

Big Liars—Bush and the Democrats

U.S./British Troops Out of Iraq Now!

U.S. Hands Off Liberia!

JULY 29—The Bush administration immediately heralded the slaughter of Uday and Qusay Hussein, whose deaths were purchased by a bounty of \$15 million per head, as the beginning of the end of the resistance to the U.S. colonial occupiers in Iraq. Within four days, eight more American soldiers were in body bags, and a total of 15 have been killed in the last eight days. When U.S. forces entered Baghdad less than four months ago, polls showed overwhelming support for the Bush administration and the war. In the triumphant afterglow of that moment, most didn't particularly care if Hussein was captured or if a single "weapon of mass destruction" was ever unearthed and were willing to entertain the prospect of getting it on with all "our enemies." That glow is fading fast. With each American casualty popular support has declined, so that now just over 55 percent of those polled approve of the war and Bush.

Notably, the strongest expression of popular dissatisfaction with the occupation is coming from those U.S. troops on the ground in Iraq and from their families at home, who anticipated their early return. The quick ticker-tape sendoff by cheering "liberated" Iraqis promised to American troops—hyped especially by Vice President Cheney and Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz—has failed to materialize. The e-mail traffic home from GIs is filled with bitter recriminations against those who put them in the Iraqi inferno. When a colonel at Fort Stewart, Georgia tried to address a meeting of 800 army wives last month, he was forced to flee the room by their angry screams and curses.

Moreover, the war and occupation have required the use of the temps of the armed services, the National Guard, to a greater

extent than any military action since the Korean War. Often in their thirties and with jobs and families, Guardsmen have increasingly been used as regular forces. Recently a National Guard truck in Iraq was spotted with the sign "ONE week-end a month *MY ASS!*" plastered on its windshield.

Added to all this is the potential social dynamite of the occupation's cost, now projected to run to \$4 billion a month (with another billion a month for Afghanistan), over double the amount initially estimated. The recession is supposedly over, but job losses continue to increase by the tens of thousands and no recovery is in sight; many working people are beginning to realize that they are the ones who will pay the price for this exercise in imperialist ambition. With tax revenues shrinking, compounded by the obscene tax breaks put in place for the rich, working and poor people are just getting a taste of the dregs from the cup of social decay prepared for them by their rulers—a cup that will continue to be filled by layoffs, attacks on health care, education, public transportation and each and all of the benefits that have accrued to the masses as a result of the bosses' past concessions in social struggle.

Black Democrats Front for Racist U.S. Imperialism

It is in this context that the mountain of lies used by Bush and his cabal of right-



Corbis SABA

U.S. military truck blown up in Baghdad. American soldier enforcing colonial occupation in Baghdad's Sadr City.

wing hawks and "neoconservative" brain-trusters to pave the way for war against a weak and essentially defenseless country has come under scrutiny. Although Bush's allegation in his January State of

the Union address that Iraq was seeking out uranium to produce nuclear weapons has drawn the most attention, that was only a fraction of the unending barrage of outright fabrications by the administration and its toadies in the bourgeois media. First there was the myth that Saddam had worked hand in glove with Al Qaeda in carrying out the criminal World Trade Center attack. Then came the now obviously bankrupt assertion that Iraq possessed vast quantities of chemical and biological agents of warfare, punctuated by the incredible claim that it was months away from developing nuclear weapons (doubtless to be delivered by rowboat).

Secretary of State Colin Powell then provided the UN with scant few "proofs" of the existence of "weapons of mass destruction." Each of the sites he presented

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Young Spartacus

The "N" Word in Racist America

See Page 6

For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!



Civil Rights Fighter, Friend of PDC In Honor of Sam Jordan

We print below a slightly edited presentation given in memory of Sam Jordan at the Bay Area Partisan Defense Committee/Labor Black League picnic held on July 21:

It is fitting for us to honor the memory of Sam Jordan at this PDC/LBL picnic. He came to some of our fundraising picnics; sometimes he even barbecued the chickens. Sam died on June 29 after a long illness.

He owned a bar, Sam Jordan's, in the black Bay View/Hunter's Point district, which he advertised as "internationalist." A friend who used to drive for MUNI [transit system] told me that some black MUNI drivers also call themselves "internationalists." Like Sam, they meant integrationists, not black nationalists. People of all races were welcome at Sam's, which was frequented by longshoremen, MUNI drivers and other unionists.

We met Sam during the 1980s, and he offered the use of his bar to us to organize—from defense of black electrician and LBL member Jeff Higgins, who was the target of disgusting racist harassment when he worked at SF General Hospital, to fund-raisers for our successful labor/black mobilizations that stopped the Klan, to defense of former Black Panther Party leader Geronimo [ji Jaga] Pratt

and later Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Sam Jordan was active in civil rights struggles in San Francisco: for integration of public housing, against school segregation, against police brutality. He opened his bar and restaurant in 1959, offering its use to neighborhood civil rights activists. He was a tirelessly generous man as well; no one went away hungry, whether they could pay for a meal or not. The Bay View district once had slaughterhouses and was called Butcher Town by many. Sam was known as the "Mayor of Butcher Town."

He was born in 1925 in a small town in Texas and moved to San Francisco in 1947 after a stint in the segregated U.S. Navy. He worked here as a warehouseman in the ILWU [longshore union]. He was also a boxer, and won the San Francisco Golden Gloves Championship at the age of 21.

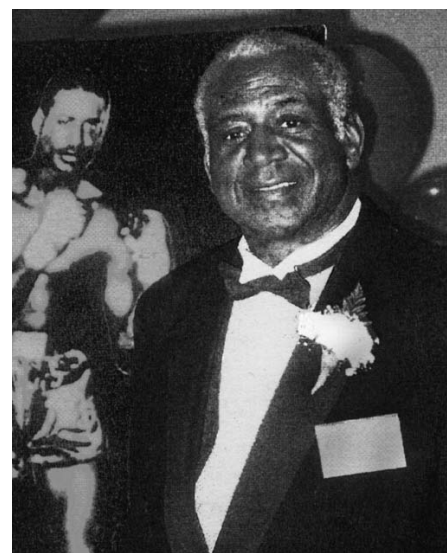
In 1961 Sam agreed to emcee a fundraiser for the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, which put him in contact with the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). Sam often talked about Asher Harer, an SWPer and a member of ILWU Local 10. In August 1963, Sam attended the March on Washington and a Freedom Now Party convention held afterwards, in which the SWP had a hand.

In 1963 Sam Jordan became the first black person to run for mayor of San Francisco. The city had just seen massive civil rights protests against widespread racist discrimination in employment. Thousands sat in at auto row dealerships, the Palace Hotel, and Mel's drive-in. Asher Harer was his speech writer; the *Militant* covered his campaign. Here's a quote from Sam's official statement mailed out to all voters:

"As an independent Negro candidate, one hundred years after the Emancipation Proclamation, I advocate the program of the Negro Revolution—Freedom Now. In the interests of all the people, I call for an end to dependence on the two old do-nothing parties; for a 30-hour week with 40-hour pay to create jobs for the unemployed, both black and white; child-care centers for working mothers; more aid for senior citizens; an end to discrimination and segregation in employment, union membership, housing, and public facilities. End *de facto* segregation in schools, and police mistreatment of minority people. Vote for Freedom Now!"
—*Militant*, 30 September 1963

Sam was invited to address an ILWU Local 10 union meeting to ask for support. Union members moved to rescind the Local's endorsement of Democrat John F. Shelley and endorse Jordan instead. It didn't pass, but nearly half of the 800 members present voted for it. This vote was all the more impressive because ILWU Local 10 historically was run by supporters of the Stalinist Communist Party (CP), which collaborated with the class enemy, the racist capitalist Democratic Party.

Sam's campaign for mayor was blacked out by the press, including the CP's *People's World*, and the black *Sun Reporter* (its editor, Carlton Goodlett, was a Democratic Party hack). When Sam



Jordan family

1925-2003

spoke to a rally of a thousand students at SFSU, the *Militant* reported: "The news blackout of his campaign was a conscious policy. It reflects the worry business and labor officialdom feel over the rise of an independent movement of minority and working people" (11 November 1963).

Unfortunately, by the 1960s the SWP was no longer the revolutionary Marxist party it had once been. They tailed alien class forces, such as the black nationalists. Our predecessor, the Revolutionary Tendency, was formed in struggle against this political degeneration. We fought to win civil rights activists to a Marxist program, revolutionary integrationism, to the understanding that anti-black racism is the bedrock of American capitalism, that the only way to end racist oppression is through the third American revolution—socialist revolution led by an integrated revolutionary workers party, independent of the capitalist parties. Had we been the majority in the SWP at the time Sam Jordan met the SWP, we might have won him—an "internationalist," an anti-racist integrationist and a real fighter—to revolutionary internationalism. ■



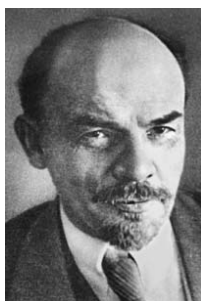
TROTSKY

The Origins of Bolshevism

August 1903 marked the emergence of V.I. Lenin's Bolsheviks (majority) in a split with the Mensheviks (minority) at the Second Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party. Initially precipitated by Lenin's insistence that party membership be open only to those "who accept its programme and who support the Party both financially and by personal participation in one of the Party organizations," the split prefigured Lenin's struggle for a revolutionary vanguard party of the proletariat, culminating in his fight during World War I for a thoroughgoing split with the opportunist Social Democrats of the Second International. Lenin's struggle guides us today as we fight for new Bolshevik parties as part of a reformed Fourth International.

The stronger our Party organisations, consisting of *real* Social-Democrats, the less wavering and instability there is *within* the Party, the broader, more varied, richer, and more fruitful will be the Party's influence on the elements of the working-class *masses* surrounding it and guided by it. The party, as the vanguard of the working class, must not be confused, after all, with the entire class.... No sensible Social-Democrat has ever doubted that under capitalism even the trade union organisations (which are more primitive and more comprehensible to the undeveloped sections) are incapable of embracing the entire, or almost the entire, working class. To forget the distinction between the vanguard and the whole of the masses gravitating towards it, to forget the vanguard's constant duty of *raising* ever wider sections to its own advanced level, means simply to deceive oneself, to shut one's eyes to the immensity of our tasks, and to narrow down these tasks. And it is just such a shutting of one's eyes, it is just such forgetfulness, to obliterate the difference between those who associate themselves and those who belong, those who are conscious and active and those who only help.

—V.I. Lenin, "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back" (1904)



LENIN

WORKERS VANGUARD

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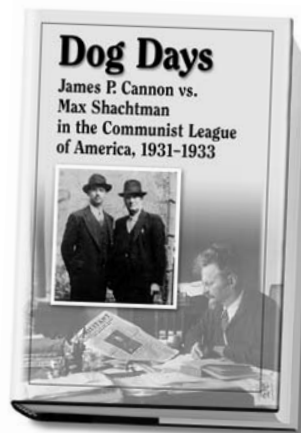
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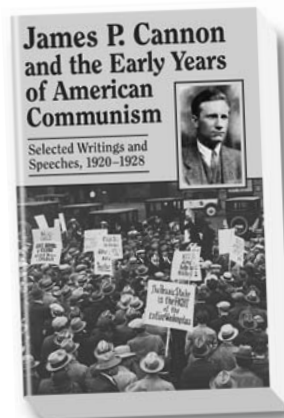
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BT: Renegades for Hire

Free All MOVE Prisoners!

25th Anniversary of Powelton Village Siege

Twenty-five years ago in the early morning hours of 8 August 1978, an army of nearly 600 cops surrounding a home in the Powelton Village section of Philadelphia opened fire. It was a furious fusillade unleashed on the MOVE commune, a mostly black, radical back-to-nature collective. When the shooting stopped, the cops came up one short. Officer James Ramp, a central figure in the Philadelphia Police Department's "Stakeout" squad, was killed in the police crossfire.

It was the inspector of the Civil Affairs unit (i.e., the notorious "red squad"), George Fencel, who had shouted over the cop bullhorn, "You have exactly two minutes in which to come out." Firemen had turned on "deluge guns," flooding the basement where the MOVE members were huddled trying to hold babies and dogs aloft to avoid the swelling waters. One by one the MOVE members surrendered, climbing out through the cellar windows. The last was Delbert Africa, a former Black Panther. He was smashed across the face with the helmet of another member of the elite "Stakeout" squad, who then dragged him by his dreadlocks across the street where three other cops proceeded to viciously beat, kick and stomp on Delbert's prone body.

All the adults forced from the building were charged with the "murder" of Ramp. The cops employed bulldozers to completely demolish the house, turning the entire property into a vacant lot, effectively destroying all evidence at what was supposed to be a crime scene. The only thing standing was a port-a-john to which the cops had taped an excruciating message, "We removed most of the shit from the neighborhood. This is for the rest."

This grotesque cop atrocity was not the first to be visited upon MOVE, nor was it to be the last. It was the culmination of over a year in which the MOVE headquarters were under a police starvation siege, as authorities under arch-racist mayor Frank Rizzo established an extensive blockade of several streets around the house. Earlier, in 1976, blackjack-wielding cops had descended on a MOVE celebration and in the resulting melee, Janine Africa's newborn infant was trampled to death.

During this series of confrontations with the racist Philly cops, the MOVE commune was predictably vilified by the local media. A powerful exception was the young and respected radio journalist, Mumia Abu-Jamal. By the time of the 1978 assault, Mumia had already inter-



Philadelphia Daily News

Philly cops brutalize Delbert Africa in 1978 siege of MOVE home.

viewed victims of police brutality and was acquiring a reputation as the "voice of the voiceless." Indeed, at Rizzo's press conference where Mumia and others asked a series of embarrassing questions on the day of the attack, the mayor railed on about the need for the reinstitution of the death penalty and blamed a "new breed of journalism" for the death of the cop. Looking right at Mumia, he spewed, "They believe what you write, what you say. And it's got to stop. And one day, and I hope it's in my career, that you're going to have to be held responsible and accountable for what you do."

Mumia had been in the cops' cross hairs since his days as the Minister of Information in the Philadelphia Black Panther Party when he was a teenager. But now he was again front and center, telling the victims' side of a story of unspeakable cop brutality. Mumia recalled that after the Powelton Village cop attack, he "gave voice to the members of the MOVE organization.... Most black reporters ignored them, while the white press slandered them."

The trial of the nine adult supporters of MOVE who survived the cop attack on 8 August 1978 was, predictably, a travesty of justice, even by bourgeois standards. Despite contradictory ballistic and forensic testimony, despite supposed videotape evidence which conveniently malfunctioned at the second the cop was shot, all of the MOVE 9 defendants were pronounced guilty of third-degree murder and in August 1981 sentenced to prison terms of 30 to 100 years each. When the trial judge, Edwin Malmel, was asked, "Who shot James Ramp?" his reply was, "I haven't the faintest idea."

In a recent letter to Kevin Gilroy, secretary of the Partisan Defense Committee, a legal and social defense organization affiliated to the Spartacist League, Debbie Africa, a member of the MOVE 9, wrote:

"According to the legal laws of this system a person is innocent until proven guilty, yet innocent MOVE people have sat in prison for 25 long years, despite Judge Malmel admitting he don't know who killed James Ramp, and despite all the blatant contradictions in testimony and official reports on the fatal bullet suffered by James Ramp....

