

Imperialists Execute Their Former Henchman Saddam Hussein

DECEMBER 31—In the early morning yesterday, the hangman's noose choked the life out of former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, onetime tool of the imperialists. George W. Bush, who has the blood of hundreds of thousands of Iraqis on his hands, declared, "Saddam Hussein was executed after receiving a fair trial—the kind of justice he denied the victims of his brutal regime." The "fair trial" was a show trial orchestrated by the imperialist butchers who have raped Iraq and turned it into living hell. It was presided over by a regime out of whose police and military offices run death squads that slaughter Sunnis, as well as criminal gangs that terrorize the

entire population. This execution of the former head of the Iraqi state by Washington's puppet government was nothing more than barbaric "victor's justice."

While Kurdish leaders wanted to put Hussein back in the dock for the mass killing of Kurds, Shi'ite prime minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki rushed the execution so that it would take place on the morning when Sunnis begin celebrating Id al-Adha, a Muslim holiday when executions are prohibited. As a calculated insult to the Sunni population, the Shi'ite judge who presided over the "appeals court" that upheld the death sentence sneered, "The official Id in

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Baghdad, 1983:
Reagan
administration
emissary Donald
Rumsfeld greeted
by Saddam
Hussein, at the
time U.S.
imperialism's
bloody bastard.



Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!

"It seemed like Angel Nieves Diaz would never die," wrote Associated Press reporter Ron Word (CNN.com, 15 December 2006). It took two doses of poisonous chemicals and 34 minutes for the state of Florida to kill Diaz on December 13. This horror was reminiscent of the fate of Stanley Tookie Williams almost exactly a year earlier in the face of an international outcry against his scheduled execution in California. Executioners spent 20 minutes digging into Williams' arms trying to insert needles for the lethal injection. In the face of such blatant torture, even pro-death penalty politicians have a hard time touting lethal injection as a "humane" form of execution. After the killing of Diaz, Florida governor Jeb Bush halted all executions. Judges in California and Maryland have stopped lethal injections in those states as well, while seven other states have instituted partial moratoriums.

Such moves are in marked contrast to the rush to eliminate restrictions on the death penalty that prevailed for most of the past 30 years. In fact, in 2006 the courts handed down 114 death sentences, less than 40 percent of the yearly average throughout the 1990s. The prior speedup on death row was codified in the 1996 Anti-Terrorism and Effec-

Revulsion over Execution Horrors



California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation
California "lethal injection table," like one used to execute Stanley Tookie Williams in December 2005.

tive Death Penalty Act signed by Democratic president Bill Clinton, which virtually eliminated the right of *habeas corpus* appeals for those sentenced to death in the state courts. Clinton swore his loyalty to the death penalty in 1992 when, as governor of Arkansas, he left his first presidential campaign in order to oversee the execution of Rickey Ray Rector, a brain-damaged black man.

The fact that state governments are tinkering with the death penalty does not

signal a "change of heart" by the U.S. capitalist rulers who wreak death and destruction from Baghdad to New Orleans. Rather, state officials seek to clean up their procedures for legal murder when there has been a sharp drop in public support for capital punishment. While more than 80 percent of those polled in 1994 were for the death penalty, the figure fell to 64 percent a little over a year ago. Much of this change in opinion stems from publicized instances of innocent people sen-

tenced to death as well as the torture of Williams, Diaz and many more. According to the Innocence Project, by this Christmas 188 convicted felons (including many on death row) had been exonerated nationwide through DNA testing.

In 2000, George Ryan, then the Republican governor of Illinois, commuted all state death sentences and declared a moratorium on capital punishment after he was confronted with proof that 13 death row inmates had been wrongly convicted. (Having faced heavy blowback for this decent act, Ryan was sentenced in September to six and a half years in prison on mail fraud, tax fraud and other charges.) While we welcome any spanner thrown into the machinery of legal lynching, such moratoria do not fundamentally undermine the death penalty. Thus, in its recent action, the Maryland court specifically rejected the argument that the death penalty is racist and based its decision solely on a technicality concerning the manner in which the state's death penalty was adopted. In California, the judge ruled that the *particular mixture* of chemicals used was cruel and unusual but noted that the death penalty "can be fixed" by using other chemicals.

Whether it be electric chairs turning victims into human fireballs, gas chamber asphyxiations or the chemical torture that today dominates America's death chambers, executions are cruel and inhuman. The death penalty is a barbaric legacy of medieval torture, and in the U.S. of black chattel slavery. It is a system of

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Protest Congressional Attack on Mumia Abu-Jamal!

The following statement was issued by the Partisan Defense Committee on December 8.

The Partisan Defense Committee denounces the U.S. House of Representatives' vote on December 6 which attacked the Parisian suburb of Saint-Denis for naming a street in honor of death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. The resolution, which passed 368 to 31 with support from both Republicans and Democrats, repeats the prosecution's frame-up lies against Mumia. This resolution seeks to pave the way for the legal lynching of an innocent man! The resolution also "commends all police officers in the United States and throughout the world"—and this in the wake of the NYC police killing of Sean Bell in a 50-round fusillade on November 25, and the Atlanta police's gunning down of 88-year-old Kathryn Johnston in her own home.

There are mountains of evidence proving Mumia Abu-Jamal's innocence and the police/prosecution frame-up: there is no ballistics evidence, so-called eyewitnesses were coerced and Mumia's confession was fabricated. In 2001 Rachel Wolkenstein (co-counsel for Mumia from 1995 to 1999) submitted an affidavit to the U.S. District Court detailing that evidence, including Arnold Beverly's confession that he, not Mumia, killed Police Officer Daniel Faulkner. Yet all the courts to which it has been presented have refused to hear the Beverly evidence. The Third Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that Mumia could raise only three issues on his appeal: the racially biased jury selection in his 1982 trial, the D.A.'s prejudicial summary argument that Mumia would have "appeal after appeal," and the grossly biased post-conviction state hearings in the 1990s before Judge Albert Sabo (who a court reporter testified had

said at the time of the original trial that he would help "fry the n----r"). These challenges should be heard in court. But the harsh reality is that the Court of Appeals—like every other court in this case—has refused to hear countless other violations of Mumia's rights. Every aspect of Mumia's case shows how much the capitalist rulers want him dead.

The House of Representatives' overwhelming vote further drives home the depth of hatred the entire bourgeois state apparatus has for Mumia Abu-Jamal, a courageous, eloquent and unbroken fighter for black freedom and against racist repression. Mumia was framed up and falsely convicted for the murder of Faulkner because he is a talented journalist known as the "voice of the voiceless," a former Black Panther, a supporter of the MOVE organization and an outspoken opponent of racism.

Partisan Defense Committee spokeswoman Rachel Wolkenstein was invited to and spoke as part of the delegation at the street-naming in Saint-Denis this past April. That event provoked months of a renewed campaign by police and government officials against Mumia. In a letter to the mayor of Paris dated October 30, Mumia denounced efforts by Philadelphia politicians to retaliate against Saint-Denis, writing that "the merchants of death" have a "campaign to not only kill me, but to wipe my name from the face of the earth. Why else would they care about a small street in St. Denis? Or an award of Citizen of Honor from the City of Light? The Empire thinks it is Master of the World and can tell all what to do".

In response to this vicious campaign, the Comité de Défense Sociale, the PDC's fraternal legal and social defense organization in France, issued a leaflet on November 16 denouncing efforts by Philadelphia politicians to stifle growing support for Mumia: "This attack takes place when the international defense campaign for Mumia is once again gaining steam, a campaign that Philadelphia and its police are seeking to crush in the egg."

More evidence of growing support for Mumia is the statement by the Partisan Defense Committee under the headline, "We Demand the Immediate Freedom of Mumia Abu-Jamal, an Innocent Man" signed by hundreds of labor activists and prominent individuals, including Nobel Prize winners Nadine Gordimer and Dario Fo, Harvard University's Henry Louis Gates Jr., Cindy Sheehan of Gold Star Families for Peace, author Michael Eric Dyson, the poet Sonia Sanchez, New York City councilman Charles Barron and Illi-



Le Bolchévik

Paris, December 9: PDC/Comité de Défense Sociale banner at Mumia rally demands, "Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Now! There Is No Justice in the Capitalist Courts!"

nois Congressman Danny K. Davis. That statement was printed as a full-page ad in New York's *Amsterdam News* (26 October), the *Nation* (20 November), and also in the *Chicago Defender* and the *San Francisco Bay View*.

The House resolution against Mumia comes at a crucial juncture in the legal proceedings. Mumia has submitted the final papers in his appeal of a federal court decision that affirmed his frame-up conviction while overturning the death sentence. After oral argument, the court could decide within months whether to reinstate the death penalty, to condemn him to the living death of life in prison or to grant a new trial. The latest offensive by Congress and the city of Philadelphia against Mumia underlines the need to mobilize now for his freedom.

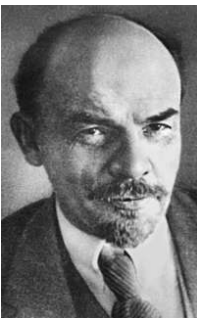
On December 9 in Philadelphia, the Partisan Defense Committee will join a rally called by the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal on the 25th anniversary of Mumia's arrest. The PDC understands that the capitalist state and its courts are not neutral institutions but organs of repression against the working class and the oppressed. Mumia's freedom will not be won through reliance on the rigged "justice" system or on capitalist politicians, whether Democratic, Republican or Green. Our PDC contingent will march under the slogans: "For Class-Struggle Defense to Free Mumia Now! There Is No Justice in the Capitalist Courts! Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!" ■



TROTSKY

Reforge the Fourth International!

In 1938, Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky sent greetings to a public meeting of the then-revolutionary Socialist Workers Party marking the founding of the Fourth International and the tenth anniversary of the birth of the American Left Opposition. As Trotsky stressed, the indispensable instrument in the fight for a socialist future for humanity is the international revolutionary proletarian party, built in the course of sharp political struggle against the misleaders of the working class.



LENIN

We are not a party like other parties. Our ambition is not only to have more members, more papers, more money in the treasury, more deputies. All that is necessary, but only as a means. Our aim is the full material and spiritual liberation of the toilers and exploited through the socialist revolution. Nobody will prepare it and nobody will guide it but ourselves. The old Internationals—the Second, the Third, that of Amsterdam, we will add to them also the London Bureau—are rotten through and through.

The great events which rush upon mankind will not leave of these outlived organizations one stone upon another. Only the Fourth International looks with confidence at the future. It is the World Party of Socialist Revolution! There never was a greater task on the earth. Upon every one of us rests a tremendous historical responsibility....

The fidelity to the cause of the toilers requires from us the highest devotion to our international party. The party, of course, can also be mistaken. By common effort we will correct its mistakes. In its ranks can penetrate unworthy elements. By common effort we will eliminate them. New thousands who will enter its ranks tomorrow will probably be deprived of necessary education. By common effort we will elevate their revolutionary level. But we will never forget that our party is now the greatest lever of history. Separated from this lever, every one of us is nothing. With this lever in hand, we are all.

—Leon Trotsky, "The Founding of the Fourth International," 18 October 1938, printed in *Writings of Leon Trotsky* (1938-39)

Free All Oaxaca Protesters Now!

Mexico

We print below a December 23 Partisan Defense Committee protest letter that was sent to Mexico's Secretary of the Interior, Francisco Javier Ramírez Acuña, and the Mexican Embassy in Washington, D.C.

We protest the bloody crackdown against supporters of the Oaxaca teachers and against members of the Popular Assembly of the Peoples of Oaxaca (APPO). According to the National Commission on Human Rights, since June 349 people have been arrested, 370 injured and 20 people killed. Those arrested include Flavio Sosa and three other prominent leaders of the APPO, who were arrested on December 4 in Mexico City after having given a press conference that announced their intention to renew talks with the government. At least five students from the National Autonomous University (UNAM) have also been arrested. Some activists were arrested through house-to-house roundups. Those

arrested have reported torture, sexual abuse and mistreatment. Many have been transferred to the distant state of Nayarit to separate them from friends and family. Those arrested face charges that are as absurd as they are serious, including robbery, violent robbery, damages, arson, destruction of property, kidnapping and sedition. We demand that all charges against Sosa and all the prisoners be dropped. Free all the APPO supporters! All military forces out of Oaxaca!

