

There Is No Justice in the Capitalist Courts

Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!

Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!

The following talk, edited for publication, was given on April 2 by Rachel Wolkenstein of the Partisan Defense Committee at Goucher College in Maryland to students largely unfamiliar with the background or particulars of the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal. Mumia Abu-Jamal—a former Black Panther Party member, MOVE supporter and eloquent journalist known as the “voice of the voiceless”—is an innocent man who has been on death row since 1982, framed up for the murder of a Philadelphia cop.

Rachel Wolkenstein was a member of Mumia Abu-Jamal’s legal team from 1995 through June 1999. She resigned from the legal team when then-lead attorney Leonard Weinglass refused to present crucial evidence of Mumia Abu-Jamal’s innocence. Another man, Arnold Beverly, had come forward and confessed that he, and not Mumia Abu-Jamal, had shot and killed police officer Daniel Faulkner. Beverly’s affidavit is published in a PDC pamphlet, Mumia Abu-Jamal Is an Innocent Man! New Evidence Explodes Frame-Up, which also includes supporting evidence in affidavits by Rachel Wolkenstein, Mumia Abu-Jamal, and others. The Partisan Defense Committee, a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League, vigorously fights for Mumia Abu-Jamal’s freedom and the abolition of the racist death penalty.

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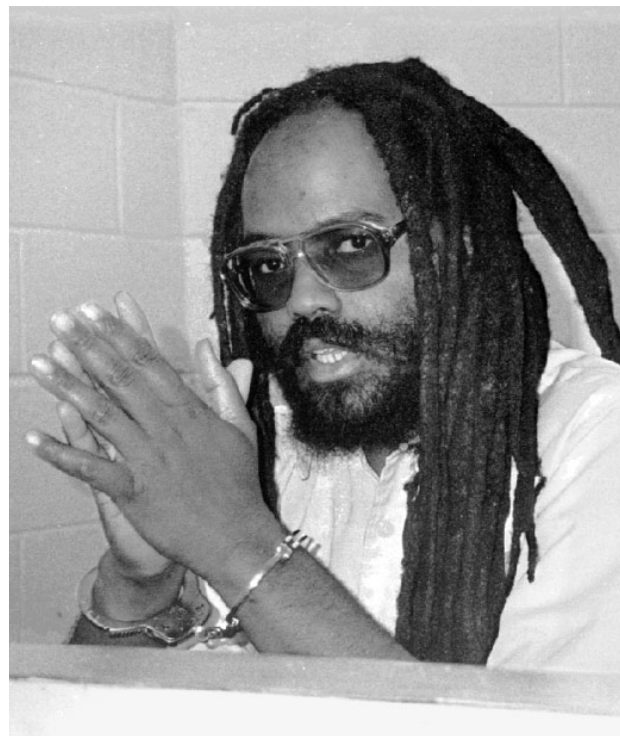
The circumstances of the prosecution and conviction of Mumia Abu-Jamal epitomize the injustices committed

every day by the capitalist legal system. At the same time, it is a very special case of political persecution and intended to be a lesson to any who dare to speak out against the injustices and inequities of American capitalism.

Let me begin with what the state and legal institutions represent in this society. Far from being neutral arbiters that can be pressured to act on behalf of labor and minorities, the capitalist state is the machinery of repression and violence in defense of the propertied rich minority that rules over this society against all the exploited and dispossessed. This machinery includes the police and the courts, which enforce laws based on defense of the capitalist order. In the U.S., the forcible subjugation of the black population at the bottom of society is key.

How many of you have seen TV shows like “The Shield” or cop movies that show that police don’t actually carry out justice, but shoot people on the street, set up and “silence” people because of their beliefs? I promise you that nothing you may have seen in the movies comes close to what happens in real life, and what happened in the frame-up of Mumia Abu-Jamal.

In 1968, when Mumia was 14 years old, he was arrested and beaten by undercover police while he was protesting a presidential candidate by the name of George Wallace. George Wallace was famous at the time for barring black children from going to school, for standing in the schoolhouse door and vowing, “segregation forever!” Wallace came to South Philly, which was



WV Photo

at that time a white racist bastion policed by a racist demagogue named Frank Rizzo, who was then Philadelphia police chief and later mayor of Philly. J. Edgar Hoover, then-FBI chief, declared war on black youth through a program called COINTELPRO. This was the Counter-Intelligence Program by the FBI, established to set up,

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Mexico: Down With Fox’s Attack on Mayor López Obrador!

Break with the PRD! For the Political Independence of the Working Class!

For months, Mexico has been in turmoil over ongoing attempts to strip the legal immunity of Mexico City’s popular mayor, Andrés Manuel López Obrador of the bourgeois-nationalist Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD). The Mexican constitution requires the approval of a parliamentary body for judicial authorities to prosecute certain public officials. Removing López Obrador’s legal immunity, which took place earlier this month, allows Mexican authorities to bring charges against him for disobeying a judge’s order to halt work on a hospital access road. Since Mexican law deems suspects guilty until proven innocent, López Obrador would be banned from contesting for or holding public office once

charges are brought against him. López Obrador is the likely PRD candidate in the 2006 presidential elections, and reportedly holds the lead in opinion polls.

The drive against López Obrador is led by President Vicente Fox—a longtime ally of Bush and a favorite of the U.S. imperialists—as well as the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). Fox came to power as the candidate of the right-wing and clericalist National Action Party (PAN) in 2000, ending some seven decades of PRI rule.

We print below a translation of a leaflet by the Grupo Espartaquista de México, section of the International Communist League, issued on April 7 and distributed at a 300,000-strong demonstration in support of López Obrador that day. The same day, the PAN and all but a handful of the PRI members of the Chamber of Deputies voted to lift López Obrador’s immunity.

* * *

We communists of the Grupo Espartaquista de México are opposed to the



Reuters

Mexico City mayor López Obrador waves to demonstrators at the capital’s main square, where 300,000 turned out to protest right-wing threats to strip him of legal immunity.

attempt to strip Andrés Manuel López Obrador of his political immunity (a process called *desafuero*), while giving him no political support. The attempt by Fox and his PRI accomplices to prevent a bourgeois-nationalist candidate from run-

ning in the elections is a blow to the democratic rights of the population. Its target is ultimately the masses who in vain place their hopes in the PRD as an alternative to the rapaciousness of the PAN and the

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Imperialists Mourn Pope of Counterrevolution

The enemies of human liberty and progress, the rich and powerful capitalist rulers of the earth, honored one of their own when they knelt before the body of the archreactionary, anti-Communist Pope John Paul II, the former Cardinal Karol Wojtyla of Poland. President Bush ordered American flags flown at half-mast, while he and two former American presidents made the Vatican funeral rites. In contrast, when the last Pope died, Jimmy Carter sent

his mother and his national security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski, who lurked around Rome long enough to see the CIA's favored candidate, Wojtyla, elected in 1978.

Wojtyla was no "people's Pope," as the capitalist media dubbed him in its necrophilic celebration of feudal remnants (from the death of the Pope to Prince Charles' royal nuptials). In its crusade against Communism, U.S. imperialism had no more reliable political ally than

Front-row pew
for U.S. delegation
to Vatican.



Pope John Paul II. Above all, he worked tirelessly to reverse the results following World War II of the Red Army's great victories against the Nazis: the overturn of capitalist property relations in East Europe, especially in his native Poland.

Even in church terms, Wojtyla was a reactionary. He favored the ultrareactionary Opus Dei, a lay organization that achieved political prominence in Franco's Spain, and led a modern church inquisition that ruthlessly smashed internal dissent. Boston's Cardinal Bernard Law, promoted to a cushy Vatican post by Wojtyla, gave a funeral oration, a calculated slap in the face to Catholics outraged by Law's—and the Pope's—arrogant stonewalling over the Boston priest sex abuse scandals. The Pope's medieval denunciation of sex, including forbidding condoms, is quite literally a death sentence for millions in the global AIDS pandemic.

In Latin America, Wojtyla crushed the "liberation theology" priests who actually had some sympathy for the poor, while promoting to Cardinal the Vatican's ambassadors to the bloody Argentine and Chilean military juntas. In Chile in 1988, he personally blessed the junta's leader, General Pinochet. This Pope of reaction made a special point of beatifying Nazi-lovers. Those he put on the first step to sainthood included the infamous Pope Pius XII, whose beatification process is still under way. Pius XII collaborated with the Nazi regime in Germany and the fascists in Spain and East Europe; he also refused to condemn the Holocaust against the Jews. Wojtyla also beatified Cardinal Stepinac, mentor to the bestial Croatian fascist regime in World War II. And he beatified nearly 200 priests who collaborated with the fascistic forces of Franco and died at the hands of the Republicans during the 1930s Spanish Civil War.

Above all, hatred of communism drove Pope Wojtyla's political agenda. Of course, the Vatican is the largest landlord on the face of the planet, thus always viscerally hostile to the proletarian expropriation of capitalist property in the means of production and land. As Karl Marx pointed out in *The Civil War in France* (1871), the heroic Paris Commune understood this:

"Having once got rid of the standing army and the police, the physical force elements of the old government, the Commune was anxious to break the spiritual force of repression, the 'parson-power,' by the disestablishment and disendowment of all churches as proprietary bodies."

For American imperialism's rulers, Wojtyla was a spearhead of their drive to overthrow the Soviet degenerated workers state, homeland of the October socialist revolution. According to Watergate reporter Carl Bernstein, Wojtyla made a secret deal with Reagan, agreeing not to oppose the U.S. installation of hundreds of cruise missiles targeting the USSR from all over West Europe in exchange for the U.S. cutting off its funding to women's programs overseas that mentioned abortion.

In the Pope's native Poland, the vehicle used by the CIA and Vatican to hammer away at Poland's socialized property forms was Wall Street's favorite "trade union," Solidarność, which exploited the grievances of the Polish prole-

tariat against the ruling Stalinist bureaucracy. Uniquely, we Spartacists warned that Solidarność was a stalking horse for counterrevolution. As the fate of the Polish working class hung in the balance in 1980, we forthrightly called for "A Workers Poland Yes! The Pope's Poland No!" (*Spartacist* No. 30, Autumn 1980). Before Solidarność solidified as an open counterrevolutionary force, we said that the task of Trotskyist revolutionaries in Poland must be "to raise in these unions a series of demands that will *split* the clerical-nationalist forces from among the workers and separate them out. These unions must defend the socialized means of production and proletarian state power against Western imperialism. In Poland today the elementary democratic demand of the separation of church and state is a dividing line between the struggle for workers democracy and the deadly threat of capitalist restoration."

This should have been elementary for any Marxist, especially in Poland, where the Catholic church is virulently anti-Semitic, a notorious bastion of reaction even within world Catholicism, and a powerful political force. But no. As we wrote in 1980: "First in Iran, now in Poland, various fake-lefts have maintained that the traditional church (Islamic Shi'ite and Roman Catholic respectively) can play a progressive, even a revolutionary, role. In this sense the opportunistic left shows an ideological regression similar to the bourgeoisie in the imperialist epoch" ("Religion & Reaction," WV No. 268, 14 November 1980). Everyone from the American Socialist Workers Party to the pseudo-Trotskyists of the European United Secretariat to the "state capitalist" Cliffites, represented in the U.S. by the International Socialist Organization (ISO), vicariously bowed before Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran and Pope Wojtyla in Poland. The drive for capitalist counterrevolution in Poland, led by Pope Wojtyla and Solidarność, was the opening wedge for capitalist restoration throughout East Europe and the USSR. In Poland as in the USSR, this created vast misery: mass unemployment, homelessness and a furious wave of anti-Semitism, anti-woman legislation, anti-Roma (Gypsy) terror and all-sided clerical reaction.

In its struggle against feudalism, the bourgeoisie, when it was an ascending class, embraced Enlightenment rationalism and rejected the religious obscurantism of the feudal order's ideological bulwark, the church. But today, in this epoch of imperialist decay, the bourgeoisie of the most powerful capitalist state rejects Enlightenment rationalism, embracing organized religion as one more means to prop up its rule. It falls to revolutionaries to uphold the liberating ideals of the Enlightenment and authentic Marxism. In Poland, one of these Marxists was the great revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg. Her words, in the 1905 essay "Socialism and the Churches," are a fitting epitaph for all peddlers of religious obscurantism:

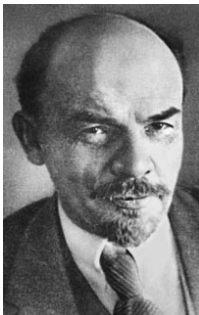
"The clergy, no less than the capitalist class, lives on the backs of the people, profits from the degradation, the ignorance and the oppression of the people. The clergy and the parasitic capitalists hate the organized working class, conscious of its rights, which fights for the conquest of its liberties."■



TROTSKY

For Class War, Not False Unity!