"Every arrest, every prison sentence, every vicious beating, every baby killing MOVE suffered, at the hands of this system is *legal*, because they were initiated by legal police, sanctioned by legal judges and perpetuated by legal prison administrators....

"The holocaust was as legal as Hitler's government, but you will *never* convince a holocaust survivor that it was *right*. Slavery was legal but it will never be *right*."

The notoriously brutal and corrupt Philadelphia cops were not done with their deadly racist assaults on MOVE and its supporters. Months after the sentencing of the MOVE 9, on 9 December 1981,

Mumia Abu-Jamal was gunned down as he ran toward a scene where his brother was being beaten by a cop at the corner of Locust and 13th Streets in central Philadelphia. Almost killed on the spot, Mumia was arrested for and grotesquely framed up on demonstrably false charges of killing another Philadelphia policeman, Daniel Faulkner. The first cops to arrive on the scene where Mumia lay critically wounded were "Stakeout" squad members and the highest ranking officer there was Alfonse Giordano, a former "Stakeout" commander. Later that night, George Fencel was called into the investigation. These cops knew precisely who Mumia was—they had been targeting him for years.

And six months later, in a kangaroo court presided over by notorious hanging judge Albert Sabo, replete with racist jury-rigging and a prosecution case resting on lies and coerced "witnesses," Mumia was sentenced to death. Despite mountains of evidence proving his innocence, including a sworn affidavit by one Arnold Beverly that he—not Mumia—killed Faulkner, and an international outcry demanding his freedom, Mumia remains on death row.

But the bourgeoisie's racist blood lust against MOVE was not satiated. In one of the most hideous examples of state repression ever visited on the domestic population of America, on 13 May 1985 Philly cops working together with the FBI and the BATF (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms) came in to finish the job they began in 1978. They dropped a high-powered explosive bomb on MOVE's Osage Avenue home, incinerating eleven black people, including five children, and leaving an entire black neighborhood in smoldering rubble. This time there was to be no escape. "Stakeout" cops drove MOVE members back into the inferno under a hail of gunfire. Some of these cops described themselves as "veterans of '78," including those who had brutalized Delbert Africa seven years earlier.

In the aftermath of this horrific and murderous assault on MOVE, the Spartacist League moved to solidarize with the victims of this racist atrocity. While the

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WORKERS VANGUARD



Defend the Cuban Revolution!

Washington's "Dissidents"—Trojan Horse for Counterrevolution

May Day celebration in Havana's Plaza de la Revolución. Sources call for the U.S. to end its economic blockade of Cuba and to recognize the Cuban Revolution.

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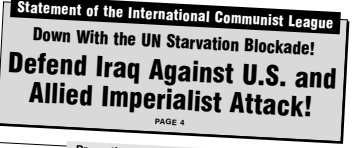
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SPARTACIST



Statement of the International Communist League

Down With the UN Starvation Blockade! Defend Iraq Against U.S. and Allied Imperialist Attack!

Prometheus Research Library Book

Dog Days James P. Cannon vs. Max Shachtman in the Communist League of America, 1931-1933

Racism, Sexism, Religion and Anti-Muslim Bigotry

Women and Immigration in France

Spartacist South Africa Comrades Address ICL Gathering

The Anti-Apartheid Struggle and the Need for a Leninist Vanguard Party

ESPARTACO

¡Abajo la rapiña imperialista! ¡Por movilizaciones obreras contra el TLC, el ALCA y las privatizaciones!



AFP



AP

Iranian students demonstrate against Islamic fundamentalist regime in June. Student protesters were thrown into Tehran's infamous Evin prison (right).

For Workers Revolution in Iran!

Chanting “The clerical regime is nearing its end!” and “Down with the Islamic Republic!” thousands of students and other protesters took to the streets of Iranian cities this summer in another round of mass demonstrations against the bloody theocratic rulers. The protests began at Tehran University on June 10 when several hundred students denounced plans to privatize the universities. Within days they had spread to other cities and drawn in broader layers of society.

The regime cracked down with brutal ferocity, unleashing its police and paramilitary Ansar Hezbollah thugs to arrest at least 4,000. One demonstrator was killed in the southern city of Shiraz, while an Iranian Canadian photojournalist was beaten to death by authorities after taking photos near Tehran's infamous Evin prison. Another center of protest was Kurdistan University in Sanandaj, where troops besieged and occupied the campus, reportedly killing one student. Faced with the threat of more widespread protests on July 9 to mark the suppression of the 1999 student revolt, the government closed Tehran University and banned all public gatherings.

Twenty-four years after a reactionary Islamic movement led by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini rode to power on the back of a popular upheaval against the despised U.S.-backed Shah and his SAVAK secret police torturers, Iran is again seething with discontent. The Islamic regime is facing all-sided social unrest, the impact of which will be felt throughout the Near East. In most of the region, the depredations of imperialism combined with the evident bankruptcy of bourgeois nationalism and the betrayals of the Stalinist Communist parties have fueled the growth of Islamic fundamentalism. But in Iran, which has lived through 25 years of “Islamic paradise,” the entire tendency of struggle is away from the forces of religious reaction.

While the deeply corrupt religious leaders live like kings, life is ever more

miserable for the working class and urban and rural poor. Real incomes have fallen by fully three-quarters since the onset of Islamic rule. Some 25 percent of the workforce is unemployed while at least a million workers with jobs have not been paid for months, in some cases for years. Despite this desperate economic situation, sections of the working class are becoming restive. Last July, 20,000 workers demonstrated in Tehran

war was fueled by the U.S., which had an anti-Iranian tilt. The struggle against the all-pervasive social restrictions of the Iranian regime finds its most explosive expression in the fight for women's rights—from being able to walk down the street without having to wear the stifling *hijab* (veil) to being able to choose your own partner. Barbaric punishments, including death by stoning, have been meted out to women, homosexuals and

Iran Fake Left:
1979: With the Mullahs
Against the Monarchy
2003: With the Monarchy
Against the Mullahs

against poor working conditions, low pay and a new labor bill that would make firings much easier. Thousands more defied a government ban to demonstrate this May Day. Around the same time, 2,000 textile workers in Behshahr went on hunger strike to protest non-payment of wages for more than two years. Rallies of up to 25,000 workers and their families backed the strikers, leading the regime to declare martial law in the city.

The population of Iran is very young, very highly educated and very repressed. Some 70 percent is under 30, in large measure the result of the slaughter of a whole generation of young men during the sordid 1980-88 Iran-Iraq War. That

others for “deviant” behavior. Hundreds of thousands of women have been driven into prostitution which, along with widespread drug addiction, has grown dramatically amid the economic and social devastation. According to the government's own estimates, *two million* women are homeless, including many teenage girls who have run away from home.

At the same time, unlike in many other Islamic-ruled states, women are not barred from higher education, and many are integrated in the workforce in fields like education and medicine. Women make up a majority of university students, and many are active in pro-reform movements. This spring, thousands of women defied the regime to publicly celebrate International Women's Day, and women have played a prominent role in the recent protests. The hold of the mosque over the population has drastically declined. Last year, the regime's own Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance admitted that 99 percent of the population no longer even bothers to attend Friday prayers.

With the fraying of Islamic rule, wildly diverse forces are now emerging to vie for leadership of the anti-regime struggle. These range from Islamic “reformers” to would-be communists, bourgeois nationalists and right-wing, pro-U.S. supporters of the former Shah. Bush cynically praised the recent student protests as “the beginning of people expressing themselves toward a free Iran.” The Bush administration has vilified Iran as part of its international “axis of evil” and has more recently tried to whip up a furor over its supposed development of

“weapons of mass destruction,” demanding “regime change” in Tehran. And over 150,000 American troops are now directly across the border in occupied Iraq and Afghanistan. ***U.S. hands off Iran! All U.S. troops out of Iraq and Afghanistan!***

The youth who spearheaded mass protests against the hated Shah 25 years ago overwhelmingly considered themselves leftists, avidly reading Lenin and chanting slogans against U.S. imperialism. The pro-Moscow Tudeh (Masses) Party had a mass base among the working class, notably the powerful and strategic oil workers, while the more left-wing guerrillaist Fedayeen attracted tens of thousands of student youth to its banners. But these organizations literally handed the working masses, oppressed nationalities, women and youthful leftists over to the new torturers of the Islamic theocracy. Upon coming to power, the Khomeini regime embarked upon the mass slaughter of the Baha'i religious minority, Kurds and other national minorities, unveiled women, militant trade unionists and all oppositionists. An entire generation of left-wing militants was wiped out. Having waded through the blood of their comrades killed by a regime they helped to bring to power, the remnants who made it into exile were defeated, broken, demoralized and most became burnt-out cynics.

Criminally, the re-emerging Iranian left today has gone from supporting Islamic reaction against the monarchy to blocking with monarchist and other pro-U.S. forces against the Islamic rulers. Many of the recent international protests in solidarity with Iranian student demonstrators, particularly in the U.S., saw leftist groups march alongside royalists and other pro-imperialist reactionaries. If you reject the possibility of bringing the working class to revolutionary consciousness, then you necessarily end up tailing one alien class force or another.

Uniquely, the International Communist League (then known as the international Spartacist tendency) warned *from the outset* of the 1978-79 upheaval that, absent a decisive break by the working class with the Islamic forces, the struggle would have a disastrous outcome. We raised the call: “Down With the Shah! Don't Bow to Khomeini! For Workers Revolution in Iran!” Today, again, we underscore that the only road to freedom for Iran's working people, women and oppressed nationalities lies in the independent mobilization of the working class and the fight for socialist revolution.

The 1979 “Revolution”: Mass Struggle and Left Betrayal

The new generation entering into struggle today in Iran has a frame of reference vastly different than that of the 1970s. The Soviet Union, the world's first workers state, which bordered Iran and provided a global counterweight to U.S.

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Worker-Communist Party of Iran

Workers demonstration in Behshahr in April.

Young Spartacus

For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

The “N” Word in Racist America

The word originated amid the horrors of the Middle Passage, the bartering in human flesh, the crack of the overseer’s whip—the systematic enslavement and dehumanization of black Africans and their descendants on North American soil. Later, it was carved by lynch mobs, savagely intent on enforcing Jim Crow racial segregation, into the hideously mutilated bodies of their black victims. It was and remains the white-supremacist rallying cry heralding cross-burnings outside black homes, firebombings of black churches and assaults on black people on city streets. Cops bark it as they rampage through the ghettos, beating down black youth and dragging them off to jail.

Yet in recent years the word “n-----” has come to be casually thrown around by youth of all ethnic backgrounds as a sign of contemporary “hipness” and a “term of endearment.” It is blasted through the airwaves in songs listened to by millions across the world and in the routines of popular black comedians. It screams from the shelves of bookstores and newsstands, the title of a best-selling book by black Harvard Law School professor Randall Kennedy last year. It has even been heard from the platforms of leftist antiwar demonstrations. In a cruel twist, the increasingly promiscuous use of this racist epithet has been driven by the hip-hop music originating in ghettos like the South Bronx and South Central Los Angeles.

For such youth, hip-hop lyrics often are an expression of defiance in the face of the raw racist reality of American society and a ruling class that could not care less whether the besieged and impoverished ghetto masses live or die. But far from being a protest against racial oppression, as some leftist black intellectuals would have it, the pervasive use of the “N” word is a result of the racist rulers’ denigration of black people. This is a form of “defiance” born of demoralization and despair, a product of the ever-worsening conditions of black life and the absence of any significant social struggle in the decades since the collapse of the civil rights movement.

It is no coincidence that the only other music today that commonly includes the word in its lyrics is that of the fascists, such as the filth put out by the neo-Nazi Resistance Records. For racist reactionaries, the one redeeming feature of hip-hop is the regular use of the “N” word. In the early years of “gangsta” rap, *Newsweek* (19 March 1990) featured a “Rap Rage” cover, which did its part to

encourage state repression and racist victimization of the hip-hop music scene by whipping up white fear and hatred. But the editors of *Newsweek* did hail “the disinterment of the word ‘n-----’” as the “most visible contribution” to rap music’s “Culture of Attitude.”

We revolutionary Marxists in the Spartacus Youth Clubs have no particular attitude toward hip-hop music. What one listens to, watches or reads is a private affair. But the word “n-----” is a *program* for racist reactionaries, and we oppose its use by whites and blacks alike. In his powerful 1829 *Appeal* against slavery,

the black race.... My home instructions were to defend the race at all cost—the ‘N’ word was a fighting word. You fought, period. To walk away was cowardice. My mother, a Southern-born woman, wouldn’t allow cowardice in her house—not on this issue. But the shame would not have ended there. In the neighborhood I lived in, the scorn would have been just as intense. A white insulted your people, and you did nothing! This was the highest shame.”

That black oppression is at the foundation of American capitalism is a direct legacy of black chattel slavery. The chains of slavery were shattered by the American Civil War, the last great bourgeois

The frequent use of the “N” word in hip-hop music precipitated a wide-ranging discussion within the Spartacus Youth Clubs on race in America and how it is reflected through youth culture, culminating in an educational presentation at the Youth Commission of the Eleventh National Conference of the Spartacist League/U.S. last summer. As vanguard fighters against black oppression, we struggle against every manifestation of racism and bigotry in this profoundly racist society. Against liberals like the NAACP, who appeal to the government or school authorities to censor “politically incorrect” language, we reject the illusion that racism can be legislated away. Such censorship only accords the capitalist government additional powers of repression, which are invariably used against working people and the oppressed. As one SL comrade observed in a pre-conference discussion contribution:

“We are materialists which, with respect to the issue at hand, means our interest is in changing material reality, that is, in forever destroying the social basis for racist oppression in this country by welding labor/black power and effecting a proletarian socialist revolution. We do not hold that this can occur by sanitizing social reality à la...the advocates of ‘politically correct’ discourse. The mirror opposite of such efforts is attempts to make the ‘N’ word hip and thus, according to the proponents of this ‘strategy,’ to erase its racist impact. Either of these idealist pursuits shares the assumption that it is what people think that is responsible for racism and not that racist oppression is the bedrock on which the American capitalist order is maintained.”

Black workers are potentially the most combative section of the proletariat; and mobilizing the labor movement in the fight for black liberation is not just one more case of championing democratic rights, but is the key to the American socialist revolution. Likewise, the “N” word is not just one more racial or ethnic slur, but is the watchword of hardened reactionaries who would spearhead a counterrevolutionary offensive rather than accept a socialist society in which black people are truly free. Any adaptation to this word can only redound to the benefit of those who view black oppression as a virtue of the existing social order. Its use can only *retard* the development of communist, i.e., liberating, consciousness.

Black Apologists for White Racism

The ideological campaign to “reclaim” the “N” word as a “term of endearment” was given national attention last year with



Young Socialist

Beaten, gassed and jailed over the course of a 64-day strike in Memphis, 1968, sanitation workers protest racist contempt for black people while marching for union recognition and improved wages.

black abolitionist David Walker wrote: “The white Americans have applied this term to Africans, by way of reproach for our colour, to aggravate and heighten our miseries, because they have their feet on our throats.”

