

Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

For a Workers America!



WV Photo

For Revolutionary Integration!

We print below a presentation, edited for publication, given by Spartacist League Central Committee member Don Alexander at a recent gathering of the SL/U.S. Central Committee.

I want to put this discussion in the context of the racist bourgeois rulers' all-out campaign to kill Mumia Abu-Jamal, a victim of a deliberate racist and political frame-up. A ruling from the Third Circuit Court of Appeals on his case is imminent. We have insisted upon united-front, labor-centered protest internationally to free this courageous fighter for black freedom and the oppressed, and we need to view the fight for his freedom within the broader context of our overall revolutionary program for black liberation. The FBI, as we know, had Mumia in their cross hairs since he was a 15-year-old member of the Black Panther Party. Against black militants in the 1960-70s, the Feds issued a directive telling their agents: "The purpose...is to disrupt...it is immaterial whether facts exist to substantiate the charge" (Brian Glick, *War at Home* [1989]). In 1968, FBI director J. Edgar Hoover vowed, "The Negro youth and moderate[s] must be made to understand that if they succumb to revolutionary teachings, they will be dead revolutionaries."

The former slave and revolutionary abolitionist Frederick Douglass once said: "Go where you may, search where you will, roam through all the monarchies and despotisms of the Old World, travel through South America, search out every abuse and when you have found the last, lay your facts by the side of the everyday practices of this nation, and you will say with me that for revolting barbarity and shameless hypocrisy, America reigns without a rival" (*Life and Writings of*



Bengiveno/NY Times

Top: 1995 Philadelphia demonstration for Mumia Abu-Jamal, part of international campaign protesting signing of Mumia's death warrant. Mobilization of labor was key to winning stay of execution. Above: NYC Transport Workers Union members rally in preparation for December 2005 strike which shut down public transport for three days.

Frederick Douglass [1950]). This is from his speech, "The Meaning of July Fourth for the Negro," at Rochester, New York, delivered on 5 July 1852. It would take a

Civil War to smash black chattel slavery.

As revolutionary Marxists, we also want to pay special tribute to Richard Fraser, who died 20 years ago this year.



Rourke/American-Statesman

New Orleans 2005: Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina starkly illuminated racial oppression built into U.S. capitalism.

The best way to honor his contributions is to fight for the program of revolutionary integrationism, which is a class-struggle program that must be viewed in internationalist terms—in terms of understanding the implications of the struggle for black liberation not only for shattering bourgeois rule here, but for electrifying the entire international proletariat. As part of our struggle to build a revolutionary workers party, we are fighting to instill in the most conscious workers, youth and the oppressed the necessity to eradicate the material basis of black oppression by taking power out of the hands of the capitalists. This requires a struggle to seize the means of production through a socialist revolution that eliminates the system of capitalist private property.

This program of revolutionary integrationism is a fight to assimilate black people into an egalitarian socialist order, which is the only way to achieve real equality. While we fight against all aspects of racial oppression, we point out that there is no solution to that oppression short of a social revolution. This program is in sharp counterposition to the program of liberal integrationism—what American Trotskyist leader James P. Cannon once derided and denounced as "inch-at-a-time" gradualism—which is based upon the deception that black freedom can be achieved within the confines of the racist capitalist system. It is also in sharp contradiction to the petty-bourgeois utopian program of black nationalism and separatism, which rejects and despairs of united multiracial class struggle to abolish this racist capitalist system. Instead, black nationalism seeks to make a virtue of the racial segregation and ghettoization of black people that is seen as unchangeable.

I want to pick on one of our fake-left opponents, the so-called Revolutionary Communist Party, which recently issued a statement headlined "Attention White People! What Is Your Problem?!?" and

continued on page 6



Britain: Reformist “Socialists” Embrace Cops and Prison Guards

The following article is reprinted from Workers Hammer No. 201 (Winter 2007-2008), newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain, section of the International Communist League.

WORKERS HAMMER

What kind of “socialist” organisation would invite a *prison guard*—a front-line enforcer of the bosses’ brutal, racist “justice” system—as a featured speaker at its own public meeting? To anyone familiar with the history and practice of Peter Taaffe’s wretchedly reformist Socialist Party [associated with Socialist Alternative in the U.S.]—notorious for its line that police are “workers in uniform” and for its chauvinist indifference to racial oppression—the answer comes as no great surprise. Thus, those attending the Socialist Party’s “Socialism 2007” weekend in London in mid-November were witness to the grotesque spectacle of Prison Officers’ Association (POA) leader Brian Caton addressing an avowed “leftist” audience as a supposed “trade union” representative.

Outside the event, a Spartacist League placard protested that prison guards are not part of the workers movement. We also called for immigration cops out of the PCS, the civil service union. From the point of view of the multiethnic working class, it is a scandal that this union in-



Reformist Socialist Party in Britain supports “strike” by prison guards at Wormwood Scrubs prison in West London, 29 August 2007.

cludes immigration police who are deadly enemies of the working class and particularly of immigrants. But the presence of immigration police and prison guards in the workers movement is perfectly legitimate for the Socialist Party, whose members form a majority on the executive of the PCS, because of the Taaffeites’ position that police are “workers in uniform.” *Immigration police out of the PCS! Prison guards out of the trade union movement!*

When thousands of prison officers in England and Wales staged a dramatic strike over pay and conditions on 29 August 2007, defying a court injunction, the Socialist Party gushed: “This united and determined action will be applauded by socialists and trade unionists through-

out the labour movement and stands as an example of how to treat the anti-union laws” (*Socialist*, 6-12 September 2007). Prison officers—like the police—are not part of the working class, but part of the armed fist of the capitalist state.

Virtually the whole spectrum of British “left” groups supported the prison officers’ strike. The Socialist Workers Party (SWP [formerly associated with the International Socialist Organization in the U.S.]) said in an online-only article dated 1 September 2007 that prison officers “should have the right to strike and to a union,” even while stating the blindingly obvious fact that “many officers have a proven record of racism and violence.” But what do strikes by prison guards mean? Better conditions to carry out their “job,” which is to repress and brutalise the prison population that in capitalist society is derived overwhelmingly from the poorest, most downtrodden sections of society. In Britain the rate of incarceration is disproportionately high for blacks, Asians and immigrants.

One group peddling its wares at the Taaffeites’ “Socialism 2007” event was the dubious International Bolshevik Tendency (BT). Distributing a weaselly leaflet titled “Which Side Are You On? Screws Out of the TUC!” (10 November 2007) the BT sagely counselled the Socialist Party that “the POA is not a workers’ organisation” and that “it is a mistake to view their action as a blow against anti-trade union laws.” A mistake? The Socialist Party’s obscene courting of the most irreconcilable enemies of the working people is merely the logic of its thoroughly reformist worldview and programme. The BT also seized the occasion to air its very own version of the line that the cops are “workers in uniform.” In a BT fringe meeting titled: “Prison Officers: ‘Courageous Heroes’ or Bosses’ Screws,” the speaker put forward the line that Marxists seek to split the police in a revolutionary situation.

In a revolutionary situation Marxists certainly seek to split the *army* into its class components, winning the “workers (and peasants) in uniform” to the side

of the insurrectionary proletariat. But in sucking up to the Socialist Party the BT wilfully obscures the gulf between soldiers, who are used as cannon fodder in the capitalist rulers’ wars, and the cops who hire themselves out to break strikes and to break the heads of minority youth. Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky described the enormous hatred of workers towards the cops in Russia during the February 1917 Revolution, saying: “Toward the police the crowd showed ferocious hatred. They routed the mounted police with whistles, stones, and pieces of ice. In a totally different way the workers approached the soldiers.” Later he added, “The police are fierce, implacable, hated and hating foes. To win them over is out of the question” (*History of the Russian Revolution*).

We have noted elsewhere (see “Social Chauvinists Under the Skin: Dubious BT Hawks Its Wares to Socialist Party,” *Workers Hammer* No. 198, Spring 2007) that the BT shares a great deal in common with the Socialist Party—both organisations are saturated with anti-communism and chauvinist indifference to racial and other special oppression. For more than four decades the Socialist Party, formerly known as the Militant tendency, and then Militant Labour, was buried deep inside the Labour Party. Throughout its history



Workers Hammer

Spartacists protest presence of prison guards “union” leader at Socialist Party’s “Socialism 2007” event.

it has been characterised by social-democratic anti-communism and abject capitulation to British imperialism. Over the years this organisation has refused to call for British troops to get out of Northern Ireland and today capitulates to the Labour government’s racist “war on terror.” The notion that police belong in the unions goes hand-in-hand with class-collaborationist politics, as shown in the rotten sell-out deal the Socialist Party-dominated PCS Executive negotiated for its members, requiring new entrants to the civil service to work *five more years* to qualify for a pension.

Marxists understand that the state is not a neutral institution standing above

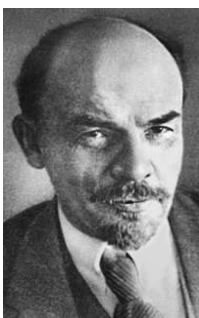
continued on page 10



TROTSKY

Black Liberation and the Struggle for Workers Revolution

As fighters for black liberation through socialist revolution, we are indebted to American Trotskyist Richard S. Fraser who first developed the program of revolutionary integrationism. In two talks for the L.A. branch of the then-revolutionary Socialist Workers Party in 1953, when Jim Crow segregation was still the rule in the South, Fraser explained the material roots of black oppression and underlined the centrality of the fight for black liberation to the struggle for proletarian revolution.



LENIN

Karl Marx proved conclusively, however, that it was not greed but property relations which make it possible for exploitation to exist.

When applied to the Negro question, the theory of morality means that the root of the problem of discrimination and white supremacy is prejudice. This is the reigning theory of American liberalism and is the means by which the capitalists throw the responsibility for the Jim Crow system upon the population as a whole. If people weren’t prejudiced there would be no Negro problem. This contention is fundamentally false.

The position in which the Negro people are placed in U.S. society is the direct result of the system of color slavery. Color prejudice under slavery resulted from the degraded position of the Negro. The Negro was virtually the entire southern working force and color prejudice reflected the degraded position of labor as a whole in society. The greatest humiliation that white men in the old South could undergo was being forced to do productive labor....

The triumph of capitalism in the South brought not the free labor market, but the adaptation of the plantation system of color discrimination and compulsory labor to capitalist property relations. In this contradiction between the tendency of capitalism to operate with a free labor market and the reality of semi-slave labor, all the weird social relations and prejudices which originated under slavery were intensified by the victory of capitalism....

Discrimination and prejudice in the rest of the United States derives directly from the southern system, feeds upon it, and like racial discrimination throughout the world is completely dependent upon it. The capitalist class adapts to its needs the fundamental features of the southern system. In every possible way it perpetuates the division of the working class by establishing throughout the entire nation the basic reciprocal relations between discrimination, segregation and prejudice which are so successful in the South....

Discrimination against Negroes in the United States is so ingrained in the social structure that only complete destruction of capitalism can lay the foundation for the solution of the Negro question.

A hundred years ago Karl Marx, in urging the American workers to support the struggle of the slaves for emancipation and to support the northern cause in the Civil War, proclaimed the following truth: “Labor cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded.” This is just as true today in the modern context of racial discrimination as it was during the struggle against slavery.

—Richard S. Fraser, “The Negro Struggle and the Proletarian Revolution” (November 1953), printed in “In Memoriam—Richard S. Fraser,” *Prometheus Research Series* No. 3, 1990

WORKERS VANGUARD

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

DIRECTOR OF PARTY PUBLICATIONS: Bonnie Brodie

EDITOR: Alan Wilde

EDITOR, YOUNG SPARTACUS PAGES: Elizabeth Johnson

CIRCULATION MANAGER: Barry James

EDITORIAL BOARD: Steve Henderson (managing editor), François Donau (production manager), Blandine Hauser (letters editor), Bruce André, Ray Bishop, Jon Brule, Helen Cantor, Ed Clarkson, Paul Cone, Michael Davisson, George Foster, Liz Gordon, Linda Jarreau, Walter Jennings, James Robertson, Joseph Seymour

The Spartacist League is the U.S. Section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

Workers Vanguard (ISSN 0276-0746) published biweekly, except skipping three alternate issues in June, July and August (beginning with omitting the second issue in June) and skipping the last issue in December, by the Spartacist Publishing Co., 299 Broadway, Suite 318, New York, NY 10007. Telephone: (212) 732-7862 (Editorial), (212) 732-7861 (Business). Address all correspondence to: Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116. E-mail address: vanguard@tiac.net. Domestic subscriptions: \$10.00/22 issues. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Workers Vanguard*, Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116.

