

Democrats, Republicans Fleece Working People

Financial Crisis: Bankruptcy of Capitalism

OCTOBER 6—In the biggest bailout in U.S. history, the House of Representatives voted to allocate some \$700 billion to buy out the “toxic assets” of banks and other major financial institutions. Aptly dubbed “cash for trash” by international bankers, under the bailout deal the government will pay a premium for “trash” on bank ledgers, centrally mortgage-backed securities that high-rolling financiers bought en masse in speculative schemes to cash in on the U.S. housing market. When that bubble burst, bankers began to sharply cut back lending to businesses, consumers and even to each other, threatening to trigger an even deeper economic crisis. While cynically decrying Wall Street “greed,” the Republicans and Democrats came to the rescue with their near-trillion dollar subsidy in tax dollars to compensate for the losses of the banking and financial looters. The deal gives virtually unlimited authority for doling out billions to Wall Street fat cats to Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson, who made close to a half-billion dollars during the boom times in housing in his former capacity as head of Goldman Sachs!

Raising the spectre of the Great Depression, bourgeois economists and media pundits insisted that the Wall Street bailout was the price that everyone had to pay for restoring stability. But no one really believes that the bailout will do much for the economy; the stock market continues to plunge as credit tightens even further. You don’t have to watch *The Sopranos* to know extortion when you see it.

The working class, poor and oppressed have plenty to fear as this crisis is being played out on their backs. Mortgage foreclosures are sweeping the country at a rate not seen since the 1930s Depression. The wholesale destruction of pension programs now means that many are also seeing the retirement monies that they invested in stock market and other accounts go up in smoke. An article in the *New York Times* (30 September) suggested that people facing retirement consider working a few years longer to let the “magic of the market place” work its supposed wonders. A few days later, it was announced that September saw the biggest monthly job loss—159,000—in five years, coming on top of some 600,000 jobs that have been lost since the beginning of this year alone. Some 6.1 million people are working part-time because their hours were cut or they couldn’t find a full-time job. And for those who still have a job, it’s another day older and deeper in debt trying to make ends meet—paying the rent or mortgage, groceries, credit cards and other debts, gas and car payments.



Chinn/Chronicle

Above: Foreclosed family’s last goodbye to Oakland home. Below: Bank run on Indymac in Pasadena, California, July 14.



Reuters

Across the country, working people are enraged at seeing their tax dollars going to line the pockets of those responsible for their ruin. Populist appeals to this anger came less from the Democrats, who generally posture as the “friends” of the “little guy,” than from Republicans in Congress. The Republicans’ votes initially meant the defeat of the bailout package, leading to the largest one-day point drop in the Dow Jones stock index in history. The Republican rants against “big government” have long been the code word in this country for slashing any and all known social programs

benefiting the working class, black people, immigrants, the poor, the sick and the aged.

Since the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92, America’s rulers have reveled in the supposed “death of communism” as they increasingly savaged the unions, drove up the rate of exploitation of the working class and made life unlivable for the poor, particularly the masses of dispossessed black people in the inner cities. Now Republican Congressmen present the government bailout of those who massively enriched themselves on the backs of the working class and poor as, in

the words of Texas Republican Jeb Hensarling, “the slippery slope to socialism”!

The current financial crisis *is* a compelling argument for a thoroughgoing socialist revolution in this country to seize the banks, the factories, mines, mills and other means of production from the hands of the capitalists who have appropriated and squandered the wealth produced by the working class. Contrary to social-democratic reformists, like the International Socialist Organization (ISO), whose call to nationalize the banks is its own version of a government bailout, we’re not talking about compensating those who have driven this country to ruin. The ISO bleats, “What’s really required in this crisis is an entirely different kind of government intervention” (*Socialist Worker* online, 1 October). What’s *really* needed is an entirely different kind of government, a government by and for the working class. Capitalism cannot be defeated short of the proletarian seizure of state power, which will abolish the private ownership of the means of production and institute a planned socialist economy. Only then will the wealth and productive capacity of society be used to serve the needs of the majority, not the profits of the few.

The working class is the only objectively revolutionary class in capitalist society; with its hands on the means of production, it has the social power and interest in sweeping away this deeply inhumane system through socialist revolution. The fundamental problem, though, is political consciousness. It is commonplace for American workers to identify themselves as “middle class.” This false consciousness is transmitted to the working class by the pro-capitalist trade-union bureaucracy and reinforced by the reformist left, which either openly or backhandedly gives support to “lesser evil” capitalist politicians. Working people need their own party, a revolutionary workers party to give conscious leadership to the struggles of the working class not only to improve its present conditions but to do away with the entire system of capitalist wage slavery. We are opposed on principle to any political support to any capitalist politician—Barack Obama, John McCain or Cynthia McKinney—Democrat, Republican, Green or “Independent.” Break with the Democrats! For a workers party!

The Shackles of Class Collaboration

Declaring that “Congress must absolutely insure that the administration’s plan is not just bailing out Wall Street, but also responds to the real pain on Main

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Those Who Labor Must Rule!



TROTSKY

Trotsky to defend the program of Bolshevism (i.e., genuine Marxism). We print below “A Great Achievement,” by Trotsky, co-leader with V.I. Lenin of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, announcing the Fourth International’s founding. The piece originally appeared in the October 1938 issue of *New Internationalist*; it is reprinted from the *Writings of Leon Trotsky (1937-38)*.

Trotsky was instrumental, along with Lenin and other Bolshevik leaders, in the founding of the Third (Communist) International in 1919. World War I had exposed the complete bankruptcy of the Second International, whose sections—with such notable exceptions as the Russian, Serbian and Bulgarian parties—betrayed Marxism by supporting their own bourgeoisies in the war. Meanwhile, the October Revolution was met with a bloody civil war, where the forces of counterrevolution were allied with 14 invading capitalist powers. Trotsky led the Red Army to victory in the Civil War. But the Soviet workers state was bled white, many of its best proletarian fighters having fallen in the struggle to defend the Revolution. By 1923, the Bolsheviks were also faced with the failure of socialist revolutions in the West, especially in Germany. It was under these dire conditions that a conservative, nationalist bureaucratic caste emerged, effecting a political counter-revolution in 1923-24 and consolidating power in the Soviet Union.

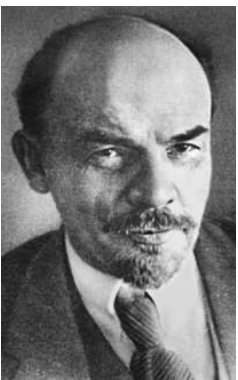
Against the Stalinist dogma put forward in late 1924 of “socialism in one country,” which liquidated the program of the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat, Trotsky and the Left Opposition fought for Leninist internationalism. In retaliation, a series of Stalinist bureaucratic measures would lead, by 1928, to Trotsky’s exile to Alma-Ata and his expulsion from the Soviet Union in February 1929.

But at the 1928 Sixth World Congress of the Comintern held in Moscow, American delegate James P. Cannon and Canadian delegate Maurice Spector read copies of Trotsky’s Critique of the Congress’ draft program, published later in *The Third International After Lenin*. It was a searing indictment not only of the policies of the Stalinist bureaucracy within the USSR, but also of its disastrous policies internationally. It dealt in particular with the lessons of the Chinese Revolution of 1925-27, with Stalin & Co.’s policy of liquidation of the Chinese Communist Party into the bourgeois-nationalist Guomindang, which in turn resulted in the slaughter of tens of thousands of Communists and trade unionists.

Trotsky’s Critique won Cannon and his allies to the Left Opposition, for which they were expelled from the American Communist Party in October 1928. The direct corollary to “socialism in one country” was the transformation of the Comintern from an instrument of world revolution into an instrument of the nationalist policies of the Kremlin Stalinist bureaucracy. In 1930, the Inter-

national Left Opposition was founded in order to wage a factional struggle to restore the Third International to its revolutionary purpose. But by 1933, Stalin’s Comintern could not be awakened by what Trotsky called “the thunder of fascism”—the victory of Hitler’s Nazis without a shot being fired by the powerful, pro-socialist German workers movement.

When this catastrophe did not give rise to outrage, or even significant dissent, within the ranks of the Third International, Trotsky concluded that that body had proved itself utterly dead as a force for revolution. He called for the building of a new, Fourth International. In 1935, the Third International at its Seventh Congress explicitly codified its program of class collaboration with the policy of the “People’s Front.” The Stalinized



LENIN

The same could be said of the Civil War.... “But now my work is ‘indispensable’ in the full sense of the word. There is no arrogance in this claim at all. The collapse of the two Internationals has posed a problem which none of the leaders of these Internationals is at all equipped to solve.”

In 1940, the dirty work of a Stalinist assassin would finally silence this great revolutionary. But it could not obliterate his massive volume of revolutionary work, including the construction of the Fourth International. Indeed, Trotsky’s final fight was against a petty-bourgeois minority in the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) that, as the Second World War got under way, wanted to jettison the program of unconditional military defense of the Soviet degenerated workers state.

Unlike the Second and Third Internationals, the Fourth International never betrayed; it was destroyed in the early 1950s by the liquidationist forces led by Michel Pablo. Faced with the onset of the imperialist Cold War and the creation of Stalinist-ruled deformed workers states in East and Central Europe, the Pabloites denied the need for a Trotskyist vanguard. The Pabloites looked to the Stalinists, social democrats and, eventually, Third World nationalists, arguing that they could be pressured to outline a “roughly” revolutionary course. The struggle against Pabloism in the Fourth International was led by Cannon, albeit partially, belatedly and on the SWP’s own national terrain. The SWP would later take quite another tack, that of seeking “convergence” with the Pabloites in the 1963 “reunification,” which formed the “United Secretariat” (USec). It is beyond the scope of this introduction to deal in a substantive or thorough fashion with the post-World War II Pabloite degeneration of the Fourth International. We refer readers to “Genesis of Pabloism” (*Spartacist* No. 21, Fall 1972), *Prometheus Research Series* No. 4, “Yugoslavia, East Europe and the Fourth International: The Evolution of Pabloist Liquidationism” (March 1993).

The forebears of the Spartacist League, the Revolutionary Tendency (RT), waged a fight within the SWP against, among other things, its perversion of revolutionary Trotskyism in order to unify with Pablo and his ilk. For this, the RT was bureaucratically expelled from the SWP, which quickly degenerated from centrism into outright reformism (see our 1984 pamphlet *The Socialist Workers Party: An Obituary*).

Comrade Trotsky insisted that revolutionaries must swim against the stream, as indeed he did and as we strive to do in order to *reforge a Fourth International that Trotsky would recognize as his own*.

* * *

When these lines appear in the press, the conference of the Fourth International will probably have concluded its labors. The calling of this conference is a major

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Founding of Fourth International at 1938 World Congress announced in *Quatrième Internationale* in France, Russian-language *Bulletin of the Opposition (Bolshevik-Leninist)* and *Socialist Appeal* in U.S.

Comintern went on to play an aggressive counterrevolutionary role in the Spanish Civil War, slaughtering revolutionary fighters in order to appease the “democratic” imperialists and head off proletarian revolution in Spain.

The founding conference of the Fourth International was held in Périgny, France, on the eve of the inter-imperialist Second World War, as the Trotskyist movement faced murderous repression internationally at the hands of capitalist regimes of all stripes, from fascist to bourgeois-democratic, and the Stalinists. The conference adopted as its basic programmatic document Trotsky’s “The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International,” popularly known as the Transitional Program. Trotsky considered the founding of the Fourth International the most important work of his political life. Writing in 1935 (printed in *Trotsky’s Diary in Exile—1935*), he noted:

“Had I not been present in 1917 in Petersburg, the October Revolution would still have taken place—on the condition that Lenin was present and in command....