The repression continues: the police continue to arrest APPO members, and hundreds of arrest warrants are still unfilled. This repression on the part of the national and state governments is intended to send a message of terror to anybody who protests. In the last year, the government has used deadly force against striking steel workers in Lázaro Cárdenas, Michoacán, peasants in Atenco, and now protesters in Oaxaca. We stand with the tens of thousands of workers, urban and rural poor, students and others who have demonstrated their solidarity with the Oaxaca teachers and the APPO. We demand that the government release all those arrested. ■

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Popular Front Paved Way for Pinochet Terror

The December 10 death of Chilean general Augusto Pinochet touched off demonstrations throughout the country, mainly by those celebrating the final demise of this bloody butcher. It was Pinochet, backed by the U.S., who on 11 September 1973 led a military coup that overthrew the Chilean Unidad Popular (UP—Popular Unity) coalition government of the Socialist Party’s Salvador Allende. Some 30,000 workers, peasants and leftists were killed in the aftermath of the coup. Untold thousands more were tortured and thrown into concentration camps. Up to 100,000 were forced into exile, where many were hounded and assassinated by Pinochet’s DINA secret police and others under the aegis of the CIA’s Operation Condor terror campaign. The economic austerity imposed upon Chile’s working people under Pinochet was directed by the University of Chicago’s Milton Friedman, who died in November.

The Allende regime and the Pinochet coup were defining political events for a generation of leftists around the world. The UP was a classic popular front—a coalition government subordinating the Chilean workers to their deadly class enemies through a bloc of workers parties with a mythical “progressive” section of the bourgeoisie and the “democratic” officer corps. The Allende government appointed Pinochet Army Commander in Chief. The purpose of the UP popular front was to head off the threat of workers revolution and disarm the working class, buying the capitalists time to behead the proletariat. Allende was not simply a martyred victim of the CIA and Chilean generals; he and his reformist supporters, with their promotion of a “peaceful” (i.e., parliamentary) road to socialism, led the Chilean working masses directly into this crushing defeat.

The article reprinted below was originally published in *Spartacist* No. 19 (November-December 1970) shortly after the UP’s electoral victory. Uniquely on the international left, we denounced any political support to the Allende coalition as class treason. We warned that unless the proletariat mobilized independently of the bourgeoisie in a fight for socialist revolution, the desperate struggles of the Chilean masses would be drowned in blood. That warning was tragically confirmed by Pinochet’s 1973 coup and subsequent reign of terror.

* * *

The electoral victory of Dr. Salvador Allende’s Popular Front coalition in Chile poses in sharpest form the issue of revolution or counter-revolution. The Chilean crisis is a fully classic expression of reformism’s attempt to derail the felt needs of the working people for their own government to rule society in their own interests. The revolutionary duty of Marxists in Chile and internationally should be utterly unambiguous. Above all, the experience of the Russian Revolution and of Trotsky’s critiques of the Spanish and French Popular Front governments of 1936 illuminate the objective of revolutionists in such a situation.

Dr. Allende’s candidacy, which gained a plurality on 4 Sept., was based on a coalition of reformist-labor and liberal-bourgeois parties, including the pro-Moscow Communist Party, Allende’s own somewhat more radical Socialist Party, the very right-wing Social Democrats, the rump of the liberal Radical Party, fragments of the Christian Democrats, etc. To gain confirmation by the Congress, Allende agreed to a series of constitutional amendments at the insis-

tence of the dominant Christian Democrats. Most crucial among these were the prohibition of private militias and the stipulation that no police or military officers will be appointed who were not trained in the established academies.

With the maintenance of the founda-



Gerretsen/Gamma

Santiago, Chile: Thousands were hunted down and killed in September 1973 military coup led by General Augusto Pinochet.

tions of the capitalist order thus assured, Congress elected Allende president on 24 October. He has now announced the division of spoils in his 15-man cabinet: the CP gets economic ministries, Allende’s SP the key posts of internal security and foreign affairs, and a bourgeois Radical the ministry of national defense. This is reformism’s answer to the Chilean masses’ years of struggle and their desperate hopes that Allende’s election would open up for them a new way of life, but they will not be held for long inside the Popular Front’s bourgeois straight jacket.

It is the most elementary duty for revolutionary Marxists to irreconcilably oppose the Popular Front in the election and to place absolutely no confidence in it in power. Any “critical support” to the Allende coalition is class treason, paving the way for a bloody defeat for the Chilean working people when domestic reaction, abetted by international imperialism, is ready. The U.S. imperialists have been able to temporize for the moment—and not immediately try to mobilize a counter-revolutionary coup on the usual Latin American model—because they have softened the anticipated nationalization losses through massive profit-taking over several years.

Within reformist workers’ parties there is a profound contradiction between their proletarian base and formal ideology and the class-collaborationist aims and personal appetites of their leaderships. This is why Marxists, when they are not themselves embodied in a mass working-class party, give reformist parties such “critical support”—against overt agents of capitalism—as will tend to regroup the proletarian base around a revolutionary program. But when these parties enter a coalition government with the parties of capitalism, any such “critical support” would be a betrayal because the coalition has suppressed the class contradiction in the bourgeoisie’s favor. It is our job then to re-create the basis for struggle *within* such parties by demanding they *break* with the coalition. This break must be the elementary precondition for even the most critical support.

The Left Views Chile

Chile’s most extreme known formation, the Movimiento Izquierdista Revolucionario, comprising Guevarists, semi-Trotskyists, etc., demonstrated conciliationism toward Allende as his cam-

paign wore on and on 4 Sept. issued a call for the workers, students and peasants to support his victory, thus throwing their weight behind the popular illusions.

While the “revolutionary” Chinese Maoists have been very diplomatically noncommittal, for Gus Hall of the U.S.

mental Press (14 Sept.) was agnostic, concluding, “Undoubtedly Allende’s program is more radical, on paper, than the program of the Popular Front of 1938. But it remains to be seen what his bourgeois allies, present and prospective, will allow him to put into practice.”

Behind the SWP’s bland know-nothingism was its operational position: critical support: “It would be a crime to whitewash the UP [Unidad Popular]. But failing to recognize the positive elements in it, condemning it in toto out of some sectarian dogmatism, would mean suicidal isolation.” (*IP*, 5 Oct.) To be sure, the SWP “knows better.” But after all the Allende candidacy was enormously popular among the Chilean masses, so these revisionists chose to feed the illusions which block the path to socialist revolution and expose the workers, in this situation of great social polarization, to the danger of victorious reaction and right-wing terror.

Healy’s Pabloism

The alleged anti-revisionists of Gerry Healy’s “Fourth International” stand only quantitatively to the left of the SWP; they are just more critical within the same framework. Healy’s *Workers Press* of 12 Sept. concludes, “There must be a preparation for class action to defend Allende’s victory and his election programs to meet this danger.” And the U.S. Workers League states: “There is only one road and that is the revolutionary road of the October Revolution... As a step in this understanding the workers must hold Allende



Reuters

Left: Socialist president Salvador Allende (at right) with Pinochet a month before the coup. Right: September 1976 NYC march against Chilean junta.



WV Photo

confidence in the Cuban leadership.

Tragically, most of those formations claiming the heritage of Trotsky’s Fourth International have taken the same road, in disorientation or conciliation to Popular Frontism. At its April 1969 World Congress the United Secretariat majority around Livio Maitan affirmed that the strategy for Latin America was “rural guerrilla warfare” with a peasant base and a petty-bourgeois (student) derived cadre, thus rendering themselves irrelevant in the face of urban-based upheavals in Latin America. How about the United Secretariat minority, grouped around the American Socialist Workers Party? Their spokesman, Joe Hansen, stood on apparent Trotskyist orthodoxy, seemingly rediscovering the need to build revolutionary workers’ parties as the key to the Latin American revolution, but this was just a fig leaf to cover the SWP’s descent into legalistic reformism. The first response of Hansen’s *Interconti-*

to his promises...” (*Bulletin*, 21 Sept.)—invoking the October Revolution, they demand the masses should compel an essentially bourgeois government to achieve socialism!

Not surprisingly, during the 1917 February Revolution in Russia the vacillating resident Bolsheviks, including Stalin, came up with the very formula the WL has rediscovered: to support the provisional government “insofar as it struggles against reaction or counter-revolution.” Lenin telegraphed his protest from abroad: “Our tactic; absolute lack of confidence; no support to the new government; suspect Kerensky especially; arming of the proletariat the sole guarantee;... no rapprochement with other parties.” All we could add today is to repeat Trotsky’s fundamental conclusion about our epoch that the time has never been more urgent for the building of the international party imbued with Leninist aims and Lenin’s determination.■

Mobilize Labor's Power to Free Mumia Now!

The following speech, edited for publication, was delivered by the Partisan Defense Committee's Erica Williamson at an October 28 Harlem rally called by the PDC and the New York Labor Black League for Social Defense under the slogans: "Free Mumia now! Mumia is an innocent man! Mumia Abu-Jamal's life is in danger—Mobilize now! Abolish the racist death penalty!"

Being that we're here for a rally, I'd like to start off with some chants. Free Mumia now! Abolish the racist death penalty! An injury to one is an injury to all—Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!

The PDC and the Labor Black League sponsored this rally to bring together in defense of Mumia Abu-Jamal speakers and organizations across the spectrum of political beliefs, raising their own views on this vital case and how to fight to win. And this rally is just one part of that struggle.

We rally today because Mumia Abu-Jamal's life is in grave danger. For 25 years our courageous class brother has been rotting away in the bourgeois jails and on death row—this is criminal. Mumia's fight for freedom has reached a critical juncture. In December of last year, the U.S. Third Circuit Court of Appeals put Mumia's case on what they call a "fast track" for decision and is considering three constitutional

Mumia's case has "frame-up" written all over it. Witnesses were bought and terrorized, Mumia's "confession" was fabricated, and ballistics evidence was invented. The courts have refused to hear the evidence of Mumia's innocence and the sworn confession of Arnold Beverly that he shot Police Officer Faulkner, for whose killing Mumia was intentionally framed up and convicted. To say that all of Mumia's court hearings, appearances and trial were a sham would be an understatement—it was nothing but a legal lynching. If Mumia is to be freed, it will take the mobilization of the masses, centrally labor, to champion his cause in outrage and on the basis that this was a case of a political frame-up through and through.

Mumia is on death row for having been a leader of the Black Panther Party, a MOVE supporter, an eloquent and effective critic of racist oppression. When we first took up Mumia's defense, we described the cops' attempt to kill him, and the frame-up conviction, as the long arm of COINTELPRO reaching into the courtroom. Under the FBI and J. Edgar Hoover's Counter-Intelligence Program, or COINTELPRO, 38 Panthers were killed nationwide and hundreds railroaded to jail. I want to underscore the point that Mumia's visible leadership role within

government can be deemed an "enemy combatant" and simply disappeared, without charges, without trial. The fight to free Mumia comes within the context of increased bipartisan attacks on civil liberties and the frame-up conviction and sentencing of leftist lawyer Lynne Stewart to 28 months and her co-defendants Mohamed Yousry to 20 months and Ahmed Abdel Sattar to an outrageous 24 years. What the U.S. capitalist rulers get away with will largely depend on the level of social and class struggle in this society.

Racist Rulers Want to Silence Mumia

The execution of death penalty abolitionist and former gang leader Stanley Tookie Williams less than a year ago was a signal that the racist rulers want Mumia dead next. The recent attacks by this administration on *habeas corpus*—which is our right to challenge evidence against us—helps to further nail the coffin in which they want to entomb Mumia. His fate cannot be left up to the same capitalist state that has worked hard for decades to see him dead.

Millions around the world took up Mumia's case in revulsion against the injustices inherent in capitalism—pov-



Jennifer Beach

courts do not sit in judgment and rule in isolation. The courts, like the cops, the D.A.s, military and police, are all a part of the capitalist state, whose role is to keep the working class and the oppressed in their place through its laws and brute force. Their interest lies with the capitalist class and in protecting the wealth of the ruling elite.

