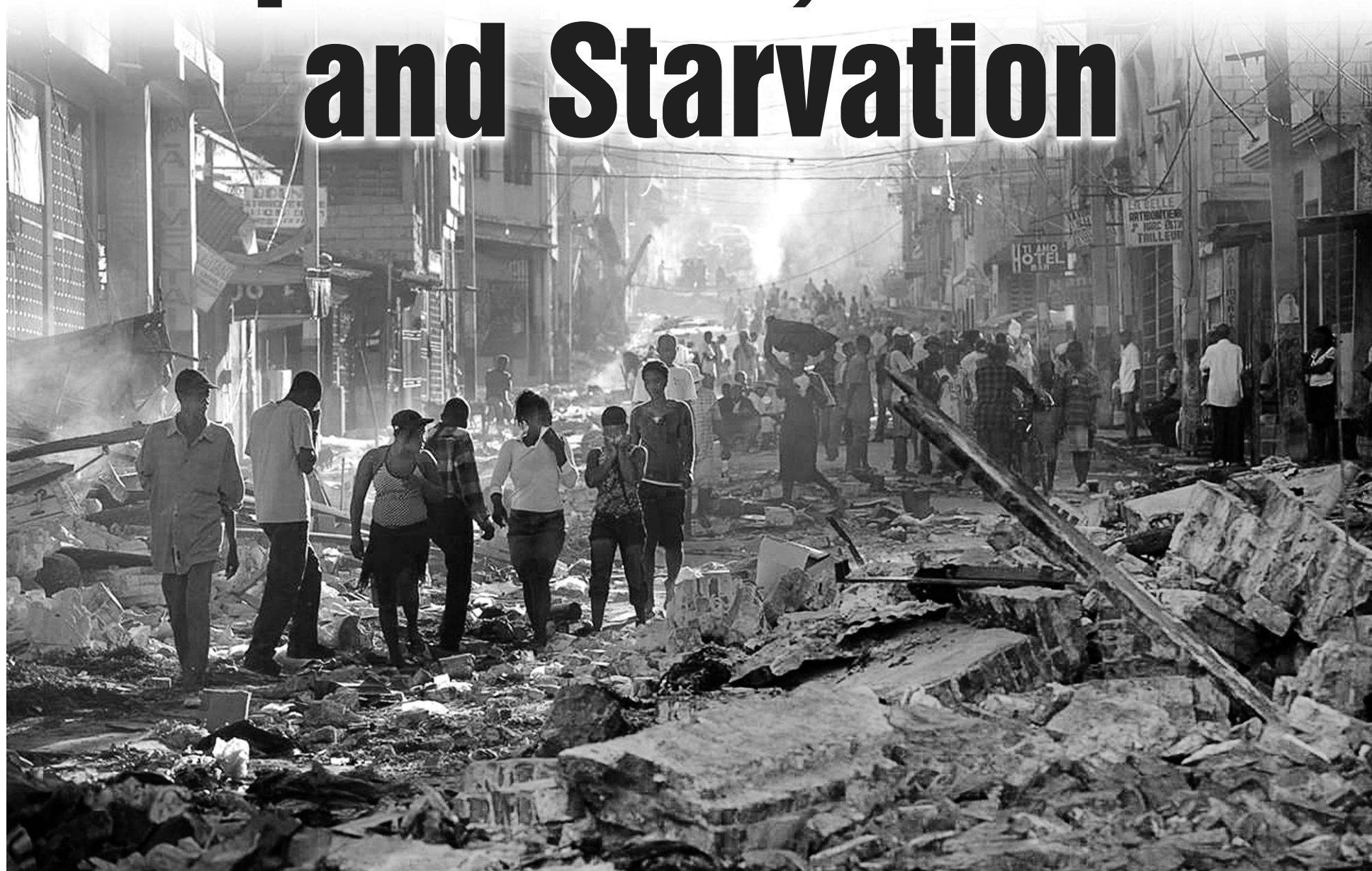


Haiti Earthquake Horror: Imperialism, Racism and Starvation



Port-au-Prince on January 16, four days after the earthquake.

AP

JANUARY 25—Any country whose capital was struck by an earthquake registering 7.0 on the Richter scale would suffer grave damage, but Haiti's unimaginable toll of death and destruction is a measure of the poverty inflicted upon it by the racist imperialist overlords. Upwards of 200,000 are believed to be dead and many more die every day from lack of food and clean water and untreated infections. Up to three million people are rendered homeless, trying to survive on the streets amid the rubble. Doctors and nurses who flew in to aid in the relief effort are performing operations in makeshift open-air "hospitals," often without anesthetic or even material to sterilize their equipment. The ramshackle state administration, such as it was, has collapsed, with the government now operating out of a police outpost at the airport.

The poorest country in the hemisphere, Haiti was totally exposed to the earthquake's impact. Even before the earthquake struck, the unemployment rate was as high as 80 percent, more than half the population lived on less than one dollar a day and nearly one out of every two Haitians had no regular access to drinking water. With little in the way of an indigenous working class, many

Haitians rely on remittances from Haitian workers in the U.S., Canada and elsewhere, which amount to nearly a quarter of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Many people lived in tin shacks that collapsed when the quake hit, and many of the concrete buildings were constructed so shoddily that they simply "pancaked."

Given the impoverishment and lack of infrastructure, the Haitian population now finds itself totally reliant on interna-

tional aid efforts. Thousands of medical and search-and-rescue volunteers from many countries rushed to Haiti to provide assistance. At the same time, the United Nations augmented its 9,000-strong occupation force with an additional 3,500 soldiers, while the Obama administration is rushing in 10,000 troops as well as military aircraft and a flotilla of naval vessels. While reformist "socialists" like the International Socialist Organization (ISO) and Workers World Party (WWP)

call for the U.S. to provide aid without the exercise of American military might, we have no such illusions. Indeed, American forces in Haiti have made "security" a higher priority than providing aid. While many planes carrying aid have landed at the Port-au-Prince airport, which is now controlled by U.S. forces, others were criminally diverted as the U.S. gave landing priority to planes carrying military personnel.

Against the backdrop of the brutal occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq as well as the escalating air strikes in Pakistan, the Haiti "relief effort" provides the Obama administration with a means to refurbish the "humanitarian" image of U.S. imperialism. As we have often pointed out, after eight years of the oddly demented regime of George W. Bush, which reveled in imperialist arrogance and barbarity, Obama is well suited to help provide a facelift for U.S. imperialism's tarnished image around the world. Yet whether the Commander-in-Chief is a Democrat or Republican, U.S. imperialism remains the most bloody and rapacious imperialist power on the face of the planet. Obama's "humanitarian" pretensions in Haiti are but a thin veneer on racist oppression and imperialist subjugation.

One of the central aims of the U.S. imperialist rulers is to prevent Haitians from fleeing the island. Thus, the U.S. quickly launched a full-scale naval

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Anguish over small child being removed from rubble.

Farrell/Miami Herald



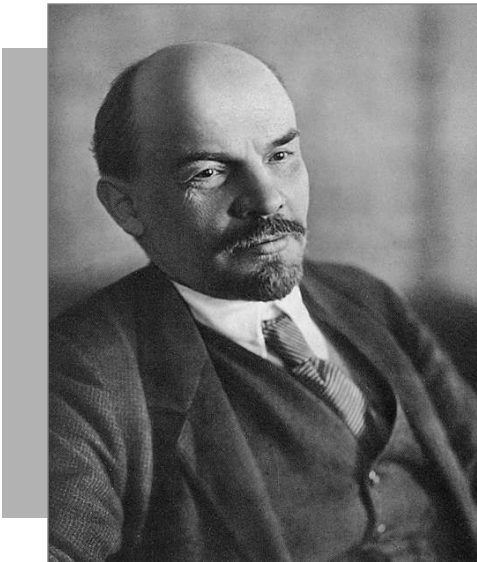
For the Communism of Lenin, Luxemburg and Liebknecht

In January we commemorate the “Three L’s”: Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin, who died on 21 January 1924, and revolutionary Marxist leaders Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, who were assassinated on 15 January 1919 in Germany by the reactionary Freikorps. This was done as part of the suppression of the Spartakist uprising by the Social Democratic government of Friedrich Ebert, Philipp Scheidemann and Gustav Noske. We reprint below an appreciation of Luxemburg excerpted from Max Shachtman’s “Under the Banner of Marxism,” which was written in response to the resignation of Ernest Erber and originally published in Volume IV, Number 1 of the internal bulletins of the Workers Party in 1949.

Shachtman joined the American Communist Party in the early 1920s. Along with James P. Cannon and Martin Abern, he was expelled in 1928 for fighting for the Bolshevik-Leninist line of Leon Trotsky against the Stalinist degeneration of the international Communist movement. For a decade he was, with Cannon, a leader of the American Trotskyist movement as well as a key leader in the International Left Opposition. However, following an intense faction fight in the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party, Shachtman, along with Abern and James Burnham, broke from Trotskyism in 1940, refusing to defend the Soviet degenerated workers state in World War II. Shortly thereafter, he developed the position that the USSR was a new exploitative form of class society, “bureaucratic collectivism.” (For more on this fight, see Trotsky’s *In Defense of Marxism* and Cannon’s *The Struggle for a Proletarian Party*.)

Following this split, Shachtman formed the Workers Party, which was a rightward-moving centrist party that existed from 1940 to 1949, when it changed its name to the Independent Socialist League. Under the intense pressure of U.S. imperialism’s anti-Soviet Cold War, Shachtman came to see Stalinism as a greater danger than “democratic” imperialism. He ended his days as an open supporter of U.S. imperialism and a member of the Democratic Party, backing the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba and the vicious, losing imperialist war against the Vietnamese social revolution.

Shachtman’s 1949 reply to Erber (who went on to become an urban planner in Northern New Jersey) represented the last time he tried to defend revolutionary Marxism against a classical Menshevik. In resigning from the Workers Party, Erber, using stock-in-trade social-democratic arguments to justify support for one’s “own” bourgeoisie, denounced the Bolshevik Revolution and counterposed Lux-



M.S. Nappelbaum



Panorama



VEB Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften

emburg to Lenin, portraying her as a defender of classless “democracy.” Many self-styled leftists continue to do likewise, distorting Luxemburg’s 1918 criticisms of the Bolsheviks, which she never published in her lifetime and which were based on the very partial information to which she had access while imprisoned

the Russian Revolution and how she and Lenin stood shoulder to shoulder in the fight for socialist revolution.

* * *

Contrast Erber *and every word he writes* with the *critical* appraisal of the Bolsheviks written in prison by Rosa Lux-

We can see now how much right Erber has to drag Rosa Luxemburg into court as a fellow-detractor of the Bolsheviks, how much right he has to mention her views in the same breath with his own. Fortunately, Luxemburg is not a defenseless corpse. She left a rich political testament to assure her name from being banded about by soiled lips. Read this, directed right at the heart of Erber:

“The real situation in which the Russian Revolution found itself, narrowed down in a few months to the alternative: victory of the counterrevolution or dictatorship of the proletariat—Kaledin or Lenin. Such was the objective situation, just as it quickly presents itself in every revolution after the first intoxication is over, and as it presented itself in Russia as a result of the concrete, burning questions of peace and land, for which there was no solution within the framework of bourgeois revolution.”

