

## As Reformists Fawn

# Barack Obama Takes Helm of Racist U.S. Imperialism



AP



Reuters



Reuters

**Military parades before U.S. Commander-in-Chief Obama during inauguration, January 20. Left: U.S. Marines in Afghanistan, May 2008. Right: U.S. occupation forces in Baquba, Iraq, November 2008.**

In the inauguration of Barack Obama, the first black president of the United States, the U.S. imperialist ruling class has gained an effective executive for pursuing its bloody aims abroad and its exploitation of working people at home. Indeed, as the shameless hosannas to the new Commander-in-Chief of U.S. imperialism by the reformist “socialists” demonstrate, Obama has breathed new life into their false claim that capitalism can be reformed. After eight years of the despised Bush administration, the hype about “hope” and the lie of “national unity” had broad appeal. But from the standpoint of the interests of the international working class, this is *nothing to celebrate*.

Enthusiasm among significant sections of the bourgeoisie, on the other hand, is justified, as they have in Obama a more rational face for their irrational and barbaric system. At a time when unemployment figures are at the worst in decades, when home foreclosures have devastated the lives of massive numbers of working people, when the wounds of the racist atrocity in the face of Hurricane Katrina are still all-too-fresh in New Orleans, when education, health care and basic infrastructure lie in shambles, large numbers of the populace—whites, blacks, Latinos and others—sought relief in a change of administration. Obama’s election refurbished the

trapping of bourgeois electoral “democracy,” the method by which the U.S. rulers seek to disguise their brutal class rule under the appearance of a popular mandate.

There’s no denying that the inauguration was unprecedented: The sight of a black man taking the oath of office, with his wife, the descendant of slaves, holding the Bible, brought many to tears, given America’s bitter origins in slavery—with lynchings and Jim Crow segregation

election would provide a much needed facelift for U.S. imperialism. And, indeed, in many parts of the world, his inauguration was greeted with euphoria. A column by Jonathan Freedland in the Johannesburg *Mail & Guardian* online (24 January), a South African bourgeois paper, gushed that the scene of his inauguration at the Mall in Washington showed America “as a nation that cherishes its unique experiment in self-government and still

the black petty bourgeoisie could very well see material benefits from Obama’s victory, which broke a “glass ceiling.” But for the black proletariat and the masses in the ghettos, conditions of life are already being further devastated. Just as it was another popular Democratic president, Bill Clinton, who ended “welfare as we know it,” where prior Republican administrations had failed, Obama today is in a better position to extract further “sacrifice” from working people in the midst of the deepening recession.

Craven reformists like Teresa Gutierrez of the Stalinoid Workers World Party (WWP) raved that Obama’s victory was “a triumph for the Black masses and all the oppressed,” writing in *Workers World* (20 November 2008):

“As communists and revolutionaries we take joy with the oppressed and other progressives as they gather in jubilation from Harlem to Colombia to Japan to Kenya with the election of Obama.... Our love of the oppressed masses—like our solidarity with the working class—extends even when it involves the presidency of the strongest imperialist country ever.”

WWP is here openly embracing the Commander-in-Chief of U.S. imperialism, 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! WWP and other reformists promote the illusion that working people and the oppressed can lay hold of the machinery of the capitalist state and wield it for their own interests. But the

*continued on page 9*

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

gation still burnt into the memory of the living. Thus the “honeymoon” period and the illusions in this “new face” of U.S. imperialism are likely to be more prolonged than usual, especially among the youth and blacks who support Obama.

The somber reality is that Obama’s ascension to the highest office in the land will do *nothing* to relieve the continuing nightmare of racial oppression for the mass of the black population. That oppression is structurally embedded in American capitalism and will not be overcome short of socialist revolution. As we warned in the run-up to the presidential election (WV No. 920, 12 September 2008), “Obama serves as a very powerful propaganda weapon for the bourgeoisie, telling black people and the oppressed to shut up and stop complaining, because, you see, ‘the American dream’ works!”

We have repeatedly warned that Obama’s

believes that even the darkest chapters of its past can be transcended.” This sentiment was also expressed by the reformist International Socialist Organization (ISO), whose editorial “Looking Forward to Change” (*Socialist Worker* online, 21 January) gushed that Obama’s election is “a reason to believe that change *is* possible” and that “some of the cruel sins of America’s past were finally being overcome.”

Support for Obama is widespread among black people. At the same time, class divisions within the black population have become very sharp, marked by the growing gulf between the small minority consisting of the black petty bourgeoisie, who went through the gates opened by the gains of the civil rights movement, and black workers and the massive “underclass” of the permanently unemployed, swollen through the devastation of American industry. Especially the upper crust of



# Outrage! Hugo Pinell Denied Parole

On January 14, the California Board of Parole denied Hugo Pinell parole for the ninth time—and declared that he will not have another parole board hearing for **15 years!** Pinell, the last of the San Quentin Six still in prison, is 63 years old and has

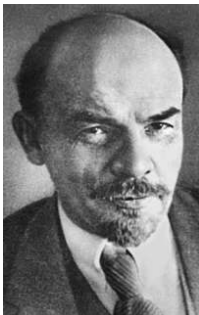
been in prison since he was 19. Despite having no disciplinary write-ups for 27 years, he has spent the last 39 years in solitary confinement, 19 of them in the notoriously brutal Security Housing Unit of the Pelican Bay dungeon, where he is



TROTSKY

### Defend the Cuban Revolution!

*Fifty years ago, as Fidel Castro's Rebel Army marched into Havana in January 1959, the bourgeois army and the rest of the capitalist state apparatus that had propped up the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista shattered. In the face of the hostile encirclement of U.S. imperialism, the Castro regime in 1960-61 expropriated the Cuban bourgeoisie as a class, creating a bureaucratically deformed workers state. Ever since, the U.S. ruling class has worked relentlessly to overthrow the gains of the Cuban Revolution and*



LENIN

*re-establish the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.*

*From the time of its inception as the Revolutionary Tendency in the Socialist Workers Party, which was undergoing political degeneration toward reformism, the Spartacist League has fought for unconditional military defense of the Cuban deformed workers state. At the same time, we fight for proletarian political revolution to oust the ruling Stalinist bureaucracy and to establish a regime based on workers democracy and revolutionary internationalism. The following excerpts are from a document submitted by the Revolutionary Tendency to the 1963 Convention of the Socialist Workers Party, which had given open political support to the Castro bureaucracy.*

13. The Cuban Revolution has exposed the vast inroads of revisionism upon our movement. On the pretext of defense of the Cuban Revolution, in itself an obligation for our movement, full unconditional and uncritical support has been given to the Castro government and leadership, despite its petit-bourgeois nature and bureaucratic behavior. Yet the record of the regime's opposition to the democratic rights of the Cuban workers and peasants is clear: bureaucratic ouster of the democratically-elected leaders of the labor movement and their replacement by Stalinist hacks; suppression of the Trotskyist press; proclamation of the single-party system; and much else. This record stands side by side with enormous initial social and economic accomplishments of the Cuban Revolution. Thus Trotskyists are at once the most militant and unconditional defenders against imperialism of both the Cuban Revolution and of the deformed workers' state which has issued therefrom. But Trotskyists cannot give confidence and political support, however critical, to a governing regime hostile to the most elementary principles and practices of workers' democracy, even if our tactical approach is not as toward a **hardened** bureaucratic caste....

15. Experience since the Second World War has demonstrated that peasant-based guerrilla warfare under petit-bourgeois leadership can in itself lead to nothing more than an anti-working-class bureaucratic regime. The creation of such regimes has come about under the conditions of decay of imperialism, the demoralization and disorientation caused by Stalinist betrayals, and the absence of revolutionary Marxist leadership of the working class. Colonial revolution can have an unequivocally progressive significance only under such leadership of the revolutionary proletariat. For Trotskyists to incorporate into their strategy revisionism on the **proletarian** leadership in the revolution is a profound negation of Marxism-Leninism no matter what pious wish may be concurrently expressed for "building revolutionary Marxist parties in colonial countries." Marxists must resolutely oppose any adventurist acceptance of the peasant-guerrilla road to socialism—historically akin to the Social Revolutionary program on tactics that Lenin fought. This alternative would be a suicidal course for the socialist goals of the movement, and perhaps physically for the adventurers.

—Revolutionary Tendency, "Toward Rebirth of the Fourth International" (June 1963), *Marxist Bulletin* No. 9

subjected to high-tech sensory deprivation: 23 to 24 hours a day in a small cell, no windows, no natural light, no contact visits and prolonged isolation. The capitalist rulers have kept Pinell locked down because he remains true to his vision of a society finally rid of racist repression.

Pinell, who immigrated from Nicaragua at age 12, was locked up in 1965. In the late '60s he became a leader of a developing movement in the California prisons against wretched conditions and racist abuse. He was a student and close comrade of George Jackson, the imprisoned Black Panther spokesman. The prisoners' movement, which was met with heavy repression, reflected the intense struggles taking place outside the prison walls, from the "black power" movement to radical protests against the war in Vietnam. Pinell and five others—the San Quentin Six—were framed up on charges of conspiracy murder stemming from the killing of three prison guards in the protests that erupted after the assassination of Jackson in the San Quentin prison yard on 21 August 1971. Pinell represented himself at the 18-month-long trial and was convicted of two counts of assault.

The parole board's decision to deny Pinell parole for another 15 years was made possible by the grotesquely reactionary Proposition 9, passed in the November 2008 elections. Under previous California law, Pinell would have to be given another hearing within two years. Proposition 9, dubbed a "victims' bill of rights," rewrote a whole section of the state constitution, as well as state penal law, in order to bolster the repressive powers of the state and further eviscerate the rights of those charged or convicted by the racist capitalist criminal injustice system. The ballot initiative was bankrolled with \$4.8 million by sleazy billionaire Henry Nicholas III, who last year was indicted on securities fraud and other charges, such as drug-



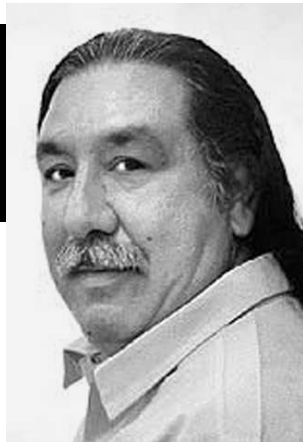
hugopinell.org

ging his customers' representatives. In 2004, Nicholas also pumped in \$3.5 million in a last-minute campaign to defeat Proposition 66, which would have rolled back some of the provisions of California's notorious, draconian 1994 "Three Strikes" law.

For over 20 years, Hugo Pinell has been one of the class-war prisoners supported by the Partisan Defense Committee's monthly stipend program. As the PDC noted in a recent letter to the California parole board, in 2006 "a commissioner berated Mr. Pinell saying 'you continue to show no remorse...'. This is a common ruse for denying parole for political prisoners. Mr. Pinell has no reason for 'remorse' for his commendable political convictions." The fight to free Pinell and all the other class-war prisoners is part of the fight against the whole system of exploitation and repression inherent in capitalist rule. **Free Hugo Pinell now!** ■

## Savagely Beaten in Prison

## Free Leonard Peltier!



Worthington/Toronto Sun

*In January, Leonard Peltier, a leader of the American Indian Movement who has been in prison for 33 years for a crime he did not commit, was outrageously put in solitary confinement after having been savagely attacked when he was transferred to the United States Penitentiary in Canaan, Pennsylvania. In a January 20 statement, Betty Peltier-Solano, Peltier's sister, stated: "We feel that prison authorities at the prompting of the FBI orchestrated this attack and thus, we are greatly concerned about his safety." We print below a January 22 protest letter from the Partisan Defense Committee to USP Canaan warden Ronnie R. Holt. The PDC is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League.*

It has come to our attention that soon after his transfer to your prison, political prisoner Leonard Peltier was placed in solitary confinement and allowed only one meal a day. This is an outrage. Given this courageous man's medical conditions, your actions put his life at risk.

Mr. Peltier had asked that he be transferred to a facility near his family and home in the Dakotas. Instead he was vindictively sent far away to USP Canaan. Shortly after his arrival he was set upon and brutally beaten, reportedly by prisoners he did not know. He sustained numerous bruises, a large lump on his head, dis-

coloration and swelling to his hands as well as pain in his chest and ribcage. This incident is the supposed pretext for his being thrown into solitary.

Mr. Peltier is an innocent man who has been unjustly incarcerated for nearly 33 years because of his activism in defense of the rights of Native Americans. During that period his health has seriously deteriorated. He suffers from high blood pressure, a heart condition, failing eyesight and diabetes. As he is at risk for kidney failure, blindness and/or amputation, it is critical that Mr. Peltier be released from solitary confinement immediately and afforded all necessary medical treatment.

We, along with millions of others, do not believe that Leonard Peltier should have been incarcerated at all. We demand his unconditional release from prison. ■

### CORRECTION

The photo caption on page 9 of the article "Oscar Grant Killed in Cold Blood by BART Cop" in WV No. 928 (January 16) mistakenly states that the protest outside the Fruitvale BART station occurred on January 10. It took place on January 7, as stated in the article.

