

Down With Obama's "War on Terror"!



Getty

U.S. Army interrogates man during patrol in Nuristan Province, Afghanistan, February 18.

In the lead-up to last year's presidential election, reformist "socialists" and liberals peddled the lie that an Obama regime would represent some kind of "change." But joblessness and foreclosures continue to climb, while Obama, a Wall Street Democrat, hands out trillions to the banks; the occupation of Iraq, which has been devastated by the 2003 U.S. invasion, continues apace; the occupation of Afghanistan is being intensified with increasing military operations costing untold numbers of civilian lives (and generating stiffer resistance against the U.S./NATO occupiers); air strikes into Pakistan have slaughtered over 300 people since Obama took office. Meanwhile, the bipartisan "war on terror"—as a pretext for U.S. military actions abroad and the domestic evisceration of civil liberties—has found a more *effective* implementer in Obama than under the Bush/Cheney gang.

In the wake of the release of Bush administration memos providing grisly details of the torture of detainees—with "methods" such as waterboarding planned and approved at the highest levels—we noted that such horrors were no "aberrations." They are the conscious policies of capitalist and imperialist regimes that routinely and necessarily use terror and degradation as tools to maintain their power. The Bush regime openly reveled in its barbarity; by putting U.S. imperialism's grisly acts of torture back behind

closed doors, Obama is simply seeking to return to the bourgeois norm while continuing the same policies.

While putting torture back behind closed doors, Obama has been otherwise pursuing the same policies as the Bush administration in the "war on terror." As we wrote in "U.S. Imperialism: Torture, Repression and War" (WV No. 936, 8 May):

"Obama has been showered with praise for his vow to close the U.S. prison in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, within a year. But in reality, the Obama administration is simply continuing the Bush regime's policies under a different name, with the 'war on terror' now branded 'Overseas Contingency Operations.' Signifi-

cantly, the Obama administration has endorsed indefinite detention, a hallmark of police-state dictatorships and the centerpiece of Bush's war on democratic rights. Many of the Guantánamo detainees will not be released—they will be transferred to detention centers in Bagram, Afghanistan, and elsewhere."

The list goes on. Refusing to release the majority of those detained in Guantánamo, Obama is now faced with turning some of them over to U.S. criminal courts, while others are to be tried by military tribunals—whose purpose is to make sure that nobody brought before them gets off—or held indefinitely without charge. A *New York Times* (23 July) op-ed piece by Chisun Lee, a reporter for the investiga-

tive group ProPublica, noted that in determining the fate of detainees federal courts have been "functioning, in essence, as the country's national security court."

These courts have essentially been issuing the judicial branch's seal of approval for the government's detention policy. While Obama has faced some setbacks in the courts, overwhelmingly federal judges have been accommodating, including over "protection of national security secrets," with judges routinely concealing important facts, "sometimes even the very basis for deciding to keep someone locked up." Moreover, another *Times* (27 June) article noted that the Obama government is considering "issuing an executive order that would authorize the president to incarcerate some terrorism suspects indefinitely."

In Afghanistan, the U.S. Bagram airbase prison—where over 600 people are detained—has become synonymous with torture and American imperialist savagery. According to a *New York Times* article (20 July): "Military personnel who know Bagram and the prison at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, describe the Afghan site as tougher and more spartan. The prisoners have fewer privileges and virtually no access to lawyers or the judicial process. Many are still held communally in big cages." The article notes that conditions at Bagram and the prisons run by the U.S. puppet regime in Afghanistan are so wretched that the U.S. military is calling for "overhauling" them as "a reaction to worries that abuses and militant recruiting within the prisons are helping to strengthen the Taliban."

Additionally, there is now the "revelation" of the formation of a secret CIA
continued on page 9



Megahed Family

Youssef Megahed (left), victim of racist "war on terror" prosecution, visiting St. Pete Beach, Florida, with his family.



French Government Represses Anti-Colonial Union Militants

New Caledonia

We print below the translation of a July 2 protest statement by the Comité de Défense Sociale, which is fraternally allied to the Partisan Defense Committee in the U.S. The CDDS is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Ligue Trotskyste de France, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

PARIS, July 2—Gérard Jodar, president of the Union of Kanak and Exploited Workers (USTKE), was sentenced on

June 29 to one year in prison, while five of his comrades also received prison sentences of between four months and one year. Eighteen others were also given suspended sentences of four months. The Comité de Défense Sociale (Committee for Social Defense—CDDS) strongly protests this attack, which strikes at all workers in New Caledonia, France and its colonies. These sentences follow a May 28 police attack. While dozens of USTKE members, including Gérard Jodar and the others who were charged, were at the Magenta airfield protesting the firing of a worker from the Air Caledonia airline company and the attack on union rights, they were forced to flee a brutal cop attack and a rain of tear gas

USTKE president Gérard Jodar (lower center), sentenced to one year in prison along with five other activists.



Les Nouvelles Calédoniennes

grenades, taking refuge in two Air Caledonia airplanes. Outrageously, they were sentenced for “prevention of the free circulation of an aircraft.” In reality, they were simply defending the right to strike and to demonstrate! *We solidarize with our class brothers in New Caledonia against this French state-led witchhunt against the USTKE militants, and we demand their immediate release and the dropping of all charges.*

These prison sentences were handed down in the context of the world economic crisis. Strikes in the colonies are subjected to increasing repression. In the French West Indies, Réunion and New Caledonia [an island east of Australia], trade-union struggles, as well as those against colonial oppression, are violently repressed. In mainland France too, attacks have been increasing against workers, immigrants and youth—above all, minority youth—as well as against Corsican and Basque nationalists. What is needed is a counteroffensive by the workers movement, organized independently of bourgeois forces and without any illusion that a “left” capitalist government would be more favorably disposed toward their struggles. Colonial repression has been no less a hallmark of popular-front governments than of governments of right-wing parties—from the government of [Socialist prime minister] Guy Mollet during the Algerian War to that of [Socialist president François] Mitterrand, who oversaw the 1985 state murder of Kanak independence leader Eloi Machoro. And let us not forget the anti-union repression and, especially, the imprisonment of UGTG leaders in Guadeloupe under the government of [Socialist prime minister Lionel] Jospin and [Communist Party leader Marie-George] Buffet. That state repression prepared the attacks being waged today against the UGTG in Guadeloupe, as well as against the

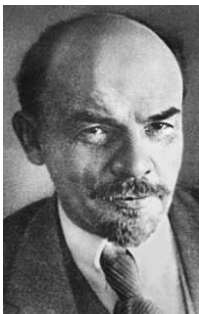
USTKE and trade unionists elsewhere.

The prison sentences against Jodar and his union brothers show that the bourgeoisie intends to crack down on the working class and on anyone who dares to criticize the “French Republic, one and indivisible.” The USTKE, and Jodar in particular, have long been legally harassed and targeted by the French state. Just over a year ago, the CDDS protested against the sentencing of Jodar to a one-year prison term for “directly provoking an armed assembly” as well as against the sentencing of 22 other activists. Through this persecution, the bourgeois state seeks to send a message that it will crush all attempts by workers, in New Caledonia or in France, to defend themselves against layoffs and any undermining of their social gains by the state or the bosses. But the workers movement, and particularly the trade unions in the French metropolis, have the social power to fight back and to strike the capitalists where it hurts—in their pocketbooks—because it is the workers who produce the profits appropriated by the capitalists. Labor must mobilize this power to take up the defense of the USTKE militants. An attack against one is an attack against all—the entire working class is being targeted.

We are for the independence of New Caledonia and we demand the immediate withdrawal of French troops from New Caledonia and the Pacific. The aim of these attacks is to maintain the control of French imperialism over nickel in New Caledonia. The emancipation of the [indigenous] Kanak people—and harmonious relations between Kanaks, Caledonians and Oceanians—can be won only by united proletarian struggle in New Zealand, Australia, Japan and throughout the region. This perspective of achieving socialism throughout the Pacific is that of the international Trotskyist program. *Free all the imprisoned USTKE militants!* ■

On the Withering Away of the State

In his 1917 work, *The State and Revolution*, Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin described the post-revolutionary transition from a workers state (dictatorship of the proletariat) to communism. This requires a series of workers revolutions internationally, extending to the economically advanced capitalist-imperialist countries. The expropriation of the capitalist class on a global scale and the establishment of collectivized, planned economies based on international planning



LENIN



TROTSKY

would lay the material basis for the qualitative leap in labor productivity and material abundance necessary for the eventual “withering away” of the state and the creation of classless, communist society.

The dictatorship of the proletariat, i.e., the organisation of the vanguard of the oppressed as the ruling class for the purpose of suppressing the oppressors, cannot result merely in an expansion of democracy. *Simultaneously* with an immense expansion of democracy, which *for the first time* becomes democracy for the poor, democracy for the people, and not democracy for the money-bags, the dictatorship of the proletariat imposes a series of restrictions on the freedom of the oppressors, the exploiters, the capitalists....

Only in communist society, when the resistance of the capitalists has been completely crushed, when the capitalists have disappeared, when there are no classes (i.e., when there is no distinction between the members of society as regards their relation to the social means of production), *only* then “the state...ceases to exist,” and “*it becomes possible to speak of freedom.*” Only then will a truly complete democracy become possible and be realised, a democracy without any exceptions whatever. And only then will democracy begin to *wither away*, owing to the simple fact that, freed from capitalist slavery, from the untold horrors, savagery, absurdities and infamies of capitalist exploitation, people will gradually *become accustomed* to observing the elementary rules of social intercourse that have been known for centuries and repeated for thousands of years in all copy-book maxims. They will become accustomed to observing them without force, without coercion, without subordination, *without the special apparatus* for coercion called the state....

The state will be able to wither away completely when society adopts the rule: “From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs,” i.e., when people have become so accustomed to observing the fundamental rules of social intercourse and when their labour has become so productive that they will voluntarily work *according to their ability.*

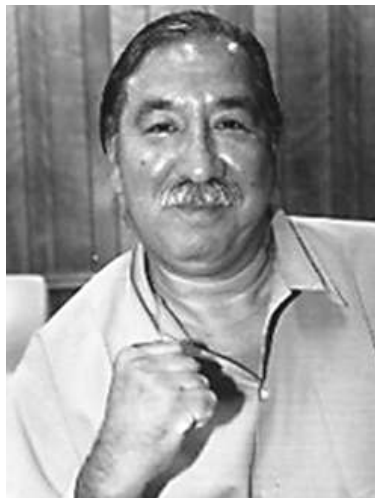
—V.I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution* (1917)

Freedom Now for Leonard Peltier!

A parole hearing for class-war prisoner Leonard Peltier was held on July 28, with a decision still pending. We print below a June 29 letter by the Partisan Defense Committee sent to the United States Parole Commission.

The Partisan Defense Committee joins with those supporting the release of political prisoner Leonard Peltier. A prominent member of the American Indian Movement (AIM), Mr. Peltier is in prison only because of his courageous activism on behalf of Native Americans, the victims of centuries of genocidal terror.

Between 1973-1976, hated Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) agents and FBI-trained thugs terrorized Indian activists at the Pine Ridge Reservation, carrying out over 300 attacks and killing at least 69 people. In June 1975, 250 FBI and BIA agents, SWAT policemen and local vigilantes descended on the reservation



cainmo.com

and precipitated a shootout. Two FBI agents were killed. Mr. Peltier and three others were charged. All charges were dropped against one AIM activist, and

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Drop the Charges Against Harrison and Ruffin Now!

OAKLAND—For two long years the Yolo County California District Attorney has relentlessly prosecuted Aaron Harrison and Jason Ruffin, two black Bay Area longshoremen caught in the cross hairs of the government’s “war on terror.” Their only “crime” was calling their union for advice after security guards demanded to search their car as they were returning to work after lunch in the Port of Sacramento. A Yolo County jury was unable to reach a verdict on the trumped-up charges of “resisting arrest” after a nine-day trial last January. The court has now severed their cases and they face separate retrials.

