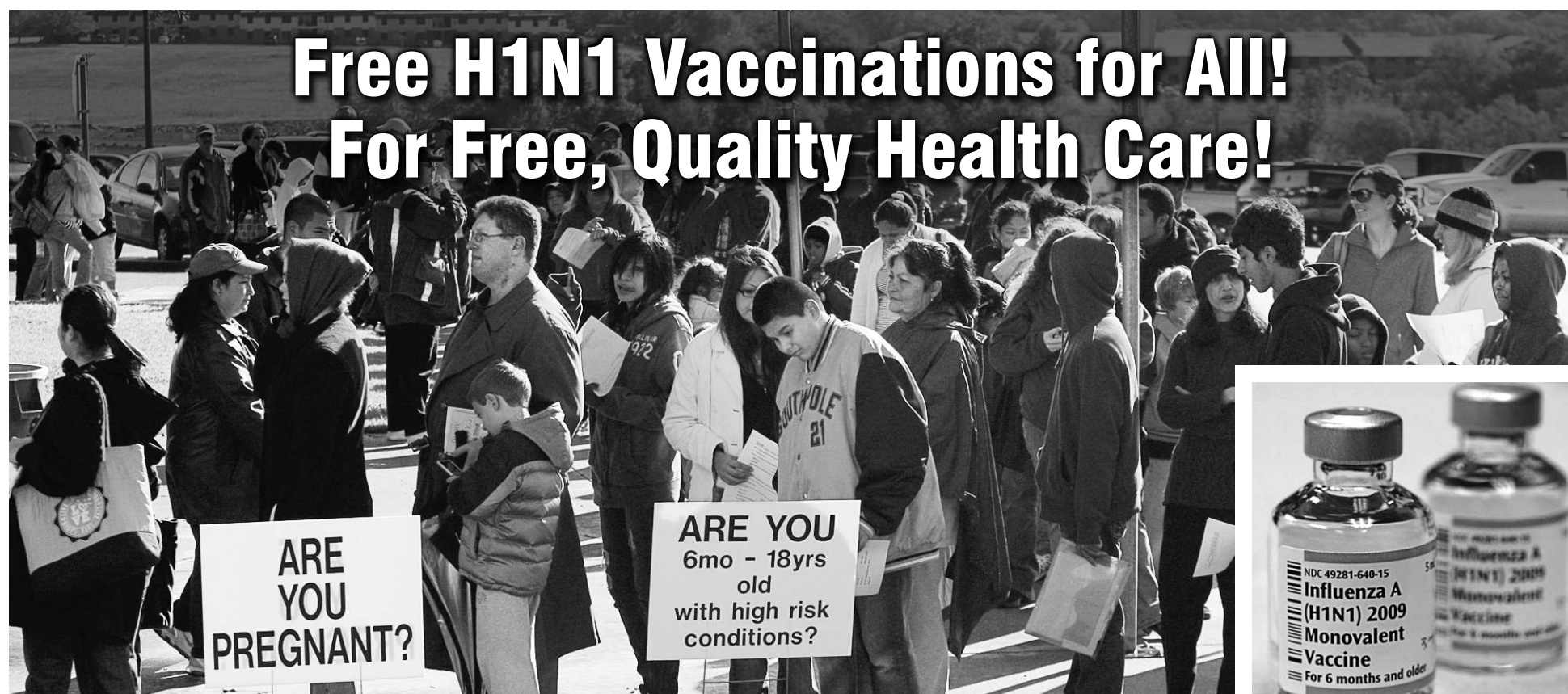


In Defense of Medical Science Capitalist Reaction and Anti-Vaccine Hysteria



Lining up to receive H1N1 vaccination in Haltom City, Texas, October 30. Capitalist rulers have failed to provide enough vaccine, with only 51 million doses available as of fourth week of November.

Since the outbreak of “swine flu” or Novel influenza A (H1N1) in Mexico in April, the virus has spread to over 200 countries killing at least 7,800 people, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). In the U.S., as of mid-October at least 22 million have contracted the virus and some 4,000 have died,

including 540 children, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). But in spite of the threat posed by the H1N1 virus, the capitalist rulers, indifferent to the health and welfare of working people and the poor, have dismally failed to provide the front-line measure against the epidemic—vaccination. Seven

months after the initial outbreak, after numerous warnings by the government and media about the virus’s threat, thousands of anxious people across the country lining up for vaccination are simply told to go home because supplies have run out.

Meanwhile, anti-vaccine groups continue to propagate their fear-mongering

and reactionary anti-science ideology against vaccination. When the New York State Department of Health briefly mandated seasonal and H1N1 flu vaccinations for health care workers—a measure we Marxists support—anti-vaccine groups seized on the objections of some unions to

continued on page 10

AP

Court Imprisons Leftist Attorney

Free Lynne Stewart, Mohamed Yousry and Ahmed Abdel Sattar!

NEW YORK CITY—In a blow against the rights of the entire population, leftist attorney Lynne Stewart was hauled off to prison on November 19 on bogus charges of conspiracy to provide “material support” to terrorism and to “defraud” the U.S. government. An outspoken courtroom advocate for black activists and the poor, the 70-year-old Stewart was con-

victed in 2005 along with translator Mohamed Yousry and paralegal Ahmed Abdel Sattar on charges stemming from her ardent legal defense of Islamic fundamentalist Egyptian cleric Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman, who is serving a life sentence for an alleged plot to blow up NYC landmarks in the early 1990s. Reporting to prison two days after the Second Circuit Court of Appeals turned down the appeal of her conviction, Stewart told her supporters that the government was warning lawyers: “Don’t advocate for your clients in a vigorous, strong way or you will end up” like her, “disbarred and in jail.”

The victimization of Stewart, Yousry and Abdel Sattar has been a key cog in the government’s drive to eviscerate civil liberties in the domestic “war on terror.” From beginning to end, the Feds’ case was a fabrication. The government admitted that not a single act of violence resulted from the alleged “terror conspiracy.” Unable to get Stewart for breaking any law, the government invoked the spectre of “conspiracy” and nailed her for violating Special Administrative Measures that drastically restrict a prisoner’s right to communicate with the outside world. Stewart was “guilty” of conveying

Lynne Stewart salutes supporters in New York City as she arrives at federal court to begin her prison sentence, November 19.

Abdel Rahman’s thoughts about a ceasefire between his Islamic Group and the Egyptian government to a Reuters journalist. The government declared this was tantamount to a terrorist “jailbreak.”

In a November 21 protest letter to Attorney General Eric Holder, the Partisan Defense Committee—a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense

continued on page 5



Good Job!

10 October 2009

I just got my WV in the mail and saw what I was looking for. Thank you for defending Polanski. These little liberals like Katha Pollitt are like wind up dolls or robots. As with Yugoslavia, and Obama: The ruling class programs them and winds them up, and they start frothing at the mouth, or cheerleading. Disgusting!

Tom

Cancel Our Subscription!

Oct. 26, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

We are writing both to cancel our household's subscription to the Workers Vanguard as well as to request that Spartacist Publications return to us the remaining portion of our subscription money, which is \$9.00 [we have received two issues of the Workers Vanguard at \$.50 each so far].

My wife and I are deeply disgusted by the "reporting" on the Roman Polanski case in the most recent issue of the Workers Vanguard [9 October 2009], in which a Workers Vanguard writer falsely reported that Polanski had consensual sex with the girl in question. This is contrary to the published account from the actual trial, which recounted, *according to the victim herself*, Polanski drugging her with Quaaludes—which the article refers to as "fashionable sedatives"—before having *unwanted* sex with her. I

have no idea what interest the Workers Vanguard has in defending a big-wig like Polanski who clearly thinks he's above the law because of his fame and money, but we are beyond repulsed at the sexist tone of the entire article, which includes referring to the 13 year-old victim as "precocious". Creepy victim-blaming Lolita subtexts, anyone? We are equally alarmed at the random information included about the young woman, such as that she had previously taken Quaaludes and had sex. SO?? This is *classic* victim-blaming, which is only a breath away from outright screaming, "You weren't really raped because you liked underage sex and drugs in the past!!" It is a common silencing technique against women and girls in our culture.

As feminists and as women in general, my wife and I cannot conscionably allow our hard-earned money to go to your publications any longer. Again, please cancel our subscription and send our \$9.00 to: Meredith M. [address—ed.]

Sincerely,
Shannon W.
Meredith M.



Guy Ferrandis

drinking), the young woman at one point admits: "I can barely remember anything that happened." Indeed, all charges against Polanski were dropped except for "unlawful sexual intercourse"—i.e., that he had sex with a minor—to which he pleaded guilty. Now an adult, Samantha Geimer (then Gailey) has come forward several times requesting the prosecution drop its charges against Polanski.

Gore Vidal, who was working in the movie industry at the time, recently responded to an interviewer (*Atlantic* online, 28 October) who asked him about Polanski: "Look, am I going to sit and weep every time a young hooker feels as though she's been taken advantage of?... The idea that this girl was in her communion dress, a little angel all in white, being raped by this awful Jew, *Polacko*—that's what people were calling him—well, the story is totally different now from what it was then.... Anti-Semitism got poor Polanski. He was also a for-eigner. He did not subscribe to American values in the least. To [his persecutors], that seemed vicious and unnatural." To his interviewer's question as to what are "American values," Vidal responded: "Lying and cheating. There's nothing better."

To which we'd add massive hypocrisy. Youth are ruthlessly prosecuted as adults by the government when it so pleases—including sentencing 13-year-olds to life in prison. Recall the hysterical day-care witchhunts of the Reagan-era 1980s, when as the Reaganites sought to abolish day-care centers for poor and working women, its prosecutors browbeat the poor kids into ever more outrageous stories and whipped up mass hysteria over alleged bunny slaughters, sexual abuse and Satanic rituals, for which, of course, no evidence was ever found.

As to our supposed "victim-blaming Lolita subtext," youth *do* have sexual

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On Steroids Article

Sunday, 15 Nov 2009

The article on baseball and drug use (Nov. 6) was most interesting. The amount of research involved is certainly impressive. A good read.

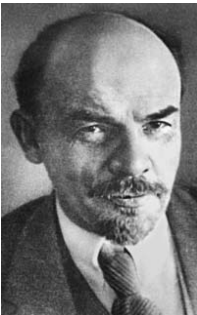
Irv J.



TROTSKY

On the Centrality of Marxist Theory

In his classic 1902 work, What Is To Be Done?, V.I. Lenin polemicized against the Economist tendency in the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party, a tendency that limited its agitation to trade-union demands and passively supported bourgeois liberal efforts to reform tsarist absolutism. Against the Economists, who were hostile to Marxism and loosely associated with the reformist current of Eduard Bernstein in Germany, Lenin stressed the centrality of Marxist



LENIN

theory for revolutionaries. Lenin's emphasis on Marxist theory is particularly important in the present post-Soviet period, which is marked by the ascendancy of deep theoretical, political and social reaction.

Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement. This idea cannot be insisted upon too strongly at a time when the fashionable preaching of opportunism goes hand in hand with an infatuation for the narrowest forms of practical activity. Yet, for Russian Social-Democrats [i.e., socialists] the importance of theory is enhanced by three other circumstances, which are often forgotten: first, by the fact that our Party is only in process of formation, its features are only just becoming defined, and it has as yet far from settled accounts with the other trends of revolutionary thought that threaten to divert the movement from the correct path. On the contrary, precisely the very recent past was marked by a revival of non-Social-Democratic revolutionary trends (an eventuation regarding which Axelrod long ago warned the Economists). Under these circumstances, what at first sight appears to be an "unimportant" error may lead to most deplorable consequences, and only short-sighted people can consider factional disputes and a strict differentiation between shades of opinion inopportune or superfluous....

Secondly, the Social-Democratic movement is in its very essence an international movement. This means, not only that we must combat national chauvinism, but that an incipient movement in a young country can be successful only if it makes use of the experiences of other countries. In order to make use of these experiences it is not enough merely to be acquainted with them, or simply to copy out the latest resolutions. What is required is the ability to treat these experiences critically and to test them independently....

Thirdly, the national tasks of Russian Social-Democracy are such as have never confronted any other socialist party in the world. We shall have occasion further on to deal with the political and organisational duties which the task of emancipating the whole people from the yoke of autocracy imposes upon us. At this point, we wish to state only that the *role of vanguard fighter can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by the most advanced theory.*

—V.I. Lenin, *What Is To Be Done?* (1902)

WORKERS VANGUARD

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

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

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

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

The closing date for news in this issue is December 1.

