

## Defend the Cuban Revolution!

The February 19 announcement by Fidel Castro that he was resigning as president of the State Council of Cuba and as commander-in-chief of the armed forces was met with a chorus of self-righteous pronouncements by U.S. bourgeois politicians. President Bush took time from his tour of Africa to offer to “help” Cubans to “realize the blessings of liberty.” The masses of Iraq and Afghanistan, devastated by years of imperialist war and occupation, know the realities of U.S. imperialism’s “blessings of liberty.” Republican front-runner John McCain wished Castro dead, declaring, “I hope that he has the opportunity to meet Karl Marx very soon.” Democratic front-runners Hillary Clinton and

Barack Obama prattled on about helping Cuba move toward “democracy,” hypocritically decrying the Castro regime’s repression against pro-imperialist dissidents. Meanwhile, it is the U.S. that is holding hundreds of prisoners with no rights in the torture chambers of Guantánamo Bay, a major U.S. military base on a piece of stolen Cuban land. Free the detainees! U.S. out of Guantánamo!

It is the duty of the international proletariat, especially the working class in the U.S., to stand for the **unconditional military defense** of the Cuban deformed workers state against imperialism and capitalist counterrevolution. When Castro’s petty-bourgeois guerrilla forces marched into Havana in January 1959,

the bourgeois army and the rest of the capitalist state apparatus that had propped up the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship shattered. Ever since the government of Fidel Castro, facing implacable hostility by the U.S., expropriated the capitalist class in Cuba in 1960-61, establishing a deformed workers state, the U.S. ruling class has relentlessly worked to re-establish bourgeois rule on the island—from the 1961 Playa Girón (Bay of Pigs) invasion carried out by Democrat John F. Kennedy to hundreds of assassination attempts on Castro; from the backing of *gusano* (worms) counterrevolutionary terrorists in Miami to the ongoing economic embargo.

In the mid 1990s, Bill Clinton twice

tightened the embargo in an attempt to squeeze Cuba into submission, while in 2003 the Bush administration set up the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba to coordinate U.S. efforts to restore capitalism on the island. At the same time, there are elements within the U.S. bourgeoisie, represented by the likes of Obama, who look to ease the 48-year-long economic embargo in order to increase U.S. imperialist economic penetration and strengthen the forces of counterrevolution within Cuba. All sections of the U.S. ruling class are committed to reconquering Cuba for untrammelled capitalist exploitation.

We demand an end to the embargo  
*continued on page 2*

## Republicans, Democrats Step Up War on Our Rights

# Government Wiretapping: Big Brother Is Listening

On February 12, the Democratic-controlled Senate approved a bill by a vote of 68 to 29 (with 19 Democrats voting “yes”) that would extend for six years the government’s legal authority to spy on U.S. citizens through warrantless wiretaps. This bill, known as the FISA Amendments Act, was an extension of last year’s Protect America Act, a time-limited law. The Protect America Act authorized the National Security Agency (NSA) to monitor the telephone and Internet communications of U.S. citizens without a court warrant as long as there is “reasonable belief” that one party in the conversation is not in the U.S. Importantly, the FISA Amendments Act grants retroactive immunity from lawsuits seeking billions of dollars in damages from phone companies, such as AT&T and Sprint, that have been collaborating with the government’s eavesdropping schemes. Democratic presidential candidates and Senators Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama were conspicuously absent for this vote (although Obama had earlier supported an amendment against the immunity for telecommunications companies).

For its part, the Democratic-controlled House adjourned for a week’s recess without taking action on the Senate bill, allowing the Protect America Act to lapse. Reflecting pressures from the Democratic base in an election period, many House Democrats are hesitant to provide retroactive immunity to the phone companies. Bush declared that “our country is more in danger of an attack” because of the House



NSA “Threat Operations Center” in the Washington, D.C., suburb of Fort Meade, Maryland.

Democrats’ refusal to pass the bill (and then promptly left for his tour of Africa). Democratic House speaker Nancy Pelosi replied that “the President knows full well that he has all the authority he needs,” referring to the 1978 Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA). On February 14, House Republicans staged a well-publicized walkout, riled up by the failure to pass the Senate bill and the Democrats’ attempts to get a contempt of Congress vote against White House Chief of Staff Joshua Bolten and former counsel Harriet Miers for unanswered subpoenas in a Congressional probe of last year’s

U.S. attorney firings scandal.

The *New York Times* (15 February) remarked, with unintentional irony, that the resistance to passing the Senate bill constituted the Democrats’ “greatest challenge to Mr. Bush on a major national security issue since Democrats took control of Congress last year.” Indeed, as the *Times* article continued: “Last summer, Democrats allowed the surveillance law to be put in place for six months although many of them opposed it. They have also relented in fights over spending on the Iraq war under White House pressure.” All this was preceded by the

Democrats’ near-unanimous support for the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan and bipartisan backing by Congress for the 2003 Iraq invasion.

The Democrats, the other party of war and racism, are no less committed than the Republicans to the reactionary “war on terror”—an all-purpose pretense for the U.S. imperialist rulers to invade and attack other countries while shredding the civil liberties of the population “at home.” One week after the September 11 attacks, Congressional Democrats overwhelmingly joined Republicans in authorizing Bush to “use all necessary and appropriate force” to find the perpetrators—a vote Bush pointed to as giving him legal authority for warrantless wiretapping, communications data mining and the like. One month later, the USA Patriot Act, which expanded the government’s authority to monitor anyone it claims is involved in international “terrorism,” was passed with near-unanimous support from the Democrats. And

in 2006, the Patriot Act was re-authorized and extended with the support of key Democrats, including both Clinton and Obama.

The current infighting between Bush and the Republicans on one side and Congressional Democrats on the other is merely over how best to secure and enhance the government’s apparatus of repression. Indeed, the sole sticking point for House Democrats is the retroactive immunity for the telecommunications companies that assisted the government in what *both parties agree will henceforth be legal*.

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## For Unconditional Military Defense of Chinese Deformed Workers State! .....4

Cuba...

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against Cuba. At the same time, we warn that the calls for “free elections” are nothing but code words for “democratic” counterrevolution, for the “electoral” rise to power of capitalist-restorationist forces financed by U.S. imperialism, intent on destroying the workers state and wreaking massive repression, if not a bloodbath, against workers and Communists.

The expropriation of the holdings of the U.S. imperialists and the Cuban bourgeoisie has led to enormous gains for Cuba’s working masses, particularly women and blacks. With Soviet aid, a centralized, planned economy was built, guaranteeing jobs, housing, food and education. Cuba’s health care system, despite the crippling effect of the U.S. blockade, is far and away the best among Third World countries. Cuban doctors have provided medical assistance to scores of poor countries. After Hurricane Katrina, Cuban doctors packed their bags for the U.S. to assist the victims, but were refused entrance.

Following the 1991-92 counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet degener-

ated workers state, which had supported Cuba with some \$4 billion a year in aid and provided a crucial military shield against the U.S., the Cuban economy massively contracted. In response, the Cuban government opened sectors of its economy to imperialist economic penetration from West Europe and Canada, which has increased inequality. However, in recent years, the government has sought to reduce dependence on imperialist investment by enacting new trade deals with the capitalist regime of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela and the Chinese deformed workers state. Today there is widespread debate about a post-Fidel Cuba undertaking an economic “opening up” along Chinese lines. Regardless of the particular Stalinist economic policies pursued by Raúl Castro, who has taken over as Cuba’s president after holding the post on a provisional basis since Fidel Castro underwent surgery in July 2006, we underline our unconditional military defense of Cuba—as well as the other remaining deformed workers states of China, North Korea and Vietnam.

At the same time, we stand in political opposition to the Stalinist bureaucratic misrulers—a parasitic layer sitting

on top of proletarian property forms—whose nationalist dogma of “socialism in one country” is an obstacle to the defense of the workers states. Rather than fighting to win the working masses in Latin America and the U.S. to the struggle for international socialist revolution, the Castroite Stalinist bureaucracy has fostered illusions in “progressive” bourgeois regimes, from Salvador Allende in Chile in the early 1970s to Chávez today. Outrageously, on February 20 the Vatican’s secretary of state arrived in Havana to unveil a monument to the late Pope John Paul II on the tenth anniversary of his visit to Cuba—a monument to the Pope of counterrevolution who worked tirelessly to restore capitalism in the East European deformed workers states, especially his native Poland!

We Trotskyists stand for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy in Havana and establish a regime of workers democracy, based on the power of workers councils, and revolutionary internationalism. The fight to defend and extend the Cuban Revolution has been a hallmark of our tendency from its origins as the Revolutionary Tendency (RT) in the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in the early 1960s. Against the SWP majority, which equated the Castro regime with the revolutionary Bolshevik government of Lenin and Trotsky, the RT described Cuba as a deformed workers state. As explained in the 1973 preface to “Cuba and Marxist Theory” (*Marxist Bulletin* No. 8), the RT

“fought for three main programmatic points in orienting to the Cuban revolution and its defense: insistence on the Permanent Revolution, i.e. the view that no essential task of the revolution could be achieved short of the victory and consolidation of a workers state; and, corre-

spondingly, insistence on the struggle for hegemony of the working class in the revolution; together with the necessity for a conscious Trotskyist party as the proletarian vanguard to lead that struggle.”

In contrast to our fight for workers political revolution and international socialist revolution, various leftist intellectuals, including prominent Cuban writer and Castro supporter Celia Hart, have pushed the illusion that support to Hugo Chávez’s bourgeois regime represents the possibility of extending the Cuban Revolution. Speaking of Chávez’s call for “socialism,” Hart asserts: “It’s like seeing how the Permanent Revolution thesis of that Russian [Trotsky] in 1905 comes to life a century later.” In fact, Chávez is a bourgeois populist ruler, no less the class opponent of the victory of the workers and oppressed than any neoliberal politician. He has moved to tighten the capitalist state’s control over the workers movement and, as even Hart admits, is not about to countenance the expropriation of the Venezuelan bourgeoisie.

The main ally of the Cuban masses in their fight against imperialism and counterrevolution is the international proletariat, not least the multiracial working class in the U.S. The Spartacist League/U.S., section of the International Communist League, fights to forge a revolutionary workers party that brings to the American proletariat the understanding that defense of the Cuban Revolution is integral to its struggle against its own exploiters, the U.S. capitalist rulers. Along with our comrades of the Grupo Espartaquista de México and the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyiste of Canada, we fight for socialist revolution from the Yukon to the Yucatán and throughout the Americas. **Down with U.S. imperialism! Defend Cuba! ■**



TROTSKY

For Women’s Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

At a time when women in the most “democratic” capitalist countries were denied even the right to vote, the October Revolution of 1917 brought unheard-of gains for women in all areas of public and private life. Despite economic backwardness and poverty, the young Soviet Republic sought to overcome the material foundations of women’s oppression, rooted in the institution of the family. But the Bolsheviks understood that complete social equality would only be attained with the

abolition of classes in a world socialist society, requiring the extension of proletarian revolution internationally. Addressing a meeting of working women in 1918, Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin stressed that the struggle for women’s liberation is integral to the emancipation of labor itself.

There can be no socialist revolution unless very many working women take a big part in it.

In all civilised countries, even the most advanced, women are actually no more than domestic slaves. Women do not enjoy full equality in any capitalist state, not even in the freest of republics.

One of the primary tasks of the Soviet Republic is to abolish all restrictions on women’s rights. The Soviet government has completely abolished divorce proceedings, that source of bourgeois degradation, repression and humiliation.

It will soon be a year now since complete freedom of divorce was legislated. We have passed a decree annulling all distinction between legitimate and illegitimate children and removing political restrictions. Nowhere else in the world have equality and freedom for working women been so fully established.

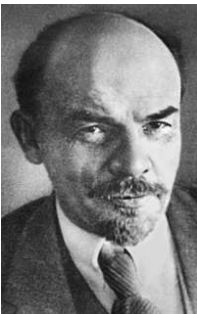
We know that it is the working-class woman who has to bear the full brunt of antiquated codes.

For the first time in history, our law has removed everything that denied women rights. But the important thing is not the law. In the cities and industrial areas this law on complete freedom of marriage is doing all right, but in the countryside it all too frequently remains a dead letter. There the religious marriage still predominates. This is due to the influence of the priests, an evil that is harder to combat than the old legislation....

The status of women up to now has been compared to that of a slave; women have been tied to the home, and only socialism can save them from this. They will only be completely emancipated when we change from small-scale individual farming to collective farming and collective working of the land. That is a difficult task. But now that Poor Peasants’ Committees are being formed, the time has come when the socialist revolution is being consolidated....

The experience of all liberation movements has shown that the success of a revolution depends on how much the women take part in it. The Soviet government is doing everything in its power to enable women to carry on independent proletarian socialist work.

—V.I. Lenin, “Speech at the First All-Russia Congress of Working Women” (November 1918)



LENIN

Defend Puerto Rican Teachers Strike!