The D.A. has persistently tried to strong-arm Harrison and Ruffin into accepting a settlement in which the prosecution would be dropped if the two agree to participate in an Orwellian court-approved “diversion” program that requires those completing it to admit in writing, and make “correctives” to, “misconceptions” that supposedly led to their arrest. The arrest and charges would also remain on their records. Harrison and Ruffin did nothing wrong! The two are courageously standing up for their union rights and refusing to let themselves be branded criminals, the fate that usually befalls victims of racist cop brutality under the system of capitalist injustice.

The San Francisco Bay Area’s International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 10 membership has voted to stand behind Harrison and Ruffin. The union organized defense rallies outside the Yolo County courthouse in October 2007 and in October 2008 that brought together ILWU members from the Bay Area, Sacramento and Stockton, as well as other unionists. Supporters of the Labor Black League for Social Defense, which is fraternally allied with the Spartacist League, joined the rallies (see WV No. 900, 12 October 2007 and WV No. 926, 5 December 2008). The June meeting of the union’s Longshore Division Caucus voted additional funds to the local to help cover legal fees. What’s also needed is a mobilization of the ILWU membership and other unionists at the upcoming court proceedings. The union must aggressively pursue the defense of Harrison and Ruffin, whose blatant frame-up demonstrates the union-busting purpose of the “war on terror.”

The domestic aim of this “war”—which the Democratic administration of Barack Obama has taken over from the Bush gang with only a few cosmetic adjustments—is to intimidate and repress immigrants, blacks and the entire working class. This can be seen clearly in the Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) program, which has now

been implemented at ports across the country (see WV No. 936, 8 May). Over 1.5 million workers have had to submit to criminal background and immigration checks before being issued the biometric ID card now required for unescorted entrance into port facilities. Workers lacking U.S. citizenship or legal immigration status have been permanently barred from working in the ports, as have workers convicted of certain felonies. Port workers with selected other felony convictions—including fraud and drug possession with intent to distribute—have been denied cards if their convictions were within the last seven years or if they were released from incarceration in the last five. A recent report by the National Employment Law Project (NELP), which the ILWU engaged to help longshoremen

waiver, were eventually granted one, though many underwent significant financial hardship while they waited (an average of seven months). But the bottom line is that tens of thousands of port workers have lost their jobs. Fully one-quarter of those denied cards—13,148—never appealed. Another 10,000 workers were fired by angry employers because the TWIC screening process left them without a card in time for the deadline. And the report doesn’t even mention the unknown number of workers—including many of the mainly immigrant, non-union port truckers—who never even applied, knowing they would be rejected.

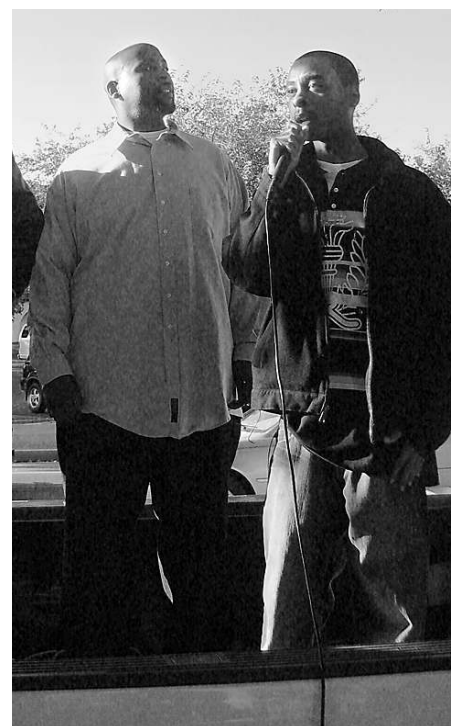
The ILWU, following the capitalist Democratic Party that they slavishly support, has criminally joined in the chorus for increased “port security.” A March statement by the ILWU International actually called for more “staffing and resources to properly administer the TWIC program,” insisting, “While the ILWU has always cooperated with the TWIC program, it has been on the basis that the program is administered fairly and non-discriminatorily.” Now, *after* tens of thousands of port workers have lost their jobs, the ILWU Longshore Division Caucus has finally voted to “seek the abandonment of the TWIC program altogether” on the basis that...“it does not actually improve port security” and “improperly inserts the employers (many of them foreign) into a United States government program” (*Dispatcher*, July/August 2009)!

These latter two statements embrace “port security” and “national unity” patriotism and belie any genuine opposition to TWIC. In fact, the ILWU bureaucrats tout Democratic Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez’s proposed legislation to streamline, not eliminate, TWIC. Acceptance of the capitalist government’s “war on terror” crackdown on the docks undermines the defense of the union and its members, such as Harrison and Ruffin. Down with TWIC and the Maritime Transportation Security Act that mandated it!

We publish below a July 16 protest letter to the Yolo County District Attorney sent by the Partisan Defense Committee, a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League.

* * *

It is an outrage that your office continues to prosecute two black longshoremen, Aaron Harrison and Jason Ruffin from Bay Area International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10, who are being railroaded to separate retrials on August 31 and September 14. In August 2007, Harrison and Ruffin entered work at the



WV Photo

ILWU members Jason Ruffin (speaking) and Aaron Harrison at protest against their arrest, October 2007.

Sacramento port in the morning after being cleared by security. On returning to work after lunch, they were stopped by the security guards, who demanded to search their car, citing the maritime security regulations that are part of the government’s “war on terror.” While the two union longshoremen were calling their Local 10 business agent for advice, the guards called in the notoriously racist West Sacramento police. Harrison and Ruffin were dragged from their car, assaulted, maced, handcuffed and thrown in jail on charges of trespassing and resisting arrest. The trespassing charge was later dropped, but for two years the state has continued to press its anti-union prosecution of the two longshore workers whose only “crime” was trying to return to work and appealing to their union for help in doing so!

A joint trial of the two on the trumped up charges of “resisting arrest” resulted in a hung jury last January. In the past, they have rejected a settlement that would have left the original arrest on their records and compelled them to complete a demeaning and self-incriminating “diversion” program. Now Ruffin and Harrison face vindictive retrial.

The persecution of these two union members places them on the front line of the defense of labor and immigrant workers against the government’s attacks under the so-called “port security” laws. The Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC), implemented at West Coast ports this past spring as part of a “national security” program, vastly increases the government’s ability to ride roughshod over workers on the docks. It is in the direct interest of dockworkers and the labor movement to defend Harrison and Ruffin as part of the defense of the entire working class. We demand: Drop all charges against Harrison and Ruffin now! ■



WV Photo

Labor Black League supporters at ILWU rally in Woodland (near Sacramento) protest arrest of Harrison and Ruffin, October 2008.

denied TWIC cards navigate the appeals process, reveals that some 54,000 port workers were rejected. These rejections were based on FBI criminal record files, some 50 percent of which are known to be inaccurate or out of date!

Those who received denials were disproportionately black and Latino, as one would expect—the racist “war on drugs” (currently responsible for over 20 percent of the felony cases in the U.S.) has particularly devastated the ghettos and barrios. NELP makes much of the fact that almost all workers who appealed inaccurate records, as well as those with disqualifying offenses who applied for a

two others were acquitted in a separate trial in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Jurors at that trial stated that they did not believe the government witnesses.

Mr. Peltier’s 1977 trial was moved to Fargo, North Dakota. The judge ruled out of order any evidence of the documented government violence against Native American activists at Pine Ridge. The prosecution concealed ballistics tests that showed that Peltier’s gun could not have been used in the shooting. As Mr. Peltier said at his sentencing, “I’m not the guilty one here; I’m not the one who should be called a criminal.”

One court proceeding after another has laid bare the evidence of his innocence and of massive prosecutorial misconduct.

In a 1985 appeals hearing, the government’s lead attorney admitted, “We can’t prove who shot those agents.”

In 1986, the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the trial jury could have acquitted Mr. Peltier if records improperly withheld from the defense had been made available.

In November 2003, the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals stated, “Much of the government’s behavior at the Pine Ridge Reservation and in its prosecution of Mr. Peltier is to be condemned. The government withheld evidence. It intimidated witnesses. These facts are not disputed.”

In 2001, in response to requests under the Freedom of Information Act and lawsuits, the U.S. government admitted it

had withheld a staggering 142,579 pages of evidence of its secret COINTELPRO efforts to persecute and convict Mr. Peltier.

The long trail of injustice against Leonard Peltier has been documented in the film *Incident at Oglala*, narrated by Robert Redford, and the book *In the Spirit of Crazy Horse* by Peter Matthiessen. He has been framed up for crimes the government knows he did not commit. Millions worldwide have demanded his freedom.

It is an injustice that Mr. Peltier was ever incarcerated at all. The more than 33 years of unjust imprisonment have not only robbed this honorable man of a majority of his lifetime. They have taken

a devastating toll on his physical well-being as he suffers from diabetes, high blood pressure, partial blindness and a heart condition. We call for the immediate and unconditional release of Leonard Peltier. ■

NOTICE
Workers Vanguard skips
alternate issues in June,
July and August.
Our next issue will
be dated August 28.



Italy: For the Separation of Church and State!

The following article is translated from Spartaco No. 71 (April 2009), newspaper of the Lega Trotskista d'Italia, section of the International Communist League.

SPARTACO

After visiting a friend reduced to a vegetative state as the result of a car accident, Eluana Englaro told her father that she would never want to be kept artificially alive in similar circumstances. Eluana was serious, but the monsters who lead Italian capitalism today—in collusion with the Vatican—are not interested in what intelligent young women think.

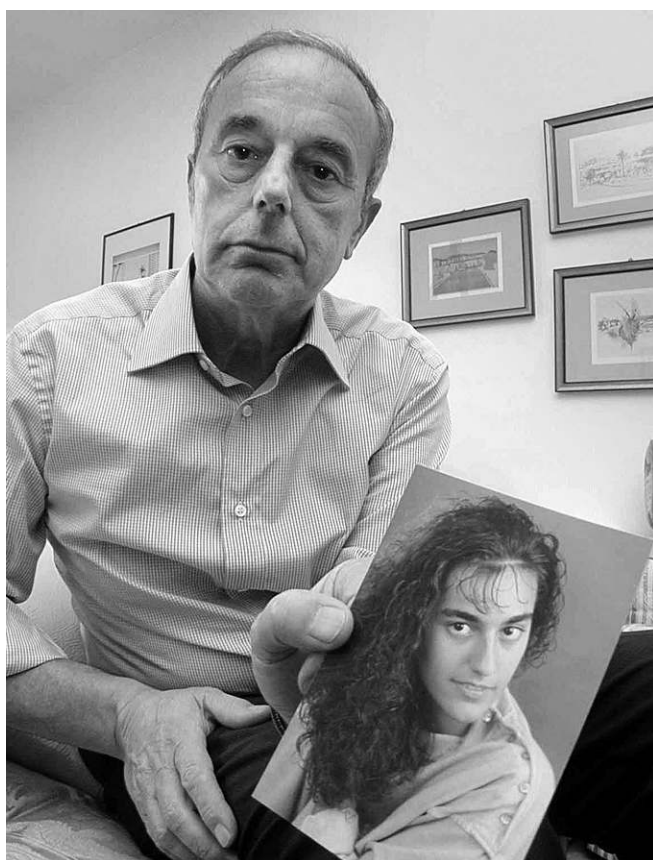
In 1992, Eluana ended up in an analogous tragedy. She had serious cerebral lesions as a result of a car accident and was reduced to a vegetative state for 17 years. Her father, Beppino Englaro, searched for a way to honor his daughter's wish. For years, he tried to get her feeding tube removed "to put an end to the horror of a non-life, which Eluana, before the accident, had always considered barbaric" (*La Repubblica*, 9 February). His efforts were systematically met with a hysterical fundamentalist crusade orchestrated by cardinals, doctors and lawyers and run by "honorable" members of parliament who trampled human dignity and their very own laws.

Even after winning a nine-year-long legal battle, Beppino Englaro was then confronted by regional and national governments that showed contempt for the judges' ruling and blocked him from disconnecting life-support equipment that was keeping Eluana artificially alive. When Eluana was transferred in early February to the "La Quiete" clinic in Udine, where doctors and nurses *voluntarily* began to honor Eluana's wishes, Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi cruelly tried to ram through an order to stop them. But Eluana's debilitated body succumbed to death before the order was approved.

