

McCain, Obama: Class Enemies of Workers, Oppressed



Getty photos

Elections 2008: Economic Crisis and Imperialist War

“As long as politics is the shadow cast on society by big business, the attenuation of the shadow will not change the substance,” wrote 20th-century American philosopher John Dewey, whose statement is often quoted in hard times. Certainly there are dark shadows cast by the U.S. economy, teetering on the brink of a deep recession. It has become the primary issue of the presidential campaign. What actual differences Republican John McCain and Democrat Barack Obama have in the face of this latest crisis of capitalism are in fact superficial, as both candidates are committed above all to the salvation of their ruling class’s profits.

As against the reformist left, which is either explicitly or implicitly behind Obama, we revolutionary Marxists fight to break workers and the oppressed from illusions in the Democrats, the other party of imperialist war and racism. We take a principled stand of never voting for, or otherwise extending any political support to, any capitalist politician—Barack Obama, John McCain or Cynthia McKinney—Democrat, Republican, Green or “Independent.” Nor would we ourselves run for executive office—president, governor or mayor. Executive office 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. Democrat or Republican, the president in the U.S. is the top cop responsible for the most massive military power in history and for the domestic machinery of repression that maintains social oppression and exploitation.

Today, working people are finding it harder and harder just to make ends meet—paying the rent or mortgage, groceries, credit cards and other debts, gas and car payments, getting the medicines they and their families need, giving their kids a decent education. Undocumented



Bengiveno/NY Times

Above: Police in Georgia, with guns drawn, enforce home eviction after foreclosure. Below: Afghans carry the body of civilian killed by U.S. forces in March 2007.



AP

immigrant workers trying to eke out a living just to survive are being rounded up, with more than 285,000 deported last year alone. The loss of millions of manufacturing jobs since deindustrialization

began some 30 years ago has fallen disproportionately on black people, and it has been paralleled by the unprecedented growth of the prison population. Once a reserve army of labor for U.S. 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 need their labor power.

Whoever wins the election, the economy will continue to tank and capitalist exploitation and racist oppression will continue unabated. The unpopular and bloody Iraq occupation will go on (whether “combat troops” are withdrawn “responsibly,” as Obama wants, or not). The slaughter of civilians in the Afghanistan occupation will intensify, with McCain calling for an Iraq-style “surge” and Obama promising at least 10,000 more troops. Pakistan and Iran will still be threatened, as will the North Korean deformed workers state. Meanwhile, the military encirclement of China, the largest and most powerful of the countries where capitalist rule has been overthrown, will continue.

Our class opposition to all bourgeois candidates—and to bourgeois electoralism more generally—is based on our Marxist understanding that capitalist society is divided between two fundamental classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, whose interests cannot be reconciled. It is based on the understanding that the capitalist state exists to defend the rule and profits of the bourgeoisie against the working class and oppressed and that it cannot be reformed to serve the interests of those it oppresses. Labor needs a fighting leadership that will unleash the power of the multiracial working class in struggle not only for workers’ economic interests but also for black rights, in defense of immigrants and in opposition to U.S. imperialism. First and foremost, that means breaking the chains forged by the present labor misleaders that have shackled the working class to its exploiters, overwhelmingly through Democratic Party “lesser evilism.”

A clear example of the role of the labor
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Down With the Rotten Capitalist System! For a Workers Party to Fight for Socialist Revolution!

Chicago Transit

Down With Racist, Anti-Union “Ex-Offender Apprentice” Scheme!

CHICAGO—Over the past year, the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) together with Mayor Richard M. Daley’s Democratic Party machine has rolled out an “Ex-Offender Apprentice Program.” Under this program, ex-convicts are hired at a paltry \$9.50 an hour without benefits to fill previously eliminated Servicer positions (workers who service and clean vehicles) that paid more than \$20 an hour plus benefits. While Boss Daley and the CTA will always seek out cheap sources of labor as a battering ram against the union, the leaders of Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Locals 241 (bus) and 308 (rail) outrageously *support* this cruel scheme. The ATU tops cut a deal with the transit bosses to back this anti-union endeavor in return for the opportunity to set up a low-wage “ghetto” within the union, where the “apprentices” pay full dues but have no real union protection or rights!

Except for one press release, there has



President Bush, surrounded by Republican and Democratic lawmakers, including Illinois Congressman Danny Davis (far left), signs racist, anti-union Second Chance Act, April 9.

been a virtual media blackout of this program. As a result, many transit workers, especially among bus drivers, are not even aware of this betrayal. Among those who

are, there has been growing sympathy for the overwhelmingly black “apprentices” who work long hours in some of the hardest, dirtiest jobs with little training and virtually no rights while segregated from the rest of the workforce. It is crucial for the ATU to take up the defense of the apprentices. Workers must demand that they receive full union wages, benefits, training, protections and rights on the job and in the union. *Equal pay for equal work! No second-class union membership!*

All transit workers stand to lose, as the program is a dagger aimed at the entire union. Many apprentices work mandatory ten-hour shifts with no overtime pay. Already the CTA is championing at the bit to extend this to the ATU workforce as a whole. With the passage of the Second Chance Act in Congress last spring giv-

ing a boost to such ex-offender “job training” programs, municipal unions across the country may soon face similar divide-and-conquer schemes, which undermine union standards.

The Second Chance Act is a product of the “re-entry movement,” a coalition encompassing the Congressional Black Caucus, liberal Democrats and religious conservatives who see an opportunity to expand their reactionary “faith-based” initiatives. A number of Democratic Party politicians, including Barack Obama and Chicago-based black Congressman Danny Davis, were sponsors of this legislation.

As with millions of other black, Latino and poor people, many of the ex-convict “apprentices” now hired by the CTA were earlier swept into prison as a part of the racist “war on drugs.” From the outset, black Democrats like Jesse Jackson were in the vanguard of this reactionary crusade, which led to the skyrocketing prison population. Activists for black rights now refer to the “war on drugs” as the “new Jim Crow.” In Chicago, where black people are 35 percent of the population, over 90 percent of those sentenced to prison for drug crimes are black!

In this racist system there is nothing “ex” about being an “ex-convict.” Once out of prison, they begin a second sentence, marked for life with the scarlet letter of a criminal conviction, barely able to eke out an existence. Across the country, ex-felons are barred from employment and denied voting rights. In Illinois, a “Certificate of Good Conduct” is virtually required of ex-felons for a whole range of jobs from barber to interior designer. We call for the decriminalization of drugs as a part of our opposition to all laws against “crimes without victims” and for the full restoration of rights to ex-convicts.

The CTA program is a harbinger of the kind of racist, union-busting attacks that the rulers have in store for the entire working class under the pretext of “concern” for former prisoners. Employed for only nine months with no guarantee of

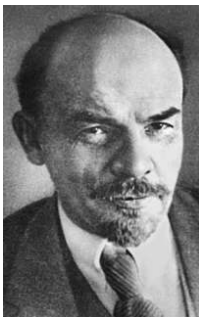
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TROTSKY

On the Need for Marxist Leadership

Amid the carnage of the first interimperialist World War and as the treacherous leaders of the Second International supported their own bourgeoisies, Lenin and Trotsky’s Bolsheviks led the Russian proletariat to the seizure of state power in the 1917 October Revolution. Speaking at the 1920 Second Congress of the Communist International, which took place during revolutionary upheavals in capitalist Europe as well as a global economic crisis, Lenin stressed the



LENIN

indispensability of proletarian revolutionary leadership. The destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92 has led to a profound, though uneven, regression in political consciousness internationally, with most advanced workers no longer identifying their struggles with socialism. We fight to reimplant the ideas of Marxism as part of the struggle to forge revolutionary parties internationally.

Comrades, we have now come to the question of the revolutionary crisis as the basis of our revolutionary action. And here we must first of all note two widespread errors. On the one hand, bourgeois economists depict this crisis simply as “unrest,” to use the elegant expression of the British. On the other hand, revolutionaries sometimes try to prove that the crisis is absolutely insoluble.

This is a mistake. There is no such thing as an absolutely hopeless situation. The bourgeoisie are behaving like barefaced plunderers who have lost their heads; they are committing folly after folly, thus aggravating the situation and hastening their doom. All that is true. But nobody can “prove” that it is absolutely impossible for them to pacify a minority of the exploited with some petty concessions, and suppress some movement or uprising of some section of the oppressed and exploited. To try to “prove” in advance that there is “absolutely” no way out of the situation would be sheer pedantry, or playing with concepts and catchwords. Practice alone can serve as real “proof” in this and similar questions. All over the world, the bourgeois system is experiencing a tremendous revolutionary crisis. The revolutionary parties must now “prove” in practice that they have sufficient understanding and organisation, contact with the exploited masses, and determination and skill to utilise this crisis for a successful, a victorious revolution.

It is mainly to prepare this “proof” that we have gathered at this Congress of the Communist International.

—V. I. Lenin, “Report on the International Situation and the Fundamental Tasks of the Communist International” (July 1920)

WORKERS VANGUARD

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Abolish the Racist Death Penalty! Stop the Execution of Troy Davis!

The grisly barbarism of the capitalist state is set to take the life of Troy Anthony Davis, a Georgia death row prisoner for the last 17 years. After the U.S. Supreme Court turned down Davis’ petition on October 14, a new death warrant was signed, and an execution date has been set for October 27. As a September 18 protest letter by the Partisan Defense Committee demanding Troy Davis’ freedom noted, “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 prosecution’s key witnesses have recanted their testimony, with several saying they were coerced by the police to lie. There is no physical evidence tying Davis to the killing: no DNA, fingerprints or murder weapon.

Davis had petitioned the federal courts to intervene in his case after witnesses had recanted their testimony. But innocence does not matter to the capitalist state’s assassins. The federal judge wielded Democrat Bill Clinton’s 1996 Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act—which virtually eliminates the right of *habeas corpus* appeals for those sentenced to death in state courts—as grounds to refuse to hear the new evidence of Davis’ innocence.

The death penalty, supported by Democrat Barack Obama as well as Republican John McCain, stands at the pinnacle of the state’s arsenal of repression—an apparatus consisting of the army, cops, courts and prisons that protects the class rule, property and profits of the capitalist



lawanddisorder.org

Troy Davis with his mother in 2002.

class. Rooted in black chattel slavery in the U.S., the death penalty is the lynch rope made legal. Black people make up over 40 percent of the death row population. *We stand for the abolition of the death penalty everywhere on principle—for the guilty as well as the innocent.* We do not accord the state the right to determine who lives and who dies.

The PDC—a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League—joins thousands throughout the world in outrage over the impending execution of Troy Davis. *Stop the execution of Troy Davis! Free him now! ■*

WORKERS VANGUARD

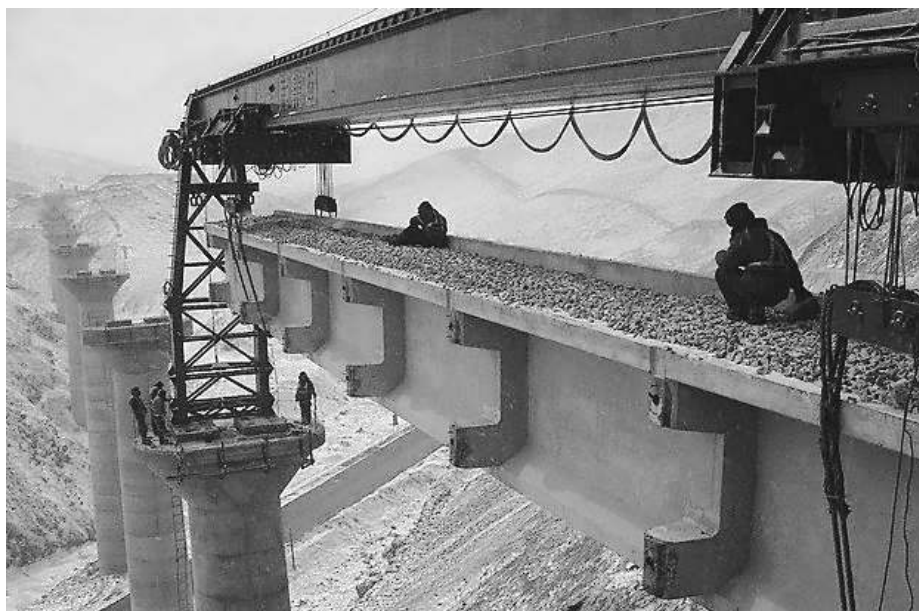
Democrats Spearhead Anti-China Crusade Down With Imperialist and Dalai Lama Provocations!

