

## Down With Imperialist Sanctions!

# U.S./Israel Hands Off Iran!



Getty



ISNA

Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu with Barack Obama at UN, September 21 (left). Tehran, 2007: Iranians lining up for gas after government announced rationing due to threat of more economic sanctions (right).

NOVEMBER 21—Today's announcement by the Obama administration of a sharp escalation of economic sanctions against Iran is the latest in a series of belligerent moves by the U.S. imperialists and their Israeli junior partners. The stated purpose of these moves is to stop Iran's purported attempts to develop nuclear weapons, which the Iranian government has always denied. Taking aim at Iran's central bank and petroleum industry, the sanctions aim at making the country's economy scream, threatening to further pummel working people who are already suffering from rampant inflation, widespread unemployment and mounting shortages.

Last year, the Iranian government responded to prior sanctions, which had cut almost 2 percent off the annual growth of Iran's GDP, by taking an ax to government subsidies of fuel and other essential goods. The price of bread quickly tripled, while gasoline prices shot up fourfold. Now, Washington targets the Iranian Central Bank (ICB) as a "money laundering concern," while Britain announces it will deny Iran access to the financial hub in London. The imperialists aim to further restrict the ability of countries to pay for Iranian oil and gas, the source of 75 percent of that government's revenue.

The latest U.S. sanctions come two weeks after a November 8 report by the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on Iran. In 2007, the IAEA stated that Iran had dismantled efforts to build an atomic bomb four years earlier. Now, contradicting that conclusion, the same agency coyly speaks of "indications" that "some activities" related to nuclear weapons may have continued after 2003 and "may still be ongoing."

On November 18, just hours after the IAEA in Vienna adopted a resolution condemning Iran for its alleged nuclear program, the UN General Assembly in New York voted overwhelmingly to demand that Iran cooperate with an investigation into the crackpot story that Tehran had plotted to assassinate the Saudi ambassador to the U.S. The bizarre accusation peddled by Washington is that Iran, using a flaky Iranian American used-car salesman as its agent, tried to hire hitmen from a Mexican drug cartel. (His "contact" turned out to be an informant for the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency.) The Iranian government cogently compared this fiction to the George W. Bush administration's concoction of Saddam Hussein's "weapons of mass destruction" as a pretext to launch the invasion of Iraq in 2003. The UN resolution exemplifies the role of that body as a fig leaf for the pursuit by the imperialists—centrally the U.S.—of their great-power interests, including through naked aggression against semi-colonial countries.

The escalating sanctions come as Israeli officials have been whipping up war hysteria and threatening to launch air strikes against suspected nuclear research sites in Iran. Determined to maintain its monopoly on nukes in the Near East, Israel conducted air strikes against Iraq in 1981 and Syria in 2007. The stakes are much higher in any attack on Iran, which is a significant and historic power in the region.

The news that the government of Benjamin Netanyahu had discussed striking Iran was broken earlier this year by Meir Dagan, the former head of Israel's Mossad intelligence agency. In May, Dagan had told the press that a military strike aimed

at taking out Iran's nuclear facilities was "the stupidest thing I ever heard," and would threaten to push Israel into a "regional war that it would not know how to get out of" (*Haaretz*, 1 June). Under Dagan, who has plenty of blood on his own hands, Israel tried to thwart Iran's nuclear program by injecting the Stuxnet computer virus into Iran's centrifuge system, which enriches uranium, and by carrying out assassinations of scientists as well as a senior commander of Iran's missile development program.

U.S. president Barack Obama, for his part, has repeatedly rattled his saber at Iran, declaring that he would keep "all options," including the threat of military attack, "on the table." Washington recently announced that next year U.S. and Israeli military forces will carry out their largest-ever joint exercises, "simulating the ballistic missile defense of Israel." Imperialist sanctions and military "options" go hand in hand. Recall that the 2003 war against Iraq, which led to the death of upward of a million Iraqis and unleashed communalist slaughter on a mass scale, was prepared by UN sanctions imposed 13 years earlier that killed 1.5 million people.

The misinformation offensive over Iran's nuclear program was powerfully exposed by journalist Seymour Hersh in "Iran and the Bomb: How Real Is the Nuclear Threat?" (*New Yorker* Web site, 6 June). Hersh recalled that the 2007 National Intelligence Estimate (NIE), a summary of the views of senior officers from all major U.S. intelligence agencies, concluded "with high confidence" that Iran had stopped working toward a nuclear weapon in 2003. Hersh wrote that the original draft of this year's NIE

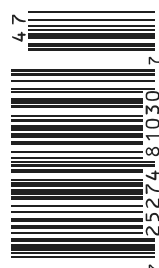
update, later changed under pressure from the Obama White House, stated that Iran's supposed earlier nuclear weapons research targeted not Israel or West Europe but Iran's longtime nemesis Iraq, which Iranian leaders thought at the time was trying to develop nukes. Hersh explained: "The Iranian nuclear-weapons program evidently came to an end following the American-led invasion of Iraq, in early 2003, and the futile hunt for the Iraqi W.M.D. arsenal."

Iran has repeatedly stated that its nuclear program is intended solely for peaceful purposes. In fact, in the face of imperialist nuclear blackmail and with continuing military threats, it is entirely rational and necessary for Iran to pursue getting nuclear weapons and adequate delivery systems to deter attack. As the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), a major think tank for the U.S. ruling class, admits, nuclear weapons "offer a deterrent capability: unlike Saddam's Iraq, a nuclear Iran would not be invaded, and its leaders would not be deposed" ("After Iran Gets the Bomb: Containment and Its Complications," *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2010).

### U.S. Imperialist Terrorists

In the event of any military attack by the U.S. or by Israel on Iran, working people and the oppressed internationally must not be neutral but must take a clear side *with Iran*. As Marxists, we do not give an iota of political support to the reactionary Islamic regime in Iran. But it is the nuclear-armed U.S. imperialists who are the main enemy of the world's working people and oppressed.

*continued on page 10*



## South Africa: Early Years of the Communist Party....4



# Sentenced to Life in Child-Porn Witchhunt

## Free Daniel Guevara Vilca Now!

The following is not a fictional account inspired by the works of Franz Kafka. It is an outrage all too real. On November 3, 26-year-old Daniel Guevara Vilca was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole. His supposed crime? Possession of child pornography. Vilca came under investigation in December 2009 when the Collier County, Florida, sheriff's department identified his computer IP address among those accessing child pornography on an online networking site. A Peruvian-born stock-room worker who required a translator to follow the court proceedings, Vilca has maintained throughout that he was not aware of the pornographic images that police investigators claimed to have found on a computer in his home.

Having turned down a plea bargain of some 20 years in prison, Vilca now faces a sentence comparable to someone convicted of first-degree murder. Vilca's defense lawyer Lee Hollander, who announced plans to appeal, denounced the sentence as cruel and unusual pun-

ishment, explaining, "People who are actually creating child porn or molesting children are getting lighter sentences than people who are in possession of it." After legally entering the U.S. in 2000, Vilca overstayed his visa, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (the hated I.C.E.) has already placed an immigration hold to prevent any possibility of his release. Even if Vilca wins his appeal, *la migra* is waiting in the wings to deport him. All that's missing from the state vendetta against this man is burning at the stake.

Child pornography, like any pornography, is images and words intended for entertainment—nothing more, nothing less. Sexually explicit art has existed since man began to draw. The criminalization of pornography, like that of drugs, gambling and consensual sexual activity, is aimed at regimenting the population and increasing the state's repressive powers. We call for abolishing all laws against such "crimes without victims." We oppose the efforts of the state to regulate what happens in the privacy of the bedroom.

The only guideline that should exist is that of effective consent—that is, mutual agreement and understanding—regardless of age, gender or sexual preference.

The violent abuse and rape of children is a terrible crime. But the willful conflation of Jack the Ripper with Lewis Carroll (or Daniel Guevara Vilca, who may not have even known about the porn on his computer) has destroyed many innocent lives in the service of social reaction. The 2002 film *Capturing the Friedmans* documented how high school teacher Arnold Friedman and his 19-year-old son Jesse were framed up and jailed in a sex-abuse witchhunt in 1987 after Arnold had been entrapped in a sting operation for purchasing gay child pornography (see our review in WV No. 808, 29 August 2003). Equating looking at pictures with child abuse, the state compelled students and their parents to come forward with unbelievable charges of molestation and rape—without a shred of physical evidence. Arnold committed suicide in prison in 1995, apparently guilt-ridden over his son's imprisonment. Jesse was finally paroled in 2001 after serving 13 years of a 16-year sentence. As for the kids coerced into giving false testimony, *their abuse was at the hands of the state*.

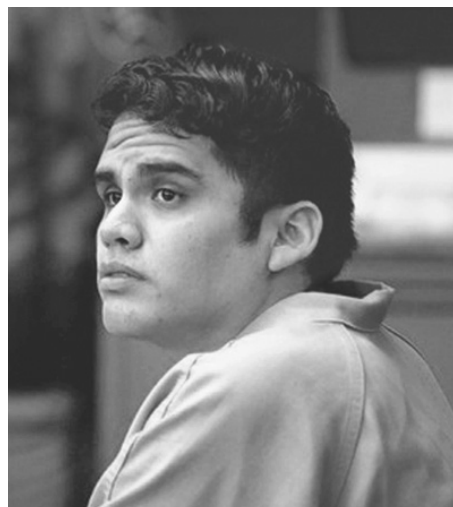
As we wrote in our review:

"Beginning in the late 1970s a mass panic, manipulated by the state in collusion with the religious fundamentalists and anti-sex feminists, engulfed society for well over a decade. People across the nation were led to believe that there was an epidemic of child molestations, satanic ritual abuse of children and sexual predators hiding behind every teacher's desk. Hundreds of men and women ended up behind bars for crimes that never happened, when the real criminals sat comfortably in their blue uniforms and black robes."

Since that time, Democrats and Republicans alike have used the crusade against child porn to extend the reach of the state further into people's lives. The "Protecting Children from Internet Pornographers Act" working its way through Congress would mandate that Internet service providers keep a record of everyone's Web browsing for a year, to turn over to the authorities on request. And for Big Brother, it does not even matter if actual images of children are involved, as was upheld in a 2008 Supreme Court ruling. The FBI has carried out its sting operations against people who merely click on hyperlinks for nonexistent child-porn sites. After Vilca's arrest, Collier County sheriff Kevin Rambosk ranted: "We will find you, we will charge you, and you will be in jail for quite some time" (naplesnews.com, 26 January 2010).

Child-porn sweeps like those in which Vilca and Arnold Friedman were caught up are only a small part of the bourgeoisie's efforts to regiment the manifold expressions of human sexuality. "Obscenity" laws were used in this country for decades to ban the dissemination of birth control, outlaw homosexuality and silence trenchant social critics such as Lenny Bruce. "Age of consent" laws, which criminalize consensual sexual activity, are wielded in the (vain) attempt to dictate a sexless existence to teens. Teenagers across the country have been hauled off to jail on charges of creation, possession and distribution of child pornography for sexting—sending or receiving suggestive pictures of each other via cell phones or the Internet.

We have a long history of defending those individuals and organizations of all stripes caught in the government's anti-sex dragnets, including the North American Man/Boy Love Association (NAMBLA), which advocates the right to consensual intergenerational sex. Defense of the freedom to write about sexual matters and of the right to peruse whatever erotica or



Kahn/Marco Eagle

**Daniel Guevara Vilca at sentencing hearing, November 3.**

porn one prefers would seem to be ABC for those claiming to oppose oppression. But NAMBLA, demonized by the ruling class, smeared in the media and subjected to witchhunting prosecutions, has been slandered by gay rights organizations and self-proclaimed "socialists"—including by the Maoists of the Revolutionary Communist Party—as child molesters.

In this, these leftists are imbibing the bourgeois prejudices and social mores that brand as "deviant" anyone who does not conform to the strictures of the monogamous nuclear family. Bolstered by religion, the family is the main instrument for the oppression of women and youth. For the bourgeoisie, it is the vehicle for passing wealth on to the next generation. For workers and the oppressed, the family serves to inculcate obedience and bears the burden of raising the next generation.

The capitalists would like nothing more than to have docile and industrious wage slaves so that they can extract greater profits. The bourgeois hypocrites preach puritanical anti-sex dogma to the masses (including "abstinence only" education in public schools) while they themselves enjoy whatever entertainment money can buy. The capitalist rulers, who can easily pay the costs for their own families, seek to ban the use of public funds for abortion. Any number of films, music and other artistic endeavors that offend some bourgeois moral code may be censored in public but treasured in the private collections of those who can afford to pay.

