

No Concessions! Organize the Unorganized!



Sanford/Lansing State Journal

Strikers on the picket line in Lansing, Michigan, September 24.

Victory to the UAW Strike!

SEPTEMBER 25—Beginning at 11 a.m. yesterday, United Auto Workers (UAW) members streamed out of General Motors plants across the country and set up picket lines. The first nationwide strike against GM since 1970 has brought production at the auto giant to a standstill. With one transmission plant in Windsor, Ontario, already shut down, the strike could also soon further reverberate throughout Canada and in Mexico as well. The Canadian Auto Workers union is refusing to work with GM parts from the U.S., and Teamsters auto haulers are refusing to transport GM vehicles.

The company brought on this battle. It forced the hand of the UAW leader-

ship by refusing to accept anything short of massive concessions, complaining about losing ground to foreign automakers because of high union wages and benefits. Fed up after years of givebacks, auto workers were ready to fight. "If they think I'm going to take a wage cut and pay more for health care, they're dreaming," said one Wisconsin striker. As millions of workers see their health and pension benefits ripped up while being made to work harder for less, this strike against a pillar of the capitalist economy is a crucial battle for all of labor. GM brags that its inventories will see the company through a long strike. The entire UAW and the rest of

the labor movement must back up the strikers with whatever it takes to beat back GM!

Prior to the walkout, the UAW leadership had already accepted the framework for a major concession on health care. Union negotiators agreed to replace the lifetime employer-paid health care benefit with a union-managed trust, known as a Voluntary Employee Benefit Association (VEBA), which would assume responsibility for GM's \$55 billion health care liability. Under the VEBA, GM would only pay a fraction on the dollar for its liabilities. The balance would likely come out of the pockets of UAW

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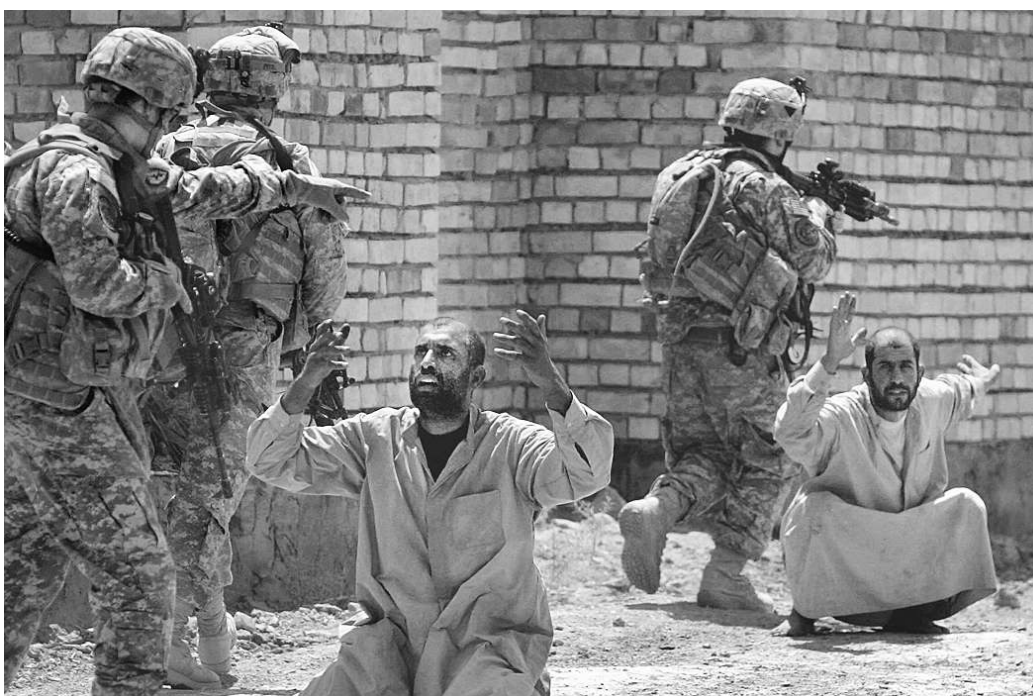
Reformist Left: Tail of Democratic Donkey

U.S. Out of Iraq Now!

The recent Congressional hearings on the "surge" of U.S. troops in Iraq, featuring General David Petraeus, commander of American forces in Iraq, and Ambassador Ryan Crocker, did nothing to change public opinion against the bloody occupation. This dog-and-pony show, cynical from start to finish, served to underline the commitment of the current administration to "stay the course" in Iraq as well as the posturing of those who seek to replace that administration, i.e., the Democratic Party.

The progress of the "surge" can be measured in parcels of carnage and misery. Upwards of a million Iraqis have lost their lives since the 2003 invasion, this on top of the 1.5 million who died for lack of food and medicine due to the sanctions overseen by the Democratic Clinton administration in the 1990s. Millions have been forced to emigrate or to relocate internally in desperate hope of surviving the carnage, whether perpetrated by the murderous imperialist occupiers and their hired mercenary butchers, such as Blackwater, or through the sectarian violence unleashed by the occupation. What was once one of the more advanced countries of the Near East today lies in ruins.

In the U.S., sentiment against the occupation in the populace redounded to the benefit of the Democratic Party during the 2006 midterm elections. This was in part due to the services of the reformist left, which sought to build an "antiwar movement" premised on "Anybody but Bush" politics (read: elect Democrats). Now, however, even mainstream Democratic voters are bitterly complaining that



Furst/AFP

Iraqi men terrorized by U.S. occupation troops in a neighborhood south of Baghdad, August 25.

Down With U.S. Imperialism! For Socialist Revolution!

electing Democrats has not made a dent. Indeed, when Petraeus gave his report to the House on September 10, the Democrats distinguished themselves primarily by denouncing antiwar protesters who gathered at the hearing and were forcibly removed and arrested under the orders of the Democratic Chairman of the Armed Services Committee, Ike Skelton.

Nearly half the Democratic Senators joined with their Republican counterparts ten days later to condemn a *New York Times* ad by the liberal group MoveOn.org,

a major force in Democratic politics, that headlined: "General Petraeus or General Betray Us?" The vote came a mere three days after a video surfaced showing 21-year-old Andrew Meyer being tackled and viciously tasered by University of Florida cops for raising a couple of relatively tame questions to Democratic Senator John Kerry.

Such is in fact standard operating procedure for the Democratic Party, the *other* party of blood-drenched U.S. imperialism. Anti-Vietnam War protesters were

bloodied by cops at the Democratic convention in Chicago in 1968, during a period of far more radicalization and militant struggle against that losing, dirty colonialist war. Now, the Democrats seek election to the White House based not simply on popular opposition to the Iraq occupation, but centrally because they see that particular war and occupation as running counter to the interests of U.S. imperialism. In this, they speak for more rational and far-sighted wings of the ruling class and the military, joined by some Republicans.

The Republicans are overt enemies of workers and oppressed; the Democrats are past masters at lying to them. The reformist left, having put its energies, such as they are, into promoting Democratic electoral victories by one means or another, now laments the "spinelessness" of the Democrats. The reformists' efforts are devoted to "making the Democrats fight." Meanwhile, not one major Democratic presidential contender calls for an immediate withdrawal from Iraq. Such a withdrawal would be correctly seen as a defeat for U.S. imperialism, and in the squalid world of American electoral politics, the Democrats do not want to be saddled with "losing" this filthy war and occupation.

As revolutionary Marxists in the belly of the imperialist beast, we demand the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Iraq and Afghanistan. Just as we took a side in defense of Afghanistan and Iraq against the U.S. invaders while politically opposing the Taliban reactionaries and Saddam Hussein's bloody regime, we have a side today: against the U.S. occupiers, their allies and Iraqi lackeys. Insofar as the forces on the ground in Iraq aim their fire at the occupiers, we call for their military defense against U.S. imperialism

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It's All About the Russian Question

8 July 2007

Dear Workers Vanguard

Your response to my second letter (WV 894) confirms your illusions in the Stalinist bureaucracy as a defender of the workers state.

You see the threat of capitalist restoration in China as coming from oppositionists such as Li Jianqiang and Han Dongfang, and deny the reality of capitalist restoration being carried out by the bureaucracy itself.

You write: "At the political level, the imperialists aim to replay in China the strategy used during Cold War II in East Europe and the former Soviet Union: promoting domestic anti-Communist oppositional forces".

This is a one-sided account of imperialist strategy during the Cold War. In addition to cultivating opposition groups, the imperialists also cultivated pro-capitalist tendencies within the bureaucracy.

This was most clearly seen in the Soviet Union. Yeltsin came from within the Stalinist bureaucracy. He was a leading member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union before he fell out with Gorbachev.

Yeltsin came to power essentially

through a coup. During the power struggle in August 1991, he won the support of key sections of the officer corps. Mobilisation of Yeltsin's supporters in the streets played a secondary role.

Even before Yeltsin's coup, the bureaucracy had already adopted a capitalist-restorationist perspective. This was shown a year earlier when the USSR Supreme Soviet adopted the "500-day plan" for the creation of a "market economy". Yeltsin won the intra-bureaucratic power struggle because he was seen as the best person to implement the bureaucracy's perspective of capitalist restoration.

In Eastern Europe, mass protests played a bigger role in bringing about changes of government than in the Soviet Union. Some former leaders of anti-regime mass movements became leaders of capitalist governments, Polish Solidarity being an obvious example.

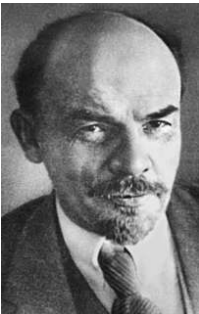
In the preceding years, imperialism had succeeded in winning over many of the leaders of protest movements in Eastern Europe. These movements arose out of a justified anger at bureaucratic privilege and repression. But setbacks in the struggle for socialist democracy in Eastern Europe, as



TROTSKY

Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

From our inception, the Spartacist League has fought for the program of revolutionary integrationism, understanding that the fight against black oppression is central to the cause of proletarian revolution in the U.S. This perspective was codified in a document adopted at the SL's founding conference in September 1966 in the midst of the struggles for black equality shaking the U.S. at the time.



LENIN

The vast majority of Black people—both North and South—are today workers who, along with the rest of the American working class, must sell their labor power in order to secure the necessities of life to those who buy labor power in order to make profit. The buyers of labor power, the capitalists, are a small minority whose rule is maintained only by keeping the majority who labor for them divided and misled. The fundamental division created deliberately along racial lines has kept the Negro workers who entered American capitalism at the bottom, still at the bottom. Ultimately their road to freedom lies only through struggle with the rest of the working class to abolish capitalism and establish in its place an egalitarian, socialist society.

Yet the struggle of the Black people of this country for freedom, while part of the struggle of the working class as a whole, is more than that struggle. The Negro people are an oppressed race-color caste, in the main comprising the most exploited layer of the American working class. Because of the generations of exceptional oppression, degradation and humiliation, Black people as a group have special needs and problems necessitating additional and special forms of struggle. It is this part of the struggle which has begun today, and from which the most active and militant sections of Black people will gain a deep education and experience in the lessons of struggle. Because of their position as both the most oppressed and also the most conscious and experienced section, revolutionary black workers are slated to play an exceptional role in the coming American revolution.

—"Black and Red—Class Struggle Road to Negro Freedom,"
Spartacist supplement, May-June 1967

September 1981:
Spartacist
protest against
opening of
NYC office of
Solidarność,
company union
for CIA and
bankers.



well as setbacks in the working class struggle on a world scale, led some activists in these movements to abandon a socialist perspective. Imperialist propaganda portrayed bourgeois democracy as the only alternative to Stalinism, and (in the absence of a strong revolutionary left movement in the West) many Eastern European activists fell for this false solution.

Acts of Stalinist repression, such as the declaration of martial law and the arrests of thousands of workers in Poland in December 1981, made the problem worse. The Spartacist League supported Jaruzelski's repression, not recognising that it was a gift to the imperialists. It made it easier for Reagan and Thatcher to pose as defenders of democracy, human rights and workers rights. This in turn helped them to sell "free market" economics to Solidarity activists and other Eastern European oppositionists.