Defend the Gains of the 1949 Chinese Revolution!



Xinhua

High school students in Tibet receiving computer training (left). Workers in China's Qinghai Province constructing world's highest railway line connecting Tibet to other parts of China. Chinese Revolution has brought dramatic social gains for Tibetan masses.



EPA

We print below an edited and abridged version of a presentation by Spartacist League/U.S. spokesman Keith Markin at forums in San Francisco on September 13 and Vancouver on October 4.

Right now we are seeing the biggest financial crisis of U.S. imperialism since the 1930s. The crisis is rooted in the capitalist mode of production that predominates in the international economy. In contrast, the economy of the People's Republic of China has been growing rapidly for years. While this may not last, especially considering the state of the world economy, China has been able to industrialize and grow because its economy is not based on the drive for capitalist private profit. China is not capitalist—it is a bureaucratically deformed workers state based on collectivized property.

We are for defending the gains of the 1949 Chinese Revolution, which overthrew capitalism in the world's most populous country. We are for the unconditional military defense against imperialism and internal counterrevolution of all the bureaucratically deformed workers states (Cuba, Vietnam and North Korea are the others). These are states where capitalism has been overthrown but the working class does not wield political power. "Unconditional" means we don't put any prior conditions on our military defense: we defend the workers state whether or not the workers have succeeded in throwing out the ruling Stalinist bureaucracy.

At the same time, we are for proletarian political revolution to oust this bureaucracy. We recognize that the bureaucracy's political rule is counterposed to the advance toward socialism—an egalitarian society based on modern technology and material plenty for all. The nationalism of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) regime, its claim that "socialism" can be built in a single country, disarms and misleads the workers. Its corruption and mismanagement undermine the collectivized economy. We fight to replace the rule of the CCP with the rule of democratically elected workers and peasants councils (soviets) committed to the fight for communism worldwide. That requires forging a new, internationalist, revolutionary party to lead these struggles.

The economy is the issue dominating

the U.S. presidential elections: how to bail out the capitalists at the working people's expense to prop up an outmoded system. Communists have a very clear principle: we don't support or vote for a capitalist party or politician, whether Democrat, Republican or Green—period. And we would not ourselves run for an executive office that administers the capi-

it with military bases from South Korea and Japan to Guam and Central Asia.

The imperialists have a two-pronged strategy for capitalist counterrevolution in China: military and economic. The Democrats and Republicans agree on the military strategy of encirclement and unremitting military provocations. They disagree only on the economic strategy. The anti-

"friends" of the workers.

In June 2007, Obama sent a letter to Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson complaining that the government "has refused yet again to declare that China is manipulating its currency"—as if that were the cause of the U.S.'s economic problems! The reality is that China has \$504 billion of its \$1.8 trillion in foreign exchange reserves invested in U.S. Treasury bonds, which helps to keep the U.S. economy afloat. Especially nowadays this is not a very wise investment, not to mention that this investment policy is helping to finance the U.S. military.

China-bashing has picked up intensity since the collapse of the market for subprime mortgages triggered the current financial crisis. China is being blamed for everything from the so-called international "food shortage" to higher gas prices, the problems in Darfur, and let's not forget global warming. We're told the reason prices have gone up is because China is industrializing, leading more Chinese to eat more, drive cars, watch television, use air conditioning. In other words, the problem isn't the capitalist system, it's the Chinese deformed workers state and its economic growth!

Economic penetration by the imperialists has enormously strengthened the forces

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For Workers Political Revolution!

talist state, like president, governor or mayor. The government is the executive committee of the ruling class. The capitalist state cannot be reformed to meet the interests of the oppressed, but must be swept away through workers revolution.

There are many groups out there that call themselves "Marxist" that have disdain for the principles and program of genuine Marxism. They are trying to reform an economic system that long ago outlived its usefulness. This forum is a polemic against these *opponents* of Marxism and in defense of a Marxist worldview.

China-Bashing and the Elections

Columnist John Feffer of the *Huntington Post* wrote on June 9:

"Although Iraq is the defining foreign policy issue so far in the presidential race, China will no doubt be smuggled into the election through this rather stark contrast between the Republicans and Democrats over trade.... Not to be outdone in China-bashing, McCain will likely argue that China is a national security threat that requires more military spending."

It's not as if the regimes of Bush I and II, as well as the Clinton regime haven't already spent lots of money on the military. Currently, the U.S. accounts for **48 percent** of the entire world's military spending. And China has been in the imperialists' cross hairs ever since its 1949 Revolution. With the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92, China became the central strategic target of the U.S., which is encircling

China protectionism pushed by Democratic politicians is based on the lie that the growth of the Chinese economy is a major cause of the loss of jobs and lowering living standards in the U.S. This myth promotes illusions that capitalism can work in the interests of the working class, thereby exonerating this exploitative system while making a scapegoat out of another country, in this case China. The biggest salesmen for protectionism are inevitably the bureaucrats who head the trade unions (Marxists call them "labor lieutenants of capitalism"), who are also selling the Democratic Party as



Reuters

A steel factory in Kunming, China. The core sectors of the Chinese economy remain collectivized.

China...

(continued from page 3)

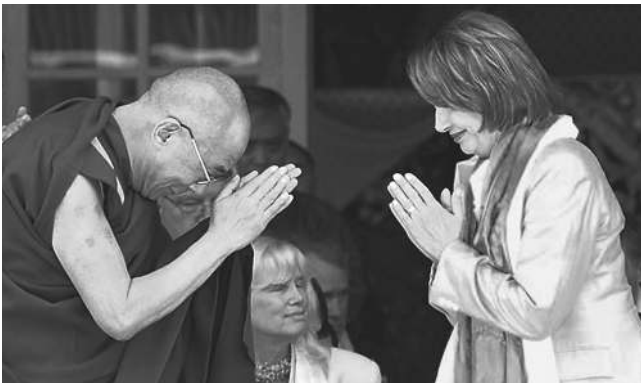
of counterrevolution within China while increasing inequality. But capitalists in China are still prevented from organizing themselves politically and vying for power. The core sectors of the economy remain collectivized and the banking system remains effectively state-owned. Economic development has vastly increased the size of the proletariat, drawing many former peasants to the cities. From 1976 to 2006 the urban population has increased from 20 to 44 percent of the total. *This is historically progressive.* Nonetheless there are still 740 million people living in the countryside.

The contradictions of the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state are sharpening. China is only the third country to have a man walk in space, but it can't effectively ensure the quality of its milk production for babies. The massive relief efforts following the devastating earthquake in Sichuan Province last spring, coupled with the collapse of many schools due to their shoddy construction, are a striking measure of these contradictions. We elaborated on this in our article on the Sichuan quake in WV No. 917, 4 July. The relief efforts were widely recognized as impressive, thus at the time cooling down the imperialist frenzy and media uproar over the counterrevolutionary riots in Tibet in March.

After the first week of the provocations in Tibet, Democratic Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi visited the Dalai Lama's headquarters in India. Pelosi blathered: "If freedom-loving people throughout the world do not speak out against China's oppression in China and Tibet, we have lost all moral authority to speak on behalf of human rights anywhere in the world." Both Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton called on Bush to boycott the opening ceremonies of the Beijing Olympics in solidarity with Tibet's "freedom fighters." Meanwhile, ethnic Chinese and Muslims were being *burned alive* in Lhasa—they didn't have traditional Tibetan scarves, known as *kataks*, outside their stores to identify themselves to the "freedom fighters."

Pelosi's "human rights" rhetoric is the vilest hypocrisy coming from a representative of U.S. imperialism, which has killed hundreds of thousands in Iraq and is currently occupying Iraq and Afghanistan. Of course, that's for the cause of "freedom" too!

Under the pro-slavery Dalai Lama, Tibetans were "free" to live an expected 35 years in squalor. Since the "Lamaocracy" was driven out of Tibet in 1959, people live nearly *twice* as long. Yet groups like the International Socialist Organization (ISO), Socialist Action and the Committee for a Workers' International—represented in the U.S. by Socialist Alternative—all enthuse over the cause of the anti-Communist "Free Tibet" movement. Like the Dalai Lama and his coterie, this "movement"—the Tibetan Youth Congress, Students for a Free Tibet, etc.—is funded by the CIA front called the National Endowment for Democracy. If Tibet were not part of China, it would be a protectorate of U.S.



Democratic House speaker Nancy Pelosi visits Dalai Lama in March (above) one week after counter-revolutionary mobs targeted ethnic Chinese in Tibet. Right: Owner sifts through remains of shop in Lhasa.



imperialism, a base for counterrevolution throughout China.

Historical Materialism and Class Struggle

This forum is in many ways inspired by a book published in 1997, *The Struggle for Modern Tibet: The Autobiography of Tashi Tsering*. It is the story of a Tibetan peasant, motivated by the need to learn how to read and write, who devoted his life to modernizing Tibet. He says that he is not a Marxist, but he was attracted to Marxism because it involved "greater power and opportunity for peasants and workers." Referring to Marxists, Tsering says that in the early 1960s:

"I was struck by their notions of the cycles or phases of history, the idea that religion could sometimes be used to enslave or hinder the common people, and the importance of revolution in the history of most of the modern European states.... I thought it was time for some kind of revolution in Tibet, too, although I didn't wish for any of the violence or the bloodshed of the sort I had been reading about [in the French and Russian Revolutions]. Yet, it was hard for me to imagine how such changes might be made to occur under our old society in any other way.... And although I was still apprehensive about the Chinese presence and long-range intentions, I began to think that perhaps what Tibet had been living through for the past ten years might in fact be the answer in the sense that the Chinese invasion of our country might have done something that we could not have done for ourselves. It had provided a revolution for us."

Fundamental social change in Tibet began after Chinese troops defeated the counterrevolutionary 1959 uprising, which was armed and backed by the CIA. But before looking at these events, it is important to understand the origins and nature of the People's Republic of China. Unlike in the 1917 workers revolution in Russia, the proletariat in China was not an active or conscious participant in the revolution that smashed the Chinese capitalist state. The CCP that defeated the thoroughly corrupt capitalist party, the Guomindang (GMD), was a party based on the peasants. So the obvious question is: how could a peasant party make a revolution that overthrew capitalism and established a workers state, albeit bureaucratically deformed? And what does that mean, anyway?

To answer these questions requires a Marxist worldview derived from a historical materialist examination of society. It means drawing lessons from the first and still only victorious working-class revolution, the Russian Revolution led by V. I.

Lenin and Leon Trotsky's Bolshevik Party in October 1917, and from the later political degeneration of the Soviet workers state under Joseph Stalin and his successors.

Historical materialism begins from the proposition that the production of the means to support human life—food, clothing and shelter—and the exchange of things produced are the basis of all social structures. In every society that has appeared in history, the manner in which wealth is distributed and society divided into classes is dependent on what is produced, how it is produced, and how the products are exchanged. From this point of view, the final causes of all social revolutions are to be sought in changes in the dominant mode of production and exchange. A "mode of production" is an economic system, which (except for primitive society, when there were no classes) is based on a particular form of property: societies based on slavery, feudalism, capitalism or collectivized property.

The transition from feudalism to capitalism necessitated bloody bourgeois revolutions like the English Revolution in the mid 17th century and the French Revolution at the end of the 18th century. Through these revolutions the bourgeoisie created the nation-state and transformed the means of production from being atomized (based on individual producers) into production by a collectivity of men. ("Means of production" includes natural resources like land and animals, as well as machines, tools, factories, infrastructure and technology.) Production became social, but the product of this collective labor was appropriated by the capitalists. There thus developed an irreconcilable antagonism between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.

Private ownership of the means of production, where production is motivated by profit, is the basis of the anarchy of capitalism. The capitalist system developed the productive forces, within the arena of the nation-state, faster than at any previous time in human history, leading to the development of modern science and the industrial revolution. This was its progressive historic role. But the capitalist system and its nation-state soon became a fetter upon economic and cultural development. The contradictions between socialized production and private appropriation, and between the development of the productive forces and the framework of the national state, came to a head. By about 1900, the territorial division of the whole world among the largest capitalist powers had largely been completed. This led to the first imperialist world war.

In his 1916 book, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Lenin advanced Marx's analysis into the period of capitalist decay, clarifying that war is inherent to the imperialist system. Capitalism had created a world market dominated by the imperialist powers and divided by their rivalries. It had also fully developed its gravedigger in the proletariat. The solution is international workers revolution to overthrow the system based on capitalist production for profit, establishing workers states based on collectivized property where production is based on what is *useful* for society. To impart to the working class the necessary revolutionary consciousness to accomplish its historic mission of overthrowing the capitalist system is the task of a Leninist vanguard party. We consider the International Communist

League the programmatic nucleus of that party today.

