

Republicans, Democrats Ratchet Up Threats



AP

Iran's Bushehr nuclear power plant in photo released in 2004.



U.S. Navy

U.S. Hands Off Iran!

On October 25, the Bush administration announced new unilateral sanctions against Iran, targeting the regime's Revolutionary Guard Corps and in particular the Quds division, which Washington accuses of "supporting terrorism." The sanctions also include four state banks. The sanctions against the elite Revolutionary Guard, which has 125,000 active troops and controls key sectors of the Iranian economy, mark the first time that the U.S. has taken such steps against the armed forces of another government.

As revolutionary opponents of U.S. imperialism, the Spartacist League opposes any economic sanctions against Iran. The 2003 war against Iraq, which has led to the death of upwards of a million Iraqis while unleashing communalist slaughter on a mass scale, was prepared by UN-imposed sanctions that killed 1.5 million people. Sanctions are an act of war and a step toward a full-fledged conflagration. Indeed, nearly half of the U.S. Navy's 277 warships, including two aircraft carrier groups, are in waters near Iran, with new military exercises already underway.

We say that in the event of military attack against Iran by the U.S. or by Israel—the only nuclear-armed country in the Near East—operating on behalf of the U.S. imperialists, it is in the interest of the international proletariat, not least the U.S. working class, to stand for the military defense of Iran without giving an iota of political support to the reactionary Tehran regime. Every victory for the imperialists in their military adventures encourages more predatory wars; every setback serves to assist the working people and the oppressed the world over. *U.S. hands off Iran! All U.S. troops out of Iraq and Afghanistan now!*

The Democrats as well as the Republicans, with their kept media in tow, are straining every nerve to foment hysteria over Iran's nuclear energy program. The

Down With Imperialist Sanctions!



Young Spartacus

Spartacus Youth Club at Columbia University rally against Iraq occupation, February 15.

Iranian government says that it does not plan to develop the bomb. In fact, given the threats by the imperialists, it would be perfectly reasonable and necessary for Iran to pursue getting nuclear weapons and adequate delivery systems to deter attack. In today's world, possession of nukes has become a necessary means of maintaining national sovereignty. The counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state in 1991-92 removed the primary military and political counterweight to U.S. imperialism. Since then, the U.S. rulers have ever more openly wielded their military might, which dwarfs that of their rival imperialist powers, to maintain their dominance in the world.

The latest round of sanctions against Iran comes after two prior rounds imposed last December and this spring by the United Nations Security Council demanding that Tehran halt its uranium enrichment program. But this time, while Britain and France have supported the U.S., there has been opposition by China, a bureaucratically deformed workers state

and one of Iran's main trading partners, and by Vladimir Putin, the president of capitalist Russia, who accused the U.S. of running around "like a madman waving a knife."

Imperialist Madmen on the Loose

In his 2002 State of the Union address, President Bush labeled Iran, along with Iraq and North Korea, part of an "axis of evil." This was accompanied by a declared policy of "pre-emptive" nuclear attack against any country the U.S. deems a "threat," with Iran, North Korea and China among the countries listed as potential first-strike targets. Last year, Bush delivered an ultimatum to Iran: "Your desires for a weapon are unacceptable."

There have been numerous reports of new plans for U.S. air strikes. In the *New Yorker* (8 October), Seymour Hersh details how the current emphasis "is on 'surgical' strikes on Revolutionary Guard Corps facilities in Tehran and elsewhere, which, the Administration claims, have been the source of attacks on Americans

in Iraq. What had been presented primarily as a counter-proliferation mission has been reconceived as counterterrorism." According to Hersh, this

plan "is gathering support among generals and admirals in the Pentagon." Israeli air strikes in September against what the Israeli rulers claimed was a partly constructed nuclear reactor in Syria could be in line with what the U.S. imperialists seek to do in Iran. The Bush administration has announced plans to provide additional billions in weaponry for Saudi Arabia, Israel and Egypt to beef up regional bulwarks against Iran.

Speaking for Democratic Party strategists, liberal columnist Frank Rich noted in a *New York Times* (4 November) column:

"The reason so many Democrats believe war with Iran is inevitable, of course, is that the administration is so flagrantly rerunning the sales campaign that gave us Iraq. The same old scare tactic—a Middle East Hitler plotting a nuclear holocaust—has been recycled with a fresh arsenal of hyped, loosey-goosey intelligence and outright falsehoods that are sometimes regurgitated without corroboration by the press."

The U.S. attacked Iraq precisely because it knew it had no "weapons of mass destruction"—i.e., a means to defend itself. Iran is a larger and far more populous country that sits on 10 percent of the world's oil reserves. And, as Hersh notes, "the crux of the Bush Administration's strategic dilemma is that its decision to back a Shi'ite-led government after the fall of Saddam has empowered Iran, and made it impossible to exclude Iran from the Iraqi political scene." Any attack on Iran would further enrage Iraq's Shi'ite majority. Moreover, with Iraq in ruins, the threat of a Turkish invasion to go after Kurdish fighters can only serve to destabilize Iraq's Kurdish north, the one relatively stable region in the country.

Meanwhile Pakistan, a key U.S. ally in the "war on terror" and in supporting the occupation of Afghanistan, is in a major political crisis, with military strongman General Pervez Musharraf having declared a state of emergency on November 3 and arresting up to 2,000 political opponents.

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On Iraq and the Democrats

6 October 2007
Cleveland, Ohio

Dear Comrades:

I enjoyed the well-deserved skewering the reformists got in the latest WV (“Reformist Left: Tail of the Democratic Donkey. U.S. Out of Iraq Now!,” WV No. 899, 28 September 2007.) But I was also concerned that our characterization of the Democrats’ views on Iraq could be misunderstood to blur the distinction between communist and reformist opposition to the imperialist war and occupation. We write:

“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....” (My emphasis.)

We follow this statement, one paragraph later, with the comment:

“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.”

These statements are indisputably true, but taken together they can be misread to argue that the Dems recognize the occupation of Iraq is not in the best interests of imperialism, but they are simply too cowardly to openly advocate that position. That conclusion is why the reformists argue that mass protest will give the spineless Dems the necessary backbone to do the right thing.

I certainly won’t dispute that the Democratic presidential contenders are a pack of weasels (my apologies to actual *mustelids*), but they absolutely do *not* oppose the continued occupation of Iraq, and neither do the more far-sighted wings of the ruling class. To the contrary, there appears

to be a bourgeois consensus that Bush and his wack-job cronies blew what should have been a successful overthrow of Saddam Hussein, but nevertheless the US must now remain in Iraq until some loyal pro-imperialist henchmen can be established atop stable pro-capitalist statelets, even if that requires the genocidal transfer and slaughter of whole ethnic populations. This bloody “consensus” was set forth to near universal capitalist acclaim in the Iraq Study Report, and the Dems are now campaigning on its implementation.

Ted Koppel, no radical journalist he, has the Democrats’ number:

“...[C]ongressional Republicans and Democrats have reached, if not a deal, an accommodation. They understand that there is, effectively speaking, no way of getting all the troops out soon.... I think what we’re looking at...is a significant number of U.S. forces in Iraq for some years to come.”

“...[W]hat the Iraqis are not capable of doing right now is protecting their own borders. It is not in the U.S.’ interest that Iran, which is now becoming the regional superpower in the Persian Gulf ...has free access to Iraq. I think you’re just going to see anywhere from 75 to 100,000 U.S. troops there for years to come.”

“...[A]ll the emphasis [has been] on the British withdrawal from Basra.... They withdrew about 15 to 20 miles outside of Basra. They’re still there.”

(NPR Interview on Morning Edition, 7 September 2007.)

The Democrats agree that U.S. soldiers should be pulled back from the cities, where they make far too convenient targets, to their massive, near-impenetrable military bases. They just argue that presence shouldn’t be construed as “permanent occupation,” you understand. They are afraid to openly say that those troops will remain for years, decades, if that is what it takes to insure that unreliable warlords and unreliable fundamentalists do not get their hands on one of the world’s largest proven oil reserves. But that is why the Democrats want the troops to remain, and will not advocate their withdrawal.

At bottom, the Democrats are loyal, pro-imperialist politicians. They argue they are best able to “secure Iraq’s borders.” They will support whatever they think are the most acceptable tactics of occupation. They will not withdraw U.S. troops until they can trust the oppressors

they leave behind. All the reformists’ alibis, and mass demonstrations to apply pressure, won’t cause the Democrats to act otherwise, because that would be a betrayal of the class they serve.

cgs,
Matt G.

WV replies:

Matt G. raises interesting considerations. It is true that no leading Democratic presidential contender calls for immediate withdrawal from Iraq. However, this does not mean that the ruling class as a whole is committed to maintaining a costly military occupation of Iraq, which in any case is not the only means at the imperialists’ disposal for maintaining domination of the oil-rich Near East.

There is no questioning the strategic importance of this region to U.S. imperialism. But despite the bipartisan support for the murderous war and occupation of Iraq, there has been significant opposition to the occupation among those in the ruling class who see the seemingly intractable quagmire as gravely harmful to their world interests, including in the Near East. These concerns were expressed in a *Foreign Affairs* (November/December 2007) article by Hillary Clinton titled “Security and Opportunity for the Twenty-First Century.” Writing as Bush’s presumptive successor, Clinton declares that the U.S. will face “a resurgent Russia,” a “rapidly growing China” and “an unpredictable and dangerous situation in the Middle East.” “To meet these challenges,” she continues, “we will have to replenish American power by getting out of Iraq, rebuilding our military, and developing a much broader arsenal of tools in the fight against terrorism.”

