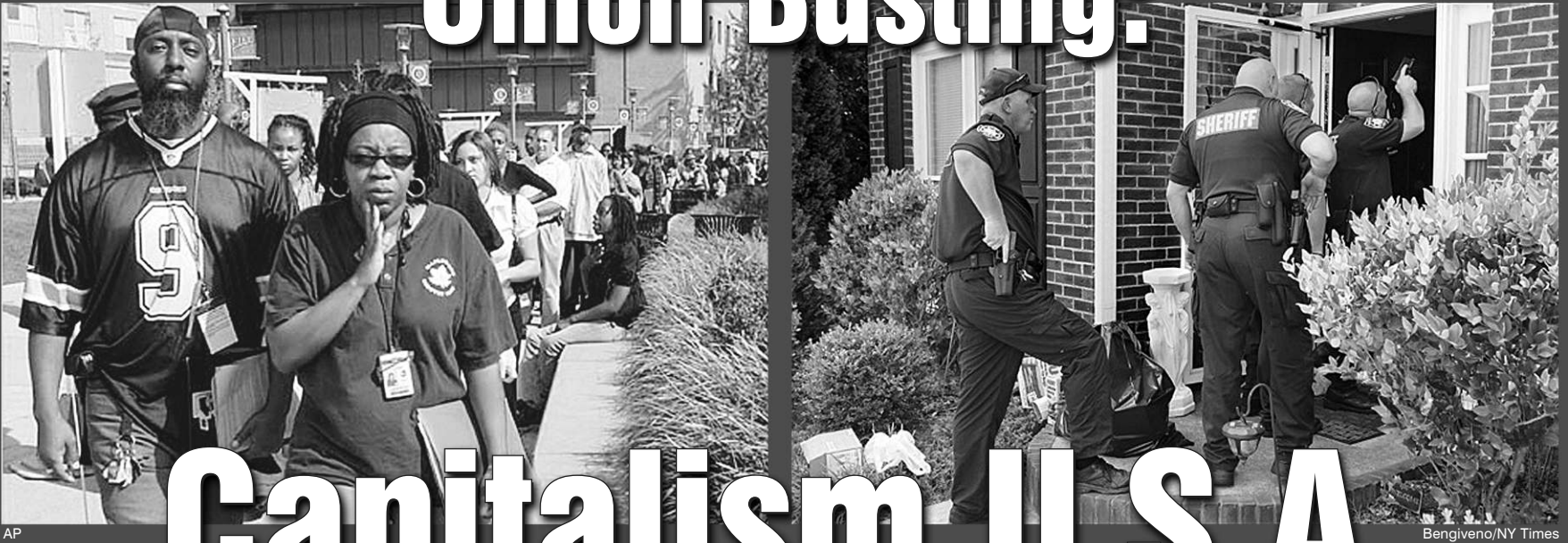


Foreclosures, Unemployment, Union Busting:



Capitalism U.S.A.

Break with the Democrats! For a Revolutionary Workers Party That Fights for a Workers Government!

"The streets are empty. Trash rustles down the road past rusted barbecues, abandoned furniture, sagging homes and gardens turned to weed.... Faded 'for sale' signs sit in front of deserted houses. The residents are gone, most after being evicted for missing their mortgage payments." This is Mount Pleasant, once a residential neighborhood in southeastern Cleveland, now a ghost town ravaged by the mortgage crisis sweeping the country. One of its few remaining residents, Sarah Evans, 60, herself on the verge of losing her home of 30 years, declared: "I had my American Dream but it became a nightmare" (Agence France-Presse, 28 January).

Such scenes of gutted dwellings, devastated communities and ruined families are being multiplied across the country at a rate not seen since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Last year, more than 1 percent of all U.S. households were in some phase of the foreclosure process, facing threats of eviction or watching helplessly as the bank prepared to auction off their homes. Enforcing foreclosures is an act of brutal state repression: the police come to a home, put the furniture and other possessions on the street and lock the family out.

In some largely black and Latino neighborhoods of South Chicago, as well as across the Detroit metropolitan area, **one of every 20 households** was in foreclosure. Many other regions, including large areas of California, Florida, Michigan and Ohio, are being hit almost as hard. This is a monumental disaster for poor and

Left: Job seekers wait in line in Newark, New Jersey, September 2007. Right: Police in Georgia carry out home eviction with guns drawn.

working-class families whose personal wealth, to the extent that they have any, is primarily invested in their homes.

The destructive irrationality of the capitalist system is highlighted by the boom-and-bust cycle, this time centered on the U.S. housing industry. Following the recession that came on the heels of the stock market boom of the mid-late 1990s, frenzied financial speculation took hold in real estate as bankers and financial analysts crowed that home prices could only keep soaring. Yet as has necessarily and repeatedly happened throughout the history of capitalism, the speculative bubble burst.

The boom-and-bust cycle, driven by the anarchy of the market, is intrinsic to the capitalist system of production and was analyzed a century and a half ago by Karl Marx. That system is maintained and defended by both major political parties in this country, the Republicans and Democrats (with the latter often posturing as sympathetic to working people). We seek to build a workers party that fights for the interests of the working class and all the oppressed against this brutally exploitative system. Those interests can be fully realized only through the overthrow of the capitalist order through socialist revolution and its replacement by a workers government establishing a planned, collectivized economy based on produc-

tion for human need and not for profit.

The wealth of the capitalist class—the owners of the means of production—derives from the exploitation of labor, holding down and driving down wages. Key to the Marxist understanding of the exploitation of labor by capital is the labor theory of value. As a norm, the market value of a commodity is determined by the labor time necessary to produce it. During the workday the value that a worker produces is greater than the value of the wages he receives. The difference is appropriated by the capitalist as surplus value in the form of profits, interest and rent.

Over the past three and a half decades, while the rich have fabulously increased their wealth, the average weekly real wages for non-supervisory workers in the private sector have fallen. Yet during this period labor productivity (according to government figures) increased by 81 percent. In other words, there has been an enormous increase in what Marx called the **rate of exploitation**. This is the ratio of the share of the product of labor appropriated by the capitalists to the share represented by the worker's wage.

The massive shift of social product from labor to capital did not encourage corporate America to expand productive capacity. Just the opposite has happened. The deterioration in the condition of the working class is directly related to

the *deindustrialization* of America. Since 1979 the share of the labor force employed in the goods-producing sector has fallen steadily from almost 28 percent to 16.6 percent (in 2005). Between 2000 and 2005 alone, over three million manufacturing jobs were eliminated.

Liberal Democrats and reformist leftists put the onus for the deterioration in workers' living standards on the economic policies of the Bush White House. But, writing in the 19th century, Marx explained in *Capital* (Volume I) that both the ever-increasing concentration of production and the immiseration of the laboring masses are inherent in the capitalist system itself:

"Along with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital, who usurp and monopolise all advantages of this process of transformation, grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation; but with this too grows the revolt of the working-class, a class always increasing in numbers, and disciplined, united, organised by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself. The monopoly of capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production, which has sprung up and flourished along with, and under it. Centralisation of the means of production and socialisation of labour at last reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. This integument is burst asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated."

To realize the expropriation of the expropriators requires the forging of a

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Young Spartacus

The Fight for Women's Liberation....4

Imprisoned for Surviving 1978 Cop Attack

Parole Hearing Approaches: Free the MOVE Prisoners!

For the first time since their imprisonment 30 years ago, the eight surviving members of the MOVE 9 are eligible for a parole hearing in April. Framed up on conspiracy and murder charges stemming from the killing of Philadelphia police officer James Ramp during a vicious police assault on MOVE's home in the Powelton Village neighborhood on 8 August 1978, the MOVE members were sentenced to prison terms of 30 to 100 years. In 1998, Merle Africa died in prison, having spent nearly 20 years behind bars. Despite persistent persecu-

tion and repeated harassment, the MOVE members remain strong and outspoken, steadfast fighters not only for their own freedom but also for the freedom of Mumia Abu-Jamal, America's foremost death row political prisoner and a long-time MOVE supporter.

MOVE has been the victim of some of the worst racist atrocities meted out by a capitalist class whose rule is founded on the oppression of black people. On 13 May 1985, the Philadelphia police, on orders from black Democratic mayor Wilson Goode and assisted by the Feds, bombed

MOVE's Osage Avenue home. Eleven black people, five of them children, were killed and an entire city block burned to the ground. As we said in protest at the time, this mass murder was the bloody signature of the Reagan years, intended "to send a message to black America and 'radicals' of every stripe. 'Anti-terrorism' means massive government terror against anyone who is out of step in Reagan's America" (WV No. 379, 17 May 1985). All opponents of racist oppression and cop brutality must demand freedom for the MOVE 9!

The city in which the back-to-nature MOVE organization emerged was a racist hellhole lorded over by a force of killer cops led by Frank Rizzo, first as deputy police commissioner, then commissioner and later mayor. In the "city of brotherly love," any expression of black dissent was met with brutal police repression. In the mid 1960s, Rizzo instituted special roving arsenals stationed in black neighborhoods so that buses of riot cops armed with machine guns, tear gas and heavy weaponry could meet up without losing a minute in smashing some political demonstration. As acting commissioner in 1966, Rizzo led 80 cops, with a reserve contingent of hundreds, in publicized raids on apartments associated with members of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee on the pretext of busting up a bogus plot to blow up buildings in the city. And in 1967, with the racist cry "get their black asses," Rizzo unleashed busloads of baton-wielding cops against black students protesting outside the Board of Education, sending 15 of them to the hospital. His raids on Black Panther Party offices in 1970, when Philly cops stripped Panthers to their underwear outside their Wallace Street office, earned Rizzo national notoriety for racist "law and order."

The cops also turned their attention to the predominantly black MOVE organization, which appeared in 1972 protesting against the "system" and which would come to proclaim their right of armed self-defense. Police planted themselves on MOVE's doorstep, hounding members and supporters every time they left their home. Arbitrary stops, beatings and hundreds of arrests were standard procedure. In 1973-74 some 40 MOVE members had been arrested 150 times, fined approximately \$15,000 and given sentences of up to several years in jail. By 1976, the Philly cops' vendetta against MOVE had escalated into a full-scale war. Blackjacket-wielding cops descended on a MOVE celebration, and in the resulting melee Janine Africa's newborn infant was trampled to death.

May 1977 ushered in 15 months of round-the-clock surveillance and a massive police offensive. The following March, police implemented a full-scale barricade, sealing off a four-block area of Powelton Village with eight-foot-high fences and cutting off gas and water lines to MOVE's house. At 6 a.m. on August 8, 600 cops surrounded the home. Two hours later, one or two gunshots were heard. Though cops claimed the gunfire came from the MOVE house, witnesses, including a reporter for KYW radio, identified the gunfire as coming from a building behind the police lines. For the next two minutes police fired thousands of rounds of ammunition into the home. When the dust cleared, Police Officer James Ramp was dead, killed by the police cross fire.

