

Defend China, North Korea! U.S. Hands Off the World!

China, North Korea, Syria, Iran...this is the short list of countries overtly threatened in the last few weeks by the nuclear-armed maniacs in Washington, while they continue their devastating occupation of Iraq. Although the U.S. can't come up with any proof that Syria is responsible for the bomb that killed former Lebanese prime minister Rafik Hariri, it vows Syria must be made to pay. Then there's Iran, rumored to be developing the capacity to produce nuclear weapons. Unmanned spy drones

have been flying over Iran for a year, and, thumbing his nose at anxiety in "old Europe," Bush vows that all options, including military, are possible. This saber rattling against Syria and Iran—neocolonial capitalist states—is part of redrawing the map of the Near East in Israeli and U.S. interests.

U.S. imperialism picks its targets carefully, and throws its overwhelming military might against states that can't defend themselves—such as Iraq. North Korea, which claims to have developed

limited nuclear capacity, has not been attacked. We defend the right of the North Korean deformed workers state to have nuclear weapons. China is foolishly trying to get North Korea back to the six-nation talks which aim to disarm North Korea...thereby opening a flank for U.S. imperialism against the Chinese deformed workers state itself. China's heroic sacrifices stopped General MacArthur from grabbing the entire Korean peninsula and turning it into a neocolony of U.S. imperialism.

Illusions of the Beijing Stalinists, that there can be "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism, can only undermine defense of China.

Pursuit of capitalist counterrevolution in China, whether through military pressure (as was used to economically bleed the Soviet Union in the arms race) or through economic penetration or both, is a prime goal of the U.S. bourgeoisie. Neocon Cold Warrior Irving Kristol speaks for his protégés in the White

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AIDS in America: Racism, Poverty, Bigotry

We reprint below a slightly edited and abridged presentation by comrade Karen Cole at a Spartacist League forum in New York City on 17 February.

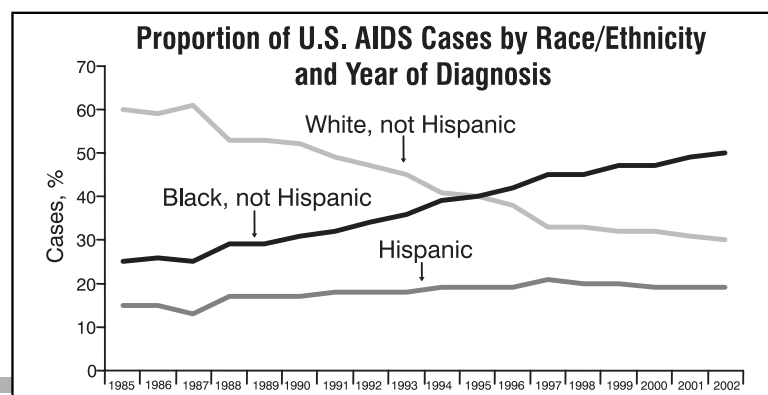
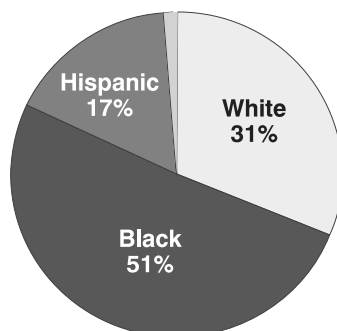
You can't begin to talk about any aspect of AIDS in any country or area of the world without placing it in an international context. For over two decades, this disease has brought massive misery and death to broad sections of the world, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, but also in Asia and Latin America. Over the last 22 years, over 65 million people have been infected worldwide. The desperate fight to obtain anti-retroviral drugs has become a vehicle for social struggle and has mobilized thousands of youth in South Africa. Nevertheless, at the end of 2003, only about 1 percent of the four million people who need anti-retroviral drugs in Southern Africa get them. No country on any continent has been untouched, and with the continuing spread of AIDS in Russia, China, South Asia and many other countries, much is still unknown, and there is no end in sight.

The possibility of bringing this source of so much misery and death under control, to extend the treatments that are currently available to all those who need it—this essential task is undermined every step of the way by the reactionary capitalist system. In its epoch of imperialist decay, capitalism is a hideous, profit-driven system, propped up by brutal racial and sexual oppression. This is an economic system where those few who own the means of production exploit the masses that produce all the wealth. The only counterweight to the unrestrained greed of the ruling class is the working



Reininger/Contact

Above: AIDS patient. Protesters at Global Day of Action AIDS rally in New York, June 2001. AIDS is ravaging black America as shown by chart showing racial breakdown of new HIV infections in 2002 and accompanying graph.



class fighting in its own interests and the interests of the oppressed. It is our task to build an internationalist, vanguard working-class party that will seize the means of production and make a revolution that will lay the basis for building a society based on human needs and not on private profit—a party like the Bolshevik Party that led the 1917 Russian Revolution.

It's not that elements of the capitalist class are incapable of making decisions that provide benefits for more than themselves, but *their actions must always be ultimately consistent with their self-preservation as an exploiting class*. So, every step forward is paid for with persistent world poverty and bloody wars. The

scientific problems of eliminating HIV are quite staggering. The HIV virus mutates and develops strains that are resistant to every anti-retroviral drug developed. New strategies must be continually coordinated and systematically researched and developed. The most rational and thoroughgoing weapon would be a vaccine, as has been used effectively against smallpox, polio, hepatitis B and other devastating viruses. But as late as 1994, the U.S. government was spending less than \$100 million per year on development of a vaccine, and the funding is tightening this year.

Vaccines are long-term, high-risk, low-profit projects. So, much remains un-

known about AIDS for reasons that have nothing to do with the complex biological facts of the virus. The advancement of medical science in general is thwarted by the chaos of capitalism and its drive for immediate profits. Compounding these obstacles are the prejudices and bigotry fomented by an irrational, rotting capitalist economic system. For example, the oppression of women that underpins every class society means that women are increasingly bearing the brunt of the pandemic. For instance: an anti-HIV microbicide, an ointment that a woman could apply to herself, with or without the knowledge of her sexual partner, has not

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Sinister Conviction of Boston Priest

“Recovered Memory” Witchhunt

“Recovered memory” prosecutions—which put hundreds behind bars in the daycare and “satanic abuse” witchhunts of the 1980s and early 1990s—are back. In Boston on February 15, 74-year-old defrocked priest, Paul Shanley, was sentenced to 12 to 15 years in prison based solely on uncorroborated “recovered memories” of a man who claimed Shanley abused him 20 years earlier. Alexander Cockburn wrote in *CounterPunch* (19/20 February): “In the state that gave us Salem in the seventeenth century and the Amiraults (all wrongly sent to prison on charges brought by Middlesex county District Attorney Martha Coakley) in the twentieth, Shanley’s case has reintroduced recovered memory to the courtrooms of the twenty-first.”

Shanley has been one of the prime whipping boys in the explosive sex scandals that have rocked the Catholic church beginning in 2002, when the *Boston Globe* began a series on priests and sexual abuse of youth. Roderick MacLeish Jr., the personal injury lawyer representing Shanley’s accuser, retailed scandalous tales to the press about Shanley, which have been refuted by JoAnn Wypijewski in *CounterPunch*. She actually read the 1,600-page official church file on Shanley, which apparently no other reporters bothered to do. As Cockburn pointed out, “Had they done so, they would have found nothing to buttress the claims that Shanley founded NAMBLA [North American Man/Boy Love Association], or was ever a member, or had ever advo-

cated sex between men and little boys, or had a 30-year record of child abuse complaints made against him or a history of being moved from parish to parish. Yet all these allegations have become the common currency of Shanley’s biography, and if guards usher a murderer into his cell, the killer will probably have the NAMBLA charge at the top of his mind.”

In fact, Paul Shanley did openly advocate recognizing homosexuality as a normal sexual variation (based partly on the pioneering work of Alfred Kinsey), and did have homosexual liaisons. He was a long-haired “street priest” in the 1960s, mentioned in the book *Common Ground*, who tried to help runaways and kids hooked on drugs. Shanley’s “association” with NAMBLA is that he attended a conference of people fighting a Boston anti-gay witchhunt at the end of which some people, not including Shanley, founded a group that later became NAMBLA.

NAMBLA’s name is perennially dragged through the plentiful Boston mud, having been pounded for over 20 years by media smears and witchhunting prosecutions. We in the Spartacist League have repeatedly defended this tiny beleaguered group as an elementary act of proletarian decency. We oppose criminalizing their advocacy of the eminently reasonable proposition that youth who have sexual feelings be allowed to express them. NAMBLA simply advocates the decriminalization of consensual sex between men and boys.

It is telling, in this deeply puritanical



Reuters

Paul Shanley

society, that the pitch of modern inquisitions increases according to the proximity of youth and sex. It is no accident that the church sex scandals have focused overwhelmingly on gay sex (did no priest ever touch a girl?), as this is guaranteed to set reactionary alarm bells ringing a lot louder. Since the daycare witchhunts, the code word for anti-sex crusaders, from the Christian right to the straightlaced morality feminists, has been “protect the children” from so-called pedophiles. This campaign reflects anti-gay bigotry, increased powers of repression for the capitalist state and a shoring up of reactionary “family values” like the domestic

slavery of women and stultifying “abstinence only” for young people.

Gerald Amirault, a married man with children of his own, was released from prison in 2004 after being unjustly imprisoned for 18 years, framed up with incredible tales of evil robots, knives and dead pets at the Fells Acres Day School he ran with his sister and mother (who were also imprisoned). This was based solely on the coerced testimony of children whose only real abuse came at the hands of the prosecutors who, in their zeal for convictions and publicity, fed so much crap into them that they still reel from the trauma. Just as Amirault was up for a commutation, the church sex story exploded and he lost another two years to prison, as the cowardly politicians of Massachusetts refused, in the midst of the scandal, to set him free, despite the Board of Pardons’ unanimous recommendation. We defended the Amiraults, and many other daycare workers, against the witchhunts of their time.

Now former priest Paul Shanley has been thrown to the wolves of “recovered memory” prosecution. This is a very dangerous thing. No evidence was presented that he committed any crime. This may be a difficult case for some of our readers to grasp, given the passionate—and legitimate—disgust so many feel for the real miseries inflicted by organized religion in this socially backward country, from the Christian fundamentalist right to the Roman Catholic hierarchy. The Catholic church upholds subservience to authority, from children’s submission to parents, a wife’s submission to her husband, the flock’s submission to the priest and

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TROTSKY

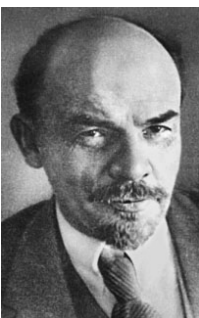
Fortieth Anniversary of the Assassination of Malcolm X

On 21 February 1965, Malcolm X was gunned down while speaking at Harlem’s Audubon Ballroom. To the racist American ruling class, Malcolm was the most hated and feared black leader of his generation. But, though he gave voice to the anger and anguish of the oppressed black masses in this racist society, he died an unfinished, politically contradictory figure. We reprint below an obituary, written by the Bay Area Spartacist Committee on 2 March 1965.

Of all the national Negro leaders in this country, the one who was known uniquely for his militancy, intransigence, and refusal to be the liberals’ frontman has been shot down. This new political assassination is another indicator of the rising current of irrationality and individual terrorism which the decay of our society begets. Liberal reaction is predictable, and predictably disgusting. They are, of course, opposed to assassination, and some may even contribute to the fund for the education of Malcolm’s children, but their mourning at the death of the head of world imperialism had a considerably greater ring of sincerity than their regret at the murder of a black militant who wouldn’t play their game.

Black Muslims?

The official story is that Black Muslims killed Malcolm. But we should not hasten to accept this to date unproved hypothesis. The New York police, for example, had good cause to be afraid of Malcolm, and with the vast resources of blackmail and coercion



LENIN

which are at their disposal, they also had ample opportunity, and of course would have little reason to fear exposure were they involved. At the same time, the Muslim theory cannot be discounted out of hand because the Muslims are not a political group, and in substituting religion for science, and color mysticism for rational analysis, they have a world view which could encompass the efficacy and morality of assassination. A man who has a direct pipeline to God can justify anything.