The Bush administration is leaving its replacement with a lose-lose situation in Iraq. We were not the only ones to predict that toppling Saddam Hussein’s regime would be easy, but that the subsequent occupation would not. Such difficulties and setbacks for imperialism should provide an opening for the pursuit of class struggle at home against the capitalist rulers, which we have fought for as part of our program to defeat U.S. imperialism through proletarian revolution. With its support—either backhanded or overt—to the Democratic Party “lesser evil,” the reformist left has once again served as a roadblock to this revolutionary perspective. ■



TROTSKY

The Internationalism of the Bolshevik Revolution

In an article marking the second anniversary of the 1917 October Revolution, Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin noted that the Soviet workers state provided a beacon for proletarian revolutions internationally. Today, following the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union after decades of Stalinist betrayal and unrelenting imperialist pressure, the capitalist rulers proclaim the “death of communism” as they step up attacks on workers and the oppressed at home

and on the neocolonial countries. Meanwhile, they target the remaining deformed workers states for counterrevolution. The International Communist League is committed to forging Bolshevik workers parties to lead new October Revolutions around the world, the only way to eradicate exploitation, oppression and imperialist war.

Why is Soviet power so firm and stable, despite the incredible ordeals, the terrible famine and the difficulties created by war and economic dislocation?

Because it is the power of the working people themselves, of the millions of workers and peasants.

The workers hold state power. The workers help the millions of labouring peasants.

The Soviet government has overthrown the landowners and capitalists and is steadfastly defending the people against attempts to restore their rule....

Tens and hundreds of millions of workers and peasants all over the world are suffering oppression, humiliation and plunder at the hands of landowners and capitalists. The old state apparatus, whether of a monarchy or a “democratic” (pseudo-democratic) republic, helps the exploiters and oppresses the workers.

Tens and hundreds of millions of workers and peasants in all lands know this; they see it and experience it in their everyday life.

The imperialist war lasted over four years; tens of millions were killed and crippled. What for? For the division of the capitalists’ spoils, for markets, profits, colonies and the power of the banks.

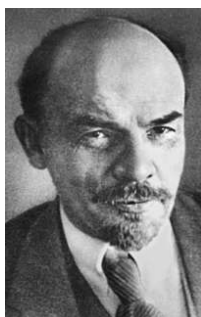
The Anglo-French imperialist predators defeated the German imperialist predators. With every passing day they are exposing themselves for what they are—robbers and plunderers, oppressors of the working folk who batten on the misery of the people and tyrannise weak nations.

That is why support for Soviet power is growing among the workers and peasants of the world.

The severe and arduous struggle against capital was victoriously begun in Russia. It is now spreading in all countries.

It will end in the victory of the World Soviet Republic.

—V.I. Lenin, “Two Years of Soviet Power” (November 1919)



LENIN

Spartacus Youth Club Classes

CHICAGO

Tuesday, November 27, 7 p.m.
**The Russian Revolution of 1917:
When the Workers Took Power**
University of Chicago
Harper Room 141
1116 E. 59th St.
Information and readings: (312) 563-0441
or e-mail: chicagospartacist@sbcglobal.net

NEW YORK CITY

Thursday, November 29, 7 p.m.
**Defend China, Cuba,
North Korea and Vietnam
Against Imperialism and
Capitalist Counterrevolution!
For Proletarian Political Revolution
to Oust the Stalinist Bureaucracies!**
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

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

LOS ANGELES

Thursday, November 15, 6 p.m.
The State and Revolution
UCLA, Haines Hall A78
Information and readings: (213) 380-8239
or e-mail: slsycla@sbcglobal.net

TORONTO

**Wednesday, November 21
6:30 p.m.**
**Trotskyism vs. the Stalinist Sellout of
the Russian Revolution**
University of Toronto
Sidney Smith Building, Room 1080
100 St. George Street
Information and readings: (416) 593-4138
or e-mail: spartcan@on.aibn.com

VANCOUVER

Wednesday, November 21, 6 p.m.
**Anglo Chauvinism Is
Poison to Class Struggle—
Independence for Québec!**
University of British Columbia
Student Union Building, Room 213
Information and readings: (604) 687-0353
or e-mail:
trotskyist_vancouver@shawcable.com

WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League of the U.S.

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No. 902

9 November 2007

Genarlow Wilson Finally Freed

Following a Georgia Supreme Court ruling, Genarlow Wilson, a 21-year-old black man, walked out of prison a free man on October 26 after two years behind bars. Wilson never should have spent a day in prison! A high school honor student, all-conference football player and track star, Wilson was convicted of engaging in consensual oral sex with a 15-year-old girl on New Year's Eve in 2003, when he was 17. Under Georgia law, where the "age of consent" is 16, the girl could not be considered to be "legally consenting." Wilson was sentenced to a mandatory ten years in prison and lifetime registration as a "sex offender."

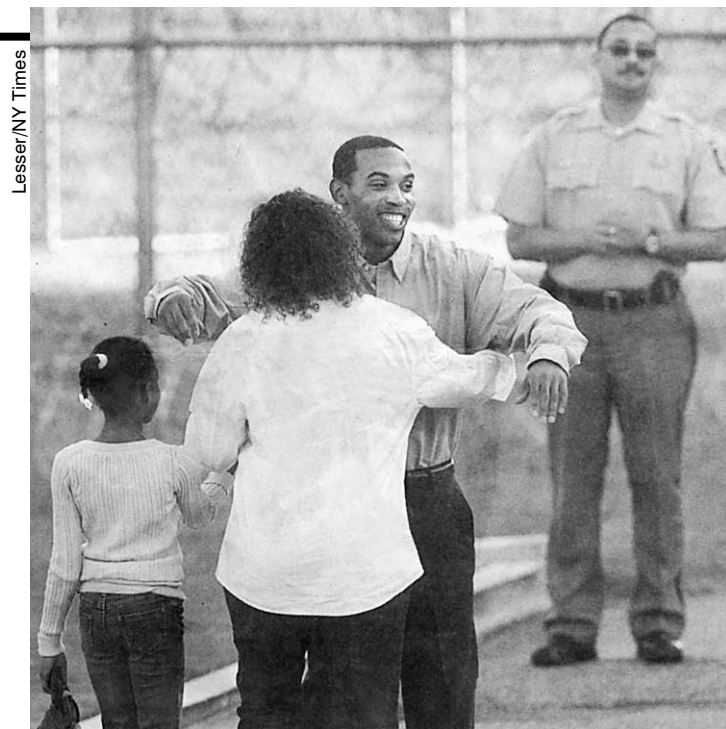
In 2006, a year after Wilson's conviction, the Georgia legislature passed a new law making such teenage sexual activity a misdemeanor punishable by no more than a year in prison. But the legislature refused to apply it retroactively and subsequently blocked bills allowing Wilson to reopen his case. Taking note of the new law, the Georgia Supreme Court ruled that Wilson's sentence violated the Constitution's prohibition of cruel and unusual punishment, stating that it was "grossly disproportionate to his crime."

From the standpoint of any rational society, Genarlow Wilson *committed no*

crime. We oppose reactionary "age of consent" laws, which deny the fact that young people are, and have always been, sexually active. Our guiding principle is simply that of mutual effective consent. Government out of the bedrooms! This case exemplifies racist and anti-sex bigotry in the U.S. Reactionary "child molestation" laws are aimed at both increasing the repressive reach of the capitalist state and bolstering the institution of the family. According to the Georgia Public Defender Standards Council, black teens are five times as likely as whites to be sentenced under the law that sent Wilson to prison. Similar laws across the country were adopted throughout the 1980s and '90s as the racist capitalist rulers deemed a generation of black youth to be innate criminals who must be warehoused in prisons, mainly through the "war on drugs."

Wilson's freedom can be attributed not to the fairness of the state Supreme Court, which had twice turned him down, but to the widespread publicity and outcry against what a *New York Times* (30 April) editorial called "Georgia's Shame." Public figures like former president Jimmy Carter and even members of Wilson's jury called for his

**October 26:
Genarlow Wilson
greeted by
mother and
sister shortly
after his release
from Georgia
prison.**



release. Much of the attention flowed from the equally grotesque persecution of Marcus Dixon, an 18-year-old black Georgia high school athlete and A student who was thrown into prison in 2003 under the same law for having consensual sex with a white girl just shy of 16. Amid a wave of publicity, the Georgia Supreme Court reduced his conviction to statutory rape, cutting his sentence to the 15 months he had already served.

