

War Crimes and Misdemeanors

The occupation of Iraq is not going well for U.S. imperialism. For that matter neither is the occupation of Afghanistan. More than 2,000 Americans have forfeited their lives in Iraq, while over 100,000 Iraqis have been killed as a result of the war and occupation. Most Americans are now aware that the expressed reason for the occupation—the “democratization” of Iraq—is as much a hallucination as were the “weapons of mass destruction” that served as a pretext for the war.

The indictment of I. Lewis “Scooter” Libby for perjury and obstruction of justice over his role in outing CIA agent Valerie Plame has been seized on by both the bourgeois press and the Democrats as a way to hide their complicity in the savage destruction that has been visited on the social fabric of Iraq and the peoples who inhabit it. The *New York Times* would have us believe that it was swindled by its reporter Judith Miller, who fed its readers the Bush administration’s war lies about Iraq. The Democrats, so the story goes, were at the mercy of the gargantuan lies concocted, in the main, by Vice President Dick Cheney, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and the evil one, Karl Rove.

This is self-serving hogwash, as we detailed in “Judith Miller and Bush Disinformation—Big Lies and Imperialist War” (WV No. 856, 14 October). To date the main imperialist executioner of the Iraqi peoples was Bill Clinton, backed by a United Nations embargo. The starvation blockade, mainly during his eight years in office, killed a million and a half Iraqis. The hundreds of UN monitors of Saddam Hussein’s military capabilities, who operated as spies for the U.S., were fully aware, and assuredly communicated to their masters, that Iraq was incapable of any coherent military action against the U.S. Thus, to sell the war to the public, an outrageous and fantastic myth was constructed linking Saddam Hussein to Al Qaeda and endowing the Iraqi military with nuclear capability. The bourgeois press was aware of the reality, as were the Democrats, who nevertheless voted overwhelmingly for the war.

The “discovery” that Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld et al. lied ranks with the discovery of snow in Antarctica. In fact, lies are the oil the imperialists use to facilitate their savageries. We noted in “Big Lies and Imperialist War” that the 1964 “Gulf of Tonkin incident” was a fabrication designed to sell the escalation of U.S.



Corbis



AP

The Libby Imbroglia

Imperialist war criminals and liars: Dick Cheney with George W. Bush; I. Lewis Libby, Cheney’s former chief of staff.

involvement in the Vietnam War. Last week it was reported that the government had suppressed a 2001 National Security Agency finding which demonstrated that the “incident” was a lie.

The Democrats’ current protestations about Bush’s lies are simply due to the fact that things haven’t worked out in Iraq. Commenting on the investigations into the Bush administration, Frank Rich

“war on terror”—a war armed with measures that frontally attack not only immigrants but the democratic rights of blacks and all working people.

As a capitalist party, the Democrats are dedicated to the fundamental interests of U.S. imperialism, which launched the Iraq invasion to assert its unchallenged domination over this oil-rich region and the globe. The reformist and

military defense of Afghanistan and Iraq against the U.S. and allied imperialists, at the same time standing in irreconcilable political opposition to the reactionary Taliban and the capitalist regime of Saddam Hussein. Today we call for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Iraq and Afghanistan. As we wrote in “Big Lies and Imperialist War”:

“Growing opposition in the U.S. population to the Iraq occupation, revulsion over the government’s role in the death and destruction of black people and the poor after Hurricane Katrina, anger at the attacks on fundamental democratic rights—the situation speaks to the burning need to build a workers party that would organize *class struggle* against the U.S. capitalist rulers. The fight against imperialist war cannot be separated from the struggle against the capitalist system that breeds such war. Only when the multiracial proletariat seizes power from the blood-drenched, arrogant capitalist rulers can we begin to speak of a world rid of imperialist wars and occupations and offering material security and social justice for all.”

Bosses’ Class War Against U.S. Workers

Even as Bush was faced with tens of thousands of protesters during his trip to Argentina, the U.S. press corps kept hounding him about the Plame investigation. Growing sections of the U.S. bourgeoisie are running out of patience with the challenged president, as clearly expressed in the *New York Times* (8 November) editorial, “President Bush’s Walkabout”:

“After President Bush’s disastrous visit to Latin America, it’s unnerving to realize that his presidency still has more than three years to run. An administration with no agenda and no competence would be hard enough to live with on the domestic front. But the rest of the world simply can’t afford an American government this bad for that long....

“The central problem is not Karl Rove or
continued on page 9

Break with the Democrats — For a Class-Struggle Workers Party!

wrote in the *New York Times* (30 October), “We’re a long way from putting together the full history of a self-described ‘war presidency’ that bungled the war in Iraq and, in doing so, may be losing the war against radical Islamic terrorism as well.” This is the standard Democratic Party criticism of the Bush White House: that it cannot be trusted to defend U.S. interests around the world and to prosecute the

liberal left that dominates the antiwar coalitions hangs on to the coattails of the liberal imperialist opposition, searching for more rational ways of maintaining this profoundly irrational system. As Marxists, our standpoint is the need to mobilize the multiracial proletariat in struggle *against* the imperialist rulers, both Democratic and Republican. The Spartacist League took a side for the



AP photos

Left: U.S. troops brutalize Iraqi civilians in Falluja, November 2004. Right: Hurricane Katrina survivors in New Orleans abandoned by racist capitalist rulers.



“Intelligent Design” Reactionaries

11 October 2005

To the editor:

It was gratifying to see the reference to the Seattle-based Discovery Institute as a leading force behind the obscurantist dogma of Intelligent Design in your excellent article, “The Evolution Wars: Religious Reaction and Racist Oppression—Hail Charles Darwin!” (WV No. 854, 16 September). This think tank of ultrarightist Christian billionaires first came to my attention when I was researching the anti-woman U.S./UN crusade against “sex trafficking” for *Spartacist*. Bush’s director for the State Department’s Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons is John R. Miller, who was Chairman of the Board of the Discovery Institute through 2003. When I learned that, I

knew that there was nothing good about the U.S.’s international campaign against “modern-day slavery,” claiming that women immigrants were being massively coerced into prostitution by sinister border coyotes. As we said in “Anti-Immigrant, Anti-Woman, Anti-Sex: U.S./UN Crusade Against ‘Sex Trafficking’” (*Spartacist* No. 58, Spring 2004), “‘redeeming the enslaved’ means unleashing the cops and courts in a multiple attack on immigrants, women and sex.”

“Hail Charles Darwin” rightly focuses on the racism of the creationists, whose dogma includes such nonsense as the separate creation of the human races (which are in fact expressions of social relations, not biological differences). But proponents of Genesis as science, of course, include women in their very long list of the geneti-

cally unworthy. It is fitting that Miller went from the Discovery Institute to running Bush’s anti-trafficking crusade, which has as a broader goal beefing up the credentials of the “family values” anti-sex witchhunt. Women’s abortion rights and people’s right to a sex life free of government snooping—these are in the cross hairs of this ongoing government campaign.

Politically thoughtful research is a requirement for a communist newspaper. Miller’s presence as the head of the U.S. Trafficking Office was a tipoff that this was a highly politicized operation aiming to recast sin and sex in “human rights” terms. According to this coalition of cops, the evangelical right and right-wing bourgeois feminists, all prostitution is “sex slavery.” The Coalition Against Trafficking in Women defines prostitution as “gang rape” and argues that it should be illegal. We Marxists oppose all laws against “crimes without victims” like prostitution,

gambling, drug use and drinking as gross government interference in private life.

I would take any words coming from John R. Miller and his political associates with a boulder-size grain of salt. Therefore, I think the reference to workers “enslaved” in Brazil in a caption in *Workers Vanguard* No. 818 (“Lula’s Popular Front Turns Screws on Workers,” 23 January 2004) is mistaken. The source for this was Kevin Bales, a major supporter of the UN anti-trafficking program. Instead, the article could have spoken of “slave-like” conditions for these workers. We believe in the political precision of words, and slavery is illegal in Brazil. The political task is not abolition of the slave system, but the fight for unionization of these hideously exploited workers. Thus the difference between the terms, seemingly semantic, has real programmatic implications.

Comradely,
Amy Rath

From New Orleans Reader

1 November 2005

Dear WV,

I am a New Orleans evacuee recently returned, and a WV supporter. I greatly appreciated the first WV article on Katrina, the “man-made disaster,” and await resumption of mail or Internet to read more. Here is what I am seeing since my return.

The feds, state and local authorities, having first attempted negligent homicide against the 20 percent of the city population with no car to evacuate in, are now seeking to prevent their return. The racist codewords of the day are “permanently reduced population” and “changed demographic.” You can read it in the bourgeois press and hear it on the street. The powers that be want a smaller, more affluent and whiter town post-Katrina.

The black poor and working class are being told “don’t come back,” by means of closing the public hospitals, public schools, public housing, libraries, parks and keeping them closed. The old jobs are wiped out, and the new jobs are going to out-of-staters. The blackest parts of town are denied utilities or are outright closed off at gun point.

Right now the part of town being repopulated is the strip of land along the Mississippi River, the 20 percent of town that has electricity and commerce. It includes Audubon Park, Tulane, Uptown, the Garden District, Central Business District and the French Quarter. These mostly well-to-do areas were protected from flooding by the old earthen levees dating to the 1700s.

The other 80 percent of the city flooded when the concrete walls of the modern-made canals broke due to faulty design and engineering. This included my neighborhood Gentilly, Mid-City, Lakeview and the overwhelmingly black New Orleans East and Lower 9th Ward. These areas are still without power and are largely unin-

habited. Homeowners have begun to go into all but the 9th Ward during daylight hours to haul their belongings to the curb, knock out all the walls, and begin rebuilding their flooded homes.

The Lower 9th Ward is closed off by the National Guard. It is, or was, virtually all poor and black, mostly working poor such as city employees, dock workers, hotel workers. Fats Domino was rescued from the floodwaters there and lost everything in his home.

9th Ward residents were the last to be allowed back in to “Look and Leave.” The first ones in made the horrific discovery of the decomposed remains of 21 elderly loved ones, missed in the house-to-house sweep. After that, access was suspended, and now only 20-minute bus tours of the area are permitted.

The City peremptorily and prematurely condemned Charity Hospital, a huge and solid structure built in the 1930s, not out of safety concerns but to eliminate healthcare to the poor and discourage their return. In the process, two medical schools and a Level One Trauma Center are gone. State legislators seek to move Charity out of N.O. Meanwhile Charity and LSU have set up a valiant little Tent City outside the shuttered University Hospital, serving 100 patients a day.

The local and state School Boards have closed the N.O. public schools for the school year, effectively preventing the return of all the families attached to those children. Only union-busting “charter schools” that cater to the well-off are being permitted to open. The state School Board President said they certainly do not plan to re-open the “failing schools,” which were all the rest. By contrast, the harder-hit St. Bernard Parish public schools are opening in November.

