

## Mexico: Tortilla Price Hike Condemns Poor to Starvation

Up to 100,000 people demonstrated in Mexico City on January 31 to protest massive increases in the price of tortillas, the main staple of the Mexican diet. With nearly half of Mexico's population already in poverty, including 20 percent without enough to eat, the sudden sharp increase in the price of tortillas, as well as of milk, eggs, and other necessities, threatens widespread starvation. A major factor in the impoverishment of the Mexican masses was the 1994 imposition of the NAFTA "free trade" agreement, which we have always denounced as U.S. imperialism's "free trade" rape of Mexico. Spurred by NAFTA, the monopolization and manipulation of the corn and tortilla markets by the Mexican company Gruma/Maseca and the U.S. agribusiness giants Cargill and Archer-Daniels-Midlands (which is part owner of Gruma/Maseca) were an immediate cause of the recent sharp rise in tortilla prices.

Called by the Unión Nacional de Trabajadores (UNT-National Union of Workers) and composed largely of labor and peasant organizations, the march reflected massive popular anger at the new government of Felipe Calderón—an open lackey of U.S. imperialism—and his right-wing National Action Party (PAN). Against the government's collusion with U.S. and Mexican agribusiness monopolies, many placards read: "We Don't Want PAN [also meaning bread], We Want Tortilla" and "Without Corn There Is No Country." The protest also called for an emergency wage increase and opposed the threatened privatization of oil and electric companies. The SME electrical workers union made up almost a third of the march. Many protesters carried portraits of Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO), leader of the left bourgeois-nationalist Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), who gave a speech at a separate rally following the initial demonstration.

Mexican society is increasingly volatile. Since coming to office on December 1, Calderón has assumed the role of a strongman, vowing to restore order after a year of stormy class and social struggle: miners and steel workers strikes; clashes between peasants and police in the village of Atenco; a rebellion in Oaxaca centered on the APPO (Popular Assembly of the Peoples of Oaxaca) that was initiated by a teachers strike; massive protests against electoral fraud in the presidential election last summer, in which Calderón was declared the victor over López Obrador.

Calderón declared that "we will not tolerate anyone who defies the authority of the state." Warning that this will "cost human lives," he has made a point of appearing in military garb—the first Mexican president to do so in more than 60 years. He took office as federal troops and police brutally smashed APPO and its supporters through arrests, beatings, torture and "disappearances." In a show of force aimed at intimidating the entire



January 31: Up to 100,000 people protested in Mexico City against huge increase in price of tortillas.

AP

### Down With NAFTA! Expropriate the Corn Magnates! For Socialist Revolution Throughout the Americas!

population, Calderón unleashed 27,000 troops throughout Mexico in "war on drugs" missions and earned high praise from the Bush administration and the American bourgeois press by extraditing 15 "drug war" prisoners to the U.S., a rare act by a Mexican government.

Mexico's imperialist overlords are pushing the regime in no uncertain terms to crack down on the workers and poor. The *Wall Street Journal* (6 December 2006) praises Calderón as the "new sheriff in town," while a special issue of the British *Economist* (18 November 2006) on Mexico complained that his predecessor, the PAN's Vicente Fox, "shrank from applying the law where protests went beyond it."

In calling for more bloody repression, the imperialists have their eyes set particularly on Mexico's nationalized oil and electrical industries, which the Calderón government has threatened to begin privatizing. The *Economist* also urged this course as "a better way of taking on the over-mighty unions" in these industries. Moves to privatize oil and electricity could touch off a more generalized social explosion. The nationalization of U.S. and British oil companies in 1938 by the bourgeois regime of Lázaro Cárdenas was an important defensive measure undertaken by semicolonial Mexico against the rapacious imperialists that must be defended by the working class—in Mexico and internationally.

In the U.S., the most powerful and dangerous of the imperialist countries, the proletariat has a particular obligation to oppose the depredations of "its own" ruling class. NAFTA has led to the devastation of the Mexican countryside, which pushed millions of peasants into the cities

and led to a huge increase in urban poverty as well as mass emigration to the U.S. Some 10 percent of the Mexican population now lives in the U.S., and the money they send home is Mexico's second-largest source of foreign revenue.

When NAFTA was first proposed in the early 1990s, the AFL-CIO bureaucracy denounced it from the standpoint of chauvinist protectionism, railing against Mexicans "stealing American jobs." In contrast, the SL/U.S. issued a joint statement with our Mexican and Canadian comrades that declared: "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. The Canadian, U.S. and Mexican sections of the International Communist League are dedicated to building a revolutionary vanguard that can unite the working masses of the continent in common class struggle" (WV No. 530, 5 July 1991). The struggle for workers revolutions in Mexico and the U.S. is intimately linked, including through the agency of the millions of Mexican immigrants who are an important component of the U.S. proletariat. We demand: Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! No deportations!

With a social explosion threatening in Mexico, the role of López Obrador and the PRD is to keep the anger of workers and the poor within the bounds of bourgeois populism. While many leftists look to "independent" unions like the UNT and SME, in fact the leaderships of these unions are politically tied to the PRD, while others, such as the Congress of Labor union federation, have been histori-

cally affiliated with the former ruling Party of Institutional Revolution (PRI). The demands of the January 31 demonstration, codified in a nine-point "Declaration of the Zócalo," reflect the PRD's populist program. While demanding price limits, emergency wage increases and government policies to create jobs, the declaration called for "reforming," not ending, NAFTA and appealed for a "great national agreement" and "social unity"—i.e., the false "unity" of the exploited and oppressed with the Mexican bourgeoisie. Similarly, a "National Dialogue" conference held by the SME on February 3-5 raised the class-collaborationist call for a "National Political Pact" to combat austerity and privatizations.

Counterposed to the rest of the Mexican left, which to one degree or another works within the framework of populist nationalism, the Grupo Espartaquista de México fights for the class independence of the proletariat in opposition to all the parties of the class enemy—PAN, PRI and PRD. As the GEM and SL/U.S. wrote in a joint statement last year ("Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants!" WV No. 867, 31 March 2006):

"The counterpart to the nationalist myth of 'we are all Mexicans' is the idea that there is no class struggle in the U.S. The December strike by largely black and immigrant transit workers in New York, which crippled the world center of finance capital, refuted that notion. The multiracial U.S. working class is potentially the most powerful ally of Mexican workers. The SL/U.S. and the GEM are dedicated to forging revolutionary workers parties on both sides of the border as part of the fight to reforge Trotsky's Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution."

*continued on page 8*



# Amritsar Massacre: A WV Photo Error

December 23, 2006

To the editor:

I want to point out one small historical inaccuracy in your article, “The ‘War on Terror’ and the Imperialist World Order—Part Two” (WV, December 8, 2006). You caption the photo of mounted British troops clubbing defenseless Indian demonstrators as the infamous Jallianwala Bagh massacre in 1919. That is wrong. That atrocity was not photographed. Moreover, at Jallianwala Bagh, the troops were on foot, they were armed with rifles, and they shot to kill. However, this photo does capture what was happening in India in 1919, when the British brutally dispersed unarmed crowds of protestors. And though you don’t make the connection, the reason those Indians were protesting is directly related to the theme of your article—a “war on terrorism.”

In 1905 the British decided to partition the province of Bengal, a hotbed of nationalism, along Hindu-Muslim communal lines. The nationalists in Calcutta saw this as another attempt to “divide and rule.” Adopting a tactic of the Irish freedom fighters, the Indian nationalists called

upon patriotic Bengalis to boycott British goods, burn their imported British cloth, and buy only Indian-made products. The government responded with an iron fist. Police whipped schoolboys who paraded in the streets singing Vande Mataram. Magistrates filled the jails. When their peaceful tactics failed to produce results, the radical youth concluded that violence was the only language the arrogant sahibs would understand. Before long, Bengali youth were tossing home-made bombs at police constables and shooting at judges. Thus was born the Indian terrorist movement. However, unlike today’s terrorists, they didn’t target innocent civilians. Their violence got results. In 1911 the British reunified Bengal. But the young revolutionaries didn’t relent. The following year they lobbied a bomb at Viceroy Hardinge as he pompously (and foolishly) paraded atop a lumbering elephant through the narrow streets of Old Delhi.

During the First World War, the armed nationalists were the only political tendency in India to oppose the war. Like the Irish nationalists, the Indian revolutionaries sought arms from Germany, following the dictum, “the enemy of my

enemy is my friend.” The future founder of the Indian Communist Party, M. N. Roy, got his start as a gun runner for one of the Bengali groups. Another group conspired to stage mutinies in several British colonies simultaneously. The British got wind of the elaborate plot and foiled the uprisings everywhere except Singapore. Nevertheless, that mutiny, the first since 1857, rattled the British. The British needed their Indian troops to fight their war in Europe and the Near East and to maintain their rule over India.

When the war ended, the British government in India adopted draconian measures (known as the Rowlatt Act) to combat the “terrorist threat.” The nationalists, with the newcomer Gandhi at the forefront, called for nationwide hartals (peaceful protests) to force the repeal of the “Black Acts.” The demonstrations went off without significant violence, except in the Punjab, where mobs burned government buildings in Amritsar and clashed with the police. The lieutenant governor declared martial law and banned all public gatherings. That was just before a traditional religious festival, Baisakhi, which took place in a large, walled garden-park in Amritsar, known as the Jallianwala Bagh. Defying the ban, thousands of people strolled into the Jallianwala Bagh on that fateful day, April 13, 1919.

The mood was festive. Children played on the grass. Then, without any warning, Brigadier-General Reginald Dyer marched his troops to the garden, blocked the exits, and ordered his men to open fire into the crowd. Men, women, and children were mowed down. There was no escape, no place to take cover in the open field. In panic many jumped into a well and

drowned. When the shooting stopped ten minutes later, more than a thousand were dead and at least 1,200 wounded. The slaughter would have been even more horrific had Dyer been able to get his two armored cars with mounted machine guns through the narrow gateways of the park.

When news of the massacre finally seeped through the censorship, Indians were shocked. Dyer remained unrepentant. The British allowed him simply to resign. The House of Lords supported Dyer, and the *Morning Post* raised 18,000 pounds sterling to bestow on “the Savior of the Punjab.” He was a hero in their “war on terror.”

In retrospect, the Jallianwala Bagh massacre marked the beginning of the end of the British Raj. The British gave Gandhi what he needed to mobilize a powerful mass movement. The “terrorist” movement too, roared back to life and played a critical role in the freedom struggle that ultimately triumphed when the Union Jack was removed from the ramparts of the Red Fort in 1947. (I discuss the role of the Indian Trotskyists in that epic struggle, including their attitude towards the “terrorists,” in my book: *Tomorrow is Ours: The Trotskyist Movement in India and Ceylon, 1935-48*, recently published by the Social Scientists Association of Sri Lanka.)

Perhaps there is a lesson here. When a world power has to resort to a “war on terror,” then the days of that empire may already be numbered.

Charles Wesley Ervin

## WV replies:

WV thanks the writer for his thoughtful letter correcting our error. ■



TROTSKY

## Marxism and the Nationalization of Oil in Mexico

*The Calderón government in Mexico is threatening to reverse the 1938 nationalization of oil by the regime of Lázaro Cárdenas, which touched off a furious imperialist reaction that included a British boycott of Mexican oil. As Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky made clear, the proletariat internationally, and particularly the workers of the advanced capitalist countries, must oppose the depredations of the imperialist bourgeoisie. Marxists in oppressed semicolonial countries,*

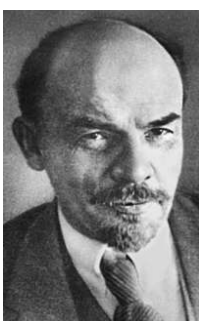
*while opposing imperialism, must stress the need for the independence of the proletariat from the national bourgeoisie.*

The oil magnates are not rank-and-file capitalists, not ordinary bourgeoisie. Having seized the richest natural resources of a foreign country, standing on their billions and supported by the military and diplomatic forces of their metropolis, they strive to establish in the subjugated country a regime of imperialistic feudalism, subordinating to themselves legislation, jurisprudence, and administration. Under these conditions expropriation is the only effective means of safeguarding national independence and the elementary conditions of democracy....