Not much room here, not so much as a crevice, for Erber’s “alternative,” is there? Not much room here for his “capitalist economic relations.” This is a *revolutionist* writing—not an idol-worshipper of Lenin and the Bolsheviks, but still a *revolutionist*, a tireless, defiant, unflinching champion of the proletariat in the class struggle.

“In this, the Russian Revolution has but confirmed the basic lesson of every great revolution, the law of its being, which decrees: either the revolution must advance at a rapid, stormy and resolute tempo, break down all barriers with an iron hand and place its goals ever farther ahead, or it is quite soon thrown backward behind its feeble point of departure and suppressed by counterrevolution. To stand still, to mark time on one spot, to be contented with the first goal it happens to reach, is never possible in revolution. And he who tries to apply the home-made wisdom derived from parliamentary battles between frogs and mice to the field of revolutionary tactics only shows thereby that the very psychology and laws of existence of revolution are alien to him and that all historical experience is to him a book sealed with seven seals.”

Read it over again, especially that wonderfully priceless last sentence. And then tell us if it is not directed straight at Erber, word for word and line for line! It is much too *exactly* fitting to be quoted only once! “And he who tries to apply the home-made wisdom derived from parliamentary battles between frogs and mice to the field of revolutionary tactics only shows thereby that the very psychology and laws of existence of revolution are alien to him and that all historical experience is to him a book sealed with seven seals.” If ever Erber gets up enough of what he lacks to look into a mirror, there is a ready-made one for him. If anyone thinks he can improve on this stinging answer to Erber and his home-made wisdom, to his Grand Coalitions between frogs and mice,

continued on page 10



Willy Römer

Berlin, January 1919: Demonstration in solidarity with Russian Revolution and against Social Democratic government shortly before bloody suppression of Spartakist uprising. First issue of *Die Rote Fahne* (9 November 1918), newspaper of the Spartacus League and later the Communist Party.

for her revolutionary struggle against the First World War. Using previously untranslated articles from the German Communist journal *Rote Fahne* written by Luxemburg near the end of her life, Shachtman demonstrated her support to

emburg, who is invoked against revolutionary socialism nowadays by every turncoat and backslider who wouldn’t reach up to her soles if he stood on tiptoes:

“That the Bolsheviks have based their policy entirely upon the world proletarian revolution is the clearest proof of their political farsightedness and firmness of principle and of the bold scope of their policies.”

You will never see *that* quoted from the turncoats who have drafted Luxemburg into the crusade against Bolshevism against her will. Nor will you see *this* quoted:

“The party of Lenin was the only one which grasped the mandate and duty of a truly revolutionary party and which, by the slogan—‘All power in the hands of the proletariat and peasantry’—insured the continued development of the revolution....

“Moreover, the Bolsheviks immediately set as the aim of this seizure of power a complete, far-reaching revolutionary program: not the safeguarding of bourgeois democracy, but a dictatorship of the proletariat for the purpose of realizing socialism. Thereby they won for themselves the imperishable historic distinction of having for the first time proclaimed the final aim of socialism as the direct program of practical politics.”

WORKERS VANGUARD

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29 January 2010



France: Polanski Case Ignites Anti-Gay, Anti-Sex Backlash

Last fall, reviving its 32-year-old vendetta against Roman Polanski, the famous director of *Chinatown* and *The Pianist*, the Los Angeles County district attorney's office, backed by the Feds and working with Swiss authorities, orchestrated his arrest in Zurich. After being jailed for two months, the 76-year-old Polanski was released to house arrest on \$4.5 million bail. He remains in Switzerland, facing possible extradition to the U.S. to be sentenced for having had consensual sex with Samantha Geimer (then

LE BOLCHEVIK

Gailey), a precocious, sexually experienced 13-year-old in 1977. On January 22, a Los Angeles judge denied Polanski's request to be sentenced in absentia, even going against the wishes of Geimer, who has repeatedly requested that the prosecution drop its charges against Polanski.

In 1977, Polanski pled guilty to “unlawful sexual intercourse” with a minor, as a Hollywood show trial with felony charges was hanging over his head. Threatened with more prison time after having already served six weeks in state prison for “diagnostic testing,” Polanski, a Holocaust survivor, fled to Paris in 1978 to escape the puritanical witchhunt. This December, Polanski issued an open letter thanking his supporters for their “messages of support and sympathy,” adding: “I would like every one of them to know how heartening it is, when one is locked up in a cell, to hear this murmur of human voices and of solidarity.”

We have defended Roman Polanski from the onset of the vicious prosecution against him. Tiger Woods has temporarily replaced Polanski as the subject of merciless media pillorying for his affairs, which should be nobody's business but that of those involved. That so much human sexual activity runs afoul of bourgeois laws and “morals” is further proof that the wretched laws that attempt to control human sexuality—laws that cause so much misery—should be abolished.

The U.S. by no means has a monopoly on such reactionary witchhunting. We reprint below excerpts from an article by the Ligue Trotskyste de France, section of the International Communist League, that appeared in *Le Bolchévique* (December 2009) along with a translation of *Workers Vanguard's* 1978 article, “Stop the Puritan Witchhunt Against Roman Polanski!” (WV No. 192, 10 February 1978) and the introduction we wrote when we reprinted that article in WV, “Stop Vendetta Against Roman Polanski! Free Him Now! No Extradition!” (WV No. 944, 9 October

2009). The LTF article deals heavily with the anti-gay witchhunt against Minister of Culture Frédéric Mitterrand, the nephew of the late Socialist Party (PS) leader François Mitterrand, France's president from 1981 to 1995.

* * *

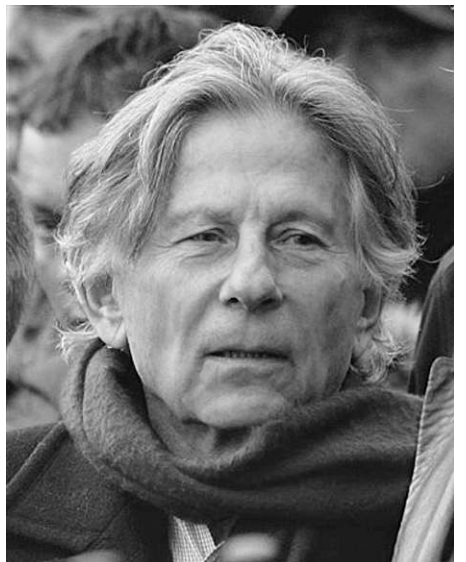
Roman Polanski committed no crime!
We demand a halt to the legal vendetta against him!

Here in France, the Roman Polanski affair has whipped up an anti-gay and anti-sex reactionary campaign led by an unholy alliance of fascists, feminists, religious fundamentalists and “Republican” social democrats. Their main target was Minister of Culture Frédéric Mitterrand, who is homosexual and who in the immediate aftermath of Polanski's arrest had taken up his defense. He characterized Polanski's detention as “absolutely dreadful” for “an old case which doesn't make much sense.”

Marine Le Pen of the fascist National Front denounced Mitterrand's “revolting support” to Polanski and exhumed Mitterrand's fictionalized autobiography, *La mauvaise vie* [*The Bad Life*], which was

rand was forced to make a public statement where he acknowledged having paid for sex with men his age. [PS politician] Arnaud Montebourg railed against Mitterrand: “His public and late condemnation of sexual tourism is in contradiction with his writings, which contain no condemnation of this type. If he wasn't minister, would he have the right to so much consideration and understanding?” Another PS politician, Jean-Paul Huchon, declared that Mitterrand's acts were “honestly reprehensible,” adding that it seemed to him “difficult to maintain a person in the government who has been so blatantly guilty of acts that are deemed illegal by the government.”

We have defended Mitterrand against this modern-day witchhunt in which reactionaries of all stripes seek once again to set up an amalgam between homosexual or pedophile on the one hand and child-murderer and rapist on the other. Mitterrand's book has no suggestion that he is a pedophile, i.e., that he is sexually attracted to children. But if he were sexually attracted to young boys, this would be no crime in our eyes. ***The only guideline***



AP

Roman Polanski

we regard as a “crime without a victim,” like drug use, gambling, pornography, homosexual sex and “statutory rape”—activities that are generally illegal or heavily regulated under capitalist law.

The conditions faced by prostitutes, whether men or women, vary greatly according to time, place and class. But we recognize that more often than not, working as a prostitute is exploitative, dangerous and degrading. Criminalization of prostitution, however, generally forces the prostitute into a lumpen milieu where access to even the most meager social and health services becomes more difficult to acquire, rendering the prostitute more vulnerable to organized crime and violence by pimps. This has exactly been the outcome of [current French president Nicolas] Sarkozy's 2003 “Internal Security Law,” which created a new offense of “passive solicitation” carrying a two-month prison sentence and heavy fine, all in the name of combating “trafficking in human beings.” The organization “Rights and Prostitution” powerfully described the impact of the law on prostitutes' lives:

“The criminalization of public soliciting, passive as well as active, was officially intended to combat trafficking in human beings. In practice, while the arrests of prostitutes have greatly increased, no sentencing for trafficking has taken place.... “In actual fact we suffer more acts of violence than before, particularly from the police.... A strategy of harassment is even adopted sometimes in order to increasingly force us to go underground. In addition, some police officers insult, beat, gas and rob us, confiscating our preventive materials, our money and personal belongings. We are humiliated in the police stations, made to strip naked and suffer unjustified body searches. Some of us, transvestites or transgender, are placed in male cells at risk of physical aggression from the other inmates.”

—Letter to Representatives and Senators, 15 October 2007

Any intervention by the capitalist state in the name of “protecting” prostitutes will necessarily intensify misery for all

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Philippe Leroyer

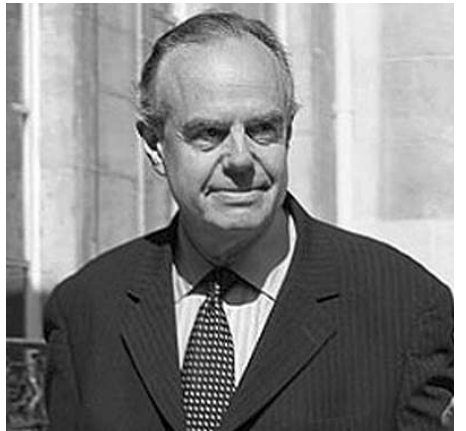
Paris, March 2008: Demonstration of sex workers against French government's 2003 anti-prostitution law.

welcomed by critics at the time of its publication in 2005. After reading on television excerpts from the book that spoke of Mitterrand visiting male prostitutes in Thailand, Le Pen demanded that the culture minister resign. After the fascists opened fire, the moral police of the Socialist Party then took up the charge. Their official spokesman, Benoît Hamon, described Mitterrand's book as a “shocking text,” denouncing the politician as a “consumer minister” and also demanding his resignation. Other PS leaders joined in the feeding frenzy, including after Mitter-

that ought to exist in sexual relations is the rule of ***effective consent***—that is, as long as both parties are at the time consenting to the act, nobody, least of all the state, has any right to tell them what they can and can't do. What matters is whether someone is forcing them to do anything they don't want to do with their own bodies.

“Effective consent” applies no less to prostitution. Just as the anti-sex warriors have conflated crimes of horrific violence against children with homosexuality and pedophilia, they have also set up an equation between real crimes against prostitutes, such as debt bondage, sexual assault, forced prostitution and rape, and the consensual act between a prostitute and client, exchanging money for sex.

