

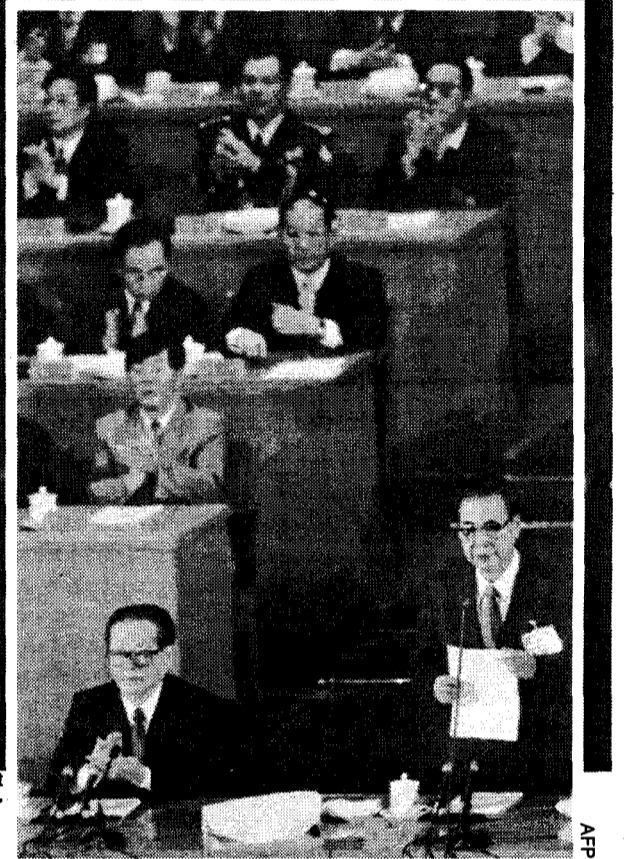
## Chinese CP Plans Liquidation of State Economy

# China on the Brink

## For Workers Political Revolution to Stop Capitalist Restoration!

Plan to sell off state industry announced by CCP chief Jiang Zemin (inset, seated left) at September congress threatens restoration of capitalism, destitution for Chinese workers and peasants.

Fred Scott



APR

China is moving rapidly toward a decisive crossroads. More than 15 years of "market reforms" have led to an ever-burgeoning capitalist sector, as more and more workers are subjected to brutal exploitation through direct foreign investment, "joint ventures" and profit-making "collective" enterprises. Now, at the 15th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) held in September, the Stalinist bureaucracy has announced plans to sell off the bulk of state-owned industry.

*If implemented, this proposal would mean the liquidation of what remains of the planned, collectivized economy and the restoration of capitalism in China. This starkly underscores the urgent need for a proletarian political revolution which sweeps away the vile Stalinist bureaucracy, replacing it with the democratic rule of workers and peasants councils committed to the fight for socialist revolution throughout Asia and beyond.*

While holding on to key strategic industries which account for about half the output of the state sector, the Beijing regime intends to privatize the vast majority of the 300,000 state-owned concerns which form the core of the industrial economy and employ over a hundred million workers. The elimination of state subsidies means that many of these plants would be shut down outright or their workforces slashed in the interests of "profitability," effectively shattering the already cracked "iron rice bowl" of guaranteed lifetime employment and social services. Untold millions of workers would face destitution, losing not

only their jobs but the housing, medical care, education and retirement benefits which are tied to employment in state-owned industries.

When China took over Hong Kong on July 1, we welcomed the removal of the British colonialists while warning that the maintenance of capitalism in this stronghold of the Chinese bourgeoisie would be a dagger aimed straight at the deformed workers state. Now, the plan to privatize a massive number of state industries on the mainland itself can only further strengthen those forces inside and outside China aiming to overturn the remaining gains of the 1949 Revolution.

The latest measures, announced as Chinese premier and CCP head Jiang Zemin prepares for a summit meeting with U.S. imperialist chief Clinton later this fall, have long been demanded by the World Bank and other imperialist agencies. The Clinton administration immediately declared it "salutes and welcomes" the privatization plan. Beijing has also moved to slash protective tariffs—further undermining the state monopoly of foreign trade—as part of its

effort to join the imperialist-dominated World Trade Organization.

Since the introduction of "market reforms" under the late Deng Xiaoping, the corrupt "Communist" bureaucrats have taken every opportunity to enrich themselves and their offspring, the notorious "princelings," as they dream of becoming a new exploiting class in their own right. But there has yet to be a final reckoning with the working masses. While glowingly praising Jiang's privatization proposal, *Business Week* (29 September) warned that "considering the risks of worker unrest, it's a bold agenda." China, it wrote, "is actually living dangerously close to the edge."

The outpouring of workers during the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests posed the imminent possibility of a proletarian political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy. That uprising was bloodily suppressed. But in recent years there has been a rising tide of workers struggles against the effects of "free market" measures, initially centered on the capitalist "special economic zones" and now rapidly spreading to state factories in the

country's industrial heartland.

Time has grown very short for the Chinese proletariat to defeat those who aim to throw the workers and peasants back to conditions of untrammelled exploitation and servitude. But as we wrote earlier this year, "Acts of militancy on the economic plane are not enough to stop the counterrevolutionary tide. It is necessary for the working class to enter the political plane" ("China on the Brink—Workers Political Revolution or Capitalist Enslavement?" *Spartacist* [English edition] No. 53, Summer 1997). The International Communist League fights to forge the Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party needed to lead the Chinese proletariat in a political revolution to stop capitalist counterrevolution.

### Turmoil in the Heartland

The 1949 Revolution resulted from the victory of Mao's peasant-based guerrilla forces over the brutal Guomindang regime of Chiang Kai-shek. While overthrowing capitalist rule and liberating the country from the tyranny of landlords

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# State Vendetta Against Mumia Ensnarers Son

In a flagrantly vindictive act against a man who has campaigned for his father's freedom, 26-year-old Jamal Hart, son of death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, has been thrown behind bars and faces a mandatory 20-year sentence on bogus weapons possession charges. Jamal Hart is the victim of a transparent frame-up cooked up by the Philadelphia police and taken over by the feds, who are now holding him in a Virginia jail. Jamal's arrest is a continuation of the deadly vendetta against Mumia, who adopted the surname Abu-Jamal—"father of Jamal"—when his son was born. At a court appearance, Hart stressed that his own arrest was carried out "very much with prejudice, because of my background and the individual that I am." Drop all the charges—Free Jamal Hart now!

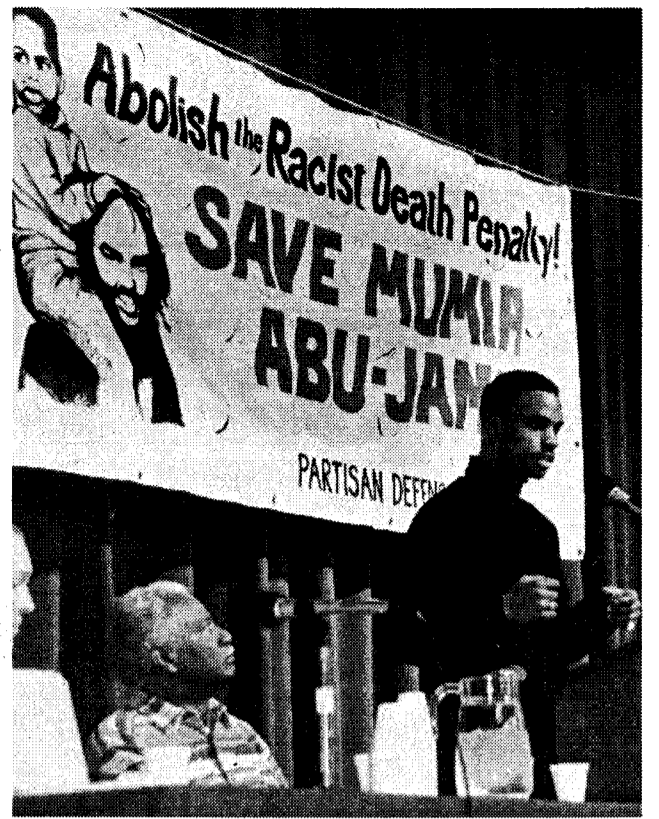
Hart's car was stopped on a Philadelphia street last October after allegedly rolling through a stop sign. During the arrest, the cops put a gun to his head and stomped on him while he was on the ground. The cops claim to have found a Smith and Wesson .357 Magnum handgun in Hart's waistband. The cop who

"found" the gun on Jamal was the same one who took down a report on the theft of this very same gun—three and a half years earlier—from a coffee shop steps away from the scene of Hart's arrest.

A couple of days after being arraigned on state weapons possession charges—which do not even necessarily carry jail time—Jamal was released without bail. The Philly police then provocatively circulated an official flyer looking like a "wanted" poster—with Hart's photo and arrest information—which was clearly aimed at alerting other cops that he was fair game.

When Hart appeared for his trial in a Philadelphia court on January 30, two federal marshals marched in and announced that the case was being taken over by the feds. Under the corresponding federal statute, the same weapons possession charge carries a **mandatory sentence of 20 years**. The feds' move against Hart is but one example of the ominous expansion of federal jurisdiction over a vast array of crimes, almost all of which carry mandatory penalties enormously greater than those specified by

Mumia's son Jamal Hart speaking at 1995 New York City rally initiated by Partisan Defense Committee and hosted by Ossie Davis (seated, left).



WV Photo

corresponding state laws.

Jamal was immediately dragged off to jail, denied bail, and recently transferred to a prison in Virginia. As Mumia wrote in a letter to the PDC: "His transfer represents punishment *before* trial; as his bust itself is punishment for his efforts on behalf of his dad." The Virginia prison has no law library and is far away from Hart's lawyers, investigators and family. His case is coming to trial on October 14 in federal court in Philadelphia.

Even on death row, Mumia Abu-Jamal remains one of Philadelphia's "most

wanted" in the eyes of the cops and their allies. In February 1995, Jamal Hart brought a moving personal voice to the fight for his father's life and freedom when he spoke at a united-front rally initiated by the Partisan Defense Committee in New York City. Jamal Hart told the audience, if we "unite for this cause and many other causes in the future we will open up gateways for all of us." Now we must fight to open the prison gates that have closed behind Jamal Hart as well. Free Jamal Hart! Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the racist death penalty! ■



TROTSKY

## British Labourism, Monarchy and Revolution

*While the pro-capitalist British Labour Party upholds reactionary institutions like the monarchy, Marxists seek to sweep away this anachronism, along with the established church and the House of Lords, as part of the fight against capitalist class rule. To this end, we struggle to win Labour's working-class base to a revolutionary program and party. In a 1925 polemic against the Labour misleaders, Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky*

*emphasized that the British workers must be imbued with an understanding of the traditions embodied in the bourgeois-democratic revolutions of the 17th and 18th centuries and the Chartist working-class movement of the 19th century.*

The French bourgeoisie, distorting the Great Revolution, adopted it and, having reduced it to petty coin, put it into general circulation. The English bourgeoisie has erased even the memory of the revolution of the seventeenth century, and recasts its entire past in the form of "gradual changes." The vanguard of the English workers should discover the British Revolution and should find in it, under its ecclesiastical garment, the powerful conflict of social forces. Cromwell was by no means a "pioneer of labor," but in the drama of the seventeenth century, the English proletariat may find great precedents for revolutionary action. This tradition, which is also "national," is fully justifiable and fully in place in the arsenal of the working class.

The proletariat also has another great tradition in the Chartist movement. An acquaintance with these two epochs is indispensable to every class-conscious English worker. An explanation of the historical thought of the seventeenth century and of the revolutionary content of Chartism is one of the most important tasks devolving upon English Marxists....

If we may resort to a rather farfetched comparison, we might say that the Chartist movement may be compared with the prelude, which gives in undeveloped form the musical themes of the entire work. In this sense, the English working class can and should read in Chartism not only its past, but also its future. Just as the Chartists discarded the sentimental preachers of "moral action," having gathered the masses under the banner of revolution, so the English proletariat will be obliged to cast out from its midst the reformers, democrats, and pacifists, and rally around the flag of a revolutionary action.

