

Down With Starvation Blockade! U.S. Out of the Near East!

U.S. Get Your Bloody Hands Off Iraq!

NOVEMBER 17—Massively reinforcing its armada of warships, submarines, aircraft carriers, fighter-bombers and cruise missiles in the Persian Gulf, U.S. imperialism is once again poised to unleash bloody carnage on the Iraqi people. The Clinton White House has now announced a postponement of the military strike as the Iraqi regime agreed to again allow free rein to the imperialist spies who masquerade as “arms inspectors.” Trumpeting Washington’s aim of overthrowing the Saddam Hussein regime, Clinton bellows, “Iraq has backed down, but that is not enough.” British Labour prime minister Tony Blair rants that the “slightest obstruction” of United Nations weapons inspectors will be met with an “immediate attack, no warning whatever.” Today’s *New York Times* headlines, “Allies See Bombing of Iraq as Inevitable.”

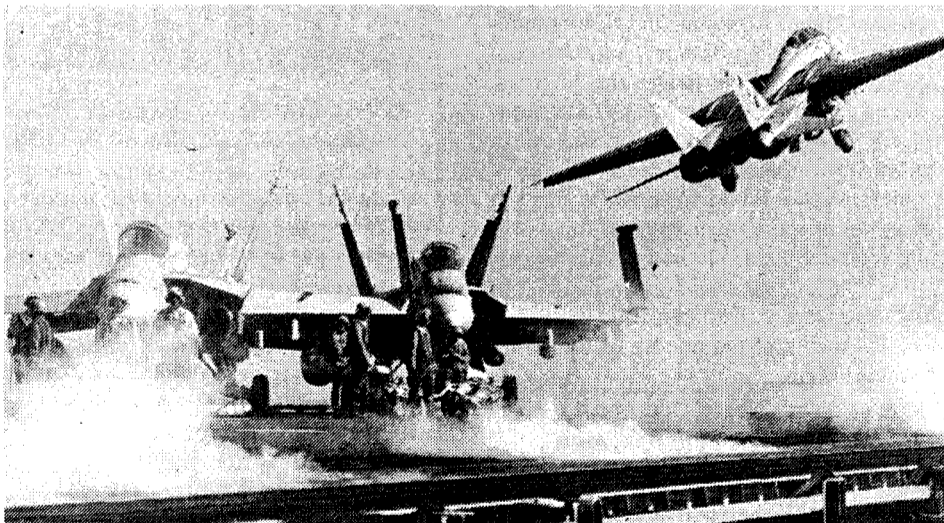
As we declared in a statement of the Spartacist League Political Bureau at the time of Clinton’s last terror-bombing threat (WV No. 685, 27 February): “Whether or not America’s capitalist rulers decide *this time* to yet *again* rain death and destruction on Iraqi men, women and children does not change by one iota the rapacious and murderous character of this imperialist system.” Against the reformist “socialists” who perpetuate the liberal lie that imperialism is just a “bad policy” which can be changed through mass pressure, we asserted:

“As Lenin stressed in polemicizing against similar views advanced by German Social Democrat Karl Kautsky, imperialism is ‘the highest stage of capitalism,’ marked by the concentration and domination of finance capital, the preeminence of the export of capital and competition among the advanced capitalist countries to control markets and spheres of exploitation. War is a necessary product of the capitalist system.”

This marks the *eighth* time since the one-sided 1991 Persian Gulf War that Washington has either perpetrated or threatened mass destruction of Iraq. Tens of thousands were slaughtered in 1991 by



Women and children in Baghdad wait for scarce medical care. Imperialist blockade has killed well over a million Iraqis, now Clinton threatens renewed terror bombing.



Reuters

U.S.-led forces acting under a UN fig leaf. Over a million children and hundreds of thousands of other Iraqis have since died from malnutrition and disease resulting from the imperialist embargo. As one Iraqi official remarked bitterly, the imperialists “will not kill in a military

strike more than they are killing with sanctions every day.” The death rate among children from diseases like pneumonia and diarrhea has increased more than tenfold. The country has also been ravaged by a horrifying cancer epidemic caused by the imperialists’ rape of Iraq in

1991, which included the use of depleted uranium shells (see “Iraq Cancer Epidemic Made in U.S.A.,” WV No. 690, 8 May). *Down with the starvation blockade! U.S. imperialism: Get your bloody hands off Iraq!*

Fearful of stirring up domestic discontent, America’s rulers rely on high-tech missile and bombing strikes which minimize U.S. casualties while wreaking devastation on the Iraqi population. An editorial in the *New York Times* (13 November), mouthpiece of the liberal bourgeoisie, virtually screamed for Iraqi blood, calling for a “sustained” bombing campaign which would necessarily include “a regrettable risk of civilian casualties.”

