

Government Seizes Servers

Protest FBI Crackdown on Indymedia!

OCTOBER 12—With no warning, commercial Web site provider Rackspace was invaded on October 7 in London by government agents under a U.S. court order. Rackspace handed over two computer servers hosting Indymedia Web sites. The seizure affected over 20 world sites, including in Britain, France, Brazil, Italy, Germany and Poland. According to an 11 October Independent Media Center Web posting, “An FBI spokesperson, Joe Parris, confirmed to Agence France-Presse that the FBI issued a subpoena to the provider who hosted the Indymedia

servers in the U.K., but that it was ‘on behalf of a third country’.” The posting also stated that a federal prosecutor in Switzerland has opened a criminal investigation into Indymedia, and that an Italian prosecutor is investigating Italy Indymedia because it may “support terrorism.”

The Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee vehemently protest this outrageous, obviously vindictive and chilling raid on a major source of independent journalism and left-wing social activism. The U.S.’s “war on terrorism” means terror against any poten-

tial political dissent. Indymedia (Independent Media Center) isn’t just a worldwide online collective providing independent, uncensored news, interactive commentary, video, radio and photos. Because it’s the “go-to” source for instant streaming information on international anti-globalization and other social protests, it’s no wonder that Indymedia is also a thorn in the side of the American empire’s global police.

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), representing over 500,000 journalists worldwide, has called for an investigation in an October 8 state-

ment. Its general secretary, Aidan White, stated: “We have witnessed an intolerable and intrusive international police operation against a network specialising in independent journalism. The way this has been done smacks more of intimidation of legitimate journalist inquiry than crime-busting.”

The international journalists’ organization stated: “The IFJ believes the seizure may be linked to a September 30 court case in San Jose California, in which Indymedia San Francisco and two students at Swarthmore College in
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Defend the Palestinian People!

Zionist Butchers Strike Gaza

Israel Out of the Occupied Territories! U.S. Out of Iraq!

OCTOBER 12—In a murderous rampage paralleling that in Jenin two years ago, Israel’s rulers have slaughtered some one hundred Palestinian men, women and children in the densely populated and impoverished Gaza Strip in less than two weeks. The targets of the Israeli offensive: a kindergarten serving about 500 of the children of Jabaliya refugee camp, bulldozed to the ground; stores serving Palestinian workers, demolished; swaths of orchards, farmland, water wells and greenhouses, destroyed; roads, power lines and possibly hundreds of homes, leveled. One teenage girl was shot in the head as she baked bread with her mother, another as she swept the floor in front of her door. Nine small children were wounded when an Israeli shell careened into the house where families had assembled them for safety, while a deaf-mute man was shot and killed when he tried to look out his window.

The pretext for the latest round of Zionist mass murder—“Operation Days of Penitence”—is the killing of four Israelis by makeshift rockets fired from Gaza. The bitter reality of Sharon’s promise to evacuate Gaza has been an increasing number of Palestinians killed. Surrounded by the desert, the sea and an electrified fence, Gaza resembles a giant concen-



Reuters photos

**Israeli tank on
edge of Gaza,
October 6.
Palestinian
medics with
children injured
when tank shell
struck their
home in
Beit Lahia,
northern Gaza.**



tration camp where over 1.4 million Palestinians languish in destitution. It is symptomatic of how frequent the Israeli mass killings of Palestinians have become that there is barely a pretense of condemnation by the “international community” and virtually no protest on the streets, either in the Near East or elsewhere. The situation cries out for labor-centered protest internationally against the Zionist murder machine. **Defend the Palestinians! All Israeli troops and**

settlers out of the Occupied Territories!

In the midst of the Israeli terror operation, on October 7 three bombing attacks at Sinai vacation resorts near Egypt’s border with Israel killed at least 33 and wounded some 150 people, mostly vacationing Israelis. Whoever carried out these bombings, these were criminal acts of indiscriminate terror: the enemy of the Palestinians is not the Hebrew-speaking people, but the Israeli capitalist rulers whose tanks are firing into their

homes. Indiscriminate attacks on innocent Israeli citizens are not only abhorrent, but serve to ideologically drive the Hebrew-speaking population toward its own ruling class.

Though the Zionist butchers have the whip hand, the Near East provides ample evidence of the genocidal logic of all nationalism. What drives the bloody cycle of Zionist slaughter and Palestinian defiance and despair is the root cause of this conflict: two peoples lay claim to the same land. There can be no equitable resolution to the conflicting national claims of the Palestinian Arab and Hebrew-speaking peoples under capitalism. The Zionist state was created through the expulsion of some 700,000 Arabs in 1948—“The Catastrophe” (*Al Naqba*), commemorated to this day by Palestinians.

The current invasion of Gaza takes place against the backdrop of growing support within Israel for the forcible expulsion of all Palestinians from “Greater Israel.” A *New York Times* (10 October) article quotes a doctor treating the wounded at a Gaza hospital: “The catastrophe of 1948 will not be repeated. We say, ‘We will die here, but we will not leave here’.” The only way to ultimately prevent yet more catastrophes on the scale of 1948—and to realize the national rights of the Palestinians without denying those of the Hebrew-speaking people—lies in workers revolutions to smash all the capitalist regimes in the region.

Those who look to seemingly more “realistic” solutions like the United Nations—which on this occasion as on countless others considered and, after a U.S. veto, rejected a call to halt the Zionist offensive—only ignore the horrific lessons of the history of the Near East. The UN is an assembly of the imperialist powers and their semicolonial victims. It was the UN that presided over the establishment of the state of Israel at the expense of the dispossessed Palestinian people in 1948. Countless
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Exchange on the Million Worker March You Can't Build a Workers Party by Fronting for Democrats

6 September 2004

Comrades

In WV 831 "Million Worker March: Tail of Lesser-Evilism," you write "Workers who want a genuinely independent workers party must raise their own class-struggle banners at the MWM in October." Is this an agitational call?

I would hope that that is the first sign of a serious mobilization. The LBL nationally and supporters in the unions would be a good way to mobilize for a class-struggle contingent for the MWM.

The existence of the MWM and the fact that unions are endorsing it in the face of the AFL-CIO "stay away" order must reflect real pressure from the ranks. The existence of an integrated contingent

intervening into the demo would intersect the kind of workers from *around the country* that the Party is looking for.

[unsigned]

* * *

19 September 2004

To the Editor:

The Spartacist article (Million Worker March: Tail of Lesser Evilism, 3 Sept. 2004), which I agree with in many areas such as the need for a working class party dedicated to socialism, confuses at least two different things in order to get the reader to dismiss the MWM:

First, the ILWU Local 10 resolution recognizes that outsourcing is a problem;

it does not call for or support protectionism, as you allege. The two are not the same, at all. In fact, the demands also call for "The cancellation of all corporate 'free' trade agreements,..." and "An end to privatization...and the pitting of workers against each other across national boundaries in a mad race to the bottom." Is this also "protectionist"? Will you also assert that everyone who opposes the bosses' "free trade" agreements supports protectionism too? This is ridiculous reasoning, done to confuse the reader with false assumptions.

Like it or not, outsourcing *is* a tool to increase profits by breaking unions, paying workers less, eliminating benefits, etc. Your article turns that recognition into protectionism as a solution ("...any form of support for 'America First' nationalism..."), but the MWM *never* calls for protectionism. You should withdraw such statements. Better yet, be a bit self-critical and change your approach, comrades. Do you ever wonder why so many good activists turn away from you? Do you think they're all just "reformists"? Misleading people by putting false words in others' mouths leaves a bad taste. I can tell you it pissed me off, for sure.

Your creating this fiction is like Bush telling us that since Saddam's regime tortured and terrorized Iraqi people (true) that his regime was connected with 9-11 when, in life, there was no connection at all. In fact, his secular fascist regime hunted and tortured the Islamicists as well.

To take another analogy, if we hate the Bush regime, does that automatically mean that we support Kerry? No, and recognizing outsourcing as the bosses' tool doesn't automatically mean supporting protectionism either. Stop making strawmen to knock down. Do you imagine that this makes you look oh-so-revolutionary?

Second, the article says that "The only way to fight for the interests of working people and the oppressed is to build a workers party that will build the struggle for...socialist revolution." So, all other fights not for such a party and revolution are not fights for working peoples' interests? Really? Then the great sit-downs and battles of the 30s weren't "for the interests of working people" because none of them were for "a workers' party that will build the struggle for...socialist revolution," were they? Maybe you mean that we need such a party and such a system to keep our gains and build a better world. That's totally different from what you say and use to criticize a movement for clear class demands. If you demand that all struggles meet your criteria, you guarantee that you and your fol-

lowers will always be on the sidelines and never in the struggle.

In effect, you're saying people struggling for working class demands must agree with the need for socialist revolution for you to support it. Some united front you can build. Hell, we'd never even get a union, better pay, health benefits, or launch a fight against racist treatment if we all had to agree with that first. Your approach is so sectarian; it also helps justify your keeping your hands "clean." Lenin and Trotsky advised otherwise; they'd laugh their heads off at your approach.

Of course, the MWM has contradictory politics involved, like any real fight. It came from a union, not a vanguard party. Everyone I know wants to continue this fight after Oct. 17th; how to do that will raise many serious questions and issues. Keeping to your sectarian and misleading approach only guarantees your further isolation from those who see themselves in these demands and this March.

For the revolutionaries reading this, Lenin and his comrades made it a principle to be *with* the workers even when the struggle didn't follow bolshevik politics and was clearly reformist. Even when they went to petition the Czar instead of wage class struggle against his regime. Even when masses of workers and peasants volunteered to fight in WWI as cannon fodder for the regime. They didn't stand aside and criticize from the towers.

Or take the IWW, they didn't stay out of workers' struggles to wait for perfection either. They didn't insist that workers sign on for "One big union" before they took up strikes and led free speech fights. When workers join a union, no one demands that they agree with everything "the union" stands for either. Same with this March.

Let's not use Marx's words to justify pointing fingers and calling names from the sidelines. Marx spent years working to help inject and develop the class consciousness of active workers in his day; he didn't misstate workers' goals and condemn them for not having achieved his worldview and conclusions.

Get your hands "dirty," comrades: many workers see this as a good thing, which it is. The demands are good, as you admit. Help get the word out, not turn your holier-than-thou back.

The water's fine, muddy, and not perfect.

Earl Silbar,
midwest coordinator,
MWM, AFSCME 3506

WV Replies: It is Brother Silbar who concocts a straw man to dismiss our criticisms of the Million Worker March (MWM). Take how he deals with our statement, "The only way to fight for the interests of working people and the oppressed is to build a workers party that will lead the struggle for the emancipation of labor through socialist revolution and the establishment of a workers government" (slightly misquoted by Silbar). While claiming to agree with the need for a workers party, he absurdly says we deny the possibility of any victories short of socialist revolution. But as our article said, "Workers who want a genuinely

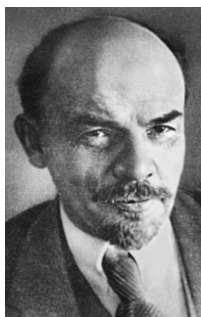


TROTSKY

For Workers Revolution!

In his 1891 introduction to *Karl Marx's Wage Labour and Capital* (1849), *Friedrich Engels described the exploitation of the working class by the capitalist class and explained the necessity for proletarian revolution to overturn the bourgeois order.*

It is the working class alone which produces all values. For value is only another expression for labour, that expression whereby in our present-day capitalist society is designated the amount of socially necessary labour contained in a particular commodity.