All the public housing projects, flooded or not, are closed. HANO, the Housing

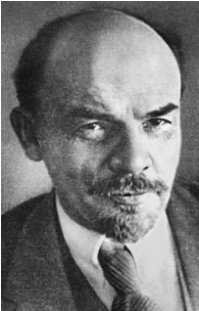
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TROTSKY

The 1917 October Revolution

Under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik Party, the workers of Russia seized power on 7 November 1917 (25 October in the old Russian calendar), proclaiming the death sentence of the old capitalist order. Addressing the Petrograd Soviet (workers council) on the day of victory amid the continuing carnage of the interimperialist World War I, Lenin emphasized the international perspective of the socialist revolution. Fighting to forge parties on the Bolshevik model, the International Communist League



LENIN

is committed to the struggle for new October Revolutions throughout the world.

Comrades, the workers’ and peasants’ revolution, about the necessity of which the Bolsheviks have always spoken, has been accomplished.

What is the significance of this workers’ and peasants’ revolution? Its significance is, first of all, that we shall have a Soviet government, our own organ of power, in which the bourgeoisie will have no share whatsoever. The oppressed masses will themselves create a power. The old state apparatus will be shattered to its foundations and a new administrative apparatus set up in the form of the Soviet organisations.

From now on, a new phase in the history of Russia begins, and this, the third Russian revolution, should in the end lead to the victory of socialism.

One of our urgent tasks is to put an immediate end to the war. It is clear to everybody that in order to end this war, which is closely bound up with the present capitalist system, capital itself must be fought.

We shall be helped in this by the world working-class movement, which is already beginning to develop in Italy, Britain and Germany.

The proposal we make to international democracy for a just and immediate peace will everywhere awaken an ardent response among the international proletarian masses. All the secret treaties must be immediately published in order to strengthen the confidence of the proletariat.

Within Russia a huge section of the peasantry have said that they have played long enough with the capitalists, and will now march with the workers. A single decree putting an end to landed proprietorship will win us the confidence of the peasants. The peasants will understand that the salvation of the peasantry lies only in an alliance with the workers. We shall institute genuine workers’ control over production.

We have now learned to make a concerted effort. The revolution that has just been accomplished is evidence of this. We possess the strength of mass organisation, which will overcome everything and lead the proletariat to the world revolution.

We must now set about building a proletarian socialist state in Russia.

Long live the world socialist revolution! (*Stormy applause.*)

—V. I. Lenin, “Report on the Tasks of the Soviet Power,” 7 November 1917

WORKERS VANGUARD

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

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The closing date for news in this issue is 8 November.

No. 858

11 November 2005



Merwin/NY Times

Hurricane Katrina evacuees in angry meeting with officials in Houston. Survivors have waited months for government aid.

WORKERS VANGUARD

Twentieth Annual PDC Holiday Appeal

Free the Class-War Prisoners!

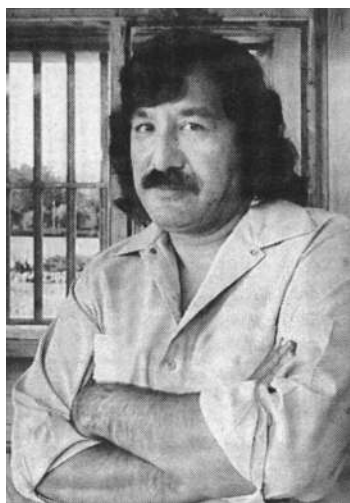
This year's Holiday Appeals mark the 20th year of the Partisan Defense Committee's program of sending monthly stipends as an expression of solidarity to those imprisoned for standing up to racist capitalist repression. This program revived a tradition initiated by the International Labor Defense under James P. Cannon, its founder and first secretary (1925-28). The PDC sends stipends to 17 class-war prisoners.

Mumia Abu-Jamal: America's foremost class-war prisoner, former Black Panther Party spokesman, well-known supporter of the MOVE organization and award-winning journalist known as "the voice of the voiceless." On December 9, Mumia enters his 25th year of incarceration for a killing that the cops know he did not commit. Mumia was framed up for the 1981 killing of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner and sentenced to death explicitly for his political views. Over four years ago, Mumia's attorneys submitted to the courts the sworn confession of Arnold Beverly that he, not Mumia, shot and killed Faulkner. But to the racists in black robes of both the Pennsylvania and U.S. federal judiciaries, a court of law is no place for evidence of the innocence of this fighter for the oppressed.

This year the Pennsylvania courts dis-

Katrina, that Mumia faces the ultimate in capitalist repression: the racist death penalty. Workers, immigrants, minorities and all opponents of racist oppression must strengthen their efforts to free Mumia now! Abolish the racist death penalty!

Leonard Peltier is an internationally revered class-war prisoner in America. His incarceration for nearly three decades



Eli Reichman

Leonard Peltier

because of his activism in the American Indian Movement has come to symbolize this country's racist repression of its native peoples, the survivors of centuries of genocidal oppression. Peltier's frame-up trial for the deaths of two marauding FBI agents in what had become a war zone at the South Dakota Pine Ridge Reservation 30 years ago shows what capitalist "justice" is all about. As in the case of Mumia and the other class-war prisoners, Peltier's case demonstrates there is no justice in the capitalist courts. Although the lead government attorney has admitted, "We can't prove who shot those agents," and the courts have repeatedly acknowledged blatant prosecutorial misconduct, the 61-year-old fighter for Native Americans is still locked away. This year federal authorities transferred Peltier from Leavenworth to the Terre Haute penitentiary, where he was thrown into solitary and denied medicine. He was cruelly transferred again, finally ending up in USP Lewisburg in Pennsylvania. Free Leonard Peltier now!

Jamal Hart, Mumia's son, was sentenced in 1998 to 15½ years on bogus firearms possession charges. Hart was targeted for his prominent activism in the campaign to free his father. Although Hart was initially charged under Pennsylvania laws, which would have meant a probationary sentence, Clinton's Justice Department intervened to have him

thrown into prison under federal laws. He is not eligible for parole. Hart is currently confined in Ray Brook, New York, near the Canadian border, hundreds of miles from family and supporters. He has been subjected to numerous provocations by abusive prison guards, thrown into solitary and had his personal property illegally confiscated.

Eight MOVE members, **Chuck Africa, Michael Africa, Debbie Africa, Janet Africa, Janine Africa, Delbert Africa, Eddie Africa** and **Phil Africa**, are in their 28th year of prison. They were sentenced to 30-100 years after the 8 August 1978 siege of their Philadelphia home by over 600 heavily armed cops. They were falsely convicted of killing a police officer who died in the cops' own crossfire. In 1985 they watched in horror from their Pennsylvania prison cells as eleven of their MOVE family members, including five children, were massacred by Philly cops, many of them "veterans" of the 1978 assault.

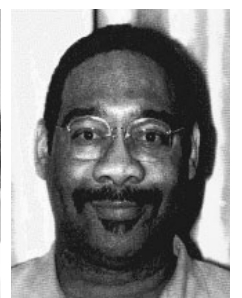
Jaen Laaman, Thomas Manning and **Richard Williams** are the remaining anti-imperialist activists known as the Ohio 7 still in prison. They were convicted for their roles in a radical group that took credit for bank "expropriations" and bombings in the late 1970s and '80s against symbols of U.S. imperialism such as military and corporate offices. Before their arrests in Ohio and Virginia in 1984 and 1985, they were targets of massive manhunts throughout the East Coast and Midwest. Their children were kidnapped at gunpoint by the Feds and interrogated. The government piled sentence upon sentence, intending to keep them imprisoned until the day they die.

The politics of the Ohio 7 were once shared by thousands of radicals during the heyday of the Vietnam antiwar movement and by New Leftists who wrote off the possibility of winning the working class to a revolutionary program and saw themselves as an auxiliary of "Third World" liberation movements. But, like the Weathermen before them, the Ohio 7 were spurned by the "respectable" left. From a proletarian standpoint, the actions of these leftist activists against imperialism and racist injustice are not a crime. As the PDC has said from the time the Ohio 7 were first persecuted by the capitalist state, these courageous fighters should not have served even a day in prison.

Ed Poindexter and **Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa** are former Black Panther supporters and leaders of the Omaha, Nebraska, National Committee to Combat Fascism. They were victims of the FBI COINTELPRO operation launched against the Communist Party and then deployed to "neutralize" radical organizations in the 1960s, particularly the Black Panther Party, whose members were framed up and imprisoned by the hundreds while 38 were killed in cold blood. Poindexter and Mondo were railroaded to prison for a 1970 explosion which killed a cop; convicted on perjured



Nat Weinstein



n2pp.info

Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa (left) and Ed Poindexter.

testimony; sentenced to life and have now served more than 30 years in jail. The Nebraska Board of Pardons refuses to lessen their sentences so they can be considered for parole.

Hugo Pinell is the last of the San Quentin 6 still in prison. He was a militant anti-racist leader of prison rights organizing along with his comrade and mentor, George Jackson, who was gunned down by prison guards in 1971. Pinell has been incarcerated for more than 40 years, repeatedly denied parole despite hundreds of letters of support, many job offers and no disciplinary write-ups or rule infractions for over a quarter of a century. Now in his 60s, Pinell continues to serve a life sentence at the notorious Pelican Bay Security Housing Unit in California.

Contribute now! All proceeds from the Holiday Appeals will go to the Class-War Prisoners Stipend Fund. This is not charity but an elementary act of solidarity with those imprisoned for their opposition to racist capitalism and imperialist depredations. Send your contributions to: PDC, P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013; (212) 406-4252. ■



COC Productions

Mumia Abu-Jamal

missed Mumia's third appeal for post-conviction relief. With the U.S. Supreme Court devoted to the racist death penalty, and with his final federal appeals in motion, Mumia remains on death row locked down in a cell the size of a bathroom. It was because he spoke for the oppressed, such as those left to die in New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane

BUNDLES AVAILABLE!

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

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Free Mumia Now!

Benefit for Class-War Prisoners

Bay Area

Sunday, December 11
2 to 6 p.m.

Oakland YWCA Tea Room
 1515 Webster Street
 For more information:
 (510) 839-0852
 P.O. Box 77462
 San Francisco, CA 94107



Chicago

Sunday, December 11
3 to 7 p.m.

United Electrical Hall
 37 S. Ashland (at Monroe)
 For more information:
 (312) 563-0442
 P.O. Box 802867
 Chicago, IL 60680

Los Angeles

Saturday, December 10
2 to 6 p.m.

Mount Hollywood
 Congregational Church
 4607 Prospect Avenue
 For more information:
 (213) 380-8897
 or e-mail:
 partisansdefense-la@sbcglobal.net

New York

Friday, December 9
6 to 11 p.m.

6 Harrison St. (at Hudson)
 Manhattan
 (Take 1 or 9 to Franklin St.)
 For more information:
 (212) 406-4252
 P.O. Box 99, Canal St. Sta.
 New York, NY 10013

Toronto

Saturday, December 10
7 to 10 p.m.