## WORKERS VANGUARD

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

DIRECTOR OF PARTY PUBLICATIONS: Bonnie Brodie

EDITOR: Alan Wilde

EDITOR, YOUNG SPARTACUS PAGES: Elizabeth Johnson

CIRCULATION MANAGER: Susan Fuller

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

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

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

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

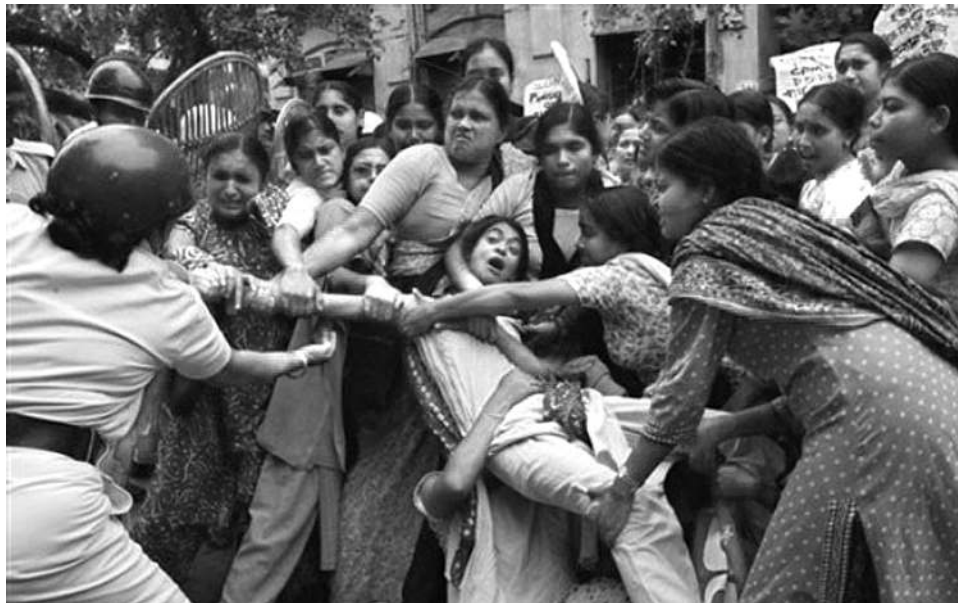
The closing date for news in this issue is January 27.

# India



AP photos

Above: Protester wounded in bloody rampage by cops and CPI(M) thugs in Nandigram, 14 March 2007. Right: Police attack July 2007 Kolkata protest following rape and murder of young woman activist Tapasi Malik by CPI(M) members.



## The Nandigram Massacre

The following article is reprinted from Spartacist Canada (No. 159, Winter 2008/2009), newspaper of the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyiste, Canadian section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

The Communist Party of Canada (CPC), long skilled in justifying working-class betrayals, has now taken up the cudgels for the capitalist government of West



Bengal headed by the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI[M]). Last spring the correspondent in India for the CPC's *People's Voice*, B. Prasant, claimed that the state budget of the Left Front government "prioritises the empowerment of the poor." The government, he reported, was buying land and "handing it over to small peasants at no cost" (1-15 April 2008). The October 16-31 issue had Prasant hailing the government's "pro-employment and pro-poor industrial policy" in Singur, a rural area not far from Kolkata (Calcutta).

"Paper will put up with anything that is written on it," as J.V. Stalin once wrote. Schooled for decades in the program of Stalinist class collaboration and the lies it entails, the CPC should know. The truth is that for the last two years, far from giving land to peasants and "empowering" the poor, the CPI(M) has made Singur and nearby Nandigram synonymous with bloody state repression—murders, rapes, beatings, mass arrests and land seizures, all to serve the greater glory of capitalist profit.

In 2005, India loosened the regulations governing the establishment of Special Economic Zones (SEZs), sparking a frenzied real estate boom as central and state governments invoked the 1894 Land Acquisition Act, a relic of the British imperialists enacted to smooth the forcible acquisition of land and minimize the cost. More than 500 SEZs have been approved around the country. Highly capital intensive, the SEZs employ a tiny fraction of the vast numbers they have displaced and ruined. To ensure untrammelled profits, strikes and protests are banned inside SEZs and taxation is minimal.

Quick to cash in on the SEZ craze, in December 2006 the Left Front government in West Bengal moved to create an SEZ in Singur, forcibly acquiring land there on behalf of Tata Motors, one of India's largest capitalist conglomerates. Those who resisted were severely beaten and some 50 arrested. Reportedly led by CPI(M) spotters, houses were ransacked and haystacks burned. Later that month

### "Left Front" Government's State Repression in West Bengal

the charred body of a young woman activist, Tapasi Malik, 18, was found. She had been brutally raped and murdered. A full year passed before two CPI(M) workers were charged with this savage crime (Indo-Asian News Service, 7 December 2007).

Singur proved to be merely the opening act. In Nandigram, in late December 2006, villagers learned that 25,000 acres of arable land were to be taken to create

CPI(M) goons hauled off bodies in trucks or buried them nearby under a newly repaired road.

What is known is that this attack was planned months in advance. Women and children, who were in the forefront of the protest in the mistaken belief that this would stay the hand of the police and CPI(M) goons, bore the brunt of the onslaught. Wrenching evidence was later given at hearings in Kolkata to a "Peo-

was infamous for his close ties with the Suharto regime which killed some one million Communists and their supporters in 1965-66 following a military coup. Happy to front for such butchers, the CPI(M) says it is promoting development that

will better the lives of the masses and indeed be a "weapon of class struggle." But no amount of such Marxoid mumbo jumbo can hide that this is a *capitalist* government in a *capitalist* country. No less a mouthpiece for imperialist finance capital than the London *Economist* pointed out in an article titled "The Capitalist Communist" that CPI(M) chief minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharya "has embraced business with an apostate zeal...travelling the world and wooing foreign companies" (24 November 2007).

#### Only Workers Revolution Will Liberate the Indian Masses!

The idea that capitalist development in a country like India (or anywhere else for that matter) could be other than brutal and exploitative is a lie pushed by the bourgeoisie and their reformist frontmen. India is a country of enormous social contradictions where modern industry is grafted onto a backward society marked by profound women's oppression as well as national, religious and caste oppression—the heritage of the pre-industrial past, reinforced and deepened by more than two centuries of British colonial rule.

Imperialist subjugation foreclosed any possibility of the Indian bourgeoisie

*continued on page 4*



Kunal Chattopadhyay

14 November 2007 protest in Kolkata against Nandigram massacre. Left Front's state repression has shattered illusions of many in CPI(M).

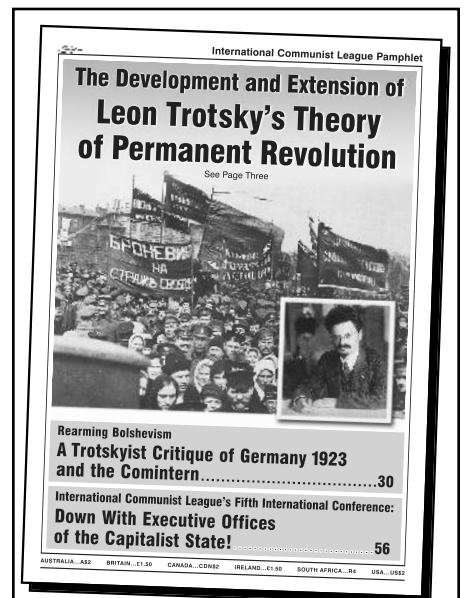
an SEZ for a massive chemical industrial complex. There was an immediate outcry. On 7 January 2007, a protest organized by the Bhumi Uchched Pratirodh (Land Eviction Resistance) Committee (BUPC) was attacked as CPI(M) cadre shot bullets and hurled bombs into the village, killing at least five. Foreshadowing what was to come, CPI(M) State Secretariat member Benoy Konar railed, "But if they want to make things difficult for us, we are prepared to make life hell for them" (*Nandigram: What Really Happened?* [2007]).

In the early morning of March 14, some 5-6,000 unarmed residents of Nandigram assembled in an attempt to prevent government forces from entering the area. On the other side a 2,000-strong police force and several hundred armed CPI(M) cadre, some in police uniform, launched an assault, blinding people with tear gas and then opening fire. The official count put the dead at 14, with over 200 injured. Others put the number of dead at more than 100. The true toll may never be known: a reporter for the civil rights journal *Combat Law* (May-June 2007) was told by villagers that cops and

ple's Tribunal on Nandigram" organized by the All India Citizens' Initiative. Some women were raped and there were at least five cases of "sadistic sexual assault"; several women accused policemen of "forcing rod/lathi/gunbarrel into sex organs" ("Executive Summary of the Report: People's Tribunal on Nandigram," 26-28 May 2007). Others were told of children being "torn apart, hurled into ponds and killed" (*Combat Law*, May-June 2007). Of 38 missing, eleven were children. This is the horrific reality that *People's Voice* hopes to hide in its lying hosannas to the West Bengal CPI(M) government.

While covering up this massacre, *People's Voice* portrays the CPI(M) as a party under siege from "elements of the reactionary right and the sectarian left" which are "using murder and mayhem" (1-15 September 2008). In reality, Nandigram has been the site of a virtual small-scale civil war as the inhabitants have faced down repeated attacks from police and CPI(M) thugs acting on behalf of the bourgeois state.

The chemical hub in Nandigram—now on hold—was to have been built by the Indonesian Salim Group, whose founder



\$2 (56 pages)

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



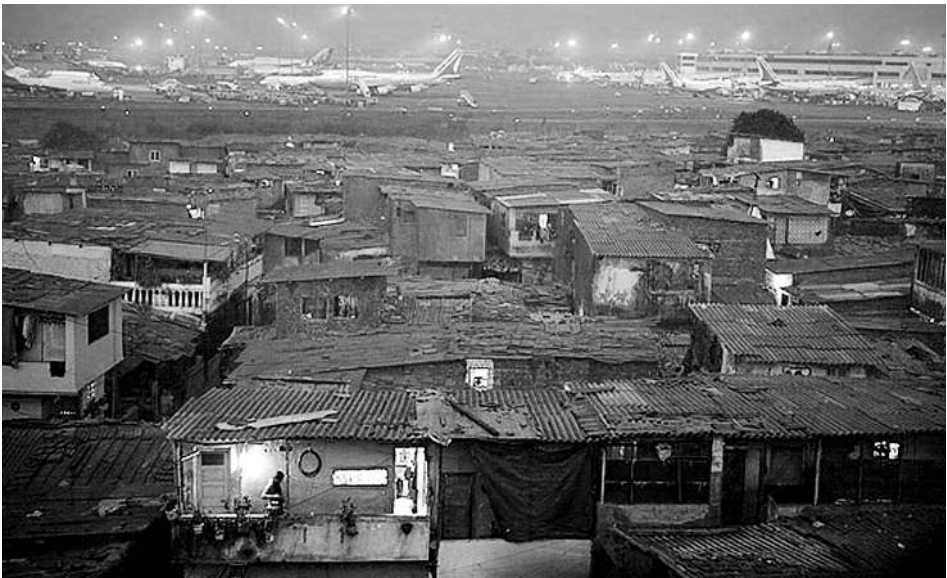
(continued from page 3)

playing the historical role of the bourgeoisies of Western Europe in liberating and developing the productive forces from feudal backwardness. The perspective for resolving the questions posed by what Bolshevik revolutionary Leon Trotsky termed “combined and uneven development” is provided by the theory and program of permanent revolution, developed by Trotsky and vindicated by the victory of the 1917 Russian Revolution (see “The Development and Extension of Leon Trotsky’s Theory of Permanent Revolution,” ICL Pamphlet [2008]).

In a country like India where development is belated and strangled by imperialist subjugation, the weak national bourgeoisie is dependent on its imperialist masters—yesterday the British, today the U.S.—and above all fears its “own” working class. The only road to liberation for the subjugated masses lies in the successful struggle of the proletariat for state power, at the head of all the oppressed, especially the vast peasantry, under the leadership of a revolutionary workers party. An Indian workers revolution would spark a revolutionary upsurge throughout the subcontinent, from Pakistan to Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka. Its survival and advancement would hinge on the achievement of social revolutions in the imperialist centers: Japan, North America and West Europe.

This is emphatically not the perspective of the Indian variants of Stalinism, including Maoism. Stalinism as an ideology arose in the Soviet workers state following the defeat of the post-1917 revolutionary wave in Europe. Beginning in 1923-24 a conservative bureaucratic caste which came to be led by Stalin usurped political power from the proletariat. Among its greatest crimes against the world working class was the resurrection of a variant of the class-collaborationist Menshevik program which had been defeated and discredited in the victorious 1917 Revolution. The Stalinist dogma of “two-stage revolution,” in which the masses are tied to a mythical “progressive” bourgeoisie in a first, supposedly “democratic” stage of struggle, has brought bloody defeat to struggling workers and peasants around the world.

Over the decades, both before and after independence, the Stalinized Communist Party of India (CPI) has often given support to the bourgeois Congress Party and the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty. The CPI(M), which issued from the CPI in 1964, continues this pattern of class collaboration. At the head of the Left Front, it has ruled West Bengal continuously since 1977, wielding the repressive powers of the bourgeois state in defense of private property and profit over a deeply impoverished population. At the all-India level, both CPs have continued to back Congress and its allies, including



## Vast slum in Mumbai next to modern airport facility.

until recently the Congress-dominated United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government in New Delhi. This is the political logic of the bankrupt program of “revolution by stages.” Whether labelled the “National Democratic Revolution” or the “People’s Democratic Revolution,” the masses remain brutally oppressed by capitalism and the supposed second, socialist stage never comes.