—Leon Trotsky, *Where Is Britain Going?* (1925)



LENIN

## WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League of the U.S.

EDITOR: Len Meyers

EDITOR, YOUNG SPARTACUS PAGES: Joe Sol

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CIRCULATION MANAGER: Mindy Sanders

EDITORIAL BOARD: Ray Bishop (managing editor), Bruce André, Helene Brosius, George Foster, Liz Gordon, Frank Hunter, Jane Kerrigan, James Robertson, Joseph Seymour, Alison Spencer

The Spartacist League is the U.S. Section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

*Workers Vanguard* (ISSN 0276-0746) published biweekly, except skipping three alternate issues in June, July and August (beginning with omitting the second issue in June) and with a 3-week interval in December, by the Spartacist Publishing Co., 41 Warren Street, New York, NY 10007. Telephone: (212) 732-7862 (Editorial), (212) 732-7861 (Business). Address all correspondence to: Box 1377, GPO, New York, NY 10116. E-mail address: [vanguard@tiac.net](mailto:vanguard@tiac.net). Domestic subscriptions: \$10.00/22 issues. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Workers Vanguard*, Box 1377, GPO, New York, NY 10116.

Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.

The closing date for news in this issue is September 30.

No. 675

3 October 1997

## Spartacist Events

### BOSTON

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

Monday, October 20, 7 p.m.  
Harvard University  
Room to be announced

*Spartacus Youth Club Class Series*  
Alternate Wednesdays at two locations. Next classes: October 8: **The Origins of Marxism**; October 22: **The Capitalist State and Revolution**. At 2:30 p.m.: UMass-Boston, McCormack Building, Room 1-212. At 7:30 p.m.: Harvard University, call for room information.

Information and readings: (617) 666-9453

### CHICAGO

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

Saturday, October 11, 3 p.m.  
University of Chicago  
Room to be announced

*Spartacus Youth Club Class Series*  
Alternate Saturdays, 2 p.m., Next classes, October 4: **Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism**; October 18: **The Bolshevik Revolution**; 328 South Jefferson, Suite 904

Information and readings: (312) 454-4930

### LOS ANGELES

#### Unchain Labor's Power—Those Who Labor Must Rule!

Saturday, October 11, 4 p.m.  
Mount Hollywood Congregational Church, 4607 Prospect Avenue  
For more information: (213) 380-8239

### OAKLAND

*Spartacus Youth Club Class Series*  
Alternate Tuesdays, 7 p.m. Next class, October 14: **How the Working Class Took Power—The Bolshevik Revolution**; UC Berkeley, 204 Wheeler

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

### NEW YORK CITY

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

Saturday, October 18, 3 p.m.  
New York Law School, Room A700  
47 Worth Street

*Spartacus Youth Club Class Series*  
Alternate Mondays, 7 p.m. Next class, October 6: **The Capitalist State and Revolution**; 41 Warren St. (one block below Chambers St., near Church St.)  
Information and readings: (212) 267-1025

### SAN FRANCISCO

#### Unchain Labor's Power—Those Who Labor Must Rule!

Friday, October 17, 7 p.m.  
The Women's Building, 3543 18th Street (at Valencia, BART stop: 16th and Mission)

*Spartacus Youth Club Class Series*  
Alternate Thursdays, 6 p.m. Next class, October 9: **How the Working Class Took Power—The Bolshevik Revolution**; SFSU Student Union, Room C114

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

### Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste Events

### TORONTO

*Spartacus Youth Club Class Series*  
Alternate Wednesdays, 7 p.m. Next class, October 8: **The State and Imperialism**; International Student Centre, 33 St. George Street  
Information and readings: (416) 593-4138

### VANCOUVER

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

Friday, October 3, 7:30 p.m.  
Britannia Community Centre  
Room L4, 1661 Napier Street

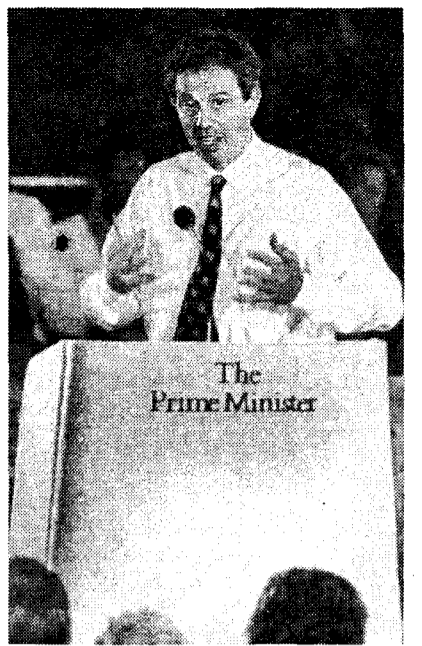
For more information: (604) 687-0353



AP

## Rallying 'Round the Queen

# Blair's Labour Fashions Facelift for British Monarchy



Hodgson/Reuters

LONDON—She was “the people’s princess,” opined Labour Party prime minister Tony Blair after the death of Diana Spencer in a car crash in Paris. Blair and his New Labour Party peddle the obscene myth of a “brave New Britain” in which people are not meant to notice that included in the words of the timeworn hymn “All Things Bright and Beautiful” is the squalid reality of the “rich man in his castle, the poor man at his gate.” The “caring” image of Diana is supposed to obscure the gross social inequality and decrepitude of British capitalism in the New World Order.

From the standpoint of the working class, the death of the “Princess of Wales” was not a tragedy; special interest in the affairs of royalty, which places the life of an aristocrat above that of her chauffeur, betrays something of a servile instinct. The archaic institution of the monarchy should long ago have been consigned to the dustbin of history.

When the British ambassador in Paris announced the death of Diana Spencer, her companion Dodi Al-Fayed, who also died in the crash, was reduced to the status of a nameless manservant: in the eyes of the racist British establishment, even this fabulously wealthy, “nonwhite” Egyptian was not a suitable escort for an English princess. To this day his father, who owns the posh Harrods department store, is denied a British passport.

While huge throngs gathered outside palaces all over London, not everyone bought the hype: TV stations and newspapers got calls and letters objecting to having the Diana saga shoved down their throats morning, noon and night. And amidst the reactionary, oppressive media blitz, we could take some pleasure in the nervous jitters of the establishment, who became fearful that the royal family might be booed at the princess’ funeral. When the funeral cortège arrived in Whitehall, one hapless TV commentator had to hastily correct himself for referring to the execution of Prince Charles instead of King Charles I.

### Labourite Bureaucracy Bows to Queen and City

Diana Spencer came from a previously obscure aristocratic family whose wealth

—described as “astonishing” by the bourgeois press—dates back to the wool trade in the days of early capital accumulation in the 15th century. Diana met the criteria for a suitable partner for the heir apparent: not a commoner and not a Catholic (and not too bright). In his column in the *Nation* (22 September), Alexander Cockburn remarked: “The adoration now poured on her is reminiscent of the groveling of Edmund Burke in 1790 toward that adornment to the feudal corruption of the French Bourbons, Marie Antoinette.”

In the eyes of the establishment, “Princess Di” has proven herself of far more use in death than in life. Support for the monarchy has waned considerably in recent years, as even “respectable” media voices have begun mooting the heretical notion of a republic. At the same time, Britain has seen an accretion of centrifugal forces: the devastation of the country’s industrial areas and the vindictive destruction of mining communities in Scotland, Wales and Yorkshire, particularly under the Conservative Thatcher government; the ever-widening chasm between the yuppie denizens in the southeastern “home counties” centred on the City of London financial district and the masses of unemployed elsewhere; the grinding racism against blacks and Asians. The orchestrated outpouring of grief and the ostentatious pageantry for the dead Diana were intended to “rally the nation” around a common cause.

It was Tony “I prefer monarchy” Blair who stepped into the breach to serve “his” Queen. He was key to urging the royals to get their act together: fly the damned flag outside Buckingham Palace at half-mast and make a credible show of mourning. It was Blair who dubbed Diana the “people’s princess” and braintusted Queen Elizabeth’s reluctant television appearance praising her former daughter-in-law. It was Blair who saw to it that the funeral would be an affair of state and chose a Saturday “so that working people would be free to stand along the streets or watch on television” (*Newsweek*, 15 September). In so doing, Blair proved himself a very good prime minister for the British ruling class.

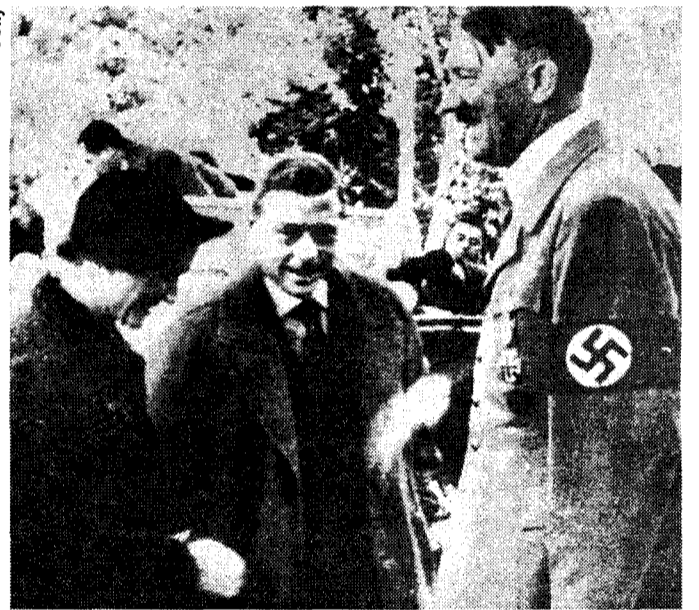
The fake-revolutionary left, ever in Labour’s tow, was swept along, nominal

disclaimers to the contrary notwithstanding. Diana Spencer may have been the girl from the 10,000 acres next door, but for the centrist Workers Power group, “Her depression, bulimia, suicide attempts and ultimately divorce provided a glitzy microcosm of the plight of millions of less wealthy women” (*Workers Power*, September 1997). That (and more) said, Workers Power assured its readers that it would “not be joining in the wave of national mourning” and even vowed to “do everything” to get the monarchy “scrapped forever”—every-

book on *The Royals* by American writer Kitty Kelley has been banned from sale or publication in Britain under the country’s already draconian libel laws.

Not surprisingly, both Workers Power and the CPGB studiously managed to avoid any reference to Blair’s role in propping up the monarchy. Labour ran for office draped in the Union Jack. At the Trades Union Congress (TUC) in Brighton one week after Diana’s demise, the Union Jack flew at half-mast. Delegates were addressed by business chiefs and the Archbishop of Canterbury, head of the

Hulton Getty



Duke and Duchess of Windsor, notorious Nazi sympathizers, greet Adolf Hitler in 1937.

thing, that is, but oppose Blair’s Labour Party at election time.

In the same vein, but even more nauseating, was the so-called Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB), a small group which formerly published the *Leninist*. The CPGB’s *Weekly Worker* (4 September) carried a front-page eulogy by chief spokesman Jack Conrad. While allowing that “even a bourgeois republic is preferable to the anti-democratic monarchy,” Conrad outdid even Blair himself in his treacly musings for the “troublesome princess” who “represented a soul in a soulless world”: “Her brief 36 years epitomise the struggle and fate of the 20th century personality who by chance and/or design has been iconised and thus commodified and sold by the uncontrollable, all pervasive power of capital.”

For our part, we preferred the satirical *Private Eye*’s (5 September) take on the matter:

“In recent weeks (not to mention the last ten years) we at the Daily Gnome, in common with all other newspapers, may have inadvertently conveyed the impression that the late Princess of Wales was in some way a neurotic, irresponsible and manipulative troublemaker....

“We would like to express our sincere and deepest hypocrisy to all our readers on this tragic day and hope and pray that they will carry on buying our paper notwithstanding.”

Underscoring the very real powers of the “figurehead” monarchy, this issue of *Private Eye* was effectively banned under *lèse majesté*—an affront to the crown—removed from sale by a number of large news outlets. The Blair government has seized on the uproar over “paparazzi” to push for further assaults on freedom of the press, while a sensationalist new

established (state) Church of England. The “theme” of the conference: “partnership for progress.” “Partnership” of capital and labour under the bloody flag of British imperialism, blessed by the established church, bowing and scraping to the Crown!

Blair’s programme for “modernising” the monarchy is aimed at providing a facelift for this anachronism in order to salvage it and the “United Kingdom” which it symbolises. The United Kingdom means continued national oppression of the Northern Ireland Catholic population as well as of the Scottish and Welsh peoples. Marxists fight for socialist revolution on both sides of the Irish Sea—For a voluntary federation of workers republics in the British Isles, as part of a Socialist United States of Europe!

The cult of Diana, the “people’s martyr,” can only bolster the reactionary ideology of monarchism transcending the “person” of the monarch. A recent opinion poll found 54 percent in favour of the Prince of Wales standing aside, with Prince William succeeding the Queen. Writer Tom Nairn captures the necrophilic quality of Blair’s “project” when he notes: “‘Modernisation’—the chorus of the salvationists—already means something uncomfortably close to resurrection. The modernisers resemble those who used to throng the death-chamber of an absolute monarch moaning, even after the last breath: ‘He hasn’t really gone!’; ‘God will not let him leave us!’” (Anthony Barnett, *Power and the Throne* [1994]).

