

Mandela Regime Cracks Down on Black Labor

The "New" South Africa



Jodi Bieber

T.J. Lemon

Striking black municipal workers protesting in downtown Johannesburg last September were met with brutal repression by "new" apartheid police.

In Anglo American's giant Vaal Reefs gold mine, a runaway locomotive crashes down into an elevator cage, killing over a hundred black miners. In rural KwaZulu-Natal, a white landowner, guarded by police, uses his tractor to pull down the mud and cow-dung hut of a family of black tenant farmers. Immigrant workers from Mozambique and other neighboring states are routinely rounded up by police and deported back across the border. As striking black municipal workers take to the streets of downtown Johannesburg, they are met by police firing tear gas canisters and stun grenades. Such are some scenes from the "new" South Africa since Nelson Mandela was elected its first black president a year and a half ago.

Of course, significant changes have taken place at the political level. Open white-supremacist rule based on police-state terror has been replaced by a "power sharing" arrangement between the African National Congress (ANC) and the former white ruling National Party of F.W. De Klerk. The legal structure of apartheid—the passbooks, the rigid segregation of the Group Areas Act, the impoverished bantustan "homelands"—has been dismantled. The establishment of an ANC-led Government of National Unity naturally awakened the expectations of the black toilers of radical improvements in their conditions of life.

But increasingly bitter black workers and unemployed youth are saying that nothing has changed in their jobs, their townships, their homes. Much, however, has changed in the lives of their leaders. A few thousand ANC cadre—

Down With Neo-Apartheid Rule! For a Black-Centered Workers Government!

now become parliamentarians, government officials, corporate executives, as well as top union bureaucrats—have jumped aboard the "gravy train," huying BMWs and Pierre Cardin suits and moving into posh, formerly white-only suburbs. Black workers see some of their comrades of yesterday literally growing fat since they're now eating meat three times a day. Yet these very same people are telling the impoverished masses they have to be patient in waiting for housing, electricity, running water and a decent education for their children!

The white ruling class entered into the "power sharing" deal with the expectation that the ANC and closely allied South African Communist Party (SACP) would use their immense political authority to restore a semblance of bourgeois order without seriously threatening the whites' wealth and privileges. The township revolt in the mid-1980s undermined the apartheid system: effective control of the segregated black cities like Soweto and Alexandra passed into the hands of popular committees generally supportive of the ANC; rents went unpaid for years as did charges for electricity and water and property taxes.

However, the development of a powerful and combative black workers movement posed a far more fundamental threat to the rule of the masters of the Jo'burg stock exchange. Formed in 1985, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) quickly became one of the strongest and most militant labor movements in the Third World. This was signaled by the great gold mine strike in 1987, the largest in South African his-

tory. On the shop floor, it became commonplace for workers to walk out in solidarity when any worker was fired or otherwise victimized by management.

In South Africa, it is recognized that the ANC is not a unitary movement; people speak rather of the ANC/SACP/COSATU "tripartite alliance." This is a *nationalist popular front* in which the black proletariat is bound to their exploiters and oppressors through the bourgeois-nationalist ANC. Here is how Amrit Manga, a labor columnist for the pro-ANC *New Nation* (29 September 1995) describes "the challenge for the alli-

ance—to balance the needs of all South Africans, the rich and the poor, without substantially compromising the interests of either group"! And in South Africa, the rich are white and the poor are black or "coloured" (mixed-race). Whites own 87 percent of the land and 90 percent of the productive wealth, and have an average income ten times that of blacks.

To balance the interests of the rich and poor in South Africa is a "challenge," as Manga puts it, which the ANC *cannot* meet. For the moment, the Randlords and their senior partners in Wall Street and the City of London are relying on the political authority of Mandela & Co. rather than the armed fist of the state to prevent and suppress black labor, township, student and other social struggles. However, De Klerk recently told his coalition partners that he could have used

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Workers Vanguard Interview

**Mumia
Abu-Jamal
Speaks
from
Death
Row**

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WV Photo



Down With Police-State Repression in Peru!

Last November 30, some two dozen people were seized in a raid by the Peruvian political police, DINCOTE, in a residential district in Lima. Five members of the Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) were killed in a six-hour firefight. Surrounded by government forces, the remaining members of the rebel unit surrendered, including a top MRTA commander, Miguel Rincón. Also arrested in the sweep was Lori Berenson, 26, a Latin America solidarity activist from New York. On January 11, those arrested were sentenced to lengthy terms in prison, including life imprisonment for Rincón, Berenson and two others.

The Túpac Amaru movement, named after a descendant of the Incas who rose in rebellion against Spanish colonial rule

in the late 1700s, is a Guevarist rural guerrilla group politically sympathetic to left-wing parties in the popular-front opposition. Over the last decade, it has mainly struck at military installations and foreign-owned businesses, in distinction to the Maoist Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) movement, which has often launched murderous attacks on workers and peasants unions as well as armed clashes with the MRTA. Hundreds of MRTA supporters have been thrown into Peru's dungeons, along with thousands jailed as alleged Sendero militants.

The military-backed government of Alberto Fujimori intensified its draconian security crackdown after the president dissolved the Congress in 1992 and instituted brutal police-state measures. Prisoners accused of "terrorism" are rou-

tinely tortured, taken before secret military tribunals, denied any legal defense, and sentenced by unseen judges. The Fujimori regime and the Peruvian military are heavily backed by Washington, despite occasional run-ins between their respective "anti"-drug forces and notwithstanding the "human rights" rhetoric of the Clinton administration. The fact that in this case an American citizen was seized has produced some liberal protest where normally the Peruvian military butchers carry out their dirty work outside the glare of international publicity.

The workers movement internationally must denounce these vicious sentences and demand that all the victims of this rightist "civilian" dictatorship be freed. The Partisan Defense Committee issued the following protest statement on January 15:

Embassy of the Republic of Peru
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Ambassador:

On January 11, twenty-two members and alleged supporters of the leftist guerrilla Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement were sentenced to decades in prison by Peru's special military courts. Among them was Miguel Rincón, Túpac Amaru's second in command, and Lori Berenson who was charged with treason and sentenced to life. We demand freedom for Miguel Rincón, Lori Berenson and all victims of right-wing government repression.

As Ms. Berenson so eloquently announced at her sentencing, her "crime" is "to worry about the subhuman conditions in which the majority of this population lives." That majority of the



New York Times

Lori Berenson, sentenced to life in prison by Peruvian military court.

population has been the victims of brutal massacres at the hands of Peru's military, heavily financed by the U.S. for its so-called "war on drugs." With the blood of thousands on their hands, the generals and colonels were recently given a blanket amnesty by your government, including those responsible for what is considered one of Peru's most notorious human rights cases, the kidnapping and murder of nine La Canuta University students and a professor suspected of being supporters of the Shining Path.

Commentators in this country have
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TROTSKY

socialist revolution in history. Lenin's terminal illness and death greatly aided a bureaucratic political counterrevolution led by Stalin under the nationalist dogma of building "socialism in one country," which ultimately laid the basis for the restoration of capitalism nearly seven decades later. But the fight for the Bolshevik program of world socialist revolution was carried on by Trotsky and the Fourth International, and is continued today by the International Communist League.

Iskra (The Spark), as most of our readers know, was the paper founded by Lenin in 1900.... *Iskra* made its first appearance at a time of rise in working-class activity, when the spontaneous labor movement was running ahead of its conscious political organization. The ideas of economism—that is, of limiting the political work of the Social Democrats—were being propagated by an influential group of leaders. The Social Democratic movement of the time consisted of loosely connected circles, and was lacking in a uniform program and cohesive organization. Lenin dedicated *Iskra* to the task of uniting the political movement and overcoming the opportunist doctrines of economism....

First of all he called for the formation of a fighting organization: "Work for the establishment of a fighting organization must be carried on under all circumstances, no matter how 'drah and peaceful' the times may be, and no matter how low the 'depression of revolutionary spirit' has sunk. More than that, it is precisely in such conditions and in such periods that this work is particularly required: for it would be too late to start building such an organization in the midst of uprisings and outbreaks. The organization must be ready when the moment arrives." These words were true for tsarist Russia thirty years ago, and they are no less true for America today. Even now it is necessary to prepare for the future day.

The organization he projected was to be a *political* organization; in other words, a party. Lenin was an irreconcilable foe of all eclecticism, narrow-mindedness, and localism. The movement had to be united on a national scale; it had to invest all its detailed activities with a sweeping perspective of revolutionary overthrow....

The article "Where to Begin" was a brief synopsis of the views he was to elaborate a few months later in his famous pamphlet *What Is to Be Done?* In this pamphlet, which became a cornerstone of Bolshevism, Lenin settled accounts with the economists and with the revisers and "critics" of Marx. He elucidated the limitations of trade unionism with a profound insight which the whole history of international syndicalism has completely vindicated. He outlined the role of the party—extending and concretizing Marx's theory of the vanguard—and brought forward for the first time the project of a body of *professional revolutionaries* who would devote their lives wholly to the revolution and take upon themselves the leadership and direction of the entire movement.

—James P. Cannon, "Lenin and the 'Iskra' Period" (March 1931)



LENIN

WORKERS VANGUARD



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Defend NAMBLA!

In the latest installment of a years-long witchhunt against the North American Man/Boy Love Association (NAMBLA), just before midnight on January 9 a New York City police "vice" squad broke down the door of NAMBLA member Roy Radow's apartment, arresting him and his friend Clark Inwald for "endangering the welfare" of a 12-year-old boy. The youngster was in the apartment because his mother is a friend of Inwald's and let her son stay there after school and on weekends. But all it took was an anonymous tip from a nosy, bigoted neighbor for the cops to stage their outrageous invasion of Radow's home. The youth insists there was no sexual contact—even the cops admit there is no evidence of this—and his mother steadfastly denies he suffered any harm. So the NYPD has now hit Radow, a former school psychologist, with an additional charge of "obstruction of governmental administration."

The lack of any evidence whatsoever against Radow and Inwald hasn't stopped the gutter press from spreading vicious smears against NAMBLA, which advocates repealing reactionary "age of consent" laws. A *Daily News* (11 January) headline blared, "Pedophile Charged." The next day, an editorial in Rupert Murdoch's right-wing rag, the *New York Post*, demonized NAMBLA, claiming, "it's time for authorities to begin seeing NAMBLA for what it is—a child-molestation club, not a collection of oddballs."

A similar cop-media campaign against NAMBLA in 1993 was led by former WNBC-TV reporter John Miller, who went on to become a gun-toting "press information" officer for the NYPD. Miller made his name with an "investigative report" retail-

ing bogus charges from "undercover cops" that NAMBLA advocates child molestation. Like the current *Post* editorial which advised the cops to look for a list in Radow's apartment to reveal if any of NAMBLA's 1,500 members are employed by the school system, in 1993 NBC's Channel 4 broadcast the names, faces and addresses of NAMBLA school employees—an open call for firings, and a set-up for violent attacks against NAMBLA members.

As we wrote then, this was "a cruel attack against a vulnerable group, one which is ostracized even by most self-proclaimed radical homosexual activists.... Attempts to portray sex between older and younger people as equivalent to child molestation are aimed at enforcing social conformity and reactionary sexual mores, and are in no way related to protecting the interests of youth" (WV No. 571, 12 March 1993).

The state's persecution of NAMBLA is part of a broader effort at government enforcement of a puritanical sexual code which deems all homosexuality "deviant." Attempts by "mainstream" gay organizations to isolate NAMBLA have helped fuel this reactionary climate, where pregnant teenagers need "parental consent" for abortion and sex education, condom distribution is banned in schools, and hysterical charges of "sex abuse" result in the persecution of day-care workers and teachers—a campaign that began with witchhunting homosexual teachers.

The Spartacist League defends NAMBLA against governmental snoops and cops seeking to regulate private, consensual sexual acts. We say: Stop the witchhunt of NAMBLA! Drop the charges against Roy Radow and Clark Inwald!