In what sick mind should the torturers of Abu Ghraib legislate what's "obscene"? Even as the bourgeoisie raises a hue and cry over protecting kids, real violence is perpetrated daily against children under this brutal capitalist system. The U.S. imperialist ruling class unleashes "kill teams" to hunt down youth in Afghanistan. At home it locks up poor youth, especially blacks and Latinos, in prison hellholes and shoots them down in the streets. It is closing schools and hospitals across the country and evicting families from their homes. More than 1.3 million children are homeless and nearly one in four struggles to get enough to eat.

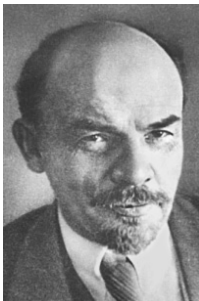
Only workers revolution can put an end to these and other ravages of capitalism and lay the groundwork for constructing a rational socialist society free of crippling, cruel religious superstition. When the workers are in power, the necessary tasks, such as childcare, that today fall on individual families will be taken up by society as a whole. To lead the proletariat in sweeping away the forces of capitalist reaction, the vanguard party of the working class must struggle against every manifestation of backwardness and oppression. Dedicated to forging such a party, we take up the defense of Daniel Guevara Vilca, who should never have spent a day in prison. *Drop all the charges—free him now! I.C.E. hands off! ■*



TROTSKY

### Consciousness and the Tasks of a Revolutionary Vanguard

*The 1905 Russian Revolution was the dress rehearsal for the successful proletarian socialist revolution in October 1917. Resisting all-sided pressures to adapt to the existing level of consciousness was crucial to leading the working masses to victory. Writing amid the tumult of 1905, Lenin argued that education of the proletarian vanguard by the Bolsheviks (who then considered themselves a wing of the Social-Democrats) could mean the difference between victory and defeat.*



LENIN

We have quite a few Social-Democrats who give way to pessimism every time the workers suffer a reverse in single battles with the capitalists or with the government, and who scornfully dismiss all mention of the great and lofty aims of the working-class movement by pointing to the inadequate degree of our influence on the masses. Who and what are we, they say, to strive towards such things? It is purposeless to speak of the role of Social-Democracy as vanguard of the revolution when we do not even really know the mood of the masses, when we are unable to merge with them and to rouse the working masses! The reverses suffered by the Social-Democrats last May Day have considerably intensified this mood. Naturally, the Mensheviks, or new-Iskristis, have seized this opening to raise anew the special slogan "To the masses!"...

That comparisons are odious is an old axiom. In every comparison a likeness is drawn in regard to only one aspect or several aspects of the objects or notions compared, while the other aspects are tentatively and with reservation abstracted. Let us remind the reader of this commonly known but frequently ignored axiom and proceed to compare the Social-Democratic Party to a large school which is at once elementary, secondary, and collegiate. The teaching of the ABC, instruction in the rudiments of knowledge and in independent thinking, will never, under any circumstances, be neglected in this big school. But if anyone sought to invoke the need for teaching the ABC as a pretext for dismissing questions of higher learning, if anyone attempted to offset the impermanent, dubious, and "narrow" results of this higher learning (accessible to a much smaller circle of people than those learning the ABC) to the durable, profound, extensive, and solid results of the elementary school, he would betray incredible short-sightedness. He might even help to pervert the whole purpose of the big school, since by ignoring higher education he would simply be making it easier for charlatans, demagogues, and reactionaries to mislead the people who had only learned the ABC.

—V.I. Lenin, "On Confounding Politics with Pedagogics,"  
June 1905, *Collected Works*, Vol. 8

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## Partisan Defense Committee CLASS-STRUGGLE DEFENSE NOTES

The PDC is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization which champions cases and causes in the interest of the whole of the working people. This purpose is in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League.

# Free the Class-War Prisoners! 26th Annual PDC Holiday Appeal

The holiday season is once again upon us. Any day now, we'll be assaulted 24/7 with commercials hawking the latest PlayStations, full-page newspaper ads featuring Christmas lingerie and jewelry, sitcoms with oafish dads sporting hideous Christmas ties and endless broadcasts of the movie about the Midwestern banker who, thanks to his guardian angel Clarence, discovers that "It's a Wonderful Life." For most, this year's holidays mean that the bosses are in the Bahamas sucking up single malt scotch while paychecks are replaced with pink slips and the Santa shimmying down the chimney is a marshal serving a foreclosure notice. At the same time, poor families debate whether the small bit of money set aside for the holidays will be spent on presents or a bus ticket to visit their loved ones behind bars.

For us, this time of year is an occasion to redouble our commitment to those among the inhabitants of America's vast network of prisons who were singled out for standing up to racist capitalist oppression—the class-war prisoners. Twenty-six years ago, the Partisan Defense Committee revived the program of the early International Labor Defense (ILD) under its secretary, James P. Cannon, of sending stipends to the class-war prisoners—irrespective of their political views or affiliations. As Cannon wrote:

"In one sense of the word the whole of capitalist society is a prison. For the great mass of people who do the hard, useful work there is no such word as freedom. They come and go at the order of a few. Their lives are regulated according to the needs and wishes of a few. A censorship is put upon their words and deeds. The fruits of their labor are taken from them. And if, by chance, they have the instinct and spirit to rebel, if they take their place in the vanguard of the fight for justice, the prisons are waiting."

—James P. Cannon, "The Cause that Passes Through a Prison" (*Labor Defender*, September 1926)

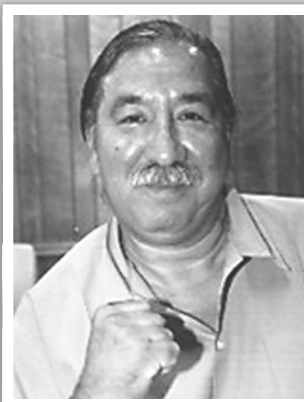
We provide monthly stipends to 16 class-war prisoners and holiday gifts for them and their families. The \$25 monthly stipends help ease a little bit the horrors of "life" in capitalist dungeons. More importantly, they are a necessary expression of solidarity with these prisoners—a message that they are not forgotten.

Since we initiated this program in

## An Injury to One Is an Injury to All!



WV Photo  
**Mumia Abu-Jamal**



cainmo.com  
**Leonard Peltier**



Edwine Seymour  
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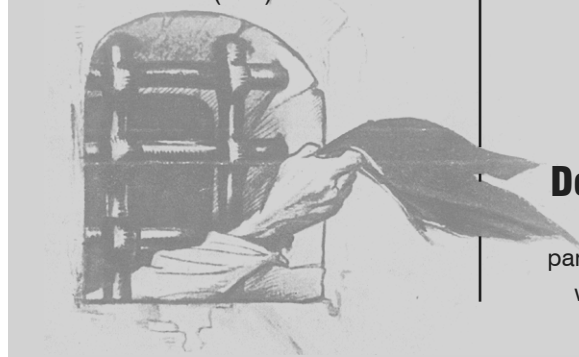


Illustration by Deni

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1986, we have provided stipends to over 30 class-war prisoners around the world. Among the first was former Black Panther leader Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt), who spent 27 years in prison, for a crime that the state authorities knew that he did not commit, before being released in 1997. Geronimo died in June, an untimely death undoubtedly linked to his many years in prison.

Most of the class-war prisoners who receive PDC stipends have already spent decades in prison, and the capitalist rul-

ers are determined not only to see them die behind bars but also to repeatedly subject them to harassment and degradation. American Indian Movement leader Leonard Peltier wrote us about his recent transfer to a prison in Florida far from his family and supporters, where the authorities placed him in a cell with a skinhead sporting on his back a tattoo of a KKK nightrider!

For those behind bars, the human tragedies that befall us all are made ever more acute by the enforced separation from family and friends. Jaan Laaman recently informed us of the death of his son Rick. Earlier this year, death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal lost his sister, Lydia Barashango, who was a tireless activist in Mumia's fight for freedom. Mumia also had the bittersweet experience of seeing his son, Jamal Hart, railroaded to prison on bogus gun-possession charges in retaliation for speaking out on his father's behalf, finally released from prison after serving every single day of his 15 and a half year sentence.

Persecution of those imprisoned for their political views and actions has not only continued unabated, but Obama and his top cop, Attorney General Eric Holder, are making reservations for many more to join those already behind bars. The Obama administration has expanded the repressive measures adopted during the Clinton/Bush years that are being wielded against those who propelled him into office—labor, blacks, immigrants and liberal youth. Obama has used the "anti-terror" laws to target leftist supporters of Latin American guerrillas and oppressed Palestinians, far surpassed the

Bush regime in deporting immigrants and carried out the assassination abroad of an American citizen without even the pretense of charges or a trial.

The struggle to free the class-war prisoners is critical to educating a new generation of fighters against exploitation and oppression—a schooling centered on the role of the capitalist state, comprising the military, cops, courts and prisons. In recent weeks, the young activists of the "Occupy" protests have been on the receiving end of pepper spray, tear gas and police truncheons, with thousands arrested—a small taste not only of the daily hell of life for black people in this country but also what the bosses' government unleashes against workers when they engage in class struggle. This was seen in the brutal cop attacks and arrests this September of over 130 leaders, members and supporters of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) in Longview, Washington. In its battle with the giant union-busting EGT grain exporter, the union has engaged in the kind of militant labor actions that built this country's industrial unions. A defeat in Longview would be a body blow against the ILWU as a whole.

The 16 class-war prisoners receiving stipends from the PDC are listed below:

**Mumia Abu-Jamal** is a former Black Panther Party spokesman, a well-known supporter of the MOVE organization and an award-winning journalist known as "the voice of the voiceless." This year the Philadelphia district attorney's office unsuccessfully petitioned the U.S. Supreme Court to reinstate the death penalty for this class-war prisoner. The D.A. now has until mid April to convene a new sentencing hearing, the sole purpose of which would be to determine whether Mumia is to be again sentenced to death or will rot in prison for life.

This December marks the 30th anniversary of Mumia's arrest for a killing that the cops know he did not commit. Mumia was framed up for the 1981 killing of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner and sentenced to death explicitly for his political views. Mountains of documentation proving Mumia's innocence, including the sworn confession of Arnold Beverly that he, not Mumia, shot and killed Faulkner, have been submitted to the courts. But from top to bottom, the

*continued on page 10*

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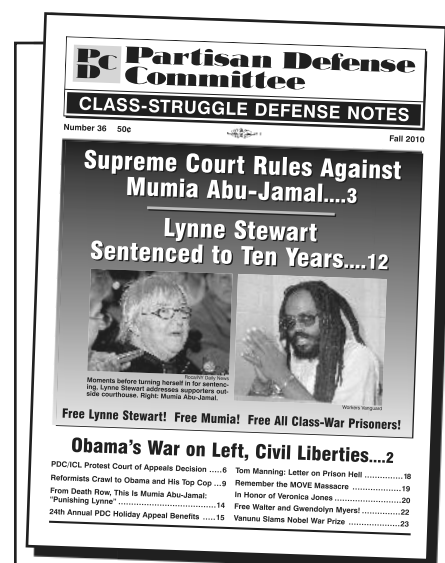
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# South Africa

# Early Years of the Communist Party

We reprint below the first part of an article from *Spartacist South Africa* No. 7 (Winter 2011), incorporating minor factual corrections. It is an edited version of a class given by comrade Karen Cole at a meeting in 2000 of *Spartacist South Africa*, section of the *International Communist League*.

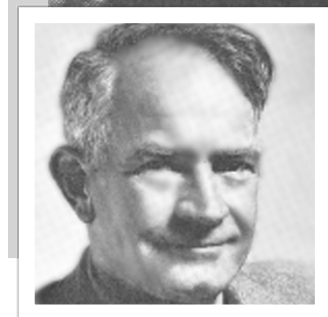
Urgent tasks faced the Third International in its early, revolutionary years. Out of the devastation of World War I and the Second International's betrayal of the

## PART ONE

world working class, the Bolshevik Party in Russia led the first and only working class revolution. Workers around the world solidarised with this victory, and the Bolsheviks looked immediately to extending their revolution internationally. Nothing less than world revolution was on the agenda. They looked outward to differentiate among disparate elements from all sorts of backgrounds—anarchists, syndicalists, liberals, social-democratic workers, intellectuals—who subjectively sided with the overthrow of capitalism and the dictatorship of the proletariat. The task was to draw a line to exclude the reformists and centrist pretenders and regroup with the genuinely revolutionary workers.