Without succumbing to illusions and without fear of slander, the advanced workers will completely support the Mexican people in their struggle against the imperialists. The expropriation of oil is neither socialism nor communism. But it is a highly progressive measure of national self-defense....

The international proletariat has no reason to identify its program with the program of the Mexican government.... Without giving up its own identity, every honest working class organization of the entire world, and first of all in Great Britain, is duty-bound to take an irreconcilable position against the imperialist robbers, their diplomacy, their press, and their fascist hirelings. The cause of Mexico, like the cause of Spain, like the cause of China, is the cause of the international working class. The struggle over Mexican oil is only one of the advance-line skirmishes of future battles between the oppressors and the oppressed.

—Leon Trotsky, “Mexico and British Imperialism,” 5 June 1938, printed in *Writings of Leon Trotsky (1937-38)*



LENIN

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**Forum: For Women’s Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!**

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

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**Anglo-Chauvinism and Nationalism Are Poison to Class Struggle! Independence for Quebec!**

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*Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.*

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16 February 2007

## Amid World Anti-Porn Witchhunt

# Teacher Convicted in Connecticut Computer Porn Case

On January 5, a substitute teacher in Norwich, Connecticut, was convicted of four counts of “risk of injury to a minor” and faces a maximum of 40 years in prison—all because of porn ads that accidentally popped up on a classroom computer. The 40-year-old teacher, Julie Amero, faces sentencing on March 2. This grotesque case, an instance of the anti-sex hysteria pushed by both the Democrats and Republicans at all levels of government, should be thrown out of court with all charges dropped!

There was no crime. There was no injury. There were only a few seventh graders possibly managing a peek at some images of human sexual activity. It’s today’s equivalent of 20 years ago finding a *Playboy* in your dad’s sock drawer. For pubescent youth, we need hardly point out, the search for such basic and vital information is hardly restricted to classroom accidents. Still, the incident was enough to unleash the guard dogs of state repression against the unfortunate teacher.

Julie Amero is being victimized by an anti-porn, anti-sex campaign that is being expanded by capitalist governments internationally. Reactionary legislation in the U.S. has already branded hundreds of men and women “sex offenders” for engaging in consensual activity. Pilloried

via public Internet listings, their lives already have been ruined, and some have even been murdered. Two men on such a registry were killed in Washington state in 2005, and two more the next year in Maine. Now hundreds more face state repression. A massive hunt was just initiated worldwide for over 2,000 individuals from 77 countries who supposedly tried to access “child pornography” on a computer in Austria. The *New York Times* (8 February) reports that “the F.B.I. is looking for as many as 600 suspects in the United States.... Germany has been given about 400 names and France close to 100.”

Now Senator John McCain has introduced a bill to set up a database of “illegal images” and to force Internet service providers and Web sites “to alert the government to any illegal images of real or ‘cartoon’ minors,” while another bill “would require all Internet service providers to track their customers’ online activities to aid police in future investigations” (*New York Times*, 9 February).

After interviewing Julie Amero, journalist Brian Krebs wrote in his January 25 “Security Fix” blog on the *Washington Post* Web site: “Amero described herself as the kind of person who can hardly find the power button on a computer, saying she often relies on written instructions

from her husband explaining how to access e-mail.” She said that when she reported for work to a seventh grade classroom at Kelly Middle School on 19 October 2004, she saw two students looking at an innocuous-seeming hairstyling site, but then pop-ups appeared and, she said, “They wouldn’t go away. I mean, some of the sites stayed on there no matter how many times I clicked the red X, and others would just pop back up.” Then, Krebs reported, “Amero said she panicked and ran down the hall to the teacher’s lounge to ask for help. ‘I dared not turn the computer off. The teacher had asked me not to sign him out’ of the computer, she recalled.” No one would help. After some students told their parents, the school told her not to come back. Shortly after, the police arrested her.

Krebs’ “Security Fix” blog describes what happened in great detail, understandable to those familiar with computer viruses, Trojan-horse programs, spyware, firewalls and so on. The school network had outdated software and lacked porn and other pop-up blockers. But at her trial, Amero’s defense was not allowed to give a demonstration proving that the pop-ups were accidental, as well as offer other evidence. While the major news media have all but ignored this story, computer experts, including from *PC World*, a main industry magazine, and others have voiced outrage at her conviction.

Looking at porn on the computer, or in books or films, should be no crime,

for anybody. We pointed out in a leaflet opposing last fall’s California “sex drag-net” Proposition 83 (see WV No. 880, 10 November 2006): “The witchhunters want to equate looking at pornography with violent crimes such as rape, sexual assault and even murder, singling out child pornography as especially pernicious. Like all pornography, it is simply words and images designed for pleasure.” The Spartacist League opposes the outrageous intrusion of the government into private life and demands an end to all laws against “crimes without victims,” such as prostitution, drug use and pornography.

In the U.S. and elsewhere, the attitude of the capitalist state when it comes to the explosive intersection of youth and sex is, literally, “God forbid somebody might learn something.” A Texas art teacher, a 28-year classroom veteran, was suspended and told her contract would not be renewed for taking her pupils to the Dallas Museum of Art last April, where they glimpsed—oh the horror!—nude statues. And last month in Yonkers, New York, a seventh-grade teacher was barred from classes after asking students in a health class to draw accurate male anatomy. More generally, “abstinence-only” programs have been promoted in the schools over the past decade, pushing ignorance and fear about sex. As for research into sexuality, about the same time that Amero was arrested, a scientist at San Francisco State University said, “I have been in this field for 30 years, and the level of fear and intimidation is higher now than I can ever remember” (*New York Times*, 9 November 2004).

As we concluded our article on California’s Prop. 83:

“At bottom, the anti-sex witchhunt serves to bolster the capitalist order through propping up its three key supports: the state, organized religion, and the institution of the family, the central source of women’s oppression. It will take a socialist revolution to sweep away the capitalist system and replace the family with socialized childcare and housework, freeing women to play a full role in social and political life. For women’s liberation through socialist revolution!” ■



WV Photo

March for abortion rights, San Francisco, 1992.

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

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(between 8th and 9th Ave., take A, C or E to 42nd St.)

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

## The Fight for Immigrant Rights and Black Liberation

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

University of Chicago, Reynolds Club  
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For more information: (312) 563-0441  
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### 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)  
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\*The views expressed by the participants are not necessarily those of the Immanuel Presbyterian Church.

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# Black History and the Class Struggle

## Immigrant Rights and the Fight for Black Liberation

The following is adapted from a forum given in Los Angeles on 16 September 2006 by Spartacist League Central Committee member Don Alexander. Part One of this piece, which we conclude below, appeared in WV No. 885 (2 February).

### PART TWO

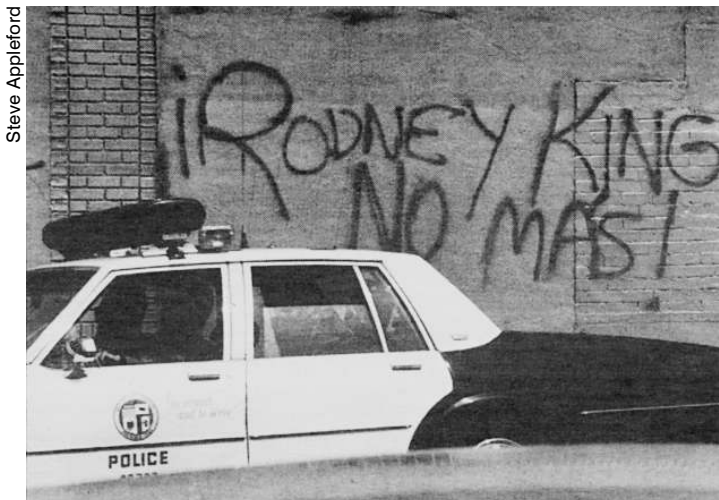
In recent demonstrations for immigrant rights, we heard the slogan “Today we march, tomorrow we vote.” The large, nationwide pro-immigrant rights protests last spring were an expression of a lot of determination of immigrant workers—Mexicans, Central Americans, Asians—to fight for their rights against the bourgeoisie’s attempts to criminalize them. These protests also represented, on the part of their organizers, a conscious attempt to steer immigrants into Democratic Party electoral politics. The protests were politically dominated by the Democratic Party and the reactionary Catholic church. The so-called “path to citizenship” “guest worker” program, which California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger recently picked up on, is pushed by Massachusetts Democratic Senator Ted Kennedy and Arizona Republican Senator John McCain. It represents a form of indentured servitude, beefed-up border patrol repression and new, fortified border walls.

A key issue in this unfolding battle is the fight for working-class political independence from the capitalist Democratic and Republican parties. Despite occasional differences, these parties contest every four years to run the government, which is an executive committee for running the affairs of the bourgeoisie. The pro-capitalist AFL-CIO labor bureaucracy opposes the expansion of the guest worker program, while refusing to mobilize labor’s power on behalf of the oppressed. The leadership of the so-called “Change to Win”—more like Born to Lose—coalition, which split from the AFL-CIO in 2005, supports Kennedy and McCain’s plan and also calls for more border “security” measures.

The misleaders of both major labor federations are dead set against organizing the unorganized through class-struggle means because they are staunch defenders of capitalism and the bourgeoisie’s so-called national interests. They tie the workers and the oppressed to the “friends of labor” capitalist Democratic Party. They hate and fear united class struggle against the capitalist exploiters. That’s why we fight to forge a class-struggle leadership of labor through a struggle to oust the treacherous labor bureaucracy.

The potential exists for common class struggle. We saw this during the multi-racial protests back in 1992 against the acquittal of the cops who savagely beat black motorist Rodney King. The Spartacist League fought for militant labor action in 1992 in defense of the besieged ghettos and barrios during the L.A. revolt. With the presence of immigrants, largely from Central America and Mexico, in these protests, this could have set the stage for genuine, united class struggle. The power existed within the labor movement nearby in the ports, in Long Beach, if the workers had been organized and mobilized. In the absence of such a struggle, the nationalists, both black and Latino, fought over the crumbs of who was going to “rebuild L.A.”—i.e., who was going to line their own pockets.

**Los Angeles, 1992: Multiracial upheaval over acquittal of racist LAPD cops in Rodney King beating shook capitalist rulers.**



Steve Appleford



Schumann/SABA

More recently, anti-racist white youth, blacks, Latinos and others stood together on the picket lines during the hard-fought UFCW supermarket workers strike of 2003-2004. That strike was knifed and defeated by the labor tops, who prevented it from being extended nationally.

In New York City, black, white and immigrant workers united on the picket lines during the all too brief, three-day transit strike in December 2005. It was a powerful strike. It represented a fight against the anti-strike Taylor Law. It showed in action the tremendous social power of labor to cripple the financial center of U.S. capitalism. However, the transit workers union bureaucracy led by Roger Toussaint called the strike off after three days. The bureaucracy’s program of class collaboration means an alliance with the very Democratic Party whose state attorney general, Eliot Spitzer, brought

down the injunction against the strike. Now Spitzer is governor of New York. There was tremendous sympathy for the strike on the part of the black and Latino poor and New York City workers who saw this union as standing up for *their* future.