The British monarchy is a relic of feudalism, a pre-Enlightenment system of

*continued on page 10*



Der Spiegel

Britain in decay: Liverpool poor pick through garbage dumps.

# Young Spartacus

We print below the third and concluding part of a presentation on the Enlightenment given by Spartacist League Central Committee member Joseph Seymour this summer, as part of a series of internal SL classes on the origins of Marxism which will continue to be serialized in future issues. Part One was published in WV No. 673 (5 September) and Part Two in WV No. 674 (19 September).

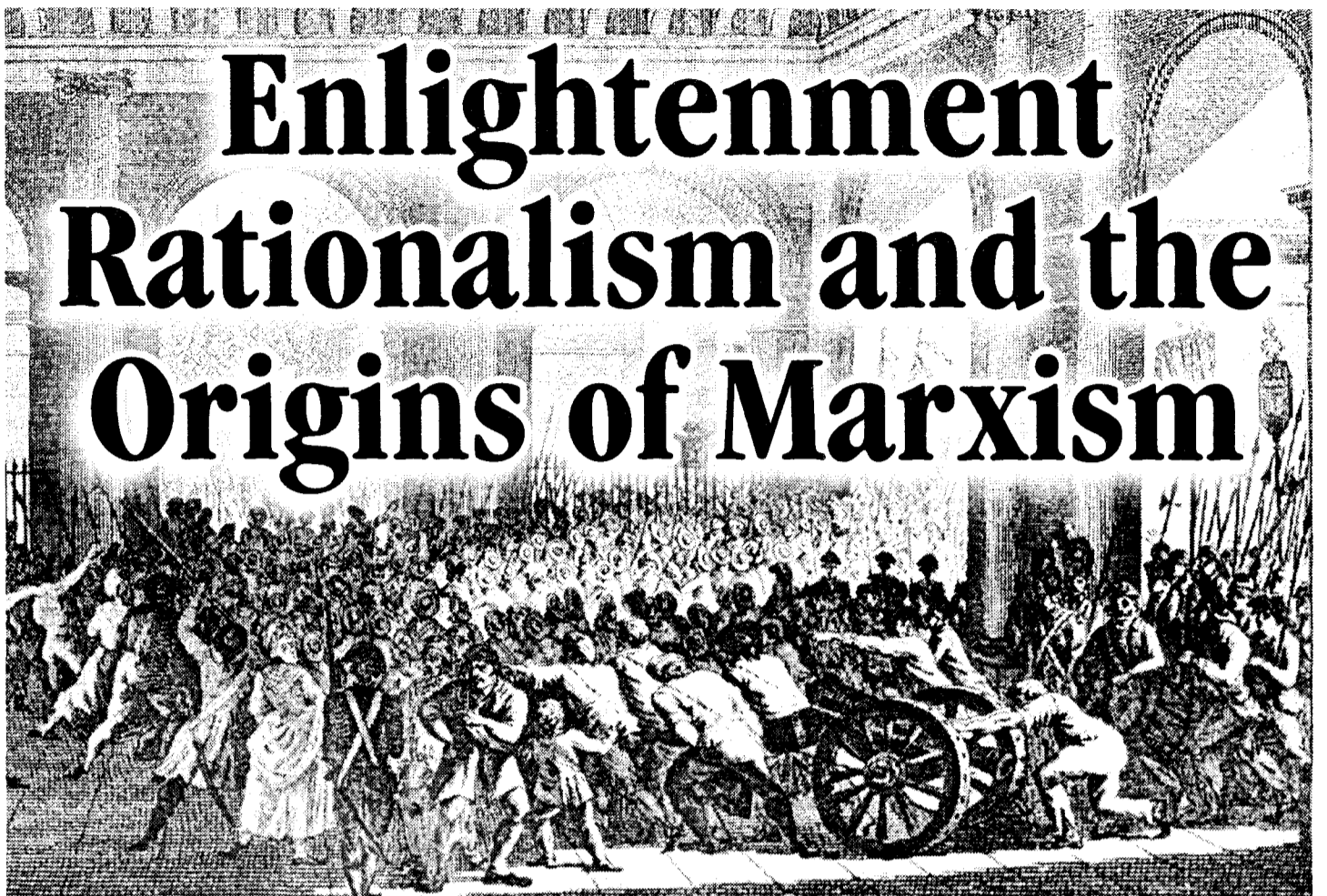
## PART THREE

To understand how the Enlightenment thinkers expected the social and political ideals they advanced to be implemented, we have to turn from political theory, values and ultimate goals to the question of political means—politics in the everyday, conventional sense of the term. First, it is necessary to understand that we are considering an era in which the organization of the lower classes against the existing social and political order was *not* possible. This was true even in relatively liberal England. In France and the rest of Europe under the *anciens régimes* even spontaneous protests such as bread riots were savagely suppressed, with the leaders of such actions being routinely tortured and executed.

Even intellectual dissidence was a risky business. Both Voltaire and Diderot spent some time in prison for their writings, even though they had friends in high places. Some printers of Enlightenment literature, who did not have friends in high places, were “sent to the galleys,” which was considered to be a living death.

We take it for granted that left-wing intellectuals can involve themselves in mass struggles—through trade unions, parties, protest movements of various kinds—against the ruling class. But this possibility—left-wing politics as we know it—was created by the French Revolution and did not exist before then. And what is not possible is often not conceivable either.

But even if the *philosophes* could have organized a political movement of artisans and peasants under the *ancien régime*, they would not have done so. A central premise of Enlightenment rationalism was that support for humane social policies—religious tolerance, abolition of judicial torture and the death penalty, opposition to slavery in the colonies—was based on a scientific understanding of nature. Since the common people were deprived of such an understanding, they could not be expected to support enlightened social policies either. Holbach expressed mainstream Enlightenment opinion in this regard when he wrote: “The people reads no more than it reasons; it has neither the leisure nor



Parisian lower classes, known as *sans-culottes*, invade king's palace, 1792. Revolutionary masses raised banner of “liberty, equality, fraternity.”

the ability to do so.”

Of course, Holbach did not regard the people as inherently incapable of reason. Quite the contrary. He was an early advocate of free, universal public education. He saw the people as the beneficiary of enlightened social policies but not the agency for bringing these policies about. In general, the *philosophes* and their cothinkers elsewhere in Europe shared the conventional upper-class view that the mass of the people were superstitious and under the thumb of the local Catholic priest or Protestant pastor. The movement was marked by a strain of intellectual elitism which would only be eradicated by the French Revolution.

The political strategy of the Enlightenment was thus one of promoting reform from above. This is often described as advocacy of “enlightened despotism,” a doctrine particularly ascribed to Voltaire. I believe this is a distortion or, at any rate, a gross oversimplification. Enlightenment thinkers did not believe in despotism as a positive good, as something to be desired. Rather they believed that there was no alternative to monarchical absolutism in the Europe of their day. Voltaire had always been an admirer of the British system of a constitutional

monarchy with a strong parliament. But he saw no possibility of replicating these institutions in France.

Furthermore, Voltaire and his fellow *philosophes* became increasingly disillusioned with “enlightened despotism,” if one wants to call it that. There was one major figure of this era who did believe in “enlightened despotism,” with the emphasis on the despotism rather than the enlightened. This was Frederick II of Prussia, known to history as Frederick the Great. He fancied himself a patron of the *philosophes* and something of a *philosophe* himself. When Voltaire got in trouble with the French authorities around 1750, Frederick invited him to take refuge in Prussia.

But Voltaire quickly became disillusioned with this so-called “enlightened despotism.” Apart from religious tolerance, conditions in Prussia were every bit as reactionary and repressive as in other European states, if not more so. All economic and social life was organized for one purpose: military conquest. Peasants conscripted into the Prussian army were subjected to savage discipline, sometimes beaten to death. Frederick was more than willing to kill tens of thousands of people—civilians as well as soldiers—to

acquire ever more territory to rule over. Voltaire quipped that while the rest of Europe consisted of states with armies, Prussia was an army with a state. He soon broke with Frederick and left Prussia, explaining in a letter to a French colleague: “There are absolutely no resources here. There are a prodigious number of bayonets and very few books. The king has greatly embellished Sparta, but he has transported Athens only into his study” (quoted in Peter Gay, *Voltaire's Politics: The Poet as Realist* [1959]).

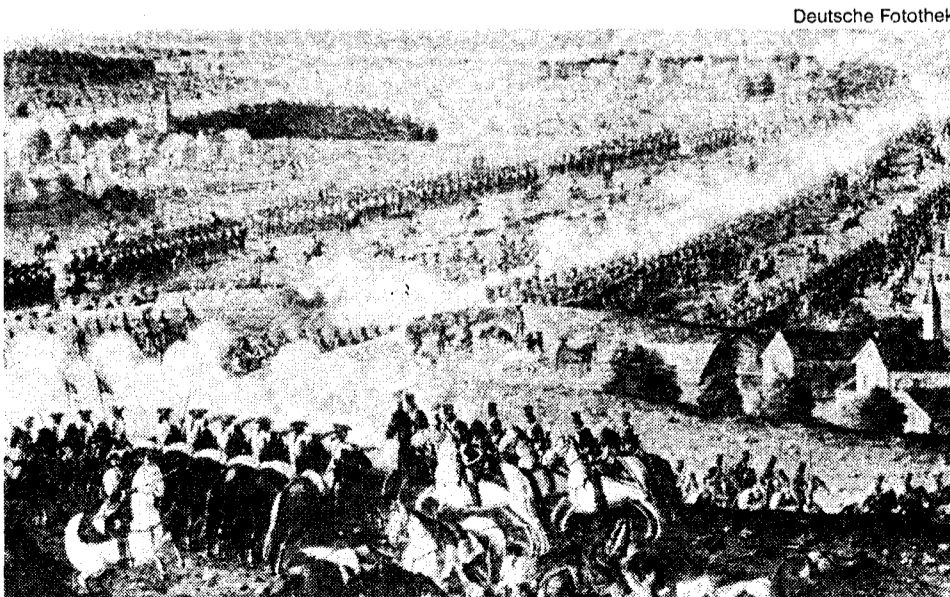
### The Revolutionary Culmination

Even more important in shaping the political evolution of the Enlightenment were developments in France itself. In the 1770s, a *philosophe* of the second rank, Anne-Robert-Jacques Turgot, was appointed comptroller general of France, equivalent to finance minister. He immediately proposed to eliminate the tax exemptions for the nobility and clergy. This provoked a powerful aristocratic reaction and Turgot was dismissed by the king.

The effect on his fellow *philosophes*—the “party of humanity” as they sometimes called themselves—was traumatic. Voltaire, then in his last years, wrote to his colleagues: “The dismissal of this great man crushes me. I have been in a perpetual depression since we were deprived of the protector of the people.” In a less personally anguished way, Holbach also expressed the rather pessimistic attitude of Enlightenment thinkers in the decades immediately before the French Revolution: “The perfecting of politics can only be the slow fruit of the experience of centuries” (quoted in Charles Frankel, *The Faith of Reason* [1948]).

However, the party of humanity had built better than they knew. Enlightened social policies came to France and much of the rest of Europe not through reform from above, as they hoped and expected, but through revolution from below—as they certainly did not expect.

Over the decades, the ideas of the Enlightenment percolated from the literary salons down to the urban lower classes. A key social link between the *philosophes* and the people was provided by skilled artisans, who necessarily were



Voltaire (far left), depicted dining with Prussia's Frederick the Great, later denounced his strident militarism. Above: Prussian army battling Austria during Seven Years War.

Menzel

Deutsche Fotothek



literate, had some knowledge of the sciences and were interested in the latest technological developments. The main collective work of the Enlightenment, the *Encyclopaedia*, edited by Diderot, involved close collaboration between the radical intellectuals and skilled craftsmen. Diderot and his colleagues went around to the foremost artisans and craftsmen in France, interviewed them, had them fill out questionnaires, and on that basis wrote the articles in the *Encyclopaedia* about what were then called the mechanical arts. Diderot explained: "This is a work that cannot be completed except by a society of men of letters and skilled workmen, each working separately on his own part, but all bound together solely by their zeal for the best interests of the human race."

The *Encyclopaedia* and other Enlightenment literature disseminated subversive political ideas as well as technical knowledge. A few years before the storming of the Bastille, a French writer, Restif de la Bretonne—he was a liberal, not a reactionary—complained, "In recent times the working people of the capital have become impossible to deal with, because they have read in our books truths too potent for them" (quoted in Norman Hampson, *The Enlightenment* [1968]).