Many of those who have harboured illusions in the capacity of the CPI(M) to bring progress and a better life to the masses of West Bengal have been shaken by the atrocities in Nandigram. The months after the massacre saw a wave of resignations from the party, and heavy electoral losses in its former rural strongholds followed this year. Most of these losses were to the virulent anti-Communists of the Trinamool Congress, which has also been the main force in the BUPC-organized protests in Nandigram. In a rotten class-collaborationist alliance, this “resistance committee” is also supported by the Socialist Unity Centre of India, one of the country’s many Maoist groups.

Another group, the CPI (Maoist), also claims to provide an alternative to the Left Front's SEZ policy. But their program of "New Democratic Revolution" and "People's War" is no less bankrupt than that of the CPI(M) and CPI. Basing themselves on the peasantry, not the proletariat, the Maoists call for a "bloc of four classes" including with so-called "progressive" capitalists. In *The State and Revolution* and many other works, Lenin savaged the idea that the class interests of the bourgeoisie and proletariat were anything other than irreconcilable.

It is necessary to break with this deeply ingrained class collaborationism which has long branded India's various Communist Parties and their offshoots. The history of the international working-class struggle against capitalist wage slavery abounds with betrayals by Stalinism, whose anti-Marxist dogma of "socialism in one country" has meant pursuit of the pipedream of "peaceful coexistence" with world imperialism and opposition to the struggle for international socialist revolution. As well as "two-stage" betrayal, it has also meant forming and supporting popular-front governments—political blocs with capitalist parties in which the politics of the working class are necessarily subordinated to those of the bourgeoisie. Too often workers have paid with their lives for the treacherous policies of their leaders.

In Indonesia this program brought the destruction of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) in 1965-66. The Chinese Maoists instructed the PKI—the largest Communist party in the capitalist world, with three million members and many times that number of supporters—to maintain at all costs a political bloc with the “anti-imperialist” regime of Sukarno, an ally of Beijing. The PKI adopted a policy of “national unity” with the Indonesian bourgeoisie and its military, even to the point of forcing workers to return to the capitalists the factories they had seized. With the workers politically lulled by the misleadership of Beijing and the PKI, the Indonesian military staged a

coup led by General Suharto, ushering in the horrific bloodbath of Communists and their sympathizers. (See “Lessons of Indonesia 1965,” *Spartacist* [English edition] No. 55, Autumn 1999.)

A contemporary lesson in popular-front betrayal is found in South Africa. The South African Communist Party (SACP) has long backed the bourgeois-nationalist African National Congress (ANC) and participates in the capitalist ANC-led Tripartite Alliance—a nationalist popular front that came to power in 1994, signaling the end of apartheid rule. The SACP's role in South Africa in containing proletarian struggle parallels that of the CPI(M)—both are central to the administration of the capitalist government.

Through its participation in the Tripartite Alliance, the SACP has been instrumental in suppressing the struggles of the black toilers and other oppressed, while providing ministers and provincial premiers to staff the ANC-led government and its repressive state apparatus. Our comrades in Spartacist South Africa are unique in calling to break with the Tripartite Alliance and to build a Bolshevik workers party that fights for a black-centered workers government. In contrast, the activity of the reformist left is firmly within the boundaries of the Alliance, reinforcing the political chains binding the masses to neo-apartheid capitalism.

## Down With U.S.-India Pact Against China!

India is the imperialists' favourite "emerging giant" in Asia, one whose economic growth over the past decade or so is sometimes compared with that of China. In fact, China and India are fundamentally different kinds of states and societies.

India is a capitalist regional power dominated by imperialism. Its per capita gross domestic product is barely half that of China. China's poverty rate is less than half that of India's and the rate of child malnutrition three-quarters less. Female adult literacy in China is 87 percent; in India it is just 48 percent. India has more hungry people than any other country in the world. All the hype by the imperialists and the Indian rulers about India's supposed rapid-fire development is just that: hype. Even before the current global economic crisis, which is already sending India's economy into a tailspin, the country's per capita GDP was a minuscule six percent of that of the U.S.

China is a bureaucratically deformed

workers state, and has been since the 1949 Chinese Revolution overthrew capitalist/landlord rule and ripped the world's most populous country from the clutches of the imperialist powers. For good reason, China became a beacon for millions of oppressed toilers in Asia. Despite the bureaucratic parasitism and mismanagement of the ruling Stalinist Chinese Communist Party, the collectivization of the economy has brought enormous social gains for workers, peasants and women, not least an end to centuries of chronic starvation in the countryside.

U.S. imperialism today sees capitalist India as a strategic ally in its drive to overturn the gains of the Chinese Revolution. This fall, Washington approved a pact for the sale of nuclear technology to India. As the *Financial Times* (28 September 2008) noted, this opens “a new chapter in relations” between the U.S. and India that “could help counter the rise of China.” The International Communist League stands for the unconditional military defense of the Chinese deformed workers state against imperialist threats and internal counterrevolution. At the same time, we call for a proletarian political revolution to oust the nationalist, Stalinist ruling caste in Beijing and create a regime based on workers democracy and revolutionary internationalism.

**Noam Chomsky, Tariq Ali et al.  
Rescue CPI(M)**

While the Nandigram massacre wracked the left in India, the CPI(M) found voices of solidarity outside the country. Less than two weeks after yet another assault on Nandigram led by a CPI(M) militia, a statement by Noam Chomsky, Tariq Ali, Susan George, Walden Bello, Howard



**Kolkata, July 2006: Left Front Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharya with representative of Indonesian Salim Group, infamous for its close ties with brutal Suharto regime.**

Zinn and various other fake-left luminaries appeared in *The Hindu* (22 November 2007) and elsewhere. Silent on the Left Front's brutal state repression, the authors deplored "what appear to be unbridgeable gaps between people who share similar values" and expressed "trust that the people of Bengal will not allow their differences on some issues to tear apart the important experiments undertaken in the State (land reforms, local self-government)."

Many Indian leftists were stunned by this plea for unity between the state architects of a bloody massacre and its victims. As well, several intellectuals, including renowned writer Arundhati Roy and Bengali novelist Mahashweta Devi, issued an angry rebuttal. For our part, we were

*continued on page 8*

[illegible]

**Trotskyist League/Spartacus Youth Club Forums**

# **The Bankruptcy of Capitalism**

## **— Those Who Labour Must Rule! —**



# Down With Labour Government's Crackdown on Prostitution!

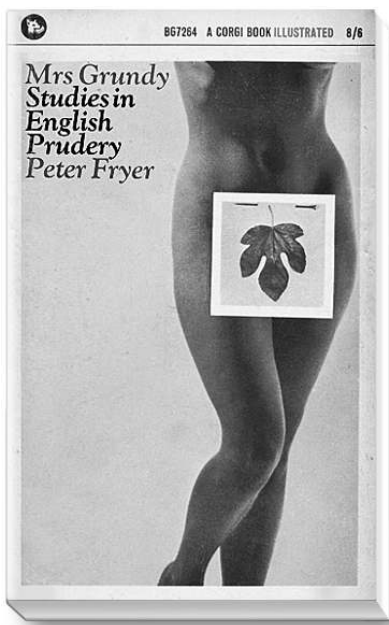
## Britain

The following article is reprinted from Workers Hammer No. 205 (Winter 2008-2009), newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain.

In the biggest shake-up of Britain's prostitution laws in 50 years, the Labour government is proposing draconian new legislation that would make it a criminal offence to pay for sex with someone who is "controlled for another person's gain." Anyone convicted would face a fine of up to £1000 and receive a criminal record. Not knowing whether a prostitute is "controlled" will be no excuse: according to Home Secretary Jacqui Smith, "This new criminal offence of paying for sex with someone who is trafficked or pimped will apply even if the buyer claims he did not know the woman was being controlled for gain" (*Independent*, 19 November 2008). If it is deemed that the client did know, he

## WORKERS HAMMER

additionally may face charges of rape, which carry a potential life sentence. This attempt to crack down on prostitution is part of a broader drive by the Labour government to increase the repressive powers of the state and to regiment society. The new measures would give police addi-



**Peter Fryer's book defined prudery as "interference in other people's pleasures." Modern-day Labourite Mrs. Grundys like Harriet Harman and Jacqui Smith have police, courts and prisons at their disposal.**

tional powers to crack down on kerb-crawling [soliciting from a car] and to raid and close down brothels, arresting prostitutes, many of whom are immigrants.

The Spartacist League/Britain unambiguously opposes these measures, which if implemented would mark a significant shift towards outlawing prostitution altogether by penalising customers. The act of performing sex for money, or of paying for sex, is not a crime, either on the part of the prostitute or the client! Currently in Britain, neither prostitution nor paying for sex is illegal, but "soliciting," advertising in a phone booth, kerb-crawling and brothel-keeping are. We are for the decriminalisation of prostitution which we Marxists regard as a "crime without a victim," like drug use, gambling, pornography, homosexual sex and "statutory rape"—activities that are



Indymedia

**Left: Sex workers organized in GMB union demonstrate for rights for prostitutes at London Mayday 2003 demonstration. Right: English Collective of Prostitutes poster.**

generally illegal or heavily regulated under capitalist law. The government is deliberately conflating horrific crimes against prostitutes such as debt bondage, sexual assault, beatings and other kinds of coercion with the fundamentally *consensual* act between a prostitute and her client to exchange money for sex. For us the guiding principle for sexual relations is that of *effective consent*, meaning mutual agreement and understanding, as opposed to coercion. We believe that as long as those who take part agree to do so at the time, no one, least of all the state, has the right to tell them they can't do it.

Labour's proposed legislation is being cynically marketed under the guise of "protecting women from exploitation." According to the *Guardian*, Minister for Women Harriet Harman (who has previously called for outlawing prostitution altogether) has described the flow of women brought into Britain by human traffickers as "a modern slave trade" while claiming that "to protect women we must stop men buying sex from the victims of human trafficking" (19 November 2008). For starters, the notion of this Labour government "protecting women" is obscene, coming from the very government responsible for the imperialist occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan which have resulted in untold brutality against women and children. At home Labour is proposing legislation which would slash benefits for single mothers even further as part of its attacks on the working class and poor.

What Harman describes as a "modern slave trade" is largely debt bondage, where a worker is forced to pay off a large debt to smugglers and gangmasters to be taken across the border and to be able to work. Most of these workers toil in the agricultural, food processing, cleaning, health care, catering and construction sectors. The British economy is highly reliant on this low-paid, "flexible" immigrant labour, both legal and illegal. The government's racist anti-immigration laws make it virtually impossible to get into Britain, and compel illegal workers to live and work in the most horrific conditions. Such conditions resulted in the deaths of 23 Chinese workers picking cockles in Morecambe Bay in February 2004.

Debt bondage, rape, sexual assault and beatings are real crimes. However, we oppose this attempt by the state to amalgamate "trafficking" and "sex slavery" with prostitution and to label all exchanges of money for sex as potential slavery. Prostitution more often than not is degrading and exploitative, but criminalisation simply forces the prostitute into a lumpen milieu where access to social services is

difficult and where she or he is more vulnerable to organised crime and violence by pimps. As Marxists we warn that any intervention by the capitalist state will necessarily intensify the misery for all involved and serve as a pretext for unleashing the cops and courts in a multiple attack on immigrants, women and sex. In fact, immigrant women "rescued" by police during "anti-trafficking" raids are routinely deported. The Spartacist League calls for *full citizenship rights for all immigrants! No deportations!* As we wrote in "Anti-Immigrant, Anti-Woman, Anti-Sex: U.S./UN Crusade Against 'Sex Trafficking'"

"The 'sex slavery' crusade is a cynical and dangerous business because it both legitimizes government persecution of immigrants and invokes state authority to intervene as moral arbiter in our most intimate affairs. It bolsters the anti-sex witchhunt as a whole and deflects attention from the real violence perpetrated every day against women and children under this class system."

—*Spartacist* (English-language edition) No. 58, Spring 2004

Niki Adams, speaking for the English Collective of Prostitutes (ECP), has aptly described the government's claim that most prostitutes are trafficked as "completely fabricated" (*Guardian*, 19 November 2008) while the ECP issued a statement opposing the new legislation saying this would lead to "more Anti-Social Behaviour Orders landing more of us in prison; more deportations under the guise of cracking down on trafficking; higher prison sentences for women working from premises" ([www.allwomencount.net](http://www.allwomencount.net)). In keeping with the contempt for the "lower" classes that oozes from the top ranks of New Labour, the new legislation targets the poorer, more vulnerable and often immigrant prostitutes likely to be work-

ing on the street or in brothels, not the escort services provided by highly paid "call girls."

Harriet Harman has even enlisted the Women's Institute (WI)—that embodiment of middle-class "Middle England"—to scour the local papers for "suspicious" ads. The traditional role of the WI is summed up in the phrase "jam and Jerusalem," meaning a woman's place is in the kitchen and referencing the patriotic hymn "Jerusalem," extolling England's "green and pleasant land." Presumably Harriet Harman and Jacqui Smith would prefer the WI stick to its traditional activities rather than its more recent claim to fame, posing naked for pictures in charity calendars as depicted in the movie *Calendar Girls*.

Labour's crackdown on prostitution is part of a moral crusade targeting sexual activity that strays outside of conservative and religious "family values," such as "underage" sex, homosexuality and other "sins" including "binge drinking." Labour's "feminist" anti-sex warriors such as Harriet Harman stand in the long tradition of morality police brilliantly chronicled in Peter Fryer's 1963 book *Mrs. Grundy, Studies in English Prudery*. An example was the 18th-century "Societies for the Reformation of Manners" which were "responsible for prosecuting no fewer than 101,683 persons in the London area alone, mostly for sabbath-breaking, swearing, drunkenness, lewdness, brothel-keeping, and sodomy."