There are numerous lessons in how there is no justice in the capitalist courts. Mumia's case is one grotesque example of the injustices that exist every day under the capitalist legal system. Just ask the inhabitants of the ghettos and barrios who are rounded up to fill up America's prison hellholes under the auspices of the "war on drugs," a bogus and racist war akin to the so-called "war on terror." Black people are five times as likely as whites to go to jail. An estimated 12 percent of young black men were incarcerated last year. And this translates into an even more astonishing incarceration rate over the course of a lifetime, with nearly a third of all black men in America imprisoned at some point. And although black people make up 12 percent of the population, they account for 42 percent of current death row inmates.

We do not accord the state the right to determine who shall live and who shall die. The death penalty is the ultimate form of institutionalized state terror and murder, and it has been and will be used to intimidate, and in some cases eliminate, those who challenge racist American capitalism. In the U.S., the death penalty is the legacy of chattel slavery and is Jim Crow lynch law made legal. Mumia's case demonstrates what the death penalty is all about. There is a concerted effort by all wings of the capitalist class—represented by both the Democratic and Republican parties—to see Mumia executed. We must fight to abolish the racist death penalty, not just for Mumia but on principle!

No Illusions in the Capitalist Courts!

While all legal proceedings and legal remedies should be pursued on Mumia's behalf, we cannot have any illusions in or reliance on the capitalist courts. Mumia Abu-Jamal is innocent! He says so himself in his 2001 affidavit. There is no need for a trial to prove that Mumia is innocent—the facts speak for themselves. The evidence of Mumia's innocence is overwhelming. The PDC has fought to get this evidence out, well before the conclusive piece of evidence that helps tie it all together—the confession of Arnold Beverly—was exposed. Mumia has been in prison or on death row for nearly 25 years. He doesn't need another "day in court." He needs his freedom!



WV Photos

Millions internationally turned out in 1995 protests that helped stay Mumia's execution. Left: August 1995 PDC-initiated united-front protest in New York City. Right: South African workers at June 1995 protest by COSATU union federation hold up flyers demanding "Save Mumia Abu-Jamal!"

challenges relating to his frame-up trial and PCRA [Post-Conviction Relief Act] hearing. But the bottom line is: we are down to the wire. This is likely to be Mumia's last round of legal appeals, and a new execution date could be set by the end of this year.

the Black Panther Party, his high-profile journalist position and his support for MOVE all took place within the very short period of ten years. Mumia was well known. The same police officers who targeted the Black Panther Party for destruction led the attacks on the MOVE organization. Mumia's involvement in the Black Panther Party was used by the prosecution to try to prove that the killing of Officer Faulkner was premeditated and as a basis for his death penalty sentence.

Nine hundred pages of heavily redacted files that the PDC retrieved from the FBI—and this is not all they had but all they released to us—prove that they had begun watching Mumia on a daily basis from the time he was 15 years old and in high school. From the time he was a teenager he was on the Security Index, which was the secret "terrorist" list of the time. Mumia was also on the ADEX list, which was a list of people who were to be taken into detention and put into concentration camps in the event of a "national emergency."

Mumia was in the gun sights of the FBI and the Philly cops, targeted for his ability to speak and write. Today, according to the government, some 300,000 names are on its "terrorist" list. *Anyone* who is perceived as an opponent of the

erty, racial and ethnic bias, inequality and war. The injustices that animated Mumia and a generation of black radical activists still exist today. Many people identify with Mumia's fight against the "system" and for justice for all humanity. And as a journalist and radio talk show host in Philadelphia, Mumia had a broad and captive audience. And he still speaks out in his essays and radio recordings, "Live from Death Row." In Mumia, the capitalist rulers see a threat and the spectre of black revolution. They want to silence him for good, as a message and signal to us all of what's in store when you stand up against this racist capitalist system.

A common question I hear in regard to Mumia's case is: why would the courts exclude the evidence of his innocence, why continue the frame-up? Well, the

Partisan Defense Committee
July 2006 • Pamphlet • \$1

The Fight to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal

Mumia Is Innocent!

Anatomy of a Frame-Up

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Join the Campaign to Free Mumia!

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Mumia’s latest court battles shouldn’t be hailed as a victory. The fight is not over just because the court has agreed to hear some of the issues in his case. The real fight is for a class-struggle defense program based on the power of labor, which can free Mumia and get rid of this whole system of wage slavery. The fact that people are not mobilizing and filling the streets now like they once did for Mumia does not go unnoticed by the courts. Mumia, in an interview with the French Communist newspaper *L’Humanité* earlier this year and prior to the filing of his legal papers, said he has “very little hope in a favorable decision from the Federal Court which has agreed to look at three points of the petition submitted to appeal by my lawyers.”

Many so-called socialist organizations such as Workers World Party, Socialist Action, the Revolutionary Communist Party and the International Socialist Organization have at one point or another taken up Mumia’s case. But it is a question on what basis they take it up. It boils down to a difference between reforming the capitalist state and organizing working people independent of it and to fight it. Many of these leftist groups were fighting on the basis of winning the courts over to Mumia’s side, and tying the masses to have faith in the courts, instead of fighting on the basis of winning the masses to the fight for the freedom of an innocent man. And now that Mumia stands on his last legal legs in court, with small exceptions you hardly hear a peep from most of these groups about doing anything for Mumia.

We cannot afford to sit on our hands and wait to see what the court does next. And if people are organized in support of Mumia only on the basis of the next court battle or a new trial, that is exactly what they are being organized to do—be complacent—while a decision as to whether or not this innocent man lives or dies could come down any day now.

I first became active around Mumia’s case probably when some of you did, back in the summer of 1995, when he was facing an execution warrant and there was heightened activity and publicity on his behalf. During the ’95 through ’99 period, I was won over to the PDC’s and Spartacist League’s fight to free Mumia and abolish the racist death penalty. Amid the swamp of banners and calls for a fair and new trial for Mumia, there was the PDC: No illusions in the capitalist courts! Mumia is innocent! Labor must mobilize to free him now!

It became clear to me that the calls for a new and fair trial reflected neutrality on the question of Mumia’s innocence and the possibility of a political frame-up, thereby rejecting an entire history in the U.S. of legal lynchings, redbaiting, union-busting and COINTELPRO. There also existed a contempt for the evidence of his innocence and an outright failure to push it, instead keeping Mumia’s case confined to what’s being argued in the courts and putting faith in them to be fair, good, just, right—basically anything and everything that they’re not. The courts are not fair! Even if he does get a new trial, who’s to say Mumia is not going to be framed up and convicted again? Rubin “Hurricane” Carter got a new trial, and he was framed and convicted again.

We don’t rely on the courts. As Mumia’s legal appeals reach their final stages, the PDC is fighting to revitalize mass protest centered on the labor movement, understanding that the only pressure that will have an impact on the capitalist rulers and their courts is fear of the social consequences of executing this innocent man or entombing him for life. Even when the PDC’s Rachel Wolkenstein and Jonathan Piper served on Mumia’s legal team, we still fought against illusions or reliance on the capitalist courts. Peddling the lie that Mumia could get a fair trial if only his case gets out of the hands of the state courts and Sabo and into the hands of the federal courts helped to demobilize a movement of millions around the world.

The armed thugs of the capitalist state, and their Fraternal Order of Police

Philly Protest Marks 25th Anniversary of Mumia’s Arrest

On December 9, a Partisan Defense Committee contingent joined some 250 defenders of death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal in a Philadelphia march and rally organized by the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal. The PDC brought from New York City a busload of 45 people, who chanted during the march, “Free Mumia—This is the hour! Unchain labor/black power!” In Paris on the same day, a contingent of 30 organized by the PDC’s fraternal defense organization, the Comité de Défense Sociale, and the Ligue Trotskyiste de France joined in a similar demonstration of some 150 people. These events marked the 25th anniversary of Mumia’s imprisonment. Shot and arrested on 9 December 1981, Mumia—a former Black Panther, a MOVE supporter, an eloquent journalist and outspoken opponent of racist oppression—was framed up, falsely convicted and sent to death row on false charges of killing Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner.

Among the groups present in Philadelphia were the Workers World Party (WWP), International Socialist Organization (ISO), League for the Revolutionary Party and the People’s Organization for Progress. A good portion of the rally was made up of college-age youth looking for a way forward in the fight to free this innocent man. The PDC contingent marched under the slogans: “For Class-Struggle Defense to Free Mumia Now! There Is No Justice in the Capitalist Courts! Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!” The PDC leaflet building the contingent emphasized that with Mumia’s case reaching a critical juncture in the courts, “Millions in the unions, on the streets and campuses must be mobilized now behind Mumia’s fight!”

The PDC supports the use of all possible legal channels on Mumia’s behalf. Indeed, PDC attorney Rachel Wolkenstein served on Mumia’s legal team from 1995 to 1999 and led the investigation that turned up evidence of Mumia’s innocence, including the confession of



WV Photo

December 9: PDC contingent at Philadelphia march.

Arnold Beverly that he shot Officer Faulkner. But the PDC has always insisted that reliance on bourgeois politicians and the capitalist “justice” system cannot win Mumia’s freedom. As the contingent leaflet stated, “The kind of pressure that will have an impact on the courts is the social power of the multi-racial labor movement demanding that this innocent man be freed now.”

Only three days before the rally, the U.S. House of Representatives passed, with overwhelming bipartisan support, a resolution that attacked the Parisian suburb of Saint-Denis for naming a street in honor of Mumia and repeated the prosecution’s frame-up lies. A PDC press release (see page 2) denouncing this action stated: “The House of Representatives’ overwhelming vote further drives home the depth of hatred the entire bourgeois state apparatus has for Mumia Abu-Jamal.”

The unfortunately small turnout on December 9 points to the urgent need to revitalize the movement for Mumia’s freedom. We have repeatedly stressed that the millions around the world who rallied to Mumia’s cause

more than a decade ago were demobilized by such reformist groups as the WWP, ISO, Socialist Action and Revolutionary Communist Party that have preached reliance on the courts and capitalist politicians, codified in their call for a “new trial” for Mumia.

Regrettably, the Philadelphia rally organizers told the PDC that it could only have a speaker on the condition that no criticisms of other groups would be raised. The PDC could not agree to such self-censorship. Indeed, political debate over competing programs and strategies is vital to reversing the demobilization of Mumia’s supporters at this crucial juncture. Such debate was the defining feature of the October 28 Harlem rally called by the PDC and the New York Labor Black League for Social Defense, which was addressed by Rachel Wolkenstein, Pam Africa and other speakers representing a spectrum of political beliefs who presented their own views on which way forward in the fight to free Mumia (see “Debate at Harlem PDC Rally: For a Class-Struggle Fight to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!” WV No. 880, 10 November 2006).

[F.O.P.], have never let up in their attacks on Mumia and his supporters, engaging in intimidation tactics nationally against individuals as well as performers who have come out for Mumia. Mumia’s family has borne the brunt of state harassment. Jamal Hart, Mumia’s older son, was arrested on trumped-up gun possession charges in 1996 and sentenced to 15 years in federal prison with no chance of parole for the “crime” of being a spokesman for his father. You will hear a statement later this evening that Jamal Hart wrote for this rally. Richard Costello, head of the Philly F.O.P., declared that Mumia’s supporters should all be put on an electric couch! And in the latest attempt at vile racist slander and provocation, the Philadelphia Police Department awarded its “Valor Award” to nine cops who participated in the assault on the MOVE commune in Powelton Village on 8 August 1978. Nine MOVE members went to prison after being attacked by the cops in 1978, an attack that Mumia vigorously protested and spoke out about. It is no coincidence that with the possibility of parole coming up next year for the MOVE prisoners, the cops were awarded for this racist attack some 28 years after the fact.

The PDC and Class-Struggle Defense

In fact, we first learned about Mumia’s case from MOVE member Ramona Africa. Exactly how and why we got involved requires me to talk a bit about the PDC.

The Spartacist League initiated the Partisan Defense Committee in 1974. The model was the International Labor Defense, or ILD, under James P. Cannon of the early Communist Party. We are a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization. We also stand on the slogan of the IWW: “An injury to one is an injury to all.” We defend cases and causes—regardless of who the organization or individual is—whose successful outcome is in the interests of the whole of the working people. By definition, this means that those we defend do not have to agree with, and often do not agree with, the political views of the Spartacist League.

