

Democrats Gave Bush the Go-Ahead

NSA/FBI Spying and the War on Our Rights

On December 16, the *New York Times* revealed that for the past four years President Bush has authorized the National Security Agency (NSA) to intercept international phone calls and Internet communications of U.S. citizens without a warrant. A week after the *Times* broke the story, it was revealed that the scope of the wiretapping, which included domestic wiretapping, was far more vast than initially disclosed and was carried out with the ready assistance of American telecommunications companies. In addition to spying on specific conversations, NSA technicians have been combing through large volumes of telephone and Internet traffic in what some officials describe as a large “data mining” operation.

These operations hark back to the Total Information Awareness project, the Big Brother brainchild of convicted Contragate criminal Admiral John Poindexter. That was projected to be a massive computer system that would allow the Feds to access the financial, medical, communications and travel records of everyone living in or entering the U.S. We noted at the time, in “Down With Government War on Civil Liberties!” (WV No. 811, 10 October 2003), that the program would allow the Bush administration to “know what books and periodicals you read, what music you listen to, what movies you watch, what cities and countries you travel to, who you sleep with and what type of contraception you use.” Amid the uproar over Poindexter’s proposal, Congress voted in 2003 to deny funding. Nevertheless, the Defense Department continued funding its development.

According to the bourgeoisie’s own laws, Bush’s actions are blatantly illegal. The NSA wiretaps are in direct violation of the Fourth Amendment’s prohibition of unreasonable search and seizure, as well as court decisions and federal laws. A 1972 Supreme Court decision in *United States v. United States District Court* requires judicial approval for wiretaps even when the government claims it’s for “national security.” The political backdrop to that decision was massive social unrest over the Vietnam War and struggles for black rights.

In 1978, after U.S. imperialism’s stinging defeat in Vietnam, the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA), signed into law by Democratic president Jimmy Carter, allowed the government to obtain



Corbis

Above: Joint Operations Command Center, which centralizes city and federal police and spying operations in Washington, D.C., during 2002 anti-globalization protests there. Below: Cops terrorize British tourists of South Asian descent in name of “war on terror,” New York, July 2005.



AP

warrants for such wiretaps from a secret court set up to review government applications in “foreign intelligence” investigations. While FISA is now invoked by liberals as a check on the nation’s secret police, in practice it has served as a rubber stamp for the Feds. In 27 years, the FISA court turned down *five* of nearly 20,000 warrant applications. But for Bush & Co., even the formality of a court sanction is unacceptable. They are intent on establishing that the word of the President is the highest law of the land.

The NSA disclosure had immediate repercussions within Congress and the courts. The Senate did not pass the permanent renewal of the draconian USA

Patriot Act sought by the administration, adopting instead a five-week extension to allow further debate after the Congressional recess. FISA court judge James Robertson resigned, reportedly in protest of the government’s end run around his court. Republican Senator Arlen Specter, chairman of the Judiciary Committee, announced plans to conduct hearings this month on the wiretaps. Just as the White House earlier dismissed reservations from those in the Justice Department—apparently including former Attorney General John Ashcroft—that the NSA program was illegal, Bush today is not budging one inch, even in the face of complaints from some Congressional

Republicans. Now, in an attempt to silence anyone who might think of revealing more of the government’s dark secrets, Bush’s Justice Department has announced a criminal investigation of the NSA leaks.

Last year, Bush lied that there were no warrantless wiretaps. Now, he points to the Congressional resolution passed one week after the September 11 attacks with near-unanimous Democratic support that gave him a blank check for the “war on terror.” This gives the lie to the feigned outrage expressed by Congressional Democrats over the NSA spying. As Republican Peter Hoekstra, chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, pointed out: “The record is clear; Congressional leaders at a minimum tacitly supported the program” (*New York Times*, 23 December 2005). At least seven Democrats are known to have been briefed about the NSA operations, only three of whom expressed even the mildest concern. California Democrat Jane Harman, who knew of the spying since 2003, called it “essential to U.S. national security.” Senate Democratic leader Harry Reid, former Senator Bob Graham and Richard Gephardt, former Democratic leader in the House, were also briefed.

Arguing in a *New York Times* (27 December 2005) op-ed piece, titled “Unwarranted Complaints,” that the NSA wiretaps required no warrants, David Rivkin and Lee Casey, who served in the Reagan and Bush Sr. administrations, point out that “numerous administrations, both Republican and Democrat, have espoused the same view.” Bill Clinton faced charges of warrantless wiretapping in 1994. That same year, Clinton’s deputy attorney general Jamie Gorelick declared before the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence: “The Department of Justice believes—and the case law supports—that the president has inherent authority to conduct warrantless physical searches for foreign intelligence purposes and that the president may, as he has done, delegate this authority to the attorney general” (*Washington Times*, 22 December 2005). Gorelick explicitly included electronic surveillance such as wiretaps in this claim. Similarly, the Clinton administration initiated the practice of “rendition” of “terror suspects” to countries where they would be tortured.

For its part, the *New York Times* sat on the NSA story for a year at the administration’s request. Once again the *Times* assisted the Bush administration, as they did in peddling the administration’s lies about Iraq’s “weapons of mass destruction.”

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On Lenin's Address to Petrograd Soviet

1 December 2005

To the Editor,

The Quote of the Week in WV No. 858 (11 November 2005) reproduced Lenin's speech to the Petrograd Soviet on 25 October 1917. The text was taken from the authoritative English source, Lenin's *Collected Works*, volume 26. But although it is rendered as spoken in the first person, it is not a transcript of Lenin's speech, but rather a newspaper reporter's rendition, published in the 27 October 1917 issue of *Izvestia*. It has been broadly cited in scholarly works without reservation. It appeared in volume 15 of the first edition of Lenin's *Collected Works* only after his death in 1924. The editor, Lev Kamenev, specifically cautioned readers in his 19 July 1922 introductory notes that Lenin's speeches from newspaper accounts are only "more or less exact, only a mere skeleton of what was said," and that "Lenin himself has several times in print renounced responsibility for his speeches as published in newspapers." I would add, the archival original is marked as "unverified."

Unfortunately, there are no stenographic records for the October 25 session of the Petrograd Soviet. And, as Trotsky noted in his *History of the Russian Revolution* about the events of that day in the Smolny Institute:

"No minutes were kept—or they have not been preserved. Nobody was bothering about future historians, although a lot of trouble was being prepared for them right there....

"There remain only the hasty and tentative newspaper reports.... *Lenin's speeches have suffered especially*" (emphasis added).

But note that Trotsky wrote of *multiple*

newspaper reports.

Now, thanks to the publication of a Russian-language documentary collection, *The Petrograd Soviet of Workers and Soldiers Deputies in 1917, Documents and Materials*, Vol. 4 (ROSSPEN: Moscow 2003), we have several other newspaper accounts to compare against *Izvestia*'s. And it immediately becomes clear why over the years the anti-Trotskyist editors of Lenin's writings provided only one variant: *Izvestia*'s was the least offensive to Stalin's nationalist-reformist "theory" of socialism in one country. In that account, Lenin said:

"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....

"We possess the strength of mass organization, which will overcome everything and lead the proletariat to the world revolution.

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

A "socialist state in Russia," "the victory of socialism" arising from a Russian "mass organization, which will overcome everything"? These formulations are striking in that they are at odds with what Lenin had always taught: that socialism is the lower stage of communism, a classless society with no need of a state, a society of abundance possible only on the basis of an international planned economy. That is why the October Revolution was seen as but a spark to ignite a Europe-wide socialist revolution.

And sure enough, other press reports of his speech, such as the following from *Rech* (26 October 1917), said just the opposite of the *Izvestia* account:

"Only socialism can save Russia from the horrors and consequences of war. 'It is

On eve of 1917
Bolshevik Revolution,
banner of "Red Putilov"
factory workers reads:
"Long Live the
Russian Revolution
as the Prologue to
Social Revolution in
Europe."



possible,' declared Lenin, 'that this task is beyond the capacities of the Russian proletariat alone, which is significantly more backward than the Western European proletariat, but the war has imposed this task on the Russian proletariat, and it must be taken on. The new workers and peasants government, which is already being formed,' Lenin underscored, 'will not resolve all the tasks that are placed before the Petrograd proletariat without a struggle against our own, and against international, capitalism.... The Russian started the revolution, and the German will carry it through to the end,' declared Lenin."

And far from Lenin declaring "a new phase in the history of Russia" alone that should lead to socialism, the account in *Novaya Zhizn* (26 October 1917) reported Lenin saying:

"[a] new phase has opened up not just in

Russia, but throughout the entire world. And this phase will inevitably lead to the victory of socialism. Without this, it is not possible to resolve all the problems that are posed before us by life and war....

"The task of the day is the construction of a proletarian state, and in this labor, we believe that the full support of the peasantry behind us is guaranteed. And with this confidence, we can shout, 'Long Live the Worldwide Socialist Revolution!'"

Thus, there are grounds for us to reaffirm that Lenin's historic declaration of the Petrograd proletariat's victorious insurrection was sharply counterposed to the Stalinist lie of "socialism in one country" and fully in accordance with Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution.

Comradely Greetings,
Victor G.

Funds Needed for Jaan Laaman Defense

The Partisan Defense Committee received a letter dated November 27 from Jaan Laaman, one of the Ohio 7 class-war prisoners. Laaman wrote: "This year I came across some profound new evidence and I now have a possibility of reopening and challenging my entire [Massachusetts] conviction and sentence. I have always maintained my innocence in this case and now I may finally be able to prove it."

The Ohio 7 were leftist activists convicted for their role in a radical group that took credit for bank "expropriations" and bombings in the 1970s and '80s against symbols of U.S. imperialism and apartheid South Africa. These actions were not crimes from the standpoint of the working class. Laaman—

who has been imprisoned for over 21 years—and his Ohio 7 comrades should never have spent a day in jail! Funds are urgently needed to hire legal defense to pursue Laaman's appeal. On December 29, the PDC sent \$500 toward this effort. We urge our readers to help support the fight for Laaman's freedom. Checks should be made out to the "Jaan Laaman Legal Freedom Fund" and sent to: Jaan Laaman Legal Freedom Fund, P.O. Box 681, East Boston, MA 02128.

You may read about Jaan Laaman's case and other class-war prisoners in the online magazine he contributes to: www.4strugglemag.org. Or write to 4strugglemag, 2035 St. Laurent Boulevard, Montreal, Quebec, H2X 2T3 Canada.

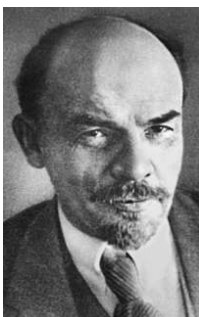
Class Against Class

Referring to the victorious 1936-37 West Coast strike by warehousemen and maritime unions, Trotskyist leader James P. Cannon outlined the class-struggle principles key to guiding labor struggles.

A conflict between workers and employers is not a mere misunderstanding between two elements who have a common general interest. On the contrary it springs from an irreconcilable conflict of interest; it is an expression of a ruthless class struggle wherein power alone decides the issue.



TROTSKY



LENIN

Viewed in this light, a dispute between workers and employers cannot be settled fairly by the government; the government is an instrument of one of the parties to the dispute—in this case the capitalists. The class conflict cannot be handed over to the "public" to decide; the "public" is itself divided into classes with different interests and different sympathies regulated primarily by these interests. The polemics of Karl Marx against the conservative labor leaders of his day answered all these questions. All the experience of the labor movement since that time, including the recent west coast strike, speaks for the position of Marx and against all conceptions which overlook the class struggle.

—James P. Cannon, "After the Maritime Strike," *Labor Action*, 20 February 1937, reprinted in *Notebook of an Agitator* (1958)

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Freedom Now for Mumia Abu-Jamal!

We reprint below a speech, edited for publication, by Jonathan Piper of the Partisan Defense Committee at a united-front defense rally in Chicago on October 1. The event was one of a series of rallies initiated by the PDC under the heading “The ‘War on Terror’ Targets Blacks, Immigrants, Labor and Leftists! Fight Government Repression!” The rallies emphasized defense of renowned black journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal, an innocent man who has been on death row for close to a quarter of a century, leftist attorney Lynne Stewart and black militant Assata Shakur (see “Fight Government Repression!” WV No. 859, 25 November 2005).