WORKERS VANGUARD

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Celia Hart, 1963–2008

On September 7, Cuban leftist Celia Hart, along with her brother Abel, died in a car accident in the Cuban capital of Havana. Their parents, Armando Hart and Haydée Santamaría, were two historic leaders of the 1959 Cuban Revolution, which laid the basis for the overthrow of capitalist rule on the island and establishment of the Cuban deformed workers state.

Celia Hart regarded herself as a Trotskyist. But this stood in contradiction to her unwavering support for Fidel Castro's Cuban Stalinist regime and her support to the bourgeois-populist regime of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela, with which Cuba is currently allied. The eclectic and self-contradictory

"trotsko-guevarist" politics she espoused were at a great distance from the revolutionary program embodied in Trotsky's permanent revolution. But Hart did not ooze with the odious anti-Communism of the social-democratic left that liked to parade her around at their international conferences, like the recent Socialist Action-organized Toronto event, "A World in Revolt—Prospects for Socialism in the 21st Century" (see "ICL's Trotskyism vs. Socialist Action Reformism," WV No. 917, 4 July). Celia Hart was feisty and sharp, always willing to engage in open political debate. We always enjoyed our discussions with her. We are sorry that she's gone.



wordpress.com

Supreme Court Bars Evidence of Innocence Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Now!

On October 6, the U.S. Supreme Court rejected Mumia Abu-Jamal's appeal for a new trial based on evidence that critical witnesses lied under police coercion in his original frame-up trial. To the racists in black robes, a court of law is no place for evidence of the innocence of this fighter for the oppressed. Mumia Abu-Jamal, a former Black Panther, MOVE supporter and eloquent journalist known as the "voice of the voiceless," is an innocent man who has been on death row for 26 years, framed up for the killing of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner in 1981. This latest rejection comes after decades of Pennsylvania state and lower federal courts dismissing the mountains of evidence of his innocence and of his racist frame-up by the Philadelphia police and prosecution.

The appeal that was turned down was submitted on July 18 by Mumia's attorney, Robert R. Bryan. That petition for a Writ of Certiorari on behalf of Mumia was a request for the Supreme Court to grant Mumia's appeal of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's decision last February 19, which refused to let him present crucial evidence that key witnesses in his original frame-up trial had lied. The only witness claiming to have seen Mumia with a gun in hand was Cynthia White, a prostitute who was given favors and coerced by the cops to lie. Two months after Faulkner's death, cops and prosecutors concocted a story that Mumia confessed to the killing as he bled nearly to death on the Jefferson Hospital Emergency Room floor after being shot and beaten by the cops.

The Partisan Defense Committee—a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League—issued a February 21 press release following the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's decision, emphasizing that the evidence barred by that court cuts to the heart of the prosecution frame-up. Such evidence included a 28 January 2002 declaration by Yvette Williams, who was in jail with Cynthia White in December 1981, stating that "Cynthia White told me the police were making her lie and say she saw Mr. Jamal shoot Officer Faulkner when she really did not see who did it." Also barred was the declaration of Kenneth Pate, stepbrother of Priscilla Durham, a Jefferson Hospital security guard who testified at Mumia's trial to hearing the bogus confession. In his 18 April 2003 declaration, Kenneth Pate recalled that Durham told him of pressure by the cops to say Mumia confessed; she confided to him, "All I heard him say was: 'Get off me, get off me, they're trying to kill me'." (The declarations by Williams and Pate are available in full on the Partisan Defense Committee's Web site (www.partisandefense.org/pubs/innocent/



WV Photo

April 19: Partisan Defense Committee and Labor Black League's Class-Struggle Contingent at Philadelphia demonstration for Mumia Abu-Jamal.

There Is No Justice in the Capitalist Courts!

yw.html and www.partisandefense.org/pubs/innocent/kp.html).

Mumia's attorney Robert Bryan will be filing a second petition for review to the U.S. Supreme Court later this year. That petition will deal with the racist jury-rigging that marked Mumia's 1982 trial. The prosecution used eleven of its 15 peremptory challenges to get rid of black jurors. In 2001, federal district court judge William Yohn overturned Mumia's death sentence while upholding the frame-up conviction. Mumia's attorney as well as the prosecution appealed—the former seeking to overturn the conviction and the latter seeking to reinstate the death penalty. On March 27, a three-judge panel of the federal Third Circuit Court of Appeals upheld Yohn's ruling. In July, the Third Circuit Court also turned down an appeal for a full court hearing, letting stand its earlier decision. Mumia now faces the prospect of a new sentencing hearing, in which the only two choices are whether Mumia remains condemned to prison for the rest of his life or is again sentenced to death (see "Third Circuit Court Turns Down Appeal," WV No. 918, 1 August).

The Supreme Court's rejection of Mumia's current petition is an outrage, but it comes as no surprise. The Supreme Court has denied previous petitions by Mumia's attorneys in 1990, 1999 and

2004. The Supreme Court is the highest court of America's racist capitalist rulers, the class enemy of workers, black people and all the oppressed. The courts, prisons and police exist to maintain, through organized violence and terror, the rule of the capitalists over working people. We have always advocated pursuing all possible legal proceedings. PDC attorneys Rachel Wolkenstein and Jonathan Piper served on Mumia's legal team from 1995 to 1999, unearthing much evidence of Mumia's innocence, including the confession of another man, Arnold Beverly, that he and not Mumia shot and killed Faulkner. But as the PDC has underlined, "We place all our faith in the power of

the masses and no faith whatever in the 'justice' of the courts."

The power that can make the courts yield is the power of the multiracial working class. It took a campaign of international mass protest, crucially including trade unionists, to help stay the executioner's hand when Mumia was under a death warrant in 1995. We fight for a strategy of class-struggle defense, which must be based on the understanding that capitalist society is fundamentally divided between two hostile social classes—the capitalist exploiters and the working class—and that the capitalist state and its courts are organs of repression against working people and the oppressed. Our class-struggle strategy is counterposed to that of the liberals and reformists, who promote dangerous illusions that the courts can provide justice for Mumia, illusions codified in their long-time subordination of the demand for Mumia's freedom to the call for a "new trial." This reliance on the agencies of the class enemy, including pathetic appeals to capitalist politicians, has been promoted by groups including the Workers World Party, International Socialist Organization, the Revolutionary Communist Party's Refuse & Resist, Socialist Action, the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal led by Pam Africa and the San Francisco Mobilization to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal led by Socialist Action honcho Jeff Mackler.

In the weeks following the Third Circuit Court's March decision, the PDC and its fraternal defense organizations internationally held emergency protests and united-front demonstrations. Though these protests brought out only hundreds, they point to what is necessary to win Mumia's freedom: the mobilization of the working class independently of and in opposition to its capitalist class enemy, whether Democrat, Republican or Green. Over 500 organizations and individuals—including trade unionists, students, gay rights activists, leftists, black activists, death penalty abolitionists and others—endorsed these protests, called under the slogans: "Mumia

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Labor Black League for Social Defense Workers Vanguard Discussion Group

Democrats, Republicans Fleece Working People
Financial Crisis: Bankruptcy of Capitalism
Those Who Labor Must Rule!

Saturday, October 11, 4 p.m.
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Reading: "Wall Street Nightmare Stalks Working People,"
Workers Vanguard No. 921, 26 September

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Italian Trotskyists Say: Mobilize Labor Power in Defense of Roma, Immigrants!

We print below a translation of a June 23 leaflet issued by our comrades of the *Lega Trotskista d'Italia*, section of the *International Communist League*.

The Berlusconi government's "security package" and subsequent wave of roundups, deportations and persecution of Roma [Gypsies] and immigrants inaugurated a new season of attacks on minorities and the entire working class. State terror has emboldened racist and fascist attacks. In the name of "ethnic cleansing," a racist horde descended on Roma encampments on the outskirts of Naples and burned them to the ground on May 11-12. A gang of 20 hooded thugs ransacked Indian- and Bengali-owned shops on May 24 in Pigneto, a multiethnic working-class neighborhood in Rome.

Viktoria Mohacsi, a [Hungarian Roma and] member of the European Parliament, denounced the fact that in Rome "at the Casilino 900 camp...armed patrols of police in uniform turn up around midnight every three or four days. They don't ask a single question, they just start attacking people. Each time they come, they take away about 20 people who are disappeared for 48 hours. They are kept in cells where they are beaten. Then they are released" (*La Repubblica*, 19 May). According to Opera Nomadi [an organization that defends the rights of Gypsies], 12 Roma children disappeared without a trace after being stopped by the police and accused of begging in Naples. In Milan, where every day the city council deploys city police and Milan transit authority ticket inspectors to round up immigrants on public transport, every



Soldiers and police seize immigrant street vendor outside Metro station in suburban Rome, August 4.

goal" of "eliminating all Roma camps." The PD called for security patrols by volunteers to work alongside the city police. In Rozzano (ruled by a PD/PRC council), hired squads of anti-Roma security guards, equipped with dogs and clubs, were led by the mayor and city council.

By attacking immigrants and Roma, the ruling class fans the flames of racism to pit workers against each other and obstruct a united fight against their exploiters. The goal of the government is hardly the deportation of the hundreds of thousands of immigrant workers who sweat and die in textile and metalworking factories, in the fields, construction sites, hospitals and homes to enrich the "Made in Italy" billionaires. The "secu-

trade-union federations (a very high percentage considering that many work in small, non-union companies), and their participation in working-class mobilizations is growing. The defense of immigrants is therefore not only a question of defending democratic rights, but also defense of the entire working class. What is needed is an immediate mobilization of union power, supported by all potential victims of racist terror, in class-struggle actions to stop deportations and racist attacks against Roma, Sinti and immigrants. **Down with the racist "security package"! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!**

For the unions to take up the fight for immigrant rights and defend the entire working class, it is necessary to wage a political struggle against the pro-capitalist union bureaucracies—of the COBAS ["Rank-and-File Committees"] and the [CGIL/CISL/UIL] union federations linked to the Democratic Party and Rifondazione.

Berlusconi, Bossi and Fini are doing nothing other than marching with redoubled violence down the path paved by the [2006-2008] Unione/Rifondazione government that preceded them. The current attacks are the direct continuation of the racist campaign against immigrants and Roma launched by the Unione/PRC government last autumn, which culminated in the infamous legislation [the Amato decree] adopted unanimously on 31 October 2007 by Prodi government ministers, including current PRC leader Paolo Ferrero. The leader of the PD, Walter Veltroni, declared his agreement with the security package, boasting that "most of its content was copied from the Amato Decree" (*La Repubblica*, 23 May). Moreover, it was the Ulivo [Olive Tree coalition government] and Rifondazione that bear responsibility for the Turco-Napolitano law of 1997, which established the existing structure for racist repression: entry quotas, temporary detention centers (CPTs) for certain ethnic groups, and mass deportations!

Historically, the Italian working class has been chained to its exploiters through popular fronts (coalitions between reformist workers parties and parties of the "progressive" bourgeoisie). Beginning in 1994, popular-front coalitions including the PRC exploited the right-wing bogeyman, or the logic of the "lesser evil," and in so doing played a decisive role in curtailing workers' struggles while the ruling class smashed, bit by bit, the hard-won gains of struggles in the period following

the Second World War. Unione/Rifondazione governments have had the same goal as the right: to control the spigot of immigrant labor and periodically use racism to divide the working class.