Standing alone among journalists in defense of MOVE was Mumia Abu-Jamal. By the time of the 1978 assault, Mumia had



UPI
Philadelphia cops brutalize Delbert Africa during August 1978 siege of MOVE's Powelton Village home.

already interviewed victims of police brutality and was acquiring a reputation as the "voice of the voiceless." At a press conference after the August 8 cop attack where Mumia and others asked a series of embarrassing questions, Rizzo railed on about the need to reinstitute the death penalty and blamed a "new breed of journalism" for Ramp's death. Looking in Mumia's direction, Rizzo spewed, "They believe what you write, what you say. And it's got to stop. And one day, and I hope it's in my career, that you're going to have to be held responsible, and accountable for what you do." At the same press conference, D.A. Edward Rendell declared that the police would have been "within their rights to have, subsequent to the shooting of Officer Ramp, stormed the house and killed all of the 12 people in the basement."

Two months after the attack on MOVE, Rizzo campaigned for a change to the city's charter that would allow him to run for a third mayoral term under the call, "Vote White." He declared, "Philadelphia wouldn't be the same without Frank Rizzo." Rizzo lost, but for the oppressed black masses little changed. In August 1981, the MOVE 9 were sentenced. Four months later, Mumia was arrested and framed up on false charges of killing Police Officer Daniel Faulkner. The following July he was sentenced to death explicitly for his political views. Mumia's imprisonment, removing a powerful and effective voice in MOVE's defense, cleared the way as the state escalated its war against MOVE culminating in the 13 May 1985 bombing. Ramona Africa, sentenced to seven years in prison for the "crime" of being the sole adult survivor, served every single day of her term.

The case of Mumia Abu-Jamal represents what the death penalty in the U.S. is all about—a legacy of chattel slavery, the lynch rope made legal. Targeted by the state from the time he was a 15-year-old Black Panther Party spokesman, Mumia became a MOVE supporter while covering the prosecution of the MOVE 9. Already well known and despised by the cops, Mumia was made a marked man by his prominent defense of MOVE. Despite mountains of evidence of his innocence, including the sworn confession of Arnold Beverly that he, not Mumia, shot Faulkner, Mumia remains on death row. Last May the Third Circuit Court of Appeals heard oral argument in Mumia's case, and a decision restoring the death sentence, condemning him to prison for life or ordering a trial or new hearings could come any day. Free Mumia now!

After 30 years, the vendetta against MOVE has not subsided. In September 2006 the Philadelphia police awarded its "Valor Award" to nine of the cops who participated in the August 8 attack. The 2008 *Guinness Book of World Records* grotesquely classified the May 1985 bombing as a "cult suicide," a characterization first coined in 1985 by then D.A. Edward Rendell, who declared, "These are people who essentially committed suicide and murdered their own children." Currently Pennsylvania's governor, Rendell was the

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TROTSKY

For the Right of All Nations to Self-Determination!

In fighting for an American proletarian revolution, we combat national chauvinism and all forms of national oppression, and we insist on the right of self-determination for the U.S. colony of Puerto Rico. We are guided by the proletarian internationalism of Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin. The Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky led the multinational working class of the Russian "prison house of peoples" to power in the 1917 October Revolution, and afterward

forged the Third (Communist) International to build new communist parties committed to struggle for international socialist revolution.

In the internationalist education of the workers of the oppressor countries, emphasis must necessarily be laid on their advocating freedom for the oppressed countries to secede and their fighting for it. Without this there can be *no* internationalism. It is our right and duty to treat every Social-Democrat of an oppressor nation who *fails* to conduct such propaganda as a scoundrel and an imperialist. This is an absolute demand, even where the *chance* of secession being possible and "practicable" before the introduction of socialism is only one in a thousand.

It is our duty to teach the workers to be "indifferent" to national distinctions. There is no doubt about that. But it must not be the indifference of the *annexationists*. A member of an oppressor nation must be "indifferent" to whether small nations belong to *his* state *or to a neighbouring* state, or to themselves, according to where their sympathies lie: without such "indifference" he is *not* a Social-Democrat [i.e., communist]. To be an internationalist Social-Democrat one must *not* think only of one's own nation, but place *above it* the interests of all nations, their common liberty and equality. Everyone accepts this in "theory" but displays an annexationist indifference in practice. There is the root of the evil.

On the other hand, a Social-Democrat from a small nation must emphasise in his agitation the *second* word of our general formula: "voluntary *integration*" of nations. He may, without failing in his duties as an internationalist, be in favour of *both* the political independence of his nation and its integration with the neighbouring state of X, Y, Z, etc. But in all cases he must fight *against* small-nation narrow-mindedness, seclusion and isolation, consider the whole and the general, subordinate the particular to the general interest.

People who have not gone into the question thoroughly think that it is "contradictory" for the Social-Democrats of oppressor nations to insist on the "freedom to *secede*," while Social-Democrats of oppressed nations insist on the "freedom to *integrate*." However, a little reflection will show that there is not, and cannot be, any *other* road to internationalism and the amalgamation of nations, any other road *from the given* situation to this goal.

—V.I. Lenin, "The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up" (July 1916)

WORKERS VANGUARD

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

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No. 910

14 March 2008

Peggy Dye, a longtime friend of the Spartacist League and supporter of the work of the Partisan Defense Committee, died of cancer in New York City on 4 December 2007 at the age of 64. Peggy was from a black working-class family. Her mother encouraged her to go to a more distant school in an integrated neighborhood near Chicago. Later she received a full scholarship to the elite, all-women Vassar College, where as one of four black students she faced isolation and prejudice. In 1965 she graduated as a history major. At a March 8 memorial, her best friend from college particularly remembered Peggy for bringing her to meetings by Malcolm X.

Peggy described herself as a freelance independent writer/organizer/public affairs consultant. She also worked for several years as a city planner, but was fired for being a whistleblower. There was nothing parochial about Peggy. In 1986, Peggy became a war correspondent in Western Sahara and then traveled to El Salvador to report on the hospital conditions during the civil war. In 1989, she wrote articles for the *Village Voice* about plans to raze Harlem's landmark Audubon Ballroom, where Malcolm X was assassinated. A talented writer, she spent many years writing a novel, *Country Negro Spy*, which she was still working on when she died.

We first knew Peggy in the late '60s, when she was around the Spartacist League. When we encountered Peggy again, more than a decade later, she was working with Conrad Lynn, a courageous black activist and radical civil rights lawyer.

Peggy became more actively involved with the PDC when she enthusiastically supported the mobilization initiated by the PDC to stop the KKK from marching in New York City on 23 October 1999. She was excited to see the power of the multiracial working class brought to bear that day, when 8,000 people stopped the Klan in its tracks. To be sure, Peggy was very preoccupied with reaching for and motivating what she described as spirituality in people, with which we, as Marxists, disagree. But she was also a very political person. While never a member of the SL or the Labor Black League, she believed in the need to transform this capitalist society through the mobilization of the working class and described herself as a revolutionary. She told us that one of her favorite books was *Their Morals and Ours* by Leon Trotsky.

Over the last several years, until she became ill and could no longer be active, Peggy's work with the PDC/LBL was primarily around the campaign to free Mumia Abu-Jamal, a black journalist whom the government wants to execute for his political beliefs and activities as a former Black Panther and supporter of the MOVE organization.

She was solidly committed to fighting to free Mumia and she had no patience for anything short of mobilizing the broadest possible masses for

Peggy Dye



WV Photo

1943–2007

Mumia's freedom. She went back to the newspapers she worked on in the labor movement—of DC 37, 1199 SEIU, the national writers union—to try to get articles printed publicizing Mumia's case, and, no doubt as a result of her work, 1199 had a very powerful, long article on Mumia.

At a 28 October 2006 rally for Mumia in Harlem, called by the PDC and the LBL, a discussion erupted when a supporter of the Free Mumia Coalition asked the audience to sign a petition to name a Harlem street in honor of Mumia. The petition called for a "new and fair trial" rather than stating that Mumia is innocent and calling for his freedom. Thus the PDC could not sign it. Peggy spoke from the floor, solidarizing with the PDC while making clear her political differences:

"I'm not a member of the Spartacist League and I do support a lot of what the Spartacist League says, and I also am *very* partisan about the Partisan Defense Committee....

"First of all I'd like to say that since we *are* saying differences, you know the main difference that I sometimes have with the *Workers Vanguard* and the Spartacists...is that the articles are really long and they're hard to read [laughter]. And sometimes there's no story, there's just a lot of conclusions, and you have to really think hard. So I'm a writer and I like a story, and I want to understand things plain like Malcolm X said....

"But I'm going to say something really plain now. I work with another group that supports Mumia, and I sat and cried about two weeks ago when the group was talking about sending out a letter to ask for support for Mumia, to raise money for his trial. And I said, 'Why don't we put in the letter that he's innocent?' Well, all hell broke out. 'We can't do that, we'll alienate people. Some people think he's guilty.' And I said, 'I'm from Chicago. Nobody gives money to a guilty guy!' They said, 'We've got to go the legal route, we've got to exhaust the possibilities.' And I said, 'I've got this thing from this group called the Partisan Defense Committee.' I was really proud of it; I want everybody in here to go out of here tonight and get a copy of the ad with the 400 names. I said, 'Don't you see that Henry Louis Gates and Manning Marable and Cindy Sheehan, they all signed a letter that said *they* believe he's innocent? You mean to tell me we're so chickenshit we can't say he's innocent?' Get that letter, take it to 1199, take it to all your unions, tell them to put it in the newspaper."

Fighting for her convictions, Peggy actively participated in our effort to publicize Mumia's case and was insistent that we put an ad in the *Nation*, paying out of her own pocket to make this possible. She was also a regular PDC sustainer.

A memorial for Peggy took place at the Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church in Brooklyn, which she had attended. Gene Herson, supporter of the SL and Labor Coordinator for the PDC, spoke at the memorial and remarked that it was fitting that this memorial was held in a place that had been a major station in the underground railroad. It also took place on International Women's Day. At the memorial, her friend Marilyn Nance read a speech Peggy had given exactly ten years earlier, on International Women's Day in 1998. In that speech, Peggy recalled that this day also commemorates the 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire in which 148 women garment workers, most of them immigrants, died because the exit doors were locked. She noted that as recently as 1991, at a chicken processing plant in North Carolina, 25 workers, predominantly black women, died in a fire in similar circumstances and that a lot of women around the world were still working in sweatshops in horrible conditions.

