

**For Free Abortion on Demand!
For Free, Quality Health Care for All!**

U.S. Imperialism: Enemy of Women's Rights



Reuters



Steve McCurry

Left: U.S. Marines patrol a village in Farah Province, Afghanistan, April 30. Right: Women in U.S.-"liberated" Afghanistan continue to be segregated, humiliated, degraded.

Women's right to abortion, having been chipped away for decades, is under renewed assault. On November 7, the House of Representatives passed a health care "reform" bill that would prevent millions of Americans from buying insurance that covers abortions. It is the most dramatic victory for anti-abortion bigots since the grossly misnamed "partial birth abortion ban" was passed by Congress six years ago.

House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi authorized a vote on the anti-abortion provision, and it was inserted into the "reform" bill, after a lobbying blitz by Catholic bishops. It would effectively ban abortion coverage in private health insurance plans offered on the insurance "exchanges" that would be created under the bill. Meanwhile, enforcement of an Illinois law requiring doctors to notify a parent when a woman 17 or younger seeks an abortion was temporarily blocked by a court suit early this month. This law represents a grave threat to the right of teens to abortion in the Midwest; such parental notification laws are already being implemented in states neighboring Illinois.

We print below, edited for publication, an October 10 forum given in the Bay Area by Amy Rath, editor of the *Women and Revolution* pages of *Spartacist* (English-language edition).

* * *

Since the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, the U.S. bourgeois press has been full of stories about the horrors of life for

For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

women in that country. This has nothing to do with protecting women and everything to do with lining up support for the U.S. imperialist intervention. More recently we have been hearing about the plight of women in not only the Taliban-controlled areas, but also under the regime of the corrupt and discredited U.S. ally, President Hamid Karzai. We are told that Afghanistan's maternal and infant mortality rates are among the highest in the world, that schoolgirls get doused with acid and that female politicians are shot or threatened with beheading for daring to work outside the home—all this, and much worse, is true.

The bourgeoisie's counterfeit concern about the plight of women is a cynical and cruel bandying of empty words in the service of support for the aims of U.S. imperialism. The main enemy of the Afghan people is American imperialism! Our starting point is proletarian class opposition to the U.S. capitalist rulers and to the imperialist system as a whole. In the lead-up to the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq we called for the military defense of these countries, without giving any political support to the reactionary, woman-hating Taliban cutthroats or the capitalist dictatorship of Saddam Hussein. Today, insofar as the forces on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan aim their blows against the imperialist occupiers, we call for their military defense against imperialism, without giving them any political support.

All U.S./NATO troops out of Iraq and Afghanistan now! Hands off Pakistan!

This story goes back 30 years, to when the United States initiated what was then the largest CIA operation in its history to support the forefathers of the Taliban. The *mujahedin* had launched a guerrilla war against the government of the left-

nationalist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), which had sought to implement a program for redistributing land, lowering the bride price, educating women and freeing them from the head-to-toe *burqa*. Responding to repeated requests by the embattled PDPA regime, the Soviet Union intervened in December 1979. For genuine Trotskyists, there was no question which side working people and the oppressed the world over had in this conflict. The threat of a CIA-backed Islamic takeover on the USSR's southern flank posed pointblank the need for
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June 1 New York City vigil, one of a series of gatherings held to honor Dr. George Tiller (above) following his assassination by anti-abortion bigot.



Korotzer/NLN



Medical Science vs. Homeopathy

23 September 2009

Dear comrades,

In the otherwise excellent *Women & Revolution* article “Wealth Care USA” re-printed in the current *WV* (No. 943), I have objections to the following:

“In 1847 a small group of physicians had founded the American Medical Association primarily as a means to combat ‘sec-tarians,’ that is, nontraditional physicians such as homeopaths, who were seen as a threat to the wealth and social position of the medical profession. (The AMA even denounced the Surgeon General of the U.S. for cooperating with a homeopathic physician to save the life of Secretary of State William Seward, when he was shot the night of Lincoln’s assassination!)”

First of all, there is a factual mistake; William Seward was stabbed, not shot, in the attempt on his life.

I’m disturbed by the implied defense of homeopathy and other “nontraditional”

(i.e., non-scientific) medicine. Two main principles of homeopathy (invented by Samuel Hahnemann in the early 19th century) are: 1) Like cures like. A substance which causes a symptom (such as poison ivy for a rash, or caffeine for insomnia) can be used to cure it. 2) Dilution. Said substance is made more effective by dilution. The curative substance is diluted so much that the remedy does not contain even a single molecule. But the water somehow contains a spiritual “memory” of it. This is obviously at odds with science, which as Marxist materialists we are champions of. Not surprisingly, it has never been demonstrated to work beyond a placebo effect. (A good new book with a discussion of homeopathy is *Superstition: Belief in the Age of Science*, by Robert L. Park.)

When so-called alternative medicines

are shown not to work in scientific tests, their proponents often cry that they are victimized by the scientific establishment. Other current examples include HIV denialists and anti-vaccination conspiracy theorists.

The problem with medicine for profit is not that quackery is kept out. (Indeed, increasingly it’s not, with hospitals opening up centers for alternative medicine. See the PBS *Frontline* documentary “The Alternative Fix” for chilling scenes of a so-called holistic healer sitting in on a consult as an equal with trained doctors in a consult about a seriously ill patient, and a hospital staff homeopath treating an autistic child.) Engels noted in *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1845):

“Another source of physical mischief to the working-class lies in the impossibility of employing skilled physicians in cases of illness. It is true that a number of charitable institutions strive to supply this want, that the infirmary in Manchester, for instance, receives or gives advice and medicine to 22,000 patients annually. But what is that in a city in which, according to Gaskell’s calculation, three-fourths of the population need medical aid every year? English doctors charge high fees, and working-men are not in a position to pay them. They can therefore do nothing, or are compelled to call in

cheap charlatans, and use quack remedies, which do more harm than good.”

A future international planned socialist economy will provide health care for all, and sweep away the material basis for the persistence of dangerous anti-scientific quackery.

Communist greetings,
Jeff T.

* * *

6 October 2009

To: Editor, Workers Vanguard

In what was otherwise a pair of outstanding, accurate and refreshingly honest articles on health care in the USA and elsewhere in the Sept 25 Workers Vanguard, in the second article, (“The Great Health Care Debate/Wealth Care in USA”) was the following paragraph:

“In 1847 a small group of physicians had founded the American Medical Association primarily as a means to combat ‘sec-tarians,’ that is, nontraditional physicians such as homeopaths, who were seen as a threat to the wealth and social position of the medical profession. (The AMA even denounced the Surgeon General of the U.S. for cooperating with a homeopathic physician to save the life of Secretary of State William Seward, when he was shot the night of Lincoln’s assassination!)”

This paragraph is uncritical of homeopathy, and indeed arguably can be con-



TROTSKY

Marxism and Science

Anti-scientific quackery and all forms of religious and superstitious backwardness, including on sexuality and abortion, are on the rise in this period, marked by the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92. Referring to the great German philosopher Georg Hegel, Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky defended the scientific nature of Marxism in a 1939 piece written against an opposition in the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party that shrank from defense of the USSR on the eve of

the Second World War and included elements who renounced dialectical materialism.

Hegel wrote before Darwin and before Marx. Thanks to the powerful impulse given to thought by the French Revolution, Hegel anticipated the general movement of science. But because it was only an *anticipation*, although by a genius, it received from Hegel an idealistic character. Hegel operated with ideological shadows as the ultimate reality. Marx demonstrated that the movement of these ideological shadows reflected nothing but the movement of material bodies.

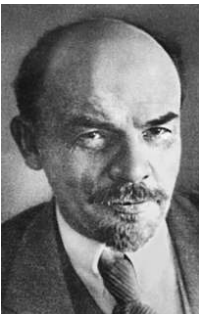
We call our dialectic, materialist, since its roots are neither in heaven nor in the depths of our “free will,” but in objective reality, in nature. Consciousness grew out of the unconscious, psychology out of physiology, the organic world out of the inorganic, the solar system out of nebulae. On all the rungs of this ladder of development, the quantitative changes were transformed into qualitative. Our thought, including dialectical thought, is only one of the forms of the expression of changing matter. There is place within this system for neither God, nor Devil, nor immortal soul, nor eternal norms of laws and morals. The dialectic of thinking, having grown out of the dialectic of nature, possesses consequently a thoroughly materialist character.

Darwinism, which explained the evolution of species through quantitative transformations passing into qualitative, was the highest triumph of the dialectic in the whole field of organic matter....

Marx, who in distinction from Darwin was a conscious dialectician, discovered a basis for the scientific classification of human societies in the development of their productive forces and the structure of the relations of ownership which constitute the anatomy of society. Marxism substituted for the vulgar descriptive classification of societies and states, which even up to now still flourishes in the universities, a materialistic dialectical classification. Only through using the method of Marx is it possible correctly to determine both the concept of a workers’ state and the moment of its downfall.

All this, as we see, contains nothing “metaphysical” or “scholastic,” as conceited ignorance affirms. Dialectic logic expresses the laws of motion in contemporary scientific thought. The struggle against materialist dialectics on the contrary expresses a distant past, conservatism of the petty bourgeoisie, the self-conceit of university routinists and...a spark of hope for an after-life.

—Leon Trotsky, “A Petty-Bourgeois Opposition in the Socialist Workers Party” (1939), printed in *In Defense of Marxism* (Pathfinder, 1973)



LENIN

Cleveland, Fort Hood, Obama

6 November 2009

“Capitalist society is and has always been *horror without end.*”

—V.I. Lenin

I’ll try not to cry, Baruch Spinoza, Leon Trotsky. I’ll try not to laugh. I’ll try to understand. The occasion is that of the confirmed deaths of eleven black women in Cleveland who weren’t “missed,” quite naturally, by the powers that be. The capitalist rulers’ motto, anyway, is that the only “good black is a dead black,” unless they are helping to slaughter poor, oppressed people throughout the world.

The Commander-in-Chief of U.S. imperialism, Barack Obama, tells the world about how horrible are the killings of U.S. soldiers at a U.S. Army base by a U.S. officer who faced the prospect of going to Afghanistan and possibly not returning.