Returning to China, you rightly condemn "the brutal suppression of the 1989 Tiananmen protests", but seek to minimise the impact of the repression. You quote Trotsky's statement that "on the road to capitalism the counter-revolution would have to break the resistance of the workers", and argue that this has not hap-

pened in China. You say that, in the 1989 Beijing massacre, "the working class was not smashed".

But a similar comment could be applied to Russia. Yeltsin's coup of August 1991 did not "break the resistance of the workers", or "smash" the working class.

The Russian working class did not resist Yeltsin's coup; rather, the workers were spectators to the struggle within the bureaucracy. The coup was nevertheless very significant, since it initiated a policy of rapid privatisation that impoverished the working class and caused many workers to lose their jobs. The result was catastrophic, but the catastrophe unfolded over several years, not just on the day of Yeltsin's victory.

Trotsky said that the bureaucracy "continues to preserve state property only to the extent that it fears the proletariat". Yeltsin's privatisation push showed that the bureaucracy had overcome its fear of the working class. The defeats for the international working class at the hands of Reagan, Thatcher etc had given the Russian bureaucracy confidence in its ability to defeat working class resistance to privatisation.

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Letters Policy

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

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

Spartacist/SYC Forums

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the 1949 Chinese Revolution!**

For Proletarian Political Revolution!

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or e-mail: nysl@tiac.net

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**Women in China and the Fight
to Defend, Extend the Gains of
the 1949 Revolution**

Saturday, September 29, 5 p.m.

Women's Building, Audre Lorde Room
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or e-mail: slbayarea@sbcglobal.net

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

LOS ANGELES

WORKERS VANGUARD

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The closing date for news in this issue is September 25.

No. 899

28 September 2007

For Working-Class Protest Against State Repression!

Australia: Drop the Charges Against Leftist Anti-APEC Protesters!

The following leaflet was issued on September 11 by the Spartacist League of Australia, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

The Spartacist League of Australia condemns the state repression meted out during the recent Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in Sydney. We protest the arrest and beating of leftist anti-APEC demonstrators and others who found themselves in the cross hairs of state repression such as journalists and photographers. Drop the charges now! Over the two-week period leading up to and including the summit, some 88 people were reportedly arrested and many are now facing charges.

For more than a week during APEC, Sydneysiders got a close-up view of the arrogant and brutal state forces that daily target Aborigines, immigrants, anti-racist youth and militant unionists in capitalist Australia. At a cost of \$170 million, the city was transformed into a fortress in which virtually the entire population was treated as enemy suspects. Such was the experience of accountant Greg McLeay, who was savagely tackled to the ground by police and then imprisoned for 22 hours after simply trying to cross the road!

A five-kilometre long, 2.8-metre high, concrete-reinforced steel fence was erected to seal off areas hosting the summit. Designated “restricted zones” were viciously enforced by gun-toting cops as snipers took aim from rooftops and helicopters buzzed overhead. Some 5,000 police and army were mobilised, backed by 1,800 private security guards, rapid response 4WD riot trucks and water cannon. Building on legislation enacted before the 2000 police state Olympics and subsequent draconian “anti-terror” laws, the military were ready with extraordinary domestic powers to interrogate civilians and seize documents. The special force killers of the SAS [Special Air Service] were on standby with “shoot to kill” powers.

This vast military force was combined with an hysterical government-led campaign to demonise protesters as potentially violent or terrorists. Police used the pretext of drug searches and vehicle inspections to stop, search and harass a convoy organised by the Socialist Party which was making its way from Melbourne to Sydney for the protests. Outrageously the government assembled a “restricted persons” list that threatened many activists with immediate arrest if

**Sydney:
Cops arrest
protester during
anti-APEC
demonstration
(right);
Spartacist
contingent at
September 8
protest.**

Stewart/Sydney Morning Herald



Australasian Spartacist

they joined anti-APEC protest actions. This repression, enforced by the NSW [New South Wales premier Morris] Iemma state Labor government along with the federal Liberal/National coalition government, was designed to intimidate and stymie all protest against APEC—a confab of bloody imperialist statesmen, their victims and intended victims. Through summits such as APEC, the imperialists seek to further their exploitation of oppressed dependent countries and foment capitalist counterrevolution in the Chinese, North Korean, Vietnamese and Cuban bureaucratically deformed workers states.

Despite extreme intimidation, up to ten thousand people turned out for the main protest on 8 September. This included contingents from the maritime and fire brigade unions. Some of those on the “restricted persons” list, like Solidarity supporter Paddy Gibson, courageously defied government orders to stay away. The brutality of the state forces was clearly displayed on the day as they sporadically provoked and attacked protesters. After numbers at the rally significantly dwindled, police moved in and assaulted Gibson and others before hauling them away. Up to 18 people were arrested and a number have been charged. After the rally, Spartacist supporters joined protesters gathered outside the Surry Hills police headquarters in solidarity with the detained leftists.

In a provocation against the demonstration, a fascist group calling itself “New Right AUS/NZ” mobilised at the start of the rally, likely with the state’s go-ahead. Later the cops shielded the vile fascists from angry protesters, including Spartacist supporters who sought to mobilise unionists and others to drive them out of the rally. In contrast, rally organisers including supporters of the Democratic Socialist Perspective (DSP) called on

protesters to ignore the fascists—ultimately a suicidal course. A revolutionary leadership of the rally would have made clear the deadly threat and tried to mobilise appropriate action. Our program to stop the fascists is centred on the independent mobilisation of the working class and its allies.

The DSP, along with Socialist Alternative (SAIt), are prominent in the class-collaborationist Stop Bush Coalition. A key organiser of the anti-APEC protests, the coalition’s main rally demands included “Stop Bush,” “Make [Australian prime minister] Howard History” and “Bring the troops home.” These demands amount to little more than an appeal for a kinder, gentler Australian imperialist state, preferably administered by a Labor government backed up by the bourgeois Greens. The reformists peddle the lie that imperialism is simply a policy rather than a *system* of capitalist exploitation and subjugation. Indeed, in the name of “human rights,” the DSP mobilised for Australian imperialist troops to occupy East Timor in 1999 while SAIt enthusiastically marched in the chauvinist “Troops in” rallies. To this day the DSP refuse to call for Australian troops out of East Timor!

In contrast, we Trotskyists fight for revolutionary opposition to racist Australian imperialism and demand not one person, not one cent for the Australian imperialist military! At the anti-APEC protests we called for racist Australian troops/cops to get out of Iraq, Afghanistan, the Solomons and East Timor; we protested the counterrevolutionary U.S./Australia alliance and demanded U.S. bases out; we called for the unconditional military defence of the Chinese, North Korean, Vietnamese and Cuban deformed workers states against imperialist attack and capitalist counterrevolution! While the reformists demanded “Bring the troops home,”

our placard “Cops/Military Get Out of Aboriginal Communities Now!” pointed to the fact that the Australian military is already at “home,” carrying out a vicious racist occupation of Aboriginal communities while enforcing a naked land grab. They were also very much “at home” in Sydney this month, mobilised to help enforce the suppression of the anti-APEC protests!

The Australian capitalist rulers transparently used APEC to bolster their oppressive laws, refurbish their instruments of repression and perfect police/military measures. It highlighted yet again that the capitalist state—with the police, army, prisons and courts at its core—is not neutral. Its purpose is to maintain the power of the capitalist class and to suppress the working class and anyone else who might challenge the bosses’ exploitative rule. The police are not “workers in uniform,” as those like the Socialist Party contend, but the professional thugs of the bourgeoisie. They have *no place* in the workers movement! **Cops, prison screws, security guards out of the unions now! For working-class actions to protest racist state repression!**

As V.I. Lenin, leader of the 1917 Russian Revolution, wrote in *State and Revolution*, “The state is an organ of class rule, an organ for the *oppression* of one class by another.” The capitalist state cannot be cleaned up, reformed or pressured to act on behalf of the workers and oppressed; it must be shattered through victorious workers revolution. Such a course demands a proletarian internationalist program. We fight against the poisonous nationalism pushed by the Laborite trade-union bureaucracy, who preach the lie that workers have a common “national” interest with the capitalist class. As we declared at the rally: “Down With Racist Protectionism! Workers of the World Unite!”

In the context of the upcoming federal elections, the SL says: “No vote to the ALP [Australian Labor Party]!” We seek to break workers from illusions in the ALP, fighting to split the working-class base away from the pro-capitalist tops in the struggle to forge the indispensable instrument—a multiracial revolutionary workers party, a tribune of the people—to lead the fight to expropriate the capitalist class. Only then will it be possible to build a new, socialist society based on a centrally planned economy where production is for human need, not for the profits of a tiny minority. For a workers republic of Australia, part of a socialist Asia! ■

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Left: Teachers union at June 1 Johannesburg rally on first day of four-week national public workers strike. Right: August 28 protest against evictions ordered by Johannesburg city government.



Werner Beukes/SAPA

Forge a Leninist-Trotskyist Party to Fight for Workers Revolution!

The following article is reprinted, in slightly edited form, from *Spartacist South Africa No. 5 (Spring 2007)*, publication of the South African section of the *International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)*.

Thirteen years after the fall of apartheid, it has become increasingly evident to the black toilers that the Tripartite Alliance government has not altered the social and economic conditions of the impoverished masses. The rigid, legally enforced racial segregation and subjugation of apartheid is no more. But behind the liberation rhetoric of the ruling African National Congress (ANC) and the democratic trappings of “one person, one vote,” there is the reality of *neo-apartheid capitalism*, based on the same social foundations as the former regime: the brutal exploitation of the overwhelmingly black proletariat by a tiny class of fabulously wealthy white capitalist exploiters (albeit now sprinkled with a few black front men).

The official unemployment rate for the black African population exceeds 40 percent, while millions have been evicted from their homes or had their electricity or water cut off because they could not pay sky-high bills. Police crackdowns have escalated against workers striking against poverty wages, township residents protesting deadly cuts in electricity and drinking water, students resisting tuition increases. There is mounting rage directed at the uncontrollable corruption of the government. Meanwhile the capitalist ANC-led government searches for scapegoats to head off mounting discontent. Immigrants, many fleeing starvation and repression, are blamed for the high unemployment rate. Ominously, tribal enmities are being fostered. Since coming to power, the ANC has increasingly worked to pit different sections of the oppressed against each other. The contest to succeed Thabo

Mbeki as head of the bourgeois ANC is viewed by many as a contest between the Xhosa central leaders of the ANC and Jacob Zuma, a Zulu traditionalist. Zuma also derives a lot of his support from the fact that he poses as a “man of the people,” willing to listen to the workers and the township poor. But he is simply a bourgeois populist politician who endorses the austerity policies of the current government. An ANC run by Zuma would be just as anti-working-class as the current ANC.

The real question confronting SACP militants is why would a party that claims to represent the interests of the working class trample on those interests in order to maintain an alliance with the bourgeois ANC. Why would a party that claims to be fighting for a communist society—in which capitalist exploitation has been eliminated and replaced by a collectivised economy and an egalitarian social order—participate in a government that defends the interests of the capitalists and

class collaboration is the argument that the interests of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie can be expressed in a common programme, like the “national democratic revolution.” In truth, the interests of the exploited and the exploiters are irreconcilably *counterposed*. The alliance with the bourgeois-nationalist ANC that is at the core of the SACP’s politics, and has been for decades, necessarily means subordinating the workers and the oppressed to the capitalist order. The SACP justifies this perspective by asserting that the ANC represents all classes of the black African population. It was absolutely necessary to stand in solidarity with the ANC—as well as AZAPO [Azanian People’s Organisation], the Pan-African Congress and other nationalist fighters—when they engaged in military confrontations with the apartheid state. But that is a very different matter than extending political support to the bourgeois-nationalist programme of such organisations.