The role of popular-front governments, and the role played by Rifondazione in particular, was clearly seen during the two years of the Prodi government. This contributed to the PRC's electoral collapse. Now the reformist Falcemartello [FM, affiliated with the International Marxist Tendency of the late Ted Grant]—even these self-proclaimed "PRC Marxists"—are forced to recognize that:

"The Italian working class was reduced to poverty by each successive government. The real wages of an average Italian worker are among the lowest in Europe. Pensions have been attacked and there have been privatizations across the board. All of this was done either by the previous Berlusconi government or the Prodi government that followed it."
—www.marxist.com

But Falcemartello hides the fact that they actively helped bring the Prodi coalition to power, campaigning for it in the elections and recruiting people directly to the PRC, and they are therefore complicit in that government's policies. FM tries to hide the PRC's responsibility for the Prodi government's racist and anti-worker attacks, hypocritically stating that "the PRC was imprisoned inside the government and absented itself from that fight" (*FM* No. 210, 9 June). On the contrary, the PRC was in the government and directly responsible for that policy! Despite its working-class base, Rifondazione has a pro-capitalist program and leadership that cannot be reformed.

We Spartacists are opposed on principle to any form of class collaboration with the capitalists, their parties and their state; we called for no vote to the parties in the Unione (including Rifondazione), emphasizing that they would form capitalist governments that are the enemy of workers, women, and immigrants. In the recent elections, we called for no vote to either the Democratic Party—a party that is entirely capitalist—or to the remnants of Prodi's popular front regrouped around the Sinistra l'Arcobaleno [Rainbow Left], or to any of the other reformist refugees from Rifondazione such as Sinistra Critica (SC), the Partito Comunista dei Lavoratori (PCL) or the Partito d'Alternativa Comunista (PDAC).

Sinistra Critica, PCL and PDAC now pretend to be opponents of "class collaboration" and try to pass themselves off as a "new anti-capitalist left" or a "left that does not betray." But when they were in



Smoldering remains of Roma encampment outside Naples that was torched by racist mob in May.

Roma, Sinti and Kalé Gypsy in the province has been ordered to officially register with the authorities. Among the first to be targeted were Goffredo and Antonia Bezzecchi, two Italian Sinti who survived the concentration camps under fascism. A protest in Rome on June 8 recalled the anniversary of the founding of the "Central Office for Fighting the Gypsy Menace" in Munich in 1936, whose first act was a census of Gypsies in Germany.

Local governments run by the PD [Democratic Party] and Rifondazione Comunista [PRC] did not hesitate to get into the act. Filippo Penati, [PD] president of Milan Province (whose government the PRC has been part of for four years) attacked [Northern League Interior Minister] Roberto Maroni from the right, calling on him to stick to the "common

ality package" is used to isolate and terrorize immigrants, to bind them hand and foot to their exploiters, in order to further divide the working class. It also serves to strengthen state surveillance and repression: some 2,500 soldiers will be deployed in major cities to intimidate all workers, at the very moment when the Confindustria [the bosses' cartel] and the government are preparing an offensive against national wage contracts, planning thousands of layoffs (at Telecom and Alitalia) and trampling on public employees, who are denounced en masse as "lazy bums."

The attacks by the state and the racist gangs against immigrants represent an attack on the entire working class. 700,000 immigrant workers are already members of the CGIL, CISL and UIL

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the PRC they shared responsibility for the anti-worker and anti-immigrant policies of the popular-front governments, and every one of them, without exception, voted for the Unione/Rifondazione capitalist coalitions (from the “Progressives” in 1994, to the Ulivo, to the Unione in 2006) and even campaigned directly for capitalist candidates. They were part of Rifondazione when the PRC voted for racist legislation such as the Turco-Napolitano law and the Treu Pact that introduced “precarious” jobs and undermined national contracts—and they still lay claim to this tradition.

Sinistra Critica repeatedly gave the Prodi government a vote of confidence and went so far as to vote to refinance the imperialist missions in Afghanistan and the Balkans (July 2006). As for Marco Ferrando, *líder máximo* of the PCL, he stayed in Rifondazione until 2006, when, against his wishes, he was thrown off the Unione electoral slates, which he voted for and aspired to join. In the last elections, which were carried out as a violent, racist campaign against immigrants, with “security” as the hot button, the PCL’s electoral program did not make even the slightest mention of the attacks on immigrants, much less a fight for their citizenship rights. All these groups have one thing in common: opposition to revolutionary internationalist Marxism and proletarian revolution. Even now that the PRC has lost its seats in Parliament, they desperately seek to revive a popular-front coalition to kick out Berlusconi and put the reins of Italian capitalism in the hands of “the left.” This is the meaning of the PCL’s call for a “parliament of the left, based on the working class and the people, to oppose the Berlusconi government,” and PDAC’s call for a “united front against Berlusconi.”



Spartaco

LTd'I at April 2007 Milan protest against police attacks on Chinese immigrants. Placard denounces “Popular Front of Racism, Repression and Imperialism.”

One historical reason for this wave of attacks against Roma and immigrants is the counterrevolutionary destruction of the degenerated workers state of the Soviet Union and of the deformed workers states of East Europe. This historic defeat for workers all over the world reduced the former Soviet Union and East Europe to misery, forcing broad sectors of the population to emigrate in order to survive. Capitalist restoration in East Europe made entire regions prey for interethnic and nationalist bloodshed and subjugation under the imperialist jackboot, including Italian imperialism, which militarily occupies the Balkans. The enlargement of the European Union to East

Europe (accompanied by restrictive laws against the East European workers) is another reactionary product of the counterrevolution, which reduced those countries to miserable protectorates of the imperialists. Under capitalism, the conditions of the Roma are similar to those in South American *favelas* [shantytowns].

The life expectancy of a Roma in Italy is 35 years, against the Italian average of 80 years, and infant mortality is 15 times higher. In contrast, even under the grotesque Stalinist regime of Ceausescu [in Romania], the Roma population enjoyed an unprecedented standard of living and level of integration in industry and the state apparatus. In Yugoslavia, the Roma were recognized as a national minority and had the right to education in their own language. The flight of Roma from the Balkans and Romania is a product of racist persecutions stemming from the restoration of capitalism. ***Full democratic and citizenship rights for the Roma! Down with the restrictions imposed on workers from East Europe! All imperialist troops out of the Balkans! Down with the reactionary imperialist alliance of the European Union! For the Socialist United States of Europe!***

We of the Lega Trotskista d'Italia/International Communist League fought for unconditional military defense of the deformed workers states and of the USSR against capitalist counterrevolution and for a proletarian political revolution to kick out the Stalinist bureaucratic caste, replacing it with a government of workers soviets. Instead, the pseudo-Trotskyist decomposition products of Rifondazione (SC, PCL, PDAC) supported (with different nuances) all the counterrevolutionary forces that contributed to the restoration of capitalism in the USSR and East Europe, from Solidarność in Poland to

Yeltsin in the Soviet Union. The opposition of these groups to proletarian revolution at home has always gone together with support to counterrevolutionary forces in countries where capitalism has been overthrown. And today they all support (with varying degrees of enthusiasm) the imperialist provocations against the Chinese deformed workers state, waged under the slogan “Free Tibet” (i.e., for a Tibet dominated by the imperialists and the Dalai Lama’s feudal theocracy). ***Defend China!***

Racism is an integral part of the capitalist system, used as a tool for the division of the working class. To eradicate it requires a socialist revolution. To fight unemployment, which is endemic to capitalism, it is necessary to divide all available work among the entire workforce, not only at equal pay, but with a sliding scale of hours and wages to reverse the continual impoverishment of the working class. To fight black-market jobs and the dramatic insecurity in employment and working conditions experienced by thousands of workers, which doubly affects immigrant workers and is the cause of so many work-site deaths, the unions must fight to organize all non-unionized workers, starting with immigrants. Housing, schools, childcare, and free, quality health care are needed for all. Fulfilling all of these basic demands for the working class is in conflict with the capitalist profit system. What’s required is the revolutionary overthrow of bourgeois power and the establishment of a workers government based on organs of workers power, a planned, collectivized economy on an international scale. Reformists accept what is “possible” and practical under capitalism. Our aim is different: it is to build a revolutionary, multiethnic and internationalist workers party that fights for socialist revolution! ■

Free Mumia!...

(continued from page 3)

Abu-Jamal Is Innocent! Free Mumia Now! Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!”

Mumia’s conviction was a racist, political frame-up of an innocent man, a fighter against racial and class bias, a man who stands for social justice and against U.S. imperialism’s wars of depredation. Since his youth in the Black Panthers, Mumia has endured the hatred and concerted effort of the bourgeoisie to silence him because they see in him the spectre of black revolt. Mumia’s case throws a spotlight on the barbaric death penalty, which is institutionalized state terror

directly descended from black chattel slavery and lynch mob terror.

Our fight to free Mumia Abu-Jamal is rooted in the struggle to make the multi-racial working class conscious of its class interests in the fight against the entire capitalist system, particularly the understanding that in America the fight for black freedom is central to the struggle for the emancipation of labor itself. The PDC’s Class-Struggle Contingents in protests for Mumia organized by other groups this spring expressed the necessity for independent working-class struggle on behalf of Mumia by demanding, in addition to the united-front calls to free Mumia and abolish the racist death penalty: “There Is No Justice in the Capitalist Courts! Mobilize Labor’s Power—For Mass Protest!” ■

James/Philadelphia Inquirer

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



Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!

A former Black Panther, a MOVE supporter and a journalist known as the “voice of the voiceless,” Mumia Abu-Jamal was framed up for the 1981 murder of Police Officer Daniel Faulkner and sentenced to death in 1982 explicitly for his political views. Earlier this year, the federal Third Circuit Court of Appeals upheld Mumia’s frame-up conviction. Mumia, an innocent man, now faces either a living death of life in prison or the death penalty.

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 to the PDC earmarked “Mumia Legal Defense” 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! The 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 book *Murdered by Mumia* by right-wing journalist Michael Smerconish and Maureen Faulkner, whose lying tract is a rallying cry not only to execute Mumia but for the death penalty itself. The PDC’s other Mumia pamphlet, *The Fight to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal—Mumia Is Innocent!* (\$1), lays out the political basis of the state vendetta against Mumia and provides additional detail on the explosive evidence that shatters the decades-long frame-up of this fighter for black freedom. Both these PDC pamphlets politically arm activists in the struggle for Mumia’s freedom.

PDC Button: “Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!”—\$1 each.

PDC Video: *From Death Row, This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal*—\$10 DVD, \$15 VHS.

Bundles of the 4-page brochure: *Mumia Is an Innocent Man: Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!*—\$2 for 25 copies.

Order from/make checks payable to Partisan Defense Committee at our New York City address below.

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

• P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013, (212) 406-4252

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Crisis...

(continued from page 1)

Street,” a September 19 press release by AFL-CIO president John Sweeney argued that “permanent solutions can be found in the economic program of Barack Obama.” The trade-union bureaucracy’s support to the Democratic Party is a central expression of their loyalty to American capitalism. It has long served to sap the fighting power of organized labor by shackling the unions to a party, which no less than the Republicans, represents the interests of the capitalist class enemy. The cost of this policy is not simply, or even mainly, the millions that are shelled out to the Democrats at election time, but the savage attacks on the living standards of the working class, the wholesale destruction of unionized jobs, the slashing of health care, the misery of the ghettos and massive incarceration of blacks, the racist roundups and deportations of immigrants.

Speaking from the Senate floor where he joined in voting up the bailout package, Obama appealed for a reconciliation of the exploited and the exploiters in the face of the financial meltdown:

“We are all going to need to sacrifice. We’re all going to need to pull our weight, because now, more than ever, we are all in this together. That’s part of what this crisis has taught us. But in the end of the day, there’s no real separation between Wall Street and Main Street. There’s only the road we’re traveling on as Americans.”