In an editorial published in *L'Humanité* [newspaper of the French Communist Party (PCF)] under the title “Let's Get Back to the Substance of ‘The Polanski Affair’” (15 October 2009), leading women members of the PCF, including Marie-George Buffet, as well as Left Party leader Martine Billard and petty-bourgeois feminist luminaries such as Maya Surduts signed a common statement accusing those defending Polanski and Mitterrand of “a criminal trivialization” of violence against women, adding, “One cannot speak of sexual freedom without condemning rape and prostitution.” Such statements are intended to invite more state legislation, which would necessarily be repressive against prostitutes and their clients. We stand for the decriminalization of prostitution, which



Blevennecc/Elysée

French Minister of Culture Frédéric Mitterrand.

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N° 189 - Décembre 2009
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24th Annual PDC Holiday Appeal Benefits Supporting the Class-War Prisoners

The Partisan Defense Committee's 24th annual Holiday Appeal benefits held in December in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Toronto raised more than \$10,000 after expenses. Funds raised at these events go toward providing monthly stipends and holiday gifts to class-war prisoners and their families, an expression of proletarian solidarity and material support. A class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League, the PDC carries forward the tradition begun by the International Labor Defense (ILD) under James P. Cannon. As the ILD's first conference in 1925 declared: "The labor movement must be awakened from its slumber and must be roused to the menacing significance of the attempt of the capitalists to break the morale of the working-class by imprisoning its best fighters."

The case of death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal was central to the Holiday Appeal benefits. PDC counsel Rachel Wolkenstein noted in her speech at the New York City benefit: "In a naked display of racist contempt the U.S. Supreme Court last April 6 turned down Mumia's petition to overturn his frame-up conviction.... It has sat for months on the Philadelphia district attorney's appeal to reinstate the death penalty." On January 19, the Supreme Court issued a decision that brings Mumia one step closer to execution (see PDC statement, page 12). As Wolkenstein underlined, "The state has made it clear for some 28 years that they want Mumia dead.... They howl for his blood because they see in Mumia the voice of defiant opposition to all forms of racist discrimination."

Addressing the New York benefit was Francisco Torres, one of the San Francisco 8, former Black Panthers prosecuted by the state on bogus charges of killing a San Francisco police officer in 1971. The state had to abandon its prosecution of most members of the SF8 (see "COINTELPRO Charges Dropped Against Four SF8 Defendants," WV No. 941, 28 August 2009). The conspiracy charge against Torres has been dropped but the vendetta against Torres continues, as a murder charge still hangs over his head despite the lack of any evidence. After giving a brief update on his case and thanking the PDC for its support, Torres stated, "For those of you who still think these dirty tactics and COINTELPRO programs don't exist...they still prevail and persist."

Also speaking at the New York benefit was Ralph Poynter, the longtime companion of Lynne Stewart, a 70-year-old leftist attorney who in recent years has been a regular speaker at New York Holiday Appeal benefits. But she was noticeably absent this year. Stewart was hauled off to prison on 19 November 2009 after the courts denied her appeal of her conviction on bogus charges of conspiracy to provide "material support" to terrorism. The courts have threatened to extend her sen-



Spartacist Canada

Toronto Holiday Appeal, 11 December 2009.

tence by 28 more years. The 2005 conviction of Stewart, along with translator Mohamed Yousry and paralegal Ahmed Abdel Sattar, stemmed from her legal defense of her client, Egyptian Islamic fundamentalist cleric Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman. Poynter spoke to the threat that Stewart's conviction poses to other defense lawyers, pointing to the upcoming show trial in New York City of Guantánamo detainees: "They picked the time to arrest

second jury found Ruffin not guilty. But Harrison was found guilty and sentenced to one year's probation, a fine and 30 days of community service. As the LBL speaker emphasized:

"The prosecution of Harrison and Ruffin demonstrates the bipartisan 'war on terror' to be a union-busting war on blacks and labor as well as immigrants. It also exposes the treacherous support by the ILWU tops for the maritime security measures that allow the govern-

on these class-war prisoners, see "Build PDC Holiday Appeal," WV No. 947, 20 November 2009.)

The above does not exhaust the list of those causes and cases for which the working class should mobilize. The Spartacist League speaker at the Los Angeles benefit underlined: "In addition to those mentioned in the program today, we have taken up the fight for those targeted under the puritanical, anti-sex witchhunt." The speaker pointed to "the struggle for gay rights and their right to marriage (and divorce)" and our stand "against the vindictive persecution of Roman Polanski.... Our fight for Mumia and the other class-war prisoners must be put in the context of the fight for freedom from this entire system, and for the construction of an egalitarian socialist society."

Our December 2009 Holiday Appeal benefits took place a year into Democrat Barack Obama's term as U.S. imperialist Commander-in-Chief, as working people continue to be battered by the Great Recession and death and destruction continue to rain down on the peoples of Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan.

As the speaker for the Labor Black Struggle League in Chicago underscored:

"Obama bailed out the banks. The auto companies were given an economic windfall while auto workers have seen their lives shattered, their neighborhoods further blighted.... In Barack Obama, the capitalists now have a black overseer on the master's capitalist plantation.... Working people are under attack but they are not powerless. What's needed is a fight to break the labor movement from the Democrats. We need a workers party that fights for a workers government that smashes the system of capitalism, of exploitation and oppression."

It is under this class-struggle program that we call to **free all class-war prisoners now!** Contribute to the PDC at P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013. ■



WV Photo

Displays showing work of Partisan Defense Committee at New York benefit.

Lynne Stewart to coincide with bringing the prisoners from Guantánamo, and if you don't believe that, you wait until you see some attorney stand up and say, 'Are you going to use torture as evidence?'"

Ralph Poynter sparked some debate when he spoke sympathetically of Cynthia McKinney, the capitalist Green Party's 2008 presidential candidate who was supported by many leftists: "She began to move and if she can move, what about all those people who believe in her? Maybe we can move them a little bit." The Spartacist League speaker argued against "unity" with "trade-union bureaucrats and the fake left," who "build illusions that the capitalist state can be reformed," adding:

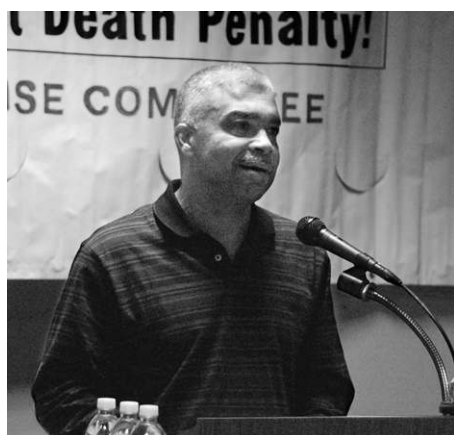
"We stand in opposition to the interests of the bourgeoisie and fight for the interests of the working class. We said: 'No vote to Democrats, Republicans or Greens!' Cynthia McKinney runs for capitalist parties! Period. That's the systems she defends. We fight for the independence of the working class and oppose calls for unity with the bosses and their parties!"

At the San Francisco benefit, the speaker for the Bay Area Labor Black League for Social Defense, which is fraternally allied with the Spartacist League, addressed the cases of Aaron Harrison and Jason Ruffin, two black members of International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 10 who were prosecuted on frame-up charges of "resisting arrest" after being subjected to a racist, anti-union attack by cops at the Sacramento port. After a nine-day trial ended in a hung jury in January 2009, Ruffin and Harrison's cases were separated. A

ment to ride roughshod over and fire dock workers. Down with the maritime security measures!"

Along with Mumia, the PDC benefits honored 15 other class-war prisoners, whose plights must not be forgotten. American Indian Movement activist Leonard Peltier has spent more than 33 years in prison for his activism on behalf of this country's oppressed native peoples. The U.S. Parole Commission again turned down his parole request last August, declaring they would not reconsider his case for another 15 years! Eight MOVE members (Chuck, Michael, Debbie, Janet, Janine, Delbert, Eddie and Phil Africa) are in their 32nd year of prison—their only "crime" was having survived a massive cop assault on their Philadelphia home in 1978.

Other PDC stipend recipients include Jaan Laaman and Thomas Manning, the last of the anti-imperialist activists known as the Ohio 7 who are still in prison. The Ohio 7 took credit for bank "expropriations" and bombings of symbols of U.S. imperialism in the late 1970s and early '80s. Former Black Panther Party supporters Ed Poindexter and Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa are victims of the FBI's deadly COINTELPRO operation against the Panthers, framed up and languishing behind bars for 37 years. Hugo Pinell, a militant anti-racist leader of prison rights organizing, is the last of the San Quentin 6 still in prison. At the NYC benefit, Monique Code read greetings from Jamal Hart, Mumia's son, who was sentenced in 1998 on bogus gun-possession charges, framed up for his prominent activism in the campaign to free his father. (For more



WV Photo

Francisco Torres of SF8 addresses New York City Holiday Appeal, 5 December 2009.



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Union Tops Complicit with Democratic NY Governor

Stealth Attack on Public Workers' Pensions

NEW YORK CITY—A significant anti-labor attack took place in early December when state lawmakers in Albany introduced and passed *in a single day* legislation that created a new “Tier 5” pension for most new state and municipal workers hired after January 1. This gutting of hard-won pension rights was orchestrated by Democratic New York State governor David Paterson, who announced that over **\$35 billion** will be cut from public workers’ pensions over the next three decades. These savings for the capitalist government will come from forcing most new-hires to accept higher deductions in each paycheck and to work longer before retiring. Pension eligibility will be raised from 55 to 62 years and the minimum service to draw a pension will increase from five to ten years.

This stealth attack on pensions is one sign that it is open season on labor in Obama’s America. The financial meltdown of American capitalism has set off budget crises in states across the country (see “The California Budget Crisis and the Bankruptcy of American Capitalism,” WV No. 941, 28 August 2009). In turn, state governments controlled by Democrats and Republicans alike have taken a cue from the White House, which wrested massive concessions from the United Auto Workers (UAW) as a condition for the GM and Chrysler bailouts. They are using the budget crises to push through layoffs and slash wages and benefits. This is a union-busting drive aimed at public workers, who now, for the first time, make up the majority of union members in the U.S.

Last summer, Paterson threatened mass layoffs to get union bureaucrats from the state’s two largest public employee unions, the Civil Service Employees Association and the Public Employees Federation, into backroom negotiations to cook up a new pension tier. The pro-Democratic Party union tops sold out in a heartbeat, even agreeing to 7,000 job cuts through “aggressive attrition” instead of layoffs. The new “Tier 5” pension does not apply to most New York City public workers, although a version does apply to newly hired teachers. “Tier 5” also doesn’t apply to transit workers employed by the state’s Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), although it is only a matter of time before billionaire Repub-

lican mayor Mike Bloomberg and the MTA attempt to force “parity” on transit and all city workers.

