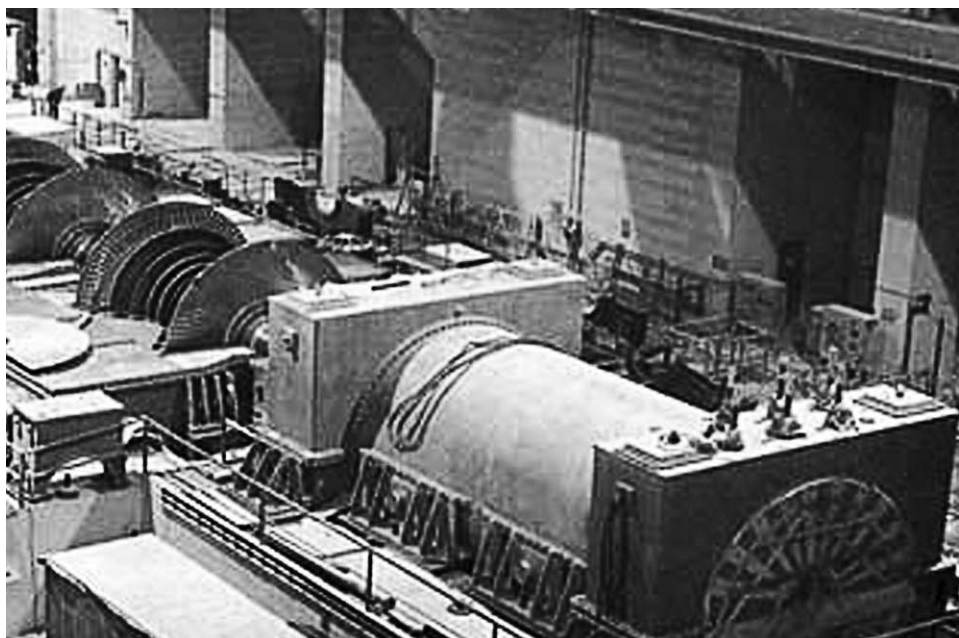


## No to Imperialist Sanctions!

# Down With U.S./Israeli Threats Against Iran!



Above: At Pittsburgh G20 Summit, Barack Obama, flanked by France's Nicolas Sarkozy and Britain's Gordon Brown, threatens Iran over its nuclear program. Right: Iran's Bushehr nuclear power station.



Reuters

When Iran reported last month to the International Atomic Energy Agency that it was setting up a new nuclear enrichment facility, the Obama administration seized upon that otherwise routine announcement as the pretext for a fresh round of imperialist saber rattling. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton threatened "crippling" sanctions if Iran did not agree to rein in its nuclear program. President Barack Obama, speaking before the United Nations General Assembly on September 23, virtually parroted former president George Bush's 2002 "axis of evil" speech, railing that Iran and North Korea "must be held accountable." This is from the chief executive of the ruling class that brought humanity the atomic incineration of 200,000 people in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, the slaughter of millions in counterrevolutionary wars in Korea and Vietnam in the 1950s and '60s, and countless CIA-sponsored coups and death squad regimes in Latin America and elsewhere—to cite just a few of the crimes of U.S. imperialism.

Meanwhile, the chief of staff of the Israeli military declared that "all options are on the table" with regard to Iran (haaretz.com, 21 September). That is the standard expression used by Israeli and U.S. officials—including by Obama during the presidential election campaign last year—to invoke the threat of a military attack against Iran. This summer, the British *Sunday Times* (5 July) reported that Saudi Arabia had secretly assured the head of the Mossad, Israel's CIA, that Riyadh would turn a blind eye if the Israeli air force flew through its airspace in order to attack nuclear installations in Iran. The same day that this article was published, an interview was aired with

Vice President Joe Biden declaring that Israel has a "sovereign right" to carry out military strikes against Iran.

We are in no position to judge the likelihood of an impending U.S. or Israeli attack on Iran. The Iranian government says that it does not plan to develop the bomb, and has actually agreed to limited inspections. (Claims that Iraq was flouting such imperialist inspections were used by the U.S. as a pretext to invade that country.) In fact, given the threats by the imperialists, it is perfectly reasonable and necessary for Iran to pursue acquisition of nuclear weapons and adequate delivery systems to deter attack. In today's world, possession of nukes has increasingly become a necessary means of maintaining national sovereignty.

In the event of military attack against Iran by the U.S. or by Israel—the only nuclear-armed country in the Near East—operating on behalf of the U.S., it would be in the interest of the international proletariat to stand for the military defense of Iran, without giving an iota of political support to the reactionary Tehran regime. Likewise, in the lead-up to the U.S. invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, we stood for the military defense of these countries while maintaining our intransigent political opposition to the reactionary, woman-hating Taliban cutthroats and the bloody capitalist dictatorship of Saddam Hussein. Every victory for the imperialists encourages more predatory wars; every setback they suffer serves to assist the struggles of working people and the oppressed the world over. We demand the immediate, unconditional withdrawal of U.S. and NATO troops and bases from Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Central Asia!

### Obama's Facelift for U.S. Imperialism

As we have repeatedly pointed out, after eight years of the oddly demented regime of George W. Bush, which reveled in imperialist arrogance and barbarity, Obama is well suited to help refurbish

U.S. imperialism's tarnished image around the world. In that regard, Obama last month scuttled a fantastical (and costly) Bush plan to deploy (unworkable) missile interceptors in Poland—i.e., in Russia's "backyard"—ostensibly to shoot down (nonexistent) Iranian intercontinental ballistic missiles.

While outwardly talking up the need to engage Iran diplomatically, behind the scenes Obama has expanded Bush's efforts to stifle the Iranian economy, now seeking to cut off the supply of fuel on which the country depends. In this, Obama is simply carrying out his presidential campaign promise of "putting the squeeze on them." (Iran, for lack of refinery capacity, relies on gasoline imports for as much as 40 percent of its consumption.)

Iran is subject to three sets of UN sanctions as well as a growing number of U.S. sanctions. As revolutionary Marxists, we oppose any U.S., UN or European economic sanctions against Iran, which are an act of war. Whether the Commander-in-Chief is a Democrat or Republican, wars of conquest and occupation are an integral feature of imperialism, from the Philippines at the dawn of the 20th century to Iraq and Afghanistan today. As Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin explained in *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1916), the pronounced importance of the export of capital is a characteristic of imperialism. The productive forces of capitalism long ago outgrew the confines of the nation-state, with the imperialist powers, each representing its own national interests, engaging in ruthless struggle against each other and their neocolonial victims to redivide markets and spheres of influence, leading to war.

Washington has been largely successful in getting international banks and oil companies to stop financing or working on oil and gas contracts in Iran. This has put in question dozens of Iranian development projects. As *Time* (30 September) reported:

"Rather than passing laws or attempting to push new sanctions through the

U.N. Security Council—where Russia and China could veto them—officials are quietly approaching companies directly, convincing executives that the cost of doing business with Iran has become too high.... "The message seems to be getting across."

Indeed, one reason Tehran views nuclear power as an important potential source of energy is the debilitating impact of sanctions on its oil and gas fields, which have been starved of the technologies necessary for their upkeep and improvement.

A bill that has overwhelming bipartisan support in Congress would formalize Obama's policy by legally banning any company involved in the sale of gasoline to Iran from doing business in the U.S. The bill's chief author, Democratic Congressman Howard Berman, chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said that if the bill achieved its purpose, "the Iranian banking system would collapse" and Iran's "economy would be seriously impaired" (*Washington Post*, 26 September). That scenario would have a devastating impact on Iran's entire population, especially working people and the poor.

After British Petroleum and India-based Reliance halted exports of refined petroleum products to Iran, Chinese state-owned companies stepped in to fill the gap and now supply about one-third of Iran's gasoline imports. China has been rapidly deepening its economic links with Iran, as it has with other oil-producing countries outside the Near East—for example, in Africa and Venezuela—where Washington has an overwhelmingly dominant strategic position. China has been Iran's biggest oil export market for the past five years, and Beijing has committed some \$120 billion to Iranian oil and gas projects. As two former National Security Council staff members noted in the *New York Times* (29 September): "Chinese military officials are particularly focused on the potential for Iranian hydrocarbons to come to China through

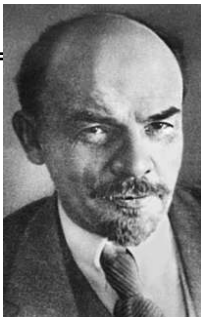
continued on page 10





TROTSKY

FROM THE ARCHIVES OF MARXISM



LENIN

Martin Widelin: Martyred Trotskyist Leader in World War II German Underground

World War II was the second round of the bloody conflict among gangs of imperialist powers. It was driven by the same underlying economic impulse as the First World War: the struggle among the imperialist powers to seize new arenas of exploitation around the planet and to defend their existing ones. However, unlike during World War I, in 1939, the year World War II began, the Soviet Union existed. The USSR, despite Stalinist degeneration, continued to embody the gains ushered in by the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, such as collectivized property and a planned economy. It represented a conquest for the world proletariat that had to be defended. As Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky wrote in "War and the Fourth International" (1934): "Defense of the Soviet Union from the blows of the capitalist enemies, irrespective of the circumstances and immediate causes of the conflict, is the elementary and imperative duty of every honest labor organization."

Among the young militants who rallied to Trotsky's banner of proletarian internationalism was Martin Monat (Widelin). Born in Berlin in 1913, he was an activist since the age of 15. Hounded by the Gestapo after Hitler's rise to power in 1933, Widelin was compelled to leave Germany in 1938. He went to Belgium, where he came into contact with the Fourth International and was won over to Trotskyism from Hashomer Hatzair, a socialist-Zionist youth organization. In 1941, he issued a manifesto in German against Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union. He also founded the illegal German Trotskyist paper, Arbeiter und Soldat (Worker and Soldier).

Widelin carried out courageous underground work during the war, traveling between Belgium and France and establishing a special group of militants for work among soldiers, crucially including German soldiers. The Stalinists denounced all German soldiers as Nazis, all the while falsely claiming, along with the "democratic" imperialists, that World War II was for "democracy against fascism." In contrast, the Trotskyists sought fraternization with German soldiers—overwhelmingly conscripts, many of whom hailed from Communist or Social Democratic backgrounds—with the aim of winning them to the revolutionary program of turning the imperialist war into a civil war against the imperialist mass murderers.

Widelin, along with another comrade, Marguerite Baget, was arrested in July 1944 by the French Anti-Communist Police Bureau (SPAC). After being tortured, Widelin was then handed over by the SPAC to the German Gestapo, which murdered him on July 22. As Marguerite Baget acidly noted in an article reprinted

they came to power and then afterward, both inside Germany and in the countries occupied by them. He was a living refutation of the foul slander that the German working class was responsible for Hitlerism. As such, he inspired both Belgian and French workers and German soldiers to struggle against Hitlerite oppression.

it did on many an Allied general.

Widelin's work was exceedingly dangerous. It was far easier to stick a knife between the ribs of a German soldier on a dark night than to meet that same German in the daytime, win his confidence and enlist him in the ranks of the revolutionary fighters against fascism. But difficult though this work was, Widelin carried it out with growing success until the day of his death.

In close cooperation with French and Belgian Trotskyists, he helped to establish a network of Fourth Internationalist cells within the Wehrmacht. This work was so effective that the Gestapo dispatched a special commission to Paris to destroy the Trotskyists. In one German unit alone, more than 30 soldiers were executed as Trotskyists after a stoolpigeon had been introduced into their midst.

Widelin's greatest achievement was Arbeiter und Soldat (Worker and Soldier), illegal German paper which he founded and edited under the direction of the European Secretariat of the Fourth International.

To be caught with a copy of this paper meant horrible torture and certain death. Yet it circulated from France where it was printed in the underground all the way back through Belgium into Germany itself. And—as the British Trotskyist paper, Socialist Appeal, reported recently—copies made their way to the distant German garrisons in Italy. (Despite many raids, the Gestapo never discovered the press on which Arbeiter und Soldat was printed.)

Among Widelin's other contributions was the role he played in helping to prepare the historic European Conference of the Fourth International in February, 1944, to which he was a delegate and by which he was elected as a member of the European Executive Committee.

Widelin's murder was a great blow to the Fourth International and above all to its German section. If he were ALIVE today, we know that he would again be inside Germany, fighting to end the Allied oppression of that country. But not in any nationalist spirit! He would be passionately organizing the German workers for independent struggle, he would be actively working among the Allied soldiers trying to win their sympathy and support. His method would still be fraternization. His slogan and goal would still be the one for which he gave his life—the Socialist United States of Europe and the whole world. ■



Above: SWP's Militant pays tribute to Trotskyist martyr Martin Widelin. Left: Underground Trotskyist paper Arbeiter und Soldat (Worker and Soldier), founded by Widelin, appealed to German troops in occupied France on basis of proletarian internationalism.

in the 20 July 1946 issue of the Militant, newspaper of the then-revolutionary Socialist Workers Party in the U.S.: "What a symbol—the German Widelin tortured and killed by the French-German Gestapo." We reprint below a tribute to Widelin and his work by Trotskyist leader George Breitman, published in the same issue of the Militant.