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

The closing date for news in this issue is February 12.

No. 908

15 February 2008

WORKERS VANGUARD

Class-Struggle Defense and the Fight to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal

We print below a speech, edited for publication, by Partisan Defense Committee counsel Rachel Wolkenstein given at the New York City Holiday Appeal for Class-War Prisoners on 16 December 2007. The PDC is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League.

When we took up Mumia's case in 1987, he was not America's foremost political prisoner. In fact, hardly anybody knew who he was. We were introduced to Mumia by the MOVE prisoners whom we had begun defending after the government bombing of the MOVE commune in Philly in 1985. This was also around the time when we, starting in 1986, began our program of sending monthly stipends to class-war prisoners. But, quite frankly, it's the work begun by the PDC—and taken up by many, many other organizations—that has made Mumia the man who represents what the death penalty is all about, who is the foremost class-war prisoner in the U.S., and who has come to represent the fight for black liberation in this country and the fight against the death penalty internationally.

Maureen Faulkner, widow of Police Office Daniel Faulkner, and a man by the name of Michael Smerconish have just published a book called *Murdered by Mumia*. It came out on December 6. Interestingly enough, Smerconish's foreword is dated December 9, after the publication of the book, to coincide with the 26th anniversary of the date of Faulkner's killing and the beginning of the frame-up of Mumia Abu-Jamal. This book, which came on the eve of an anticipated decision by the Third Circuit Court of Appeals, is a total rehash of the police and prosecution lies to falsely convict Mumia for the killing of Faulkner on December 9, 1981. It is an orchestrated attack written with support from arch-reactionaries. Smerconish, a man who considers that Abu Ghraib was not a question of torture, worked with Frank Rizzo, the notorious, racist, brutal police commissioner and then mayor of Philadelphia.

Murdered by Mumia was written with the support of other people who are known in the far-right wing. This book is not just a right-wing tract that can be dismissed as such. It is a call for Mumia's execution. It is also an assault on those bourgeois liberals who from time to time have wavered on the question of Mumia's innocence and instead have called for having him spend the rest of his life in prison, *for burying him alive*. It makes clear that there are only two sides in Mumia's case. On one side is the struggle to fight for his freedom, based upon his innocence and the fact that he is a victim of a racist and political frame-up. On the other side, there are the forces of racist law and terror, led by the Fraternal Order of Police, who



Partisan Defense Committee counsel Rachel Wolkenstein speaking at PDC's 22nd annual Holiday Appeal in NYC, 16 December 2007.

demand his execution.

I am not going to go through all the prosecution's lies, which are virtually endless. We have written about them in our PDC pamphlets, including the pamphlet, *The Fight to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal—Mumia Is Innocent!* (July 2006). Smerconish and Faulkner repeat over and over that Billy Cook (Mumia's brother) and Mumia have never stated what they saw happen the night Faulkner was killed. They act as if the declarations Mumia and Cook wrote and submitted in 2001, along with the submission of the confession of Arnold Beverly that he, not Mumia, killed Faulkner, as well as other evidence, simply do not exist. In fact, the declarations and Beverly's affidavit are on the original Daniel Faulkner Web site! Faulkner and Co. make no bones about the political nature of Mumia's frame-up. They reiterate the prosecution's line that Mumia's Black Panther Party membership proves that he'd been planning to kill cops for years. They write that D.A. Joseph McGill "successfully established that Abu-Jamal had an anti-police, anti-establishment, anti-government philosophy that accounted for his desire to murder Danny."

When we first took up Mumia's case, it was primarily on the question of freedom of speech. Here is a man, Mumia, the only man in recent decades who, as far as we know, was sentenced to death because of his exercise of his First Amendment rights: Mumia was a member of the Black Panthers in his youth, and 12 years before the killing of Faulkner, he was interviewed after the police killing of the Chicago Panthers Fred Hampton and Mark Clark. He said in the interview that the government was trying to get the Panthers, that the Panthers should face reality. He called for "all power to the people" and noted that "political power grows out of the barrel of a gun." And for *that* Mumia was sentenced to death, because that was considered to be the proof that he had always intended to kill cops!

In the book, Maureen Faulkner also paints a vicious, lying portrait of the MOVE organization, of which Mumia is a supporter. His support of MOVE is also part of the reason why he was framed up in 1981. You all saw the PDC video, *From Death Row, This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal*, and you saw the bombing of the MOVE commune in 1985. You heard Mumia speak about how this was done under black Democratic mayor Wilson Goode, with the ATF and the FBI assisting and providing

the bomb. Faulkner claims that MOVE "was responsible" for the bombing—that is, the killing of eleven MOVE members, including five children and the incineration of the entire neighborhood. She doesn't describe the circumstances of the bombing.

Faulkner uses thinly veiled racist terms to describe Mumia's writings, his supporters and the MOVE organization—code language for pure out-and-out racism. She also has a whole chapter on one of her major supporters, a guy by the name of Joey Vento who runs a well-known cheesesteak place in Philadelphia. Vento is known for having a sign in his window saying, "This



Left: Philadelphia, 17 May 2007: Workers World Party's International Action Center promotes call for "new trial" and illusions in capitalist courts. Right: Spartacists at protest outside NBC Today show, New York City, 6 December 2007.



WV Photos

is America. When ordering please speak English." Faulkner hails this, which tells you who this book is addressed to.

The determination of the bourgeoisie to kill Mumia or imprison him for life is no less than the determination the bourgeoisie showed for killing the two anarchist martyrs, Sacco and Vanzetti, who were executed in 1927; or for killing the Rosenbergs, Communist Party supporters executed in 1953 on charges of giving "secrets" on the bomb to the Soviets. Political repression is part and parcel of the workings of the capitalist injustice system, and it is supported by both parties of American capitalism, Democrats as well as Republicans. And it is intended to intimidate, silence and punish those who raise their voices in opposition.

Mumia Abu-Jamal Is an Innocent Man!

The PDC video most of you saw tonight was made some 17 years ago. But the man that you heard speak there is the same man who is in prison today. He has not changed his political views one iota.

He said then that he was fighting to create revolution in America, "revolution means change, it means total change." Mumia has not been intimidated into silence since then. He continues to be the voice of the voiceless, denouncing the imperial and colonial slaughter and destruction in Iraq, denouncing the U.S. rulers' disdain for the black and the poor left to die in the face of Hurricane Katrina, defending immigrants, defending workers on strike. Now, Mumia is no Marxist revolutionary. He is not a supporter of the Spartacist League. But to the capitalist rulers, Mumia represents the spectre of black revolt, of defiant opposition to their system of racist oppression. For them, Mumia is a dead man on leave.

The fight to free Mumia also involves a political struggle within the movement of those who say that they are fighting to defend Mumia. Why is that? Because the social power to free Mumia is embodied in the international working class, but there are obstacles to unleashing that power. The so-called left serves to tie working people to the view that the bourgeoisie can somehow be reformed, that capitalism can be reformed. And so we have yet another struggle with two opposing sides. On one side are those bourgeois liberals, trade-union misleaders, so-called leftists that are sowing illusions in the "fairness" of capitalist justice. On the other side, there is the PDC and its supporters and cothinkers, and our line of class-struggle defense, which means having no illusions in capitalist "justice" and putting all faith in the power of the masses.

CORRECTION

A January 27 letter by the Partisan Defense Committee, printed in our last issue ("Drop Charges Against Anti-Fascist Protester!" WV No. 907, 1 February), incorrectly stated that "Mychal Bell of the Jena Six is now in prison." In fact, Bell moved into an area foster home in December 2007, where he remains in the custody of the Office of Youth Development following a December plea agreement in juvenile court.

Young Spartacus

Platypus Group: Pseudo-Marxist, Pro-Imperialist, Academic Claptrap

Chicago

The Platypus Affiliated Society is a talk shop that holds discussions and movie showings on two elite Chicago campuses, as well as blogging ad nauseam in cyberspace about “reformulating the Marxian Left.” Beneath the “Marxian” verbiage, the Platypus group’s political purpose is defense of U.S. imperialist “democracy,” as exhibited in particular by Platypus leader Chris Cutrone’s *support for the invasion and occupation of Iraq!* This argument echoes the neocons. Nonetheless, we felt compelled to respond to this pretentious clot because they have been using our materials on their reading lists. As an act of political sanitation, the Chicago Spartacus Youth Club produced the leaflet that we reprint below to expose these academic apologists for U.S. imperialism for who they are. Buyer beware!

Copies of our leaflet were snapped up by people attending a 6 November 2007 Platypus panel discussion, “The 3 Rs: Reform, Revolution, and ‘Resistance’: The Problematic Forms of ‘Anticapitalism’ Today.” In his closing remarks, Cutrone insinuated that the left was ashamed of its history. Our comrade responded that we are proud of our history. We stand in the tradition of the Bolshevik Party that led the Russian Revolution. In contrast, both Platypus and the new Students for a Democratic Society (SDS—represented on the panel by Marisa Holmes) seek to refurbish the image of racist U.S. imperialism. SDS does this through appeals to the capitalist Democratic Party.

Our leaflet and interventions struck a nerve with Cutrone, who sent us an e-mail two days later whining that “I have never in any form suggested, let alone said, because I do not believe that the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq was good and supportable, *but only questioned the alternatives*” (our emphasis). There’s a



Chris Cutrone

Platypus leader Chris Cutrone (in suit).



John Gould

distinction without a difference—the alternative that Cutrone has “questioned” (repeatedly) is an end to the U.S. occupation! *Workers Vanguard* has already replied to two letters in which Cutrone argues that the blood-drenched U.S. imperialists are playing a progressive role in Iraq (see “An Exchange on the Iraq ‘Resistance,’” WV No. 847, 29 April 2005 and “Exchange on Iraq Occupation,” WV No. 874, 4 August 2006).

The SYCs call for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Iraq and Afghanistan. In doing so, we stand in the tradition of V. I. Lenin, who wrote in 1915: “Any socialist would wish the oppressed, dependent and unequal states victory against the oppressor, slave-holding and predatory ‘Great’ Powers” (*Socialism and War*). Our leaflet of 6 November 2007 was reissued November 12 and has been distributed at the University of Chicago.

* * *

The Platypus group, a Chicago-based pseudo-“Marxian” study circle—whose defining position is its *support* to the U.S. occupation of Iraq—is an acute if minor expression of pro-imperialist “death of communism” politics. Their outlook is framed by the 1991-92 Soviet counterrevolution, a historic catastrophe for work-

ers and the oppressed worldwide, which not only devastated Russia and Eastern Europe, but also removed the main military obstacle to the blood-drenched U.S. rulers’ imperialist adventures. In its wake, bourgeois ideologues trumpeted that “communism is dead” and socialism is a “failed experiment.” The reformist “socialists,” most of whom cheered the collapse of the USSR, have embraced those same lies. Today the reformists accept the imperialist order as inviolable, aiming merely to pressure the ruling class to conform to a bogus ideal of liberal bourgeois “democracy.”

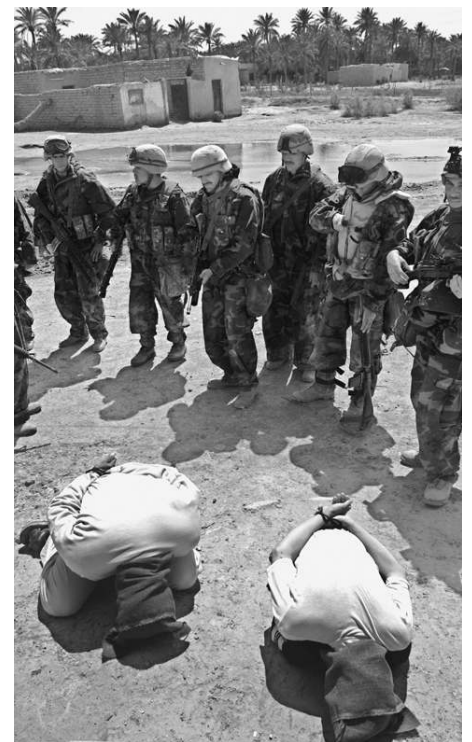
Platypus imbibes the worst of all worlds: the worst of the reformist left, the worst of bourgeois academia, the worst of post-modernist claptrap. Centered at the University of Chicago and School of the Art Institute [SAIC], two bastions of class privilege and academic pretension, Platypus’s guru is one Chris Cutrone, an SAIC instructor and U of C grad student, who briefly passed through the Spartacus Youth Club in the 1990s. His Platypus outfit is of note to us mainly because its reading lists include a number of our Spartacist polemics on such topics as imperialism, the New Left and black nationalism. But Platypus guts our Trotskyist arguments of any revolutionary content, twisting them to fit their own reactionary anti-Marxist ends. So it is necessary to restate some basic Marxist principles and expose this campus talk shop’s pro-imperialist politics, in case anyone might be fooled into thinking they have anything, “theoretical” or otherwise, to offer inquiring radical minds.