To build a revolutionary party we have to politically defeat the opportunist currents within the labor movement, the opponents of the revolutionary workers movement. There is no such thing as the “family of the left.” While the fake-left reformists criticize aspects of the Democrats’ proposed immigration legislation, they oppose the perspective of a class-struggle fight for immigrant rights and for black freedom. They oppose the struggle for proletarian revolution.

The International Socialist Organization (ISO) stated during last year’s immigrant rights protests that they were “sending chills down the spine of Cor-

porate America” (*Socialist Worker* online, 7 April 2006) and that “potentially the movement can break the logjam of U.S. politics, in which the Republicans launch attack after attack with little or no response from the Democrats” (*Socialist Worker* online, 31 March 2006). In other words, make the Democrats fight, and capitalists should cease to be capitalists. The ISO ridiculously whines that the ultra-legalistic and respectable NAACP merely supports a path to citizenship for college-age students and has firmly planted itself on the right wing of the movement. From its inception, the NAACP has lobbied to get the viciously racist rulers to ameliorate conditions for black people in the smallest kind of way, to allow the tiny black middle class more access to perks and positions. Then you have Workers World Party, which claimed that the immigrant rights protests represented “taking a path independent of both Republicans and Democrats” (*Workers World* online, 27 April 2006).

Chiming in along similar lines is a tiny organization, mainly based in New York, called the League for the Revolutionary Party (LRP), which claims to be Trotskyist. The LRP was founded on capitulation to anti-Sovietism and racist reaction, to anti-busing bigotry in Boston. They also chase behind the liberals, and in the words of Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin, bow to spontaneity. In regard to the protests, they said that this “partial victory has already begun to affect the consciousness of oppressed immigrant workers. They are learning a crucial lesson: their own power” (*Proletarian Revolution*, Spring 2006). What partial victory? The beefing up of the borders with National Guardsmen? Increased deportations and increased deaths in the deserts in Arizona? What planet do they live on?

Now I have already pointed out a few things about the historical role of anti-black racism in the U.S., that this has largely prevented the development of socialist consciousness within the proletariat. And I recall an old saying when I was growing up: “If you’re white, you’re right; if you’re brown, stick around; if you’re black, get back.” It has some truth to it, but not the whole truth. Because you don’t have to be black to be kicked

**March 2006: Spartacist banner at massive L.A. demonstration for immigrant rights.**



WV Photo

around, beaten down and locked away. Black people don't have a monopoly on suffering in this society.

**Black Democrats and Immigrant Rights**

In the U.S., there are a number of petty-bourgeois black hustlers, capitalist wannabes, who were the main beneficiaries of the civil rights movement and who demonstrate complete contempt for the oppressed black masses. They got PhDs in blaming the oppressed for their oppression. They include black Democrats like Jesse Jackson and Barack Obama, black nationalist demagogue Louis Farrakhan of the Nation of Islam, and for a while Bill Cosby was not to be outdone.

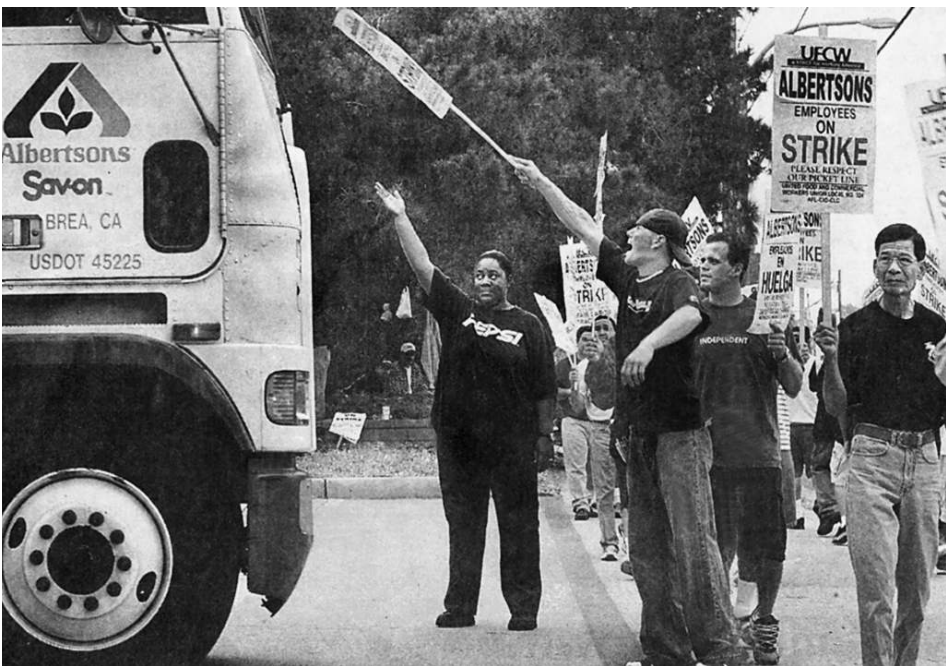
A number of the political con artists who represented the legalistic-pacifist wing of the civil rights movement are still around, cynically talking about a so-called new civil rights movement—which to them means a new movement to chain labor, blacks, Latinos and immigrants to the Democrats. Some of them play the anti-immigrant card, like Andrew Young, the black former UN ambassador under Democratic president Jimmy Carter, who recently talked about how various immigrants rip off black people.

Although we defend such gains as the right to vote, we point out that the failure of the liberal-led civil rights movement to qualitatively change the conditions of the black masses shows that no number of laws can change the conditions of the black ghetto masses. Because the slightest fight for jobs, decent integrated education, an end to racist police brutality means a fight to abolish capitalism, the root cause of black oppression. We fight for black liberation through socialist revolution—the assimilation of black people in an egalitarian socialist order in which the monstrous edifice of color-caste oppression has been swept away.

Black Democrats are divided on the question of immigrant rights. Al Sharpton and Jackson posture as defenders of immigrants, lining up some of the immigrants' votes for the Democrats. We know and have pointed out (see "Labor and the Fight for Immigrant Rights," WV No. 871, 26 May 2006) that under the liberal Democratic administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Mexican workers were used, abused and sent back to Mexico during the Great Depression of the 1930s. (This is not to mention the "Operation Wet-back" deportations under a later administration in the 1950s.) This was the same Roosevelt who opposed anti-lynching legislation because of his alliance with Southern racist Dixiecrats. This was historically the best the liberals have had to offer.

As a quintessential petty-bourgeois hustler, Sharpton wore a wire for the Feds in the 1980s. He has supported one or another sordid capitalist politician, like Republican Al D'Amato, as well as Roy Innis of CORE, who in the mid 1970s supported the UNITA organization, which was backed by apartheid South Africa, in Angola against the petty-bourgeois nationalists of the MPLA, which was backed by the Soviet Union and Cuba. Sharpton led boycotts in Harlem against Arab shopkeepers in 1986. He has served the racist exploiters well in keeping the masses in check—squelching struggle against the racist acquittal of the murderous cops who pumped 41 bullets at unarmed black African immigrant Amadou Diallo, and fronting for the Ku Klux Klan by going to court on their behalf in opposition to the Partisan Defense Committee-initiated labor/black mobilization that stopped the Klan from marching in New York City in October 1999.

L.A.-based, pro-Democratic Party liberal Earl Ofari Hutchinson issued one of his communiqués warning Latino capitalist politicians to not forget black interests as they rally for their rights. And he said, "Though Latinos have displaced blacks as the nation's biggest minority group, the popular notion lingers that they are years away from packing the political wallop of black voters and politicians"



Chambers/Orange County Register  
**Pickers in Southern California face down scab truck during 2003-2004 UFCW grocery workers strike.**

(Pasadena Weekly, 18 May 2006). And further he wrote in an online article (2 May 2006), "Latinos who want to change the mindset of blacks on illegal immigrants' rights must make a visible and concerted effort to reach out to blacks and not just on immigrant rights issues but on issues that are important to blacks as well."

Earl Ofari Hutchinson is a former so-called radical who long ago made his peace with this rotten racist capitalist system. Today he pushes illusions in the pro-capitalist Martin Luther King wing of the civil rights movement and he praises the arch-Uncle Tom Booker T. Washington, who from the late 1880s to the 20th century pushed segregation and "black capitalism." Washington's gospel of self-help is fervently embraced today by petty-bourgeois black misleaders who ingratiate themselves with the white ruling class. This underscores the sharp, conflicting class interests within the black population.

Again we hear, from Ofari, that the liberal pacifist King was becoming a socialist toward the end of his life. This is not new. The reformists sing the same psalms. When you hear that, it's time to reach for your wallet and watch your back. This is the same King who supported the suppression of the black masses during the Watts rebellion in 1965. This deliberate deception by these hypocritical, self-serving Democratic Party liberals is aimed at fooling the oppressed masses into thinking that the liberals represent a realistic alternative to a class-struggle program for black liberation, a program which is inseparable from a struggle to get rid of the capitalist system.

**For Working-Class Unity!**

The pervasive hopelessness and despair in America's ghettos today have a basis. They grow out of several decades of defeats for working people and black people as a result of the betrayals of the pro-capitalist labor leadership and the sav-

age attacks administered by black Democratic Party mayors as front men for racist capitalist rule. One can see the despair in the pervasive use of the "N" word.

Such defeats have generated among some blacks the growth of separatist sentiment, which is incapable, like the program of black separatism historically, of generating a program of struggle. Separatism acquiesces to the racist capitalist status quo, accepts "separate but equal" segregation. Najee Ali in L.A. is emblematic of the black nationalist program that embraces capitalism. While posing as a champion of the poor and oppressed, he rails against immigrants for "taking jobs from blacks." He defends *sharia*, Islamic law, in Afghanistan and the veil. He embraces anti-woman, anti-immigrant, anti-labor and anti-communist ideology, and he says that he is for the protection of women from the supposed evils of rap music. This is poison to integrated class struggle against the capitalist exploiters, who seek to enslave us all.

His reactionary politics is cut out of the same filthy cloth of the CIA-backed fundamentalist *mujahedin* who in Afghanistan in the late 1970s and '80s skinned schoolteachers who taught women how to read and write. Teaching women how to read and write was a crime for U.S. imperialism and their *mujahedin* Islamic cut-throat allies, just like during slavery it was a crime to teach black people how to read and write. In opposition to "born again" Cold Warrior Democratic president Jimmy Carter, we said: "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan! Extend the social gains of the October Revolution to the Afghan peoples!" We warned and fought against any pullout of Soviet troops in Afghanistan. Indeed, the Soviet withdrawal in 1988-89 was a criminal betrayal that paved the way for the destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state itself.

We don't romanticize the oppressed. We don't shut our eyes to the poisonous divisions of capitalist society. Many

immigrants do buy into the anti-black racism of the capitalist exploiters. For many immigrants, this has historically been one of the tickets for admission and possible acceptance in this capitalist society. The dominant ideas are the ideas of the ruling class. And we combat the ideological influence of the bourgeoisie upon the proletariat, be it through a struggle against racism, against the oppression of women or against anti-gay bigotry. Racial divisions among workers can be overcome through militant class struggle.

The reality and centrality of black oppression have come to bite many foreign-born immigrants over the years. This includes black immigrants, like the Jamaica-born poet Claude McKay, who in the 1920s captured his recognition of anti-black racism in this country, which he thought he was exempt from, in a powerful series of essays. One of these was titled, "He Who Gets Slapped." It was him, when he tried to get into a theater. Even the relatively privileged Cuban immigrants, who are welcomed into the U.S. by the anti-Communist American rulers, soon find this out. While white Cuban *gusanos*—counterrevolutionary worms—run Miami, the black Cubans who get there are relegated to low-paid jobs. They're segregated into the



Minuteman Project  
**June 2006: Anti-immigrant rally by reactionary Minuteman outfit, Los Angeles.**

ghettos like Liberty City and Overtown and subjected to racist cop terror.

