

India

Down With Government War on Maoists, Tribal Peoples!



Indian Vanguard



AFP

Left: Mass rally of Maoist supporters in Hyderabad, September 2004. Right: In crackdown on Maoists, paramilitary troops arrest villagers in West Midnapore district, West Bengal, June 2009.

In a military offensive that began late last year, the government of India has mobilized up to 100,000 heavily armed police backed by the army in an attempt to crush Maoist guerrilla forces in the country's eastern and central interior. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of the Congress Party, which leads the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) coalition regime, has called the insurgency led by the Communist Party of India (Maoist)—hereafter referred to as CPI (Maoist)—“the single biggest internal security challenge ever faced by our country.” Government sources state that the Maoists are active in nearly a third of India's administrative districts, stretching from the northern border with Nepal south to Andhra Pradesh.

The offensive, dubbed Operation Green Hunt, has brought a bloody campaign of terror. One report described how:

“Early one morning last October police forces surrounded the residents of Gompad, a remote village in the state of Chhattisgarh in eastern India, and attacked. Sixteen people were killed, including an older couple and their 25-year-old daughter, who was stabbed in the head with a knife and had her breasts sliced off. Her 2-year-old son survived, but three of his fingers were chopped off.... The cops suspected the villagers of sympathizing with Maoist insurgents, believing that some were informants.”

—Megha Bahree, “India's Dirty War,” *forbes.com*, 10 May

For all the hype about India becoming an economic superpower, the intense poverty suffered by most of the population has been made worse by the neoliberal reforms instituted by the country's rulers starting in 1991. While a small layer of capitalists has accrued immense profits,

Only Workers Revolution Can Liberate the Indian Masses

the working class and urban and rural poor have been hit by savage cuts to public spending and the dismantling of price supports for agricultural products. Land dispossession and debt peonage led to at least 183,000 peasant suicides from 1997 to 2007—one every 30 minutes. Tens of millions of displaced peasants have migrated to the cities where most live in fetid slums. Poverty is so entrenched that more than 40 percent of India's children under the age of five suffer from malnutrition.

The Maoists' base of support is among the roughly 80 million adivasi (tribal) people, the poorest and most dispossessed population in all of India. Tribal villages in the forests and jungles have almost no schools or hospitals, or access to modern sanitation. The literacy rate is less than 25 percent, and only 14 percent for women, while malnutrition is rampant. The CPI (Maoist) has a record of defending the ad-

vasi population against rapacious landlords and brutal police incursions. On April 6, they successfully ambushed a heavily armed patrol, killing 76 paramilitary cops.

Five years ago, the state government in Chhattisgarh set up a vigilante outfit called the Salwa Judum (“peace hunt”) to forcibly depopulate hundreds of tribal villages, claiming this was for economic development. Salwa Judum mobs financed by the Tata and Essar industrial conglomerates, who seek to grab huge swaths of the area's land and resources, burned down homes and interned tens of thousands in squalid detention camps. Such actions only produced deeper revulsion toward the authorities and increased support for the Maoists. Now the Indian rulers are expanding their attacks into an all-out war. Their goal is to bring the tribal districts back under central control, which would allow for the forcible seizure of land and the

handing over of vast mineral riches to Indian and international corporations.

This area has immense untapped resources including rich reserves of iron ore, coal and limestone as well as bauxite deposits worth an estimated \$4 trillion—more than three times India's entire annual gross domestic product. As prominent Indian author Arundhati

Roy commented in an insightful article in *Outlook India* (9 November 2009):

“Right now in central India, the Maoists' guerrilla army is made up almost entirely of desperately poor tribal people living in conditions of such chronic hunger that it verges on famine of the kind we only associate with sub-Saharan Africa....

“If the tribals have taken up arms, they have done so because a government which has given them nothing but violence and neglect now wants to snatch away the last thing they have—their land. Clearly, they do not believe the government when it says it only wants to ‘develop’ their region. Clearly, they do not believe that the roads as wide and flat as aircraft runways that are being built through their forests in Dantewada by the National Mineral Development Corporation are being built for them to walk their children to school on. They believe that if they do not fight for their land, they will be annihilated.”

Soon after its reelection in May 2009, *continued on page 8*

All U.S./UN Troops Out!

Haiti: Mass Misery Under Imperialist Occupation...3



Ruffling Feathers: An Editorial Comment On Quacks and Their Defenders

Rarely has a subject elicited such a vehement reaction from our readership as our articles “Medical Science vs. Homeopathy” (WV No. 947, 20 November 2009), “Capitalist Reaction and Anti-Vaccine Hysteria” (WV No. 948, 4 December 2009) and “Defend Simon Singh! Defend Scientific Medicine!” (WV No. 949, 1 January). WV was deluged by so many letters that we could not possibly publish all of them. With the exception of one letter (printed at right), all took issue with our blanket denunciation of medical quackery—homeopathy, acupuncture, chiropractic, “New Age” spiritualism, herbal remedies, naturopathy—and our intransigent defense of science-based medicine and its accomplishments, such as vaccinations.

As we noted in WV No. 947 in regard to snake-oil “medicine”: “While some of these treatments may be relatively harmless and may sometimes have a placebo effect, more often they are dangerous both in themselves and because they divert patients from needed medical treatment.” Of the let-

ters that defended quackery outright, one grotesquely claimed that AIDS is spreading because of a lack of selenium in the soils of southern Africa and defended homeopathy as “hard science” and chiropractic as “a great American invention.”

A few writers tried to put defense of their chosen snake oil in a more rationalist light. A letter by B.B. in Atlanta correctly noted that “all attempts should be made to protect the scientific community from anti-science hysteria” but also condemned attempts to vaccinate the population against the H1N1 virus, which he called a “hoax.” T.S. wrote that we should support the “methods of science” while also favorably quoting New Age health guru Gary Null, an HIV-denialist who promotes chiropractic and homeopathy and pushes “nutritional” methods to treat AIDS in place of antiretroviral drugs. When South Africa’s former president Thabo Mbeki carried out a similar policy, it resulted in the needless deaths of an estimated 300,000 people.

As a Marxist organization, we do not purport to have particular expertise in medical science. But the issue at hand goes to the defense of science itself, and of Marxism’s dialectical materialist worldview, against religious obscurantism, mysticism and all anti-scientific outlooks.

While scientists must test their theories to ensure that they are rooted in material reality, quacks by definition resist rigorous testing because their practices are based at bottom on religious or other mystical dogmas (subluxation for chiropractors, *qi* for acupuncturists, etc.). This is not to say that medical science still does not have a great deal to learn and a long way to go in the treatment of diseases. The marriage of the art of medicine and science is historically recent and incomplete. We fight to *expand* scientific understanding against the quacks who exploit gaps in that understanding to peddle their wares. Science-based medicine cannot perform miracles. But it must be defended against the alternatives.

The letters we received that argued for “alternative medicine” had a common theme: that “mainstream” medicine cannot be trusted because it is profit-driven and therefore hopelessly corrupt. Under capitalism, medicine is driven by both profit and social utility. We certainly do not claim that the American Medical Association primarily cares about patients or that the pharmaceutical giants are benignly concerned about people’s health needs. Indeed, many of the problems in the U.S. health care system do stem from the drive for profit. But this is not a question of the scientific method but of the social system in which science operates. As we wrote in WV No. 947:

“Medicine for profit rations health care by class, race, sex and ethnicity, reserving the best care for the wealthy. The capitalist class can largely be blamed for the gullibility of the public: high costs

Letter

On Anti-Vaccine Hysteria

WV received the following undated letter on February 1.

Dear Comrades,

I am writing concerning your article, “Capitalist Reaction and Anti-Vaccine Hysteria.” I found the article to be accurate and informative.

I would like to point out a few things that confirm the accuracy of your article.

In the article you mentioned that vaccine development is covered by “eye dropper” funding while if you say terrorism then it is funded by the billions. I can see that here in Boston where we had to wait for flu vaccines. Meanwhile, however, the federal government is funding a bio-safety lab level 4 in a working class neighborhood. This facility will contain pathogens that are deadly and mostly incurable (see enclosed pamphlet).

You also mentioned that there is religious opposition to young girls receiving the HPV vaccine. While this is true it is also true that the HPV vaccine is beneficial to men as well in that the virus can cause colorectal cancer in gay men. Also most women get the virus from infected straight men.

You are also correct in your conclusion in that only in a healthy socialist society will the needs of humanity be taken care of instead of profit and superstitiousness.

Alan N.

place health care beyond the reach of many, and out of despair, many turn to something that promises miracles. Contributing to this problem is ignorance of the principles of science on the part of a

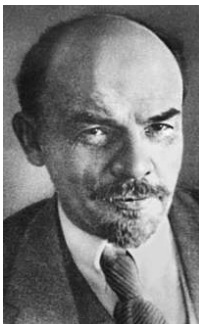
continued on page 7



TROTSKY

Revolutionary Perspective for India

The founding document of the Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India (BLPI), written while India was under British rule, emphasized the proletariat’s unique capacity to lead all the exploited and oppressed in the struggle for their emancipation. Applying the Trotskyist perspective of permanent revolution, the BLPI program stressed the fight for the political independence of the proletariat from the Indian bourgeoisie, which is today, as under colonial rule, a counterrevolutionary force beholden to imperialism.



LENIN

The leadership of the revolution, which the peasantry cannot provide for itself, can come only from an urban class. But the Indian bourgeoisie cannot possibly provide this leadership, since in the first place, it is reactionary through and through on the land question itself, sharing as it does so largely in the parasitic exploitation of the peasantry. Above all, the bourgeoisie, on account of its inherent weakness and dependence on Imperialism itself, is destined to play a counter-revolutionary role in the coming struggle for power.

The leadership of the peasantry in the coming petty bourgeois democratic agrarian revolution that is immediately posed can therefore come only from the industrial proletariat, and an alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry is [a] fundamental pre-requisite of the Indian revolution. This alliance cannot be conceived in the form of a “Workers’ and Peasants’ Party” or of a “democratic dictatorship of workers and peasants” in the revolution. It is impossible so to fuse within a single party or a dictatorship the policies of two classes whose interests only partially coincide and are bound to come into conflict sooner or later. The revolutionary alliance between the proletariat and peasantry can mean only proletarian *leadership* of the peasant struggle and, in case of revolutionary victory, the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship with the support of the peasantry....

Despite its subjective weakness in organization and consciousness, inevitable in a backward country and in the conditions of repression surrounding it, the working class is entirely capable of leading the Indian revolution. It is [the] only class objectively fitted for this role, not only in relation to the Indian situation, but in view of the decline of capitalism on [a] world scale, which opens the road to the international proletarian revolution. The proletariat needs above all to develop its own independent political party, free from the influence of the bourgeoisie, and armed with the weapons of revolutionary Marxism, to lead it not only in the day to day struggles but above all in the coming revolution. Without such a party the proletariat must fail in its historic task of leading the masses of India to revolutionary victory.

—“Draft Programme of the Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India” (1942),
reprinted in Charles Wesley Ervin, *Tomorrow Is Ours:
The Trotskyist Movement in India and Ceylon, 1935-48* (2006)

Polanski Wins, Witchhunters Lose

In a victory against the forces of social reaction, on July 12 the Swiss government declared renowned film director Roman Polanski a free man, rejecting a U.S. request to extradite him. Polanski, a French citizen, fled the U.S. for Paris in 1978, having faced multiple felony charges for having had consensual sex with Samantha Geimer, a sexually experienced 13-year-old. After pleading guilty to “unlawful sexual intercourse” with a minor, Polanski served six weeks in prison for “diagnostic testing” and was then threatened with more prison time before he fled. For more than three decades, he has been the target of a vicious, puritanical vendetta whose agents range from U.S. police forces to many liberals and bourgeois feminists. Arrested in Zurich last September, the 76-year-old Polanski spent two months in jail and seven more under house arrest before the ruling by the Swiss Justice Ministry.

In a July 17 Swiss TV interview, Polanski thanked the many people “who kept sending me messages of support during those nine long months.” From the beginning, the Spartacist League has been virtually alone on the U.S. left in defending Polanski. We wrote in “Stop the Puritan Witchhunt Against Roman Polanski!” (WV No. 192, 10 February 1978; reprinted in WV No. 944, 9 October 2009) that what was “genuinely ‘tawdry’ and sordid about the Polanski case is not the actual incident itself, but the vile official persecution and the hideous hypocrisy of it all.” The article went on:

“As communists we oppose attempts to fit human sexuality into legislated or de-



Reuters

July 17: Roman Polanski arrives at Montreux Jazz Festival after being freed from house arrest.

creed ‘norms.’ The guiding principle for sexual relations between people should be that of effective consent—that is, nothing more than mutual agreement and understanding as opposed to coercion. We hold that any and all consensual relations between individuals are purely their own concern, and the state has no business interfering in human sexual activity.”