Many comrades, especially in New York, grew to know Peggy and appreciated that she wanted to transmit her experience, knowledge and understanding of society to the youth. When she came to our forums, she would always raise thought-provoking interventions and questions. This vivacious, feisty and passionate activist will be sorely missed.

Drop Charges Against Denver Leftist Larry Hales!

The following Partisan Defense Committee protest letter was sent to Denver City Attorney David R. Fine and Mayor John Hickenlooper on March 8.

The Partisan Defense Committee protests the vicious police attack and bogus charges of "interfering with the police" against Larry Hales, a leader of the Denver branch of Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST), a contributing editor to *Workers World* newspaper and an organizer against police brutality. We demand that all charges be dropped immediately.

Hales was arrested on November 30 after ten cops burst into his house without a warrant. The cops claimed they were seeking a man Hales was housing at the time, a survivor of a police gunshot in the back who was on parole and who had also filed a civil case against the cops. After he informed the police that the parolee was not home, Hales was assaulted and his companion, Melissa Kleinman, was handcuffed to a chair. Having ransacked his home, the police then dragged Hales off to jail. During the arraignment, the

prosecutor suggested that more charges might be pending.

Hales was targeted by the police not only because he is a well-known young black activist with a history of protesting racist police terror, but also because he is an organizer of Re-create 68, one of the groups planning demonstrations at the Democratic National Convention (DNC) to be held in Denver in August. Hales' arrest was a message of intimidation aimed at anyone who would want to protest. We recall that for the 2004 DNC protests in Boston, armed Coast Guard boats patrolled Boston Harbor while a razor wire steel cage was set up as the "free speech zone." Congress has allocated \$50 million each for security at the Denver DNC and the St. Paul Republican National Convention. Already last May the Denver city government announced plans to clear the homeless from downtown streets for the duration of the convention, especially in the so-called "security perimeter."

We vigorously protest Hales' outra-

geous arrest and demand that all charges against him be dropped.

* * *

The PDC has contributed to Larry Hales' legal defense. Donations can be

sent to: National Justice for Larry Hales Committee, c/o Solidarity Center, 55 W. 17th St., #5C, New York, NY 10011. Make checks payable to Justice for Larry Hales/IAC.■

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Young Spartacus



Spartacist contingent at August 1970 Women's Strike for Equality march in New York City.

Women and Revolution

"The Fight for Women's Liberation"

In honor of International Women's Day (March 8), we reprint below a position paper first presented at the December 1969 New Haven conference of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) by the Revolutionary Marxist Caucus (RMC), forerunner of today's Spartacus Youth Clubs. This is a historic document of the Spartacist League, part of our struggle to bring the materialist, Marxist analysis of the nature of women's oppression to the New Left in the period of the early growth of the radical women's liberation movement. We put forward the understanding that the core institution of women's oppression, the family, arose with private property (see *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* by Friedrich Engels). While women's oppression is distinct from and predates the oppression of the working class, it can only be ended through socialist revolution. This analysis stands against both "lifestyle liberationist" feminists who view gender as the main division in society and Stalinists (Maoist and otherwise) who hold the position that the family can be "a unit for fighting the ruling class" (as the Worker-Student Alliance [WSA] caucus in SDS argued).

SDS was originally the youth group of the Cold War, anti-Soviet "socialists" of the League for Industrial Democracy (LID). SDS moved leftward under the impact of events, particularly the struggle of the civil rights movement against Jim Crow segregation in the South and, later, the struggles against the Vietnam War. In 1962, SDS's Port Huron Statement toned down the overt anti-Communism that was the stock in trade of the LID social democrats, and in retribution SDS leaders were locked out of their offices. By the end of 1965, SDS had dropped its anti-Communist exclusion clause and split from the LID entirely. It grew rapidly, drawing in tens of thousands of young activists at its peak.

Revolutionary Marxists at December 1969 SDS Conference



In the summer of 1969, SDS underwent a split. As part of an orientation toward revolutionary regroupment, the RMC, supporters of the Trotskyist program of the Spartacist League, critically supported the wing led by Progressive Labor (PL) and its WSA caucus, which put forward a crudely pro-working-class orientation as against the generally Maoist National Collective. PL itself had been formed from a left split from the extremely reformist Communist Party in the direction of Maoism.

The context of widespread leftward movement, fueled not least by opposition to the Vietnam War and the draft, and the politically open character of SDS provided an arena for revolutionary Marxists to struggle for our program. The RMC sought to take full advantage of this necessarily time-limited situation in winning young would-be revolutionaries to Marxism. To this end, we put forward position papers and resolutions arguing for the program of revolutionary proletarian internationalism. We fought for Marxism as a program for the liberation of *all* of humanity, especially highlighting the need for a materialist program to confront the oppression of women and blacks (see also "Racial Oppression and Working-Class Politics," WV No. 897, 31 August 2007).

This position paper also mentions in passing the Young Socialist Alliance (YSA) and Independent Socialist Clubs (ISC). The former was the youth organization of the Socialist Workers Party, a once Trotskyist organization by then degenerated into reformism—as exemplified by its leading role in the class-collaborationist National Peace Action Coalition. The Coalition's purpose was to appeal to liberal Democratic Party politicians who sought to extricate American

imperialism from the losing colonial war in Vietnam and to head off a challenge to the capitalist order at home. The ISC were a left split from the Cold Warriors of the Socialist Party who purveyed the same anti-Sovietism with different trappings. Today, readers will recognize them as the still rabidly anti-Communist and helplessly liberal International Socialist Organization.

* * *

I. SDS and Women's Liberation

SDS needs a clear, accurate class analysis of the special oppression of women and a Marxist program for women's liberation. No other radical youth group has yet undertaken this task. The YSA substitutes enthusiastic tail-ending for program; the ISC in their Statement of Principles patronizingly caters to the separatist mood by telling women that socialist revolution won't solve their problems automatically—as if other sorts of oppression would disappear without the intervention of consciousness!

The existing women's liberation movement, both liberal and radical, seems to see sex as the basic "class division" in society. This low level of theoretical development means an opportunity for Marxists to intervene with a working-class line. However, we will render our intervention useless if we cling to an oversimplified analysis that the only form of oppression is class oppression and confine our interest to the economic superexploitation of women workers.

The class question is the decisive issue in class society. However, other additional types of oppression do exist as well—e.g., racial oppression, national oppression, women's oppression. To deny that Marxist revolutionaries must concern themselves with these issues is sectarian

and blatantly anti-Leninist. It is vital that revolutionaries participate in these struggles. The basis of such participation must be the realization that the class question is decisive and thus any movement which fails to identify itself with the struggle of the working class against the capitalist class is doomed to be beset by utopianism, crackpotism, liberal illusions and—ultimately—irrelevance.

The SDS resolution (which was sponsored by the WSA caucus and opposed by us) passed by our June convention (after the walk-out of the RYM [Revolutionary Youth Movement] splitters) did not provide a correct analysis or program. This failure was primarily due to an anti-historical, unMarxist method which resulted in an entirely incorrect position on the family.

II. Oppression and the Family

The June WSA resolution included the following statement: "The family does not have to be primarily reactionary. We should attempt to attack the bourgeois aspect and make the family a unit for fighting the ruling class."

This statement is flatly wrong. It ignores, in a crude anti-theoretical manner, the entire thrust of the Marxian critique of the family in order to accept as potentially revolutionary an institution which is inherently reactionary. The family can no more become a unit for fighting capitalism than can racial segregation, which is also a bourgeois institution. Both of these socio-economic institutions are oppressive and help maintain the capitalist system. Both are tools by which the ruling class maintains and strengthens false consciousness in the working class.

As a pro-working-class student organization, SDS must provide a Marxian class analysis of the social oppression of women. The primary source document for this analysis is *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, in which Frederick Engels traces the history of the increasing oppression of women through the various stages of economic development of society, showing that the appearance of private property brought with it the necessity of transferring this property through inheritance. From this flows the need to trace descent; and since the male, in the primitive division of labor, had come to be the property-owner, he is therefore given the right to exclusive sexual access to the bearer of his children. Hence, the institution of marriage emerges.

Following the method of Engels, examining the oppression of women in class society and the nature of class society itself, we must seek its roots in the primitive division of labor, which resulted in

Women and Revolution

Journal of the Women's Commission
of the Spartacist League/U.S.

Bound Volume

Now incorporated into *Spartacist*, the theoretical and documentary repository of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), *Women and Revolution* reflects our commitment to the fight for women's liberation through socialist revolution. Fully indexed cloth-bound volume contains:

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the social division of man and woman, placing the latter in a subordinate position, as class society was born. Subsequently the class divisions transcended the sexual division, and class became the dominant reality of society. To put it another way, Mrs. Rockefeller and her maid both suffer in varying degree from the pervasive oppression of females and have some issues in common, but the maid has more in common with her own husband than with Mrs. Rockefeller.

Sexual divisions continue to be socially enforced, since they bolster the capitalist system. The social inferiority of women is maintained by the entire structure of class society, including its ideologies. Many women internalize and come to believe the false ideas of class culture, and actually feel themselves to be inferior. Women today tend to be “under-achievers”; feeling rightly that there is not much future for them, they waste their talents and energies on trivialities, decide to live through their families or succumb to despair. It is our task to offer to these women a worthwhile goal: their own liberation, which cannot be a personal “self-liberation” but requires a socialist revolution and the withering away of the family. As communist revolutionaries, further, these women will lead incomparably richer lives. They will come to understand their own oppression and the origins, the nature and the future of the family. As stated by Engels:

“We are now approaching a social revolution in which the economic foundations of monogamy as they have existed will disappear just as surely as those of its complement, prostitution. Monogamy arose from the concentration of considerable wealth in the hands of a single individual, a man, and from the need to bequeath this wealth to the children of that man and no other.

“For this purpose the monogamy of the woman was required, not that of the man. But by transforming by far the greater portion, at any rate, of permanent, inheritable wealth, the means of production, into social property, the coming social revolution will reduce to a minimum all this anxiety about bequeathing and inheriting.... The position of men will be very much altered, but the position of women, of *all* women, also undergoes significant change. With the transfer of the means of production into common ownership, the single family ceases to be the economic unit of society. Private housekeeping is transformed into a social industry. The care and education of the children becomes a public affair; society looks after all children alike whether or not they are, in bourgeois legal jargon, legitimate.”

This is far from advocating that straw man of the bosses’ press, that under communism men and women will live in separate barracks and all children will be brought up in a state orphanage. We are rather advocating the replacement of marriage *as a compulsory economic unit* with voluntary forms better suited to people’s physical and emotional needs. Since the institution of the family is an integral part of the capitalist system, the struggle for women’s liberation is inseparable from the struggle for a socialist revolution.