**For a Workers Party to Fight for Socialist Revolution!**

It will take a fighting leadership of labor, committed to uncompromising class struggle, to transform the unions into instruments of revolutionary struggle against the bosses. The absence of a working-class-led fight against black oppression has crippled the labor movement in the United States, especially in the open shop South. With the significant growth of the immigrant workforce in the South, especially Mexican workers, the possibility of common struggle is sharply posed.

In Tar Heel, North Carolina, there exists the Smithfield packing plant, the biggest employer in the region and the largest pork production plant in the world. The few whites there are either mechanics or supervisors, while black and Latino workers have the dirtiest jobs. In 1997, after a failed union recognition struggle, management fired the pro-union black workers and replaced them with Latino immigrants. We know that this can blow up in the bosses' faces, like when unionized black janitors were replaced in L.A. by immigrant workers who then went on to organize strikes in the city. The morning of the union vote in Smithfield in 1997, the deputy sheriffs showed up in riot gear, and on the union trailer that had been set up were the words "n---r lover." That was the management response.

We've pointed out that the fight to organize the South means a direct fight for

*continued on page 11*



WV Photo  
**Spartacist League-initiated labor/black mobilization in Washington, D.C., stopped Ku Klux Klan march centrally targeting immigrant rights, 27 November 1982.**





# Britain: Racism and the Islamic Veil

The following article is reprinted from Workers Hammer No. 197 (Winter 2006-2007), newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

When cabinet minister Jack Straw declared in October that he would prefer Muslim women not to wear the veil that covers the face (the *niqab*), he opened the floodgates for a torrent of racist bigotry particularly directed against Muslim

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women. He also unleashed a campaign for banning the *niqab* in certain areas of public life. This comes in the wake of the ban on the *hijab* (headscarf) imposed in French schools in 2004 which was followed by similar bans in some German states, and now the Netherlands government proposes to ban the *niqab* in public places.

Straw's attack on Muslim women comes in the context of an escalation of the racist "war on terror" which seeks to brand Muslims the "enemy within." Labour ministers are trying to drum up support among the public, which is deeply opposed to the occupation of Iraq. There is also much scepticism about government "terrorism" scares, following the 2005 shooting of Jean Charles de Menezes and the police raid in Forest Gate in June 2006 in which Mohammed Abdul Kahar was shot in the chest. He and his brother were arrested although they were totally innocent. Meanwhile despite the massive "security" scare at the airports in August, no evidence whatsoever of a terror plot has been presented to the public.

In November, to whip up support for yet another tranche of "anti-terrorism" laws, MI5 head Eliza Manningham-Buller was wheeled out to give a speech that made the country appear to be awash with terrorist plots and potential terrorists. She claimed there are 30 "major terrorist plots being planned," while 1,600 individuals are "actively engaged in promoting attacks here and abroad" and no less than 100,000 people "considered the London bombings to be justified" (*Guardian*, 10 November 2006).

Soon after Straw's statement, a woman in Liverpool had her veil ripped off, there were arson attacks on mosques and the xenophobic capitalist press had a field day denouncing the veil, and all things Muslim. Straw of course says that it is Muslims wearing the veil that "could make community relations more difficult." His opposition to the veil soon took on the status of a government-backed campaign. Tony Blair proffered that the veil could make some "outside the community feel uncomfortable." Local government minister Phil Woolas called for the sacking of teaching assistant Aishah Azmi for wearing the *niqab* at work; Blair backed Kirklees Council in suspending her from her job, which was in a Church of England school with a majority of Muslim pupils. When Azmi was subsequently sacked, she denounced ministers who called for her dismissal, rightly saying it made her "fearful of the consequences for Muslim women in this country who want to work."

Meanwhile the city council in nearby

## No to Racist State Bans on Muslim Dress!

Bradford—home to one of the largest concentrations of Asians outside London—is drawing up guidelines stating that pupils and staff should not wear veils during lessons. And in a landmark ruling, the House of Lords unanimously backed Denbigh high school in Luton in their exclusion of a pupil, Shabina Begum, for wearing the Muslim *jilbab* (which covers the body but not the face). This overturned a previous Court of Appeal decision that Begum's exclusion was unlawful and that she had a right to manifest her religion.

ing on "national unity" against a supposed common enemy. The "war on terror" must be fought by mobilisations of the multiethnic working class, involving its immigrant component, in a struggle against the hated Blair government and against the capitalist system as a whole. This system based on production for profit is the root cause of racism and of the oppression of women in society.

Straw's provocation ignited a fierce controversy over race relations, religion and women's rights. Supporters of Labour's "war on terror" waxed venom-



Ray Tang/Rex Features

**June 2006 protest following "anti-terror" police raid in East London, in which Mohammed Abdul Kahar was shot. Right: Teaching assistant Aishah Azmi was fired with Blair's backing for wearing the *niqab*.**



Getty

As Marxists—and therefore atheists and fighters for women's liberation—we oppose the veil as both a symbol and an instrument of women's oppression. Nonetheless we unambiguously oppose any state or government bans and restrictions on the veil, which are racist and discriminatory against Muslims. Contrary to liberal claims that banning the veil is designed to integrate Muslims into society, bans will lead to expulsions of Muslim women from schools, universities and the workforce, which will reinforce their isolation and oppression. Bans will also fuel racism and play into the hands of the fascist BNP [British National Party].

Across Europe, bans and strictures on Islamic dress are an extension of the racist "war on terror" directed in the first instance against Muslims, who are falsely and indiscriminately branded terrorist suspects as a pretext for state repression. In Europe, people of Muslim origin are mainly the descendants of immigrant workers brought into the imperialist countries as cheap labour in previous decades to work in the lowest paid, dirtiest jobs, just like today's new generation of immigrants. In Britain, the majority of Muslims are of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin and constitute the most impoverished section of the population.

The "war on terror" is a classic "divide and rule" ploy, stigmatising Muslims as an excuse for a sweeping reduction in the legal rights of the entire population. It is also aimed at the working class, intended to stifle class struggle by insist-

ous against the religious strictures of Islam, which in Britain is a minority religion of the most deprived and downtrodden. The British capitalist state has its own established Christian churches in England and Wales that are tied to the heart of the conservative establishment, the monarchy and House of Lords. British society at large has been relatively secular for decades, but the Blair government has done its utmost to change that, by funding a huge growth in religious schools while over 40 of the 100 new "city academies" are to be run by Christians.

From Blair's crusading Christian godliness to local government minister Ruth Kelly's membership of the far-right Catholic sect Opus Dei, Christianity constantly interferes in the private lives of the population. The social consequences are all around. Creationism—once the preserve of Christian fundamentalists—is increasingly being taught in schools, repackaged as "intelligent design" while reactionaries of all stripes have been beating the drums for a reduction in the time limit on abortion. Religion ought not to have any official backing by the state, and people should be free to practise their religion without state interference and persecution. **Abolish the monarchy, the House of Lords and the established churches! For separation of religion and state! For free abortion on demand! For an end to state funding of religious schools—for free, secular education!**

larism, Toynbee is echoing the Islamophobia being whipped up by Labour ministers. This campaign has nothing to do with secularism. It is not directed at Christianity (as can be seen in Blair's backing of a Christian airport worker's right to wear a crucifix at work) but is part of a generalised assault on Muslims worldwide. Pope Benedict gave it his seal of approval in September when he provocatively described Islam as "evil and inhuman." This is rich indeed, coming from the head of the Catholic Church which is responsible for the Crusades and the Inquisition.

Outrageously, the Alliance for Workers Liberty (AWL) leapt to the Pope's defence! Condemning the international outcry from Muslims that forced him into a half-hearted apology as "the effort to silence the head of the Catholic Church," Sean Matgamna opined: "If the spiritual absolute monarch of a billion and a quarter Catholics can be treated like that, the cause of free speech and freedom to criticise religion, is surely in a very bad way" (*Solidarity*, 28 September 2006). The AWL's Islamophobia is an extension of their craven loyalty to "democratic" British imperialism born out of anti-communist hostility to the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Their defence of imperialist "democracy" against Islam today is a basic denial that the biggest force for terrorism on earth is U.S. and British imperialism.

Prominent liberals from Muslim backgrounds reluctantly lined up with Jack

# For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

Straw, whom they otherwise despise. *Independent* columnist Yasmin Alibhai-Brown said, “Jack Straw’s politics usually make me either furious or bilious,” but on the veil, “I find myself agreeing with his every word.” Alibhai-Brown was scathing against liberal apologists for the veil in Britain. Noting that unveiled women in Iran are imprisoned, “branded whores and beaten” while women in Afghanistan and Palestine suffer a similar plight, she complained bitterly that: “Instead of expressing solidarity with these females, sanctimonious British niqabis are siding with their foes” (*Independent*, 9 October 2006).

Also backing Straw was Houzan Mahmoud of the Worker Communist Party of Iraq (WCPI) who said, “I could never have imagined having anything in common with Jack Straw, but I find myself in agreement with him about how it feels talking to a woman covered up in hijab or the ‘niqab’ that covers women fully” (guardian.co.uk Web site, 7 October 2006). Despite the name, the WCPI is an anti-clerical reformist organisation which often looks to the imperialist powers as allies in the fight for women’s rights in the semi-colonial world. Mahmoud points to the horrors of Iraq, where “the veil is being imposed at gunpoint.” Yet despite the British government’s role in Iraq, she sees no contradiction in calling on them to defend women at home by banning the veil.

The very institutions these people look to and support are *responsible for* the bloody mess in the semi-colonial world. It is absurd to appeal to the British imperialist state, whose military occupying forces in Iraq are actively fomenting the communalist terror Mahmoud so vehemently opposes. The imperialists are perfectly capable of seizing on the oppression of women in the Muslim world and elsewhere, but only to justify colonial subjugation. It is fatal to fall for the illusion that they will actually improve the status of women.

Afghanistan today is a case in point. In 2001, George Bush cited the status of women—who are brutally oppressed—as part of the justification for a devastating military assault on one of the poorest countries on earth. Among the liberals who fell for this lie was feminist journalist Natasha Walter who visited Afghanistan at the time. On a recent return visit she was shocked by the situation of women: the majority of girls cannot go to school; women who participate in public life, including a well-known member of parliament and a TV presenter, live in constant fear of being killed by fundamentalists (*Guardian*, 28 November 2006).

lord in colonial Egypt, cited the fact that women there wore veils to justify the British occupation which began in 1882. Cromer’s claim was bogus, to put it mildly: so vehement was his opposition to women’s rights that in London in 1910 he became president of the National League for Opposing Women’s Suffrage! He also opposed suffrage for working-class men, seeing it as a slippery slope towards socialism.

**Soviet Bureaucracy’s Betrayal in Afghanistan**

The U.S. and British imperialists are responsible for the growth of the global network of Islamist forces, including Osama bin Laden, committed to *jihād* against the West. In the 1980s, the CIA organised and armed the Afghan *mujahed*in (holy warriors) who were known for throwing acid in the faces of unveiled women and shooting schoolteachers for educating girls. This massive mobilisation by U.S. imperialism was directed against the Soviet Union and its allies in government in Afghanistan.

