

## Law Enshrines Indefinite Military Detention

# Obama Ramps Up “War on Terror” at Home

Capping a year of full-bore assaults on the livelihoods and rights of working people, on New Year's Eve President Barack Obama signed a law sanctioning the indefinite military detention of any persons, including U.S. citizens, accused of supporting “terrorism.” The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) gives the military legal authority to abduct and imprison indefinitely without charge anyone deemed a member of Al Qaeda, the Taliban or “associated forces.” The elastic provisions of the law—a bipartisan effort that overwhelmingly passed Congress—extend to American citizens who have committed or supported a “belligerent act” against the U.S., whether they are apprehended outside the country or on domestic soil.

There could hardly be a clearer illustration of how the capitalist rulers’ imperialist marauding abroad is packaged with attacks on the most fundamental rights of the population at home. The NDAA is the annual military appropriations bill, funding the operations of the Pentagon as well as some 1,000 U.S. bases around the world. It reaffirms detention practices under the September 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force resolution that gave the president carte blanche to carry out the “war on terror,” the pretext for the neocolonial wars against Afghanistan and Iraq and for the massive attacks on immigrants and democratic rights generally in the U.S. This year’s NDAA allots billions more to the occupation of Afghanistan and imposes additional punitive sanctions against Iran for its purported nuclear weapons program.

Obama had threatened to veto earlier versions of the bill, which he thought constrained “the President’s critical authorities”—i.e., Congress was overstepping by telling the chief executive how to conduct the “war on terror.” Obama explained when he signed the amended bill that he objected to “a rigid across-the-board requirement for military detention” when that is just one among many weapons—from assassination to prosecution in civilian courts—in his arsenal. He also did not want to invite “legal uncertainty” over detainees since the courts have rubber-stamped virtually every application of executive authority in this regard.

Obama also piously intoned on December 31, “My Administration will not authorize the indefinite military detention without trial of American citizens.” Whether or not that particular provision is used by Obama, who before reaching the White House promised to close down the Guantánamo detention/torture center, the law codifies prerogatives already



AP



Reuters

**Above: Prisoners detained without charges languishing in U.S. prison camp at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, 2002. Left: Private Bradley Manning (center) taken from courthouse at Fort Meade, Maryland, December 22. Accused of providing classified documents to WikiLeaks, Manning could face life sentence.**

claimed and exercised by both the Bush and Obama administrations under the 2001 Military Force resolution. The U.S. Commander-in-Chief is now legally licensed to disappear citizens, a hallmark of police-state dictatorships.

A direct precedent for this body blow to citizenship rights was set by the Bush administration in the case of Jose Padilla, a U.S. citizen who was seized by the military at Chicago's O'Hare airport in May

2002, declared an “enemy combatant” and disappeared into a Navy brig in South Carolina. Forbidden to meet with attorneys or family, Padilla was subjected to a variety of torture techniques and incurred brain damage. Only at the end of 2005 were charges finally brought against him. Although the government had repeatedly accused Padilla of planning to set off a radioactive bomb inside the U.S., the indictment made no mention of this or

of any other concrete terrorist attack or plot. Instead, the government filed empty “conspiracy” charges—a vehicle historically used against labor militants, political dissidents and others when the state can find no evidence of criminal activity. After a show trial, Padilla was sentenced in 2007 to more than 17 years in prison.

The Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee filed *amici curiae* (friends of the court) briefs against Padilla's indefinite detention, challenging the entire construct of the “war on terror”—a “war” without end, waged against an undefined enemy, that has put unprecedented powers in the hands of the presidency. Our briefs noted that the “Executive's declaration that its ‘war against terrorism’ forfeits constitutional protections for designated individuals” amounts to the government “proclaiming the *right to disappear* citizens of its choosing.” We stated:

“The case of Jose Padilla tests the very existence of the fundamental rights of due process—liberty of the individual from the arbitrary, discriminatory power of the state—and the freedoms protected by the First Amendment. It poses the evisceration of the rights and privileges of citizenship embodied in the first ten Amendments to the Constitution and secured on the battlefield of the Civil War and in class and social struggle over the past hundred and more years. If the imperial President is upheld, Padilla's detention threatens to become the Dred Scott case of our time, a declaration that ‘Citizens have no rights that the government is bound to respect.’”

Now, under Obama, the NDAA further guts *habeas corpus*, due process and the Bill of Rights. This is not to mention the direct violation of the Posse Comitatus Act of 1878, which prohibits military forces from engaging in domestic law enforcement.

Former officials of the Bush regime have lavished Obama with praise for extending his predecessor's key policies: detention of “enemy combatants” at Guantánamo, Bagram and elsewhere; kangaroo-court military commissions for accused terrorists; torture and extraordinary rendition; expansion of domestic wiretapping and other surveillance. Obama has put his own stamp on the “war on terror,” from persecuting record numbers of government whistle-blowers in the name of protecting “state secrets” to the assassination of U.S. citizen Anwar al-Awlaki in Yemen in September by a drone missile strike. The White House ceaselessly trumpets the assassination of Osama bin Laden last May as demonstrating this administration's prowess as the world's top cop.

This did not deter the reformist Workers World Party (WWP) from supporting calls by sundry liberal groups on Obama to veto the NDAA (*Workers World*, 23 December 2011). The WWP was among the loudest voices on the reformist left that cheered the election of Democrat

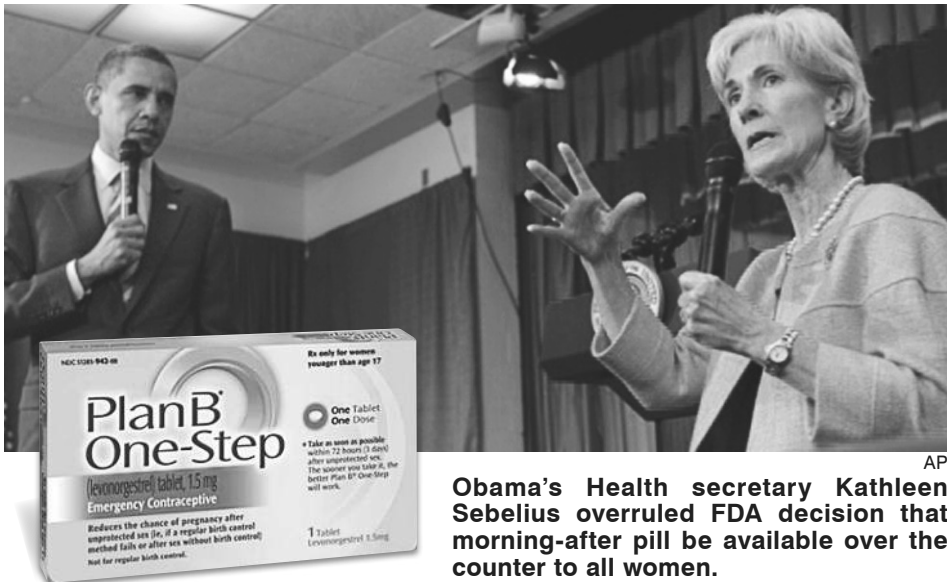
*continued on page 10*



# Free Birth Control on Demand for All!

## White House Obstructs Morning-After Pill for Teens

It's a good rule of thumb that if someone, somewhere, desperately needs help, the government will do its best to make sure they don't get it. The Obama administration last month struck another blow for human misery—perhaps not its largest or worst, but painful enough—by refusing to allow girls under the age of 17 easy access to morning-after emergency contraceptives. A small tentacle of rationality had crept out from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) when the agency on December 7 approved the contraceptive “Plan B One-Step” for over-the-counter sales to *anyone*, regardless of age, who needs it. This move toward humaneness and common sense was promptly crushed by Obama and his Health and Human Services secretary Kathleen Sebelius the same day in an unprecedented overruling of the FDA. So now women 17 and older must still ask a pharmacist for the pill, while those younger must beg a doctor for a prescription, if they can even find one willing to give it to them in time.



AP  
**Obama's Health secretary Kathleen Sebelius overruled FDA decision that morning-after pill be available over the counter to all women.**

Obama claimed patriarchal privilege “as the father of two daughters” in justifying the ban, an obvious ploy to cater to Christian fundamentalist voters for this year's elections. Certainly, concern

for young girls has nothing to do with it. This is a vicious attack on young women, particularly young black and Hispanic women who have the highest rate of teen pregnancy, reflecting their limited access to health care in this deeply racist, class-divided society. The vast majority of people start having sex in their teens and almost half of all girls have had heterosexual sex before their 17th birthday, most beginning at age 15 or 16. Yet in this irrational society abstinence is the agenda pushed in many “sex” education programs.

Obama and his “Health” secretary float above the apparently thorny issue of teenage pregnancy because they don't want to deal with the dreaded “A-word” (abortion) or with the real needs of teens having babies. As of October 2011, 36 states require minors to get parental consent before seeking an abortion, and even then nearly 90 percent of counties have no abortion facilities at all.