For Platypus, the fundamental social divide is not the class struggle of proletariat vs. bourgeoisie, but an amorphous and classless contest of “Left” vs. “Right.” And according to the Platypi, “the Left is dead.” Disdaining a proletarian perspective, Platypus argues that in the post-Soviet world the main forces opposing U.S. imperialism abroad come from the “Right,” i.e., Islamic reaction. They therefore uphold U.S. imperialist “democracy” against the Iraqi peoples as the “lesser” evil. As Cutrone said recently in one of his interminable Web posts: “I take no comfort whatsoever in the fact that the U.S. and the political process it is fostering is being ‘resisted’ in Iraq. In this sense, I would be happy to see the U.S. be ‘successful’ in Iraq (according to what it claims to be doing there)” (platypus1917 yahoo group [“pyg”], 13 September 2007). In a 2006 letter to *Workers Vanguard*, Cutrone alibied U.S. imperialism’s crimes in Iraq, writing: “The reality is that the US troops in Iraq stand between the Iraqi workers and Leftists and the insurgents and Iraqi-government affiliated paramili-

taries” (“Exchange on Iraq Occupation,” WV No. 874, 4 August 2006).

No! The racist and rapacious U.S. ruling class—in both its Democratic and Republican wings—is an enemy of the working people and the oppressed around the globe! War is the inevitable product of the capitalist competition for profits, resources and markets. Only socialist revolution can end war! Every blow struck against the imperialist occupiers is a blow in the interests of workers and the oppressed worldwide. During the 2003 invasion, we uniquely took a side in defense of Iraq, calling for a class-struggle opposition to U.S. imperialism. Today we call for immediate, unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. troops from

Iraq and Afghanistan. Insofar as the forces on the ground aim their fire against the occupiers and their lackeys, we call for their military defense against U.S. imperialism. At the same time, we are intransigent opponents of the Islamic fundamentalists’ and Ba’athist remnants’ murderous intercommunal violence, and warn that, absent



AFP

Nassiriyah, Iraq: U.S. Marines torture prisoners, March 2003. Cutrone “questions” the alternatives to brutal U.S. occupation of Iraq.

working-class struggle against the occupation, the victory of one of these forces would likely come about through a bloody alliance with imperialism.

In the face of the imperialists’ war provocations against Iran, Cutrone grotesquely argues that he cannot defend Iran because “the U.S. is more civilized” (pyg, 9 October 2006). U.S. imperialism more “civilized”? Tell that to the victims incinerated at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, slaughtered in Vietnam, tortured at Abu Ghraib, or left to drown in the man-made racist atrocity in the face of Hurricane Katrina. Iran *needs* nuclear weapons to defend itself against the blood-drenched U.S. rulers. Imperialist hands off Iran! As part of his defense of Western bourgeois “democracy” and “civilization,” Cutrone also nauseatingly declares that “the Israeli state/govt.” should be defended “against what I think Hamas (and even Fatah, e.g., the al-Aqsa brigades) represent” (pyg, 15 June 2007). We say: Defend the Palestinian people! All Israeli troops, settlers out of

Spartacus Youth Club Class Series

BAY AREA

Tuesday, February 19, 7 p.m.
Race, Class and the Fight for Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution

SFSU, Cesar Chavez Student Center
Room: Rosa Parks D
Information and readings: (510) 839-0851
or e-mail: sycbayarea@sbcglobal.net

LOS ANGELES

Wednesday, February 27, 6:30 p.m.
The Russian Revolution

UCLA, Ackerman Union, Room 3516
Information and readings: (213) 380-8239
or e-mail: slsycla@sbcglobal.net

NEW YORK CITY

Saturday, March 8, 4:30 p.m.
The Class-Struggle Road to Women’s Liberation

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

TORONTO

Monday, February 25, 7:30 p.m.
The Struggle Against National Oppression: Why Marxists Advocate Quebec Independence

University of Toronto
Sidney Smith Hall, Room 2112
100 St. George Street
Information and readings: (416) 593-4138
or e-mail: spartcan@on.aibn.com

VANCOUVER

Wednesday, February 27, 6 p.m.
Why China Is Not Capitalist

University of British Columbia
Student Union Building, Room 212
Information and readings: (604) 687-0353
or e-mail: trotskyst_vancouver@shawcable.com

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

the Occupied Territories! At bottom, the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is one of interpenetrated peoples, two populations laying claim to the same small piece of land, whose conflicting national claims cannot be resolved under capitalism. The liberation of the Palestinians demands a perspective of socialist revolution throughout the Near East. We defend Hamas and Fatah against the Zionist butchers, while giving them not one iota of political support. We also vigorously oppose acts of indiscriminate terror against innocent Israeli civilians, which only drive the Hebrew-speaking population toward its own ruling class.

At home, from the vantage of the ivory tower, Cutrone disgustingly slanders courageous black militants like Malcolm X as “pathological” (pyg, 26 April 2007). The Platypi hate Malcolm X for the same reason that the racist capitalist rulers feared and hated him: he was an uncompromising fighter for black freedom. While lacking a Marxist understanding of the need to mobilize the multiracial working class independent of its capitalist masters, Malcolm X was a truth-teller who exposed the hypocrisy and lies of the capitalist Democratic and Republican parties and advocated the right of armed self-defense against Klan and police terror. Platypus instead promotes the liberal integrationist program of Martin Luther King and Bayard Rustin, which shackled the civil rights movement to the Democratic Party of racism and war based on the illusion that black equality can be won within the confines of capitalism. Understanding that black oppression is the *bedrock* of American capitalism, the SYCs fight for revolutionary integrationism. We seek to mobilize labor’s power to combat every instance of racist discrimination, such as the racist political frame-up of death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal and the Jim Crow “justice” meted out to the Jena Six. At the same time, we understand that black freedom will not be won short



WV Photo

Spartacist banner at 18 March 2007 antiwar demo in New York calls for end to Democratic Party-supported occupation of Afghanistan, often disappeared by reformist left.

of socialist revolution. *For black liberation through socialist revolution!*

Platypus’s academic “Marxian” pretensions add up to little more than a handful of Marxist terms—commodity fetishism, alienation—guttled of revolutionary content and wrapped in a fog of gobbledygook cribbed from such “theorists” as the dreary German anti-communist Theodor Adorno. Platypus’s hot air has absolutely nothing to do with what Marx himself considered most essential, namely that “class struggle necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat” (Letter to J. Weydemeyer, 5 March 1852). As Lenin explained in *The State and Revolution*: “A Marxist is one who *extends* the acceptance of class struggle to the acceptance of the *dictatorship of the proletariat*. Herein lies the deepest difference between a Marxist and an ordinary petty or big bourgeois.”

The 1917 Russian Revolution is a litmus test, posing the question of proletarian dictatorship pointblank. The petty-bourgeois Cutrone sneers that “The

Bolshevik Revolution was a disaster, almost from the beginning,” and became “less and less defensible over time, beginning at least as early as 1918” (pyg, 20 March 2007). 1918 notably was the year when the Bolsheviks expropriated the bourgeoisie, and imperialist troops invaded to smash the fledgling workers state. As Trotskyists, we hail the Bolshevik Revolution! Despite the Stalinist degeneration that began in 1923-24, we fought for the unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union against imperialist attack and counterrevolution. Cutrone also dismisses the Vietnamese workers and peasants’ battlefield defeat of U.S. imperialism as a “pyrrhic victory.” There was nothing “pyrrhic” about this great victory, which drove out the imperialists and overthrew the national bourgeoisie through a social revolution. This stinging defeat also produced the “Vietnam syndrome,” helping to stay U.S. imperialism’s hands militarily for over a decade. Today we defend the remaining

deformed workers states—China, Vietnam, Cuba and North Korea—while calling for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracies.

The Platypi’s outright support to the neocolonial occupation of Iraq may set them somewhat apart from other reformist leftists active at SAIC and U of C, such as the International Socialist Organization (ISO), Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP), Spark and Socialist Alternative (SAIt). Not that this stopped the ISO from rubbing shoulders in oh-so-comradely dialogue with Cutrone at Platypus’s January 30 “Imperialism” forum. At bottom, no less than Platypus, these other fake socialists stand for class collaboration with imperialism. They too are anti-Marxist *opponents* of the revolutionary workers movement. They enthusiastically backed the capitalist rulers’ anti-Soviet war drive in the 1980s, taking a side with the imperialist-backed Islamic reactionaries against the Red Army in Afghanistan, and then cheering the Yeltsin/Bush counterrevolution that overthrew the Soviet Union in 1991-92. None of these groups took a stand in defense of Iraq in 2003. Instead, the ISO, RCP, Spark and SAIt show their faith in the capitalist class enemy by trying to build an “antiwar movement” consisting of “peace-loving” people of all different classes to pressure the imperialist rulers to end the occupation and put resources into “jobs not war.” Their goal is simply to pressure the Democratic Party—the other party of racist U.S. imperialism—to put a more “humane” face on the capitalist profit system.

In sharp contrast, the SYCs fight to dispel all illusions that capitalism can be reformed to serve the interests of the working people and the oppressed. We fight for socialist revolution under the leadership of a proletarian vanguard party like Lenin and Trotsky’s Bolsheviks. Youth interested in joining this fight should check out our revolutionary Trotskyist program and literature. ■

Nurses...

(continued from page 12)

government, through its National Labor Relations Board, expanded the use of this union-busting ploy with its ruling on the “Kentucky River” cases in October 2006 (see “Fight NLRB Union Busting!”, WV No. 882, 8 December 2006).

The NYSNA and CNA have issued support statements, and the NYSNA had a contingent at a rally for the Sentosa 27 last year. Members of these unions understand that if the victimization of these Filipino nurses is allowed to stand, it will set a precedent for attacks on all nurses, especially those considering strike action. But the union bureaucrats dodge a real fight to defend the Sentosa nurses, instead channeling union efforts into the self-defeating strategy of lobbying capitalist politicians, usually Democrats but at times Greens and Republicans.

The NYSNA, along with other groups in the campaign for the Sentosa 27, has thrown its weight behind calls for Democratic New York governor Eliot Spitzer to appoint a special prosecutor to handle the cases against the nurses. Soon after the petition campaign for a special prosecutor began, Sentosa started pouring thousands of dollars into Spitzer’s campaign coffers. The same Spitzer, as state Attorney General, invoked the slave-labor Taylor Law in an attempt to crush the 2005 New York City transit strike.

And it was liberal New York Democratic Senator Charles Schumer who bailed out the Sentosa bosses when the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) suspended Sentosa’s recruiting license in May 2006 after the nurses filed complaints. Schumer lobbied the Philippine government of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. The POEA quickly reinstated Sentosa’s license. Sentosa’s

associates promptly donated \$75,000 to the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee (DSCC) headed by Schumer. Sentosa had earlier given some \$125,000 to the DSCC and to Schumer’s re-election committee. This is how capitalist “democracy” works. As Schumer explained in his own defense: “I regard it as part of my job to help New York companies.”

Schumer’s Long Island finance chairman, Howard Fensterman, also happens to be Sentosa’s chief attorney. In May of 2006, Fensterman and the Sentosa bosses met with Suffolk County District Attorney Thomas Spota, a Democrat who received campaign contributions from Fensterman, to push for prosecution of the nurses. Last March, Spota indicted the nurses as well as their lawyer, who also was hit with the bogus charge of “criminal solicitation” for advising the workers of their legal rights. The prosecution of the nurses’ lawyer serves to strip the nurses of the right to adequate defense and in general to chill expressions of dissent.