LENIN

These values produced by the workers do not, however, belong to the workers. They belong to the owners of the raw materials, machines, tools and the reserve funds which allow these owners to buy the labour power of the working class. From the whole mass of products produced by it, the working class, therefore, receives back only a part for itself. And as we have just seen, the other part, which the capitalist class keeps for itself and at most has to divide with the class of landowners, becomes larger with every new discovery and invention, while the part falling to the share of the working class (reckoned per head) either increases only very slowly and inconsiderably or not at all, and under certain circumstances may even fall.

But these discoveries and inventions which supersede each other at an ever-increasing rate, this productivity of human labour which rises day by day to an extent previously unheard of, finally give rise to a conflict in which the present-day capitalist economy must perish. On the one hand are immeasurable riches and a superfluity of products which the purchasers cannot cope with; on the other hand, the great mass of society proletarianised, turned into wage-workers, and precisely for that reason made incapable of appropriating for themselves this superfluity of products. The division of society into a small, excessively rich class and a large, propertyless class of wage-workers results in a society suffocating from its own superfluity, while the great majority of its members is scarcely, or even not at all, protected from extreme want. This state of affairs becomes daily more absurd and—more unnecessary. It *must* be abolished, it *can* be abolished. A new social order is possible in which the present class differences will have disappeared and in which—perhaps after a short transitional period involving some privation, but at any rate of great value morally—through the planned utilisation and extension of the already existing enormous productive forces of all members of society, and with uniform obligation to work, the means for existence, for enjoying life, for the development and employment of all bodily and mental faculties will be available in an equal measure and in ever-increasing fullness.

—Friedrich Engels, 1891 Introduction to *Wage Labour and Capital*
by Karl Marx (1849)

WORKERS VANGUARD

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

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The closing date for news in this issue is 12 October.



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15 October 2004

Crowley/NY Times



Democratic politicians Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton stump for Kerry at Miami church, October 10. Jackson is a featured speaker at Million Worker March.



Join the Labor Black Leagues!

The first Labor Black Leagues were formed as a result of the Spartacist League-initiated, 5,000-strong labor/black mobilization that stopped the Ku Klux Klan from marching in Washington, D.C. in November 1982. We stand for mobilizing the masses of minority and working people in militant integrated struggle against the brutal system of racist oppression that is capitalist America. Initiated by and fraternally allied with the Spartacist League, a multiracial revolutionary Marxist organization, the Labor Black Leagues are part of the revolutionary movement of the workers and oppressed against the bosses and for socialism.



WV Photos

If You Stand For—

1 Full rights for black people and for everyone else in jobs, housing and schools! Defeat the racist assault on affirmative action! For union-run minority job recruitment and training programs! For union hiring halls! Open up the universities to all—for open admissions, free tuition and a full living stipend for all students. Free, quality, integrated public education for all!

2 A fighting labor movement—picket lines mean don't cross! Defeat police scabherding and strikebreaking through mass pickets and union defense guards! For sit-down strikes against mass layoffs! Fight union-busting; keep the capitalist courts out of the unions! Organize the unorganized, unionize the South! Jobs for all—for a shorter workweek at no loss in pay with full cost-of-living escalator clause! Cops, prison guards and security guards out of the unions!

3 Fight for women's rights! Defend abortion clinics! Free abortion on demand; free, quality 24-hour child-care! Equal pay for equal work! For free, quality health care for all!

4 Full citizenship rights for all immigrants; everyone who made it into this country has the right to stay and live decently! Stop deportations! No to racist "English only" laws! Down with anti-Hispanic, anti-Semitic, anti-Arab and anti-Asian bigotry!

5 Defend the separation of church and state! Full democratic rights for homosexuals! Down with the

anti-sex witchhunt—cops and courts out of the bedroom! Down with all laws against consensual activities such as "crimes without victims" like pornography, gambling, drugs and prostitution!

6 Mass labor/black/Hispanic mobilizations drawing on the power of the unions against the racist terrorists. Stop the Nazis! Stop the KKK!

7 Abolish the racist death penalty! Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Free all victims of racist capitalist repression! No faith in the capitalist courts! No to gun control! Defend victims of cop terror and racist police frame-up! No illusions in civilian review boards or community control of the police! Down with the racist and anti-labor "war on drugs"! For decriminalization of drugs! For class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense; support the work of the Partisan Defense Committee!

8 Unconditional opposition to every attempt to abolish welfare! Down with slave-labor, union-busting "workfare" schemes! Fight any and every attempt of the government to take away or cut back even more social programs such as Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, public health and aid to education and housing! For a massive program of public works—high-quality integrated housing, schools, libraries, hospitals for the working people and the poor!

9 Down with the chauvinist poison of protectionism! For international working-class solidarity! Support revolutionary struggles of working people abroad! Defend

the deformed workers states—Cuba, Vietnam, China and North Korea—against capitalist restoration and imperialist attack! For proletarian political revolution to oust their Stalinist bureaucracies! For labor action against U.S. imperialist war moves and military adventures! For the right of independence for Puerto Rico! U.S. troops out of Puerto Rico and the Caribbean!

10 Down with the Democrats and Republicans! For a revolutionary workers party that champions the cause of all the oppressed! Finish the Civil War! Those who labor must rule! For a workers government to take industry away from its racist, incompetent and corrupt owners! Rebuild America on a socialist planned economy!

—Join the Labor Black Leagues!

Membership pledge is \$3/year unemployed; \$10/year employed.

For more information, contact:

CHICAGO (312) 563-0441

Labor Black Struggle League
Box 6938, Chicago, IL 60680

NEW YORK (212) 267-1025

Labor Black League for Social Defense
Box 2502, Church St. Station, New York, NY 10008

OAKLAND (510) 839-0851

Labor Black League for Social Defense
Box 29497, Oakland, CA 94604

independent workers party must raise their own class-struggle banners at the MWM in October." And in response to both letters, we will be there, distributing our press and fighting to win workers away from the politics of "lesser-evilism" and to our revolutionary perspective.

But there is a difference between intervening into an event and political endorsement of an action, which indicates political agreement. The SL/U.S. is not in political accord with the fundamentally reformist politics of the MWM, and this is what really rankles Silbar. He objects to our program, in particular our insistence that there can be no independent political mobilization of labor that does not *explicitly* break from the capitalist Democratic Party. Thus Silbar asks, "if we hate the Bush regime, does that automatically mean that we support Kerry?", answering: "No." True—but in the middle of an election campaign, MWM leaders call to dump Republican Bush while the MWM platform keeps mum on a vote for Democrat Kerry. It doesn't take a Marxist to hear the unambiguous message: Vote Kerry.

Our article maintained that the MWM's pretense of being an "independent mobilization of working people" is designed to get out the vote among workers who are not very happy with Kerry and the Democrats. It is thus no surprise that leading black Democratic Congresswoman Barbara Lee and Jesse Jackson Sr. have recently endorsed the MWM. And at the October 10 Bay Area organizing committee meeting for the MWM, it was made clear by ILWU Local 10 official Clarence Thomas that Jackson, whose longtime role has been to rope in workers and blacks to vote Democrat, will speak from the platform. The response by the fake-socialist organizations in attendance



WV Photo

Spartacists raise call for workers party at April 2003 antiwar protest in Oakland.

was at best meek acceptance; members of Socialist Organizer and ANSWER voted in favor! While the MWM is having Jackson speak from its platform, they are excluding one of the MWM's own backers, Steve Zeltzer—who despite his slimy social-democratic politics is at least a part of the workers movement—on the pretext that he is a candidate for office in the Bay Area.

Silbar deliberately takes out of context our statement about the necessity of building a workers party to fight for the interests of working people and the oppressed. We said this not in relation to trade-union struggles against the bosses, but to pose the only genuine alternative to "the loathsome Bush administration" given that "no such alternative exists

with Democrat John Kerry." But even the kinds of trade-union struggles Silbar mentions consistently raise gritty political questions such as the nature of the capitalist state and the necessity to mobilize the working class in the fight for black rights.

Since the domination and division of the globe by the imperialist powers became complete early last century, the world entered an epoch of decaying capitalism, "when, in general, there can be no discussion of systematic social reforms and the raising of the masses' living standards; when every serious demand of the proletariat and even every serious demand of the petty bourgeoisie inevitably reaches beyond the limits of capitalist property relations and of the bourgeois state," in

the words of the 1938 Transitional Program written by Leon Trotsky.

Far from implying that workers' defensive struggles are futile, this reality makes it imperative for every such struggle to be linked up with the need for socialist revolution. For example, the powerful upsurge of the 1930s which produced the CIO was politically contained by the labor bureaucrats with the help of the supposedly Marxist Communist Party—these forces succeeded in keeping workers tied to Roosevelt and the Democrats, thereby heading off the development of a conscious working-class challenge to capitalist rule. The rotten fruit of that betrayal can be seen all around in the decline of the labor movement under the misleadership of the current pro-capitalist bureaucracy.

Another excellent case in point is outsourcing, or what the AFL-CIO tops call the "export of our jobs," thereby violating the most elementary norms of international class solidarity and underlining their allegiance to American capitalism. Brother Silbar accuses us of falsely calling an International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 10 resolution and the Million Worker March "protectionist." Silbar has no trouble putting false words in *our* mouth—we said no such thing. We quoted MWM organizer and ILWU Local 10 official Clarence Thomas, denouncing "the systematic outsourcing of our jobs to areas of the world where workers can be exploited even more ruthlessly." We then noted that Thomas had "on many occasions supported international labor solidarity," but went on to underline that "any form of support for 'America First' economic nationalism puts you in bed with your own bourgeoisie."

It is incumbent on anyone who claims

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Young Spartacus



Young Spartacus photos

Left: United-front rally at CCSF, October 7. Right: Later, demonstrators from campus rally join UNITE HERE pickets at San Francisco Hilton.

SYC Initiates United-Front Rally at CCSF

Victory to the San Francisco Hotel Workers Strike!

SAN FRANCISCO—On October 7 the Spartacus Youth Club helped mobilize students and workers at the City College of San Francisco (CCSF) in a united-front rally in support of the UNITE HERE Local 2 hotel workers strike. Over a dozen groups and individuals endorsed the rally—leftists, student leaders, a women's organization, campus clubs representing minority groups and a trade unionist—under the slogans, “*Students Support the Hotel Workers! Protest the Union-Busting Lockout! Victory to the UNITE HERE Strike!*”

The Spartacus Youth Club initiated this rally at CCSF in order to build support for the strike, to bring students to the picket lines and win them to the active support of this crucial class battle in one of the most expensive cities in the U.S. The UNITE HERE strike in San Francisco is part of a national effort by hotel workers here, as well as in Los Angeles and Washington, D.C., to win common contract expiration dates with workers in six other cities and Hawaii.

This would give their combined 60,000 workers much greater weight in dealing with national hotel chains.

San Francisco's 8,000-strong Local 2 is facing the Multi-Employer Group (MEG), which represents the 14 hotels involved. On September 29 1,400 workers went on a two-week strike at four of those hotels. Two days later, MEG locked out the 2,600 workers at the other ten affected hotels. The union is also fighting against the bosses' attempt to raise medical premiums from the current \$10 to over \$270 a month in a workforce that for the most part makes only \$9 to \$15 an hour. Additionally, the union rejects the insulting offer of “pay raises” of 5 to 20 *cents* an hour.