In a climate that recalled the medieval Inquisition, Beppino Englaro and the courageous medical team that helped his daughter were in danger of being charged with homicide. They received death threats from self-proclaimed "right to life" supporters. **Down with this grotesque persecution! Hands off Englaro and Eluana's medical team!**

The Vatican enthusiastically supported a proposed law whose intent was to prevent the repetition of other "Eluana cases" in the future. The "living will" law, otherwise known as DAT (Declaration in Advance of Treatment), not only bans any type of euthanasia, but also prohibits removal of artificial feeding tubes, casting aside the express wishes of the patient. **Down with this reactionary law!**

We say that the state has no right to decide who lives and who dies. That's why we oppose the death penalty on principle. The state should not interfere in any personal or private decisions. We believe that people of sound mind who are afflicted with painful, incurable diseases have the right to decide for themselves if and when they want to die, as well as the right to any necessary medical assistance. Opposition to carrying out this basic form of humanitarianism is rooted in the religious conception that human beings possess a "soul" that only God may take back. The humanitarian solution in Eluana's case would have been a quick, pain-



EPA

Beppino Englaro with photo of his daughter, Eluana.

The Englaro Case: A Modern Inquisition

less and merciful injection.

The Englaro case recalls the case of Piergiorgio Welby, who was afflicted with muscular dystrophy. He died in 2006 after having been tied to an artificial respirator for nine years. In contrast to Eluana, Welby was fully conscious and launched a campaign to end his life of torment. We oppose the criminalization of suicide, which historically has been considered a crime against God and the state. We defend courageous medical doctors like Jack Kevorkian, who spent eight years in jail in the United States for having helped many patients defend their right to euthanasia and bring their suffering to an end.

It's the inquisitors, who today reside in parliament and the opulent rooms of the Vatican, who destroy lives or make them miserable in the name of a mythological God, patriarchy and the capitalist state. They are the same ones who oppose and restrict artificial insemination and medical progress through embryonic stem cell research. Berlusconi grotesquely exclaimed that Eluana "could still, hypothetically, give birth to a son." The Catholic hierarchies and the many politicians who fed like vultures on the body of Eluana Englaro and oppose the right to euthanasia would like to overturn the right to abortion, which is already severely restricted by the so-called "conscientious objector" clause of Law No. 194 [1978 law providing limited abortion rights]. Thanks to this reactionary clause, about 70 percent of gynecologists at public hospitals, pressured by Catholic fundamentalists, refuse to perform abortions (and you can be sure some of them do this to poach patients for their private clinics), creating a situation where women are often compelled not to have an abortion or to resort to expensive, illegal and potentially fatal abortions. To be sure, bour-

geois women, who have the means and access to competent doctors, have always been able to terminate a pregnancy in decent conditions. But the situation is particularly serious for working-class and poor women, and even worse still for "illegal" immigrants who are terrorized by the threat of deportation if they go to public hospitals. **Free, safe abortion on demand, including for immigrants and minors! Abolish the conscientious objector clause!**

With the hypocritical pretext of defending women, on February 5, the very same week in which the government was trying to prolong the agony of the Englaro family, the Senate approved a new security package that included a so-called "anti-rape law" and legalized racist patrols supported by [Umberto Bossi's racist, far-

right] Northern League. Despite the regular media campaigns to incite racist hysteria against "foreign rapists," the fact is that the majority of violence against women and children takes place inside the suffocating confines of the family. This law has nothing to do with protecting women from rape, a horrible crime that is being cynically exploited as a pretext to unleash more terror against immigrant workers and their families. **Down with the security package! Abolish the Turco-Napolitano and Bossi-Fini laws [1998 and 2002 anti-immigrant laws]! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!**

The security package is doubly racist and deadly. It increases the number of persecutory measures against the terribly oppressed and impoverished Roma [Gypsy] minority, and pushes doctors to finger "illegal" immigrants to the police, a de facto denial of their right to health care (including pregnant women and children). The press has already pointed to several cases where immigrants were turned in or were too afraid to seek medical care. **Nurses and doctors unions must mobilize against these laws! For free, quality health care for all!**

Parini High School students in Milan celebrated International Women's Day by protesting the security package and distributing condoms, explaining that the only protection they need is against venereal disease and unwanted pregnancies. Meanwhile Pope Ratzinger toured Africa railing against sex and the use of condoms. On the African continent, the deadly policies of the Catholic church and the hunger for profits of the pharmaceutical companies that refuse to provide free anti-retroviral drugs to the impoverished black masses have condemned millions to death from the AIDS virus.

The creeps that pretend to "defend life" and wanted Beppino Englaro jailed for murder include one Mario Palmaro, leader of the Catholic fundamentalist "Verità e Vita" ["Truth and Life"]. Palmaro is opposed to abortion rights even for rape victims, and he recently published a book dedicated to Lefebvrian "traditionalists." Last January 24, just before the "day of [Holocaust] remembrance," Ratzinger revoked the excommunication of four Lefebvrian bishops, including Richard Williamson, who denies the Nazi genocide. Don Abrahamowicz, who has celebrated

continued on page 8



Milan: Demonstration in defense of Law No. 194, which granted limited abortion rights, January 2006.

Repubblica

Defend Cuba! Hands Off Walter Kendall and Gwendolyn Myers!



New York Times

On June 4, Walter Kendall Myers, a retired State Department analyst, and his wife, Gwendolyn Myers, were arrested on charges of acting as illegal agents of the Cuban government and passing secret information to the Cuban Intelligence Service for three decades. They are also charged with wire fraud—based on the government’s claim that Kendall Myers collected his salary from the State Department without telling the government he was a Cuban agent and then wired the money to a joint account at the bank where his wife worked. The couple pleaded not guilty at their June 5 arraignment and are being held without bail. If convicted, the Myerses, both in their seventies, face a maximum sentence of 35 years—a virtual death sentence.

Kendall Myers, a great grandson of Alexander Graham Bell, started working for the State Department in 1977 as a contract instructor and rose to the position of senior analyst with top-secret security clearance, specializing in European affairs. According to the criminal complaint, they were recruited by Cuban intelligence months after a 1978 trip to Cuba. Kendall’s diary of that trip, seized by the Feds, notes his growing bitterness over the lack of decent medical care, oil company greed and indifference to poverty in the U.S., in contrast to Cuba where “the revolution has released enormous potential and liberated the Cuban spirit.”

Cuban leader Fidel Castro described the charges against the Myerses as an “espionage comic strip.” Indeed, much of the government’s story does seem to be lifted from the pages of *Mad* magazine, not least the seeming naiveté of this couple whom the Feds portray as seasoned spies. The

government claims that the Myerses communicated with their Cuban handlers in encrypted Morse code messages via short-wave radio, and later by encrypted e-mails from Internet cafes. Supposedly, they passed information through shopping cart exchanges in grocery stores and had personal meetings with Cuban contacts in Mexico, Jamaica, Brazil, Ecuador and Argentina. The Feds allege that in the two years leading up to his retirement in 2007, Myers examined some 200 intelligence reports dealing with Cuba, many classified or top-secret. Without any sense of irony, intelligence experts breathed a sigh of relief that Kendall Myers lacked information that would jeopardize the U.S. network of spies in Cuba.

As the government’s story goes, on April 15, an FBI undercover agent posing

as a Cuban official approached Myers outside the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies in D.C. where Kendall Myers taught, wished him a happy birthday, offered him a cigar and in a short conversation easily coaxed him and his wife out of two-year spy retirement. The bulk of the government’s charges are based on this and two other meetings later that month, in which the Myerses are alleged to have nostalgically waxed on with details of their three decades of passing information to Cuban intelligence. The elderly couple also advised they had no wish to resume their activities on a regular basis, and told of their plans to “sail home” to Cuba to live out their days. The Myerses warmly recalled meeting with Castro in 1995 and proudly boasted they had received numer-

ous medals from the Cuban government.

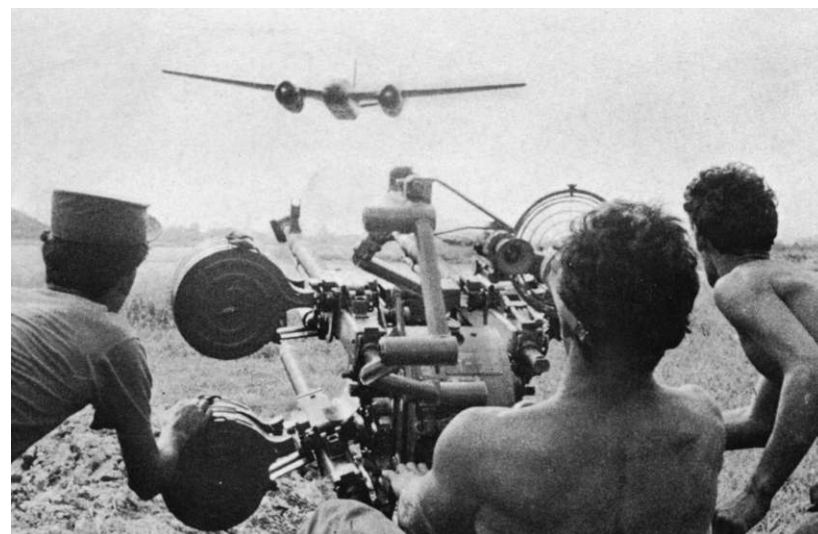
Though having no recall of meeting the couple, Castro stated, “Those who in one form or another have helped to protect the Cuban people from the terrorist plans and assassination plots organized by various U.S. administrations have done so at the initiative of their own conscience and are deserving, in my judgment, of all the honors in the world.” Indeed, assisting the defense of the Cuban deformed workers state from the most dangerous imperialist power in the world is laudable.

Also in June, the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear an appeal by the Cuban Five, who have been incarcerated for over ten years. Three Cuban citizens and two U.S. citizens who infiltrated and monitored violent anti-Communist exile

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Bettmann



Raúl Corrales

Counterrevolutionary Cuban *gusanos* present Democratic president Kennedy with brigade flag two years after 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion (left). Heroic Cuban soldiers defeated Kennedy’s attack on Cuban Revolution.

Letter

On Executive Offices and the Capitalist State: An Exchange

To the editor:

You take the position in *Workers Vanguard* (No. 918 [1 August 2008]) that Socialists should not run for executive office. You argue “To run for executive office means to aspire to be the next Commander-in-Chief who decides who gets tortured, who gets bombed, who gets invaded.”

On the contrary, a Socialist President would have the torturers arrested and prosecuted, starting with those who authorized the torture, to wit, Bush and Cheney et al.

He would immediately end the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and bring all the troops home. And he would do everything in his power to advance the struggle for Socialism and oppose Capitalism and U.S. Imperialism.

U.S. military bases around the world would be shut down and all U.S. forces returned home and demobilized. Guantánamo would be returned to Cuba and the embargo ended. U.S. support for right wing regimes and Israel would end. The Pentagon and CIA budgets would be reduced to close to zero and the money saved would be used to better the lives of the American people.

All Federal political prisoners would

be pardoned and so called “enemy combatants” would be freed or tried in Federal courts. Military commissions would be abolished. Spying on Americans would be immediately stopped. The crimes and lies of the Bush administration and its predecessors would be brought to the attention of the public. The practice of rendition would be ended. Left wing attorneys would be nominated to the Federal Judiciary.

Obviously if a Socialist were elected to the Presidency it would mean a tremendous leftward shift in U.S. politics, brought on no doubt by an economic crisis of severe proportions. The workers would be looking to Socialism as the answer to their problems.

A Socialist President by himself could not bring about Socialism, but he would explain what Socialism is and what would be needed to bring it about.

He would propose nationalizing the key industries, services and banks and operating them under workers control. If these proposals were blocked by Congress, the executive powers of Eminent Domain could be used to take over key industries etc. without Congressional approval.

He would fight for and mobilize the workers to achieve: Single Payer National Health insurance, a 30 hour week at 40 hour pay, repeal of all anti-labor laws, an indefinite moratorium on home mortgage foreclosures, a ban on companies relocating outside the country, shifting the tax burden off the workers onto the wealthy and the corporations, free college education, a guaranteed job for all, etc.

Incidentally, you might recall that both Marx and Engels believed that at least in the case of the United States and England, because of their long democratic traditions, Socialism could be achieved electorally and peacefully.

