

## For Unconditional Military Defense of China!

# Imperialists Stung by Chinese Weapons Test

On January 11, a Chinese missile smashed to bits an aging Chinese weather satellite more than 500 miles above the country's Xichang space facility. The exercise marked a significant advance in the ability of the Chinese deformed workers state to defend itself against a nuclear first strike by U.S. imperialism. The threat of such an attack has grown with Washington's plans to deploy a "missile defense system" in the Asian Pacific, which would rely on satellite technology.

The U.S., British and Japanese governments raised a hue and cry over the successful test. With consummate chutzpah, a spokesman for Bush's National Security Council intoned: "China's development and testing of such weapons is inconsistent with the spirit of cooperation that both countries aspire to in the civil space area." The U.S. rulers' overwhelming military might, far exceeding that of their imperialist rivals, not to mention China, includes extensive militarization of space. In October, the administration released a new "National Space Policy" (signed by Bush two months earlier) declaring Washington's unilateral right to "deny, if necessary, adversaries the use of space capabilities hostile to U.S. national interests." In fact, this policy is principally aimed at preventing China from developing anti-satellite weapons.

Behind the imperialist hype about mythical Chinese "aggression" lies a genuine military problem. The U.S. war machine has become heavily reliant on a vast network of satellites for intelligence, communications, navigation and weapons targeting. The U.S. owns or operates more than half of the 845 currently active commercial and military satellites in orbit. Dozens operate in low orbits similar to that of the destroyed Chinese Fengyun 1C satellite. According to *Aviation Week and Space Technology* (21 January), which broke the story of the anti-satellite test, the Chinese military can now "credibly threaten imaging reconnaissance and other satellites operated by the U.S., Japan, Russia, Israel and Europe." Moreover, according to a U.S. official, China recently "painted" U.S. satellites with a ground-based laser, a potentially disabling capability. At considerably higher orbits are the Pentagon's vital network of Global Positioning System satellites and other spacecraft.

The International Communist League,

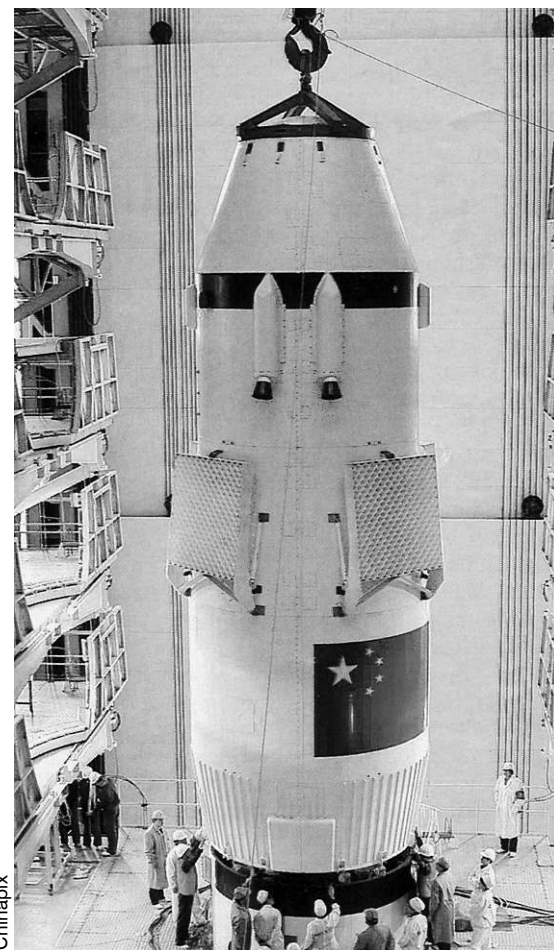
of which the Spartacist League/U.S. is a section, stands for the unconditional military defense of China and the other bureaucratically deformed workers states, North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba, against imperialist attack and internal counter-revolution. We support China and North Korea's development of nuclear weapons and the means to deliver them as essential to the defense of those workers states. The Chinese nuclear force, on the order of 200 warheads with an estimated 20 deployed ICBMs capable of reaching the U.S., acts as a deterrent against the U.S. mass murderers who reduced Nagasaki and Hiroshima to irradiated rubble in 1945.

China has been a target of the U.S. nuclear arsenal, currently consisting of some 10,000 warheads, since the Korean War. For decades, the Soviet Union's nuclear force forestalled the imperialists from unleashing their deadly nukes. Since the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state in 1991-92, Washington has shifted much of its strategic forces to target China, the most powerful of the remaining countries in which capitalism has been overthrown. The Pentagon's space forces are designed to ensure its first-strike capability by suppressing any counterstrike.

It is notable that the recent Chinese and North Korean weapons tests were carried out with the U.S. bogged down in its murderous occupation of Iraq. Indeed, the Democratic Party's principal objection to Bush's Iraq policy is that it diverts resources away from more strategically important targets like China.

At the same time, the U.S. has pursued

China's technological development is crucial for its military defense. Right: Shenzhou spaceship, part of manned space program. Below: Army parade in Tiananmen Square.



Chinapix



DPA

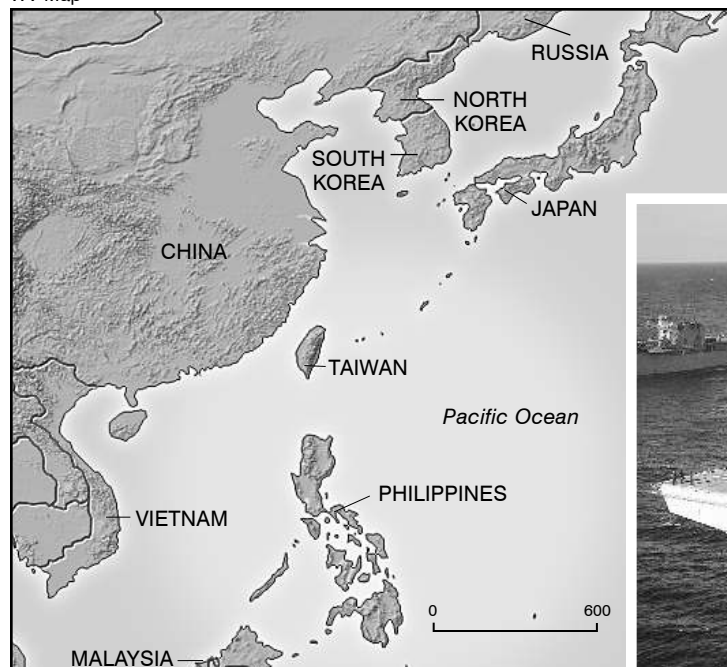
the encirclement of China under cover of fighting "terrorism." Treacherously, Beijing has embraced the imperialists' "war on terror" in the interest of its economic relationship with the U.S. The U.S. now has military installations in Central Asia on China's western flank and has enhanced its military presence in the Philippines. The Bush administration last year sealed a nuclear pact with India and in 2005 resumed open military rela-

tions with Indonesia. In Australia, long instrumental as a junior imperialist partner to the Pentagon's global operations, huge U.S. bases are under construction at Bradshaw and Yampi Sound.

### China in Imperialists' Cross Hairs

The 1949 Chinese Revolution overthrew capitalist/landlord rule and ripped  
*continued on page 5*

WV Map



U.S. amphibious assault ship, part of American-led naval exercise near Hawaii, July 2006. U.S. military expansion in Pacific region threatens China.

U.S. Navy



# On Military vs. Political Support

25 November 2006

We read a lot in the pages of WV about supporting groups “militarily but not politically.” If military action is just the continuation of politics, as Mao used to say, how can such a separation be made, except in one’s own mind? I do not feel comfortable supporting the Shia’te militias even if their actions help defeat the US imperialists. I am not interested in restoring the veil!

This separation into “military” and “political” is what we call, in general semantics, “elementalism” and the practical consequence of it is to distort reality.viz. into a false picture. The jihad-ists are not going to thank us for our support—they are going to kill us, if they can, and Kim Jung Il will throw us into prison. Pretty selfless of us, don’t you think, to support all these people who want to do us harm? Jesus would be proud!

Comradely,  
C.O.

WV replies:

C.O.’s letter, at bottom, embraces “democratic” imperialism as superior to those states where capitalism has been overthrown, in this case the deformed workers state of North Korea under Kim Jong Il. Our unconditional military defense of the North Korean workers state is nothing other, nothing less than the duty of Trotskyists to defend the conquests of the proletariat internationally against imperialism, as is our call for proletarian political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucratic castes sitting atop such states which undermine their defense.

Pointing to the bureaucratic Stalinist regimes and the proletariat’s lack of *political* power in these states, which nonetheless rest on proletarian property forms, as a pretext to renege on *military* defense of these states against imperialism and internal counterrevolution is nothing new in the history of the workers movement. Nor is that fact that those who

adopt such a position inevitably find themselves, as C.O. does, taking a “third camp” position that objectively puts them in a bloc with their “own” bourgeoisie.

Thus, C.O. expresses “discomfort” over our forthright and elementary military defense of those forces fighting the U.S. occupiers in Iraq, a neocolonial capitalist country. While giving no political support to such forces and making clear our vehement opposition to the communalist, sectarian slaughter taking place on all sides, we also tell the truth: this slaughter was in fact *unleashed and exacerbated by the U.S. invasion and occupation*. Our staunch opposition to U.S. imperialism’s bloody occupation of Iraq requires military defense of those who land blows against the occupiers.

The distinction between political and military support is not, in fact, a difficult concept to grasp if one begins by drawing the *class line*. Take the example of a strike led by a pro-capitalist, bureaucratic union

leadership. Obviously, revolutionaries (not to mention class-conscious workers) support the strike despite political opposition to the union leadership. This becomes *very* concrete on the picket line.

C.O.’s semantic gymnastics cannot obscure the simple fact that C.O. is buying into the retrograde consciousness that we confront today in the aftermath of the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union. A tip off: C.O. omits the fact that it was the imperialists who supported and indeed fueled the growth of Islamic fundamentalism—veil, bride price and all—as an anti-Communist bulwark during Cold War II. This was particularly acute in Afghanistan in the 1980s, where the CIA-backed *mujahedin* were armed to the teeth against the intervention by the Soviet armed forces. Such an omission, along with C.O.’s writing off of the Trotskyist position of unconditional military defense of the deformed workers states, makes clear that C.O. is imbibing of and embellishing the “democratic” credentials of imperialism. Tony Cliff and Max Shachtman would be proud!■

## Letters Policy

*Workers Vanguard* welcomes letters from our readers. Opinions expressed in letters do not necessarily reflect the viewpoint of the WV Editorial Board. We reserve the right to respond to letters either

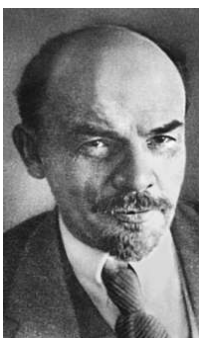
at the time of publication or at a later point. In order to facilitate the printing of letters, which we do not edit, please keep them to 500 words or less. Letters can be sent to *Workers Vanguard*, Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116 or e-mailed to [vanguard@tiac.net](mailto:vanguard@tiac.net).