Lenin’s Bolshevik Party was a steadfast champion of all struggles against national oppression and Great Russian chauvinism in the tsarist empire, which Lenin termed a prison house of peoples. But the Bolsheviks fought for the rights of oppressed peoples *with the methods of proletarian class struggle*. Lenin politically exposed and combatted nationalism as a bourgeois ideology, be it of the “most just” or “most refined” sort. This Leninist understanding is all the more critical in South Africa, where class exploitation is integrally bound up with national oppression. Leon Trotsky, co-leader with V.I. Lenin of the October Revolution, wrote to his followers in South Africa in the mid 1930s [“On the South African Theses,” 20 April 1935]:

“It is entirely obvious that the predominant majority of the population, liberated from slavish dependence, will put a certain imprint on the state. “Insofar as a victorious revolution will radically change not only the relation between the classes, but also between the races, and will assure to the blacks that place in the state which corresponds to their numbers, insofar will the *social* revolution in South Africa also have a *national* character.”

The struggle for national liberation can be a powerful motor force for socialist revolution in South Africa. Yet far from educating and leading the black African proletariat to take its place in revolutionary struggle at the head of all the oppressed, the SACP has for decades diverted the struggles of the proletariat into support for the bourgeois-nationalist ANC. The result of this has been not the

Break with the Bourgeois Tripartite Alliance!

It was against this backdrop of growing dissatisfaction that the 12th national congress of the South African Communist Party (SACP) met in July in Port Elizabeth, where the future of the alliance with the ANC was the subject of vigorous debate. While SACP leader [Blade] Nzimande gives thinly veiled support to Zuma on the false basis that he is pro-working-class, some delegates at the recent congress called for the SACP to run candidates under its own name, as opposed to on the ANC slate. However, the resolution of the Gauteng region proposing that the SACP run its own candidates explicitly asserted that the “revolutionary alliance led by the ANC” is “an historic and important alliance that should be preserved.” This means that the SACP could continue to serve in the bourgeois government but as part of a coalition with the ANC rather than as ANC ministers.

suppresses the struggles of the workers, the oppressed and the township and rural poor?

The SACP is not a Leninist party. It is, rather, what Lenin called a *bourgeois workers party*, with a working-class base and a pro-capitalist leadership and programme. In order to placate its working-class base, the SACP tops have been forced to become more critical of Mbeki. The bottom line, however, is that through its alliance with the bourgeois ANC and its class-collaborationist programme the SACP must serve the bourgeois order.

This could be seen graphically during the recent bitterly fought public workers strike. While the SACP claimed to support the strike, via its ministers in the bourgeois government it served as strike-breakers: Minister of Safety and Security Charles Nqakula set the cops and army against the strikers, while Minister for Intelligence Services Ronnie Kasrils unleashed the intelligence services to spy on the teachers union. The COSATU [trade-union federation] bureaucracy, an integral component of the ruling Tripartite Alliance, deliberately refused to mobilise unions like the miners and metal workers which had the social power to win the strike. You cannot wage an effective struggle against the capitalist government when you are part of that government!

The Tripartite Alliance is a *nationalist popular front*, the South African variant of a governmental coalition binding a reformist workers party to the bourgeoisie. Through such class-collaborationist coalitions, the Communist parties in countries like France and Italy have derailed working-class revolutions. The essence of

Just Out!

Spartacist South Africa

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liberation of the black African and other non-white masses but the “freedom” of a handful of aspiring black bourgeois to jump aboard the “gravy train” and join in the exploitation of their “own” people. The nationalism promoted by the ANC/SACP has also served to fuel and embitter national, tribal and other divisions among the masses, frustrated by their failure to achieve any modicum of gains 13 years after the end of apartheid. At the same time, sections of workers and youth are beginning to perceive that they can be oppressed by their own kind and not simply by whites.

South Africa is not a nation but a colonial-derived state. Apartheid South Africa brutally exploited migrant labour from elsewhere in southern Africa. The peoples of these surrounding countries made numerous sacrifices to support the struggle against apartheid. But today immigrants are discriminated against and subjected to deportation. Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! South Africa/Azania, one and indivisible, cannot be the programme for workers revolution in southern Africa. We stand for a voluntary socialist federation of southern Africa in which the peoples of the region should enjoy regional autonomy.

Lobbying the SACP tops to adopt a more critical posture toward the ANC will do nothing to advance the struggle of the proletariat for its own emancipation and that of all the exploited and oppressed. Rather what is necessary is the forging of an entirely different party, a party based not on nationalism and class collaboration but on the proletariat, revolutionary and internationalist programme of the Communist International at the time

the bourgeoisie, cannot be reformed. As Lenin insisted, the replacement of a bourgeois state by a workers state requires a *revolution* that overthrows the capitalist system of exploitation.

The article “Protest Apartheid-Style Police Brutality Against Union Bus Drivers!” [WV No. 893, 25 May] addresses the issue of the bourgeois cops. The core of the state consists of the police, army, courts and prisons. The public sector workers strike underscored that the cops are an integral part of the capitalist state, wielded by the bosses to repress the working class. The line of the SACP and COSATU that cops are workers, welcoming them into the trade unions, reflects their revisionist position that the state is “ours.” This dangerous illusion is reinforced by the fact that some cops in the “new” South Africa formerly served as armed fighters in the ANC’s struggle against apartheid rule. This does not diminish by one iota their current role as enforcers of capitalist state repression against the oppressed, meting out terror and brutality in the same way as the hated apartheid police did. Nor is such a development unusual: once Algeria gained independence from France, the freedom fighters who had once been tortured by the French colonialist army and police became the torturers of their own people on behalf of the neocolonial bourgeois-nationalist Algerian regime. Spartacist South Africa says: Police, security and prison guards—out of the unions!

Responding to the grumbling at the base of the party, deputy SACP head Jeremy Cronin cynically asserted that SACP ministers in government had been appointed for something other than carry-



August 10: Demonstration outside Cape Town press conference called by Deputy Health Minister fired for criticizing government’s neglect of AIDS.

of Lenin and Trotsky and its programmatic continuator, the Fourth International founded by Trotsky in 1938. It is to this task that Spartacist South Africa, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), is dedicated, as part of our struggle to reforge an authentically Trotskyist, democratic-centralist Fourth International.

The State: An Organ of Class Domination

In this issue of *Spartacist South Africa*, we are reprinting three articles originally published in *Workers Vanguard*, the newspaper of the American section of the ICL. These articles address some of the central issues debated by members of the SACP and others in the workers movement. One of the most important of these issues is the need to have a clear understanding of the nature of the state. As we note in “Bitter End to Defiant Public Sector Strike” [WV No. 895, 6 July]: “In order to justify its participation in the government, the SACP has to pretend that the Tripartite Alliance is something other than what it is: *a bourgeois government*.” The SACP line that the existing state is some kind of “class-neutral” entity in which the workers can gain “hegemony” is a profound revision of Leninism. There are two fundamental classes in modern society—the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. As Lenin wrote in *State and Revolution*: “The state is an organ of class *domination*, an organ of *oppression* of one class by another.” The working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes, or achieve workers rule by electoral means. The capitalist state, which serves as the executive committee of

ing out ANC policies: “You can’t forget that you are a communist. If you are not a communist, then leave this party.... You can’t privatise state-owned enterprises or abuse workers and their rights. You have options. Step down as a minister” (*Morning Star* Online, 13 August). The Gauteng resolution put forward at the SACP congress accepts the reformist, class-collaborationist framework of the SACP leadership that the workers can “contest power” in a bourgeois government. It is one thing for communists to stand candidates for and participate in bourgeois parliaments, in order to act as a tribune of the workers and oppressed there, as the Bolsheviks did even under the arduous and repressive conditions of the tsarist autocracy. It is a very different matter to stand for and assume executive office or serve as a bourgeois minister, whether on a local or national level. To assume such a position necessarily means enforcing the bourgeois order, including using the cops or army to repress workers struggle. This is why we are opposed to running for executive office (see “Down With Executive Offices!” *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 60, Autumn 2007).

On one level, Mbeki’s sacking of deputy health minister Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge reflected the government’s continued contempt for AIDS victims and more generally for the masses of poor people who suffer from the country’s crumbling health system. Madlala-Routledge had made mild criticisms of the government’s neglect of HIV/AIDS and had pointed out that the fact that 2,000 babies had died at Frere Hospital in the Eastern Cape over five years constituted a national emergency. Unable and unwill-



Bourgeois-nationalist ANC is in midst of power struggle between Jacob Zuma (left) and South African president Thabo Mbeki.



AFP photos

ing to marshal the resources necessary to provide free anti-retroviral medications and other measures to alleviate the impact of the AIDS pandemic, the bourgeois-nationalist ANC instead pushes anti-science obscurantism. Mbeki has never acknowledged the elementary fact that AIDS is caused by a virus, HIV, while his health minister Tshabalala-Msimang is a notorious advocate of “traditional remedies.” In other words, millions of people deprived of anti-retroviral drugs are abandoned to die. Women are among the hardest hit by the AIDS pandemic: for example, over 39 percent of pregnant women in KwaZulu-Natal test HIV-positive. “Traditional views” are frequently combined and overlap with the religious doctrines of the Christian church and missionaries, reinforcing anti-sex bigotry and the stigma of AIDS. We demand: Free anti-retrovirals and free quality health care for all! Open up the private hospitals for all!

COSATU general secretary [Zwelinzima] Vavi hailed Madlala-Routledge (a member of the central committee of the SACP), claiming that thanks to her “the spirit of AIDS denialism is behind us.” This is just false. Only a small percentage of those with HIV/AIDS are receiving medication. Moreover, the under-five mortality rate has actually *increased* since 1990, going from 60 per 1,000 live births to 65 per 1,000 live births (*Sunday Independent*, 12 August). By far the largest cause of death in children under five is HIV/AIDS! It is hardly a secret that medical services are crumbling: a shortage of staff, poor pay for health workers, decaying facilities, budget cuts for health services. And when health workers struck recently, the government—in which the SACP serves—threatened to fire many of them because they are “essential workers.” The fact is that the SACP, in aiding and abetting the capitalist attacks on working people as part of the Tripartite Alliance, is co-responsible with Mbeki for his criminal neglect of health services.

The AIDS pandemic exposes the bankrupt “nation-building” rhetoric pushed by the SACP; it obviously cannot be solved within the borders of one country. To even begin to provide free, quality health care and treatment for all in South Africa requires the creation of a workers government and the expropriation of the blood-sucking pharmaceutical giants. Only world socialist revolution, tearing the means of production out of the hands of the greedy capitalist class, can put the positive gains

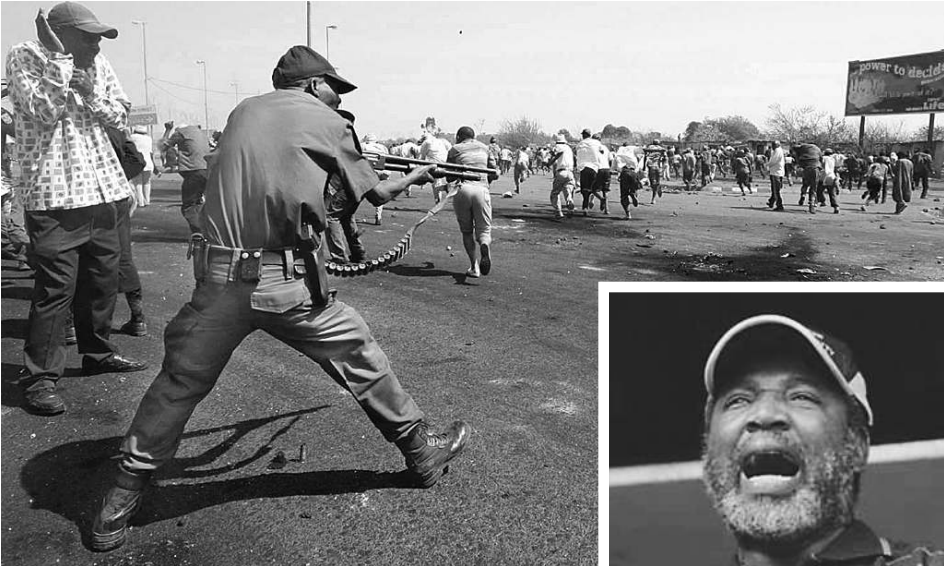
of modern science at the service of all mankind. (For more on this, see “Capitalism, AIDS and ANC ‘Rollout’ Scam,” *Spartacist South Africa* No. 4, Spring/Summer 2004.)