\* \* \*

Martin Widelin—member of the European Executive Committee of the Fourth International, assassinated by the French-German Gestapo in Paris two years ago on July 22—was one of the great figures of the revolutionary movement of our time.

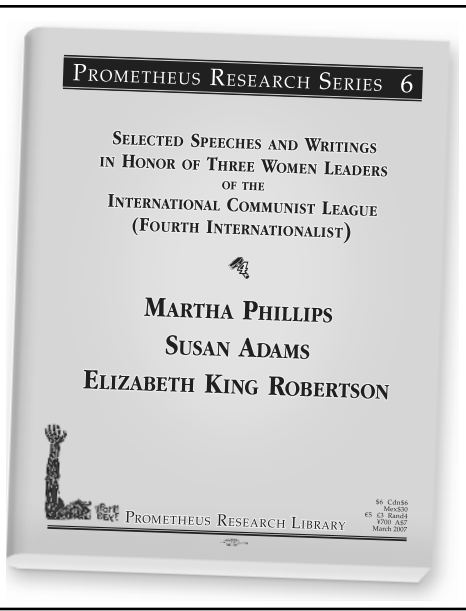
A German himself, he was a lifelong foe of German capitalist reaction and fascism. He fought against the Nazis before

Opposition to Nazism was not unusual in Europe. But the anti-fascism of Widelin and his comrades was something unique. For their opposition was conducted throughout in the spirit of internationalism.

They did not unite with the agents of Allied capitalism around the nationalist slogan of "Death to the Boche!"—as the Stalinists and "Socialists" did. On the contrary, Widelin and his co-workers in all countries sought to unite the masses of the occupied countries with the German soldiers in the occupying armies in a joint struggle against their common oppressors. Fraternization was their method, for they knew that only through fraternization could the struggle against Hitlerism have a successful revolutionary outcome. As a consequence, the Gestapo placed a higher price on the head of Widelin than

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# The Economic Crisis and the Transitional Program

Johannesburg, South Africa  
6 September 2009

Dear comrades,

Having just read the article “The California Budget Crisis and the Bankruptcy of American Capitalism” in WV No. 941 (28 August), I have a criticism of the programmatic answer we offer for the current economic crisis. The article gives a compelling picture of the massive attacks being meted out by the dual capitalist parties that run the state government. However, the presentation of transitional demands is deficient in that the article never makes the point that a revolutionary workers government, expropriating the capitalist class as a whole, would proceed to build a planned economy. The workers government is defined—twice—as one in which “those who labor rule,” and expropriation is raised in the last paragraph. But the fundamental economic task of a workers state—the development of a socialized, planned economy based on a perspective of international proletarian revolution, i.e., a world socialist order—is not. Thus, the article raises the demand for public works but does not provide the link made in Leon Trotsky’s Transitional Program between such programs and the need for comprehensive economic planning.

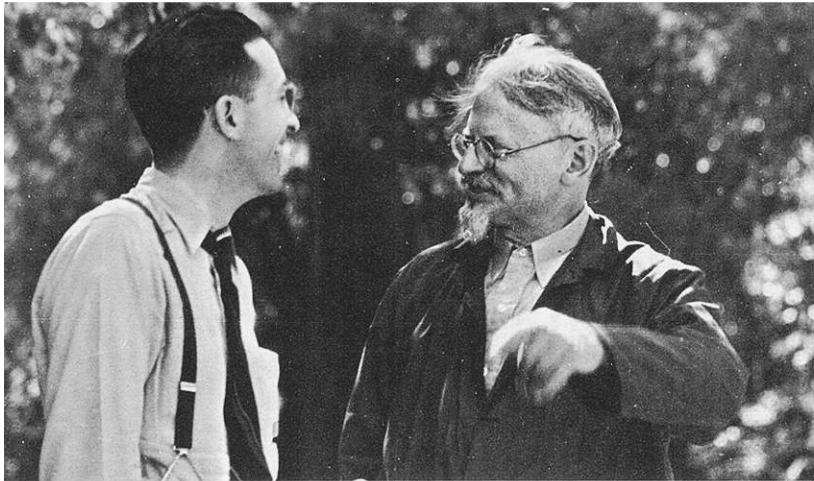
This could leave readers with a narrow understanding of the task of a workers government and of socialism as a program to seize the existing wealth of the capitalists and use it to provide quality health care, housing, etc. In both South Africa and the U.S., this would certainly be a start in reconstructing society in the interests of the masses. But it is not the fundamental answer to the periodic wrenching economic crises wrought by the anarchic system of capitalist production or to overcoming scarcity.

In this period of ideological reaction, we have the task of defending the most basic tenets of revolutionary Marxism—not least, the need for a planned economy—against bourgeois spokesmen and their tails on the reformist left, which has increasingly renounced any allegiance to the October Revolution and any defense of the workers state it created, as well as the remaining deformed workers states of China, North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba. As a case in point, today’s Johannesburg *Sunday Times* reported that Trevor Manuel, formerly Finance minister and now Planning minister for the Tripartite Alliance government under Jacob Zuma, has released a policy paper that “warned against a communist-style of planning, saying centralisation of decision-making could cripple the state” and cited “China’s communist Great Leap Forward policy and the

Soviet Union’s planned economy as examples of planning ‘gone terribly wrong.’” This comes from a spokesman for a government that includes the South African Communist Party, which we should not expect to make any defense of socialist planning. I don’t think that the California article was the place to get into how Stalinist bureaucratic rule gave central planning a bad name (to put it mildly). But I do think that in any substantial article dealing with

**Socialist Workers Party leader Farrell Dobbs with Leon Trotsky in Mexico. The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International, known as the Transitional Program, is a basic programmatic document of the Trotskyist movement.**

Pathfinder



the current economic crisis we should speak to the need for a planned economy. This is not only a fundamental, necessary component of our program, but it has potential popular appeal given the attacks on the working class, blacks, immigrants and the poor coming down thanks to an economic system based on the drive for private profit and not social need.

Comradely,  
B.

\* \* \*

7 September 2009

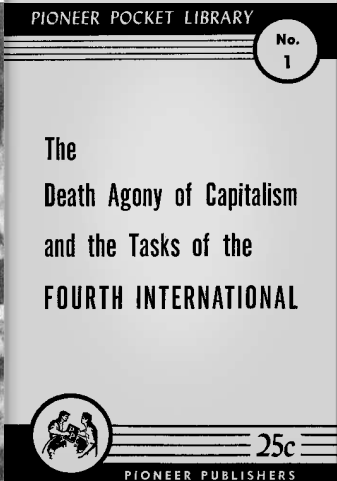
To the Editor:

“In the United States, where a man who owns a million is referred to as being ‘worth’ a million, market concepts have sunk in deeper than anywhere else.” —“Marxism in Our Time”  
“In any event, whoever has not overcome the habit of uncritically accepting the ready-made ideological reflections of economic development, whoever has not reasoned out, in the footsteps of Marx, the essential nature of the commodity as the basic cell of the capitalist organism, will prove to be forever incapable of scientifically comprehending the most important and the most acute manifestations of our epoch.” —“Marxism in Our Time”

The reason I write is to comment on a sentence in the very fine lead article in WV No. 941 [28 August]. Near the end of that article one finds this: “While the capitalist rulers bray that Marxism has proved to be a ‘failed experiment,’ they cannot eliminate the class struggle, which

is born of the irreconcilable conflict of interests between labor and capital.” This is undoubtedly correct—as far as it goes. But the question still remains—either socialism or barbarism. And what of Marxism? From the anarchist “left” through the entire political spectrum to the extreme right, if there is one point upon which all these “fine ladies and gentlemen” agree, it is that genuine Marxism (a.k.a. Trotskyism) and a workers’ government (the

be right. We understand this, but the most advanced workers and youth, as yet, do not. Therefore, Marx’s ideas must be patiently explained over and over and over again. As a friendly suggestion, I would like to put forward the following point: I think that it might prove useful, if only through the device of a running commentary (incorporating updated statistics and trends), to present a more contemporary version of “Marxism in Our Time” by



dictatorship of the proletariat) are historically irrelevant as *the* solution and resolution to the class struggle of labor against capital. And they have been quite vocal and strident about this, especially since the destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers’ state. Furthermore, the Bolshevik-Leninist party—the essential instrument and only means of successfully destroying capitalism and its State through leading the workers’ (socialist) revolution and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat as the gateway to constructing the socialist order—is likewise poo-pooed by these oh-so “learned” anti-Marxists of all stripes. Nothing could be further from the truth than the shrill babblings of these assorted anti-Marxists. The current crisis of American (and world) capitalism proves beyond any doubt that Marx was and continues to

Trotsky (1939). Trotsky did something similar in his 1937 work “Ninety Years of the *Communist Manifesto*.” If one declares that Karl Marx was right (and he most certainly was and is), then one should make clear to the most advanced workers and youth, point for point, exactly how and where, in a systematic presentation. As J.S. noted in his excellent article on the united front [“The United Front Tactic: Its Use and Abuse”] (WV No. 941), the “...perspective should be to produce more and better propaganda...explaining many complex ideas to the few.” There are more than a few in the SL/US and the ICL(FI) who are capable of producing such a work. Additionally, I have found it useful to re-read Trotsky’s 1932 Copenhagen speech “In Defense of October” and his work “Stalinism and Bolshevism” (1937). Best fraternal wishes, Mike W.

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# SLAVERY AND THE ORIGINS OF AMERICAN CAPITALISM

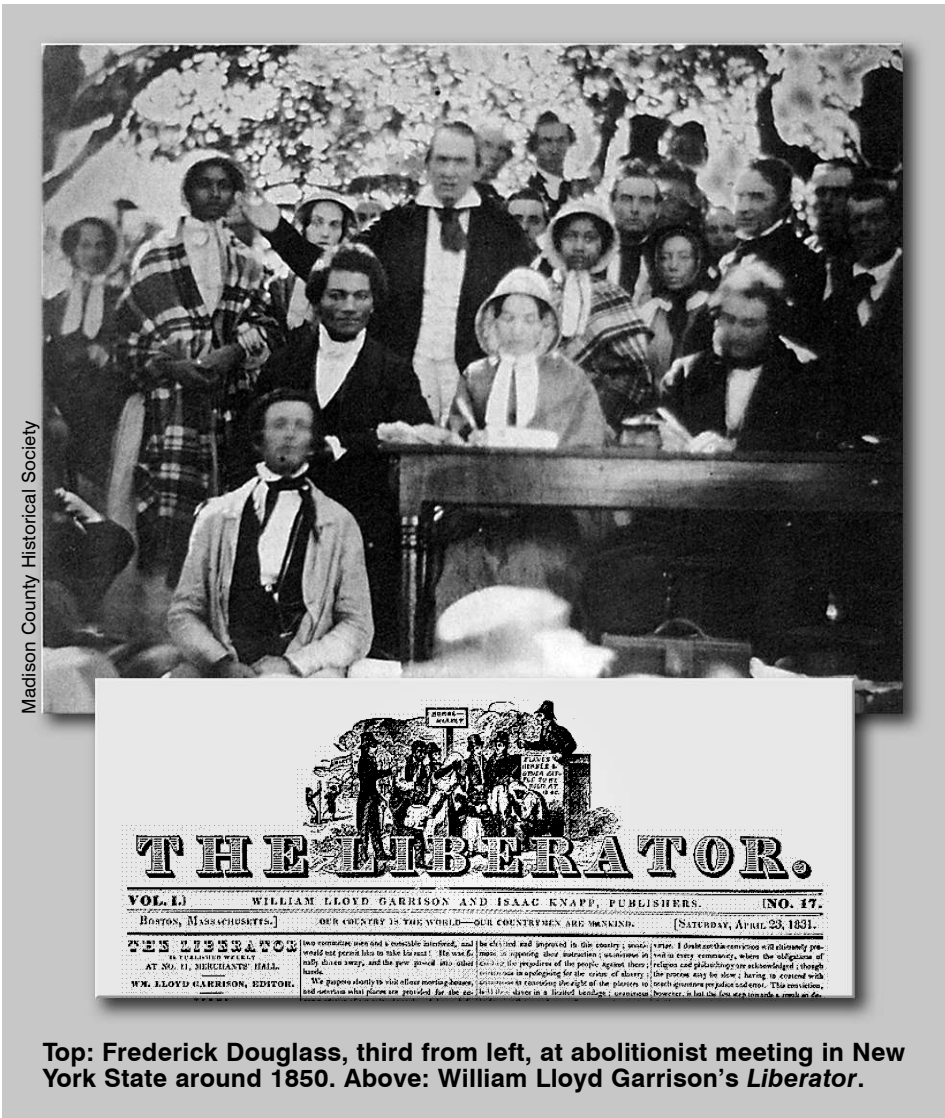
We print below, in slightly edited form, the third and final part of a presentation by Jacob Zorn to a Spartacist League educational in New York on 30 March 2008. The first two parts were published in WV Nos. 942 and 943 (11 September and 25 September).