Unrestricted access to contraception and abortion is essential for women, including teenagers, to have control over their own fertility. Leon Trotsky, co-leader with V.I. Lenin of the October 1917 Russian Revolution, wrote that birth control and abortion are among women's “most important civil, political and cultural rights” (*The Revolution Betrayed* [1936]). We call for **free abortion on demand** as part of **free, quality health care for all** as well as **free 24-hour childcare!**

What idiotic justifications were made for denying the morning-after pill to younger teens? Secretary Sebelius claimed she was worried that 11-year-olds, some 10 percent of whom have begun menstruation, might

not understand the label instructions. Outraged feminist Katha Pollitt pointed out on her *Nation* blog (8 December 2011): “Here are the instructions, courtesy of an alert commenter at [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com): ‘Plan B One-Step dosage consists of a single tablet taken once. A second tablet or dose is not required. The Plan B One-Step tablet should be taken as soon as possible and not more than 72 hours (3 days) after unprotected intercourse or contraceptive failure.’ If a sixth grader can't understand those elementary, crystal-clear instructions, we should just move back to the caves, because civilization is finished.”

U.S. civilization may not be finished, but it is moving backwards in a period characterized by vicious cycles of social reaction to buttress the decaying capitalist-imperialist order, upheld by Obama as much as by the foam-flecked Republican right he seeks to co-opt. Katha Pollitt and the feminists aren't helping either; she bitterly commented that Obama “must be assuming” that pro-choice Democratic women “are captive voters—we have no place to go. That may be true.”

This is an honest confession from Pollitt of the losing lesser-evil strategy of “fight the right.” While Obama and the Democrats may seem rational in comparison to the frighteningly demented bible-thumping Republican lineup, the Democrats represent the interests of the same bourgeois ruling class. Both parties push their anti-sex agenda on young women, effectively condemning teens to early motherhood, yet both parties rule a society where poor, young, working-class women and their babies cannot thrive. Unemployment is endemic, higher education is increasingly unaffordable, and police brutality and imprisonment are “the future” for increasing numbers of minority youth.

The Obama administration's ruling on the morning-after pill shows that the religion-drenched, cruel priorities of bourgeois electoral politics trump the needs of some of the most vulnerable members of society. Sexual repression is all about social control. The capitalist class seeks to buttress the family—the main social institution oppressing women—which along with organized religion and the state forms a triad that props up the exploitation of labor.

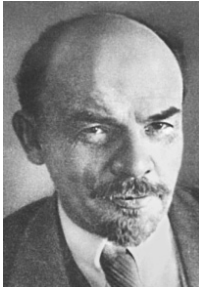
Opening the road to the expansion of human freedoms, including freedom of sexuality, requires socialist revolution to abolish the capitalist system of exploitation once and for all. For women's liberation through socialist revolution! ■

### Marx and Engels Were Right!

As Leon Trotsky observed during the 1930s Great Depression, the understanding laid out by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in the 1847 Communist Manifesto that capitalism is a system of crisis and immiseration has been borne out time and again. The following is taken from Trotsky's introduction to the first Afrikaans translation of the Communist Manifesto, which was prepared by his South African comrades.



TROTSKY



LENIN

The anatomy of capitalism, as a specific stage in the economic development of society, was given by Marx in its finished form in *Capital* (1867). But even in the *Communist Manifesto* the main lines of the future analysis are firmly sketched: the payment for labor power as equivalent to the cost of its reproduction; the appropriation of surplus value by the capitalists; competition as the basic law of social relations; the ruination of intermediate classes, i.e., the urban petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry; the concentration of wealth in the hands of an ever-diminishing number of property owners, at the one pole, and the numerical growth of the proletariat, at the other; the preparation of the material and political preconditions for the socialist regime.

The proposition in the *Manifesto* concerning the tendency of capitalism to lower the living standards of the workers, and even to transform them into paupers, had been subjected to a heavy barrage. Parsons, professors, ministers, journalists, Social Democratic theoreticians, and trade union leaders came to the front against the so-called “theory of impoverishment.” They invariably discovered signs of growing prosperity among the toilers, palming off the labor aristocracy as the proletariat, or taking a fleeting tendency as permanent. Meanwhile, even the development of the mightiest capitalism in the world, namely, U.S. capitalism, has transformed millions of workers into paupers who are maintained at the expense of federal, municipal, or private charity.

As against the *Manifesto*, which depicted commercial and industrial crises as a series of ever more extensive catastrophes, the revisionists vowed that the national and international development of trusts would assure control over the market, and lead gradually to the abolition of crises. The close of the last century and the beginning of the present one were in reality marked by a development of capitalism so tempestuous as to make crises seem only “accidental” stoppages. But this epoch has gone beyond return. In the last analysis, truth proved to be on Marx's side in this question as well.

—Leon Trotsky, “Ninety Years of the Communist Manifesto” (1937)

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## Letter

### On the Transition to Socialism

5 December 2011

Dear Workers Vanguard,

I appreciated your article in WV No. 989, “Economics of a Workers State in Transition to Socialism” [*Young Spartacus* pages]. This article helped me understand that communism cannot be achieved in a short time although we must be prepared for a revolution which can strike rather quickly. It also made clear that deformed workers states such as China do not represent the kind of revolution that Trotsky and Lenin had envisioned when leading the first successful workers revolution in 1917. “Market Socialism”, as comrade Seymour points out, is an economic system that still leads to unemployment, shortages of items and overall economic waste. These deformities are birthed by the bureaucracy that does not have a program for international class struggle and

revolution that is paramount in achieving communism.

Many left organizations argue that socialism means a fair share for every individual but this article rightly focuses on the maximization of production. In “Critique of the Gotha Programme” Karl Marx makes the point that because communism will come out of the womb of capitalism there will still be people who make more wages and have a higher standard of living than others. This is because it will take generations of people working communally under a society in which capitalism is no longer the system in place, for society to achieve the maximization of production required to achieve communism in which Marx says, “From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs”.

Paul

WORKERS VANGUARD

# Holiday Appeal for Class-War Prisoners

## “Join Us in the Fight to Change the World!”

As part of its 26th annual *Holiday Appeal*, the *Partisan Defense Committee* held a fundraising event at the *United Electrical workers union hall* in Chicago on December 11. The *Holiday Appeal* provides support for the PDC's program of sending monthly stipends and holiday gifts to 16 class-war prisoners—those who have been imprisoned for standing up to racist capitalist repression and whose freedom is in the interest of the entire working class. The following speech, edited for publication, was delivered by Paula Daniels on behalf of the *Chicago Spartacist League*.

The class-war prisoners we are honoring tonight paint a vivid and painful picture of lives stolen from courageous individuals, locked away for decades for taking a stand against this racist capitalist system in some way. These class-war prisoners are a reminder that the bourgeoisie does not take lightly any challenge to its order or any infringement on its profits, and eagerly metes out vindictive punishment to those who tear away at the democratic facade to reveal the rotting beast that is U.S. imperialism.

Persecuting those who buck the system or cut across the grain of mainstream beliefs is hardly new. Italian philosopher Giordano Bruno was burned at the stake for advocating the Copernican belief that the Earth indeed orbits the sun. John Brown was indicted for “treason to the Commonwealth” and “conspiring with slaves to commit treason and murder,” and executed for his heroic fight against slavery. Many of the most prescient, bold thinkers have been met with scorn or worse for their innovative and accurate ideas. This theme frames my remarks for tonight. Karl Marx was another brilliant, yet vilified thinker. Marx's views hold true to this day and their validity is inescapable from every angle.

For instance, never has it been clearer what a losing strategy it is to ally with the class enemy, in this case the Democratic Party of capitalism, racism and war. Obama bailed out the banks with one hand as he stuck it to the workers and oppressed with the other. What began as Bush's “war on terror” has continued under Obama's leadership: the war in Afghanistan, the bombing of Pakistan, threats to bomb Iran.

As the first black president, dangerous illusions in Obama soared particularly high and many feel let down. But let's be clear—he did not betray. He is doing right by *his* class—the capitalist ruling class. From the White House to the State House to City Hall, black Democrats play a special role in enforcing racist oppression against the black masses, acting as overseers for the white ruling class. There can be no justice for black people in this racist capitalist system. Our program of revolutionary integrationism means mobilizing the tremendous power of the multiracial working class against every manifestation of racial oppression—such as segregation in schools and housing, mass incarceration, lack of jobs—as part of the fight for black freedom, which means uprooting the source of black oppression: capitalism. Black people will only be fully integrated in an egalitarian society, through workers revolution.

The trade-union misleaders play a critical role in keeping the working class tied to this same Democratic Party. Indeed they are a useful player with their

protectionism, their derailing strikes and ensuring class peace. As the next electoral circus rolls into town with the upcoming presidential elections (complete with the new deranged Tea Party tent), rest assured these trade-union misleaders will mobilize thousands...to ring doorbells for the Democrats.

ety—and the popularity to accomplish it. Even those on the left, like us at *Socialist Worker*, who were skeptical of Obama's promises concluded that the multiple crises facing the White House would compel the president to move away from the free-market, neoliberal policies that characterized not only Bush, but the Clinton admin-



Young Spartacus

**Left: March 2011 Madison rally against bill attacking Wisconsin public employee unions. Below: Families line up for food and toy giveaway in Chicago on Christmas Eve, 2010.**



Garcia/Chicago Tribune

The aptly dubbed “labor lieutenants of capital” gave us a stunning display of the impotence of their class-collaborationist politics last winter in Madison, Wisconsin. Tens of thousands from unions representing hundreds of thousands of unionists converged on Capitol Square in Madison, outraged by the anti-labor legislation. Encapsulated in this was massive potential social power: men and women, black, white, Hispanic, Asian ready to fight. And what were they told? Recall the bad Republicans, elect good Democrats. In other words, don't struggle—vote for the lesser of the capitalist evils. Instead of this losing strategy, what is needed is some good old-fashioned class struggle to counter these massive attacks being waged against us.