Longshoremen in U.S., Canada, Australia “Hot Cargo” Scab Shipping

International Solidarity with Liverpool Dock Strike

A lesson in labor solidarity: when members of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) saw three picketers on the Newark, New Jersey docks on December 19, they got the message and refused to cross the line. The Atlantic Container Lines (ACL) ship *Companion Express* had earlier tried to unload its cargo in Baltimore, but when picketers showed up there, too, the Baltimore ILA also honored the line. And when the ship moved on to Norfolk, Virginia, it got the same treatment.

The pickets represented 500 dock workers in Liverpool, England, members of the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU), who since September have been engaged in a bitter fight against union-busting by the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company, which sacked hundreds of the workers for honoring a picket line. In response to their appeals for international support, longshoremen in Australia, New Zealand and Canada also refused to touch ACL containers, and dock workers in Sweden and Spain have vowed to do likewise. In “hot-cargoing” ACL ships, these workers have resurrected a couple of basic principles of the class struggle: *Scab goods are too hot to handle! Picket lines mean don't cross!*

These actions breathed new life into the struggle in Liverpool, where the local Labour Party administration has presided over devastating layoffs and cutbacks in social services. The London *Guardian* (20 December 1995) noted, “For an industrial cause widely dismissed as hopeless, the dockers' campaign has succeeded in calling on a reserve of international solidarity which is causing significant damage to their employer.”

The Liverpool dock strike takes place amid a growing wave of labor struggle

throughout Britain and against a backdrop of intensified racist terror against blacks and immigrants. As our comrades of the Spartacist League/Britain emphasize in a special *Workers Hammer* supplement (12 January), excerpts of which

picket line mounted by the Liverpool dockers. Protests are mounting against the brutal, racist Asylum and Immigration Bill. Vauxhall [auto] workers are hanning overtime and balloting on their claim, after chucking out the manage-

Liverpool dockers have waged bitter four-month battle against union-busting.

Christopher Thomond



are reprinted below, what is needed is a revolutionary leadership with an internationalist program to drive forward the kind of solidarity shown toward the Liverpool dock workers.

* * *

Since September the Merseyside dockers have been fighting bitterly against casualisation and de-unionisation, winning the support of dock workers internationally. This week dock workers at the Isle of Sheppey refused to cross a

ment offer at mass meetings. Ford workers are to ballot on strike action this month, after a wildcat walkout at Dagenham in November [and again last week]. And from Liverpool to the capital firefighters are taking or discussing action to fight the fire brigade cuts. The obstacle to co-ordinated, joint strike action—and to powerful union and minority community action and protest against state racism—is the present reformist union leadership.

The attacks on the working class across

Europe today are being dictated by the drive by each national capitalist class to improve its position vis-à-vis its imperialist rivals. The French and German governments want to do to their working classes what Thatcher did to us and Reagan did to the American workers. The British rulers seek to hone their competitive edge by ensuring that wages and working conditions remain lower than those in Japan and the rest of Europe. Now that capitalist counterrevolution has destroyed the Soviet Union and East European deformed workers states, the imperialists think the way is open to reintroduce the untrammelled exploitation and oppression that existed in the nineteenth century.

What is needed is the kind of uncompromising, Marxist class-struggle workers party that led the Russian workers to power in October 1917. An internationalist party that fights for the interests of all the oppressed—against the racism of the capitalist system, typified by the sequence of police killings of black peo-

ple last year and by the brutal Asylum and Immigration Bill. One that opposes the imperialist troops in the Balkans and Northern Ireland and fights for the unity of working people across national boundaries.

The splendid action of dockers around the world points the way forward. The Merseyside docks should be shut down tight by mass picket lines, which nothing and nobody can cross. But [TGWU leader Bill] Morris & Co. are so in awe

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David North, “Socialist” Apologist for Scabbing

Four years ago, the organization known as the Workers League, led by one David North, decided to write off the trade unions, saying “to define the AFL-CIO as a working class organization is to blind the working class” (*Bulletin*, 10 January 1992; see “Workers League vs. the Unions,” WV No. 580, 16 July 1993). Now, in the context of the defeated 17-month-long Caterpillar strike and the four-month battle by Liverpool dockers against union-busting, North & Co. have taken this formulation out of the realm of theory and shown it for what it really is: an open prescription for strikebreaking.

Early last month, as dock workers unions from North America to Australia announced their refusal to handle ships loaded in Liverpool by seabs, North's followers in the British International Communist Party (ICP) wrote a scurrilous article, “Dockers Must Reject Fake Internationalism” (*International Worker*, 2 December 1995), calling this basic declaration of solidarity a “fraud.” Yet some two weeks later, American trade unionists of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) turned back a seab Atlantic Container Lines ship from three U.S. ports

by honoring picket lines put up by dock workers who had flown in from Liverpool, giving a huge boost to their strike.

As a cover for their anti-internationalist, anti-working-class line, the Northites point to the ILA's “history of working with the U.S. State Department and CIA hacked operations abroad.” This is pretty cheeky coming from these political bandits, who took up the cause of every imperialist-backed anti-Soviet movement from the Lithuanian nationalists to the bloodthirsty Afghan *mujahedin* reactionaries. North's Workers League spent decades crudely fawning after the anti-communist labor tops, calling on the likes of George Meany to form a “labor party.” Now, when the world's capitalist rulers are escalating their war against the unions, the poor and immigrants following the destruction of the Soviet Union, North's followers tell workers that any struggle by the trade unions against these attacks is useless.

The link between the Northites' current anti-labor line and their historic anti-Sovietism was captured in a recent appeal by ICP National Secretary David Hyland to the deeply reformist Militant Labour group for a “mass

socialist party.” Openly calling to “destroy the influence and control of the old unions,” Hyland offers as proof that any “trade union perspective” is bankrupt... “the example of Solidarnosc in Poland” (*IWB*, 11 September 1995). Solidarnosc, in fact, was a counterrevolutionary political movement masquerading as a “union” on behalf of its CIA and Vatican bankrollers, which was *cheered by the Northites* as it organized Polish workers behind a program of capitalist restoration.

Never ones to differentiate the trade unions from the pro-capitalist bureaucracy that keeps them chained to the exploiters and their state, North & Co. have now become lawyers for scabbing. Reporting on the Caterpillar UAW strike, which was betrayed outright by the UAW bureaucracy, their American newspaper writes, “UAW officials have attempted to absolve themselves of blame for what has happened by diverting the anger of strikers towards the ‘scabs,’ i.e., those union members who decided to cross picket lines” (*International Workers Bulletin*, 18 December 1995). Putting quotation marks around “scab” is no slip. In fact, the article *justifies* scabbing, claiming

that “the large majority of the 4,000 union members who returned to work were not right-wing or anti-union. Most simply recognized the futility of the policies being pursued by the UAW, which had, after all, abandoned the previous strike.” Now that corporations are shelling out billions every year to hire union-busting law firms and private police, are the Northites offering themselves as PR agents for the growing army of strikebreakers?

The “hot-cargoing” of seab shipping by dockers internationally is an example of the kind of genuine solidarity in action which can fortify the unions against the worldwide capitalist offensive. Our perspective is the forging of a new, class-struggle leadership in the labor movement as part of the fight to build a revolutionary workers party. This requires a hard political struggle to drive out the sell-out bureaucracy—the “labor lieutenants” of the bosses—that is undermining and destroying the unions. That fight must also be waged against *scab “socialists”* like the Northites, who spit on the best traditions of working-class struggle as they stand on the side of the capitalist union-busters.

Workers Vanguard interviewed death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal at the SCI Greene maximum security prison in western Pennsylvania on 21 December 1995. A former Black Panther, supporter of the Philadelphia MOVE group and award-winning journalist, Jamal was framed and sentenced to death for the 1981 killing of a Philadelphia policeman. Part One of this interview was printed in WV No. 636, 5 January.

Workers Vanguard: Let's talk about the protest movement this past summer. It's amazing how your case took off around the world. One of the most interesting things to us was how much support was generated among the trade unions. Your fellow journalists in Germany, South Africa, Britain and many other countries made you a member of their unions. What has this kind of support meant to you?

Mumia Abu-Jamal: Like all support, you know, it kind of sends one the spirit of solidarity. By solidarity, of course, I'm not talking about the former trade union that existed in Poland. I'm talking about real solidarity, the feeling that you are a part of us. That was a feeling that was communicated by MWASA [Media Workers Association of South Africa], by IG Medien [in Germany], by the writers group in France, that even in the darkest depths of death row, you are a colleague, you are a part of us. And I appreciate it.

It's interesting that you mention South Africa, Germany, Great Britain, France, so on. You've mentioned nothing about the United States [laughs]. And I think there's a reason for that as well. I think that in many of those countries, they see the role of journalists far differently than the journalist in the United States. The journalist in the United States is kind of a salesman for selling this system. That's the undercover role. The system is never to be criticized. To the extent the system is to be criticized, it is to be personalized to make it the criticism of a specific person, not the whole. The system is never to be questioned; that's the unwritten rule that all journalists in this society must adhere to. You're not taught that in journalism school. That's not a rule that's written on the walls of the editor's office in radio stations or newspapers. But it's a role that comes with the territory. It's communicated almost *sub rosa* to all their colleagues.

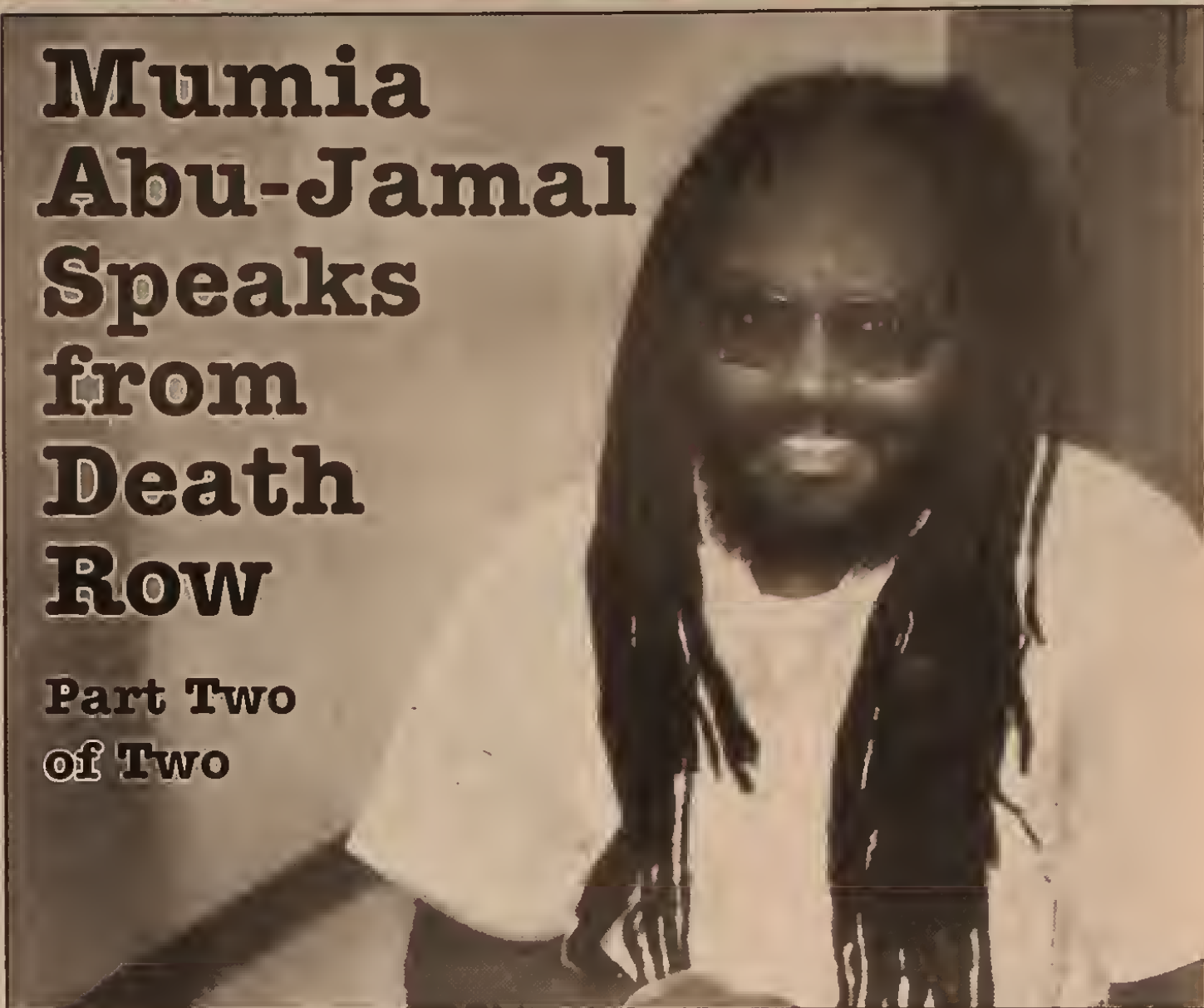
It's also interesting when you consider that in most other societies—like South Africa, like Germany—journalists are perceived as part of the working class. They're average Joes, you see, like the guy who works at the auto factory, like the guy who works at a service station. In America they're perceived as the upper class. They are wealthier than most. And they speak from their class perspective. And that's how they're kind of sucked in, hought into this protective system at all costs. It's like protecting a privilege.