### PART THREE

One way of contrasting the American Revolution to the French Revolution is to look at the case of Tom Paine. In the American Revolution, he was the far-left wing. But when he went to France, while he supported the French Revolution, he ended up essentially on the right wing of the revolution. It wasn't his ideas that changed so much as the context. And when the Haitian Revolution erupted in 1791, even the elements of the American Revolution that supported the French Revolution, such as Jefferson, hated the Haitian Revolution and wanted to drown it in blood, because they saw in it a spectre that would threaten slavery in the South. Interestingly, Hamilton was one of the more open to recognizing Haiti as an independent country, partly because he hated France. Also, it's interesting that the leaders of the American Revolution who were the most anti-slavery—Alexander Hamilton and Tom Paine—were not really American in the traditional sense. Tom Paine had just come over from Britain, and Hamilton was from the West Indies.

I do not want to suggest that the American Revolution was nothing more than a pro-slavery rebellion. As the article on Haiti points out, "To be sure, some radical elements in the American Revolution, including Thomas Paine, denounced slavery as a moral evil and called for its abolition. And Jefferson himself was well aware—and was constantly reminded by his liberal and radical English and French friends—that black chattel slavery was blatantly incompatible with the democratic principles he so eloquently proclaimed" (WV No. 764, 14 September 2001).

The common way liberals and idealists deal with this problem, especially with Jefferson, is to say that the *ideals* of Jefferson transcended the *reality* of Jefferson (and other founders)—that this was their own personal weakness. But in reality, whatever his personal weaknesses, Jefferson's beliefs reflected the interests of his class, which was the slav-



Top: Frederick Douglass, third from left, at abolitionist meeting in New York State around 1850. Above: William Lloyd Garrison's *Liberator*.

ocracy, and it was *social struggle* that expanded bourgeois-democratic rights to black people, including through the Civil War, and not a closer reading of the Declaration of Independence.

Incidentally, abolitionists such as William Lloyd Garrison rejected the entire Constitution—they called it a "covenant with death"—because it was pro-slavery, but in some ways they drew the wrong conclusion. That is to say, they avoided political struggle in favor of "moral suasion." But their analysis of the Constitution as pro-slavery was correct. When Frederick Douglass broke with Garrison, he also changed his views of the Constitution.

### The Early U.S. and Slavery

To many, the pro-slavery nature of the Constitution at the time may have appeared justified because many people thought that slavery would die a slow but

natural death: the international slave trade was going to be abolished, the fertility of the soil in tobacco country was declining, and tobacco prices were in decline. But two things gave the Southern slavocracy a renewed lease on life, and Jefferson was at least indirectly involved in both. One was the invention of the cotton gin in the 1790s that made slave-produced cotton profitable. Jefferson as secretary of state approved the patent by Eli Whitney, and he also bought one of the earliest models. The second was the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, in which Jefferson as president basically illegally doubled the size of the United States. There is a whole debate in the history books over whether Napoleon or Jefferson was the one most responsible for the Louisiana Purchase. But in reality I think it was Toussaint L'Ouverture—by having defeated the French in Haiti, he made it so that Napoleon wanted to wash his hands of any colonies in America as quickly as possible.

Taken together, these developments increased the power of the Southern slavocracy and propelled them into conflict with the North. As we all know, this conflict between the capitalist North and the slave South eventually led to the Civil War, the second bourgeois revolution in the United States. However, the Northern capitalists were not engaged in one unceasing revolutionary struggle. Key elements of the Northern bourgeoisie were all too eager to cohabit with slavery because it was profitable. However, by the mid 19th century, the development of capitalism as a whole increasingly came into conflict with the domination of the Southern system in national politics. Marx in 1861 sarcastically described what he called the Northern bourgeoisie's "long hesitations, and an exhibition of forbearance unknown in the annals of European history," in describing their willingness to compromise with the South.

And in fact, Marx was one of the great-

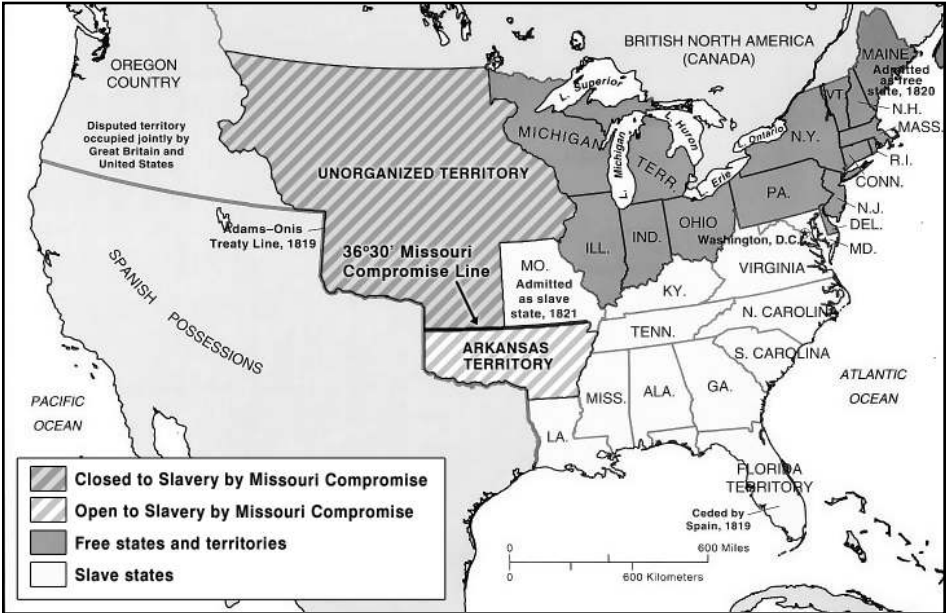
est observers of the class dynamics of American politics. Here's a rather long quote from the same article by Marx:

"The progressive abuse of the Union by the slave power, working through its alliance with the Northern Democratic party, is, so to say, the general formula of the United States history since the beginning of this century. The successive compromise measures mark the successive degrees of the encroachment by which the Union became more and more transformed into the slave of the slave-owner. Each of these compromises denotes a new encroachment of the South, a new concession of the North. At the same time none of the successive victories of the South was carried but after a hot contest with an antagonistic force in the North, appearing under different party names with different watchwords and under different colors. If the positive and final result of each single contest told in favor of the South, the attentive observer of history could not but see that every new advance of the slave power was a step forward to its ultimate defeat. Even at the times of the Missouri Compromise the contending forces were so evenly balanced that Jefferson, as we see from his memoirs, apprehended the Union to be in danger of splitting on that deadly antagonism. The encroachments of the slaveholding power reached their maximum point, when, by the Kansas-Nebraska bill, for the first time in the history of the United States, as Mr. [Stephen] Douglas himself confessed, every legal barrier to the diffusion of Slavery within the United States territories was broken down, when, afterward, a Northern candidate bought his Presidential nomination by pledging the Union to conquer or purchase in Cuba a new field of dominion for the slaveholder; when, later on, by the Dred Scott decision, diffusion of Slavery by the Federal power was proclaimed as the law of the American Constitution, and lastly, when the African slave-trade was de facto reopened on a larger scale than during the times of its legal existence. But, concurrently with this climax of Southern encroachments, carried by the connivance of the Northern Democratic party, there were unmistakable signs of Northern antagonistic agencies having gathered such strength as must soon turn the balance of power."

—"The American Question in England" (1861)

So the point is that there was what New York Senator William Henry Seward called an "irrepressible conflict" between slavery and freedom. I'm going to give somewhat short shrift to the 1850s, not because it's an unimportant period, but because it's so important that comrades are probably more familiar with it than with the earlier stuff. I also think that the first volume of James McPherson's *Ordeal by Fire* (1982) covers this ground very well. But I want to draw comrades' attention to several factors. One is the role of the political parties, and the second is the role of expansion.

As Marx illustrates, the Democratic Party—including in the North—was a pro-slavery party. The contemporary political system that we have today is relatively new. For much of the antebellum period, there were two parties, the Whigs and the Democrats. The Democratic Party, formed by Jefferson in 1792 and reformed by President Andrew Jackson in the 1830s, was a populist party. They were in favor of what is often called "Jacksonian Democracy," which goes down in various history books as the expansion of democracy in the United States. They were for the rule of the "little man"; they were against banks and entrenched economic power. They opposed the creation of a national bank. They were a white man's party, viciously anti-Indian—Jackson carried out one of the brutal series of attacks that pushed the Indians out of

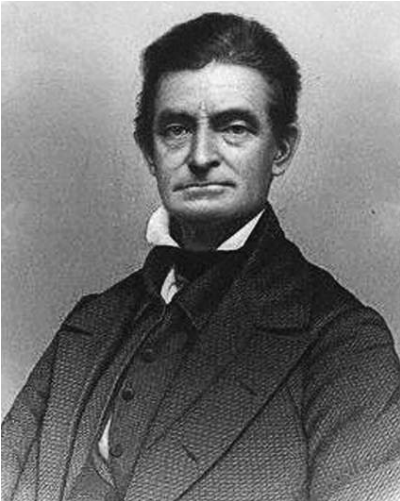


Missouri Compromise of 1820 admitted Missouri as a slave state. As Marx noted: "Each of these compromises denotes a new encroachment of the South, a new concession of the North."

the Southeast and further west—and also viciously pro-slavery and anti-black. This was also the time of increasing Irish immigration, and the Democratic Party, especially in big Northern cities like here in New York, based themselves on immigration.

In the South, the Democrats were an openly pro-slavery party. Although he had his differences with Jackson, one key Democratic leader was John C. Calhoun, who was in many ways the intellectual grandfather of the Confederacy. He developed the idea—“nullification”—that a state could refuse to abide by the federal government if it disagreed. He also believed, unlike Jefferson, that slavery was not only necessary, but was positively good. And this is really the history of the Democratic Party. There is a new book that is very interesting, by Bruce Bartlett, who writes for the *Wall Street Journal*, called *Wrong on Race: The Democratic Party’s Buried Past* (2008). He is pro-Republican and so has an ax to grind, but it goes through the history of the Democratic Party on the question of slavery and then later on Reconstruction, up through the Dixiecrats.

The other political party was called the Whigs. They opposed what they saw as increased presidential power. They wanted the government to intervene into the economy to help spur capitalist development, such as through a national bank, protective tariffs to develop industry, and government spending on what were called “internal improvements,” or infrastruc-



**John Brown, courageous fighter against slavery.**

ture. Both these parties had supporters in the North and the South, but as slavery became a more important issue, they were increasingly torn apart.

The other party that developed, as the slave question basically corroded the Whigs in the 1850s, was the Republican Party. The Republicans were not an abolitionist party, but they were perhaps the most radical mainstream party that the country has ever seen. They were dedicated not to eliminating slavery, but to rolling back the power of the slave South—the so-called Slave Power. There is a good book by Eric Foner that sums up the goal of the early Republicans, called *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men* (1970). The Republican Party became the party of the American bourgeoisie in its struggle against the slavocracy—it was a class-based party, something that we are told doesn’t exist in the United States.

And then there were the abolitionists, who were seen as a radical fringe, but who played a very important role in pushing the question of slavery forward. I said that there is really no radical Cromwell or Robespierre figure in the American Revolution, but it’s the abolitionists who are the real radical bourgeois revolutionaries in the history of the United States. It is to them that we look, not Thomas Jefferson.

Why did the two systems keep butting heads? It was not about the morality of slavery or about broader philosophical issues. It was because both slavery and capitalism had built-in tendencies to expand, and the expansion of one came at the expense of the other. So, as Marx wrote, one had to vanquish the other. There are three reasons why the Southern slavocracy needed to expand:

1. Exhausted soil. Just as in Roman times, the slavery system used up the soil rapidly. The emphasis was on getting the most crops possible now, and not on preserving the soil. In the North, they were able to invest capital in order to fertilize farm land, but in the South they didn’t do that. So there was an endless need for more land. According to Eugene Genovese’s *The Political Economy of Slavery* (1967), by 1858 some 40 percent of the South’s cotton land was already exhausted.
2. Political. The three-fifths compromise was designed to give the South more power than its population warranted, but it still could not allow the North to obtain



**Toussaint L'Ouverture, leader of Haitian Revolution. Establishment of black republic in Caribbean inspired slave revolts in American South.**

more free states. Every free state needed to be offset by a slave state, to prevent the North from getting the upper hand.

3. Domestic slave trade. Less important, but still real, was that the slaveholders in the older states, like Virginia and Maryland, raised money by selling slaves to the Lower South, so they had an interest in keeping slavery expanding.

So the whole politics of the South was one of expanding slavery, and they saw any interference with the growth and expansion of slavery as a dagger aimed at the heart of the entire slave system.

But the free North also needed to expand. The key reason was, as we all know, that capitalism has to have expanding markets as its productivity increases. Capitalism depends on growing markets, and although a fair number of capitalists made a profit on selling to the South, slaves were not very big consumers, and there was a limit to the planters’ demand for goods. So from the point of view of the North, the South was really a stagnant economy, compared to the West, which the Northeastern and Northern capitalists saw as a vast potential market. They were increasingly selling to the West, but this

depended on the expansion of free labor and not slavery to the West.