Most of the radical leaders of the revolution were from the bourgeoisie; typically they were lawyers. A significant exception was Lazare Hoche, a leading general in the revolutionary army, best known for suppressing the Catholic-royalist peasant uprising in the Vendée. As a youth in his teens, Hoche had been a stable boy in the royal palace at Versailles. He later recalled that in his spare time, when not cleaning the stables and grooming the horses, he had read Voltaire and the other *philosophes*. When a stable-boy in the king's stables is reading Voltaire and Diderot, you know that the *ancien régime* is in deep horse manure.

The clearest and strongest proof that the ideas of the Enlightenment had penetrated the masses, centrally the artisan proletariat, was the course of the French Revolution. Within a few years the trinity of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost was displaced in Paris, Marseille and other French cities by the trinity of liberty, equality and fraternity. The revolution produced and was driven forward by a genuinely dialectical interaction between radical intellectuals and the urban working classes, the so-called *sans-culottes*—those who wore loose trousers rather than the tight leggings of the upper classes.

On the one hand, the literature of the Enlightenment legitimized popular hostility toward the old order—the aristocracy, the clergy, the monarchy. Throughout Europe, not only reactionaries but also liberals retrospectively denounced the *philosophes* for inciting the people against their betters. The English liberal historian, Edward Gibbon, who rejected Christianity for himself, criticized the deceased Voltaire for not recognizing "the danger of exposing an old superstition to the contempt of the blind and fanatic multitude."



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**Last of the Enlightenment *philosophes*, Condorcet championed democratic rights for women. Political discussion at militant women's club during French Revolution.**

At the same time, the revolutionary heroism, energy, commitment and idealism of the people propelled the radical intellectuals far to the left. The children of the Enlightenment—Robespierre, Saint-Just, Babeuf—developed an optimistic, aggressive, world-conquering outlook that would have been unthinkable for Voltaire or Rousseau.

### The Impact of the French Revolution

By the time of the revolution, all of the major *philosophes* had left the scene, with the exception of the Marquis de Condorcet. Condorcet had been a protégé of Voltaire. He had edited Voltaire's collected works and written his semi-official biography. But under the impact of the revolution Condorcet moved light years to the left of anything Voltaire had considered remotely possible in France. He became an advocate of a democratic republic based on universal suffrage. And I mean *universal* suffrage not just universal *male* suffrage. He was one of the very few people in France or anywhere else at the time to champion the same political rights for women as for men. To appreciate what this meant, consider that it was not until a century and a quarter after this that women got the vote in the United States or Britain. Condorcet's *Sketch for a Historical Picture of the Human Mind*, written in 1793-94 during the radical climax of the French Revolution, presents a sweepingly optimistic vision of the future beyond Voltaire's wildest imaginings.

There's an interesting book by a modern scholar, Joan-McDonald, about the radical reinterpretation of Rousseau during the revolution. Before the revolution, Rousseau had admirers in all political circles, including right-wing circles. He was not regarded as an advocate of social revolution or even reform; rather he was viewed as a proponent of individual moral regeneration. His message was that members of the educated classes should abandon their luxury-loving, money-grubbing, career-climbing ways and retreat to the countryside to lead a simple and honorable existence like the heroes and heroines of his immensely popular novels.

During the first years of the revolution, all factions claimed the authority of Rousseau. Liberals and even some counterrevolutionaries argued that Rousseau had considered that a democratic republic was not possible in a country like France. It was too big, too diverse, its people too habituated to monarchy over the centuries. McDonald explains how the left responded to this argument:

"Rousseau, it was pointed out, could not possibly have foreseen the great progress of political knowledge and public enlightenment which would take place after his death. The Revolution had rendered his fears groundless, in Fauchet's [a left Rousseauian] view, because in 1789, for the first time, the people were conscious of their rights, and would therefore no longer be the ignorant victims of those who in the past had usurped their sovereignty."

She goes on to explain how Rousseau's ideas were transformed from a doctrine of individual moral regeneration into a doctrine of social revolution:

"The revolutionaries had accepted the view that the regeneration of the individual could be brought about by the regeneration of society; and because it was with the name of Rousseau that the idea of individual moral regeneration had become particularly associated, so, in carrying the idea into the wider sphere of social regeneration, it was with Rousseau's name that the practical devices of the Revolution were associated. Since Rousseau had stated the ends, then the means adopted by the Revolution were also regarded as having been approved by Rousseau."

—Rousseau and the French Revolution, 1762-1791 (1965)

In one of Marx's early writings, he states that the weapons of criticism cannot replace the criticism of weapons. That is, a theoretical denunciation of an unjust social order cannot substitute for the overthrow of that social order by the rev-

olutionary mobilization of the masses. With the French Revolution the Enlightenment was transformed from a weapon of criticism to a criticism of weapons. It ceased to be a movement of an intellectual elite and became the theoretical basis for a revolutionary movement of the exploited classes, centrally the artisan proletariat.

The first attempt in history to establish communism through the insurrectionary overthrow of the bourgeois state by the working class was Babeuf's Conspiracy of Equals in 1796. At his trial, facing a death sentence, he declared:

"The masses can no longer find a way to go on living; they see that they possess nothing and that they suffer under the harsh and flinty oppression of a greedy ruling class. The hour strikes for great and memorable revolutionary events, already foreseen in the writings of the times, when a general overthrow of the system of private property is inevitable, when the revolt of the poor against the rich becomes a necessity that can no longer be postponed."

A very tough and a very great man.

In defending the principles of communism, Babeuf cited and quoted extensively from the writings of Rousseau, Mably and Morrelly—the most left-wing expressions of Enlightenment social and political thought. But the rational humanism of the Enlightenment was an inadequate theoretical basis for the communist movement and proletarian revolution. First, it held that all men of all classes could be won to the communist cause through an understanding of natural law



A. Mondadori

LE COMITÉ INSURRECTEUR DE  
SALUT PUBLIC, AU PEUPLE.

**Acte d'Insurrection.**

ÉGALITÉ, LIBERTÉ,  
BONHEUR COMMUN.

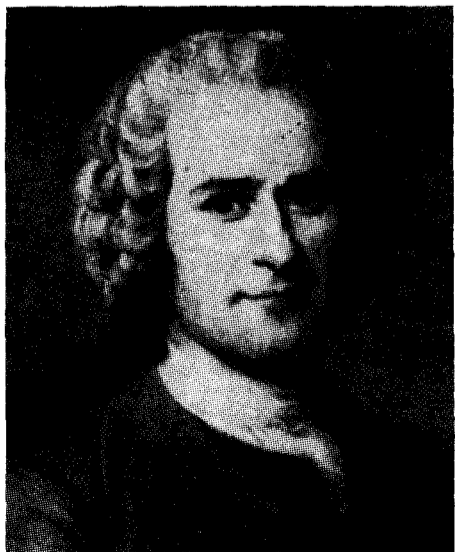
DES Démocrates Français, considérant que l'oppression et la misère du Peuple sont à leur comble, que cet état de tyrannie et de malheur est du fait du gouvernement actuel ;  
Considérant que les nombreux forfaits des gouvernans ont excité contre eux les plaintes journalières et toujours inutiles des gouvernés ;  
Considérant que la constitution du Peuple, jurée en 1793, fut remise par lui sous la garde

**Gracchus Babeuf's Conspiracy of Equals called for insurrection against Thermidorian reaction, 1795.**

and natural rights. Second, it held that communism could be established under any and all conditions if only the people were sufficiently enlightened.

It was Marx who would provide an adequate theoretical basis for communism and proletarian revolution. But to explore this next chapter in our history, we have to take a second trip in our time machine.

[TO BE CONTINUED]



Maurice Quentin de La Tour

Jean-Jacques Rousseau

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Grigory Dukor

Bolshevik poster shows Central Asian woman rejecting the veil as part of the revolution's struggle against religious and social oppression. Today, Boris Yeltsin's counterrevolutionary regime has restored power of Russian Orthodox church.

# Marxism and Religion

Today, especially in the wake of the counterrevolution in the Soviet Union and East Europe, religious obscurantism and mystical superstition are increasing. Religion is also prevalent among youth who are repelled by the horrors of capitalism and racism, many of whom look toward some kind of spiritualism as an answer to "corporate greed" and exploitation. Various so-called Marxist and revolutionary organizations pander to this prevailing social backwardness. For example, the Progressive Labor Party, despite bellowing its mantra of "Communist Revolution," brags that since "many people we want and need in the Party are active in churches," there is a "need for PLP members to be active in churches" (Challenge, 18 June).

In order to win over a new generation to the struggle for socialism, based on a materialist conception of society, socialists must ceaselessly combat religion and other forms of idealism which look toward the supernatural, explaining that freedom from oppression lies in this world, not another. The following, based on a presentation by comrade Alan Wilde to the Los Angeles Spartacus Youth Club, explains the SYCs' approach.

As Marxists we are materialists, dialectical materialists, which therefore means irreconcilable atheists, as the Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky once put it. We need to know religion not only as an academic exercise but to combat it. Lenin, the leader of the 1917 Russian Revolution, wrote:

"The dialectical materialism of Marx and Engels...applies the materialist philosophy to the domain of history.... We must combat religion—that is the ABC of all materialism, and consequently of Marxism. But Marxism is not a materialism which has stopped at the ABC. Marxism goes further. It says: We must know how

to combat religion, and in order to do so we must explain the source of faith and religion among the masses in a materialist way."

—Lenin, "The Attitude of the Workers Party to Religion" (1908)

At one point in history, religion served a particular purpose. As a hunter or gatherer wholly dependent on a cruel and ever-changing nature he couldn't understand, man devised a system of explanations for natural occurrences. This

like philosophers who only sought to interpret the world, Marx and Engels fought to change society. Their perspective for change, socialist revolution, was based entirely on existing social forces.

Marxism as an outlook, a mode of thought and a means of change can be applied to history. Since it is not based on faith, you can scientifically prove Marxism. No philosophy can ever honestly assert this, because they all base themselves on some form of idealist outlook

their religious faith is very important in their lives. A recent study found that almost 45 percent of American college freshmen do not believe in Darwin's theory of evolution (*Scientific American*, October 1997). We live in a period marked by a general absence of social struggle and working-class consciousness, allowing for obscurantism to pose as legitimate. Whatever their entertainment value, television programs like the *X-Files*, *Paranormal News* and *Unsolved Mysteries* propagate mystification and irrationalism. Then there are things like the "Psychic Friends Network" which prey on social backwardness and ignorance. The collapse of Stalinism and the world-historic destruction of the Soviet Union and the East European deformed workers states only helped to expand reactionary obscurantism, both there and here. In St. Petersburg, formerly called Leningrad, the new capitalist rulers closed down a beautiful museum dedicated to materialism and atheism which the Bolsheviks had created in a former church, and replaced it with an Orthodox church (which would-be tsar Boris Yeltsin once again made the effective official church of Russia). Marxism, the only ideology that was consistently both materialist and dialectical had just, according to the bourgeoisie, ultimately failed. In this country, as a *Los Angeles Times* (19 May) editorial noted, "Alien abductions, nightly visitations, spirit channeling, interdimensional travel and psychic ability are just a few of the fringe claims that permeate our media."

The working masses continue to have little control or understanding of the real



Simons/Time



UFO hysteria, religious mysticism flourish in capitalist America.

was the function of spiritualism, mysticism and religion. With the advent of private property and class society, religion, which developed simply to explain what human empirical logic could not, became a means both of oppression and of escape for the oppressed. Noting that "Man makes religion, religion does not make man," Karl Marx explained:

"Religious suffering is at one and the same time the expression of real suffering and a protest against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people.

"The abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of the people is the demand for their real happiness. To call on them to give up their illusions about their condition is to call on them to give up a condition that requires illusions."

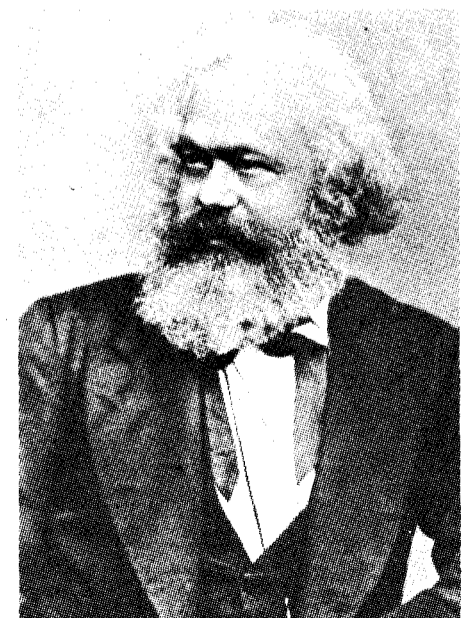
—"Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right" (1844)

Marxism is not one of several competing and potentially equal means to achieve progress. It is the only way to fundamentally change society. Marxism can stake that claim because it bases itself entirely on the material world. Un-

that places mankind's ideas above its environment. For example, as the feudal system collapsed and the bourgeois system was on the rise, the philosophy that aided and explained capitalism's revolutionary development also was formulated by Enlightenment philosophes. An idealist, for example, might argue that these philosophical ideals of the Enlightenment developed the capitalist system of production and distribution; if someone had thought of capitalism two thousand years earlier, we would've had it then. This is how it was taught in a college history course I took a couple of months ago. Marxism, on the other hand, is materialist because it analyzes the world based on the relationship of classes to each other and to the existing means of production. Likewise, with this understanding, Marxists can intervene to change this relationship.

