

AFL-CIO Convention: Recycling the Sellouts



Labor Traitors vs. Class Struggle

The top officialdom of the AFL-CIO met last week to pick a new president in the first contested presidential election in the labor federation in a century. But amid the atmosphere of a power fight, the "house of labor" they preside over is burning. The state of the unions is far worse than a crisis—it's a disaster. Workers, minorities and the poor are suffering an all-sided assault on their rights and living conditions. And the responsibility lies squarely on the shoulders of the American labor bureaucracy whose hand-picked delegates assembled under the chandeliers of the New York Sheraton.

The last two decades have seen the elimination of millions of union jobs and a huge collapse of real wages and working conditions—hitting black and immigrant workers hardest. Unions now represent 15.5 percent of the workforce (compared to 35 percent in the mid-1950s), and less than 11 percent of workers in private industry. This massive destruction of labor gains and gutting of the unions is the legacy of a labor bureaucracy which was imposed in the anti-Communist purge of the late 1940s and entrenched during the decades of the anti-Soviet Cold War. As their actions have shown, this parasitic layer doesn't defend the interests of the workers but those of the capitalist class it loyally serves.

At the Sheraton, following some frenetic last-minute horse-trading in the plush suites, a majority voted for John Sweeney, whose slate proclaimed itself a "New Voice for American Workers." His opponent, Tom Donahue, lost mainly because he was so hopelessly compromised as the second-in-command under Lane Kirkland that he couldn't even provide the illusion of change. A shake-up has been in the works since last February's AFL-CIO retreat in Bal Harbour—where strikers from labor's central Illinois "war zone" crashed the bureaucrats' party. Bemoaning their lack of clout in Washington and their declining dues base, a section of the federation's top brass got together there to plot a palace revolt. They were able to ease Kirkland



AFL-CIO bureaucracy, including newly elected president John Sweeney (top), has a long history of sabotaging strikes. Detroit newspaper workers put up militant picket lines battling cops and strikebreakers, but union misleaders want to throw in the towel.

**For Labor/Black Power!
For a Workers Party That
Fights for All the Oppressed!**

into retirement in August, and now the "New Voice" bunch has taken over, with United Mine Workers (UMW) chief Richard Trumka as secretary-treasurer and AFSCME official Linda Chavez-Thompson elected to a newly created post of executive vice president.

Sweeney has promised "change," warning that the union movement was sliding into "irrelevance." But no less than his rival Donahue, he too is part of the AFL-CIO "old guard." In fact, the final vote was determined by a deal in which Donahue supporters kept almost

half the seats on an expanded executive council. The styles are different: Donahue supporters on the third floor of the Sheraton were recognizable by their expensive suits, while Sweeney's troops in the basement sported red T-shirts. They have tactical differences, reflecting their bases of support: Sweeney likes to sit down on bridges, as his SEIU "Justice for Janitors" campaign has done in Washington, while Donahue—much of whose support comes from the building trades, as well as die-hard anti-Communists in the teachers and Communications Work-

ers—talks of building bridges. But their fundamental program is the same: they act as political police of the capitalist class within the labor movement.

This is shown very concretely by the role played in recent strikes by the would-be "reformers" who promise to "rebuild labor." On September 2, as thousands of Detroit newspaper strikers and other unionists manned mass pickets at the Sterling Heights printing plant, Trumka, speaking as head of the AFL-CIO's "Strategic Approaches Committee," was droning on about "corporate campaigns" at a UAW-sponsored rally a mile away. Flags of Sweeney's "New Voice" slate were everywhere, with signs calling to cancel subscriptions to the struck *Free Press* and *Detroit News*—when what was needed was to stop production and delivery of the scab paper. Their hacks to the wall, the strikers fought militant battles with cops and Vance Security scabherders, managing to stop delivery trucks for hours at a time. But officials of the Metropolitan Newspaper Union Council headed by local Teamster leader Al Derey had earlier made a deal to let the scab trucks through, and eventually managed to wear down the strikers' resistance.

The union tops act as labor cops for the bosses politically as well, tying the workers to the capitalist Democratic Party. At the convention, Democratic president Clinton received a standing ovation from the entire hunch. And in his acceptance speech as AFL-CIO president, Sweeney called for an "American autumn" in 1996, to "re-elect a President and elect a Democratic Congress committed to the people who work hard and play by the rules!" The AFL-CIO bureaucrats have always played by the bosses' rules, leading to the present ruinous state of the unions.

**Labor Lieutenants of Capital,
Yesterday and Today**

Sweeney's message to working people was "America needs a raise." This is the

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**Feds, Finks and Fake Militants—Recipe for Defeat
Labor: Stop Playing by the Bosses' Rules!**

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Journalist on Death Row Testifies in Pittsburgh

Mumia Abu-Jamal Fights Prison Harassment

Death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal testified in his civil rights case against the Pennsylvania prison system in Pittsburgh in October, speaking in court on his own behalf for the first time since his frame-up conviction in 1982. Surrounded by seven to eight prison guards, his legs shackled at all times, Jamal's strong, calm demeanor and powerful testimony defeated all attempts by his prison captors to dehumanize him.

A black journalist and radio commen-

tator, Jamal was sentenced to death for allegedly killing a police officer in Philadelphia in 1981. This summer, he won an indefinite stay of execution as thousands demonstrated internationally and his lawyers sought to win a new trial to prove his innocence. "Hanging judge" Albert Saho turned down Mumia's appeal in September, and Jamal's attorneys have now filed a "notice of appeal" to the Pennsylvania state supreme court.

Jamal's lawsuit contends that the prison system has waged a furious cam-



Jennifer Beach

FREE MUMIA ABU-JAMALI Jamal testified in court for the first time since his 1982 frame-up conviction.



AP

paign to punish and isolate him because he is fighting his death sentence, and because his powerful prison writings, centrally his book *Live from Death Row*, expose their racist system of repression. On behalf of Jamal, Pittsburgh attorneys Jere Krakoff and Tim O'Brien challenged as unconstitutional the prison administration's obstruction of Jamal's access to the courts and the media, basing the case on the First, Sixth and Fourteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

"What the hearing brought out," said Rachel Wolkenstein, Partisan Defense Committee staff counsel and one of Jamal's attorneys, "is that heavy political pressure was put on the governor's office by the Philadelphia Fraternal Order of Police and politicians like State Representative Michael McGehean. Then the governor's legal office—the very same office from which Mumia's death warrant was issued—oversaw the prison authorities' punishment of Mumia and their interception of his correspondence and cutting him off from the broader public hearing that is a vital part of his defense."

A key operative in this campaign against Jamal, David Horwitz, Assistant Counsel for the Department of Corrections, supervised by the governor's General Counsel, admitted that he had authorized opening and copying Mumia's mail, including from his attorneys Leonard Weinglass and Rachel Wolkenstein, in August 1994. "At least two of these letters were forwarded to the governor's legal office, and who knows what other state officials up to and including the D.A. received copies," Wolkenstein said. "What they wanted to do was to lock up Mumia's ideas and kill the writer. Where Mumia is concerned, COINTELPRO never ended."

In February 1995, as news of Mumia's

book came out, confidential attorney correspondence from Wolkenstein, including notes of a key legal strategy meeting among attorneys, was confiscated. Prison officials also denied Len Weinglass' paralegals access to Mumia, and banned the media from interviewing him, under the thin guise of lack of prison personnel and that Mumia was "the subject of an internal investigation."

Another "mail watch," including reading and copying Jamal's legal mail, was conducted in the period immediately following the June 1 issuance of the death warrant by Governor Tom Ridge and the filing of Mumia's petition for a new trial. Just days later, on June 9, Mumia was convicted of "misconduct" for being a journalist and for *Live from Death Row*, because, they said, it violated a prison policy forbidding "engaging in a profession." The punishment was 30 days of disciplinary confinement, eliminating all phone calls to his family and allowing only one family visit—at a time when Mumia had only two months to live!

On October 13, Jamal took the stand in U.S. Magistrate Kenneth Benson's Pittsburgh courtroom. Regarding his "misconduct" for *Live from Death Row*, Jamal testified in his strong, resonant voice, "I pled not guilty, not based on the fact that I wrote it, because it's hard to deny that. The basis of the plea was, the thrust of the misconduct [claim] was a violation of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. To try to infract me from exercising what is said to be a constitutional right, was itself unconstitutional."

Regarding this "write-up for writing," Jamal noted he has written many works in prison. "To be perfectly honest," Mumia testified, "I began writing in the County of Philadelphia jail, while

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TROTSKY

Every Class Struggle Must Become a Political Struggle

Over the past two decades the American labor movement has been gutted and workers' wages slashed. Now throughout the industrialized capitalist countries there is a general onslaught against social welfare programs, particularly targeting oppressed minorities. As unionists, blacks, Hispanics and many others face a battle for survival, it is necessary to understand that this fight cannot be limited to trade-union struggles



LENIN

against specific employers. As Lenin wrote almost a century ago, at the time of the birth of the Russian Social Democratic Workers Party, the day-to-day economic struggles of the workers movement must be linked through a revolutionary socialist party to the struggle against the capitalist system and the state which upholds it.

We are all agreed that our task is that of the organization of the proletarian class struggle. But what is this class struggle? When the workers of a single factory or of a single branch of industry engage in struggle against their employer or employers, is this class struggle? No, this is only a weak embryo of it. The struggle of the workers becomes a class struggle only when all the foremost representatives of the entire working class of the whole country are conscious of themselves as a single working class and launch a struggle that is directed, not against individual employers, but against the *entire class* of capitalists and against the government that supports that class. Only when the individual worker realizes that he is a member of the entire working class, only when he recognizes the fact that his petty day-to-day struggle against individual employers and individual government officials is a struggle against the entire bourgeoisie and the entire government, does his struggle become a class struggle. "Every class struggle is a political struggle"—these famous words of Marx are not to be understood to mean that any struggle of workers against employers must *always* be a political struggle. They must be understood to mean that the struggle of the workers against the capitalists inevitably *becomes* a political struggle *insofar as* it becomes a class struggle. It is the task of the Social-Democrats, by organizing the workers, by conducting propaganda and agitation among them, to turn their spontaneous struggle against their oppressors into the struggle of the whole class, into the struggle of a definite political party for definite political and socialist ideals. This is something that cannot be achieved by local activity alone....

Social-Democracy is not confined to simple service to the working-class movement; it represents "the combination of socialism and the working-class movement" (to use Karl Kautsky's definition which repeats the basic ideas of the *Communist Manifesto*); the task of Social-Democracy is to bring definite socialist ideals to the spontaneous working-class movement, to connect this movement with socialist convictions that should attain the level of contemporary science, to connect it with the regular political struggle for democracy as a means of achieving socialism—in a word, to fuse this spontaneous movement into one indestructible whole with the activity of the *revolutionary party*.

—V.I. Lenin, "Our Immediate Task" (second half of 1899)

WORKERS VANGUARD

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No. 632

3 November 1995

Spartacist Events

BOSTON

Spartacus Youth Club Class Series

Saturdays, 2 p.m. Next classes, November 4: *The Revolution Betrayed* and the *Syphilis of Stalinism*; November 11: *Black Liberation through Socialist Revolution!* Abolish the Racist Death Penalty—Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!; Boston University, CLA (College of Liberal Arts) Room 418, 725 Commonwealth Ave. For more information: (617) 666-9453

NEW YORK CITY

Spartacist League Forum

Wednesday, November 8, 7:00 p.m.: *Farrakhan's Million Man March—A Reactionary Dead End. No to Sexism, Nationalism! For Revolutionary Integrationism! Black Liberation through Socialist Revolution!* Borough of Manhattan Community College, Student Development Center, 199 Chambers St

Spartacus Youth Club Class Series

Alternate Fridays, 7 p.m. Next classes, November 3: *Women's Liberation through Socialist Revolution*; November 17: *Black and Red: Black Liberation through Socialist Revolution*; Spartacist Public Office, 41 Warren St. (one block below Chambers St.) For more information: (212) 267-1025

CHAMPAIGN/URBANA

Spartacus Youth Club Class Series

Alternate Thursdays, 7 p.m. Next class, November 16: *Stalinism and Counterrevolution*; University of Illinois-Champaign/Urbana, Illini Union, Room 217. For more information: (312) 663-0715

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TORONTO

Spartacus Youth Club Class Series

Alternate Mondays, 7 p.m. Next class, November 13: *The State: Lessons of the Paris Commune of 1871*, International Student Centre, 33 St. George Street (north of College). For more information: (416) 593-4138

VANCOUVER

Spartacus Youth Club Class Series

Alternate Thursdays, 7:30 p.m. Next class, November 9: *The State: Lessons of the Paris Commune of 1871*, Britannia Community Centre, Room L4, 1661 Napier (off Commercial Drive). For more information: (604) 687-0353

Snubbed by Giuliani, Fêted by Rockefeller

Fidel Castro in Harlem

It was the 50th anniversary of the United Nations, and world dignitaries galore trooped through. The media dutifully chronicled the forgettable moments of countless presidents' greetings. Most noteworthy was how the entire week was dominated by the appearance of Cuban leader Fidel Castro, for decades the bête noire of the American bourgeoisie.

Despite attempts to quarantine Castro, to the consternation of the State Department, his five-minute speech to the UN was the most applauded of all, particularly his criticism of "hegemonism" and a "new colonialism within the very United Nations." Everyone from Third World leaders to NATO "allies" (and imperialist rivals) saw it as a way to tweak the arrogant Americans.

That night, the Harlem establishment rolled out the red carpet to welcome the man Clinton, Giuliani and Gingrich love to hate. The New York mayor went on a tear, exuding racist imperialist arrogance, proclaiming any leader he didn't like *persona non grata* at all social functions associated with the UN anniversary. A black-tie dinner for Clinton at the World Financial Center was declared off-limits to Castro. At a concert at Lincoln Center, Giuliani dispatched a flunky to tap Yasir Arafat on the shoulder and tell him he'd be bounced if he didn't leave the premises!

Wall Street and the White House were none too happy with Giuliani's outrageous stunt, but the attempt to blackball Fidel Castro really backfired in Harlem. His visit recalled his first time there in 1960, when, after having been precipitously dumped out of a Midtown hotel, the young Cuban leaders decamped to the Hotel Theresa, where Harlem residents lined the streets in support. Castro was visited there by Malcolm X, and a parade of world leaders headed up to Harlem to see him, including Soviet leader Khrushchev, Ghana's Nkrumah and Egypt's Nasser.

This time, some 1,500 jammed into the Abyssinian Baptist Church to hear Castro, while 500 more were unable to get in. In addition to the invited guests, several hundred youthful black and Hispanic activists filled the upper tier of the church, punctuating Castro's speech with chants of "Viva Cuba revolucionaria!" and "Cuba sí! Bloqueo no!" The church, famous as the pulpit of Adam Clayton Powell Jr., has hosted world figures from Haile Selassie to Nelson Mandela. The current pastor, Rev. Calvin Butts, introduced Castro. Later, a statement was read to the meeting from death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, after which the crowd erupted in chants of "Free Mumia Now!" Another statement highlighting Jamal's case was read from Assata Shakur, a former Black Panther now in exile in Cuba.

Castro, who knows how to play to a crowd, went on at length about how he changed out of the business suit he wore at the UN and into his combat fatigues, just like he wore in his last visit to Harlem. Ridiculing Giuliani for his snub, Castro revealed that he had been invited to dinner that night by "a wealthy family and a group of businessmen." The Cuban leader trod lightly around conditions in Cuba today ("We have difficulty, but we're always in trouble"), while adding, "Here in Harlem you have difficulties too." On the international scene, he got in a dig at former Soviet leader Gorbachev, noting: "Khrushchev was a peasant, a very shrewd peasant. He didn't dismantle his own country." The highest applause came when Castro recounted how Cubans shed their blood fighting against the apartheid invaders in Angola. He presented himself as unbowed



October 22: 1,500 turn out to greet Fidel Castro at Abyssinian Baptist Church.

and unrepentant, saying, "We will never change because we are right." But, significantly, he made not a single mention of socialism, communism or Marxism.

