on Brazilian steel. Now the bureaucrats have mobilized against trade relations with China. Yet most of the U.S. left tries to ignore or prettify the blatant chauvinism of their adopted new "movement," the better to tail it.

As the class struggle heats up, it is crucial to forge a genuinely internationalist, *revolutionary workers party* steeled in the fight against these bourgeois political currents. It is necessary to build a party that can appeal to Brazilian, Mexican and Chinese as well as U.S. workers on the basis of a common program of socialist revolution. Such a Trotskyist party would counterpose to the protectionist poison pushed by the pro-capitalist labor fakers a fight for jobs for all through a shorter workweek at no loss in pay – a transitional demand that points toward a socialist planned economy. Such a Leninist party would act as a "tribune of the people," fighting for the liberation of all the oppressed, warning that protectionism in the U.S. threatens layoffs in China especially of women workers, who as in the former Soviet Union and all over East Europe are the first hit by the destruction of collectivized industry and the rise of capitalist counterrevolution.

The response of revolutionary Marxists to the anti-WTO/IMF/World Bank protests is a litmus test for their policy toward the pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy, the key obstacle within the workers movement to revolutionary struggle. Tailism today spells defeat tomorrow. A firm defense of internationalist principles, telling the truth about the national-protectionist politics of this "new coalition," may be unpopular at first. But this alone can prepare the way to sweeping away global capitalism, through international socialist revolution. As Leon Trotsky wrote in the founding program of the Fourth International: "To face reality squarely; not to seek the line of least resistance; to call things by their right names; to speak the truth to the masses, no matter how bitter it may be," these are the rules that will lead a reformed Fourth International to victory. ■



AFL-CIO chief and DSAer John Sweeney.

Sinister Fascist Haider...

continued from page 34

with Austria's Bundesheer in tow. And bringing up the rear are the fake Trotskyists who seconded NATO's war propaganda by calling for "self-determination for Kosovo" – the battle cry of "human rights" imperialism. Authentic Trotskyists called for *defense of Yugoslavia and defeat of the imperialist war*, while advocating a voluntary socialist federation of the Balkans.

All these groups also foster illusions that the SPÖ is going to move to the "left." The tiny Grantite group proclaimed, in all seriousness, "After the elections, and when the coalition discussions were going on, we proposed that the SPÖ should form a minority government to put into practice a socialist policy, relying on the strength of the unions" (interview with Herbert Bartik in *Der Funke*, 7 February). Of course, even at the height of SPÖ electoral strength under Bruno Kreisky no "socialist" policies were carried out, nor could they be by these labor lieutenants of capital. There was a SPÖ minority government in this period, however...based on the "toleration" of the FPÖ!

To be sure, the SPÖ is seeking to give itself a political makeover with a new chairman, Alfred Gusenbauer. Gusenbauer's political career began in the Socialist Youth, with an obligatory "left" phase (like Gerhard Schröder's in Germany!) that included a stint picking coffee in Sandinista Nicaragua. The new leader went before the SPÖ ranks (mainly VÖEST metal workers) in Linz, made a few mild self-criticisms of the party's "compromises" with the ÖVP and discovered "a whiff of class struggle" (*Profil*, 21 February). It is his job precisely to dissipate this "whiff of class struggle," and with this purpose Gusenbauer talks of giving the ÖVP/FPÖ government a year's grace. As for the SPÖ's would-be coalition partners, the Greens, their party leader Van Bellen is touring Europe on behalf of the right-wing government arguing against the diplomatic sanctions. The ÖGB bureaucrats, meanwhile, stepped up their sporadic "actions" which *Profil* accu-

rately characterized as "300 pin pricks against the government." In March union assemblies in the state sector adopted paper resolutions against privatization, but no attempt was made to mobilize the ranks or prepare for strike action.

In this context, the agitation of the fake-Trotskyist grouplets, using the popular-frontist demonstrations as the springboard for their general strike calls, was illusory in every sense. It was an appeal for action in the streets to pressure the current social-democratic leadership to put in a popular front (in one form or another). As Trotsky wrote of the British general strike in 1926, every general strike "brings the question of power sharply to the forefront." When pressure builds from the ranks for an all-out mobilization of the working class against attacks by the bourgeoisie, revolutionaries would call for a general strike in opposition to the sellout bureaucrats. But that would only pose the question of power point-blank, and the need for factory committees, workers militias and workers councils (soviets). The tragic experience of the Vienna workers in February 1934 should underline that calling for a general strike without a struggle to oust the reformists and forge a revolutionary leadership is no answer to a counterrevolutionary attack.

The focus must be on the fight for the working class to *break politically with the popular front* and all forms of class collaboration. Such a fight can only be waged by a genuinely communist party, an internationalist party that draws in workers of every ethnicity, women and revolutionary-minded youth and transforms them into Bolshevik cadres, able to lead their class brothers and sisters. The bankruptcy of Social Democracy and Stalinism, two variants of reformism, can be seen in the ascendancy of the FPÖ fascists in Austria and the capitalist counter-revolution that destroyed the Soviet-bloc bureaucratically degenerated workers states. Authentic Trotskyist parties must be built in the struggle to reforge the Fourth International, to lead the working class and all the oppressed forward to a socialist revolution that eliminates racist capitalism. ■

The Internationalist

Annual subscription US\$10 for five issues



A Journal of Revolutionary Marxism for the Reforging of the Fourth International

Publication of the Internationalist Group

Name _____

Address _____

_____ Apt.# _____ Tel.(____) _____

City _____ State/Province _____

PostalCode/Zip _____ Country _____

Make checks/money orders payable to Mundial Publications and mail to:

Mundial Publications
Box 3321, Church Street Station
New York, NY 10008 U.S.A.

Write the Internationalist Group at above address, or contact: Tel (212) 460-0983 Fax (212) 614-8711 E-mail: internationalistgroup@msn.com

PRI and PRD: Partners in Strikebreaking

Mexico: The UNAM Strike and the Fight for Workers Revolution



John Moore/AP

In open defiance of threats by a bourgeoisie united against them, thousands of student strikers march on Mexico City's main plaza, the Zócalo, on February 4, demanding freedom for the hundreds arrested in Preparatory School No. 3 by the militarized federal police.

MARCH 15—Jailing 996 students of the National University (UNAM) during the first days of February and ordering the arrest of almost 500 more, Mexican president Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León began the final stretch of his six-year term under the sign of mass repression. After “bullet-proofing” his regime economically with billion-dollar loans from the International Monetary Fund and militarily with the new Federal Preventive Police, which was created as a direct instrument of Gobernación (Mexico’s interior ministry), now the regime is going into action. Other targets of Zedillo’s repression are the Zapatista Indians in the southern state of Chiapas and sectors of the working class which have escaped direct control by the regime’s corporatist apparatus. The government repression began with the students, on the assumption that by sending

the federal police to take over Ciudad Universitaria (University City, the sprawling UNAM campus in Mexico City) it could get rid of the obstinate student strikers who for almost ten months refused to cave in to the intimidation and pressure of the capitalist state, all its parties and the bourgeois media. *But they were wrong!*

The police action did permit the university bureaucrats to “reclaim” their fancy executive chairs in the Administration Tower. However, arresting the entire assembly of the students’ Strike General Council (CGH)—and then having *porros* (professional thugs) burn the red-and-black strike banners while a mariachi band played for the occasion—has not succeeded in breaking up the struggle for free higher public education available to all. Instead, it unleashed a mobilization demand-

**Break with the Cárdenas Popular Front!
Forge a Revolutionary Workers Party!**

ing freedom for the students jailed under absurd, trumped-up charges such as "terrorism," "sabotage," "mutiny" and "looting." Three days after the invasion of the National University by troops of the Third Brigade of the Military Police, dressed in the gray uniforms of the federal police, while 2,500 *granaderos* (riot police) sent by the Federal District government cordoned off the area, on February 9 more than 100,000 people surged into the streets (the semi-official daily *Excelsior* reported up to 200,000), completely filling the Zócalo, Mexico City's main square, to demand: *Free the political prisoners!*

The government occupied Ciudad Universitaria, but the struggle to free the prisoners and for the demands of the strike continues in the streets. Even inside the university campuses, many oppose resuming classes while strikers are in jail. The mobilization of tens of thousands of electrical workers, university workers and teachers has already resulted in the release of hundreds of arrested students. Nevertheless, almost 200 students remain behind bars. The regime's real purpose is to carry out *selective* repression, scapegoating strike leaders Alejandro Echavarría ("El Mosh"), Alberto Pacheco ("El Diablo"), Mario Benítez, Leticia Contreras and others. Nevertheless, *once again the regime is mistaken*. But what needs to be done to defeat the government strategy? It is illusory to set the goal of a supposed "dialogue"—as the dominant sectors of the CGH call for—with the rector (university president), who is responsible for unleashing mass arrests and *porro* thug attacks. It is necessary to bring into the streets the only force capable of defeating the bourgeois state: the power of the proletariat. The Grupo Internacionalista calls for *class-struggle mobilization to fight capitalist repression*.

While Zedillo's long-ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) "reclaims" UNAM, the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas is carrying out its own electoral reclamation operation. As the PRI mounts a "fear campaign" for the July 2 elections under the watchword PRD = CGH, the PRD is posing as defenders of the imprisoned *cegehacheros* (CGH members). "Not one vote for the PRI" was one of the slogans most widely chanted during the February 9 march. "*Nor for the PRD!*" replied furious student strikers. In the past, UNAM students were one of the bulwarks of this bourgeois-nationalist "opposition" party. From 1988 on, sectors of the bourgeoisie have sought to divert discontent over the regime's starvation policies into electoral channels through a "popular front" around Cárdenas. Their purpose is to chain the workers, and all the exploited and oppressed (peasants, Indians, poor people along with students), to the exploiters through this machinery of class collaboration. But the extended UNAM strike considerably eroded support for *cardenismo*, above all due to the repression launched against the students by the PRD government of the Federal District (DF) under Cárdenas and his successor, Rosario Robles.

The UNAM strike of 1999-2000 has been the biggest student struggle in Mexico's history. On the eve of the military/police invasion of Ciudad Universitaria, after almost a year of struggle, the CGH was able to mobilize tens of thousands of students in a February 4 march to the Zócalo. Additional tens

of thousands of university workers, electrical workers, teachers and residents of poor neighborhoods went into the streets time and again to support the strike. The student struggle occupied the center of the political stage for months. It was the object of denunciations and maneuvers by all the parties, and its impact extended to the farthest reaches of the country. The strike fought the privatization plans imposed by the highest circles of imperialism, and in contrast to what happened in Mexico in 1968, over the course of many months it confronted not only the regime's harassment but the hostility of almost all bourgeois and petty-bourgeois opinion. For many participants, the strike has been the most important experience of their lives. It is all the more urgent, therefore, to draw the lessons of the UNAM strike, beginning with the understanding that it lacked *the revolutionary leadership necessary to defeat the enemy in this hard battle against capitalist power*.

Contrary to all the criticisms of the "radicalism" of the students' Strike General Council, in reality the dominant tendencies in the CGH never broke with the bourgeoisie. From the PRD "moderates" to the so-called "mega-ultras," all of them counted on receiving "toleration," at least, from the *cardenista* government of the DF. The PRD's response was to carry out secret negotiations with the rector and the federal interior ministry (Gobernación), and to send its *granadero* riot police against the strikers. The various "ultra" groups adopted the policy (first put forward by the PRDers) of vainly seeking a "democratic dialogue" with the PRI university authorities. But the rector and Gobernación preferred the "dialogue" of police riot batons, and so it was. The CGH's dominant tendencies did *not* undertake the fundamental step required to win the strike: fighting to mobilize the working class. This refusal reflected the *bourgeois-democratic program* of these petty-bourgeois sectors. For their part, the labor bureaucrats allied with the PRD opposed an all-out mobilization of their unions together with the CGH. Both the student and labor leaderships were tied to the bourgeoisie through the Cárdenas popular front.

The Grupo Internacionalista insisted from the outset of the struggle at UNAM that, while formally the strike only sought a bourgeois-democratic demand, free public higher education, at bottom it posed a *class struggle*. We stressed that the struggle cannot achieve its goals solely through the action of a sector of the petty bourgeoisie, the students, in a single university, even the largest in Latin America. We fought insistently to *extend the strike to key sectors of the working class*, beginning with those most affected by the privatization offensive (electrical workers, teachers and university workers), in order to join the UNAM strike with the struggle of the proletariat for its class interests. As part of this perspective, we fought for *workers defense of the strike*, and we achieved a partial success in July with the formation of *worker-student defense guards* involving the participation of hundreds of workers of the SME (electrical workers union), STUNAM (National University workers union) and SITUAM (Metropolitan University workers union). Today, beyond the efforts to close various schools and departments, and more than the 24-hour national work stoppage, essentially of the universities, that



Women student strikers of the CGH arrested in Prepa 3 on February 1, in the Reclusorio Norte jail. Free all the arrested comrades!

the CGH has proposed, it is urgently necessary to organize a *national strike for the liberation of all the arrested comrades and against privatization of education and the electrical industry.*

As Karl Marx emphasized, every class struggle is a political struggle. You cannot fight for free public education without fighting politically against the class forces which oppose it. In this case, *the entire bourgeoisie closed ranks, overcoming its tactical differences, to put an end to this strike.* Today the dominant tendencies in the CGH and various union bureaucrats are attempting to revive the phantom National Front in Defense of Free Education or form a National Struggle Committee, which would simply confine the struggle to the bourgeois framework of popular frontism. Today when the PRD with utter cynicism mounts an electoral campaign on the issue of freeing the jailed students, the Grupo Internacionalista insists: *Down with the PRI, PAN and PRD – bloody parties of the bourgeoisie! Break with the Cárdenas popular front!* It is necessary to fight against all the capitalist parties and their political alliances, proven enemies of the UNAM strike, and address the most conscious workers in the fight to forge a *revolutionary workers party.*

For Workers Mobilization Against Police-State Repression!

The press is currently filled with disgusting calls for “reconciliation” from the same authorities who were installed by police riot clubs. How many times have we read calls to “heal the wounds” from those who most insistently called for repression to put an end to the strike! How shameless are these

university department chairmen who talk of reconciliation and even “concord” *with hundreds of strikers in jail!* And don’t forget the hired intellectuals who signed an ad paid for by the university administration and published February 4, on the eve of the police takeover of the UNAM, which supported the rector’s anti-strike referendum, calling the CGH an “intolerant minority” and demanding the “immediate return” of the struck facilities. Some of these mercenary writers, accomplices of repression (like Carlos Monsiváis, Carlos Fuentes and Elena Poniatowska) later tried to cleanse their hands by asking that the jails be opened to let out the political prisoners. Others, police scribes such as Héctor Aguilar Camín, only want to make the charges more specific.

In Ciudad Universitaria, rector Juan Ramón de la Fuente and his general staff think they are a victorious gang of “untouchables.” They even reactivated a “Dialogue Commission” under the baton of the administration’s gray eminence, José Narro Robles. A body for “dialogue” set up by De la Fuente is like a commission against organized crime appointed by Al Capone. In fact, according to leaked reports, the topic of discussion at this outfit’s first meeting (behind closed doors) was how many students should be left to rot in the Reclusorio Norte jail. Meanwhile,

a veritable witchhunt is being carried out in the university. Cars full of thugs parked in front of the schools; police action to throw demonstrators out of football games. School directors are required to turn in detailed reports about the political groups present in their departments, complete with names, telephone numbers, activities, etc. The watchword is *every administrator a police spy.* But despite all this, they have not been able to restore “normalcy.”

The rector who requested the federal police invasion of UNAM now pretends to favor freeing the arrested students. What gall! Bit by bit, judicial bodies dismiss the “serious” charges against some students, declaring that they can be released under “*reserva de ley*” (pending “investigation” of their “crimes”). At the same time, bail of 100,000 pesos (US\$10,000) is imposed, or 50,000 pesos in cash, which the strikers and their families can’t possibly pay. To top it off, the university administration says that in order to show its “benevolence,” it will help the families “arrange” to pull together such enormous sums! What is really happening, since there are no specifics to the charges, is that the authorities decide which students “may” be released according to political criteria, giving preference to the most “moderate” strikers. In early March some 180 strikers were left in the Reclusorio Norte, dozens of them suffering from illness due to conditions at the prison.

Since there isn’t a shred of evidence to support the “serious” accusations (even federal Attorney General Jorge Madrazo mocked the charge of “terrorism”), the federal prosecutor’s office claimed, and pliant judges concurred, that the CGH prisoners represented a “danger to society,” in order to prevent them from being let out on bail. This arbitrary charge

inevitably recalls the earlier charge of “social dissolution” pinned on railroad strikers in 1959 and student protestors in 1968. And what exactly might this danger be? That the students might occupy the National University again. This same “aggravating circumstance” was used to keep in jail four Argentine students and academics whose only “crime” was being present at the CGH meeting on the fateful night of February 6. (After student protests in Buenos Aires, they were freed, and immediately expelled from the country for supposed violation of the “population control” law.) In reality, the prisoners are hostages of the regime, which thinks it can put a stop to the struggle by keeping them behind bars. In order to free them, what is needed is a class mobilization of the power of the proletariat against these police-state measures, and against the privatization and starvation policies that the repression is supposed to “bullet-proof.”

Such a mobilization could have a tremendous revolutionary impact. The chiefs of the PRI-government, whose disdain for the “commoners” rivals that of another Old Regime, would do well to recall how in 1789 the starving masses of Paris stormed the prison of La Bastille. Two centuries later in capitalist Mexico, there persists the explosive mixture of prisoners and starvation. After the events at the El Mexe rural teachers institute—in which the population of the town of Tepatepec captured and disarmed 68 *granadero* police, who “watched in horror the six-foot-high bonfires in the main plaza” where they were put on trial by the townspeople—Luis Gutiérrez y González remarked (*Excelsior*, 28 February): “So prick up your ears, Federal Government, state and municipal authorities, and take a good look around. What happened in Tepatepec could become contagious nationally. At Versailles, La Fayette heard King Louis XVI’s facile explanation of the mobs besieging the palace: ‘They are rioters.’ To which the general replied: ‘No, sire, they are revolutionaries’.”

The Mexican capitalists and their imperialist masters are fully conscious of the explosive potential of the Mexican social volcano. The *Wall Street Journal* of 14 February caused a stir with an article reporting that “In Washington, U.S. Defense Department officials are concerned that guerrilla groups still have the ability to ‘distract and disrupt’ the electoral process” in Mexico. According to the *Journal*, sources in the Mexican Defense Ministry and Cisen (Mexico’s main intelligence agency) reject the Pentagon’s vision of the spread of rural guerrillas as out of touch with reality. Nevertheless, on a number of occasions reports leaked by the regime’s military intelligence apparatus have detailed more than 20 different guerrilla groups active in the country. Meanwhile, “hard-line” sectors of the PRI, the government, the church and the univer-



SME

Electrical workers of the SME march in support of the UNAM strike, 23 April 1999. It will require mobilizing the class power of the proletariat to win this struggle against the bourgeoisie.

sity authorities tried (without success) to link the UNAM strike to the guerrillas, in order to justify the repression.

The various guerrilla groups have their own particular characteristics, from the mass uprising of the EZLN in the Indian regions of Chiapas to groups whose real existence is somewhat dubious. But politically they all raise one or another variant of a program of bourgeois “democratic” reforms. The EPR (People’s Revolutionary Army) and its several offshoots call for a “democratic people’s republic”; the Zapatistas no longer demand more than the approval of a rather vague statute on Indian rights (the San Andrés Agreements). In reality, they all act as electoral pressure groups within the framework of popular-front politics. They also have in common their orientation to the peasantry, a petty-bourgeois sector which, as Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky pointed out, does not have the ability to lead a social – much less a socialist – revolution. This role falls to the proletariat and its communist vanguard.

In fact, both the PRI regime and the PRD government of the Federal District concentrate on preparing to crush *urban* uprisings. It is reported that the DF police department is purchasing expensive espionage devices to intercept and monitor voice and data communications, faxes and cellular telephone messages (*El Universal*, 6 March). For what purpose? Well-placed Mexican commentators fear that student activists in the cities, particularly after the police takeover of UNAM, are already adopting more far-reaching objectives. As Pablo Hiriart wrote in *La Crónica* (14 February): “They were after the country, not open admissions or canceling the tuition and fee structure. And that’s what they’re looking to do.”

The heroic struggle of the UNAM students has landed a blow against the PRI regime and its plans to privatize education and key economic sectors. Everyone now recognizes that behind the struggle for free public education is a protest against

the government's starvation policies, which over the last two decades have produced an explosion of extreme poverty. This is why the strikers received the support of millions of workers throughout the country. Currently, groups of Indians from several states are converging on the DF to show their solidarity with the jailed fighters. Electrical workers of the SME and dissident teachers of the CNTE are negotiating labor contracts. There is talk of a national teachers strike on March 17 – almost a month and a half *after* the police assault on University City! – which would amount to a big demonstration, when what was needed for the past *ten months* of the student strike was *all-out workers mobilization*. Today, it continues to be possible to unite the various struggles in a single powerful fist against the state party and the parties of the bourgeois “opposition.” But to do so, it is necessary to break the chains that bind the oppressed to their oppressors.

The bourgeois media nervously pointed to the slogans chanted in the Zócalo on February 9: “If there is no solution [to the students’ demands], then there will be revolution!” During the February 14 march called by the CGH and parents of the arrested students, various banners were emblazoned with the communist hammer and sickle. For now, these revolutionary references don’t go beyond symbolism. But they are indications that the upshot of the UNAM strike could be a search for revolutionary politics by many of those who through long months of arduous struggle resisted the onslaught of the bourgeoisie. So far, the struggle has been guided by a populist-nationalist, i.e., bourgeois, perspective, opposing “neo-liberalism” and “globalization.” However, among the fundamental lessons of the strike—which met opposition not only from the “neo-liberals” of the PRI and the PAN but also from the nationalist populists of the PRD—is the unavoidable conclusion that its fundamental objectives can be won only through *international socialist revolution*.