TROTSKY

### Germany: “Democratic” Imperialism and the Lie of Collective Guilt

*In the wake of World War II, the Fourth International denounced the lie propounded by the capitalist “democracies,” as well as by the Social Democrats and Stalinists, that the German proletariat and the German people as a whole were guilty of the monstrous crimes of Hitlerite fascism. Expressing their solidarity with the working people of ravaged Germany, the Trotskyists reasserted the necessity to sweep away the barbaric capitalist world order through proletarian revolution.*



LENIN

Truth demands that we tell the world proletariat Hitler-fascism was not a pure “German” phenomenon, but the most violent dictatorship of German monopoly capitalism against the German working people.... The guilt of international capitalism in supporting Hitler-fascism is only underlined in retrospect when it plasters the label of “guilty” on the German people in order to squeeze billions in reparations out of them.

Truth further demands that we note the Second World War broke out when Hitler attempted in the interests of German monopoly capitalism to secure a world redivision of markets and spheres of influence. If Hitler, representing belated German imperialism on the world market, appears as the aggressor, the other imperialists cannot thereby be labelled peace-loving democrats, since they simply defended imperialist robberies made at an earlier stage....

We International Communists therefore denounce as the main culprit above all the capitalist system which creates war and fascism. We say to the German proletariat and all other workers that the fall of Hitler-fascism has not assured world peace. Peace can be secured only through the struggle for socialism and the Socialist United States of the World....

In the final analysis the victorious imperialists, as well as the defeated Hitler-fascists and the now hypocritically democratic German bourgeoisie all find their main enemy to be the proletarian revolution. The treatment of the German people on the principle of collective-guilt provides the fascists precisely with new possibilities to fish in the murky waters of nationalism. The danger is all the greater since if the German people are collectively guilty then the Nazis who are the real guilty ones can logically hope to escape punishment.

We warn the German proletariat not to trust this bourgeoisie which now declares itself to be democratic. These new “anti-fascists” in reality are the same capitalist cliques who are already utilizing their connections with the international trusts to reorganize their class front against the German proletariat, and who want to make a pact with the foreign imperialists to load German reparations on the backs of the German people.

—“International Solidarity With the German Proletariat,”  
*Fourth International* (January 1946)

## WORKERS VANGUARD

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The closing date for news in this issue is January 28.

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## CORRECTION

In “Free Jamal Hart!” (WV No. 884, 19 January), we wrote that Hart had “already been locked up for eight years,” framed up in retaliation for his prominent activism to free his father, death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. While Hart was sentenced in 1998, he was in fact initially

arrested by Philadelphia police in October 1996 and then released without bail. When he appeared for his trial on 30 January 1997, he was dragged off to jail by federal marshals and has been imprisoned ever since. He is now beginning his eleventh year of incarceration.

## Spartacist Black History Month Forums

**We Will Not Forget Sean Bell!  
For Labor Protest Against Racist Cop Terror!**

### The Fight for Black Freedom Through Socialist Revolution

**With an Update on the Fight to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal**

**Saturday, February 17, 4:30 p.m.**

322 W. 48th St., 1st Floor  
(between 8th and 9th Ave., take A, C or E to 42nd St.)

**NEW YORK CITY**

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

### Against Capitalists’ Divide-and-Rule!

### The Fight for Immigrant Rights and Black Liberation

**Saturday, February 24, 5 p.m.**

University of Chicago, Reynolds Club  
5706 South University Ave.

**CHICAGO**

For more information: (312) 563-0441  
or e-mail: [chicagospartacist@sbcglobal.net](mailto:chicagospartacist@sbcglobal.net)

### Down With the Racist Purge of the Universities!

### For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

**LOS ANGELES**

**Saturday, February 24, 3 p.m.**  
Immanuel Presbyterian Church\*  
3300 Wilshire Boulevard

(2 blocks west of Vermont/Wilshire Red Line station)

For more information: (213) 380-8239  
or e-mail: [slsycla@sbcglobal.net](mailto:slsycla@sbcglobal.net)

**BAY AREA**

**Sunday, February 25, 2 p.m.**  
UC Berkeley  
213 Wheeler

(near downtown Berkeley BART station)

For more information: (510) 839-0851  
or e-mail: [slbayarea@sbcglobal.net](mailto:slbayarea@sbcglobal.net)

\*The views expressed by the participants are not necessarily those of the Immanuel Presbyterian Church.

# “Anti-Terror” Show Trial

## Defend Muhammad Salah, Abdelhaleem Ashqar!

CHICAGO, January 27—A jury is meeting to decide the verdict in the case of two men tried on trumped-up “racketeering” conspiracy charges of providing support to the Palestinian Islamic fundamentalist outfit Hamas. Muhammad Hamid Khalil Salah, a 53-year-old Palestinian-born U.S. citizen and a businessman in the Chicago suburb of Bridgeview, and Abdelhaleem Hasan Abdelraziq Ashqar, a 48-year-old Virginia resident and former Howard University professor, face up to 30 years in prison. A third man in the alleged conspiracy, Mousa Mohammed Abu Marzook, is currently in Syria. This latest “anti-terror” show trial, which began in mid October, rested on “confessions” Salah signed nearly 14 years ago in an Israeli interrogation center after weeks of torture. We say: **Drop the charges!**

The prosecution’s key witnesses were two of Salah’s “interrogators” from Israel’s Shin Bet secret police, who testified in disguise and under aliases, and Judith Miller, the former *New York Times* reporter who played a central role in retailing the Bush administration’s lies about Iraq possessing “weapons of mass destruction” that served as a pretext for U.S. imperialism’s murderous war and occupation. In 1993, Salah supposedly confessed to secretly acting as a major fundraiser for Hamas’ military operations while working at a used car dealership and doing Muslim charity work in the Chicago area.

Salah was imprisoned for nearly five years in Israel. When he came home to the U.S. in 1997, the Clinton administration froze his assets on the grounds that he



**Muhammad Salah greets family after release from jail in September 2004.**

under oath ever being a Hamas supporter, contradicting the statements extracted by Shin Bet. Ashqar’s “conspiratorial” activities consist of his refusing to testify in grand jury investigations of Hamas supporters in 1998 and 2003. Shortly before the current trial began, the government dropped its charge that Salah had provided “material support to a terrorist organization” by attempting to recruit people for Hamas who would scout terrorist targets in Israel. But the jury did get to hear of another recruiting effort: a 1996 letter from the CIA to Ashqar seeking his services as an overseas “operations officer”!

In an unsuccessful effort to bar the U.S. government from using the “confessions” as evidence, Salah filed an affidavit that described in chilling detail the “on-going nightmare of unmitigated and unbearable terror, threats, physical and psychological abuse” he faced in the Zionist dungeons. Salah recounted that he had gone to the Occupied Territories in January 1993 to distribute money raised for families of deported Palestinian activists. He was arrested at an Israeli checkpoint. Soldiers threw him in the back of a jeep and drove him around for hours, stomping and kicking him and hitting him in the groin with a rifle butt. After being deposited at the Ramallah interrogation center, Salah was stripped, threatened and forced to stay awake for 48 hours. When he asked for a lawyer, his interrogators laughed and told him he was in a military occupation zone “where no law applies—the only law is what we say.”

Salah was chained for hours to a forward-slanted, child-sized chair, causing unbearable back pain. He was then forced into a “dark, freezing, closet-sized cell in which I could not stand upright, sit or lie down.... Most of the time, my head was covered with a filthy, foul-smelling hood reeking of urine, vomit, and other unpleasant substances.” This barbaric abuse continued for 53 days. Ultimately Salah signed several statements, including two in Hebrew, a language he does not speak. Salah was then placed among a group of Palestinian prison informants who physically abused him for days, after which he signed yet another “confession” that he was a Hamas operative.

In an attempt to refute Salah’s accounts of torture, the prosecution called Judith Miller as its star witness. This is the same Miller who, beginning shortly after the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, churned out gar-

bage about nuclear and chemical weapons sites in Iraq; about aluminum tubes intended for production of atomic bombs that were in fact simply rocket components; about Iraq planning to use nerve gas against U.S. troops. Reprising 1950s Cold War-type hysteria, a Miller “exclusive” in the *New York Times* (3 December 2002) was headlined: “C.I.A. Hunts Iraq Tie to Soviet Smallpox.” This purveyor of U.S. war lies about Iraq had years earlier been invited by Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin, her longtime friend, and Shin Bet to witness Salah’s interrogation. The purpose: to plant a story in the *Times* about Hamas and their supposed fundraising cells in the U.S.

Miller included an entire chapter about this incident in her 1996 anti-Islamic screed, *God Has Ninety-Nine Names*. In this book and in her testimony, Miller recounted watching Salah’s interrogation via a television monitor, his statements translated by an Israeli-supplied interpreter. She even provided questions for the interrogation. Miller portrayed the whole thing as a friendly chat, with Salah bantering with his jailers about how much sweetener is in his coffee and calmly describing his role in Hamas’ international monetary and political structure. Six days later, Miller dutifully printed a story in the *Times*, deviously failing to mention her presence at the interrogation and instead attributing the account to notes provided by the Israelis.

In contrast to the tales of Iraq’s WMDs, Israeli torture of Palestinians is well documented, acknowledged by sources as diverse as Amnesty International, rabid Zionist “civil libertarian” Alan Dershowitz, the Israeli Supreme Court and the thousands of prisoners who survived. In 1989 during the first Palestinian *Intifada*, Rabin, then defense minister, ordered the Zionist army to “break the bones” of the Palestinians, including women and children. Miller herself wrote that she initially suspected Salah had been tortured. As Salah’s lawyers demonstrated at a hearing last spring, the specific torture techniques he describes have been shown to be standard Shin Bet methods in the 1990s.

Miller made headlines in 2005 when she was jailed for 85 days for refusing to testify and reveal her government sources before a grand jury looking into the outing of CIA agent Valerie Plame, whose husband, Joseph Wilson, had exposed the administration’s lie that Saddam Hussein’s Iraq tried to import uranium from

Niger. Lewis “Scooter” Libby, former assistant to Dick Cheney, currently faces trial on charges of obstructing justice for lying to a grand jury investigating who revealed Plame’s identity.

Many liberals and some leftist groups defended Miller on the grounds that her jailing was an attack on the democratic rights of the press. But as we stated in “Judith Miller and Bush Disinformation: Big Lies and Imperialist War” (WV No. 856, 14 October 2005), “This is not a case of the press being harassed for exposing government lies—it is, in fact, the polar opposite. The ‘confidential source’ protected by Miller was not some whistle-blower who needs protection from vindictive government higher-ups, but those selfsame higher-ups, the Bush administration.”

Among those who took up Miller’s cause was the centrist Internationalist Group (IG). While noting Miller’s role as “a conduit for official disinformation,” the IG falsely portrayed her jailing as “an ominous attempt to throttle the press” and proclaimed that “class-conscious workers and all defenders of democratic rights should demand that Judith Miller be freed in order to defend their right to know the secrets of the government that oppresses them and the rest of the world” (“Free Judith Miller!” *Internationalist*, Summer 2005). In its solidarity with this shill for the government, the IG turned the question of free speech and the public’s right to be informed totally on its head. Miller played the victim ***precisely to cover up, not reveal***, government secrets and lies.