In addition, these labor misleaders get help from a plethora of self-avowed socialist groups peddling their pressure politics, begging the powers that be to behave more humanely. You've seen them out there—Progressive Labor, Revolutionary Communist Party, Workers World Party, Party for Socialism and Liberation, etc.—pushing that tired reformism. The International Socialist Organization (ISO) always seems to win the Most Shameless award. You can hear it in their own words: “Obama had the opportunity to change the direction of U.S. politics and soci-

istration before him” (*Socialist Worker*, 27 January 2010). Shameless, right?

This short quote graphically shows the ISO's touching faith in the bourgeoisie. Not one of these groups believes you can mobilize the working class on a revolutionary program, so they look to pressuring the bourgeoisie—the same bourgeoisie

running roughshod across the globe in defense of its profits.

Economically, things are no better in capitalist Europe. Daily we hear about the fragile state of the European Union (EU) and the brutal assault on the working class and immigrants. Though the crisis in Europe has been met with more militancy and strikes, the workers are equally disarmed politically (see “Economic Crisis Rips Europe,” WV No. 992, 9 December 2011).

From day one, we pointed out that the European Union was a reactionary imperialist consortium. The origins of the EU go back to the 1950s when the West European imperialists, led by the U.S., sought to consolidate their alliance against the Soviet Union through improved economic cohesion. In spite of its degeneration under a parasitic bureaucratic caste led by Stalin which appropriated political power starting in 1924, the Soviet Union remained a workers state based on the expropriation of the capitalists and the collectivization of the means of production resulting from the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. That is why we Trotskyists defended the Soviet Union, and why the imperialists wanted to destroy it in order to regain unlimited access to those markets, including throughout East Europe. Today, following the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92, the EU remains committed to squeezing what it can out of the working class and the oppressed.

As the capitalist economies nose-dive internationally, China's economy is growing. Why? There is a different economic system in place in China. It is not capitalist and the international imperialist bourgeoisie knows it. That is what is behind the China-bashing and behind Obama's move to beef up the U.S. military presence in Australia, and elsewhere. Despite China's bureaucratic deformations, its economy is not based on private ownership of the means of production and therefore is not held prisoner to the anarchy of the free market—which is not to say China is not affected by international market forces. As with the Soviet Union when it existed, we unconditionally defend China against imperialist attack or internal capitalist counterrevolution. And key to that defense is calling for a political revolution to oust the Chinese bureaucracy that stands as a

*continued on page 11*

### 26th Annual PDC Holiday Appeal

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Fauqué/Le Monde



AFP

Left: Tunisian president Moncef Marzouki (front, center) and deputies praying together at first session of Constituent Assembly, November 22. Right: Unemployed protesters from Gafsa mining region in November outside Tunisian Chemical Group headquarters in Tunis.

# Tunisian Elections: Victory for Islamic Reactionaries

The following article is translated from *Le Bolchévik* No. 198 (December 2011), newspaper of our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyste de France.

The popular revolt in Tunisia that ousted hated despot Ben Ali last January resulted in the election of a new constituent assembly on October 23. With the blessing of the imperialists, the

bureaucrats and reformists are paving the way to a bloody defeat for the workers and the oppressed. It is necessary to break with class collaboration!" (*Le Bolchévik* No. 195, March 2011).

Indicative of the increasing disillusionment among the Tunisian masses over the perspectives offered by the first "democratic" elections in the history of the country, the rate of abstention was 46 percent on average and was especially high in the rural and less industrialized areas of the country. Tunisia has long been known as the least religious and most secular country in the region. The Ennahda victory thus does not as such indicate a strong turn toward political

anti-Islam. In June, ultra-conservative Salafist Muslims attacked a showing of the film *Neither Allah, Nor Master!* as promoting secularism and issued death threats against filmmaker Nadia El Fani. In October, thousands of Islamists demonstrated at the headquarters of a local television station and set it on fire to protest against its showing of *Persepolis*, an animated film that denounces the reactionary impact of the 1979 "Islamic revolution" in Iran and that the protesters claimed to be insulting to Islam.

While Ennahda professed to denounce the violence of the protests, Rached Ghannouchi announced his support of "the right of the Tunisian people to defend its

investors" (*La Presse Tunisienne*, 27 October 2011). In other words, privatization, austerity and more grinding poverty for the working masses.

## For Working-Class Independence

There has indeed been no improvement in the desperate material conditions that led Mohamed Bouazizi, a young street vendor of vegetables, to set himself on fire in Sidi Bouzid in December 2010, sparking the countrywide revolt that overthrew Ben Ali. A general wage increase of 4.7 percent was largely eaten up by consumer inflation, which hit an annual rate of 4.5 percent in October. Unemployment, which hits young people the hardest, has increased by more than a third since the beginning of 2011, and the number of unemployed could reach one million by the end of 2011. Conditions have been made even worse by the return of tens of thousands of Tunisians who had been working in Libya.

Strikes, sit-ins and workplace blockages have continued unabated since January 2011 in just about every sector of the economy: in telecommunications, transportation, education, the phosphate industry, oil, aviation and tourism, as well involving doctors, judges, postal workers, market vendors, brewery workers—the list goes on. To cite just one example, the *Financial Times* (15 August 2011) reported that in July there had been a total of 184 protest roadblocks across Tunisia, up from 103 in June, and that 156 protests had blocked access to industrial sites, including oil companies, up from 78 in June. The "post-revolutionary" police have continued to brutally suppress these protests with the help of the army. Thabet Belkacem, a 14-year-old youth, was killed on July 16 by the cops in Sidi Bouzid. Again on November 23 in Kasserine, cops firing their guns in the air attacked several thousand demonstrators with tear gas (*tunistribune.com*, 24 November 2011).

There was a slight dip in the number of strikes in the month before the elections, as the UGTT obscenely called on the working class to avoid all strikes in the weeks leading up to the elections—a call that was only partially heeded. Having historically engaged in militant class struggle, the UGTT finally succumbed to years of repression under Ben Ali; many of its top leaders even joined the leadership of his Democratic-Constitutional Rally (RCD)

## Workers Must Fight for Their Own Class Rule!

Islam, given that less than one-quarter of the potential voters cast ballots for its slates. However, this victory is ominous.

Immediately following the election, Ennahda leader Rached Ghannouchi pledged to maintain a secular course, arguing that his party has no interest in establishing *sharia* (Islamic) law or alienating other parties in the coalition government. Indeed, Ghannouchi chose to govern in alliance with secular parties rather than with the populist Al-Aridah Chaabia ("People's Petition for Liberty, Justice and Development"), a bourgeois party led by a London businessman who had been an Ennahda activist until 1992 and reportedly forged close ties with the Ben Ali regime.

However, while Rached Ghannouchi may promise, as he did in his first post-election speech, that "Tunisia is for everyone," attacks on basic rights are sure to be on the rise. On December 3, a band of about 1,000 Islamic reactionaries attacked secular demonstrators with stones in front of the parliament, wounding many people. Even before the elections, Ennahda supporters began to flex their muscles. Two of the larger attacks were against films perceived as being

religion" (*l'Humanité*, 19 October 2011). Now it is the manager of the TV station that showed *Persepolis* who is being prosecuted for "violating sacred values and moral standards and disturbing public order," and he faces up to three years in prison (*Le Monde*, 17 November 2011). Drop the charges!

In the weeks following the elections, Ennahda has above all sought to reassure the Tunisian bourgeoisie and Western imperialism of its commitment to improving the state of the Tunisian economy. One of its main concerns is to bolster the flagging tourist industry, vowing to continue to allow liquor and bikinis at the country's beach resorts (while simultaneously hinting that hotels should also offer liquor-free bookings for Muslims). More specifically, just a few short days after the elections, Ennahda met with Tunisian stock market representatives to discuss the implementation of its program of "developing and encouraging private sector initiatives while strengthening the market economy by improving the business environment so that companies can more easily access financial markets, as well encouraging direct and portfolio investment by foreign

**LE BOLCHEVIK**

"modernist" Islamists of the Ennahda party took 89 of the 217 seats in the new assembly, which is now tasked with the job of running the country for the next year as well as drafting a new constitution. Ennahda, the secular Congress for the Republic (CPR), a bourgeois party, and Ettakatol (Democratic Forum for Labor and Freedom), which is affiliated with the Second International, have formed a coalition to run the country. However, the Islamists have the real power in the coalition. Ennahda's Number Two, Hamadi Jebali, was named prime minister on December 14, and his party got most of the key ministerial posts, notably that of the police, as well as the ministry of mosques.