UNAM Strike – A Class Battle

For many among the tens of thousands of students who have participated in the strike, the National University has been a little universe, their “*patria chica*” (home turf), when in fact it is only one battlefield in the class struggle. First of all, because over and above the disputes in the ruling class, the strike ultimately confronted a united bourgeoisie. Liberal intellectuals joined with “neo-liberal” capitalist ideologues to vituperate against the “insatiability” of the CGH (*La Jornada*), and its “archaic millenarian discourse” (*La Crónica*). The Mexican Conference of Bishops beat the drums and sounded the trumpets for a holy war, virtually a *cristiada* (the 1920s Catholic clericalist revolt against the Mexican Revolution)



Andrew Wining/Reuters

UNAM strikers in front of banner with hammer and sickle, marching on February 9 to demand freedom for all the arrested students.

against the strike. They even criticized the federal government for intervening “too late,” due to fears of “the shadow of 1968” and the risk of “dirtying their hands” with repression (*El Universal*, 24 February). In order to defeat a bloody ruling class whose high priests preach the gospel of dirty hands, which murdered hundreds of students in 1968 and which continues to perpetrate massacres against dozens of peasants every year, what is required is revolutionary class politics.

The struggle for free university education is a class struggle also because it clashes with the present policies and interests of the bourgeoisie with regard to education. The attacks on public higher education go hand in hand with the campaign to privatize the steel, petrochemical and electrical industries, water and other basic resources. They are part of a general capitalist offensive against social services and the living standards and defensive organizations of working people. Mounting impoverishment is revealed by the fact that in the last five years, consumption of beef has fallen by 30 percent; it currently stands at half the level of the 1960s, and about 40 percent of the population never eats it at all. During the last five years there has also been a fall in the consumption of milk, with the elimination of milk subsidies for low-income families; of tortillas, with the elimination of the tortilla subsidy; of beans and basic grains, due to the elimination of the minimum prices that made production of these foodstuffs profitable for peasants. Yet Mexico is not the only place this is occurring.

The privatization offensive is frequently termed “neo-liberalism.” Earlier, in the 1980s, the catchword was “Reaganomics.” In the ’70s, it was the monetarist “Chicago boys.” This vocabulary comes from reformist pseudo-socialists and bourgeois pseudo-progressives, and behind the diagnosis is a program: to “reform” capitalism. They want to substitute another “model” for the current one, for example replacing export production with the previous policy of industrializa-

tion through import substitution. However, the attack against social services and the rights and living standards of the working people is not the product of a particular doctrine but of an offensive by the capitalist class worldwide to ratchet up the rate of exploitation through a general attack on the workers. It began right after the United States lost the war on Vietnam in 1975, and its first targets were the U.S. workers themselves. Hundreds of thousands of public workers were laid off in the late '70s, large numbers of students were forced out of the public universities, hundreds of factories were closed.

The unions were the initial target of this capitalist onslaught, from the defeat of the 1977-78 coal strike in the U.S. to the destruction of the air controllers union in 1981 by Ronald Reagan, the defeat of the 1984-85 British miners strike by Margaret Thatcher, and many others. At the same time the economic and military pressure of imperialism was drastically stepped up against the Soviet Union, a bureaucratically degenerated workers state. The privileged Stalinist bureaucracy, which vainly sought "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism, undermined the foundations of the planned economy, preparing the way for capitalist restoration. From the time of the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan in 1989 on, the counterrevolutionary offensive escalated, leading to the destruction of the deformed workers states

of East Europe and the USSR during 1989-92. In an atmosphere of everyone for themselves, the Stalinists handed everything that had been built with the workers' toil over to the imperialists on a silver platter.

Drunk with victory, the capitalists proclaimed the death of communism and even (in the case of some ideologues of Yankee imperialism) the end of history. They thought it was the end of the "red threat" they had feared ever since the victory of the October Revolution in 1917 under the Bolsheviks of Lenin and Trotsky. The bourgeoisie promptly opened fire on the West European trade unions and populist leftist movements in Latin America. The Sandinista regime in Nicaragua fell, and a few years later the Salvadoran guerrillas surrendered. In Mexico, Carlos Salinas de Gortari opened his six-year presidency with a bazooka attack against oil "union" leader Joaquín Hernández Galicia (*La Quina*), sending him to prison for more than a decade. Ernesto Zedillo began his term in Los Pinos (the presidential residence) with the destruction of the Mexico City bus drivers union, SUTAU-100. All this underscores the lesson: *a revolutionary program and leadership are indispensable to win in the face of this counterrevolutionary offensive.*

The *capitalist* assault against the working people is now

Cárdenas Popular Front Against the Workers

Its actions during the strike showed with crystal clarity how the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) in office uses the force of the capitalist state to attack workers, peasants, students and the urban poor who have been its electoral support. On 4 August 1999, *granadero* riot police of the Federal District (controlled by the PRD) assaulted striking students who were blocking a scab facility; 107 were arrested. On October 14, the *granaderos* gave a furious beating to supporters of the students' Strike General Council (CGH) on Mexico City's Periférico highway, leaving several bleeding profusely on the pavement. On December 11, when students held a protest meeting in front of the U.S. embassy to demand freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal, the renowned radical Black journalist on death row in Pennsylvania, and to protest the repression against demonstrators at the meeting of the World Trade Organization in Seattle, the *granaderos* viciously beat them, arresting 98. On 1 February 2000, the capital police acted as a shield while the federal police evicted strikers from Preparatory School No. 3, jailing more than 250. Five days later, the *granaderos* surrounded the main UNAM campus at Ciudad Universitaria while the federal police rounded up 750 people, arresting the entire CGH assembly and many more students and workers who were guarding the facilities.

After February 6, it is no secret that the PRD has desperately sought to reintegrate its "wayward sons and daughters" in the dominant tendencies of the CGH. At the same time, PRD candidates held meetings with leaders of the "independent" unions, i.e., those who are not part of the PRI's

charro apparatus of corporatist labor fronts (including the CTM, CT, CROC, CROM and allied "union" groups). Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas presented his labor platform to bureaucrats of the SME, STUNAM, SITUAM, the Coordinadora Sindical 1° de Mayo and the UNT federation dominated by the telephone workers. The PRD platform would leave intact the straitjacket of capitalist state control of the workers, as well as the starvation wages it protects. Even if wages were raised a couple of points above the 12 percent ceiling and the miserable 10 percent "increase" in the minimum wage, this would mean nothing to the Mexican working class whose real incomes have fallen 40 percent under Zedillo and more than 75 percent over the last two decades. Like the other capitalist parties, the PRD defends the system of merciless exploitation of the working people; Cárdenas only proposes to throw some aspirins into the "basic market basket" to dull the pain.

Meanwhile, the PRD sends the capital police against the workers. On 25 May 1999, the *granaderos*, motorcycle squad and mounted police busted up a demonstration of thousands of teachers of the CNTE from the states of Michoacán, Guerrero and Oaxaca. The SNTE, the pseudo-union linked to the PRI and its CTM, justified the beating of the dissident teachers. On June 14, Mexico City riot police clashed in Iztapalapa with residents of the Frente Popular Francisco Villa-Independiente, a split-off from the FPFV, which is politically aligned with the PRD. More recently, on 28 January 2000, while the federal police were already occupying UNAM facilities, the riot cops of *la granadera*

being repeated against the students. That it isn't just a case of "neo-liberalism" is shown by the fact that the UNAM strike was opposed not only by the spokesmen of the PRI and PAN, but also those of the PRD. In fact, at crucial moments in the strike *the Cardenistas were the spearhead of the bourgeois attack against the CGH* (the proposal by the emeritus professors in July, the attack by *granadero* riot police in December, PRD scab-herding in January). The same bourgeois *iron front* can be seen in the rabid accusations of "*lumpenism*" against the strike. *La Crónica* (6 January) editorialized against "The Lumpenization of UNAM." *Excelsior* of the same date vituperated against the "Revenge of the 'Lumpen' at UNAM." After the mass arrests, the same attack on the student strikers was leveled by one of the regime's most prominent intellectuals, Carlos Fuentes, who joined the official chorus demanding that the "ringleaders" of the CGH remain in jail:

"All the students who are not facing *de officio* charges should be freed.... UNAM is not an elitist university, but neither should it be a university of lumpens or of a resentful lower middle class."

Yet the intelligentsia which considers itself as belonging to "the left" expressed this same hatred—that of a privileged upper middle class—toward the strikers. *La Jornada Semanal*

(6 February) published a diatribe titled "The Lesson of UNAM," in which Augusto Isla writes of the CGH: "They are and feel themselves to be social scum." Their demands, he continues, show "the mask of their resentment"; they are "desperate" people who will not engage in dialogue, a "deranged minority" marked by "primitivism" and a "dialectic of insatiable appetites"; a distilled "poison" which has adopted "the logic of violence." The violence, however, came from the police, which that very day took Ciudad Universitaria. "Maestro" Isla's vituperations were accompanied by a drawing of an "ultra" in rags (*Lumpen*, in German) which perfectly illustrates this visceral loathing toward the strikers. Isla attempts to justify his disdain toward the "social scum" by writing, with regard to "the most radical elements," that:

"The real problem was not tuition but social exclusion. Their faces, their clothing, their provocative gestures, speak of youth from popular sectors who, while they may have found a place in the university, do not see the future clearly, not only because of their presumably poor academic performance, as shown by the verbal crudeness of their spokesmen, but also because the social model itself tends to displace them."

Isla ends by calling the student strike "one more indica-

Robles used massive violence to break up a demonstration by hundreds of workers, most of them women, from the Autonomous University of Chapingo who were staging a sit-in in front of the federal labor ministry. Dozens were injured.

Both in order to win the UNAM strike and to defend workers' struggles, the first task is to fight for the political independence of the working class from the bourgeoisie. In our propaganda, in resolutions and interventions in the CGH and student strike committees, and also intervening in workers' union meetings, the Trotskyists of the Grupo Internacionalista have emphasized this fundamental issue. On January 12, GI comrades participated in a discussion with some 60 workers of the Mexican Electrical Workers Union (SME) at a plant in central Mexico City. The discussion centered on the question of the PRD. We stressed the need for a joint struggle of the students and workers. We also explained how the popular front around the PRD serves as an escape valve for social discontent, and how PRD students had negotiated with the UNAM administration and the federal government to break the strike. We illustrated the bourgeois character of the PRD with the fact that the Cárdenas government was the first to begin the process of privatizing the electrical industry by taking bids last fall for the construction of a cogeneration plant in the DF.

During the discussion, a worker defended the PRD and excoriated the striking students for their "extremism." But other workers, the majority, understood that the "isolation" of the strike was due to the fact that the regime had mobilized its forces against the students — from demonization in the bourgeois media to police repression — just as it has done against the electrical workers. What's needed, they stressed, is that

we mobilize our strength. But instead, the SME bureaucracy seeks to channel the struggle into a classical popular front "against privatization," set up to include the PRD and even elements of the PRI. When the front against the privatization of the electrical industry was set up a year ago, the Grupo Internacionalista explained: "Waving the flag of 'national sovereignty,' the same slogan occasionally used by Ernesto Zedillo himself, its main purpose is to prevent a class-struggle, internationalist mobilization of the power of the working class."

The GI called for a "joint strike by UNAM students and workers, electrical workers and other workers," and to "form defense groups of students and workers (including SME members and with the active support of other sectors of the workers movement)," which was later carried out. And we insisted:

"Needless to say, the CTM and the corporatist SUTERM 'union' in the electrical industry back the Zedillo government's privatization scheme to the hilt. Today a strike with class-struggle leadership would provide backing for a fight for workers committees genuinely independent of the bourgeois parties, to destroy the *gharrros'* corporatist straitjacket, a crucial part of the PRI's semibonapartist regime. It would pose social questions, from the oppression of women and Indian peasants to the repudiation of the imperialist debt, which can be resolved only through a socialist revolution and its international extension to the imperialist centers. This is the Trotskyist perspective of permanent revolution."

Based on this program we must forge a revolutionary workers party, which is Leninist and Trotskyist, in the struggle to reforge the Fourth International, the world party of socialist revolution. ■



Image of an “ultra” according to *La Jornada* reflects the racist “anti-lumpen” hysteria of well-off petty-bourgeois sectors.

the Pedregal or Coyoacán, but from poor neighborhoods, in many cases from families who live in abject misery and whose future is utterly somber in a Mexico governed by the PRI, PAN or PRD. Their clothing – and their inability to pay 100,000 pesos in bail – reflect their social situation.

A recent study by Banamex indicates that while the government is reporting that the national income is growing 5 percent annually, the number of Mexicans who live in “extreme poverty,” with incomes that fail to cover even basic food needs, doubled between 1992 and 1999, going from 13 to 26 million people. During the same period, the number of people in “intermediate poverty,” with incomes roughly equal to what a working-class family used to earn, fell from 24 million to 14 million (*La Jornada*, 13 February). This dramatic inversion shows the effect of the massive impoverishment of the Mexican working class. Another study carried out by economist Julio Boltvinik indicates that in reality “extreme poverty” extends to 54 percent of the population, more than double the official figure (*La Jornada*, 25 February). This is the hard reality which the Mexican working masses live in, and which UNAM students confront, far from the wonderland described by Zedillo in which the poverty of the women workers in the *maquiladoras* (free trade zone factories) represents “progress.”

tion of our social vulnerability.” What we have here is the terror of a protected and well-off petty-bourgeois layer anxious to protect its privileges, which is oriented toward the PRD but feels itself vulnerable in the face of the demise of the regime which has been the host for its parasitic existence. The “anti-lumpen” fury expresses the horror of the Conaculta (the government cultural council set up by Salinas) intelligentsia who fear that the demons of the CGH will endanger their sinecures, their trips abroad and cushy jobs, even if they only have a cubicle at UNAM. Behind these epithets is the fact that the large majority of the strikers do not come from the well-to-do middle class, from

It is largely for this reason that the parents of the student strikers have been so committed to their sons’ and daughters’ struggle at the University. Throughout the struggle, the Assembly of Parents has actively participated in marches, and the day of the cop assault on UNAM they courageously confronted the federal police. Today, parents continue to be camped out in front of the Reclusorio Norte jail and the Administration Tower, where they represent a real headache for the authorities – to the point that the outrageous category of “pseudo-parents” had now been placed in the official lexicon, next to the term “pseudo-students.”

In accusing the CGH members of being “lumpens,” some petty-bourgeois intellectuals want to give a Marxoid veneer to their expressions of fear and loathing. Marx and Engels defined the *Lumpenproletariat*, the proletariat in rags, as “the ‘dangerous class,’ the social scum, that passively rotting mass thrown off by the lowest layers of the old society,” which due to its lack of steady work lives off of petty theft and begging, and whose conditions of life “prepare it far more for the part of a bribed tool of reactionary intrigue” (*Communist Manifesto*). But the poverty of many of the strikers and their parents is an expression of the increasing immiseration of the *proletariat* itself in the final stages of the imperialist epoch, when the rotting of *capitalism* has reached the extreme of destroying fundamental productive forces. In the countries of the OECD alone, which essentially includes the highly developed capitalist countries (plus Mexico), 50 million jobless are officially recorded; on a world scale, there are more than a billion unemployed.

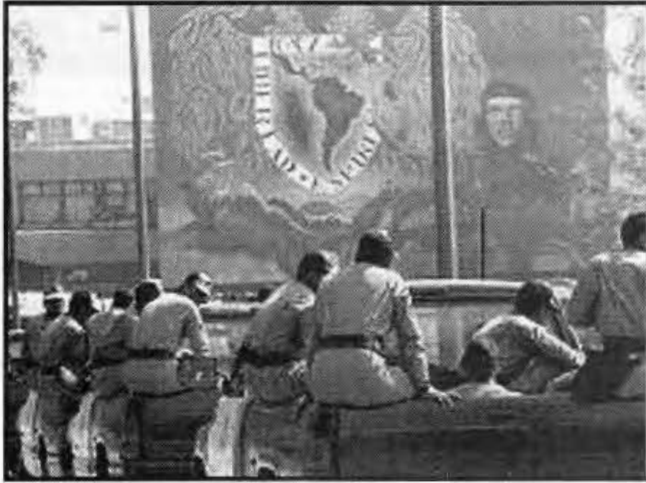
At bottom, this middle-class hatred and fear reflect the evolution of Mexican capitalism. For decades, in addition to supplying leading cadres for the PRI and the regime’s bureaucracy, the National University also provided an avenue for individual social advancement by preparing career “professionals.” But following the explosion of the Latin American “debt bomb” in 1982, millions of jobs disappeared; the same happened, even more drastically, during the economic crisis touched off by the December 1994 devaluation of the Mexican peso. Many students had to work in order to cover their families’ expenses, with the result that it took longer to finish their studies; others saw no perspective of getting a job after leaving UNAM. The political scientist Alfonso Zárate says the members of the CGH are the “product of desperation; they are the losers of modernity and globality.” *El Universal* (27 January) sums up its interview with Zárate:

“The researcher stated that for some years now UNAM has ceased to be an option for social mobility and was turned into a big ‘social parking lot.’ He maintains that the strategy of the government – from Luis Echeverría [in the 1970s] on – was to admit thousands of students in order to defer the pressure for jobs; the University became a buffer given the impossibility of offering them jobs.

“In this sense, he went on, the phenomenon of the ‘ultras’ is related to neo-liberalism and its logic of exclusion. They have no place in its designs, and they can’t see why every option of development is closed to them.”

Zárate, who does not sympathize with the strikers (he accuses them of having a “delirium of omnipotence” and even

La Jornada



Federal Police occupying Ciudad Universitaria on February 6. Mural in background, showing Che Guevara and the UNAM shield, was painted over after police attack, as were all other student murals, including one showing Vietnamese leader Ho Chi Minh that was a decade old.

a “mania for martyrdom”), concludes that “they aren’t waging a strike, they’re making a revolution.” This fear of the UNAM strike as a revolutionary hotbed, expressed by the possessing classes and their scribes, is based on their own certainty that *you can’t put an end to the poverty and social exclusion which the strike denounces without a social revolution*. In their own way, many strikers have come to see this as well during the course of the struggle, which has continued for so long due to the stubborn refusal, not only by the administration but also by PRD professors and researchers, to accept the principle of free higher public education. As a result of the police suppression of the strike, today many more strikers must understand that the only way to achieve their objectives is through a socialist revolution which sweeps away a society based on competition and poverty, and in its place begins to build a society based on a planned economy, ruled by the proletariat, not the lords of finance.

Key to Victory:

Forge a Revolutionary Leadership

The strikers’ experience fully confirms what Leon Trotsky wrote on the basis of the experience of the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917:

“With regard to countries with a belated bourgeois development, especially the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the theory of the permanent revolution signifies that the complete and genuine solution of their tasks of achieving *democracy and national emancipation* is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat as the leader of the subjugated nation, above all of its peasant masses.”

Trotsky directed his polemical essay, *The Permanent Revolution* (1930), against the falsification of Marxism and Leninism by the Stalinists, with their Menshevik program of “two-stage revolution” and their nationalist pretense of achieving “socialism in

one country.” Determining that today democratic tasks can be achieved only through the seizure of power by the proletariat, the Bolshevik leader drew the programmatic conclusions:

“The realization of the revolutionary alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry is conceivable only under the political leadership of the proletarian vanguard, organized in the Communist Party....

“The dictatorship of the proletariat which has risen to power as the leader of the democratic revolution is inevitably and very quickly confronted with tasks, the fulfillment of which is bound up with deep inroads into the rights of bourgeois property. The democratic revolution grows over directly into the socialist revolution and thereby becomes a *permanent* revolution....

“The socialist revolution begins on the national arena, it unfolds on the international arena, and is completed on the world arena.”

In basing ourselves on this perspective of permanent revolution, the Trotskyists of the Grupo Internacionalista have fought continuously in the student mobilization for the revolutionary program necessary to win this class battle. With regard to the CGH’s demands to eliminate the fee hike (in reality, the introduction of tuition) and abrogate the university reforms of 1997 (which blocked automatic admission of all graduates of UNAM-related preparatory schools), we wrote: “We support these demands and, at the same time, we point out their limited character” (*El Internacionalista*, 3 August 1999). Now a press release of the CGH (9 March) seeks to minimize the scope of the struggle, chiding rector De la Fuente: “So he can’t figure out how to resolve these demands, which are elementary and signify nothing other than a return to the situation of three years ago, which the University functioned under for three decades, so all of us can then decide UNAM’s future?” But we definitely do *not* want a return to the situation of the past, nor that anything be “decided” together with the bourgeois repressors in the administration and its bureaucracy.

Warning against reformist/populist illusions in a “democratic and popular” university, in our August 3 pamphlet we stressed that “revolutionary communists present a series of demands pointing to the fundamental need to carry out a socialist revolution.” Even before the strike began, we called for a joint strike between the UNAM students and SME electrical workers in the face of the regime’s privatization campaign. We insisted throughout on the need to break with the Cárdenas popular front and forge a workers party. Concerning the students, we wrote:

“Against the Mexican bourgeoisie and its imperialist godfathers, the struggle against tuition must be a struggle for free, secular public education, for free access to higher education, with all the assistance required for this to be accessible to children of poor and working-class families. We must not only *smash the tuition hike*, but tuition itself must be *abolished*. Students should receive a *living stipend* so they can devote themselves to their studies. The administration must be abolished and the university must be run under *student-teacher-worker control*. A single

continued on page 55

Population Seizes Police, Forces Release of Students

El Mexe: Rebellion in Hidalgo

FEBRUARY 23—The spectacular events of recent days in the town of Tepatepec, in the central Mexican state of Hidalgo, have poured a bucket of cold water on the repressive triumphalism of the government. For more than two weeks the regime's kept press extolled the "surgical" takeover of the National University (UNAM) ordered by president Ernesto Zedillo. Provincial bosses of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) wanted to get rid of their own hot spots of social discontent using the same iron-fisted action. But when the PRI governor of Hidalgo, Miguel Ángel Núñez Soto, ordered the arrest of 900 students and the storming of the Rural Teacher Training Institute of El Mexe, he shot himself in the foot. In the face of the armed invasion of hundreds of state *granaderos* (riot police), the population of this town in the Mezquital Valley rose up, capturing dozens of the uniformed repressors, disarming them and holding them until they were able to exchange them for the arrested students. The front-page headline of *La Crónica* summed up the bourgeoisie's nightmare: "Popular Rebellion in Hidalgo."

The El Mexe teacher training institute was occupied on January 5 by its students, who demanded an increase in the number of scholarships. The state government's response was to order the closing of the school. In the early morning hours of February 19, police in the state capital Pachuca arrested hundreds of students and parents staging a sit-in in front of the state legislature to demand freedom for dozens of El Mexe students arrested at the end of January. Then, at about 6:30 in the morning—as if imitating the details of the police takeover of UNAM could guarantee the success of this new military incursion—some 800 cops and regional security police entered Tepatepec to "take back" the institute's facilities, where they arrested 170 students. At the same time, the paramilitary forces attacked the population of the community of Francisco Madero, indiscriminately beating old people, children, youth and women.