WV: That leads me right into South Africa. Probably more there than in any

Workers Vanguard Interview

Mumia Abu-Jamal Speaks from Death Row

Part Two of Two



WV Photo

other country, your cause won massive support among the working class, particularly black workers who identify the death penalty with the racist apartheid system. So your cause was really near and dear to their hearts when they heard about it.

Mumia: Well, of course, for anyone who has been involved for any length of time in the black liberation movement, the black consciousness movement in the United States, many if not most of us have been deeply inspired by what has transpired in South Africa. There are even very strong correlations in the civil rights movement in relationship to South Africa. Many of us have looked at the system in South Africa and see kind of eerie parallels with the United States.

I know that in my personal life experience, years ago when I was in college and I met black people from the whole diaspora—the Caribbean, North Africa, West Africa, Central Africa—it was those from Southern Africa who kind of touched me the deepest. I felt their kinship. Perhaps it was because in many of the other countries, the African countries, people had experienced independence. They were mostly freed. It was

African Americans in this country and people sucked into the apartheid system who had a sense of struggle, whose basic fundamental dignities and human rights were abused. And I think it's those kinds of elements that have lessons, one for the other. Of course, in the United States and in South Africa, the death penalty has been used extrajudicially, but also as a tool of white-supremacist power. Not as an instrument of justice.

In today's South Africa, the former minister of defense, Magnus Malan, and maybe 13 others were just indicted on homicide charges. It's interesting to note that it's been over ten years since May 13, 1985 in Philadelphia and not one policeman, not one politician, not one government official who conspired to massacre eleven people, to bomb MOVE to death, to shoot them and to dismember them, not one has even been charged for a single crime! I think it speaks volumes about which system is more progressive, that of South Africa or that of the United States. I think because we both are living in systems where we have to struggle for the most basic fundamental human rights and dignities, and survival, many South Africans see similarities. Repressive societies are very much alike, and people who rebel against those societies are also very much alike.

WV: In Brazil there have been demonstrations of support for you also. In August there was a rally at the memorial to Zumbi, who led the slave republic in Brazil and who was murdered 300 years ago by the slavocracy. I understand that your sister, Lydia Wallace, just spoke in November at an international conference on the anniversary of Zumbi's murder.

Mumia: Yes, she just sent me some beautiful pictures of the people, people who were organizers, workers at the conference. She spoke at several health conferences, also a general conference. She met a lot of these people, like Benedita da Silva [a black woman senator from the Workers Party]. She told me it was a life-changing experience for her.

I remember reading a book when I was in college the first time, '70-'71, a book called *Maroons*. And it talked about

free African societies in the Americas. It talked about Zumbi and Palmares, which is the state he founded, and how African societies rebelled through the centuries over corruption and oppression. And since that time—although of course I've not had occasion to speak or to consciously invoke that spirit—that was an inspiration for me.

WV: I wanted, of course, to ask you a bit about the hearings this summer in Albert Sabo's court on your petition for post-conviction relief. I sat through a couple of sessions, but you had to sit through the whole thing.

Mumia: Well, it wasn't fun. I'll tell you that. Sabo is like "dèjà vu all over again." I am reminded by a lot of questions that people, especially journalists, ask me: Well, if you had to do it all over again, would you behave at a new trial the way you did at your old trial? Why were you acting so crazy? I have to use the example that we saw in court. I said, well, OK, you can say I acted out at my first trial. But look at this hearing. Here you haven't heard me say one word. I've sat quietly at the defense table. Here you have one of my lawyers, Rachel Wolkstein, carried away in shackles, you have another one of my lawyers, Leonard Weinglass, fined \$1,000 literally for not moving fast enough. You have all of them threatened with contempt for daring to ask a question. You had them literally threatened by the court for trying to do what defense lawyers are supposed to do, that is, defend.

It's very clear that what happened in that court had nothing to do with how I behaved in court; it had everything to do with the fact that this was Sabo's courtroom. This was the courtroom of a life member of the Fraternal Order of Police. This was a courtroom of the F.O.P., who literally could walk in unmolested, untouched, armed, who threatened people, who manhandled people. I remember hearing about a German journalist who comes from Berlin. I believe. This was a young mother, and while she was waiting in line she was brutally pushed, her foot was stepped on. When she asked this guy why he is doing it, the cop looked



James/Philadelphia Inquirer

Mumia Abu-Jamal, 1969: As Minister of Information for Philadelphia Black Panthers, Mumia was a target of FBI's COINTELPRO campaign to destroy black militants.

at her—it was a cop who was doing it—looked at her with utter contempt: “What are you doing here?” This was a cop working for the city of Philadelphia brutalizing a journalist from overseas for daring to come to cover the hearing.

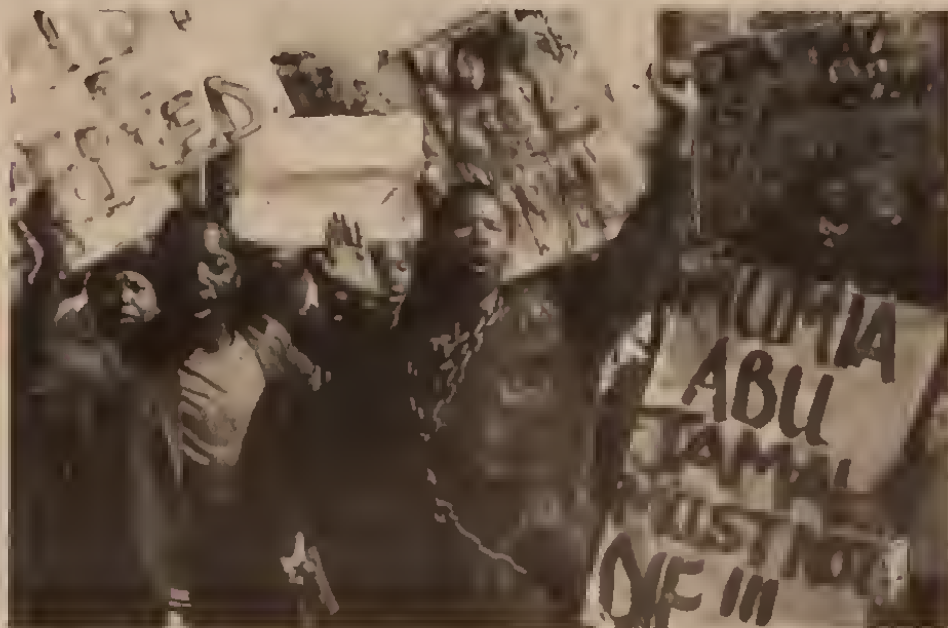
I heard from another group, the Bruderhof—a religious Christian center—who had come to cover the trial. One guy said he went out for the lunch break, he was walking around City Hall, and he’s doing nothing, he’s simply walking around, he had a few leaflets he gave to some of the young people. A cop walked up to him, in full uniform with sergeant’s stripes on him, hawk-spits him right in his face. I think that for a lot of people, and this is not just so-called Jamal supporters, but for a lot of people the summer of 1995 was a revelation of the real heart and heartless message of Philadelphia, the cold, naked face of the city. No amount of P.R., posters, sweet jingles can replace the real horror and vicious treatment that people got in this context.

WV: Our newspaper has raised the demand that you be freed, now, that justice will begin the day you walk out of prison. Relating back to what you just said, almost all the people involved in your original frame-up conviction and in the penalty phase of your frame-up in 1982 are all there, right? You’ve got the same Judge Sabo. The 1982 prosecutor, Joseph McGill, is a very prominent spokesman for the F.O.P. and for the District Attorney’s office—he was on the radio everywhere over the summer. The current D.A., Lynne Abraham, who really grooves on the death penalty, was the original arraigning judge. Then you’ve got Ron Castille, who was the D.A. on the appeal, he’s now on the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. And, of course, the District Attorney in 1982, Ed Rendell, is now mayor of Philadelphia. This describes perfectly well the whole frame-up system that passes for so-called justice in your case.

Mumia: Well, there ain’t none. As for the editorial position of the paper, I wholeheartedly agree. You won’t hear me disagree. I think that what you’re talking about here is a system that rewards corruption, a system that rewards repression, a system that rewards the worst instincts of prosecutors, judges, and all of those in that whole process. It’s easy when you make those analogies about my case. But for instance, when we talk about the 39th District in Philadelphia, well, people will scream and cuss and point their finger at those sick, corrupt cops who framed those hundreds if not thousands of people. But they couldn’t have done it alone, you see. Every one of those people that were framed, victims of the 39th District, they were prosecuted by a prosecutor. Many of those prosecutions happened when



AP photos
Campaign of international protest against scheduled execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal received broad support in Brazil (above) and South Africa last summer. International outcry helped win stay of execution.



Castille was the D.A. They were prosecuted before a judge. Some of those were before Judge Lynne Abraham when she was on the bench. All of them were in front of judges of the Court of Common Pleas. Most of them were before the Superior Court on appeal or the Supreme Court. All of them were denied relief—hundreds of people.

So what we’re talking about is a system that is corrupt. And not just about Jamal, not just about MOVE, but about tens and hundreds and thousands of everyday people, who were not radicals, who were not ex-Black Panthers, who were not MOVE members, but were everyday people. Like Betty Patterson, who was a church-going grandmother who served three years and eleven months, going through the hell and humiliation of being in one of the worst prisons for women—or for anybody—in Pennsylvania. Because a cop felt like kicking her door

down, going through her house and dropping some cocaine down there and telling ‘em, oh, look at what we found. The very fact that that could happen to her really makes it clear what could happen to someone who has a political history for over 20 years.

My lawyer, Len Weinglass, points out that in fact the D.A.’s office should have been introducing my FBI files as mitigation evidence, because from the time I was 14 years old they’ve been following me, reading my mail, listening to my phone calls, putting informants on me, the whole deal. In fact, we later learned that they’ve actually been writing letters in my name, bogus letters, in my name, to other people. This is your government at work, the FBI, the government and the Philadelphia police department. Well, during all that time they never saw me commit one crime. But they turned around and said: Ooh, look, he was a Black Panther many years ago and that’s why you should kill him today, because he’s been planning all these years to kill cops. It’s just turning the truth on its head. That’s the function of policemen, that’s the function of the prosecutor, and that’s the function of the judiciary. I think we should at this juncture quote Judge Sabo, aptly and accurately, on the question you raised about justice. In his words, “Justice is just an emotional feeling.”