III. The Family and the Class

The WSA resolution states: “With the rise of capitalism and modern industry, the economic foundation on which the traditional family was based was destroyed. Women were taken out of the home and put into the factory. But the special exploitation of women, who became a cheap reserve labor force, continued. To justify the double exploitation of women workers, the ruling class fostered the ideology of male chauvinism.”

To set the record straight, at the very beginning of the industrial revolution women and children formed the bulk of the industrial proletariat. The reasons for this are well established. Women and children were cheap, unskilled, docile labor used by the rising capitalists to batter down the wages of men (usually more highly paid) and to destroy the craft industries employing (relatively) highly paid male artisans. To quote Marx in *Capital*:

“The value of labor power was determined not only by the labor-time necessary to maintain the individual adult

laborer, but also by that necessary to maintain his family. Machinery, by throwing every member of the family into the labor market, spreads the value of man’s labor-power over his whole family. It thus depreciates his labor power.”

Consequently, workers with large families were often given preference by the early capitalists who, as a matter of fact, often compelled the worker to require his entire family to work in his factory or lose his job.

The bourgeoisie of this period actually devised ideological apologia for female and child labor (see Jurgen Kuczynski, *The Rise of the Working Class*, Chapter 2, “The Working Class Emerges”). The limitation of female and child labor (by, e.g., the Factory Acts in Britain) represented concessions wrested by the working class from capital. The progressive withdrawal of this super-exploited labor from the factory system compelled the capitalists to employ machinery in their stead if they wished to remain in business.

The destruction of the traditional family by employing women and children in production creates the possibility of founding the relationship between the sexes on a new economic basis. But, the spontaneous way this employment developed with the rise of capital was, to quote Marx, “a pestiferous source of corruption and slavery” which the advanced sections of the working class fought. The kernel of this contradiction is that under capitalism the family remains—because there is no other socio-economic institution to replace it.

An Institution of Indoctrination

The bourgeoisie and its theorists tinkered with the old institutions in order to fit them better into the new industrial capitalism. In the age of disintegrating feudalism, before the capitalists had accumulated much experience in running



Spartacist

Spartacist League at 1966 New York City protest against Vietnam War.

their own system, some of them even toyed with very radical ideas regarding the state, family and religion. They soon learned, however, that whether they themselves liked conventional family life or not, or whether they believed in God or not, the *institutions* of religion and the family were indispensable for inculcating the required docility, submissiveness, respect for authority and superstition in the working class. Without religion and the family the workers would be far more likely to become troublesome. For this reason the bourgeoisie learned to pay public obeisance to the ideals of religion and the family whether they personally believed in them or not. When economically necessary, the capitalist class will tolerate and even encourage female and child labor—but without allowing the development of institutions to replace the family. The working woman is not really freed from her role as household slave by obtaining work outside the home; she merely has one responsibility added to another.

Although individual families were destroyed—and are being destroyed—by capitalism, the family *as an institution* was not hurt, as it rises or falls with the existence of private property. When economic considerations permitted, the ruling class periodically initiated campaigns, through the media and the churches, to get women back into the home. This tendency reached a peak of brutal chauvinism and cynical barbarism with the Nazi

slogan, “Kinder, Küche, Kirche,” which portrays the woman deluded by religion and as breeder, babysitter and cook. “The family that prays together stays together”: both religion and the family are bourgeois institutions of false consciousness.

Functions of the Family

Women and children left the process of production, not chiefly because the capitalists feared for the nuclear family and forced them out but in large part because under capitalism no substitute for the family is available. The domestic labor performed by the housewife has no exchange value, and the family is socially necessary to

U.S. encourage whites to oppress blacks) and false consciousness (racism). The working man learns to direct his anger and frustrations against his wife, rather than against the bosses. He is told that he is the boss in his own home (“a man’s home is his castle”). Thus, the family as an economic and social institution is a shackle on the consciousness of the men workers as well as that of women.

The Family in Non-Capitalist States

The family serves its reactionary function not only in capitalist societies but also in the bureaucratically-deformed workers’ states—i.e., Russia, China, and those other nations which have abolished the material basis of the family—private property—but which still require the family as a socio-cultural institution in order to suppress the consciousness of the masses, rendering them subservient to the parasitic bureaucracies headed by Brezhnev & Co., Mao, etc.

For example, the initial effect of the Chinese revolution—which in its need to fight imperialism found itself completing the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution and establishing the property relations of a workers’ state—was the unleashing of an immensely progressive social force. The feudal oppression of women was abolished. But in the absence of workers’ democracy in China, policy is determined by the whim of the Maoist bureaucracy. Hence, the ambivalent attitude toward the family: thus the bureaucracy opposed birth control during the Great Leap Forward; today they encourage long periods of celibacy for the Chinese youth.

The survival of most features of bourgeois family life within the non-capitalist *continued on page 6*

Xin Liliang



“The Happy Life Chairman Mao Gave Us,” 1954 Maoist propaganda poster by Xin Liliang, glorifies the reactionary institution of the family.

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OF THE
INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST LEAGUE
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Women's Liberation...

(continued from page 5)

world simultaneously reveals something about both the family and the nature of these societies. The bourgeois family is still the family, similar in decisive respects to the family in non-capitalist but not classless (e.g., feudal and slave) societies. The family unit represents a division of social labor far older than capitalism, dating back to the first "class" division of labor, that between man and woman. As such, the family will require more than the abolition of capitalism (in and of itself) before it is superseded entirely by a freer system of relations between men and women, parents and children. Needless to say, the overthrow of the capitalists and their state by the regime of workers' power is *absolutely essential* to the liberation of individuals from the narrowness, authoritarianism and sexual inequality inherent in family life. But we should recognize that this task will not be *fully* accomplished until the dictatorship of the proletariat has fulfilled its historic mission: until class distinctions and their vestiges have been eradicated from society, i.e., mankind has reached the stage of classless society, communism. The same holds true for other features of class societies in

ward in policy regarding women and the family was led by the same parasitic gang who murdered the Old Bolsheviks of all viewpoints, throttled the Spanish revolution and let Hitler take power without firing a shot. Just as Stalin was willing to use Great Russian chauvinism against national minorities, praise the Orthodox Church and foster anti-Semitism, so he found that the backward Russian family created a base for his bureaucratic and authoritarian aims. Even where private property no longer exists, the institution of the family serves—at best—to hinder the development of a socialist society. At worst it provides a base of support in the culture for the parasitic bureaucrats who barter away the gains of the revolution. SDS cannot wish away the social and cultural significance of the family by words about making it "a unit for fighting the ruling class." Reactionary institutions serve reactionary ends.

IV. The Working Woman

The economic aspects of the inferior position of women in our society provide the most immediate benefits to capitalism. Whenever capital needs to draw women out into the labor force, it has been able to use the ideology of male superiority to justify the super-exploitation of women workers—that is, women being paid less for doing the same work as the men. After all, "a woman's place is in the home," "a man has the responsibility of supporting a family, a woman only works because she wants to."

The assumption is that the woman's main role is that of the tender mother; hence, she is forced to take care of her children, even if they are unwanted, even when she is divorced. Any woman who wants more out of life is termed "unnatural" or "unfit." The lie is pushed that women are fit only for domestic chores and that therefore their labor is not worth as much as the labor of men.

Women make up one third of the American labor force, but the wages of the full-time working woman average only 60% of those of the average male working full-time. The non-white working woman, suffering under a double load of exploitation and oppression, must indeed be the most victimized category in American capitalist society. In itself, the lower average income of women workers roughly indicates the degree of their oppression, not their super-exploitation relative to working men. (They might—and do—take home less money because they are concentrated in less productive jobs.) But women, even more than other oppressed groups such as Black male workers, frequently receive less for work *identical* to that performed by more highly paid men. In addition to suffering oppression and discrimination, working women are super-exploited in the literal and technical sense of the term.

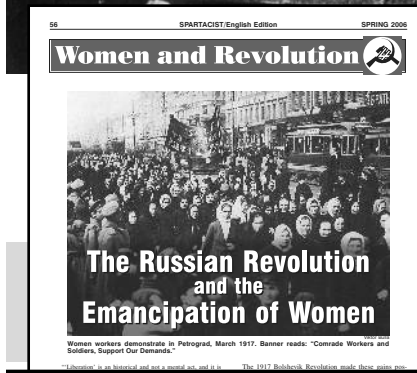
Militancy or Passivity?

In the months ahead, many SDS members expect to have jobs, either full-time or temporary, in factories, on campus,



Harlingue-Violet

Adult literacy class in the Soviet Union, early 1920s. Bolshevik Revolution opened the road for women to be integrated into political and economic life.



The Russian Revolution and the Emancipation of Women

in offices and hospitals, wherever labor struggles are going on. Those of us involved in assisting striking unions will be able to establish contacts with workers on the picket lines. As socialists, we must support the working class in its struggles and seek to raise consciousness, pointing out that male chauvinism divides the workers, that lower wages for women means lower wages for everyone. In Britain, where unions have calculated that wages would increase 11% if women received the same pay as men, equal pay for equal work has become a major union demand. In the U.S., a related process of awakening is going on.

Male chauvinism has made many women workers passive in accepting their lower wages and generally poorer working conditions. Many women are convinced that it isn't "ladylike" or "feminine" to be really militant, that political activity is only for men, that the picket line is too dangerous a place for women. These attitudes serve the bosses and must be fought. Radicals should encourage militancy among women workers and relate women's oppression to the oppression and alienation that all workers experience under capitalism. Thus, women's liberation has an important role to play in the struggles of the working class. Further, situations sometimes arise where the women—because they *are* more oppressed by poor working conditions, low wages and speed-up—are more militant than the men. Women are not pale, fragile, helpless creatures; as workers engaged in industrial production, they can wield workers' power!

V. Male Chauvinism in the Student Movement

The student movement is infected with male chauvinism, a bourgeois ideology, as is the rest of society under capitalism. Long ago most of us faced up to our own deeply imbedded racist attitudes and began to conquer them. Now we must root out our male chauvinism as carefully. Here we are dealing with the social

and psychological forms of discrimination rather than the economic aspects of male chauvinism. We must recognize also that no one—including our women members—is automatically exempt from male chauvinist attitudes. We must, by scrupulous attention to the *content* of a pro-women's liberation position, prevent the subject from becoming a bandwagon which intimidates free political debate in SDS the way that some Black hustlers have sought to racist-bait other radicals into accepting their positions as gospel.