No. 948

4 December 2009



Spartacus Youth Club Class Series

LOS ANGELES

Sunday, December 6, 12 noon

The State

3806 Beverly Blvd.

Room 215

Information and readings: (213) 380-8239
slsycla@sbcglobal.net

NEW YORK CITY

Thursday, December 10, 7:30 p.m.

The Revolution Betrayed
and the Origins of
the Left Opposition

Hunter College

West Building, Room 411

Information and readings: (212) 267-1025
nysl@tiac.net

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

German Trotskyists in 1989 on Opening of Berlin Wall: “Workers Soviets Must Rule in All Germany!”

This November the imperialist rulers celebrated the 20th anniversary of the opening up of the Berlin Wall in the former East Germany (DDR). The bourgeois rulers falsely portray this event and its aftermath as an expression of the longings of the East German masses for the supposed joys of capitalism and an unqualified rejection of socialism and communism. The reality was very different, as powerfully described in the statement by our comrades of the *Trotskyistische Liga Deutschlands* (TLD—now the *Spartakist-Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands*) that we print below. Republished from *Workers Vanguard* No. 490 (24 November 1989), this statement was issued days after the Berlin Wall came down on 9 November 1989 and over 200,000 copies were distributed.

The DDR was a bureaucratically deformed workers state that we Trotskyists defended against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution. Capitalism had been overthrown in the DDR, as in much of East Europe, in the wake of the Soviet Red Army’s defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II. But the DDR was ruled by a parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy. On the basis of their dogma of “socialism in one country,” the Stalinists opposed the extension of proletarian revolutions internationally while suppressing any independent political expression of the working class at home.

The late 1980s and early ’90s saw the unraveling of Stalinist rule in East Europe and the Soviet Union. In the DDR, significant protest rallies began in October 1989, growing larger week by week. That month, hardline ruler Erich Honecker, head of the Socialist Unity Party (SED), was ousted from power. November 4 saw a million-strong demonstration in East Berlin. Contrary to today’s capitalist mythology, it included many pro-socialist banners and slogans such as “For Communist Ideals! No Privileges!” The choices posed for the workers of the DDR were proletarian political revolution—i.e., the working class ousting the bureaucracy and taking political power into its own hands—or capitalist counterrevolution, i.e., the West German bourgeoisie taking over the DDR.



Spartakist photos
East Berlin, 3 January 1990: Spartakist speaker addresses ICL-initiated 250,000-strong rally in Treptow Park against fascist desecration of memorial to Red Army soldiers and in defense of DDR.

3 January 1990 united-front demonstration against the fascist desecration of a Soviet war memorial and in defense of the DDR workers state that brought out some 250,000 people to East Berlin’s Treptow Park. Our call for this protest was taken up by the ruling Stalinist party, which feared the growing impact of our political views. At Treptow, for the first time in 60 years, Trotskyists addressed a mass audience in a workers state. Participants and those listening on radio and TV heard two counterposed programs: that of the Stalinist SED, and that of the Trotskyist ICL. Over hostile Stalinist interjections, the TLD’s Renate Dahlhaus declared, “Our economy is suffering from waste and obsolescence. The SED party dictatorship has shown that it is incompetent to fight this.” We called for the forging of an egalitarian communist party and for the rule of workers and soldiers councils.

The Treptow mobilization posed the possibility of organized workers resistance to the imperialists’ drive for capitalist annexation of the DDR. For that reason it became a key turning point, as Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev pulled the plug

on the DDR, vastly speeding up the timetable for capitalist reunification, and the East German Stalinists began to organize a stampede into counterrevolution. In their counterrevolutionary blitzkrieg, the German bourgeoisie threw billions of deutschmarks into East Germany. Under the impact of the bourgeois offensive, the March 1990 Volkskammer (East German parliament) elections became a referendum on capitalist reunification. Demoralized and disorientated by the abject betrayals of the Stalinist bureaucracy, 85 percent of the population voted for either the Christian Democratic or Social Democratic coalitions. Counterrevolution had won, a bitter defeat not only for the East German working class but internationally.

The ICL alone fought to the end against capitalist counterrevolution in the DDR, the rest of East Europe and the Soviet Union. In contrast, the bulk of the left cheered it on, serving as junior partners in the imperialists’ drive for capitalist restoration and standing openly with the forces of “democratic” counterrevolution. Many of the same groups today bemoan the poverty of East Europe while burying their own roles in helping to bring about this catastrophe.

We were very conscious that our intervention in the DDR was integral to the struggle for proletarian political revolution in the USSR as well. So, too, the defeat in the DDR paved the way for the ascendancy in 1991-92 of counterrevolution in the Soviet Union, homeland of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. An unparalleled defeat for working people all over the world, counterrevolution devastated the working classes of the former Soviet Union and the rest of East Europe, bringing grinding poverty, mass unemployment and fratricidal wars. Nor were the catastrophic results confined to the former Soviet bloc. On the ideological level, the consciousness of workers around the world has been thrown back, albeit unevenly, to the point where politically advanced workers no longer identify their struggles with the goals of socialism.

The collapse of bureaucratic rule and triumph of counterrevolution confirmed

continued on page 4

Young Spartacus

Police Assault UC Protesters

Drop All Charges Now!

NOVEMBER 30—More than 110 were arrested in demonstrations and building occupations at University of California campuses from November 18-20. Protesters rallied across the state in opposition to a massive 32 percent hike in tuition fees and a job- and wage-slashing offensive against campus workers by the UC Board of Regents. At UCLA 14 protesters were arrested for “unlawful assembly” inside the Regents meeting on November 18. The following day, AP photos showed a cop shooting a black student in the chest

with a taser gun at a demonstration. Spartacus Youth Club members who participated in the protests also witnessed cops jabbing protesters with their batons.

A virtual army of cops was also mobilized to break up an occupation of the administration building at UC Davis by several hundred students on November 19. According to the *San Jose Mercury News*, “the California Highway Patrol arrived en masse, as did officers from Vacaville, Davis, Winters, Yolo County, Sacramento and more” (20 November). More than 50 protesters were arrested.

When some 40 protesters occupied the Wheeler Hall building at UC Berkeley on November 20, riot-equipped cops were brought in from the Alameda County Sheriff’s Department and the Oakland and Berkeley police forces to back up the armed forces of the campus cops. Protest-



Daily Bruin

Protest against University of California austerity measures outside Board of Regents meeting, UCLA, November 18.

ers outside Wheeler Hall who had mobilized in solidarity with the occupation were shoved and beaten with billy clubs, while cops pointed their weapons at demonstrators. Early on, three protesters were charged with felony burglary, and all of the student occupiers were arrested and charged with trespassing. A Berkeley biology professor, Robert Dudley, who had gone to monitor the situation, was thrown to the ground and then arrested for resisting and obstructing a police officer!

The police assaults and arrests of UC protesters provide an object lesson in the class nature of the Board of Regents and campus administration as the agents of the capitalist class on campus—enforcing austerity, busting campus unions and repressing student protest. Drop all the charges against the UC protesters now! For a class-struggle fight for free, quality, integrated education for all! Abolish the Board of Regents—for student/teacher/worker control of the universities! ■

Germany...

(continued from page 3)

Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky’s warning that the political bankruptcy of Stalinism was a mortal danger to the historic gains of the working class. Following Marx, Trotsky emphasized that an isolated workers state could not survive in the long run since its level of economic productivity could not rise above that of the powerful advanced capitalist-imperialist states committed to its destruction. The preservation of proletarian power in the Soviet Union and East Europe required its international extension through worldwide socialist revolution.

As we wrote in the main document adopted at the ICL’s Second International Conference in 1992, “For the Communism of Lenin and Trotsky!” (reprinted in *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 47-48 [Winter 1992-93]):

“From the beginning we were in a political struggle with the abdicating Stalinist regime over the future of the DDR. While we were calling for a government of workers councils, the Stalinists were consciously acting to prevent a workers insurrection by demobilizing all army units that had formed soldiers councils as a result of our early propaganda. Although shaped by the disproportion of forces, there was in fact a contest between the ICL program of political revolution and the Stalinist program of capitulation and counterrevolution....

“The workers of the world, and we among them, suffered a grave defeat with the victory of the Fourth Reich. But we fought.”

* * *

Workers throughout the world seeking the rebirth of genuine communism are watching the dramatic events in East Germany. “Russia was the spark—Germany will be the flame,” proclaimed a banner, a slogan from the KPD [German Communist Party] of the ’20s, in the massive November 4 East Berlin demonstration. The developments in the DDR [German Democratic Republic] pose pointblank *proletarian political revolution*. This means ousting the Stalinist bureaucracy and erecting in its place *real workers soviets*, like those established in the October Revolution, based on collectivized property. This in turn can be the spark for socialist revolution in the capitalist West.

East Berliners flooded across the border into West Berlin on the night of November 9. Except for a handful all went back. Kohl tried to address a “victory rally” in West Berlin but was drowned out with boos and whistles. When he tried to strike up a chorus of “Deutschland, Deutschland über alles,” Brandt, Momper & Co. sang along, but the boos and whistles drowned them out. And an attempted Nazi march on the Brandenburg Gate led by Republikaner *Führer* Schönhuber was turned back by crowds shouting “Nazis out!” East German workers are jubilant that the Wall is coming down, but they don’t want a revanchist capitalist reunification.

One placard on November 4 read: “Hungary ’56, China ’89,” and the spectre haunting the bureaucracy was the 17 June 1953 East German workers uprising,



Spartacist
Spartacists raise banner “For a Red Germany of Workers Councils in a Socialist Europe” at demonstration in honor of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, East Berlin, 14 January 1990. Spartacist Workers Party poster for March 1990 elections declares, “No to Capitalist Reunification!”

the first in East Europe against Stalinist bureaucratic rule. West German revanchists have tried to usurp June 17, and the East German bureaucracy spread the same lies about the uprising. But it belongs to the German working class. On that day East German workers appealed to their class brothers and sisters in the West to rise up against their capitalist masters. At the train station in Halle, workers greeted a train from the West with a banner proclaiming, “We’re cleaning house in Pankow [East Berlin], now you sweep out the crap in Bonn.” Ulbricht was saved only by Soviet tanks. In any case, what was required then as well as today is fraternization with the Red Army. As Siberian and Silesian miners strike against the ravages of “market reforms,” the East German workers can make common cause with their class comrades and be the springboard for proletarian political revolution throughout East Europe and the Soviet Union.

The Red Army crushed the Nazi regime and established a bureaucratically deformed workers state east of the Elbe. But the resurgence of German nationalism and fascist terror has not been restricted to the West German successor state of the Third Reich. There, the first victims of fascist terror are immigrant workers. And now similar attacks, for example on Vietnamese workers, are taking place in East Germany. Hostility to immigrant workers such as the Poles has been expressed even in the mass protest demonstrations, as in Dresden. Instead, as a banner on November 4 declared, “For Communist Ideals! No Privileges!” This means: *Full citizenship rights for immigrant workers East and West!*

Today a wing of the East German security forces shows its support for revanchist capitalist restoration under the watchword of German nationalism by cloning a new generation of fascist terrorist skinheads and scum, the existence of which the bureaucracy has done its best to deny. A banner of an anti-fascist contingent at the November 4 demonstration read, “Weimar: 160 Nazi Skinheads Organized a Manhunt.” Even



the perimeter of this massive demonstration was infested with fascists from West and East. Just as Russian workers must smash Pamyat, workers/minorities in East and West Germany had better organize to crush these vermin *now!*

A demonstration of 50,000 SED [Socialist Unity Party] members in East Berlin on November 10 demanded “No sellout of the DDR,” for “real plans,” and “return to Lenin.” Stalin gave central planning a bad name. The East German economy is the most successful in Eastern Europe. Workers may chant “Gorby, Gorby, help us.” But by and large they reject Gorbachev’s “perestroika” and “market socialism,” which have bred increasing misery and national conflict from the Balkans to the Baltic and Caucasus. East German workers are not about to surrender the social gains they have won. Attempts to form a Solidarność-style anti-Communist “free union” have fizzled.

Workers in the DDR have followed attentively the strikes against perestroika of Soviet miners. The factory committees the miners have organized are the *core of real workers soviets*, which are *the key* if economic planning is to be controlled by the working class. Although tremendous ferment exists in the plants, the working class remains politically atomized, e.g., there have as yet been no strikes, which would immediately be *political*. Workers councils must be established at the point of production with control over quantity and quality. Computerized input-output analysis (developed by Russian-born economist Leontief) can permit investments in line with the democratically controlled growth of investment and consumption.