The ex-Stalinist Communist Workers Party of Tunisia (PCOT), which won only three seats in the assembly, was apparently also invited to join the new government but declined, asserting that "remaining outside the government is the best choice for the PCOT" (*La Presse de Tunisie*, 19 November 2011). As we explained in our articles earlier this year, while the organized working class played a quite significant role in the popular uprising that led to the toppling of the hated dictator Ben Ali, it remained politically subordinated to the bourgeoisie. The main trade-union federation, the General Union of Tunisian Workers (UGTT), which is led by longtime Ben Ali toady Abdesselem Jerad, has since last January engaged in various political blocs, subordinating itself to bourgeois forces, including the Islamic reactionaries of Ennahda, in a so-called "National Council to Safeguard the Revolution," which was formed on February 11. Jerad & Co. thus helped build the credibility of Ennahda, which then won the election. As we wrote back in March, "By thus chaining the workers to their class enemy, the trade-union



# West Bengal After the Elections

# The Political Bankruptcy of Indian Stalinism



Reuters



AFF

Left: Rival electoral posters in Kolkata, May 2011. Right: January 2007 protest against Nandigram land expropriation carried out by CPI(M)-led West Bengal government on behalf of industrial conglomerate.

The following article is reprinted from Spartacist Canada No. 171 (Winter 2011/2012), newspaper of the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyiste, Canadian section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

**SPARTACIST** CANADA

The humiliating rout of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI(M)) in the West Bengal elections last May puts a harsh spotlight on the political bankruptcy of Indian Stalinism and its Maoist variants. The dominant force in the Left Front, the CPI(M) had ruled continuously since 1977, wielding the repressive powers of the capitalist state against the deeply impoverished and oppressed masses of West Bengal. The CPI(M) has committed many crimes against the toilers, but its bloody repression in Singur and Nandigram virtually assured its defeat at the hands of the right-wing Trinamool Congress (TMC).

In December 2006 the Left Front government expropriated land in the Singur district on behalf of Tata Motors, one of India's largest capitalist conglomerates. Those who resisted were severely beaten and arrested and a young woman activist was brutally raped and murdered. The following March, thousands of police and armed CPI(M) cadre assaulted peasants resisting a forced land expropriation in Nandigram. At least 14 were killed and over 200 injured. [See "India: The Nandigram Massacre," WV No. 929, 30 January 2009.] Try as they might, oceans of lying CPI(M) propaganda could not wash away the blood of Singur and Nandigram.

Trinamool leader Mamata Banerjee demagogically manipulated the anger over Singur and Nandigram, but this pos-

turing was aimed only at wresting power from the CPI(M). A right-wing split from the Congress Party, Trinamool is a Bengali regional outfit that has repeatedly allied itself with the communalist Hindu-supremacist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Trinamool's rule will be marked by Hindu chauvinism, anti-Communism and intensified attacks on workers and the poor. Already Banerjee has called for a law against strikes and *bandhs* (street protests).

The CPI(M) was reduced to a rump in the state legislature, though its 30 percent of the vote indicates that it still retains the allegiance of millions of workers and peasants. This is the context for a wave of political violence—largely aimed at the CPI(M)—that has marked the post-election period in West Bengal. Reportedly, TMC thugs have killed up to 30 leftists, most of them CPI(M) supporters, and carried out hundreds of rapes and thousands of assaults, arsons and mass evictions. The offices of non-Trinamool trade unions have been ransacked and taken over by the ruling party. The workers movement must oppose all such anti-worker and anti-Communist attacks, as well as any communalist violence—which often targets India's large Muslim minority—that TMC reactionaries may provoke.

Grotesquely, however, CPI(M) leader Buddhadeb Bhattacharya protested that "Instead of taking action against the 'Maoists' the government is acting against us," adding that the Maoists "are the real danger to the state" (*People's Democracy*, 21 August 2011). With this, the CPI(M) continues its criminal support to Operation Green Hunt, the Delhi government's armed offensive against Maoist guerrillas in India's eastern and central interior. Trinamool, needing no urging from these contemptible hacks, has already

announced its own plans for an "all-out" military offensive against the Communist Party of India (Maoist)—hereafter referred to as CPI (Maoist)—and its supporters among the adivasi tribal peoples. As one of her henchmen put it, "Chief minister Mamata Banerjee is for development in the Maoist-dominated areas and those who oppose it will have to face the wrath of the government" (*Hindustan Times*, 6 July 2011).

## Permanent Revolution vs. Stalinist Betrayal

Twenty years after capitalist counter-revolution devastated the Soviet Union and East Europe, India is one of the few places in the world where parties purporting to be Communist continue to have mass influence among the working class and oppressed. However, as the events in West Bengal demonstrate, the politics of the many parties that are derived from Indian Stalinism, including the Maoists, are sharply counterposed to the revolutionary, proletarian and internationalist program of authentic Marxism. Today, these parties are entering into significant political and organizational crises. The question of what way forward for the Indian masses is posed acutely.

Without exception, the Stalinist parties espouse a two-stage program of "democratic revolution." This dogma means supporting brutal capitalist exploiters while postponing the proletarian revolution to an indefinite future, i.e., never. The end result is not "democracy," much less socialism, but the killing of leftists, workers and peasants.

In pursuit of its "People's Democratic Front" strategy, the CPI(M) has always sought alliances with a mythical "progressive" wing of the bourgeoisie. The official CPI(M) program instructs work-

ers to ally with the "non-big bourgeoisie," stressing that "every effort must be made to win them to the democratic front." In reality, the CPI(M) has courted not just the "non-big," but the *really* big bourgeoisie. The violent dispossession of the impoverished peasants of Singur and Nandigram on behalf of the Tata and Indonesian Salim Group conglomerates was an application of this political logic.

Nor are the Maoists an alternative, for they share the same fundamental program, also routinely seeking alliances with bourgeois forces. During the protests against the Singur and Nandigram atrocities, various Maoist groups allied with Trinamool. Going into the May elections, the CPI (Maoist) backed this extremely right-wing party as the "alternative" to the betrayals of the CPI(M). "We will support her [Banerjee] and follow the roadmap for development drawn up by her if she comes to power," they vowed in a statement (*The Hindu*, 18 January 2011), only dropping this unabashed support at the eleventh hour.

In India, where capitalist development is belated and constrained by imperialist subjugation, the weak national bourgeoisie is dependent on its imperialist masters—yesterday the British, today the U.S.—and above all fears its "own" working class. The only road to liberation for the subjugated masses lies in the successful struggle of the proletariat for state power, at the head of all the oppressed, especially the vast peasantry, and under the leadership of a revolutionary workers party. An Indian workers revolution would spark a revolutionary upsurge throughout the subcontinent, from Pakistan to Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka. Its survival and advancement would hinge on the achievement of social revolutions in the imperialist centres:

# Forge a Leninist-Trotskyist Party!



This is the perspective of permanent revolution. First elaborated for countries of combined and uneven development by Leon Trotsky around the 1905 Russian Revolution, it was stunningly confirmed by the October 1917 Revolution and the coming to power of the working class under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party. The Russian workers were able to take power in 1917 thanks to the Bolsheviks' intransigent struggle for class independence from the capitalists. The result was a workers state, a revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat supported by the peasantry. Key to cementing the workers' alliance with the peasants was the Bolsheviks' support for peasant seizures of the landed estates and the division of the land among those who worked it.

Beginning with a political counterrevolution in 1923-24, the USSR underwent a qualitative bureaucratic degeneration in which the working class was deprived of political power. The nationally narrow conservatism of the consolidating bureaucratic caste was given ideological expression by Stalin's promulgation in late 1924 of the theory that socialism could be built in a single country. Under this anti-Marxist dogma, the struggle for the international extension of the revolution was increasingly shelved in favour of the pipe dream of "peaceful coexistence" with world imperialism. The parties of the Communist International were transformed—after ruthless purges in most cases—into reformist tools of class collaboration with their "own" capitalist rulers. In the colonial and neocolonial world this meant the resurrection of the old Menshevik formula of "two-stage" revolution—the very program that had been defeated and discredited in the victorious 1917 Revolution. The result has been defeat after defeat for the toiling masses.

The original Communist Party of India (CPI), founded in December 1925, was marked by class collaborationism from the start. Under the guidance of the pseudo-Marxist adventurer M.N. Roy (then a close ally of Stalin and Nikolai Bukharin in the leadership of the Communist International), the CPI set out from its inception to build a cross-class “Peasants’ and Workers’ Party” in Bengal. This party in turn operated as a pressure group on the bourgeois Indian National Congress of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. Roy’s aim in this was to capture the bourgeois Indian National Congress and make it a “people’s” or “revolutionary nationalist” party based on a democratic program of national independence (see “M.N. Roy: Nationalist Menshevik,” *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 62, Spring 2011).

**6 JANUARY 2012**

Like tsarist Russia, present-day India is marked by combined and uneven development, with stark contrasts of wealth and poverty, modern industries directly abutting unspeakable squalor. Myriad forms of special oppression—based on sex, caste, nationality, religion—are among the heritages of a pre-industrial past that were reinforced and deepened by nearly two centuries of brutal British colonial rule. This culminated in the 1947 British partition of the subcontinent into India and Pakistan, which unleashed communal slaughter and the forced migration of millions of Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus. Since independence, and mainly under the rule of the nominally secular Congress Party, the Indian bourgeoisie has continued to fan the flames of every kind of murderous division. It is criminal and illusory to place even a shred of confidence in this venal and backward ruling class as a vehicle for liberation.

As leftist author Achin Vanaik noted in a recent *New Left Review* (July/August 2011) article, the CPI(M) and CPI are “the principal legatees of the old Nehruvian consensus—the social-democratic vision of a strongly secular, welfarist and non-aligned, yet capitalist India. Formal commitment to a communist future leaves no imprint on these parties’ programmes or behaviour.”

