

U.S. Hands Off Iraq!

The last act of the Clinton administration was to launch another terror attack on Iraq, as U.S. missiles slammed into the town of Samawa in southern Iraq on the morning of January 20, killing six people. Two days later, the *New York Times* (22 January) carried a front-page article foreshadowing an intensification of U.S. imperialism's ongoing war of terror. Headlined "Iraq Rebuilt Weapon Factories, U.S. Officials Say—A Test of Bush's Vow to be Tough on Saddam Hussein," the article retails a January 10 intelligence report claiming that the Iraqi ruler has rebuilt factories "suspected of producing chemical and biological weapons."

In the Persian Gulf War in 1991, U.S. bombs destroyed a baby formula and powdered milk facility on the outskirts of Baghdad which Washington claimed was a "biological weapons plant." Two years ago, as U.S. missiles smashed into a pharmaceuticals plant in famine-ridden Sudan, Washington

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AFF



AP

Clinton administration's last act: Iraqi village of Samawa devastated by U.S. missiles.

Beware Peace Talks Fraud

Mexican Army Out of Chiapas!

Down With NAFTA!

MEXICO CITY, January 30—On New Year's Day 1994, the day the NAFTA agreement for the imperialist "free trade" rape of Mexico took effect, the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) launched the peasant rebellion that cast an international spotlight on the hideous poverty and oppression of the indigenous people in one of the country's poorest states, Chiapas. The uprising was quickly contained by military repression and death squad terror unleashed by the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) regime. In the intervening years, the EZLN has pursued one sham government "peace" initiative after another. Yet Chiapas remains under occupation by at least 70,000 troops, and the government-sponsored right-wing paramilitaries responsible for the 1997 massacre of 45 men, women and children in the town of Acteal continue to operate with abandon.

As soon as he assumed the presidency on December 1, ending more than 70 years of PRI rule, Vicente Fox Quesada of the National Action Party (PAN) vowed to secure a peace deal with the EZLN. With much fanfare, Fox ordered the withdrawal of troops at a number of



Reuters

U.S.-backed military occupation of Chiapas has meant bloody repression of peasants, indigenous peoples.

outposts in Chiapas. The day after his inauguration, the EZLN announced that Subcommander Marcos would lead a two-week march to the capital beginning February 25. The Zapatistas' stated aim is to pressure federal legislators to adopt a constitutional amendment on autonomy for indigenous peoples proposed by the Commission of Concord and Peace (COCOPA)—a group of congressmen designated to mediate peace talks—and endorsed by Fox. They have also called for the release of more than a hundred imprisoned EZLN militants and the withdrawal of troops from seven outposts near Zapatista villages as a precondition for renewed peace talks.

On January 12, more than a thousand protesters, mainly students, marched

through the capital to support the EZLN's demands, while thousands more demonstrated in Chiapas with signs reading "We Want Peace." After years of looking to the "left" bourgeois-nationalist Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) and seeking to pressure the PRI to the bargaining table, the petty-bourgeois EZLN now hopes to pressure the new clerical-reactionary regime to negotiate a peace agreement. In Chiapas, the PRD is in a coalition with the PAN. Addressing Fox, Marcos told the *New York Times* (30 January), "If this government truly represents change...it will address all the issues that provoked war." Such illusions are deadly. The blood-drenched Mexican bourgeoisie, backed to the hilt by rapacious U.S. imperialism, will not and can-

not bring justice to the oppressed and impoverished.

There are 259 military outposts in Chiapas and another 396 points occupied by police forces! While the government claims that it has already dismantled four outposts, the reality is that the troops have just been moved back to their barracks a few miles away. Meanwhile, major bourgeois spokesmen are screaming for blood. The PRI is dead set against any autonomy legislation. The head of the COPAR-MEX employers association rails that "too much space" has already been given and warns Fox it would be "a grave error" to allow the EZLN march to take place. A leading official in Fox's own party, the head of the Chamber of Deputies (Congress) commission on "public security," demands that EZLN leader Marcos be arrested if he leaves Chiapas. On January 20, Fox declared there would be no further troop withdrawals and no more EZLN prisoners freed other than the 18 already released.

Standing behind the Mexican bourgeoisie is the U.S. imperialist colossus, which has funneled vast quantities of military aid to the war of terror against the EZLN peasant insurgents in Chiapas, the Popular Revolutionary Army (EPR) in Guerrero and the Insurgent People's Revolutionary Army (ERPI). Since the imposition of NAFTA, U.S. imperialism has planted its boot even more firmly on the necks of the Mexican workers and peasants, and Fox was elected on a platform of extending the PRI's sell-off of the Mexican economy to the imperialists. The American capitalists are watching closely to make sure Fox delivers on his promises to further open Mexico to U.S. economic

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Susan Rosenberg Free At Last

On January 20, Susan Rosenberg finally walked out of the prison hell in which she spent the past 16 years. A former member of the New Left Weather Underground, Rosenberg was arrested with Timothy Blunk in November 1984, convicted four months later for possession of firearms and explosives and sentenced to **58 years** in prison. Blunk was paroled after 12 years, but not Rosenberg, despite being described as a “model prisoner.” The government demanded that Rosenberg remain in prison at least 15 years longer because of allegations that she had been involved in the 1981 robbery of a Brink’s armored truck, though she was never even tried, much less convicted, in the Brink’s case.

Rosenberg was among more than a hundred people pardoned by Clinton in his final days in office. Her pardon was met with a bipartisan storm of criticism, including from New York Democratic Senator Charles Schumer, NYC police commissioner Bernard Kerik and Republican mayor Rudolph Giuliani. Giuliani, who as U.S. attorney dropped the Brink’s charges against her, conceded he didn’t remember the details of the case—but

said that Rosenberg should spend her life behind bars anyway!

Conspicuously not included among those pardoned by Clinton was American Indian Movement leader Leonard Peltier, who has been imprisoned for over 23 years, framed up for the shooting deaths of two FBI agents during the Feds’ massive siege of the Pine Ridge Reservation in 1975. Peltier’s appeal for a pardon triggered a vindictive outcry by the FBI and other police agencies. **Free Leonard Peltier!**

Together with Puerto Rican nationalist Alejandrina Torres and Italian leftist Silvia Baraldini, until 1988 Rosenberg had been held in the barbaric High Security Unit (HSU) at the federal prison in Lexington, Kentucky. They were confined to subterranean white tombs under glaring white fluorescent lights 23 hours a day and video surveillance followed their every step, even to the shower stalls. As Rosenberg described it, “They are trying to drive us completely out of our minds.” Though the Lexington HSU was ultimately shut down, it served as a prototype for psychological torture chambers which now dot the country’s landscape.

Rosenberg’s arrest came amid an “anti-terror” frenzy whipped up by the Reagan administration in the 1980s to criminalize leftist politics and labor militancy as the U.S. pursued its Cold War drive against the Soviet Union. This was a time of widespread opposition to U.S. imperialism’s support to apartheid South Africa, the contra terrorists in Nicaragua and the death squad regime in El Salvador. Among those still languishing behind bars are four members of the Ohio 7: Jaan Laaman, Ray Luc Levasseur, Richard Williams and Tom Manning. The Ohio 7 were convicted on a conspiracy rap, charged with being members of the United Freedom Front, which took credit for the bombing of government buildings (in which nobody was hurt) to express opposition to U.S. imperialism.

During the heyday of the New Left and the Vietnam antiwar movement, the politics of Rosenberg and the Ohio 7 were held by thousands of radicals who wrote off the possibility of winning the working class to a revolutionary program. As Marxists, we reject the strategy of individual terror but defend those like the Ohio 7 and Rosenberg and her com-



NYPD
Susan Rosenberg under police escort during 1984-85 federal trial.

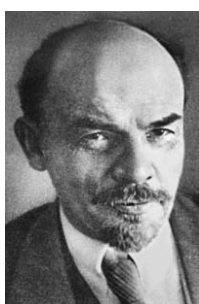
rades in the Weather Underground. They committed no crime from the standpoint of the working class but were spurned by the “respectable” reformist left when the full brunt of government repression came down upon them. Neither Rosenberg nor the Ohio 7 should have spent a day in prison. **Free all class-war prisoners!** ■



TROTSKY

The Communist International and the Fight for Black Liberation

The Russian October Revolution of 1917 reverberated among the exploited and oppressed internationally, not least the black population in the U.S. In sharp contrast to the social-democratic Second International and the pro-imperialist labor opportunists, the Communist (Third) International under Lenin and Trotsky championed the fight against colonial oppression. Addressing the tasks of American Commu-



LENIN

nists, the Comintern insisted at its Fourth Congress in 1922 that the struggle for black freedom was integral to the fight for proletarian revolution.

The blood, sweat and tears of the “emancipated” blacks helped to build American capitalism, and when the country, now become a world power, was inevitably pulled into the World War, black Americans gained equal rights with the whites...to kill and to die for “democracy.” Four hundred thousand coloured proletarians were recruited to the American army and organized into special black regiments. These black soldiers had hardly returned from the bloodbath of the war before they came up against racial persecution, lynchings, murders, the denial of rights, discrimination and general contempt. They fought back, but paid dearly for the attempt to assert their human rights. The persecution of blacks became even more widespread than before the war, and the blacks once again learned to “know their place.” The spirit of revolt, inflamed by the post-war violence and persecution, was suppressed, but cases of inhuman cruelty, such as the events in Tulsa, still cause it to flare up again. This, plus the post-war industrialization of blacks in the North, places the American blacks, particularly those in the North, in the vanguard of the struggle for black liberation.

The Communist International is extremely proud to see the exploited black workers resisting the attacks of the exploiters, since the enemy of the black race and the enemy of the white workers is one and the same—capitalism and imperialism....

The Communist International represents the revolutionary workers and peasants of the entire world in their struggle against the power of imperialism—it is not just an organization of the enslaved white workers of Europe and America, but is as much an organization of the oppressed non-white peoples of the world, and so feels duty-bound to encourage and support the international organizations of the black people in their struggle against the common enemy.

—Communist International, “The Black Question” (1922), printed in *Theses, Resolutions and Manifestos of the First Four Congresses of the Third International*, Ink Links (1980)

Iraq...

(continued from page 1)

cynically lied that the factory produced nerve gas. Now, to beat the drums for a new round of bombing in Iraq, U.S. officials claim that a factory producing castor oil for use in brake fluid is a weapons factory because, we’re told, “the mash from castor beans is used to make a deadly biological toxin called ricin.”

Even more deadly than these terror bombing attacks is the U.S. starvation blockade of Iraq, imposed in 1990 under United Nations auspices and continued under Clinton, which has killed some 1.5 million people, many of them children under five. Now, the old gang that carried out the 1991 war in which tens of thousands of Iraqis were murdered is back in the White House, with Bush Sr.’s defense secretary, Richard Cheney, serving as vice president and General Colin Powell, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, running the State Department.

Pushing its pro-Democratic Party “fight the right” line, the reformist International Socialist Organization (ISO) introduces an article on the tenth anniversary of the Gulf War by noting that the Bush team “perpetrated one of the greatest war crimes in history—the destruction of an entire country and the murder of more than a million people in the name of oil profits” (*Socialist Worker*, 19 January). But most of those people were murdered under the watch of the Democrats, who don’t even rate a mention in the ISO’s

article. In addition, hundreds of Iraqi civilians were killed by near-daily U.S. bombing in the last two years of the Clinton administration, and many more by earlier terror attacks ordered by Clinton. The Democratic Party is the **preferred** war party of the U.S. capitalist class because its posture as a friend of labor and minorities allows it to more readily whip up public support for imperialist adventures abroad.