When the Wall started coming down on Friday [November 9], the West German stock market went up, because Frankfurt bankers and their SPD [social-democratic] front men are dreaming of bleeding East Germany dry the way they have Poland and Hungary. To defend collectivized property and to attack the world market, East Germany needs a stable, readily convertible currency (e.g., based on the gold

standard like the Soviet *chervonets* in 1923). However, an isolated revolutionary East German workers state would still be threatened by the power of cheap commodities, as Marx warned.

There can be no genuine socialism in half a country facing an economically far more powerful imperialist neighbor. From the podium of the massive November 4 demonstration writer Stefan Heym was enthusiastically received when he said, “Socialism, not Stalinist but the real thing, which we want to finally build, for our benefit and that of all Germany, is unthinkable without democracy.” The defense of collectivized property in East Germany requires its extension to the West. That means the expropriation of the Frankfurt bankers by proletarian revolution in the West—to which immigrant workers are key. We Trotskyists call for the *revolutionary reunification of Germany* through socialist revolution in the West and proletarian political revolution in the East. Because of the strategic weight of Germany in Europe, reunification, if it is not to recreate an imperialist behemoth, a Fourth Reich, can only be as part of a *Socialist United States of Europe*.

The huge protest demonstrations, impressive in their discipline, remain dominated by petty-bourgeois forces like Neues Forum and the Social Democrats (SDP). On November 4, Neues Forum called for “free elections” supervised by the UN, i.e., by imperialism, while the SDP, just like Helmut Kohl, called for a return to a “market economy.” When the [West German] SPD and their hangers-on talk about “democratic socialism” they mean “democratic” counterrevolution, of which the SPD intends to be the general staff. While Kohl was booed down, Brandt and Momper were cheered. The Social Democrats are the main danger for East German workers.

The International Communist League and its German section, the Trotzkiistische Liga Deutschlands, uphold the Trotskyist position of unconditional defense of the social gains of the October Revolution and its extension from East Berlin to Havana against imperialism and internal counterrevolution. In contrast, the social democrats faking as Trotskyists such as Ernest Mandel and the Bund Sozialistischer Arbeiter [followers of the dubious David North] surrender these gains at every point they are challenged. They backed Solidarność’ counterrevolutionary bid in 1981 and opposed the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan against imperialist-backed clerical reaction in 1979.

To date no left opposition has surfaced within the SED. Yet there have been expressions of support for real communism in the DDR, such as the signs on November 4 calling “for a new communist party.” As in 1953, what is lacking today is a proletarian internationalist vanguard party fighting for power. Forging such a party requires returning to the Bolshevism of Lenin and Trotsky! Hail Rosa Luxemburg, the greatest founder of German Communism, murdered by the Freikorps at the behest of the SPD leadership! The German Revolution, East and West, needs a Leninist-Trotskyist workers party!■

Polanski...

(continued from page 2)

desires and they act on them—desires that sometimes involve significantly older people. There is nothing inherently wrong with this. For us the guiding principle for sexual relations is that of *effective consent*, meaning mutual agreement and understanding, as opposed to coercion. It is especially ridiculous to present the sexually experienced, post-pubescent teenager in the Polanski case as an unwitting child. To lump together sex with a minor or morning-after regrets with rape is to trivialize and belittle the savage brutality of the crime of rape.

Sex with men is not the source of women’s oppression, contrary to feminist writ. The bourgeois family, that strait-jacket of sexual monogamy for women,

is. Bourgeois feminists have done much damage to the cause of women’s liberation by fueling the arguments of the capitalist sex police. Criminalizing sexual activity for young people has always been a war cry of the fire-and-brimstone religious types and other right-wing forces. When feminists took up the cause of repression by arguing that pornography was “violence against women,” they helped make renewed anti-sex Puritanism more mainstream. Meanwhile, the “date rape” furor pushed by feminists on campus has reinforced the Victorian sexual dual standard that while men are naturally lecherous, of course “decent” women actually do not like sex. The assault by “family values” feminists on men as sexual predators has also fed into the government’s relentless hounding of convicted “sex offenders” beyond their prison sentences. This has driven many out of their homes,

even into tent cities, where they are driven further into the wilderness if found out. Many of these individuals are guilty of *nothing*, just consensual acts with youth, that is, “minors” without any civil rights, who are themselves trapped under the oppressive control of parents or the state.

As apostles of such Puritanism, the feminists are joined by pseudo-socialists like Workers World Party (WWP). In “Polanski, Rape & Justice,” (*Workers World* online, 8 October), WWP accepts the prosecution’s story without a blink, declaring: “It is clear from the grand jury testimony” that “Polanski drugged and raped” Geimer. In a chilling call for Polanski’s head, with a hint of bizarre and sick vigilantism, WWP adds: “Why aren’t celebrities circulating a petition supporting Geimer and all survivors of sexual abuse and condemning Polanski and his defenders? In fact, why not call

for a women’s tribunal—made up of survivors of sexual assault—to decide his fate?”

Our defense of Roman Polanski, like our longstanding defense of NAMBLA (North American Man/Boy Love Association) and others persecuted for not conforming to the norms of bourgeois society, is based on our Marxist program for women’s liberation through socialist revolution. It is also based on our understanding that this state upholds in every way it can the inherently oppressive bourgeois family, including enforcing sexual repression and fear. This repression includes a host of vindictive and peculiar state laws which reveal more about the sadistic and repressed character of capitalist society than anything else, as does this seemingly endless persecution of Roman Polanski. Hands off Polanski! Drop the charges!■

Protest Gag Order Against Ray Luc Levasseur

Last month, former Ohio 7 political prisoner Ray Luc Levasseur was vindictively barred from speaking at an event at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, about the notorious 1989 sedition frame-up trial in which he was a defendant. The university library's invitation to Levasseur was met with a vile slander campaign by the cops and bourgeois press, which tarred Levasseur as "bloodthirsty" and a "terrorist," while the state senate passed a resolution "roundly condemning" that this opponent of U.S. imperialist terror had been invited to speak.

Bowing to pressure from Massachusetts Democratic governor Deval Patrick and the state Fraternal Order of Police, the university administration canceled Levasseur's invitation. In response, the Social Thought and Political Economy Program and several academic departments took over sponsorship of the event and reinvited Levasseur. UMass president Jack Wilson admitted he had "no way of preventing a speaking appearance, based on free speech and free assembly rights" (*Boston Herald*, 11 November). But Levasseur's parole officer did, denying him

permission to leave Maine. Arnie Larson, president of the Massachusetts Fraternal Order of Police, boasted, "We reached out to people in the Justice Department and educated them about our passion here...and they followed through on it" (*Boston Globe*, 12 November).

When former political prisoner and sedition trial co-defendant Pat Levasseur (Ray's former wife) spoke in Ray Luc Levasseur's place, she was met by an ominous display of police bonapartism. An army of over 200 cops from New Jersey, New York and Massachusetts protested the event on the campus with signs reading, "There Is No Such Thing as a Former Terrorist." This was an echo of the government's 1987 frame-up of two other Ohio 7 defendants for the killing of a New Jersey state trooper.

Pat and Ray Luc Levasseur were part of the Ohio 7, convicted for their roles in a radical group that took credit for bank "expropriations" and bombings against symbols of U.S. imperialism such as military and corporate offices. Before their arrests in the mid 1980s, the Ohio 7 were targets of massive manhunts and their

children were kidnapped at gunpoint by the Feds and interrogated. Having already convicted and sentenced them to decades behind bars, in 1989 the Justice Department spent nearly \$10 million to vindictively prosecute them again for the same alleged crimes, as part of an effort to rehabilitate discredited "thought crime" sedition laws. Pat and Ray Luc Levasseur as well as another member of the Ohio 7, Richard Williams, were dragged through a ten-month trial for conspiring to overthrow the U.S. government. The defendants were acquitted, though this did not put an end to the government vendetta. Richard Williams died in prison in December 2005 due to medical neglect and abuse during his solitary confinement. Two other members of the Ohio 7, Tom Manning and Jaan Laaman, still languish behind bars. Free Manning and Laaman now!

From the standpoint of the working class, the actions of the Ohio 7 against U.S. imperialism and racist injustice are not crimes, and these courageous activists should not have served a day in prison. Although we do not share their political perspective, we have been outspoken in



Nancy Lane

the defense of the Ohio 7, several of whom have been longtime recipients of the Partisan Defense Committee's monthly stipend program for class-war prisoners. We noted in "RICO Witchhunt Targets Ohio 7" (WV No. 476, 28 April 1989), "with the seditious conspiracy case of the Ohio 7 this dangerous government is trying to move a big step closer to its police-state dreams of outlawing leftist political views." Likewise, the censorship of Ray Luc Levasseur and the massive cop mobilization at UMass are intended as a threat to all who would speak out against the ravages of the racist American ruling class. *An injury to one is an injury to all!* ■

Stewart...

(continued from page 1)

organization associated with the Spartacist League—stated that Stewart, Yousry and Abdel Sattar "should not have spent a single day in jail! Their frame-up prosecution gives the government a green light to prosecute lawyers for the alleged crimes of their clients, ripping the Sixth Amendment right to counsel to shreds." Pointing out that the jailing came in the immediate aftermath of the Justice Department's announcement of plans for a show-trial prosecution of Guantánamo detainees, to be held within a mile of the World Trade Center site, the letter stressed that "the message is clear: any determined defense of those the government deems an enemy can mean a prison sentence for 'material support' to terrorism."

The Second Circuit's 125-page decision against Stewart, Yousry and Abdel Sattar made no bones about its effect on restricting the right to legal counsel, declaring that it was now "less likely that other incarcerated persons will have the same level of access to counsel that [Stewart's] client was given." The court ordered not only that bail be revoked immediately but that a new hearing be held by the trial judge, John G. Koeltl, to *increase* the sentences of all three defendants. In 2006, Federal prosecutors who had demanded a 30-year sentence reacted in outrage when Koeltl, citing Stewart's efforts on behalf of "the poor, the disadvantaged and the unpopular," set her sentence at 28 months. Yousry got 20 months while Abdel Sattar, a former postal worker, was given *24 years*.

The higher court, which includes two Clinton appointees, outrageously denounced Koeltl for failing to consider whether Stewart committed perjury at trial by maintaining that she believed she did nothing illegal. Describing her sentence as "breathtakingly low," one of the appellate judges all but explicitly called for Stewart, who suffers from breast cancer, to be locked away for life. The *New York Post* (17 November) cheered, "Finally: Jihadist-Enabling Lawyer Lynne Stewart Ordered to Jail," while the *New York Daily News* (19 November) headlined: "Terror Moll Gets Hers."

Stewart, Yousry and Abdel Sattar were convicted after a seven-month trial fraught with prosecutorial misconduct. Prosecutors pandered to public fear in the post-September 11 climate, even introducing videotapes of Osama bin Laden as evidence! The evidence against Yousry, a

doctoral candidate in Middle Eastern Studies at New York University and an opponent of Islamic fundamentalism, consisted of notebooks of his discussions with Sheik Abdel Rahman for use in his dissertation. Yousry now faces possibly two decades in prison for *doing his job* as an interpreter. Ahmed Abdel Sattar is an Islamic fundamentalist whose only "crime" was to rack up large phone bills talking to other fundamentalists. At bottom, they were convicted of being Arab in post-September 11 America.

Though the prosecution was carried out under the Republican Bush administration, this mugging of constitutional rights has the fingerprints of the Democratic Clinton White House all over it. The Special Administrative Measures Stewart purportedly violated were enacted by the Clinton administration. For years, the Feds under Clinton secretly recorded the supposedly privileged attorney-client discussions between Stewart, her aides and Abdel Rahman. Stewart, Yousry and Abdel Sattar were indicted under the 1996 Anti-terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, one of several measures that have been escalated under the "war on terror" to attack fundamental rights.

After eight years of chanting "Anybody but Bush," the liberals and reformist left hailed the election of Barack Obama and his promises of "change," not least in regard to the "war on terror." But as we have always stressed, the "war on terror" has the stamp of both parties of U.S. imperialism. Despite Obama's campaign pledge to close Guantánamo and end torture, his administration has endorsed indefinite detention, a hallmark of police-state dictatorships and a centerpiece of Bush's war on democratic rights. Many Guantánamo detainees will be transferred to detention centers in Bagram, Afghanistan, which has become synonymous with torture and all-around imperialist savagery, and elsewhere. And as the death toll of Afghans mounts ever higher in the U.S./NATO occupation of that country, the announced show trial of Guantánamo prisoners like Khalid Shaikh Mohammed demonstrates the Obama administration's commitment to continuing the assault on democratic rights at home.