They fought to build a new International for their own survival as well as mankind's. They had to focus on the strategic battle fronts in the advanced industrial countries where revolution seemed most imminent—where the prerequisites seemed to be all there, particularly Germany. The lesson of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution was that the leadership of a Bolshevik party like the one led by Lenin and Trotsky was the critical factor. That was the one prerequisite missing elsewhere, and it was decisive. This lesson was outlined most clearly in Trotsky's *The Lessons of October* (1924).

The newly formed Third International also organised to extend the revolution to the East and South, to the countries of belated capitalist development. The Rus-



UWC Robben Island Mayibuye Archive; Republic of South Africa (left inset); South African History Online (right inset)  
**Early leaders of Communist Party of South Africa. Above, center: Sidney Bunting addressing Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union meeting, Johannesburg, circa 1926. Left: Edward Roux. Right: David Ivon Jones.**

sian Revolution had vindicated Trotsky's theory and programme of permanent revolution regarding the inseparable link between national liberation from the yoke of imperialism and proletarian revolution. Trotsky wrote in *The Permanent Revolution* (1929): "that the democratic tasks of the backward bourgeois nations lead directly, in our epoch, to the dictatorship of the proletariat and that the dictatorship of the proletariat puts socialist tasks on the order of the day." This understanding, proved in the experience of the Russian

Revolution, opened the possibility of successful revolutionary struggle under the leadership of a proletarian vanguard in the colonial and less advanced countries. Trotsky's analysis and generalisation of permanent revolution, based on the experience of Russia and, in a negative sense, the 1925-27 aborted revolution in China, laid out the necessary programme to lead the colonial peoples to liberation.

So this is the political context in which we have to examine the first years of the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA)—from its beginnings in World War I through the late 1920s.

I want to briefly start with the split within the South African Labour Party which eventually led up to the founding of the Communist Party of South Africa, and describe the historical period to get a sense of the leap that the founders of the early CPSA had to make if they were to be the leadership of a South African revolution. They started out expecting that the organised and militant white mineworkers would be the vanguard of the proletarian revolution—but it didn't work out that way, reflecting the unique historical overlap between race and class in South Africa.

After the Anglo-Boer War [1899-1902], the policy of the British colonialists was to assist British immigrants in settling as a bulwark against Afrikaner nationalism. On the Rand [central gold mining region], political rights were restricted to whites. The English-speaking workers who brought specialised skills from Britain were kept as a supervisory layer in the mines, and their job classifications were protected by colour-bar laws. On the Rand with its centre in Johannesburg (and I am going to mainly talk about the Rand because this was the centre of class

struggle), the gold mine commission legislated the racial exclusions with the full support of the whites-only union

leadership. Black Africans were permanently disenfranchised migrant mineworkers, forced off their rural homes by hut and poll taxes and expelled by white farmers. They were confined and policed in fenced-in compounds, with no political or union rights. Blacks were considered expendable, replaceable and were offered no training. Their every movement was totally controlled and resistance was met with swift punishment and death. White workers consistently scabbed on any attempts by black workers to strike.

But the inexorable laws of capitalism which demand continual maximising of profits—particularly in the labour-intensive deep gold-mining industry—set the mine owners and white miners at odds. The Afrikaner as well as British miners engaged in many industrial struggles, and the British miners were closely linked to and influenced by the militant union movement of Britain. But the volatility of gold prices meant the mine owners needed cheaper labour, and had no need to protect the white workers. For a while, they imported indentured Asian labour but, in the long run, saw their future in superexploiting black peasant labour.

So during the 1910s and 1920s, you see the leadership of a white working class attempting to fight to preserve its privileges on the backs of the black masses. The 1920s was a time of changing economic relations. Over time the rural Afrikaners, who had been a factor in the mines, eventually moved into the state-protected apparatus. After outbursts of bloody state repression of rearguard white mineworker strikes, the ruling-class strategy developed into absorbing the white workers into the petty-bourgeoisie. Instead of the white workers being ground down into impoverishment, their relations to the means of production shifted into being the overseers, managers, supervisors and state bureaucrats. Meanwhile, the bourgeoisie continued to deprive black people of the right to own land and levied taxes to compel more landless blacks to migrate into designated "locations" near metropolitan areas and become proletarianised. Brutally enforced pass systems were used to control this labour force.

## The Impact of World War I

On the eve of World War I, in South Africa as in the rest of the world, there was tremendous ferment among sections of the workers and oppressed. At the same time, the war highlighted, in South Africa like in Europe, the bankruptcy of bourgeois nationalism and labour reformism. There were rebellions among various sectors of the South African population on the eve of the war.

In 1913 there were uprisings and strikes of Indian workers across [the province of] KwaZulu-Natal. They struck in the mines and cane fields, railways and shops. Mahatma Gandhi, who had been in South Africa since 1893, pleaded for passive resistance. Nevertheless, the cane workers clashed with police and workers were beaten and killed. Gandhi came to an agreement with the government during the Natal uprisings, and called the struggle of Indian workers off with little gains. On the Rand, in 1913 and 1914, the white gold miners led general strikes, and



Africana Museum, Johannesburg  
**July 1913: Mounted police attack white South African mine workers. Strike over work hours grew to 19,000 men, affecting every mine.**

The leaflet below was written in late 1918 by David Ivon Jones and L.H. Greene to rally “the workers of South Africa—black as well as white” behind the banner of the October Revolution and incipient workers revolution in Germany. It was issued in English, Zulu and Sotho by the International Socialist League, a predecessor of the Communist Party of South Africa, amid militant strikes in Durban, especially on the docks. The authors were arrested and convicted under the Moratorium (War Measure) and Riotous Assembly acts, although the convictions were later overturned. The leaflet, reprinted from South African Communists Speak (1981), refers to “Tommy Atkins” and “Blighty,” which were World War I-era slang for British soldiers and Britain.

A spectre is haunting Europe—the spectre of Bolshevism!

What is this Bolshevism that the ruling class is so much afraid of?

Why do they send British Armies to Russia to fight the Bolsheviks?

Have they not had enough killing? Or is it a thirst for righteousness that makes them pack Tommy Atkins off to freeze in the snows of Archangel, just when he was looking forward to Home and Blighty?

The Czar massacred half a million nomads in Southern Russia in one swoop. They did not send an army against him.

Why then are they so scared of Bolshe-

# “The Bolsheviks Are Coming”

vism? Why do they turn pale at its shadow as at the ghosts of murdered men? Why?

We will tell you why!

The Great War of Nations is over, and the Class War against Labour has openly begun.

Bolshevism means the rule of the working class! And where the workers rule, the Capitalists cannot carry on their Robber System any more.

## A Campaign of Lies

Workers! Do not be misled when the Capitalist Press reviles the Bolsheviks. They slander the Bolsheviks because they have lost the fat money bags they lent to the Czar to crush the Russian people.

They slander the Bolsheviks because they have lost the rich mines and factories which the Russian workmen are now working for themselves; and the land, which forty million peasants are farming in common under the Soviet Republic.

They slander the Bolsheviks because

they fear you will follow suit. They are afraid the workers in South Africa will also become free and independent.

They are losing their hair over Bolshevism because they see a prospect of losing their Profits.

## Bolshevism Means Labour on Top

The workers of Russia and Germany are forming themselves into Soviets—that is: Councils of Workmen.

They are taking over the control of the country into their own hands—the hands of the great wage-earning proletariat. That means the end of the Profiteering System, the end of the Capitalist exploitation of wage-labour for profit.

Why have the workers of Russia and Germany to shed their blood?

Because the Capitalist Class of all countries will sooner tear the people to pieces with their cannon rather than let the people rule. The workers are the people.

Remember the massacre of the workers in Johannesburg in 1913 and in [the city of] Bloemfontein last February!

Down with British Militarism! It is a weapon to crush the workers.

Down with Allied intervention in Russia!!

Down with the Capitalist Class in all countries!!!

The hope of the workers is coming from Bolshevism. The free commonwealth of labour is an actual fact in Russia today.

Bolshevism means the victory of the wage-earners. It will soon spread to Britain, France, America and throughout the world.

Get Ready for the World-wide Republic of Labour.

The way to get ready is to combine in the workshops. Combine as workers, no matter what colour.

Remember that an injury to one is an injury to all, be he black or white.

While the black worker is oppressed, the white worker cannot be free.

Before Labour can emancipate itself black workers as well as white must combine in one organisation of Labour, irrespective of craft, colour or creed.

This is Bolshevism: The Solidarity of Labour.

**Workers of the World Unite!**

**You have nothing to lose but your Chains. You have a world to Win!!**

the government killed over 20 people to put the first strike down, and deported nine trade-union leaders to put the second down. In Jagersfontein diamond mine, Sotho [South African ethnic group] miners went on strike when a white overseer kicked a black miner to death, and eleven miners were killed in the subsequent struggle. In Cape Town, 600 coloured [mixed-race] stevedores struck for an 8-hour day and wage increases.

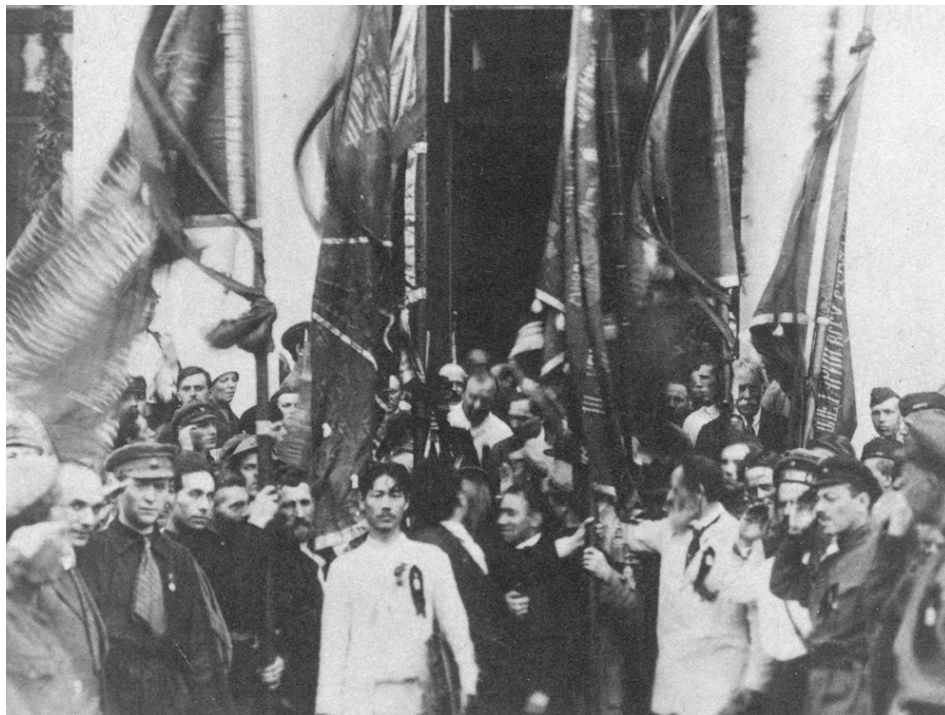
The existing misleaders of the workers and oppressed were busy lining up support for the first interimperialist war on the side of the British overlords of South Africa. During World War I Gandhi urged Indians in South Africa to join the British army. As described by Jack and Ray Simons in *Class and Colour in South Africa 1850-1950* (International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa, 1983), Gandhi earlier argued that passive resistance was “best for ‘illiterate natives.’ It taught them to break their own heads and not other people’s in order to redress grievances.”

After a brief moment of hesitation on the eve of the war, the South African Labour Party signed up for the war no less enthusiastically than the mine owners’ Unionist Party. Colonel Frederic Creswell, the leader of the Labour Party, enlisted and called for support to the war in a manifesto titled “See It Through.”

In the Western Cape, the African Political Organisation (APO, renamed the African People’s Organisation in 1919), the main political voice of the coloureds, had tremendous illusions that the British imperialists would influence their South African counterparts to drop the colour bar, and hoped that if coloureds supported the war effort, they would be rewarded for their loyalty.

Days before Britain declared war in 1914, Dr. Abdullah Abdurahman, president of the APO, proclaimed, “The present foundation of the Empire is rotten, and cannot last.” Weeks later he said, “The only question we have to ask ourselves is how we can best serve the Empire” (*Class and Colour in South Africa*).