After Wilson's release, Jesse Jackson Sr. stated, "Genarlow Wilson has been set free, but thousands are still imprisoned" (*Amsterdam News*, 1 November). Many

of those are there thanks to the "war on drugs" pushed by Jackson, Al Sharpton and other black Democrats. As a *Young Spartacus* article titled "Free Genarlow Wilson!" (WV No. 887, 2 March) states:

"The desperate conditions facing black youth—police terrorizing the ghettos, mass unemployment and incarceration, the rollback of affirmative action and re-segregation of urban schools—can be eliminated only through the overturn of capitalist class rule by the multiracial working class. We fight to build the revolutionary workers party that is essential to lead the proletariat in this struggle. Black liberation through socialist revolution!" ■

BT's "Correction" Where German Imperialism Goes Wrong on World Peace

It seems that we stung the International Bolshevik Tendency (BT) by publishing an article written by our comrades of the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany scandalizing the BT's German affiliate for propagating "anti-Communist nostalgia about the Bundeswehr [German army]" ("BT's Anti-Soviet Embellishment of German Imperialism," WV No. 900, 12 October). The German BT, Gruppe Spartakus, had written in *Bolschewik* (January 2006): "After the end of the Cold War, there was a change in the duties of the German Bundeswehr, which was supposed to function as a defensive army during the bloc confrontation." The January 2007 *Bolschewik* continued in

the same vein, arguing that "the army was made smaller, in order to change it from a defensive army into an offensive army of attack."

This was indeed a scandal. From World War I through Hitler's blitzkriegs against the Soviet Union to the heavy tank formations lined up against East Germany and the USSR during the Cold War, it is not news to students of history or pretty much anybody who reads and thinks that the German military is relentlessly aggressive in pursuit of the imperialist interests of the German bourgeoisie. As our German comrades noted, "The impulse to describe the functions of the army of German imperialism as 'defensive' during

the 'bloc confrontation' with the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies flows straight from the Cold War mythology that the 'democratic' West was threatened by 'Soviet expansionism'."

Caught out by our criticism, the BT issued a non-denial denial in a Web posting, "Reply to WV No. 900," dated October 23. The BT whines that it had already supposedly "repudiated the 'defensive army' formulation in a posting on the German section of our website" and appends a translation of this "correction," titled "'Defensive Army'—A Mistaken Formulation" and dated July 14. The German BT's "correction" simply further confirms our point. It states:

"We do not consider that West German imperialism had a purely defensive strategy exclusively concerned with territorial defense. Our misleading formulation

was intended to describe how the orientation of the Bundeswehr changed after the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Warsaw Pact."

Not "purely defensive"? Not "exclusively concerned with territorial defense"? It's no accident that the BT's "correction" is accompanied by an appendix attacking the International Communist League for our *unconditional military defense of the deformed and degenerated workers states*, including our support to the suppression of imperialist-backed, counterrevolutionary Solidarność. And it was our Soviet defensism that led the individuals who would later make up the BT, in Germany as elsewhere, to quit our party.

In addition to being caught out, again, for its Stalinophobic hostility to the Trotskyist program, the BT is no doubt reeling from our further exposure of its leader, one Bill Logan. Logan was expelled from our organization for crimes against communist morality and elementary human decency; the documentary record has been published in the ICL's two-volume *Logan Dossier*. We fully intend to continue our exposure of the BT's combination of retrograde politics and sinister pathology as an elementary act of hygiene within the workers movement. ■

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slsycla@sbcglobal.net
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Oakland Box 29497, Oakland, CA 94604, (510) 839-0851
slbayarea@sbcglobal.net
Public Office: Sat. 1-5 p.m., 1634 Telegraph, 3rd Floor

San Francisco... Box 77494, San Francisco, CA 94107, slbayarea@sbcglobal.net

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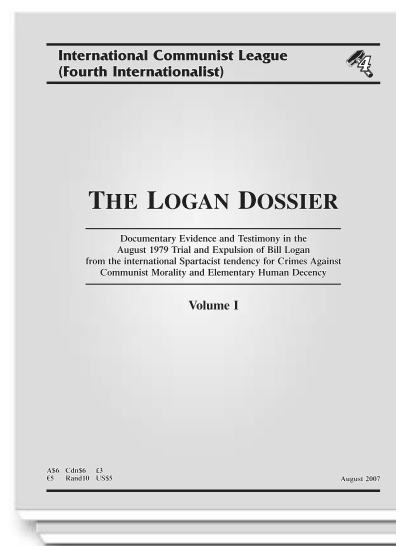
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Protest “War on Terror” Arrests of Maori Activists, Leftists!

New Zealand

The following was issued as a leaflet on October 24 by the Partisan Defence Committee, a legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League/Australia, section of the International Communist League.

Numerous protests were held across New Zealand following the racist and deeply repressive 15 October “anti-terror” raids on Maori, peace and environmental activists. On 19 October up to 1,000 people in the township of Whakatane marched on the local police station in outrage at police actions, which included house raids and reportedly the boarding of a school bus by a gun-toting cop. Protesters carried plac-

ards saying, “He taonga te mokopuna [our children are treasures],” “We are not terrorists, we’ve been terrorised” and “Don’t point the gun at me! I’m under 5” (New Zealand Weekend Herald, 20 October).

The following statement, produced on 18 October by the Partisan Defence Committee (PDC) in Australia, was distributed in Auckland at a protest outside the District Court on Friday, 19 October, at a protest rally in the city the following day as well as at Auckland University. The city rally, which included leftists, Maori activists and civil rights campaigners, marched from Aotea Square to the Auckland Central Police Station. While there some protesters attempted to pull down the New Zealand flag with police emblem and replace it with the Maori sovereignty flag. This attempt resulted in a brief scuf-

fle between police and activists with the activists escaping.

The PDC protest statement was well received, particularly by Maori activists. It was announced at Saturday’s rally that international protests against the outrageous raids were being planned for the following week.

* * *

We protest the arrest and detention of 17 Maori, anarchist and environmental activists in raids carried out across New Zealand in the early hours of 15 October by hundreds of heavily armed police of the Clark Labour-led government. One of those arrested was veteran Maori sovereignty campaigner, Tame Iti. Mr Iti, Jamie Lockett and others whose names have not been released have been denied bail. While

one Wellington judge described the information backing charges against four of these who appeared in her court as “scant,” police have threatened further arrests amidst a hysterical media campaign.

Using the criminal attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001 and the subsequent Bali and London bombings as a pretext, capitalist rulers from London to Washington to Canberra and now Wellington have seized the opportunity to jack up state repression, accompanied by racist hysteria in the service of suppressing Maori, trade unionists and leftists and youth opposed to bloody colonial occupations from Iraq to the Pacific.

Augmented police powers are being wielded to accustom people to the restriction of democratic rights and create a climate of fear aimed at quashing in advance any social struggle against the bloated capitalist profit system that consigns the working class and oppressed to increased exploitation and misery.

The 2002 Terrorism Suppression Act was used to justify the warrants for the arrests. While targeting Maori activists today, these measures ultimately threaten all opponents of New Zealand imperialism, the entire workers movement and the left. They are really about political suppression. We call on the workers movement in New Zealand and internationally to rally against this outrageous witchhunt. **Free all the arrested activists! Drop the charges!**■

Nebraska Court Ruling Against Imprisoned Black Militant

Free Ed Poindexter and Mondo we Langa!

Class-war prisoner Ed Poindexter suffered a further blow to his fight for freedom on September 10 when Douglas County, Nebraska, District Judge Russell Bowie rejected his request for a new trial. This ruling flew in the face of new evidence proving that key witnesses perjured themselves at the 1971 trial in which Poindexter and his co-defendant Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa, then known as David Rice, were convicted of murder and sentenced to life. Black Panther Party supporters and former leaders of the Omaha National Committee to Combat Fascism, Poindexter and Mondo were framed up as part of the Feds’ notorious Counter-Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO).

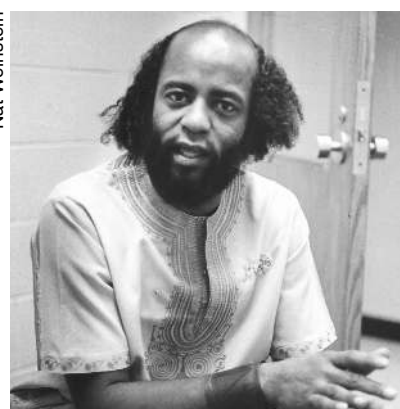
After a cop was killed by a bomb explosion in a vacant house in August 1970, Omaha police rounded up dozens of black people in a racist dragnet. Duane Peak, a scared 15-year-old, confessed to placing the bomb. After initially stating he acted alone, Peak was threatened with the death sentence and offered a deal in which he would be sentenced as a juvenile in exchange for helping to frame up Mondo and Poindexter. Although Peak named four others as well, the prosecuting attorney, Art O’Leary, said he was only interested in Mondo and Poindexter.

At trial, Peak testified that it was he who made the 911 call to lure cops to the abandoned building. But in the hearing before Judge Bowie held this May,



n2pp.info

Ed Poindexter (left), Mondo we Langa



Nat Weinstein

vocal analyst Tom Owen testified that after studying a taped copy of the long-suppressed emergency call, he confirmed that Peak could not have made that phone call. The suppression of this tape is no accident. A 1970 FBI memorandum made available through the Freedom of Information Act records a warning by the Omaha Assistant Chief of Police that use of the tapes “might be prejudicial” to the trial of Poindexter and Rice.

Though Peak’s clearly coerced testimony was shown to be bogus, Judge Bowie ruled that the 911 call constituted “but one part of the evidence against the defendant.” The other “evidence,” cop testimony that dynamite was recovered from Mondo’s basement, was equally specious. Jack Swanson, the Omaha PD Intelligence Division liaison with the FBI, testified at trial that he found the

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22nd Annual Holiday Appeal for Class-War Prisoners

Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!

Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!