On February 21, the Federación de Maestros de Puerto Rico (FMPR), the largest public employee union on the island representing over 40,000 teachers, went on strike in a fight for its very existence against government attempts to smash it. The teachers are on strike in defiance of Law 45—similar to New York State’s Taylor Law—prohibiting public workers in Puerto Rico from striking or even “promoting” a strike. The teachers and their supporters have been met with brutal police repression. Twenty-one have been arrested (most released without charges). In retaliation for voting to strike, the government decertified the union, fined it \$30,000, halted the dues check-off, attempted to freeze its assets and issued an order against its 3,000 elected leaders and delegates, forbidding them from representing their members or running in union elections until 2013! The government is now threatening to fine the union \$10,000 for each day of the strike. The union has filed a lawsuit in U.S. federal court appealing the government’s attacks.

In a letter of solidarity sent to the FMPR, the Partisan Defense Committee, a class-struggle non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League, called for labor to smash the union-busting Law 45. The letter affirmed, “The attack on your union is an attack on all unions and the entire working class in Puerto Rico and the United States.” Puerto Rico is a colony of U.S. imperialism, and it is ultimately Washington that holds the whip hand over the Puerto Rican masses. It is crucial for the U.S. proletariat to defend the struggles of our class brothers and sisters in Puerto Rico, and stand for Puerto Rico’s right to independence. Victory to the teachers strike!

We print below a February 21 protest letter by the PDC addressed to Aníbal Acevedo Vilá, the governor of Puerto Rico.

The Partisan Defense Committee vigorously protests the vicious police attacks against strikers and supporters of the Federación de Maestros de Puerto Rico (FMPR) teachers union. We also con-

demn the arrests of 14 teachers. We demand their immediate release and that all charges be dropped.

The FMPR is on strike after more than two years without a contract. They are striking over deplorable wages, overcrowded classrooms and buildings in decay. This morning, police attacked strikers and supporters defending the picket lines at schools all over the island. In San Juan, one demonstrator was seen bleeding from an open head wound after the police beat him with batons. Strikers picketing at school entrances were arrested on charges of “obstructing justice,” “provoking damage to a vehicle” and other outrageous charges.

In retaliation for exercising its right to strike, the union faces threats by the Public Service Labor Relations Commission of decertification under Law 45, which forbids public employee unions from striking. The PDC vehemently protests this slave-labor law. The PDC demands the immediate release of all strikers and supporters. Drop all charges now!

\* \* \*

The PDC urges all unions and defenders of workers rights to contribute to the FMPR’s strike fund. Wire money to the union’s account at: Banco Bilbao Vizcaya Argentaria de Puerto Rico; routing number: 021502228; account name: Grupo Nacional de Apoyo a Maestros y Maestras, Sucursal 018; account number: 1050401162. ■

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Selected Documents on the Cuban Question

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# Mobilize Now to Free Mumia!

## Pennsylvania Court Rejects Mumia Abu-Jamal's Appeal—

The following press release was issued on February 21 by the Partisan Defense Committee, a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League.

On February 19, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court once again slammed shut its doors to death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. Citing procedural rules that bar as untimely the use of evidence discovered after trial and appeal, Pennsylvania's highest court turned down Mumia's request for a hearing to present evidence that key witnesses in his frame-up trial perjured themselves under police coercion. Still pending in the federal Third Circuit Court of Appeals is Mumia's appeal from a denial of his application for *habeas corpus* seeking to overturn his conviction. Oral argument in that appeal was held last May, and a decision, either upholding the death sentence, condemning Mumia to a life behind bars or ordering a new trial or additional legal proceedings, could come any day.

A Black Panther Party spokesman in his youth, and later a renowned journalist and supporter of the Philadelphia MOVE organization, Mumia was framed up for the murder of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner on 9 December 1981, and he was sentenced to death explicitly for his political views. Partisan Defense Committee counsel Rachel Wolkenstein, who was a member of Mumia's legal team from 1995 to 1999, stated, "What the court again refused to hear is a small piece of the mountain of evidence of Mumia's innocence. The proof of Mumia's innocence, which includes the confession of Arnold Beverly that he, not Mumia, shot officer Faulkner, is detailed in the PDC Fact Sheet pamphlet, *Big Lies in the Service of Legal Lynching*" (<http://www.partisandefense.org>).

Wolkenstein explained, "The evidence barred by the Pennsylvania court cuts to the heart of the prosecution frame-up. The only witness claiming to have seen Mumia with a gun in hand was Cynthia White, a prostitute who was given favors and coerced by the cops to lie. Two months after Faulkner's death, cops and prosecutors concocted a story that while bleeding nearly to death on the Jefferson Hospital Emergency Room floor, Mumia screamed out a confession to Faulkner's murder." She continued, "The evidence barred by the court was the declarations by Yvette Williams, who was in jail with Cynthia White in December 1981, and Kenneth Pate, step-brother of Priscilla Durham, a Jefferson Hospital security

## Federal Court Decision Due



WV Photo

PDC contingent at May 2007 Mumia demonstration in Philadelphia.

guard who testified at Mumia's trial to hearing the bogus confession." In her 28 January 2002 declaration, Williams stated, "Cynthia White told me the police were making her lie and say she saw Mr. Jamal shoot Officer Faulkner when she really did not see who did it." In his 18 April 2003 declaration, Kenneth Pate recalled that Durham told him of pressure by the cops to say Mumia confessed, but confided to him that "All I heard him say was: 'Get off me, get off me, they're trying to kill me'."

Wolkenstein pointed out that "the pretext for the court's decision is Pennsylvania's version of the epidemic of laws adopted across the country—chief among them Bill Clinton's 1996 Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act—cutting off the right of appeals for the thousands on death row. Pennsylvania's law was adopted shortly after Mumia's first post-conviction relief (PCRA) hearings in 1995, precisely to cut off his appeal rights." Wolkenstein continued, "It is one of the many 'Mumia rules' that have been used to keep this innocent man on death row. Recalling the infamous 1857 Dred Scott case, court after court—state and federal—have declared that this fighter for black freedom has no rights which they are bound to respect."

Pam Africa, coordinator of the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, stated, "I am not shocked by this decision. The PA Supreme Court has never ruled fairly in Mumia's

case, especially with former Philadelphia DA Ron Castille's participation. This should wake people up to see the injustice in Mumia's case." Castille, chief justice of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, was the district attorney opposing Mumia's first appeal, and was later one of the members of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court who turned down Mumia's appeal of the denial of his PCRA in 1997.

According to Wolkenstein, "The current appeal shot down by the court was filed in 2003, shortly after the same court used the same rules to refuse to even consider the confession of Arnold Beverly that he, not Mumia, shot and killed officer Faulkner." Wolkenstein explained, "Beverly stated that he and another man were hired to kill Faulkner because Faulkner interfered with graft and pay-offs to allow prostitution, drugs and gambling in the Center City area. This, and a treasure trove of supporting evi-

dence, was filed in federal and state courts along with Mumia's own statement that he had nothing to do with the shooting. But these courts refuse to hear the evidence because it underscores that the frame-up of Mumia is not an aberration, the working of one racist judge or a few rogue cops, but the workings of the racist capitalist justice system." She added, "Neither the evidence barred by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, nor other parts of the vast evidence of Mumia's innocence, is even before the Third Circuit."

Gene Herson, Labor Coordinator of the PDC, stated, "The racist capitalist rulers want Mumia's legal lynching because they see in him the spectre of black revolt, because of his determined opposition to the racist oppression of black people which is a bedrock of American capitalism. There is *no justice* in this system for people like Mumia, for fighters for black freedom, for labor militants, for opponents of the capitalist system and its Democratic and Republican parties." Herson stressed the need to mobilize the social power of the labor movement, along with all fighters against racist injustice, behind Mumia's cause: "The only pressure that will have an impact on the capitalist rulers and their courts is the fear of the consequences of executing Mumia or entombing him for life. It took a campaign of international mass protest, crucially including trade unionists, to stay the executioner's hand when Mumia was under a death warrant in 1995." Herson pointed to the call by the PDC and other organizations for day-after emergency protests in the event of a negative decision by the Third Circuit and to a planned national protest in Philadelphia on the third Saturday after (<http://www.partisandefense.org/events/index.html>). He emphasized, "These protests must serve as a springboard to revive mass protest behind the call: Mumia is innocent—Free him now! Abolish the racist death penalty!" ■

## 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, German and French—\$.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

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## 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](http://www.partisandefense.org)**



Jennifer Beach

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



# German Social Democracy Promotes Capitalist Counterrevolution

## For Unconditional Military Defense of Chinese Deformed Workers State!

The following article is translated and reprinted, in edited form, from Spartakist No. 169 (Winter 2007-2008), newspaper of the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

### SPARTAKIST 4

German chancellor Angela Merkel's reception of the Dalai Lama marks, for now, the high point in the continued anti-Communist campaign by the bourgeoisie and its ideologues against the Chinese deformed workers state. After Merkel, U.S. president Bush received the Dalai Lama—surely no coincidence. Crocodile tears are being shed over the “oppression of Tibet,” while the Communist Party of China (CCP) is warned to observe “human rights.” All this will escalate in view of the upcoming Olympic Games in Beijing in 2008. Merkel's provocation set off harsh diplomatic reactions in Beijing. *Welt* online (15 November 2007) writes: “Beijing strategists are following not only the course the EU takes toward China, but also how closely Europe, which under Jacques Chirac and Gerhard Schröder had distanced itself from the USA, is again approaching Washington. The new closeness doesn't suit Beijing. Thus the paper *Global Times* appeared with the disapproving headline, ‘England, France and Germany compete in sucking up to the USA’.” In fact, at the end of November the EU began to exert massive pressure to get the Chinese currency, the yuan, revalued, and the chairman of the Euro group, Jean-Claude Juncker, has issued a barely veiled threat of trade war against China: “Protectionism is in the air,” warned Juncker (*Handelsblatt*, 29 November 2007). In the meantime, the U.S. imperialists have concluded an anti-Chinese military agreement with Japan and are arming Taiwan with Patriot missile systems. The imperialists' common goal is to increase the military and economic pressure on China and isolate it politically via a new “human rights” campaign.

Merkel's reception of the Dalai Lama led to disputes within the SPD/CDU coalition government of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the Christian Democratic Union (CDU). Foreign Minister Steinmeier of the SPD criticized the confrontational course of the CDU:

“But basically—and the Foreign Minister and Chancellor stick to this—they are betting on differing approaches towards improving the human rights situation

in China.... [Steinmeier] is promoting ‘long-term structures’ in [Germany's] China policy, recalling Schröder's project, which initiated a dialogue about a state founded on the rule of law seven years ago, an academic project of German and Chinese jurists. For economic contacts, it was claimed, the rule of law was necessary—this is the way Beijing was being enticed at the time—and part and parcel of this were human rights.”

—FAZ.NET, 23 November 2007

The SPD and CDU both want to destroy the Chinese workers state by counterrevolution but are pursuing different

even more cynically—“workers' rights.”

As in the Cold War against the Soviet Union, the imperialists understand by “human rights” above all one thing: the right of the bourgeoisie to unlimited exploitation and enslavement of the working masses. And this “right” was “violated” in China by the 1949 Revolution, which drove the bourgeoisie off the Chinese mainland. In spite of the market reforms, China is not capitalist. The private sector created by the market reforms, including foreign companies, is

tionary destruction of the deformed workers states of East Europe and, in particular, the destruction of the degenerated workers state of the Soviet Union in 1991-92. As a result of the treacherous Stalinist policy of “socialism in one country” and its associated illusions in “peaceful coexistence” between the Chinese workers state and imperialism, the Chinese bureaucracy has been making concessions to the imperialists. Thus, it supports the “war against terror,” the sanctions against Iran and the campaign for the



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**Left: Baosteel plant in Shanghai, part of China's collectivized industry. Right: German chancellor Angela Merkel welcomes Dalai Lama, spearhead of “Free Tibet” movement for capitalist counterrevolution in China.**



Gallup/Action Press

strategies whereby German imperialism can achieve its interests. The SPD is concerned that Merkel's closeness to the U.S. might damage German interests in China (and Russia). As chancellor, Schröder went to China with an economic delegation almost every year. The SPD likewise is pushing the anti-Communist “human rights” campaign, but more from the background. While Merkel strikes a note that recalls Ronald Reagan in Cold War II, SPD policy is a continuation of their “Ostpolitik” toward East Germany (DDR) developed by Egon Bahr (SPD) in the mid '60s and described as “change through convergence.” Here “change” always meant capitalist counterrevolution, but in the name of “democracy,” “a social market economy,” “human rights” and—

predominantly light industry. Heavy industry—steel, non-ferrous metals, heavy machinery production, telecommunications, energy, petrochemicals—is concentrated in state-owned companies, which are strategically far more important. State ownership of land has prevented the development of a layer of rich large landowners dominating the rural areas. State control over the financial system has so far been able to protect the People's Republic of China from the maneuvers of speculative capital, which have ruined the economy in so many capitalist neocolonies.