In 1912 the South African Native National Congress [SANNC], predecessor of the African National Congress, was founded by lawyers, church-trained intellectuals and tribal chiefs. Their reaction to the outbreak of World War I was to cancel a meeting to discuss opposition to the 1913 Natives Land Act which dispossessed the majority of the black population, and instead to organise recruitment of blacks into the British army.



International Institute for Social History

**Petrograd, July 1920: Delegates at Second Congress of Communist International, at which International Socialist League application for affiliation was recorded.**

David Ivon Jones, secretary in the South African Labour Party and later a leader of the CPSA, adamantly opposed the interimperialist war. When the editor of the SANNC newspaper proposed a motion of condolence on the death of British Lord Kitchener at a public meeting in 1916, Jones opposed this, stating that Kitchener “was the agent of the class who exploit both native and white working class and encompass the death of millions of our fellow workers” (Baruch Hirsion and Gwyn A. Williams, *The Delegate for Africa: David Ivon Jones 1883-1924* [Core Publications, 1995]). Kitchener was the military architect of British imperi-

alism across the African continent from Sudan to South Africa.

## Internationalism and the Struggle for Black Liberation

David Ivon Jones and Sidney Percival Bunting, both immigrants from the British Isles who were central party leaders, were the outspoken antiwar leaders. In September 1914, Bunting and a small group of oppositionists to British imperialism in the South African Labour Party formed the “War on War League.” They were not pacifists but revolutionary defeatists. They called for socialist revolution to bring down all contenders in the

imperialist carving up of the world. After leaving the Labour Party, they formed the International Socialist League (ISL). Bunting immediately made the link between working-class internationalism and solidarity with the non-whites of South Africa. Their solidarity with the struggles of coloureds, blacks and Indians in many ways had made them as anathema to the Labour Party as their antiwar positions.

They distributed works of Marx, Engels and Daniel De Leon, a leading American Marxist. Even before the October 1917 Revolution in Russia, their newspaper enthusiastically cited German revolutionary Karl Liebknecht and comrades in Russia as fellow opponents of the imperialist war. In September 1915, they put out propaganda on the need for a new International. They were ignorant of the struggles by Lenin within the Zimmerwald conference [held in Switzerland in September 1915] for an anti-imperialist opposition to the war. At their first conference in January 1916, they voted to affiliate with the Zimmerwaldian International Socialist Commission in Switzerland as a manifestation of the beginning of a new International.

Simultaneously, Bunting confronted the new group with the race question in South Africa. It was and continued to be the key test of whether they had broken from the white-supremacist programme of the Labour Party. Bunting proposed that the League “affirm that the emancipation of the working class requires the abolition of all forms of native indenture, compound and passport systems; and the lifting of the native worker to the political and industrial status of the white” (quoted in Allison Drew, *Between Empire*

*continued on page 9*

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# Black Struggle, the Vietnamese Revolution and the Working Class



Le Minh Truong



Intercontinental Press

NLF guerrilla fighter in Mekong Delta, 1973 (left). Heroic Vietnamese workers and peasants inflicted humiliating defeat on U.S. imperialist colossus. May 1968 general strike: Workers at Renault plant near Paris reject union bureaucrats' sellout agreement with government (right).

## From 1960s New Left to Trotskyism

We print below the second part of a presentation, slightly edited for publication, by Spartacist League speaker Diana Coleman at an October 15 forum in Los Angeles. Part One appeared in WV No. 990 (11 November).

At the same time that Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) was growing, the ghettos were exploding. With the civil rights movement unable to change the hellish conditions of black life in the North, there was a rising level of frustrated expectations. There were a whole series of ghetto upheavals in the mid to late '60s that were repressed with extreme police/National Guard violence. Young militants were breaking from the Democratic Party and the liberal pacifism of MLK. The Black Panthers (BPP) were

### PART TWO

the best of a generation of young black activists who courageously stood up to the racist ruling class and its kill-crazy cops. Unfortunately, the Panthers, along with most of the New Left, rejected the organized working class as the agent of black freedom and socialist revolution. The Panthers looked to black ghetto youth as the vanguard of black struggle.

The underlying ideology of the Panthers was that the most oppressed are the most revolutionary. But in fact the lumpenproletariat in the ghetto, removed from the means of production, has no real social power. The Panthers' glorification of ghetto rage and rejection of the Marxist understanding of the role of the working class left them more vulnerable to state repression. They faced a systematic government campaign of assassination, police provocations, frame-ups and imprisonment, including through the FBI's notorious Counter-Intelligence Program. Mumia Abu-Jamal, a former Panther and talented journalist known as the "voice of the voiceless," has been on death row on frame-up charges for decades now. In the face of this repression, the Panthers turned to the right, into the orbit of the reformist Communist Party (CP), its lawyers and concomitantly the Democratic Party.

But let me give some quotes from Black Panther leader David Hilliard's speech to an antiwar demo in San Francisco in the fall of 1969. It says something that by '69 and '70 the speakers at these mass

marches included a Black Panther *and* the Democratic mayor of SF. Hilliard says he had been warned by the BPP leadership not to curse and not to get mad because that would alienate the white liberals, but as you can see he did both. Like Hilliard, I usually try not to curse in speeches, but I will read this quote as it appeared in Phil Foner's *The Black Panthers Speak* (1995):

"There's too many American flags out here and our Minister of Information, Eldridge Cleaver, says that the American flag and the American eagle are the true symbols of fascism....

"So then, we would like to ask the American people do they want peace in Vietnam. Well, do you? (audience) 'Yes.' Do you want peace in the Black communities? (audience) 'Yes.' Well you goddamned sure can't get it with no guitars, you sure can't get it demonstrating. The only way you're going to get peace in Vietnam is to withdraw the oppressive forces from the Black communities right here in Babylon."

As the crowd became restive and some started to boo, Hilliard got mad:

"We say down with the American fascist society. Later for Richard Milhous

Nixon, the m-----f----r. Later for all the pigs of the power structure. Later for all the people out here that don't want to hear me curse.... Because Richard Nixon is an evil man. This is the m-----f----r that unleashed the counter-insurgent teams upon the BPP.... This is the man that sends his vicious murderous dogs out into the Black community.... We will kill Richard Nixon. We will kill any m-----f----r that stands in the way of our freedom. We ain't here for no goddamned peace, because we know that we can't have no peace because this country was built on war. And if you want peace you got to fight for it."

While the liberals were booing, my friends and I were cheering his opposition to pacifism. The Panthers had become broadly popular. There was a real convergence between the white left and the black left. Black people are not a separate nation but an integral part of American class society while at the same time forcibly segregated at the bottom as a race-color caste. Hilliard was subsequently brought up on charges for threatening the life of the president. Later the charges were



Bettmann

1 May 1969: National Guard breaks up New Left UC Berkeley protest demanding return of People's Park.

dropped—perhaps because it was obvious that no one plans an assassination attempt in a speech in front of upward of 150,000 people in Golden Gate Park!

### The Limits of Student Radicalism

Just as the Panthers came up against the dead end of their lumpen vanguard strategy, SDS came up against the dead end of student vanguardism. As I said earlier, the New Left had been very anti-working-class. Trotsky's biographer Isaac Deutscher, who considered himself a classical Marxist, toured the U.S. in 1966, speaking at Vietnam antiwar protests. He was appalled by the intellectual elitism he found among young radicals who considered themselves anti-capitalist. Deutscher said:

"Do you really take such a contemptuous view of your working classes that you think that you alone are so sensitive or so noble as to be dissatisfied with this degrading society and that they cannot find it in themselves to be dissatisfied? Do you really believe that they are so much more prone, and by nature conditioned, to be corrupted by the meretricious advantages of this war-flourishing capitalism than you are?"

Well, that is pretty much what many did think. Deutscher also said something to the effect that he would exchange all the peace marches for one good dockworkers strike. Most of the New Left didn't understand that, either.

What happened was that the very success of the student strikes demonstrated their impotence. In the spring of 1970, President Nixon ordered American troops in South Vietnam into neighboring Cambodia. In the ensuing campus protests, the Ohio National Guard killed four students at Kent State. Ten days later, cops killed two black students at Jackson State. Of course, the second murderous assault didn't get as much coverage, black life being cheap for the bourgeoisie, then as now. These events triggered protests involving four and a half million students—half the U.S. student population—and many colleges remained shut through the rest of the semester. But this did not stop the Vietnam War.

If this protest demonstrated the impotence of "student power," the May-June 1968 events in France demonstrated the actual power of the working class. Leftist student protest there triggered a workers general strike that shook the de Gaulle regime to its core. France was engulfed in

a pre-revolutionary crisis that the French CP barely managed to stabilize and sell out. The incipient workers revolution in France reaffirmed in real life the revolutionary potential of the working class. This made a lot of us think twice, especially since there was a strike wave in the U.S. in '69 and '70—a General Electric strike, a nationwide postal wildcat strike (the first major strike against the federal government), a Midwest Teamsters wildcat and a General Motors strike.

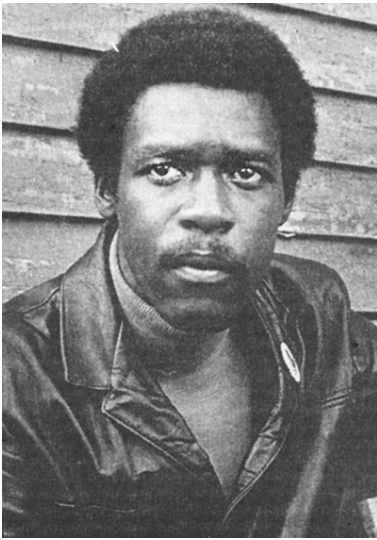
Needless to say, this was not news to the Spartacist League. As Marxists, the SL understands that the motor force of history is the class struggle—today between the capitalist class and the proletariat. The capitalists own the means of production like the land, mines and factories, while the workers have nothing but their labor power, which they sell to the capitalists in order to live. Because the working class turns the wheels of production, it has the social power and the organization to overthrow the capitalist rulers. But the working class has to understand its power in order to use it. For that you need a revolutionary vanguard party that can bring communist consciousness to the proletariat.

A key prop of capitalism is to keep the working class divided along ethnic and racial lines, which in this country means foremost the segregation of black people. The SL fights for black freedom on the program of revolutionary integrationism: the working class must fight against all instances of racist oppression and discrimination, while at the same time genuine equality for black people in the U.S. will only come about through socialist revolution that smashes capitalism. There will be no socialist revolution without the working class taking up the fight for black freedom.

Our model is the Bolshevik Party of V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky, which led the October Revolution in Russia in 1917. This was the greatest victory for the working people of the world: it gave the program of proletarian revolution flesh and blood. The proletariat seized power and created a workers state based on collectivized property and soviets (workers councils). The young workers state eliminated laws discriminating against women and homosexuals and recognized the right to self-determination of the many nations oppressed under tsarist/capitalist rule. The Soviet government proclaimed the right of working people to jobs, health care, housing and education.

The Russian Revolution was not made solely for Russia but was seen as the opening shot of a necessarily international struggle of labor against the rule of capital. It was an inspiration to the oppressed masses of the world and had a direct impact on the struggle of black people in the U.S. The American rulers have always seen a connection between the Russian Revolution and the struggles of black people in the U.S.—and rightly so. The Bolshevik Revolution was popular among wide layers of urban blacks and even among moderate black newspapers and organizations of the time. “Black and Red” is the American bourgeoisie’s greatest fear.

The SL attempted to convey some of this understanding in various leaflets written at the time and in sporadic interventions into SDS. In 1967, as young radi-



Pirkle Jones

**Left: Black Panther leader David Hilliard, 1968. Right: Marching Panthers give black power salute, 1969.**



Stewart/Bethel

cals turned to confrontation with the cops, the SL wrote: “Personal sacrifice can never substitute for a mass movement... this does not mean reverting to the simple pacifist humanitarianism of the official peace movement in order to get middle-class liberals on the picket line. What it does mean is tapping the fundamental discontent and conflicts in American society; the black ghetto uprisings and rash of militant strikes indicate the depth and explosiveness of this discontent.”

The SL fought for a one-day general strike and raised the slogan: “Labor strikes against the war!” The SL also controversially opposed the draft resistance campaign and insisted that *if drafted*, young radicals should go. In a position paper put forward in SDS, we argued that the voluntary purging of radicals from the army would only strengthen the ideological purity and political reliability of the army. We said that young militants should go with working-class and minority youth and continue their political agitation in the army.

### Stalinism Versus Trotskyism

Another question that the SL took up in this period was the question of Maoism-Stalinism. The New Left didn’t want to deal with these old, musty debates, but these questions come after you. Stalinism versus Trotskyism, the nature of the workers states—these questions cannot be avoided. SDS liberals of the mid 1960s were poring over Mao’s “Little Red Book” of quotations by 1968.