Bay Area

**Sunday, December 2
3 to 6 p.m.**

Berkeley Fellowship of Unitarian Universalists
1606 Bonita Ave., Berkeley
(1 block east of MLK at Cedar St., near Berkeley BART)
For more information:
(510) 839-0852

Chicago

**Sunday, December 9
3 to 7 p.m.**

United Electrical Hall
37 S. Ashland
(at Monroe)

For more information:
(312) 563-0442

Los Angeles

**Saturday, December 8
2 to 6 p.m.**

Immanuel
Presbyterian Church
3300 Wilshire Blvd.
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Jamal Hart Wins Prison Transfer

After months of harassment and provocations, Jamal Hart, son of death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, has been transferred to the federal prison in Loretto, Pennsylvania, a low-security facility. Hart was sentenced in 1998 to 15½ years on bogus firearms possession charges. A recipient of the Partisan Defense Committee program of monthly stipends to class-war prisoners, Hart was framed up for his prominent activism in the campaign to free his father.

Hart’s transfer from the FCI Schuylkill prison was held up for many months because his security level had been manipulated. This was the work of Case Manager Walter Whalen, who made his motivation clear by prominently displaying inside the prison a

Fraternal Order of Police poster condemning Mumia. The harassment was stepped up when Hart filed an appeal after the February denial of his *habeas corpus* petition which, if granted, would have freed him. In April, Hart was thrown into solitary for a month. After his release from solitary, he continued to be denied all non-legal personal visits and phone calls. Hart’s *habeas* appeal was denied by the same Third Circuit Court of Appeals that is currently considering Mumia’s appeal. Free Jamal Hart! Free Mumia!

* * *

You can write to Jamal Hart at: Jamal Hart #50597-066, FCI Loretto, Federal Correctional Institution, P.O. Box 1000, Loretto, PA 15940.



Resistance

As labor upsurge threatened the Shah’s regime in 1978, Spartacists called for workers revolution, warned against Khomeini’s theocratic forces. Left: Iranian oil workers on strike in October 1978. Right: Iranian firing squad slaughters Kurdish rebels in August 1979, only months after mullahs came to power.

Iran...

(continued from page 1)

On November 5, Pakistani police bloodily attacked thousands of demonstrators who had gathered in Lahore and other cities to protest the imposition of martial law. The Bush administration, while expressing “concern” over the situation, has made clear that billions in aid will continue to flow to the Musharraf regime, particularly funds slated for “counterterrorism.”

While the Democrats (and some Republicans) criticize the Bush administration for its handling of the Iraq occupation, there is bipartisan consensus to go after Iran, though with some falling out over the details. Senator Hillary Clinton, the leading Democratic presidential candidate, voted in September to declare Iran’s Revolutionary Guard a foreign terrorist organization, for which she was condemned by rivals John Edwards and Barack Obama, who accused her of giving Bush a “blank check” against Iran. Obama, interviewed by the *New York Times* (2 November), declared that if elected president he “would offer economic inducements and a possible promise not to seek ‘regime change’ if Iran stopped meddling in Iraq and cooperated on terrorism and nuclear issues.” It takes some chutzpah for U.S. politicians to complain about Iranian “meddling” in Iraq when U.S. troops have devastated that country in enforcing a vicious occupation. Meanwhile, both Obama and Edwards have emphasized that they would keep “all options,” including the threat of military attack, “on the table” in dealing with Iran.

Widespread sentiment against the Iraq occupation in the American populace redounded to the benefit of the Democratic Party during last year’s midterm elections, in part thanks to the services of the reformist left, which tried mightily to build an “antiwar movement” premised on pro-Democratic Party “Anybody but Bush” politics. Now, however, even mainstream Democratic voters are bitterly complaining that electing Democrats has not made a dent. The Democratic Party is the *other* party of blood-drenched U.S. imperialism. During his presidency, Bill Clinton oversaw the murderous sanctions against Iraq and bombed Serbia into submission in 1999 while conducting the same type of bloody “surgical strikes” in Afghanistan, Sudan, Iraq and the Balkans that the Bush gang is planning against Iran.

In no small part, the Democrats and other opponents of Bush’s policies worry that the Iraq debacle has damaged U.S. imperialism’s interests in the Near East and beyond, including by overstretching the military, which continues to have trouble finding new recruits. The Iraq occupation has diverted the U.S. rulers’ attention from more strategically important areas, in particular China, the largest and most powerful of the remaining bureaucratically deformed workers states and the imperialists’ key target for capitalist counterrevolution. We stand for the unconditional military defense of the Chinese, North Korean, Cuban and Viet-

namese deformed workers states against imperialism and domestic counterrevolution. We support North Korea’s testing and development of nukes as a deterrent against imperialist blackmail.

Defeat Imperialism Through Workers Revolution!

Democrats and Republicans both portray Iran’s Islamic regime as a bunch of demented fanatics, and Bush has even ludicrously accused the Shi’ite government in Iran of arming Sunni fighters in Iraq. According to Frank Rich’s *New York Times* column, some 52 percent of the U.S. population now supports a “pre-emptive” strike on Iran. But the real nuclear crazies are the U.S. imperialists, who have not only acquired the means to

question of the rights of women played a central role. While most of the international left howled along with the imperialists against the Soviets, we said, “Hail Red Army in Afghanistan! Extend social gains of October Revolution to Afghan peoples!”

U.S. policy has been to back the forces of Islamic reaction, except when these forces have been arrayed against America’s client regimes, like the Shah of Iran, who was overthrown in 1979. What culminated with an “Islamic Revolution” in fact began with a major proletarian upsurge that in particular involved Iran’s heavily Arab and strategic oil workers. But the prospect of workers revolution, which would have radically changed the political terrain in the Near

enslaved women in the veil, slaughtered thousands of leftists and trade unionists and intensified repression against Kurds and other minorities.

Today, Iran is a cauldron of discontent. The regime of reactionary president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is increasingly unpopular. Fanatical decrees against “Western haircuts,” music and culture continue to stifle social life, especially for the country’s women and youth, while repression against opponents of the regime and trade unionists intensifies. The *New York Times*, cognizant of the restlessness in Iran, warned in an October 29 editorial that an American bombing campaign would more likely result in the mullahs and Ahmadinejad being “turned into national heroes than hung from lampposts.” Students, women, trade unionists and national minorities in Iran must have no illusions that their liberation will come from a “regime change” engineered by the imperialists. The multinational Iranian working class, leading all the oppressed behind it, must overthrow the Persian-chauvinist, clericalist regime. Key to this perspective is the forging of a Leninist workers party. Such parties must be built throughout the Near East—forged in struggle against all forms of fundamentalism and nationalism—to unite the proletariat in struggle against the imperialists as well as the region’s capitalist rulers. For a socialist federation of the Near East!

In the U.S. and other advanced capitalist countries, the rapacious imperialist rulers must be swept away through workers revolutions. Imperialist war is not an issue of narrow policy concerns of one capitalist politician or another, but rather the function of the capitalist system in its decay. The struggle against imperialist war must be part and parcel of a struggle against the entire system of exploitation and oppression. This requires a fight to build a multiracial workers party by breaking the political chains tying the working class to its capitalist class enemy, particularly through the labor bureaucracy’s support to the Democrats. The Spartacist League is committed to forging the revolutionary workers party needed to lead the struggle for workers power to victory in the heartland of world imperialism. ■



Tehran: Iranian students march with banner reading, “Nuclear Energy Is Our Obvious Right,” April 9.

destroy the world many times over but have actually carried out nuclear terror, incinerating some 200,000 Japanese people in the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. The true enemy of working people, minorities and the oppressed in the U.S. is the U.S. bourgeoisie. The ruling class that is today threatening Iran is the same capitalist class that has slashed the pensions, health care and jobs of America’s working people while shredding democratic rights through the reactionary “war on terror.”

As for Islamic reaction, the U.S. rulers fostered its growth for decades as a bulwark against “godless” Communism and even secular nationalism. In 1950, John Foster Dulles, who was later Secretary of State during the Eisenhower presidency, wrote: “The religions of the East are deeply rooted and have many precious values. Their spiritual beliefs cannot be reconciled with Communist atheism and materialism. That creates a common bond between us, and our task is to find it and develop it.” This policy found its highest expression in the funneling of vast quantities of arms and money to the Islamic fundamentalist terrorists fighting Soviet troops in Afghanistan in the 1980s.

At the request of a modernizing nationalist regime in Afghanistan besieged by fundamentalist forces, the USSR intervened in 1979 to defend its southern border. The Soviets intervened on the side of social progress in Afghanistan in the only civil war in history in which the

East and beyond, was betrayed as most of the left in Iran and internationally lined up behind the reactionary Islamic forces of Ayatollah Khomeini in the name of “anti-imperialism.”

In contrast, the International Communist League (then the international Spartacist tendency) gave no political support to Ayatollah Khomeini’s forces. We said: “Down with the Shah! Don’t bow to Khomeini! For workers revolution in Iran!” We warned that absent a decisive break by the working class with the Islamic forces, the 1978-79 upheaval would have a disastrous outcome. And indeed, after taking power, the mullahs

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The Development and Extension of Leon Trotsky's Theory of Permanent Revolution

Part One of this article appeared in WV No. 901 (26 October).