Last month, the federal Third Circuit Court of Appeals in Pennsylvania put Mumia’s case on a “fast track” for decision. This means that Mumia’s attorneys as well as the Philadelphia district attorney’s office will file their legal papers, and there will be a court decision within a very short period of time, perhaps as soon as six months. The court will be deciding whether to uphold Mumia’s death sentence or to allow him more legal proceedings, including possibly a new trial.

The federal appeals court is not required to consider all of the violations of rights evident in Mumia’s frame-up, conviction and sentencing, during which virtually every right of due process—from the right to an attorney to the right to cross-examine witnesses—was violated. However, the court has allowed three



August 1995: Philadelphia demonstration, part of international campaign protesting signing of Mumia Abu-Jamal’s death warrant. Mobilization of labor was key to winning stay of execution.

WV Photo

Mumia first entered the cops’ cross hairs in the late 1960s. At age 15 he helped found the Black Panther Party chapter in Philadelphia, serving as the Minister of Information for the Philadelphia chapter and as a talented writer for the *Black Panther* newspaper. He was targeted by the FBI’s notorious COINTELPRO operation of intimidation and assassination. His activism contin-

then let her go. Yet several other witnesses who knew her confirmed that she was not even there when Mumia or the police officer was shot.

Two months after the shooting, the prosecutor called together all the police officers, looking for something to make a case and got them to come up with a story about how Mumia had “confessed” to the shooting while lying in the emergency room, where he was beaten by police officers. In fact, the officer on guard wrote in his report that night that during this whole time, Mumia made no comments.

What happened at the kangaroo trial in 1982 shows why we say there is no justice in the capitalist courts. Mumia’s trial was presided over by the notorious hanging judge Albert Sabo, who sent more men to death row than any other sitting judge in recent history. A court reporter overheard Sabo during the trial saying, “I’m going to help them fry the n----r.” Mumia was saddled with an incompetent lawyer, with a jury that was rigged to keep blacks off. There was no lie or trick too low for the prosecutor, who argued that Mumia deserved the death penalty because he was a former Black Panther Party member who had quoted Mao Zedong saying, “All power to the people” and “Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun.” This was the argument for why Mumia deserved death, and this shows what the death penalty is all about as a barbaric, racist legacy of the era of chattel slavery.

I joined Mumia’s legal team in 1990, after he lost his first appeal. Rachel Wolkenstein and I, who served as Partisan Defense Committee lawyers, operated with the understanding there is no way that Mumia could win justice out of the capitalist court system. To speak of Mumia ever receiving a “fair trial” only breeds the deadly illusion that there can be justice in the capitalist courts. While fighting to use every possible legal procedure and remedy on Mumia’s behalf, we understood that his real fate lay not in the hands of the hanging judges but in the hands of the masses of the labor movement and the oppressed rallying to his defense.

In 1999, Rachel located the witness Arnold Beverly and secured his written confession that “I was hired, along with another guy, and paid to shoot and kill Faulkner.... Jamal had nothing to do with the shooting.” Not only did Beverly pass a lie detector test, but his confession is

completely consistent with all the physical evidence in the case, and with the accounts of numerous eyewitnesses who saw the shooter run away from the scene. And this account of being hired to kill Faulkner is consistent with the fact that there was an FBI investigation right at that time of police running the prostitution rings and taking graft from the late-night clubs in the downtown Philadelphia neighborhood right where this happened. Many officers involved in framing up Mumia in fact were later convicted in the corruption scandals that came out of that. Rachel and I left the defense team in 1999 because Jamal’s lead counsel, the liberal lawyer Leonard Weinglass, and Dan Williams refused to let us bring out the Beverly confession.

This confession, and other evidence of the massive police misconduct, exposed the state’s conscious frame-up of an innocent man. This is “too hot to handle” for the capitalist courts. It proves that this is not some aberration or mistake of a bad judge or a bad jury, but the crystallization of what the capitalist state is all about: committed to preserving the bosses’ property system and the racial oppression on which it rests. Beverly has never been allowed to testify in court, nor has much of the other evidence showing the frame-up been allowed into court. The pretext for denying all this evidence is a rash of laws that were passed in the 1990s to stop death row and other inmates from raising their appeals. The primary measure was the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996, which was signed by the Democrat Bill Clinton after the Oklahoma City bombing. This underscores how the so-called “war on terror” in fact is a war on black people and labor as well as immigrants.

Now Jamal’s case is in the federal court of appeals. A federal judge has for the time being overturned Mumia’s death sentence, but the Philly prosecutors want to put it back in place. The cops are howling for Mumia’s blood. And even if the death sentence is overturned, Mumia faces the rest of his life buried in prison. We need a renewed effort to win Mumia’s freedom. You need to get involved in this fight if you aren’t already—to raise this case in all arenas, all organizations, most importantly your trade unions. This is the force that can win Mumia’s freedom.

Free Mumia now! Free all class-war prisoners! Abolish the racist death penalty! ■



James/Philadelphia Inquirer

Mumia Abu-Jamal in 1969, Minister of Information for Philadelphia Black Panther Party.

challenges: the racially biased jury selection in Mumia’s 1982 trial, the D.A.’s prejudicial summary argument to the jury falsely stating that Mumia would have “appeal after appeal,” and the grossly biased post-conviction state hearings before Judge Albert Sabo in the 1990s.

That these challenges can even be heard in court is a good development. But these proceedings also put Mumia’s life literally in the balance. This emphasizes with even more urgency the need to mobilize the social power of organized labor and its allies *now* to fight for Mumia’s freedom.

* * *

Mumia Abu-Jamal, America’s foremost political prisoner, is an innocent man. Yet he is locked away in Pennsylvania’s death row dungeons, even when Arnold Beverly, another man, has confessed that he was the one who shot the police officer in the killing for which Mumia was framed up.



Mumia remains imprisoned despite the mountain of evidence that proves his innocence. America’s capitalist rulers and their courts know that he’s innocent. They want to silence Mumia’s voice because he is a symbol of defiant opposition to their system of exploitation and racist oppression.

ued throughout the 1970s as an eloquent journalist in Philadelphia, where his championing the cause of the oppressed and exploited led him to be called “the voice of the voiceless.” The cops hated him because he publicized the cases of victims of police brutality, particularly the Philadelphia MOVE organization.

All this time they had been trying to pin something on Mumia, but he had done nothing but journalism and exercising his First Amendment rights. They saw their chance to get him in the early morning hours of 9 December 1981, when Mumia was shot and beaten on the scene where a police officer named Daniel Faulkner had been shot. The Chief Inspector on the scene had been leading the campaign against the Black Panthers back in the ’60s. He knew who Mumia was, and they immediately started to pull out every stop to pin Faulkner’s killing on him. They pulled out the third degree, threatening and coercing witnesses and people who weren’t even there to say that Mumia had shot the cop. The state’s main witness was Cynthia White, a prostitute who was arrested four times between December 9 and the trial six months later. Each time she was arrested the police got her to say something additional against Mumia and

Partisan Defense Committee
September 2001 Pamphlet \$.50

Mumia Abu-Jamal Is an Innocent Man!



New Evidence Explodes Frame-Up

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Free Mumia Now!

\$.50 (32 pages)

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Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!

California Lynches Stanley Tookie Williams

OAKLAND—On December 13, the state of California executed Stanley Tookie Williams. In an act of barbarism, the executioners spent 20 minutes digging in his arms trying to insert needles for the lethal injection. This legal lynching gruesomely underscores the political message that, for the capitalist rulers, black life counts for nothing, a message the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina showed to all the world. It is meant to underline that the government intends to enforce the racist death penalty despite substantial public opposition to it, and is especially pushing for the execution of America's foremost class-war prisoner, Mumia Abu-Jamal. Addressing black youth horrified by Williams' cruel murder, Marc Sapir noted in a 28 December 2005 column in the *San Francisco Bay View*: "The state's message was loud and clear: 'If you resist our violence and terror you will be called the terrorist and we will kill you.'"

Capital punishment, a legacy of black chattel slavery, exposes the naked brutality of this class-divided and racially segregated society. We oppose the death penalty on principle—for the guilty as well as the innocent—because we do not accord the state the right to determine who lives and dies. On the night of Williams' execution, some 2,000 protesters gathered outside the gates of San Quentin State Prison where Williams had been entombed on death row for nearly a

prior week. Only hours before Williams was to die, a fourth witness signed an affidavit that the L.A. County Sheriff's Department fed police reports to one witness to aid his fabrication of Williams' hearsay "confession." California's top cop, Democratic attorney general Bill Lockyer, presided over the state's legal pursuit of Williams' execution, and now any evidence that might have proven his innocence will never be heard.

The Williams case "is a prime example of the racist travesty that is American 'justice,'" as the Partisan Defense Committee stated in a November 29 protest letter to Schwarzenegger. Williams, a former leader of the L.A. Crips gang, was convicted in a case brought by a prosecutor twice censured by the California Supreme Court for discriminatory conduct. Every potential black juror was struck from the jury. No physical evidence linked Williams to the murders. He was convicted on circumstantial evidence and hearsay testimony by jailhouse snitches who faced felony convictions and were offered reduced sentences and other compensation.

Because of Williams' conversion in prison into an anti-gang and anti-crime crusader, portrayed in the docudrama *Redemption*, many, including the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, considered him an excellent candidate for clemency. However, in his five-page denial, Schwarzenegger dismissed all

To many black people, protesting on behalf of Williams represented a gut reaction to the racist injustice and violence they regularly experience at the hands of the capitalist rulers and their state. In L.A., thousands of people, overwhelmingly black, turned out to view Williams' body and honor him at his funeral. They were met with an ominous police presence, as hundreds of riot cops dispatched by Democratic mayor Antonio Villaraigosa lined the streets. In his remarks at the funeral, Jesse Jackson made a point that was on the minds of many people there about the racist and capricious character of the death penalty: "Tookie Williams is dead, killed by the state. However, Charlie Manson is alive, and he tore apart the body of Sharon Tate who was nine-months pregnant." Manson's death sentence was commuted to life in prison when the death penalty was briefly ruled unconstitutional in the state of California in 1971.

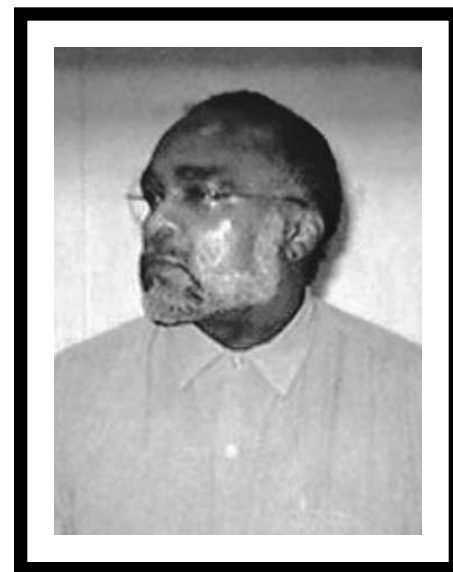
California now has a death row population of 647, the largest in the country. So many innocent people have been sentenced to die that the California State Senate established a Commission on the Fair Administration of Justice to investigate, and there are proposals that there be a moratorium on executions at least until the Commission issues its report in 2007. Perhaps for this very reason, Williams' execution date was moved forward. The state machinery of death presses on: the next legal lynching is scheduled for January 17, of 75-year-old Native American Clarence Ray Allen, who is wheelchair-bound and almost blind.

Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!

Williams' case became a referendum on the enforcement of the death penalty, which is supported by politicians in both the Democratic and Republican parties. In executing Williams, they declare their intention to carry out the execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal—a former Black Panther and MOVE supporter known as the "voice of the voiceless"—who was framed up for the killing of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner in 1981.