As the strongest of the remaining deformed workers states, China has been drawn into the cross hairs of the imperialists especially since the counterrevolu-

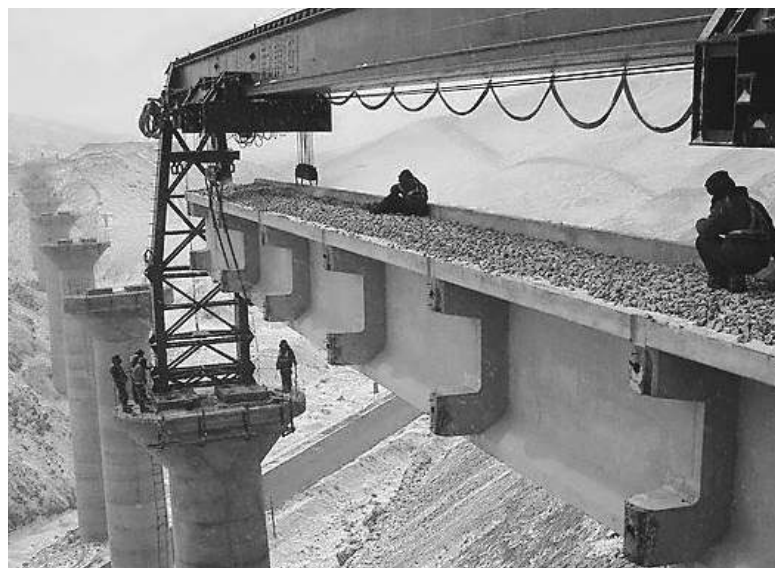
nuclear disarmament of North Korea. Nonetheless, China is surrounded today by a whole system of U.S. military bases. Along with North Korea, it is on the Pentagon's list as a potential target of a nuclear first strike by the U.S., while the U.S. program of National Missile Defense has the strategic goal of neutralizing China's modest nuclear capacities. Japan and the U.S. are cooperating militarily, subordinating their rivalry to their common hostility to the workers states in Asia. We are in favor of China and North Korea developing, testing and producing nuclear weapons to defend themselves against U.S. and Japanese imperialism. We fight for the unconditional military defense of China and the other deformed workers states of North Korea, Cuba and Vietnam against imperialism and internal counterrevolution.

The “Free Tibet” cause originated with the machinations of the American CIA and other imperialist forces intent on fomenting capitalist counterrevolution in China. Until its overthrow following the 1949 Chinese Revolution, the Tibetan “Lamaocracy” ruled a society where slavery was rampant, medical care nonexistent and literacy the preserve of (some of) the ruling priest-caste. As in the case of other horribly benighted and backward countries, even a modicum of modernization can only come from without.

In 1950, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) occupied Tibet in response to counterrevolutionary resistance fomented by U.S. imperialism and Taiwan. In 1959, a rebellion inspired, armed and financed by the CIA (with help from Taiwan and India) culminated in a monk/aristocrat-led uprising in Lhasa, which was crushed by the PLA. Against the imperialist hue



Bettmann



EPA

**Left: Tibetan Buddhist monks surrender to Chinese Red Army troops in Lhasa after leading reactionary armed revolt, April 1959. Right: Workers in China's Qinghai Province constructing world's highest railway line that climbs to 16,640 feet above sea level to cross Tibetan plateau. The train line is now in operation.**

and cry over “poor little Tibet,” the Trotskyists stood forthrightly for the defense of China. Following the defeat of the counterrevolutionary uprising in 1959, the Chinese deformed workers state abolished *ulag* (forced peasant labor), slavery and the myriad of mandatory taxes paid to the aristocracy and monasteries. The land, livestock and tools of the aristocrats who fled into exile were distributed to the peasants, as were the land and chattels of the monasteries that had participated in the uprising. It is because Tibet is part of a deformed workers state that life expectancy has dramatically increased (from 35.5 years in the 1950s to 67 by 2001) and infant mortality has dramatically decreased (from 430 per 1,000 births in 1959 to 6.61).

The call for an “independent Tibet” at this time can only be a rallying call for capitalist counterrevolution. At the same time, the Chinese proletariat must combat the Han chauvinism of the Stalinist bureaucracy and oppose all discrimination against Tibetans, the Muslim Uighurs of Xinjiang and other national and ethnic minorities. The fate of the Tibetan people is inextricably bound up with the struggle for proletarian political revolution in China and socialist revolution in the capitalist countries—from the Indian subcontinent to Japan and other imperialist centers.

The fate of China, the most populous land on earth, where the bourgeoisie was expropriated by the 1949 Revolution, is of central interest to all the workers of the world. The international proletariat must be won to the understanding that it must defend China against internal counterrevolution and against its own bourgeoisies. Ultimately, only a political revolution in China can lead to the rule of workers soviets, and only the extension of the Chinese Revolution can ensure the defense and development of its gains. In Germany, the central obstacle to this revolutionary consciousness is the social-democratic program of pursuing nationalist protectionism and class collaboration with the bourgeoisie at home, and promoting counterrevolution in the remaining workers states under cover of “human rights” and “democracy.”

“Market Reforms” Sharpen Contradictions in the Chinese Workers State

In order to promote counterrevolution, the imperialists are on the one hand putting more military pressure on China and on the other intensifying their economic penetration by utilizing China’s “market reforms.” The market reforms of the past decades have enormously sharpened the contradictions in the Chinese deformed workers state. But contrary to the widespread belief on the left that China is already capitalist or irreversibly on the way to becoming capitalist, the Stalinist bureaucracy is not capable of bringing about a cold, step-by-step restoration of capitalism from above. In 1936, in *The Revolution Betrayed*, Trotsky explained in regard to the Soviet degenerated workers state that “a further development of the accumulating contradictions can as well lead to socialism as back to capitalism; h) on the road to capitalism the counterrevolution would have to break the resistance of the workers; i) on the road to socialism the workers would have to overthrow the bureaucracy.”

The ruling Stalinist bureaucracy is a fragile, contradictory caste, not a homogeneous class based on private ownership of the means of production. The accumulating contradictions in China will lead sooner or later to the collapse of Stalinist bonapartism and the political shattering of the ruling Communist Party. But whether this is followed by a capitalist counterrevolution that breaks the resistance of the Chinese working class and destroys the workers state, or by a proletarian political revolution that overthrows the rule of the Stalinist bureaucracy, establishing the political rule of workers soviets in China and fighting to extend the Chinese revolution internationally, will be a question of struggle. Basing



October 2007: Workers demonstrate outside paper products factory in Shenzhen, China, to demand back pay.

ourselves on our unconditional military defense of the deformed workers states against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution, we fight for proletarian political revolutions to bring down the Stalinist bureaucracies and establish the rule of workers soviets.

With the Chinese Revolution of 1949, capitalist rule was smashed and Chinese society fundamentally transformed. This victory was won by Mao Zedong’s People’s Liberation Army, which was based on the peasantry. The capitalists and large landowners fled to Taiwan, where they were protected by U.S. imperialism. Mainland China, which had been divided and plundered by the imperialists, was unified. China was reconstructed as a workers state with a centrally planned economy; this was a huge social leap forward. Over the next few years, land was distributed to the peasants, the key industries were expropriated and a significant component of state-owned industry was built up. The liberating effect of the Revolution is evident in the status of Chinese women, who made enormous progress over their previous miserable existence, symbolized by the barbaric practice of footbinding.

But the Chinese CP was not a party based on the working class; rather it rested on the peasantry. After the bourgeois Guomindang had massacred the insurrectionary workers in Shanghai in 1927, the CP abandoned the working class. Only due to an exceptional historical situation was it able to smash capitalism two decades later. The working class had been atomized by the horrific oppression of both the Guomindang and the Japanese imperialists. After the defeat of Japan in the Second World War, bourgeois rule was unstable, and the Guomindang regime was decaying from within. An additional factor was the existence of the Soviet workers state, which was able to offer economic and military assistance to the new People’s Republic. From the start, the CCP regime suppressed independent action by the working class, while falsely claiming to be building “socialism in one country.” This stood in sharp contradiction to the beginnings of the Soviet Union in the October Revolution of 1917, a proletarian revolution led by Lenin and Trotsky’s Bolshevik

Party that translated Marxism into deeds. The October Revolution showed that the working class can take power and wield it through democratically elected workers soviets. The internationalist early Soviet Union became a beacon to the working class and oppressed worldwide.

To the Bolshevik leadership, it was clear that workers revolutions in more advanced countries were necessary to establish an international planned economy and produce the social growth rates and abundance which are the necessary foundation for socialism—a society based on equality and without material want. But the revolutionary uprisings after World War I, in particular in Germany, were crushed through the betrayal of the pro-capitalist social democrats and because there were no experienced parties, like the Bolsheviks, that could have led the masses to conquer state power. In the wake of these defeats, especially that of the German Revolution in 1923, a conservative nationalist bureaucracy took political power in the Soviet Union in late 1923-early 1924. In the course of the degeneration of the workers state, Stalin and his clique turned away from proletarian internationalism and created the anti-Marxist dogma of “building socialism in one country.” A few years later, seeking “peaceful coexistence” with imperialism, they sabotaged revolutionary possibilities abroad, not least the Second Chinese Revolution of 1925-27, which they betrayed by subordinating the young Chinese CP to the bourgeois Guomindang.

Historically, the anti-revolutionary character of the Chinese bureaucracy can be seen in its alliance with U.S. imperialism against the Soviet Union, a logical consequence of the search for “peaceful coexistence” with the rulers in Washington. In 1972, as bombs were raining down on Vietnam, Mao Zedong received U.S. president Nixon in Beijing. These politics were continued by Mao’s successor, Deng Xiaoping. In 1979, four years after the heroic Vietnamese had defeated the U.S., Chinese troops criminally invaded Vietnam. Shortly thereafter, China supported the murderous Islamic *mujahedin* in Afghanistan, who were fighting against the Soviet Red Army. In many respects both the Mao and Deng wings of the bureaucracy helped imperialism destroy

the Soviet Union. And, not least, it was Mao’s alliance with U.S. imperialism that prepared the way for Deng to open the door to imperialism’s economic penetration of China.

The market-oriented reforms initiated by Deng in 1978 were made possible by the previous successes of the planned economy under Mao. They were an attempt to tackle the incompetence of the bureaucratic command economy, within the framework of Stalinist bonapartism. As we wrote in the 1980s:

“Within the framework of Stalinism, there is thus an inherent tendency to replace centralized planning and management with market mechanisms. Since managers and workers cannot be subject to the discipline of soviet democracy (workers councils), increasingly the bureaucracy sees subjecting the economic actors to the discipline of market competition as the only answer to economic inefficiency.”

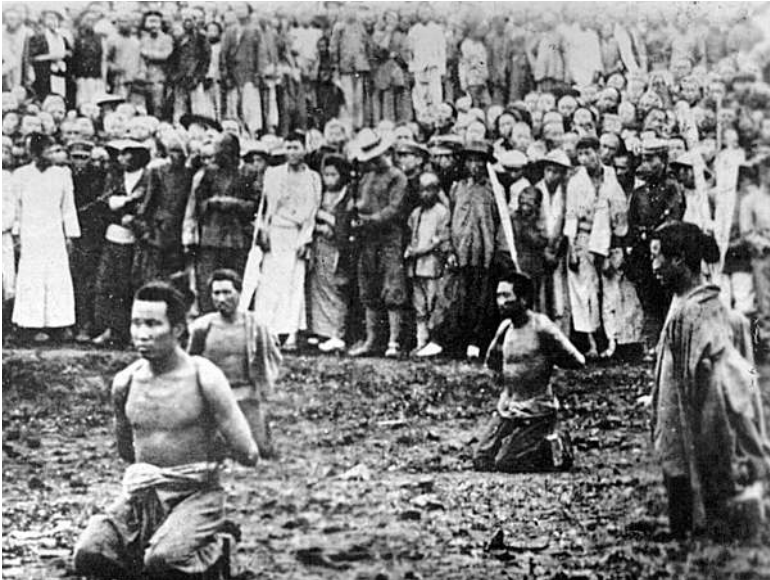
—“For Central Planning Through Soviet Democracy,” printed in Spartacist pamphlet, “Market Socialism” in Eastern Europe, July 1988

The Stalinist bureaucracy opened the country to imperialist investment, privatized strategically unimportant companies and ultimately abandoned the state monopoly of foreign trade. The planned economy was replaced by market mechanisms and agriculture was decollectivized, so that peasant families could get their own little piece of land on a long-term lease. Over time, the regime abolished the “iron rice bowl,” which was based on guaranteeing workers a job for life and was seen by urban workers as an important gain of the 1949 Revolution. But a country as poor and backward as China could obviously not offer hundreds of millions of peasants a job in state industry, guaranteed for life and at a significantly higher wage rate than the income of members of a rural commune.