PART TWO

Mensheviks and Stalinists have long portrayed the February Revolution, which overthrew the Russian tsar, as the opening of a necessary “first stage” of the Russian Revolution. In fact, the February Revolution resolved none of the radical-democratic tasks of the “democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry” outlined by V. I. Lenin in 1905.

In a 9 January 1917 “Lecture on the 1905 Revolution,” Lenin had already dropped any mention of his 1905 formula. His speech reflected the development of the class struggle in Russia on the eve of World War I, an interimperialist war. After the 1907-10 years of reaction, the proletariat had raised its head again. By the first half of 1914, the level of strike activity had reached heights not seen since 1905. And this time, some 80 percent of the politically active workers were behind the Bolsheviks.

In his speech, Lenin spoke of 1905 in the terms of Trotsky's permanent revolution: “In reality, the inexorable trend of the Russian revolution was towards an armed, decisive battle between the tsarist government and the vanguard of the class-conscious proletariat.” Like Trotsky, he now argued that the coming revolution “can only be a proletarian revolution, and in an even more profound sense of the word: a proletarian, socialist revolution also in its content.... Only class-conscious proletarians can and will give leadership to the vast majority of the exploited.”

World War I had a profound impact on Lenin's thinking. The Second International had collapsed into social-chauvinism, with most of its sections supporting their own national bourgeoisies in the war. This led Lenin to generalize the split course with the Russian Mensheviks, which he had made definitive in 1912. He concluded that opportunism was not a vestigial or localized phenomenon; rather, as he laid out in his monumental study, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1916), the superprofits derived from the imperialists' exploitation of the colonies provided a material basis for an opportunist, pro-capitalist layer in the workers movement. Lenin fought for a complete break internationally from all reformist and centrist currents and raised the call for a Third International. Against the social-chauvinists and social-pacifists, he called for a policy of revolutionary defeatism against all the warring bourgeoisies and raised the slogan: Turn the imperialist war into a civil war!



VAAP photos

Petrograd, February 1917. Above: International Women's Day protest touched off February Revolution; banner demands increased rations for soldiers' families. Below: Revolutionaries take aim at Petrograd police headquarters.



The war had cut across the upsurge in class struggle in Russia, as an initial burst of patriotism inundated the proletariat. But the reactionary mood did not last too long. The horrors of the war spoke louder than all the priests and patriots. Russia was to see five and a half million soldiers killed, wounded or captured. Women slaved in munitions plants for pitiful wages while a “shower of gold” rained on war profiteers.

The February Revolution was triggered by a strike of mostly women textile workers in Petrograd (as St. Petersburg was renamed after Russia went to war with Germany) on International Women's Day, demanding increased war rations. Street clashes with the forces of “order” resulted in numerous casualties. But in the end, the tsar could find no loyal troops and was forced to abdicate. Sovi-

ets (councils) were immediately elected in the factories and army garrisons and at the front. In the provinces, police and state officials were arrested or sent packing. In the capital, the autocracy had been overthrown by the workers, but the government that emerged was a *bourgeois* government.

Trotsky remarked in his *History of the Russian Revolution* (1932) that the February Revolution represented the awakening of the peasant-based army. The first wave of army delegates elected to the soviets consisted heavily of literate petty bourgeois who largely supported the peasant-based Socialist-Revolutionaries (SRs). The war thus gave the SRs as well as the reformist Mensheviks, who represented urban petty-bourgeois layers as well as a section of the workers, a massive but historically accidental initial preponderance in the workers and soldiers soviets.

Even as street fighting was still raging in Petrograd in February, the Provisional Government was formed with the aim of erecting a constitutional monarchy. Meanwhile, within the soviets, the SR and Menshevik delegates, loyal to bourgeois republicanism, held the insurgent workers and peasants in check and desperately appealed to the bourgeoisie to take political power. But the masses were hostile to the bourgeoisie and looked to the soviets. That made these organs, despite their treacherous leadership, the de facto power in the country. Thus the paradox of the February Revolution: the workers, many of them inspired by the Bolsheviks, carried out the revolution, yet the government that came out of it was bourgeois.

The February Revolution resulted in a situation of *dual power*. As Lenin described in “The Dual Power” (April 1917), “Alongside the Provisional Government, the government of the *bourgeoisie*, *another government* has arisen, so far weak and incipient, but undoubtedly a government that actually exists and is growing—the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies.” This situation could not persist—one class or the other would have to rule.

Lenin Rearms the Bolsheviks

Meanwhile, the Bolshevik Party, with Lenin still in exile in Switzerland, was being steered on a conciliationist course under J. V. Stalin and Lev Kamenev, who were veteran Bolsheviks. Taking over the Bolsheviks' central organ, *Pravda*, upon their return from Siberian exile in March 1917, Stalin and Kamenev used Lenin's old formula of the “democratic dictatorship” to trample on Lenin's uncompromising opposition to the liberal bourgeoisie. The 15 March issue of *Pravda*, the first to list Stalin and Kamenev as editors, came out for support to the bourgeois Provisional Government “in so far as it struggles against reaction and counterrevolution.” Turning sharply against the Bolsheviks' revolutionary defeatism, *Pravda* declared to Russian soldiers that “every man must remain at his fighting post” and that “all ‘defeatism,’ or rather what an indiscriminating press protected by the tsarist censorship has branded with that name, died at the moment when the first revolutionary regiment appeared on the streets of Petrograd.” *Pravda* also called for the merger of the Menshevik and Bolshevik parties.

In his report to a March 1917 Bolshevik party conference, Stalin sounded like the Menshevik Georgi Plekhanov denouncing the December 1905 Moscow insurrection for antagonizing the bourgeoisie. Stalin stated: “It is not to our advantage at present to force events, hastening the process of repelling the bourgeois layers, who will in the future inevitably withdraw from us. It is necessary for us to gain time by putting a brake on the splitting away of the middle-bourgeois layers” (“Draft Protocol of the March 1917 All-Russian Conference of Party Workers”). He also declared, “Insofar as the Provisional Government fortifies the steps of the revolution, to that extent we must support it; but insofar as it is counterrevolutionary, support to the Provisional Government is not permissible.”

To the Mensheviks' offer of fusion raised at this conference, Stalin responded, “We must do it. It is necessary to define our proposal for a basis of union.” The Menshevik and SR leaders were jubilant, but there were numerous protests from Bolshevik cadres. As the worker-Bolshevik Alexander Shlyapnikov, a Central Committee member, put it: “The indignation in the party locals was enormous, and when the proletarians found out that *Pravda* had been seized by three former editors arriving from Siberia they demanded their expulsion from the party” (quoted in Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution*).

Lenin was reading *Pravda* with alarm. Even before he returned from exile on April 3, he warned in his “Letters from Afar” that the Provisional Government was a bourgeois government and that the slightest support to it meant support of the imperialist war. When he finally arrived and gave his famous speech atop an

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armored car at the Finland Station, its effect on the Bolsheviks was electrifying. In the face of the official delegation of social-patriots sent to greet him, he spoke in honor of the German revolutionary Marxist leader Karl Liebknecht, who had been imprisoned for his opposition to the war and had denounced those “socialists” who supported their own bourgeoisies as guilty of class treason. For Lenin, any support to the Provisional Government was a *split issue*.

In his “April Theses,” Lenin explained that it was only “owing to the insufficient class-consciousness and organisation of the proletariat” that power had been allowed to pass into the hands of the bourgeoisie at this stage (“The Tasks of the Proletariat in the Present Revolution,” April 1917). “The country is *passing* from the first stage of the revolution,” wrote Lenin, “to its *second* stage, which must place power in the hands of the proletariat and the poorest sections of the peasants.” When *Pravda* published Lenin’s “Theses” on April 7, not a single other Central Committee member signed them.

In a rejoinder published in the next day’s *Pravda*, Kamenev used much the same language to denounce Lenin’s “April Theses” that the Stalinists would later use against Trotsky’s permanent revolution: “As for Comrade Lenin’s general scheme, it appears to us unacceptable, inasmuch as it proceeds from the assumption that the bourgeois-democratic revolution is *completed*, and builds on the immediate transformation of this revolution into a socialist revolution.” Quoting Kamenev’s statement, Lenin replied in “Letters on Tactics” (April 1917):

“After the [February] revolution, the power is in the hands of a *different* class, a new class, namely, the *bourgeoisie*....

“To this extent, the bourgeois, or the bourgeois-democratic, revolution in Russia is *completed*.

“But at this point we hear a clamour of protest from people who readily call themselves ‘old Bolsheviks.’ Didn’t we always maintain, they say, that the bourgeois-democratic revolution is completed only by the ‘revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry’?...

“My answer is: The Bolshevik slogans and ideas *on the whole* have been confirmed by history; but *concretely* things have worked out *differently*....

“The person who *now* speaks only of a ‘revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry’ is behind the times, consequently, he has in effect *gone over* to the petty bourgeoisie against the proletarian class struggle; that person should be consigned to the archive of ‘Bolshevik’ pre-revolutionary antiques.”

Stalin receded into the shadows, confining his criticism of the “April Theses”



Lenin addressing Petrograd Soviet, April 1917.

to their “impracticality” while quietly siding with the conciliators. Kamenev, later joined by Zinoviev, led the charge against Lenin, right up to their open strikebreaking against the revolution when they publicly denounced Bolshevik plans for an insurrection on the eve of October.