According to Obama’s bourgeois ethos, the poor black women in Cleveland (and elsewhere) were/are just a bunch of lazy, drug-crazed louts and fiends who played in the fast lane and

got what was coming to them.

Remember, working people: the rulers’ gain is our pain, their tears are not ours and their rotting system comes at the expense of our lives. It needs to be eradicated through international proletarian revolution.

Well, Brother Joe Hill, I believe that we can both mourn and organize for that day, when

“...burning sticks—and crosses—is not mere child’s play.

But a madman in his most incandescent bloom

Whose loveless soul is imperfection in its most lustrous groom.

So stand fast, young old mule, soothe in contemplation

Thy burning hole and aching thigh.

Your stubbornness is of the living

And cruel anxiety is about to die....”

—from “Freedom”

by Charles Mingus

We’ll see.

Don A.

On Paid Sick Leave

14 November 2009

Dear Editor,

In addition to demanding free quality health care for all (including *all* immigrants) as we do in “For Socialized Medicine,” (*Workers Vanguard* No. 943, 25 September), we have to make it unambiguously clear that we support unconditional, unlimited paid sick leave for all workers at full (100%) pay, beginning with *day one of employment*. The same principle applies to the unemployed: They should get full union-scale pay and benefits, including when they are sick and cannot look for work. The USA is the only advanced capitalist country without a national health care or health insurance program; it is also the only one without paid leave guaranteed by national legislation. In Germany, for example, every employee is entitled to 100% of their salary for the first six weeks of sick leave, paid by the employer, starting *day one* of employment! After six weeks the insurance provider pays the sick leave called *Krankengeld*.

In the United States in contrast, sick pay, even in better union contracts, is pathetically short, underpaid and often only available after a probationary period. For longer illnesses workers must pay out-of-pocket for expensive, long-term disability insurance. There is enormous pressure for workers to drag their sick carcasses to work, even with contagious infections like the flu, or face discipline including firing for “excessive” sick leave. In turn, managers and supervisors are rewarded with bonuses and raises for “excellent” attendance records.

How many industrial accidents and how many of the 36,000 flu-related deaths a year in the U.S. might be preventable with guaranteed paid sick leave. The absence of such a national policy is catastrophic in the face of a pandemic such as we are facing now. Indispensable to the demand for Free Quality Health Care is: *Unconditional, Unlimited, Paid Sick Leave for All Workers and the Unemployed!*

Comradely,
Reuben S.

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strued as suggesting homeopathy deserves a place in the rational practice of medicine along with scientific evidence-based, clinically-tested treatments.

I have little doubt the AMA's primary motivation for attacking homeopaths in 1847 was to protect the profits and power of its membership, but it makes for a pretty poor condemnation of the AMA to accuse them of trying to "combat" and crush an organization of outright total quacks.

In the century and a half that has elapsed since 1847, there have been many hundreds of good (double blind, randomized, with meaningful sample size) clinical tests of homeopathy. NONE of them have found ANY homeopathic remedy to be superior in efficacy to a placebo. NONE. Homeopathy, as quackery, has been responsible for immense harm to health. This BOTH by turning people away from effective, science and evidence-based treatments, AND by the tendency of homeopaths to counsel parents against vaccinating children against childhood diseases. It was a mistake for Workers Vanguard to treat such a gross fraud in that fashion.

Homeopathy is most prevalent in India, in large part because quality evidence-based scientific medicine is not available to its population.

Any high school chemistry student can tell you what Avogadro's number is: 6.02×10^{23} to the 23rd power, the number of molecules in one "mole" [a mole is the molecular weight in grams of substance]. Knowing this, any high school chemistry student can calculate that at the dilution of its active ingredients specified for a large fraction of homeopathic remedies, it is highly unlikely a single molecule of that active ingredient remains. [Avogadro and Samuel Hahnemann (the latter being the man who founded homeopathy) were contemporaries.] Thus, most homeopathic "remedies" are nothing but PURE WATER, with NO active ingredient what so ever in the water. The "theory" of homeopathy is total crackpot nonsense in the light of current scientific knowledge of pharmacology and biochemistry. As such, one would expect to find homeop-

athy to be absolutely worthless. This is what a century of testing its specific remedies has confirmed.

As a scientist, a physician, and a Marxist, I share your contempt for the AMA, for most of the reasons you provided in the remainder of your discussion of the history of medical care in the USA. I never joined that organization, in part because I was well aware of most of what you presented. However, to repeat, attacking the AMA for its attack on quackery (regardless of its motivations for attacking quackery) is NOT an effective way to expose it.

A subscriber to Workers Vanguard since the early 1970's, I note you have repeatedly (rightly and wisely) endorsed Enlightenment rationalism and evidence-based science, and (again rightly and wisely) repeatedly condemned superstition and faith-based beliefs. It is inconsistent with such a position to present so uncritically a mention of homeopathy.

You are rightly proud of the fact that, historically, you have rejected trendy and opportunistic "in" positions of liberals and the pseudo-left, taking unpopular but correct positions regarding feminism, black nationalism, the nature of the Cuban state, the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in support of a secular government, and other important issues. Why now even appear to be capitulating to current ignorant and fuzzy-headed (but popular in a segment of the left) knee-jerk and wrong ideas about "alternative medicine"?

As a side issue, I do note that in 1847, even mainstream medicine had little to offer in the way of effective treatments, and in fact was not at that time solidly based on science, and employed many untested, ineffective, and in some cases (such as blood letting) harmful to lethal "treatments". It is doubtful that anyone in 1847...whether a total quack such as a homeopath, or a respected mainstream physician...had much to offer William Seward beyond bed rest. With few exceptions, it was not until roughly a century later, at the time of the availability of penicillin to the masses in the mid to late

1940's, that science and evidence-based medicine began to provide substantial numbers of proven and effective treatments. None of this excuses your uncritical mention of, and arguable implicit support for the total quackery that is homeopathy in your article.

This is NOT, as I hope you understand, a political criticism. I find myself entirely in agreement with the political observations made in both articles, including (as mentioned above) your strong criticism of the AMA.

This is a matter of scientific and medical fact.

It behooves Marxists, when they refer to issues of science, to get their facts right. Scientific method (that group of approaches to examining the world which endeavor to minimize as much as possible the bias of the investigator), the greatest achievement of the Enlightenment and greatest advance in human thought, is the bed-rock on which Marxism stands.

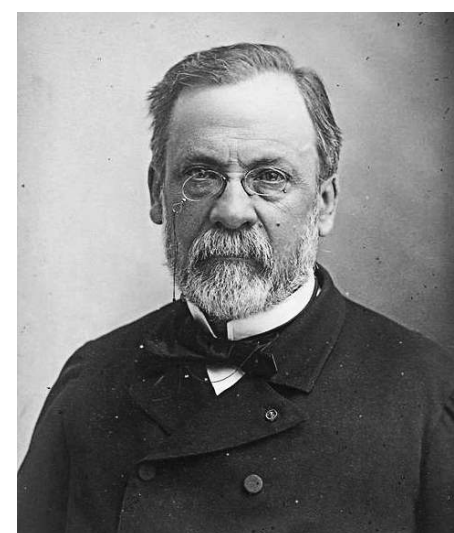
I would urge you, comrades, to print a clarification regarding the matter.

Respectfully,
Martin H. Goodman, MD

References:

The best article I have read on homeopathy...one that is exceptionally well-written, a delight to read, and extremely well documented with reference material...is the chapter on homeopathy in the book "Trick or Treatment" by Edzard Ernst and Simon Singh, published in 2008. Pages 93-143. This book also has chapters on acupuncture, chiropractic, and herbal medicine and attempts to cover all of alternative and complementary medicine. It presents the most up to date hard clinical scientific evidence regarding the efficacy...or lack there of...of "complementary and alternative" medical disciplines. The book's introductory chapter expounds brilliantly what evidence-based clinical science is, and the inspiring history that led to its being adopted by honest, caring, serious healers. It should be read by all.

[All brackets and ellipses are the authors'. —ed.]



New York Public Library

Louis Pasteur's work was instrumental in developing the germ theory of disease.

WV Replies:

We thank our readers for pointing out the error in the article "Wealth Care USA," reprinted from *Women and Revolution* No. 39 (Spring 1991) in WV No. 943 (25 September). This error is particularly unfortunate given the growing popularity of quack "medicine" today. In the 21st century, these snake-oil treatments—homeopathy, chiropractic, "New Age" spiritualism, herbal remedies, acupuncture—are international multibillion-dollar businesses. While some of these treatments may be relatively harmless and may sometimes have a placebo effect, more often they are dangerous both in themselves and because they divert patients from needed medical treatment.

The distinction between science-based, mainstream medicine and homeopathy is stark and irreconcilable, though in the early 19th century "mainstream" medicine embraced many of the same mystical concepts. As physicist Robert Park explained in *Superstition: Belief in the Age of Science* (Princeton University Press, 2008), vitalism was "the prevailing medical superstition of the time," representing

continued on page 11

30 Years Later

We Will Not Forget Greensboro Martyrs

On 3 November 1979, in broad daylight, nine carloads of Klansmen and Nazis drove up to a black housing project in Greensboro, North Carolina, where an anti-Klan rally was gathering. With cool deliberation, the killers took out their weapons, aimed, fired and drove off. Five supporters of the Communist Workers Party—union officials, union organizers and civil rights activists—lay dying in pools of blood. Ten others were wounded or maimed for life.

The Greensboro Massacre was the bloodiest fascist attack in the U.S. in decades. It was a conspiracy of fascists and their capitalist state patrons. From the outset, the fascists were aided and abetted by the government, from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms agent who helped train the killers and plot the assassinations, to the "former" FBI informer who rode shotgun in the motorcade of death and the Greensboro cop who brought up the rear. When the two-minute fusillade ended, the cops moved in to arrest the survivors for "rioting." Two successive all-white juries acquitted the killers of all charges, affirming once again the meaning of "justice" in this racist capitalist country.