The struggle of the Sentosa 27 shows how the union bureaucrats’ strategy of reliance on the Democrats is a recipe for disaster. This support to the political parties of the capitalist class enemy flows from the union tops’ acceptance and defense of the capitalist profit system and of the “national interests” of U.S. imperialism. In opposition to the class-collaborationist union tops, workers need to forge a class-struggle leadership in the unions—a leadership that will fight for a workers party independent of and opposed to all the parties of the capitalist class. We need a workers state where those who labor rule! *Break with the Democrats! For a revolutionary workers party that fights for a workers government!*

Suffolk County, a racist hellhole for blacks and immigrants, is one of the most segregated regions in the U.S. Last year, Spota oversaw the outrageous prosecu-

tion and conviction of John White, a courageous black man who now faces 15 years in prison for the crime of defending his home and family against a racist mob of white youth (see “John White Must Go Free!”, WV No. 905, 4 January). Suffolk County has long been awash in anti-immigrant racism, with the police rounding up “illegal” immigrant workers and policies that make “standing while Latino” illegal. A local reverend has accused the Democratic County Executive of “ethnic cleansing.”

Filipino nurses make up the largest section of a huge number of foreign-trained nurses now working in the U.S. The nursing shortage is due primarily to a lack of nursing schools and teachers, and many nurses leave the profession due to the low pay and horrible working conditions. The U.S. Health and Human Services Department estimates that 8.5 percent of the nursing positions in the U.S. are now unfilled and that by 2020 there may be **810,000** unfilled nursing positions. Thousands of patients die each year as a result of inadequate staffing, just one example of how capitalism sacrifices lives for profits.

Schumer’s intervention to revoke the suspension of Sentosa touched off a storm of outrage in the Philippines. The Arroyo regime, backed by U.S. imperialism, is responsible for a bloody campaign of terror against leftists, workers and peasants (see “Philippines: Down With Arroyo’s Reign of Terror!”, WV No. 878, 13 October 2006). “Labor export” has been official government policy for over 30 years in this impoverished neocolony and remittances from overseas workers—including seamen and household servants, many of whom are brutally mistreated—account for some 10 percent of the national income. Some 120,000 Filipino nurses went abroad to work last year alone. The Sentosa 27 have won wide support in both the U.S. and the

Philippines, including from the Philippine Nurses Association, the National Alliance for Filipino Concerns, the Alliance of Health Workers in the Philippines, and the International Alliance of Filipino Migrant Organizations. Faced with popular outrage, the Philippine parliament has held hearings into the case and Arroyo pledged a token amount of money for the Sentosa nurses’ legal defense last November. Predictably, in early February the Philippine Department of Justice decided not to prosecute Sentosa for its recruitment practices.

As the Sentosa 27 show, Filipino immigrant workers can be a bridge between the multiracial working class in the imperialist U.S. and workers in the Philippines. Workers in the U.S. must fight against the imperialist subjugation of the Philippines and demand the *immediate withdrawal of all U.S. troops and bases* from there. A revolutionary workers party in the U.S. would support the struggles of the Filipino workers and oppressed against their own bourgeoisie, lackeys of U.S. imperialism. As we wrote in “U.S. Troops Out of the Philippines!” (WV No. 779, 19 April 2002): “The United States and Philippine bourgeoisies have enjoyed a neocolonial ‘special relationship’ spanning decades. The special relationship that the Philippine and American workers must have is one of internationalist working-class solidarity. Led by a revolutionary workers party, the American working class will fulfill its task of aiding the enslaved masses of the semicolonies by carrying out a proletarian revolution in the bastion of world imperialism.”

The Partisan Defense Committee, a legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League, has contributed to the legal defense for the Sentosa 27. Send donations to: Sentosa 27 Legal Defense Trust, P.O. Box 730505, Elmhurst, NY 11373. ■

Black Liberation...

(continued from page 1)

concluded, “Wake the F--- Up!” (*Revolution*, 9 December 2007). This is the kind of unadulterated liberalism pushed by this group, whose aim right now is to get a Democrat in the White House and to impeach Bush. Against this liberal muck, we point out that it is precisely the class foundations of black oppression that were illuminated so well in Fraser’s historical research on the black question and that we have to assimilate. Fraser emphasized the importance of studying black writers who write extensively on the question of race, understanding both their confusions and their contributions. He noted in “Revolutionary Integration: The Dialectics of Black Liberation” (*Revolutionary Age*, 1968) the following: “The Negro Question is a unique racial (not national) question, with a movement marked by Integration (not Self-Determination) as its logical and historical motive force and goal, thereby producing a struggle that is necessarily transitional to socialism and a revolutionary vanguard for the entire working class.”

Today the struggle for integration, though still critical, has been derailed by the liberals and the reformists, who seek to pressure the racist federal government and especially the capitalist Democratic Party to serve the interests of the oppressed and the exploited. A key turning point in the derailing of that struggle was the smashing of the busing program for school integration in Boston in 1974-75. Uniquely, we fought for labor/black defense and called to mobilize the independent power of the working class to fight to extend busing to the suburbs.

Back in 1939, cadre from the then-revolutionary Socialist Workers Party (SWP) had discussions with Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky, who projected the potential vanguard role of the black working class in the struggle for socialist revolution in the U.S. He acknowledged that he lacked sufficient knowledge of the question of black oppression. But he was quite concerned that the party should have a correct orientation toward the most dynamic and militant section of the proletariat, and not to accommodate to the backward elements of the class. Trotsky said, “We must say to the conscious elements of the Negroes that they are convoked by the historical development to become a vanguard of the working class” (*Leon Trotsky on Black*



Forman/Boston Herald American
Boston 1976: While racist mobs attacked blacks in the streets, liberals in City Hall and Congress killed school integration. Below: Spartacist League fought for labor/black mobilizations to stop racist attacks on busing for school integration, Boston 1974.



WV Photo

Nationalism and Self-Determination).

Our forebears, the Revolutionary Tendency, the left oppositional tendency in the SWP, waged, in collaboration with Fraser, the fight for the program of revolutionary integrationism at the SWP convention in 1963, when that party was already in rapid rightward motion away from Trotskyism. We fought against the SWP’s abstention from the civil rights movement and its tailing of both black nationalist forces, like the Nation of Islam, and liberal pacifists, like Martin Luther King and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

The Fight for Black Liberation in the Post-Soviet World

We’ve had many discussions about the retrogression of consciousness in the

post-Soviet world. Our small revolutionary Marxist group is under multiple pressures from various fronts. We fight against the backward flow, the lowering of the ideological level by constant bourgeois-liberal pressures that preach the lie that we live in a “colorblind” society, a democracy where freedom reigns and where equality has basically been achieved. Or, as the black Democratic presidential hopeful Barack Obama said, “90 percent of the way.” Yeah, whose 90 percent?

In light of the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92, the bourgeoisie proclaims the lie of the “death of communism.” This has its reflection in the myth of the “end of racism” and the burial of the struggle for racial integration as a failed

experiment. As on all the fundamental questions—the Russian question, the immigrant question, the prospects for class struggle against the capitalist exploiters—so, too, on the black question the political pressure is to tone down and curtail our powerful Marxist program in order to not alienate the bourgeois liberals and in particular the other party of war and racism and terror, the Democrats.

We have to face reality squarely. There isn’t much multiracial class struggle against the capitalist rulers today. But there will be. The contradictions of capitalism necessarily generate class struggle, and the fight for black liberation in the U.S. can be a powerful motor force for sparking class struggle against the capitalist rulers. Some of us here remember that the mass-based civil rights movement, though misled and derailed by liberal reformism, played a powerful role in shattering the anti-Communist consensus of the McCarthyite witchhunt of the 1950s.

Our strategic perspective is to forge black Trotskyist cadre, leaders of a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party rooted in the entire working class and waging a fight on behalf of all of the oppressed to win conscious workers to the fight for abortion rights for women, democratic rights for gays (including the right to marriage), and full citizenship rights for all immigrants, which is an integral part of the fight for socialist revolution. There’s been a ratcheting up of the anti-sex witchhunt against “crimes without victims,” against prostitution, pornography. The racist “war on drugs” heavily impacts upon black women, who are having their kids snatched away from them and are a rapidly growing proportion of those behind bars.

Our struggle for black freedom is not confined to the national terrain. The link between the U.S. imperialist wars abroad in Iraq and Afghanistan and the rising racist reaction at home should be quite clear. We have pointed out in our press that Charles Graner, one of the guards involved in torture at Abu Ghraib, was also a guard at the prison where Mumia is housed, accused, among other things, of slipping a razor blade into an inmate’s food. We have something special to say to the majority of the oppressed black masses, who in larger numbers historically oppose U.S. imperialist adventures against dark-skinned peoples: the violent and bloody and corrupt and hypocritical ruling class that slaughters Iraqis and Afghans is the same ruling class whose cops gun down black youth and Latinos on a daily basis. This occurs in a country in which there’s a proliferation of nooses as a means of inciting racist terror, including even in workplaces and working-class areas.

Our literature must address the anti-China imperialist “human rights” campaign in relationship to Darfur, Sudan, especially now with the upcoming Olympics in Beijing. A lot of black liberals have joined with Zionists and other reactionaries in pushing for “humanitarian” imperialist intervention into Darfur under the umbrella of the United Nations and other imperialist forces. They’re appealing for humanitarianism from the same U.S. imperialist ruling class that during the apartheid era had a policy of “constructive engagement” with the apartheid butchers in South Africa.

Meanwhile, by their own numbers the bourgeois press, which likes to laud U.S. imperialism today about its “aid to Africa” on the question of AIDS, can’t hide the truth about how the AIDS epidemic here in the U.S. is taking a heavy, disproportionate toll upon black people. There was a recent report that in the U.S. in 2005 alone some 17,000 people died from AIDS. There’s no decent health care in this country for millions, and the capitalist exploiters put nothing before their profits. They never have and they never will. The struggle for black liberation is explosive not simply because of the weight that black workers still have

Spartacist Black History Month Forums



From Mumia Abu-Jamal to the Jena Six Capitalist “Justice”=Racist Repression



- For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!
- Break with the Democratic Party of Racism and War!
- Build a Revolutionary Workers Party!

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

Bay Area	New York City	Los Angeles	Chicago
Saturday, February 23, 2 p.m. Rockridge Library* 5366 College Ave., Oakland (5 blocks from Rockridge BART, near Broadway) For more information: (510) 839-0851 <small>*The Oakland Public Library does not advocate or endorse the viewpoint of meetings or meeting room users.</small>	Saturday, February 23, 4 p.m. 322 W. 48th St., 1st Floor (between 8th and 9th Ave., take A, C or E to 42nd St.) For more information: (212) 267-1025	Saturday, March 1, 3 p.m. Immanuel Presbyterian Church* 3300 Wilshire Blvd. (2 blocks west of Vermont/Wilshire Red Line Station) For more information: (213) 380-8239 <small>*The views expressed by the participants are not necessarily those of the Immanuel Presbyterian Church.</small>	Saturday, March 1, 5 p.m. Room 713, Student Center East University of Illinois at Chicago 750 S. Halsted Street For more information: (312) 563-0441 Visit the ICL Web Site: www.icl-fi.org

as a highly unionized layer of the working class, but because it threatens to destabilize imperialist rule at home and has internationalist implications.

The “End of Racism” Myth

During the period of the bipartisan anti-Soviet war drive, we used to run articles such as “Blacks Don’t Cry for Solidarność” (WV No. 297, 22 January 1982), in reference to the CIA- and Vatican-backed clerical-nationalist “union” that spearheaded capitalist counterrevolution in the Polish deformed workers state. You had black press running headlines like, “Democracy in Poland—by Reagan?” We ran headlines like “The KKK Doesn’t Ride in Moscow” (WV No. 389, 18 October 1985) as part of our fight to win American workers to the defense of the Soviet degenerated workers state.