No Program

The main point, however, is not who killed Malcolm, but why could he be killed? In the literal sense, of course, any man can be killed, but why was Malcolm particularly vulnerable? The answer to this question makes of Malcolm’s death tragedy of the sharpest kind, and in the literal Greek sense. Liberals and Elijah have tried to make Malcolm a victim of his own (non-existent) doctrines of violence. This is totally wrong and totally hypocritical. Malcolm was the most dynamic national leader to have appeared in America in the last decade. Compared with him the famous Kennedy personality was a flimsy cardboard creation of money, publicity, makeup, and the media. Malcolm had none of these, but a righteous cause and iron character forged by white America in the fire of discrimination, addiction, prison, and incredible calumny. He had a difficult to define but almost tangible attribute called charisma. When you heard Malcolm speak, even when you heard him say things that were wrong and confusing, you wanted to believe. Malcolm could move men deeply. He was the stuff of which mass leaders are made. Commencing his public life in the context of the apolitical, irrational religiosity and racial mysticism of the Muslim movement, his break toward politicalness and rationality was slow, painful, and terribly incomplete. It is useless to speculate on how far it would have gone had he lived. He had entered prison a burglar, an addict, and a victim. He emerged a Muslim and a free man forever. Elijah Muhammed and the Lost-Found Nation of Islam were thus inextricably bound up with his personal emancipation. In any event, at the time of his death he had not yet developed a clear, explicit, and rational social program. Nor had he led his followers in the kind of transitional struggle necessary to the creation of a successful mass movement. Lacking such a program, he could not develop cadres based on program. What cadre he had was based on Malcolm X instead. Hated and feared by the power structure, and the focus of the paranoid feelings of his former colleagues, his charisma made him dangerous, and his lack of developed program and cadre made him vulnerable. His death by violence had a high order of probability, as he himself clearly felt.

Heroic and Tragic Figure

The murder of Malcolm, and the disastrous consequences flowing from that murder for Malcolm’s organization and black militancy in general, does not mean that the militant black movement can always be decapitated with a shotgun. True, there is an agonizing gap in black leadership today. On the one hand there are the respectable servants of the liberal establishment; men like James Farmer whose contemptible effort to blame Malcolm’s murder on “Chinese Communists” will only hasten his eclipse as a leader, and on the other hand the ranks of the militants have yet to produce a man with the leadership potential of Malcolm. But such leadership will eventually be forthcoming. This is a statistical as well as a social certainty. This leadership, building on the experience of others such as Malcolm, and emancipated from his religiosity, will build a movement in which the black masses and their allies can lead the third great American revolution. Then Malcolm X will be remembered by black and white alike as a heroic and tragic figure in a dark period of our common history.

—Spartacist No. 4 (English-language edition), May-June 1965

WORKERS VANGUARD

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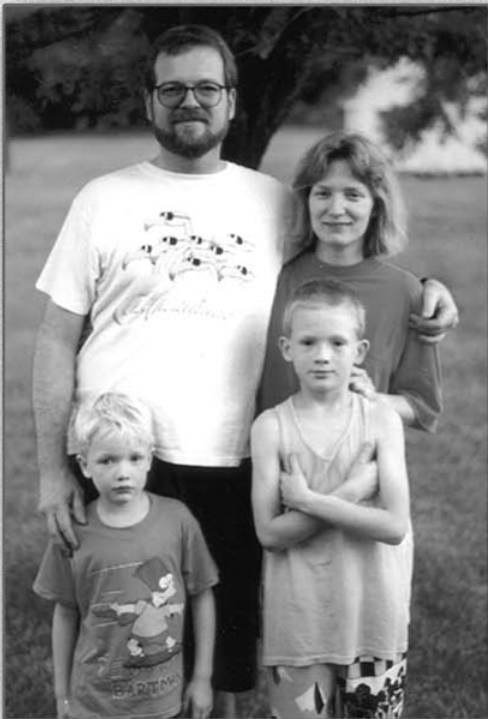
No. 843

4 March 2005

In Memory of Gregg Best

1953-2004

Gregg at San Francisco demonstration against U.S. war on Iraq, February 2003.



Gregg with wife Phyllis and sons Zach and Alex, Cleveland 1990.



Gregg in his twenties.



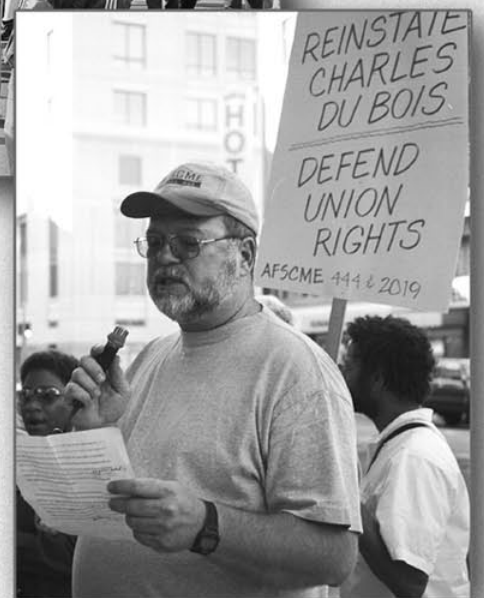
Above: Gregg with his long-time friend Steve.

Right: Gregg was one of many supporters who helped renovate the *Workers Vanguard* office in New York.



These photos honor the memory of Gregg Best, an ardent socialist and longtime supporter of the Spartacist League, who died suddenly on December 16. An outspoken opponent of racism and bigotry of any kind, Gregg could be counted on to champion cases and causes in the interests of the working class. He brought many of these to his union, AFSCME Local 444 in Oakland, like the defense of class-war prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. He fought against company attacks on his union brothers and sisters. At a rally for fired union militant Charles DuBois, Gregg told the crowd: “‘Workplace violence’ witchhunts are also being used as part of the so-called ‘war on terror’ which in fact targets labor, blacks and immigrants—a *bipartisan* war backed by both Democrats and Republicans” (*Workers Vanguard* No. 810, 26 September 2003).

Gregg also fought for labor to oppose the invasion and occupation of Iraq and marched in antiwar demonstrations with Revolutionary Internationalist Contingents organized by the SL and Labor Black League for Social Defense. He took part in labor-centered mobilizations against the KKK and Nazis from Detroit and Washington, D.C. to Gary, Indiana. We continue to mourn the loss of this workers’ leader. A fuller appreciation can be found in *Workers Vanguard* No. 839 (7 January).



Gregg speaking at rally in defense of union militant Charles DuBois, September 2003.



Top: Gregg with union banner at 9 February 2002 rally protesting “war on terror” attacks against immigrants, blacks and labor. Above: Press conference for February 9 rally.

In Defense of Science and Technology

An Exchange on Eco-Radicals and HIV Denialists

25 August 2004

To the Editor, Workers Vanguard,

I'd like to take issue with a few of the points in the headline article in the 9 July 2004 issue of your paper [WV No. 829], entitled "We Need a Fighting Workers Party! Break with the Democrats! No Vote to Nader!" First of all, I must say that I completely agree with the sentiment expressed in the title of the article. We certainly do; and we certainly should. One problem I have is that you propose no solutions, on the electoral field. Why not advise your readers to vote for some socialist candidate—perhaps the SWP. Isn't it important that socialism gets at least a few supporters during this sordid upcoming election (if it takes place at all)?

The major problem I have with the article, however, begins with the sentence, "Many of the proposals of the Greens and Nader go against the interests not only of the industrial working class, but against human progress." I would like first to fault the author(s) for not discussing exactly *which* of the Green's/Nader's proposals are anti-working class, and why and how they are. I think the subject merits special attention, if we are to win over the hearts and minds, especially of working class people now mistakenly supportive of the Greens. The WV has called attention to the fact that, in terms of foreign policy, Nader agrees with Kerry that the U.N. should do the job in Iraq—after ten years of U.N. sanctions already killed millions.

Economically, however, your critique has fallen short. Here is something I wrote recently on the subject. In fact, while they talk a big game about "another world is possible," the Greens have never offered more than ineffectual schemes, such as

- "stakeholder's democracy." Here, corporate stockholders consult with the representatives of communities affected by their decisions—while leaving the present board of directors still in charge,
- "Jeffersonian community based economics." This ecumenical approach to economics assumes that the lamb can lie down with the lion. A vital small business sector can become prevalent, all the while operating in peaceful coexistence with corporations as well as workers cooperatives—provided it is all "decentralized." What happens when the corporations start centralizing again?
- corporate regulation and taxation—asking the government of, for, and by the corporate gangsters, controlled by the corporate gangsters from the Civil War to the present, will now regulate and tax the corporate gangsters in the interest of the public and the environment.
- fanciful small business loan/expanded currency/"democratic investment" programs, by which everyone will somehow gain equal opportunity for prosperity and advancement without challenging the fundamental tendencies toward inequality and misery when the means of production are held in private hands in order to profit from exploiting others' labor.

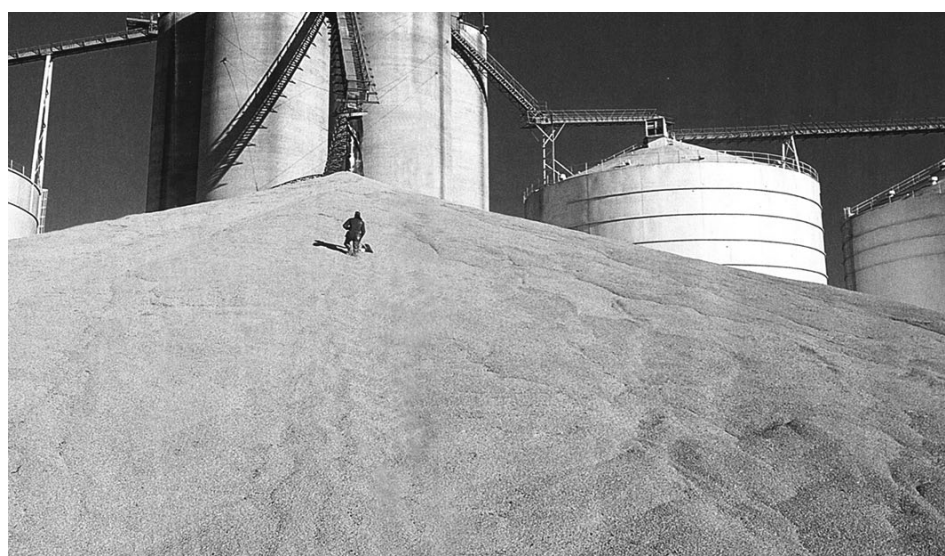
It is somewhat incredible and disturbing that so many "socialist" groups this year—Solidarity, the International Socialist Organization, the Socialist Alliance and the NY Socialist Project—support voting for the Greens/Nader. They ignore the not-so-trivial fact that such populist schemes have nothing to do with socialism. They may understand the problems with these schemes. They will still argue, however, that a resurgent populist movement will "open the discourse" for further movements toward the left, and "buy us time" to build a genuine opposition. However, as Tim Wohlforth wrote in his book *The Struggle for Marxism in the*

United States, populism has always represented a trap, not a blessing, for the working class socialist movement in the United States. Populism legitimates and props up the order it ostensibly opposes, by accepting its basic principles, by proffering delusions about how this order might be painlessly reformed.

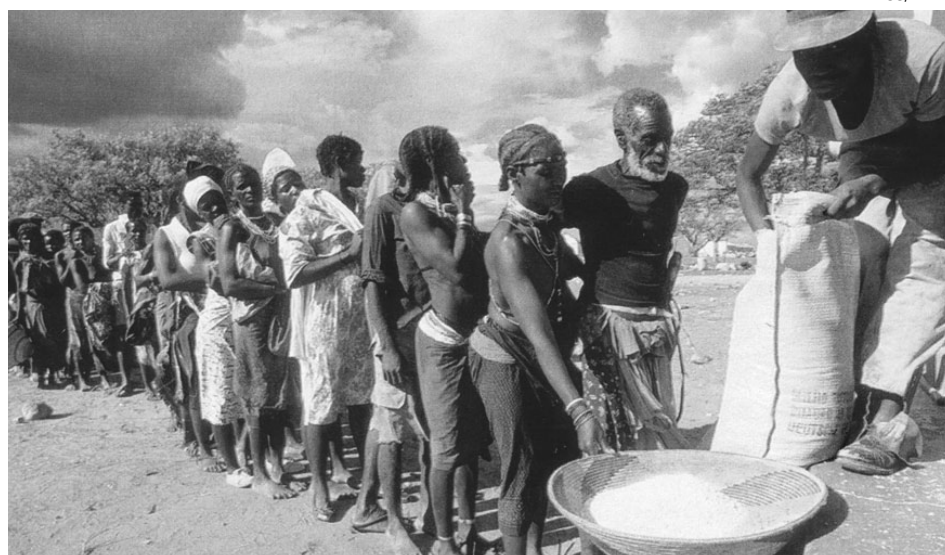
You go on to ask, rhetorically, "And what about the Green Party's 'key value,' that people must 'live within the ecological and resource limits of our communi-

after the Pentagon itself, in a secret memo leaked recently, has predicted massive unrest all over the world in just a few decades, as a result of global warming, which even the Pentagon admits is occurring as a result of our tremendous over-use of "technology and large-scale industry"!"