The U.S. imperialist butchers seek to assert their “right” to ride roughshod over the colonial and semicolonial peoples of the world and to demonstrate to their rivals that the U.S. remains top dog, particularly in the oil-rich Near East. This has contributed to growing tensions among the imperialists, as evidenced by the clamor from France and other European powers to end the UN sanctions against Iraq. And in recent months Russia, Turkey and Italy have all defied the ban on commercial flights into Baghdad.

Competition over natural resources, markets and spheres of exploitation ultimately paves the way for a new inter-imperialist world war, this time fought with nuclear weapons. The threat of war can only be eliminated through socialist revolution internationally to sweep away the entire system of capitalist exploitation and oppression. From Turkey and Iraq to France and, above all, the U.S., the bastion of world imperialism, we fight to build proletarian vanguard parties to lead the workers to power. **Down with the starvation blockade—U.S. get your bloody hands off Iraq!** ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

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2 February 2001

Spartacus Youth Club Class Series

BAY AREA

Alternate Tuesdays, 7 p.m.
February 13: **Marxist Economics: Why Capitalist Boom Must Go Bust**
UC Berkeley, 179 Dwinelle
Information and readings: (510) 839-0851

CHICAGO

Saturday, 5 p.m.
February 3: **Marxism: The Fight for Socialist Revolution**
University of Illinois, Chicago (UIC)
Circle Center, Rm. 501, 750 S. Halsted
Information and readings: (312) 454-4930

NEW YORK

Alternate Tuesdays, 7:30 p.m.
February 6: **The Russian Revolution—How the Working Class Took Power**
Columbia Univ., Hamilton Hall, Rm. 609
Information and readings: (212) 267-1025

TORONTO

Alternate Wednesdays, 7 p.m.
February 14: **Racism and Capitalist Oppression**
U of T, Int'l Student Centre, Rm. TBA
33 St. George St. (just north of College St.)
Information and readings: (416) 593-4138

VANCOUVER

Alternate Wednesdays, 6:30 p.m.
February 7: **Anglo Chauvinism and Canadian Capitalism: Why Marxists Advocate Quebec Independence**
UBC, Student Union Building, Rm. 213
Information and readings: (604) 687-0353

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www.icl-fi.org

Government War on Blacks and Reds in the Early '20s

The Russian Revolution and the Black Freedom Struggle

"Everything new on the Negro question came from Moscow—after the Russian Revolution began to thunder its demand throughout the world for freedom and equality for all national minorities, all subject peoples and all races—for all the despised and rejected of the earth."

—James P. Cannon, "The Russian Revolution and the American Negro Movement" (*International Socialist Review*, Summer 1959; reprinted in *The First Ten Years of American Communism* [1962])

These words, describing the revolutionary ideas which inspired a generation of radicals in the early 1920s, were written by American Trotskyist leader James P. Cannon as the historic struggle for

Black History Month

black freedom and equality in the U.S. entered a new chapter with the civil rights movement. The October Revolution of 1917 was a beacon to the exploited and oppressed throughout the world, the greatest victory ever achieved by the working people. As the multinational working class, led by the Bolshevik Party of V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky, smashed the bloody rule of the capitalist masters and erected its own state power, it opened



National Archives

Black army unit in World War I. Returning black vets played key role in self-defense against rampant lynch mob terror in U.S.

the portals of liberation to all the many oppressed peoples of Russia.

In the U.S., the reverberations of the Russian Revolution coincided with the great migration of Southern black sharecroppers to the cities of the North and the return of some 400,000 black World War I vets. This combination of events gave birth to the rise of a new black militancy. It also gave birth to the far-flung web of repression that a half century later took the form of the FBI's COINTELPRO (Counter-Intelligence Program) terror operation. From the time of the slave revolts before the Civil War, the sight of black people armed not only with guns but with "radical" notions of freedom and equality has struck fear into America's racist rulers. In a 1919 Senate report, Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer, author of the infamous 1920 Palmer Raids, warned that "the Negro is 'seeing red'."

Many black radicals in the early '20s did indeed look to the Russian Revolution, and a few joined the early American Communist Party (CP). Among them

were leaders of the African Blood Brotherhood (ABB), mainly composed of West Indian immigrants, which advocated race pride and armed self-defense against racist terror. As black people took up arms in self-defense against a series of racist pogroms and lynchings that swept American cities from Washington to Tulsa, Oklahoma at the end of World War I, the ABB defiantly proclaimed in an article headlined "The Tulsa Outrage" (*Crusader*, July 1921):

"As at Washington, D.C., so at Tulsa, Okla. The entire power of the State, all of the forces of capitalist 'law and order,' were turned upon the Negro in the process of 'putting down' race riots that were started and most actively prosecuted by white mobs.... That is the kind of justice the Negro gets in capitalist America! That is the kind of justice the Jew used to get in capitalist-Czarist Russia, until the workers of all races arose in their wrath and overthrew the capitalist-Czarist combination and set up Soviets. Now the workers of all races get equal justice—in Russia. How long will the Negro in America continue to fall for capitalist bunk? How many more Tulsas will it take to line up the Negro where by all race interests he belongs—with the radical forces of the world that are working for the overthrow of capitalism and the dawn of a new day, a new heaven and a new earth?"

These questions are posed with no less urgency 80 years later. The last great struggle for black equality in the U.S., the civil rights movement, resulted in the formal elimination of entrenched Jim Crow segregation in the South. But it did nothing to ameliorate the de facto segregation of the black masses at the bottom of American society—massive and chronic unemployment, segregated and substandard housing and schools, rampant cop terror in the ghettos—rooted in the very foundations of this capitalist system. Thousands upon thousands of civil rights activists faced down shotgun-wielding cops and Klan lynchings in white robes. But the movement was steered away from a revolutionary challenge to racist American capitalism by Martin Luther King Jr. and other liberal civil rights leaders, aided by the long-since reformist Communist Party, and into the dead end of Democratic Party liberalism.

The Spartacist League was born in good part in a fight for a revolutionary proletarian intervention into the civil rights movement. The SL originated as the Revolutionary Tendency within the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), which had been founded and led for many years by Cannon, in struggle against the party's

Black poet Claude McKay addresses Fourth Comintern Congress, 1922. McKay's book *Negroes in America* (1923) was printed in Moscow.



Wide World

descent from Trotskyism into centrism in 1961-63. Weakened by years of isolation during the McCarthyite witchhunt, the SWP criminally abstained from the struggle to win the thousands of left-wing militants who rebelled against King's liberal pacifism, instead adapting to the liberals and later the black nationalists.

Today, the material conditions of the mass of the black population are by every measure worse than they were in the 1960s, while even the minimal gains achieved then have either been rolled back or are under incessant attack. Meanwhile, King's political heirs—Jesse Jackson, Al Sharpton, etc.—seek to bind a new generation of black youth to the Democratic Party as a capitalist "lesser evil" and to convince them that "communism is dead." The destruction of the Soviet Union, the final undoing of the October Revolution, was an enormous defeat. But the lessons of the Russian Revolution remain no less vital. It will take nothing short of a new October Revolution that sweeps away the U.S. bourgeoisie to bring about freedom and equality for black people and all working people.

The First COINTELPRO

If the class-struggle road to black freedom was first charted in the immediate aftermath of the Bolshevik Revolution, it was in this period as well that the American capitalist state constructed the

deadly apparatus of political repression—with its vast army of spies and informers, local police "red squads," wiretaps and mail interceptions—that was later deployed by J. Edgar Hoover's FBI in the '60s. COINTELPRO singled out the Black Panther Party, the best of a layer of radical black militants who spurned the accommodationism of King & Co., for defiantly asserting the right of armed self-defense. The FBI's war of terror left 38 Panthers dead and hundreds more framed up and imprisoned in America's dungeons, ultimately including onetime Philadelphia Panther spokesman Mumia Abu-Jamal, who now fights for his life from a prison cell on Pennsylvania's death row.

Theodore Kornweibel's *"Seeing Red": Federal Campaigns Against Black Militancy 1919-1925* (1998) presents a history of the first edition of COINTELPRO. Kornweibel opens: "Modern America's political intelligence system—surveillance, investigation, and spying on individuals because of fear or dislike of their beliefs, resulting in harassment, intimidation, or persecution—came of age during World War I and the Red Scare of 1919 to 1921." America's entry into World War I, the first interimperialist world war, in 1917 gave impetus to the creation of a far-flung domestic espionage apparatus—including the Bureau of Investigation, the Military Intelligence Division (MID) and the Office of Naval Intelligence—which

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1917 Harlem protest against East St. Louis pogrom in which at least 39 black people were killed.



Schomburg Collection

Black Freedom...

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grew from a handful of agents to a staff of thousands by war's end in November 1918. At its center was the newly formed Bureau of Investigation—to be recast in 1935 as the FBI amid a new wave of working-class radicalization—and its General Intelligence Division (GID), headed by the same J. Edgar Hoover.

Within months of its formation in 1919, the GID had compiled a list of 55,000 names. Initially aimed at antiwar dissidents, left-wing Socialists and IWW members, Hoover's political police went on to pursue the fledgling American Communist movement. As always, black militants were a particular target. The federal agencies were assisted by local red squads and private anti-Communist outfits like the American Defense Initiative. The Palmer Raids in the first week of January 1920 resulted in the arrest of over 6,000 Communists and the deportation of thousands of foreign-born anarchists and other radicals. All of this was carried out under "progressive" Democratic president Woodrow Wilson.

Foreshadowing the "human rights" rhetoric which was later used to justify a host of imperialist military interventions by the Clinton White House, Wilson proclaimed that the imperialist war for re-division of colonies and spheres of exploitation was fought to make the world "safe for democracy"—even as he presided over the brutal subjugation of American colonies like the Philippines and Puerto Rico and Jim Crow terror against black people in the U.S. Wilson's "14 Points," including the right of national self-determination, were cynically crafted to counter Bolshevik influence among working people and colonial slaves around the world. As a staunch supporter of segregation, Wilson was representative of ascending U.S. imperialism, whose racist wars of conquest abroad, beginning with the Spanish-American War of 1898, were accompanied by the intensification of racist repression at home.

Based on previously unavailable government documents, Kornweibel presents a powerful exposition of how the federal government mobilized its resources—from the armed forces to the postal service, from the State Department to the Justice Department—to defend the racist capitalist status quo and to crush the new movements for black emancipation and red revolution. A liberal anti-Communist, Kornweibel argues that the Feds had "reasonable grounds for monitoring" black Communists because they supposedly advocated the violent overthrow of the American government and acted as spies for Soviet Russia. He condemns the capitalist government only for spying on large numbers of liberals and non-Communist radicals. Kornweibel sneers that "the Bolsheviks failed to convert more than a handful of blacks to communism in the 1920s."