Throughout the invasion and occupation of Iraq, the reformist left has peddled the lie that unity with "progressive" capitalist politicians in the Democratic Party can stop the war and end the occupation. Writing in 1918, amid the slaughter of the First World War and as the 1918-19 German Revolution was unfolding, revolutionary leader Karl Liebknecht warned against the dangers of false unity. Liebknecht called for a break with the Social Democratic Party (SPD), which betrayed the working class by sup-



LENIN

porting German imperialism during the war. In 1919, the revolution was defeated and Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg and other leaders of the German proletariat were murdered by right-wing paramilitary forces at the behest of the SPD.

Unity! Who could yearn and strive for it more than we? Unity, which gives the proletariat the strength to carry out its historic mission.

But not all "unity" breeds strength. Unity between fire and water extinguishes the fire and turns the water to steam. Unity between wolf and lamb makes the lamb a meal for the wolf. Unity between the proletariat and the ruling classes sacrifices the proletariat. Unity with traitors means defeat.

Only forces pulling in the same direction are made stronger through unity. When forces pull against each other, chaining them together cripples them both.

We strive to combine forces that pull in the same direction. The current apostles of unity, like the unity preachers during the war, strive to unite opposing forces in order to obstruct and deflect the radical forces of the revolution. Politics is action. Working together in action presupposes unity on means and ends. Whoever agrees with us on means and ends is for us a welcome comrade in battle. Unity in thought and attitude, in aspiration and action, that is the only real unity. Unity in words is an illusion, self-deception, or a fraud. The revolution has hardly begun, and the apostles of unity already want to liquidate it. They want to steer the movement onto "peaceful paths" to save capitalist society. They want to hypnotize the proletariat with the catchword of unity in order to wrench power from its hands by reestablishing the class state and preserving economic class rule. They lash out at us because we frustrate these plans, because we are truly serious about the liberation of the working class and the world socialist revolution.

Can we unify with those who are nothing more than substitutes for the capitalist exploiter, dressed as socialists?

Can we, may we join with them without becoming accomplices in their conspiracies?

Unity with them would mean ruin for the proletariat. It would mean renouncing socialism and the International. They are not fit for a fraternal handshake. They should be met not with unity, but with battle.

The toiling masses are the prime movers of social revolution. Clear class consciousness, clear recognition of their historic tasks, a clear will to achieve them, and unerring effectiveness—these are the attributes without which they will not be able to complete their work. Today more than ever the task is to clear away the unity smokescreen, expose half measures and halfheartedness, and unmask all false friends of the working class. Clarity can arise only out of pitiless criticism, unity only out of clarity, and the strength to create the new socialist world only out of unity in spirit, goals, and purpose.

—Karl Liebknecht, "The New 'Civil Peace'" (19 November 1918), in *The German Revolution and the Debate on Soviet Power* (Pathfinder Press, 1986)

WORKERS VANGUARD

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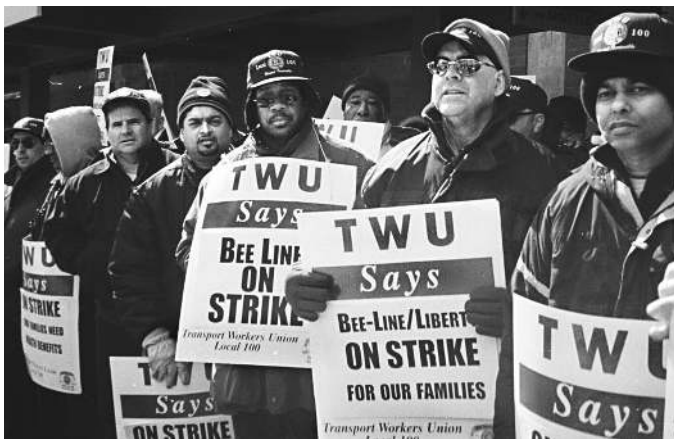
Victory to the Bee-Line Bus Strike!

Westchester, NY

APRIL 12—For six weeks, 568 bus drivers, mechanics and cleaners of Bee-Line bus, serving 55,000 riders in Westchester County, just north of New York City, have been solidly out on strike against the Liberty Lines bus company. On March 2, just hours before the strike deadline, management suddenly made demands for new health benefit givebacks which would cost members up to \$2,000 per year. This was the last straw for the workers, and the strike ensued. Around the end of March, nearly 60 strikers were arrested while trying to stop buses that management was trying to remove from a depot to train a handful of scab drivers. The strikers were released, and they are now facing disorderly conduct charges. **Drop the charges!** Although Bee-Line workers are a small section of the powerful 37,000-strong Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100, the union as a whole has the power to beat back the union-busting attacks of the bosses and the Westchester County politicians who control the subsidies that keep the buses rolling and guarantee the company's profits.

The issues involved in this strike are faced by most workers today—savagely attacks on health care and pensions. Bee-Line workers are dying before they can ever receive even the meager retirement benefits that they were promised. Bus drivers suffer high mortality rates from job-related hazards and stress, including hypertension, back problems, heart attacks and kidney disorders. Outrageously, Bee-Line workers have **no sick days** in their contract. No wonder they are fighting to be able to retire at the age of 57 after a minimum of 20 years of service—bringing their retirement package closer to the rest of the TWU Local 100 membership—and to defend their existing health benefits. We say: **Victory to the Bee-Line bus strike!**

The principal power broker in this



WV Photo

March 10: Bee-Line workers on strike. Ranks of powerful TWU Local 100 should be mobilized for victory in Westchester.

strike is Democrat Andy Spano, the Westchester County Executive. Spano says the union's demands are "preposterous" and fumes: "Who gets benefits like this? Who retires at 57?" A transit worker who visited the picket lines told *Workers Vanguard* that more than 4,000 workers have made careers at the Liberty Lines over the years, yet only a couple of hundred collect benefits today—the rest are dead. Because Spano, who works closely with Liberty Lines bosses, controls the cash, he also controls the negotiations, which came to a halt during his recent two-week business trip to China.

With its segregated suburbs like Yonkers, Westchester County illustrates the sharp race and class divide in American society. Wealthy professionals commute into Manhattan while the working poor and their children must use the Bee-Line bus service every day for work, school and shopping. There is widespread sympathy for the strike, despite the howls and blatant lies from the bosses' anti-union press and politicians. Spanish-language newspapers read by immigrant riders have notably been more sympathetic, and their articles and photos have been posted at the picket lines. Spano and Liberty Lines management try to cynically exploit the real hardships of black, immigrant and poor riders to drive a wedge between them and the unionized workers. In fact, Bee-Line management openly admits it

has enough money to meet the union's demands! But they provocatively refuse to budge from their union-busting drive, dripping with racist disdain for the riders. A union call for **free mass transit** would go a long way toward spiking the bosses' propaganda and forging a fighting alliance between the riders and the union.

Playing by the bosses' rules, the TWU Local 100 leadership has let the strike drag into its sixth week without flexing the union's muscles. On March 29, TWU Local 100 president Roger Toussaint responded to the on-again, off-again negotiations by calling in a federal mediator. "It brings pressure on both parties," said Local 100 Secretary-Treasurer Ed Watt. This underscores the role of labor misleaders in this country as agents of the bosses within the union movement. Calling in a federal labor mediator to broker "a compromise" is calling in an enemy of labor to get the workers to back down in defeat. Such mediators, as well as judges and arbitrators, are part of the machinery of the capitalist state which exists to defend the status quo, protecting the profits and property of the ruling class against those whose strength lies in their organized labor power. Workers have wrested gains from the capitalists by relying on their own strength and mobilizing in struggle.

Toussaint and the rest of the TWU Local 100 leadership have left Bee-Line

strikers twisting in the wind and isolated. Only Local 100 staffers and small groups of transit workers and other unionists have visited the striking workers. But the union could easily mobilize thousands of MTA workers to swell the picket lines. If the bosses succeed in defeating the Bee-Line strike, it will only embolden them in their attacks on the rest of the TWU Local 100 membership, the large majority of whom are facing a contract battle with the MTA this December. The MTA is now completing a takeover of seven other private bus lines, one of which was Liberty Lines' express bus service between NYC and Westchester. These Liberty Lines workers still don't have a contract with the MTA. If the TWU Local 100 leadership were willing to fight, the former "Liberty Lines Express" (now "MTA Bus") workers in Westchester **would also be on strike!** What's needed is a union-wide mobilization to win full parity in wages, benefits, job protection and union rights—at the highest levels—for all bus and subway workers.

What better illustration can there be of the arrogance of the racist rulers and the irrationality of the capitalist system of wage slavery than this: Bee-Line workers are striking just to be able to live to retirement! Who but the vicious capitalists benefit when over 45 million workers in rich and powerful America have no health care? The lessons of class struggle show that the working class shouldn't plead—it must fight.

The strategy of the TWU tops, like the rest of the AFL-CIO pro-capitalist leadership, is to lobby (i.e., beg) Democratic and Republican Party politicians for a few more crumbs. Such "labor lieutenants of capital" have made a choice that their fortunes lie in defending the bosses' system, so they are not interested in leading the type of hard, independent class struggle that workers need in order to win. What's necessary is a leadership that wants to put political power in the hands of those who labor, a leadership that fights for a workers party and a workers government. ■

Alabama Bigots Vibrate over Sex Toys

Recently the U.S. Supreme Court justices donned their stately robes in order to refuse to hear a constitutional challenge to Alabama's 1998 ban on the distribution of "any device designed or marketed as useful primarily for the stimulation of human genital organs," that is, sex toys. First-time violators face a penalty of up to \$10,000 and one year in jail! Georgia and Texas have similar laws, and they do enforce them. In 2003, Joanne Webb, a devout Christian and Republican, was arrested in a police sting operation for selling lotions, books and toys, items quaintly known as "marital aids," at one of her Tupperware-style "Passion Parties" for Texas housewives. In the 4 March *Moscow Times*, columnist Chris Floyd wrote: "Sex, sex, sex—how it haunts the damp and fervid dreams of the Bushist Party faithful."

The challengers to the Alabama legislation made clear that such laws are aimed at women, pointing out that products of the Viagra variety are perfectly legal. The bible-thumping bourgeois legislators believe that God himself has anointed them to police women who try to squeeze a little fun out of life. In their evangelical hallucinations, chaste young girls grow up to be passive, faithful wives who "endure" sex for procreation. You might think that if you really want to advise a teenage girl to "control your urgin", be a virgin," you would, at least, let her have a vibrator. It all brings to mind H.L. Mencken's classic description of the American Puritans, tortured by "the haunting fear that someone, somewhere, may be happy." Of course, the rulers' hypocrisy is boundless; the divorce rate in

Alabama is one of the highest in the country.

We say, it ain't nobody's business. We oppose all laws against "crimes without victims." We oppose "age of consent" laws and laws against pornography, drugs, gambling and prostitution—and certainly laws against peddling the delightful variety of vibrators and dildos on the market. The sex toy restriction is part of a law that bans strip clubs, which are just fine by us also. These "morality" laws have nothing to do with protecting anybody from anything but rather serve to regulate and control the population, instilling guilt and shame in the service of obedience to authority. And abstinence-only programs mean that when teenagers



Locher/NY Times

Joanne Webb (right), arrested on outrageous "obscenity" charges in Texas.

inevitably have sex, they are ignorant of HIV and other STDs, and have no access to contraception.

As Floyd points out, laws against sex toys are meant to clamp down on the sexual pleasure of women and "are part of Bush's worldwide war against women... a war in which the Bushists are allied with their putative enemies, the radical Islamists. These two groups share an overwhelming fear of the freedom and inviolability of a woman's body, her ability to control her own sexuality and fertility. This freedom threatens social, cultural, political, economic and even psychological structures that in some cases go back thousands of years."