Before the first imperialist war, Russia was the weakest link in the imperialist chain. Trotsky described its development as "uneven and combined": an overwhelmingly peasant country with a myriad of national and ethnic minorities oppressed by Great Russian landlords and capitalists and under an absolutist monarchy. At the same time, there was a small but important proletariat in a few industrial centers, concentrated in huge factories equipped with the most modern technology. For example, the massive Putilov metal works and the surrounding area in St. Petersburg had *30,000 workers* in 1905.

The right wing of Russian social democracy, the Mensheviks, argued that the bourgeoisie must come to power to resolve the outstanding democratic tasks such as giving land to the peasantry. Against this perspective of binding the proletariat to the liberal bourgeoisie, Lenin and the Bolsheviks counterposed the revolutionary collaboration of the proletariat and the downtrodden peasantry, establishing a "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry." Crucially, Lenin had no illusions in any "progressive" character of the Russian bourgeoisie.

Trotsky likewise recognized that the Russian bourgeoisie was incapable of leading a democratic revolution, but went further than Lenin. In his theory of permanent revolution, developed in 1904-06, Trotsky asserted that the Russian Revolution would be proletarian-socialist in character, that the solution of the bourgeois-democratic tasks was conceivable only in the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, leaning on the peasantry. This would place on the order of the day not only democratic tasks but socialist tasks as well. To guarantee such gains and lay the basis for a socialist society, proletarian rule had to be extended to the advanced capitalist world.

In 1917, when the tsar's government collapsed, the Mensheviks supported the new liberal bourgeois Provisional Government and later joined the government. Lenin waged a merciless political struggle against the Mensheviks and those in the Bolshevik Party who conciliated them. He came over to Trotsky's view that the revolution could triumph only by placing the proletariat in power, while Trotsky came to see that Lenin's fight for a programmatically steeled and tested vanguard party was the necessary foundation for socialist revolution. Lenin won over the key cadre in his party, and in October the Bolsheviks led the working class, supported by the peasantry, in a revolution that smashed the old state apparatus, replacing the class dictatorship of capital with the dictatorship of the proletariat based on democratically elected councils (soviets) of workers, soldiers and peasants. There is a detailed examination of these political struggles in "The Development and Extension of Leon Trotsky's Theory of Permanent Revolution," available in a new ICL pamphlet.

After the October Revolution, during the grueling civil war against the forces of counterrevolution backed by no less than 14 capitalist countries, the Bolsheviks founded the Communist International (Comintern), embodying their commitment to international revolution. The Russian Revolution was a confirmation of

International Communist League pamphlet comprising three articles from ICL press: "The Development and Extension of Leon Trotsky's Theory of Permanent Revolution," "A Trotskyist Critique of Germany 1923 and the Comintern" and "Down With Executive Offices of the Capitalist State!" These articles together constitute an introduction to the historically founded principles and program of Trotskyism (i.e., genuine Marxism).

\$2 (56 pages)

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International Communist League Pamphlet

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

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the Marxist program and a clarion call to the world's oppressed. It is *our model*. We struggle for the perspective of new October Revolutions throughout the capitalist world today.

Stalinism and the Betrayal of the 1925-27 Chinese Revolution

After the Bolsheviks won the Civil War at tremendous cost, including losing the most advanced layers of the proletariat who were either killed or incorporated into the state administration, all eyes were on the powerful German working class: a proletarian victory in Germany would end the isolation of the fledgling workers state. However the 1923 German Revolution was defeated, with enormous international consequences. The postwar revolutionary wave was stopped and the global bourgeois order stabilized for a period of time. The defeat had a hugely demoralizing effect on Soviet workers, helping to pave the way for the usurpation of political power by a conservative, nationalist bureaucracy.

Beginning in 1924 (Lenin died in January that year), the bureaucracy, led at the time by Stalin, Zinoviev and Kamenev, defeated the emerging Left Opposition led by Trotsky and set in motion a process of consolidating its rule as a privileged caste atop the workers state. But the mode of production based on the predominance of collectivized property did not change: what changed was the political regime.

In the fall of 1924, Stalin began to justify the Soviet Union's isolation and the political power of the bureaucracy with his "theory" that socialism—a society based on material abundance, in which classes have disappeared and the state has withered away—can be built in a single country, and an economically devastated one at that. "Peaceful coexistence" with the capitalists of the world soon became the corollary. The bureaucracy became hostile to the proletarian, revolutionary, internationalist program of the October Revolution. "Socialism in one country" was the banner of defeat under which countless revolutionary opportunities were betrayed. This political counterrevolution was fought by the Left



RGAKFD

Red Army soldiers with banner hailing "Communism" march through Moscow in 1918 on first anniversary of October Revolution. *The Permanent Revolution* (1930) by Leon Trotsky applied lessons of 1917 Russian Revolution to countries of belated capitalist development.

preventing national unification.

China's capitalist development was even more belated than Russia's had been. The key question in the Second Chinese Revolution was: what would be the class character of the Chinese Revolution? Stalin and Bukharin continued the policy of liquidating the young Chinese CP into the bourgeois GMD, now led by Chiang Kai-shek. They revived the Menshevik line of "two-stage" betrayal, whose bankruptcy had been exposed in Russia in 1917. Citing the weakness of the workers movement in China, they argued that the revolution must be restricted to a "democratic" stage under the leadership of a "bloc of four classes"—the national bourgeoisie, urban petty bourgeoisie, workers and peasants. In this schema, the "second stage," the struggle for socialism, is relegated to an indefinite future that in reality never comes to be. How could a national bourgeoisie lead an agrarian revolution against landlords, many of whom were part of the same bourgeoisie? The answer is: it could not.

In March 1927, a general strike of over a half a million workers in Shanghai turned into an insurrection. But the proletariat was supposed to follow the bour-

national After Lenin. Key international cadre were won to the Left Opposition, including James P. Cannon, a central leader of the American CP, and Chen Duxiu, the founding leader of the CCP who had been made the scapegoat for Stalin's betrayals.

The defeat of the Second Chinese Revolution had a profound impact on the proletariat and the CCP. At Comintern insistence, the CCP denied that there had been a defeat. With the proletariat atomized, being hunted down by the GMD, the CCP soon turned its back on the workers, retreating to the countryside. Only the Chinese Trotskyists, working underground, sought to maintain roots among the urban working class. The CCP transformed itself into a peasant party in composition and political outlook. So when the 1949 Chinese Revolution overthrew capitalist rule, it did so under the leadership of a peasant-based party with Stalinist politics.

Extraordinary historical circumstances conditioned these events. There was the existence of the Soviet Union, which gave material aid to the CCP's People's Liberation Army (PLA), albeit reluctantly. The utterly corrupt bourgeois GMD was

The smashing of capitalist class rule in China arose from the specific, and not predetermined, relations among the peasant-based CCP, the Chinese proletariat and the domestic and imperialist bourgeoisie. But the victory of the social revolution could only establish a *bureaucratically deformed* workers state. The CCP feared the proletariat and was suspicious of it. Like the Soviet bureaucracy, the Chinese bureaucracy is a petty-bourgeois parasitic and nationalistic caste that sits atop the workers state and feeds on it. Its privileges are derived from the existence of the workers state. Just like under Stalin, the bureaucracy's program, whether under Mao Zedong, Liu Shaoqi, Deng Xiaoping or Hu Jintao, is based on the anti-Marxist lie of building "socialism in one country" and seeking to perpetuate the status quo by "peacefully coexisting" with imperialism.

Trotsky explained the material roots of the Soviet bureaucracy in his 1937 book *The Revolution Betrayed*, using language that today could be applied to the Chinese Stalinists as well:

"The basis of bureaucratic rule is the poverty of society in objects of consumption, with the resulting struggle of each against all. When there are enough goods in a store, the purchasers can come whenever they want to. When there is little goods, the purchasers are compelled to stand in line. When the lines are very long, it is necessary to appoint a policeman to keep order. Such is the starting point of the power of the Soviet bureaucracy. It 'knows' who is to get something and who has to wait."

Calling for workers political revolution in the USSR, Trotsky emphasized: "It is not a question of substituting one ruling clique for another, but of changing the very methods of administering the economy and guiding the culture of the country. Bureaucratic autocracy must give place to Soviet democracy."

Tibet and the Chinese Revolution

Until early 1949, U.S. imperialism's policy toward Tibet was unequivocal. Tibet was seen as part of China, though with a large degree of independence from the central government. While its geographic location was not seen as strategic at that time, the CIA's predecessor, the OSS (Office of Strategic Services), had several agents in Tibet during World War II. The U.S. changed its policy in 1949, when it was clear that the Chinese Civil War was going badly for the U.S.-backed GMD armies. One Ruth Bacon of the State Department argued that with a Communist takeover, Tibet would assume "ideological and strategic importance" and that the U.S. should no longer consider it under Chinese authority. This shows how the Tibet question has long been cynically manipulated by the imperialists for their own interests.

Everything changed with the 1950-53 Korean civil war. The PLA made no decisive move into Tibet until China was threatened by the imperialists, who had overtaken most of North Korea and were threatening China at the border. Chinese troops crossed the Yalu River bordering

continued on page 6



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Left: Workers militia in Shanghai during 1925-27 Revolution. Right: Execution of Chinese Communist following Chiang Kai-shek coup in 1927. Stalinists ordered liquidation of CCP into bourgeois-nationalist Guomindang, leading to massacre of Communists and militant workers.

Opposition led by Trotsky—and one of the first decisive political battlegrounds on the international arena was the Second Chinese Revolution of 1925-27.

The First Chinese Revolution of 1911, led by Sun Yat-sen's bourgeois-nationalist movement and with the direct participation of the imperialists, overthrew the decrepit Qing (or Manchu) dynasty. The next year Sun founded the bourgeois-nationalist Guomindang. Before World War I, there was barely a Chinese proletariat at all. But the war stimulated the Chinese economy and by 1922 there were two million industrial workers. While this was a tiny part of the population, the proletariat was concentrated in large enterprises with the most modern techniques of production in a few urban centers on the coast, giving it enormous social power. China was not an outright colony like India, but imperialist penetration perpetuated its backwardness. Warlordism with competing imperialist sponsorship proliferated,

geois nationalists, not insurrect against them. Stalin ordered the CCP to disarm. Lulled into the belief that Chiang Kai-shek was an ally, tens of thousands of Communists and militant workers, who were the effective power in Shanghai, were murdered when he turned on them in the massacre of April 1927.

At every step, Trotsky opposed this policy of subordinating the working class to the bourgeois nationalists. In a March 1927 statement to the Soviet Politburo, Trotsky demanded that the CCP organize soviets and initiate a revolutionary struggle for power. Drawing the lessons of the Chinese Revolution's bloody defeat, he *generalized* his theory and perspective of permanent revolution to other countries of belated capitalist development. In 1928, Trotsky submitted to the Comintern's Sixth Congress a document titled "The Draft Program of the Communist International—A Criticism of Fundamentals," later published in *The Third Inter-*

decaying from within. The proletariat was not mobilized as an independent force. Another significant factor was that the Soviets set off an atomic bomb on 29 August 1949, which provided a nuclear deterrent against imperialist attack.

The basic policy of *all* sections of the Chinese bourgeoisie and the imperialist powers toward the CCP and PLA during the 1946-49 Civil War was one of physical annihilation. Thus the triumph of the PLA signaled the destruction of the Chinese capitalists as a politically organized class, reducing them to atomized property owners. Contrary to Maoist theory, there was no basis for "two-stage" revolution or a "bloc of four classes." History proved wrong the dogma that you "cannot skip stages," that the proletariat must first ally with a section of the capitalist class enemy in a fight for "democracy"—a class-collaborationist perspective that has produced only disaster and defeat for the world's working people.

China...

(continued from page 5)

North Korea to drive the imperialists back, and around the same time about 40,000 PLA troops attacked the Tibetan army, which was on the brink of collapse because of inferior numbers, weapons and organization.

After the First Chinese Revolution in 1911, the 13th Dalai Lama consolidated his power by expanding and modernizing the Tibetan army along the lines of his imperialist sponsors, the British and the Japanese. So pervasive was British influence that as late as 1950 the officers issued all their commands in English while the army band was only capable of playing such “traditional” Tibetan tunes as “Auld Lang Syne,” “God Save the King” (they clearly weren’t referring to the “god-king” of Tibet) and my personal favorite, “It’s a Long Way to Tipperary.” Tipperary is in Ireland—so it certainly was a long way!