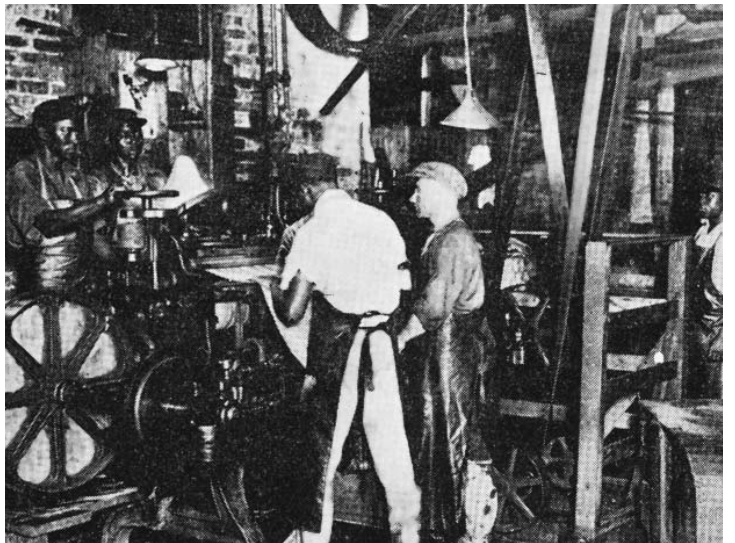
It is true that as late as 1928, the CP had only some 50 black members. The Palmer Raids and the anti-red witchhunt had served their purpose. The decade of the '20s was marked by an ebb tide in labor struggle, as union membership shrank to barely 10 percent of the workforce. Emboldened by the right-wing climate, the Ku Klux Klan reached a peak of power and popularity, with several million members, including in the urban North. In 1925, the Klan staged a march of 40,000 in Washington, D.C.

But in the immediate aftermath of the Russian Revolution, the bourgeoisie's fears that the black masses might "see red" were not misplaced. The black GIs who had been sent to die in the "great war for democracy" in Europe and were now determined to fight for some democracy at home were, in Wilson's eyes, the "greatest medium in conveying bolshevism to America." As Kornweibel himself recounts, the Bolshevik Revolu-



Chicago Historical Society

Left: Racist riots in Chicago, 1919, helped break meatpackers union organizing drive. Right: Chicago factory in 1920s. Migration from rural South to industrial North gave black workers social power as integral part of proletariat.



Vanguard Press

tion was popular among wide layers of urban blacks and even among moderate black newspapers and organizations. The accommodationism of Booker T. Washington, who preached acceptance of Jim Crow segregation and lectured impoverished blacks to pull themselves up "by the bootstraps," had held sway in the years following the elimination of the last remaining gains of Reconstruction in the 1890s, when the downtrodden masses of black sharecroppers in the South entertained little hope of social struggle. But the end of World War I ushered in a new spirit of militancy, the "New Crowd Negro," in the words of black social democrat A. Philip Randolph.

Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

The experience of the Bolshevik Party in leading the first victorious proletarian revolution provoked a polarization and regroupment within the workers movement internationally. In the U.S., many left-wing Socialists and members of the revolutionary-syndicalist Industrial

on a Mississippi steamboat?" (Jean Y. Tussey, ed., *Debs Speaks* [1970]). This Debsian outlook was manifested in the 1919 founding program of the Communist Party, while the program of the rival Communist Labor Party (the two groups merged in 1920) simply ignored the black question.

As Cannon, a former Wobbly who became an early leader of the CP and then founder of the American Trotskyist movement, noted in his 1959 article:

"The earlier socialist movement, out of which the Communist Party was formed, never recognized any need for a special program on the Negro question. It was considered purely and simply as an economic problem, part of the struggle between the workers and the capitalists; nothing could be done about the special problems of discrimination and inequality this side of socialism....

"The difference—and it was a *profound* difference—between the Communist Party of the Twenties and its socialist and radical ancestors, was signified by its break with this tradition. The American communists in the early days, under the influence and pressure of the Russians in the Comintern, were slowly and

designated to report on the "Negro Question." Describing the horrors of lynch law and Jim Crow segregation as well as the effects of proletarianization and imperialist war, Reed said:

"If we consider the Negroes as an enslaved and oppressed people, then they pose us with two tasks: on the one hand a strong racial movement and on the other a strong proletarian workers' movement, whose class consciousness is quickly growing. The Negroes do not pose the demand of national independence....

"The Communists must not stand aloof from the Negro movement which demands their social and political equality and at the moment, at a time of the rapid growth of racial consciousness, is spreading rapidly among the Negroes. The Communists must use this movement to expose the lie of bourgeois equality and emphasize the necessity of the social revolution which will not only liberate all workers from servitude but is also the only way to free the enslaved Negro people."

In the years before and during World War I, more than a million blacks fled the rural Jim Crow South to enter Northern industry. In his 1915 pamphlet, *New Data on the Laws Governing the Development of Capitalism in Agriculture*, Lenin wrote: "To show what the South is like, it is essential to add that its population is fleeing to other capitalist areas and to the towns.... For the 'emancipated' Negroes, the American South is a kind of prison where they are hemmed in, isolated and deprived of fresh air." The black question in the U.S. was thus transformed from primarily a Southern agrarian question left unresolved in the aftermath of the Civil War and the radical-democratic Reconstruction era to a key question of the *proletarian* revolution.

Particularly with the formation of the integrated CIO industrial unions in the latter half of the 1930s, black workers became a strategic component of the multiracial proletariat. The special oppression of black people as a race/color caste—segregated at the bottom of this society while integrated into the economy—is the cornerstone of American capitalism. Black workers serve as an industrial reserve army, the last hired and first fired as economic need demands. As well, America's rulers foster racial divisions in order to obscure the fundamental and irreconcilable *class* division between labor and capital and to head off united working-class struggle.

The Spartacist League's proletarian, revolutionary strategy for black liberation derives from the seminal understanding laid out by Reed in Moscow in 1920 and powerfully developed by the later writings of veteran Trotskyist Richard Fraser. In the late 1940s and early '50s, Fraser pioneered the perspective of revolutionary integrationism upheld today by the SL. We fight to mobilize the multiracial proletariat in struggle against every manifestation of racist oppression, a struggle which can only be victorious through the full social, political and economic integration of black people in an egalitarian *socialist* society.

Won to a revolutionary program, doubly oppressed black workers will play a leading role in the fight to emancipate the black masses and all working people by sweeping away the entire system of capitalist exploitation. There can be no



Vanguard Press

1925 founding convention of American Negro Labor Congress organized by CP and ANLC secretary Richard Moore. Banner reads: "Organization Is the First Step to Freedom."



Labor Monthly

Workers of the World (IWW) joined together to forge an American section of the Communist International (CI). Of particular importance was the profound change inspired by the Russian Bolsheviks in the way American radicals viewed the black question.

Samuel Gompers' American Federation of Labor was largely composed of lily-white craft unions. Even the IWW, which fought heroically to organize black and immigrant workers, had no program to address the special oppression of black people. The Socialist Party ranged from open racists like Victor Berger, who considered black people "a lower race," to "colorblind" socialists like Eugene V. Debs. Debs staunchly opposed racist discrimination and the exclusion of black workers from the unions but denied that black people suffered from any form of oppression other than as workers, going so far as to challenge: "What social distinction is there between a white and a black deckhand

painfully learning to change their *attitude*; to assimilate the new theory of the Negro question as a *special* question of doubly-exploited second-class citizens, requiring a program of special demands as part of the over-all program—and to start doing something about it."

Though the early Comintern tended to conflate the black struggle in the U.S. with the colonial struggle in Africa, the manifesto adopted by the First Congress of the CI in 1919, drafted by Trotsky, was a clarion call to the dark-skinned masses throughout the world, proclaiming: "Colonial slaves of Africa and Asia! The hour of proletarian dictatorship in Europe will strike for you as the hour of your own emancipation!" The first full discussion of the black question from a Communist viewpoint took place not in the U.S. but in Moscow, at the Second Comintern Congress in 1920. At Lenin's personal request, American Communist John Reed—author of *Ten Days That Shook the World*, the first popular account of the Russian Revolution—was

socialist revolution in this country without united struggle of black and white workers led by a multiracial vanguard party, and there is nothing other than a workers revolution, smashing the capitalist state and expropriating the capitalist class, which can at last realize the historic struggle for black equality and freedom.

Racist Terror and Black Self-Defense

The Red Scare hit full stride in 1919. That year saw the crest of the wave of labor radicalism which swept Europe in response to the great carnage of the war and under the impact of the Russian Revolution. In the U.S., the ranks of the Socialist Party swelled to more than 100,000, mostly foreign-born workers, with two-thirds supporting the pro-Bolshevik left wing. The U.S. was hit by the biggest strike wave up to that time, as four million workers walked off their jobs in response to the mounting cost of living induced by war inflation. Drives to organize unions in meatpacking and steel culminated in a huge steel strike that year which was smashed by federal troops. Shunned by the Jim Crow craft unions of the AFL, many black workers had first been hired by the bosses as scabs and worked in non-union “open shops.” Many more had been brought in to replace white workers drafted into the military.

In the South, the sight of armed and uniformed black soldiers drove the racists

James/Philadelphia Inquirer



into a frenzy. In Houston, 13 black soldiers were hanged in September 1917 and 41 imprisoned for life for defending themselves against a racist mob, and the number of lynchings escalated over the next couple of years. Conflicts over housing and jobs set the stage for a series of bloody pogroms and racist massacres, beginning in East St. Louis in July 1917, where over 40 blacks were killed. These conflicts intensified with the end of the war, as white workers demobilized from the army demanded jobs at the expense of black workers and a postwar economic downturn set in.

The Red Summer of 1919, so called for the blood of black victims that flowed through city streets, saw a series of racist rampages that left hundreds dead across the country. In Washington, D.C., the entry of black workers into lower-level civil service jobs during the war provoked a riot by returning soldiers in which six blacks were killed. A five-day riot in Chicago, which broke the back of the meatpackers organizing drive, left 23 blacks and 15 whites dead and over 500 people seriously injured. In Elaine, Arkansas, the formation of the black Progressive Farmers and Householders Union was met with a racist onslaught. Following a mob attack on a union meeting in October, in which some 200 black men, women and children died, federal troops were called in and 12 sharecroppers were sentenced to death and another 80 to prison for “inciting to insurrection.” They were finally freed after prolonged efforts by the NAACP.

The worst of these racist atrocities came in Tulsa, Oklahoma in May 1921.

IWW militants were among the thousands of radicals deported following 1920 Palmer Raids.

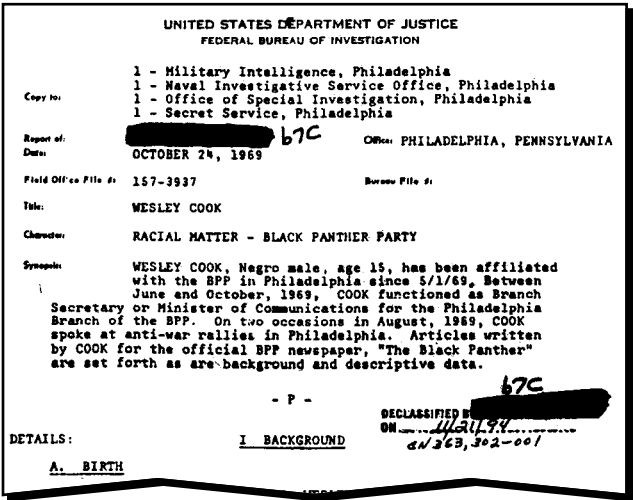
As false rumors spread that a young black man had attacked a white female elevator operator, lynch mobs looted and burned black homes and businesses. Black residents, many of them army vets, organized to defend themselves. The police, commandeering private planes, dropped dynamite on the heart of black Tulsa. By the time it was over, the once-thriving black business district, known as “the Negro Wall Street,” had been razed. Over 200 black men, women and children (as well as some 50 white attackers) were killed, and over 4,000 more were thrown into concentration camps.

What alarmed the bourgeoisie was not the murderous ferocity of the racist



Lake View Press

in which editor W. E. B. DuBois called for black vets to “battle against the forces of hell in our own land” and declared, “We return from fighting. We return fighting.” This was deemed so inflammatory that the New York Postmaster ordered 100,000 copies of the issue withheld, despite the NAACP’s record of loyalty to the racist rulers. During the war, DuBois had urged blacks to “close ranks” behind U.S. imperialism, while NAACP chairman Joel Spingarn served as an officer in military intelligence, briefly heading up subsection M14E, which specialized in “investigations of blacks’ loyalties,” as Kornweibel reports.