## Religious Mysticism in Capitalist America

According to the *Los Angeles Times* (17 May), 75 percent of Americans believe in angels, and 87 percent said



Mayall

Karl Marx

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conditions that govern their lives, and, in the absence of class struggle and class consciousness, religion serves as a tremendous emotional solace.

Religion is a private matter. As Marxists we oppose all forms of religious persecution and oppression. People should be able to hold their religious faiths without interference from the state, and, likewise, we don't want religion to dictate the policy of the state—Marxists believe in the complete separation of church and state. This is why in 1877 Friedrich Engels, Marx's close collaborator, condemned the German philosopher Eugen Dühring's pseudo-revolutionary proposal that religion should be prohibited in socialist society.

We should not be arrogant toward leftist youth who, despite having good impulses on racism, abortion and gay rights, are caught in a tremendous contradiction between their impulses and their religious beliefs. With the individual cases we will run across in this period of reaction we must be resolute. The odds are currently against us. Unless we win these youth to our *full* program, their contradiction will most likely be resolved in the direction of reaction and obscurantism. Obviously, we don't see the breaking of the working class from the religious hold as a linear process where we convince each person we run across of religion's backwardness. As Lenin wrote, we "understand that only the class struggle of the working masses could, by comprehensively drawing the widest strata of the proletariat into conscious and revolutionary social *practice*, really free the oppressed masses from the yoke of religion."

There might be some usefulness in drawing a comparison between religion and the family. Both are means of oppression and justification for oppression which also serve a social purpose. The family raises a new generation of people, albeit by tremendously oppressing women. In a workers state these services would be taken up by society itself, becoming socialized through communal kitchens, laundry facilities, child care, all at the expense of the state. The family is not "abolished"; it is replaced. We are the only leftist organization today to have published a journal, *Women and Revolution*, dedicated to explaining a Marxist view of the woman question and other social issues.

Likewise, for the oppressed, religion serves as a sort of consolation for material oppression and degradation. It is a world outlook and a philosophy that is directly counterposed to Marxism. However, the workers state cannot simply abolish religion. This would only raise sympathy for and create a reaction in the direction of religion and mysticism. To fight religion, a workers state must create the material conditions to replace it, and



WV Photo  
Spartacist contingent joins in defense of Birmingham, Alabama abortion clinic against religious bigots, 1994.

for it to be rejected by the masses themselves in favor of rationalism, materialism. The religious worldview is replaced with an understanding of how the natural and social world works, and how humans can intervene in it, creating the best possible material conditions for those living on earth, for themselves. The outlook which creates religion is thus not abolished; it is replaced with materialism, Marxism.

### Fight Against Religion

The party must resolutely fight to win youth over to materialism. This is not a question of freedom to believe what one wants, but, as stated earlier, mysticism and Marxism are two counterposed ways not only of looking at the world and studying it, but also of acting upon it. It makes perfect sense that a Marxist party expects that its members embrace a

Marxist worldview, i.e., be materialists, atheists. The Spartacus Youth Clubs do not dilute the party's program of socialist revolution and pursue an unyielding fight with youth over mysticism and religion. As Lenin wrote, Marxists "regard religion as a private matter *in relation to the state*, but not in relation to themselves, not in relation to Marxism, and not in relation to the workers' party."

The Spartacist League's program is concrete on the question of religion: point ten of our organizational rules (see *Marxist Bulletin* No. 9) states, "Substantial material support to cults, religions or comparable fads or proselytizing for them is incompatible with SL membership." As Lenin wrote:

"A Marxist must be a materialist, i.e., an enemy of religion, but a dialectical materialist, i.e., one who treats the struggle against religion not in an abstract way,

not on the basis of remote, purely theoretical, never varying preaching, but in a concrete way, on the basis of the class struggle which is going on *in practice* and is educating the masses more and better than anything else could."

—"The Attitude of the Workers Party to Religion"

That said, in our current period marked by growing religious belief, we only recruit exceptional individuals, and we are not in a position to recruit the masses but only that minority of the working class and oppressed which is class conscious. The question of religion and mysticism comes to the fore, and we must develop a thoughtful approach to winning away radical-minded workers and youth from religion.

We must show concrete examples of the atrocities committed in the name of gods and religions, especially against women—from medieval European witch trials to female genital mutilation, anti-abortion terrorism to the imposition of the veil in Afghanistan and Iran, to gay-bashing to advocacy of slavery. Religious wars, persecution and obscurantist oppression are endemic to *all* religions.

We must also argue effectively against the idealist view of the world in general. It is common to get spiritualists who agree with us completely on the ravages of organized religion, but still believe in magic or "alien abductions." The fight against idealism is especially important for those who reject organized religion only to embrace New Age spiritualism or modern-day witchcraft (or who pick and choose those tenets of religion they want to accept, such as a Catholic who supports abortion and gay rights but still clings to Jesus). We have to prove to them that Marxism is the only way to understand the world and fundamentally change it. We must concretely show how a mystical or moral view of the world is in the end counterposed to workers revolution and socialism.

The struggle against religion is not some academic or philosophical exercise. Most of the people on earth are beholden to some form of religiosity and this works as an obstacle to socialist consciousness. In the end, the question of religion will be worked out in the class struggle itself and through the intervention of the party as the leader of the most advanced section of the proletariat in that struggle. As the class struggle ebbs and flows, though, the revolutionary party must keep its theoretical bearings intact at all times; it must maintain its program. That means we must fight to resolve the contradiction of someone with good impulses on broad social questions who is still seeing the world through the eyes of god. This is the only way to win youth and workers to communism, that is to the struggle for a truly just and free world. ■



Der Spiegel  
Vatican-sponsored Solidarność of Lech Walesa (left) chained Polish workers to Catholic reaction, led capitalist counterrevolution.

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# China...

(continued from page 1)

and imperialist subjugation, the revolution was deformed from its inception. The Chinese workers were bystanders in the revolution, which brought to power a nationalist, anti-working-class bureaucracy falsely claiming to be building "socialism" in a single, very backward country. With the egalitarian pretenses of the Mao years long since discarded, Jiang now resorts to doubletalk about "the primary stage of socialism" to justify the liquidation of the nationalized economy.

While foreign capitalist and domestic "collective" businesses have grown to account for almost two-thirds of China's output since "market reforms" were first implemented almost two decades ago, production and employment in state industry has up to now also continued to grow, although at a much slower pace. Lately, in a tentative and piecemeal way, China's central banks have cut funds to less "profitable" state plants, which have in turn taken to laying off workers, withholding wages and charging for previously free social services. This in turn has sparked a dramatic rise of struggles by workers in the aging state industries concentrated in central and northeastern China.

The year began with a dramatic uprising in the northeastern city of Harbin, when some 3,000 textile workers protested the withholding of four months' pay by occupying train tracks. With rail service paralyzed, local and national CCP leaders quickly reached a settlement with the workers. In March, 20,000 workers at a state textile factory in the town of Nanchong in Sichuan—China's most populous province—laid siege to the city hall and held the plant manager hostage until authorities came up with six months' back wages. Four months later, in the Sichuan city of Mianyang, thousands of workers marched through the streets and built roadblocks to protest managers' embezzlement of unemployment benefits after three silk and textile plants closed. Some 80 workers were reportedly arrested and 100 injured after clashes with the People's Armed Police, a force created in the mid-1980s specifically to control mounting urban unrest.

Strikes and social protests have continued to mount. Many of these have been directed against the flagrant corruption of local officials. While news of social turmoil is slow to leak out, in the month of September alone there were reports of a demonstration by angry workers in Sichuan trying to eke out a living after being forced into early retirement and a mass protest in Guangdong province—against the regime's draconian "one-child" policy—which was put down by 1,000 troops and paramilitary forces. Social tensions have also been stoked by widening income disparities between centers of economic expansion along the eastern coastal areas and the rest of the country.

The bureaucracy has tried to keep an iron grip on society as it plunges ever deeper into the "free market." Last year,

over 6,000 people were condemned to death, some for crimes as petty as stealing chickens. The barbaric death penalty is part of the bureaucratic arsenal of terror designed to keep the working people and impoverished peasantry in line.

The brittle bureaucratic caste is well aware that it is sitting on a social powder keg. While unemployment officially stands at 3 percent, this figure is not believed by anyone. The mainland Chinese magazine *Outlook* reports that the urban jobless rate is 7.5 percent while "China's rural areas have about 175 million surplus laborers, representing an unemployment rate of 34.8%" (*Asian Wall Street Journal*, 5 August). Much of this enormous "surplus" workforce, which was spawned by the destruction of collectivized agriculture in the early

of social protest. Many "princelings"—including Deng's son-in-law, head of the mammoth Poly Group conglomerate—were kept off the new Central Committee. And shortly before the congress, the government announced that a former Beijing party chief and Political Bureau member would face trial and possible execution on corruption charges. A well-connected Chinese writer observed: "The leadership was very nervous people would take to the streets with anti-corruption slogans" (*South China Morning Post*, 11 September).

At the same time, the CCP leadership signaled it would brook no loosening of political controls. Several open letters, including one ostensibly written by former premier Zhao Ziyang—who lost his position for opposing the 1989

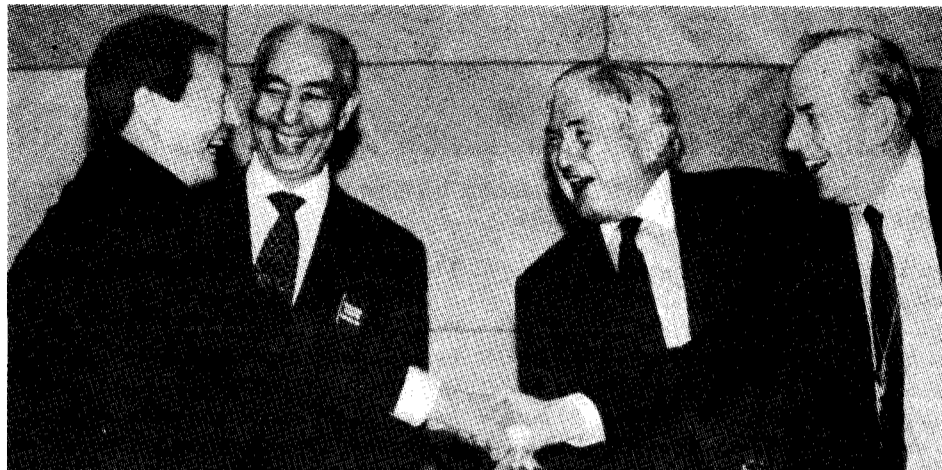
tive hierarchy, independently of any special property relations of its own. The individual bureaucrat cannot transmit to his heirs his rights in the exploitation of the state apparatus.... Its appropriation of a vast share of the national income has the character of social parasitism. All this makes the position of the commanding Soviet stratum in the highest degree contradictory, equivocal and undignified, notwithstanding the completeness of its power and the smoke screen of flattery that conceals it."

Capitalist restoration in China would require the consolidation of a *new, counterrevolutionary state apparatus*, with an attendant legal system codifying private ownership of the means of production. This would necessarily be a bloody process that would throw China into chaos, very possibly including the breakup of the country into regional fiefdoms. It would also turn China into an arena of hot imperialist competition. Moreover, unlike the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, in which the Russian bourgeoisie was destroyed as a class, the Chinese capitalists were able to flee the mainland in the late 1940s, keeping their cohesion as a class. Thus, the Chinese masses now face a powerful predator in the offshore Chinese bourgeoisie.