Notably, the MTA’s demand for a new “Tier 5” pension from Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100 was the main provocation that sparked the 60-hour NYC transit strike in December 2005. Then-TWU Local 100 president Roger Toussaint declared beforehand that the union would not sell out “the unborn” (future hires). But with transit workers on

to support the gubernatorial campaign of Democrat Eliot Spitzer, who as state attorney general hit Local 100 and its members with massive Taylor Law fines and even put Toussaint briefly in jail. With Spitzer’s demise, the union tops enthusiastically embraced Paterson (whose father, longtime Democratic Party operator Basil Paterson, was a paid advisor to Local 100 before and during the strike). But Paterson has only proven yet again that reliance on the capitalist Democratic

defend either the union or more senior workers. Once the new tier is in place, the bosses inevitably come back to knife the older and retired workers with their so-called “Cadillac” pay and benefits. The 2007 contract brokered by the UAW tops allowed new-hires and temporary workers to make **half as much pay** for doing the same work as existing UAW members. Soon after the Big Three, helped by the bailout deal, greatly accelerated plant closings and layoffs to drive senior workers out of the workforce. Labor must demand: **Equal pay for equal work!**

American workers’ dream of a “comfortable retirement” is a sick joke these days. Bourgeois ideologues, think tanks and media mouthpieces rail against government employees who still have “defined-benefit” pensions, which have been shredded in the private sector. The notion that companies “owe” workers a few dollars to live on when they retire is considered antiquated. Defined-benefit pensions have largely been replaced by 401(k)s, mostly paid for by the workers themselves, with actual benefits dependent on the vagaries of Wall Street parasites. In 1983, 62 percent of American workers had a defined-benefit pension plan, but only 17 percent had them in 2007. Large corporations often loot their pension funds, and bankrupt ones simply unload their liabilities onto the Fed’s Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, which then doles out pennies on the dollar.

With workers made to “sacrifice” to prop up the flagging capitalist economy and bloody U.S. imperialism, the response of the trade-union bureaucracy has been to maneuver for crumbs while peddling a false unity of interests with the bosses. New York’s public workers unions represent transit, sanitation, hospital and highway workers with enormous potential power. But that power is consciously squandered by the union misleaders whose allegiance to American capitalism and the Democratic Party has tied labor’s hands for decades. The all-sided attacks on workers today pose pointblank the importance of having a class-struggle leadership. The fight for a new leadership of the unions is part and parcel of forging a workers party to fight for a workers government and the expropriation of the capitalist class. ■



New York City transit workers struck for nearly three days in defiance of state’s slave-labor Taylor Law, December 2005.

the picket lines fighting against tiered pensions, a threat facing *all* city and state public workers, city labor leaders refused to support the strike. This was an expression of their de facto support to the slave-labor Taylor Law, which outlaws New York State public employee strikes. United labor action to smash the Taylor Law would have been key to winning the widely popular transit strike. In the end, the strike staved off a “Tier 5” pension, but Toussaint & Co. did grant the MTA a huge medical care concession while scuttling the strike without a contract in hand.

The sellout TWU bureaucracy went on

Party is a losing game. In fact, Paterson has delivered a blow to union pension gains that former Republican governor George Pataki and the MTA could only dream about.

For the union bureaucrat, resigned to forking over concessions to the bosses, it does not take much to accept new tiers: existing workers are supposedly “not affected” while yet-to-be-hired workers cannot vote. But what follows is corrosive to the union. New workers are soon toiling at the same jobs for less, fueling dissension within a layer of second-class union members, who are less likely to

Mumia...

(continued from page 12)

capitalist rulers. When Mumia faced a death warrant in the summer of 1995, worldwide protests that included trade unions representing hundreds of thousands of workers played a crucial role in staying the executioner’s hand.

Counterposed to this class-struggle strategy is the policy of many organizations—Socialist Action, the Workers World Party,

the Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal and others—which long centered their protests on the demand for a new, fair trial for Mumia. With the judicial appeals in which they put their faith nearly exhausted, their plea that the capitalist state deliver justice now comes in the form of petitions to Attorney General Eric Holder to conduct a civil rights investigation into Mumia’s frame-up trial and to President Barack Obama to “speak out against the death penalty for Mumia Abu-Jamal.”

These hat-in-hand appeals to America’s

top cop and imperialist Commander-in-Chief are a savage indictment of the liberal belief in the “democracy” of capitalist class rule. Holder’s Justice Department recently threw leftist attorney Lynne Stewart in prison and threatened to extend her sentence by 28 more years for staunchly defending her client, who was accused of terrorist activities. Obama openly announced his support for the death penalty in his run for the White House, including in an interview with right-wing journalist Michael Smerconish, one of the voices

calling loudest for Mumia’s execution.

After eight years of the despised Bush regime, Obama took office to give a facelift to blood-soaked U.S. imperialism. Reinforcing illusions that Obama represents “change,” the reformist left tails after the trade-union bureaucracy, whose program of seeking “friends” in the parties and state agencies of the capitalist class enemy has gravely dissipated labor’s fighting capacity. Meanwhile, the U.S. military still rains death on Iraq and Afghanistan, inmates from America’s vast prison complex to the military’s Bagram and Guantánamo Bay dungeons continue to be brutalized and tortured, and bankers get billion-dollar bailouts while workers lose their jobs and homes.

The fight to free Mumia, as with all struggles against social oppression and deprivation, can go forward based only on a clear understanding of the class forces involved. Make no mistake: In baying for Mumia’s blood, the forces of bourgeois “law and order” are sending a message to all who would fight against exploitation, oppression and imperialist war that they, too, are in the sights of the state. Any real fight for Mumia’s freedom must be based on a class-struggle opposition to the capitalist rulers, who have entombed this innocent man for more than half his life. **Free Mumia now!** ■



November 1998 conference at Chicago’s Northwestern University School of Law featured 30 people who had been released from death row after proving their innocence.

Asylum for Tamil Refugees Now!

Australia

The following article, which incorporates a small factual correction, is reprinted from Australasian Spartacist No. 207 (Summer 2009/10), newspaper of the Spartacist League of Australia, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

For months the bourgeoisie, politicians and media have waged an hysterical campaign against desperate refugees seeking asylum by boat. Demonised as “illegal,” many are Tamils fleeing the imperialist-backed Sri Lankan regime’s merciless repression. Since the regime’s military offensive ended in May, some 300,000 Tamils have been interned in horrific prison camps and interrogation centres. Under-scoring the risks these refugees face, in early November twelve Tamils drowned when their boat sank almost 650 kilometres from the Cocos Islands. Months earlier, five refugees died and scores were injured when their boat exploded after it was seized by the Australian navy.

Refugees intercepted on the high seas by heavily armed Australian navy ships are turned back or redirected to Indonesia. Those captured in “Australian waters”



are incarcerated behind razor wire in the remote Christmas Island detention centre, an overcrowded hellhole likened to Guantánamo Bay. Rudd’s federal ALP [Australian Labor Party] government enforces mandatory detention of “illegal” refugees, first imposed by the Keating ALP government in 1992. Once “processed,” for those refugees deported, it can be a death sentence. We demand: *Close the detention camps! No deportations! For the right of asylum for Tamil refugees and all victims of right-wing terror! Full citizenship rights for all who have made it here!*

Capitalist governments from Europe to North America to Australia have been waging a vicious war on the millions of refugees forced to flee the immiseration caused by imperialism. This brutality occurs in the context of the biggest capitalist economic crisis since the Great Depression. Millions of workers have lost their jobs across the globe. As the ongoing crisis continues to threaten the livelihoods of working people, the Rudd Labor government targets immigrants and minorities with increased state repression and violence. This in turn has generated racist attacks on the streets such as the wave of murderous terror against Indian and Chinese students.

Anti-immigrant racism is a time-worn method of the capitalist rulers to divide the working class and paralyse it in the face of the capitalists’ attacks. It can and



Desperate Tamil asylum seekers on Australian Customs vessel *Oceanic Viking* in November 2009.

Roy Rubianto

Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants!

must be fought by the organised workers movement. Giving a taste of the power the working class can wield, in 1998 union action in Perth saved a Somali man from being deported to certain death when the pilots refused to fly the plane and ground crew refused to refuel it. Mobilising the workers movement in defence of immigrant rights is crucial to the defence of the multiracial working class as a whole, to forging the necessary unity and strength to fight the bosses’ war on working people. Far from helpless victims, immigrants are a vital component of the working class, the force capable of destroying this decaying capitalist system. Only by sweeping away capitalist rule through workers revolution and building a classless socialist society can there be an end to racism.

ALP’s Anti-Refugee, “Anti-Terror” Regional “Security”

In mid-October, at Rudd’s behest, the Indonesian navy intercepted a boat carrying 260 Tamil asylum seekers. Taken to a port in Java, the refugees refused to leave their boat fearing they would be detained there in limbo for years. The Rudd government then brokered a deal with Indonesia for the latter to take 78 Tamil asylum seekers picked up by the Australian Customs ship, the *Oceanic Viking*. This turned into a month-long stand-off after the refugees refused to disembark until given a written guarantee of quick resettlement in Australia.

The Rudd government has increased funding to Indonesia to help police Australia’s racist “border protection” measures, including incarcerating refugees in Australian-funded detention centres there. For the Australian imperialists, strengthening ties with Indonesia is of key eco-

nomic and geo-strategic importance. The Rudd government has been working to strengthen military co-operation with Indonesia, and continues training the blood-soaked Kopassus special forces, whose role is to suppress any opposition to the repressive Indonesian regime.

As a jackal imperialist power allied to the U.S., Australia seeks to impose regional “stability,” i.e., ensure its flow of profits from imperialist exploitation, by shoring up semicolonial regimes that will do their bidding. Australian imperialism’s recent spate of military and other agreements with regimes from the Philippines to Indonesia also occurs in the context of increased imperialist concern over the growing political and economic influence of the Chinese deformed workers state in the Asia-Pacific region. We stand for the unconditional military defence of China against imperialist attack and internal capitalist counterrevolution and for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy.

The Rudd government is also providing resources and training for the Sinhala-chauvinist Sri Lankan government including to beef up the regime’s crackdown on Tamils attempting to flee the island. The Sri Lankan government’s bloody 26-year war against the Tamils in the North and East of the island ended in May with the destruction of the remnants of the Tamil mini-state and the execution of the leader of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). We stand for the right of self-determination for the Tamil people and stood for the military defence of the LTTE against the army assault. At the same time we give no political support to the bourgeois-nationalist LTTE who, carrying out the logic of nationalism, have staged attacks on Sinhalese villagers, expelled Muslims from the historic Tamil city of Jaffna and employed murderous violence against other Tamil nationalist groups.

The banning of the LTTE as a “terrorist” organisation by governments in numerous countries effectively gave the Lankan regime a green light to carry out its murderous offensive. We in the International Communist League denounced these bans and called for the defence of Tamil organisations against state repression, just as we have defended individual Tamils arrested and charged under the “anti-terror” legislation.

Using the criminal attack on the World Trade Center in 2001 and subsequent attacks such as the Bali and London bombings as a pretext, capitalist rulers around the world have used the “war on terror” to whip up racism, jack up state repression at home and regiment the population, criminalising political dissent and re-

stricting the civil liberties of all. The “anti-terror” frenzy is also used to justify imperialist marauding abroad, including the growing and bloody occupation of Afghanistan, where under the banner of the “war on terror” thousands of civilians have been maimed and slaughtered.

While particularly targeting Arab, Asian and Muslim people, the “anti-terror” laws are ultimately aimed against the entire working class. Today, the Construction Forestry Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) is targeted by the witch-hunting Australian Building Construction Commission (ABCC) of the Rudd government. The ABCC’s ASIO [Australia Security Intelligence Office]-style powers to spy on, secretly interrogate and prosecute militant workers are patterned on the “anti-terror” laws. CFMEUer Ark Tribe faces a jail sentence of up to six months for allegedly failing to attend a compulsory ABCC interrogation. We say: Defend the unions! Down with government union busting including the ABCC! It is necessary to organise a proletarian-centred fight against all the reactionary “anti-terror” and anti-union laws.