From the time he was a Philadelphia Black Panther Party spokesman in late '60s, Mumia Abu-Jamal was targeted by FBI's murderous COINTELPRO operation.

attacks but that they were met by blacks with growing resolve for armed self-defense. The Chicago *Whip*, one of a number of small black newspapers which typified the “New Crowd Negro,” drew the ire of the Feds when it headlined a report on a 1920 racist riot in Jersey City in which three whites were badly beaten in self-defense by besieged blacks: “Started by White Hoodlums, Finished by Tough Negroes.” Following the Tulsa pogrom, the paper carried a scathing indictment of racist American “democracy”: “Americanism! Is that the thing which lynches, burns and murders the weak? If so, then give us Lords and Kings with guillotines and dungeons” (quoted in the *Crusader*, July 1921).

Claude McKay gave voice to the new spirit of militancy in his famous poem “If We Must Die” (1919):

“If we must die, let it not be like hogs.... Like men we'll face the murderous cowardly pack, Pressed to the wall, dying, but fighting back!”

Though never a member of the CP, McKay was outspoken and eloquent in his support for the Russian Revolution and was invited to attend the CI's 1922 Fourth Congress as a special delegate. When McKay met Trotsky, the Bolshevik leader and Red Army commander talked of his hopes of training a group of American blacks as officers in the Red Army and invited McKay for a three-week tour of Russian military facilities. But, stressed Trotsky, “The training of black propagandists is the most imperative and extremely important revolutionary task of the present time.”

Even the cravenly legalistic NAACP ran an editorial in its *Crisis* in May 1919

alist regimes, and to ‘expropriate all the expropriators.’ Such revolutionary principles and appeals were the real radical demands of the epoch—and not a wind of these blew through the civilized halls of the Pan-African Congresses.”

—“Critical Introduction” to George Padmore, *Pan-Africanism or Communism* (1972)

When McKay criticized the *Crisis* in 1921 for “sneer[ing] at the Russian Revolution, the greatest event in the history of humanity,” DuBois replied that “the immediate work for the American Negro lies in America and not in Russia” and pronounced it “foolish for us to give up this practical program...by seeking to join a revolution which we do not at present understand” (*Crisis*, July 1921; reprinted in Philip S. Foner and James S. Allen, eds., *American Communism and Black Americans: A Documentary History, 1919-1929* [1987]). This the liberal DuBois would never understand, even after joining the by-then thoroughly reformist CP in 1961, shortly before his death.

Hoover's Witchhunt Against Black Militants

As racist mobs rampaged against blacks in 1919, Hoover directed his agents to pay “special attention” to “the Negro agitation which seems to be prevalent throughout the industrial centers of the country and every effort should be made to ascertain whether or not this agitation is due to the influence of the radical elements such as the IWW and Bolsheviks.” In a report to Congress that year, Hoover railed that “a certain class of Negro leaders” had shown “an outspoken advocacy of the Bolshevik or Soviet doctrines,” had been “openly, defiantly assertive” of their “own equality or even superiority” and had demanded “social equality” (quoted in Robert Goldstein, *Political Repression in Modern America: 1870 to the Present* [1978]).

In its venomous crusade against anything smacking of black self-assertion, the government even targeted Marcus Garvey's *Negro World* as “probable Bolshevik propaganda.” In fact, Garvey was an early exponent of the reactionary separatism and black capitalism today espoused by Louis Farrakhan's Nation of Islam. In 1922, Garvey even staged a meeting with the head of the KKK. Garvey's United Negro Improvement Association tried to get blacks to move to Africa and establish themselves as a new colonial elite with himself as their emperor. The only black nationalist movement in the U.S. ever to attain a mass base, the Garveyites fed off the disillusionment and demoralization which followed the defeat of the postwar strike wave and the 1919 riots. After a years-long vendetta, the Feds imprisoned Garvey in 1925 on fraud charges, deporting him to Jamaica three years later.

The main targets of government repression, intimidation, infiltration and frame-up were black leftists, especially those like McKay who had traveled to Moscow and were suspected of bringing back instructions from Trotsky to set up a “colored Soviet.” The small number of black agents and informants recruited by

continued on page 6

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Black Freedom...

(continued from page 5)

the Feds were kept busy infiltrating numerous organizations, in some cases simultaneously, and reporting on public meetings and discussion circles. A particular focus of government spying was Martin Luther Campbell's tailor shop in Harlem, where regular discussions were attended by a wide range of black radicals and Communists, including McKay and leading CPer Rose Pastor Stokes.

Among those targeted by the Feds were left social democrats A. Philip Randolph and Chandler Owen, who published the *Messenger*. The second issue of the *Messenger* (May/June 1919) featured headlines like "The March of Soviet Government" and "We Want More Bolshevik Patriotism." It was from the *Messenger* group and the Harlem branch of the Socialist Party that the Communist Party recruited its first black members, including founding CPer Otto Huiswoud, a union printer from Dutch Guiana (now Surinam). The post office withheld permanent second-class mailing status from the *Messenger* for two years for the following piece puncturing the racist hypocrisy of American bourgeois society:

"As for social equality, there are about five million mulattoes in the United States. This is the product of semi-social equality. It shows that social equality galore exists after dark, and we warn you that we expect to have social equality in the day as well as after dark."

Though initially an admirer of the Bolshevik Revolution, Randolph sided with the reformist wing of the SP in the 1919 split that led to the formation of the CP. In 1923, he and Owen ran an editorial titled "The Menace of Negro Communists." By the 1950s, Randolph was a Cold War liberal and Democratic Party stalwart.

The African Blood Brotherhood

The CP's real breakthrough in black recruitment came from the African Blood Brotherhood, founded in 1919 by West Indian militant Cyril Briggs, publisher of the *Crusader*. Announcing the formation of the ABB, the *Crusader* wrote: "Those only need apply who are willing to go the limit!" Briggs was led by his uncompromising hostility to imperialist capitalism to embrace a revolutionary outlook, and he and other ABB leaders joined the CP. When the CP, before then underground, set up the Workers Party as a legal party, the ABB sent a fraternal delegation to its founding convention in December 1921 and many ABB members joined the new legal party.

Briggs himself came under surveillance in 1919 when the MID was alerted by a British intelligence report on "Negro Agitation" which described the *Crusader* as a "very extreme magazine" for its opposition to imperialism, its admiration of Bolshevism and its "abuse of the white man." Garvey's pro-capitalist separatist movement was a chief target of the *Crusader's* polemical fire. This political struggle soon became muddled as Hoover's provocateurs tried to push it toward a violent confrontation, just as 50 years later FBI provocateurs seized on the antagonism between the Panthers and Ron Karenga's "cultural nationalists" in Los Angeles to foment murderous feuding. DuBois and Randolph were trying to get the Feds to prosecute Garvey. Indefensibly, in 1922 Briggs joined with them in this, according to Kornweibel, alerting the "New York authorities that the *Negro World* had violated the law by printing advertisements for a cure for venereal disease."

In the wake of the 1921 Tulsa massacre, the ABB was subjected to even closer government scrutiny and a hysterical press witchhunt for supposedly organizing black self-defense efforts there. But the ABB's membership soared as it defiantly affirmed the right of armed self-defense. The CP distributed hundreds of thousands of copies of its own

James P. Cannon in Moscow with Red Army soldiers during Sixth Congress of Communist International, 1928.



leaflet, "The Tulsa Massacre," which called for blacks "to resist the armed assaults upon their homes, their women and children." Three CPers were convicted and sentenced to five months under Connecticut's sedition law for distributing this leaflet.

While the ABB retained a separate existence and identity through 1924, it was closely associated with and served as a recruiting ground for the Workers Party. In 1925, the CP attempted to launch a black transitional organization, the American Negro Labor Congress (ANLC), in line with the CI's recognition of the need for special organizational forms to draw into the revolutionary movement specially oppressed layers. Today's Labor Black Leagues initiated by the Spartacist League are an example of such transitional organizations, which are linked to the proletarian vanguard party both programmatically and through their most conscious cadres. The ANLC opposed the color bar in the AFL, calling for unionization of black workers, demanded full social and political equality for black people and hailed "the workers' and farmers' government of Soviet Russia." Its founding conference declared, "The white workers cannot free themselves without the aid of us dark-skinned people, and we cannot liberate ourselves unless they join with us in an assault of the world bastions of imperialism" (*Daily Worker*, 14 November 1925; reprinted in *American Communism and Black Americans: A Documentary History, 1919 to 1929*).

The CP did not have enough black cadre to get the ANLC off the ground, making little headway overall in this period marked by a sharp decline in union membership and massive growth of the KKK. Moreover, by this time the Bolshevik leadership of Lenin and Trotsky which had sought to guide and educate the American Communists had been replaced by the bureaucratic regime headed by Stalin. Hostile imperialist encirclement and the failure of revolution to spread beyond backward Russia to the advanced capitalist world led to the consolidation of a parasitic, nationalist bureaucracy which usurped power through a political counterrevolution consummated by the smashing of the Trotskyist Left Opposition in January 1924. The Stalinist bureaucracy proclaimed the nationalist dogma of "socialism in one country," transforming the Communist parties in the capitalist world from instruments for socialist revolution into appendages of the Kremlin's diplomatic maneuvers.

The Stalinists' conservative policies found an echo among American CP cadre weighed down by the reactionary pressures of an expanding and self-confident imperialism. The Soviet bureaucracy manipulated the ongoing and politically unclear factional warfare within the American party for its own ends. In 1928, the CI decreed the so-called "black belt theory," insisting against all reality and the opposition of the majority of the CP's black cadre that the black population in the South constituted a nation and that the key task was to fight for black "self-determination." But as Cannon noted in his 1959 essay, "The Russian Revolution and the American Negro Movement," it was the CP's

"aggressive agitation for *Negro equality and Negro rights on every front...* that brought the results, without the help, and probably despite, the unpopular 'self-determination' slogan."

Cannon explained that the profound changes in the attitude of the American Communists to the black question introduced in the early 1920s, "brought about by the Russian intervention, were to manifest themselves explosively in the next decade." As the Great Depression led to a new period of struggle in the early '30s, the CP took the lead in fights against evictions, in struggles of the unemployed and in the Scottsboro and Angelo Herndon defense campaigns. When the tumultuous battles that gave rise to powerful new industrial unions erupted, "the policy and agitation of the Communist Party at that time did more, ten times over, than any other to help the Negro workers to rise to a new status of at least semi-citizenship in the new labor movement."

But, as Cannon put it, "the American

tude toward the Black middle class"—i.e., its revolutionary proletarian perspective—and counterpose the need for a class-collaborationist "united freedom front." Because they uphold the Stalinist class collaborationism of the later CP, Foner and Allen are necessarily hostile to the perspective of black liberation through proletarian revolution which animated the American Communist movement under the guidance of Lenin and Trotsky.

The Stalinists' sellout of the fight for black rights in the service of FDR's Democrats cast a heavy shadow over the American workers movement. That goes a long way to explaining why, in the subsequent years, many blacks—and white workers as well—turned their backs on the Communist Party and the left in general, leaving the field open to Democratic Party liberals like Martin Luther King Jr. and, today, Jesse Jackson. In concluding "The Russian Revolution and the American Negro Movement," Cannon wrote:

"In the next stage of its development, the American Negro movement will be compelled to turn to a more militant policy than gradualism, and to look for more reliable allies than capitalist politicians in the North who are themselves allied with the Dixiecrats of the South. The Negroes, more than any others in this country, have reason and right to be revolutionary.