In response to the violent police invasion, the local residents began to organize. Armed with rocks, metal bars and sticks, they headed to the school. After blocking access with a bonfire, more than 1,500 peasants advanced, undeterred by tear gas and explosive devices, to repel the attack. The several hundred



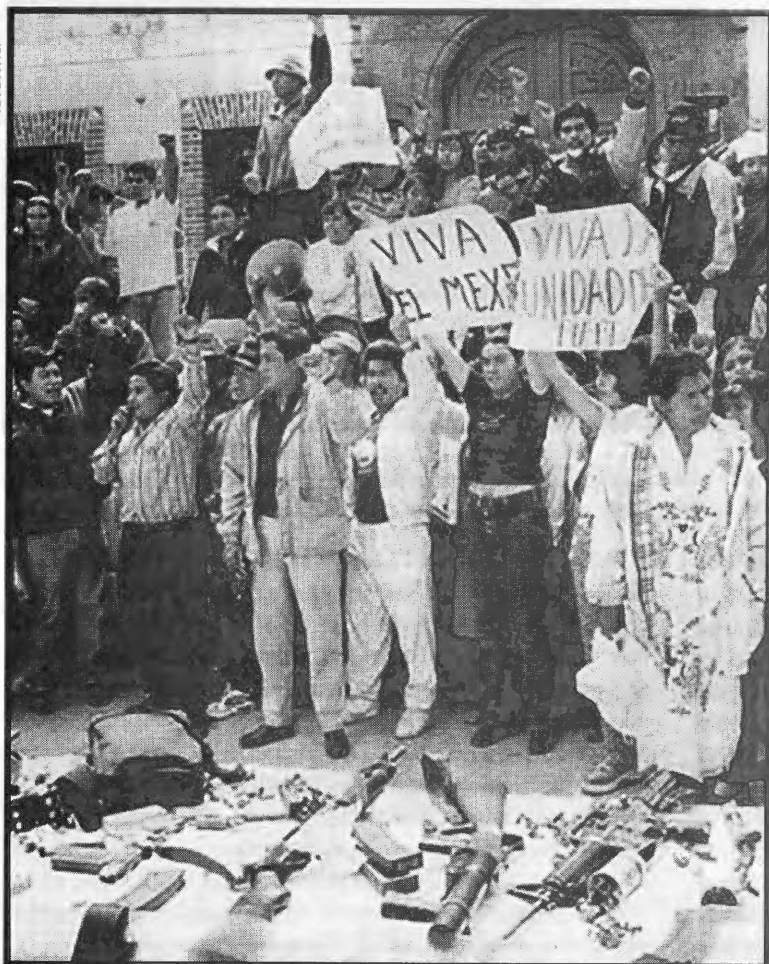
Reforma

Granadero paramilitary state police captured by the population of El Mexe on February 19. Cops were held in the municipal plaza until the arrested students were returned.

granaderos who had been left behind to guard the school tried to flee, throwing themselves into the sewage drainage ditch or running into the fields. Yet some 68 police failed to get away, and the enraged crowd seized them. The crowd took away the cops' shoes and the tops of their uniforms, frog-marching them half-dressed into the town's main plaza, where they were put on trial by the population. In the melee, at least eight patrol cars and trucks were set ablaze, and an equal number were demolished.

TV news and the front pages of papers throughout the country showed dramatic images of dozens of police, handcuffed and with their feet tied. They were kept face down on the ground in the Tepatepec plaza for more than 12 hours, serving as hostages during negotiations for freeing the arrested students and parents. As the hours passed, the situation grew increasingly tense. At one point in the late afternoon, a federal police helicopter buzzed the plaza. The populace immediately began organizing to resist a massive police attack. At 7 p.m., negotiations finally began, and an accord was reached to release the *granaderos* once the students arrested during the course of the day were returned.

However, at least eight student leaders are still in jail and the judicial "investigation" of 800 people is continuing. El Mexe is not alone! The Grupo Internacionalista calls on the working class throughout Mexico to mobilize its power to free all the jailed students and strikers, both from UNAM



Residents of El Mexe display weapons confiscated from the state police sent by the governor.

and in Hidalgo. There have already been work stoppages by education students in Oaxaca and other states, organized by the dissident teachers of the CNTE (National Coordinating Committee of Education Workers). These protests must be generalized into a *national strike demanding freedom for the arrested comrades and against privatization*.

The arms that the population seized from the *granaderos* were presented at a press conference on Monday, dramatically refuting the governor's claim that the attack was carried out by "unarmed" police. At first, the governor claimed the 15 AR-15 and Galil rifles, ten kilograms of bullets, tear gas and riot sticks belonged to the students, but the state interior minister later admitted they belonged to the riot police. The right-wing press has also sought to promote a campaign against "subversion" in El Mexe, noting that it was the *alma mater* of Lucio Cabañas (a guerrilla leader in the 1950s and '60s) and that the student leaders are affiliated with the Mexican Federation of Socialist Peasant Students. They pointed out that in the public presentation of the police arsenal, the students and parents sang the socialist anthem, the *Internationale*, with their left fists in the air. Indeed, El Mexe has been the object of relentless hounding by the regime, which considers it a "nest of reds"; in the fall of 1995, the police laid siege to the school.

But the main target of the government's broadsides was Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas' Party of the Democratic Revolution, which it accused of "whipping up the population." In reality the PRD, a bourgeois-nationalist party, has acted as fireman for the bourgeoisie, offering its services to put out the blaze of rebellions provoked by PRI governments. And if need be, PRD-run local governments send in their own *granadero* riot police. That is what was done by Rosario Robles, PRD head of the Federal District government, against the UNAM student strikers, slum dwellers in Iztapalapa, CNTE teachers and others. The PRD governor of Zacatecas, Ricardo Monreal, also sent *granaderos* against students of the Matías Ramos Rural Teachers Training Institute when they tried to present their demands to President Zedillo on January 13. In the case of El Mexe, the PRD mayor acted as a mediator in the negotiations, after the interior ministry (Gobernación) expressly requested that the PRD's national executive committee intervene in the conflict.

In Hidalgo and Mexico City, a mobilization of the working class is urgently necessary against the repression and the starvation policies that the bourgeoisie seeks to impose through terror. Following the violent suppression of the UNAM student strike, they attempted a second edition of this onslaught of repression in Hidalgo. The regime of President Zedillo and PRI presidential candidate Francisco Labastida is also preparing to strike with an iron fist against the Indian peasants who have risen up in Chiapas. There have been reports from the Zapotec Indian city of Juchitán, Oaxaca (*El Universal*, 21 February) of the passage of an enormous military train, the largest convoy of soldiers and equipment since the 1994 uprising of the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN).

Some on the left paint the situation in El Mexe in terms of rustic folklore, calling it a Fuenteovejuna, after the 17th-century Spanish playwright Lope de Vega's work about a town that metes out justice against an oppressive local potentate. But what happened in Tepatepec was not a matter of an isolated town rebelling against misgovernment on the local or state level. The population of El Mexe heroically resisted an attack that is part of a *national* offensive of repression. Seeking to reassure financiers concerned for Mexico's political stability, PRI candidate Labastida denied that the conflict in Hidalgo would give rise to the "*México bronco*" (rebel Mexico) of the beginning of the 20th century. But what the rebellion in El Mexe recalls is precisely the outbreaks of rebelliousness in the years leading up to the Mexican Revolution. In addition to strikes by textile workers in Río Blanco and copper miners in Cananea, Mexico during the years of 1900-1910 also saw explosions of discontent among Yaqui Indians and workers enslaved by debt peonage in the Yucatán.

In the Mexico of the year 2000, in addition to student strikes there is widespread discontent in the countryside. In addition to the Zapatista Indians in Chiapas, there are guerrilla groups in Oaxaca, Guerrero and other southern and central



Carlos Camacho/La Jornada

Pick-up trucks of Hidalgo state police burning after local population captured 68 riot cops who attacked the El Mexe Rural Teachers Training Institute, confiscating their weapons. Free all the arrested students!

states, and a host of agrarian struggles. Agricultural workers in the San Quintín Valley in Baja California, accused of burning down a packing plant at the beginning of December because the owners failed to pay their back wages, have been linked by Mexican intelligence services to communist organizations. University workers throughout the country threatened to strike at the end of January. A few days ago, Dina auto workers in Ciudad Sahagún, Hidalgo went on strike for a wage increase. All this shows a great potential for struggle. Some UNAM students hold that El Mexe shows the road to victory, because students there won "the support of the people." But neither a mythical "people united" nor isolated union struggles are going to defeat the bourgeois oppressors. Without a revolutionary leadership the discontent will be drained off by the *Cárdenas popular front*.

The events of El Mexe dramatically exposed reformist slogans like "the people in uniform are also exploited," which try to hide the nature of the armed fist of the bourgeoisie. As we have insisted, it is necessary to expel the police from all unions (Auxilio UNAM out of STUNAM). In Brazil, our comrades of the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil fought against police, judicial and gangster repression, to throw *guardas municipais* (municipal police) out of the ranks of the union of workers of the steel city of Volta Redonda.

After the destruction of the Soviet Union and the bureaucratically deformed workers states throughout East Europe, the international bourgeoisie has intensified its attacks against the working class. The reformist and popular-frontist left in Latin America has been left prostrate. In Mexico, most of the organizations which claimed to be socialist dissolved into the bourgeois PRD. But the class struggle continues uninterrupted. In many places around the continent there have been local rebellions, such as the 1993 uprising by government workers in the tiny Argentine city of Santiago del Estero. Others followed, but they were always subordinated to popular fronts with dissident sectors of the bourgeoisie. When they reached larger proportions, with hunger riots such as the *caracazo* in Venezuela, they have been easy prey for populists in uniform, as also occurred recently in Ecuador, where an Indian uprising was taken over by military officers and gave rise to another government devoted to dollarized looting.

The rebellion at El Mexe was a lightning bolt that shows the possibility of a class struggle extending throughout the country against the wave of repression currently underway. But in the absence of a class-struggle workers leadership, it will naturally fall – with the help of the popular-frontist left – into the hands of the PRD. Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas made clear his position when he called the events in El Mexe a big "danger" ... for Mexican capitalism. In order that the outbreak in El Mexe not remain an isolated local event, and so that it doesn't become booty for the electoral campaigns of the bourgeoisie, it is urgently necessary to forge a revolutionary workers party. What's needed is a party based on the Trotskyist program of permanent revolution, which fights for workers revolution extending beyond the border to the very centers of imperialism.

Immediate freedom for all those arrested! Drop all the charges and arrest orders!

Grupo Internacionalista,
section of the League for the Fourth International
23 February 2000

Internacionalista

Órgano en español de la
Liga por la IV Internacional

Mundial Publications
Box 3321, Church St. Sta.
New York, NY 10008
U.S.A.

Apdo. Postal 70-379
Admón. de Correos 70
CP 04511, México, D.F.
México

Caixa Postal 084027
CEP 27251-970
Volta Redonda, RJ
Brasil

Cuadernos de *El Internacionalista*

México: régimen en crisis

Un folleto con nueve artículos de la prensa de la Liga por la IV Internacional.

US\$2

Giros/cheques a: Mundial Publications, Box 3321,
Church Street Station, New York, NY 10008, U.S.A.

In Face of Threats to UNAM Strike

Worker-Student Defense Guards Formed

The following statement was issued on 19 July 1999.

The student strike at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), now in its 90th day, is convulsing the Mexican capital. President Ernesto Zedillo has denounced the strike as a "brutal aggression" and demanded that the students "return" the huge campus which they continue to occupy. Threats of police and even military invasion of the university have been rife. Simultaneously new evidence has become available about how the 1968 Tlatelolco massacre of hundreds of student strikers was ordered straight from the presidential palace. Everyone is aware of the possibility of a "new '68." But this time key sectors of the labor movement have begun to mobilize to defend the students.

Worker-student defense brigades have been formed including members of the university workers union (STUNAM), and beginning on July 15 the powerful Mexican Electrical Workers Union (SME) has dispatched squads of its members to stand guard against a possible attack by the authorities. Other unions have indicated their support. The prospect of facing organized workers contingents can give Mexico's capitalist rulers pause, as such a confrontation could have unpredictable consequences.

As we write, several hundred SME and STUNAM workers are participating daily in round-the-clock defense guards together with students, thousands of whom have occupied university installations for the last three months. The SME-STUNAM-student brigades began at the School of Philosophy and Literature, one of the largest components of the sprawling Ciudad Universitaria (CU), and have since been established at a number of UNAM schools, including Cuautitlán, Iztacala, Aragón and other campuses. This is an extremely significant development in the class struggle, whose importance extends beyond Mexico. The Grupo Internacionalista/League for the Fourth International has played a key role in initiating and helping organize the worker-student defense guards, as part of its struggle to extend the student strike to key sectors of the working class which has the power to take on the Mexican bourgeoisie and its imperialist patrons.

The UNAM student strike has been front-page news in the country's leading papers almost daily for the last three months. All wings of the ruling class want to find some way to put an end to the occupation of the largest university in Latin America, with some 270,000 students on 38 campuses. Following the directives of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, the ruling



Workers defense guards of the Mexican Electrical Workers Union (SME) at the National University, July 1999.

party, the PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party), which has run Mexico uninterruptedly for the last 70 years, wants to crush this knot of resistance to its policies of wholesale privatization and gutting of public higher education. The bourgeois-nationalist opposition party, the PRD (Party of the Democratic Revolution) of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, a leading presidential candidate and head of the Federal District government, has for some time now sought to put an end to such wrenching social turbulence in the capital. But the strike continues.

For the last two weeks, a charade has been carried out in the Palacio de Minería in downtown Mexico City where flunkies of the UNAM rector and representatives of the students' Strike General Council (CGH) have been discussing ground rules for "dialogue." On Thursday, July 15, the administration issued a take-it-or-leave-it ultimatum, refusing to discuss the strikers' six-point set of demands and insisting that they turn over the UNAM campus forthwith – i.e., abandon the strike. In the aftermath, reports have circulated that an assault on the occupied university is increasingly likely.

The UNAM rector, Francisco Barnés de Castro, a veteran PRI bureaucrat, last March ordered the imposition of a hefty tuition in the guise of drastically increased student "fees," carrying out a commitment of the Mexican government to the World Bank. Barnés has refused to talk to students or other opponents of this measure that would in effect abolish free public higher education, instead issuing a series of deadlines, ultimatums and decrees by the dutiful University Council. The council had declared that student strikers had to turn over the campuses by

July 7 "or else." But the deadline came and went. Instead, the first workers defense brigades appeared at the CU.

The Grupo Internacionalista has been agitating from the outset for extending the strike to include the SME, dissident teachers of the CNTE and other sectors, while calling for a break from the popular front around PRD leader Cárdenas which has tied militant workers as well as peasants and students to this wing of the bourgeoisie. The GI introduced motions concretizing this perspective in meetings of colleges, schools and the Strike General Council (see the 23 June GI leaflet, "UNAM Strike at the Crossroads, Mobilize the Working Class to Win!"). On July 2, the assembly of the College of Philosophy passed a GI-introduced motion calling for, among other points: "1. To organize a worker-student defense to defend pickets and protect the strike. To seek the active participation of the union movement, in particular its most combative sectors." A Liaison Commission was named, including a militant of the Grupo Internacionalista, to establish contact with the unions.

Contact was established with the STUNAM, SME, CNTE and other unions. Already on July 1, Grupo Internacionalista supporters had attended a meeting of the union of workers of the Metropolitan University (SITUAM). At the invitation of SITUAM workers, a GI spokesman urged that union to strike in support of the UNAM struggle. In a near unanimous vote, the union decided to stage a one-day solidarity strike the next day. On July 2, the three Metropolitan University campuses were solidly shut down, with picket lines of dozens of workers. The GI organized a bus load of students from the UNAM to go to the campus at Xochimilco; the bus drivers union SUTAU-100, whose 17,000 members were fired by Zedillo in a brutal union-busting attack in 1995, dispatched a bus to transport them. Striking SITUAM workers and the UNAM students marched from the Xochimilco campus to Preparatory School No. 5, also on strike, in a show of solidarity. In the afternoon, representatives of the SME, STUNAM, SITUAM and CNTE addressed a demonstration of some 5,000 in downtown Mexico City declaring their support for the UNAM strike.

That evening, workers from the Central Library at the UNAM invited a spokesman of the Grupo Internacionalista to attend their union meeting to present arguments for STUNAM joining the strike and for the formation of worker-student defense guards. The call was well-received, and on Monday, July 5, GI supporters led a brigade of UNAM students and STUNAM workers to an installation of the Central Power and Light company to talk with the SME workers about forming worker-student defense brigades. The following day, while the leaders of the Strike Committee (CGH) were meeting with the administration representatives, a group of workers and students gathered at the School of Philosophy to discuss the possibility of forming joint defense brigades.

On July 7, the day of Barnés' "deadline," a meeting of the STUNAM's General Representatives Council was held to discuss what to do. At the workers' invitation, the GI representative spoke to the council urging them to join the strike, form worker-student defense guards and remove campus cops from the union. The Council voted to form defense brigades, de-

claring that campus workers would give up their vacations (scheduled to begin on July 9), and "call[ing] on all workers and union delegates to organize solidarity guards with the strike movement." In the afternoon a "human chain" of 600-1,000 students, campus workers and parents was set up in front of the main entrance to CU on Insurgentes Avenue. That night reports circulated of movements of Mexican Army units from outlying areas into Military Camp No. 1, the staging ground for the 1968 massacre. But the rumored attack never came.

The bourgeoisie was livid. *Excelsior* (7 July), the authoritative pro-government paper, denounced "student violence" by "minority groups, manipulated with obscure aims," and complained bitterly about the union's intention to "set up guards and protect the strikers, in the face of concerns that the university authorities and the Federal Government are preparing a 'violent outcome' to the problem." A couple of days later *Excelsior* vituperated against "ultraleftists" who were out to "destroy the UNAM," but also reported a growing body of (bourgeois) "reluctance to use the police force" against the strikers. Simultaneously, the federal government announced the transfer of an entire Military Police brigade of some 5,000 MPs to the newly formed Federal Preventive Police. This brigade is the same one whose members executed youths in death-squad style in the Buenos Aires neighborhood of Mexico City in 1997. Now these infamous killers will be used to "armor" the regime against perceived threats as next year's presidential elections approach. Their first target could be the UNAM strikers.

The Grupo Internacionalista continued to push for strengthening the defense guards, in particular approaching the electrical workers union. On July 15, GI supporters went to SME headquarters to again urge union leaders to dispatch workers to join in defense brigades at the struck campuses. The students received a positive response, and that afternoon several dozen SME members, including the union's Central Committee (executive board), went out to the School of Philosophy at Ciudad Universitaria where they put up a banner declaring, "The SME Supports the Students on Strike at UNAM." The electrical workers were enthusiastically greeted by students and by a delegation of a dozen STUNAM workers who had been participating in defense activities. A welcoming meeting included remarks from the SME, other students and the GI, which stressed that the formation of worker-student defense guards pointed to the need for a joint strike against the government's privatization offensive.

Since July 15, worker-student defense brigades have spread to a number of UNAM campuses and installations. In addition to the danger of a police or military assault, there is the threat of attack by *porros* (hired thugs), which university authorities have used in the past. Close to 400 SME members have been participating daily in the defense guards organized on rotating eight-hour shifts. Additional unions have indicated interest in joining the brigades. The SME and other "independent" unions (in contrast to the PRI's corporatist labor fronts) have often talked solidarity, while in fact subordinating the workers to Cárdenas and the popular front. Today effec-

tive action in support of the UNAM strike runs directly up against this class-collaborationist front, and requires a revolutionary leadership capable of waging sharp class struggle. The formation of worker-student defense guards is an important step. Leon Trotsky, in the Transitional Program, the founding document of the Fourth International, underlined:

“Scabs and private gunmen in factory plants are the basic nuclei of the fascist army. *Strike pickets* are the basic nuclei of the proletarian army. This is our point of departure. In connection with every strike and street demonstration, it is imperative to propagate the necessity of creating *workers’ groups for self-defense.*”

As the Grupo Internacionalista has repeatedly stressed, the formation of worker-student defense guards and the struggle to extend the UNAM student strike to key sectors of the labor movement are part of a strategy to mobilize the working class in struggle against all sectors of the capitalist ruling class. Where the CGH and union leaders seek to pressure Cárdenas to pressure the PRI, seeking a treacherous “dialogue” with the bourgeoisie, the GI has warned against this trap and called instead to rely on the power of the proletariat. The GI has insisted on the need for the working class and oppressed to break with the Cárdenas popular front and forge a revolutionary workers party. Where student and union leaders appeal to Mexican nationalism, posing the struggle in terms of defending “national sovereignty,” the GI has emphasized the need for an *internationalist* struggle against this *capitalist* (not just “neo-liberal”) offensive against workers and students from the Southern Cone of South America to Europe, an offensive emanating from the centers of imperialism. It can only be defeated through socialist revolution extending to the imperialist heartland in the U.S., where Mexican and other immigrant workers form an important and growing sector of the proletariat.

Mobilize the working class to win the UNAM strike! Break with the Cárdenas popular front – Forge a revolutionary workers party!

UNAM Strike...

continued from page 49

union of all university workers must be forged (expelling the professionals of bourgeois repression such as the campus cops who are members of the UNAM workers union) and linked to the struggle of the primary and secondary school teachers.”

–“Workers, Students: For a Class-Struggle Mobilization Against the Bourgeois Attack,” translated in *The Internationalist* No. 7, April-May 1999

At the same time, we stressed that “a class-struggle mobilization of this scope would mean a struggle against growing government repression, highlighting the demand for *immediate withdrawal of the Mexican army from Chiapas and Guerrero.*”

Based on this program, the Grupo Internacionalista intervened in the strike assemblies of different schools and in the Strike General Council, putting forward motions for a joint strike

of the UNAM (CGH and STUNAM), SME electrical workers and CNTE teachers; to reject the “dialogue” proposed by the administration, denouncing it as “a trap whose purpose is to negotiate an end to the strike at the lowest possible cost”; to “organize a worker-student defense to defend the picket lines and protect the strike” (these motions are reproduced in *El Internacionalista*, 23 June 1999). This last demand was approved in an assembly of the School of Philosophy and Literature at the beginning of July, and we immediately set about putting it into practice. We were thereby able to initiate the formation of workers brigades in defense of the UNAM strike with the participation of several hundred union workers of the SME, STUNAM and SITUAM. These brigades appeared in Ciudad Universitaria on the night of July 7 when an ultimatum from then-rector Barnés expired. Their presence blocked the expected police/military attack (see “Worker-Student Defense Guards Formed,” on page 53).