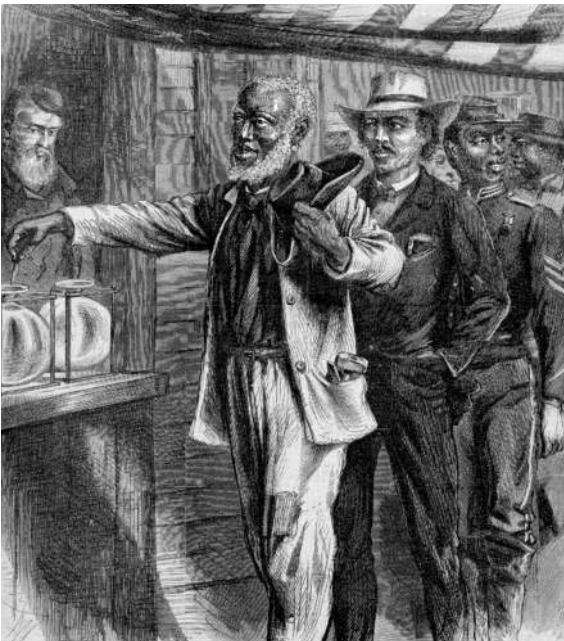
In the U.S., our labor/black mobilizations that have swept the Klan and Nazi fascists off the streets over the past decades were built in political confrontation with the black Democrats and their reformist tails. Our press must educate our youth and our working-class readership about our history on these questions, about what strategy and program is necessary to smash the roots of black oppression, which lie and are lodged in the very structure of racist American capitalism.

As I said earlier, the flipside of the



Library of Congress

Left: Heroic Massachusetts 54th, one of the first black regiments in the Civil War, charging Fort Wagner in South Carolina, July 1863. Black troops were key to Union victory that smashed chattel slavery. Right: Southern blacks voting in 1867 during Reconstruction.



Harper's Weekly

and I made a trip to Detroit a couple years ago, there was an article in the local press about a funeral home that had closed on the very economically devastated west side of Detroit. For some reason the cops opened up this funeral home, and coffins were still in there with two black males. To the racist capitalist rulers, black life is increasingly expendable. And not only black life—just look at the war being waged against the Latino and immigrant populations.

with unions, black rights, immigrant rights, women’s rights. But while the Democrats smile in your face, they keep their dagger hidden. Obama denies that the Jena Six case had anything to do with race. This is not just a program of color-blindness. It’s in fact a program for subordinating the interests of the working masses to the capitalist rulers in the name of “national unity” patriotism.

Every day in this sick, barbaric, capitalist society, black people are confronted with the legacy of slavery and the enduring reality of the color line, which obscures the fundamental division of society into antagonistic social classes with irreconcilably opposed class interests. While Obama was celebrating his victory in South Carolina, Confederate flags—the flag of slavery—were flying around him. This, 143 years after the defeat of the slavocracy in the Civil War! That’s why we have a lot of unfinished business.

Today the racism is increasingly blatant. The liberal *New York Times* now romanticizes the days when white performers performed in blackface, the minstrel shows. They had an article a few months ago about Al Jolson and what a wonderful guy he was. Black women are called “nappy-headed hos,” while that racist, sexist pig Don Imus predictably gets a mere slap on the wrist, and is now back on the air. There are increased racist provocations and attacks, which the multiracial labor movement must fight tooth and nail. All this must be part of the fight to build a class-struggle workers party that will fight for a workers government.

For the Unity and Integrity of the Working Class!

Increasingly today, petty-bourgeois black “leaders” are playing the anti-immigrant card, and they’re getting slicker about it, trying to maintain their slice of the dwindling pie. One of those who was once a friend of Dick Fraser’s, and used to be my friend too when he was some kind of radical, is Earl Ofari Hutchinson. He is especially important in L.A. He has written extensively on blacks and the left. In his better days he wrote a manuscript called “Blacks and the Early American Left: A Study in History Reconstructed,” which is a very useful analysis about the role of the Communist Party in winning over a layer of blacks in its early decades. But today, he’s a straight-out bourgeois liberal. He recently wrote a book called *The Latino Challenge to Black America* (2007) where he argued that there’s a layer of Latino capitalist politicians who recognize the numerical superiority of Latinos today and the black politicians have to work with them, because these black politicians can’t have as many posts and positions as before. Ofari argued in this book that black people shouldn’t just rely on the Democrats but should look to other bourgeois politicians as well.

The reason why I mention Ofari is not because he represents any kind of organ-

ization, although there are people who listen to him and read his columns in black newspapers, but to point to the different manifestations of bourgeois-liberal ideology out there. Ofari cites black Democratic mayor Ron Dellums in Oakland. He says black leaders need to learn from Dellums, figure out a way to work with Latino politicians, like Dellums does, and build a multiethnic coalition. It all amounts to different ways of slicing up an ever-shrinking piece of the capitalist pie. We vigorously fight against anti-immigrant and anti-Latino chauvinism while challenging the deeply entrenched anti-black racism that forms the cornerstone of U.S. capitalism. We just published our new *Black History and the Class Struggle* pamphlet, which has a number of important articles on this question.

I want to refer to a piece by Richard Fraser called “On the Negro Question,” an SWP internal document dated 7 June 1952. In his opening paragraph, Fraser states: “The existence of discrimination against and segregation of Negroes in the U.S. is an historically unique form of oppression and exploitation in that it is a special form which can be identified neither with class nor national oppression. The problem of its elimination from American life is a great challenge to American Marxism. I would hazard that of all the theoretical problems of American Marxism the Negro question is the only one which is especially unique, truly American.”

Now, in this fine document Fraser also stated that the SWP had pronounced theo-



Washington Post

Labor/black mobilization organized by Spartacist League stopped Klan from marching in Washington, D.C., November 1982.

bourgeoisie’s “death of communism” triumphalism is the myth of the “end of racism.” This is particularly embodied in the Obama campaign. But as you go to any big city, you will see the shuttered factories, the huge population of the hungry and the homeless and the nearly 50 million people in this country without health care. In Detroit, unemployment stands at 70 percent among black youth, forcing many to survive on the streets by any means necessary. When a comrade

It’s an all-sided class war against the oppressed. The crumbling anarchic capitalist economy also deeply impacts the white working class and the middle class. People are victimized by parasitic capitalists. You can see it with the home foreclosures.

The upcoming presidential election is significant in the sense that for the first time ever, the Democratic nomination will likely either go to a woman, Hillary Clinton, or a black man, Barack Obama. Obama says this is a post-racial America. He can say that, but a lot of his black supporters are rightfully worried about some racist nut taking him out. Sections of the ruling class, whose interests and “democratic” image have been damaged by the last eight years of the Bush regime, now seek to put into office the historically preferred instrument for carrying out future imperialist wars, the “friends of labor” Democratic Party.

You might wonder why a black bourgeois politician such as Obama can deny the deep-seated racism at the heart of U.S. capitalism. Well, he’s one of those middle-class beneficiaries of the civil rights movement; he’s a reflection of the utter bankruptcy of the so-called black leadership, many of whom were mayors in the ’80s and administered capitalist austerity programs and racist cutbacks. Many of these black capitalist politicians—Coleman Young in Detroit and Tom Bradley in L.A. come to mind—were supported by the fake left. The Republicans are pretty up-front about their program. They want to do away

A Spartacist Pamphlet \$1.50

Black History and the Class Struggle

No. 20

From Mumia Abu-Jamal to Jena Six

Capitalist “Justice” = Racist Repression

For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

South Africa: Permanent Revolution vs. “Two-Stage” Stalinist Betrayal

No. 20 \$1.50 (56 pages)

Black History is sent to all Workers Vanguard subscribers.

Make checks payable/mail to: Spartacist Pub. Co., Box 1377 GPO New York, NY 10116

Beinecke Library

Jamaican-born poet Claude McKay speaking at Communist International's Fourth Congress in Moscow, 1922.

retical weaknesses on the black question, but that “Our party does have an enviable record in practical struggle. We have never neglected an opportunity to enter into a struggle against Jim Crow and its various manifestations when it was physically possible for us to do so. When it was impossible for us to engage organizationally in a struggle, our press was tireless in its defense of the Negro struggle and exposed every faker who sought

continued on page 8

15 FEBRUARY 2008

7

Black Liberation...

(continued from page 7)

to subordinate it to other considerations.” Now, he wrote this during the period of the McCarthyite witchhunt; today we face the political pressures of the post-Soviet world. But we, too, have an enviable record.

The Material Roots of Black Oppression

As an oppressed race-color caste, black people are integrated into the capitalist economy but forcibly segregated at the bottom of society. The recent Supreme Court decision scrapping school integration plans in a couple of cities was a declaration of intent of segregation forever. This goes along with the more outspoken pseudo-scientific racism that’s beginning to deepen, even in the mouths of scientists like James Watson—who, by the way, gave little to no credit to Rosalind Franklin, disparaging her critical role in the discovery of DNA.

A former member of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), H. Rap Brown [Jamil Al-Amin], put it very well:

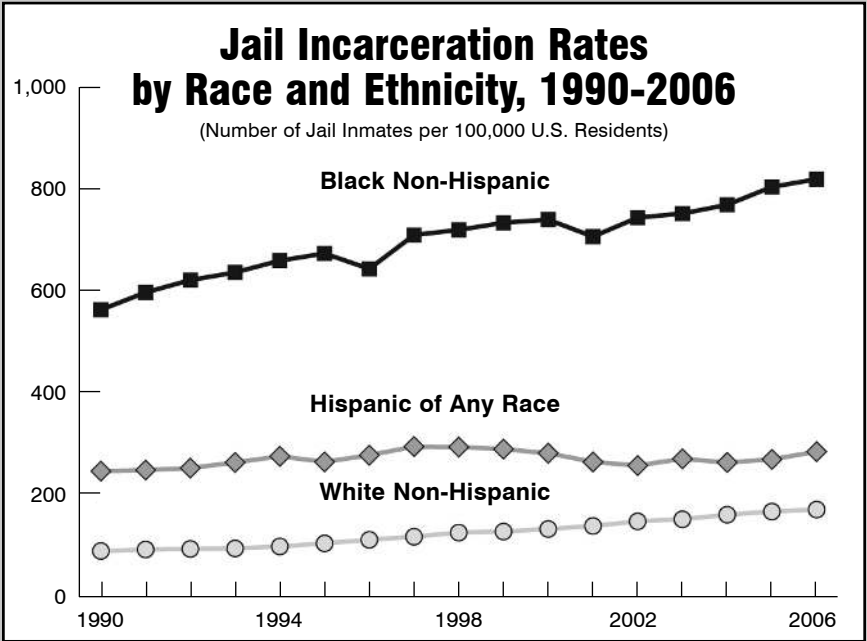
“Color is the first thing Black people in america become aware of. You are born into a world that has given color meaning and color becomes the single most determining factor of your existence. Color determines where you live, how you live and, under certain circumstances, if you will live. Color determines your friends, your education, your mother’s and father’s jobs, where you play, what you play and, more importantly, what you think of yourself. “In and of itself, color has no meaning. But the white world has given it meaning—political, social, economic, historical, physiological and philosophical. Once color has been given meaning, an order is thereby established” (*Die N---r Die!*, 1969).

In the same book, he also stated, “Being Black in this country is like somebody asking you to play white Russian roulette and giving you a gun with bullets in all the chambers. Anyway you go, jim, that’s your ass.”

Along with others—many with his courage—H. Rap Brown was a nationalist. He had a classless view of society, a view that led many black radicals of the era of the civil rights movement, like the Panthers, to reject the only road to black liberation—i.e., the program of revolutionary integrationism, the mobilization of the multiracial labor movement in the struggle for black freedom.

I mentioned the recent U.S. Supreme Court decision against school integration because it strikes deep; it strikes home. It potentially jeopardizes almost a thousand other such desegregation plans. We know that for many years the attacks on integration have been full steam ahead. But this takes us back to 1896, in which the “separate but equal” doctrine was codified in the *Plessy v. Ferguson* Supreme Court decision. Homer Plessy, a man of mixed-race ancestry, sued in Louisiana when he

Vander Brug/L.A. Times



was refused seating in the so-called “white section” of a train. The court decision said that if black people regard this as racial discrimination, it’s because they choose to put such an interpretation on it.

The era after Reconstruction, the most radical period in American history, was contradictory. It was punctuated, as we know, with the revolt of the white farmers in the 1880s alongside black farmers and the rise of the Populist Party led by Tom Watson, who eventually became a virulent white supremacist. By the end of the 19th century, white supremacy prevailed South and North, backed up by the state and federal governments.