## For a Leninist-Trotskyist Party!

To forge an internationalist, egalitarian-communist party in China requires a political struggle not only against the Stalinist misleaders but also against those who would lead the workers into the camp of "democratic" counterrevolution. Some Tiananmen-era dissidents have been engaged in efforts to organize trade unions opposed to the regime's All-China Federation of Trade Unions. Such activists can be very heroic, going up against capitalist entrepreneurs and their Stalinist police protectors. However, Marxists warn against any ties to pro-capitalist "dissidents" such as Tiananmen veteran Han Dongfang. Han regularly appeals to the U.S.-sponsored International Confederation of Free Trade Unions—which originated in the Cold War against the Soviet Union—for action against the Chinese regime, while his Hong Kong-based *China Labor Bulletin* (January 1997) baldly admits that its chief editor had been featured on the U.S. imperialists' *Voice of America* and *Radio Free Asia*.

Such appeals for (bourgeois) "democracy" are echoed and embraced by various "socialist" groups in the West. The most brazen of these is the tendency led by Tony Cliff's British Socialist Workers Party, including the U.S. International Socialist Organization. Ever since Cliff's expulsion from the Trotskyist Fourth International in 1950 for refusing to defend China and North Korea during the Korean War, the hallmark of this group has been tailing after "democratic" imperialism. This has included cheering such thoroughly *anti-democratic* and flagrantly reactionary forces as Lech Walesa's Vatican-sponsored Solidarność in Poland and the anti-woman *mujahedin* cutthroats in Afghanistan. More recently, Cliff's outfit sided with the political heirs of Guomindang butcher Chiang Kai-shek, who run the brutal capitalist Taiwan regime. As U.S. warships plied the Taiwan Strait last year in a provocation against Beijing, the Cliffites proclaimed that "China's claim to Taiwan is a colonialist one. We would oppose any Chinese invasion of Taiwan



Chinese finance minister and vice premier Zhu Rongji welcomed at World Bank/IMF meeting in Hong Kong, September 22.

1980s, roams the townships and cities in search of work, often leading to bitter conflicts with longtime city residents.

Labor costs are so low in China that many capitalists now prefer to invest there than in bourgeois countries in the region. This has been a factor in the currency crisis now wracking Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia. At the same time, as China becomes increasingly integrated into the Southeast Asian economies dominated by the offshore Chinese bourgeoisie—the source of most of China's foreign investment—such events could have a major effect on the mainland economy itself. This only serves to underscore the need for an internationalist perspective, linking the fight of the Chinese masses against capitalist counterrevolution to class struggles throughout East and Southeast Asia, particularly reaching out to the proletariat of Japan, the industrial powerhouse of the region.

## Chinese Stalinists Prepare Final Sell-Out

The question is whether the Beijing regime can enforce mass layoffs and cutbacks on a working class which has been taught that the revolution was made for the benefit of "the people." The Stalinist bureaucracy lives in mortal fear of the spectre of the Tiananmen uprising. Popular discontent in 1989 was largely fueled by rising inflation and the flagrant, filthy corruption of the officialdom. With anger over corruption and economic insecurity growing once again, the bureaucracy is ever-mindful to ward off any possibility

crackdown—called on the congress to "revise" the party's depiction of the Tiananmen student protests as an attempt to overthrow CCP rule. All these petitions were dismissed out of hand, and the congress purged former intelligence chief and Politburo member Qiao Shi, who also called for a softer line toward the Tiananmen events. Such calls do not necessarily come from the left. They are often linked to demands for "free elections" and the "rule of law," echoing the imperialist spokesmen who insist that moves toward capitalism must be consolidated through the establishment of a bourgeois regime.

For all of its ostentatious corruption and evident identification with rich investors, the Stalinist bureaucracy remains a brittle caste which continues to rest on the economic foundation, however attenuated, of the deformed workers state. Beijing has time and again announced capitalist measures only to back off in the face of threatened social unrest. The government first announced it would "smash the iron rice bowl" in 1987. Yet it took almost ten years before any serious effort to cut back the labor force in state plants was begun.

The CCP bureaucracy hopes to transform itself into a new exploiting class through a "cold" transition to fully fledged capitalism. They have certainly gone a long way down this road, much further than the Soviet Stalinist regime had before its downfall. Yet despite differences of degree, what Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky wrote in his definitive 1936 work analyzing the Stalin regime, *The Revolution Betrayed*, holds true in its essentials for the Chinese bureaucracy today:

"It is recruited, supplemented and renewed in the manner of an administra-

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(English Edition)

No. 53  
Summer 1997  
(56 pages)

\$1.50

Spartacist is sent to all WV subscribers.

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NUMBER 53      ENGLISH EDITION      SUMMER 1997

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**SPARTACIST**

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**斯巴达克同盟  
原则宣言**

**Declaration of Principles  
of the Spartacist League**

**国际共产主义同盟(第四国际主义者)  
International Communist League  
(Fourth Internationalist)**

110-8951 1381 148 152 162 174 185 191 200 205 210 215 220 225 230 235 240 245 250 255 260 265 270 275 280 285 290 295 300 305 310 315 320 325 330 335 340 345 350 355 360 365 370 375 380 385 390 395 400 405 410 415 420 425 430 435 440 445 450 455 460 465 470 475 480 485 490 495 500



as an act of imperialist aggression" (*Socialist Review*, April 1996).

In a lengthy article on "China: from Mao to Deng" (*International Socialist Review*, Summer 1997), ISO leader Ahmed Shawki dismisses China as a "state capitalist" society which has "nothing to do with socialism" and makes not one mention of the gains of the 1949 Revolution. Even the bourgeois *Los Angeles Times* (10 August), in an article headlined "How China Beat India in Race for Success," acknowledges that "particularly in the early stages of Communist rule, in the 1950s, the country benefited from the land redistribution, introduction of compulsory universal education, adoption of simplified Chinese characters that led to greater literacy, and the introduction of health and welfare policies and other reforms."

The Cliffites' "theory" of state capitalism—which is counterposed to any Marxist analysis of capitalism—is simply a fig leaf for virulent anti-Communism. Nobody, but nobody—from bourgeois Western ideologues to hard-pressed Russian workers—would buy the Cliffites' idiotic view that the counterrevolution in the USSR in the early 1990s simply involved a shift from one form of capitalism to another. Expropriation of the bourgeoisie and creation of a planned economy is the prerequisite for any development toward an international, classless socialist society. It was on the basis of China's planned economy that workers, peasants, women and national/ethnic minorities made huge strides forward. Trotskyists call for unconditional military defense of the Chinese deformed workers state against imperialism and counterrevolution. Political revolution is premised on the need to defend the socialized property forms through overthrowing the nationalist bureaucracy which acts as a parasite on the planned economy and today prepares to bury it for good.

Two Hong Kong organizations more or less closely associated with the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat (USec) of the late Ernest Mandel—the *October Review* group and the Pioneers—share the Cliffites' affinity for "democratic"

Rural laborers outside Guangzhou (Canton) rail station, part of massive unemployed population created by "market reforms."



counterrevolution. In separate statements on the reversion of Hong Kong to Chinese rule, both groups bemoaned Beijing's threat to the thin veneer of "democratic" trappings installed by the last colonial administration while not once calling for opposition to the growing threat of capitalist counterrevolution in China.

Striking a pose to the left of such overt social democrats is the British Workers Power (WP) group and its League for a Revolutionary Communist International (LRCI). Workers Power is an object lesson in Trotsky's description of centrism as "crystallized confusion." In its *Trotskyist International* (July-December 1997), the LRCI calls for "the Trotskyist programme of proletarian political revolution as the only alternative to capitalist social counter-revolution." Yet another article in the very same issue insists that "in China, as in Eastern Europe, there are no grounds for expecting workers to mobilise in defence of what remains of post-capitalist property relations!"

What forces, then, are going to make a proletarian political revolution?! Behind WP's Trotskyist verbiage is a deep-seated affinity for social-democratic Labourism. These centrists cannot conceive of break-

ing the proletariat from its existing consciousness and winning workers to the cause of revolution. Thus, for Workers Power the call for political revolution has simply been a cover for tailing whatever reactionary force it deemed to be a "lesser evil" to Stalinism. In Poland in 1981, WP supported Solidarność even while admitting that this CIA-backed movement stood for capitalist restoration. Likewise, Workers Power called for a "united front" with Boris Yeltsin as he headed the forces of counterrevolution in the USSR in August 1991.

In sharp contrast, the International Communist League has fought tooth and nail against capitalist counterrevolution. At the time of the Walesa/CIA/Vatican power bid in Poland in late 1981, we raised the call: Stop Solidarność counter-revolution! In 1989, we mobilized all the resources of our international organization to intervene in the turbulent events in East Germany in opposition to capitalist reunification and for a "red Germany of workers councils," calling for political revolution in the East and socialist revolution in the West. And immediately after Yeltsin's power grab in Moscow in August 1991, the ICL distributed tens of thousands of leaflets in Russian calling

on Soviet workers to "Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!"

If Chinese working people are not to suffer the devastation and bloodletting experienced by the masses of East Europe and the former Soviet Union, they must be won to the authentic communism of Lenin and Trotsky. The Stalinists' rush to open the road to full-scale capitalist restoration makes ever more urgent the need to forge a Trotskyist party to lead the workers and peasants in struggle. As we wrote in *Spartacist*:

"The program of political revolution is needed in China today if the workers and impoverished peasant masses are to emerge victorious in the class battles that lie ahead. As part of our fight to reforge Trotsky's Fourth International, the International Communist League seeks to build an egalitarian-communist party based on the program of Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks and the early Chinese Communist Party. Such a party would link the struggle against the corrupt Stalinist bureaucracy in China with the class struggles of the militant Indonesian and South Korean workers against their capitalist rulers, and with those in the imperialist centers such as Japan. Only through extending socialist revolution to these countries will the threat of capitalist re-enslavement be eliminated once and for all and the basis laid for the development of China in a socialist Asia." ■

## NYC Elections...

(continued from page 12)

even among the besieged minority masses for any of the Democratic candidates, including Sharpton, who is widely recognized as a cynical hustler. Meanwhile, even black Democrats like Congressmen Floyd Flake and Ed Towns have come out for Giuliani, who is considered a shoo-in in November.

For all his bluster, Sharpton's politics are virtually indistinguishable from Messinger's on all issues. On the question of cop terror, this was captured in a *New York Times* (7 September) summary of the candidates' positions: Messinger "would put more officers on police patrol," Sharpton "opposes reduction in size of police force." Sharpton's chief demand has been the call for a stronger and more "independent" civilian police review board, a call echoed by Messinger—and fake leftists like the Workers World Party, which openly supports Sharpton.

The purpose of such review boards is not to stop cop terror but to whitewash it, to make the machinery of capitalist state repression more efficient by occasionally disciplining a "rogue" cop in order to restore some credibility to the police. In stressing these points at a September 5 New York City Spartacist League forum, SL spokesman Bruce André described the fraud of the NYC review board:

"Fewer than one-third of complaints of police brutality are even investigated by the Civilian Complaint Review Board. Of these, fewer than 10 percent are validated and turned over to the police commissioner for action. But the police

commissioner only acts on fewer than 20 percent of the cases turned over to him. And the cops are found guilty of 'misconduct' in fewer than 10 percent of those cases that go to administrative trial. So if you do the arithmetic, that means that one cop gets disciplined for every 1,500 formal complaints of police brutality in this city. And all he gets is a slap on the wrist."

The cops are the armed thugs of the capitalist class. Their job is to protect the masters of Wall Street against those whom they exploit and oppress. The police cannot be "reformed" but must be swept away by a socialist revolution which smashes the capitalist state and expropriates the bourgeoisie.

It is a measure of the level of frustration and despair among black and Hispanic working people that someone like

Sharpton can get away with posing as a champion of the oppressed. Sharpton has a well-documented history of inciting ethnic and racial divisions, of fomenting the racist "war on drugs" and of working directly with the forces of racist repression (see "The Case of Al Sharpton, FBI Fink," WV No. 488, 9 September 1988). In the 1980s, Sharpton colluded with the FBI and the notorious NYPD "Black Desk" as they carried out surveillance and arrests of black militants. He wore a concealed microphone, accompanied "wired" undercover agents to meetings with people the feds were trying to entrap, and allowed the feds to install a tap on his own phone. He was literally working for Giuliani, then a federal prosecutor. Sharpton also backed Republican Senator Alfonse D'Amato for re-

election in 1986, even as that racist bigot was describing blacks living in housing projects as "animals."

Today, Sharpton has cleaned up his act as he seeks the "respectability" of mainstream Democratic Party bourgeois politics. But he made his mark in vile campaigns against Koreans, Arabs and other ethnic minorities. In 1986, he tried to whip up a pogromist backlash against Arab shopkeepers in Harlem for supposedly selling drug paraphernalia. And only two years ago, Sharpton was in the thick of an anti-Semitic campaign to drive a Jewish-owned shoe store out of Harlem.