The Tibetan army was clearly no match for the hardened veterans of the PLA. Under Mao’s “helmsmanship,” China began negotiations with the 14th Dalai Lama (the current one, who was about 16 then) based on a program that amounted to “one country, two systems.” This meant the CCP would allow the Tibetan ruling class to continue its social and political rule so long as it ceded sovereignty to the Chinese deformed workers state. This deal was codified in the Seventeen Point Agreement signed in May 1951.

There is a sharp contrast here with how the Bolsheviks consolidated Soviet power in Central Asia, a region which, like Tibet, was economically precapitalist and had no proletariat. The separation of church/mosque and state was crucial in the fight for women’s emancipation, especially in the heavily Muslim Soviet East. But it took time for the Bolsheviks to establish a material and political basis for secular Soviet government and educational organs to supplant clerical vestiges. Of necessity, the Bolsheviks made compromises with those sections of local religious and traditional civil institutions that had been brutally persecuted under the tsar and sided with the October Revolution. At the same time, they used Soviet state power to carefully and systematically supplant such institutions, including by simultaneously demonstrating the superiority of Soviet government.

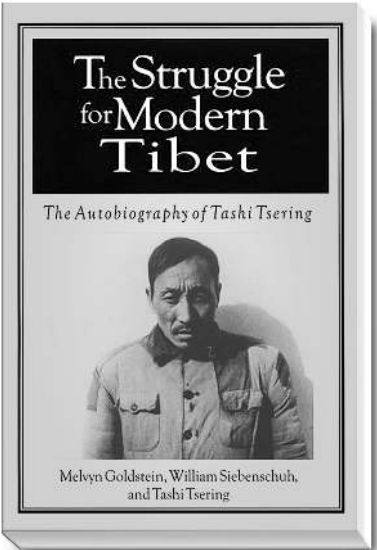
The Soviet government under Lenin and Trotsky differentiated between the rights of individuals and social organizations to privately practice religion, and the conduct of those clerics of the Orthodox church, Islam, etc., who actively supported the forces of counterrevolution because their material interests were counterposed to the fledgling workers state. The Soviet government successfully mobilized the workers and peasants to decisively crush such forces. They set out to achieve universal literacy, instituting a materialist education for all, counterposed to all forms of religious prejudice. For example, Communist women put on the veil to teach women in Soviet Central Asia how to read and write.



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Left: Emancipated Tibetan serfs receiving land certificates. By end of 1961 all serfs were emancipated by People’s Liberation Army.

Right: Autobiography of Tashi Tsering, a Tibetan peasant who recognized progressive role of Chinese Revolution and devoted his life to modernizing Tibet.



If Tibet was Shangri-La for the lords and lamas it was hell for the oppressed. Formed through the merger of a feudal-like aristocracy and a vast clerical estate making up at times over 20 percent of the male population, the Lamaocracy held sway over a society of serfs, peasants and herdsmen for hundreds of years. This meant that the women did a lot of the labor, since both the monks and a not small portion of the male population, who emulated the monastic life after “sinning” by procreating, were employed in contemplation. Young boys were taken from their families, including to replenish the monk population. Household slavery also existed. It is a measure of the intensity of oppression and exploitation in lamaist Tibet that what was perhaps proportion-

bureaucracy and its contradictory nature. The CCP decided the PLA had to intervene decisively in North Korea because China was directly threatened by imperialist troops advancing on its border. If the workers state goes, the parasite has no host to feed on—there’s no material basis for the bureaucracy’s privileges. At the same time, the CCP chose to “peacefully coexist” with feudal Tibet, where the Lamaocracy was perceived as no threat to the bureaucracy’s privileged position atop the deformed workers state. The oppressed peasants, serfs and herders were not of primary concern—not until there was a military threat.

The Seventeen Point Agreement only applied to central Tibet, not to the other areas where the relatively small popula-

said to have been well supplied by some mysterious agency with necessary light weapons and ammunition.” One U.S. Air Force officer pointed out that physical evidence is not always necessary: “If the Dalai Lama is spirited out of Tibet in the face of an overwhelming Chinese army of conquerors, are the Chinese going to think he found his support in heaven?”

What of the serfs, peasants and herders? Political, social and religious customs in Tibet largely remained as they were before the PLA’s arrival. The mass of Tibetans were tied to the status quo without the slightest knowledge or experience of any other way of life. Confused by the new ways offered by the CCP, which simultaneously urged liberation of the serfs from the feudal masters while creating alliances with these same masters, they did not join their liberators in large numbers. Clearly, the CCP’s policy of conciliating the Lamaocracy in central Tibet *demobilized* the oppressed classes.

It took the PLA only 20 hours or so to crush the U.S.-backed, pro-slavery Lamaocracy uprising in 1959. Following this victory the Chinese government abolished *ulag* (forced peasant labor) and put an end to flogging, mutilation and amputation as forms of criminal punishment. The land, livestock and tools of the aristocrats who fled into exile were distributed to the peasants, as were the land and other property of the monasteries that had participated in the uprising. The Chinese deformed workers state established secular education and built running water and electrical systems in Lhasa. As a result of the social gains of the Chinese Revolution coming to Tibet, the conditions of life vastly improved. Infant mortality, an astounding 43 percent in 1950, dramatically decreased to 0.661 percent by 2000. The literacy rate rose greatly, though it continues to be the lowest of all the provinces of China.

From Mao to Deng

In 1966, Mao initiated the “Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution” to regain the authority he lost following the economic disaster called the “Great Leap Forward” (1958-60). The latter had brought industrial and agricultural production to a standstill, leading to a devastating famine throughout China. Instead of communism resulting from the international division of labor of several advanced workers states and the elimination of scarcity, Mao’s Chinese-style “communism” was to be brought about by the primitive labor of millions of peasants—equal sharing of poverty. Mao refused to admit that the “Great Leap” was a disaster. The Cultural Revolution was a falling out between two wings of the Stalinist bureaucracy: Mao vs. Liu and Deng, neither of which merited the least political support from Trotskyists.

Mao developed a particularly demented version of Stalinist doublespeak for the Cultural Revolution. “Capitalism” ceased to mean a particular form of property relations. Mao’s opponents within the bureaucracy were branded as “capitalist roaders” in a “class struggle.” Students were hailed as “proletarian revolutionaries” while being cynically mobilized to break workers strikes. Especially significant, the Soviet Union became “Soviet social-imperialism,” supposedly more reactionary than U.S. imperialism. This



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Tibetan Buddhist monks surrender to PLA troops in Lhasa after leading reactionary armed revolt, April 1959.

ally the largest and most idle ruling stratum in human history was economically supported by barley growers and yak herders.

Tibet and Modernization

Tsering, the Tibetan peasant whose book I mentioned earlier, finally began to get an education in the U.S. in 1960. He wrote:

“The revelations started when I began to read about medieval history, because as I began thinking about Europe in the Middle Ages—about the cathedrals, the monasteries, the feudal system, the aristocrats and monks who had all the power and land, and the close connection between church and state—I saw parallels to the old, theocratic, and essentially feudal Tibetan society of my youth.”

After reading basic Marxism and history he concluded that since it took revolutions to oust European feudalism it would take the same in Tibet.

Tsering commented on the initial arrival of the Chinese troops in the early 1950s. They soon opened the first primary school in Lhasa, and built roads and a hospital. He said: “It was more change for the good in a shorter period of time than I had seen in my life—more change, I was tempted to think, than Tibet had seen in centuries.” As Tsering understood, it took the Chinese to provide a revolution which the Tibetans could not have made for themselves.

Yet social change was very circumscribed up to 1959. Mao instructed CCPers to slow down the changes Tsering refers to. Why? The answer has everything to do with the nationalist basis of the Stalinist

tion of Tibetans (about 1.3 million at the time) resided. The other two areas are Kham to the east, covering western Sichuan and the northwest corner of Yunnan Province, and Amdo, covering much of Qinghai and some of Gansu provinces northeast of central Tibet.

The economic policy for the first three years in Mao’s China was meant to be for recovery, to restore production. U.S. intervention in Korea showed the need for an economy in China based on heavy industry that could sustain a modern army sooner rather than later. The first five-year plan based on collectivized property was not inaugurated until 1953. Problems soon developed because China was simply too poor to apply the Soviet model for rapid economic growth. Compared to the Soviet Union in 1928, China in 1952 produced less than *one-half* as much grain per person.

Resistance among reactionary Tibetan forces began in the region of Kham in 1956. This intersected serious problems in the economy throughout China, which led to a rapid change from voluntary to forced collectivization in the countryside. Almost the entire peasantry was organized into collectives in a single year. This collectivization did not go over well with the remnants of the Tibetan feudal nobility in Kham.

Washington was scheming long before the counterrevolutionary uprising that commenced on 10 March 1959. Few believed the Chinese claims that the U.S. and GMD had been arming the rebels in Kham since 1956. But in a 25 March 1959 article titled “Turmoil in Tibet” the *Washington Post* stated, “guerrillas are

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was meant to justify China’s anti-Soviet alliance with U.S. imperialism at the height of the latter’s dirty, losing war against the Vietnamese Revolution.

The prime task laid down in a 1966 CCP Central Committee decision on the Cultural Revolution was the elimination of “old ideas, culture, customs, and habits of the exploiting classes,” otherwise known as the “Four Olds.” This campaign wreaked havoc, with tremendous human and economic damage throughout China. It was anti-culture, against Western art and music and against the cultures of the Han Chinese and all minority nationalities. To this day, the group known as the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) here in the U.S. hails the demented Maoist Cultural Revolution as an achievement akin to the Russian Revolution!

There is a widespread distortion promoted by the Dalai Lama camp and the imperialists that during the Cultural Revolution Mao mobilized Han Chinese student youth to smash and destroy much of what had been at the core of Tibetan culture. But it was mostly *Tibetan* youth who destroyed many Buddhist relics and palaces. Wang Lixiong wrote in his thoughtful article, “Reflections on Tibet,” in *New Left Review* (March-April 2002):

“To point out that it was largely the Tibetans themselves who destroyed the monasteries and temples is not to exonerate the Han; but it does raise broader questions, beyond the issue of responsibility. Why did the Tibetans, who for centuries had regarded religion as the centre of their lives, smash the Buddhist statues with their own hands?... Surely these actions are evidence that, once they realized they could control their own fate, the Tibetan peasantry, in an unequivocally liberating gesture, cast off the spectre of the afterlife that had hung over them for so long and forcefully asserted that they would rather be men in this life than souls in the next.”

I disagree with Wang’s argument that the underlying impulse for the attack on Buddhist relics was “simply that Mao had replaced the Dalai Lama as the god in their minds.” Because of the continued high rate of illiteracy, coupled with the cult of Mao during the Cultural Revolution, no doubt some Tibetans viewed Mao as a god who liberated them from hell under the Dalai Lama’s rule. But what underlay their actions was that they thought they were aiding the Revolution. Tsering writes about his active participation in the Cultural Revolution: “But precisely because it was so unthinkable it was also exciting. Students like me were in the vanguard of continuing the revolution in China!”

In 1978, two years after Mao’s death and the purge of the rabidly pro-Mao

“Gang of Four,” Deng took over the CCP leadership and denounced the Cultural Revolution. Despite the claims of some leftist academics and organizations that revile Deng and uphold Mao as a revolutionary alternative, Deng was in many ways Mao’s logical successor. The aim of Deng’s “market reforms,” which he dubbed “socialism with Chinese characteristics,” was the same as Mao’s: to turn China into a modern nation-state and a world power. The market-oriented reforms were an attempt to address

met with German chancellor Angela Merkel in Berlin, U.S. president Bush in Washington and Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper within a space of five weeks beginning in September 2007. A few months later, on the 49th anniversary of the 1959 uprising, the orgy of anti-Chinese rioting led by Buddhist lamas in Lhasa was followed by coordinated actions in Gansu, Qinghai and Sichuan provinces. This was a counterrevolutionary provocation by the Dalai Lama and the imperialists, and the ICL opposed it.



Beijing: Construction workers gather after being blocked by police from marching to Tiananmen Square, August 2007. The workers were protesting unpaid wages.

within the framework of Stalinist bonapartism the inefficiencies of the bureaucratic command-planned economy.

Starting in 1980, the CCP put forward new policies that gave Tibet substantial financial aid. Living standards improved significantly. From 1979-94 the average income of Tibetan farmers and herders went up *six times*. Agricultural production was *460 percent* of its 1952 level. At the same time, Deng went back to Mao’s original conciliationist stance toward the lamas. In 1978, less than a week after taking power, he indicated his willingness to start a dialogue with the Dalai Lama. The clergy were again given special treatment. The number of monks and nuns increased to 46,000 (2 percent of the Tibetan population) by 1994. Temples were under construction everywhere. The Han population in Tibet was *reduced* by 40 percent.