White Australia Racism and Laborism

One of the very few notes of public dissent by ALP politicians against Rudd’s racist war on refugees came from retiring federal backbencher Julia Irwin, who aptly labelled Rudd’s “Indonesian solution” worse than the previous Howard government’s “Pacific solution.” Australian capitalism’s immigration laws are designed to ensure that only those who have the desired skills, money or anti-communist credentials—and preferably the “right” skin colour—are allowed in. Thus, while demonising Tamil and other refugees, Rudd simultaneously peddles the view of a wing of the capitalist rulers who worry that Australia’s current population base is insufficient to compete economically against their rivals.

Australia was established as a white imperialist enclave in Asia—a British penal colony built on the bloody dispossession and mass murder of the Aboriginal people, pogroms against the Chinese people and a racist colour bar to keep out anyone not “Anglo-Celtic” enough. “White Australia” racism was a founding pillar of the ALP. The exclusion of “cheap” Asian labour was the basis of the Labor Party’s chimera of bringing prosperity to its white Australian working-class base through domestic capitalist ownership and the exploitation of Australia’s natural resources. While the White Australia policy has been formally abolished and Australia is no longer lily-

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Haiti...

(continued from page 1)

blockade to prevent a seaborne exodus of refugees seeking sanctuary in the U.S. An American Air Force plane flies daily over Haiti broadcasting a Creole-language appeal from that country’s ambassador to Washington calling on Haitians not to attempt to flee the country by boat.

The Obama administration announced that undocumented Haitians in the U.S. would be granted “temporary protected status” allowing them to remain and work in this country—if they can even find jobs in this economy with rampant unemployment and dispossession. However, many injured Haitians were denied the visas that would allow them to be transferred to Miami for surgery and treatment—immigration officials in Florida even seized a two-year-old Haitian child who required medical treatment. At the U.S. military camp in Guantánamo, Cuba, almost 200 prisoners of the “war on terror” remain locked up in inhuman conditions. Obama’s deadline for shutting down the prison passed unnoticed last week. Military authorities there are rushing to set up an installation capable of holding up to 13,000 Haitian refugees.

In preparing to interdict any Haitian refugees seeking to reach the U.S., Obama is following in the footsteps of George W. Bush and previous presidents going back to a 1981 treaty signed by President Ronald Reagan and the then-puppet dictator “Baby Doc” Duvalier. In September 1991, a military coup toppled the presidency of populist priest Jean-Bertrand Aristide after less than one year, sending many of his supporters to sea in rickety boats. The administration of the first Bush plucked thousands of Haitian refugees from their boats and imprisoned them indefinitely at Guantánamo with no right to legal counsel—a policy continued under Democrat Bill Clinton. We demand: Down with the racist ban on Haitian refugees! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! U.S. out of Guantánamo!

Down With U.S. Imperialism!

For liberals disappointed with the Obama administration’s policies in Afghanistan and Iraq, the earthquake in Haiti was seen as an opportunity for the U.S. to show a benign face. This was echoed by Obama’s somewhat disillusioned reformist boosters, such as the ISO and WWP. The ISO demands that “Obama immediately stop the military occupation of Haiti,” while calling for the U.S. to “flood the country with doctors, nurses, food, water and construction machinery” (*Socialist Worker* online, 19 January). Likewise, a January 14 statement on Workers World’s Web site demands “the removal of all U.N. combat troops,” while calling for “all bonuses from executives of financial institutions that received bailout money to be donated to Haiti.”

The notion that U.S. imperialism can be pressured into serving the needs of the oppressed, rather than its own class interests, shows boundless illusions in the good offices of the rapacious American ruling class. Reformists like the ISO and WWP perennially raised calls at demonstrations against the U.S. war in



Cuban volunteer medical team treats earthquake victims in Port-au-Prince, January 16.

Iraq demanding a shift of U.S. government spending priorities from war to social services like education. But neocolonial domination and aggrandizement are inherent to imperialism, and no amount of pressure and pleading can change that.

The brutal treatment routinely meted out to Haitians seeking asylum in the U.S.—detention, humiliation, deportation—contrasts sharply with the way the U.S. welcomes counterrevolutionary *gusanos* (worms), whom they encourage to “flee” from Cuba. A social revolution in Cuba overthrew capitalism in what had been an impoverished neocolony, and ever since then the U.S. ruling class has been determined to overturn the Cuban Revolution and re-establish capitalist exploitation in that country. We stand for the unconditional military defense of the Cuban bureaucratically deformed workers state against imperialism and the forces of internal counterrevolution. At the same time, we fight for workers political revolution to oust the ruling Stalinist bureaucracy and replace it with a regime based on workers democracy and revolutionary internationalism.

Cuba has provided medical personnel and medical training to countries throughout Latin America and elsewhere, and Cuban universities have trained over 500 Haitian doctors, free of charge. Before the earthquake hit, some 350 Cuban medical personnel were already working in Haiti. Within hours of the quake, Cuba dispatched an additional 69 doctors from the Henry Reeve International Contingent of Doctors Specialized in Disaster Situations and Serious Epidemics. That brigade, named after a U.S. citizen who fought for Cuban independence from Spain in the late 19th century, was set up by the Cuban government in September 2005 to aid victims of Katrina (the Cuban doctors were refused entry into the U.S.).

Even the conservative *Wall Street Journal* (17 January) conceded: “U.S. officials have blamed security concerns for holding up providing relief. Yet a team of Cuban doctors were seen Monday treating hundreds of patients without a gun or soldier in sight.” Moreover, despite repeated attempts by U.S. imperialism to foment counterrevolution—including a

decades-long U.S. starvation embargo—Cuba has temporarily allowed U.S. military aircraft to fly over its airspace in order to speed up aid efforts for Haiti.

The advantages of a collectivized economy over capitalist anarchy are evident not least in the way Cuba deals with natural disasters. Cuba, which is regularly battered by hurricanes, is well known for its efficient evacuation of citizens in the face of such disasters. When the Haiti quake struck, southeastern Cuba was put on tsunami watch for 90 minutes.



Haitians in desperate need of water near Toussaint L'Ouverture Airport, January 15.

During that brief period, Cuban authorities evacuated some 30,000 people from Baracoa, that part of the island closest to Haiti; they were able to return home that evening.

A History of Neocolonial Rape and Dispossession

For 200 years, the Haitian masses have been paying in blood for the revolution they carried out under the leadership of Toussaint L'Ouverture against the French colonial slavocracy. Directly inspired by the Great French Revolution, the Haitian Revolution of 1791-1804, which culminated in the creation of the first independent black state in the modern era, served as a beacon, inspiring slave revolts throughout the Americas. It was greeted with a frenzy of racist counterrevolutionary hostility from both Napoleonic France and the slave-owning United States.

In return for recognition by France, Haiti was compelled to compensate the former slaveowners to the tune of 150 million gold francs—approximately \$20 billion at today’s prices. For its part, the U.S. refused to grant Haiti diplomatic recognition until 1862, during the Civil War against the Southern slavocracy. Throughout the 1800s, the U.S. and European powers used gunboat diplomacy and the threat of military intervention to extort debt repayment. By the end of the 19th century, 80 percent of Haiti’s national budget was going to pay off its former exploiters, and the country remains a hideously impoverished debtor nation today.

The U.S. militarily intervened into

Haiti in 1888, 1891 and 1914. In 1915, the U.S. initiated a bloody occupation of the country that would last until 1934. The U.S. military regime in Haiti was, according to one historian, “probably the bloodiest in all of the Caribbean” (Donald Schulz and Douglas Granham [eds.], *Revolution and Counterrevolution in Central America and the Caribbean* [1984]).

The occupation and the subsequent imposition of forced labor provoked a national uprising by *cacos* (peasant bands) beginning in 1916, which lasted five years before being drowned in blood. As described by Mumia Abu-Jamal, America’s foremost class-war prisoner, in a 1994 column (“American Hatred of Haiti,” WV No. 609, 28 October 1994):

“When the people rebelled against this involuntary servitude in the Cacos Insurrection, the U.S. Marines responded by ruthless repression, that left an estimated 15,000 peasant casualties. “One U.S. Marine officer, Colonel Littleton W.T. Waller (Virginia) wrote of his impressions of the people historians now say they came to ‘help’; the Haitians were ‘real n----rs and make no mistake—there are some fine looking, well educated polished men here, but they are real n--s beneath the surface.’

“A perfect example of exported American ‘democracy’.”

Since then, the U.S. has propped up one Haitian despot after another, each further bleeding the country dry of whatever resources were left. Among these brutal dictators was the infamous “Papa Doc” Duvalier, who organized the Tonton



Fifteen-year-old girl shot dead by a Haitian cop for “looting,” January 19.

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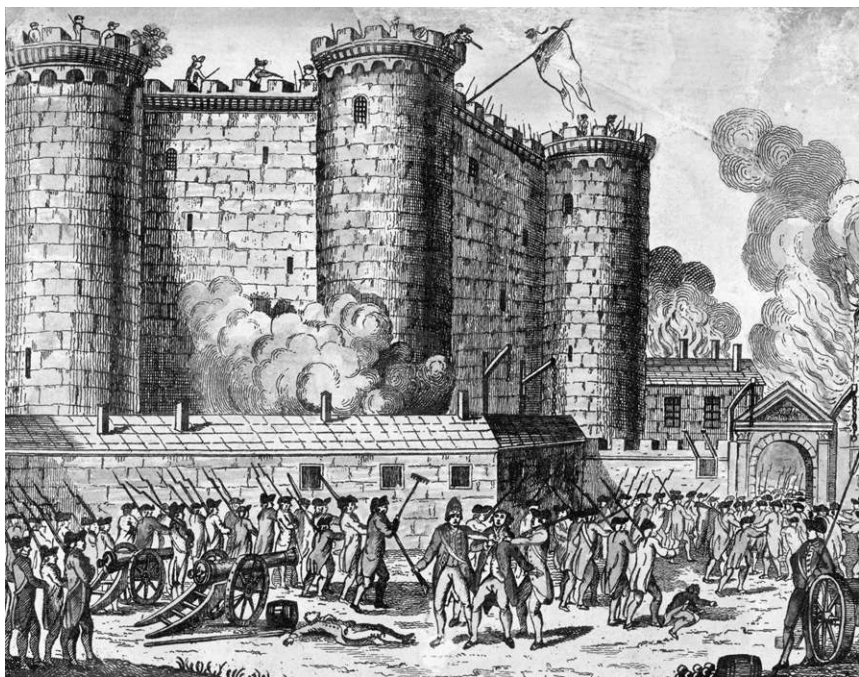
No. 6

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Left: Storming of Bastille prison, opening event of French Revolution, 14 July 1789. Toussaint L'Ouverture (inset) forged army of black slaves to win freedom and independence for Haiti. Right: Emile Antoine Bayard's "Revolt of the Negroes in San Domingo." Haitian Revolution combined the struggle against slavery with the ideals of the French Revolution.

The massive discontent that drove "Baby Doc" Duvalier out of power ultimately led to the election of radical Catholic priest Jean-Bertrand Aristide in December 1990. Virtually the entire left internationally gave him political support. WWP hailed Aristide for supposedly promising to introduce such things as "economic justice," "honest" government and "broad participation of the people" (*Workers World*, 27 December 1990). The WWP article quoted from a solidarity message they sent to Aristide hailing his "great courage in bringing the flood of the mass struggle into the election campaign." Likewise, the ISO celebrated Aristide's election, claiming that he was "fully aware that for democracy to survive in Haiti, the whole system had to be restructured" (*Socialist Worker*, November 1991).