The status of prostitutes in society is related to the status of women more generally, itself a measure of a society's advancement. Thus the conditions faced by the prostitute vary greatly with time, place and class. The family is the central

*continued on page 8*

**Workers Hammer**  
No. 205 WINTER 2008-2009 40p  
Newspaper of the Spartacist League

**"Neo-liberal" and Keynesian policies — two ends of the same stick**

**New Labour fleeces working people**

For a revolutionary workers party!

**Marxist newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain**  
International rate: \$10—Airmail (1 year)  
**Order from: Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116**

50 SPARTACIST/English Edition SPRING 2004

**Women and Revolution**

**Sex Slaves On Main Street**

**Anti-Immigrant, Anti-Woman, Anti-Sex: U.S./UN Crusade Against "Sex Trafficking"**

**Spartacist**  
**No. 58, Spring 2004**  
**\$1.50 (60 pages)**



# 23rd Annual Partisan Defense Committee Holiday Appeal

Last December marked the 23rd annual Holiday Appeal, which raises funds for the Partisan Defense Committee's program of sending monthly stipends and holiday gifts to class-war prisoners and their families. Held in New York, Chicago, the Bay Area, Los Angeles and Toronto, these benefits raised over \$10,000 after expenses as a concrete expression of solidarity with class-war prisoners.

The 2008 Holiday Appeal benefits focused particularly on the struggle to free death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, an innocent man falsely convicted of killing Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner on 9 December 1981. Also honored were 15 other men and women who were singled out by the state for standing up to racist capitalist oppression and exploitation. With this act of solidarity the PDC has revived and kept alive the tradition of class-struggle defense of those imprisoned for championing the rights of labor and all the oppressed. This tradition was begun by the International Labor Defense (ILD) under James P. Cannon, a founding leader of the Communist Party, the ILD's first secretary (1925-28) and later the founder of American Trotskyism. As a resolution from the ILD's first conference in 1925 declared: "The workers must not be allowed to forget those who lie in prison for them, but must be stirred into action in their defense."

In building for these benefits, the PDC—a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League—addressed trade-union locals in several cities, emphasizing that the working class must break with the capitalist Democratic Party in order to advance its own interests and those of the oppressed. This elicited much discussion and debate, especially in the wake of the election of Barack Obama. In the Bay Area, presentations were made at both the ILWU long-shore Local 10 and AFSCME Local 444 unions' November meetings. Amalgamated Transit Union locals 308 and 241 in Chicago and the New York chapter of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists contributed money for the class-war prisoners and Mumia Abu-Jamal's defense.

At the Chicago Holiday Appeal, one of the sit-in participants from United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE) Local 1110, spoke about the six-day plant occupation by largely immigrant and black workers at the Republic Windows & Doors factory in Chicago, which captured the attention of the nation (see "UE Workers Win Severance Pay," WV No. 927, 2 January).

The New York City benefit, which drew more than 150 people, including many youth and trade unionists, featured the one-man play, *John Brown: Trumpet of Freedom*, by George Wolf Reily and Norman Thomas Marshall (who performed the play). The play honored those who fought against slavery in the Civil War, and underlined the significance of John Brown's 1859 raid on the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry.

## Thousands Raised for Class-War Prisoners



### Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Free the Class-War Prisoners! Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!



WV Photos

All the Holiday Appeals played taped greetings from Mumia Abu-Jamal made especially for the occasion (see below). Wadiya Jamal, Mumia Abu-Jamal's wife, wrote before the meeting: "There is no word to express the extent of gratitude for

the continued support of the PDC to Mumia's fight for freedom." Excerpts from greetings by other class-war prisoners, most of whom have been incarcerated for at least a quarter century, were also read.

A letter on behalf of the eight surviv-

ing members of the MOVE 9 thanked the PDC for its work "for not only this year, but all of the years in the past, as we approach yet another new administration of capitalism." The MOVE 9 were framed up on conspiracy and murder charges after a vicious police assault on MOVE's home in Philadelphia's Powelton Village neighborhood in August 1978. For the first time since their imprisonment over 30 years ago, the MOVE 9 became eligible for parole last April. Their parole was rejected. In his greetings to the Holiday Appeals, MOVE 9 prisoner Delbert Africa wrote: "Best believe, the *world-wide* letters, e-mails, telephone calls, rallies—all the activities scared and shook-up the parole board to the point that they even admitted it was unprecedented! Of course, it did not stop the arrogant bastards from giving us all one year 'hits'."

Ed Poindexter, a former Black Panther supporter and a leader of the National Committee to Combat Fascism, also sent greetings. He and his comrade Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa were framed up as part of the FBI's deadly COINTELPRO operation under which 38 Black Panther Party members were killed. In his greetings Ed Poindexter wrote:

"I used to think no matter how long I would serve in prison, and no matter what the oppressive conditions, that they'd never break me. But now as I sit here in my wheelchair at 64 years old and cripple, my mind and spirit still maintain my initial position, yet my body is disagreeing. But, rest assured, as long as there is at least a single breath left in this tired body, I will continue to resist, fight for my personal liberty and plan for an eventual future 'touchdown' back to the community to resume my life-long passion of serving the people."

Jaan Laaman and Tom Manning are the two remaining members of the Ohio 7 still in prison. This radical group took credit for bank "expropriations" and bombings against symbols of U.S. imperialism in the late 1970s and 1980s. In his greetings Jaan Laaman expressed his gratitude for those "supporting U.S. political prisoners," and explained that as he was writing these words on 15 November 2008, he had just fully completed his Massachusetts state sentence after being in captivity for over 24 years. But, he added, "Today, I also started my next federal sentence of 53 years. In two days I will be turned over to U.S. Marshals and transported to some federal prison to begin this new sentence." This is an outrage—free Laaman and Manning now!

Messages were also received from Leonard Peltier and Hugo Pinell (see page 2 for updates on their cases). Peltier has been incarcerated for more than three decades because of his activism in the American Indian Movement. He has come to symbolize this country's racist repression of its native peoples, the survivors of centuries of genocidal oppression. Pinell, a militant anti-racist leader of prison rights, is the last of the San Quentin 6 still in prison. Despite hundreds of letters of support, Pinell has repeatedly been denied parole. Now in his 60s, Pinell continues to serve a life sentence, and, as he wrote, is being

*continued on page 8*

*We print below the taped greetings from Mumia Abu-Jamal to the 2008 PDC Holiday Appeal gatherings.*

Ona Move!

I want to thank you all for your work in support of political and class-war prisoners, whose names are almost too numerous for me to recount here.

Suffice it to say, they represent people from wide and various movements, radical, socialist, social and labor.

But as vicious and as unjust as the state has been (and continues to be) in its enmity against those of us in various movements, as these words are written

we are all witnessing a relentless war against *all* workers in the midst of the current economic crisis.

Those of us who've studied these matters know that this crisis is one that is endemic to the capitalist system itself. How could it do otherwise than

create crisis?

Marx and Engels said that "the executive of the modern State is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie."

Thus we see, not just repression against our movements, violations of

their own "law," and the like, but we see workers thrown out of work by the millions, while banks are granted billions!

We see social injustice next to obscene capitalist rapaciousness.

This day, this time of trial and tribulation, should be seen as one of incredible opportunity, and we should build our movements stronger as this social order weakens.

Babylon is falling!

Thank you! Ona Move! Long Live John Africa!

From death row, this is Mumia Abu-Jamal.

## Mumia's Greetings to Holiday Appeal Benefits

We print below the speech given by Labor Black League representative Adwoa Oni at the Bay Area Holiday Appeal on 7 December 2008.

The Labor Black League for Social Defense stands for mobilizing the masses of black and working people for militant integrated struggle against the brutal system of racist oppression that is capitalist America. Initiated by and fraternally allied to the Marxist Spartacist League, the LBL is part of the revolutionary movement of the workers and oppressed against the bosses and for socialism.

The election of Barack Obama serves as a powerful propaganda weapon for the U.S. bourgeoisie at home and abroad. But Obama's promise of "change" is a cruel hoax. As the next Commander-in-Chief of bloody U.S. imperialism, he will preside over the racist capitalist system, which is based on the brutal exploitation of working people. Racist oppression, grinding poverty, police violence and massive incarceration are all endemic to the American capitalist system, and that will continue to be the reality for black and working people. It will be Obama's job to contain potential social unrest and impose austerity measures upon working people on behalf of the racist ruling class. In this, Obama is following the same script as black Democrats who have been employed as mayors and police chiefs of major urban areas—from Oakland to L.A., to Detroit, to Philadelphia and elsewhere. Their job has been to keep working and black people down and to oversee rampant cop terror. We have not forgotten the 1985 Mother's Day bombing of the MOVE commune, carried out under Philadelphia's black Democratic mayor Wilson Goode, that burned alive eleven people, including five children, and was allowed to burn down a whole black neighborhood. That is the role of the black Democrats and Barack Obama!

Class-war political prisoner Mumia

## Bay Area LBL Holiday Appeal Speaker: "Obama's Promise of 'Change' Is a Cruel Hoax"



WV Photo

**Labor Black League representative Adwoa Oni at Bay Area Holiday Appeal.**

Abu-Jamal's case is at a critical stage following the rejection of his appeals by the bourgeois courts. Yet at a Mumia event sponsored by Socialist Action, Jeff Mackler (Socialist Action's leader) silenced any mention of class struggle and socialism in order to embrace the little bourgeois politico Cynthia McKinney. However, an LBL spokesman intervened from the floor and forthrightly put forward our class-struggle perspective. She said: "And one fundamental truth is that black oppression is the cornerstone of American capitalism, and...I don't see anybody addressing that because the system that put Mumia in jail

and condemned him to die is the capitalist system itself." That intervention exemplifies what the LBL fights for—our fight to free Mumia Abu-Jamal is rooted in the struggle to make the multiracial working class conscious of its class interests in the fight against the entire depraved capitalist system, particularly the understanding that in America the fight for black freedom is central to the struggle for the emancipation of labor itself. Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Free the MOVE 9! Black liberation through socialist revolution!

As overseer of the whole bloody plantation, Obama vows to escalate the "war on terror" in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and at home. Meanwhile the retrial of the San Francisco 8, former Black Panthers, brings Gitmo to the West Bay. The original charges were thrown out because the so-called "evidence" and "confessions" were extracted through torture. Torture and rendition have always been part of the capitalists' arsenal of repression. We say: Drop the charges! Hands off the SF 8!

Drop the bogus charges against longshoremen Jason Ruffin and Aaron Harrison! [These two black ILWU longshore union members were beaten and arrested in August 2007 for the "crime" of trying to return after lunch to work at the Sacramento port and appealing to their union for help in doing so. See "'War on Terror' Assault on Black Longshoremen," WV No. 926 (5 December 2008).] The government's "war on terror" has long had the ILWU in its sights, yet outrageously

the leadership of the ILWU has wrongly supported the maritime security measures under which the two ILWU longshoremen are being prosecuted by the government. The prosecution of Ruffin and Harrison is the bitter fruit of this treacherous policy by the union tops. Outrageously, security guards on the docks, whose job is to police the workforce and enforce the government's anti-union laws, are members of the ILWU. We say: Security guards out of the unions! Cops out of the unions! Organize the largely immigrant port truckers! At a rally in October in front of the Yolo County courthouse supporting Ruffin and Harrison, an LBL spokesman declared: "The LBL...calls on the union movement to organize the unorganized, like the port truckers, and fight for citizenship rights for all immigrants. Down with the I.C.E. raids!"

Down with Proposition 8! The LBL opposed the reactionary Proposition 8 banning same-sex marriage. Black working people have been in the forefront of social and class struggle in this country, but the black church has also promoted social backwardness and bigotry when it comes to issues of abortion and homosexual rights. While Obama said Prop 8 was "unnecessary," his declaration that marriage is a "sacred union" between a man and a woman was exploited in black neighborhoods by the Prop 8 bigots. More than 60 percent of black voters backed Prop 8. We combat every manifestation of homophobic bigotry just as we fight anti-immigrant prejudice among blacks or anti-black racism among immigrants and gays. In America, family law has always been saturated with racism: black slaves were denied legal marriage. One hundred years after the Civil War, some states still barred black-white marriage. Church and state out of our bedrooms! Full democratic rights for homosexuals! Full citizenship rights for immigrants! Finish the Civil War! Forward to a workers state! ■

## Young Spartacus

# Fake Socialists Celebrate New Commander-in-Chief

We print below an edited excerpt from the presentation of Spartacus Youth Club spokesman Tom Allegri at the 14 December 2008 Holiday Appeal for Class-War Prisoners in Chicago.

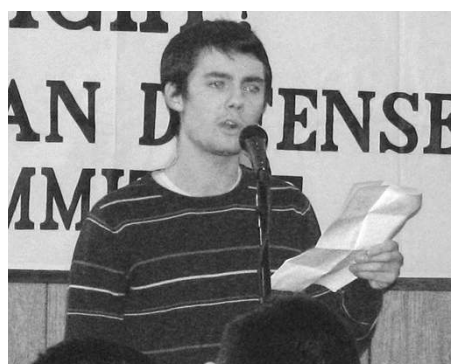
Since the fall of the Soviet Union, the youth of our generation have been told the lie that communism is dead, that the "end of history" has come with "democratic" capitalism. Our perspective is based on the model of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. It destroyed the class rule of the bourgeoisie and laid the basis for a classless society based on material abundance. Even after its degeneration under the Stalinist bureaucracy beginning in 1923-24, the Soviet workers state offered the promise of jobs, medical care, schools and mass transit under a centralized, planned economy. That's why we defended the Soviet degenerated workers state until the very end, just as we defend the remaining deformed workers states of China, North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba.