In fact, industry has grown enormously, and over half the working population is now employed in manufacturing, transport, construction and the public service sector. Up to 150 million peasants became proletarians since “market reforms” began. According to *Monthly Labour Review* (July 2005), there were twice as many industrial workers in China as in all the G-7 states together. This is a progressive development of great historical significance. Development in China puts the growth in capitalist neocolonies in the shade, whether it be “tiger states” like Indonesia and South Korea, or India, which won its independence around the same time as China but remained capitalist. India’s per capita gross national product is only half that of China, while the poverty rate of China is only half that of India. Child malnutrition is 75 percent lower in China than in India. In China, almost 90 percent of women are literate, almost twice as high as in India.

China today is a country seething with discontent. On the one hand, economic penetration by the imperialists has enormously strengthened the forces for internal counterrevolution. A class of capitalist entrepreneurs has developed with family and financial connections both to the CCP bureaucracy and to the Chinese capitalists in Taiwan and Hong Kong. A layer of well-to-do managers, professionals and

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1927 Shanghai massacre, carried out under Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek (right), marked bloody defeat of 1925-27 Chinese Revolution.





(continued from page 5)

technocrats has been created that enjoys a lifestyle like that in the West. On the other hand, the policies carried out by the Beijing Stalinists have come at the cost of a significant part of the working class and rural toilers, driving them into poverty. Important social gains such as health care have been eroded, millions of unemployed are looking for new jobs, and if they find work at all, they are employed in the private sector under much worse conditions, without the social benefits of the state sector. Some 150 million migrant workers have moved from the countryside into the cities, where they toil under wretched conditions with few political rights and are often scorned by urban workers. The result is massive struggles: workers protesting against non-payment of wages, layoffs or poor working conditions; peasants protesting against corruption and illegal theft of their land by party bureaucrats or against environmental pollution. We support these struggles. The ruling bureaucracy is clearly split between elements who want to pursue the economic "reforms" unabated, those who want more state intervention and others who want to return to a bureaucratically planned economy.

According to the bureaucrats' official statistics, there were 87,000 protests in 2005 alone. But militancy at the economic level is not enough. The working class must take up the struggle at the political level. What's needed is a revolutionary vanguard party in China to fight for a proletarian political revolution. Such a party would fight to unite all sectors of the working class in an alliance with the rural workers and the urban poor. Migrant workers must receive all the rights of legal residents—including access to health care, housing and public education—and equal pay for equal work. The imperialist investments in the private sector must be renegotiated in the interests of the working class.

As we explain in our article “China’s ‘Market Reforms’—A Trotskyist Analysis” (WV Nos. 874 and 875, 4 August and 1 September 2006), a real reduction in the gap between the city and the countryside requires a massive redistribution and reallocation of economic resources. The introduction of modern technology in the countryside demands a qualitatively higher industrial base than that which exists today. Correspondingly, a growth in agricultural productivity would necessitate an enormous extension of industrial jobs in the urban areas in order to absorb the huge workforce which would no longer be required in the countryside. This would no doubt be a lengthy process, especially given the still limited size and relatively low productivity of China’s industrial base.

All this shows the strategic necessity of extending the Chinese revolution to



**People's  
Liberation Army  
marches  
through Beijing,  
June 1949.**

advanced capitalist countries like Japan and of establishing an international planned economy; both the tempo and ultimately the viability of this perspective depend upon it. A red China of workers councils would be a beacon for the oppressed working masses of Asia and the entire world. A victorious proletarian political revolution would deal a death-blow to the bourgeoisie's "death of communism" propaganda, and it would lift up the downtrodden masses of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and inspire the workers of Western Europe.

## Protectionist Campaign Against China

There is a mounting campaign by the bourgeoisie in Germany to conjure up the image of a “Chinese threat.” In its 27 August 2007 issue, *Der Spiegel* vituperates in its lead article: “The Yellow Spies—How China Spies on German Technology.” The article fulfills its promise of racist and anti-Communist witchhunting: “Every student, every businessman” from China is presented “as an informer, as a stool pigeon,” “800,000 informers” worldwide and “in Germany alone there are more than 27,000 Chinese students.” Then China is accused of having infected government computers with “Trojans”—an action which the German government is now planning against its own citizens!

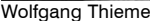
*Der Spiegel* waxes indignant over the Chinese workers state: "In this way it not only steals government secrets—that alone would be bad enough. At the same time, it is also stealing national wealth: German know-how. That is the only raw material worth mentioning that the Federal Republic has to offer in the international competition for prosperity." This pushes the lie that it is China's economic development that threatens the living standards of the working class in Germany, and not the German bourgeoisie, which is continually intensifying exploitation here. This campaign is intended to create a climate in which the bourgeoisie's all-sided theft of wages and social benefits from the working population can be further intensified, so as to amass more profit and to expand against the imperialist competitors.

As far as “German know-how” is concerned, a short look at history shows us that it is by no means as German as the chauvinist *Spiegel* would like us to think. The industrial revolution in Germany was carried out in the 19th century with know-how that was stolen lock, stock and barrel from England, the leading industrial power of the day. Be it the steam engine, mechanical looms or steel production—that was all spied out during factory visits in England and then copied, or it was brought into the country by the recruitment of English engineers. And Japan and the other capitalist powers which rose after England proceeded no differently.

More fundamentally, all nationalist protectionist campaigns serve to throttle workers' struggles to defend wages and social benefits. The trade-union bureaucracy constitutes the transmission belt bringing this bourgeois program into the

working class. Instead of mobilizing workers to defend their interests in class struggle against the bosses, the union bureaucrats, with their program of class collaboration, act as advisers to the capitalists on how to run the shop better.

While protectionism is a possible option for the bourgeoisie, it is deadly poison for the working class, splitting the working class along national lines and subordinating it to its own bourgeoisie. And this is how the union bureaucracy pits the multiethnic German working class against the working classes of other countries, e.g., against “low-wage competition” from China or Eastern Europe. The Social Democratic union bureaucracy quite consciously refrains from demands for import controls or customs duties since it deeply shares the national-



Chinese students visiting German city of Chemnitz are among those denounced by chauvinist newsweekly *Der Spiegel* (inset) as “Yellow Spies.”

ist logic of “*Standort Deutschland*” (Germany: the place for investment and industry), knowing that the welfare of German industry depends on exports.

One example is Hamburg. The harbor workers' willingness to struggle against the Port Package attacks on wages and working conditions was diverted by the union bureaucracy onto a protectionist track behind their "own" bosses, using the slogan "harbor work for harbor workers," which is directly aimed against seamen. Hand in hand with this, the union tops explained to the workers at a demonstration on 11 January 2006: "If in the future powerful global players from Hong Kong and Singapore can buy into the Hamburg harbor company, then it won't be much longer before Asian social standards with day labor, mini-wage and hire and fire come to these shores." The picture painted here by the ver.di service sector union bureaucrats serves as nationalist propaganda, which they use to try to rally the workers behind their "own" bosses and their government. In fact, there hasn't been a strike in the Hamburg harbor for decades, in spite of relentless attacks by the German bosses, while even the 24-hour strike on 11 January 2006 was organized so as not to hurt the bosses. Against the poison of nationalist isolation, the working class must be won to a class-struggle program on an interna-

tionalist basis: Equal pay for equal work, regardless of who carries it out! The harbor workers must solidarize with everyone who unloads ships, whether seamen or immigrants, organize them in a union and fight for the full contract wage for all. The same applies to the truckers in the harbor and all the other workers who have to slave below contract wages in the harbor. Harbor contract for harbor work! Organize the unorganized! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! Down with the work ban against East European workers!

A 21 April 2005 article by the Wolfsburg local of the IG Metall metal workers union summarizes the protectionist justifications employed by the union bureaucrats to sell out the struggles that were going on against the bosses' massive attacks on strategic sections of the working class, as at VW and DaimlerChrysler:

"For some time now, announcing a [possible] relocation has no longer been a threat, but reality, according to [Frank] Patta [second in command of IG Metall Wolfsburg]. The trade unionist calculates that '1,000 jobs are lost daily in Germany'.... But, Patta admits, saving jobs doesn't mean making them secure: 'Our processes and structures must again become more efficient. Only if we produce and sell competitive cars at Volkswagen will our jobs also remain secure—until 2011 and beyond'."

After concessions were made by IG Metall-Wolfsburg to the VW bosses, production of models from Brussels and South Africa was then shifted to Wolfsburg, and more than half the jobs in Brussels were axed. While the IG Metall bureaucrats and plant council princes like to prattle about international solidarity from time to time, the struggle of the Belgian VW workers for their jobs was brutally betrayed here for a further dirty deal with the VW bosses.



leadership are entirely dedicated to capitalism. Social democracy is based on a thin privileged layer of labor aristocrats who are bribed by the bourgeoisie with the help of superprofits from the exploitation of the neocolonial peoples. In August 1914 with the outbreak of the First World War, an imperialist war of conquest, the social democracy openly went over to the side of their respective bourgeoisies, mobilizing the workers as cannon fodder against their class brothers in other countries.

Following World War I a revolutionary wave shook the capitalist world. Led by Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks, in October 1917 the workers in Russia had overthrown the bourgeoisie, smashed their capitalist state and erected a workers state. In Western Europe the social democracy managed, due to the inexperience of the young, newly founded Communist parties, to save bourgeois rule. In Germany, the SPD organized the *Freikorps* (paramilitary bands) and had Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg murdered, beheading the young German Communist Party (KPD). While the SPD leaders Friedrich Ebert, Philipp Scheidemann and Gustav Noske drowned the revolution in the blood of thousands upon thousands of workers, "left" social democrat Karl Kautsky of the social-pacifist Independent Social Democratic Party ranted against the dictatorship of the proletariat and propagated the illusion of "pure democracy." In 1918, in *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, Lenin explained that "democracy" is a type of state. And the state—at its core the police, army and courts—is not neutral. So the question always posed for Marxists is: democracy for which class? Marx drew the decisive lesson from the Paris Commune of 1871 that the proletariat cannot simply take over the bourgeois state machinery, but must smash it, "shatter" it and replace it with its own state: the dictatorship of the proletariat. And that is exactly what Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks did in the October Revolution of 1917.

The SPD's agency for all kinds of hidden counterrevolutionary activities is the fittingly named Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES). Ebert was the Social Democratic hangman of the November Revolution of 1918-19, famous for having said: "If the Kaiser fails to abdicate, then social revolution is inevitable. But I don't want it, indeed, I hate it like sin." The FES is a classic "non"-governmental organization (NGO) closely linked to the leaderships of the DGB (trade-union federation) and the SPD. From time to time it presents itself as an organization of the German workers movement. But it serves German imperialism and seeks to promote its interests around the world. Thus the FES acted as a conveyor belt for CIA and other monies in order to suppress revolution in Portugal in 1974. When leftist insurgents in Latin America sought power, it intervened heavily in order to prevent them from following the Cuban road and smashing capitalism. And it was in the front lines of the drive to counterrevolution in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. It is the instrument that is supposed to make counterrevolution palatable to Chinese workers in exchange for a bit of worker participation (*Mitbestimmung*) and of course "democracy." To this end, it employs the real conflicts in Chinese society, presenting to the workers an image of being on their side against exploitation, frightful working conditions and the like.

The Social-Democratic DGB bureaucracy does the same thing. IG Metall-Wolfsburg reported as follows on the first official visit of a DGB delegation since the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989: "The ACFTU [All-China Federation of Trade Unions] has well over 100 million members. But it is not a trade union in the Western sense. For this it lacks the necessary prerequisites such as political independence, freedom for oppositions, and democratic structures. The Chinese unions see themselves more as a front-line organization of the Communist Party. Nonetheless the German unions want to enter into a critical dialogue with the Chinese organization. Following the visit, [DGB International Division head]

Karl Feldengut put it this way: 'We want to use our growing economic contacts with China in order to promote free trade unions, co-determination and wages based on collective bargaining there'." (19 April 2005)

For the DGB union bureaucrats to lecture the Chinese union federation on "democratic structures" and the lack of "freedom for oppositions" has got to be a bad joke. The DGB is bureaucratically controlled by the social democracy—the SPD and, since 1990, increasingly the PDS/Linkspartei. This control has been enforced by the social democracy with purges and expulsions in a fight to the finish against communists and other leftist opponents. The fight for unions independent of the Stalinist bureaucracy in China must be based on unconditional military defense of the Chinese deformed workers state. Independent unions must stand in irreconcilable opposition to the imperialists and their ideological agencies like the FES and the whole pack of counterrevolutionary NGOs. Defense of workers' rights presupposes above all the defense of the Chinese workers state and its collectivized economy.