As much as we are cheered by this brilliant director and Holocaust survivor’s victory over his persecutors, we note that Polanski still faces an Interpol warrant in effect for 188 countries. A Los Angeles Superior Court spokesman has warned that Polanski could be arrested and sent back to the U.S. if he travels to another country that has an extradition deal with the U.S. *Witchhunters: Keep your hands off Roman Polanski!* ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

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

DIRECTOR OF PARTY PUBLICATIONS: Liz Gordon

EDITOR: Ray Bishop

EDITOR, YOUNG SPARTACUS PAGES: Elizabeth Johnson

CIRCULATION MANAGER: Susan Fuller

EDITORIAL BOARD: Barry James (managing editor), François Donau (production manager), Blandine Hauser (letters editor), Bruce André, Bonnie Brodie, Jon Brule, Ed Clarkson, Paul Cone, Michael Davison, George Foster, Walter Jennings, Jane Kerrigan, James Robertson, Joseph Seymour, Alan Wilde

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

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

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

The closing date for news in this issue is July 27.

No. 962

30 July 2010

Haiti: Mass Misery Under Imperialist Occupation



Fremson/NY Times



AP

Left: Hundreds of families live in shanties on median strip in Port-au-Prince six months after earthquake. Right: Protesters in front of National Palace demand that UN forces leave and President René Préval resign, May 25.

In the six months since the devastating earthquake struck the Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince, killing some 250,000 people and destroying 100,000 homes, the suffering of the Haitian masses has only deepened. A week after the quake, imperialist occupiers led by the U.S. signaled what they had in store for the Haitian masses when police in a joint UN-Haitian operation fired into crowded prison cells in the southern city of Les Cayes, killing at least 12.

While the last of the 20,000 U.S. troops that were dispatched to Haiti in the guise of a “relief effort” have been withdrawn, 500 American National Guardsmen are stationed there. The country remains under military occupation by the UN force known as MINUSTAH, which has run Haiti since 2004. Headed by the Brazilian military, more than 10,000 UN troops and police are imposing “order” on a starving, homeless population, brutally repressing social protest and rebuilding the machinery of repression on behalf of Haiti’s imperialist masters.

The earthquake’s death toll was itself a product of over a century of imperialist depredation that left the country totally exposed to the quake’s impact, as shoddily built buildings in the teeming city collapsed. Today, some 1.5 million people are still living in makeshift tents—often no more than four sticks and bedsheets—in camps in and around the capital. With virtually no means of transport, many of these people are hours from the city center. In this utterly impoverished country, where the unemployment rate reached as high as 80 percent before the quake, this means that few have even the hope of being able to find any work.

People who had sought refuge on golf courses, parks or other facilities were forcibly relocated to barren land where there are no basic services like water and sanitation, where the dust and heat are unbearable and where a strong wind could

All U.S./UN Troops Out!

easily destroy their shelters. More than 1,200 families camped in the Sylvio Cator soccer stadium had their tents destroyed without warning by the Haitian National Police and were moved out at gunpoint. People are in deadly fear of the hurricane season, with many living precariously on eroded hillsides that could

exist of an economy in this shattered country in the hands of the IMF, World Bank and other imperialist agencies. These are the same forces that have repeatedly imposed drastic austerity measures on the Haitian population while enforcing privatization and other “free trade” policies that have ruined local agriculture and

to provide a ‘humanitarian’ face-lift to bloody U.S. imperialism and was aimed at securing U.S. military control in Haiti and reasserting American imperialist domination over the Caribbean” (WV No. 958, 7 May).

U.S. military authorities who took command of the Port-au-Prince airport prevented the World Food Program from landing cargos of food, medicine and water for two days, diverting their flights “so that the United States could land troops and equipment, and lift Americans and other foreigners to safety” (*New York Times*, 17 January). At the same time, the Obama administration ordered a naval blockade to prevent Haitians from fleeing to the U.S., with Air Force flights broadcasting a Creole-language warning from Haiti’s ambassador to the U.S. that American forces would “intercept” anyone fleeing by boat and “send you back home.”

We demand an end to the UN occupation of Haiti and call for all imperialist troops and police forces out now! We call for full citizenship rights for all Haitians and other refugees and immigrants who have made it to the U.S. No deportations!

Neocolonial Haiti: Subjugation and Devastation

For 200 years, the Haitian masses have been paying in blood for the revolution carried out under Toussaint L’Ouverture against the French colonial slavocracy. Culminating in the creation of the first independent black state in the modern era, the Haitian Revolution inspired slave revolts across the Americas and met with a frenzy of racist hostility from both France and the then-slaveowning U.S. In return for recognition by France, Haiti was compelled to compensate the former slaveowners in an amount measuring \$20 billion at today’s prices. The country remains hideously impoverished to this day.

The occupation this January was the fourth carried out by the U.S. in the past century. U.S. troops occupied Haiti from 1915-1934, drowning an anti-imperialist revolt in blood. The U.S. installed and then propped up a series of brutal, corrupt dictatorships, most infamously that of François “Papa Doc” Duvalier beginning in 1957. Duvalier organized the Tonton Macoutes paramilitary thugs and oversaw the killing of 50,000 of his opponents. The bloodletting continued under his son “Baby

continued on page 7



Reuters

February 1: U.S. troops push through crowds of desperate people waiting for food coupons in downtown Port-au-Prince.

easily be wiped out by a mudslide. Only a few of the promised hurricane-resistant shelters have been built. Other people have fled to the abject poverty of the countryside.

Some elements associated with the occupation have swooped down like vultures to reap the spoils of “reconstruction.” In the town of Ganthier, 18 miles east of the capital, private developers have laid claim to state land that has been used to grow food for 80 years, driving peasants off with bulldozers. Those who resisted were beaten and arrested, along with the mayor.

The Haitian Parliament has officially ceded power over aid money and reconstruction to the Interim Commission for the Reconstruction of Haiti, headed by Bill Clinton, placing control of what

most of what little industrial production had existed. The “development” that Clinton & Co. talk about centers on expanding garment and other sweatshop production. Workers in those shops are paid starvation wages, often less than the official minimum salary of roughly \$3 a day.

Half a year after the quake, only some 2 percent of pledged reconstruction aid has been delivered and less than 5 percent of the rubble has been removed. Aid was never the point of the U.S. intervention into Haiti. The International Executive Committee of the International Communist League issued an April 27 statement repudiating our initial position justifying the U.S. imperialist troop presence as essential to aid, a social-patriotic betrayal of Marxist principle. We wrote: “The U.S. military invasion was designed

NOTICE

Workers Vanguard skips alternate issues in June, July and August.

Our next issue will be dated August 27.

In Honor of Comrade Joe Verret

Founding Member of Spartacist League

Our comrade Joe Verret died from leukemia in Los Angeles on March 30. He was a founding member of the Spartacist League in 1966 and a respected leading cadre of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist). A memorial meeting in his honor was held in Los Angeles on June 12. A salute from the Chicago Local stressed that he would be “missed by those comrades who never even met him but have benefited from his interventions through the years. Joe was of the generation of Southern young white radicals who ‘defied Dixie’ and found their way to revolutionary Marxism.”

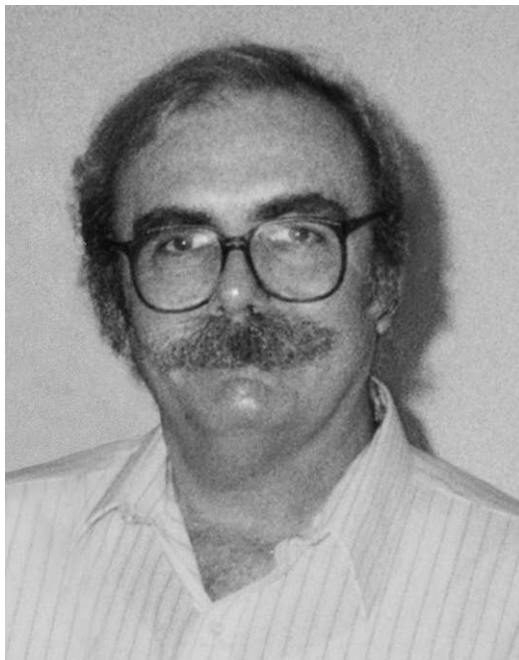
A native of New Orleans, Joe was motivated deeply by the need to fight for a third American revolution that would open the road to black freedom in an egalitarian socialist society. In the Deep South under Dixiecrat rule, Joe carried out our work under some of the most difficult circumstances an American communist could face. To this day, the open shop South is a bastion of racist reaction and a sword of Damocles over labor’s struggles.

Joe was at the core of our Southern perspectives for many years but was not the least provincial. His voracious intellectual appetite was renowned. As Bob from Paris wrote, recalling a time when he and Joe were comrades in Britain, whatever Joe read “became the subject of often wide-ranging discussions with other comrades regarding all questions human. The fact he took an interest in so many questions encouraged us to do so too.” Joe played a leading role in establishing the Spartacist League/Britain and made the main political presentation to its 1978 founding conference. Patrick, who worked with Joe in London in the early years, wrote to us of Joe’s “determination and strength of character.” During a scare campaign against the Irish Republican Army, Patrick was fired from his job in London, and Joe was eager to pursue the fight against his victimization. Patrick stated, “He knew racism when he saw it.”

Although Joe left our organization in 2000, he continued to work with comrades through the Prometheus Research Library. He also became, increasingly, a valued mentor for younger comrades of the L.A. Local. As the PRL Librarian observed, Joe was an enormous piece of party history wrapped up in one man. At the memorial, Barry, who worked with Joe for many years, noted that in Joe’s collaborations with *Workers Vanguard*, he sought to highlight contradictions and changes in social reality. In his last contribution (“Notes on New Orleans,” WV No. 955, 26 March), Joe underlined how the mili-



Gloria Verret addressing June 12 memorial meeting in Los Angeles.



Verret Family

1945–2010

tary/police clampdown on New Orleans in the wake of Hurricane Katrina exposed the brutal, racist reality behind the facade of bourgeois democracy.

As Joe’s longtime friend and comrade Corky wrote, “Joe left the organization for a time, but we and Joe were able to reconcile and he contributed, in spite of his illness, to WV and gave some internal classes to the organization. So Joe died as both he and we would have it—a Trotskyist.” We reprint below excerpts from the speeches by Gene Herson, Joe’s wife Gloria Verret, and comrades Reuben, Benny and Carla.

Gene Herson: We are here today to remember and honor our comrade Joe Verret, a revolutionary, a founding member of the Spartacist League and a leading cadre of our organization from the day he joined in 1965.

Joe was a fighter—politically as a revolutionary and personally. He fought to the end, enduring multiple bone marrow transplants and a final round of chemo in an effort to see his daughter, Jasmine, graduate from high school this June. His death after a four-year battle with leukemia is a grave loss for our party.

It is difficult to capture the breadth and experience of this comrade. He could be patient and understanding, a good and careful listener, and he could be rock-hard politically and crusty and tenacious—even at times downright cantankerous. He came to be known in the party as the “ole Cajun alligator.”

Joe was born in New Orleans on 11 December 1945. His father came out of Cajun country, picked peppers on the Avery Island plantation and was later a member of the CIO’s Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers union, where he was involved in a 1947 strike where black workers played a leading role. Joe’s dad’s stories about being a union member in the open shop Jim Crow South made a deep impression.

Joe had immense capacity, and diverse interests. He was a communist and talented mathematician. He listened to all kinds of music and loved jazz. He was an enthusiastic cook, creating complicated and exotic dishes. And then there was his wicked sense of humor. Joe and Gloria were always gracious hosts. A teacher by profession, he was an educator in the party. From the time he joined, he helped recruit to the party many of the young people radicalized during the Vietnam War.

This was a time when youth in the U.S. were becoming radicalized in the midst of developments in the civil rights movement, growing opposition to the Vietnam

War and the emergence of the New Left. Political organizations were breaking up, like the pro-Mao Progressive Labor Movement, later becoming Progressive Labor Party (PL), which originated in a split from the pro-Soviet Communist Party. And there were the split-offs of the Young People’s Socialist League, the youth group of the reformist, anti-Communist, witch-hunting Socialist Party (SP).

Joe was a member of the American Socialist Organizing Committee (ASOC), a left split from the SP. Joe met comrades from the SL at an ASOC conference in Baltimore, I believe, and began corresponding from New Orleans. Joe understood the need to organize a revolutionary party based on the program of Trotskyism. This meant defending the gains of the Bolshevik-led Russian October Revolution. Joe was won over on the necessity to stand for the unconditional defense of deformed workers states like China and Cuba against imperialism and capitalist counterrevolution and to fight for a workers political revolution to oust the anti-revolutionary bureaucracy whose policies endanger those gains and undermine revolution internationally. These were crucial lessons which grounded Joe as an effective revolutionary leader.