More and more, laws that might have once been dismissed as signs of rural backwardness, perhaps remnants of a Victorian and Puritan America or the slaveowning Confederacy, are being resurrected and pushed as the law of the land. Alabama stamps all its biology schoolbooks with evolution "warning labels." Now some Imax theaters have decided to stop showing any educational films that refer to evolution. Bush proclaims that the jury is still out on evolution, the framework of modern biology, and that potentially life-saving stem cell research should be *verboten*. Law upon law is piled on to end the right to abortion, and homegrown religious fascists threaten the few remaining abortion providers. White-supremacist Eric Rudolph has just pled guilty to the 1998 bombing of a Birmingham abortion clinic that killed one person and maimed another. Meanwhile, one state after another outlaws same-sex marriage.

Artifact from the Stone Age: People have been at this for a long time.

Musée des Antiquités nationales, St. Germain-en-Laye



The anti-sex, anti-abortion, anti-gay capitalist politicians only take breathers from their religious crusades to ax welfare, food stamps and Medicaid—hitting poor women and children the hardest. Religious reaction and anti-woman bigotry are part of the ideological underpinning to the grinding down of the working class. Government out of the bedrooms! For the separation of church and state!

Are we going back to 19th-century America when women had to seek out physicians who wielded large steam-powered massage contraptions in their offices to "treat" recurring bouts of "female hysteria"? The Alabama law does indeed exempt sales of sexual devices for "bona fide" medical purposes. In fact, sales are also allowed for "legislative, judicial or law enforcement purpose"! As Floyd put it, "Let's just rejoice in the knowledge that, thanks to the Supreme Court, Alabama politicians, judges and sheriffs can diddle themselves to their heart's content with all manner of manipulators, while your ordinary desperate housewife will have to do without them." ■

Oakland Teachers Under Attack

Defend Public Education!

Free, Quality Education for All!

We print below a leaflet issued by the Bay Area Spartacist League on April 10.

OAKLAND—The Oakland Education Association (OEA) teachers union is waging a battle for its very survival against a government drive to dismantle the public schools in this largely minority and working-class city. With public education increasingly under attack in California and across the country, the success or failure of the OEA could well be a turning point in this crucial battle for all working people. In fighting against layoffs, school closures and for a decent contract and improved classroom working conditions, Oakland teachers are necessarily also fighting against a state takeover that threatens to privatize public schools, gut education at all levels, and render the already appalling conditions of the schools even more like prisons for youth. Contentious district-union negotiations led to a March 25 proposed settlement that was rejected 13 to 0 by the union executive board. Meanwhile, teachers continue a “work to rule” slowdown.

Oakland schools administrator Randolph Ward, appointed by State Superintendent Jack O’Connell in 2003 to run the Oakland schools after the district’s massive financial collapse, has called for the closure or “restructuring” of more than a quarter of the district’s 94 schools, primarily in poor neighborhoods. “Restructuring” usually means turning the school into a charter run by an outside corporation on the same inadequate budget that was already in place, often requiring the teaching staff to reapply for their jobs and threatening the union contract. Thus, Ward aims to balance the books out of the teachers’ pockets and at the cost of educating the youth. In late February, amid protests by hundreds of teachers, parents, students and other citizens, Ward proposed to eliminate Oakland’s \$15 million adult education program, which serves up to 30,000 people and is vitally necessary, above all to immigrants seeking to learn English.

Attempting to set native-born working people of all races against non-English-speaking, non-citizen immigrants, Ward vowed to “not allow adult ed to take away from K-through-12 education” (*Oakland Tribune*, 23 February). He also tried to blame the dismantling of adult education on the unions by saying that adult ed might remain only if the union agreed to cost-saving measures such as cuts in health care benefits. Perhaps he thought his crude play of the anti-union race card would divert people from the real culprit: the massive underfunding of public education by a capitalist class that is no longer committed to maintaining what is traditionally considered to be the road to a better life in the United States. The demented right-wingers running the country right now want high-priced, high-quality education for their own children and the sheerest tokenism for all others.

Free, Quality Integrated Education for All!

The public schools have been on the front line of struggle around every important social issue in the United States. Today, with the U.S. government witchhunt against immigrants, and the general assault on democratic rights in the name of the “war on terror,” the fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants must be front and center in labor struggle, including bilingual education. Everyone should have the right to an education in their own language and the right to learn English!

Historically, the battle for black rights has raised education as a central priority. From the laws of the old slave states making it illegal to teach slaves to read and write, to the civil rights marches against the lie of “separate but equal,” to the decaying ghetto schools today, public education has been a battleground against segregation and oppression. A January 2005 study by the Harvard University Civil Rights Project, *Why Segregation Matters: Poverty and Educational Inequality*, shows that education has declined as poverty and segregation increase in the public schools. In March, the Civil Rights Project released a new study documenting a

represent an American capitalist class that is no longer interested in educating the children of working people, blacks and minorities. To the capitalists, black ghetto youth in particular aren’t wanted except as cannon fodder.... They want to eliminate all social services and break the backs of the unions, and that’s the real motive for the anti-education and racist ‘No Child Left Behind’ and the charter schools.... The right of universal public education was won through hard, integrated class struggle, as a result of the Civil War and through the civil rights movement.”

Certainly, no mere change in the structure of the school administration or city council, or the name of the administrator



Tristan

Oakland: Rally in defense of teachers, March 15. A victory for Oakland teachers would strike a blow against attacks on education.

graduation rate of only 71 percent among California high school students; according to this study, Oakland Unified School District graduates less than half of its incoming freshmen on time. It is no coincidence that the attacks on public education and the “racial cleansing” of higher education through the destruction of affirmative action accompany California’s three-strikes law and increased police brutality in the ghettos.

The severe crisis in California’s public education dates from the 1978 Proposition 13 tax revolt, when white, middle-class property owners voted a cap on property taxes. Prop. 13 was a de facto racist referendum aimed against spending “tax dollars” on social programs that benefited blacks and other minorities—a convenient scam designed to pit petty-bourgeois homeowners against unions and government workers. The real beneficiaries were large commercial property owners, who in San Francisco alone reaped an annual windfall of some \$600 million as a result. Since then, California, which used to boast of being the “education state,” has plunged toward the bottom of the 50 states in per-pupil spending.

The Labor Black League for Social Defense, fraternally aligned with the Spartacist League, is intervening in support of the OEA with a class-struggle program, calling for: Full rights for black people and for everyone else in jobs, housing and schools! Defeat the racist assault on affirmative action! Free, quality, integrated public education for all! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! In the discussion period at a March 8 town hall meeting, “Defend Public Education,” an LBL spokesman addressed the audience of some 200 teachers, parents and students:

“Randy Ward might be the point man for these attacks, but they are bipartisan. The Democrats as well as the Republicans

or mayor, can “reform” education in favor of the oppressed. With the race-color caste oppression of black people as a fracture line of American capitalism, a question as central as public education cannot be addressed without taking on the struggle for black liberation. That requires a revolutionary transformation of the society itself. Today, even incremental improvements are hampered by the political allegiance of the union tops to the Democratic Party and the capitalist system as a whole. What’s needed is to build a multiracial revolutionary workers party that will fight for the interests of all the oppressed and exploited.

Such a party would mobilize the power of labor to defend the teachers and the education of working-class, black and immigrant youth. Teachers must not be left to defend themselves alone. Oakland is a transportation hub, vital to the flow of profits, giving considerable potential power to workers organized in the rail unions, the Teamsters and particularly the strategic ILWU longshore union, which operates the Port of Oakland. The ILWU, able to shut down a major conduit for the lucrative profits of Pacific Rim trade, could exercise considerable social power in this struggle; many union members are also the parents of Oakland schoolchildren. In defending the OEA—and other teachers, such as those in Berkeley who rejected a proposed contract in late March and who are also engaged in a “work to rule”—the labor movement will be defending its own future and the future of all the oppressed.

However, the political allegiance of the labor tops to the Democratic Party—the other party of racism, austerity and war—is an obstacle to such a mobilization. The Democratic Party is no less committed to defending the interests of the capitalists than the Republicans. Wit-

ness state senate Democratic majority leader Gloria Romero, who came out for a “compromise” with Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger’s union-busting attack on teachers, which would extend the time it takes a teacher to get tenure from two years to five (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 13 March). At the March 8 town hall meeting, ILWU member Clarence Thomas, who chaired the gathering, touted last October’s Million Worker March as a movement of the working people independent of the politicians. But as we wrote in “Million Worker March: Tail of Lesser-Evilism” (WV No. 831, 3 September 2004), “The MWM platform deliberately avoids denouncing ‘lesser evil’ support to the Democrats—including by their own unions, whose tops are pouring money into Kerry’s campaign coffers.” Without an explicit renunciation of the Democrats, the MWM’s persistent call to dump Bush could only have meant, vote Kerry. Thus the MWM is attempting to put over a deliberate political swindle on workers who are seeking genuine independent labor political organization and action.

With Oakland’s gross metropolitan product topping \$100 billion, the OEA calls on local businesses to pay the district’s \$60 million debt to the state. But what if they don’t want to, in line with their class interests? Presumably, the OEA tops look to “elected officials” to lean on recalcitrant capitalists. Implicit in this or other “tax the rich” proposals is the illusion that the capitalists can be induced to act contrary to their class interests through moral suasion or the intervention of the government. But the government—local, state and federal—is in charge of a set of institutions dedicated to defending the interests of the capitalists.

The futility of pressuring Democrats has its sad and comic side in California under the Governorator, who recently slammed state schools superintendent O’Connell as one of the “Three Stooges” for opposing the proposed budget, which further starves the schools of desperately needed funds. Those who think O’Connell may be a “lesser evil” should remember that Randolph Ward works for him, and that before Ward came to Oakland, he administered the coup de grâce to the public schools of Compton, the impoverished black and Latino city just south of Watts. In Oakland, ex-Democrat and now “independent” mayor Jerry Brown is an ardent supporter of charter schools and military academies such as the Oakland Military Institute, which he helped establish in 2001.

The reformist left has followed the lead of the labor bureaucracy. The International Socialist Organization pushes the Green Party, which they supported in the last two California gubernatorial elections. But the Green Party is no less a capitalist party than the Democrats. The group Education Not Incarceration lobbies the politicians to move money into education and away from the enormous prison system. But there’s a reason why the government puts the priority on prisons instead: This ruling class really thinks Oakland school kids, who are considered “excess population,” deserve prison time and not decent schools. Begging and sweet reason will not change their minds—we’ve got to take through struggle what should be ours.

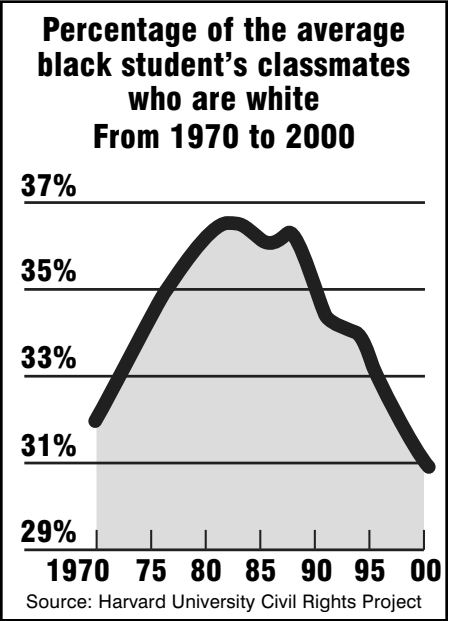
One organization that captures the fundamental problem of the reformist outlook is BAMN (Coalition to Defend Affirmative Action, Integration and Immigrant Rights and Fight for Equality By

Any Means Necessary). Echoing the OEA officials, BAMN calls to “restore democratic control and full voting rights to the people of Oakland—End the school takeover and get rid of Randolph Ward.” But local control of the same cutbacks can do nothing to improve things. This is a small example of what’s wrong with BAMN’s entire orientation. With its maximum demand for a “new civil rights movement,” BAMN embraces the program of pressuring the Democrats embodied by Martin Luther King. The reformist civil rights movement ran into a capitalist brick wall when King tried to take it North. In contrast to King’s and BAMN’s liberal program, we put forward a program of revolutionary integrationism. For black liberation through socialist revolution!