We defended militant leftists after the 1973 U.S.-backed bloody Pinochet coup against the Allende government in Chile. We defended Mario Muñoz, a Chilean miners leader whose life was at risk in Chile and who was threatened by the junta in Argentina shortly after that. We

defended Black Panther Party members who were basically forgotten, like Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt). We initiated anti-Klan and anti-fascist mobilizations and filed lawsuits against being slandered as “violent” and as “terrorists”—against the Moonies, for example, and against the FBI, which tried to put the Spartacist League on its domestic terrorist list, a sort of precursor to the USA Patriot Act. And we did win those lawsuits.

We gave support to the British miners in their 1984-85 strike against the mass closure of coal pits, and we defended the MOVE organization after the firebombing of their commune on May 13, 1985, in which eleven men, women and children were burned to death. This occurred under black Democratic mayor Wilson Goode in collusion with the Feds and cops, and this massacre was a bloody signature of the Reagan years. Ramona Africa served

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Spartacus Youth Club Classes

LOS ANGELES

Saturday, January 13, 2 p.m.
The Russian Revolution and the Civil War

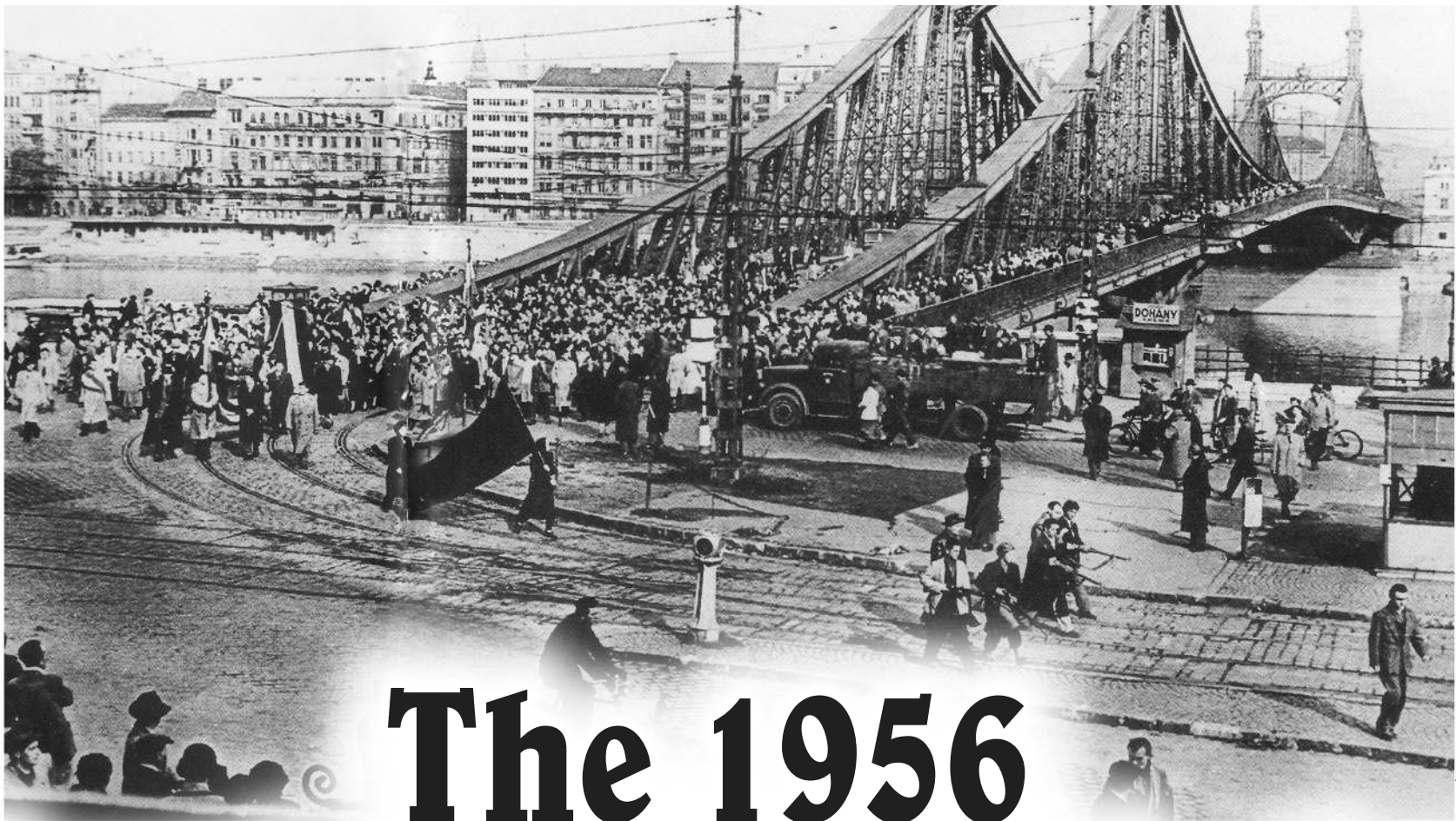
3806 Beverly Blvd., Room 215
(Beverly/Vermont Red Line Station)
Information: (213) 380-8239
or e-mail: slsycla@sbcglobal.net

TORONTO

Wednesday, January 24, 6:30 p.m.
Defend the Palestinians Against Zionist Terror!

University of Toronto
OISE, 252 Bloor Street West, Room TBA
Information and readings: (416) 593-4138
or e-mail: spartacan@on.aibn.com

Workers Political Revolution Against Stalinist Rule



The 1956 Hungarian Revolution

This past October 23 marked the 50th anniversary of the beginning of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution. The anniversary was celebrated internationally by bourgeois politicians and ideologues, who cynically portrayed the uprising as a precursor to the counterrevolutions that restored capitalist rule in East Europe and

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the Soviet Union in 1989-1992. Four months earlier, George W. Bush visited Budapest and laid flowers in honor of “the Hungarian patriots who tore down the statue of Josef Stalin and defied an empire.” Commemorations of the uprising were held in Budapest by the government of former-Communist, now-millionaire Ferenc Gyurcsany as well as by anti-government protesters, including a hefty contingent of fascist skinheads.

The depiction of the 1956 events as an anti-Communist, pro-capitalist rebellion, which has been propagated by reactionary forces for the past half-century, is an outright lie. The Hungarian uprising was an attempt by the working class, in a country where capitalism had been overthrown but political power was in the hands of a Stalinist bureaucracy, to throw off bureaucratic rule and open the road to socialism. Workers seized the factories and mines and set up elected workers councils (soviets), embryonic organs of proletarian political power. For weeks the workers fought courageously—by means of strikes, demonstrations and armed struggle—before this political revolution was suppressed.

The cynical misappropriation by capitalist spokesmen of the uprising was skewered in a 1957 document by Shane Mage, a founder of our political tendency:

“What a cruel, cynical joke of history this seems to be! The Hungarian revolution is hailed lyrically by the rulers of the ‘West,’ the worst enemies of socialism and of the Russian revolution. The men who surrounded the infant Soviet Republic with a ‘cordon sanitaire’ of steel and fire, who hailed Hitler and Mussolini as bulwarks against Bolshevism, who stood by with smiling ‘neutrality’ while Franco murdered freedom in Spain, whose hands are still stained by the crimes of Algeria, Suez, Guatemala—the ‘Free’ world gleefully hands



Top: University students and teachers, joined by workers, march across Danube River, 23 October 1956. Above: Budapest workers topple statue of Stalin during Hungarian Revolution.

its poisoned bouquets to the freedom fighters of Hungary.”

—“The Meaning of Two Revolutions” (reprinted in the 1959 Young Socialist Forum pamphlet, *The Hungarian Revolution*)

Bourgeois ideologues focus on isolated expressions of anti-Communism, such as some lumpen gangs calling themselves “freedom fighters” or arch-reactionary Cardinal József Mindszenty addressing the insurgents by radio. (Following the suppression of the revolt, Mindszenty spent the next 15 years holed up in the U.S. Embassy in Budapest.) This is a fundamental distortion, one that was also disseminated by Stalinist spokesmen to justify the brutal repression of the workers. As we stated in “Political Revolution in Hungary—Ten Years After” (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 8, November-December 1966), the slander that the Hungarian masses embraced fascists and monarchist reactionaries “was demolished not only by the *actions* of the revolutionaries—including the violent suppression of what anti-Semitic and White Guard threats actually existed—but by the workers’ militantly communist aspirations and their unambiguous hatred for capitalism.”

The Hungarian working class was overwhelmingly committed to socialism and opposed to a return to capitalism. In all of the workers councils and other proletarian bodies that arose in 1956, Communist Party members were elected to positions of leadership. Ferenc Töke, a vice-president of the Central Workers Council of Greater Budapest, later recalled: “No reactionary tendency manifested itself throughout the entire strike. There was never, at any moment, a question of the former owners eventually returning” (Jean-Jacques Marie and Balazs Nagy [eds.], *Pologne-Hongrie 1956* [1966]). The Central Workers Council of Budapest declared in a 27 November 1956 appeal to workers councils throughout the country: “Faithful to this mission, we defend, even at the cost of our lives, our factories and our fatherland against any attempt to restore capitalism.”

The 1956 Hungarian Revolution was in fact a powerful confirmation of the Trotskyist understanding of the nature of the deformed and degenerated workers states. In the Soviet Union and East Europe before the restoration of capitalism—as in China, North Korea, Cuba and Vietnam today—capitalist rule was

overthrown as a result of social revolutions but political power was/is monopolized by a conservative, anti-working-class bureaucracy. The Hungarian Revolution decisively demonstrated that the Stalinist regime represents a *caste* parasitically resting upon the collectivized economy, not a new type of social *class*. Unlike the capitalist ruling class, which in the face of revolution inevitably unites around a program of counterrevolution, the Stalinist bureaucracy in Hungary *shattered*, with large sections going over to the side of the workers.

These events caused a profound crisis in the Communist parties internationally. In Italy, the Communist Party lost some 200,000 of its members. The French Communist Party, already facing discontent over its support to the Socialist-led government as it pursued the Algerian War, saw its share of the electorate plunge. In Britain, the Communist Party lost a third of its membership. More than 200 CP members and ex-members, including a number of talented intellectuals, were won over by the British Trotskyist group led by Gerry Healy. These former CPers included Brian Pearce, Cliff Slaughter, Tom Kemp and Peter Fryer, the correspondent in Hungary for the Communist Party’s *Daily Worker* whose first-hand observations of the events were recounted in his 1956 book, *Hungarian Tragedy* (see article, page 9).

With the formation of workers soviets, Hungary entered into a period of incipient *dual power* in which local workers councils, defended by the armed masses, confronted what remained of the Stalinist repressive apparatus, which was backed by Soviet troops. Mage noted:

“The first and decisive thing about the Hungarian revolution is that it was a *workers* revolution, and the leading role of the workers was institutionally formulated by the establishment of *workers councils*. Except for the Russian army, there was in Hungary not the shadow of a social force capable of preventing the assumption of state power by the workers councils. Thus the objective conditions for the formation of a soviet republic, in the event of revolutionary victory of course, were entirely favorable.

“The actual level of consciousness of the Hungarian workers, however, was not at the level indicated by the objective possibilities of the revolution. In this the Hungarian workers were like the Russian

proletariat after the February revolution. The general demand was *not* for all power to the workers councils, but for ‘free elections’ to a sovereign parliament. “It would, however, be a disastrous mistake to take the level of consciousness corresponding to the struggle against the Stalinist bureaucracy as the permanent and ultimate political program of the Hungarian proletariat. The Hungarian workers wanted ‘free elections,’ but they also wanted to preserve their own councils and extend their powers. They wanted to move forward to socialism, not backward to capitalism.”

—“The YSL Right Wing and the ‘Crisis of World Stalinism,’” *The Hungarian Revolution*; excerpted as “‘Pure Democracy’ or Political Revolution in East Europe” in the Spartacist pamphlet, *Solidarność: Polish Company Union for CIA and Bankers* (1981)

The Birth of the Hungarian Deformed Workers State

To understand the 1956 Hungarian Revolution requires examining the Russian Revolution of 1917—the only successful revolution as yet carried out by the working class—as well as its later degeneration under the Stalinist bureaucracy. In the October Revolution of 1917, the proletariat, led by Lenin’s Bolshevik Party, took state power, basing its rule on the soviets of workers, soldiers and peasants deputies. The young workers state nationalized the land and went on to expropriate capitalist property. The Bolsheviks understood their revolution as the first step of the world socialist revolution and founded the Third (Communist) International in 1919.