At the onset of the prosecution of Stewart, Yousry and Abdel Sattar, we pointed to the urgent need for leftists, trade unionists and defenders of democratic rights to defend them against a government intent on tearing up the rights of all of us. SL and PDC supporters have repeatedly turned out to express our support at court hearings and protests, and in recent years

Stewart has been a regular invited speaker at the PDC's Holiday Appeal benefits for class-war prisoners. Based on the principle of non-sectarian, class-struggle defense, we have also stressed that defense of Stewart is inseparable from that of Yousry and Abdel Sattar. Not so the reformist left, which disappeared any mention of Yousry and Abdel Sattar long ago. Recent articles protesting Stewart's incarceration in *Workers World*, the International Socialist Organization's *Socialist Worker* and the Revolutionary Communist Party's *Revolution* don't even mention their names.

Stewart and Yousry's jailing reveals yet again the workings of the courts as an

integral part of the repressive machinery of the "democratic" capitalist state, which masks the class dictatorship of the bourgeoisie with a veneer of equality before the law. But there can be no equality between the exploited and their exploiters, between the oppressed and their oppressors. We fight to win those outraged at the legal persecution of Stewart, Yousry and Abdel Sattar to a perspective of proletarian revolution to abolish the capitalist system, sweeping away the capitalist state and establishing a workers state, where those who labor rule. Then, and only then, will we see justice for all the victims of imperialist barbarism, at home and abroad. ■

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

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



Jennifer Beach

Chicago

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

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

For more information:
(312) 563-0442

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:
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Thirteenth National Conference of the SL/U.S.

“Dog Days of the Post-Soviet Period”

The Spartacist League, U.S. section of the International Communist League, held its 13th National Conference in New York last summer. The National Conference is the highest body of the SL, charged with reviewing the work of the organization in the period since our last conference, thrashing out questions in dispute and electing a Central Committee, which oversees the party’s work between conferences. The gathering was preceded by a period of intense pre-conference discussion, formally opened with the issuance of a Conference Call by the outgoing Central Committee three months before the conference and leading to the election of delegates at local membership meetings on the basis of a political platform.

The document adopted at the conference noted that this gathering took place “in the midst of a worldwide economic crisis, the most substantial since the Great Depression, and in the aftermath of the election of a Democratic president following eight years of the despised and somewhat demented Bush administration.” The document pointed out that Barack Obama is a “Wall Street Democrat whose economic advisers, Summers and Geithner, are direct representatives of banks and financial interests. They aim to make the working class and oppressed pay in order to restore the profits of the American bourgeoisie while preserving and extending U.S. overlordship abroad.”

The conference had to grapple with a number of our opportunist lunges in the preceding period. Placing these problems in their historical context in the post-Soviet world, the main resolution passed by the conference cited the following statement by one senior comrade: “In the aftermath of the fall of the USSR, it’s very difficult to maintain our revolutionary continuity and very easy to have it be destroyed.” The document added:

“The period that the SL/U.S. has confronted in the last decades is characterized by a dearth of class struggle and the proletariat’s defeat with the counterrevolution in the USSR, which has resulted in a throwback in consciousness where communism is considered utopian at best. The party’s internal struggles have reflected the impact of this reactionary period on us.... A failure to recognize the most fundamental difference between us and the

rest of the left—that they do not share the same ultimate goal, world communism—has been an underlying factor in the recurrent tendencies of successive regimes toward phony mass work and unrealistic expectations of recruitment or regroupment.”

In 2007, the ICL’s Fifth International Conference codified corrections to some manifestations of these tendencies within the ICL (see “Maintaining a Revolutionary Program in the Post-Soviet Period,” *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 60, Autumn 2007). This year’s SL/U.S.

leading to a stay of execution while also drawing in an array of liberal and reformist forces that had previously been uninterested in his case. While we had worked to get larger forces on board, we also recognized that the involvement of these forces, virulently hostile to our proletarian and revolutionary purpose, would necessarily mean a diminished role for us. However, in the past few years, this understanding was increasingly subverted, as we committed ourselves to being the best builders of a campaign to “revitalize”

the leadership developed into a full-fledged factional opposition in the period before the conference. While repeatedly stating their agreement that the resident leadership had taken the party to the brink of liquidation, this minority continued to cling to the politics and methods that had paved the way to such liquidationism. The minority submitted a platform counterposed to the majority document, and delegates were elected on the basis of one or the other of these two factional documents, in proportion to their support in the party membership. Other groupings and individuals also presented documents on disputed questions before the conference. After a full debate in the pre-conference period and at the conference itself, delegates voted overwhelmingly in favor of the majority document, “Fighting for Programmatic Continuity in the Dog Days of the Post-Soviet Period.” At the end of the conference, the majority and minority caucuses formally dissolved, though the minority did not change its views.

Members of the ICL’s International Executive Committee participated in the conference deliberations as fraternal delegates with voice and consultative vote. The greetings from the Italian section, the Lega Trotskista, were especially appreciated for their incisive summary of the situation facing us:

“This Conference takes place at the intersection of the deepest economic crisis in the last 70 years, which is hitting the working class and downtrodden masses worldwide and will shape the political landscape; and the election of black Democrat Barack Obama, a gift to U.S. imperialism and the capitalist classes abroad, raising renewed illusions in the capitalist system amongst workers and minorities. In this context, the ICL and the SL/U.S. faced a political crisis marked by a series of capitulations to the Democratic Party and its liberal and reformist tails, centered on a practice of increasingly turning the party into a civil defense organization for black political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal and a pressure group on the Democratic Party. Underlying these failures was an idealist subjectivist methodology that ‘yes, we can’ break out of political isolation, by entering a permanent campaign mode and finding ‘convergence’ with other forces at the expense of our communist program. The fact that the party regime pushing this methodology found wide support speaks to our current political isolation and the willingness to follow a leadership which proposes an apparent easy breakthrough and has the strength to pursue it.”

At the same time, the Italian greetings noted:

“The last four years have seen major political correctives and advances...[including] the historic correction of our position on executive office, which has vindicated and completed the fights of our predecessors from Marx and Engels to Lenin and Luxemburg against reformism [see ‘Down With Executive Offices of the Capitalist State!—Marxist Principles and Electoral Tactics,’ *Spartacist* (English-language edition) No. 61, Spring 2009]. That we were able to carry on a task left to us by such revolutionary giants speaks to the strength of our party, which will remain in the future.”

Pressures of the Period

Founding American Trotskyist and Socialist Workers Party (SWP) leader James P. Cannon wrote that factional struggle is always a reflection of the class struggle, and so it was with this fight. The imme-



January 1992 Spartacist protest outside Federal Reserve Bank in New York City, where Boris Yeltsin was feted by his Wall Street paymasters. ICL uniquely fought to mobilize Soviet workers against capitalist counterrevolution.

National Conference had to deal with a growing political adaptation to the liberals, reformists and black nationalists claiming to fight in defense of black death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal.

From the time the SL and Partisan Defense Committee—a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the SL—first took up Mumia’s case in 1987, we have fought, often virtually alone on the left, to expose the racist frame-up of this innocent man as widely as possible within the international labor movement and among all opponents of racist, capitalist injustice. Mumia’s threatened execution in the summer of 1995 provoked an outpouring of protest internationally,

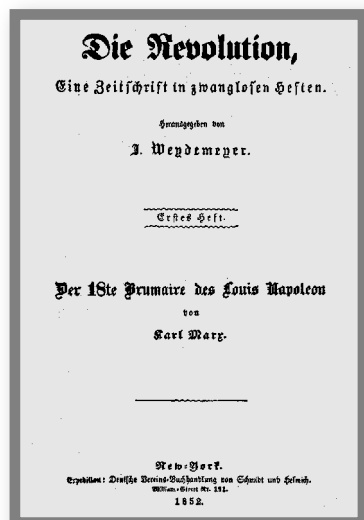
the (nonexistent) “mass movement” to free Mumia.

The political liquidationism inherent in this false perspective became particularly acute when it intersected the first serious presidential candidacy by a black man in this deeply racist society. Not surprisingly, after years of bleating “anybody but Bush” our opponents on the left, including the dominant liberal/reformist elements in the Mumia defense milieu, wholeheartedly embraced Barack Obama. Alarmingly, this sentiment found an echo at a meeting in our New York center attended by members of the resident bodies, the SL Political Bureau and the International Secretariat, following Obama’s vaunted “More Perfect Union” speech in March 2008. Notwithstanding an attempted corrective by leading comrades outside the party center stressing the centrality of our class opposition to this black bourgeois politician, Obama’s speech was applauded as a “turning point” for “acknowledging race and racial oppression in the U.S.”

In fact, Obama had lauded the original slaveholders’ Constitution and disavowed his erstwhile mentor, Reverend Jeremiah Wright, for simply asserting that racial oppression remained a central factor in American society. Had we gone to press with the main political line advanced at that meeting, it would have been a public betrayal of our principle of proletarian class independence, a lurch toward the Democratic Party of racist American imperialism. Following reconsideration by comrades in the center, our press rightly characterized Obama’s message as “‘National Unity’ in Service of U.S. Imperialism” (WV No. 911, 28 March 2008).

As the party sought to come to grips with the roots of this opportunist departure, resistance from a small section of

Beard



Karl Marx’s *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852): “Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please ...but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past.”

diate pressures on us have been the election of a black Democrat as president against the backdrop of the financial crisis. Notwithstanding that Obama is a Wall Street Democrat who, moreover, made escalation of the U.S.-led war and occupation of Afghanistan a centerpiece of his campaign, his election generated renewed illusions among the working class in liberal reformism, including the notion that government intervention in the economy can better the conditions of the working people. The current bureaucratic, pro-Democratic Party misleadership of the trade unions has mostly been prostrate before and in some cases complicit in a range of attacks by the capitalists accomplished under successive Democratic and Republican administrations, from the rollback of gains of preceding workers struggles, to the increasingly restricted access

tory convinced large numbers of people...that something different is possible” (*Socialist Worker*, 21 January). Many of these organizations, having lined up behind imperialist-backed anti-Soviet forces from Jimmy Carter’s “human rights” crusade to Polish Solidarność and the Afghan *mujahedin*, bear a share of the responsibility for the catastrophic defeat for the world proletariat represented by the capitalist counterrevolutions in the former Soviet Union and East Europe. Decades of Stalinist lies and bureaucratism had so eroded the socialist consciousness of the Soviet proletariat that it failed to rally in defense of the historic gains embodied in the workers state. We are proud that we swam “against the stream” and remained at our posts in defense of the gains of the October Revolution. Meanwhile many organizations



Y.A. Zhelyabuzhsky

Lenin playing chess with Bogdanov (right) in Capri, 1908. Lenin’s *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, published in 1909, polemicized against subjective idealism of Bogdanov and other Bolsheviks.

to higher education, to attacks on the remaining gains of the civil rights movement. While there seems to be some increased interest in Marxism now that the anarchy and instability of the capitalist system have again been exposed by the financial crisis, the bottom line is that workers and the oppressed have been taking it for a long time because they do not see any alternative. Following the final destruction of the USSR in 1991-92, even more politically advanced workers generally accept that the historic struggle for a socialist society proved to be at best a failed experiment. The reformist left has been increasingly abandoning even lip service to the liberating ideals of communism and revolution.

Emblematic of this is the French Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR), once the exemplar of the radicalization of the New Left generation. In the 1960s-early 1970s when the Vietnamese liberation forces were giving the American imperialists a black eye, the LCR spurned the proletariat in favor of petty-bourgeois radicalism and guerrillaism, seeking to be associated with the Vietnamese Stalinists as well as others who, at that time, militantly resisted imperialism and capitalist oppression. Albeit with opportunist politics, Alain Krivine and his fellows fought the cops on the barricades of May ’68 in Paris. Today they exult in the “death of communism” and are in the business of being the “left wing” of the Cold Warrior social democracy, which considers Stalin’s Russia to have been no better than Hitler’s genocidal fascism. The LCR put the final touches on a long process of reconciling itself to its own bourgeois rulers when it dissolved into its newly founded “New Anti-Capitalist Party,” thus excising both “revolutionary” and “communist” from its self-description (see “‘Death of Communism’ Leftists in New Guise,” WV No. 934, 10 April). The very term “anti-capitalist” was carefully chosen to avoid any hint of identification with the Bolshevik-led October Revolution of 1917 and to be ambiguous on whether or not one is for socialism.