Meanwhile the bourgeois press has been filled with hysteria whipped up over financial allegations regarding the SACP. What exactly is going on here is not clear. It does seem to involve infighting between different factions of the SACP, including those around Nzimande who are pro-Zuma and others like COSATU president Willie Madisha, who is closer to Mbeki. In any event, we oppose any state prosecution of the SACP. This is an issue of workers democracy—financial irregularities, if there are any, in workers parties or trade unions should be addressed by the workers movement. An attack on the SACP on such grounds opens the door for similar attacks by the government against trade unions and other workers organisations. From the standpoint of the workers movement, the real corruption in the SACP is political: its class-collaborationist support for the ANC is directly responsible for the betrayal of the interests of the workers and oppressed.

The Trotskyist Program of Permanent Revolution

It is critical that militant workers and youth assimilate the history of the communist movement. As we note in our article “Permanent Revolution vs. ‘Two-Stage’ Stalinist Betrayal” [WV No. 875, 1 September 2006], also reprinted in this issue, the bankruptcy of “revolution by stages” was proven by the course of the Russian Revolution of 1917. Tsarist Russia was an example of combined and uneven development, an overwhelmingly peasant country with a myriad of national minorities oppressed by the Great Russian landlords and capitalists. At the same time, however, there was a small but important proletariat in a few industrial centres, concentrated in huge factories equipped with the most modern technology. The Mensheviks, who in fact were the original proponents of “two-stage revolution,” argued that the bourgeoisie must come to power to resolve the outstanding democratic tasks such as giving land to the peasantry. Against this perspective of binding the proletariat to the liberal bourgeoisie, Lenin counterposed the revolutionary collaboration of the

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Werner Beukes/SAPA (above), Die Burger (right)
Soweto: Cops fire rubber bullets at township residents protesting lack of services, September 3. Inset: National SACP chairperson Charles Nqakula runs cops as Minister of Safety and Security.

South Africa...

(continued from page 5)

proletariat and the downtrodden peasantry, culminating in a “democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry.”

Trotsky likewise recognised that the Russian bourgeoisie was incapable of leading a democratic revolution, but went further than Lenin. In his theory of *permanent revolution*, developed during the period 1904-06, Trotsky asserted that the Russian Revolution would be proletarian-socialist in character; that the solution of the bourgeois-democratic tasks (such as destruction of the tsarist autocracy, land to the tiller, democratic solution of the national question) was conceivable only in the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, leaning on the peasantry. The dictatorship of the proletariat would place on the order of the day not only democratic tasks but socialist tasks as well. To guarantee such gains and to lay the basis for a world socialist society, proletarian rule had to be extended to the advanced capitalist world.

In 1917, when the tsar’s government collapsed, the Mensheviks supported the new liberal bourgeois Provisional Government and later joined the government. Lenin waged a merciless political struggle against the Mensheviks and those in the Bolshevik Party who conciliated them. He came over to Trotsky’s view that the revolution could triumph only by placing the proletariat in power. While the majority of the Bolshevik leadership initially called for “completing the bourgeois-democratic revolution,” Lenin insisted that “The conclusion is obvious: only the assumption of power by the proletariat, backed by the semi-proletarians, can give the country a really strong and really revolutionary government.” Lenin won over the key cadre in the Bolshevik party; the Bolsheviks led the working class, supported by the peasantry, in a revolution that smashed the old state apparatus, replacing the class dictatorship of capital with the dictatorship of the proletariat based on democratically elected councils (soviets) of workers and peasants.

At the time of the Chinese Revolution of 1925-27, the Communist International (Comintern) revived the Menshevik line of “two-stage” betrayal. By then the bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet state had placed at the head of the Comintern J.V. Stalin and Nikolai Bukharin, who advocated the anti-Marxist, nationalist dogma of building “socialism in one country,” denying the need to spread the revolution outside the Soviet Union. They continued the policy of liquidating the Chinese Communist Party into the Chinese bourgeois nationalists, the Guomindang, led by Chiang Kai-shek. Lulled into the belief that Chiang was an ally, tens of thousands of Communists and militant workers, who were the effective power in the key city of Shanghai, were disarmed and murdered when he turned on them in the Shanghai massacre of April 1927. This policy of subordinating the working class to the bourgeois nationalists was opposed by Leon Trotsky. As a result of this experience, Trotsky generalised his theory of permanent revolution to the colonial and semicolonial world.

However, the Stalinist leadership of the Comintern drew the opposite conclusions. It defended its treacherous conduct in China and generalised this strategy of subordinating the working class to the national bourgeoisie to other countries like South Africa. (For more information, see our pamphlet *The Stalin School of Falsification Revisited*.) In fact, the alliance with the ANC dates from the year after the defeat of the Chinese Revolution. At its recent congress the SACP leadership cited a resolution of the 1928 Sixth Congress of the Comintern that asserted:

“Our aim should be to transform the African National Congress into a fighting nationalist revolutionary organization against the white bourgeoisie and the British imperialists, based upon the trade unions, peasant organizations, etc., developing systematically the leadership of the workers and the Communist Party in

this organization [we repeat: “*developing systematically the leadership of the workers and the Communist Party in this organization*”].... The development of a national-revolutionary movement of the toilers of South Africa...constitutes one of the major tasks of the Communist Party of South Africa.”

—Political report of the SACP’s 11th Congress Central Committee as tabled before the 12th Congress (brackets and emphasis in original)

Stalin’s Comintern sought to prettify its class collaboration by dubbing the Guomindang a “workers and peasants party.” This “two-class” formula, denying that the class interests of the proletariat differed from the petty proprietor outlook of the peasantry, covered up the *bourgeois* character of the Guomindang. The Comintern claimed that a bourgeois revolution would “grow over organically” into the socialist revolution. Similarly the SACP denies the necessity for proletarian revolution, rejecting the “erroneous (and divisive) conclusion that a socialist transition required *another* political revolution in which the working class, in the name of ‘socialism’ overthrew its own national democratic state, and marginalized its own closest allies” (“Taking Forward the Struggle for Socialism, Chapter 5”). The ANC is dubbed a “broad national liberation movement” and a “class-contested terrain,” the better to deny that the SACP is politically subordinated to a bourgeois party and participates in running the bourgeois state.

Contrary to what some SACPers believe, the ANC has not betrayed its “socialist past,” as supposedly embodied in the 1955 Freedom Charter. That document in fact makes no reference to either socialism or the working class taking power. The



Getty

Workers at South Africa’s Kloof Gold Mine, March 2005.

common interest which stands higher than class divisions.

The demise of apartheid refuted the SACP’s false claims that genuine racial and national equality could be achieved in alliance with the national bourgeoisie. Apartheid was not destroyed through revolution but rather through a “power-sharing deal” between the Randlords and the ANC, backed up by the Western imperialists. While one factor in inducing the capitalists to arrive at an agreement with the ANC was the escalation of labour struggle against apartheid, the bourgeoisie did not seriously feel that its rule was threatened. The deal took place in the wake of the counterrevolutionary destruction of the USSR, which provided material as well as diplomatic support to the ANC. Throughout the 1980s the ANC devoted the bulk of its efforts to a “divestment” campaign aimed at pressuring the

social conditions of the black, Indian and coloured working masses have if anything deteriorated. This gives the lie to the SACP’s claims of a “national democratic revolution.” It confirms in the negative the Trotskyist programme of permanent revolution, underscoring that achievement of national equality requires the overthrow of the capitalist system of exploitation.

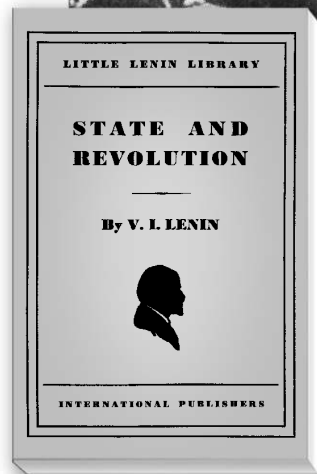
Some SACPers, trade unionists and other leftists (including some grouped around the magazine *Amandla*), dissatisfied with the alliance with the ANC, have proposed a lash-up with other forces, including AZAPO and the “social movements” like the Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF). Despite its criticisms of the government, AZAPO is a bourgeois-nationalist formation qualitatively no different from the ANC (except being smaller). Indeed, its willingness to administer capitalism is demonstrated by the fact that it currently has a minister in the government (Mosibudi Mangena). Our article on “Permanent Revolution vs. ‘Two-Stage’ Stalinist Betrayal” deals with the popular-frontist “social forums.” It speaks to the treachery of the SACP in enforcing the dictates of capital that outfits like the APF have come to the fore, acting as a safety valve for the ANC-led government by leading protests against some of the government’s more unpopular measures, such as cutting off water in the townships. No less than the SACP itself, these formations are tied to the imperialists and the capitalist states via their ties to and funding by bourgeois governments, banks and CIA-linked institutions like the Ford Foundation. (See also “Social Forum Con Game,” *Workers Vanguard* No. 853, 2 September 2005.)

What is necessary is the forging of a Leninist-Trotskyist party, which must unite the most politically advanced worker militants with the best of the leftist intellectuals. Such a party must be a “tribune of the people,” championing the interests not only of the working class but of all the oppressed—the unemployed, the rural poor, women, immigrants, tribal and ethnic minorities. It will be built in political and polemical struggle against the various currents of the South African left, including the SACP, whose best elements must be won away from its pro-capitalist leadership to a Trotskyist programme. Only the revolutionary expropriation of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of a workers state and planned economy will put the mineral wealth and all that has been built through the sweat and blood of the toilers at the disposal of working people.

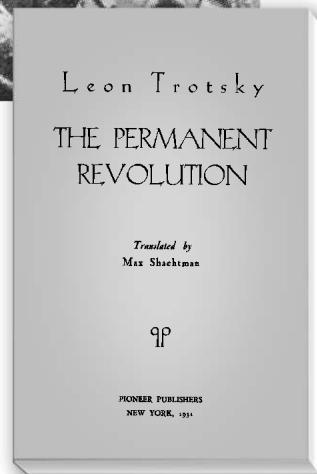
A socialist revolution in South Africa, centred on the black proletariat, would confront formidable enemies in the imperialist powers, emboldened and strengthened by the final undoing of the Russian Revolution. Yet such a revolution would also galvanise strategically powerful allies: from the American black working class, to the militant young proletariat of South Korea and Indonesia and the working class in West Europe. This would electrify workers throughout the world and establish a base for the struggle for international revolution, especially in the advanced capitalist countries, which is vital for the achievement of a world socialist society, one in which poverty has been abolished and classes are no more. ■



L.Y. Leonidov



Works by Bolshevik leaders Lenin and Trotsky, pictured in 1919 in Red Square on anniversary of October Revolution, are crucial tools in fight for proletarian revolution in South Africa and internationally.



famous phrase that “the mineral wealth beneath the soil...shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole” was deliberately vague as to how it was to be realised. At best, it posed a nationalisation of the mines within the framework of capitalism. The charter explicitly upholds the right of “all people” to “trade where they choose” and “to manufacture,” that is, it upholds the right to private property in the means of production. In the main it consists of a series of bourgeois-democratic demands, such as abolition of the apartheid laws and laws restricting suffrage. The document claims that “the people” should “share in the country’s wealth” and envisions that “only a democratic state, based on the will of all the people, can secure to all their birthright without distinction of colour, race, sex or belief.” But “the people” are divided into different classes with counterposed interests. In referring to “democracy,” the ANC meant *bourgeois democracy*, which means above all defence of the “right” of the capitalists to exploit the workers. The ANC was asserting its appetite to become the bourgeois rulers of the country. In pushing the Freedom Charter, the SACP reinforced the ideology of nationalism, the false belief that the black African people all have a

Anglo-American imperialists to pressure the Afrikaner rulers to come to terms with the ANC; after the counterrevolution the ANC quickly came to terms with the Western imperialists and their South African junior partner.