National Right-Wing Campaign Targets Blacks, Workers

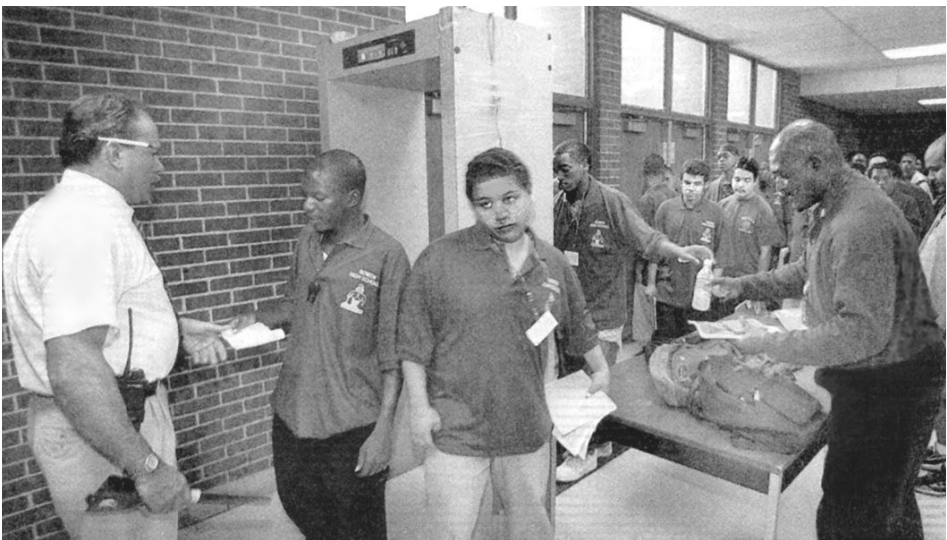
Nationally, the Bush administration is spearheading the destruction of public education with its 2002 reauthorization of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act, dubbed No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in a bitter misnomer. Under NCLB, schools are mandated to administer standardized yearly tests in reading and math from grades three through eight, beginning in school year 2005-2006, and later grades as well. Schools whose test scores fail to improve at a set pace are penalized by loss of funds, “reorganization” (firing the staff), closure or conversion to charter schools. The key index is “adequate yearly progress” (AYP). So arbitrary are the standards that one of the state’s best school systems, in wealthy Cupertino, does not meet NCLB requirements for AYP because, in a very small section of its students, test scores did not increase!

NCLB also requires school districts to provide U.S. imperialist military recruiters with students’ names, addresses and phone numbers. Considerable opposition has materialized against this from those who oppose the U.S.’s bloody war against the people of Iraq, as well as parents who protest the requirement as a violation of privacy. Drop the requirement! U.S. out of Iraq now! U.S. imperialism, get your bloody hands off the world!



Adapted from Newsweek graphic
With rollback of gains of civil rights movement, schools have become increasingly segregated. Right: Spartacist signs at March 2004 antiwar rally in San Francisco.

National education experts have complained about the focus on test scores as a measure of school success. Already strapped for resources, schools are cutting art, music, social studies, foreign languages and recess while prepping students for the standardized tests. In a statement released after the National Conference of State Legislatures report criticizing NCLB, National Education Association president Reg Weaver commented, “Instead of saddling educators and schools with inflexible, bureaucratic mandates, the federal government should be focusing aid on classrooms, where it makes a difference. This means adequate resources for smaller class sizes, increased teacher training and parental involvement, expanded early childhood



Wagner/Chicago Tribune
Chicago high school. Capitalist rulers have turned inner-city public schools into police pens with metal detectors and cops.

and after-school services, and up-to-date textbooks and materials” (NEA online, 23 February).

Coupled with the across-the-board decrease in government funding for education, programs that make both learning and teaching fun and exciting are slashed, while the very art of teaching is transformed into a robotic pursuit of test scores, driving the best and most experienced teachers out of the profession. And this is, evidently, one of the aims of NCLB, only the latest salvo fired against teachers unions nationally.

The ideological campaign against the teachers unions is intended to scapegoat their supposed incompetence as responsible for the crisis in education. But more importantly, teachers unions (despite their relative lack of social power) have been effective in pushing for more funding for schools from Congress and state governments. Teachers’ authority among parents lends the unions a potentially broad influence, while widespread union seniority and tenure provisions make teachers more difficult to intimidate. Teachers are likewise in the path of the right wing’s drive to use the schools to indoctrinate children in all kinds of backwardness for purposes of social regimentation—from destroying sex education to promoting anti-science “creationism” and imposing school prayer. Thus the

employees.) “Merit” will presumably be established by student test scores.

California’s government is bankrupt by design: The state’s economy is the fifth largest in the world. Oakland itself, for example, is home to a major international port doing over \$25 billion in annual trade. U.S. Census Bureau statistics from 2002 show that the per capita GNP in the United States is higher than any other country except Switzerland. The resources exist for the U.S. to have a public education system as good as, if not better than, that of any other country. But to the contrary, a recent report states that in 2002-03 the nation’s public schools were \$250 billion in debt, up 11 percent from the previous year (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 17 March). The real problem is not lack of resources, but the political balance of class forces.

Beginning in the late 1970s, the capitalist war on labor gave impetus to an enormous upward redistribution of income. Between 1976 and 1992, hourly wage earnings declined almost 1 percent a year, while productivity increased nearly 1.5 percent—an enormous shift of income from labor to capital that shows in stark economic terms the increase in the rate of exploitation of labor. This shift may well be historically unprecedented for an advanced bourgeois democracy in a comparable period.

The widening of class-based inequality in the country translates into inequality in class-based and ethnic-based school districts. While school districts are funded largely through local property taxes in most other states, in California state funding ends up with much the same result. State spending per student is capped to ensure “equality,” a measure devised to end the gross disparity in tax revenue between wealthy and poor communities, but which has in effect equalized mediocrity by making sure all districts get a fixed, inadequate amount of money for their schools. Wealthier towns can supplement these funds through local measures, as Berkeley does, for example, or through private fundraising, often organized by desperate parents. While a spaghetti dinner in a poor community may raise a few hundred dollars, wealthy parents in rich suburbs can raise hundreds of thousands of dollars by establishing tax-exempt charities to fund their school districts. This guarantees that rich, white suburban kids get the best education money can buy, while poor and minority inner-city students end up in squalid, decaying pits.

In 2000, a San Francisco middle-school student, Eliezer Williams, initiated a lawsuit (later joined by some one million schoolchildren) against substandard conditions in the urban schools; a recent court agreement is supposed to provide state funds to buy textbooks and clean out vermin in the schools, for example. But the legal notices informing students of their rights under the Williams settlement are still lacking in most classrooms (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 7 February).

As socialists, we oppose all class-based and racially discriminatory privileges in educational opportunity. As against funding based on local property taxation of very different “publics,” we

call for the full funding of public education at the national level. All social services, from welfare to health care, should be federally funded. Yet as long as the schools remain segregated, no amount of federal aid can ensure equal access to educational facilities. The root cause of school segregation is the residential segregation that pervades American society. Residential segregation itself must be smashed through a massive public works program that builds affordable housing and good neighborhoods for all.

Break with the Democrats! Fight for a Class-Struggle Workers Party!

The share of the social product dedicated to maintaining the standard of living of the working people—in the form of wages, government funding and social programs—is determined by the level of class struggle. The ruling class concedes nothing that it isn’t forced to give.

That the labor movement today has instead lost so much ground can be laid squarely at the door of the trade-union bureaucracy, which has cultivated not the strength but the weakness of the unions at organizational, economic and political levels. As Republicans and Democrats unite to slash social programs and the wages and jobs of government workers, raising fees and taxes that disproportionately target poor and working people, the bureaucracy plays along, pushing the lie that labor and capital have the same interest in keeping profits high and the economy “healthy” and competitive with U.S. imperialism’s world rivals. The issue is not to choose one or another capitalist politician. As long as the capitalist system of production for profit—not human needs—prevails, the rulers will always seek to reduce the standard of living of the working class to its lowest possible level.

We have often noted that if the labor unions had spent the millions they spent on trying to elect Democrats such as John Kerry or Gray Davis on actually promoting labor struggle, such as funding the Southern California grocery workers strike, they would be in a much better position. But the unions are led by a labor bureaucracy wholly committed to the capitalist system and the preservation of the profit system, for whom “class struggle” means begging the other party of American capital, the Democrats, for slightly better conditions under the same system of wage slavery that produces the misery and racism in this society. With such pro-capitalist policies, the unions can’t even fight for a slightly better today, never mind wage the fight for a workers government that will finally end the rule of capital altogether. Labor must be unchained from its political reliance and dependency on the Democratic Party, the party of slavery and war, if it is to succeed in defending its rights. To achieve this will require a political fight in the unions to oust the pro-capitalist bureaucracy, and to forge a revolutionary party committed to fight for a workers government to seize control of the country’s enormous wealth and use it for the benefit of the workers and oppressed of the whole world. ■

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Young Spartacus

We print below the fourth, and concluding, part of an educational given by Spartacist League Central Committee member Joseph Seymour at the Twelfth National Conference of the SL/U.S. held last summer. Part One appeared in WV No. 840 (21 January), Part Two in WV No. 842 (18 February) and Part Three in WV No. 844 (18 March).

The period between late 1843 and the spring of 1845, when Marx wrote the “Theses on Feuerbach,” was a transitional period in his thinking. His ideas did *not* constitute a consistent and coherent whole. Elements of left Hegelian idealism coexisted with rudimentary elements of what Plekhanov would later term “dialectical materialism.”

Thus in late 1843, Marx projected an imminent revolution in Germany led by the proletariat. At the same time, he by no means rejected and opposed Feuerbach’s concept of the “religion of humanity.” He wrote to Feuerbach in 1844:

“In these writings you have provided—I don’t know whether intentionally—a philosophical basis for socialism and the Communists have immediately understood them in this way. The unity of man with man, which is based on the real differences between men, the concept of the human species brought down from the heaven of abstraction to the real earth, what is this but the concept of *society*!” [emphasis in original]

Marx was here still operating with a concept of man in society which was class undifferentiated.

A superficial and ahistorical reading of Marx’s early writings might give the impression that he was more radically leftist in 1843-44 than in 1847-48. In the introduction to his “Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Law,” written in late 1843, Marx declared:

“In Germany emancipation from the *Middle Ages* is possible only as emancipation from the *partial* victories over the Middle Ages as well. In Germany *no* kind of bondage can be broken without breaking *every* kind of bondage. The *thorough* Germany cannot make a revolution without making a *thoroughgoing* revolution. The *emancipation of the German* is the *emancipation of the human being*. The *head* of this emancipation is *philosophy*, its *heart* is the *proletariat*.” [emphasis in original]

However, in the *Communist Manifesto*, written four and a half years later, Marx projected:

“The Communists turn their attention chiefly to Germany, because that country is on the eve of a bourgeois revolution that is bound to be carried out under more advanced conditions of European civilisation, and with a much more developed proletariat, than that of England was in the seventeenth, and of France in the eighteenth century, and because the bourgeois revolution in Germany will be but the prelude to an immediately following proletarian revolution.”

How does one explain Marx’s change in position on the crucial question of the social character of the coming revolution in Germany? The answer is that in 1843-44 Marx was not yet a Marxist. He used the terms “proletariat,” “revolution” and “communism,” but these terms were placed within a left Hegelian conceptual framework. The proletariat was assigned the role of the revolutionary negation or antithesis of the existing social and political order in Germany. Marx defined the revolutionary capacity of the proletariat essentially, indeed entirely, in *negative* terms. It was

“a class with *radical chains*, a class of civil society which is not a class of civil society, an estate which is the dissolution of all estates, a sphere which has a universal character by its universal suffering and claims no *particular right* because no *particular wrong* but *wrong generally* is perpetrated against it.” [emphasis in original]

—Introduction to “Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Law”

None of Marx’s early writings investigate the actual socio-economic condition

How Marx Became a Marxist

PART FOUR

BY Joseph Seymour

of the German proletariat, its various components (such as artisans versus factory workers), its organizations and political consciousness. The empirical reality represented by the term “proletariat” in Germany in the 1840s was fundamentally different than it is today or, for that matter, half a century later. No more than a third of urban wage earners worked in factories. The large majority were employed in small workshops using pre-industrial technology. And they considered having to work in a factory a form of social degradation which they resisted as best they could.