At the same time, we insisted that this step, which put into practice on a modest scale a point of the Transitional Program of the Fourth International, should be extended to key sectors of the workers movement and included in a strategy to mobilize the proletariat against the entire bourgeoisie. Over the course of the strike, we also introduced several proposals to concretize proletarian internationalism. At the beginning of June, the Grupo Internacionalista put forward a resolution, which was approved by the CGH, to make a contribution from the striking Mexican students to the auto workers of Zastava, Yugoslavia and to take a stand for the defense of Yugoslavia against the imperialist war. In October, the GI presented a motion for workers action to win freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal, which was approved by the CGH hours before the governor of Pennsylvania signed a death warrant for Jamal (which was later stayed by appeal to U.S. federal courts). The GI also fought for the CGH to call a demonstration demanding freedom for Mumia, which took place on December 11 and was brutally attacked by the *granadero* riot police of the PRD.

While there have been plenty of empty references to the “strike of the end of the century” or the end of the millenium, what is true is that the UNAM strike takes place in the dying days of the PRI regime. All the bourgeois parties sought to maneuver around the strike, and then agreed to put an end to it. The actions of the PRD in this extended strike show what its “democratic transition” would be like: precious little “carrot” for the working masses, lots of “stick” to beat those who offer resistance to its capitalist government. But even though the dominant tendencies in the CGH are angry with Cárdenas and his party, they have not broken with the Cárdenas popular front; moreover, with their populist/nationalist program, they opposed a *class-struggle internationalist fight*. In order for the experience of the UNAM strike to serve to educate future cadres of the socialist revolution, it is necessary that this be part of the struggle to forge a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party, the indispensable tool for victory. The Grupo Internacionalista, section of the League for the Fourth International, calls upon the most determined fighters to undertake this task together with us. ■

Pseudo-Trotskyists...

continued from page 37

of the popular front, the ICL has nothing programmatically concrete to offer to workers, immigrants and youth who want to struggle against capitalist austerity, racist terror and the fascist danger. To justify their passivity, they deny the FPÖ is fascist, alleging it's just another right-wing electoral party.

Meanwhile there are fascists-for-Haider in the streets of Berlin. On March 13, Haider's fans in the fascist NPD and other neo-Nazis, about 400 in total, marched past the site of the planned Holocaust monument to the Brandenburg Gate in order to celebrate the anniversary of Hitler's *Anschluss* of Austria and to declare "national solidarity with Vienna." Several times that number of leftists, politically dominated by the SPD and PDS social democrats, mobilized against the Nazi march, which was protected by a massive police force. To be consistent, the SpAD should have showed up with signs declaring, "Haider's FPÖ Is Not Fascist." But that would be too up-front for these centrists who are trying to put a left gloss on their policy of "passive radicalism," as Karl Kautsky described his own posture on the eve of World War I.

Once again, the ICL has abandoned a longstanding position just when the question became immediate. In Mexico, the Grupo Espartaquista and *Workers Vanguard* warned for almost a decade of the danger posed to workers and the oppressed by the rise of an opposition popular front around Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas and his bourgeois-nationalist party. But on the eve of Cárdenas' election as head of government of Mexico City in 1997, the ICL suddenly dropped its call to break with the Cárdenas popular front, claiming it did not exist. In Austria, just as the FPÖ enters the government, the ICL suddenly decides that Haider's party is not fascist after all, adopting the reformist and bourgeois media view on this question. Characteristically, in both cases the ICL neglected to mention that it had just changed its line. It wants to hide that it is abandoning what were distinctive, indeed polarizing, Spartacist positions.

Running like a pink thread through all the fake-Trotskyist

Julien Hekiman/Syagma



No longer fascist, only "fascistic" (according to the ICL)? French National Front leader Le Pen assaults Socialist Party deputy during 1997 elections.



Sozialarchiv, Zürich

In 1937, imprisoned Austrian Trotskyists denounced Austro-fascism, social-democratic and Stalinist social-patriotism, declaring: "The main enemy is at home!"

analyses of Haider is the profoundly social-democratic idea that only those fascists who directly engage in pogrom violence may be recognized as such. Fascism's goal is the complete obliteration of the workers movement; this is its "pogrom essence." But for this it must generate a mass movement of the petty bourgeoisie, with political agitation and not just the "technical" organization of armed bands. Workers Power's bluster that fascism "can only be fought by equally warlike methods" is the latter-day equivalent of the Austro-Marxists' empty promises of armed insurrection when and if reaction stepped outside the bounds of the constitution. When that moment came, it was "too late."

A relatively low level of class struggle has resulted in the fact that despite Haider's efforts, the FPÖ remains organizationally weak; its ties to the neo-Nazi grouplets who supply extra-parliamentary violence as enforcers of his fascist program are informal – but nonetheless very real. The FPÖ has absorbed into its apparatus and parliamentary fractions numerous ex-members of virtually the entire spectrum of banned Nazi groups, which always coordinated their bloody actions with Haider's "legal" campaigns. Those who turn a blind eye to this can only prepare defeats for the working people. In *What Next?* Trotsky warned:

"Under the cover of the constitutional perspective which lulls his adversaries, Hitler aims to reserve for himself the possibility of striking the blow at a convenient moment.... He must in due time produce the knife from under his shirt."

The chorus of pseudo-socialists who claim that "Haider's FPÖ is not fascist but electoralist" is undercutting the urgent fight for a class mobilization against the capitalist assault on the workers, immigrants, women and youth spearheaded by Haider's fascist outfit. Instead of dangerous electoral-cretinist lullabies that the FPÖ "rules out violence or fascist methods" (USec), that "the police hardly dare to intervene" (LRCI), that "there are no fascist mobilizations in the streets" (ICL), genuine Trotskyists should be warning: *Do not be fooled by the fact that Haider keeps his knife hidden in his track suit! We must forge a revolutionary workers party and mobilize working-class power to crush the fascist danger before it is too late!* ■

LQB Spokesman Cerezo Fired for Leading Resistance

Brazilian Steel Company Assault on Six-Hour Day

On April 14 Brazilian bosses dealt a blow to the working class, ramming through a vote to end the six-hour day at Volta Redonda's Companhia Siderúrgica Nacional (CSN), Latin America's largest steel plant. Management threatened hundreds of layoffs if workers refused to give up this historic gain, while pretending there would be "zero dismissals" if it passed. But barely an hour after the polls closed, as vote counting was underway, CSN bosses peremptorily fired our comrade Cerezo from the plant for his leading role in the fight to defend the six-hour day. The management was clearly afraid that if it had announced this reprisal earlier, it could have reversed the close vote.

One of those who pushed the CSN's cynical "zero dismissals" lie was the head of the local pro-company Força Sindical union, who the next day threatened to sue Cerezo in the bosses' courts for denouncing the bureaucrats' treacherous role. The firing of comrade Cerezo, the leading spokesman of the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil, came after several thousand copies of a special supplement of the LQB's newspaper, *Vanguarda Operária*, were distributed at the plant with headlines calling for a "Militant Strike to Defend the Six-Hour Shift at CSN" and denouncing "Bourgeois State Terror Against Workers' Struggle." The paper reported on recent revelations that during a steel strike a decade ago, the Brazilian army put Cerezo on a *death list* of radical workers.

The six-hour day was won in the great 1988 steel strike, which became a milestone in the history of the South American labor movement when the workers of Volta Redonda refused to back down in the face of the army's occupation of the plant and murder of three strikers. Over the past year CSN has waged a campaign to abolish this important gain and restore the 8-hour workday. Its threats of mass layoffs had a big impact in a company town already suffering devastating unemployment as a result of the slashing of the CSN workforce in the late '80s and after the company's privatization in 1993. Together with its threats, the company offered a bribe of two and a half months' pay, as a bonus, if workers voted "yes" to ending the six-hour day. In addition, as Cerezo denounced in the local press, supervisors and company guards participated in the vote.

Despite the intimidation, the bribes, the stacked nature of the referendum and the union leaders' refusal to wage a real fight against the company attack, the company only won the vote by a little over 300 out of the almost 4,000 ballots cast.



Vanguarda Operária

Students demonstrate April 12 in defense of six-hour shift at CSN steel plant in Volta Redonda, Brazil.

While the vote was still being counted, Cerezo's supervisor told him he had been fired and gave him half an hour to clean out his locker and get off the premises. This was the third time Cerezo had been fired from CSN. The first dismissal came after a 1987 strike in which he was part of the strike committee. He played an important role in the 1988 strike, which was initiated by the committee of fired workers; in the settlement of that hard-fought strike, 30 militants were reinstated.

Two years later, he was instrumental in sparking the 1990 CSN strike, which earned him a prominent place on the army's death list. Cerezo was one of several militants fired from CSN in a political purge of the plant after the '90 strike. He was the only one who never gave up the fight to win his job back, and only a month and a half ago finally returned to his old job as a welder—almost ten years later—after a labor court ruled the original firing illegal. His latest firing, on April 14, was prominently covered by *Diário do Vale*, mouthpiece of the steel bosses, as well as by other local press and television.

In the period leading up to the vote, the LQB energetically mobilized to defend the union gain of the six-hour day. The *VO* supplement reprinted a leaflet by the Comitê de Luta Classista (Class

Struggle Caucus, led by the LQB), which noted:

"The onslaught against CSN workers is not simply the result of privatization or of 'neoliberalism,' as the reformists pretend; it is a product of the offensive against the working class by the entire bourgeoisie and their state.... After the capitalist counterrevolution in East Europe and the former Soviet Union, which were undermined by Stalinism, the capitalists around the world want even more than before to tear away the rights and conquests of the working class...."

The CLC leaflet denounced the Força Sindical bureaucrats' scheme of "partnership" with the CSN bosses, as well as the popular-frontism of the leaders of the CUT labor federation aligned with the Partido dos Trabalhadores (Workers Party) of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, which has formed a class-collaborationist alliance with bourgeois politicians from the traditional populist parties. The leaflet called the CUT leaders' reliance on the bourgeois courts "the road to defeat." It stressed the need to link the fight at CSN with the defense of all the oppressed, calling for a shorter workweek with no loss in pay, demanding jobs at the plant for women and free 24-hour childcare centers.

The Trotskyist workers underscored the need for the "expulsion of every kind of police from the unions and the CUT, since cops are not part of the workers movement but the armed fist of the bourgeoisie." The leaflet reprinted in the *VO* supplement also noted:

"A militant strike at CSN, a first necessary step, must be accompanied by shutting down the city of Volta Redonda: no bus should move, shut down all industry, commerce, transport, shut down city hall, the schools, so 'Steel City' will stop dead in its tracks. Elect a strike committee that can be recalled at any time."

While United Steelworkers union bureaucrats in the U.S. call for protectionist measures against Brazilian steel, the Class Struggle Caucus in Volta Redonda declared:

"In a situation where the bosses try to pit Brazilian steel workers against the workers of other countries, we must declare our solidarity with our class brothers and sisters by making real the motto of the workers movement: 'Workers of all countries, unite!'"

The CLC leaflet emphasized that these tasks require "building a revolutionary internationalist workers party, a Fourth Internationalist party...for a workers and peasants government as part of the socialist united states of Latin America and the extension of revolution to the powerful North American proletariat."

The perspective of a genuine class-struggle fight against the arrogant CSN bosses, the government of president Fernando Henrique Cardoso and their godfathers in the International Monetary Fund drew the interest of increasing numbers of steel workers, primarily young workers. Meanwhile, as the whole city of Volta Redonda focused on the vote, LQB supporters played an important role in sparking an April 12 demonstration of 150 high-school students in defense of the six-hour day. In the march ending at CSN's main gate, signs also demanded freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal and for Mexican students arrested during the



Volta Redonda students marching for six-hour day at CSN steel plant call for freedom for jailed Mexican students, April 12.

strike at UNAM (Mexico's National University).

In threatening to use the capitalist courts to try to silence Cerezo right after CSN fired him, the Força Sindical bureaucracy is part of a holy alliance of capitalist state repression against our comrades. Over the past few years, the Brazilian Trotskyists have faced an unrelenting onslaught from the courts and cops: municipal workers union president Geraldo Ribeiro was threatened with jail by the city government for campaigning against the racist firing of a black woman city worker; when LQB supporters mounted a drive to expel members of the *guarda municipal* (municipal police) from the union, they confronted armed military and city police intervention, Ribeiro was sued and threatened by the *guarda* commander, and a union assembly was shut down by police action on a court order to try to prevent the removal of the cops; pro-police provocateurs were then installed by the courts in a judicial coup to oust Ribeiro and other LQB supporters; and the provocateurs continued to unleash slander, violent gangsterism and endless court suits against the LQB, including a court order for the "search and seizure" of CLC leaflets.

That the repressive vendetta against our comrades goes much higher up in the bourgeoisie and considerably further back in time is now made chillingly clear in the revelations about the army's death list. The following article is translated from the April 2000 *Vanguarda Operária* supplement.

Uma obra imprescindível

James P. Cannon,
A Revolução Russa
e o movimento
negro norte-americano

\$1

Tradução e edição
anotada da LQB

Endereço:
Caixa Postal 084027
CEP 27251-970
Volta Redonda, RJ
Brasil

Bourgeois State Terror Against Workers Struggle

Military Scandal Reveals: Army Death List Targeted Brazilian Worker Militants

The following article is translated from the April 2000 special supplement to *Vanguarda Operária*, newspaper of the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil.

“CAPTURE AND NEUTRALIZATION”: The words evoke the death squads that terrorized an entire continent, from the Southern Cone to Central America. And they come from Brazilian military officers seeking to exterminate the “subversives” who dare to organize struggles of the exploited and oppressed. Yet this is not a story from the darkest years of the dictatorship that ruled Brazil from 1964 to 1985. Recent spectacular revelations—unveiling the terrorist activities of the armed forces against workers struggles in the steel city of Volta Redonda a decade ago—show the iron fist of the capitalist state in today’s bourgeois “democracy,” in force in Brazil since the military turned power over to civilian politicians. The same conspirators and specialists in repression remain in the officer corps today, under the government of president Fernando Henrique Cardoso.

These revelations are the tip of the iceberg of what the press has called Brazil’s “parallel military government.” The topic returned to the headlines recently when high-ranking officers unleashed a torrent of threats and insults against the creation of a Defense Ministry supposedly subordinated to civilian government structures. Contrary to the illusions sown by reformists and popular frontists, it is not possible to “democratize” or reform the armed forces, which exist to defend the power of the ruling class.

Repression is not simply the work of this or that individual, nor of the particular government currently inhabiting



the Planalto presidential palace. It is a function of the capitalist state, which in Friedrich Engels’ famous definition boils down to “special bodies of armed men” whose purpose is to defend the exploiters’ rule. During the investigation of the crimes committed by the army during the repression of the 1970s guerrilla movement in Araguaia (central Brazil), the chairman of the ultra-reformist Partido Comunista do Brasil (PCdoB) used his May 1996 testimony in the chamber of deputies to proclaim that his party is not an “inflexible opponent of the Armed Forces,” which “have an important role to play.” Yet the entire history of the class struggle shows that the role of the bourgeois armed forces is bloody repression in the service of the exploiters. The struggles of the oppressed must aim at sweeping away the entire capitalist system and its repressive apparatus through international socialist revolution. Only in this way can the working people of the cities and countryside defend themselves against the terror of the armed fist of the bourgeoisie.

The recent wave of revelations began in March 1999 with the publication of testimony by Dalton Roberto de Melo Franco, a former captain in the First Special Forces Battalion, regarding the bomb that destroyed the memorial to the workers killed by the army during the great 1988 Volta Redonda steel strike. This was followed in June by an official inquiry into the Riocentro incident, in which a bomb exploded near a May Day concert attended by 20,000 people in Rio de Janeiro in 1981. And in August of last year, a military officer revealed that the commander of the Special Forces prepared a list for the “clandestine capture” and “neutralization” of seven

leaders of the strike which paralyzed the Companhia Siderúrgica Nacional steel plant, Latin America's largest, for 31 days in 1990, among them our comrade Cerezo (Carlos Alexandre Honorato). Make no mistake: this was a hit list of people to be killed.

Almost ten years after being fired in the wake of the 1990 strike, Cerezo recently returned to his job as a welder at the CSN steel plant after winning a legal judgment against the company. The local journal *Aqui* (12 December 1999) called the event "The Victory of Determination," observing: "What distinguishes Cerezo's story from that of the other trade unionists involved [in the 1990 firings] is what happened between then and now. The welder refused to make a deal with the company because he wanted to uphold the basic right to return to work," not only for himself but for all those fired. After many years, a labor relations court "finally granted him a ruling returning him to his former job." *Aqui* noted as well that "together with other activists, he founded the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil, which publishes the *Vanguarda Operária* newspaper."

The Bourgeois State: Terror Machine Against the Exploited

Cerezo was recently interviewed by *The Internationalist*, publication of the Internationalist Group. (The IG, like the LQB, is a section of the League for the Fourth International.) In the future we will publish more of this interview; here we will focus on drawing the lessons of the 1990 events. As Cerezo points out:

"With the exit of the military dictatorship and the establishment of bourgeois 'democracy,' there was no basic change for the workers. The army, the military and local police all remained and would occupy CSN when the workers went on strike.... It didn't change the life of the steel workers, who were still persecuted by the army, the municipal and Military Police as well as CSN's own police force."

Volta Redonda had been a "National Security Area" under the military dictatorship. Officially this came to an end in 1985, but in reality it continued eight more years, with the presence of the 22nd Motorized Infantry Battalion in the neighboring city of Barra Mansa.

During the great strike of 1988, in which comrade Cerezo was a member of the strike committee, the army invaded the plant, wounding 46 workers and murdering William Fernandes Leite (22 years old), Valmir Freitas Monteiro (27) and Carlos Augusto Barroso (19) on November 9. Yet even the military invasion and the betrayals of the union bureaucracy did not succeed in breaking the spirit of the steel workers, who resisted in the streets and inside the factory itself, where they faced off against army tanks and occupied the plant's rooftops,

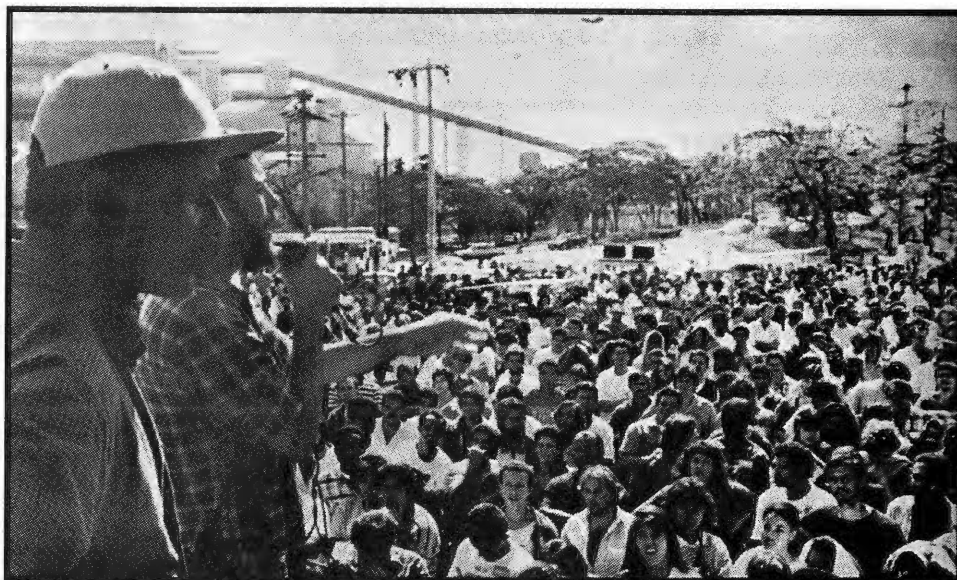
throwing stones—and even lime—at the soldiers below. The bourgeoisie and its armed forces viewed with an abiding hatred the workers of Volta Redonda, who won a six-hour day at CSN as a result of this strike.

As a direct provocation against the workers, in September 1999 president Cardoso nominated army general José Luiz Lopes da Silva, who commanded the invasion of CSN in which three strikers were killed, to the Superior Court of Military Justice, which oversees trials against military personnel. The government's supporters were mobilized to ram the nomination through the Senate. In testimony before the Constitution and Justice Commission which rubber-stamped his nomination, general Lopes spoke of the invasion with pride: "From a military point of view it was a complete success" (*O Estado de S. Paulo*, 7 October 1999).

Lopes was not the only one rewarded for his bloody attempts to smash the workers' resistance. Already in 1989 four Rio de Janeiro Military Police officers were decorated with the "Peacemaker" medal for their actions during the invasion of the struck CSN plant. In fact, an important role was played in the invasion by the Military Police, which worked closely together with the army. As Cerezo observes in the interview:

"Our entire experience with regard to the police underlines the point we always make: that cops of all kinds are not part of the workers movement.... When we carried out the fight to expel the *guardas* [municipal police] from the Volta Redonda municipal workers union, this was influenced not only by the lessons of theory—such as Trotsky's explanation, in his writings on Germany and elsewhere, that police must not be part of the unions—but also by our own experience of living through this police repression."

On May Day 1989, a memorial to the slain strikers William, Valmir and Barroso, designed by the renowned Brazilian architect Oscar Niemeyer, was inaugurated in Volta Redonda. As Cerezo notes, "during the early hours of the following day, army comandos blew up the monument as an act of revenge against the



Marcos de Oliveira/Imagens da Terra

Assembly of metal workers during 31-day strike, July 1990.

steel workers and against the memory of what happened." The shock waves from the explosion—a symbolic second murder of the fallen strikers—shattered windows a thousand feet away. Another explosive charge, which failed to detonate, was found near the ruins of the memorial.