Obama is the first black candidate with a real shot at being elected the Commander-in-Chief of U.S. imperialism, a prospect heretofore virtually unthinkable in this deeply racist country where the forcible subjugation of the majority of the black population at the bottom of society has been and remains a central foundation stone of American capitalism. And his chances of winning might well have been given a big boost by the Wall Street crisis. The Democratic Party’s facade of being the “friend” of labor and blacks has historically made it the preferred party of the American bourgeoisie to rule in times of crisis either in mobilizing for war or in appeals for belt-tightening for the “good of the nation.” This has been additionally fueled by increasing antipathy among the bourgeoisie for the deranged fundamentalists of the Republican Party, whether in



Above: Homeless sleep in downtown Las Vegas. Below: San Quentin State Prison gymnasium filled with nearly 400 double-bunked inmates. Overcrowded prisons are endemic to decaying American capitalist system.



the White House or out. An article in the *New York Times* (3 October) noted: “In this campaign cycle, Republicans have continued to lose ground in voters’ party affiliation, especially among upper-income voters and those who identify themselves as professionals and managers. Even more than in 2006, business contributions are favoring Democrats.”

Obama outpaces McCain in contributions from hedge fund operators, securities and investment houses and commercial bank financiers—i.e., the same filthy rich speculators whose failed gambling debts on the housing market are now being paid off by taxpayers. They are speculating, and not unreasonably, that a Democratic Party

administration would be more adept at keeping a lid on social discontent by putting a nicer face on the same grinding oppression and exploitation that the Republicans openly revel in enforcing. Some hark back to the 1932 elections—in the midst of the Great Depression—which brought Democrat Franklin Delano Roosevelt to power. But these days, the Democrats aren’t talking about a “New Deal.” All that’s being offered now is a “raw deal” for the working class, making the exploited and oppressed pay for the crimes of capitalism.

In any case, it is simply a liberal myth that FDR’s “New Deal” pulled the U.S. out of the 1930s Depression. The American economy did not recover its pre-1929 level until the imperialist slaughter of World War II set the war industries running in high gear. The New Deal was, however, successful in heading off a proletarian socialist movement. During the 1930s, American workers waged hard-fought class battles to organize for the first time in mass industrial unions. However, thanks in large part to the Stalinists and social democrats at the head of these unions, the incipient radicalization of labor was diverted into FDR’s Democratic Party.

Today, the price of the trade-union tops’ fealty to the Democrats is witnessed in the devastation of many of the industrial unions that were forged in the battles of the 1930s. The loss of millions of manufacturing jobs since the beginning of the deindustrialization of America some 30 years ago has fallen hardest on the black population. The loss of manufacturing jobs has been paralleled by an increase in the prison population, with black and Latino youth overwhelmingly rounded up and incarcerated in the racist “war on drugs.” Once a reserve army of labor for American capitalism, the populations of the ghettos are increasingly deemed a surplus population not “worth” even the most miserable social welfare by the capitalist rulers who no longer needed their labor power.

It was Democratic president Bill Clinton who ended “welfare as we know it,” condemning single mothers and their children to unspeakable poverty and starvation. Now Obama continues the refrain of condemning young black men as “deadbeat dads” who need to pull themselves up by their nonexistent bootstraps. Official unemployment for blacks is 11.4 percent, but according to some economists the actual jobless rate for all blacks of working age in this country is an

astounding **42 percent!** In some largely black and Latino neighborhoods in South Chicago, as well as across the Detroit metropolitan area, **one out of every 20 households** has been or is in the process of being foreclosed. The response of Democrats and Republicans alike is to condemn those who were preyed upon with subprime mortgages and other credit scams for “living beyond their means.”

Enough! The situation desperately cries out for class struggle against the capitalist rulers’ onslaughts. Labor needs a fighting leadership that will unleash the power of the multiracial working class in struggle not only for its own interests but also for black rights and in defense of immigrants. First and foremost that means breaking the chains forged by the present labor misleaders, which have shackled the working class to its exploiters.

Democratic Party “lesser evilism” has served to perpetuate the racist hellhole that is capitalist America, where the increasingly raw exploitation of labor is stoked by fomenting racial and ethnic divisions. While Obama has left room for few illusions that his election will in any way improve conditions of life for blacks in this country, many nonetheless have illusions that a black president might at least change the patina of race relations in this country. But one need look no further than the numerous black Democrats who were elected as mayors in major urban areas. Their job was to keep working people and blacks down, a role embodied in the statement by former New York City mayor David Dinkins: “They’ll take it from me.” Obama simply seeks to become the overseer for the whole plantation.

Black workers are a significant component of organized labor, integrated into strategic sections of the working class. The road to black freedom and the emancipation of the working class as a whole can only be realized in the destruction of American capitalism in which black oppression is rooted. Only when the working class has ripped the economy out of the hands of the capitalist exploiters and reorganized it on a socialist basis will the material basis be laid for the full equality and integration of black people. For a class-struggle leadership of the unions! For black liberation through socialist revolution! Those who labor must rule!

The Myth of “Regulation”

It has now become conventional wisdom, especially in liberal circles, to blame the meltdown on Wall Street on inadequate government regulation and then to blame inadequate regulation on the Republicans’ supposed belief in “free market fundamentalism.” An editorial in the *New York Times* (20 September) asserted:

“This crisis is the result of a willful and systematic failure by the government to regulate and monitor the activities of bankers, lenders, hedge funds, insurers and other market players. All were playing high-stakes poker with the financial system, but without adequate transparency, oversight or supervision.”

Similarly, Obama went after his Republican rival in their September 26 debate, railing, “this is a final verdict on eight years of failed economic policies promoted by George Bush, supported by Senator McCain—the theory that basically says that we can shred regulations.”

In reality, speculative binges that inevitably crash are endemic to capitalism. An example is the 1720 South Sea Bubble in England, where rampant speculation in the stocks of the South Sea Company led to a financial collapse whose impact was felt internationally. (David Liss’s 2000 novel, *A Conspiracy of Paper*, is a good read on the subject.) One need only look back to the last major financial crisis in this country, the collapse of the dot-com stock market boom in 2000-2001. In that case, the preceding speculative bubble took place under the Democratic Clinton administration, not a Republican White House. The wild inflation of financial assets—what Marx called *fictitious capital*—was centered on corporate shares rather than newfangled, exotic securities like CDOs (collateralized debt obligations) and CDSs (credit default swaps).

Stock market transactions were and

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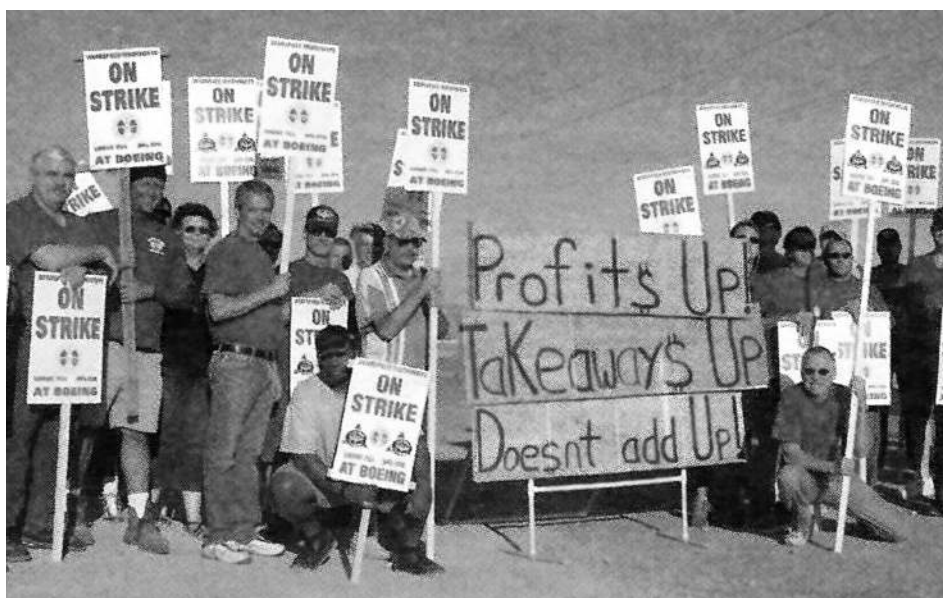
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IAM Boeing Strikers Hold Firm

OCTOBER 6—Against the backdrop of the financial meltdown on Wall Street, the monthlong strike by the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM) against Boeing has rippled across the globe. Already the aerospace giant has missed delivery of more than 30 commercial aircraft, forcing airlines internationally to postpone the launch of new service. Many of its thousands of parts suppliers, some as far away as Japan, have slowed or stopped production. With Boeing the nation's largest exporter, the effects of the strike could be felt well beyond the aerospace industry.

This strike, like any labor battle, is a confrontation between the capitalist bosses and the working class. Having raked in \$4 billion in the last year alone, Boeing hopes to further jack up its massive profits by forcing a giveback contract on the union with no restrictions on the bosses' ability to outsource work. Boeing is targeting new-hires, threatening to eliminate their pensions and retiree medical benefits altogether, and similarly wants to cut off survivor benefits. Its wage proposal is grossly inadequate, with more than 4,000 IAM members currently earning less than \$30,000 a year because of a tiered wage structure.

But the Machinists remain firmly resolved to stay out and are in a position to win. The aircraft manufacturer had been scurrying to build planes in the face of volatile oil prices, slowing economies



Aero Mechanic

Striking IAM members picket at Edwards Air Force Base, California.

and a shakeout among the companies that finance aviation sales. The strike at Boeing points the way toward unleashing the social power of the working class at a time when the economic crisis, including the bipartisan federal bailout of Wall Street, threatens working people with yet another big hit in the pocketbook.

A victorious IAM Boeing strike could reverberate throughout the labor movement. Recognizing the Machinists' struggle as their own, members of other unions have joined the picket lines, with union

pilots at Alaska Airlines refusing to fly a new 737 from Boeing Field to Sea-Tac airport. In marked contrast to the bureaucrats' plans to keep pickets small, a number of IAM members are putting in extra duty on the picket lines. However, other workers at Boeing are going into the plants. As a result, Boeing has sent out ten planes to customers during the strike, and engineers have continued to prepare the 787 Dreamliner for ground tests. *Workers Vanguard* supporters were told by Machinists on Seattle-area picket lines

that the engineers, whose union is in contract negotiations with Boeing, and Teamsters are "required" by contract to work. The unions should carry out joint negotiations and strike action as a first step to forming one industrial union. "No-strike" contract clauses are examples of earlier sellouts by the pro-capitalist union bureaucracy, which swears off hard class struggle, substituting for it the lie of a partnership between labor and capital. *All* Boeing workers would be in a stronger position if they followed the union principle: picket lines mean don't cross!

Many striking workers expressed concerns about outsourcing and job security. The response of the IAM tops has been to try to pit workers here against those overseas through protectionist campaigns to keep "our jobs" in the U.S., which fuel bigotry toward foreign, especially Asian, and immigrant workers. This chauvinist poison also is the stock in trade of the capitalist Democratic Party. As a norm, the capitalists will move to exploit cheaper labor where it is available. What is necessary is a head-on struggle against the bosses. This includes forging a fighting alliance of Boeing workers internationally and launching a serious drive to organize Boeing's non-union suppliers in the U.S. To unlock labor's power, there must be a political struggle within the unions for a class-struggle leadership to replace the bureaucrats who chain workers to the Democratic Party. *Victory to the IAM Boeing strike!* ■

are highly regulated by the Securities and Exchange Commission. Nonetheless, at the height of the bubble in 2000, the shares of companies listed on the S&P 500 Index were trading at **36 times** their average earnings over the previous five years. The so-called price-earnings ratio was at the highest level in over a century. When the crash came, it wiped out **more than a third** of the stock market's paper wealth. And then came a recession as corporate spending on new plants and equipment plunged and employment fell for three straight years.