Where have you been?! Haven't you been reading the forecasts of the Club of Rome, which indicate that we need to lower our worldwide industrial use by



Liss/Time



Ulutunçok/laif

Irrationality and gross inefficiencies of capitalist production underscore need for worldwide planned, collectivized economy. Overflowing silos of grain in Iowa (top), famine in Angola (above).

ties' and 'move to an energy efficient economy'? What does this mean for the already desperately poor in inner-city ghettos? For the fight against the horrible worldwide AIDS pandemic, which requires sophisticated medicines, refrigeration—i.e., electrification and a modern industrial infrastructure? We need an international *expansion* of advanced technology, science and production to solve these world problems, not a retreat to some utopian sentimental pre-industrial Hobbiton of happy farmers, honest tradesmen and small craftsmen, which is impossible in any case. Technology and large-scale industry, which is extremely efficient and saves huge amounts of human labor, can be used to solve human problems."

This polemic is positively embarrassing! It is utterly outdated and completely out of touch with current realities. It seems deliberately designed to alienate any ecologically minded person from Marxism, which you seem to confuse, in the ecological field, at least, with Stalinism.

Are you honestly trying to assert that there are *no* "ecological and resource limits" upon our use of industrial technology? It seems that way, although you never actually state this ridiculous claim. It would indeed be difficult to do so,

90%? Haven't you looked at the *Ecologist* recently, or the works of Mike Davis (*Ecology of Fear, Dead Cities*), James [sic] Bellamy Foster (*Marx's Ecology*), Joel Kovel (*The Enemy of Nature*) and Saral Sarkar (*Eco-Socialism or Eco-Capitalism?*)? All these authors are *socialists*, attempted either to synthesize Marxism with ecologism (Sarkar, Kovel) or show that Marx was *already* an ecologist, very much cognizant of "ecological and resource limits" (Foster). Or has the mere fact that such authors and reports remind you Spartacists ever so superficially of Thomas Malthus' work (Foster devotes much of his book to the problems that ecologist Marx himself had with Malthus), dictate that they may safely be placed on the dustbin of "human progress"?!

Instead of seriously disputing or even grappling with these ecologists' assertions, you simply and crudely assert that we need to "fight against the horrible worldwide AIDS pandemic!" This is silly "emergency-ism": No time for serious thought right now about our opponents' claims: the sky is falling! As if the mere mention of "AIDS!" should lead us all to forget completely that the world is heading toward ecological disaster! Here again, however, you reveal yourself to be

remarkably out of touch with the current debate. There is much debate about whether AIDS is all it has been cracked up to be: or whether, in fact, HIV even exists! See Dr. Peter Duesberg's massive tome on the subject, *Inventing the AIDS Virus*. According to Duesberg and other dissenters, AIDS may instead be the product of the overuse of drugs as well as a code word for old fashioned diseases no one would spend any money on otherwise—like malaria, dysentery, and starvation—in the Third World.

Whether or not HIV actually exists, there is also considerable contention about whether the so-called "anti-AIDS cocktails," these "sophisticated medicines" whose "refrigeration" requires the destruction of the planet, in your addled view, actually *stop* AIDS, or rather, in fact, *weaken and kill* the patients! Many of them were, after all, at one time drugs offered by the pharmaceutical industry for chemotherapy. At that time, they were judged too dangerous, even for chemotherapy. So along comes the "AIDS crisis," and, lo and behold, and what do you know—suddenly they become cure-alls for AIDS, and are judged benign! Now, isn't that *spec-ial*?

There are alternative means of treating the conditions called AIDS—they are holistic, however. They involve supporting and boosting our immune systems rather than destroying our bodies. They do not require expensive, toxic drugs, nor massive "refrigeration" nor "electrification"—impossible in a few centuries anyway, according to ecosocialists like Sarkar, since we are running out of fossil fuels, nuclear is too dangerous, and "solar electricity" simply will not work.

Finally, I wish to critique your satire of the "pre-industrial Hobbiton" of the Greens' vision, their "community economics" utopia. Yes, it is a bit silly and unrefined. There is the assumption that some of us can be merchants, others artisans, others farmers, etc. and still all miraculously get along and treat each other like in that REM song, "smiling happy people holding hands" (a leading "Community Economics" theorist, Steve Welzer, former SWP'er, even argues that feudalism was OK and a damn sight better than capitalism!). It's too petit-bourgeois for my tastes, too. But that should not dissuade us from understanding that *Marx and Engels themselves* put forward a socialist version of *decentralism*. Theirs was not a vision of a "Metro-Marxist" future, in which we all would and should live in big cities, in the modern "Megalopolei." Foster is very clear on this point, in *Marx's Ecology*: as is Engels himself, in *The Housing Question*, as is Marx and Engels, in such works as *The Communist Manifesto*. Look at it; there it is; right under your very noses, Spartacists! The "decentralization of population; the unity of industry and agriculture": what do you think that means, right there in the *Manifesto*?! It doesn't mean a "pre-industrial Hobbiton." It does mean that the working class, once in power, builds garden cities, with their own industry, in the countryside, and greens existing cities, a la the visionary plans of Ebenezer Howard, Patrick Geddes, Henry Wright, and Lewis Mumford, and the contemporary "new urbanists." Each worker will work and farm/garden, collectively. Industry must be made ecologically safe: non-polluting, as much as possible. As against the deadly stultification of our suburbs and dying small towns, the fruits of cosmopolitan urban culture and society will be spread throughout the land.

Instead of sticking your heads in the anti-ecological Stalinist sands, why not think about what these supremely ecological demands from Marx and Engels

mean for us today? How about, as part of our transitional program, the demand to “turn prison towns into garden cities for current prisoners, slum dwellers and workers!”?

Tom S.
Brooklyn, NY

WV replies:

Tom S. claims that we did not back up our statement that many positions of the Greens and Ralph Nader are reactionary and anti-working-class. But, in the very next sentence, the WV article stated: “In Germany, the Social Democratic/Green government attacked the living standards of the workers to increase Germany’s competitiveness, while Green foreign minister Joschka Fischer deployed German jets, tanks and troops, for the first time since the Third Reich, to participate in the wars against Serbia and Afghanistan.” The article went on to note that Nader panders to the racists in his attacks on immigrants and wallows in anti-Communist China-bashing.

Citing WV’s criticism of the Greens’ aversion to advanced technology, Tom S. asks, “Are you honestly trying to assert that there are *no* ‘ecological and resource limits’ upon our use of industrial technology?” His reference to “our” use of technology implicitly identifies humanity as a whole with the capitalist class, which in the current world system directs the development and utilization of industrial technology for its own interests. What ecological and resources limits exist to the future expansion of material production, and the concrete nature of such limits, cannot be accurately judged within the framework of the capitalist system.

To look at the capitalists’ unbounded squandering of natural resources and degradation of the environment in the interests of profit, one could easily conclude—as most ecologists do—that advanced industrial technology is inherently destructive of nature. This reflects a static, ahistorical view of both human society and scientific progress. Developing and using industrial technology to deal with pollution or the recycling of raw materials in limited supply is not necessarily an insurmountable problem.

Science and technology are not the same thing. Science is based on a process of experimentation and the gathering of empirical knowledge in the service of deepening our understanding of how nature works; technology is the applica-



Ricardo Lopez Hevia/Gamma

Superiority of planned, collectivized economy demonstrated by Cuban deformed workers state’s advances in field of medicine, export of doctors to many countries. One of thousands of Cuban doctors providing free medical care to impoverished Venezuelans.

tion and fulfillment of what science makes known. But technological considerations do not exist apart from class society. The organization of industrial production under capitalism necessarily leads to the degradation of the environment because capitalist firms are motivated solely by maximizing profits.

The basic goal of Marxist socialism is to liberate the creative powers of humanity, which have been shackled by the capitalist system and earlier forms of class-divided society. Marxists regard the development of the productivity of human labor power as the prime mover of social evolution and the underpinning of historical progress. We look to a qualitative *increase* in the application of known science and the development of new technology. Ultimately this will liberate the productive capacities of mankind,

eliminating economic scarcity—while laying the basis for the disappearance of classes and for the withering away of the state. Such a qualitative development of the world’s productive forces for the benefit of all can hardly be envisaged under capitalism, whose every step forward is paid for with giant steps back in the form of world poverty, recurring economic crises and wars. It can only be achieved in the context of an internationally planned, socialist economy.

The qualitative superiority of a collectivized, planned economy over capitalist anarchy was demonstrated in practice by the historical experience of the Soviet Union. To deny the historic gains of the Russian Revolution, social democrats (and anarchists) point to the Stalinist bureaucracy, which—we Marxists understand—grew out of the isolation of the Russian Revolution in a single, economically backward country. Even given the tremendous bureaucratic distortions due to the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy, the USSR was able to construct an advanced industrial economy almost from the ground up. And the Soviets did it twice, first in overcoming the ravages of the 1918-20 Civil War and then, again, a scant generation later, in recovering from the Nazi invaders’ scorched-earth policies and the loss of 27 million lives in World War II. The precondition for that historic gain for working people was the 1917 Russian Revolution, which took the factories and other means of production out of the hands of the capitalist class.

The Russian Revolution demonstrated in practice the ability of the proletariat to seize the reins of state power and construct a modern industrial society in which workers have access to medicine, science, education and culture. It is this question, workers revolution, that at bottom separates us from the ecologists. As Marxists, we oppose the environmentalist movement *not* because we are indifferent to the degradation of the environment caused by the existing capitalist organization of industry. As Marx wrote in *Capital* Vol. 3 (1894):

“Even a whole society, a nation, or even all simultaneously existing societies taken together, are not the owners of the globe. They are only its possessors, its usufructuaries, and, like *boni patres familias* [good heads of the household], they must hand it down to succeeding generations in an improved condition.”

W. Hall



Friedrich Engels motivated need for materialist understanding of the world in his 1878 work *Anti-Dühring*.

What we oppose is the ecologists’ illusion that this question can be adequately addressed without the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist system.

Marxism and the Environment

John Bellamy Foster, one of the authors recommended by Tom S., goes to great pains in *Marx’s Ecology* (2000) to depict Marxism as “deeply, and indeed systematically, ecological,” while simultaneously trying to airbrush out the revolutionary underpinnings of Marx and Engels’ worldview. Foster quotes (and repeatedly refers to) Engels’ projection in *Anti-Dühring* (1878) that:

“Abolition of the antithesis between town and country is not merely possible. It has become a direct necessity of industrial production itself, just as it has become a necessity of agricultural production and, besides, of public health. The present poisoning of the air, water and land can be put an end to only by the fusion of town and country; and only such fusion will change the situation of the masses now languishing in the towns, and enable their excrement to be used for the production of plants instead of for the production of disease.”

Yet Marx and Engels’ view of socialist society is fundamentally *counterposed* to the universe of small, decentralized communities advocated by ecologists (and anarchists). Saral Sarkar, another of the authors touted by Tom S., writes that “in eco-socialism, to a large extent, economic activities would be decentralised, economic units small, and regions and local communities self-provisioning and autonomous” (*Eco-Socialism or Eco-Capitalism?* [1999]). This harks back to the pre-industrial village, essentially glorifying the “mental torpidity” of rural life decried by Marx and Engels. It is also profoundly inegalitarian: Would you rather live in a self-provisioning commune in the fertile U.S. Midwest or in devastated Haiti?

Marxists understand that the qualitatively higher level of industrial productivity of socialist society compared to capitalism will lay the basis for overcoming the division between manual and intellectual labor, agricultural and industrial labor. As Engels put it, “productive labour, instead of being a means of subjugating men, will become a means of their emancipation, by offering each individual the opportunity to develop all his faculties, physical and mental, in all directions and exercise them to the full—in which, therefore, productive labour will become a pleasure instead of being a burden.”