No less today than in the past, it means not only race-terror and the lynch rope but also that the victims “deserve it.” In Meridian, Mississippi earlier this month, a deranged white racist gunned down five people, including four blacks, at an aircraft parts plant, after having repeatedly terrorized black co-workers with how “he was going to come in one day and kill up a bunch of n-----s” (*New York Times*, 9 July). In this violent, racist society, the “N” word is a fighting word, as both black and white people are aware. Recalling the intense struggles of the civil rights movement, a black SL comrade explained:

“Its use by whites was an assertion of white supremacy and the inferiority of

revolution and one which ushered in the most democratic period in American history, Radical Reconstruction. But the promise of Reconstruction was betrayed by the property interests of the Northern capitalists. Until almost a century later with the civil rights movement of the 1950s and ‘60s, built on the courage of thousands of activists, white supremacy and Jim Crow police-state control of black people reigned in the South. Blacks who fled North were integrated into the workforce at the bottom and forcibly segregated into inner-city ghettos. The subjugation of the black masses at the bottom of this society continues to this day—but black workers also remain integrated into strategic sectors of the industrial proletariat, which alone has the social power to shatter this racist capitalist system. For the capitalists, the color line is a key weapon in enforcing class exploitation by keeping the working class divided and weakened.

the publication of Randall Kennedy's *N-----: The Strange Career of a Troublesome Word* (a grotesque parody of the title of C. Vann Woodward's insightful history, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* [1955]). In his viciously satisfying riposte titled "The N-Word as Therapy for Racists: Randall Kennedy's Idiotic Assault on Black People's Honor" (*Black Commentator*, 27 June 2002), Martin Kilson, the first black professor to receive full tenure at Harvard in 1968, denounced as "idiotic" the "notion that the more White Americans mouth the 'N' word the greater will be the purge of Negrophobia in their souls, as if by comparison the more today's Germans mouth the K-word the greater will be the eventual purging of Jewish-phobia in German society."

Kennedy's book "was tantamount to tossing a match at a gasoline-soaked building," wrote Kilson, pointing to a series of racist provocations unleashed by the book at Harvard Law School last spring, including a Web posting using the slur "n-g" and an e-mail by a white student crowing, "I have actually begun using the 'n-----' word more often than before." In a reply to Kilson, Kennedy confessed, "It so happens that the students involved were my students" (*Black Commentator*, 22 August 2002).

Kennedy's service on behalf of the forces of racist reaction was widely hailed by the American bourgeois media. Typical was the review in *Newsweek* (14 January 2002): "He's made his case: that this 'troublesome' word is only a word. And that words—like people—can always change." What purpose can a "changed" definition of the "N" word serve in capitalist America? None other than to legitimize the continuing degradation of black people.

Kennedy's vile little tract is a slap in the face to every black person. But attempts to legitimize the growing use of the "N" word in public discourse extend to more left-wing black intellectuals like Robin D. G. Kelley and Michael Eric Dyson. Commenting on the controversy surrounding Jennifer Lopez's use of "n---a" in her "I'm Real" remix single with rapper Ja Rule, self-described "hip-hop intellectual" Dyson wrote in the *Chicago Sun-Times* (31 July 2001):

"One of the few privileges blacks may derive from their oppression is the ability to linguistically subvert its corrosive meanings....

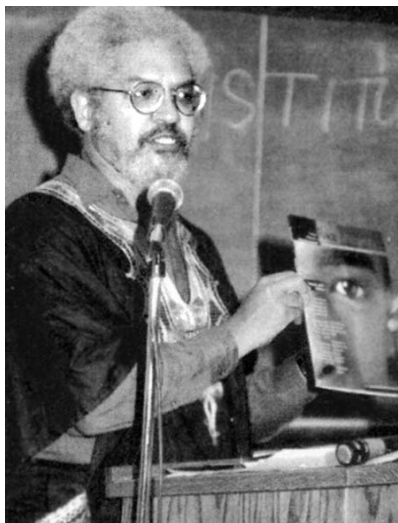
"And it is one of the consequences of black freedom that white folk—and other nonblacks—must not pretend not to understand the difference between blacks calling each other 'n---a' and whites and others calling us 'n---er.' Only a heady moral insolence could feign such innocence. So J-Lo, here's the deal: Puffy can say 'n---a'; you can't. Now that's real."

Responding to the likes of Dyson, Ron Scott wrote in the *Amsterdam News* (9 August 2001):

"Well, if you really want to keep it real, try reading '100 Years of Lynchings' by Ralph Ginzburg and 'Without Sanctuary, Lynching Photography in America,' by James Allen and Hilton Als, which graphically depict the hideous lynchings of African-Americans in America. The latter has some photographs that show the N word, which was carved on their chests."

As for the supposed distinction between the term of affection and the slur in ending the word with an "-er" rather than an "-a," this is, as Scott observed, a distinction without a difference: "Remember, many white people weren't that educated, just racist as hell, so in many cases, it was spelled the latter."

As Scott remarked, "When a word is placed in the public domain the way the hip-hop community has somewhat recklessly dropped the N word, it's evident that one can no longer define who uses it." Witness the case of white Cincinnati cop Thomas Haas, who gunned down 21-year-old Rickey Moore only months after the cop killing of another black youth, Timothy Thomas, touched off a long-simmering explosion of outrage in April 2001. Five years earlier, a com-



Herb Robinson



Daily Pennsylvanian



Ohio University

Left-wing intellectuals Manning Marable, Robin D. G. Kelley, Michael Eric Dyson despair of integrated social and class struggle, accommodate racist status quo and use of "N" word by blacks.

plaint was filed against this same cop for calling a black prisoner "n---a" while beating him into submission. According to the police report of the incident, quoted in the *Cincinnati Enquirer* (5 August 2001):

"Officer Haas claims he used the term in a friendly manner and that he was not attempting to be disrespectful.... He also claims this is an acceptable term used by persons on the street, primarily drug dealers. He states that he is trying to be a good community police officer by 'acting the role' and by presenting himself in a manner close to the persons he serves."

The Politics of Despair

In an essay titled "Kickin' Reality, Kickin' Ballistics: 'Gangsta Rap' and Postindustrial Los Angeles" (reprinted in *Race Rebels* [1994]), Robin Kelley notes, "The generation that came of age in the

plex electronic surveillance, even small tanks armed with battering rams became part of this increasingly militarized urban landscape." It was these conditions that gave rise to the massive 1992 upheaval provoked by the acquittal of four white cops who had beaten and tormented black motorist Rodney King.

South Central was emblematic of every ghetto in America. From the time of the first mass migration of Southern blacks to the Northern cities in the early decades of the twentieth century, the ghetto population was used by the capitalist rulers as a "last hired, first fired" reserve army of labor, brought in when their labor was needed and cast aside in economic downturns. Witness current unemployment figures, which for black teenagers today hover at 40 percent. As the capitalists took the wrecking ball to the steel works,

ment abolished chattel slavery, it excluded prisoners from protection against enslavement. The mainstream use of the "N" word, a symbol of slavery, recurs at a time when blacks are disproportionately imprisoned.

In the article "Deadly Symbiosis" (*Boston Review*, April/May 2002), Loic Wacquant noted that the massive intensification of state repression in the ghettos came as "the capacity of the ghetto to ensure caste domination was undercut in the 1960s by economic restructuring that made African-American labor expendable." The result was "to make the ghetto more like a prison" and "the prison more like a ghetto." The further impoverishment and all-sided degradation of the inner-city masses has been used to intensify the exploitation of the entire working class, axing social programs and branding the black "underclass" as "undeserving," "indolent" and "criminal."

A few decades after the mass struggles of the civil rights movement broke the back of legalized Jim Crow segregation and formal equality for black people was decreed in this country, the conditions of life of the ghetto masses have worsened by every material standard: average family income has plunged, schools are more segregated than before civil rights programs were implemented, the unemployment rate among black youth is twice that among white youth, and an astounding **28 percent of all black men** are destined to spend some time behind bars. Poverty, chronic joblessness and jail, schools that are no more than holding pens, AIDS, crime and cop terror—these are standard aspects of life for the black population under decaying American capitalism.

Focused as it was on winning legal reforms, the liberal-led civil rights movement of the 1950s and '60s was bound to the Democratic Party and thereby the capitalist order. As such, it was incapable of addressing the desperate conditions of the black inner cities, which are materially rooted in the whole system of American capitalism. A series of spontaneous ghetto rebellions broke out beginning in the mid '60s and was smashed with brute force as heavily armed police and the military occupied entire neighborhoods. At the same time, widespread anger at the Vietnam War fueled the radicalization of youth in the army and at home.

Nationalist groups promoting black capitalism and liberal politicians like black Congressman Adam Clayton Powell responded with efforts to keep the cities safe for racist American capitalism, from installing black front men in the mayor's office to colluding directly with the cops, as in the case of cultural nationalist leader Ron Karenga in Los Angeles. These betrayals had the backing of major American corporations, which were eager to fund such programs dedicated to containing black unrest and promoting business.

The government set up "war on poverty" programs that successfully co-opted a layer of black activists for the purpose of re-establishing control over the rebellious ghettos. A number of

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Police occupy Benton Harbor, Michigan in June after black population erupted over cop terror (above). Material conditions of life have worsened for the black masses since the 1960s.

AP

Chicago Historical Society



1980s was the product of devastating structural changes in the urban economy that date back at least to the late 1960s." As the rubber and steel factories that had formerly provided jobs for black youth disappeared, South Central L.A. experienced a 50 percent rise in unemployment and an almost one-third drop in median income. The ghettos "were turned into war zones," housing projects "were renovated along the lines of minimum security prisons" and "police helicopters, com-

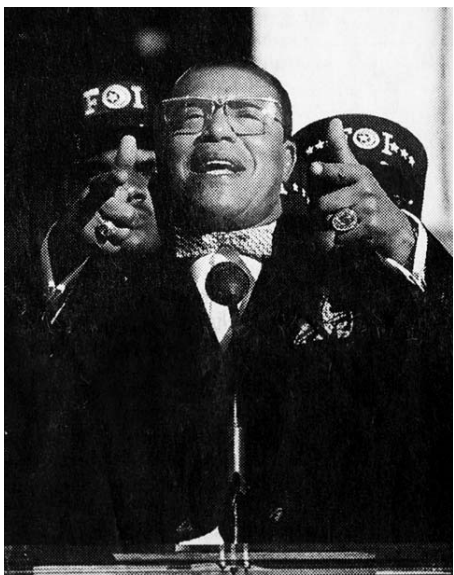
shut down the auto factories and cut millions of manufacturing jobs beginning in the 1970s, the population of the inner cities came to be seen as a surplus population not "worth" providing with even the most basic needs of subsistence. The "war on poverty" of the 1960s was replaced by the "war on drugs," a concerted onslaught on the ghetto masses leading to the imprisonment of up to a million young black men and women at any given time. While the 13th Amend-

“N” Word...

(continued from page 7)

blacks like Coleman Young in Detroit and Maynard Jackson in Atlanta *were* installed as mayors to fire city workers, close inner-city hospitals, slash funds to social programs and bolster racist “law and order.” Once the turmoil in the black communities was tempered, in the early ’70s the poverty programs were massively cut. Soon after, the deindustrialization of the 1980s ravaged the black working class.

The conscious selling out of the social struggles of the ’50s and ’60s, which potentially could have taken a revolutionary direction given the proper leadership, and the absence of any significant struggle since that period have produced a climate of defeat and reaction in which the “N” word has gained wider “respectable” public currency. The liberal and leftist apologists for its use are both products and promoters of that defeatist mood. They reject any possibility of mass social struggle, much less integrated workers struggle, and instead glorify “cultural empowerment,” which posits that black oppression exists in people’s minds rather



Reuters

Sinister demagogue Louis Farrakhan addresses 1995 Million Man March.

than being inherent to American capitalism. Now as in the ’60s, this is a program for capitulation to the racist status quo and is simply another means to blame the oppressed for their oppression. This gains literal expression with the prominent political influence of Louis Farrakhan’s Nation of Islam (NOI) on the hip-hop scene.

Farrakhan: Bad News for Black People

Farrakhan has been the keynote speaker at a number of “hip-hop summit” meetings. Many black youth who disdain the “respectable” inch-at-a-time gradualism

of mainstream Democratic Party politicians like Jesse Jackson take as good coin Farrakhan’s occasional rhetorical forays against the racist rulers. In turn, black leftists, looking for an audience that would provide them some access to corridors of influence in this society, seek to peddle their liberal and reformist wares in Farrakhan’s shadow. Thus Dyson extols Farrakhan’s 1995 Million Man March as “a dramatic testament to the magnitude of black male hunger for racial rescue and moral requirement.”

Despite the just outrage at racist America felt by many in attendance, the Million Man March was a reactionary, woman-hating mobilization for “atonement,” which forgave the oppressors and exploiters for their enormous crimes against black people, working people and the poor, while blaming the oppressed for their oppression. In an article in the *Black Scholar* (Winter/Spring 1996) titled “Million Man March Appeals Racist Exploiters” (reprinted in WV No. 647, 7 June 1996), Bay Area Spartacist spokesman and Labor Black League member Don Cane wrote:

“In the 1960s, ‘I’m Black and I’m Proud’ race consciousness, influenced by masses in struggle, was defiant of the racist capitalist rulers. Today we witness ‘I’m black and I’m not a criminal’ race consciousness influenced by a desperate black middle class begging for ‘understanding’ from the racist rulers. The black misleaders, branded by race themselves, can barely conceal their contempt for the black masses on whom they call to ‘atone.’ I say *black people have nothing to atone for!* But the false prophets of the ‘American Dream’ blame the victim for not ‘succeeding’ and degrade the proud history of black working people who have struggled long and hard for freedom from the chains of racist oppression.”

Columbia University professor Manning Marable, a leading figure in the social-democratic Committees of Correspondence, opposed the Million Man March at the time. But in “The Politics of Hip Hop” (*Along the Color Line*, March 2002), Marable complains of the refusal of “the liberal integrationist, middle class black establishment” to “engage in a constructive political dialogue with the hip hop nation” and enthuses over the NOI:

“The Nation of Islam has understood for decades that black culture is directly related to black politics. To transform an oppressed community’s political behavior, one must first begin with the reconstruction of both cultural and civic imagination.”

It is an indictment of the “black establishment” that they have written off a generation of black youth. But here Marable retails the discredited notions of the ’60s cultural nationalists. “Black art initiates, supports and promotes change,” wrote Ron Karenga in 1967, for whom this was an explicit renunciation of the need for the economic and political liberation of blacks. In a retort applying equally well to Marable today, black scholar Robert Allen exposed the real



Wide World

Leroi Jones (Amiri Baraka), 1967. Reactionary logic of cultural nationalism: Jones built black capitalist political machine and in 1968 colluded with police to quell Newark riots and mobilized followers to break teachers strike.

meaning of this program in *Black Awakening in Capitalist America* (1969):

“It has allowed a passive retreat into ‘blackness’ on the part of some of those who call themselves revolutionaries. These so-called black revolutionaries measure their militancy by how much ‘black awareness’ they have or how ‘bad’ they can talk. Verbal militance thus replaces action, and the net result is passive nonresistance to oppression.”

Farrakhan’s alternative to the fraud of liberal integrationism is to peddle segregationist bigotry so that he and his coterie of like-minded petty-bourgeois followers can gain the exclusive “right” to exploit the ghetto for themselves. The “self-respect” he offers is the misogyny of a husband forcing his wife to walk ten feet behind him, and his “race pride” comes in the form of vindictive denunciations of Jewish, Arab and Asian shopkeepers as “bloodsuckers.”