So during this period Joe rigorously studied these central political questions and became solid on the fundamentals of Marxism and Leninism, including the struggle by Leon Trotsky and the International Left Opposition against the degeneration of the Russian Revolution, presided over by Joseph Stalin with his anti-revolutionary dogma of “socialism in one country.”

In 1965, Joe joined the Spartacists and continued to try to recruit the best ASOC members. At the same time, Joe was writing to the SL national office about the black protests going on in Bogalusa, Louisiana, and the Deacons for Defense and Justice, which organized armed self-defense patrols to protect civil rights workers and black neighborhoods against KKK terror. Joe knew firsthand that the civil rights movement was not just Martin Luther King’s pacifism, as the bourgeois press and many left groups would propagate, so Joe offered to write an article about this which appeared in *Spartacist* (“Report from New Orleans,” *Spartacist* No. 8, November-December 1966).

Meanwhile, ASOC was disintegrating, with disputes between various shades of “third campers,” who considered capitalism and Stalinism as twin evils. On 26 April 1966, Joe resigned from ASOC with a statement declaring, “I HAVE JOINED SPARTACIST.” That Labor Day in Chicago, Joe attended the founding conference of the Spartacist League and was elected an alternate member of our Central Committee. Joe went to work as the Spartacist organizer in New Orleans. But it was more like organizing and politically intervening in the entire Gulf region. In one letter to New York, Joe reported, “Arrived yesterday in Houston after four days spent in Austin at the SDS NC [Students for a Democratic Society National Committee] there. I plan to be back in New Orleans on Thursday, leaving there after a day or so for a SSOC [Southern Student Organizing Committee] high school conference in Atlanta, returning to New O. via Tallahassee.”

Joe was well known and respected in the New Orleans left. Our small group was often involved in united-front defense work, including with black militants in the left wing of the Southern civil rights movement. There was one united-front defense protest with SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) in 1968 to protest the cop killing of a black youth, after the NAACP called off a planned march. The protest came on the heels of Martin Luther King’s assassination and a massive police presence was expected. Our comrades contacted Charles Sims of the Deacons for Defense and requested assistance. Joe recalled in a class he gave to comrades here in Los Angeles: “It’s us and SNCC and it’s like hundreds of cops are circling the demonstration.... I don’t think we would have done it without the Deacons; we would have just probably gotten beaten up.”

Joe’s communist work in the South was dangerous. For over two years, beginning in 1966, the New Orleans Spartacist League local was infiltrated by three state

agents and informers, who did their best to get “evidence” that the SL was engaged in or advocated violent or illegal activities. But the 1967 Louisiana Joint Legislative Committee on Un-American Activities Report No. 9 on “The Spartacist League and Certain Other Communist Activities in South Louisiana” acknowledged that the agents had never heard anyone in our organization so much as joke about violence. This is a testimony to the scrupulous work conducted under Joe’s leadership. An internal party circular at the time noted, “The report is not a bad recruiting pamphlet for us,” as it shows us to be genuine Marxists committed to socialist revolution and working-class rule.

In August of 1967, the cops arrested three SL members, including a leading black woman comrade, Shirley, who was making a Southern tour, along with a friend. They were arrested under the Louisiana vagrancy law after returning from an all-night drive from Atlanta. The comrades were facing up to six months in jail and hundreds of dollars in fines. The SL mounted a defiant defense campaign, which was ultimately successful. Joe led the comrades in organizing defense efforts in this and other cases.

As the organizer of the branch, Joe was particularly targeted. He was physically attacked by an undercover cop at a campus snack bar, suffering a chipped tooth and broken glasses. Joe told L.A. comrades years later, “I can tell you that when I would get death threats, I would be afraid. I spent weeks checking around the hood of my car to make sure it hadn’t been wired for bombs. But it’s a question of how you manage your fear, and the party’s program is what gives you the ability to manage that.”



Verret Family

Joe in Vietnam with his books. Joe worked on *G.I. Voice*, newsletter initiated by Spartacist supporters in Army during Vietnam War.

During this period, Joe was intervening in an anti-Vietnam War group, one that was supposed to be open to all those who opposed the war. The pro-Mao Stalinist PL was also in this group, but could not defend its politics against the Spartacist League. PL resorted to Stalinist dirty tricks and organizational maneuvers to dodge the SL’s Trotskyist program. When PL pulled a purge effort, Joe countered with a leaflet, “Moscow Trials in New Orleans,” exposing PL. PL succeeded in purging the SL and converted the antiwar group into an organization ironically named the Movement for a Democratic Society, welcoming anarchists and other anti-Marxists.

Joe understood that recruiting to the party meant rigorous education and training. One comrade Joe recruited, who went on to do communist work in the United Auto Workers, recalled Joe training her and a crew of disparate youth. She wrote:

“I don’t know who else could have taken on the training and education of this unpromising and unlikely bunch. I personally had been a member of the I.S. [International Socialists] without ever seeing an I.S. newspaper, without reading a word of Lenin or Marx, never heard of Shachtman, and had no idea that the I.S. put a pox on both houses in the Vietnam War. “He assigned and laid out an ambitious syllabus of reading for our study group sessions. Soon, he even made us present and lead the discussions. He was an infinitely patient and challenging teacher. He was serious about building a Trotskyist party and managed to make us serious about it too.”

Through all of this, Joe was also carrying out his work as a national leader on the SL Central Committee,

keeping an eye on the work of the party and comrades around the country. Joe was elected to the Central Committee as a full member in 1969.

That same year, at the height of the Vietnam War, he was drafted into the Army. Joe followed the SL’s policy laid out in “On Draft Resistance: You Will Go!” (*Spartacist* No. 11, March-April 1968). Counterposed to the largely student “hell no, we won’t go!” protesters, as Marxists we joined our class brothers and sisters in the military to win them to our class-struggle program. Joe, along with other comrades, like Reuben who is here today, worked on the *G.I. Voice* newsletter beginning in 1969, urging soldiers to exercise their democratic right to protest against U.S. imperialism’s dirty war. The publication was infused with a *class* analysis and connected the repression in the military with the oppression and exploitation of the working class and the oppression of blacks.

Joe, a well-known red, was ordered by the Army to keep redoing basic training in Louisiana *for a year!* He told me a story about how two officers took him on a long drive to a remote part of the base in the bayous. He didn’t know if he was coming back from this. After asking him some questions, they brought him back to his barracks. And he went when they shipped him to Vietnam for a six-month hitch. Just after he got there, his weapon was taken away and he was given a desk job.

Throughout his political life, Joe intervened on a broad range of domestic and international questions in the party. This included playing an important role in the party’s work on the fight for black liberation. In 1974, at the Fourth National Conference of the Spartacist League, he served on the Black Commission. A year earlier, he had written a key document on the Russian question, focusing on guerrilla movements and the formation of the deformed workers states.

Joe was a member of the London Spartacist Group, which was set up in 1976. Joe played a leading role in the founding of the Spartacist League/Britain in 1978, giving the key report on building and transforming the section. Joe also played a prominent role in a 1985 internal party discussion on slogans against apartheid in South Africa.

In 1979, at our First International Conference, Joe was elected a full member of the International Executive Committee, the leading body of the international Spartacist tendency, now International Communist League. In the late ’70s and early ’80s he played a leading role in both our Canadian and British sections, including serving as National Chairman of the Trotskyist League of Canada. Joe’s key fights in that section were “centrally against a narrow circle existence,” as one comrade there recalled, and on the Russian question as Cold War II heated up. He was also a member of the Central Committee of the Spartacist League/Britain.

Joe was also stationed in the Spartacist League of Australia and New Zealand for several weeks in 1980 as a representative of the International Secretariat. John, who had been in our Austin branch and collaborated with Joe in the ’60s, was in the Australian section when Joe got there and remembered Joe

“taking apart a leaflet that the Melbourne Local wrote which we had thought was pretty good. The title was ‘Hate Carter, Khomeini, Scabs.’ Joe pointed out that in the United States such a title might not be a bad thing at the time. The problem here was that it was indistinguishable from the position of any good social democrat. I think his trip at that time was the key to the Australians [comrades] *beginning* to recognize that the main enemy of the Australian working class and oppressed is those who rule *Australia*.”

After further international work, Joe returned to the U.S. in 1981 and served on the SL/U.S. Political Bureau during his brief stay in our center.

Joe led our former Atlanta Local from 1983 until 1996. In Atlanta, he was part of the leadership of a Partisan Defense Committee-initiated labor/black mobilization to counter a Klan provocation against Martin Luther King Day on 21 January 1989. It was one of the hairiest actions I have been involved in. We brought out more of a crowd than we expected, but were *very* thin on marshals for maintaining order and security. Afterward, Joe and I had a drink together, just looked at each other and knew it could have gone very dif-

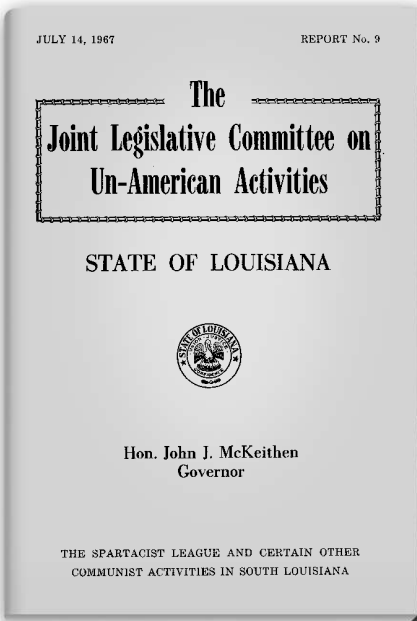
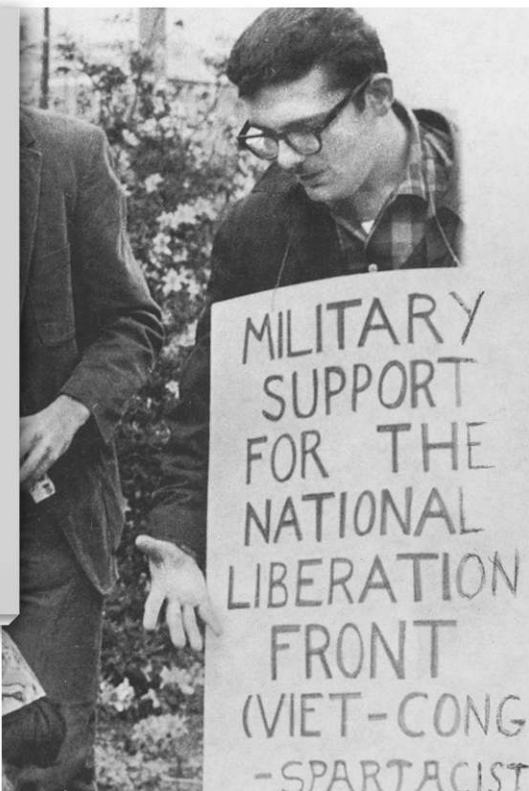


Photo of Joe carrying sign in support of Vietnamese Revolution, as it appeared in July 1967 State of Louisiana report.



Joint Legislative Committee on Un-American Activities

ferently. Joe always had a hard-nosed sense of social reality in America, a product of being a communist fighter in the South.

In 1996, Joe transferred to Los Angeles, where he spent the rest of his life. Joe resigned from the SL in 2000, and this, I think, was unfortunate. The *way* this happened was unfortunate. I made it my business to get out to L.A. to say that to him in person before he died and also let him know that many other comrades felt that way. What disturbs me is the *manner* in which this was handled, even if the outcome would have been the same. But this has to be placed in political perspective. As the main resolution passed by the Thirteenth National Conference of the SL/U.S. stated:

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

The Spartacist League is the longest continually existing revolutionary Marxist organization. We are going on 45 years as a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist-Trotskyist party dedicated to the emancipation of the working class and the oppressed by abolishing capitalism through worldwide workers revolution. Joe was a key part of this from the beginning.

The *Workers Vanguard* article on the conference [“Dog Days of the Post-Soviet Period,” WV No. 948, 4 December 2009] made the point that “In the past period we have certainly made errors, which we struggle to understand and correct without demonizing comrades.” The point is to approach political questions based on an objective assessment of the concretes and reality and on a programmatic basis. When I last talked with Joe, this was his disposition.

After he resigned, Joe continued to work with the Prometheus Research Library. Then, as a sympathizer, he became increasingly close to the party again. He contributed to and tried to correct *Workers Vanguard* articles. He was an especially valued mentor to the Los Angeles comrades. In April 2009, recognizing Joe’s lifelong contributions and commitment to the SL, the Political Bureau voted him an honorary member of the SL/U.S.

Joe’s death is a loss for our small revolutionary party. But we have gained a great deal from his contributions, which we can build on, making our party stronger to help our cause of building a revolutionary workers party as a section of a reformed Fourth International—the cause to which he dedicated his life.