The second reason was political. The North did not want to be dominated by the South more than it already was, so it needed to offset the growth of slave states. Both the North and the South had agreed in theory that expansion was good. This was the period of so-called “Manifest Destiny”—the idea that God had uniquely blessed the United States with the job of civilizing the American continent. This idea was popular in the North and in the South, but the devil was in the details, and the question was what to do about the land that became part of the United States.

The first real crisis came with the Missouri Compromise of 1820. Missouri was the second state admitted from the Louisiana Purchase, and essentially what was agreed on in 1820 was the temporary measure of drawing a line, anything north of which would become free, and anything south of which would become slave. But the problem was broached again every several years.

A key thing, to which I’m going to give a lot less attention than it deserves, was Texas. In the 1830s, slaveholders had moved to Texas, and they basically engineered a split from Mexico. The South supported this because they wanted Texas to join the country as a slave state. The so-called Texas Revolution of 1835-36 was basically a rebellion against Mexico in order to protect slavery. The North did not want Texas to join as a slave state or, God forbid, several slave states.

So, a lot of the roots of the immediate struggle over slavery in the 1840s and ’50s go back to how to deal with the question of Texas. Mexico, for obvious reasons, did not want its former territory to be annexed by the United States, and when in 1845 the Southern states essentially were able to annex Texas, that act provoked a war with Mexico. And so, in 1846 the United States invaded Mexico and ended up occupying Mexico City and important cities like Veracruz and Monterrey. As a result of the 1846-48 war, the U.S. took over half of Mexico’s territory, and the acquisition of these new territories gave rise to disputes between the North and South that helped lead to the Civil War (see “Mexican-American War: Prelude to American Civil War,” WV Nos. 933 and 934, 27 March and 10 April).

*continued on page 6*

*Race is not a scientifically valid concept; it developed as a justification for exploitation and slavery. As early as 1893, the German Marxist leader Franz Mehring pointed to the fact that race is a social-historical concept in his work On Historical Materialism, which we excerpt below.*

Historical materialism sees historical development in the gradual progression from the domination of man by nature to the domination of nature by man.

This progress is one and the same as the progress of countless tribes of men, who developed out of the animal world to the one social community, which some day will encompass the whole of the human race. The course of history is not the “differentiation of the homogeneous, but the assimilation of the heterogeneous.” That differentiation was the legendary conception, as it is found in the Biblical genealogical construction of Ham, Shem and Japhet, in Tacitus’ German genealogy of the three brothers Ingaev, Istaev and Hermin, or the Slav Czech, Lech and Russ. This assimilation, however, is a scientific conception derived as much from what daily takes place before our eyes, as it is from the investigations into the history of primitive man.

It is one of the insoluble contradictions in which mechanical materialism moves in the field of history, that it totally denies in the struggle for existence in human society the principle of

## Franz Mehring

# On Race as a Social Construct

evolution with which, in the realm of nature, it explains the peculiarities of a given species as the adaptation to their environment in the fight for existence, and claims that the human race here has certain permanent features which it has never had and never will have. In tortured additions to this indefensible conception, in the effort to make it compatible with clearly contradictory facts, the concept of race has become so indeterminate.... In fact already in the pre-historical primitive times, the crossing and mixture of different races and tribes had begun, and the first civilizations of antiquity are proved by the Russian researcher Mechnikov to have been the result of a very colourful mixture of different races and tribes, of combinations in which the relative importance of the different combinations had never been remotely understood. Thus for example, it is difficult to weigh which of the three races, the black, the white or the yel-

low did the most for the civilization of ancient Egypt. The history of Chaldaea even shows that the black race, the so-called Kushites, were more advanced than any of the others in civilization. It advances us even less to take language instead of blood or colour as the sign of differentiation between races. In each of the main language groups, the Aryan, Semitic and Mongolian, there are people of the most varied origins, and if Herr Barth does have some reservations about the utterances of some “brilliant” statesman or other, to the effect that “race is everything” and yet claims that race is important, and tries to support this claim by insisting that the Aryan race is superior to the Semitic in its “political abilities,” then we must say in this connection not only that race is unimportant, but that it counts for absolutely nothing. And it is a little strange that Herr Barth refers to the words of some unnamed English statesman, while

he will of course have read in the works of the world famous English philosopher, John Stuart Mill, about the assumption of racial differences: “Of all vulgar modes of escaping from the consideration of the effect of social and moral influences on the human mind the most vulgar is that of attributing the diversities of conduct and character to inherent natural differences” (*Principles of Political Economy*, Vol. 1, p. 390).

Historical materialism does not neglect race in any way: it is the first to make it a clear concept. There is no more an unchanging race of human beings than there is an unchanging race of animals, except that animals are subject to the laws of development of nature, and the human race is subject to the laws of development of society. The more human beings become independent of nature, the more the natural races mix and merge together; the more man’s control over nature grows, the more completely the natural races become transformed into social classes. And as far as the capitalist mode of production extends, the differences between the races have been dissolved or are dissolving more each day into the class opposites. Within human society race is not a natural but a historic concept, which in the last analysis is determined by the material form of production, and is subordinate to the laws of its development, as Kautsky proved in the most convincing way in relation to concepts of nationality.



# Cops Rampage at G20 Protests

Thousands of police and National Guard members were mobilized against protesters outside the September 24-25 G20 summit, turning Pittsburgh into an armed camp for the better part of a week. Some 200 people were arrested and the reprisals continue. Elliot Madison faces charges for tweeting demonstrators instructions on how to avoid police.

## Young Spartacus

On October 1, FBI “anti-terrorism” agents spent 16 hours raiding his Queens, New York home. While helicopters circled overhead, they seized anarchist literature and other items in an attempt to frame him up as a terrorist. **Drop the charges against Elliot Madison and all the G20 protesters now!**

When our *Workers Vanguard* sales team arrived in Pittsburgh on Thursday, September 24, gangs of heavily armed and armored cops and troops roamed the center of the city. Protesters organized by the Pittsburgh G-20 Resistance Project tried to march without a permit and were brutally attacked by cops. Over a hundred students and bystanders, including members of the press, were arrested at that protest and a similar one on Friday.

The Pittsburgh G-20 Resistance Project vainly sought to pressure the capitalist state to serve the interests of the people, not corporations. Although their tactics were more militant, fundamentally they shared the same liberal framework as the organizers of Friday’s permitted “Peoples’ March to the G-20.” That event, also menaced by phalanxes of cops, was organized as a plea to the imperialists at the G20 summit for “Money for human needs, not for wars and occupations—Environ-



Pittsburgh, September 24.

## Drop All Charges Against Pittsburgh Protesters!

mental justice for the earth and its inhabitant—Jobs and health care for all.” Falling in step behind the imperialists’ anti-China crusade, organizers invited a large contingent of anti-communists carrying flags of the U.S. and of the CIA-backed Tibetan exiles to march at the front.

We were there not to pressure the capitalist state but to seek out those protesters open to our revolutionary communist program based on the social power of the work-

ing class. Against the sabre rattling against Iran’s nuclear facilities by Obama and the French and British imperialists, we raised a placard: “Iran Needs Nuclear Weapons to Defend Itself—Imperialist Hands Off Iran!” Below we reprint a protest letter to Pittsburgh mayor Luke Ravenstahl that we distributed in Pittsburgh, issued on September 24 by the Partisan Defense Committee, a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League.

\* \* \*

The Partisan Defense Committee condemns the brutal repression against anti-G20 demonstrators. We demand the immediate release and the dropping of all charges against the protesters.

Local armored police backed up by 4,000 federal and state agents have fired pepper gas canisters, pellet-filled beanbags and rubber bullets at assembled demonstrators. Protesters attempting to exercise their First Amendment rights to demonstrate were told, “You must leave the immediate vicinity regardless of your purpose.” Dozens have been arrested on trumped-up charges. So grotesque has been this assault on civil liberties that demonstrators hanging a banner on a bridge that merely read “Danger—climate destruction ahead. Reduce CO2 emissions now,” now face outrageous charges of “defiant trespass, disorderly conduct, obstruction of highways or other public passages, conspiracy and possession of instruments of crime.”

For those seeking to protest the ravages of poverty made worse by the world economic crisis, you have made your city into a police state. We again demand the release of all leftist protesters and the dropping of all charges against them. ■

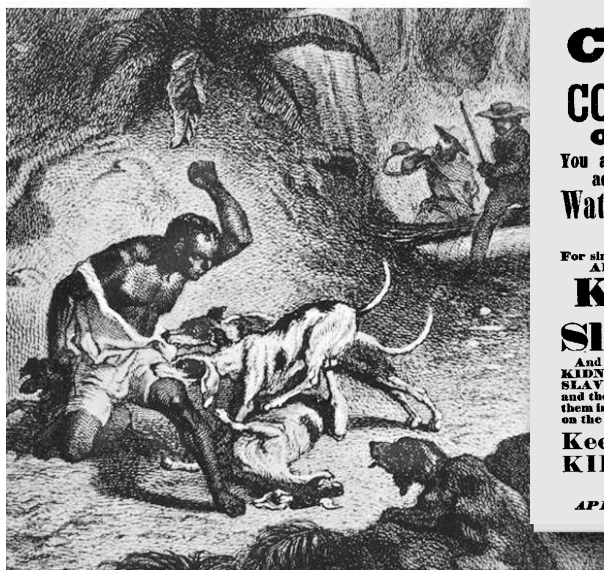
## Slavery...

(continued from page 5)

The situation created compromise after compromise. Many Northerners preferred to compromise with the South, and so there were a series of compromises, but the crisis over Texas and the invasion of Mexico basically made continued compromises impossible. Northerners, including Democrats, had been less willing to support the invasion of Mexico because it was seen as a war to expand slavery. Not just the abolitionists—although the abolitionists were the most fervent—but many people in the North were against the invasion of Mexico because they thought it was a pro-slavery conspiracy, which to a large degree it was.

The U.S. obviously won the war against Mexico, which had important effects on the development of both U.S. and Mexican capitalism. Yet the immediate result of the victory was to bring the United States even closer to civil war. The first sign of this was the Wilmot Proviso, in which Northern states refused to finance the war against Mexico so long as it was seen as increasing the number of slave states. The Wilmot Proviso declared that the war would only be funded if the states that were gained from it did not become slave. This cut across party lines—Wilmot was a Democrat from Pennsylvania—and it heralded the realignment of American politics along sectional lines.

Soon after the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which finalized the taking



Hull Museums

**Slave attacked by slave catchers and their bloodhounds. Poster issued by Boston abolitionists in 1851 warned blacks following 1850 Fugitive Slave Law.**

over of half of Mexico, there was the Compromise of 1850, and by this time the split of the country was already posed; it was already talked about. And in fact Calhoun, who would die shortly afterward, all but advocated a division of the country, that is, the secession of the South. The Compromise of 1850 allowed California to become a free state, but it put off deciding on the rest of the former Mexican territories, and this was seen as allowing the possibility of slavery there. More grotesquely, it also created the Fugitive Slave Act, which made Northern states complicit in “returning” slaves who had run away from the South to the North. When

**CAUTION!!**  
**COLORED PEOPLE**  
**OF BOSTON, ONE & ALL,**  
You are hereby respectfully CAUTIONED and advised, to avoid conversing with the **Watchmen and Police Officers of Boston.**  
For since the recent ORDER OF THE MAYOR & ALDERMEN, they are empowered to act as **KIDNAPPERS** AND **Slave Catchers,**  
And they have already been actually employed in KIDNAPPING, CATCHING, AND KEEPING SLAVES. Therefore, if you value your LIBERTY, and the Welfare of the Fugitives among you, Shun them in every possible manner, as so many **SCOUNDRELS** on the track of the most unfortunate of your race.  
**Keep a Sharp Look Out for KIDNAPPERS, and have TOP EYE open.**  
**APRIL 24, 1851.**

they attempted to capture Anthony Burns, a runaway slave, in Boston and provoked angry mass protests, it really posed the question of the relationship between the North and the South. Frederick Douglass spelled this out when the Fugitive Slave Act was passed:

“By an act of the American Congress, not yet two years old, slavery has been nationalized in its most horrible and revolting form. By that act, Mason and Dixon’s line has been obliterated; New York has become as Virginia; and the power to hold, hunt, and sell men, women and children, as slaves, remains no longer a mere state institution, but is now an institution of the whole United States. The power is co-extensive with

the star-spangled banner, and American Christianity.”

—“The Meaning of July Fourth for the Negro” (1852)

From the 1850 Compromise on—there were still more compromises—the Southern states were increasingly pushing the envelope. There was the Dred Scott decision, where the Supreme Court ruled, as we mention in our Mumia articles, that slavery was not only the law of the land in the South, but was the law of the land anyplace. It ruled that slave property must be protected, including in free states and that, in its famous statement, blacks had “no rights which the white man was bound to respect.” This really gave rise to what would be a final showdown between the capitalist system in the North and the slavocracy in the South.