Indeed the ANC was eager enough to share in the spoils of South African capitalism. Talk of “nationalising the mines” was quickly dropped. As early as 1990 Nelson Mandela made clear that he had “never advocated socialism at all” and that he favoured “the flourishing of capitalism among Africans.” The “power-sharing deal” was guaranteed by various “sunset clauses” (pushed vigorously by then SACP leader Joe Slovo) that enshrined the privileges of the old white ruling class. The ANC acted fundamentally no differently than other former petty-bourgeois nationalists like Robert Mugabe who, upon taking power, exploited their own people in league with the imperialists.

Over the following 13 years the ANC—aided and abetted by its labour lieutenants in the SACP and the COSATU bureaucracy—has indeed kept its end of the bargain with the Randlords, defending the sanctity of the bourgeoisie’s property and profits. While there is a black government, the economic and

Rally to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal

With the fight for life and freedom for death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal at a critical juncture, the Committee for Social Defense (CDDs), a legal and social defense organization associated with the Ligue Trotskyste de France, has called a rally for September 29 in Paris under the slogans: “Mumia Is Innocent! Immediate Freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!” Speakers will include Daniel Carreno of the Postal Workers Union, Jimmy Duclos of the SUD rail workers union and Jean-François Téaldi, general secretary of the SNJ journalists union affiliated with the CGT labor federation, as well as a representative of the LTF. Also speaking will be Rachel Wolkenstein of the Partisan Defense Committee, which is associated with the Spartacist League/U.S. As a member of Mumia’s legal team from 1995 to 1999, Wolkenstein uncovered a massive amount of evidence of Mumia’s innocence, including the confession of Arnold Beverly that he shot and killed Police Officer Daniel Faulkner.

The Paris event is the latest in a series of rallies called by defense organizations linked to national sections of the International Communist League in a concerted effort to revitalize mass, labor-centered protest on Mumia’s behalf. (For coverage of rallies in London and Berlin this spring, see “International Rallies Demand: Free Mumia!” WV No. 893, 25 May.) We print below the July 30 call for the rally issued by the Committee for Social Defense.

* * *

Mumia Abu-Jamal, the foremost political prisoner in the U.S., has been on death row for a quarter of a century, isolated in a cell that he describes as living in a space no larger than a bathroom. All elements of the “criminal justice system” have colluded to rig the proceedings and convict this powerful “voice of the voiceless.” A former Black Panther Party spokesman, supporter of the MOVE organization and award-winning journalist, Mumia was framed up in 1982 on false charges of killing a Philadelphia police officer. A

Paris, September 29, 2 p.m.

**Espace Saint-Martin, Salle Nicolas Roerich
199 bis rue Saint-Martin, 75003 Paris**

For more information: Comité de défense sociale:
(33) (0)1 42 08 01 49 or e-mail: cddsfrance@hotmail.fr

passionate fighter against racial, ethnic and class bias, against cop terror and for social justice, Mumia was sentenced to die on the basis of his political history and beliefs. The judge at his trial, Albert Sabo, was overheard by a court stenographer saying: “I’m going to help them fry the n----r.” His frame-up shows what the death penalty is all about in the United States. Racist and barbaric, it is the lynch rope made legal, the ultimate weapon of repression against the working class and oppressed.

The fight for Mumia’s freedom is at a crucial turning point. The U.S. federal appeals court will pronounce on Mumia’s fate soon. But there should be no illusions in these proceedings. For 25 years both the Pennsylvania state and federal courts have rejected or even refused to consider the mountain of evidence of Mumia’s innocence, including the sworn confession of Arnold Beverly, that he, not Mumia, shot the police officer. In Mumia, the state sees the spectre of black revolt. The state is determined to carry out his legal lynching or bury him in the veritable hell of life in prison. *This must not happen!*

The Committee for Social Defense—a class-struggle legal and social defense organization whose purpose is in accordance with the political views of the Ligue Trotskyste de France—stands for pursuing every legal avenue on Mumia’s behalf while putting no faith in the “justice” of the capitalist courts. It will take an international mobilization of the masses, centrally the workers movement, to secure Mumia’s freedom. When he faced execution in 1995, a worldwide mass outpouring of protest, including from unions representing millions, stayed the

executioner’s hand. This struggle was demobilized by those who fostered illusions in the capitalist justice system by subordinating the call to free Mumia to the call for a new trial.

In France the Communist Party (PC) raises “freedom for Mumia” but in conjunction with their demand for a “new trial.” See for example the call supporting a “new fair trial” for Mumia in *l’Humanité* (4-5 February 2006) signed by hundreds of notables and politicians including PC [leader] Marie-George Buffet as well as Olivier Besancenot of the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR) and Arlette Laguiller of Lutte Ouvrière (LO).

Behind these attempts to misdirect the struggle for Mumia towards the bourgeois injustice system is a *political program* premised on reliance on the capitalist state—a program directly counterposed to a mobilization of working-class power to free Mumia. *Mass protests to demand immediate freedom for this innocent man must be revived!*

Mumia’s appeal takes place in the context of the “war on terror,” under which rights won through tumultuous class struggles are being shredded in order to terrorize any who would stand in the way of the bourgeoisie’s drive for profits and their imperialist adventures, like the colonial occupation of Iraq or the bloody subjugation of Afghanistan in which French special forces are participating. The “war on terror” targets first the Muslim population, but it is ultimately aimed at the entire working class. This was seen here at Roissy airport last autumn when dozens of baggage handlers had their airport security badges pulled in the course of a racist witchhunt whose

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Le Bolchévik

9 December 2006: Committee for Social Defense banner at Paris Mumia rally reads, “Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Now! There Is No Justice in the Capitalist Courts!”

Prepare Now for Emergency Protests!

Mumia Abu-Jamal Is an Innocent Man! FREE MUMIA NOW! Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!

On May 17, the Third Circuit Court of Appeals heard oral arguments in Mumia’s case, and there could be a decision at any time.

If the Third Circuit Court of Appeals rules to uphold the death sentence or denies Mumia’s appeals for a new trial or a new hearing, the PDC and LBLs call for protests the day after the decision.

BAY AREA

**14th and Broadway
Oakland**

Near the Federal Building

4:30-6:30 p.m.

(On Monday if the decision falls on Fri.-Sun.)

More info: (510) 839-0852 or pdcbayarea@sbcglobal.net

CHICAGO

**Kluczynski Federal
Building
Northwest corner of
Jackson and Dearborn**

**Weekday: 4:30 p.m.
Saturday: Noon**

More info: (312) 563-0442 or chicagopdc@sbcglobal.net

LOS ANGELES

**Weekday: 5 p.m.
U.S. Federal Courthouse
312 N. Spring St.**

**Saturday: 1 p.m.
Westwood Federal Bldg.
11000 Wilshire Blvd.**

More info: (213) 380-8897 or partisandefense-la@sbcglobal.net

NEW YORK CITY

**Federal Building
Broadway between
Worth and Duane Sts.**

**Weekday: 5-7 p.m.
Saturday: 1-4 p.m.**

More info: (212) 406-4252 or (212) 267-1025 or partisandefense@earthlink.net

TORONTO

360 University Ave.
Across the street from the U.S. Consulate between Dundas (St. Patrick station) and Queen (Osgoode station)

**Weekday: 6 p.m.
Weekend: 1 p.m.**
More info: (416) 593-4138 or pdctoronto@bellnet.ca

U.S. demonstrations are sponsored by the Partisan Defense Committee and the Labor Black Leagues.

For information on Berlin and Mexico City demonstrations: www.partisandefense.org

Subsequent to the PDC’s call for protests, the Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition (NYC) has publicized the following actions, in the event of a negative decision, to take place the next day:

Philadelphia: 13th and Locust. Call (267) 760-7344 for information

New York City: Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. State Office Bldg.
(125th Street and Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Blvd.)
Weekday: 5 p.m., Saturday: 1 p.m.

**Three Saturdays after the decision:
National Demonstration in Philadelphia**

Iraq...

(continued from page 1)

without giving any political support to Islamic fundamentalism or nationalism. Our starting point is the understanding that imperialist war is the necessary product of the capitalist system. It is the concentrated expression of a profit system that daily slaughters workers on the job, that consigns millions to the scrap heap, that metes out brutal racist cop repression. Imperialism is capitalism in its death agony, in which a handful of advanced powers compete for control of markets, raw materials and access to cheap labor. To get rid of war, poverty and oppression, the entire capitalist system must be overthrown through workers revolutions in the U.S. and internationally.

Reform vs. Revolution

This revolutionary program is starkly counterposed to that of the reformists and the various antiwar coalitions they have built and promoted—Workers World Party (WWP) and its Troops Out Now Coalition (TONC), the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) and its World Can't Wait (WCW) outfit, the International Socialist Organization (ISO) and its various Campus Antiwar Network (CAN) groups, the Party for Socialism



Flyer by ISO front group says it all. Reformist left built “antiwar movement” as vehicle for Democratic Party of U.S. imperialism.

and Liberation/ANSWER. The mounting frustration with the Democrats is seen by these groups not as an opportunity to break working people and young activists from the politics of “lesser evilism,” but rather to further entrench such politics by preaching that what is needed is more and bigger protests to pressure the Democrats to do the right thing. This program was on display at the September 15 antiwar protest in Washington, D.C., called by ANSWER. And it is what is also being promised for the September 29 antiwar protests heavily promoted by TONC. Thus, a *Workers World* (27 September) article titled “How Congress Could Stop the War—But Won’t” states that “it will take a massive, determined, angry and independent movement to force the conciliatory Democratic majority in Congress to put impeachment on the table and take war funding off.” The front-page headline of the prior issue of *Workers World* (20 September) read: “Camp Out



Spartacist banner at March 18 New York City antiwar protest.

on Congress’s Doorstep to Say No Funds for Racist Occupation!” Not to be outdone, the ISO’s *Socialist Worker* online (7 September) moans that the “antiwar movement has failed to build on the momentum from last November’s election.” Its 3 August article on an occupation of Representative John Conyers’ office by liberal activists lauds “antiwar activists” for “taking steps to put liberal leaders of the Democratic Party on the hot seat—demanding action, not words, to end the U.S. war on Iraq and stand up to a Bush administration hell-bent on continuing it.” The punch line of the article: “We must hold the Democratic Congress to account—and pressure it to do what the antiwar majority wants: cut off funds for the war and set a deadline for withdrawing U.S. troops.” The logic of such pressure politics was brought home by an insipid leaflet by the New York City CAN demanding that Hillary Clinton “Cut the Funding, Stop the War! What the Hell is Senate For?” Its purpose as the “higher” branch of Congress has always been, in the words of Alexander Hamilton, to be “out of reach of those occasional ill-humors” of the masses. More broadly, the purpose of the entire capitalist government with all its tentacles and branches is, as Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels put it in the *Communist Manifesto*, to act as “a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.” Against the reformists’ lulling of the workers, youth and oppressed into faith-based appeals to the good offices of the bourgeois state, we say what is necessary is *class-struggle opposition to U.S. imperialism* by the multiracial American proletariat. The struggle against imperialist war must be part and parcel of a struggle against the entire system of exploitation and oppression. The primary obstacle to this revolutionary perspective is the pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy, whose embrace of the capitalist system and promotion of U.S. imperialism’s interests chains the working class to its class enemy, centrally via the Democratic Party. The working class, the only force with both the objective interest and social power to overthrow this system, needs revolutionary leadership. The Spartacist League fights to build a revolutionary workers

party—a U.S. section of a reformed Fourth International—that will lead the proletariat in the struggle for workers rule. U.S. Hands Off Iran! In presenting themselves as even more tough than Bush & Co. in the “war on terror,” all the major Democratic presidential candidates support the bloody U.S./NATO occupation of Afghanistan. Moreover, they have all sought to compete with Bush in beating the drums against Iran, promising to keep all options, including a nuclear strike, “on the table” to deal with this supposed “threat.” When Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was invited to speak at Columbia University on September 24 (which he did), as when he asked to pay his respects to the dead at the World Trade Center “Ground Zero” (which he was not allowed to do), the politicians of both parties were apoplectic. It’s more than nauseating to hear their whines about “human rights abuses” in Iran as the U.S. rulers spy on, imprison, taser and otherwise make miserable the existence of a large swath of the population in this country. While we are politically hostile to the reactionary mullah-led Iranian regime, we stand against U.S. war threats and nuclear blackmail and say: *U.S. hands off Iran!* Iran *needs* nuclear weapons and adequate delivery systems to deter imperialist attack. In the event of an attack by the U.S. or any force acting as its proxy (e.g., Israel), the international proletariat must stand for the military defense of Iran. As for the reformist left, the “opposition” to war against Iran that it might mention in its publications was exposed last year when the RCP’s WCW and the ISO’s CAN signed onto a petition to “Dear President Bush and Vice President Cheney” advising: “The most effective way to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons would be to closely monitor its nuclear energy program, and to improve diplomatic relations—two tasks made much more difficult by threatening to bomb Iranian territory. We urge you to lead the way to peace, not war, and to begin by making clear that you will not commit the highest international crime by aggressively attacking Iran.” As we wrote in “ISO, RCP to Bush: Disarm Iran, ‘Lead the Way to Peace’” (WV