In the U.S., which has never had even a mass social-democratic party, the reformists openly embrace the Democrats and/or their Green Party shills. Typically, the International Socialist Organization celebrated the election of a black Democrat as the new Commander-in-Chief of U.S. imperialism because “Obama’s vic-

falsely claiming to be Trotskyist lent their support to “democratic” counterrevolution in the train of their own bourgeoisies, which were determined to finally roll back the gains of the October Revolution. As we wrote in the “Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program” adopted by the ICL’s Third International Conference in 1998:

“The ‘Russian question’ has been the defining political question of the 20th century and the touchstone for revolutionaries. We Trotskyists stayed at our posts and fought to preserve and extend the revolutionary gains of the working class while every other tendency on the planet capitulated to the ideological pressure of imperialist anti-communism. Above all our defense of the USSR was expressed in our fight for new October Revolutions around the world.”
—*Spartacist* (English-language edition) No. 54, Spring 1998

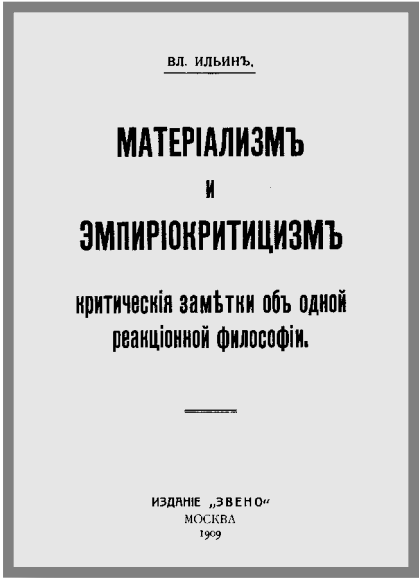
Today, as part of our continuing struggle for world socialist revolution, we uphold the Trotskyist program of unconditional military defense of the remaining deformed workers states (China, Cuba, Vietnam and North Korea) while fighting for proletarian political revolution against the sellout Stalinist bureaucracies. But the disproportion is very great between our revolutionary purpose and the current political consciousness of the working class internationally.

Liquidationism and Subjective Idealism

Rejecting the idealist notion underlying party work in the recent period that objective limitations can be overcome through sufficient force of will, the National Conference upheld the position that “the basic problems we face are *objective* and therefore cannot be resolved simply through internal political struggle.” We also reject *bourgeois objectivism*, embraced by classical Social Democracy, which at bottom denies the possibility of transforming society through a revolutionary struggle led by a proletarian vanguard. As Trotsky pointed out in *Lessons of October* (1924), if the Bolsheviks had failed to take power in October 1917 there would be no lack of social-democratic academics and “Marxists” who would have come forward to “prove” the objective impossibility of that revolution ever taking place. The main conference resolution stressed: “Bringing revolutionary consciousness to the proletariat is not supra-historical.

Our ability to impact the world, to significantly recruit or to achieve an organizational breakthrough is not the result of subjective effort or force of will alone. Workers and youth will be won to our program in the course of a process of politicization conditioned by class relations and class struggle—an objective historical process outside of the sphere of our small party’s influence or comrades’ wills. As Marx noted: ‘Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past’ (Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*).”

Lenin fought against subjective idealism and a rise of religiosity (“god-loving”) in the ranks of the then-Bolshevik faction after the defeat of the 1905 Revolution in Russia. His most famous polemic against this is *Materialism and*



Empirio-Criticism (1908). But unlike the Bolsheviks, experienced and steeled in the course of several very different kinds of struggles—offensive and defensive—wars, defeats and revolutions between 1905 and 1917, we are in a particularly long and deep trough. As our founding national chairman, James Robertson, noted in a talk at the Fourth ICL Conference in 2003 on the revolutionary antecedents of the Spartacist tendency: “It is an unfortunate fact of life that individual life spans do not necessarily correspond to the rhythms of political developments.” Impatience and impressionism are characteristics that contribute to opportunism.

The pressures of the period have helped to generate attempts to find a way to “get rich quick,” i.e., liquidating our revolutionary, internationalist and proletarian program in order to latch on to larger forces, hostile to the working class and to our revolutionary purpose. There were several early expressions of liquidationist pressures on the party. In our Canadian section in 1994, a small faction was formed by Y. Rad and Marie Hayes, who glorified various nationalist, ex-Stalinist formations in post-Soviet Russia and wanted to support the bourgeois African National Congress in South Africa. In the case of the tendency led by Jan

Norden, which defected from the SL in 1996 to become the Internationalist Group, we characterized them as “Pabloites of the second mobilization.” Norden and his cohorts retrospectively denigrated our intervention into the DDR (East Germany) in 1989-90, as they pursued some of the Stalinist has-beens of the former ruling party (SED-PDS) that had helped sell the DDR out. In exchange for this illusion of an opportunity, Norden wanted to disavow Trotsky’s fight for revolutionary leadership against Stalinism and popular-frontism (see the publicly available ICL *International Bulletin* No. 38, “Norden’s ‘Group’: Shamefaced Defectors from Trotskyism,” June 1996). He and his co-factionalists also conciliated a group of Brazilian trade unionists who took another faction of the union bureaucracy to court. At our 2003 ICL conference, we fought against yet another series of opportunist lunges (see *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 58, Spring 2004).

If we had not fought back against these explicit challenges to our program and defeated them inside our party, the ICL would not be here today as, however small, the programmatic continuity of revolutionary Marxism. Nonetheless, it is profoundly idealist to behave as though a correct fight, correctly assimilated, will protect the cadres against being sucked off base by new pressures...or by the same pressures expressed again in periods such as this one.

Problems in the Mumia Campaign

While some of the political work of the 2004 SL/U.S. conference was correct and necessary, particularly codifying a sharp fight to reassert our crucial revolutionary continuity as against appetites to accommodate in the direction of some of our most despicable political enemies on the left, a wrong emphasis was put on episodes of sectarianism in our work as the main problem. At the recent conference, the party minority hotly contested the majority’s conclusion that the 2004 “conference document contained the roots of problems that subsequently found full flower” and gave “a political justification for opportunism and disdain for theory and program by urging ‘intervention’ and ‘tactics’ in the direction of liberal activism.”

The stress on “anti-sectarian” tactical militancy led to a series of opportunist lunges. There was also a systematic skew toward vowing to get around our problems through our own efforts, which meant especially substituting exhortation for reason and micromanaging party branches from the center for political guidance. The concomitant to this was the disparaging of the party’s theoretical, material and human resources, not least our precious, and aging, senior cadre.

That we endorsed that document at the 2004 conference speaks at bottom to the difficulty in getting oriented in the

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Gérard Le Métail, 1959–2007.....3

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Spring 2009, \$1.50 (64 pages)
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Conference...
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post-Soviet period. As part of our determination to reverse course, the 2009 conference resolved: "The main weapon we have to guard against opportunist zigzags and lurches under our current adverse historical circumstances is to struggle to understand our place in history. This renders all the more important Spartacist as the ICL's theoretical organ and the Prometheus Research Library, which contains holdings of our party and of the workers movement that are truly priceless in political terms."

A main task of the conference was to arrest the programmatic bending expressed in the course of vainly substituting the small forces of ourselves and our sympathizers for the absence of a mass movement to free Mumia Abu-Jamal, thereby letting our opponents off the hook as we pursued "united fronts." We were increasingly trying to create a "movement" for Mumia through our own subjective efforts, despite the lack of objective basis for such a movement. This meant that the party was increasingly liquidating politically and organizationally into a movement that barely existed.

For example, after two SL supporters representing the PDC were physically excluded from an event by the New York Free Mumia Coalition, the PDC wrote an "Open Letter to Fighters for Mumia's Freedom" (WV No. 912, 11 April 2008) appealing to these political opponents for a "united front." While naturally making many good points against them, the "Open Letter" failed to even mention the question of the Democratic Party (and their shills, the Greens), which was in fact the real concern of these pseudo-leftists. In effect, we were reaching out for a bloc with those who are deadly enemies of principled class-struggle defense. Another example of adaptation, which did not make it into the public arena, was expressed in initial resistance in New York to the need for the SL to carry a banner in the PDC/Labor Black League contingent at a Mumia rally in Philadelphia—held on the eve of the state's Democratic primary election—making clear our opposition to the Democratic Party.

Our articles on Mumia in recent years have emphasized the need to "revitalize" or "rebuild" a mass movement that had been "demobilized" by the reformists with their appeals for a "new trial." Relatedly, WV coverage of the united-front protests initiated by the Partisan Defense Committee in the spring of 2008 tended to describe these as "exemplary actions that pointed to what is necessary to win Mumia's freedom: the mass mobilization of the working class independent of and in opposition to its capitalist class enemy" (WV No. 927, 2 January). This vastly inflates the importance of these modest demonstrations, which, moreover, were carried out in the political framework of an opportunist orientation.

At the conference there was debate and clarification over the role and purpose of the united front in general. Prior to the conference, some comrades, including a

subsequent member of the minority, had argued that the united front is in and of itself a counterposition to the pro-capitalist politics of our opponents. While the minority did not continue to defend that precise statement, they did continue to fetishize the united front—particularly brandishing it as a solution to our purported "withdrawal from opponents combat" in defense work in the 1990s—and the question of the united front remained at the center of the debate during the conference. The united front is nothing more than a means, a tactic, with the aim of embedding the revolutionary program in the masses. In 1973, we wrote, "Any form of fetishism toward the mere form of united fronts...means abdicating as revolutionists because at bottom it is the dissolution of the vanguard party into the class through the substitution of such forms (and other politics!) for the role of the revolutionary party" ("Letter to the OCRFI and the OCI," Spartacist No. 22, Winter 1973-74).

An educational presentation at the conference by comrade Joseph Seymour was valuable in reasserting the purpose of the

after Mumia's lead attorney, Leonard Weinglass, was fired from the defense team in March 2001 along with Weinglass' co-counsel, Dan Williams, who had published an unauthorized, lying account of the defense, Executing Justice, which aided the courts in suppressing evidence of Mumia's innocence. Then in December 2001, while affirming Mumia's conviction, Judge Yohn overturned the death sentence, undercutting the perceived urgency of the threat to Mumia's life.

That said, our opponents on the left have contributed to the extent of their capacities to politically demobilizing any serious campaign for Mumia's freedom. Rather than insisting on the straightforward point that Mumia is innocent, they do everything to appeal to the liberals, for whom the demand for a new trial is as much about cleaning up the embarrassing unconstitutional "excesses" involved in his blatant frame-up trial as it is about Mumia. At the same time, winning people to the demand to free Mumia in counterposition to the reformists' "new trial" slogan does not in itself lead them to understand that the American state is an

Larger forces have finally come on board and they seek to silence our revolutionary views. We will continue our propaganda and agitation around this case as the cutting edge of the fight against racist capitalist oppression, among minorities, and in the labor and youth arenas where our party will be built."

Having larger forces take up the case flowed from the recognition that we are a tiny communist propaganda group lacking the social weight needed to build a class-struggle movement to defend Mumia. Nonetheless, the party and PDC threw massive resources into assisting with Mumia's legal defense. Every professed defender of Mumia today is forced to rely on one or another aspect of the work done by attorneys for the Partisan Defense Committee who also worked on Mumia's case in the mid to late 1990s. From the ballistics evidence to the state's coercion of witnesses to the numerous constitutional violations, virtually every legal argument that Mumia's defenders raise is based on the tremendous work of investigation and legal argumentation advanced by PDC attorneys and publicized by the PDC and SL. And, as our recent conference reaffirmed: we will continue to fight for his freedom "in the framework of our real capacity with our propaganda and tasks adjusted accordingly," which means "investing our resources in accordance with the ebbs and flows of Mumia's case and with the activities of the party as a whole."

For us the fight for Mumia's freedom is part of the struggle to do away with a social system based on vicious class exploitation, all-sided oppression and state terror. But in seeking to "revitalize" a single-issue "movement," our purpose began to shift in a revisionist direction, in the vein of the German arch-reformist, Eduard Bernstein. In continuing to defend the political methodology that led to this shift, our party minority, as a leading comrade noted, advanced a species of neo-Bernsteinism. As Lenin wrote in "Marxism and Revisionism" (1908):

"A natural complement to the economic and political tendencies of revisionism was its attitude to the ultimate aim of the socialist movement. 'The movement is everything, the ultimate aim is nothing'—this catch-phrase of Bernstein's expresses the substance of revisionism better than many long disquisitions. To determine its conduct from case to case, to adapt itself to the events of the day and to the chopping and changing of petty politics, to forget the primary interests of the proletariat and the basic features of the whole capitalist system, of all capitalist evolution, to sacrifice these primary interests for the real or assumed advantages of the moment—such is the policy of revisionism. And it patently follows from the very nature of this policy that it may assume an infinite variety of forms, and that every more or less 'new' question, every more or less unexpected and unforeseen turn of events, even though it change the basic line of development only to an insignificant degree and only for the briefest period, will always inevitably give rise to one variety of revisionism or another."