However, should a workers revolution develop in the United States, wouldn’t its chances of success be far greater if the President, who is Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, were a Socialist? Think about this.

Running for the Presidency gives Socialists a wonderful opportunity to educate the American people about Socialism.

And if a Socialist were elected President it would represent a giant step toward a Socialist America.

Yours truly,
Concerned Reader

WV Replies:

The starting point of the above letter, using the example of the American imperial presidency, is that the working class can utilize the existing state apparatus to implement beneficial policies and gain political supremacy. In fact, the tasks that the author proposes for a “socialist” president are hardly revolutionary. Such proposals on torture, spying, the economy and health care read like a liberal or social-democratic wish list, while the call for a ban on companies relocating abroad echoes the “Buy American” chauvinism of the Democrats and the trade-union bureaucracy. More fundamentally, the differences we have with the letter are not only over the question of running for executive offices but the very basis of our opposition to running for such offices: the nature of the capitalist state. As we wrote in our extensive article (to which we refer readers), “Marxist Principles and Electoral Tactics” (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 61, Spring 2009):

“Behind the question of running for executive office stands the fundamental counterposition between reformism and Marxism: Can the proletariat use bourgeois democracy and the bourgeois state to achieve a peaceful transition to socialism? Or, rather, must the proletariat smash the old state machinery, and in its place create a new state to impose its own class rule—the dictatorship of the proletariat—to suppress and expropriate the capitalist exploiters?”

Bourgeois politicians, sociologists and academics have utterly distorted what the

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LESSONS OF THE 1934 MINNEAPOLIS STRIKES

SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

The worsening condition of the working class, and the waning strength of the unions, is not the first such crisis faced by the American labor movement. In the early years of the Great Depression, the ranks of the unemployed soared while membership in the AFL craft unions had fallen precipitously. With the partial revival of industry in 1933, workers regained confidence in their ability to fight. A great strike wave erupted, concentrated in the unorganized mass production industries, only to end in a series of bitter defeats. The efforts of the workers were frustrated by the pro-capitalist AFL leaders on the one hand and by brutal government repression on the other.

The breakthrough came in 1934, 75 years ago, when three citywide strikes led by avowed socialists shook America and paved the way for the great class battles in 1936-37 that built the CIO. In Toledo, Ohio, supporters of radical labor organizer A.J. Muste's American Workers Party were in the forefront of the Auto-Lite strike. On the West Coast, dock workers and seamen, led by Communist Party (CP) supporters and other militants, fought pitched battles with the police in a three-month-long strike that included a four-day general strike in San Francisco. And in Minneapolis, Trotskyist union militants, supporters of the Communist League of America (CLA), organized and led mass strikes in the spring and summer that won union recognition for the Teamsters. Workers seeking to revitalize the labor movement today would do well to learn the lessons of these great struggles of the past.

In Minneapolis, the effective participation of a revolutionary Marxist group in actual strike organization and direction was demonstrated. Every detail of the strikes was meticulously organized in advance, proceeding from the standpoint of class war. No reliance was placed in any government agent or agencies, including Floyd B. Olson, the Farmer-Labor Party governor, and the National Labor Board of Democratic president Franklin D. Roosevelt. Above all, workers were prepared for the inevitable confrontations with the capitalist state.

For many years, Minneapolis had been a notoriously open shop town ruled by the Citizens Alliance, an organization of anti-union employers. An initial blow was delivered to the bosses in February 1934, when workers paralyzed the coal yards for three days and won union recognition for Teamsters Local 574. The organizers were a group of Trotskyists and their sympathizers who happened to work in the yards: the Dunne brothers (Vincent, Grant and Miles), Carl Skoglund and Farrell Dobbs.

Unlike the craft-minded bureaucrats of the AFL who aspired to build isolated job-holding trusts as a dues base and lit-

tle more, the Dunne brothers and Skoglund set out to organize every truck driver and every "inside" warehouse worker industry-wide in Minneapolis. On 15 May 1934, after the bosses refused to negotiate with the growing local of 5,000 members, Local 574 went on strike. Only one of the existing union officers at the time, local president Bill Brown, actively supported the strike, which was organized and led through an elected Organizing Committee.

The Citizens Alliance had not anticipated the Trotskyists' class-struggle tactics. "Flying squads" of pickets, later widely adopted in the great CIO strikes of the late '30s, were sent rolling about town to intercept scabs. All trucking in the city was halted except union-permitted urgent services. The entire working-class population of the area was called on to support the strike. The unemployed organization, where CLA members had long been active, aligned itself with the union, and a Women's Auxiliary went into action. On May 20, 35,000 building trades workers initiated a sympathy strike, and even the conservative Central Labor Union felt obliged to vote its support. Other work-

ers, many unorganized, stayed off their jobs and joined the pickets.

The strike was decided on May 22 when a mass mobilization of the union and its supporters sent fleeing virtually the entire city police force, as well as its 2,200 "special deputies," in what became known as "The Battle of Deputies Run." With the defeat of this attempt by the bosses' thugs to run scabs through pickets at the City Market, the companies quickly settled the strike, recognizing the union.

But the bosses would continue to stall and ignore the union, provoking another strike in July, which lasted for five weeks. The employers were given aid in their anti-union crusade by Teamsters president Daniel Tobin, a reactionary craft unionist and Roosevelt supporter who red-baited the strike leadership. Meanwhile, the CLA sent its leaders James P. Cannon and Max Shachtman to Minneapolis to help produce a daily strike newspaper, *The Organizer*, to combat the lies of the bourgeois press.

On "Bloody Friday," July 20, the cops lured picket trucks into an ambush and opened fire on the strikers, killing two

and wounding 67, most of them shot in the back. Within 20 minutes of the massacre, the National Guard rolled into the area. Four days later, some 40,000 union supporters marched in the funeral for Henry Ness, Local 574's first martyr. In response, the cops promptly arrested Cannon and Shachtman as part of an orchestrated red scare, and Governor Olson declared martial law. In a pre-dawn raid, the National Guard seized the strike headquarters and arrested strike leaders, including Bill Brown and Vincent and Miles Dunne.

These actions by the "friend of labor" governor exposed Olson's capitalist loyalties for the workers to see. The Teamsters defied Olson's troops and maintained mobile picketing while organizing protests against the arrests, including another 40,000-strong demo. The union members and leaders were released within a few days. Meanwhile, Local 574 successfully navigated the artifices and tricks practiced by federal mediators, agents of the class enemy, in negotiations. After a war of attrition, on August 22 the bosses gave in to the union's main demands, including union membership for "inside" workers. Minneapolis became a solid union town.

Sparked by the tremendous gains won in the 1934 strikes, workers in the basic industries were soon flocking to union organizing meetings. With the AFL craft unions refusing to organize the unskilled, workers joined mass industrial unions, frequently under radical leadership. These unions later formed the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) after breaking away from the ossified AFL.

Despite repeated attempts by the ruling class to split and defeat the militant Teamsters, the Trotskyists remained leading union organizers, helping to build the Teamsters into a powerful, national industrial union. Even James Hoffa, who was sent back to Minneapolis in 1941 as Tobin's hatchet man against the Trotskyist union leaders, acknowledged that he had earlier learned effective union organizing from the Trotskyists. Having worked under Dobbs, Hoffa said, "I was studying at the knees of a master." It was not until the early 1940s, during World War II, that the Trotskyists were driven out of the union leadership when Roosevelt, spurred on by Tobin and the Stalinist CP, jailed 18 Trotskyist and Minneapolis Teamster leaders under the Smith Act for their opposition to U.S. imperialism in the war.

The Trotskyists' success in Minneapolis in 1934 vindicated their general policy of calling on revolutionists to enter the mainstream of the labor movement, as against the ultraleft dogma of building separate "red unions," voiced by the CP during its 1928-34 "Third Period." It also pointed to the crucial role of leadership in any class battle. In a 1942 lecture that he gave on Minneapolis, available in *The*



Minnesota Historical Society



25 August 1934

"Battle of Deputies Run," May 1934: Unionists battle strikebreaking cops and deputies during Trotskyist-led Minneapolis strike.

Left: Trotskyist newspaper announces victory of July-August strike.



Wayne State Labor Archives



San Francisco Public Library

Left: After National Guardsmen killed two strikers and wounded 25 during 1934 Toledo Auto-Lite strike, massive explosion of city's labor movement and unemployed leagues forced withdrawal of troops and won union recognition. Right: Strikers battle with cops during San Francisco general strike in 1934. Labor struggles that year set the stage for great CIO organizing drives of mid-late 1930s.

History of American Trotskyism (1944), Cannon observed:

“In Minneapolis we saw the native militancy of the workers fused with a politically conscious leadership. Minneapolis showed how great can be the role of such leadership. It gave great promise for the party founded on correct political principles and fused and united with the mass of American workers. In that combination one can see the power that will conquer the whole world.”

We reprint below two articles from the *Militant*, the newspaper of the CLA. The first, “Learn from Minneapolis!” (26 May 1934), was written by Cannon after the May strike. The second, “The Strike Triumphant” (25 August 1934), was published at the conclusion of the July-August strike.

* * *

“Learn From Minneapolis!”
(*Militant*, 26 May 1934)

Today the whole country looks to Minneapolis. Great things are happening there which reflect the influence of a strange new force in the labor movement, an influence widening and extending like a spiral wave. Out of the strike of the transport workers of Minneapolis a new voice speaks and a new method proclaims its challenge.

It was seen first in the strike of the Coal Yard Drivers, which electrified the labor movement of the city a few months ago and firmly established the union after a brief, stormy battle of unprecedented militancy and efficiency. Now we see the same union moving out of this narrow groove and embracing truck drivers in other lines.

Behind this, as was the case with the Coal Drivers, there are months of hard, patient and systematic routine work of organization. Everything is prepared. Then an ultimatum to the bosses. A swift, sudden blow. A mass picket line that sweeps everything before it. The building trades come out in sympathy. The combined forces, riding with a mighty wave of moral support from the whole laboring population of the city, take the offensive and drive all the bosses’ thugs and hirelings to cover in a memorable battle at the City Market.

The whole country listens to the echoes of the struggle. The exploiters hear them with fear and trepidation. Weaving the net around the automobile workers, with the aid of treacherous labor leaders, they ask themselves in alarm: “If this spirit spreads what will our schemes avail us?”

And the workers in basic industry, vaguely sensing the power of their numbers and strategic position, can hardly help asking themselves: “If we should go the Minneapolis way could anything or anybody stop us?” The striking transport workers are a mighty power in Minneapolis today. But that is only a small fraction of the power of their example for the cheated and betrayed workers in the big industries of the country.

The Message of Minneapolis

The message of Minneapolis is of first rate importance to the American work-

ing class. A careful examination of the method from all sides ought to be put as point one on the agenda of the labor movement, especially of its most advanced section. A study of this epic struggle, in its various aspects, can be an aid to their application in other fields, and, by that, a rapid change of the position of the American workers.

There is nothing new, of course, in a fight between strikers and police and gunmen. Every strike of any consequence tells the old, familiar story of the hounding, beating and killing of strikers by the hired thugs of the exploiters, in and out of uniform. What is out of the ordinary in Minneapolis, what is more important in this respect, is that while the Minneapolis strike began with violent assaults on

any conclusion. The grand spectacle of labor solidarity in Minneapolis is what it is because it includes also the solidarity of the working class women.

The Sympathetic Strike

The strike of the transport workers took an enormous leap forward and underwent a transformation when the building-trades unions declared a sympathy strike last Monday. In this action one of the most progressive and significant features of the entire movement is to be seen. When unions begin to call strikes not for immediate gains of their own but for the sake of solidarity with their struggling brothers in other trades, and when this spirit and attitude becomes general and taken for granted as the proper thing, then the para-

and take a leading part in developing it at every stage.

The Bolshevik Militants

Further development of the union, and perhaps even of the present strike, on the path of militancy may bring the local leadership into conflict with the reactionary bureaucracy of the International and also with conservative forces in the Central Labor Union. This will be all the less apt to take the local leaders of the militant union by surprise, since most of them have already gone through the school of that experience. In spite of that, they did not turn their backs on the trade unions and seek to set up new ones artificially.