Marxists are intransigent defenders of democratic rights. For example, we have publicized the case of anarchist journalist Josh Wolf, who has been imprisoned in San Francisco since September for refusing to turn over unedited protest film footage to the state, which wants to use it to prosecute protesters (see “Free Journalist Josh Wolf!” WV No. 882, 8 December 2006). But we view all issues, including questions of democratic rights, from a proletarian class standpoint—the standpoint of the interests of the working class in advancing the fight for socialist revolution. Thus we wrote that Judith Miller’s “right to not divulge her sources is decidedly secondary to the need for the fullest possible exposure of the Bush administration’s lies, which she duly retailed, that served as the pretext for the colonial war of occupation of Iraq. Such exposure aids in further tearing through the ‘national unity’ hysteria whipped up after the September 11 terrorist attacks.”

Today, Judith Miller spreads her disinformation from the witness stand of a federal courtroom to assist a frame-up that threatens to send Salah and Ashqar to prison for decades. It is in the direct interest of the working people, black people and defenders of democratic rights to defend Salah, Ashqar, Jose Padilla and all victims of “anti-terror” repression. The “war on terror,” endorsed by both the Democratic and Republican parties of capital, is a formula for imperialist rampages in Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere and for a massive growth in the government’s repressive powers at home. In the fight against government repression, we look to mobilizing the working class—the only class with both the power and objective interest to sweep away the capitalists’ entire murderous state machinery through socialist revolution. ■



AP

**July 2005: NY Times reporter Judith Miller, mouthpiece for Bush war lies, at D.C. courthouse before being sent to jail on contempt charge.**

was an admitted terrorist. In 2000, he and others accused of being supporters of Hamas were sued by the family of an American student who was shot and killed in the West Bank in 1996, an act for which Hamas took responsibility. In 2004, after the Bush administration launched a slew of legal attacks on Muslim charities, the Feds threw the outrageous racketeering charges against Salah and Ashqar, the latter accused of opening bank accounts for Hamas and linking phone calls between Hamas members.

The trial reveals how the Feds use “racketeering” conspiracy laws to prosecute anyone on whom they cannot otherwise pin criminal activity. The charges include that Salah “obstructed justice” when, during the 2000 lawsuit, he denied

# Anti-China Protectionism: Poison for Workers

The following article is reprinted from Spartacist Canada No. 151 (Winter 2006/2007), newspaper of the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste, Canadian section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

**SPARTACIST**

CANADA

The Canadian capitalists have been looting the working class of this country with a vengeance. Since the early 1990s, the wealth amassed by Canadian banks and corporations has soared, while workers, immigrants, women and the poor have suffered drastic cutbacks in real wages and social services, and homelessness has skyrocketed in all the major cities. Despite occasional upsurges of labour struggle, the trade-union misleaders have capitulated time after time to the bosses' attacks and giveback demands. In Ontario in particular, they have responded to the massive job losses in industry not by using the weapons of class struggle, like strikes, but with Canadian-nationalist protectionism that targets workers abroad—in Japan, Korea and now increasingly in China.

The labour tops' campaign is interlaced with anti-Communist "human rights" rhetoric demanding that the Canadian capitalist rulers take action against China. Their parliamentary allies, the NDP [social-democratic New Democratic Party], took the occasion of Chinese premier Hu Jintao's visit to Canada in September 2005 to demand that then prime minister Paul Martin, whose Liberal minority government the New Democrats were propping up, "drive home Canada's serious concerns with China's record of human rights abuses."

Meanwhile the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) has joined with such openly pro-imperialist organizations as the Falun Dafa religious sect, Canada Tibet Committee and Rights & Democracy, a "non-partisan" outfit set up by the Mulroney Tory government in 1988, to form the Canadian Coalition on Human Rights in China. On October 6, this Coalition issued an open letter to Tory prime minister Stephen Harper criticizing the previous Liberal regime's policy of "quiet diplomacy" with China and urging the Tories to implement a "strengthened approach to the promotion of human rights in China."

Such open anti-China alliances with the racist Canadian state—brutal oppressor of the Native peoples, the Québécois and millions of immigrants, not least from Asia—show the pro-capitalist character of the labour bureaucracy: a thin, privileged layer at the head of the unions whose worldview corresponds to that of the capitalist class, which it seeks to advise on how best to "conduct business." Today both the NDP and the CLC-backed Coalition are getting what they wanted, as the right-wing Harper government lectures the Chinese regime on "human rights" at every opportunity.

Nationalist protectionism has long been the calling card of Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) president Buzz Hargrove, who stridently demands government action against Asian imports. For their part, the leaders of the UNITE HERE garment workers union have joined with the textile bosses in an ongoing campaign to pressure the government to slash imports from China.

We communists are without exception opposed to protectionism in the imperialist countries like the U.S. and Canada. But nor are we partisans of "free trade": we are fully aware that companies which today demand free access to foreign markets do so with the sole purpose of increasing profits. Their mechanism for this is

the superexploitation of cheap, largely unorganized labour abroad and often, concomitantly, access to an increased pool of buyers for goods. This "offloading" is not simply corporate policy but is intrinsic to capitalism.

The unions are the necessary first line of defense against the capitalists' attacks, but promoting national protectionism undermines labour's struggle by poisoning class consciousness and solidarity. Protectionism scapegoats foreign workers for the loss of jobs in North America, while building illusions in the benevolence of our "own" national capitalists.



Reuters

What is necessary is internationalist solidarity with workers abroad and a fight to replace the current Canadian-nationalist labour misleaders with a class-struggle leadership.

## Defend the Gains of the Chinese Revolution!

The union tops' calls for protectionist measures are doubly pernicious when directed against China, a bureaucratically deformed workers state. The fact that capitalist rule was overthrown in China by the 1949 Revolution, leading to the building of a collectivized economy, represents a historic gain for the working class internationally. Despite profound bureaucratic deformations, the Chinese Revolution was of world-historic significance, overthrowing the rule of the imperialist-backed Chinese bourgeoisie and laying the basis for an enormous leap in social progress. A nation that had been ravaged and divided by foreign powers for a century was unified and freed from imperialist subjugation. In a country defined by abject peasant backwardness, the revolution enabled women to advance by magnitudes over their previous status.

Particularly since the destruction of the Soviet Union, the U.S., Canadian and other imperialist powers have had as a central goal the destruction of the Chinese workers state, aiming to restore capitalist rule in order to turn the Chinese mainland into a gigantic sweatshop. They have a two-pronged approach. On the one hand, they aim to undermine the workers state by strengthening internal counterrevolutionary forces, including through capitalist investment. On the other, they are exerting unrelenting military pressure against China. The incursions into Afghanistan and elsewhere in Central Asia by the U.S. and its allies—including Canada—have significantly tightened the military vise around China. The U.S. has also strengthened its military deployment in the Pacific Rim, placing antiballistic missile systems in the region and signing a joint declaration with Japan in defense of capitalist Taiwan.

Just as workers in Canada and the U.S. must defend their unions against the bosses despite the sellout labour leadership, it is the duty of the international working class to *defend China against imperialism and internal counterrevolution*.

The gains of the Chinese Revolution have, however, been undermined throughout by Stalinist misrule. The bureaucracy that rules in China is not a class but a privileged caste that sits atop the workers state. Following the Stalinist dogma of "socialism in one country" and its corollary, "peaceful coexistence," the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) regime, from



China Labour Bulletin

**Workers at BMW plant in China (left). Women workers at Tianwang Textile Factory struck for nearly seven weeks in 2004 after privatization of their plant.**

Mao Zedong up through today, has conciliated imperialism, not least through selling out revolutions in other countries. Since Mao's death, his successors have embarked on a program of "market reforms" whose impact has been deeply contradictory. While penetration by off-shore Chinese and imperialist capital has strengthened internal counterrevolutionary forces, increased trade and investment have also led to a marked increase in development, including through the importation of industrial machinery. (See "China's 'Market Reforms'—A Trotskyist Analysis," *Workers Vanguard* Nos. 874 and 875, 4 August [2006] and 1 September [2006], for an extensive treatment of this question.)

Insofar as it offers up low-wage Chinese workers to large imperialist corporations, the Beijing bureaucracy acts as a labour contractor for the international bourgeoisie. The same Stalinist regime conciliates imperialism at the international level by such acts as voting in the United Nations Security Council to condemn the North Korean deformed workers state's nuclear testing. This is but one example of how CCP rule undermines the system of nationalized property and the defense of the deformed workers state itself. In recent years, Chinese workers and peasants have waged constant battles against the effects of the bureaucracy's "market reforms." A Leninist-Trotskyist party, committed to defending and extending the gains of the 1949 Revolution, must be forged to lead China's powerful working class, at the head of the peasants and urban poor, to sweep away the Stalinist bureaucracy through *proletarian political revolution*.

## The CAW, David Miller and Bombardier

But who are the social-democratic misleaders of the CLC, CAW et al. to howl about the lack of workers' rights in China? For years these labour fakers have let the bosses get away with sweeping attacks on workers' jobs, union rights and

benefits. CAW president Hargrove has long raved against Japanese and Korean cars, and now the CAW tops are warning of the "threat" of cheap imports from China. Yet in Ontario alone, tens of thousands of auto workers are employed in non-union plants, including Japanese-owned Honda and Toyota and Canadian-owned parts plants, notably the union-busting Magna. Hargrove & Co. wage no serious fight to organize these plants. Instead they criminally pit workers in the Japanese-owned factories against the CAW by denouncing the products they make, because they are "foreign"! **Organize the unorganized! The entire auto industry must be unionized!**

The union tops' anti-China protectionism was in full flower this fall over the awarding of a \$700 million subway train manufacturing contract for the Toronto Transit Commission. After Montreal-based Bombardier was given the contract for production at its Thunder Bay, Ontario plant, a furor erupted when Siemens of Germany claimed it could do the work more cheaply, in part by assem-

bling trains in China. While right-wing councillors tried to make political hay against NDP mayor David Miller for awarding the contract to Bombardier as a sole-source supplier, the CAW, which organizes the Thunder Bay plant, went into overdrive to back their friend Miller, thereby pitting Canadian workers against their brothers and sisters in China.

Cynically manipulating workers' fears of losing their jobs, on September 25 the Toronto Labour Council organized a chauvinist "Made in Canada Matters" rally at City Hall before the vote that approved the Bombardier contract. While Miller intoned, "Public money used to buy subway cars made in Canada helps keep jobs and technology in our country," senior CAW official Bob Chernencki called on workers to "oppose politicians who want to ship jobs overseas" (*CONTACT* Newsletter, 29 September [2006]). A few months earlier, TTC chairman and NDP councillor Howard Moscoe railed: "I don't want to build my cars in a communist regime.... I want to make my cars where it benefits Canadian workers" (*Northern Ontario Business*, 5 June [2006]).

The claim that Canadian workers have a common interest with Canadian bosses is a pernicious lie: here, as everywhere, the interests of labour and capital are irreconcilable. What is needed is an internationalist fight against the capitalist exploiters, who are manifestly incapable of providing decent conditions for workers anywhere. Job losses can be fought by militant class-struggle actions such as plant occupations. Last May, Toronto ATU transit workers gave a taste of labour's potential power when they struck against management harassment, safety violations and arbitrary shift changes, shutting down North America's third-largest transit system in an "illegal" walkout. NDPers Miller and Moscoe were in the forefront of denouncing this strike and are seeking massive fines against the union.