In another example of trying to find some kind of original sin that, once corrected, would prevent future problems, the 2004 National Conference also embraced an argument that we had never had an evaluation of our intervention in the DDR and that a lack of evaluation was a root of problems in the party. The WV article on the 2004 conference stated that "the ICL failed to conduct a synthetic assessment of either our intervention in the DDR or the work of Moscow station. The failure to critically evaluate these interventions helped set a pattern over the next period that major party interventions did not have to face real scrutiny inside the organization." Politically wrong and factually absurd, this statement was re-examined as part of wide-ranging discussions in the ICL on our DDR intervention.

Beginning immediately after our DDR intervention and continuing through to the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, we engaged in an intensive internal discussion to arrive not only at a synthetic evaluation of our work but also at an analysis of the terminal collapse of Stalinism. The undoing of the



WV Photo

November 1998: Partisan Defense Committee-initiated rally in Chicago to free Mumia Abu-Jamal and abolish the racist death penalty.

united-front tactic and the conditions for its implementation in broad historical terms (see WV No. 941, 28 August). As conceived by the Communist International at its Third Congress in 1921, the united-front tactic was intended mainly for large Communist parties with a sizable base in the proletariat. It is only under exceptional circumstances, usually where there is a defensive situation and a widely shared sense of urgency, that a small Leninist vanguard can compel larger reformist forces to engage in a united front.

As evidenced by the small turnouts at the 2008 Mumia protests, such circumstances did not exist at the time. In a period already marked by a dearth of class struggle and the rollback of consciousness, the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon were a godsend to the bourgeoisie, reinforcing appeals to chauvinist "national unity" and facilitating the so-called "war on terror"—in reality, a recipe for imperialist plunder abroad and for terrorizing the population domestically, beginning with immigrants, the most vulnerable sector of the working people. Many liberal Mumia supporters had turned tail

instrument of class as well as racial oppression. Yet we acted as though those who agreed with our defense slogans were thereby closer to us programmatically and that a class-struggle defense strategy somehow expressed the totality of our revolutionary-internationalist program.

Correcting Errors

A false perspective that we could "rebuild" a "mass movement" for Mumia Abu-Jamal was related to a false self-criticism central to our last national conference in 2004. The WV article reporting on the 2004 conference correctly noted:

"In the summer of 1995, after a death warrant was signed against him, a powerful movement demanding that Mumia's life be saved erupted across the U.S. and around the world. His scheduled execution was stayed by the courts in August of that year. And while we succeeded in our efforts to galvanize much larger social forces to fight on behalf of Jamal, we recognized that those same forces were far removed from our communist outlook and would inevitably seek to marginalize our involvement in this struggle."

—WV No. 841, 4 February 2005

But the article went on to wrongly charge that this correct recognition "became a rationale for increasingly withdrawing from political combat with groups such as Socialist Action and the Workers World Party who tailored their appeals to liberals who were agnostic on Mumia's innocence and thus would not rally around a call to free him.... Our disengaging from political combat with these forces meant we were not as effective as we could have been in exposing their demobilization of support for Mumia."

Far from "disengaging from political combat" after 1995, we continued to expose the state frame-up in our press and to polemicize against the illusions in the "justice" of the capitalist state that our opponents embody in all their activities. While the WV article presented an accurate picture of the thinking at that conference, it was wrong. In August 1995, the SL/U.S. Political Bureau motion had determined:

"The PDC's involvement in Jamal's legal defense should not cloud a clear assessment of our diminishing role in the case.

On the United Front

A reprint of
Young Communist
Bulletin No. 3, 1976

A Spartacist pamphlet
originally printed in 1976 as
Young Communist Bulletin No. 3
\$1 (16 pages)

Young Spartacus
**The United Front Tactic:
Its Use and Abuse**

By
Joseph Seymour

Workers Vanguard No. 941
28 August 2009
\$.50

Make checks payable/mail to:
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Vaccine...

(continued from page 1)

the mandatory vaccination, falsely claiming that this posed a threat to individual rights and that vaccines are dangerous.

The reality is that the influenza virus, which has a very rapid rate of mutation, poses a real threat to the life and well-being of people all over the world. During the 1918-19 worldwide flu pandemic, some **50 million** people lost their lives. In the U.S. alone, about 36,000 die every year from the seasonal flu.

Unlike seasonal influenza, against which many people have some immunity, H1N1 is a relatively new virus to which most people have never been exposed, meaning most have little to no immunity. While healthy children and young adults are at risk, the virus is especially dangerous to pregnant women, the elderly and those with weakened immune systems or underlying disease conditions such as diabetes, asthma and heart and lung disease. Although the mortality rate of the H1N1 virus is thus far rather low, the virus has the potential to become far more lethal.

Priority of vaccination was set for these vulnerable sections of the population. But what is needed is production of ample amounts of vaccine to inoculate enough of the population to produce what public health professionals call “herd immunity.” The higher the proportion of immune individuals, the lower is the likelihood of the spread of disease. However, no H1N1 flu vaccine was available until the first week of October. Of the 195 million doses needed in the U.S. to effectively combat the H1N1 flu, only 51 million doses were available by the fourth week of November—this is in addition to substantial shortages of the seasonal flu vaccine. There have been cases of people lying about their age and women faking pregnancy in order to get vaccinated.

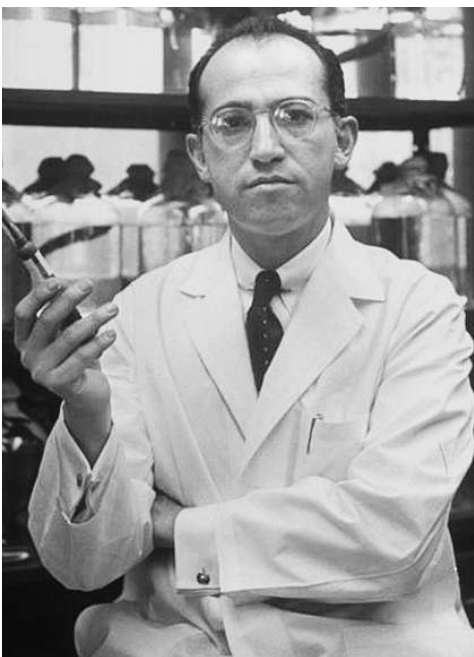
Under capitalism, medicine is driven by profit, not by the needs of society. Because vaccine production is not highly profitable, pharmaceutical companies are loath to invest in it. In 1967, there were 26 companies producing vaccines in the U.S. Today there are only four. Rather than investing in more efficient technology with a faster vaccine yield, these companies continue to use the same antiquated, low-yield technology that was used 50 years ago. Moreover, because many health insurance companies refuse to cover the cost of vaccinations, many pediatricians refer children to hospitals for immunization. At the same time, health delivery services are continually being slashed through budget cuts, layoffs of public health care workers and the closures of hospitals and clinics.

While research into vaccine development receives funding with an eyedropper, the U.S. imperialist ruling class pumps billions into germ warfare research and into fighting “bioterrorism,” which has been hyped up as part of the rulers’ reactionary “war on terror.” As journalist Arthur Allen wrote in his 2008 book, *Vaccine: The Controversial Story of Medicine’s Greatest Lifesaver*:

“No price was too high to pay for anything that had the magic word ‘terrorism’ attached to it. Congress was willing to authorize \$1.9 billion to build and maintain a stockpile of smallpox vaccine, and \$1.4 billion to create and stockpile a new anthrax vaccine. From 2002 to 2006 it spent \$33 billion on bio-defense. Yet in 2003, the NIH [National Institute of Health] invested less than \$70 million on influenza vaccine research.”

Under capitalism, while providing quality medical care for everyone is within the bounds of material possibility, the availability and quality of health care for working people are subordinate to the drive for profit, with health care rationed by class, race and sex. In New York City, vaccines were diverted from those in hospitals and schools who need them most in order to secure the health of the wealthy bankers of Goldman Sachs and Citigroup.

We stand for free, quality health care for all, including full access to abortion and contraception. We fight for socialized



Alfred Eisenstaedt

medicine—the expropriation of the parasitic health care and drug companies, which are an immediate threat to the well-being of just about everyone in this country. Our aim is the mobilization of the working class in a fight for these and other such demands as part of the struggle for socialist revolution against the decrepit capitalist order. A rational, internationally planned socialist economy would devote the resources necessary to ensure that the population receives vaccinations and quality medical treatment in a timely manner. Massive resources would be invested in scientific research, to the benefit of the whole of society.

Mysticism and the Anti-Vaccine Hysteria

Although medical science is far from being able to treat all diseases, it has made it possible to control, through vaccination, many of the infectious diseases that were hideous scourges in past centuries. Until vaccines were introduced to stop them, diseases like measles, polio, diphtheria and mumps rolled viciously around the globe. Before it was eradicated, smallpox threatened 60 percent of the world’s population, killed every fourth victim (some 500 million in the 20th century alone), scarred or blinded most survivors and eluded any form of treatment. In the U.S., the polio epidemic of 1952 infected some 58,000 people and killed more than 3,000, leaving behind a legacy of terror and paralysis. Until 1963, four million people contracted measles annually; hundreds died each year and thousands were disabled for life by measles encephalitis.

Vaccines have saved the lives of countless millions across the world. Such “miraculous” advances, achieved through science-based medicine, are a refutation of the basic tenets of the anti-vaccine movement, which is based on a reactionary and superstitious ideology. With their hostility to immunization, the anti-vaccine evangelists—groups such as Generation Rescue, Age of Autism, the National Vaccine Information Center and PutChildrenFirst.org—are perfectly willing to let millions of people in poor Third World countries die of preventable diseases. It is the same mentality as that of South African leaders, like former president Thabo Mbeki, who for years had criminally denied that AIDS is caused by a virus, advocating in place of anti-retrovirus medicines natural “remedies” in the form of herbs, vegetables and garlic.

To bolster their argument, anti-vaccine outfits claim that vaccines are ineffective and harmful to the body. They take their religious and anti-scientific cues from turn-of-the-century racists and anti-Semites like the mystic Rudolf Steiner, who established the Waldorf movement, and Reuben Swinbourne Clymer, who was vice president of the Anti-Vaccination Society of America in 1902. As Arthur Allen wrote in *Vaccine*, Steiner viewed “the body as a temple, the blood as a divine fluid, and vaccines as spiritual pollution.” He believed that “blond, blue-eyed people were disappearing from the world because they were ‘weaker physi-



AP

Pioneering virologist Jonas Salk (left) did not patent his polio vaccine, making it available to everyone. Above: Child is vaccinated following polio outbreak in Nigeria, 2008.

cally and mentally stronger’ than ‘dark people’.”

Clymer’s 1957 book, *The Age of Treason*, a bible for medical quacks, is a harangue against vaccination, birth control, food additives, mood-altering drugs and “racial miscegenation”: “The enemies of God and mankind...have used or plan to employ inoculations for the purpose of destroying mental balance and making it impossible for the minds of children to develop beyond a more or less moronic or robot degree.” He put the blame of these “ills” on “militant socialists and the enemies of God and Man, many of whom are admittedly Jews.”

Anti-vaccine fanatics cite anecdotal evidence to falsely link vaccines to autism. They claim that vaccines are damaging to the immune system and that thimerosal, a mercury derivative that had been used as a preservative in multi-dose vials of vaccines, is the cause of brain damage in autistic children. The symptoms of autism, believed by many scientists to be a genetic disorder, become evident around the age of two years, which happens to be the same age children receive multiple vaccines. Credible scientific studies in several countries, involving hundreds of thousands of children, have found no link between vaccines or thimerosal and autism. Unvaccinated children developed autism at the same rate as the vaccinated, and the prevalence of autism remained the same after thimerosal was removed from vaccines in 2001.

The myth of vaccines’ link to autism is trumpeted by politicians of both capitalist parties, from Republican Congressman Dan Burton, an adamant supporter of “alternative medicine” quackery, to Democratic Senator John Kerry and Robert F. Kennedy Jr. Contributing to the crusade, the media has provided the anti-vaccine fanatics with forums to spew their poison. They want to create a “debate” where none exists, much like their promotion of proponents of “intelligent design” mysticism. Generation Rescue spokespersons Jenny McCarthy, whose son suffers from autism, and her boyfriend Jim Carrey, as well as National Vaccine Information Center president Barbara Loe Fisher have become fixtures on talk shows, from Oprah Winfrey to Don Imus and Larry

King. Meanwhile, the influential *Huffington Post* Web site has become a repository of all kinds of medical quackery. To her credit, actress Amanda Peet has stepped forward in defense of childhood vaccinations, declaring, “I was shocked at the amount of misinformation floating around, particularly in Hollywood.”