In all modern capitalist countries, the overall supply of money and availability of credit is regulated through the operations of the central bank. No sustained speculative bubble, whether centering on corporate shares or mortgage-backed securities, can occur behind the back of the central bank. And the Federal Reserve, the U.S. central bank, helped fuel first the stock market boom and then the housing-price bubble through its "easy money" policy. When the former went bust, the Fed flooded financial markets with money. It cut the interest charged on short-term loans to member banks from 6.5 to 1 percent by 2003, the lowest rate in half a

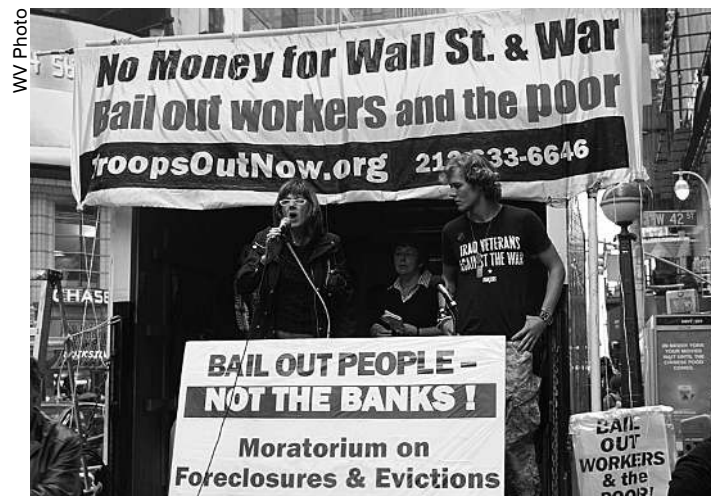
century. During most of this period, the so-called federal funds rate was **less than the going rate of inflation**. In effect, the government was giving away money for free—and as much as they wanted—to Wall Street financiers. No wonder the latter then spent with reckless abandon.

In late 2004, the London *Economist* warned that America's "easy money policy has spilled beyond its borders" and "has flowed into share prices and houses around the world, inflating a series of asset-price bubbles." Almost all European countries were infected with speculative bubbles regardless of the political and ideological character of their governments or the particular laws and practices regulating their financial markets. Countries like Spain, which have been governed by social-democratic parties, experienced an even more extreme inflation of housing prices than did the U.S.

Now these and other European countries are also facing the day of reckoning. Last fall, a large British bank, Northern Rock, which specialized in mortgage loans, went bust and had to be taken over by the government. Within the past few weeks the French, Belgian and Dutch governments have been involved in "rescue" operations for two major banks, Dexia and Fortis. The Union Bank of Switzerland—one of the largest in the world—has been hit by heavy losses and there is now talk of a bailout for this global titan. The German government has announced that it will guarantee all private savings, to the tune of more than \$700 billion, after a group of banks pulled out of a deal to provide more than \$48 billion to rescue the large German mortgage lender, Hypo Real Estate. Thomas Mayer, chief economist for Germany's Deutsche Bank, bemoaned: "In this day and age, a bank run spreads around the world, not around the block." To maintain that the current international financial crisis could have been prevented by more regulation and better oversight by Washington is like arguing that the destruction caused by a 100-foot-high tidal wave could have been prevented by adding a few feet to a six-foot-high jetty.

At the political level, the West European imperialist ruling classes are conflicted between worrying about the fallout from the Wall Street crash and gloating over the sudden weakening of their American

September 27 protest in New York City. Reformists like Workers World and its Troops Out Now Coalition foster illusions that capitalism can serve interests of workers and oppressed.



imperialist rival. A recent study by the German economics ministry points to a "noticeably worsened external economic environment." On the gloating side (which didn't last too long) is a lengthy piece in the leading German bourgeois journal *Der Spiegel* online (30 September) titled, "The End of Arrogance: America Loses Its Dominant Economic Role":

"With its rule of three of cheap money, free markets and double-digit profit margins, American turbo-capitalism has set economic standards worldwide for the past quarter century. Now it is proving to be nothing but a giant snowball system, upsetting the US's global political status as it comes crashing down."

The current economic meltdown demolishes the notion peddled by various liberal and radical ideologues of a new era of "globalization," positing that capitalist rule had transcended the nation state and that agencies like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund had become some kind of world capitalist government. Currently the national bourgeoisies of various countries, including those in the European Union consortium, are scrambling to shore up their own economic interests. The recent move by Ireland to guarantee the debts and deposits of its six largest banks provoked the ire of the British New Labour government, which feared a loss of depositors in its banks as people headed for greener pastures.

Noting that the "lack of a unified regulatory structure and a co-ordinated European response has led some governments to act unilaterally to protect their banks, even at the risk of infuriating their neigh-

bours," an article on the Web site of the *Financial Times* (3 October) quoted Willem Buiter, a professor at the London School of Economics, writing in his *Financial Times* blog: "The Irish guarantee is the most 'in-your-face' beggar-thy-neighbour provocation since medieval armies catapulted bubonic-plague-ridden corpses into the cities they were besieging." Meanwhile, the Dutch government ripped up its part of the deal with Belgium to bail out Fortis, declaring that it would now spend this money to take full control of the bank's operations in the Netherlands alone.

The "globalization" myth was premised on the liberal-pacifist notion that the capitalists don't need state power—i.e., armed bodies of men—to defend their interests both against the exploited at home and against rival capitalists in other countries. As the world today is once again riven by an economic crisis, rivalries among competing imperialist powers that have led to two world conflagrations are once again heating up. The deadly chauvinism of the trade-union misleaders of "defending American jobs" against foreign competition, including against the Chinese deformed workers state, where capitalist rule was overthrown by the 1949 Revolution, is itself a defense of the interests of America's imperialist rulers against the working class both at home and abroad. The defense of the class interests of the proletariat must be imbued with the program of international solidarity and struggle that Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels inscribed on the

continued on page 8

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Abolish the Racist Death Penalty! Free Troy Davis!

We print below a letter sent on September 18 to Georgia governor George Ervin Perdue by the Partisan Defense Committee, a class-struggle, non-sectarian, legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League. On September 23, two hours before Troy Davis' scheduled execution, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a stay pending a decision whether to review his case, which they are due to consider on October 10. The execution warrant has expired, but should the Supreme Court turn Davis down, it is expected that a new death warrant will be issued, and Davis could be executed before the end of this month.

The Partisan Defense Committee joins thousands throughout the world in outrage over the impending execution of Troy Anthony Davis. The death penalty is cruel and barbaric. In the United States

it is the racist legacy of centuries of slavery and segregation.

Like many poor and black prisoners on death row, Mr. Davis' conviction was based on the testimony of "eyewitnesses" who were forced by intimidating policemen to falsely implicate him in the death of a white off-duty police officer. Seven of the key prosecution witnesses have recanted their testimony, many citing police misconduct. But the courts have turned a blind eye to this exculpatory evidence due in large part to the provisions of the Anti-terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996 signed by Bill Clinton.

Now your office is preparing to execute Mr. Davis, despite thousands of protests including Amnesty International, a former FBI director and the Pope. We demand this racist barbarity be stopped and that Mr. Davis be freed. ■



September rally in Atlanta calls to stop execution of Troy Davis (inset).



Martina Davis-Correia, Georgia Department of Corrections (inset)

Crisis...

(continued from page 7)

banner of the communist movement more than 160 years ago: "Workers of the world, unite."

Reform vs. Revolution

In an editorial asking "Why not a bailout for the rest of us?" (*Socialist Worker* online, 1 October), the International Socialist Organization calls to "ban the Wall Street casino for high-stakes gambling." One is reminded of the gendarme in *Casa-blanca* who declares that he is "shocked" to find gambling going on in Rick's casino. But this is merely an expression of the ISO's promotion of the supposed inherent democracy of capitalist class rule, which under sufficient pressure from the "people" can be made to serve the interests of the working class and oppressed.

Just in case anyone might mistake the editorial's call to nationalize the banking system as any challenge to bourgeois rule, the ISO is quick to add: "Nationalized banks are nothing new. For much of the second half of the 20th century, they were the norm in Western Europe—and

they remained capitalist institutions to boot." No kidding! In the mouths of mass reformist parties in Europe, like the old Labour Party in Britain, calls for nationalization were typically nothing other than a prescription for bailing out bankrupt enterprises and financial institutions. By these lights, even the ISO allows, "It's hard to describe the federal government's recent adventures in the banking industry as something other than nationalization."

To avoid confusion between what they are calling for and what the U.S. government has already done with its \$700 billion bailout package, the ISO argues, "An economic bailout on pro-worker terms would include much more than nationalizing the banks." What follows is a wish list of beneficial programs such as a moratorium on home foreclosures, job creation, public works to rebuild schools and housing in the inner cities and so on. This is echoed by Workers World Party (WWP) in its article, "Handout to the Rich Ignites People's Anger" (*Workers World*, 1 October), which calls for "a freeze on all workplace closings and job layoffs...and a rollback in gas, food and utility prices" and lots of other good things. According to the ISO and WWP's pipe dream, all of these demands can and

will somehow be legislated by the capitalist state. As V.I. Lenin, leader of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, wrote nearly a century ago, the working people "*never decide* important questions under bourgeois democracy, which are decided by the stock exchange and the banks."

WWP even advises that "from a strictly capitalist point of view, aid to homeowners would transform bad debts into debts that are payable. It would actually ease the financial crisis of the system." Nonetheless, unlike the ISO editorial, WWP is at least capable of mouthing the words that the current crisis is a product of the capitalist system of production for profit and even calls for "struggle" as the "only way that real, profound change takes place." But for the working class, black people and the poor to get their hands on the money that will provide jobs, education and health care requires breaking the power of the bourgeoisie, which has its hands on the wealth, taken from the labor of those who produced it.

In the Transitional Program, the founding document of the Fourth International, written on the eve of World War II, Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky put forward a series of demands aimed at bridging the struggles of the working class to the understanding of the need to overthrow the decaying and anarchic capitalist profit system. To unmask the exploitation, robbery and fraud of the capitalist owners and the swindles of the banks, he argued that the workers should demand that the capitalists open their books "to reveal to all members of society that unconscionable squandering of human labor

which is the result of capitalist anarchy and the naked pursuit of profit." Pointing out that "imperialism means the domination of *finance capital*," he raised the call for the expropriation of the banks while arguing that this would produce "favorable results only if the state power itself passes completely from the hands of the exploiters into the hands of the toilers." In the face of mass unemployment, he called for working-class struggle for a shorter workweek with no loss in pay to spread the available work, for a massive program of public works and for wages to rise with prices to guard against the ravages of inflation.

In opposition to the capitalists and their reformist agents, Trotsky argued:

"Property owners and their lawyers will prove the 'unrealizability' of these demands. Smaller, especially ruined capitalists, in addition will refer to their account ledgers. The workers categorically denounce such conclusions and references. The question is not one of a 'normal' collision between opposing material interests. The question is one of guarding the proletariat from decay, demoralization and ruin. The question is one of life or death of the only creative and progressive class, and by that token of the future of mankind. If capitalism is incapable of satisfying the demands inevitably arising from the calamities generated by itself, then let it perish. 'Realizability' or 'unrealizability' is in the given instance a question of the relationship of forces, which can be decided only by the struggle. By means of this struggle, no matter what its immediate practical successes may be, the workers will best come to understand the necessity of liquidating capitalist slavery." ■

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Fourth International...

(continued from page 2)

achievement. The irreconcilable revolutionary tendency, subjected to persecutions as no other political tendency in world history has in all likelihood suffered, has again given proof of its power. Surmounting all obstacles, it has under the blows of its mighty enemies convened its International Conference. This fact constitutes unimpeachable evidence of the profound viability and unwavering perseverance of the international Bolshevik-Leninists. The very possibility of a successful conference was first of all assured by the spirit of revolutionary internationalism which imbues all our sections. As a matter of fact, it is necessary to place extremely great value upon the international ties of the proletarian vanguard in order to gather together the international revolutionary staff at the present time, when Europe and the entire world live in the expectation of the approaching war. The fumes of national hatreds and racial persecutions today compose the political atmosphere of our planet. Fascism and racism are merely the most extreme expressions of the bacchanalia of chauvinism which seeks to overcome or stifle the intolerable class contradictions. The resurgence of social patriotism in France and other countries, or, rather, its new open and shameless manifestation, pertains to the same category as fascism, but with an adaptation to democratic ideology or its vestiges.