UNITE HERE workers also are striking seven casinos in Atlantic City as part of a similar drive to synchronize contract expirations with Las Vegas and other casino hotels. Meanwhile, workers at the Chicago Congress Hotel have been on strike for over a year. At a Los Angeles UNITE HERE Local 11 rally on Octo-

ber 5, the cops arrested 44 unionists and sympathizers demonstrating in support of the locked-out San Francisco hotel workers in front of the Hyatt Regency Hotel. We say: ***Drop all charges now!***

Mobilizing Students Behind the Power of the Working Class

The CCSF rally of dozens attracted a lot of attention, and students stopped to listen and check out the SYC's Marxist literature. The DJs from Student Activities who were helping out with sound started off by playing Michael Jackson's “Wanna Be Startin' Somethin',” which was not only fitting for the occasion but also sparked some moonwalking as people gathered to listen to the speeches. Reflecting CCSF's heavily immigrant and minority composition, many of those who joined the rally were black, Latino or of Asian descent, mirroring the ethnic composition of the UNITE HERE workforce. Several students were attracted by our Chinese-language signs at our literature table, and the demonstration also received a write-up in the Chinese-language newspaper *Ming Pao*.

Other student groups that endorsed did not attend in large numbers or send speakers. But some individuals, who had argued within their groups for an endorsement and distributed rally fliers, came out to the rally. A few anarchists on campus did attend and one assisted in building the rally by helping to get an announcement on the campus radio station. However, when the rally MC encouraged him to speak, he refused, stating that as an anarchist he couldn't stand on the same platform with socialists. The MC explained that he could both talk about the strike and make clear that he stood for anarchism. Despite having ample opportunity to speak and even raise his political differences with us if he chose, he let his anti-Marxism keep him from speaking to mobilize others, including fellow anarchists, in support of the strike.

A black campus worker in SEIU Local 790 decided to speak on the spot. Commenting on the importance of linking the hotel workers labor struggle to the

defense of immigrant rights, she pointedly said:

“There are lots of people who have lost their children and lost their husbands to deportation. We're fighting against deportation. You need to understand that if these people actually get a hold of the workers that are downtown, then they will be after us next.”

As SYC speaker Mike Retondo explained, “These attacks come hand in hand with the so-called ‘war on terror,’ which is just an excuse for the U.S. imperialist rulers to increase the state repression against workers, leftists, immigrants, blacks and other minorities. We say: ***Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!***”

In building for this united front, our comrades talked to students who also work in the hotels and are on strike or whose parents or relatives are on strike. Many others had seen or even joined the picket lines and are supportive of the strike, underlining the working-class character of the CCSF student body. We learned that a labor relations professor was requiring his students to visit the picket lines. An Asian American Studies professor let his class out so his students could attend the rally. We also talked to a black student whose friend got hired as a scab at one of the hotels. The student argued hard with his friend against scabbing because, as a former Teamster, he understood that unions fight for people to have decent lives. At the rally, the SYC MC made the point,

“This is a pitched battle and it demands your support! *Students must take a side! We must fight on labor's side!* The battle is posed on this campus, which we found, in building this rally, not only includes students who are on strike as hotel workers, but also scabs that have taken over their jobs. No to scabs!”

The rally motivated a group of students to go downtown to join the picket lines, where workers applauded them.

The class line that divides this society is most evident on the picket line. Jido Cooper, speaking for the Labor Black League for Social Defense, explained to the CCSF rally:

“There are security guards at some of these hotels, who are organized in the SEIU, who have been going in to ‘work’ during this strike *and* lockout. Well, of

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Spartacus Youth Club Class Series

BAY AREA

Thursday, Oct. 21, 6:30 p.m.
Decriminalize Prostitution!
Berkeley: Vote YES on Measure Q!
UC Berkeley, 222 Wheeler Hall
Information and readings: (510) 839-0851
or e-mail: sycbayarea@sbcglobal.net

TORONTO

Wednesday, Oct. 27, 6:30 p.m.
No to Ontario's “Sharia Courts”!
Down With Anti-Muslim Racism!
York University Student Centre
Room 315C
Information and readings: (416) 593-4138
or e-mail: spartacan@on.aibn.com

LOS ANGELES

Saturday, Nov. 6, 2 p.m.
The State and Revolution
3806 Beverly Blvd., Room 215
Information and readings: (213) 380-8239
or e-mail: slsycla@sbcglobal.net

CHICAGO

Alternate Tuesdays, 7 p.m.
Nov. 2: Marxist Materialism vs. Liberal Idealism
University of Chicago
Cobb Hall, Room 107
5811 S. Ellis Ave.
Information and readings: (312) 563-0441
or e-mail: spartacist@iname.com

NEW YORK

Video Showing and Discussion
Tuesday, Oct. 19, 7:30 p.m.
From Death Row,
This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal
Columbia University
325 Pupin Hall (116th and Broadway)
Information and readings: (212) 267-1025
or e-mail: nysl@compuserve.com

Visit the ICL Web Site:
www.icl-fi.org

My Night with Nader... Or Why I'd Rather Be Driving a Pinto

We print below a report from Spartacist League comrade Paula Daniels on a September 14 speaking appearance by independent presidential candidate Ralph Nader at Loyola University in Chicago.

There is nothing leftist, left-leaning or left-like about Ralph Nader and his politics. At bottom, he is a liberal reformer who is moved by the many horrors of capitalism—like Jane Addams, only without the compassion for immigrants (but all the condescension). He yearns for a past when the Democrats supposedly were a genuine second party fighting for good things (like Jim Crow or the Vietnam War?!). Apparently the root of all evil is corporatism, which for Nader breeds greed and human suffering and finished off the Democrats as a second party, giving us the “Republicrats.” His goal is to get the Democrats “back on course” through building a movement of critical-minded liberals to pull the Dems onto the correct path.

Nader paints a distorted view of the glory days of the Democrats when, we are told, they won elections and fought for unions, for the poor, for jobs (well, they did win elections). In other words, let's make this “great democracy” work again. He quoted with longing Eisenhower's “Cross of Iron” speech—an apology for the Cold War with the goal of smashing the workers states, wrapped in the language of peace—and said almost nothing about Iraq until the Q&A period. Nader referred to all the advice he gives Bush and Kerry. To Nader, Kerry is losing because he didn't follow Nader's advice to ignore his corporate advisers. Nader is virulently anti-communist, and his talk was mostly a litany of capitalist crimes that he posits can be solved with better organization and priorities. The only redeeming factor about his talk was that he defended our right to speak, albeit after interrupting us.

There were about 700 people (mostly but not exclusively students) who showed up to hear him speak. The International Socialist Organization (ISO) was all over this thing. Quite a few people expressed agreement as I hawked WV saying, “Break with the Democrats! No vote to Nader! Build a revolutionary workers party to fight for a workers government!” This also drove the *Socialist Worker* salesmen crazy, some of whom were pitching their paper by saying, “A vote to Nader is a vote to end the occupation of Iraq!” I had a long exchange with an ISO member about their support to Nader. His main argument was that he agreed Nader has nothing to offer working people, Nader wasn't a socialist, etc., but socialists had to get behind the campaign because it's important that “the movement” grow. For the ISO, the campaign is a start and Nader is addressing important issues. He got intensely frustrated when I kept demanding he explain to me why, if Nader has nothing to offer to working people, minorities, etc., are they telling people to support him—why isn't that building illusions in capitalism and its politicians? I did not convince him, but he was plenty distressed. Overall, the ISO was feeling some heat as we had numerous exchanges with them over the course of the evening.

The Libertarian Party gave a short rap before Nader spoke about the right to be on the ballot, followed by Students for Nader. Nader himself received a limp standing ovation—the only two ISOers I saw giving him a standing ovation were honchos Joel Geier and Joe Allen. Their masses didn't rise.



The Phoenix

After Nader's talk and before the Q&A we were held hostage by liberal activist “people's lawyer” Greg Kafoury. He worked the crowd up about how great Nader is. The most telling line which truly reveals Nader's strategy was when Kafoury (to paraphrase) talked about how if we can get a few more percentage points in this election, Kerry will flip (as opposed to flop, I guess) and then the Democratic Party will flip, and then the war can be ended. Kafoury then went on the most shameless, aggressive money-squeezing spiel.

Finally came the Q&A. By this time there were about 200-300 people left in the room. SYC comrade Amanda Higginson and I stayed for the “full Monty,” so to speak, as Nader and the ISO bared all. An ISOer intervened right before we did. Basically he made a mushy intervention about how every four years there is no choice, we need an alternative, we need to build the left. The ISOer held up their flyer and invited the audience to hear “Nader's running mate” Peter Camejo speak and ended by asking Nader what University of Illinois at Chicago students can do to help and organize. Later I went after him before other ISOers and independents, exposing the fact that the ISO can sound left in private and might even criticize Nader; but when the ISO gets up in public or in front of Nader himself, it's all “build the campaign,” no criticism of Nader.

Higginson intervened right after the ISO did. She began by observing that what she heard tonight was protectionism (flowing from Nader's invocation of “saving American jobs”) and anti-immigrant chauvinism, pointing to his campaign banner featuring the bloody American flag. She noted that Nader is for the occupation of Iraq under the UN. Identifying herself as an SYC'er, she said she wanted to address “those of you who are looking for a real alternative.” Some in the crowd were heckling her, with Nader himself interrupting to say, “I heard this same thing last night [at Michigan State University]. Put your notes away and tell me what *you* think, not what someone wrote down for you to say.” She kept on, raising her voice amid heckles, to say that Nader is appealing to those who are disaffected but with the intent to keep their dissent within the bounds of the capitalist system. Nader wants to pressure the Democrats to the left—but the Democrats are the party of slavery, Hiroshima and Vietnam, and were never a party of the workers and oppressed. Groups like the ISO not only buy Nader's “alternative” but are out there fighting for it—thus they are an obstacle to raising consciousness about the need to overthrow the capitalist system. Capitalism is a profit-driven system which was just as vicious before corporations existed. As long as there is capitalism, there will be oppression. We need a workers party to fight for a workers government! She held up *Workers Vanguard*.

I spoke a few people later. I identi-

fied myself and defended my comrade against Nader's insulting anti-communist heckling. This got some applause. I went on to point out that people are hungry for answers, for solutions and hungry for change. The Democrats and Republicans are so indistinguishable that a guy like Nader comes along, lists the many horrors of capitalism and looks like some sort of alternative—but beware, he's not. Nader basically is a small businessman with a program to match—opposition to unions in his own business (which he didn't deny), American-jobs-first protectionism, anti-immigration, more to the right than many conservatives on China. His ideas are all within the bounds of capitalism, just redistribute and reorganize the wealth within this same rotting system. He interrupted me to ask me what our position on immigration is. I told him I would get to it when I finished my remarks—we had a short go around, as I too got heckled by those who love the First Amendment until the “com-mies” get up. Nader actually defended me, telling the hecklers to let me finish.

I pointed at Nader and said—you make it clear you are for capitalism, you have no pretense of being a Marxist or leftist—I completely disagree with you but you say who you are. The real crime, I said, were groups like the ISO and Socialist Alterna-

Ralph Nader at Loyola University, September 14. The Pinto might explode on impact, but Nader is unsavory at any speed.



Young Spartacus graphic

for socialist revolution. I then answered Nader's question, stating that our position on immigrants is that anyone who makes it into this country should be given full citizenship rights—this got some applause.