Like the rest of China, there was a lot of opposition in Tibet to problems arising out of the “market reforms” policy. The U.S. imperialists had had the Dalai Lama on their payroll since the early 1950s; now they played this card again. On 21 September 1987, the Dalai Lama appeared before the U.S. Congress. Six days later Lhasa saw its first street demonstrations since 1959. Big rallies demanded independence and raised the banned national flag. The next 17 months saw an increasingly bloody pattern of disturbances, leading ultimately to the imposition of martial law in March 1989, which remained in effect for 419 days. This was just a month before the protests began at Beijing’s Tiananmen Square against corruption and spiraling inflation, leading to an incipient proletarian political revolution that was brutally crushed on 4 June 1989.

Having been twice bitten by the policy of conciliating the CIA-backed Dalai Lama, the Chinese Stalinists again hardened their approach after the counterrevolution in the former Soviet Union and East Europe in the early 1990s. Tibet has undergone notable development and now has the third highest average monthly wages of all the provinces. But the hold of religion helps to maintain social backwardness. For example, the Tibetan illiteracy rate is still about five times the national average.

The imperialist powers hoped to take advantage of the Beijing Olympics to intensify their pressure on China through their support to the Dalai Lama. In a provocation that prefigured the Tibet riots—similar to 1987—the Dalai Lama

The bureaucracy’s policies of conciliating the Dalai Lama on the one hand, and the anti-proletarian, anti-cultural, fake “class struggle” of the Cultural Revolution on the other also helped to lay the basis for this reactionary revolt. In *The Revolution Betrayed* Trotsky wrote: “From the point of view of socialist forms of society, the policy of the bureaucracy is striking in its contradictions and inconsistencies. But the same policy appears very consistent from the standpoint of strengthening the power of the new commanding stratum.”

The common thread is that the bureaucracy’s policies are mired in nationalism, the false ideology of a petty-bourgeois bonapartist caste that vacillates between the pressures of world imperialism and fear of the proletariat. An example of CCP bonapartism run amok was the announcement in August 2007 that reincarnation in Tibet is banned without government permission. This could be described as bureaucratic atheism.

China and Revolutionary Internationalism

It is vital for the Chinese proletariat to combat the Han chauvinism of the Stalinist bureaucracy and oppose all discrimination against Tibetans, the Muslim Uighurs of Xinjiang and all other national and ethnic minorities. The bureaucracy’s opposition to international revolution, based on the nationalist program of “socialism in one country” and its corollary, “peaceful coexistence,” deeply undercuts the defense of the deformed workers state. Tibet’s fate is tied to the fate of the Chinese Revolution, which in turn is dependent on the international revolution, especially in the imperialist centers.

The massive strikes and protests by Chinese workers and peasants that happen on a regular basis underscore the sharpening contradictions in China. Recently, there are reports that the legal right to strike may be reinstated, showing that the bureaucracy indeed rules in fear of the largest industrial proletariat in the world. We stand for trade unions in China free of the bureaucracy’s control and based on defense of the workers state. Unconditional military defense of China against counterrevolution is also in the vital class interest of the international proletariat, not least in the U.S. As James Cannon, the founder of American Trotskyism, taught us about the former Soviet Union, the best and only thing that can save China in the end is the international

revolution of the proletariat. In order to regenerate the workers state, we stand for the overthrow of the bureaucracy by a political revolution.

The reformist opponents of revolutionary Marxism preach that capitalism can be reformed, and socialism is a pipe-dream. This is a defense of the capitalist status quo. A decade and a half ago, the International Socialist Organization, Socialist Action and their ilk cheered on the counterrevolutions that destroyed the Soviet Union and the deformed workers states of East and Central Europe, which brought unparalleled immiseration, particularly for women. They have a share of responsibility for that world-historic defeat. Other groups, for example the Workers World Party (WWP), politically supported the Stalinist bureaucracies who sold out the workers states to imperialism.

In June 1989, WWP denounced the incipient political revolution in China’s Tiananmen Square as “counterrevolutionary” and supported its bloody repression. (Its split-off group, the Party for Socialism and Liberation, has the same position.) In May of that year, organized workers contingents started to participate in the Tiananmen protests, which had begun among student youth. The threat of a general strike led the CCP to declare martial law, but for two weeks this was not implemented by the army.

As governmental authority in Beijing evaporated, workers groups began to take on responsibility for public safety, taking over essential services like transporting food and other vital necessities. A group of PLA generals sent a letter of protest to Deng Xiaoping. The army was politically splitting—not horizontally, as happens in a social revolution where the ranks split from the officers, but vertically, an aspect of the bureaucracy collapsing. Other troops loyal to Deng were finally brought in and crushed the rebellion. The Chinese proletariat needed—but did not have—a revolutionary leadership that could have led decisive action at a critical moment in history. The job of a vanguard party is to prepare for such moments.

The events in China directly impacted the mass upsurge against bureaucratic rule in East Germany (the DDR) that began later that year, which also posed pointblank the need for a Leninist party to lead the fight for the rule of workers and soldiers councils. The ICL, in our most significant intervention, fought for the revolutionary reunification of Germany—workers political revolution in the DDR combined with socialist revolution in West Germany. The power of our Trotskyist program was shown in East Berlin on 3 January 1990 when our comrades addressed a quarter-million-strong demonstration called to honor the Soviet Red Army soldiers who liberated the DDR from the Nazis. We initiated the call for this mobilization, which was taken up by the ruling Stalinists because they feared how our program had resonated among the East Berlin workers and felt compelled to mobilize their base. In the end, the Moscow and East Berlin Stalinists surrendered the DDR to the West German imperialists. As we wrote in our journal *Spartacist* ([English-language edition] No. 47-48, Winter 1992-93), “although shaped by the disproportion of forces, there was in fact a contest between the

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Elections...

(continued from page 1)

bureaucracy was the political basis on which the West Coast port shutdown by the ILWU longshore union on May Day this year against the U.S. occupation of Iraq (but *not* of Afghanistan) was carried out. Occurring amid ongoing contract negotiations with the Pacific Maritime Association, this action was a powerful display of union muscle to the shipping bosses. But it was wrapped in red-white-and-blue American chauvinism by the ILWU International bureaucracy and subordinated to the union tops’ endorsement of Obama for president. At the San Francisco May Day rally, which was politically dominated by speakers from the Democratic and Green parties, an ILWU Local 10 official read out a statement from International President Bob McEllrath declaring, “We’re standing up for America, we’re supporting the troops.... We’re loyal to America.” Such vile “America first” chauvinism is a pledge of allegiance to the bloody U.S. occupiers against the peoples of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Welfare for the Super Rich

Writing in 1918, Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin noted in *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky* that elections “*never decide*” important questions under bourgeois democracy, which are decided by the stock exchange and banks.” No matter who’s in the White House come January, the current economic crash and burn will be used to justify a massive “redistribution of income”—out of taxpayers’ paychecks and into the coffers of Wall Street fat cats. Both



Getty

Food distribution in a Florida church in March. With higher food prices and rising unemployment, more and more working people are struggling to make ends meet.

“socialism.” There is nothing either new or socialist about them. Capitalism has always worked to socialize the bourgeoisie’s losses, while the exploiters appropriate the profits for themselves. According to a tally by the *New York Times* (18 October), money allocated by the government for potential use in bailout schemes totals a stupefying **\$5.1 trillion**—an amount equal to more than a third of the yearly output of the U.S. economy!

Where is such a staggering sum of money going to come from? In the long term, it will ultimately have to be paid by working people. In the short term, it will be financed by deficit spending—that is, by increased government borrow-

One need only look to the numerous black Democrats who were elected as mayors in major urban areas. They served to enforce austerity measures against the exploited and oppressed, 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.

Nonetheless, the possibility of the election of the first black president, whatever his actual policies, will propel the overwhelming majority of black voters to support Obama. The unprecedented number of voter registrations, mostly in support of Obama, promise an unusually high turnout for this election. In this, Obama performs a great service to the capitalist order by reinforcing illusions in the shell game of bourgeois electoral politics. Like the myth that if you own some stock (now probably worthless) then you’re a capitalist, the fact that you and billionaire Warren Buffett both have one vote is supposed to make us all equal. Such myths are likewise promoted by bourgeois “third parties,” which serve to dissipate and channel social discontent into bourgeois electoralism; and in the case of “progressive” or liberal movements, back into the Democratic Party. Green Party presidential candidate Cynthia McKinney’s appeal in her nomination acceptance speech that “whatever it is that we want in the realm of public policy, we can get if we have the right elected officials in office,” is a lie and a hoax.

Obama offers a much-needed facelift for U.S. imperialism and for “the American dream” that “anybody can grow up to be President.” Such powerful mythology is an invaluable distraction from the current chaotic disaster of capitalism, serving to reinforce illusions in the trappings of American bourgeois democracy.

In ancient Athens, democracy was meant for the slave-owning class—a concept near and dear to America’s founding fathers, many themselves slaveowners. Democracy under capitalism is nothing but democracy *for the capitalist rulers*. It is the means by which the bourgeoisie disguises its rule with the appearance of

a popular mandate. As Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin captured it in his 1917 work, *The State and Revolution*, “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.”

With Obama ahead in the polls, the Republicans are trying every dirty trick in the book to pare down the number of voters. It worked in 2000 in Florida and in 2004 in Ohio, though certainly the Democrats are no strangers to voter fraud. One could say that this old American “art” was perfected by Democratic Party machines in cities like New York (Tammany Hall) and Chicago (the Daley machine—“vote early, vote often”—which helped Kennedy to his narrow win in 1960). This time around, there are the usual shenanigans involving paperless electronic voting machines and voters being dropped off registration rolls. The Republicans are also going after the non-profit group ACORN, which has registered 1.3 million new voters, many of them minorities and poor people. McCain inanely declared during the third presidential debate that ACORN may be “destroying the fabric of democracy”!

But it is mass incarceration that has deprived some 2 percent of the voting-age population of the franchise. Some 13 percent of black men are disenfranchised, with one in four permanently barred from voting in seven states, including nearly one-third of all black men in Florida. Many of the 2.3 million people in America’s jails and prisons—40 percent of whom are black—are there as a result of the racist “war on drugs,” a war on black people that was spearheaded by Democrats, including black elected officials. We are for the decriminalization of all drugs. We demand full citizenship rights for all immigrants and the restoration of all citizenship rights to prisoners and ex-“felons.” But as we wrote in “Black Disenfranchisement and American ‘Democracy’” (WV No. 833, 1 October 2004):

“While the ballot is a fundamental right, a right we tenaciously defend, fundamental change will not come through voting. It was not by the ballot that slavery met its demise; it was not by the ballot that Jim Crow was ended. Union rights did not come from Congress or the president. All the gains working people and black people have made came through their seizing them, by mass struggles on the battlefields, in the factories and on the streets, from the racist rulers.”

The Dirty Business of U.S. Politics

In America, the raw exploitation of labor is stoked by fomenting racial and ethnic divisions. One can see that in the rallies of John McCain and his “pit bull,” Alaska governor Sarah Palin, whose campaign style would make Vlad the Impaler blush. Palin has been whipping up a lynch-mob atmosphere at rallies of hardcore right-wing Republicans, with people screaming “traitor” and “kill him” about Obama. A Republican women’s group in Southern California’s Inland Empire had to issue an apology after its president sent out a newsletter with a picture of Obama on a mock food stamp replete



Getty

Woman in Miami applying for restoration of her voting rights after being released from prison. Over five million convicted felons cannot vote, many of them victims of racist “war on drugs” which has been supported by Democrats as well as Republicans.

presidential candidates united behind the Bush administration’s \$700 billion plan to bail out banks by buying up subprime mortgages and other “toxic” assets on their books. Yet bank lending remained virtually frozen, threatening a worldwide economic collapse. Last week, the Bush administration switched gears and decided to pour \$250 billion into major U.S. banks in return for ownership shares, thus partially nationalizing the banking system.

Right-wing bourgeois politicians today absurdly denounce the recent bailouts as

ing on world financial markets—thus greatly increasing the instability of what we have called “the debt-ridden financial house of cards that is the capitalist economy” (see the three-part series, “Capitalism U.S.A.,” WV Nos. 910-912, 14 and 28 March and 11 April). Meanwhile, in their final debate on October 15, we saw Obama and McCain fill their time with endless sparring over whether some guy called “Joe the Plumber” should pay a little bit more in taxes if he makes over a quarter million bucks a year!