Gloria Verret: I want to thank everybody for the tributes around the country. I’m glad a lot of people got to visit Joe while he was still talking. The L.A. branch has my gratitude because I was working full-time and I have a daughter. And if I ever couldn’t do something, the organizer here and the comrades here did it. Most of all, thank you for bringing him back into the party. Despite the debilitating deterioration of the cancer, it gave him purpose; he was able to write, produce, be a part of the bigger picture that he never left in his heart.

Joe was a very shy man. Only in the party did his true colors come out, where he could be the fierce man he was. This is where he really lived his life. We would still have a lot of fun, we traveled a lot and had a lot of adventures. There are pictures over there of some of our beach trips. He never stuck his toe in the

continued on page 6

Joe Verret...

(continued from page 5)

water, hardly, but he loved to be on the edge of it and loved cooking for people. The nurses at work are sad for me and for them because I used to bring all of the leftovers. Joe cooked not for two people; he cooked for 20 people.

He also introduced me to culture because I am from South Dakota and I had none, either. He took me to the opera, the ballet. For 17 of our years we were parents to Jasmine, the light of our lives. He was an awesome dad from the very beginning.

We had some wild adventures. When we got married, there are some pictures of us—I am covered with champagne. He actually spent his wedding night next to [comrade] Kevin, who passed out next to him. Then there was the time in New York where we had our moving crew pack up all of our worldly belongings and we took them out to dinner in gratitude. And the people that stole our truck were also grateful that we packed it up nicely; they drove off to the New Jersey Turnpike. We found it later. There was a time in Chicago when he sat up bolt upright in the middle of the night holding his ear, which had been bloodied by a huge rat. I always thanked him for taking the hit that night.

One of the last things he said the week before he fell and had to go to the hospital was, “We had a good run, didn’t we?” And we did. The last four years were pretty rough. He was a fighter and underwent a lot. He went from about 230 to 150 in weight. He went from a 60-year-old working man who loved teaching and wanted to cook—he looked 90.

Joe never gave up hope that he could get back to his life—working, teaching. The thing I can get some comfort from is that he had written things for WV at the end. He was participating in his mind despite his body

Joe at Trotskyist League of Canada’s Fourth National Conference, September 1980.



The next day, when I stopped by his place with comrade Sheri, we talked about the upcoming labor/black history class on the ’30s. As originally conceived, the class was light on the black question. Joe was full of ideas for the class, so I called Don, who was giving it, handed my cell to Joe while his dog Zoey took me out for a spin. When I got back the phone was hot, the battery was dead and the class was the better for it.

At the fresh grave of the Georgian Bolshevik and Left Oppositionist Kote Tsintsadze, Trotsky contrasted to the West the harsh conditions that forged the Bolsheviks of the East—and, one might add, the American Deep South—concluding:

“The revolutionary begins where personal ambition is fully and wholly subordinated to the service of a great idea, voluntarily submitting to and merging with it.... His was the ambition of unshakable revolutionary loyalty. It should serve as a lesson to the proletarian youth.”

Benny: It is going on 37 years since I first met Joe Verret. By 1973 I’d spent three years as a student and anti-Vietnam War activist in the San Francisco Bay Area. It

Again, Joe made important contributions as part of local discussion on the changing demographics in L.A. with the growth of the Latino and Asian populations. Joe wrote: “L.A. is a really weird place relative to the rest of the U.S. The ghettoization of blacks is more intense than any other big city I know. In every sphere of social/political life the black question is buried.”

The ruling class in America faced in Joseph Verret an ardent enemy of class exploitation, with the intellect and ability to assist in putting the bourgeoisie out of business.

Carla: Joe was my comrade who was able to educate me as a Marxist in Atlanta and shaped the first ten years of my political life as a communist. In Atlanta, we fought the lingering weight of the Martin Luther King legacy in the civil rights struggle and the emerging “talented tenth” toadies that became the black elected officialdom in the wake of the civil rights movement’s defeat. We fought to recruit the best elements from historically black institutions, and elite institutions like Emory, with marginal success. We were the main axis of party intervention from Mississippi to Tennessee and Florida to North Carolina, and we generated propaganda and reportage drawing from our work from the Savannah longshore docks to the coal mines of Alabama. Joe was uniquely capable of guiding such a broad scope of work.

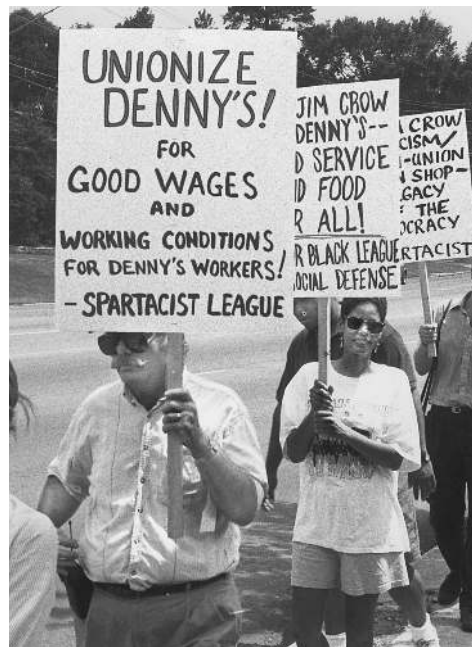
Three years after leaving Atlanta, the lessons learned there came in handy in establishing a station of Spartacist comrades in Johannesburg, South Africa, where neo-apartheid capitalism has entrenched the African National Congress nationalist regime, with South African Communist Party (SACP) Stalinists as their bloc partners. It was Joe who had already given me a primer on the origins of the SACP, the dynamics of the struggle for national liberation in South Africa, as well as in India.

I have not forgotten the demanding effort of maintaining a local collective at great distance from other locals and the comradeship we shared, through internal fights and struggles. We cooked together; we held barbecues and shared books and music and laughed quite often.

We succeeded in organizing a 3,500-strong demonstration in less than two weeks with limited forces against Ku Klux Klan lynch rope terror in downtown Atlanta, when they threatened the MLK holiday in 1989. We were able to do this because we had each learned the power of black and red, our program for mobilizing the multiracial working class in defense of blacks and all the oppressed as a cornerstone of the struggle for socialist revolution. It affirmed for many comrades that even under difficult conditions, with a clear program and a dedicated cadre, we will make inroads into the working class and lead numbers far greater than ourselves. Joe was a good teacher. ■



Left: Joe (left) in New York Spartacist contingent in El Salvador demonstration, November 1981. Right: Joe in Atlanta picket against racist discrimination at Denny’s restaurants, July 1993.



WV Photos

being ravaged. Whatever he went through, whenever he was in delirium, I would always say: do you know who I am? And he would say, yes, you are my sweetie. He always remembered me and he would always remember Jasmine and his dog.

Reuben: When I was “released from the control and custody” of the Army in 1969, I volunteered to reinforce our beleaguered New Orleans branch. But when I got there the Army had got Joe. It took 40 years before I had the opportunity to work with him.

Two projects beckoned where I could draw on his rich experience, insight and political depth. One was a party discussion on the importance of mass black incarceration, which culminated in the Black History forum I gave this past February. In and out of the hospital, facing down death, he worked for two months on the material he sent me on the forum. Example: Regarding Douglas Blackmon’s study of black convict labor in Alabama, *Slavery by Another Name*, Joe wrote:

“The author mentions that in the time that he is talking about, some large percentage of southern blacks lived on the land, that is, they were sharecroppers. And sharecropping was the real backbone of the southern system.... The end of the sharecropper system was a predecessor to the victory of the Civil Rights movement over Jim Crow racism. We should note the population of the U.S. became urban just before WWI, but the black population did not become urban until about 1960!”

It took Joe’s renowned determination and a blood transfusion to make it to that forum, stay afterwards to give me a critique and go out to dine with comrades and contacts.

was a time of the Black Panther Party and the Chicano Power movement. I spent it learning from the Spartacist League. That year my brother-in-law, Jim, and I ventured on a five-month road trip. Our return route to California was through the South and New Orleans. The New York Spartacist local put us in contact with Joe. What I remember first was Joe taking us to one of his favorite restaurants for gumbo! I remember him smiling and laughing a lot that night. In those few days Joe gave us a thumbnail sketch of New Orleans politics and of jazz music.

Driving through Louisiana and having Joe explain New Orleans was unique. Between the late ’60s and 1973 was a short span of time. But, being young and from the West Coast, one could artificially think that the civil rights movement had resolved social and legal inequalities. What I naively considered “the past” and “history” about the South was looking me in the face: broad swaths of land with blacks in overalls working them. These may not have been the plantations of yesterday but it wasn’t “the past” looking me in the eye—it was the legacy of Jim Crow! The entire experience gave me clarity of political outlook as to what Joe and the Spartacist League were fighting for—what in revolutionary politics is known as the black question, the question of social revolution.

Joe and I found ourselves in Los Angeles in the fall of 1975. We all came to indulge in following jazz music together. The young black comrades introduced us to the great jazz pianist Horace Tapscott. After maybe two years, Joe left L.A. and returned again in the mid ’90s.



Verret Family

Joe with his daughter Jasmine at L.A.’s Griffith Observatory.

Quacks...

(continued from page 2)

population stripped of access to decent public education.”

Under the Obama administration’s health care “reform,” the very insurance giants that have made U.S. health costs the highest on the planet will be raking in even more money by ripping off working people. Meanwhile, an estimated 23 million people will not be able to afford any health insurance by 2019, in addition to millions of “illegal” immigrants who are barred from receiving any benefits. The labor movement should be in the forefront of the struggle for free, quality health care for all. We fight for socialized medicine—the expropriation of the parasitic health care and drug companies—as part of the struggle for a workers government.

It is quite trendy to rage against “Big Pharma” and to turn to “natural,” “organic” and “holistic” foods, cures and lifestyles as some kind of alternative. Note, however, that the alternative medi-

cine industry is no less driven by profit. It is, in fact, a very lucrative market: Americans spent more than \$23 billion on vitamin, herbal and other supplements in 2007. More than a third of Americans use “therapies” like acupuncture, homeopathy, chiropractic and “traditional” healing methods. None of these treatments require FDA approval or any kind of certification of safety or effectiveness to be commercialized. Big Pharma is, in fact, a big player in “alternative medicine.” Some of the same companies that mass-produce drugs in huge chemical labs also churn out vitamin and herbal pills sold in bottles with rainbows, sunrises and flow-ers on their labels. Pharmaceutical giants Wyeth, Bayer HealthCare, Unilever, Novartis and GlaxoSmithKline all make or sell supplements.

Indeed, this business is so big and profitable that a number of legitimately degreed doctors and scientists prostitute their credentials to promote anti-science nonsense. The notion that vaccines cause autism was given a veneer of scientific credibility by Andrew Wakefield, a prestigious doctor from a prestigious British

hospital, in a 1988 study published in the reputable medical review *The Lancet*. His study was funded by a lawyer’s office conducting a lawsuit against a vaccine manufacturer. As the baseless rumor linking autism to measles-mumps-rubella vaccines spread throughout Britain, child vaccination rates plummeted to below 70 percent in some areas, and the country suffered waves of measles outbreaks. Twelve years after the article appeared, *The Lancet* issued a full retraction of the study. In May, Wakefield was stripped of the right to practice medicine by Britain’s General Medical Council.

Religious obscurantism and anti-scientific superstition were given an enormous boost by the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union. With bourgeois ideologues claiming that socialism is a failed experiment, and even that class struggle itself is a thing of the past, disaffection with capitalist society can take on strange colorations. Many who fear imminent ecological disaster, for instance, turn to reactionary “zero growth” and “back to nature” schemes, all the while chatting on their computers about

the evils of technology.

Our defense of science—and of the gains of the bourgeois Enlightenment in general—is intimately linked to our fight for new October Revolutions. Under an internationally planned collectivized economy, massive resources would be invested in scientific research and the means would be developed to ensure that everyone receives quality medical treatment in a timely manner.

Health also means a decent place to live, good nutrition, education in human biology, clean air, safe and decent working conditions. The capitalist profit system cannot provide this—whether in the advanced industrial countries or in the neocolonial countries of the Third World, where masses languish in hunger and dire poverty and are cut off from anything resembling modern health care. The means of production have to be ripped out of the hands of the greedy capitalist class through world socialist revolution—the only road to building a society where scientific research, technological development and all the productive forces would be put to the service of all of humanity. ■

Haiti...

(continued from page 3)

Doc,” who went on to face a popular revolt that caused him to flee the country in 1986, when others in his cabal took over.

The massive social discontent eventually led to the election of radical populist priest Jean-Bertrand Aristide, champion of the Lavalas movement, by a two-thirds majority in 1990. Virtually the entire left internationally gave this bourgeois politician political support. 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 crackdown aimed at decisively disciplining the pitilessly oppressed population” (WV No. 517, 4 January 1991). In fact, both things happened.