"An honest workers' party of the new generation will recognize this revolutionary potential of the Negro struggle, and call for a fighting alliance of the Negro people and the labor movement in a common revolutionary struggle against the present social system.

"Reforms and concessions, far more important and significant than any yet attained, will be by-products of this revolutionary alliance. They will be fought for and attained at every stage of the struggle. But the new movement will not stop with reforms, nor be satisfied with



Chicago labor/black demonstration to demand freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal, November 1998. Our fight for black liberation through socialist revolution stands in tradition of early Comintern.

Stalinists eventually fouled up the Negro question, as they fouled up every other question." By the mid-1930s, the CI had adopted the overtly class-collaborationist "people's front" line, manifested in the U.S. in a policy of subordination to Franklin D. Roosevelt's "New Deal" Democratic Party, whose Southern wing was the Klan-infested Dixiecrat segregationists. The CP played a key role in subordinating the CIO unions and the fight for black rights to the Democratic Party, opposing labor and black struggles during World War II in order to promote the war effort of racist U.S. imperialism.

Break with the Democrats—Forge a Workers Party!

In their introductory note to *American Communism and Black Americans: A Documentary History, 1919 to 1929*, Stalinist academics Philip Foner and James Allen seek to justify this history of sellouts by spitting on the heroic and pioneering work of the early CP. They depict the central role of the Russian Bolsheviks in reorienting the American Communists on the black question and criticize them for "requiring adherence to their full program" in the ANLC. They attack the early CP's "negative atti-

concessions. The movement of the Negro people and the movement of militant labor, united and coordinated by a revolutionary party, will solve the Negro problem in the only way it can be solved—by a social revolution."

The forging of an authentically communist vanguard party to lead the multi-racial proletariat to power requires breaking working people and the black masses from the grip of the racist capitalist Democratic Party. This is the task of the Spartacist League. As we state in the SL/U.S. programmatic statement "For Socialist Revolution in the Bastion of World Imperialism!": "The shell game through which the Democratic Party—the historic party of the Confederate slavocracy—is portrayed as the 'friend' of blacks and labor has been essential to preserving the rule of racist American capitalism. Our principal task in the U.S. is to break the power of the pro-capitalist trade-union bureaucracy over the labor movement. It is this bureaucracy—itsself a component part of the Democratic Party—which politically chains the proletariat to the bourgeoisie and is the major obstacle to revolutionary class consciousness, to the forging of a revolutionary workers party." *For black liberation through socialist revolution!* ■

Mexico...

(continued from page 1)

penetration. Days after his inauguration, Republican president George W. Bush announced that his first visit abroad will be to Mexico. Down with the U.S. “free trade” rape of Mexico! Mexican army out of Chiapas now! Immediate freedom for all EZLN, EPR and ERPI prisoners!

Fox’s Sham Autonomy Scheme

The COCOPA proposal, based on the 1996 San Andrés accord, would grant indigenous people “autonomy as part of the Mexican State” and “collective access to the use and enjoyment of the natural resources of their lands and territories...except those whose direct control corresponds to the nation.” In practice, these vague promises are meaningless. The proposed autonomous regions, with limited rights to land, would often come into conflict with the big landholders and the industrial enterprises Fox wants to introduce in the area. The territories whose control “corresponds to the nation” are presumably those rich in oil, gas and water resources. Chiapas has 30 percent of Mexico’s scarce water resources, 47 percent of natural gas reserves and 21 percent of the oil. In fact, some of the army outposts in Chiapas were set up specifically to protect oil reserves.

The contempt of the government for the indigenous population is clear from the openly racist statement of Rafael Rangel, the president of Fox’s National Council of Education for Life and Work. Rangel declaimed that it is “very difficult” to educate half of the country’s 36 million illiterate people, who are “dispersed indigenous people” or “don’t have the mental capacity” because “their brains didn’t develop” due to malnutrition (*La Jornada*, 11 December 2000). First the bourgeoisie starves the rural and indigenous population, and then uses that to justify the fact that they are denied even the most basic education!

Fox took over a country racked by widespread social unrest, exemplified by the year-long strike at Mexico City’s National Autonomous University (UNAM) that was brought to an end last February when police stormed the campus and arrested over 700 people, including leaders of the General Strike Council. The NAFTA pact has brought untold misery to the proletariat and peasantry. Since 1994, prices for basic necessities like tortillas rose over 400 percent while real wages plummeted by some 25 percent and are barely two-thirds what they were 30 years ago. With the products of American agribusiness flooding Mexican markets, the already impoverished peasantry has been ruined.

Since last July’s elections, Mexico has been rocked by labor actions, including a strike by Volkswagen auto workers and, in mid-January, work stoppages by Mexico City subway mechanics and ticket collectors. Fox’s selection as labor minister of a former head of COPARMEX was a slap in the face to Mexican workers. One of the government’s first acts was to issue an injunction against a strike of 45,000 sugarcane workers, declaring it “nonexistent.” On January 11, state cops in Puebla invaded a factory making sweatshirts for Nike, beating and dragging away some of the 850 strikers who had been occupying the plant in protest against wages less than 70 cents an hour and conditions in which workers as young as 14 are forced to work ten hours a day.

At the same time as he moots “peace” in Chiapas, Fox is pushing to impose a 15 percent tax on food and medicine, provoking a furor among working people and the middle class. He is also proposing to open the nationalized electricity industry to foreign investment, which would amount to the privatization his PRI predecessor, Ernesto Zedillo, failed to implement in 1999. In response to the California power crisis, U.S. vice president Cheney is already talking about building new generating facilities in Mexico.

Fox’s proposal, which would cost tens of thousands of jobs, has spurred union protest marches and could detonate an explosion among the strategic and militant electrical workers. The privatization plan also poses a direct clash with the indigenous people in Chiapas, whose water resources are key to expansion of the electricity system.

The Fox government’s talk of transforming Chiapas peasants into small and medium businessmen is worse than a sick joke. A few paltry grants to create tourist enterprises and craft shops will not address the utter destitution of the region. In reality, Fox would like to convert the area into another *maquiladora* zone, exploiting its natural resources and converting the impoverished peasants into low-wage labor for U.S. and other “multinationals.”

For Permanent Revolution!

Many radical youth who previously supported Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas’ PRD had their illusions broken by the blows of billy clubs wielded by police repeatedly called out by the PRD city administration against the UNAM strikers. At the January 12 march in Mexico City, many students told our comrades that the PRD “is just the same as the other parties.” These youth continue to look to the Zapatistas’ struggle as a way to end misery and oppression. But the Zapatistas don’t even pretend to fight for social revolution; Marcos states that they “don’t want to create the Union of Socialist Republics of Central America” (*La Jornada*, 8 January).

As the EZLN’s current pursuit of a negotiated settlement with Fox underlines, its peasant-guerrillaist strategy is nothing other than liberalism with guns, propagating the illusion that capitalism can be transformed into a more “humane” system. The Zapatistas march with the Mexican flag, promoting the lie that somehow the workers and oppressed will satisfy their felt needs by uniting with the Mexican bourgeoisie to fight against the ravages of imperialism. Mexican nationalism is the common coin of all the capitalist parties—PRI, PAN, PRD—and is counterposed to achieving the rights of the indigenous peoples oppressed by the Mexican bourgeoisie.

Under capitalism, hunger and illiteracy are all the ruling class has to offer the peasantry and indigenous peoples. The fight for social justice for the indigenous peoples, for the elimination of hunger, misery and illiteracy, for an end to the deep-seated oppression of women can only be victorious through a socialist revolution that sweeps away the capitalist system of racism and oppression and expropriates the bourgeoisie! In countries of belated capitalist development like Mexico, the weak national bourgeoisie, dependent on the imperialist overlords, cannot resolve the tasks—agrarian revolution, political democracy, national liberation—historically associated with bourgeois revolutions such as the French Revolution.

We Marxist revolutionaries understand that the poor peasantry is an indispensable ally of the proletariat in the struggle for socialist revolution. But the peasantry can play no independent revolutionary role; these intermediate elements, producing for and dominated by the capitalist world market which drives them to ruination, strive for land and compete among themselves to sell their produce. The peasants’ narrow, petty-bourgeois outlook is further reinforced by rural isolation and backwardness.

It is only the proletariat, concentrated in large factories and wielding social power derived from its relationship to the means of production, which has the historic interest and ability to liberate all the oppressed. The rule of the industrial and agrarian capitalists and landlords must be replaced by the rule of the proletariat, supported by the rural and urban poor, which will sweep away pre-capitalist vestiges and resolve the burning democratic tasks as it proceeds to the establishment of a socialist economy. This is the Trotskyist program of permanent rev-



Jenkins/Fort Worth Star-Telegram

Mexico’s Vicente Fox with George W. Bush before U.S. election. Zapatista protest in Chiapas on January 12 demands: “We Want Peace.” EZLN nationalists promote illusions in sham “autonomy” proposal.



AP

olution, which can only be fully realized through the victory of the proletariat in the advanced capitalist countries, centrally the U.S.

The Grupo Espartaquista de México, section of the International Communist League, fights to forge the Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party needed to lead the Mexican proletariat to power. Crucial to this struggle is combatting the influence of bourgeois nationalism within the working class. Nationalism binds Mexican workers to their class enemy and prevents them from uniting with the workers and oppressed in the U.S. in common struggle against the capitalists on both sides of the border.

In the U.S., it is necessary to politically struggle against the AFL-CIO bureaucracy which pushes protectionist poison against Mexican workers and to fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants. With the living bridge provided by millions of Mexican immigrant workers in the U.S., and as the two countries’ economies are increasingly interpenetrated, there is a tremendous opportunity for joint class struggle uniting workers in Mexico and the U.S. against the imperialist exploiters. But this struggle will only be victorious under the leadership of a revolutionary-internationalist party. It is the purpose of the Spartacist League to build such a party.

Fake Trotskyists Push Illusions in EZLN

The fake-left groups in Mexico which claim to offer a socialist alternative to the Zapatistas in fact serve to promote illusions in these nationalists. This is crystal-clear in the case of the Liga de Trabajadores por el Socialismo (LTS), a centrist group which is revolutionary in words and opportunist in deeds. In a 10 January leaflet titled “The Politics of the Zapatista Leadership,” the LTS declares: “Only the *independent mobilization*, nationally and

internationally, and the unity of the working class and the poor masses of the city and the countryside can solve the demands of the peasantry.” But while raising a call for an “internationalist workers party” and making ritual reference to the proletariat leading the oppressed, the LTS fosters the view that the petty-bourgeois EZLN could play a more revolutionary role. Thus they lament, “Regrettably, the Zapatista leadership changed the demands of LAND!, DOWN WITH NAFTA! and DEATH TO THE BAD GOVERNMENT! a few days after the armed uprising began—to give way to the San Andrés Accords—under the promise of Zedillo’s PRI government that it would grant indigenous autonomy.”

But from the very start, the Zapatistas made it clear that they were seeking to pressure the bourgeoisie! Lacking in the LTS’s whining is any recognition of the *petty-bourgeois class character* of the EZLN. In a separate piece in the same flyer, the LTS demands: “Dissolution of the repressive apparatus of the state that serves to harass and persecute peasant, workers’ and student fighters! Punishment to repressive assassins!” While posing as revolutionary advisers to the EZLN leadership, the LTS calls upon the bourgeoisie to punish its own hired assassins and suggests that the repressive apparatus of the capitalist state can be “dissolved” short of a workers revolution. The capitalist state cannot be reformed to serve the interests of workers and the oppressed; it must be smashed and replaced by a workers state.