Reserve general Newton Cruz, whose former posts included military commandant of the presidential palace and chief of the Central Agency of the National Intelligence Service, said at the time that he applauded the authors of the bomb plot. Nevertheless, armed forces spokesmen sought to cover up the truth by roundly denying any military involvement in the attack. Cerezo recalls:

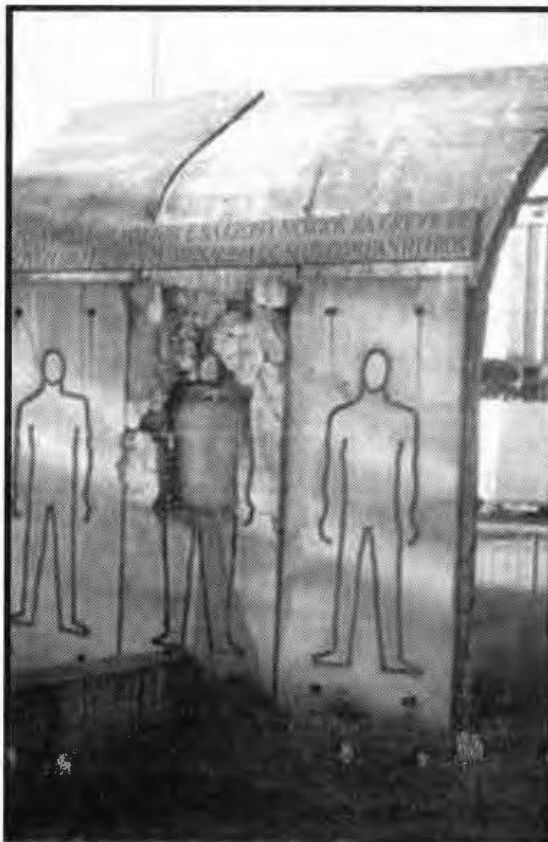
"Several days later the workers moved to rebuild the memorial, mixing the concrete themselves. It was striking how the army used blackmail to make sure no cranes would be made available and no company would take up the project to reconstruct the memorial. So all the various companies which were approached for the job refused to do it, and told people this was because of the army's threats. The workers decided to put the memorial back up with their own hands."

The blowing up of the monument also intensified many workers' doubts and suspicions about the death, three months previously, of steel union leader José Juarez Antunes, who had led the 1988 strike. Juarez was elected mayor of Volta Redonda after the strike and had been in office 51 days when he died in a supposed auto accident.

The bishop of Volta Redonda, Waldyr Calheiros, has stated that a Federal Police agent warned him at the time that both he and Juarez had been marked for assassination in "accidents" that were supposed to occur in areas far from the city (*Diário do Vale*, 17 March 1999). Although Juarez was elected as a candidate of the Partido Democrático Trabalhista (PDT), the populist bourgeois party of Leonel Brizola, many capitalists and military officers considered his election an act of defiance and an insult against "order" by the workers. Later, death threats were made against former union president Marcelo Felício (who has now gone over to Cardoso's party) and a lawyer hired by the union to investigate the death of Juarez.

The Revelations of Ex-Captain Franco

The existence of the death list against Cerezo and other leaders of the 1990 strike came out as part of the series of



Internationalist photo

Volta Redonda monument to steel workers William, Valmir and Barroso, killed on 9 November 1988 in army attack on CSN strike. Army squad blew up original monument the day after it was inaugurated.

revelations about the attack on the November Ninth Monument, as well as other facets of military terror, that shook Brazil over the course of several months last year. The 1990 strike broke out in July of that year against the bourgeoisie's campaign to go after the CSN workers in preparation for privatizing the company. The sequence of events provides insight into the machinery of bourgeois state power in Brazil.

In April 1999, *Jornal do Brasil*, one of the country's leading dailies, published the revelations of Dalton Roberto de Melo Franco, a former captain in the army's First Special Forces Battalion. Franco originally made his declarations as part of his defense in a military trial held in December 1998, in which he was accused of "diverting munitions" eight years earlier. He said he had been persecuted by a number of higher officers, among them the notorious general José Siqueira, former secretary of security in the Rio state government and a friend of populist leader Leonel Brizola.

Describing himself as the victim of a military frame-up, ex-captain Franco said he had been punished and then expelled from the

army because he was ordered to participate in blowing up the November Ninth Monument in Volta Redonda but refused to do so unless he was given the order in writing. Franco had been part of a group of Special Forces officers that the army infiltrated into CSN in 1988 with the mission of identifying and "rapidly isolating the leaders" when troops invaded the plant. He noted that the following year, when plans for unveiling the monument were underway, "the army considered this an affront, that the intent was to create martyrs" (*Jornal do Brasil*, 14 March 1999).

Franco said he received the order to blow up the monument from then-colonel (now general) Álvaro de Souza Pinheiro; when he refused, the task was carried out by other agents. "The dynamite came from a group of numbers-runners who obtained it from stone quarries in the Baixada Fluminense region. They helped put together a storehouse of munitions to be used subsequently in irregular operations," he related. The dynamite was kept in camouflage knapsacks that were part of a shipment of arms and matériel the army had seized from a Panamanian-registered ship in 1986.

Franco went on to describe the activities of his former battalion, clearly modeled on the U.S. Special Forces "green berets" units, specialized in counterinsurgency and "uncon-

ventional" warfare, which were used by the United States to carry out terrorism and extermination operations in Vietnam. As the *Journal do Brasil* described it:

"The First Special Forces Battalion is the apple of the eye of any commander of the Brazilian Army. Created in the 1960s, it is made up of soldiers renowned as Rambo-style warriors."

Franco related that in his more than ten years in the battalion, he carried out espionage assignments in all the countries neighboring Brazil, from Argentina to Guyana. General Pinheiro had participated in the repression of the Araguaia guerrilla movement, and according to Franco the battalion carried out counterinsurgency missions in Colombia, Nicaragua and El Salvador. In the early '90s, he said, Brazilian Special Forces soldiers were in El Salvador on the eve of the "peace" accords between the Salvadoran government and the FMLN guerrillas. "There were sectors of the rebel movement that didn't like the accords. Our detachment provided support to a group of American counter-guerrilla troops," Franco stated.

A Chain of Attacks and Provocations

In response to the scandal set off by ex-captain Franco, the army established a Military Police Inquiry (IPM, from its initials in Portuguese) to "investigate" his revelations. And who appointed the officer in charge of this IPM? *The same general José Luiz Lopes who commanded the invasion of CSN in 1988*, and today heads the army's Eastern Military Command. The IPM was accompanied by a special commission of the Rio de Janeiro state assembly which "united" the legislators, from the popular-frontist "opposition" of the Partido dos Trabalhadores (the Workers Party of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva), the PCdoB and their bourgeois partners in Brizola's PDT, the Partido Socialista Brasileiro of the landowner Miguel Arraes, etc. For his part, Luiz de Oliveira Rodrigues of the pro-company labor federation Força Sindical called the inquiry "good for the Army and good for society" (*Diário do Vale*, 18 March 1999). Thus "Luizinho," who promoted the establishment of union-company "partnership" at CSN when the steel plant was privatized in 1993, used the occasion to underline yet again his loyalty to the exploiters and their state.

There have been so many parliamentary investigative commissions (CPIs) into one scandal after another that the bourgeois press has taken to calling Brazil "the land of the CPIs." As for the Military Police Inquiry, this is a clear example of the continuity of many institutions of today's "Brazilian democ-

SECRETO

MINISTÉRIO DO EXÉRCITO
CEL - SDA INF PQDT
1º BTL P EXP

Rio de Janeiro, RJ, 31 Jul 90

INFORMAÇÃO Nº 0010-3/2

1. DATA 31 JUL 90
2. ASSUNTO COMPANHIA SIDERÚRGICA NACIONAL
3. ORIGEM 1º BTL
4. DIFUSÃO SDA INF PQDT
5. DIFUSÃO ANTERIOR X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X
6. REFERÊNCIA X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X
7. ANEXO: X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X

ANEXO Nº 0010-3/2

Na ausência do desescaletamento de ações que caracterizem grave perturbação da ordem (bloqueio da DUTRA, ocupação de pontos sensíveis por elementos armados dentro ou fora da CSN, saques etc), esses elementos devem ser de imediato neutralizados. É importante ressaltar que sua captura, desde que efetuada de forma clandestina, não será de difícil execução, tal a liberdade e a despreocupação com que circulam no momento.

Secret Brazilian Army document says that "in the event of imminent actions which would constitute a grave disturbance of public order" seven "individuals who stand out for their radical positions" should be "neutralized immediately."

racy" with the old military dictatorship. As part of the "Great Strategy of the Doctrine of National Security," the institution of IPMs was created in 1964, after the military coup carried out that year, specifically as a tool to identify and root out "subversive" elements. The bourgeois "justice" system, in both its military and civil incarnations, exists to defend the rule of the capitalist class, which in Brazil means racist, anti-working-class terror. Some months ago, the press revealed the "disappearance," in São Paulo alone, of more than 1,100 inquiries and lawsuits accusing members of the Military Police of serious crimes, 80 percent of which had to do with the murder of civilians, many of them minors (*O Globo*, 23 May 1999).

The most famous IPM in Brazilian history, on the Riocentro affair, returned to the headlines in recent months in the context of the revelations by ex-captain Franco. On the night of 30 April 1981, a bomb exploded inside a car carrying two officers of the armed forces' terror and torture unit DOI-CODI (Intelligence Operations Detachment-Center for Internal Defense Operations), killing one and gravely wounding the other. The incident occurred at a turning point in Brazil, after the huge metal workers' strikes at the end of the 1970s. The bomb blew up near the Riocentro arena, where 20,000 people were attending a show to celebrate May Day featuring several of the countries' most popular musicians, among them Milton Nascimento, Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil. The original IPM on the Riocentro incident declared the explosion to have been the work of anti-army "terrorists," and this brazen fraud was used to whip up more white terror against "subversives."

Almost two decades later, faced with Franco's declarations in 1999, the army confronted growing pressure to reopen



Former captain Franco (circled, right) revealed that General Álvaro de Souza Pinheiro (circled, left) gave the order to blow up the November Ninth Memorial to the three Volta Redonda workers killed by army in 1988 strike.

the Riocentro case. The armed forces' first response was a scarcely veiled threat: the commander of the army declared that calls to reopen the case "disturbed" the military and demanded an "end to resentments and discord." When this failed to do the trick, the second response was to mount a damage-control operation through a new IPM. Even the bourgeois daily *O Globo* (9 May 1999) warned that the result could be "to avoid having the IPM wind up revealing the inner workings of the parallel military government of the 1980s, tarnishing records and stirring up military circles on the eve of the creation of the Ministry of Defense." Thus the decision was made to sacrifice Wilson Machado, the officer who survived the 1981 explosion, and general Newton Cruz, charging Machado with homicide and Cruz with perjury and disobedience. After an attempt to maintain silence with the argument that the 1964 law creating the National Intelligence Service exempted its agents from testifying, Cruz admitted knowing about the Riocentro bomb before it blew up.

In reality the Riocentro conspiracy involved the entire military terror apparatus. Press interviews, parliamentary testimony and other statements by individuals associated with military terror groups—among them ex-officers and "right-wing militants" linked to the armed forces and the paramilitary Communist-Hunting Commandos (CCC)—demonstrated that the intended purpose of the bomb carried by the two officers in their car was a controlled explosion which would provide cover for bombs placed to explode inside the auditorium at Riocentro. These were deactivated only after the failure of the two officers' mission.

The Riocentro incident was part of a chain of terrorist

acts by the "intelligence community" during this period, including the bombs which assassinated a secretary at the oppositionist Brazilian Lawyers Guild and maimed an employee of Rio de Janeiro's town hall, as well as the series of bombings of newspaper stands in Rio used to create a panic over "terrorism." According to Franco, the army considered blowing up newspaper stands in Rio again during the 1989 elections. Ten years later, a former member of the ultra-rightist CCC threatened to blow up a monument to murdered guerrilla leader Carlos Marighella in São Paulo, saying he "didn't need help from Army officers" to do it and demanding the establishment of a monument to the founder of the bloody São Paulo State Department of Political and Social Order (DOPS) for "creating the Death Squad which hunted down and eliminated un-

desirables and participated in the fight against terrorists" (*Diário do Vale*, 5 November 1999).

Death List

Death squads were clearly the inspiration for the plan for capture and "neutralization" of CSN strikers put forward in 1990 by the commander of the Special Forces Battalion. In August 1999, the *Jornal do Brasil* published an extensive article on this plan, reproducing a secret report by then-colonel Álvaro Pinheiro which the newspaper obtained from a former military officer identified as "R." Saying that he decided to divulge these secrets because "the Army caused me problems," R. confirmed the essential facts of ex-captain Franco's revelations about the Special Forces' terrorist activities and turned over seven army documents, three of which detailed the movements of Volta Redonda steel workers and visits by trade unionists and political figures from other cities during the 1990 CSN strike.

The secret report of 31 July 1990 begins with the observation that "July 30 marked the 20th day of the strike at the Companhia Siderúrgica Nacional" and that "the proposal presented by [CSN] president ROBERTO PROCÓPIO LIMA NETO...was rejected by the workers." (Lima Neto was the frontman for the capitalists most interested in privatizing CSN, and later became a right-wing politician.)

The report goes on to give detailed information on the speakers and discussions at union assemblies, stressing disagreements between the most militant activists and "the 'moderate' wing of the Union, whose foremost representative is union president VAGNER BARCELOS, [who] completely op-

poses any kind of radicalization.” (Barcelos was a member of the Democracia Socialista tendency in the PT, followers of the late pseudo-Trotskyist Ernest Mandel; he later joined the staff of Cardoso’s minister of sports, Pelé.) The document highlights “the proposal to blockade the Dutra Highway put forward...by activists from CONVERGÊNCIA SOCIALISTA (CS) and the ORGANIZAÇÃO QUARTA INTERNACIONAL (OQI).” It also notes that the company of Military Police stationed in the city “completely lacks the credibility and reliability required for reestablishing order when necessary.”

Then the report gives a list of seven “individuals who stand out for their radical positions,” providing the full name of each of them, including Luiz Antônio Vieira Albano, Marcelo Felício, Isaque Fonseca, Wanderley Barcelos, Nilson Carneiro Sales and Luiz Antônio Coelho Ferla. One of the first people listed is:

“CARLOS ALEXANDRE HONORATO—‘CEREZO’—Union activist. He is one of the foremost members of the OQI and a member of the PT of VOLTA REDONDA.”

To be included on this list meant being marked for death, as shown in the subsequent part of the report, which put forward the plan for eliminating the activists:

“In the event of imminent actions which would constitute a grave disturbance of public order (blocking the Dutra highway, occupying key points inside or outside CSN, looting, etc.), these elements should be neutralized immediately. It is important to stress that their capture, which would be carried out in a clandestine fashion, would not be difficult to carry out, given the freedom and lack of concern with which they circulate at the present time.”

Jornal do Brasil comments: “One can assume that when [then-colonel] Álvaro proposed the ‘capture’ and ‘neutralization’ of union leaders, and sent this suggestion to the higher echelons, his superiors condoned this. There is no report of him being punished for making an illegal proposal.” Punished? He was *promoted*, and today he is a general. With the fake naïveté of the bourgeois press, *JB* asks: “What does it mean to clandestinely capture and neutralize striking workers?”

Everyone knows the answer: in the jargon of the “intelligence community,” neutralize is one of the many ways of saying *kill*. In the United States, the FBI’s “counterintelligence program” COINTELPRO for “neutralizing” black radicals led to the murder of 38 members of the Black Panther Party and the death of many other fighters against racist oppression. The police frame-up against Mumia Abu-Jamal, the radical journalist and former Black Panther on Pennsylvania’s death row, was the culmination of years of persecution against him under this same secret police program. In fighting to mobilize the power of the working class to free Jamal, we are fighting against capitalist state terror here in Brazil as well, and all over the world.



Cerezo pointing to poster showing stand-off between the army and workers in 1988 steel strike which won the six-hour day. Poster says: “No to Privatization of CSN. For Workers Control of Production.”

The 1990 Steel Strike

In his interview with *The Internationalist*, comrade Cerezo recalls that “we suspected at the time, but now the revelations confirm the fact that they really sought to capture and neutralize part of the strike committee” in 1990. The 1990 strike was one of the most important struggles in the period preceding the “auction”—in reality an outright giveaway—of CSN. The steel company’s privatization followed a plan originally presented by the government of Fernando Collor de Melo, which soon became an international symbol of presidential corruption; it was carried through by president Itamar Franco with the support of Rio governor Leonel Brizola. (Both Franco and Brizola are now “heroes” of Lula’s popular front.)

“The strike began because CSN owed each steel worker four to six months’ back wages,” Cerezo notes, “under the pretext that the company was in a financial crisis and was going bankrupt.” Meanwhile, CSN’s standard practice over the course of many years was to furnish steel to large Brazilian and international corporations at prices well below the cost of production. “So a struggle broke out to demand the back wages and also to oppose privatization and win back the jobs of a number of workers who had been fired.” Cerezo continues:

“It’s important to point out that this struggle occurred immediately after the election of Collor, who openly said CSN might be shut down.... One of the ways Collor’s attack was expressed was by not paying the company’s debt to the workers and to make a list of people to be laid off in preparation for the privatization. Collor sent his frontman Procópio Lima Neto to carry out this mission. Lima Neto was put in place by the Monteiro Aranha group, a group of businessmen known for living off of corruption, which was getting ready to take a big slice of the pie when state-owned industries were privatized. They served as a front for imperialist companies which were constantly exercising pressure and various forms of blackmail as pioneers in the push for

privatization and mass layoffs at CSN and other state enterprises.

“So the strike was against all of this. It was the hostile reception the workers gave to this frontman for imperialism and Brazilian big capital.”

For his part, Lima Neto did not bother to conceal his contempt and hatred for the workers, including in his references to the killing of the three strikers in 1988. When questioned about his decision not to ask that troops be sent against the strikers in 1990, he responded, “I’m not going to give them any more corpses.” In fighting for this strike, Cerezo and the Luta Metalúrgica group (predecessor of today’s LQB), together with other activists, had to wage a major struggle against the union leadership: “The union bureaucracy reacted by trying to put obstacles in the way of a strike.” Led by the Mandelite Vagner Barcelos, they argued that the company’s crisis made it impossible to call a strike and that the CUT labor federation should avoid being accused of instigating “chaos.”

The 31-day strike was preceded by a plant occupation on 11 May 1990. At the beginning of the occupation a contingent of 8,000 workers entered the plant singing the Internationale, the revolutionary working-class anthem composed during the Paris Commune. Cerezo recalls: “In several other marches and mass meetings the workers sang the Internationale. It was exciting and quite beautiful, and showed the radicalism of this struggle. The workers were already in the habit of doing this, because the union sound truck always used to play a tape of the Internationale, and sometimes the words were passed out to the workers so they could sing the lyrics.”

At a mass union meeting held during the plant occupation, comrade Cerezo put forward the proposal to maintain and intensify the mobilization and clear a path of struggle for the entire workers movement. Within a short time there would be strikes by the Ford workers and electrical workers; millions of working people throughout Brazil wanted to resist layoffs and the brutal slashing of real wages. But the spokesmen for the union bureaucracy succeeded in pressuring the CSN workers into temporarily suspending the plant occupation while they presented various reformist schemes for fixing up the company’s financial situation.

Fighting against this sell-out perspective, in July “we called another mass meeting, and this time the workers voted to go on strike,” Cerezo remembers. “The 31-day strike was characterized by a high level of mobilization, with the participation of 28,000 to 30,000 workers, who decided to face this situation head-on and refused to be intimidated by the murder of William, Valmir and Barroso in the previous strike two years earlier.”

Yet despite the CSN workers’ enthusiasm and the potential to broaden the struggle, in the midst of the strike there was an attempt at reformist sabotage led by representatives of Convergência Socialista (predecessor of today’s PSTU [United Socialist Workers Party]), the followers of the late Argentine pseudo-Trotskyist Nahuel Moreno. Cerezo explains:



Demonstration by rail workers against mass layoffs by CSN, May 1990.

João Ripper/Imagens da Terra

“In the middle of the strike, Convergência proposed that CSN’s debt to the steel workers be turned into debentures, a kind of bonds which the workers would hold while they waited for a supposed improvement in CSN’s situation, which meant that Convergência had swallowed the company’s whole line about the crisis it was in. It was clear that the capitalists were saying this to gouge and lay off the workers. But these people created this illusion about swapping the four to six months’ back wages for bonds, debentures and other paper issued by the government. This was how the way was cleared for privatizing CSN. The proposal came from Convergência, and the Mandelites, the Catholic left, the PDT—all of them part of the union executive board—accepted it. This was a heavy blow which we fought against at the time.”

In reality, he continues, “this was the foundation stone for the ‘independent CUT Investment Club’ created two years later” by the popular-frontists to grease the skids for privatizing the plant outright. “It was class collaboration under the guise that CSN was in crisis, that it was unsustainable, so they created ‘leftist’ phrases about the debt being paid when the company recovered.... The Morenoites were the pioneers of *parceria*” (“partnership,” Força Sindical’s slogan for union-company collaboration in a privatized CSN). The same reformist logic later led the Morenoites to participate directly in the Frente Brasil Popular, the class-collaborationist alliance between bourgeois politicians and Lula’s PT.

The entire course of this struggle, in which the main protagonists included militants of three different tendencies which identified themselves (falsely) as Trotskyists, underlines that the fight for an authentic class-struggle leadership is at the same time the struggle for genuine Trotskyism. This is the task undertaken by the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil.

The Bureaucracy’s Three Nooses and Lima Neto’s Attack

Referring to this betrayal by Convergência, Cerezo says: “Even so, with their open class collaboration, they were unable to put a stop to the strike. The strike continued for another 15 days.” He continues:

"At a certain point the bureaucrats decided they didn't want me to speak in one of the union assemblies, and they used a squad of violent goons to try to stop me by force. I broke through the goon squad, got up on the sound truck and said the only way I would agree not to speak was if the assembly voted not to let me. It was a meeting of about 5,000 workers. While a union bureaucrat tried to take the microphone away from me, the workers voted massively for me to speak. The bureaucrat was defeated and had to let me use the mike. I said that both the bureaucracy and Convergência were creating obstacles aimed at defeating our strike.

"In the next days the union bureaucracy put up three nooses, threatening to hang me, together with Nilson and another Luta Metalúrgica activist called Boquinha—in other words, to lynch us. This was about 15 days into the strike, and they put up a big beam with the three nooses and signs saying they were for the three of us. The ones who organized this were a bureaucrat from the PDT together with the Mandelite Vagner Barcelos. This was directly related to them trying to stop us from speaking and their attempts to put an end to the strike."

But Cerezo says "we didn't let ourselves be intimidated, we managed to speak in the assemblies and we put forward the proposal for the strike to be extended, to occupy the Dutra Highway and transmit our struggle to other workers, and for us to join together with the strike which had broken out at Ford, and with the electrical workers' strike. The workers supported this proposal."

It was these debates which proved so worrisome to the officers and spies of the Special Forces Battalion, as shown in the recently published documents. It was against the plan to extend the strike, in particular, that they proposed the *capture and neutralization* of strike activists.