Carried out during the Democratic Carter administration, the Greensboro Massacre was the opening shot of what would become the Reagan years' war on labor and blacks. When the Klan announced it would "celebrate" this



Greensboro Daily News

Nelson Johnson (with stick) passes fallen comrade, 3 November 1979. Five supporters of the Communist Workers Party were killed by KKK and Nazi terrorists, abetted by cops and Feds, in Greensboro Massacre.

massacre on 10 November 1979 in Detroit, the Spartacist League initiated a labor/black mobilization that drew over 500, many of them black auto workers, who made sure that the Klan did not ride in the Motor City. In city after city over the following years, when KKK and fascists threatened to mobilize, we brought out core battalions of black and labor militants who understood that the fascists and the Klan can't be ignored—they must be stopped.

Annual commemorations of the Greensboro Massacre repeatedly focused on the call for a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which was founded in 2005 and modeled on the South African commission. The South African commission served to whitewash the crimes of apartheid-era butchers and to assure a peaceful transition to neo-apartheid rule under the African National Congress-led government, which continues the superexploitation and oppression of the

black and other non-white masses. To commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Greensboro Massacre, a four-day "Truth, Justice and Healing Conference" was held in Greensboro, with the keynote speaker being James Joseph, U.S. ambassador to South Africa under the Clinton administration and former board member of the National Endowment for Democracy, a CIA front.

The Greensboro Massacre was racist murder. The truth is that no justice can come from the same capitalist state whose forces helped to orchestrate the killings in the first place. "Reconciliation" with the forces of racist reaction and with the capitalist rulers, who keep the fascist bands in reserve to unleash against the working class in times of social crisis, can only serve to politically disarm and demobilize workers and the oppressed in the face of fascist terror.

We honor the Greensboro martyrs—Cesar Cauce, Michael Nathan, Bill Sampson, Sandi Smith and James Waller—as well as the many others who were wounded that November day. They take their place on a proud roster of fighters for the working people and oppressed, whose memory must be seared into the consciousness of the working class. We honor them by fighting to build a revolutionary workers party that will fight to put the working class in power through a socialist revolution that will make sure there will be no more Greensboros.



Young Spartacus

National Equality March for gay rights, October 11, Washington, D.C.

RCP: Anti-Gay Moralists Then and Now

On October 11, tens of thousands turned out for the National Equality March for gay rights in Washington, D.C., calling on Barack Obama, Commander-in-Chief of the imperialist military that is brutally occupying Iraq and Afghanistan, to overturn both Bill Clinton's infamous "don't ask, don't tell" policy for homosexuals serving in the armed forces and Clinton's 1996 Defense of Marriage Act. (Obama opposes gay marriage.) Though supportable, these demands reflect the fundamentally conservative thrust of the gay rights milieu in a period of little social struggle. As we noted in "For the Right of Gay Marriage...and Divorce!: Marriage and the Capitalist State": "It's a far cry from 'free love' and the Stonewall Rebellion of 1969 to today's marriage ceremonies, PTA meetings and Democratic and Republican Party fund-raisers" (WV No. 824, 16 April 2004).

Far from being a defender of gay people in this viciously oppressive and bigoted society, the Democratic Party is a staunch promoter of anti-gay "family values" and brutal anti-sex witchhunts. This results from the capitalist class' dependence on the institution of the family, which arose as a means of ensuring the inheritance of private property. The main source of women's oppression, the family is an important means for the bourgeoisie to regiment society and anti-gay bigotry flows from the need to defend this patriarchal structure against any "deviations." Our article on gay marriage explained:

"We socialists fight for a society in which no one needs to be forced into a legal straitjacket in order to get medical benefits, visitation rights, custody of children, immigration rights, or any of the many privileges this capitalist society grants to those, and only those, who are embedded in the traditional 'one man on one woman for life' legal mold."

We seek to replace the family as an economic institution by socializing childcare and housework, freeing women to play a full and equal role in social and political

between working people, above competition among them.

Socialist society will wipe out the decadence of capitalism in all spheres. Prostitution, drug addiction, homosexuality and other practices which bourgeois society breeds and the bourgeoisie promotes to degrade and enslave the masses of people, will be abolished. The prostitutes, drug addicts, homosexuals and others who are caught up in these things will be re-educated to become productive members of society, with working class consciousness. The shame connected with these practices will be taken from the shoulders of these

emancipation of women. As mentioned earlier, some expressions of homosexuality (and especially some expressions of male homosexuality in today's world) can at times constitute pretty blatant manifestations of male right (and contribute to the oppression of women in this way), but even the most backward and socially objectionable of these practices or "scenes" are not the "cause" of the oppression of women. As we have emphasized, under socialism, as the material

Programme and Constitution of the Revolutionary Communist Party USA

October 1975

"On the Position on Homosexuality in the New Draft Programme"

2001

life as part of constructing an egalitarian, socialist society.

In contrast, rally co-organizers in the International Socialist Organization attempted to police the rally against our "disruptive" opposition to the Democratic Party and our defense of Roman Polanski, targeted for consensual sexual activity that took place more than 30 years ago (see "Stop Vendetta Against Roman Polanski!" WV No. 944, 9 October). The Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP), long notorious on the left for their open anti-gay bigotry, turned out with banners calling for gay rights, pushing Democratic Party lesser-evilmism through their still ongoing "World Can't Wait—Drive Out the Bush Regime" project.

The RCP is desperately clawing its way deeper into the liberal Democratic Party swamp, in an atmosphere of anti-sex bigotry and "family values" moralism. Of course, the RCP wouldn't have gotten far at the National Equality March while ranting against lesbians and gays as "degenerates." When they were known as the Revolutionary Union, this group issued a position paper describing homosexuality as a disease of capitalist society like "exotic religious sects, mysticism, drugs, pornography, promiscuity, sex orgies, trotskyism, etc." ("Position Paper of the Revolutionary Union on Homosexuality and Gay Liberation," 1974). Ever the

opportunists, since that time they've had a "change of line"—though not exactly a change of heart.

RCP's "New Position": Same Old Prejudice

The RCP's 2001 "On the Position of Homosexuality in the New Draft Programme" admits that their former Programme "did tend to treat the fairly widespread phenomenon of homosexuality in the U.S. as a reflection of imperial decay and decadence, and although not portraying homosexuals as enemies, did regard them as individuals whose backward outlook needed to be reformed and homosexual practice remodeled. This was incorrect"! They proceed to defend this "incorrect" program:

"Our view on this subject was also a product of opposition to and criticism of the more degrading and abusive sexual practices engaged in by some homosexuals (which do exist), and to some misogyny towards women (including lesbians) on the part of some male homosexuals. Also, basic masses, among whom our Party is based, works among and relies on as a decisive force for revolution, have a wealth of experience with U.S. prisons and with the widespread use of homosexual sex (including rape) to establish power hierarchies over people in prison and sometimes outside of prison.... All the negative things we spoke of really did (and do) exist...."

So what is the "new" position on homo-

sexuality? Now they "do not see a homosexual orientation or the practice of homosexuality *per se* as something that constitutes an impediment to the emancipation of women and the abolition of all oppressive and exploitative relations." Gee, thanks.

The RCP apparently felt compelled to investigate, "why do some people engage in sexual activity with people of the same sex?" This obsession with trying to find the culprit for something that is a *natural phenomenon* led them to embark on an extensive "theoretical review" of the cause of homosexuality. The fact is, what "causes" homosexuality is *completely irrelevant!* All we can say is, it's as natural a sexual expression as any other—occurring not only in all human societies throughout history but in many other species. All the RCP's baloney about reviewing biological studies to conclude that "*even the most backward and socially objectionable of these practices or 'scenes' are not the 'cause' of the oppression of women*" (emphasis in original) is a fig leaf on their bigotry. They would have us believe that in the decades when they were busy excluding gays from their organization as "degenerates," science couldn't have told them that they were full of crap.

What they admit to sounds bad enough, but the RCP's document is rife with falsifications. The statement that "our party has always been firmly opposed to the discrimination and attacks leveled against homosexuals and we welcomed and encouraged the participation of homosexuals in the revolutionary struggle" is a *bald-faced lie*. Actually, they *excluded* gays from their organization, stating in their 1974 position paper: "homosexuals cannot be Communists." All their rhetoric about fighting "pogromist" attacks on gays is *empty*—they pushed the same reactionary garbage that's used to whip up murderous hysteria against gays, lesbians and transgenders, including calls to "reeducate" homosexuals from their "degrading" and "shameful" practices. We wonder what the RCP would say about "socialists" who pushed an alleged analysis of black people as intellectually and morally inferior while insisting that they "always opposed" lynching!

The Family and Uncle Joe

The RCP attempts to drag the Marxist movement into the mire of their own Stalinist degeneracy, claiming, "we were unfortunately in line with some longstanding historical tradition within the

CORRECTION

In "LRP State Department Socialists Embrace New Bedfellow" (WV No. 945, 23 October), we wrongly wrote that Socialist Appeal is the U.S. affiliate of Ted Grant's International Marxist Tendency. The organization's name is the Workers International League. *Socialist Appeal* is the name of their publication.

international communist movement.” In reality, the communist movement from its beginnings has stood forthrightly in defense of homosexuals’ rights, including courageous public stands such as August Bebel’s 1898 speech in the German Reichstag for repealing the penal code against “unnatural fornication.” The Russian Revolution gave flesh and blood to the Marxist understanding of the woman question and homosexual rights. The Bolsheviks’ position was explained in a 1923 pamphlet by Grigori Batkis, director of the Moscow Institute of Social Hygiene:

“Concerning homosexuality, sodomy, and various other forms of sexual gratification, which are set down in European legislation as offenses against public morality—Soviet legislation treats these exactly the same as so-called ‘natural’ intercourse. All forms of sexual intercourse are private matters. Only when there’s use of force or duress, as in general when there’s an injury or encroachment upon the rights of another person, is there a question of criminal prosecution.”

—*The Sexual Revolution in Russia*

Soviet Russia annulled all laws discriminating against homosexual acts, and a campaign was undertaken against anti-homosexual prejudice as part of the broader struggle for the liberation of women and children from the prison of the family.

In fact, the “longstanding historical tradition” the RCP follows is Joseph Stalin’s, under whom many democratic rights for women and gays were overturned and abortion and “sodomy” were re-criminalized. This was part of the process of political counterrevolution where a conservative bureaucratic caste usurped political power from the working class in impoverished Soviet Russia. The Stalinist bureaucracy, a parasitic layer dependent on the socialized property forms won through the Russian Revolution, sought to buttress its own position by promoting social conservatism and respect for authority, including the outright bourgeois ideology of Great Russian chauvinism and the cult of the family.