One thing that caused this change was the tremendous authority of the Vietnamese Stalinists. They looked like they were going to and then *did* beat U.S. imperialism, and they made no bones about being old-line Stalinists. Since Ho Chi Minh didn’t claim to have his own ideology, it was Maoism that was the beneficiary of New Leftists looking for some kind of “new” Marxism that would be more radical than old-line Soviet Stalinism and its practice of “peaceful coexistence” with U.S. imperialism, which meant betraying social and class struggles internationally. China was under the gun of U.S. imperialism, so the Chinese Communist Party leadership was talking more left at that moment.

On a sociological level, some of the Stalinists in the American Communist Party who hadn’t simply quit to become liberals became Maoists—for example, Progressive Labor (PL)—and influenced the New Left. Maoism did not represent a break from Stalinist class collaboration but rather was what we called “Khrushchevism under the gun.” (Khrushchev was the Soviet premier at the time.) Seeking to win young radicals to a Trotskyist program, the SL exposed the repeated attempts by the Chinese Maoists to form a reactionary anti-Soviet bloc with U.S. imperialism at the expense of social struggles around the world. This alliance was sealed by Mao’s 1972

meeting with U.S. war criminal Richard Nixon in Beijing as American warplanes were raining death and destruction on Vietnam.

In the article “NLF Program: Fetter on Victory” (*Spartacist* supplement, May 1968) about the National Liberation Front (NLF) the SL wrote:

“There has been an understandable but nevertheless unfortunate tendency on the part of the American left to idealize Ho Chi Minh and the leadership of the NLF, and for radicals to turn their correct demands for military victory against imperialism and its puppets into uncritical political support for these leaders and their politics. This is a grave error, for not only do these would-be revolution-



Spartacist

**Mid 1960s civil rights demonstration in New York. During wave of ghetto explosions, Spartacists fought for militant defense of inner cities, sought to mobilize working-class solidarity.**

aries not understand the deformities of those they support—and are extremely likely to feel personally betrayed when the inevitable occurs—but are likely to carry over the Stalinist hallmarks of class-collaboration and murderous opportunism into the American revolutionary movement. It is vitally necessary to keep in mind that Ho Chi Minh and his co-thinkers have already sold out the Vietnamese revolution twice before.”

This article also presciently predicted that in the best of circumstances the “NLF will simply bypass its program and will then set out to make a limited, distorted and bureaucratic revolution from the top.” That is exactly what they did. And this is also why the SL began to raise my favorite slogan of all time: “All Indochina Must Go Communist!” This slogan cut not only against liberal pacifism at home but also against the limits of Vietnamese Stalinism. Uniquely on the left, today we uphold the same Trotskyist program of unconditional military defense and proletarian political revolution for the remaining bureaucratically deformed workers states of China, North Korea, Vietnam, Cuba and Laos.

And that point from the *Spartacist* article, about the carrying over of class collaborationism and opportunism into the American movement, was so true. One of my old friends went to a conference in Vancouver in '67 or '68 and met with Vietnamese women, not only women in the CP of Vietnam but also women combatants in the NLF of South Vietnam. Of course, she was very impressed by the presence of these women who were actually fighting U.S. imperialism with gun in hand. And, of course, the Americans wanted advice on how to build an American revolutionary movement.

But the Vietnamese kept steering the conversation away from that subject. Instead, all the Americans got were reformist clichés about building the biggest possible movement on the broadest possible basis—watch out when people start telling you that, it’s code for class collaboration—and helping elect whomever would help end the war, i.e., the Democrats, who else. My friend was very disappointed by this, as were the people like myself whom she told this to. We couldn’t figure it out and filed it away as one of those things that you better not think about too hard.

### The New Left Turns to the Working Class

I do want to give one example of the New Left meets the working class from my own history. In 1969, I was in a women’s liberation group, and we were so impressed by the working-class struggle in France and so frustrated by student struggles and peace marches that we decided that we had to get out of Berkeley and organize the workers. We got together a group of men and women, husbands, boyfriends, friends in the movement (as it was called). We were planning on organizing white workers because we were very much imbued with the black nationalist idea of polyvanguardism—that blacks should organize blacks, whites should organize whites, and so on.

We did a demographic study of the Bay Area and decided that the place where we could find the most young white workers was Hayward. What a boring suburb, but

we all moved there, 20 or 30 of us. Later, one of our people got a job at the General Motors auto plant in Fremont, and we decided that we would start a radical caucus there. We thought you had to do something flashy to get working people’s attention, start off with a bang. So we printed up a leaflet about the birthday of BPP leader Huey Newton, which we thought was very appropriate to jolt white people out of their racism. And there were a lot of blacks working there, too, who probably *did* know who Huey Newton was.

We took the plant’s tour train with the leaflets stuffed under our coats. At a pre-arranged moment, we leapt off and ran around like maniacs, handing out leaflets and throwing them in the cars. Whether the workers were convinced by our politics, I don’t know, but they thought it was wild. The bosses stopped every assembly line in the plant and proceeded to chase us around. Workers hid us and showed us where to go. They figured that as long as we were there the lines would stay down. Assembly line work is hard and boring, and we were an interesting diversion that had never been seen before. It took a long time before management could round us up. They didn’t even think to stop us when we announced that we were leaving and walked out and got in our cars.

Meanwhile, during this exact period in '69, SDS was splitting due to the real inadequacy of New Left politics in the face of the general social crisis of the late 1960s. In the summer of 1969 at the SDS National Convention in Chicago, facing the prospect of PL’s positions gaining a majority, a clique within the SDS National

*continued on page 8*



Magnum

**Mao welcomes Nixon to Beijing in 1972 as China seals anti-Soviet alliance with U.S. imperialism.**



# New Left...

(continued from page 7)

Collective (NC), including Bernardine Dohrn and Mike Klonsky, engineered a split, lining up Black Panthers and others to race-bait PL supporters. When this didn't work, the NC splitters led their followers out of the conference.

The SL remained with the PL-led Worker-Student Alliance wing of SDS due to its orientation, however crude, to the proletariat. The SL referred to PL, more leftist at this time than now, as "Trotskyists with a prefrontal lobotomy." The SL issued position papers within SDS, arguing for a Leninist vanguard party to bring the power of the working class to bear in the interests of all the oppressed (reprinted in "'Racial Oppression and Working-Class Politics,'" WV No. 897, 31 August 2007, and "'The Fight for Women's Liberation,'" WV No. 910, 14 March 2008). PL was vulnerable to our Trotskyist criticism, but ultimately they clung to their "minimum/maximum program," combining "communist" rhetoric with reformist practice.

The SL's Trotskyist program won a hearing within SDS, and the forebear of today's Spartacus Youth Clubs was founded as the Revolutionary Marxist Caucus (RMC) in SDS in early 1970. The RMC sought to win radical students to a revolutionary, internationalist and proletarian communist program. This included fighting for an understanding of the lessons of the 1917 Russian Revolution and Trotsky's understanding of the material roots of its bureaucratic degeneration.

## The Futile Strategy of the Weathermen

Even in Hayward, we felt the effects of the SDS split. We had been organizing the working class for at least six months and had put out a ton of leaflets. Actually, there was more interest in our politics than you might imagine, the working class being very restive. We did some high school organizing at a working-class high school in Hayward. After passing out some leaflets protesting the war in Vietnam, we stood outside the school with a bullhorn and shouted: "Come out of your prisons!" The most surprising part was that several hundred did, and we led a march all over Hayward.

But some of the people in the Hayward Collective began to feel that the working class just wasn't responding sufficiently. So they got ahold of the Weathermen, who were part of the anti-PL side of the split in SDS. The Weathermen—named, I believe, after a Bob Dylan song which includes the line: "You don't need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows"—had a policy of confrontation with the armed forces of the state. They practiced terrorism in the name of Third World nationalism.

Lacking a proletarian strategy, and desperate to do something, the Weather Underground would conduct acts of individual terrorism that were self-defeating and, more times than not, far more dangerous to themselves than to the bourgeoisie. Such a program was no break from liberalism but a logical conclusion, in extremis, of the liberal program of bearing

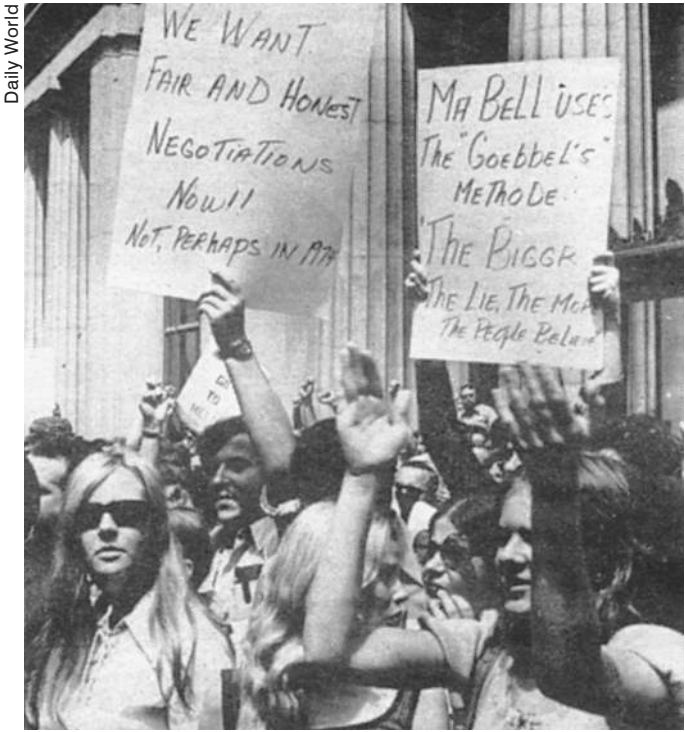
**August 1971,  
New York:  
Striking telephone  
workers at AT&T  
headquarters.  
At its height,  
400,000 CWA  
members were  
on strike nationally  
for higher wages.**

"moral witness" to government crimes. The Weathermen's strategy was futile. At the same time, their targets were representatives of imperialism and capitalist oppression. While politically opposing the Weathermen, the SL fought for their defense, insisting that they were "an integral part of the radical movement." The rest of the left turned its back on them.

The Weathermen came to visit the Hayward Collective to win us to their variety of Third World nationalism, arguing that the American working class was totally bought off and could never make a socialist revolution. They presented their views, and then they sang us some songs. You think I'm kidding. Believe me, I'm not. First they sang, "We all live in a Weatherman machine" to the tune of "Yellow Submarine." Then they sang "Bad Moon Rising" by Creedence Clearwater Revival. "Looks like we're in for nasty weather" sort of captured their perspective. Those of us who believed in the revolutionary potential of the American working class decided maybe our theme song should be the Creedence song "Lodi" about the small, remote California town, as in "stuck in Lodi again" boring. This forum seems to include a lot of discussion about music—maybe it should have a soundtrack to go with it.

Since there was a minority of us who were not convinced, several others from our collective and I went to meet Bernardine Dohrn, a leader of the Weathermen who was on the "Ten Most Wanted" list in the U.S. I had seen her "Wanted" picture up in the local post office. We were supposed to meet on Telegraph Avenue in front of Cody's Bookstore. Dohrn was late, and everyone was worried. She claimed that she had been up the street stealing a pair of earrings. Meeting in such a public place as Telegraph Avenue was dumb enough, but even I thought *that* was crazy when you were underground. But it was all a part of the "outlaw" image.

Finally, we sat down to meet, and she asked me what I was going to do when the North Koreans sailed in to Puget Sound, presumably to take over since the American working class was supposed to be so bought off. Perhaps not answering this on a very deep level—and I was kind of intimidated since she was a big shot—I



just said that I didn't think that was going to happen. She said that just showed what an American-chauvinist racist I was. So I didn't join the Weathermen, and Dohrn and her hubby Bill Ayers eventually went back to Chicago, where they hang out in liberal circles and know such unsavory people as Barack Obama.

## Breaking with Feminism

The women, two others and myself, who didn't join the Weathermen then began a sort of feminist working-class organizing collective in East Oakland together with women we had known from the Berkeley Women's Liberation group and others. Why we became more feminist, since the Hayward Collective certainly did not split along gender lines, I'm not quite sure. In any case, we had our East Oakland Women's Collective, and we worked with other women to set up a citywide Oakland Women's Liberation Group, which probably included a couple hundred women over the years. I was among those who went to work in a glass-bottle-blowing factory in East Oakland, and others went to work as operators at the phone company. There are a million more ridiculous stories from this period—"socialist feminists meet the working class"—but you don't want to be here until midnight.