The unions should fight for demands

Chinese Test...
(continued from page 1)

the world’s most populous country out of the clutches of the imperialist powers that had long held China in their grip. Although deformed from its inception by the rule of a parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy, the Chinese Revolution laid the basis for collectivizing the economy, resulting in enormous social progress for workers, women and peasants. Smashing the Chinese workers state is a strategic goal for the capitalist powers, who seek to turn China into a vast field for untrammeled exploitation and super-profits. In pursuit of counterrevolution, the imperialists are both increasing their military pressure against China and furthering their economic penetration of the mainland by taking advantage of Beijing’s “market reforms.”

Defense of the workers states against imperialism is undermined by the rule of the nationalist Stalinist bureaucracies, whose policies are encapsulated in the dogma of “building socialism in one country.” The Stalinists oppose the fight for international proletarian revolution and instead pursue the futile quest for “peaceful coexistence” with imperialism. A glaring case in point is Beijing’s treacherous partnership with the U.S., Japan and others in the attempt to disarm North Korea. Following North Korea’s successful nuclear test in October, China criminally voted for sanctions against Pyongyang in the UN Security Council.

The Chinese Stalinist bureaucracy played no small part in the destruction of the Soviet Union, which had been the industrial/military powerhouse of the non-capitalist world. In the wake of a falling-out between Moscow and Beijing that began in the late 1950s, Mao Zedong pursued an alliance with American imperialism against the Soviet Union. This was sealed when Mao met with U.S. Republican president Nixon in 1972 as American bombs rained down on Vietnam and Cambodia. In 1979, only four years after the victory of the heroic Vietnamese workers and peasants, China under Deng Xiaoping invaded Vietnam, acting as U.S. imperialism’s cat’s paw. The alliance allowed the U.S. under Reagan to add to its anti-Soviet arsenal the bulk of the nuclear weapons it had aimed at China, at the same time tying down significant Soviet forces in the Far East.



Spartacists raise fight to defend China and other deformed workers states at Oakland labor/black mobilization in defense of immigrant rights and against “war on terror” repression, February 2002.

Following the demise of the USSR, China was placed once again in Washington’s cross hairs. A directive signed by Democratic president Clinton in 1997 broadened the Pentagon’s list of nuclear targets in China. Since issuing a Nuclear Posture Review in 2001 that included China among seven countries targeted for possible nuclear attack, the Pentagon has moved into the Pacific five nuclear submarines carrying an estimated 720 warheads, including some with advanced Trident II missiles, according to the Federation of American Scientists.

In pursuit of their own ambitions, the Japanese imperialists, who brutally colonized Korea in 1910 and occupied much of China before World War II, have embarked on a program of military expansion whose principal targets are North Korea and China. On January 9, the government of Shinzo Abe re-established a fully fledged “defense” ministry for the first time since World War II, with authority to deploy the military overseas. This is a significant step toward junking Article Nine of the U.S.-imposed postwar constitution—long flouted in practice—banning Japan from maintaining military forces. According to the Japan Times (22 December 2006), Japan and the U.S. signed an agreement in December “to exchange detailed global topographic data—a move

apparently aimed at sharing information specifically on North Korea and China.” Japan is also planning to launch a fourth spy satellite this month that will complete its system of global coverage.

The point at which imperialist military pressure bears down most directly on Beijing is capitalist Taiwan, where the defeated bourgeoisie under the command of the butcher Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek fled the 1949 Revolution. In February 2005, the U.S. and Japan issued a joint policy statement declaring Taiwan a “mutual security concern” and moved to reposition their military forces, including the regional deployment of antiballistic missile systems. In response to these dangerous provocations, the Spartacist League/U.S. and the Spartacist Group Japan declared in a joint statement:

“Since the 1949 Chinese Revolution, from which the Chinese deformed workers state emerged, Taiwan has been an outpost for U.S. imperialism’s counter-revolutionary schemes, military threats and interference in Chinese internal affairs through the puppet Chinese bourgeoisie. Taiwan has been since ancient times a part of China, and we Trotskyists will stand with China in the event of any military conflict with imperialism over Taiwan.”
—WV No. 844, 18 March 2005

Now it is reported that in February the U.S. and Japan will discuss a “joint opera-

tion plan for their troops” for defense of Taiwan (Japantoday.com, 4 January).

Beijing extends a hand to the bourgeoisie in Taiwan by pushing for its reunification with China under the formula, “one country, two systems.” The nationalist Stalinist regime thus pledges to maintain capitalism on the island, as it has done in Hong Kong following the reversion of the former British colony to Chinese control in 1997. In opposition to the Stalinists and to the reactionary forces calling for Taiwanese independence, the ICL calls for the revolutionary reunification of China: for socialist revolution to expropriate the Taiwanese capitalists and a workers political revolution to oust the Beijing bureaucracy, establishing a regime of workers democracy and revolutionary internationalism.

Washington’s current space policy opposes treaties proposed by China and Russia banning the “weaponization of space.” Clearly the administration’s intent is to put a lot more weapons there. The Democrats, the other party of U.S. imperialism, and such bourgeois mouthpieces as the New York Times advocate a space weapons treaty as a better means of limiting China’s capabilities and protecting the American advantage. Edward Markey, Democratic co-chair of the House Non-proliferation task force, declared on January 20: “American satellites are the soft underbelly of our national security, and it is urgent that President Bush move to guarantee their protection by initiating an international agreement to ban the development, testing, and deployment of space weapons and anti-satellite systems.”

To defend and extend the gains of social revolution in China, North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba requires fighting for proletarian revolution in the imperialist centers. Defense of the remaining workers states against imperialism and counterrevolution is critical to mobilizing the proletariat in the U.S. and Japan against their own exploiters. Every advance in the workers states’ military capabilities buys more time for the international proletariat. Only when workers revolutions put the advanced technology and industrial capacity of the developed countries to use in an international planned economy will the basis be laid for a socialist society of material abundance. To this end, the ICL fights to build revolutionary Trotskyist parties as part of a reformed Fourth International.■

like a shorter workweek with no loss in pay, enabling the available work to be shared among all workers. If the capitalists are unwilling to run certain plants or sectors of industry—out of pure greed, or because plants may be obsolete or resources depleted—then workers must put up a hard fight for long-term wage protection and retraining at company expense. Such demands go against the grain of the irrational capitalist economic system of production for profit. Only socialist revolution and the establishment of an international planned economy—where production is based on human needs as determined through workers democracy, not the profits of a tiny exploiting class—can put an end to joblessness and misery everywhere.

For Internationalist Proletarian Leadership!

The anti-Communist union bureaucrats in Canada, as in the U.S., have a long record of dirty work on behalf of their “own” imperialist rulers. This was driven home at this year’s Toronto Labour Day parade. “Made in Canada Matters” was a central theme of the march, and among the contingents was one from the reactionary Chinese Falun Dafa religious sect. Back in the 1980s, the labour misleaders were avid champions of Polish Solidarność, a reactionary movement masquerading as a trade union that was in the forefront of the drive for capitalist restoration in East Europe. The American AFL-CIO union tops channelled millions of dollars of CIA money to this counter-

revolutionary “union.” In Canada, the B.C. [British Columbia] Federation of Labour and NDP organized an anti-Communist picket against a Polish ship, while the CLC put on its payroll one Zygmunt Przetakiewicz, a rabidly reactionary supporter of Solidarność, who openly made common cause with the U.S. rulers on every issue from CIA-backed counterinsurgency in Central America to the West European “peace” movement.

As they did in East Europe and the former Soviet Union, the U.S. and Canadian labour tops are abetting the imperialist drive for capitalist counterrevolution in China. Counterrevolution in the Soviet Union, prepared by decades of Stalinist misrule, plunged the working people into mass unemployment, falling life expectancy and all-around social degradation. Capitalist restoration in China, a much poorer and less developed country, would bring even deeper misery and devastation, and would further embolden the capitalists worldwide in their attacks on workers and oppressed minorities.

Genuine solidarity with the embattled Chinese worker and peasant masses must be based on opposition to the rapacious imperialist rulers and defense of the gains of the Chinese Revolution. The smashing of capitalist class rule was the crucial precondition for China to commence the economic and social modernization necessary to bring millions of toilers out of poverty and degradation. Substantial trade with and investment from more industrially advanced imperialist countries has brought crucially

necessary modern technology, permitting further economic progress. But the CCP bureaucracy’s dismantling of the state monopoly of foreign trade; its promotion of policies that have produced substantial new domestic capitalist forces while sharply increasing inequality; and above all its anti-revolutionary appeasement of imperialism on the global scale—all this points to the need to replace Stalinist bureaucratic rule with the revolutionary-internationalist rule of soviet democracy. The all-round liberation of the Chinese masses ultimately rests on winning support, including crucial economic aid, from successful socialist revolutions in

the imperialist centers of Japan, North America and West Europe.

Working-class struggle must be consciously waged as an international fight. In Canada that means fighting to break workers from the flag-waving chauvinism and China-bashing pushed by the labour tops and NDP. As part of our struggle to forge a revolutionary workers party, we warn against the deadly dangerous trap of calls to “defend Canadian jobs” against foreign competition. We live by the words which Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels inscribed on their banner more than 150 years ago: “Workers of the world, unite.”■

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# “Collective Guilt” and German Imperialism

# Hypocritical Outcry Against Günter Grass

The following article is translated from Spartakist No. 164 (Autumn 2006), newspaper of the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

## SPARTAKIST 4

The belated admission by writer Günter Grass in the 12 August 2006 *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ) that he had been a member of the Waffen SS 62 years ago, and not “a Wehrmacht [army] flak unit auxiliary” as stated previously in his biographies, provoked a storm of indignation. The “most profound moral depravity” was imputed to the 79-year-old Grass. Above all, his “political-moral authority” supposedly took a major hit due to “his having recalled this so belatedly.”

More than virtually any other writer, Günter Grass politically polarized the country with the positions he took opposing church and state in postwar Germany over the suppression of the Nazi past. He repeatedly pointed to the seamless integration of top Nazis into [Konrad] Adenauer’s West German government of the 1950s. In the outcry over his confession, what is mentioned above all is Grass’ protest in May 1985, when he criticized Chancellor [Helmut] Kohl for his visit to Bitburg cemetery [with its graves of Nazi SS members]. A similar outcry of indignation was set off in 1990 over his criticism of the capitalist reunification of Germany as “*Anschluss*” [annexation], analogous to [that of Austria in] the Nazi period, and his call for “equalization of burdens” for the DDR [German Democratic Republic (East Germany)]. In a 1997 speech honoring the famous writer Yasar Kemal from Turkey, who was being awarded the German book trade’s peace prize, he attacked Germany’s CDU [Christian Democratic Union] government for its brutal deportation practices: “Isn’t Germany’s latent hatred of foreigners expressed through the bureaucratic jargon of the current Interior Minister’s deportation practices, whose severity is echoed by gangs of right-radical thugs?” Now he is the target of grandiose accusations of being “two-faced” and “hypocritical.” There has even been talk of stripping him of the Nobel Prize for Literature awarded him in 1999 and of his honorary citizenship in [the Polish city] Gdansk.

### The Lessons of World War II

For us Marxists World War II was, as far as the warring capitalist countries were concerned, an imperialist war on all sides. For the workers of all countries, there was only one warring country to defend—the Soviet Union. Thus, Trotskyists fought on the side of the Soviet Union and called for its unconditional defense. In the war between Nazi Germany and the “democratic” allies Britain and the U.S., we called for the defeat of all the imperialist powers.