The CPI(M) leadership denounced supporters of the Naxalbari upheaval as CIA agents and counterrevolutionaries, expelling them from its ranks and launching a bloody fratricidal assault on these erstwhile comrades. The revolt reverberated throughout the country and shook the CPI(M) to its core. A mass of defections over the party's role in the murderous vendetta against the Naxalbari uprising led directly to the birth of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist), the forerunner of today's CPI (Maoist).

political terror and tens of thousands of its supporters were driven underground.

Upholding capitalist rule, and thus incapable of mobilizing the working class against the vicious caste, class and communal oppression that has defined nominally secular India, the CPI(M) was a mirror of the Indian ruling class. The Nandigram massacre had a precursor in a 1979 massacre of dalit (so-called “untouchable”) Hindu refugees from heavily Muslim Bangladesh. These refugees, some 30,000, had tried to settle on the

At no level could the CPI(M) reformists solve the burning needs of the toiling masses—in West Bengal or anywhere else. Modest land reforms helped build support for the party, but without a thoroughgoing agrarian revolution to expropriate the feudal landlords and big capitalist farmers, the poor peasants still had no land. While the CPI(M)'s mass support comes in part from a reputation for opposing communalism, its repeated alliances with Congress have fuelled Hindu chauvinism, betraying the often decent impulses of its own militants. In India's 1999 Kargil War against Pakistan—a war in which the proletariat had no side—the CPI(M) spewed vile patriotic gore. In CPI(M)-run West Bengal, the police targeted Muslims, while anti-war protesters in Kolkata were first attacked by Hindu communalists, and then arrested.

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## Mao and Stalin vs. Lenin and Trotsky

The original Naxalite movement of the

These are obvious references to “New Democracy” and the “bloc of four classes,” the twin pillars of Maoist faith. Instead of fighting for workers revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, the CPI (Maoist) presents the peasantry as the epicentre for a “democratic” overthrow of oppressive Indian society. Time and again, this strategy has meant that the thoroughgoing workers revolutions so desperately needed in India and all South Asia have been deferred, derailed and defeated.

Maoism is a modern crystallization of the politics which Lenin and the Bolsheviks had to combat in order to plant the banner of Marxism in tsarist Russia and then bring the 1917 October Revolution to victory. In fighting to win radical intellectuals away from the then dominant populism, founding Russian Marxist Georgi Plekhanov insisted as early as the 1880s that the proletariat, not the peasantry, was destined to make a revolution in Russia, leading the oppressed masses against the tsar. Due to its place in production—where its collective labour is exploited by the capitalists for profit—the working class alone has both the material interest in liberating and expanding socialized production based on a collectivized economy, and the social power to carry out the necessary revolution.

[illegible]

With their inherently class collaborationist “people’s war” perspective, the Maoist guerrillas of India are unable to root out the intense backwardness of village peasant life, be it women’s oppression or the devastating oppression of caste. Moreover, the Maoists’ strategy of two-stage revolution is exactly what Lenin *rejected* in 1917. Following the February Revolution that overthrew the tsar, Lenin returned to Russia and waged a fight in the Bolshevik Party against the then-leadership centred on Stalin and Kamenev, who were conciliating the new capitalist Provisional Government and its continued participation in World War I. In his famous *April Theses*, Lenin argued that power must “pass to the proletariat and the poorest sections of the peasants aligned with the proletariat.”

mation of the theory of permanent revolution. Stalin and Bukharin (and their agent M.N. Roy) had ordered the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to literally disarm the proletariat, hold down the class struggle of workers and peasants against the "anti-imperialist" bourgeoisie and liquidate into the bourgeois-nationalist Guomindang of Chiang Kai-shek. The fruit of this strategy was the defeat of the revolution as the Guomindang drowned the Chinese working class in blood. It was the experience of this defeat that caused Trotsky to generalize his theory of permanent revolution to countries of belated capitalist development.

The Chinese Revolution shook the world and was a beacon for millions of toilers in Asia. Despite the bureaucratic rule of Mao and his successors, China's collectivized economy has brought immense gains for workers, peasants and women, not least an end to centuries of chronic starvation in the countryside. This stands in stark contrast to developments in capitalist India. But the Chinese Stalinists' search for "peaceful coexistence" has meant conciliating imperialism, including

Today, U.S. imperialism sees India as a strategic ally in its drive to overturn the gains of the Chinese Revolution. The International Communist League stands for the unconditional military defense of China against imperialism and counter-revolution. At the same time, we call for a proletarian political revolution to oust the nationalist, Stalinist ruling caste in Beijing and create a regime based on workers democracy and revolutionary internationalism.

For the CPI(M), the workers are voting cattle, buttered up with promises and fake Marxist phrases while their struggles



are contained and betrayed. To the CPI (Maoist), the workers are—at best—just another urban support group for their rural struggles. In practice, the Maoists end up supporting a section of the bourgeoisie, as with Trinamool in West Bengal.

Indian workers have been on the defensive in the face of unremitting capitalist attacks, and strike levels are at record lows. Nevertheless, labour battles in some vital and highly profitable industries have rattled the Indian bourgeoisie. In Gurgaon, a massive industrial area near Delhi, workers have repeatedly struck against the giant car producer Maruti Suzuki. Hundreds of thousands of auto and other industrial workers in the area suffer brutal superexploitation, as their labour creates fabulous profits for Indian, Japanese, American and other capitalist magnates.

mining conglomerates worldwide are raking in the profits, and workers from Chile to South Africa have struck for higher wages. Just how massive these profits are may be gauged by the fact that the one-day strike against CIL cost the company 1.2 billion rupees (\$25 million).

A small spark could light this enormous social tinder, but a revolutionary Marxist leadership that fights for proletarian unity and class independence is essential. The fighting power of the proletariat is greatly undercut by the fact that the unions are divided politically. Congress, the Hindu-communalist BJP and various of the Stalinist-derived parties, among others, each run their own unions and there are some 13 separate labour centrals. A working class divided by caste, religion and ethnicity is further fractured by these competing party-linked unions. An authentic proletarian leadership would fight for industrial unions which include all workers in an industry as an elementary defense of the working class.

The reality behind the myth of “Shining India,” with its start-ups in Bangalore and its tiny layer of fabulously wealthy in cities like Delhi and Mumbai, is that the Indian masses are even poorer than they were 30 years ago. Industrial development and the pillaging of India’s natural resources have destroyed the lives and livelihoods of millions of peasants, and it is this which fuels the almost continual cycle of peasant revolt and protest. The working class—which has grown rapidly in recent years—toils under terrible conditions for miserable wages.

The situation cries out for the kind of perspective fought for by the Bolsheviks in the 1917 October Revolution: the workers seizing power at the head of the oppressed masses and smashing the bourgeois state, agrarian revolution to liberate the peasantry, the socialization and rational reorganization of the economy in the interests of human needs not profit, and the fight to extend socialist revolution internationally, especially to the imperialist heartlands.

“The realization of the combined character of the Indian revolution is essential for the planning of the revolutionary strategy of the working class. Should the working class fail in its historic task of seizing the power and establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat, the revolution will inevitably recede, the bourgeois tasks themselves remain unperformed, and the power swing back in the end to the imperialists without whom the Indian bourgeoisie cannot maintain itself against the hostile masses. A backward country like India can accomplish its bourgeois-democratic revolution only through the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.”

—“Draft Programme of the Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India” (1942)

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“While the Constituent Assembly played a progressive role in the great French bourgeois revolution of 1789, historical experience since has demonstrated that this ceased to be the case thereafter. Beginning with the revolutions of 1848, in every situation where a constituent assembly or similar bourgeois legislative body was convened in the context of a proletarian insurgency its aim was to rally the forces of counterrevolution



**1922 Soviet poster shows Russian counterrevolutionaries and imperialists sailing under ragged banner of Constituent Assembly.**

against the proletariat and to liquidate proletarian power. This was evident in the Paris Commune of 1871, the October Revolution of 1917 and the German Revolution of 1918-19. Though never subsequently codified by the CI [Communist International] as a general statement of principle, the thrust of the Bolsheviks under Lenin and Trotsky's leadership following the October Revolution was to treat the constituent assembly as a counterrevolutionary agency."

The ICL has thus rejected on principle the call for a constituent assembly. We have insisted in our propaganda on Tunisia on the need to address the burning democratic demands of the masses after decades of dictatorial rule, as a lever to mobilize the working class and the oppressed behind it for socialist revo-

Marx drew on the experience of the revolutions of 1848, in which the European bourgeoisies made common cause with the forces of aristocratic reaction, to propound the “revolution in permanence.” Pointing to the treachery of the democratic petty bourgeoisie, Marx argued that the task was to “make the revolution permanent, until all more or less possessing classes have been forced out of their position of dominance, the proletariat has conquered state power” and the revolution spread internationally (“Address of the Central Authority to the Communist League,” March 1850). Trotsky extended this understanding to tsarist Russia in his writings of 1904-06 and then, at the time of the Second Chinese Revolution, generalized the program of permanent revolution to countries of combined and uneven development globally. Our understanding of the reactionary character of the bourgeoisie, in the semicolonial countries as well as the advanced capitalist states, means that there can be no revolutionary bourgeois parliament. The call for a constituent assembly consequently runs counter to the permanent revolution.