Lenin concluded in an article written after he won a majority of the Bolshevik All-Russian Conference in April to his side: “Only assumption of power by the proletariat, backed by the semi-proletarians, can give the country a really strong and really revolutionary government” (“A Strong Revolutionary Government,” May 1917). Lenin had in effect adopted the program of Trotsky’s permanent revolution.

Trotsky and Lenin Reunite

At the same time, Trotsky had come to recognize the correctness of Lenin’s bitter struggle from 1903 on to build a disciplined, programmatically solid vanguard party. In the period before the 1903 split between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks at the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (RSDLP) Second Congress, Trotsky had earned the nickname of “Lenin’s cudgel.” But in 1903, Trotsky balked at Lenin’s insistence on a hard party of professional revolutionaries. However, he also opposed the Mensheviks’ orientation to the liberal bourgeoisie.

Trotsky declared himself to be outside both factions. He worked closely with the Bolsheviks in the 1905 Revolution, but in the years that followed, his attempts to unify all factions cut against Lenin’s fights to sharply differentiate revolutionaries from opportunists and inevitably led Trotsky into episodic rotten blocs against the Bolsheviks. This came to a head in 1912, after the Bolsheviks’ final split with the Menshevik faction, when they

constituted themselves as a separate party. In August 1912 Trotsky took the lead in organizing a conference with “pro-party” Mensheviks in Vienna—what became infamous as the “August Bloc”—which sought to reverse the split.

Once the February Revolution had taken care of tsarism and brought the supposedly “democratic” bourgeoisie to power, the majority of the Menshevik leadership joined the bulk of the Second International in adopting a line of “defensism” toward its “own” ruling class. Under the impact of the war and Lenin’s scathing polemics against his conciliationist efforts, Trotsky was increasingly drawn toward Lenin’s insistence on a complete break with opportunism.

Thus in 1917, Trotsky and Lenin were in agreement on the decisive questions of the party and the class character of the revolution. Upon his return from exile on May 4, Trotsky did not immediately join the Bolsheviks but worked with them while in the leftward-moving *Mezhrayontsi* (Inter-Borough) organization, which he steered toward fusion with the Bolsheviks. The fusion was consummated at the Bolsheviks’ Sixth Congress which began in late July. As Lenin later acknowledged, once Trotsky had recognized the impossibility of unification with the Mensheviks, “from that time on there has been no better Bolshevik” (quoted in Trotsky, *The Stalin School of Falsification* [1937]).

Throughout the events of 1917, Lenin pounded on the need for a proletarian seizure of state power. After the first Provisional Government was brought down in a firestorm of outrage over its pledge to continue the hated imperialist war, a new government was formed in early May. SR and Menshevik leaders formally accepted ministerial portfolios. Lenin explained that the Russian bourgeoisie had “resorted to a method which for many decades, ever since 1848, has been practised by the capitalists of other countries in order to fool, divide and weaken the workers. This method is known as a ‘coalition’ government, i.e., a joint cabinet formed of members of the bourgeoisie and turncoats from socialism.” He went on:

“The simpletons of the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties were jubilant and fatuously bathed in the rays of the ministerial glory of their leaders. The capitalists gleefully rubbed their hands at having found helpers against the people in the persons of the ‘leaders of the Soviets’ and at having secured their promise to support ‘offensive operations at the front,’ i.e., a resumption of the imperialist predatory war, which had come to a standstill for a while.”

—“Lessons of the Revolution” (August 1917)

In his classic work *The State and Revolution* (September 1917), Lenin retrieved the writings of Marx and Engels on the question of the state from under a mountain of social-democratic obfuscation. Pointing to the key lesson Marx drew from the experience of the 1871 Paris Commune, when the Parisian proletariat held power for nearly three months before being bloodily crushed, Lenin cited Marx’s statement in *The Civil War in France* (1871) that “the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own

purposes.” Lenin explained: “Marx’s idea is that the working class must *break up, smash* the ‘ready-made state machinery,’ and not confine itself merely to laying hold of it.”

Lenin revived Marx’s understanding that the proletariat cannot maintain an alliance with, let alone lead, the peasantry unless the workers wield *state power*: “The proletariat needs state power, a centralised organisation of force, an organisation of violence, both to crush the resistance of the exploiters and to *lead* the enormous mass of the population—the peasants, the petty bourgeoisie, and semi-proletarians—in the work of organising a socialist economy.”

Having already dropped his earlier formula of a “revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry,” Lenin explicitly asserted that the state could not represent two different classes:

“The essence of Marx’s theory of the state has been mastered only by those who realise that the dictatorship of a *single* class is necessary not only for every class society in general, not only for the *proletariat* which has overthrown the bourgeoisie, but also for the entire *historical period* which separates capitalism from ‘classless society,’ from communism. Bourgeois states are most varied in form, but their essence is the same: all these states, whatever their form, in the final analysis are inevitably the *dictatorship of the bourgeoisie*. The transition from capitalism to communism is certainly bound to yield a tremendous abundance and variety of political forms, but the essence will inevitably be the same: *the dictatorship of the proletariat*.”

When the Bolsheviks led the proletariat to power in October 1917, they gave flesh and blood to the Marxist understanding of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The Comintern and the Colonial Revolution

The October Revolution had an electrifying effect internationally. It was felt most immediately among the workers of the other warring European powers, especially Germany. But the tidal wave it set off reached far beyond Europe, including throughout the colonial world.

Prominent among those drawn to the banner of Communism were students and other intellectuals who wanted to overcome profound social oppression, autocratic government and subservience to imperialism in their own countries and had become disillusioned in the capacity of their own weak, corrupt bourgeoisies to achieve anything resembling the Great French Revolution of 1789-93. But the early Communist International (CI) was still breaking new ground when it addressed the question of the relationship of Communist parties in the colonial world to bourgeois-nationalist movements. The Bolsheviks expected workers revolution in the imperialist centers to by and large resolve the colonial question.

The Comintern’s early work on the national and colonial question was largely aimed at drawing a hard programmatic line between the Communists and the chauvinist cesspool of the Second International. Before World War I, there had been a spread of attitudes on the colonial question within the Second International. On the left wing were many who solidarized with the colonial victims of their “own” rulers. But these Kautskyan “parties of the whole class” also included right-wing elements who championed the “civilizing” mission of imperialism (and were sometimes openly racist toward “lesser” peoples overseas and at home). Once the war broke out, the pro-war Socialist leaders acted as recruiters for the imperialists’ efforts to defend and extend their colonial empires.

Lenin drew the sharpest line against such social-chauvinism. He insisted, “Repudiation of the right to self-determination, i.e., the right of nations to secede, means nothing more than defence of the privileges of the dominant nation” (“The Right of Nations to Self-Determination,” 1914). A working class in bloc with its own rulers against oppressed nations and the colonial masses would never make a socialist revolution.

continued on page 8



International Publishers





Imperial War Museum
Leon Trotsky, then Soviet Commissar of Foreign Affairs, with Adolf Joffe arriving at January 1918 Brest-Litovsk talks with Germany.

welcome into its ranks the old Economist and Menshevik, Alexander Martynov.

Martynov would become central to the Troika's fight against Trotsky over China. It was Martynov, for instance, who coined the characterization of the GMD as a "bloc of four classes" (workers, peasants, petty bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie), which was used to justify the CCP's liquidation into that bourgeois-nationalist party. As Trotsky later noted in "Who Is Leading the Comintern Today?" (September 1928):

"Martynov not only wormed his way into the party, but he became one of the chief sources of 'inspiration' in the Comintern.... They have come closer to him and they have stooped to him—solely because of his struggle against 'Trotskyism.' For this he did not need reeducation. He simply continued to fight 'permanent revolution' just as he had done for the previous twenty years."

A few months after the 12th Party Congress came the defeat of the 1923 revolution in Germany, which had enormous worldwide consequences. The fail-

ure in Germany was due to the incapacity of the Communist International under Zinoviev and the lack of a sufficiently steeled Communist Party in Germany: the German KPD adapted to the Social Democracy and, in October, even entered Social Democratic-led regional *bourgeois* governments (see "Rearming Bolshevism: A Trotskyist Critique of Germany 1923 and the Comintern," *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 56, Spring 2001). The postwar revolutionary wave, already receding by 1921, was stopped and the global bourgeois order stabilized. In Soviet Russia, the workers had been intensely following the course of the German workers revolution. Its defeat had a huge demoralizing effect on Soviet workers, prolonging the isolation of the workers state and helping pave the way for the usurpation of political power from the proletariat by the nascent Soviet bureaucracy.

The elections to the January 1924 13th Party Conference were rigged to allow only three representatives of the loose grouping of oppositionists associated with Trotsky, despite their broad support in the urban centers and in the Red Army. "Trotskyism" was condemned as a heresy antithetical to Leninism. Lenin died on January 21, the day after he learned the outcome of the Conference. After January 1924, the people who ruled the USSR, the way the USSR was ruled and the purposes for which the USSR was ruled had all changed. In the fall of 1924, Stalin generalized the conservative bureaucracy's aversion to the proletarian, revolutionary, internationalist program of the October Revolution with his "theory" that socialism—a society based on a qualitatively higher level of productivity, in which classes have disappeared and the state has withered away—can be built in a single country, and in economically devastated Russia at that.