Nazism, which arose from a mass movement of the unleashed petty bourgeoisie, was propelled to power by strong capitalist interests. The capitalists summoned the fascists to help fend off the “threat” of proletarian revolution by Europe’s most powerful working class. The German working class was powerful



Hoenig/DPA

enough, and in its majority had the will, to prevent Hitler from seizing power. What made the triumph of Nazism possible was the criminal capitulation of the workers’ leadership, both the Stalinists [German Communist Party (KPD)] and the Social Democrats [SPD]. And only after destroying the German workers movement was Hitler able to proceed to the terrible “final solution.” The Nazi Holocaust is a unique crime in which the annihilation of whole peoples, Jews, Roma and Sinti [Gypsies], was organized on an industrial basis. Ultimately, it was the Red Army and Soviet partisans who, despite Stalin, smashed the Nazi regime and liberated Europe from fascism.

The social-democratic and Stalinist popular-frontist fairy tale of an “anti-fascist war of the democracies” served only to chain the American and West European working class to their own bourgeoisies. In the case of Germany, the betrayal of the KPD and SPD leaders, who had capitulated to fascism without a fight, was concealed behind the thesis of “collective guilt of the entire German people.” Also, the spectre of workers revolution haunted the “democratic” imperialists and was behind their policy of

mass bombings at the end of World War II, aimed at demoralizing the German populace. During the war the Trotskyists were the only ones to raise international condemnation of these indiscriminate terror attacks, understanding that the “war for democracy” was a lie.

### Collective Guilt à la Grass

The division of Germany along a class line was a result of the Second World War. In the East, the German bourgeoisie was expropriated and in 1949 the DDR, a deformed workers state, was created. In the West, the bourgeoisie of Auschwitz was “rehabilitated” and retained its power. The imperialists helped reinstate former Nazis in key political and economic positions. Only a strong German capitalism could be of use to them against the Soviet Union. While they were carrying out their Cold War against the Soviet Union, the American victors, together with their German allies, had every reason to bury the crimes of the Third Reich. That is why the imperialist lie of collective guilt was as practical as it was simple: the entirety of the populace was supposedly responsible for the horrors of the Nazi Holocaust. The heart of the collective guilt argument is the counterposition of the despotic, anti-Semitic Germany of the Second World War to the democratic, socially minded German Federal Republic [BRD] of today. And this promotes the efforts of German imperialism to transform Germany into a “normal” country, with troops deployed from the Balkans to Afghanistan and now, for the first time, to the Near East.

Günter Grass is, in his own words, driven by the “horrific experience of Auschwitz.” But unlike the best elements of his generation, who drew from the horrors of the Third Reich and the defeat of Nazi Germany in the war the conclusion that they should settle the score with the bourgeoisie which brought Hitler to power and fight for a socialist Germany, Grass places responsibility for Auschwitz and all the other atrocities of the Nazi regime on the entire German people. In an interview with Fritz Pleitgen, Grass unashamedly asserted that his generation had “no glimmering of anti-fascism” and shifted what he sees as his personal failure and that of his whole generation onto the youth of today: “They are absolutely not responsible for it, without guilt, and

nevertheless it is their responsibility that such a thing, even the first germs of it, not be repeated in Germany” (*Spiegel* online, 10 October 2002).

Grass, whose works powerfully reflect an image of the claustrophobic Nazi stench in postwar West Germany, where you could still sense the predatory bourgeoisie of Auschwitz, nevertheless holds the position “that the constitution of the Federal Republic is the best we’ve ever had in Germany.” This makes him an apologist for a “better” *capitalist* Germany. We Spartakists also turn to the young generation, not with Grass’ loyalty to the constitution but with the understanding that fascism and imperialist war are endemic to the capitalist system. That is why only a workers revolution can avenge the victims of the Holocaust.

### Günter Grass and the Waffen SS

In his autobiography, *Beim Häuten der Zwiebel* [Peeling the Onion], Grass explains that he had tried in vain to join the U-boat arm of the military in 1943 as a 15-year-old volunteer, and in 1944 at the age of 17 he was drafted from labor service into the “Jörg von Frundsberg” division of the Waffen SS.

“The question is: Did the double S, which you couldn’t overlook in the recruitment office, shock me then, as it does now, after over 60 years, while I’m writing this down?”

“There is nothing etched in the onion skin which could be read as a sign of shock or even horror. I would more likely have seen the Waffen SS as an elite unit, which was deployed when it was necessary to seal a breach in the front line, to break out of an encirclement, as in Demyansk, or to recapture Kharkov. The double rune on the uniform collar wasn’t offensive to me.”

The whole world identifies SS runes with the “final solution” and the murder of Jews. The SS is rightly regarded with deep abhorrence. At the start of World War II, the Waffen SS was founded as the military elite troops of the “Reichsführer” Heinrich Himmler, made up of heterogeneous elements such as the SS roving squads, the concentration camp guards and the SS Death’s Head Division. Its most infamous member was Josef Mengele, the Auschwitz concentration camp “doctor.” The Waffen SS was responsible for the mass murder of civilians and prisoners of war, and Waffen SS



AP  
May 1985: West German chancellor Kohl (left) and President Reagan pay tribute to Nazi SS war dead in Bitburg, Germany.

thugs were well suited for the job of torturers in the concentration camps. We will not forget the massacres of Oradour-sur-Glane or Sant’Anna-di-Stazzema, where whole towns were slaughtered, including the aged and infants. These massacres were carried out by tank divisions of the Waffen SS, “Hitler’s political soldiers,” in the summer of 1944, shortly before Grass received his induction orders.

Toward the end of the war, the character of the Waffen SS as special [Nazi] Party troops changed, with many Wehrmacht units being incorporated as a whole into the Waffen SS and young conscripts involuntarily drafted in. While the total number of soldiers in the “Greater German Reich” fell between 1943 and 1945 from 9.4 to 7.8 million, the number of members of the Waffen SS rose in the same period from 450,000 to 830,000 at the end. So, in the spring of 1945 more than 10 percent of German soldiers were members of the Waffen SS. In his 20 August 2006 letter to the Berlin *Tagespiegel*, Werner T. Angress, author of *Die Kampfzeit der KPD 1921-23* [originally published in English in 1963 under the title *Stillborn Revolution: The Communist Bid for Power in Germany, 1921-23*], wrote:

“It is totally inappropriate to condemn Grass because of his short period of service in the Waffen SS. When I was an interrogator of prisoners in the American 82nd Airborne Division, where I was serving at that time as a Jewish émigré from Germany, I met many young Germans who had been drafted into the Waffen SS at the end of 1944 or the start of 1945 at the age of 17 to 18 years. They were still ‘teenagers.’ In May 1945 I was given, along with three comrades, the task of separating the ‘sheep from the goats’ in a camp for SS prisoners near Ludwigslust, Mecklenburg—the task of separating those who volunteered for the SS from those who were drafted. In doing this I took great care to get these youth transferred to a Wehrmacht prisoner-of-war camp because the majority of them hadn’t served in the Waffen SS out of political conviction. Grass also belonged to this kind of group, which was to be found in many SS units at the end of the war. It’s a real pity that he waited until now to make public his brief membership in the Waffen SS.”

Grass is no leftist, but a liberal intellectual who found his political home in the Social Democracy in postwar Germany. In his famous Danzig trilogy (*The Tin Drum, Dog Years, Cat and Mouse*), the Hitler years are narrated from the perspective of children and youth who were part of them and who regained their footing in West Germany during the Adenauer years. *The Tin Drum*, his novel about the everyday life of the petty bourgeoisie under fascism in Danzig [Gdansk], was seen as counterposed to the official suppression of the Nazi period in the Adenauer epoch. Grass writes:

“In the ’50s, the time of political restoration, people spoke of the Nazi period, the period of National Socialism, as a dark phase of German history, as if the poor German people had been seduced by earth spirits that come overnight. But I know from my own youth, basically

everyone knew, that it didn’t all occur at night and it didn’t derive from earth spirits either. It happened by the light of day, it was announced by *Mein Kampf* and many other things; and that brought me closer and closer to my background, to what I had lost; a war started and lost by the Germans had led to the loss of my native country, affecting millions of people and me as well. And so I dared to approach this complex in that way. There is another thread, also in order to further refute this legend, this demonization of the Nazi period: one needs to portray the layer of the petty bourgeoisie, which I know and am familiar with and which is particularly susceptible to National Socialism in its wishes and presumptions and longings.”

—Quoted in Heinz Ludwig Arnold, “Ausgehend vom Labesweg 13” [Starting at Labesweg 13], 23 June 2003

Grass, born in 1927 in Danzig of German-Kashubian extraction, always held anti-Communist and anti-Soviet views. He was caught in the framework of bourgeois anti-fascism, which on the one hand dismisses the working class and on the other considers every individual German responsible for the Holocaust. Bourgeois class rule and capitalism as the cause of fascism are removed from the picture.

Why was Grass silent for so long? Obviously he was in the Waffen SS for only a short time. Furthermore he was drafted into it and is not known to have committed any criminal acts. He never made a secret of the fact that as a youth he believed in the final victory of the Nazis. But the reactions that now assail him indicate the extent to which, with the lie of collective guilt used as a weapon, it has been made impossible to deal with the Nazi period in all its complexities in Germany. In his 12 August interview with *FAZ*, Grass stressed regarding the postwar period in West Germany: “We had Adenauer—frightful—with all those lies and all that Catholic stench. The society that was being promoted at that time was characterized by a sort of petty-bourgeois stuffiness that didn’t exist even under the Nazis.” Angress confirms this. Asked by the Berlin *Tagesspiegel* whether “he could imagine why Grass was silent for so long,” he answered, “Germany was frightful in the ’50s. And afterwards it was too late.”

The lie that all Germans are to blame for the crimes of the Nazis is also very prevalent in the social climate of today’s “Berlin Republic,” which is cynically extolled as “normal.” The ideological foundation of the much-praised Wehrmacht exhibition [which graphically revealed the crimes of the German army] equates soldiers drafted into the Wehrmacht with the Nazi criminals. As we wrote in *Spartakist* No. 163, Summer 2006 (“Wehrmacht, Holocaust and ‘Collective Guilt’”): “The statement that, because the drafted soldiers were forced to carry out massacres they became counterrevolutionary scum and Nazis, blurs the class line which runs through *every* imperialist draft army between the bourgeois officer corps and the ranks, who



Yevgeni Khaldei

Johnny Florea



**Red Army defeated Nazi scourge. Above: Soviet soldiers trample Nazi flag on outskirts of Vienna in 1945. Right: Slave laborers slain by Nazis at Nordhausen weapons factory, April 1945.**

come mainly from the working class. And it blurs over the difference between the Wehrmacht as a compulsory organization and the volunteer elite units of Hitler’s regime, like the SS, SD and Gestapo.”