However, the immaturity and indecisiveness of revolutionary leadership outside Russia led to the failure to realize opportunities for proletarian revolution. For example, a proletarian revolution was defeated in Germany in 1918-19, and short-lived soviet republics were crushed in Bavaria and Hungary in 1919. The decisive defeat was the failure of the German Communist Party to consummate a socialist revolution in 1923. The economically backward Soviet workers state—suffering under the devastation wrought by World War I and compounded by the bloody 1918-20 Civil War against imperialist-backed counterrevolution—was left isolated in the face of imperialist encirclement and a general stabilization of the world capitalist order. Together with the decimation of the most conscious layer of the proletariat during the Civil War, these factors set the stage for a political counterrevolution.

While the social foundations of the workers state—above all, the expropriation of the capitalist class and the establishment of a collectivized economy—remained intact, by 1924 political power was transferred from the hands of the proletariat and its revolutionary vanguard into the hands of a conservative bureaucratic caste headed by Stalin. From that point on, the people who ruled the USSR, the way the USSR was ruled, and the purposes for which the USSR was ruled



Austrian Ministry of Education, Science and Culture

Left: Admiral Horthy, Hungarian dictator before and during World War II. Right: Jews slaughtered by Nazis before German withdrawal from Budapest in 1945.



Photoworld

all changed. Under the false dogma of “socialism in one country,” proclaimed by Stalin in December 1924, the bureaucracy accommodated the imperialist order. Correspondingly, the Comintern became transformed over time into an instrument of the bureaucracy’s search for “peaceful coexistence” with imperialism. With the elaboration of the “Popular Front” line at the Comintern’s Seventh (and last) Congress in 1935, the Stalinists explicitly and officially embraced the program of class collaboration with the “democratic” imperialist bourgeoisies.

Leading the fight against the degeneration of the Bolshevik Party, Leon Trotsky’s Left Opposition upheld the revolutionary-internationalist program of the October Revolution. In 1938, Trotsky and his co-thinkers founded the Fourth International. Central to its program was the unconditional military defense of the Soviet degenerated workers state against imperialism and capitalist counterrevolution and the call for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy and restore working-class political power. Such a *political* revolution would be premised on defense of the socialized property forms. This is in contrast to *social* revolutions or counterrevolutions, which overturn existing property relations and place a different class in power. The Trotskyist analysis of Stalinism is key to understanding the creation and subsequent development of the bureaucratically deformed workers states of East Europe.

In the closing months of World War II, in Hungary as throughout much of East Europe, large sections of society welcomed the Soviet Red Army as liberators from the nightmare of Nazi occupation and supported the ensuing destruction of the old bourgeois order. Class-conscious workers hated the right-wing dictatorship of Admiral Miklós Horthy, who ruled Hungary during the interwar period and much of World War II. Impoverished agrarian laborers settled huge scores with the landlords in this land of feudal-derived estates.

Initially, the remnants of the bourgeoisies

of Soviet-occupied East Europe, which had been discredited and shattered by the war, were not expropriated, either politically or economically. In Hungary, elections in 1945 gave a majority, in what was then a largely peasant country, to the bourgeois-clericalist Smallholders Party, which was allowed to form a coalition government with the social democrats and Stalinists. But, as elsewhere in East Europe, it was the Red Army that held the

Soviet Army liberated Hungary from Nazis at cost of 140,000 soldiers.

Progress Publishers



real power. Under the growing pressure of the anti-Soviet Cold War, the Stalinists in 1947-48 proceeded to expropriate the bourgeoisie in Hungary and elsewhere in East Europe, jettisoning their bourgeois coalition partners, nationalizing industry and establishing deformed workers states, that is, societies qualitatively similar to the Soviet Union under the Stalinist bureaucracy.

Prelude to Political Revolution

The 1945-48 period of the so-called “People’s Independence Front” government had a significant effect on the attitudes of the Hungarian working masses. Many would later view that period favorably in comparison to the harsh Stalinist police state that came afterward, although virtually no one wanted a return of the capitalists and large landowners. The 1945-48 interregnum also created certain left-right tensions among the Stalinists themselves. An incipient left opposition, impatient with the slow pace of social transformation, crystallized around Minister of the Interior Laszlo Rajk, a hero in the eyes of many for having fought in the Spanish Civil War and for having been a leader of the Communist underground under the Horthy dictatorship. At Moscow’s behest, the Hungarian regime adopted a one-sided economic policy concentrated on heavy industry. This served to drive down living standards, further fueling proletarian discontent.

The fact that, with the exception of Tito’s Yugoslavia, the East European Stalinist regimes were imposed from without meant that they had shallower roots

than in the Soviet Union. This rendered the social order in the East European deformed workers states relatively volatile and unstable.

Facing social discontent, the East European bureaucracies began to split into Moscow loyalists and national-liberal Stalinists more attuned to popular moods. In 1949 Tito’s Yugoslavia broke from the Kremlin. With its “workers self-management,” Titoism presented itself as a more democratic and authentic form of socialism than Stalin’s Russia. Among East European Communist oppositionists there was a tendency to idealize the Yugoslav “road to socialism,” on the one hand, and Western bourgeois democracy on the other. Fearing further splits, Stalin went into a murderous frenzy, seeking to eliminate any potential Titos elsewhere. The Polish party leader Wladyslaw Gomulka was imprisoned and placed under house arrest. Rajk in Hungary and Rudolf Slánský in Czechoslovakia were subjected to show trials and then executed.

Following Stalin’s death in March 1953, the Kremlin bureaucracy and its counterparts in East Europe embarked on a policy that has been referred to as “de-Stalinization.” Moves in the direction of liberalization throughout East Europe had the effect of simultaneously opening up possibilities for mass struggle while reinforcing illusions that, under the pressure

of the masses, the Stalinist bureaucracy could carry out self-reform and become an instrument for building socialism.

On 17 June 1953, the first incipient proletarian political revolution in the deformed workers states broke out in East Germany. Both the Stalinist regimes and West Germany’s capitalist rulers portrayed the uprising as pro-Western. But this was a lie. Workers from the East German Hennigsdorf steel works marched through West Berlin and back to the East demanding a metal workers government. June 17 powerfully demonstrated the potential for the slogan later adopted by the international Spartacist tendency (now the International Communist League) for the revolutionary reunification of Germany through political revolution in the East and socialist revolution in the West. (For more on the 1953 events, see “The East German Workers Uprising of 17 June 1953,” WV No. 332, 17 June 1983.)

The post-1953 crisis of “de-Stalinization” had a particular impact on Hungary. Of all the Stalinist regimes in East Europe, that of Matyas Rakosi was unquestionably the bloodiest: more Communists were killed under Rakosi than under Horthy. Rakosi’s widely despised political police, the AVH, a multitude of highly paid thugs, constituted fully 1 percent of the entire population of Budapest.

In 1953, to head off the pressures building up in Hungary, the Soviet leadership forced Rakosi to step down as prime minister. He was replaced by Imre Nagy, who had a reputation as a liberal Communist. Nagy proclaimed a “New
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Boni and Liveright

Workers at Petrograd’s Putilov metal works, a bastion of Soviet power during 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. Banner at left proclaims: “Long Live the Third International.”

Hungary 1956...

(continued from page 7)

Course” that included easing the pace of industrialization, lessening pressures on the peasantry and relaxing police terror. However, Rakosi, fearing the vengeance of his political opponents, hung onto power and by 1955 managed to oust Nagy. Thus, between 1953 and 1956 the Hungarian Stalinist regime was torn by a severe polarization between the Rakosi clique and the mass of Communist Party members who supported Nagy. One sign of the ferment in the Communist Party was the emergence of the Petofi Circle, a grouping of dissident intellectuals and others that provided a forum for public debate and became a hub of opposition to the Rakosi hardliners.

In February 1956, Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev gave a “secret” speech to the Soviet Communist Party’s 20th Congress in which he acknowledged a number of Stalin’s crimes. Four months later, locomotive workers in Poland demonstrating for higher wages and lower prices attacked the city hall, radio station and prison in Poznan. Security forces fired on them, killing over 50 workers. Poland entered into an incipient proletarian political revolution, which was headed off at the last minute by Gomulka’s restoration to power. Subsequently, Khrushchev and his Kremlin colleagues did not move against Gomulka, in large part because in factories throughout the country workers councils organized resistance to any attempt to overturn the “Polish October.” Gomulka granted sweeping concessions, such as wage increases. But once the crisis was defused, he disbanded the workers councils that had helped bring him to power.

Meanwhile in Hungary, 200,000 people turned out in early October for a ceremony marking the regime’s “rehabilitation” of Laszlo Rajk. The mass turnout foreshadowed the revolutionary explosion later that month.

The Hungarian October

The Hungarian Revolution, whose events were broadcast on radio and television internationally, was one of the best-documented revolutions ever. It began on October 23 with a largely student demonstration solidarizing with the victory of Gomulka in Poland and calling for the reinstatement of Nagy as head of the Hungarian government. The Rakosi regime denounced the protest as a counter-revolutionary mobilization, and when the unarmed demonstrators marched to the radio station to protest, the AVH goons fired on them.

Hungary then exploded in a near-universal general strike combined with military resistance to the regime. While the initial agitation was student-based, once the fighting started the core of the insurgency in Budapest and the other main centers was the workers councils

and workers militias. Writing about the emergence of the workers soviets, Peter Fryer observed in *Hungarian Tragedy*:

“In their spontaneous origin, in their composition, in their sense of responsibility, in their efficient organisation of food supplies and of civil order, in the restraint they exercised over the wilder elements among the youth, in the wisdom with which so many of them handled the problem of Soviet troops, and, not least, in their striking resemblance at so many points to the soviets or councils of workers’, peasants’ and soldiers’ deputies which sprang up in Russia in the 1905 revolution and again in February 1917, these committees, a network of which now extended over the whole of Hungary, were remarkably uniform. They were at once organs of insurrection—the coming together of delegates elected by factories and universities, mines and Army units—and organs of popular self-government, which the armed people trusted. As such they enjoyed tremendous authority, and it is no exaggeration to say that until the Soviet attack of November 4 the real power in the country lay in their hands.”

Even a 1957 “Report of the Special Committee on the Problem of Hungary” by the United Nations, whose role is to provide a fig leaf for imperialist depredation, noted that the emergence of workers councils “represented the first practical step to restore order and to reorganize the Hungarian economy on a socialist basis, but without rigid Party control or the apparatus of terror.”

The Hungarian army immediately ceased to be an effective force. Some sections went over to the insurgents; many



MTI, Hungarian News Agency

25 October 1956: Soviet tank surrounded by insurgents in front of Parliament in Budapest. Moscow withdrew forces after initial attack, in part from fear of fraternization between Soviet troops and Hungarian workers.

interests are identical. We and you are all fighting together for a better socialist life.” On October 28, the Hungarian trade-union newspaper *Népszava* called for the right of asylum for Soviet soldiers who sided with the workers (François Manuel, *La Revolution Hongroise des Conseils Ouvriers* [1976]).

There were innumerable cases in which Soviet soldiers refused to fight or sided with the insurgents. In his auto-

from one of his police officers: “The AVO [AVH] is firing from every roof. Now the Soviet tanks are firing on the AVO! They’re defending the crowd.”

Though the Stalinist apparatus had disintegrated, a short-lived government was cobbled together under Nagy. On October 28, the Nagy government announced an agreement that Soviet troops would immediately leave Budapest. Indeed, one of the reasons that the Kremlin pulled troops out of Budapest was fear of the effect of fraternization with the insurgent Hungarian masses. But the Kremlin quickly reneged on the agreement. And on November 1, Nagy protested to Soviet Ambassador Yuri Andropov (who would become head of the Soviet Union in the early 1980s) against the entry of new Soviet troops into Hungary without his government’s assent.

The new troops were not only lied to about what was happening; they were lied to about where they were being sent. A leader of the insurgents in a village in eastern Hungary recalled his encounter with the troops (Melvin J. Lasky, ed., *The Hungarian Revolution* [1957]): “Some of the Russians thought they were in East Germany and that they would soon meet American ‘fascists’ who had invaded the country. Other troops thought they were in the Suez Canal zone.” (The Suez Canal had just been nationalized by Nasser’s Egypt, which was then attacked by British, French and Israeli forces.)