The period at the end of the 19th century, which culminated with the formal disenfranchisement and entrenchment of legal segregation of black people as an oppressed race-color caste, also saw the entry of U.S. imperialism on the world scene. This was manifested in the imperialist subjugation of dark-skinned peoples in Cuba, the Philippines and Hawaii,

and carried out under the racist watchword of the “white man’s burden.” This is the context in which conservative black leader Booker T. Washington arose. He was a product of the defeat of Reconstruction. The U.S. capitalist rulers were driving to keep black people in their “place” in order to divide the working class and also to keep white workers down.

Booker T. Washington assured the white racist rulers: “The wisest among my race understand that the agitation of questions of social equality is the extremist folly.” He advocated an alliance with the white capitalists and said that these are the greatest friends of black people, regarding white workers as lower-class trash. There’s a revival of Booker T. Washingtonism, if you will, in this post-Soviet period. Ex-radical black writers—many of whom were years ago calling him what he was, an Uncle Tom accommodationist to racist segregation—are now claiming that he was about uplift,

about giving black people some skills, self-esteem, self-respect. There’s a book called *Crisis of the Black Intellectual* by a Southern Connecticut State University professor, W.D. Wright. In the book, Wright has some criticisms of Cornel West and of the feminists and of black “leaders” like Al Sharpton and Jesse Jackson. But then he points to Booker T. Washington and says that this is what we need today. We need someone like that, Wright says, because the fight for racial integration is old hat.

During our subscription drive last year, we ran into several black students who thought that the Civil War was unimportant because it didn’t end racism, while dismissing organizations like the Panthers that fought for armed self-defense against racist terror as a thing of the past. Where does such an outlook come from? It comes from defeats, from despair of the possibility of mobilizing the multiracial working class to fight against black oppression and on behalf of the poor and exploited. We oppose those who say that separate can be equal, that there’s a separate road for black liberation independent of the rest of American society. Our revolutionary program underlines that the fight for black liberation cannot be achieved through liberal integrationism or petty-bourgeois black nationalism and separatism, but rather through the struggle for revolutionary integrationism, the struggle for black liberation through socialist revolution.

Incarceration, Unemployment and Black Oppression

We cannot deny the minimal gains won through massive social struggle during the civil rights movement, gains that have increased the growth of a black middle class up until today, with more black elected officials in government and more corporate officials, as well as more black judges and cops, enforcers for the racist capitalist state. The black middle-class elements are growing and there are sharper class divisions within the black population. But the American bourgeoisie remains overwhelmingly white. At the same time, the ruling class has a new layer of younger, black capitalist politicians like Cory Booker in Newark, New Jersey, and Obama, who are being pushed forward to repackaging the “end of racism” lies.

While the bourgeois black politicians regard themselves as the “natural leaders of the black masses,” black workers are still a strategic component of the proletariat, forming an organic link to the downtrodden ghetto masses. The black proletariat has borne the brunt of racist cutbacks and layoffs. But one can also see the potential for integrated class struggle, like during the 2005 New York transit strike and the 2007 Pascagoula, Mississippi, shipyard strike of white and black workers against the largest naval shipbuilder in the world. At the same time, in relationship to the Latino proletariat, the weight of the black proletariat has shrunk, and I think that the statistics are indicative.

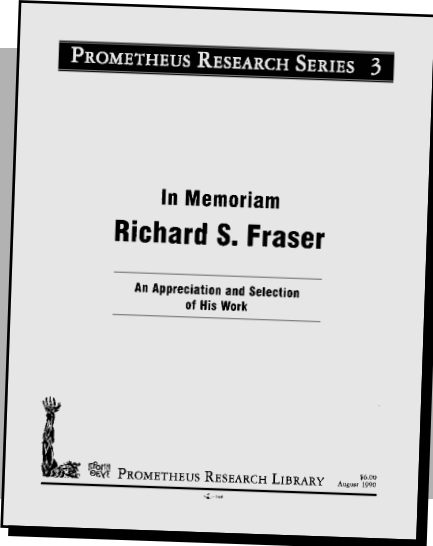
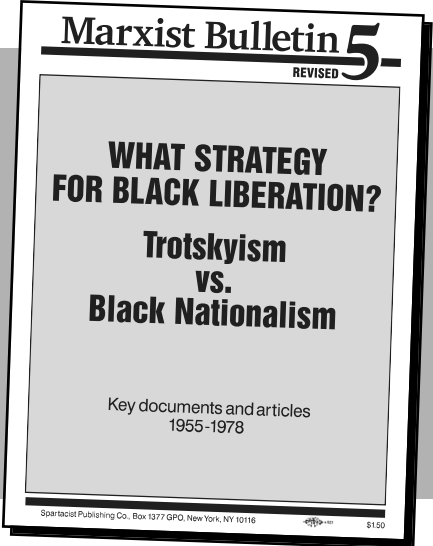
From 1983 to 2002, there were 2.3 million more craft and skilled manufacturing jobs, with the percentage of blacks increasing from 6.8 percent to 7.4 percent. However, Latinos increased from 8.5 percent of craft jobs to 17.1 percent, a huge increase. The number of unskilled manufacturing jobs in that period decreased by 1.3 million, with blacks remaining steady at 14 to 15 percent, while the percentage of Latinos increased from 9.4 percent to 20.9 percent. This represents a significant decline in the number of black manufacturing workers. There’s been an increase of Latino workers in non-farm laboring jobs—helpers, handlers, textile, etc. It’s important to look at the numbers.

Also you have to look at the question since the 1960s. In a book called *For Jobs and Freedom: Race and Labor in America Since 1865*, Robert H. Zieger noted that the greatest relative gains in earnings for black Americans occurred in the



Fraser Family

Richard S. Fraser developed Marxist analysis of black oppression in U.S. *Marxist Bulletin* No. 5 (Revised) includes his “For the Materialist Conception of the Negro Question,” \$1.50. *Prometheus Research Series* No. 3 is available for \$7 (prices include postage). Order from/pay to: Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116.



South in the 1960s. By the late '70s, the economists and statisticians had concluded that the rise of black employment in Southern industry accounted for the bulk of the recent income gains. Clearly that was affected very greatly over the following decade with deindustrialization and the shift toward high-tech and service sector jobs. And black workers took a very big hit. The deindustrialization of the American heartland hit young black men with particular force. I earlier mentioned the unemployment rate of young blacks in Detroit as an example—the average in most cities is around 50 percent. It understates the number of people unemployed who don't even bother to look for work because there aren't any jobs.

And then there's the question of incarceration. In that regard, the statistics and figures—when you think about the incarceration of blacks in this country—are quite staggering. This is not Jim Crow; but it's certainly an intensification of the caste oppression of black people.

Nationally, 2 percent of the population cannot vote as a result of felony convictions. Some 13 percent of black males are disenfranchised, with one in four permanently barred from voting in seven states. In Florida, nearly one-third of all

tion of mandatory sentencing imposing harsher terms for those found in possession of crack cocaine. And we know the role of black Democrats like Jackson and Sharpton in supporting and pursuing the racist "war on drugs," a key linchpin of increasing incarceration.

In the Transitional Program (1938), Trotsky noted that under decaying capitalism, unemployment was taking on not only a conjunctural but structural character. He wrote:

"Under the menace of its own disintegration, the proletariat cannot permit the transformation of an increasing section of the workers into chronically unemployed paupers, living off the slops of a crumbling society. *The right to employment* is the only serious right left to the worker in a society based upon exploitation. This right today is being shorn from him at every step. Against unemployment, 'structural' as well as 'conjunctural,' the time is right to advance, along with slogans of public works, the slogans of a *sliding scale of working hours*. Trade unions and other organizations should bind the workers and the unemployed together in solidarity of mutual responsibility."

It is precisely this point that was underscored by the horrific racist atrocity seen in the devastating effects of Hurricane Katrina, along with the rapidly crumbling infrastructure that highlights the urgency



Dykes/L.A. Times

Troops and cops rounded up minority youth in South Central L.A. during 1992 explosion after acquittal of racist cops in Rodney King beating. L.A. mayor Tom Bradley (inset), one of black Democratic Party mayors whose job was to keep lid on ghetto unrest.



AFP

black men are permanently disenfranchised. With only 12 percent of the U.S. population, blacks comprise over 40 percent of prison inmates, six times the rate of imprisonment for whites. The soaring rate of black imprisonment has been a subject of public discussion and political debate for two decades, with the rise of "three strikes" laws, the intensification of the "war on drugs" and the introduc-

tion of binding together unionized workers and the unemployed and unorganized. We have to raise key transitional demands, such as those outlined by Trotsky in the Transitional Program, in the party press to forge this link. Our call for the decriminalization of drugs and our opposition to "crimes without victims"—such as prostitution and pornography—are key, as these "crimes" impact greatly upon

Admitted FBI fink Al Sharpton marking crack house in 1986. His "anti-drug" campaign fed into rulers' racist "war on drugs."



women, especially black women. Many families are now being completely destroyed. Our call to decriminalize drugs can effectively counter the calls being made by black and white liberals for more cops in the ghettos.

We must raise the call to restore full citizenship rights to all felons. We categorically oppose every instance of disenfranchisement, which disproportionately impacts blacks and other minorities. But we also have transitional demands that we must be raising, like: jobs for all, organize the unorganized, organize the South.

It is impossible to discuss the black question in the U.S. without simultaneously discussing the role of immigrant workers, who are today a key component of the proletariat. What about the 1994 California Proposition 187, which denied access to social services to undocumented immigrants and was passed with sizeable black support? We have the phenomenon of a few blacks joining the anti-immigrant Minutemen vigilante outfit. This is the kind of anti-immigrant garbage that we have to combat as part of our fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants.

For a Multiracial, Revolutionary Workers Party!

Anti-black racism is truly horrifying. The statistics of black imprisonment are just the tip of the iceberg. In our 1966 document, "Black and Red" (reprinted in *Marxist Bulletin* No. 9), we posed the burning need for a fight for the retention of black workers as part of the proletariat, recognizing that lumpenization was increasing. It is in the objective interests of the multiracial working class to fight on behalf of black rights, on behalf of women's liberation, on behalf of the struggles and interests of all of the oppressed.

Karl Marx said that it's not in the first instance a question of how the proletariat views itself; it's fundamentally a question of what its objective position is in capitalist society. The workers are propertyless wage slaves; they don't have any stake in the existing capitalist order. This doesn't mean that revolutionary communist consciousness is a spontaneous product of class struggle. But it means that we can facilitate the process by consciously standing in the tradition of the Bolshevik Revolution. Richard

Fraser rooted himself in the Russian Revolution. The Bolsheviks dealt with special oppression, such as the national question, in the tsarist empire. It was the Bolsheviks who insisted that the American Communist movement address front and center the special oppression of black people and win them to the fight for socialist revolution.

In recent months, we have run into some black youth who doubted our characterization of the Democratic Party as the historic party of slavery in the U.S. Well, it is true. And, by the way, New York City was a hotbed of racist, pro-Democratic Party sentiment, especially during the Civil War. Before then, New York was one of the centers of the slave trade. About a year ago, there was an exhibit about this in New York City, and its subtitle was "Commerce and Conscience."

What all this reveals is that youth today, including black youth, are not taught about this country's history and do not understand the material roots of black oppression. It is the task of our party and press to motivate to a new generation why the black question is central to the fight for workers revolution, why it is rooted in the very history of racist American capitalism, and why only socialist revolution can achieve black liberation.