In contrast, we warned: "Aristide will either play the role of groveling instrument of the Haitian bourgeoisie and the U.S. imperialist overlords or he will be swept away in a reactionary crack-down aimed at decisively disciplining the pitilessly oppressed population" ("Haiti: Election Avalanche for Radical Priest," WV No. 517, 4 January 1991). Both proved to be true.

Initially, Aristide irked the U.S. rulers by resisting their economic diktats and establishing diplomatic relations with Cuba. This was one of the few benefits from the Aristide regime since it meant that Cuban doctors and nurses began working in Haiti. Aristide was toppled in 1991. In 1994, following a starvation embargo against Haiti, President Clinton re-installed Aristide at the point of bayonets, with Marines occupying the country in a military intervention dubbed "Operation Uphold Democracy." Aristide supported both the embargo and the invasion. He proved his reliability to his U.S. overseers by agreeing in advance of his 1994 return to power to a drastic austerity program, privatization of state-owned industry, massive layoffs in the public sector and the virtual abolition of import tariffs. The latter induced the collapse of the indigenous economy as the market was flooded with, for example, American rice at prices cheaper than the Haitian-grown product. Having dissolved the army (a center of opposition to his regime) in 1995, Aristide propped up his rule with a brutal police force and gang terror.

Again in 2004, as Haiti was being swept by armed revolts (some with the support of Washington neoconservatives), Bush sent U.S. Marines to invade Haiti as a U.S. military escort whisked President Aristide out of the country and into exile in Africa. Prominent in pushing the hesitating Bush administration to send the Marines were the Democrats of the Congressional Black Caucus, though ostensibly in defense of Aristide. The 1994 and 2004 U.S. invasions, both of which were carried out with UN backing, were largely motivated by the U.S. rulers' determination to prevent Haitians from

reaching America's shores. We pointed out that the U.S. occupation of Haiti also represented a danger to the Cuban deformed workers state, as well as to the militant proletariat of the Dominican Republic, which shares the island of Hispaniola with Haiti (see "Haiti: U.S./UN Troops Out!" WV No. 821, 5 March 2004).

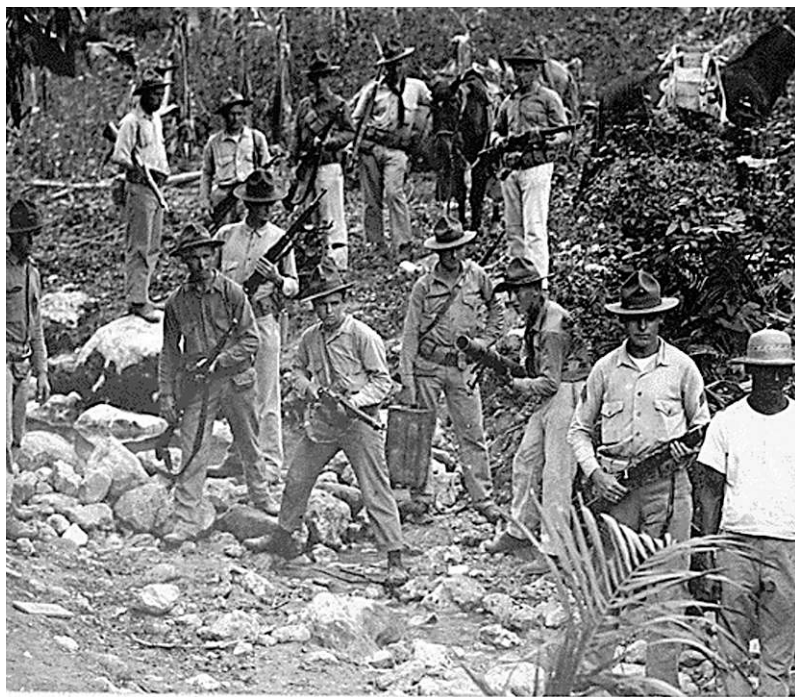
Following the 2004 U.S. invasion, an occupation force was set up under UN sponsorship, bringing with it a beefed-up

talist state is largely reduced to rubble and a few marauding bands of police."

The stark reality that the IG would deny is that a) even before the earthquake, there was virtually no working class in Haiti; b) in the aftermath of the earthquake, not only is the state "largely reduced to rubble," but so is the society as a whole, including the desperate and dispossessed population; and c) there is a military power in Haiti that

cies they advocate were implemented, they would result in mass death through starvation.

Notwithstanding the IG's deranged and grotesque fantasies, there are no good alternatives facing Haiti today. The U.S. military is the only force on the ground with the capacity—e.g., trucks, planes, ships—to organize the transport of what food, water, medical and other supplies are getting to Haiti's population. And they're doing it in



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AP

Haiti under boot of U.S. imperialism. Left: Marines (circa 1919) during brutal 1915-34 occupation. Above: U.S. military policeman savages Haitian man during Clinton's "Operation Uphold Democracy," which restored Aristide to power in 1994.

Haitian police force composed of sadistic rapists and killers. The UN, since its creation at the end of World War II, has always been a fig leaf for naked imperialist aggression against semicolonial countries. During the current earthquake disaster, the U.S.-armed thugs of the Haitian police have coldbloodedly gunned down "looters," including a 15-year-old girl who was shot in the head as she carried a few wall hangings from the ruins.

The imperialist system, which imposes grinding poverty and degradation on its colonial and semicolonial subjects, must be swept away through international proletarian revolution. Toward that end, Haitian workers in the U.S., Canada and elsewhere will serve as a vital bridge linking the struggle for national and social emancipation in Haiti with the fight for socialist revolution in the imperialist centers of North America that have turned that country into a neocolonial hell.

For Revolutionary Internationalism

In a January 20 article posted on its Web site, the centrist Internationalist Group (IG) argued that the earthquake provides an opening for socialist revolution in Haiti. The IG wrote that Haiti's "small but militant proletariat can place itself at the head of the impoverished urban and rural masses seeking to organize their own power, particularly at present where the machinery of the capi-

is far from "reduced to rubble," and it's U.S. imperialism.

The IG demands that "*all U.S./U.N. forces get out*," painting the U.S. military presence in Haiti today as aimed at suppressing a popular uprising: "This huge military occupation is not intended to deliver aid, but to *put down unrest by the poor and working people of Haiti*" (emphasis in original). By the IG's reasoning, the Cuban government is to be condemned for opening its airspace to American military planes after the earthquake. The IG is cynically toying with rhetoric, blithely unconcerned with the fact that, in the real world, if the poli-

the typical piggish U.S. imperialist manner. We have always opposed U.S. and UN occupations in Haiti and everywhere—and it may become necessary to call for U.S./UN out of Haiti in the near future—but we are not going to call for an end to such aid as the desperate Haitian masses can get their hands on. As Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky explained in his 1938 article "Learn to Think: A Friendly Suggestion to Certain Ultra-Leftists":

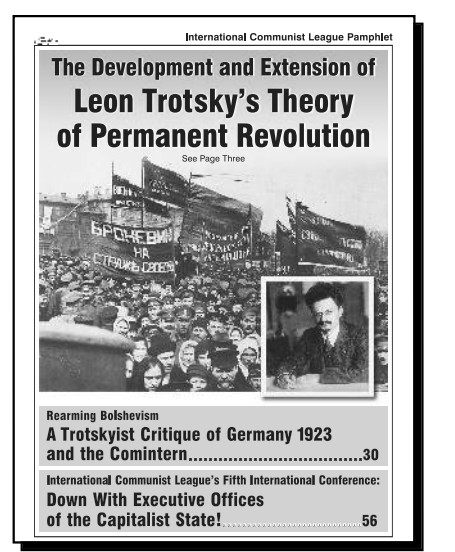
"An irreconcilable attitude against bourgeois militarism does not signify at all that the proletariat *in all cases* enters into a struggle against its own 'national' army.

continued on page 10

International Communist League pamphlet comprising three articles from ICL press: "The Development and Extension of Leon Trotsky's Theory of Permanent Revolution," "A Trotskyist Critique of Germany 1923 and the Comintern" and "Down With Executive Offices of the Capitalist State!" These articles together constitute an introduction to the historically founded principles and program of Trotskyism (i.e., genuine Marxism).

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Lenin, Luxemburg...

(continued from page 2)

he is just wasting good time.

“Still, didn’t Rosa criticize the Bolsheviks for dispersing the Constituent Assembly?” No, she did not. She criticized them for not calling for elections to a new Constituent; she criticized them for the arguments they made to justify the dispersal. But in the first place, her criticism has next to nothing in common with that of the latter-day anti-Bolsheviks (or, for that matter, of the anti-Bolsheviks of the time). And in the second place, she was wrong, just as she was wrong in her criticism of the Bolshevik position on the “national question” and of the Bolshevik course in the “agrarian question.” And in the third place, what she wrote in prison, on the basis of “fragmentary information” (as the editor of the American edition of her prison notes admits), was not her last word on the question. Before her cruel death, she *altered her position* on the basis of her own experiences, on the basis of the living realities of the German revolution. Lenin’s *State and Revolution* was checked *twice*—first in the Russian Revolution and then in the German revolution! We will give the reader an idea of what she wrote before her death so that he may see why our present “champions” of Luxemburg never find time, space or inclination to *quote her to the end*.

The German workers, a year after the Bolshevik Revolution, overturned the Hohenzollern monarchy and, just as spontaneously as did the Russians before them, they formed their Workers’ and Soldiers’ Councils (“Räte,” Soviets). The German Mensheviks—Scheidemann, Noske and Ebert—feared and hated the Councils just as much as did their Russian counterparts. They championed the National Assembly (German counterpart of the Russian Constituent) instead, calculating thereby to smash the Councils and the struggle for socialism. Haase and Kautsky, the centrists of the Independent Socialists, oscillated between the Councils and the Assembly. What position did Rosa Luxemburg take, what position did the Spartacus League and its organ,



VAAP
Russian factory workers at May Day demonstration in 1917 carried Bolshevik slogans, including banner reading, “Long Live the Third International!”

Die Rote Fahne, take? Here once more was the problem of workers’ democracy versus bourgeois democracy, the democratic republic of the Councils versus the bourgeois republic, dictatorship of the proletariat organized in the Councils versus the National Assembly—not in Russia but in Germany, not in 1917 but a year later, not while Rosa was in Breslau prison but after her release.

Here is Rosa Luxemburg in *Die Rote Fahne* of November 29, 1918, writing on the leaders of the Independents:

“Their actual mission as partner in the firm of Scheidemann-Ebert is: to mystify its clear and unambiguous character as defense guard of bourgeois class domination by means of a system of equivocation and cowardliness.

“This role of Haase and colleagues finds its most classical expression in their attitude toward the most important slogan of the day: toward the National Assembly.

“Only two standpoints are possible in this question, as in all others. Either you want the National Assembly as a means of swindling the proletariat out of its power, to paralyze its class energy, to dissolve its socialist goal into thin air. Or else you want to place all the power into the hands of the proletariat, to unfold the revolution that has begun into a tremendous class struggle for the socialist social order, and toward this end, to establish the political

rule of the great mass of the toilers, the dictatorship of the Workers’ and Soldiers’ Councils. For or against socialism, against or for the National Assembly; there is no third way.”