Science as a Candle in the Dark

Apart from minor reactions, vaccines are quite safe. They are certainly never as dangerous as the highly contagious diseases that they prevent (and contrary to popular myth, flu vaccines do not cause the flu). There could be no better proof of the effectiveness of vaccines than the fact that many ruthless killers like diphtheria and the measles are rare and, in many cases, unknown to young parents.

Ironically, the virtual disappearance of such diseases has given the anti-vaccine zealots ammunition to prey on ignorance, falsely claiming that infectious diseases are not deadly and that vaccines pose a threat. Meanwhile, some 20 states have religious exemptions to childhood vaccinations. Ominously, because of declining rates of childhood vaccinations, many dangerous diseases are making a comeback. For example, the number of reported cases of pertussis (whooping cough)—a highly contagious bacterial disease that can be lethal to infants—jumped from 1,000 in 1976 to 26,000 in 2004, while there have been a number of fatal cases of meningitis in unvaccinated children in Pennsylvania and Minnesota.

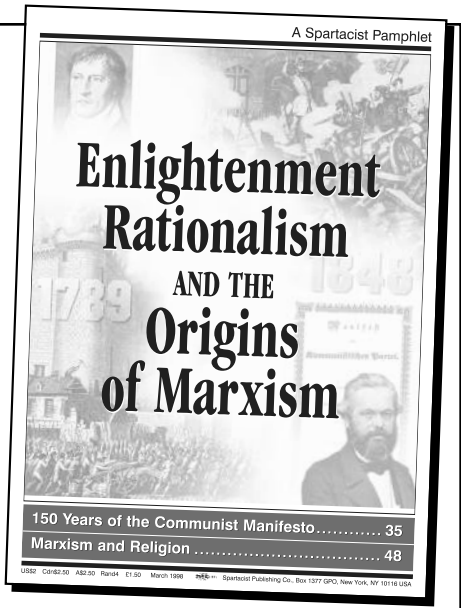
Many today do not remember the scientists who developed life-saving vaccines. In the 1950s, when polio was wreaking havoc, Dr. Jonas Salk, the pioneering virologist who developed the first safe and effective vaccine against it, was rightly hailed as a hero and his name became a familiar household word. The grateful citizens of Winnipeg, a site of a major polio epidemic in 1953, sent him a 208-foot telegram with more than 7,000 signatures. Salk did not patent his vaccine, believing it should be available for everybody. When asked who held the patent, he replied, “Well, the people.... There is no patent. Could you patent the sun?” Salk was never awarded a Nobel Prize for his

This pamphlet reprints presentations given by SL Central Committee member Joseph Seymour on the origins of Marxism in the French Enlightenment and in left Hegelianism. Also included are “150 Years of the Communist Manifesto” and “Marxism and Religion.”

In the retrograde climate of post-Soviet reaction, the struggle to reassert the validity of the program and purpose of revolutionary Marxism is crucial for our fight for new October Revolutions.

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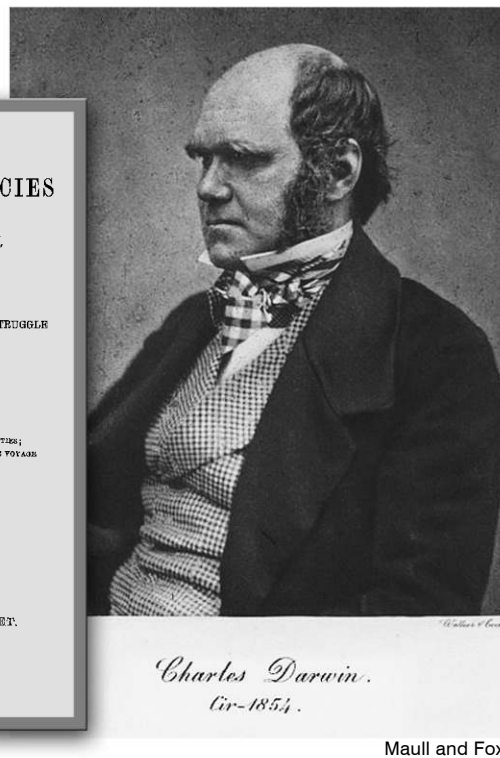
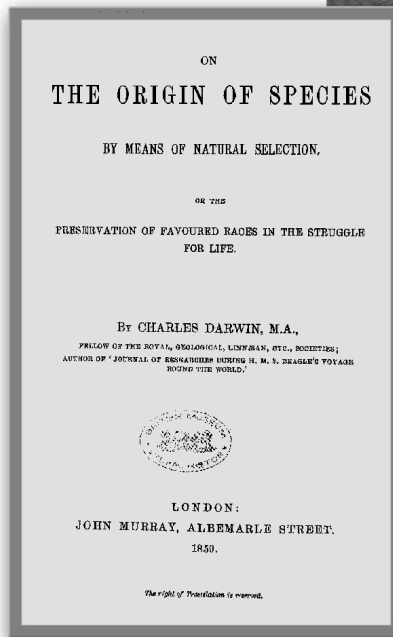


“There Is Grandeur in this View of Life”

November 24 marked the 150th anniversary of the publication of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*. This seminal work outlined Darwin's theory of evolution through natural selection, which forms the basis of modern biology. We print below the final paragraph of *On the Origin of Species*, as published in the first, 1859, edition. Of note, in subsequent editions of the book the words “by the Creator” were added after the phrase “having been originally breathed,” most likely due to pressure from religious “public opinion.”

It is interesting to contemplate an entangled bank, clothed with many plants of many kinds, with birds singing on the bushes, with various insects flitting about, and with worms crawling through the damp earth, and to reflect that these elaborately constructed forms, so different from each other, and dependent upon each other in so complex a manner, have all been produced by laws act-

ing around us. These laws, taken in the largest sense, being Growth with Reproduction; Inheritance which is almost implied by reproduction; Variability from the indirect and direct action of the external conditions of life, and from use and disuse; a Ratio of Increase so high as to lead to a Struggle for Life, and as a consequence to Natural Selection, entailing Divergence of Character and the Extinction of less-improved forms. Thus, from the war of nature, from famine and death, the most exalted object which we are capable of conceiving, namely, the production of the higher animals, directly follows. There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed into a few forms or into one; and that, whilst this planet has gone cycling on according to the fixed law of gravity, from so simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been, and are being, evolved.



scientific breakthrough. But for his idealistic humanism, the FBI kept a file on him. Today, with most of these deadly diseases a distant memory, scientists like Dr. Paul Offit, an ardent defender of vaccines and co-inventor of a vaccine against rotavirus, a diarrheal disease that kills 600,000 children worldwide every year, have been targets of scurrilous attacks and death threats by opponents of vaccines.

Helping drive the anti-vaccine campaign are homeopaths, acupuncturists, chiropractors and other quacks who are opposed to science-based medicine. On its Web site, the International Chiropractors Association promotes a tract titled *Vaccination: 100 Years of Orthodox Research Shows that Vaccines Represent a Medical Assault on the Immune System*. According to Arthur Allen, when in the early 1990s the National Vaccine Information Center (then called Dissatisfied Parents Together) was about to go bankrupt, it was saved by a large donation from a chiropractors' organization. What makes these quacks more dangerous is that they are at times more accessible than costly health care and are increasingly covered by insurance companies because they are much cheaper than real doctors. Sadly, these snake oil salesmen have become a source of “treatment” for a wide section of the population.

In its irrationality, fear mongering and anti-scientific backwardness, the hysteria against vaccines is reminiscent of the 1950s' campaign against the fluoridation of public water, a measure to prevent tooth decay that was depicted as a Communist plot to control the mind and sap and pollute the “precious bodily fluids” of the population. Dr. Stephen Barrett of Quackwatch.org notes that “chiropractors have been in the forefront of political battles against fluoridation.” (Perhaps they think that tooth decay is susceptible to spinal manipulation!)

In the U.S., religion, promoted and embraced by whole sections of the bourgeoisie, supplies an ideology that attempts to harmonize conflicting class interests while keeping society firmly ordered: capital above labor, white above black, man above woman. It provides the breeding ground for backward anti-scientific ideologies, including creationism, which challenges the established facts of Darwinian natural selection as the motor force for evolution. Some 46 percent of Americans believe in the Biblical creation myth, while 79 percent believe in angels.

The rise of religiosity and anti-scientific attitudes is aided by the decline of education, especially in basic science, in public schools. The last time that the U.S. ruling class undertook a sustained effort to promote science education was after the Soviet Union launched its Sputnik I satellite in 1957. Fear of a Soviet lead in military technology led President Dwight

Eisenhower to demand a billion-dollar program to improve science education and to enact the National Defense Education Act in 1958. Creationism was elbowed aside as the newly formed Biological Science Curriculum Study wrote evolution into new high school textbooks. But for decades, the U.S. has seen a growing tide of ideological reaction that became even more accentuated following the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state in 1991-92, which gave a major boost to all-around religious delusion.

The backward ideology that feeds the anti-vaccine movement is shared by opponents of abortion and genetically engineered crops. For years, the Catholic church's hierarchy “debated” whether it was sinful to be inoculated with the vac-

Nurses Association, 1199 SEIU United Healthcare Workers East and AFSCME District Council 37—objected to the mandate and some filed suits claiming that the order violated their civil rights. A judge put a halt on the directive, which the state later suspended because of vaccine shortage.

We would be in favor of this mandate—now unfortunately annulled—as a public health measure that would protect those receiving vaccines and prevent the further spread of disease, especially among hospitalized people whose underlying conditions are aggravated by infection. Because herd immunity cannot always be achieved voluntarily, public health measures are sometimes drastic and intrusive, but they are often necessary to achieve that level of immunity and save lives. There are often times when public health

concession after concession to the bosses on health and pension benefits, reopening and extending contracts, are now posturing as defenders of their members' rights by mobilizing them for a reactionary campaign against vaccinations. Instead, the trade-union movement should be demanding that vaccines be made available for all health workers against the preventable diseases to which they are exposed. The unions should be calling for unconditional, unlimited sick leave for all workers at full pay beginning with day one of employment. They should be in the vanguard of the struggle for free health care for everyone, which would help revitalize the labor movement. Such struggles are part of the fight to forge a vanguard party of the proletariat that will strive to combat social backwardness within the workers movement and stand for the primacy of science over superstition.

Where there is a real clash between the principle of individual rights and that of public health, resolution can be achieved only by examining the particular health threat posed. In the early 1980s, as the deadly AIDS epidemic was spreading, public health officials proposed to close gay bathhouses in San Francisco. Our initial reaction was to demand: “Government Out of the Baths!” This was incorrect. The issue was one of *life and death*. You don't cite the First Amendment when the fire department is hacking through your walls to stop a fire. The point of closing the baths was to slow down the already exponential spread of AIDS and alert the gay men who were most at risk. In reconsidering our earlier incorrect position, we wrote in “The Agony of AIDS” (*Women and Revolution* No. 35, Summer 1988):

“Like everything else in this capitalist society, ‘public health’ is infused with class, race and sex bias. Early in this century, health officials blamed immigrants and the poor for diseases like syphilis and gonorrhea, which they claimed (falsely) were spread through drinking fountains. But the extraordinary powers granted by law to departments of public health are necessary to fight disease. This fight can often involve quite brutal interference of the state into private life.”

Another example of such necessary intrusion occurred in 1967 when the World Health Organization launched a successful campaign to rid humanity of smallpox. For eleven years, health workers, armed with vaccine and bifurcated

continued on page 12



Cairo, April 2009: Egyptian Coptic Christian farmers protest Health Ministry's phony anti-flu measure of slaughtering pigs.

cine against rubella, which was grown on a cell line obtained from an aborted fetus. On the same ideological basis, federal funding for potentially life-saving stem-cell research was banned in the U.S. until very recently. In Britain, Prince Charles, ranting about genetically engineered foods, once stated, “I happen to believe that this kind of genetic modification takes mankind into realms that belong to God, and to God alone.” In his opposition to a technology that yields qualitatively better and more abundant crops, this relic of medievalism is willing to starve millions.

Public Health and Individual Rights

Last August, the New York State health commissioner issued a directive mandating vaccination against seasonal and H1N1 flu for all health care workers by the end of November. Several health workers unions—including the New York State

and individual rights clash. But getting vaccinated violates no individual rights except the “right” to spread infection. Appropriate measures such as hand washing and the wearing of gloves and masks have been standard mandatory practices in hospitals for decades. Every state already requires health care workers to be immunized against measles, mumps and polio. Quarantines are at times established for those with dangerous infectious diseases. Some of the greatest advances made in health were made through public health measures like clean drinking water, improved hygiene and vaccines.