As exiled revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky observed in his 1936 analysis of the degeneration of the Soviet workers state:

“Instead of openly saying, ‘We have proven still too poor and ignorant for the creation of socialist relations among men, our children and grandchildren will realize this aim,’ the leaders are forcing people to glue together again the shell of the broken family, and not only that, but to consider it, under the threat of extreme penalties, the sacred nucleus of triumphant socialism.”

—*The Revolution Betrayed*

With Soviet Russia isolated after the revolution failed to spread internationally, in 1924 the Stalinists developed the ide-

ology that socialism could be built in one country if only peace could be maintained with the imperialists. This program of class collaboration led to the strangulation of revolutionary struggles internationally, the betrayal and murder of Communists around the world and, in 1991-92, the counter-revolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union itself. We stand in the tradition of Trotsky’s Left Opposition and its fight against the Stalinist betrayers and for the revolutionary, proletarian, internationalist principles that animated the October Revolution.

Second only to their cultish obsession with their Chairman Bob Avakian, the RCP promotes Chairman Mao, who represented the same nationalist program of “socialism in one country” as Stalin, only in a different country, China. The 1949 Chinese Revolution overthrew capitalism and the rapacious landlords, in the process transforming the lives of Chinese women who in prerevolutionary times were barely recognized as human beings. However, the society that emerged was and remains a bureaucratically deformed workers state, qualitatively similar to Stalin’s Russia. As Trotskyists, we fight



Xin Liliang

“The Happy Life Chairman Mao Gave Us,” 1954 Maoist propaganda poster glorifies the reactionary institution of the family.

to defend the gains of the 1949 Revolution, including through the overthrow of the parasitic bureaucracy and the establishment of workers democracy. Internationally, we fight for socialist revolution, including in advanced industrial countries, which will lay the basis for an increase in the productive capacities of society and allow the family to be replaced.

Just like the Stalinist leaders in Trotsky’s polemic, the Chinese Maoists (who have regarded homosexuality as an “illness”) promote the family as an ideological prop. Like all Maoists, the RCP glorifies the family as the fighting unit for socialism. However, following Mao’s death, the RCP backed the Gang of Four in the intra-bureaucratic fight in the Chinese Communist Party. After the Gang of Four was outmaneuvered, the RCP wrote China off as capitalist, leaving these defenders of “socialism in one country” without a country.

Chairman Avakian’s Bedroom Police

The RCP’s 1974 position paper stated: “We feel that the best way to struggle out such contradictions in our personal lives is in stable monogamous relationships between men and women based on mutual love and respect.... In reality, gay liberation is anti-working-class and counterrevolutionary. Its attacks on the family would rob poor and working class people of the most viable social unit for their revolutionary struggle against the imperialist system.”

The sentimental portrait of the socialist family in RCP’s new Programme is likewise a far cry from Marx and Engels’ view of an institution “based on the overt

Spartacist table at National Equality March. Our defense of Polanski and opposition to Democrats drove reformists crazy.



or covert domestic slavery of the woman” (Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, 1884).

The RCP’s present enthusiasm for gay marriage apparently has more to do with their enthusiasm for forcing people into the stultifying institution of monogamous marriage than with any opposition to the oppression of homosexuals. In their 1988 article “On the Question of Homosexuality and the Emancipation of Women,” the RCP ranted against gay men’s “very narcissistic and self-indulgent lifestyle, including a high degree of preoccupation with sex” and “transvestism and displays of stereotypical ‘effeminate’ behavior” (we could go on). The RCP’s list of “backward and socially objectionable” practices includes sexual promiscuity, pornography and casual anonymous sex—and their injunction that everyone who joins their party will be held to a “higher standard of proletarian morality and discipline than the masses,” means that hapless prospective members, gay *and* straight, should think twice before surrendering their personal freedom to join the ranks of Chairman Bob Avakian! (One might also question the “standard of proletarian morality” of an organization that felt compelled to include rules against raising “money for yourself in the name of the Party” and attempting “to get people to support or join the Party by threatening them” in its 2001 Programme.)

In any case, the RCP’s bourgeois family values have led them to embrace the vilest anti-sex campaigns, foaming at the mouth with disgust for anything that strays from their Maoist dystopia. The crowning example is their slander as “child molesters” of NAMBLA (North American Man/Boy Love Association), an organization that calls for the decriminalization of consensual relationships between younger and older men. Anti-

pedophile hysteria is used by the state to justify the grossest intervention into people’s private lives, and especially to police the behavior of youth. We have a proud history of defending NAMBLA and opposing reactionary age of consent laws and all laws that curtail the privacy and sexual freedom of consenting individuals—for which the RCP also slanders us as “child molesters”! We believe in the principle of effective consent, that is, the sexual behavior that consenting individuals pursue is nobody’s business but their own. For the RCP, an organization that lumps together porn and rape, the distinction between consensual and coerced sex is simply irrelevant.

The Marxist program does not include any position on the value of any particular sexual orientation, and the Spartacus Youth Clubs stand on the tradition of the Marxist movement in opposing all forms of discrimination against homosexuals. As we concluded in our 1976 RCP polemic “Bible Belt Maoists Rant at ‘Deviant Sexual Behavior’”:

“As Lenin declared in *What Is to Be Done?*, communists must be ‘in, but not of’ bourgeois society. Communists must seek to become the ‘tribune of the people,’ championing the cause of all the victims of bourgeois oppression and exploitation. Foolish superstitions and vicious bigotry are the odor of decaying bourgeois society.”

—*Young Spartacus* No. 47, October 1976

Bereft of a Marxist program and shamelessly wallowing in the present backward consciousness inculcated by bourgeois society, the RCP caters to and promotes that consciousness. Here, as on every other crucial question, the program of the RCP has nothing to offer anyone who wants to fight for a revolution against this exploitative, oppressive capitalist society. ■

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Fighting Reformists' Obamamania

WV Subscription Drive Success

Comrades and sympathizers of the Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth Clubs successfully concluded our *Workers Vanguard* subscription drive in October, making 110 percent of the national quota and adding 674 new subscriptions to WV. The annual sub drive is always a major campaign for the party, providing an opportunity to introduce new readers to our Marxist biweekly press, along with our international theoretical journal, *Spartacist*, our publication *Black History and the Class Struggle* and the publications of other sections of the International Communist League. It is also an occasion to make contact with and resubscribe long-time readers.

The outcome of the sub drive was successful, but it was not easy going. Our sub drive took place in the context of the biggest world economic crisis since the Great Depression and the first year of Obama's presidency, hailed by the trade-union bureaucrats, bourgeois liberals and reformist "socialists" as a sea change from the oddly demented Bush regime. Last year, we stood out for our class opposition to all capitalist politicians, including Obama, whose election has provided a facelift for blood-soaked U.S. imperialism. While there is a certain level of disappointment among many in Obama's presidency, illusions in this Wall Street Democrat run deep. Indeed, in the face of right-wing mobilizations, particularly around the issue of health care "reform," many, especially black working people, have solidarized with Obama against wingnut reaction. Headlines such as "Down With Obama's War in Afghanistan!" (WV No. 942, 11 September) were especially controversial.

At the same time, the disastrous effects of the Great Recession have increased interest in learning more about Marxism among new subscribers, a few of whom are or have been around various reformist groups. A giveaway popular with new subscribers was our May 2009 pamphlet, *Capitalist Anarchy and the Immiseration of the Working Class*.

Our press is our central weapon for raising consciousness of the need for a working-class vanguard party to lead the proletariat and the oppressed in the struggle for socialist revolution to overthrow the capitalist order and establish working-class rule. As Bolshevik leader V. I. Lenin put it in "Where to Begin" (1901): "A newspaper is not only a collective propagandist and a collective agitator, it is also a collective organizer." This understanding stands in sharp counterposition to that of the reformists, whose opposition to socialist revolution means liquidation into the Democratic Party swamp. The stodgy, thoroughly reformist Communist Party—whose main "principle" is to sup-

port the Democrats—has gone so far as to relegate its journal *Political Affairs* only to the Internet, and there are rumors that it plans the same for its newspaper, *People's World*.

Marxists do not normally expect heightened class and social struggle in the immediate wake of a massive economic meltdown threatening the jobs and livelihoods of workers. At the same time, we intersected expressions of disgruntlement among working people during our sub drive. In

and faculty joined the UPTE picket lines, chanting "Don't cross the picket lines!" The 5,000-strong rally held that day was the largest at UC Berkeley in years.

We sent a sub drive team to New Orleans, which is still groaning under the impact of Hurricane Katrina and the rulers' racist atrocity against the poor and black population of the city in its aftermath. WV's lead article "For Socialized Medicine! Expropriate the Health Care Industry!" (No. 943, 25 September)

tember 24-25 summit. While defending those arrested, we pulled no punches in our political exposure of the organizers of the protest, whose demands "vainly sought to pressure the capitalist state to serve the interests of the people" (see "Cops Rampage at G20 Protests," WV No. 944, 9 October).

The largest demonstration was the October 11 protest in D.C. in support of gay rights, which appealed to the Democratic Obama administration, the heir



the Bay Area, we sold well to BART transit workers who were going through their contract negotiations. Comrades in Chicago went to the Teamsters picket lines when SK Hand Tools workers struck in August, after the company had canceled all health benefits. We also sold well at a New York City Transport Workers Union Local 100 rally, and a few "Day of Outrage" rallies at work sites, in defense of the union's contract. Trips to several Southern port cities allowed us to renew contact with our longtime readers in the docks and shipyards. We intervened at rallies protesting the California budget cuts and the proposed massive tuition fee hikes at UCLA and UC Berkeley. The rallies were held in conjunction with a one-day statewide strike by the University Professional and Technical Employees union. At UC Berkeley, other campus workers, students

touched a raw nerve there. Other trips to the South included those to North Carolina, Norfolk, Charleston and Washington, D.C., where a key task was combating widespread illusions in Obama and the Democrats. We also highlighted our struggle for black liberation through socialist revolution, including through our articles on Michael Jackson, the arrest of Henry Louis Gates Jr. and the fight to free death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Throughout the sub drive, comrades made a particular effort to sell subscriptions to *Espartaco*, the publication of our comrades of the Grupo Espartaquista de México. Working with comrades in the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyiste of Canada, we also made a trip to Montreal, where our newly published French-language edition of *Spartacist*, particularly the article on the Spanish Civil War, was the biggest selling point by far for subscriptions.