The most interesting aspect of the event was the crowd that turned out to cheer and hear Castro, which could have stepped out of the pages of *Who's Who in Black America*. The *Amsterdam News* devoted its front page to a photo spread headlined "Harlem Welcomes Fidel!" Among the invitees were Angela Davis, State Senator David Paterson, Queen Mother Moore, Nation of Islam spokesman Conrad Muhammad accompanying Mrs. Elijah Muhammad, Elombe Brath, Leonard Jeffries, Amiri Baraka and Gil Noble. Harlem Congressman Charles Rangel sat on the stage with Castro and heartily embraced him twice. Bronx Congressman Jose Serrano and Brooklyn Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez were seated among the luminaries. Velazquez not only waved but rushed down from the balcony to embrace Castro.

In contrast to the popular outpouring of Harlem's black masses during Castro's 1960 visit, this time it was the black petty-bourgeois elite telling Giuliani, Clinton and Gingrich to go to hell. The fact that black and Hispanic Democrats embrace Castro so effusively is indicative of the mood among their constituents—they're clearly not worried about being red-baited—but also reflects a shift in opinion in the ruling class. From the UN to the Abyssinian Baptist Church, Castro's visit highlighted the fact that big sections of the U.S. bourgeoisie agree with him that the American embargo is "obsolete."

Thus, Luis Ortega, longtime Cuban exile writer, criticized the "semi-terrorist groups" of *gusanos* in Miami's Little Havana for having "turned Cuba into a martyr island and Castro into an international hero" (*El Diario/La Prensa*, 25 October). And certified reactionary William Buckley called for repealing the embargo: "We would need to swallow

our pride, but that is healthy. We did not succeed in bringing Castro down, and it is not dignified to save our bad consciences by continuing policies appropriate only during the Cold War" (*New York Post*, 25 October).

In fact, in his five days in New York, Castro was wine and dined by leading capitalists and media moguls, something that his socialist cheerleaders like the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), Communist Party (CP) and Workers World Party (WWP) barely hinted at in their stories. Castro had a lengthy interview broadcast live on CNN and was interviewed by the editorial boards of the *New York Times*, *Time* and the *Wall Street*

Journal. He met with the Council on Foreign Relations, and had a UN lunch with David Rockefeller. *Daily News* publisher and real estate czar Mortimer Zuckerman threw a luncheon attended by the broadcasting elite of America.

While his speech in Harlem was mostly "I'm with you" gestures of solidarity, he was very concrete with the opinion-makers and power brokers of U.S. imperialism. The *Wall Street Journal* (25 October) wrote: "His message to Wall Street: Cuba plans to deepen economic reforms that the government has recently instituted. Mr. Castro was effusive in his praise of the U.S. business community as more efficient and reliable than diplomats and politicians."

Following the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, which for years had supported it with trade and aid, as well as guaranteeing its military defense against the Yankee imperialist colossus, Castro's Cuba has been on its own. Like Stalinists everywhere, the ideology of the Cuban bureaucratic regime was the nationalist dogma of building "socialism in one country." In the giant USSR, occupying one-sixth of the world and later supplemented by the other countries of the Soviet bloc, it took some decades for the bankruptcy of this doctrine to play itself out, as the degenerated workers state collapsed under the pressure of imperialism. But a deformed workers state on a Caribbean island only 90 miles from the most powerful imperialist country in the world cannot last for long in isolation.

So the Castro regime has undertaken a series of pro-capitalist reforms which threaten to spark counterrevolution from within. Last summer, Cuba passed a new foreign investment law opening the possibility of 100 percent foreign-owned companies. To date, apart from tourist ventures by European chains, there hasn't been much imperialist investment in Cuba. And the *Financial Times* (27 October) complains that Cuba's economic "reforms" fall far short of those introduced in, for instance, Vietnam and China. But with the legalization of the dollar as a means of payment, appeals for foreign investment and now sizable mass layoffs (500,000 in the last year), the regime's policies are pushing Cuba toward the restoration of capitalism, and with it the evils that are the product of the profit system, such as mass unemployment.

The various Stalinists and Stalinoids (CP, WWP, SWP, etc.) chant "Viva Fidel," yet Castro and the bureaucracy are today among the most dangerous elements undermining the remaining gains of the Cuban Revolution and preparing the way for its downfall. The Spartacist

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Free Sarah Balabagan!

In our last issue (WV No. 631, 20 October), we reported on the international struggle to stop the execution of 16-year-old Filipina maid Sarah Balabagan. Despite the revoking of the death sentence, on October 30 she was sentenced to a year in jail and a murderous 100 lashes! We print below a statement from the Partisan Defense Committee demanding Sarah Balabagan's immediate freedom.

29 October 1995

United Arab Emirates Embassy
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sirs:

We demand the immediate release of Sarah Balabagan. Although the death sentence hanging over the head of this courageous 16-year-old Filipina woman was lifted, she is outrageously still being persecuted. While working as a maid in the United Arab Emirates, Balabagan was assaulted and raped at knife point by her employer. He was killed as she struggled in self-defense. Now she finds

herself locked in prison fighting for her life and freedom.

Like millions of women around the world, Balabagan was driven by poverty into working abroad, facing a life of degradation and brutality. Here in the U.S. Asian women, smuggled into the country to evade the racist immigration laws, are forced to work seven days a week in virtual slave conditions. We call for full citizenship rights for all immigrant workers and their families.

Two weeks ago Balabagan's death sentence was revoked in exchange for blood money from her family. On October 30 she is scheduled to return to court, where her fate will be decided. Balabagan is not out of danger so long as she remains in prison in the United Arab Emirates. We demand immediate freedom for Sarah Balabagan, and that she be granted safe passage immediately out of the country.

Very truly yours,
Paul Cooperstein
for the PDC



Bourgeois press and politicians lauded massive turnout for Farrakhan's message of "atonement," blaming the oppressed for the poverty, degradation and violence meted out by the capitalist oppressors.

Farrakhan: Broker for Racist Reaction

Why Did Rulers Applaud Million Man March?

Imagine how the government and media would respond to a mass militant protest against Klan and cop terror, or against the lynch-law crusade to execute black political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. Even the acquittal by an integrated jury of black football superstar O.J. Simpson in the face of a hlatant police and prosecution frame-up provoked an ohscene outery of racist vituperation. Yet the same houngeois political establishment which contemptuously scorns or ruthlessly represses any and every protest against black oppression greeted the massive turnout for the October 16 Million Man March with effusive praise. That alone should make it clear to every militant black worker and youth that the self-abasing display of "atonement" organized by separatist demagogue Louis Farrakhan had nothing whatever to do with the struggle for black liberation.

For all the tortured attempts to "separate the message from the messenger," the Nation of Islam (NOI) leader has clearly been the main beneficiary of the mammoth gathering of black men in Washington, D.C. two weeks ago. As he announced a voter registration drive aimed at consolidating his influence as a black broker for the racist rulers, Farrakhan proclaimed: "We intend to

leverage that power you saw on the Mall yesterday." Farrakhan's move was welcomed by the chairmen of both the Republican and Democratic parties. This anti-immigrant, anti-woman and anti-gay bigot who preaches a reactionary utopia of "black capitalism" and "self-help" to the downtrodden and dispossessed ghetto masses is a "black leader" made to order for Clinton/Gingrich's America.

Notwithstanding their hypocritical denunciations of Farrakhan's vile anti-Semitism and anti-white demagoguery, the "message" of the Million Man March was endorsed by racist capitalist politicians of all stripes. President Clinton saluted its emphasis on "personal responsibility." Republican presidential hopeful Bob Dole praised its "talk about self-reliance" and "getting kids off drugs." Newt Gingrich pointed to the turnout for Farrakhan as evidence "that these men think there is something profoundly wrong with the welfare state." Even fascist Republican Pat Buchanan chimed in: "Americans can and should unite behind the stated goals of the Million Man March—of men taking responsibility for their own actions and their wives, their families and their communities." And the *Wall Street Journal* (18 October) summed it up in a headline,

"One Magnificent Day."

Joining the racist Republican right and the main mouthpiece for American finance capital in hosannas for the march were a broad spectrum of reformist leftists. Despite its earlier profession of opposition, the Socialist Workers Party could not resist the allure of a "mass movement" and showed up to peddle its literature, conspicuously minus the issue of the *Militant* which criticized Farrakhan and the march. The Communist Party's *People's Weekly World* (21 October) ran a huge front-page display blaring "African Americans March" and extolling the "feeling of togetherness and pride...in the mainly working-class crowd" as a "response to the rising racist offensive." The Progressive Labor Party's *Challenge* (25 October), after earlier denouncing Farrakhan's march as a "fascist mass mobilization," changed its tune when it saw the size of the turnout, discovering that "the overwhelming motivation of the vast majority was an intense hatred for racism in this society."

Sam Marcy's *Workers World* (26 October) backloaded what complaints it had of the NOI—which notably did not include its reactionary separatism—while enthusing that the "great majority" of the participants came out for "Black unity, Black solidarity, Black pride and a growing desire for economic and political empowerment." Taking the cake for craven fawning was the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP), whose Carl Dix hailed the march as "an excellent idea" and cheered: "A lotta people see this Million Man March as a way to change the way things are going down and to jump start a serious movement against the oppression of Black people, even if they ain't down with everything that the march organizers are putting out" (*Revolutionary Worker*, 8 October).

The Million Man March was a *reactionary* mobilization of the oppressed, something rarely seen in the United States but not uncommon internationally. Another example would be the Hindu-chauvinist and virulently anti-Muslim BJP in India, which is supported by millions of low-caste peasants. But support for a reactionary "mass movement" is nothing new for the fake left. Most of them flocked to Khomeini's 1979 "Islamic Revolution," when obscurantist

mullahs and middle-class merchants succeeded in roping in the Iranian masses behind their calls for "Death or the veil" and "God is great." In contrast, just as we opposed Khomeini (no less than the bloody shah he replaced), we bluntly wrote of the Million Man March last issue: "Despite the outrage and despair over the hellish conditions of racist America felt by the hundreds of thousands at the Mall in Washington, this march was *directly counterposed* to any struggle for black emancipation."

Behind Farrakhan's nationalist rhetoric is a program of separate-and-unequal accommodation to the racist status quo. A *New York Times* (17 October) piece by Don Terry, describing Farrakhan as "a Booker T. Washington-style conservative and a Marcus Garvey black nationalist," noted: "He is often portrayed as a militant, but much of what he says sounds ghost-written by a Republican, with its talk of self-help and bootstraps." Farrakhan's social agenda dovetails with the reactionary white racist bourgeois consensus which blames the oppressed



Marcus Garvey, founder of 1920s "Back to Africa" movement.

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for their oppression and paints blacks as "violent" and "lazy." This was epitomized by the demeaning pledge the "Minister" imposed on the assembled men.

As for black women, they were told to stay home, pray and take care of the kids. This was a key "message" of the march for the NOI, who denounce abortion as murder and insist that women belong in the home and behind "their" men, not as equals in the fight against oppression. In this, Farrakhan strongly echoes the program of the fundamentalist right wing of the Republican Party, presenting a black nationalist version of the white Christian "Promise Keepers." This sinister reactionary movement has drawn over 700,000 men this year alone to "family values" rallies across the country, where they are enjoined to take back "their God-given 'spiritual leadership' in the home" (San Jose *Mercury*, 30 September).

Far from voicing the aspirations of the ghetto masses, Farrakhan offers himself up as a cop for the racist rulers to impose "morality" and "law and order" in the ghettos, appealing to the "talented tenth" to assert their rightful place as exploiters of the black poor. The Million Man March was, in fact, a mainly middle-class crowd: a Howard University survey conducted on the Mall showed 41 percent of participants having an annual income upwards of \$50,000—nearly three times the 1992 median income for black men. Significantly, although a number of unions endorsed this exclusionist rally, reports circulated that black union leaders were not welcome on the speakers' platform.

It is due to the abysmal treachery of the labor and black misleaders, who go all out to prove their loyalty to Clinton's Democrats and the Wall Street financiers, that this right-wing huckster could gain even a momentary mass hearing for his bizarre excursions into the mysteries of the number 19. But while Farrakhan has become the pre-eminent black leader in America today, the black population has not embraced his reactionary political program and his mass support is shallow.

A community worker in Chicago expressed the sentiment that drew many to the march: "Finally, somebody is doing something. The situation in black America is so bad now that it almost doesn't matter what that something is as long as it's some kind of action." Farrakhan has seized on the despair felt by black people, in the face of an unremitting racist offensive and in the absence of any response by the misleaders of the integrated labor movement, to anoint himself as chief overseer for the grinding oppression of the black masses. He has been aided and abetted in this by Jesse Jackson, the Congressional Black Caucus and a host of other black politicians who sponsored or spoke at the event. Echoing Farrakhan—and Gingrich, Democratic Baltimore mayor Kurt Schmoke told the crowd, "Today we ask nothing of the government, today we ask everything of ourselves." And, though her organization refused to endorse, NAACP head Myrlie Evers Williams hailed the march as a "spiritual awakening" and urged, "Let's give him a chance."

A chance to do what? What Louis Farrakhan is doing is fanning the flames of racial polarization while counseling the black masses to retreat into the ghetto rather than fight. At a September 30 forum in Chicago, Spartacist League Central Committee member Don Alexander indicted Farrakhan and other black misleaders for their complicity in the racist rulers' war on black America:

"What about their silence about the racist MOVE massacre in 1985? Jesse Jackson's response when the black neighborhood was burned down was, we need more black contractors, i.e., black capitalism. How about the labor/black mobilizations, from Washington, D.C. in 1982 to Philadelphia in 1988 to Berkeley last year when David Irving the Nazi was going to speak? What was their

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Million Man March: Trap for Blacks and Labor

We reprint below a letter from comrade Don C. of the Bay Area Spartacist League on the aftermath of the Million Man March called by Nation of Islam (NOI) leader Louis Farrakhan

23 October 1995

Comrades,

On October 16, the day of the Million Man March (MMM), the Bay Area black fraction held a fraction meeting. This was coincidental, but appropriate activity for this day. We discussed the current state of our party work and how to advance it. Our business is life and death for the future of U.S. workers and black people. We are not bureaucrats (or wanna-be bureaucrats) with a secret agenda or heavenly sanctioned knowledge. Our job is to educate and lead our class in a struggle for power based on their own class

private ownership of capital and shares and people with bursting bins who use their surplus grain to enslave the hungry. Freedom and equality for the oppressed sex! Freedom and equality for the workers and labouring peasants! Struggle against the oppressors, struggle against the capitalists, struggle against the kulak profiteers!"

Our reformist opponents do not believe in a forthright struggle against the lieutenants of capital in the labor movement or the black ghetto. Therefore they are willing to be silent on any question that might prove to be heated. They would sweep (and have swept) the black question under the rug in the face of hostile Meanyite bureaucrats while they do the same with the class question in the face of hostile black nationalists. They are only consistent at manufacturing "victories" out of defeats. Surely they will find

must arm itself with Lenin and Trotsky as it takes its place in the trenches. Any other course is cowardice. We must prove to the oppressed and the workers that we are fighters worthy of their confidence.

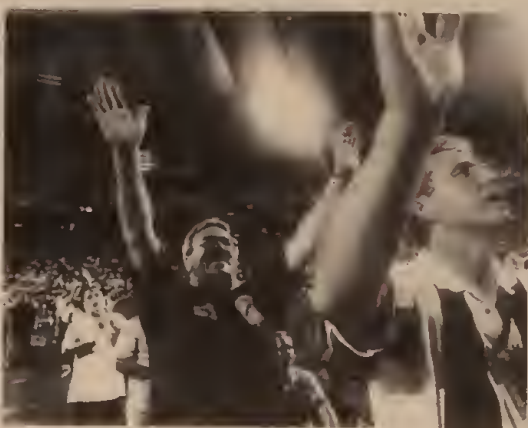
The MMM was an event of historic significance that marks a turning point for blacks and labor. The exact features of what is unfolding is still unclear. But the message is clear and it is bad news for blacks, labor, women, immigrants and communists. The ascent of the NOI with its Fruit of Islam (FOI) thugs spells danger for us all. The *WV* article spoke of a white racist reaction to the MMM. The MMM will embolden the fascists as the right wing endeavors to make the fascists respectable once again. After all they have already adopted their programmatic rallying cries—reverse discrimination, states' rights, etc.