The idea of “black capitalism”—predicated on the possibility of consolidating a significant black bourgeoisie in racist America—is both reactionary and utopian. But it expresses the outlook of that small layer of black entrepreneurs like Russell Simmons of the Hip-Hop Summit Action Network (HSAN), who have “made it.” The glorification of criminality not infrequently promoted in Simmons’ productions is but the flip side of Farrakhan’s appeals for “atonement”—both accept the

racist stereotype of the ghetto poor as a criminal underclass. “Many people who are racist don’t even know it. Part of our struggle is to take our advantage of that—move that racism around, use it for your business, your objectives,” exhorts Simmons in a 2002 interview with Marable. This attitude parallels what Ishmael Reed observed among some Bay Area rappers who “come across as cynical, amoral capitalists who know what turns on their white suburban audience. This audience seems to need their ‘n-----’ fix” (*Los Angeles Times*, 3 February 2002).

Black Oppression and the Bankruptcy of Liberalism

Marable’s real perspective is Democratic Party pressure politics. Thus, he applauds “respected rappers” who “emphasized the need to mobilize artists around progressive goals, such as supporting voter education and registration campaigns.” In fact, Marable sits on the board of HSAN, itself nothing other than a vehicle to hustle the “hip-hop generation” vote for the Democratic Party. HSAN works closely with bourgeois politicians like presidential hopeful Al Sharpton, who has sought at every opportunity to channel ghetto anger against cop and fascist terror into the confines of bourgeois electoralism.

Kelley also partakes of the mood of defeat in promoting the use of the “N” word in hip-hop music, justifying this with the grotesque implication that the use of the word is actually an expression of class consciousness. Kelley argues that the use of the “N” word in hip-hop “speaks to a collective identity shaped by class consciousness, the character of inner-city space, police repression, poverty, and the constant threat of intraracial violence.” He concludes:

“In fact, N—a is frequently employed to distinguish urban black working-class males from the black bourgeoisie and African Americans in positions of institutional authority. Their point is simple: the experiences of young black men in the inner city are not universal to all black people, and, in fact, they recognize that some African Americans play a role in perpetuating their oppression.... By linking their identity to the ‘hood’ instead of simply skin color, gangsta rappers implicitly acknowledge the limitations of racial politics.”

However, the “N” word does not denote the wage slaves of the working class, but the chattel slaves of the old South. Black working-class males (and females) who identify with the word objectively deny their historic class interests and social power as *workers* and will never transcend “the limitations of racial politics.” Far from being a sign of a subversive assault on the language of oppression, the pervasive use of the slave masters’ epithet by black youth reflects a



Reuters

HSAN founder Russell Simmons (second from right) and rapper Sean “P. Diddy” Combs (far right) alongside Democratic Party politicians at NYC protest against Rockefeller drug laws. Black nationalists, liberals view hip-hop as vehicle to mobilize the youth vote for capitalist candidates.

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and Sat. 1-5 p.m.
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profound, if unconscious, demoralization and self-hatred, an internalization of the demeaning view of black people propagated by the capitalist rulers and the mass media. Its use represents a *retreat* from the fight against racism and within the working class can only offend and divide.

Oppression oppresses—when not combatted, it is internalized and re-directed against others among the oppressed. Motown groups like the Temptations could at least sing about when “there’s plenty of work and the bosses are paying” in 1965’s “Since I Lost My Baby.” Rap can sometimes capture the misery of life in racist America, but all too much of it also glorifies backward lumpen consciousness. Retrograde language and the social attitudes it betrays not only are an expression of the reactionary ideology with which the ruling class justifies the all-sided oppression endemic to capitalist class society, whether of black people, women, gays or immigrants, but also reinforces that oppression. This finds expression not only in the widespread use of the “N” word but also in anti-gay and anti-woman bigotry. Hip-hop albums are littered with songs—from Jay-Z’s “Big Pimpin’” to Ludacris’s “Move Bitch”—referring to women in the most vilely derogatory and misogynous terms.

Black working-class women are triply oppressed under American capitalism, often relegated to the lowest-paying jobs with little opportunity for advancement and demonized by the racist rulers as “welfare cheats” and “irresponsible” unwed mothers. Perhaps the most extreme form of capitalism’s exploitation and degradation of women is prostitution. So it is symptomatic of his acceptance of the inviolability of the rule of capital that Kelley argues in *Yo’ Mama’s Disfunktional!* (1997) that a prostitute is “resisting what would otherwise be her fate in an increasingly service-oriented, low-wage economy with shrinking opportunities for working-class ghetto residents.” Only in a planned economy under a workers government can women be freed from the isolation and drudgery of the family as well as its accompaniment—sex as a commodity. Won to the communist program, black women will be in the forefront of the struggle against all aspects of capitalist oppression.

The grotesque notion that “reclamation” of the “N” word ameliorates racial oppression speaks to the political bankruptcy of the liberal program of many of the prominent black intellectuals like Dyson and Kelley. They can offer no way forward, only idealistic moralism, and it comes at the cost of disarming black youth confronted by a vicious, hostile society. Comparing such types to Booker T. Washington, a black apologist for Jim Crow and accommodation to the racist status quo in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, one comrade observed in our pre-conference discussion: “These latter-day Booker T.’s have no solution to black oppression so instead they are reduced to seeking their bona fides by defending the ‘flexible’ use of the word, which inflexibly denotes a people relegated to second-class status.” As the comrade stressed, “For us the fight for black liberation is key to proletarian revolution in the U.S. All our comrades are women’s liberationists and all our comrades are black liberationists.”

American Workers Revolution Needs Black Leadership!

The overwhelming feeling of powerlessness that weighs down on ghetto youth stems not mainly from the absence of objective opportunities for social struggle but especially from the betrayal of struggle by self-proclaimed black leaders and the existing trade-union leadership, whose first loyalty is to the capitalist profit system. The refusal of the misleaders of organized labor to wage any struggle on behalf of the ghetto and barrio

poor has contributed not only to the increased destitution and despair in the inner cities but also to the devastation of the trade unions.

Today, the conditions of life for working people are under increasing assault as the result of a contracting economy and the post-9/11 drive for “national unity.” The situation cries out for a class-struggle fight for *all* workers and the poor—for free, quality, integrated education, for decent medical care and housing, for jobs for all. Despite the hardening of segregation in American society and the erosion of union strength over the last two decades, black workers remain integrated into strategic sectors of the industrial proletariat, including in such basic services as health care, urban transit and longshore. But to mobilize that social power in a struggle to break the material chains of exploitation and oppression requires a political struggle to break the ideological chains that bind labor and minorities to the agencies of the capitalist oppressor, chiefly the Democratic Party. As comrade Cane said in a presentation to the Bay Area Spartacus Youth Club last year:

“If we are to be the best defenders of the ghetto poor, the best fighters against the prevailing conditions grinding down a generation of black youth, we must face reality squarely and combat every aspect of lumpen culture that retards forward movement of the working class. The black question is the decisive question facing the American workers revolu-



October 1999: Trade unionists were backbone of our NYC mobilization to stop KKK race-terrorists, giving taste of social power needed to shatter capitalist system of exploitation and racist oppression.

tion—the black ghetto cannot be separated out from it. Our party must sink deep roots into the working class and develop a communist worker cadre. Through the black component of this worker cadre we seek to organize and lead the ghetto masses in a forward march against the main enemy—the capitalist exploiters. The task of revolutionary activity is to rally the broad mass of society, the widest layers, around the only revolutionary class, the working class. And by doing so isolate the capitalists, expose them as social parasites, challenge their position of power and finally remove them from the same.”

The October Revolution of 1917, led by the Bolshevik Party of V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky, was the greatest act of social liberation in all history. In placing the multinational working class of Russia in power, it opened the door to the emancipation of women, the many oppressed nationalities and the long-suffering Jewish people. In doing so, it served as a beacon to the exploited and oppressed around the world. “Everything new on the Negro question came from Moscow,” wrote American Trotskyist leader James P. Cannon, “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.”

To lead that revolution to fruition, the



During 1999 U.S. imperialist bombing of Serbia, integrated Newport News, Virginia shipyard workers shut down production of aircraft carriers.

Bolsheviks had to forge a party free of any manifestation of the backwardness and bigotry infecting the proletariat. Following the revolution, the workers government could begin to lift the entire population out of the material poverty and corresponding cultural mire brought on by the old order of reaction and oppression. Unlike in the former Russian tsarist empire, a prison house of nations into which non-Russian nationalities

But the racial barriers erected by the capitalist rulers to keep black people “in their place” and to divide black and white workers can be surmounted—in the course of class struggle. In the mass united-front anti-Klan mobilizations we have built over the years drawing on the social power of the trade unions, we have sought to bring to life the connection between labor’s fight and the fight for black freedom. When some ten thousand trade unionists, youth, black people and other minorities came out to ride the KKK race-terrorists out of New York City in October 1999, it was a powerful display of the social power of the working class standing at the head of all the oppressed.

We seek to build a Bolshevik party in the United States—a multiracial party that fights for the liberation of the proletariat and all the oppressed. Black workers, specially oppressed in racist America and correspondingly harboring fewer illusions in bourgeois “democracy,” will play a central role in this vanguard party and serve to link the anger of the downtrodden ghetto masses to the cause of the proletariat. Only a party of the Bolshevik type can lead the working class to power, smashing the social basis for racial oppression and ushering in a world in which the “N” word and all the other legacies of slavery are consigned to the scrap heap of history. As we wrote in the International Communist League “Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program” (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 54, Spring 1998): “The victory of the proletariat on a world scale would place unimagined material abundance at the service of human needs, lay the basis for the elimination of classes and the eradication of social inequality based on sex and the very abolition of the social significance of race, nation and ethnicity.” ■

Spartacus Youth Club Events

BAY AREA

Meet the Marxists

Thursday, August 21, 7 p.m.
Café Strada (corner of College Avenue and Bancroft Way), UC Berkeley
Information: (510) 839-0851
or e-mail: slbayarea@compuserve.com

BOSTON

Saturday, 3:30 p.m.

August 9: **For Women’s Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!**
Harvard University, Loker Common
Information and readings: (617) 666-9453
or e-mail: bostonsyc@yahoo.com

ICL Web Site:
www.icl-fi.org

CHICAGO

Saturday, 5 p.m.

August 9: **The Revolution Betrayed: What Happened to the Soviet Union**
222 S. Morgan, ring buzzer #23
(Blue Line, UIC-Halsted stop)
Information and readings: (312) 563-0441
or e-mail: spartacist@iname.com

TORONTO

Saturday, 2 p.m.

August 2: **Marxism vs. Anarchism—For a Revolutionary Workers Party! Independence for Quebec!**
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Room 2286
252 Bloor St. West (above St. George Station)
Information and readings: (416) 593-4138
or e-mail: spartcan@on.aibn.com

Iran...

(continued from page 5)

imperialism, has been destroyed through capitalist counterrevolution, throwing back the consciousness and struggles of the working class and oppressed internationally. This effect is magnified in Iran, where Islamic terror physically annihilated the left.

If their struggles are to go forward, the most farsighted elements among today's young Iranian activists must assimilate the bitter lessons of the 1979 "revolution," including the betrayals of a whole host of leftist organizations in Iran and internationally.

In an article in *International Socialist Review* (August-September 2000), the International Socialist Organization (ISO) writes: "The failure of the left was also crucial in allowing Khomeini's forces to take power. The workers and the left could have challenged both the Shah's regime and the mullahs' leadership based on the power of the workers' strike committees. But their political strategy made this impossible.... Much of the left subordinated workers' interests to building a coalition with the clergy and liberals who were hostile to the working class. They argued that the main task was to maintain unity in the movement in order to get rid of the Shah's dictatorship."

The ISO's analysis is both correct and



WV Photo

January 1989 NYC protest called by Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee against mass executions in Iran.

tant, 14 December 1979)! Meanwhile, European USec leader Brian Grogan boasted of chanting "God is great!" in the streets of Tehran.

It was the betrayals of the left that ensured that the workers did not challenge *both* the Shah and the mullah leadership. The Shah's brutal regime remained in power solely through naked terror and the backing of American imperialism. Its days were numbered; the only question was, what would replace it—

plified the Marxist conception of combined and uneven development. Alongside a sizable, militant and strategic industrial proletariat, particularly in the oil industry, were thousands of rural villages and impoverished urban shantytowns under the sway of the Shi'ite clerical caste. A chauvinist "prison house of peoples," Iran oppressed non-Persian nationalities like the Kurds and Arabs, who together make up nearly half the population. At the very bottom of the social ladder were millions of hideously oppressed peasant women. In these respects Iran resembled the tsarist empire on the eve of the Russian Revolution of 1917. But it lacked a revolutionary leadership like the Russian Bolsheviks, acting as a tribute of all the people in the struggle to lead the working class to the conquest of state power.

All wings of the bourgeoisie in Iran and other countries of belated capitalist development are too backward and dependent on imperialism to play any progressive role. Only the proletariat leading the urban plebeian and peasant masses can lead a struggle for liberation from imperialist subjugation and reactionary traditionalism. In seizing state power and establishing their own rule, the workers will be compelled to institute socialist measures, expropriating the means of production and establishing a planned economy. At the same time, a victorious workers revolution in Iran would be immediately besieged by the imperialist powers. It could only survive and flourish by being extended internationally, not only throughout the Near East, but most crucially to the advanced imperialist powers of West Europe, North America and Japan.

The "Islamic revolution" of 1979 represented a negative confirmation of Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky's concept of permanent revolution. In countries like Iran, whose economic and social development has been retarded by imperialist enslavement, the historic tasks posed by the bourgeois revolutions of West Europe and North America remain on the agenda: equality for women, freedom for national minorities, agrarian revolution, social and economic modernization. From this, many self-styled leftists draw the utterly false conclusion that there must be a "two-stage revolution," with the

first stage led by "anti-imperialist" elements of the bourgeoisie and limited to "democratic" capitalist rule. For much of the Iranian left, "anti-imperialism" meant unity between the working and oppressed masses and the "progressive" (and not so progressive) elements of the bourgeoisie. The outcome of this schema is that the "second stage" invariably means not the ascent of the workers but the massacre of communists and trade unionists, as happened in Iran. (See "Iran 1979: Proletarian Revolution or Islamic Reaction," WV No. 784, 12 July 2002.)

As we wrote in our "Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program":

"The 1979 'Iranian Revolution' opened up a period of ascendant political Islam in the historically Muslim world, a development which contributed to and was powerfully reinforced by the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union. Khomeini's seizure and consolidation of power in Iran was a defeat akin to Hitler's crushing of the German proletariat in 1933, albeit on a narrower, regional scale. The international Spartacist tendency's slogan 'Down with the Shah! No support to the mullahs!' and our focus on the woman question ('No to the veil!') stood in sharp contrast to the rest of the left's capitulation to mullah-led reaction."