Male chauvinism—perhaps a misleading term since it tends to obscure the fact that women's male chauvinist attitudes can oppress them or other women—has hurt the radical movement. Many potentially radical women are unwilling to join an organization which they believe is indifferent to women's oppression. It is a fact that a good number of the ersatz, crackpot and separatist tendencies in the existing women's liberation groups are a reaction to the male chauvinism in the student movement. These groups blur over class lines and stress "individual liberation" and other utopian schemes.

Many of the women who do enter radical politics tend to play supportive roles and are not encouraged to develop politically or exercise leadership. SDS must rid itself of male chauvinism and utilize the full talents of all its members.

VI. SDS and Special Groups

It is not enough to fight individual aspects of women's oppression within the labor movement and in SDS. Separate women's liberation groups offer an opportunity to tie together all aspects of women's oppression in the minds of their members, and hence to suggest a single solution—which is socialism. As Marxists, we recognize that special oppression calls for special defensive and combative organizations of the oppressed. For this reason, SDS should give critical support (determined by program) to Black groups which fight the special oppression of Black people; similarly SDS should sup-



Gordon Parks

Black women welders during World War II.

general—aspects not simply peculiar to capitalism, such as the need for a state power over society, the existence of a certain amount of religious superstition, what Marx called "the idiocy of rural life," etc.

No society could *today* be entirely free of the dark heritage of the family with its sexual oppression and shut-in, stultifying life for the children. What is most repugnant to any revolutionist about family life in the deformed workers' states, however, is the fact that the political elite ruling these societies presents the survival of an archaic and reactionary institution as a great achievement in building socialism! The Bolsheviks in Lenin's time never glorified the family as an instrument—real or potential—for revolutionary socialist struggle and development. As far as the miserably insufficient level of Russian economy and culture permitted, they passed laws and created institutions designed to free Soviet citizens, particularly the women and children, from the oppressive and stultifying influence of the family. All this was of course reversed with the advent of Stalin's bureaucratic regime, which continues on to this day. After wiping out the left wing of the Communist Party and stripping the Soviets of power, the Stalinized regime proceeded to make divorce more difficult, legalized abortion, enhanced parental authority, and worst of all called this adaptation to brutal barefoot Russian medievalism—socialism! For reasons which Stalinists find difficult to explain, the Soviet Great Leap Back-

Spartacus Youth Club Events

BAY AREA

Tuesday, April 8, 7 p.m.

Imperialism and War

SFSU

Cesar Chavez Student Center
Room: Rosa Parks D

Information and readings: (510) 839-0851
or e-mail: sycbayarea@sbcglobal.net

CHICAGO

Saturday, March 22, 3 p.m.

The Obama Campaign and the "End of Racism" Myth

222 S. Morgan Street, Suite 2C
(Buzzer 23)

(Near the UIC/Halsted stop on the Blue Line)
Information and readings: (312) 563-0441
or e-mail: chicagosyc@sbcglobal.net

NEW YORK CITY

Saturday, April 5, 4:30 p.m.

A Marxist Perspective on the Near East: For a Socialist Federation of the Near East!

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

VANCOUVER

Wednesday, March 26, 6 p.m.

Permanent Revolution vs. Bourgeois Nationalism
UBC Student Union Building, Rm. 212

Information and readings: (604) 687-0353
or e-mail: trotskyist_vancouver@shawcable.com

TORONTO

Monday, March 17, 12 p.m.

Film Showing and Presentation:
Mumia Abu-Jamal Is Innocent: Free Him Now! Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!

University of Toronto
Sidney Smith Hall, Room 2115
100 St. George Street

Monday, March 24, 7:30 p.m.

The Fight to Build a Revolutionary Workers Party in the Post-Soviet Period

University of Toronto
Sidney Smith Hall, Room 2112
100 St. George Street

Information and readings: (416) 593-4138
or e-mail: spartcan@on.aibn.com

port women’s groups which fight on the basis of a Marxist program for the special needs of women.

Armed with a more developed political and economic analysis of society, SDS members should be able to win the more serious groups away from petty-bourgeois amateur therapy sessions, liberalism, female separatism and vicarious anti-male terrorism, to a working-class perspective. Women’s liberation groups are a good arena for winning militant women over to SDS and to socialism.

VII. Program for Women’s Liberation

When SDS members make a political entry into a special group such as a women’s liberation group, they should be armed with a program that raises con-

sciousness by relating specific felt needs to the broader struggle for socialism. We carry through this program by raising a series of transitional demands—that is, demands which flow from the specific struggle but which lead the struggle to a higher level of militancy and political sophistication.

We move that SDS accept the following program for struggle and agitate around the following demands:

For the abolition of family restrictions:

- 1. Abolition of abortion laws; each woman must be free to make her own decisions.
- 2. Free abortions, as part of demand for free quality medical care for everybody, so poor women will have the same freedom of choice as middle-class women.

- 3. Freely available birth control devices and information.
- 4. Free full-time child-care facilities for all children, the expenses to be borne by the employer or the state. Free pre-natal, maternity and post-natal care with no loss in pay for time off.
- 5. Establishment of free voluntary cafeterias in the factories and other places of work.
- 6. Divorce at the request of either partner. Abolition of alimony. Expenses for children to be paid by the state.
- 7. Lower the legal age of adulthood to 16. State stipend for schooling or training for any child who wishes to leave home. Free education for all children, with housing, food and stipend. No *loco parentis*. Student-teacher-worker control of all schools and colleges.

- To fight the super-exploitation of women workers:
- 8. Full and equal pay for equal work.
- 9. Equal work: equal access to all job categories. Shorter work week with no loss in pay (“30 for 40”) to eliminate unemployment at the capitalists’ expense.
- To fight male chauvinism:
- 10. An end to all forms of discrimination—legal, political, social and cultural.
- SDS should seek the creation of a non-exclusionist class-conscious women’s liberation organization in which SDS members can participate and struggle on the basis of the above program. Toward this end, we should direct interested SDS members to seek to initiate, along with other radical women, a nationally-oriented women’s liberation publication. ■

MOVE...

(continued from page 2)

D.A. who prosecuted the MOVE 9 and Mumia Abu-Jamal, and is one of a number of leading figures in the Pennsylvania state government for whom the vendetta against MOVE and Mumia has played a key role in building their careers. His wife Marjorie Rendell sits on the Third Circuit Court of Appeals that is about to rule in Mumia’s appeal. Ronald Castille, chief justice of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, was the D.A. who prosecuted Ramona Africa and who fought Mumia’s appeals in the state courts. Longtime Philadelphia D.A. Lynne Abraham was the judge who in 1985 issued warrants for the arrest of MOVE members and the search of their Osage Avenue home, laying the basis for the cop massacre. Abraham, a staunch advocate of the racist death penalty, has fought to carry out Mumia’s legal lynching in the past 17 years.

The Partisan Defense Committee—a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League—has since 1986 been sending monthly stipends to the imprisoned MOVE members as part of the PDC’s program of support to class-war prisoners. We print below the text of a March 6 PDC letter to the Parole Board demanding the immediate and unconditional release of the MOVE prisoners. Letters demanding freedom for MOVE should be sent to the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole, 1101 South Front Street, Suite 5100, Harrisburg, PA 17104-2517. The names for each of the commissioners are at: www.pbpp.state.pa.us. Copies of letters should be sent to: William Phillips Africa, AM 4984, SCI-Dallas, 1000 Follies Road, Dallas, PA 18612-0286.

* * *

The Partisan Defense Committee joins with those supporting the release of the eight surviving political prisoners who have been collectively known as the MOVE 9. These men and women were victims of racist police brutality and they should not have spent 30 seconds in jail,

much less nearly 30 years in state prison. They are innocent of the crimes for which they were convicted and imprisoned.

After a yearlong siege, on August 8, 1978, an army of nearly 600 police surrounded the MOVE home to evict its defenseless residents. Three months before the attack MOVE had allowed the police to search their home, resulting in the removal of what were inoperable weapons. The police turned on “deluge guns” flooding the basement of the house and then unleashed a furious fusillade so intense that one of their own officers, James Ramp, was killed in the police cross fire. When the adults emerged, police publicly beat, dragged, kicked and stomped on Delbert Africa. The outrage sparked by Delbert’s savage beating, captured in slow motion on television news cameras, ultimately led to a federal civil rights lawsuit and indictments against three of the police attackers. Following the police assault, the police completely bulldozed the house, destroying not only evidence of their own wrongdoing, but proof that the MOVE members’ only “crime” was to survive.

The trial of the MOVE 9 was a travesty



13 May 1985: Black Democratic mayor Wilson Goode ordered Philly cops, aided by FBI, to bomb Osage Avenue MOVE home, killing eleven people and destroying entire black neighborhood.

of justice. At least eight witnesses confirmed that no gunshots came from the MOVE house. Three firemen said they did not know where the gunshots came from and had seen no MOVE members with guns. When weapons supposedly found at the MOVE home were brought to court, none of them had any fingerprints of the defendants on them and none of the MOVE prisoners were ever charged with illegal weapons possession. Despite contradictory ballistic and forensic testimony, all nine defendants were pro-

nounced guilty of third-degree murder, attempted murder and seven counts of aggravated assault. They were also convicted of conspiracy, a catchall charge used especially to prosecute people for their shared political beliefs when prosecutors are unable to prove that a criminal act was committed. After the trial, the presiding judge Edwin Malmel was asked “Who shot James Ramp?” His reply was, “I haven’t the faintest idea.”

The victimization of the MOVE 9 was part and parcel of a years long vendetta against MOVE and its supporters. In 1985 they watched in horror from their Pennsylvania prison cells as the Philadelphia police, in league with federal authorities, dropped a high-powered explosive bomb on MOVE’s Osage Avenue home, burning to death eleven black people, including five children, and leaving an entire black neighborhood in smoldering ruins.

It is an injustice that these men and women have been incarcerated at all. They are innocent survivors of premeditated police assaults. We are mindful that a common ruse for denying parole for those who have been falsely convicted is the claimed failure to show “remorse.” Having committed no crime, the imprisoned MOVE members have no reason to demonstrate any so-called “remorse.” We do not forget that Merle Africa died in prison in 1998 having undergone nearly two decades of wrongful imprisonment. We call for the immediate, unconditional release of Debbie Africa, Janine Africa, Janet Africa, Chuck Africa, Eddie Africa, Phil Africa, Delbert Africa and Mike Africa. ■

Join the Campaign to Free Mumia!

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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Jennifer Beach

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

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

Capitalism...