WV: It has also come out that the Philly cops kept files on some 18,000 people during the ‘60s and ‘70s. What was it like for you to read some of your new files? You got about 100 more pages this year that you didn’t know about before.

Mumia: You’re talking about FBI, it wasn’t Philadelphia. It was precisely in that last hundred pages, of the full 700 or 800 pages, that we found out about the letter-writing campaign of the FBI. When they raided the Panther office, I’m sure just like the Leonevallo center in Milano [see WV No. 636, 5 January], well, they didn’t just destroy the files, they stole the files. They wrote crazy letters, with real crazy messages, and they signed them with my name. And also another brother, they wrote and

signed his name and sent it to Washington and said: Check this signature, doesn’t it look good? Uh-huh, looks great. OK, send them out. This is what the government did. And this is what they admit they did. So, again, your tax dollars at work—at work for the government and its deception.

To broaden the discussion also, I might add, there’s a recent book that was published, written by Kenneth O’Reilly, *Black Americans: The FBI Files* (Carroll & Graf, 1994). He’s the same guy who wrote the book *Racial Matters*. He actually documents how back in the ‘30s, ‘40s and ‘50s, the FBI kept files on prominent black Americans like Harry Belafonte, like Dorothy Dandridge, like, of course, Martin Luther King Jr. and Sr., Malcolm X when he was a prisoner in, I think, a Massachusetts jail. It’s astonishing to see how these people go to those who do hard work, to average hard-working Americans, to “law-abiding citizens,” who are also the subject of FBI disinformation campaigns, snooping, simply because once or twice they may have announced an opinion, let’s say in support of Martin Luther King. Or let’s say they dare believe that their government was their government, and they met with someone and said: Well, we want some changes. It shows that this is not a new thing, that it did not begin with the Black Panther Party. It’s going on now, even as we speak, and has been going on for over 50, perhaps 60 years.

WV: Certainly there was heavy FBI and Philly cop collaberation in victimizing MOVE. We had protested the May 1985 police bombing of the MOVE home on Osage Avenue, and we first heard of your case from some of the MOVE prisoners in the Partisan Defense Committee’s stipend program for victims of capitalist repression. Certainly in the 1985 bombing of MOVE the FBI was all over that and helped plan the attack with the Philly cops, and we have to assume they worked with the police in the attack on the Powelton Village MOVE home in 1978 as well. As a reporter you covered then-mayor Frank Rizzo’s press conference following that. So there’s quite a bit of history with FBI and police victimization of MOVE.

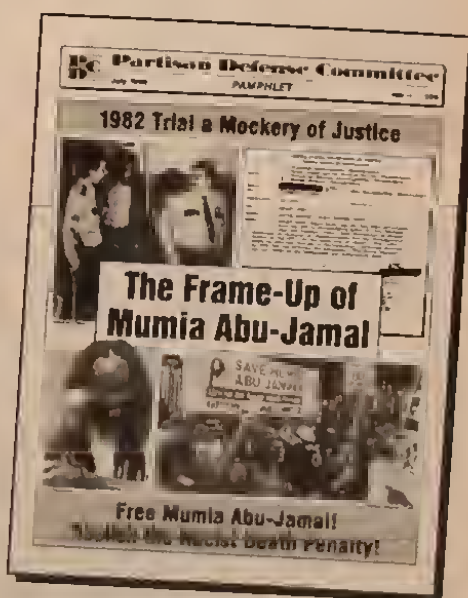
Mumia: I wouldn’t just say Philadelphia police and FBI, and I’ll tell you why. The weapons that the Philadelphia police were using were weapons that were not provided by the FBI in Washington. The anti-tank weapons and .50 calibre machine guns they were using were provided by Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, ATF. The bomb components were provided by the FBI, C-4, it’s a military explosive. And the helicopter was provided by the Pennsylvania state police. So all of those elements of so-called law enforcement were integrated into one

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May 1985 police firebombing of Philadelphia MOVE commune, approved by black Democratic mayor Wilson Goode, with explosives and weaponry provided by FBI and BATF, killed eleven people and burned down entire black neighborhood.



Baiger/WCAU-TV



Partisan Defense Committee pamphlet exposes government conspiracy to railroad Mumia Abu-Jamal. To order, send \$.50 to PDC, P.O. Box 99 Canal St. Station, New York, NY 10013.

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(continued from page 1)

the army to remain in power for five or even ten years. This is a not-so-veiled threat that elements of the white ruling class might attempt a military coup if the "new" South Africa proves not to be to their liking. And any move by the ANC to purge the white officer corps which still commands the army will explode the fragile neo-apartheid arrangement.

The Government of National Unity—ranging from black African union bureaucrats to white bankers—is bound to fracture, and when it does South Africa will be thrown into a period of violent political conflict and turmoil. Already we are seeing in the province of KwaZulu-Natal that the Inkatha tribalist movement, backed by right-wing white supremacists, has escalated its murderous attacks on ANC supporters. There has also been formed a "Coloureds Resistance Movement" (KWB), fighting for a "homeland" for coloureds and modeling itself on the fascist Afrikaner Resistance Movement (AWB). If the many-sided tensions and conflicts in South African society are not centered around a class axis, they will be fought along racial, ethnic and tribal lines. In conditions of unrelieved poverty, if the nationalist principle prevails, Zulu will be set against Xhosa, black Africans against coloureds and Indians, South Africans against immigrant workers and refugees—and this will be done by self-styled "progressives" in the ANC alliance no less than by open reactionaries. Already the housing program under since-deceased SACP leader Joe Slovo led to an explosion of hostility to coloureds, as the government tried to collect back rents from them (but not from black Africans). A revolutionary workers party must be built to lead the working class in the struggle for state power, drawing behind it the rest of the oppressed black African, coloured and Indian masses along with non-racist whites.

Such a revolutionary party will not simply defend the economic interests of the workers against capital but will combat *all* the manifold forms of oppression which beset South Africa: the demolition of squatter camps in the townships and eviction of farm laborers from the land, the deportation of "illegal" immigrants and refugees from neighboring African states, the degradation of women by, for example, such tribalist patriarchal practices as polygamy and *lobola* (bride price). South Africa conforms in an exceptionally clear way to Trotsky's conception of *permanent revolution*: national liberation and social and economic modernization in backward countries can be achieved only through proletarian revolution and its international extension to the advanced capitalist countries.

"Neoliberalism" Comes to Neo-Apartheid South Africa

The economic bedrock of the apartheid system was the superexploitation of black workers, which enabled the whites (who



May 1994 Inauguration of Nelson Mandela as South Africa's first black president in "power sharing" deal with white capitalist ruling class. At left, deputy president Thabo Mbeki.

make up 13 percent of South Africa's population) to enjoy "First World" living conditions. Skilled workers, almost exclusively white, were paid six times as much and middle-level managers 15 times as much as black laborers. ANC and especially SACP/COSATU spokesmen have vowed to eliminate the apartheid wage structure. Legally the color bar has been abolished and blacks can apply for any job. But it is still white management which decides whether or not blacks get the better-paying jobs—and they still do not. More fundamentally, the technical and administrative skills needed to run a modern industrial economy are concentrated in the dominant white caste. Over half of the adult black African population cannot read, a result of the "bantustan education" imposed by the apartheid rulers.

For significant numbers of blacks to become skilled workers, technicians and administrators will therefore require a massive financial expenditure on education and training. Obviously the white capitalists are not going to do this. And the Government of National Unity is committed to not raise taxes on business or otherwise redistribute wealth from the affluent white community to the impoverished black toilers. In fact, the ANC would not do so even if it governed independently of De Klerk's National Party.

Like all popular fronts, the ANC/SACP/COSATU tripartite alliance practices a division of labor between its bourgeois and labor-reformist components. Mandela and his No. 2 man, Thabo Mbeki, reassure the spokesmen for capital at home and abroad that they are committed to serving their interests. South Africa's first black president declared that one of his most important accomplishments was creating "an investor-friendly environment." At the same time, SACP and COSATU leaders are pushing the Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP), which promises dramatic improvements in the conditions of the black masses. For example, it calls for ten years of free, compulsory education for all children in South Africa. But the minister of education has already reneged on this, saying that it will take seven or eight years

before such schooling is possible. According to the RDP, a million new houses are to be built in five years. Yet in the first year of the ANC-led regime, a mere 11,000 houses were built with government funds.

Instead of exposing and denouncing the Reconstruction and Development Program for the sham that it is, much of the South African left agitates for the ANC to carry out this utopian, reformist program. Typical in this regard is the Socialist Workers Organisation, part of the British-centered international tendency led by Tony Cliff, which writes: "There is no real shortage of money. The

Peters/Newsweek



Armed supporters of reactionary Zulu tribalist Inkatha Freedom Party marching in Johannesburg in 1994.

real problem is the greedy minority who control most of it. It's time the ANC stopped trying to impress these scum and got on with meeting RDP promises" (*Socialist Worker*, 16 August 1995). As if the bourgeois party of Mandela, Mbeki, Ramaphosa & Co. could be pressured to act in the interests of the black toilers! The ANC leaders have become the political agents for the greedy minority who control most of the money in South Africa, a job for which they are being quite well rewarded.

Historically, South African capitalism has rested on the superexploitation of black labor, including many contract workers drawn from outside the country's borders, in the mining sector. The profits from the Rand gold fields, along with the platinum, diamond, coal and other mines, have supported a modern manufacturing industry producing both strategic goods (e.g., armaments) and consumer goods (e.g., autos) for the affluent white community. The emergence of a powerful and combative trade-union movement coupled with a particular economic structure has over the past decade raised wages in key manufacturing sectors in South Africa to a level higher than in Latin America and some East Asian countries. For strategic reasons, the Afrikaner nationalist regime sought to maximize the country's economic self-sufficiency through trade protection-

ism, generous subsidies to business and extensive state ownership and controls. But in agreeing to the "power sharing" arrangement, the white ruling class now expects the ANC to suppress worker militancy and hold down labor costs. And with a black government in Pretoria, the capitalists are no longer willing to carry the overhead costs of a fortress economy.

Despite all the pious lip service to the RDP, the actual program of the Mandela regime conforms to the neoliberal economic model prescribed by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank: fiscal austerity, tight control over the money supply, dismantling of trade protectionism, selling off state-owned enterprises or running these on the basis of market profitability. The London *Financial Times* (21 November 1995) points out, "Quasi-Thatcherite supply-side policies are replacing the protection and export subsidies put in place by previous administrations." For example, as part of a cost-cutting program the big state-owned steel firm Iscor plans to reduce its labor force from 48,000 to 42,000 over the next five years. Barlow's, a major manufacturer, is threatening to stop producing household appliances in South Africa because, with reduced tariffs, it cannot compete with cheaper imports from East Asia.

The layoffs generated by the ANC-led government's neoliberal policies occur under conditions, more or less permanent, in which half of the black workforce has no regular, full-time employ-

ment. Bourgeois economists project that of the 400,000 black youth who will leave school this year, only between 50,000 and 100,000 will be able to find jobs in the so-called formal sector of the economy, i.e., government bodies, corporations or other white-owned businesses. The large majority will either be unemployed or eke out a living as petty traders, day laborers, doing whatever they can to survive.

ANC Demobilizing Black Workers Movement

In 1986, the leadership of the newly formed COSATU issued a joint statement with the ANC proclaiming the latter as head of the "national liberation movement." In turn, COSATU was declared to be "an important and integral part" of the "democratic forces of our country." In subsequent years, the unions acted as the main mass combat organizations in undermining the apartheid system. Strikes, even around narrow economic issues, were viewed by the black populace as weakening the white power structure as, in fact, they did.