When the union bureaucrats failed to prevent Cerezo from speaking, Procópio Lima Neto attacked him in the company's *Informativo* newsletter, saying that Cerezo was putting forward dangerous proposals and that the strike "is being used for political purposes." In an article titled "Our Answer to Procópio," the *Luta Metalúrgica* bulletin (August 1990) responded:

"YES, OUR STRIKE IS POLITICAL. It is the politics of defending the workers massacred by savage wage-cutting.... It is against *your politics* of privatization and draining CSN to pay off the foreign debt. Our strike is against your politics and that of the government you represent."

The slogans Luta Metalúrgica put forward during the strike also included opening the company's books to inspection by the workers, cutting the workweek with no loss in pay, and workers control of production.

Strikebreaking Role of the Popular Front

Cerezo recounts that despite the workers' support for the proposal to extend the strike, "the bureaucracy did not abide by the decision and asked Lula to come to Volta Redonda."

"So Lula traveled to Volta Redonda and had a meeting with activists, excluding the Luta Metalúrgica members such as myself, Nilson, Boquinha. What he said was that we were a danger. And Lula said the strike should end and

that the workers should not follow the proposals put forward by these radicals like Cerezo, Nilson, Boquinha, etc. "From that point on the union bureaucracy dealt heavy blows to the strike until it was finally able to defeat the strike, without holding a union assembly, in a treacherous fashion, and with various people being fired. Approximately three days after Lula came to town, the strike ended. It was a major betrayal against the workers."

Cerezo explains that this betrayal was the direct application of the politics of the *popular front*. While the PT emerged from the wave of tumultuous workers struggles in the late '70s and early '80s, Lula's party always had a reformist program. Evolving further to the right, however, it abandoned its original slogan of "Workers vote for workers" and decided to crystallize the program of class collaboration by forming the Frente Brasil Popular with bourgeois politicians for the 1989 presidential elections.

Cerezo, who was elected president of the Volta Redonda PT in 1988, voted against the Frente Brasil Popular at the PT's Sixth Conference, held in São Paulo in June 1989. His position was approved at a plenary meeting of 290 members of the Volta Redonda PT, against the violent opposition of Convergência Socialista in particular. It was in this context that Cerezo and other Luta Metalúrgica militants joined Causa Operária (formally called the OQI), in the belief that it represented a proletarian opposition to class collaboration, although in reality Causa Operária voted for Lula, candidate of the popular front.

Cerezo explains that "the popular front was in high gear": "So the formation of the popular front and the betrayal of the 1990 strike are two directly related events.

"The leftists who were active against us in the union were part of the popular front. In the period immediately before the strike, the Mandelites, who at that time were leading the union, were even calling for a government of Lula and Brizola. In other words, they were proposing an even more right-wing popular front, which would include not only Arraes' PSB but also the PDT. This was actually carried out later [for the 1998 elections]."

A year after the strike, the PT began a purge against its left wing, beginning with Causa Operária. The first targets were the comrades of Luta Metalúrgica in Volta Redonda. In a document written in 1991 on the eve of the PT's First Congress, Cerezo wrote that this "witch hunt" was launched "at a time when the threat is looming that CSN will be privatized, bringing mass layoffs," after the city's proletariat had in effect gone up against "the 'National Security Area' and courageously confronted the armed fist of the bourgeoisie—the army." He warned that privatization and repression were "the solution the popular front is preparing for the population of Volta Redonda."

The reformist leaders soon gave their response, as Cerezo recounts in the interview: "Since they were unable to achieve their objective through a vote in Volta Redonda, they sent João Machado, a Mandelite who was part of the national leadership of the PT; Jorge Bitar from the Rio PT, who is now the secretary of planning under Rio state governor Garotinho; Dodora from Força Socialista (another tendency in the PT), the leader of the teachers union in Volta Redonda; Vagner Barcelos, and Ernesto Braga,

today the national president of the PT. They put together a special commission to intervene in the Volta Redonda PT in order to expel us.” (The name of the Mandelite tendency in the PT is Democracia Socialista, which as it turns out translates into “democracy” for the bourgeoisie and expulsion for class-struggle militants.) The LM comrades showed up at a PT local meeting and found a sheet posted on the wall announcing that they had been “excluded” from the party.

For the reformist PT leaders, these expulsions were the counterpart of the process of deepening class collaboration, as shown for example by the PT’s and CUT’s participation in “chambers of industry” with the employers and the Collor government; the presence of prominent PTer Erundinha in president Itamar Franco’s cabinet; the PT’s participation in state and municipal governments run by the PDT, Cardoso’s PSDB, the PMDB (Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement), etc. But even where the PT governed alone, its policies were no different from those put forward by these bourgeois parties.

Against the reformist PT and the bourgeois popular front, the comrades of Luta Metalúrgica continued the struggle for the revolutionary independence of the working class, which later led them to clash with Causa Operária’s political line. As Cerezo points out in the interview with *The Internationalist*:

“Causa Operária said in 1989 that it was against the popular front. But from ’89 to ’94, when we were in CO, what they really did was tail Lula and the PT.... In all the elections they came out for supporting and voting for Lula. “During the 1990 strike their publications were militant in form, but when it came to the revolutionary program and important issues like the woman question, the black question, the defense of homosexuals, they had absolutely nothing to say. “So what we did, knowing what the popular front was about, was to try to look more deeply into the program, and we found there was an immense vacuum in their program. So we decided to fight on the black question, the

woman question, the popular front, putting forward documents in 1994 stating our repudiation of these politics of class collaboration and of ignoring the revolutionary struggle against special oppression.”


Cerezo stresses:

“Our line of combating class collaboration means no vote to any candidate of the popular front. We have seen and lived what the popular front really means and how it is the enemy of the working class. On the basis of these experiences and lessons, our group went through a revolutionary evolution. We fight for a revolutionary workers party, a Trotskyist party. In 1996 we formed the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil, which two years later was one of the founding sections of the League for the Fourth International.”

The Struggle Continues: Forge a Revolutionary Workers Party!

Those who fought against bourgeois state repression, against the popular front, for the intransigent defense of the workers’ rights, continue fighting for the interests of all the oppressed and exploited, the struggle for international socialist revolution. They remained at their posts, and call on new forces to join the struggle.

Having denounced the “armed fist of the bourgeoisie” which repressed strikers and prepared a hit list for assassinations, in 1996 the LQB carried out the struggle for the expulsion of the municipal *guardas* from the Volta Redonda municipal workers union (SFPMVR), which was voted by the union assembly of 25 July 1996. The following year, the LQB and the Comitê de Luta Classista (CLC—Class Struggle Caucus) denounced support by the opportunist “left” to “strikes” by the Military Police, stressing that police are professionals of bourgeois repression who must be expelled from all unions and from the CUT. We have defended the class-struggle program against the repression, physical attacks and slanders of the pro-police provocateurs of Artur Fernandes’ clique (as well




Leia e assinie


Vanguarda Operária

Orgão informativo da Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil

R\$4,00 por 4 números

Endereço:
Caixa Postal 084027
CEP 27251-970
Volta Redonda, RJ
Brasil





as their "left" apologists, among them the Liga Bolchevique Internacionalista and its "Revolutionary Trade-Union Tendency"), imposed by the bourgeois courts against the will of the workers so as to masquerade as the SFPMVR. And we have defended this program against the capitalist state, which even ordered the "search and seizure" of our leaflets in September 1997.

In the 1998 elections we warned that the "Broad Front" of Lula and Brizola bound the exploited hand and foot in the face of the onslaught by Cardoso and the IMF; and as an expression of proletarian opposition to the popular front, we called for casting a blank ballot. Against class collaboration, we call for workers mobilizations to defeat the starvation plans of the Brazilian bourgeoisie and their imperialist senior partners.

As part of the internationalist struggle against black oppression, we have succeeded in getting various unions to begin mobilizing in strikes and work stoppages to demand immediate freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal, a first step that must be extended and intensified. The struggle for black liberation through socialist revolution "is a basic and strategic question as part of the program of permanent revolution in Brazil," observes Cerezo, which manifests itself in many different issues, "from the struggle against the murder of street children and forced sterilization of black women to the question of leukopenia. [Leukopenia, the drastic reduction in white blood cells caused by exposure to the benzene gas produced by steel plants' coke ovens, affects many workers in the Volta Redonda area.] Long before the bourgeois press finally decided leukopenia was newsworthy, back in 1993 at the first "CUT anti-racist seminar" Luta Metalúrgica was the first to denounce CSN's racist practice of characterizing this as a "black disease."

Today, when many leukopenia sufferers are fighting for their rights, the company insists that leukopenia "is not considered an illness according to the criteria of the Ministry of Health" (*O Estado de S. Paulo*, 3 December 1999). At the same time, in yet another example of the phony character of the bourgeoisie's "environmental laws," a recent press report stated that "the index of benzene in the air of Volta Redonda is 80 times greater than the level allowed by legislation."

The great themes and issues of past struggles have a very concrete expression today in Brazil and at CSN. Cerezo states in the interview:

"We want to fight against the return of the 8-hour work shift, together with fighting this attack on workers who suffer from leukopenia. CSN wants to destroy the victory won by the workers in the 1988 strike, when we won the six-hour day. Together with firings of people with leukopenia, they want to increase the workday and carry out mass layoffs. We put out a bulletin on this question, calling for a militant strike not only at CSN but at other steel plants as well, to fight CSN's policy of wage-slashing, layoffs and racism."

The Class Struggle Caucus bulletin (19 May 1999) emphasizes that this means shutting down Volta Redonda completely and extending the strike to the other sectors of the empire

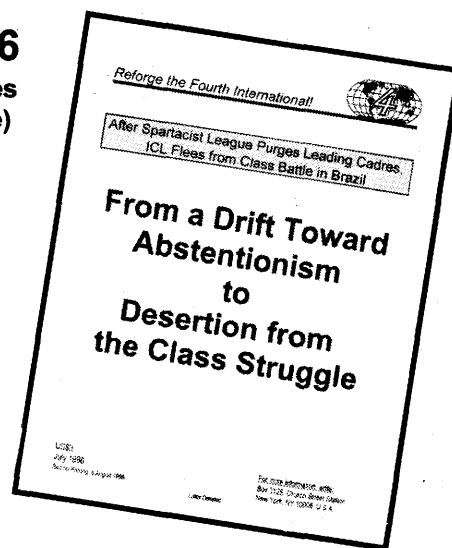
controlled by CSN (Vale do Rio Doce mines, the Light electric company, etc.). The slogans it puts forward include an end to layoffs and the brutal speed of production at the plant; cutting the workweek with no loss in pay, dividing available work among those presently employed and unemployed; opening jobs to women and establishing high-quality 24-hour child-care centers. The bulletin points out:

"In a situation where the bosses try to pit Brazilian steel workers against the workers of other countries, we must declare our solidarity with our class brothers and sisters by making real the motto of the workers movement: 'Workers of all countries, unite!... Forge a class-struggle leadership, cohered in the world party of socialist revolution, a reformed Fourth International, to lead the struggle for power for the proletariat and all the oppressed!'"

Cerezo ended the interview by noting: "Young people in particular are key to the revolution. So we want them to know about the struggle in order to draw lessons from the defeats and the victories, to learn, and above all to join the ranks of the struggle and the revolution. Against every obstacle we continue the fight, and we invite the workers to join us." ■

Order Now!

US \$6
(includes
postage)



Bulletin contains:

- From a Drift Toward Abstentionism to Desertion from the Class Struggle
- Brazilian Militants: It is a Crime to Abandon the Struggle Now
- The Truth About the 1993 Berlin Hostel Defense
- The Post-Soviet Period: Bourgeois Offensive and Sharp Class Battles
- Reply to a Frame-Up "Trial"
- No to the Purge of Norden and Stenberg!
- LQB Reply to ICL Letter Breaking Fraternal Relations
- A Note on the "Bolshevik" Tendency
- A Mountain of Mendacity

Order from/make checks payable to: Mundial Publications, Box 3321, Church Street Station, New York, NY 10008, U.S.A.

ICL on Puerto Rico: Lies in the Service of Social-Chauvinism

In *The Internationalist* No. 6 (November-December 1998) we denounced the Spartacist League's renunciation of the demand of independence for Puerto Rico as another proof of its increasing abandonment of Leninism and Trotskyism. We pointed out that one of the famous "21 conditions" (authored by V.I. Lenin) for a party to join the Communist International was to "demand the expulsion of its compatriot imperialists from the colonies." But with their new line, the SL and the International Communist League do *not* demand the expulsion of Yankee imperialism from its Puerto Rican colony, and they smear those who do. In our article, we stressed: "For socialists in an imperialist country to refuse to call for independence for a colony is a betrayal and a colonialist, chauvinist position."

The SL/ICL responded with a lengthy polemic titled "For the Right of Independence for Puerto Rico!" (*Workers Vanguard* No. 704, 8 January 1999). The *WV* article goes through many contortions, distortions and diversionary *ad hominem* attacks to try to get around the fact that Leninists have always held that for *colonies*, supporting the right of self-determination can only mean calling for independence. In our article, we cited several writings by Lenin where he insists that revolutionary socialists must demand immediate liberation of the colonies. Resorting to distortion by omission, *WV* quotes from one of these, his July 1916 article "The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up," but leaves out Lenin's statement that "the demand for the liberation of the colonies is nothing more than 'the recognition of the right of nations to self-determination'."

Lenin attacked centrists like the German Social Democrat Karl Kautsky who recognize the right of self-determination "in a patently hypocritical fashion" by not calling for independence.

Navy Out of Vieques...

continued from page 6

Trotskyists fight for workers political revolution to establish revolutionary soviet democracy and to forge a genuinely internationalist leadership. This is the only way to defend and extend the remaining gains of the Cuban Revolution which are being sacrificed one by one by the Stalinist bureaucracy as it vainly seeks "peaceful coexistence" with rapacious Yankee imperialism.

Above all, it is necessary to forge revolutionary workers parties in Puerto Rico, the United States and throughout the region. A successful fight against colonial capitalist rule, against imperialism's neo-colonial satraps and within the imperialist heartland itself requires as its indispensable instrument a party of Bolshevik cadres. It is necessary to win the most advanced workers and the best elements from the youth, women and oppressed minorities to prepare themselves through study of the history of the workers movement and by political battles against the present nationalist and pro-capi-

Writing of the posture of German left social democrats in the 1930s concerning oppressed nations, Leon Trotsky emphasized that "Bolshevism does not confine itself to recognizing their 'right' to self-determination and to parliamentary protests against the trampling upon of this right. Bolshevism penetrates into the midst of the oppressed nations; it raises them up against their oppressors.... Everything that does not step over this boundary remains centrism" (Leon Trotsky, *What Next? Burning Questions for the German Proletariat*, January 1932).

Like the Communist International and Trotsky's Fourth International, the SL/ICL stood unconditionally for Puerto Rico's independence until late 1998, when it "corrected" a *WV* article on the general Puerto Rican general strike that July. The SL's "correction" (in *WV* No. 696, 11 September 1998) said that "we do not currently *advocate* independence for Puerto Rico," *punto*. In response to our article, in *WV* 704 the SL tries to cover up its betrayal, claiming in passing that it "favors" the independence of Puerto Rico while denouncing anyone who "advocates" liberation of the island colony (as do the Internationalist Group and League for the Fourth International) as therefore calling to *force* independence on the population.

So in addition to selective quoting from Lenin, here the SL/ICL resorts to transparent word games and bald-faced lies about the Internationalist Group and the League for the Fourth International. *WV* 704 claims that "the IG *advocates* independence, while simultaneously arguing that they would *not advocate* independence if it were contrary to popular sentiment." Yet the quotations from our article they cite say no such thing. Rather, it says that *we advocate* independence but are not for *forcing* it on the Puerto Rican population against their will.

talist misleaders of the exploited masses. The fight against colonial and military domination of Puerto Rico will not be won by "the people united" or "patriotic unity" which is everywhere the slogan of treacherous unity with the class enemy of the working people.

Even the slogan of "*Puerto Rico libre y socialista*" betrays a narrow nationalist perspective with a thin "socialist" veneer. As Trotsky's program and theory of *permanent revolution* elaborated, based on the experience of the 1905 and 1917 Russian Revolutions, in the imperialist epoch, even democratic questions such as national independence can only be resolved in the colonial and semi-colonial countries through the taking of power by the working class, the undertaking of socialist tasks and the international extension of the socialist revolution to the advanced capitalist, imperialist powers. What is required is *proletarian, internationalist and revolutionary* unity of the workers of the world, under an authentically Trotskyist vanguard party, built in the battle to reforge the Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution. ■

The verb "advocate," says Webster's *New World English Dictionary*, means "to speak or write in support of"; as a noun it gives the definition of "a person who speaks or writes in support of something; as, an *advocate* of socialism." For the SL/ICL "advocating" anything supposedly means seeking to force something down someone's throat: a curious concept of socialism indeed.

The SL/ICL wants to pretend that by calling for the *right* of independence for Puerto Rico it is softly indicating support for independence. In no way. Every single force involved in the battle over Puerto Rico's status has explicitly stated that it favors Puerto Rico's *right* to independence. U.S. president Clinton says it even as he sends the FBI and Navy to occupy the island of Vieques; even pro-statehood governor Pedro Rosselló says he's for Puerto Rico's right to self-determination. Like the SL, they just don't *advocate* independence.

Beyond the weasel words, even as it tries to prettify the social-chauvinist position it has adopted, the fact is that the Spartacist League does not oppose the colonial subjugation of Puerto Rico. It does not advocate, demand, fight for, call for, speak out for, agitate for, propagandize for, or do anything active at all for independence – that is, for the expulsion of the Yankee imperialists from their largest colony. *WV* 704 doesn't even call for a boycott of the colonialist referendum held the previous month. While criticizing the "colonialist machinations" of the U.S., nowhere does the *WV* article say it is opposed to Puerto Rico's present phony "commonwealth" colonial status as such, or to statehood, for that matter. The article talks of "voluntary integration" of the Puerto Rican colony into the capitalist-imperialist U.S.!

Are they colonialist "socialists," pro-statehood "socialists" or "socialists" who have no position on (are indifferent to) colonial oppression? There is a name for this in the history of the Marxist movement: social-chauvinism. This is exactly the kind of social-democratic claptrap that the Comintern objected to and that Trotsky powerfully denounced. In fact, it is exactly the position adopted by the Stalinists as they lunged headlong into reformism – that is, to support for capitalist imperialism – in the late 1930s. At the 9th Congress of the French Communist Party (PCF) in December 1937, PCF leader Maurice Thorez spoke of the French colonies in North Africa, Syria-Lebanon and Indochina:

"The fundamental demand of our Communist Party concerning the colonial peoples remains *their free decision, the right to independence*. Recalling Lenin's formulation, we have already said to the Tunisian comrades, who approved, that *the right to divorce* does not mean the *obligation* to divorce."

–quoted in Jacob Moneta, *Le PCF et la question coloniale, 1920-1965* (Paris, 1971)

Under this line the PCF supported the Popular Front government of Socialist Léon Blum, which in January 1937 ordered the dissolution of the Etoile Nord-Africaine, a group with strong support among Algerian workers in France, as a "separatist" organization. Indeed, just after Blum took office, amid a strike wave in France that extended to the French colonies of Algeria and Vietnam, the colonial authorities ordered the arrest of Vietnamese Trotskyist leader Ta Thu Thau for the crime of... "advocating" independence.

On 11 June 1936, the Vietnamese League of Internationalist Communists (LCI) issued a leaflet proclaiming "Long live the total independence of Indochina!" and "Long live the French and Indochinese proletarian revolution!" That same day the leaders of the LCI were arrested (see Ngo Van, *Revolutionaries They Could Not Break: The Fight for the Fourth International in Indochina 1930-1945* [London, 1995]).

When we have pointed out to ICLers that their line on Puerto Rico today is identical to the position of the French CP on the colonies in the 1930s, they cry foul, because the CP was involved in repression. But that is the point: *the ICL has now adopted the line that was used by pseudo-Communists to justify anti-Trotskyist and colonial repression*.

Moreover, it has adopted precisely the line it trenchantly denounced when it was put forward by pseudo-Trotskyists in the past. Thus an article on Lutte Ouvrière and the colonial question in the publication of the French section of the ICL, *Le Bolchévik* (No. 111, May 1991), took LO to task for only raising the "right" to self-determination in Algeria in the 1950s. *Le Bolchévik* commented:

"To call for 'respecting the right of self-determination of the peoples of North Africa' does not in any way imply being in favor of *exercising* this right – that is to say, independence. But for Lenin, the right of nations to self-determination means concerning the colonies that revolutionaries must, in the imperialist countries, 'demand the immediate liberation of the colonies without compensation' ('The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination'). Otherwise they place themselves in the *French* framework."

Today, with its new line on Puerto Rico, the ICL places itself in the *American* framework. Using sleight-of-hand and nonsensical formulations (advocate = force), what *Workers Vanguard* 704 laid out is a wholesale revision of Marxism – and the ICL's own formerly Trotskyist positions – on the colonial question.

In addition to misrepresenting our position on Puerto Rican independence, *WV* tries to cover itself by lying about our line (and theirs) on the July 1998 Puerto Rican telephone strike. The article alleges that we "falsified the name of the *class-collaborationist* front directing the strike." How so? We translated CAOS as "Broad Committee of Trade Union Organizations," which is what the initials stand for and how it was regularly described in the press. We described CAOS in our July 1998 leaflet on the strike as "a coalition of 53 unions joined by student, leftist, women's and community groups," and as an "umbrella group of labor and leftist organizations." This is accurate.

The full name of CAOS also included "religious and civic organizations." *WV* claims this category included bourgeois individuals and parties, in particular the Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP). As we said in *The Internationalist* No. 6, this is false. We didn't just assert this, we checked all available written material (including hundreds of pages of clippings on the strike), and we spoke directly with the PIP, CAOS, San Juan newspapers and the UTIER electrical workers union. All of them agree that the PIP was not part of CAOS, nor were Popular Democratic Party (PPD) politicians, although they "supported" the strike for their own bourgeois electoralist reasons.

To counter our article, *WV* 704 claims:

"CAOS itself, as well as a link on the web site of the UTIER union, published the list of *CAOS delegates* at the assembly held to plan the strike. This meeting, held in Carolina in June, included the following: delegate No. 29, 'Nuevo Movimiento Independentista (Julio Muriente)' and delegate No. 31, 'Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño (Victor García San Inocencio).'"