The Grupo Espartaquista fights to sweep away the ideological barriers to revolution represented by such centrists as part of the struggle to bring revolutionary consciousness to the proletariat. The urgent task is building a Mexican section of a reformed Trotskyist Fourth International under the banner of permanent revolution and proletarian internationalism. ■

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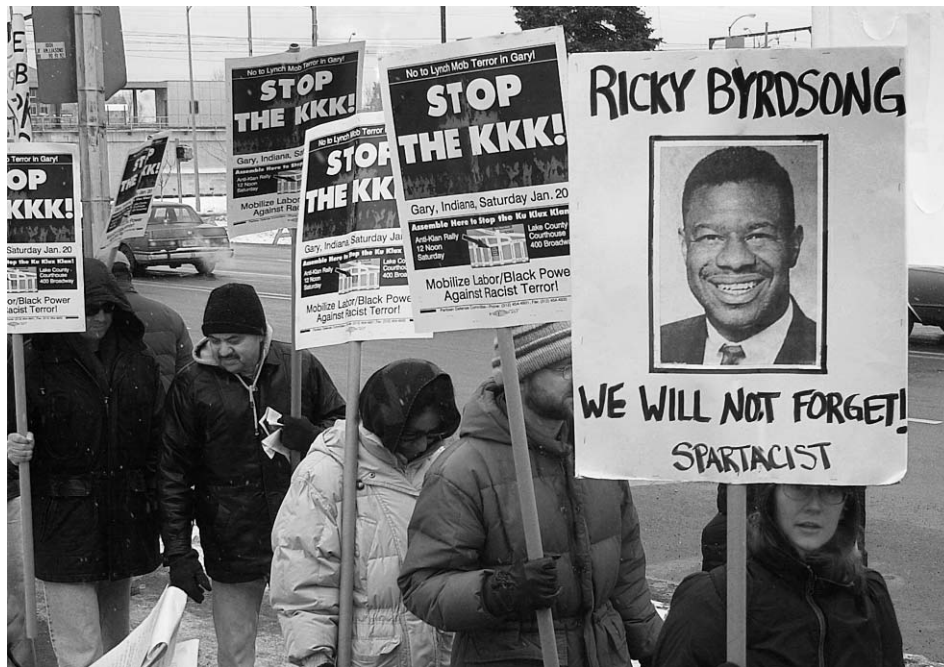
Stop the Klan! For a Workers America!

The following leaflet was issued by the Chicago Spartacist League on January 18 for the labor/black mobilization to stop the KKK in Gary.

* * *

The Ku Klux Klan threatens to rally in Gary on January 20 to “celebrate” Martin Luther King Jr.’s murder and the birthday of Confederate general Robert E. Lee. As George W. Bush is sworn in as Commander in Chief, the Klan dons its white robes to celebrate the Confederate slavocracy. These racist terrorists are the shock troops of a capitalist system that has waged a savage and unrelenting attack on American workers, black people and immigrants. No place is a more vivid expression of the cruel contradictions of that system than Gary. Reduced, since the late 1970s, from a solid working-class city to one of this country’s boarded-up plywood capitals, it is surrounded by a network of about a dozen Indiana fascist organizations, including five separate KKK groups.

In the U.S., the fundamental prop for capitalist rule is the racial oppression of black people, which is used to divide the working class that has the social power to overturn this decaying order through socialist revolution. It is no accident then that the obscene accumulation of wealth in capitalist America has been based on the deteriorating lives of the working people accompanied by a vast expansion of the instruments of state terror—the courts, cops, prisons and the executioner’s ax on death row, the victims of which are mostly black and Hispanic. As armed enforcers of the “open shop” South and the auxiliary troops of the primary organizer of racist murder and terror, the U.S. state power, the Klan is the final recourse of the American cap-



WV Photo

Gary anti-Klan protesters commemorate Ricky Byrdsong, murdered by fascist in 1999 rampage.

italist rulers. Its minions will be called into service when the anger of the working class and oppressed masses can no longer be restrained by the “normal” mechanisms of bourgeois rule.

The Democrats, widely perceived as the friends of working and black people, have, no less than the Republicans, overseen this era of ruling-class reaction. It was Bill Clinton who gutted welfare, sponsored the explosive growth of the prison system and oversaw the elimination of even token affirmative action. It was ex-mayor Richard Hatcher who held office as Gary was turned into a ghetto slum. It was his black Democratic counterpart in Chicago, Harold Washington, who led the attack against transit work-

ers, gutting their pension fund and salary base, as thousands of industrial jobs disappeared, primarily from that city’s South Side. Bush has signaled his intent to more deeply plow the terrain prepared by Clinton with his nomination of a stone racist, “keep-them-barefoot-and-pregnant” anti-abortion geek as attorney general. It has never been clearer that the working class needs to break its ties to the Democrats, the supposed “left wing” of capitalist rule, and forge a working-class party that fights every manifestation of exploitation and oppression as it gathers the forces of socialist revolution.

This mobilization was initiated by the Partisan Defense Committee—a legal and social defense organization whose purpose is in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League. The PDC and SL understand that the organized working class, standing at the head of all the intended victims of the Klan, has the power to stop the fascists. But for that power to be fully felt, labor and its allies must stand independent of all the parties and agencies of the capitalist class enemy. Inside the unions, that independence is daily threatened by the presence of the armed thugs of the state, the prison guards and cops, organized by the union tops as “workers.” The cops and prison guards must be thrown out of the trade-union movement! By building this labor/black mobilization we fight to give an organized, militant and determined political expression to the outrage of all working people, to black Chicagoland and Hispanic East Chicago and to all who know the danger posed by the Klan and who don’t intend to let them show their hooded faces in Gary.

The Chicago/Gary area remains a stronghold of working-class power. The significantly black workforce, numbering in the hundreds of thousands, produces the lion’s share of the nation’s steel while generating a yearly social product *ten times* that of all of South Africa. There is *no question* that that power, if mobilized, could drive the fascist scum off Gary’s streets. The liberal Democrats act to *block* any such mobilization. Democratic Party mayor Scott King directed the city government to deny the PDC’s permit and grant one for the Baptist Ministers’ Conference. Then the federal court summarily threw out the PDC’s appeal of the city’s denial of a permit, while Mayor King announced that any-

one demonstrating without a permit on January 20 would be arrested, thus denying the right of trade unionists, blacks and others to mobilize in opposition to the KKK murderers. This is just the way the steel bosses of this company town have always treated the workers, wielding court injunctions to ban union pickets and mobilizing armies of cops to bust strikes.

Meanwhile, the Interfaith Clergy Council of Gary plans to divert people to a “celebration of ‘reconciliation and love’” while the Klan announced its intent to rally at 1 p.m. Feeling the pressure from City Hall, some top union officials who originally backed the labor/black mobilization backed out and endorsed the preachers’ rally. Make no mistake: This is a diversion counterposed to the labor/black mobilization to stop the Klan!

On top of this came a dirty disinformation campaign by the mayor, the media and preachers who have tried to lull us into thinking the Klan won’t show. If the Klan doesn’t show their faces, it will only be because trade unionists, black people and other opponents of racist terror have shown their determination to keep the nightriders off our streets. *Keep the Klan on the run!*

When Jeff Berry, one of the Klan leaders planning to rally in Gary, attempted to bring his racist terrorists to New York City on 23 October 1999, Al Sharpton and other liberals offered to share their permit with the Klan. This craven assembly was in opposition to the 8,000-strong Partisan Defense Committee labor/black mobilization to *stop the Klan* that caused Berry to turn tail and flee after a brief appearance. For his part, Jesse Jackson seeks to deflect outrage against the race-terrorists with his proclamation that “ropes never killed as many of our young people as the pushers of drugs.” It is precisely the liberals who promote the fascists’ “right” to free speech in order to undermine the independent mobilization of the power of labor.

As Marxist revolutionaries, the Spartacist League is well aware of the importance of free speech, which we fight to defend with no illusions that this constitutional right will be respected for those who fight exploitation and injustice. In fact, it is invariably fighters against the capitalist order who have been and will be prosecuted and imprisoned under laws that curtail the freedom of expression and assembly—from the 1940s Smith Act, supposedly directed against the fascists but used to imprison socialists, to today’s “conspiracy” laws. That is why the SL opposes any appeals to the capitalist state to “ban the Klan.” The defense of free speech, the defense of the right to bear arms, are a defense of the very ability of the masses to organize and defend themselves against racist terror.

But the fascists are not just imbecilic, inbred, lip-flapping refuse; they are a horde of racist terrorists who aim their guns at leftists, trade-union organizers and all fighters against injustice and who ultimately seek to destroy the only organized institutions of the working class, the trade unions. Klan/fascist rallies are military forays. If they drew 100 to 200 supporters unopposed, no one in downtown Gary would be safe. The racist murders of Cathy Long in Indianapolis, of Sasezley Richardson in Elkhart, Indiana and of Ricky Byrdsong in Evanston, Illinois are stark testimony to the fascists’ real intent.

The phonies who let the Klan ride under the guise of the “right to free speech” are well aware of that intent. Their message is one of reliance on the cops and courts, the forces of “law and order” of the bosses’ state. But it is precisely those forces that erect holding pens to protect the fascists from those who are outraged by their presence. It is precisely the courts and the cops who framed up Mumia Abu-Jamal because he fought racism and oppression. Mumia now sits on death row. The liberals and their left



Zajakowski/Daily Calumet

USWA bureaucrat Jack Parton (left) and Jesse Jackson on their knees outside USX Gary Works during 1986 strike.

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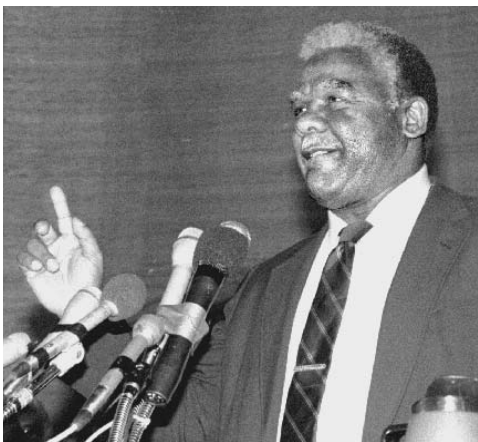
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hangers-on “defend” Mumia by calling for a new trial by the very racist system that now plans his execution. He must be unconditionally freed! It is the supposedly august Supreme Court that spit on the right of thousands of black and Jewish voters to be counted in the recent presidential election. It required a Civil War to free the slaves declared less than men by the U.S. Constitution and property by the Supreme Court in the infamous Dred Scott decision.

It will take a socialist revolution based on a struggle against all exploitation and oppression and for black freedom to ensure that the Klan/fascists will never again spread terror in this land, to assign the racist death penalty to the scrap heap of history and to assure that all have the right and wherewithal to realize their fullest potential as human beings. That revolution will expropriate industry without compensation for the fat cats and proceed to build an egalitarian society without unemployment and with full access to decent housing, free, quality health care and the highest levels of education accessible and without cost to all. To achieve these ends, the ties of labor and black people to the Democrats, maintained in the unions by the trade-union tops and in the ghettos by the likes of Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton, must be severed and a revolutionary working-class party forged to lead the struggle for a workers America. That party must act as the tribune of all the people, a party that fights against the oppression of



WV Photos

As Chicago mayor, Harold Washington presided over massive cutbacks, strikebreaking against heavily black teachers union in 1987.

ful center—Klan attacks here were primarily directed at the newly arrived Catholic immigrant population, as well as at blacks. To rout the Klan in Gary it is necessary to unite all labor—black, Hispanic and white—and this cannot be done under the banner of America-first protectionism. The SL calls for full citizenship rights for all immigrants. We fight to build an international, revolutionary working-class party to fight against the interests of imperialism.

The counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92 set the stage for the U.S. imperialists to redouble their efforts to maintain and expand their



another stronghold of imperialism, does not see the trade unions as organizations of the working class and, ignoring the class line, does not seek to mobilize organized labor. Instead, PL’s “strategy” to fight the real fascists like the KKK is to seek small group encounters with the Klan and with its police protectors, displaying at the same time their contempt for the organized power of the working class and their unbounded faith in the forces of bourgeois state repression which, if necessary, would attempt to destroy PL and its followers.

The International Socialist Organization (ISO), literal cheerleaders for the overturn of the gains of the October Revolution, slavishly follows the lead of the liberal Democrats. In New York City in October 1999, the ISO attached itself to the Democrats who sought to assure the “right” of the Klan to free speech. Most recently, after supporting the candidacy of Ralph Nader, the “third-party” candidate for capitalism, the ISO now explicitly embraces the Democratic Party by wedding itself to those who moan that Gore was robbed, and, in fact, has committed the majority of its forces to the January 20 demonstration in Washington protesting Bush’s inauguration. Petty and not so petty robbery is an age-old component of elections under bourgeois rule, but it is to be noted that the ISO *betrayed* the working class in its struggle for independence by throwing its support to the reformer of capitalism and of the Democratic Party, Ralph Nader.

A mass labor-based mobilization to stop the Klan in black working-class Gary, the heart of steel in the U.S., would set the stage for the welding of black/labor power necessary to unionize the “right to work” South. Last year’s strike by Charleston longshoremen, who faced down virtually the entire available police forces of South Carolina, revealed the

potential dynamite of labor/black power. The successful strike by Verizon telecom workers who mobilized flying pickets across state lines showed labor’s combativity and eagerness to battle the profit-bloated bosses.

The imperialists, invigorated by the counterrevolution in the USSR, have unleashed a holocaust of exploitation and oppression. Africa has been decimated by starvation and AIDS. NAFTA has ravaged the Mexican working class and peasantry. The South American and Asian masses are destitute under the burden of International Monetary Fund dictates enforced by their venal comprador ruling classes. Social benefits are under attack throughout Europe and double-digit unemployment is the order of the day. The 1949 Revolution in China which expropriated the capitalist class is endangered as the Stalinists encourage counterrevolutionary forces by dismantling state industry piecemeal while allowing the spread of domestic and imperialist capitalist enterprise. China must be defended from imperialist attack and domestic counter-revolution. The Stalinist ruling caste must be overthrown through a proletarian political revolution.

The continued existence of world capitalism means deteriorating living conditions, predatory imperialist wars and the danger of fascism. The SL, as the American section of the International Communist League, seeks to unleash the forces of world socialist revolution by building a revolutionary working-class party in America to overthrow the American imperialist order, which would ignite international class struggle. And to accomplish this, the cause of black freedom must be linked, in this country, to the fight against all oppression and exploitation. Finish the Civil War—For black liberation through socialist revolution! ■



WV Photo

SYC mobilized campus youth for Gary anti-Klan rally.

We print below a speech by Josh K., a Richmond, Virginia student activist, at the Gary anti-Klan demonstration.

We still see on the streets of Richmond today what the Civil War represented to the South. We have a street dedicated to the Civil War generals, and those monuments still represent to the South the slavocracy that the Klan is trying to uphold. They’re saying that “we still run Richmond.” Richmond is more segregated today than it was prior to the Civil War. It’s only through mobilizations like this, through the power of labor, through students, through Latinos, blacks, whites, men and women that we can get out and change this oppressive system and fight for a communist future.

women and for free abortion on demand, a party that stands against gay oppression, against state proscription of consensual sexual relationships and against all “crimes without victims” like the anti-drug laws which have imprisoned tens of thousands of people, primarily minorities, who have committed no crime. *Break with the Democrats! For a workers party to fight for a workers government!*

The union tops, with the assistance of Jackson & Co., stand in defense of the interests of the U.S. imperialist order. They have handcuffed steel workers to the bosses by promoting “America-first” protectionism. This support to the interests of America’s rulers comes with a price willingly paid by the trade-union tops: their submission to laws that render the picket line and strike, the only real weapons of the working class against the bosses, impotent under the direction of the capitalist courts. It is “protectionism” of U.S. interests in the oil-rich Near East that has led to the murder of a million and a half Iraqis, many mere children. It is “protectionism” of U.S. interests in East Europe that paved the way for the bombing of Serbia. And it is “protectionism” that has placed Klan/fascist SWAT teams next to the hated *migra* immigration cops on this country’s border with Mexico, and that sets native-born labor against immigrants in the U.S. It is to be remembered that when the Klan was at its largest in the 1920s—with Indiana as its most power-

world dominance while increasing their attacks on labor, the poor and helpless at home. The capitalist counterrevolutions in the USSR and East Europe resulted in societal devastation, joblessness and poverty attended by the re-emergence of the fascists and of bloody nationalist pogroms and wars that go hand in hand with capitalist rule. We communists of the Spartacist League fought to defend the gains of the 1917 October Revolution that remained in the USSR just as today we fight to defend the gains of the revolutions that expropriated capitalist/imperialist rule in China, Cuba, North Korea and Vietnam. The capitalist counterrevolutions in the USSR and East Europe received invaluable assistance from the Stalinist usurpers of the Bolshevik Revolution who pursued a policy of class collaboration with the imperialists. Like the trade-union tops in this country who accept the right of the bosses’ state to dictate the terms of class struggle, the Stalinists willingly paid the price demanded by the imperialists, blocking the only real defense of the gains of October—new workers revolutions internationally to destroy the world imperialist order.

With the sole exception of the SL, those organizations that describe themselves as socialist stood with their imperialist masters in support of the overthrow of the gains of the October Revolution. It is no accident that the Progressive Labor Party (PL), which saw the USSR as just

JUST OUT!

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- South African Workers Battle ANC Union-Busting, Austerity
- South Africa ANC Regime: Enforcer for Imperialist Plunder
- Labor/Black Mobilization Rides KKK Out of NYC
- Diallo Trial: There Is No Justice in the Capitalist Courts!
- From Death Row, This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal: What Diallo Really Means
- Free Mumia! Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!
- Down With the Confederate Flag of Slavery!
- The Fight to Unionize the “Open Shop” South

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Black History and the Class Struggle

No. 16

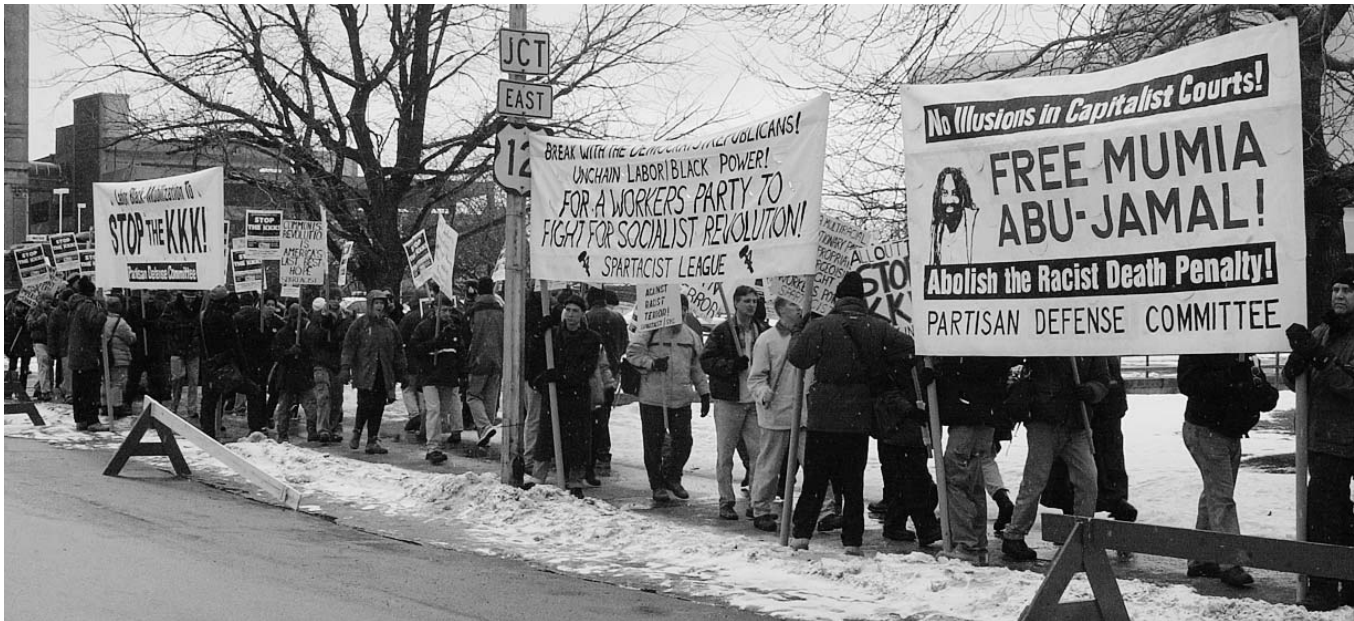
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January 2001

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organized by the Baptist Ministers Conference and Interfaith Clergy Council—the only rally sanctioned by the capitalist state that day—drew barely a few dozen people, but its purpose from the start was to get Gary’s black residents to stay home and ignore the Klan. In this, they played the role described by one black preacher in the Jim Crow South: “We are the policemen of the Negroes.... If we did not keep down their ambitions and divert them into religion, there would be upheaval in the South” (quoted in George B. Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South, 1913-1945*).

Speaking at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois on January 15, Jackson stated that the main danger isn’t the Klan but John Ashcroft, George W. Bush’s appointee for attorney general. Ashcroft is an open apologist for the Confederate slavocracy. Doubtless part of the Klan’s intention in trying to rally on January 20 was to celebrate Bush’s inauguration that day. But Jackson’s purpose is to channel the increasing anger of workers, black people, immigrants and others back into the shell game of Democratic Party electoral politics. As LBSL spokesman Bernard Branche said:

“What has voting Democrat achieved? The Clinton administration abolished welfare, escalated the racist ‘war on drugs’ that has imprisoned millions of black and Hispanic youth and has inflicted even more desperate conditions of poverty, union-busting and destitution, which nourish the KKK. The Republicans would rather openly repress us while the Democrats would rather lie. We don’t want to be lied to or repressed. Illusions in the Democratic Party stand in the way of freedom for labor, blacks and all those at the bottom of this society because they reinforce the rule of our exploiters and oppressors.”

Jackson’s injunction that the biggest threat is Ashcroft and not the Klan ignores the bitter history of black people in this country, especially in Indiana. At the height of the Klan’s influence in the 1920s, it was in Indiana that it “reached the zenith of its power,” as Wyn Craig Wade writes in *The Fiery Cross: The Ku Klux Klan in America* (1987). “It was the only state where Klaverns were chartered in every one of its ninety-two counties. It was the only state where the Klan elected

the governor and both U.S. senators.”