Steelworkers Hall
 25 Cecil Street
 (near Queens Park Sta.)
 For more information:
 (416) 593-4138
 P.O. Box 314, Station B
 Toronto, Ontario M5T 2W1

This is not charity—it's a duty and an act of solidarity with those in prison. Their fight is our fight!

SPONSOR: PARTISAN DEFENSE COMMITTEE

WV Subscription Drive: A Successful Campaign



Spartacist literature table at September 24 San Francisco antiwar demonstration.

WV Photo

The success of the 2005 *Workers Vanguard* subscription drive is a tribute to the hard work of the comrades and sympathizers of the Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth Clubs. The six-week sub drive from late August through early October netted more than 1,500 subscriptions to *WV*, 76 subscriptions to *Espartaco*, the newspaper of the Grupo Espartaquista de México, Mexican section of the International Communist League, and 102 subscriptions to the press of other ICL sections. Altogether, these sales represent 3,335.5 points, where each full *WV* sub is two points, an introductory sub is 0.5 points, and a sub to other ICL publications is one point. This final tally is 120 percent of the cumulative quota of 2,790 points, with every local organization surpassing its quota.

The annual sub drive is a major national campaign to widen the readership of our biweekly Marxist press. Thousands of hours were spent preparing and carrying out the work. Comrades traveled widely to take part in protests and meet striking workers, man campus literature tables and organize “Meet the Marxists” events. Subscription renewals, representing an extension of the political relationship with our readers, also were sought. In conjunction with the sub drive, comrades helped build a series of united-front rallies, initiated by the Partisan Defense Committee, against government repression, highlighting the cases of Mumia Abu-Jamal, Lynne Stewart and Assata Shakur (see *WV* No. 855, 30 September).

WV is a vehicle for introducing youth and workers, along with black people, immigrants and other oppressed layers, to a revolutionary Marxist program. The role of the communist press was delineated in the 1921 Organizational Guidelines adopted at the Third Congress of the Communist International, which codified the experience of the Bolshevik Party that led the working class to power in the October Revolution of 1917. Emphasizing the importance of subscriptions, the Guidelines observed: “Use must be made of every situation in which there is increased motion among the workers and where political or social life is further inflamed by any sort of political and economic events.” During the sub drive, *WV*, in its content and distribution, served

our intervention into expressions of social discontent and class struggle—above all the reaction to the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and the growing opposition to the occupation of Iraq as seen at demonstrations across the country on September 24. As well, comrades made trips to intersect strikes by the Northwest Airlines AMFA mechanics and cleaners and Boeing IAM workers.

Our new readers will find that *WV* is hard-hitting and polemical. We strive for clarity and forthrightness when presenting our revolutionary views, in opposition to the liberal-reformist program of other groups claiming to be socialist. One recent subscriber wrote to us: “Most (such as the Peoples Weekly World, and the Workers World) simply talk about issues, and how these problems are products of capitalism. In the *Workers Vanguard*, you guys directly relate the situation to the writings of Marx, Lenin, and Trotsky.”

That’s right. The opportunist politics of the reformist left shift with the prevailing winds of liberal bourgeois public opinion, steering opponents of imperialist war, racism and exploitation to the doorstep of the Democratic Party. In contrast, we are guided by the program and principles of our revolutionary forebears as we fight to forge a workers party to lead the struggle for socialist revolution. We are proud of our political history, making available back issues of our journal of record through sales of bound volumes of *WV* and other publications.

An incident that spoke to the value we attach to our revolutionary continuity took place on one of two “Northern Tour” trips in the Pacific Northwest. Our comrades found a statue of Lenin in Fremont, Washington, defaced by an anarchist symbol and anti-communist expletive written in spray paint. So they purchased paint remover and scrubbed clean the statue of the leader of the world’s first successful proletarian revolution, prompting a worker from a nearby restaurant to come outside and thank us for a job well done.

We carry forward the banner of the October Revolution, not least by defending tooth and nail those gains already won by the international proletariat. Our program for the Chinese, North Korean, Vietnamese and Cuban deformed work-

ers states is unconditional military defense against imperialism and capitalist counterrevolution and for proletarian political revolution to oust their Stalinist misleaders. Our literature in relation to China, including our latest Chinese-language pamphlet, drew interest from Chinese students.

New Orleans: Racist Atrocity

When a wave of revulsion swept the country at the government’s response to the disaster in New Orleans, we shifted gears and expanded our trips to the South. While



WV Photo

Fremont, Washington: Comrade on Northern Tour cleaning statue of Lenin defaced by anarchist and right-wing graffiti.

we certainly ran into outrage at the racist contempt for black life shown by Republicans and Democrats alike, this anger did not take the form of organized mass protest on the streets. Those angered by what happened in New Orleans tended to see no other way to help the victims than as individuals, such as donating money and their time, because no collective protest was

organized. The pro-capitalist union misleaders did nothing to mobilize labor’s power to fight for what was needed, like jobs at good union wages and massive public works projects. This situation underscores the crying need for a new, class-struggle union leadership, committed to mobilizing labor’s power independent of the capitalist state and politicians.

Our articles and placards on New Orleans attracted people to our literature tables on campuses and at workplaces and neighborhoods across the country. Our characterization of New Orleans as a racist atrocity was polarizing and showed how deepgoing the racial divide is in this society. White liberal students from coast to coast commonly disagreed with us and denied that the crimes against the people of New Orleans had anything to do with race. In contrast, the mostly black students at schools like Chicago State University and North Carolina Central University gave a very different reception to the paper. Much the same was true among working people. On the Boeing picket lines, black workers were keenly aware of the racism, but some white workers thought the problems were due to “bureaucracy” or “just Bush.” In Norfolk, we sold over 120 papers to the predominantly black ILA longshore union. Our New Orleans material stopped them in their tracks, and our “Feds: Hands Off ILA!” article (*WV* No. 854, 16 September) denouncing the Justice Department’s attack on the union clinched sales.

New Orleans generated interest in what a socialized planned economy would look like and often was a jumping-off point for us to describe our program more fully, especially the centrality to the American socialist revolution of the fight for black rights. The Gulf Coast disaster graphically demonstrated that black people remain an oppressed race-color caste segregated at the bottom of this society. However, blacks also remain a strategic component of the industrial proletariat and are unionized at a higher rate than white workers. We fight for revolutionary integrationism, premised on the understanding that black freedom requires smashing the capitalist system and constructing an egalitarian socialist society.

Notably our comparison of the lack of preparation and criminal response by the U.S. government to the hurricanes with the success of the Cuban deformed workers state in repeatedly safely evacuating masses of people was especially appreciated by immigrant and black students. Additionally, our article on the 1955 lynching of Emmett Till and the fight for black liberation—also the subject of a well-attended sub drive forum in Chicago—attracted readers early in the campaign.

Bush and Iraq

Last year’s sub drive took place in the lead-up to the presidential elections, when many youth were swept up by “Anybody but Bush” fervor. The reformist left seized on anger over the Iraq war and occupation to promote standard-fare Democratic Party “lesser evilism.” What we intersected this year was colored by Bush’s re-election. Northern Tour comrades noted that looking to the U.S. rulers to protect “human rights” or even to “save the trees” has lost a lot of luster in the Bush years.

But the Democratic Party is no friend of the oppressed, exploited and downtrodden of the world! The struggle to eradicate the poverty and wars produced by the profit-driven capitalist system must begin with understanding the need for the complete and unconditional independence of the proletariat from all agencies of the capitalist class, including its Democratic and Republican parties. For a generation of youth force-fed the “death of communism” myth, we motivated subscriptions by explaining how Marxism remains the only program that can effectively fight to end capitalist exploitation and oppression through socialist revolutions worldwide.

We also came across forces reinvigorated by the victory of the fundamentalist Bush regime. Texas State University-San

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Philly Transit Strike Beats Back Bosses' Assault

NOVEMBER 8—A solid one-week strike by over 5,000 transit workers brought Philadelphia subways, buses and trolleys to a halt and beat back a union-busting assault by the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) against workers' pensions and access to affordable health care. Importantly, both Philly transit unions—Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 234 and United Transportation Union (UTU) Local 1594—walked out together. And yesterday, they walked back into work together. While the contract proposals, which workers will be voting on, contain some compromises, the strikers successfully fended off the most onerous demands of the SEPTA bosses.

This strike by predominantly black transit workers should help steel the resolve of other workers under attack, not least New York City transit workers in TWU Local 100 whose contract expires on December 15. Hours after the announcement of a Philly settlement, officials of Pittsburgh's Amalgamated Transit Union Local 85, which has been without a contract since July, authorized a strike vote that will go to the membership on November 20.

According to press reports, the tentative contracts have won 3 percent annual wage increases over the next four years, as well as pension increases. The unions also secured some stipulations against arbitrary company discipline. SEPTA had demanded that workers pay 5 percent of health insurance premiums, which, at current rates, could reach over \$600 per year. While holding off this demand, the union did concede that workers pay 1 percent of their base wages into their health plan.



October 31: TWU Local 234 members on picket line in strike against SEPTA. WV Photo

And although union negotiators held the line against SEPTA's demand to eliminate retirees' prescription drug plan, they agreed that workers hired after the new contract goes into effect would lose this benefit when they become eligible for Medicare.

In the face of SEPTA's attacks and a vicious anti-union propaganda barrage by the city's bourgeois press, transit workers stood solid and united. With the strike costing the region's businesses as much as \$1.5 million a day, Democratic Pennsylvania governor Ed Rendell intervened to get a deal worked out. It was the determination of the transit workers on the picket line, demonstrating their social power, that beat back SEPTA.

From Northwest and United Airlines to the Delphi auto parts manufacturer, the capitalist exploiters in this country are on a union-busting tear. In the face of this assault, the trade-union tops' strategy has been to sacrifice hard class struggle in favor of impotent appeals to "friends of labor" politicians in the two capitalist parties, especially the Democrats. To answer the capitalists' attacks on working people, what's needed is a fight by the labor movement for jobs for all at union wages, for free mass transit and free health care for all, for labor/minority mobilizations against racist attacks. To carry out this struggle, the unions must fight for the rights of black people and all the oppressed. In Philadel-

phia, this immediately raises the need for the unions to champion freedom for MOVE supporter and former Black Panther Mumia Abu-Jamal, who was framed up and sent to death row in 1982 for the murder of a Philadelphia cop that he did not commit.

The "city of brotherly love" is one of the most racially polarized cities in this country, where notoriously racist and corrupt cops enforce the brutal oppression of black people, Hispanics and the poor. As a measure of the racial polarization, most white workers we spoke to on the picket lines did not defend Mumia, while black workers overwhelmingly understood that, as one put it, "He got railroaded." One striker recalled his own experience of being arrested for armed robbery simply because he happened to be walking near a crime scene. However, many of these strikers expressed illusions in the cops as another sector of labor. Grotesquely, during the 1995 transit strike, the union tops appealed to the sinister Fraternal Order of Police (F.O.P.) for "support," hailing the cops as "brothers" even as the F.O.P. was on a rabid, nationwide effort to whip up support for Mumia's execution.