### SPD "Ostpolitik": Counterrevolution in the Name of "Workers' Rights"

As far as "free trade unions" are concerned, Polish Solidarność should serve as a warning for Chinese workers and leftists. In Poland the aspirations of the working class had repeatedly been disappointed by the Stalinists, so that by 1980 a majority of the traditionally pro-socialist Polish proletariat had been driven into the arms of the Catholic church. By September 1981 Solidarność had consolidated around a program of capitalist counterrevolution—its demand for "free elections" was intended to carry out a capitalist restoration under the cover of parliamentary governmental activity. We described Solidarność at the time as a company union for the CIA and the bankers, from whom they received millions of dollars, and demanded, "Stop Solidarność Counterrevolution!" We emphasized that the Polish working class needed a Trotskyist party. When in December 1981 General Wojciech Jaruzelski suppressed Solidarność' grab for power, we supported this measure. At the same time we warned that the Stalinists were capable of selling out the Polish workers state to capitalism, as they ultimately did in 1989-90. By contrast, the fake-Trotskyist left wallowed in "solidarity with Solidarność" and criticized the SPD for not being aggressive enough! In Poland today you can see the results of defense of "workers' rights" à la the SPD: large parts of the Polish economy—mining, heavy industry and textiles—have been massively destroyed, unemployment is around 20 percent and there are hardly any unemployment benefits. Women's rights have been smashed and a reactionary clerical capitalist system established.



Workers and students fraternize with troops called in to suppress 1989 Tiananmen uprising, which marked incipient political revolution against Chinese Stalinist regime.



East Berlin, 3 January 1990: Spartakist speaker addresses the ICL-initiated 250,000-strong demonstration at Treptow Park against fascist desecration of Soviet war memorial and in defense of East German and Soviet workers states.

A good example of how the campaigns for plant councils and co-determination serve counterrevolution is the DDR in 1989-90. In the fall of 1989, a few months after the Tiananmen Square uprising in Beijing, the Stalinist Honecker regime collapsed. A proletarian political revolution began to develop in the DDR. We mobilized all the forces of our international organization in order to build a revolutionary leadership with the East German workers. Without any ifs, ands or buts, we fought against capitalist counterrevolution. We fought for the revolutionary reunification of Germany, i.e., for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy in the DDR and for social revolution in West Germany to overthrow the rule of the bourgeoisie, for a red Germany of workers' councils. We called for the formation of workers' and soldiers' councils, in order to organize the working class as a class for itself, as a contender for political rule. Against illusions that the SED-PDS could be reformed, we fought to build a new egalitarian Leninist party. We warned against the SPD as the Trojan horse of counterrevolution. A detailed report can be found in "Revolution vs. Counterrevolution in Germany 1989-90," WV Nos. 730 and 731, 25 February and 10 March 2000. Our intervention is evaluated in *Spartacist* (English-language edition) No. 47-48, Winter 1992-93.

And the SPD likewise intervened. At the beginning of October 1989 the SDP, the East German Social Democratic Party, was founded; it was composed essentially of Evangelical (Protestant) clerics. This was no accident, since from the very beginning the Evangelical Church of Germany (EKD) played a central role in working out and implementing the Social Democratic "Ostpolitik." For instance, as early as 1965 in its "Memorandum on the East" the EKD called for recognizing the Oder-Neisse line as Germany's border, so as to create closer ties with the East, in a

break from the then prevailing open revanchism. Erhard Eppler, a member of the SPD Executive from 1970-91, was a central connecting link between the Evangelical Church and the SPD. In the early 1980s, with the rise of the nationalist peace movement in West Germany, the SPD intensified its contacts with petty-bourgeois pacifist opposition groups in the DDR via the EKD.

Counterposed to our call in 1989-90 for "Workers' and Soldiers' Councils to Power!" the capitalists, social democrats, Stalinist combine directors and DDR opposition groups like the United Left (VL) campaigned for plant councils and co-determination. As we warned in *Spartakist* No. 68, 1 March 1990: "PDS (Party of Democratic Socialism) chairman Gregor Gysi said in a January 7 speech kicking off the election campaign that 'co-determination of the working people' was necessary in the case of 'joint ventures,' and plant councils were supposedly a form of 'democratizing the economy.' To the contrary, what is at stake here is the sell-out of our economy, of our VEBs [state-owned plants], of the workers, of the DDR." The intention was to disguise the fact that with the sellout of the DDR workers' factories to West German capital, they were to be disempowered as a class. "Co-determination" is the class-collaborationist illusion of a reconciliation of the interests of the exploited with their exploiters; this was brought home after reunification, when DDR industry was smashed by the bourgeoisie through the Treuhand (an agency set up to privatize DDR industry). We wrote:

"But at a conference of plant councils called by the VL initiative group, reports about the real conditions of 'co-determination' in the Federal Republic had a 'sobering' effect, according to *Neues Deutschland* (5 February [1990]).

"Thus the call for factory councils often serves to mask a program for the restoration of capitalism. Against this, the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany calls for workers and soldiers councils to power. In our 'Open Letter to all Communists' (*Arprekorr* No. 18, 12 January [1990]) we wrote: 'The SED-PDS now suggests creating plant councils "before capital comes" (*ND*, 11 January [1990]). The Spartakists call for building workers and soldiers councils to stop capital from coming!'"

The potential for a proletarian political revolution in the DDR was expressed on 3 January 1990 in the pro-socialist, united-front rally against the fascist desecration of the Soviet war memorial at Berlin-Treptow and in defense of the DDR and the Soviet workers states, which we initiated and which was taken up by the SED-PDS. In front of more than 250,000 demonstrators, we Trotskyists called for political revolution and warned against the SPD as the Trojan horse of counterrevolution. Gorbachev became aware of the danger of a political revolution that might have spread to the Soviet Union. He saw his wheeling and dealing with the imperialists in danger and drove the capitalist reunification of Germany forward at greater speed, carrying it out with the CDU of then-chancellor Helmut Kohl.

The SED acceded to this betrayal and became the social-democratic PDS under

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# China...

(continued from page 7)

Modrow’s slogan, “Germany one fatherland!” This capitulation demoralized the pro-socialist workers who had looked to the SED-PDS in the hope that it would be an obstacle to counterrevolution. More backward sections of the working class and the DDR petty bourgeoisie, who had fallen prey to the illusions of social well-being via *Anschluss*, were encouraged. Thus the conservative electoral coalition, financed with many millions of deutschmarks by the West German bourgeoisie, won an overwhelming electoral victory in the Volkskammer (East German parliament) elections on 18 March 1990, sealing the fate of the DDR. As we wrote in the document of our second international ICL conference, the ICL intervention in the DDR clearly demonstrates that our program of political revolution and defense of the gains of the October Revolution stood opposed to the Stalinist program of capitulation and counterrevolution (see *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 47-48, Winter 1992-93).

In 1992 the SPD defended itself against charges from the bourgeois camp that they had not been sufficiently anti-Communist and had courted the SED: “No, the Social Democrats have no reason at all to hide their light under a bushel. Their Ostpolitik was successful: it embraced the opponent, the SED, until it ultimately suffocated in our friendly clutches. This is how it should be viewed, soberly and without any ideological idealization” (“The New Society,” *Frankfurter Hefte*, 1992). Indeed they were and are today a Trojan horse of counterrevolution.

## Fake Left Tails Social Democracy

The trade-union left trots along behind the Social Democracy. At Labournet.de, a forum of the union left, you find a lot of articles on China which conjure up anti-Communist “human rights” and “workers’ rights.” The “Asia House” in Essen plays a central role here, overseeing various projects which have to do with “democracy” and ecology. The Asia House is financed by, among others, the development service of the Evangelical church, the Environment and Development Foundation of North-Rhine Westphalia and the Greens’ Heinrich Böll Foundation. An editor of *taz* with ties to the Asia House criticized Merkel’s China policies on the Internet paper of Asia House, under the headline: “A new tune doesn’t mean a different policy” (3 September 2007). This means that Merkel still isn’t anti-Communist enough for them. Then he serves up all the filth of

the imperialist anti-China campaign: “Here at home, China’s image has rapidly deteriorated in the recent period because of dangerous cheap products, ecological over-exploitation and brazen spying on government computers.” Even if cleansed of the deeply racist “yellow peril” tones, this conjures up, just as in *Spiegel*, a “threat” to Germany, indeed to the whole of Europe:

“The rise of the Middle Kingdom is seen here in this country less and less as an opportunity, and more and more strongly as a threat. But like the German image campaign, this only reveals the real relationship of power. The Chinese are sure of their continued political and economic

celled following protests by the Chinese government. Our French comrades of the LTF denounced LO for inviting Cai, a continuation of LO’s historical support for similar counterrevolutionary forces in the Cold War against the Soviet Union (see WV No. 896, 3 August 2007).

On 14 March 2007 there was a forum in Hamburg held by Labournet, Asia House and the group of trade-union leftists “Jour fixe,” associated with the Linkspartei, at which Chinese women workers reported on the wretched working conditions at the Gold Peak concern, where they and other women workers were poisoned with cadmium. The sort of solidarity the forum



**Spartakist placard at September 2007 demonstration in Berlin calls to “Defend Cuba, China, North Korea and Vietnam! For Proletarian Political Revolution!”**

ascent, while the Germans are struggling to stay in the same league, while also having to court the Chinese.”

Labournet is full of links to articles from *China Labour Bulletin* (CLB). The CLB and its founder Han Dongfang have direct connections to the European and American imperialists. Han, who is also called the “Chinese Lech Walesa” after the leader of Solidarność, has for years been a regular spokesman for Washington’s Radio Free Asia (RFA), and the CLB Web site provides a link to RFA. The RFA is the radio station of the CIA, operating under the direction of, among others, Condoleezza Rice, who is on its board of directors. In Europe, CLB spokesman Cai Chongguo offers himself to the imperialists as a China “expert.” The French fake Trotskyists of Lutte Ouvrière (LO) invited Cai Chongguo to their annual LO Fête, where Cai baldly admitted in his opening remarks: “I speak three or four times a week for the BBC, Radio Free Asia, Radio France Internationale and Deutsche Welle. And naturally also sometimes for the Chinese department of Voice of America.” Two weeks before this, Cai had been invited by the EU to speak in Berlin on the topic of “labor law”; the invitation was can-

had in mind was made clear right at the beginning by a ver.di speaker. He pointed to their history of “successful support” to workers struggles, especially their invitation to representatives of Solidarność, which they supported at the time. Our comrades warned against counterrevolutionaries like Han Dongfang and explained how Solidarność counterrevolution had plunged the Polish workers into poverty. It is for the purpose of counterrevolution that the forum organizers sought to misuse the just struggle of the Gold Peak workers.

## Fake Trotskyists for Counterrevolution in China

The majority of the social-democratic fake Trotskyists claim that China is capitalist. This is not an erroneous analysis, but an anti-Communist program for counterrevolution. The method is not new. The centrist social democrat Karl Kautsky labeled the Soviet Union “state capitalist” in order to justify his anti-Bolshevik tirades. During the Korean War at the beginning of the ’50s, Tony Cliff served up this “theory” again, in order to justify his public refusal to defend the North Korean deformed workers state against his own British imperialism. This was a cowardly capitulation to the then-governing Labour Party, for which Cliff’s followers were expelled from the Fourth International. In 1991 it became clear where the Cliffites’ imaginary “third camp” was located when they were on Yeltsin’s side of the barricades and hailed his counterrevolutionary putsch: “Com-

munist has collapsed,’ our newspapers and television declare. It is a fact that should have every socialist rejoicing” (*Socialist Worker* [Britain], 31 August 1991). Very far from being a “step sideways,” as the Cliffites claim to this very day, counterrevolution in the Soviet Union was a devastating step backwards. The economic collapse is without parallel for a modern society. Between 1991 and 1997, the gross national product in Russia fell by more than 80 percent. In the year 2000, life expectancy was lower than at the end of the 19th century. Unemployment and poverty are rampant. A counterrevolution in China would have even more devastating effects than in the Soviet Union.

The Committee for a Workers’ International (CWI), which in Germany is Socialist Alternative (SAV), also claims that China is capitalist:

“Capitalism in China has been recreated under the tutelage of the Stalinist ruling party, in close interaction with overseas capitalism through the process of globalization. The Chinese capitalist class is extremely dependent on this state, primarily to protect it from the working class, and for this reason its democratic ambitions—and desire for regime change—are almost nonexistent.”

—“China at the Crossroads,”  
www.chinaworker.tk,  
24 May 2007

So according to the CWI the Stalinist bureaucracy transformed itself into a ruling class and in this simple way the workers state became a capitalist state. As Trotsky explained in 1933 in “The Class Nature of the Soviet State,” this is winding in reverse the reformist film of a peaceful step-by-step transition from capitalism to socialism, as the deeply social-democratic program of the CWI does in fact project. For them, “socialism” is the “transfer of the banks and concerns into public ownership” by a social-democratic majority in the bourgeois parliament. In fact, a capitalist counter-revolution would have to triumph at the political level and destroy the Chinese workers state. This is why the imperialist bourgeoisie is profoundly hostile to the Chinese workers state, screaming for “democracy” along with its social-democratic stooges.