At dawn on November 4, Soviet troops attacked Budapest. Despite stiff resistance, the insurrection was soon crushed. Nevertheless, the general strike continued well into December—the longest nationwide general strike in history. In this way, the proletarian centrality of the uprising was even more evident in its aftermath than during the anarchic period of the revolution itself.

The Significance of Hungary 1956

During his brief tenure, Nagy moved steadily to the right. He brought into his government bourgeois politicians from the “People’s Independence Front” period. Nagy also declared Hungary’s withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact and appealed to the United Nations to defend Hungarian neutrality. The logic of Nagy’s policies, had they succeeded in running their course, was to strangle the revolution and enormously strengthen the forces of capitalist counterrevolution. However, Nagy, who spent his greatest efforts trying to get the workers to lay down their arms, utterly lacked control over events. While the revolutionary workers had their fair share of political confusion, their representative organs were in practice counterposed not only to the old hardline Stalinist butchers like Rakosi but to the Nagy regime as well.

In the industrial city of Miskolc, one of the main centers of the revolution, the workers council sent a delegation to Nagy demanding that a new government be



Open Society Archives



Moscow News

Left: Hungarian metal workers read of Stalin’s death, March 1953. Right: Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev’s February 1956 “secret” speech at 20th Communist Party Congress acknowledged some of Stalin’s crimes.

soldiers turned their weapons over to the workers militias. Militarily, the turning point of the revolution was the attempt by the Soviet Army to capture the Kilian barracks, the main stronghold of the Hungarian army within Budapest. The commander of the barracks, Colonel Pal Maleter, a veteran Communist, went over to the revolution and led the forces that repulsed the Soviet attack. Following the subsequent Soviet withdrawal from Budapest, the embryo of an effective revolutionary authority was seen in the newly established National Guard under Maleter’s command, although its authority remained largely limited to the capital. In many press interviews, Maleter insisted that he was a good Communist and would remain so. Maleter’s comments in one such interview are recounted in *Hungary 1956* (1976) by Bill Lomax:

“If we get rid of the Russians don’t think we’re going back to the old days. And if there’s people who do want to go back, we’ll see!” To emphasize the last remark, he reached for his revolver holster and repeated, “We don’t mean to go back to capitalism. We want socialism in Hungary.”

Despite attempts to portray the uprising as dominated by anti-Russian nationalism, what stands out is the degree to which the insurgents attempted to fraternize with the Soviet soldiers—and the degree to which they were successful. The workers’ and students’ Council of Miskolc published leaflets in Russian for the Red Army soldiers declaring: “Our

biographical *In the Name of the Working Class* (1986), Sandor Kopacsi, the Budapest police chief who went over to the insurgents, described a scene that occurred on October 25 when Soviet tanks encountered a crowd of demonstrators:

“A boy, undoubtedly a student—the scene took place just below us—pushed his way through the crowd to the first tank and passed something through the loophole.

“It wasn’t a grenade but a sheet of paper. It was followed by others.

“These sheets, many of which my men would later collect, were tracts in Russian composed by students in the faculty of oriental languages. They reminded the Soviet soldiers of the wishes of the Hungarian nation and of the unfortunate role of policemen in which they had been cast. The tracts started with a citation from Marx: ‘A people that oppresses another cannot itself be free.’

“We counted the minutes. Nothing happened.

“Then the top of the turret of the lead tank opened a little, and the commander, with his leather cap and the gold epaulettes, emerged slowly into the view of the apparently unarmed crowd. Then he flung the turret open and perched himself upon the top of his tank....

“The crowd erupted in a frantic ovation. In this jubilant atmosphere, the commander’s cap was thrown into the middle of the crowd. In exchange, someone plunked a Hungarian Army kepi on his head. The crowd sang ‘Kossuth’s Song’ and then the Hungarian national anthem. And, at the top of their voices, they cried: ‘Long live the Soviet Army!’”

Moments later, Kopacsi received a report

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Chronicler of Hungarian Revolution

Peter Fryer 1927–2006

Peter Fryer, a British Marxist writer and former revolutionist, died on 31 October 2006. His was a rich, complex life. He was born the son of a Hull master mariner in 1927 and won a scholarship to Hymers College in 1938. In his youth, like many of his generation, Fryer was inspired by the efforts of the Red Army during the Second World War, as the Soviet forces fought against and finally prevailed over the forces of fascist barbarism in Europe. In 1942 he joined the Young Communist League, the youth group of the Stalinist Communist Party (CP), which, however, also supported Britain and the other “democratic” imperialist powers in the war. As a member of the British CP, Fryer became a journalist for the party’s *Daily Worker* in 1947. He was sent to Budapest in 1956 and reported on the Hungarian uprising.

Fryer wrote in *Hungarian Tragedy* (1956):

“I saw for myself that the uprising was neither organised nor controlled by fascists or reactionaries, though reactionaries were undeniably trying to gain control of it. I saw for myself that the Soviet troops who were thrown into battle against ‘counter-revolution’ fought in fact not fascists or reactionaries but the common people of Hungary: workers, peasants, students and soldiers.”

His truthful accounts of the Hungarian events led to Fryer’s expulsion from the CP. His eyewitness reports established him as a communist determined to tell the truth to the international working class. Fryer’s dispatches, written initially for the *Daily Worker*, which censored them, contradicted the line of the Stalinist hacks and bourgeois propagandists that the Hungarian workers were engaged in an

anti-Communist, pro-capitalist uprising. Fryer’s reports caused an uproar in the ranks of the CP, which lost one-third of its 30,000 members. Similar upheavals took place in Communist parties internationally. In Britain, some of the CPers simply retired from politics, while others embraced anti-Sovietism. But Peter Fryer led the way for some 200 former CP militants and intellectuals, as well as a layer of industrial workers led by Brian Behan, to be won to Trotskyism (see article, page 6).

Fryer and other former CP cadres were attracted to the literary Trotskyist orthodoxy of Gerry Healy’s group, then known as “The Club,” which would become the Socialist Labour League (SLL). The Healy organization’s formal Soviet defensism and the fact that its publications relied heavily on Trotsky’s writings were the basis of this reputation. In contrast, Tony Cliff’s organization (now the British Socialist Workers Party) failed to grow at the time. Cliff’s group had been expelled from the Fourth International in 1950 for its cowardly capitulation to its “own” bourgeoisie and refusal to defend the Soviet Union, North Korea and China during the Korean War. Such craven anti-Sovietism was repellent to CP members radicalized over the Hungarian events.

As a member of Healy’s organization, Fryer wrote impressively in defense of Trotskyism, editing the weekly *Newsletter* and contributing to the journal *Labour Review*. His 1957 article “Lenin as Philosopher” is a coherent explanation of dialectical materialism that we continue to use today as an educational tool for our own party and youth comrades. As Fryer wrote, dialectical materialism “is above all else a tool in the hands of the working class for use in refashioning society, and whoever blunts the keen edge of this tool, no matter how slightly, is



doing a disservice to the working-class movement” (*Labour Review*, September-October 1957).

Criminally, the valuable acquisition of former Stalinist cadres by the Trotskyist movement was squandered by the Healy outfit. The founding cadres of the Spartacist tendency were impressed from a distance by the SLL’s nominal orthodoxy, represented by its 1961 document *The World Prospect for Socialism*, and Marxist propaganda, but were unaware of Healy’s methods and his adaptation to the Labour Party “lefts” (see “Spartacist and the Healyites,” *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 36-37, Winter 1985-86). The orthodoxy of the SLL, which later declared itself the Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP), was increasingly belied by opportunist practice. In the mid 1960s, the Healyites embraced both the Maoist “Cultural Revolution”—an unusually degrading and violent falling-out between sections of the Chinese Stalinist bureaucracy—and the totally classless

concept of an “Arab Revolution.”

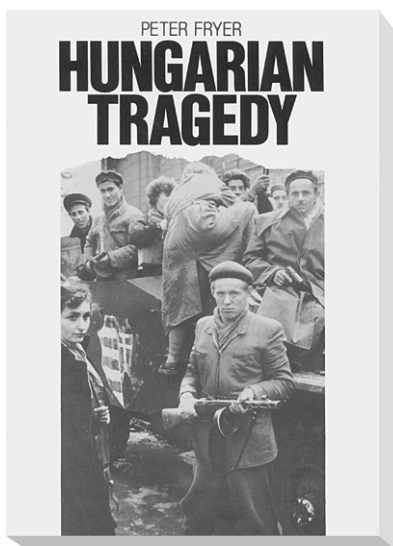
The Healyites’ political banditry would find full flower in, among other things, their conciliation of oil-rich Arab despots, including sordid financial dealings, the hailing in their press of the 1979 execution of 21 Iraqi Communists by the Ba’athist regime, and right-wing Labourite, anti-Soviet provocations against British miners’ leader Arthur Scargill on the eve of the miners’ heroic 1984-85 strike. All this was overseen by a brutal internal regime. This situation led to the spectacular implosion of the WRP in 1985. We wrote in “Healyism Implodes” (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 36-37, Winter 1985-86):

“Healy is a political bandit, and the organization he built is an outfit of cynical charlatans at the top. If that were all, we would simply be enjoying the excruciating problems of the WRP leaders, who have it coming. But there is a tragic side to all this: the damage that has been done over the years to thousands of sincere young people who joined the WRP because they hated capitalism and wanted to take part in the fight for socialist revolution. The WRP’s posture of ‘Trotskyism,’ utterly fraudulent though it is, is not without meaning for many members. And Healy/Banda’s organization has frequently done a competent job in exposing the reformist scum and centrist confusionists who people the British left; hence, the WRP is widely seen as the ‘hard Trotskyists,’ the alternative to class-collaborationist betrayal. Now the members in the main feel profoundly betrayed, as indeed they have been. We urge them not to turn away in shock and despair from the ideals of socialism, but instead to seek to understand what has happened.”

Peter Fryer’s departure from the Healy group predated the upheaval in the WRP by over 25 years. Fryer initially walked out amid internal turmoil accompanying Healy’s launch of the SLL in February 1959. While not signalling an end to Healy’s opportunist adaptation to the Labour “lefts,” the SLL’s founding was an abrupt departure from the Healy group’s years-long “deep entry” work in the Labour Party. Fryer was disgusted by the bullying of members and lack of political debate on this “turn.” His “Open Letter to Members of the Socialist Labour League and Other Marxists” (19 September 1959) expressed anger “that a turn of this magnitude should have been carried through without a national conference and without the production and discussion of documents.”

Fryer wrote to us in a 17 December 1985 letter, responding to our “Healyism

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Peter Fryer’s 1956 eyewitness account of Hungarian Revolution.

formed based on the existing workers councils, not through elections to a new parliament. The Budapest Parliament of Workers Councils adopted as its first programmatic principles that “the factory belongs to the workers” and that “the supreme controlling body of the factory is the Workers’ Council” (see Lomax, *Hungary 1956*). While that statement did not express the Marxist program for central economic planning combined with genuine soviet democracy, it was nevertheless incompatible with a capitalist order and bourgeois parliamentarism.

On the available evidence, the Hungarian workers looked toward an idealized version of Titoist Yugoslavia. Tito, however, along with Mao Zedong, supported the crushing of the 1956 Revolution. Tito and Mao were quite aware of the ramifications for their own bureaucratic regimes if the Hungarian workers succeeded in taking and securing political power. Nagy had taken refuge in the Yugoslav Embassy in Budapest on November 4. But despite an agreement for safe passage out, Nagy was arrested by Soviet forces later that month. He was eventually handed over to the Hungarian Stalinist regime under János Kádár, which executed Nagy as well as Maleter and other leaders of the revolution in 1958.

The repression directed at the workers, however, was relatively mild. The Kádár

General Pal Maleter, at right, joined insurgent Hungarian workers.



government announced in early November that it “will not tolerate the persecution of workers on any pretext, for having taken part in recent events.” But Kádár was not in control of events, and Soviet troops conducted searches for those suspected of having participated in the uprising. For the most part, the Kádár regime attempted to piece off the population by raising consumption levels under a policy that came to be known as “goulash communism.”