The repeated *displays of terror* by U.S. imperialism are aimed at enforcing the subjugation of the semicolonial peoples of the world and demonstrating to its capitalist rivals that the American bourgeoisie remains top dog. In cynically railing against destitute Iraq’s supposed “weapons of mass destruction,” Washington is asserting its “right” to a monopoly over such weapons. The U.S. has not only enormous stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons but a nuclear arsenal capable of wiping out the world’s population many times over. And it is the only country to have used nuclear weapons in wartime, incinerating over 200,000 Japanese and Korean civilians in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.

In organizing protests at various campuses around the U.S. last week in response to the war buildup, the Spartacus Youth Clubs raised the call, “Defeat U.S. Imperialism Through Proletarian Revolution!” As an SYC spokesman at a November 12 speakout at UCLA stressed: “What is necessary is the building of a class-struggle, revolutionary workers party that stands opposed to the Democratic and Republican parties of war and racism. Such a party is absolutely essential in the struggle for

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**No Illusions in Bourgeois Liberals—
For Workers Revolution!**

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Turns Screws on Workers, Poor**

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Young Spartacus

**Defeat of Reconstruction and the
Great Rail Strike of 1877**

**The Shaping of
Racist American Capitalism**

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On Reconstruction

August 17, 1998

Dear Editor,

I write concerning a significant episode of (Black) history, which I believe gets short shrift in the formulations I have read upon it in the pages of *WV*. If, after reading below, it turns out that I have been mistaken, and the points I make *have* been covered in *WV*, then you can ignore this letter. But even if they have been covered, I believe they still lack the proper emphasis. My concern is over how the period after the Compromise of 1877 is characterized, most recently, but I think not atypically in the otherwise fine and important article, "Death Row Speedup Targets Minorities" (*WV*, No. 694, 31 July 1998). I quote the formulation in its context:

"...the promise of black freedom was betrayed by the Northern capitalists, who were not about to take any action which would threaten the dominance of private property, North or South. Even minimal land redistribution was stopped and the large plantations maintained, with the former slaves becoming impoverished sharecroppers and tenant farmers. Following the defeat of Reconstruction, formalized by the Compromise of 1877, the black freedmen were again disenfranchised under Jim Crow laws steeped in the spirit, and at times the letter, of the

old Slave Codes. In the 1896 *Plessy* case, the Supreme Court codified "separate but equal" segregation as the law of the land.... With the withdrawal of the last Union troops in 1877, KKK terror stalked the South unchallenged."

As a précis of a crucial period of U.S. history—the defeat of Reconstruction—the above is perhaps adequate. However, my main disagreement concerns the overly mechanistic, and historically inaccurate, depiction of this defeat that equates the Compromise of 1877 with the establishment of Jim Crow. Secondly, I think it's worth pointing out that KKK and other race terrorists rampaged throughout the Reconstruction period, only half-heartedly challenged by the Union government. There did continue to be black militias during this latter period, but their influence was largely kept in check. On this latter point, please refer to Du Bois's *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880*. But to return to my main point, the Compromise of 1877 may have officially ended the Northern attempt at Reconstruction of the South, ending in the so-called "redemption" of the Southern states, but it did not result in the immediate disenfranchisement of the blacks, nor did Jim Crow immediately spring into existence in 1877-78. In fact,

as is well documented in C. Vann Woodward's classic study, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, originally published in 1955, an entire historical period was required to wipe out (and then never completely) the gains made through tremendous suffering, fighting and sacrifice by both blacks and whites during both the Civil War and in the attempt to impose Radical Reconstruction thereafter. Du Bois wrote, in his seminal study noted above, written in the early 1930s:

"Negroes did not surrender the ballot easily or immediately. They continued [after 1877] to hold remnants of political power in South Carolina and Florida, Louisiana, in parts of North Carolina, in Texas, Tennessee and Virginia. Black Congressmen came out of the South until 1895 and black legislators served as late as 1896 [p. 692].... The whole history of this post-Reconstruction development is yet to be written...." [pp. 693-694]