(continued from page 1)

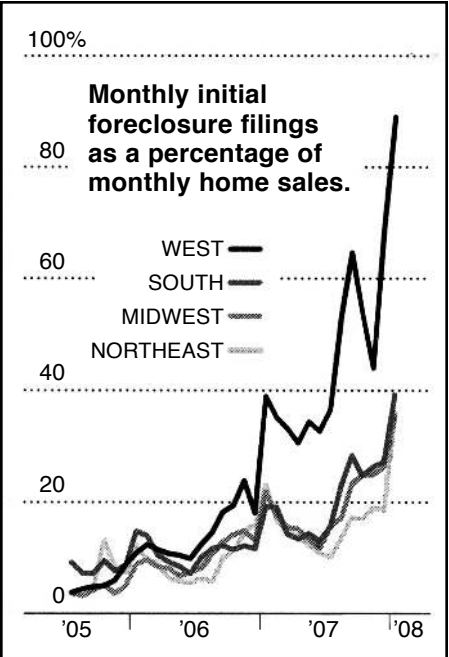
revolutionary party to lead the proletariat in the fight for working-class rule.

Financial Crisis Deepens

The current financial crisis was triggered by the collapse of the market for subprime mortgages. These are loans to families with low incomes and, in some cases, checkered credit histories that would in the past have disqualified them from home ownership. Bankers and other financial operators induced such families into “buying” rather than renting a house by offering them “teaser” loans with low

PART ONE

initial interest, no down payments and deferred repayment on principal. Now with rising interest rates along with higher property taxes and insurance premiums, many of these families, as well as many above the subprime category, are being hit with monthly payments they cannot afford. More than 1.8 million sub-



prime mortgages are scheduled to reset to higher interest rates this year and next.

Lending scams like subprime mortgages have especially targeted black, Latino and other minority communities. More than half of all black borrowers face such high-risk, high-cost loans. Even high-income blacks and Latinos are two to three times more likely to have subprime loans than comparable non-Latino white borrowers. A study by the National Community Reinvestment Coalition showed that black and Latino loan applicants were half as likely as whites to even be told by brokers what interest rates they would have to pay. One study concluded that “the current foreclosure crisis can be considered the greatest loss of wealth for communities and individuals of color in modern US history” (United for a Fair Economy, *Foreclosed: State of the Dream* 2008).

The U.S. “subprime mess,” as the business press now calls it, has roiled international financial markets since last August, when nearly the entire spectrum of credit markets seized up. Large firms found it almost impossible to borrow by issuing corporate bonds, and banks almost stopped lending to one another. Floyd Norris of the *New York Times* (10 August 2007) called it “the 21st-century equivalent of a run on a bank.”

Indeed, last September’s credit crisis triggered Britain’s first classic bank run in over a century, as long lines of frantic customers of Northern Rock clamored to withdraw their money, helping to bring that bank to its knees. Desperately trying to unfreeze the financial markets, central banks in the U.S. and Europe have granted over *half a trillion* dollars in loans to large banks. In a string of moves since last September, the U.S. Federal Reserve slashed the interest rate that banks charge one another for overnight loans from 5.25 percent to 3 percent. In this way the government is seeking to bail out those financial capitalists who bet

the wrong way on mortgage-backed securities. Wall Street financial journalist James Grant commented acidly on the Fed’s policy that “capitalism without financial failure is not capitalism at all, but a kind of socialism for the rich” (*New York Times*, 26 August 2007).

Another major factor feeding into the current economic crisis is the sky-high price of oil now hovering around its real (inflation-adjusted) historical peak. What we see here is the combined impact of the anarchy of the capitalist market with the extortionate practices of capitalist monopolies. During the 1990s the price of oil fell steadily, reaching a low point by the end of the decade. As a consequence, Exxon-Mobil and the other members of the Anglo-American oil cartel cut back in developing new oil fields and expanding refining capacity. Nonetheless, there is still a plentiful supply of oil in the ground that is readily extractable, especially in Saudi Arabia, by far the world’s biggest producer. But that oil is being deliberately withheld from the market by Exxon-Mobil et al. in league with U.S. imperialism’s client, the Saudi monarchy, and other member states of the OPEC oil cartel. At the same time, instability, graphically expressed by the bloody Iraq occupation, has served to drive up the price of oil. Meanwhile, the downward slide of the dollar against other world currencies has helped push up the price of oil (which is priced in dollars), in turn prompting a wave of speculative buying by bankers and other financial operators (AP, 3 March). As a result, working families are being wracked by skyrocketing heating fuel and gasoline prices, even though U.S. inventories are relatively high.

It is now widely recognized that the U.S. economy is tumbling into recession, as consumers slash spending and companies, finding it difficult or impossible to borrow, cut back investment and lay off workers. Since interest rate cuts began last September, the Standard & Poor’s 500-stock index has lost about 9 percent of its value. An economic downturn in the United States—which despite the erosion of its dominance over the past several decades is still responsible for about a quarter of the world’s output—would have devastating impact internationally, especially in semicolonial countries like Mexico.

Desperate to head off a recession, Democrats and Republicans in Congress voted to jump-start U.S. consumer spending by disbursing government payments totaling over \$100 billion. By proposing to stimulate the economy through subsidizing consumption, the bourgeoisie implicitly (and unconsciously) endorsed the following observation by Karl Marx in *Capital* (Volume III): “The ultimate reason for all real crises always remains the poverty and



Bengiveno/NY Times

Homeless families wait on Bronx sidewalk for emergency assignment to shelter, 2007.

restricted consumption of the masses as opposed to the drive of capitalist production to develop the productive forces as though only the absolute consuming power of society constituted their limit.”

For a Workers Government to Expropriate the Bourgeoisie!

Democratic presidential hopefuls Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton promise to produce a financial windfall by withdrawing many (but not all) troops from Iraq. That money, they say, could then be used to pay for improved health care, education and other services. This is a cynical lie. Imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism. The scramble for markets, natural resources and sources of cheap labor between the capitalist-imperialist powers necessarily produces a drive toward war—colonial war as well as wars among the imperialist powers themselves (e.g., World Wars I and II). Despite Obama’s early opposition to the invasion of Iraq, he and Clinton have repeatedly voted to finance that murderous occupation to the tune of hundreds of billions of dollars. Both call for escalating the war in Afghanistan and have made not-so-veiled threats of a possible military attack on Iran.

Calls for “Money for jobs and education, not for war” or tax-the-rich schemes are commonly put forward by phony “socialists” like the International Socialist Organization and Workers World Party. This only serves to reinforce the liberal illusion that the murderous, profit-driven capitalist system can be reformed to serve human needs by convincing or pressuring the bourgeois rulers to reorder their priorities. But the bourgeoisie’s top priority is to maintain and defend the capitalist system, which necessarily entails war, racist oppression and exploitation.

The enormous increase in the rate of exploitation of a generation of workers is

expressed in decades of giveback union contracts, two-tier wage systems and similar devices acceded to by the trade-union bureaucrats. As V. I. Lenin explained in *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1916), the bourgeoisie has cultivated a materially privileged social stratum—the labor bureaucracy—which while sitting atop the mass organizations of the working class, serves to ensure the subordination of the workers to the interests of the class enemy of the proletariat. In the U.S., this collaboration with the capitalist rulers is exemplified by the labor bureaucrats’ overwhelming fealty to the Democratic Party, of which they are an integral part. No less than the Republicans, the Democrats are a party of and for the capitalist class—the difference being that while the Republicans make no bones about openly trying to oppress working people, the Democrats do the same while bemoaning the consequences or proclaiming themselves “friends of labor.”

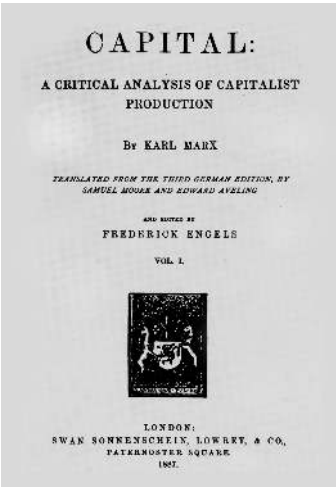
The pro-capitalist trade-union bureaucrats have by and large renounced the class-struggle methods that built the mass industrial unions in the 1930s, such as mass picketing, plant occupations and secondary labor strikes (refusing to handle struck goods). The labor tops did everything in their power to isolate major recent strikes that, moreover, had broad popular support, notably the 2005 New York City transit strike and the supermarket workers strike in Southern California in 2003-04.

It is necessary to forge a new leadership of the unions based on the understanding that there are two decisive classes in capitalist society, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, whose interests are irreconcilably opposed. Such a leadership, fighting for the unity of the multi-racial proletariat in hard class struggle, would link those struggles to defense of the social interests of black people, Latinos and other oppressed minorities. The organized workers movement must demand full citizenship rights for all immigrants, documented or undocumented, to unite the working class regardless of its origins; must fight for labor/black mobilizations to stop the KKK and other racist terrorists; must fight to organize the open shop South, where “right to work” laws have historically been backed by Klan terror. Proletarian-centered actions are necessary to fight against U.S. imperialism’s military depredations, such as the occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan, and combat the intensified state repression carried out in the name of the “war on terror”—a war on immigrants, black people and labor at home and an all-purpose pretense for imperialist war and plunder internationally.

A class-struggle leadership of the unions would fight for a series of transitional demands, which start from the current consciousness of wide layers of the working class and their daily struggles against the capitalists and lead to the program of proletarian revolution. The fight to mobilize labor in struggle for its class interests must include the fight for a shorter workweek with no loss in pay in order to fight unemployment and the bosses’ union-busting drive for “two-tier” contracts; for union defense guards against the scabherders; for mass picketing and plant occupations to win strikes

Progress

Boom-and-bust cycles outlined by Karl Marx demonstrate fundamental irrationality of capitalist system of production. Unemployed stand in bread line after 1929 stock market crash.



European Picture Service



Victory to UAW American Axle Strike!

MARCH 10—Some 3,650 United Auto Workers (UAW) members are on strike against American Axle & Manufacturing Holdings (AAM). They walked out of five plants in Michigan and upstate New York on February 26 in a struggle against massive cuts demanded by the auto bosses. The strike has reverberated throughout the industry, with parts shortages forcing General Motors to idle or partially shut down 29 factories and other suppliers to cut production.

Backed by Detroit's Big Three automakers and Wall Street, AAM, a profitable company spun off of GM, wants to slash wages and benefits by nearly *two-thirds*, including reducing wages down to \$14 per hour. The union battle at American Axle takes place as the Big Three seek to buy out tens of thousands of senior workers, which would further divide and weaken the UAW by creating a smaller, low-wage workforce. Striking AAM workers are fighting to put a halt to the endless concessions repeatedly accepted by the UAW tops. Fed up with givebacks, one striker at the Detroit Gear & Axle plant picket line told *Workers Vanguard*: "Now that we are out, we're not going to back down."