A workers revolution in Tunisia, tearing state power from the capitalist class in an Arab country, would have tremendous impact throughout the region. It would immediately reverberate in the imperialist countries, notably in France, where several million people of North African origin live, concentrated in the proletariat and the most oppressed layers of the population. They constitute a living bridge for socialist revolution on both sides of the Mediterranean. To fight for the overthrow of the capitalist order, the working class needs a proletarian revolutionary party, which can be built only in an intransigent struggle against all bourgeois forces. We fight to reforge the Fourth International founded by Trotsky on the basis of the legacy of the October Revolution. ■

(continued from page 12)

While placing no faith in the rigged “justice” of the capitalist courts, we have also advocated pursuing all possible legal proceedings on Mumia’s behalf. The legal issue that removed Mumia from death row was the unconstitutional jury instructions issued at his 1982 trial, which did not allow jurors to freely consider mitigating circumstances weighing against a death sentence. This issue was first raised in a 1990 legal memo by PDC attorney Jonathan Piper to Steven Hawkins of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, then part of the legal team. This was the basis of a 2001 decision by Judge William Yohn, who overturned Mumia’s



**PDC-initiated united-front protest in New York City, August 1995. Worldwide protests joined by unions helped win stay of execution for Mumia.**

It has been many years since thousands took to the streets for Mumia. Now, as the PDC declared in its December 10 statement, “the state authorities hope with the latest decision that Mumia’s cause will be forgotten and that he will rot in prison hell until he dies. This must not be Mumia’s fate.” In 1927, James P. Cannon, the first national secretary of the International Labor Defense, warned of the lessons of the cases of Tom Mooney and Warren Billings, labor leaders falsely accused of murder in 1916. In 1918, Mooney’s death sentence was commuted to life in prison, the same sentence as Billings’. Cannon wrote:

"The workers who had rallied to Mooney and Billings were soothed by the sinister argument that imprisonment for life was, in any event, better than execution. They were told that we would have to be satisfied for the while with one victory, and that the final release of the two fighters would be won later. But after ten years there remain only a few who still keep alive the memory of these buried men."

—*Labor Defender*, July 1927

The frame-up of Mumia Abu-Jamal was not some aberration in American “justice” but the workings of a legal system that

For the liberals, removing Mumia from the sanction of death vindicates their belief in the ideal of American justice. But in no way can this be seen as just. In continuing to publicize Mumia's case and pursue the fight for his freedom, we seek to imbue the multiracial working class with the understanding that it must destroy the monstrous, racist machinery of capitalist repression root and branch and erect in its place a workers state, in which those who labor rule. ■



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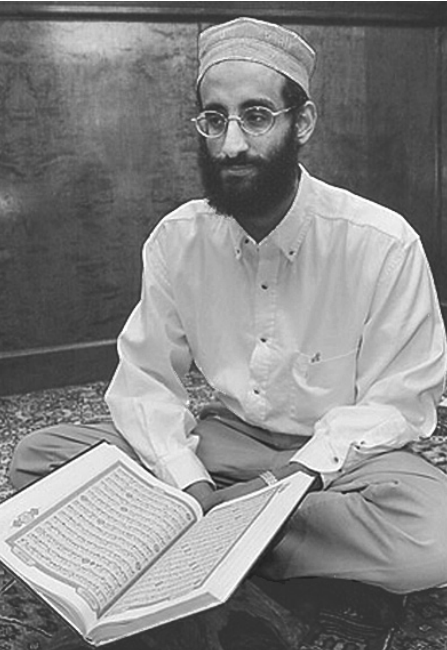
War on Terror...

(continued from page 1)

Obama in 2008, declaring it “a triumphant step forward” from the George W. Bush regime. But Obama’s interest in cleaning up after the Bush gang always was to wage a more effective “war on terror.” The rapturous reception attending his election gave Obama political capital to implement repressive measures that go well beyond what Bush accomplished. And today there is barely a squeak of protest from the liberals and reformist left over his trampling on basic rights. So-called socialists who seek to pressure the Democratic Party to “do right” are an obstacle to mobilizing the working class and the oppressed in defense of their rights, *against* the class enemy. The capitalist-imperialist system has been and will continue to be enforced by repression and war until it is swept away through proletarian revolution.

“War on Terror” Means War on Working People

For the capitalist class, “democracy” has always served as the velvet glove hiding the iron fist of its class dictatorship over the working class, minorities and the poor. The yawning abyss between the tiny class of capitalists—the owners of industry and the banks—and the working people they exploit for profit has been made even wider by three years of global economic crisis. Well aware that galloping inequality is increasing social tensions that sow the seeds of class struggle, the rulers are eager to use the panoply of “anti-terror” measures and laws to



Spillers/NY Times  
U.S. citizen Anwar al-Awlaki, assassinated in Yemen in September on orders from White House.

strengthen the repressive apparatus of the capitalist state against the working class and oppressed. Ultimately, the only rights the capitalists are committed to maintaining are their rights to hold property and exploit labor.

Following the September 11 terrorist attacks, we warned: “The rapidity with which the government rammed through



WV Photo  
February 2002: Oakland united-front protest initiated by Labor Black League and PDC against Patriot Act and Maritime Security Act.

the new laws and executive orders was made possible by the illusion that they were intended for a specific small and vulnerable sector of the population—immigrants from Muslim countries. In the government’s gun sights, however, is just about everyone perceived as an opponent by the capitalist rulers” (WV No. 770, 7 December 2001). At the same time, we stressed that what the government ultimately gets away with will be determined by class and social struggle.

We also warned that black people and the labor movement would be particular targets of “anti-terror” repression. There is a history to the capitalists going after unions and the left by broadening the scope of laws adopted ostensibly to go after much different forces. For example, the RICO “anti-racketeering” law, enacted in 1970 on the pretext of battling gangland crime, was the main lever by which the government assumed sweeping control over the Teamsters and other unions in the 1980s and ’90s. RICO also has been repeatedly invoked in lawsuits against striking unions for confronting scabs and defending picket lines.

Among the first “anti-terror” measures enacted by Bush were the USA Patriot Act and the Maritime Transportation Security Act, a direct threat to port and transportation workers. In response, the Bay Area Labor Black League for Social Defense, which is fraternally allied with the Spartacist League, and the PDC issued a call for a labor-centered, united-front protest. At the core of the 300-strong demonstration in Oakland on 9 February 2002 were black longshoremen who were members of International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 10, which endorsed the protest. The protest call, reprinted in WV No. 773 (25 January 2002), urged “the powerful multiracial unions in the Bay Area to mobilize against the government’s war on America’s integrated working class, on black people and on immigrants. Every bombing raid and missile attack on Afghanistan came together with new deadly assaults on the democratic rights of *all of us*.”

The West Coast ILWU was an early target of the government’s campaign

for “national unity” against “terrorism.” During contentious contract negotiations in 2002, the Homeland Security chief phoned the ILWU International president to warn that a strike would “threaten national security.” The White House set up a special task force to manage its intervention into the contract battle, with Bush explicitly threatening to bring in federal troops in the event of a strike.

Nationwide, port authorities have spent at least \$2.6 billion ramping up security



AP  
Jose Padilla escorted to terrorism show trial in Miami, January 2006. SL/PDC amici curiae brief on behalf of Padilla can be obtained for \$.50. Order from/pay to: PDC, P.O. Box 99, Canal St. Station, New York, NY 10013.

over the last decade to meet federal guidelines. In 2008, the Transportation Workers Identification Credential (TWIC) program was first rolled out, vastly increasing the government’s ability to police port workers. Longshoremen, port truckers and others were forced to submit to extensive criminal background and immigration status checks. Tens of thousands were officially turned down. Many port truckers, a mostly immigrant workforce, opted not to apply out of fear of deportation or worse. Among the offenses that would permanently bar workers from the waterfront is involvement in a “transportation security incident.” This category includes “transportation system disruption or economic disruption in a specific area,” i.e., strikes and other labor actions.

The union-busting threat of these “port security” measures can be seen at the Port of Longview, Washington. The ILWU has been locked in a battle with the giant EGT grain consortium, which is out to break the union’s decades-long control of all loading and unloading of grain in the Pacific Northwest. Behind EGT stands the capitalist state. In response to militant labor actions by the ILWU and its allies that had stopped grain shipments into the EGT terminal, ILWU members and their supporters have been brutally assaulted by riot cops, subjected to over 200 arrests and more than \$300,000 in fines levied against the union by the courts (see “ILWU Fights Deadly Threat,” WV No. 986, 16 September 2011, and “Defend Longview ILWU Against Bosses’ Cops and Courts!” WV No. 987, 30 September 2011). Right-wing pundits joined the

chorus condemning longshoremen in this small port town as “terrorists.”

Now the grain in the EGT terminal, which has been worked by scabs from the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 701, is due to be shipped out. Over the past few months, Coast Guard officials have shown up at the Longview ILWU Local 21 hall threatening to revoke union members’ TWIC cards if there are any union protests that interfere with the loading of the first outbound ship. According to reports, the whole operation is to be overseen by the Department of Homeland Security. Here is the union-busting domestic face of the government’s “war on terror.”