At the phone company, we saw in living color where feminism led—that is, right across the class line. We were radical feminists with a working-class bent, but the bottom line is that Marxism and feminism are counterposed. Feminism is a bourgeois ideology that asserts that the main division in society is between men and women rather than class versus class. Its logic is that all women have more in common with each other than they do with men, regardless of class. Feminism is politically incapable of resolving the most basic aspects of women's oppression because it functions entirely within the framework of bourgeois rule. In contrast, Marxism looks to the power of the working class as the motor force for social progress. The private property system, backed by the capitalist state, and the family are the most basic and deeply intertwined aspects of class society. They cannot be "reformed" away. The inescapable conclusion is that the entire capitalist system must go.

Our collective was working through the Operators Defense Committee, which featured an eclectic combination of New Left, Maoist and workerist politics, with a heavy overlay of feminism and male exclusionism. But we were quite shaken up when there was a strike of electrical workers, who were mostly men, at the phone company. We saw that many of the women whom we had helped to recruit to women's consciousness were recruiting others to *cross* the picket lines, using all the feminist arguments we had told them. "Well, we're more oppressed, what have they ever done to fight for women's rights? So, therefore, it's OK to cross the picket line." We were horrified. We were somewhat ambiguous on unions, but we knew one thing: you never cross a picket line. We had been following a feminist strategy

of organizing women around their own oppression, and it didn't lead them to a broader understanding or socialist consciousness. It led to strikebreaking.

There was a Spartacist-supported caucus in the Communications Workers of America (CWA) called the Militant Action Caucus (MAC). The MAC was based on class-struggle politics and a series of transitional demands, which are designed to link current consciousness to the necessity of the conquest of power by the proletariat. Over a period of a couple of years, culminating in the 1971 national CWA strike, we were able to test out in action our feminist strategy versus the revolutionary strategy of the SL and the class-struggle politics of the MAC. Having had some negative experiences with other groups like PL and the Revolutionary Union (predecessor of the Revolutionary Communist Party), I came grudgingly to the conclusion that only the Trotskyists of the SL seemed to know how to do working-class organizing.

Finally, even in the feminist Oakland Women's Liberation Group, the dreaded question of Maoism versus Trotskyism came up when we helped set up what was essentially a Marxist study group. With some push from women around the SL, Trotskyist works like *The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution* by Harold Isaacs were included as readings. What an eye-opener! Stalinism led to the bloody defeat of the Chinese Revolution of the late 1920s and betrayed many other revolutionary opportunities, as did Maoism. All that Maoist class collaborationism, the belief that in the underdeveloped countries you should work with your own bourgeoisie—whether called the "bloc of four classes" or the "united front against imperialism"—could no longer be ignored. Trotsky's program of permanent revolution really is the only alternative to placing confidence in the backward, imperialist-dependent bourgeoisie of an oppressed country as the vehicle for liberation.

A bunch of us East Oakland women, after hard, sometimes bruising, political discussions with the SL, decided in the summer of 1972 that we needed to join an internationalist Leninist vanguard party, embodied, at least in its nucleus, in the SL. Our eclectic wanderings on the path to Leninism are mainly important in the context of the SL's call in 1969 for revolutionary regroupment. Here the Spartacist League called for "political and theoretical polarization of the ostensibly revolutionary groupings, leading ultimately to a left-communist regroupment of all organizations, factions, tendencies and individuals who stand on an anti-revisionist Marxist program, toward the formation of a Leninist vanguard party."

What was proposed was not a non-aggression pact but, if anything, an intensification of political struggle. This perspective embodied the Leninist conception that a party is built through a series of splits and fusions. It worked. The SL tripled in size between 1971 and 1974, regrouping with subjectively revolutionary elements breaking from Maoism, Socialist Workers Party (SWP) reformism and New Leftism: for example, the Communist Working Collective of L.A., the Buffalo Marxist Caucus, elements of the Leninist Faction of the SWP and the Mass Strike group in Boston, as well as assorted feminists and former black nationalists, among others.

Today is not 1972, and there aren't many subjectively revolutionary organizations or groupings around. I don't think we are going to regroup with "Occupy Wall Street," and there don't seem to be any inchoate revolutionary tendencies in the International Socialist Organization or Workers World Party. Recruitment of thoughtful, unusual individuals is the order of the day, and it is hard mental work. But things change, capitalism breeds class struggle. However, the precondition for a socialist revolution is a party. As Trotsky said in *Lessons of October* (1924): "Without a party, apart from a party, over the head of a party, or with a substitute for a party, the proletarian revolution cannot conquer." We urge you to join us in the struggle to build the party necessary to lead international proletarian revolution. ■

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South Africa...

(continued from page 5)

and Revolution: A Life of Sidney Bunting, 1873-1936 [Pickering & Chatto, 2007]). But at this meeting Bunting’s motion was amended by others in the group to include a reactionary call for preventing the increase of numbers of black wage workers, and this version passed.

Bunting and Jones, as leaders and editors of the ISL, continually carried on a fight to incorporate demands for blacks among their small membership. In their newspaper *The International*, Jones wrote:

“If the League deal resolutely in consonance with socialist principles with the native question, it will succeed in shaking South African capitalism to its foundations. Then, and not till then shall we be able to talk about the South African proletariat in International relations. Not till we free the Native can we hope to free the white.”

—“The Parting of the Ways,” 1 October 1915 (reprinted in *South African Communists Speak, 1915-1980* [Inkululeko Publications, 1981])

Bunting and Jones were often alone. The ISL invited black men and leaders of the Native Congress to ISL meetings, which led them to get expelled from the Trades Hall [in Johannesburg] in late 1917. Bunting used the expulsion as an opportunity to denounce the racist Labourites. He hated and condemned all who called themselves socialists and claimed to support the 1917 Russian Revolution, but did not support black African struggle. In April 1919 he wrote in *The International*: “It is humiliating to have to keep on emphasising that the essence of the Labour movement is Solidarity, without which it cannot win. The outstanding characteristic of the capitalist system in South Africa being its Native labour, the outstanding movement of the country must clearly be the movement of its Native labourers” (quoted in Edward Roux, *S.P. Bunting: A Political Biography* [Mayibuye Books, 1993]).

Through the ISL conferences of this period and the early 1920s Bunting and Jones wrote articles and repeatedly introduced motions and theses calling for special attention to black workers in all sorts of ways: for classes to be instituted, for leaflets to be addressed to them, for incorporating demands for the right to vote, organise, end pass laws, etc. In late 1918 the ISL published a leaflet written by Jones titled “The Bolsheviks Are Coming” [see page 5], which was translated into Zulu and Sotho. He combined solidarity with the Bolshevik Revolution with the necessity to emancipate the black workers—he ended by saying that this is Bolshevism—that black and white workers combine in one organisation irrespective of craft, colour or creed. In Jones and Bunting’s break from social democracy to international working-class revolution, they applied their understanding of Marxism to the inseparable fight for black liberation and socialist revolution in South Africa.

The pages of *The International*, the ISL newspaper, were filled with solidarity with the Russian Revolution. Jones was prescient in March 1917 when he wrote about the February Russian Revolution that overthrew the tsar. He hailed the

Russian workers as the vanguard of world revolution: “this is a bourgeois revolution, but arriving when the night of capitalism is far spent. It cannot be a mere repetition of previous revolutions” (“170 Million Recruits,” *The International*, 23 March 1917). They serialised the manifesto of the First Congress of the Communist International in 1919 and they sought to affiliate with the Third International born out of the workers revolution.

In 1919 Bunting wrote a scathing denunciation of the Johannesburg white municipal workers strike which the work-

ers of the early American socialists, Eugene Debs, could only say that the Socialist Party was “the party of the whole working class, regardless of color.” It took the authority of the Russian Revolution to fight with the American communists against their “colour blindness” and to pay attention to the special oppression of blacks, just as the Bolsheviks had championed oppressed nationalities. Armed with the lessons of the Russian Revolution, the American communists took up black oppression as a special question of American capitalism, and

and Johannesburg and other places and formed the Communist Party. Their membership was almost all English-speaking immigrants. They debated adopting the “21 Conditions” of the Second Congress of the Comintern. Their agreement with the Comintern’s programmatic conditions for entry caused some of the syndicalists and others who refused to support the dictatorship of the proletariat to part ways.

Jones’s “Communism in South Africa” was presented on behalf of the ISL and used as the basic report on South Africa for the Third Congress of the Comintern in June 1921, which he attended. Jones initiated a motion to devote serious attention to the Negro question as a separate question of importance.

The report reflects his sensitivity to the horrendous conditions of blacks. He tries to inform the Comintern of the unique social and political groupings that make up the country. Jones denounces the Native Congress for its timid pro-government programme and its fear of the masses, and predicts that class-based organisations will dominate in South Africa. The “national and class interests of the natives cannot be distinguished the one from the other.” What comes out strongly is Jones’s desire to bring the question of black oppression to the forefront of the International. He appeals for reinforcements, and for the South African movement to come more into the purview of the Third International. He writes: “The white movement dominates our attention, because the native workers’ movement moves only spasmodically and is neglected. It requires a special department, with native linguists and newspapers. All of which require large funds, which are not available.” His final remarks are that “African natives are ripe for the message of the Communist International.”

The party remained divided as to whether their purpose should be to address white workers and about admitting black members. After Jones left South Africa in 1920 to spend his final days in the Soviet Union, Bunting continued almost alone to push the party toward the black masses.

In October 1922 Bunting wrote a document called “The ‘Colonial’ Labour Front” (reprinted in *South Africa’s Radical Tradition: A Documentary History*, Volume 1, edited by Allison Drew [Mayibuye Books, 1996]). It takes on the relation of national oppression to class based on the theses of the Second Congress of the Communist International. This document tries to explain how the bourgeoisie splits the workers of the imperialist countries from workers in the colonial countries, that racism has an economic basis. And he argues that the task of the communist parties is to bridge the divisions between white and black labour, between the workers of the imperialist and colonial countries. He says that national liberation struggles must not “postpone” labour action; particularly in places like South Africa there is no real national liberation movement or peasant movement to link up with. He quotes from the Supplementary Theses on the National Question of the Second Congress (1920): “we must in any case struggle against control by bourgeois democratic national movements over the mass action of poor and ignorant peasants and workers for their liberation from all sorts of exploitation.”

[TO BE CONTINUED]



South African History Online

Leaders of South African Native National Congress, forebear of ANC, 1914.

ers called the “Johannesburg soviet.” He called it ironically a “White ‘Soviet,’” and attacked it for its racist hypocritical indifference to black workers. In February 1920 some 70,000 black miners went on strike, and Bunting wrote appeals to white workers to support their struggle.

The Industrial Workers of Africa

One other effort of the ISL I want to mention before I get on to the formation of the CPSA is the Industrial Workers of Africa (IWA), founded in October 1917 and modelled on the American syndicalist Industrial Workers of the World. The slogan of this all-in industrial organisation became “*Sifuna Zonke*” (“We want all”). They distributed their leaflets in Zulu and Sotho. As described by Jones in his March 1921 report to the Comintern, “Communism in South Africa”: “The native workers of the IWA quickly grasped the difference between their trade union and the Congress [SANNC] and waged a merciless war of invective at the joint meetings of their Union with the Congress against the black-coated respectables of the Congress” (reprinted in *South African Communists Speak*).

In this period they also planned to publish in Hindi and Tamil in Durban, and they organised coloured garment workers in Kimberley. One of these people in Kimberley was Johnny Gomas, who later became a Cape Town union organiser and leader of the Communist Party.

James P. Cannon, a founder of the American Communist Party and later Trotskyist leader, makes the point in *The First Ten Years of American Communism* (1962) that it took the intervention of the Comintern under Lenin to force the American communists to take up the black question. Cannon says that the best

they became the foremost champions of black liberation and recruited blacks to the party.

During the course of the rise of American capitalism, the origins of black oppression in chattel slavery led to blacks becoming a race-colour caste. This is very different from South Africa where black oppression originated in colonial subjugation and national oppression. However, the comparison I want to make is that the assimilation of the lessons of the Russian Revolution would have directly guided the early CPSA. Jones, Bunting and later Eddie Roux were inspired by the Russian Revolution. Although they were physically distant from the Comintern, they grasped the centrality of the fight against black oppression, and this manifested itself in their perseverance in making the Communist Party a mass black party. But they never developed a theoretical framework to this question as it applied to South Africa. And it became more and more impossible for them to develop a programme as the Comintern degenerated into more a tool of the nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy rather than an organising centre for world revolution, as it was under Lenin and Trotsky.