But now the language of nationalism and "nation building" is being used *against* the black workers movement. ANC leaders are trying to mobilize black sentiment against the unions, claiming that the relatively high wages in the industrial sector are responsible for mass



Weinberg/NT Times

Rural black family's home destroyed last year after eviction by white landowner. A Bolshevik workers party in South Africa is needed that would defend all the oppressed.



Mbongeni Zulu

Black COSATU trade unionists demonstrate in Johannesburg last June to improve terms of new Labour Relations Act, which aims to shackle labor militancy through class collaboration.

unemployment in the townships and abject poverty in the countryside. Strikes and shop floor militancy are blamed for repelling multinational corporations from investing in South Africa. Mandela has denounced some unions for continuing a policy of resistance rather than switching to "reconstruction."

The new Labour Relations Act (LRA) aims to place the trade-union movement in a straitjacket of tight government control. COSATU general secretary Sam Shilowa, a member of the SACP Central Committee, approvingly stated that the LRA's "primary purpose" is to "minimize conflict on the shop floor." An oppositional resolution by the chemical workers union summed up the nature and intent of this corporatist legislation:

"The main objective of the new Labour Relations Bill is to push the working class into a collaborating and co-operative relationship with the bosses through the employee based workplace forums. This will undermine the political and ideological fabric of the trade union movement."

—New Nation, 27 October 1995

A new, lucrative profession has developed for South African ex-leftists who didn't make it into parliament or government office. They've set up labor mediation services since they speak the same political language as the union bureaucrats, who are in many cases their former comrades-in-arms.

However, it will not be easy to get black workers to accept government-regulated "business unionism," where the fight on the shop floor and picket

line is replaced by backroom deals. In June, the metal workers signed a three-year deal with the auto companies, including a no-strike pledge, which was hailed as a model for harmonious labor relations in Mandela's South Africa. Yet a few months later thousands of workers at Volkswagen's giant plant in the Eastern Cape walked out to protest the firing of a fellow worker as a result of a fist-fight with a white foreman.

The immediate aftermath of Mandela's election as president in May 1994 saw a sharp upsurge of black labor struggle. Since then, however, the ANC-led government and allied union bureaucrats have succeeded in dampening worker militancy. For the first three quarters of last year, man-hours lost to strikes totaled 870,000 compared to a five-year annual average of 2.6 million. Furthermore, the most significant labor struggles which have taken place have either been defused or defeated outright.

A major auto strike in July-August 1994 was ended on the companies' terms when the government ordered a cut in tariffs on imported cars, a clear threat to the workers' jobs. A month later, a highway blockade by long-distance truckers organized by the militant breakaway Turning Wheel Workers Union was dispersed by the police and army at gunpoint. This September, a strike by municipal workers was shunted onto the track of government mediation. And, most ominously, the nurses strike last fall was condemned as "counterrevolutionary" by SACP/COSATU bureaucrats while the government threatened—and later carried out—mass firings of the nurses.

As a letter recently received from a South African militant reports:

"The South African society is increasingly becoming divided along racial lines: De Klerk's Nationalist Party was lobbying the extreme right-wing organisations, Constant Viljoen's Freedom Front and the Conservative Party, to form an election pact against the ANC which never succeeded. On the other hand, the Popular Front government is starting to use an iron fist against the working class. I am going to give you typical examples of a growing tendency: Tuesday, 5 September 1995, City Deep Market strike, workers go on strike demanding at least R300 [US\$80] minimum a week. The highest paid worker is taking home R140 a week. Bosses offer R26 increase and arrogantly tell workers 'to go to hell' if not satisfied by that dehumanising wage offer—far below the breadline. Workers block the entrance to the market and refuse to move when told to. Police are called—apparatus of organised violence against the whole population. Strikers are brutally forced out while many are arrested, including those with blood-soaked faces."

South African capital and its partners in Wall Street and the City of London cannot and will not long tolerate the powerful and combative black workers movement which developed in the last period of direct white-supremacist rule. Thus, this is a dangerous period for the South African proletariat. Trade-union gains in South Africa today cannot be defended simply with a program of mil-

itant trade unionism. Yet this is the line pushed by groups to the left of the ANC/SACP. For example, the International Socialist Movement (ISM), the more leftist of the two Cliffite groups in the country, ran a front-page headline in its press, "Build the Fighthack." After denouncing the attacks on the working class carried out by the Government of National Unity, the *Revolutionary Socialist* (August 1995) concludes:

"We have to rebuild our democratic, rank and file organisation. Our unions are us. They do not belong to the bureaucracy. United on the shopfloor we can win the democracy and independence necessary to fight back against the rotten deal."

This amounts to nothing more than a call for militant *economism* within the framework of neo-apartheid capitalism. But to break the working class and plebeian masses from the nationalist popular-frontism of the tripartite alliance requires a *revolutionary vanguard party fighting for a black-centered workers government*.

Municipal Workers and Nurses Strike

The *anti-working-class* character of the ANC-led regime was clearly demonstrated in different ways by the municipal workers' and nurses' strikes, both of which took place in late September-early October. The first, organized by the South African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU), involved some 50,000 workers in more than 40 cities and towns in four provinces. The strike was centered in Johannesburg, the country's major metropolis, and also embraced the capital city of Pretoria.

In the "new" South Africa as in the old, striking black workers invariably face attacks by the police. In Johannesburg, they used tear gas and stun grenades, which proved ineffectual against the strikers. But in Pretoria the cops used rubber bullets and in Pietersburg live ammunition. At least one striker was killed.

The strike in Johannesburg was basically directed against the apartheid wage

structure. The local authorities have divided Greater Johannesburg into four sub-districts, each of which has the power to negotiate its own separate agreement with the municipal workers union. This would mean that workers in the affluent white suburbs and downtown business district would get far higher wages than those in the impoverished black townships, thus "perpetuating the social and economic apartheid that we have inherited" in the words of local SAMWU leader Mbongeni Mahaso (*Johannesburg Star*, 27 September 1995).

The strike began in spectacular fashion on September 26, as the workers stormed through the streets overturning garbage bins, uprooting trees and opening underground water pipes. The bourgeois media was scandalized by "the trashing of downtown Jo'burg." But the union bureaucrats used the "trashing" of Jo'burg—letting the workers blow off steam—as a substitute for a genuinely effective strike. No attempt was made to cut off electric power or the water supply. Nor were picket lines set up at key workplaces to prevent scabbing.

An experienced trade unionist and supporter of the International Communist League, who was in Johannesburg at the time, reported:

"Several times during these rallies I saw angry workers rush the podium and ask why were some of their members working during the strike? The bureaucrats handled this by retorting, 'Hey, you're asking the wrong people,' implying that the workers who were angry about this development should be 'talking' to the scabs. But no picket lines were set up to keep them out. It was quite clear that the bureaucrats were not fighting to win and were maneuvering to get the ranks back to work, which they finally managed to achieve eight days later by accepting a mediation deal."

The strike saw the white ruling-class parties and ANC use a typical hard cop/soft cop approach. In the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council, representatives of the National Party moved to take "disciplinary action" against all strikers. The ANC councilmen *abstained*, thereby allowing the motion to pass. At the same time, ANC labor minister Tito Mboweni entered the scene, stating that "all of us would like to see normality return as quickly as possible," and called for statutory mediation with the threat of compulsory arbitration if that didn't work. The SAMWU bureaucrats were more than willing to "return to normality," that is, the neo-apartheid system.

Because the municipal workers were in a COSATU-affiliated union, the ANC/SACP leaders responded to their strike through diplomatic maneuvering. The nurses, however, were given the bare-knuckles treatment. This strike—or rather its underlying causes—also demonstrated in a very clear way the sham of the ANC's social reform program embodied in the Reconstruction and Development Program.

One of the first acts of the Mandela government was to decree free health care for all children under the age of six at local clinics and hospitals. But *no*

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Reuters

Highway blockade by long-distance truckers in September 1994, organized by militant Turning Wheel Workers Union, was dispersed by police and army at gunpoint.

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additional funds were allocated to hire more nurses and other health care workers. Quite the contrary! As part of the regime's commitment to fiscal austerity, government spending cuts closed down hospital wards, deprived clinics of drugs and medical staff of equipment needed to treat patients. The lines in front of hospitals and clinics are endless, people in need of treatment have to wait forever and the quality of public health care is poor since nurses and other health care workers are terribly overburdened. In some hospitals nurses have to single-handedly manage wards of up to 50 patients.

As in other countries, many nurses in South Africa, who are overwhelmingly black or coloured, consider themselves "professionals" distinct from the mass of industrial workers. Only a minority of nurses are organized by the COSATU union covering health care workers. The main body of nurses sought to represent their interests in a newly formed association, Nursing Forum, which, however, was not recognized by the government as a union.

When the nurses demanded a 33 percent across-the-board pay increase and improved working conditions, ANC officials flat out said that no more money was available for health care. Mandela got on television and in effect told the nurses to go to hell. The minister of health, Nkosazana Zuma, sought to whip up popular feeling against them, declaring that a "strike will put innocent lives at risk." In addition to the demagogic attacks of the ANC leaders, the nurses also confronted a pervasive disdain for women in a society saturated with patriarchal attitudes. An article sympathetic to the nurses in the *Johannesburg Star* (7 October 1995) noted that "the strike escalated to the point that it did because the strikers were women working in a profession whose main attributes are compassion and servility."

But the nurses were anything but servile. On the picket lines, many carried signs reading "Away with Zuma" and sang derogatory songs they had made up about Mandela, whom they labeled "the driver of the gravy train." This was something new. It has become commonplace for black working people to complain that the ANC-led government has done nothing to improve their lives and to denounce "the gravy train." However, Mandela was considered sacrosanct. His personal authority is a key factor in holding down the explosive contradictions generated by the neo-apartheid arrangement.

Thus the nurses' attack on Mandela, far more than the strike as such, threw the leaders of the tripartite alliance into a frenzy. A number of SACP/COSATU bureaucrats branded the nurses' action a "counterrevolutionary strike." This



Growing discontent with neo-apartheid exploitation was reflected in nurses' strike last September. Nurses called Mandela "driver of the gravy train."

seems to have caused some tension within the SACP, for the *African Communist* (Third Quarter 1995) criticized the "allegation, which is sometimes heard from within our own alliance ranks," that the striking nurses and also municipal workers had been "manipulated by third force elements."

In directly attacking Mandela the nurses showed themselves far to the left of self-styled "revolutionary socialists" in South Africa. These groups criticize the ANC regime in ever-so-polite terms and never in a way disrespectful to Mandela. Thus, the Workers Organisation for Socialist Action (WOSA) of Neville Alexander issued a leaflet, "Support Nurses and Municipal Workers," which doesn't even mention the role of the ANC/SACP in breaking the first strike and sabotaging the other.

Without a trade-union organization of their own, without the support of and even facing opposition from COSATU, and with the prospect of wholesale dismissals, the nurses resorted to a series of one-day wildcats. But this tactic could not be sustained and the strike petered out by mid-October, broken by the ANC regime and its labor lieutenants. In the aftermath, 6,000 nurses were dismissed by the provincial government of the Eastern Cape headed by Raymond Mhlaba, who is also national chairman of the SACP!

For a Bolshevik Workers Party in South Africa!

In the weeks leading up to the nationwide local elections in early November, ANC spokesmen openly voiced concern that the black populace was becoming apathetic and disillusioned with the slow pace of social reforms. Even De Klerk demagogically lambasted the ANC for failing to build houses, while at the same time lashing out at strike actions for "disrupting services."

Much of the South African left moved to shore up the ANC's faltering pop-

ularity and authority. Under the headline "Don't Give the Nats a Chance," the *Socialist Worker* (6 September 1995) maintained "we must vote for the ANC in order to defend the reforms we have won from the system" while adding "we shouldn't be under any illusions that they will lead a fight for full realization of our needs." The bourgeois-nationalist ANC has become the *main political agent* administering the exploitation of South Africa's black toilers by domestic and foreign capital. But the Socialist Workers Organisation, self-described supporters of "workers struggles against the bosses' greed," portray the ANC as representing the interests, albeit inadequately and partially, of the black masses.