When the Soviet Army entered Afghanistan in December 1979, we said, “Hail the Red Army!” and “Extend the social gains of the October Revolution to the Afghan peoples!” The Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy—for its own reasons—sent in the army at the request of the nationalist government in Kabul which was attempting to lower the bride price and to introduce land reform. These modest measures provoked the reactionary Islamic fundamentalists into a “holy war” against the government forces. The reformist Socialist Workers Party (SWP), the AWL and other reformists around the world lined up with the imperialists, howling against the Soviet troops, in the first war in modern history in which women’s emancipation was a central issue. The reformists lined up with their own “democratic” bourgeoisie because what was at stake was not only social progress within Afghanistan but also the defence of the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Union was a workers state that emerged from the victorious October 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia that overthrew the rule of the landlords and capitalists and established the dictatorship of the proletariat supported by the vast peasantry. Even though tsarist Russia was the most backward of the imperialist countries, the Russian Revolution was a beacon to workers and the oppressed in all advanced capitalist countries and of course to the oppressed masses of Central Asia. Despite the Stalinist bureaucratic degeneration that took place in the Soviet Union beginning in



British occupation troops near Nawzad, southern Afghanistan, killed 21 people in June 2006 battle.

The Soviet Army presence could have resulted in the incorporation of Afghanistan into Soviet Central Asia, opening up the possibility of a social transformation, something that did not exist before because a proletariat as such did not exist. But rather than fighting to defeat the brutal *mujahedin*, the Kremlin Stalinists under Mikhail Gorbachev criminally withdrew the Soviet troops in 1989. This was a huge betrayal of Afghanistan, especially its women. It also paved the way for handing over East Germany and the USSR itself to counterrevolution, a colossal defeat for the working masses of the entire world.

**SWP Extols the Virtues of Islamic Reaction**

Today the SWP is allied with Islamic organisations in Respect and the Stop the War Coalition (StWC). In response to Straw’s statement, StWC held a “People’s Assembly” in London on 18 November against Islamophobia and the “war on terror.” This gathering (which provided prayer rooms, as is now standard at SWP events) issued a declaration condemning the government’s attack on Islamic religious practices, and the occupation of Iraq. But in keeping with the SWP’s gross capitulation to Islamic forces, the declaration says not one word on the rights of women. Referring only obliquely to the veil, it does so positively, presenting the issue as if it were a lifestyle choice and a welcome example of “diversity.” It said:

“In particular we condemn the statements made by government ministers designed to isolate, demonise and even criminalise Islamic religious practices, choice of dress and cultural expression. We affirm that such diversity in fact makes an important contribution to the overall development of our society.”

The notion that the veil is just some “choice of dress” or a matter of “cultural expression” is liberal nonsense. Marxists reject such “cultural relativism” which serves to prettify hideous oppression in the neo-colonial world as merely “cultural differences.” Often those who speak of “cultural relativism” do so in a laudable effort not to impose Western cultural standards on the rest of the world. However it can also be used to condone gruesome crimes like female genital mutilation or so-called honour killings. Contrary to such drivel, the head-to-toe veil is a walking prison that physically excludes women from society. It embodies the submission of women to men and their supposed inferior status. The *hijab* too is a tool of oppression, covering the hair based on the notion that female attractiveness and sexuality must be suppressed and hidden because it leads men into “sin” and is a sign of Western “decadence.” *We solidarise with the countless thousands of women who have sought to escape the tyranny of the veil, whether in the Muslim world or in the imperialist centres.*

To justify their capitulation to Islam, the SWP sometimes cites the fact that Lenin’s Bolshevik Party regarded religion as a private matter. Lenin made it very clear that Marxism is based on dialectical materialism which is “absolutely atheistic and positively hostile to all religion” and “has always regarded all modern religions and churches, and each and

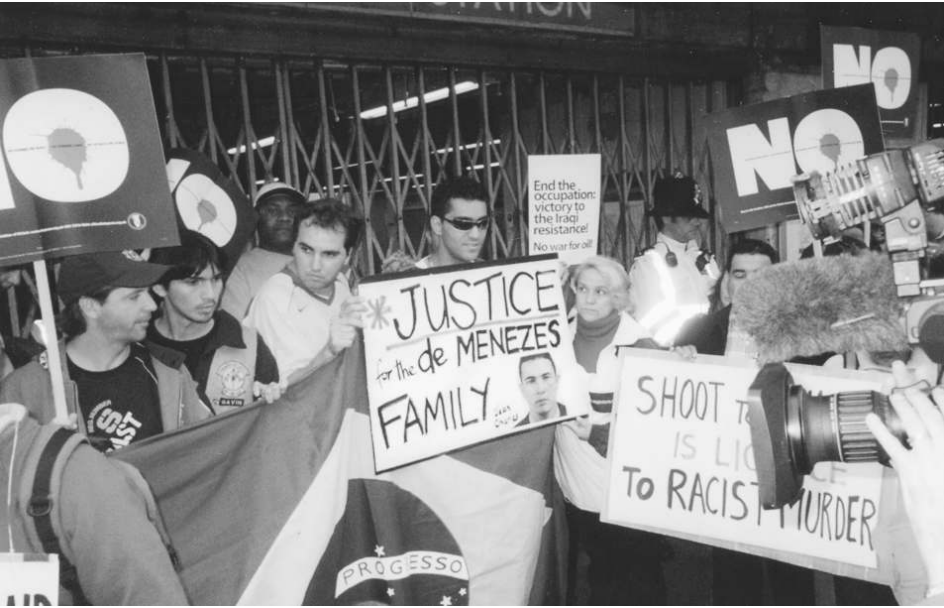
every religious organisation, as instruments of bourgeois reaction that serve to defend exploitation and to befuddle the working class.” At the same time he noted that religion serves to solace the oppressed masses in a cruel world, and therefore to free the masses from its yoke requires class struggle for socialist revolution against the capitalist system that gives rise to the brutal social conditions religion thrives on. However Lenin was adamant that revolutionaries “regard religion as a private matter *in relation to the state*, but not in relation to themselves, not in relation to Marxism, and not in relation to the workers’ party” (“The Attitude of the Workers’ Party to Religion,” 1909).

The SWP’s adaptation to Islam is based on the utterly false notion that political Islam is “anti-imperialist.” Since counterrevolution in the Soviet Union in 1991-92, the imperialists have sought to portray Islamic fundamentalism—exemplified by Osama bin Laden’s Al Qaeda—as the replacement for the “red menace” in order to justify domestic repression and imperialist military aggression. The U.S. imperialists feel emboldened in their military adventures and are seeking to strengthen their hold on the historically Muslim oil-rich Near East.

The dramatic rise of political Islam in this region is a result of the bankruptcy of secular nationalism and of Stalinism, forces that were once dominant among the poor and oppressed in Iraq, Iran and Egypt. Today the masses increasingly look to Islamic jihadist forces that are reactionary and hostile to any form of social progress. These forces are reacting in their own distorted way to the crimes of U.S. and British imperialism against the peoples of the Near East, including their backing for Israel’s bloody repression of the Palestinians. The fundamentalists also utilise the perceived threat by the imperialists to “Westernise” Muslim societies as a justification for the degradation of women. However this threat is actually *non-existent*. The U.S. and British imperialists are not about to set up secular democracies in either Afghanistan or Iraq, or anywhere else in the neo-colonial world.

Islam is not uniquely reactionary or anti-woman; in fact anti-woman bigotry is just as much an integral part of Christianity

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July 2005: London protest against killing of Jean Charles de Menezes by British cops.

The *Independent* (29 November 2006) also reported on a 46-year-old school teacher, Mohammed Halim, who was savagely killed and disembowelled by the Taliban in a series of murders of teachers who dare to educate girls.

There is nothing new in the imperialists using the oppression of women in the colonial world to justify enslavement of a weaker country. In Victorian times Lord Cromer, the Empire’s chief over-

1923-24, it remained a workers state until counterrevolution in 1991-92.

Nowhere were the remaining gains of the Bolshevik Revolution more clearly visible in 1979 than in Soviet Central Asia. An Afghan schoolteacher looking across the northern border at that region, which two generations earlier was as wretchedly poor as Afghanistan, saw a literate, relatively modern society where women were no longer degraded slaves.

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Newspaper of the Spartacist League

**No to racist state bans on Muslim dress!**

**HANDS OFF MUSLIM**  
**STOP POLICE BRUTALITY**  
**TONY BLAIR CRUSADE**

**Racism and the Islamic veil**

**For women's liberation through socialist revolution!**

*Marxist newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain*

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Mexico...

(continued from page 1)

We reprint below a 27 January GEM leaflet distributed at the Mexico City demonstration.

\* \* \*

“Yet the slightest attention and thought will suffice to satisfy anyone that the ways of combating catastrophe and famine are available, that the measures required to combat them are quite clear, simple, perfectly feasible, and fully within reach of the people’s forces, and that these measures are *not* being adopted *only* because, *exclusively* because, their realisation would affect the fabulous profits of a handful of landowners and capitalists.”  
—V. I. Lenin, *The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It*, 1917

The capitalists’ pockets get fatter in the same proportion as the poor get thinner. Facing a volatile situation in the country with combative struggles in defense of the basic rights of the population, and after decades of privatizations and the devastation of the countryside under NAFTA, now the bloodsucking corn magnates, in collusion with the right-wing Felipe Calderón government, even want to take tortillas away from the poor. Becoming a luxury item, tortillas are being sold for as much as 30 pesos [\$2.73] per kilo (a 400 percent increase!). This crisis is a product of rapacious speculation on the part of magnates like the U.S. company Cargill and the Mexican monopoly Maseca. While the pathetic minimum wage rose just 3.9



Reuters

Woman weighing tortillas in Mexico City shop. Right: Mexico City slum. Price increase threatens poor with starvation.



Corbis

of labor to produce profits for the capitalists. Speculation, economic crises, misery and repression are endemic to this system and are even more catastrophic in semi-colonial countries like Mexico, no matter which of the bosses’ parties rules—the PAN, PRI or PRD. Capitalism cannot be reformed to serve the interests of the workers and the oppressed; it must be overthrown.

The UNT, the CROC [pro-PRI union], the SME and its Mexican Unions’ Front, and the Congress of Labor (CT) had announced that they would all march together this January 31 against the rise in tortilla prices and for an emergency increase in

sive provision, which was supposed to take effect in January 2008. At the same time, Calderón, serving his imperialist masters, is testing the waters to move on to the total privatization of strategic national industries. Down with the privatization of the oil and electric industries!

Given the backwardness of the Mexican countryside and the inability of the peasants to compete with huge U.S. agribusiness, NAFTA has caused the most terrible agricultural crisis. Millions of peasants have been condemned to misery, while millions more try to survive in the U.S. or in the big cities of Mexico, where they join the huge army that makes up the “informal economy.” The large number of Mexican workers on the other side of the border serve as a human bridge to help mobilize the multiracial U.S. working class, which shares the same historic interests, to join the fight against imperialism. *Down with NAFTA, treaty for imperialist rape of Mexico! For socialist revolution in all the Americas!*

Mexico has seen a series of convulsive social struggles that indicate the extent of the bourgeois regime’s instability. Last year the industrial working class gave a taste of its power: the combative miners and steel workers union strike in Lázaro Cárdenas—the most important outbreak of class struggle in the country in many years—brought the bosses to their knees and gave the bourgeois state a black eye. Millions marched in 2005 and 2006 in defense of their electoral rights and in support of the bourgeois populist López Obrador. There were also combative struggles of the impoverished urban and rural petty bourgeoisie, such as in Oaxaca and Atenco. In the wake of the brutal smashing of APPO, the “*tortillazo*” could well be the spark that sets off mass labor struggle.