GM boasts that its large inventory of pickups and SUVs will allow it to withstand a prolonged strike. Against the automakers' hardball tactics, the UAW and the entire labor movement have to revive the class-struggle methods that built the unions in the first place—from mass UAW pickets shutting down production to the Teamsters and other unions hot-cargoing stockpiled car inventory! But to wage such a fight against the automakers also requires a political struggle against the pro-capitalist union misleaders who cravenly abide by the bosses' rules and rely on protectionist appeals to capitalist politicians, particularly the Democrats. This has led to the decline of the UAW and the union movement as a whole.

The auto bosses smell blood in no small part due to the abject capitulations of the UAW tops. Joining the companies in railing against "unfair" competition, union officials routinely ram through givebacks with the lie that they will "save American jobs." Racist, chauvinist protectionism scapegoats foreign workers when the real culprits are the union-busting, profit-hungry American capitalists.

A mere 40 miles from American



WV Photo

Axle's Detroit plant is a non-union AAM plant in Oxford. The key to the survival of the UAW is organizing the large and growing number of unorganized auto workers *in the U.S.*, mainly concentrated in the South. Such an organizing drive would require the union to take up the struggle against black oppression, a cornerstone of American

capitalism, as well as fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants. The way forward is to forge international solidarity with workers abroad and unity of the multiracial working class at home, alongside the struggle to replace the current labor misleaders with a class-struggle leadership. *Victory to the UAW strike!*

instead of bowing to the bosses' laws.

To forge such a leadership requires a *political* fight within the labor movement to sweep away all wings of the pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy. This is integrally linked to the fight for a workers party—like Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik Party that led the Russian Revolution of 1917—to provide revolutionary lead-

argue that real wages for most people did increase during the boom years of the late 1990s. But that was nowhere near enough to reverse the long-term immiseration of the American working class. In 2000, after nine years of an economic expansion, the real average annual income of workers in their twenties with a high school-only education was *16 percent less* than what their

lute superiority in armed force on the global level. The share of military spending in the U.S. gross domestic product declined from close to 5 percent in 1992 to 3 percent in 2000. Nonetheless, in that latter year the Pentagon budget of \$300 billion was greater than the combined total military spending of all other members of NATO as well as Russia and all

ment spending (as a proportion of total national output) for education, transportation, scientific research and environmental protection.

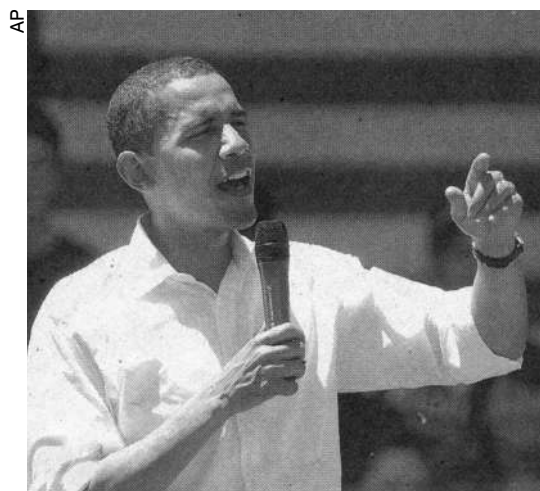
Why were the Clintonite New Democrats able to reduce a wide range of social programs beneficial to working people? A key was the steady decline in the strength of the organized labor movement over the previous decade and a half, beginning under the previous Democratic administration of Jimmy Carter in the late 1970s. As the sharp world economic downturn of 1974-75 revealed the weakened position of American capitalism vis-à-vis its West European and Japanese rivals, the U.S. ruling class moved to restore profitability by intensifying the rate of exploitation. Corporate managers demanded and got from the servile, pro-capitalist AFL-CIO bureaucracy give-back contracts and two-tier wage systems with lower pay scales for newly hired younger workers. The smashing of the PATCO air traffic controllers union in 1981—conceived by Democrat Jimmy Carter and implemented by Ronald Reagan—was the model of what the bourgeoisie had in store for the labor movement. In turn, the supine surrender of the labor tops to Reagan's busting of PATCO was a badge of infamy that became a model for the union tops' response to the capitalists' drive to gut the labor movement.

During the 16 years between the inaugurations of Carter and Bill Clinton, the unionization of the labor force declined from 26 to 18 percent. It now stands at 12 percent, and at only 7.5 percent in the private sector. Responsibility for the de-unionization of the American working class lies with the defeatist and treacherous policies of the labor bureaucracy, aptly

continued on page 10



Bill Clinton signing 1996 bill to "end welfare as we know it," consigning millions of poor and black people, especially women, to the scrap heap. In *The Audacity of Hope*, Obama declared that Clinton was "right about welfare."



ership to the struggles of the workers in the fight for socialist revolution and the building of a workers state where those who labor rule.

The Clinton Era Economy and Its Liberal Apologists

Obama, Clinton and the trade-union bureaucrats portray the years of the Bill Clinton presidency as a golden age of successful economic stewardship. Paul Krugman, probably the country's most widely read liberal economist, painted a glowing picture of the U.S. economy in the late 1990s: "The economy was booming, jobs were plentiful, and millions of people were getting rich. Budget deficits had given way to record surpluses.... The future seemed almost incredibly bright" (preface to *The Great Unraveling: Losing Our Way in the New Century* [2003]).

It didn't look that bright to those less favored. During the 1990s the U.S. continued to experience at an accelerated pace ever-widening economic and social inequalities. In 1991 under Bush I, the average corporate CEO (chief executive officer) made 113 times more than the average worker. In 2001, when Clinton turned over the White House to Bush II, corporate CEOs were making *449 times* more than the average worker!

Liberal publicists for the Democrats can

parents had earned three decades before.

Underlying the fiscal turnaround of the late 1990s (which turned out to be short-lived) was a world-historic defeat for the international proletariat—the counter-revolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union and the East and Central European workers states. In 1991-92, the Soviet Union, which had been politically undermined for decades by Stalinist bureaucratic rule, succumbed to the pressures of world imperialism, triggering a catastrophic economic collapse and corresponding social degradation in the former Soviet bloc that is historically unprecedented in any advanced industrial society. From 1989 to 1994, male life expectancy in Russia dropped by over six years to 57.6, and from 1991 to 2001, deaths exceeded births by nearly seven million.

Triumphantly proclaiming the "death of communism," the men who run Wall Street and the Fortune 500 corporations now believe they can do anything to the workers, the poor, the elderly, the black and Latino communities without the slightest danger of serious social turmoil, not to speak of revolution. As masters of the "world's only superpower," the U.S. ruling class was able during the 1990s to reduce the country's military expenditure while still maintaining abso-

countries in the Near East.

There was, however, *no* "peace dividend" for American working people. Quite the contrary. The budget surpluses of the latter Clinton years were achieved in part by substantially *reducing domestic social programs*, especially those benefiting the poorest sections of the populace. Between 1992 and 2000, as Clinton did away with "welfare as we know it," the share of federal government spending for programs labeled "income security" (unemployment insurance, welfare, food stamps and other poverty programs) declined from over 3 percent to 2.6 percent of the country's gross domestic product. Also reduced was federal govern-

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Capitalism...

(continued from page 9)

described by the early 20th-century American socialist Daniel De Leon as the “labor lieutenants of the capitalist class.”

Against Chauvinist Protectionism! For International Labor Solidarity!

The economic slowdown in the U.S. has been accompanied by increasing calls for chauvinist protectionism that are pushed by both Democratic politicians and the trade-union bureaucracy. In pushing trade protectionism against China, the labor tops combine anti-Communism with flag-waving national chauvinism. During the Cold War era, the AFL-CIO bureaucracy was among the most rabid supporters of American imperialism against the Soviet Union. Today, these labor misleaders are directing their virulent hostility toward the People’s Republic of China in the name of “workers’ rights.”



UAW
During 1937 Flint sit-down strikes, UAW workers occupied GM plants. Such class-struggle methods are needed to revitalize the unions.

China is not a capitalist but a workers state, albeit one that was bureaucratically deformed from its inception. The fact that capitalist rule was overthrown in China by the 1949 Revolution, leading to the building of a collectivized economy, represents a historic gain for the working class internationally. Despite inroads of “market reforms,” the core of China’s economy remains collectivized, including in the state ownership of the banking system. While the U.S. is moving into a recession amid fears that this will drag down the rest of the capitalist world, China has maintained a high level of eco-

nomical growth—11 percent last year. At the same time, a deepgoing and prolonged downturn in the U.S., especially if accompanied by trade-protectionist measures, would have a negative impact on China’s economy. But unlike semicolonial capitalist countries like Mexico, China has the capacity to counteract a steep decline in export earnings by rechanneling investment for domestic purposes. Addressing this question, the London *Economist* (5 January) pointed out: “China’s economy is driven not by exports but by investment, which accounts for over 40% of GDP [gross domestic product].” The *Economist* cites a study by Dragonomics, a Beijing-based research firm, indicating that only 7 percent of total investment is directly tied to export production. The aim of the U.S. and other imperialists is to destroy the Chinese workers state and restore bourgeois rule in order to turn the Chinese mainland into one gigantic sweatshop for the generation of capitalist profits. The international working class must stand for the unconditional military defense of China against imperialist attack from without and counter-revolution from within. At the same time, we call for proletarian political revolution to oust the parasitic and nationalist Stalinist bureaucrats and to establish a regime based on workers democracy and revolutionary internationalism.