Even when it came to organizing a large group of workers hitherto outside the labor movement, they selected an A.F. of L. union as the medium. The results of the Minneapolis experience provide some highly important lessons on this tactical question. The miserable role of the Stalinists in the present situation, and their complete isolation from the great mass struggle, is the logical outcome of their policies in general and their trade union policy in particular.

The General Drivers’ Union, as must be the case with every genuine mass organization, has a broad and representative leadership, freely selected by democratic methods. Among the leaders of the union are a number of Bolshevik militants who never concealed or denied their opinions and never changed them at anybody’s order, whether the order came from [AFL head William] Green or from Stalin.

The presence of this nucleus in the mass movement is a feature of the exceptional situation in Minneapolis which, in a sense, affects and colors all the other aspects of it. The most important of all prerequisites for the development of a militant labor movement is the leaven of principled communists. When they enter the labor movement and apply their ideas intelligently they are invincible. The labor movement grows as a result of this fusion and their influence grows with it. In this question, also, Minneapolis is showing the way.

* * *

“The Strike Triumphant”
(*Militant*, 25 August 1934)

The stirring news of the victory of the Minneapolis strike will give heart and hope to every class conscious and union conscious worker in the United States. It comes as a beacon light on the dark sea of defeats that have engulfed the labor unions in the second strike movement under the NRA [National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933]. The thrilling outcome of the battle will give confidence to the doubting worker that labor need not lose and capitalism can be defeated. It will strengthen the conviction in the minds of every revolutionist that the policies of consistent class struggle are the only method of crowning the struggles of the working class with success.

But the working class has little time to rejoice. Bigger and fiercer battles are ahead. It must forge its weapons and prepare. Let the workers learn and assimilate the lessons of Minneapolis and they will have gained an invaluable addition to the arsenal of class weapons against

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Minnesota Historical Society

Max Shachtman and James P. Cannon in Minneapolis during 1934 strike.



the strikers it didn’t end there.

In pitched battles last Saturday and again on Monday, the strikers fought back and held their own. And on Tuesday they took the offensive, with devastating results. “Business men” volunteering to put the workers in their place and college boys out for a lark—as special deputies—to say nothing of the uniformed cops—handed over their badges and fled in terror before the mass fury of the aroused workers. And many of them carried away unwelcome souvenirs of the engagement. Here was a demonstration that the American workers are willing and able to fight in their own interests. Nothing is more important than this, for, in the last analysis, everything depends on it.

Here was a stern warning to the bosses and their hirelings, and not only those of Minneapolis. Transfer the example and the spirit of the Minneapolis strikers to the steel and automobile workers, for example, with their mass numbers and power. Let the rulers of America tremble at the prospect. They will see it! That is what the message of Minneapolis means first of all.

Mass Action

A second feature of the fight at the City Market which deserves special attention is the fact that it was not the ordinary encounter between individual strikers and individual scabs or thugs. On the contrary—take note—the whole union went into action on the picket line in mass formation; thousands of other union men went with them; they took along the necessary means to protect themselves against the murderous thugs, as they had every right to do. This was an example of mass action which points the way for the future victorious struggles of the American workers.

It is not a strike of the men alone, but of the women also. The Minneapolis Drivers’ Union proceeds on the theory that the women have a vital interest in the struggle, no less than the men, and draws them into action through a special organization. The policy, employed so effectively by the Progressive Miners [a 1932 splinter from the United Mine Workers], is bringing rich results also in Minneapolis. To involve the women in the labor struggle is to double the strength of the workers and to infuse it with a spirit and solidarity it could not otherwise have. This applies not only to a single union and a single strike; it holds good for every phase of the struggle up to its revolution-

lyzing divisions in the trade union movement will be near an end and trade unionism will begin to mean unity.

The union of the truck drivers and the building trades workers is an inspiring sight. It represents a dynamic idea of incalculable power. Let the example spread, let the idea take hold in other cities and other trades, let the idea of sympathy strike action be combined with militancy and the mass method of the Minneapolis fighters—and American labor will be a head taller and immeasurably stronger.

Those who characterize the A.F. of L. unions as “company unions” and want to build new unions at any price will derive very little consolation from the Minneapolis strike. We have always maintained that the form of a labor organization, while important, is not decisive. Minneapolis provides another confirmation, and a most convincing one, of this conception. Here is the most militant and, in many respects, the most progressively directed labor struggle that has been seen for a long time. Nevertheless it is all conducted within the framework of the A.F. of L.

The Drivers’ Union is a local of one of the most conservative A.F. of L. Internationals, the Teamsters; the building trades, out in sympathy with the drivers, are all A.F. of L. unions; and the Central Labor Union, backing the drivers’ strike and the possible organizing medium of a general strike, is a subordinate unit of the A.F. of L. The local unions of the A.F. of L. provide a wide field for the work of revolutionary militants if they know how to work intelligently. This is especially true when, as in the Minneapolis example, the militants actually initiate the organization

Minnesota Historical Society

Strikers’ soup kitchen, Minneapolis, 1934.



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Minneapolis...

(continued from page 7)

capital. And Minneapolis is rich in lessons, so rich that if but a part of them are digested the proletariat will take a huge stride forward.

With hardly an exception practically all of the major problems of strike strategy were telescoped in the battle of 574. Lack of space does not permit us to deal with all of them, but to mention them in part: maintaining a picket line to cope with scabs, feeding five thousand strikers and their families, providing relief to the more destitute of the workers, holding high the morale of the strikers for the long weeks of the struggle, answering the lies, the calumnies and the slanders of the boss press and radio, conducting negotiations with the employers and federal arbitrators, gaining the support of workers in other unions, combating the police and the city officials.

These are the customary problems faced by the workers when they rebel for better conditions. But the Minneapolis strike was complicated with other and far more perplexing matters. From the very word go, the strike was faced with a vehement “red” scare of the bosses, kept alive for its entire duration. This was joined in by the International President of the Teamsters, Tobin, who declared the strike illegal at the very outset. Then, to make confusion worse confounded, a farmer-labor governor, having the confidence of the overwhelming majority of the workers, dealt some deadly blows at the strike while pretending friendship. A backward rank-and-file, fighting mad, but steeped in all the prejudices that the bosses had inculcated into them for years, finishes the picture.

Any other leadership than the one in Minneapolis would have foundered on the rocks of this stupendous problem. This is not because of the personal qualities or the integrity of the men, although that contributed heavily, but rather because the tactics they pursued were Marxian from beginning to end. They were thoroughly fused with the workers in the ranks. They carried on their work in the trade union not with the purpose of some sensational stunt. Building on organization, leading it to victory and helping the workers learn from their own experiences in the class struggle—that was their aim.

Previous issues of the *Militant* have commented on the military-efficient or-



ganization of the strike apparatus. But it does not hurt to repeat some of them, for it was on this very thing that success was founded. To enumerate: the picket line on wheels ready to move at a moment’s notice, in contact at every step with strike headquarters—the commissary serving five thousand strikers daily on the solid assumption that an army travels on its belly—the Ladies Auxiliary giving the women a direct interest in the struggle, making them an encouragement and an aid instead of a drag on the strikers—the mobilization of the unemployed for support—and finally the daily strike bulletin, which we can safely say is one of the greatest contributions to strike strategy in recent times. Here was a paper that inspired the strikers, answered the lies of the boss press day in, day out, fanned their flagging enthusiasm, warned them of traps set by the bosses and arbitrators, showed the class lines of the struggle and performed a thousand and one other services. This was the unshakeable foundation of the strike.

Yet all of this would have been wrecked by the “red” scare had the union leaders not been prepared to meet it. In Frisco the cry of “Communist” tore a deep hole into the strike front. In Minneapolis it was a complete dud. The leaders faced the issue squarely. They did not rush into print denying the accusations. Nor did they shout their opinions to the wide world. They explained to the men that this was part of a plot of the bosses to evade the issues, sow confusion and division in the ranks and thus smash the

Left: Commemoration for Minneapolis striker Henry Ness at the spot where he was slain by police. Right: Vincent Dunne, Trotskyist Teamsters leader, arrested during National Guard raid of strike headquarters.



Minnesota Historical Society photos

strike. The results are known. The red-scare fell on deaf ears.

Quite as important, if not more so, was the role of Governor Olson. With a cunning play of demagoguery and harmless attacks on the employers he established himself as the “friend” of the strikers. So much so, that when he called the troops onto the streets and declared martial law, opinion was general among the drivers that it was done in their interest. Pickets began to rely on Olson’s soldiers. Knowing the class nature of the state, the leaders saw how fatal such an attitude would be for the strike. They were quick to act. The *Organizer*, at the risk of incurring the displeasure of the union men, pointed out the real purpose of the troops—to break the strike. But they did not confine themselves to denunciation. Only experience would teach the strikers. A test of the right of picketing was decided upon. And then... by raiding the strike headquarters, imprisoning the leaders and the best pickets, Olson taught the strikers more about Olson than all the editorials in the world could have done. A different opinion of the Governor of Minnesota and the purpose of the state now pervades not a few members of 574.

The unions saw to it that the struggle against Olson be further pushed by exerting the severest pressure on Olson’s men, the conservative leaders of the Central Labor Union. The biggest barrier to Olson’s game was the support of the drivers by the entire Minneapolis labor movement. By adroit and skillful tactics the leaders of 574 forced the heads of the C.L.U. to give

their assistance to the drivers and not to condemn them. When the union called upon the officials to declare a general strike in answer to the raid on the headquarters, they resisted but they were on the carpet. They brought pressure to bear on Olson and he released the strike leaders and restored the hall. While the officials of the C.L.U. and the Minnesota State Federation of Labor were successful in preventing a general strike, their answer was a living demonstration to the workers of Minneapolis of the stuff these “leaders” are made. A general strike is not an end in itself. It is a means to an end. And the conservatives at the head of the Minneapolis labor movement deprived 574 of this powerful means. The rank and file will draw the proper conclusions!

In the gratifying conclusion of the battle there lie the features that distinguish the Minneapolis strike from all others in recent times. For the first time in years militants, indigenous to the industry, have entered an A.F. of L. union; converted it from a craft to an industrial union; built it up patiently and quietly; prepared carefully and struck at the proper moment; combined organization with militancy and political wisdom, and emerged from a five week’s strike against insuperable odds with victory in their laps. And on top of all this, what is almost unprecedented in such strikes—not only is the union intact but the leadership is still in the hands of the genuine militants.

The example of the Minneapolis leadership will be an inspiration everywhere! It can and will be repeated!■

Italy...

(continued from page 4)

masses against Islam and organized anti-gay protests with the Northern League, maintains that the death penalty “in and of itself is not reprehensible” and asserted that the gas chambers in Nazi death camps were “at least for disinfection” (*La Repubblica*, 30 January). That this is not limited to a marginal wing of the Catholic church is demonstrated by the fact that the preceding Pope, Wojtyla, beatified Cardinal Stepinac, mentor to the horrific Croatian fascist regime during the Second World War.