For starters, the NMIP is a petty-bourgeois nationalist party, what's left of the former Puerto Rican Socialist Party. But let's look closer at the list of supposed "*CAOS delegates*." We found the list *WV* referred to, including as Nos. 29 and 31 the NMIP and PIP, but this is *not, and does not purport to be, a list of "CAOS delegates."* Rather, it is a list of organizational representatives present among the several thousand participants in a mass assembly called by CAOS to proclaim the strike. No. 1 on the list is the "AFL-CIO (Jimmy Torres)." Yet the AFL-CIO has never been a part of CAOS and was less than enthusiastic about the general strike.

The presence of some bourgeois politicians at a strike assembly does not change the character of a labor action any more than did the presence of Democratic Congressman Charles Schumer at a CWA strike rally in Brooklyn a few weeks later. Beyond trying to smear the IG/LFI, the *WV* 704 article argues that the July 7-8 general strike (which the SL never called for the victory of) really "had the character of a political protest" in which "the political independence of the proletariat was subordinated to the program of the bourgeois nationalists." In other words, it was not a labor action at all, according to the SL, but merely a nationalist demonstration!

While it certainly was counterposed to Rosselló's annexationist drive and to a U.S. corporation with close ties to the U.S. military (GTE), the Puerto Rican general strike mobilized the workers in sharp *class* struggle. Called in defense of the bitter six-week telephone workers strike, it involved mass pickets of hundreds of unionists who confronted the police and drove out scabs. The strike itself was not class collaboration; it was *betrayed* by the bureaucrats who collaborated with "patriotic" bourgeois elements to undermine its impact.

So the Spartacist League denies that a general strike which paralyzed Puerto Rico for two days to stop privatization of the phone company was a strike; they pretend that a longshore work stoppage that shut down every port on the U.S. West Coast for ten hours demanding freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal was not a work stoppage; and they claim to know nothing about work stoppages by Brazilian teachers and other sectors demanding the liberation of Jamal. This "hear no strike, see no strike" line is not blindness but a program, ultimately reflecting the outlook of sectors of the labor aristocracy.

It is particularly egregious because in fact *it was the IG* that denounced nationalist class collaboration in the Puerto Rican strike while the SL was silent on this. The *WV* article pretends that only "once the strike was over" did "the IG denounce '*independentista* unity'" between the labor movement and bourgeois parties like the PIP. This is a patent lie. There was a whole section of our strike leaflet (printed in *The Internationalist* No. 6) under the subtitle "For Proletarian Interna-

tionism, Not Nationalist Popular Frontism," specifically denouncing "*independentista* unity" with bourgeois parties and politicians. In contrast, the SL/ICL in its leaflet distributed at the strike (a treatise on the history of colonialism) said not one word about the danger of the union misleaders, or popular frontism or the bourgeois-nationalist PIP, even denying that petty-bourgeois nationalism represented a danger today!

We warned *at the time* of the dangers of class collaboration and of the PIP in particular; the ICL did not. *WV*, assuming most of its readers will not have access to our material, invents its "facts" with reckless abandon. It is revealing, once again, how much of what they accuse us of is in fact true of themselves. *WV* 704 accuses the Internationalist Group of engaging in "the standard 'gringo'-baiting of Latin American nationalists" – a total fabrication – while on the previous page it describes the Internationalist Group as "Yankee Liars"! Gringo-baiting and pandering to nationalism, anyone? But the fact is that the ICL's lies serve to cover up its social-chauvinist line: its refusal to fight for unconditional independence of all colonies is a hallmark of centrists and reformists who make their peace with "their own" bourgeoisie. ■

Ecuador...

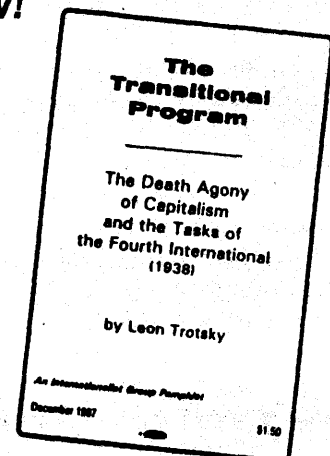
continued from page 19

ment sweatshops and the most dangerous construction jobs. Yet the situation means not only oppression but also the potential for an enormously powerful *class struggle*; these workers are now part of the powerful multiracial U.S. proletariat. One of the keys to unlocking this potential is the mobilization of the organized working class against "migra" raids in a fight for *full citizenship rights for all immigrants*.

The Ecuadoran crisis shows once again that the capitalist system is incapable of satisfying the most basic and pressing needs of the working class. The "instability" so feared by the bourgeoisie must be turned into an all-out, class-struggle fight, against imperialism and the "national" bourgeoisie and for international proletarian revolution. ■

Order Now!

U.S.\$1.50



Order from/make checks payable to: Mundial Publications, Box 3321, Church Street Station, New York, NY 10008, U.S.A.

23 October 1999

KKK Besieged by 8,000 Angry Protesters in New York City

When the "American Knights of the Ku Klux Klan" announced last October that they intended to stage a race-hate provocation in the heart of Manhattan, outrage surged through the working people of New York City. Liberals and black Democrats led by Al Sharpton grotesquely defended the "rights" of the fascist terrorists and tried to head off militant protest by calling a rally for "tolerance," even sharing a sound permit with the KKK! The Partisan Defense Committee, linked to the Spartacist League, called for a mass labor/black mobilization to stop the Klan. The Internationalist Group endorsed the mobilization and actively built it with the leaflet printed below.

On October 23, some 8,000 workers, minorities and youth showed up to protest the presence of the white su-

premacists. Upwards of a thousand gathered at the site of the PDC demonstration a block away from the KKK, but most eventually gravitated to Foley Square hoping for a chance to get at the Klan. While the reformist International Socialist Organization disgustingly spoke at the Democrats' "tolerance" rally in front of a Latin police officers' banner, a leftist schoolteacher did manage to land some blows against a Klansman. The massive cop presence along with barricades and a big construction site blocked the angry crowd's attempts to run the KKKers out of town. Yet for an hour and a half the Klansmen were literally besieged in a powerful display of militancy by the thousands of workers, blacks, immigrants and youth who sought to drive the KKK out of NYC.

Mobilize Workers Power to Crush the KKK! All Out to Stop the Klan October 23!

We print below a leaflet issued by the Internationalist Group on 20 October 1999, which was distributed in Spanish and English at NY transit locations, in the garment district, at demonstrations and in minority neighborhoods building for the mobilization to stop the Klan.

The racist terrorists of the Ku Klux Klan have announced that they will rally for "white pride" on Saturday, October 23 near City Hall in downtown Manhattan. This is a direct threat to all minorities and working people in New York City. The hooded nightriders must be stopped in their tracks by a militant mobilization of the power of the working class, blacks, immigrants and all the oppressed to **crush the KKK in the egg**.

Now the Giuliani administration threatens to use police power to prevent protesters from expressing loud and clear their determination to sweep the KKK off the streets. Meanwhile, the ACLU's Norman Siegel defends "free speech" for the lynchers, as Upper West Side liberal Democrat Scott Stringer and black Democrats Al Sharpton and David Paterson are obscenely calling for a rally for "tolerance" by *sharing a sound permit with the KKK!* But the working people and minorities of New York will not "tolerate" the hooded fascists.

Liberal politicians and editorial writers say the KKK is just a bunch of kooks, that their "rally" is harmless and should be ignored. This is a dangerous illusion and a lie, as shown by the bombs against abortion clinics and assassinations of abortion providers from Alabama to New York and the massacres by "Aryan" gunmen against Jewish schoolchildren, Asians and blacks in California and Illinois. Others call on the government to "ban the Klan" – the same government that starves welfare moms and kids and whose racist killer cops terrorize minority

communities. No, what's needed is to mobilize the powerful multiracial workers movement to crush the Klan.

Make no mistake: the KKK are not debaters, *they are murderers*. Anyone who thinks this is about free speech should recall James Byrd, Jr., dragged to a hideous death by Klansmen in Texas. The Klan is the spearhead of racist reaction. If they get away with this provocation, lynch mobs will go after black and immigrant youth. Tens of thousands of New Yorkers have marched to protest the station house torture of Abner Louima, the NYPD death squad murder of Amadou Diallo and the wanton cop killings of so many other minority and immigrant youth. Whether they wear blue uniforms or white sheets, the racist killers must be stopped before they kill again!

Demonstrate in a labor/black/immigrant mobilization to drive out the Ku Klux Klan. The Internationalist Group urges you to join with us in the united-front protest to stop the KKK called by the Partisan Defense Committee and numerous labor, leftist and minority spokesmen this Saturday, 12 noon, at 100 Centre Street in Manhattan – bring your co-workers, classmates, neighbors and friends. All out to stop the KKK on October 23!

A powerful mobilization of workers power on Saturday, October 23 can strike a real blow against the racist and anti-labor attacks that the capitalist rulers have escalated against the working class and the poor. It can also provide important backing for the urgent life-and-death struggle to free Mumia Abu-Jamal, the radical black journalist on Pennsylvania's death row. Pennsylvania governor Ridge just signed a death warrant for Jamal, setting an execution date of December 2. The fight to defend minorities and the entire working class against KKK lynchers goes hand in hand with the struggle to abolish the racist death penalty – legal lynching derived from slavery – and to free this heroic fighter for the oppressed.

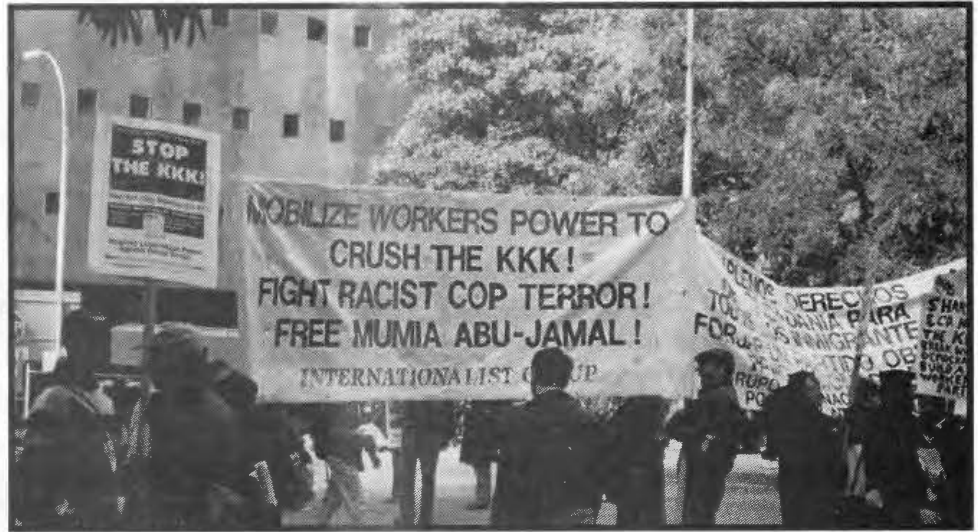
Why has the KKK targeted New York City – and why now? Throughout the U.S., New York is seen as the capital of blacks, immigrants, Hispanics, Jews, Arab Americans, Asians, gays and lesbians and others on the Klan's hit list. It is a city of labor struggles going back to the immigrant garment workers who started International Women's Day 90 years ago, and a historical seedbed of the struggle for black liberation. In the 1920s, in a climate of anti-immigrant and anti-communist hysteria the KKK grew to number in the millions. Today a majority of the NYC population are minorities, with a huge influx of new immigrants from Latin America, Asia and Africa. New York City symbolizes everything the Klan hates.

The KKK is responding to signals coming from City Hall, the White House and the halls of Congress. The fascists are drawn by Giuliani's stormtrooper tactics, like when he sent an army of cops to occupy Harlem and shut down the "Million Youth March" called by the bigoted demagogue Khallid Muhammad, or the brutal police beating of demonstrators protesting the sadistic murder of gay student Matthew Shepard in Wyoming. They are attracted by the mayor's police-state methods, turning City Hall into a bunker and even trying to shut down Brooklyn Museum over what he calls "sick art."

In the 1980s, the KKK and Nazis crawled out from under the rocks at the height of the anti-Soviet offensive begun by Democrat Carter and taken to a fever pitch by Republican Reagan. Today the reactionary climate is set by U.S. imperialist warmonger-in-chief Clinton, who engages in wanton mass murder from Iraq to Yugoslavia while throwing millions of mothers and children off welfare at home. The Klan's appetites are whetted by *migra* raids against immigrant workers of the sweatshop districts (recall the KKK "patrols" along the Mexican border). And when they see thousands pushed into union-busting "workfare," the Klan yearns to bring back the slavery days of the lash, the chain and the branding iron.

Giuliani and the Klan seek to intimidate and terrify the oppressed. But those who the fascists want to trample and kill have the strength to defend ourselves. There are hundreds of thousands of city workers, hospital and telephone workers, Teamsters and other unionized workers who make this city run and who can stop it cold in protest over marauding cops or to stop this fascist provocation. Moreover, the struggle against the racist terrorists can contribute to building a working-class offensive against the arrogant parasites of Wall Street who grind the poor into the dirt while amassing vast profits from the labor of the working people.

In particular, the 33,000-member, integrated Transport Workers Union can shut down New York, as should have been done in response to the torture of Abner Louima and the murder of Amadou Diallo. Today we call for the TWU to mobilize against



Internationalist Group contingent at October 23 mobilization to stop the KKK.

the KKK and to strike to demand freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal, following the lead of Brazilian teachers and West Coast U.S. longshoremen last April. This would strengthen transit workers for the necessary strike battle against the arrogant TA and city bosses, which could galvanize the labor movement throughout the city. Such a struggle requires throwing cops out of the union and forging a class-struggle leadership against the TWU bureaucracy and the union-suing out-bureaucrats.

The union bureaucrats want to keep the ranks of labor "in line" for the Democratic Party. Yet it was because of the sellout policies of the pro-capitalist labor leaders that the labor movement lost one crucial struggle after another, from the PATCO air traffic controllers on. Likewise, black Democrat Sharpton channeled the outrage over the cold-blooded cop murder of Amadou Diallo into "civil disobedience" by Democratic politicians. Now he is the buddy of racist former mayor Ed Koch. And don't forget that it was liberal black Democratic mayor Dinkins who hired thousands of new cops to terrorize the ghettos and barrios.

The official black and Hispanic leaders are in business to subordinate the oppressed to the racist Democratic and Republican parties of U.S. imperialism. It is the capitalists and their politicians who produce the social decay and destruction that the Klan feeds off. What is urgently required is a revolutionary workers party to lead the fight to put an end to racist oppression and capitalist exploitation through workers revolution here and around the world.

The fight to crush the KKK is a fight to mobilize the power of the working class in its own interests and in defense of all the exploited and oppressed. The Internationalist Group, section of the League for the Fourth International, says: *Free Mumia Abu-Jamal – Smash the racist death penalty! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! Labor and the oppressed must break from the Democrats and Republicans – Forge a revolutionary workers party! MOBILIZE WORKERS POWER TO CRUSH THE KKK! ALL OUT TO STOP THE KLAN ON SATURDAY, OCTOBER 23, 12 NOON, AT 100 CENTRE STREET IN MANHATTAN!*

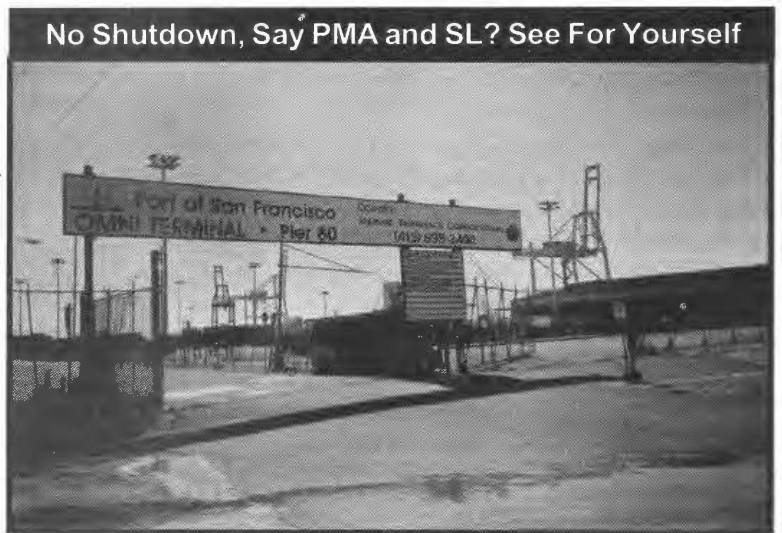
24 April 1999

ILWU West Coast Port Shutdown Showed Labor's Power in Fight to Free Mumia

On 24 April 1999, longshore workers shut down the docks all along the U.S. West Coast demanding freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal, the former Black Panther and radical black journalist on death row in Pennsylvania. The Coast-wide port shutdown was the first major political work stoppage in the United States in at least half a century on behalf of a victim of the racist injustice system. It gave a taste of the tremendous power of labor to bring capitalist transport and industry to a grinding halt. Mobilizing that *working-class power* is what it will take to liberate Mumia, the eloquent "voice of the voiceless," from the jaws of the state murder machine.

For more than a decade, Marxist revolutionaries and class-struggle unionists have called to mobilize the power of labor to free Mumia. Now this call was being translated into action. On that day in April, from Bellingham, Washington to San Diego, California, the giant cranes stood still. No cargo moved from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Instead, by vote of the Longshore Division of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), the ports were shut down to demand, "Stop the Execution! Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!"

The *San Francisco Examiner* (20 April 1999) noted: "The April 24 action will be a first. Never before has the union organized a West Coast work stoppage for a non-strike-related social cause." The *ILWU Dispatcher* (March 1999) reported "Caucus Votes to Close the Coast for Mumia." It added:



San Francisco docks deserted on 24 April 1999, day of work stoppage to free Mumia Abu-Jamal.

"As far away as Brazil union teachers are joining the action for Abu-Jamal's cause. The Union of Education Workers of the State of Rio de Janeiro plans to stop work for one hour Friday, April 23 to hold a meeting demanding Abu-Jamal's freedom and discussing his situation and the ongoing struggle against racism around the world."

The Rio teachers' stoppage (one hour on each shift) was initiated by militants of the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil, section of the League for the Fourth International.

Mumia's cause has become the focus internationally for the fight against the racist death penalty in the U.S. The witchhunting frame-up of this courageous fighter for the oppressed was the outcome of years of persecution by the FBI's notorious "COINTELPRO" provocations, particularly against black radicals. Jamal was on the authorities' "enemies list" for his exposure of the murderous government vendetta against the Philadelphia MOVE group. This culminated in the 1985 Mother's Day massacre in which eleven black women, children and men were killed and an entire black neighborhood was incinerated. The firestorm was set off by a police bomb, authorized by black Democratic mayor Wilson Goode, with explosives supplied by the Republican Reagan administration in Washington.

The Internationalist Group and League for the Fourth International have highlighted the importance of the April 1999 work stoppages by Brazilian teachers



Longshoremen march on 24 April 1999 chanting, "An injury to one is an injury to all, Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!"

and U.S. West Coast dock workers. These union actions have encouraged an escalation of international labor solidarity for Mumia. Last November, Brazilian teachers, bank workers and the CUT labor federation of Rio de Janeiro included the call for Jamal's freedom in their strike demands, again at the initiative of the LQB (see "Brazilian Workers Mobilize for Freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal," page 80). As the gears of the machinery of capitalist state murder grind on, as Pennsylvania governor Tom Ridge prepares to again sign Jamal's death warrant, we urgently call on the workers movement to use its power to stay the executioner's hand, *free Mumia* and *abolish the racist death penalty*.

In contrast, the Spartacist League lied about, sought to undermine and then dismissed the April 1999 West Coast port shutdown for Mumia. The SL repeated the bosses' propaganda of the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA) and made a lying amalgam of dock workers who used their class power to stop work to free Mumia, and the pro-Democratic Party popular front with its appeals to the state for a "new trial" for Mumia. Using the same smear tactics, the SL tries to equate the Internationalist Group, which has fought to mobilize workers power to free Jamal, with the inveterate Mensheviks of the misnamed "Bolshevik Tendency," who seek to justify the slogan for a "new trial" which only breeds illusions in the the capitalist courts.

Prior to last year's ILWU action, the SL newspaper *Workers Vanguard* (No. 711, 16 April 1999) blatantly lied about it, pretending it was nothing more than "two-hour" union meetings. In the same article, *WV* made the vicious smear that Jack Heyman, the author of the resolution calling for the union work stoppage, requested a list of labor endorsers of Mumia defense actions in order to "go after the reds." When Heyman objected to this slander, *WV* (No. 714, 28 May 1999) responded by claiming the port shutdown was nothing but "regular monthly union meetings" and denounced Heyman for "touting these as 'work stoppages'!"

For back-up, *WV* cited the *San Francisco Chronicle* (24 April 1999) saying that "the longshore workers' protest isn't an actual strike," and quoted a PMA official who claimed "the work stoppage would have little effect on their business" because it was announced weeks earlier! But if the maritime bosses are such authorities for *WV*, it could have quoted *Lloyd's List* (23 April 1999), the newspaper of the international shipping industry, which reported "Strike Hits US West Coast Ports":

"West coast ports in the US, from Seattle to San Diego, will be shut tomorrow by the International Longshore & Warehouse Union in support of a death row inmate in Pennsylvania.

"While each local union along the west coast decides which day of the month to hold its meeting, it takes something out of the ordinary for them to schedule a stop-work meeting for the same shift on the same day."

The SL also neglected to report that the PMA bosses vociferously objected to the ILWU stopping work in Los Angeles, with two-fifths of the entire Coast dock workforce, threatening to take the union to court because the L.A./San Pedro local had already held its monthly meeting.

As for the Brazilian teachers' April 1999 work stoppage in Rio de Janeiro, *WV* has not said a word about it (nor about the

November 1999 Rio labor actions for Mumia). Readers of the ILWU's *Dispatcher* know that Brazilian educational workers stopped work to demand freedom for Jamal, but readers of *Workers Vanguard* are kept in the dark. Since these facts contradict their slanders of the IG/LFI and our Brazilian comrades of the LQB, SLers pretend they "don't know" if the Rio work stoppages "ever happened." Their know-nothingism has a purpose: to cover the SL's own betrayal in Brazil, deserting the struggle for cops out of the unions and then broadcasting the lies of the popular-front government and the pro-police provocateurs against the Trotskyists.