One likely response could be another attempt for a Klan Washington march, this time with NOI approval and intensified cop protection. We would be obligated to respond to this provocation with a labor/black mobilization facing a whole new set of uncertainties. Only one thing is certain: blacks occupy a similar position to the East European Jews—they are the scapegoats for the capitalist class. Blacks constitute 13 percent of the American population that capitalist genocide could easily reduce by 10 percent. Those who play with the fire of race war are aiding and abetting genocide.

Last year at the Bay Area's Juneteenth celebration I sold the *WV* issue with the article "Farrakhan Is Bad News for Black People" at the Richmond and Berkeley events. At Richmond, a working-class affair, we met a little hostility and a lot of interest in the article. At Berkeley, a more petty-bourgeois affair, we encountered a large NOI presence but significant interest in the article. However, we had to stay out of range of the NOI bean pie/newspaper salesmen in order to work the crowd. The disciplined NOI, with the wind in its sails and an influx of fresh recruits, will be menacing in appearance at least. We certainly have to be aware that the NOI/FOI greatly outnumber us. But the watchwords are: be resolute and smart.

The MMM is certainly an appeasement to the racist rulers. This is rapidly becoming apparent with each day. The *Contra Costa Times*, a conservative suburban paper, ran a front-page article praising the MMM and the "Promise Keepers" as a new men's movement of bonding and leadership. The Congress of National

continued on page 6



Lee/Sig-Tribune

"Promise Keepers," a reactionary Christian movement, has been packing stadiums around the country with mass male-only rallies pledging to uphold "family values."

interest. Comrade Trotsky spoke of eadre learning to swim against the stream. We must swim with determination against a flood.

The official exclusion of women from the MMM, despite their reluctant acceptance in token numbers, was a neon sign announcing its reactionary nature. For communists it should be basic that any social movement that excludes and regulates the oppressed sex to a secondary status is insupportable. Our opportunist reformist opponents can sweep the woman question under the rug. We cannot! All "family values" talk, "protecting and serving our women and children" talk, is rubbish. We should say so. It romanticizes the real oppression of women and children. I found this quote from Lenin in *Women and Revolution*:

"Down with the liars who speak about freedom and equality for all, while there is an oppressed sex, oppressing classes,

a "victory" of sorts in the MMM. One SWP co-worker of mine is already talking about "revolutionary youth" in the MMM. This is like the little boy who happily dug into a hill of manure because "with all this manure there's got to be a pony in there somewhere."

Above all it buys into the capitalist media's lie about contending programs under the umbrella of the MMM. This one SWPer displayed a profound conviction in "the progress of blacks since the '60s." The manufacturers of "victories" are buying their own goods here because nobody else is. The same *Women and Revolution* article had this Lenin quote advising women cadre: "Don't twitter like a bunch of chatterboxes, but speak out loudly and clearly like fighters should. Show that you can fight" (from Clara Zetkin's "My Recollections of Lenin"). In the face of sexist exclusion and race-haiting nationalism our party

Join the Labor Black Leagues!

The Labor Black Leagues stand for mobilizing minorities and working people in militant integrated struggle against the brutal system of racist oppression that is capitalist America. The LBLs are fraternally allied to the Spartacist League, and are part of the revolutionary movement of the workers and oppressed against the bosses and for socialism.

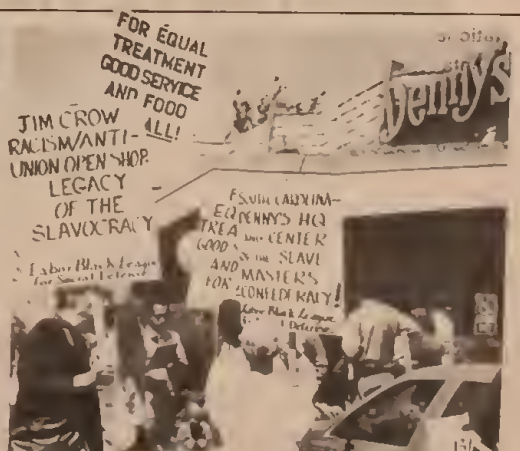
There is a crisis of leadership today. Black misleaders and the union bureaucracy are wedded to either pro-capitalist racist Democratic Party liberalism or do-nothing dead-end black separatism. The Labor Black Leagues are multiracial organizations of militant workers and youth fighting for revolutionary integrationism: for black freedom through socialist revolution.

For more information write:

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Protest against racist discrimination at Denny's restaurants, Bay Area, July 1993.

WV Photo

Mumia...

(continued from page 2)

awaiting trial. Some of those essays were put together as a book, sold and distributed under the title *Survival is Not a Crime*. Around 1987, he began writing for radical and community publications: "As someone who had never been to prison, I found a new world. It was a form of self-expression, but also a revelation of what it really is, as opposed to how it's reported in the daily press.... What I saw, what I heard, what I smelled, what I perceived around me. They were stories of despair, the hopelessness of some people on death row, stories of suicide, of people losing their way, getting entangled and not getting out."

Jamal said he sought "to talk about and expose conditions on death row, and hopefully to affect and change that reality. I wrote not just for myself, but for everyone on death row, thousands now. As you can see, it's gotten me disciplinary action, write-ups." Although he knew there might be retaliation, Jamal said, he taped a series of commentaries for National Public Radio in 1994—a series NPR canceled under pressure from the Philadelphia Fraternal Order of Police.

Those tapes meant all "the difference between life and death," Mumia told the court; they were "a window into my soul as a living man." He did them, "Essentially to save my life. As someone on death row, I know we are not perceived as persons, but as nameless, faceless beings, unknown except as a headline in yesterday's newspaper. By airing on NPR, millions of people would have

been in an intimate communication with me—it's a two-way communication, and it humanizes me in a way the daily press could not and would not."

Another reason Jamal published *Live from Death Row*, he said, was "To make money. And to use the money to pay,

then-superintendent Love at Huntingdon, were well aware of Jamal's writing, including his 1990 *Yale Law Journal* article and columns for the local Huntingdon college paper *The Juniata*, which was mailed to the prison. A "surprise" witness, criminologist and profes-

his ability to exchange confidential legal mail with his attorneys: "The security or confidentiality of my legal mail is, in a word, nonexistent.... I have no faith, no trust, no sense of security—all of my mail, slit open outgoing, slit open incoming. I believe that mail I sent to you [counsel Jere Krakoff] was interfered with because I sent you a letter and you didn't get it."

Testimony has now concluded, and the hearing magistrate will make his recommendation to a U.S. District Court judge on whether to order an injunction against the prison system to cease its vindictive and unconstitutional actions against Jamal.

Meanwhile the battle continues outside the courts. Justice for Mumia will begin only when he walks out of prison a free man! Join the fight to free Mumia Abu-Jamal!



Warsaw, October 2: Polish Spartacists initiated united-front protest against Philadelphia D.A. Lynne Abraham, would-be executioner of Mumia Abu-Jamal and apostle of racist death penalty.

hire and employ lawyers for my appeal, investigators and other support staff." This forthright explanation put to shame the pathetic efforts of the state's eager-beaver "investigator" David Horwitz, who bragged how he chased computer printouts to sniff out supposed subterfuge in Jamal's "stamp money accounts" and to challenge Mumia Abu-Jamal's support groups, such as Equal Justice and the Partisan Defense Committee.

In fact, prison officials, including

sor Ted Alleman, testified that while he was a teacher in the prison, he had openly assisted a Huntingdon prisoner publish a 1985 book, *Caesar's Gladiator Pitt*. Not only was no punishment ever inflicted on the author, who proudly kept a copy by his prison bed for years—but the prison even assisted in publicizing the book!

Regarding the deadly chilling effect of having his vital legal mail seized, Mumia said he has zero confidence in

and its gains, based on collectivized property and a planned economy. The fundamental truth is that Cuba alone cannot stand as a workers state. The future of the Cuban Revolution stands in the balance of class struggle outside the Caribbean island, and this fact underlines the urgent necessity for revolutionary struggle here in the U.S., in Latin America, and elsewhere. ■

March...

(continued from page 5)

response to these successful labor/black mobilizations that swept the Klan and the skinheads and the Nazis off the streets and prevented them from carrying out their program of racist murder? "How about their virtual silence over the question of anti-immigrant racism—Proposition 187—not mobilizing the black masses along with the working class and Latinos and others to challenge this, which of course set the stage for the attack on affirmative action? Now many of these same leaders, like Kweisi Mfume of the Congressional Black Caucus, are rallying around former head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell, who was one of the chief architects of mass murder in Iraq.

"This march is about politically disarm-

ing the working class and the black masses, it's about strengthening illusions in this deeply racist, sick capitalist society and its violent rulers."

What's needed is a racially integrated working-class struggle against the right-wing assault on labor, minorities and immigrants. The labor-centered mobilizations for Mumia Abu-Jamal in New York and the Bay Area in August gave a taste of that kind of labor/black power. Hundreds of workers, black and white, marched together behind their union banners to fight for this death row political prisoner who faces execution because of his outspoken advocacy of the oppressed. Those protests, counterposed to everything Louis Farrakhan stands for, point the way forward to a class-struggle fight against black oppression led by a multiracial revolutionary workers party. *For black liberation through socialist revolution!* ■

Trap...

(continued from page 5)

Black Churches, addressing Clinton and the Congress, says: "Nobody objects to a reasonable and rational reform." Colin Powell, the butcher of Iraq, didn't grace the stage of the MMM because he chose not to. Farrakhan's overture to Powell was quite public, though low key.

In effect, a wide spectrum of the black misleaders have conceded to a return to the social relations prevalent in the "good old days" of Jim Crow. They only want, at best, a softer landing—commissions to study the matter and "reasonable reforms." And this is only to guarantee their own positions as overseers and middlemen for the racist rulers. In the "good old days," racial harmony was based on blacks "staying in their place." The black misleaders wish to negotiate their place. For the black masses, the "good old days" aren't old at all, they still live them today. We must point out continuously that the defeated civil rights movement achieved only token gains, i.e., temporary relief for the black masses with the greatest benefactor being the black middle class.

The civil rights movement with its "Farce on Washington" did hold out the

carrot of material progress and relief from suffocating Jim Crow laws. The MMM holds out a stick. Atonement and sacrifice for the masses. Illusory economic advancement and political influence for the middle-class professionals. Farrakhan's inner circle has done well milking the NOI ranks and others. This same inner circle will be the only benefactors from Farrakhan's cockroach capitalist schemes. "Uplifting the race" requires economic resources presently in the tight fist of the capitalists, who will deny welfare mothers their meager crumbs. This wealth must be seized and only the revolutionary workers party can and will do it. The MMM euphoria will be short-lived as capitalist reality reveals itself. The more important issue will be the social anger that will follow. That is why it is so important to be loud and clear about where we stand now.

I remember well the '60s/early '70s practice of nationalist racial exclusion on the U.S. left. I learned that such practices are the last refuge of demagogues and a brake on militant struggle. In the recent mini-wave of youth activism I was struck by the wide acceptance (even among black youth) of integrated action and discussion, even if they couldn't grasp class struggle. We should be on guard to protect this acceptance and be prepared to protest strongly any and all attempts at nationalist racial exclusion.

Under Jim Crow it was illegal for blacks and whites to hold meetings without segregating the meeting itself. Industrial unionism necessarily challenged these repressive laws. The civil rights revolt put the nail in their coffins. The necessity of integrated social struggle is understood by the youth that are in motion. The integrated protests around Prop. 187, affirmative action and the L.A. upheaval reveal this. For the labor movement, the only organized social movement that cuts across the race line, racial exclusionism is suicidal.

I believe we need a Labor Black League (LBL) recruitment pamphlet or supplement similar to the present youth project, "Join the SYC." I have always thought that Farrakhan would be a litmus test for LBL recruits. I believe this even more strongly now. ■

Castro...

(continued from page 3)

tendency, from our inception as the Revolutionary Tendency of the SWP in the early 1960s, has called to defend Cuba against imperialist attack and for a proletarian political revolution to oust the bureaucracy and establish organs of workers democracy.

In our article "Cuba, Castro and Che: The Mystique of the Guerrilla Road" (in the *Young Spartacus* pages of WV No. 630, 6 October), we warned:

"In this country, real solidarity with the Cuban Revolution is a fundamental duty for all opponents of U.S. imperialism. Yet rad-lib muddleheads lend themselves to the service of capitalist counterrevolution by lashing up with liberal Democrats and 'progressive capitalists' (like Ted Turner and Lee Iacocca?) who oppose the U.S. economic embargo as counterproductive (and costly to their profits), preferring to undermine the revolution through greater capitalist economic penetration. In contrast, we Spartacists link our opposition to the blockade with defense of the revolution

tion of his vicious Matrix program to drive the homeless out of city parks. And he is waging a racist, union-busting campaign against the heavily black Muni transit drivers. But it's not just Jordan; the city already has a youth curfew voted by the "liberal" board of supervisors, and all of the main mayoral candidates, including black Democrat Willie Brown, are competing to show who's "tougher on crime."

If passed, Prop. L will give broad new scope to police harassment of black and Hispanic youth—turning them over to the tender mercies of the SFPD racist cops who have brutally killed two black men in the last four months. Youth have a right to be treated as human beings, not criminals! Vote "no" on Prop. L! Down with all youth curfews!

Vote No on S.F. Prop L!

SAN FRANCISCO—A draconian new youth curfew has been put on the ballot for the upcoming November 7 election by SF mayor Frank Jordan. Under Proposition L, youth under 18 will be rounded up from public places after 11 p.m. weekdays (midnight weekends). If parents don't show up on time to retrieve them, their kids will be taken away and handed over to the Child Protective Services. Kids picked up three times in a year will become enmeshed in the cruel machinery of state repression, either through the "protective" services or the Juvenile Probation Department.

Jordan has made a crusade out of persecuting "Food Not Bombs" to stop them from feeding the growing thousands of hungry people in San Francisco's streets. This former SF police chief has launched a new edi-

Young Spartacus

Brutal Police Assault in Hidalgo

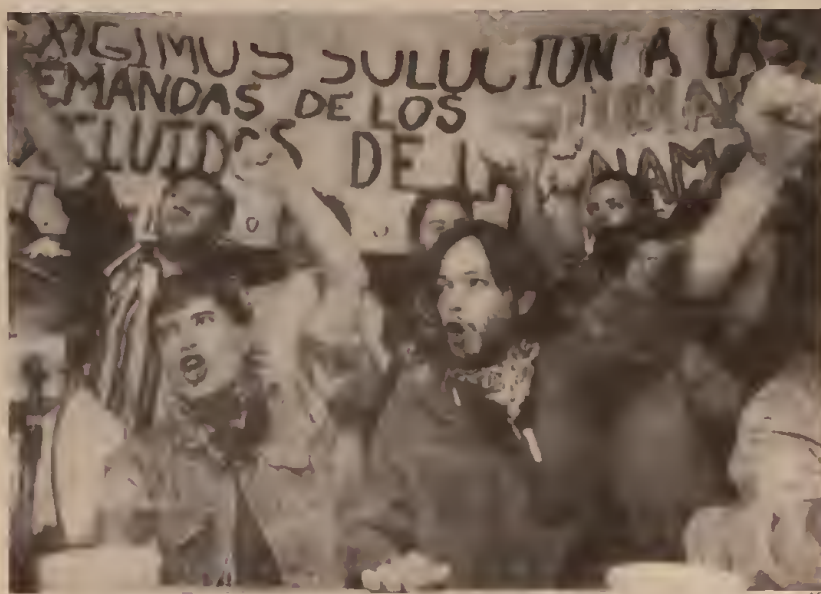
Mexican Students Fight "Elitization" of Education

The following leaflet was distributed by our comrades of the Grupo Espartaquista de México (GEM) and Juventud Espartaquista in response to the repression of student protesters in the Mexican state of Hidalgo. On October 17, a student march from the teachers' training college in El Mexe, Hidalgo, was attacked by the Judicial police (*judiciales*) and *granadero* riot police, as well as other police forces.

The bus belonging to the school was fired on by the cops, while students were in it, "until its windshield, tires and side windows were destroyed," *La Jornada* (28 October) reported.

"Then, more than 120 students, most of them wounded, were detained and held incommunicado, causing desperation for their families, who did not know if they were alive, dead or wounded. Others were tortured physically by burning their eyelids and stripping them in the cells of the Judicial Police so as to beat them and threaten them with rape. Others were beaten on the muscles, kidneys and soft tissue. After a period of 18 to 30 hours most of them were set free after they were made to sign a document stating that they were in good physical condition and promising that they would not continue the struggle for the right to education."