It is in the direct interest of the working class to fight against the wars, occupations and domestic repressive measures carried out in the name of combating “terrorism.” But this runs straight up against the class collaborationism of the trade-union bureaucracy, which openly embraces the “national security” interests of the capitalist exploiters as its own and chains workers to the Democratic Party. If the unions are to be revived and transformed into bastions of the class struggle that is so desperately needed, they must act in defense not only of themselves but also immigrants, black people and all those in the crosshairs of the capitalist state. Advancing the class consciousness and solidarity of the proletariat begins with fighting for its independence from the Democratic Party of U.S. imperialism. A

**BC** **Partisan Defense Committee**

**CLASS-STRUGGLE DEFENSE NOTES**

Number 31 50c 499a-- Summer 2003

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v.  
**DONALD RUMSFELD**,  
Respondent-Appellant-cross-Appellee.

On Appeal from the United States District Court  
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fundamentalist cleric. This is effectively a death sentence for the 72-year-old Stewart, who suffers from cancer.

Last month, in the pretrial hearing for the court-martial of Army Private Bradley Manning, the military prosecutors tried to make an amalgam between Manning, Julian Assange of WikiLeaks and Al Qaeda. Manning faces 22 charges, including “aiding the enemy”—an offense punishable by death—for allegedly leaking hundreds of thousands of government and military documents, which WikiLeaks began disseminating in early 2010. The material cast a modest but welcome light on the machinations of the U.S. imperialists and other capitalist governments. Locked up for over a year and a half by the military after video of a U.S. war crime in Baghdad was posted online, Manning has endured solitary confinement, forced nakedness, sleep deprivation and other torturous conditions.

In a taste of what Manning faces if the court-martial proceeds, the presiding officer at the hearing refused to hear 46 of the 48 witnesses for the defense while granting the prosecution all its witnesses. The officer repeatedly denied defense requests, including one that he recuse himself on the grounds that he also works for the Department of Justice, which has convened a grand jury to investigate WikiLeaks. Presenting no evidence of actual “aid” provided by Manning, the lead prosecutor pressed the case by claiming that Manning “had actual knowledge” that “foreign adversaries like Al Qaeda and Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula would use WikiLeaks to their advantage.”

As Marjorie Cohn observed in *CounterPunch* (26 December 2011): “If Manning had committed war crimes instead of exposing them, he would be a free man today. If he had murdered civilians and skinned them alive, he would not be facing the death penalty.” The Obama administration also has its sights set on Assange, who currently is fighting extradition to Sweden on trumped-up sex charges. If he loses his appeal, he could face extradition to the U.S. In trying to take down Manning and WikiLeaks, the military and the White House are sending the message that any exposure or even reporting of the imperialists’ many and varied crimes could bring the harshest punishment. **Free Bradley Manning! Hands off Julian Assange!**

What the capitalist government deems “material support to terrorism” and even the “terrorist” designation itself are determined by its own military/political purposes. In the 1980s, when Islamic reactionaries of the Al Qaeda and Taliban ilk were throwing acid in the faces of unveiled women in Afghanistan, they were hailed by Washington as “freedom fighters” against the Soviet Union and showered with billions in aid to kill Red Army soldiers. At the same time, the African National Congress, then fighting apartheid rule in South Africa, was



**Above: Aftermath of murderous U.S. drone attack in northwestern Pakistan, November 2010. Below: In Montgomery County, Texas, sheriff’s office adds ShadowHawk surveillance drone to its arsenal.**



officially classified as a terrorist group. Today in Libya, former Al Qaeda associates are embraced as part of the opposition that served as the ground troops for NATO in overthrowing the regime of Colonel Muammar el-Qaddafi.

The Spartacist League has strenuously fought attempts by the government to criminalize political dissent, not least the branding of Marxists as “terrorists.” In 1981, we discovered that the office of California attorney general George Deukmejian had listed us as “left-wing terrorists” in a “Report on Organized Crime.” Lumping the Spartacist League together with the Manson family, the Hell’s Angels and prison gangs, the report portrayed us as some sort of outlaws, to be blown away in the dead of night. We noted at the time that if the report had been issued ten years earlier, it would have included the Black Panther Party, which saw 38 of its members assassinated and hundreds more locked away in America’s dungeons in the Feds’ infamous COINTELPRO operation.

We waged a legal battle that forced California authorities to retract the terrorist smear and distribute a statement to that effect to police and FBI offices nationwide. At a protest outside Deukmejian’s San Francisco offices, an SL spokesman remarked: “The efforts of the Spartacist League in California and elsewhere are to organize a workers party to struggle for the immediate and ultimate interests of the working class. *The working class and its party have the right to organize*” (WV No. 286, 31 July 1981). Subsequently, we filed a lawsuit against the FBI’s 1983 Domestic Security/Terrorism guidelines equating left-wing political activity with terrorism and organized crime. As a result of our challenge, the government conceded on this issue and changed its definition of the SL to what we are: a Marxist political organization.

**Terror by Drone**

A distinguishing feature of the Obama administration’s “war on terror” is its reliance on targeted assassinations, as

detailed in a *Washington Post* (27 December 2011) article headlined “Under Obama, an Emerging Global Apparatus for Drone Killing.” This apparatus consists of “dozens of secret facilities, including two operational hubs on the East Coast, virtual Air Force cockpits in the Southwest and clandestine bases in at least six countries on two continents.” Not including its RQ-170 stealth drones, one of which recently crashed while spying in Iran, the U.S. fleet counts at least 775 Predators, Reapers and other models. Under Obama, the number of drone strikes in Pakistan alone has soared to 240, with at least 1,600 dead, among them innumerable “unintended” victims. Two weeks after four drones were deployed in the mission to assassinate al-Awlaki, the imperialist butchers killed his son in Yemen in a separate drone strike.

With the explosive growth in drone technology and the erosion of Fourth Amendment safeguards against warrantless searches, all the elements are aligning for the introduction of routine aerial surveillance of the American population. Already the U.S. Border Patrol operates Predator B drones along the border with Mexico. The *Los Angeles Times* (10 December 2011) reported that local police departments have secretly made use of these drones for law enforcement operations. Meanwhile, the Miami police department and others have received permission from the federal government to test aerial drones. Some of these vehicles, such as an unmanned helicopter acquired in October by a sheriff’s department outside Houston, are designed to carry weapons like tasers and beanbag guns. Even without drones, police already have access to powerful tools of spycraft, from ubiquitous video cameras to GPS tracking devices and satellite images.

In this way, too, measures first used against “terrorists” rebound against the working people at home, even as the president declares that Al Qaeda is “on the path to defeat.” Continuing to build up the forces of domestic repression is an essential task for the bourgeoisie as it takes the ax to jobs, wages and social services in an attempt to restore its profits. These are hallmarks of the capitalist system in its epoch of decay.

As V.I. Lenin observed in his seminal pamphlet *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1916): “Imperialism is the epoch of finance capital and of monopolies, which introduce everywhere the striving for domination, not for freedom. Whatever the political system the result of these tendencies is everywhere reaction.” Lenin’s Bolshevik Party showed how to defeat this reaction, leading the working class of Russia to power in the October Revolution of 1917. Only the victory of proletarian revolutions in the U.S. and around the world can end the wars and occupations, the exploitation and racist oppression of capitalist class rule and its barbaric state repression. ■

**SPARTACIST LEAGUE/U.S.**  
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- Chicago** ..... Box 6441, Main PO, Chicago, IL 60680, (312) 563-0441  
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- Los Angeles** ..... Box 29574, Los Feliz Sta., Los Angeles, CA 90029, (213) 380-8239  
slsycla@sbcglobal.net  
**Public Office:** Sat. 2-5 p.m., 3806 Beverly Blvd., Room 215
- New York** ..... Box 3381, Church St. Sta., New York, NY 10008, (212) 267-1025  
nysl@tiac.net  
**Public Office:** 1st and 3rd Sat. of every month, 1-4 p.m., and by appointment, 299 Broadway, Suite 318
- Oakland** ..... Box 29497, Oakland, CA 94604, (510) 839-0851  
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**Public Office:** Sat. 1-5 p.m., 1634 Telegraph, 3rd Floor

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**Holiday Appeal...**

(continued from page 3)

roadblock to building a healthy workers state.

We need a new ruling class—the working class! Karl Marx was right! Marx and Engels explained that the only way to end the boom-bust cycles inherent to capitalism is for the working class to take control of the means of production through socialist revolution and institute a planned, collectivized economy. It was true over 160 years ago and it remains true today.

So to wrap it up: Galileo, another farsighted yet persecuted genius, once said, “All truths are easy to understand once they are discovered; the point is to discover them.” Marxism is one of those truths. The truth is that the interests of the bourgeoisie and the working class are irreconcilable. No one argues that the interests of the slave and slaveholder can be united yet we are supposed to believe that the working class, i.e., the wage

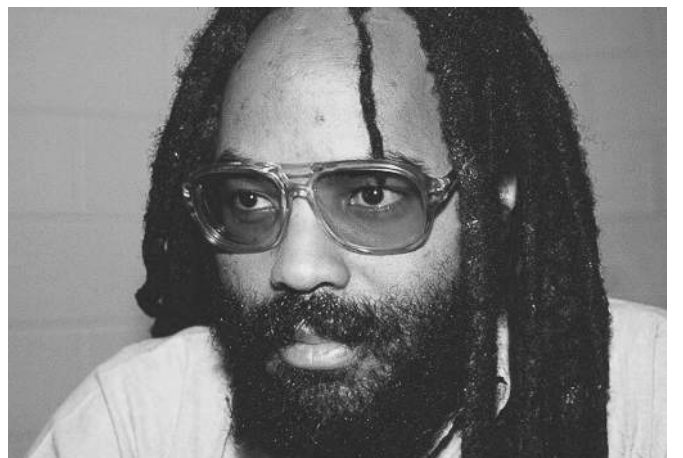
slaves, have a common interest with the bosses, i.e., the capitalists. The truth is that what is necessary is a political struggle to break the multiracial proletariat from the class enemy and unleash workers’ massive social power. We must mobilize the proletariat with its own party, for its own interests and for the interests of all the oppressed—fighting against racist oppression, for women’s rights, in defense of gays, for full citizenship rights for immigrants—a “tribune of the people,” if you will, independent of and in opposition to the bourgeoisie and all of its parties.