Williams was not a fighter for black freedom imprisoned for his political beliefs. But after years in San Quentin, he came to appreciate the fight waged by those who were. In denying clemency to Williams, Schwarzenegger cited the fact that Williams dedicated his 1998 book, *Life in Prison*, to "Nelson Mandela, Angela Davis, Malcolm X, Assata Shakur, Geronimo Ji Jaga Pratt, Ramona Africa, John Africa, Leonard Peltier, Dhoruba al-Mujahid, George Jackson, Mumia Abu Jamal, and the countless other men, women, and youths, who have to endure the hellish oppression of living behind bars." Schwarzenegger ranted: "The mix of individuals on this list is curious. Most have violent pasts and some have been convicted of committing heinous murders including the killing of law enforcement."

On the contrary, it is Schwarzenegger's objections that are "curious": Mandela is a hero of the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa; Angela Davis was acquitted of all charges; Assata Shakur is in exile in Cuba with a \$1 million bounty on her head; Malcolm X was murdered; Pratt and Dhoruba, both former Panthers, are now free after their convictions, both blatant COINTELPRO



Reuters

frame-ups, were reversed; Ramona Africa spent seven years in prison for the "crime" of being the sole adult survivor of the 1985 bombing of the MOVE commune by the Philadelphia police and FBI; John Africa was among those killed in the same bombing; American Indian Movement leader Peltier is in prison for a crime he did not commit.

Schwarzenegger's statement singles out Black Panther Party member George Jackson for special slander: "The inclusion of George Jackson on this list defies reason and is a significant indicator that Williams is not reformed and that he still sees violence and lawlessness as a legitimate means to address societal problems." In fact, George Jackson, a revered leader of the Panthers and a fighter for prisoner rights, was never convicted of anything more than a \$71 gas station robbery; he was *assassinated* by prison guards at San Quentin on 21 August 1971.

But the main target of Schwarzenegger's lies and slander is Mumia Abu-Jamal. *Mumia Abu-Jamal is an innocent man!* Another man has confessed to Faulkner's killing—evidence the courts refuse to hear (see article, page 3). Jamal's case exposes what the death penalty is all about: a weapon of repression by the capitalist rulers, employed not least against fighters against racist oppression. By branding Mumia and other freedom fighters murderers criminals, Schwarzenegger and his racist supporters are sending an ominous message to Mumia's defenders, as well as any black people, particularly young blacks, who would take up his struggle for freedom.

The bourgeois press, too, is joining the lynch mob. Among others, journalist Michael Smerconish published a column titled "How Mumia Helped with Tookie's Sendoff" (*Philadelphia Daily News*, 16 December 2005), gloating over Tookie's death and looking forward to Jamal's. Vile radio shows like the "Kill Tookie Hour" in Los Angeles fomented race hate and bloodlust.

In his funeral oration, Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan claimed that Williams "paid a price, not just for his redemption, but for ours" (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 21 December 2005). For its part, the reformist International Socialist Organization (ISO) declared in an article titled "They Murdered a Peacemaker" (*Socialist Worker*, 16 December 2005): "The state of California rewarded redemption with cold-blooded murder." "Redemption" amounts to blaming the victims for their own oppression—as though they need to "redeem" themselves before the eyes of "God and country"—thereby alibiing the racist capitalist rulers. As Marxists, we reject the very concept of "redemption," the sickening religious notion of being "saved" through repentance.

In its article, the ISO describes Schwarzenegger as "better" than his predecessor, Democratic governor Gray Davis, praising him for "promoting parole for prisoners and last year adding the word 'rehabilitation' to the name of



Reuters

Los Angeles, December 20: Thousands turn out to honor Williams at his funeral.

quarter century. We participated in the demonstration called that evening with signs demanding, "Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!" "Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!" and calling for "Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!"

To the end, Stanley Williams maintained that he was innocent of the four murders of which he was convicted. Just hours before the execution, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger denied Williams clemency, and the U.S. Supreme Court turned down his last-minute legal appeals. After the governor rejected clemency, lawyers for Williams asked Schwarzenegger for a stay of execution based on exculpatory information of three more witnesses who had come forward in the

evidence of an unfair trial and posed the ultimate Catch-22: Williams could not be "redeemed" because he refused to confess, i.e., he refused to compromise his integrity in order to exculpate the racist injustice system.

From the ghettos of South-Central L.A. to the parliaments of Europe, where the death penalty is illegal in most countries, many voiced outrage over the killing of Williams, a Nobel Peace Prize nominee. His numerous supporters included such well-known figures as Jamie Foxx, Snoop Dogg and Joan Baez. Protests were organized in Schwarzenegger's Austrian hometown of Graz, after which he demanded that his name be stripped from the sports stadium.

Protest Cop Attack on Gay Rights March in Poland!

We reprint below the translation of a November 23 letter by the Committee for Social Defense (KfsV) in Germany to Polish president-elect Lech Kaczynski and Poznan mayor Ryszard Grobelny, protesting a brutal police attack on gay and lesbian rights activists in Poznan on November 19. This assault was the latest example of a campaign of the Polish capitalist state—established after the Solidarność-led counterrevolution 15 years ago—against the democratic rights of gays, lesbians, national minorities and the left. It comes on the heels of Kaczynski’s recent election on a program of re-establishing the death penalty, even further restricting abortion rights for women and establishing a clerical, anti-communist “Fourth Republic.” The Kaczynski regime thus threatens to bring every aspect of life in Poland ever more under the control of the Catholic church.

The KfsV is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization that champions cases and causes in the interest of the whole of the working people. This purpose is in accordance with the political views of the Spartakist Workers Party, German section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist). Today, the Polish capitalist state unleashes its police against gay and lesbian rights activists. Tomorrow, the same police will be unleashed against striking workers who defend their jobs and the meager social welfare that still exists. *An injury to one is an injury to all! Full democratic rights for homosexuals! For free abortion on demand!*

* * *

On Saturday, 19 November 2005, in the city of Poznan, police in riot gear brutally assaulted a march of several hun-



Indymedia

Police seize protester at November 19 Poznan rally for gay rights.

dred people for equal rights for gays and lesbians. This march was banned by Poznan’s mayor, Ryszard Grobelny, who followed the example of the Polish president-elect, Lech Kaczynski, who last June as mayor of Warsaw outlawed the “Parade of Equality.” The police attack occurred at the end of the march and was cheered by fascistic reactionaries who hurled racist and homophobic epithets at the demonstrators. The police first sur-

rounded the march and then started beating and arresting 65 demonstrators, dragging them along the sidewalk. The protesters now face penalties of up to one month in prison.

The Komitee für soziale Verteidigung (Committee for Social Defense) demands: *Stop the persecution of gay and lesbian rights activists in Poland! Drop all charges against the Poznan demonstrators!* ■

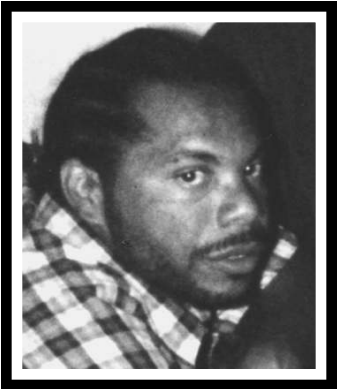
LBL Protests Cop Killing of Patrick Gaston

Oakland

On November 10 Patrick Gaston, a 34-year-old black man, was brutally killed in front of his mother and neighbors by Oakland police in broad daylight. Arrested for allegedly selling heroin to an undercover cop, Gaston was beaten and kicked into unconsciousness. A witness said, “I saw the police grab him, pull him off his bicycle and beat him. They beat him. They choked him. I didn’t see him fight back at all” (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 12 November 2005). Shouting that they were killing him, Gaston’s mother, Gwendolyn, called 911, and Patrick was pronounced dead less than an hour after he was attacked.

Gaston was killed in West Oakland, the territory of the infamous Oakland “Riders,” a gang of dozens of cops set loose in a special campaign in the racist “war on drugs.” Three Riders were brought to trial in 2002 on more than 60 counts stemming from their savage beatings and attempted frame-ups—and were acquitted in two successive trials. As a result of a civil suit, \$10.5 million was awarded last June to victims of years of abuse by Oakland police. Since November 2000 a consent decree has been in effect, seeking to refurbish the Citizens’ Police Review Board (CPRB) as a “solution” to cop violence. But as Gaston’s killing shows, no number of whitewash investigations and civilian review boards can disappear the role of the murderous police.

As we wrote in “As Oakland Police Thugs Face Trial: Anger Mounts Over Cop Terror in Bay Area” (WV No. 778,



Gaston Family

5 April 2002), “Waves of outrage against cop terror are followed by penny-ante, meaningless liberal ‘reforms,’ with the ghetto masses receding into bitterness and despair.” The cops are the hired thugs of the racist capitalist ruling class and serve to protect the system of private property.

The Bay Area Labor Black League for Social Defense submitted the following letter, as yet unpublished, to the *San Francisco Bay View* and *Oakland Tribune* on December 4. The recent attacks on Arab-owned neighborhood liquor stores in Oakland, mentioned in the letter, are alleged to be the acts of the late Yusuf Bey’s Black Muslim followers, a local group not affiliated with the Nation of Islam. For this group, selling alcohol is as much a “crime” as drug use. Such attacks benefit only the racist rulers who foster such divisions within the working and oppressed masses to maintain their power.

* * *

Patrick Gaston was a victim of police violence targeting young black men as criminals under the guise of the “war on

drugs.” The Labor Black League calls for an end to drug laws—“crimes without victims.” His generation has been deemed a surplus population by America’s rulers—no jobs, only prison hellholes or cannon fodder in imperialist wars. From the days of chattel slavery to the present, black oppression is the foundation upon which the American system of capitalist exploitation rests.

These conditions are intensified by the “war on terror” that targets immigrants, blacks and labor, tearing up rights that have been won through decades of social struggle. This year’s acquittal of the police gang, “the Riders” (named after the KKK nightriders), shows that police terror cannot be “reformed.”

In American class society, black peo-

ple are segregated at the bottom, yet form a strategic part of the working class. Labor action by the powerful, racially integrated trade unions, independent of the other party of war and racism—the Democratic Party—would give an organized political expression and social power to the outrage of the black ghetto against cop terror. Such protest must also include defense of Arab store owners against vigilantism. The recent vigilante attacks on Arab-owned ghetto liquor stores, allegedly by Bey’s Black Muslims, can only fuel anti-immigrant racism. Clearly, in racist America, the immediate targets of vigilantism and state repression are black people. We need a multiracial workers party to lead the way. ■



Bush/SF Chronicle

Gaston’s family holds vigil in Oakland near where he died, November 12.

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the Department of Corrections.” One might as well point out that the words “Work Brings Freedom” were above the entrance to the Auschwitz Nazi death camp. Meanwhile, ISO spokesman Todd Chretien called the execution of Williams “a great moral failure on the part of our government” in a 15 December press release announcing his candidacy for U.S. Senate on the capitalist Green Party ticket. “*Our government*”? This cabal of murderers, liars and robbers is not “our government.” The ISO is promoting illusions in the nature of the capitalist state. As we said in “Free the San Quentin Six,” an article about George Jackson and his comrades (WV No. 122,

20 August 1976):

“Prisons are the concentrated essence of the repressive power of the state, which upholds capitalism with its enforced poverty and inequality, driving many lumpenized elements to crime to survive. But once in prison, ‘rehabilitation’ and ‘correction’ become sick and empty lies, as harassment and torture of those seeking to maintain even a minimum of human dignity lead to ever longer sentences and deepening repression.”

Rather than “redemption,” black people need class-struggle leadership in the form of a revolutionary workers party that can lead the fight to overthrow this thoroughly rotten imperialist system. Abolish the racist death penalty! For black liberation through socialist revolution! ■



Canada: I.S. Upholds Anti-Woman Religious Courts

Sharia “Socialists”

The following article is reprinted from Spartacist Canada No. 147 (Winter 2005/2006), newspaper of the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste, Canadian section of the International Communist League.

What kind of “socialists” would actively back state-sanctioned Islamic *sharia* courts? That is exactly what the International Socialists (I.S. [affiliated with the British Socialist Workers Party]) are doing in taking up the cudgels for what they call, aping the language of the Christian right, “faith-based arbitration.” It is mind-boggling that self-styled leftists would champion a campaign by the most reactionary, anti-woman forces in the Muslim community to have their religious law backed by the authority of the capitalist state.