As for Nader, his position on immigration was expressed in an interview with Pat Buchanan (*American Conservative*, 21 June), when he said: “I don't like the idea of legalization because then the question is how do you prevent the next wave and the next?” He replied to me by completely twisting around our position, claiming it was similar to that of the *Wall Street Journal* (I shouted out that I'd never seen them call for a revolutionary workers party, but few could hear me). He asserted that we call for “open the borders,” which we do not. (Even if this utopian demand could somehow be implemented, it would only allow the imperialists to more directly plunder their poorer neighbors.) Nader went into a long spiel on corporations becoming entities of themselves and taking over the world, though he was forced to admit they rely on the protection afforded by the U.S. armed forces.

Afterwards we had another go around with the ISO, though SAlt was nowhere to be seen. As well, numerous people came up and thanked us for getting up and speaking, most in agreement, some just as a show of support for speaking our minds in the face of heckling. We sold papers to most of them. My favorite was an Iranian woman and her friend who came barreling up to me and shook

New York City: Spartacist signs at August 29 anti-RNC demonstration express opposition to Democratic Party and Nader, call for revolutionary workers party.



tive (SAlt) who claim to be socialists and are telling people to vote for Nader. Any time a socialist tells you to vote for a capitalist politician, you better hold on to your political wallet. I addressed the need to fight for our own party—a fighting revolutionary workers party—and break with the Democrats, no support/vote to Nader. The lefties were heckling me by this point. To motivate the need to build a party now, I asked who in the reactionary 1950s had a clue of the mass struggles and protests that marked the '60s? I ended by reiterating that the capitalist profit system will always be run by exactly that—profit—and that the only solution is to uproot capitalism and fight

my hand, thanking me for speaking out in defense of immigrants. She said she came to the event supporting Nader but “tonight he dug his own grave,” and she refuses to support him in any way. She correctly pointed out that he says nothing about the plight of the Palestinians. We talked about how many on the left deep-sixed this issue during the antiwar protests. It was one way in which reformist groups tailored the politics of the antiwar movement to the “dove” Democrats. Instead of pandering to liberal sentiment, we intervened in the antiwar protests as we did tonight, with the call to build an independent workers party to fight for socialist revolution. ■

Free Mumia...

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health cadres, food cadres, you name it. Did some dangerous work too, and studied Hegel, Marx, Lenin, Fanon, Mao like a religious zealot.”

We Want Freedom provides a riveting account of the campaign of terror leveled at Jamal and his comrades by the FBI and cops, who were determined to destroy the Panthers by any means necessary. Mumia devotes a chapter to the FBI’s deadly COINTELPRO, noting, “The Bureau used its enormous power, influence, and contacts to intimidate politicians. It used the omnipresent press to hound people out of their jobs. It sabotaged allegedly free elections. It destroyed marriages. It shattered families. It fomented violence between political and social adversaries.”

With characteristic modesty Jamal says not a word about his own fight for life and freedom against the racist frame-up that keeps him in the shadow of death on Pennsylvania’s death row. Yet on every page of *We Want Freedom* the reader can see why the government has targeted this man for so long. Jamal was convicted in 1982 on frame-up charges of killing Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner on 9 December 1981. From the moment of his arrest, the prosecution sought to hang Jamal with his BPP background. The cover photograph of *We Want Freedom* comes from a January 1970 *Philadelphia Inquirer* interview with Jamal, then a 15-year-old Black Panther Party spokesman. The interview was used by the prosecution as exhibit number one for Jamal’s execution. As Jamal recalled in the 1990 Partisan Defense Committee video, *From Death Row, This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal*, “The word Black Panther means different things to different people, depending on their perspective, depending on their history, depending on their political orientation. The prosecutor knew that exceedingly well.... I saw when it hit the jury, it was like a bolt of electricity.”

To secure the death sentence for Jamal, prosecutor Joseph McGill inflamed the nearly all-white jury with the grotesque lie that Jamal’s membership in the Panthers as a teenager proved he was a committed cop killer who had been planning to kill a cop for 12 years. As readers of this book will see, and as confirmed by Mumia’s own COINTELPRO files, it was the kill-crazy Feds and Philly cops who planned to get Jamal “all the way back then”—i.e., from 1 May 1969, when he and his comrades made their first public appearance in a rally outside the State Building in Philadelphia to demand freedom for imprisoned Panther leader Huey P. Newton.

The Frame-Up of Jamal

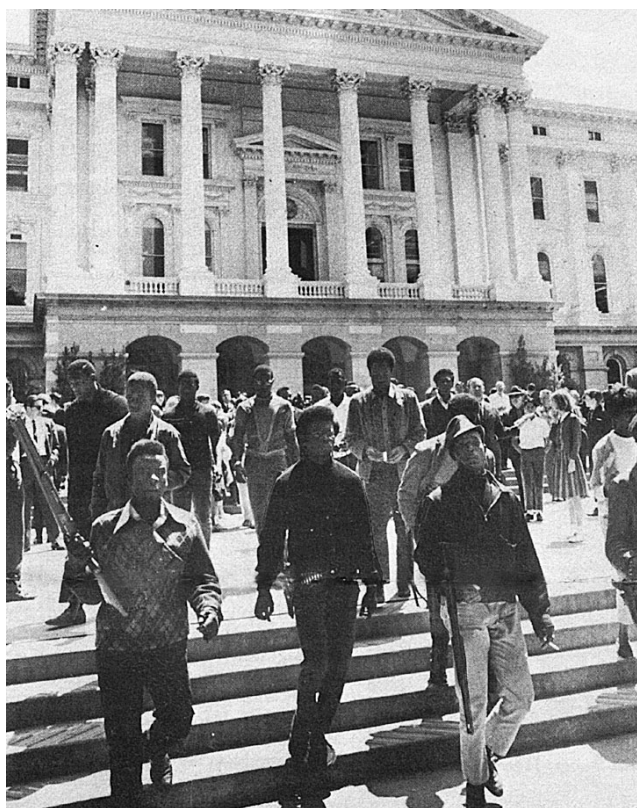
Mumia Abu-Jamal is an innocent man! His case is a textbook example of a classic racist political frame-up. For three years both Pennsylvania state courts and federal courts have refused to even consider testimony from Arnold Beverly that he, not Jamal, shot and killed officer Faulkner, as well as a mountain of supporting evidence. They have also rejected evidence discovered over two years ago: the sworn account of court stenographer Terri Maurer-Carter of a conversation she overheard in the courthouse where Mumia was tried. In that conversation, judge Albert Sabo, who sentenced Jamal to death, declared in regard to Jamal’s case, “I’m going to help ’em fry the n----r.”

With this vulgar promise, “king of death row” Sabo speaks not just for himself but for this country’s racist rulers, who waged a bloody war of disruption, frame-up and extermination against the Panthers and other radical black activists. A directive from FBI headquarters advised its agents that since the “purpose ... is to disrupt...it is immaterial whether facts exist to substantiate the charge.” In 1968, FBI director J. Edgar Hoover vowed, “The Negro youth and moderate[s] must be made to understand that if they succumb to revolutionary teachings, they will be dead revolutionaries.” Under the ruthless COINTELPRO vendetta 38

Panthers were killed and hundreds more railroaded to scores of years in prison hellholes.

The young men and women Mumia describes lived with the awareness that every day could be their last. After Fred Hampton and Mark Clark were assassinated in a hail of bullets in the early morning hours of 4 December 1969, Mumia was one of a contingent of Philadelphia Panthers who drove to Chicago for the commemoration. Jamal recalls: “When we arrived at the office, we were walked over to the apartment and saw the holes making the walls look like Swiss cheese. We saw the mattress, caked with blood, where Fred and his fiancée lay that fateful night, the bullet holes lining the walls, tactile markers of government hate.”

Four days later the cops raided BPP headquarters in Los Angeles, bombarding the Panthers with thousands of rounds of ammunition over five hours. The cops especially wanted to kill Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt). A decorated Vietnam vet, Geronimo’s military knowledge had saved his life and his comrades—and the FBI and California rulers would make him pay. Before his release in 1997, Geronimo spent 27 years in prison on the lying testimony of a cop informant, Julius Butler, for a killing in Santa Monica,



AP

Panthers hold armed demonstration against Mulford gun control bill in Sacramento, May 1967.

California that the cops and FBI knew Geronimo didn’t commit. FBI wiretap logs showed Geronimo was 400 miles away from the scene of the shooting, at a Black Panther Party leadership meeting in Oakland. From the prosecutors’ office, to the august judges’ chambers up to the governor’s mansion, many high-ranking California officials in the 1970s-80s built and maintained their careers on the war against the Panthers and the frame-up of Geronimo, who was then America’s foremost class-war prisoner.

Jamal quotes Philadelphia Panther leader Reggie Schell describing one of the cop raids on the Philly Panther offices. Mumia recalls his arrest and days in jail for jaywalking on his way to sell the *Black Panther* newspaper in the streets of Oakland; how the Feds were waiting for him as he was about to board a plane for California, only to be frustrated when their search revealed he had nothing that could even be claimed to be a weapon. (Jamal was once reprimanded by a Panther cadre for falling asleep during guard duty.) Mumia also cites an account by L.A. Panther Flores Forbes of frequent “faux attacks” by the LAPD, complete with hovering police helicopters designed to shatter the nerves of individual Panthers: “The house started to rattle. The trees in our yard and across the street started to swirl.” And, as Jamal describes, the cops had their own special targets. One of those in L.A. was Paul Redd, a talented artist whose highly praised work graced the pages of the *Black Panther* newspaper. When the LAPD realized who he was upon arrest,

Even with much of the text blacked out and many documents withheld outright, over 700 pages of FBI files obtained for Jamal by the Partisan Defense Committee make it clear that the FBI and cops were on a mission to use any “dirty trick” to silence the man who would become known as the “voice of the voiceless.” Using its wiretaps, its informants and police spies, the government relentlessly pursued him at demonstrations, newspaper sales, political meetings and fundraisers—even at picnics. They knew when he was to leave town and when he was to return, intercepting him as he boarded a flight and engaging in physical observation of returning flights. The Feds



Temple University

George FencI (right), head of Philadelphia Police Department’s Civil Disobedience Unit, which assisted FBI COINTELPRO operation against Panthers.

Chicago Tribune



1969: Chicago police and FBI brutally killed Panther leaders Fred Hampton (inset) and Mark Clark. Blood-soaked mattress on which Hampton was sleeping (right).

UPI

they broke the fingers of his right hand.

Without doubt Jamal, identified in the FBI files as one of the top three leaders in the Philadelphia BPP, was a prime target of Frank Rizzo’s racist thugs in blue. The Feds decided to open a dossier on Jamal when he participated in the 1 May 1969 “Free Huey” demonstration. From that day on a steady stream of memoranda, letters, “airtels” and “nitels” between FBI headquarters and its field agents tracked Mumia’s every political move.

interrogated school officials, contacted employers, harassed Jamal’s mother.

In one typical four-week period in the summer of 1969, the FBI files include: a memorandum dated August 11 reporting that Jamal spoke at a Hiroshima Day rally in Philadelphia; a Civil Disobedience Unit (CDU) report on the same rally, also dated August 11; two “airtels” to the FBI director, dated August 14; an August 14 “FBI Notice”; an August 19 “Government Memorandum,” again on the Hiroshima Day rally; and a September 4 FBI report on a Socialist Workers Party campaign rally where Mumia “spoke against the ‘pigs’,” followed by a cover note dated September 5 specifically identifying “Wesley Cook, aka Wes Mumia.”