Founding of the CPSA

In January 1920, the ISL resolved to affiliate with the Third International and sent their rules and constitution to “convince you that our policy is on all fours with that of Communist parties of Europe and elsewhere” (quoted in *South African Communists Speak*). Apparently the application was read and applauded at the Second Congress of the Comintern.

In 1921 they pulled together various groupings from Cape Town, Durban

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**

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**Government Unleashes Cop Terror on Unions, Township Poor, Immigrants**

**Break with the Bourgeois Tripartite Alliance!**

For a Class Struggle Fight Against Labour Brokers.....2  
Letter of Application to Join Spartacist South Africa.....7  
Rising Police Terror: Cops Kill SAMWU Shop Steward.....8  
Ugandan Gay Rights Activist Brutally Murdered.....10  
Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants! No Deportations!.....12  
Early Years of the Communist Party of South Africa.....15  
Britain: For a Class Struggle Fight Against Fees and Cuts!.....23  
Zimbabwe: Hands Off Leftists, Trade Unionists!.....26  
Defend Libya Against Imperialist Attacks!.....28

Printed by Steve Roberts. Based on information from the ICL Party's website.

# Iran...

(continued from page 1)

It was the U.S. that incinerated some 200,000 Japanese people in the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. The U.S. ruling class that is today threatening Iran is the same obscenely rich capitalist class that gorges itself on profits while busting unions, throwing millions out of work, slashing social services, destroying health care and stealing pensions—attacks that hit particularly hard at the black masses segregated at the bottom of society. In opposing the U.S. occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan and other imperialist adventures, we raise the call for class struggle at home, promoting the understanding of the need to mobilize the proletariat to sweep away the murderous imperialist order through socialist revolution.

Although the Obama administration is seeking—at least for now—to rein in Israel and head off an immediate military attack on Iran, support for such an action has been growing within U.S. ruling circles, and not only in *Wall Street Journal* editorials and the speeches of Zionist neocons. A sign of the broader “bomb Iran” sentiment was an exchange between strategists for the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments (CSBA), which includes former officials from both Democratic and Republican administrations, and others from the



Reuters  
**April 2004: Mordechai Vanunu leaves prison after serving 18 years for disclosing Israel's massive nuclear stockpile.**



WV Photo  
**New York, March 2007: Spartacist banner at antiwar demo.**

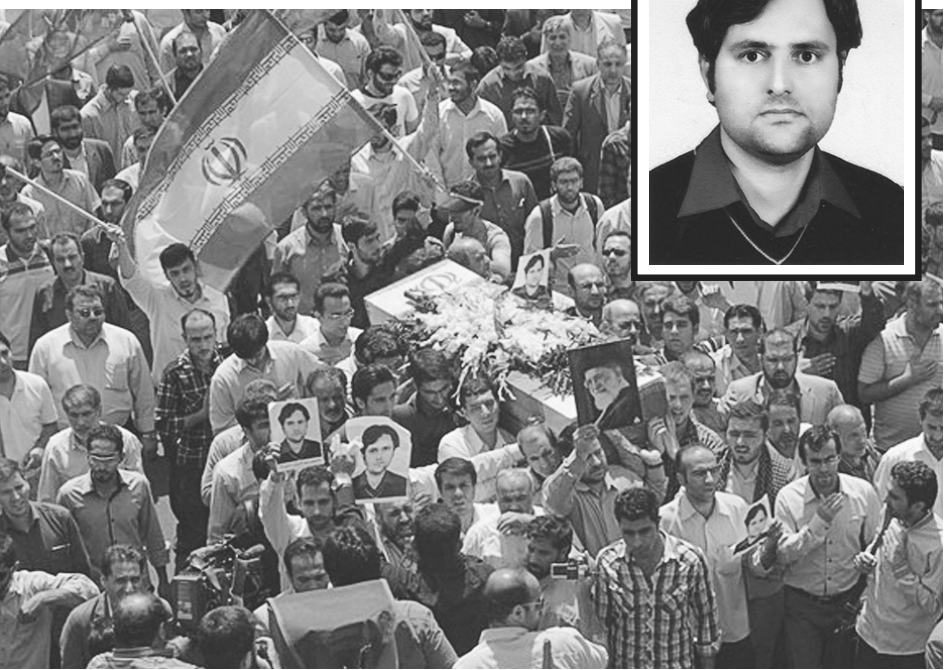
Council on Foreign Relations. CFR spokesmen argued in *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 2010) that, in the event Iran succeeded in developing nukes, the U.S. should threaten to attack with any means, “including nuclear weapons,” if Tehran crossed certain “redlines,” such as “initiation of conventional warfare against other countries” or “stepped-up support for terrorist or subversive activities.” Initially, the CSBA authors argued a more restrained line of keeping up the current policy of sanctions and military pressure (*Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2011). Yet one day after the November 8 IAEA report, the same CSBA authors posted a statement online titled: “Why Obama Should Take Out Iran’s Nuclear Program: The Case for Striking Before It’s Too Late.”

It takes some chutzpah for the U.S. rulers, echoed by imperialist Britain and France, to rail against Iran possibly acquiring nuclear weapons. The U.S. capitalists possess enough nuclear firepower to destroy humanity many times over. The atomic bombing of Japan, which was ultimately meant as a warning to the Soviet Union, epitomized the role of the U.S. rulers as the greatest menace to the workers and oppressed the world has known. That act of imperialist barbarism has been followed by a long line of wars and military operations, from Korea and Vietnam—where the U.S. failed to reverse social revolutions—to Afghanistan, Iraq and

Libya more recently. The destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state by capitalist counterrevolution two decades ago removed what had been the chief military and diplomatic obstacle to the imperialists’ pursuit of their global ambitions.

The U.S. funnels billions in aid every year to Zionist Israel, whose existence is predicated on the displacement and bru-

**Mourners carry the body of Iranian scientist Darioush Rezaie (inset), assassinated in Tehran on July 24.**



Reuters photos

# PDC...

(continued from page 3)

courts have repeatedly refused to hear this overwhelming evidence.

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

**Leonard Peltier** is an internationally renowned class-war prisoner. Peltier’s incarceration for his activism in the American Indian Movement has come to symbolize this country’s racist repression of its native peoples, the survivors of centuries of genocidal oppression. Peltier’s frame-up trial, for the 1975 deaths of two marauding FBI agents in what had become a war zone on the South Dakota Pine Ridge Reservation, shows what capitalist “justice” is all about. Although the lead government attorney has admitted, “We can’t prove who shot those agents,” and the courts have acknowledged blatant prosecutorial misconduct, the 67-year-old Peltier is still locked away. This year, Peltier, who suffers from multiple serious medical conditions, was thrown into solitary confinement and then transferred to Florida, far from his family. He is not

scheduled to be reconsidered for parole for another 13 years.

Eight **MOVE** members—**Chuck Africa, Michael Africa, Debbie Africa, Janet Africa, Janine Africa, Delbert Africa, Eddie Africa** and **Phil Africa**—are in their 34th year in prison. They were sentenced to 30 to 100 years after the 8 August 1978 siege of their Philadelphia home by over 600 heavily armed cops, having been falsely convicted of killing a police officer who died in the cops’ own cross fire. In 1985, eleven of their **MOVE** family members, including five children, were massacred by Philly cops



Jericho Movement  
**Delbert Africa**

in collaboration with the Feds. After more than three decades of unjust incarceration, most of these innocent prisoners had parole hearings this year, but none were released.

**Lynne Stewart** is a radical lawyer incarcerated for defending her client, a blind Egyptian cleric imprisoned for an alleged plot to blow up New York City

landmarks in the early 1990s. Last year, she was resentenced to ten years, more than quadrupling her earlier sentence, in a loud affirmation by the Obama administration that there will be no let-up in the massive attack on democratic rights under the “war on terror.” Stewart, now over 72 years old and suffering from breast cancer, is known for her defense of Black Panthers, radical leftists and others reviled by the capitalist state.

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

The Ohio 7’s politics were once shared by thousands of radicals during the Vietnam antiwar movement and by New Leftists who wrote off the possibility of winning the working class to a revolutionary program and saw themselves as an auxiliary of Third World liberation movements. But, like the Weathermen before them, the Ohio 7 were spurned by the “respectable” left. From a proletarian standpoint, the actions of these leftist activists against imperialism and racist injustice are not a crime. They should not have served a day in prison.

**Ed Poindexter** and **Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa** are former Black Panther supporters and leaders of the Omaha, Nebraska, National Commit-

tee to Combat Fascism. They were victims of the FBI’s deadly COINTELPRO operation under which 38 Black Panther Party members were killed and hundreds more imprisoned on frame-up charges. Poindexter and Mondo were railroaded to prison and sentenced to life for a 1970 explosion that killed a cop, and they have now served more than 40 years in jail. Nebraska courts have repeatedly denied Poindexter and Mondo new trials despite the fact that a crucial piece of evidence excluded from the original trial, a 911 audio tape long suppressed by the FBI, proved that testimony of the state’s key witness was perjured.

**Hugo Pinell**, the last of the San Quentin 6 still in prison, has been in solitary isolation for more than four decades. He was a militant anti-racist leader of prison rights organizing along with George Jackson, his comrade and mentor, who was gunned down by prison guards in 1971. Despite numerous letters of support and no disciplinary write-ups for over 28 years, Pinell was again denied parole in 2009. Now in his 60s, Pinell continues to serve a life sentence at the notorious torture chamber, Pelican Bay Security Housing Unit in California, a focal point for two recent hunger strikes against grotesquely inhuman conditions.

*Contribute now! All proceeds from the Holiday Appeals will go to the Class-War Prisoners Stipend Fund. This is not charity but an elementary act of solidarity with those imprisoned for their opposition to racist capitalism and imperialist depredations. Send your contributions to: PDC, P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013; (212) 406-4252. ■*



and imprisoned. The vindictive Zionist rulers want him forever silenced, but the working class internationally will be forever in Vanunu’s debt.

Mounting Pressure Against China

Increasing belligerence toward Iran comes as the U.S. is preparing to withdraw almost all of its troops from Iraq and draw down its forces in Afghanistan, while strengthening its position elsewhere in the region. The U.S. is reportedly planning to beef up its military contingent in Kuwait, while reinforcing its naval presence in the Persian Gulf. The Obama administration is also looking to negotiate a stronger military alliance with the six countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, dominated by Saudi Arabia. Meanwhile, the U.S. and Turkey have announced the placement of an American anti-missile radar system on Turkish territory, 435 miles from Iran, by the end of the year.

Chief among U.S. rulers’ concerns in redirecting their forces is pursuing the military encirclement of China, the largest and most powerful of the remaining bureaucratically deformed workers states. In the name of fighting “terrorism,” the U.S. has in the past decade enhanced its military presence in the Philippines and resumed open military relations with Indonesia, in addition to establishing bases in Afghanistan and Central Asia. Washington has also strengthened military ties with the Japanese imperialists and continues to buttress capitalist Taiwan. Last week, Commander-in-Chief Obama announced plans to deploy 2,500 marines to Darwin in northern Australia as a move to counter China.

Capitalism was overthrown in China by the 1949 Revolution. Today, despite major inroads by both foreign and indigenous capitalists, the core elements of China’s economy remain collectivized. Ultimately, the U.S. imperialists aim to restore capitalist rule in China, and for this they have a multipronged strategy: capitalist eco-



Meyer/Dallas Morning News  
**U.S. soldiers terrorize unarmed man during imperialist occupation of Iraq, 2003.**

nomic penetration combined with military pressure and support to domestic counter-revolutionaries, such as the “Free Tibet” movement. It is vital for the international proletariat to stand for the unconditional military defense of China and the other deformed workers states—Cuba, North Korea, Vietnam and Laos—against imperialism and internal counterrevolution. Thus, we support the testing and development of nukes and delivery systems by North Korea and China.

China is highly dependent on the flow of Iranian oil—in 2009, Iran ranked as China’s second largest oil provider. Despite this fact, the Stalinist regime in Beijing supported all four previous rounds of UN sanctions directed against Iran, a measure of the Stalinist bureaucracy’s futile strivings for “peaceful coexistence” with the imperialists. In the interest of its economic relationship with the U.S., the Beijing bureaucracy has also embraced the imperialists’ “war on terror.” Through its appeasement of imperialism and opposition to the program of world socialist revolution, the nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy undermines the defense of the workers state. It

is necessary for the Chinese proletariat to carry out a political revolution to oust the Stalinist misrulers and establish a regime based on workers democracy and revolutionary internationalism.