Also pertaining to the same circle of events is the open fostering of nationalism in the USSR at meetings, in the press, and in the schools. It is not at all a question of the so-called “socialist patriotism,” i.e., defense of the conquests of the October Revolution against imperialism. No, it is a question of restoring preeminence to the patriotic traditions of old Russia. And here the task is likewise one of creating suprasocial, supraclass values, so as thereby more successfully to discipline the toilers and subject them to the greedy bureaucratic vermin. The official ideology of the present Kremlin appeals to the exploits of Prince Alexander Nevsky, to the heroism of the army of Suvorov-Rymniksky or Kutuzov-Smolensky, while it shuts its eyes to the fact that this “heroism” was based on the enslavement and benightedness of the popular masses, and that for this very reason the old Russian army was victorious only in struggles against the still more backward Asiatic peoples, or the weak and disintegrating states on the Western border. On the other hand, in conflicts with advanced countries of Europe the valiant czarist soldiery always proved bankrupt. Obviously, the experience of the last imperialist war has already been buried in the Kremlin, just as it has forgotten the not unimportant fact that the October Revolution grew directly from defeatism. What do Thermidorians and Bonapartists care about all this? They require nationalistic fetishes. Alexander Nevsky must come to the aid of Nikolai Yezhov.

The theory of socialism in one country, which liquidated the program of the international revolutionary struggle of the proletariat, could not fail to terminate in a wave of nationalism in the USSR and could not but engender a responsive wave of the same nature in the “Communist” parties of other countries. Only two or three years ago it was maintained that the sections of the Comintern were obliged to support their governments only in the so-called “democratic” states that were prepared to support the USSR in the struggle against fascism. The task of defending the workers’ state was intended to serve as a justification for social patriotism. Today, Browder, who has been no more and no less prostituted than other “leaders” of the Stalinern, declares before a Congressional investigating committee that in the event of a war between the U.S. and the USSR, he, Browder, and his party will be on the side of their own democratic fatherland. In



28 August 1940 memorial meeting in New York for Leon Trotsky after his assassination in Mexico at the hands of a Stalinist agent. Meeting reaffirmed Fourth International's commitment to lead world socialist revolution.

all probability this answer was prompted by Stalin. But the case is not altered thereby. Betrayal has a logic of its own. Entering the path of social patriotism, the Third International is now being clearly torn from the hands of the Kremlin clique. “Communists” have become social imperialists and they differ from their “Social Democratic” allies and competitors only in that their cynicism is greater.

Betrayal has a logic of its own. The Third International following the Second has completely perished as an International. It is no longer capable of displaying any kind of initiative in the sphere of world proletarian politics. It is, of course, no accident that after 15 years of progressive demoralization, the Comintern revealed its complete internal rottenness at the moment of the approaching world war, i.e., precisely at a time when the proletariat is most urgently in need of its international revolutionary unification.

History has piled up monstrous obstacles before the Fourth International. Moribund tradition is being aimed against the living revolution. For a century and a half, the radiations of the Great French Revolution have served the bourgeoisie and its petty bourgeois agency—the Second International—as a means of shattering and paralyzing the revolutionary will of the proletariat. The Third International is now exploiting the incomparably more fresh and more powerful traditions of the October Revolution to the same end. The memory of the first victorious uprising of the proletariat against bourgeois democracy serves the usurpers to save bourgeois democracy from the proletarian uprising. Confronted with the approach of the new imperialist war, the social patriotic organizations have joined forces with the left wing of the bourgeoisie under the label of the People's Front, which represents nothing else but an attempt on the part of the bourgeoisie, in its death agony, once again to subject the proletariat to its rule just as the revolutionary bourgeoisie had subjected it at the dawn of capitalism. What was once a progressive historical manifestation now appears before us as a revolting reactionary farce. But while the “People's Fronts” are impotent to cure a capitalism that is rotten to the core, while they are incapable of even checking the military aggression of fascism—the example of Spain is full of symbolic meaning!—they nevertheless still prove sufficiently powerful to sow illusions among the ranks of the toilers, to paralyze and shatter their will to fight, and thereby create the greatest difficulties in the path of the Fourth International.

The working class, especially in Europe, is still in retreat, or at best, in a state of hesitation. Defeats are still too fresh, and their number far from exhausted. They have assumed their sharpest form in Spain. Such are the conditions in which the Fourth International is developing. Is

it any wonder that its growth proceeds more slowly than we should like? Dilettantes, charlatans, or blockheads, incapable of probing into the dialectic of historic ebbs and flows, have more than once brought in their verdict: “The ideas of the Bolshevik-Leninists may perhaps be correct but they are incapable of building a mass organization.” As if a mass organization can be built under any and all conditions! As if a revolutionary program does not render it obligatory for us to remain in the minority and swim against the stream in an epoch of reaction! The revolutionist who uses his own impatience as a measuring stick for the tempo of an epoch is worthless. Never before has the path of the world revolutionary movement been blocked with such monstrous obstacles as today, on the eve of a new epoch of greatest revolutionary convulsions. A correct Marxist appraisal of the situation prompts the conclusion that we have achieved inestimable successes in recent years, despite everything.

The Russian “Left Opposition” originated 15 years ago. Correct work on the international arena does not add up as yet even to a complete decade. The prehistory of the Fourth International properly falls into three stages. In the course of the first period, the “Left Opposition” still placed hopes on the possibility of regenerating the Comintern, and viewed itself as its Marxist faction. The revolting capitulation of the Comintern in Germany, tacitly

accepted by all its sections, posed openly the question of the necessity of building the Fourth International. However, our small organizations, which grew through individual selection in the process of theoretical criticism practically outside of the labor movement itself, proved as yet unprepared for independent activity. The second period is characterized by the efforts to find a real political milieu for these isolated propagandist groups, even if at the price of a temporary renunciation of formal independence. Entry into the Socialist parties immediately increased our ranks, although in respect to quantity the gains were not as great as they could have been. But this entry signified an extremely important stage in the political education of our sections, which tested themselves and their ideas for the first time face to face with the realities of the political struggle and its living requirements. As a result of the experience acquired our cadres grew a head taller. A not unimportant conquest was also the fact that we parted company with incorrigible sectarians, muddlers, and tricksters who are wont to join every new movement in the beginning only to do everything in their power to compromise and paralyze it.

The stages of development of our sections in various countries cannot of course coincide chronologically. Nevertheless, the creation of the American Socialist Workers Party can be recognized as the termination of the second period. Henceforth the Fourth International stands face to face with the tasks of the mass movement. The transitional program is a reflection of this important turn. Its significance lies in this, that instead of providing an a priori theoretical plan, it draws the balance of the already accumulated experience of our national sections and on the basis of this experience opens up broader international perspectives.

The acceptance of this program, prepared and assured by a lengthy previous discussion—or rather, a whole series of discussions—represents our most important conquest. The Fourth International is now the only international organization which not only takes clearly into account the driving forces of the imperialist epoch, but is armed with a system of transitional demands capable of uniting the masses for a revolutionary struggle for power. We do not need any self-deceptions. The discrepancy between our forces today and the tasks on the morrow is much more clearly perceived by us than by our critics. But the harsh and tragic dialectic of our epoch is working in our favor. Brought to the extreme pitch of exasperation and indignation, the masses will find no other leadership than that offered them by the Fourth International. ■

Spartacist Forums

Obama/McCain/McKinney—Class Enemies of Workers, Oppressed Bourgeois Elections and the Imperial Presidency: A Marxist Analysis
For a Workers Party to Fight for a Workers Government!

**Saturday, Oct. 11
3 p.m.**

322 W. 48th St.
1st floor
(between 8th and 9th Ave.
take A, C or E to 42nd St.)

(212) 267-1025 or
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NEW YORK CITY

**Saturday, Oct. 25
4 p.m.**

Women's Building
3543 18th St.
(16th and Mission BART)
San Francisco

(510) 839-0851 or
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BAY AREA

**Saturday, Nov. 1
2 p.m.**

Immanuel Presbyterian
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Wilshire Red-line Station)
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LOS ANGELES

**Democrats, Republicans Fleece the Working Class
Financial Crisis: Bankruptcy of Capitalism
Those Who Labor Must Rule!**

Thursday, October 23, 7 p.m.
University of Chicago
Stuart Hall, Room 102
5835 S. Greenwood Ave.

(312) 563-0441 or
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CHICAGO

South Africa...

(continued from page 12)

South Africa, the ANC embraced “power sharing” with the racist apartheid rulers, a section of whom accepted that ANC rule no longer threatened the white economic oligarchy.

The SACP derives much political authority from its role in helping build the ANC and in the underground struggle against apartheid, for which it suffered harsh repression. It was necessary to stand in solidarity with the ANC—as well as AZAPO, the Pan Africanist Congress and other nationalist fighters—when they engaged in military confrontations with and other struggles against the apartheid state. But the SACP subordinated the class interests of the proletariat in that struggle to bourgeois nationalism through its *political support* to the ANC.

The SACP programme is derived from the doctrine of “two-stage revolution,” which the party inherited from the degenerating Comintern under Stalin and Bukharin in the late 1920s. Under this doctrine, first comes the installation of bourgeois democracy and, many years later, a revolution to supposedly institute socialism. Except that the second “stage” never comes. Applied to South Africa, this schema became the “national democratic revolution,” based on the anti-Marxist notion that the class interests of the proletariat and those of the bourgeoisie can be reconciled in a common struggle against white-supremacist rule. In fact, the SACP is committed only to the first “stage,” proclaiming that the bourgeois state under the Alliance can progressively “grow over” into socialism.

The “growing over” we’ve seen is a number of leading SACP cadres becoming millionaires out of their connections in the bourgeois state. In 1995, a number of SACP and COSATU bureaucrats denounced a national nurses strike as “counterrevolutionary.” The strike was broken and 6,000 nurses were dismissed by the Eastern Cape provincial government headed by the late Raymond Mhlaba, who was SACP national chairman at the time. This was followed in 2000 by the crushing of a wildcat strike at Volkswagen in Uitenhage, near Port Elizabeth, with the SACP-dominated NUMSA metal workers bureaucracy mobilising against the strike. More than 1,300 workers were fired, and 200 armed cops occupied surrounding townships to suppress resistance.

The man chosen by the ANC to serve as caretaker president of the country until the elections, Kgalema Motlanthe, personifies the subordination of the SACP and COSATU to the ANC. Convicted by the apartheid regime for “terrorism” in 1977, he spent ten years on Robben Island. After his release, he served as an education officer and later general secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), the most powerful component of COSATU. In 1997 he became secretary-general of the ANC while also serving until 1998 on the SACP’s Central Committee, although he later let his SACP membership lapse. Each of the ANC’s last three general secretaries had also served as NUM general secretary, including Cyril Ramaphosa, who went on to get a first-class seat on the gravy train. The current ANC general secretary, Mantashe, is also the national chairman of the SACP. The intermingling of membership in the ANC and the SACP reflects and reinforces how race consciousness, based on a shared history of oppression, obscures the *class* divide in this society.

An enormous amount of social tinder has accumulated out of frustration that 14 years since the end of apartheid, the abject material conditions of the mainly black working class and urban and rural poor have not changed and in many ways have worsened. The AIDS epidemic that kills at least 1,000 people in South Africa every day has been compounded by deadly strains of drug-resistant tuberculosis. Mbeki’s infamous denial that HIV causes AIDS and the crusade of his health minister, Manto Tshabalala-

Msimang, pushing beet root and garlic as “cures” for the disease immeasurably aggravated the death toll in a country with the largest number of HIV-infected adults in the world. Tshabalala-Msimang has now been shifted to a different Cabinet position. The labour movement must fight against the government’s starving of health care and demand free antiretroviral drugs for all who need them.