More generally in the sub drive, our unconditional military defense of the Chinese deformed workers state and our opposition to the counterrevolutionary "Free Tibet" movement sparked heated exchanges with students, anarchists and others. Our insistence on full citizenship rights for all immigrants was polarizing, especially in the Southwest. Also controversial was our call for free abortion on demand and our defense of director Roman Polanski, who faces extradition to the U.S. for having consensual sex with a 13-year-old girl over 30 years ago.

WV sales teams intervened into several demonstrations organized by and/or built by the reformists, seeking to break activists from Democratic Party pressure politics. Among these events were the G20 protests in Pittsburgh outside the Sep-

tember 24-25 summit. While defending those arrested, we pulled no punches in our political exposure of the organizers of the protest, whose demands "vainly sought to pressure the capitalist state to serve the interests of the people" (see "Cops Rampage at G20 Protests," WV No. 944, 9 October). The largest demonstration was the October 11 protest in D.C. in support of gay rights, which appealed to the Democratic Obama administration, the heir

Congratulations to all comrades on their hard work in the sub drive and especially to comrade Laura in the Bay Area for selling the most subs (109 points). Welcome to all of our new readers and those who renewed their subscriptions. We are proud of our history and revolutionary program and offer bound volumes of WV for sale as well as other publications of our party. We strive to make our paper forthright, polemical and hard-hitting, basing ourselves on the work of our revolutionary Marxist forebears. ■

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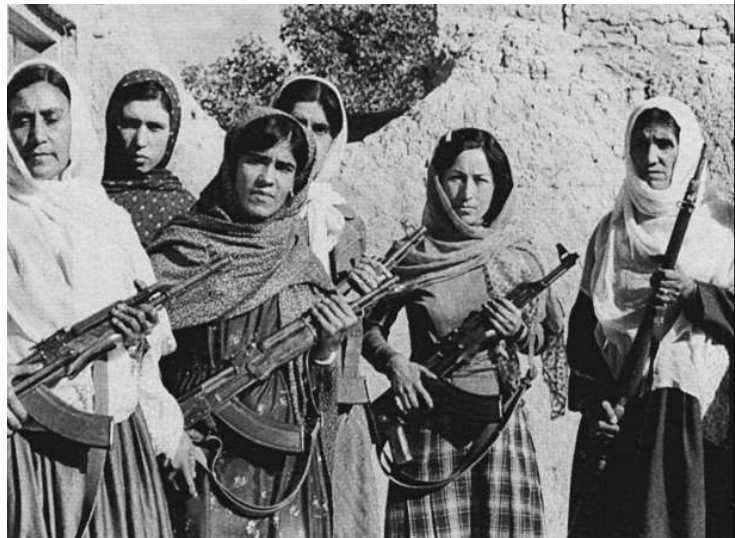
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Women and Revolution

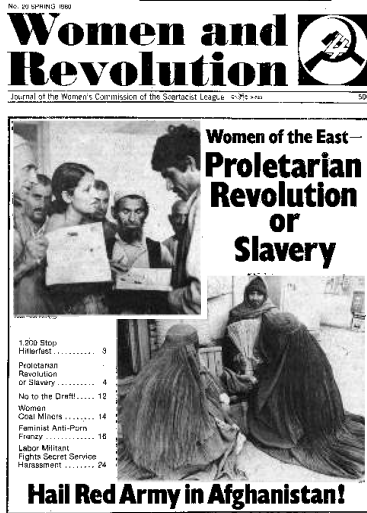


Spring 1980



Der Spiegel

Soviet intervention opened road to extending gains of October Revolution to Afghan peoples. Left: Afghan women mobilized against U.S.-backed *mujahedin* (holy warriors). Right: Spartacist/Spartacus Youth League contingent at March 1980 anti-draft demonstration in Washington, D.C.



Young Spartacus

Women's Rights...

(continued from page 1)

unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union, a bureaucratically degenerated workers state. The Soviet intervention also opened up the possibility of social liberation for the Afghan masses, particularly women. We said: Hail Red Army! Extend social gains of October Revolution to Afghan peoples!

Under the Soviet military umbrella, the Afghan government began mass literacy campaigns and provided medical care. Over 300,000 peasants received land. By the late 1980s, half of all university students in Afghanistan were women, and women made up 40 percent of the country's doctors, 70 percent of its teachers and 30 percent of its civil servants. Women in the workforce had increased 50-fold, and 15,000 women served as soldiers and commanders in the Afghan army. The London *Guardian* online (30 September 2001) quoted Saira Noorani, a female surgeon who left Kabul in 2001: "Life was good under the Soviets," Saira said. "Every girl could go to high school and university. We could go wherever we wanted and wear what we liked.... Since then everything has been a long dark night."

But for much of the left, support for the Democratic Party at home and for anti-Communism abroad has been at the core of their program. With few exceptions, the reformist "socialists" all howled with the imperialists in demanding Soviet troops out of Afghanistan in the 1980s. We were alone on the left internationally in hailing the Red Army in Afghanistan.

The International Socialist Organization (ISO) and its then-parent group in Britain demanded: "Troops Out of Afghanistan!" (*Socialist Worker* [Britain], 12 January 1980). The Maoist Revolutionary Communist Party likewise condemned the Soviet intervention. To justify siding with the reactionary *mujahedin* and their imperialist patrons, the reformist left invoked the lie of "poor little Afghanistan" and screamed about the national rights of the country being trampled by "Soviet imperialism." In fact, even if Afghanistan were a nation, the question of its national self-determination would have been subordinated to the overriding class and social questions—defense of the Soviet Union and the struggle for women's rights and social progress in Afghanistan.

Just across the border, Soviet Central Asia had once been exactly like Afghanistan—a miserably backward, desolate and benighted place, in fact not a nation but a patchwork of tribes and peoples. But in the 1920s, Soviet power came to Central Asia. To be sure, even the most powerful government cannot decree social advancement—it must be built. In 50 years, Soviet

Central Asia had moved forward ten centuries because it had been transformed from a backward, tribal area by the socialized, planned economy of the USSR.

Why We Defended the Soviet Union

Upon coming to power in 1917, the Bolsheviks put into practice a number of crucial measures to begin the liberation of women. They made marriage and divorce simple matters of civil registration, entirely independent of the reactionary Russian Orthodox church, as part of an early decree giving women equal rights with men. Insofar as the poverty of the country allowed, they established communal kitchens, laundries and childcare centers to free women from the drudgery of housework—measures that sought to bring women into the workforce and into

and production for profit.

Marxists hold that the institution of the family is the source of the oppression of women in class society. As Friedrich Engels laid out in his classic work *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (1884), under the "primitive communism" of the Stone Age, where a primitive equality prevailed, the division of labor between men and women derived from biology (women had to bear and nurse the young) and implied no subordinate social status. In what is now called the Neolithic Age, technological advances, particularly the development of agriculture, created for the first time a social surplus. This wealth was appropriated by a tiny minority, a ruling class, producing the division of society into classes, with a state of armed bodies of men to defend the ruling class.

by socialized childcare, laundries, dining rooms, which will eliminate the oppression of women once and for all.

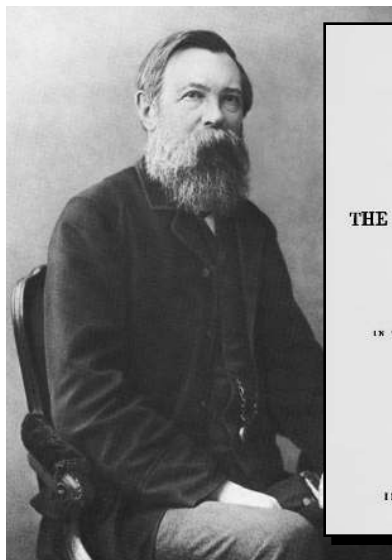
This is the future that the Bolsheviks strove for. They recognized, however, that without qualitative economic development, a fully socialist economy and the liberation of women were a utopian fantasy in backward, isolated Russia. Most importantly, they founded the Communist International with the goal of forming revolutionary proletarian parties and fighting for revolution, especially in the advanced industrial countries, like Germany.

In *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936), Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky explained that from the beginning the Bolsheviks recognized that "the real resources of the state did not correspond to the plans and intentions of the Communist Party. You cannot 'abolish' the family; you have to replace it. The actual liberation of women is unrealizable on a basis of 'generalized want.' Experience soon proved this austere truth which Marx had formulated eighty years before."

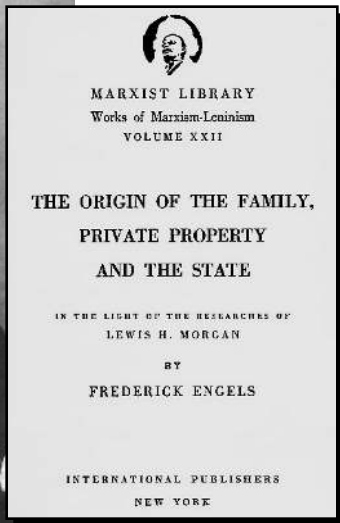
The gains made by women in the Soviet Union are one of the reasons why we Trotskyists stood for unconditional military defense of the USSR against imperialist threats and internal counter-revolution. Stalin turned back the clock on many of the gains of women—for example, abortion was made illegal in 1936—but the enormous power of the planned economy remained. Despite its Stalinist bureaucratic degeneration, the Soviet workers state was able to provide all with a job, housing, health care and education. These are among the social gains that we called for the Soviets to introduce to Afghanistan in the 1980s.