Sharia is the 1,300-year-old body of Muslim canon law that regulates every aspect of life. In Iran, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and elsewhere, it is synonymous with barbaric punishments such as “honour” killings and stoning “adulterers” and homosexuals to death. In Muslim personal law, women are inherently unequal (as in all organized religion); indeed they are considered less than fully human. Women may be beaten by their husbands, denied divorce, or arbitrarily divorced

SPARTACIST CANADA

by the husband simply repeating three times, “I divorce you.” In many countries, *sharia* codifies the Koranic strictures dictating the seclusion of women. The head-to-toe *chador* (veil), for example, is a walking prison, physically excluding women from society. It embodies the submission of women to men and their imposed inferior status. We solidarize with the countless women who have sought to escape this tyranny, whether in the Muslim world or the imperialist centers.

In late 2003, the Canadian Society of Muslims announced plans to establish *sharia* courts in Ontario that would function under the 1991 Arbitration Act introduced by the then NDP [social-democratic New Democratic Party] government. Like the Ontario Jewish rabbinical courts, the *Beit Din*, *sharia* courts would deal with family law—marriage, divorce, inheritance—where the subjugation of women is most brutally enforced. Decisions would be binding and upheld

International Socialists’ press (24 September 2005) champions reactionary *sharia* tribunals in Canada.

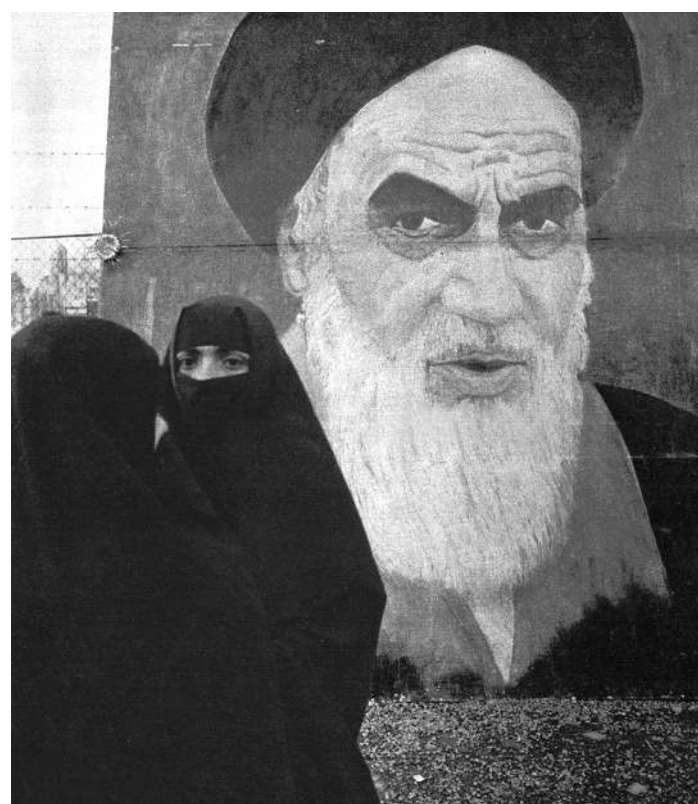


by the provincial courts unless coercion was shown. This plan sparked a huge outcry, including internationally, and after over a year of protest, on September 11 Liberal premier Dalton McGuinty announced, “There will be no religious arbitration in Ontario.” His government has now introduced a law to that effect.

The plan for *sharia* courts with official legal standing was an outrage that could only deepen the isolation and oppression of Muslim women. As revolutionaries, atheists and fighters for women’s liberation, we were unalterably opposed to them from the start. We wrote in *Spartacist Canada* (No. 142, Fall 2004):

“We are against all intrusion of religion into an already deeply unjust legal system that exists to defend capitalist private property and is driven by Christian thirst for vengeance and punishment. Religion ought to be a private matter in relation to the state. People should be free to practice their religion without the state persecution and religious bigotry which has spawned centuries of repression and bloodshed. But these religious tribunals are not a matter of private religious practice. Their rulings will have the force of law, making them part of the legal machinery of the capitalist state which in turn is to be the enforcer of religious obscurantism.”

Furious they can no longer claim the state’s blessing for their rulings, various mullahs and rabbis howled in protest.



Abbas/Gamma-Liaison

1979 seizure of power by Iranian mullahs was bloody disaster for women, workers and leftists.

Joining this reactionary outcry, the I.S. sneered against “abstract ‘secularism’” and trumpeted their participation in a “spirited demonstration” in defense of the woman-hating *sharia* tribunals (*Socialist Worker*, 8 October 2005).

The I.S.’s pro-*sharia* friends include the arch-Zionists of B’nai Brith, who also denounced the government’s decision. They want to buttress support for the *Beit Din* and are happy to see Muslims, especially women, ghettoized and oppressed by “their” religious leaders. In Orthodox Judaism, where women’s oppression is profound, a divorce is only final when the husband has served the *get* (writ of divorce) and it is endorsed by a rabbinical court. Should no *get* be served, the woman cannot be divorced. She is left in a horrific state of limbo known as *agunah*, a Hebrew word meaning “chained woman.” As columnist Anna Morgan wrote, “When asked to comment on the fate of the *agunah*, one Orthodox woman told me, ‘Are you crazy? If I speak out, no one will allow their children to marry mine’” (*Toronto Star*, 9 October 2005). The anti-*sharia* campaign helped crack this code of silence, putting a spotlight on the suffering of women at the hands of the rabbinical courts. It is very good that religious tribunals will no longer have legal standing in family law.

Of course, McGuinty’s Liberals and their ilk are hardly champions of women’s liberation. In racist capitalist Canada, Muslim women already face multiple hurdles. Often denied access to jobs, services and language classes, many live in intense isolation, making it very difficult to break out of the web of religious oppression. Those who do so face the threat of brutal coercion or are ostracized, cut off from family, friends and community. The imams already dispense “justice” from the mosques, but if *sharia* had become part of the state’s legal machinery, the vicious, age-old, anti-woman practices which it codifies would have been legitimized and the hold of religion increased.

I.S. Gets Religion

The I.S.’s defense of *sharia* rests on a stunning apology for Islamic reaction. The September 24 *Socialist Worker* featured an article (first posted on Marxmail.org) by Richard Fidler praising former NDP attorney general Marion Boyd’s government-commissioned report in favour of *sharia*. With contemptible indifference to women’s oppression, Fidler positively quotes Boyd’s statement

that “There is no evidence to suggest that women are being systematically discriminated against as a result of arbitration of family law issues.”

This prettification of Islam was embraced by *Socialist Worker* editor Paul Kellogg. “All religions are contradictory,” Kellogg averred, “Why aren’t the opponents of the use of the arbitration act highlighting those aspects of Islamic law which say it is the man’s responsibility to share in the cleaning and cooking, that gives women, along with men, the right to divorce, that mandates child-support from the estranged husband?” (8 October 2005). This is a cruel mockery of the brutal reality of women’s oppression. For women from huge swathes of Asia, Africa and the Near East, it is not a matter of who does the cleaning, but of the right to be considered fully human, not a chattel of first father, then husband.

Contrary to Kellogg, the contradiction in religion lies in the fact that human beings created religions, only to have their creations rule over them like a Frankenstein monster. It is obscene to have to debate with ostensible Marxists whether clerical reaction should be supported. Marxists regard all modern religion as an instrument of bourgeois reaction that defends exploitation and befuddles the working people.

Not so the I.S. Echoing the outraged mullahs and rabbis, Kellogg declares that “These third-party arbitrations have always existed, especially in religious communities, where it is often to the Priest, Minister, Iman [sic] or Rabbi that people turn when confronted with family or marital issues.” The I.S. *accepts* this domination, seeking to give it legal force.

Down With Anti-Muslim Racism!

The I.S. invokes the ruling class “war on terror” to cover its embrace of *sharia*. But for the racist Canadian rulers there is no contradiction between attacking Muslims as terrorists and nurturing the most oppressive forces in the Muslim community. Both reinforce the grip of capitalism by scapegoating and regimenting immigrants.

This is the central purpose of official “multiculturalism.” Promoted heavily by the Liberal Party as an expression of tolerance for all cultures (which is why right-wingers hate it), multiculturalism is designed to encourage the “voluntary” cultural and racial segregation of the population, ghettoizing immigrants while elevating petty-bourgeois “community leaders.” It is thus a conservatizing force for policing minorities and maintaining social peace. But the Muslim community, like the rest of society, is class-divided. The struggles of immigrant and other minority workers for rights, jobs and unions necessarily require throwing off the debilitating grip of religious and other community leaders.

Socialist Worker smears the opposition to *sharia* as “involving more than a hint of anti-immigrant and racist prejudice” and claims that leftist opponents of *sharia* are “lining up with reactionaries.” To be sure, some right-wing journalists and politicians seized on the *sharia* debate to inflame anti-Muslim racism. But Marxists’ opposition to *sharia* (and all religious law) is conditioned not by the character of others who may oppose it, but by what advances the class interests of the proletariat.

Moreover, the central organizers of the protests against official *sharia* courts in Ontario were not pro-imperialist

reactionaries, but women leftists from the Worker-communist Party of Iran (WCPI)—refugees from the bloody mullah regime in Iran. The No Religious Arbitration Coalition, which includes the Ontario Federation of Labour and many women's organizations, explicitly condemns Islamophobia and opposes *all* legally binding religious arbitration, not only Muslim. We have serious differences with the WCPI, anti-clerical reformists who all too often present the institutions of Western capitalism as potential allies against Islamic reaction (see "Iran and Women's Liberation," SC No. 141, Summer 2004). But to paint the campaign against *sharia* as a reactionary crusade that promotes anti-Muslim racism, as the I.S. does, is a slander in the service of religious reaction.

For Separation of Religion and State

In a September 15 Marxmail.org polemic on *sharia*, Fidler writes: “The traditional left speaks a language that is to a large degree alien to the cultural experience of these huddled masses. It is the language of the white European Enlightenment, redolent in abstract concepts such as ‘separation of church and state’.” This is a bald-faced repudiation of Marxism and its origins. The radical-democratic principles of the bourgeois Enlightenment were the ideological reflection of historic material advances over a backward, feudal society. Hardly an abstraction, the demand for separation of religion and state was vital to this social progress. Today it is an essential part of educating the proletariat as to its true class interests.

Hostile to religion, Marxism seeks to lay bare its deep social roots, which are today to be found, as Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin wrote, in “the socially downtrodden condition of the working masses and their apparently complete helplessness in face of the blind forces of capitalism” (“The Attitude of the Workers’ Party to Religion,” 1909). In fact, the full separation of religion and state has nowhere been fully realized by the bourgeoisie for the simple reason that religion has great value for the ruling class in its struggle against the proletariat.

Religious wars, persecution and obscurantist oppression are endemic to *all* religions and all serve to buttress the patriarchal family, ruling class authority and the particular sexual and moral codes of their respective societies. The institution of the family, today fashioned to serve the needs of capitalist class rule, is the main source of women's oppression. It is the mechanism for transmitting property from one generation to the next and raising new generations of workers. Family law is tightly bound up with defense of private property and women's inequality is always reflected in the legal and social codes of society.

Anti-woman bigotry for the glory of God marks Christianity and Judaism as much as Islam. Just look at the Catholic Church's crusade against abortion rights, the attacks on evolution and science by the Protestant right, or the anti-Palestinian barbarism of the theocratic Zionist state of Israel. But while in general Christianity and Judaism had to conform with rising industrial capitalism and the emergence of bourgeois nation-states, Islam did not, largely because it remains rooted in those parts of the world where imperialist penetration has reinforced social backwardness as a prop to its domination.

Today the imperialists fulminate against Muslim fundamentalism, but for decades they consciously fuelled the growth of Islamic reaction. In their drive to prevent social revolutions and destroy the Soviet Union—the state that emerged from the victorious October 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia—the imperialists allied with indigenous forces of religious and social reaction against godless Communism.