The horrendous death toll in the gold, platinum and other mining operations that are the backbone of the economy is another measure of how cheaply black life is counted under neo-apartheid capitalism. This year miners have been killed on the job at a rate of nearly one every other day. A number of battles are being waged for basic union rights, including a strike for union recognition at the Woolworths food market chain. In Durban on September 29, some 800 bus drivers were fired for waging an “illegal” strike against the Remant Alton company, which had taken over transit operations through privatisation. Durban waste workers went out in solidarity with the fired strikers and to press their own demand to be hired as permanent employees.

With the slowdown in the world economy, layoffs in the domestic auto industry have already been announced. The platinum mining industry, the world’s largest, is due to take a hit with cutbacks in world auto production since a key use of platinum is in auto emissions control. Earlier this year, gold mining companies had to cut production, even as prices for gold rose sharply, because of cutbacks in electricity supplies by the Eskom utility, which also caused a slowdown in construction. Compounding the problems in the economy is the ongoing flight of skilled white labour and professionals (engineers, doctors, etc.) to Australia, Britain and other countries. With “white flight” in mind, Motlanthe told a meeting of Afrikaaner business and farming elites in August that the government should consider phasing out affirmative action programmes.

Added to this picture are daily township protests, often met with police firing



Getty

Immigrants rush gate at government refugee center to apply for asylum permits during wave of pogromist anti-immigrant violence in June.

on strikes, demolished a refugee camp in Pretoria, leaving hundreds of people to fend for themselves. The head of the Blue Waters camp in the Western Cape has accused the government of deliberately starving out its residents so that they would submit to deportation or forced “reintegration” into the townships. In the Eastern Cape last week, a Somali mother and her three children who had been urged to leave their camp were brutally murdered in their shop.

A May 15 leaflet issued by Spartacist South Africa, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), demanded full citizenship rights for all immigrants and an end to deportations (see “South Africa: Mobilize Trade Unions Against Anti-Immigrant Terror!” WV No. 915, 23 May). The statement noted that the same SACP and COSATU misleaders who sermonized against xenophobia are part of a government that has helped spawn repeated outbreaks of violence against immigrants who are used as scapegoats for mass unemployment, poverty and crime.

The need to unite immigrant and South

realised through the extension of socialist revolution to the most advanced capitalist countries and the establishment of a collectivised, planned world economy.”

Reformism of an Ordinary Type

The victory that SACP spokesmen have claimed with Mbeki’s ouster may come at a high price, as the current ANC/SACP/COSATU leadership will now be viewed as more directly responsible for the privations of workers and the poor. The SACP has called on the new government to enact economic reforms while holding out the prospect of deeper reforms after the elections. But Motlanthe made clear from the beginning that his regime would stay the present course, winning plaudits from South Africa’s business establishment. With the capitalist world entering into recession, the government will come under pressure to *cut* expenditures on social programmes, not expand them. As for Zuma, the presumed successor to Motlanthe as South Africa’s president, he went on a world tour following his victory at the Polokwane conference in order to assure capitalist leaders that he, too, will play by their rules.

The SACP is what Lenin described as a bourgeois workers party: a party with a working-class base but with a thoroughly pro-capitalist leadership and programme. Key to building a Leninist vanguard party will be splitting revolutionary-minded members of the SACP from their reformist tops by winning them to a genuinely communist programme.

SACP militants should begin by understanding that one’s attitude toward the capitalist state is the dividing line between revolutionary Marxism and reformist betrayal. While acknowledging that the mines and banks that dominate the economy are still in the hands of white capitalists, SACP ideologues claim that in “democratic” South Africa the state is “class-contested” terrain. The role of the SACP, as spelled out in a document issued by the leadership for a party policy conference late last month, is to win hegemony for the working class against “monopoly capital” in such “sites of power” as “the executive, the legislatures, the judiciary, security forces.”

In theory and practice, the SACP leadership violates the fundamental Marxist understanding, verified by all historical experience, that the state is an *organ of domination of one class over another*, enforcing the rule of the economically dominant class through bodies of armed men such as the police, army and prison system. All the talk in SACP documents about South Africa’s “developmental state” is meant to obscure the fact that this state plays the same role under the Tripartite Alliance as it did under apartheid: violently suppressing the proletariat and the impoverished masses in defence of capitalist rule and profits. The difference is that today, with the ANC/SACP/COSATU alliance at the helm, this bloody work is packaged as “democracy.”

In his 1917 book *The State and Revolution*, Lenin excoriated the Russian Menshevik and Socialist Revolutionary (SR) par-



Furrer/NY Times

South African child contracted HIV because mother was given inadequate treatment. Anti-scientific claims by government officials that HIV does not cause AIDS, as well as promotion of phony “cures,” have aggravated death toll in South Africa, where 1,000 people die daily from AIDS.

rubber bullets, for decent houses and the provision of electricity, water and sanitation. The power of the trade unions, based on labour’s role in producing the wealth of society, must be wielded in defence of the township and rural masses, most of whom are unemployed or only marginally employed. In the absence of a class-struggle fight for their needs, their disillusionment and anger can take starkly reactionary forms. This was seen in the outbreak of murderous violence against immigrants that began in Alexandra in May, fuelled in part by routine cop brutalization of immigrants and government deportations. Sixty-two people were killed in the pogromist terror that month while tens of thousands fled back to Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Malawi. Thousands more were left to barely survive in refugee camps outside Johannesburg, Cape Town and other cities.

Those camps are now being shut down, with a vengeance. On September 23, the Red Ants security outfit, which is infamous for evicting the poor and scabbing

African-born workers in a struggle for jobs and affordable, quality, integrated housing for all requires a fight for the political independence of the proletariat from the ANC and the bourgeois state. Leon Trotsky, co-leader with V. I. Lenin of the 1917 October Revolution, explained in developing his theory of permanent revolution that national and social emancipation in countries of belated capitalist development, such as South Africa, requires the seizure of power by the proletariat standing at the head of all the oppressed.

As we wrote in “South Africa: For a Black-Centered Workers Government!” (WV No. 911, 28 March), a revolutionary working-class regime “would seize the economy from the fabulously wealthy conglomerates that are the true masters of neo-apartheid capitalism. It would expropriate without compensation the industries, mines and banks.... The expropriation of the bourgeoisie would begin to lay the material foundations for social equality. But this perspective can only be fully

ties that justified their role in the bourgeois Provisional Government, an early version of the Tripartite Alliance and other popular fronts. Responding to their claim that the state reconciles the different classes in society (or, we would add, constitutes “class-contested terrain”), Lenin wrote:

“Innumerable resolutions and articles by politicians of both these parties are thoroughly saturated with this petty-bourgeois and philistine ‘reconciliation’ theory. That the state is an organ of the rule of a definite class which cannot be reconciled with its antipode (the class opposite to it) is something the petty-bourgeois democrats will never be able to understand.”

Lenin had already waged a fierce struggle in April 1917 against Stalin and others in the Bolshevik leadership who had called for critical support to the Provisional Government, which had been installed after the February Revolution overthrew tsarist rule. In his “April Theses,” Lenin denounced any support to the capitalist government—much less participation in it—as class treason and called for a struggle for all power to the workers and soldiers soviets (councils). Lenin’s fight was crucial in preparing the Bolsheviks to lead the October Revolution. In fact, his work on *The State and Revolution* was cut short by the outbreak of the October Revolution and was continued with his 1918 polemic, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*.

Lenin explicitly refuted revisionists who falsely lay claim to the heritage of the *Communist Manifesto* written by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in 1847. He pointed out in *The State and Revolution* that “the only ‘correction’ Marx thought it necessary to make to the *Communist Manifesto* he made on the basis of the revolutionary experience of the Paris Commune of 1871, when the proletariat in the city briefly held power. That correction was made in a June 1872 preface to a German edition of the *Manifesto* in which Marx and Engels declared: “One thing especially was proved by the Commune, viz., that ‘the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes.’” (The words in single quotation marks were taken from Marx’s *The Civil War in France*, written in 1871.) As Marx, Engels and Lenin repeatedly affirmed, the capitalist state must be smashed and replaced with a workers state, the dictatorship of the proletariat. This lesson is anathema to the SACP misleaders, who occasionally praise the *Manifesto* the better to cover their treacherous role as key components of the capitalist state in South Africa.

State Power: What “Debate”?

Reflecting the dissatisfaction simmering at the base of this society, several proposals have been raised inside the SACP over the past few years that the party contest elections in its own name and not simply occupy places on ANC slates. Far from representing a break with the Tripartite Alliance, these proposals amount to reconfiguring the class-collaborationist alliance with the ANC. For example, a resolution sponsored by the Gauteng provincial SACP for the party’s 12th National Congress in July 2007 called for the SACP to “go it alone” in the elections while simultaneously defending the “revolutionary alliance led by the ANC” as “an historic and important alliance that should be preserved.” In other words, the SACP could continue to serve in the capitalist government but as part of a coalition with the ANC rather than as ANC ministers.

In the lead-up to the SACP policy conference last month, a provincial meeting in the Western Cape voted to urge the SACP to consider contesting municipal elections entirely on its own. The effect of such a policy would be that successful SACP candidates run the capitalist state on a local level—so-called “red municipalities”—where they would be responsible for suppressing township protests and setting the cops against strikers.

For genuine communists, contesting parliamentary elections can be an appropriate tactic to popularize and widely disseminate the revolutionary Marxist programme, including by exposing the fraud

of bourgeois parliamentarism. But unlike bourgeois parliaments, where communists can, as oppositionists, serve as revolutionary tribunes of the working class, an executive office—such as mayor, provincial premier and president—means taking responsibility for the administration of the machinery of the capitalist state. Running for an executive office can only reinforce illusions that the capitalist state can, under the right leadership, be made to serve the interests of the exploited and oppressed. The ICL opposes running for executive offices on principle (see “Down With Executive Offices of the Capitalist State!” in the ICL pamphlet, *The Development and Extension of Leon Trotsky’s Theory of Permanent Revolution*).

A variant of the strategy of pressuring the Alliance was put forward by the journal *Amandla* in its September 24 statement on the Mbeki resignation, which called for



Peter Botha

January 2000: After more than 4,000 workers at Volkswagen plant near Port Elizabeth staged wildcat strike in defense of suspended shop stewards from NUMSA metal workers union, the SACP-dominated NUMSA bureaucracy mobilized to break the strike. Over 1,300 workers were fired and 200 armed cops occupied surrounding townships to suppress resistance.

“progressive movements” to push the government to “shift policy.” *Amandla* represents the views of some leading SACPers like Jeremy Cronin, former SACPers and other reformists, many of whom are leading lights in popular-frontist movements associated with the World Social Forum. Their perspective is shared by Keep Left!, associated with the British Socialist Workers Party of the late Tony Cliff and a leading component of the Anti-Privatisation Forum in South Africa, whose street protests are directed at pressuring the Tripartite Alliance popular front.

In his “political overview” for the policy conference, SACP general secretary Blade Nzimande posited that Mbeki’s departure provided “building blocks for a reconfigured government.” An example of such “reconfiguring” can be seen in the role of SACP Central Committee member Charles Ngakula, who shifted his post from Safety and Security Minister under Mbeki, where he directed murderous police repression of labour struggle and township protests, to Defence Minister under Motlanthe, responsible for deploying the South African military as the regional gendarme for the imperialists. Whether or not the likes of Ngakula serve in the name of the ANC or the SACP, their job is to repress the very workers the SACP “vanguard” claims to lead. If Blade Nzimande were to somehow become South Africa’s president, his job would still be neo-apartheid capitalism’s top cop.