The bourgeoisie's lie of the "death of communism" has a reflection in the myth of the "end of racism"—a myth that Obama's campaign propped up—and in the burial of the struggle for racial integration as a "failed experiment." It's no surprise, then, that the same fake-socialist reformists in the International Socialist Organization (ISO) who criminally cheered the fall of the Soviet Union also echoed the bourgeois liberals' pro-Obama chants of "Yes We Can!" with touching faith in a "post-racial" capitalist democracy. The ISO and other reformists bury the simple fact that the Democrats are the other party of racist U.S. imperialism and class enemies of the proletariat. The ISO even celebrated with a party in Harlem and called the victory a "transformative event." The Revolutionary Communist

## SYC Speaker at Chicago Holiday Appeal

Party's World Can't Wait flocked to Grant Park with throngs of Obama's supporters on election night. And the Workers World Party's Larry Holmes gushed about the "feeling of liberation" unleashed by Obama's win. In stark contrast to the reformists' bald-faced, class-collaborationist praise of U.S. imperialism's chief executive, the SYC fought vigorously to break youth from any illusions in bourgeois candidates and capitalist electoral politics, and win them to the fight for a multiracial working-class party, which is the necessary instrumentality to get rid of this rotting capitalist system.

The fake socialists' social-pacifist calls to "bring the troops home!" and for "jobs not war" build the dangerous illusion that capitalism can be reformed into a peaceful, democratic system that promotes the interests of the world's proletariat and oppressed. But all the "peace-loving" sloganeering of our fake-socialist opponents belies one simple fact: that they have historically sided with the U.S. imperialists against the world's working



Young Spartacus

**Spartacus Youth Club spokesman Tom Allegri.**

class. They did just that in their egregious opposition to the Red Army's intervention into Afghanistan in the late '70s and '80s. That intervention raised point-blank the question of women's liberation through extending the historic gains of the October Revolution.

Today, the reformists are so enamored of the "Obama phenomenon" that they have little to say about the imperialist

occupation of Afghanistan—Obama, who sees this war as the "good war" and a "just response" to 9/11, has pledged more troops to continue the bloodletting there. This poses an increased danger to the world's oppressed. We say: *All U.S. troops out of Iraq and Afghanistan now!*

As Rosa Luxemburg said, the question posed today is socialism or barbarism. With the Soviet Union gone, those workers and radical youth who identify their struggles with socialism are very exceptional and rare. The Spartacus Youth Club provides a training ground for the next generation of professional revolutionaries who want to dedicate their lives to the fight for a socialist future. Though small, we are armed with a powerful program and a deep memory of the working class's struggles and victories. Our fundamental task remains to win those exceptional individuals to Marxism and arm them with its program, the only one that can lead the workers and oppressed to victory when they rise to struggle, as they inevitably will. Join us!

*Free the class-war prisoners! Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the racist death penalty! ■*

## Spartacus Youth Club Events

### BAY AREA

**Wednesday, February 4, 6:30 p.m.**  
**Marxism and the Scientific Worldview**

San Francisco State University  
Cesar Chavez Student Center  
Room T-153, Terrace Level  
Information and readings: (510) 839-0851  
or sycbayarea@sbcglobal.net

### LOS ANGELES

**Wednesday, February 4, 6 p.m.**  
**Zionist Bloodbath in Gaza**  
**U.S. Imperialists Cheer on Israeli Terror**  
**Defend the Palestinian People!**  
**For a Socialist Federation of the Near East!**

UCLA, Bunche Hall, Room 2173  
Information and readings: (213) 380-8239  
or slsycla@sbcglobal.net

### TORONTO

**Wednesday, February 11, 6:30 p.m.**  
**Marxism and the National Question:**  
**Independence for Quebec!**

University of Toronto  
Sidney Smith Building, Room 2114  
100 St. George Street  
Information and readings: (416) 593-4138  
or spartacan@on.aibn.com

**Visit the ICL Web Site: [www.icl-fi.org](http://www.icl-fi.org)**

India...

(continued from page 4)

unsurprised. This is par for the course for petty-bourgeois dilettantes like Chomsky et al., many of whom have been leading publicists for the popular-frontist World Social Forums. International confabs backed by numerous capitalist governments and corporate endowments, the purpose of the Social Forums has been to ensure that those who oppose some of the depredations of capitalism do not challenge the capitalist system itself. As noted in a well-researched article in *Aspects of India's Economy* (September 2003) shortly before the 2004 Social Forum in Mumbai, these gatherings are funded by the likes of the “Ford Foundation, which has closely collaborated with the US Central Intelligence Agency internationally, and in India has helped to shape the government’s policies in favour of American interests.”

An article in the online version of the British Socialist Workers Party’s (SWP) *International Socialism* (2 July 2007) attacked the Nandigram massacre—only to mourn the lost “unity” of the Social Forums, including in India, where the left shared a “common platform.” “After Nandigram,” they continue, “it is difficult to see where this shared space is.” According to *International Socialism*, the alternative to the CPI(M) is “a real democratic



March 2007 strike at Hindmotors, Kolkata. Only proletarian revolution will liberate Indian masses.

left, stripped of old dogmas” that breaks “from the dead past and stifling present.” Here the SWP is dishing out the same old anti-communist garbage in new pails.

In sharp contrast, the ICL fights for the communism of Lenin and Trotsky whose highest embodiment was the 1917 Russian workers revolution. In India today, alongside the massive peasantry is a small but very powerful and vibrant working class. It is this proletariat that holds the key to the future. In January

2007, and again in March, West Bengal workers carried out statewide strikes against the bloodshed at Nandigram. More recently, in August this year, a countrywide general strike against price rises, rising unemployment and falling real wages aimed at the UPA government brought West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura almost to a standstill. The burning need is to give this immense proletarian social power the necessary leadership and program through the forging of a genuinely

revolutionary party, a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party. Against the class collaborationism and popular-frontism endemic to the Indian left, such a party will counterpose a revolutionary program for the all-sided emancipation of the Indian masses under working-class rule—the dictatorship of the proletariat. Our Trotskyist forebears in the Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India stood firmly in this tradition. In 1942 they declared:

“The ultimate fate of the revolution in India, as in Russia, will be determined in the arena of the international revolution. Nor will India by its own forces be able to accomplish the task of making the transition to socialism. Not only the backwardness of the country, but also the international division of labor and the interdependence—produced by capitalism itself—of the different parts of world economy, demand that this task of the establishment of socialism can be accomplished only on a world scale. The victorious revolution in India, however, dealing a mortal blow to the oldest and most widespread imperialism in the world will on the one hand produce the most profound crisis in the entire capitalist world and shake world capitalism to its foundations. On the other hand it will inspire and galvanize into action millions of proletarians and colonial slaves the world over and inaugurate a new era of world revolution.”

—“The Classes of India and Their Political Roles: A Thesis of the Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India.” *Fourth International*, March 1942 ■

Holiday Appeal...

(continued from page 6)

“kept in maximum custody status, totally deprived and not allowed contact visits.” In New York, the evening concluded with live greetings from federal prison by Jamal Hart, Mumia Abu-Jamal’s son. Hart was framed up for his prominent activism in the campaign to free his father and was sentenced in 1998 to 15 1/2 years without parole on bogus firearms possession charges. In greetings written for the

occasion, which were read by Monique Code, he stated:

“As a man who didn’t think twice to become the voice of the voiceless, Mumia stepped up to the plate to expose this demonic system. A system that was and still continues to enforce intense oppression on African Americans throughout this nation by murderous police officers.... “The only way Mumia will be free is for all of us to mobilize like never before and demand that freedom he and all of our freedom fighters so rightfully deserve. We must let them know that we will never give up!”

The cases of the 16 class-war prisoners honored at this year’s benefits exemplify key aspects of our Marxist program. Since initiating the stipends program, we

have provided support to 33 prisoners on three continents. These included fighters against black oppression in the U.S. and labor militants slapped with prison sentences for defending strikes and defending their union from scabs and thugs. Overseas, we sent a stipend to Mordechai Vanunu, the courageous Israeli nuclear technician who in 1986 was kidnapped in Italy by Mossad agents and railroaded to prison for 18 years for exposing the extent of Israel’s nuclear arsenal. After the Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy treacherously withdrew the Red Army from Afghanistan

in 1988-89, the PDC also organized a campaign that raised over \$44,000 worldwide in support of the heroic people of Jalalabad who were fighting against the U.S.-backed *mujahedin* cutthroats.

We urge WV readers to support the work of the Partisan Defense Committee. Become a sustaining contributor to help drive the work of the PDC forward! Contributions can be sent to: PDC, P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013. For more information about the class-war prisoners see: [www.partisandefense.org/stipend.html](http://www.partisandefense.org/stipend.html). ■

Prostitution...

(continued from page 5)

instrument for the subjugation of women under capitalism. Its historical function is to transmit private property to “legitimate” heirs through inheritance, although that function has little relevance to working-class people who generally have little to pass on. It serves to instil obedience to bourgeois codes of morality and to impose on the working class the burden of raising the next generation of wage slaves. As we wrote in “U.S./UN Crusade Against ‘Sex Trafficking’”:

“It is the institution of the family that brings money into sexual relations. Whether it’s renting a prostitute by the hour or a wife by the lifetime, the family and the oppression of women are founded on private property, and the religious

codes of morality and capitalist law are all that distinguish the wife from the prostitute in this fundamental sense....

“Under socialism, the family will be replaced by communal childcare and housework, enabling women to participate fully in economic, social and political life.... Birth control and abortions will be free and on demand, with free, quality health care for all. Sex will be free from the snooping of preachy busybodies and corrupt cops. The liberation of the prostitute can’t be separated from the liberation of women as a whole, and prostitution will die only as the institution of the family is replaced.”

The Spartacist League seeks to build a revolutionary party of the working class to uproot this decaying capitalist system and replace it with planned collectivised economies on an international scale, laying the material basis for the liberation of humanity. *For women’s liberation through socialist revolution!* ■

Spartacist Black History Month Forums Mexican-American War—Prelude to American Civil War

Seizing the reins as Commander-in-Chief of racist U.S. imperialism, Barack Obama paid homage to the founders of this country, which was built on the bodies of black slaves and extended through bloody conquest. This included the invasion of Mexico in 1846, in which half of Mexico was annexed in the interests of the Southern slavocracy. Today, Obama’s “national unity” appeals are designed to refurbish the “democratic” credentials of American imperialism in order to jack up the brutal exploitation of the working class, blacks, immigrants and all the oppressed in this country and to pursue repression and conquest abroad. Exposing the true history on which racist American imperialism was founded is part of our commitment to the cause of black freedom and the emancipation of the working class through victorious socialist revolution in the bastion of world imperialism.

- Finish the Civil War—For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!
- Bloody U.S. Imperialism—Enemy of World’s Working People and Oppressed
- For Socialist Revolution from the Yukon to the Yucatán and Throughout the Americas!
- Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants!

Bay Area	Los Angeles	New York City
<b>Sunday, February 15 3 p.m.</b> Centro del Pueblo, 2nd floor 474 Valencia Street San Francisco (1 block from 16th St. BART Sta.) For more information: (510) 839-0851 slbayarea@sbcglobal.net	<b>Saturday, February 14 4 p.m.</b> Immanuel Presbyterian Church, 3300 Wilshire Blvd. (2 blocks west of Vermont/ Wilshire Red Line Station) For more information: (213) 380-8239 slsycla@sbcglobal.net	<b>Saturday, February 28 6 p.m.</b> 6 Harrison Street (#1 train to Franklin St., west on Franklin to Hudson, 1 block south to Harrison) For more information: (212) 267-1025 nysl@tiac.net

Chicago

**Finish the Civil War!**

**For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!**

The Second American Revolution Smashed Chattel Slavery  
The Fight for Black Freedom Continues

**Thursday, February 12, 7 p.m.** For more information: (312) 563-0441  
University of Chicago, Stuart Hall, Room 104 [chicagospartacist@sbcglobal.net](mailto:chicagospartacist@sbcglobal.net)

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

<b>Web site:</b> <a href="http://www.icl-fi.org">www.icl-fi.org</a> • <b>E-mail address:</b> <a href="mailto:vanguard@tiac.net">vanguard@tiac.net</a>	
<b>National Office:</b> Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116, (212) 732-7860	
<b>Chicago</b> .....	Box 6441, Main PO, Chicago, IL 60680, (312) 563-0441 <a href="mailto:chicagospartacist@sbcglobal.net">chicagospartacist@sbcglobal.net</a> <b>Public Office:</b> Sat. 2-5 p.m., 222 S. Morgan (Buzzer 23)
<b>Los Angeles</b> .....	Box 29574, Los Feliz Sta., Los Angeles, CA 90029, (213) 380-8239 <a href="mailto:slsycla@sbcglobal.net">slsycla@sbcglobal.net</a> <b>Public Office:</b> Sat. 2-5 p.m., 3806 Beverly Blvd., Room 215
<b>New York</b> .....	Box 3381, Church St. Sta., New York, NY 10008, (212) 267-1025 <a href="mailto:nysl@tiac.net">nysl@tiac.net</a> <b>Public Office:</b> 1st and 3rd Sat. of every month, 1-4 p.m., and by appointment, 299 Broadway, Suite 318
<b>Oakland</b> .....	Box 29497, Oakland, CA 94604, (510) 839-0851 <a href="mailto:slbayarea@sbcglobal.net">slbayarea@sbcglobal.net</a> <b>Public Office:</b> Sat. 1-5 p.m., 1634 Telegraph, 3rd Floor

TROTSKYIST LEAGUE OF CANADA/LIGUE TROTSKYSTE DU CANADA

<b>Toronto</b> .....	Box 7198, Station A, Toronto, ON M5W 1X8, (416) 593-4138 <a href="mailto:spartcan@on.aibn.com">spartcan@on.aibn.com</a>
<b>Vancouver</b> .....	Box 2717, Main P.O., Vancouver, BC V6B 3X2, (604) 687-0353 <a href="mailto:trotskyist_vancouver@shawcable.com">trotskyist_vancouver@shawcable.com</a>



Obama...
(continued from page 1)

capitalist state exists to defend the rule and profits of the capitalist class. All historical experience has shown that it cannot be reformed, but must be smashed through a socialist revolution that establishes in its place a workers state to defend the rule of the working class and its allies. Thus, as Marxists, we are opposed to giving any political support to any capitalist politician—Democrat, Republican or Green—on principle. Nor would we ourselves run for an executive office (i.e., president, governor or mayor). To stand for election to executive positions carries the implication that one is ready to accept responsibility for the administration of the machinery of the capitalist state.