The Obama campaign has been the beneficiary of the ongoing economic crisis. It’s a familiar seesaw. Franklin Delano Roosevelt won in an upset in 1932 because of the Great Depression; Kennedy promised to “get the country moving again” after eight years of Eisenhower “do-nothing” Republicanism and went on to lead the bipartisan “crusade against Communism,” from the failed Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba to imperialist escalation in Vietnam. Bill Clinton took over after the Reagan/Bush “decade of greed” culminated in the then-longest recession since the 1930s. And now it appears that Obama has a shot after eight years of George W. Bush’s reign, surely one of the most venal, stupid and sadistic presidencies in this country’s history.

From “health care reform” to education and taxation policy, Obama has promoted himself as a politician who will stand for the interests of “hard-working families.” In fact, his job will be to run U.S. capitalism and keep working people, blacks, immigrants and all the oppressed down.

**Programmatic Statement
of the Spartacist League/U.S.**

**For a Workers Party
That Fights for a Workers Government!**

**For Socialist Revolution
in the Bastion
of World Imperialism!**

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**Organizational Rules and Guidelines
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**Opponents of the Revolutionary
Internationalist Workers Movement**

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**Obama/McCain/McKinney—Class Enemies of Workers, Oppressed
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Presidency: A Marxist Analysis**

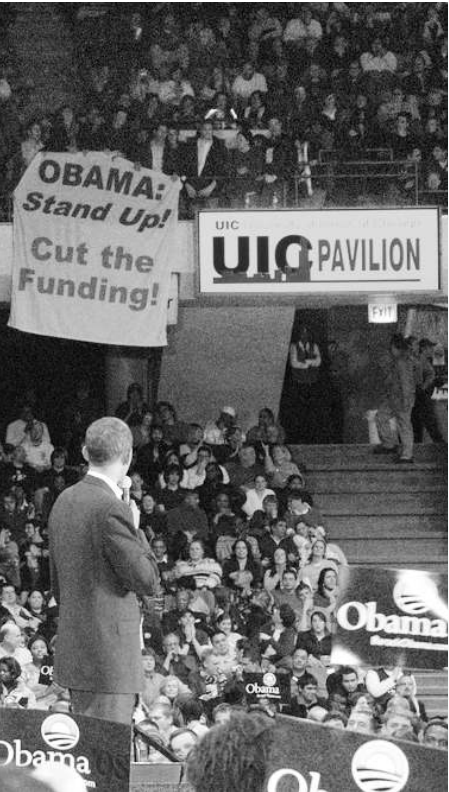
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with images of watermelon and other racist stereotypes. When a woman at a recent rally said she was scared of Obama because he was an “Arab,” McCain outrageously replied, “No, ma’am, he’s a decent family man.” As the Egyptian *Al-Ahram Weekly On-line* (16 October) put it, “No commentator bothered to note that he failed to state that Arabs are also decent.”

All this underlines that without the leadership of a Marxist party that unites the struggles of the multiracial working class with the fight for the rights of black people, women, immigrants and all the oppressed, the social discontents of this society can go in many, including reactionary, directions. The U.S. is the only advanced capitalist country in which the working class does not have its own political party, not even a reformist one like the social-democratic parties in Europe, Australia and Japan. In large part, this is because the bourgeoisie—abetted by the pro-capitalist labor bureaucrats—has been able to successfully utilize the poison of racism to divide the working class and obscure the fundamental class divisions in this society. Whipping up racial and ethnic hatred has long served the ruling class in furthering the exploitation of all workers. As 19th-century American robber baron Jay Gould boasted: “I can hire one half of the working class to kill the other half.”

It is only through united and integrated class struggle and the forging of a working-class leadership that actively combats the bourgeois rulers’ poison of chauvinism



Chicagoist
ISO-led protesters unfurl banner at Barack Obama campaign rally at University of Illinois at Chicago, February 2007. Reformists push illusions in Democratic Party of U.S. imperialism.

that racial divisions in this country can be overcome. Key to such a perspective is recognizing the centrality of the struggle against black oppression. The oppression of black people as a race-color caste, historically forcibly segregated at the bottom of society, is materially rooted in and central to American capitalism. Chattel slavery was smashed only by blood and iron in the Civil War, the Second American Revolution. Today, due to their special oppression and the fact that they are among the most conscious and experienced in struggle, black workers are slated to play an exceptional role in the third, socialist, revolution. As we wrote in “The Obama Campaign and the ‘End of Racism’ Myth” (WV No. 906, 18 January): “As against both liberal integrationists and black nationalists, our struggle for black liberation is based on the program of *revolutionary integrationism*. While opposing every manifestation of racist oppression, fighting in particular to mobilize the social power of the multiracial labor movement, we underline that full equality for the black masses requires that the working class rip the economy out of the hands of the capitalist rulers and reorganize it on a socialist basis.



WV Photo
Spartacist League banner raises call for workers party at Philadelphia demonstration for Mumia Abu-Jamal, April 19.

Only then will it be possible to eliminate the material roots of black oppression through the integration of black people into an egalitarian socialist society based on a collectivized economy with jobs and quality housing, health care and education for all.”

Down With U.S. Imperialism!

Both McCain and Palin repeat the lie that Obama has been “pallin’ around with terrorists,” citing his supposed connections to one Bill Ayers (a connection first pushed by Hillary Clinton in trying to knock out Obama in the Democratic primaries). Ayers, a former leader of Students for a Democratic Society and the Weather Underground in the 1960s and ’70s, is an education professor in Chicago. Obama’s response at the October 15 debate was to say: “Let me tell you who I associate with.... I associate with Warren Buffett and former Fed Chairman Paul Volcker.... I associate myself with my running mate, Joe Biden or with Dick Lugar, the Republican ranking member on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, or General Jim Jones, the former supreme allied commander of NATO.” In other words, the financiers, political front men and military commanders in charge of the mass terror carried out by U.S. imperialism (we can also add Madeleine Albright and Cold War anti-Communist Zbigniew Brzezinski).

For our part, we, unlike most of the left, defended the left-radical Weathermen against state repression in the 1960s and ’70s, while pointing out that their tactics of individual terror—bombing the Pentagon and other U.S. government buildings—were self-defeating (and incompetent) and counterposed to mobilizing the masses of working people. It was the height of the Vietnam War, and we, along with thousands of young radicals, were for the victory of the heroic Vietnamese workers and peasants fighting the U.S. Like thousands of others, the Weathermen were outraged by the mass terror bombing of the Vietnamese people—carried out by the likes of McCain. McCain, who’s fond of singing “Bomb Bomb Iran,” flew 23 combat missions over North Vietnam as part of Operation Rolling Thunder, which bombed civilians. He undoubtedly slaughtered hundreds, if not thousands, of Vietnamese, and is by all rights a war criminal.

On October 19, Obama received the endorsement of Colin Powell, the former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the U.S. armed forces and the Secretary of State from 2001 to 2005. Speaking on NBC’s *Meet The Press*, Powell bemoaned the Republican Party’s further movement to the right and addressed the false accusation of Obama being a Muslim, saying, “Is there something wrong with being a Muslim in this country? The answer’s no, that’s not America.” Such touching sentiment—from the man who led the 1990-91 Gulf War that slaughtered tens of thousands of Iraqis and who went to the

United Nations to build support for the 2003 invasion and occupation of Iraq, which by some estimates has led to the deaths of over 650,000 Iraqi people (most of them Muslim). All U.S. troops out of Iraq and Afghanistan now!

Break with the Democrats! Build a Workers Party!

The ABC Marxist principle of opposition to all capitalist parties and their politicians is regularly jettisoned by the reformist left, which, despite occasional criticisms of Obama’s positions, is working for a Democratic victory this November either through overt support to Obama (such as by the Communist Party); or via the small-time capitalist Green Party, which acts as a shill for the Democrats (such as by Workers World Party); or through protest politics to pressure the Democrats (such as by the International Socialist Organization [ISO]).

Then there’s Progressive Labor Party (PL), which, notwithstanding its “fight for communism” rhetoric, has openly declared that it will “actively participate

in Obama’s campaign” to, of course, “expose his true purposes” (*Challenge*, 26 March). Taking their cue from *Challenge*, PL supporters have gone the next logical step, *literally* registering voters for Obama. Without comment, *Challenge* (4 October) printed a letter signed by one “Red Registrar” who boasts: “I helped out at a voter registration drive in my neighborhood that I found out about through BarackObama.com”!

Meanwhile, the headline of a 16 October online editorial by the ISO’s *Socialist Worker* bemoans, “Why Won’t Obama Back a Real Jobs Plan?” The article itself asks, “If the U.S. government can find \$700 billion to buy up bad debts on Wall Street and another \$250 billion for a stake in the biggest banks, why not spend some money on the *government* creating jobs?” Why not just build heaven on earth? “The challenge,” according to the ISO, “is to build a working-class opposition, independent of the mainstream parties, which can make our demands heard and felt by *all* the politicians in Washington.” This is just another version of the classic reformist slogan, “money for jobs, not war.” Its premise is the lie that the capitalist system can, through protest and pressure, be made to serve the interests of working people and the oppressed. Exploitation, oppression and war *are* the priorities of the capitalist system. No amount of protest or pressure can fundamentally change that. We live under the dictatorship of capital, with a bourgeois-democratic facade.

Capitalist rule must be replaced with the dictatorship of the proletariat—i.e., a workers government that serves the interests of working people and the oppressed. Only through the socialist overthrow of this deeply inhumane capitalist system can the vista of human liberation be opened. Only when those who labor rule can the vast resources of society be reorganized to put an end to material scarcity and the ideological backwardness that capitalism inevitably generates. What the exploited and oppressed need is a revolutionary workers party, forged in class struggle—a multiracial vanguard party in which black workers will play a key leadership role. What is necessary is the fight for socialist revolutions in the U.S. and throughout the world. ■

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Rosenbergs...

(continued from page 12)

to Latin America. Who can doubt that U.S. imperialism would have destroyed Vietnam totally with nuclear weapons if they did not fear a retaliatory Soviet strike? Would Cuba exist today if the U.S. had a nuclear monopoly? It is clear that the USSR's advance to nuclear capacity and then to nuclear parity has thus far been instrumental in staying the nuclear hand of U.S. imperialism."

The Soviet Union was destroyed by imperialist-backed counterrevolution, but the question posed by the Russian Revolution—that of the proletarian seizure of state power—is as vital as ever. The imperialists seek to rewrite history in order to ensure that the rule of capital is never again challenged. We honor the Rosenbergs' memory today, not least in our unconditional military defense of the remaining bureaucratically deformed workers states—China, Cuba, Vietnam and North Korea—against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution.

As always, the Rosenberg case is used to serve the political needs of the day. Sobell's "confession" was leaped on by the bourgeois press and bloggers. "Case Closed: The Rosenbergs were Soviet Spies," trumpeted an op-ed piece by Ronald Radosh in the *Los Angeles Times* (17 September). Written when he was a member of the Democratic Socialists of America, Radosh's 1983 book was a rallying point for the liberals, radlibs and social democrats as they joined U.S. imperialism's efforts to regiment the population during Cold War II against the Soviet Union. Today, Radosh, portrayed as an expert on the Rosenbergs case, is a neocon, a loud voice in support of the "war on terrorism" and a contributing columnist to *FrontPage Magazine*, mouthpiece of right-wing racist demagogue David Horowitz.

Written shortly after the FBI was given new powers to spy on and terrorize the population in the name of the "war on terrorism," Radosh's *L.A. Times* article declares, "It is time the ranks of the left acknowledge that the United States had (and has) real enemies and that finding and prosecuting them is not evidence of repression." Meanwhile, his right-wing acolytes have seized on the Sobell statements to argue that death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal—a former Black Panther Party spokesman and supporter of the MOVE organization framed up on charges of killing Police Officer Daniel Faulkner in 1981—is guilty. It is a telling indictment of American capitalist "justice" that from the liberal *New York Times* to Radosh's right-wing "fringe," Sobell's confession is accepted without question, while the mountains of evidence of Mumia's innocence, including the confession of Arnold Beverly that he, not Mumia, shot Faulkner, is sneered at and barred by court after court.