Such bigoted actions are directly counterposed to the kind of class unity across racial and ethnic lines needed to fight back against the racist capitalist rulers. That a demagogue like Sharpton can get a hearing at all among NYC minorities speaks to the utter bankruptcy of the labor misleaders, who turn a blind eye to rampant racism, cop terror and attacks on their own unions. Far from fighting the imposition of slave-labor "workfare" schemes, which have forced welfare recipients to fill more than 20,000 formerly unionized municipal jobs, the union tops have enlisted as overseers on Giuliani's plantation. We call for equal pay for equal work and for jobs for all at full union wages!

It is necessary to mobilize the multiracial working class to take up the cause of all the oppressed. This requires a political struggle against the pro-capitalist labor misleaders and a fight to break working people and minorities from the partner parties of capitalism. The Spartacist League fights to forge a revolutionary workers party to lead the socialist revolution necessary to overthrow this system of unemployment, degradation and racist terror. ■



Protesters at demonstration outside Brooklyn D.A.'s office in July carry pictures of victims of police killings.

# Monarchy...

(continued from page 3)

unabashed class privilege and social deference based on land-holding, at the apex of which was the head, anointed by god, which wore the crown: the king, lord of every man. The "common touch" always had its place in the alchemy of monarchy: "Lady Di" reaching out to touch the sick harks back to the veneration of the monarch's touch as the cure for scrofula, once known as the "king's evil." "Faith, hope and charity"—the beneficence of the rich to the poor, whose place was to remain poor. And "charity" is what the dispossessed must suffer today in the face of attacks on social welfare and the very idea of social provision.

Today's capitalist society, based on the exploitation of industrial wage labour, was itself born of the revolutionary overthrow of the feudal order, which in 17th-century England ended with the public beheading of King Charles I in front of the banquet hall of his own palace, an object lesson in democracy that was repeated in the Great French Revolution of 1789. But once the rising merchant-capitalist interest in the state was secured against the return of the "old regime," the monarchy was restored in form to exorcise the many-headed spectre of revolt from "below"; the body of the bourgeois revolutionary Oliver Cromwell was exhumed, decapitated and his head fixed on a pike as a "traitor."

The original "people's martyr" was Charles I himself, who died in defence of "Merrie England." In place of schism, revolution and civil war the monarchy was, and is, meant to represent continuity with the past, gradualness, tradition—to legitimise and to *obscure* the specifically *capitalist* character of this society and its state machine. "Above all things our royalty is revered," prescribed historian Walter Bagehot in the middle of the last century: "Its mystery is its life. We must not let in daylight upon magic." Hence the "Mother of Parliaments" sits in the royal palace of Westminster and the prime minister is a minister of the Crown. His official residence—with a "civilian" policeman at the front and the Queen's Guards at the rear—is in Downing Street, which was named after a notorious parliamentary turncoat in the court of King Charles II.

In the "United Kingdom" there are no citizens, only "subjects," and treason to the Crown remains a capital offence despite the abolition of the death penalty. Under the 1361 Treason Act, "adultery" involving the wife of the Prince of Wales is punishable by death.

## From Cromwell's Roundheads to Lenin's Bolsheviks

Monarchism is opposed not merely to the socialist revolution of the working class but is a retrogression from the

rationalism of the bourgeois Enlightenment. From Cromwell's Roundheads to Robespierre's Jacobins to Lenin's Bolsheviks, it was the revolutionary regicides who represented advancement for humanity. Marxism embodies the principles of scientific rationality as the basis for liberating mankind from all forms of social oppression.

Leon Trotsky once described Lenin, leader of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, as the "proletarian twentieth-century Cromwell." Trotsky went on to explain



Samuel Cooper

**Spartacists at 1980 NYC protest against Prince Philip visit. Charles I was beheaded by Oliver Cromwell (above), called the "great revolutionary of his time" by Leon Trotsky.**

that from Cromwell, the "great revolutionary of his time," British workers would learn "incomparably more" than from all the conciliationist Labour leaders: "The dead lion of the seventeenth century is in this sense immeasurably greater than many living dogs." By the "many living dogs," Trotsky meant those Labour "leaders" who "dare not refuse pocket money to the Prince of Wales" (*Where Is Britain Going?* [1925]).

Today's Labour leadership under Blair differs only in that it has graduated to the post of chief adviser to the Prince of Wales, while seeking to break even the most attenuated organisational connection to the trade unions. But there is nothing new about the Blairites' royal bootlicking. During World War I, Labour Party leader Arthur Henderson was a member of the King's "advisory" Privy Council when the British government ordered the state murder of James Connolly after the failed 1916 Irish Republican Easter Rising in Dublin. Ramsay MacDonald, who in 1924 became the first Labour prime minister, accepted an invitation to the royal court bedecked in the blue and gold-braid costume of the peerage. More recently, the snivelling former Labour deputy leader, Roy Hattersley, earnestly replied when offered a post in some minor ministry, "Does this mean I get into the Privy Council?"

While posturing as a "socialist alternative" to Blair—whose election it nonetheless supported—Tony Cliff's Socialist Workers Party (SWP, big brother of the U.S. International Socialist Organization) is firmly embedded in the syphilitic chain of Labourism. At the time of the 1977 Silver Jubilee, a carnival of reaction celebrating Queen Elizabeth's 1952 coronation, the SWP called for organising "red" jubilee celebrations so workers could "add to the fun." At least then the Cliffites said "Stuff the Jubilee—Roll on



WV Photo

the Red Republic."

Today, even such pseudoradical *verbiage* is off the agenda, as the SWP joins with the imperialist bourgeoisie in wallowing in the supposed "death of communism." Under the respectful headline, "A Death Is Used for Cynical Ends," *Socialist Worker* (6 September) moans about "an attempt to rehabilitate the battered institution of the royal family," but complains only about Diana's "life of privilege" and the "cost" of the royals. Meanwhile the SWP "lobbies" the capitalist government administered by Blair's Labour Party to "Tax the rich" and "Scrap the Royal Yacht."

It is not its extravagant cost, in and of itself, that makes the monarchy reactionary; the function of the money is to flamboyantly assert social privilege, to loudly proclaim that there is an unequal social place for everyone and that this is historical and inevitable. For the bourgeoisie, the cost of maintaining its sacred cows is quite cheap at the price. More fundamentally, the institution of the monarchy is a constant anti-democratic outrage and potential focus for reaction. In *Where Is Britain Going?* Trotsky tore apart the arguments of Labourite politicians that the royal power was inconsequential since it did not "interfere" in the country's affairs and was at any rate cheaper than electing a president as head of state. The revolutionary leader explained:

"Royalty is weak as long as the bourgeois parliament is the instrument of bourgeois rule and as long as the bourgeoisie has no need of extra-parliamentary methods. But the bourgeoisie can if necessary use royalty as the focus of all extra-parliamentary, i.e., *real* forces directed against the working class."

It is to the Queen, not Parliament, that the British officer corps swears allegiance. In a crisis situation it is quite conceivable that a right-wing bonapartist coup attempting to restabilise the bourgeois order would seek out the monarchy as a buttress to reactionary mobilisation, and as a sign of "legality" and legitimacy against a weak bourgeois-democratic Parliament. The "private" Council of the Queen is the government-in-waiting of a possible future bonapartism. In 1975, Gough Whitlam's Australian Labor Party government, despite holding a parliamentary majority, was dismissed by Governor-General John Kerr, the Queen's personal representative, using the supposedly moribund "reserve powers of the Crown." Kerr exercised the "royal prerogative" against a government that was the object of a concerted CIA destabilisation campaign.

The late, unlamented Duke of Windsor, the once-king Edward VIII, and his would-be Queen Wallis were notoriously pro-Hitler and conspired with the Nazis to head a quisling government in England after the fall of France in 1940. Labour loyally supported "democratic" British imperialism—and its colonial empire—during the inter-imperialist conflict. The 1945 Labour government of Clement Attlee and Aneurin Bevan, today regarded by much of the left as the "socialist" pinnacle of "old" Labour, then went to extraordinary lengths to shield the Nazi-loving Duke and the rest of the "royal family" in the "national interest" while overseeing sinister "rat line" schemes that saved thousands of Nazi war criminals for use against the Soviet Union.

It took a revolution, culminating in the workers' seizure of power under Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks, to sweep away the Russian tsarist autocracy headed by Nicholas II, a relative of the British royal family. Like their latter-day British Labourite cousins, the Mensheviks served to prop up the old order to the very end. Writing after the Labour/TUC misleaders betrayed the 1926 general strike, Trotsky described the Labourite officialdom as the "backbone" of British imperialism: "If there were not a bureaucracy of the trade unions, then the police, the army, the courts, the lords, the monarchy would appear before the proletarian masses as nothing but pitiful ridiculous playthings" ("The Errors in Principle of Syndicalism," November-December 1929).

The Spartacist League/Britain fights to build a revolutionary workers party, forged through splitting Labour's working-class base from its thoroughly pro-capitalist, and pro-monarchist, leaders. We uphold the authentic, militant traditions of the working class—not the disgusting parliamentary sycophancy of the Labour Party, but the revolutionary red republicanism of the Chartists of the mid-19th century. We call for abolition of the anachronisms of the monarchy, the established churches and the House of Lords, leading—as the relationship of forces permits—to confrontations over the institution of the House of Commons and the City of London financiers and capitalists it represents. What is needed is a sweeping social revolution culminating with the workers in power, opening a new line of historical development. ■

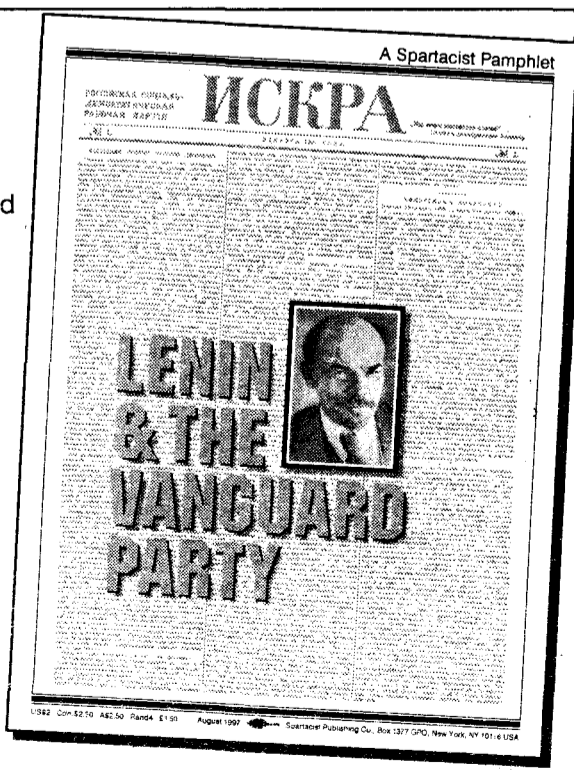
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## WORKERS HAMMER

SWP says: pressurise capitalist government  
**Labour turns the screw on the working class**

The working class needs a revolutionary party!



# Anti-Labor Attacks...

(continued from page 12)

Hatch launched Senate committee hearings on a proposed "Freedom from Union Violence Act." This strikebreaking measure would literally make defense of picket lines a federal offense, bringing such cases under the purview of the FBI and opening up entire unions as well as individual strikers to federal prosecution. Strikes cannot be won without the ability to build picket lines that mean "Don't cross!"

The *Wall Street Journal* has been fervently lobbying for the bill with a series of weepy accounts of scabs who were taught a lesson for trying to cross picket lines. One particularly scurrilous editorial was titled "Brother Acuna" (15 September). Jesse Acuna spent over two years behind bars for defending his picket line outside a Pico Rivera, California freight company during the 1994 national truckers strike. That strike was marked by vicious assaults by cops, including deadly SWAT teams, on the picket lines. Acuna was arrested and charged with attempted murder after a scab driving a double trailer had tried to run down Acuna and other Teamster pickets.

Now the rabid union-haters at the *Wall Street Journal*, who want to see many more union officials and militants like Jesse Acuna behind bars, try to paint this courageous working-class militant as a crazed would-be killer while denouncing Carey for a miserable \$100 contribution to Acuna's legal defense. *Workers Vanguard* helped publicize his case, and the Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee called for all of labor to rally to Acuna's defense.

Also last month, a federal appeals court in Ohio ruled that "union shop" clauses in labor contracts—whereby workers must join a union after being hired—are "invalid" (*Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 11 September). The intent of this decision is to roll the clock back to the "right to work" days when workers had no right to organize. If accepted as a precedent nationally, it would effectively turn the whole country into an "open shop" area like the South, where employers, cops and KKK race-terrorists combine to intimidate workers who seek to join or organize unions.