While the Aristide government tried to carry out such reforms as raising the miserable minimum wage, as a bourgeois regime it served the class interests of the ruling elite of sweatshop owners and landowners and their imperialist patrons. Before his election Aristide often denounced U.S. imperialism’s role in Haiti. But once in office he welcomed USAID and IMF assistance, boasting that he would “restore the World Bank’s confidence in Haiti.”

Seven months after taking office, Aristide was overthrown by the man he appointed as military chief, Raoul Cedras, who established a regime of military terror and forced Aristide into exile. Some 2,000 people were killed in the immediate aftermath. Thousands fled to the U.S. in rickety boats only to be imprisoned in

Guantánamo. In 1994, following a starvation embargo imposed by the U.S. under Clinton, American Marines invaded the country and reinstalled Aristide at bayonet point.

The condition for Aristide’s return was that he agree to a drastic austerity program, privatization of state-owned industry, massive layoffs in the public sector and the virtual abolition of import tariffs. All this he did, inducing the collapse of Haiti’s economy while setting the police, supplemented by gangs, against strikers and others. Nonetheless, his Washington overlords were not satisfied. After an interim regime under René Préval—the current nominal president—Aristide was re-elected in 2000 only to face a U.S.-led destabilization campaign. To Washington’s chagrin, Aristide developed ties with the Cuban deformed workers state, which has provided crucial medical personnel for Haiti, and with Venezuela under bourgeois populist Hugo Chávez. In 2004, “peacekeeping” troops led mainly by the U.S., Canada and France landed in Haiti and Aristide was whisked out on a U.S.-chartered jet to the Central African Republic. (He later moved to South Africa.)

Ever since the 2004 coup, the UN’s MINUSTAH troops have backed violent assaults by the Haitian police on poor communities and on demonstrations demanding Aristide’s return. UN forces have participated in a number of “anti-gang” raids on Cité Soleil, an Aristide bastion, and other slum neighborhoods in Port-au-Prince. Attacks in December 2004 and December 2006, with hundreds of troops moving into Cité Soleil by land, sea and air, left scores of residents dead. During hunger riots in 2008, UN troops fired

on crowds, killing several demonstrators.

The imperialist intervention undertaken by the Obama White House shored up this bloody occupation force while also demonstrating to the world that the U.S. continues to regard the Caribbean basin as an “American lake.” Under both George W. Bush and Barack Obama, the U.S. has expanded its military presence in Colombia, where there are now seven U.S. bases. The government of Costa Rica this month authorized the entry of 46 U.S. warships and 7,000 Marines, while the U.S.-backed government in Honduras opened a new base for American use in April. The U.S. military buildup in the region is a particular threat to the Cuban bureaucratically deformed workers state. We defend Cuba unconditionally against U.S. imperialism while fighting for a proletarian political revolution against the nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy. We demand: All U.S. military forces and bases out of the Caribbean! U.S. out of Guantánamo! U.S. imperialists: Hands off the world!

Anger at Occupation Grows

Thousands of Haitians fed up by foreign occupation and Préval’s puppet government have staged protests recently in the face of brutal repression. Demonstrations in May in Port-au-Prince brought out an estimated 30,000 people demanding free elections, a role in reconstruction efforts and the return of Aristide. Demonstrators have also called for ending the ban of his Fanmi Lavalas party, which is barred from running in the national elections scheduled for November. We defend the right of people to vote for whomever they want. We demand the right of Aristide to return to Haiti and oppose the ban on Fanmi Lavalas, despite our political opposition as Marxists to this populist party.

On May 4, after students at the State University Ethnology College in the capital held a series of protests against the occupation, MINUSTAH troops stormed the campus, firing tear gas and rubber bullets and arresting militant student leader Frantz Mathieu Junior. Faced with the growing unrest, the UN is sending 680 additional foreign policemen to augment the MINUSTAH force. The international workers movement must demand: Free all victims of military/police repression!

Unrest has spread to the countryside. On June 4, 10,000 peasants protested against the American agribusiness giant Monsanto, which had donated 475 tons of maize. They fear having to buy new seeds from Monsanto every year at prices they cannot afford. Haitian peasants have bitter memories of previous instances when the U.S. forced policies down their throats that ruined their livelihoods. After the Clinton White House compelled Haiti to drop tariffs on im-

ports, subsidized U.S. rice flooded the Haitian market, bankrupting many peasants. Earlier, the U.S. had pressured the Haitian government to wipe out the Creole pigs indigenous to the country on the pretext that they might be infected with swine flu. The U.S. substituted its own pigs, which could not survive the Haitian climate.

The only way out of the misery imposed on neocolonial Haiti lies through proletarian socialist revolution throughout the Caribbean and, crucially, in the North American imperialist heartland. But the social base for workers revolution is exceedingly narrow in a country as destitute and ground down as Haiti. Struggles by the Haitian masses against imperialist depredation must be linked to class and social struggle in the neighboring Dominican Republic, where Haitians are a sizable component of the proletariat, and elsewhere in the Caribbean. It is especially crucial that workers in the belly of the U.S. imperialist beast—and in Canada as well—wage class struggle against their “own” capitalist rulers.

Our perspective—for a workers and peasants government in Haiti as part of a socialist federation of the Caribbean—is inextricably linked to the fight for the revolutionary overthrow of U.S. imperialism. In diaspora, Haitians, Jamaicans and others can play a crucial role as a bridge to the rest of the American proletariat, particularly to other black workers. The key is to build revolutionary workers parties—sections of a reformed Fourth International—to lead the workers in this struggle. ■

SPARTACIST LEAGUE/U.S.

Local Directory and Public Offices

Web site: www.icl-fi.org • E-mail address: vanguard@tiac.net

National Office: Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116, (212) 732-7860

Chicago Box 6441, Main PO, Chicago, IL 60680, (312) 563-0441
chicagospartacist@sbcglobal.net
Public Office: Sat. 2-5 p.m., 222 S. Morgan (Buzzer 23)

Los Angeles Box 29574, Los Feliz Sta., Los Angeles, CA 90029, (213) 380-8239
slsycla@sbcglobal.net
Public Office: Sat. 2-5 p.m., 3806 Beverly Blvd., Room 215

New York Box 3381, Church St. Sta., New York, NY 10008, (212) 267-1025
nysl@tiac.net
Public Office: 1st and 3rd Sat. of every month, 1-4 p.m., and by appointment, 299 Broadway, Suite 318

Oakland Box 29497, Oakland, CA 94604, (510) 839-0851
slbayarea@sbcglobal.net
Public Office: Sat. 1-5 p.m., 1634 Telegraph, 3rd Floor

TROTSKYIST LEAGUE OF CANADA/LIGUE TROTSKYSTE DU CANADA


Toronto Box 7198, Station A, Toronto, ON M5W 1X8, (416) 593-4138
spartcan@on.aibn.com

Vancouver Box 2717, Main P.O., Vancouver, BC V6B 3X2, (604) 687-0353
trotskyist_vancouver@shawcable.com

A Spartacist Pamphlet \$1.00

Black History and the Class Struggle

No. 6



TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE AND THE HAITIAN REVOLUTION

No. 6 \$1 (32 pages)

Black History is sent to all Workers Vanguard subscribers.

Make checks payable/mail to: Spartacist Pub. Co., Box 1377 GPO New York, NY 10116

India...

(continued from page 1)

the UPA government banned the CPI (Maoist) under draconian “anti-terrorist” laws. Others have been targeted merely for speaking out against state repression. Arundhati Roy herself has been investigated for prosecution under the Special Public Security Act following another *Outlook India* article reporting on her visit to a Maoist-controlled area. Meanwhile left-wing activists are gunned down by police in extrajudicial “encounter killings.” Protest the state witchhunt! Down with Operation Green Hunt!

Permanent Revolution vs. Stalinist Class Collaboration

The International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) denounces the Indian government’s war against the CPI (Maoist) and adivasi villagers, which is being waged at the behest of the venal Indian bourgeoisie and the international mining magnates. The working class in India and internationally must take up the defense of the Maoists and tribal peoples against the bloody state offensive.

But the political strategy of the CPI (Maoist) provides no way forward for India’s oppressed masses. Like all the many variants of Indian Stalinism, the Maoists seek an alliance with a mythical “progressive” wing of the capitalist class in the “first stage” of a “two-stage” revolution. Party general secretary Ganapathy made this explicit in an interview:

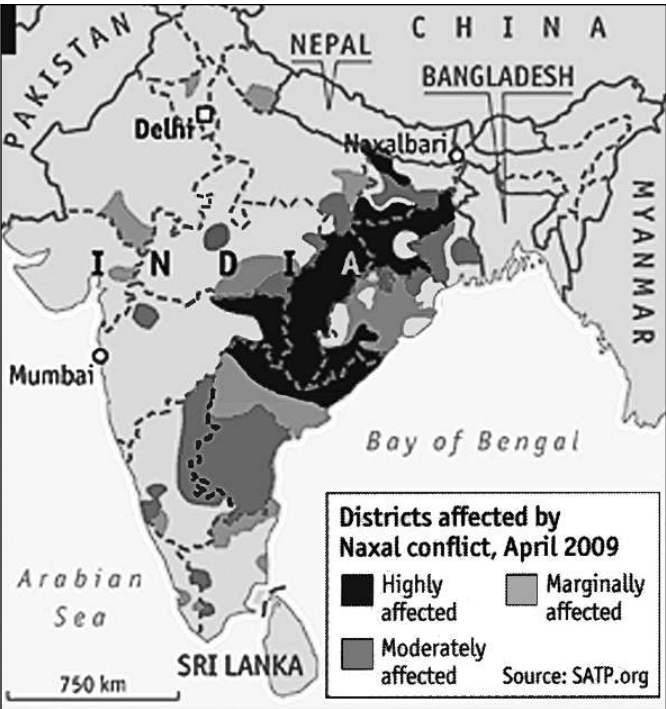
“We have a clear-cut understanding to unify all revolutionary, democratic, progressive, patriotic forces and all oppressed social communities including oppressed nationalities against imperialism, feudalism and comprador bureaucratic capitalism. Our New Democratic United Front (UF) consists of four democratic classes, i.e. workers, peasants, urban petty-bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie.”
—*Sanhati*, January 2010

The strategy of allying with a wing of the bourgeois exploiters—whether dubbed “national,” “patriotic” or “progressive”—has produced defeat after defeat for the workers and oppressed, in India and around the world. *All* wings of the Indian capitalist class are tied by a thousand threads to the imperialist powers of Europe, North America and Japan; *none* are in any sense potential allies of the working class and oppressed. In *The State and Revolution* and many other works, V.I. Lenin, leader of the October 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, savaged the idea that the class interests of the bourgeoisie and proletariat are anything other than irreconcilable.

The Russian workers were able to take power in 1917 thanks to the Bolsheviks’ intransigent struggle for class independence from the capitalists. The result was a workers state, a revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat supported by the peasantry. Key to cementing the workers’ alliance with the peasants was the Bolsheviks’ support for peasant seizures of the landed estates and the division of the land among those who worked it. The Bolsheviks also won widespread support among the peasantry through their revolutionary



Maoist Naxalite guerrillas (above) are active in one-third of India’s administrative districts. Map at right shows India’s “red corridor” in the eastern and central regions of the country.



opposition to the first interimperialist war, in which countless hundreds of thousands were killed among the working-class and peasant base of the army.

The perspective of permanent revolution, first developed by Leon Trotsky during the 1905 Russian Revolution and vindicated by the October 1917 proletarian seizure of power, outlines most clearly the road to liberation for the Indian masses. Like tsarist Russia, present-day India is marked by combined and uneven development, with stark contrasts of

What is required is the smashing of capitalist class rule and the creation of a workers and peasants government. The Indian proletariat is the only social force that can lead such a struggle. Due to its central role in production—where its collective labor in the factories, mines, transport systems and other industries is exploited by the capitalists for profit—the working class has vast potential power.

The essential instrument for victory is an internationalist Leninist vanguard party of the working class. Rejecting the

and hunger, including through the collectivization and modernization of agriculture. Success in this endeavor hinges on the resources that would be made available by socialist revolution in the imperialist heartlands.