I'll end with this: our program corresponds to the deeply felt interests and needs of working people in this period of decaying, crumbling capitalist rule. We are determined to make clear—not least because in America black oppression is the envelope for class exploitation—that it is in the interest of white, Latino and other workers to fight for black liberation. We saw it in 2007 in the South, when black and white workers joined together against the shipyard bosses in the Pascagoula strike. We see it in the struggle of black, Latino and white workers to organize at the Smithfield meatpacking plant in Tar Heel, North Carolina. In fact, Mexican workers last year joined in protest with black workers who were denied the Martin Luther King Day holiday. These are small examples, but they show the potential for united class struggle and for educating the most conscious elements of the working class in the understanding that there is no future for humanity unless we build a multiracial, revolutionary workers party as part of a reformed Trotskyist Fourth International that will fight for world socialist revolution. ■

SPARTACIST LEAGUE/U.S. Local Directory and Public Offices

Web site: www.icl-fi.org • **E-mail address:** vanguard@tiac.net

National Office: Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116, (212) 732-7860

Chicago Box 6441, Main PO, Chicago, IL 60680, (312) 563-0441
chicagospartacist@sbcglobal.net
Public Office: Sat. 2-5 p.m., 222 S. Morgan (Buzzer 23)

Los Angeles Box 29574, Los Feliz Sta., Los Angeles, CA 90029, (213) 380-8239
slsycla@sbcglobal.net
Public Office: Sat. 2-5 p.m., 3806 Beverly Blvd., Room 215

New York Box 3381, Church St. Sta., New York, NY 10008, (212) 267-1025
nysl@tiac.net
Public Office: Sat. 1-4 p.m., 299 Broadway, Suite 318

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

TROTSKYIST LEAGUE OF CANADA/LIGUE TROTSKYSTE DU CANADA

Toronto Box 7198, Station A, Toronto, ON M5W 1X8, (416) 593-4138
spartcan@on.aibn.com

Vancouver Box 2717, Main P.O., Vancouver, BC V6B 3X2, (604) 687-0353
trotskyist_vancouver@shawcable.com

WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League

- ☐ \$10/22 issues of *Workers Vanguard* (includes English-language *Spartacist* and *Black History and the Class Struggle*)
international rates: \$25/22 issues—Airmail \$10/22 issues—Seamail
- ☐ \$2/6 introductory issues of *Workers Vanguard* (includes English-language *Spartacist*)
- ☐ \$2/4 issues of *Espartaco* (en español) (includes Spanish-language *Spartacist*)
- ☐ I would like to contribute \$_____ to the production of *Workers Vanguard*.

Name _____

Address _____

_____ Apt. # _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (_____) _____ E-mail _____

908
Make checks payable/mail to: Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

(continued from page 12)

say this repeated sadistic mauling left him with mental disabilities from which he may never recover.

Torture is all over this case: one government “source” used against Padilla, Binyam Muhammad, was captured and tortured in Pakistan and then, under the U.S. government’s policy of “extraordinary rendition,” sent to Morocco to be tortured. On February 5, CIA director Michael Hayden admitted during a Senate Intelligence Committee hearing that the CIA used waterboarding torture against another central “source” against Padilla, Abu Zubaydah, as well as two others. Bombarded with noise and lights, deprived of sleep and denied pain relief after being shot, Zubaydah was broken to the point of saying anything his captors wanted to hear, even as an FBI expert on Al Qaeda described Zubaydah as “insane, certifiable, split personality.”

CIA torture is no aberration but is just as much a part of the fabric of the capitalist-imperialist system as the carnage in U.S.-occupied Iraq and Afghanistan and the barbaric death penalty and racist cop terror “at home.” What is different today is that the extralegal repression that used to be kept under wraps is now being made legal, while the lexicon of torture has become a matter of open “civilized debate” among Democratic and Republican bourgeois politicians.

The conviction and sentencing of Jose Padilla and his codefendants was a show trial, and one with the clear intent of enshrining as permanent features of the legal system an array of repressive laws and measures enacted as part of the “war on terror.” In December 2007, the Supreme Court heard oral arguments on the constitutionality of stripping Guantánamo detainees of the right of *habeas corpus*. Two months later, the government filed an appeal to the Court, seeking to overturn a lower-court ruling that the government must supply more information to defend its designation of a detainee as an “enemy combatant.” Meanwhile, six detainees held in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, are about to face military tribunals, accused of being “conspirators” in the September 11 attacks. Now prosecutors have announced that they intend to seek the death penalty.

The outrageousness, depravity and racist character of the government's detentions in Guantánamo were highlighted in a 5 February *New York Times* article about one Abdul Razzaq Hekmati, an Afghan who recently died of cancer while in detention. Hekmati was an *ally* of the U.S., having fought alongside the CIA-armed *mujahedin* cutthroats against the Soviet forces that intervened into Afghanistan in the 1980s on the side of social progress and in defense of the USSR's southern border. During the five years of his detention, no one would hear his pleas that they had the wrong man. In addition to this former tool of U.S. imperialism, there are hundreds of other prisoners in Guantánamo's torture chambers. *Free all the detainees! U.S. out of Guantánamo!*

In 2002 and 2003, when Padilla was



Waterboarding in Vietnam. January 1968: U.S. occupying forces torture captured Vietnamese, wrapping his head in towel and pouring water over it.

detained as an “enemy combatant,” the Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee filed two *amici curiae* (friends of the court) briefs on his behalf. Our briefs noted that the “war on terror” is “no more a ‘war’ in a military sense than ‘war against cancer,’ ‘war against obesity’ or a ‘war against immorality.’ Like the ‘war against communism’ and the ‘war against drugs,’ this ‘war’ is a pretext to increase the state’s police powers and repressive apparatus.” We warned that the “Executive’s declaration that its ‘war against terrorism’ forfeits constitutional protections for designated individuals” amounts to the government “proclaiming the *right to disappear* citizens of its choosing.” The brief underlined:

“The case of Jose Padilla tests the very existence of the fundamental rights of due process—liberty of the individual from the arbitrary, discriminatory power of the state—and the freedoms protected by the First Amendment. It poses the evisceration of the rights and privileges of citizenship embodied in the first ten Amendments to the Constitution and secured on the battlefield of the Civil War and in class and social struggle over the past hundred and more years. If the imperial President is upheld, Padilla’s detention threatens to become the Dred Scott case of our time, a declaration that ‘Citizens have no rights that the government is bound to respect’.”

Down With “Conspiracy” Thought-Crime Laws!

Conspiracy laws provide legal cover for repressing the government's perceived enemies when the state can find no evidence of any criminal activity. In Miami the Feds are forging ahead with the "Liberty City 7" conspiracy case, in which five black U.S. citizens and two Haitians were rounded up in an FBI/police SWAT operation in the Miami Liberty City ghetto and charged with a trumped-up "Al Qaeda plot" to blow up the Sears Tower in Chicago. By the government's own admission, none of the defendants ever had any contact with any Al Qaeda members, other than a paid government informant pretending to be one, and never acquired any weapons. In December the jury handed a stinging defeat to the government by acquitting one defendant, Haitian immigrant

Lyglenson Lemorin. With the jury deadlocked on the other six, the Feds are now retrying them. Meanwhile, they vindictively whisked Lemorin, a permanent legal resident with no criminal record, into deportation proceedings where the “burden of proof” for their charges is considerably lower, while the judge is enforcing a gag order to prevent Lemorin and his lawyers from discussing his “not guilty” verdict! ***Drop the charges against the Liberty City 7! No deportations!***

In the early decades of the 20th century, labor unions were outlawed as “criminal conspiracies.” Conspiracy laws have been used time and again to railroad leftists and radicals, from socialist and trade-union opponents of World Wars I and II to the Communist Party in the 1950s and more recently radical attorney Lynne Stewart. Today the bosses at Smithfield Foods in Tar Heel, North Carolina, have filed a racketeering suit against the United Food and Commercial Workers, using RICO (Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations) Act conspiracy laws against the union’s attempts to organize that company’s multiracial workforce.

When Padilla was convicted last August, the bourgeois mouthpiece *New York Times* editorialized that “it would be a mistake to see it as a vindication for the Bush administration’s serial abuse of the American legal system in the name of fighting terrorism” (17 August 2007). The *Times*’ bottom line was to complain that Padilla “will likely never be brought to trial on the dirty-bomb plot, a much publicized charge that cries out for resolution,” and that the conspiracy case might “be reversed on appeal because of his alleged mistreatment before trial.”

What concerns liberals and Democrats about the “war on terror” are purely

tactical questions of how best to mask the bloody visage of U.S. imperialism revealed so grotesquely by the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan. While more farsighted members of the bourgeoisie would prefer that kidnapping and torture remain U.S. imperialism's dirty secrets, the demented Bush regime brags openly of its barbarity.

When it comes to the interests of U.S. imperialism, the Democrats—including Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama—have backed the “war on terror” all the way. Clinton voted for the USA Patriot Act (Obama was not in the Senate when it first came up), and both she and Obama voted to reauthorize it in 2006. And if Democrats posture as “antiwar” and timidly critique the Iraq occupation, it is only to better *refurbish* the image of rapacious U.S. imperialism and to bolster its strategic interests around the globe. The draconian policies enacted by Bush & Co. under the pretext of the “war on terror” were built upon laws enacted under the Democratic Bill Clinton administration, such as the 1996 Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act. Indeed, many of the “anti-terror” prosecutions are based on Clinton-era laws.

In the immediate aftermath of the September 11 attacks, we warned that the laws and measures targeting immigrants from overwhelmingly Muslim countries would also be used to further the subjugation of black people and the exploitation of labor. It is in the direct interest of the labor movement and of all opponents of racist repression and defenders of civil liberties to call for the freedom of Jose Padilla and *all* the detainees. As opposed to the “Anybody but Bush” swamp of liberals and reformist leftists who seek to pressure the Democrats to “fight” all the way to the White House in 2008, we stand in principled opposition to the capitalist Democratic Party, the other party of racism and war. We underline that the system of capitalist imperialism has been and will continue to be enforced through barbaric measures and repression. Our vigorous defense of Padilla is rooted in the Marxist understanding that the capitalist state cannot be reformed to serve the interests of the working class and oppressed. As we wrote in “Torture, Lies and Videotape” (WV No. 905, 4 January):

The apparatus of the capitalist state has been greatly strengthened by measures enacted in the 'war on terror.' However, what the government is actually able to get away with will ultimately be determined by the level of social struggle. We fight to forge a workers party that acts as a tribune of the people, mobilizing the social power of the proletariat on behalf of all the exploited and oppressed. In the course of such struggle, the proletariat must be won to understanding the need to carry out a socialist revolution that smashes the capitalist state and establishes a dictatorship of the proletariat, a workers government where those who labor rule.' ■

(continued from page 2)

society, but an instrument of class oppression. In his seminal work of 1917, *State and Revolution*, Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin reiterated the Marxist understanding of the state as consisting at its core of “special bodies of armed men which have prisons, etc., at their command.” Under capitalism the army, the police, the courts and prison service, as well as the state bureauc-


racy all exist to protect the wealth and power of a tiny minority of capitalists who exploit and live off the labour of the working masses. This state cannot be reformed or pressured into becoming an instrument of working people and the oppressed. The elimination of capitalist exploitation and oppression and the building of a classless, socialist society require that the capitalist state be smashed through workers revolution and replaced by a workers state, based on organs of proletarian rule such as workers councils. ■

CLASS-STRUGGLE DEFENSE NOTES

No. 31, Summer 2003


50¢ (24 pages)

Order from/make checks payable to:
 Partisan Defense Committee
 P.O. Box 99
 Canal Street Station
 New York, NY 10013-0099



**Partisan Defense
Committee**

CLASS-STRUGGLE DEFENSE NOTES

Number 31 50¢  Summer 2003

**BRIEF OF *AMICI CURIAE* SPARTACIST LEAGUE
AND PARTISAN DEFENSE COMMITTEE
ON BEHALF OF JOSE PADILLA
AND GRANTING HIS *WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS***

In The
UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS
For The Second Circuit
 Docket No. 03-2235
 03-2438

JOSE PADILLA, Donna R. Newman,
 as Next Friend of Jose Padilla,
 Petitioner-Appeelee-cross-Appellant,
 v.
 DONALD RUMSFELD,
 Respondent-Appellant-cross-Appellee.

On Appeal from the United States District Court
 for the Southern District of New York

SEE PAGE 2

Free All MOVE Prisoners! Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!
25th Anniversary of Powelton Village Siege 18
Anti-Terror* Dragnet Threatens 13,000 with Expulsions
Stop the Deportations! 22

*Marxist Newspaper of the
Spartacist League/Britain*

£3/1 year
International rate: £7—Airmail (US\$10)
Europe outside Britain and Ireland: £5

Order from/make checks payable to:
Spartacist Publications
PO Box 42886, London N19 5WY, Britain
or
Spartacist Publishing Co.
Box 1377 GPO
New York, NY 10116, USA

[illegible]

Mumia...