The precondition is the revolutionary seizure of state power by the proletariat. Immediately preceding the above passage from *Anti-Dühring*, quoted by Foster, Engels states that “only the abolition of the capitalist character of modern industry” and the creation of society in which the productive forces are organized “on the basis of one single vast plan can allow industry to be distributed over the whole country in the way best adapted to its own development.”

In contrast, “eco-socialist” Sarkar dis-

misses “all illusions as to the revolutionary or leading role of the proletariat” because workers are “addicted to consumerism.” He advocates a reversion to pre-industrial, “labour-intensive technologies” which “would be preferred, not only to provide jobs, but also because such technologies reduce resource consumption and, consequently, have less negative environmental impact.” This is a reactionary utopia in which the mass of humanity would work longer and harder while consuming less. Sarkar himself describes it as “similar to an ever-worsening recession” and “a great crisis without end.”

Most Green activists do not subscribe to Sarkar’s uncompromising primitivism, preferring to focus on eco-reformism within the framework of the existing capitalist order. The policies they advocate to “protect” the environment and “conserve” energy usually would result in lowering the living standards of the working class and poor. Tom S. cites the Club of Rome, a think tank founded by a Fiat executive, whose 1972 best seller, *The Limits to Growth*, claimed that limited oil and other natural resources imposed a ceiling on economic expansion. That thesis dovetailed neatly with the austerity plans pushed by bourgeois politicians, who argued that working people were living beyond their means by consuming cheap but irreplaceable energy. In 1977, President Jimmy Carter called for “painful” sacrifices as he asserted: “Our energy problems have the same cause as our environmental problems—wasteful use of resources.”

In a two-part series, “Eco-Radicalism and Bourgeois Politics” (WV No. 695 and 696, 28 August and 11 September 1998), we wrote:

“In their denigration of the proletariat and their promotion of schemes to ‘save the environment’ under the existing capitalist system, the eco-radicals help perpetuate this system in which science and technology are often used in ways destructive to humanity. The vast nuclear arsenal in the hands of U.S. imperialism poses a far greater danger to humanity than does leakage from nuclear power plants. Under capitalist rule, the fundamental irrationality of profit and market relations can render unsafe even the best understood technology. But in opposition to eco-radicals, we are defenders of technological development and promoters of it. Even the present technology is more than adequate to provide food and shelter for everyone. Yet, as famine plagues many countries, the U.S. government is still paying farmers here *not* to grow food.”

The revolutionary Marxist solution to the problem of degradation of the environment has as its necessary precondition proletarian socialist revolutions in the advanced capitalist countries of North America, West Europe and Japan. In the aftermath of the 1991 Gulf War against Iraq, we wrote an article on the world oil market, which concluded:

“The ecology activists are right in one important respect: the massive burning of hydrocarbons—whether oil or coal—is in the long term bad for the earth’s atmosphere. The answer, however, is not to save oil by cutting the living standards of North American and European working people. A planned socialist economy would carry out the scientific research required to develop safer, more efficient sources of energy (including nuclear and solar energy).”

—“The World Oil Racket,” WV No. 535, 27 September 1991

Communism and Human Liberation

At bottom, eco-radicalism is *bourgeois* ideology. It shares the same basic premise as other expressions of bourgeois ideology: that the capitalist system has developed the highest level of scientific knowledge and technical application possible in the present period and in the foreseeable future. Sarkar’s book contains a lengthy section implying that even under socialism solar power would not be a viable technology for generating electricity. Why not? He cites a 1978

continued on page 11

Mumia Denied Day in Court, Again

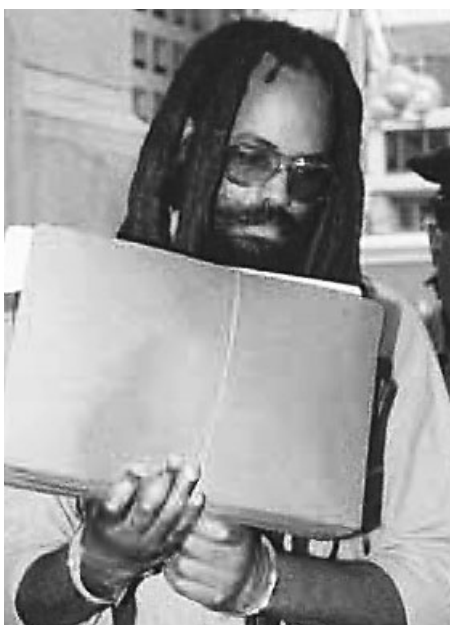
Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!

Last month, Pennsylvania Court of Common Pleas judge Pamela Dembe canceled a scheduled court hearing for America's foremost political prisoner, Mumia Abu-Jamal. Mumia had been prepared to present in court on February 11 evidence of his innocence that further undercuts the foundations of the prosecution's entire racist frame-up. Dembe squelched the hearing suggesting she lacked "jurisdiction of the Court to proceed in defendant's third PCRA [Post Conviction Relief] petition."

Mumia Abu-Jamal is an innocent man! Convicted in 1982 on frame-up charges of killing police officer Daniel Faulkner on 9 December 1981, Jamal was sentenced to die explicitly for his political views and past membership in the Black Panther Party. For nearly four years, both federal and state courts have refused to even consider the sworn testimony of Arnold Beverly that he, not Jamal, shot and killed Faulkner.

Dembe's cancelation is just the latest in a long series of legal machinations by the courts to bar additional mountains of Mumia's evidence. Dembe ordered Mumia's attorneys to submit papers explaining why evidence of Mumia's innocence should not be barred by rules allowing only evidence that is "newly discovered." In papers submitted to the court, Robert Bryan, Jamal's lead counsel, explained that the evidence was previously unknown, adding, "Had the prosecution not engaged in fraudulent conduct and a cover-up of its misdeeds, the new evidence would be unnecessary."

The prosecution's case against Mumia has long been exposed as a lie from top to bottom (see Partisan Defense Committee pamphlets, *The Frame-Up of Mumia Abu-Jamal* [July 1995], and *Mumia Abu-Jamal Is an Innocent Man!* [September 2001]). At the now canceled hearing, Mumia had hoped to bring forward two pieces of evidence that have come out since Dembe's 2001 decision denying Mumia's earlier PCRA petition. These two pieces of evidence further blow to bits key parts of the government frame-up: the coerced testimony of prostitute Cynthia White that she saw Mumia shoot Faulkner and the patently false claim that Mumia confessed to the shooting. In early 2002, a new witness, Yvette Williams, courageously came forward and testified in a sworn affidavit submitted in federal courts that White herself admitted the cops coerced her to testify against Jamal: "I was in jail with Cynthia White in December of 1981 after Police Officer Daniel Faulkner was shot and killed. Cynthia White told me the police were making her lie and say she saw Mr. Jamal



Mumia Abu-Jamal during his PCRA hearings in Philadelphia, 1995.

shoot Officer Faulkner when she really did not see who did it." It has long been known that White had been coerced and was under police control when she gave her lying testimony, and other witnesses have testified that White was far from the scene.

Mumia had also hoped to bring out the testimony of Kenneth Pate, stepbrother of Priscilla Durham, the Jefferson Hospital security guard who joined in the cops' manifest lie that Mumia "confessed." In fact, the cop assigned to guard Jamal while he lay bleeding in the hospital reported at the time, "during this time the negro male made no comments." The bogus "confession" was cooked up two months later at a round-table meeting called by the D.A.'s office to orchestrate the cops' trial testimony. In an April 2003 declaration, Pate described how Durham told him that when Mumia was brought to the hospital he was "all bloody and the police were interfering with his treatment, saying 'let him die.'" Cops pressured her that, as a security guard, she "had to stick with them" as part of the "'brotherhood' of police," and to "say that she heard Mumia say that he killed the police officer, when they brought Mumia in on a stretcher." Durham told her brother, "All I heard him say was: 'Get off me, get off me, they're trying to kill me'."

Still pending in the federal courts is Jamal's application for *habeas corpus* relief. While affirming Jamal's frame-up conviction, in December 2001, federal district court judge William Yohn overturned Jamal's death sentence on the grounds that the jury failed to consider

mitigating circumstances (reasons prescribed by law why Jamal should not be executed) as set forth by the Supreme Court in the 1988 *Mills* case. Mumia appealed, seeking to overturn the conviction, while the prosecution appealed, seeking to reinstate the sentence of death. In an ominous development, last summer the Third Circuit Court of Appeals ordered Jamal's counsel to file a brief to explain how Jamal's case was not adversely affected by a pro-death penalty ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court which held that the *Mills* case could not be applied to convictions prior to 1988. Jamal's attorneys pointed out that Mumia's case should be immune from the ruling as his conviction didn't become final until 1990. But the entire history of Jamal's case shows that a fighter for black freedom like Jamal has no rights the capitalist courts are bound to respect.

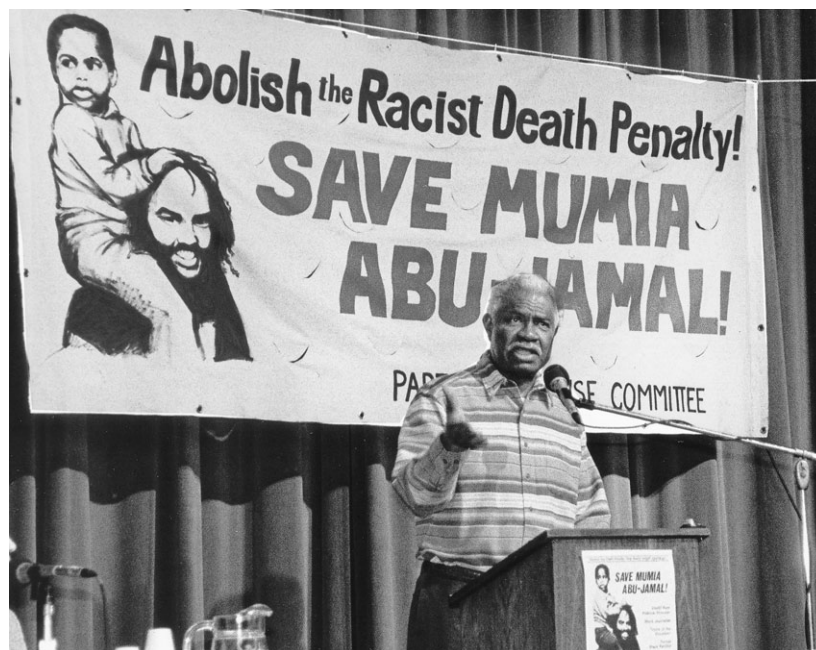
Mobilize Now to Free Mumia!

On February 4, Mumia lost one of his most prominent supporters when renowned actor and civil rights activist Ossie Davis died at the age of 87. Serving as co-chairman of the Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal, Davis joined others in reading from Mumia's writings in a 1994 united-front speakout spon-

Dembe's cancelation of Jamal's hearing, hundreds of his supporters, including an international delegation from Paris, turned out on February 11 for a "Day of Action" calling for his freedom. The Philadelphia protest was called by the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal.

While such protests are welcome, what is needed are mass protests centered on the social power of the multiracial working class. For years, and in spite of the evidence of his innocence, what has driven Jamal's supporters from the streets are illusions in the capitalist courts, promoted by reformist protest organizers like Workers World Party and Socialist Action. These illusions have been embodied in the subordination of the call to free Mumia to the demand for a "new trial," a conscious appeal to liberals who were agnostic on Mumia's innocence and thus would not rally around a call to free him. Why mobilize in the unions and streets if the courts can be relied on to ultimately do the right thing?

The PDC, a legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League, has sought to bring Jamal's case to unions in the U.S. and around the world and raise funds for Mumia's defense. As part of its annual Holiday



Ossie Davis hosted February 1995 rally for Mumia sponsored by Partisan Defense Committee and Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal.

sored by the Committee and the Partisan Defense Committee to protest the National Public Radio cancelation of its plans to air Mumia's commentaries, and again spoke at a Committee/PDC rally in February 1995.

Mumia's case is a textbook example of what the capitalist state is all about. As Marx and Engels explained, the state is an armed body of men for the suppression of one class by the other. Mumia's plight shows how that state, from its brutal cops to its robed "justices," will dispense with the niceties and formalities of its sham "democracy" in the interest of silencing an eloquent voice for black freedom. Mumia is not just another black man ensnared in this racist system. He is an outspoken advocate for the oppressed, a MOVE supporter, an eloquent journalist and fighter who was in the cross hairs of the Philly cops and the FBI since he was a teenage spokesman for the Black Panther Party.