No. 870, 12 May 2006): “This petition is like appealing to Jack the Ripper to take up social work—while simultaneously demanding that his potential victims walk the streets defenseless.” For New October Revolutions! Those newly introduced to political protest often feel that the differences that separate the tendencies on the left should be held in abeyance and that we should “all get together.” But this course is criminal for those fighting to overturn this murderous imperialist system. Reformism is based on the lie that the evils of the bourgeois order can be overcome and that the capitalists can be made—through protest and pressure—to serve the interests of those they exploit and oppress. Although the occasional reform can be wrested through struggle from the capitalist rulers, such reforms are always reversible. History shows again and again that in opposing the program of socialist revolution, the reformists serve to keep this murderous system going, ensuring that protest and anger against it are kept within bounds safe for the bourgeois rulers. In stark contrast, Marxists tell the bitter truth about this system and fight to organize for its destruction through socialist revolution. Our model is the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, the victorious workers revolution that established the world’s first proletarian state power. For decades, including after its bureaucratic degeneration under Stalinism, the Soviet Union was a beacon of liberation, not least for the masses in those countries subjugated by imperialism. We fought for the unconditional military defense of the Soviet degenerated workers state against imperialist attack and internal capitalist counterrevolution. We called for workers political revolution to oust the Stalinist regime and replace it with one based on workers democracy and revolutionary internationalism. Today, we extend this same program to the remaining deformed workers states of China, North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba. As for the anti-Communist ISO and its international cothinkers, they hailed the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92—a world-historic defeat for the international proletariat—proclaiming: “Communism has collapsed.... It is a fact that should have every socialist rejoicing” (*Socialist Worker* [Britain], 31 August 1991). The military-industrial powerhouse of the non-capitalist world, the Soviet Union had at its disposal a nuclear arsenal that could challenge that of the U.S. That rough nuclear parity stayed the hand of rapacious U.S. imperialism on more than one occasion. Now, in the post-Soviet period, the world has become a far more dangerous place, one of unfettered U.S. military intervention abroad and relentless pounding on the exploited and oppressed “at home.” We fight to forge a Bolshevik party that can mobilize the U.S. proletariat—independent of and in opposition to the capitalist parties—in sweeping away this murderous, decaying capitalist system. *Defeat U.S. imperialism through workers revolution!* ■

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Russian Question...

(continued from page 2)

The same is true in China, though the details are different. The Chinese bureaucracy has proceeded more slowly with privatisation, and has continued to use the organisational form of the Communist Party. China has received much more foreign investment than Russia, with many transnational corporations choosing China as a base for production for the world market.

The Chinese bureaucracy’s “gradualist” strategy has been much more successful economically than Yeltsin’s “shock therapy”, which sent Russia into a deep depression. China has experienced a long boom similar to that in South Korea and Taiwan in earlier years. This boom is based on the extremely ruthless exploitation of the working class, especially the vast numbers of migrant workers.

Neither in China nor in Russia was there just one single “catastrophic” event that broke the resistance of the workers. The resistance of many specific groups of workers to privatisation, job cuts, welfare cuts, oppressive working conditions, etc has been crushed in numerous separate battles, but outbreaks of resistance have continued to occur in both Russia and China.

Nevertheless the state in both Russia and China is a capitalist state. It defends the interests of the capitalist class. This does not exclude the maintenance of a significant nationalised sector of the economy in both countries, nor attacks by the state on specific capitalists (e.g. Putin’s attacks on certain “oligarchs”), nor conflicts between the Chinese or Russian states and US imperialism.

Chris Slee

WV replies:

We have extensively answered Chris Slee’s arguments on the class character of the Chinese deformed workers state in our replies to two letters from him (see “Why China Is Not Capitalist: An Exchange,” WV No. 890, 13 April and “Again on Why China Is Not Capitalist,” WV No. 894, 8 June). Slee’s arguments echoed prevailing pseudo-left views on China; our replies provided an opportunity to underline our Trotskyist program of unconditional military defense of China against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution and for proletarian political revolution against the Stalin-

ist bureaucracy. They also provided a means to expose Slee’s social-democratic enthusing over “democratic” forces backed by the imperialists against the Stalinist regimes.

In his third letter, Slee again denies the contradictory nature of the Stalinist bureaucracy—portraying it as simply counterrevolutionary—in order to justify support to capitalist counterrevolution, including the Solidarność bid for power against the Polish workers state in late 1981. In replying to his second letter, we noted that “Slee does not deign to mention his longtime affiliation with the Australian Democratic Socialist Perspective (DSP), whose forerunners during Cold War II *enthusiastically supported* imperialist-backed counterrevolutionary forces in the former Soviet sphere, from Lech Walesa’s Solidarność in Poland to Boris Yeltsin’s ‘democrats’ in Russia.”

Slee readily admits that in East Europe and the former Soviet Union, “Some former leaders of anti-regime mass movements became leaders of capitalist governments, Polish Solidarity being an obvious example.” Quite so, as the mass movements they led were pro-capitalist. Slee falsely implies that Solidarność was initially struggling for “socialist democracy.” In fact, from its formation during the August 1980 Gdansk shipyard strike, Solidarność was led by pro-capitalist elements and actively supported by the Vatican and American and West European imperialism, not exactly champions of “socialist democracy.” And as we wrote in “Stop Solidarity’s Counterrevolution!” (WV No. 289, 25 September 1981):

“With its first national congress in September, decisive elements of Solidarity are now pushing a program of open counterrevolution. The appeal for ‘free trade unions’ within the Soviet bloc, long a fighting slogan for Cold War anti-Communism, was a deliberate provocation of Moscow. Behind the call for ‘free elections’ to the Sejm (parliament) stands the program of ‘Western-style democracy,’ that is, *capitalist restoration under the guise of parliamentary government*.” [emphasis in original]

There was no question that for genuine Trotskyists it was necessary to stand with the regime of General Jaruzelski when it spiked Solidarność’s bid for power in December 1981. We condemned the Polish Stalinist bureaucracy for driving the historically socialist Polish working class into the arms of Washington and the Vatican. Slee condemns the Stalinists for preventing Solidarność from overthrowing the deformed workers state at that time. We refer our readers to the October 1981 Spartacist pamphlet *Solidarność: Polish Company Union for CIA and Bankers*.

In arguing that the Beijing Stalinist bureaucracy has restored capitalism in China, Slee contends that this is also what basically happened in the former Soviet Union. He thus describes Boris Yeltsin’s seizure of power in August 1991 as an “intra-bureaucratic power struggle.” Yeltsin had been a leading figure in the Soviet Stalinist regime. However, in 1990 he and other right-wing forces split from the ruling Communist Party, which was then breaking apart. Trumpeting his support for “democracy” and “free market” economics, Yeltsin was able to gain the support of the U.S. imperialists in his struggle to overthrow the decomposing regime of Mikhail Gorbachev. What happened in the Soviet Union in 1989-91 was, as Leon Trotsky had predicted decades earlier, the *disintegration* of the Stalinist bureaucracy, out of which elements emerged that formed a capitalist-restorationist political force led by Yeltsin.

After seizing power in August 1991, Yeltsin dismantled the remaining structures of Stalinist bureaucratic rule. The Communist Party was outlawed and the armed forces purged of officers who might resist the dissolution of the USSR and the restoration of capitalism. At this critical juncture in modern world history, the International Communist League put out a leaflet, “Soviet Workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!”, that was distributed in the tens of thousands in Soviet Russia. It began:

“The working people of the Soviet Union, and indeed the workers of the world, have suffered an unparalleled disaster whose

devastating consequences are now being played out. The ascendancy of Boris Yeltsin, who offers himself as Bush’s man, coming off a botched coup by Mikhail Gorbachev’s former aides, has unleashed a counterrevolutionary tide across the land of the October Revolution. The first workers state in history, sapped and undermined by decades of Stalinist bureaucratic misrule, lies in tatters. The state power has been fractured, the Communist Party—its bureaucratic core—shattered and banned from the KGB and armed forces, the multinational union is ripping apart as one republic after another proclaims secession.”

—WV No. 533, 30 August 1991; reprinted in the August 1993 Spartacist pamphlet *How the Soviet Workers State Was Strangled*

Slee blows a lot of smoke to obscure one simple, decisive fact: He and his party stood with Yeltsin and his counterrevolutionary rabble; the ICL fought to the last in defense of the gains of October.

Turning to China, Slee again asserts that the state is “capitalist.” This is simply a philistine cover for *support to those forces which indeed seek such a counter-revolutionary outcome*. In our reply to Slee in WV No. 890, we explained:

“Should China succumb to counterrevolution, the results would be catastrophic: the return of imperialist subjugation, the dismantling of the gains of the 1949 Revolution, the deepening of ‘death of communism’ ideology internationally. This is an outcome we seek to combat. And in such a showdown, the DSP will stand on the side of counterrevolution, as it has done and is doing.”

With this reply to Slee’s third letter, we rest our case. ■

Paris Rally...

(continued from page 7)

intent was to undermine the potential social power this workforce has when united against the bosses.

In France the death penalty has been officially abolished, but for the youth of the *banlieues* [minority ghettos] death can always be at the end of the street when the cops chase them, as was the case for Zyad Benna and Bouna Traoré, the two youth of Clichy-sous-Bois electrocuted in October 2005 while trying to escape a cop raid. Their death provoked the *banlieue* youth revolt. While the Ligue Trotskyste and CDDS called on the workers movement to mobilize in defense of the youth, most of the left, notably the PS [Socialist Party], the PC and LO at the time supported the restoration of order by the cops. In the wake of this revolt, dozens of prison sentences were meted out to youth in mockeries of trials run round the clock, which denied the possibility for a “defense” to even be prepared against the cop charges.

Mumia’s case shows the class nature of the capitalist state. Its legal system has an

inherent class and race bias. The cops and courts that framed up this innocent man, the prison system, the executioner are all tools of organized violence used to perpetuate the domination of the capitalist class through repression of the working class and oppressed. Destroying this organ of repression requires a socialist revolution that sweeps away the capitalist system in the U.S., in France and other imperialist centers.

It is urgent to revitalize massive protests in the U.S. and internationally. It is necessary to unite working-class power with anti-racist youth in the fight to free this innocent man. His freedom will not be won through reliance on the rigged “justice” system or capitalist politicians. The only power that can turn the tide is the mobilization of the workers movement, which has the social power to shut down production. We need united-front actions and protests centered on the trade unions in which a range of political opinions are represented and where all are assured the right to express their own views. *Organize now in your trade union, on your campus, in your community, to demand: Abolish the racist death penalty! Free Mumia Abu-Jamal now!* ■

JOIN THE CAMPAIGN TO FREE MUMIA ABU-JAMAL!

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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Jena Six...

(continued from page 12)

nightriders. Federal intervention into anti-racist and other social struggles has meant spying on and murderous repression of activists. President Bush, cynically claiming to be “saddened” by the events in Jena, noted that “the Justice Department and the FBI are monitoring the situation.” We’re sure they are—just like they “monitored” the Black Panther Party and thousands of other radicals, black and white, in the civil rights, anti-Vietnam War and New Left movements.