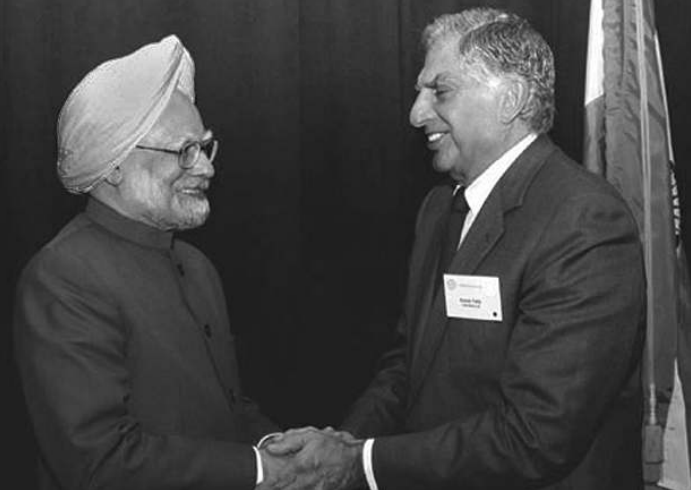
A revolutionary workers party in India would champion the cause of all the down-trodden, including the rural and urban poor, oppressed castes and tribal peoples. It would intransigently fight for the liberation of India’s hideously oppressed women and defend persecuted national and religious minorities, notably Muslims targeted by Hindu chauvinism. Such a party can only be forged through political struggle against the class-collaborationist programs of the various Stalinist organizations. The political outlook of the petty-bourgeois CPI (Maoist)—a species of “reformism with guns”—provides no alternative to the overt parliamentary reformism of the longstanding mass Stalinist parties, the Communist Party of India and Communist Party of India (Marxist).

Indian Stalinism’s History of Betrayal

The CPI (Maoist) is the largest of India’s remaining Naxalite organizations, named for the Naxalbari district of West Bengal, the site of a major peasant revolt in 1967. Formed largely through splits from the CPI (Marxist)—which itself issued from the unitary CPI a few years earlier—the Naxalite movement attracted thousands of educated urban youth misled by the “revolutionary” rhetoric of Mao’s China during the late 1960s. In opposing the crass parliamentarism of the CPI and CPI (Marxist), these youth abandoned the cities for the countryside and upheld a perspective of peasant-based “people’s war.”

The initial peasant uprisings were largely defeated by the early 1970s and China later renounced the Naxalites. The Indian Maoists soon fractured into dozens of competing outfits, some of which ended up centering their activities in urban slum districts rather than the countryside. Today the urban-based Maoist groups are in considerable decline and disarray. The largest remaining rural-based groups united in 2004 to form the CPI (Maoist), setting the stage for the present expanded insurgency.

Indian Stalinism has a long and sordid



Indian prime minister Manmohan Singh (left) greets Ratan Tata, chairman of Tata industrial conglomerate, during U.S.-India Business Council meeting in Washington, D.C., November 2009.

wealth and poverty, modern industries directly abutting unspeakable squalor. Myriad forms of special oppression—based on sex, caste, nationality, religion—are among the heritages of a pre-industrial past that were reinforced and deepened by nearly two centuries of brutal British colonial rule. This culminated with the British partition of the Indian subcontinent into India and Pakistan, which unleashed communalist slaughter and the forced migration of millions of Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus. Since independence, and mainly under the rule of the nominally secular Congress Party, the Indian bourgeoisie has continued to fan the flames of every kind of murderous division.

National and social liberation for the masses cannot be carried out by, or in alliance with, India’s capitalist exploiters.

centrality of the working class, the CPI (Maoist) bases itself on the rural peasantry. But the peasant masses, highly stratified and dispersed in small villages all over India, are incapable of cohering an independent social policy. There are only two decisive classes in capitalist society: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The peasants are part of a heterogeneous intermediate layer, the petty bourgeoisie. Their immediate felt interests are centrally proprietary, for the defense or acquisition of land. Thus peasant parties are at bottom pro-bourgeois or bourgeois, even though sections of some of such parties may be won to the side of the revolutionary proletariat.

Especially in countries like India where the working class is numerically smaller than the peasantry, the question of agrarian revolution is a key component of the program for proletarian state power. The working class must win the support of the masses of poor and/or landless peasants, including through demands for expropriation of the landlords and land to the tiller, while seeking as much as possible to neutralize the middle and upper strata of the peasantry.

Freedom from the imperialist yoke, the destruction of all forms of oppression, economic development in the interests of the vast majority—these urgent tasks require proletarian revolution and its extension to the advanced capitalist countries of North America, West Europe and Japan. A socialist revolution in India would reverberate throughout South Asia and the world over, finding powerful allies in the proletariat of the imperialist centers as well as that of the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state. A crucial task of an Indian workers state supported by the peasantry would be to generate the material basis to end poverty



September 2009: Laborers in village near southern city of Hyderabad break coal to be used for steel production.

Spartacus Youth Club Class Series

CHICAGO

Women’s Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

Wednesday, August 4, 6:30 p.m.

222 S. Morgan St.
(Between Adams and Jackson—
Ring #23 on buzzer)

Information and readings:
(312) 563-0441 • chicagosyc@sbcglobal.net

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

history of class collaboration. As early as 1926, under the guidance of the Indian pseudo-Marxist adventurer M.N. Roy (then a close ally of Stalin and Nikolai Bukharin in the leadership of the Communist International), the CPI began building a cross-class “Peasants’ and Workers’ Party” in Bengal. This party in turn operated as a pressure group on the bourgeois Indian National Congress of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. Roy urged the CPI to go even further and create “a loyal nationalist party with a radical republican programme (Peoples’ Party)” (cited in *History of the Communist Movement in India*, Volume 1, Communist Party of India [Marxist], 2005).

From the mid 1930s on, the CPI time and again gave political support to the bourgeois-nationalist Congress. For a period during World War II, they even renounced the struggle for Indian independence in favor of an alliance with the “democratic” British imperialist oppressors. (For more detail, see “The ‘Quit India’ Movement 50 Years On—Stalinist Alliance with Churchill Betrayed Indian Revolution,” *Workers Hammer* Nos. 131 and 132, September/October and November/December 1992.)

Today the CPI and CPI (Marxist) act as overt supporters of Indian capitalism. Since 1977, these Stalinists have controlled the state government in West Bengal, wielding its repressive powers in defense of private property and profit against the poor and oppressed. In recent years, the “Left Front” regime headed by the CPI (Marxist) has repeatedly seized land from the peasants at the behest of Indian and international capitalist corporations, provoking widespread popular resistance.

In December 2006 the West Bengal government expropriated land in the Singur district on behalf of Tata Motors, one of India’s largest capitalist conglomerates. Those who resisted were severely beaten and arrested while a young woman activist was brutally raped and murdered. The following March, thousands of police and armed CPI (Marxist) cadre assaulted peasants resisting a forced expropriation in Nandigram. At least 14 were killed and over 200 injured. (See “India: The Nandigram Massacre,” *Spartacist Canada* No. 159, Winter 2008/2009, reprinted in WV No. 929, 30 January 2009.)

More recently, the West Bengal regime has mobilized police to attack adivasi villagers protesting expropriations in Lalgarh on behalf of the Jindal Steel and Power conglomerate. And today the CPI and CPI (Marxist) support the central UP government’s bloody offensive against the Maoists. Such is the political logic of the program of “revolution by stages”: the masses remain brutally oppressed by capitalism, and the second, supposedly socialist, stage never comes.

From the beginning, the Naxalite forces have upheld a variant of the same Stalinist class collaborationism. Calling for a “People’s Democratic Revolution,” founding leader Charu Mazumdar wrote in 1970 that “the majority of the business community will come with us. They are a large part of the national bourgeoisie” (quoted in Sumanta Banerjee, *India’s Simmering Revolution: The Naxalite Uprising*, 1980).

While talking of “worker-peasant unity,” in retreating to the countryside the Naxalites turned away from the working class and transformed themselves into a petty-bourgeois, peasant-based movement both in composition and political outlook. Their model is the “people’s war” waged by Mao’s Chinese Communist Party in the 1930s and ’40s. Mao’s retreat from the cities to the countryside followed the defeat of the 1925-27 Chinese Revolution, during which Stalin and his henchmen—prominently including M. N. Roy—ordered the Chinese Communists to subordinate the workers to the bourgeois-nationalist Guomindang. The result was a bloodbath of tens of thousands of Communist-led workers in Shanghai and other cities.

In polemicizing against the peasant-based perspective of the Chinese Stalinists

in the 1930s and upholding the independent class mobilization of the urban proletariat, Leon Trotsky wrote:

“The peasant movement is a mighty revolutionary factor insofar as it is directed against the large landowners, militarists, feudalists, and usurers. But in the peasant movement itself are very powerful proprietary and reactionary tendencies, and at a certain stage it can become hostile to the workers and sustain that hostility already equipped with arms. He who forgets about the dual nature of the peasantry is not a Marxist. The advanced workers must be taught to distinguish from among ‘communist’ labels and banners the actual social processes.”

—“Peasant War in China and the Proletariat” (September 1932)

It was only under the highly exceptional circumstances of the immediate post-WWII period that Mao’s peasant-based People’s Liberation Army was able to take the cities and smash capitalist class rule in 1949. These included the collapse of the corrupt Guomindang forces, the absence of the working class as an immediate contender for power and, crucially, the existence of the Soviet Union, a bureaucratically degenerated workers state, as an economic and military lifeline. From the outset Maoist China was not a “New Democracy” based on a “bloc of four classes”—the standard parlance of the Stalinists—but a form of the dictatorship of the proletariat. But the Chinese workers state was bureaucratically



October 2009: Auto workers protest in Gurgaon, outside New Delhi, after worker was killed in clash with strikebreakers.

deformed from its inception, ruled by a nationalist bureaucracy hostile to the independent struggles of the working class and the necessary perspective of international socialist revolution. This was shown clearly in China’s counterrevolutionary alliance with U.S. imperialism against the Soviet Union during the 1970s and ’80s.

Despite the bureaucratic rule of Mao and his successors, the Chinese Revolution was a beacon for millions of oppressed toilers in Asia. China’s collectivized economy has brought immense gains for workers, peasants and women, not least an end to centuries of chronic starvation in the countryside. This stands in stark contrast to developments in capitalist India. Today, U.S. imperialism sees India as a strategic ally in its drive to overturn the gains of the Chinese Revolution. The ICL stands for the unconditional military defense of China against imperialism and counterrevolution. At the same time, we call for a proletarian political revolution to oust the nationalist, Stalinist ruling caste in Beijing and create a regime based on workers democracy and revolutionary internationalism.

The Revolutionary Potential of the Indian Working Class

As we wrote in the 1998 ICL “Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program”:

“The partial character of the anti-capitalist revolutions in the colonial world leads us to reaffirm the Marxist-Leninist concept of the proletariat as the only social force capable of making the socialist revolution. The ICL fundamentally opposes the Maoist doctrine, rooted in Menshevism and Stalinist reformism, which rejects the

1927 Shanghai massacre, marking defeat of Second Chinese Revolution, was prepared by liquidation of Communist Party into bourgeois-nationalist Guomindang, a policy ordered by Stalin and his henchmen.



vanguard role of the working class and substitutes peasant-based guerrilla warfare as the road to socialism.”

—*Spartacist* (English-language edition) No. 54, Spring 1998

The Naxalite movement misdirected a generation of leftist Indian youth, who abandoned the struggles of the urban working class in favor of the chimera of rural guerrillaism. The bankruptcy of this perspective is even more evident today with the substantial growth of the Indian proletariat.

While over two-thirds of the population still lives in rural areas and slightly over half the workforce is engaged in agriculture, both the urban population and manu-

recent strikes and occupations have been “fueled by the discontent of workers, many of whom say they haven’t partaken of the past decade’s prosperity.” Last year alone, major strikes hit companies from the domestic automaker Mahindra & Mahindra to plants owned by Finland’s Nokia, South Korea’s Hyundai and the Nestlé food conglomerate.

In September 2009, a six-week strike by over 2,000 workers at an Indian-owned auto supplier in the Gurgaon-Manesar industrial belt near Delhi left the U.S. auto giant Ford without transmission parts, leading to production shutdowns at plants in Canada and the U.S. More than 100,000 workers at upwards of 70 plants in the Gurgaon-Manesar area joined a one-day walkout to protest the murder of a striker by company thugs. The direct impact of the strike on Ford’s North American operations underlines the need for active solidarity by U.S. and Canadian workers with their class brothers and sisters in India.

In the first few months of this year, hundreds of thousands of telecommunications workers and coal miners struck against privatization and job cuts, while unions staged a countrywide one-day general strike on April 27 against soaring price rises for essential goods. An even larger general strike on July 5, organized by a tacit alliance of the Stalinist Left Front parties and the Hindu-chauvinist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), was called to protest rising fuel prices.

The Maoists *at best* confine the restive urban working class to the role of passive spectator of their rural “people’s war,” leaving the workers in the clutches of the overtly pro-capitalist Left Front parties and bourgeois forces like Congress and the BJP. Meanwhile, the CPI (Maoist) has extended the Naxalite policy of “annihilation of class enemies”—the executions of individual landlords and state agents—to the kidnapping and killing of cadres of rival Stalinist parties, including union leaders, whom they label “social fascists.” Such murderous violence against other left and working-class parties, so typical of Stalinism, is repugnant and must be condemned.