The Hidalgo governor's threats to "annihilate" protesters recall the 1968 Tlatelolco Massacre of hundreds of student demonstrators in Mexico City.



Thousands of students excluded from public university classes protest in Mexico City at National Autonomous University.

While "union" leaders from the ruling party (key to the system of regimenting mass organizations known as "corporatism") sealed off the 1968 student movement from most of the working class, it nonetheless managed to win significant gains in public education. As a result, access to the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) was opened up considerably; it now has about 300,000 students. The use of new rules and procedures to exclude about 150,000

applicants from UNAM this summer has led to protest demonstrations over the past several months, which the regime has answered with threats and repression.

Emergency protests called by the Partisan Defense Committee in New York City at the Consulate General of Mexico on October 23 demanded "Down with Police State Torture and Terror Against Mexican Students in Hidalgo." The Los Angeles Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth Club also organized a speak-out at the University of California at Los Angeles on October 24. The protests were covered in New York's *El Daily News* and *La Opinion* in L.A. As we go to press, reports from Mexico indicate that arrested students have been released, although the status of charges against them remains unclear, as does the fate of those reported "disappeared."

than 110 students, many of whom were wounded. There are reports of the "disappearance" of 16 students and the use of torture against those detained; 12 are being held on serious charges.

The head of the Hidalgo education system announced the expulsion of participants in the protest. Meanwhile, it was reported that Hidalgo's governor Murillo Karam "threatened that if they did not desist from their struggle, they would be 'annihilated'" (*El Dia*, 21 October). Thus this governor, who rules Hidalgo like his personal fiefdom, threatens to imitate the massacre carried out by [then president] Diaz Ordaz at Tlatelolco in 1968. This takes place in the context of threats and repression against applicants denied admission to the National University here in Mexico City.

Hidalgo Normal School students—many of them from Indian and peasant families—are fighting against cutbacks restricting education to the elite few. They are

demanding a 100 percent increase in student enrollment, more scholarships, better lodging and food. The vital interests of the working class and of students from poor families throughout Mexico are at stake in this fight against repression and against the "elitization" of education. (This drive to restrict education is directly related to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), as we noted in our October 2 leaflet on the struggle of students barred from enrolling at UNAM.) The bloody repression in Hidalgo is an attack on all those who dare to oppose the government's offensive against the working people, the right to education and democratic rights. Active, mass solidarity with the besieged students of El Mexe is clearly necessary, in particular the mobilization of support from the working class.

There must be united mass mobilizations now to demand immediate and unconditional freedom for those arrested at El Mexe, the dropping of all charges against them and fulfillment of their just demands. Education for all! From Mexico City to Hidalgo, Guerrero and Chiapas: Down with bourgeois repression! These demonstrations should be called by mass student and workers organizations (in particular the University Students Council, the movement of rejected UNAM applicants, and independent trade-union organizations like the Mexico City bus drivers, the dissident teachers movement, the UNAM and Metropolitan University workers unions and others). This fight goes hand in hand with the struggle of the students excluded from UNAM and with the university workers' battle against starvation wages—especially since the UNAM workers

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Emergency demonstration at Mexican consulate in New York City, October 23, to defend Hidalgo students.

Stop Repression in Hidalgo!
Mobilize the Power of the Working Class!
Mass United Actions
Urgently Needed to Defend El Mexe Students

The grave situation of state repression in Hidalgo demands urgent action by the labor and student movements. Today (October 21), newspapers report that 300 riot police are blocking access to the Luis Villarreal Normal School in El Mexe, where 300 students have taken refuge, while the police "detain any youth who 'looks like a student,' and stop local residents 'in order to search them.'" This is the sequel to an attack by the cops on an October 17 student march, which was broken up with tear gas, gunshots and clubbings, leading to the arrest of more

Welcome Spartacus Youth Club in Eugene

During the fall subscription drive, new readers checked out the politics of the Spartacus Youth Clubs and Spartacist League, reading and signing up for our Marxist literature. In Eugene, Oregon, a group of activists in a *Workers Vanguard* study circle sold subscriptions at the University of Oregon campus, taking part in our nationwide drive. During the subscription drive's Northern Tour, the study circle mobilized more than 40 students to attend a forum and discussion centering on Mumia Abu-Jamal's case and the fight against state repression. They capped off their work by applying to form their own Spartacus Youth Club in Eugene. At a recent West Coast educational gathering, the Eugene comrades' acceptance into membership was followed by the singing of the *Internationale*. We welcome these new members, whose coming to communist consciousness speaks very much to what the youth clubs are about.

In his application letter, comrade Lawrence, a young student and unionist, wrote that when he first met a Spartacist salesman, "I went away with only the paper, and the Spartacist pamphlets. When I read it, I discovered that the paper contained a plan to overcome the bosses." His interest in *WV* became more significant when he was able to attend a Spartacist video showing of *From Death Row, This is Mumia Abu-Jamal*. Lawrence noted that, "In the discussion which came after the video, I began to understand how race oppression and worker exploitation were two faces of the same beast: capitalism." The group's evolution

from a study circle debating Marxist views to a youth club intervening in the class struggle came out of their decision to stand for the principle that *picket lines mean don't cross*—in opposition to their own radical-liberal milieu.

Comrade Travis, who was active around the fight against National Guard recruitment on campuses and the struggle against fascist terror, had studied social theory with "Marxist" instructors. But picket-line battles taught him more than classroom lessons when he supported the OPEU (Oregon Public Employees) strike last spring. As he wrote in his application for membership:

"By the time they went on strike, I was much clearer on the fundamentals of Marxism. I tried to rally student support for the strikers by passing out petitions in my classes requesting the instructor not to hold class and make students cross the line. All in all, my Marxist professors turned out to be merely preachers as they all crossed the line."

"As I stood on the line in support of the workers, a bond formed between me and a few other students. We held true to the Marxist line as best we could. After the strike, we forged a Marxist study group. I know now that standing alone without a program is not the answer. I fully agree with the Trotskyist program as I understand it today."

What the study circle learned on the lines of the OPEU strike brought to life a point Karl Marx stated in his *Theses on Feuerbach*: "Philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point however, is to change it." The OPEU struggle led them to a conclusion drawn in comrade Paco's application letter: "World revolution can only be

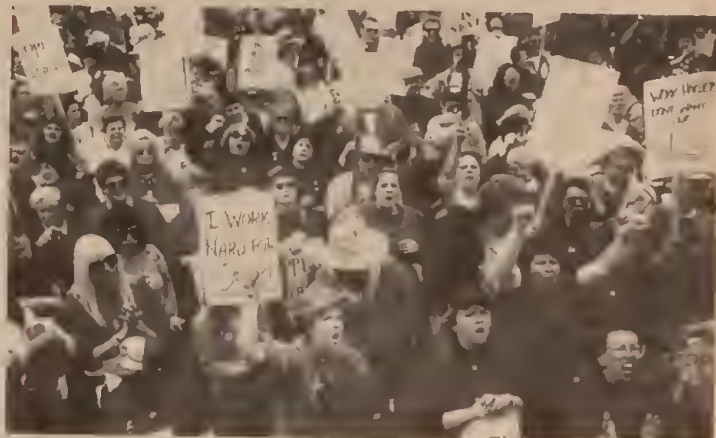
successful if it is led by a class-struggle based workers party."

Comrade Paco, who was heavily influenced by his work with women workers in the Mexican *maquiladora* (free trade) zone, particularly stressed the need for a Bolshevik workers party which "is the only means to champion the needs of all the oppressed—Blacks, Latinos, Asians, women, gays/lesbians." He wrote of the intersection of the fight for black liberation and the conditions of immigrant workers in his application for membership:

"The SL's fight for revolutionary internationalism is the only way the race ques-

tion can be answered. As a Mexican-American, Prop. 187 can only be understood and eliminated by exposing the racist nature of the state. Also, the link between the anti-immigrant hysteria and the superexploited *maquiladora* workers in Mexico can only be understood and fought against by an international revolutionary workers party. This internationalist perspective also demands the fight for women's liberation, since 85-90 percent of the *maquiladora* workers are women."

We welcome these new comrades and the founding of the Eugene Spartacus Youth Club as a school of revolutionary education and action for young communists. Join us! ■



Bette Lee/Impact Visuals

Rally of 10,000 Oregon Public Employees (OPEU). Defense of OPEU picket lines last spring was key to winning young militants in Eugene to the struggle for a revolutionary party.

Anti-Abortion Posse in Nebraska

The home of a teenager is attacked by a mob led by her boyfriend's parents. Surrounding her home, that night another mob—this time as a swarm of more than 10 cop cars—kidnaps the young woman and charges her parents with criminal neglect. Why? Because with the permission of her parents she sought an abortion. Welcome to Blair, Nebraska, where the all-sided attacks on women—under the banner of "family values" and welfare "reform"—have come home.

A year ago, the 15-year-old in Blair, after discovering she was pregnant by her boyfriend, made an abortion appointment. The boyfriend's father and stepmother, John and Cathy Tull, decided to stop the abortion by force. The Tulls and some of the boy's friends pounded on the family's door demanding to see the girl. Her father, Carl Scott, never had a chance to answer his assailants before they kicked in the door and dragged his daughter away, yelling "baby killers!" Later that night, the local cops, with the Tulls in tow, arrived after the Scotts had requested help. A deputy sheriff, who had met earlier with the Tulls, came by the Scotts' home on his own and forced anti-abortion literature into the young woman's hands.

Local authorities seized the girl in the middle of the night, dumping her at the home of strangers who were to be her foster family for an undetermined amount of time. The morning after the cops' siege at her home the county attorney interrogated the young woman, frightening her into submission and later filing a petition claiming that she was in a situation "dangerous to her life or limb or injurious to her

health," a lie used to keep her away from her family, ultimately leading to her compliance.

In the meantime, a witchhunt atmosphere was sweeping through Blair. The Scotts awoke to find flyers plastered around town proclaiming them "murderers" and "baby killers." The next day, a Washington County Juvenile Court judge held a hearing at which the county attorney filed an amended petition calling the girl's situation "injurious to her health and morals" (!) and saying she was neglected by her parents. The judge released her to her parents only on the grounds that she not go through with the abortion!

The "right" to abortion, particularly for the poor and women in rural areas, is increasingly a cruel hoax. In Blair, the "right to life" bigots (who nationwide overlap with the race-terrorist KKK and pro-death penalty rightists) were backed not only by the cops, but also the courts. Local officials, together with the reactionary mobs, conspired to force this woman to have a baby. All of this happened in the context of a frenzy of anti-abortion terror: the murders of Shannon Lowney and Lee

Ann Nichols, two clinic workers, last winter in Boston; the murder of David Gunn in 1993 in Pensacola, Florida; and the gunning down of Dr. John Britton and his bodyguard James Barrett, also in Pensacola in 1994.

Meanwhile, the bourgeois-feminist National Organization for Women (NOW) and Planned Parenthood along with the reformist Socialist Workers Party called for FBI and federal marshals to "protect" the clinics; the same government that sent agents that murdered 86 men, women and children near Waco, Texas in 1993 under the orders of NOW's hero, Janet Reno. As we wrote in "Anti-Abortion Bloodbath in Boston":

"When the liberal civil rights movement appealed for federal intervention, U.S. troops and marshals were brought into Little Rock (1956) and Birmingham (1963) to clamp a lid on organized black self-defense, while FBI agents rode along with the KKK. The whole apparatus of the capitalist state exists to enforce the oppression and exploitation of minorities and workers. They are no defenders of women's rights.... For Mass Mobilizations to Defend the Clinics—No Reliance on Cops and Troops!"

—WV No. 614, 13 January

Increasingly, the country has been under a climate of anti-abortion hysteria. The Democrats portray themselves as the "pro-choice" alternative, while the Republicans try to wipe out abortion rights altogether. But the Clinton White House has pushed legislation making it more difficult to have access to safe, legal abortion—particularly if you're on welfare—and by signing "squeal laws" has made it next to impossible for young women to get an abortion without parental consent. In the Blair teen's case, the state's excuse that 23 weeks is "too late" and that her parents were somehow negligent by helping her to get an abortion was used to intervene and sequester her.

The government has no business interfering in people's private lives! The passing of the 1994 "Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act," which states that it is a federal crime to use or threaten force against a woman seeking an abortion, obviously didn't help the Blair teenager. She was driven out of her high school by reactionary mobs and subsequently her family fled to Iowa to escape the witchhunt atmosphere of their hometown. This has only come to light because her parents filed a complaint in federal court in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Women will not be liberated short of a socialist revolution and the expropriation of the capitalist class and destruction of its oppressive institutions. Women's liberation is possible only with the revolutionary transformation of society and the emancipation of women from domestic slavery in the institution of the family. *Free Abortion on Demand! For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!*

For Free Abortion on Demand!

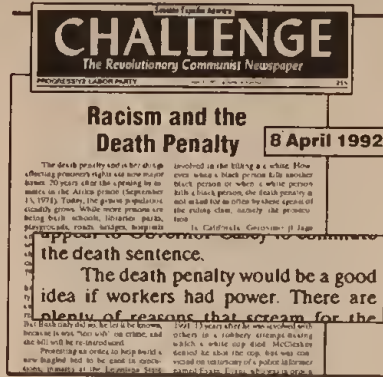
PL's Liberalism and Anti-Gay Bigotry Exposed

Howard Conference Debates Million Man March

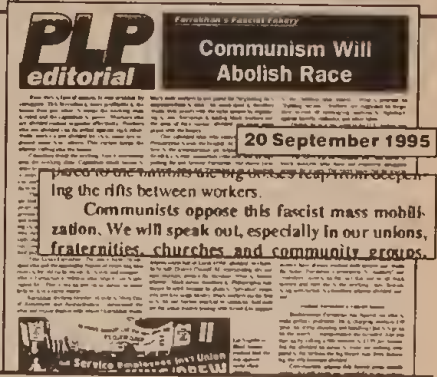
On the weekend of October 5-7, several hundred people attended a conference on race and inequity at Howard University. The main organizers, the Progressive Labor Party (PL), loudly posture as the "real red" communists. But at this confab, they expected to feed the attendees a regimen of dead dull academic crustaceans, hackstabbing Democratic Party windbags, and to top it off with PL's own unique brand of crude reformist politics. Instead, there was a raging three-way political debate which polarized the conference between supporters of PL, supporters of Farrakhan's Million Man March, and supporters of the Spartacist League (SL) and Spartacus Youth Club (SYC), who posed the necessity for integrated class struggle to defend all of the oppressed.

The opening session was supposed to address cutbacks in social programs. The conference organizers sure got an expert as their keynote speaker: Washington, D.C. mayor Marion Barry. His role is to lord it over the impoverished masses of the nation's capital like the black overseer of a vast plantation. Barry's credentials to speak on cutbacks are his own vicious policies—from slashing social programs, laying off workers, eliminating health care for the poor, to doing anything else the rulers on Capitol Hill and in the White House ask. "Hizzoner," however, was short on discussing his crimes against the people of D.C., and instead praised the Million Man March.

The march was forcefully denounced by a woman conference participant who correctly noted that the march was divisive and anti-woman. She was heartily applauded. To its credit, PL also took a hard line—at least initially—against the march, but grotesquely, because they consider Farrakhan a fascist! They denounced the march as a "fascist mass mobilization" (*Challenge*, 20 September), not recognizing that black oppression remains, as it has always been in this country, the cornerstone of reaction. Using racist and chauvinist demagoguery, a fascist movement aims to mobilize the petty bourgeoisie and more backward workers against the labor movement,



How Progressive Labor Party "fights for communism": pushing workers' death penalty and bizarre notion of mass movement of black "fascism" in racist America.



ethnic minorities and the left. There never has been and never will be a mass black fascist movement in this country. To read PL's claim of discovering this movement in white racist America is to wonder what planet they live on.

The Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth Club forthrightly opposed Farrakhan's reactionary mobilization. Against sexism and nationalism, we counterposed a program of revolutionary integrationism—to build a multiracial, class-struggle workers party to fight on behalf of all the oppressed and overthrow this racist, capitalist system and establish an egalitarian socialist society. Farrakhan, the man who wanted Malcolm X dead, is a sinister demagogue whose role is to misdirect the justified outrage of the black population into reactionary displays of "atonement" and into support of his black capitalist schemes. Farrakhan echoes the white racist ruling class, which also blames black people for their own oppression, promotes segregation, and urges the "underclass" to lift themselves up by their own bootstraps—when they don't even have boots! (See related articles, pages 4 and 5.)

Normally, PL spouts a crude class-struggle political line typified by puerile chants like, "Kick the bosses in the ass, power to the working class!" However, this is often combined with reformist appeals, from "left-center coalitions" in

the unions to InCAR (International Committee Against Racism) liberalism. Occasionally, they show a little imagination—as for example their protest against a disgusting government-sponsored conference to discuss a racist, "genetic" link to crime, where a PL/InCAR sign called for "Johs, Not Prozac."

But at this Howard conference, PL kissed a lot of bourgeois butt while censoring leftist views. At a plenary session featuring Clinton appointee to the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, Mary Frances Berry, SL speakers were cut off when they raised the need to break with the Democratic Party, the fight to defend Mumia Abu-Jamal and our program of how to fight for an egalitarian socialist society. The PL chairman was more solicitous of several bow-tied supporters of the Million Man March, who spouted pro-Farrakhan rhetoric to their hearts' content, and were then denounced by PLers from the floor.

After the session, the youth at the conference were eager to talk and read Spartacist literature. Veteran PLers tried time and again to pull people away, but that strategy backfired as many were pissed off at this attempt at political censorship. Many youth had come to the conference because they were sympathizers of PL, but they didn't know anything about PL's political history, or the fight for workers revolution beyond a couple of slogans, and were eager to learn.

Young PL supporters were particularly upset at PL's refusal to defend Mumia Abu-Jamal, the award-winning journalist and black political prisoner on death row in Pennsylvania. PL's criminal sectarianism leads them to wrongly denounce Jamal as a reactionary black nationalist unworthy of support and thus to abstain from this important international campaign to free a class-war prisoner who has fought on the side of the oppressed.

The Mumia campaign has become a worldwide struggle precisely because his case focuses all that is wrong with this racist capitalist system and galvanizes many people and organizations which share an opposition to the death penalty and racist legal lynching. The Spartacus Youth Clubs, working closely with the Partisan Defense Committee, have always insisted on the strategy of united-front defense—based on the old IWW slogan, "An injury to one is an injury to all," emphasizing the need for different organizations to join together in common action while freely proclaiming their own political views. We have

applied this understanding not only in Jamal's case, but also in defense of PL members victimized by the cops for opposing fascist marauders.

Shocking Anti-Gay Hysteria

If young PL supporters were upset about their party's abandonment of Jamal, they were genuinely shocked that in keeping with its Stalinist puritanism, PL thinks homosexuality is a "sickness,"



Washington mayor Marion Barry was a keynote guest of PL.

and refuses to allow gays into its ranks! Many people did not believe this, but when they asked senior PLers about this policy, the PLers shamelessly defended this bigotry, and even attacked the Spartacists for our principled defense of the North American Man Boy Love Association (NAMBLA) from state persecution.

During a workshop on student action against budget cuts, Spartacists were able to present our positive program for action. Lisa Martin of the Spartacist League said:

"To fight the budget cuts, students must ally with the social power of the labor movement. Around the CUNY [City University of New York] cuts last year, we called for New York labor to shut down New York in support of the students. We've also initiated united-front actions with labor to stop the Klan and Nazis and defend Mumia Abu-Jamal [applause]. The Million Man March is antithetical to this struggle. It is divisive and poisonous [howls from march supporters]. PL claims to oppose the Million Man March, but they don't defend all the oppressed. They don't defend Mumia Abu-Jamal, and they don't defend gays. What is needed is a party that is a tribune of people, and PL is not that!"

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Partisan Defense Committee initiated August 3 NYC united-front labor/black protest in defense of Mumia Abu-Jamal.

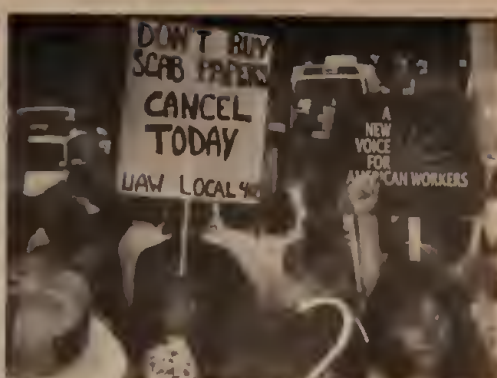
Labor...

(continued from page 1)

old refrain of American business unionism, going back to AFL founder Samuel Gompers' one-word summary of labor's demands: "More." But working people, minorities and the poor in this country need a hell of a lot more than a raise. We need to smash the union-busting assault by the capitalists and their government. We need to defeat the bipartisan assault on social programs, from welfare to health care and education. The multi-racial working class, with an increasingly important and militant sector of immigrant workers, must mobilize to stop racist attacks, from cop terror in the ghettos and barrios to California's anti-immigrant Prop. 187 and the "English only" movement nationally.

Sweeney and Trumka help build this poisonous chauvinism and racism by pushing for protectionism. "The problem," says Sweeney, "is American companies that export jobs instead of products. The solution is a union movement that fights for American workers as well as American values." No, the international working class needs unions built through class struggle in solidarity action with their working-class brothers and sisters around the world. This was the goal of the first workers international, founded in the 1860s. To defeat old-fashioned American strikebreaking, it is necessary to make common cause with Japanese and Mexican workers against the American and Japanese and Mexican bosses.

The struggle to defend the working class and minorities must be waged against the entire labor bureaucracy, which is committed to upholding capitalism and tied to the Democratic Party. We need to forge an internationalist workers party that links the struggles of



New AFL-CIO leadership—(from left) secretary-treasurer Richard Trumka, executive vice president Linda Chavez-Thompson and president John Sweeney—offers same old pro-Democratic Party policy of class collaboration. Right: Sweeney's "New Voice" pushes impotent consumer boycott strategy at Detroit newspaper strike rally.

workers everywhere against the capitalist bosses. To get rid of the boom-bust system of production for profit that produces unemployment and poverty-level wages, along with racist terror and imperialist war, it is necessary to overthrow the capitalist system through workers revolution. And the starting point is to oust the lieutenants of capital in the labor movement. As founding American Trotskyist James P. Cannon wrote in the 1920s:

"The fight for a class movement of the American workers is in the first place a fight against the capitalist ideology which dominates them. The labor bureaucrats of the AFL and the unaffiliated unions of the same type are the direct bearers of this ideology in the working class and must be fought as such. The labor bureaucracy is a part of the capitalist rationalization and war machine—its 'labor' wing."

—"Platform of the Communist Opposition" (February 1929)

Throughout Latin America, the AFL-CIO is justly known as the "AFL-CIA" for its subversion of workers organizations and the construction of "free

trade unions" under CIA control. Its government-funded "American Institute for Free Labor Development" (AIFLD) helped topple the leftist Allende government in Chile, financed anti-government unions in Sandinista Nicaragua and pro-government unions in death squad El Salvador. Financed by CIA conduits like the National Endowment for Democracy, the AFL-CIO played a major role for the U.S. bourgeoisie in pumping in millions of dollars in support of the CIA's Polish "union" Solidarność. Trumka himself was a major cog in the AFL-CIO's "cold war clock." In 1989-92, as the fate of the USSR hung in the balance, the UMW and AFL-CIO funneled in money and "advisers" to win combative miners to support U.S.-backed Boris Yeltsin.

Union Organizing and the International Economy

To pump some life back into the near-moribund labor movement, Sweeney has vowed to spend some tens of millions of dollars to sign up new union members

in an organizing drive, particularly in the Southern "sun belt." This would be a shift from the past two decades, when unions typically spent a tiny 2-3 percent on organizing work, and much of that on raiding other unions. But just throwing money at the problem won't bring the promised millions of new members into the unions. Any attempt to unionize the "open shop" South, organizing black and white workers into integrated locals, will run smack into the explosive race question. To overcome the racist poison fostered by the ruling class to keep workers divided, it will take a concerted struggle by all workers against black oppression and its enforcers, the cops and courts and their hooded fascist auxiliary in the Ku Klux Klan. In Washington, labor faces a hostile government, from the Democratic White House to the Republican Congress.

And everywhere attempts to organize the unorganized will run up against private armies of strikebreaking thugs like Vance Security, not a few of whom were

Mexico...

(continued from page 7)

union has planned an October 26 work stoppage and a strike at the end of the month. What's needed is a militant, class-struggle perspective and leadership, which could make such a mobilization an important step toward uniting all the struggles in one big fist.

In the state of Hidalgo, where auto workers and miners have a long history of struggle, workers at Dina and Sidena [large bus and steel plants] must mobilize their power, together with other sectors, in defense of the besieged students. This would strengthen and broaden their own fight against layoffs and attacks on their union contracts, and would point the way toward a proletarian counteroffensive throughout the country.

For a number of years now, the gov-

ernment has sought to reverse the so-called "massification" of UNAM, which resulted from the 1968 mobilizations, and to exclude the majority of poor students from higher education throughout Mexico. The repression in Hidalgo is part of the same bourgeois onslaught that has been sinking the working-class population into ever-deeper poverty; that launched its machinery of death against the courageous Zapatista insurgents; that seeks to smash the peasant land seizures occurring all over the southern part of the country; that threw the Mexico City Ruta 100 municipal bus drivers out into the street, imprisoned their union leaders and now persecutes the strikers at Tres Estrellas de Oro bus line. Now they seek to formalize this wave of repression through a draconian "anti-crime law."

Under the aegis of NAFTA, the Mexican bourgeoisie and its senior partners on Wall Street are slashing real wages at the same time as they attack the most

basic social services; they want workers to foot the bill for the devaluation and brutal inflation brought on by their capitalist system. This offensive means increasingly harsh attacks on all the oppressed, the poor peasantry, Indians, working women and youth, and everyone's democratic rights.

The working class is the only force with the social power and interest to unite the oppressed and exploited in a counteroffensive capable of defeating the bourgeois assault. In 1968 the government succeeded in isolating the students from the bulk of the working class, and repressed them in a hail of bullets. But today, when the regime is shaken by one crisis after another, it is possible and necessary to destroy the corporatist chains that bind the Mexican proletariat. This means breaking with the bourgeoisie, both the ruling PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party) and the PAN (the rightist National Action Party) as well

as Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas' bourgeois nationalist PRD (Party of the Democratic Revolution), that neo-PRI that helps isolate struggles and seeks to subordinate every sign of discontent to the politicians and institutions of the capitalist state. What's lacking is the revolutionary leadership; the urgent task is to forge a revolutionary, internationalist workers party to unchain the power of the working class, uniting it with its class brothers and sisters north of the Rio Grande and throughout the world, to eradicate poverty, inequality and bourgeois repression through socialist revolution. As part of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), the Grupo Espartaquista de México and the Juventud Espartaquista are dedicated to this task.

For united mass mobilizations to defend the students of El Mex! Freedom now for the arrested students—Drop all charges against them! ■

Howard...

(continued from page 9)

A raging debate ensued, centering on the Million Man March and our program for integrated working-class struggle. PL members squirmed in their seats but not a single one of them got up to answer the Spartacist speaker about the need to defend Jamal and gays. At the conclusion of the workshop, people mobbed the Spartacist speakers, wanting to denounce PL, defend PL, protest PL's bureaucratic attempts to shout us down, and talk about gay rights and the Million Man March.

The entire conference had a surreal quality, with PL fawning over their Democratic Party guests one minute, and thundering about the "fight for communism, now!" the next minute, while never seeing the contradiction. Meanwhile a useful political discussion continued among the young people present over what strategy to fight for black liberation—a debate which PL cadre simply chose to ignore. The conference concluded with a plenary session on "con-

sensus issues"—at a conference where there was a consensus on nothing! PL rammed through a resolution for a "day of action" in the spring. A day of action on what? Who knows, but you can bet it won't be on the fight to free Mumia Abu-Jamal, defend gay rights, or build a revolutionary workers party that defends all of the oppressed!

Such a program is counterposed to the politics of PL, which routinely vacillates between reformist liberalism and sectarian adventurism—courting black Democrats here, posing as the best streetfighters of the fascists there. Progressive Labor originated as a left split from the Communist Party, USA in the early 1960s, but they've always been marked by eclectic Stalinism, despite subjectively revolutionary elements among their membership.

PL turned to Maoism as an alternative to the blatant reformism of the CP and its Moscow mentors, tailing the anti-Sovietism of the U.S. rulers. For a time, this gave PL the de facto franchise as the only Maoist group recognized by China in the U.S. However, PL got

caught in a real contradiction: on the one hand they adhered to Maoism, the Chinese brand of Stalin's schema for class collaboration; on the other they had subjective impulses to be proletarian revolutionists. In the late '60s, PL eventually broke with Maoism, but not Stalinism, and never has moved toward its anti-thesis, the communist road of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky.

Progressive Labor is so thoroughly imbued with grotesque Stalinist views that they believe under communism homosexuality (which they consider a disease of capitalism) will be wiped out, with everyone rejoicing in happy monogamous family lives. They trumpet the totally discredited theories of virologist Peter Duesberg which blame AIDS on "deviant behavior" (*Challenge*, 20 November 1991). Thus they echo the Moral Majority bigots in the belief that America must be "morally regenerated" to total conformity—by force.

This line runs parallel to their view that the death penalty "would be a good idea if workers had power" (*Challenge*, 8 April 1992). One wonders who would

be the first targets of state-sponsored execution under PL's "communism." Gay couples? The "socialist society" these people want to see isn't the kind anybody would want to live in and is the polar opposite of what communists fight for: the liberation of humanity in all spheres of life. However, this outlook is right up the alley of mainstream black Democrats, who in large part have bought into the bourgeoisie's "family values" crusade to morally straitjacket the population. No wonder then that PL caters to these black misleaders when they come to Howard, the nation's most prestigious black university.

In contrast, the Spartacus Youth Clubs seek to break the illusions young people have in the Democratic Party, the twin party of capital. As an action school for young revolutionaries, we win revolutionary fighters to the side of the oppressed in action, for instance, in campaigning for the freedom of Mumia Abu-Jamal. We fight for a revolutionary party which champions all the oppressed—blacks, gays, women, Latinos and Asians. Join us! ■

active as mercenaries in U.S. imperialism's contra war in Central America (in which the "AFL-CIA" acted as the "labor" auxiliaries). *Business Week* bragged last year that "over the past dozen years, in fact, U.S. industry has conducted one of the most successful antiunion wars ever, illegally firing thousands of workers for exercising their right to organize." Union-busting has turned into a *billion dollar* industry. The result: unionized workers are now a *smaller* portion of the workforce than they were at the end of the 1920s—and less than when the Wagner Act was enacted in 1935.

Today Sweeney & Co. talk of replicating the mass union organizing of the late 1930s, but the explosive growth of the Congress of Industrial Unions was the result of convulsive social struggles far beyond anything the "new-old guard" at the AFL-CIO has in mind. It is a fundamental myth perpetrated by the labor bureaucracy, from CIO founder John L. Lewis on down, and one accepted by much of the left, that Franklin D. Roosevelt gave labor the "right to organize." But Section 7A of FDR's 1933 National Recovery Act and the subsequent Wagner Act were designed to derail militant labor struggle and confine it in the straitjacket of capitalist legality. The CIO was born out of the three 1934 citywide general strikes (Minneapolis, San Francisco and Toledo), all led by "reds," and the powerful industrial unions were built through militant class-struggle tactics like the sit-down strike, which *all* wings of the labor bureaucracy abhor today.