The cops, along with the courts, prisons and the military, form the core of the capitalist state, which exists to defend the capitalist order of exploitation and racial oppression. The same racist police force that helped frame up Mumia would also be the ones called out against striking workers to enforce anti-union injunctions or impose scabherding by the bosses. The capitalists' frame-up system targets militant strikers and fighters for black rights alike with one aim: to terrorize workers and minorities into submission.

The labor movement needs a new, class-struggle leadership that breaks from the policy of reliance on capitalist politicians and the bourgeois state. To mobilize labor's social power in its own interests and on behalf of the oppressed requires the forging of a multiracial workers party committed to ending capitalist rule through socialist revolution. ■

Join the Labor Black Leagues!

The first Labor Black Leagues were formed as a result of the Spartacist League-initiated, 5,000-strong labor/black mobilization that stopped the Ku Klux Klan from marching in Washington, D.C. in November 1982. We stand for mobilizing the masses of minority and working people in militant integrated struggle against

the brutal system of racist oppression that is capitalist America. Initiated by and fraternally allied with the Spartacist League, a multiracial revolutionary Marxist organization, the Labor Black Leagues are part of the revolutionary movement of the workers and oppressed against the bosses and for socialism.

If You Stand For—

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

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

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

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

5 Defend the separation of church and state! Full democratic rights for homosexuals! Down with the anti-sex witchhunt—cops and courts out of the bedroom! Down with all laws against consensual activities such as "crimes without victims" like pornography, gambling, drugs and prostitution!

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

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



WV Photo

social defense; support the work of the Partisan Defense Committee!

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

9 Down with the chauvinist poison of protectionism! For international working-class solidarity! Support revolutionary struggles of working people abroad! Defend the deformed workers states—Cuba, Vietnam, China and North Korea—against capitalist restoration and imperialist attack! For proletarian political revolution to oust their Stalinist bureaucracies! For labor action against U.S. imperialist war moves and military adventures! For the right of independence for Puerto Rico! U.S. troops out of Puerto Rico and the Caribbean!

10 Down with the Democrats and Republicans! For a revolutionary workers party

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

—Join the Labor Black Leagues!

Membership pledge: \$3/year unemployed; \$10/year employed. For more information:

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Box 6938, Chicago, IL 60680

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Ireland: The Fight for Abortion Rights

We reprint below an article first published in Spartacist Ireland No. 8 (Autumn/Winter 2005), publication of the Spartacist Group Ireland, Irish section of the International Communist League. The article is based on an SGI forum held in Dublin in April 2005.

SPARTACIST IRELAND

I want to start off by talking about a recent excellent book by Ray Kavanagh, *Mamie Cadden: Backstreet Abortionist* (Mercier Press, 2005), which tells the story of Nurse Mamie Cadden, who provided abortions in Dublin from the late 1920s to the 1950s. The story of her work and her persecution tells us a lot about the nature of the clericalist capitalist state in Ireland. It also shows how the clericalist state was consolidated and how the Catholic church attained a dominant role in society: not immediately at independence but through a process extending over decades.

As in Nurse Cadden's time, the 1861 Offences Against the Person Act still criminalises abortion on the island of Ireland, buttressed in the South by the Eighth Amendment to the Constitution which followed the [anti-abortion] 1983 referendum. In Britain, the 1967 Abortion Act legalised abortion—a huge advance for women's rights. Today over 6,000 women each year having an abortion in Britain give an address in the Republic of Ireland and a further 1,000-plus give an address in Northern Ireland. There were huge demonstrations here in 1992 over abortion rights and the struggles of that period were responsible for bringing about significant changes for women and

The Church, the State and Women's Oppression

gays. However, abortion is still totally illegal.

Mamie Cadden was born in the U.S. to immigrants from [County] Mayo in 1891 but returned to Mayo with her family at the age of four. Mamie moved to Dublin in 1925 and qualified as a midwife, a highly skilled and, at that time, highly respected profession. In 1929, just a couple of years after qualifying as a midwife, Mamie established her own maternity nursing home. At the time, Dublin had up to 50 such private nursing homes. These homes were a challenge to the Catholic church which, with the cooperation of the capitalist state, was attempting to establish a monopoly in the field of medical care, especially in relation to women, reproduction and sexuality. Ray Kavanagh notes that "the nursing-homes would have had a far more liberal and woman-centred ethos than the religious hospitals." It was this struggle of the church to establish absolute control over women's sexuality which was to shape the rest of Nurse Cadden's life.

The 1920s were a relatively prosperous and hopeful time in Ireland after independence and the Civil War [1922-23] and before the economic depression of the 1930s. The latter coincided with the deeply conservative premiership of Éamon de Valera and its nationalist protectionist economic policies. Lack of jobs

led to mass emigration, mainly to Britain. Married women were barred from many workplaces, in 1935 contraception was banned and in 1937 women's role in the home was enshrined in the Constitution. Kavanagh describes Nurse Cadden's attitude towards these anti-woman attacks: "All the men thought that women should be scrubbing and cooking in the kitchen, having a baby each year until they died of thrombosis or high blood pressure.... Well, that was not for Mamie Cadden, she would fight them all, as she had all her life."

Nurse Cadden's nursing homes (firstly in Ranelagh and from 1931 in Rathmines), like others of the day, provided various services for pregnant women, including adoptions (which were unregulated at the time and viewed with suspicion by the church) and care of women who had suffered complications from backstreet (or self-administered) abortions. Illegal abortions may also have been performed in the nursing home, but were not the main focus of the business. These activities brought much attention from the gardaí [national police], but Mamie's first serious run-in with the law occurred in the summer of 1938, when she was charged with child abandonment over the case of a baby found abandoned in Meath shortly after Mamie had been seen in the area. In fact, with contraception and abortion both being outlawed and there not even being any regulated adoption service, cases of child abandonment and infanticide were frequent.

As part of the investigation, the garden of the nursing home was dug up and the remains of a foetus were discovered. This became the source of one of the enduring urban myths about Nurse Cadden: that there were the bodies of more than a dozen dead babies buried in her garden. In fact this was the only set of remains ever found there. Margaret Berkery had been admitted to the nursing home in February 1938 suffering from severe bleeding after she tried to terminate her pregnancy by drinking liquid ergot [a potentially poisonous fungus]. The stillbirth was buried in the garden. Kavanagh describes how "Mamie was totally unrepentant: 'You cannot say that was a child,' she said when confronted by the gardaí with the find, 'it was a foetus'."

The trial on the child abandonment charges (and two additional charges of having demanded money under false pretences for arranging adoptions) dragged on for months. When Mamie was found guilty in May 1939, she was sentenced to one year's hard labour. Moreover, she was struck off the registry of midwives and was left financially ruined by her legal fees. When she was released from prison in 1940, she was in desperate straits but was determined to rebuild her life. She began providing various medical

procedures, including cures for constipation and dandruff, but especially illegal abortions. There were a lot of illegal abortions being carried out in Dublin at this time, even more because of the travel restrictions introduced during World War II which limited the ability of women to travel to England.

At the same time, with its new Constitution in force, the Irish bourgeoisie really had the wind in its sails and carried out a concerted crackdown on abortion services. Kavanagh explains that:

"The early 1940s was to see the greatest onslaught against abortion in Ireland since the foundation of the state, events hardly unconnected with the start of



National Archives

Courageous nurse Mamie Cadden in 1938 at time of first jailing.

the episcopate of John Charles McQuaid which had commenced in 1940. He was a deeply conservative prelate especially in matters relating to women's fertility and sexuality. Abortion was to be expunged from the face of Catholic Ireland."

Many backstreet abortionists were prosecuted in this campaign. Cadden was a particularly significant figure and target for the new rulers of Ireland because, as Kavanagh notes:

"She was startlingly different too from [the abortionist] Dr James Ashe. Whereas he was on the top of the social scale with Dublin's upper echelons in his client list, Mary Anne Cadden was truly the abortionist to the new independent Ireland—to de Valera's Ireland. Since her time running the nursing-home in Rathmines her patients had included the wives of farmers, gardaí and shopkeepers—in fact the emerging Irish middle- and lower-middle class."

Nurse Cadden was arrested in 1944 and charged with "intent to procure the miscarriage" of Ellen Thompson. She was again found guilty and in April 1945 sentenced to **five years** imprisonment.

After completing her second prison sentence in 1950, Nurse Cadden again set up a medical practice providing abortions and other services. Now, following the anti-abortion crackdown of the 1940s, she was Ireland's only well-known abortionist. Approaching 60, her health was failing and she operated in only a single-room flat where she could see no more than a few clients a week. Over the next several years, two of her clients died of an air embolism during an abortion. Legal abortion in a hospital or clinic is a quite safe and routine medical procedure, but the chance of complications (including



no credit



no credit

Above: For decades, women and girls were forced to work in brutal conditions in Magdalene laundries. Left: Dublin cops escort "fallen women" in religious procession in 1950s. Catholic church and Irish state often forced women into seclusion.

deadly embolisms) is much higher in a backstreet abortion, even when the abortionist is, like Nurse Cadden, a trained and conscientious medical professional. After the second of these tragic incidents, the death of Helen O'Reilly in 1956, Nurse Cadden was arrested. Indicative of the changed political climate, she was charged with the murder of O'Reilly rather than merely providing an abortion. As the arresting officer, Superintendent George Lawlor, said: "This is a breaking of minds, and I'm going to break Cadden."

The case was based on circumstantial evidence and contradictory testimonies, but the state was determined to find Cadden guilty. She was faced with the full force of the state, the church and the sinister and reactionary Knights of Columbanus. Noting that "every day during the trial two priests attended and sat in the public gallery facing the jury," Kavanagh captures what likelihood Cadden had of a fair trial:

"The enormous power of the priests in the Ireland of the time can only be imagined now in a more secular age but back then only the very brave or the very foolhardy would go against the priests. Such great and once powerful men as Noel Browne, the Minister of Health or Charles Stewart Parnell, the leader of the Irish Party, were to realise this to their cost.... It would have taken a very brave Catholic indeed in 1956 to sit in front of two priests for ten days and not come up with a verdict that would have satisfied them."

Nurse Cadden was duly found guilty and the judge gleefully sentenced her to death. When the sentence was pronounced and the judge intoned: "and may the Lord have mercy upon your soul," she snapped back: "Well, I am not a Catholic. Take that now." She was a very brave woman.

As a small diversion: Noël Browne was mentioned in that quote from Kavanagh. In the late 1940s, as Minister for Health, Noël Browne attempted to introduce a limited free health programme for children and pregnant women, the Mother and Child Scheme. This provoked outrage from the bishops and the Catholic medical establishment. As Browne describes in his autobiography, *Against the Tide*, Archbishop McQuaid "considered the health scheme an encroachment by the state on the church's role, which he considered to be, among much else, 'to determine and to control the social attitudes of the family in the Republic, especially in the delicate matters of maternity and sexuality'." The church crushed the scheme and Browne was hounded out of the government. Labour Party leader and member of the Knights of Columbanus William Norton sided with the church against Noël Browne and the Mother and Child Scheme.