Last month, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors approved a resolution affirming "its support for justice and a new trial for Mumia Abu-Jamal." Despite

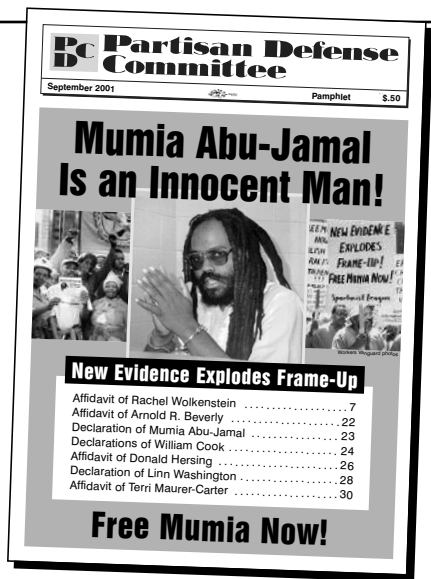
Appeal for Class-War Prisoners, the PDC coordinated the raising of over \$1,600 for Mumia's legal defense from labor unions across the country.

Based on the only significant integration in racist America—the workplace and the factory floor—the trade unions have the social power and the potential to become battalions in the struggle against capitalist exploitation and racial oppression, to shake the foundations of this decaying capitalist system and ultimately topple it. If undertaken with a mobilization of the union movement at the forefront, the fight to free Mumia and to abolish the racist death penalty would be a first, giant step in that direction and would strike a significant blow against the draconian new repressive measures being implemented by the Bush administration with bipartisan support. To that end, labor must break the chains with which the trade-union misleaders have shackled the unions to the political parties—centrally the Democrats—and the state agencies of the enemy class. No illusions in the capitalist courts! Free Mumia now! Abolish the racist death penalty! ■

Evidence Explodes Frame-Up: Declarations and affidavits of Mumia Abu-Jamal, Arnold R. Beverly, Rachel Wolkenstein and others prove that death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal is an innocent man.

Published September 2001
\$.50 (32 pages)

Order from/pay to:
Partisan Defense Committee
P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station
New York, NY 10013



From Death Row, This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal

Targeting Lynne Stewart



The conviction of civil rights attorney Lynne Stewart and her co-defendants translator Mohamed Yousry and paralegal Ahmed Sattar is a triumph of fear over reason. The three legal workers were charged and convicted of aiding and abetting terrorism in connection with their representation of the blind Egyptian Sheik Omar Abdel-Rahman. When the former attorney general Ashcroft announced the arrest of Stewart he did so on the late night David Letterman talk show. Certainly an unprecedented venue for such an announcement. And as it began on TV so it was often prosecuted with a fearsome visage of Osama Bin Laden beamed to jurors via video tape threatening to attack America on the Sheik's behalf.

Even though the judge dutifully instructed the jury that Osama Bin Laden had nothing to do with the case. How do you wash something like that from the mind after it has been admitted into evidence? Lynne's husband activist Ralph Poynter put the hammer to the nail when he said of the trial "this prosecution doesn't have a damn thing to do with terrorism. It has to do with politics and putting Lynne Stewart away." Stewart was

really targeted because she ignored unconstitutional rules put in place by the government.

In an interview with Stewart she spoke about what the case was really about. "The justice department decided that things that I did as a lawyer are now to be outlawed, are now to be made into crimes, in order to deter other lawyers from vigorously defending people. What I basically did was, I issued a press release on behalf of my client. They said that this press release was materially aiding a terrorist organization, thus making it impossible for any first amendment right to be protected. And to me that is the real essence of this work, is that we be permitted to defend people such as yourself in these cases as political people, not just as defendant 10872."

Recently black political prisoner Albert Woodfox of the Angola Three talked about the importance of lawyers in destroying isolation. "I think that this was a pretty strong shot across the bow as they say, you know if you dare put forth an honest attempt to uphold the standards of law in this country we will get you. You know we will destroy you, cause in most cases

they are [the] only voice to the outside world."

And now the state has prevailed sending shock waves through the defense bar that already shies away from the kind of cases that has been Stewart's staple for a generation. She has taken on cases involving members of the Black Panther Party, the Attica Brothers, Puerto Rican Independence fighters and since at least 1995 the blind Sheik. In order to put into operation the draconian special measures of the government the state needs to seed fear into those who are sworn to protect and provide a full and vigorous defense—lawyers. But the battle isn't over. Perhaps what has happened has awakened many people in this country who would have preferred to slumber? Lynne Stewart, paralegal Ahmed Sattar and professional translator Mohamed Yousry plan to stage a vigorous appeal of this outrageous verdict. They will need your support, now more than ever, it will take work of many to undo John Ashcroft's revenge. From Death Row this is Mumia Abu-Jamal.

12 February 2005

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Send urgently needed contributions for Jamal's legal defense, made payable to "National Lawyers Guild Foundation" and earmarked for "Mumia" to: Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal, 130 Morningside Drive, Suite 6C, New York, NY 10027.

If you wish to correspond with Jamal, you can write to: Mumia Abu-Jamal, AM8335, SCI Greene, 175 Progress Drive, Waynesburg, PA 15370.

Hands Off...

(continued from page 1)

House and Pentagon, by saying, "Work for the fall of the Communist Party oligarchy." This is not a new Bush policy, but the resumption of a goal that was temporarily deflected by the September 11 attacks. That China signed on to the U.S. unlimited "war on terror" has only emboldened Washington. As a result of capitalist counterrevolution in the former Soviet Union, the U.S. wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as a renewed U.S. military presence in the Philippines and expanded nuclear presence in Guam, China is now squeezed in a dangerous military vise.

The United States and Japan issued a significant joint policy statement on 19 February avowing that Taiwan is "a mutual security concern." This comes fast on the heels of the U.S. enlisting Japan and Australia to deploy its overhyped antiballistic missile (ABM) shield against China (see "Japanese Trotskyists

U.S.'s "unsinkable aircraft carrier" in the Western Pacific.

We fight for the unconditional military defense of the Chinese deformed workers state against imperialism and capitalist counterrevolution, as we do for the other remaining workers states—North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba. Taiwan is part of China, and we Trotskyists will stand with China in the event of any military conflict with U.S. imperialism over Taiwan. We do not minimize the danger posed to the Chinese deformed workers state by the growing social weight of the Taiwan and Hong Kong capitalists, some of whom have family ties to top Chinese government officials. Nor do we deny the danger of the newly fledged entrepreneurs on the mainland. Nonetheless, the core of China's economy remains the collectivized state industry, and the economic policies of the ruling bureaucracy are constrained by fear of popular and working-class unrest that could topple it. We advance a program for the revolutionary reunification of China, which would require a proletarian socialist revolution in Taiwan, the expropriation of the Hong Kong capitalists, and a workers political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy in Beijing.

Sooner or later, the explosive social tensions within Chinese society will shatter the bureaucracy. Then the fate of the most populous country on earth will be starkly posed: proletarian political revolution to open the road to socialism or capitalist enslavement and imperialist subjugation. Working people all over the world have a stake in this struggle. Capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union and across East Europe created a "unipolar" world of unbridled military aggression by U.S. imperialism abroad, coupled with more savage attacks on workers, women, minorities and immigrants. So too would destruction of the Chinese deformed workers state be a terrible global defeat. The fate of China and the fate of workers the world over are inextricably linked, economically and politically.

The unchallenged global military hegemony of the U.S. stands in sharp contradiction to its declining economic base. The tendency of the Bush administration and correspondingly wide sections of the American ruling class to view the world through the apocalyptic theological lens of Armageddon has its roots in this objective contradiction. Having presided over the deindustrialization of the country and driven by the pursuit of greater profit margins exacted from the labor of work-

ers abroad, the American capitalist class cannot now easily reverse its industrial decline. This is the material basis for the rabid behavior of the Bush administration. Its outlook brings to mind the siege mentality of the Afrikaners in South Africa, the Ulster Protestants in Northern Ireland and the Zionists in the Near East.

After World War II, when the U.S. emerged on top among capitalist imperialist powers, it took the lion's share of the plunder and placed the world on dollar rations. Particularly after 1971, when President Nixon announced the U.S. would go off the gold standard, the rest of the world was pressured to hold reserves in U.S. paper currency, worth nothing except for belief in the almighty U.S.A. But now the U.S. is the biggest debtor nation, and with its huge balance of trade deficit, foreign competitors are compelled to hold U.S. reserves, for fear that a collapse of the American economy would seal off imports and thus plunge their own economies into collapse.

"The Dollar's Crisis & Ours," a perceptive article by Loren Goldner (*Against the Current*, January/February 2005), keenly draws the connection between the decay

of American capitalism and the nuclear brinksmanship of the faith-based Bush administration:

"The American capitalists understand that their decline requires keeping not only all potential rivals, but American working people themselves, permanently off balance. Everything will be done to make the consequences of decades of American decline appear instead as the work of terrorists, or China, or (as in the unbelievable French-bashing in the run-up to the Iraq war) even of Europe."

That capitalism has outlived its usefulness is a terrible understatement. Fulfilling basic human needs such as health care, education, jobs, requires ripping power out of the hands of the capitalist rulers and rebuilding society on the basis of a global collectivized planned economy, socialist egalitarianism and working-class rule. The terrible impact of capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union has hurled the consciousness of workers back, such that few now identify their struggles with the ideals of socialism. This is the reality we confront, and, though our task to build a party of the Bolshevik type to lead struggles ahead is surely harder, it is no less urgent. ■



Young Spartacus

Spartacus Youth Club speakout against U.S. war on Iraq at University of Illinois-Chicago, September 2003.

Say: Down With Japanese Provocations Against China, North Korea!" WV No. 842, 18 February). Although arrayed against North Korea, the main ABM target is China's missile force. Ever since the victory of the 1949 Chinese Revolution, Taiwan has been an outpost for U.S. imperialism's counterrevolutionary schemes and interference in Chinese internal affairs through the Chinese bourgeoisie on the island. During the Korean War, MacArthur described Taiwan as the

Spartacus Youth Club Class Series

BAY AREA

Wednesday, March 9, 6 p.m.

Religion, Reaction and Capitalist Society

San Francisco State University
Cesar Chavez Student Center
Room T-143 (Terrace Level)

Information and readings: (510) 839-0851
or e-mail: sfsyc@sfsu.edu

TORONTO

Wednesday, March 9, 6:30 p.m.

China: The Fight Against Capitalist Counterrevolution

York University
Student Centre, Room 315C
Information and readings: (416) 593-4138
or e-mail: spartcan@on.aibn.com

VANCOUVER

Tuesday, March 22, 5:30 p.m.

**Break with the Pro-Imperialist NDP!
For a Binational Revolutionary Workers Party!**

University of British Columbia
Student Union Bldg., Room 211
Information and readings: (604) 687-0353
or e-mail: tlit@look.ca

LOS ANGELES

Saturday, March 5, 2 p.m.

For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

3806 Beverly Blvd., Room 215
(Beverly/Vermont Red Line Station)

Wednesday, March 9, 7 p.m.

**Marxism vs. Feminism:
For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!**

UCLA, Ackerman Union, Room 2410
Information and readings: (213) 380-8239
or e-mail: slsycla@sbcglobal.net

BOSTON

Wednesday, March 9, 6:30 p.m.

For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

For Free Abortion on Demand!

Harvard University, Loker Common
Basement of Memorial Hall

Information and readings: (617) 666-9453
or e-mail: bostonsyc@yahoo.com

**ICL Web Site:
www.icl-fi.org**

AIDS...

(continued from page 1)

yet been developed, and is still years away. Around the world, even treatment with AZT or nevirapine (which have been around for many years) to prevent mother-to-child transmission, is still not readily available. Why? Because in most of the world today, women continue to be the slave of the slave, economically dependent on her spouse, isolated in the home, with lives considered of lesser value.

The U.S., which is among the most advanced, industrialized capitalist countries, with some of the most technologically sophisticated medical research, has not been able to eliminate HIV infections. Every country has its peculiar characteristics shaped by the history of its class society. Effective control of HIV requires great medical resources, not to mention clean running water, which poverty-stricken countries in Asia and Africa lack. But in the vastly wealthy U.S., access to quality health care for the masses of people has been deliberately neglected by the ruling class.