In order to divert attention from their own right-wing social and economic policies, Mandela & Co. made a show of political militancy against the white right. Two days before the elections, the ministry of safety and security announced that arrest warrants had been issued for former defense minister Magnus Malan and ten retired military officers for their involvement in a 1987 massacre of black Africans, mainly women and children, in KwaZulu-Natal. Malan and his colleagues were the supposed "third force" which financed and trained the terrorist squads of the Zulu tribalist Inkatha in its war against the ANC. Everyone in South Africa knows that the former defense minister of the white-supremacist regime acted with the full knowledge and approval of his then boss, F.W. De Klerk. And Inkatha chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, now a minister in the Government of National Unity, was obviously also deeply involved.

An important, though unwritten, clause in the "power sharing" agreement was that officials of the former apartheid regime would *not* be prosecuted for their crimes. Key sections of the white ruling class now see Mandela & Co. breaking this promise under the pressure of the black masses. De Klerk predictably declared that "selective prosecutions are totally unacceptable" and that the action against his former defense minister was harming "racial reconciliation." For the first time since Mandela was elected president, talk of a military coup by the white officer caste is rife in South Africa.

As proletarian revolutionaries, we, of course, support the prosecution of former officials of the apartheid state for their crimes against the black populace. But to call on the ANC, as does the left-Cliffite International Socialist Movement (ISM), to imprison the principal leaders of the white capitalist class can only fuel dangerous illusions. The headline of the November 1995 *Revolutionary Socialist* demands "Go! Malan—Now Charge De Klerk, Botha and All the Rest." To begin with, everyone in South Africa knows that the idea that Mandela would now arrest and prosecute De Klerk is absurd. This would lead to massive capitalist flight, the cessation of foreign investment and the immediate threat of a military coup. In a more general sense, the ISM feeds into the notion that the ANC could

and would, under the pressure of the masses, destroy the power of the white ruling elite.

The ANC, perhaps bolstered by the arrest of Malan, won a clear-cut victory in the November 1 local elections, gaining two-thirds of the vote with a respectable turnout among black Africans. However, this vote was heavily concentrated among older blacks, whose deep-seated loyalty to the ANC derives from the decades-long struggle against the apartheid state. Furthermore, shortly before the elections the Mandela regime had falsely promised to raise benefits for old-age pensioners.

Expressing the approval of American imperialism, the *New York Times* (12 November 1995) commented on the elections: "the results suggest that the voting black majority is an anomaly in this day and age; an electorate with a high degree of tolerance and patience, despite the ruling party's shortcomings." What the results actually indicate is that *in the absence of a revolutionary working-class alternative* the black masses retain their traditional loyalty to the ANC against the parties of the white ruling class.

The elections did not, and by their nature could not, reveal the increasing discontent and tensions within the ANC's social base, especially its strategic core: the unionized industrial proletariat. Those discontents and tensions were clearly revealed at a meeting of the Witwatersrand regional shop stewards council in August, where delegates blasted the Labour Relations Bill as a "miserable compromise." Far more sig-



Former apartheid defense minister Magnus Malan, recently charged in 1987 massacre of ANC supporters.

nificantly, some even called for an end to the tripartite alliance "so that we can fight the enemy." "How can we fight with the government," one shop steward asked rhetorically, "if we are in an alliance with it?" (*South African Labour Bulletin*, September 1995).

What kind of struggle is necessary to break the black workers movement from the bourgeois-nationalist ANC? The conventional designation of the ANC/SACP/COSATU "tripartite alliance" expresses an important fact about South African politics. It is the Communist Party which is the *crucial link* between the now openly pro-capitalist ANC leaders like Mandela and Mbeki and the organized proletariat. Since it was legalized in 1990, the SACP has become a mass party with an officially claimed membership of 75,000. Even more importantly, the party exercises hegemonic leadership within COSATU, not only in terms of the top officials but also at the shop steward level. At the same time, the SACP has been built on the basis of its "alliance"—in fact, deep interpenetration—with the ANC for over half a century. Thus the struggle for the political independence of the South African working class will necessarily require a *deep split* in the SACP, breaking worker militants and genuinely leftist intellectuals from the right-wing leaders like Jeremy Cronin, Ronnie Kasrils and Sam Shilowa.

What would be the political basis for such a split? Not to pursue militant trade unionism within the framework of the

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neo-apartheid arrangement. The black proletariat must struggle to displace the ANC as the leader of the oppressed black African, coloured and Indian peoples. This can be achieved only through the formation of a revolutionary party, a Bolshevik workers party based on the principles of Lenin and Trotsky, leaders of the October Revolution, the greatest victory for the international working class in history.

South Africa—indeed, all of southern Africa—needs a genuine reconstruction and development program based on socialist economic planning. Spokesmen for the ANC/SACP and its apologists internationally maintain they have no choice but to accommodate capitalism in the post-Soviet world. An article on the South African left in *Against the Current* (September-October 1995), sponsored by the American left social-democratic Solidarity group, argues it is necessary to recognize “the limits of what is possible in this period, in both the South African and the global post-Cold War contexts.” In other words, for these advocates of “the politics of the possible,” there can be no prospects for socialist revolution in South Africa.

As Trotskyists, we certainly do not believe it is possible to build an isolated socialist society on the southern tip of Africa, besieged and attacked by world imperialism. It was precisely the pressure of world capitalism which led to the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, undermined for decades by the Stalinist bureaucracy. Like the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, a workers revolution in neo-apartheid South Africa would face the powerful forces of Western imperialism, from an eco-



Striking municipal workers in Johannesburg, September 1995. Combative workers movement must break with ANC-led nationalist popular front and fight for black-centered workers government.

nomie blockade to direct military intervention. But compared to 1917, when the European bourgeois order was massively disrupted by the World War and extension of the Russian Revolution to the West was an immediate and palpable possibility, black workers in South Africa, geographically distant from the main concentrations of the industrial proletariat, now confront emboldened Western imperialism.

To recognize this truth is not to argue, as does the South African Communist Party, that the South African workers movement and oppressed nonwhite masses must accept the framework set

by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. Rather, the establishment of a black-centered workers government in South Africa would reopen the global struggle which began with the Russian October Revolution. The decisive issue would turn on the confrontation between labor and capital in the advanced capitalist powers.

As we wrote shortly after the installation of the ANC-led regime:

“A socialist revolution in South Africa would find strategically powerful allies within the imperialist centers. In particular, it would have an enormously radicalizing impact on blacks in the United States, who have strongly identified with

the struggle against white supremacy in the apartheid state. And it would reverberate in particular among the nonwhite masses throughout the Western Hemisphere (notably the millions of black people in Brazil), West Indians and South Asians in Britain, and North Africans and black Africans in West Europe.”

—“South Africa Powder Keg: Part 4,” *WV* No. 606, 16 September 1994

Thus, the fight to build a Bolshevik workers party in South Africa is inseparable from the struggle we in the International Communist League are waging to reforge an authentically Trotskyist Fourth International. ■

Dockers...

(continued from page 3)

of the bosses' state (which they want [Labour Party leader Tony] Blair to administer), that they haven't even given official backing to the dockers. Thanks to the T&G leadership's treachery, the port bosses have been able to bring in scab “replacement” workers to work the docks. Repeatedly, mass rallies in support of the dockers have brought out thousands of supporters from across the country, including Fire Brigades Union members who have carried out a series of strikes against the job-slashing attacks of the Labour-controlled Liverpool local authority. *But demonstrations alone will not win this dispute: only a complete shut-down of the port will stop the scab operation altogether!*

The 500 dockers who are on strike have the determination to win this struggle, but they don't have the power on their own. The labour movement as a whole has the potential, but it is shackled by a trade-union leadership which across the board fears unleashing that power because they don't want to jeopardise Tony Blair's election and their own cozy relations with the capitalist bosses. They quake in fear of a strike declared “illegal” by the bosses' state. Well, the only “illegal” strike is one that loses! Strike action alongside the dockers at Vauxhall Ellesmere Port and Ford Halwood would make Merseyside a launching pad for the working-class fightback we so sorely need.

No Deportations! Down With the Asylum Bill!

All across Europe there has been a resurgence of anti-immigrant hysteria and blatant racism, as each national capitalist class seeks to divert the anger of the working masses by pointing the finger at immigrants and minorities as the real “enemy.” The British ruling class today, no less than during the Empire, rests on brutal divide-and-rule: the Asylum and Immigration Bill threatens thousands of refugees with deportation, torture and death, while condemning the vast majority of asylum seekers to a life of begging, soup kitchens, or death from hunger and

cold through denying them *all* state benefits. Besides mass protest, the trade unions must block the implementation of the racist checks on immigration status by government agencies and employers.

These government attacks fuel race terror on the streets. Fascist attacks on Asians and blacks have become an endemic part of British society—reinforced by the official action of the capitalist state. In December, Alton Manning, a 33-year-old black man, died after a violent attack by warders in the privately-run Blackenhurst prison in Redditch. The same month, cops beat to death a young black Brixton man, Wayne Douglas, seven months after the similar bludgeoning to death of Brian Douglas. When protesters gathered in Brixton on 14 December to demonstrate against the killing of Wayne Douglas, they were met by a huge cop mobilisation. The cops openly carried sub-machine guns that night. When the crowd began to dissipate, the cops moved in, jabbing people with their batons. The resulting riot they provoked was an outpouring of youth anger and frustration involving running battles with cops and attacks on shops and cars. The police and press responded with an hysterical witch hunting campaign accusing Guyana-born barrister Rudy Narayan and other demo speakers of “igniting violence.” *Down with the police and bosses' media witch hunt! Defend the Brixton anti-racist protesters!*

The great miners strike of 1984-85 won powerful support in the black and Asian communities in British cities, precisely because these communities saw in the miners the potential power to inflict a decisive blow against the whole apparatus of police brutality and oppression which was also aimed at them. Similarly, the international campaign to save the life of the American black journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal has galvanised support from workers around the world who understand that the racist imperialist American state which wants to execute him is *their* enemy as well. Such solidarity can be a powerful force propelling working-class struggle, if it is consciously mobilised and channelled by a revolutionary programme and party.

The capitalists attempt to use nationalism and the “national interest,” as they

attempt to use racism, to keep the working classes of the world divided and at each other's throats. To protect “British” jobs, workers are supposed to accept worsening conditions and pay. Such protectionist poison fuels racism, and stands in stark contrast to the recent acts of international solidarity with the Liverpool dockers. British workers cannot see the Australian and American workers who blacked [boycotted] the scab ships as the “enemy,” but as their firmest allies in the class struggle. The protectionist rubbish pushed by so-called left-wingers in and around the Labour Party, such as the call for import controls on foreign coal advocated by Arthur Scargill, is a reactionary non-answer to the “free market” ideology of Major and Blair.

The Labour Party Has Never Had a Socialist Soul

Much to the dismay of the majority of left Labour MPs (and of not a few Labour-loyal “revolutionary” groups), Arthur Scargill is making noises about breaking from Tony Blair's discredited “New Labour” Party, and forming a breakaway Socialist Labour Party [whose formation he announced in a January 13 press conference]. The Socialist Workers Party (in line with Labour left Tony Benn) cautions against departing from Labour, announcing that “a vote for Labour is a class vote” (*Socialist Worker*, 11 November 1995). This is a counterposition to Scargill, not from the left, but from the right. Workers Power enthuses over Scargill's SLP initiative but their fundamental loyalty to Labourism is captured graphically by the statement that a “revolutionary” Socialist Labour Party “would call for a vote for Labour in any constituency where there was no revolutionary candidate, and continue to demand that Labour acts in the interests of those workers” (*Workers Power*, December 1995).