The files are replete with clippings of *Black Panther* articles written by Jamal and reports of his public speeches. It was Jamal’s noticeable talent as a young revolutionary journalist and propagandist that attracted so much FBI attention. A 24 October 1969 report on Jamal urged that he be placed under high-level surveillance: “In spite of the subject’s age (15 years), Philadelphia feels that his continued participation in BPP activities in the Philadelphia Division, his position in the Philadelphia branch of the BPP, and his past inclination to appear and speak at public gatherings, the subject should be included on the Security Index.”

Jamal was targeted for more than surveillance. His name was placed on two government hit lists: The FBI’s Security Index (SI) of those deemed a “threat” to “national security” and the Administrative Index (ADEX) of those to be rounded up and thrown into concentration camps in case of a “national emergency.” Many of the documents bear the notation “Smith Act,” the notorious “thought crimes” legislation under which first Trotskyists and then Communist Party members were sent to prison for “advocating” revolution.

Despite the FBI’s acknowledgement that Jamal “has not displayed a propensity for violence” and was not once found with a gun throughout this period of intense surveillance, the files regularly labeled him “Armed and Dangerous”—a license for the cops and G-men to shoot first and ask questions later. And they finally did shoot him, in the early morning of 9 December 1981. History is not a conspiracy, but there are conspiracies in history. We are not saying that the cops who were at the scene the night of 9 December 1981 knew Jamal was going to be there. But they were there and had the chance they had long awaited. The subsequent trial, conviction and death sentence was a political frame-up pure and simple, the culmination of a decade of efforts to “neutralize” Jamal.

The FBI records are only the tip of the iceberg. During the 1960s and ’70s the Philly cops kept their own voluminous files—none of which have been made available—on some 18,000 people! There was extensive collusion between the FBI and Frank Rizzo’s Philadelphia Police Department. Document after document in the FBI files lists as its source unidentified cops from the CDU or Intelligence Division. According to Rizzo’s biographer, S.A. Paolantonio, the Philadelphia CDU led by George FencI “had a steady stream of informers paid by the Federal Bureau

Free Mumia...

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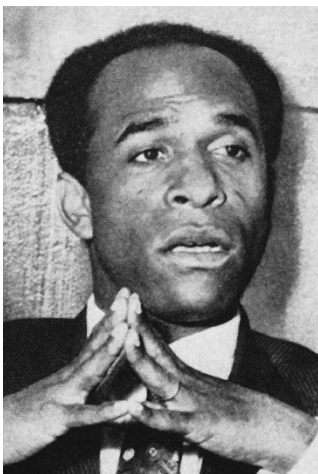
peoples' own homes that were burned down. The cops went on a killing rampage. These proved that police brutality was not an isolated injustice that could be eliminated through militant action. The cops are an essential part of the armed force of the capitalist state; if defeated locally, they came back with the National Guard or Army. To drive and keep out the cops from the ghettos is equivalent to overthrowing the American state. As long as the majority of white workers remained loyal or only passively hostile to the government, black activism could not liberate the ghetto.

Fanon's writings played a significant part in the Panthers' belief that the lumpenproletariat, especially street-wise ghetto youth, were the vanguard of the American revolution. We warned at the time that "a political movement which isolates itself in a social milieu hostile to normal work-a-day society must become irresponsible, individualistic, and ultimately cynical and contemptuous of the mass of working people" ("Rise and Fall of the Panthers: End of the Black Power Era," WV No. 4, January 1972). In the end, the Panthers were destroyed not only by police terror from without but a murderous internal factionalism inflamed by COINTELPRO provocations.

The Panthers never found the only road leading to the destruction of the racist bourgeois order—the multiracial proletariat. As self-described "revolutionary nationalists" the Panthers shared with the predominantly white New Left a rejection of the centrality and strategic social power of the integrated labor movement in the struggle against brutal racial oppression and imperialist war as well as capitalist exploitation.

There was a palpable basis to link the ghetto to the factories to wage a militant struggle against the killer cops. This required a class-struggle leadership of the labor movement. In 1970 the postal workers had the first national strike against the federal government. Auto plants were seething with rebellions. In 1969, the Panthers briefly formed a caucus at the Fremont, California GM plant and even put out a few issues of a plant newspaper. Panther Chief of Staff David Hilliard had been a longshoreman for a while, and his brother June, a party member, was a city bus driver. The Panthers knew there were white workers at a union oil facility whose heads were being beaten by the scabherding cops, workers who took up the Panthers' characterizations of the cops as "pigs." But, instead, the Panthers turned to "community work"—local programs which seek at best to partially ameliorate some of the deprivations of ghetto life without challenging the material basis for black oppression—a substitute for the fight to win the working class to take up the struggle for black freedom. In doing so, they ceded the terrain to the reformist black misleaders and the labor lieutenants of capital, the trade-union bureaucracy.

The genuine radicalism and personal courage of many Panthers were combined with illusions in the reformability of the racist capitalist system. One example is the 1970 Revolutionary People's Constitutional Convention, a meeting in Philadelphia called to bring together a variety of left organizations and activists to adopt a "constitution that serves the people, not the ruling class." Jamal attributes its "failure" to the fact that white radicals weren't



Time

Frantz Fanon. His book, *The Wretched of the Earth*, had strong influence on Panther leaders.

prepared to make a revolution. Mumia asks: "Were millions of white youth, no matter what they claimed their political or ideological persuasions, really ready to embark on a revolution, one that did not prize whiteness?" This notion of white skin privilege, which was the common coin for the New Left's rejection of the American proletariat as a revolutionary factor, wears pretty thin after 25 years of attacks on the living standards of all workers in the U.S., ushered in by the firing of the entire PATCO air traffic controllers union in 1981, and exemplified by the imprisonment of steel worker Bob Buck and coal miner Jerry Dale Lowe.

The Panthers' ten-point program of mildly liberal reforms called on the government for reparations, wanted the educational system to teach the "true history" of black and oppressed people in this country, and expressed the Panthers' illu-

housing, broken-down schools and drug addiction born of despair. This requires a massive reallocation of resources and wealth, which is only possible with the expropriation of the bloodsucking capitalist class as a whole and the creation of a workers state in which those who labor rule—a workers state where production is based on human need, not profits. This can only be accomplished through a socialist revolution to overthrow the capitalist order and its state, which exists to defend the class dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. And only the multiracial working class has the power to do that. Based on its role in producing the wealth of this society, it is only the industrial proletariat which has both the social interest and power to bring down this rotten capitalist order.

The crackdown on the Panthers did not provoke mass ghetto rebellions, but a rapid lurch to the right. Isolated, with repression bearing down on them, the Panthers shifted their focus to legal defense work in an effort to gain the broadest possible support. The Panther alliances with white radicals were not motivated by the realization that American society could only be revolutionized by an integrated working-class movement, but because they sought support for their defense campaign. In 1968 Eldridge Cleaver ran for president on the liberal Peace and Freedom Party ticket. A key role in the rightward degeneration and demise of the BPP was played by the cynical operators of the Communist Party (CP). Beginning in 1969, the CP influenced the Panther leadership in launching a "united front against fascism," an attempt to create an alliance of everyone to the left of the Nixon-Agnew

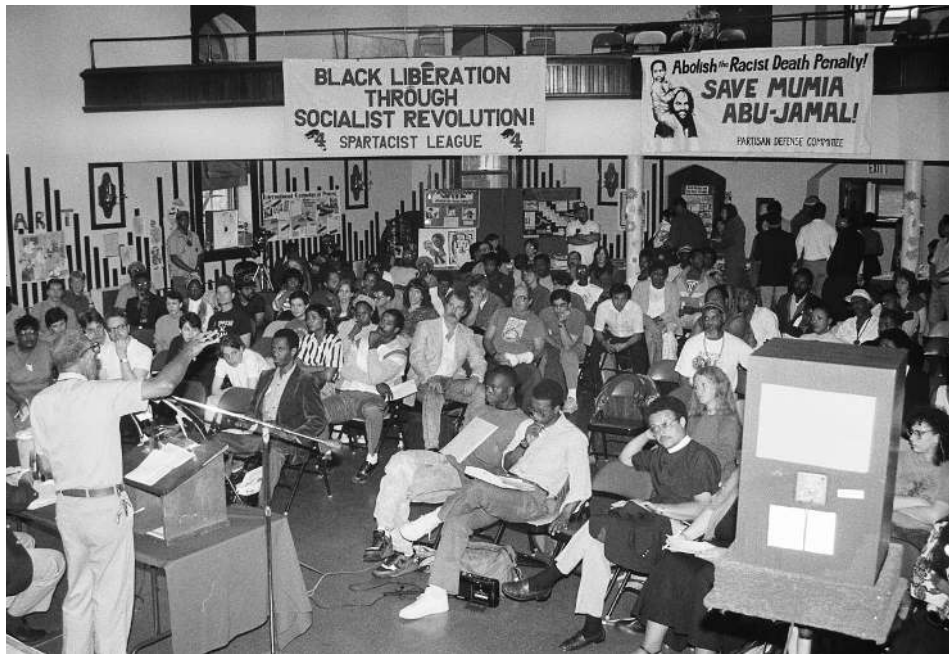
all aspects of social oppression on the basis of an internationalist revolutionary program.

Jamal describes the Panthers as a woman's party, and gives compelling portraits of women who played leading roles and were the key to running the party in various capacities in spite of the obstacles in their way. However, just because Newton issued a proclamation of the necessity for women's and gay liberation didn't mean that the Black Panther Party was a tribune of the people. The Panthers were heavily influenced by lumpen ideology. Some women chose to leave the Panthers because the male chauvinism was suffocating. This is not to deny the heroic role played by women who chose to remain in the ranks of the Panthers and function as leaders no matter what.

It is impossible to have a program for the liberation of women divorced from a proletarian revolutionary program to abolish the roots of women's oppression: the system of private property in the means of production. The Bolsheviks of Lenin and Trotsky were intransigent fighters for women's liberation as an indispensable part of the fight for the emancipation of the working class from exploitation. The material basis of women's oppression lies in the institution of the family. Without an energetic and implacable struggle for women's equality the proletarian struggle against the rule of capital cannot succeed.

With their military posturings, the Panthers were easy pickings for the mass murderers of U.S. imperialism. You cannot build a revolutionary party on the basis of hero-worship and glorification of a street-gang mentality. It is tragic that the Panthers were destroyed by bloody state repression, and there was no revolutionary party sizable enough to win the best of these radical black youth. We tried. In the late '60s and early '70s the Panthers were so sacrosanct in radical circles that any criticism of them was met with shrill accusations of racism. In the face of the widespread hero-worship of Newton, Eldridge Cleaver and other leaders, the Spartacist League polemicized against the Panthers' notion of lumpen vanguardism and argued that black nationalism, even in its most radical form, was a utopian dead end. We also denounced the physical gangsterism against other leftists and challenged the BPP's rightward plunge into the Democratic Party. In an "Open Letter to the Ranks of the Black Panther Party on the Oakland Elections" (WV No. 18, April 1973), we wrote that we could not give electoral critical support to the Panthers, asking, "How is it that your party, which once claimed to seek a revolutionary transformation of society, can now support candidates who are members of the Democratic Party—the party of war, racism and repression—and run as Democrats yourselves?" We offered that if the BPP broke with both the parties of capital and its own policies of class collaboration we could offer critical support for their election campaign: "We hope that you comrades will recognize the disastrous right turn of the Black Panther Party and will struggle to replace the present BPP line of support for black Democrats, black churches, black cops and black capitalists with a revolutionary working-class perspective."