—*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 54, Spring 1998

Washington's current war on "Islamic terror" was preceded by decades of support to Islamic terror in the name of the war against "godless communism." Osama bin Laden and his fellow *mujahedin* are creatures of U.S. imperialism. Faced with a U.S.-backed Islamic insurgency on its southern flank in Afghanistan, in late 1979 the Soviet Red Army intervened on the side of the left-nationalist Kabul government that had tried to implement such reforms as lowering the bride price and setting up literacy programs for girls. We Trotskyists proclaimed: "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!" and called to extend the gains of the Soviet October Revolution to the peoples of Afghanistan. But rather than fighting to win, the treacherous Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy withdrew its forces from Afghanistan in 1988-89 to appease the U.S. imperialists, directly paving the way for the victory of Washington's Muslim fanatics and opening the door to capitalist counterrevolution in the USSR itself.

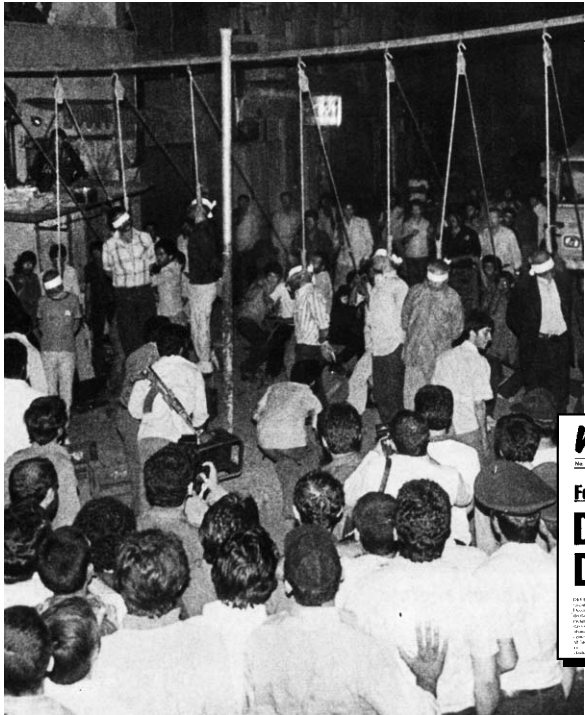
WCPI Calls for "Dialogue" with Monarchists

Today, the mullah regime in Tehran is widely despised, and the question of who will rule Iran could soon be posed again. Faced with broad unrest, the regime has fractured between hard-liners around Ayatollah Ali Khomeini, Khomeini's successor as the Islamic "supreme leader," and "reformers" around President Mohammed Khatami. The latter was first installed in office six years ago as a pressure valve to contain discontent. But popular illusions that Khatami would institute significant reforms have dissipated, as he works alongside the hard-liners to suppress discontent and enforce the stifling restrictions on social life. A spokesman for the main reform student group, the Office for Consolidating Unity (OCU), told *Middle East Report Online* (15 July):

"Previously, the students distinguished between the reformers in government, whom the students helped to elect and with whom they shared many concerns, and the hardliners, whom they had not elected and who were intent on maintaining their authoritarian grip on power....

"At a minimum, we want to ensure civil and social rights and liberties, and we want a democracy. But the students have lost any illusion that working for reforms within the system can bring this about."

But if Iranian student activists have lost their illusions in the Islamic "reformers," there are from all evidence widespread illusions that an idealized form of Western bourgeois democracy can provide an answer. Some look back to the bourgeois-nationalist Mossadeq regime in the early 1950s, which was propped up by the Tudeh Stalinists, who channeled a working-class upheaval against



L/Express

Victims of Islamic regime's terror are hanged in Tehran, July 1980. We uniquely fought to mobilize proletariat against both Shah and Khomeini's forces.



utterly cynical. The fake left in Iran and internationally—including the ISO—promoted the mullah-led reactionary movement, whose most prominent slogans were "God is great!" and "Death or the veil!" They dismissed the emancipation of women, along with every other revolutionary perspective, because they all, to a greater or lesser extent, *liquidated into the reactionary Islamic mobilization*, putting forward justifications such as "anti-imperialism" or claims that the "mass movement" encompassed a "revolution within a revolution" through which the "progressive" forces could "later" come to power!

The January 1979 issue of the ISO's *Socialist Worker* unabashedly hailed Khomeini's "mass movement" which aimed to enslave women and throw back social progress centuries, headlining one article: "The Form—Religious, the Spirit—Revolution!" In this, they were far from unique. Today, an editorial in the *Militant* (7 July), newspaper of the American Socialist Workers Party (SWP), squirms: "Some of the *Militant's* past coverage may have also conveyed the impression that the current Iranian regime, in a warped form, is a defender of the remaining gains of the revolution." Wonder why! The SWP has touted the Tehran regime's "gains" for years. When the mullahs came to power, the SWP, then associated with the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat (USec), ran the banner headline: "Victory in Iran!" (*Militant*, 23 February 1979), and declared some months later that "women are freer than ever before in Iran" (*Mili-*

workers rule or Islamic reaction. It was powerful proletarian struggle, such as a sit-down strike by 37,000 oil workers, that led to the toppling of the tyrannical Shah. We stressed at the time:

"The hundreds of thousands who are now marching behind the mullahs are by no means all Muslim fundamentalists. Many are primarily motivated by hostility to the real crimes of the shah. Many leftist workers have probably joined what they view as a potentially successful opposition to the hated regime. But the masses, particularly the workers, who are now supporting the Khomeinis and the Shariatmadaris can and must be won away from the present Islamic reactionary offensive in favor of a *social revolutionary* opposition to the shah."

—"Iran in Turmoil" WV No. 215, 22 September 1978

As it does today, Iran in 1978-79 exem-



Asparagiti

New York City, July 9: Pro-imperialist monarchist forces were prevalent at recent demonstrations in the U.S. against the Islamic regime in Iran.

the Shah and the imperialists into support for the “progressive” Mossadeq. But Mossadeq called on the army generals, who were working with the U.S. to bring him down, to crack down on Tudeh. The army, in league with Mossadeq’s former Islamic allies, then brought him down (see “Near East, 1950s: Permanent Revolution vs. Bourgeois Nationalism,” Part Two, WV No. 741, 8 September 2000). If the Mossadeq interlude demonstrates anything, it is that in a country like Iran, whose economic and social development has been stunted by imperialism, there can be no stable bourgeois democracy; under capitalism, Iran can never look like Western Europe or North America. Only workers rule can begin to lift Iran from its economic and social backwardness.

Today the fraying of illusions in Islamic “reformers” has provided an opening for the monarchists around Reza Pahlavi, exiled son of the former Shah, to sharply increase their activities toward and in Iran. These monarchists are based among the hundreds of thousands of mainly right-wing Iranian exiles in Southern California. Their Farsi-language satellite TV stations and Web sites are a major source of information for many Iranians, given the widespread media censorship within the country. But these pro-U.S. royalists face major obstacles to winning widespread support in Iran. Iranians can look next door to Iraq and Afghanistan to see that the real face of Washington’s vaunted “democracy” is naked colonial brutality. And memories of the CIA-organized coup that overthrew Mossadeq in 1953 run deep. In his *Middle East Report Online* interview, the OCU student leader commented, “For the students, at least, a monarchist alternative is taken as an insult.... Why should they go back to a monarchy, even a constitutional one, where a hereditary sultan is set to rule over them as subjects?”

Yet the Worker-Communist Party of Iran (WCPI), which appears to be the largest and most influential force among the Iranian left today, openly seeks to accommodate such monarchist forces. The WCPI rightly denounces any idea of allying with any wing of the current regime, and is also unique on the Iranian left in its emphasis on women’s rights, including forthright opposition to the veil. However, the WCPI accommodates prevalent social conservatism; while, for example, saying that the decision to have an abortion rests with women alone, the WCPI nevertheless calls for state counseling to dissuade women from the procedure. And far from upholding a perspective of proletarian class independence, the WCPI are in fact anti-clerical reformists who foster terrible illusions in “democratic” Western imperialism.

For years, one of the WCPI’s main campaigns has been for imperialist governments in Europe and Canada to shut down the Iranian embassies in their countries. By raising this demand, the WCPI lends credence to the democratic pretensions of these imperialists and calls on them to act as cops of the world. The WCPI has also repeatedly called on the United Nations to intervene on behalf of the oppressed in the Near East. Its sister group in Iraq is currently agitating for a UN military intervention in that country, calling for the U.S. and British forces to be replaced by “the intervention of the United Nations” to “safeguard free and secure conditions” (*WPI Briefing*, 28 April). As was shown by its decade-long starvation embargo of Iraq, which killed at least a million and a half men, women and children, the UN is nothing more than an instrument for upholding the imperialist status quo against the oppressed masses of the underdeveloped “Third World.”

The WCPI’s grotesque accommodation to the Iranian monarchists was clearly seen at a 4,000-strong rally in support of Iranian students in Toronto on June 9, which featured a sea of monarchist and Iranian national flags interspersed with WCPI banners and placards. A WCPI representative spoke from the official platform and, far from even criticizing



Worker-Communist Party of Iran
Tehran, March 8: Demonstrators defy Islamic regime by openly celebrating International Women’s Day (top). In 1979, tens of thousands marched against reimposition of the veil in first mass challenge to Islamic rule.



the monarchists, the WCPI’s own statement for the event, titled “Resolution in Solidarity with the People’s Struggle to Overthrow the Islamic Regime of Iran,” avoided all mention of these royalists or of U.S. imperialism. For the occasion, the WCPI even dropped the last part of its customary slogan, “Freedom, Equality, Workers Rule,” as its banners in Farsi and English solely called for “Freedom, Equality!”

This transparent opportunism aimed at accommodating deeply reactionary forces is no accident. Two years ago, in an interview in *International Haftegi* (10 August 2001, summarized in English on the WCPI’s Web site), WCPI founder-leader Mansoor Hekmat (since deceased) characterized the WCPI and “the pro-West nationalist current which has primarily gathered around Reza Pahlavi” as the “two main currents in the opposition demanding the ouster of the regime.” While rejecting “unity” with the monarchists, Hekmat continued:

“What can be done is to establish an official dialogue among the opposition currents demanding the regime’s overthrow. We do not have a problem with this. We invited all the opposition, from Left to Right, to our Third Congress. Not only do we not have a problem with setting up an official dialogue with any organisation opposing the Islamic Republic, we welcome it and think it necessary.”

The forces around Reza Pahlavi are the literal heirs of the bloody Shah and his henchmen who butchered Iranian workers, leftists and minorities by the thousands. In the late 1970s, the Iranian left allied with Islamic reaction against the hated Shah, with horrific results; now the WCPI wants a “dialogue” with the Shah’s forces against the Islamic regime! Such a perspective expresses profound political bankruptcy. It would prove literally suicidal for a new generation of Iranian leftists.

For Women’s Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

Iran today is in the throes of a profound social crisis. The only road to genuine social emancipation, to freeing Iranian women from enslavement, to winning national self-determination for the Kurds and other oppressed nationalities, lies through the smashing of capitalist class rule. An Iranian workers revolution would

send shock waves throughout the Near East, showing a way forward for the beleaguered masses who chafe under the grip of Islamic theocracies, military dictatorships and bloody imperialist overlordship. It would act as a spur to struggle, as well, for working people in the United States and throughout the imperialist world, who must be won to the perspective of proletarian opposition to their “own” ruling classes.

In the countries of the East, the question of women’s oppression is one of the most powerful motor forces of socialist revolution. Indeed, when the Bolsheviks arrived in Central Asia in the years fol-

MOVE...

(continued from page 4)

anti-technological worldview of MOVE was very distant from our Marxist politics, we always aspired to the Leninist model of the revolutionary workers party championing the cause of all the oppressed. As Lenin said more than one hundred years ago in his classic book *What Is To Be Done?*, a working-class party’s ideal “should not be the trade-union secretary, but the *tribune of the people* who is able to react to any manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears, no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects; who is able to generalize all these manifestations and produce a single vision of police violence and capitalist exploitation.” As we said at the time, “This atrocity must never be forgotten! Ramona Africa (the sole adult MOVE survivor) and all the MOVE prisoners must be set free! Solidarity with the martyrs is an elementary reflex of human dignity, not to mention socialist morality” (WV No. 384, 26 July 1985).

During their now quarter century of hard time in the overcrowded, racist prison complex in Pennsylvania, the MOVE 9 have routinely had their legal attempts at redress summarily turned down by state courts. On February 20 last year, the MOVE defendants filed a petition for Allowance of Appeal before the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. But as a MOVE 9 statement declared, “there is

lowing the October Revolution, it was among women that they found the main point of support for their program and won their key cadres. The same holds true for Iran. A Leninist-Trotskyist party, championing women’s rights against the age-old stranglehold of religion and the family, will find its most loyal and courageous fighters among women.

In the wake of the mullahs’ rise to power, we held forums across the U.S. under the title “No to the Veil! Down With Khomeini! For a Workers Revolution in Iran!” Defying attempts by Iranian Muslims and pro-Khomeini leftists to violently disrupt these meetings, the speaker, a Near Eastern Trotskyist of Muslim origin, told the simple truth that the veil is a prison, “a symbol of women’s oppression under Islam and an instrument of that control” (“Fatima Khalil Tells the Truth on Iran,” WV No. 230, 27 April 1979).

The emancipation of women not only from the veil but from the daily drudgery of hearth and home will only come about when the proletariat conquers state power and establishes a socialist society, which will lay the material basis for the replacement of the institution of the family through collective childcare, kitchens and other social institutions. As we wrote in *Women and Revolution* (No. 18, Spring 1979) following the first challenge to mullah rule in 1979, with the outpouring of 100,000 women in Tehran on International Women’s Day:

“The Iranian masses today urgently need an independent, working-class revolutionary party, capable of struggling in its own name against the reactionary social program of the mullahs. In this task, the question of women’s oppression will play a major role. We salute the masses of outraged women who took to the streets in defiance of Khomeini, in defiance of 1,300 years of brutal institutionalized repression, in defiance of those ‘leftists’ who hail as liberators the clerical reactionaries who would keep women gagged, locked away and enslaved from birth to death. But unless the defiant women find a programmatic base of support in a class-conscious proletarian opposition to the mullahs, their militancy will be dissipated or smashed by the clerical reaction.... Only the perspective of a new, socialist order can show the way forward for the militant women. It is as cadres of a vanguard party of the Iranian working class, armed with the fighting program of revolutionary Trotskyism, that the courageous women of Iran will win their liberation and the liberation of all the exploited and oppressed.”■

no justice in the courts for MOVE.”

We continue in our efforts to sear into the memory of the workers movement the racist atrocities visited upon MOVE and its supporters. The Partisan Defense Committee sends monthly stipends to Debbie Africa, Janine Africa, Janet Africa, Chuck Africa, Eddie Africa, Phil Africa, Delbert Africa and Mike Africa. We do not forget that Merle Africa died in prison in 1998 having spent nearly two decades in the racist dungeons of Pennsylvania. We have championed the cause of freedom for America’s foremost political prisoner, Mumia Abu-Jamal. Free the MOVE 9! Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!■

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Iraq...