**Anti-Soviet Alliance in Bitburg**

Today some of Grass’ opponents play the trump card that, already in 1985 on the occasion of Bitburg, he should have stated that he had been a member of the Waffen SS. On 5 May 1985, Kohl and Reagan paid an obscene visit to the SS graves in the military cemetery of Bitburg. Ronald Reagan, then the U.S. president, wanted to embrace the “enemy” of the Second World War. For Germany’s then chancellor Helmut Kohl, Reagan’s visit was his return favor for Kohl’s having promoted the stationing [in Germany] of American Pershing missiles aimed at the Soviet Union. As we wrote in a July 1985 *Spartakist* supplement, “Bitburg: Kohl/Reagan Stand at Attention Before SS Mass Murderers—Defeat the Anti-Soviet War Drive!” (reprinted in *Spartacist* [German edition] No. 12, Winter 1986-87): “And they *intentionally* sought out a military cemetery with SS graves. For Reagan, Hitler’s killers who fought against Russia are simply magnificent—the sole problem was that they did this in the interest of Berlin and not of Washington.”

This aspect eludes Grass with his anti-Soviet outlook. Bitburg is inseparably linked to the resurgence of German nationalism. Indeed, it was Kohl who suggested the Bitburg visit to Reagan; the point was the rehabilitation of the SS and Waffen SS. At the same time that the government festivities took place, the “Death’s Head Division” of the Waffen SS was holding a convention and the cops were protecting meetings of both the “Hitler Youth” 12th SS Tank Division and the “Adolf Hitler Bodyguard” First SS Tank Corps.

Bitburg was a dividing line for West

German society, which is why Grass’ bourgeois criticism of Chancellor Kohl over Bitburg has not been forgotten right down to this day:

“I know that even in editorials, certificates of innocence are currently being handed out. At present, we can afford a Chancellor whose innocence, if not ingrained, is nonetheless innate. Once again, the de-Nazification certificates of the ’50s are readily at hand.”

—“Freedom as a Gift—Failure, Guilt, Missed Chances,” *Die Zeit*, 10 May 1985

Bitburg constituted an honorable recognition of the successor state of the Third Reich, of the main driving force of NATO in Europe. As Trotsky stated in 1933, Hitler’s takeover of power was the greatest defeat for the working class in history. It remains the task of the working class to end the threat of fascism and the horrors of imperialist war by smashing the capitalist system through worldwide proletarian revolution.

Grass’ opponents are a pretty rotten bunch, even if their motives vary. For example, Bundeswehr [German army] professor Michael Wolffsohn, who holds torture by the state to be an appropriate measure, considers Grass’ lifework “completely damaged.” Or take the recently deceased admirer of [high-ranking Nazi Albert] Speer and biographer of Hitler, Joachim Fest. In the mid ’80s he opened the pages of his *FAZ* to Ernst Nolte, who denounced Auschwitz as a “Bolshevik act,” triggering a “red equals brown campaign” in the notorious “Historians’ Dispute.”

But there are also some nasty characters among Grass’ supporters. The notoriously right-wing Arnulf Baring conjectures that “the Grass case will lead to a calm and fairer judgment on the involvement of many Germans in National Socialism.” In the Wiesbaden State Parliament in September, the 74-year-old promptly seized the opportunity, calling the National Socialist dictatorship an “unfortunate error”

*continued on page 8*



Deutsche Fotothek Dresden

**U.S. and British imperialists deliberately targeted German civilians in February 1945 firebombing of Dresden, slaughtering over 100,000.**

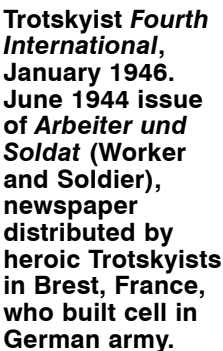
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Today they want to push through a new edition of the cold amnesty of Nazi cadre like that following World War II. From the outset, Nazi brass and war criminals seized the opportunity of a safe haven in the West. Only in the DDR in the '80s were two members of the Waffen SS division that carried out the massacre in Oradour-sur-Glane convicted, whereas not a single one was jailed in West Germany. In trials after the founding of the DDR in 1949, 12,881 Nazis were convicted; in the West, with a population almost three times as large, it was only half as many. While the state apparatus of the Federal Republic was filled to the brim with small-time and big-time Nazis, that of the DDR was composed of many former Nazi concentration camp prisoners, and many of its most prominent citizens were from Jewish families.

## Grass Against Reunification

With the collapse of the [Erich] Honecker regime and the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the DDR was caught in the whirlwind of a developing political revolution. The International Communist League undertook the biggest mobilization in our tendency's history for a Trot-

The spectre of organized proletarian resistance against capitalist reunification revealed at Treptow alarmed the West German imperialists and their Social Democratic minions, who threw their campaign to drive the DDR into reunification into high gear. The Stalinists in the Kremlin and the DDR capitulated to the imperialists, actively participating in the forced march to capitalist reunification. And it was at this point that then-DDR Prime Minister, Hans Modrow of the SED-PDS [Socialist Unity Party/Party of Democratic Socialism], swallowed the thesis of German collective guilt. The imperialist press rejoiced, understanding that this meant Modrow denied the essential difference between the denazified DDR and the Federal Republic, which had been established



“The German Democratic Republic didn’t come out of nowhere, it was constructed out of the destruction of Hitler’s Reich by the Red Army at a cost of 20 million Soviet lives. Its cadres came in large part out of the concentration camps....  
“The Federal Republic of Germany formally declares itself the successor state of Hitler’s Third Reich, underlining the continuity of German imperialism. The West German secret police were set up by simply taking over the Nazis’ anti-Soviet spy operation (the Gehlen organization) wholesale....  
“The DDR is a workers state, albeit bureaucratically deformed from birth, founded by the *victims* of the Nazi terror regime.”

—reprinted in WV No. 496,  
23 February 1990

When the Wall fell, Günter Grass came out against reunification, favoring a con-



**East Berlin, January 1990: 250,000 protested Nazi desecration of Red Army memorial in Treptow Park at demonstration initiated by German Spartacists and taken up by ruling SED. Spartacist banner reads: "Down With NATO! Defend the Soviet Union!"**

federation between the BRD and an independent DDR. In his “Reden eines vaterlandslosen Gesellen” of February 1990 [quoted from the English, published in *Two States—One Nation?* (1990) under the title “Short Speech by a Rootless Cosmopolitan”], he wrote: “Anyone thinking about Germany these days and looking for an answer to the German question must include Auschwitz in his thoughts.

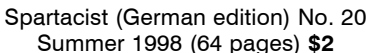
"The anxieties felt by your protagonist [in her book *The Seventh Cross*], George Heisl, communicated itself to me once and for all; except that the commandant of the concentration camp is no longer called Fahrenberg but Walter Ulbricht, and he presides over your state.... Up to now you have been the epitome of resistance to violence; it is impossible that you should fall prey to the irrationalism of a [fascist like] Gottfried Benn and fail to recognize the violent nature of a dictatorship that has scantily, yet cleverly, wrapped itself in your dream of socialism and communism—a dream I do not dream, but which I respect, as I do any dream."

—“Open Letter to Anna Seghers,”  
in *Two States—One Nation?*

However, his appeal to the DDR writers ("He Who Is Silent Becomes Guilty," 14 August 1961 [the day after the building of the Berlin Wall began]) was a miserable failure. [DDR writer] Stefan Hermlin replied to Günter Grass: "I didn't send my government a telegram of thanks on August 13, nor would I define my inner state as one of 'joyful agreement,' as many people like to express it.... But I do agree seriously and without qualification...to the measures that the government of the German Democratic Republic has taken to put a brake on the aggressive course of the most dangerous state in the world, the Federal Republic" (from Hans Werner Richter's 1961 *Die Mauer oder der 13. August* [The Wall or August 13]).

Very shortly, capitalist reunification was whipping up Nazi terror, which was then fanned even more by the abolition of the right to asylum, initiated by the SPD with the [1992] Petersberg Resolutions. Consequently, in protest against the SPD's policy of destroying the right to asylum, Günter Grass quit the SPD in 1993. He did do some decent things, such as marching in the front line of a demonstration against an arson attack [against immigrant hostels] in Mölln and establishing a foundation to support Roma and Sinti. At the same time that he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature, the "dreadful and unique experience of Auschwitz" led him to enthusiastically support the then-SPD/Green government's military intervention in the Balkans. As we wrote in "Holocaust, 'Collective Guilt' and German Imperialism" [WV No. 697, 25 September 1998]: "Far from expressing opposition to resurgent German chauvinism, the embrace of 'collective guilt' by German liberals *serves as a cover* for aggressively promoting imperialist military intervention to 'stop genocide' in the Balkans and elsewhere."

For decades the German bourgeoisie longed to be freed from the chains of the European postwar order. Capitalist reunification made this possible. The Schröder-Fischer [SPD/Green] government contributed significantly to a way of looking at imperialist Germany known as “normalization.” Finally the German bourgeoisie could attempt to play a role as a world power, not just economically



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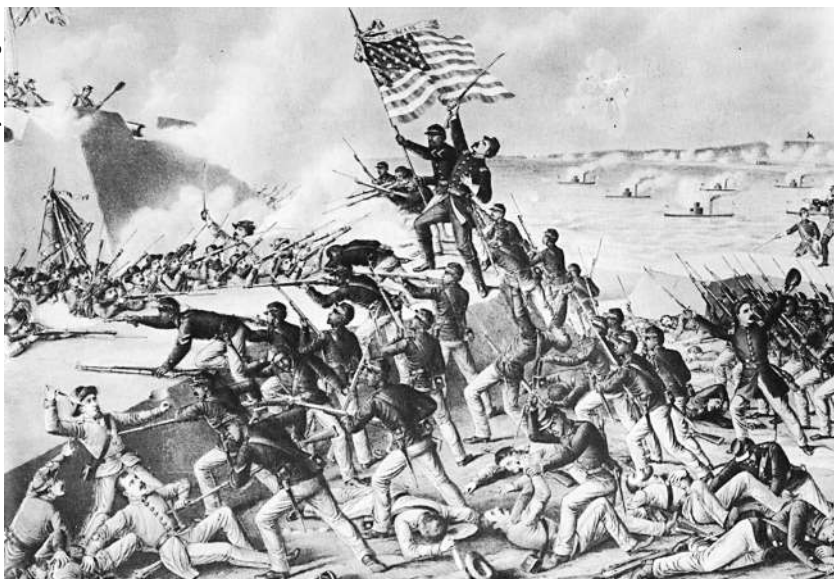
# Black History and the Class Struggle



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**Left: 1862 photograph shows five generations of a slave family in Beaufort, South Carolina. Right: Graphic depicts black Massachusetts 54th regiment charging South Carolina's Fort Wagner, July 1863.**

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## Immigrant...

(continued from page 12)

Twenty years ago, the right-wing Republican Reagan administration introduced the Immigration Reform and Control Act. They came up with a “guest worker” program primarily serving the interests of huge agribusiness. But the Act legalized 2.3 million Mexican workers, who had to document at least five years of residence in the U.S. This meant that Hispanics—who had historically been concentrated in Texas, California and also Florida, with its large number of Cubans, Nicaraguans and others—could move elsewhere. During the 1990s, the Hispanic population increased by some 60 percent, rising from 22.4 million in 1990 to 35.3 million in 2000. By 2003, the new census counts confirmed that the Hispanic population surpassed black Americans as the nation’s largest minority.