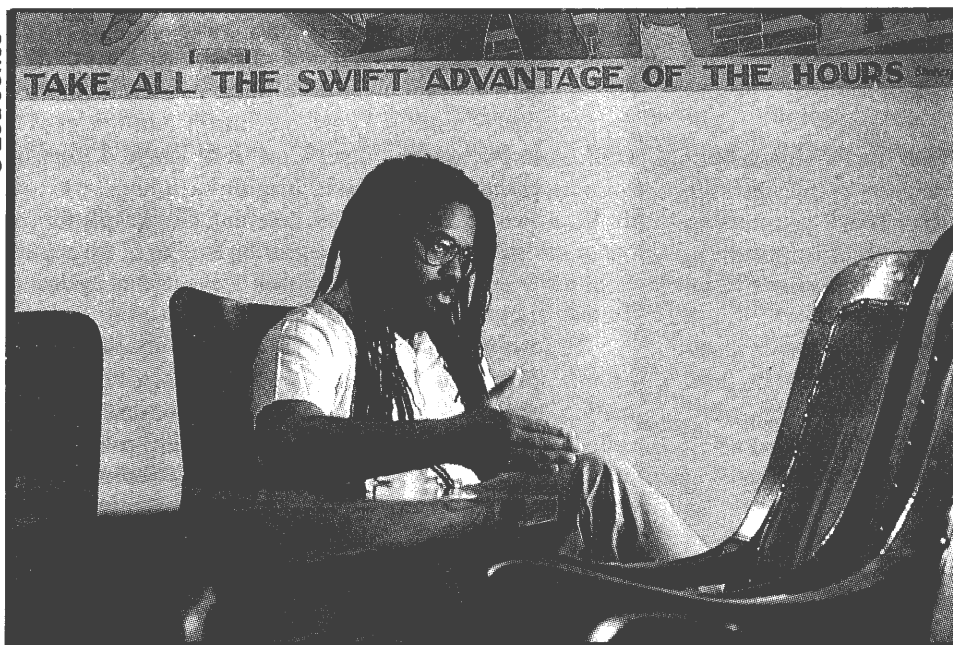
To justify its dismissal of the ILWU work stoppage for Mumia's freedom, *WV* pretends that the Longshore Caucus motion "endorsed" the call for a new trial for Jamal because it called to mobilize for the April 24 march which centrally raised this demand. The demo organizers, notably Socialist Action and the Workers World Party, were intentionally appealing to bourgeois liberals and Democrats who are not prepared to call to free Mumia. In *The Internationalist* No. 8 we attacked the SA/WWP "new trial" call, noting: "There can be no 'fair trial' for Mumia in the racist capitalist courts that have relentlessly hounded black radicals and him in particular."

Even *WV* was forced to admit that a "small" (200-plus) ILWU contingent marched at the head of the April 24 march "with its 'Free Mumia' banner," dismissing this as "cynically conceived as camouflage." In a second response to Heyman, the SL denounced the union motion for "tacking on the slogan 'Free Mumia' as a fig leaf aimed at deceiving the workers" (*WV* No. 716, 9 July 1999). "Camouflage," "fig leaf"? The ILWU motion called to "support" the march *by carrying out a coast-wide work stoppage explicitly called to "Free Mumia!"* Moreover, the union motion stressed that Mumia is innocent and that "the organized labor movement has the power through action to ensure justice for this principled and courageous freedom fighter, which he can't get in the courts."

The ILWU motion's call to "support" the April 24 demo undercut the impact of the first-ever union work stoppage demanding his freedom, not least by aiding *WV*'s slander-mongers. Not only was the call to free Mumia the focus of the ILWU port shutdown, not only did the ILWU contingent march behind a banner proclaiming "Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Stop the Execution!" it chanted repeatedly throughout the march, "An injury to one is an injury to all, Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!" The Workers World/Socialist Action organizers were so worried about the impact that they moved up a "new trial" banner to place in front of the longshoremen.

WV No. 714 accused the Internationalist Group of having "marched shoulder to shoulder with Heyman" in SF. An IG spokesman marched with the ILWU contingent carrying our multilingual poster (in English, Portuguese, French, Spanish and German) calling to "Mobilize the Power of the Working Class to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Now!" LFI supporters demonstrated with this poster in Philadelphia and Rio de Janeiro as well. We were proud to take a stand with the workers who closed the West Coast ports demanding freedom for Mumia. As for the SL, its supporters slunk along the sidewalks next to the march incognito.

© Lou Jones



STATEMENT OF SUPPORT OF THE WORK STOPPAGE IN BRAZIL

By Mumia Abu-Jamal, November 1999

Sisters, brothers, friends and comrades in Brazil: *Ona Move!*

I thank you for your principled and courageous stand in support of life, freedom and justice.

I write to you from a nation that many of you may know of, but that you don't really know about. Did you know that over 3,000 men and women, mostly black, await extermination on American Death Rows? That over 1 million people are held in jails and prisons in America? Or that over 30 million people live in dire poverty in the richest nation on earth?

Death Row, and prison, is a province reserved for the poor.

That your work is suspended on behalf of one person from such a vile place is a testament to the power of human solidarity in the face of state repression, and a reflection of our commonality. I thank you, and applaud you; and will see you in Freedom! *Ona Move! Long Live John Africa!*

For the last several years Spartacist supporters have screamed that it was a capitulation to march in popular-frontist Mumia protests. But in the latest twist of its zigzag policies, the SL now vociferously calls to participate in the Mumia marches organized by the WWP/SA pop-front crowd. Indeed, *WV* No. 735 (5 May 2000) declared that "many people will be making their voices heard in marches and protests for Mumia" and that "it is essential that the largest numbers possible turn out for these protests." After boycotting them, they have suddenly become best builders of the marches.

In the next issue (*WV* No. 736, 19 May), a Spartacus Youth Club leaflet called for "All out on May 13!" for a San Francisco march whose main demand was "New Trial for Mumia Abu-Jamal" (which the SYC coyly referred to as the "watered-down politics of the organizers"). Recall that a year earlier the SL denounced the ILWU for supporting an identical march by shutting down West Coast ports to "Free Mumia!" By the Spartacist League's 1999 standards, the SL 2000 is a bunch of opportunist capitulators, effectively "endorsing" the "new trial" demonstration ("All out on May 13!"), its claims to call for Mumia's freedom being nothing but a "fig leaf" and "camouflage"! But revolution-

ary consistency is not the SL's hobgoblin these days, nor do they bother to mention that they have changed their line (again).

Both when they're zigging and zagging, the SL is *politically capitulating to the pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy*. In the case of the ILWU, the SL has been notable for its kid-gloves treatment of ILWU International president Brian McWilliams. *WV* No. 714 baldly declared that "Heyman is a lot worse than McWilliams," because Heyman "pretends to be something different, a left-talking friend of the workers who is more radical than McWilliams." In the previous issue, *WV* printed a photo of McWilliams speaking to an Oakland PDC protest for Mumia in 1995. But unlike the ILWU motion, which explicitly called for union action to *free* Mumia, the SL's favorite bureaucrat McWilliams really did endorse the "new trial" demand along with a host of liberals in a full-page ad in the *New York Times* (16 October 1998).

For many years, when it fought for the program of Trotskyism, the Spartacist League called for workers strike action to free Mumia. Yet reflecting its political degeneration into left-centrism, when the first actual work stoppages took place, instead of stressing their importance

the SL undermined them by parroting the employers' anti-labor propaganda. Grotesquely, the SL essentially placed itself *against* this important labor action. *Nor have Spartacist League supporters in the unions fought for strike action to free Mumia*. Abandoning the Trotskyist program of mobilizing the working class in its revolutionary interests, it has gone over to passive propagandism and a live-and-let-live relationship with various "progressive" union bureaucrats who periodically endorse its events. The SL/ICL is forced to resort to subterfuge, distortion and outright lies to hide its political capitulation. And as it tries to cover up reality, *WV* must hope its readers have a short memory.

The Internationalist Group and the League for the Fourth International underline the importance of the work stoppages in Brazil and on the U.S. West Coast demanding freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal. We seek to revive the tradition of powerful international workers solidarity action of the early Communist International and the International Labor Defense under James P. Cannon. To be successful, this requires building Bolshevik-Leninist parties and reorganizing the Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution. *Mobilize the power of the working class to free Mumia Abu-Jamal now!* ■

"It's Strike or Nothing": Rio de Janeiro bank workers vote (below, right) to include demand for freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal in strike on November 25. Union newspaper articles on Jamal headlined: "Black Journalist Condemned to Death in Land of Uncle Sam" and "Banco do Brasil Workers Want Abu-Jamal Free."

ABU-JAMAL

Jornalista negro é condenado à morte na terra de Tio Sam

Abu-Jamal é jornalista e militante negro anti-racista. Foi preso em dezembro de 1981 sob a acusação de ter matado um oficial de polícia, na Filadélfia. Jamal foi socorrer o irmão que estava sendo brutalmente espancado pelo policial Daniel Faulkner. Houve muita confusão, luta corporal e, no final, Jamal terminou ferido e Faulkner, morto. Foi condenado num julgamento cheio de irregularidades, presidido por um juiz membro da FOP, uma associação policial.

Apesar de uma intensa campanha internacional, sua execução foi marcada para o dia 2 de dezembro. E suspensa pelo juiz William Yhon, na semana retrasada. O que o manter vivo até março de 2000. Jamal entrou com pedido de habeas corpus na Corte Suprema, sua última chance de sair vivo do corredor da morte.

Funcionários do BB querem Abu-Jamal livre

Os funcionários do BB aprovaram na assembleia de quarta-feira (incluindo a liberdade do jornalista negro americano Mumia Abu-Jamal como uma das reivindicações do movimento. Condenado à morte por um crime que não cometeu, Jamal tem

nação prevista para o próximo dia 2 na Filadélfia (EUA). Para ajudar a salvar a vida de Jamal, envie mensagens (mesmo em português) para Bill Clinton geralden@whitehouse.gov ou para a entidade sindical americana AFL-CIO comited@lsc.org.

DIÁRIO BANCÁRIO

Síndico dos Bancários e Financieiros do Rio de Janeiro
Ano LXXV - Caxias-Atibaia, 26 de novembro de 1999 - R\$ 2,95



Reunião da Casa é amanhã

A Casa é convocada para a reunião de amanhã às 14h, no auditório de Conf. do Ministério do JUIZ (R. Príncipe de Marçá, 66, 7º andar - CE, RJ). Para discutir o programa de trabalho dos departamentos filiados de Plano de Assistência para o desemprego. A assembleia terá validade à votação entre 18 e 21 de dezembro.

BANCOS PÚBLICOS

É greve ou nada!

Assembleias, hoje, decidem se paralisam nos shoppings e praça de amanhã no BB e no CEF.

Vanguarda Operária



continued from page 80

dent Fernando Henrique Cardoso, journalists in the capital of Brasilia carried signs with Mumia's picture calling for his freedom. The strongest showing by unions in Rio de Janeiro came from the teachers (which shut down 61 of 89 schools in Rio), bank workers, social security workers and oil workers – the same unions which prominently championed the cause of Mumia. During the Rio march, the sound truck of the Central Única dos Trabalhadores carried a CUT banner declaring:

“Workers of Brazil Also Demand in the General Strike: FREEDOM for Mumia Abu-Jamal! Long live Zumbi and João Cândido!” Zumbi was the leader of the *quilombo* (community of escaped slaves) of Palmares who was murdered by colonial mercenary troops on 20 November 1695. A march is held yearly to commemorate the death of this champion of black freedom. João Cândido was the leader of the *Revolta da Chibata* (whipping revolt) by black sailors in the Brazilian navy, which broke out on 22 November 1910.

Following the November 10 work-stoppage, a meeting of the Conexão Zumbi (Zumbi Connection) at the CUT offices in Rio de Janeiro voted to include the demand for Mumia's freedom as a focus of the “black consciousness” march on November 22.

A Conexão Zumbi leaflet announced that the struggle was against racism, sexism, Cardoso's economic policies and “for the liberation of the great black African American leader Abu-Jamal.” In its daily bulletin (*Rápido*, 16 November), the CUT called attention to the fact that the march in honor of Zumbi was also demanding “the freedom of the American journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal, who is on death row. A couple of weeks ago, Mumia's lawyers won from Philadelphia judge William Yohn a stay of execution, which had been set for December 2. This will keep him alive until March, but still under the death threat.”

In the following days, CUT bulletins repeatedly highlighted the demand for Jamal's freedom, and the November issue of its newspaper *Conquista* headlined: “CUT Wants Freedom for Abu-Jamal.” The article noted: “The black movement in Rio de Janeiro and the Rio CUT are involved in a campaign for freedom for Abu-Jamal. This was in fact one of the axes of the national day of work stoppages and protests on November 10.” After noting the political character of the death sentence against Mumia and the countless “irregularities” in his 1982 trial, *Conquista* concluded: “In these cases it is always worth re-

CONQUISTA

CUT quer liberdade para Abu-Jamal

Antes dele, outros outros foram executados injustamente

O movimento negro do Rio de Janeiro e a CUT/RJ estão empenhados na campanha pela liberdade para Abu-Jamal. Este foi, inclusive, um dos eixos do Dia Nacional de Paralisação e Protesto, em 10 de novembro.

O jornalista norte-americano Mumia Abu-Jamal, militante anti-racista, foi condenado à morte e teve a execução suspensa no início deste mês, pelo juiz William Yohn. Nova data será marcada.

Mumia foi acusado de matar um

oficial da polícia, depois de um confronto corporal para livrar o irmão da agressão do policial.

O julgamento foi político, com inúmeras irregularidades.

Mumia ainda não foi executado porque movimentos de direitos humanos, no mundo inteiro, estão protestando contra a sentença que lhe foi dada.

Nestes casos é sempre bom lembrar dos mártires de Chicago que foram inocentados pela justiça depois de terem sido executados.

CUT labor federation of Rio de Janeiro calls for freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal.



CUT union federation banner on November 22. LQB signs read: "Capitalism = Racism" and "Strikes and Work Stoppages to Free Mumia!"

calling the martyrs of Chicago, who were later found to be innocent after they had been executed," referring to the labor militants sentenced to death after the Haymarket Square bomb provocation in 1886, who are commemorated every May Day.

The November 22 march in Rio drew some 500 participants, including João Cândido's son and daughter (who gave a speech at the closing rally). A letter was read from Mumia to the Brazilian workers thanking them for their November 10 work stoppage and underlining the importance of such actions of international solidarity. Among the unions present, several highlighted the call for Mumia's freedom. The Rio bank workers' daily, *Diário Bancário* (16 November), included a box on "Abu-Jamal: Black Journalist Condemned to Death in the Land of Uncle Sam." The oil refinery workers union (Sindipetro) bulletin *Surgente* (18 November) article announcing the march ran a photo of Mumia underlining the call for freeing the "anti-racist militant condemned to death." The postal workers union also called for Mumia's freedom in the November issue of its union paper, *O Grito Ecetista*, as did the social security workers union (Sindiprevi).

In addition, supporters of the United Black Movement, the Commission for Proletarian Culture, Anarchists Against Racism, the PSTU (United Socialist Workers Party—followers of the late Nahuel Moreno) and Ação Socialista (a split from the Morenonites) had leaflets, signs or banners calling for freedom for Mumia.

The Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil had a contingent of some two dozen supporters wearing T-shirts reproducing our multilingual poster calling to "Mobilize the Power of the Working Class to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!" Militants of the LQB and the Internationalist Group (U.S.) spoke from the union sound truck during the march and again at the concluding rally on the need for powerful workers action to win Mumia's freedom. The LFI spokesmen also emphasized the

LQB's fight to expel the police ("the armed fist of the bourgeoisie") from the labor movement, warning against illusions in bourgeois "justice" and calling for sharp class struggle against the popular front of class collaboration. The LQB spokesman stressed that the fight for Mumia's freedom is part of the struggle for black liberation through socialist revolution. Hundreds of copies of *Vanguarda Operária* leaflets on Mumia, and calling for a revolutionary workers party built in struggle against the popular front

around Lula's social-democratic Workers Party (PT) and the reformist CUT tops were distributed to the participants.

The fight to mobilize the working class to win freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal was a central focus of the November 22 march, and the struggle continues. On November 24, some 600 Rio bank workers in two union assemblies enthusiastically voted to include the call to free Jamal as one of the official demands of their strike the next day. *Diário Bancário* (26 November) noted that "Banco do Brasil workers approved at their Wednesday union assembly the inclusion of freedom for black American Journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal as one of the demands of the strike movement." On November 25, the Agricultural School in Pinheiral, part of the Fluminense Federal University, held a forum sponsored by the LQB on Mumia's case which drew more than 50 students. The school shut down both in the 23 April 1999 teachers work stoppage and again on November 10 in solidarity with Mumia.

On Saturday, November 27, the SEPE teachers union began its educational conference with a special agenda point on Mumia. At the end of the day, the more than 400 delegates voted to hold a half-day strike December 7, in the middle of exam period, protesting the privatization and layoffs policies of the popular-front state government and demanding freedom for Jamal. The Rio teachers' strike was held the same day that Mumia's lawyers handed in legal papers to the federal district court in Philadelphia for his *habeas corpus* appeal.

Over the last decade, the fight to save Mumia from the executioner has become the focus of the struggle against the barbaric death penalty internationally. The determination of U.S. rulers to silence Jamal is a continuation of the bourgeoisie's drive to banish the spectre of black revolutionaries, from the assassination of Malcolm X and scores of Black Panthers under the FBI's COINTELPRO provocation and extermination program in the 1960s to the

Vanguarda Operária

Rio de Janeiro Teachers' Work Stoppage to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal

23 April 1999



Teachers in the city and state of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil carried out work stoppages on 23 April 1999 to demand freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal, the former Black Panther and radical journalist on Pennsylvania's death row. The action, carried out for one hour on day and evening shifts, was called by the State Teachers and Education Workers Union (SEPE), which also co-sponsored a demonstration outside the American consulate that afternoon demanding Jamal be freed.

This important step in mobilizing international workers action against the racist death penalty followed the adoption of a resolution for Jamal's freedom at the January 1999 congress of Brazil's National Confederation of Education Workers (see *The Internationalist* No. 7, April-May 1999). Like the motion for the work stoppages, it was put forward by the Class Struggle Caucus (CLC—affiliated with the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil, section of the League for the Fourth International).

The April 23 teachers' action was held the day before U.S. longshoremen shut down all West Coast ports to demand

freedom for Jamal. For more, see our leaflet "Brazil Education Workers Stop Work Demanding: Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!" (available by writing to the IG or on our Web site, www.internationalist.org).

Above, at Rio de Janeiro's Education Institute, banner of teachers' unions and CUT labor federation demands "Freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal!" Right: SEPE union bulletins on the work stoppage for Jamal's freedom. May 1999 bulletin headlines: "Rio Schools and U.S. Port Workers Stop Work to Demand Freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal."

decades-long attempt to murder former Philadelphia Panther leader Jamal. Thus it is crucially important that this struggle for his freedom be correctly focused against the racist, capitalist injustice system, which particularly targets minorities, immigrants and working people. Various reformist leftists have called for a "new trial" for Jamal, hoping to appeal to liberals who believe that his death sentence was an aberration. Against this, the LFI has insisted the fight must be for "freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal," and that the working class and oppressed must have no illusions in bourgeois "justice."

In the Brazilian workers protests, supporters of the social-democratic current led by the French Parti des Travailleurs (Workers Party) of pseudo-Trotskyist Pierre Lambert initially proposed that the November 10 work stoppage call for a "new trial" for Mumia. At a meeting of the Conexão Zumbi movement linked to the CUT, LQB spokesman Cerezo objected that this would represent a step backwards from the April 23 Rio teachers work stoppage which unambiguously called for

Mumia's freedom. Moreover, the call for a new trial would inevitably foster illusions in the capitalist courts, which from the beginning have sought to silence the "voice of the voiceless" through state murder. The issue was posed sharply in a vote counterposing "new trial" to "freedom" for Mumia, and the call to free him won. Two days later at a November 6 CUT meeting the issue was again debated, and again the motion for Jamal's freedom won out.

The events in Brazil must be a spur to even more powerful workers action in the spirit of the International Red Aid in the 1920s. The internationalist spirit of the Brazilian workers mobilizing in solidarity with Jamal, and the political battle waged by the LQB/LFI for independent labor action to win freedom now for Mumia Abu-Jamal, should serve as an inspiration to class-conscious workers around the world, from South Africa, where the death penalty was a key component of enforcing apartheid slavery, to Europe and the very heartland of Yankee imperialism. ■

Brazilian Workers Mobilize for Freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal

In a stirring demonstration of international working-class solidarity, Brazilian workers have repeatedly mobilized to demand freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal. This series of strikes and marches marks a vital step forward in the struggle to save the radical black journalist on Pennsylvania's death row for the last 17 years. It also poses a challenge to labor worldwide to use its tremendous power to abolish the racist death penalty.

- 10 November 1999: the CUT labor federation in Rio de Janeiro raised the call for freeing Mumia as one of the demands of a day-long work stoppage by unions throughout the state.

- November 22: a labor-centered demonstration in Rio on the "Day of Black Consciousness" made freedom for Jamal one of its central demands.

- November 25: a one-day strike by bank workers in the state of Rio de Janeiro included the demand "*Liberdade para Mumia Abu-Jamal!*"

- December 7: the Rio teachers union (SEPE) struck for half a day, including freedom for Mumia as one of its central demands.

This was the second time that Rio teachers had undertaken work stoppages demanding freedom for Jamal. On 23 April 1999, the SEPE held a two-hour statewide work stoppage and protest meetings for Mumia's freedom. That action was carried out along with the action by ILWU dock workers in the U.S., who shut down every port on the West Coast for ten hours on April 24 demanding: "Stop the Execution! Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!"

The League for the Fourth International has been in the



Vanquarda Operária

LQB supporters at 22 November march in Rio de Janeiro call to mobilize workers power to free Mumia Abu-Jamal, proclaiming "Down with capitalist justice!"

forefront of recent efforts to mobilize the power of the working class to stop the machinery of capitalist state murder. The comrades of our Brazilian section, the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil, initiated the 23 April 1999 teachers work stoppage as well as the subsequent actions by Rio unions demanding Jamal's immediate release. Around the world, unions representing millions of workers have come out for Mumia's freedom. The key is to turn these calls into powerful labor action, as Brazilian workers have begun to do. Time is pressing. In October, Pennsylvania governor Tom Ridge for the second time signed a death warrant for Jamal. The *habeas corpus* appeal by Mumia's lawyers to the federal district court won a stay of execution until a decision is handed down. But that only gains a little time, and we must use that time effectively to mobilize international working-class defense of Mumia.

During the November 10 national work stoppage protesting the anti-working-class "austerity" policies of Brazilian presi-

continued on page 77

**Smash the Racist Death Penalty!
Forge a Revolutionary Workers Party!**