I want to make the point, however, that it was not something that even at the time was obvious, or that even many of the bourgeoisie accepted. When John Brown carried out his raid in 1859, he was roundly denounced by many, including by Abraham Lincoln. But it posed the question: How was the United States going to be ruled? Was it going to develop as a capitalist country or as a slave society? This is something that the Civil War, which is the subject of the next class, would decide, in what we call the Second American Revolution. ■



## Spartacus Youth Club Events

### TORONTO

**Wednesday, October 14, 6 p.m.**  
**Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism**

University of Toronto  
Sidney Smith Hall  
Room 2119  
100 St. George Street

Information and readings: (416) 593-4138  
spartacan@on.aibn.com

Visit the ICL Web Site:  
**www.icl-fi.org**

### BAY AREA

**Thursday, October 22, 6:30 p.m.**  
**60th Anniversary of the 1949 Chinese Revolution and the Contradictions of China Today**

**Defend the Chinese Deformed Workers State Against Imperialism!**

**For Workers Political Revolution to Oust the Beijing Bureaucrats!**

San Francisco State University  
Cesar Chavez Student Center  
Rosa Parks E

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

### LOS ANGELES

**Wednesday, October 28, 6 p.m.**  
**For Women’s Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!**

UCLA, Haines Hall A78

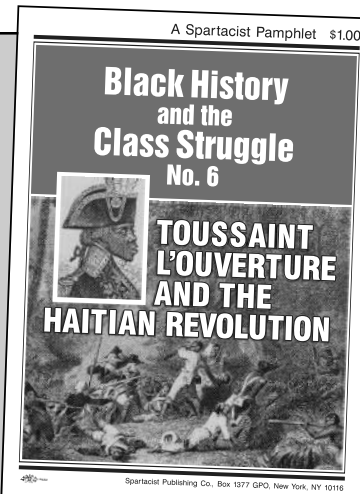
For more information: (213) 380-8239  
slsycla@sbcglobal.net

### VANCOUVER

**Thursday, October 29, 6:30 p.m.**  
**The Capitalist State: Reform vs. Revolution**

University of British Columbia  
SUB Room 42V

Information and readings: (604) 687-0353  
trotskyist\_vancouver@shawcable.com



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## Anti-Abortion Witchhunt in Australia

# Full Access to RU486 Now! For Free Abortion on Demand!

We reprint below an article from *Australasian Spartacist No. 206 (Spring 2009)*, newspaper of the *Spartacist League of Australia*, section of the *International Communist League*.

**Australasian  
SPARTACIST**

AUGUST 31—A young Queensland couple, 19-year-old Tegan Leach and 21-year-old Sergie Brennan, are being subjected to a harrowing ordeal over the alleged use of the drug misoprostol to end the teenager's pregnancy last year. The couple were charged by police in April under archaic 110-year-old anti-abortion clauses in Queensland's Criminal Code. Tegan is the first woman in the state to be charged over procuring an abortion in more than half a century. If convicted, she faces up to seven years' jail. Her partner faces a three-year and possibly 14-year jail term for procuring and supplying a drug to procure an abortion. We say: Drop the charges against Tegan and Sergie now! It is in the interest of the labour movement and all defenders of democratic rights to vigorously take up their defence.

The state's witchhunt of the couple, overseen by the Queensland Labor government of Anna Bligh, has emboldened the anti-abortion bigots, who reportedly mobilised outside the couple's home. The pair was forced to flee the house after it was firebombed and Sergie's car vandalised. In this "deep north" state, riddled with religious backwardness and prejudice, the Labor government has ruled for over ten years, pushing racist "law and order" campaigns that serve to strengthen the powers of the police, who carry out brutal repression within Aboriginal communities.

A "pro-choice" feminist, Premier Bligh has backed the police prosecution of the couple, claiming the case is about the importation of misoprostol and its use without medical supervision. Flouting Queensland ALP [Australian Labor Party] state policy to repeal the anti-abortion laws from the criminal code, the premier reaffirmed a March election commitment made to the Australian Christian lobby that the party had no intention of pursuing abortion law reform. Bligh, a former student campaigner for abortion rights, declared any changes would be "a matter of a private member's bill" adding, "I certainly have no intention of introducing a private member's bill..." (*Australian*, 12 June). In fact, such a bill decriminalising abortion drafted in 2003 was repeatedly blocked by then-ALP premier, Peter Beattie, and Bligh herself when she took over the job.

With Section 282 of Queensland's Criminal Code technically only allowing a "surgical operation" to save a woman's life, the police prosecution of Leach and Brennan has raised widespread concern among doctors offering drug-induced medical abortions over possible prosecution of themselves and their patients. Prominent Cairns obstetrician, Dr. Caroline de Costa, who was in the forefront of the 2005-06 campaign to overturn the federal government's ban on the abortion drug RU486, has stopped prescribing RU486/misoprostol and urged others to do likewise until the law is clarified. She has since been

joined by doctors around the state, including from some 22 public hospitals, which carry out mostly medical abortions in cases of severe fetal abnormality or health risk.

Forcing the hand of the Bligh state government, Queensland's largest hospital, the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, suspended its medical abortion services in mid August. Usually performing about 80 late-term abortions each year, the hospital has now referred women needing such terminations interstate. The state Labor government rushed into damage control, declaring it would revise Section 282 of the code to allow for medical procedures. Bligh pointedly added that the government would not bow to pressure and decriminalise abortion in the state.

According to a poll reported on the Pro Choice Qld website, 79 percent of Queenslanders want abortion out of the criminal code. The demand for abortion rights is the demand for a simple, basic democratic right to a medical or surgical procedure, among the safest in the world. It is outrageous that the capitalist state and its bourgeois parliamentarians should have the power to interfere in people's most intimate, private decisions, including a woman's decision to have an abortion. As one Cairns doctor recently said, "I do not believe police should be standing behind the bedroom door" (*Cairns*

misery of working people. The loss of full-time jobs has been matched by a growth in part-time work, reinforcing a decades-long push towards increased casualisation of the workforce. Often the hardest hit by attacks on jobs and conditions are women workers, who on average earn 17.5 percent less than men.

Barely 50 percent of women have access to paid maternity leave, forcing thousands of low-income-earning mothers back to work early out of financial necessity. As the economic crisis unfolded, the government talked of shelving the introduction of a national paid maternity leave scheme. In the May budget, it announced an 18-week national parental leave scheme that won't be introduced until 2011. Even then it will be means-tested and only pay the poverty-level minimum wage while denying recipients family tax benefits and other payments.

Families also face a health care system in crisis, with pregnant women in labour being turned away from hospitals due to lack of specialist staff and others having miscarriages in the toilets because of bed shortages. Parents are also in dire need of accessible, affordable childcare. A 2008 UNICEF report on childcare slammed Australia as third-worst out of 25 developed countries, spending less than 1 percent of GDP on early childhood services. With the widening gap between rich and poor, increasing numbers of children are growing up in households struggling on or below the poverty line. Child poverty rates stand at more than 10 percent. Aboriginal communities have been subjected to racist "quarantining" of welfare payments for more than two years [replacing half the cash payments with cards that can be used only for specific items and at specific retailers]. Liberal and Labor MPs alike have called for quarantining welfare payments across the entire country.

A moralistic, god-fearing Christian, Kevin Rudd is well known for his reactionary anti-abortion views. From voting for the RU486 ban in 1996 to allowing a "conscience" vote on abortion issues, from supporting the outrageous ban on gay marriage in 2004 to upholding these discriminatory laws in office today, the pro-capitalist Labor Party is clearly no friend of women and the oppressed.

### For Access to RU486, Free of Charge, Now!

In 2006, when federal parliament voted to overturn its effective ban on RU486, transferring control to the state-appointed Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), we wrote:

"It is a good thing that control over RU486 no longer rests in the hands of the anti-abortion bigot Abbott [then federal Liberal health minister]. Australian women now at least have the possibility of accessing a drug that two million users in more than 30 different countries have found to be safe and effective for more than a decade.... However, while the TGA is expected to approve the drug within the year, access is likely to be severely restricted, as is the case in New Zealand, and there is also no guarantee that it will be affordable for working and poor women. Of course the TGA could bury RU486 for years. **For access to RU486, free of charge, now!**"

— *Australasian Spartacist*  
No. 194, Autumn 2006



Brian Casey  
**Sergie Brennan and Tegan Leach face years in prison under reactionary anti-abortion laws.**

Importation and administration of RU486 is so far restricted to doctors approved by the TGA under stringent conditions, with 61 reportedly authorised as of early August. The latest TGA approvals, announced amidst the growing outcry over Queensland's current anti-abortion case, include authorisation for 14 doctors from Marie Stopes International clinics around the country to provide RU486 in cases where women are less than nine weeks pregnant and "meet eligibility criteria covering standard surgical abortions" (*Australian*, 11 August). The approval sent anti-abortion fanatics into a frenzy, labelling this women's health organisation "fundamentally evil" and grotesquely comparing it to "terrorists."

Up until this decade, anti-abortion laws were included in all state and territory criminal codes. However, common law rulings in the 1970s and '80s gave tens of thousands of women across the country access, albeit restricted, to this medical procedure. The availability of relatively cheap, safe abortions in most major cities, despite the continued existence of legislation making it a crime, was in large part a tribute to the militant struggles of courageous fighters for abortion rights such as the late Dr. Bertram Wainer.

In 2002 the ACT [Australian Capital Territory] repealed the anti-abortion provisions in its Criminal Code and last year Victoria also repealed its laws. However, even here restrictions and bureaucratic hurdles still exist, particularly for the small number of women desperately seeking late-term abortions. In the ACT, obtaining an abortion after the first twelve weeks requires approval from a hospital "ethics" committee. In Victoria, the Brumby ALP government's abortion law reform bill removed all restrictions within the first 24 weeks, but requires the agreement of two doctors for later abortions.

We defend every gain won from the capitalist rulers against attack by the state and other reactionary forces such as the Catholic Church which is currently threatening legal action against aspects of the Victorian abortion law reform. While reforms can be won under capitalism, they are necessarily partial and can be reversed by the bourgeoisie. They remain under threat as long as bourgeois class rule remains. This is seen in the ongoing attacks on abortion rights in the U.S., including the assassination of Dr. George Tiller earlier this year by an anti-abortion fanatic. Dr. Tiller heroically provided abortion services to women for more than 35 years, despite massive harassment, both legal and extralegal, against him.

### For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

That the state can dictate whether a woman can or cannot have an abortion

*continued on page 9*



Australasian Spartacist

**Spartacist supporters at Sydney International Women's Day rally, 2003.**

*Post*, 22 August). State out of the bedroom! We fight for free abortion and contraception on demand, without qualification, linked to a program of free, quality health care for all. These are vital necessities for women and for working people as a whole, along with paid maternity and paternity leave and free 24-hour childcare facilities at work and in the community.

### Rudd's Labor Government Enforces Anti-Woman Bigotry

In the context of the current global capitalist economic crisis, working people face increasing hardship and economic uncertainty. In July, the Labor prime minister, Kevin Rudd, told the populace to brace for rising prices, interest rates and unemployment on the "long, tough and bumpy road" of "economic recovery." In other words, any resurgence of capitalist profits will be built on the

We reprint below a letter to the Southwark Crown Court by the Partisan Defence Committee, published in Workers Hammer No. 208 (Autumn 2009), newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist). The PDC is a class-struggle legal and social defense organization associated with the SL/B. Since the publication of this letter, Helen Goddard has been sentenced by a British court to 15 months in prison. She has also been banned from working with children and placed on the “Sex Offenders Register” for ten years. We demand her immediate freedom.

## WORKERS HAMMER

The Partisan Defence Committee demands the immediate dropping of all charges against 26-year-old music teacher Helen Goddard, a victim of the government’s anti-sex witch hunt. Goddard, nicknamed the “Jazz Lady” by her students, is due to be sentenced on 21 September in Southwark Crown Court under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 for the “crime” of having had sex with a 15-year-old female pupil. According to the *Telegraph* online, having admitted six counts of sex with the girl who is under the age of consent, Goddard now faces a possible

# Down With Age of Consent Laws! Government Out of the Bedroom! Free Helen Goddard!

sentence of *up to 14 years in prison* and has been ordered to sign the Sex Offenders Register.

Goddard and the pupil at City of London School for Girls were involved in a close and sexual relationship, a perfectly natural thing that should be no business of either the school or the state. There is *no* suggestion from anyone, including the girl’s parents, that the sex was anything but consensual. Now Goddard’s promising career as a musician and teacher is in tatters, she has been thrown to the media wolves, both her and her partner’s personal lives violated.

The puritanical witch hunt against “sex offenders” waged by the Blair and Brown Labour governments is a modern-day version of Christian fundamentalist crusades against “sin.” Adults engaged in inter-generational sex, especially between

teachers and pupils, are treated as though they are de facto child rapists and murderers. The Sex Offenders Register is a witch hunter’s charter, containing thousands of names of totally innocent people—e.g., some merely cautioned for possessing “dirty” pictures—now black-listed, stigmatised and worse for the rest of their lives.