What was lacking above all in the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 was a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party rooted in the working class. Such a party would have had the task of winning the workers

to a program of transforming the soviets from being organs of insurrection to becoming the sole basis for political power in the workers state. It would have fought to extend the struggle for political revolution to neighboring East European countries and crucially to the Soviet Union, linking these efforts with the fight for socialist revolution in the capitalist countries. This would have required politically combating the views of Maleter, Kopacsi and others whose outlook at the time remained within the framework of Stalinist nationalism and “peaceful coexistence” with the imperialist world order.

Had even a small Trotskyist propa-

ganda group been able to intervene in this situation, it could have rapidly won an initial base among the tens of thousands of workers and radical intellectuals who saw themselves as authentic communists. These lessons have profound significance for the remaining deformed workers states, in particular China, which experienced an incipient political revolution in May-June 1989 and, more recently, a massive growth in defensive struggles by both workers and peasants.

What Leon Trotsky foresaw in outlining the course that a political revolution would take in the Soviet degenerated workers state was amply confirmed by the 1956 events in Hungary:

“When the proletariat springs into action, the Stalinist apparatus will remain suspended in midair. Should it still attempt to resist, it will then be necessary to apply against it not the measures of civil war but rather the measures of a police character....

“A real civil war could develop not between the Stalinist bureaucracy and the resurgent proletariat but between the proletariat and the active forces of the counterrevolution.... The victory of the revolutionary camp, in any case, is conceivable only under the leadership of a proletarian party, which would naturally be raised to power by victory over the counterrevolution.”

—“The Class Nature of the Soviet State” (October 1933)

[TO BE CONTINUED]

Death Penalty...

(continued from page 1)

legal murder that reinforces the brutalization of society in all respects. As Marxists, we stand for the abolition of the death penalty everywhere on principle—for the guilty as well as the innocent. We do not accord the state the right to determine who lives and who dies.

Racist Legal Lynchings

The death penalty stands at the pinnacle of the capitalist state’s arsenal of repression—an apparatus made up of the army, cops, courts and prisons that protects the property, profits and class rule of the capitalist class. In addition to the thousands of poor and working people who have died at the hands of the state, the capitalist rulers have repeatedly staged exemplary executions of their perceived opponents for the sheer purpose of instilling terror—from the Haymarket martyrs in 1887 to Sacco and Vanzetti in 1927 and the Rosenbergs in 1953. In the capitalist rulers’ sights today is death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, a Black Panther Party spokesman in his youth, later a MOVE supporter and award-winning journalist, who was framed up and convicted of a crime he did not commit and sentenced to die explicitly for his political beliefs. The forces of racist “law and order” represented by both the Democratic and Republican parties want to see Mumia dead because they see in him the spectre of black revolution, a voice of defiant opposition to the oppression of black people that is a cornerstone of American capitalism. The fight to save Mumia and free him from prison hell must be a key focus of the struggle to abolish the racist death penalty.

In the U.S., it is overwhelmingly black people, Latinos and the poor that the courts put on death row. In 1987, when black Georgian Warren McCleskey challenged his death sentence by presenting indisputable facts of the racist application of capital punishment, the Supreme Court declared such bias an “inevitable part of our criminal justice system.” In rejecting McCleskey’s appeal, the Court acknowledged that his premise “throws into serious question the principles that underlie our entire criminal justice system.”

Today, black people make up almost 42 percent of the death row population—three times more than their representation in the population. Legal lynchings are supplemented by the rampant killings of ghetto and barrio youth on the street by cops who act as judge, jury and executioner. Last week, seven New Orleans cops were charged with murder or attempted murder for having killed two people and wounding four others attempting to flee the ravages of Hurricane Katrina, while in New York City anger continues to boil over the police killing of Sean Bell in November.

The origins of capital punishment in the U.S. are rooted in the Southern slave system. The numerous “crimes” for which the Slave Codes prescribed torture and death included rebellion and attempted rebellion, hitting a white person in self-defense or any other act deemed “insolent” or a challenge to the slaveholders.



Jeff Paterson

Nearly 1,000 people, including rapper Snoop Dog, rallied outside San Quentin prison in November 2005 to stop execution of Stanley Tookie Williams.

The Civil War smashed the slave system, but, with the betrayal of Radical Reconstruction by the Northern capitalists, a new system of racist exploitation was established through repression of the freedmen’s fight for land, education and civil rights. A rigid system of legally enforced segregation called Jim Crow was imposed and maintained by KKK terror and police-state suppression of black people. At the heart of Jim Crow was lynch-law terror. In the 1890s, black people were lynched at a rate of over one every other day. By the 1930s, the state carried out executions at a rate of one every other day. The extralegal terror of the KKK was largely supplanted by the state’s legal lynching. Between 1930 and 1967, black people composed more than two-thirds of those executed nationally.

In 1967, the death penalty was put on hold by the capitalist rulers, who faced tumultuous civil rights struggles and burgeoning anti-Vietnam War protests. U.S. imperialism also sought to present a more liberal image for American “democracy” in the world arena, where it competed for influence with the Soviet Union. In 1972, the Supreme Court ruled that the death penalty was “wanton and freakish” and ordered states to rewrite their laws. But by 1976 the protest marches had stopped and busing for school integration was defeated by a combination of racist mobs in the streets and liberals in Congress. A vicious racist backlash against the minimal gains of the civil rights movement was unleashed. The racist “war on crime” that took off in the early 1970s was augmented in the 1980s with the “war on drugs,” leading to mass black incarceration. In 1976, the Supreme Court restarted the machinery of legal murder, which has taken more than 1,000 lives since.

As industry was being decimated in the 1970s and 1980s, the prison population grew by a million—one place for every job lost on the assembly line. From 1995 to 2005, more than three million industrial jobs were eliminated. Today, with 2.2 million people in prison or jail, the U.S. has 25 percent of the world’s prison population—and 60 percent of it is black or Latino. Some 12 percent of black men aged 25 to 29 years old are behind bars.

With no jobs to offer, the racist rulers have increasingly relegated black people to be imprisoned, legally lynched or used as fodder in U.S. imperialism’s dirty, predatory wars.

Fight Capitalist Repression!

A recent poll by the Death Penalty Information Center showed that when presented with the choice of life imprisonment without parole, support for capital punishment dropped to 48 percent. This “alternative” has long been sought by many death penalty abolitionists and liberals who preach that the state’s repressive apparatus can run more efficiently and with better public relations without executions. We Marxists do not offer advice on how to administer the capitalist state. We are opposed to the bour-

Swift...

(continued from page 12)

that includes the UFCW, declared in a 15 December statement: “We are hopeful that the new Congress and President Bush will enact a comprehensive immigration solution.”

The “solution” Burger points to is the “compromise” immigration bill, supported by liberal Democratic Senator Ted Kennedy and Republican Senator John McCain, that would further militarize the border, set up new detention centers and mobilize thousands more cops to drive out “illegal” immigrants. It would set up a “guest worker” program—i.e., indentured servitude—for millions of immigrants while outlining a “path to citizenship” for those few who can put up thousands of dollars and prove they have lived in the U.S. for many years. The proposed legislation reflects the interests of employers who rely on low-wage immigrant labor. And in fact, the Swift raid was orchestrated by Chertoff largely to help make the case for just this immigration “reform,” which stalled in Congress last summer.

Anti-immigrant attacks pose a threat to the rights of the entire population. The pretext for the Swift raids—supposed “identity theft” by immigrants—feeds into plans to impose “real ID” national identification cards, expand databases on the activities of the population and offer FBI files to local police forces. The Bush administration has allocated hundreds of

geoisie’s entire machinery of repression. This includes the vast enhancement of repressive tools adopted under the pretext of the “war on terror.”

As Marxists, our attitude toward crime and punishment is that we are against it. Marxists aim to ultimately rid the world of crime and law by eliminating the system of capitalist imperialism through world proletarian revolution. But even before this has been achieved, we have no use for retributive punishment, which is fundamentally a religious conception of social relations. Our attitude toward proponents of “life without parole” was expressed by Karl Marx in *The Holy Family* (1844). Polemicizing against the German “Critical critics,” Marx condemned those who quarrel with the world of law “not over ‘punishment’ itself, but over the *kinds* and *methods* of punishment.” As to retributive physical justice, Marx wrote:

“This is the Christian means—plucking out the eye if it offends or cutting off the hand if it offends, in a word killing the body if the body gives offense; for the eye the hand the body are really only superfluous sinful appendages of man. Mass-type jurisprudence, too, in agreement here with the Critical, sees in the *laming* and paralyzing of human strength the antidote to the objectionable manifestations of that strength.”

Following the first U.S. execution since 1967, we wrote in “State Butchers Gilmore” (WV No. 141, 21 January 1977):

“The reinstitution of the death penalty is not just another legal argument lost before an increasingly reactionary Supreme Court. It is one among many proofs of the failure of capitalism in its death agony to fulfill its promise of a decent life.... Only the victorious proletarian revolution that overthrows the bourgeois state will abolish the death penalty for good and smash the prisons, in the course of rooting out the whole vicious cycle of crime, punishment and repression caused by capitalism.” ■

millions of dollars to build detention centers capable of holding thousands of immigrants and others the state deems “undesirable.” Meanwhile, the obscenely rich capitalists continue to slash wages, gut pensions, take away health benefits and impose grueling, unsafe work conditions.

The need to organize immigrant workers requires fighting against the class collaborationism of the labor tops, who support the capitalist profit system and identify with the “national interests” of U.S. imperialism. The Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and the UFCW, today the largest union of workers in private industry, have recently achieved some modest organizing successes. In November, for example, a month-long strike in Houston by mainly immigrant SEIU janitors won the first union contract for 5,300 workers. But at the same time, only some 21 percent of meatpackers are unionized today compared to 46 percent in 1980. It will take hard class struggle to reverse the decades of attacks on labor.

Organizing the unorganized into the unions with full rights and protections will require an uncompromising fight for the class independence of the proletariat from the state agencies and political representatives of the capitalist exploiters. To defeat the capitalists’ divide-and-rule tactics requires a class-struggle leadership of the unions that will fight every manifestation of prejudice and oppression—“an injury to one is an injury to all.” Such a leadership would serve the struggle to build a workers party that fights for a workers government. ■

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Hussein...

(continued from page 1)

Iraq is Sunday,” referring to the day that Shi’ites begin celebrating. The masked executioners further tormented Hussein as he tried to pray by calling out the name “Moktada, Moktada, Moktada,” referring to Shi’ite militia leader Moktada al-Sadr. With Iraq spiraling deeper into civil war between Shi’ite and Sunni Arabs, more than 70 people were killed in separate car bombings in predominantly Shi’ite areas in the hours after Hussein’s hanging.

With ghoulish glee, CNN and other American television networks have been repeatedly playing video images released by the Iraqi government showing Saddam

Hussein being led to the gallows, and today’s *New York Times*, the U.S. rulers’ “newspaper of record,” plastered four separate images of the execution on its front page. The whole obscene march toward Hussein’s execution, an all-but-inevitable outcome of his seizure by U.S. forces three years ago, had the markings of a lynch mob. As Marxists, we are opposed on principle to the barbaric death penalty, everywhere.

The three years that have passed since Hussein’s arrest have only underlined what we wrote in “Imperialists Gloat over Capture of Former Henchman Saddam Hussein” (WV No. 816, 26 December 2003):

“The architects of imperialist war and mass murder in the White House and Pentagon and 10 Downing Street hail the

capture of Saddam Hussein as a great day for ‘world peace’ and ‘justice’ while they intensify their brutal war against the Iraqi people. Saddam Hussein was Washington’s bloody bastard. He was Washington’s close ally and client while he massacred tens of thousands of Kurdish people. He was a mainstay of U.S. imperialist policy in the Near East while he arrested, tortured and executed thousands of Iraqi Communists, workers’ leaders, leftists, ethnic minorities and religious opponents, and waged eight years of bloody war with predominantly Shi’ite Iran. But when Hussein slipped his leash and made a grab for Kuwait in 1990, this former ally and flunkie for U.S. imperialism in the Near East became Washington’s all-purpose bogeyman.