"Socialism in one country" was a pro-

gram of retreat and a false promise of the stability for which Soviet society ached after years of war, revolution and privation. It crystallized the mood of conservatism that affected not only the Soviet party but the young Communist parties of the West in the face of the restabilization of world capitalism. It flew in the face of the theory and practice of not only Lenin and the Bolshevik Party but of Marx and Engels, who had always been explicit that socialism would prevail only as a world system.

"Socialism in one country" was the banner under which countless revolutionary opportunities were betrayed by the Stalinists. But the transformation of the CI from an instrument for world socialist revolution into an agency for diplomatic maneuvers did not happen overnight. Dur-

ing the 1920s, first Zinoviev and later Stalin experimented with various coalitions with bourgeois forces, eventually leading to the murderous sabotage of the Second Chinese Revolution of 1925-27. By 1933, Stalin's Comintern could not be awakened by what Trotsky called "the thunderbolt of Fascism"—the victory of Hitler's Nazis without a shot being fired by the powerful German workers movement. The CI had proved itself utterly dead as a force for revolution. By 1935 it had explicitly codified a program of class collaboration (the Popular Front) and played an aggressive counterrevolutionary role in the Spanish Civil War in order to prop up bourgeois rule. The Stalinized Comintern was indeed, as Trotsky described it, "the great organizer of defeats."

[TO BE CONTINUED]



Wide World
J.V. Stalin, Alexei Rykov, Lev Kamenev and Zinoviev in Moscow, 1925. Inset: Pamphlet titled Trotsky Before the Court of the Communist Party includes Trotsky's 1924 Lessons of October and speeches by Kamenev and Stalin titled "Leninism or Trotskyism?"



Poindexter...

(continued from page 4)

dynamite in a coal bin but changed his story in a 1974 federal appeal hearing to say he saw it by the furnace. In the hearing before Judge Bowie, another cop who backed up Swanson's trial story now claimed that he, not Swanson, discovered the dynamite. Police photos of the basement show no dynamite, which first appeared in a photo of the *trunk of a police cruiser*. Bowie ruled these contradictions in sworn police testimony "immaterial."

The Nebraska chapter of the American

Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) submitted an *amicus curiae* (friend of the court) brief detailing COINTELPRO surveillance, disruption, frame-up and terror. The brief documents frame-ups against Black Panthers such as Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt) in Los Angeles, who spent 27 years in prison for a crime the LAPD and Feds knew he did not commit, and Dhuruba bin Wahad in New York, who spent two decades in prison based on falsified evidence. In a 1990 BBC documentary about the Nebraska case, Jack Swanson boasted that as a result of the arrests of Poindexter and Mondo the Black Panther Party "completely disappeared from the

city of Omaha." Thirty-eight Panthers were killed by the Feds and cops. Hundreds more were framed up and locked away, foremost among them Mumia Abu-Jamal, who was falsely convicted of the 1981 killing of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner and sent to death row.

Despite their nearly four decades of imprisonment, Ed Poindexter and Mondo we Langa remain unbowed. Poindexter has earned both bachelor's and master's degrees and is recognized as a caring mentor for fellow prisoners. Mondo, a celebrated playwright, author and artist, has recently published a collection of poems and raps titled "The Black Panther Is an African Cat." In a prison interview two days before the decision against Poindexter, Mondo was quoted as saying that 37 long years behind bars gave him "low expectations" about a favorable ruling in a Nebraska courtroom.

Mondo should know. In 1974 a federal district court overturned his conviction based on the illegality of the search of his

house, as did a federal appellate court a year later. But in 1976, the U.S. Supreme Court ordered the case returned to Nebraska state courts. The Nebraska Supreme Court then ruled that his appeal time had lapsed! There is no justice in the capitalist courts! Free Ed Poindexter and Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa now!

* * *

Ed Poindexter and Mondo we Langa are among the 16 class-war prisoners receiving stipends from the Partisan Defense Committee, which is preparing to hold its 22nd annual Holiday Appeal fundraiser in support of this program. For more information about the PDC and its class-war prisoners fund see www.partisandefense.org. You can write to Poindexter and Langa at: Ed Poindexter, 27767, 1-A-12, Nebraska State Penitentiary, Box 2500, Lincoln, NE 68542-2500; W.M.E. we Langa, 27768, Nebraska State Penitentiary, P.O. Box 2500, Lincoln, NE 68542-2500. ■

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.

Partisan Defense Committee

e-mail: partisandefense@earthlink.net • Web site: www.partisandefense.org

P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013 • (212) 406-4252
P.O. Box 802867, Chicago, IL 60680 • (312) 563-0442
c/o Box 29574, Los Feliz Station, Los Angeles, CA 90029 • (213) 380-8897
P.O. Box 77462, San Francisco, CA 94107 • (510) 839-0852

Prepare Now for Emergency Protests!



Jennifer Beach

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 Court rules to uphold the death sentence or denies Mumia's appeals for a new trial or a new hearing, the Partisan Defense Committee and the Labor Black Leagues have called for protests the day after the decision. Others have also called for protests.

For more information see the PDC Web site, www.partisandefense.org

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

(continued from page 12)

In Italy in June 1995, a demonstration for Mumia was made an official part of a larger protest in Rome of over 60,000 workers fighting against pension cuts. After a speaker from the Mumia contingent from Naples called for his freedom, one of



Paris: Daniel Carreno, assistant secretary of SUD-TMT postal sorting workers union, addressing September 29 rally called by Committee for Social Defense.

In a column written four days after the stay was announced, Mumia told his supporters, "Let us utilize this precious time to build a stronger and broader movement, to not 'stay' one execution, but to halt them all!" Mumia's case had become the focal point of struggle against the racist death penalty. His name had become a household word. Articles about Mumia and his own written commentaries were a regular feature of the U.S. black press. Mumia's face was emblazoned on the T-shirts of student activists and youth in the ghettos; his name

But over time, a massive movement was demobilized by a political program advanced by liberal and reformist organizations—Workers World Party, Socialist Action, the Revolutionary Communist Party, among others—that centered their protest actions around the call for a “new trial” for Mumia. In doing so, they hoped to attract prominent bourgeois liberals who view Mumia’s case not as emblematic of the capitalist legal system but as an aberration that stains the fabric of American “democracy.” This strategy undermined the very basis of the support Mumia received from masses of people who identified with his opposition to oppression and injustice, which are inherent in capitalist society.

The PDC's class-struggle defense strategy is rooted in the pioneering work of the International Labor Defense (ILD) led by James P. Cannon, a founding leader of the American Communist Party and, later, of American Trotskyism. In leading the struggle to free anarchist immigrant workers Sacco and Vanzetti in the 1920s the ILD constantly combatted illusions in the

The central demands of the S.F. protest—to stop the execution of Mumia and for a new trial—were tailored to attract support from Democratic Party politicians and other bourgeois liberals who view Mumia’s case as an isolated “miscarriage of justice.” Heyman, a key speaker at the rally, uttered not a word against either the “new trial” call or the Democratic Party. Heyman typifies those in the labor bureaucracy who adopt an appearance of militancy as a deceptive cover for reformist

NATIONAL UNION OF MINEWORKERS

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Membership: 0845 4500 373 Facsimile: 020 7837 8143
E-mail: info@nuj.org.uk DXS7907, KINGS CROSS DXWC1
http://www.nuj.org.uk

The NUJ backs the campaign to free Mumia Abu-Jamal, an award-winning journalist and honorary member of the NUJ.

The NUJ and supporters of Mumia believe he has spent 24 years on death row in the USA for a crime he did not commit.

Mumia was convicted of killing a Philadelphia police officer and sentenced to death, despite the sworn confession of Arnold Beverly admitting the murder.

Mumia, a journalist, known as the "voice of the voiceless", believes he was framed as a result of class and race bias. Both the Pennsylvania state and federal courts have refused to consider the reams of documented evidence proving Mumia's innocence.

We believe it is vital this evidence is considered. We believe it is vital justice is done. We believe Mumia should be freed.

Αθήνα 7 Αυγούστου 2007

CEPU
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And Services Branch
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Mumia Abu-Jamal

Mandia Rametsi Cosatu International Department

On October 23 2006 Cosatu's International Relations Office wrote a letter to Governor Tom Ridge expressing grave concern at the attempts to reimpose the death penalty against award winning journalist and former Black Panther spokesperson Mumia Abu-Jamal.

The letter appealed that the review of the case and the admission of new evidence to the effect that the person who committed the murder has admitted to have done it, calls for a total review of the case.

COSATU has fought against racism, oppression

To join the campaign to free Mumia write to the following:

Governor Tom Ridge
Main Capitol Building
Room 225
Harrisburg PA 17120

Write to Mumia:

Mumia Abu-Jamal

The Shopsteward

Vol 16.1 March 2007

Congress of South African Trade Unions journal (March 2007) with its statement supporting Mumia.

June 2, 2006

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PRESIDENT: Thomas A. Clark
VICE PRESIDENT: Lawrence J. Thibaux

Farless F. Dailey, III.
SECRETARY TREASURER

August 17, 2007

Via Fax (415) 292-4878

Law Offices of Robert R. Bryan
2088 Union Street, Suite 4
San Francisco, CA 94123

Dear Bryan:

At a recent monthly union meeting, the membership of ILWU Local 10 voted to send you a letter reaffirming our commitment to the fight for freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal. As you may know, ILWU Local 10 is a longstanding supporter of Jamal. Since 1989 the ILWU has spoken out a number of times for Mumia, joining hundreds of other unions around the world, from South Africa to England to the Bay Area. In 1995, the ILWU played a critical role in the labor-centered fight that stopped his scheduled execution. On April 24, 1999 the ILWU staged a coast wide stop-work

Letters and statements from trade unions in U.S. and around the world declare support for the fight for Mumia's freedom.