Our Marxist program speaks directly to immigrants’ burning needs. We demand full citizenship rights for all immigrants, whether legal or “illegal”—for all who have made it here. We also say that if there were a real amnesty for undocumented workers, we would support that, while recognizing that such gains are partial. We stand for full equality of all languages in all spheres of public life and defend bilingual education against “English only” bigots. We stand unalterably opposed to the bourgeoisie’s anti-immigrant laws and regulations. Against the capitalists’ attempts to use undocumented, low-wage immigrant workers as a club against the trade unions, we seek to mobilize the labor movement to fight deportations and anti-immigrant raids through class-struggle means, and to organize such workers into unions with full rights and protections.

We fight to build a party—a multiracial revolutionary workers party—that champions the interests and the rights of all the oppressed and exploited, whether fighting for full citizenship rights for all immigrants, for defense of the besieged Latino poor, for defense of Asians, for defense of abortion rights for women, for women’s liberation through socialist revolution, for democratic rights for homosexuals, for black freedom. Immigrant workers, especially from Mexico and Central America, bring militant traditions of class struggle to the U.S. And they are not only a catalyst for class and social struggle, but also

a human bridge linking the struggles of working people on both sides of the border. And this is why it’s so important to mobilize immigrant workers in struggle and to defend them.

It is not just a question of immigrant workers’ continued militancy and determination, but that they share common class interests with the proletariat as a whole. There must be a class-struggle mobilization of the labor movement to fight for jobs for all through a shorter workweek with no cut in pay, a unified struggle for our burning, fundamental needs.

Worldwide, the imperialists have perfected the art of playing upon national, ethnic, religious and sexual divisions to perpetuate their barbaric rule. At their disposal are various weapons of mass deception: their press, their political parties, their preachers and priests. Above all, they have their armed bodies of men who safeguard their “right” to exploit and live off the labor of others. As Trotskyists, we fight for international proletarian revolution.

We raise an implacable struggle against the U.S. capitalist rulers, both Democrats and Republicans, and demand the unconditional withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq, Afghanistan, South Korea and elsewhere. We stand for the defeat of imperialism through international proletarian revolution. While the imperialist troops butcher Iraqis, the racist cops gun down blacks and Latinos here in racist capitalist America.

### Marxism and Immigration

Our revolutionary internationalist proletarian program flows from the reality of the world capitalist economy. As Marxists, we understand that imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism, is not a preferred policy of capitalism but the inevitable product of the constant search for sources of cheap labor and raw materials. This has twice resulted in bloody interimperialist wars for the division and redivision of the world.

Whether it’s immigration or trade policy, we don’t seek to advise the bourgeoisie. There is no answer to the brutal immiseration produced by this boom-and-bust capitalist system without a proletarian socialist revolution that takes power out of the hands of the capitalist exploiters. Basing ourselves upon the lessons of history—the Paris Commune of 1871, and in particular the victorious October 1917 Russian Revolution—we

understand that workers cannot achieve emancipation through a futile quest to reform the capitalist profit system. The fight must be for a socialist revolution that smashes the bloody capitalist state apparatus and constructs a workers state. This requires a consistently revolutionary program and the leadership of a Leninist vanguard party, a tribune of the people.

The system of capitalism long ago outlived any progressive historical role. Today, capitalism retards the development of the productive forces of society, which long ago outgrew the narrow shell of the bourgeois nation-state. We recognize that the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state and the East European deformed workers states, an unprecedented defeat of the international proletariat, has resulted in a retrogression of political consciousness, albeit unevenly. This has meant that the proletariat today does not view its struggles through the prism of the fight for socialism. Despite the bourgeois lie of the “death of communism,” there exists a rich body of theoretical and programmatic conceptions to draw upon in the struggle for the complete emancipation of the working class from capitalist exploitation.

The exploiters know this. And that is why they put out their anti-communist garbage. Outlived social classes fight back in defense of their obsolete systems, just like the pro-slavery ideologists in the pre-Civil War South did—those like George Fitzhugh, who wrote biting denunciations of the evils of the industrial capitalist wage-slavery system in the North in order to counter the slaveholders’ Northern bourgeois opponents. It was the Southern slavocracy’s desire to extend slavery that partly motivated the 1846 invasion of Mexico, which resulted in the United States government’s stealing half of Mexico’s territory. A workers government in the U.S. would return to Mexico certain predominantly Spanish-speaking areas along the border. It is worthy of note that in 1855 Texas slaveholders bitterly complained of the estimated loss of more than 4,000 black slaves, valued at more than \$3.2 million, who escaped to northern Mexico. According to one account, by the mid 1850s several Texas counties had passed laws prohibiting Mexicans from communicating with slaves.

Capitalism, paraphrasing Karl Marx, came into the world dripping with the blood of the oppressed. In Volume One of *Capital*, Marx laid out how the development of capitalism entailed horrific consequences especially for women and children. Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin quoted from this volume in *The Teachings of Karl Marx* (1915):

“‘The expropriation and eviction of a part of the agricultural population not only set free for industrial capital, the laborers, their means of subsistence, and material for labor; it also created the home market.’

“‘The impoverishment and ruin of the agricultural population led, in their turn, to the formation of a reserve army

of labor for capital. In every capitalist country ‘a part of the agricultural population is therefore constantly on the point of passing over into an urban or manufacturing proletariat.... This source of relative surplus population is thus constantly flowing.... The agricultural labor is therefore reduced to the minimum of wages, and always stands with one foot in the swamp of pauperism.’”

This process also results in the amalgamation of the proletariat of different nations and brings to the fore their common interests as an international class. “The Thesis on the World Role of American Imperialism” (1938), one of the founding documents of Trotsky’s Fourth International, exposed the deceitful “good neighbor” policy of U.S. imperialism toward Latin America. (The name has changed over the years. I know under Kennedy they used to refer to it as the “Alliance for Progress.”) The Thesis stated:

“The ‘good neighbor’ policy is nothing but the attempt to unify the Western Hemisphere under the hegemony of Washington, as a solid bloc welded by the latter in its drive to close the door of the two American continents to all the foreign imperialist powers except itself. This policy is materially supplemented by the favorable trade agreements which the United States seeks to conclude with Latin American countries in the hope of systematically edging its rivals out of the market.... The struggle against American imperialism is therefore at the same time a struggle against the coming imperialist war and for the liberation of oppressed colonial and semicolonial peoples. Hence, it is inseparable from the class struggle of the American proletariat against the ruling bourgeoisie, and cannot be conducted apart from it.”

This is still true. Currently there are some bourgeois-nationalist thorns in the side of U.S. imperialism, such as Hugo Chávez in Venezuela and Evo Morales in Bolivia, who spout anti-U.S. rhetoric as a way to conceal their own bourgeois rule.

We fight for the unity and integrity of the international working class against chauvinism and racism. The same racist U.S. capitalist butchers who brutally exploit the peoples of Latin America and

## Join the Campaign to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!

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### Black History and the Class Struggle

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elsewhere also let the poor and black people of Louisiana and the Gulf Coast drown, suffer and rot during and after Hurricane Katrina. They use their cops to torture black people in Chicago, and last January they sent white coal miners to their deaths in West Virginia.

### The “Free Trade” Rape of Mexico

Mexico today is in turmoil. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) forced millions of Mexican peasants out of the countryside. NAFTA came into effect on January 1, 1994, and in its first two years more than 2.3 million Mexicans lost their jobs. The effect of NAFTA is an important component of increased immigration to the U.S. Also, capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union and East Europe has accelerated immigration internationally, particularly to West Europe. NAFTA wreaked havoc for Mexican workers and peasants with the elimination of state subsidies for many goods and services. Mexican workers had their wages slashed, they were thrown out of work by the thousands, and many were forced into informal employment. The costs of basic necessities such as gas and electricity skyrocketed, and the masses today face increased starvation or are forced to emigrate.

This “free trade agreement” represented imperialist looting of Mexico. We opposed it from the very beginning from an internationalist, revolutionary standpoint. In 1991, the Grupo Espartaquista de México, the Trotskyist League of Canada and the Spartacist League/U.S., sections of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), issued a joint statement declaring, “There is a burning need for an *internationalist* proletarian opposition which stands with the working class and impoverished peasantry of Mexico against the imperialist assault” (“Stop U.S. ‘Free Trade’ Rape of Mexico,” WV No. 530, 6 July 1991). In contrast, the labor tops of the AFL-CIO and the Teamsters opposed NAFTA on the basis of poisonous chauvinism and protectionism.

Apparently, the U.S. imperialists are building what they call a NAFTA super-highway—the construction of major transportation corridors from Mexico’s Pacific coast port of Lázaro Cárdenas to Kansas City, and also to Canada. This is the inexorable logic of capitalist production. Capital migrates to areas of higher profitability. This demands of Marxists the organization of workers, from the Yukon to the Yucatán, for common internationalist class struggle and for socialist revolution throughout the Americas.

The labor lieutenants of the capitalist class—the pro-capitalist trade-union bureaucracy—holler about foreign workers “taking American jobs,” with China being at the top of their list. It’s in the interests of the U.S. proletariat to unite with the workers of the world to overthrow the hideous system of capitalism. The imperialists especially seek to restore capitalist rule in China, a deformed workers state, and completely turn that country into a giant sweatshop of superexploited labor and a haven for super-profits.

### Immigration and Women’s Oppression

Women workers in Mexico are brutally exploited, especially in the so-called free-trade *maquiladora* factory zones in the North. Women there as young as 16 suffer exposure to poisonous chemicals and endure wretched working conditions that maim and destroy them. They endure not only constant sexist abuse but outright murder by the police and their henchmen. Ideologically, the reactionary, anti-woman Catholic church and the bourgeois parties—the National Action Party, the Institutional Revolutionary Party and the Party of the Democratic Revolution—bolster their subjugation. The institution of the family is the main source of the oppression of women.

Many women from desperately poor Third World countries, including Mexico and the Philippines, endure racist, anti-

woman abuse in the U.S. Some women opt for prostitution as a means to survive. Prostitution should be decriminalized and the bourgeois state should stay out of our bedrooms and our lives. Whether in Mexico, the Philippines or even the “land of the free,” the capitalist U.S.A., the fight for free abortion on demand, free quality medical and child care and equal pay for equal work requires winning the most conscious elements of the working class to carry out the proletariat’s historic task as the fighter for the interests of the oppressed. The working class must take up the fight for women’s liberation, which requires the overthrow of the capitalist order.

As Lenin explained in his classic work *What Is To Be Done?* (1902), revolutionary working-class consciousness is not a by-product of spontaneous struggle but must be brought into the proletariat from the outside, through the intervention of a vanguard party. Proletarian international-



**Mexico City: March 2006 rally in solidarity with National Mining and Metallurgical Workers Union, which launched two-day strike after government attack on union’s leader.**

ism is not abstract. It is a necessity dictated by the increased economic integration of the U.S., Canada and Mexico.

### For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

In racist capitalist America, black rights and immigrant rights either go forward together or slide back separately. Black oppression is the cornerstone of U.S. capitalism, rooted in the very structure of the capitalist system and a key weapon of the ruling class historically to maintain its class domination.

The Labor Black Leagues, initiated by the Spartacist League and fraternally allied to it, promote and fight for common class struggle. On the masthead of the LBLs’ newsletters, we have Karl Marx’s statement that “labor cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded.” Our program for black liberation is the program of revolutionary integrationism, the fight for black liberation through socialist revolution. This program is in sharp counterposition to the program of liberal integrationism, which is based upon the lie that you can have equality between the oppressed and the oppressors, that you can have genuine black freedom under capitalism. Equality, as Friedrich Engels put it in his magnificent book *Anti-Dühring* (1878), can only be achieved by abolishing the capitalist mode of production.