When the political situation opened up in 1848, the newly formed mass working-class organizations did not look forward to a collectivized industrial economy, but rather backward to a protected artisanal economy. They demanded higher tariffs to protect German workers from cheap manufactured imports from Britain. They agitated for laws to protect artisans from competition from goods made in German factories. On a few occasions, small groups of artisans physically attacked and sought to demolish factories. “We are destroying industrial capitalism...literally. Smash! Take that, you evil factory!”

I want to digress a little on the present-day significance of left Hegelian radicalism. Because of Marx’s involvement in this movement, left Hegelianism is usually identified with Germany in the early-mid 1840s. But the German left Hegelian movement was very short-lived. Even before 1848, its leading figures—Bruno Bauer, Feuerbach, Arnold Ruge—had dropped out of radical politics, while Marx and Engels transcended left Hegelian idealism.

It was not German but rather *Russian* left Hegelians—notably Alexander Herzen and his colleague Mikhail Bakunin—who founded historically significant political-ideological tendencies which exist *to this day*. Herzen was the founding theorist of Russian populism—the idea of a peasant-based revolution leading to peasant-based socialism. Bakunin was the founding figure of anarcho-communism both as a doctrine and a movement.

We’re all aware of the revival of anarchism in the post-Soviet period. However, there has been a revival of left Hegelian radicalism, in substance though not form, since the 1960s. From the late 1950s until his early death in 1961, Frantz Fanon, a left-wing intellectual from the French West Indies, served as a publicist for the Algerian petty-bourgeois nationalists then waging a war of liberation against French colonial rule. In that capacity he published a book whose title, *The Wretched of the Earth*, instantaneously entered into the vocabulary of the left internationally.

Fanon maintained that the industrial working class in the advanced capitalist countries, and also the colonial and semi-colonial countries, had become bourgeoisified. The revolutionary negation of the global capitalist-imperialist system was now to be found in the “wretched of the earth”—the poorest and most downtrodden section of the peasantry and the impoverished slum dwellers in cities of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

In the U.S., Fanon’s views strongly influenced the leaders of the Black Pan-

ther Party like Huey Newton and David Hilliard, who maintained that black lumpens—the “brothers on the block”—were the social vanguard of the American revolution. To speak Hegelian, the black lumpenproletariat was the revolutionary antithesis of the American racist, capitalist social and political order.

All of us in the SL/U.S. are familiar with the expression: the most oppressed is the most revolutionary. This is the crux of left Hegelian political radicalism which Marx and also Engels transcended in the course of becoming Marxists.

Toward Dialectical Materialism

Looking back in the 1880s, Engels considered that the “Theses on Feuerbach,” written by Marx in the spring of 1845, was the first coherent expression of historical materialism. The following year, Marx and Engels wrote *The German Ideology*, which was in a sense an explanation and elaboration of the ideas which the “Theses” presented in a highly encapsulated, almost cryptic, form. Marx later wrote that *The German Ideology* was a work of “self-clarification,” thereby implying that it criticized ideas which he and Engels had recently shared with other left Hegelians, notably Feuerbach.

I want to emphasize three aspects of the new Marxist worldview which sharply differentiated it from left Hegelian idealism. First, external reality cannot be adequately understood through passive contemplation. Thought is purposive. People think in order to pursue their needs and interests. One can expand and deepen one’s understanding of the world only by seeking to change it, by trying to act upon it. One can then assess the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of such efforts and therefore the validity and adequacy of one’s understanding of the world. As Marx wrote in the second thesis on Feuerbach:

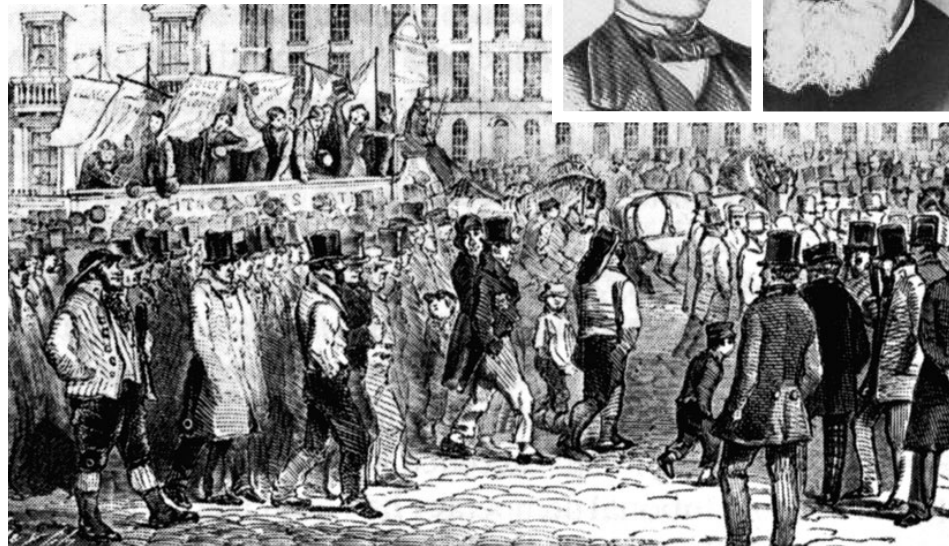
“The question of whether objective truth can be attributed to human thinking is not a question of theory but is a practical question. Man must prove the truth, i.e., the reality and power, the this-worldliness of his thinking in practice. The dispute over the reality or non-reality of thinking which isolates itself from practice is a purely scholastic question.”

Second, Marx insisted that the elimination of oppression and exploitation in their various historically derived forms required the development of the productive forces of society. It was not enough to expose and refute the ideological legitimations of the existing social and political order such as religion and nationalism or, for that matter, liberalism. Thus a key passage in *The German Ideology*:

“We shall, of course, not take the trouble to explain to our wise philosophers that the ‘liberation’ of ‘man’ is not advanced a single step by reducing philosophy, theology, substance and all the rubbish to ‘self-consciousness’ and by liberating

Chartist demonstration in London, 1848. Engels developed a close relationship with left-wing Chartist leaders Ernest Jones (right) and Julian Harney (far right).

Illustrated London News



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‘man’ from the domination of these phrases, which have never held him in thrall. Nor shall we explain to them that it is possible to achieve real liberation only in the real world and by real means, that slavery cannot be abolished without the steam-engine and the mule jenny, serfdom cannot be abolished without improved agriculture, and that, in general, people cannot be liberated as long as they are unable to obtain food and drink, housing and clothing in adequate quality and quantity. ‘Liberation’ is a historical and not a mental act.”

Marx and Engels did not, of course, deny or minimize the importance of combating the influence of bourgeois ideology among the mass of the working class. Such propagandistic activity was a necessary precondition for a proletarian revolution. But it was the proletarian revolution that was the necessary and decisive act of social liberation in the real world.

This bears on a third important aspect of Marxism as it differentiated itself from left Hegelian radicalism. This was a dialectical materialist understanding of the working class. Here I believe Engels’ contribution was of crucial importance. Unlike Marx, during this period Engels acquired firsthand knowledge of a mass political movement of an *industrial* proletariat, the British Chartist movement of the 1840s.

for the establishment of a Communist party among the educated classes of society, than anywhere else. The Germans are a very disinterested nation; if in Germany principle comes into collision with interest, principle will almost always silence the claims of interest. The same love of abstract principle, the same disregard of reality and self-interest, which have brought the Germans to a state of political nonentity, these very same qualities guarantee the success of philosophical Communism in that country.” [emphasis in original]

So how did Engels become a Marxist? Certainly, an important factor was that he developed a close political relationship with the leaders of the left wing of the Chartist movement, notably Julian Harney and Ernest Jones. He came to recognize both the potential social power of the organized industrial proletariat and the many obstacles to and difficulties in organizing the mass of workers on a revolutionary program.

Even among the relatively advanced workers who participated in and supported the Chartist movement, there were significantly different levels of political consciousness. The Chartist movement, whose central programmatic demand was universal suffrage, had a well-defined right-left factional spectrum. Workers who supported the right wing were willing to



Time



Stephen Shames

Left: Frantz Fanon. Right: Black Panther Party rally, 1969. Panthers were influenced by Fanon's writings advancing left Hegelian view that the most oppressed are the most revolutionary.

vanguard and the relatively more backward workers:

“The Communists are distinguished from the other working-class parties by this only: 1. In the national struggles of the proletarians of the different countries, they point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality. 2. In the various stages of development which the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie has to pass through, they always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole.”

The same month that the *Manifesto* was published, a popular, working-class-centered uprising in Paris overthrew the government of Louis Philippe, known as “the bankers’ king.” This initiated revolutions throughout continental west and central Europe. The revolutions of 1848, Marx and Engels’ participation in them, their defeat and aftermath lie beyond the scope of this educational, which is plenty ambitious as it is.

However, one episode in the aftermath of the 1848 revolutions bears directly on one of the themes I’ve been discussing. By 1850, following the defeat of the revolution in Germany, the leadership of the Communist League reassembled in London. In the fall of that year, the League experienced a factional struggle leading to a split. A group around Karl Schapper, the veteran leader of the organization before Marx, maintained that the victory of monarchical reaction in Germany was transient. Schapper and his cothinkers projected a renewed imminent revolutionary upsurge which would be even more radical than before, since the bourgeois liberals had discredited themselves with the workers and petty-bourgeois masses.

Marx and Engels considered this wishful thinking. In the course of the fight, Marx exclaimed:

“The materialist standpoint of the *Manifesto* has given way to idealism. The revolution is seen not as the product of realities of the situation but as the result of an effort of *will*. Whereas we say to the workers: You have 15, 20, 50 years of civil war to go through in order to alter the situation and to train yourselves for the exercise of power, it is said: We must take power *at once*, or else we may as well take to our beds.” [emphasis in original]

The basic point is that the revolutionary capacity of the working class is not

simply a result of the condition of oppression and exploitation but is a product of its *own historical development*, in which the communist vanguard plays a crucial role.

In 1850, Marx and Engels did not foresee and could not possibly have foreseen that the reactionary conditions in Germany and also France would last another decade and a half. And even after that, except for the short-lived Paris Commune of 1871, there was no prospect for proletarian revolution in Europe during Marx and Engels’ lifetimes.

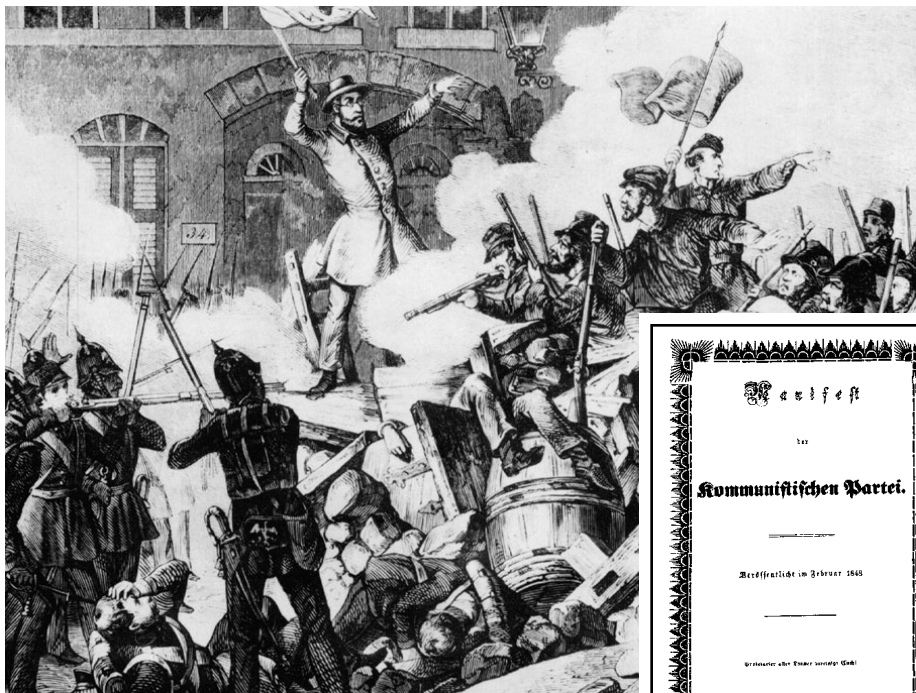
When the *Communist Manifesto* was published, there were a couple of thousand members and supporters of the Communist League in Germany and elsewhere in West Europe. Ten years later only a handful of these were still communists. The overwhelming majority of “Red ’48ers,” as they were called, had come to terms with the developing bourgeois order. One even ended up as German finance minister under Bismarck. A goodly number of former “Red ’48ers” emigrated to the United States where they played an honorable and important role as officers and soldiers in the Union Army in the American Civil War. But they did so as radical democrats, no longer communists.