“Now the main enemy of the world’s working people, the U.S. imperialist state—which killed hundreds of thousands of Japanese in the atomic bombing of

Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which butchered over three million Koreans, which burned the flesh off Vietnamese villagers with napalm, which wreaked destruction in the former Yugoslavia in the 1999 war in the Balkans—just had its Iraqi stooges set up a tribunal which will likely try Saddam Hussein. This shameless hypocrisy should steel the resolve of all genuine fighters for social justice to sweep away the whole rotting system of imperialist capitalism and its lackeys and to create societies where those who labor rule. When workers tribunals of a victorious socialist revolution in the United States try America’s capitalist exploiters for their crimes against the oppressed masses of the world, black America, labor, immigrants and the poor, and when Iraqi Kurds, leftists and workers rip the oil wealth out of the hands of the military occupiers and judge them and their former henchmen, *then* we can start talking about justice.”■

Free Mumia...

(continued from page 5)

every day of a seven-year sentence for the “crime” of being the sole adult survivor.

In 1986, the PDC began a program in the tradition of the ILD of providing monthly stipends to class-war prisoners as an act of solidarity. Among the first class-war prisoners we gave stipends to were Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt), imprisoned British miners and MOVE prisoners. In 1989, the Partisan Defense Committee launched a campaign to raise funds for the civilian victims in Jalalabad, Afghanistan, who, after Soviet troops were criminally withdrawn, were left to face the revenge of the CIA-backed Islamic fundamentalist *mujahedin*. Each of these campaigns is a separate story, in which the PDC applied our international class-struggle defense policies to the crucial struggles of workers and the oppressed, in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League.

Ramona Africa and other MOVE prisoners asked us to take up Mumia’s case. The PDC campaign for Mumia, begun in 1988, was coupled with the fight to abolish the racist death penalty. From the very beginning, the PDC and the Spartacist League have fought to win broader forces to the defense of Mumia and in opposi-

tion to the racist death penalty, while educating others on the political and racist basis of the frame-up and stressing the need for a class-struggle defense program to free Mumia. And this means we place no reliance on the state or on bourgeois politicians, whether they are black or white, Democratic, Republican or Green. We know that justice in the capitalist courts means “just us,” for just the capitalists.

By 1989 the PDC had embarked on a worldwide campaign of publicity and protest to bring Mumia’s case to the attention of larger forces—civil rights organizations, anti-death penalty gatherings, other political organizations and leftist groups. But our key mobilization efforts were directed toward trade-union organizations, and this was based on the understanding that labor is strategic for class-struggle defense. It is the working class that has the social power that can bring production, transportation and communications to a halt. Labor has the real power to change society.

The same capitalist state that is responsible for the savage occupation of Iraq and the human disaster on the Gulf Coast is also attempting to kill Mumia. By taking up such struggles, workers are fighting not just for themselves as workers pitted against individual employers, but on behalf of the entirety of the working class, which has the power and interest to



WV Photo

April 1989: Spartacist/PDC contingent at Washington, D.C., abortion rights demonstration.

overturn the rule of capital. The fight for Mumia is the fight for black liberation, for the liberation of us all, part of the struggle for socialist revolution. What’s necessary is to bring to the working class the consciousness that the way out of this whole system of capitalist injustice is the struggle for socialist revolution. This requires the instrumentality of a Leninist

party that fights as a tribune of the people. The fight for Mumia’s freedom, if successful, would not just be a true victory for Mumia but would galvanize and inspire the working masses and the oppressed around the globe.

We have been taking Mumia’s case to unions in every city around the world where we have fraternal defense organizations. Hundreds of trade unions and unionists have signed on to our statement demanding that Mumia be freed now, that he is innocent, and that the testimony of Arnold Beverly helps prove this [see “We Demand the Immediate Freedom of Mumia Abu-Jamal, an Innocent Man,” WV No. 880, 10 November 2006]. However, this is just a step in the right direction.

We are a tiny organization, and Mumia needs the support of the masses. Everyone here must take this case back to their unions, to their campuses, to their community groups. An international mobilization based on the power of labor, from South Africa to Europe to the U.S., helped stay the executioner’s hand when Mumia was ten days from execution in 1995. Now we need to mobilize again to exert that type of pressure which will impact this appeals court—a mass movement, based on labor and its allies demanding: Free Mumia now! Free Mumia now! Free Mumia now!■

Peter Fryer...

(continued from page 9)

Implodes” issue of *Spartacist*, that “after two and a half years’ close daily work with Healy, I had reached the conclusion that he was a gangster and that I could no longer continue to associate with him.” Characteristically modest, Fryer also noted:

“No doubt it would have been better to stay in and fight. But I had been exhausted by the bitter struggle in the Communist Party—my expulsion and unsuccessful appeal—and the gruelling work of building *The Newsletter* and the SLL. I simply didn’t have the stomach, or the energy, or the appetite for a further bitter fight against a further set of cynical and unscrupulous opponents. And, I

frankly admit, I was more than a little afraid of Healy whose favourite method with dissenters was, in those days, a knock on the door by him and his thugs at two o’clock in the morning.”

—“What Happened to Peter Fryer,” *Spartacist* (English-language edition) No. 38-39, Summer 1986

After the WRP’s implosion, Fryer wrote a column for *Workers Press*, the newspaper of Cliff Slaughter’s group, which was a WRP offshoot that continued to uphold the anti-Sovietism that marked Healy’s latter period. But the Peter Fryer we honor, in contrast, had written powerfully in advocating the Trotskyist position of *unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union*. An article he wrote on the 40th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution declared:

“The Soviet Union remains a working-class conquest despite the temporary exclusion of the working class from the seats of power. Forty years ago the chain of capitalism was snapped; the distortions and deformations that have attended the building of a socialist economy are unfinished business for the workers to settle; and in settling this overdue account they need neither help nor advice from the imperialists. From the proletariat of the rest of the world, however, they need the utmost fraternal help and understanding. The principle of international working-class solidarity imposes on us in 1957, no less than in 1917, the pre-eminent duty of defence of the Soviet Union and of its planned economy.”

—*The Newsletter*, 7 November 1957

In addition to the literary contributions to Marxism noted above, Fryer leaves a rich legacy of other writings. His best-known book is *Staying Power* (1984), a history of black people in Britain. Other works unmasked bourgeois hypocrisy about sex, such as *Mrs. Grundy*, *Studies in English Prudery* (1963) and *Private Case—Public Scandal* (1966), an indict-

ment of the British Library for keeping its collection of erotic publications secret. Fryer’s 1993 pamphlet *Lucid, Vigorous and Brief: Advice to New Writers* is immensely valuable for aspiring Marxist journalists. Peter Fryer was also an accomplished jazz pianist.

We will miss Peter Fryer and will not forget his powerful words in *Hungarian Tragedy*:

“We joined the party to help emancipate mankind, not only from exploitation, but from its concomitant as long as class society exists: ignorance. We joined be-

cause we wanted to help bring the light of science and humanism into the darkness of men’s minds, to end forever the deception of our fellow men by the obscurantist ‘golden lies’ and ideological illusions with which class society veils its true nature and its crippling and stunting of people. We joined because we wanted to contribute to the enlightenment of our fellow-men, to bring them the richest and most precious of all gifts: the truth. The truth about human society and their place in it and what they themselves can do, together, to leap from the kingdom of necessity into the kingdom of freedom.”■

CORRECTION

In “Imperialist Occupation: Hell for Iraq” (WV No. 882, 8 December 2006), we described a series of coordinated attacks in Baghdad that claimed the lives of some 215 Shi’ites as carried out “presumably by Sunni militia forces” and also wrote that “the result of the occupation has been an unfolding civil war between Sunni militias and Shi’ite forces, many of them death squads working directly from within the U.S.-backed puppet government.” However, it is the Shi’ites who are openly organized into militias such as Moktada al-Sadr’s Mahdi Army and the Badr Organization, while there are also both Sunni and Shi’ite death squads, many of the latter operating directly out of the police as well as the Iraqi military.

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Down With Feds' Raids at Swift Meatpacking!

On December 12, federal agents dressed in SWAT uniforms and brandishing military weaponry charged simultaneously into six Swift & Co. meatpacking plants nationwide. Once inside, they separated employees by skin color, targeting immigrants, and dragged off 1,282 workers in chains and handcuffs. When word of the raids spread, family members and friends gathered to protest outside several of the plants, chanting and shouting at the *migra* cops as they herded workers onto buses with blacked-out windows. Many were immediately deported, while hundreds of others remain in remote jails and detention centers.

As part of a series of ongoing anti-immigrant workplace raids, this massive sweep at plants in Iowa, Texas, Colorado, Minnesota, Utah and Nebraska was the largest ever at a single company. The raids, carried out by Homeland Security's Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), were reminiscent of the roundup of thousands of Arab and Muslim immigrants in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks. The day after the Swift roundup, Homeland Security chief Michael Chertoff pledged more raids in the future. In fact, there have been a number of well-publicized *la migra* raids since the spring in an attempt to terrorize and intimidate immigrant workers who turned out in mass numbers to protest proposed draconian anti-immigrant legislation. Reporting on recent raids at upstate New York dairies and farms, a *New York Times* (24 December 2006) article was headlined: "Immigrants Go From Farms to Jails, and a Climate of Fear Settles In."

In a December 28 letter to Chertoff protesting the Swift raid, the PDC stated:

"Your threats to carry out more such raids, part of the government's escalating campaign against immigrants as well as the evisceration of civil liberties in the name of the 'war on terror,' are an open attack on the labor movement and all working people.

"We demand freedom now for all those detained and the dropping of all charges for those arrested. We further demand: Stop the raids! No deportations! All the detained and deported Swift workers must immediately be allowed to return to their jobs, families and communities!"

The United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), which represents workers at five of the six Swift plants, de-



Terry/Rocky Mountain News

December 12: Arrested workers' family members confront Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents after immigration raid at Swift plant in Greeley, Colorado.

Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants!

nounced the raids as "an effort designed to terrorize the workforce" and has sought to assist the workers and families whose lives have been devastated. What the UFCW leaders should have done was to **immediately shut down all union meatpacking plants in the country**. The potential to do that was shown last May Day when workers idled many of the Swift plants by joining the nationwide protests for immigrant rights.

Instead, the UFCW tops *accept* the government's drive against "illegal" immigrants, complaining only about its methods. While the UFCW bureaucracy filed lawsuits challenging the legality of the Swift roundup, a statement it presented to a December 20 Congressional hearing argued that ICE agents could have carried out the raids the way they did it at a Swift facility in Kentucky the previous month, when they "calmly" whisked away four workers! This is sheer treachery. The unions are supposed to *defend* the workers! Labor must use its power to fight deportations and organize immigrant workers, demanding full citizenship rights for *everyone* who makes it into this country.

The UFCW statement also declared the union tops' "support to law enforcement doing its job" and noted the many "law enforcement officers" in the UFCW nationwide. The job of the cops and all "law enforcement officers" is to terrorize immigrants, enforce racist "law and order" in the ghettos and barrios and smash strikes. Cops, prison guards and security guards have no place in the labor movement!

As part of its crackdown on immigrants, Washington has been pushing employers to fire workers whose Social Security numbers do not match government records. The government's "no

match" letters to employers are an open invitation to get rid of union activists and other "troublemakers." The uniform manufacturer Cintas, where UNITE HERE has been on an organizing campaign, has fired hundreds of "no match" workers. The bosses at Smithfield meatpacking tried to do the same at a plant in Tar Heel, North Carolina, where the UFCW has been waging a bitter organizing campaign for a decade. Over a thousand workers—mainly Latino immigrants but including black and white workers—walked off the job in protest in November. Production was crippled, forcing the company to temporarily rescind the firings (see "Smithfield Walkout Saves Immigrants' Jobs," WV No. 881, 24 November 2006). However, the company is still threatening to fire up to 500 workers if they cannot soon clear up their papers.

It will take the fighting unity of Latino, black and white workers against the bosses and their government to defeat the anti-immigrant, anti-union attacks. But this necessity runs straight up against the pro-capitalist program of the labor bureaucracy, which sees allies in the bourgeois politicians, especially the Democrats, the government and the courts. In condemning the raids at Swift, Anna Burger, one of the leaders of the AFL-CIO split-off Change to Win labor federation

continued on page 10



Immigration agents search Swift worker seized in December 12 raid in Greeley.