Cadden's death sentence was commuted, but she was ruled insane and lived out her remaining days in the Central Criminal Lunatic Asylum in Dundrum. It's not clear why she was ruled insane, but it is revealing that the East Coast Area Health Board still refuses to release her file for the reason that "the release of these records would not respect the rights to privacy of third parties." Cadden was in a position to know the intimate details of the hypocrisy of the clericalist state:



Spartacists at February 2002 abortion rights protest in Ireland.

11 NOVEMBER 2005

Right: 1992 mass protest in Dublin supporting teenager's right to travel to Britain for an abortion, known as the X Case. Below: Recent protest by Alliance for Choice outside the Dáil (parliament).



Alliance for Choice

she had information on priests, bishops, gardaí and no doubt politicians too. But as a "criminal lunatic" her accusations could be dismissed. Like all inmates of the Dundrum asylum she was buried in a common grave when she died in 1959.

Kavanagh eloquently sums up Cadden's life and work, "Perhaps she was the most hated woman of twentieth-century Ireland by those who deplored her profession and her ethics. But what of the thousand plus women who came to her in desperation when all else had failed them? How many mothers' lives did she save? Which of those women has ever condemned her? How many are living today because of her intervention?" Indeed, Mamie Cadden provided a valuable service to thousands of women. While her motivations remain obscure (aside from earning a living—her services were not free), we Marxists honour her as a real fighter against the church and the consolidation of the clericalist state.

Class Society and the Oppression of Women

In the 19th century, Karl Marx's co-laborator Friedrich Engels explained that women's oppression is rooted in the class system. The class system today, capitalism, is based on the private ownership of productive property by the capitalists and their exploitation of the working class. It is important for the capitalists that their private property be passed on to their "correct" heirs and therefore that women be kept sexually monogamous. This, and the need to raise the new generation of wage slaves, is the basis of the family sys-

tem which really serves as a building block of the capitalist system. The family is a conservatising institution which oppresses women and children and those who don't fit into it, for example gays. Religion is a key prop of capitalism; it attempts to give a justification for the monogamous family and the misery inherent in capitalism.

So the questions of exploitation, women's oppression and religion are inextricably linked under capitalism. Rather than promoting any dead-end strategy of reforming this or that aspect of the capitalist system, we need to build a new society based not on private property, but on socialised property in order to remove the material basis of the oppression of women. With the working class in power we will be able to socialise the necessary duties now carried out by women in the family, e.g., childcare, cooking, cleaning. Furthermore, consensual sexual relations will be a purely private matter, and religion will necessarily wither without its state props and the misery which it exists to justify.

The 1917 Russian Revolution demonstrated that such a society is possible by putting into practice for the first time what Marx and Engels had fought for—the dictatorship of the proletariat. The rights granted to women in the early Soviet workers state show the advances possible for all of humanity with the overturn of capitalism and the institution of a planned, collectivised economy and a regime of workers democracy. Following the October Revolution, the Bolsheviks abolished all laws against abortion and homosexuality; they made marriage and divorce simple civil acts and they abolished the concept of illegitimacy. They opened private hospitals to the masses, and (to the extent they were able given the extreme material backwardness of the country) began to build public kitchens and laundries and to create residential nurseries.

It is clear that a lot has changed in Ireland since the time of Nurse Cadden. But if we look at exactly what has changed and what has stayed the same, we see that what Engels described as the fundamentals of capitalist society, including the oppression of women, are still present today. One key difference since Cadden's time is the increased numbers of women in work. Women also have access to contraception, which was illegal at the time. Homosexuality was decriminalised in 1993; divorce was legalised in 1997.

And the 1967 British Abortion Act did have a huge impact on the quality of life

here: although only legal in Britain, legal abortion came within reach of a large number of Irish women. But it has always remained out of reach for poor women and is out of reach for many immigrants. Without a temporary travel permit, a pregnant asylum-seeker or immigrant on a restricted visa travelling abroad for an abortion risks not being allowed to re-enter Ireland, or having to seek a backstreet abortion here. In 2004 there were two reports of backstreet abortions having been carried out on immigrant women. We call for **full citizenship rights for all immigrants** including the right to travel.

Attitudes to marriage and children have changed vastly. One report found that 3.2 percent of children born in 1973 were born outside marriage. But 30 years later, in 2003, this had risen to 31.4 percent. There is not the same pressure on unmarried mothers to give their children up for adoption. And it is less socially stigmatised to choose to remain childless. On the other hand, many of the old prejudices persist, especially in rural areas. Commenting on a recent study which found that the rate of women concealing their pregnancy was much higher in the West of Ireland than in Dublin, a spokeswoman for the Crisis Pregnancy Agency said: "It shows that there is still a considerable stigma amongst younger women around pregnancy." A report last year from the Crisis Pregnancy Agency showed fairly wide support for some level of legal abortion in Ireland. In fact only 8 percent disagreed with abortion in every circumstance, i.e., agreed with the law as it now stands.

The authority of the church has been reduced in society, in no small part due to the revelations of the endemic brutality towards children in the schools and other institutions. However, the church's power has not been broken. The church still runs the vast majority of National Schools for the state and controls most of the hospitals. The fact that the church runs the schools means that sex education ranges from non-existent to woeful. And the "Catholic ethos" of most hospitals means that even if abortion were legalised, there would be few if any places where the procedure would be carried out. **For separation of church and state! For free quality health care for all!**

While there are more women at work, childcare is so expensive that it is very difficult for a woman to have children and return to work unless she has a very well-paid job or family members who can look after the children while the mother is at work. And in work, women are paid a good deal less than men. Having to pay for childcare helps keep many working-class women in poverty. There are no marriage rights for gays, who face the constant threat of violence. **For free 24-hour childcare! Full democratic rights for gays!**

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As mentioned earlier, abortion was legalised in Britain in 1967—a key gain for women. Since 1967 there have been numerous attempts to restrict and attack this legislation, including most recently a campaign to restrict abortions to 20 weeks. Any restrictions on late-term abortions will disproportionately affect young women and Irish women, who tend to have later abortions because of the difficulty in getting money together and arranging travel. We and our comrades in the Spartacist League/Britain oppose all restrictions on abortion rights and fight for free abortion on demand.

While many of the attacks on the 1967 Abortion Act in Britain have, so far, been seen off [rejected], they show an important feature of capitalism: gains for women and the oppressed can be won under capitalism but the bourgeoisie constantly attempts to reverse them. Every struggle for democratic rights, if it is to lead to the liberation of the working class and oppressed, must be infused with an understanding of the need to bring down the entire system of capitalist class rule. Our task is to build the revolutionary

[Society for the Protection of Unborn Children] targeted and hounded anyone they deemed to be responsible, even going so far as to try to get the Student Union leaders jailed. The students were defended by Senior Counsel, Labour Senator Mary Robinson. We intervened in these struggles to fight for free abortion on demand and sought to show how the fight for women’s liberation must be linked to the overthrow of capitalism.

In November 1990 Mary Robinson stood for President and was supported not just by the “government in opposition”—Labour and Fine Gael—but by one of the government parties itself, the PDs [Progressive Democrats]. Despite being involved in the defence of the Trinity students, Robinson declared during her election campaign that she had “done more practical work than any other Irish politician to stop Irish women going for abortions” and admitted that she herself was against abortion. *Socialist Worker* [Irish Cliffite newspaper] and the Militant (now the Socialist Party [in Ireland]) told workers and fighters for women’s rights that they should vote for Robinson despite the fact that she was supported by some bourgeois parties and was against abortion. They were sowing illusions that somehow having a liberal facade was



W. E. Debenham



Friedrich Engels’ 1884 Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State pointed to basis of women’s oppression in development of family system and private property.

workers party that is so urgently needed to lead the working class to power through socialist revolution.

Class Struggle and Women’s Rights

The period when abortion was legalised in Britain was a different historical period from today, marked by social struggles inspired by the civil rights movement in the U.S. and also aimed against the U.S.’s long, losing Vietnam War. In the midst of the Cold War against the Soviet Union, a generation was inspired by the heroic battles of the North Vietnamese and guerrilla leaders like Fidel Castro and Che Guevara in Cuba, who successfully challenged the U.S. empire. These events affected Ireland too: for example, the civil rights movement in America was the direct inspiration for the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association.

These social struggles were the basis for winning a wide range of social gains. In Southern Ireland, the “special position” of the church was removed from the Constitution following a 1972 referendum. Women got increased access to both the pill and the coil. The Catholic church was alarmed at these marks of progress and liberalism and the Knights of Columbanus started organising a backlash, leading to the anti-abortion referendum held in 1983 which brought about the Eighth Amendment [which makes abortion unconstitutional].

The Spartacist group in Ireland was forged during the struggle for abortion rights in the late 1980s and early 1990s. In 1989 the [Dublin] Trinity Student Union published a phone number from which abortion information could be obtained. The anti-abortion bigots of SPUC

going to change the character of the clericalist Irish state.

In 1992 the courts moved to bar a 14-year-old from travelling to Britain for an abortion in what became known as the X Case. Huge protests on the streets assured that the young woman was allowed to travel to Britain for an abortion. It was significant that the state was forced to make the concession that abortion could be permitted on the grounds of risk of suicide. It’s also important to note this was achieved through social struggle. There were expectations at the time that there would be some advancement of abortion rights, but more than a decade later women still can not get legal abortions in Southern Ireland. Ever since the X Case, anti-abortion bigots have sought to overturn even this modest advance and Youth Defence is still on the streets most Saturdays with their macabre placards. Youth Defence is an anti-abortion group harbouring a fascist core who have physically attacked workers demonstrations and fighters for abortion rights. They should be swept off the streets by workers and fighters against women’s oppression.

Tribune of the People

The most prominent leader of the “pro-choice” movement today is Trinity College academic, barrister and Labour Party politician Ivana Bacik. She was a leader of Trinity Student Union at the time of the SPUC campaign against abortion information in 1989-90 and sees herself as following in the footsteps of Mary Robinson. Bacik wrote a book last year entitled *Kicking and Screaming: Dragging Ireland into the 21st Century* (O’Brien Press, 2004), which describes the various legal reforms which have



WV Photo

Spartacist League joined 2,000 others in defense of Washington, D.C. abortion clinics against Operation Rescue bigots, January 1992.

transformed Ireland into what she calls “a much more progressive and diverse society, a symbol of economic success for all small states in Europe.” The high point of her conclusion on reproductive rights is that:

“Pending the removal of Article 40.3.3 [added by the Eighth Amendment] by referendum, limited legislation should be introduced providing for the conditions under which a pregnancy may be terminated, that is, where its continuance poses a threat to the life of a pregnant woman—the long overdue legislation under the X case test. This measure would at least address the needs of women in the most desperate circumstances. In the longer term, more fundamental, broader change is necessary to ensure the real needs of women in Ireland are met.”