We implacably oppose the imperialist impoverishment and exploitation of the masses of the neocolonial Third World, and defend immigrants from such countries against persecution in the imperialist centers. But we are not cultural relativists who



Spartacist Canada

Trotskyist League speaker at September 2004 anti-sharia rally, Toronto. Right: Women confront Islamic fundamentalist bigot at Toronto protest, September 2005.



no credit

prettify the horribly oppressive status quo in the Near East and elsewhere as quaint “traditions” of the oppressed. Does the I.S. in the name of siding with the Third World oppressed, defend hideous “customs” such as female genital mutilation or *suttee*, whereby a Hindu widow self-immolates on her husband’s funeral pyre? Modern bourgeois law *is* an advance over the tribal law of the desert, or the feudal system in which the European populace was once virtually enslaved to temporal lords and priests. Put another way, what regime best facilitates struggle by the working class and oppressed—one based on the European Enlightenment or one based on 7th century religious obscurantism?

I.S.: “God is Great” Socialists

Where does the I.S.'s grotesque embrace of *sharia* come from? Most immediately, it dovetails with their political conciliation of the Muslim clerics whom they have repeatedly promoted on protests against the Iraq war and occupation. But their portrayal of Muslim fundamentalism as "anti-imperialist" and even "revolutionary" is longstanding. It is a direct outgrowth of their anti-Communist hostility to the former Soviet Union and other societies where capitalism had been overthrown. The I.S.'s British parent group was founded in 1950 by forces breaking from Trotskyism who refused to defend the North Korean and Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers states against a bloody assault by the U.S., Britain and Canada. This was a direct capitulation to the "democratic" pretensions of British imperialism (and its then Labour Party government).

In 1979, joining with the rulers in Washington and Ottawa, the I.S. openly took the side of a CIA-bankrolled Islamic insurgency in Afghanistan that fought to keep women as chattel slaves. They rallied against the Soviet Red Army, which had intervened to support a besieged left-nationalist Afghan government that had introduced substantial reforms—like educating girls and reducing the bride price—to this terribly backward country. We

Trotskyists declared “Hail Red Army!” and called to extend the gains of the October Revolution to the Afghan peoples, especially women.

Criminally, instead of fighting to win, the Stalinist bureaucracy in Moscow withdrew the Red Army in 1989, paving the way for the victory of Washington's brutal religious fanatics. And the I.S. was ecstatic. Hailing "the importance of the defeat of the Russian army," they claimed this would "spur the struggles of the oppressed nationalities in Eastern Europe" (*Socialist Worker*, March 1989). By this they meant movements like Poland's clerical-reactionary Solidarność, another pro-imperialist outfit backed to the hilt by the CIA and Vatican. Solidarność' rise to power later in 1989 brought devastating capitalist counterrevolution to Poland, which meant anti-Semitism, mass unemployment and the brutal rollback of women's rights.

The current period of ascendant political Islam opened with the rise to power of ayatollah Khomeini in Iran in 1978-79. The I.S., like many reformist leftists, criminally lauded the ayatollahs' "mass movement" which overthrew the blood-drenched U.S.-backed shah, headlining "The form—religion, The spirit—revolution" (*Workers Action*, February 1979). We declared: "Down with the shah! No support to the mullahs! For workers revolution in Iran!" We put particular emphasis on the struggle for women's emancipation, declaring "No to the veil!" We were not about to capitulate to Khomeini over the bodies of Iranian women! The I.S.'s support for the "Islamic Revolution"—a bloody disaster for women, the working class and the left in Iran—was a monstrous betrayal.

But the horrors of the Iranian regime didn't faze this crew. In 1998 the Trotskyist League, Ontario Coalition Against Poverty and others joined with the WCPI to drive out representatives of the Iranian regime who had been given a stall at the Toronto International Women's Day fair, from which they handed out propaganda supporting the stoning of Iranian

women. Contemptibly, the I.S. opposed this action, calling such protest “a concession to anti-Islamic scapegoating coming from the ruling class” (*Socialist Worker*, 25 March 1998). Then, as now, for the I.S. *any* left-wing protest against anti-woman Islamic reaction can only be racist and pro-imperialist.

Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

The Trotskyist League intervened actively in the protests against the proposed *sharia* courts. We addressed meetings and rallies, and sought to mobilize left, gay and lesbian groups. Throughout, we made clear that the fight against *sharia* is inseparable from opposition to Canada's brutally racist "justice" system and, especially, the government war on immigrants and the anti-Muslim racist backlash.

For us, the defense of immigrant rights, including the call for full citizenship rights for everyone in this country, has tremendous significance. A class-struggle fight to defend the rights of Muslims and all immigrants and minorities against the racist capitalist state is in the interest of all the working class. The eradication of racial oppression requires a revolutionary struggle, centered on the power of the proletariat, to uproot capitalism and liberate humanity from poverty and want.

The liberation of women is inextricably linked to the workers' struggle to build an egalitarian communist society of material abundance. This alone will make it possible to replace the institution of the family, key source of women's oppression. We are dedicated to freeing workers from religion's yoke—not strengthening it, as the I.S. would do. As Marx said, "Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world.... It is the *opium* of the people." In the future socialist society, the Bible and the Koran, with their bloody misogynist proscriptions, will be nothing more than historical artifacts, their power to torment women obliterated by victorious workers revolution. ■

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

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

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NSA/FBI...

(continued from page 1)

mass destruction” (see “Judith Miller and Bush Disinformation: Big Lies and Imperialist War,” WV No. 856, 14 October 2005). This duplicity is par for the course for the bourgeois press, which, despite its claims of “objectivity,” acts as an auxiliary to the capitalist state in defense of imperialist rule.

The Fraud of Bourgeois “Democracy”

The NSA spy revelations starkly illuminate what the Spartacist League stated from the outset of the “war on terror”: that the repressive measures directed initially at Muslims and immigrants would lead to attacks on political dissent and civil liberties across the board, not least against black people and the labor movement. The instruments of repression that form the core of the capitalist state—the cops, courts, prison system and military—serve and protect a social system based on the exploitation of labor for the profit of the capitalist rulers. A case in point was last month’s transit strike in New York City, where the union is facing massive fines and possible jail sentences for its leaders under the Taylor Law, which outlaws strikes by public workers, as well as other penalties from anti-strike court injunctions.

As Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin explained in *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky* (1918): “It is natural for a liberal to speak of ‘democracy’ in general; but a Marxist will never forget to ask: ‘for what class?’” Lenin added:

“Take the fundamental laws of modern states, take their administration, take freedom of assembly, freedom of the press, or ‘equality of all citizens before the law’, and you will see at every turn evidence of the hypocrisy of bourgeois democracy with which every honest and class-conscious worker is familiar. There is not a single state, however democratic, which has no loopholes or reservations in its constitution guaranteeing the bourgeoisie the possibility of dispatching troops against the workers, of proclaiming martial law, and so forth, in case of a ‘violation of public order’, and actually in case the exploited class ‘violates’ its position of slavery and tries to behave in a non-slavish manner.”

Every liberty, every conquest for working people and the oppressed, has been wrested through social struggle and outright civil war. And as attacks on civil liberties, black voting rights and abortion rights attest, almost any such gain is faced with bourgeois reaction. It is necessary to wage a class-struggle fight to defend our rights. Pointing to the need to mobilize the labor movement against government repression, in February 2002 the Labor Black League for Social Defense and the Partisan Defense Committee initiated a united-front, trade union-centered mobilization in Oakland against the



Oakland, 9 February 2002: Partisan Defense Committee and Labor Black League initiated labor-centered mobilization against USA Patriot Act and anti-immigrant repression.

attacks on labor and immigrant rights carried out in the name of the “war on terror.”

Liberals Seek Cleaner “War on Terror”

The protests of bourgeois mouthpieces like the *New York Times* and of Democratic politicians reflect fear within the bourgeoisie that even *their* rights are being jeopardized by the Bush administration. This recalls the post-Watergate sentiment of a wing of the ruling class that resented the Nixon administration using against its bourgeois opponents the kind of illegal surveillance and sabotage normally reserved for communists, black activists and unionists.

Some are now calling for Congressional hearings modeled on the mid-1970s Senate Church Committee hearings on the FBI’s COINTELPRO program, a campaign of surveillance and disruption of the left and black militants in which 38 Black Panther Party members were killed. While those hearings formally dismantled COINTELPRO and curbed the FBI’s most blatant excesses, the government’s secret political police continued their dirty work. Black Panther leaders like Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt) and Dhorruba bin Wahad, framed up under COINTELPRO, remained in prison for years. American Indian Movement leader Leonard Peltier and former Black Panther Party spokesman Mumia Abu-Jamal remain in prison after being convicted of killings they never committed, with Mumia on death row in Pennsylvania.

Bush’s liberal critics share the administration’s aim of defending the interests of American imperialism. Their difference is over the means. Thus Democrats and liberals express outrage over the military’s torture of “terror suspects” because it undermines the ability of U.S. imperialism to sell its military adventures in the name of humanitarianism and the promotion of “democracy.” Among those embarrassments is the case of Khaled el-Masri, who has filed a lawsuit against former CIA head George Tenet. A German citizen of Lebanese descent, el-Masri was kidnapped while on holiday in Macedonia, detained incommunicado, beaten, drugged and shipped off to a secret CIA prison in Afghanistan. After a few months, el-Masri was let loose on a hill in Albania, having never been charged with a crime.

Similarly, the liberals complain that the government’s violation of due process of law is ruining the “war on terror.” In “Bush’s NSA Spying Jeopardizes National Security,” Dave Lindorff writes in *CounterPunch* (30 December 2005), “This illegal spying may have put the U.S. at risk by undermining the prosecution of possible terror suspects.” Lindorff adds, “The administration has opened the door for defense attorneys to seek new trials for their clients based upon a claim of improperly obtained evidence. Other

cases that have yet to be brought to trial may end up being thrown out on the same grounds.” Indeed, defense attorneys are rightfully beginning to pursue just such a defense. One victim who may seek reopening of his case is Ali al-Timimi, a Muslim professor sentenced to life in prison last year on conspiracy charges based purely on the exercise of his First Amendment right to free speech

restraint by Congress or the courts has even its closest allies fuming. Last month, the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals turned down the government’s request to transfer Jose Padilla from military to civil custody, a decision that stands in the way of his criminal prosecution. Padilla is a U.S. citizen whom the government for three years claimed was an “unlawful enemy combatant” who could be held indefinitely without being charged with a crime or going to trial. Previously this court—the most conservative in the country, whose specialty has been upholding the President’s claim to free rein as “Commander in Chief”—had upheld the Feds’ declaration of Padilla as an “enemy combatant.” Appealing to the Supreme Court, the administration lashed out at the temerity of federal court judges who assert their authority to “disregard a presidential directive.”

In *amici curiae* briefs filed by the Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee with the Second Circuit Court of Appeals and U.S. Supreme Court on behalf of Jose Padilla, we wrote: “Based on the false proposition of an ongoing global ‘war against terrorism,’ the Executive asserts that it has the unchallengeable authority to decide who is a terrorist and apply martial law, demanding absolute and complete deference by the judiciary. This demand of unfettered power by the Executive is a move toward bonapartism, a police state, and relies on a compliant judiciary.”

In the U.S. political system, much of the constitutional power originally vested



Khaled el-Masri, Sami Al-Arian and Jose Padilla—victims of “war on terror” witchhunt.

(see “Muslim Professor Sentenced to Life for ‘Thought Crime’—Free Ali al-Timimi!” WV No. 852, 5 August 2005).

Lindorff and his liberal cohorts want a cleaner “war on terrorism.” The ACLU calls to “Keep America Safe and Free” and to “reform” the Patriot Act, refusing to call for its repeal. The “war on terror” is nothing but a pretext to increase the state’s police powers and repressive apparatus. Its results can be seen in the coldblooded killing by air marshals of an emotionally disturbed passenger on the tarmac at Miami International airport last month.

The administration’s contempt for any

in Congress has increasingly been transferred to the imperial presidency. This corresponds to the needs of the U.S. imperialist rulers to assert themselves as the world’s top cop, without having their wars and military adventures held up by the bother of seeking the approval of Congress. The last time Congress availed itself of its constitutional power to declare war was 64 years ago, when the U.S. entered World War II.

Fight Government Repression!

The government’s “anti-terrorism” measures are increasingly being directed against leftist political activity. At the

Partisan Defense Committee CLASS-STRUGGLE DEFENSE NOTES Number 31 50¢ Summer 2003

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In The UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS For The Second Circuit Docket No. 02-2235 05-2478

JOSE PADILLA, Donna R. Newman, as Next Friend of Jose Padilla, Petitioner-Appellee-cross-Appellant, v. DONALD RUMSFELD, Respondent-Appellant-cross-Appellee.