WWP even apologizes for Obama’s choice of Rick Warren, an anti-gay bigot and opponent of women’s rights, to deliver the invocation at the inauguration. While “disappointment” at Warren’s role is, according to Workers World (11 January), “understandable,” “When it comes to inaugural preachers, Warren is by no means the worst of the lot.” Translation: Shut up—because, as WWP put it in the same article, Obama’s victory “represented a breakthrough in the struggle against racism”!

WWP may revel in “love” for Obama, but that love will not be reciprocated: A January 16 Washington Post online article was entitled, “Obama Pledges Entitlement Reform.” Pointing to programs like Social Security and Medicare, Obama told the Post, “there are going to be very difficult choices and issues of sacrifice.” Echoing George W. Bush—who stated after the 2004 elections, “I earned capital in the campaign, political capital, and I intend to spend it”—Obama said, “You have to have a president who is willing to spend some political capital on this. And I intend to spend some.” In this, Obama follows in the footsteps of the black Democrats who have been employed as mayors and police chiefs of major urban areas, epitomized by the statement of former New York City mayor David Dinkins to a meeting of Wall Street financiers: “They’ll take it from me.”

The road to black freedom lies in the struggle to shatter this racist capitalist system through proletarian socialist revolution, and the power to do that lies with the multiracial working class. We base our struggle for black liberation on the program of revolutionary integrationism. While combating 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 racist capitalist rulers and reorganize it on a socialist basis. Only then will it be possible to eliminate the material roots of black oppression through the full integration of black people into an egalitarian socialist society based on a collectivized economy with quality jobs, housing, health care and education for all. For black liberation through socialist revolution! For a workers party to fight for a workers government!

Reformist Obamamania

Even as Israel pounded the Gaza Strip, the ISO politely described Obama’s often-stated support to the murderous Zionist state as being “silent during Israel’s slaughter” (Socialist Worker, 21 January). But well before taking office, Obama made clear his support for the Israeli bloodbath. In a visit to Israel during his campaign, he clearly stated, “If somebody was sending rockets into my house where my two daughters sleep at night, I’m going to do everything in my power to stop that. And I would expect Israelis to do the same thing.” For its part, Israel, after slaughtering over 1,300 Palestinians, withdrew from Gaza hours before the inaugural ceremonies.

In the same January 21 article, the ISO enthused over the “profound impact” of the Obama campaign, writing:

“After a generation of the conservative agenda dominating in Washington, when the White House and Congress seemed wholly insulated from any influence by

ordinary people, Obama’s victory convinced large numbers of people of some basic sentiments at the heart of the great struggles of the past—that something different is possible, and that what we do matters.”

The ISO concludes: “But the most fundamental changes in society do happen from the bottom up. And it’s up to the people who want to see that change to use all the opportunities presented to us in this new era of Barack Obama—to argue, to mobilize and to agitate.” Both the ISO and Socialist Alternative sponsored a January 20 “Seattle Inauguration Day Celebration,” which proclaimed “We Voted Barack, Now Get Out of Kabul and Iraq!” The Web site for the event burred about how “amazing” it was that Obama was “elected by a vocal, antiwar, young constituency” and claimed that celebrating the end of the “old era” could best be done by “letting President Obama know what the real changes that we want and deserve are” (j20celebration.blogspot.com).

Put simply: the reformists want to “mobilize” to make Obama fight. And Obama will fight—for the class that has hired him as chief executive, in the interests of U.S. imperialism.

“We remember with humble gratitude those brave Americans who, at this very hour, patrol far-off deserts and distant mountains,” Obama intoned in his inaugural speech, referring to the U.S. occupiers of Iraq and Afghanistan, where hundreds of thousands have been slaughtered at the hands of U.S. imperialism. As he completed his first week in office, CIA Predator missile-bearing drones continued to slam into Pakistan, one killing at least 15 people



Bombed-out ruins of Gaza. Zionist rulers slaughtered over 1,300 Palestinians; Obama has pledged to back Israeli terror.

in western Pakistan on January 23. A senior Pakistani official says that as many as 100 civilians have been killed by the missiles. More are sure to come as Obama’s war on Afghanistan heats up, with 30,000 more troops slated for dispatch there. This is in line with Democratic Party policy of reducing troops in Iraq to beef up occupation forces in Afghanistan.

Obama is moving to clean up some of the most internationally damaging “excesses” of the Bush era. This includes his executive order to close the Guantánamo concentration camp by the end of the year—though the fate of the inmates is unclear. But such acts serve to make U.S. imperialism more effective in pursuing its bloody ends by giving it a “humane” facade. Obama is a staunch supporter of the “war on terror”—which has served as the pretext for imperialist depredation abroad and the evisceration of democratic rights at home—including voting as a Senator for warrantless wiretapping and the renewal of the USA Patriot Act. His inner circle of advisers includes Carter- and Clinton-era war criminals like Zbigniew Brzezinski and Madeleine Albright as well as staunch supporters of Zionist Israel like Vice President Joe Biden and Rahm Emanuel, his chief of staff.

For its part, the reformist Maoist Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) has spent the Bush years chanting “The World Can’t Wait! Drive Out the Bush Regime!” So, now what? After a brisk shoe-throwing rally against Bush in Washington and “die-in” against the occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan on 19 January, the RCP topped off its festivities the next day during the inaugural parade with an



Reuters

“ARREST BUSH event in front of the FBI building” (showing a touching faith in the bourgeois state and its secret police, to say the least). Revolution online (19 January) calls on the Obama regime to “Indict the War Criminals!”—in the Bush regime. The RCP earnestly pleads:

“All this is not to say that it is impossible that Bush, Cheney and the rest of the criminal cabal would be put on trial by the new crew in the White House. BUT this is not going to happen without an outpouring of outrage and tremendous struggle by millions of people. It is not going to happen without an impossible-to-ignore demand that manifests politically in the streets and in all kinds of ways among various strata of society—on a level where the rulers feel that this

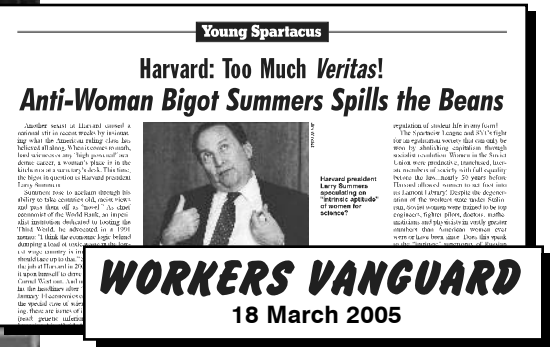
outpouring more threatens the legitimacy of their whole system than going through the prosecution of Bush and Cheney would.”

What cynicism! CIA dirty tricks, torture, vile measures taken as part of “counter-insurgency” from the Philippines to Vietnam and Iraq are part and parcel of the imperialist arsenal under the rule of both capitalist parties.

In counterposition to such repulsive reformist fawning, we say, from Afghanistan to Iraq and Guantánamo: Free all the detainees! U.S. out of Guantánamo! As revolutionary opponents of U.S. imperialism, we stood for the military defense of Afghanistan and Iraq in the lead-up to U.S. imperialism’s invasions, while politically opposing the reactionary Taliban and Saddam Hussein’s brutal capitalist regime. We call for class struggle against the capitalist rulers at home. We are for the defeat of U.S. forces; their every setback serves to assist the struggles of working people and the oppressed around the globe. We demand the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. troops and bases from Iraq, Afghanistan and Central Asia! U.S. hands off Pakistan and Iran!

Barack Obama: Anti-Communist

Obama’s inaugural speech took pains to hail those who “faced down fascism and communism not just with missiles and tanks,” an allusion to the Cold War combination of intense military, economic and ideological pressure brought to bear in the destruction of the former Soviet Union and the East European deformed workers states. The restoration



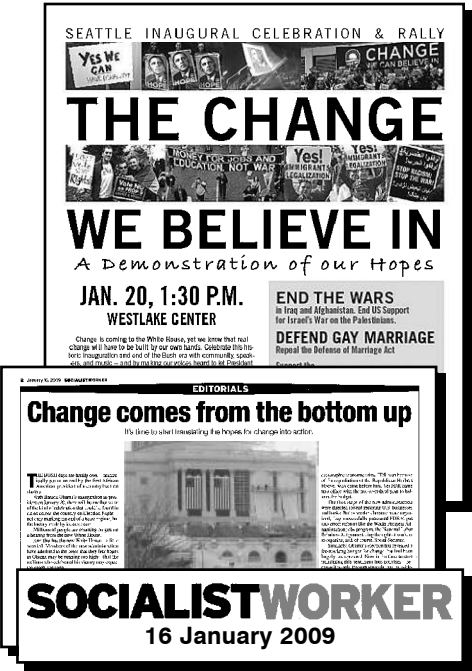
Obama’s National Economic Council head Larry Summers was dumped as Harvard president after “speculating” that lack of women in sciences was a question of “intrinsic aptitude.” Young Spartacus article in WV (above) noted he also advocated dumping toxic waste in Third World in 1991.

of capitalism in these countries was a world-historic defeat for the international proletariat, including by removing what was the main counterweight to the bloody ambitions of U.S. imperialism.

By equating communism with fascism, Obama is echoing an old war cry of bourgeois apologists who not only smear communism but also trivialize the unique and unspeakable crimes of Hitler’s Holocaust, in which millions were murdered in a crusade to eliminate whole peoples from the face of the earth. In fact, the relationship between the program of communism and that of fascism is that they are polar opposites. Authentic communism means the full liberation of all of humanity from material scarcity. Fascism is the epitome of bourgeois-nationalist reaction and capitalist barbarism; it is a form of capitalist rule that the bourgeoisie resorts to in extremis, dispensing with bourgeois democracy to maintain its class power, as the German bourgeoisie did in handing power to Hitler on the road to World War II. As we wrote in “Black Book: Anti-Communist Big Lie” (WV No. 692, 5 June 1998): “Hitlerite fascism was the most dihard, most ideological expression of the bourgeoisie’s unremitting world struggle against Communism.”

During his Senate confirmation hearing, Obama’s Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner noted that “President Obama... believes that China is manipulating its currency,” a charge that could result in U.S. economic sanctions against the Chinese deformed workers state. As a New York Times (24 January) headline put it: “China Jittery About Obama Amid Signs of Harder Line.”

The U.S. imperialists seek to restore capitalist rule in the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state, and for this they have a two-pronged strategy: military encirclement combined with capitalist economic penetration. Obama represents the section of the bourgeoisie that wants to extricate its troops from the Iraq quagmire in order to aim the U.S. military at more continued on page 10



Reformist International Socialist Organization hails new imperialist chief, sponsored “Seattle Inaugural Celebration” (above), as Socialist Worker peddles Obama “change” rhetoric.

# Obama...

(continued from page 9)

strategic and long-term targets, not least China. At the same time, the Democrats, backed by the pro-capitalist trade-union bureaucracy, have been in the forefront of pushing anti-China chauvinist protectionism.

The openly anti-Communist ISO would agree with Obama that those states where capitalist rule has been overturned *should*, in the name of “democracy,” be smashed. This is in line with their support to every imperialist-backed counterrevolutionary movement against the former Soviet Union and the deformed workers states of East Europe. Such is their lineage, ever since their political forebears departed from the Trotskyist movement when they refused to defend the USSR during the 1950-53 Korean War. Nor is

the RCP much different from the garden-variety anti-Communist social democrats of the ISO: the RCP long ago wrote off China when its preferred faction lost power following Mao’s death in 1976, and earlier it had denounced the Soviet degenerated workers state, the military-industrial powerhouse of the non-capitalist world, as “Soviet social imperialism.”

As against the reformist left that has lined up with its “own” blood-soaked bourgeoisie, we fight for the *unconditional military defense of those states where capitalism has been overthrown*—China, Cuba, Vietnam, North Korea—just as we earlier fought to the end for the defense of the Soviet Union and the East European deformed workers states against capitalist counterrevolution. Integral to such a struggle is our fight for *workers political revolution* against the bureaucratic Stalinist regimes that undermine the defense

and extension of the gains made by the anti-capitalist overturns in these countries.