Thus the CWI calls for “permanent revolution” in China for “democratic change.” This is a perversion of Trotsky’s theory of permanent revolution, a denial of the class character of the Chinese state so as to make common cause with counterrevolutionary forces to destroy the deformed workers state in the name of “democracy.” This can be clearly seen in the CWI criticism of CIA favorite Han Dongfang. The CWI reproaches Han for having illusions in the Stalinists, because he supposedly wants to win the official union federation “to a democratic, fighting standpoint.” This is “completely unrealistic,” they say! In contrast the CWI stands for “independent” unions, just as they did when helping to build Solidarność in the 1980s. Indeed, the CWI hardly veils its call for legalization of the utterly counterrevolutionary Guomindang (GMD), which was driven from the mainland by the 1949 Revolution: “Marxists support the right of all parties, except fas-

## Spartacus Youth Club Events

### BAY AREA

**Thursday, March 6, 7 p.m.**  
**For Women’s Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!**  
SFSU, Cesar Chavez Student Center  
Room: Rosa Parks E  
Information and readings: (510) 839-0851  
or e-mail: sycbayarea@sbcglobal.net

### CHICAGO

**Tuesday, March 11, 4:30 p.m.**  
**The Russian Revolution of 1917: When the Workers Took Power**  
University of Illinois at Chicago  
Student Center East, Prairie Rm. (3rd Fl)  
750 S. Halsted Street  
Information and readings: (312) 563-0441  
or e-mail: chicagosyc@sbcglobal.net

### NEW YORK CITY

**Saturday, March 8, 4:30 p.m.**  
**Free Abortion on Demand! 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, March 10, 7:30 p.m.**  
**Down With the Anti-Sex Witchhunt! Government Out of the Bedroom!**  
University of Toronto  
Sidney Smith Hall, Room 2112  
100 St. George Street  
Information and readings: (416) 593-4138  
or e-mail: spartacan@on.aibn.com

### VANCOUVER

**Wednesday, March 5, 1:30 p.m.**  
**Video Showing:**  
**From Death Row, This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal**  
UBC Student Union Building, Room 211

**Wednesday, March 12, 6 p.m.**  
**Women’s Oppression and the Family—For Women’s Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!**  
UBC Student Union Building, Room 212  
Information and readings: (604) 687-0353  
or e-mail: trotskyist\_vancouver@shawcable.com

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

## Spartacist Black History Month Forums

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

**Chicago**  
**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

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

**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**



# Explosion...

(continued from page 12)

family members are relying on community donations to afford the three-hour trip to Augusta, Georgia, to see their relatives at the burn ward. As she told *WV*, that money should be coming from the company. Instead, several longshoremen who work near the sugar plant told *WV* that the company is now using scare tactics against the workers—claiming that if they sue, the company will go bankrupt and the plant will not be rebuilt. Dixie Crystals refinery accounts for some 9 percent of the total refined sugar capacity in the U.S. The Imperial Sugar Company, headquartered near Houston, Texas, is one of the largest sugar companies in the U.S., with gross profits of almost \$105 million in 2007.

To the capitalist bosses, the lives of workers are expendable in the service of the bottom line. In 2006 alone, more than 5,700 workers died at work and millions more were injured nationwide. The sugar refining industry is prone to dust explosions that are preventable. Last November, an explosion rocked the Domino Sugar refinery in Baltimore, Maryland, injuring two workers. According to the United States Chemical Safety Board (CSB), between 1980 and 2005 there were 281 dust explosions, killing 119 workers and injuring 718 more.

In the clash between protecting workers’ lives and boosting capitalist profits, the main weapon workers have to defend themselves is the union. The Dixie

Crystals refinery was a non-union plant, although other Imperial Sugar refineries are unionized. Every factory and worksite should have union safety committees with the power to shut down unsafe locations. With the overwhelming majority of U.S. workers unorganized, what is desperately needed is a class-struggle fight to *organize the unorganized*. Especially in the notoriously anti-union, “right to work” South, this means that the labor movement must fight against the racial oppression of black people that has long been used by the capitalists to divide and weaken labor. The name Dixie Crystals—with a plant workforce that is majority black—highlights this legacy of racist oppression.

Workers from the powerful International Longshoremen’s Association (ILA), which organizes workers at other sugar refineries, had unloaded raw sugar at the refinery’s dock. The ILA should have been playing a leading role in fighting to unionize that plant, but the Savannah labor movement has never made a concerted effort to organize these refinery workers. Instead, the pro-capitalist labor tops push reliance on capitalist politicians and government agencies, renouncing the very class-struggle methods that built the union movement in this country. The response of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT)—who between them organize sugar plants throughout the country—to the disaster in Port Wentworth is indicative. Rather than seeing it as a clarion call to fight to organize the unorganized, the UFCW and IBT filed a petition to the Department of

Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to strengthen its regulations.

Government agencies such as OSHA and the CSB do not exist to protect workers. Their pretenses to safety serve to mask capitalism’s disregard for workers’ lives and safety. The labor bureaucrats are literally putting the lives and safety of workers in the hands of the bourgeois government, which exists to protect the rule and profits of the capitalist bosses. As part of a muckraking series on workers’ deaths, *New York Times* writer David Barstow pointed out in a 22 December 2003 article, “When Congress established OSHA in 1970, it made it a misdemeanor to cause the death of a worker by willfully violating safety laws. The maximum sentence, six months in jail, is half the maximum for harassing a wild burro on federal lands.” Between 1982 and 2002, OSHA refused to seek prosecution in *93 percent* of the 1,242 cases where OSHA itself concluded workers had died from *willful* safety violations. OSHA had not inspected the Dixie Crystals refinery since 2000, and Dan Fuqua, an OSHA spokesman in Atlanta, told *WV* that the agency dismissed a complaint several years ago without even bothering to visit the plant.

In an article on the Savannah explosion, *Socialist Worker* (15 February), newspaper of the reformist International Socialist Organization, points out, “Since taking office, the Bush administration has chipped away at OSHA, limiting the institution of new regulations and rolling back existing ones.” Echoing the labor

bureaucrats, the article concludes, “It is little wonder the agency stresses a ‘voluntary compliance strategy,’ which relies on industry associations and companies to police themselves.” What *Socialist Worker* willfully disappears is that the Democratic Clinton White House set the tone by its “New OSHA” initiative that stressed “partnership” with business and “voluntary compliance.”

The labor bureaucracy’s strategy of relying on the government to protect workers is part and parcel of its class-collaborationist reliance on the capitalist Democratic Party to enact more labor-friendly laws. The Change to Win Coalition, to which both the IBT and the UFCW belong, has endorsed Barack Obama’s presidential campaign, while the AFL-CIO can be trusted to campaign for whomever the Democrats nominate this year. While the Republicans are open partisans on the side of the capitalist bosses, the Democrats posture as “friends of labor” and carry out anti-working-class policies.

The capitalist rulers are waging an unrelenting war on the rights of workers, the poor, immigrants and black people to live any kind of decent life. As we wrote after a mine explosion killed twelve workers (“West Virginia Mine Disaster: Capitalist Murder,” *WV* No. 862, 20 January 2006):

“Only when the working class rips the means of production out of the hands of the corrupt, obscenely rich capitalist class and establishes a planned socialist economy can the health and safety of every person be ensured. That requires the forging of a multiracial workers party, leading all the exploited and oppressed in the struggle for socialist revolution.”■

cists (which use terror against the working class and all democratic rights), to organize independently of the state. This means we would not oppose legalization of the GMD, however much we reject its anti-working class policies.”

This stands completely in continuity with the CWI’s support for counterrevolution in the deformed workers states of East Europe and in the degenerated workers state of the Soviet Union. In 1991, they supported Yeltsin’s counterrevolutionary coup in the Soviet Union, in the name of “democracy.” Today they carp over capitalist Russia, created with their support: “But ten years on, Russia and Indonesia are hardly blossoming democracies. On the contrary both are pseudo-democracies in which real power rests with unelected elites rather than the elected politicians.” Here these parliamentary fetishists glorify bourgeois democracy. In their classically social-democratic worldview, “socialist democracy” will be achieved by “elected politicians” who win “genuine power” through a majority in a bourgeois parliament. As Marx and Lenin explained, every state is an instrument of class rule, including the modern bourgeois republic, where the democratic forms of government conceal the rule of the bourgeoisie particularly effectively. Lenin asked Karl Kautsky, just as he could ask the CWI today: “Can it be that the learned Kautsky has never heard that the *more highly* democracy is developed, the *more* the bourgeois parliaments are subjected by the stock exchange and the bankers?” (*The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky* [1918]). What is necessary is a socialist revolution that smashes the bourgeois state machinery and replaces it by the dictatorship of the proletariat, a fact which the CWI, like Kautsky, abhors.

The CWI prefers even more backward capitalist states with “pseudo democracy” to the Chinese deformed workers state. For instance, the CWI supports independence for Taiwan, which it justifies by redefining Taiwan as a separate nation. Peter Taaffe explains: “There is now clearly a consciousness of a separate entity, Taiwan, and a broad ‘national consciousness’ amongst the majority of the population” (“Marxists, Taiwan and the National Question,” *China Worker* online, 26 August 2005). Taiwan has been part of China for centuries. In 1949 the Chinese bourgeoisie fled there from Mao’s troops,

where they ruled under the protection of U.S. imperialism. For the imperialists, above all Japan and the USA, Taiwan is a dagger at the throat of the Chinese deformed workers state and a springboard for counterrevolution on the mainland. So they arm it to the teeth. In a military conflict between China and Taiwan—which could certainly result in a counterrevolutionary imperialist attack on China—we naturally side with the deformed workers state, which we unconditionally militarily defend. The Beijing bureaucrats are following a policy of “one country, two systems,” which the bureaucracy intends as a signal to the Chinese bourgeoisie that in the case of reunification their property would be respected. We, on the other hand, fight for the revolutionary reunification of China and Taiwan through proletarian political revolution on the mainland and social revolution to bring down the Chinese bourgeoisie in Taiwan.

As against this, the CWI takes a side with the Taiwanese bourgeoisie and the imperialists, whom it supports. The real reason is again social-democratic support for “democracy”: “Nevertheless, the Chinese regime is a dictatorship. Moreover, from the standpoint of the Taiwanese masses they would not wish to place themselves under its control, preferring the democratic rights, however limited, which they enjoy under a bourgeois-democratic regime, as in Taiwan.” In 1989-90 in Germany—which was until capitalist reunification one nation separated, like China today, by a class line—the CWI argued the reverse. At that time they trumpeted: “The SPD’s Germany Policy—An Offensive for Unity and Socialism Is Needed” (February 1990), stating: “We support the unification of every nation—even the German one—as a historically progressive development and as a democratic right” (*Voran* supplement, 25 January 1990). In both cases one thing remains the same for the CWI: They are always on the side of counterrevolution, of “democratic” capitalism against “Stalinist dictatorship,” which in reality was a form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, albeit deformed.

That certainly doesn’t go over well today, especially with their East German members, who with their families are directly experiencing the “joys” of capitalist parliamentary democracy in the former DDR: deindustrialization, 17 percent

unemployment, over one million emigrants since 1990, Nazi terror on the streets against leftists and immigrants, right down to “national liberated zones,” etc. And that’s why today the Taafeites seek to justify their support for counterrevolution in the DDR in 1989-90 by saying that the SAV’s leadership in West Germany made a mistake in thinking back then in February 1990 “that Germany could be reunified only on a socialist basis.” This is simply a cover-up and nothing has changed in their social-democratic politics. Today they are at it again, supporting counterrevolution in China by persuading workers and leftist youth in Germany that there is nothing to defend there, hand in hand with pushing the worst kind of conciliation with their own “democratic” imperialist bourgeoisie.

On the one hand, the market reforms have fed the growth of enormous forces in China for capitalist counterrevolution. On the other hand, there has arisen in China one of the most powerful industrial proletariats in the world, which is attempting in numerous struggles to defend its

economic interests. As Trotsky stated:

“The workers’ state must be taken as it has emerged from the merciless laboratory of history and not as it is imagined by a ‘socialist’ professor, reflectively exploring his nose with his finger. It is the duty of revolutionists to defend every conquest of the working class even though it may be distorted by the pressure of hostile forces. Those who cannot defend old positions will never conquer new ones.”  
—“Balance Sheet of the Finnish Events,” 1940

The question of revolution and counterrevolution in China is of central interest to the working class of the whole world. We fight to build Trotskyist parties worldwide. The working class in Germany must be won to the understanding that it is necessary to defend China against the German bourgeoisie and its social-democratic agents. This constitutes a central component of breaking workers from their illusions in bourgeois democracy and ultimately mobilizing them to overthrow German imperialism and to set up a red Germany of workers councils as part of a Socialist United States of Europe.■

## Spartacist Literature Available in Chinese

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# Big Brother...