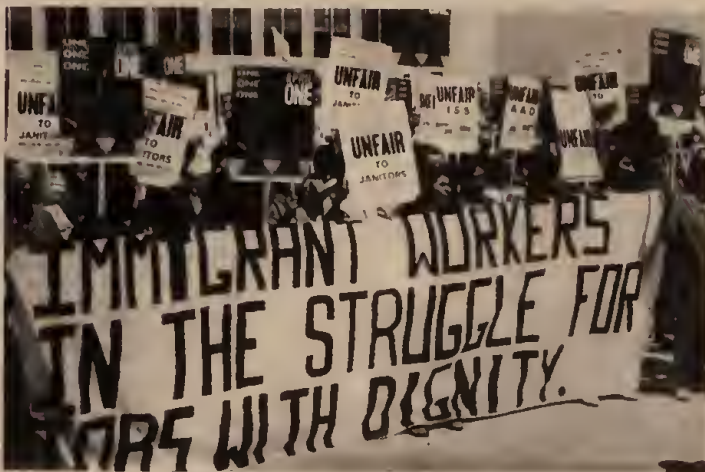
The response of the AFL-CIO tops to the battering received by labor has been a bureaucratic reshuffling. There has recently been a series of union mergers, with more in the offing. The International Ladies' Garment Workers and the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers joined to form UNITE. Latest to announce a merger were the UAW, the Machinists and the United Steelworkers, who just took in the Rubber Workers earlier this year. This will form a union of almost two million workers—but the UAW, IAM and USWA used to have a million members *each*. The *New York Times* confidently predicts: "Nor will substitution of a mega-sized union do anything to stop the 20-year slide in real wages.... The international market increasingly arbitrates compensation." In fact, the catastrophic decline in the American labor movement over the past 20 years is directly related to significant structural changes in the U.S. economy, especially its manufacturing sector.

The sharp losses experienced by corporate America in the 1974-75 world slump exposed the declining competitiveness of U.S. industry compared to its Japanese and West European rivals. American capital then sought to jack up the rate of exploitation by shifting manufacturing operations to low-wage countries in East Asia and Latin America and to the "open shop" South and Southwest within the U.S. These geographical moves were then used to pressure the AFL-CIO bureaucrats into conceding giveback contracts and two-tier wage systems, scrapping union safety and work rules, etc. The growing integration of Mexico—where manufacturing wages are even lower than in Taiwan and South Korea—into the American industrial economy culminated in the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1994. In the first year of NAFTA, the real hourly wages of the 77 million production workers in the U.S. declined another 3 percent.

While shifting production abroad, corporate America has engaged in relentless layoffs at home. Unions can no longer as in the past make gains in periods of economic upturn by taking advantage of employers' increased demand for labor. Today, periods of economic upturn are marked by rising corporate income and profits combined with stagnant or even falling wages. Corporate downsizing and government cutbacks have forced millions of workers to survive by taking marginal, part-time, temporary or home-

based jobs, the kind of jobs that weren't unionized even in the 1940s and '50s.

As long as capitalism exists, the capitalists will move capital—and jobs—to where the profits are greatest. This means that a fighting labor movement must extend beyond heavy industry and government to include the burgeoning sweatshop and minimum-wage service jobs. Moreover, the increasing integration of the North American market under NAFTA, while intensifying the superexploitation of Mexican workers, has also opened increased possibilities for sharp class struggle against the North American bourgeoisie. In auto, for example, a strike at the GM plant in Ramos Arizpe, Mexico reverberates in the Midwest and Canada. The capitalists' "just in time" production without stockpiling inventory makes them extremely vulnerable to strike action. But the protectionism and anti-immigrant racism of the labor bureaucracy stands as a *roadblock* to this kind of united class struggle.



SEIU "Justice for Janitors" organizing drive in downtown Los Angeles mobilizes heavily immigrant minority workers against racist bosses.

While the California AFL-CIO came out against anti-immigrant Prop. 187 last year, it was the labor federation that campaigned so hard for the employer sanctions provision of the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act, in order, in their racist language, to "stem the tide of illegal immigrants" (*AFL-CIO News*, 22 August 1994). The labor tops have echoed the call of liberal Democrats like Senators Feinstein and Boxer for more Border Patrol agents and for militarizing the border. Much is being made of the rapid growth of the SEIU in recent years, especially among immigrant workers. A lot of this rise has come from mergers. And where immigrant workers have waged bitter fights to win unions they have been bureaucratically hamstrung by the SEIU tops. The well-known SEIU Local 399 in Los Angeles, a showcase of the "Justice for Janitors" campaign, has been placed in trusteeship by Sweeney after immigrant activists defeated the incumbent bureaucracy in a union election.

There have been some significant shifts in the composition of the union movement of late that are indirectly reflected in the infighting among the bureaucrats over the AFL-CIO's top slot. *Time* magazine (30 October) highlighted "The Battle to Revive the Unions" and noted "a new militancy is taking hold in the workplace." The *Wall Street Journal* (1 September), which follows labor with particular interest from the other side of the class line, headlined "Some Unions Step Up Organizing Campaigns and Get New Members." The article began: "The U.S. labor movement has been doing something surprising lately: winning a few." It noted that in the last two years, union membership actually went up by 3 percent to 16.7 million. The new recruits are mainly immigrant Hispanic and black workers in service industries and low-wage sweatshops. This will eventually reflect itself in the labor bureaucracy. But the promotion of women, black and Hispanic officials in the name of diversity will not in itself

turn the unions into "fighting machines" for the working class. The key is program.

For a Class-Struggle Workers Party!

In Leon Trotsky's final work, "Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay," left unfinished when a Stalinist assassin struck him down in August 1940, he noted that when the American CIO was created, "the new 'leftist' trade union organization was no sooner founded than it fell into the steel embrace of the imperialist state.... In the United States the Department of Labor with its leftist bureaucracy has as its task the subordination of the trade union movement to the democratic state, and it must be said that this task has up to now been solved with some success." The rising CIO bureaucracy tied the working class to its class enemy through the agency of the Democratic Party. Through support to their "own" bourgeoisie in the Second World War, and especially through the

Advocates' Doesn't Advocate a Labor Party," *WV* No. 622, 5 May), the purpose of such outfits is to act as a *pressure group on the Democrats*. This was exactly what *Labor Notes* (October 1995) advocates in calling for supporting Sweeney as a lesser evil:

"It would make a lot more sense for unions to rattle a few sabres rather than kiss and make up with the Democratic Party and be taken for granted all over again.... Why not lend support to the founding convention of Labor Party Advocates to throw a real scare into phony friends of labor next year?"

Or as LPA founder and longtime Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers top official Tony Mazzocchi, made clear from the get-go: "Organizing Labor Party Advocates is not going to retard the rebirth of the Democrats. On the contrary, it will encourage it."

Bourgeois politics/elections have never offered anything more than the illusion of change—today the illusion is gone. A taste of the kind of struggle that is needed to revive the unions and forge a class-struggle workers party was seen in the labor-centered demonstrations last August initiated by the Partisan Defense Committee in the campaign to save political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, on death row in Pennsylvania. These demonstrations won the support and active participation of a number of unions, including Mail Handlers, AFSCME, SSEU, 1199 Hospital Workers, Teamsters and others in New York, and in the Bay Area the ILWU longshore and warehouse workers, SEIU, Typographical Workers, Postal Workers and Teachers unions.

Together with the picket-line battles against cops and scabs in the Detroit newspaper strike, such actions indicate that there is movement at the base of labor which the Sweeneys and Trumkas are working overtime to tame and contain. The fight to mobilize the unions in the struggle to abolish the racist death penalty is critical as we seek to build a workers party that acts as a "tribune of the people," in Lenin's classic phrase. With a generation of minority youth condemned to "life" in the ghetto and the prison, or death by "legal lynching" and cop execution, with welfare mothers facing a genocidal budget ax, a fighting labor movement can be built only by championing the cause of all the oppressed.

To mobilize labor in struggle for its class interests must include the fight for a shorter workweek at no loss in pay, to fight unemployment and the bosses' union-busting drive for "two-tier" contracts; for union defense guards against the scabherders, for mass picketing and plant occupations to win strikes instead of bowing to the bosses' laws; for labor/black mobilization to stop the KKK and other racist terrorists who are an immediate obstacle to any serious attempt to organize the South; for full citizenship rights for all immigrants, legal or "illegal," to unite the working class regardless of its origins; for labor action against imperialist marauding, from the Persian Gulf and Haiti to Bosnia; for a political mobilization of the working class to build a workers party that fights for a workers government to expropriate the capitalists and establish a planned economy.

As Trotsky noted more than half a century ago, such a program of transitional demands, challenging the capitalist system itself, "is not only the program for the activity of the party but in its fundamental features it is the program for activity of the trade unions." For the working class to mobilize in struggle against the all-sided economic and social and racist attacks launched against it by the capitalist rulers of this country requires a leadership. In the first instance, this means that there must be a *political* fight within the labor movement itself to sweep away all wings of the pro-capitalist labor traitors. As Trotsky wrote: "In the epoch of imperialist decay the trade unions can be really independent only to the extent that they are conscious of being, in action, the organs of proletarian revolution." ■

When newly elected AFL-CIO president John Sweeney promised to bring back the "militancy" of hygone years, he wasn't exactly preaching class war. Sweeney wants to revive the civil disobedience tactics of the 1960s civil rights movement, not the powerful strike strug-

PART ONE OF TWO

gles of the 1930s—some mass rallies in place of mass picket lines, pacifist sit-ins instead of sit-down strikes, consumer boycotts rather than secondary boycotts by transport workers declaring struck products "hot-cargo." Sweeney and his running mate Richard Trumka of the United Mine Workers (UMW) may make a grandstand play of getting themselves arrested for sit-ins on bridges, but certainly not for leading masses of unionists in defiance of anti-picketing injunctions and no-strike laws. Not only have they always refused to do this, they have smashed "wildcat" actions by workers going up against the bosses' laws.

Last month an activist in the Detroit newspaper strike pointedly asked: why do strike leaders think it's OK to illegally sit in the roadway and get arrested but not to illegally build mass pickets and stop the scabs? Throughout the bitter struggle in Detroit union leaders have derailed the strikers' impulse to wage hard class struggle into defeatist protest actions aimed at winning over liberal public opinion. And now, with hundreds of scabs holding the strikers' jobs, Sweeney and Trumka have announced an impotent nationwide "corporate campaign" aimed at the struck newspapers' biggest advertisers. In a dire struggle crying out for sympathy strikes, Sweeney mounts a PR bid for "public" sympathy.

The Detroit strike is following a blueprint pushed for years by reformist and liberal pundits who preach that the "old-fashioned methods" of labor struggle don't work anymore. It has in fact become a liberal maxim that strikes are dead. Instead, in league with the Democratic Party, they want the AFL-CIO to "turn workers' rights into a civil rights issue" to be resolved through Congressional action. This is the message promoted by labor lawyer Thomas Geoghegan, who two decades ago shared an office in the UMW International with Rich Trumka. In his revealing book, *Which Side Are You On? Trying to Be for Labor When It's Flat On Its Back* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1991), Geoghegan paints a vivid picture of the AFL-CIO under former chieftain Lane Kirkland—"a dumb, stupid mastodon of a thing," so out of touch it doesn't even "know where to put the pickets." The self-fulfilling "no strike" perspective has produced hundreds of yuppie labor lawyers, like Geoghegan, whose job is to advise union bureaucrats on the bosses' anti-strike laws.

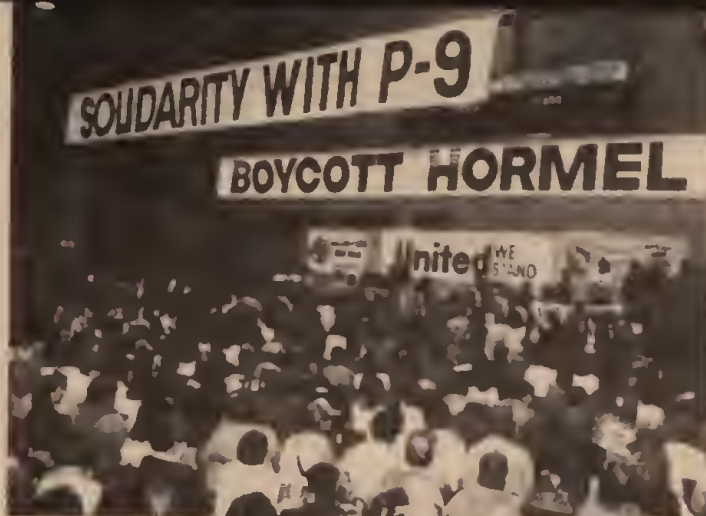
What is bankrupt is not the "traditional" strike but the union bureaucracy that constantly misleads and sabotages it. Encouraged by the labor tops' curtailment of class struggle, America's capitalist rulers in the Republican and Democratic parties pursue an all-sided campaign of racism, regimentation and austerity directed primarily at the heavily minority, urban working class. The defeats suffered by labor fuel the growth of the Ku Klux Klan and other race-terrorist defenders of a decaying profit system, who pose a deadly threat to blacks and labor. The routine police violence exposed by the Fuhrman tapes, the gun-control frenzy that triggered the Waco massacre, the imperialist attacks on the Bosnian Serbs—these are signatures of the rapacious American capitalism that the AFL-CIO bureaucracy has loyally served.

The AFL-CIO's sellouts have spawned a proliferation of labor "advisers" push-



Feds, Finks and Fake Militants—Recipe for Defeat

Labor: Stop Playing by the Bosses' Rules!



Meat packers clash with cops during 1985 strike against Hormel (top). "Corporate campaign" diffused militant union struggle, as Local P-9 roving pickets were abandoned in favor of consumer boycott.

ing no-strike nostrums, like mosquitos multiplying around a stagnant pool. Their proposals for "the new unionism"—corporate campaigns, in-plant strategy, civil disobedience, labor law reform, etc.—all accept the framework of capitalist legality. The lesson they draw from the almost unbroken string of union defeats over the past two decades is to put forward a strategy of retreat. Moreover, what passes for a socialist left in this country has almost uniformly embraced such diversions, and the bureaucrats on the make who push them.

For years, union leaders have sought to blame the decline of labor on the Reagan and now Gingrich Republicans. Since the AFL-CIO brought out the union troops to get "right to work" Clinton elected in 1992—only to get kicked in the teeth over NAFTA, NLRB decisions, health care and "striker replacement" legislation—many have soured on the Democrats. But even when they bandy about talk of a "labor party," this is only a pressure tactic on the parties of capital. The umbilical cord tying the American labor bureaucracy to the Democrats has produced defeat after defeat for the unions, while simultaneously ghetto and barrio youth are condemned to starve and thrown into prison by the millions.

The gutting of the American labor

movement over the last 20 years—barely 15 percent of the work force is now unionized—has gone hand in hand with the rise of racist reaction. The AFL-CIO bureaucracy—refusing to organize the "open shop" South, protecting the racist job-trusting building trades, attacking the Panthers and other "black power" radicals in the 1960s—contributed greatly to the political climate leading to Clinton/Gingrich's America. What the working class needs is not rehashed pressure tactics, but a revolutionary class-struggle leadership with a program to mobilize the working class, both economically and politically, to fight in its own interests against the ruling class and its government. This means above all complete independence from the capitalist parties. Labor's historic ties to the Democratic Party are the main strategic obstacle to class struggle in this country. The revival of a labor movement in this country, especially through organizing the South and Southwest and the sweatshops exploiting "illegal" immigrant workers, requires uniting black, Hispanic, Asian and white workers in the struggle against racial oppression and anti-immigrant chauvinism.

Ideologues of "New Unionism"

For 20 years Geoghegan has aided various "progressive" union figures, from

Arnold Miller, installed by the Labor Department to run the United Mine Workers (UMW) in 1972, to Ed Sadowski, the Chicago-based "insurgent" candidate of the 1977 United Steel Workers (USWA) presidential election, to the Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU), who in 1991 helped the Justice Department place Ron Carey—and themselves—in the leadership of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT). But Geoghegan, who describes himself as a "New Deal Democrat," ultimately believes labor's fate depends upon favorable labor law reform in Congress. Barring that unlikelyhood, he pronounces, "The strike is dead.... This is post-strike America." He moans, "I think we are at the end of the union era."

Geoghegan argues that post-World War II labor legislation—like the Taft-Hartley and Landrum-Griffin Acts—eliminated the right of labor to organize, in contrast to the 1930s when "the workers could run wild" and millions were recruited into mass industrial unions. The absurd notion that class struggle was easier in the 1930s is an all-purpose alibi for today's labor fakers, who pledge to fight by any means necessary...as long as the bosses' politicians in Congress approve! In reality, union organizing in the 1930s was often a matter of life or death. During the CIO's attempt to organize Republic Steel in Chicago in 1937, police opened fire on fleeing unionists, killing ten and wounding 40 others. When the workers won, it was only through confronting and defeating the cops, National Guard and private company goons—for example, the famous "Battle of Deputies Run" in the 1934 Minneapolis Teamsters strike, led by Trotskyists.