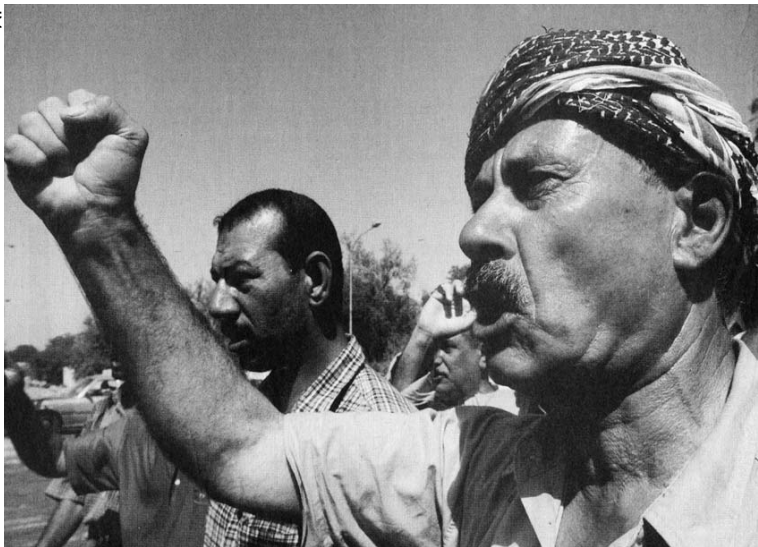
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was inspected, either before or in the immediate aftermath of the war, and contained not a whisper of evidence of such weapons. During the war itself, there were frequent claims to have offed Saddam as well as tales of the “heroic” rescue of Private Jessica Lynch who was, in fact, voluntarily turned over by medical personnel in the hospital where she was being well treated. When Iraqi citizens previously attempted to return her, they were driven off by American troops.

The Bush regime has not been loath to employ the whip in an effort to quiet the rising dissent against the war. Most recently, two soldiers from the Army’s 3rd Infantry Division are being considered for discipline for having voiced their discontent with Pentagon chief Donald Rumsfeld in a TV interview. The White House has and continues to accuse its bourgeois critics of giving comfort to the enemy and has, evidently, alienated the entire CIA by attempting to foist blame for Bush’s lie that Iraq was attempting to obtain uranium on the spy agency. But the Bush administration is obviously in a lather. In testimony to its increasing “sensitivity” to the rising dissatisfaction, soon after the “traitorous” interview, the 3rd Infantry Division received the news that it would be rotated back to the States.

In an effort to avoid any fallout against Bush, the administration first offered CIA top George Tenet as a scapegoat. Tenet initially took full responsibility for the “mistake,” subsequently telling all who would listen that he, in fact, had informed the administration that the intelligence was phony. Not accidentally, an op-ed piece by Joseph Wilson, former U.S. ambassador to Gabon, appeared in the *New York Times* (6 July). Wilson revealed that in early 2002 he had been sent by the

June 30:
Iraqi oil
workers
protest in
Baghdad
demanding
jobs.



threat posed by North Korea’s nuclear capacity. This is a frank proposal to take a further step toward a police state here and to prepare for an attack against the North Korean bureaucratically deformed workers state.

The Democrats’ incredulous cries that they were duped by Bush into supporting the war are nothing short of breathtaking. From the alleged Al Qaeda link to the Niger uranium scam and everything else, the administration’s lies were transparent and exposed as such. It didn’t take any inside sources to know that; we communists knew it and *Workers Vanguard* told the truth. But the Democrats embraced Bush’s war because they are, after all, the other party of racist U.S. imperialism.

Indeed, it is the liberal black Democrats who were most prone to mouthing opposition to “Bush’s war” in Iraq who are today in the forefront of screaming for racist U.S. imperialism to intervene militarily in war-torn Liberia. While Jesse Jackson Sr. laments that “we are turning our backs on Liberia,” presidential hopeful Al Sharpton rushed off to negotiations in Ghana to prepare the ground for the

who looked to these Democratic politicians simply abandoned the field. We intervened into the mass antiwar protests internationally to fight for military defense of Iraq—without any political support to the Saddam Hussein regime—and for class struggle against the imperialist rulers at home. As we said in the call for a Revolutionary Internationalist Contingent in an antiwar demonstration in Washington, D.C. last October: “Unless the struggle against imperialist war is based on opposition to all parties and agencies of capitalist rule, it will be used by the bourgeois liberals to channel discontent back into the very capitalist system that breeds war. ***Break with the Democratic Party of war and racism! Build a workers party to fight for socialist revolution!***”

Big Lies and Imperialist War

Lies in the service of military aggression are hardly unusual. When used to justify the actions of the imperialists against qualitatively weaker forces, these must usually be even more fantastic and grotesque. With the emergence of American imperialism on the world stage, during the regime of Republican president McKinley, the Hearst press in 1898 created the *casus belli* of “Remember the Maine!”—a ship it claimed was sunk in Havana harbor by the Spanish overlords of Cuba (when it is well-established that the explosion was caused by faulty construction design). The subsequent U.S. invasion, supposedly in the service of liberating Cuba, was in reality aimed at asserting America’s “right,” as against the “right” of Spain, to control that country, a “right” the U.S. imperialists asserted as well in the Philippines.

In more recent memory, the 1965 Gulf of Tonkin “incident,” in which a supposedly brutal North Vietnamese naval assault on a U.S. warship was fabricated out of whole cloth, provided the pretext for a massive escalation in U.S. bombing and ground forces in Vietnam. This was carried out under the leadership of Democratic president Lyndon B. Johnson—whose domestic agenda has, with some justice, been described as “progressive”—and virtually every one of the Democrats who would later be prominent fixtures on reformist antiwar platforms voted for the 1965 war resolution. Portrayed by the American imperialists as a war for democracy, this was in fact a

counterrevolutionary war to suppress the struggle of the Vietnamese workers and peasants both against colonial domination and for social revolution. Happily, that war ended in a defeat for U.S. imperialism that, for a period, demonstrated to many Americans that this country is neither good nor omnipotent, and stayed the hands of the American capitalist rulers from embarking on further military adventures.

It is said that whom the gods would destroy, they first make mad. Here Bush has a considerable head start. The latest evidence of this is a scheme hatched by Contragate ex-con John Poindexter—head of the Pentagon unit that earlier proposed a “Total Information Awareness” program to spy on the whole population—to set up a “futures market” trading in prospects for terrorist attacks (a sort of a Wall Street lottery betting on another World Trade Center attack!).

More generally, Bush and his cohorts have simply proposed that “America the Good” will politically dominate planet Earth, where necessary by the use of military force and if necessary in the absence of allies. This is quite mad and deadly dangerous even as a fantasy. Even Hitler had the assistance of Mussolini. To be sure, the motor force that drives such aspirations is not insanity but the *raison d’être* of the capitalist system of exploitation which is based on the quest for profits and the power necessary to assure that these profits are realized. This quest has, with the overturn of the degenerated workers state in the USSR in 1991-92, intensified exponentially, especially the aspirations of the currently far dominant U.S. imperialists. They are set on a course against their imperialist competitors that, absent socialist revolution, will, as it did twice in the last century, sooner or later result in world war, this time posing the possibility of a nuclear holocaust.

Witness this plan in its beginnings on the backward terrain of Iraq. The ignoble real purpose of the war and subsequent occupation is to plant the American flag in the oil-rich Near East as an assertion of U.S. dominance over all semicolonial countries and imperialist rivals. This baldly imperialist aim has been wrapped in the guise of a crusade to erect a secular, democratic Iraq to serve as a beacon for freedom in the region. This is an opium pipe dream. In a fundamental way there is no “Iraq,” a country the boundaries of which were created in the divvying up of the spoils by the British and French imperialist victors in the aftermath of World War I. What exists is the Kurdish North, the Sunni Muslim center and the majority Shi’ite South (and various others), with each region further riven by clan and tribal rivalries.

In such a society the exertion of secular rule under capitalism is only possible under something like Hussein’s Ba’athist dictatorship, which Bush & Co. aspire to replicate—democratic rhetoric aside—cleansed of its Ba’athist elements and pliable to U.S. dictates. What does exist among all the peoples of that country is an almost century-long hatred for and resistance to imperialist colonialism. And this just hatred is likely to continue to produce American casualties. In response to the

1983:
Donald Rumsfeld,
architect of
murderous colonial
war on Iraq, greets
Saddam Hussein in
Baghdad on behalf
of Reagan
administration.



CIA, at the behest of Cheney, to Niger in an effort to verify Saddam’s attempt to obtain yellow-cake uranium. Upon his return Wilson informed both the CIA and the State Department that there was no such attempt, reiterating this after Bush’s State of the Union address. Bush has since offered up another administration lackey, deputy national security adviser Stephen Hadley, as the one responsible for failing to inform him that the intelligence was based on a known forgery. More evasions and fall guys are likely to follow.

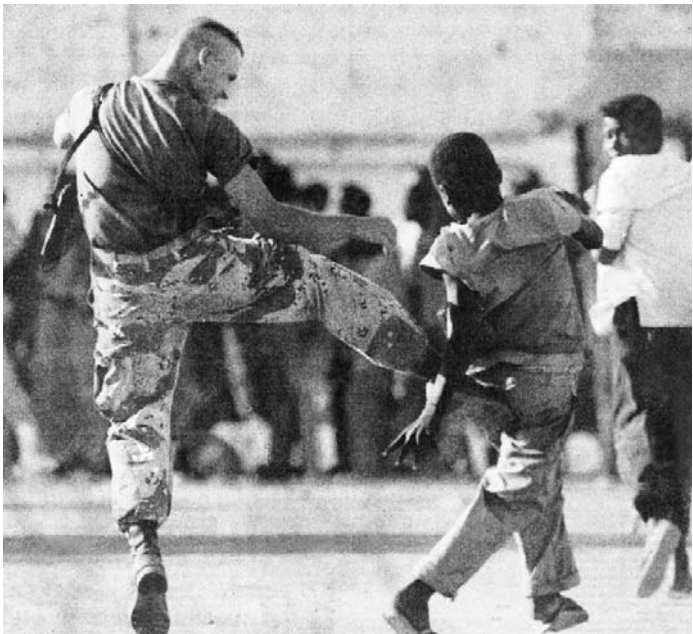
Bush is sweating, but for the most part the Democratic opposition in the House and Senate continues to be terrified by the prospect of confronting the still popular president, especially on the war and occupation. Those who have voiced criticisms, notably Democratic presidential candidates Bob Graham and Vermont governor Howard Dean, accuse Bush of neglecting domestic security and ignoring the “real”

Pentagon. While pleading “humanitarian” intentions, such efforts in fact serve U.S. imperialism’s current plans to extend its military presence all over the planet, including a string of bases across the African continent. ***U.S. hands off Liberia!***

To date the not-so-left in this country has charted a fight-the-right (i.e., elect the Democrats) agenda supplemented by the not very daring call in a recent “Win Without War” coalition ad for an independent commission to determine the truth about U.S. intelligence on Iraq. The ad ends in the following whimper, “It would be a tragedy if young men and women were sent to die for a lie.” This is merely an extension of the class-collaborationist mobilizations sponsored by the more left-wing antiwar coalitions—like Workers World Party’s International ANSWER—that provided a platform for those “decent” imperialists who opposed *this* war. The big lie here is that the working class and its sons and daughters share any common cause with America’s imperialist rulers.

As soon as the invasion started, even the handful of Democrats who spoke out against the war immediately rallied in support of “our troops.” By this they meant support for their imperialist army of occupation, which slaughtered thousands of Iraqis in this war on top of the 1.5 million killed by the 12 years of UN sanctions. And the reformists and pacifists

Racist U.S.
military
intervention in
Somalia, 1992.



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Hands Off NAMBLA! Reinstate Peter Melzer!

Protest Thought Crime Firing of Teacher!

Another blow against the beleaguered group NAMBLA (North American Man/Boy Love Association) was struck recently, as U.S. Court of Appeals judges in Manhattan upheld the Board of Education's firing of Peter Melzer. Melzer was a physics teacher at the Bronx High School of Science for over 30 years; he was fired by the Board of Education in 2000 solely and explicitly because of his membership in NAMBLA, which defends the rights of adults and youth to mutually consensual sexual relations. The decision, made public on July 17, is particularly ominous because no one even pretends that Melzer committed a crime or did anything at all with anyone. Indeed, the court panel declared that the supposed disruption created by Melzer's NAMBLA membership was "great enough to warrant the school's action" (*New York Times*, 18 July).

This opens the way for firing anyone whose opinions are deemed unacceptable. Who's next? It's in the interests of all fighters for free speech, free association and job rights—from unionists to leftists to anybody with the guts to criticize this increasingly repressive society—to defend NAMBLA and demand the reinstatement of Peter Melzer.

We in the Spartacist League have been almost unique in defending this group, an expression of elementary proletarian decency. Back in 1993, when Melzer was being hounded on the streets by sensation-seeking TV journalists whipping up outrage over supposed "pedophile" infiltration of the schools, the leader of Melzer's own union, New York City's United Federation of Teachers, contemptibly joined the witchhunt. The "respectable" gay rights movement has long treated NAMBLA, which was founded in 1978, as a pariah, preferring to let cops march in Gay Pride events while excluding NAMBLA.

The reason for this cowardice is that

NAMBLA dares to openly address the explosive issue of sex between adults and young people. The group's Web site states: "We condemn sexual abuse and all forms of coercion," asserting simply: "We support the rights of youth as well as adults to choose the partners with whom they wish to share and enjoy their bodies." Beat poet Allen Ginsberg, quoted on the NAMBLA Web site, said some years ago, "Attacks on NAMBLA stink of politics, witchhunting for profit, humorlessness, vanity, anger and ignorance.... I'm a member of NAMBLA because I love boys too—everybody does, who has a little humanity." Another great American poet of the Civil War era and after, Walt Whitman (often profiled in NAMBLA literature), also celebrated in life and writing many forms of sexuality, including that of youth. Such renowned figures would have no place in today's narrow-minded, censorious, terrorizing public school system—indeed, the likes of Whitman would probably find themselves in jail. And now with public libraries being forced to use "porn filters" (which arbitrarily block just about anything interesting, including information on birth control and sexually transmitted diseases) to get federal funding, it's a wonder anybody gets any education at all.

Another scary development on the thought-police front involves pure fiction. The *New York Times* (18 July) reported that a young man, Brian Dalton, who had been condemned to a total of eleven and a half years in prison in Ohio on multiple child pornography charges, recently had his guilty plea dismissed, on the grounds of ineffective legal assistance, which is a good thing. However, the basic charge he was convicted on is still law, and Dalton could still be tried. Ohio's 1989 child pornography law bans possession of any obscene material involving children—what "material" Dalton possessed was his

own personal diary, which was in his own house, and in which he wrote private fantasies about the capture and rape of young children. That these were not published, not circulated, not real, is irrelevant to the state's thought-police. So theoretically



New York Public Library
Portrait of Walt Whitman that appeared in first edition of *Leaves of Grass* (1855).

even a little poetry or a personal drawing that the state decides is "dirty," even if you don't show it to anybody else, can be used to put you away. Brave New World, indeed.

For all this supposed concern to protect children, this government is willfully inflicting massive damage on children, as poverty rates soar and health conditions deteriorate. What does all this anti-sex hysteria do to them? While the government hounds adults who dare to state that

children might have sexual inclinations, it seeks to purify youth in the spirit of the scorched earth policy. Millions of dollars are poured into "abstinence only" school curricula, whose message is that the only safe sex is none (unless of course sanctified by god in a nice fundamentalist wedding). And the legal right to abortion is being increasingly gutted. The result, predictably, is that America has far higher rates of teen pregnancy, infant mortality and sexually transmitted disease than any comparable industrial country. Meanwhile, the lethal AIDS epidemic continues worldwide. And who knows how much agony results from socially enforced guilt compounded by ignorance, how much vile witchhunting of gays fosters teen suicide. If you're young and you want sex, you're damned if you do to possible disease, pregnancy and fear of discovery; and damned if you don't to frustrated misery in this lying, hypocritical sex-saturated society.