(continued from page 1)

Not content with the post-9/11 laws and measures expanding its spying powers, the Bush administration had pushed through an expanded program of surveillance by the NSA, which in turn gained the cooperation of phone companies to obtain backdoor access to streams of domestic and international communications. The NSA now has a direct hookup into AT&T's massive database of nearly *two trillion* phone records. After disclosure of this wiretapping by the *New York Times* in December 2005, the Electronic Frontier Foundation launched a class-action lawsuit against AT&T, based in part on documents provided by Mark Klein, a retired AT&T technician, charging the company with illegally giving the government access to its customers' communications and records.

As we noted in "Government Spy Network Exposed, Again" (WV No. 871, 26 May 2006):

"The current expansion of the government's repressive apparatus is a significant escalation in the war against the rights of working people and the oppressed. The NSA's invasion of privacy can carry drastic consequences. Now, if you are singled out and labeled a terrorist based on 'classified' evidence, the government claims the right to 'disappear' you as an 'enemy combatant' with no legal recourse. The 'war on terror' has accelerated the drive toward unfettered power by the executive branch."

This corresponds to the needs of U.S. imperialism as it asserts itself as cop of the world.

The NSA domestic spying program caused something of a stir when it first came to light, and even now the full extent of this surveillance cannot be known. Meanwhile, open "debate" over torture techniques such as waterboarding used against those seized in Afghanistan and Iraq has become commonplace in bourgeois circles, no longer a dirty CIA practice cloaked in secrecy. The world has watched in horror as graphic scenes and revelations of torture of prisoners have come out from Bagram in Afghanistan to Abu Ghraib in Iraq and Guantánamo Bay in Cuba. The same goes for the U.S. practice of "extraordinary rendition," where "terror suspects" are shipped abroad, to places such as Egypt, Syria and "black site" secret prisons in Europe, to be tortured. ("Rendition" has indeed become part of American popular culture, as shown by last year's movie, *Rendition*.)

All this underlines that the struggle against the U.S. rulers' attacks on working people and the oppressed "at home" must be integrally linked to the fight against their depredations abroad. *For the immediate, unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. forces from Iraq and Afghanistan! Hands off Iran! Free all the detainees now!*

## FISA, Government Surveillance and Other Dirty Tricks

Liberal mythology to the contrary, Bush & Co. did not invent, but expanded upon, draconian attacks on such civil liberties as exist, wrested through hard class and social struggle. The perceptive historian and novelist Gore Vidal noted: "Though Bush's predecessors have generally had rather higher IQs than his, they [Democrats], too, assiduously serve the 1% that owns the country" (London *Guardian*, 27 April 2002). Vidal pointed out that it was former Democratic president Bill Clinton who "set in place the trigger for a police state which his successor is now happily squeezing."

Indeed, the Clinton administration's Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996, while greatly curtailing *habeas corpus* rights for death row inmates, provided much of the structure for the further abrogation of democratic rights under Bush & Co. by establishing secret courts and denying "terror" suspects the right to see the evidence against them or to cross-examine their accusers. The NSA itself was founded in 1952 by secret order of Democratic president Harry Truman primarily to spy on the

Soviet Union during the Cold War. The NSA's domestic spying underwent significant expansion under the Democratic Johnson administration in 1967 and again under the Republican Nixon administration. In the 1960s and early '70s, the government targeted black militants—killing 38 Panthers and imprisoning hundreds more—under its COINTELPRO campaign. At the same time, other radicals, leftists and Vietnam antiwar activists were gone after based on "watch lists" given to the NSA by the FBI, CIA and other agencies.

In the aftermath of the Watergate scandal in the mid 1970s, the government's

reached hundreds of thousands, with the names of those on "watch lists" distributed to airlines, cops, border guards and U.S. consulates. One man on such a list was Maher Arar. A Canadian citizen born in Syria, Arar was detained by U.S. authorities while trying to change planes at JFK airport. Accused of being a "terrorist" on the basis of bogus information provided by Canadian authorities, Arar was deported to Syria, where he was held in solitary confinement in a coffin-size cell and tortured for nearly a year before being released back to Canada. Arar secured an apology and a settlement of \$11.5 million from the Canadian gov-



9 February 2002: Bay Area longshoremen were at the core of united-front, labor-centered mobilization initiated by Partisan Defense Committee and Labor Black League in defense of immigrant rights and against government's "war on terror."

secret police were nominally reined in. Revelations that the Nixon administration was carrying out "black bag jobs" even against the Democratic Party were cause for concern among significant sections of the American bourgeoisie over such "excesses" as came out in the 1975-76 Senate Church Committee hearings. In 1978, the Democratic administration of Jimmy Carter signed the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. Billed as a barrier to NSA/CIA domestic spying, FISA in fact codified such surveillance by adding a veneer of legality. In 27 years, the secret FISA court that is supposed to vet requests for wiretap warrants has turned down only *five* of nearly *20,000* wiretap applications.

The Protect America Act that expired this February expanded on FISA, whose standards were already loosened by the Patriot Act. Cases can now be pursued when surveillance is a "significant" rather than a "primary" purpose of the investigation. A single warrant can cover multiple communications involving a target, without specifying a particular telephone line, computer or facility, while the requirement to establish a connection between the target of surveillance and a "foreign power" has been eliminated.

In the past few years, the FBI has served tens of thousands of "national security letters" to libraries, phone companies and other businesses demanding the records of anyone deemed to be "relevant" to an investigation "against international terrorism or clandestine intelligence activities" (*Wired News*, 16 March 2006). To justify these police-state measures, the government concocts stories about "terrorist sleepers" who lead outwardly normal lives—i.e., everybody is suspect. Another program, "Secure Flight," which is temporarily suspended, aims to mine commercial databases of personal information on airline passengers. Data on a staggering number of air travelers has been turned over to the government by major airlines (*15 million* in 2004 alone), which the government has duly used to suppress protest. During the protests against the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, the government used its "no-fly" list (which today has at least 44,000 people on it) to prevent activists from attending demonstrations against the war.

The number of files maintained under the government's "Terrorist Identities Datamart Environment" (TIDE) has

erminated. He remains, however, on the State Department's "watch list."

The sinister web of the "war on terror" is exemplified by the ordeal of Jose Padilla, an American citizen who was kidnapped, tortured and stripped of his citizenship rights as an "unlawful enemy combatant." Padilla was finally granted a show trial that ended with his conviction on "conspiracy" charges and a sentence of 17 years in prison with absolutely no evidence of any crime (see "Free Jose Padilla!" WV No. 908, 15 February). In 2003 and 2004, the Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee filed two *amici curiae* (friends of the court) briefs on Padilla's behalf. We wrote:

"The case of Jose Padilla tests the very existence of the fundamental rights of due process.... 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'."

## Break with the Democrats! For a Revolutionary Workers Party!

Behind the labyrinth of draconian measures is the fundamental fact that as long as the capitalist rulers hold state power—regardless of which capitalist party governs—they *will* repress and persecute their political opponents. In 1984, the Spartacist League won a legal victory against the FBI and Attorney General's Guidelines for Domestic Security/Terrorism Investigations, which sought to slander Marxist advocacy as "terrorism"—a modest but genuine blow to the government's efforts to criminalize leftist political dissent. As we wrote in "FBI Admits: Marxists Are Not Terrorists," (WV No. 368, 7 December 1984):

"We have no illusions that the government's secret police have stopped or will stop their harassment, infiltration and disruption of Marxist political organizations and other perceived political opponents of the government. We do know that the secret police have not changed since Karl Marx was harassed by secret agents of Prussia, that as long as the capitalists hold state power, their police agents will continue their dirty work against any real or perceived challenges to their class rule. Our suit certainly has not changed, nor could it, this fact of life in American capitalist society."

In contrast, our reformist opponents on the left pin their hopes on a "reformed" capitalist state and imperialist policy, and to this end seek the election of a Democratic Party candidate to the post of U.S. imperialism's Commander in Chief. In particular, the reformist left has positioned itself to be cheerleaders from the "left" for Barack Obama, whose rigorous defense of the interests of U.S. imperialism is in no doubt—from his support to the Afghanistan occupation to his bellicosity toward Pakistan as well as Iran and the North Korean deformed workers state.

Obama's campaign is in large part based on the lie that racist oppression has been overcome "90 percent of the way," as he put it. As we underlined in "The Obama Campaign and the 'End of Racism' Myth" (WV No. 906, 18 January): "Contrary to the myth promoted by Obama and other liberals, black oppression continues to be the central defining feature of U.S. society. It is *materially rooted* in and central to American capitalism." We stated that "our struggle for black liberation is based on the program of *revolutionary integrationism*," the understanding that "full equality for the black masses requires that the working class rip the economy out of the hands of the capitalist rulers and reorganize it on a socialist basis."

Against this revolutionary perspective, pseudo-socialist groups such as the International Socialist Organization (ISO) fawn over this bourgeois politician. A recent Bay Area ISO leaflet titled "Elections '08: The Obama Phenomenon Hope for Change" all but called for a vote to Obama, declaring:

"Anyone committed to fighting for change today should see how Sen. Barack Obama's campaign has raised hopes and expectations. People are becoming convinced of the most basic sentiment at the heart of all the great struggles of the past: that what we do matters—and that could mean more in the future than the candidate trying to employ this sentiment to gain votes."

The pro-Democratic Party left, which the reformist ISO so well exemplifies, is far less influential than the trade-union bureaucracy, while reflecting the labor tops' pro-capitalist policies. Many millions of hard-earned union dollars have been and will again be poured into the coffers of the capitalist Democratic Party. Unless forced into action by the bosses' provocations or pressure from labor's ranks, the labor bureaucrats recoil from waging even the most basic struggle on behalf of their members' rights, let alone taking up the struggle against black oppression or for full citizenship rights for all immigrants, especially targeted by the "war on terror."

The apparatus of the capitalist state has been greatly strengthened by measures enacted to wage the "war on terror." However, what the government is able to get away with will ultimately be determined by the level of social struggle. What is necessary is a fight to forge a new, class-struggle leadership in the labor movement. This must be linked to the fight to build a revolutionary, multiracial workers party that acts as the tribune of the people and stands for the political independence of the working class against the capitalist state and its parties—an internationalist beacon, capable of mobilizing the social power of the proletariat on behalf of all the oppressed. In the course of such political struggle, we seek to win the working class to the understanding that only a fight to smash the capitalist state through socialist revolution and to establish workers rule can emancipate labor and rid the planet of the horrors of U.S. imperialism. ■

## CORRECTION

In "Free Jose Padilla!" (WV No. 908, 15 February), we incorrectly wrote that the two *amici curiae* (friends of the court) briefs by the Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee on Padilla's behalf were filed in 2002 and 2003. The briefs were filed in 2003 and 2004.



# Smithfield...

(continued from page 12)

WV No. 881, 24 November 2006). As part of the nationwide anti-immigrant crack-down, I.C.E. agents raided the plant and workers' homes in January and August 2007, arresting and hauling off dozens.

The raids sent shockwaves throughout surrounding Bladen County and the rest of eastern North Carolina. Fearing reprisals from *la migr*a immigration authorities, at least 1,100 immigrant workers, most from Mexico, have left Smithfield since the start of last year, when Latinos comprised over half of the plant's 5,200 employees. Three of the 28 workers arrested in the August raid were sentenced to 18 months in prison for using "fraudulent documents" to get their jobs, after which I.C.E. plans to deport them. Fifteen of the remaining workers are also being prosecuted.

In recent months, union organizers have been rushing to the trailers of immigrant workers facing arrest to ensure that someone can care for their children. Indeed, the union has a responsibility to defend the workers it is fighting to organize. What's needed above all is to mobilize the social power of the union movement in defense of immigrant workers, fighting for full citizenship rights for all immigrants. This could be crucial for revitalizing the labor movement, as many immigrant workers bring with them a history of militant union struggle. Free the detainees! No deportations!

The struggle for immigrant rights must be linked with the fight against black oppression. This is key to organizing the open shop South, where "right to work" laws have historically been backed up by Klan terror. An organizing campaign at a Perdue poultry plant in Dothan, Alabama, failed in 1995 after a KKK-style cross-burning at the plant, with the cross bearing a union T-shirt. At Tar Heel, shortly before the 1997 vote, workers arrived at work and saw "N---r go home" painted on the side of the union trailer. Some 120 miles from Tar Heel, five union organizers and leftists—supporters of the Communist Workers Party—were gunned down at an anti-Klan rally in broad daylight on 3 November 1979. They were killed by Klansmen aided and abetted by the government, from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms agent who helped train the killers to the "former" FBI informant who rode with the Klansmen and the Greensboro cop who brought up the rear of their motorcade of death.

Smithfield managers have taken every opportunity to inflame racial and ethnic divisions. While blacks and Latinos work the dirty jobs, they are kept segregated from each other on the killing floor and processing lines. Soon after the 1997 vote, Smithfield began hiring immigrant workers in larger numbers, viewing them as vulnerable, to replace pro-union black workers. The fighting unity of black, Latino and white workers is key to organizing the Smithfield plant.