Chauvinist protectionism—this time mainly directed against Mexico—was front and center in the Democratic primary campaign in Ohio, where both Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama railed against NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) and promised to renegotiate its terms with Canada and Mexico. Part of the Midwest “rust belt,” Ohio has experienced a decades-long decline in manufacturing employment; 200,000 jobs were lost in the last seven years alone. In their present-day nationalist opposition to NAFTA, Hillary Clinton (who earlier supported her husband’s signing of NAFTA) and Barack Obama portray the U.S., the world’s most powerful imperialist state, as the victim of this agreement, rather than semicolonial Mexico. For their part, the misleaders of the AFL-CIO and Change to Win trade-union federations blame workers in other countries for “stealing” U.S. jobs and argue that by “protecting” American industry from foreign competition, American workers will benefit and the outflow of jobs from the U.S. will be stopped. This is a lie. The capitalists will do what they need to do in order to increase their profit margins—by intensifying exploitation of workers at home and/or by exporting their capital, thus moving jobs to countries where labor costs are cheaper. In opposition to protectionism, the labor movement must fight for international labor solidarity, linking the economic and other struggles of workers in the U.S. with those of workers around the world, particularly in



Francisco Olvera
January 31: Workers and peasants demonstrate in downtown Mexico City against NAFTA “free trade” agreement.

such Third World countries as Mexico. What is ultimately necessary is the sweeping away of the global capitalist order through a series of socialist revolutions that establish an *international* planned economy. Protectionism is deadly poison for workers in the U.S., not least because it is based on the lie that their enemies are the workers of other countries while serving to conceal the fact that it is the capitalists and their system that are responsible for the destitution of the working class. When NAFTA was being negotiated in 1991 under the Republican presidency of George Bush I, the Grupo Espartaquista de México, the Spartacist League/U.S. and the Trotskyist League of Canada—sections of the International Communist League—issued a joint statement, “Stop U.S. ‘Free Trade’ Rape of Mexico,” explaining that “Yankee imperialism wants to turn Mexico into a giant *maquiladora*, or free trade zone—‘free’ of unions, and ‘free’ for capital.” At the same time, we pointed out that the “main opposition to the trade pact has come from the openly racist and protectionist AFL-CIO bureaucracy, which treacherously sets U.S. workers against their Mexican and Canadian class brothers and sisters” (WV No. 530, 5 July 1991).

A few years later, NAFTA was implemented by Bush’s Democratic successor, Bill Clinton. Indeed, this “free trade” pact was a centerpiece of his international economic policies. Since then the effects of NAFTA have been, as we warned, disastrous for the workers, peasants and urban poor of Mexico. Given the backwardness of Mexican agriculture and the inability of the peasants to compete with U.S. agribusiness, NAFTA has caused millions of peasants to be condemned to misery, while millions more try to survive by emigrating to the U.S. or to the big cities of Mexico, where they join the huge army that makes up the “informal economy.” Labor *should* be mobilized in opposition to NAFTA—but not on the basis of the “stars and stripes” chauvinism and racist job-trusting protectionism exemplified by the Teamster bureaucracy’s years-long campaign against Mexican truckers using U.S. highways. We oppose NAFTA as a “free trade” rape of Mexico under which the U.S. rulers are increasing their profits and power through the superexploitation of Mexican workers while also bringing about the economic ruination of Mexican peasants.

Labor Must Fight for Immigrant Rights!

Over the last several years, the bourgeois rulers have intensified their drive against immigrants; deportations have been on the rise while agents of the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (I.C.E.) have carried out brutal anti-immigrant raids at homes and workplaces. Last year’s Republican debates saw the candidates competing with each other over who could be the most racist and anti-immigrant bigot. As for the Democrats, both Obama and Clinton voted in May 2006 for the Senate’s “Comprehensive Immigration Reform

Act,” which would have set up a “guest worker” program, the modern equivalent of indentured servitude, tying immigrants’ visas to their employers and depriving them of any rights. Obama and Clinton also voted in September 2006 for the “Secure Fence Act” mandating the construction of a 700-mile wall along the U.S./Mexico border. For their part, the labor bureaucrats have not waged any real struggle against the anti-immigrant drive. As the SL/U.S. and the Grupo Espartaquista de México declared in a joint statement printed in WV No. 867 (31 March 2006): “Instead of mobilizing union power in defense of immigrants, the union tops embrace one or another of the capitalists’ anti-immigrant ‘reforms,’ particularly favoring their so-called ‘friends’ in the capitalist Democratic Party. This policy of class collaboration, sacrificing labor’s interests on the altar of capitalist profitability, flows from the labor bureaucracy’s support for the capitalist system and its identification with the ‘national interests’ of U.S. imperialism. This program has led to defeat after defeat, leaving the U.S. labor movement weaker today than at any time since the early 1900s.”



AP
Undated photo of anti-China UAW protesters in Washington, D.C. Anti-Communist protectionism is poison for U.S. workers.

Change to Win, which includes the Teamsters, as well as the SEIU service workers and other heavily immigrant unions, has pushed immigration “reform” bills with provisions to expand so-called “guest worker” programs. While the Change to Win leaders’ rivals in the AFL-CIO bureaucracy oppose expanding “guest worker” programs, they do not fight for citizenship rights for immigrants or even condemn plans to further militarize the border. It is in the vital interest of the U.S. labor movement to mobilize in defense of immigrants, who form a key and vibrant component of the U.S. working class and a living bridge to the struggles of work-

SPARTACIST LEAGUE/U.S.

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Defend FMPR Teachers Union!

MARCH 11—The Federación de Maestros de Puerto Rico (FMPR), representing some 42,000 teachers, waged a courageous nationwide strike from February 21 to March 5. After working without a contract for more than two years, the teachers struck against a union-busting school privatization plan and against wages that are *less than half* the average salary of U.S. mainland teachers, who are themselves miserably underpaid. Teachers and students in Puerto Rico endure overcrowded classes, crumbling buildings, outdated textbooks or no books at all and school bathrooms without toilet paper. The strikers' demands for improvement of these intolerable conditions were met with the U.S. imperialists' racist contempt for the schoolchildren in America's Puerto Rican colony, which mirrors the contempt the rulers show for poor, working-class and especially black and Latino children "at home."

At the peak of the strike, the union effectively shut down 80 percent of the schools across the island. Over 8,000 union members, a reported 80 percent of whom were women, mobilized on the picket lines, along with many supporters, including a contingent of union truck drivers at one school. Students conducted a one-day strike at the University of Puerto Rico in solidarity with the striking teachers. Indeed, the strike had broad support from the population: on its third day, 84 percent of elementary and high school students were absent from school. In response, the government threatened to fail students for the year unless they crossed the picket lines.

In defiance of the slave-labor Law 45, which forbids waging or even "promoting" strike action by public workers, the union had to go up against the government, its courts, and scabherding police who busted open the head of one picketer on the first day and brutally assaulted many others. At least 30 people were arrested in the strike, and charges are pending against four. We demand: **Drop all the charges now!**

The Spartacist League/U.S. called upon all workers, especially in the belly of the U.S. imperialist beast, to support the FMPR strike and to oppose the government's union-busting campaign. As we wrote in "Defend Puerto Rican Teachers Strike!" (WV No. 909, 29 February):

"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."

Scandalously, in the face of such struggle, the bureaucrats of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU, affiliated with the Change to Win federation) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT, affiliated with the AFL-CIO) did everything in their power to knife the FMPR union. The SEIU is represented by their Puerto Rican affiliate, the Sindicato Puertorriqueño de Maestros (SPM). The SPM in turn is a subsidiary of the Asociación de Maestros de Puerto Rico (AMPR), which was founded as a professional organization of *principals and supervisors*. In January, SEIU and AMPR tops announced that the SPM would call for a union election to oust the FMPR. The government decertified the FMPR a few days later.

On March 5, in the face of scabbing organized with the help of the SEIU lackeys under the protection of the riot police,

Pro-Imperialist SEIU, AFT Tops Knife Puerto Rico Strikers

the union voted to call a strike "recess" without a contract. The government now promises to halt its plans to turn 500 schools into privatized charter schools, no reprisals against strikers, and a \$250

"out of 27,000 associates [of the AMPR], eight are on the picket line" (*El Vocero*, 26 February). In an undated letter to Secretary of Education Rafael Aragunde posted on AMPR's Web site, Díaz called



Teachers take to the streets in San Juan, February 17. Banner reads: "Contract or Strike!"

monthly increase to the \$1,500 base salary, effective this July. However, the FMPR still faces the government attempt to destroy the union through decertification, which the union is appealing.

According to an article by Juan Gonzalez in the 29 February *Daily News*, SEIU vice president Dennis Rivera said he met with Puerto Rican Governor Aníbal Acevedo Vilá "maybe 20 times," while denying claims that the government gave its support to the SEIU's raiding expedition against the FMPR in exchange for Rivera's offer to make \$3-4 million in contributions to the governor. FMPR president Rafael Feliciano Hernández told *Workers Vanguard* that on February 28 the Department of Education and the union had almost reached a settlement. Feliciano said that government officials informed the FMPR that SEIU representatives were in contact that same day with the Puerto Rican government to lobby against the government's settling with the union.

In the first days of the strike, the SEIU leadership's minions in the AMPR took a clear side—as scabs! Aida Díaz, president of the AMPR, denounced the strike, claiming the strike vote itself was illegitimate. Then Díaz despicably bragged that

on the capitalist government to protect the safety of scabs.

The AFT's role has been no less treacherous. The FMPR voted in 2004 to disaffiliate from the AFT. In response, the AFT sued the FMPR in 2005, taking the union to the courts of the capitalist-imperialist rulers, in an unsuccessful bid

to overturn the decision to disaffiliate from the AFT. *This is class treason!* This is the same imperialist ruling class whose FBI thugs killed Puerto Rican independence militant Filiberto Ojeda Ríos in 2005 and which continues its long vendetta against *independentistas*. The Spartacist League opposes on principle suing the unions in the courts of the class enemy, whose only interest in intervening is to impede and punish unions' efforts to wage class struggle.

In mobilizing scabs against the FMPR, the pro-capitalist union bureaucracies are dutifully doing the dirty work of the U.S. imperialist oppressors. These labor lieutenants of capital also work overtime for class peace at home, largely by tying workers to the Democratic Party of racism and imperialist war. The AFT tops have a long history of being especially active social-democratic front men for U.S. imperialism. In the 1980s, the leaders of the United Federation of Teachers (UFT), which is the New York local of the AFT, directly sponsored Polish Solidarność, the only "union" in history that had the blessing of the Pope, Ronald Reagan and the CIA.

The Spartacist League was in the forefront in opposing Solidarność's counter-revolutionary bid for power, which aimed to overthrow the Polish deformed workers state. As part of our fight in defense of the Soviet degenerated workers state, as well as Poland and the other deformed workers states in East and Central Europe, we organized a demonstration outside the UFT's New York headquarters against Solidarność in 1981. We fight for the unconditional military defense of the remaining deformed workers states—China, Cuba, North Korea and Vietnam—against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution. At the same time, we call for workers political revolution to oust the nationalist Stalinist bureaucrats and replace them with regimes based on workers democracy and revolutionary internationalism. This is roughly analogous to how workers must defend their unions against the capitalist rulers while fighting for a new, class-struggle leadership.

Puerto Rican workers, both on the island and in the U.S., are exploited as a low-wage labor pool by the capitalist ruling class. Some 48 percent of the island's population lives below the poverty line. Second-class "citizens" of the U.S. with no right to vote in federal elections and no voting representatives in Congress, they are politically dispossessed and suffer the classic national oppression of a colonized people. While

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New York City demonstration at Puerto Rican government offices in defense of striking Puerto Rican teachers, March 4.