We warned from the outset that the Kremlin bureaucracy, in its quest for "peaceful coexistence" with U.S. imperialism, might cut a deal at the expense of the Afghan peoples. When the Soviet forces completed their pullout from Afghanistan in early 1989, paving the way for a bloody onslaught against Afghan workers, women and leftists, we bitterly denounced this betrayal while the reformist left cheered. The ISO said: "We welcome the defeat of the Russians in Afghanistan." But the Red Army was *not* defeated militarily in Afghanistan. The Soviet withdrawal in 1988-89 was a *political* betrayal by the Stalinist bureaucracy under Mikhail Gorbachev. Objectively, the Soviet intervention had cut against the grain of the nationalist Stalinist dogma of "socialism in one country." Gorbachev's betrayal flowed from the whole outlook of the Stalinist bureaucracy, which subordinated the interests of the international proletariat in an attempt to defend its own privileged position as a parasitic layer resting on the collectivized economy, thus undermining the defense of the Soviet workers state itself. We fought

continued on page 8



W.E. Debenham



Friedrich Engels in 1888. His classic work, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* laid bare material roots of women's oppression.

political life and lay the basis for replacing the family with socialized alternatives.

They abolished all laws regarding consensual sexual relations (laws against sodomy, adultery, homosexuality) because they thought the state had no business interfering in private sexual matters. In 1919, the Communist Party created the Department of Working Women and Peasant Women, or Zhenotdel, to organize special work among women, which included building over 25,000 literacy schools and donning the veil to reach the women of the Muslim East. In 1920, abortion was made legal, free and available in state hospitals under a doctor's care.

For the Bolsheviks, the liberation of women was an integral part of the emancipating goals of the communist program. Denouncing feminism as the tool of upper-class women seeking their own place in the male ranks of capitalist power and privilege, the Bolsheviks insisted that the place of the working woman was side by side with the working man. The proletariat as a whole must embrace the fight against women's oppression as part of its historic task of freeing humanity from the outmoded system of private ownership

The institution of the family came about first and foremost as a means to determine inheritance of private property and the power that came with it. As a means of consolidating wealth in the hands of a tiny minority, the patriarchal family decreed monogamy of women so that there was no question as to the "legitimate" heir. The biological fact of childbearing and child rearing was henceforth tied to the social oppression of women.

In the thousands of years since the advent of class society, the institution of the family has taken many different forms according to the needs of the ruling class, its economy, politics, religion and culture. In the capitalist order it serves not only as the principal mechanism of inheritance for the propertied classes, but as the means by which the next generation of wage slaves is raised. A big part of this is instilling bourgeois ideology, "morals," and the requisite obedience to the powers that be. As such, the family is vitally necessary to the maintenance of production for profit. It will take a socialist revolution to lay the basis for the replacement of the necessary functions of the family—e.g., the raising of children—

his church. Some sent death threats. One bombed his clinic. Another tried to kill him in 1993, firing five shots, wounding him in both arms.

In Tiller’s own words: “Make no mistake, this battle is about self-determination by women of the direction and course of their lives and their family’s lives. Abortion is about women’s hopes and dreams. Abortion is a matter of survival for women.” His commitment to this fight is best exemplified by his statement, “If a stake has to be driven through the heart of the anti-abortion movement, I want to have my hand on the hammer.” We honor Dr. George Tiller, who was murdered for his courageous stand for women’s rights.

Tiller is the eighth person murdered in this anti-abortion, “family values” onslaught since 1993. On September 1 the *Washington Post* reported that doctors trained in and practicing abortion are becoming extinct in the U.S. There is a justifiable fear of the high probability that they and their families, friends, co-workers would be subjected to harassment, violence and death.

**Anti-Abortion Laws:
Weapon of Church and State**

The regulation of abortion and contraception has historically been a powerful weapon in the hands of organized religion and the state. Even the most cursory examination of the laws, going back thousands of years, about miscarriage, abortion, contraception and the like, shows that they are integrally related to the institution of the family. Laws from ancient Egypt to Sumer to Rome were concerned with abortion and contraception, mainly to defend a man’s right to have children and heirs. In *Eve’s Herbs: A History of Contraception and Abortion in the West*, John Riddle traces the development of the religious and legal attitudes toward contraception and abortion (though some of

tion. The emergence of the religious right in the late 1970s as the ideological leaders of the anti-sex witchhunt was integrally tied to the overall political and economic interests of U.S. imperialism at the time. Coming to office in 1977, the Democratic Carter administration kicked off an onslaught of domestic social reaction and a renewal of U.S. imperialism’s Cold War drive to destroy the Soviet Union, garbed in the call for “human rights.” The CIA’s war in Afghanistan was a key part of this.

Carter’s domestic policies reflected the attempt of the American ruling class to overcome widespread fear and loathing of the government following the explosive years of the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War, the rise of the New Left, the women’s liberation movement and black radicalization, and finally the Watergate break-in that forced the resignation of Republican president Richard Nixon in 1974. For the American bourgeoisie, this all-sided social turmoil and defiance of authority were deeply disturbing, and the potential for an alliance of black militants and radicalized students with an increasingly restive labor movement was a threat that had to be stopped. Thus a major bourgeois ideological assault was launched to overcome the “Vietnam syndrome” and to instill an unquestioning acceptance of “free enterprise,” God and “family values,” including the desirability of dying for one’s country.

The Carter administration brought “born again” religious fundamentalism front and center into the White House. This was the national backdrop for an anti-sex witchhunt that cut a very wide swath: not only abortion was targeted but gay rights—for example, Anita Bryant’s “Save Our Children” anti-gay campaign of hate. Roman Polanski was first arrested at this time in the still ongoing 30-year witchhunt of this man. Under Reagan, all this rolled into a vicious persecution of AIDS patients,



**Ronald Reagan
meets with
reactionary
Afghan
mujahedin at
White House,
1983.**

his conclusions on pre-industrial contraception and abortion techniques are controversial). He says, for example, “Deliberate abortion in the Old Testament is not mentioned, only injury by a third party resulting once again in a man being denied progeny he sired. And, in keeping with the same principles, no compensation is due the women injured. Hebrew law protected the family and the position of the father as its ruling head. According to Talmudic interpretation, the fetus was the property of the father.”

Modern abortion laws show how social and legal institutions changed to reflect the interests of the capitalist class. In 1803 the Ellenborough Act was the advent of abortion as a statutory crime in the English-speaking world. The preoccupations of the ruling class with this law and others following it are revealed as protecting the male’s right to heirs, punishing (especially single) women for illicit sex and protecting population growth. More children must be born for the growth of the capitalist nation-state, its army and working population.

**From Carter to Reagan:
Resurgence of the
Religious Right**

The source of anti-woman bigotry in the U.S. is not the particular capitalist party in power—whether Democratic or Republican—but the capitalist order that breeds oppression and bigotry as a necessary corollary to its system of exploita-

tion. The emergence of the religious right in the late 1970s as the ideological leaders of the anti-sex witchhunt was integrally tied to the overall political and economic interests of U.S. imperialism at the time. Coming to office in 1977, the Democratic Carter administration kicked off an onslaught of domestic social reaction and a renewal of U.S. imperialism’s Cold War drive to destroy the Soviet Union, garbed in the call for “human rights.” The CIA’s war in Afghanistan was a key part of this.

As communists we oppose attempts to fit human sexuality into legislated or decreed so-called “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. All consensual relations are purely the concern of the individuals involved, and the state has no business interfering in human sexual activity.

Our Intervention

Our party intervened heavily into the 1970s movement for abortion rights, dominated by the Socialist Workers Party’s front group, WONAAC, which in tried-and-true reformist fashion kept its “single-issue” campaign within the political limits acceptable to Democrats. In sharp contrast, we fought for a program of women’s liberation through socialist revolution and pointed out that without the means to pay, “choice” is no choice. The wealthy will always get their medical care and their abortions, while the myriad anti-abortion laws target young, working-class and poor women, who can’t afford quality health care, childcare and housing. We raised the call for *free abortion on demand* as part of *free, quality health care for all* and *free, 24-hour childcare* to address the deep race and class oppres-



**Democratic
president
Bill Clinton
signing 1996
bill to “end
welfare as we
know it.”**

sion of poor and minority women.

In 1991, when Operation Rescue launched its “Summer of Mercy,” we participated in clinic defense actions across the country. At the same time, we criticized the feminists and the reformist left for calling for government defense of abortion facilities and for more “pro-choice” capitalist politicians and Supreme Court judges. We have always emphasized that only the power of social struggle, particularly by the organized labor movement, can force the capitalist class into actions it would prefer to avoid. We called for mass mobilizations, bolstered by the power of labor, to defend the clinics and make a show of strength in support of women’s rights.

But when Bill Clinton became president in 1993—another one of those Democrats who think abortion is a tragedy that should be rare—well, then, the feminists dusted off their hands and went home, because he passed the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act in 1994. Let me point out two things that happened during Clinton’s eight years in office that massively affected women: safe access to abortion was gutted as the number of abortion providers plummeted 14 percent between 1992 and 1996, and a huge number of laws chipping away abortion rights, including parental consent regulations targeting teenagers, were passed. And Clinton ended “welfare as we know it,” gutting welfare benefits in an assault against poor and black women and their children.

Today, various feminist and leftist organizations are again raising defense of the clinics in the aftermath of the killing of George Tiller. But it’s the same reformist game here. Operation Rescue has targeted a clinic in Nebraska for harassment. Says a spokesperson for the National Organization For Women (NOW): “As we prepare to stand in peaceful support of women’s rights in Nebraska, we know that every clinic in the United States is a potential target. I call on the Obama administration to respond to this threat using the strongest means possible, to prosecute the criminals, their funders and their co-conspirators, and to protect every provider, worker and patient across this nation.”

NOW makes no pretense to being a socialist organization, so it’s consistent that they call on the government—the very agency whose job it is to enforce the social order that breeds oppression—to defend women’s rights. But ostensible socialists are supposed to stand for something else. Yet the Socialist Workers Party’s *Militant* (7 September), writing on the Nebraska action, quotes without a word of criticism another passage from that very same NOW statement I just read you.

“Fight the Right and Stand Up for Choice,” says the ISO’s *Socialist Worker* (29 September). This is a blatant appeal to the Democratic Party, the “right” being the Republicans. In their theoretical journal, *International Socialist Review* (July-August 2009), they have an article titled: “Defending Abortion Rights: On the Need for a New Movement.” A classless “grass-roots” movement is the ISO’s answer to everything. In this case they are presented with a bit of a problem: the first main point in the article is to “prove” that there is no anti-abortion movement of religious bigots. The ISO calls the anti-abortion crusade “smoke and mirrors.” I wish it was.