The policy conference took place against the backdrop of the deepening fissures in the ANC and the attempt of its right-wing opponents—from the mainly white Democratic Alliance to the Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party and the United Democratic Movement (UDM)—to capitalize on the situation. At least 700 ANC members in the Eastern Cape have reportedly jumped to the UDM, which is led by Bantu Holomisa, who served the former apartheid rulers as a bantustan leader before joining the ANC in 1994, and being expelled two years later. In this context, there was no question that the SACP’s agenda would be to unite behind the ANC for the biggest possible victory in the coming elections. Citing unnamed senior SACP leaders, the *Mail and Guardian* (3 October) reports that the conference rejected “parliamentary seats for the SACP, on the grounds that ‘we don’t want to be

seen as going against the ANC’.”

Zuma himself addressed the SACP gathering, instructing delegates to approach the elections “as a united and solid force” to “deliver an overwhelming democratic victory for the ANC.” For his part, Nzimande called for the formation of a “political council” comprising the ANC, SACP and COSATU through which the SACP would get more say in carrying out Alliance policies—in other words, play even more of a role in administering the bourgeois state.

The Fraud of Bourgeois Democracy

The SACP leadership’s policy document called for urgent repairs to the capitalist state machinery to make it more efficient. It bemoaned the low morale and the “unravelling” of technical capacity in the military and called on the party to “fight for the integrity, the professional-

ism and the independence of the Criminal Justice System and its component parts.” In this vein, the SACP has announced a “Red October Campaign” in support of the ANC’s drive to build street committees to aid the “fight against crime.” Like community policing forums, such committees tie the masses directly to their police oppressors. They also foment the kind of vigilante terror that in May spun into the anti-immigrant pogroms.

The document condemned (unnamed) “ultra-left” groups that tell workers that “the present ANC state is ‘inherently bourgeois and reactionary’,” slandering these “relatively isolated groupings” as seeking to “provoke the police and other state authorities into repressive measures in order to ‘prove’ their point.” The document could have just as well denounced striking workers, or township residents demanding houses and clean water, for “provoking” the police. Earlier this year, striking SAMWU municipal workers in Port Elizabeth were attacked by cops who were members of their own union. More recently, residents of Orange Farm, south of Johannesburg, protesting against the lack of sanitation, roads and houses, saw their barricades rammed by a Nyala armoured personnel carrier. A longtime resident told the *Saturday Star* (20 September) that the attack reminded him of how the apartheid cops crushed a similar protest in 1984, when nearly 50 people were killed.

From the SACP to the Democratic Socialist Movement and Keep Left!, the reformist left sows the deadly dangerous illusion that the cops are “fellow workers.” No! The police are the paid enforcers of racist capitalist rule. We say: *Cops out of the unions!*

Reinforcing illusions in the police is the ANC/SACP line that the state in the “new” South Africa, with its parliamentary trappings and democratic constitution, serves the people. The question is *which class* does this “democracy” serve? As described by Lenin, under capitalism it’s democracy for the rich and dictatorship for the working class and the poor. In *The State and Revolution*, Lenin cited Friedrich Engels’ observation that in a democratic republic, “wealth exercises its power indirectly, but all the more surely” by means of the “direct corruption of officials” (America) and by means of an

“alliance of the government and the Stock Exchange” (France and America).

Just as working people and minorities in the U.S. who revile George W. Bush’s Republican Party are offered Democrat Barack Obama as an alternative, the workers and poor of South Africa who are fed up with Thabo Mbeki’s blatantly pro-business posture are offered Jacob Zuma, portrayed by the SACP/COSATU tops as a man who listens to them. Lenin tore into such deceptions in *The State and Revolution*, paraphrasing Marx: “To decide once every few years which member of the ruling class is to repress and crush the people through parliament—this is the real essence of bourgeois parliamentarism.” Lenin noted:

“Take any parliamentary country, from America to Switzerland, from France to Britain, Norway and so forth—in these countries the real business of ‘state’ is performed behind the scenes and is carried on by the departments, chancelleries and General Staffs. Parliament is given up to talk for the special purpose of fooling the ‘common people’.”

Spokesmen for the SACP and the entire spectrum of bourgeois politics in South Africa wrap themselves in the country’s constitution. This is about as democratic a constitution as one is likely to ever get under capitalism, despite its upholding of “the status and role of traditional leadership,” as did the apartheid regime. Yet its lofty constructs are rooted in defending the rule of capital. As Anthony Butler put it in his *Business Day* (22 September) column, “The constitution is noisily celebrated because it partially reassures whites and foreign investors that black leftist rulers will not loot state resources, pursue egalitarian programmes to the detriment of corporate profitability, or undermine property rights.”

As under apartheid, the role of the capitalist state in the “new,” “democratic” South Africa is to defend the rule and profits of the Randlords—and the interests of their senior partners on Wall Street and in the City of London—against the oppressed black, coloured and Indian toilers. To answer all the SACP claptrap about “winning hegemony” for the working class in the cesspool of bourgeois democracy, we offer Lenin’s polemic in *The State and Revolution* against opportunists who “are quite willing to work for the ‘shifting of the balance of forces within the state power,’ for ‘winning a majority in parliament,’ and ‘raising parliament to the rank of master of the government.’ A most worthy object, which is wholly acceptable to the opportunists and which keeps everything within the bounds of the bourgeois parliamentary republic.” Lenin continued:

“We, however, shall break with the opportunists; and the entire class-conscious proletariat will be with us in the fight—not to ‘shift the balance of forces,’ but to overthrow the bourgeoisie, to destroy bourgeois parliamentarism, for a democratic republic after the type of the Commune, or a republic of Soviets of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies, for the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.” ■

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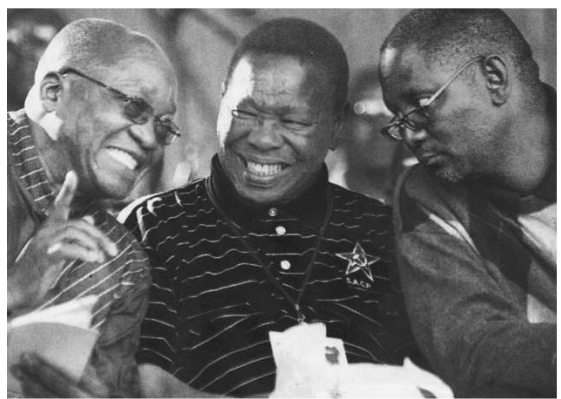
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WORKERS VANGUARD

SACP/COSATU Tops: “Reconfiguring” Neo-Apartheid Capitalism

ANC Palace Coup Rattles South Africa



Left: Thembinkosi Dwayisa, center: Corbis, right: AFP

Break with the Bourgeois Tripartite Alliance! For a Black-Centered Workers Government!

JOHANNESBURG, October 3—The resignation of South African president Thabo Mbeki has touched off the biggest political crisis in the African National Congress (ANC) since the government it leads came to power in 1994, replacing white-supremacist apartheid rule. Two days after Mbeki’s televised announcement that he would resign, ANC general secretary Gwede Mantashe declared that there was no crisis. Two days after that, the front page of the *Sowetan* (25 September) headlined, “ANC Split Looms.” Now the press reports that a split seems almost certain after the release yesterday of a letter by Mosiuoa Lekota, Defence Minister under Mbeki and former ANC national chairman, denouncing the current leadership’s departure from the ANC’s supposed “democratic culture.” There are reports of plans by Mbeki supporters in several provinces to launch a breakaway party.

Mbeki’s ouster has helped reveal the fault lines in this very unstable bourgeois democracy and in the Tripartite Alliance of the ANC, South African Communist Party (SACP) and COSATU trade-union federation. The Tripartite Alliance is a nationalist popular front—the South African variant of a governmental coalition between a reformist workers party and the capitalist class enemy, in this case through the bourgeois-nationalist ANC. In the name of a “new,” “democratic” South Africa, for 14 years the Alliance has presided over the capitalist profit system, which continues to be based on superexploited black labour and white privilege.

While the mainly black proletariat and the urban and rural poor are ever more ground down by unemployment, disease

Left: Capitalist Tripartite Alliance: ANC head Jacob Zuma (far left) with SACP’s Blade Nzimande and COSATU’s Zwelinzima Vavi. Right: Newly appointed South African president Kgalema Motlanthe (seated) with Finance Minister Trevor Manuel. Nationalist popular front presides over misery of township masses.

and wretched housing, a layer of ANC cronies have enriched themselves (more through corruption than through “black economic empowerment” schemes), with some even squeezing their way into the white-dominated capitalist class. A letter to the Johannesburg *Sunday Times* (28 September) complaining about politicians clawing their way to “self-enrichment and a ride on the gravy train” was aptly titled “New Government: Aloota Continua.”

The inherent instability of neo-apartheid capitalism has been accentuated by the confluence of the government shake-up and the world financial meltdown. The September 23 announcement by South Africa’s Trevor Manuel, the world’s longest-serving finance minister, that he was tendering his own resignation sent the Johannesburg Stock Exchange plunging and the value of the rand spiralling downward. That night, Manuel hastily convened a press conference at the International Monetary Fund in New York to reassure business leaders that he had resigned only out of deference to Mbeki and would continue serving in the government.

The ANC leadership forced Mbeki’s resignation after a court ruling by Judge Chris Nicholson implicated him in a conspiracy to prosecute his rival Jacob Zuma on corruption charges. The charges were levelled at Zuma just days after he defeated Mbeki for the ANC presidency at the December 2007 Polokwane confer-

ence. The reformist SACP and COSATU tops had promoted the populist Zuma as an antidote to the “neoliberal” Mbeki, seeking to propel Zuma to the state presidency with the 2009 general elections. A section of the capitalist class also backs Zuma, calculating that his popularity among the dispossessed makes him better able to *contain* their anger.

The premiers of Western Cape and Eastern Cape provinces were removed in the factional warfare that engulfed the ANC after Polokwane. Now the premier of Gauteng province, which includes Johannesburg and Pretoria, has resigned his post in protest against Mbeki’s ouster. Gatherings of the ANC’s regional bodies as well as of its youth and women’s leagues in recent months have been torn by fighting and even deaths as Zuma’s followers and Mbeki-ites battled for often lucrative posts in the party and government. There is palpable fear that Mbeki’s removal will touch off more violence.

Jacob Zuma may yet be tried on corruption and other charges, as the National Prosecuting Authority has moved to challenge the Nicholson court ruling, which is also being challenged by Mbeki. Whatever the truth of the charges, corruption is inherent in bourgeois politics, and nowhere more so than in imperialist “democracies” like the U.S. We say that the working class has no interest in taking a position on the charges against Zuma. From our Marxist

standpoint, the worst corruption is the *political* corruption of the SACP/COSATU misleaders’ tying the working class to its class enemy through the Tripartite Alliance.

The working class cannot emancipate itself while it is politically chained to its exploiters. What is needed is to forge a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party that champions the interests of all the oppressed and exploited in the struggle for a black-centred workers government—i.e., a workers government that is not racially exclusive but includes a full role and democratic rights for coloureds (mixed-race), including descendants of Malay slaves), Indians and those whites prepared to live under a government based centrally on the black African toilers. This perspective must be part of the struggle for a socialist federation of southern Africa. ***Break with the Tripartite Alliance!***

Atop the Powder Keg

For decades under racist colonial and apartheid rule and later as part of the “democratic” government, the SACP, a reformist workers party, has been intertwined in its membership and leadership with the ANC. Contrary to SACP mythology, the ANC is a *bourgeois* party that has always represented the interests of an aspiring black bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie. A key factor in the ANC coalition’s accession to power was the 1991-92 counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, which for decades had supported the ANC materially and diplomatically. As the Stalinist regime of Mikhail Gorbachev fell apart, and in the context of militant labour struggles in

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