Conscious of the massive discontent with his fraudulent government and the explosive character of his right-wing measures, Calderón has launched unusually fierce repression. He has greatly reinforced all the police forces and military forces and launched massive operations sowing terror from [southern] Guerrero to [northern] Chihuahua states, targeting in particular guerrilla organizations like the EPR [Popular Revolutionary Army]. Calderón surely has his eye on Chiapas and the EZLN [Zapatista Army of National Liberation]. On January 22, Calderón imposed

a new virtual state of siege in the Zócalo in downtown Mexico City, mobilizing some 4,000 police to protect his speech on “security” against protesters and to attack PRD supporters. *Free all the imprisoned APPO and Atenco activists! Drop all the charges!*

We Spartacists are guided by the perspective of permanent revolution formulated by Leon Trotsky and vindicated by the October Revolution of 1917. The working class uniquely has the power, the cohesion and the class interest to put itself at the head of all the oppressed—peasants and indigenous people, the urban poor, women, gays—against this inhumane system of exploitation and oppression. Indeed, only proletarian revolution—destroying capitalism and its state and replacing it with a workers state based on collective ownership of the means of production—can lay the basis for the elimination of misery, bring the peasants out of their ancestral backwardness and obtain elemental democratic rights like education for all or free abortion on demand. Only proletarian revolution, fighting for its extension north of the Río Bravo, can achieve genuine national emancipation from the U.S. imperialists. Only socialist revolution can guarantee political rights for the exploited and oppressed through soviet democracy, in which *they* will lead the destiny of the country through the soviets, or councils, of workers and poor peasants.

The workers need their own class party—a revolutionary internationalist leadership like Lenin and Trotsky’s Bolsheviks—to fight for power through socialist revolution. A fundamental part of the struggle for a revolutionary workers party is combatting the ideology of bourgeois nationalism that permeates the working class and is prominently pushed by the PRD. Bourgeois nationalism claims to overcome the fundamental class division in society, pushing the bogus “national unity” of all Mexicans and channeling the genuine aspiration of the masses for national emancipation from the imperialists into support to their lackeys, the Mexican bourgeoisie. Against imperialist rapaciousness and the lies of the Mexican bourgeoisie, revolutionary Marxists counterpose proletarian internationalism. We fight for an international division of labor and an internationally planned economy



Dominguez/La Jornada

Drug bust in Mexico City in January, part of massive police/military mobilization by right-wing Calderón government.

percent, Calderón, in an outrageous display of irony, made a pact with these big consortiums for a “price limit” (which is barely observed) of 8.5 pesos [\$0.77] per kilo—a 40 percent increase! Calderón and his cronies are condemning the workers, peasants and urban poor to starvation. To fight against this crisis, workers and peasants must take control of the food that the capitalists are hoarding. Expropriate the corn magnates with no compensation! For labor strikes that demand a subsidy for tortillas so everyone can have them! For the distribution of food for all under control of the trade unions, organizations of poor peasants and the urban poor! The only way to end hunger is to seize the means of production from the capitalists through proletarian revolution and its extension internationally. Capitalism is a system based on the exploitation

the minimum wage and called on the CTM [PRI-affiliated Mexican Confederation of Labor] to join them. The PRI-dominated CT backed out following the declaration that López Obrador would head up the march, and the CTM argued that Calderón should be “given some time” to see whether his measures “work”! The leaderships of the incorrectly labeled “independent” unions as well as those of the PRI unions are in reality *misleaders* of the working class who subordinate themselves to one or another wing of the bourgeoisie. *For the political independence of the working class! For strike actions against repression and the starvation offensive!*  
Under the pretext of “alleviating” the crisis, Calderón has given a green light to importing thousands of tons of U.S. corn, putting into effect NAFTA’s most explo-

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January 12: More than 3,000 steel workers in Lázaro Cárdenas struck to protest arrest of union leader who was released later that day.

Carlos Torres Oseguera





# Britain...

(continued from page 7)

and Judaism as of Islam. However, while Christianity and Judaism adapted to the rise of industrial capitalism, Islam remained rooted mainly in those parts of the world that remained poor and undeveloped, due to the world system of capitalism. Historically and today, the development of the weaker countries has been *arrested and retarded by imperialism*. Capitalist imperialism is based on the domination of the world by a handful of wealthy states using their military might to protect their markets and spheres of influence. All religions reinforce the patriarchal family, and the institution of the family is the main source of women's oppression in society. It is the mechanism for inheriting property, for socialising new generations of workers and for inculcating the moral and sexual codes of the ruling class.

## Hue and Cry Over "Multiculturalism"

The row over the veil in Britain overlaps with a controversy over "multiculturalism," a policy of voluntary cultural and racial segregation of minority communities that has been promoted by governments for decades. It has always been hated by right-wingers as a concession to racial tolerance. Now it is being denounced as "self-segregation" and Blair has declared that everyone has a "duty to be part of an integrated United Kingdom." This means conform to so-called British values, or, in Blair's words, "don't come here" (*Guardian*, 9 December 2006). Multiculturalism is also detested by liberal Muslims because it strengthens conservative, patriarchal and religious forces within minority communities. It was invoked to justify the government's tacit

support to reactionary protests by Sikh elders that shut down the play *Behzti* (Dishonour) in Birmingham in December 2004. Written by a Sikh woman, the play was savagely critical of the oppression of minority women, including by religious elders.

We Marxists fight for *voluntary integration of all minorities based on full equality*. But we understand that the eradication of racism, women's oppression and all forms of discrimination requires a revolutionary struggle, mobilising the power of the proletariat, to uproot capitalism and liberate humanity from poverty and want. Predictably, the reformist SWP defends multiculturalism. This denies that minority communities, like the rest of society, are class-divided and that the struggles of immigrant and other minority workers for jobs, unions and equal status means breaking the grip of religious and other conservative community leaders. Moreover, supporting multiculturalism promotes illusions that the capitalist state can be used as an instrument to fight racist oppression. The capitalist state exists to defend class rule based on private property; it is the executive organ of the capitalist class for the suppression and exploitation of the working class.

The increased prevalence of the Islamic veil in Britain is in part due to the rise of political Islam internationally. It is also a result of relentless racism, poverty and hardship suffered by immigrant workers and their descendants under British capitalism. Two decades ago, religion had much less influence among minorities from South Asia. In 1985 the film *My Beautiful Laundrette*, based on a novel by Pakistani-derived writer Hanif Kureishi telling of a gay relationship between a young Asian man and a National Front "hard man," was hugely popular. Today an Asian gay film would cause uproar.



Central Museum of the Revolution, Moscow

**Soviet Central Asia, 1924: Communist cadres of Zhenotdel, Bolshevik commission for work among women, teach literacy. October Revolution was beacon to women of the East.**

under working-class rule.

To wage a successful struggle against the constant rightist attacks, it is necessary to shatter the widespread illusions in the PRD. The PRD is a party of capital, whose differences with the PAN are, at bottom, over how to administer capitalist exploitation. In the old style of the PRI, the PRD tries to deactivate the enormous discontent and keep it within the framework of bourgeois politics through concessions to the workers and the poor. The PRD is incapable of breaking with the imperialists, to whom, like the rest of the Mexican bourgeoisie, it is tied by thousands of threads.

In fact, the PRD does not even oppose NAFTA but rather seeks simply to "renegotiate" it. The PRD wants to renegotiate the continued subordination of Mexico to the imperialists, giving it a more "dignified" and "democratic" image. The nature of the PRD can also be seen in its actions. PRD-directed police forces, together with police forces under the PAN and/or the PRI, attacked striking UNAM students in

1999-2000 (in the end breaking the strike) as well as workers in Lázaro Cárdenas, peasants in Atenco and many, many others. Only defeats can come from putting one's trust in the bourgeoisie. *Break with AMLO and the bourgeois PRD!*

We Spartacists fight against the capitalists' policy that tries to make the workers bear the full burden of the crisis, which is caused not by material scarcity but by capitalist greed and exploitation. Open the books! Down with trade secrets! Against chronic and massive unemployment, and to maintain the cohesion of the working class and mobilize the enormous mass of the poor urban street vendors at its side, the working class should fight for an extensive program of public works and a sliding scale of working hours, to divide up all the available work. Against the galloping increase in the cost of living, we call for price-monitoring committees composed of delegates from the factories, unions, cooperatives, peasant organizations and the urban poor. We demand a sliding scale of wages to assure an auto-



Tass

**Above: Afghan women in 1980, as Soviet Army intervention opened prospect of social emancipation. Right: In today's Kabul, woman in burka begs on street.**



Musadeq Sadeq/AP

In so far as integration of minorities exists in this country, it was not handed down by government policy, but was fought for in the streets and on picket lines. In 1958 in London's Notting Hill and in Nottingham, black and Asian residents fought back racist mobs backed by police in scenes similar to those in Oldham in 2001. Blacks and Asians have been integrated into the workforce and the trade unions and have historically played a prominent role in the class battles of this country. The Grunwick strike in 1976 in London was a landmark battle by Asian women for decent working conditions. In the great miners strike of 1984-85, the black and Asian communities provided huge support to the overwhelmingly white miners, as an act of solidarity against the common enemy—the Thatcher government. The Heathrow airport wildcat strike that paralysed BA [British Airways] last year and cost them millions, carried out by the ground crews in support of over 600 sacked catering workers, was a powerful demonstration of the social power of the working class. The racially integrated workforce struck in class solidarity with the catering workers, the majority of whom were Sikh women, showing how class struggle can transcend ethnic lines.

Within the Respect coalition, the SWP has dropped their reformist claim to fight for "socialism" or the working class. They have disavowed secularism and any

meaningful fight for women's or gay rights in order to maintain their bloc with Islamists. In its own way, this shows the SWP has absorbed the "death of communism" myth to the same degree as Jack Straw, who argues that unlike 50 years ago when the divisions in society "were ones of class," in the post-Soviet world and especially since 9/11 they are "principally ones of religion" (*New Statesman*, 18 September 2006). This myth must be combated and shattered through class struggle. A class-struggle fight to defend the rights of Muslims and all immigrants and minorities against the racist capitalist state is in the interests of all the working class. Against anti-immigrant racism, we call for *full citizenship rights for all immigrants*.

We are dedicated to building a multiethnic revolutionary workers party which will champion the rights of all the oppressed and whose task is to bring revolutionary consciousness to the working class, overcoming backwardness and prejudice in the struggle for the overthrow of capitalist class rule. The liberation of women requires successful struggle for working-class rule. This will lay the basis for an egalitarian communist society of material abundance, which alone will make it possible to replace the family, the key institution of women's oppression. This is also the only route to the eradication of racism and inequality and will open the road to the full emancipation of women. ■

matic increase in proportion to the increase in the price of consumer goods. In short, we call for employment and dignified living conditions for all. But such simple

and rational demands are counterposed to capitalism—it is necessary to prepare its general overthrow through the construction of a revolutionary workers party. ■

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Mumia...

(continued from page 12)

to see him freed. I want to make the point that millions around the globe took up Mumia's case over the years. They took it up based on the work of the Partisan Defense Committee, affiliated with the Spartacist League, as is the Labor Black League, as well as many, many other organizations that did not at all have the PDC's politics. These included the MOVE organization, the various Free Mumia coalitions, Equal Justice and Noelle Hanrahan from the Prison Radio Project and many organizations internationally. But we are unique in understanding that the capitalist state cannot be reformed and that Mumia's case, for all the reasons that we have said, represents the epitome of the race question, the class question and the fight for freedom for us all.

People around the world identified with Mumia and his cause out of a visceral rejection of all of the injustices inherent in capitalism—poverty, war, racial and ethnic bias. In all of these ways they saw in him a symbol. Though being in lockdown 23 hours a day, seven days a week, in solitary, Mumia nonetheless has never given up his own convictions and his own fight against the injustices of the system.

What needs to be underscored here is what happens when you are on the streets demanding a new trial on the basis that the courts can be pressured to be fair. Other political organizations that say that they are socialists, like Socialist Action, the International Socialist Organization and Workers World, know full well that such demands are in contradiction with the understanding that capitalism must be overturned. These reformist groups spread illusions that the courts can be reformed, that we can count on the courts to provide some justice. Well, the courts will respond, but only from the fear of mass action, particularly the action of the organized working class, with its power to strike. It is such social unrest that drives them to make some amelioration in the system.