On Appeal from the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York

SEE PAGE 2

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TORONTO

NYC Transit...

(continued from page 12)

press but mounting pressure from dozens of labor “leaders” to call off the strike.

At a press conference on the afternoon of December 21, Toussaint powerfully rebuked the racist diatribes against the union and asserted the necessity to defy unjust laws, referring to Rosa Parks and the civil rights movement. But he also offered that the union would end the strike if the MTA took its pension demand off the table, and in fact state mediators were already cooking up a deal. An hour later, a group of labor tops including teachers union president Randi Weingarten, representing the Municipal Labor Committee, mouthed meaningless “support” for the TWU while refusing to utter the four words: “We support the strike.” All they had to say about the Taylor Law was that it should be “reformed,” complaining that it’s not used against the MTA.

Abandoned by the rest of the labor officialdom, facing fines and possible jail

main slogans on the picket lines was “No contract, no work!” George Perlstein, one of five Local 100 Executive Board members who voted against returning to work, declared, “We had them at a stranglehold. I do not understand the concept of giving up the stranglehold for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority to put a stranglehold on us.”

Prepare for Further Struggle

The Toussaint leadership *demobilized* this effective strike. Now the membership must vote on the proposed 37-month contract. The strike forced the MTA to take back its pension demands and its attempts at further “broadbanding” of jobs—i.e., combining job duties, leading to a reduced workforce carrying heavier workloads in more dangerous conditions. The proposal also expands health benefits for all retirees, including by making it available to those under 65 living outside the metropolitan area. By going on strike, the TWU waged a defensive battle that slows down the capitalists’ onslaught against pensions and working conditions.



Roger Toussaint (far right) at December 16 press conference with (from left) Democrat Basil Paterson, 1199 SEIU head Dennis Rivera, cop “union” leader Patrick Lynch, teachers union head Randi Weingarten and TWU treasurer Ed Watt. Union tops look to cops, Democrats as labor’s allies.

increases of 3, 4 and 3.5 percent. As the Toussaint leadership did not make the demand for amnesty for strikers a condition for returning to work, the union and its membership are also faced with the fines. Pataki is threatening to veto a provision refunding some \$130 million in additional pension contributions from union members before 2001 that were kept by the state. Now he’s angry over a reported agreement by which the MTA would provide the money in the event of a veto, railing, “You don’t reward illegal strikes.”

A much-touted new provision for maternity leave is a sham. Workers with newborn children would get a paltry \$200 per week for up to four weeks, but only after using up all their vacation and sick leave time. There should be maternity/paternity leave at full pay, and the union should demand free childcare.

Workers at Triboro and Jamaica private bus lines, which are about to be absorbed into the MTA, were the first to go on strike, on December 19. But they are left out of the proposed deal and returned to work without a contract.

The agreement should be voted down. Transit workers are particularly fuming over the health care concession. Instead of atomized voting by mail ballot, there should be mass meetings where the members can reject the pact and debate what course of action to take, up to and including resuming strike action. This requires a hard look at the December strike and how to get the kind of leadership labor needs.

Lessons of the Strike

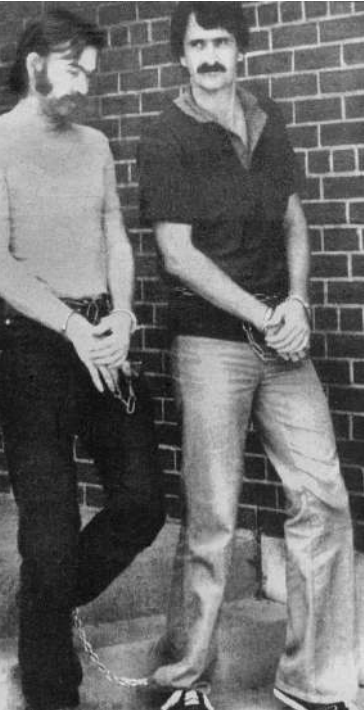
Like every major strike, this was a bull-headed battle between labor and capital.

On one side are the bosses, their government, whether run by Democrats or Republicans, and the repressive capitalist state apparatus, mainly the courts and cops. The role of the courts and government officials during the strike starkly demonstrated that the “democratic” trappings of the capitalist state are but a facade for the dictatorship of the exploiting class. On the other side, the workers have their own weapons: their numbers and power based on their collective labor at the workplace, and their union organization.

This was the first time a major union had defied anti-strike laws since the 1981 PATCO air traffic controllers strike. That strike was smashed after the Machinists and other airline union tops treacherously refused to shut down the airports in solidarity. The union was destroyed, its leaders hauled off in chains. This defeat set the stage for a quarter-century of attacks on labor.

This time around, the transit workers, strategically placed in the economy, faced down the bosses and the state. Unlike manufacturing, transit systems can’t be “outsourced.” The workers went out solid, challenging the anti-strike injunctions. Many on the picket lines chanted “Taylor Law: Rip it up!” and avidly picked up the call for amnesty for strikers. Despite Pataki and Bloomberg’s intransigent stance against the union, the government came under mounting pressure from major retailers and other business interests, which were losing millions every day, to effect a settlement. The TWU ranks went back to work proud. By engaging in this battle, the union became *stronger*.

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AP



Left: PATCO union leaders in chains, 1981. Bourgeois gutter press screams for jailing of Toussaint.

time, and with his phony “friends of labor” in the Democratic Party mainly ducking for cover, Toussaint called off the strike the next afternoon. The Local 100 tops contemptuously refused to consult the membership, whose overwhelming response was anger at going back to work without a contract when one of the

However, the Local 100 tops agreed to a major concession that would make members contribute 1.5 percent of their gross pay to offset the cost of retirees’ health benefits. The MTA would also be able to hike this contribution when the plan’s spiraling costs rise further. The health care concession comes with slim annual wage

same time that the NSA wiretapping hit the news, government documents obtained by the ACLU revealed that the FBI has been conducting numerous “investigations” of antiwar activists, environmentalists, animal rights activists and leftists. So far-ranging—and deranged—are the government’s surveillance and harassment that one of their targets is the liberal-pacifist Catholic Workers group for its “semi-communistic ideology.” Ominously, the *New York Post* (26 December 2005) reports that the Freedom Socialist Party (FSP) is under investigation by the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities for supporting the European-based Anti-Imperialist Camp, which allegedly raised funds for Iraqis opposed to the U.S. occupation. This is a threat to the entire workers movement. Hands off the FSP!

Last month, videotapes confirmed that New York City police have not only conducted surveillance of antiwar gatherings and other protests but employed provocateurs to set up protesters for vicious beatings and arrest—a revival of the old “red squads.” On 30 August 2004, during the Republican National Convention, the police staged the arrest of a cop plant at a protest for poor and homeless people. Unaware that he was a plant, protesters chanted, “Let him go.” Riot cops then attacked, arresting two. The “terrorist” scare campaign around the RNC had nothing to do with Al Qaeda and everything to do with suppressing political

dissent. Over 1,800 people were arrested; most of the charges were later dropped—particularly after private videos caught out the cops’ tales as blatant lies.

Around the world, the capitalist “democracies” have adopted laws modeled on the U.S. Patriot Act and other repressive measures. In Australia, the right-wing John Howard government—with the support of Kim Beazley, head of the opposition Labor Party—passed sweeping “anti-terrorism” legislation last month making it a crime to “urge disaffection against” the federal government or Parliament. The law also threatens antiwar protesters by targeting anyone who “urges another person to engage in conduct to assist, by any means whatever, an organization or country” being fought by the Australian military.

In Britain, “anti-terrorism” legislation adopted by Tony Blair’s Labour Party government states that British citizens and foreign nationals considered threats to “national security” can be confined to house arrest, electronically tagged, and barred from using mobile phones and the Internet and visits by anyone not authorized by the government. The decision of who is subject to such “control orders” is entirely at the whim of the government—no trial, or even filing of charges need take place.

These police-state measures have been implemented within the framework of bourgeois democracy. It is especially in the advanced capitalist countries that democratic forms of government serve to

veil the nature of the state as a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie over the exploited and oppressed masses in a garb of “equality of all citizens.”

The U.S. capitalist rulers have long sought the current repressive measures, which the Bush administration intends to make a permanent fixture of the American system of “justice.” There is an inherent tendency of the ruling class—a tiny class of exploiters who produce nothing but reap trillions in profit out of the sweat and blood of working people and

who wreak death and destruction around the world—to tighten the screws on the workers and oppressed. The capitalist rulers need such repressive measures because they hate and fear the people.

Short of the overthrow of capitalist rule, none of the rights and gains that working people hold dear are secure. What’s needed is a thoroughgoing socialist revolution led by a multiracial workers party to establish the rule of the working class and usher in a society based on production for human needs not profit. ■

Spartacus Youth Club Classes

CHICAGO

Tuesday, January 10, 7 p.m.

The Degeneration of the Russian Revolution and the Fight for New October Revolutions

University of Chicago, Cobb Hall 5811 S. Ellis Avenue, Room 104

Information and readings: (312) 563-0441 or e-mail: chicagospartacist@sbcglobal.net

VANCOUVER

Wednesday, January 18, 5 p.m.

Marxism and the Scientific Worldview—Defend Science Against Superstition and Mysticism!

University of British Columbia Student Union Building, Room 224

Information and readings: (604) 687-0353 or e-mail: tlft@look.ca

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Saturday, January 7, 2 p.m.

Capitalism Part I: Exploitation, Profit, and the Capitalist Social Order

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

Information and readings: (213) 380-8239 or e-mail: slsycla@sbcglobal.net

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NYC Transit...

(continued from page 9)

Former Democratic mayor and certified racist pig Ed Koch demanded that the state mete out “medieval” treatment to the strikers. A court date is scheduled for January 20 to decide on imposing the fines as well as possible jail time for union leaders. It is the duty of not only every TWU local but also of labor throughout the U.S. and internationally to demand: No fines! Government hands off the TWU!

Spartacist teams mobilized to go to picket lines throughout the city got an overwhelmingly warm response from transit workers outraged by the lies and anti-union venom spewed by the daily papers. Strikers saw that *Workers Vanguard* was on their side and gave a broader picture of the class struggle and what it takes to defeat the capitalist enemy. Spartacist comrades and supporters distributed thousands of our strike support leaflet and sold some 1,000 copies of *WV* during the strike.

For a Workers Government!

The same Wall Street bloodsuckers who screamed about “overpaid” public workers and “unaffordable” pensions and union health benefits just gave themselves close to **20 billion dollars** in holiday bonuses. Top execs commonly get \$2 million or more in bonuses; the money that 16 of these parasites rake in this way equals the entire annual health care payment that TWU members are being told to fork over! When the MTA moaned about future deficits as a pretext to demand union concessions, it was sitting on a \$1 billion surplus. Much of MTA revenue goes to pay off debts to Wall Street bondholders anyway. And billionaire mayor Bloomberg had the audacity to call transit workers “selfish” and “greedy”!

Giving a sinister twist to Bertolt Brecht’s poem “The Solution,” the American capitalists act like they can **no longer afford the people**. With the destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state through capitalist counterrevolution in 1991-92—a historic defeat for the world proletariat—the arrogant U.S. imperialists thought they had no obstacle in their drive to dominate the world and control its riches. Increasingly irrational in their drive for profit, the capitalist rulers have massively deindustrialized the U.S. Infrastructure is rotting. With the unions taking huge hits, the capitalists are fixated on destroying every shred of social benefit that might still be available to the populace, who, if they have jobs, are supposed to work like slaves and then drop dead. Airline and auto companies declare bankruptcy, or threaten to, in order to rob workers of their pensions. The labor movement must fight tooth-and-nail in defense of retirement benefits as well as for free, quality health care for all!

Every decrepit ghetto is testimony to the sickness of this class society. As for the racist MTA bosses, only with the current contract proposal is Martin Luther King Day finally being made a paid holi-

day! This profit-driven system can’t meet the needs of the population—it must go! It will take a workers revolution, led by a multiracial workers party, to rip the means of production from the capitalist class and institute a collectivized, planned economy where the masses will be able to fully enjoy the fruits of their labor.