Those who call for a new trial often claim that this is “what Mumia wants”—as if Mumia has not been fighting all along for his freedom! Rachel Wolkenstein, a PDC counsel who served on Mumia’s legal team from 1995 to 1999, answered this at the May 5 London PDC rally, which was also addressed by speakers from the Communication Workers Union and the RMT (see “International Rallies Demand: Free Mumia!” WV No. 893, 25 May). Wolkenstein observed that in earlier struggles for class-war prisoners, the call was not for a “new trial for the Guildford Four, or for Angela Davis, or Huey Newton” but for their freedom. Responding to comments from the floor, she observed that Mumia “knows perfectly well every word I said here. He sent greetings to this rally, brief though they were, making the point that he was fighting for his freedom.” As the French CGT Limoges railway workers union wrote in a March 1 letter: “There is no need for a new fast-track procedure in the appeals court. All the facts and evidence” of Mumia’s innocence, the letter noted, “are known.”

Some 250 union organizations, officials and members in the U.S. have signed the PDC statement, including four chapters of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, Amalgamated Transit Union, International Longshoremen's Association and AFSCME locals and the Chicago-area United Auto Workers Women's Committee. International supporters include CGT railway workers in France, COBAS postal workers in Italy, SNTE educational workers in Mexico and hospital workers in Vancouver. A Hamburg, Germany factory stewards council of the giant IG Metall union and the Greek All-Workers Fighting Front, a half-million-strong union federation, have also signed on. Other union groups, such as the Conference of European Harbor Unions, have issued their own statements demanding Mumia's freedom. Mumia has been made an honorary member of a number of unions, including the National Union of Journalists in London, which recently issued a letter instructing its members to mobilize for Mumia (see WV No. 898, 14 September).

In an August 17 letter to Mumia's lead attorney, Robert Bryan, ILWU Local 10 wrote that Mumia is "the victim of a political frame-up on false charges of killing a Philadelphia police officer and that he was sentenced to death based on his political history and beliefs." SEIU Local 616, representing 14,000 public sector workers in the Bay Area, wrote in a 13 June 2006 letter: "Mumia has spent almost a quarter century on death row for a crime he did not commit, a crime that someone else has confessed to."

9 NOVEMBER 2007

WORKERS VANGUARD

For Class-Struggle Defense to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!

International PDC Campaign

The fight to free death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal is a defining cause for all opponents of the racist American “justice” system. But this struggle also bears enormous consequences for all who are in the capitalist rulers’ cross hairs. Mumia was sentenced to death for a crime he did not commit, the December 1981 killing of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner. Police, prosecutors and judges conspired to railroad Mumia—a former Black Panther, a supporter of the MOVE organization and a renowned journalist—employing frame-up methods used to victimize countless union activists, black militants and leftists over the years. In seeking to silence this powerful “voice of the voiceless,” they aim to intimidate any who would struggle on behalf of workers, black people and the poor.

With Mumia’s life in the balance, the Partisan Defense Committee—a legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League—and its international fraternal organizations have campaigned over the past few years to rekindle mass support for his freedom. From New York City, Chicago, Oakland and Los Angeles to London, Paris and Berlin, we have initiated rallies calling to free Mumia and to abolish the racist death penalty. These rallies have brought together representatives of left, labor and civil rights organizations raising their own views on which way forward in this struggle.

In this campaign, we have focused particularly on bringing Mumia’s cause to the trade unions. Our policy is that of *class-struggle defense*, based on the Marxist understanding that capitalist society is fundamentally divided between two classes—the capitalists who own the means of production and the workers whose labor they exploit. The legal lynchers must be answered by mobilizing the social power of the working class. We do not deceive those who would fight on Mumia’s behalf by peddling the lie that pleading with the capitalist courts and political parties will bring him justice. Mumia is the victim of a racist and political frame-up. And now his fight is at a critical juncture, as he and his supporters await a decision by the Third Circuit Court of Appeals on whether to uphold his death sentence or keep him in prison for life, or alternately to grant him a new trial or further court hearings.

Over 800 individuals and organizations, including unions representing hundreds of thousands of workers, have signed a PDC statement demanding Mumia’s freedom and the abolition of the racist death penalty. Titled “We Demand the Immediate Freedom of Mumia Abu-Jamal, an Innocent Man,” the statement cites the confession of Arnold Beverly that he, not Mumia, shot and killed Daniel Faulkner. As a sign of its commitment to Mumia’s cause, the London Underground Engineering Branch of the Rail, Maritime and Transport (RMT) union paid for the statement to run as an ad in a local black newspaper. As a resolution adopted by the SUD-TMT postal sorting workers union in Paris in October 2006 stressed, Mumia’s imprisonment “constitutes a real warning to all those who will one day stand up to

and take on the oppressors of minorities and more widely the working class.”

While supporting all possible legal proceedings on Mumia’s behalf, we fight against relying on the legal system that has shown it will stop at nothing to kill him or consign him to a “life” in prison hell. Mumia was in the sights of the FBI and Philly cops from the late 1960s, when he was a 15-year-old leader of the Black Panther Party. To secure Mumia’s conviction, cops and prosecutors intimidated witnesses and suppressed and falsified evidence. The Fraternal Order of Police (F.O.P.) has repeatedly threatened Mumia’s supporters, leading a howling mob in July 1995 outside the 1199C hospital workers union hall in Philadelphia to stop a fundraiser for Mumia and continuing such harassment to this day, including by organizing boycotts of musicians and others who have spoken out for Mumia. Judges at all levels have denied evidence exonerating Mumia, with the courts repeatedly refusing to hear the Beverly confession. With very few exceptions, the capitalist politicians, both Democratic and Republican, have abetted the cops and prosecutors, with the House of Representatives overwhelmingly passing a resolution last December condemning the Paris suburb of Saint-Denis for naming a street in honor of Mumia.

We fight for mass protest centered on

the working class, whose social power lies in its ability to choke off the profits that are the lifeblood of capitalism. That power was displayed in December 2005 when New York City transit workers in Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100 defied the state Taylor Law and went on strike, crippling the financial center of world imperialism for three days. Writing in solidarity with Local 100, Mumia quoted Karl Marx’s statement that the law “is but the will of one class made into a law for all.” Mumia continued, “The same law demanded that Blacks take the back of the bus. The same law outlaws the right of those who labor to withhold their labor, to better their condition, and those who follow them.” Mumia has long spoken out on behalf of labor. During a lockout of 2,500 unionized ABC technicians in 1998, he refused an interview by reporters from the “20/20” TV news show, stating that he would rather die than cross the picket line.

The crucial importance of bringing out labor’s forces for Mumia was the center of discussion at a PDC-initiated rally in Harlem in October 2006, which was addressed by a TWU Local 100 official, Pam Africa of the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, representatives of the PDC and others (see “For a Class-Struggle



COC Productions

Fight to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!”, WV No. 880, 10 November 2006). Speaking for the New York Labor Black League for Social Defense, Local 100 member Tom Cowperthwaite emphasized:

“Especially now, we who are outside the prison walls must not forget Mumia, nor our obligation to appeal to labor and the entire working class to act now—stop the executioners! In 1995 when the first death warrant was signed, a worldwide protest by unions, civil rights activists and death penalty abolitionists forced the rulers to grant a stay of execution just days before Mumia was scheduled to die. Today, we need even larger mobilizations of union power.”

Fraternally allied to the Spartacist League, the Labor Black Leagues have focused their efforts on bringing out union support for Mumia. Based on the only significant integration in racist America—the workplace and factory floor—the trade unions have the social power and potential to become battalions in the struggle against racial oppression and exploitation and to shake the foundations of this decaying capitalist system.

Mumia’s case is a microcosm of capitalist class rule and the black oppression that is intrinsic to it. In the U.S., the barbaric death penalty is the legacy of chattel slavery, the lynch rope made legal. The road to black freedom lies in the struggle for revolutionary integrationism—the full integration of black people into an egalitarian, socialist America. The fight for black freedom is the strategic question of the American proletarian revolution. There can be no socialist revolution in the U.S. unless the working class takes up the fight for black freedom—opposing every manifestation of racist repression and discrimination—and there can be no liberation of black people without the overthrow of this capitalist system.

If undertaken with a mobilization of the union movement, the fight to free Mumia and abolish the racist death penalty would be a first, giant step toward infusing workers with the consciousness that this system must be overturned through proletarian socialist revolution. But this requires a struggle against the policies of the labor misleaders, who rarely use labor’s strike weapon even in defense of their own members and look instead to the Democratic Party, the courts and other agencies of the enemy class. The labor bureaucracy’s pro-capitalist program is a major obstacle in the fight for Mumia’s freedom.

An International Fight

When the SL and PDC first took up Mumia’s defense more than 20 years ago,

continued on page 10



WV Photos

Top: May 17 San Francisco rally for Mumia on day of Third Circuit Court hearing in Philadelphia. Below: South African workers at June 1995 COSATU protest hold up flyers demanding “Save Mumia Abu-Jamal.”