A parallel development occurred in Britain. In 1850, the first English translation of the *Communist Manifesto* was published on the front page of the journal of the Chartist left, the *Red Republican*. However, over the next decade, the Chartist movement disintegrated completely. First Julian Harney, then Ernest Jones became demoralized, moved to the right and came out for collaboration between the workers movement and bourgeois liberals.

Almost uniquely among the leading “red republicans” of the 1840s, Marx and Engels continued to stand for and fight for communism for the rest of their lives. They modified their concrete program in line with changing historical conditions (for example, on the colonial question), but they did not change their ultimate goal. Eventually, they were able to intersect a new generation of young militant leftists—represented by Jules Guesde in France and Georgi Plekhanov in Russia—who had not been scarred by the historic defeat of 1848.

If, in the years or decades after 1848, Marx and Engels had abandoned communism as a utopian fantasy, the *Communist Manifesto* would today be as little known and little read as the writings of Wilhelm Weitling, Étienne Cabet, Auguste Blanqui, Robert Owen and the many other communists and socialists of the pre-1848 era. Marx and Engels were the human, that is, material, agents necessary to transmit their ideas to future generations.

We, too, now operate in the aftermath of a world-historic defeat: the counter-revolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union. And we, too, are the only human agents—there’s no one else out there—who can transmit the principles and program of communism and the understanding of dialectical materialism to future generations. That’s just the way it is. ■



Dietz Verlag Berlin

Workers’ barricades in Frankfurt, Germany in 1848. *Communist Manifesto* was published as revolutions swept Europe that year.



In 1843, Engels was sent to help manage the family textile factory in Manchester, England. At the time he was a pure left Hegelian communist who believed that what is rational must soon become real, especially in Germany. Soon after arriving in England, he wrote an article, “Progress of Social Reform on the Continent,” for the Owenite socialist journal, *The New Moral World*, in which he stated:

“The Germans are a philosophical nation, and will not, cannot abandon Communism, as soon as it is founded upon sound philosophical principles: chiefly if it is derived as an unavoidable conclusion from their *own* philosophy....

“There is a greater chance in Germany

settle for moderate reforms and were prepared for that purpose to collaborate with bourgeois liberals. The leaders and militants of the Chartist left were “red republicans,” and indeed, later chose that term for the name of their newspaper.

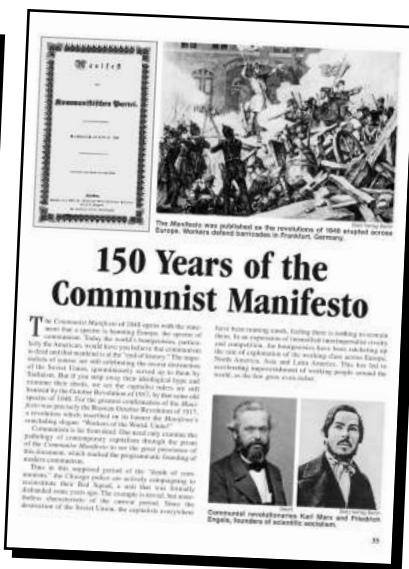
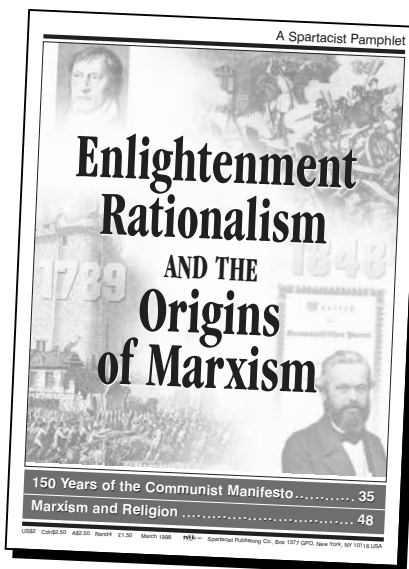
Unlike Marx’s earlier writings, the *Communist Manifesto* presents, albeit briefly, a dialectical materialist analysis of the modern working class, explaining the interaction between objective economic development and the organization and political consciousness of the proletariat. The *Manifesto* also for the first time clearly defines the *fundamental difference* between the communist

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.”

In the retrograde climate of post-Soviet reaction, the struggle to reassert the validity of the program and purpose of revolutionary Marxism is crucial for our fight for new October Revolutions.

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No Reprisals Against Anti-Military Recruitment Protesters!

We reprint below an April 7 Bay Area Spartacus Youth Club statement responding to repression against protesters at San Francisco State University (SFSU).

On March 9, Students Against War (SAW) and others organized to “Kick Military Recruiters Out of SFSU.” The Spartacus Youth Club participated, and an SYCer addressed the crowd of about 200, making clear our opposition to the U.S. colonial occupation of Iraq. After protesting in Malcolm X Plaza, about 100 students marched up into Jack Adams Hall and confronted recruiters at a career fair. The next day, according to SAW, two activists who entered the career fair with leaflets were pushed out by eight cops on the pretext of “causing a fire hazard” and expelled from the Student Center. We defend SAW and its supporters in the International Socialist Organization against administration attacks, despite our fundamental political differences with them. **An injury to one is an injury to all!**

According to the local news, the administration plans to punish organizations and individuals who organized and participated in the March 9 protest (KPIX Channel 5, 9 March). Two SAW supporters received letters from the Coordinator of Judicial Affairs demanding

that they appear before the administration in closed meetings where legal representation is barred. These letters are meant both to intimidate and open the process of squelching activists. During an event in February featuring racist ideologue David Horowitz, two supporters of the SYC were ejected before they were able to speak during the Q&A session. Some weeks later, these supporters received similar letters from the administration demanding they attend closed meetings. As we wrote in a recent statement, “How far the right-wing witchhunt will go depends on how much labor, leftists, and minorities are willing to stand up and voice their opinions” (*Golden Gate [X]press*, 10 February). **We must defeat political repression on the campuses and nationally.**

In self-defense, Students Against War has circulated a petition entitled “Protect SFSU Students’ Right to Free Speech.” It reads:

“San Francisco State University has threatened to suspend campus groups and discipline individual students for taking part in the March 9th counter-recruitment demonstration. Such actions would be blatant violations of students’ right to free speech. We, the undersigned, demand that no such disciplinary actions be taken against campus groups

or individual students involved in the protest.”

We encourage students to sign that petition. Military recruiters aim to draw in working-class youth and students as fodder for the bloody campaigns of U.S. militarism, such as the brutal colonial occupation of Iraq. We oppose the direct use of the university by the imperialist U.S. military. **ROTC/military recruiters off campus now!**

Our opposition to recruiters is based upon anti-militarism and anti-imperialism, not pacifism. We certainly do not groove on the deaths of American soldiers, but we do have a side in Iraq: against the U.S., its allies and Iraqi lackeys. We call on youth and workers in the U.S. and internationally to mobilize in protest on the basis of the defense of the peoples of Iraq against any U.S.-led attack or repression and for the military defense of Iraqi forces on the ground when they aim their blows against the imperialist occupiers. **All U.S. troops out of Iraq now! Down with the colonial occupation!**

Meanwhile in cyberspace, SAW has posted a totally *different* online petition with language that reflects dangerous illusions in the university administration. It reads in part: “San Francisco State Uni-

versity should be ashamed that they are a shell [sic] for the US military. They undermine their own anti-discrimination policies and commitments to diversity by allowing a racist, sexist and anti-gay institution to recruit on campus.”

On this petition, we have to note the fact that the role of the school authorities is to administer the campus on behalf of the bourgeoisie, policing it as necessary to ensure the steady flow of educated workers for the profit machine in this country and to buttress its imperialist rule abroad. Many students opposed to the presence of military recruiters on campus are nonetheless wedded to liberal beliefs in the “anti-discriminatory policies and commitment to diversity” of the campus administration. This is a misguided conception. The administration is not committed to “justice” or “equality.” SFSU president Corrigan’s own nasty history bears this out, from the attacks on General Union of Palestine Students and cop spying on student protesters to its cooperation with the FBI as it sought student records in an open-ended investigation of Near Eastern and Muslim students following September 11, 2001. The Spartacus Youth Club demands: **No reprisals against student protesters! ■**

ROTC...

(continued from page 12)

faith in “God and country.” This is illustrated by the patriotic “support our troops” line pushed by both the Democrats and Republicans during the war and occupation, and echoed by much of the reformist left with their calls to “Bring the troops home now.” Despite the working-class background of most of the rank and file, soldiers in the bourgeois army serve to defend the rule of the capitalist exploiters. For working people these are not “our” troops, but the troops of the U.S. imperialist butchers. Whatever the intention of the individual recruit, the reality of what it means to serve in the military can be seen starkly in Iraq today from the destruction and depopulation of Falluja to the Abu Ghraib den of torture.

The call to “Bring the troops home” is an accommodation to those who appeal to the U.S. rulers to get the American troops out of harm’s way; this is what Lenin called social-patriotism—expressing concern primarily for the loss of *American* lives rather than for the victims of U.S. imperialist terror. This call serves to obscure the fact that working people in the U.S. should take a side militarily with the Iraqi peoples *against* the U.S. military

PROTEST!

**ROTC/Military Recruiters Off Campus!
All U.S. Troops Out of Iraq, Now!
Down With Anti-Gay Discrimination in the Military!**

**Cal Day, Saturday, April 16, 12 Noon
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Wheeler Hall, South Entrance**

**Initiated by the
Bay Area Spartacus Youth Club**

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occupiers. The blows directed against the U.S. imperialist occupiers and their Iraqi lackeys represent a just struggle by Iraqis against a neocolonial occupation. And responsibility for the deaths of American soldiers lies entirely with the U.S. ruling class. We say: **Defend the peoples of Iraq against the occupation forces! All U.S. troops out of Iraq now!** At the same time, we oppose the deadly communalist violence in Iraq against other ethnic, religious and national populations, which is often carried out by the very same forces fighting the occupation armies.

During the war we called for defense of neocolonial Iraq against the predatory U.S. imperialist attack without giving an iota of political support to the reactionary Saddam Hussein regime. While many reformist left groups such as the International Socialist Organization (ISO), Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) and Workers World Party (WWP) today vicariously cheer the “Iraqi resistance,” they rejected the call for defense of Iraq during the war. This was because it would have prevented them from uniting with bourgeois liberals who didn’t want to take a side against U.S. imperialism and simply opposed the war because they didn’t think it was the best way to advance the interests of American capitalism.

Behind many of the recent protests against military recruiters are coalitions and leftist organizations who organized the “antiwar movement” against the Iraq war. These include the ISO-dominated Campus Antiwar Network and its campus affiliates, the RCP’s Not In Our Name coalition and the WWP youth group Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST). The premise of the Iraq antiwar movement was that if the greatest number of people

united in a broad movement, they could pressure the U.S. government to stop the war and occupation. The goal of the antiwar movement was, and continues to be, based on the fallacy that imperialism can be reformed and that the imperialist rulers can be pressured to make their system more humane, peaceful and democratic.

These reformist leftists would have you believe that the antiwar movement failed in its goals because they just didn’t get enough people on board to pressure the government hard enough. The ISO lays out this reformist strategy explicitly: “To influence Congress, our most effective tool is not compromise, but a confident, coherent and growing opposition to the Iraq occupation. We should exploit every division at the top, even between Republicans, but this can only be done effectively by wielding a clear ideological counterweight, backed up by mass forces” (*Socialist Worker*, 18 February). The ISO also blames supposedly nefarious liberals, like their coalition partners in the leadership of United for Peace and Justice (UFPJ), for somehow sidetracking antiwar activists into campaigning for the Democratic candidate in the presidential election. Don’t buy any of this!