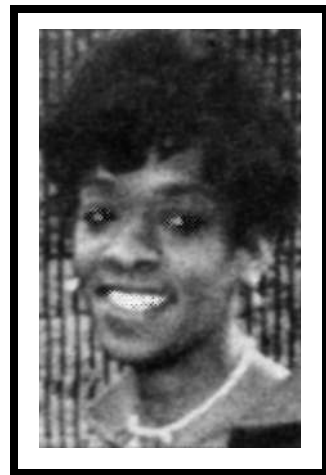
The transit strike gave a taste of the enormous potential power of the working class. But to wield this power against this deadly profit system requires fighting against the current labor misleadership, which supports the capitalist system and sees “allies” in the political parties and state agencies of the class enemy. The last thing that Weingarten & Co. wanted to do was jeopardize their privileges and connections in the Democratic Party by engaging in actual struggle, like supporting the transit strike. As a Democratic state assemblyman, NYC Central Labor Council president Brian McLaughlin embodies the class collaborationism of the labor bureaucracy.



Chief-Leader



Dozier Family



NY Daily News

Victims of industrial murder in NYC transit: Lewis Moore died at work on 1 December 2005 after MTA denied him medical care for 20 minutes; Harold Dozier died on 14 December 2004 after being hit by train while doing track work; conductor Janell Bennerson was killed on 18 January 2003 after her head was struck by an eight-foot gate as her train pulled away.

Toussaint is part of that bureaucracy and embraces Democratic Party politicians. The Local 100 tops spent hundreds of thousands in union dues to elect Democratic candidates in the last state elections, while AFL-CIO unions nationally spent hundreds of millions in support of John Kerry’s bid for the White House. In a speech at a December 10 TWU rally, Jesse Jackson linked the fight for “job security” with “national security.” This talk of “national security” promotes the lie that American workers have common interests with the U.S. capitalist exploiters, who are on a murderous rampage against working people and the oppressed from New Orleans to Iraq and Afghanistan. Toussaint retails this lie with his proposals for TWU members to act as auxiliaries to the cops by watching for “terror suspects” in the transit system—i.e., racist profiling.

We say: Break with the Democrats! Workers must rely only on their own class power. That means forging a multiracial workers party—not a party of electoral reformism but one like the Bolshevik Party of V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky that led the workers of Russia to power in the October Revolution of 1917. Such a party,

based on declassified revolutionary intellectuals and class-conscious workers in the unions and among unorganized workers, would lead the workers in struggle. It would promote international proletarian solidarity and seek to mobilize workers against U.S. imperialism’s predatory wars—U.S. out of Iraq and Afghanistan! It would lead the fight for black liberation through socialist revolution. It would fight to mobilize labor in defense of the rights of women and gays. It would demand full citizenship rights for all immigrants and fight to unionize immigrant workers. **Forward to a workers government!**

For a Class-Struggle Leadership!

The Local 100 tops were under intense pressure from the membership when they called the strike. Once the battle was engaged, workers increasingly felt they should stay out for as long as it took to beat back the MTA, Pataki and Bloomberg. The workers started to really feel their power.

The Local 100 tops at that point were on their own with an aroused membership. Fearful that the strike would deepen and extend in the face of further attacks by the bosses, the Toussaint bureaucracy called it off.

Toussaint had signaled his willingness to end the strike by getting UNITE HERE president Bruce Raynor and Mike Fishman of SEIU Local 32 B-J building service workers, who supported Bloomberg in the last election, to put in a word with the mayor. “Enter the mediators,” as the *New York Times* (23 December 2005) described the intervention of the state Public Employment Relations Board (PERB). This agency is in no way “neutral.” The presence of former AFSCME DC 37 chief negotiator Alan Viani on the PERB is a ploy to make this agency appear “impartial.” The PERB, NLRB and all such government auxiliaries have only one purpose: to demobilize labor struggle and maintain class peace.

The Toussaint leadership refused to employ the kind of tactics that could win victory outright. Union leaders at the regional rail lines—Metro-North, LIRR, PATH—not only kept workers on the job, even when some were themselves without

a contract, but allowed Metro-North and PATH to run extra train service to help bail out the city rulers. When *WV* salesmen at Grand Central Station handed out our leaflet to Metro-North workers, they asked us: Where are the TWU pickets? Several of these unionists said they knew the bosses wanted to crush the TWU and then go after them and everyone else. Yet the Local 100 leadership did not appeal directly to the ranks of these unions, or to city and state workers, over the heads of their misleaders.

While turning away from the ranks of labor, Toussaint from the beginning of this battle turned to Police Benevolent Association head Patrick Lynch, whom he has embraced as a “labor” ally ever since becoming Local 100 president in 2000. Lynch appeared on TWU speaker’s platforms and at one of Toussaint’s press conferences. During the strike, as Toussaint powerfully spoke of the plight of city workers, he kept invoking the cops as part of that workforce. Many workers on the

picket lines voiced the illusion that cops were workers, too.

No! The PBA and the other police “unions” are enemies of labor whose job is to safeguard the bosses’ private property. The cops, security guards and the MTA’s Property Protection Agents have no place in the labor movement. One white worker responding to Bloomberg’s racist slur about union “thugs” said, “Yeah, the thugs are here—the thugs in blue.” That’s right! ***It is the job of the cops to enforce Taylor Law injunctions against the union.*** It’s their job to terrorize minorities.

The anti-strike injunctions and massive fines were an object lesson in the role of the courts as part of the capitalists’ state machinery. The same lesson should be drawn over the use of the courts to intervene into the TWU, which can only undermine the very purpose of the union: to defend the workers from the bosses.

Toussaint along with a bevy of fake-militants and their “leftist” supporters have long turned to the courts against their opponents in the union. Five Local 100 vice presidents, including Ainsley Stewart of the Car Maintenance Division and John Mooney of Stations, have a lawsuit against Local 100, although it was put into abeyance leading up to the contract expiration. Prior to taking office, Toussaint dragged the union into the bosses’ courts, as did other members of the former New Directions caucus. Nevertheless, Marty Goodman, supported by the reformist Socialist Action group, was long a member of New Directions and supported Toussaint’s election. Eric Josephson, supported by the fake-socialist League for the Revolutionary Party, also called for votes for Toussaint, adding a fig leaf of “criticism.”

The Spartacist League has always opposed the intervention of the capitalist courts into the labor movement on principle. Thus we opposed Toussaint’s candidacy, headlining our article in *WV* No. 746 (17 November 2000), “Sellouts, Traitors, Finks: No Choice in TWU Local 100 Elections.” Labor must clean its own house! Cops, courts out of the unions!

Labor needs a leadership based on a program of class struggle and the politi-



Minnesota Historical Society



Wide World

Left: Trotskyist-led 1934 Minneapolis Teamsters strikes helped forge powerful nationwide union. Right: 1943 coal miners strike defied WWII no-strike pledge.

United Labor Action Can Smash the Taylor Law!

Victory to the Transit Workers Strike!

Spartacist Leaflet

The following leaflet was issued on 20 December 2005.

In going out on strike for the first time in 25 years, Transport Workers Union Local 100 is challenging the Taylor Law and the repressive might of the capitalist government. Every working person—in New York City and around the country—every black person, every Latino, every immigrant has a direct stake in the outcome of this class battle. If the TWU wins, it will begin to turn around years of labor defeats and racist attacks. If the bosses are *not* stopped, it will mean further attacks on union rights, pensions and health benefits for other city and state workers. The key to winning this strike is forging a fighting alliance of all the unions, leading the city's working masses and its ghetto and barrio poor. For a start, that means shutting down the LIRR, PATH and Metro-North lines into and out of NYC. Rail workers at Metro-North vowed to respect TWU picket lines. Good! Surround Grand Central and Penn Station with mass pickets reinforced by all the unions! Transit workers must not stand alone—For united labor action to smash the Taylor Law!

With the labor-hating Bush administration and its “war on terror” arsenal standing behind them, Republican governor Pataki, billionaire mayor Bloomberg and the real estate barons and filthy rich financiers who make up the MTA board provoked this showdown. They want to split the workforce with multi-tier schemes, imposing more onerous conditions on health coverage and pensions for new hires. Pataki and Co. denounce as “greedy” and “criminals” the hardworking TWU members who keep this city running and who are fighting not just for themselves but for the next generation. The criminals in this society are the capitalist rulers who callously left tens of thousands of black and poor people in New Orleans to starve and die, who shut down schools and throw our young people into prison hells, who slaughter women and children in Iraq and other countries in pursuit of profits and power. And what about the criminality of the MTA bosses, who allowed train operator



TWU workers on the picket lines at Manhattan's Clara Hale bus barn, December 22.

Lewis Moore to die on the job earlier this month by denying him medical care for over 20 minutes?

If we don't have the right to strike, then we don't have unions in any real sense. Pataki, Democratic state attorney general Eliot Spitzer and the MTA have already invoked the Taylor Law against the transit workers. Now the courts have gone along with Bloomberg's demand for massive fines of \$1 million a day, aimed at bankrupting the union and its members. Meanwhile, former Democratic mayor and all-round racist pig Ed Koch screams for doubling these fines each day. In the face of possible arrests of union officials, it is necessary to organize elected strike committees. This will ensure that the strike cannot be beheaded and also that it will be run by the membership as a whole. The city's lawyers were able to use the TWU International's criminal opposition to the Local 100 strike to bolster the strikebreaking attack on the union. Every TWU member around the country must demand that the International repudiate this treachery and back the strike all the way!

Bloomberg cannot arrest all 34,000 transit workers, and Wall Street knows it can't run the center of American and world finance capitalism without the subways and buses. The only “illegal” strike is one that loses—no reprisals, no fines and no victimizations! The TWU has real social power—it can paralyze New York City, and it can render the Taylor Law a dead letter, just as the 1966 strike did to the Condon-

Wadlin Act, the Taylor Law's predecessor.

But it will not be easy. For this strike to win, as it can and must, the union must be clear on who its friends are and who its enemies are. The partnership of capital and labor is a lie. Every strike boils down to a bullheaded struggle between two forces—labor and capital—whose interests are irreconcilable and counterposed. The TWU must rely solely on the support of the rest of the union movement and the millions of poor and working people who ride the subways and buses. Labor solidarity is not a matter of hot-air speeches and token donations, but *joint union action on the picket lines*. The transit union can mobilize wide support by raising its historic demand for *free, quality mass transit!*

On the other side are labor's enemies. They are the capitalist government, the capitalist politicians, the capitalist courts and the cops who enforce the courts' injunctions. Every strike shows how the state is not neutral but rather is an instrument of coercion that safeguards capitalist interests. Suing the union in the courts, as just about every faction in the TWU leadership has done, is like taking a slow poison. The PBA and the other police “unions” are enemies of labor whose job is to safeguard the bosses' private property. PBA head Patrick Lynch said that his members, “while on the other side of the barriers now are with you in their hearts.” They damn well are on the other side of the strike barriers, and they'll bust transit workers' heads to prove that—like they do every day

to people in the ghettos and barrios. The cops, security guards and the MTA's Property Protection Agents are not workers; they have no place in the labor movement.

The TWU's membership reflects black, Hispanic and immigrant New York, and most poor and working people in the city actively sympathize with the union and would welcome a union victory as their own. The attacks on the union, including the harsh management discipline that TWU members rightly denounce as “plantation justice,” underscore a basic truth in racist capitalist America: the fate of organized labor is closely bound to that of the black masses.

Al Sharpton, Jesse Jackson and the other Democratic Party celebrities who were invited to grace the platforms of TWU contract rallies promote the party of the Taylor Law—of Attorney General Spitzer and of Senator Hillary Clinton, who hailed Spitzer's earlier use of the Taylor Law against the TWU in 1999! Jackson links “job security” with “national security,” as though workers should have a stake in the reactionary “war on terror”—a war on workers, immigrants and black people. The Democrats pose as “friends of labor,” the better to position themselves to strangle labor struggle, as Jackson did in the case of the L.A. transit strike in 2000.