Under the FBI’s Counter-Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO), 38 Black Panther Party members were killed and hundreds of others framed up. FBI “infiltrators” made up about 20 percent of Ku Klux Klan membership in the 1960s and were involved in bombings and murders, including the 1963 Birmingham church bombing and the murder of civil rights worker Viola Liuzzo in her car in 1965. The November 1979 Klan/Nazi massacre of five leftists and union officials in Greensboro, North Carolina, was aided by a government agent who helped train the killers and by a “former” FBI informant who rode shotgun in the fascists’ motorcade of death.

A living symbol of the system of racist capitalist injustice today is the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal, a former Black Panther and later a MOVE supporter and radical journalist who has been imprisoned on death row for a quarter century, framed up on false charges of killing a

9 December 2006: PDC contingent at Philadelphia protest on 25th anniversary of arrest of Mumia Abu-Jamal.



Philadelphia policeman in December 1981. From the time he was a 15-year-old leader of the Philadelphia Panthers in the late 1960s, Mumia was a target of COINTELPRO spying and harassment. The cops, prosecutors, bourgeois politicians and their media jackals have howled for Mumia’s legal lynching because they see in him the spectre of black revolt.

The big-name black liberals who organized the Jena Six protest have done nothing at all comparable on behalf of Mumia. While Jena is a small Southern town, Philadelphia is a major Northern city long run by the Democratic Party machine. And it was the local Democrats who joined with the cops and prosecutors in putting Mumia on death row. The D.A. who prosecuted Mumia in 1982, Ed Rendell, is now

the Democratic governor of Pennsylvania. Since first taking up Mumia’s cause two decades ago, the Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee have urged all opponents of racist oppression to join the fight for his freedom and to abolish the racist death penalty. But we understand that this fight must be waged independently of the capitalist courts and political parties that conspired to railroad Mumia.

Democrats: The Other Party of Racist Capitalist Rule

What politicians like Sharpton, who admits that he wore a wire for the FBI in the 1980s, want above all else is to keep black people tied to the Democratic Party as the “lesser evil” to the Republicans, who openly appeal to the white racist vote. All the major GOP presidential candidates recently refused to appear in a debate at Baltimore’s historically black Morgan State University. In an earlier calculated insult, all but one Republican candidate turned down the chance to debate on the Spanish-language Univision network. In his *New York Times* (24 August) column, liberal commentator Paul Krugman noted that the Republicans’ “electoral strategy has depended largely on exploiting racial fear and animosity.” He pointed out that “Rudy Giuliani remains the front-runner for the G.O.P. nomination,” despite his big-city social life and record on abortion, because he “comes across as an authoritarian, willing in particular to crack down on you-know-who.”

The impoverishment of the black populace is perpetuated by the American capitalist government—federal, state and city—whether run by Democrats or Republicans. It was the Clinton administration in the mid 1990s that axed the main federal welfare program, thereby condemning millions of women and children, disproportionately black, to destitution while further depressing wages at the low end of the labor market, where black workers are concentrated. Today in response to the Jena atrocity, Hillary Clinton has joined the call for an “investigation,” while Barack Obama says he just wants “fairness” and claims it “isn’t a matter of black and white.” Tell that to the marchers who passed Confederate flags on the way out of Jena!

The bulk of the “socialist” left, which sows the illusion that the capitalist system can be reformed to serve the interests of workers and the oppressed, has offered no criticism of the Sharpton and Jackson leadership of the Jena protest. Typical are the eccentric Maoists of the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP), who went to Jena with stickers to “Impeach Bush!”—their longstanding gimmick to promote the Democratic Party of racism and imperialist war. The RCP’s *Revolution* has pumped out a lot of newsprint on Jena that includes some ritualistic denunciations of capitalism and white supremacy. But you won’t hear from them that Jackson, Sharpton & Co. have repeatedly moved to steer anger over racist abuses into toothless “reforms” and bourgeois electoral politics.

MLK and the Failure of Liberal Reformism

There was a lot of talk at the Jena protest about the need for a “new civil rights

movement.” It’s obvious to millions of oppressed black people that *something* needs to be done. The bipartisan “war on drugs” campaign has led to the mass incarceration of black as well as Latino youth. A decision by the Supreme Court this summer effectively put the last nail in the coffin of school integration. The mass of black people is forced to live in ghettos that are little more than rotting shells: no jobs, no health care, primary and high schools little more than prisons. In some inner cities, infant mortality rates approach Third World conditions.

The civil rights movement succeeded in eliminating legalized racial segregation (the Jim Crow system) in the South. That system had taken hold in the late 19th century after the defeat of Radical Reconstruction, the period of racial equality and black political empowerment that followed the smashing of the slavocracy in the Civil War. An important factor leading to the end of Jim Crow was that by the late 1950s legalized segregation had become an increasing embarrassment for the U.S. imperialist rulers in their Cold War with the Soviet Union, especially in the former colonial countries of Asia and Africa.

But the civil rights movement was defeated in the mid 1960s when it came North, where blacks already had the same formal democratic rights as whites but remained segregated at the bottom of society. For here it ran straight into the conditions of black impoverishment and oppression rooted in the basic structure of American capitalist society: mass unemployment, rat-infested slums, rampant police brutality. These conditions could not be eradicated by Congress passing a new civil rights act.

However, the civil rights movement—in which the black masses courageously confronted the white-supremacist police states of the South—also had the possibility of developing into a working-class-centered struggle for black equality. Such a struggle was obstructed and sabotaged by Martin Luther King Jr. and the other black misleaders who tied the movement to the Democratic Party of John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson.

The main organization of young civil rights militants in the South was the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), which in the early 1960s underwent a leftward radicalization. Through their own bitter experience, SNCC militants came to recognize that the Kennedy/Johnson White House was a lot closer to the racist Dixiecrats than it was to them. At the same time, they also came to recognize that the Democrats, no less than the Republicans, were a party of imperialist militarism, seeking to overthrow the Cuban Revolution and escalating the war in Vietnam in the name of anti-Communism.

Tensions between the young militants and King & Co. came to the surface during the 1963 March on Washington. The liberal leaders pressured then SNCC chairman John Lewis into deleting from his prepared speech the following passage: “We cannot depend on any political party for both the Democrats and Republicans have betrayed the basic principles of the Declaration of Independence.” Subsequently, Lewis, like many other activists, came to terms with the racist capitalist order, becoming a Democratic Congressman.

To black people, King preached “non-violent resistance” in the face of racist police repression as well as attacks by the Klan. And when in the summer of 1965 blacks in the Watts district of Los Angeles rose up against police brutality, King, at the behest of Lyndon Johnson, endorsed their bloody suppression by the L.A. cops and National Guard. King’s support for the suppression of the Watts rebellion widely discredited him among young black militants who were already derisively calling him “De Lawd.”

Our own political tendency emerged during this convulsive period. The Spartacist League originated as a left opposition, the Revolutionary Tendency (RT), in

A talk by Bryan D. Palmer

author of *James P. Cannon and the Origins of the American Revolutionary Left, 1890-1928*

James P. Cannon: American Communist Pioneer From Wobbly to Bolshevik

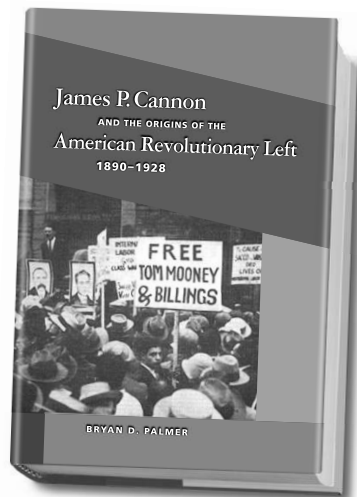
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Women and Revolution

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UAW...

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retirees. Not only would this plan put the union in the position of debt collector, but it also opens the door to the union itself cutting benefits if, for example, its investments cannot keep pace with rising medical costs. A hard-fought battle could turn the tide on such concessions and defend hard-won benefits.

The contract negotiations apparently stalled when GM rejected any job security promises, among other issues. Company promises to save jobs are meaningless. Every UAW contract with GM since 1980 has included a job security clause. But a combination of automation, company spin-offs and outsourcing has decimated UAW membership rolls at GM, Ford and Chrysler. In 1980, there were over 350,000 UAW members at GM compared with 73,000 today. Meanwhile, there has been a proliferation of non-union jobs in auto, particularly in the South.

For decades, the overriding concern of the UAW officialdom has been the “competitiveness” of the American automakers against their overseas rivals. UAW head Ron Gettelfinger and his cohorts blame the plight of U.S. automakers on “unfair” foreign trade and currency imbalances, particularly in regard to China. They demand that Washington broker “fair trade” agreements replete with protectionist barriers

and hand out subsidies to the “Big Three.”

Here is a crystalline expression of the labor tops’ support to the capitalist profit system and the ambitions of the U.S. ruling class. The UAW tops’ chauvinist protectionism promotes the lie that workers in the U.S. have a common “national interest” with their “own” exploiters and goes hand in hand with their loyal support to the capitalist Democratic Party. It also serves to foment bigotry against Asian and Latino workers, for example when the UAW bureaucracy rails against the “outsourcing” of jobs to other countries. This flag-waving chauvinism is reflected in the current strike with picket signs reading, “Americans Have Rights” and “NAFTA Bankrupts America.” Calls for protectionist measures are doubly pernicious when directed against the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state, which the international proletariat must defend against the imperialist powers and against internal counterrevolutionary forces.

To actually protect auto workers’ jobs means fighting the bosses. As a norm, the capitalists will move to exploit cheaper labor where it is available. The growth of the GM empire worldwide points straight to the need for international labor solidarity action. From the standpoint of working-class internationalism, the growth in the ranks of the proletariat in underdeveloped countries means the growth of the international allies of the U.S. working class. In the case of GM, many of its

U.S. models are assembled in Mexican plants. When the UAW struck two Flint, Michigan, GM-Delphi parts plants in 1998, GM’s North American assembly network shut down from Mexico through to Canada.

As in 1998, the current strike shows that the UAW still wields significant power despite its declining numbers, which include a large component of black workers and a significant number of women workers as well. In terms of the percentage of auto workers organized, the UAW peaked in the early 1950s. Its greatest number of dues-paying members was reached in 1970, at 1.6 million workers. This year, that number could sink below 500,000, less than half the auto workers in the U.S. At the same time, domestic sales of cars and trucks have grown in recent years, and the vast majority of vehicles sold here are made in the U.S.

Organizing the unorganized is crucial to the very survival of the UAW. A victory against the GM bosses could spark a drive to organize the large and growing number of non-union, mainly foreign-owned plants in the U.S. For example, a strike victory would energize the fight to organize the Toyota Camry plant in Georgetown, Kentucky. The bulk of non-union plants are located in the “right to work” South, where the racist legacy of slavery and Jim Crow segregation has always served to undercut labor struggle. Any organizing campaign must

center on the fight for black rights and take up as well the rights of immigrant workers, a growing component of the U.S. proletariat.

GM’s appetite to crush the union has been whetted by the series of givebacks already granted by the UAW tops, who oversaw the mass layoffs and wage-gouging at Delphi when that company declared bankruptcy. Despite their precarious position, one-third of UAW Delphi workers rejected their rotten contract earlier this summer. In 2005, UAW’s Solidarity House made concessions on retiree health care at GM and Ford followed by job-slashing employee buyouts at the Big Three.

As we wrote during the Delphi bankruptcy crisis in “Defeat Auto Bosses’ Union Busting!” (WV No. 857, 28 October 2005):

“The screaming about rising health care and wage costs is corporate propaganda in the service of union-busting. Meanwhile, Delphi, GM et al. rake it in with their subsidiaries and international operations. The unions should fight for free, quality health care for all! For jobs for all through a shorter workweek with no loss in pay! Against the anarchy of capitalist production, we fight for workers revolutions to establish an international planned socialist economy.”

For this to happen requires forging a revolutionary workers party that will rip power out of the hands of the exploiters and create a society organized to meet human needs, not private profit. ■

the once-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP). When the Southern civil rights struggles erupted in the late 1950s, the SWP was beginning to move away from the Trotskyist program, finally descending into reformism in 1965. The SWP leadership abstained from intervening in the mass struggles for democratic rights while acting as cheerleaders for both King and the black nationalists of the Nation of Islam.