Early Evidence of Innocence

I worked on Mumia's legal team from about 1995 through June 1999. Before that, we in the PDC tried our best to help Mumia get good legal counsel. We also campaigned to make it clear who Mumia was—a Black Panther Party member, a MOVE supporter, a black militant and journalist. The Partisan Defense Committee believes that Mumia is innocent. And basically the evidence of Mumia's innocence that was uncovered during the period from 1995 through 2001 is due to



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the work that we did. Not because we are great lawyers, or the most experienced, but because we understood that the state had framed Mumia up and that he was an innocent man.

The evidence was simply there to be seen. In 1995, a man named William Singletary testified at a hearing for Mumia. Singletary is a black man who was not a leftist but a Vietnam vet who had a tow-truck company that required a lot of cooperation from the cops, and he happened to

was a prostitute who had testified at the 1982 trial that she was on the scene but really didn't see very much of what happened. This contradicted her initial witness statement that she saw the shooter running from the scene. When she testified in 1996, she admitted that she had lied at the trial. She said that her original statement was true, that she saw the shooter run from the scene, but that she had been coerced by cops, who had threatened that she would be sent away for a long time on a robbery



Owens/Philadelphia Bulletin

Left: Nearly 600 Philly cops besieged MOVE's Powelton Village commune in 1978. Above: At August 1978 press conference, Mayor Rizzo justifies siege and lashes out at "new breed" of journalists such as Mumia (far left).



Susan Schary

Artist's depiction of attorney Rachel Wolkenstein being ordered to jail by Judge Sabo at 1995 PCRA hearing seeking overturn of Mumia's conviction.

be on the street corner in the Center City area when Daniel Faulkner was shot. He tried to tell the cops that he saw somebody wearing a green Army jacket get out of a car and shoot the cop, and Mumia came along after the fact. They would not hear anything of this. They threatened him, coerced him and falsified his witness statements. He left town and was not there for the 1982 trial. We got Singletary to testify at Mumia's 1995 Post Conviction Relief Act (PCRA) appeal hearing.

We also located Veronica Jones, and she testified in court the following year. She

charge and not see her young children, to say something different. As she was testifying in '96, the prosecution pulled her off the witness stand and arrested her in court on a two-year-old petty larceny warrant from New Jersey.

And then we had another PCRA hearing in 1997, where another former prostitute named Pamela Jenkins, who was a prostitute-lover of a cop who had been prosecuted and convicted on federal corruption charges, testified that various police officers knew that Mumia was not the shooter. She testified that Cynthia

White, another prostitute who was the key prosecution witness, had lied when she said that she saw Mumia shoot Faulkner. She lied due to threats from and fear of the cops.

These are some of the things that happened in the early period before the late Judge Sabo, the racist judge who ran the courtroom without even the pretense of what's supposed to be a fair hearing. In 1982, before Mumia's trial, Judge Sabo stated in the presence of a court stenographer and another judge, "I'm going to help them fry the n----r." That was Judge Sabo.

The Significance of the Beverly Confession

I want to say a bit about Arnold Beverly, who confessed to killing Faulkner. Arnold Beverly was a hitman for the mob. He was hired, according to his statement, by the mob and the cops—working with a cop liaison—to shoot and kill Faulkner on that night in December 1981. He had heard—and this was all he was told—that Faulkner was a problem for the cops and the mob. Center City was rife with corruption. The cops got payoffs for the clubs, the gambling, the prostitution.

Later we learned that at the time Faulkner was killed, there were three ongoing federal investigations into cop corruption, which disclosed the fact that the cops and the mob were like one. We have an affidavit from a witness who testified in several different federal prosecutions that he had heard from cops that they were afraid that there was a cop informant working for the FBI. We believe that informant was Faulkner, that the killing of Faulkner was a hit, and that Beverly was one of the people hired to do that. When Mumia showed up on the scene, quite accidentally, the cops who were there knew exactly who he was. Some of the cops involved in corruption were the very same cops who had earlier attacked the Panthers and who had attacked MOVE.

The chief police officer on the scene on December 9, 1981, was Inspector Alfonzo Giordano. He also happened to have been the right-hand man for Frank Rizzo, the former head cop and mayor of Philadelphia. He also happened to have been the head of the Stakeout squad, the SWAT team in Philadelphia that went after the Panthers in 1969 and 1970. He also was the cop who was in charge of the barricades thrown up around the MOVE Powelton Village compound in 1977-78.

When the cops saw Mumia on the scene in December 1981, they all knew him as the one who was the 16-year-old spokesman for the Panthers back in 1970, the one who spoke out after the FBI killing of Panthers. Less than ten years later, Mumia became a reporter and exposed the lies that the cops and the city were saying about the MOVE organization. Mumia covered the trial of the MOVE 9, who were falsely convicted of killing a cop during the Powelton Village siege, when in fact the cop was killed in police crossfire. MOVE members were sent away to prison for 30 to 100 years. That trial took place in August 1981. Faulkner was shot, and Mumia was shot and almost killed, in December 1981. The police knew exactly who Mumia was and they were really happy to get him.

JOIN THE CAMPAIGN!

Funds are urgently needed for legal defense!

Make a contribution today, payable to "National Lawyers Guild Foundation" (earmarked for "Mumia") and mail to: Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal, P.O. Box 2012, New York, NY 10159.

Organize protest! Pass motions in your unions, campus, community and religious organizations demanding Mumia's freedom. Get your union or organization to make a contribution and join rallies and protests for Mumia. Publicize Mumia's case in your union or organization's newsletter.

Spread the word! Contact the PDC for copies of The Fight to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal—Mumia Is Innocent! This pamphlet arms activists in the struggle for Mumia's freedom by presenting the political basis of the state vendetta against



Mumia and the explosive evidence which completely destroys the more than two-decades-long frame-up of this eloquent fighter for black freedom. It is available for \$1. Get the PDC button: "Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!"—\$1 each. Order the PDC video, From Death Row, This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal—\$10 for DVD, \$15 for VHS. Bundles of the 4-page brochure, Mumia Is an Innocent Man: Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!—\$2 for 25 copies. Order from/make checks payable to Partisan Defense Committee at our New York City address below.



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Now there are a lot of stories going around about Arnold Beverly, that he is all about the money and the fame, and that he has told many different stories. There is an affidavit by Beverly in the PDC pamphlet, *The Fight to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal*, that you should read. I first talked to Arnold Beverly in 1989. He said a lot of things to me that never changed, except for one thing. In 1989 he didn't admit that he killed Faulkner. In 1999 he did admit this. The fundamentals of what he said, including the particular cops who were involved in setting this up, remain the same. Arnold Beverly confessed and is willing to testify for Mumia not because he is a good guy and is altruistic, nor for money. Rather, the cops tried to kill Beverly that night, too, because they wanted to make it look as if there was just a shootout on the street between various blacks, and Faulkner was shot in the middle of it. And Beverly was shot that night.

I also want to address the rumor that Mumia doesn't want anything to do with the Beverly evidence. Mumia knows what the PDC is doing about his case, as he has for the 20 years we've worked with him. That doesn't mean that Mumia agrees with everything the PDC says, but there is nothing we have done about his case that he has not known about, that he has not been able to say yea or nay to. He knows about the PDC-initiated newspaper ads titled "Mumia Abu-Jamal Is an Innocent Man!" that have been published which protest the state frame-up and cite evidence of his innocence, including the confession of Arnold Beverly. Mumia has approved of all the work that we are doing.

Why is there so much hullabaloo over this? I want to make it clear that the Beverly evidence did not come to the fore until 2001. His evidence presented an entire picture of what happened. The very contradictory evidence presented by the

prosecution at Mumia's trial is explainable only with the benefit of the information that Beverly provided. This has to do with the number of shooters and where the shooters were. It has to do with the type of gun that was used.

Very importantly, the Beverly evidence has to do with how Mumia was shot—not by Faulkner but by another cop. And there was something that had always plagued us. We had gone through the record, and there were all these references in police reports that said that the shooter wore a green Army jacket. Somebody said that the guy in the car that was stopped by Faulkner at the site wore a green Army jacket, and somebody else said that Mumia wore a green Army jacket. Six or seven people said that there was somebody on the scene with a green Army jacket.

I've seen the evidence that the prosecution has, and I've talked to Mumia and his brother, Billy Cook. And I'll tell you that Mumia did not wear a green Army jacket that night. He wore a quilted sort of ski jacket, red with big blue stripes in the front. Billy Cook wore a blue Nehru-style jacket with brass buttons. And Faulkner wasn't wearing a green Army jacket; he wore a police uniform. Singletary said the shooter wore a green Army jacket. Two cops said there was a green Army jacket there, including one who said the shooter had a green Army jacket. Arnold Beverly said he wore a green Army jacket.

### Frame-Up and Cover-Up

In addition to that, the evidence of the shots fired does not fit with the prosecution's case. Also, the cops and prosecutors invented a confession that Mumia supposedly made. And on this confession question, let me go back. Giordano, who was on the scene when Mumia was arrested, invented a witness to whom, it turns out, promises were made and who



WV Photo

**South African workers at June 1995 protest by COSATU union federation hold up flyers demanding "Save Mumia Abu-Jamal!" as part of worldwide campaign.**

**PDC contingent at Philadelphia march on 25th anniversary of Mumia's arrest, 9 December 2006.**



WV Photo

wasn't in the place that the prosecution said he was. Giordano also invented the story that Mumia—after he was shot, beaten up, thrown into a police van—confessed and that his gun was simply lying at the scene.

Giordano never testified at the trial. In fact, Giordano was removed from regular duty and put on desk duty during Mumia's trial. He resigned from the police the day after the death sentence came in. It wasn't until 1986 that he was actually charged with and pled guilty to corruption and tax evasion charges based on his receipt of tens of thousands of dollars in illegal payoffs during the 1979-1980 period. 1981 isn't included in there. But we have a witness who says that Giordano was a target of the federal investigations going on that year.

Nothing in the prosecution's case holds up under examination. You look at the ballistics evidence, and the witnesses and what they said they saw and what the prosecution says, and it does not hold up. There is proof over and over again that Mumia is innocent, that his conviction was a police and prosecution frame-up, that the FBI knows perfectly well who was involved in the case. They know that Faulkner was an informant or otherwise involved in this. And they know that cops like Giordano who were involved in the prosecution of Mumia were being investigated. None of that came out during Mumia's trial. And the court refused Mumia's defense any and all information during the PCRA hearings from 1995 to 1998.

What the Beverly evidence does is to make it impossible for anyone to argue that Mumia's case is about one rogue cop, or one not-so-honest prosecutor and one racist judge. Mumia's case proves the nature of the capitalist state, the nature of the courts, the cops and the prosecution.

I got a call from Frank Serpico about

a week ago. People may know him as the New York cop who spilled the beans on police corruption in 1971. What he said to me about the Fraternal Order of Police (F.O.P.) is very interesting. He said: I know about those guys. I know that the fact that the Fraternal Order of Police targets every person who has gone on record for Mumia is proof that they are covering up for something, that this is proof that Mumia is innocent, and proof of the corruption of these cops. Because the F.O.P. has protected cops all over.

Now, I don't agree with Serpico that it is possible to have a police force without corrupt cops. I want to make that clear. But this is a man who spent his life trying to find some honesty in the police force and risked his life to do that. So one has to respect that, within its own terms. These police forces are very powerful, and they are given aid and comfort and support by the Democrats and Republicans. And falling in behind are the fake socialists who promote the lie that the capitalist state can be reformed.