You can’t expect an organization that

cheered the capitalist counterrevolution in the USSR to understand the profound roots in the capitalist order of this anti-woman crusade. The ISO does not believe in the ability of the working class to defend women’s rights any more than in its ability to overthrow the capitalist order, found its own government and establish a planned, collectivized economy. Today the ISO is even printing contributions to a debate: “Should the left call for Taliban victory?” They can see supporting the Taliban—but the Red Army, never.

Clinics closing, doctors and staff killed, abortion rights massively losing support among an increasingly religious population—it’s a depressing spectacle. What about mobilizing the power of the labor movement to defend women’s rights? It’s a fine idea, and we’re for it. But the pro-capitalist bureaucrats in the unions have notoriously remained silent on abortion rights—indeed any rights—for women. And these days they can’t even defend their own members’ wages—witness UAW president Gettelfinger giving away the store to the GM bosses. Why? It’s political. The union bureaucrats uphold the partnership of capital and labor and preach reliance on “lesser evil” politicians. But we Marxists know that the proletariat and the bourgeoisie are irreconcilable enemies in the basic functioning of the economy and in the historic interests of the emancipation of the human race. Workers can win even the most basic reforms and even the most basic defensive struggles only through hard class combat.

Let’s make it concrete. Take a look at the company that everyone loves to hate: Wal-Mart, the world’s largest profit-making enterprise. The immediate thought that might come to your mind of the connection between Wal-Mart and the status of women would, no doubt, be the ongoing class action suit brought by some 1.6 million women employees against the anti-union behemoth. But the connection goes far deeper than the company’s discrimination against women employees and its grotesque corporate culture of repulsive male chauvinism. There’s a very interesting book, *To Serve God and Wal-Mart: The Making of Christian Free Enterprise*, published this summer, that details the earlier history of Wal-Mart through the 1990s and its social and political links in the country. In fact—although the author certainly doesn’t share our Marxist outlook—the book reveals details proving the truth of our longstanding analysis of

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Women and Revolution

**Journal of the Women’s Commission
of the Spartacist League/U.S.**

Bound Volume

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Women's Rights...

(continued from page 9)

the genesis of the religious right in the United States. It's a concrete illustration of the way that the bourgeoisie controls society through a million threads, weaving into the very fabric of the country.

Wal-Mart, particularly through its founder Sam Walton, was a key player in the rise of the Christian New Right in the U.S.: it funded evangelical colleges, campaigned for "family values" and free enterprise, and participated in targeting for annihilation gay rights and abortion rights as overriding "sins." And not least, it founded a scholarship program in 1985 to combat the influence of Communism in Central America—this at the behest of the Reagan administration as it backed its blood-drenched allies like the Salvadoran dictatorship.

Wal-Mart also played a key role in the passage of the NAFTA "free trade" agreement in 1994; it was no coincidence that its first store outside the borders of the U.S. was built in Mexico City in 1993. This American "free trade" rape of Mex-

ico was a major factor in intensifying the impoverishment of the Mexican masses. And yet the American trade-union bureaucracy denounced NAFTA on the basis of poisonous protectionism: saving "American jobs." Meanwhile, Wal-Mart remains virulently anti-union in every country around the world. Especially in the United States, the fight to organize Wal-Mart is critical to the labor movement as a whole. But instead of waging this fight, the labor tops offer up virulent anti-Mexican chauvinism and protectionism, which posits foreign workers—not the capitalist bosses—as the enemy.

Wal-Mart is also one of the largest buyers of China's "free market" exports. The union bureaucrats respond with China-bashing, doing double duty by pushing anti-Communism and scapegoating another "foreign enemy." This China-bashing serves the U.S. imperialists in the counterrevolutionary crusade.

Organizing Wal-Mart would also entail taking head-on the active defense of immigrant rights and the fight for black freedom. These are crucial components of any labor struggle and are equally eschewed by a labor bureaucracy that is committed to the maintenance of the capitalist system. Today, it's our job as

Marxists to struggle to bring the fight for worldwide proletarian revolution to the working class, which necessarily means the indivisible fight for *all* the exploited and oppressed. In the words of Lenin, we revolutionaries seek to be "*the tribune of the people*...able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears, no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects; who is able to generalise all these manifestations and produce a single picture of police violence and capitalist exploitation; who is able to take advantage of every event, however small, in order to set forth *before all* his socialist convictions and his democratic demands, in order to clarify for *all* and everyone the world-historic significance of the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat."

Karl Marx's classic definition of communism is "from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs"—that is our goal. The woman question is a very powerful lens through which to see this goal. We are for a society where everyone can fulfill their potential in a materially abundant world where want puts no limits on human development. In this world, a woman will be able to have children (or not) with the full support of

society, including contraception, abortion, childcare, medical care, time off from work and every other thing she might need.

We are a very long way from that day. But I hope that by putting it in the context of the international situation and the broader struggle for human liberation that you have a perspective beyond the immediate horizon. We are in a trough right now where the class struggle is mainly on the side of the class enemy, conditioned by the world-historic defeat in the capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union. But there's one thing you can be sure of: it will change. And when the working class again begins to flex its muscle and to move onto the stage of history, we revolutionaries will be there, fighting for the program of communist revolution. We Trotskyists fight to build a multiracial vanguard party of the type built by the Bolshevik leaders Lenin and Trotsky, which led the world's first socialist revolution in October 1917. In a communist future, women will be fully and equally integrated into society, and anti-woman violence and bigotry, the reactionary constraints of family and religion, and the repressive role of the capitalist state will all be but barbaric memories of the past. ■

Appeal...

(continued from page 12)

prisoners had parole hearings, but none were released.

Jaana Laaman and **Thomas Manning** are the two remaining anti-imperialist activists known as the Ohio 7 still in prison. They were convicted for their roles in a radical group that took credit for bank "expropriations" and bombings of symbols of U.S. imperialism, such as military and corporate offices, in the late 1970s and '80s. Before their arrests in 1984 and 1985, the Ohio 7 were targets of massive manhunts. Their children were kidnapped at gunpoint by the Feds.

The Ohio 7's politics were once shared by thousands of radicals during the Vietnam antiwar movement and by New Left-

ists who wrote off the possibility of winning the working class to a revolutionary program and saw themselves as an auxiliary of Third World liberation movements. But, like the Weathermen before them, the Ohio 7 were spurned by the "respectable" left. From a proletarian standpoint, the actions of these leftist activists against imperialism and racist injustice are not a crime. They should not have served a day in prison.

Ed Poindexter and **Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa** are former Black Panther supporters and leaders of the Omaha, Nebraska, National Committee to Combat Fascism. They were victims of the FBI's deadly COINTELPRO operation under which 38 Black Panther Party members were killed and hundreds more imprisoned on frame-up charges. Poindexter and Mondo were railroaded to prison and sen-

tenced to life for a 1970 explosion that killed a cop, and they have now served more than 37 years in jail. This year, the Nebraska Supreme Court denied Poindexter a new trial despite the fact that a crucial piece of evidence excluded from the original trial, a long-suppressed 911 audio tape, proved that testimony of the state's key witness was perjured.

Hugo Pinell is the last of the San Quentin 6 still in prison. He was a militant anti-racist leader of prison rights organizing along with George Jackson, his comrade and mentor, who was gunned down by prison guards in 1971. Despite numerous letters of support and no disciplinary write-ups for over 28 years, Pinell was again denied parole this year. Now in his 60s, Pinell continues to serve a life sentence at the notorious Pelican Bay Security Housing Unit in California.

Jamal Hart, Mumia's son, was sentenced in 1998 to 15½ years without parole on bogus firearms possession charges. Hart was targeted for his prominent activism in the campaign to free his father. Although Hart was initially charged under Pennsylvania law, which would have meant a probationary sentence, Clinton's Justice Department intervened to have Hart thrown into prison under federal law. The U.S. Third Circuit Court of Appeals has turned down Hart's *habeas corpus* petition, and he has faced myriad bureaucratic obstacles and racist targeting throughout his incarceration.

Contribute now! All proceeds from the Holiday Appeal will go to the Class-War Prisoners Stipend Fund. Send your contributions to: PDC, P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013; (212) 406-4252. ■

Twenty-Fourth Annual Holiday Appeal for Class-War Prisoners Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the Racist Death Penalty! Free All Class-War Prisoners!

Bay Area

**Sunday, December 6
3 to 7 p.m.**

The Women's Building
3543 18th St. (near Valencia)
San Francisco

(Near 16th St./Mission BART)

For more information:
(510) 839-0852



Jennifer Beach

Los Angeles

**Sunday, December 13
2 to 5 p.m.**

F Square Printing
519 S. Spring Street
(Between W. 5th and W. 6th St.,
2 blocks east of
Pershing Metro Station)

For more information:
(213) 380-8897

Toronto

**Friday, December 11
7 to 10 p.m.**

Steelworkers Hall
25 Cecil Street

(1 block south of College
at Ross Street, west of
Queen's Park Station)

For more information:
(416) 593-4138

New York City

**Saturday, December 5
5 to 9 p.m.**

District Council 1707 Hall
75 Varick Street, 14th Fl.
Manhattan

(North of Canal St., take 1, A,
C or E train to Canal St.)