USWA district director Jack Parton and other labor bureaucrats played their role as lieutenants for the capitalist Democratic Party. Parton launched a nasty campaign to defame the PDC as violent “outside agitators,” telling the *Gary Post-Tribune* (19 January): “I told them we have enough violence in Gary and we don’t need them in here with that.” In tandem, the local newspapers carried some lame redbaiting articles, with the *Hammond Times* (17 January) reporting that “the Partisan Defense Committee’s plans are being broadcast on a Web site of the International Communist League.” PDC labor coordinator Gene Herson responded, “These articles point to the PDC’s affiliation with the Marxist Spartacist League of which we are open and proud.”

For their part, the labor tops purport to act as representatives of the workers while serving the interests of the bosses. Parton’s “outside agitator” line is a time-worn weapon of the racists and union-busters. The bosses and their press in the 1930s screamed about “outside agitators” and reds when the industrial unions were being organized. Civil rights protesters were brutally attacked by Bull Connor’s cops in Alabama as “outside agitators.” Parton’s violence-baiting and redbaiting demonstrate how the pro-capitalist labor tops act as enforcers for the steel magnates who rule this company town. In 1998, for example, Parton opposed the idea of a strike for health benefits by cleaners at the Gary Works.

Bending to the pressure from the top, one USWA official shamefacedly blamed his endorsement of the PDC-initiated action on his secretary, who he had asked to sign on for him. But as evidenced by the leaflet issued by Wheeler, the labor officialdom also had to contend with pressure from the base, as thousands of PDC mobilizing leaflets were distributed at the Gary Works and posted inside the plant by workers.

Build a Revolutionary Workers Party!

Earlier in the week, the Progressive Labor Party (PL) had put out a leaflet

calling to “organize thousands of people to come out to oppose the Ku Klux Klan,” arguing: “If the KKK is having a rally, we should be prepared to prevent them from getting their message out.... If the KKK does not come we should have a multiracial rally, celebrating the unity of all working-class people.” But PL’s rejection of the trade unions as the mass organizations of the working class makes it incapable of mobilizing labor’s power, leaving it no recourse but hot-air bravado or occasional substitutionist confrontations with the Klan. And given its sectarian hostility to the communist Spartacist League, it is not surprising that PL did not show up at all.

The same KKK outfit that threatened to rally in Gary tried to stage a race-hate provocation in New York City in October 1999. In a statement of solidarity to the Gary labor/black mobilization, the National Council of Trade Unions in South Africa noted, “Let us remember that they were stopped in New York last year and they can and must be stopped in Gary.” In New York, more than 8,000 people—unionists, blacks, Hispanics, Jews, student organizations—came out in response to the PDC’s call to stop the Klan. The Democratic Party politicians, from black preacher Al Sharpton to the top layers of the state party machine, tried to *stop* this anti-Klan protest, going so far as to offer to share a sound system with the KKK for a “demonstration for tolerance.” But they didn’t succeed, as the labor/black mobilization rode the Klan off the streets.

In New York, the reformist International Socialist Organization (ISO) acted as the most energetic builders for the Democrats’ rally for tolerance for the KKK in New York. In the face of the KKK’s threat in Gary, the ISO once again turned its back on any fight to defend labor, blacks and all the intended victims of fascist terror. Instead, their efforts were devoted to boosting the fortunes of the capitalist Democratic Party by mobilizing for the “counter-inaugural” rallies against Bush that day. Taking the line of the Gary mayor, black liberals and the Klan, ISO members boarding buses in Chicago for the anti-



Katopodis/Hammond Times

Gary mayor Scott King watches as anti-Klan protesters defy threat of mass arrests.

Bush protest in Washington, D.C. told our comrades that the KKK would not rally without a permit and denounced us for not uniting with the preachers’ “reconciliation and love” diversion. A representative from the League for the Revolutionary Party spoke at the Gary demonstration. Not a single other fake-left group turned out.

The political battle waged to build a labor/black mobilization to stop the Klan in Gary on January 20 demonstrated that the capitalist state is not “neutral” but rather the instrument for organized violence to ensure the rule of one class—the capitalists—over another class, the proletariat. It showed that the Democratic Party, far from being the “friend” of labor and blacks, represents the interests of the class rule of the few who profit by the exploitation of the many. It underlined the role played by the labor bureaucracy as the instrument for chaining the working people to a system based on their exploitation and oppression. In summing up the lessons of the mobilization, Spartacist League spokesman Ed Kartsen said: “In Washington, the Republican Bush government, with its Confederate sympathizers, is being inaugurated. But let the role played by Gary’s Democratic Party mayor be a lesson. As King demonstrated, what they fear and loathe above all is the independent mobilization of labor/black power.”

Our mobilization was built on the understanding that for labor to win it must be mobilized independent of the parties and agencies of the class enemy. As a new member of the Spartacus Youth Club said at a Chicago SL forum on the Gary mobilization on January 27: “Not only did we see the social power of labor in building this mobilization, but we also saw the raising in the level of consciousness of these workers. We made the necessity of a proletarian revolution and what is required to realize it that much clearer to them: the building of a revolutionary workers party linking the cause of black freedom to the struggle against all exploitation and oppression to overthrow the existing capitalist order through socialist revolution.” ■

Black History Month Forums

The Defeat of Reconstruction and the Great Rail Strike of 1877: The Shaping of Racist American Capitalism

Saturday, February 24, 3 p.m.
Harvard University
room to be announced
For more information: (617) 666-9453

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South African Workers Battle ANC Neo-Apartheid Rule

Thursday, February 15, 7:30 p.m.
Columbia University, room to be announced
116th St. and Broadway
For more information: (212) 267-1025

NEW YORK CITY

The Fight for Black Liberation: Key to the American Socialist Revolution

Friday, February 9, 7 p.m.
160 Dwinelle, UC Berkeley
For more information: (510) 839-0851 or (415) 395-9520

BERKELEY

Saturday, February 10, 4 p.m.
Immanuel Presbyterian Church, Geneva Room
3300 Wilshire Blvd. (at Berendo)
For more information: (213) 380-8239

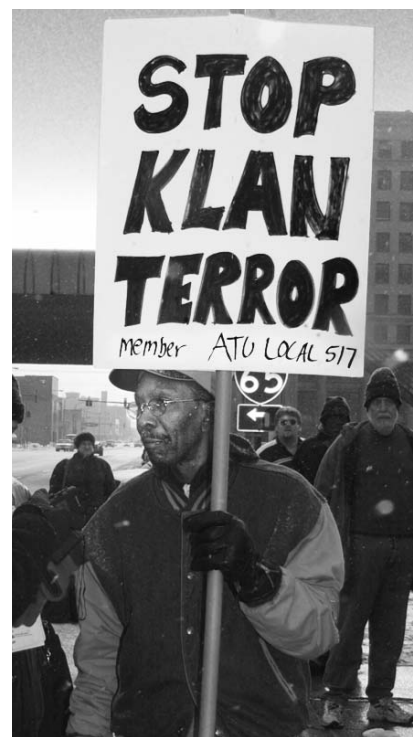
LOS ANGELES

Forums will include reports from successful labor/black mobilization to stop the KKK in Gary, Indiana on January 20!

WORKERS VANGUARD

Defying Democratic Party Mayor's Threat of Mass Arrests

Gary, Indiana: Labor/Black Mobilization Keeps Klan Out



WV Photos

January 20: PDC-initiated anti-Klan rally brought out solid contingent of ATU transit workers and others in defiance of city administration, courts and their labor bureaucrat and black preacher allies.

The Ku Klux Klan said they would rally in Gary, Indiana on January 20. These hooded lynchers said they would celebrate the murder of Martin Luther King Jr. and the birthday of Confederate general Robert E. Lee. But the Klan did not show its face in Gary that day. Instead, some 150 protesters—including a solid contingent of members of Chicago's powerful Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU), as well as other unionists, blacks, students and socialists—marched at the site of the intended Klan provocation in front of the Lake County Courthouse chanting “KKK, no way! You didn’t march today!”

Gary's Democratic Party mayor, Scott King, had threatened to arrest any and all who came out in response to the Partisan Defense Committee united-front call, “All Out to Stop the KKK!” Serving as King's front men, black ministers tried to divert outrage against the Klan into a rally for “reconciliation and love” for the racist terrorists. The local capitalist media, aided by the United Steelworkers (USWA) district director and a couple of flunkies, tried to spike the mobilization with a redbaiting campaign against “outside agitators.”

The mayor, preachers and press also tried to lull people into thinking there was no danger of a Klan rally because they were denied a permit. They were aided by the Indiana Civil Liberties Union, acting as legal counsel for the KKK, which announced that the fascist Klan promised not to march without a permit. But as PDC staff counsel Rachel Wolkenstein said in a January 15 press statement: “Did the KKK get a permit for the 1963 Birmingham church bombing which killed four young black girls? Did the white-supremacists in Indiana who murdered 19-year-old Sasezley Richardson as part

of their ‘initiation’ into the fascist Aryan Brotherhood get a permit?”

The hardcore forces who came out on January 20 made sure that the KKK did not ride in Gary that day and gave these race-hate terrorists a message of the labor/black power that can and must be mobilized to crush the fascist scum. Chicago Labor Black Struggle League spokesman Kevin Quirk, a member of ATU Local 241, summed it up best at the victory celebration at the USWA Local 5544 union hall in South Chicago later that day:

“We stood in defiance of the KKK. We stood in defiance of the efforts of the powers that be, their cops and courts who wanted to stop us. We stood in defiance of efforts by the preachers to divert us into a revolting rally for ‘love and tolerance’ for the KKK. Although our numbers were diminished by the forces who tried to stop us, we prevailed today because we fought on the basis of mobilizing the power that lies in the hands of the working people who built this country against all the parties and agencies of the enemy class. Through our efforts, we stopped the fascist stormtroopers whose aim is a ‘white-only’ America where trade unions don’t exist.”

The hand of the mayor was stayed by the wide array of union endorsements for

the PDC-initiated mobilization—from ATU Local 241 and Gary ATU Local 517 to USWA Local 1014 at the huge U.S. Steel (USX) Gary Works—as well as protests by union leaders from around the area and the country against the threatened arrests. Writing from Charleston, South Carolina the day before the rally, International Longshoremen's Association Local 1422 president Kenneth Riley notified King: “It would be a drastic mistake to have the rest of the country witness a mass arrest of mainstream citizens protesting a Klan rally. I fully support the anti-Klan (hate) rally and will be watching to see what happens.” This sentiment was echoed by California East Bay Area APWU postal workers president Stephen Lysaght, who wrote: “With all other persons of conscience, I will be watching how the city of Gary handles this situation.”

Among those who sent a protest to King was ATU International vice president Jackie Breckenridge, who also spoke at the rally, telling the crowd, “I am proud to be here and proud to see so many people show up here today to stand up against racist terror. The KKK is an organization that must be crushed

by any means necessary.” ATU Local 241 executive board member Marcellus Barnes, president of the ATU Black Caucus, recalled that M. L. King was assassinated in Memphis amid an organizing struggle by sanitation workers and added, “We didn’t know what we were going to be faced with this afternoon, but we all came out. I say to all of you, whenever we’re called on, we must respond to fight against organizations like the KKK.” William Draine, vice president of ATU Local 517, told the press at the rally, “Labor is a lot stronger than any person could imagine. We know what the KKK’s about. I knew for sure that they wouldn’t be here today.”

While the PDC's call had been widely distributed and discussed among USWA members at Gary Steel Works, on the eve of the demonstration Local 1014 president Alex Wheeler Jr. issued his own leaflet calling on union members to turn out at the PDC rally site. In the upshot, Wheeler himself did not turn up at the rally. But his statement lending Local 1014's authority to the anti-Klan demonstrators, as well as the protests by union officials, made it clear to King that he

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