The antiwar movement failed because you can’t stop the imperialist rulers from going to war through pressure politics. Wars against neocolonial countries by imperialist nations, as well as wars between imperialist nations, are inevitable under capitalism. While the capitalist rulers may differ among themselves over tactics, imperialism is not a “policy” that the capitalist rulers can choose to carry out or not depending on their “conscience” or the will of the populace; it is a system based on cutthroat economic

competition between nation-states over markets and spheres of influence. This competition is fought out ultimately in the military arena. This will always be the case until the working class destroys the capitalist system and replaces it with a society in which production is for the needs of all humanity, not the profit of a tiny minority.

Flowing from this is the understanding that a successful fight against imperialist war requires attacking the economic and social roots of war, *not* begging the capitalist rulers to make their system more humane. The only successful antiwar movement is the working class vying for power—like the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. As then-Trotskyist James Burnham stated in *War and the Workers* (1936):

“Since the victory of socialism, and this alone, will defeat war, every step on the path to socialism is a blow at war. In the struggle against war, properly understood, every militant workers’ demonstration, every broad mass labor defense fight, every well-led strike, and in general every advance of the workers toward power, is worth a thousand ‘Peace Leagues.’”

War exposes the true nature of capitalism, concentrating the everyday, seemingly random violence of life under capitalism into one geographical area over a compressed period of time. In response to this, youth and workers often draw a pacifist conclusion. But this visceral reaction against the horrors of imperialist war must be turned into an understanding that it requires a class war against capitalism to put an end to war once and for all. The program of pacifism, on the other hand, is based on the false premise that peace can be achieved without overturning capitalism. In this sense pacifism is of great service to the capitalist rulers because it helps them channel discontent with war into an impotent movement crying out “Stop the War!” This is why a handful of capitalist “peace dove” politicians typically come out against the war (while, of course, “supporting the troops”)—they appear on the platforms of liberal antiwar protests to keep the “movement” safe for capitalism.

Helping the imperialists keep the opposition to the Iraq war and occupation safe for capitalism are groups that claim to be revolutionary and anti-imperialist—ISO, WWP, RCP—who built the pacifist antiwar movement. Their call for the



Karl Liebknecht, revolutionary internationalist and anti-militarist.

“broadest possible unity” meant eagerly seeking the participation of capitalist politicians, welcoming with open arms capitalist Democratic Party politicians like Jesse Jackson, Al Sharpton and Dennis Kucinich. From day one, pro-Democratic Party “Anybody but Bush” politics predominated in the antiwar coalitions and demonstrations these reformist leftists organized. Of course, *after* their vaunted movement dissipated, they complained that the liberals derailed the movement into voting for Kerry! And such complaints hardly deterred them from raising the call “Beat Back the Bush Attack” and bringing out their usual roster of “anti-war” Democrats at the recent March 19 protests against the occupation.

Illusions in the reformability of capitalism and in the Democratic Party as a supposed “lesser evil” are the key obstacles to the kind of working-class struggle that is so badly needed. We say: Break with the Democratic Party of racism and war! For a revolutionary workers party!

New Campaign, Same Reformist Program

The reformist left is now working overtime to dress up the same tired, old liberal-pacifist program that the antiwar movement was based on in new, militant, “grassroots” garb. Groups like the ISO are seizing on campus “counter-recruitment” and soldiers’ resistance as the new vanguard in the fight against the occupation of Iraq. The argument that if you could just stop enough people from signing up for the military and get enough soldiers to refuse to serve, then the U.S. would have to end the occupation does have its appeal to youth who’ve never seen a serious mobilization of the social power of the working class. These youth have been sold the myth that the Vietnam War was ended through a mass pacifist movement of antiwar protesters and draft resisters.

Contrary to popular left mythology, what ended the Vietnam War was the military defeat of the U.S. imperialists by the revolutionary workers and peasants of Vietnam who carried out a social revolution that overturned capitalism. Not only did we call for victory to the Vietnamese revolutionaries at the time, but to this day we continue to stand for the unconditional military defense of Vietnam, China, North Korea and Cuba as countries where

capitalism has been overturned. Unlike pacifists and anti-Communists like the ISO and RCP, we defend the right of these workers states, albeit deformed by Stalinism, to defend themselves against the imperialists, including through the acquisition of nuclear weapons. ROTC was successfully driven off hundreds of



1980: Spartacist contingent at Washington, D.C. anti-draft march. SL hailed Soviet Red Army against U.S.-backed Islamic reactionaries in Afghanistan, opposed anti-Soviet war drive.

campuses in the late 1960s and 1970s *not* because of a mass pacifist movement, but because the U.S. was waging a *losing* war in Vietnam while facing massive social and class struggle in the U.S.

Scratch the “Revolutionary” Surface—Reformists Underneath

In contrast to the more explicit reformists of the ISO, RCP and WWP, the Progressive Labor Party (PL) couches its fight against military recruiters in high schools in revolutionary phrases: “We don’t welcome the bosses’ wars and we want military recruiters out of the schools. But we also know that opening the eyes of youth in and out of uniform to the need for, and possibility of, communist revolution lays the foundation for a red army of workers and youth to smash imperialist war for good” (*Challenge*, 17

November 2004). While the rhetoric may sound good, PL refused to take a side with Iraq against the U.S., writing on the eve of the war that the working class must “oppose both U.S. and Iraqi bosses” (*Challenge*, 5 February 2003).

PL clearly swam with the reformist stream as did all the other groups that

refused to call for the defense of Iraq during the war, but to cover this up, they grotesquely distort Lenin. Today, in reference to the U.S. occupation of Iraq, PL writes: “Only Rebellious Soldiers Can ‘Bring The Troops Home’ From All Imperialist War” (*Challenge*, 19 January). In this article PL falsely applies Lenin’s program on *interimperialist* wars to Iraq today. Lenin’s program for wars between imperialist nations was that workers have no side in such a war and that soldiers of all the belligerent countries should “turn the guns around,” turning the imperialist war into a revolutionary civil war against the capitalists. What PL hides is that Lenin made it quite clear that in the case of a war between an imperialist power and a country subjugated by imperialism, the duty of revolutionaries was to militarily side with the latter and favor the defeat of the imperialists. As

Lenin wrote in *Socialism and War* (1915): “If tomorrow, Morocco were to declare war on France, or India on Britain, or Persia or China on Russia, and so on, these would be ‘just,’ and ‘defensive’ wars, *irrespective* of who would be the first to attack; any socialist would wish the oppressed, dependent and unequal states victory over the oppressor, slave-holding and predatory ‘Great’ Powers.”

Another group that touts its fight against military recruiters, the League for the Revolutionary Party, opposes the slogan “No to the Draft!” and promotes the “virtues” of a conscript army! In this they march in lockstep with bourgeois liberals like black Democratic Congressman Charles Rangel, who has introduced legislation for the reinstatement of the draft because “if policymakers in Washington knew that their kids would be placed in harm’s way, their foreign policy of invading and bombing countries would cease and desist” (New York *Amsterdam News*, February 24-March 2). As was clear with student deferments during the Vietnam War and schemes like those George W. Bush took advantage of, the ruling class always finds a way for its sons to avoid being drafted into combat. Rangel’s scheme is nothing other than a gross attempt to refurbish the credentials of racist U.S. imperialism in the eyes of black people and minorities by promising “democratization” of the armed forces.

Those who oppose the rapacious wars of U.S. imperialism abroad must also oppose the war drive at home. This means opposing the draconian assaults on civil liberties like the USA-Patriot Act, opposing the witchhunts in the universities against pro-Palestinian and leftist professors, as well as opposing recruiters for the armed forces. By failing to put opposition to military recruiters and ROTC in the context of the fight to abolish bourgeois militarism and imperialism, the reformist left’s campaigns promote illusions in a reformed bourgeois military and a “democratic” imperialism. The SYC participates in struggles against military recruiters on campus, seeking to link these struggles to the social power of the working class, and to win youth to the understanding that only a revolutionary, proletarian fight against imperialism and bourgeois militarism can succeed. Join us! ■

Mexico...

(continued from page 1)

PRI. In opposing this *desafuero* we are defending our class’s right to organize and fight against the capitalist class as a whole. Thus, if the working class is to break with the bourgeois parties and move forward toward its political independence, as a basic starting point the working class should not allow Fox’s judicial dictates to prevent it from voting for whomever it wants. If the government can push aside even a timid bourgeois nationalist such as López Obrador, removing him from his elected post and even incarcerating him, what could a class-struggle leadership of the working class expect?

López Obrador is a capitalist politician, and the workers movement must achieve its political independence from him and his party, the PRD, as well as from the PAN and the PRI. Concretely, this means not to vote for any of these parties. López Obrador himself has made it explicitly clear to Mexican investors and imperialist representatives that he is not planning to do anything that hurts their reactionary interests (let us remember that the PRD is not even opposed to NAFTA [North American Free Trade Agreement], that it was López Obrador who brought the racist and despotic Giuliani to braintrust the Mexico City police, that he was the first one to propose the militarization of prisons, and is rabidly

opposed to union organizing in Mexico City’s high schools). While we oppose Fox’s anti-democratic maneuvers against the PRD, we warn that if López Obrador wins the presidency, the very support he has among the workers movement would put him in a much better position to push forward the privatization of the electric and oil industries, which the ineffectual Fox has not been able to impose.

In large part, López Obrador’s popularity is due to his being identified as an opponent of the “neoliberalism” of the PAN and the PRI, centrally symbolized by NAFTA, i.e., the unrestrained pillaging of the Mexican economy by U.S. imperialism, which for over a decade has been causing mass layoffs and an increasingly greater devastation of the Mexican countryside. Thus, in the absence of truly revolutionary parties and with the help of the current treacherous leaders of the workers movement, throughout Latin America, “left” capitalist governments have managed to pose as an alternative and even to use the mobilization of the working class to achieve a less disadvantageous position vis-à-vis imperialism—like Chávez in Venezuela—or to guarantee greater stability before the same IMF-type policies of their predecessors—such as Lula in Brazil. The history of the 20th century in Latin America has seen the alternating succession of both bourgeois nationalist and openly right-wing governments, sometimes through bloody coups, without either one achieving any real independence from imperialism or a

qualitative increase in the masses’ standard of living.

Despite his soft “left” rhetoric and his even more modest reforms expanding social expenditure in Mexico City, neither López Obrador nor any other bourgeois politician will realize the legitimate demands of the masses for a truly independent and democratic country free of misery. And this is so because Mexican capitalism, as capitalism in the rest of the underdeveloped world regardless of the party that administers it, is organically chained to imperialism: it depends too much on the latter’s investments and credits. The solution is not in class collaboration with the “national bourgeoisie,” but in the opposite; the solution lies in the powerful working class breaking with all bourgeois parties and *building a*

revolutionary party, part of a reformed Leninist-Trotskyist Fourth International, capable of leading the working class, at the head of the impoverished population, in the struggle against the rule of capital. In this way the workers will be able to establish their own class rule based on the expropriation of the means of production from the hands of the national and foreign capitalists. Their best allies in this struggle will be their class brothers and sisters in the rest of the world, especially the powerful multiracial working class in the belly of the American imperialist beast. As Leon Trotsky’s theory of permanent revolution explains, the democratic demands of the Latin American masses can only be ultimately won by putting an end to imperialism and establishing socialism on a worldwide scale. ■

Spartacist League/Spartacus Youth Club Forum

For a Class-Struggle Fight for All Our Rights! “War on Terror” Targets Labor, Blacks and Immigrants

Thursday, April 28, 7:30 p.m.

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Hamilton Hall, Room 503
116th Street and Broadway
(Take #1 train to 116th St. Station)

For more information: (212) 267-1025
or e-mail nysl@compuserve.com

NEW YORK

Mumia...

(continued from page 1)

frame up, harass, jail, and even murder black youth and disrupt their political organizations. Their prime target was the Black Panther Party. Hoover declared in 1968: “The Negro youth and moderate[s] must be made to understand that if they succumb to revolutionary teachings, they will be dead revolutionaries.” As a member of the Black Panther Party, Mumia did consider himself a revolutionary, and, from the point of view of the FBI and the Philadelphia cops, he was a dead man on leave.