State interference aims at regimenting society to conform to the mythical sexual “norm” of one man on one woman for life, denying the complexity and variety innate in human sexuality. State repression will not alter the fact that children and teenagers develop sexual attractions towards other children and adults, including their teachers. “Age of consent” laws giving the capitalist state the right to determine at what age youth can engage in sex are an invasion of privacy. The



Facundo Arrizabalaga

guiding principle in these matters should be that of mutual effective consent.

We protest the gross abuse perpetrated by the state on Helen Goddard and demand: **Drop the charges now!** ■

## Polanski...

(continued from page 12)

Superior Court judge Peter Espinoza. With perverse logic, Espinoza acknowledged that there was “substantial misconduct,” but refused to consider dismissal unless Polanski personally showed up in his court to face certain arrest.

With the frame-up story out—including in court—the prosecutors had nothing to lose in gunning for Polanski. Wells now ludicrously claims that he lied on camera and assumed the film would not be shown in the U.S. In response, Marina Zenovich, who made the documentary, noted that Wells had in fact “corroborated the account of events that he gave in my film” to the *New York Times* in an article printed on 17 July 2008.

The motives of the lying and vindictive American prosecutors and judges are clear enough, but the Swiss government’s sudden willingness to kowtow to U.S. authorities has raised some eyebrows. Polanski, after all, has for many years owned a home in Switzerland that he frequently visited. Rumors abound that throwing Polanski to the wolves is a bid for leniency in the IRS investigation of the Swiss banking giant UBS on charges of assisting American citizens in tax evasion. “The government is so traumatized by the IRS and whole UBS scandal,” commented former Swiss Socialist parliamentarian Jean Ziegler. “If any American authority asks for anything in Switzerland, they get it in

24 hours” (AP, 29 September).

Whatever machinations the government is employing against Polanski, we oppose this outrageous witchhunt, as we have from the outset. In the U.S., the morality police are howling for Polanski’s blood, including the *New York Times* in a 30 September editorial. In France, after officials in the French government objected to Polanski’s arrest, they were met by howls of indignation from other politicians demanding that Polanski face “justice” in the U.S.

At the same time, Polanski has received support from other filmmakers like Martin Scorsese and Woody Allen, who himself was the target of an anti-sex witch-hunt (see “Woody Allen Crucified on ‘Family Values’,” WV No. 558, 4 September 1992). But among those who defend him, many accept that Polanski committed a “crime” in 1977. And since that time, “sexual tolerance has shriveled,” as noted by Alexander Cockburn in *CounterPunch* (2-4 October), with increasing hysteria over “pedophilia” and the attendant mushrooming of reactionary laws.

We demand an end to reactionary “age of consent” and “statutory rape” laws, which falsely conflate consensual sex with violent crimes. We oppose all laws against “crimes without victims” (which also include gambling, prostitution, drug use and pornography). **Government out of the bedroom! Free Roman Polanski!**

At the time of Polanski’s original persecution, we were virtually alone on the left in defending him. We reprint below our article, “Stop the Puritan Witchhunt Against Roman Polanski!” which first appeared in WV No. 192, 10 February 1978. The political points in that piece are as relevant today as they were then, over three decades ago.

\* \* \*

Internationally acclaimed film director Roman Polanski has been driven out of the U.S. by a vicious and vindictive official witchhunt. His legal tribulations began last March 11 when he was arrested in the lobby of the Beverly Wilshire Hotel by Los Angeles police, responding to a woman’s charge that he had screwed her 13-year-old daughter. Ever since, Polanski’s nightmarish persecution—which included 42 days in the Chino, California state prison for degrading “psychiatric observation”—has escalated.

Polanski was recently released from Chino upon completion of the “psychiatric diagnosis,” which was reportedly “favor-

able.” However, Superior Court judge Rittenband immediately called the report a “whitewash” and informed the director’s lawyer that he intended to sentence Polanski to an additional 48 days in prison, to be followed by “voluntary deportation.” “He doesn’t belong in this country,” proclaimed this state-empowered guardian of the nation’s morals. Polanski, who holds French citizenship, fled to Paris on February 1, where he remains while the prosecution plans ways to extradite him.

Rittenband, known locally as a “hanging judge,” obviously intends to make Polanski into an example. Douglas Dalton, the defendant’s attorney, has pointed out that of the 44 people convicted in Los Angeles County on similar charges in 1976, *none* ever spent any time in jail. Former state attorney general Younger also sought to make political hay out of the case as part of his general “law-and-order” campaign.

The national press has covered the case with a mixture of pious outrage and amused contempt as another typical “Hollywood scandal.” *Time* (28 March 1977) sneeringly referred to the director’s “tawdry troubles,” while the *New York Post* (2 February) devoted a full-page spread to the “new Hollywood” and Polanski’s “rat pack” of sexually swinging friends, making him out to be some kind of exotic, neurotic freak. This is not the first time that the state, gleefully cheered on by the sensation-mongering press, has driven prominent figures out of Hollywood. Errol Flynn, by all accounts an amiable man who never hurt anyone, was endlessly being dragged through the courts on account of his well-known preference for young women.

Ingrid Bergman was even denounced in Congress at the height of the McCarthyite witchhunt for her nerve in defiling her saintly “Joan of Arc” screen image by bearing a child out of wedlock to the Italian filmmaker Roberto Rossellini. Charlie Chaplin too was driven out of the “land of opportunity”—largely for political reasons, of course, but with a good dose of nasty sexual innuendo thrown in. The news-starved press runs periodic “exposés” of glamorous Hollywood in order to simultaneously titillate the public—for the most part trapped in deadly dull, poor and restricted lives—and channel their resentment against the rich and famous into satisfying but empty moral outrage.

What is genuinely “tawdry” and sordid about the Polanski case is not the actual incident itself, but the vile official perse-

cution and the hideous hypocrisy of it all. The national press has carefully “omitted” the real facts of the case. The director had pleaded guilty on August 8 to unlawful intercourse with a minor in return for dismissal of other sex and drug charges against him, including rape, child molestation, oral copulation, sodomy and providing drugs to a minor. However, statements at the trial make it clear that what happened was hardly a case of rape!

The 13-year-old whom Polanski was accused of raping was described in the *Los Angeles Times* (20 August 1977) as “an aspiring actress,” whose mother had known Polanski for over a year and given permission to photograph her daughter for the French edition of *Vogue* magazine. One of those photography sessions with the celebrated director turned into an evening of sipping champagne, nude bathing in a Jacuzzi whirlpool bath and consumption by the girl of part of a Quaalude (a fashionable sedative). Following this there was sexual intercourse (translated in the press as “drugging and raping”).

It came out in court, however, that the girl had been “experimenting” with Quaaludes since the age of 10 or 11, and had a 17-year-old boyfriend with whom she had had prior sexual intercourse. A police detective on the case described her as looking to be “between 16 and 18,” while the girl’s mother at one point described her daughter rather lamely as “precocious in the midst of growing up.” Even Judge Rittenband in his probation report was forced to admit the blatantly obvious sexual maturity of the girl: “the prosecutrix was a well-developed young girl, who looked older than her years, and regrettably not unschooled in sexual matters.”

The incident occurred in the home of movie star Jack Nicholson, and it was partially on the testimony of Nicholson’s current roommate Angelica Huston, who had returned home later that evening, that Polanski was charged. Of course, her eager cooperation with the police could have had something to do with the fact that detectives searching the place for “evidence” found a vial of cocaine in her room.

Sexual and social life in southern California, with its thriving drug culture and troupes of precocious and sexually active groupies hanging about the fringes of the entertainment industry, produces thousands of “aspiring actresses” (and young male would-be “rock stars”) like the one Polanski had the misfortune to run into. Regardless of what one thinks of the

**WORKERS HAMMER**

Down with racist capitalist rule!

**The bankruptcy of Labour**

—The case for socialist revolution—

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Australia...
(continued from page 7)

exemplifies the oppression women face in capitalist society. This oppression is rooted in the age-old institution of the family, which arose with the advent of private property as the mechanism for passing property from one generation to the next. The family serves in general as the social means for rearing the next generation, and under capitalism, where the masses of youth are slated for wage slavery or service as cannon fodder in the armed forces, it seeks to instil obedience to authority. It serves as an ideological transmission belt for the “values” of the capitalist rulers, inculcating religious backwardness as a brake on social consciousness. Along with organised religion and the state apparatus, the institution of the family is a fundamental prop for the capitalist system of oppression and exploitation.

The private property system, upheld by the capitalist state, and the family are the most basic and deeply intertwined aspects of class society. They cannot be “reformed” away. While fighting to defend every gain wrested through hard struggle from this ruling class, the inescapable conclusion must be that the entire capitalist system must go. To win freedom for women and all the oppressed requires a workers socialist revolution to overturn capitalist property relations and the creation of a workers state that rests on a collectivised and planned economy where production is for human need, not profit.

A workers government will be able to begin to provide social alternatives—in caring for children, the sick, the elderly, for housework, etc.—to the oppressive family structure. The young Soviet workers state created by the 1917 Russian Revolution led by the Bolshevik Party acted on this understanding of women’s oppression and did more to liberate women than any other society in history. While inheriting a largely peasant society devastated by the First World War and bloody Civil War, the Bolsheviks made heroic efforts to replace the family with social alternatives. They were the first government in the world to overturn criminal penalties for abortion in 1920 (health concerns prevented earlier legalisation in



Women’s demonstration in Russia, 19 March 1917. Banner reads: “As Long as the Woman Is a Slave There Cannot Be Freedom—Long Live Women’s Equality.” Following 1917 October Revolution, Russia was first country to overturn criminal penalties for abortion.

those days before antibiotics). (See “The Russian Revolution and the Emancipation of Women,” Spartacist [English-language edition] No. 59, Spring 2006.)

Until its counterrevolutionary destruction in 1991-92, the Soviet Union remained a workers state, albeit degenerated under a nationalist, parasitic, bureaucratic caste, which usurped political power from the Soviet proletariat in a political counter-revolution beginning under Stalin in 1923-24. We stood for the unconditional military defence of the USSR against imperialist attack and internal capitalist counter-revolution and called for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist misleaders. Capitalist restoration in 1991-92 was a deep blow to the world working class, not least women in the former USSR, and conditions the current period of capitalist reaction.

Marxism vs. Feminism

Young women who hate the ingrained anti-woman bigotry of this society often refer to themselves as feminist. However, feminism is politically incapable of resolving the most basic aspects of women’s oppression because it functions entirely within the framework of bourgeois rule. Because it asserts the main division in society is between men and women rather

than class versus class, feminism necessarily reflects the ideology of the politically and economically dominant class, the capitalists. The fate of many 1970s “radical” feminists, such as Anna Bligh, is instructive. Rejecting the necessary fight to overthrow the entire capitalist system, they secured careers in the Labor Party and the trade-union bureaucracy and have helped to oversee cutbacks and union-busting carried out by the ALP federally and in the states, which have particularly hit their working-class “sisters.”

In contrast to feminism, Marxism, recognising that the class question is decisive, rests on a fundamentally different, proletarian, class axis. Every real gain won by working people and the oppressed is, and will be, the result of hard class and social struggle, not attempts to pressure bourgeois politicians and the courts. We look to the power of the working class as the motor force for social progress. Our understanding of the centrality of the working class and a revolutionary perspective in fighting for the liberation of women is counterposed to the outlook peddled by reformist left groups who reinforce feminist illusions among women.

In a recent article on abortion rights, the “socialist feminists” of the Freedom

Socialist Party (FSP)/Radical Women (RW) call to “trounce the bigots, once and for all, through a massive, broad-based movement,” declaring that “community organising is what has won just about every gain of working people” (Radical Women Supplement, Winter/Spring 2009). They continue:

“Radical Women calls on feminists to join together to build a united front capable of stopping the right wing and winning survival needs such as full reproductive rights, affordable housing, childcare and education, free healthcare, decent paying jobs, expanded human services and an end to imperialist war.”

Trying to square the circle between feminism, a bourgeois ideology, and socialism, the FSP/RW are in essence Laborite reformists, pushing class-collaborationist schemas. Their calls for feminist unity can only serve to tie working women to their capitalist class enemy and breed illusions in capitalist politicians like feminist Labor premier Anna Bligh, whose cops are prosecuting Leach and Brennan today. Their demands to “stop the right wing” and for classless community organising echo the Laborite pro-capitalist union misleaders, who push cross-class community campaigns and ALP lesser-evil parliamentary cretinism, burying the need for an independent class-struggle fight, including for women’s rights. The FSP/RW’s anti-Marxist call absurdly asserts that imperialist wars can be ended by a feminist united front rather than the only road forward: the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist/imperialist system through working-class revolution.