Despite our political differences, we defended the Panthers against state repression—including after their left cheerleaders had long jumped ship—and we continue to do so today. The Partisan Defense Committee provides monthly stipends to Mondo we Langa, Ed Poin-dexter and Mumia, for whom we have waged a 17-year campaign for his life and freedom, producing pamphlets and a video and introducing his case to unions around the world. We seek to build the revolutionary party that will lead the working class to power through smashing this decrepit, racist capitalist system. In an American workers state, *We Want Freedom* will be given the highest honor in the people's libraries and classrooms. Read this book. ■



WV Photo

Philadelphia, 14 July 1990: PDC-initiated united-front rally in defense of Jamal.

sions in the United Nations den of imperialist thieves and their victims. Just a few years after the UN's well-known dirty role in the assassination of Congo nationalist leader Patrice Lumumba, the Panthers' program called for a UN-supervised plebiscite for black people to determine "their national destiny." The Panthers also called for an end to police brutality and petitioned for community control of the police, combining liberal illusions over the nature of the bourgeois state with black nationalist illusions that the oppression of black people can be ended through "control" of ghetto institutions.

Even if it could be accomplished, black "control" of the impoverished ghettos could not put an end to the endemic poverty, joblessness, crime, dilapidated

administration on an essentially civil libertarian basis. A few years later, Newton & Co. were talking about the relevance of the black church and black capitalism. In 1973 Bobby Seale ran for mayor as a Democrat and in 1976 Newton joined the NAACP.

In 1971 the Panthers suffered a split between the more overtly reformist, pro-Democratic majority Newton wing and the urban guerrilla warfare Cleaver wing—a split characterized by murderous internal factionalism, and inflamed by COINTELPRO provocations. Both of the factions sent their supporters onto the streets to murder each other. Jamal's book cites Panthers who went underground for safety not just from the state, but from other Panthers.

For a Revolutionary Workers Party to Fight for a Workers Government!

Though the Panthers self-consciously fashioned themselves as a vanguard party, they were not. The Panthers were New Left sectoralists. Their program was that blacks would liberate blacks, Hispanics would liberate Hispanics, and so on. As opposed to sectoralism, which is a strategy for dividing the ranks of the future proletarian army fighting for state power, a Leninist vanguard party is a tribune of the people, which fights against

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NEW YORK CITY

Indymedia...

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Pennsylvania successfully opposed an application by Diebold Election Systems Inc to remove documents claiming to reveal flaws in the design of electronic voting machines which are due to be used widely in the forthcoming US Presidential election.” Diebold, like other companies providing electronic balloting, has close links to the Republican Party. The *New York Times* (8 October) reported that some Indymedia members think the seizure “might be related to recent requests by the FBI asking that the site remove photos posted by IMC’s Nantes affiliate, purportedly depicting Swiss undercover police” during the 2003 G-8 Summit protests in Geneva.

Whatever the pretext for this raid, it is clear that the U.S. rulers would like to wipe out political dissent. For example, Sherman Austin (recently released to a halfway house) was convicted in 2003 under a 1997 “anti-terrorism” law just

for hosting an anarchist Web site on which publicly available information was posted. Activists and others have been banned from flying or even entering the country. The U.S. even barred former pop singer Cat Stevens (who converted to Islam and changed his name to Yusuf Islam) from the U.S. on “national security grounds”!

The U.S. capitalist rulers are also bent on swatting out of their way any obstacles to their continued sway—like journalists who might expose inconvenient or damning truths. The FCC (Federal Communications Commission) in September launched a series of raids on small “alternative” community radio stations across the country, among them “Free Radio Santa Cruz,” which had operated freely without a license for nearly ten years. On September 29 two dozen federal agents with automatic weapons and riot gear seized the station’s antenna and equipment from its base in a student housing co-op, ironically just as it finished its regular broadcast of “Democracy Now!” Even report-

ers for the respectable *New York Times* are targeted: Judith Miller now faces 18 months in jail for refusing to “name names” of her sources to a federal prosecutor investigating the exposure of a CIA agent—even though she never published an article on the subject!

In this era of “war on terror” repression against political dissent, free speech and other rights are being attacked, including on an expanding electronic battlefield. The Feds were thwarted two times recently in going after Internet sources of information. Before the Republican National Convention, the Secret Service tried to get Indymedia to turn over contact information, a blatant attempt to intimidate people planning to protest at the convention. That attempt was beaten back successfully, as was a previous attempt in 2001. On September 29 the American Civil Liberties Union won an important victory for Internet privacy when a federal appeals court overturned a key part of the Patriot Act. The court barred the Justice Department from issuing “National Security Letters”

to Internet service providers. These letters authorized the government seizure of financial information and communications information on citizens without the constitutional requirement of a search warrant issued by a judge upon probable cause a crime has been committed. The law’s provision also prohibited its victims from revealing to anyone they were the recipients of such government demands.

Now the U.S. government has struck again in London. It’s a well-known cliché that truth is the first casualty in war. Brig. Gen. Vincent Brooks said in Baghdad, “We don’t target journalists,” as two journalists were killed by U.S. forces firing at the Palestine Hotel and an Al-Jazeera TV reporter died in a U.S. air strike in the early days of the U.S. invasion of Iraq. From the front lines of war to the back offices disseminating uncensored information, we stand in fullest solidarity with those courageous journalists who struggle to tell the truth against the repression and lies of the American imperialists.■

Casino Strike...

(continued from page 12)

of Pacific Avenue, scabs were being bused in, deliveries were being made, and construction workers doing work on hotels were on the job. And Atlantic City’s core business of sucking up money on the dark, glittering gaming floors continues, as slot attendants and dealers, not in Local 54, have stayed on the job. Key to union power is industrial organizing, getting *every* single casino worker into the union, so the hotel casinos are organized top to bottom!

Across the street from the picketing strikers, huge slabs of prefabricated concrete were being delivered as construction at Caesars’ new “transportation center” and the Tropicana went on. A striking cook at the Tropicana said of the com-

pany’s planned new “Quarter”: “I work in the buffet and they say this could be a nonunion buffet” (*New York Times*, 1 October). Striking cocktail servers told WV that construction workers had said they would honor pickets at their work site, but a judge banned pickets from crossing the street. Construction workers themselves have bitter reason to distrust the casino bosses. In 2003, four workers were killed and 21 injured when a Tropicana garage under construction collapsed. The Tropicana had been fined previously for a collapsing walkway, but as a laborer told the Associated Press in 2003, “They’re always trying to rush the job to stay ahead because the bad weather’s coming.”

The union should be calling on other labor unions to *shut down* the casinos. Instead, on October 8 they held a “civil disobedience” action, where some

80 unionists sat in the street, got themselves briefly arrested and paid “disorderly conduct” tickets. Meanwhile, they make legalistic appeals on picket restrictions to the bosses’ courts, where the deck is stacked against the working class. The Teamsters have plenty of power; so do the construction workers—and so do the 10,000 striking workers in Atlantic City’s major industry, if they really use it. Casino business is obviously booming, as the projected mega-mergers and new “cashless” slot technology drive investment by the really big gamblers in the Wall Street stock market.

On October 4, WV reporters saw a big white Teamster “Command Center” pull up to Local 54 strikers. But instead of Teamster reinforcement pickets coming to shut the place down, what emerged was Democratic Party politician Richard Gephardt, a groomed pink-and-blonde

former presidential candidate ready for his “photo op” on the line. So they took the photo and the Teamsters pulled out. And the little clusters of pickets were left banging their sticks and watching everybody else go to work as usual.

Democratic Party politicians will not help workers fight for our real interests because they are a capitalist party, committed to maintenance of the capitalist system of exploitation of labor. Relying on these lying “friends of labor” is a losing strategy. Workers can *win* this strike, if they use their own independent strength to shut the casinos down, and if they are backed up by their union brothers and sisters in the Teamsters, on the construction sites, and in the transport unions who drive in many customers. You don’t really need to be a gambler to see how favorable those odds could be on the streets of Atlantic City during this strike.■

Hotel Workers...

(continued from page 4)

course they have. After all, their job is to guard the security of the bosses’ property against the workers! We say, throw the cops and security guards out of the unions! They’re not part of the working class.” Security guards protect the bosses’ property. The cops enforce the bosses’ laws. The bosses use both to *break* strikes.

SYCer Retondo spoke of the power of the working class to change the world:

“Anyone who opposes the injustices of this decaying imperialist society, from the brutal colonial occupation in Iraq to the intense racism and state repression at home, should side with the working class, which actually has the power to change society. The working class, because it is organized at the point of production, has the power to shut down the capitalist system by going on strike. Right now the class line is clearly drawn.”

In San Francisco, hotel workers have real social power due to the strategic importance of tourism to the city’s economy. Tourism brings in over \$6 billion a year—\$3.4 billion in hotel revenue, translating into nearly \$139 million in city revenue brought in by the city’s hotel room tax in 2003.

But to win this strike, the union will have to flex its own muscles and will need the solid adherence of other organized workers at all levels of hotel operations and, crucially, will have to enforce the basic trade-union principle of *picket lines mean don’t cross*. No one should work in or patronize the struck hotels. We talked to a CCSF student who’s also a member of UNITE HERE Local 2, who expressed frustration at how the strike is going, saying that many workers no longer want to be on strike. We talked to him about how a winning strategy would involve stopping the scab operation and *shutting down the hotels*. Already Teamsters Local 665 president Mark Gleason has vowed that “All Teamster deliveries [to the hotels] are going to stop” (ABC7news.com, 1 October). On

the other hand, picket captains told us that despite official assertions that they are honoring the strike, Operating Engineers Local 39 has been crossing the picket line by keeping minimum staff on site, thereby capitulating to legal requirements rather than staying out in solidarity, which would pose the possibility of the hotels being shut down for violations of safety regulations. This reveals their leadership’s unwillingness to really confront the hotel owners and city government.

Break with the Democrats!

The hotel owners have expressed their own class solidarity by locking out thousands of workers, declaring that “a strike against one hotel is a strike against all.” To win this strike, workers need to show class unity and stick together—which means fighting against the union leaders’ program of relying on Democratic Party politicians to act as “friends of labor” in negotiating with the hotel owners.

Workers in San Francisco may not have too much confidence in Democratic mayor Gavin Newsom, who is after all a wealthy restaurateur with ties to the local hotel owners. But there are widespread illusions in the “progressive” Democratic politicians, such as SF Supervisors Tom Ammiano or Aaron Peskin, who are among the eight supervisors (out of eleven) who publicly profess to “support” the strike. Peskin himself revealed his true class allegiance by instructing neighbors of the picketed hotels in posh Nob Hill to sic the cops on the supposedly “noisy and raucous” strikers. He soon got his wish; the SFPD threatened to fine picket captains \$180 if they continued to allow picketers to disturb the delicate ears of the rich (*SF Examiner*, 7 October). Meanwhile, UNITE HERE Local 2 president Mike Casey spoke at a rally with Democratic lieutenant governor Cruz Bustamante at the Fairmont Hotel, pledging to return to work on October 13, with or without a new contract. This despite

the bosses’ threat that they will lock out all workers after the strike is over if the union doesn’t accept their ultimatums.

As the LBL’s Jido Cooper put it, “Why are the labor leaders’ ties to the Democrats a problem? It’s that the Democrats are a capitalist party. A party of the class enemy which protects and promotes the prerogatives and profits of the American capitalist class. You can’t wage an all-out fight against the bosses and stand up against their state if you’re in bed with their political representatives.” He continued, “What labor needs is a new class-

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Gaza...