Bacik sets as her baseline that it shouldn’t be legal for women to be left to die while blithely postponing women’s “real needs” to “the longer term.”

In Bacik’s whole book on the legal ins and outs of the Irish Constitution, you won’t find one straightforward call for abortion rights—a clear capitulation to the Labour Party. Moreover, treating abortion as just a legal issue denies that women’s oppression is intrinsic to Irish capitalist society. Even if through some mighty struggle we won the right to free abortion on demand, who would perform the operations? Until hospitals are liberated from the church, doctors will be threatened with being struck off [which effectively bars them from practicing] (as they constantly are today) even if abortion were legal. Since Nurse Cadden’s time to today, the church, the state and the Medical Council have colluded to restrict women’s control over their own fertility and sexuality.

In 2004, Bacik was a Labour Party

candidate for the EU [European Union] parliament, but Labour, tied as they are to the bourgeoisie and Catholic church, are opposed to waging a campaign for abortion rights. When Labour’s delegate conference in 2001 voted by a single vote for the “right to choose,” this was overturned by the national executive. Today, Labour says it is in favour of legislation permitting abortion in only very limited circumstances: risk of suicide, “significant injury” to the woman, or if the foetus has no chance of being born alive. Labour is a bourgeois workers party, which has a working-class base but a thoroughly pro-capitalist leadership. Along with the trade-union bureaucracy, Labour is the main agency within the working class pushing class collaboration, i.e., tying the working class to their exploiters. This can be seen through their perennial policy of entering governmental blocs with one or another capitalist party, their pushing of subsequent “social partnership” deals as well as their refusal to fight for abortion rights and indeed rights for Travellers [indigenous nomadic people] or any section of the oppressed.

What is needed is to build a party like Lenin and Trotsky’s Bolshevik Party in Russia that will provide the political leadership for the working class to take power in its own name. This means a party which stands as a tribune of all the oppressed and fights to mobilise the working class to champion the rights of women, Travellers and immigrants. The bourgeoisie tries to divide and rule, but the fact is that the oppression of all these groups is rooted in the capitalist system. The working class can liberate all humanity, if it is led by a party that fights for all the oppressed. For women’s liberation through socialist revolution! ■

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Compounding Bush's current problems are former House majority leader Tom DeLay's indictment for financial shenanigans and investigations into Senate majority leader Bill Frist, who is suspected of similar transgressions. The Republicans are concerned that, given the occupation's unpopularity, their hold on the Senate and House may be in danger in next year's Congressional elections.

Fearing that the weakness of the Bush regime might soften its resolve to stack the Supreme Court with anti-abortion, anti-civil-rights zealots, the religious right rose up to quash the candidacy of Harriet Miers, prompting Bush to select a candidate from the Catholic right, Samuel Alito, whose record of racist, socially reactionary and pro-big-business court decisions is unambiguous. This comes after the installation of the arch-reactionary John Roberts as Chief Justice. The conservative core of the party, answering to its wealthy constituents, is taking an ax to Medicaid and Medicare while holding dear the tax cuts for the rich. Those Republicans who are dependent on more plebeian elements for their re-election are seeking to persuade the oil companies, which are presently gouging the population and recording enormous profits, to provide a little free natural gas, perhaps during the holidays, for the "poor people."

While the abandonment of New



Laura Williams

Spartacist-initiated contingent at March 2003 antiwar rally in New York City.

All this while ordinary working people are being hammered by draconian cuts in health benefits and the disappearance of pensions. While bankruptcy procedures have been sharply curtailed for those who have next to nothing, the same procedures are used by the bosses to slash paychecks and benefit packages of their unionized workers. If the Delphi auto parts manufacturer succeeds in its attempt to use the bankruptcy courts to cut union wages by 63 percent, this would further encourage employers to transform the current assault on workers into a wage- and benefit-slashing Armageddon.

U.S. workers are prone to see them-

selves not as members of the working class, with interests that are counterposed to the capitalists, but as part of a “middle class” that lies somewhere between abject poverty and unimaginable wealth. Not so America’s rulers, who know there is a working class from whose exploitation they derive their profits, and who seek to increase profits through speed-up, layoffs and wage cuts.

There are a number of historical sources for the political backwardness of the U.S. working class, that is, for its inability to recognize its class identity in opposition to the capitalist class. The primary and day-to-day barrier to the forging of a working-class party is the special oppression of black people as a race-color caste. If the good industrial job has been slaughtered, it is to no small degree black workers who are thrown into unemployment and the grinding poverty of the ghetto. If education and health care are going down the drain for most everyone, it's been this way in the ghettos for decades. What Karl Marx said almost 150 years ago is every bit as true today: "Labor cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded."

For Working-Class Independence!

Normally, the stark incompetence of the White House and pervasive social discontents would suggest that the party in power would do well to pack the china and look for deals on moving vans while the opposition, in this case the Democrats, might begin investigating the D.C. housing market. A recent Pew Research Center survey, however, revealed that Democratic leaders in Congress had a dismal 32 percent approval rating while Bush's rating has dropped below 40 percent. Both the excessively venerable Walter Cronkite and *New York Times* columnist Bob Herbert have recently suggested in the *Times* that the Democrats should at least appear to articulate differences with the Republicans.

For decades, it was the norm that the Democratic Party, as the capitalist party that sought the votes of working people, at least pretended to address their concerns, promising a less savage and heartless social contract. This was the legacy of the 1930s New Deal under Franklin D. Roosevelt, which proposed a set of palliative reforms in an attempt to deflect an upsurge of class struggle. Instead of leading to the formation of a workers party, the titanic labor battles of the time were channeled by the Stalinist Communist Party and other union misleaders into support for Roosevelt's Democratic Party. Since that time, it has been primarily through the instrument of the Democratic Party that the trade-union officialdom has chained the workers to the capitalists and their state.

During Bill Clinton's two terms as president, he continued the work of his Republican predecessors in taking an axe to many of the social programs set up under the New Deal. Following years of

rollback of the gains of the civil rights movement of the 1950s and '60s, it was left to this consummate hustler to convince black people that he felt their pain as he pushed the death penalty and signed the death warrant for welfare. And it was during his regime that the criminal speculation and Ponzi scheme "investments" by the dot-com industries attracted the monies available to the giant pension institutions with the result that, when the bubble burst, the pensions of many working people became so many worthless scraps of paper.

The Democratic Party has the same class interests as the Republicans. The Democrats may still wrap their program differently to appeal to their voters, for example over social issues such as abortion rights. Whereas the Republicans are open in their contempt for labor and blacks, the Democrats continue to posture as “friends of labor,” the better to position themselves to contain outbreaks of class struggle. But given the low level of class and social struggle, there is simply no current motivation for the Democrats to offer up the New Deal rhetoric that some of their liberal ideologues demand. Furthermore, ruling-class politicians, Democrats included, will not lightly tamper with the imperial presidency. Nevertheless, bourgeois opposition to the Bush administration may well deepen if, for example, the Iraq occupation gets further bogged down or the domestic economy worsens.


Any labor movement worth its salt would use the travails of the White House to mount a fightback against the massive assault on working people. Why, for example, given the attacks on health benefits and the declining number of those covered by any such insurance, are the unions not fighting for some form of national health insurance? This directly raises the question of labor's leadership. Marxists understand that the existing leadership of the trade unions is the representative of the capitalist order within the working class. Residing in the most powerful imperialist country on the planet, this labor bureaucracy not only concedes the "right" of the capitalist rulers to a profit but supports their aspiration to dominate their imperialist competitors. This is just as true of Andy Stern's Change to Win Coalition as it is of John Sweeney's AFL-CIO officialdom. Both seek "partnership" with the American capitalists. The labor tops' class collaboration is exemplified by their "America First" protectionism, pitting the U.S. proletariat against its class brothers and sisters overseas, and their role as lieutenants of U.S. imperialism in subverting struggles of working people in the semicolonial world.

A primary symptom of the abject condition of the working class is the steep decline in union membership, to the point that currently less than 10 percent of the workforce in the private sector is organized. The responsibility for that decline lies squarely with the generations of the labor bureaucracy in the period following World War II,

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Spartacus Youth Club Classes	
<p>BAY AREA</p> <p>Women's Oppression, the Family, and Capitalism: A Marxist Perspective on How to Fight for Women's Liberation</p> <p>Friday, November 18, 5 p.m.</p> <p>San Francisco State University Cesar Chavez Student Center, Rm. T-153 Information and readings: (510) 839-0851 or e-mail: sycbayarea@sbcglobal.net</p>	<p>BOSTON</p> <p>The Russian Revolution of 1917: How the Working Class Took Power</p> <p>Thursday, November 17, 7 p.m.</p> <p>Boston University George Sherman Union, Room 322 775 Commonwealth Avenue (BU Central stop on Green Line B) Information and readings: (617) 666-9453 or e-mail: bostonsyc@yahoo.com</p>
<p>CHICAGO</p> <p>The Bolshevik Revolution: How the Working Class Took Power</p> <p>Tuesday, November 29, 7 p.m.</p> <p>University of Chicago Cobb Hall, Room 104, 5811 S. Ellis Ave. Information and readings: (312) 563-0441 or e-mail: chicagospartacist@sbcglobal.net</p>	<p>TORONTO</p> <p>The Struggle for Working Class Leadership Today: Break with the Pro-Imperialist NDP! Build a Revolutionary Party!</p> <p>Wednesday, November 16, 6:30 p.m.</p> <p>U of T, Sydney Smith, Room 2128 100 St. George Street Information and readings: (416) 593-4138 or e-mail: spartcan@on.aibn.com</p>
<p>LOS ANGELES</p> <p>Women's Oppression and the Family</p> <p>Saturday, December 3, 2 p.m.</p> <p>3806 Beverly Blvd., Room 215 (Beverly/Vermont Red Line Station) Information and readings: (213) 380-8239 or e-mail: slsycla@sbcglobal.net</p>	<p>VANCOUVER</p> <p>The Russian Revolution: How the Working Class Took Power</p> <p>Thursday, November 24, 5 p.m.</p> <p>UBC, Student Union Building, Rm. 212 Information and readings: (604) 687-0353 or e-mail: tl1t@look.ca</p>
<p>NEW YORK</p> <p>The State and Revolution</p> <p>Wednesday, November 16, 7 p.m.</p> <p>Columbia University Hamilton Hall, Room 703 Information and readings: (212) 267-1025 or e-mail: nysl@compuserve.com</p>	<p>Visit the ICL Web Site: www.icl-fi.org</p>

**Programmatic Statement
of the Spartacist League/U.S.**



**For a Workers Party
That Fights for a Workers Government!**

**For Socialist Revolution
in the Bastion
of World Imperialism!**

SEE PAGE 2

**Organizational Rules and Guidelines
of the Spartacist League/U.S.**

SEE PAGE 30

**Opponents of the Revolutionary
Internationalist Workers Movement**

SEE PAGE 37

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The burning need for class struggle is inextricably linked to fighting for the political independence of the proletariat from the capitalists' political parties and government agencies. What is required is a new, class-struggle leadership of labor. The crucial task is to break labor from the Democrats and to forge a revolutionary working-class party that shares no interest with the bosses but rather seeks the overthrow of their system and the establishment of workers rule.

The counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, a degenerated workers state, in 1991-92 removed the one serious obstacle to U.S. military dominance and encouraged the capitalist rulers everywhere to drive down workers' living standards and slash social benefits. No reform won by U.S. workers in the class battles of the 1930s has been spared from the increasing attacks of the profit-gorged bosses, who perceive themselves as destined to rule a worldwide American empire. The USSR stood as a living example that the overturn of capitalist rule and the

Despite the subsequent degeneration of the workers state under the political rule of the parasitic Stalinist bureaucratic caste, the International Communist League defended the Soviet Union against all attempts at capitalist counter-revolution, whether of imperialist or domestic origin. We fought for a workers political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy, which daily undermined the gains of the October Revolution, and replace it with the rule of workers soviets (councils). That is our program for the remaining deformed workers states—China, Vietnam, North Korea and Cuba.

The current situation in the U.S. steel industry is a clear example of how the capitalist profit system differs from a planned economy under workers rule. In 1980, some 400,000 workers were employed in U.S. steel plants and produced about one ton of steel per worker every nine hours. Today, only 120,000 workers are similarly employed and produce a ton of steel every two hours. Under capitalism, which is geared toward maximizing the profits of the tiny class of exploiters, this increased productivity has

The fight to forge the American revolutionary proletarian party requires the exposure and denunciation of those who lead the workers onto the path of reform of the murderous and anarchic imperialist order. This includes the likes of the International Socialist Organization and Workers World Party, whose efforts center on pleading with the Democrats to beat imperialism's sabers into the plowshares of jobs and social benefits. Most recently, they raised this appeal in league with the anti-Semitic, anti-woman, pro-black-capitalist demagogue Louis Farrakhan, supporting (critically or not) his reactionary "Millions More March" in Washington, D.C. last month. Attracting support from Bill Clinton and an array of black Democrats—as well as a handful of "progressive" union officials—that march was called to commemorate Farrakhan's 1995 rally for "atonement," which blamed black people for their own oppression.

The groundwork for the current attacks on the well-being of all was prepared with a frontal assault on black people. The deindustrialization of the Northeast and Midwest has been especially devas-

Black oppression, with its profound and pervasive ideological effects, is fundamental to the American capitalist order. Obscuring the class divide, racism and white supremacy have served to bind white workers to their capitalist masters with the illusion of a commonality of interest based on skin color. A proletarian revolutionary party simply cannot be forged in the U.S. without linking the fight for black freedom to the fight against all exploitation and oppression. It is necessary to recruit those who recognize the depravity of U.S. imperialism to become fighters for the forging of a multiracial working-class party—a U.S. section of a reformed Fourth International, which is the indispensable instrument for the victory of socialist revolution. ■

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The PCF issued a special statement (*l'Humanité*, 4 November) on Clichy demanding: "Place the police at the service of the whole nation, which means democratization, training, neighborhood residency and adequate funds." LO's editorial on Clichy mentions immigration or racism only once, in order to warn that Sarkozy's antics will "encourage more repressive attitudes among the police and racism among many of its elements." As if putting a different top cop in charge and throwing a few "bad apples" off the force would create "good" French cops. All these reformists are trying to rehabilitate the police in the eyes of oppressed youth, thus promoting deadly illusions in the bourgeois Republic. The police cannot be reformed to serve the population. Promoting the lie that they can be reformed is what distinguishes reformists from revolutionaries. Like the other armed bodies of men that constitute the core of the state (prison guards, the army), their function is to protect private ownership of the means of production by the capitalists. The capitalist state has a legal monopoly on weapons in order to maintain the capitalist system: the police are the guard dogs of the bourgeoisie, not "workers in uniform." *Police, prison guards, out of the unions!*

In its statement, the PCF speaks accusingly of Sarkozy: “The government has shown that it is incapable of guaranteeing public order.” The PS and PCF are using the current riots in order to refurbish their much-tarnished credentials and present themselves as those who are more capa-



Left: High school students expelled from school for wearing headscarves in 2003. Right: Paris cops evict impoverished African immigrants from living quarters in rundown building in September. French proletariat must fight anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim reaction.



At bottom, the issue for the PCF is to push forward a new coalition, including with bourgeois parties like the Greens, Chevènementistes and Left Radicals, to win the 2007 elections. And the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR) as well as LO (albeit more indirectly) are helping them out. The “left,” including the PCF and the pseudo-Trotskyists from the LCR and LO, are sharing a platform on November 8 in Paris with two little Chevènementiste bourgeois parties, MARS and MRC, supposedly against the privatization of the EDF electricity monopoly. Thus, the LCR and LO promote illusions that you can fight the capitalist onslaught by uniting with capitalist parties!

In early October at Charles de Gaulle Airport, baggage handlers went on strike for permanent hiring of casual workers and for higher wages (following the privatization of Air France under the previous government of Jospin/Buffet). The strike was broken by the government, using Vigipirate and a supposed terrorist threat posed by luggage not being sorted. This shows very concretely what we have been saying for years: Vigipirate targets all immigrants and minorities, as well as the working class as a whole. It may be wielded again in coming weeks if a major

LO has from Day One refused to oppose Vigipirate and this goes hand in hand with its leading role in pushing the racist campaign to expel young women wearing the headscarf from school. In France, Islam is a religion of the oppressed and of the ghettos. The headscarf represents a reactionary social program that confines women to the home in a position of servitude. The expulsion of Muslim girls from school can only reinforce their isolation and oppression and fuel racism against all immigrants. We oppose these racist campaigns and defend the girls who wear headscarves against the bourgeois state. Instead of that, LO welcomed Chirac's law banning the headscarf, a racist law that is part and parcel of the daily harassment against Muslims, and LO spokesman Arlette Laguiller even linked arms at a 6 March 2004 march of women from immigrant neighborhoods with Nicole Guedj (then-Secretary of State for prison construction from Chirac's UMP party)!

LO does mobilize on behalf of undocumented immigrants, just as many bourgeois liberals do who believe the French Republic should be able to integrate those immigrants who often have been in France for years and have raised families in this country. However, racism against ghetto youth runs deep and goes to the core of French capitalism, serving to profoundly divide the working class. LO consciously evades the issue, talking only of "poor neighborhoods," avoiding the key ques-

tion of racial oppression. What is needed is to forge the revolutionary unity of the working class, starting with workers mobilizations against racist police terror. We fight to build a multiethnic revolutionary workers party, committed to leading the proletariat of this country in socialist revolution. ■

[illegible]

Subscription Drive...

(continued from page 4)

Marcos was crawling with some 35 evangelical Christian groups, and religious reactionaries descended on the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill when we were there. Creationist cretins who were out in force in Texas were incensed by our defense of science and evolution. One of our most popular sub drive articles nationwide was “Hail Charles Darwin!” (WV No. 854, 16 September). In Oregon, we were warmly received by some for our defense of the right of gays to marry, as an initiative against it was on the state ballot.

Comrades reported that opposition to the occupation of Iraq has clearly increased over the past year, including among workers. For example, not one of the Boeing strikers with whom we spoke defended the occupation, including some who had supported the original invasion. We sold over 50 points at the demonstrations against the occupation in Washington, D.C., and San Francisco on September 24. We intervened at the protests to promote the understanding that the fight against imperialist war cannot be separated from the fight to get rid of the capitalist system that breeds such wars.

Our revolutionary, proletarian, internationalist perspective is starkly counterposed to that of the wretched “socialist” builders of the September 24 protests, such as the Workers World Party and International Socialist Organization, who sow the illusion that imperialism is merely a policy of the ruling class and not a system that must be overthrown. Thus the reformists sought to funnel disgust with the Iraq occupation and Gulf Coast disaster into calls on the capitalists to change their fundamental priorities, demanding “healthcare not warfare” and “money for hurricane relief and not for war.” Such liberal pressure politics serve to chain the working class to its exploiters, promoting support for capitalist politicians like Jesse Jackson and other Democrats who addressed the D.C. rally.

In the lead-up to and during the 2003 war, the reformists refused to take a side with Iraq, whereas we were for the military defense of Iraq and for the defeat of U.S. imperialism while giving no polit-



ical support whatsoever to the capitalist regime of Saddam Hussein. Today we demand: “All U.S. troops out of Iraq now!” An in-depth explanation of the vast gulf separating reformist and revolutionary opposition to imperialist war is available in “Marxism, Militarism and War” (Young Spartacus pages, WV No. 857, 28 October).

From Labor Strikes to Social Issues

Intervening through WV into the ongoing Northwest Airlines strike and the Boeing strike—important battles for all labor—and at various Labor Day rallies helped concretize for our readers our class-struggle perspective. The Chicago Local made multiple trips to Detroit and Minneapolis to spend time on the picket lines at the two main Northwest hubs; the Bay Area and Los Angeles locals joined Boeing IAM picket lines in Seattle.

In North Carolina and elsewhere in the South, some subscribers wanted to talk about how to organize the most vulnerable layers of the working class in the region. Any serious campaign to organize unions in the “open shop” South will run up against racist reaction, exemplifying that labor rights and black rights will go forward together or fall back separately. Leninists look to combat any and every manifestation of oppression and bigotry. In San Marcos, we joined students

in calling to defend three youth arrested in a vicious cop attack on a black student fund-raiser for hurricane relief. Our placards reading “Down With the Racist *La Migra* Roundups!” and “For Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants!” were popular in Arizona, where the viciously anti-immigrant Minutemen run amok and the border is increasingly militarized.

As in recent years past, many students were drawn to our defense of the Palestinian people. In many places, our positions on social issues, especially abortion, were of particular interest. In Los Angeles, we sold a number of subs to women attracted to our table by our sign calling for free abortion on demand. At the same time, some comrades reported that support for abortion rights seems to be eroding under the impact of the right wing’s propaganda barrage.

Other Highlights

Congratulations to comrade Vanessa of the Bay Area, who with 179 points sold the most subscriptions!

Some of the most successful regional trips this year were once again headed up by the Bay Area Local, including the Colorado trip (265 points), the Northern Tours (178.5 points) and the Texas trip (74.5 points). In addition to participating in those trips, the Los Angeles Local also went to Arizona (43.5 points) and San

Diego and to Las Vegas for the Transport Workers Union international convention. In L.A. itself, the Spartacus Youth Club did very well at UCLA (72.5 points). The Chicago Local covered an expanse of Midwest campus areas, from Ann Arbor and East Lansing in Michigan to the University of Illinois-Urbana/Champaign, the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Minneapolis, as well as helping on the Colorado trip.