What is essential is a fight to forge an internationalist multiracial workers party to lead the working class in a socialist revolution that sweeps away this system of capitalist exploitation, racist discrimination and women’s oppression. The indispensable task of the revolutionary vanguard party, which we seek to build, is to bring to the working class the understanding that they must fight for all the oppressed in their battle to free themselves from wage slavery. The entry of women into the working class opened the way to their liberation: their position at the point of production gives them social power, along with the entire working class, to overturn the capitalist system. For women’s liberation through socialist revolution! ■

scene as a whole, its all-too-obvious reality makes absurd Rittenband’s attempts to force rigid morality of the Victorian era into L.A. freeways and bedrooms.

Official repression and enforced standards of sexual activity have brought oppression and pain throughout history, from the cruel feudal “right of the first night” through the Catholic church’s intensely detailed rules on various sexual sins to the Victorians’ complete denial of the sexuality of women and children and their artificial prolongation of childhood. The sexual “norms” which the American state upholds today reek with hypocrisy in a society where scientific research into

human sexuality is only now beginning to be published on a mass basis; where scientific breakthroughs in contraception have removed the legitimate fear of pregnancy, which for ages stood as a barrier to sexual pleasure; and where rigid taboos based on ignorance have lost much of their force.

All those laws which define “sex crimes” in America today are fundamentally aimed at glorifying and propping up the obscene and repressive prison of the family, for centuries the main institution for the oppression of women and children. The reactionary sentiment whipped up by the persecution of “sex deviants” is

fueled also by recognition that the family is the individual’s shelter in a hostile world. Only a broader social vision of the eventual replacement of the family as part of the transition to a classless society can defuse these fears that lumpenization and social collapse are the only alternative to bourgeois morality.

The media’s exploitation of the Polanski case is more than mere sensationalism. His prosecution, like the furor over “kiddie porn,” feeds into the sanctimonious “Save Our Children” crusade epitomized by Anita Bryant’s anti-homosexual witchhunt—a reactionary offensive which hides behind the “innocence” of children to enforce bourgeois morality through the vindictive persecution of “deviants.”

The victimization of those held to threaten the prevailing norms of family life often takes the most extreme forms. In November a 23-year-old princess and her commoner husband were executed in Saudi Arabia as “sex criminals.” By the traditions of her tribe, which is simultaneously the Saudi ruling class, shooting her and hacking off her husband’s head by sword in the public market of Jidda were socially quite “moral.” Judge Rittenband was not able to have Polanski beheaded in order to protect the “American Way of Life,” but the principle that the state has the right to enforce a “norm” on private sexual activity is equally held by the U.S. bourgeoisie and the Bedouin sheiks. Their methods simply vary a bit.

There are indeed very real and pervasive sex crimes committed in America today, but they are not only nor necessarily the ones splashed across the pages of the tabloid press. Fear, guilt and repression are loaded on the very young for even

having sexual thoughts. Adolescent youth are inhumanly and artificially segregated from one another in schools and colleges. The religious strictures of the Catholic church and other religious sects, including orthodox Judaism, keep thousands of women trapped in an endless cycle of poverty, pregnancy and ever more mouths to feed. The aged are locked into grim and tiny rooms to die as their wardens debate “Should sex be allowed in old age homes?”

In ignorance and shame thousands of poor young women are forced into dangerous abortions without Medicaid, while the wealthy manage as they always have. The more unfortunate must either bear their unwanted children or else be sterilized permanently in government hospitals while great debate rages as to whether the young should be “exposed” to contraceptives and birth control information. There is also the hideous frustration and sexual tension built up within the family itself, with attendant beatings and brutalization of children, including their sexual mistreatment. Rape and these other very real crimes, along with the prostitution which is the eternal companion of enforced monogamy, are the sordid reality behind “public morality.”

Polanski has been the latest public target in the state’s vindictive attempts to uphold the puritan myth and hide this reality. Even his brilliant and often powerful films, like “Cul de Sac,” “Knife in the Water,” “Repulsion,” and more recently “Rosemary’s Baby” and “Chinatown,” have been used against him. As one Columbia Pictures executive moaned, “Roman’s got such a bad reputation for being a pervert film maker, he’s going to

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# Women and Revolution

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# Iran...

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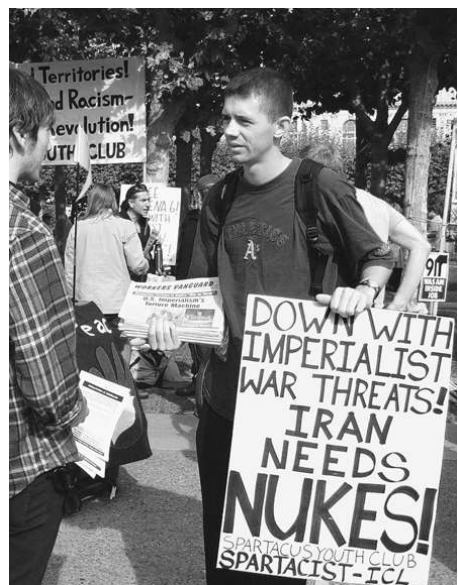
pipelines running across Central Asia, rather than through seaborne routes vulnerable to American naval interdiction.”

That is an eminently reasonable long-term strategic concern on the part of Beijing. Obama took office pledging to draw down U.S. troop levels in Iraq in order to pursue what a significant portion of the U.S. bourgeoisie sees as more strategic aims, including the occupation of Afghanistan. A major consideration behind this policy is the encirclement of China, a bureaucratically deformed workers state where capitalist rule was overthrown by the 1949 Revolution.

Ultimately, the U.S. imperialists aim to restore capitalist rule in China, and for this they have a two-pronged strategy: military pressure combined with capitalist economic penetration. At the same time, the Democrats, backed by the pro-capitalist trade-union bureaucracy, have been in the forefront of those pushing anti-China chauvinist protectionism. It is vital for the international proletariat to stand for the unconditional military defense of China and the other remaining deformed workers states—Cuba, North Korea and Vietnam—while fighting for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist misrulers and establish regimes based on workers democracy and revolutionary internationalism.

## For Workers Revolution in Iran!

After Tehran indicated last week that it would be willing to send most of its



WV photo

**Spartacists at San Francisco antiwar demonstration, October 2007.**

enriched uranium to another country (Russia and France have volunteered) for further refinement into fuel, Obama administration officials toned down the calls for a formal embargo on gasoline shipments to Iran. Obama called the proposal “a step towards building confidence that Iran’s program is in fact peaceful”



AP

**Iranian riot police attack supporters of opposition leader Moussavi at Tehran University, June 14.**

(*New York Times*, 3 October). Washington has defined its posture toward Iran in recent months with an eye to the political turmoil in that country, into which the imperialists have sought to intervene, most openly through intensified radio broadcasts.

The fraud surrounding the June 12 reelection of President Mahmoud Ahmadi-najad triggered a series of mass demonstrations in Tehran and other cities that were brutally attacked by the police and paramilitary Basij militias, leaving dozens of protesters dead and thousands in jail. On September 18, the regime’s annual pro-Palestinian rally for Jerusalem Day, also known as Quds Day, was overshadowed by a mass mobilization of tens of thousands of anti-government protesters. More recently, there have been several student demonstrations in Tehran, including a September 28 protest at Tehran University that forced Ahmadi-najad to cancel a visit there. We call on the international workers movement to demand: Free all anti-government protesters!

While including heterogeneous forces, the opposition demonstrations have been politically subordinate to one side in what is essentially a falling out between rival factions within the ruling clerical elite. The main opposition candidate, Mir Hussein Moussavi, one of the founders of the Islamic Republic, served as prime minister from 1981 to 1989, when untold thousands of leftists, Kurds and women’s rights activists were slaughtered in Iran’s prisons. As we wrote in “Down With the Clerical Regime! No Support to ‘Reform’ Mullahs!” (WV No. 939, 3 July): “The workers and oppressed of Iran have *no interest* in supporting *either* of the cabals fighting over how best to pursue the mullahs’ bloody rule.”

A 5 August article on the liberal *Huffington Post* Web site by Robert Naiman of Just Foreign Policy described how a formally declared U.S.-sponsored gasoline embargo could embarrass Iranian

oppositionists such as Moussavi:

“If he says he supports the embargo, he may be politically toast in Iran: every bad thing that happens to Iranians as a result of the embargo will be blamed on Mousavi by the Iranian government. If he says he is against it, then he’s saying that the signature Iran policy of the West is a policy to attack Iranian civilians.”

All sides in the tumult shaking Iran today hark back to the 1979 overthrow of the country’s despised autocrat, Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, as a model for their political activity. At that time, the convulsive opposition to the monarchy included powerful workers strikes in the oil fields and throughout the country; Iran could have become the cockpit of proletarian revolution in the Near East. However, the mass mobilizations were channeled into a reactionary crusade for an “Islamic Republic,” with virtually the entire left in Iran and internationally cheering on the mullah-dominated opposition led by Ayatollah Khomeini. Uniquely on the left, we raised the call: “Down With the Shah! Don’t Bow to Khomeini! For Workers Revolution in Iran!”

Today, while promoting the Democrats in the U.S., the U.S. reformist left repeats the treacherous policies of 30 years ago by lining up behind one or another wing of the ruling clergy in Iran. Workers World Party (WWP) and the Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL), a split-off from WWP, have sided with the pro-Ahmadi-najad wing of the clerics against the protests, claiming that in this way they are opposing U.S. imperialism. The International Socialist Organization (ISO), in the September-October issue of *International Socialist Review*—while scoring some easy polemical points against the WWP and PSL—makes not

# Polanski...

(continued from page 9)

be judged guilty by his work” (*Time*, 28 March 1977).

What emerges from the director’s life, however, is a pattern of successful creative achievement in the face of a pattern of violence and tragedy. As a young boy Polanski saw his parents ripped away (to disappear permanently in the concentration camps) by Nazi stormtroopers. At 15 he was beaten almost to death with an iron bar by a maniac. After achieving a reputation as a talented filmmaker in Stalinist Poland, he emigrated to the West—where his pregnant wife, the actress Sharon Tate, was hideously slaughtered at home along with the couple’s friends by the crazed Manson family. And now Polanski has had the humiliation and torture of spending over a month in prison for “psychiatric observation.” (If this had occurred in the Soviet Union, where dissidents are barbarously locked up in mental hospitals, the director would already be high on the list of Jimmy Carter’s “human rights” campaign.)

Yet to the state of California Polanski is a “sex criminal” and it threatens more prison. It is no wonder why the victim

even a token effort to distinguish itself politically from the Moussavi-led opposition. Instead, they write that Moussavi

“has become a symbol in the fight for democracy in the eyes of millions. A very elementary demand of the mass movement—that the regime live up to its claim of being a republic and count people’s votes—has become a gateway for further radicalization.”

In fact, in 1979 the ISO, like virtually the entire left internationally, unabashedly hailed Khomeini’s “mass movement,” which aimed to enslave women and throw back social progress by centuries. The ISO headlined one article “The Form—Religious, the Spirit—Revolution!” (*Socialist Worker*, January 1979). The establishment of a Shi’ite theocracy following the overthrow of the Shah resulted in murderous terror directed against leftists and working-class militants, Kurds and other minorities, homosexuals and unveiled women.

Eduard Bernstein, the father of “socialist” revisionism, wrote in *Evolutionary Socialism* (1899) that “the ultimate aim of socialism is nothing, but the movement is everything.” This statement represents the reformist politics promoted by the ISO. In contrast, we stand in the tradition of Lenin, who built the Bolshevik Party that led the 1917 Russian Revolution. Iran is a country of combined and uneven development. The only road to genuine social and economic modernization, to liberating Iran from imperialist subjugation, to freeing Iranian women from enslavement, to winning the right of national self-determination for the Kurds and the myriad other oppressed nationalities, lies in the smashing of capitalist class rule in Iran through proletarian socialist revolution as part of the fight for a socialist federation of the Near East. The fundamental question facing the Iranian proletariat today is the need to build a Marxist workers party that fights for the class independence of the proletariat.

The conquest of power by the proletariat does not complete the socialist revolution, but only opens it by changing the direction of social development. Short of the international extension of the revolution, particularly to the advanced, industrialized imperialist centers, that social development will be arrested and ultimately reversed. Defense of those subjugated by the imperialists around the globe demands the pursuit of class struggle in the U.S. and other imperialist centers, and ultimately requires a proletarian struggle for power. If the imperialists are not to plunge humanity into nuclear Armageddon, they must be overthrown through socialist revolutions internationally. This underscores the urgent need to reforge Trotsky’s Fourth International, the world party of socialist revolution. ■

chose to leave America. As he rightly observed, “They spent 42 days trying to drive me bizarre, but thank god I’m smart and rich...” (*New York Post*, 7 February). He went on:

“In America, California, I lose my wife, my baby, my friends, perhaps my sanity and almost my freedom. No, I say, no! The Nazis couldn’t take it away from me, nor could the grief of my losses. And this little whore and the California laws won’t either. I have given much and they have taken too much from me.”

Good for him. We are cheered to see that this ordeal of puritanical witchhunting has not broken Roman Polanski’s spirit.