Today, all union bureaucrats—including the most "progressive" among them—reject and oppose such class-struggle tactics. With their no-fight panaceas, these "progressives" are the main characters of Kim Moody's book, *An Injury to All: The Decline of American Unionism* (Verso, 1988). Moody, a longtime social democrat, is an editor of *Labor Notes*, a Detroit-based think tank and news magazine for "reform"-minded union bureaucrats. He calls for the replacement of narrow business unionism with "a social unionism that would seek to deal with capital at the level of industry and finance, in the political arena, and even internationally." Moody's vision of a West European-style social democratic movement on U.S. soil is not only unappealing—at a time when working people throughout Europe are suffering massive job losses and pay cuts—but downright ominous: from Berlin to London, social democrats and Labourites today are fueling the chauvinist frenzy against immigrant workers.

Moody's program of non-struggle is revealed by his choice of heroes: Oil Chemical and Atomic Workers (OCAW) bureaucrat Tony Mazzocchi, founder of Labor Party Advocates (LPA), who "argued that the traditional strike weapon was ineffective" in the oil industry; New Directions, the tame, pro-Democratic Party "opposition" in the United Auto Workers (UAW), which promotes "in-plant" pressure tactics in place of strikes; and Ray Rogers, whose corporate-campaign strategy mobilizes the "financial power" of unions to "pressure" intransigent bosses.

A few years ago Rogers and New Directions head Jerry Tucker began advising Local 7837 of the United Paperworkers (UPIU) in Decatur, Illinois, in its battle with the corn-processing Staley Manufacturing Co. Until last January Rogers ran the local's corporate campaign, a futile attempt to scandalize a company whose only concern is profits. Tucker advised on the

local's "in-plant strategy"—he did, that is, until the company locked out Local 7837 in June 1993. And they remain locked out two and a half years later! Defeats are nothing new to this bunch; Rogers helped organize one of labor's biggest setbacks of the 1980s.

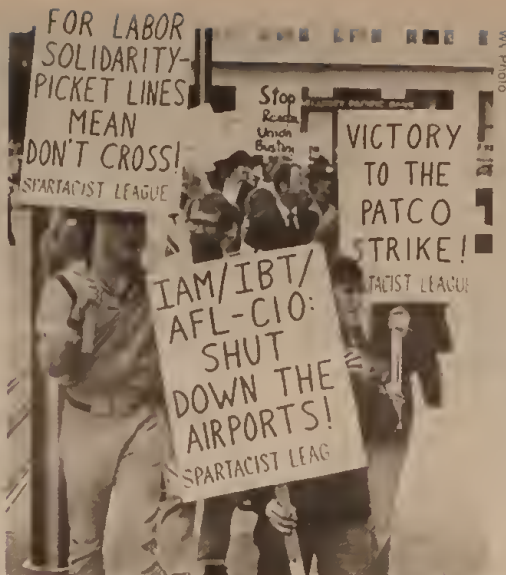
Kim Moody's *An Injury to All* was written in the wake of the 1985-86 Hormel strike in Austin, Minnesota, in which Rogers played a leading role as adviser to Local P-9 of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW). P-9's roving pickets electrified much of the U.S. labor movement by shutting down key Hormel plants. However the strike was lost after Hormel reopened its flagship Austin plant with scab labor. Rogers' corporate-campaign strategy—which relied on public relations, consumer boycotts, stockholder pressure and legal maneuvers—diverted P-9 from militant action to halt the scabbing. It was this misleadership that opened the way for Hormel, abetted by the treacherous UFCW International, to break the strike, disband P-9 and fire hundreds of workers. Yet Moody calls P-9's fight "a model of what unionism can be."

Another enthusiast for the losing strategy imposed on the P-9 strikers is Peter Rachleff, a Minnesota history professor who conducts "inside strategy" seminars for New Directions. Rachleff, who participated in support work during the P-9 strike, has written his own account and analysis of that struggle, *Hard-Pressed in the Heartland: The Hormel Strike and the Future of the Labor Movement* (South End Press, 1993). Rachleff brushes aside the devastating defeat inflicted on the strikers and exults that they "were able to win their dignity and self-respect. They developed empowering organizing skills, built a movement culture, and developed a critical awareness of the social forces arrayed against America's working people." Rachleff's account actually devotes more space to Local P-9's "Boycott Hormel" *concerts* than to the roving pickets that nearly set the company on its ear! He sourly concludes, "More than any other traditional labor tactic, the strike was a casualty of the changed climate of the 1980s." Rachleff's message: Local P-9 might have won...if it hadn't gone on strike!

U.S. Government: Tool of the Bosses

If many workers buy this no-strike defeatism, it's only because all the AFL-CIO dinosaurs (including the "progressives") have let so many promising working-class struggles go down the drain, from PATCO to Phelps Dodge, from Hormel to Caterpillar. They've been losing, and losing big, for nearly two decades now. But what do the "new unionists" offer as an alternative to hard class struggle? All their newfangled tactics invariably boil down to the old reformist aim of pressuring the government to give labor a boost.

Professor Rachleff feebly complains that employers get an unfair advantage from the "slow justice" meted out by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) as well as "tax government enforcement" of labor laws! He whines: "The federal



Spartacist League in SF solidarity demonstration after Reagan fired striking PATCO air controllers. Refusal of labor tops to shut down the airports doomed strike to defeat.

government clearly chose sides in favor of management" against P-9. But the government didn't have to "choose sides," because it is itself the *command center of capitalist rule*. The courts, the police, the NLRB, Congress—these are agencies of a capitalist state machine whose purpose is to nurture and protect the system of profit and private ownership. Many Teamsters who went on strike last year mistakenly thinking of cops as "union brothers" got a bloody lesson in the role of the state when the police repeatedly attacked picket lines to beat and arrest the most militant strikers. And Jesse Acuna, a Latino trucker from L.A. who was nearly mowed down by a scab during the three-week freight strike, is still in jail serving five years for the "crime" of defending his picket line.

You don't need a Marxist worldview, just a pair of eyes, to see that the NLRB functions "like a bloodless bureaucratic death squad," to use Geoghegan's description. This observation is repeatedly confirmed in *Confessions of a Union Buster* (Crown Publishers, 1993) by Martin Jay Levitt, who spent nearly two decades helping companies drive out organized labor:

"It so happens that the NLR Act, the bible of collective bargaining [that established the NLRB], can be a union buster's best friend. In its complexity the nation's fundamental labor law prevents endless possibilities for delays, roadblocks, and maneuvers that can undermine a union's efforts and frustrate would-be members."

Now a speaker at AFL-CIO functions, Levitt in his former career racked up a record of 200 successful anti-labor drives against only five "losses." He describes union-busting as a growth industry employing 7,000 attorneys and consultants and pulling down well over \$1 billion a year. And this army of mercenaries is aided every step of the way by the capitalist state, from a "plodding legal system" that obstructs union organizing to laws like Landrum-Griffin, which pry open labor's internal functioning to government inspection—"union busters couldn't have asked for a bigger break," says Levitt—to federal mediation, a cop-

out favored by union bureaucrats, which Levitt frankly terms "bullshit."

Labor Reformists: Tools of the State

The capitalist state has erected a whole structure of labor laws designed to hamstring the unions and prevent militant class struggle. *Those who rely on the government as a substitute for mobilizing the proletariat in struggle inevitably wind up as agents of the state against labor*. This was the case of the



August 1975: Over 100,000 coal miners wildcatted in defense of their right to strike, signed away by "reform" union leader Arnold Miller.

UMW's Arnold Miller, Geoghegan's first employer in the labor movement.

Geoghegan came out of law school just as Miller was coming to power in the United Mine Workers. Miller's election in 1972 was engineered by the U.S. Labor Department, which sought to replace the utterly corrupt and discredited regime of Tony Boyle with a leadership better equipped to control and discipline an increasingly bitter and restive workforce. Almost uniquely in the left, the Spartacist League gave no support to Miller, who, far from being answerable to the UMW membership, would "keep faith only with the Labor Department/liberal Democrat cabal which installed

him at the head of the UMW" ("Labor Department Wins Mine Workers' Election," *WJ* No. 17, March 1973). Geoghegan took a job on the legal staff at UMW headquarters in Washington.

Though Geoghegan was to leave the UMW before the notorious sellout of the hard-fought coal strike of 1977-78, his account of the intervening years provides a rich illustration of the union's international struggling to clamp a legalistic lid on rank-and-file miners who instinctively turned to class-struggle methods. For instance, in 1975 the Miller leadership asked U.S. Customs to block the importation of South African coal—a protectionist appeal cloaked in anti-racist garb. But when a coal-laden ship from South Africa actually landed in Mobile, coal miners throughout Alabama went on strike and shut down the entire port of Mobile! "I have never seen so many injunctions all at once," complains Geoghegan. "It took three or four years to dispose of all the litigation." The International was outraged; Sam Littlefield, the UMW district president who called this action, was "off his rocker," according to Geoghegan. A few months later Littlefield was murdered in his Washington, D.C. hotel room, amid rumors of "assassination."

Wildcat strikes broke out in the coal fields during 1975 and 1976 over the right to strike:

"It would start at a single mine, and then go like a forest fire from state to state. Soon it would be a national strike..."

"The entire Union was like a roaming mob...and back in Washington, we had

nothing to do with it. *Nothing*. "The second one (1976) was a strike against the federal courts. The picket signs even said, 'Strike Against the Federal Courts'..."

—Which Side Are You On?

Geoghegan explains that the courts were issuing injunctions against these strikes because they violated the no-strike clause in the UMW contract, but he omits that it was Miller who gave up the right to strike over grievances in the 1974 contract. These wildcats were waged against the government and its agents in the Miller administration, which worked hand in glove with the courts to end them.

Miller's success in curtailing the UMW's fighting power put the union on a downward course, and it still hasn't hit bottom. "Trumka became president in 1981," writes Geoghegan. "And today the UMW is probably the stablest, most adult, most democratic union in all of labor." The reality is that today UMW members produce less than 30 percent of the coal mined in the U.S. Trumka's latest contract sanctions non-union mines, guts on-the-job safety and leaves miners facing federal frame-up charges from the ten-month "selective strike" of 1993 twisting in the wind. With Clinton's Justice Department bearing down on miners, and the UMW International refusing to use the union's power in his defense, West Virginia miner Jerry Dale Lowe still faces eleven years in prison. The mine bosses certainly have little to complain about.

[TO BE CONTINUED]



Streeky/Camera 5



Prisons...

(continued from page 16)

explosion in the women's prison population is the war on drugs."

This war has been pushed no less fervently by Clinton's Democrats than by Gingrich's Republicans. It was the Democrat-controlled Congress in 1986 that passed the draconian anti-drug law which put the teeth in Reagan's "Just Say No" crusade. And when the government commission recommended equalizing the crack and cocaine sentences last April, Attorney General Janet Reno loudly denounced the decision. The burgeoning and blackening of the prison population has become the barometer of political success for the two parties of racist reaction. Here is Clinton's campaign theme for the '96 elections, as outlined by political adviser James Carville:

"I came here to make a better America. And, by the way we measure a better America, it is better. There are more people working than on the day I took office. There are more people in prison cells than on the day I took office."

More people in prison cells—this is the "promise" of capitalism in Clinton/Gingrich's America! And while there may be more minimum-wage McJobs flipping burgers, in fact the massive

In the same period as the prison population went up by a million, the number of manufacturing jobs went down by a million. And while real wages for all workers have plummeted 20 percent in the past two decades, among black men who have not graduated from high school the plunge in annual earnings between 1973 and 1989 is an astounding 50 percent. Indeed, the Sentencing Project report reveals that the chief victims of the "war on drugs" are not lumpenized ghetto youth but working-class blacks, whose rate of incarceration increased sixfold in the 12 years from 1979. Some of these young black workers were forced to turn to drug dealing to supplement median incomes of \$800 a month.

Echoing the racist yuppie in the White House are a host of black misleaders, from Louis Farrakhan to Jesse Jackson. While cynically bemoaning the number of young black men in prison, the sponsors of Farrakhan's Million Man March ardently boost the racist "war on drugs" which has put them there. In virtually identical language, Farrakhan and Jackson railed against the "proliferation of drugs and guns" in building the march, while Farrakhan's cosponsor and former NAACP head Benjamin Chavis declared, "The measure of success of the march will be...if black-on-black crime will go down, if drug addiction and alcohol abuse will go down."

Jackson & Co. enlisted as lieutenants in the "war on drugs" from the outset. Grotesquely dismissing Klan lynchings in the South, Jackson railed in 1986 that "ropes never killed as many of our young people as the pushers of drugs," while Joseph Lowery's SCLC obscenely called to "Resist the new lynch mob...Killer Krack Koke." In New York City, they were joined by FBI fink Al Sharpton and nationalist demagogue Sonny Carson, who organized anti-drug vigilante gangs as auxiliaries to the racist cops. And a lot of the left followed in their wake, typified by the Stalinist puritans of the Progressive Labor

Party, who stomped around Brooklyn trying to shut down crack houses like junior G-men while vituperating that "the U.S. has become the land of drugs" (*Challenge*, 23 July 1986).

The indictment leveled against the Reagan administration and the narcs by liberal academic Michael Tonry in his book, *Malign Neglect—Race, Crime, and Punishment in America* (Oxford University Press, 1995), applies no less to the Democrats and the black bourgeois misleaders:

"The war's planners knew exactly what they were doing...."

"Urban black Americans have borne the brunt of the War on Drugs. They have been arrested, prosecuted, convicted, and imprisoned at increasing rates since the early 1980s, and grossly out of proportion to their numbers in the general population or among drug users. By

Prestier/Washington Times

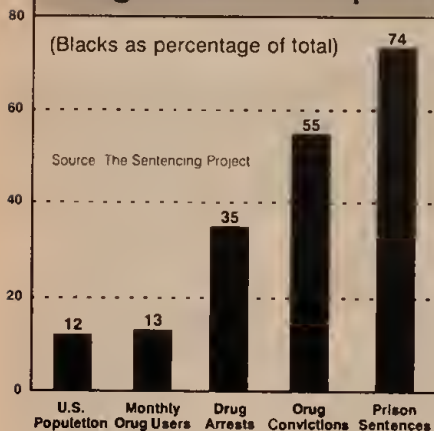


Gingrich, Clinton and Reno push American capitalism's solution to mass unemployment—racist cop terror in the ghettos and barrios under the guise of "war on drugs."

AP photos

Racist "War on Drugs" Targets Black People

(Blacks as percentage of total)



increase in police-state repression in the inner cities has gone hand in hand with rampant unemployment—often disguised by simply eliminating such "discouraged workers" from the workforce. In a recent article in the journal *Social Justice* (Summer 1995), criminologist William J. Chambliss wrote:

"The loss of jobs and increasing impoverishment of the lower classes increase the threat of riots, rebellions, and demands for a redistribution of wealth through education and job retraining. During these periods, social control through criminal law always increases in an effort to defuse, control, and preempt riots and rebellions. An army of police officers that systematically harasses, arrests, and imprisons the most vital elements of the community (the young men and women) is a time-honored tradition designed to control 'the dangerous classes.'"

every standard, the war has been harder on blacks than on whites; that this was predictable makes it no less regrettable."

Among other things, Tonry points out that the massive escalation in the "war on drugs" has been facilitated by the recruitment of blacks and Hispanics to big city police departments. Yet the call for more black cops and "community control" has been an insistent demand by black politicians and fake leftists. Meanwhile, Jesse Jackson and his fellow Democrats spearhead the drive for ever more stringent gun control, aimed at reinforcing the capitalist state's monopoly on armed force. Look at what happened to former NYC transit worker James Frazier: after surviving a near-murder by the cops, Frazier was convicted earlier this year on felony gun possession charges.