The counterrevolution in the Soviet Union, a historic defeat for the world working class, has emboldened the U.S. capitalist rulers to pursue their goal of worldwide domination through mass murder and torture, from Afghanistan to Iraq. No matter how much they hypocritically yell about “freedom,” the U.S. ruling class is the bloodiest ruling class in history and is the main enemy of the workers and oppressed worldwide. The U.S. has the widest gap in the entire world in the standard of living between rich and poor. It’s virtually the only de-

stranglehold on the pittance it divvies out in order to force its reactionary, religious agenda on the world. Funds for AIDS are tied to anti-abortion policies, and condoms are put way down the list after the “A” and “B” in the much-lauded Ugandan campaign against AIDS called “ABC.” “A” is for “abstinence,” “B” is for “be faithful,” and the “C” is for condoms.

In this country, millions of adolescents and children get federally funded abstinence-only sex-miseducation programs. These are not just repressive and totally useless for young people, but they are deadly. Youth are given ignorant, lying, religious propaganda instead of the science-based contraceptive information they need to protect themselves from sexually transmitted diseases and from getting pregnant. For example, federally funded programs give youth false information, such as that tears and sweat can transmit HIV. Most dangerously, they overstate the failure rate of condoms and discourage their use. Recently, Texas A&M University surveyed 29 high schools regarding Bush’s much-vaunted abstinence-only education in his home state and found that these programs had no impact on teen behavior. These teens are left in ignorance when they do have sex, and they *do have sex*, as teenagers *naturally* do. It was reported in November that new federal guidelines for treating rape victims omit mentioning the option of the emergency contraceptive pill.

Anti-science, anti-evolution, faith-based programs mean death as well. National Institutes of Health (NIH) officials warn HIV/AIDS researchers to eliminate certain “key words” from funding proposals—including “sex workers,” “anal sex,” “needle exchange,” “abortion,” “condom



James Schnepf

Promoting potentially deadly ignorance about sex in youth: Federally funded programs push “abstinence before marriage” in schools, government pamphlets.

This will impact HIV-positive people, not to mention poor people in general.

The deindustrialization of the major Northern cities over the last several decades meant that the black population, which had migrated in waves to the North for jobs in the first half of the 20th century, was now left with little in the ’80s. Over a million manufacturing jobs were lost during this period and over 2.6 million more have been lost since Bush took office. The capitalist class—which must accumulate profit through the exploitation of working people’s labor—ultimately had little use for those at the bottom when they finished looting what they could from them. As the “last hired and first fired,” the black population supplied, in the words of Karl Marx, a “reserve army” of unemployed labor for the American capitalists.

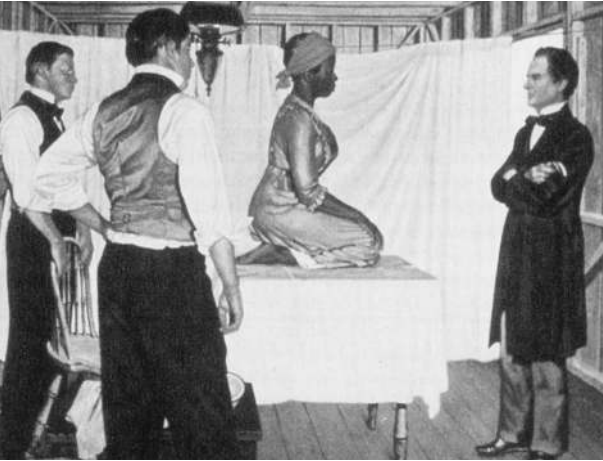
The color bar is the fundamental dividing line in American society, a key prop

union busting and by moving production to the non-unionized South and out of the country. Today in the U.S., a mere 8 percent of private industry remains unionized. Black workers still play a strategic role in the American economy and are disproportionately in union jobs. However, more and more, the black population has become an excess, surplus population for the ruling class. Just as HIV was beginning to infect the U.S. population, the “war on drugs” was being launched against black people with a brutal vengeance—a war of police repression and imprisonment aimed at the black and minority population. And now, over 20 years later, this has sent much of a generation of black men to prison.

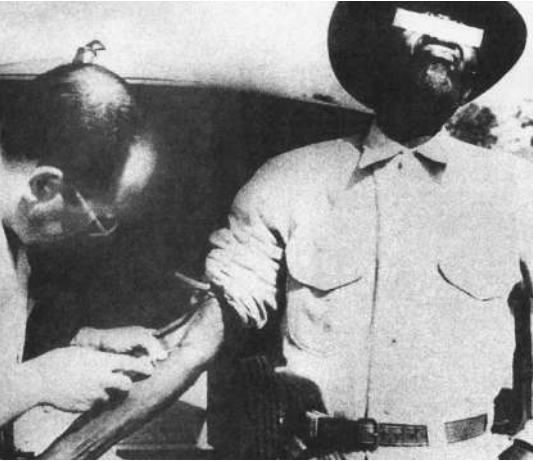
The rate of HIV infection is actually increasing in the most recent period among certain sectors of the population in the U.S. In New York City, the financial center of the world, half of black men are unemployed and HIV infection rates are comparable to the Third World. The rate of HIV infection among women is rising dramatically in the U.S.—as it is everywhere in the world. When AIDS was first identified in the early 1980s in the U.S., religious and social bigotry contributed to AIDS being branded as a “white, gay disease.” Now it is branded as a “poor black disease.”

Last Tuesday, I heard Jacob Levenson, author of *The Secret Epidemic: The Story of AIDS and Black America*, speak at the Brooklyn Library. First of all, there are virtually no other books that focus exclusively on the history of AIDS among black people in the U.S. Levenson is a young, white journalist who took an interest in why AIDS in the U.S. had become a disease of black poverty. Also speaking was Mindy Fullilove from Columbia University. She was one of the first black health professionals in the mid ’80s to try to address the rampant HIV infection which was sweeping the ghettos of the Bay Area, along with crack cocaine. AIDS in this black ghetto was totally ignored, although it is right next door to the gay, white ghetto of the Castro District. Fullilove jumped into the fray because there were virtually no trained black scientists to consult at the time in the U.S. The researchers and community organizers were told patronizingly they were the “Third World component”—the intention was to relegate care for black people to a ghettoized back burner.

Black people’s disproportionately high HIV infection rate in the U.S. was not unknown before then. Before the mid ’80s, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) had published statistics that 74 percent of all female cases were black and Latino and 57 percent of pediatric AIDS cases were black. I looked back at Randy Shilts’ excellent 1987 book, *And the Band Played On*, which recounts the vicious bigotry and government neglect that contributed to the deaths of thousands of gay men in the 1980s. He makes clear that key to dispelling the myth that AIDS was an exclusively “gay plague” was the evidence that intravenous drug users, who were often black and heterosexual, their spouses and children, as well as hemophiliacs, contracted AIDS. While the profit-driven blood bank businesses were trying to suppress the information, people were getting infected



Painting by Robert Thom



CDC

Horrific “scientific” experimentation on blacks. Left: Dr. Sims, considered “Father of Gynecology,” preparing to operate on slave woman. Infamous Tuskegee study withheld treatment for black men with syphilis.

veloped country that has no universal medical coverage. Its rulers want to throw old people on the garbage heap, with the slashing of Social Security.

You may have read new statistics on the high infant mortality rate in the U.S. By the way, although high infant mortality is largely attributable to the lack of health care available to poor women, it is also partly due to the difficulty of getting an abortion in the U.S., as compared with other industrialized countries. Today, there is one abortion clinic left in the state of Mississippi, and it is under attack.

The United States has a hugely profitable pharmaceutical industry whose commercial interests conflict with the lives of millions of people around the world. In fact, the U.S. government continues to hold hostage funds for AIDS, and keeps a

effectiveness,” “gay,” “homosexual,” and “transgender”—to improve their chances of being funded.

Capitalist Rulers Wage War on Working People, Blacks

The fate of specially oppressed sectors of society—black people, immigrants and women—is in large part determined by the course of class and social struggle. Coming out of the struggles of the civil rights movement was a brief moment of the broadening out of public health care, most notably the passage of the Medicaid and Medicare programs, however inferior and substandard. Today, massive cutbacks in Medicaid keep coming down the pike every year. Some 55 percent of people living with AIDS rely on Medicaid. Because of federal cutbacks, nearly every state is cutting back on Medicaid coverage.

for obscuring the irreconcilable divide between the working class and the capitalist class. White workers and immigrant workers are told that black people are their enemy, not the bosses who exploit them all. Up until the last few decades, although black workers often held the most arduous industrial jobs, such as the coke ovens in steel, at least a layer had jobs with health benefits and a pension. These benefits were won because of decades of union struggle and many of these battles were integrated actions, where black and white workers fought side by side on the picket lines. Such integrated class struggle is the only way forward today.

The mass actions of the civil rights movement broke down Jim Crow in the South, but, when the protests came up against the hard economic reality and dehumanized ghetto conditions in the Northern cities, the movement hit the limit of what could be achieved without overthrowing the entire capitalist system. The pro-capitalist leadership of the civil rights movement channeled the struggles into the dead end of the racist Democratic Party.

We seek to build a multiracial, working-class party that will replace the current pro-capitalist labor leadership that only knows how to organize givebacks today. It will take a proletarian, international socialist revolution to complete the tasks of the Civil War, to extend to all oppressed sectors the fruits of their labor. That means seizing the means of production and taking state power from the capitalist class.

The capitalist class has sought to exploit workers at an ever higher rate by

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through transfusions. In other words, HIV is borne by blood, semen, vaginal secretions and breast milk, not the wrath of God against Sodom and Gomorrah, or, the more “polite,” bigoted way to put it, a disease caused by a so-called “lifestyle.”

But Shilts never addressed the impact of AIDS on the black inner-city populations. In our review of Shilts’ book, we said: “AIDS, which was first recognized as a disease in gays, is being transformed into a disease of the ghetto, among the desperately impoverished and oppressed: the chronically unemployed, sometimes already homeless, often illiterate, already without any insurance for health care” (*Women and Revolution* No. 35, Summer 1988). The fight for black rights and freedom is central to the American workers revolution, and it’s the task of a revolutionary party to be a tribune of the people, as Lenin said, and instill this consciousness into all the struggles of the multi-racial working class.

AIDS and Special Oppression

We communists fight against all manifestations of social oppression. Defense of democratic rights for homosexuals is part of the historic tradition of Marxism. Murderous bigotry against homosexuals stems from the oppression of women and the straitjacket of the bourgeois family. The reactionary, religious bourgeoisie says that the only legitimate sexual activity for workers is for reproduction of the next generation of workers. The family as an economic unit arose with the rise of class society, and the capitalist class uses the family to instill obedience to the bourgeoisie from generation to generation. More and more, the mythical icon of the monogamous family, enshrined with something called “family values,” is used to club poor people over the head and to remind them that they are inadequate. This model has nothing to do with family life actually experienced by workers.

Let me say a word about the current media coverage of a new resistant HIV strain that rapidly leads to full-blown AIDS. While gay activists have expressed genuine concern about the decreasing use of condoms, the hysterical, not-so-thinly-veiled, anti-gay rhetoric escalated every day in the *New York Times* to a crescendo of statements by community leaders and commentators who called for vigilantism and criminalizing gay men as “murderers.” One psychologist did at least note: first they don’t let gays get married, and then they condemn them for having sex outside traditional marriage relationships.

We are for appropriate public health measures being taken that may override personal liberty when necessary, but legitimate fears of victimizing the victims looms, especially in this post-September 11 period, when civil liberties on every front are under attack. What has also been glaringly revealed is that 25 years after having repeatedly predicted that a resistant HIV strain that develops quickly into full-blown AIDS could occur, and was in fact inevitable, the public health agencies don’t even have the centralized databases that they need to proceed. Partly this is because of the chaotic patchwork of private doctors, laboratories and hospitals that may hold critical information, and partly because of rampant prejudice and discrimination that has not abated, and has forced gay people to fight for confidentiality.

As vilified as gay white men were and are for being “deviant” from the precious norms of bourgeois society, their relatively greater resources allowed them to fight for attention to the AIDS epidemic, especially when the spectre of infection in the larger population was posed. But black gay and bisexual men, IV drug users and their partners, enmeshed in hopelessly impoverished lives in disintegrating neighborhoods, were beneath vilification and faced death on the streets or death in prison.