For us, the only rule that should govern human sexuality, including for youth, is effective, mutual consent, nothing more and nothing less. We oppose all reactionary "age of consent" laws and indeed all governmental attempts to legislate sexuality, including legal discrimination against homosexuals, which continues despite the Supreme Court's recent ruling that knocks anti-sodomy laws off the books. We understand that all such laws are an essential prop to the institution of the family, a social prison for women and children in this brutal, puritanical, capitalist society. Our consistent, decades-long defense of NAMBLA and other such beleaguered and unpopular groups is an expression of our socialist, secular and humane vision of a future free of the class-enforced terror and brutality that cripples human potential, including sexuality, today. Government out of the bedrooms! Defend NAMBLA! Reinstate Melzer now! ■

quite successful hit-and-run attacks, the American military forces, increasingly confined to the relative safety of the barracks and increasingly trigger-happy, will effect even greater outrages against a population which has already sustained at least 6,000 civilian deaths in the process of the "liberation" of Iraq. This, in turn, will add to the body count of U.S. soldiers and to even greater atrocities against Iraqi citizens and, in the process, fuel demoralization among U.S. troops sickened by killing innocent civilians.

While Bush et al. may feel omnipotent, the U.S. Army is not equally endowed. In fact its forces are stretched tight as a wire. Almost half of its existing divisions are now stationed in Iraq—aided by some 13,000 British and other troops—and a full two-thirds of all forces are now placed outside the country in violation of the military guideline to keep two divisions at home for every one deployed elsewhere. Similarly, the U.S. economy, now stagnating, has very real limits. The projected costs of the occupation, undoubtedly still underestimated, have drawn the most negative attention even from the right wing of the Republican Party. Even the rabidly "unilateralist" Bush administration has now been driven to courting the despised UN and the "cowardly" leaders of "old" European countries like France and Germany in an effort to solicit assistance in the occupation.

Such assistance will not be easily forthcoming. With world opinion of the bullying U.S. imperialists at a low ebb, India has recently turned down an administration request for 17,000 troops to assist in the occupation, insisting that military sup-

port would only be available under UN auspices. Indian leaders were probably not overly impressed with the promise of financial assistance that accompanied the request, as the Bush administration is notorious for reneging on such promises. In the triumphant immediate aftermath of the war the Bush regime made it clear that "old" Europe, owed billions of dollars by Iraq, would not get a penny from its oil riches that the U.S. supposedly needed to rebuild Iraq. In reality, this booty has been allocated to the rather narrow segment of the American ruling class that the graft-ridden Bush administration is beholden to, primarily defense industries like Bechtel and Halliburton and, of course, the oil/energy giants. The lust for these profits is so strong that even ever-loyal Britain has been nudged away from the trough. UN assistance will not be forthcoming precisely unless the countries of "old" Europe are satisfied with a large piece of the oil action.

For Class Struggle Against U.S. Imperialism!

Whether under another Bush term or a Democratic Party alternative, the prospects are not pretty for America's working people and the black and Latino poor—with every indication that more of their sons and daughters will die and that further economic disasters lie ahead. Added to this now is the beginning realization that they were conned into this war. The manifold discontents in this society, building over the decades, could erupt in any direction. What is needed is an upheaval of social struggle centered on the social power of the multiracial prole-

tariat. For such a struggle to go forward to victory against the capitalist ruling class, it is necessary to cut the chains that bind workers and the oppressed to the Democratic Party through the forging of a revolutionary workers party to lead a socialist revolution that breaks the power of the bourgeoisie and establishes workers rule.

Currently, bourgeois critics have responded to the popular dissatisfaction by pointing out that Bill Clinton was impeached for merely lying about getting a little sexual gratification on the sly. Richard Nixon, who presided over the humiliating U.S. defeat in Vietnam, was eventually forced to resign as president for merely approving and subsequently covering up a break-in into Democratic Party offices at the Watergate complex. The Bush administration has been no slacker in its disdain for other institutions of capitalist rule in this country. It has lied to House and Senate committees and openly defied the injunctions of several courts.

If too much goes to hell the seemingly indomitable Bush will pay the piper in one way or another. One is reminded that in the summer of 1933, at the very beginning of "New Deal" Democrat Franklin D. Roosevelt's first term during the depths of the Great Depression, General Smedley Butler was approached by businessmen to lead a 500,000-strong march of veterans on Washington. With Roosevelt then severely incapacitated by polio, Butler correctly interpreted this "request," which was accompanied by a bribe, as an attempt at a military coup. Fortunately for Roosevelt, Butler blew the whistle on the plot. If evil befalls Bush by whatever mechanism, he will have more than

earned it. The most just outcome would be if he, Bill Clinton and Bush Sr. were to face a tribunal in Iraq to account for the million-plus Iraqi lives taken in the service of American imperialism's aspirations for world dominance.

But such justice in this imperialist world is not to be anticipated. Nor will any independent commission fix the problems of imperialist war or end the grinding exploitation that most Americans have to face whatever Bush's fate. Only the overturn of the capitalist order and its spread throughout the world will end for all time imperialist war and man's exploitation by man. For decades the working class in this country has lain prostrate before the bosses because it remains tied to the Democratic Party—in the case of its trade-union component, through the medium of the "America first" trade-union bureaucracy. That tie must be severed and a revolutionary working-class party forged. It is to that end that the Spartacist League, U.S. section of the International Communist League, directs all its efforts. ***Down with the colonial occupation of Iraq! All U.S. and allied imperialist forces out of the Near East!*** ■

NOTICE

Workers Vanguard skips alternate issues in June, July and August.

Our next issue will be dated August 29.

BT Renegades...

(continued from page 3)

any role.” The BT cries that is a “piggish” reference to the Kurds. Only in the minds of those genuinely inspired by chauvinism could “turds” be seen as referring to Kurds! And that is the BT. Insofar as this organization has taken any note of the national oppression of myriad peoples around the globe, and that isn’t much, the BT has been strident in declaring its opposition to the exercise of their right to self-determination—with the exception of Kosovo just at the time when Kosovo Albanian separatists were acting as bomb-spotters for the 1999 U.S./NATO war against Serbia. For the BT, the Kurds number among those whose demands for independence get in the way of the “struggles of the workers and peasants against the existing oppressor states.”

And it doesn’t just apply to the Kurds. The BT has achieved some notoriety for its opposition to independence for Quebec, winning the BT an official invite from the organizers of a mass Anglo-chauvinist “Maple Leaf” unity rally in Montreal on the eve of a 1995 referendum on Quebec sovereignty (and also losing them their only Québécois member, who quit protesting the BT’s “de facto bloc with the Canadian bourgeoisie”). Here too the BT tries to hide its chauvinism behind appeals for “joint class struggle,” echoing the Anglo-chauvinist labor bureaucrats in Canada who also argue that independence for Quebec would be harmful to “labor solidarity.”

And speaking of adaptation to “great-power chauvinism,” how about the abjectly reformist Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB), which the BT tried to woo into discussions “for political regroupment” a few years back? It didn’t bother them that the 1995 draft program of the CPGB openly pronounced: “The capitalist state in Britain has an official ideology of anti-racism” (*Weekly Worker*, 5 September 1999). In fact, these fusion negotiations fell apart only because the CPGB rejected the BT’s advances.

In the U.S., the BT similarly dances to the political tune of the pro-capitalist labor bureaucrats, mirroring their indifference to the struggles of the black masses. When the Spartacist League in 1982 mobilized the power of labor and the black community to successfully spike a Ku Klux Klan provocation in Washington, D.C., and launched Labor Black Leagues based on that victory, the BT claimed we were turning our backs on the unions and disparaged this as “community organizing”!

In America, where anti-black racism has always been the handmaiden of reaction and black militancy has always been seen as profoundly subversive, the fight to mobilize the multiracial working class in defense of the oppressed black masses is the key to the socialist revolution. Fortunately, black workers and youth in Washington and black longshoremen and shipyard workers from union locals throughout the South did not share the BT’s disdain for our anti-Klan mobiliza-



WV Photo

As SL/PDC mobilized during worldwide protest campaign to stop execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal in 1995, capitalists’ house organ picked up BT’s “cult” smear to vilify Mumia’s supporters.

tion. Only those for whom “the working class” means the labor aristocracy could see our mobilization for the unity and integrity of the working class against capitalist “divide and rule” racism and its fascist shock troops as anything but a fight for the survival of the unions as instruments for the elementary defense of the proletariat.

Garbage Doesn’t Walk by Itself

In “BT Doth Whine Too Much” (WV No. 806, 4 July), we published excerpts from the BT’s letter which charged that we had “grossly” misrepresented their views on the Kurdish people; in response, we demonstrated their opposition to Kurdish independence, largely by citing the BT’s own words from articles in its press, 1917. But the purpose of the BT’s letter was its postscript—to slander the SL and comrade Robertson in particular as “chauvinist.” The leaflet which the BT fed to the SWP’s goons at Marxism snidely intones that our omission of “any comment on the letter’s postscript” in WV is evidence of our “implicit acceptance” of their “vulgar chauvinism” slander. What we plead guilty to is fatuous gullibility. As we write in our editorial statement (see page 3): “We excised the ‘P.S.’ because it was a contemptible lie, but in so doing fell into the BT’s trap and implied guilt with our evasive silence.” We responded to the BT’s letter as if it were some kind of legitimate political dispute in the workers movement and as though the purpose of their letter actually had anything to do with the plight of the Kurdish people. More fool us; we should have, and do, know better.

The BT isn’t an outfit that has any concern with the clash of political opinion that is critical to raising the consciousness of workers and radicalized youth. And it never has had such concern. The founders of the BT all individually quit our organization coincident with the onset of anti-

Soviet 1980s Cold War II, when the stakes of being “red” got a lot higher than they were in the period of the “New Left” and Vietnam antiwar movement when most of them joined. A couple of years later, this ragtag collection of political cowards got together to concoct a political rationale for their lack of intestinal fortitude, claiming that they had been “purged” for their political views. They didn’t have a word, much less a document, they could point to as evidence of their putative political opposition, just their pathetic resignation statements.

But although their political appetites—which are generally rightist and generally reflect the fringes of petty-bourgeois academia they overwhelmingly inhabit—should lead them elsewhere, the BT has throughout its existence pursued an unnatural obsession with our organization. And they have a rather consistent history of staging provocations against us just when other forces—ranging from the reformists straight up to agencies of the bourgeoisie—are gunning for us. Thus in 1983, the BT (then calling itself the External Tendency) launched an international campaign labeling us as “violent,” lying that we had assaulted one of their members. We were at the time engaged in a very serious legal fight against the FBI, which had targeted our organization as “violent.” And here we have a group of ex-members of our organization screaming that we are “violent.” Whose interests did this serve?

In 1985 they published a highly inventive piece of reptile journalism titled “The Road to Jimstown,” smearing our party as an “obedience cult” and spinning lurid, slanderous tales of corruption and worse.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL
16 June 1995

Not Much Left:
‘The Movement’ Is
Pretty Still Nowadays

Despite the GOP Revolution,
Radical Groups Can’t Win
Converts to Their Brand

...ed by Angela Davis ...
... Communist Party USA member ...
The Spartacists are led by a man named James Robertson, prompting the International Bolshevik Tendency, a group of former Spartacists, to deride their old party as “Jimstown,” a takeoff on Jonestown in Guyana, the jungle site of mass suicide.

In 1995, these slanders against us were picked up by no less a mouthpiece for the American capitalist rulers than the *Wall Street Journal*. The purpose was to try to undercut growing domestic and international protest in defense of black death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, who was then under immediate threat of execution. In their efforts to portray Jamal as a depraved “cop killer,” the *Wall Street Journal* (16 June 1995) happily picked up the BT’s smears to depict the Partisan Defense Committee—the central organization that had been fighting for others to take up his case—as associated with a crazed “cult.” As we wrote almost two decades ago, “Those who are guided by intense subjective malice as a political program are just asking to be someone’s tool, witting or unwitting (sometimes both)” (“ET: New Name, Same Game?” WV No. 388, 4 October 1985).

The addition of Bill Logan as the BT’s own dear leader in 1990 added a whole new dimension to the BT’s obsession with trying to get us by any means necessary. Logan was expelled at the first international conference of our tendency in 1979 following a thorough investigation by an international Control Commission and trial body which found him to be a twisted sociopath who manipulated the most intimate details of comrades’ personal lives for his own power purposes and gratification. The charges against Logan were brought by the Central Committee of the Spartacist League of Australia and New Zealand. The documents on the Logan regime in Britain had unleashed a torrent of painful testimony by the overwhelmingly young comrades of the remote Australian section, of which

Hate Trotskyism,
Hate the Spartacist League

—a bulletin series of opponent material

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Special ICL Bulletins

On the Logan Regime
(Three parts)

In 1979, Bill Logan was expelled from the international Spartacist tendency for crimes “against communist morality and its substrate human decency.” Logan is now the leader of the “International Bolshevik Tendency.” As a service to the workers movement we have made our international bulletins documenting Logan’s crimes publicly available.

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The International Bolshevik Tendency—What Is It?
International Communist League pamphlet, August 1995

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by the
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ON THE LOGAN REGIME
PART III
The Dishonorable
Schoolboy Sent Down

International Communist League Pamphlet

The International
Bolshevik Tendency—
What Is It?

Logan had formerly been national chairman for years. As Reuben Samuels, who was sent to Australia on behalf of the international at the time, recounted in a recent document: “Exploiting their inexperience as well as deep devotion to our program, in Australia Logan ran a personality cult based on poisonous intrigue and manipulation of the most private details of comrades’ personal lives. ‘Loyalty’ was measured by loyalty to the ‘Chairman’s’ latest whim. Comrades were told who they should couple up with or not. Offspring were considered a curse and abortion a party ‘duty,’ so that one comrade with a baby was rendered suicidal.”

Logan was expelled for crimes “against communist morality and its substrate elementary human decency.” The motion passed unanimously by delegates at our international conference (including some who would later found the BT) concluded that Logan “cannot be and should never have been a member of a working-class organization.” As a measure of protection of the workers movement, we took the unusual step of making our internal bulletins documenting the Logan case publicly available and expending some effort to get them into major libraries in Australia and New Zealand.

One Sick Puppy

Eleven years later, the BT embraced Logan as one of its own. Unlike the Saudi royal family, who merely granted asylum to deposed Ugandan dictator Idi Amin, the BT anointed Logan as its *lider maximo*, and launched itself as an “international” tendency. And now the BT seizes on a statement from comrade Robertson made *25 years ago*—a statement that never elicited a single objection from the several future BTers then still in our organization—from our publicly available internal bulletins. Today, the BT contorts this statement in order to make the lying charge of “vulgar chauvinism” and peddles the slander to larger reformist outfits (and who knows who else).