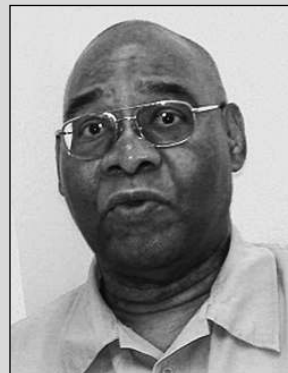
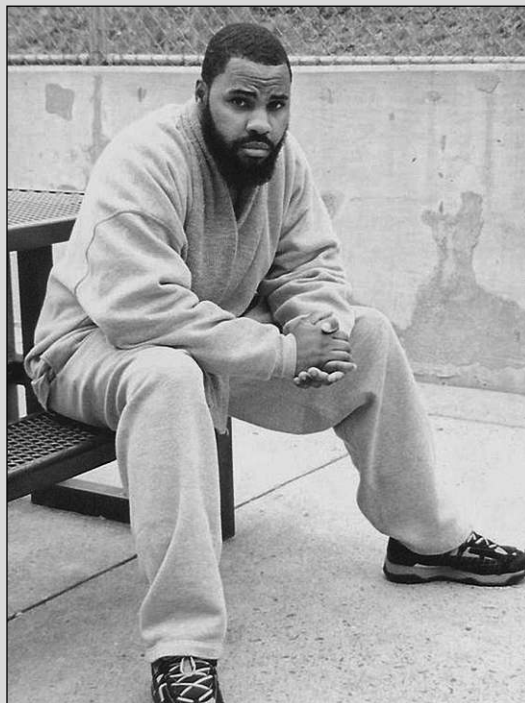
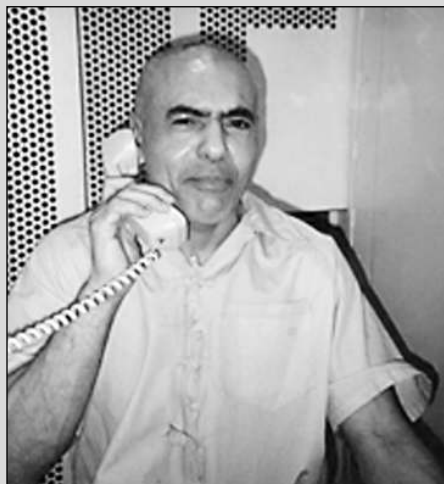
For more information:
(212) 406-4252

Chicago

**Sunday, December 13
4 to 8 p.m.**

U.E. Hall
37 S. Ashland
(at Monroe)

For more information:
(312) 563-0442



Clockwise from top left: Hugo Pinell, Jaana Laaman, Tom Manning, Ed Poindexter, Jamal Hart.

Credits, clockwise from top left: hugopinell.org, 4strugglemag (2), Richardson/Boston Progressive Examiner, Monique Code

WORKERS VANGUARD

“The path to freedom leads through a prison. The door swings in and out and through that door passes a steady procession of ‘those fools too stubborn-willed to bend,’ who will not turn aside from the path because prisons obstruct it here and there.”

—James P. Cannon, “The Cause that Passes Through a Prison,” *Labor Defender*, September 1926

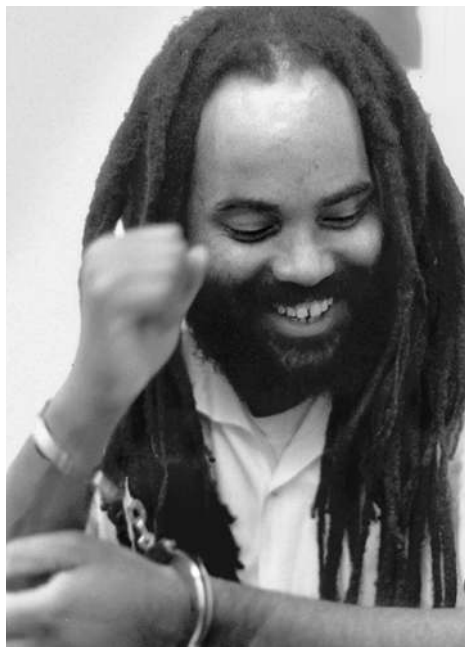
Twenty-four years ago, the Partisan Defense Committee—a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League—revived a key tradition of the International Labor Defense under James P. Cannon, its founder and first secretary: sending monthly stipends to those “stubborn-willed” class-war prisoners condemned to capitalism’s dungeons for standing up against racist capitalist repression. We are again holding Holiday Appeal benefits to raise funds for this unique program, calling particular attention to the fight to free America’s foremost class-war prisoner, Mumia Abu-Jamal, who remains on death row in Pennsylvania.

Our forebear, Cannon, also affirmed a basic principle that should be no less applicable today: “The class-conscious worker accords to the class-war prisoners a place of singular honor and esteem.... The victory of the class-war prisoners is possible only when they are inseparably united with the living labor movement and when that movement claims them for its own, takes up their battle cry and carries on their work.”

The PDC calls on labor activists, fighters for black and immigrant rights and defenders of civil liberties to join us in donating to and building the annual Holiday Appeal. An injury to one is an injury to all! We print below brief descriptions of the 16 class-war prisoners who receive monthly stipends from the PDC, many of whom were denied parole over the last year for refusing to express “remorse” for acts they did not commit!

Mumia Abu-Jamal is a former Black Panther Party spokesman, a well-known supporter of the MOVE organization and an award-winning journalist known as “the voice of the voiceless.” This past April,

Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Free All Class-War Prisoners! Build PDC Holiday Appeal



COC Productions



Ben Corbett

Class-war prisoners Mumia Abu-Jamal and Leonard Peltier.

the U.S. Supreme Court summarily threw out Mumia’s efforts to overturn his frame-up conviction based on the racist exclusion of black jurors from his 1982 trial. Ominously, this same court has yet to rule on the prosecution’s petition to reinstate the death penalty. The Philadelphia district attorney’s office states that, whatever the Supreme Court decides, it will continue to push for Mumia’s execution.

December 9 is the 28th anniversary of Mumia’s arrest for a killing that the cops know he did not commit. Mumia was framed up for the 1981 killing of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner and sentenced to death explicitly for his political views. Mountains of evidence proving Mumia’s innocence, including the sworn confession of Arnold Beverly that he, not Mumia, shot and killed Faulkner, have

been submitted to the courts. But to the racists in black robes, a court of law is no place for evidence of the innocence of this fighter for the oppressed.

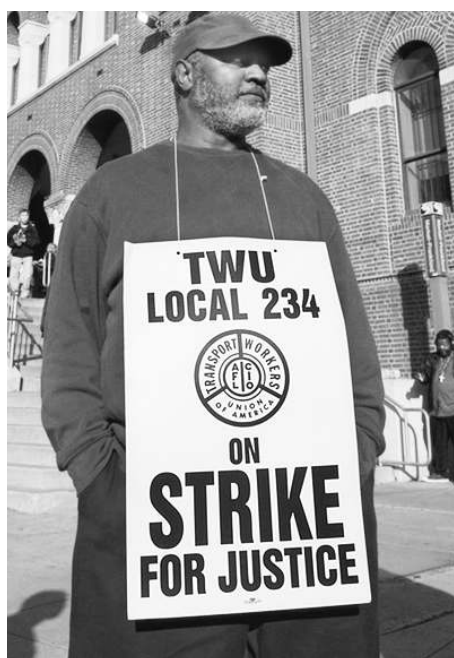
While others plead with the current U.S. president and his attorney general to “investigate” violations of Mumia’s “civil rights,” the PDC says that Mumia’s fate cannot be left in the hands of the government of the capitalists. The racist rulers hate Mumia because they see in him the spectre of black revolt. The stakes are high and the situation is grim, but any real fight for Mumia’s freedom must be based on a class-struggle opposition to the capitalist rulers, who have entombed this innocent black man for more than half his life.

Leonard Peltier is an internationally renowned class-war prisoner. Peltier’s incarceration for his activism in the American Indian Movement has come to symbolize this country’s racist repression of its native peoples, the survivors of centuries of genocidal oppression. Peltier’s frame-up trial, for the 1975 deaths of two marauding FBI agents in what had become a war zone on the South Dakota Pine Ridge Reservation, shows what capitalist “justice” is all about. Although the lead government attorney has admitted “We can’t prove who shot those agents” and the courts have acknowledged blatant prosecutorial misconduct, the 65-year-old Peltier is still locked away. Outrageously, in August, the U.S. Parole Commission again turned down Peltier’s parole request and coldbloodedly declared they would not reconsider his case for another 15 years.

Eight MOVE members—**Chuck Africa, Michael Africa, Debbie Africa, Janet Africa, Janine Africa, Delbert Africa, Eddie Africa** and **Phil Africa**—are in their 32nd year of prison. They were sentenced to 30-100 years after the 8 August 1978 siege of their Philadelphia home by over 600 heavily armed cops, having been falsely convicted of killing a police officer who died in the cops’ own cross fire. In 1985, eleven of their MOVE family members, including five children, were massacred by Philly cops. This year, again, after more than three decades of unjust incarceration, nearly all of these innocent

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In Face of Offensive by SEPTA Bosses, Democrats Philly Transit Strikers Stood Firm



Getty

Striking SEPTA worker, November 3.

For six days earlier this month, a solid strike by the members of Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 234 shut down public transit in Philadelphia, one of the largest systems in the U.S. Here was a union willing to fight despite the tough economic times, setting an example for city workers and others who face cut-backs. The walkout held off an offensive by the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) bosses and capitalist Democratic Party politicians, with the union getting a contract after months and months of management foot-dragging. However, the union leadership gave ground on the key issue of pensions in the settlement, which is slated for a membership vote on November 20.

The union had warned it might strike just before the World Series games played in Philadelphia. But TWU officials kept the membership on the job after Democratic governor Ed Rendell threatened “significant consequences” if a strike oc-

curred then. Once the strike began, Rendell, joined by black Democratic mayor Michael Nutter, sought to whip up anti-union sentiment by spreading misinformation and making the cynical claim that the strike was hurting the city’s working population. When negotiations broke down during the strike, Rendell sought to take away some \$7 million in state funds meant to pay for a signing bonus unless the membership immediately voted on the bosses’ terms, circumventing the Local 234 leadership.

The role of the Democratic Party politicians during the strike starkly demonstrated that these representatives of the class enemy are no “friends of labor.” However, while denouncing Rendell and Nutter—who was dubbed a “Little Caesar” by Local 234 president Willie Brown—TWU officials embrace “good” Democrats. This included supporting the election of Barack Obama, who has handed out hundreds of billions of dollars to the

banks amid mounting foreclosures and joblessness. One local Democrat widely praised for brokering the strike settlement is Congressman Bob Brady. The main interest of this liberal politician was not in getting a better deal for union members but rather in maintaining “labor peace,” as he made clear in a TV interview: “This strike has to be over.”

Bourgeois media coverage of the strike was a constant barrage of anti-union propaganda, depicting the strikers as “greedy” at a time when many people are being thrown out on the streets. What a sham! Hardly short on cash, SEPTA has a long history of demanding concessions from the union at every turn, boom or bust. Layoffs, benefit slashing and recurring economic crises are all features of the capitalist economic system, where the owners of the means of production make profits off the toil of the working class. In a deindustrialized city like Philly, once

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