Horrified by the devastating impact of the "war on drugs," some liberals argue for lower sentences, more drug treatment facilities and shifting resources from repression to jobs and education. But the cops and courts are imprisoning more and more blacks and Hispanics precisely because this capitalist system has no other future to offer them. The slashing of funds for education, the abolition of welfare, the malign neglect of the ghettos and barrios in the face of epidemics of AIDS and TB, are all part of a genocidal policy whose ultimate end-product is the elimination of a whole layer of the black population for whom the capitalist rulers no longer have any jobs. As we

noted nine years ago:

"Black parents are anguished at the sight of their teenage children's lives wasting away. But the cause is not the particular form that escapism takes in this period, but the vicious cycle of joblessness, drugs and crime, promising a future of despair for a generation of ghetto youth. What kind of life is it where the 'alternatives' are welfare, jail, or the army?"

—"Drug Witchhunt," WV No. 410 (29 August 1986)

While much of the reformist left climbed aboard the anti-drug bandwagon, the Spartacist League raised the call, "Labor: Smash Drug Witchhunt! Stop the Ghetto Roundups!" (WV No. 414, 24 October 1986). We called on the unions to resist mandatory drug testing, which has become a pervasive method to scapegoat particularly transportation workers for the bosses' failure to maintain safety. As we pointed out at the time, *decriminalization* would take much of the profit and violence out of the drug trade, which is intimately tied to the state apparatus, from the cop on the beat and narc squads right up to the CIA and its various tinpot dictators and Mafia collaborators around the globe. While hundreds of thousands of black youth are thrown into prison, the big-time criminals are the people running this country. It will take a workers revolution led by a multiracial vanguard party to put them out of business and lay the basis for a planned socialist economy which can provide jobs, education and a decent future for all. ■

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Talladega, Alabama federal prison, October 20, the day after revolt against Congressional decision upholding racist sentencing disparities for crack versus powder cocaine.

AP

Quebec...

(continued from page 16)

and the ethnic vote." Promising to win "next time," Quebec's bourgeois-nationalist leaders will now seize on their narrow loss to scapegoat minorities and increase pressures aimed at pushing out anyone who is not white and francophone (French-speaking).

All this underlines the necessity for Marxists to advocate the independence of Quebec as the means to cut through the national divide which sets worker against worker along national lines and poisons the prospects for anti-capitalist class struggle (see "Independence for Quebec!" WV No. 629, 22 September). We print below a leaflet issued on October 25 by the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyiste, Canadian section of the International Communist League.

On October 30, the population of Quebec will vote for or against sovereignty. In the present circumstances, this is a clear referendum on independence. The oppression of the Québécois, who form a separate nation with their own distinct language and culture, is a cornerstone of capitalist rule in Canada. From the British Conquest of 1759, to the crushing of the Patriote Rebellion in 1837, to the War Measures Act of 1970 and repeated threats to "use the sword" against any move to independence, the Anglo-chauvinist rulers have kept Quebec forcibly confined in a "united," and necessarily oppressive, federal state.

The government in Ottawa has made clear it is not about to agree to any amicable new "partnership" with Quebec. Liberal prime minister Chrétien, who sat in the Trudeau cabinet when Ottawa sent the army to occupy Montréal in 1970, threatens to refuse to recognize a majority Yes vote as a mandate for independence. And the New Democratic Party (NDP) provincial premiers Romanow and Harcourt (and ex-premier Rae in Ontario) have joined the Liberals, Tories (Conservatives) and Preston Manning's viciously anti-Quebec Reform Party in a grotesque chauvinist front against Quebec's national rights.

The prospects for anti-capitalist class struggle in Canada today are deeply poisoned by nationalist bigotry. Spawned by the oppression of the Québécois under the heel of the unitary Canadian state, and fueled by the bourgeois nationalists of the Parti Québécois (PQ) and Bloc Québécois (BQ) who seek to be exploiters of their "own" working class, these animosities have bitterly divided the working class of English Canada and Quebec. As revolutionary internationalists who seek to clear the road for common struggle by the workers of both nations against their common capitalist enemy, the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyiste calls for an independent Quebec. Thus we believe that class-conscious workers in Quebec should vote Yes in the coming referendum.

Since the triumph of the "Quiet Revolution" in the 1960s and '70s, the development of Quebec society has been sharply away from assimilation into English-dominated Canada and toward



June 1993 union demonstration in Montréal against pay cuts.

separation. The late 1980s/early '90s saw a vicious chauvinist uproar in English Canada against the Meech Lake Accord's simple affirmation that Quebec is a "distinct society." This was followed by another surge in separatist sentiment in Quebec, leading to a massive vote for Bouchard's *indépendantiste* BQ in the 1993 federal election. In the same election, workers in whole regions of English Canada backed the anti-Quebec hogs of Manning's Reform Party.

National chauvinism has divided the workers, undermining class struggle in the face of ever more sweeping attacks on wages, jobs and social programs from both Ottawa and the provincial governments. The union movement is increasingly riven: today not only all three Quebec labor federations but even the Quebec wings of countrywide unions like the Auto and Postal Workers support independence. We advocate independence for Quebec as the means to *break down* national and chauvinist antagonisms. Only through separation into two independent states can it be made clear to the workers of both nations that their real enemy is not "the French" or "les Anglais," but their "own" capitalist rulers.

Defend Quebec's Rights, Defend Native Rights!

While Chrétien and his lieutenants brandish the sword of "Canadian unity," nationalist leaders Bouchard and Parizeau want independence in order to more fully exploit the workers of Quebec, and lord it over Native peoples and other minorities. Bouchard's grotesque comment about the need for more children "of the white races" in Quebec speaks volumes about the racist mindset of these bourgeois nationalists, mirroring the anti-immigrant and anti-Native hysteria fanned by the rulers in English Canada.

Aboriginal people in particular are in the racist rulers' crosshairs. The PQ's draft sovereignty bill pledges to uphold Quebec's "territorial integrity." These are code words for denial of the rights of the Cree, Inuit and other Native peoples who make up the overwhelming population of northern Quebec and have made clear that they do not want to be part of an independent Quebec. The capitalists in both Quebec and English Canada are determined to hold onto this resource-rich region, whose rivers feed the hydroelectric power stations that are the mainstay of the modern Quebec economy.

The labor movement must defend Native rights against today's all-sided racist offensive. In particular, that means upholding the right of the aboriginal populations of the north to regional autonomy and to decide their own fate, whether that be in Quebec or a rump Canada. But

we emphasize that, in either case, the capitalist ruling class will continue to oppress and brutalize the Native peoples. We fight for an egalitarian socialist society which can alone redress the centuries-long oppression of the aboriginal populations.

Quebec and the Left

A correct stance toward the national question in the Canadian state today is decisive for those who would fight for working-class unity and a socialist future. But in both English Canada and Quebec, most of the left is in thrall to either Quebec nationalism or—far worse—to Anglo chauvinism.

The NDP, right-wing social democrats who seek to manage capitalism on behalf of Bay Street, are by no means alone in appealing to prop up the oppressive federal state. The Communist Party, for example, has stayed true to form in calling for a No vote, issuing yet another "urgent appeal for a united Canada" which calls for a "new, equal and democratic union."

Then there are the International Socialists (I.S.), who in 1992 called to vote in favor of (then prime minister) Mulroney's Charlottetown referendum, which aimed to reinforce the chauvinist status quo of a "united" capitalist Canada. On 20 September, *Socialist Worker* came out for a Yes vote in Quebec's sovereignty referendum, albeit with spurious arguments which attempted to dodge the question of independence. Then the I.S. did a 180 degree about-face. In the next issue (4 October) they wrote:

"We have to let them [Quebec workers] know that they are welcome in Canada. We need them in our struggles. "We must demand that our government negotiate with Quebec in good faith. We must demand that [federal finance minister] Martin and Chrétien abandon all threats and agree to a new economic and political association."

The fact that self-proclaimed socialists could portray the Anglo-chauvinist capitalist rulers in Ottawa as "our" government says just about all there is to say about where the I.S. is coming from. Their plea for Chrétien to "negotiate" a new "economic and political association" is simply a call to refurbish the existing, necessarily oppressive capitalist state.

A small Maoist group in Montréal, Action Socialiste (A.S.), raises the call to "Don't Vote Yes!"—which, they explain, means you should vote No, abstain, boycott, or whatever else you want. A.S. claims that this is the way to "rebel against the capitalists" of Quebec. But beyond the fact that most Québécois capitalists currently oppose independence, A.S. willfully ignores the reality of national oppression in Quebec—and that

this oppression has produced deepgoing national divisions which sharply undercut prospects for proletarian struggle in both nations. Behind their left rhetoric stands *de facto* support to the oppressive federal status quo.

Even worse, a leaflet issued by the tiny Bolshevik Tendency in Toronto calls for a No vote while nowhere mentioning—much less opposing—the national oppression of Quebec. Three years ago, the BT refused to vote No to Mulroney's Charlottetown gambit. Their statement calling for abstention failed even to defend Quebec's *right* to independence. Now they are quick to say No to Quebec separation, claiming, in the face of all reality, that English Canadian and Québécois workers show a "considerable desire for unity."

The BT flatly denies that there has been an upsurge of chauvinism in English Canada over recent years, or that the national divide has served to stifle working-class struggle throughout the Canadian state. Instead they conjure up a fantasy world where Québécois workers retain the militancy of the 1960s and early '70s—militancy which was in fact spawned in large part by opposition to national oppression—and continue to spark joint class struggle across Canada. The BT's position isn't so much self-delusional as an expression of their *disdain* for any kind of struggle against special oppression. In the real world, their call for a No vote puts them in a united front with the chauvinist Canadian ruling class.

Despite ritual genuflection to the right of self-determination and appeals to the Quebec working class to "unite and fight," from the Communist Party on down these organizations end up capitulating to the Anglo-chauvinist status quo. As we wrote in the latest issue of *Spartacist Canada* (No. 105, September/October 1995), "Only by standing forthrightly against the nationalism of an oppressor nation can the proletarian vanguard claim the moral authority to call on workers of the oppressed nation to fight their 'own' nationalist leaders, who seek to solidify their place among the exploiters and oppressors."

Toward Socialist Revolution

Our advocacy of Quebec independence has nothing in common with that of the various "left" apologists for nationalism. While calling for a Yes vote, organizations like the Communist League and the Gauche Socialiste group (Quebec supporters of the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat) provide a left cover for the bourgeois nationalists of the PQ and BQ.

Rejecting the elementary proposition that there should be equal language rights for all, including francophones (French speakers) in English Canada and anglophones in Quebec, these groups support restrictive and undemocratic legislation like the PQ's French-unilingual Bill 101. Far from fighting for a revolutionary working-class alternative to the nationalists, three years ago Gauche Socialiste even tried to form a joint youth group with the PQ. Meanwhile their co-thinkers in English Canada, Socialist Challenge, support the NDP, who are ferocious enemies of Quebec's national rights!

The task of Marxist revolutionaries is not to ignore or minimize the realities of national and racial oppression—the stock-in-trade of the social democrats and most fake-leftists—but to put forward a revolutionary program and perspective which can overcome them. Through advocating independence for Quebec, we seek to get the national question "off the agenda": to lay a basis for redirecting the workers' consciousness and struggle against their "own" capitalists, whether in Ottawa and Toronto's Bay Street financial district or Quebec City and Montréal's Rue St-Jacques. Our fight is for a *revolutionary workers party* which can rally the multiracial, binational working class against all forms of capitalist exploitation and oppression, in the struggle for international socialist revolution. ■

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Gingrich, Clinton, Farrakhan Push Sinister "War on Drugs"

Prison Revolt Against Racist Congress Drug Vote

On October 20, prisoners at five federal penitentiaries erupted in outrage against a Congressional vote to uphold the 100-to-1 sentencing disparity for crack versus powdered cocaine. Some 14,000 inmates, almost all black and Hispanic, languish behind bars in federal prisons solely because of the mandatory five-year minimum sentence for crack possession. After quelling the revolt by inmates in Alabama, Illinois, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania and Tennessee, the government responded with a punitive lockdown of the entire federal prison system. Prisoners have been restricted to their cells, given cold meals in paper bags and barred from seeing visitors, making phone calls or speaking to the press. The only exemptions to this vindictive measure are the "minimum security" facilities reserved for those convicted of yuppie "white collar" crimes like embezzlement and insider trading.

Immediately, the feds started looking for a "conspiracy." Faced with the spectre of another Attica—the 1971 prison uprising in upstate New York, drowned in blood by Governor Rockefeller—they had good reason to be worried. Yet the elements who provoked these nationwide prison riots are in the corridors of power in Washington. "I know they were watching it on C-Span," said Juanita Hodges, head of a prisoner advocacy organization in Atlanta. "All during the Congressional debate, I was receiving telephone calls from brothers in prison who were watching developments. The violence was because of Congress's vote" (*New York Times*, 24 October). Conditions in the prisons are being made increasingly harsh, from the reintroduction of chain gangs to the elimination of grants for college study. But while prisoners are not allowed to study or leaf through *Playboy*, they can watch them-

selves getting screwed by Congress!

This dramatic political protest action is a measure of the desperation felt by the ghetto population in the face of a genocidal drive by the racist capitalist rulers. As huge numbers of black youth

are swept off the streets and herded into prison hellholes, the ghetto revolts of the '60s are being reenacted in the jails and penitentiaries. Four months ago, death row inmates at Huntsville, Texas staged a hunger strike and protest against the

massive speedup in the rate of legal lynching. Now the federal prison system has exploded in seething anger over the astronomical—and growing—rate of incarceration for black and Hispanic youth as a result of the "war on drugs."

The overwhelming four-to-one House of Representatives vote, the first time a recommendation by the government's own Sentencing Commission was ever rejected, underlined the flagrantly racist character of the "war on drugs." It takes 500 grams of powdered cocaine to secure the same five-year minimum sentence as 5 grams of crack. As a prisoner support group acerbically noted on the Internet last month following a vote in the House Judiciary Committee, "What do you think the drug of choice for those politicians and their families is?" Laura Murphy, director of the American Civil Liberties Union, commented, "How can you go to an inner-city family and tell them their son is given 20 years, while someone in the suburbs who's using powdered cocaine in greater quantities can get off with 90 days' probation" (*New York Times*, 28 October).

Since 1980, the prison population in this country has tripled, topping 1.5 million, with blacks and Hispanics accounting for three out of every four new inmates. On any given day, over 800,000 young black men—one out of every three—find themselves ensnared in the criminal "justice" system—either in prison or on probation or parole. Between 1986 and 1991, the number of black women sent to state prisons on drug offenses climbed more than eightfold. And 75 percent of minority women in prison are mothers. In a report issued last month by the Sentencing Project, Marc Mauer and Tracy Huling concluded: "The key factor behind this

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Ed Kashi

Since 1980, racist "war on drugs" has tripled U.S. prison population, with blacks and Hispanics accounting for three out of four new inmates.

Quebec's Referendum: Acid Test for the Left

Break the Grip of National Chauvinism—Independence for Quebec!

On October 30, the population of Quebec voted narrowly against secession from Canada in a referendum organized by the separatist Parti Québécois (PQ) government. The No side eked out its victory by a razor-thin 50.6 to 49.4 percent in an extremely heavy turnout. About 60 percent of French-speaking Québécois cast Yes ballots for "sovereignty," while the English-speaking and immigrant minorities, both concentrated in Montréal, overwhelmingly voted No.

When polls showed support for the

separatist forces surging in the final week of the campaign, the capitalist money markets spoke out loudly in favor of "Canadian unity." The Canadian dollar went into free fall, and the Toronto Stock Exchange had its biggest one-day drop in six years. Airline companies and the government-owned Via Rail slashed fares by up to 90 percent to bring thousands of people from English Canada to a flag-waving "unity" rally in Montréal on October 27.

In the run-up to the referendum, federal prime minister Jean Chrétien warned that the government would not recognize the legitimacy of a narrow Yes majority. But now, with the No side having won by the slimmest of margins, Ottawa insists that the result is definitive and that Quebec's place in Canada is effectively resolved.

In fact, the referendum has resolved nothing. The outcome has only deepened and exacerbated the poisonous

national division in Canadian society. There will be a further chauvinist backlash against Quebec from English Canada, especially in the West. Meanwhile, Quebec itself is deeply and bitterly polarized. In Montréal, crowds of No and Yes supporters threw stones and traded punches as they chanted "Canada, Canada" or "Québec, Québec." Immediately after the vote, PQ premier Jacques Parizeau launched a vicious attack on immigrants, telling his followers they had been beaten "by money

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