On December 1st, Luxemburg spoke on the situation at a meeting of the Spartacus League in the hall of the Teachers’ Union. At the end of the meeting, a resolution was adopted setting forth her views and giving approval to them:

“The public people’s meeting held on December 1st in the Hall of the Teachers’ Union on Alexander Street declares its agreement with the exposition of Comrade Luxemburg. It considers the convocation of the National Assembly to be a means of strengthening the counterrevolution and to cheat the proletarian revolution of its socialist aims. It demands the transfer of all power to the Workers’ and Soldiers’ Councils, whose first duty it is to drive out of the government the traitors to the working class and to socialism, Scheidemann-Ebert and colleagues, to arm the toiling people for the protection of the revolution, and to take the most energetic and thoroughgoing measures for the socialization of society.”

In her first editorial in *Die Rote Fahne* of November 18, she writes under the title, “The Beginning”:

“The Revolution has begun.... From the goal of the revolution follows clearly its

path, from its task follows the method. All power into the hands of the masses, into the hands of the Workers’ and Soldiers’ Councils, protection of the work of the revolution from its lurking foes: this is the guiding line for all the measures of the revolutionary government....

“(But) What is the present revolutionary government (i.e., Scheidemann & Co.) doing?

“It calmly continues to leave the state as an administrative organism from top to bottom in the hands of yesterday’s guards of Hohenzollern absolutism and tomorrow’s tools of the counterrevolution.

“It is convoking the Constituent Assembly, and therewith it is creating a bourgeois counterweight against the Workers’ and Peasants’ representation, therewith switching the revolution on to the rails of the bourgeois revolution, conjuring away the socialist goals of the revolution.”

[Shachtman mistakenly attributed the following quote to the article, “The Beginning.” It is actually from “The National Assembly” in the 20 November 1918 issue of *Die Rote Fahne*—ed.]

“From the *Deutsche Tageszeitung*, the *Vossische*, and the *Vorwärts* to the *Freiheit* of the Independents, from Reventlow, Erzberger, Scheidemann to Haase and Kautsky, there sounds the unanimous call for the National Assembly and an equally unanimous outcry of fear of the idea: Power into the hands of the working class. The ‘people’ as a whole, the ‘nation’ as a whole, should be summoned to decide on the further fate of the revolution by majority decision.

“With the open and concealed agents of the ruling class, this slogan is natural. With keepers of the capitalist class barriers, we discuss neither in the National Assembly nor about the National Assembly....

“Without the conscious will and the conscious act of the majority of the proletariat—no socialism. To sharpen this consciousness, to steel this will, to organize this act, a class organ is necessary, the national parliament of the proletarians of town and country.

“The convocation of such a workers’ representation in place of the traditional National Assembly of the bourgeois revolutions is already, by itself, an act of the class struggle, a break with the historical past of bourgeois society, a powerful means of arousing the proletarian popular masses, a first open, blunt declaration of war against capitalism.

“No evasions, no ambiguities—the die must be cast. Parliamentary cretinism was yesterday a weakness, is today an equivocation, will tomorrow be a betrayal of socialism.”

It is a pity that there is not space in which to quote far more extensively from the highly remarkable articles she wrote in the last few weeks of her life, before she was murdered by those whose “parliamentary cretinism” became the direct betrayal of socialism—by those for whom Erber has now become a shameful apologist by “showing” that the defeat of the revolution in Germany was as much the responsibility of the masses as it was of the Scheidemanns and Noskes! The articles as a whole show the veritable *strides* that Luxemburg took away from her prison criticism and toward a policy which was in *no* important respect different from the one pursued by the Bolsheviks toward the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois democrats, toward the Mensheviks and other “socialist opponents,” toward the Constituent Assembly and the Soviets. With these articles of hers in print, to mention her today as an enemy of the Bolsheviks, as a critic of their attitude toward bourgeois democracy and the Constituent is excusable only on the grounds of inexcusable ignorance.

The course of the German Revolution, life, the lessons of the struggle—these left us the heritage of a Rosa Luxemburg who was, in every essential, the inseparable comrade-in-arms of the leaders of the Russian Revolution. To claim that this firm solidarity did not exist, is simply an outrage to her memory. What is worse, it shows that nothing has been learned of the lessons of the Russian Revolution and nothing of the lessons of the German Revolution—the two great efforts of the proletariat to test in practice what is, in the long run, the question of life and death for us: the state and revolution. And on this question, with Lenin *and* with Luxemburg, the real Luxemburg—we remain under the banner of Marxism.■

Haiti...

(continued from page 9)

At least the workers would not interfere with soldiers who are extinguishing a fire or rescuing drowning people during a flood; on the contrary, they would help side by side with the soldiers and fraternize with them....

“In ninety cases out of a hundred the workers actually place a minus sign where the bourgeoisie places a plus sign. In ten cases however they are forced to fix the same sign as the bourgeoisie but with their own seal, in which is expressed their mistrust of the bourgeoisie. The policy of the proletariat

is not at all automatically derived from the policy of the bourgeoisie, bearing only the opposite sign (this would make every sectarian a master strategist). No, the revolutionary party must each time orient itself *independently* in the internal as well as in the external situation, arriving at those decisions which correspond best to the interests of the proletariat.”

The IG’s conjuring up of a proletarian revolutionary opposition in Haiti today is the demented logic of their glorification of Third World nationalism. In practice, they deny the horrendous impact that nearly two centuries of depredation by the U.S. and other capitalist powers has

had on Haiti. The bitter truth is that the desperate conditions of Haiti today cannot be resolved *within* Haiti. The key to the liberation of Haiti lies in proletarian revolution throughout the hemisphere, in which the mobilization of the sizable Haitian proletariat *in the diaspora* can play a key role. In addition to the brutally oppressed Haitian sugar cane workers in the Dominican Republic and those elsewhere in the Caribbean, hundreds of thousands of Haitian workers now live in cities from Montreal to Miami. These workers can be a vital link to class struggle by the powerful North American proletariat.

The IG’s article does not even mention the hundreds of thousands of Haitian workers in the urban centers of North America. In contrast, as a Spartacist speaker explained at an October 1991 forum in New York City (“Haitian Workers: Fight for Power!” WV No. 537, 25 October 1991):

“Haitian nationalists are forever lamenting the fact that the Haitian diaspora exists. Comrades, it is very *good* that you have this diaspora! It internationalizes the struggle of Haitian workers, gives them social power and helps forge an international vanguard directly linked to the U.S. proletariat, which has the power to bring imperialism to its knees....

“Haitian workers throughout the diaspora are today a vital link between revolutionary class struggle in Haiti and throughout the Caribbean, and the North American continent. Organizing the most conscious elements into an international Bolshevik party, a Trotskyist party, is the task the International Communist League sets itself in the struggle for worldwide socialist revolution.”

It is only this revolutionary internationalist program that holds out any genuine perspective for the liberation of the Haitian masses.■

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With an update on the fight to free Mumia Abu-Jamal

France...

(continued from page 3)

involved, including notably more deportations of immigrant women after being “rescued” by the police in anti-trafficking raids. The Ligue Trotskyste de France calls for full citizenship rights for all immigrants! No deportations! The state is not a neutral arbiter; it is an instrument for the suppression of the exploited and oppressed by the exploiters. The social-democratic organization from which Olivier Besancenot’s New Anti-Capitalist Party (NPA) comes, the former Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire, has for years campaigned for a “law against violent abuse of women,” the effect of which was in fact to increase illusions in the capitalist state and pave the way for the repressive laws of Sarkozy & Co. As we wrote in “Anti-Immigrant, Anti-Woman, Anti-Sex: U.S./UN Crusade Against ‘Sex Trafficking’”:

“The ‘sex slavery’ crusade is a cynical and dangerous business because it both legitimizes government persecution of immigrants and invokes state authority to intervene as moral arbiter in our most intimate affairs. It bolsters the anti-sex witchhunt as a whole and deflects atten-

tion from the real violence perpetrated every day against women and children under this class system....

“The liberation of the prostitute can’t be separated from the liberation of women as a whole, and prostitution will die only as the institution of the family is replaced. For women’s liberation through socialist revolution!”

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

Anti-“Pedophile” Witchhunts and the State

The supposed mortal threat to children from “pedophiles” has been a central theme of repeated moral crusades in past decades. The Outreau witchhunt and show trial [in which 18 people were sent to jail for sexual abuse of children for several years

based on the accusations of one woman who later confessed to having lied] was set in motion by the [popular front] government of [Socialist prime minister] Jospin in 1997, under the instructions of then-family minister Ségolène Royal. Royal instructed all teachers, school nurses, etc., to report in writing any allegations of sexual fondling, however incoherent or absurd, to the district attorney.

When it comes to obscene child abuse, the capitalist system and its governments are the main culprits—from locking up babies and children in immigration detention prisons to deporting them to war zones, such as Afghanistan where they risk being butchered under imperialist bombs. Or there is the fact that today nearly one in five (18 percent) of all children live below the official poverty line, a rate which is close to 50 percent among minority youth in the ghettos.

The Outreau case was in no way an aberration; this scandal laid bare the horror of capitalist “justice” and if anything, the scaremongering and reactionary anti-sex campaign has picked up momentum since then. Back in October, Sarkozy declared his support for “chemical castration” to combat “pedophiles” and rapists.



Reuters

Paris: Victims of Outreau anti-pedophile witchhunt after acquittal, December 2005. Lydia Mourmand holds photo of her brother, François, who died in prison.

national identity” to reappropriate “Marianne [the female figure that symbolizes the French Republic], the flag and the national anthem” from the fascists. This “debate” is aimed at scapegoating immigrants and youth in the *banlieues* [suburban ghettos] as lying at the root of insecurity in this country.

To fight against racist oppression and the oppression of women, gays and minorities, we must build a revolutionary workers party independent of the bourgeois parties and the social democrats, who are wedded to upholding and defending the oppressive capitalist system. The working class has the social power to mobilize in defense of all the oppressed. But to convince workers that they have a stake in defending Mitterrand or Polanski, it is necessary to fight against our reformist opponents in the workers movement, such as the PS, PCF and Alternative Libertaire, which fully participated in the campaign against Mitterrand and Polanski.

Olivier Besancenot’s NPA refused to join this campaign, but, at the same time, its position had nothing to do with Marxism. As usual, it distinguished itself by voicing varying positions on the question. In its weekly newspaper, distributed mainly to its members and periphery, the NPA ran an interview with an academic who had studied the Thai homosexual milieu and who took on the attacks against Mitterrand, describing them as “dubious” (*Tout Est à Nous*, 22 October 2009). But it was the NPA’s official spokesman, Olivier Besancenot, who laid out the NPA’s real line: the refusal to defend Mitterrand against the homophobic campaign. Besancenot declared in a television interview: “I must admit that I am deeply troubled. I must confess that I haven’t read the book and haven’t listened to all his explanations.... I’ve of course read the excerpts [of Mitterrand’s book] and it’s true that they are super-ambiguous when we know what sexual tourism and pedophilia are.... I’m neither his lawyer nor his judge and I prefer to judge on the basis of his politics, on his job as Minister of Culture.”