A Cold War Show Trial

Like many of their generation, the Rosenbergs were inspired by the authority and achievements of the Russian Revolution, which overthrew capitalism on one-sixth of the globe and created a society where those who labored ruled. Within less than two decades, the collectivized and planned economy of the USSR propelled a poor and backward country into a world power, with jobs, housing, education and medical care for all. In the 1930s, the capitalist world was mired in the Great Depression, while the rise of fascism and the buildup for a second interimperialist war further exposed the barbarity of capitalist class rule. As a teenager, Julius became determined to help free labor leader Tom Mooney, and as a college freshman protested against fascist students from Italy visiting CCNY. Ethel helped raise money for refugees fleeing fascist terror during the Spanish Civil War. Both were active trade unionists—Ethel in the clerical workers union and Julius as an organizer for the Federation of Architects, Engineers, Chemists and Technicians until he was fired from his job in 1945 for membership in the



Washington Post

Demonstration to "Save the Rosenbergs" in Paris, hours before they were executed on 19 June 1953.

U.S. Communist Party (CP).

The Rosenbergs looked for political leadership to the Stalinized CP, a product of the degeneration of the Soviet workers state and Communist International. Ardent believers in the disastrous Stalinist popular front against fascism, the Rosenbergs were typical of "progressives" who hoped for a U.S.-Soviet alliance to continue after World War II. CP leader Earl Browder declared, "Communism is 20th Century Americanism." But the U.S. ruling class didn't see it that way.

On the contrary, the Rosenbergs were political scapegoats tried as "atom spies" because U.S. imperialism lost its nuclear monopoly, and with it the capacity for nuclear blackmail against the Soviets. Two months after Washington dropped A-bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, the Pentagon mapped out a plan to launch a nuclear attack on 20 Soviet cities. Throughout the next few years, the U.S. repeatedly threatened to nuke Russia during early confrontations in the Cold War—in 1946, in 1948 over Berlin, again in 1950 over Korea. FBI chief J. Edgar Hoover seized on the Soviets' August 1949 atomic test to unleash his army of G-men to hunt down the "atom spies" in the hopes of launching a series of show trials to frame up the CP for espionage. They went on frequent fishing expeditions hoping to force "confessions" and to get the confessors to falsely point the finger at other CPers.

Government prosecutors have since admitted that the arrest and threat of execution of Ethel Rosenberg was intended solely to force Julius to break down and "confess." In the last minutes of their lives, a U.S. Marshal stood outside the execution chamber, waiting for a nod from either of them indicating that they would "confess" and "name names." Two FBI agents waited by a special phone with an open line to Attorney General Brownell, ready to call off the execution if the Rosenbergs capitulated and allowed the government to use them as it had other finks and turncoats. But the Rosenbergs refused to bow.

Fully aware that there was no case against the Rosenbergs for espionage, the government got them on the classic frame-up charge—"conspiracy." The government knew that the Rosenbergs did not "steal the secret of the atomic bomb." In fact there was no "secret." J. Robert Oppenheimer, the physicist in charge of designing the first atomic bomb, pointed out, "There are no unpublished secrets concerning atomic weapons, and no secrets of nature available to a few." Judge Irving Kaufman, upon pronouncing the death sentence, accused the Rosenbergs of "treason." It did not matter that according to the U.S. Constitution, "treason," a capital crime, is defined as giving aid and comfort to the enemy in wartime. The USSR was an *ally* of the U.S. in 1944 when the "crime" supposedly took place!

It was hardly coincidental that the judge, the lead prosecutor, Irving Saypol, and the key witnesses were Jewish, chosen in a transparent effort to cover up the

stench of anti-Semitism surrounding the trial (see "The Political Execution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg," WV No. 626, 28 July 1995). Two self-confessed perjurers sent them to the chair—Ethel Rosenberg's brother David Greenglass and Philadelphia chemist Harry Gold, supposedly a Soviet spy courier. Gold admitted at the trial to having become "so tangled up in a web of lies...it is a wonder steam didn't come out of my ears," and never even testified to having met or known Julius or Ethel Rosenberg.

Greenglass, who had apparently stolen a piece of uranium while working as an army technician at the Los Alamos nuclear facility in 1945, set his sister and her husband up as fall guys. Greenglass testified that, after being recruited to a spy ring by Julius, he had handed sketches of the atomic bomb to Soviet spy courier Gold, claiming to have learned the A-bomb "secret" by overhearing conversations of scientists passing through the machine shop at Los Alamos. Greenglass implicated his sister with testimony that she typed up the notes for Julius. That Greenglass' testimony was perjured was proven yet again in recently released grand jury testimony of his wife Ruth Greenglass, who testified that she wrote up the notes. The only hard "evidence" against the Rosenbergs introduced at the trial was a contribution box found in their home for Spanish Civil War refugees and Ethel's signature on a petition for a Communist candidate for New York City Council.

Liberals and Social Democrats Witchhunt Reds

While his name has become a synonym for eviscerating the democratic rights of individuals and organizations based on their political views and associations, Wisconsin Senator Joe McCarthy was at first a fringe development in the anti-

Communist hysteria. The political basis of the post World War II witchhunt was set by the Cold War liberals. As early as 1947, Democratic president Harry Truman put in place a loyalty board to screen all government employees, and the purge of left-wing militants from the CIO began. That same year Congress enacted the strikebreaking Taft-Hartley law, which, in addition to outlawing such labor weapons as secondary strikes, barred Communists from union office. It was the pro-Truman anti-Communists, among them Democrat Hubert Humphrey and United Auto Workers head Walter Reuther who founded the Americans for Democratic Action in 1947 to drive the CP and radicals out of the unions.

Some 25,000 union members, many of them key leaders of the CIO organizing drives of the 1930s, were purged from the labor movement, in some cases leading to the destruction of whole unions. Thousands of others were tracked down by the FBI and driven from their jobs, only to continue to be hounded and witch-hunted due to secret employer blacklists. The 1950 McCarran Act, named for the Democratic Senator from Nevada, legitimized secret FBI record keeping on "subversive" individuals and called for the registration of organizations and individuals who purportedly "advocated violent overthrow" of the government. It also provided for the deportation of non-citizens who had been Communists at any time in their lives. Hundreds of Communists were jailed. Nearly 12,000 people were listed on a "Security Index" kept by FBI national headquarters and another 17,000 on the "Communist Index," while FBI field offices held lists of an additional 200,000 considered to constitute a danger in times of "national emergency." Humphrey sponsored the 1954 Communist Control Act outlawing the CP, and amended the McCarran Act to set up concentration camps for "subversives" in the U.S.

The liberal Cold Warriors shared the same enemy, Communism, but thought that McCarthy overreached—he went after the "innocent" liberals along with the "guilty." When the names of Cold War liberals were added to the Attorney General's Subversives List, the liberals dumped McCarthy. The liberals and social democrats wanted their civil liberties and their witchhunt too.

Playing a parallel role was the Independent Socialist League (ISL) of Max Shachtman, successor to the Workers Party. The founders of the Workers Party had split toward social democracy from the SWP in 1940 over their refusal to defend the Soviet Union against imperialism. The ISL, a precursor to the International Socialist Organization (ISO), supported the expulsions of the CP-led unions from the CIO. Shachtman, clearly expressing the need to join forces with Reuther, declared that workers "should

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follow the general line, inside the labor movement, of supporting the reformist officialdom against the Stalinist officialdom” (*New International*, September 1949). Shachtman proclaimed, “Stalinism is the most virulent poison that has ever coursed through the veins of the working class and its movement. The work of eliminating it makes the first claim on the attention of every militant.” The anti-red purge installed a venal pro-imperialist union leadership that abetted the bosses in fostering racial divisions and presided over the decimation of the unions for decades.

Shachtman’s ISL refused to come out for commutation of the Rosenbergs’ sentence until just before the execution. In the Bay Area branch, where a vote to support commutation of the death sentence lost by a single vote, the right-wing “hang the spies” faction was destroyed when confronted with Shachtman’s wire to President Eisenhower asking to commute the sentence. Writing in the name of “an independent socialist organization which has been uncompromising in its struggle against Stalinism,” Shachtman assured Eisenhower that their concern arose only from the death penalty which “gives worldwide Stalinism an effective weapon” (*Labor Action*, 22 June 1953). Still, there was a hue and cry in the party against the decision, as letters poured in to *Labor Action* bitterly complaining of Shachtman’s “capitulation” and of “this *belated* jump into the ‘super-liberal’ bandwagon...that hangs on the Stalinist coattails.”

The Shachtmanites were visceral anti-Communists. But most of the left, including the SWP, failed to immediately rally to the Rosenbergs’ defense for other reasons. This was a time when left-ist militants were being tried and sent to prison for long stretches based on nothing but their libraries; Congressmen were calling to make CP membership a capital crime and the government was looking to brand left organizations, particularly the CP, as espionage agents. Civil rights activist Carl Braden was jailed for “state sedition” after he and his wife sold a house to a black family in a white neighborhood of Louisville, Kentucky. Paul

Robeson, the acclaimed black actor and vocalist, was one of the many stripped of their passports and banned from leaving the country for years. The renowned filmmaker Charlie Chaplin, a British citizen, was barred from re-entering the U.S.

As for the CP, it did not even mention the case until after the trial was over and the death sentence had already been handed down. When the CP did take up the case, it neither denounced the political frame-up nor defended the Rosenbergs as victims of the capitalist state. It merely accused the government of “bad faith” similar to its refusal “to negotiate peace in Korea” (*Daily Worker*, 6 April 1951). The CP’s betrayal was not simply one of defense policy over the Rosenbergs’ case. The CP betrayed the working class with its program of class collaboration, its policy of tailing the “progressive” bourgeoisie. By the end of World War II, the CP found itself without allies when it was no longer useful for the bourgeoisie to continue the popular front forged during the “Great Patriotic War Against Fascism.” Years of class

collaboration behind Roosevelt—the no-strike pledge, scabbing on strikes and betrayal of the fight for black rights during the Second World War—closed off the possibility of effectively mobilizing the labor movement against repression. As the Cold War McCarthy period ensued, the CP found itself totally abandoned by its “progressive” friends.

Even had the CP moved sooner and with more energy, it is not likely they could have saved the Rosenbergs from a government intent on killing them. Against the Stalinists’ vapid talk of “bad faith” on the part of the U.S. government, it was the SWP that correctly recognized the anti-Soviet centrality of the Rosenberg trial and hailed the USSR’s nuclear capacity—an important act demonstrating considerable political courage in that period. Though the SWP could have recognized the political character of the Rosenberg case sooner and sounded the alarm earlier and louder, the defense record of the SWP was generally excellent. They protested the 1949 Smith Act prosecutions of the CP, undeterred by the vicious sectarianism which led the CP to

applaud the first use of the Smith Act in 1941 against the Trotskyists for their principled opposition to their “own” rulers. While unconditionally defending the USSR during the Second World War, the SWP courageously opposed all the imperialist combatants in that carnage.

Today, Sobell’s “confession” has left the Rosenbergs’ few liberal defenders uneasy and defensive. That is because they are hostile to the cause for which the Rosenbergs died. What the liberals care about is the “fairness” of the American “justice” system. For Howard Zinn, “The most important thing was they did not get a fair trial in the atmosphere of cold war hysteria” (*New York Times*, 21 September). Victor Navasky, former publisher of the *Nation*, told the *Times*, “I wish Morty and Ethel and Julius had been open about what they had and hadn’t done, or in Morty’s case, ‘come clean’ before this.” He added, “These guys thought they were helping our ally in wartime, and yes, they broke the law, shouldn’t have done what they did, and should have been proportionally punished for it; but the greater betrayal was by the state.”

Today, Shachtman’s heirs in the ISO have published an article “Executed to Send a Message” (*Socialist Worker* online, 30 September) that makes no mention of the Democrats’ role in the Cold War witchhunt or in the Rosenbergs’ prosecution. The ISO ludicrously seeks to put distance between the Rosenbergs and the CP, stating, “by 1943, they were no longer active in the party,” and giving not the slightest hint that they went to their deaths as supporters of the Soviet Union. Small wonder: this is a group that was formed in opposition to the defense of the USSR and that hailed its counter-revolutionary destruction.

Against such liberals and renegades, we Trotskyists fought to the end in defense of the Soviet Union and the deformed workers states of East Europe. We hail those, like the Rosenbergs, who gave their lives in defense of the land of October and fight to disarm the rapacious imperialist rulers through socialist revolution. *We will not forget—Honor the heroic Rosenbergs! For new October Revolutions!* ■



WV Photo
Spartacist League honors Rosenbergs at protest outside 1999 Academy Awards ceremony honoring anti-Communist Cold War fink Elia Kazan.

Chicago...