Though I like Galileo’s remarks, I like these from Karl Marx even better. He said, “Philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it.” That’s what we aim to do. Join us in that fight to change the world and open up the possibility of a socialist future and a world where the terms property, economic crisis and exploitation would drop out of use and mankind can at last cross the threshold into true humanity. ■



# WORKERS VANGUARD

## Mumia Abu-Jamal Is Innocent—Free Him Now! Drive to Execute Mumia Halted



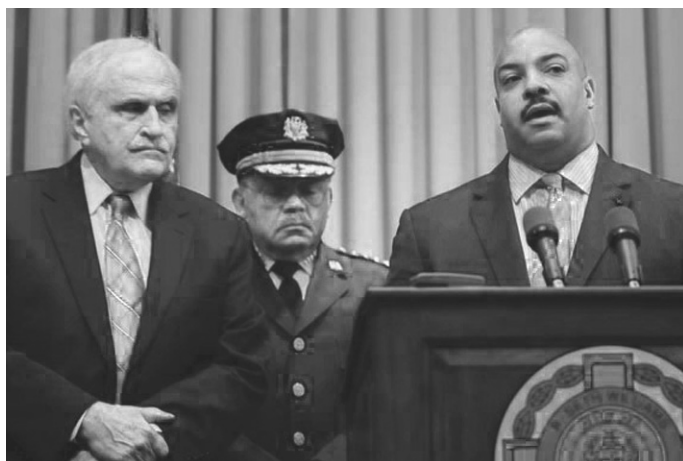
Lisa Terry

After 29 years and 363 days, Mumia Abu-Jamal no longer lives under the executioner's shadow. On December 7, Philadelphia district attorney Seth Williams announced that his office was dropping efforts to execute America's foremost class-war prisoner. While this brings to an end a legal lynching campaign that began with Mumia's arrest and false conviction for the 1981 killing of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner, Mumia remains condemned to spend the rest of his life in prison with no chance of parole, despite overwhelming evidence of his innocence.

In a recent letter to the Partisan Defense Committee, Mumia aptly characterized his new home at the Mahanoy Correctional Institution in Frackville, PA, as "slow Death Row." A Black Panther Party leader in his youth and later an award-winning journalist, Mumia has spent over 40 years fighting for the oppressed. He must not be forgotten and left to rot in prison hell! Trade unionists, radical youth and fighters for black rights must demand: Freedom now for Mumia Abu-Jamal!

The state forces that have tried for decades to silence this powerful voice for the oppressed are certainly not going to forget him. Appearing with Williams when he made his announcement were prosecutors who helped railroad Mumia to death row, officials of the Fraternal Order of Police (F.O.P.), long the spearhead of the drive to execute him, and F.O.P. mouthpiece Maureen Faulkner, the slain policeman's widow. Spewing the venomous racism that has motivated the persecution of Mumia, Faulkner described him as a "seething animal" and ranted, "I

am heartened by the thought that he will finally be taken from the protected cloister he has been living in all these years and begin living among his own kind; the thugs and common criminals that infest our prisons." This is the voice of the cops who stop and throw black youth against the wall for "walking while black," who have consigned generations of young blacks and Latinos to prison hell in the "war on drugs," who carry out street executions with impunity.



Glover/Philadelphia Inquirer

**December 7: Philadelphia D.A. Seth Williams announces dropping pursuit of death sentence for Mumia. Joseph McGill (shown at left) was prosecutor who helped railroad Mumia to death row.**

For Mumia, being "cloistered" on death row the past 30 years has meant confinement almost 24 hours a day in an eight-by-twelve-foot cell, severe limits on phone calls, separation from visitors by thick Plexiglas and, until recently, being manacled during visits. Mumia has been unable to embrace his wife Wadiya or bounce grandchildren on his knee. In 1985, Mumia learned that the Philly cops

regs even prohibited Mumia and his son from corresponding with one another.

As described in the Partisan Defense Committee statement printed below, Mumia is an innocent man who was subjected to a racist and political frame-up. For three decades, police, prosecutors and government officials of both the Democratic and Republican parties have been screaming for Mumia's head. From the

right-wing tabloids to the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and *New York Times*, newsrooms across the country have treated the prosecution's lying account of Faulkner's killing as gospel.

Court after court has refused to even consider the massive amount of evidence proving Mumia's innocence. In 2001, Mumia's attorneys presented in state and federal courts the sworn confession of Arnold Beverly that "I was hired, along with another guy, and paid to shoot and kill Faulkner. I had heard that Faulkner was a problem for the mob and corrupt policemen because he interfered with the graft and payoffs made to allow illegal activity including prostitution, gambling, drugs without prosecution in the center city area." At the time of Faulkner's killing, the Philadelphia police were under three corruption investigations by the Feds, encompassing virtually the entire chain of command that oversaw the "investigation" of Faulkner's death.

First taking up Mumia's defense in 1987, the PDC and the Spartacist League made his case known to a wide range of death penalty abolitionists, student groups, black activists and the labor movement through publicity and protest. From the beginning, we have fought for the understanding that the power of labor must be brought to bear to win Mumia's freedom. Indeed, it was an outpouring of protest internationally including trade unionists that helped win a stay of execution for Mumia in August 1995.

Mumia had become a central focus of the fight to abolish the racist death penalty.

*continued on page 9*

## PDC Statement

*The following statement was issued by the Partisan Defense Committee on December 10. 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.*

On December 7, the Philadelphia District Attorney announced that he will not seek another death sentence for Mumia Abu-Jamal, America's foremost class-war prisoner. The announcement by D.A. Seth Williams comes in the wake of the October 11 U.S. Supreme Court decision rejecting the D.A.'s petition to reinstate the death sentence that was overturned in 2001. This means Mumia, framed up for the killing of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner in 1981, will be sentenced to life in prison without possibility of parole. While it is welcome that Mumia will no longer be under the threat of state execution, it is an abomination that this innocent man, who has already spent 30 years entombed, is condemned to a living death in prison!

The government's drive to execute Mumia has run aground, but the vendetta of the prosecution, cops and capitalist politicians, both Democratic and Republican, against Mumia continues. There is a mountain of evidence, including Arnold Beverly's confession that he shot and killed Faulkner, that demonstrates Mumia is an

innocent man who should never have spent one day in prison. The courts have refused to consider this evidence because it exposes Mumia's frame-up as not just some aberration of a rogue cop or a bad judge, but the result of the workings of a whole "justice" system whose real purpose is the repression of workers, minorities and the poor on behalf of the capitalist rulers (see the July 2006 Partisan Defense Committee pamphlet, *The Fight to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal—Mumia Is Innocent!*).

Beginning in the late 1960s, Mumia was targeted by the police and FBI as a Black Panther leader and later as a MOVE supporter and journalist renowned for his searing exposés of cop brutality and racist oppression. The prosecution railroaded Mumia to death row in 1982, building its case on the basis of phony ballistics and other manufactured "evidence," a "confession" concocted by cops and prosecutors, massive police intimidation of witnesses and racist jury rigging. His trial was overseen by "hanging judge" Albert Sabo, who was overheard saying he would help the prosecution "fry the n---r." To secure the death sentence, prosecutors pointed to political statements made by Mumia as a 16-year-old Panther.

In December 2001, federal judge William Yohn overturned Mumia's death sentence as unconstitutional based

on improper jury instructions while simultaneously upholding every aspect of the 1982 frame-up conviction. As for the Supreme Court, its 2009 denial of Mumia's petition essentially put an end to his legal efforts to overturn his conviction on constitutional grounds.

During the decades of his unjust imprisonment, Mumia has remained unbowed, speaking out for the oppressed and the impoverished through his death row commentaries. Mumia's cause has been an international focal point of the fight for abolition of the death penalty, which in the U.S. is the legacy of black chattel slavery and represents the pinnacle of state terror. When Mumia faced a death warrant in the summer of 1995, massive publicity about his case and worldwide protests that were endorsed by trade unions representing hundreds of thousands of workers played a crucial role in staying the executioner's hand.

Now the state authorities hope with the latest decision that Mumia's cause will be forgotten and that he will rot in prison hell until he dies. This must not be Mumia's fate. As the Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee have always insisted, fighters for Mumia's freedom must look to link his cause to the class struggles of the multiracial proletariat. Trade unionists, opponents of the racist death penalty and fighters for black rights must continue the fight to **free Mumia** from the racist dungeons of Pennsylvania and to abolish the racist death penalty. ■