Church and religion serve to reinforce the rule of the capitalist class. They preach submission to misery and suffering in this life in exchange for a mythical paradise after death. At the height of the hysteria around the Eluana case, Ratzinger railed against euthanasia: “Not one tear, neither of those who suffer nor of their loved ones, must be lost before God” (*Ansa*, 1 February). Bourgeois ideology demands that workers subordinate themselves to the capitalist rulers in a society where a small minority owns the means of production and exploits proletarian labor for private profit. The church attacks everything that might undermine the oppressive institution of the family. The origins of women’s oppression, the most ancient and deep-rooted form of subjugation in human society, are in the family, the basic economic unit to safeguard private property and the fundamen-

tal nucleus of class society, where women are relegated to giving birth, raising “legitimate” progeny, and, in general, to performing all those domestic services that the capitalist state doesn’t want to and cannot carry out. *Women’s liberation through socialist revolution!*

The hysterical crusade around the Englaro case coincided with the 80th anniversary of the Concordat (also known as the Lateran Pact) between the Italian state under Mussolini and the Catholic church in 1929. The Concordat integrated the Catholic church into the Italian state, allowing it to spread its tentacles into every state institution, from courts to schools and hospitals. The Lateran Pact is one of the pillars of the 1948 Italian Constitution, along with private property and the bourgeois state’s “democracy.” This Constitution sealed the betrayal of Togliatti’s Communist Party (PCI), which had politically and militarily disarmed the Italian proletariat between 1943-48 and derailed a potential proletarian revolution. The PCI entered an “anti-fascist” popular-front government with bourgeois forces and the Catholic church and helped put Italian capitalism back on its feet. *Abolish the Concordat! For the separation of church and state! Expropriate all the Vatican’s wealth!*

Over the course of the next 60 years, the PCI and its successors pushed class-collaborationist and popular-frontist betrayal at the expense of the proletariat. The leaders of the Democratic Party (a fusion between the Left Democrats and the bourgeois-Catholic Margherita

[Daisy] party) all agree in opposing euthanasia, but they are divided over the currently proposed law. The Catholic fundamentalists sided with the Berlusconi government while the others pursue a “soft” Catholic line—they favor suspending use of feeding tubes only on the condition that this wish was expressed in a written living will and that doctors motivated by “conscientious objection” are allowed to refuse to carry out this wish. Even Rifondazione Comunista, which considers itself to be “the People of the Constitution,” has a long history of alliances with Catholic forces in national and local government, in particular with the anti-abortion Prodi [former Prime Minister]. *Break with popular-front politics! Forge a revolutionary Leninist-Trotskyist party as a tribune of the oppressed!*

To cure the “cancer of Italy,” as revolutionary democrat Garibaldi called the Vatican, requires a proletarian revolution that expropriates the bourgeoisie and the church and opens the road to a rational, socialist society, unshackling medicine and science from the profit system. Only when the huge resources and medical technology of this society are used to serve the masses, and not the profits of a few, will we be able to build a society free of racism and crippling, cruel religious superstition, a society that respects human dignity and worth. In his discourse “On Socialist Man,” Isaac Deutscher observed:

“May I remind you that Trotsky, for instance, speaks of three basic tragedies—hunger, sex, and death—besetting

man. Hunger is the enemy that Marxism and the modern labor movement have taken on. In doing so they have naturally been inclined to ignore or belittle man’s other predicaments. But is it not true that hunger or, more broadly, social inequality and oppression, have hugely complicated and intensified for innumerable human beings the torments of sex and death as well? “In fighting against social inequality and oppression we fight also for the mitigation of those blows that nature inflicts on us.... “Yes, socialist man will still be pursued by sex and death; but we are convinced that he will be better equipped than we are to cope even with these.”■

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8

WORKERS VANGUARD

“War on Terror”...

(continued from page 1)

kill squad. As Alexander Cockburn wrote in *CounterPunch* (24-26 July): “And regular as the congressmen taken in adultery seeking forgiveness from God and spouse, the CIA rolled out the familiar response that yes, such a program had been mooted, but there had been practical impediments....With these pious denials we enter the Theater of the Absurd.” Indeed, just like torture, assassination is, has always been and will always be the norm for U.S. imperialism.

In 2001, after the passage of the USA Patriot Act, we warned in “‘Anti-Terror’ Laws: Shredding Your Rights” (WV No. 770, 7 December 2001): “The rapidity with which the government rammed through the new laws and executive orders was made possible by the illusion that they were intended for a specific small and vulnerable sector of the population—immigrants from Muslim countries. In the government’s gun sights, however, is just about everyone perceived as an opponent by the capitalist rulers.” The capitalist ruling class is a tiny minority that sits atop a vast population that it exploits and oppresses. The purpose of the panoply of “anti-terror” measures and laws is to strengthen the repressive apparatus of the capitalist state against the working class and oppressed.

In 2003 and 2004 the Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee filed *amici curiae* (friends of the court) briefs against the indefinite detention of Jose Padilla, a U.S. citizen who was picked up at Chicago’s O’Hare airport, declared an “enemy combatant,” disappeared into a Navy brig in South Carolina, tortured and then convicted after a show trial in 2007 and sentenced to more than 17 years in prison. In our brief, we warned that the government is seeking to “institutionalize in the American justice system the arbitrary deprivation of rights that are the hallmarks of right-wing dictatorships propped up around the world by U.S. imperialism,” adding: “What the government previously did in secret it can now conduct with the authority of a legal mandate.”

Bush, Cheney & Co. oversaw the atroc-

ity against Padilla. But the chilling case of Youssef Samir Megahed is taking place on Obama’s watch. Megahed, who moved to Florida from Egypt with his family eleven years ago and is a legal U.S. resident, was acquitted in April by a federal jury on charges of transporting explosives during a road trip with a friend who had packed model rocket propellants in the trunk. Three days later, he was arrested again by immigration authorities who are seeking his deportation under the charge that he “is engaged in or is likely to engage in” terrorist activities.

The *New York Times* (4 June) noted, “Mr. Megahed is at least the third Florida defendant in three years to be brought up

Democratic politicians have repeatedly wrung their hands in indignation over the Bush administration’s torture and detention programs. But this has all the credibility of the corrupt cop in *Casablanca* who announces that he is “shocked” that there is gambling going on in Rick’s Café. The Democrats have long been staunch supporters of the “war on terror,” voting for (including then-Senator Obama) the USA Patriot Act and other attacks on democratic rights. Democratic Congressmen were up to their necks in helping to set up the Bush government’s torture program. In September 2002, top Republican and Democratic politicians, including current House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, were given a “vir-



Reuters

May 10: Kabul University students protest deadly U.S. air strikes in Farah Province.

on immigration charges after prosecutors failed to win terrorism convictions in federal court.” It further explained that immigration courts “share prosecutorial advantages similar to those found in the controversial military tribunals.” In Megahed’s case, several jurors who acquitted him in the federal court trial are outraged at his retrial, with several signing a statement opposing his detention. His father recently explained that if deported, Megahed, having been accused of “terror” charges in the U.S., could face further imprisonment and even torture in Egypt. His hearing is now scheduled for August 17. ***Stop the deportation of Youssef Samir Megahed! Free Jose Padilla!***

tual tour” of CIA detention centers that included descriptions of waterboarding and other “enhanced interrogation” methods.

As Gore Vidal noted in a London *Guardian* (27 April 2002) piece: “Though Bush’s predecessors have generally had rather higher IQs than his, they, too, assiduously serve the 1% that owns the country while allowing everyone else to drift. Particularly culpable was Bill Clinton.” Vidal noted that it was Clinton who “set in place the trigger for a police state which his successor is now happily squeezing.” For example, Clinton’s 1996 Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act gutted *habeas corpus* rights for death row prisoners, setting the stage

Cuba...

(continued from page 5)

groups in Florida in order to stop terrorist attacks against Cuba, these men were arrested in 1998 under the Clinton administration on bogus charges of conspiracy to commit espionage and murder, as well as lesser charges like failing to register as agents of a foreign power. After being tried in Miami, a den of counterrevolutionary *gusano* (worm) activities, Gerardo Hernández was sentenced to two life terms plus 15 years; Antonio Guerrero and Ramón Labañino to life plus ten and 18 years, respectively; Fernando González to 19 years; and René González to 15 years.

In 2005, a three-judge panel of the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta threw out the 2001 convictions and ordered a new trial in a new venue because of the “pervasive community prejudice” in Miami. The trial was engulfed in anti-Communist hysteria and intimidation of anyone not toeing the *gusano* line on Cuba. During jury selection, potential jurors asked to be excused, fearing the consequences of rendering an “unsatisfactory” verdict. The atmosphere was so inflamed that the jury even convicted Hernández of conspiracy murder charges that the prosecution itself had already concluded would be an “insurmountable hurdle” to prove! After a government appeal, the full Eleventh Circuit Court reinstated the convictions in August 2006, which the Supreme Court has now refused to review. ***Free the Cuban Five! Drop the charges against Kendall and Gwendolyn Myers!***

The elimination of capitalist class rule

in Cuba in 1960-61 led to enormous gains for working people, despite the rule of a bureaucratic nationalist caste. The centralized planned economy guarantees everyone a job, housing, food and education. Cubans now enjoy one of the highest literacy rates in the world. The revolution especially benefited women: domination of the Catholic church was broken, and abortion is a free health service. Despite the crippling effects of the U.S. blockade, the free health care system is still far and away the best in economically underdeveloped countries. Infant mortality is lower than in parts of the “First World,” and Cuba has more doctors and teachers per capita than just about anywhere in the world. As revolutionary Marxists, we stand for the unconditional military defense of the Cuban deformed workers state against imperialism and capitalist counterrevolution, while calling for workers political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy and establish a regime based on workers democracy and revolutionary internationalism.

For nearly 50 years, the U.S. ruling class has worked relentlessly to overthrow the Cuban Revolution and re-establish the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie—from the 1961 Playa Girón (Bay of Pigs) invasion to repeated attempts to assassinate Castro; from funding counterrevolutionary terrorists in Miami to the ongoing economic embargo. Not surprisingly, the Myerses’ arrest has given fuel to the most vile anti-Communist reactionaries and neo-McCarthyite witchhunters. Chris Simmons, a former U.S. counterintelligence official and founder of the Cuban Intelligence Research Center, declared, “Cuba is an intelligence trafficker. It steals U.S.

secrets and it sells or barter them on the open market to anyone that has something to trade, to offer” (CNN interview, 8 June).

This is no idle rant. In 2002, as Washington was gearing up for its invasion of Iraq with the lie of “weapons of mass destruction,” the government peddled lies that Cuba was developing biological weapons and transferring the technology to other “rogue” states. Cuba remains on the State Department’s list of “state sponsors of terrorism.” At the same time, there are elements within the U.S. bourgeoisie who look to ease the economic embargo in order to increase U.S. imperialist economic penetration and strengthen the forces of counterrevolution within Cuba.

Ronald Radosh—who has made a career in justifying the Cold War frame-up of the courageous Rosenbergs and depicting all members of the Communist Party as potential spies—has seized on the Myerses’ arrest to reinvigorate his depiction of leftists as the treasonous “enemy within.” Radosh is a contributing columnist to *FrontPage Magazine*, mouthpiece of right-wing racist demagogue David Horowitz, who has been on a years-long campaign to purge left-leaning professors from college campuses. According to Radosh, “Why should it be so surprising to find that Cuban intelligence seeks its agents at our universities?... Read their regular publication and you will not be surprised that Cuban intelligence sees scholars with this point of view as good picking for their agents. After all, they are merely repeating the pattern used by the KGB through the years.... Soviet intelligence used the American Communist Party and its off-

for further erosion of this fundamental democratic right.

The difference between the Democrats and Republicans is not what they do but how they do it. With their posture as friends of labor and minorities—and backed to the hilt by the pro-capitalist trade-union bureaucracy—the Democrats have generally been the bourgeoisie’s preferred party of war, better equipped than the Republicans to sell U.S. imperialism’s atrocities as exercises in “human rights” and “democracy.” ***Break with the Democrats—for a workers party! U.S. out of Iraq and Afghanistan! Hands off Pakistan! Free all the detainees!***

The reformist International Socialist Organization (ISO) today bemoans the fact that Obama “is embracing some of the worst abuses carried out by the Bush administration in the name of national security and the ‘war on terror’” (*Socialist Worker* online, 20 March). These are the same “socialists” who published an editorial the day after Obama’s inauguration titled, “Looking Forward to Change,” and declared that Obama’s election showed that “some of the cruel sins of America’s past were finally being overcome” (*Socialist Worker* online, 21 January).

Such abject subservience to the class enemy is the hallmark of the fake left. In contrast, we base ourselves upon the lessons of the October 1917 Bolshevik Revolution that smashed the capitalist system and its state, put the proletariat in power and took Russia out of the bloody maw of World War I. The leader of that revolution, V. I. Lenin, took on the reformists of his day in the wake of their capitulation to their “own” bourgeoisies as the first interimperialist war unfolded. He wrote in a 1915 piece, “The Collapse of the Second International”:

“To the class-conscious workers, socialism is a serious conviction, not a convenient screen to conceal petty-bourgeois conciliatory and nationalist-oppositional strivings.... It has long been conceded that, for all the horror and misery they entail, wars bring at least the following more or less important benefit—they ruthlessly reveal, unmask and destroy much that is corrupt, outworn and dead in human institutions. The European war of 1914-15 is doubtlessly beginning to do some good by revealing to the advanced class of the civilised countries what a foul and festering abscess has developed within its parties, and what an unbearably putrid stench comes from some source.” ■

shoots as a recruiting ground, since its members already were committed to Communist ideology and the Soviet motherland. The people Cuban intelligence look at are the modern counterparts—people who show in their own writing where their true allegiance lies.”