The problem with Scargill's proposal is not that he wants to break from the Labour Party, but the reformist politics of the party that he wants to create. Scargill cites Blair's junking of the 1918 constitutional Clause IV as the definitive betrayal of Labour's “socialist” soul. But Clause IV was never more than a figleaf to improve Labour's “socialist” credentials in the wake of the Bolshevik

Revolution of October 1917. The Labour Party is a *bourgeois workers party*, with a working-class base but a pro-capitalist leadership. Blair wants to turn back the clock, and sever the links with the trade unions: to abandon even the pretence of class independence. Arthur Scargill wants to maintain the pretence.

But the working class doesn't need a pretence—it needs the real thing: a party which actually represents the separate class interests of the proletariat, which can only be satisfied by a *workers state*. A revolutionary party will be built by widening the contradictions and antagonism between the aspirations and objective interests of the working class, centrally organised in the trade unions, against the policies and actions of the pro-capitalist leadership. Marxists seek to win the support of the working-class base of reformist parties like Labour, in order to build up a vanguard party like Lenin's Bolsheviks, which can lead the working class to victory in the class battles which *will* rend apart the new world disorder. The purpose of the Spartacist League, British section of the International Communist League, is to pursue this perspective, in order to bring about the overthrow of bloody British imperialism, its monarchy, House of Lords and parliament, and to replace it with a federation of workers republics. For a workers government based on workers councils (soviets) to expropriate the bourgeoisie! ■

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California Bans Prisoner Interviews

As the U.S. prison population grows daily, the country's racist rulers rapidly eliminate what little is left of "prisoners' rights." The chain gang is back in the South, access to education is withdrawn, legal services for prisoners to challenge the brutality of racist guards and their hosses are on the chopping block. Now, in what will most likely start a trend across the country, California prison officials are banning inmates from face-to-face interviews with reporters.

Prison authorities contend that their motivation is to eliminate what they deem to be interviews for "entertainment" purposes and allow only those they consider "legitimate news." These draconian restrictions are of a piece with Supreme Court decisions and Congressional legislation to do away with the right of *habeas corpus* challenges to convictions and sentences. They are intended to prevent exposure of hideous prison conditions like those at the notoriously brutal Pelican Bay "super-maximum" prison near the Oregon border, and to prevent victims of the racist frame-up system from proving their innocence.

Foremost among the prisoners they are silencing is former L.A. Black Panther Party leader Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt), who has been the subject of a number of newspaper and TV reports disproving the charges on which he was imprisoned. For over 25 years, Geronimo has been imprisoned for a 1968 murder in Santa Monica which the government knows he did not commit. In his recently published book, *FBI Secrets: An Agent's Exposé*, former agent M. Wesley Swearingen reveals that there were at least three different sets of FBI wiretaps on Panther offices revealing that Geronimo was 400 miles away in Oakland at the time of the murder.

Geronimo has tenaciously fought to prove his innocence and to expose the FBI's deadly COINTELPRO operations against the Panthers. Every time his case has caught the interest of the press and won increased support, prison officials have retaliated. In January 1994, when FOX TV aired a three-part series detailing his innocence, prison officials immediately transferred Geronimo to Mule Creek prison, placed him in a double cell and intensified a pattern of interfering with his right to counsel,



Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt), America's foremost class-war prisoner, was interviewed in 1987 by *60 Minutes* (right), which was refused further interviews.

CBS

including restricting paralegal visits. Litigation challenging the ongoing harassment of Geronimo, first filed in 1989 by Partisan Defense Committee counsel Valerie West and Geronimo's attorney Stuart Hanlon, is still pending. Three months ago, prison officials turned down *60 Minutes'* request to interview Geronimo.

In a similar vein, Pennsylvania death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal suffered punitive measures fol-

lowing announcement of the publication last year of his book, *Live from Death Row*. Visits from paralegal assistants were restricted and Jamal's legal correspondence was intercepted; in addition, he was barred from speaking with the media for eight months. Jamal described his fight against this harassment in the first part of our interview with him (see WV No. 636, 5 January).

Drop the ban on interviews with prisoners! Free all class-war prisoners!

Mumia...

(continued from page 5)

unholy objective, to destroy MOVE. Kill them root and branch. Again, when you look at the corollaries between what happened in Philadelphia, May 13, 1985, and the political murders that happened in South Africa against the anti-apartheid movement, the ANC, SWAPO and so forth, you see how there was no difference between one branch of the government and another, because their objectives were ultimately the same. They worked together no matter what their department was, and their objective was to destroy revolutionary organizations.

WV: The first opportunity our organization had to actually work with you was when you gave a very powerful statement to the Labor/Black Mobilization, in November of 1988, in Philadelphia against the Ku Klux Klan and the skinheads. The PDC wrote to the state to demand that you be given a special parole to address the rally, because you belonged there.

Mumia: Right.

WV: And of course they refused.

Mumia: Of course.

WV: But I can say this: at the victory

party after the rally you could hear a pin drop when your statement was played by tape. People were exhausted, they were cold, and they were very happy, they were very jubilant. It was powerful.

Mumia: Long live John Africa.

WV: We were struck in reading what of your FBI files were made public that apparently one of your first acts of protest was at a rally commemorating the victims of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Mumia: Yeah, I think it was 1969.

WV: Well, this year the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II was used by the ruling class to promote a very ugly wave of anti-Asian racism. Clearly, the U.S. sees Japan as one of its main competitors in the post-Soviet world. So I wondered if you had any comments on this.

Mumia: The question is to really talk about the future. Unless masses of people around the world begin to organize in their best interests, then the elite, in terms of the ruling class of their countries, will begin organizing them against their best interests. War is never in the interests of the poor, never in the interests of the working people, never in the interests of the masses of the country, but always in the interests of the indus-

trialists, or the military-industrial complex. So unless people organize to push forward those interests in their countries, then they will be organized against their best interests, against their very life, by utilizing their own nationalism, racism, all of those chauvinisms.

When you think about wartime, no matter what you're talking about—Vietnam War, Korean War, world war, whatever—they utilize those real deep-seated hatreds. That means people from America going to Vietnam and killing over 2 million people and calling them "gooks." People from the United States going to Japan and talking about "Japs"—that racist projection that is so easily used by the state to achieve its narrow interests, and its economic interests. But they're never the people's interests. So they should organize, they should fight, organize and fight to create a war against the rulers.

WV: I wondered if you might have a comment on Lynne Abraham's trip to Poland, where she said that if you're going to have capitalism, you need capital punishment.

Mumia: I think the real reason you need capital punishment, of course, is tied to the destruction of the capital infrastructure in terms of jobs we need, in terms of industry unable to serve the needs of this country, in terms of not hiring people. They know that there are people who are going to rebel against the poverty and hunger and homelessness that's going to result. They need places to cage that growing number. They need those places.

WV: In closing, I wonder if you have any additional comments for our readers?

Mumia: Well, I thank the readers for providing me a platform. As any writer, the best thing for me writing is to be read. And I thank your readers for reading my writings. It makes me feel as if I'm a part of your lives, and it makes me less isolated. I should also let you know the latest issue, WV No. 635, was held up by the prison.

WV: It's been a privilege, and we look forward to hearing more from you in the future.

Mumia: Give my love to everybody. ■



Lipchitz/AP

Emergency press conferences by international writers' group PEN protesting impending execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal were held in Paris (above) and New York City, 1 August 1995.

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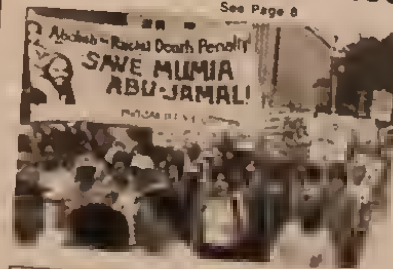
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NYC Strike...

(continued from page 12)

lower wage levels of maintenance workers in other parts of the country. The building owners' union-busting assault in what is still the strongest bastion of organized labor in the U.S. is a frontal challenge. As one striker told *Workers Vanguard*, "They want to bust our union, like they did to PATCO" air traffic controllers in 1981.

The *New York Times* (15 January) headlined, "High-Stakes Strike: Building Workers' Walkout May Set Union Pattern Nationwide," noting that new AFL-CIO president John Sweeney came out of Local 32B-32J. Everyone is watching to see how the shock waves of the wretched betrayal of the Caterpillar strike (see page

self a member of the Sweeney "team."

Scabs hired before the strike immediately started appearing inside the office buildings. That was to be expected, but the real scandal is that union electricians, operating engineers, plumbers and elevator repairmen are crossing picket lines with the approval of both 32B-32J and their own union tops! One worker outside the World Trade Center (WTC) told *Workers Vanguard*, "We should shut the whole place down. All the unions should be out."

Dozens of janitors gathered outside the Twin Towers in the first days of the strike to block the street near the main loading dock, confronting delivery drivers and turning many of them away. Half of WTC's 600-plus janitors are women who have been instrumental in stopping deliveries. But at hundreds of smaller

union-busters.

On January 10, a meeting of the Central Labor Council drew over 100 officials from New York unions to discuss how to deal with the strike. At a press conference the next day, Bevona declared that the other unions would be "honoring our picket lines" and support the strike "any way they can." However, no officials from other unions showed up, and when pressed to explain exactly what the Teamsters and skilled trades would do, he said they would only do what they could "legally"—i.e., whatever the bosses will allow. He added, "What that means remains to be seen."

Bevona's business unionism is a dead end. But the only opposition to Bevona within the union is an outfit frequently touted in the bourgeois press. To supposedly fight corruption, "Members for a Better Union" is playing a treacherous game of suing the union and local officials in the bosses' courts. Letting prosecutors and court-appointed monitors pry into union affairs is the kiss of death for workers' struggle. Labor's got to clean its own house!

Going to the courts against the union feeds right into the employers' strike-breaking. Striking janitors have already suffered close to a hundred arrests. Police have taken to ambushing strikers: hiding in the back of delivery trucks, cops pounce on picket line militants. Many strikers are learning that the police are on the other side of the class line. Breaking strikes is as fundamental to their job as terrorizing urban ghettos and barrios. And scandalously, Local 32B-32J includes some of the building security guards, whose job is to act as a private auxiliary to the cops. Police, "correction" officers, prison guards and all the bosses' uniformed thugs are not part of the labor movement!

Break with the Democrats—Build a Workers Party!

A lot of the devastation and decay of this metropolis can be placed at the doorstep of real estate speculators. The Rockefellers were the granddaddies of them all. Today the names Leona Helmsley and Donald Trump epitomize the rezoning, rent-raising and profit-gouging practices of this propertied elite. While tens of thousands of homeless people have been thrown into freezing streets because of extortionate rent increases, the Helmsleys and Trumps are claiming poverty and inability to pay the janitors' wages because of supposedly high vacancy rates and inadequate commercial rents. Yet vacancy rates for commercial space in Midtown and lower Manhattan are down and rents are sky high. Meanwhile, their pals in City Hall just gave themselves raises averaging more than what the 32B-32J workers make in an entire year.

NYC labor officialdom's "strategy" for fighting layoffs, privatization and Giuliani's replacement of laid-off unionized municipal workers with "workfare" recipients is to endlessly lobby their supposed "friends of labor" in the Democrat-controlled City Council, while doing "anything they can" to suppress class struggle. Meanwhile, hospital workers Local 1199 president Dennis Rivera (a longtime vice president of the state Democratic Party) has drained the union treasury lobbying the legislature in Albany against budget cutbacks—with nothing to show for it. While these labor misleaders beg for more crumbs from Albany and City Hall, the two million union members in the state are under an all-sided attack by both Democrats and Republicans.