As far as we know, Lutte Ouvrière (LO) has not said a word on Polanski’s

arrest. In their weekly paper, which is addressed to workers, LO has not mentioned the anti-homosexual witchhunt against Mitterrand either. LO’s silence is itself a capitulation to anti-homosexual bigotry, which is propagated in the working class by the homophobic campaigns of the bourgeoisie. However, LO mentioned the Mitterrand affair in their monthly “theoretical” journal *Lutte de Classe* (November 2009). In an article on the debate on “national identity,” they give a series of reasons why Sarkozy recently “angered part of his right-wing constituency,” and, notably, “the fact that he chose as a culture minister, one Frederic Mitterrand, who does not hide his homosexuality, and that he defended him when the media were full of confessions by the latter for his taste for Thai ‘kids’.” LO knows full well that Mitterrand, far from having “confessed” his “taste for Thai ‘kids’,” stated the exact opposite during his October 8 television interview, insisting that he only had relationships with people “of my age” (*Le Figaro*, 9 October 2009). And in his book, he speaks only of pubescent teenagers, for instance, students.

LO makes these statements using the sensational language typical of the gutter press without even pretending to defend Mitterrand. LO implicitly peddles the accusations against Mitterrand by the fascists, PS and others about his supposed “sex tourism” with Thai children. Thus LO plays its hypocritical little role in this homophobic campaign.

When even the “far left” capitulates, at least by omission, to the moral order campaign against Mitterrand, it is because they seek to reform, not overthrow, the capitalist order and therefore cannot challenge the institution of the bourgeois family. Capitalism is not only exploiting workers by appropriating the surplus value they produce with their sweat and blood. It also discriminates against various layers of the population for their skin color, gender, sexual practices, etc. This should rather be an opportunity for the working class to lead all the oppressed in a revolutionary struggle to overthrow the oppressive capitalist system. ■



AP

November 2007: Police rampage against protesters in working-class Paris suburb of Villiers-le-Bel one day after two minority youth were hit and killed by police car.

This new barbaric measure, which would also return someone to prison after they have served their sentence if they refuse to continue taking the drug, is currently under debate in the National Assembly.

In the wake of the Mitterrand affair, the government has tightened the screws even further on minorities and immigrants—not only in its everyday business, but also to neutralize the fascists ahead of the regional elections in six months. The government’s right-wing constituency was not happy that the government refused to fire Mitterrand and that foreign minister Bernard Kouchner asked his American counterpart, Hillary Clinton, to leave Polanski alone. The government has now gone on the offensive with its announcement of a three-month-long “debate on

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Supreme Court of Death Rules Against Mumia Abu-Jamal

The following statement was issued by the Partisan Defense Committee on January 24.

On January 19, the U.S. Supreme Court took a clear step toward the legal lynching of Mumia Abu-Jamal. The Court vacated a 2001 decision by federal district court judge William Yohn overturning Mumia's death sentence. Yohn's decision had been previously upheld by the U.S. Third Circuit Court of Appeals. The new ruling by the Supreme Court underscores our insistence that fighters for Mumia's freedom must place no faith in the courts, which, at every level, have colluded with the police and prosecutors to see through the execution of this innocent man.

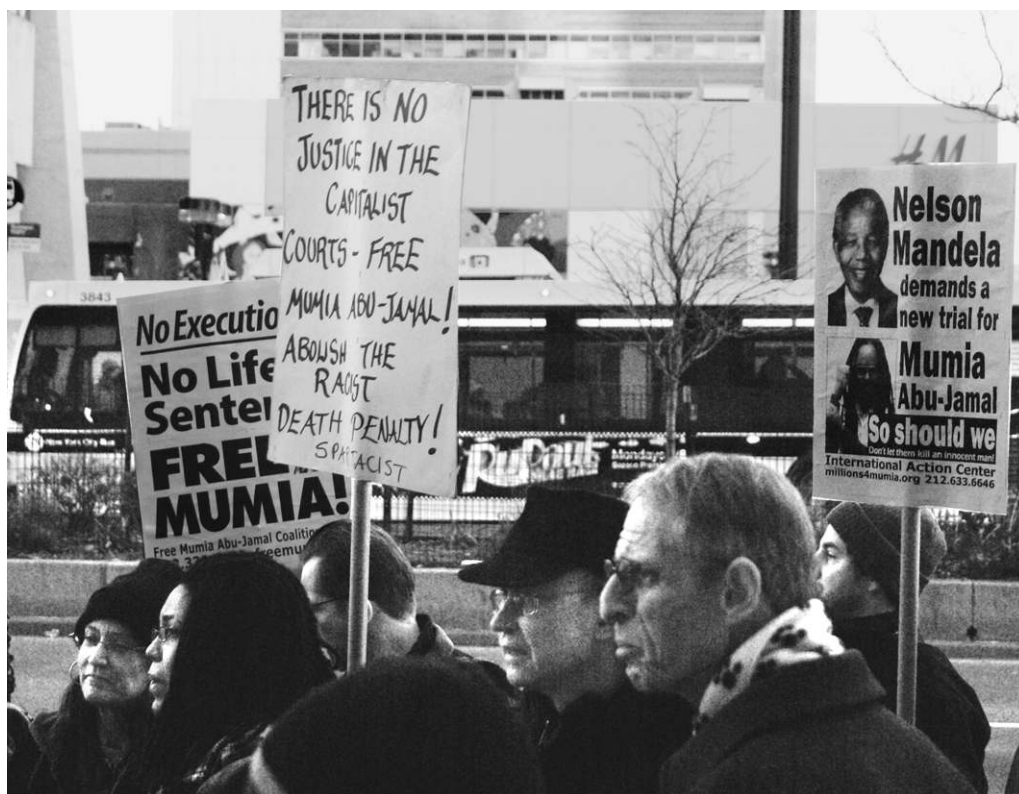
Mumia was targeted by the police and FBI in his teenage years as a Black Panther leader and later as a journalist and MOVE supporter renowned for his searing exposés of cop brutality and racist oppression. In a blatantly racist and political frame-up, Mumia was railroaded to death row in 1982 on false charges of killing Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner. Without a shred of actual evidence against him, he was convicted on the basis of phony ballistics and other manufactured "evidence," a "confession" concocted by cops and prosecutors, massive police intimidation of witnesses and racist jury rigging. His trial was overseen by "hanging judge" Albert Sabo, who was overheard saying he would help the prosecution "fry the n---r." To secure the death sentence, prosecutors pointed to political statements issued by Mumia as a 16-year-old Panther.

Since his trial, the courts have repeatedly tossed aside massive evidence of Mumia's innocence, not least the confession of Arnold Beverly that he, not Mumia, shot and killed Faulkner. Yet Mumia remains unbowed, speaking out for the oppressed and the impoverished through his death row commentaries. The Partisan Defense Committee—a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League/U.S.—calls on trade unionists, death penalty abolitionists and all opponents of racist injustice to make their voices heard in demanding: Free Mumia now! Abolish the racist death penalty!

The Supreme Court moved against Mumia with cold calculation. Last April, it turned down Mumia's petition to overturn his frame-up conviction. At the same time, the Court held in abeyance the arguments of Pennsylvania prosecutors to reinstate his death sentence, which had been overturned by Yohn on the grounds that Mumia's trial jury had been given faulty sentencing instructions. The Supreme Court waited to rule against Mumia until after it reinstated the death sentence for Ohio neo-Nazi Frank Spisak, which had been overturned on similar grounds of faulty jury instructions. In effect, the high court gave the Third Circuit their marching orders to uphold Mumia's death sentence. Alternatively, the Third Circuit



COC Productions



WV Photo

Mumia in prison. Right: New York City rally called by Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition (NYC) after January 19 Supreme Court decision.

Mumia Is Innocent—Free Him Now!

could send the case back to Yohn for a hearing to consider other still-pending claims by Mumia or, less likely, reaffirm its prior decision.

The Supreme Court cynically tied together the Spisak and Mumia cases, not despite but because of their glaring differences. Spisak is a sociopath who admitted to killing his victims and made no secret of his admiration for Adolph Hitler. Mumia has always maintained his innocence and won acclaim as the "voice of the voiceless" for his powerful commentaries. The Court is consciously manipulating abhorrence of the fascist Spisak's crimes to set a precedent for the legal murder of Mumia, a man whose "crime" was to stand up to the racist capitalist rulers. Noting how his case differed from Spisak's, Mumia aptly told Free Speech Radio News, "The law is the tool of those in power, so how they use it doesn't depend on the law; it depends on power." The Supreme Court ruling will touch off new rounds of perhaps lengthy legal proceedings. But even if Mumia wins his battle against execution, the "alternative" offered by the courts is a life sentence with no possibility of parole, which, as Mumia noted in one of his prison writings, "is merely slow death."

The court's linking of the two cases highlights yet again how the fight for Mumia's freedom is inseparable from the struggle to abolish the death penalty. The PDC opposes the death penalty on principle and everywhere—for the guilty as well as for the innocent. We do not accord any state the right to determine who lives and who dies.

Capital punishment is a barbaric relic

of ancient codes of justice and, in the U.S., of chattel slavery. Where in medieval times those who ran afoul of Crown and Church were put to the rack or burned at the stake, today's representatives of bourgeois "civilization" debate which combination of lethal drugs to administer to writhing prisoners strapped to death gurneys. In threatening such treatment for Mumia, the courts hark back to when black slaves could be tortured and put to death for hitting a white man in self-defense or for any other act deemed a challenge to the slaveholders. The hugely disproportionate number of black people on America's death rows is a testament to the racist subjugation of the black population, which is fundamental to the maintenance of American capitalism. And while judges in their oak-paneled chambers decree the legal murder of the poor, minorities and working people, the police carry out the same sentence on a far greater scale as they gun down ghetto and barrio youth in the streets.

The death penalty stands at the apex of the machinery of state repression used by the tiny class of capitalist exploiters against the masses they exploit and oppress. The "justice" system threatens Mumia with the ultimate state sanction that it used against earlier militants deemed to be threats to capitalist "order"—the Haymarket Martyrs (1877), IWW militant Joe Hill (1915) and anarchist workers Sacco and Vanzetti (1927), to name a few. The state vendetta against Mumia began as part of the FBI's COINTELPRO campaign to wipe out the Black Panther Party, in which some 38 Panthers were killed and hundreds of others framed up and railroaded to prison.

The government's intent was made clear in 1968 by FBI director J. Edgar Hoover, who warned: "The Negro youth and moderate[s] must be made to understand that if they succumb to revolutionary teachings, they will be dead revolutionaries."

Mumia's cause has been and must continue to be a focal point of the fight for abolition of the racist death penalty. Popular support for capital punishment has fallen steadily in recent years, due not least to the many cases where DNA evidence has exonerated death row prisoners. Even the conservative American Law Institute, whose death penalty guidelines were cited by the Supreme Court when it ended a brief moratorium on executions in 1976, has decided to get out of this gruesome business as ever more exposures of American injustice come to light. The Supreme Court, however, is not in the least deterred from its push to execute the innocent. Some six weeks before ruling against Mumia, the Court refused to consider the appeal of black California death row inmate Kevin Cooper despite evidence of his innocence and of a massive police frame-up. Free Kevin Cooper!

From the time we first took up Mumia's cause more than 20 years ago, the PDC has supported the use of every possible legal avenue available to Mumia while having no illusions in the courts or any other agency of the capitalist state. Our fight has centered on the struggle to mobilize the multiracial working class in the U.S. and working people internationally, based on the fact that the proletariat is the one force in this society with the social power to effectively challenge the

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Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!