The Polanski case has stirred up the poisonous fears and vicious repression which underlies bourgeois morality. As communists we oppose attempts to fit human sexuality into legislated or decreed “norms.” The guiding principle for sexual relations between people should be that of effective consent—that is, nothing more than mutual agreement and understanding as opposed to coercion. We hold that any and all consensual relations between individuals are purely their own concern, and the state has no business interfering in human sexual activity.

Drop the charges against Roman Polanski! No extradition! Stop the puritanical witchhunt! ■

## Spartacist Forums

## U.S. Imperialism: Enemy of Women’s Rights Internationally—For Women’s Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

- Honor George Tiller! For Free Abortion on Demand!
- For Free, Quality Health Care!
- Break with the Democrats—Forge a Workers Party!

### BAY AREA

**Saturday  
October 10, 3 p.m.**

The Women’s Building  
3543 18th Street  
San Francisco  
(near 16th St./Mission  
BART)  
(510) 839-0851  
slbayarea@sbcglobal.net

### LOS ANGELES

**Saturday  
October 10, 2 p.m.**

Immanuel Presbyterian  
Church  
3300 Wilshire Blvd.  
(2 blocks west of Vermont/  
Wilshire Red Line Station)  
(213) 380-8239  
slsycla@sbcglobal.net

### NEW YORK CITY

**Saturday  
October 10, 3 p.m.**

CWA Local 1180 Hall  
6 Harrison Street  
Manhattan  
(1 train to Franklin, west  
on Franklin to Hudson,  
1 block south to Harrison)  
(212) 267-1025  
nysl@tiac.net



# Transit...

(continued from page 12)

who owns a fleet of sports cars, but it speaks volumes about the greedy, corrupt and racist ruling class that is going after TWU Local 100 yet again. In the same piece, Kalikow all but admits that he provoked the December 2005 strike by demanding a union-busting new pension tier that would have foisted a 6 percent pay deduction on new hires. In response to that MTA provocation (and many others), subway and bus workers walked off the job and gave the transit bosses a taste of union power.

But since that time, the Local 100 misleaders have played by *all* the bosses' rules, demonstrating allegiance to the MTA, the Taylor Law and the capitalist Democratic Party at every turn. Toussaint even backed Democratic state attorney general Eliot Spitzer for governor in 2006 after Spitzer had put him in jail! In response to the MTA's latest move, Toussaint & Co. issued a flyer titled "MTA Tries to Weasel Out—Get Ready to Rock 'n' Roll" (August 27) that makes one obvious point: "It seems that arbitration is 'binding'—but only when it goes against us, and not 'binding' if it doesn't go their way."

Long a weapon in the bosses' anti-union arsenal, binding arbitration is designed to short-circuit workers struggle, stop strikes and leave union members with no say in the final contract. Arbitration is a trap that puts the fate of union members in the hands of a supposedly "neutral" board that is in reality stacked on the side of the capitalist class. The interests of the capitalist class and the working class are irreconcilably counterposed, but the pro-capitalist trade-union bureaucracy embraces arbitration to keep the lid on workers struggles, like the kind that built the unions in the first place and won genuine gains for our class. The labor traitors push illusions that the Taylor Law can be used against the bosses and that the capitalist state can be neutral, when in fact it is the main instrument for maintaining capitalist wage slavery. That's why the TWU tops and the rest of New York's labor officialdom talk only about "reform" of the Taylor Law through pathetic lobbying efforts in Albany.

TWU Local 100 and MTA negotiators jointly agreed to arbitration even *before* the last contract expired on 15 January 2009. Shortly before that, Toussaint and

the Local 100 Executive Board signed a no-strike pledge that was the quid pro quo for the restoration of the union's dues checkoff, which had been revoked following the strike (see "TWU Local 100 Tops Sign No-Strike Pledge," WV No. 926, 5 December 2008). In fact, the arbitrator's decision comes in the context of numerous sellouts by the TWU tops, not least their refusal to wage any serious struggle against the recent fare hike or the MTA's longstanding plan to ax 600 station agent jobs.

Now that the deal is threatened, the Toussaint bureaucracy has correctly warned that "every single worker in New York City subject to the Taylor Law should pay heed." If the city rulers get away with putting the squeeze on Local 100, it will be open season on the rest of NYC labor. But the TWU misleaders' idea of "fight back by any means necessary" is to file legal papers defending the anti-labor Taylor Law and the system of arbitration that keeps union power in check. This is an example of their class collaboration, which subordinates workers to the capitalist class enemy.

The Local 100 tops are trying to focus workers' ire at Mayor Bloomberg while

**TWU workers on the picket line during December 2005 NYC transit strike.**



tunes of city Democratic Party politicians, including mayoral candidate Bill Thompson. Some Dems talk a "labor friendly" line around election time, but they all support the Taylor Law and serve the Wall Street rulers with the same "due diligence" as the Republicans. The upcom-



**Bill Thompson, Democratic candidate for mayor of New York, addresses September 29 TWU rally. Union bureaucrats promote "labor friendly" capitalist politicians, tie workers to their class enemy.**

covering for the Democrats. Toussaint & Co., bowing to pressure from an angry membership, have called for a mass union rally at MTA headquarters on September 29 and for a "day of outrage" at work locations in October. But at the same time the bureaucrats are attempting to channel this anger into boosting the electoral for-

ing union rallies, like many before, will be built to boost Democratic Party politicians. Labor must break with the Democrats and all other capitalist parties.

Every wing of the current TWU Local 100 bureaucracy shares this program of reliance on the political representatives and agencies of the class enemy, including the "Take Back Our Union" (TBOU) and "United for Change" slates headed by John Samuelson and J.P. Patafio respectively. Both of these former close allies of Toussaint ran in the recent union elections (for which votes will not be counted until December) against the in-bureaucrats loyal to outgoing president Toussaint. TBOU issued a leaflet titled "The Union's Arbitration Fight Back Strategy is Missing a Key Component"—which turns out to be pressuring the governor and not letting him "off the hook." The way forward is to mobilize labor's power, not begging capitalist politicians for "support." Following the practice of New Directions, these out-bureaucrats see nothing wrong with launching anti-union court suits, which put the union under the thumb of the capitalist state.

One left-talking grouplet, *Revolutionary Transit Worker* (RTW), supported by the League for the Revolutionary Party, sometimes attempts to distance itself from the pro-Democratic Party pack. In a September 2 leaflet, the RTW criticizes those who "mostly share Toussaint's affection for the Democratic Party of workers' enemies." But when it counts, RTW buries its paper opposition to the Democrats, as it did in an April 17 election campaign leaflet for the TWU International Convention. In their candidates' "immediate demands" and proposals there was not a word against the Democrats. The RTW's real program is to cover for and try to push the pro-capitalist union bureaucracy into more militant action. Echoing Toussaint,

for whom they hustled votes in 1999, the RTW titles their latest leaflet "Defend Our Wage Increase!" which inflates the sorry "award" and reinforces illusions in arbitration. It concludes by beseeching, "Keep the pressure on, force the Toussaint crew forward—or out!" Such fake socialists are obstacles to raising workers consciousness and forging a class-struggle leadership of the unions.

It is an indictment of the current TWU leadership that many transit workers—after proving their militancy and desire for struggle during the December 2005 strike—have drawn the wrong lessons from that strike and its aftermath. Left hanging by the sellout TWU and AFL-CIO tops, many embittered workers falsely equate the union with the sell-out pro-capitalist bureaucracy. A class-struggle leadership would educate and mobilize transit workers and the rest of NYC labor on a totally different program. For example, the TWU should resurrect its historic call for free mass transit, cutting against the bosses' campaigns to pit workers against the riding public. The unions should fight for free, quality medical care for all; for full citizenship rights for immigrants; and against racist cop terror in the ghettos and barrios. The Taylor Law can be defeated, but that requires joint labor action with the other key city unions, such as teachers, sanitation and hospital workers unions. At a real TWU mass meeting—not just a pep rally for the bureaucracy—transit workers would be able to speak, debate and decide on a strategy to stop the MTA's union-busting attacks.

The struggle to forge a class-struggle leadership in the unions goes hand in hand with building a multiracial workers party that fights for a workers government. As long as capitalism exists, the working class and all the oppressed can only hope to survive from one economic crisis, one bloody war, one racist clamp-down to the next. The Spartacist League is dedicated to building a revolutionary workers party that can lead us out of this morass and toward a socialist future for all mankind. ■

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# WORKERS VANGUARD

## Stop Vendetta Against Roman Polanski!

### Free Him Now! No Extradition!

Suddenly reviving its 32-year-old vendetta against world-renowned film director Roman Polanski, the Los Angeles County district attorney's office, backed by the Feds, orchestrated his arrest in Zurich on September 26. The 76-year-old Polanski, now in Swiss custody, awaits possible extradition to the U.S. to be sentenced for having had *consensual* sex with a precocious 13-year-old one day back in 1977.

**Roman Polanski committed no crime.** Facing a Hollywood show trial with multiple felony charges hanging over him,

he pled guilty to "unlawful sexual intercourse" with a minor. Threatened with more prison time after having already served six weeks in state prison for "diagnostic testing," Polanski, a French citizen, fled to Paris in 1978 to escape the puritan witchhunt. Despite the standing threat of extradition, Polanski has persevered in the face of the American judicial *fatwa* and managed to pursue his film career in Europe with artistic success, until now.

Many are asking the obvious question about Polanski's sudden arrest: *why now?*

The events occurred over three decades ago, Polanski is in his 70s and there is no "victim" to avenge. The woman involved, Samantha Geimer, now in her 40s with three children, has long opposed the continued prosecution of Polanski. And, until recently, the U.S. has not really turned the screws trying to extradite him.

But, as noted by author Robert Harris in a 30 September op-ed piece in the *New York Times*, that changed after the release of the 2008 documentary, *Roman Polanski: Wanted and Desired*. The documentary includes an interview with David



**Roman Polanski at closing ceremony of 2008 Cannes Film Festival.**

Wells, who brags how he, as a then-deputy district attorney, coached Judge Laurence Rittenband (now deceased) on the case, in particular to ensure prison time for Polanski. Based on the film and other evidence, Polanski's attorneys filed a motion to dismiss the case, which was denied in February by Los Angeles

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## Bosses' Rules: A Losing Game

# MTA Moves to Scrap Arbitration Ruling, Transit Workers Seethe



WV Photo

**Transit workers protest at MTA headquarters, September 29.**

## New York City

*The following article was issued as a leaflet by the New York Spartacist League on September 28. It was distributed at a mass rally of transit workers the following day.*

On September 8, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) filed papers in New York Supreme Court to scrap a contract imposed by an arbitration board a few weeks earlier on some 35,000 members of Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100. According to the MTA bosses, billionaire mayor Mike Bloomberg and the capitalist gutter press, transit workers don't deserve the paltry wage hikes and minuscule reduction in health care costs included in the pact. With this 2009-2012 contract and their livelihoods in limbo, transit workers are seething, angry not only with the greedy MTA brass and the arrogant mayor but also with their own union misleaders. Since the transit workers' powerful December 2005 strike, which was cut short and sold out, this is the second contract imposed

through arbitration under the machinery of New York's slave-labor Taylor Law. The lessons are clear: arbitration is a trap and playing by the bosses' rules is a losing game.

The MTA and Bloomberg's latest attack on TWU Local 100 is further "pay-back" for the 2005 strike. But it's also part of a broader bipartisan assault on the living standards of the entire working

bosses, but neither is it the "good contract for tough times" as claimed by the Local 100 bureaucracy led by President Roger Toussaint. The contract is supposed to cap the 1.5 percent "health care tax"—the most hated concession agreed to by Toussaint during the 2005 transit strike—at 1.5 percent on a 40-hour workweek. It also calls for an 11 percent wage hike over three years (an amount

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

class, from the Obama administration's "bailout" of the Big Three automakers that gutted United Auto Workers jobs and contracts to anti-union cutbacks imposed by state governments. This offensive is being carried out to make working people pay for Wall Street's sinking portfolios and capitalism's deep economic crisis.

The new arbitration deal is hardly the "great train robbery" decried by the

that the arbitration panel chairman determined that the MTA can easily afford).

But workers are incensed that these wage increases would begin in April instead of January when the contract expired and are staggered in a way that saves the MTA tens of millions of dollars. What's more, the MTA court challenge could delay the wage increase for up to a year, amounting to a wage freeze. The

deal also creates a poorly paid "handyman" job title, Station Maintainer Helper, that attacks hard-won work and safety rules ("broadbanding") and threatens the jobs of skilled trades workers. On the plus side, if the pact is ever implemented, several thousand "MTA Bus" division workers are supposed to finally get a near-parity contract with the rest of the bus and subway workforce. These former private bus line workers have been working without a contract since before the 2005 strike (!) and still have substandard pension benefits. There should be equal pay for equal work!

Even before the arbitration ruling was announced, it provoked howls of outrage from City Hall and elsewhere. In a 24 July op-ed piece in the *Daily News*, former MTA chief Peter Kalikow attacked the 1.5 percent cap on health care contributions and claimed that transit workers enjoy the "kinds of lavish benefits that caused General Motors and Chrysler to go bankrupt"! This is pretty rich, coming from a multimillionaire real estate baron

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