Both Du Bois and Woodward point out that the fight against the black vote, and the attempt to subjugate blacks economically, socially and politically, was symbolized by the rise of the accommodationist Booker T. Washington, whose program was not enunciated until the mid-1890s! What happened in the almost 20 years between the official end of the Reconstruction period and the *Plessy v. Ferguson* case in 1896? Some of the development can be followed in the decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court prior to *Plessy*, which sought to sharply curtail the special protections of the Fourteenth Amendment and the Reconstruction-era 1875 Civil Rights Act. For instance in the three *Civil Rights Cases* of 1883, the court tried to emasculate efforts by Radical Republicans to promote racial equality, e.g. by prohibiting racial segregation. But the U.S. capitalist government still held that it could prohibit discriminatory action by a State government. It wasn't until the period of reaction had consolidated itself by the mid-1890s that the outright legal overturn of Civil War and Reconstruction attempts at equal protection and civil rights was made explicit in the notorious *Plessy* case. In this latter,

the Supreme Court upheld a Louisiana law requiring segregation in railway cars. In other words, the legal codification of segregation took almost a generation following the Compromise of 1877. The capital (so to speak) of earlier struggles, and the struggles of men and women in the 20 years following the end of official Reconstruction, ensured that black America would not go down fighting [sic]. Perhaps *WV* would like to research and write an article on this someday.

Why bother to carp upon a single sentence in a *WV* article? Well, for one, I have read the same formulation of this period in previous *WV* articles, and have long thought of writing a letter about it. I do not write with any substantive criticism, but only, really, to suggest a reformulation of how a particular period in history is presented. This may have significance, as we are now living through a period of international defeat and reaction ourselves. I would suggest only a modest reformulation of the immediate post-Reconstruction period somewhat along the lines as follows: "The gains of Civil War battle and Reconstruction were not easily overturned. Following the Compromise of 1877, a losing battle was fought against the forces of racist, capitalist reaction, culminating in the near-universal establishment of Jim Crow segregation laws and the political disenfranchisement of blacks only by the end of the nineteenth century." This reformulation, brief and not too different from *WV*'s, has this virtue, it does not telescope historical development, nor does it make it seem that blacks rolled over in defeat with the end of Reconstruction. I am sure that the editorial staff of *WV* can do a better job than me in coming up with the correct formulation.

Fraternally,
Jeffrey K.

WV Replies

We appreciate Jeffrey K.'s observations and refer him to the article in this issue on "Defeat of Reconstruction and the Great Rail Strike of 1877—The Shaping of Racist American Capitalism." ■



TROTSKY

Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution

The fight against black oppression is central to the struggle for socialist revolution in this deeply racist country. This understanding was brought to the American Communist movement by the Communist International of Lenin and Trotsky at its Fourth Congress in 1922. Drawing on the experience of the October Revolution of 1917, the Russian Bolsheviks imbued the early American Communist Party with the need to actively take

up the fight against racial oppression in the U.S.

Three hundred years ago the American Negro was dragged from his homeland, brought in indescribably horrible conditions on board ship, and sold into slavery. For 250 years he worked as a slave under the lash of American overseers. His labour cleared the forests, built the roads, planted the cotton, laid the railways, and kept the aristocracy of the south. His wages were poverty, ignorance, humiliation, and wretchedness. The Negro was not a docile slave; his history is rich in revolts, disturbances, and subterranean methods of gaining freedom. But all his struggles were savagely suppressed. He was forced into subjection by torture, and the bourgeois press and religion justified his enslavement. Slavery then became an obstacle to American development on a capitalist basis; personal slavery came into conflict with wage slavery, and personal slavery was bound to go under. The civil war, which was not a war to free the Negroes, but a war to maintain the industrial predominance of capital in the northern states, confronted the Negro with the choice between slavery in the south and wage slavery in the north. The longings, the blood, and the tears of the "emancipated" Negroes were a part of the fabric of American capitalism. As America, which had meanwhile risen to the position of a world Power, was inevitably dragged into the maelstrom of the world war, the Negro was declared to be equal in rank to the whites. He had to kill and be killed for "democracy"...

The Communist International notes with satisfaction the resistance of the exploited Negro to the exploiters' attack, for the enemy of his race and the enemy of the white workers are one and the same—capitalism and imperialism.

—"Theses of the Fourth Comintern Congress on the Negro Question,"
November 1922, reprinted in Jane Degras, *The Communist International 1919-1943 Documents* (1971)



LENIN

WORKERS VANGUARD

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No. 70120 November 1998

Cops at UPS Victimize Jamal Defense Rally Organizers

The following is a Partisan Defense Committee leaflet issued on November 15 in response to police harassment of trade unionists who were mobilizing at a UPS location in the suburb of Willow Springs for the November 21 Chicago rally to free Mumia Abu-Jamal.