In 1995, the Partisan Defense Committee managed to obtain from the FBI over 700 pages of records that the FBI had collected on Mumia. That’s only what they released to us; it’s not the entirety of it. We found in these FBI files the statements proving that the FBI had begun watching Mumia on a daily basis from the time he was 15 years old and in high school. Why did they target him? Was it because he had weapons and threatened to kill anyone? No. They put him under surveillance because of his speaking and writing skills.

Here’s a quote from an October 1969 FBI report:

“In spite of the subject’s age (15 years), Philadelphia feels that his continued participation in BPP [Black Panther Party]



James/Philadelphia Inquirer

Left: Mumia Abu-Jamal as Minister of Information for Philadelphia Black Panthers, 1969. Right: As part of vendetta against black militants, Police Commissioner Frank Rizzo’s cops stripped Philadelphia Panthers during 1970 raid on their office.

Ligato/Philadelphia Bulletin



activities in the Philadelphia Division, his position in the Philadelphia branch of the BPP, and his past inclination to appear and speak at public gatherings, the subject should be included on the Security Index.”

The Security Index was a list that the FBI compiled of people who were to be taken into detention and put into concentration camps in the event of a national emergency. It was a secret list. Mumia was in the gun sights of the FBI, targeted for his ability to speak and write. The reports in the FBI files include all sorts of attachments of clippings and articles written by Mumia. And the FBI noted that he “made the BPP look good because his approach was very positive.” They

their beds. Years later, in a civil rights lawsuit, it was proved that the FBI was involved in this. Then the families got some financial compensation.

Mumia went to Chicago and viewed Hampton and Clark’s shot-up apartment. He returned to Philadelphia with other Black Panther Party members and spoke out in protest against their murders. Shortly afterward, in early January 1970, the front page of the *Philadelphia Inquirer*—an establishment newspaper in Philly—ran an article about Mumia, who was then 16, sitting in the Panther office and talking about the role of the Black Panther Party and the government’s attacks against it.

At the time, the Panthers had made a

turn toward community service and were very involved in things like breakfast programs for poor kids in churches, reading programs and those kinds of things. They understood from experience that the police were not their friends, that the police were shooting them up.

The Panthers adopted certain slogans of Mao Zedong, then the leader of China, such as “all power to the people,” and “political power grows out of the barrel of a gun.” The latter was intended to mean

that, in a historic sense, all states come into being through force. In this context, in reference to the United States government, it is seen in the eradication of the Native Americans in the area that became the United States, and in the institution of slavery and what was done to black slaves as part of building the American social system.

Political Repression, Lynch Law “Justice”

Some years later, Mumia was an up-and-coming radio journalist known as “the voice of the voiceless.” He was listed in *Philadelphia Magazine* as a rising talent, one of their “people to watch” in 1981. Just a few months later, he was arrested for the murder of police officer Daniel Faulkner. The headlines in the papers were amazing with regard to someone accused of killing a police officer. They said: “The Suspect—Jamal: an Eloquent Activist Not Afraid to Raise His Voice.” That’s a pretty unusual description of somebody who’s just been accused of killing a cop. The articles described his work in various communities, his Panther Party background, and his support for the MOVE organization, a back-to-nature commune that was harassed and persecuted. In 1985, the Philadelphia police in collusion with the FBI dropped a bomb on them.

The main argument used by the prosecution to get Mumia sentenced to death in 1982 was the statement he had made as a 16-year-old Panther Party member—a decade before Daniel Faulkner was killed—that “political power grows out of the barrel of a gun” and “all power to the people.” The D.A. argued to the jury that these views meant that Mumia had always intended to kill a cop. When we discovered that the basis for sentencing Mumia to death was his membership in a political organization and manipulation of a statement he made when he was 15

or 16 years old, the PDC was compelled to take up Mumia’s defense. We took up Mumia’s case as emblematic of the death penalty, of its inherent racism from its origin to its application in the U.S. And we took up Mumia’s defense as part of a broader fight against labeling people “terrorists” and sentencing them to death based upon their political beliefs, expression or organizational membership.

Now, this may not seem so outrageous to you at this time. After all, this is the post-September 11 period and we now live in a time when laws are passed declaring that, if you give support to somebody the government deems some kind of “terrorist,” it makes you a terrorist too. There’s a lawyer in New York named Lynne Stewart who was just convicted of giving material aid to terrorism because she represented Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman, who was convicted of involvement in the 1993 attack on the World Trade Center. And because she vigorously defended her client, and didn’t adhere to restrictive conditions by the government that said she couldn’t speak to the press about her client’s views, she was convicted of giving material aid to terrorism and conspiring to defraud the U.S. government. She now faces decades behind bars. We are also fighting to overturn her conviction and the conviction of her translator, Mohamed Yousry, and her paralegal, Ahmed Abdel Sattar.

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WORKERS VANGUARD

ROTC, Military Recruiters Off Campus Now!

As the bloody U.S. colonial occupation of Iraq drags into its third year, and with the U.S. volunteer military facing predictable recruitment shortages, student activists around the country have taken to protesting military recruiters on campus. On January 20, the day of Bush's second imperial inauguration, some 300 students at Seattle Central Community College confronted and successfully drove out two military recruiters. On March 9, more than 100 students at San Francisco State University (SFSU) marched into an auditorium where Air Force and Army Corps of Engineers recruiters were handing out their literature and surrounded their

Young Spartacus

tables for two hours, chanting and giving speeches (see "No Reprisals Against Anti-Military Recruitment Protesters!", page 8). Planned and impromptu protests and "counter-recruitment" activities have taken place on dozens of other campuses.

Military recruiters, ROTC and other similar agencies are direct appendages of the military machine that exists to defend the interests of the American imperialist ruling class. ROTC recruits university students to become the next generation of the elite officer corps whose job is to oversee U.S. imperialist slaughter in wars like those against Afghanistan and Iraq. Meanwhile, military recruiters use promised tuition assistance and job opportunities to lure working-class youth, including a disproportionate number of black and minority youth, into signing up to be the cannon fodder for these wars.

The SYC opposes the extension of the repressive apparatus of the capitalist state onto college campuses and high schools. We fight against the use of the universities and schools as direct agents of U.S. imperialism and have actively organized for years against ROTC, military recruiters, military research, the CIA and cop training on campus. We say: **ROTC, military recruiters off campus now!**

With the U.S. military straining to maintain a large occupation force in Iraq

Not One Person, Not One Penny for the Imperialist Military!



Seattle Central Community College students drive out military recruiters at January 20 protest.

and fighting a global "war on terror," the capitalist rulers have been on a drive to expand the presence of ROTC and military recruiters on campus. For several years high school activists have been campaigning against a provision in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 stipulating that high schools receiving federal funding must give military recruiters students' personal information and the "same access" to schools as college and job recruiters. The drive to return ROTC to campuses such as Columbia University continues. An ROTC student-faculty task force there is evenly split on the immediate return of ROTC, but has voted overwhelmingly for the return of ROTC if the

military's anti-gay "don't ask, don't tell" policy were abolished.

Students protesting military recruiters have been met with victimization and repression by campus administrations and the cops. On March 9, three students at the City College of New York (CCNY) were detained and brutalized by the police for protesting against military recruiters during a career fair. The three students, along with a CCNY staff member who was arrested two days later, face charges of assault and have been suspended from the college. And at William Paterson University in New Jersey, student Thomas Keenan was arrested and charged with defiant trespass for the "crime" of handing out flyers opposing military recruiters on February 28. The SYC demands: **Drop the charges now! No reprisals! Cops off campus!**

Marxism and Bourgeois Militarism

The military's discrimination against gays has been central to the legal battle over the Solomon Amendment—a law stipulating that colleges and universities must allow military recruiters onto campus as a condition for federal funding. This law was ruled unconstitutional by the Third Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals last November on the basis that it violated the free speech rights of schools to bar an organization which openly pursued a policy with which they disagreed. The Justice Department has obtained a stay of this ruling while it prepares a challenge to it at the U.S. Supreme Court level.

Racism and social bigotry are intrinsic to capitalist society and therefore find their reflection in institutions such as the armed forces. As opponents of all mani-

festations of racial and sexual oppression we say: Down with anti-gay discrimination in the military! Yet we also understand that no amount of reform will change the fundamental purpose of the military: to uphold the capitalist system. This necessarily means that for the fight against militarism to be successful, it must go beyond the boundaries of the schools and colleges, and become a part of the struggle to overthrow the entire capitalist system. The working class uniquely has both the power and material interest to end this system by expropriating the means of production and abolishing capitalist private property through socialist revolution.

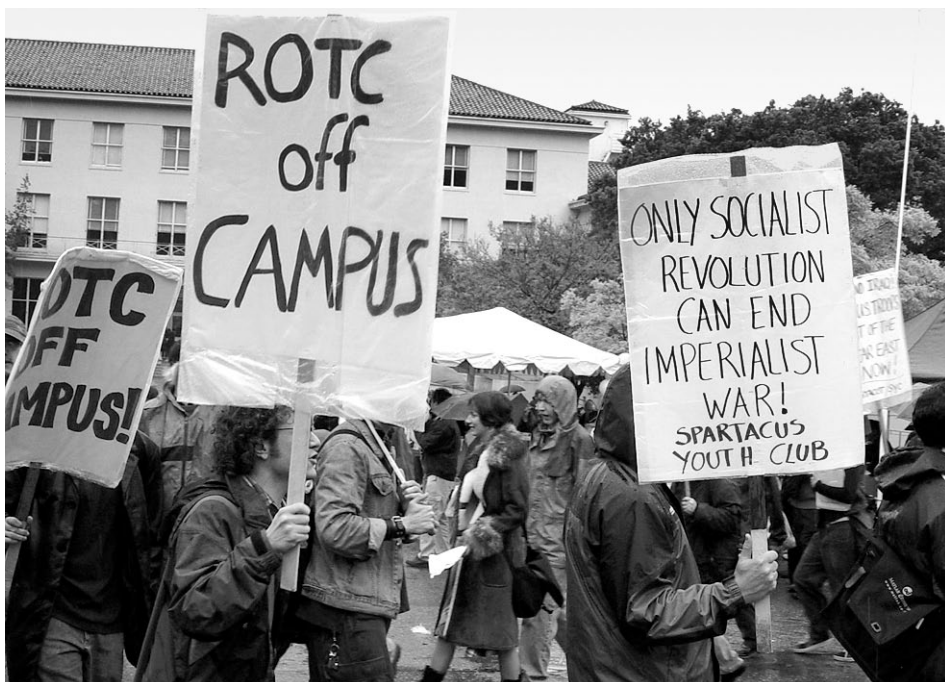
The military is an essential part of the capitalist state, the armed bodies of men—cops, courts and prison system—that exist to defend the capitalist rulers' "right" to exploit the working and oppressed masses. It defends capitalism not only through imperialist adventures and colonial plunder abroad, but also by violently repressing class and social struggle at home. From the slaughter of workers by federal troops in the historic Rail Strike of 1877 to the government's threats just over two years ago to have the military take over the ports if the West Coast longshore union dared strike, the military has been a key tool for strike-breaking. And from the ghetto rebellions of the 1960s to the 1992 L.A. upheaval in the wake of the acquittal of the cops who beat black motorist Rodney King, troops have been used to crush black protest. Student protesters against the Vietnam War also got a taste of this treatment, most infamously with the National Guard killing of four students at Kent State University in 1970.

Marxist opposition to bourgeois militarism is encapsulated in the call raised by heroic German revolutionary Karl Liebknecht during World War I: Not a man, not a penny for the imperialist military! An application of this is our opposition to signing up for the volunteer army. Correspondingly, revolutionaries oppose military conscription, which serves to turn the bulk of working-class youth into cannon fodder for imperialist wars. Since their humiliating military defeat in the Vietnam War, the U.S. rulers have been hesitant to reinstate the draft for fear of the opposition this would engender. Yet, sooner or later, the U.S. ruling class will be forced to reinstate the draft. The duty of revolutionaries, if drafted, is to go into the military with the mass of young workers and seek to win the working-class ranks to the fight for socialist revolution.

The Iraq War and the Left

Bourgeois militarism is an ideologically conservatizing force, serving to imbue workers and the oppressed with national chauvinism and unquestioning

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Spartacus Youth Club-led united-front protest against ROTC on UC Berkeley campus, April 2003.