Members of the New York Local traveled up and down the East Coast, visiting Washington, D.C. (66 points), Norfolk, Virginia (28 points), North Carolina (122 points), Charleston, South Carolina (46 points) and Atlanta. Teams also went to numerous CUNY and SUNY campuses. Thirty-five points were sold at Columbia University, where the SYC has for years intervened in campus struggles, held forums and classes and distributed literature. Boston comrades, with help from New York, netted 108 points at Western Massachusetts campuses.

Defense of the right to distribute literature and participate in the political life of a campus is an important component of any sub drive. On occasion, petty school officials, unsettled by our unabashedly communist politics, have attempted to shut us down. At Boston University (BU), the administration suspended the Friends of the Spartacus Youth Club (FOSYC) midway through the sub drive. The Boston comrades poured their resources into fighting this flagrant political censorship, mobilizing support among BU students and faculty to win the reinstatement of FOSYC. As a result of the FOSYC defense campaign, 18 points were sold at BU.

Finally, the “at large” points included points for subscriptions to WV sold by our Canadian comrades of the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste as part of their *WV/Spartacist Canada* subscription drive. Subscriptions mailed in from locations not serviced by a local make up the remainder of the “at large” points. Congratulations again to everyone for all their work!

We welcome our readers, new and longstanding. We hope you will become our active supporters and join in the struggles of the working people and oppressed. We encourage you to contact us to discuss the contents of WV and introduce WV to friends and co-workers. If you agree with our purpose and principles, join us!■

New Orleans...

(continued from page 2)

Authority of N.O., is paying to rent “shutting devices” at an incredible \$55 per month per door and \$22 per month per window to keep the residents out.

The City of N.O. has laid off most city employees and closed all the neighborhood parks and libraries indefinitely, except for Algiers on the West Bank.

A quarter of a million jobs disappeared in September, fully 40 percent of the local workforce. Employers have notified the State of additional planned layoffs. Locals are shut out of the massive work of debris collection, demolition and rebuilding. Less than one-half of one percent of the initial contracts went to Louisiana companies; the rest went to Halliburton and those with ties to the Bush Administration. Halliburton and friends brought in an initial workforce from out of state, apparently 99 percent white...and without health insurance. Which I know because they are showing up at the hospital where I work. The sub-subcontractors have since brought in Latino crews which has caused the black Democratic mayor to worry aloud about “being overrun by Mexicans,” and led Democratic State Senator Mary Landrieu to call in the INS to deport undocumented workers from the Belle Chasse Naval Center. In historically under-unionized Louisiana, there has never been a clearer case for the need to unionize and unite workers of all races and nationalities.

There is a massive shortage of housing stock for both laborers and returning residents. Contractors and crews got little cooperation from local authorities and are squatting in massive encampments in City Park and empty lots everywhere. There is to this date not one occupied FEMA trailer in use in all of Orleans Parish.

Cops are enforcing the message that black residents better stay away. A tee-totalling 64-year-old black retired schoolteacher back to check on his 9th Ward home was beaten bloody and senseless and arrested outside his French Quarter hotel by NOPD who then menaced the TV camera man and reporter who recorded the incident. A middle-aged black female friend of mine, also back to check on her home, told me she is leaving the city for good because she cannot enter a store or place of business without being treated like a probable looter.

That was the line from the bourgeois state immediately after the storm. The prostitute bourgeois press duly repeated the lies as fact for four fateful days: namely that there was nobody in New Orleans to save but criminals and looters, and you couldn’t go in there because you’d get shot.

Red Cross trucks and fleets of rescue vehicles were stopped by the feds and barred from entering the city while vulnerable elderly and ill died awaiting rescue, including those in hospitals.

Only after enough movie stars, Wal-Mart trucks and TV camera men got in and showed the scenes of poor and elderly, mothers and children begging to be

saved did the tide turn.

After all was said and done the “criminal takeover” turned out to be a racist lie, and no one has apologized or retracted it.

The real looters were the cops. NOPD officers stole every last Cadillac and Corvette from a downtown dealership in a widely witnessed example.

New Orleans is a key port city and transportation hub which cannot be abandoned, moved, or reduced to a Disneyland version of the French Quarter. Black people are literally the backbone, guts and heart of New Orleans. People love this city for its Afro-Caribbean-Creole-Latin charm, reflected everywhere: in the architecture, food, music

and culture of “laissez les bon temps rouler.” You cannot keep out the black port workers, laborers, musicians, chefs, oil workers, hospital and hospitality industry workers and still have a city.

A bitter joke made the rounds here: What is Bush’s position on Roe versus Wade? Answer: he doesn’t care how people get out of New Orleans. The hurricane of the century blew down most of this town, revealing the vicious hostility of the ruling class toward the poor, the black and the working class. Truly a socialist revolution is needed to put the working class in power. It’s a matter of life and death.

Ruth
New Orleans

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Down With Racist Cop Terror!

Ghetto Youth Upheavals Sweep France



Paris suburb Clichy-sous-Bois invaded by cops. Right: Cops arrest youth on October 30.

The following article is based on a leaflet issued on November 5 by our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyiste de France.

PARIS, November 8—On October 27, two youth of African origin, Ziad Benna and Bouna Traoré, were electrocuted in a power substation where they had sought refuge from a police dragnet in Clichy-sous-Bois, near Paris. For over a week, immigrant and minority ghettos and neighborhoods have been in flames. Thousands of cars as well as some warehouses and stores have burned. The unprecedented unrest in the suburban ghettos has also flared up in the center of Paris and spread to suburbs all over France and beyond. Cars were set ablaze outside the main train station in Brussels and in a working-class neighborhood of Berlin.

The French government continues to fuel the outrage. A state of emergency invoking sweeping police measures has now been imposed against the seething ghettos. Some 10,000 police have been deployed while more than 1,200 youth have been arrested and some have already been sentenced to months in jail. We demand the *immediate release of all the jailed youth and the dropping of all charges! Down with racist police terror against youth in the immigrant ghettos!* We also oppose Vigipirate, a plan consisting of racist joint police and army patrols in train and metro stations and airports, which has been on “code red” for five months now.

The explosion started in Clichy-sous-Bois, a rundown ghetto with a population consisting heavily of immigrants and French youth of immigrant descent. The official unemployment rate there is 25 percent; in reality, probably more than 50 percent of youth there are unemployed. No wonder Clichy exploded. The bourgeoisie does not have much to offer these youth except police patrols, jail and death—in some prisons about 80 percent of the inmates are of Muslim background, whereas Muslims make up less than 10 percent of the population of France.

A recent sociological study documents “apartheid at school,” with racist segregation now even more intense in high schools than in housing. As a result, these youth have little to no perspective of finishing school or getting a job. And the situation has gone from bad to worse over the last 20 years, under “left-” and right-wing governments alike. Racism is inherent to capitalism, and in France it is rooted also in its colonial past: the French bourgeoisie still seethes over its defeat in the Algerian liberation struggle over 40 years ago. A consistent fight against racist oppression requires a fight to overthrow the whole capitalist system.

Riots such as these are an expression of despair by unemployed youth so marginalized that they are deprived of any means to be a factor for effective social change. The unrest has also included incidents of indiscriminate attacks on individuals who happened to find themselves in the wrong place, and has devastated the

neighborhoods these youth have to live in. Yet despite the vast energies expended and the devastation suffered, these outbreaks usually change nothing. This makes it even more important for workers to fight for better conditions for residents of these neighborhoods. The working class is the social force that has the objective interest and power to overturn this whole system of capitalist exploitation, racism and misery, and build a workers state based on a planned economy.

Aulnay-sous-Bois is another city in the 93rd district, a heavily working-class and immigrant region outside Paris that was prominent in the recent riots. In Aulnay there is also a large Citroën auto plant where young workers, mostly of North and West African immigrant origin, carried out a winning strike this past March. Thousands of youth from the area have jobs at the nearby Charles de Gaulle Airport, one of the largest in Europe. The power of the multiethnic workforce of the



Clichy-sous-Bois residents march on October 29. T-shirts reading “Dead for Nothing” honor two young men who died after being chased by police.

area, French and immigrant, can be unleashed to fight against the terrible conditions in the ghettos and in defense of the oppressed youth. But for this to happen, what is necessary is a relentless fight against the chauvinist trade-union bureaucracy, which restrains and betrays working-class struggles because at bottom it shares the bourgeoisie’s concern that French capitalism be made more “competitive” against its international rivals.

The government’s vicious attack against a whole generation of youth is intended to fuel racist divisions within the multiethnic working class of this country in a context of savage attacks against the whole proletariat and growing working-class resistance. After the seamen of the Corsica-Mediterranean ferry line lost their strike, stabbed in the back by the CGT union leadership (see “Corsica and Class Struggle in France,” WV No. 857, 28 October), the government, wielding an anti-strike court injunction, is now trying to break a month-long strike by Marseille transit workers. A strike has been called for November 21 by all the major unions of the SNCF railway. This makes it all the more urgent for the organized workers movement to oppose the government’s racist onslaught. For the working class, it is a life-and-death question to stand united and fight off the attacks on its standard of living and on social services. As the LTF wrote in *Le Bolchévique* (September 2005):

“An attack against one is an attack against all. The whole workers movement... must mobilize in defense of its most vulnerable class brothers, the workers coming from North and West Africa in particular, who form a strategic component of the proletariat of this country, whether in construction, auto or among the sanitation workers of Paris. What’s needed is a campaign to unionize the temp workers, time-limited jobs and ‘new hire contracts’ [a new type of contract below union standards]. *Down with Vigipirate! Down with racist expulsions and deportation charter flights! Full citizenship rights for all those who are here! French troops out of Africa!*”

Neighborhood Police and Riot Police: Guard Dogs of the Bourgeois Order

The trade-union bureaucrats and the reformist parties should be condemned for their refusal to protest the government’s racist onslaught in Clichy-sous-Bois and other neighborhoods. They mainly complain that Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy is a crazed maniac, only pursuing his career to become president. Thus they give backhanded support to his rival, Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin (a close ally of President Jacques Chirac), who has even increased the level of police repression since he took over the situation after the first days of rioting. The reformists condemn Sarkozy for sending riot police on hit-and-run operations against the minority ghettos. Instead of Sarkozy’s raids, they promote the so-called good old days of the “neighborhood police” put in place by the late popular-front government of Lionel Jospin of the Socialist Party (PS) and Marie-George Buffet, the current head of the Communist Party (PCF). The PCF and Lutte Ouvrière (LO), which is linked to the American pseudo-Trotskyist organization Spark, have even attacked Sarkozy for reducing the number of police working daily in the ghettos. LO wrote in *Lutte Ouvrière* (8 July):

“In complete contradiction to his promises, the minister Sarkozy has conducted the same policy on his turf as his colleagues: playing tricks with the numbers to hide the decrease, closing police precincts, budgets without funds.”

The “neighborhood police” was a favorite concept of Jean-Pierre Chevènement, minister of police in the Jospin government,

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