The Secret Epidemic contrasts the gay, white San Francisco Castro District to the black areas of the San Francisco Bay Area in the early ’80s. Black men were dying silently in the ghettos of San Fran-

cisco, Oakland and Richmond. Black and Latino community activists were isolated and had fewer connections to get money. There were few statistics on sexual behavior or drug use in the Latino Mission, black Western Addition or Bayview/Hunters Point that could inform an epidemiologically coordinated plan of attack. There had been virtually no serious scientific studies of black male/female sexuality in the U.S.—ever—because American medical “science” is often a reflection of the racist belief that black people are inferior, and “natural rapists” to be castrated and lynched. Such views reflect the origins of American capitalism, built on the backs of black chattel slaves.

Black women have been stereotyped as either asexual, selfless “mammies” of white children or sexually insatiable Jezebels, fair game for white men. In fact, as the revelation of Strom Thurmond’s secret black daughter showed, from slavery until today, it has been a rite of passage for white men to treat black women as sexual property. When the pioneering Indiana University sex researcher Alfred Kinsey carried out his extensive field interviews back in the late 1940s, he told his co-researchers that he had to withhold his findings about black men because he recognized that publishing anything about their sexuality was too explosive; there was no way to address this issue without stoking a violent, racist reaction in America. Slaveowners penned the American Constitution, which lauded liberty and the equal rights of all mankind, and the only way to reconcile such a contradiction was to deem black people less than human. Racism is the bedrock of American capitalism, along with the anti-poor, Puritan work ethic and fundamentalist, anti-sex religious reaction.

In the early ’80s as the breadth of the AIDS epidemic began to be known, the black population was so beneath interest to the medical establishment, which was also so blinded by anti-homosexual prejudice, that, in 1981, when Dr. Arye Rubinstein wrote a paper for the prestigious *New England Journal of Medicine* documenting cases of AIDS in black children in the Bronx, his paper was rejected because the editors deemed it impossible that children could have a “homosexual disease.” And they certainly weren’t concerned that black children had any new, mysterious illness.

According to the CDC, the overall rate of HIV infection has slowed from 150,000 new cases a year in the mid ’80s to the current estimate of 40,000 annually. Anti-retroviral drugs, if you can afford them, have changed HIV infection into a chronic condition, rather than death, for many. The absolute number of new infections has stubbornly stayed the same for the last decade, but what has been changing is the percentage of black people infected. HIV infection has been decreasing overall in the white population in the U.S., but it is increasing among black people.

As of 2002, black people were half of the new HIV diagnoses reported. Blacks are over half of those tested late and diagnosed HIV-positive and thus will have a shorter life span, even if treated. The leading cause of HIV infection among black men is sexual contact with other men, followed by injection drug use. The leading cause for black women is heterosexual contact, followed by injection drug use. Black and Hispanic women represent less than 25 percent of U.S. women, but account for 82 percent of female AIDS cases. The majority of black women with AIDS live in the Northeast and the South.

AIDS and the Incarceration of Black America

We had an article in *Workers Vanguard* almost exactly ten years ago called “Lockdown U.S.A.” (WV No. 618, 10 March 1995). In that article we said that 1.5 million were behind bars. Currently it’s nearly 2.1 million. Today, nearly seven million people in the U.S. are in jail or are on probation or parole, and that’s more than the population of the eight

Rally against draconian New York State Rockefeller Drug Laws.



least populated states in the U.S. combined. There has been an explosive growth of prisons over the last three decades in the name of the “war on drugs.” Escalating cop terror against the black masses is a social necessity when decent, livable jobs are removed.

These prisons, with their high-tech, security units, are the torture training grounds for the likes of Army Specialist Charles A. Graner, who used his years as a prison guard in the U.S. to train for Abu Ghraib in Baghdad. Graner is being sued by an inmate of the State Correctional Institution-Greene in Pennsylvania for putting a razor in his mashed potatoes, and, with other guards, beating him up and yelling “Shut up, n----r, before we kill you.” This is the prison that holds today’s foremost class-war prisoner, Mumia Abu-Jamal, on death row, because he is the voice of the voiceless, a fighter for black freedom.

It’s important to state here that we consider drug use, prostitution, gambling and age of consent laws (as a few examples, there are others), all as “crimes without victims.” In other words, the capitalist state’s criminalization of these activities has nothing to do with the welfare of society and everything to do with regimentation and repression. The government should stay out of the bedroom. And drug use or addiction, depending on the circumstances, may be a health concern, but not a crime. Drug addiction, especially among ghetto youth, is fundamentally a reflection of hopelessness and a response to brutal oppression. As Marxists we know that this will not change until social reality changes. The road to a truly egalitarian society is through a socialist revolution.

To this day in the U.S., federal funds are banned for needle exchange programs, which are used all over the world to save lives. And of course, both needle exchange and condoms are banned or unavailable in almost all prisons, although the use of drugs and sexual activity are well known by all.

The state of Ohio, with its miles of empty shells of former steel mills and auto plants, announced they were opening their *fourth* women’s prison in January because of rising drug convictions, reduced probation options and longer sentences. Nationally, women are imprisoned mainly for drugs, prostitution, burglary, fraud and larceny. In 1970 there were 5,600 women in prison; now there are some 100,000 and almost half are black. About one million women are under the control of the criminal justice system. Besides inadequate education,

health care and drug treatment, probably the meanest aspect is the seizure of these women’s children and restrictions against visitation. Most women in prison are mothers. In 2003, the Supreme Court ruled that prisoners with certain drug infractions could be denied *any* family visits. And for the sizable number of inmates who are functionally illiterate, this means they cannot even correspond with their family.

There is a growing ex-felon population and drug felons are banned for life from receiving welfare, that is, any cash assistance, and food stamps. Among other states, California, Illinois and Georgia enforce these lifetime bans. Forty-eight percent of women affected are black or Latina. Anyone with a drug conviction cannot get financial aid for any post-secondary education and is barred from public housing. Ex-felons, many of whom went to prison homeless, cannot even stay with relatives in public housing for fear of causing them to lose their homes, are barred from all sorts of job licensing—such as nursing attendant and childcare—are tracked by authorities, virtually unemployable, stigmatized, and the family traumatized and destroyed.

Read the compelling book, *Life on the Outside: The Prison Odyssey of Elaine Bartlett*, by Jennifer Gonnerman. Elaine Bartlett is on a speaking tour around the city right now. She spent 16 years in prison in upstate New York, on a 20-to-life sentence, for delivering four ounces of cocaine in a sting operation—her first offense—and became an activist protesting the Rockefeller drug laws while still in prison. The book recounts the impossible barriers she faced when she finally managed to get out of prison. The fabric of her entire family had been irretrievably ripped apart by her prison years. The New York State laws are still the harshest in the country, and the recent reforms that shorten the longest sentences only affect the smallest percentage of the incarcerated.

Regarding the rate of HIV infection in black women, I want to mention the “down low” media frenzy which has been hyped everywhere, from a titillating *New York Times* magazine cover story to the Oprah Winfrey show. The “down low” frenzy was provoked by J. L. King’s book, *On the Down Low: A Journey into the Lives of “Straight” Black Men Who Sleep with Men*. The book purports to expose the phenomenon of HIV-positive, black, bisexual men who “cheat” on their wives. In fact, it is a backward religious piece, which reinforces bigoted

continued on page 10

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“Black Economic Empowerment” = Attacks on Workers, Poor

Capitalism, AIDS and ANC’s “Rollout” Scam

The bourgeois nationalist African National Congress (ANC)-led Tripartite Alliance is celebrating “10 years of democracy” and heralding a rollout of anti-retroviral (ARV) drugs to people with AIDS. Behind the hype is the same criminal obstacle

still fatal. Even the most “rational” AIDS policy in such circumstances still results a death sentence for untold numbers of people. In South Africa, the Milpark Hospital casualty unit in a wealthy Johannesburg

Letter...

(continued from page 5)

study purporting to prove that, given the existing technology, the total energy indirectly consumed in manufacturing a solar power plant is greater than what the plant would produce during its lifetime. (There are a number of studies contradicting that conclusion; Sarkar dismisses a few out of hand while simply ignoring the rest.) Yet even if Sarkar's contention were justified with regard to current solar energy technology, its generalization to socialist society is invalid. It assumes that it is impossible to significantly increase the efficiency of solar cells or lower their production costs—hardly the most intractable technical problem facing mankind.

A socialist system is, by its very nature, not limited to the known technologies developed and utilized by the capitalist mode of production. Under a socialized system of international planning, an international workers soviet would no doubt choose to invest considerable resources in developing renewable energy sources and in reorienting the world economy away from a reliance on fossil fuels. In contrast, investment decisions under capitalism, including those regarding research and development, are primarily determined by how individual capitalist companies feel they can make a profit. If burning fossil fuels results in pollution, environmental degradation and disease, that is not a concern to the individual capitalist; those costs don't appear on his balance sheet.

Moreover, the development of communism will be accompanied by a corollary downward drift in the present population hypertrophy. Evidence of this can already be seen under capitalism in the industrially advanced countries of the world—e.g., Japan, North America and Western Europe—where economic and technological advancement has effected, not through fiat, a substantial reduction in the birthrate. Under communism, both the division between town and country and economic dependence on the family will virtually disappear. No longer will poor peasants or agricultural workers be compelled to have more children in order to ensure enough manpower to work the land. Human beings will have far greater mastery over both their natural and social environments.

Additionally, communist society will be based on a thoroughly different set of social values from those that exist today. The liberation of women from patriarchal domination will mean complete and unhindered access to birth control and contraception. Communism will elevate the standard of life for everyone to the highest possible level. By eliminating scarcity, poverty and want, communism will also eliminate the greatest driving force for the prevalence of religion and superstition—and the attendant backwardness, which defines the role of women as the producers of the next generation of working masses to be exploited. A prolonged, mild population shrinkage based on increasing material abundance and progressive social ideals will go a long way toward ensuring that there are enough resources to guarantee the well-being of all.

Tom S. misidentifies our views on modern industrial technology with those of J. V. Stalin. Environmentalists commonly point to the former Soviet Union to argue that socialist planning is just as destructive of the environment as capitalism. However, the ecological disasters which occurred in the USSR, as well as those being created in China today, resulted from the *mismanagement* of the collectivized economy by the Stalinist bureaucracy. A Soviet government based on workers democracy, representing the

used to combat HIV. His book, *Inventing the AIDS Virus*, was published by Regnery Publishing, a right-wing outfit that also publishes such reactionary, anti-gay bigots as Patrick Buchanan, G. Gordon Liddy and Ann Coulter. Duesberg served as an adviser to South African president Thabo Mbeki, whose ignorant diatribes denying that HIV causes AIDS were largely aimed at deflecting criticism over his government's criminal refusal to allocate medical resources to combat the epidemic. Despite overwhelming evidence

treatments for AIDS that do not require "expensive, toxic drugs." Obviously, anyone who believes this would see no need to demand the vast increase in funding that is needed across the board for health care and medical research on AIDS. Why denounce those like the U.S. and South African governments, who refuse to make vital medications readily available, or the pharmaceutical giants, which demand exorbitant prices for life-prolonging medicines? At bottom, the myth about combating AIDS through "alternative" or "hol-

German foreign minister, Green Party leader Joschka Fischer, deployed German troops for first time since Third Reich to participate in wars against Serbia and Afghanistan. Fischer visits German troops in Balkans.



interests of the working people, would have sought to prevent the pollution of the Caspian Sea and the destruction of the Aral Sea, as it would resist the mounting pollution today of China's rivers and urban atmosphere.

But we approach such questions from the standpoint of strengthening, developing and extending the planned, collectivized economy and technological progress. The capitalist counterrevolution which destroyed the Soviet Union in 1991-92 has certainly "improved" the environment, and some Green radicals may welcome the closing of Russia's steel smelters and other factories, since they no longer poison the atmosphere. But the final reversal of the remaining gains of the 1917 Russian Revolution, above all the destruction of the Soviet planned economy, was a historic defeat for the proletariat that has brought with it an enormous rise in the death rate due to rampant malnutrition and disease.

The Reactionary Agenda of HIV-Denialists

Over the past couple of decades, accelerated in good part by "death of communism" reaction in the imperialist centers following capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union in 1991-92, there has been a growing assault on science, from the teaching of evolution in public schools to stem-cell research. A manifestation of this trend is the crusade, which Tom S. champions, promoting the lie that the HIV virus does not cause AIDS. This is not a scientific debate. It is a reactionary campaign which aims to provide pseudo-scientific legitimacy for a right-wing social agenda that would condemn millions of people to death.