So far, New York's labor traitors have worked hand in glove with Giuliani to knife the poor and kept a lid on the seething discontent at their base. But in November, teachers rebelled against social-democratic union president Sandra Feldman, voting down a five-year contract she worked out with Giuliani which froze wages until 1998. Meanwhile, Stanley Hill, president of the 120,000-member AFSCME District

Council 37, is sweating bullets trying to ram through a similar package for city workers. And in late December, the heavily black and Hispanic Local 420 municipal hospital workers, who face massive layoffs and closures, voted against Hill's contract by 4,402 to 34! The sentiment is there for an explosion of union struggle, which could link up with the janitors' strike, but what's missing is the leadership to take it forward.

In his own way, John Sweeney recognizes this potential for an explosive labor upsurge—and fears it like the plague. Remarking on how impressed he was by the recent mass strikes in France, the AFL-CIO chief quickly added, "I hope it never comes to that here in America." From failing to build picket lines to refusing to defend black people against pervasive cop terror, the labor bureaucrats are sworn enemies of class struggle against the capitalist rulers. The key to unleashing labor's muscle is to sweep out the pro-Democratic Party agents of capital within the unions, and transform the unions into instruments of revolutionary struggle against capitalism.

A class-struggle leadership of the labor movement will be forged in the fight for a workers party. This is what the Spartacist League fights for, a party that champions the cause of all the oppressed as part of the struggle for a workers government that expropriates the propertied exploiters. That is the road to an egalitarian socialist society that will provide homes, jobs, education and a future for all working people and minorities. ■

Peru...

(continued from page 2)

voiced their concern that Ms. Berenson, an American citizen, was tried without any rights in Peru's special military courts. Her trial, as well as those of the members of Túpac Amaru, before a masked military judge, in which they were not allowed to call any witnesses or confront their accusers, was a travesty. Countless fighters for the oppressed have already been sentenced by those courts to Peru's notorious jails, and millions are racked by starvation and disease under President Fujimori's austerity programs championed by Washington. We demand that Miguel Rincón, Lori Berenson and all leftist victims of government repression be immediately freed.

Very truly yours,
Paul Cooperstein

CAT Sellout...

(continued from page 12)

strike action, let alone an industry-wide strike. The first big strike was called off in April 1992, just one day after the AFL-CIO endorsed Democrat Bill Clinton for president. For the next two years they ran an "in-plant strategy" work slowdown that resulted in dozens of activists being victimized by the company while amassing scores of (still unresolved) Labor Board complaints. When rank-and-file anger erupted into another major strike in June 1994, the bureaucrats substituted chauvinist appeals to Clinton's government to "defend the American Dream" for a hard-nosed fight to stop CAT's scabs with mass pickets.

Throughout this fight, working people across the Midwest were itching for a chance to win one for labor. Tens of thousands would have eagerly responded to the call for mass pickets to shut down Caterpillar, which is exactly why the UAW International never made such an appeal. To organize such a fight, a class-struggle leadership is needed which is unremittently opposed to the capitalist, racist Democratic Party and which refuses to bow before the dictates of bourgeois legality. What's needed is a revolutionary workers party such as we of the Spartacist League are striving to build. ■



Labor must defend the oppressed! New York demonstration for Mumia Abu-Jamal last August drew 1,000 people, including contingents from SSEU Local 371, Local 1199 hospital workers, Mall Handlers and Teamsters.

12) are felt in his hometown. While claiming to represent a "new voice for American workers," Sweeney, now a member of the Democratic Socialists of America, is no less wedded to class collaboration than "Lame" Kirkland. Instead of preparing the ranks for this battle, he came to New York last month to address an audience of businessmen, including many real estate tycoons: "Offering an olive branch, he said he and the labor movement might tone down their confrontational oratory and adopt a cooperative attitude if business would treat workers fairly and with respect," the *Times* reported. But while Sweeney was begging for "cooperation," the bosses were gearing up for union-busting.

The *Wall Street Journal* (12 January) reported that the strike is taking a toll on package deliveries, but even so UPS drivers are allowing office workers to pick up packages on the street and bring them upstairs. Without the organized support of the unions, the picket lines will remain like sieves. In the first few days of the strike, Teamster-organized trash haulers not only crossed picket lines, but on several occasions threatened the strikers, brandishing pipes and shovels! Teamster officials have claimed no knowledge of this, but as yet have not officially told drivers not to cross the lines or service struck buildings.

Victory in this strike centrally depends on the *organized solidarity of other unions*. The Teamsters, including UPS drivers, are key—they can cut off deliveries. Moreover, many Fed-Ex workers, who are not unionized, have been refusing to cross the picket lines. A militant Teamster leadership would use this opportunity as a springboard to begin unionizing this key transport company nationwide. But under "reform" president Ron Carey, the Teamsters are saddled with a leadership that was installed by the federal government, which still effectively runs the union. Carey is him-

buildings, the pickets mostly consist of only two, three or four workers who can barely cover the main entrance.

Wherever 32B-32J picketers gather, there are women and men, West Indian and East European, black and white and Hispanic, recent immigrants and native-born, fighting together—notable in a city plagued by racism and rampant cop terror against minorities. Multiracial class struggle is essential to this strike and to every advance of the working class. As part of their divide-and-rule strategy, the real estate bosses are looking to use desperately poor, undocumented immigrant workers to scab on the building strike. A class-struggle leadership would undercut this racist ploy by fighting for *full citizenship rights for all immigrants*, and for a *union hiring hall*, to fairly distribute the available work and also protect high-seniority workers from victimization. *For jobs for all, through a shorter work-week with no loss in pay!*

Playing by the Bosses' Rules

On the third day of the strike, New York City was hit with one of the worst blizzards on record, piling snow up on sidewalks, outside building entrances and loading docks. But when Mayor Giuliani threatened striking janitors with arrest if they interfered with snow removal, Local 32B-32J president Gus Bevona ordered his members to cooperate with the scabherding bosses and city authorities while \$2/hour snow shovellers took their jobs.

Meanwhile, the strikers are getting practically no information from the union. Frustration over the conduct of the strike, which seems to be just dragging on, is mounting. The \$50 per week strike benefits are scarcely enough to get to and from the picket lines. Bevona is talking about the strike going on "for a long time," but every day that scab cleaners and scab deliveries skip across the picket lines strengthens the

Victory to NYC Building Workers Strike!

On the morning of January 4, over 30,000 building maintenance workers began their strike against New York City's multimillionaire real estate barons. Streaming out of skyscrapers like the Empire State Building, World Trade Center and Rockefeller Center, the commercial building workers represented by Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 32B-32J sling red-and-white picket signs over their shoulders and braced themselves against bosses and scabs, as well as record snowfall and arctic cold. With pickets all over Manhattan's business districts, this is a very visible strike. Over 1,300 buildings are struck, including such citadels of capitalist greed as the New York Stock Exchange and Trump Tower.

Negotiations between the Realty Advisory Board (RAB), representing the filthy rich building owners and property managers, and Local 32B-32J broke off over the landlords' demand that newly hired workers have their pay slashed by 40 percent. This union-busting two-tier wage demand is the key issue of the strike.

Although the RAB cutthroats reportedly demanded a slew of other givebacks, these have not been revealed by either union or management negotiators. But 32B-32J strikers across the city keenly understand that this is a recipe for getting rid of the current workers. As one striker said, "They'll find reasons to let us go one by one and then they'll put in new guys at a much lower wage."

The existence of the union and the jobs of every one of its workers are at

Picket Lines Mean Don't Cross!



World Trade Center, January 10: Striking building workers picket loading dock. All NYC labor must honor Local 32B-32J picket lines to win this strike.

stake in this battle. A hard-fought strike by this heavily integrated workforce could be resoundingly popular with the ground-down working population of New York. *But the passive, legalistic road being pursued by the union bureaucracy is leading to disaster.* Even at the biggest sites, the picket lines are not being organized to stop anything, but rather as moral witness appeals. To win this one you need picket lines at every location that *nobody and nothing crosses*: no fuel

deliveries, no mail, no UPS or Fed-Ex packages, no garbage pickup! If the skilled trades walk out, building system breakdowns could effectively make office towers uninhabitable.

Mobilizations of pickets drawing in other sectors of city labor should mass at key sites like the World Trade Center and Rockefeller Center to *shut them down*. NYC workers, who are themselves facing Mayor Giuliani's budget ax, should be mobilized in the streets

and on the picket line to see this strike through to victory. If every union in town honored the elementary labor principle that *picket lines mean don't cross*, the strike could be won in a matter of days. But to do that will mean going head-on against the powers of finance capital that run this city, and their politicians, cops and courts.

This is the *enemy* that has to be defeated, and the biggest *obstacle* to doing so is the pro-capitalist union bureaucracy. They police the unions on behalf of the bosses, rather than mobilizing labor's power against the bosses. There must be a political struggle within the unions to sweep away the misleaders whose first loyalty is to the capitalist order and replace them with a fighting leadership that doesn't bow to the bosses' rules. In the present strike there is an immediate, pressing need for an *elected strike committee* to take control of the strike and hammer out a strategy to galvanize the union for the hard battle it will take to win.

**"All the Unions
Should Be Out!"**

After 48 years without a single strike, the 32B-32J commercial building workers are now engaged in a bitter fight for their jobs. What the bosses want is to slash starting wages from \$573 to \$352 per week—givebacks that could total over \$300 million each year, to be pocketed by the bosses. The employers want to drive wages down from \$30,000 a year, which makes for a barely livable existence in New York, to the drastically

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CAT Sellout Sets Up "In-Plant" Repression

JANUARY 16—Caterpillar, Inc. is wreaking revenge on the 8,700 workers whose long and grinding walkout against the heavy-equipment giant was liquidated by United Auto Workers (UAW) president Stephen Yokich last December 3. Deserting 150 strikers that the company had fired, Yokich sent the rest back with no contract and no grievance protection. Since then, at least 88 unionists have been fired or suspended under CAT's draconian "rules of conduct" for "offenses" ranging from wearing union T-shirts to "shunning," i.e., not shaking hands with a scab. Strikebreaking Vance Security thugs walk the aisles and salaried "bird dogs" are constantly looking over workers' shoulders. Management says they have called back 90 percent of the strikers, but one returning UAW

member told *Workers Vanguard* that he only spent one half-hour in the plant before they laid him off and told him to come back in April!

While the CAT bosses purge the workforce of the most determined and conscious unionists, Yokich & Co. claim their hands are tied. What a crock! It was the UAW International along with the entire AFL-CIO bureaucracy that handed victory to Caterpillar on a silver platter by *preventing* militant mass action that could have shut the company down tight. A year ago, central Illinois was being called a "war zone" for labor, with striking rubber workers and locked-out Staley workers on the picket lines alongside the CAT strikers. "It was a time for all the union leaders to get together and say, 'Let's bring this coun-

try to a halt,'" a CAT worker in Decatur told WV, adding that pickets "four lines deep" would have won the strike in short order. Instead, all three struggles were sold down the river, by the same bureaucrats who last fall elected a new AFL-CIO leadership pledging to "renew" the labor movement!

The only thing these fakery will ever "renew" is their role as labor lieutenants of capitalism, *company cops* enforcing class peace so the bosses can get on with the business of exploitation. The "new" AFL-CIO leadership of John Sweeney and Richard Trumka push "political action" through the bosses' Democratic Party, no-fight diversions like consumer boycotts and "corporate campaigns," and shackles like binding arbitration. At a transit union meeting in Chicago last

month some members spoke out against the arbitration straitjacket; pointing to the massive strike wave in France, one militant called for strike action to win a new contract. The local president responded by demagogically asking who wanted to "go out on strike and lose your job" like at Caterpillar. The union misleaders counterpose the betrayal at CAT to the strikes in France in order to argue that strikes supposedly don't work anymore!

What doesn't work is pressuring the bureaucrats who misled, disorganized and sold out the Caterpillar fight from Day One. In the four years since the last CAT contract expired, the UAW International steadfastly refused to even call all us CAT members out in joint

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