## For Class Against Class!

There is no “common ground” between imperialist president Barack Obama, representative of the capitalist system, which is based on the exploitation of labor, and the working class, including its growing immigrant sector and its strategic black component. Labor desperately needs a fighting leadership to unleash the power of the multiracial working class in struggle for workers’ economic interests and for black rights, to organize the unorganized, to demand full citizenship rights for immigrants, and to oppose U.S. imperialism. But the trade-union bureaucrats of both the AFL-CIO and Change to Win federations promote Democratic Party “lesser-evilism.” The union tops push chauvinist “America first” patriotism and protectionism, promoting

the lie that working people abroad, as opposed to the U.S. capitalist rulers, are the enemies of the American proletariat.

It is only the working class that has the objective interest and social power to smash the capitalist system and lay the basis for an egalitarian socialist society, based on a collectivized economy that produces for human needs, not profits. We fight for a workers party with a revolutionary internationalist program aimed at the liberation of the proletariat and all the oppressed. As opposed to the Obama-enthralled reformist opponents, our revolutionary continuity extends from the Bolsheviks of Lenin and Trotsky, who led the 1917 October Revolution. Our watchwords are those of these revolutionary antecedents: for a proletarian, revolutionary and internationalist party to lead the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat and all the oppressed masses. For new October Revolutions! ■

# EFCA...

(continued from page 12)

was a cosponsor of the bill in the Senate in 2007 when it was common knowledge that the EFCA would not survive a Bush veto. The EFCA passed the House in a symbolic party-line vote, but was filibustered in the Senate. The backing this bill received from Obama and other Democrats was in the service of undermining class struggle while providing a means to increase the number of dues-paying union members, representing in the Democrats’ eyes more money and manpower for future election campaigns under the watch of the pro-capitalist labor tops. Although Democrats posture as “friends of labor,” their goal is the same as the Republicans: advancing the interests of capital.

But different sections of the bourgeoisie do not always agree. One ranking Chamber of Commerce official has promised “Armageddon” in the battle over the EFCA, which the founder of Home Depot referred to as “the demise of civilization.” Businesses have lined up blue-chip lobbying firms to block it and legal scholars to prove that it is unconstitutional. In the face of this opposition and the economic crisis, the new administration has dropped hints that it intends to hold off on the EFCA and is open to watering it down. When asked about the bill during her Labor Secretary confirmation hearing on January 9, Hilda Solis would not commit to supporting a specific method for union certification. A week later, Obama said of the EFCA in an interview with the *Washington Post* (15 January): “I will certainly listen to all parties involved, including from labor and the business community, which I know considers this the devil incarnate. I will listen to all parties involved and see if there are ways that we can bring those parties together and restore some balance.”

The labor tops are so beholden to the Democratic administration that some are now second-guessing whether to push right away for the EFCA for fear of alienating Obama. Recently, Obama’s transition team signaled that it would prefer dealing with a single labor federation, as opposed to both the AFL-CIO and the Change to Win coalition, which split apart three and a half years ago. In response, the presidents of 12 of the nation’s largest unions immediately jumped into talks to reunite the American labor movement. There are no principled differences between the two federations; their basic strategy is class collaboration, not class struggle. What the labor movement desperately needs is a new, class-struggle leadership.

## Binding Arbitration Is a Trap!

In addition to opposing card checks, the bosses are outraged by the arbitration clause in the EFCA, as they cringe at the thought of someone else dictating the terms of employment. Stonewalling on first-contract negotiations after a union is recognized is one common means for employers to derail organizing drives. It is, in fact, the labor tops who wrote the arbitration clause into the EFCA as a means to “guarantee” a first contract

without having to engage in struggle.

In his essay “Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay” (1940), written at the time of the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration, Trotsky observed: “In the United States the Department of Labor with its leftist bureaucracy has as its task the subordination of the trade union movement to the democratic state, and it must be said that this task has up to now been solved with some success.” From Trotsky’s time through today, the slavish dependence of the trade-union officials on state arbitration of labor disputes has only grown deeper.

Tailing right behind the bureaucrats are left groups like the International Socialist Organization (ISO). Demonstrating fully their willingness to accept the capital-

workers. Employers fire workers in a quarter of all organizing campaigns, threaten workers with plant closings or outsourcing in half and employ mandatory one-on-one anti-union meetings in two-thirds of unionization drives. All these tactics are illegal, but the bosses almost always get away with it or receive a slap on the wrist from the NLRB. From 1999 to 2007, 86,000 workers filed charges over anti-union firings—few ever get their jobs back.

This union-busting is often backed up by the forces of the bosses’ state and racist reaction. Historically, organizing in the open shop South meant confrontations with county sheriffs and the Ku Klux Klan. In 1995, an organizing drive at a Perdue poultry plant in Dothan,



Sheldon Dick

**Workers occupy a GM Fisher Body plant in Flint, Michigan, during 1936-37 sit-down strike that won union recognition for UAW.**

ist state as a “neutral” arbiter in the class struggle, the ISO applauds the EFCA’s arbitration clause as a means to “speed up negotiation of a first union contract” (*Socialist Worker* online, 30 March 2007). Binding arbitration is a trap meant to head off strikes and leave workers with no say in the outcome of the negotiations. It is no accident that the dispute over the last contract for New York City transit workers, which sparked a powerful three-day strike in 2005, ended up in arbitration after angry union members rejected the sellout strike settlement.

In “What’s In Store in the Obama Era?” (*Socialist Worker* online, 20 January), ISO leader Lance Selfa takes stock of the “full-out opposition” to the EFCA, adding: “As this opposition arises, it will put Obama and the Democrats to the test.” At bottom, the aim of the ISO is little more than that of the union tops: to resurrect Democratic Party liberalism and to make Obama “fight.” We say: *Break with the Democrats! For a workers party!*

## The EFCA and the Working Class

A coalition of 500 business associations has started to run ads seeking to discredit the EFCA as “undemocratic” for taking away the “secret ballot.” The truth is that certification elections are commonly drawn out for months or even years, including when Democrats sit on the labor boards, giving the bosses time to intimidate and terrorize pro-union

Alabama, failed after a KKK-style cross-burning at the plant. Shortly before an unsuccessful 1997 certification vote at Smithfield in Tar Heel, “N----r go home” was painted on the side of the union trailer. Recently, anti-immigrant workplace raids by *la migrá*, such as at Agriprocessors in Iowa, have helped break up union organizing campaigns. There will be no effective defense against union-busting unless the labor movement becomes a powerful champion of black rights and takes up the fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants.

The reformists in the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) have actually lined up with the Chamber of Commerce and its ilk in advocating NLRB-run elections over card-checks as “the most effective way for workers to express what they want regarding unionization” (*Militant*, 9 April 2007). The SWP goes so far as to put a positive spin on union-busting, writing, “Winning such a vote in face of company intimidation efforts means the rank-and-file has become convinced, through its involvement in the struggle, of the need to organize.”

In practice, today most workers gain union recognition through card checks. About 300,000 workers joined unions through card checks in 2007 whereas some 60,000 workers gained membership through elections. Normally for a company to respect the card check, it demands of the union concessions, including sweetheart contracts and “neutrality” agree-

ments where the union foregoes the right to attack or even criticize the company. For the union bureaucrats, such compromises are business as usual.

To broaden support for the EFCA, the two main labor federations have circulated petitions within the unions. The AFL-CIO petition states: “This crucial legislation will protect workers’ freedom to choose a union and bargain, without management intimidation.” The third, and final, provision of the EFCA would increase the penalties for “unfair labor practices” by the bosses. But it is a dangerous illusion to think that the EFCA would safeguard union organizing efforts against employer interference. The union-busting industry of lawyers, spies and security goons rakes in \$4 billion annually. If the rules for union certification were to change, so would their tactics. Already there is movement to make it easier to *decertify* the unions.

The fundamental purpose of the labor boards is never that of enforcing the rights of workers but rather maintaining “labor peace,” which entails preventing strikes or settling them quickly if they break out. These government boards are in effect strikebreaking agencies even if they occasionally rule against the bosses. Moreover, the EFCA will not prevent employers from unleashing their panoply of union-busting laws and tactics against labor struggle.

While the AFL-CIO petition also speaks of the “middle class,” a term meant to blur the line between labor and capital, union militants could sign it and note their objections. Change to Win’s petition obliterates this line by stating that the EFCA is “about preserving the American Dream and ensuring that the economy works for all of us.” This is a lie about and support for capitalism, and should not be signed. In fact, the capitalist system is based on the exploitation of the wage slave, as Karl Marx explained in *Wage-Labour and Capital* (1849): “A rapid increase of capital is equivalent to a rapid increase of profit. Profit can only increase rapidly if the price of labour, if relative wages, decrease just as rapidly.”

## Trotskyists and the 1935 Wagner Act

Especially since the days of the New Deal, the trade-union bureaucracy has perpetuated the myth that the right to organize was won as the result of the passage of liberal labor legislation. Enacted at the height of the Great Depression in 1933, the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) supposedly “guaranteed” the “right to organize and bargain collectively” in its Section 7(a), added as a sop to the craft AFL leadership. Seizing on it, labor organizers urged workers that “the President wants you to join the union.” Intersecting the biggest strike wave since the early ’20s, these organizing drives met with a tremendous response, with many taking these promises as good coin. However, the open shop was not smashed, and in most industries NIRA government/company codes were drawn up that simply ratified existing conditions. As a result of the failure by the AFL tops to strike against such codes, tens of thou-



# Devastation in Motor City



Getty

Line for food handouts in Detroit, December 2008.

A longtime cadre, Vance, went to major auto plants in Detroit in mid-December to distribute *Workers Vanguard* with the front-page article “Bosses Declare War on UAW Workers” (5 December 2008). He was accompanied by two longtime *SL* sympathizers from the Detroit area. Printed below is his report, edited for publication, of the trip.

## Reporter’s Notebook

Soon after I arrived, Matt and I went to the Ford plant in Dearborn. We found the large automobile assembly facility no longer existed. This was the place where we have done sales for years as part of our subscription drive. All that’s left is the truck assembly plant. We sold 33 copies of *Workers Vanguard*. This was pretty good considering the windchill was about zero and it was completely drive-by traffic. The workers on the day shift were overwhelmingly white, about 80 percent from what I saw. The second shift had more black workers, about 40 percent. There was one incident where a white couple drove in, bought a paper, turned around in the parking lot, drove up to me,

and the woman handed me a fistful of ones, said thank you and then sped off. White or black, a good number of the workers didn’t like what United Auto Workers (UAW) president Ron Gettelfinger was doing, selling out the workers again so that the Big Three carmakers could get government bailouts. One black worker said, “It’s embarrassing what he’s doing, begging.”

Most of the workers would at least throw us a “thumbs up” as they drove by. I am sure auto workers feel very besieged these days as the bourgeois media has pointed to their living standards as the main culprits in capitalist decay. So any sign of support, including from us Marxists, is welcomed.

The next morning Matt and I hit the Chrysler Truck plant in north suburban Warren. At least the wind cooperated so we only had zero degrees to deal with. These workers probably sense the Sword of Damocles over their heads more than most auto workers, as the company they work for is in very bad shape. We sold 21 papers to a pretty small workforce (maybe 150 to 200 people). This was all walk-up traffic. A couple of guys bought two papers each, an extra one to leave

lying around the break area.

The suburbs surrounding Detroit resemble suburbs around Chicago, with strip malls and chain restaurants. Once you hit the city, things worsen qualitatively. You can see two and three story buildings just fallen down on themselves. In many instances there are no buildings at all, just open space. As Matt and I drove around we did a little “ghoul tour.” As we crossed streets, he would bring up places where comrade so-and-so was mugged or robbed or where so-and-so was shot. Comrades, Detroit was always kind of rough. Matt had called us in Chicago a few weeks ago, saying that, if Detroit was going down, at least let’s sell to some plants before they’re closed forever. He thinks that Michigan, as a region, is home to the greatest concentration of unemployed skilled workers in the world.

Matt told me he was surprised when he recently found out Detroit’s population was now less than 800,000. When he moved there in 1973 there were close to two million people. It’s now a question of how much worse this city can get. Any little string of hope is grasped at. The latest hope is Democratic mayor Ken Cockrell Jr. This is what it has come down to: the son

of one of the original leaders of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers has been put into power to rebound the city from former mayor Kwame Kilpatrick.

When GM built the Cadillac plant in Hamtramck, “Poletown,” that was indeed ballyhooed as a savior. Matt told me how all these grand plans were drawn up. Nothing except the plant was ever built. The most striking thing about the plant is that the area around it looks like Appalachia, when, at least in warmer weather, you can see poor little white kids playing in the dirt and mud in the adjacent neighborhood.

The last plant we sold to was Cadillac on Tuesday afternoon. By now we also had Tom with us. We were able to sell two introductory subscriptions to white guys, one of whom had lots of questions about the military. In all, we sold 35 papers at this location. One woman, a shop steward, told us she was “not happy at all what the union was doing!” While the lack of any fightback from the UAW is pissing off the rank and file, there is nothing people think they can do about it.

When I brought up Obama and the Democrats, black workers thought that the new government had to be better than Bush, but there wasn’t euphoria. The few whites I spoke with didn’t say much. What people did respond to was the point about organizing the unorganized, particularly auto workers in the South, including in the foreign-owned plants. This point did elicit a few protectionist comments from people. But others thought it would be a good idea if those workers got the same benefits they had.