Yet the proceedings at last week's AFL-CIO convention gave little sense that labor is facing a crescendo of ruling-class attacks. The union bureaucrats are silent about anti-union attacks because they themselves are against real picket lines, instead pursuing a class-collaborationist program of pressuring the Democratic Party. In the recent Teamsters strike, picket captains prevented strikers from stopping scab trucks, either at the gates or on the streets.

At the convention, AFL-CIO head John Sweeney, Carey and the rest were busy welcoming the feds to snoop into union affairs and concocting new approaches for financing the capitalist political parties, while providing a platform for Democrats Clinton and Gore. Underscoring the bureaucracy's ties to the capitalist class, the focus of the convention—directed against the imperialist chief's



Martelli/Boston Herald

**Police SWAT team attacks North Reading, Massachusetts picket line during 1994 Teamsters strike.**

"fast track" proposal for new trade agreements—was a chauvinist crusade for "American jobs" and American industry, scapegoating workers in other countries for unemployment here.

As we wrote in a *WV* supplement on the lessons of the UPS strike, "The union bureaucracy sees 'allies' in the agencies of the class enemy—the government, the cops, the courts. This class collaborationism stands behind the series of broken strikes and broken unions that have racked the organized labor movement" ("Unchain Labor's Power!" *WV* No. 673, 5 September). The latest events underscore the need for a political struggle against the pro-capitalist union tops as part of the fight to forge a revolutionary workers party.

## Reformists and Bureaucrats

Only those dazzled by the "democratic" credentials of this capitalist government could fail to see that the purpose of state intervention is not to "clean up" the unions but to cripple them. The International Socialist Organization (ISO) is a prime example. These reformists have been among Carey's biggest political boosters on the left. But as soon as the feds moved against Carey, the ISO bowed down to the government. Uncritically reporting the prosecution of a Carey aide and the feds' diktat to rerun the union election, *Socialist Worker* (29 August) squealed: "While Carey is the best choice in the election, anyone in the Teamsters union found guilty of wrongdoing—including Carey himself—should be held accountable." In the same article, the ISO crows that Carey was "the first Teamsters president directly elected by the rank and file," failing to mention that this election was *directly run by the capitalist state*—which was invited into the union by the ISO-supported Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU).

In an article titled "A New Labor Movement?" in its new "theoretical" journal, *International Socialist Review* (Summer 1997), ISO honcho Lee Sustar argues for "the necessity of reintroducing socialist politics into the labor movement

to help develop workers' consciousness, organization and capacity to fight for their interests." In real life, the ISO degrades the consciousness of the workers by preaching reliance on the capitalist state to bring "democracy" to the labor movement. In contrast, the Spartacist League bases itself on the Marxist understanding of the class struggle. As we wrote in our UPS strike supplement, socialist politics begin with "the understanding that this society is divided between two hostile classes: workers who are forced to sell their labor power in order to survive and the property-owning capitalist class to whom their labor power is sold." This irreconcilable



*WV* Photo

**Jesse Acuna, militant Los Angeles Teamster imprisoned for defending picket line in 1994 truckers strike.**

conflict of class interests can only be resolved in favor of the workers through the smashing of the capitalist state and the revolutionary expropriation of the bourgeoisie under a workers government.

What the ISO pushes is *social-democratic* politics, the view that the capitalist state, which is organized to defend the interests of the bourgeois ruling class, can be pressured to act on behalf of the interests of the exploited. This has been the ISO's central premise since its inception as a tendency in the early 1950s, when its British patron Tony Cliff scabbed on the Soviet Union, China and North Korea, refusing to defend the degenerated/deformed workers states against "democratic" imperialism during the Korean War.

Fundamentally, the ISO shares the political outlook of the pro-capitalist union tops. Behind its calls for "rank-and-file movements" is a perspective of becoming left advisers to "progressive" bureaucrats like Carey. Thus, during the UPS strike the ISO made no effort to "develop workers' consciousness," instead limiting its role to raising contract demands for just a little more than what Carey was putting forward.

The ISO's perspective of seeking to become a "socialist" auxiliary to the pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy was shown clearly in *Socialist Worker* (29 August) which, despite its virulent anti-Communism, hailed the reformist Communist Party for providing a "socialist alternative" during the turbulent labor struggles of the 1930s, not even hinting at the Stalinists' role in channeling militant workers into Democrat Roosevelt's "New Deal" coalition. Today, Gus Hall's near-moribund CP identifies wholesale with the AFL-CIO bureaucracy—from support to "progressive" Democrats and chauvinist protectionism to diversionary "corporate campaigns" appealing to the capitalists' "conscience." Thus the CP's *People's Weekly World* (30 August) hailed not only the UPS strike but the recent Wheeling-Pitt sellout as "victories," boasting how in the latter case it withdrew "its investment portfolio from Merrill Lynch as a contribution to the corporate campaign of the Steelworkers union"!

## Forge a Revolutionary Leadership!

It is a statement on the indifference of the bulk of the U.S. left to the struggles of the working class that the Spartacist League was virtually the only socialist organization to have a regular presence at Teamster picket lines during the UPS strike. We sought to bring to the strikers an understanding of the whole capitalist system—stressing the need to mobilize labor against racist oppression—and that strikes are a microcosm of the struggle for workers power. While the ISO was all over the strike because of their support to Carey and the TDU, they offered nothing more than a warmed-over version of the bureaucracy's politics.

The Progressive Labor Party (PL) tries to posture as a "hard" alternative to the labor bureaucracy. Originating as a left split from the reformist Communist Party in the early 1960s, PL has never been able to overcome its Stalinist baggage, alternating between "revolutionary" phrasemongering and reformist "center-left coalition" pressure politics. While raving about the need for "Communist-led Class War," PL dismissed the strike as "a war between factions of the ruling class" (*Challenge*, 10 September).

Then there are the political bandits of David North's Socialist Equality Party (SEP) who write off the unions, saying "to define the AFL-CIO as a working class organization is to blind the working class" (*Bulletin*, 10 January 1992). They even went so far as to openly defend scabbing in the UAW Caterpillar strike (*International Workers Bulletin*, 18 December 1995). Now they cannot even bring themselves to recognize that the Teamsters victory over UPS was a major break in the 20-year pattern of destroyed strikes, haughtily announcing that they "decline to join in the chorus of hosannas" for the strike's outcome (*International Workers Bulletin*, 25 August). Both PL and the SEP equate the unions with their sell-out leaderships. At bottom, their sneering dismissal of workers' struggles denies any possibility of winning the working class to revolutionary consciousness.

The political struggle against the labor misleaders is real—it must be fought out and won inside the labor movement in order to fully mobilize the proletariat to overthrow capitalism. We stated in our UPS strike supplement that while the strike won only relatively modest economic gains, "nonetheless, the consciousness that it is possible to win something, anything, against the bosses is important. So is the recognition of the social power of the organized, multiracial working class." Turning that recognition into the understanding that the historic interests of the working class can be achieved only through socialist revolution is the unique and necessary role of a revolutionary workers party, completely independent from the capitalist class, its government and political parties. The Spartacist League is committed to building this workers party in relentless political combat against "leftists" who are an obstacle to the proletariat's struggle for power. ■

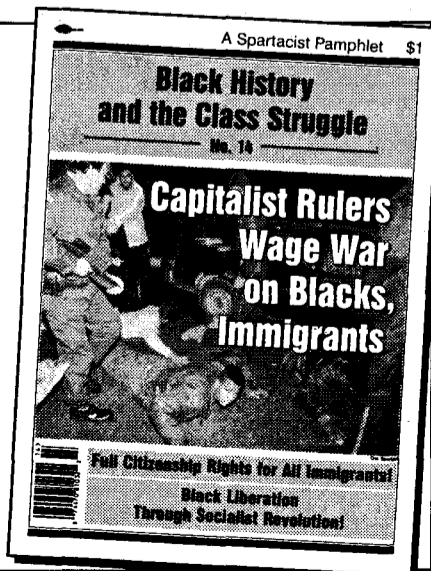
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\$1 (48 pages)

*Black History* is sent to all *Workers Vanguard* subscribers.

Order from: Spartacist Publishing Co. Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116



# WORKERS VANGUARD

## Democrats, Republicans: Enemies of Workers and Minorities

### NYC Elections and Racist Cop Terror



Yee/NY Times



Jonathan Lipkin/Impact Visuals



Savulich/Daily News

Republican mayor Giuliani (left) gives green light for police rampages through ghettos and barrios. Democrats Ruth Messinger and Al Sharpton back cops while pushing review board "reform" hoax.

The sadistic torture of Haitian immigrant Abner Louima in August put the issue of rampant cop terror at center stage in the run-up to New York City's mayoral election. Despite the hypocritical expressions of protest by Republican mayor Rudolph Giuliani and his Democratic rivals, even as Louima lies in a hospital in critical condition, the New York Police Department has continued its deadly rampages through the city's ghettos and barrios. In mid-September, the 400-strong "Manhattan North Narcotics Initiative" carried out one of a series of "drug sweeps" which have besieged the largely Dominican Washington Heights area and other minority neighborhoods. Dominican immigrant Norman Batista had seven ribs fractured as he was kicked unconscious by the cops.

Days later, a mob of white bigots in

the Carroll Gardens section of Brooklyn chased and severely beat black UPS driver Kevin Teague because he had crossed the "color line" dividing their ethnic enclave from predominantly black Red Hook. This was a chilling echo of the 1989 murder of black teenager Yusuf Hawkins in Bensonhurst and the 1986 lynch mob killing of Michael Griffith in another white enclave in Howard Beach. Meanwhile, Magalie Laurent, the Haitian nurse who heroically exposed the police brutalization of Abner Louima, has been threatened and physically attacked by some cop-loving employees at her hospital.

Those who torment this courageous nurse should be put on sharp notice by her union. But all that AFSCME Local 420 president James Butler had to offer to "protect" her was to call on the very

cops who stand behind the attacks. A mobilization of New York's integrated unions—Teamsters, transit workers, hospital employees and others—in protest action over the Louima beating would have sent a powerful message to the racist bigots in and out of uniform.

Instead, the union officialdom devotes its energies—and workers' dues money—to pushing one or another capitalist politician. AFSCME District Council 37 head Stanley Hill is openly endorsing Giuliani in this election, while others are doing it more quietly. Under Giuliani, who was catapulted into office on the shoulders of a racist cop mobilization, the NYPD has had a green light for untrammelled racist terror. In the first year after his election, the number of black and Hispanic people killed by cops climbed 42 percent. But neither erstwhile liberal Ruth Messinger,

the Democratic mayoral candidate, nor her chief primary rival, the Rev. Al Sharpton, offer the least alternative to Giuliani.

After initially declaring the need for a primary runoff between Messinger and Sharpton, the Board of Elections, notorious for its incompetence and patronage, reversed itself on the basis of an absentee ballot count. Amid the raw racism dominating the elections, this was perceived by many black people as yet another racist maneuver to somehow cheat and disenfranchise them. Sharpton has now thrown his support behind Messinger.

Sharpton has made a point of being the *only* public figure to identify with victims of racist cop attacks. But as the abysmal turnout for the primary—the lowest in decades—indicated, there is little appetite

*continued on page 9*

## In Wake of Teamsters Victory

### Government Steps Up Anti-Labor Attacks

#### The Left and the UPS Strike

After initially being stunned by the first successful strike against a major U.S. corporation in decades, the government, the courts and Wall Street have launched a broad counteroffensive aimed at preventing the spread of labor militancy. Immediately after the UPS strike in August, the government stepped up its decades-long vendetta against the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT), voiding last December's re-election of IBT president Ron Carey, imposing a new ballot and even threatening to bar Carey from running again. This has now mushroomed into a wide-ranging "investigation" of supposedly "illegal" campaign funding throughout the AFL-CIO.

The pretense for this sinister snooping is transparently cynical: it is a known fact that the union officialdom squanders millions of dollars of union members' dues to support capitalist Democratic—and, in some cases, Republican—politicians. That is a matter for the union membership to deal with, as part of the fight for the class independence of the workers movement from the capitalist state and its political parties. As we wrote last month (*WV* No. 673, 5<sup>th</sup> September), after the ruling ordering new Teamsters elections and the ban by Clinton of a threatened strike by UPS pilots:

"Labor can and must clean its own house through political struggles *inside* the unions. State intervention is flatly *counterposed* to the fight for union democracy and waging class struggle against the capitalists. Government hands off the Teamsters!"

Hard on the heels of the move against the Teamsters, Utah Republican Orrin

*continued on page 11*



Feanny/Saba

Solid Teamsters strike against UPS broke string of labor defeats. Now government has launched counterattack against unions.