(continued from page 3)

fight is—to a false view that somehow the justice system under capitalism can be made to be just. The many liberals and reformists who call for a new trial for Mumia also fling mud on the Beverly confession. Here’s a man who confessed to shooting Faulkner, and instead of people saying, “Hey this is great, we got somebody who confessed,” and looking at the mountains of evidence supporting his confession and explaining all the crazy nonsensical things in the prosecution’s case—the reformists and liberals say it is a terrible thing. They even cast doubt on Mumia’s own statement—the statement that he presented in state and federal court—declaring, “I had nothing to do with the killing of Officer Faulkner. I am innocent.” Do you ever hear anyone besides us say that Mumia has declared his innocence and explained what he saw happen that night? No. Instead you have people who are heralded on platforms by most of the rest of the left, people like David Lindorff and others who say something like: I sort of defend Mumia, but you know it’s possible, even likely, that he really did shoot the cop. And *that* passes for people who say that they are defenders of Mumia.

Now why does that happen? Again, it goes back to the political period we are in, and the necessary fights we have to wage. It goes back to the whole question of what the Beverly evidence represents. What does it mean to understand that in this case there was collusion between the cops and the mob and the D.A. and the judges to see Mumia convicted of murder, to see him executed? It means that there is not just one rogue cop, or one racist judge—though Sabo is definitely a racist judge—or one D.A. who is “overzealous.” It is an indictment of the entire bourgeois legal system, which is class-biased and race-biased.

And what liberals want to do—and what the so-called left agrees with—is to attempt to clean up the “justice” system’s bad image. They say that it was only one bad cop, and only Judge Sabo who is the racist, that the rest of them aren’t that bad, that federal court judge Yohn is really an honorable man, that the Third Circuit is the most liberal in the country—though, of course, it’s where reactionary Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito comes from. They say this even though Marjorie Rendell, the wife of Democratic Pennsylvania governor Ed Rendell, the former D.A. who prosecuted Mumia, sits on that court. What does all that amount to except trying to refurbish the credentials of the “justice” system?

For Class-Struggle Defense!

As Marxists—and the PDC has a Marxist worldview—we understand that the cops, the courts, the prisons, the armed forces, are the core components of the capitalist state, the machinery of organ-



James/Philadelphia Inquirer

Mumia Abu-Jamal as Minister of Information of Philadelphia chapter of Black Panther Party in 1969.

ized violence that protects the rule and profits of the exploiting class. We believe that the justice system, at every single level in Mumia’s case and in other cases, has declared that Mumia has no rights that it is bound to respect. This is like what was done by the Supreme Court before the Civil War in the infamous Dred Scott decision, which upheld slavery and declared that black people have no rights that whites are bound to respect.

A “new trial” is a code word for a program of reliance on the capitalist class and on some sort of benevolent Democratic Party politician, on some good judge; a code word for sowing illusions that fighters for the oppressed can obtain justice from the capitalist courts. This has retarded the political understanding of those who joined the struggle for Mumia and has ultimately served to demobilize the movement for Mumia’s freedom. It is no accident that in the lead-up to the Third Circuit Court of Appeals hearing this past May, there were very few protests and events organized on Mumia’s behalf. The events called by the PDC and its cothinkers internationally numbered a modest few hundred here or there. But those were the largest events that there were. What does that tell you about the demobilization of a movement that once numbered in the millions?

I want to make a point: I’m a lawyer, and the work that I personally did and Jonathan Piper, another lawyer associated with the PDC, has done in Mumia’s case when we were on the legal team from 1995 to 1999 represents hundreds and hundreds of hours of legal work. I’m not saying that it wasn’t good work to do. But the purpose of this legal work was not only to have a fight in court, but to provide key evidence for a movement that would take this evidence and fight in the streets, mobilizing the working class in the fight for Mumia’s freedom. The organized working class has the power to actually scare the hell out of the bourgeoisie and to let them know that if some-

thing bad happens to Mumia, there will be a social explosion. This perspective is part of understanding that the fight for Mumia is part of the fight for black liberation, for that of all working people and the oppressed, which requires socialist revolution.

I also want to make the point that if bourgeois law were followed, Mumia’s conviction should be thrown out, dismissed, no new trial, no nothing. This is because there is constitutional law stipulating that if the police and the prosecution withhold evidence from the defense, if they suppress evidence of Mumia’s innocence, if they frame people up, it is a violation of due process for which the charges can be dismissed. So all the talk about needing a new trial to free Mumia is a lot of legal bunk. It’s a way to give support to those who want to destroy a movement that could be based on the fact that Mumia is an innocent man who must be freed. The legal papers we filed called for dismissal of the charges. The call for a new trial does not even have legal credibility; it

expresses the politics of sellout, a betrayal of everything that Mumia represents.

I would just like to note that when a death warrant was signed in 1995, there were protests around the world for Mumia’s cause, including protests based on trade unions representing millions of workers from South Africa and Europe to the U.S. The mobilizations were built on the fact that Mumia’s frame-up conviction was political and racist, and that the death sentence was the call for racist legal lynching. And the very particulars of Mumia’s case provide powerful lessons, that Mumia’s freedom can be wrested from the state only by the independent action of the working class acting with consciousness of its social power to withhold its labor, to shut down industry, communications and transportation. Mumia’s case has the power to deepen workers’ militancy, class solidarity and the recognition that the fight for black rights, for immigrant rights and to end exploitation and oppression is one fight.

What we need is class-struggle defense. We need united-front defense for Mumia based on a class-struggle program. This means, as an initial basis, that we agree that Mumia is an innocent man. Free him now! Abolish the racist death penalty! We are prepared to work with any organization that supports those slogans, understanding that we will continue to criticize other forces in this united front on other political issues. And there are a number of different political issues here. As I said, Mumia is not a Marxist.

Finally, I want to say this: the labor movement, the revolutionary movement internationally, has had its share of martyrs. We don’t want more martyrs. We don’t want Mumia to be a martyr. And he must not become a martyr to the racist viciousness of American capital. The power to free Mumia exists in the international working class and our task is to rekindle and build a mass international mobilization based on the social power of the working class and its many allies to fight for Mumia’s freedom. Free Mumia now!■

JOIN THE CAMPAIGN!

Funds are urgently needed for legal defense!

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

Donations earmarked “Mumia” as well as collections at PDC or other events for Mumia’s legal defense are receipted and transferred in full to the above NLG account as has been designated by Mumia’s lawyer for this purpose.

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.

Get the facts! New PDC fact sheet pamphlet, *Big Lies in the Service of Legal Lynching* (available in English and German—\$.50 each, \$10 for 30) is a detailed refutation of the recent book *Murdered by Mumia* by right-wing journalist Michael Smerconish and Maureen Faulkner, whose lying tract is a rallying cry not only to execute Mumia but for the death penalty itself. The PDC’s other Mumia pamphlet, *The Fight to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal—Mumia Is Innocent!* (\$1), lays out the political basis of the state vendetta against Mumia and provides additional detail on the explosive evidence that shatters the decades-long frame-up of this fighter for black freedom. Both these PDC pamphlets politically arm activists in the struggle for Mumia’s freedom.

PDC Button: “Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!”—\$1 each.
PDC Video: *From Death Row, This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal*—\$10 DVD, \$15 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!

On 17 May 2007 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



Jennifer Beach

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



WORKERS VANGUARD

Sentenced to 17 Years in “War on Terror” Show Trial

Free Jose Padilla!

On January 22, Jose Padilla was sentenced by a federal court in Miami to 17 years and four months in prison based on frame-up charges of “conspiracy to murder, kidnap and maim.” The sentencing comes after nearly six years of hell for Padilla, a U.S. citizen who was effectively stripped of his citizenship rights in the name of the bipartisan “war on terror” unleashed after the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon. In May 2002, Padilla was seized at Chicago’s O’Hare airport. Claiming that he was plotting to set off a radioactive “dirty bomb” on U.S. soil, the government declared Padilla an “unlawful enemy combatant” and disappeared him into a Navy brig without any charges or due process. He was trapped in a legal netherworld with no way to challenge his imprisonment, tortured and deprived of contact with family and—for almost two years—lawyers. In 2005, to avoid a Supreme Court decision on Padilla’s “unlawful enemy combatant” designation, the Bush administration dropped its “dirty bomb” plot like yesterday’s “weapons of mass destruction.”

Instead, the government simply added Padilla’s name to pre-existing “conspiracy” indictments against Adham Hassoun, a computer programmer of Palestinian descent, and Kifah Jayyousi, a public school administrator. Though charges against them were just as bogus, they were sen-



WV Photo

tenced to over 15 years and over 12 years respectively. Even the Bush-appointed judge admitted that there was “no evidence that these defendants personally maimed, kidnapped or killed anyone.” But 12 to 17 years based on *no evidence* wasn’t good enough for the prosecutors, who had demanded life sentences and

have announced that they’re considering an appeal. We say: **Free Jose Padilla, Adham Hassoun and Kifah Jayyousi!**

For nearly four years, the Feds tortured Padilla in the brig through extreme sensory deprivation, drugged and deprived him of sleep. A motion filed by Padilla’s lawyers in fall 2006 demanding that the



AP

Left: Spartacists at March 2002 protest in Brooklyn against “war on terror” detention of Arab and Muslim immigrants. Above: Jose Padilla in federal custody in Miami, 2006.

criminal charges be dismissed described treatment that echoes the horrors of Abu Ghraib: Padilla was “hooded and forced to stand in stress positions for long durations of times” and “threatened with imminent execution.” Two psychiatrists and a psychologist who examined Padilla

continued on page 10

Health Care Bosses Target Filipino Nurses

Ten Filipino immigrant nurses and their lawyer await trial on April 28 in Suffolk County, New York, on bogus charges of conspiracy and “patient endangerment”—when not a single patient was in fact endangered or even inconvenienced. This vindictive and unprecedented prosecution is retaliation for the nurses’ decision to stand up to their employer SentosaCare, the largest for-profit nursing home business in the state, and its Manila-based recruiting agency.

The attack on these immigrant workers, who are among the many thousands of Filipino nurses hired to work in the U.S. to alleviate a severe nursing shortage, points to the precarious situation of immigrants as a whole. Sentosa paid the nurses reduced wages, denied them promised benefits, subjected them to intolerable working conditions and, in some cases, forced them to work miles away from the home they had been assigned to. “You were treated like dirt,” said Juliet Anilao, a mother of two and one of the ten indicted nurses. In April 2006, after the company ignored their complaints, these ten nurses, along with 16 other nurses and a physical therapist collectively known as the Sentosa 27, filed discrimination suits against the nursing homes. They resigned their jobs in protest as a last resort, believing the inaction

Defend the Sentosa 27!



George Tsourovakas

Supporters of Sentosa 27 march in New York City in Philippine Independence Day parade, 3 June 2007.

of the nursing home bosses was putting the patients at risk. Now the ten nurses face 12 counts, each carrying a potential sentence of one year in prison, the loss of their nurs-

ing licenses and deportation. The courage shown by the Sentosa 27 has prompted other Filipino nurses victimized by Sentosa to come forward.

The manufactured allegations of “endangerment” were already dismissed in September 2006 by the New York State Education Department, and another report issued this January by the New York State Department of Health also cleared the nurses. Not only did the nurses not place any patients in jeopardy, but they purposely quit at the end of their shifts, having completed all their duties and knowing the next shift would be covered. As a representative of the New York State Nurses Association (NYSNA) stated in support of the Filipino nurses: “It’s clear to us that this employer wants free rein to bring nurses to this country under false pretenses, treat them like indentured servants, and threaten them with imprisonment if they don’t keep quiet and obey orders.” **Drop all charges against the Filipino nurses and their lawyer, Felix Vinluan! Throw out the bosses’ civil suit! Immediate compensation of all wages due!**

The trade unions which organize nurses in the U.S. and wield real social power, like 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East and AFSCME, as well as the NYSNA and California Nurses Association (CNA), should organize all Filipino and other immigrant nurses with full union rights regarding working conditions, wages and benefits. This must be part of a union drive to **organize all the unorganized** and must be linked to the fight for **full citizenship rights for all immigrants!** These nurses, like all other immigrant workers, are an integral part of the U.S. working class. The ten nurses under indictment worked at the Avalon Gardens nursing home, where aides and other workers are organized by 1199. However, management kept the Filipino nurses out of the union by categorizing them as “supervisors.” The capitalist

continued on page 5