Working people need a party that represents their class interests, a workers party that champions the cause of all the exploited and oppressed. Transit workers are rightly demanding a share of the enormous surplus their labor has produced for the MTA. But it's not just the MTA. All the billions upon billions of profits that currently go into the coffers of a handful of Wall Street bankers and brokers and wealthy industrialists is surplus value generated by the sweat and blood of the workers. In a socialist society, that surplus would be used to rebuild the decaying subway system, the schools and the hospitals; to provide free mass transit and medical care and free, quality, integrated education for all; to provide decent, affordable housing for all. But to secure all of these things requires a workers revolution led by a multiracial workers party that overthrows the capitalist system and replaces it with an egalitarian socialist society internationally. The Spartacist League seeks to educate the workers in the Marxist understanding of their historic role as the gravediggers of this system of exploitation, racism and war. *Victory to the transit strike!* ■

cal independence of the proletariat. This was the type of leadership, composed of Trotskyists and their supporters, that conducted the historic 1934 Minneapolis Teamsters strikes, which helped forge the Teamsters into a powerful industrial union. Summing up the lessons of Minneapolis, Trotskyist leader James P. Cannon said in *The History of American Trotskyism* (1944):

“The modern labor movement must be politically directed because it is confronted by the government at every turn. Our people were prepared for that since they were political people, inspired by political conceptions. The policy of the class struggle guided our comrades; they couldn't be deceived and outmaneuvered, as so many strike leaders of that period were, by this mechanism of sab-

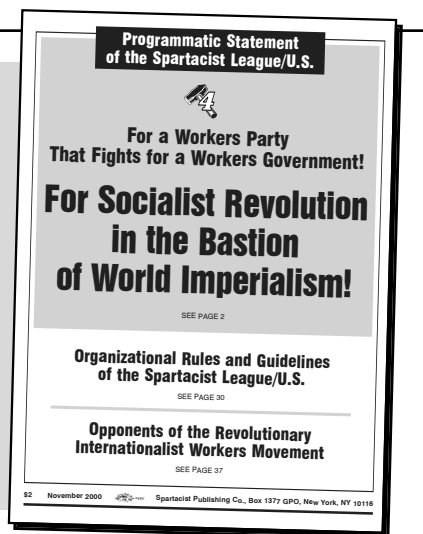
otage and destruction known as the National Labor Board and all its auxiliary setups....

“Our people didn't believe in anybody or anything but the policy of the class struggle and the ability of the workers to prevail by their mass strength and solidarity. Consequently, they expected from the start that the union would have to fight for its right to exist; that the bosses would not yield any recognition to the union, would not yield any increase of wages or reduction of the scandalous hours without some pressure being brought to bear. Therefore they prepared everything from the point of view of class war. They knew that power, not diplomacy, would decide the issue. Bluffs don't work in fundamental things, only in incidental ones. In such things as the conflict of class interests one must be prepared to fight.” ■

Programmatic Statement of the Spartacist League/U.S.

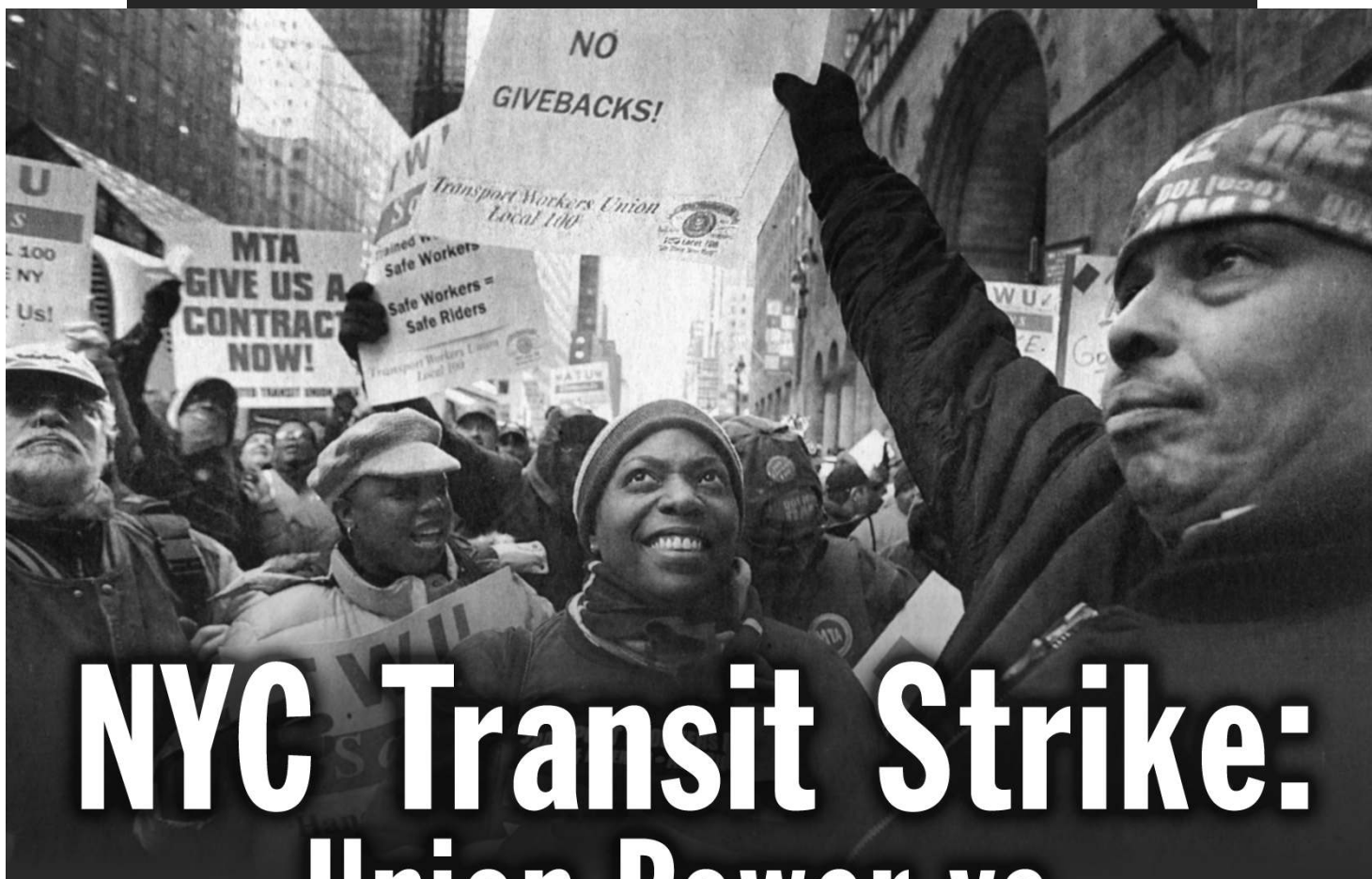
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WORKERS VANGUARD

Strikers Defy Taylor Law



NYC Transit Strike: Union Power vs. Class Collaboration

JANUARY 2—The 2005 New York City transit strike stunned the obscenely rich capitalist rulers of this society and gave a shot in the arm to all working people. For three days, 33,700 members of Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100 defied the state Taylor Law banning public workers strikes and shut down the city—the financial center of U.S. imperialism. Finally, here was a powerful union using its strength, not only for itself but also for future transit workers and workers across the country who see their pensions looted and health benefits ripped up by profit-bloated capitalists. Here was a union standing up to the billionaires' government—from the Bush White House down to Republican governor Pataki, Democratic state attorney general Eliot Spitzer and Republican mayor Michael Bloomberg—and its anti-labor courts and cops.

The strike against the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), which was joined by Amalgamated Transit Union MTA bus workers in Queens and Staten Island, drew wide support from the city's ghettos and barrios and from both unionized and unorganized workers. The strike was intensely followed by working people throughout the U.S. and internationally and featured on news broadcasts from Britain to Argentina to Japan. It came at a time of growing popular anger over attacks on workers' livelihoods, over the government's racist abandonment of New Orleans' poor and black population after Hurricane Katrina, over the murderous imperialist occupation of Iraq. The strike was a battle for the rights of labor at a time when the government has taken aim at all of our rights through the "war on terror" backed by both capitalist parties, the Democrats and Republicans.

The strike was provoked by the MTA bosses and carried out by a reluctant union

leadership. First the MTA demanded that new-hires work an additional seven years, to age 62, before becoming eligible for full retirement benefits. Not only was this a direct attack on the unity of the union, but seven more years of grueling work—breathing steel dust underground, exposed to toxic chemicals and diesel exhaust, bouncing around in bus drivers' seats on choked city streets—would be a death sentence for large numbers of workers. The Local 100 leadership under Roger Toussaint kept talks going for four days after the old contract expired. While the MTA dropped its demand for raising the retirement age, just hours before the new December 20 strike deadline MTA chairman Peter Kalikow ambushed the union by demanding that new-hires pay 6 percent of their wages toward their pensions, up from the 2 percent that workers currently pay. This time the union didn't blink, and the workers walked out.

Bloomberg railed that the leadership of this overwhelmingly black and Latino union was "thuggish." The capitalist rulers saw this strike as something akin to a slave rebellion. But their attempt to divide and isolate the union through racist vilification backfired. A black worker on the picket line told us that Bloomberg's slurs reminded him of the accusations of looting leveled by the media against desperate black people looking for food in New Orleans. Others remarked that this vicious treatment is indicative of the "plantation justice" they endure from the MTA with its onerous disciplinary measures. Local 100 reflects the working class

of the city: white, black, Latino; immigrants from the Caribbean, the former Soviet Union, Ireland, the Indian subcontinent, China and elsewhere. The integrated picket lines graphically demonstrated how the poisonous racial and ethnic divisions fostered by the capitalists to weaken labor can be overcome through class struggle.

The strike demonstrated the potential to link the power of labor to the anger of the ghetto and barrio masses. On its second day, residents of Brooklyn's blighted East New York neighborhood pumped their fists in support when hundreds of TWU picketers from the transit facility there marched through the area. Some teachers brought their classes to the picket lines. While strikers were cheered throughout the city, the bourgeoisie's anti-union demagoguery did help fuel some sentiment against the strike, including among shopkeepers and desperate immigrants fearful of losing their jobs. While the gutter tabloid *New York Post* (22 December) blared "JAIL 'EM!" in a front-page headline with a graphic of Toussaint behind bars, the front page of the *Amsterdam News*, NYC's main black newspaper, the same day ran an open letter by Toussaint and other coverage sympathetic to the strike.

The overwhelming popular support for the strike exemplified revolutionary Marxist leader V.I. Lenin's comment in his May 1912 article "Economic and Political Strikes": "Whereas the liberals (and the liquidators) tell the workers: 'You are strong when you have the sympathy of

"society",' the Marxist tells the workers something different, namely: 'You have the sympathy of "society" when you are strong'."

The transit strike was a golden opportunity to tear up the anti-union Taylor Law by forging a fighting alliance with all of NYC labor at the

head of the city's minorities and poor. This task raised to the forefront the need to fight for the independence of the unions from the state and parties of the capitalist class. But the union went into battle with one hand tied behind its back because of the ties of its leadership to the capitalist Democratic Party. As we wrote in the 20 December 2005 Spartacist strike support leaflet, titled "Victory to the Transit Workers Strike! United Labor Action Can Smash the Taylor Law!" (see page 11): "Al Sharpton, Jesse Jackson and the other Democratic Party celebrities who were invited to grace the platforms of TWU contract rallies promote the party of the Taylor Law—of Attorney General Spitzer and of Senator Hillary Clinton, who hailed Spitzer's earlier use of the Taylor Law against the TWU in 1999!"

As Spitzer and the courts slammed the union with injunctions imposing massive fines—\$1 million charged to the union and two days' pay charged to individual members for every day on strike—and possible jail sentences, the traitors in the TWU International and city labor leadership stabbed the strikers in the back. A statement issued the night the strike began by TWU International president Michael O'Brien "notifying" Local 100 members that they had to "cease any and all strike or strike-related activities and to report to work" was posted by management at doors and gates of transit facilities. By the second day of the strike, the Local 100 leadership faced not only a relentless anti-union barrage from the politicians and

continued on page 9

December 13: TWU rally three days before contract expiration.

Bengiveno/NY Times

Break with the Democrats! Build a Workers Party!