The demented rantings of Radosh illustrate that all opponents of the depredations of U.S. imperialism have a stake in the defense of Kendall and Gwendolyn Myers as well as of the Cuban Five. ***Defend Cuba! Down with the embargo! U.S. out of Guantánamo Bay now!*** ■

Partisan Defense Committee

CLASS-STRUGGLE DEFENSE NOTES

Number 31 50¢ Summer 2003

BRIEF OF *AMICI CURIAE* SPARTACIST LEAGUE AND PARTISAN DEFENSE COMMITTEE ON BEHALF OF JOSE PADILLA AND GRANTING HIS *WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS*

In The UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS For The Second Circuit Docket No. 03-2235 03-2438

JOSE PADILLA, Donna R. Newman, as Next Friend of Jose Padilla, Petitioner-Appellee-cross-Appellant, v. DONALD RUMSFELD, Respondent-Appellant-cross-Appellee.

On Appeal from the United States District Court For the Southern District of New York

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Free All MOVE Prisoners! Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!

25th Anniversary of POWellton Village Siege 18

Anti-Terror Dragnet Threatens 13,000 with Expulsions Stop the Deportations! 22

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No. 31, Summer 2003

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(continued from page 5)

state is, presenting it as a body that stands above society with the purpose of organizing it and arbitrating its class antagonisms. In reality, as Marxist leader V.I. Lenin outlined in his 1917 work, *The State and Revolution*, “the state is an organ of class **rule**, an organ for the **oppression** of one class by another; it is the creation of ‘order,’ which legalises and perpetuates this oppression by moderating the conflict between the classes.” In modern capitalist society, the state exists to defend the rule and profits of the bourgeoisie against the working class and oppressed. At its core, the state is made up of armed bodies of men and their adjuncts dedicated to that task: the cops, the military, the prisons, the courts.

The letter writer betrays huge illusions in bourgeois democracy. Such democracy is, in fact, for the bourgeoisie **against** the proletariat and oppressed. Lenin observed, “A democratic republic is the best possible political shell for capitalism, and, therefore, once capital has gained possession of this very best shell...it establishes its power so securely, so firmly, that **no** change of persons, institutions or parties in the bourgeois-democratic republic can shake it.”

History has repeatedly demonstrated that the bourgeois state cannot be made to serve the interests of the proletariat and

“No Peace with the Present-Day State!”

We print below excerpts from an 1869 speech by German socialist leader Wilhelm Liebknecht (father of the revolutionary Marxist Karl Liebknecht) attacking the notion that socialists (who at the time called themselves Social Democrats) could get rid of capitalism through parliamentary means.

Let us assume that a candidate comes up for election and that the government is absolutely opposed to having him in the “Reichstag” [parliament]. The government will confiscate the newspapers that advocate his election—it will do so legally; it will confiscate his election handbills—also legally; or it will give permits for meetings of electors and then dissolve them—again legally; it

will arrest the candidate’s campaign managers—quite legally; it will arrest the candidate himself—also legally....

But let us assume that the government—either because it feels it is strong enough, or because of some other calculation—makes no use of its powers, and that it becomes possible, as some socialist statesmen of imagination still dream—to elect a social-democratic majority in the “Reichstag”—what would this majority proceed to do? *Hic Rhodus, hic salta!* Now is the moment for transforming society and the state. The majority will adopt a world-historic decision; the new era is born—don’t you believe it! A company of soldiers will eject the Social-Democratic major-

ity from its stronghold and if these gentlemen make any objection to this procedure, a few policemen will take them to police headquarters and there they will have time enough to ponder the consequences of their Quixotic aspirations.

Revolutions are not made by getting the permission of the high powers that are in authority; the socialist ideal cannot be achieved within the frame of the present-day state; it must overthrow the state in order to secure the possibility of life.

No peace with the present-day state!
—Wilhelm Liebknecht,
“The Elections to Parliament
Are Only a Means of
Agitation” (1869)

the ‘ready-made state machinery,’ and not confine itself merely to laying hold of it.” The capitalist state must be smashed through a socialist revolution that erects in its place a workers state—i.e., the dictatorship of the proletariat, based on democratically-elected workers councils (soviets). It will take the victory of proletarian revolution on an international scale to lay the basis for the creation of a classless communist society and the withering away of the state.

To bolster its argument, the above letter states that “Marx and Engels believed

forces. In the U.S., the post-Civil War period produced an enormous boost to Northern capital, so that by the time of the Ulysses S. Grant administration all the pieces were in place for the development of full-blown U.S. imperialism in the coming decades (see “The Grant Administration (1869-1877) and the Rise of U.S. Imperialism,” WV Nos. 938 and 939, 5 June and 3 July). At any rate, whatever Marx may have speculated, we are now in the imperialist epoch. Today, the idea of a peaceful, parliamentary transition to socialism is worse than a pipe

‘critical support’ to the Allende coalition is class treason, paving the way for a bloody defeat for the Chilean working people when domestic reaction, abetted by international imperialism, is ready.”

It was the Chilean masses that paid for the reformists’ betrayals. Backed by the U.S., General Augusto Pinochet, whom Allende had appointed as Commander-in-Chief of the Army, led a military coup on 11 September 1973 that overthrew the government, assassinated Allende and slaughtered tens of thousands of workers and other militants. Allende was not simply a martyred victim of the CIA and Chilean generals; he and his reformist supporters, with their promotion of a “peaceful” (i.e., parliamentary) road to socialism, led the Chilean working masses directly into this defeat.

Our position is that communist deputies can, as oppositionists, serve in bourgeois legislative bodies as tribunes of the proletariat. But assuming executive office means taking responsibility for the administration of the machinery of the capitalist state. And to stand for executive office carries the implication that one is ready to accept such responsibility (no matter what disclaimer one makes in advance). This can only lend legitimacy to prevailing and reformist conceptions of the state.

The 1917 Russian Revolution led by the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky proved the validity of the Marxist theory on the state and made it a reality. In reaching our position on not running for executive offices, we are fulfilling and extending the work of the Communist International of Lenin and Trotsky’s time. As Lenin put it in *The State and Revolution*, “A Marxist is solely someone who **extends** the recognition of the class struggle to the recognition of the **dictatorship of the proletariat.**” ■



Lagos/NY Times

Left: Chilean Socialist president Salvador Allende, who preached peaceful road to socialism, seen here moments before his death as right-wing military coup toppled his government, September 1973. Right: Troops round up leftists in Santiago during coup.



Gerretsen/Gamma

the oppressed. This was shown by the 1871 Paris Commune—when the Parisian proletariat held power for nearly three months before being crushed at a cost of over 20,000 lives. Lenin pointed out that Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels found only one point from the 1848 *Communist Manifesto* that they considered “out-of-date.” Based on the experience of the Commune, Marx wrote in *The Civil War in France* (1871) that it had become clear that “the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes.” Lenin underlined in *The State and Revolution*, “The working class must **break up, smash**

that at least in the case of the United States and England, because of their long democratic traditions, Socialism could be achieved electorally and peacefully.” In fact, in those instances where Marx asserted that in the U.S. and England “workers may achieve their aims by peaceful means” (“On the Hague Congress,” 8 September 1872), he did not base himself on these countries’ “long democratic traditions” but rather on his belief that these countries lacked militarist cliques or significant bureaucratic apparatuses.

However, Marx’s speculation was in error. Britain had a vast colonial empire requiring large bureaucracies and military

dream; it is a noose placed on the proletariat by the reformists and other enemies of workers revolution.

Writing in 1899, after French Socialist Alexandre Millerand took a ministerial post in the government, revolutionary Marxist Rosa Luxemburg underscored: “The government of the modern state is essentially an organization of class domination, the regular functioning of which is one of the conditions of existence of the class state. With the entry of a socialist into the government, and class domination continuing to exist, the bourgeois government doesn’t transform itself into a socialist government, but a socialist transforms himself into a bourgeois minister.”

This point has been repeatedly confirmed, with tragic results for workers and the oppressed. In 1970 in Chile, the Socialist Party’s Salvador Allende and his Unidad Popular—a coalition government that subordinated the workers to their deadly class enemies through a bloc of workers parties with a mythical “progressive” section of the bourgeoisie and the “democratic” officer corps—won a major electoral victory. When Allende became president, reformists across the globe hailed this as a great victory in the advance to socialism. But as we warned in “The Chilean Popular Front” (*Spartacist* No. 19, November-December 1970): “It is the most elementary duty for revolutionary Marxists to irreconcilably oppose the Popular Front in the election and to place absolutely no confidence in it in power. Any

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Defend China Against Imperialism, Counterrevolution! For Workers Political Revolution!

Gérard Le Méteil, 1959–2007.....3

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Gates...

(continued from page 12)

an undercover cop off the stoop, thinking he was trespassing.

It was Obama's recognition of Gates's *class* status in the black petty bourgeoisie that caused the president to weigh in, likening the incident to "racial profiling." (Imagining himself in Gates's shoes, Obama quipped that if he himself tried to break into his current residence he could be shot.) Contrast that with Obama's reaction two years ago to the Jim Crow "justice" meted out to the Jena Six in Louisiana, five of whom were charged with attempted murder following a schoolyard scuffle with a white student. That scuffle followed months of racist threats and insults, including the display of hangman's nooses, after black students sat under the school's "white tree." Obama said he just wanted "fairness" in Jena, claiming it "isn't a matter of black and white."

Or look at Obama's reaction last year when the New York City cops who gunned down Sean Bell in a firestorm of 50 bullets on his wedding day were found "not guilty" on all counts. Obama intoned: "We're a nation of laws, so we respect the verdict that came down." Likewise, in 2005 when America's racist capitalist

rulers, in the face of Hurricane Katrina, abandoned masses of overwhelmingly black and poor people in New Orleans and the Gulf Coast, leaving them to die, Obama's verdict on this racist atrocity was that "the ineptitude was color-blind."

The hue and cry from "respectable" black petty-bourgeois spokesmen in response to Gates's arrest is in sharp contrast to their deafening silence regarding the countless black youth who are stopped, interrogated and beaten by the cops, black or white, in this country's brutal inner cities. Shem Walker's killing, for example, was pretty much treated by black leaders as a non-event.

The same day that Gates was being dragged off by Cambridge cops, Obama delivered an address to the NAACP's centennial convention in which he declared to enthusiastic applause:

"We need a new mind set, a new set of attitudes—because one of the most durable and destructive legacies of discrimination is the way we've internalized a sense of limitation.... Yes, if you live in a poor neighborhood, you will face challenges that somebody in a wealthy suburb does not have to face. But that's not a reason to get bad grades.... No excuses."

The myth that black oppression exists in people's minds, rather than being inherent to American capitalism, serves to blame the oppressed for their oppression. Ghetto schools are nothing but holding

pens for minority youth with no future in society because, especially with the deindustrialization of this country, black ghetto youth are not wanted or needed by America's capitalist rulers. The daily reality of black life in America can be measured by the nearly one million black men and women who are incarcerated in the country's jails and prisons.

After Gates's arrest, papers from the Harvard *Crimson* to the *New York Times* have run "exposés" detailing how black professionals have been harassed by police in Harvard Yard and throughout the country. "None of us African-American residents of Cambridge are surprised or shocked," one Harvard graduate student wrote (*Black Commentator*, 23 July). At Harvard, which like other elite Ivy League schools reeks with arrogant self-satisfaction in its role as a bastion of white upper-class privilege, black students and faculty are subjected to pervasive oppression and prejudice. When Larry Summers became Harvard president in 2001, he went on the warpath against the Department of African and African American Studies (of which Gates was then the head), driving out black intellectual Cornel West. Today Summers is the head of Obama's National Economic Council and key to the president's plan that has granted hundreds of billions of dollars to the capitalists while

forcing increased sacrifice on the workers.