There is more than plenty to distrust about the capitalist government. But the anti-vaccine hysteria has nothing to do with a “healthy” mistrust of the state. Rather, it is motivated by anti-scientific prejudices.

It is testament to the political bankruptcy of the trade-union bureaucracy that union leaders who have presided over

NOTICE
Workers Vanguard skips
an issue in December.
Our next issue, which will
close on December 15,
will be dated
1 January 2010.

Conference...

(continued from page 9)

the basis of proportional representation. Another aspect of political preparation was the participation in the written discussion of comrades of other sections of the ICL, leading up to a plenum of the International Executive Committee preceding the SL/U.S. conference.

Factional rights are integral to democratic-centralism and our organizational rules are unique in spelling out those rights. The different factions had the right to circulate their own correspondence among themselves and caucuses met separately in the lead-up to and at the conference. At the same time, our rules are explicit that binding instructions cannot be placed

tial.” This can be said of almost any factional struggle in the Marxist movement. Revolutionary continuity does not occur seamlessly or in a straight line, but in jagged struggles of trying to apply the program of Marxism to reality. The Socialist Workers Party was for many decades the Trotskyist organization in the U.S. During World War II, an argument began with a grouping that became the Goldman-Morrow faction, which made an empirically correct assertion that illusions in democracy would be increased in West Europe with the re-stabilization of the bourgeois order under the occupation of American troops. The Goldman-Morrow faction had a better grasp of empirical reality, but they were also capitulating to it, writing off the need for a revolutionary working-class program

international socialist revolution. These politics were reflected inside the SWP in the Cochran-Clarke fight in 1952-53. That fight was partial and focused on the issues as they were posed on the SWP’s national terrain. But despite the limitations, the SWP majority under Cannon crucially *did* take a stand against Pabloite liquidation.

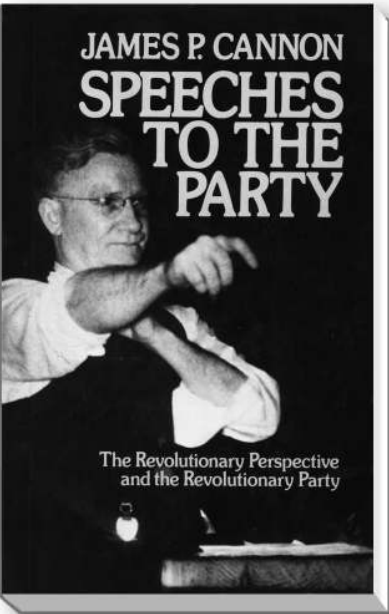
Cannon and the SWP are our revolutionary continuity, carried forward through the factional struggle of our founding cadres as the Revolutionary Tendency inside the SWP. The RT fought against the SWP’s reconciliation with the revisionism it had once opposed. Embracing Pabloite tailism of whatever was in motion and was popular, the SWP in the early 1960s politically supported the Cuban Stalinist bureaucracy under the guns of U.S. imperialism, as well as

been a sign of the ideological pressures of our times. *Every* internal fight tends to have errors, partial understandings and overcorrections; a Marxist evaluation of reality can be achieved only through successive approximations. In the past period we have certainly made errors, which we struggle to understand and correct without demonizing comrades. These have included sectarian errors; however, we have mainly had to struggle against opportunist departures that, if not fought and reversed, undermine our whole revolutionary purpose.

The program of Trotskyism remains the indispensable means for finding a proletarian way forward out of the impasse of capitalism. Without this the crises of capitalism will bring nothing but more mass misery, racist reaction and war. As the Italian comrades’ greetings to the conference emphasized:

“The economic downturn of capitalism and its outcomes—from reactionary strikes in Britain aimed at Italian, Portuguese and other foreign workers; to the ominous growth of racist reaction in Europe; or to the joint efforts of U.S. and Italian capitalists, aided by trade-union bureaucrats and reformists, to save the profits of failing automakers (Chrysler, GM or Fiat) through state funding, massive layoffs and cutbacks—cry out for a class-struggle response based on the program of proletarian revolutionary internationalism embodied by the ICL.”

Our experiences of the past period only emphasize the danger of looking for new “get rich quick” schemes as a way out of our current impasse. We may not have an immediate “perspective” but we have plenty of essential tasks, centering on the maintenance of the biweekly *Workers Vanguard* as the chief expression of our propaganda perspective and on cadre education. We must continue to probe for openings, especially in areas of the world where the regression of consciousness is more uneven. But our central task, including and especially in those endeavors, is to arm the party programmatically and theoretically, from *Spartacist* to the maintenance of our Central Committee archive, the Prometheus Research Library, and education of all kinds in the course of our work. More than anything we must continue to patiently fight for the program of authentic Trotskyism and the building of a proletarian vanguard party in the U.S. as a disciplined section of a reformed Fourth International.■



The ICL stands on heritage of James P. Cannon and the SWP’s fight to defend Trotskyist program against Pabloite revisionism during 1952-53 Cochran-Clarke fight, documented in *Speeches to the Party*. Right: Ernest Mandel (at microphone) and Michel Pablo in 1988.



on conference delegates, who must be free to change their views in the course of the discussion. Counterposed conference documents, amended by each caucus, were thus debated and voted on in the final session. The minority decided to forego its right to present a leadership slate counterposed to the slate recommended by the majority caucus. Nonetheless, the minority was integrated into the Central Committee with a weight generously disproportionate to the support for its views in the party as a whole.

In the course of the recent party debates, there was a dispute over whether a prior internal party fight had been “par-

and justifying a concentration on “democratic” demands. While their analysis of the situation was empirically flawed, the SWP majority upheld the correct and essential programmatic conclusions of Trotskyism.

Later, Cannon and the SWP were belated in taking up the fight against Pabloism in the Fourth International. Arguing that objective conditions in the post-World War II world would cause the Stalinist parties to pursue a “roughly” revolutionary course, Michel Pablo and cothinkers in the European Trotskyist movement obviated the need to build a Trotskyist leadership in the struggle for

American black nationalists and/or the liberal preachers of the civil rights movement. This centrist degeneration was a short-lived way station to the SWP becoming the reformist “best builders” of the social-patriotic, pro-Democratic Party wing of the antiwar activism thrown up by the losing U.S. imperialist war against Vietnam. Fighting for the victory of the Vietnamese Revolution, despite its Stalinist leadership, the early Spartacist League defended the elementary Leninist understanding that imperialist war is endemic to the capitalist system and can be ended only by socialist revolution.

The recent struggle in our party has

Vaccine...

(continued from page 11)

needles, scoured cities and remote villages throughout Africa and Asia for cases and contacts. They broke into houses and vaccinated families against their repeated objections. Nick Ward, a WHO official in Bangladesh, described his team as “a band of vigilantes, about forty-four white, foreign infidels who were not likely to be excessively worried about the finer points of Muslim beliefs.... We nearly lost some of our people, though. Somebody *was* killed with an arrow in India, and another had his head slit open with a cleaver” (quoted in June Good-

field, *Quest for the Killers* [1985]). Time was key to the campaign’s success, and in the face of resistance, force was fastest. By 1979, in one of the greatest achievements of the 20th century, the smallpox disease was wiped from the face of the planet.

Public Health and Government Manipulation

Control of disease is as much a social question as a scientific one. Under capitalism, the profits of pharmaceutical and insurance giants come before public health, which is indelibly imprinted with the reactionary bigotry of capitalist society.

In the infamous Tuskegee experiments, 400 Southern black men with syphilis,

who were never told they had it, were left untreated for some 40 years and allowed to die so that “researchers” could watch the ravages of the untreated disease as it destroyed their bodies and minds. Right-wing bigot Norman Podhoretz railed against government expenditure on AIDS vaccination research, writing, “Are they aware that in the name of compassion they are giving social sanction to what can only be described as brutish degradation?” To this day, the federal government refuses to fund needle-exchange programs to help prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS among heroin addicts. For several years, conservatives have been waging a war to prevent mandatory vaccination of school-girls against human papilloma virus (HPV) because it “promotes promiscuity.” HPV is one of the most common sexually transmitted diseases and a primary cause of cervical cancer, killing some 5,000 women each year. The vaccine has proven to be exceptionally effective. The right-wing zealots are telling women: practice abstinence or maybe die.

Using the current “swine flu” pandemic as a pretext, governments around the world have manipulated public health measures for their own purposes. Several governments slapped irrational bans on imports of live pigs. In Egypt, the government slaughtered all the country’s 300,000 pigs, even though the virus is not spread by pigs. The culling of the hogs was part of the continuing oppression of the Coptic Christian minority, the only group that raises and consumes pigs. In the process, the Egyptian government actually *created* a public health disaster: garbage piled high on the streets of Cairo

as the Coptic pig farmers, known as the *zabaleen* (trash people), who collected much of the city’s garbage could no longer do their work, because the pigs that devoured the collected organic waste were killed. Meanwhile, in Ukraine, the government has banned public gatherings and rallies for the period leading up to elections in January.

As historical materialists and scientific socialists, we fight for a world socialist revolution to tear the means of production out of the hands of the greedy capitalist class. On an international scale, this would lay the material basis for a communist world free of exploitation and oppression. Then, all the positive gains of modern science can be used to form the basis for a qualitative expansion of scientific research, technological development and production output, which would all be put to the service of humanity. And all the fake science that is used to justify and defend capitalist rule can be rejected. In a 1925 speech, “Dialectical Materialism and Science,” Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky stated:

“For its needs, society requires knowledge of nature. But at the same time, society demands an affirmation of its right to be what it is, a justification of its particular institutions—first and foremost, the institutions of class domination—just as in the past it demanded the justification of serfdom, class privileges, monarchical prerogatives, national exceptionalism, etc. Socialist society accepts with utmost gratitude the heritage of the positive sciences, discarding, as is the right of inventorial choice, everything that is useless in acquiring knowledge of nature but only useful in justifying class inequality and all other kinds of historical untruth.”■

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- This subject index covers issues of *Workers Vanguard* published during 2009, from issue No. 927 (2 January) through the end-of-the-year issue No. 948 (4 December). During this time, *WV* was published biweekly, except skipping three alternate issues in June, July and August, and skipping the last issue in December.
- The fullest listing is by SUBJECT. Subject headings are arranged alphabetically. Entries are listed chronologically with two exceptions: all entries comprising a series are listed together immediately following the first entry of the series; corrections immediately follow the relevant entry. An asterisk (*) after the page location of an entry indicates that a correction follows.
- Entries are listed under subject heads. In some cases, subject heads are broken down into subcategories. These subcategories are listed immediately after the initial subject head and preceded by a dot (•). The numbers following each entry headline give the issue number, date and page number(s) for the article. Thus:

Army Bloodbath in Sri Lanka, #930, 13 Feb. (12, 11)

means the headline of the article, issue No. 930, dated 13 February 2009 beginning on page 12 and continuing on page 11.
- No entry is listed twice; refer to cross-references for guidance in locating the subject head for particular articles. Cross-references are of two types: those following the word “see” deal centrally with the subject head; those following the words “see also” are related articles. Subject heads in cross-references are separated by a semicolon, while subcategories of subject heads are separated by a comma. Thus:

G20 Protests—See **Civil Liberties: G20 Protests**. See also **Britain**.

means that articles about G20 protests can be found by

- going to the subject head **Civil Liberties** and looking under the subcategory **G20 Protests**. Related articles can be found by going to the subject head **Britain**.
- Individuals mentioned in articles are usually not a subject heading unless the article is primarily about the given person. Foreign political organizations are generally cross-referenced to their appropriate countries, while U.S. political organizations are listed under their organizational names.
 - Articles relating to foreign countries are listed under geographical headings and not normally under any other subject heading. Articles that deal centrally with U.S. foreign policy will be found under **U.S.: International Relations** or under the relevant geographical heading. For example, articles about the U.S. occupation of Iraq will be found under **IRAQ**.
 - Articles under the *Class-Struggle Defense Notes* (CSDN) masthead are by the Partisan Defense Committee, a class-struggle, non-sectarian, legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League.
 - Abbreviations used in entries are:

C: Correction
CSDN: *Class-Struggle Defense Notes* article
E: Editorial Note
L: Letter
S: Series
R: Review
W&R: *Women and Revolution* article
YSp: *Young Spartacus* article
 - Entries for articles that first appeared in the press of another section of the International Communist League indicate the name of the press in parentheses, for example: (*Le Bolchévique*).

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