I want to end with the following point. We have a huge, huge battle ahead of us. It will not do us any good to think that maybe because the Court of Appeals may be hearing oral argument in Mumia's case and will be rendering a decision sometime in the next few months, that this is the answer for Mumia. Every single stage of Mumia's case has shown that the courts are committed to seeing Mumia executed or making him spend his life entombed in prison. It will take not only us here tonight but mass mobilizations, primarily focused on the power of labor with its allies—youth, the unemployed, etc.—to show that we will not permit the state to execute Mumia or entomb him in prison for life, to show that we are committed to fighting to free Mumia now. Free Mumia now! ■

## Immigrant...

(continued from page 5)

black equality and against the anti-union company thugs who are backed up by the union-hating, racist Klan terrorists. Organizing the unorganized in the South today has necessarily got to be on an internationalist basis, to undercut the capitalists' attempt to pit sections of the proletariat against each other. Opposed to the reformists, who proceed from a nationally limited framework, we put forward a revolutionary internationalist program that flows from the nature of the world capitalist economy. As I've said, we do not advise the capitalist rulers on immigration. We fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants! No deportations!

The racist atrocity in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina graphically shows the continued racial oppression of black people. It's out in the open for the world to see. It shows the anarchy and bankruptcy of American capitalism, of capitalism period, and the necessity of struggling for a planned economy under workers rule. The working people of the world saw how this government let people suffer and die. The fight to rebuild New Orleans, the fight for jobs for the unemployed and displaced at union wages, for

free, quality medical care, the fight to defend public education against the flourishing of charter schools—all these sharply pose the question of fighting for a new leadership in the labor movement.

There is no substitute for building a Leninist vanguard party, a tribune of the people like the Bolshevik Party forged in tsarist Russia that led the working class and the oppressed to the seizure of state power in 1917. They established Soviet rule: democratically elected workers councils that administer the dictatorship of the proletariat.

In the U.S., it took a civil war to end slavery, and it will take international socialist revolution to end capitalist wage slavery here and throughout the world. I want to conclude with a statement issued on August 18, 1945 by the then-revolutionary Socialist Workers Party in its newspaper, the *Militant*, just a few days after the U.S. atomic-bombing of Japan:

"Let the cataclysmic horror of Hiroshima and Nagasaki serve as a clarion call to the working class! The workers must wrench the power from the hands of the blood-drenched capitalist criminals and take their destiny in their own hands. The fight for socialism is now more than a fight to end poverty and inequality, to abolish the exploitation of man by man. Today the fight for socialism is a fight to prevent the annihilation of the human

race. Mankind must now exterminate the capitalist system—or be exterminated!"

The fight for a communist future of humanity is our only guarantee to life—to live for the first time as free human beings, administering a world socialist order of material abundance and

cultural enrichment, in which all of our potentials can be realized. That is what the Spartacist League, the U.S. section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), fights for. We call on you to join us in that fight. ■

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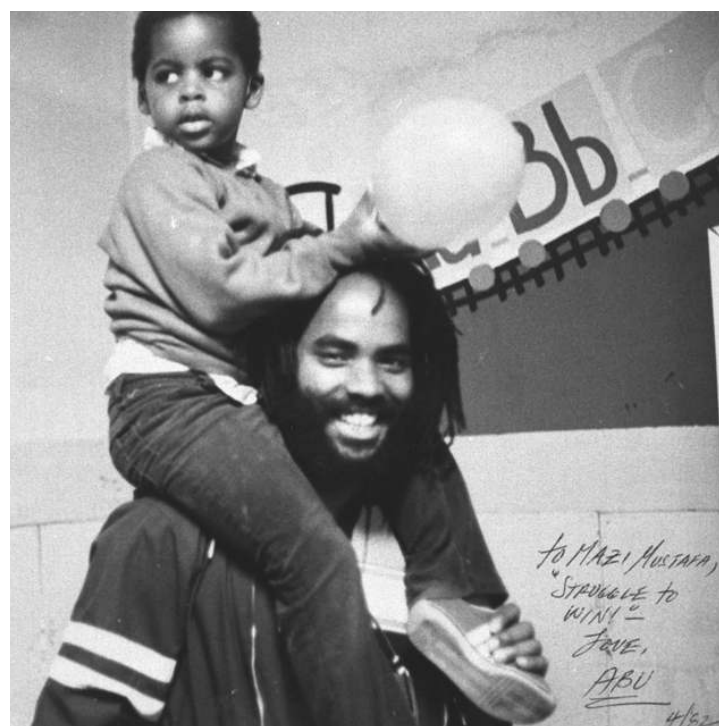
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# WORKERS VANGUARD

## The Frame-Up of an Innocent Man

# Mobilize Labor's Power! Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!



Mumia Abu-Jamal and son Mazi Mustafa.

The urgent effort to revitalize the fight to free Mumia Abu-Jamal was a special focus of the Partisan Defense Committee's annual Holiday Appeal fund-raisers for class-war prisoners, which were held in December. A Black Panther Party spokesman in his youth, subsequently a MOVE supporter and award-winning journalist, Mumia was framed up on false charges of killing Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner on 9 December 1981 and sentenced to death explicitly for his political views and activities. With Mumia's case currently before the federal Third Circuit Court of Appeals, the fight for his freedom has entered a decisive stage. Mumia's attorney Robert Bryan recently announced in a letter to Mumia's supporters that while the court had notified him in November that oral arguments would be scheduled for January, "that was later rescinded." A decision could come within weeks or months.

The Holiday Appeal events followed a series of rallies in October called under the slogans: "Free Mumia Now! Mumia Is an Innocent Man! Mumia Abu-Jamal's Life Is in Danger—Mobilize Now! Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!" Leading up to and after the rallies, full-page ads appeared in the *Nation*, the Harlem-based *Amsterdam News*, the *Chicago Defender* and the *San Francisco Bay View* listing hundreds of trade unionists, academics, authors and other notables who had signed a PDC-initiated statement declaring that Mumia is innocent and demanding his immediate freedom. Ads have subsequently appeared in the French Commu-

nist Party's newspaper, *l'Humanité*, and the *Morning Star* in Britain, as well as papers in Germany and Canada.

The ad (which is reprinted in *WV* No. 880, 10 November 2006) clearly states, "Both the Pennsylvania state courts and the federal courts have refused to consider the reams of documented evidence that prove Mumia's innocence. Foremost is the sworn confession of Arnold Beverly that he, not Mumia, shot and killed the police officer." Notable signatories to the statement include Professor Henry Louis Gates, Jr.; the writers Alice Walker, John Wideman, and Nobel Prize winners Dario Fo and Nadine Gordimer; hip-hop artist Chuck D. of Public Enemy; New York City Council member Charles Barron and Illinois Congressman Danny K. Davis. Among the signatories from organized labor are the New York chapter of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, Amalgamated Transit Union and International Longshoremen's Association locals and NYC's 1199 SEIU East. The breadth of signers to the statement is evidence of the potential to mobilize mass protest on the basis that Mumia is an innocent man who was the victim of a racist and political frame-up.

Those fighting for Mumia's freedom must recognize the depth of the hatred the capitalist rulers have for a man known as the "voice of the voiceless." The capitalist state's relentless vendetta against those who fight for black freedom was seen in last month's arrest of eight former Black Panther Party members on charges of killing a San Francisco cop over 30 years

ago. Those charges had been repeatedly rejected by grand juries and in one case thrown out of court because "confessions" had been coerced by the police through torture (see "Protest Government Roundup of Former Black Panthers!" *WV* No. 885, 2 February). That Mumia is the state's foremost target was seen in a Congressional resolution passed with overwhelming support in December that condemned the decision by the Parisian suburb of Saint-Denis to name a street after him.

With events in Los Angeles, Chicago, the Bay Area, Toronto and New York, the Holiday Appeal raised more than \$10,000 for 16 recipients of the PDC class-war prisoners stipend fund. In addition to Mumia, the recipients include eight members of Philadelphia MOVE, former Black Panther supporters Mondo we Langa and Ed Poindexter, Jaan Laaman and Thomas Manning of the Ohio 7, American Indian Movement leader Leonard Peltier, Mumia's son Jamal Hart and prison activist Hugo Pinell. Each of these cases illustrates that there is no justice in the bourgeois courts for anyone perceived as an opponent of the racist capitalist rulers.

We print below an edited version of a presentation by PDC counsel Rachel Wolkenstein at the December 17 New York City benefit.

\* \* \*

We cannot be lulled into thinking that because Mumia has an appeal pending before the Third Circuit Court of Appeals, which is hearing three (and only three) of

his more than two dozen legal claims, that this is a great opportunity for Mumia. It is good that the court is hearing these claims. But it is also likely that they are just greasing the skids toward a final conclusion that Mumia should be executed.

Prior to my meeting Mumia for the first time almost 20 years ago with Paul Cooperstein, also from the Partisan Defense Committee, in August 1987, Mumia passed along a quote from *Henry VI* about how the first thing we'll do after taking power is kill all the lawyers. We sent back to him a quote from V. I. Lenin that had similar negative sentiments about lawyers.

The work that I have done along with other comrades of the Partisan Defense Committee has been, simultaneous with legal assistance, to push propaganda, publicity and protest, concentrated on mobilizing the social power of the labor movement, of the working class, which has the only real power to change anything. We base our work on the understanding that the only way to get rid of the injustice that exists in this society is through socialist revolution, and in the process we must fight tooth and nail for Mumia's freedom, and for democratic rights of all sorts. The abuses of the capitalist system will not stop, the capitalist system will not be reformed in any way that will be long-lasting. The only fundamental change that's possible is a change in the social system, which means socialism.

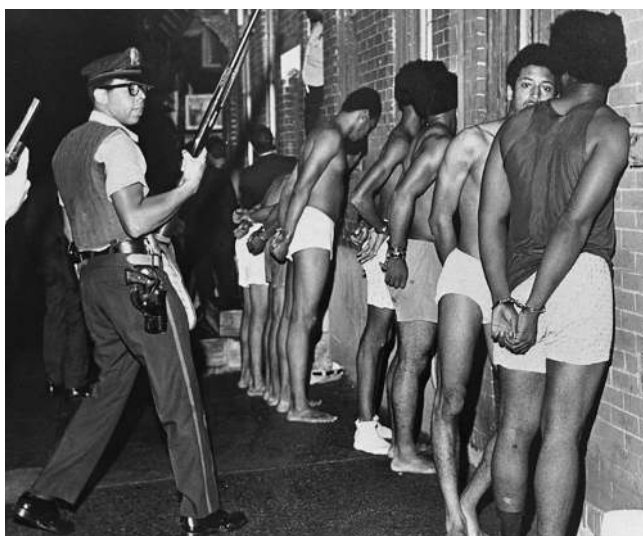
Mumia is not a Marxist. Mumia is not a socialist. But he has been absolutely steadfast in his opposition to racist oppression, to the extremes of capitalism, to injustices, to American imperialism. That is the reason that he is a target of the rulers of this country, who see in him the spectre of black revolution. They have seen that in him from his early days as a Black Panther Party member and from his becoming an advocate for the MOVE organization, for his continued statements in defense of blacks and others against the capitalist state. And for all of these reasons, the capitalist state—the courts, the prosecution, the bourgeois politicians—are committed to seeing Mumia executed or locked up in the living hell of life imprisonment.

We are up against enormous odds. So this gathering, in which we are having fun, dancing and listening to wonderful music, has to be sort of a respite and a way to reorganize ourselves for the very critical fight to prevent Mumia's execution and

*continued on page 10*



James/Philadelphia Inquirer



Ligato/Philadelphia Bulletin

Left: Mumia in 1969 as Minister of Information for Philadelphia Black Panthers. Right: Police Commissioner Frank Rizzo's cops stripped Panthers during 1970 raid on their Philadelphia office.