The Maoists also regularly seek alliances with one or another openly capitalist party. During the protests against the Singur and Nandigram atrocities, they made a scarcely concealed alliance with the right-wing Trinamool (Grassroots) Congress of Mamata Banerjee, the main

continued on page 10

WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League

- ☐ \$10/22 issues of *Workers Vanguard* (includes English-language *Spartacist* and *Black History and the Class Struggle*) international rates: \$25/22 issues—Airmail \$10/22 issues—Seamail
- ☐ \$2/6 introductory issues of *Workers Vanguard* (includes English-language *Spartacist*)
- ☐ \$2/4 issues of *Espartaco* (en español) (includes Spanish-language *Spartacist*)
- ☐ I would like to contribute \$ _____ to the production of *Workers Vanguard*.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Apt. # _____

Phone (_____) _____ E-mail _____

962

Make checks payable/mail to: Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

India...

(continued from page 9)

parliamentary rival of the Left Front in West Bengal. Having joined the UPA government in New Delhi, Banerjee & Co. have now endorsed the armed offensive against the Maoists.

Mass Plebeian Revolt in Nepal

The logic of Maoist class collaboration has played out clearly just to the north in the Himalayan country of Nepal. Over the past two decades, Nepal has been wracked by a deepgoing revolt centered on the oppressed peasantry and again led by Maoist forces. A major impetus for this struggle was opposition to the monarchy. By 2006, Maoist forces, which significantly include a large number of women, controlled up to 80 percent of the countryside, where they enacted significant social reforms including legal equality for women, an end to the caste system, the establishment of schools and road construction. Following a period of mass demonstrations including a prolonged general strike in 2006, they were able to entrench themselves in the capital, Kathmandu.

The Maoists then entered a bourgeois coalition government, and in 2008 emerged as the largest party in parliamentary elections that led to the end of the monarchy. After leaving the government a year later following a standoff over the dismissal of the army chief, this May the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)—UCPN (Maoist)—launched an “indefinite general strike” for a new “national unity government.” The strike was soon abandoned, and the Maoists then signed a deal to continue negotiations toward a new government, while a rival Stalinist-derived outfit, the Unified Marxist-Leninists, remained in the interim regime. Maoist guerillas are confined to camps, nominally under United Nations control, while their leaders seek their integration into the bourgeois armed forces.

The organization now known as the UCPN (Maoist) has always had close links to India’s Naxalites and upholds a similar dogma of “revolution by stages.” Its 2001 “Common Minimum Policy and Programme” demanded a “people’s democratic dictatorship with the participation of all the progressive classes including the national bourgeoisie.” While running the government in 2008-09, the Maoists explicitly upheld capitalism and supported legislation to ban strikes. Reporting that “the government is planning to restrict bandhs [street protests] and strikes in industries and essential commodities,” the *Himalayan Times* online (10 April 2009) quoted Maoist finance minister Baburam Bhattarai: “We are in a new political set-up and it demands a new outlook in business and industries also.”

Unlike India, Nepal has very little in the way of an industrial proletariat. Three quarters of the workforce is involved in agriculture and 90 percent of the urban labor force works in the “informal” sector, largely small family workshops. While trade unions organized by various parties claim hundreds of thousands of members, what industrial activity there is mainly involves the processing of agricultural products like pulses (e.g., lentils), jute, sugar cane, tobacco and grain. The garment industry, largely based on primitive handicraft technology, once employed as many as 300,000 workers but has now almost entirely collapsed. About three million Nepalese—over 10 percent of the population—have moved abroad to seek work, including important concentrations in India and elsewhere in Asia.

The oppressed masses of Nepal need a *Marxist-internationalist* perspective that links the struggle for social modernization and liberation to the class struggles of the proletariat in more advanced countries beyond the country’s borders. A workers revolution in neighboring India would have a massive immediate effect on Nepal, posing a struggle for a socialist federation of the subcontinent. Conversely, a huge plebeian upheaval in Nepal drawing in its



Soviet government issued “Decree on Land” expropriating landed estates one day after proletarian seizure of power in October 1917 Revolution. Right: Uzbekistan peasant receives land and livestock certificate.

small working class could help to spark a proletarian upsurge in India.

Sharply opposing such a perspective, the petty-bourgeois UCPN (Maoist) pushes retrograde Nepalese nationalism, including against so-called “cultural pollution” from India. The Maoists’ “40 Point Demands,” issued in 1996 on the eve of their armed insurgency, includes calls for the Nepal-India border to be “controlled and systematized,” for cars with Indian license plates to be banned, and for the suppression of Hindi-language films, videos, magazines and newspapers. In a series of recent pronouncements, the

forests and jungles, but requires the mobilization of the urban proletariat under revolutionary leadership. In the fight to forge such a leadership, crucial lessons can be drawn from the work of the Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India (BLPI), Indian section of the Trotskyist Fourth International, during World War II. While the Stalinists backed British imperialism and opposed the struggle for Indian independence, and later returned to subordinating the workers to the bourgeois Congress, the BLPI fought heroically for a Marxist proletarian perspective.

This proud history was later squan-

collapsed and disappeared. The ICL fights to reforge the Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution. Militants in India seeking the road to revolutionary Marxism must examine the program of Trotskyism and the record of the early BLPI, which uniquely chart a path to the Indian workers revolution and a socialist federation of South Asia. As the BLPI wrote in its founding program, issued in 1942:

“The peasantry, the largest numerically and the most atomized, backward and oppressed class, is capable of local uprisings and partisan warfare, but requires the leadership of a more advanced class for this struggle to be elevated to an all-national level. Without such leadership the peasantry alone cannot make a revolution. The task of such leadership falls in the nature of things on the Indian proletariat, which is the only class capable of leading the toiling masses in the onslaught against Imperialism, landlordism and the Native Princes....

“But the leadership of the working class in the bourgeois-democratic revolution poses before the working class the prospect of seizing the power and in addition to accomplishing the long overdue bourgeois-democratic tasks of proceeding with its own socialist tasks. And thus the bourgeois-democratic revolution develops uninterruptedly into the proletarian revolution and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat as the only state-form capable of supplanting the dictatorship of the imperialist bourgeoisie in India....

“The ultimate fate of the revolution in India, as in Russia, will be determined in the arena of the international revolution. Nor will India by its own forces be able to accomplish the task of making the transition to Socialism. Not only the backwardness of the country, but also the international division of labor and the interdependence produced by capitalism itself—of the different parts of the world economy, demand that this task of the establishment of Socialism can be accomplished only on a world scale. The Indian proletariat will, of course, proceed with the socialist transformation of society to the extent that this is possible in the concrete circumstances, but the establishment of the socialist society will depend on the course of international revolution. The victorious revolution in India, however, dealing a mortal blow to the oldest and most widespread Imperialism in the world, will, on the one hand, produce the most profound crisis in the entire capitalist world and shake World Capitalism to its foundations. On the other hand, it will inspire and galvanize into action millions of proletarians and colonial slaves the world over and blaze the trail of World Revolution.”■



Kathmandu, May 6: Maoists in Nepal rally during general strike demanding ouster of prime minister.

Indian Maoists have criticized their erstwhile comrades in Nepal for their “dangerous reformist positions.” But the Nepalese Maoists are only carrying out the logic of Mao-Stalinist nationalism and class collaboration.

Forge a Leninist-Trotskyist Party!

India’s vaunted development over the past two decades has benefited only a small section of the population: the filthy rich bourgeoisie and a petty-bourgeois technocratic/managerial stratum in the cities. The working class faces horrific working and living conditions and poverty-level wages, while squalid slums expand everywhere as displaced peasants descend on the cities to seek work. Caste, religion, language and other divides are fostered by the rulers to maintain their oppressive hold.

The situation cries out for the kind of perspective fought for by Lenin and Trotsky in the 1917 October Revolution: the workers seizing power at the head of the oppressed masses, agrarian revolution to liberate the peasantry, the socialization and rational reorganization of the economy in the interests of human needs not profit, and the fight to extend socialist revolution internationally, especially to the imperialist heartlands. In India, such a perspective alone can lay the basis for planned economic development that benefits, rather than destroys the lives of, impoverished populations like the adivasis.

Social liberation in South Asia will not come through isolated struggles in the

dered, starting with the dissolution of the BLPI in 1948 to pursue a liquidationist entry into the thoroughly reformist Socialist Party of J.P. Narayan. Over the following years, the remnants of the once powerful Indian Trotskyist cadre were assimilated into social democracy. Thus when a new wave of youthful radicalism appeared in India in the late 1960s it was led into the dead end of Naxalite Maoism. The small ostensibly Trotskyist groups that operated from the 1970s on, generally associated with the revisionist “United Secretariat” (USec) of the late Ernest Mandel, continued to push abject accommodation to non-revolutionary forces. By the mid 2000s, the Indian USec section

International Communist League Pamphlet

The Development and Extension of Leon Trotsky's Theory of Permanent Revolution

See Page Three

Rearming Bolshevism
A Trotskyist Critique of Germany 1923 and the Comintern.....30

International Communist League's Fifth International Conference:
Down With Executive Offices of the Capitalist State!.....56

AUSTRALIA...A22 BRITAIN...£1.50 CANADA...C025 IRELAND...£1.50 SOUTH AFRICA...R4 USA...US\$2

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).

\$2 (56 pages)

Make checks payable/mail to:
Spartacist Publishing Co.
Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

Stewart...

(continued from page 12)

applied. Charging Stewart with perjury is as absurd as accusing a stripper of prudery. Inside and outside the courtroom, Stewart was open and outspoken about her actions, and in her reactions throughout the case.

Lynne Stewart’s public post-conviction utterances were recorded by the prosecution and presented to the judge in a compendium for review and resentencing. Her proclamation following her October 2006 sentencing that she could do 28 months “standing on my head” was wielded by Koeltl as clear evidence that his original sentence was “not sufficient” to deter her from continuing as an advocate for those caught in the web of government repression. The court’s decision is also clearly meant to deter others from following a similar road. What gored them was not the promise of headstands but the fact that Stewart was unrepentant and continued to act as a leftist opponent of the government.

Stewart’s persecution has spanned three presidencies and five attorneys general. She ran afoul of Special Administrative Measures (SAMs) imposed by the Clinton administration to strip prisoners of basic rights, including the Sixth Amendment right to counsel, and to hinder their ability to communicate with the outside world. She was convicted under Clinton’s 1996 Antiterrorism and Effective

Death Penalty Act. With the Democrats in tow, the Bush White House seized on the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon to greatly enhance Clinton’s “anti-terror” measures, making Stewart’s prosecution a centerpiece of the “war on terror.” This “war”—a pretext for increased imperialist marauding abroad and for a massive attack on democratic rights “at home”—has been reinforced with a vengeance under Barack Obama. The workers movement must oppose the entire construct of the bogus “war on terror.”

At a meeting of the Lynne Stewart Defense Committee shortly after the 2005 convictions, supporters of the Partisan Defense Committee—a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League—spoke of the importance of fighting for freedom for Stewart’s codefendants Yousry and Abdel Sattar. Although Stewart replied that she applauded the PDC for its efforts, the defense committee, run by the National Lawyers Guild (NLG), abandoned the other two defendants. Longtime “movement” lawyer and NLG icon Liz Fink, who quit the legal team days before Stewart’s resentencing, filed court papers that despicably attempted to exonerate Stewart by framing up Yousry! The prosecution seized on this in the resentencing to mock the defense team. Stewart, to her credit, directed defense attorney Jill Shellow to reply that those were Fink’s words, not Stewart’s.

The defense of Stewart and her co-defendants is an elemental duty for socialist opponents of bloody U.S. imperialism. But the reformist left has abandoned Yousry and Abdel Sattar no less than have the liberal-radical lawyers. Post-sentencing articles by Socialist Action and the Workers World Party continue their normal practice of disappearing their names. Nor can any defense of Yousry or Abdel Sattar be found in the July 19 statement of the Party for Socialism and Liberation, which nonetheless intones, “The scapegoating of Stewart by the government is part of an ongoing war against civil rights and civil liberties, particularly targeting the Arab-American and Muslim communities. With her jailing the government’s message to all attorneys is clear: ‘Do not represent Arab people and/or Muslims’.” What about Yousry and Abdel Sattar—U.S. citizens prejudged as guilty because they are Arabs in the government’s crosshairs?!

Every witchhunt has its own particular context and dimension. Lynne Stewart was resentenced by the same court that, at the height of the McCarthyite red scare, sentenced Julius and Ethel Rosenberg to death in 1951 on frame-up charges of conspiring to pass the “secret of the atomic bomb” to the Soviet Union. The death penalty was applied against Communists then for the same reason a leftist attorney has been effectively sentenced to die in prison today: to terrorize *you*. Through “terrorism guidelines,” Supreme

Court rulings, legislation and presidential directives, the ruling class has seized sweeping powers to bolster the capitalist state: an apparatus of repression that employs police and judicial terror against workers, blacks, immigrants and all the oppressed (see “Supreme Court Decision Shreds First Amendment Rights,” WV No. 961, 2 July).