(continued from page 2)

further work, the apprentices can be fired immediately for any infraction including a single late arrival to work. The CTA refuses to train them in transferable skills necessary to do the job, from obtaining a commercial driver’s license to using computers. Additionally, they cannot enter programs available to the rest of the servicers to learn mechanics’ skills that can help them advance in the industry. Instead, the company, backed by the ATU tops, has created semi-supervisory positions for full union members to assist management in overseeing its modern-day version of chain-gang labor. Down with this “straw boss” position!

There must be a political struggle to oust the pro-capitalist ATU bureaucrats, who have aided and abetted the bosses’ union-busting program. Transit workers told *Workers Vanguard* that when the plan was introduced to bus maintenance

this summer union reps toured the locations *with management* to help sell the rotten deal to the members. American socialist Daniel De Leon captured the treachery of the U.S. labor officialdom more than a century ago, popularizing the description of them as “labor lieutenants of the capitalist class.” Today, some union leaders are acting more like low-wage labor contractors than even labor lieutenants for the bosses.

Under the watch of the current ATU leadership and their predecessors, Chicago transit workers have been subjected to a slicing and dicing of the workforce, including the introduction of part-time work and wage tiers, two separate ATU locals and multiple craft unions. Every fissure allows the bosses to drive a wedge between workers so they can roll back the wages and conditions of all union members.

The union misleaders’ entire strategy rests on a program of class collaboration, principally through herding votes for the capitalist Democratic Party. It was Dem-

ocratic president Bill Clinton who in the 1990s greatly expanded union-busting “workfare” schemes, which drafted the ghetto and barrio poor on a large scale to work as slave labor in formerly unionized municipal jobs. Today in stark contrast to mobilizing the power of the union to defend the membership against attacks and givebacks, the ATU bureaucrats are churning out thousands of “ATU Supports Obama” buttons.

This goes hand in hand with their established practice of voluntarily submitting the union to binding arbitration, which is designed to head off strikes, whenever a contract is up. They peddle the lie that the ruling class and the working class have common interests.

The way forward in the face of schemes to divide and weaken the union is to unite behind a program of class struggle in opposition to the Democratic Party and all other parties and agencies of the class enemy. The labor tops treat the membership as little more than a dues base, as is graphically shown in the case

of these apprentices. All workers who pay dues must have full union protection and rights! Fight for one industrial union of all transit workers!

As is clear in the case of this racist union-busting scheme, union rights and black rights will either march forward together or fall back separately. One of the most powerful unions in the city, the heavily black and Latino ATU is in a strategic position to take the lead. What is required is a fight for *jobs for all*—for a shorter workweek at no loss in pay—and full cost-of-living escalator clauses in union contracts. We need a class-struggle fight for a massive program of public works at union wages—for quality, integrated housing and schools; for massive reconstruction of roads, bridges and tunnels; for free, quality transit services; for everything we need for a decent life. Out of these struggles, a multiracial revolutionary workers party will be built that leads all the exploited and oppressed in the fight for workers power. Those who labor must rule! ■

China...

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ICL program of political revolution and the Stalinist program of capitulation and counterrevolution.”

Today, the same fake-left groups who backed the forces of counterrevolution in the USSR and East Europe tail the CIA-backed movement for an independent Tibet. They are actually to the right of the Dalai Lama, who says he is for “cultural autonomy” within China! While the American RCP claims that capitalism has been restored in China, the ISO claims China has *always* been capitalist.

The group called the “Bolshevik Tendency” (BT), which occasionally claims to defend China, argues that “a revolutionary government in China would signal its willingness to coexist with Tibet’s traditional ruling caste” as long as the latter “retain popular support” (1917, 2004). Mao tried a similar conciliationist policy in the 1950s when the Dalai Lama was in Tibet, which helped to foster the counter-revolutionary uprising in 1959. The BT’s call for “coexistence” with the lamas dovetails with the “Free Tibet” machinations of the imperialists and their social-democratic lackeys. No less than the groups who denounce China as capitalist, the BT in its own small way aids the

cause of pro-imperialist counterrevolution in China.

The CCP under Mao in the 1950s effectively pursued a nationalist policy of “one country, two systems” in Tibet. Today it pursues this policy toward Taiwan, especially since the March election victory there of the Guomindang, the party of counterrevolution. The ICL fights for the program of revolutionary reunification of Taiwan with the mainland—for socialist revolution on the island, as well as the expropriation of Hong Kong capitalists, and proletarian political revolution on the mainland. We fight for new October Revolutions in the capitalist world.

From the imperialist occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan to the incarceration of masses of black youth; from the global food crisis to poverty in capitalist America and environmental degradation throughout the world: the only way to resolve these problems and eliminate the scarcity that condemns hundreds of millions to hunger and early death is to rid the world of the capitalist system and establish an international planned economy based on collectivized property. The ICL fights for a revolutionary historical perspective: for the communism of Lenin and Trotsky’s Bolsheviks and the reforging of the Fourth International, party of the world revolution! ■

Cold War Ideologues Want to Kill Them Again

Shortly after 8 p.m., on 19 June 1953, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were executed in the electric chair at New York's Sing Sing prison. Jewish Communists from New York, the Rosenbergs were framed up on charges of "conspiring" to pass the "secret of the atomic bomb" to the Soviet Union during World War II, when the USSR was allied with the U.S. Their 1951 trial was replete from beginning to end with perjured testimony, concocted evidence, a heavy dose of anti-Semitism and a judge who illegally consulted with the prosecution before meting out a sentence under provisions of a law that didn't apply to their case—all against a backdrop of bloodcurdling calls to "fry the Reds."

Around the world, millions raised their voices in an outcry demanding "justice for the Rosenbergs." But from the White House on down, the American ruling class was united in its determination to make an example of these courageous leftists who never renounced their support to the Soviet Union, and refused to name names to save their lives. The great Soviet spy Kim Philby, in his book, *My Silent War*, rightly called them "the brave Rosenbergs."

Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were executed on the altar of Cold War anti-Communism, in which the U.S. rulers saw the USSR as the main obstacle to U.S. imperialist world hegemony. Thus, Julius Rosenberg was arrested three weeks after the outbreak of the Korean War and less than a year after the first Soviet A-bomb test. Setting the tone for the trial, the prosecutor ranted in his opening arguments that the Rosenbergs stole "the key to the survival of this nation and...the peace of the world." As we explained in our article "In Defense of the Rosenbergs!" (WV No. 86, 21 November 1975), following World War II:

"As the predominant capitalist power, the U.S., planning for an 'American century,' tore apart the U.S.-Soviet alliance and prepared the ground for a nationwide anti-red scare. When the Soviet Union exploded its first nuclear bomb in 1949 and later that same year Mao's Red Army overthrew capitalism in China, politicians like Richard Nixon and Joseph McCarthy were building their political careers through a crusade to exorcise 'Communism' from American life."

It was against this backdrop the Rosenbergs were put to death.

The Rosenberg Case and the Russian Question

The horrific memory of this case has been nearly impossible to bury. The capi-

Hail the Heroic Rosenbergs!



AP

Martyrs of Anti-Soviet Witchhunt

talist rulers—often with liberals and social democrats taking the lead—have found the need to frame up and execute the Rosenbergs again and again. On the one hand they seek to defend the secret police, prosecution, judiciary and highest federal authorities who framed them. On the other, the Rosenberg case was, and still is, the question of the Russian Revolution. The 1917 seizure of power by the Bolshevik-led Russian working class was the greatest event of human history, and its counterrevolutionary destruction in 1991-92, after decades of Stalinist bureaucratic misrule, a world-historic catastrophe. America's imperialist rulers, the most

dangerous in history, would like to wipe out of the consciousness of the proletariat and the oppressed any attachment to the program or ideals of communism—and that means driving a stake through the memory of those martyred in defense of the land of the October Revolution.

Today, with the financial crash leading the international capitalist economy into a freefall, the massive unpopularity of the U.S. occupation of Iraq, the floundering occupation of Afghanistan, the U.S. bourgeoisie seized on a chance to fry the Rosenbergs again. The latest exhumation and assassination was sparked by an interview (12 September) by the *New*

York Times' Sam Roberts with the Rosenbergs' co-defendant Morton Sobell, who had served over 18 years in prison. Responding to whether he had been a Soviet spy, Sobell, now 91 years old and ill, said, "Yeah, yeah, yeah, call it that. I never thought of it in those terms." Regarding Julius Rosenberg, Sobell offered, "His intentions might have been to be a spy." Yet Sobell maintained that sketches and other atomic bomb details the government claimed were passed along to Julius Rosenberg by his brother-in-law, David Greenglass, were of little value. "What he gave them was junk." According to Sobell, Ethel Rosenberg "knew what he [Julius] was doing, but what was she guilty of? Of being Julius's wife."

We don't know if Sobell's "confession" is true or not—whether his interview was a last grab for attention near the end of his life or merely an expression of his coming to peace with U.S. imperialism. We do know however that every previous effort to "prove" the Rosenbergs' "guilt"—from Ronald Radosh's 1983 book, *The Rosenberg File*, which featured the dubious jailhouse informer Jerome Tartakow, to the Venona papers released in 1995—have had as much credibility as Bush's tales of "weapons of mass destruction." ***The Rosenbergs were legally lynched for political purposes.*** As the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) wrote in the *Militant* (27 October 1952): "The Rosenberg decision above all else was an act of ruling class terror by a state that is preparing a war of world conquest, a war directed primarily against the Soviet Union."

What is indisputably true is that for the U.S. capitalist masters, guilt or innocence mattered not at all. Nor is guilt or innocence in this case the key question for revolutionaries. The nuclear arms capacity developed by the Soviet Union was an important component to the defense of the gains of the October Revolution. As we wrote 25 years ago, at the height of Carter/Reagan's Cold War II, in "They're Trying to Kill the Rosenbergs All Over Again" (WV No. 340, 21 October 1983):

"For revolutionaries, on the contrary, those who helped the Russians achieve nuclear capacity did a great service for humanity. Had U.S. imperialism maintained a nuclear monopoly, it would have meant historic defeats for the international proletariat. It would have meant nuclear destruction from Southeast Asia

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Philadelphia D.A. Seeks Death for Mumia Abu-Jamal

There is an ominous new development in the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal, an innocent man who has been on Pennsylvania's death row for 26 years, framed up for the killing of a Philadelphia police officer in 1981. Since his youth in the Black Panthers, Mumia, a MOVE supporter and eloquent journalist, has been targeted by the racist rulers because of his courageous defense of the oppressed. Now the Philadelphia district attorney's office has advised the Supreme Court that it is seeking the execution of Mumia. The D.A.'s petition, which must be filed by November 19, opposes the federal Third Circuit Court's affirmation this past spring of a 2001 decision by Judge Yohn striking down Mumia's death sentence while upholding his frame-up conviction.

The remaining possibilities for Mumia within the court system are: 1) The Supreme Court could agree with the D.A.'s petition, in which case Mumia's death sentence would be reimposed, with no new trial. In this event, the case would be sent back to Judge Yohn, who in his 2001 deci-

There Is No Justice in the Capitalist Courts! Free Mumia Now!

sion deferred ruling on additional challenges to the death sentence raised by Mumia. 2) The Supreme Court could refuse to hear both the D.A.'s petition as well as Mumia's attorney Robert Bryan's upcoming appeal, which is centered on racism in the jury selection, of the Third Circuit Court's decision (see "Third Circuit Court Turns Down Appeal," WV No. 918, 1 August). This would let stand the current situation: a new sentencing hearing, with the only possibilities being either continued life imprisonment for Mumia or a new death sentence. 3) The Supreme Court could agree with Bryan's appeal, thus putting Mumia back into the racist Philadelphia court system to be tried again. This could result in an acquittal; however, we have no faith in the capitalist courts, which over the decades have

refused to hear the mountains of evidence of Mumia's innocence, including the confession of Arnold Beverly that he killed Police Officer Daniel Faulkner.

We have always advocated pursuing all possible legal proceedings. However, the Supreme Court has refused to hear four previous petitions by Mumia's attorneys. The Supreme Court is the highest court of America's capitalist rulers, the class enemy of workers, black people and all the oppressed. Our fight to free Mumia Abu-Jamal is based on a strategy of mass protest centered on the multiracial working class, which has the power to make the courts yield. As the Partisan Defense Committee has always stated, "We place all our faith in the power of the masses and no faith whatever in the 'justice' of the courts."

To contribute to Mumia's legal defense, make checks payable to "National Lawyers Guild Foundation" (earmarked "Mumia" on bottom left) and mail to: Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal, P.O. Box 2012, New York, NY 10159-2012. ■