It is notable that the postscript to the BT’s 12 June letter to WV, recounted in the written ammo they gave the SWP at “Marxism,” omits any mention of Logan. They can’t manage to mention that the quotation from comrade Robertson that they pulled out and twisted beyond recognition comes from a bulletin titled “On the Logan Regime Part I.” How come? Why has Logan become the equivalent of that empty space on retouched photos? What is the BT hiding?

A look at Logan’s Web site (bl.co.nz) might offer some answers. Here Logan advertises his services as a “counselor, narrative therapist and celebrant.” The man who tried to force a young woman comrade to have an abortion and when that failed pressured her to put her child in a foster home now provides sample texts for funerals for babies. The man who aped all the attitudes of the long-decayed British “empire” to play on internalized oppression of working-class youth, women and those from the “colonies” now offers a “secular grace” worthy of a fat bourgeois sitting down to his dinner as he gushes with condescending thanks “to those who planted the crops... to those who gathered the harvest... to those who prepared it and those who served it.” The man who spoke the language of her majesty’s Parliament in objecting to any criticism of himself that might find its way into the membership as a “breach in diplomacy” when he was in our organization, now advertises the “Anglican and Presbyterian influences of my childhood” on his Web site. A sadistic Colonel Blimp turned “all god’s children” missionary—to say that this is one sick puppy is a vast understatement.

Tell Me Who Your Friends Are...

An early sign that something wasn’t quite right with Logan was when he started writing documents arguing that bands of armed guerrillas were sufficient for the establishment of a workers state on any piece of territory, including coming very close to arguing that a workers state could be built in “one cave.” This

particular “theory” has much in common with the views of Pol Pot. And with the benefit of hindsight, one can see the shared and grotesque distortion of Marxism into a vicious personality cult that characterized Logan’s “methods” of leadership. On the other side of the equation in looking at what makes the BT tick, there’s Al Richardson of the journal *Revolutionary History*. A raving anti-Communist inspired by the “democratic traditions” of parliamentary Labourism, Richardson was cheek by jowl with the BT at “Marxism.”



26 October 2002: Revolutionary Internationalist Contingent organized by Spartacist League/Spartacus Youth Clubs at Washington, D.C. antiwar protest.

Such is the political company in which the BT logically belongs. The second leaflet that the BT was handing out at Marxism (“Compare and Contrast—ICL vs. IBT on Stalinism & Soviet Defencism”) provided a veritable compendium of the BT’s anti-Sovietism. This ranged from their denunciation of our call to “Hail Red Army in Afghanistan” fighting the CIA-backed, anti-woman Islamic reactionaries to their claim that our statement of military support to the Kremlin Stalinists should they have intervened to stop the bid for power by the anti-Semitic, clerical-reactionary Solidarność in Poland in 1981 was a “Stalinophilic perversion of the Trotskyist position of unconditional military defense of the bureaucratized workers states.”

Given this track record, the BT’s charge that we “flinched” on Soviet

defensism by not giving military support to the impotent Kremlin coup plotters against Yeltsin’s counterrevolutionary forces in 1991 would appear all the more remarkable. The “Gang of Eight” coup makers made no move against Yeltsin, militarily or otherwise, for the simple reason that they were as committed as Yeltsin’s clique to capitalist restoration but lacked the backing of U.S. imperialism. In fact, the BT’s after-the-fact support to the “Gang of Eight” was simply a convenient means for the BT to be able to drop its always highly nominal position

of Soviet defensism by declaring the battle against capitalist restoration already lost. In contrast, the ICL distributed tens of thousands of copies of our leaflet “Soviet Workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!” in the Soviet Union. It was only when it was clear that the working class was not going to move against Yeltsin, who was rapidly consolidating a capitalist state, that we accepted that the USSR had been definitively destroyed.

And you can bet your boots that the BT forgot about its military support to the coup plotters in the company of the SWP, which cheered Yeltsin’s counterrevolution as a cause for “rejoicing.” On the contrary, an intervention by a BT speaker at an SWP forum at “Marxism” on “Russia 1917 and Soviet Democracy” was so pusillanimous that he got sustained

applause from much of the audience, which was replete with state-capitalist, anti-Communist SWPers. And what about the BT’s line that imperialist troops should “live like pigs, die like pigs”? The BT charged us with “social-patriotism” because we didn’t cheer the deaths of 240 U.S. Marines blown up by a car bomb—planted by persons and forces unknown—in Lebanon in 1983 as an act of “anti-imperialism.” As we noted at the time, the BT’s vicarious bloodthirstiness was both a convenient posture against us and directly proportional to their distance from where the blood was being shed. At “Marxism” our comrades challenged the BT to apply its supposed convictions a little closer to home and intervene into a forum on Northern Ireland to demand that the British troops there should “die like pigs.” Not bloody likely. Instead the leader of the BT’s British outfit politely asked why the Socialist Alliance, which has been little more than an electoral front group for the SWP, does not “call for British troops out of Northern Ireland now.” Why? Maybe it has something to do with the fact that the SWP *supported* the intervention of these troops in 1969?! But that’s the BT’s standard operating procedure—they reserve their bile for the revolutionists while crawling before the large reformist forces.

Thus to the extent the BT has a political profile, it is as centrists who use their anti-Spartacism as the entry ticket into the swamp of social democracy. But the BT is also something else altogether: a vicious gang of crazed “god that failed” renegades, eager to serve the purposes of those who would like to destroy us. Lies and slanders are their weapons of choice, as they are the first recourse for the bosses when they want to break strikes and for the defenders of the racist status quo when they seek to destroy fighters for black liberation.

From the time of Marx on, Marxists have always been committed to elementary sanitation in the workers movement. We do not know whether the BT is motivated simply by its obsessive malice or by something even more sinister. But in seeking to destroy the nucleus of the indispensable Leninist vanguard, they serve the interests of all the enemies of the revolutionary proletariat. To smear the ICL as “chauvinists” is to strike at the very heart of what we are and what we must be to play a role in the liberation of all mankind from capitalist tyranny.■

Verizon...

(continued from page 16)

crosses. At the outset of the 2000 strike, mass pickets shut out management scabs in Philadelphia. Later, when the union tops in the company’s northern division reached a settlement and ordered the membership back to work, workers from Pennsylvania and points south took a page from the union battles of the 1930s by dispatching “flying squadrons” that picketed out facilities in the northeast, including strategic NYC locations organized by CWA Local 1101. It was due to such determination that the unions were able to beat back the bulk of the company’s demands for concessions.

Some big business media suggest that Verizon wants a dragged-out strike to see how well it could run its highly automated systems without union labor. A 1981 strike by telephone workers in British Columbia showed how to beat that: instead of marching out, they occupied every major installation and held the company’s property hostage. But to carry out tactics like that, you need a union leadership that does not bow to the capitalists’ “property rights.”

A vital issue in this contract battle, as in 2000, is organizing the 20,000 workers at Verizon Wireless, which has billions in profit riding on keeping the union out while this part of the industry is expanding. The unions should bolster their fight to defend and increase union jobs by

appealing to unemployed workers, showing that they have a common stake in this struggle. Three years ago, the union tops settled for contract language supposedly guaranteeing the company’s “neutrality” during organizing campaigns. But as we wrote at the time in “Verizon Strike Rattles Wall Street” (WV No. 740, 25 August 2000), “The corporate owners are *never* neutral when it comes to their profits.” Of course, the company flouted the “neutrality” agreement from Day One. Now CWA spokesman Bob Master complains that on management’s part, “There was never any good-faith effort to live up to it” (*Village Voice*, 9 July).

A successful strike could set the stage for a concerted drive to *organize the unorganized*, not only at Verizon Wireless but at former CWA strongholds like AT&T as well as largely non-union companies like Sprint and MCI. A key reason the capitalists deregulated the industry in the first place was to divide the unionized workforce at the former AT&T monopoly and open the door to non-union outfits. Divisions between the IBEW and CWA, and even between locals within these unions, have led at times to workers stabbing each other in the back by crossing the others’ picket lines. There is a crying need for *one industrial union for all telecom workers*.

The union bureaucracy did nothing to fight against the growth of non-union companies, particularly in the South. Organizing the South means taking head-on the issue of racist discrimination—on and off the job—which has long been used to keep

black people “in their place” and unions out. Verizon’s intention to tear up the no-layoff contract clause is a direct threat against younger workers, including large numbers of blacks and Hispanics, who were brought into the workforce during the telecom boom. The union cannot go forward without fighting to defend these workers’ jobs and combatting the racist and sexist bigotry that is reinforced by the craft divisions separating higher-paid, overwhelmingly male technicians from operators and clerks, largely minority women.

The battle looming at Verizon points to the utter irrationality and chaos of the capitalist profit system. Many thousands of miles of fiber-optic cables that were laid during the 1990s boom now lie unused, and unemployed communications workers are ending up in homeless shelters. Labor needs a leadership that understands that the “partnership” of labor and capital is a lie, that stands for the complete independence of the working class from the capitalists’ government and political parties. Forging such a leadership through sharp class struggle will be a crucial step in building a workers party that fights for a workers government, which would expropriate the capitalist class and build a planned economy. When those who labor rule, technological advances would not mean workers being thrown onto the scrap heap but would mean reduced workdays, better working conditions and more leisure, and the wealth of society would be used for the benefit of all.■

WORKERS VANGUARD



Bergin/NY Times

Verizon: For a Solid Strike to Stop Union-Busting!

From Maine to Virginia, 75,000 members of the Communications Workers of America (CWA) and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) are faced with a battle against the Verizon telecommunications giant that could determine the fate of unions in the industry. Verizon is demanding massive union concessions to maximize its profit margin in competition with non-union outfits created since the deregulation of the industry in the 1980s. The company wants to gut seniority, create a “two-tier” system that pits new-hires against high-seniority workers, force huge increases in workers’ health insurance payments, allow virtually unlimited subcontracting and job transfers and junk the “no-layoff” clause in the contract. CWA members voted 92 percent to authorize a strike when the contract expires on August 2.

The task now is to *prepare a solid strike to defeat Verizon’s union-busting!* Three years ago, when the unions fought Verizon for over two weeks in a combative strike, the capitalist media was forced to admit that “organized labor still has a place in the New Economy” (*New York Times*, 21 August 2000). Now with the economy mired in recession and hundreds of thousands of highly skilled telecom workers laid off, and with the aggressively anti-labor Bush administration in office, the bosses are out to destroy the unions’ “place” entirely. Unlike previous strikes, in which Verizon relied on managers to cross picket lines and keep systems running, the company is openly recruiting unemployed telecom workers to scab through the Volt company, as well as calling on retirees. Verizon, General Electric and Tyson Foods have all hardlined demands for union givebacks despite enormous profits, \$4.1 billion for Verizon last year alone. This points to the high stakes in this battle for the entire labor movement.

To wage the hard fight necessary to win, Verizon workers must understand where their power lies and the obstacles in the way of using it. Telecommunications is central to the national economy. If Wall Street traders can’t get their stock quotes because their phone lines are down, they’ll be screaming bloody murder. And if the capitalists feel their sacred profits threatened, the same government that is carrying out a brutal colonial occupation of Iraq—and fleecing working people at home to the tune of \$4 billion a month to pay for it!—will be prepared to use the

cops and courts against a telecom strike.

The “war on terror” wielded by the Bush gang, with the assistance of the Democrats, to slaughter thousands in Afghanistan and Iraq has also meant mass roundups of immigrants and a wholesale assault on civil liberties and union rights on the home front. When the contract for the West Coast International Longshore and Warehouse Union expired last summer, “Homeland Security” director Tom Ridge warned the union president that a strike could “threaten national security.” When shipping bosses locked out the union for ten days, Bush invoked the slave-labor Taft-Hartley Act in Octo-

speech he proclaimed that “we are in the war against terrorism to protect our basic freedoms” and “will support our government on the war.”

The CWA bureaucracy has historically been among the most active supporters of U.S. imperialism, for example through building the anti-Communist American Institute for Free Labor Development, which aided death squad terror against leftists and union militants from Chile to El Salvador. Today CWA spokesmen brag about bringing into the union some 40,000 cops and sheriffs, whose job is to enforce capitalist “law and order” by busting picket lines, terrorizing the ghettos

of American capitalism. When Bahr and other union bureaucrats rail about the overt enemy of labor in the White House, it is to gear up support for the Democratic “lesser evil.” The AFL-CIO tops are currently engaged in efforts to revive the Democrats for next year’s presidential elections by hammering Bush over his lies about Iraq’s supposed “weapons of mass destruction,” the pretext for the colonial war and occupation. But the Democrats went along with that war and the one before in Afghanistan, as well as the panoply of anti-immigrant, anti-labor “war on terror” laws at home. For the working class to fight in its own class interests, there must be a political struggle to break labor from the Democratic Party and forge a workers party committed to sweeping away the capitalist system that is predicated on unemployment, poverty, racial oppression and war.

Communications workers demonstrated the crucial role they play immediately following the criminal attack on the World Trade Center. Workers from not only NYC but from upstate New York, Connecticut and New Jersey piled into lower Manhattan, working more than 12-hour days, seven days a week for weeks at a time to get the communications grid up and running; the New York Stock Exchange was working only a week after the attack. The thanks these workers got was a kick in the teeth, with mass layoffs and stepped-up victimizations on the job, just as firemen who risked life and limb on 9/11 have been met with station closings. Last year alone Verizon slashed 18,000 jobs while doling out \$25 million to its two top executives (not counting stock options). Earlier this month, an arbitrator reversed the layoffs of over 2,300 Verizon workers, which violated the “no-layoff” contract clause, and ordered them reinstated with full back pay.

Verizon has declared its intention to keep all operations running in the event of a strike. Workers laid off only months ago have received letters enticing them to cross picket lines. Verizon has also been training its non-union employees, especially in the South, to do struck work. Attempting to intimidate union members, the company has ratcheted up disciplinary measures on the job and installed cameras outside workplaces to film picketers.

The CWA and IBEW must be prepared to form solid picket lines, backed by the rest of the labor movement, that no one

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Union rally outside Verizon shareholders meeting in Ft. Wayne, Indiana, April.

ber to force the union back to work on the bosses’ terms. Outside a mass union meeting in New York City last week, CWA members told *Workers Vanguard* salesmen that they had heard of government threats to use the USA-Patriot Act against phone strikers.

But the main obstacle facing Verizon workers is a union leadership that has pledged allegiance to the “war on terror,” which has served as a pretext for attacks on the labor movement, and that chains workers to the capitalist system through support to the Democratic Party. In a February 2002 speech delivered as U.S. bombers laid waste to Afghanistan, CWA president Morton Bahr correctly pointed out that “President Bush and his colleagues are trying to use the terrorist threat as a smokescreen to undermine our unions and our rights.” But in the same

tos and carrying out the “war on terror” against immigrants and the rest of the population. Cops out of the unions!

The union tops have done precious little to prepare for a strike, besides spending more than \$1 million on an ad campaign designed to gain public sympathy by lambasting Verizon execs’ huge pay packages. But what must be understood is that questions of union tactics flow from a broader political perspective. The CWA bureaucracy exemplifies the class collaborationism of the American labor misleadership, which regards the capitalist system of production for profit as sacrosanct and proclaims the unity of interests of the working class with those of the racist imperialist rulers.

Any serious labor struggle brings to the forefront the need to break the unions’ ties to the Democratic Party, the “soft