Despite disproportionately bearing the brunt of racist cutbacks and job losses, black workers are a strategic component of the unionized proletariat and potentially can play a vanguard role in the struggle for the rule of the working class. However, black workers’ weight in the proletariat has undergone considerable erosion. The renewal of this layer of the proletariat has been checked by new forms of racial and social controls devised by the racist rulers. Not a day goes by in which their racist “war on drugs” doesn’t add to the total of broken black lives—and also Latino youths’ lives. American capitalism is a prison nation, a gigantic jailhouse for the poor and the

oppressed. In New York City, nearly half the black men are unemployed.

There are various schools of liberal idealism that posit race and not class as the fundamental dividing line in society. From their standpoint, racism is primarily a product of bad ideas. This notion divorces racism from its material, economic roots in capitalist society. In his latest book, *Working Toward Whiteness: How America’s Immigrants Became White*, the scholar David Roediger reflects the bankruptcy of liberalism. How is it possible to write such a book and not mention slavery? It’s not even in the book’s index. He can’t explain how black people became a race-color caste forcibly segregated at the bottom of this society, victims of the institutionalized racial oppression that is fostered by the bourgeoisie. Black oppression is bound up with black chattel slavery and is a foundation of American capitalism. Slavery’s legacy persists: the racist segregation, the unparalleled levels

of imprisonment, the racist death penalty.

Slavery was the defining reality at the founding of the United States, from the slave trade’s very earliest phase and its tenuous hold in the 16th century to its full flowering in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. For the majority of the history of this country, black chattel slavery made a mockery of the democratic ideology of the founding fathers. Most of the early presidents of this country were slaveholders, along with the chief justices of the Supreme Court. The ideology of black inferiority and white superiority was a rationalization for the brutal extraction of uncompensated slave labor in the production of commodities for an international market.

Today, on one hand we get the neocons and others proclaiming an “end to racism,” embodied in their obscenely misnamed “civil rights” initiatives that have abolished the remnants of affirmative action at many universities. The flip side of this is “people of color” liberal politics, which denies the distinct and different histories of different ethnic groups in this country and, especially, ignores the special oppression of black people. Its purveyors reject the fact that anti-black racism has been central to the maintenance of the bourgeois order in this country. Such an omission—color blindness if you will—is a back-handed concession to reactionary ideologues such as David Horowitz who openly and stridently deny the reality of black oppression.

Behind “people of color” politics is a political program. Race is viewed as the primary dividing line in capitalist society, as opposed to the class division between the capitalists and the workers. There is an implicit presumption that all non-white people have common interests against all whites. White workers and bosses are supposedly united in “white skin privilege.” Large sections of the white working class do buy into the racism of this society, which is fomented by the exploiters. However, what material stake do white workers have in the perpetuation of this incredibly unequal society, whose white ruling class enjoys unparalleled riches coming at the workers’ expense? None whatsoever.

That is not to say that the racist rulers don’t constantly fill their heads with the lie of white superiority and black inferiority, and this has its effects. But it would be news to many of these workers—who along with black people, Latinos and Asian workers, have lost jobs and hard-earned benefits—that they, as opposed to the Wall Street money sharks, are the beneficiaries of the oppression of minorities. The presumption is that blacks and Latinos have more in common with Chinese or Indian businessmen than with Irish- or Italian-derived white workers. The presumption is that Condoleezza Rice and Alberto Gonzales are “our people.”

“People of color” politics serves to perpetuate the divisions in the working class and can only help drive white workers into the arms of this country’s white ruling class. Unlike the liberals and the reformists, we fight to win the multiracial working class to a program and perspective of class struggle against a common enemy, the capitalist exploiters. We fight to win the workers, no matter what their color or sex, to the struggle for socialist revolution to abolish capitalism.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

## Spartacus Youth Club Events

### BAY AREA

**Thursday, February 15, 6 p.m.**

**The Racist Frame-Up of Mumia Abu-Jamal and the State Vendetta Against the Black Panthers**

San Francisco State University  
Cesar Chavez Student Center,  
Rosa Parks D

Information and readings: (510) 839-0851  
or e-mail: sycbayarea@sbcglobal.net

### CHICAGO

**Forums: Alternate Tuesdays, 7 p.m.**

**February 13: Finish the Civil War! For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!**

U. of Chicago, Harper Memorial Library  
1116 E. 59th St., Room 125

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

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### LOS ANGELES

**Thursday, February 15, 6 p.m.**

**The Revolution Betrayed**

University of California, Los Angeles  
Haines Hall, A78

Information and readings: (213) 380-8239  
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### TORONTO

**Wednesday, February 7, 6:30 p.m.**

**Marxism vs. Superstition: Religion Is the Opiate of the Masses!**

University of Toronto, OISE Rm. 4420,  
252 Bloor Street West

Information and readings: (416) 593-4138  
or e-mail: spartcan@on.aibn.com

### VANCOUVER

**Wednesday, February 7, 6 p.m.**

**Women’s Oppression and the Family: For Women’s Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!**

UBC, Student Union Building, Rm. 212

Information and readings: (604) 687-0353  
or e-mail: trotskyist\_vancouver@shawcable.com

## Immigrant Rights and the Fight for Black Liberation



WV Photo

Left: Queens protest against racist cop killing of Sean Bell, December 2. Right: Walkout at Smithfield against victimization of immigrant workers, November 17.



Rubiera/Fayetteville Observer

JANUARY 27—Three days ago, Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents descended upon the Smithfield pork processing plant in Tar Heel, North Carolina, and arrested 21

### PART ONE

workers who are now being deported. The Smithfield bosses have worked hand in hand with ICE, targeting workers on the pretext that their Social Security numbers cannot be verified.

After more than a decade of struggle by the United Food and Commercial Workers union to organize Smithfield, the company recently said it will allow a new union representation election. However, just prior to the ICE raid, the company said that beginning in February it will fire up to 600 workers, primarily those who walked out to protest the firing of 75 immigrants last year (see “Smithfield Walkout Saves Immigrants’ Jobs,” WV No. 881, 24 November 2006). Moreover, Smithfield has effectively blocked elections by appealing a National Labor Relations Board ruling that held that the com-

pany’s private cops had brutalized workers during an earlier walkout.

The arrests at Smithfield are the latest installment of a vindictive campaign launched by the government following immigrant rights protests last spring. More than 750 immigrants in Southern California were rounded up this month as part of “Operation Return to Sender,” a nationwide drive in which more than 13,000 people have been arrested since June, ostensibly for evading deportation orders or for having previously been deported for crimes committed in the U.S.

“Homeland Security” repression is also bearing down on unionized black workers. Late last year in Chicago, some 70 mostly black rail workers lost their jobs, many for supposedly violating new government guidelines barring ex-felons from holding such positions. As we wrote in “Protest ‘War on Terror’ Firing of Rail Workers!” (WV No. 884, 19 January): “The fight for the rights of workers, immigrants and black people will either go forward together—independent from and opposed to the capitalist class and its government—or fall back separately.”

The following is adapted from a forum

given in Los Angeles on 16 September 2006 by Spartacist League Central Committee member Don Alexander.

\* \* \*

Not a day passes without many horrible examples of the social barbarism inherent in this decaying, racist capitalist system. In the world arena, so-called civilized U.S. imperialism has been and is the outstanding example of imperialist rapacity, smugness, hypocrisy, torture and mass murder. In the U.S., the bipartisan “war against terror” is a war against immigrants, black people, the left and labor. It is no accident that following the nationwide immigrant rights protests last May, the capitalist government dispatched the National Guard to the Mexican border and also sent Guardsmen back to New Orleans. Not a mere coincidence. The racist capitalist ruling class has never missed a chance to play whites off against blacks, blacks and whites against immigrants, men against women, old against young, and vice versa.

The struggles against anti-immigrant chauvinism and for black freedom are intertwined. The key to unlocking the power of labor in the United States is the

fight for black liberation, which can be a motor force for proletarian revolution. We say that the color bar in America, the special oppression of black people as an oppressed race-color caste, serves to obscure the division of society into irreconcilable classes and to keep the working class divided.

Today immigrants are 12 percent of the population, with about half coming from Mexico and Central America and the rest from Asia and Europe. In the 1950s, only 2.5 million immigrants arrived in the United States, with 60 percent coming from Europe or Canada, 25 percent from Latin America or the Caribbean and only 6 percent from Asia. By the 1980s, however, immigration to the U.S. had nearly tripled to 7.3 million people, only 12 percent of whom came from Europe or Canada, with 47 percent originating from Latin America and another 37 percent from Asia. During the 1990s, an additional ten million immigrants entered the country, exceeding the prior pace set in the previous decade by 37.7 percent. The vast majority came from Latin America and Asia.

*continued on page 10*

## Protest Government Roundup of Former Black Panthers!

JANUARY 27—In early morning raids on January 23 in California, New York and Florida, police arrested former Black Panther Party members on charges including murder and conspiracy in relation to the 1971 death of San Francisco police officer John Young. Two of the eight arrested were already in prison, and one more is being sought. Coming on top of decades of harassment, grand jury investigations and indictments, the racist roundup shows the relentlessness of the state’s vendetta against the Black Liberation Army (BLA), an offshoot of the Black Panther Party, and other former Panthers. Fighters for black rights, labor

activists and the left must demand: Drop all the charges now!

The *San Francisco Chronicle’s* front pages have been filled with stories in which those charged are smeared as “classic domestic terrorists” carrying out a campaign aimed at “assassinating law enforcement officers.” There *was* a campaign of terror in the 1960s and ’70s: the government’s murderous COINTELPRO effort to destroy an entire generation of black and leftist militants, in which 38 Panthers were killed. In September 1968, FBI head J. Edgar Hoover called the Black Panthers “the greatest threat to the internal security of the country.” Com-

menting on today’s climate defined by the “war on terror,” Ray Boudreaux, one of those arrested in the roundup, said, “When I watched on TV the twin towers come down, deep in my heart I knew that someone will come by and visit me as soon as they can get it organized, and they did. Once upon a time, they called me a terrorist too. To expedite something in the system, they put the ‘terror’ tag on it, and it gets done” (*Los Angeles Times*, 24 January).

Prosecutors are now claiming new evidence and a secret government witness. Defense attorneys believe that the witness is Ruben Scott, whose “confession” fol-

lowing his arrest in 1973 was coerced through torture, as were those of two others. As Bill Goodman, legal director of the Center for Constitutional Rights, said, “The case against these men was built on torture and serves to remind us that the U.S. government, which recently has engaged in such horrific forms of torture and abuse at places like Bagram, Abu Ghraib and Guantánamo, has a history of torture and abuse in this country as well, particularly against African Americans.”

Two other former BLA members, Assata Shakur and Sundiata Acoli, were victimized in a frame-up following a 1973 ambush by New Jersey state troopers, during which one of the cops was killed in the crossfire with a bullet from a police revolver. While Sundiata Acoli has been in prison for over 30 years, Assata escaped prison hell in 1979 and fled to Cuba, where she still resides. In May 2005, the

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