The scientific godfather for this crusade is Peter Duesberg, a professor of molecular and cell biology at UC Berkeley, who claims that HIV is harmless and that AIDS is caused by "life-style" factors such as illicit drug use by gay men and others, as well as by AZT, a drug

that a course of anti-retroviral medication for HIV-positive pregnant women can largely prevent transmission of the virus to the fetus, the Mbeki government fought for years to block distribution of these medicines; today it does little to implement even those limited government programs that were finally set up.

The fact that the main victims of AIDS, when it was first recognized in 1981, were homosexual men and, later, intravenous drug users, brought to the fore a powerful undercurrent of anti-gay bigotry and racism in the response to the disease. Randy Shilts, in his book *And The Band Played On*, documented how difficult it was for doctors trying to deal with the beginnings of the epidemic to get any recognition or response from U.S. government health officials. Right-wing religious bigots and reactionary politicians seized on the idea that AIDS is a "behavioral" rather than an infectious disease to present it as God's punishment for people they would just as soon see dead. Suicidally, a number of gay activists and even some leftists have bought into this myth.

That HIV causes AIDS is a scientific fact, no less than Darwinian evolution. The mechanisms by which the virus breaks down the immune system are the subject of considerable research and debate. But that HIV causes AIDS is not a matter of scientific dispute. An article by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) titled "The Evidence That HIV Causes AIDS," posted on their Web site, notes: "AIDS and HIV infection are invariably linked in time, place and population group." And: "Many studies agree that only a single factor, HIV, predicts whether a person will develop AIDS." Another NIH article, "How HIV Causes AIDS," declares that "the level of HIV in an untreated individual's plasma 6 months to a year after infection...is highly predictive of the rate of disease progression; that is, patients with high levels of virus are much more likely to get sicker, faster, than those with low levels of virus."

Given the racism inherent in American capitalism, and especially the legacy of the infamous Tuskegee syphilis experiments where black men were criminally allowed to go untreated for decades by researchers who wanted to study the effects of the disease, many black people are justifiably suspicious of the government and the medical establishment. Tragically, many blacks buy into conspiracy theories, promoted by the likes of nationalist demagogue Louis Farrakhan, claiming that AIDS is a government conspiracy to kill blacks. Obviously, anyone believing this myth—or the myth that HIV does not cause AIDS—would be less likely to use condoms, get tested for HIV infection or seek medical treatment.

Tom S. tells us that there are "holistic"

istic" remedies boils down to an argument against fighting the pharmaceutical giants, the racist governments and the whole capitalist system.

In a recent study, touted on Web sites devoted to "holistic" therapies as well as in the *New York Times*, the onset of AIDS was delayed in HIV-infected pregnant women in Tanzania when they were given vitamin supplements—hardly a surprising result in a country beset by widespread malnutrition. An author of the study hailed this as "a low-cost intervention that could result in major savings." Not widely reported was the study's conclusion that the "benefits" of vitamins were "small relative to the effects of triple antiretroviral therapy" ("A Randomized Trial of Multivitamin Supplements and HIV Disease Progression and Mortality," *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 1 July 2004). This study exemplifies the racism inherent in capitalism/imperialism, not least in how it provides—or fails to provide—health care. As in numerous other AIDS studies carried out in Africa, the doctors watched as scores of black women grew sick and died of AIDS without administering anti-retroviral drugs known to be effective in prolonging their lives—and 267 of the women were given a placebo, that is, no treatment at all. As in the Tuskegee experiment, the rationale given for such studies is that these impoverished black women would not have had access to advanced medications in any case.

The bourgeoisie's racist disdain for the lives of its colonial underlings partakes of a mindset that sees everything from human life to the natural environment as nothing but raw materials to be ravaged in the drive for profit. That the leaders of the most powerful industrial country in the world have minds filled with the worst superstitions, ignorance and bigotry of the Dark Ages is dramatic evidence of the decay of capitalist society. That backwardness and irrationality is mirrored in petty-bourgeois fads like faith healing, astrology and hostility to science and technology. Socialist revolution will make modern technique, science, culture and education available to all, with a corresponding explosion in creative human energy. As Friedrich Engels wrote in *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* (1880):

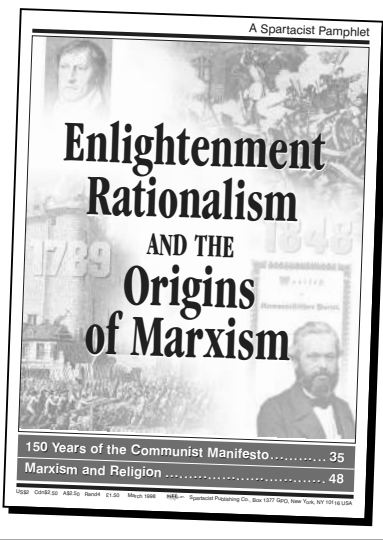
"Man's own social organisation, hitherto confronting him as a necessity imposed by Nature and history, now becomes the result of his own free action. The extraneous objective forces that have hitherto governed history pass under the control of man himself. Only from that time will man himself, more and more consciously, make his own history—only from that time will the social causes set in movement by him have, in the main and in a constantly growing measure, the results intended by him. It is the ascent of man from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom." ■

This pamphlet reprints presentations given by SL Central Committee member Joseph Seymour on the origins of Marxism in the French Enlightenment and in left Hegelianism. Also included are "150 Years of the Communist Manifesto" and "Marxism and Religion."

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WORKERS VANGUARD

13-Year-Old Devin Brown Gunned Down by LAPD

LOS ANGELES—The cop killing of black, 13-year-old Devin Brown on February 6 was the outrageous, but predictable outcome of the “open season” for intensified racist cop terror given by the capitalist rulers of Los Angeles. Brown’s killing is the latest in a string of police attacks on black people in L.A., with one atrocity quickly following another. Devin Brown was killed just three days after L.A. County District Attorney Steve Cooley announced that there would be no criminal charges filed against the cops that hospitalized another black man, Stanley Miller, by beating him repeatedly with a metal flashlight on live television last June. And less than three weeks earlier, a jury with no black members awarded \$2.4 million for “wrongful termination” to two of the Inglewood cops who were disciplined after being caught on videotape battering black teenager Donovan Jackson-Chavis!

In this context, two Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) cops on shift in South-Central L.A. radioed in to say they were pursuing a possible drunk driver in a Toyota shortly before 4 a.m. on February 6. The ensuing 3-minute “chase” came to an end after the pursued car ran into a curb. The 14-year-old in the passenger seat managed to get away. In the meantime, LAPD cop Steve Garcia was out of his car and shooting, as the Toyota moved back from the curb. A few seconds and 10 bullets later, Devin Brown was dead.

Devin was a talented 8th-grader at Audubon magnet school whose short life was annihilated by the racist cops without a moment’s hesitation. His family and the people who met him cherished the life of Devin Brown. “There was a sweetness about him...I saw an innocence and a sweetheart,” one of his teachers said. Devin was close to his parents. When Devin’s father died suddenly of heart failure last year, Devin was devastated. As his cousin put it, “He took it the way any young child might.”

But as a young, black male in racist, capitalist America, Devin Brown was seen as “Enemy No. 1” to the L.A. bosses’ ruthless thugs—the LAPD. When L.A. police chief Bratton arrived in L.A., he

Black L.A. Seethes Over Racist Cop Terror



WV Photo

February 26: L.A. protest against cop killing of Devin Brown.

launched a racist war on black youth, referring to gang members as “terrorists,” “tribal” and “thugs.” One speaker at a recent L.A. City Council meeting hit the nail on the head: “Black people fear the police as much as they fear the gangs. In fact, the LAPD is considered the biggest gang in the city.” The LAPD acts like an occupying force in the ghettos and barrios. Like the U.S. imperialist military in Iraq, both think they can kill with impunity. In a profit-driven system that cannot provide jobs, health care or a decent education, cop terror serves to force the oppressed black and Latino masses into submission. Down with racist cop terror! We will not forget the brutal slaying of Devin Brown!

That cop beatings and killings are a domestic corollary of the “war on terror” was driven home by the racist shooting of Bassim Chmait, a 20-year-old Arab American youth killed in Orange County on February 5 by an off-duty U.S. Customs and Border Patrol agent. Bassim and his three friends were on their way to a college house party in Mission Viejo when the Homeland Security officer, supposedly angry about neighborhood noise, pistol-whipped Bassim’s friend and shot Bassim in the head at pointblank range when he tried to protect his friend. Down with the anti-Arab, anti-immigrant “war on terror”!

The police exist to defend capitalist rule, which in the U.S. is based on the racial oppression of black people as a race-color caste at the bottom of American society. They are part of the capitalist state, which is a machine of organized violence used to enforce the class rule of a minority of exploiters against the majority of toilers. The state cannot be reformed, but must be smashed through workers revolution. As revolutionary fighters for the emancipation of the proletariat, we seek to advance the consciousness that the American working class cannot liberate itself from the misery and exploitation of the profit system without fighting against every manifestation of racism and championing the cause of black freedom. For black liberation through socialist revolution!

But this is exactly the truth that is covered up, suppressed and distorted by all the preachers, liberals, nationalists, trade-union bureaucrats and social-democratic reformists. The reformist “socialists” of Workers World Party’s International Action Center (IAC) ludicrously announced in a 17 February *Workers World* article on Devin Brown: “IAC: Disarm LAPD”! While saying not a word about the perspective of mobilizing labor struggle against racist cop terror, the IAC proclaims that “it is absolutely irresponsible to allow the LAPD to arm its officers with guns. Allowing the LAPD to carry any weapons provides a dangerous risk to the general public and especially Black and Latino youth.” Meanwhile, the International Socialist Organization demands that “if city officials want to reduce gun violence, they should start with their police department.” Let’s be clear: the only force that can abolish racist cop terror is the revolutionary proletariat in power!

A February 26 protest at Leimert Park was called by a coalition including millionaire *LA Sentinel* publisher and head of the Brotherhood Crusade, Danny Bakewell, by the Nation of Islam (NOI) and by various black preachers. What all these types have in common is their usefulness to L.A.’s rulers in diverting outrage over cop killings into religiosity, dead-end Democratic Party politics or poisonous anti-immigrant racism (the specialty of the Nation of Islam). Among the speakers was L.A. city councilman (and former LAPD chief!) Bernard Parks, now running for mayor. Parks praised the NOI and the preachers for their “constructive” work—i.e., for chilling out the population and concealing the nature of the cops.

At Devin’s funeral, Tony Muhammad, the local leader of the black-nationalist NOI, pronounced, “We’ll police ourselves!” This is reminiscent of when the NOI Security Agency was given contracts in the early 1990s to police the federally subsidized housing projects in cities from Baltimore to Los Angeles, acting as black front men to carry out the bourgeoisie’s racist “war on drugs/crime” against the mainly black residents. The NOI has a

long history of letting the racist, capitalist rulers off the hook by misdirecting black anger toward Koreans, Latinos, Jews and immigrants. We fight for **multi-racial** labor struggle to unite all of the oppressed against our common oppressors—the capitalist ruling class. The struggle for black, immigrant, and labor rights can only go forward together!

A Latina from the Justice for Janitors union (SEIU 1877) spoke movingly at the February 26 protest. Devin Brown’s mother is herself a member of UNITE HERE, and several members of her union were present at the protest. The multi-racial proletariat of Los Angeles—from the heavily black and Latino workers on the docks and in transit, to the overwhelmingly immigrant janitors and hotel workers—is a powerful latent force in this city that has every interest in mobilizing against racist cop terror.

Exactly one year ago, there was a big and popular grocery workers strike, centered in Southern California. If won, that strike could have galvanized union struggle nationwide. Instead, it was misled into defeat and sold out by the pro-capitalist union tops. The recent labor battles in Southern California have shown there is will to fight on the part of the working class. Responsibility for the defeat of recent labor struggles must be laid at the door of the labor misleaders, whose job it is to inundate the workers with false, bourgeois consciousness and politically subordinate the unions to the bourgeois state via the **capitalist** Democratic Party. This is the main obstacle to a fighting, class-struggle labor movement. Instead of tapping into the outrage against police violence among workers and mobilizing labor unions against it, the L.A. County Federation of Labor (AFL-CIO) has been throwing union money and political support behind the reelection of “tough on crime/more cops” Democratic L.A. mayor Jim Hahn. There must be a political fight within the unions to oust the sellout bureaucrats and forge a militant **class-struggle** leadership. Break with the Democrats! For a revolutionary workers party to fight for a workers government! ■



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Spartacist supporter at February 26 rally in L.A.