After things had wound down and Tom was giving me a ride to the airport, he recalled how back in 1985, in response to a call from the UAW Solidarity House to assist striking mineworkers, he was part of a union caravan named “Motown to Coaltown” of hundreds of cars down the interstates to West Virginia. He told me, “Man, with that many cars, each with two or three guys, that’s an army! That’s what needs to be done now to organize the South.” Today, it’s qualitatively the same bureaucracy running the UAW. But a quarter century later, the most they can muster is a promise to the bosses to give up virtually everything in two years and sell out the workers. ■

sands of workers deserted the unions they had only recently joined.

In 1934, three victorious citywide organizing strikes set the stage for the rise of CIO industrial unionism: one led by Communists in San Francisco, the Trotskyist-led Minneapolis Teamsters strikes, and a general strike led by left-wing socialists in Toledo. The Trotskyists in Minneapolis mobilized the city’s proletariat and its allies in mass struggle, including pitched battles with scabs, cops and National Guard troops. In assessing the strikes, Trotskyist leader James P. Cannon noted in *The History of American Trotskyism* (1944):

“The modern labor movement must be politically directed because it is confronted by the government at every turn. Our people were prepared for that since they were political people, inspired by political conceptions. The policy of the class struggle guided our comrades; they couldn’t be deceived and outmaneuvered, as so many strike leaders of that period were, by this mechanism of sabotage and destruction known as the National Labor Board and all its auxiliary setups. They put no reliance whatever in Roosevelt’s Labor Board; they weren’t fooled by any idea that Roosevelt, the liberal ‘friend of labor’ president, was going to help the truck drivers in Minneapolis win a few cents more an hour. They weren’t deluded even by the fact that there was at that time in Minnesota a Farmer-Labor Governor, presumed to be on the side of the workers.”

Intent on preventing the new wave of labor organizing from falling under the control of union militants and “reds,” the Roosevelt administration moved quickly to set up a government-sanctioned mechanism to subordinate the unions to the capitalist state. The result was the 1935 National Labor Relations (Wagner) Act, hailed by union officials as the “Magna

Carta of Labor” to this day. The EFCA, like most other federal labor laws, is written as an amendment to the Wagner Act, which established the NLRB and the framework for sweeping federal regulation of labor relations and empowered the government to carve out bargaining jurisdictions and run certification elections.

During the last big push by the union tops for labor law reform some three decades ago, we wrote: “Trotskyists opposed the Wagner Act as a threat to labor’s ability to strike” (“California Farm Labor Bill Threatens Right to Strike,” WV No. 128, 8 October 1976). In fact, as far as we know, the Trotskyists neither explicitly supported nor opposed the Wagner Act. An October 1935 *New International* article by John West (James Burnham) argued:

“Marxists must be vigilant with respect to it [the Wagner Act]. An attitude of simple denunciation of the Bill as a strike-breaker is not sufficient, and would serve only to confuse union workers and to isolate the Marxists. It must be connected with the lessons of Section 7a, which might be summarized: Take anything it offers, but never depend on it; depend only on independent class activity.”

Section 9(c) of the Wagner Act provided that the NLRB could certify unions by relying on a secret ballot election or “any other suitable method.” One commonly used “other suitable method” at first was card checks. But actually organizing required the mobilization of millions in militant class struggle, sparked by the 1936-37 Flint sit-down auto strikes. The CIO tops, including social democrats and Stalinists, betrayed the evident opportunity to forge an independent workers party by tying the unions to the Democratic Party of Roosevelt and the New Deal.

By the late 1930s, the NLRB was less and less willing to grant card-check recognition. In the wake of the post-World War II strike wave, Congress passed the Taft-Hartley Act, which outlawed secondary boycotts and sympathy strikes, allowed states to pass “right to work” laws and demanded loyalty oaths from union officials. A majority of Congressional Democrats voted for this union-busting law. The new provisions were used in short order to strangle strikes and purge militants and “reds” from the unions. This law, as well as later NLRB and court rulings, also made card-check recognition far more difficult. Belying the trade-union bureaucrats’ nominal opposition to Taft-Hartley, an AFL-CIO fact sheet on the EFCA states, “just as the NLRB is required to seek a federal court injunction against a union whenever there is reasonable cause to believe the union

has violated the secondary boycott prohibitions in the [Taft-Hartley] act, the NLRB must seek a federal court injunction against an employer whenever there is reasonable cause to believe the employer has discharged or discriminated against employees...during an organizing or first contract drive.”

In the 1930s, the thousands of militants who considered themselves communists propelled the great industrial union organizing drives forward. Motivated by their ideals of building a society where those who labor rule, they knew that spiking the bosses’ attacks on black people and immigrants was crucial. The fight to organize the unorganized could be the crucible in which a revolutionary workers party is forged. Such a party is indispensable to uniting the working class and leading it in the revolutionary overthrow of the bosses’ rule. ■

## WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Apt. # \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

929  
Make checks payable/mail to: Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116



# WORKERS VANGUARD

## Organize the Unorganized! For a Class-Struggle Leadership of the Unions!

# Why Marxists Support the EFCA

With Democrat Barack Obama in the White House, union officials, having invested \$450 million to put him and other Democrats into office, are now eager for “payback.” At the top of their wish list is passage of the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA), also known as the “card-check bill,” which would provide for the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to recognize a union without a certification election when a majority of employees at a workplace sign union authorization cards. This long-stalled bill to ease union organizing is “the most important issue that we have,” according to AFL-CIO head John Sweeney.

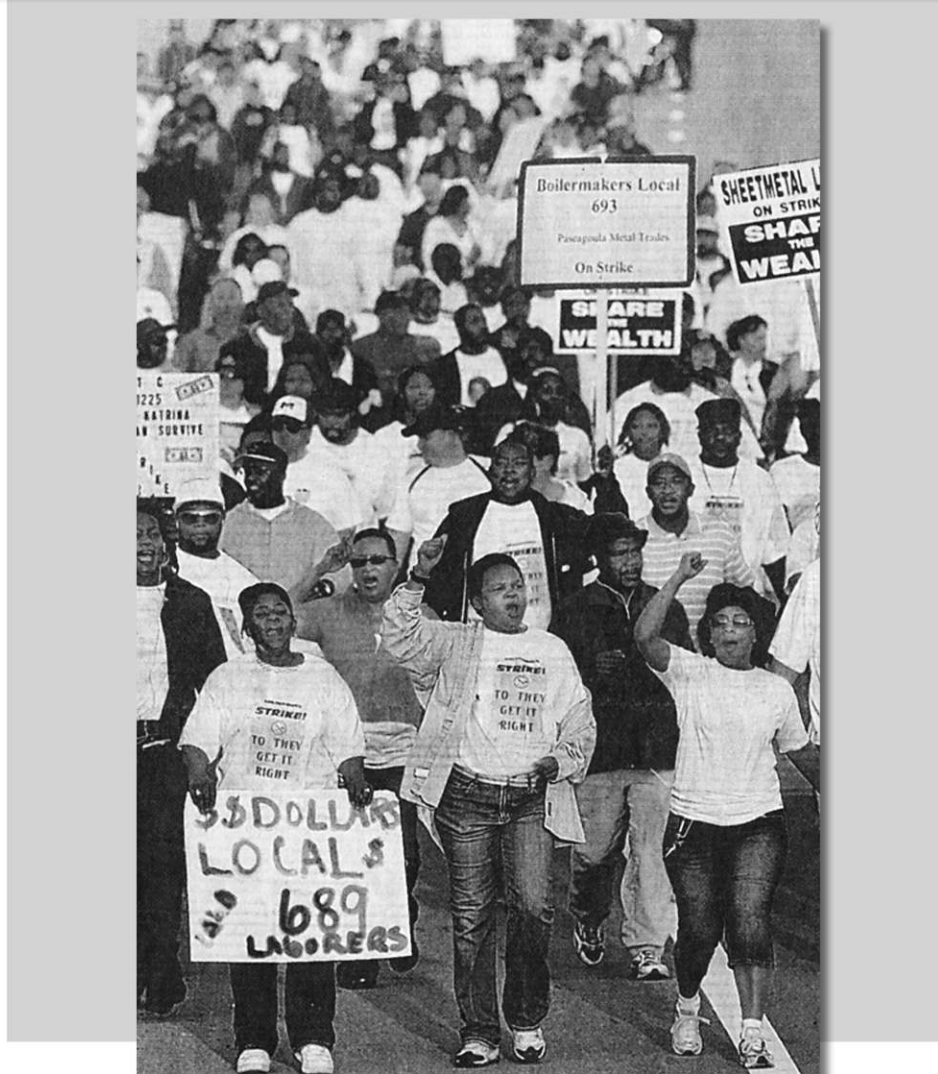
Notwithstanding a slight upswing in union membership in the first half of last year, the strength of the unions has been on the wane for decades. As of 2007, unions represented 7.5 percent of the nation’s private sector workforce, with the total union membership rate hovering around 12.1 percent, down from 35 percent in the 1950s. With the recession deepening, the capitalist ruling class is moving rapidly to attempt to further gut the unions, beginning with the United Auto Workers (UAW). Revitalizing the labor movement is all the more necessary as the bosses try to make working people pay for this crisis.

Dead set on keeping the unions out, conservative politicians, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Manufacturers and others, including large employers that have engaged in union-busting like Wal-Mart, have launched a counteroffensive against the EFCA. The headline of a *New York Times* (9 January) article noted, “Bill Easing Unionizing Is Under Heavy Attack.” Indeed, in 2008, business groups spent a combined \$50 million on anti-EFCA ads and are now gearing up to spend an additional \$200 million in the coming months. With the bosses engaged in an all-out propaganda offensive against it and the unions waging a major campaign to have it enacted, the EFCA represents a referendum on unionization.

Even though it contains an arbitration clause that we oppose, we support the EFCA, as it allows workers to organize and form unions through a streamlined card-check system, bypassing the prolonged balloting process. At the same time, the EFCA in its current form contains a contradiction. Disputes over the first contract at a newly organized workplace could be referred to government arbitrators if after 90 days of negotiations either the union or the employer invokes the option of federal mediation and then at least 30 days of mediation fail to produce an agreement. We oppose the arbitration provision because it is a form of government intervention into the unions’ disputes with the bosses. While the purpose of such a provision is to curtail class struggle, there are no legal prohibitions in the EFCA to prevent strike action during this four-month period.

Both partisans and opponents of the bill claim that its passage will bring millions of unorganized workers into the unions. In reality, the balance of forces

## No Reliance on the Capitalist State



Virginian-Pilot (top), Fitzhugh/Sun Herald

**Top: UFCW members protest Smithfield Foods in Richmond, Virginia, 2006, during struggle for union recognition. Above: 2,000 striking union workers of Northrop Grumman demonstrate in Pascagoula, Mississippi, March 2007.**

in struggle will ultimately determine the success or failure of any unionization campaign. To the extent that the EFCA affords the possibility of strengthening the working class by organizing unions, workers should make use of it. But at the same time workers must beware the EFCA’s pitfalls and not rely on it or the capitalist state, which exists to defend

the rule and profits of the capitalist class. Last month, workers at the Smithfield Foods hog slaughterhouse in Tar Heel, North Carolina, voted to unionize after a more than 15-year organizing battle. Union officials credited a court-imposed “neutrality” agreement for the success, while the company spokesman claimed the result shows “that the union can win

without a card check.” In fact, the key was the combativity of the workers, who engaged in walkouts and other protests to win union recognition (see “UFCW Organizes Smithfield Plant,” WV No. 927, 2 January).

In 1981, the government smashed the PATCO air traffic controllers strike in the most massive union-busting attack since before the CIO was founded in 1935. That strike could have been won, but the union tops refused to call out airline workers to shut down the airports. As we wrote in “Labor’s Gotta Play Hardball to Win” (WV No. 349, 2 March 1984): “No decisive gain of labor was ever won in a courtroom or by an act of Congress. Everything the workers movement has won of value has been achieved by mobilizing the ranks of labor in hard-fought struggle, on the picket lines, in plant occupations. What counts is power.” *For a class-struggle fight to organize the unorganized!*

### Break with the Democrats!

Labor is on the ropes, and the criminal policies of the union tops are in no small part responsible. These misleaders have squandered the fighting strength of the unions by shackling them to the bosses’ state, especially through the instrument of the Democratic Party. At every turn, the “labor lieutenants of the capitalist class” demonstrate their allegiance to the rule of capital, promoting “cooperation” with the employers and policing the workforce on the bosses’ behalf. Meanwhile, this bureaucratic layer enjoys access to privileges and perks.

The labor bureaucrats long ago renounced the class-struggle methods that originally built the unions: mass pickets, sit-down strikes, secondary boycotts. This refusal to carry out a hard-fought battle to organize the unorganized is now a dagger aimed at the unions. In the auto industry, the government’s proposed bailout requires the UAW to agree to slash its wages and benefits to the levels of its counterparts in the large and growing number of non-union, mainly foreign-owned plants in the U.S. Even more, the government has reserved the right to revoke the loans to the automakers if the UAW were to strike at any time. In the face of this declaration of war, the UAW tops readily rolled over.

Worried about the dramatic drop in union membership and corresponding declines in union economic and political power, the sellouts atop the unions are at the same time committed to playing by the bosses’ rules. That’s why their primary recourse is to pressure the government to modify those rules. But capitalist “labor law” is ultimately designed to hold the unions captive to the bourgeois order. The war chest wasted on electing representatives of the class enemy last year was never considered by the union tops for strike funds or organizing drives. One-quarter million union members were mobilized for voter turnout, not to build picket lines or engage in strikes.

Obama’s support for the EFCA was a major selling point for the union tops. He

*continued on page 10*