(continued from page 1)

imperialist-inspired “peace plans” since, far from opening up any vista of liberation for the Palestinians, have served only to deepen their subjugation under the Zionist jackboot.

Down With the U.S. Occupation of Iraq!

As their Israeli junior partners carry out a murderous assault on the population of Gaza, the U.S. imperialists, assisted by their puppet Iraqi army, storm and bomb cities and regions across Iraq. Najaf has been pummeled; it is now described as largely in ruins. U.S. forces have also been carrying out virtually nightly bombing raids in Falluja, home to about 350,000 people. The U.S. forces have retaken Samarra, a city of about 250,000 people north of Baghdad, killing at least 150 people and wounding unknown numbers.

With this military offensive, the Bush administration is clearly intent on displaying, not least to the American populace which will be casting votes for president in less than a month, that Iraq is under control and striding toward “democratic” elections in January. But as one resident of Samarra, whose wife and two children were killed by the U.S. invaders, said bitterly: “I’ve lost my entire family. Why should I trust this government? Why should I vote at all?” (*New York Times*, 11 October).

Bush’s glib assurances to the contrary, nothing can conceal the fact that Iraq is on fire, and that the U.S. offensive is only throwing oil on the flames. Each area “stabilized” by the U.S. has insurgent counterparts in cities and towns across the country, and can itself re-erupt in fighting at any time.

To the extent that the various Shi’ite and Sunni militias, which seem to be engaged in most of the fighting, aim their blows against the occupation, we take their side against U.S. imperialism. However, it must be understood that these mutually hostile clerical forces are deeply reactionary; are murderously opposed to women’s rights and those of other peoples like the Kurds; and are utterly opposed to the most basic conception of human progress. Among the



AFP

Israeli wall imprisons Palestinians, dividing families, separating farmers from their land and cutting off population from jobs, hospitals, schools, fresh water.

near-infinite crimes of U.S. imperialism must be added the fact that it has turned Iraq—the cradle of human civilization and a country that was until recently among the most secular in the Near East—into an inferno where women have been driven in fear back into their homes and nearly every day innocent citizens from various countries perish in suicide- or car-bombings or are beheaded in the name of god.

In desperation over the absence of any class struggle against the imperialist occupation—either in Iraq or in the U.S.—some look to the “Iraqi resistance” as the only way to drive out the U.S. imperialists. Such illusions are reinforced by a host of reformist left groups in the U.S. and Europe, who prettify the Sunni and Shi’ite religious gangs as “anti-imperialist.” In fact, as we have warned: “In the absence of working-class struggle in Iraq and internationally against the occupation, the victory of one or another of the reactionary clerical forces is more likely to come about through an alliance with U.S. imperialism” (WV No. 830, 6 August). Typically, Shi’ite leader Moktada al-Sadr, whose Mahdi Army has twice staged a rebellion against the occupation forces in Najaf, is now again dealing with the U.S. for a place in a future neocolonial puppet government.

Political support to the Islamist (or

bourgeois nationalist) forces in Iraq is *counterposed* to the only real perspective for liberating Iraq and the rest of the Near East from the yoke of imperialist domination—socialist revolution. In neighboring Iran, for example, there is a young and powerful proletariat, chafing under the suffocating grip of a reactionary and increasingly discredited Islamic theocracy. A socialist revolution in Iran would be a direct blow for the emancipation of women and national and religious minorities in that prison house of peoples. It would also open up the possibility of a revolutionary transformation of the entire region, offering a vista of proletarian internationalism even to the seemingly intractable national divide in Israel/Palestine. But it is patently obvious that to mobilize the masses of Iran (or those of the Arab countries) on the road of social revolution requires an intransigent opposition to Islamic fundamentalism as well as Western imperialism. Leninist vanguard parties must be built in opposition to all manner of bourgeois nationalism and religious fundamentalism.

As Iraq burns and Bush’s Republican Party tries to prove that stability is gaining hold, the Democrats are working frantically to prove that their candidate, John Kerry, would better “finish the job” in Iraq. The Democrats and Republicans step up their sparring with each other

every four years, each hoping to demonstrate that theirs is the party that will best represent the “American people.” This year, notwithstanding the mostly leaden performance of the Kerry-Edwards campaign, there is more intense fervor than usual to defeat the Republicans, which is hardly surprising: the Bush cabal is a truly frightening administration that has antagonized the U.S.’s erstwhile imperialist allies through its god-invoking crusade in Iraq and created a lot of genuine loathing at home.

The fact is there is no significant difference in policy between these parties over Iraq—only a difference of opinion as to tactics. And when it comes to U.S. support to Zionist Israel, there aren’t even tactical differences. Both Democrats and Republicans agree on the need for U.S. imperialist control over the Near East and its oil spigot.

More fundamentally, the U.S. is a class-divided society in which the interests of working people are counterposed to those of the capitalist rulers. The ruling class derives its fabulous wealth from the exploitation of the working people at home and imperialist plunder abroad. The capitalists have two major parties—the Democrats and Republicans—each committed to maintaining imperialism for them. We need a revolutionary workers party that fights to sweep away the imperialist system that breeds poverty, racism and war.

Oslo “Peace” Accord Paved Way to Ghetto

In the most immediate sense, the desperate situation the Palestinians face today is the result of the 1993 Oslo “peace” accords brokered by U.S. Democratic president Clinton between Israel and Yasir Arafat’s Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). In the years since, the number of settlers, many of them heavily armed ultra-Zionist fanatics, has doubled. The Palestinians have been partitioned into ghettos to which exit and entry is entirely controlled by Israeli troops: farmers are unable to reach their land, families are split apart and the population is cut off from jobs, hospitals, schools and even water.

Today, the entire West Bank is dotted with military outposts and fortified settlements, crisscrossed by the “bypass

Letters...

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to oppose the AFL-CIO tops’ protectionism to do so explicitly. The WV article made clear our intransigent opposition to protectionism, something Thomas did not do in his remarks. In the absence of any denunciation of protectionism, Thomas’ complaints about the “outsourcing of our jobs” is an echo of the labor tops’ protectionism—the concern raised about the exploitation of foreign workers serves as a left cover.

The question is: how should workers respond to the loss of their jobs? The capitalists will generally go where social conditions are most favorable for extracting profits, whether it’s the “open shop” American South or India. Whatever measures the capitalists might agree to implement to restrict the movement of jobs outside the U.S. will not halt their ruthless pursuit of profit nor protect workers in the U.S. from unemployment and an increased rate of exploitation. In a 21 September interview posted on the MWM Web site, Silbar himself acknowledges that the demands of the MWM “are silent about how to defend workers.”

The key to the defense of workers in the U.S. is international solidarity action to support the organizing of workers in foreign countries and their struggles to free themselves from imperialist subjugation. But you can’t carry out this fight while joining hands with U.S. capitalists and lobbying for protectionist policies. If the MWM opposes the protectionism of the AFL-CIO tops, where are its denunci-

ations of these policies? There are none, just as the MWM denounces Bush without repudiating Kerry.

The China Currency Coalition, a lash-up of the AFL-CIO and assorted employers associations, is currently waging an anti-Communist, protectionist campaign to pressure the imperialists in Washington to force the revaluation of Chinese currency. Their goal is to make Chinese exports more expensive in this country to bolster the sales of domestic American capitalists. This campaign just happens to coincide with Kerry’s platform, as the chauvinist heads of the United Steelworkers of America eagerly trumpet on their Web site: “Kerry Joins Efforts to Block Flood of Cheap Chinese Imports.” While the ILWU tops have in general distanced themselves from the most extreme anti-China fulminations of the AFL-CIO bureaucracy, the ILWU paper, the *Dispatcher* (December 1999), proudly displayed a picture of a Local 10 member helping dump mock “foreign” I-beams into Puget Sound as part of the anti-China “tea party” during the 1999 Seattle WTO protests.

All such protectionist appeals are reactionary, seeking to unite workers with their class enemies at home against their class brothers and sisters in other countries. In this case, they strike an additional blow against the interests of the international working class. The Chinese Revolution of 1949 overthrew capitalist rule, creating a workers state which, although deformed from birth by the rule of a Stalinist bureaucracy, removed the most populous nation on earth from the sphere of imperialist exploitation. Despite deep

capitalist inroads fostered by the Chinese bureaucracy’s “market reforms,” the collectivized property and planned economy created by the revolution persist. The imperialist powers would like nothing better than to get their claws freely into China once again. Key to advancing the interests of the working class internationally is understanding the necessity for the unconditional military defense of the Chinese deformed workers state.

Silbar objects that the Spartacist League

does not follow in the footsteps of Lenin or Karl Marx: “Marx spent years working to help inject and develop the class consciousness of active workers in his day.” Indeed he did—and he did it through merciless critiques of the opportunists of his day. Almost everything that Marx and Lenin wrote was polemical, because the job of a revolutionary is to struggle to win the working class to the socialist program. And that’s what we’re about. ■

SPARTACIST LEAGUE/U.S. Local Directory and Public Offices

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roads” that are off-limits to Palestinians. The construction of a 600-mile-long wall completes the segregation of the Palestinian West Bank population, while placing large chunks of Palestinian land under Israeli control. Last month, the mayor of Jerusalem presented plans, praised by the Israeli interior ministry, to declare Wadi Joz, an Arab neighborhood in occupied East Jerusalem, as “zoned for Jewish population” (*Ha’aretz*, 24 September).

Palestinian unemployment is now two-thirds in some areas, and more than half the children are malnourished. Incomes have fallen by more than half to \$900 a year—compared with an average of nearly \$17,000 for Israelis. One of Sharon’s cabinet ministers last year expressed the long-standing Zionist dream that through brutal suppression, the Palestinians will just get out: “Make their life so bitter that they will transfer themselves willingly.”

Today, the illusion of a negotiated settlement for a Palestinian state, or even the vague “autonomy” promised by Oslo, is dead and buried. Even Sharon’s promise to withdraw Israeli troops and settlers from the tiny Gaza Strip is simply a cynical cover for all but formal annexation of much of the West Bank. One of Sharon’s top advisers, Dov Weisglass, said recently: “What I effectively agreed to with the Americans was that part of the settlements would not be dealt with at all, and the rest will not be dealt with until the Palestinians turn into Finns.... Effectively, this whole package that is called the Palestinian state, with all that it entails, has been removed from our agenda indefinitely. And all this with authority and permission. All with a [U.S.] presidential blessing and the ratification of both houses of Congress” (*Ha’aretz*, 8 October).

For Arab/Hebrew Workers Revolution!

We defend the Palestinians in their just struggle against the Zionist occupation. However, as long as the conflict remains one of nation against nation, the Palestinians can only lose out to the far wealthier, heavily armed (including with nukes) and more technologically advanced Zionist state. This realization has led to growing despair among the Palestinian population. Particularly since Oslo, as Palestinians have increasingly come to see the PLO as politically bankrupt, increasing numbers, including youth and even women, are turning to the reactionary Islamic fundamentalist Hamas and Islamic Jihad movements. On the other hand, some Palestinian spokesmen are abandoning even talk of Palestinian self-determination. In an op-ed piece printed in the *New York Times* (4 October), PLO legal adviser Michael Tarazi wrote:

“After years of negotiations, coupled with incessant building of settlements and now the construction of the wall, Palestinians finally understand that Israel is offering ‘independence’ on a reservation stripped of water and arable soil, economically dependent on Israel and even lacking the right to self-defense. As

a result, many Palestinians are contemplating whether the quest for equal statehood should now be superseded by a struggle for equal citizenship. In other words, a one-state solution in which citizens of all faiths and ethnicities live together as equals.”