Black people in the U.S. are a race-color caste, oppressed as a people regardless of class. The position of the black middle class in this country is a precarious one, even in elite enclaves like Harvard. At the same time, as we wrote following Obama's inauguration in "Barack Obama Takes Helm of Racist U.S. Imperialism" (WV No. 929, 30 January):

"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 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....

"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." ■

Jackson...

(continued from page 12)

In 1913, black boxer Jack Johnson was arrested because his relationships with white women were deemed to violate the Mann Act against transporting women across state lines for "immoral purposes." In 1960, black rock 'n' roll artist Chuck Berry was also convicted under the Mann Act for transporting an underage girl across state lines. More recently, R&B singer R. Kelly was dragged through the courts on sex-related charges. Frenzy about black male sexuality is a common thread in American culture, long used as a justification for lynch rope terror.

Many black establishment figures who wouldn't normally go near a contentious "sex" issue have felt obliged to come out in Jackson's defense. The day after Jackson's death, black Representatives Jesse Jackson Jr. and Diane Watson asked for a moment of silence in the House of Representatives in Michael Jackson's memory, with at least one Congressman storming out in protest. When Democratic Representative Sheila Jackson Lee put forward a resolution proclaiming Jackson "an American legend, musical icon and world humanitarian," it was promptly killed by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, to the pleasure of Republican Representative Peter King. King infamously called the media coverage of Jackson's death an "orgy" and ranted on a YouTube posting about Jackson being a "pedophile" and a "pervert."

Michael Jackson was the victim of a depraved social order with a degenerate and cruel sense of "morality." And all of these politicians—black or white, Democrat or Republican—are staunch defenders of that very social order, i.e., American capitalism.

America's Puritanical Values

As Michael Jackson was twice dragged through the courts over accusations of child sexual abuse, we defended him through his legal trials and tribulations.



Fans sing and dance to the music of Michael Jackson during tribute at the Apollo Theater in Harlem, June 30.

The cases relied on hearsay, contradictory testimony and zero physical evidence. As we stated in "Michael Jackson Defeats Racist, Anti-Sex Vendetta" (WV No. 851, 8 July 2005):

"Jackson steadfastly maintains that he has been asexual in his relations with boys, which is certainly possible—but for us, that is irrelevant. The state's vendetta against Jackson rested upon anti-sex laws that we oppose on principle.... "Sex is a natural activity for humans—even children. We believe that in any kind of sexual relations, the guiding principle should be effective consent, regardless of age, gender or race. That is, if those involved have effective knowledge and desire to do whatever it is they will, that should be the end of it. We oppose arbitrary and reactionary state interference in such intimate matters."

Our steadfast defense of privacy and sexual freedom, more generally across the board and more specifically in the Michael Jackson case, has earned us the contempt of the liberals and the reformist left, who groove on being the "morality police" when sexual matters are involved. The most extreme demonstration of this was when our comrades in Germany were

excluded from a conference called "Socialism Days" hosted by Sozialistische Alternative Voran (SAV), the sister group of Socialist Alternative in the U.S., both of which are associated with Peter Taaffe's Committee for a Workers' International (see "German Taaffeites Exclude Defenders of Michael Jackson," WV No. 847, 29 April 2005). For the Taaffeites, anything that doesn't conform to bourgeois society's chauvinist and repressive values deserves political censorship. Outrageously, the Taaffeites slandered our

position in the Michael Jackson case as "defense of rapists" and "relativizing child abuse"! Whether explicitly or implicitly, much of the left was happy to jump on the "strange means guilty" bandwagon around the Jackson case, thus demonstrating their embrace of prudish bourgeois morality and their fundamental loyalty to the current social order.

Michael Jackson's sex life was nobody's business but his own. But not unlike the countless people branded "sex offenders" in this country who have committed no crime and hurt no one and yet whose lives are made a living hell under bourgeois laws and media hysteria, Jackson had to withstand the bourgeoisie's attempts to railroad him for falling outside the norms of this society. Today, after his death, the media is replete with discussions over his finances, custody of his children and the raid on his doctor's office for suspected manslaughter.

Black Democrat Al Sharpton is a political hustler who specializes in corralling black anger at racist injustice into support for the capitalist Democratic Party. But at Jackson's elaborate, lavish and emotional memorial, he had a moment of honesty, stating: "I want his three children to know, wasn't nothing strange about your daddy. It was strange what your daddy had to deal with." The fact that the very gifted Michael Jackson was one of the entertainment world's biggest sources of scandals and attacks was not an indication of what he did, but of the sick society in which he lived. ■

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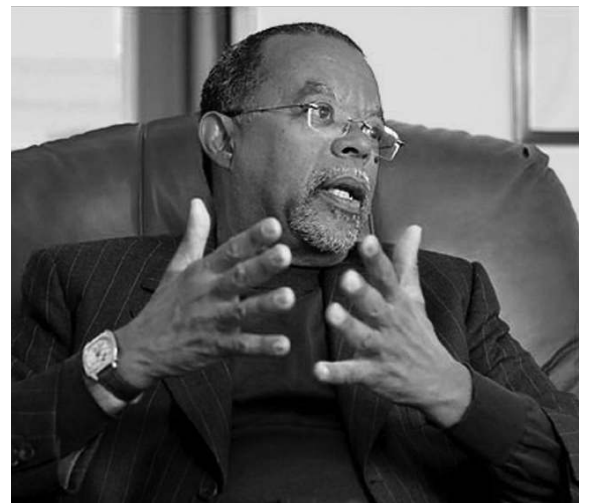
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WORKERS VANGUARD

Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s Arrest

Obama's "Change" Is More of the Same



AP

The arrest of distinguished black Harvard professor Henry Louis Gates Jr. has touched off a public debate on race in the U.S., ranging from media pundits and academics to President Barack Obama. Gates was arrested on July 16 by a white Cambridge, Massachusetts, cop as he stood on his own porch. Someone had called the police to report a possible break-in after seeing Gates force open the jammed door of his house. Speaking of the cop, Gates said in a statement: "Now it's clear that he had a narrative in his head: A black man was inside someone's house, probably a white person's house, and this black man had broken and entered, and this black man was me." Though he presented proof of his identity, the cops dragged Gates off in handcuffs, accusing him of being "loud and tumultuous."

The election of Obama was celebrated by many, especially blacks, who believed that it heralded an easing of the nig-

mare of racial oppression suffered by the mass of the black population. That an eminent world-class scholar—who is on a first-name basis with the president, no less—can be subjected to such patently racist abuse speaks volumes about the condition of black people in this country, and it shows how little it has been changed by Obama's election. The somber reality is that racial oppression is structurally embedded in American capitalism and will not be overcome short of socialist revolution.

Obama initially declared that the Cambridge police had acted "stupidly" in arresting Gates, provoking a furious uproar by police groups across the country. The head of the Cambridge police association defiantly demanded that Obama "make an apology to all law enforcement personnel." The president promptly backtracked, declaring that both sides had "overreacted." Obama invited both Gates and the cop to the White House to talk it out over a beer.

In the same spirit, liberal black commentators (and Gates himself) have responded by calling for more "sensitivity training" of the police. Such schemes simply try to clean up the cops' image so that these armed enforcers of capitalist rule can more effectively do their job. Police brutality can never be "reformed" out of the capitalist system because enforcing the capitalist rulers' racist "law and order," whether against blacks, Latinos and other minorities or striking workers, is what the cops are paid to do. In fact, the cop who arrested Gates had given classes to other cops on avoiding "racial profiling."

Obama ceded so readily to pressure from the police because, as Commander-in-Chief of racist U.S. imperialism, he is the top cop responsible for enforcing the dictates of U.S. capitalist rule, from the streets of Cambridge to Iraq and Afghanistan. The president's supposedly even-handed judgment that both sides "overreacted" in fact emboldens the police to

continue to harass, intimidate and frame up black people for objecting to racist mistreatment.

Gates's "crime" was that he objected to being treated like a criminal at the hands of a cop who sought to humiliate him and put him "in his place." Gates is justifiably proud of his intellectual achievements and hardly reticent to show it. In the view of white racists, he is an "uppity" black man. Yet the treatment meted out to this eminent professor was plenty mild compared to what might happen to a ghetto resident who got into a confrontation with the cops. Gates was released after four hours in jail, and the disorderly conduct charge was dropped. Another in his place might have faced serious criminal charges, had drugs planted on him, been beaten or even shot. On July 11, Shem Walker, a black Army veteran, was gunned down in front of his mother's home in Brooklyn when he tried to push

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The Man in the Mirror Michael Jackson and Racist America



Los Angeles Times

On June 25, black megastar and musical icon Michael Jackson died at his home in Los Angeles. The "King of Pop," as he has been known for decades, was one of the most successful recording artists of all time and has remained hugely popular throughout the world. Following his death, there were spontaneous gatherings of fans dancing to his music in Harlem and doing the "moonwalk" or holding tributes as far away as Mexico City, Hong Kong and Paris. Rio de Janeiro's mayor announced the construction of a statue of Michael Jackson in the slums where he filmed one of his videos to "They Don't Care About Us." In Algiers, hundreds of singers and dancers from across the African continent performed the Jackson 5's "Blame It on the Boogie."

The tragedy of Jackson's death is that an extremely influential music career was driven to the brink of destruction by a savagely racist and puritanical witchhunt spanning more than a decade. The mass hysteria whipped up against Jackson over charges of "child molestation" was an indictment of this anti-sex, bigoted capitalist society, where being an eccentric black celebrity is enough for the state to try to frame you up with something. The stunning hypocrisy of the bourgeois media—which hounded and scapegoated Jackson as a "pedophile" when he was alive, even after he was acquitted of all charges, but then teemed with adulation and tributes after he died—was captured by an article in the *Los Angeles Times* (27 June): "The tabloids that had baited him mercilessly, dubbing him 'Wacko Jacko' for his erratic behavior,

increasingly strange looks and accusations of child molestation, were suddenly effusive in their praise of a man 'who provided the soundtrack to a billion lives'."

Victim of Racist Vendetta

During his highly publicized career—which soared when he was only eleven years old as the lead singer of the Jackson 5 under Motown Records, through his solo career as a songwriter, musician and performer up until age 50—Michael Jackson was famous not only for his talent and versatility, but also for challenging both racial and sexual identities. In the spirit of other "crossover" artists like Chuck Berry—who was one of the first artists to perform to multiracial audiences—Jackson was known for breaking down racial barriers and was the first black artist to get heavy airplay on MTV.

But the "inexcusable" racial barrier that he attempted to break down was his appearance. Whether due to vitiligo or to skin bleaching, the fact is that his gradual "whitening" and plastic surgeries did nothing to make him less black in the eyes of racist America—a twisted confirmation of the color-caste nature of black oppression. No money in the world, no changes to your "racial" appearance, could ever change the fact that, if you are born black, capitalist America will make sure to try to put you in your place. In a country where the white supremacist ideology of racial "purity" resulted in the "one drop of black blood" rule, Jackson's physical transformation became a transgression that the bour-

geois media and "public opinion" would not let him get away with.

There is a real connection among blacks to someone who, no matter what he did, always had to respond to this society's expectations of what a black person should look like, act like and sleep with. Even in death, the mud continues to be slung against this enormously talented and idiosyncratic man, with most black people defiantly coming to his defense. In the last few weeks, it was not rare for TV and radio commentators to ask why black people seem to identify with Michael Jackson since he "looked white." Rabidly vile Fox News commentator Bill O'Reilly ranted on his show *The O'Reilly Factor* against blacks seeing Jackson as their own when he looked white and "chose to have white children." In pure O'Reilly fashion, this was a bitter and unfiltered expression of the American bourgeois psyche.

Race and Sex in America

As we stated in our article "Stop Vendetta Against Michael Jackson!" (WV No. 818, 23 January 2004): "The Jackson case represents an intersection of blatant anti-gay bigotry, the reactionary state-enforced stigma against intergenerational sex, and racial prejudice." The intense vilification of Michael Jackson served the bourgeoisie's aim to whip up hysteria over race and sex, which is all too common in a country where blacks (famous or not) are frequently indicted on false charges involving sex.

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