The RT fought for the SWP to intervene into the civil rights movement based on a program of linking the struggle for black democratic rights and social equality with the working-class struggle against capitalist exploitation. Concretely, we called on civil rights militants to break with the Democratic Party and form a Freedom Labor Party. We called as well for a Southern organizing drive backed by the labor movement. Then as now, only on the basis of common class interests and struggle can the deep racial divide between black and white workers be overcome. After being expelled from the SWP, the early Spartacist League intervened in the civil rights movement in both the South and North, to the best of the ability of our very small forces.

Recoiling against the liberal reformism of King and identifying the labor movement with its bureaucratic misleaders,

many SNCC and other militants turned toward black nationalism. Black nationalism or, more accurately, separatism is at bottom a doctrine of despair. This outlook accepts that the racist character of American society is unchangeable and that no significant section of the white populace can be won to the struggle for black equality. The best of the young black radicals of this period were represented by the Black Panther Party, which was destroyed largely through murderous state repression. Many Panthers subsequently returned to the fold of liberal reformism and the Democratic Party.

The Class-Struggle Road to Black Liberation

Black nationalism obscures the *class* divide in this society, denying the potential power that black workers have as a strategic component of the multiracial proletariat. Despite the destruction of many industrial jobs and erosion of union strength, black workers, whose rate of union membership is significantly higher than that of white workers, continue to be integrated into such industries as steel, auto, urban transit and longshore. The proletariat alone has the power to shatter this racist, capitalist system. Won to a revolutionary program and under the leadership of a Leninist vanguard party, black

workers will be the living link between the anger of the dispossessed ghetto masses and the social power of the proletariat.

The two main obstacles preventing black workers from playing that historic role are the Democratic Party, especially its black component, and the trade-union bureaucracy, which chains workers to the capitalist Democrats. Beginning in the mid 1960s, the Republican Party positioned itself as the party of the “white backlash” while the Democrats moved to co-opt young black activists into the government bureaucracy. Black Democrats became mayors of major cities, where they acted as overseers of the ghetto masses and implemented the killing cuts in social welfare programs. One of those mayors, Wilson Goode of Philadelphia, ordered the firebombing of the MOVE commune in May 1985, killing eleven black men, women and children and destroying an entire black neighborhood in the process.

The failure of the trade-union misleadership to mobilize labor’s power to combat the oppression of black people is a major factor underlying the decline of the union movement. This is nowhere clearer than in the South, where the legacy of Jim Crow racism has made it the main regional bastion of anti-labor reaction since the building of the integrated industrial unions in the 1930s. Nonetheless, black workers retain considerable social power alongside their white and Latino class brothers and sisters. The strike of 7,000 shipyard workers at Northrop Grumman, the world’s largest naval shipbuilder, in Pascagoula, Mississippi,

earlier this year demonstrated the potential power of the integrated labor movement, which under class-struggle leadership could spearhead a drive to organize the open shop South.

Organizing the region’s working class, which now includes increasing numbers of immigrants, especially from Latin America, cannot be achieved on the basis of narrow business unionism. Labor needs a leadership which does not bow to this country’s harsh anti-labor laws and which mobilizes unions to fight the systematic oppression of black people and to defend the rights of immigrants and all the oppressed. Black and working-class militants must stand for full citizenship rights for all immigrants.

Our perspective of revolutionary integrationism is premised on the understanding that black freedom requires smashing the capitalist system and constructing an egalitarian socialist society. There will be no social revolution in this country without a united struggle of black, white and immigrant workers led by their multiracial workers party. As stated in the preamble to the program of the Labor Black Leagues, which are fraternally allied to the Spartacist League: “The civil rights movement, tied to pro-Democratic Party pressure politics and sold out by liberal reformism, failed to complete the unfinished business of the Civil War. We fight to win the entire working class, including white workers as well as the growing number of Latino and other immigrants, to the fight for black liberation, strategic to the American revolution.” ■

Spartacus Youth Club Events

CHICAGO

Wednesday, October 3, 7 p.m.

Meet the Marxists

University of Chicago
Harper Memorial Library, Room 141
1116 E. 59th St.
Information and readings: (312) 563-0441
or e-mail: chicagospartacist@sbcglobal.net

NEW YORK

Thursday, October 4, 7 p.m.

Eyewitness Report from Jena Rally
Free Mychal Bell! Drop All Charges
Against the Jena 6!
Outrage Over Racist Jim Crow
Justice in Louisiana!

Spartacist Public Office
299 Broadway, Suite 318
(take any train to Chambers Street)
Information and readings: (212) 267-1025
or e-mail: nysl@tiac.net

VANCOUVER

Wednesday, October 10, 6 p.m.

Marx’s View of Economics— Exploitation, Profit and the Capitalist Social Order

University of British Columbia
Student Union Building
Room 213
Information and readings: (604) 687-0353
or e-mail: trotskyist_vancouver@shawcable.com

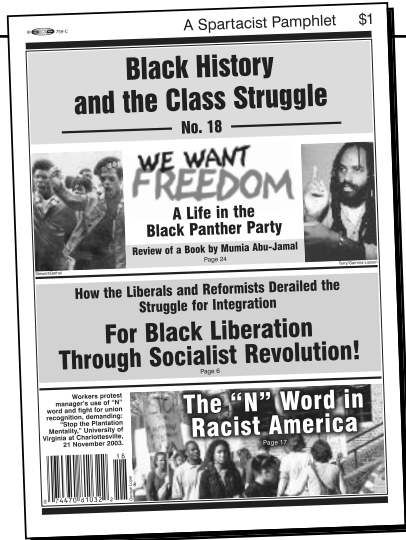
TORONTO

Wednesday, October 10, 6:30 p.m.

The Capitalist Class and the Working Class

Sidney Smith Building, Room 2101
100 St. George Street
University of Toronto
Information and readings: (416) 593-4138
or e-mail: spartcan@on.aibn.com

Visit the ICL Web Site: www.icl-fi.org

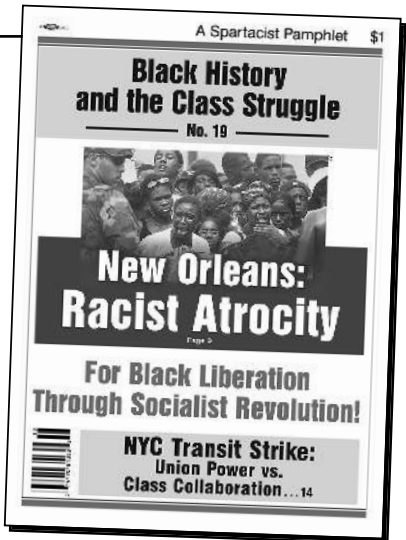


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No. 19 \$1 (48 pages)

WORKERS VANGUARD

Jena Six: Racist “Justice” U.S.A.

On September 20, as many as 50,000 protesters—overwhelmingly black and comprising workers, students, retirees and church groups—poured into the small rural town of Jena, Louisiana. Alerted by black radio and Internet networks, they came on buses from all over the South, from Detroit and Harlem and as far away as Los Angeles, to express their outrage at the Jim Crow “justice” meted out to six black Jena high school students. After months of racist insults and threats prompted by black students sitting under the “white tree,” with

Young Spartacus

racists putting hangman’s nooses on the tree, five of the youth were charged with attempted murder following a schoolyard scuffle with a white student, while the sixth was charged as a juvenile (see “Outrage Over Jim Crow Justice in Louisiana,” WV No. 896, 3 August). On campuses and workplaces across the country, the case of the Jena Six has touched a raw nerve among black people. One protester in Jena held up a sign reading, “There Would Be More of Us Here But So Many of Us Are in Jail.”

The day after the protesters left, Jim Crow justice in Jena reasserted itself. Earlier, 17-year-old Mychal Bell, the only one of the six students who has been continuously imprisoned since the schoolyard fight, saw his aggravated assault and conspiracy charges thrown out because he had been tried as an adult. But outrageously, on September 21 he was denied bail. Bell remains incarcerated in a town in the central Louisiana pine woods that has been a stronghold for KKKer David Duke. The other five still await trial, although charges against four of them have been reduced. Hours after the Jena demonstration, two young whites, one an admitted Klansman, provocatively drove through the nearby city of Alexandria, threatening people who had returned from the protest by dragging two nooses from their pickup truck, which contained a rifle and brass knuckles. **Free Mychal Bell now! Drop all the charges against the Jena Six!**

“Jena justice” is not some aberration. In Georgia, black youth Genarlow Wilson is *still* in prison for having had consensual oral sex with a 15-year-old girl when he was 17. After a court reduced his sentence to time already served, prosecutors appealed the ruling, keeping him behind bars. In New York City, Sean Bell, a young black man celebrating his upcoming wedding, was cut down in a hail of 50 cop bullets last December, and six months later black and Latino high school students in Brooklyn’s Bushwick neighborhood were rounded up by cops as they tried to attend a friend’s wake. The prisons, and the barbaric death rows within the prisons, are overflowing with black men in a country with the highest incarceration rate in the world.

Many of the protesters who poured into Jena appreciated the connection made by Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth Club comrades between the case of the Jena Six and the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, one of the worst racist atrocities in modern U.S. history. But Democratic politicians Jesse Jackson Sr. and Al Sharpton, central leaders of the Jena protest, did *not* organize any significant protests over



Winter/NY Times

September 20: Tens of thousands from throughout the U.S. rallied in Jena, Louisiana, against Jim Crow prosecution of six black youth.

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

Finish the Civil War— For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

Katrina. The Katrina disaster could not be blamed solely on the criminal policies of the Bush administration but also indicted the Democratic Party, which for decades helped preside over the deterioration of the flood control system and ran the notoriously racist and corrupt New Orleans cops. A featured speaker on September 20 was New Orleans mayor Ray Nagin, who

ordered the city’s evacuation while abandoning those without cars—overwhelmingly black and poor—to the Katrina floodwaters. We wrote in a 4 September 2005 Spartacist League statement titled “New Orleans: Racist Atrocity” (WV No. 854, 16 September 2005):

“This disaster has laid bare the class and race divisions in America. The logic

of U.S. capitalism is that whites mainly lost property, blacks mainly lost lives. It is overwhelmingly black people, deemed ‘expendable’ by the rulers, who suffered and died by the thousands in this two-thirds black city.... This catastrophic destruction of lives and livelihoods underlines that the oppression of black people is rooted in the very bedrock of American capitalism and will not be ended short of a socialist revolution that rips power and the means of production from the greedy rulers and places them in the hands of the working people.”

We look to the working class and its strategic black component as the social force that can overturn the capitalist order. With its hands on the means of production—the factories, mines, transportation systems—the working class produces the profits of the capitalist exploiters. We fight to build a workers party based on the perspective of *revolutionary integrationism*. While combatting racist segregation and state repression, we understand that black liberation can be achieved only through the integration of black people into an egalitarian socialist society. This program is counterposed to the liberal myth that black people—an oppressed race-color caste—can achieve equality within the confines of the capitalist profit system. It is also counterposed to black nationalism, which capitulates to and helps perpetuate the racist segregation fostered by this country’s rulers and despairs of multiracial class struggle.

Liberal Misleaders

Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton, whose longtime role as “black leaders” has been to quell social unrest, came down to Jena to preach reliance on the same “justice” system that from the county sheriff on up is a machine of racial and class oppression. Sharpton called in Jena for “federal intervention to protect people from Southern injustice,” intoning that “our fathers in the 1960’s had to penetrate the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, we have to do the same thing” (Associated Press, 20 September).

It is a *lie* that the federal government is a friend of black equality. Fifty years ago during the battle to integrate Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, President Eisenhower sent in troops to *head off* efforts by black people to defend themselves against racist mobs and KKK

continued on page 10

Fitzhugh/Sun Herald

Rourke/American Statesman



Above: New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina starkly demonstrated racial oppression built into American capitalism. Right: Pascagoula march by Northrop Grumman workers, many of them Katrina victims, who shut down shipbuilding giant in powerful strike, March 2007.