Such is the logical outcome of the political bankruptcy of Palestinian nationalism. In 1964, the Palestinian National Covenant declared that only “Jews who were living permanently in Palestine until the beginning of the Zionist invasion will be considered Palestinians.” Following the 1967 Arab-Israeli War and Israel’s conquest of the West Bank and Gaza, the PLO adopted the “democratic secular state” line—a Palestinian state in

Tarazi writes that Israel “wants Palestinian land but not the Palestinians who live on that land.” Despite the hideous injustices, oppression and subjugation suffered by the black masses in South Africa, the white rulers could not even conceive of driving them off the land because it would mean driving off their labor force: the enormously higher standard of living experienced by most of the white population was based on the super-exploitation of black labor. The opposite is the case in Israel/Palestine. From the beginning of their colonial enterprise, the Zionist rulers have made it a point not to rely on Arab labor, and to instead build up a Hebrew proletariat.

Jerusalem: Israeli workers demonstrate against Finance Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during nationwide general strike in September.



which Jews would presumably have equal rights. This was not only utopian; it also denied the *national* rights of the Hebrew population, treating them instead as a religious minority. Then in the mid 1970s, the PLO adopted the call for a “mini-state” in the Occupied Territories. In the early 1990s came Oslo, where Arafat’s PLO and the Palestinian Authority would get to police isolated Palestinian cantons for Israel’s rulers. Now Tarazi is renouncing the national rights of the Palestinians outright.

Tarazi is calling for what amounts to a “Greater Israel” in which the 3.5 million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza would join the “Israeli Arabs” who are currently third-class citizens of Israel. Tarazi paints this as a struggle for equality akin to the black struggle in South Africa and asserts, “The struggle against South African apartheid proves the battle can be won.”

The fall of apartheid was an important victory for the oppressed black masses of South Africa, as it provided formal equality and the right to vote. But it is hardly liberation; what exists in South Africa today is neo-apartheid, where a black government lords it over the black population—whose standard of living has not changed in the last decade—for a tiny white capitalist class. But even that can never happen in Israel—no way will a predominantly Arab Palestinian government rule for a Zionist capitalist class. Similarities between South Africa and Israel/Palestine are purely superficial; the differences between them are far greater.

its police to attack Israeli strikers and political demonstrators; court-martials the growing numbers of young people in the draft army who are refusing to serve in the Occupied Territories; and shoots Israeli youth who protest the building of the wall.

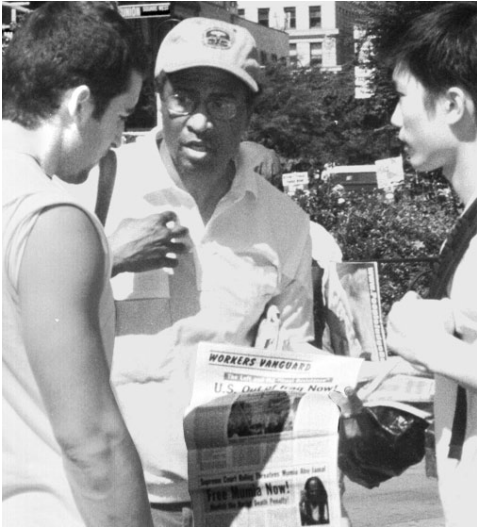
The Peled article makes vividly clear that the Israeli bourgeoisie’s war against the Palestinians is being carried out simultaneously with a war against the Hebrew working class. A powerful nationwide general strike on September 21—the third general strike since April 2003—paralyzed the country for 30 hours as the Histadrut, Israel’s labor federation, demanded payment for municipal workers, many of them Arab, who had not been paid for months. On October 1 Arabs called a strike to commemorate the police massacre of 13 people in an Arab village in Israel during the protests that erupted in October 2000 in solidarity with the uprising in the Occupied Territories. And now another general strike is posed, as many workers are still not paid their wages.

It is the task of socialists in the Near East to use every fissure, every strike, every opportunity to widen the gap between Israel’s workers and rulers, to convince the Israeli proletariat that it is in its interests to defend the Palestinians and to oppose the Zionist ruling class. We have no illusions that this will be an easy task; it will likely take some historic event, like the victory of social revolution in another country in the Near East extending a hand of proletarian internationalism to the Israeli working class, to jolt the Hebrew proletariat from its ties with the Zionist rulers. Indeed, the Israeli proletariat is largely made up of Sephardic (Near Eastern and North African) Jews who are on the one hand treated as second-class citizens while on the other expressing the most chauvinist attitudes toward Palestinian Arabs. But to write off the Israeli working class as potential allies of the struggle for Palestinian national rights is to write off the struggle for Palestinian national rights.

National self-determination for the Palestinian people—who also constitute the majority of Jordan’s population—cannot be resolved within the borders of Israel/Palestine. Nor can there be justice for the Palestinians within the framework of capitalist rule. On the contrary, the system of private property and private ownership of the means of production necessarily contains within it the components of nationalism and religion, which make impossible the settlement of the conflicting national claims of the Palestinian Arab and Hebrew populations. Only through a socialist federation of the Near East can the right of national self-determination for these peoples and the many other peoples of the region—including the Kurds, the largest nation without a state—be equitably realized. This necessarily calls for the leadership of internationalist Marxist workers parties, sections of a reformed Fourth International. There is no other way. ■

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Free Mumia! Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!

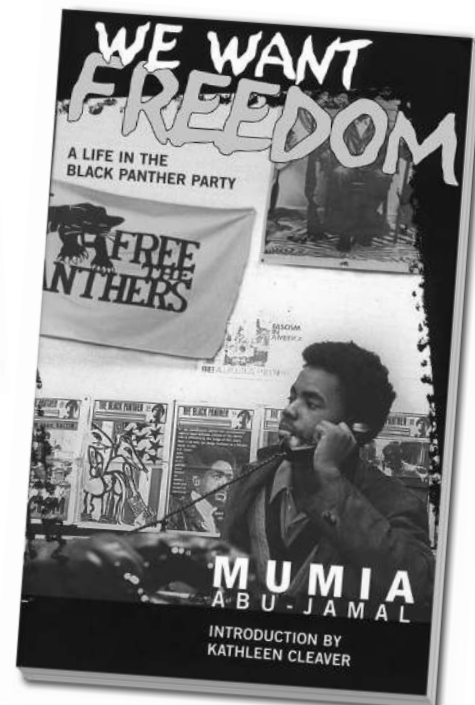


COC Productions

Mumia Abu-Jamal

WE WANT FREEDOM

A Life in the Black Panther Party A Book by Mumia Abu-Jamal



“FOR ME, POLITICAL life began with the Black Panther Party.

“When an older sister named Audrea handed me a copy of *The Black Panther* newspaper around the spring of 1968 my mind was promptly blown. It was as if my dreams had awakened and strolled into my reality.

“I read and reread the issue, tenderly fingering each page as if it were the onion-skinned, tissue-like leaf of a holy book. My eyes drank in the images of young Black men and women, their slim and splendid bodies clothed in black leather, their breasts bedecked with buttons proclaiming rebellion, resistance, and revolution.

“I almost couldn’t believe my eyes as I scanned photos of armed Black folks proclaiming their determination to fight or die for the Black Revolution.

“It would be some months before I would formally join something called the Black Panther Party, but, in truth, I joined it months before, when I saw my first *Black Panther* newspaper.

“I joined it in my heart.

“I was all of fourteen years old.”

We Want Freedom is a firsthand account of life in the Black Panther Party (BPP) by death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. The story Jamal tells is that of the Panthers’ foot soldiers, the very

young men and women, like himself, who devoted their lives to the cause of revolutionary struggle against black oppression. Jamal dedicates this book in part “To those young idealistic souls who wore the black and the blue. To those who sold papers in the dead of night, in smoky

people’s freedom, and we loved it.

“It was the one place in the world that it seemed right to be.”

Thanks to this book, the many young black men and women whom the FBI warned about “succumbing to revolutionary teachings” are no longer “name-

Vietnamese and Cuban Revolutions, including their bold offer to send troops to fight alongside the Vietnamese against bloody U.S. imperialism.

Most compelling in this powerful book are Jamal’s accounts of the young men and especially women, born of poverty in the hellish American ghettos, who joined the fight for black freedom. There was Regina Jennings, a drug-addicted 16-year-old who after hopping a plane in Philadelphia stormed into the Oakland office demanding to join the party—which took her in a few days later, when she was sober, and helped her kick her habit. Jamal quotes Naima Major, who as a 17-year-old National Negro Scholar shunned college to travel to Oakland to join the Panthers. “Devoted to the black revolution and the ten point program, I commenced with baby in sling to doing the hard community work required of all Panthers, organizing poor women like myself, planning and supporting free schools, writing letters for people who couldn’t write, demanding decent housing for people who were afraid of the landlord, helping get the newspaper out,

continued on page 6

A Review by Paul Cone

bars, and in the freezing grips of the wind (especially in the East). To those loving women and sensitive men who rose from their beds at five a.m. to prepare hot breakfasts for schoolchildren from coast to coast.”

Jamal’s book captures the finest qualities that are embodied in militant fighters for the oppressed and exploited. Mumia recalls:

“The days were long.

“The risks were substantial.

“The rewards were few.

“Yet the freedom was hypnotic. We could think freely, write freely, and act freely in the world.

“We knew that we were working for our

less” and “faceless” as the racist exploiters have tried to make them.

We Want Freedom tells the story of the Black Panther Party’s origins and subsequent destruction less than a decade later through the vicious COINTELPRO (Counter-Intelligence Program) campaign, inflamed by internal factionalism. Jamal gives personal reminiscences of the Philadelphia chapter, of which he was a founding member and Lieutenant of Information. Jamal describes with pride and passion the free breakfast and other community programs with which the Panthers sought to “serve the people.” He tells of how the Black Panthers defied the racist rulers by expressing solidarity with the

Victory to Casino Hotel Workers Strike!

Atlantic City

OCTOBER 12—Over 10,000 casino hotel workers in Local 54 of UNITE HERE went on strike on October 1 against 7 of 12 Atlantic City casinos: Caesars, Harrah’s, Bally’s (which includes the Claridge), Showboat, Resorts, the Hilton and the Tropicana. The Trump casinos settled before the strike, the Borgata signed a contract last year, and the Sands agreed to abide by the first contract reached. Local 54 is fighting for a three-year contract, to expire simultaneously with contracts in Las Vegas and Detroit. This would give casino hotel workers enormous negotiating strength against the powerful gaming industry bosses, a move which a Harrah’s spokesman charged was “unacceptable”—even as his own company does

a mega-merger with Caesars! The union is also fighting to retain health benefits and, importantly, to ensure that union labor will be used in new expansions and leased, subcontracted or sold facilities.

On October 4, *Workers Vanguard* reporters went to the picket lines in Atlantic City. Striking workers beat drums and sticks as cars along Pacific Avenue honked in support and passengers waved Local 54 signs reading “On Strike” and “No Contract! No Peace!” On the sunny boardwalk, over 40 pickets in front of Bally’s sang *Saturday Night Fever*’s “Staying Alive.” Workers told WV that the strike is having an effect, as some guests ate off plastic plates, rooms got dirtier, and some restaurants cut back to basic buffets.

But there is also concern on the picket lines. Behind the pastel oceanfront facades, in the shadows

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WV Photo

UNITE HERE picket line in front of Bally’s Casino, October 4.