The conviction and imprisonment of Stewart, Yousry and Abdel Sattar must be fought. Although “anti-terror” measures have been primarily aimed at Muslims and immigrants, the ultimate target of such repression is the multiracial working class, which has the potential social power and class interest to be the gravediggers of the racist capitalist order. Standing in the way of such struggle are the pro-capitalist union tops who put themselves forward as lieutenants for American imperialism. With the economy tanking and U.S. imperialism’s Afghan adventure teetering, Obama seeks to further tighten the screws of repression. It is our task to forge a revolutionary workers party that champions the cause of all the exploited and oppressed in the struggle for a socialist transformation of this society. Fighting the government’s “terrorism” frame-ups is an essential component of that task today.

The PDC has contributed to Lynne Stewart’s defense and encourages others to do the same. Donations can be sent to: Lynne Stewart Organization, 1070 Dean Street, Brooklyn, New York 11216. ■

Oakland...

(continued from page 12)

reality for black people and other minorities. Protesters held signs reading, “We Are All Oscar Grant!” The Bay Area Spartacist League and Labor Black League for Social Defense joined the protest, while the L.A. Spartacist League joined a protest in that city the same evening.

In Oakland, an army of riot cops mobilized from 15 different police agencies (with 20,000 National Guardsmen on standby) descended upon the protesters. The cop action had been rehearsed in a “simulation” weeks before, where plainclothes cops posed as protesters and threw objects at officers. The bourgeois media did its part to vilify protesters, whipping up bigoted, sensationalist hysteria about impending violence by “anarchist” rioters and flashing scenes of people hurriedly fleeing heavily black Oakland the day of the verdict.

The stage was set for cop provocations and attacks. A siren-blaring squad car hit a deaf woman protester. Walter Riley, a local black civil rights attorney, was choked and arrested as he tried to enter his own office. Some 78 protesters were arrested, many charged with “failure to disperse” and several with trumped-up felonies. *We demand: Drop all charges and free all jailed protesters now!*

As the Partisan Defense Committee wrote in a July 13 protest letter to the Alameda County District Attorney, the lurid stories of outsiders fomenting “violence” in Oakland were “a direct echo of the forces of racist reaction in the Jim Crow South who branded civil rights movement activists as ‘outside agitators.’ In fact, the assault on and arrest of protesters in Oakland on the night of July 8 is just the latest vindictive attempt by Mayor Dellums and his cops to silence and intimidate those who would protest rampant, racist police terror.”

As one protester put it, “We’ve been suffering police brutality for generations.... We want it to end.” Generations have indeed been suffering the racist oppression of black people that is rooted in American capitalism, enforced by both the Democratic and Republican parties of capital. The story has played out again and again. A cop kills a black person. In the rare instance when the cop is made to face charges, the venue is changed to ensure a jury with no black people. The cop, if convicted of anything, gets the most minimal sentence. Anger erupts, and to head this off, Democratic politicians and their



Oakland, July 8: Spartacist supporters at protest against verdict in killing of Oscar Grant.

water boys on the reformist left offer means to “reform” the justice system—federal “investigations,” appeals to the courts to jail killer cops, community “oversight” and “control” of the police.

Their purpose is to lull the working class and minorities into believing that this racist *injustice* system can be reformed to serve the exploited and the oppressed. The cops are the hired guns of the capitalist ruling class. Their job is to uphold racist capitalist “law and order” through brute force: breaking strikes, rounding up ghetto and barrio youth, repressing social protest. The courts, to which many are looking for some justice, are an essential part of this murderous repressive machinery. Capitalist “law and order” is based on frame-ups, lies and police violence. There will be no end to racist cop terror, no justice for working people and the oppressed, until the multiracial proletariat takes power through a socialist revolution that destroys the capitalists’ entire apparatus of state repression.

An intended result of police “reform” schemes is to channel anger over their racist atrocities into the electoral con game of bourgeois “lesser evilism”—i.e., support to the Democratic Party. Right on cue, Democratic Congresswoman Barbara Lee issued an appeal to Barack Obama’s Justice Department to investigate civil rights violations in the killing of Oscar Grant. Mayor Dellums, who oversees cop repression as the city’s chief executive, supported Lee’s appeal. The reformist left, which almost to a man championed the election of Obama as imperialist Commander-in-Chief as a victory for the workers and oppressed, has been singing much the same song.

Take the International Socialist Organ-

ization (ISO). After the capitalist media smeared protesters as rioters and looters, the ISO’s *Socialist Worker* (9 July) outrageously intoned: “If politicians truly cared about violence after the verdict, they could have taken a few more positive steps”! Parroting Lee and Dellums’ call for federal intervention, the article complains that “there is no independent BART police oversight board.” In fact, Oakland and the cities surrounding it have served as a virtual laboratory for such liberal schemes, starting in the 1970s when Berkeley established the first police review board in the country. That never stopped Berkeley cops from killing black people with impunity. Ditto for the Oakland Citizens’ Police Review Board established in 1980 following a police killing spree that took the lives of nine black people the previous year.

In the same vein, the Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL) calls for “community control” of the police and declares in a statement for its gubernatorial election campaign on the petty-bourgeois Peace and Freedom Party ticket that “cops who violate civil rights and murder working-class youth should be jailed” (PSLweb.org, 16 July). The call to “jail the killer cops” has been raised by the PSL, the ISO, the dubious Bolshevik Tendency and many other groups. Reinforcing the liberal lie that the state can be cleaned up and made accountable to the “will of the people,” this demand channels anger over cop terror right back into the very “justice” system that upholds state violence in every way. The ISO adds the absurd demand to “disarm all the police,” as if the capitalists would ever give up the apparatus of organized violence by which they defend their rule and profits.

The courts almost always let the cops off on the grounds that they’re just “doing their job.” On the rare occasion when the rulers find it necessary to punish one of their murderous gendarmes, the purpose is to refurbish the image of the state and its armed bodies of men. The bourgeoisie occasionally upholds the pretense of “justice” in order to put a gloss on a social order based on class exploitation and oppression. We noted in an article on Oscar Grant’s killing in WV No. 928 (16 January 2009): “Even if one cop were charged and imprisoned, it wouldn’t stop police brutality and terror. The cops serve, together with the military and the prisons, as the core of a state whose purpose is the repression of the working class and oppressed by any means necessary.”

Our perspective is the mobilization of the working class at the head of the oppressed, independent from all capitalist parties, politicians and the state. As the Bay Area Labor Black League wrote in a 12 January 2009 statement following Oscar Grant’s killing:

“The mass outrage against cop terror needs an organized political expression, and not one that strengthens the hand of the Democratic Party, the political tool of the very capitalist rulers whose interests the cops ‘serve and protect.’ The Labor Black League for Social Defense fights to link the anger of the ghettos and barrios to the power of our class, the multiracial labor movement. Labor protest by the Bay Area’s powerful and multiracial unions—starting with the BART transit unions and including longshore, grocery, city and other workers—would provide the social power of a working-class political axis.”

What prevents labor from waging such struggle are the pro-capitalist union bureaucrats, who have shackled the workers to their class enemies, including by organizing cops—the sworn enemies of labor and blacks—into the unions. The same SEIU union that organizes BART maintenance workers and Oakland city workers includes the BART cops! We demand: *Cops out of the unions!*

Addressing the July 8 Oakland protest, a Spartacist spokesman declared, “We fight to build a revolutionary leadership to unite labor and all the oppressed to get rid of the entire capitalist system.” Our speaker continued: “In a Socialist America we can use the wealth created by the working class to open the road to freedom from exploitation and racial oppression for good! The Spartacist League is dedicated to building a workers party that can lead this fight. Racist cop terror, we say no! This whole damn system’s got to go!” ■

Vicious Retribution for Defending Her Client



Roca/NY Daily News



WV Photo

Left: Lynne Stewart. Right: July 14 New York City protest against Stewart's resentencing.

Radical Lawyer Lynne Stewart Resentenced to 10 Years

Lynne Stewart was resentenced to ten years in prison on July 15 for zealously defending her client, a blind Egyptian cleric imprisoned for an alleged plot to blow up New York City landmarks in the early 1990s. U.S. District Court judge Koeltl's decision to more than quadruple Stewart's original sentence of 28 months is a loud affirmation by the Obama administration that there will be no let-up in the massive attacks on democratic rights under the "war on terror."

Stewart, her interpreter Mohamed Yousry and paralegal Ahmed Abdel Sattar were convicted in February 2005 of conspiracy to provide material support to terrorism and conspiracy to defraud the U.S. government. Abdel Sattar was also convicted of conspiracy to "kill and kidnap persons in a foreign country." What constituted "material support" was Stewart's *statement* to a Reuters reporter that her client urged his Egyptian supporters in the Islamic Group to reconsider their cease-fire with the Mubarak dictatorship. As we wrote in opposing the conviction of Stewart, Yousry

**Free Lynne Stewart,
Mohamed Yousry,
Ahmed Abdel Sattar!**

and Abdel Sattar: "The verdict gives the government a green light to prosecute lawyers for the alleged crimes of their clients, thereby shooting the basic right to counsel to hell.... And if nobody can get a lawyer to zealously defend him from prosecution, then fundamental liberties, from the right to a trial and an attorney, to even the right of free speech and assembly, are choked" (WV No. 842, 18 February 2005).

All the judges and prosecutors involved acknowledge that Lynne Stewart, known for her defense of Black Panthers, radical leftists and others reviled by the capitalist state, did not commit or contribute to

a single act of violence. Yet she is labeled a "terrorist" supporter and ostentatiously and brutally treated like a dangerous criminal by a capitalist government that is, in fact, the deadliest force for terror on the planet, raining death and destruction in Afghanistan and elsewhere on a daily basis. The point is to cow the rest of the population, particularly workers, minorities and the left, with the message: This is what could happen to you if you oppose, or defend opponents of, America's rulers.

The resentencing is for all intents and purposes a death sentence for Lynne Stewart, a 70-year-old woman currently under-

going chemotherapy for breast cancer. Stewart is transported from her jail cell to hospital rooms in leg irons and handcuffs shackled to a chain around her waist. She is chained to her hospital bed under 24-hour surveillance by an armed guard in the room and two more outside the door. Judge Koeltl repeatedly stated that his task was to hand down a sentence "neither insufficient but not greater than necessary." Apparently death in prison is not greater than necessary for an audacious leftist lawyer. Yousry is serving a 20-month sentence while Abdel Sattar is locked away for 24 years. *Stewart, Yousry and Abdel Sattar should never have been charged and should not have spent a minute in jail!*

Judge Koeltl was directed to resentence Stewart by the Second Circuit Court of Appeals, which ruled last December that perjury was not taken into account in her original sentencing and that the government's draconian "terrorism enhancement" guidelines, which urge judges to vastly increase sentences in such cases, were not

continued on page 11

Cop Who Killed Oscar Grant Gets Slap on Wrist

Oakland Protesters Brave Racist Hysteria, Cop Riot

OAKLAND—In the early morning hours of New Year's Day 2009, Johannes Mehserle, a white Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) police officer, gunned down Oscar Grant III, a young black apprentice grocery butcher and father of a four-year-old girl. The killing was witnessed by dozens of train passengers and recorded by cell phones and BART's own video cameras. Mehserle shot Grant pointblank in the back while Grant lay prone on a BART station platform, pinned down by

another cop calling him a "bitch ass n----r." This July 8, Mehserle was given a slap on the wrist for the brazenly racist killing. He was found guilty of "involuntary manslaughter" by a jury that included not a single black person, in a trial that was moved from Oakland, where the killing had sparked massive outrage, to Los Angeles thanks to the machinations of the Oakland city government under black Democratic mayor Ron Dellums.

At the trial, Mehserle's lawyer argued:

"Police officers are different.... We give them guns and tell them to use those guns." This racist atrocity certainly bears that out. The *San Francisco Chronicle* reported Mehserle testifying that he thought Grant "might be going for a gun" and that he only meant to use his taser. This is hardly believable. Mehserle's gun weighed over two and a half pounds while the taser weighed less than a pound, and the weapons were kept on opposite sides of his body. Mehserle went so far as to handcuff

Grant after the fatal shot. There can be no doubt: *Oscar Grant was executed in cold blood.* Due for sentencing on November 5, Mehserle may face as little as probation with no prison time.

On the evening of the verdict, a multi-racial crowd of some 1,000 people gathered in downtown Oakland not only to voice their outrage over the outcome of the trial but to protest the police terror and racist oppression that is the daily

continued on page 11