Smithfield has aggressively gobbled up dozens of competitors over the last decade. It is the number one producer and processor of pork in the world, controlling nearly one-third of the U.S. market. It operates plants across North America and Europe with sales of \$12 billion last

**17 November 2006:  
Mass walkout by  
workers at  
Smithfield pork  
processing plant  
in Tar Heel, North  
Carolina, protests  
victimization of  
immigrant workers.**



Rubiera/Fayetteville Observer

year. The largest is the one million square foot facility in Tar Heel, where 32,000 hogs are slaughtered every day. To meet company goals, the processing lines at the Tar Heel plant are kept moving dangerously fast. The punishing work leaves muscles burning and hands cramped from thousands of cutting motions every day. Despite incentive bonuses for managers to keep injury report rates low, the number of injuries on record has doubled in recent years, as workers suffer debilitating hand and repetitive-motion injuries, gashes, stab and cut wounds, even death. The company has an enormous annual turnover rate, a testament to the brutal working conditions.

Workers at the Tar Heel plant have repeatedly exhibited courage and combativity in the face of an enemy looking to chew them up and spit them out. When workers on the plant sanitation crew walked out one night in 2003 in protest over wages and working conditions, company cops assaulted them, arresting one and threatening to turn the others over to *la migr*a. In 2005, another group of workers walked off understaffed lines, demanding management bring in more people for the production lines. Last summer, livestock workers carried out a sit-in protest to get regular access to clean drinking water. The protest occurred after state OSHA inspectors came in to investigate—by interrogating workers about their union sympathies. The walkout in defense of the immigrant workers in November 2006 was followed by a walkout of several hundred workers on Martin Luther King's birthday. For the first time, the company this year recognized MLK Day as a paid holiday.

Yet this militancy is kept in check by UFCW officials committed to an impotent and diversionary "corporate campaign." This losing strategy seeks to pressure the bosses and stockholders by building a public outcry based on moral indignation at the company's anti-labor practices. America's labor tops have by and large renounced the very means that built this country's mass industrial unions: sit-down strikes to occupy the plants and keep out the scabs, mass picket lines that defy injunctions, and secondary labor boycotts. No amount of protest outside events for "celebrity chef" and Smithfield spokeswoman Paula Deen, resolutions condemning Smithfield from bourgeois politicians on city councils or consumer boycotts of Smithfield ham can replace getting Smithfield where it hurts: by shutting down production.

Smithfield is actually unionized in most

locations outside of North Carolina; half of the more than 30,000 workers at its pork plants are organized. The Tar Heel plant is the only one of its large hog slaughterhouses that is non-union. In addition to the UFCW, there are unions representing Smithfield workers in France, Poland and Spain. A union leadership worth its salt would fight for union recognition by mobilizing joint actions by all Smithfield workers and coordinating international labor solidarity. A successful organizing drive in Tar Heel could serve as a springboard to organize the South and the meatpacking industry. It could also render the RICO lawsuit a dead letter.

That the UFCW's "corporate campaign" could attract the support of then Democratic presidential candidate John Edwards last year underlines how toothless it is. Edwards was elected as a U.S. Senator from North Carolina in 1998 with the endorsement of the state AFL-CIO—while *supporting* the state's "right to work" law, which has helped make North Carolina the least unionized state. Other bourgeois politicians, including the state Democratic Party executive committee and the Reverends Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton, have contacted Smithfield urging the company to talk to the union.

Tailing behind the union bureaucrats are the reformists in Workers World Party. They have uncritically pushed the corporate campaign, whose main goal is to secure a pledge of "neutrality" from Smithfield in the union organizing effort. Fat chance! Backed up by the capitalist state, time and again Smithfield has resorted to threats, confiscation of union material, racist intimidation, spying, physical assaults, arrests and firings to get its way. The RICO lawsuit is only the latest chapter.

Taking aim at the UFCW's corporate campaign, the suit seeks \$17 million in damages and court orders barring most of its activities. The union is cited for issuing press releases about the working conditions at Tar Heel, contacting civil rights and environmental groups for support, organizing protests, lobbying city governments and calling for boycotts. For decades, the labor tops have pointed to anti-labor laws

like RICO as an excuse to not engage in hard class struggle and instead pursue legalistic corporate campaigns. Increasingly, the bosses have used these same laws to undercut the bureaucrats' corporate campaigns. In 2006, Sutter Health hospitals won a \$17 million verdict against UNITE-HERE for mailings sent out during the union's corporate campaign against a vendor, Angelica Textile Services.

The starting point for any serious union organizing drive must be the understanding that this capitalist society is divided fundamentally between two hostile classes—the workers who have to sell their labor power and the capitalists who own the means of production. The interests of these classes are irreconcilably opposed. The labor tops are tied to the capitalist order, especially through their "friends" in the capitalist Democratic Party. They stand for collaboration with the bosses, not class struggle against them.

Playing by the bosses' rules is a strategy for defeat. In 1985-86, hundreds of thousands of workers across the country were inspired by striking UFCW Local P-9 workers at Hormel in Austin, Minnesota, who defied the scabherding UFCW International and dispatched roving pickets. But the strike was sold out, as the local leadership put its faith in civil disobedience and consumer boycotts orchestrated by Ray Rogers, the pioneer of the corporate campaign. Instead of sitting down in the plant, workers were sitting down in the streets. In the end, 900 members of Local P-9 lost their jobs to scabs.

In the fall of 2003, the UFCW launched what was to become a bitter five-month-long strike by 60,000 grocery workers in Southern California. Over 280,000 other UFCW members in eleven states had contracts coming up while tens of thousands were working under expired contracts. But the UFCW tops isolated the Southern California workers by refusing to extend the strike nationally, and both they and Teamsters officials betrayed it by allowing the supermarkets' distribution centers to re-open. The union officials instead pushed consumer boycotts, and the strike was defeated (see "UFCW Strike: A Battle for All Labor," WV No. 819, 6 February 2004).

The ongoing battle to organize Smithfield's Tar Heel plant is a key struggle for workers in the U.S. today. It cries out for a determined fight against the deep racial oppression and pervasive anti-black racism that exist in this country and for an active defense of immigrant rights. For this perspective to become a reality will require a sharp political struggle against the politics of class collaboration and to oust the sellout labor bureaucrats who tie the unions to the Democratic Party. It is necessary to forge a class-struggle leadership within the unions as part of the fight to build a revolutionary workers party. Capitalist exploitation and racist oppression will be ended only once the capitalist class is expropriated through socialist revolution. ■

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

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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](mailto:chicagospartacist@sbcglobal.net)  
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# WORKERS VANGUARD

## Imperial Sugar Explosion: Capitalists Profit, Workers Die

FEBRUARY 25—"The building shook, and the lights went out. I thought the roof was falling in," a forklift operator told the *Savannah Morning News*. On February 7, an explosion at the Dixie Crystals sugar refinery just outside Savannah, Georgia, ignited the plant and set it ablaze. Eleven workers have died so far. Dozens have been injured; 13 remain hospitalized. "I saw people come running out burnt, screaming, hollering, their skin hanging off them," one witness told the *New York Times* (9 February). Captain Matt Stanley from the Savannah Fire Department called it a "dormant volcano full of lava" (CNN.com, 12 February). A machine operator working on the third floor of the plant described how "there was fire all over the building." "We climbed out of there from the third floor to the first floor," she said. "Half the floor was gone. The second floor was debris, the first floor was debris" (*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 7 February). For a week firefighters battled the fire while rescue workers looked for burnt bodies.

This atrocity was no "accident" or "tragedy," as John Sheptor, the CEO of Imperial Sugar, the plant's parent company, claimed. The sugar refinery plant at Port Wentworth was a firetrap waiting to explode. The plant was first built in 1917 and one of the antiquated processing

### Eleven Workers Killed Near Savannah, Georgia

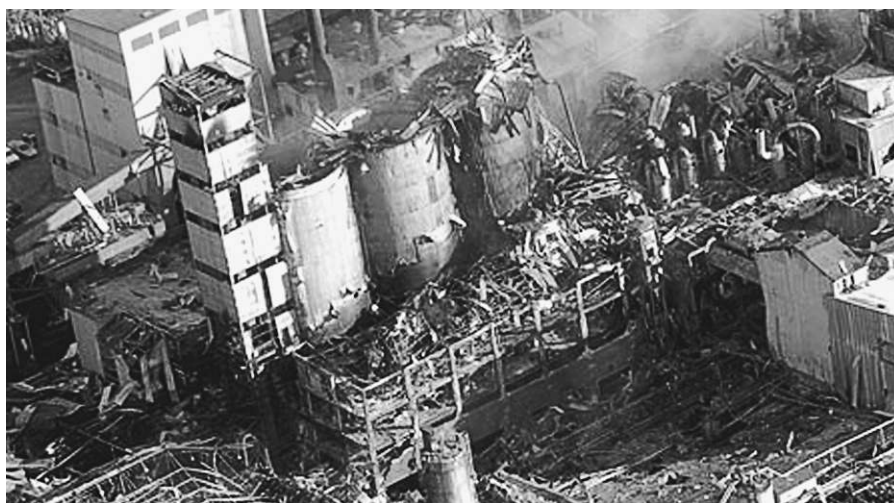
buildings that exploded was constructed of wood soaked in creosote—called "fat lighter" because it is so flammable. Even though the plant sits right by the Savan-

nah River, firefighters quickly encountered water pressure problems as they combatted the blaze. Government investigators have found evidence that com-

bustible sugar dust had accumulated beneath silos next to the processing plant in a basement area where conveyor belts are used to move processed sugar. In early January, the plant was rocked by a smaller explosion in the dust removal equipment.

"We are concerned about the families," intoned CEO Sheptor. In fact, a relative of an injured worker told *Workers Vanguard* that the workers' impoverished

*continued on page 9*



Elmore/Savannah Morning News

**Left: Aftermath of explosion and fire at sugar refinery plant in Port Wentworth, Georgia. Right: Grieving family members and friends comfort each other the day after disaster.**



Bisson/Savannah Morning News

## Organize the South!

## Smithfield Plant: Smash Anti-Union RICO Suit!

In an ominous move to break the contentious 14-year struggle by the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) to organize the Smithfield Foods pork processing plant in Tar Heel, North Carolina, the company brought a wide-ranging lawsuit against the union last October. In late January, a federal district court judge rejected a motion to dismiss the case, filed under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act. If the company gets its way, it will set a dangerous precedent, equating union efforts to win public support for its organizing campaigns with attempted extortion. The RICO suit is a dagger pointed at the entire labor movement—it must be smashed by mobilizing workers in hard class struggle.

RICO was the main lever by which the capitalist state assumed sweeping powers in the 1990s over the Teamsters, the HERE hotel and restaurant workers and the Laborers unions, as well as a number of union district councils. Enacted in 1970 supposedly to fight gangland crime, RICO, as we described in "Hands Off the Teamsters!" (WV No. 474, 31 March 1989), "was designed to be a prime weapon against labor and the left." Companies have invoked RICO in suits against numerous striking unions, including the United Mine Workers at Canterbury Coal and the



Virginian-Pilot

**August 2006: Members of United Food and Commercial Workers demonstrate against Smithfield Foods during annual shareholders meeting in Richmond, Virginia.**

Teamsters at Overnite Trucking, for confronting scabs and defending their picket lines. To pull together its suit against the UFCW, Smithfield hired one of the lawyers who helped write the RICO law. It has run daily TV ads on English and Spanish stations comparing UFCW organizers to Mafia thugs. For the bosses and their flunkies, unions are "criminal enterprises."

The UFCW's organizing campaign in

Tar Heel has run up against the cops and courts—the core components of the capitalist state, which exists to defend the bourgeoisie's rule and profits. Shotgun-wielding deputy sheriffs were present at the plant during the last union representation election in 1997. At the end of the vote count, amid a chorus of anti-black slurs, two union supporters were dragged out of the plant, beaten up and arrested

by deputy sheriffs doubling as plant security. The goons were later rewarded with positions on the company's police force, which was authorized by local authorities to patrol the plant from 2000 to 2005. They carried concealed weapons on and off duty and arrested and detained union activists in a jail cell *in the plant*. These goons remain at the plant as private security to terrorize the heavily black and Latino immigrant workforce.

Smithfield has been conspiring with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (I.C.E.) to get rid of longtime workers and strong union supporters, many of them undocumented workers. Around the time that Smithfield workers joined national immigrant rights protests, idling the Tar Heel plant on May Day 2006, the company enrolled in the IMAGE program—the I.C.E. Mutual Agreement between Government and Employers—to purge militant "illegal" workers. In November 2006, it fired 75 workers and threatened to fire hundreds more, claiming that their identity information did not match government records. A two-day walkout that included black and white workers as well as Latinos forced the company to rehire everyone (see "Smithfield Walkout Saves Immigrants' Jobs,"

*continued on page 11*