Anti-Imperialism Abroad Means Class Struggle at Home

The working people of Iran have a long history of subjugation by the imperialists and bloody suppression by their “own” rulers. In 1953, after the modernizing nationalist regime of Mohammad Mosaddeq tried to nationalize Iran’s oil fields, the CIA staged a coup, installing Shah Pahlevi and propping up his savage rule for 25 years. In 1979, in a “revolution” hailed by almost the entire left internationally, the Islamic hierarchy under Ayatollah Khomeini seized power, going on to crush struggles by workers, women and oppressed national minorities. Women were segregated from society under *sharia* law and forced to don the sweltering head-to-toe veil; workers organizations were smashed; leftists were jailed and executed. Uniquely, our organization, then known as the international Spartacist tendency,

championed the proletariat’s class interests against the forces of Islamic reaction. Our battle cry was: “Down With the Shah! Don’t Bow to Khomeini! For Workers Revolution in Iran!”

Today, Iran is again a cauldron of discontent, with the working people, youth and women suffering privation and chafing under the mullahs’ rule. The multinational Iranian working class, leading all the oppressed behind it, must overthrow the Persianchauvinist, clericalist regime. Key to this perspective is the forging of a Leninist workers party in Iran. Such parties must be built throughout the Near East in struggle against all forms of fundamentalism and nationalism. In Egypt, where there has been a new outburst of mass opposition to military rule, the working class must emerge as a contender for power in its own right, against both the army and the powerful, reactionary forces of political Islam. In Israel, where recent popular struggles against economic privation have helped reveal the class divisions that define that society, Zionism continues to chain the overwhelmingly Jewish proletariat to its class enemy (see “U.S./Israel Tighten Screws on Palestinians,” WV No. 988, 14 October).

The International Communist League fights for a socialist federation of the Near East, necessarily linked to the struggle to sweep away the rapacious imperialist rulers in the U.S. and elsewhere through workers revolutions. Imperialist subjugation, military occupations and war are endemic to capitalism in its death agony, and can only be fought through a struggle against the entire system of exploitation and oppression. The Spartacist League/U.S. is committed to building a multiracial workers party that breaks the political chains tying the working class to its “own” exploiters, particularly the labor bureaucracy’s support to the Democrats. Such a party is the necessary instrument to lead the struggle for workers power to victory in the heartland of world imperialism. ■

Occupy...

(continued from page 12)

unorganized, workers were recently fired by the Australian-owned Toll Group transportation company for trying to organize with the Teamsters. Three days later, a November 18 Occupy Oakland General Assembly voted to expand the L.A. proposal. It called on “each West Coast occupation to organize a mass mobilization to shut down its local port” on December 12, emphasizing solidarity with the ongoing fight by longshoremen in Longview, Washington, against the union-busting attacks of the giant EGT grain conglomerate (see “ILWU Fights Deadly Threat,” WV No. 986, 16 September).

That these activists want to solidarize with labor is welcome. At the same time, thanks in large part to the betrayals of the trade-union bureaucrats, few if any in the Occupy movement have much sense of working-class struggle. Instead, protesters have been led to believe that solidarity with workers means activists setting up community pickets to shut down port operations. However well-intentioned, such actions do little to advance the workers’ consciousness of their power as a class not only to defend their own interests but to champion the cause of all the oppressed against the capitalist ruling class and its state. As was the case when thousands of demonstrators shut down the Port of Oakland the night of November 2, the workers are relegated to the sidelines. Seeing the opportunity to allow the ranks to blow off some steam, the labor tops are happy to subsume the workers under the populist politics of the Occupy movement, politics that the bureaucrats themselves amply share.

An article in *Socialist Worker* (10 November), newspaper of the reformist International Socialist Organization (ISO), argues that: “Many labor leaders have correctly seen Occupy as a key to a revival of the union movement.” On the contrary, the labor tops embrace the Occupy movement not to revive workers

struggle but to divert workers’ discontent once again into advancing the electoral fortunes of the Democratic Party. This was put baldly in a video statement by SEIU president Mary Kay Henry: “We agree, all across SEIU, that we need to stand for a 99 percent agenda and re-elect our president, Barack Obama, and that those two steps are on the same path...so that we can make the 2012 election about the agenda for the 99 percent.” For the unions to become instruments of militant struggle against the exploiters requires a leadership that will advance to the battle from the perspective of class war, not acceptance of capitalist exploitation and reliance on bourgeois politicians.

Democratic Party, Enemy of Workers and the Oppressed

The populism of the “99 percent” slogan boils down to the defense and extension of American capitalist “democracy.” A posting on the official Occupy Wall Street Web site following the police raid on Zuccotti Park proclaimed, “Facing the most brutal assault on our Democracy since 9-11, New Yorkers must once again stand as one!” This statement echoes the outlook of the American ruling class, which seized upon the September 11 attacks to push “national unity” jingoism. In calling on the population to “stand as one,” the goal of the capitalist rulers was to line up support for their imperialist wars of depredation abroad, while they launched anti-immigrant witchhunts and shredded civil liberties at home. This is the true face of American “democracy.” With the protests awash in such patriotism, it is no surprise that the ongoing imperialist occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan seem to be off the radar of the Occupy movement.

Always glomming on to anything calling itself a movement, the fake socialists have fully embraced the Occupy protests. Workers World Party honcho Larry Holmes absurdly hailed Occupy as a “fledgling revolution” (workers.org, 12 October), while the ISO has enthused



AP  
**California, November 18: Cop pepper-sprays UC Davis protesters directly in the face.**

over it for supposedly “transforming the political landscape in the United States” (socialistworker.org, 8 November). For the reformist left, Occupy is the latest vehicle for peddling their “fight the right” opportunism, which amounts to nothing other than promoting illusions in the other party of capitalist rule, the Democrats.

The U.S. ruling class has two primary ways of dealing with protest—state repression and political co-optation. Describing how the Occupy movement receives funding and support from key Democratic Party foundations and outfits, including MoveOn.org, Patrick Henningsen commented in an article in the London *Guardian* (15 November): “When the dust settles and it’s all said and done, millions of Occupy participants may very well be given a sober lesson under the heading of ‘controlled opposition.’ In the

end, the Occupy movement could easily end up doing the bidding of the very elite globalist powers that they were demonstrating against to begin with.”

Militant youth and workers seeking a solution to capitalism’s ills must draw the lessons of past struggles to avoid being caught in a revolving door of Democratic Party pressure politics. Mobilizing the power of the working class, independently from the parties of capital, is crucial to every struggle against imperialism, exploitation and the myriad forms of oppression under capitalism. A revolutionary workers party is the necessary instrument to weld together these struggles into the fight for proletarian power. Our task, as a small internationalist Marxist organization, is to fight for the understanding that the road to human freedom lies through socialist revolution. ■



# WORKERS VANGUARD

## Democrats Unleash Cop Crackdown

# Drop the Charges Against All Occupy Protesters!

NOVEMBER 21—Over the last two weeks, a wave of brutal police attacks has descended on Occupy protesters and encampments across the nation, including surprise nighttime raids, unrelenting pepper spray and baton beatings and hundreds of arrests. Two days after riot police dismantled the Zuccotti Park encampment, during a November 17 “Day of Action” the NYPD left protesters bloodied and beaten and detained over 200, among them leaders of the large Service Employees International Union (SEIU), a city councilman and at least 26 journalists. Billionaire New York mayor Bloomberg unleashed the cops en masse and then praised them for their “restraint.” ***We demand all the charges against Occupy protesters be dropped immediately!***

Crackdowns on encampments in Oakland, Portland, Denver and other cities—launched under the pretext of supposed health and safety hazards—were carried out overwhelmingly by Democratic mayors in a coordinated effort to shut down these popular protests. So-called “progressive” Democrat Jean Quan, mayor of Oakland, admitted to participating in a conference call with officials from other cities nationwide to discuss how to disperse the encampments. Providing a grotesque justification for the Oakland sweep, Quan singled out “anarchist groups who have been looking for a confrontation with the police.”

Amid skyrocketing tuition costs and school budget cuts, Occupy protests have also spread to the universities and come up against the administration and its campus cop thugs. When students at UC Berkeley were attempting to set up an encampment on November 9, police moved in with nightsticks, brutally clubbing protesters who were chanting “Stop beating students!” Graphic video taken on November 18, after cops dismantled the encampment at UC Davis, shows students seated with linked arms being pepper-sprayed directly in the face by police, resulting in several hospitalizations. In an open letter that same day to the chancellor, one faculty member noted: “When students covered their eyes with their clothing, police forced open their mouths and pepper-sprayed down their throats.”

The FBI and Homeland Security are reported to have assisted the local cops, with the Feds spotted staking out Occupy sites. Last week, federal immigration agents took custody of one protester who had been arrested by local police (while meditating!) during the November 14 raid on Occupy Oakland. A native of Mexico, Francisco Ramos Stierle faces the threat of being deported, as hundreds of thousands already have been, under Obama’s “Secure Communities” program. ***No deportation of Francisco Ramos Stierle!***

Demonstrators across the country



Stolarik/NY Times

**Above: Police assault Occupy Wall Street protesters, New York, November 17. Below: Occupy Cal mass protest at UC Berkeley, November 15.**



Atkins/SF Chronicle

have been hit with charges ranging from disorderly conduct and resisting arrest to inciting a riot and assaulting police officers. Such charges are meant to intimidate anyone who would oppose the violence, poverty and exploitation that are endemic to the rule of capital. Despite the brutality against Occupy protesters, many still hold to the illusion that the cops are allies. In fact, it is the job description of the police to protect the profit system through organized violence.

These recurrent, naked displays of capitalist state repression against liberal but defiant protesters, students and veterans have generated widespread anger with the “powers that be.” Suffering the unmitigated effects of the economic crisis—i.e., the

closure of schools, high unemployment and the slashing of social programs—many are expressing solidarity with a movement that at least appears to be doing *something* to protest such ravages. However, the Occupy protests do not in any way fundamentally challenge the workings of the capitalist order, which is the root cause of misery and inequality. Notwithstanding the movement’s insistence on having no demands at all, the program embodied in the protests is simple liberal reform.

### The Centrality of the Working Class

As Marxists, we struggle to impart the understanding that the barbaric capital-

ist profit system cannot be reformed to benefit working people and the oppressed, but must be overthrown. The only way to assure jobs and decent living standards, including free quality medical care and education for all, is by seizing the wealth from the hands of the capitalist class through socialist revolution and putting it in the hands of those whose labor makes society run, i.e., the working class.

The ubiquitous slogan of the Occupy movement—“We are the 99 percent”—is based on a populist notion of the “people,” which ludicrously lumps together everyone besides a small, rich elite, the so-called “one percent.” According to this outlook, workers and the oppressed supposedly share common interests with the managers who fire their employees, cops who gun down black people and religious leaders who preach obedience to authority.

The real, fundamental class division in capitalist society is that between the working class, which sells its labor power to survive, and the capitalist class, which owns the banks and means of production, such as the factories and mines. The bourgeoisie, the group of fat cats that actually is a very small fraction of the “one percent,” makes the real decisions and reaps the profits by exploiting labor. The interests of these two main classes are entirely irreconcilable.

Uniquely, the international working class possesses the social power—derived from its ability to shut off the flow of profit by withholding its labor—and collective interest to expropriate the bourgeoisie and reorganize society globally on a socialist basis. The heterogeneous intermediate social layers in the petty bourgeoisie—encompassing students, professionals and shopkeepers among others—has no direct relationship to the means of production. Lacking social power, the petty bourgeoisie cannot

provide an alternative to capitalism and, depending on which way the wind is blowing, will align either with the workers or against them. If the working-class leadership shows that it has the resolve and program to lead society out of its crisis, it can pull much of the petty bourgeoisie behind the workers in struggle.

There is a sense of solidarity with the working class among Occupy activists, but mainly the workers are seen as simply another victimized sector of the “99 percent.” On November 15, Occupy Los Angeles approved a proposal for a “port action” on December 12 that would include the occupation of “at least one facility owned by SSA Marine, a shipping company belonging to Goldman Sachs.” The motion said that this action “could be coordinated with a possible port shutdown by port truck drivers.” Twenty-six of these largely immigrant, and

*continued on page 11*

## For Socialist Revolution!