It's no secret to Teamster members that the United Parcel Service desperately wants to destroy the union, which obstructs its quest for ever higher profits. In fact, after the successful 1997 UPS strike, which broke a very long chain of labor defeats, UPS beefed up its union-busting, racist security forces for that very purpose. At the Hodgkins UPS facility these thugs, acting in concert with local cops, were mobilized to threaten, assault and illegally detain supporters of Mumia Abu-Jamal, the radical black journalist facing execution on frame-up charges in Pennsylvania. The same state forces arrayed against the union moved to suppress the defense of Jamal.

On the night of November 13 two Jamal supporters were handing out flyers at the Willow Springs Road entrance to UPS calling for a mass labor/black protest demanding: "All Out to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!" Soon two UPS guards arrived on the scene in company Broncos. One, Thomas Evoy, identified himself as a state policeman;

the other flashed a sheriff's deputy badge. When ordered to leave the area, the two asserted their right to distribute labor material on public property. Evoy radioed for the Willow Springs cops. When they then attempted to leave, Evoy thrust a heavy mag lite into the chest of one of the leafleters, threatening to arrest them himself and saying, "Consider yourselves detained." Before long, the two Jamal supporters were surrounded by five Willow Springs cruisers, two unmarked police cars and two Indian Point squad cars!

The purpose of this overwhelming police mobilization, ostensibly in response to an alleged traffic "violation," was to send a message of intimidation and implied terror to any who would seek to link the struggle for black rights to the power of the multi-racial working class. UPS, notorious for its racist mistreatment of black workers across the country, is especially motivated to squash any threat of labor/black power. But for Teamster members at UPS as well as other unionists, the lesson should be clear: union rights and black rights must march forward together—or they will fall back separately. In the aftermath of last year's strike, UPS and the cops ally to strangle the social power of the union; *this* is the power that must be mobilized to defend Jamal.

Government Hands Off New York City D.C. 37

The increased combativity of the American labor movement which has been evident beginning with last year's Teamsters (IBT) strike against UPS has prompted a counteroffensive by Wall Street, the government and its courts aimed at completely shackling the unions. This has been highlighted by the government stepping up its years-long intervention into the Teamsters following the UPS strike, voiding last December's re-election of IBT president Ron Carey, imposing new elections and expelling Carey from the union altogether.

Now, expanding this anti-union vendetta, the government has targeted American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) District Council 37 in New York City, which represents some 120,000 city workers in 56 locals. Under the guise of fighting "corruption," four separate sets of investigators are probing the union, while the Manhattan District Attorney's office has subpoenaed financial records from every single local. These ominous intrusions into the union have nothing to do with the measly financial shenanigans the D.A.'s office claims to be investigating and everything to do with further crippling the unions as defensive organizations of the working class. **Government hands off the unions!**

The D.C. 37 bureaucracy has itself been instrumental in shackling the potential power of the union by its embrace of the capitalist politicians who run the city and their anti-union laws. D.C. 37 president Stanley Hill—a longtime backer of viciously racist, anti-labor Republican mayor Rudolph Giuliani—has run point for City Hall's massive cutbacks which have meant tens of thousands of layoffs and further devastation of the ghettos and barrios. In 1995, Hill pushed through a five-year contract which included a two-year wage freeze and millions of dollars in givebacks. The following year, Hill endorsed Giuliani's imposition of slave-labor, union-busting "workfare," which has led to more rounds of layoffs and has served to pit the desperate minority poor against the unions. And the D.C. 37 tops have long bowed to New York State's Taylor Law banning public workers strikes—it's been more than 25 years since D.C. 37 last went on strike.

Nationally, the AFSCME bureaucracy has eagerly "organized" prison guards and cops—the racist, strikebreaking guard dogs of the capitalist rulers. The police, courts and prisons are at the core of the capitalist state, which exists to pro-

ISO Cheers Feds' Union "Reformers"

tect the class rule, property and profits of the bourgeoisie. The emancipation of labor and the liberation of all the exploited and oppressed depends on the destruction of the capitalist state machinery through socialist revolution, creating a society where those who labor rule.

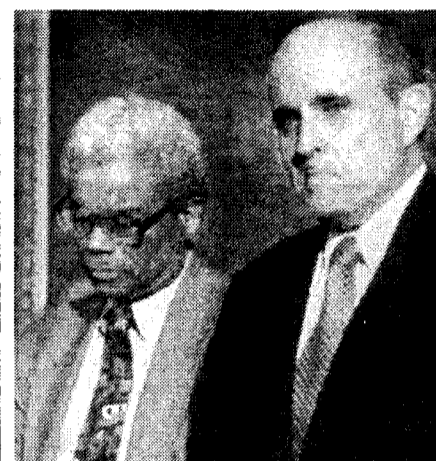
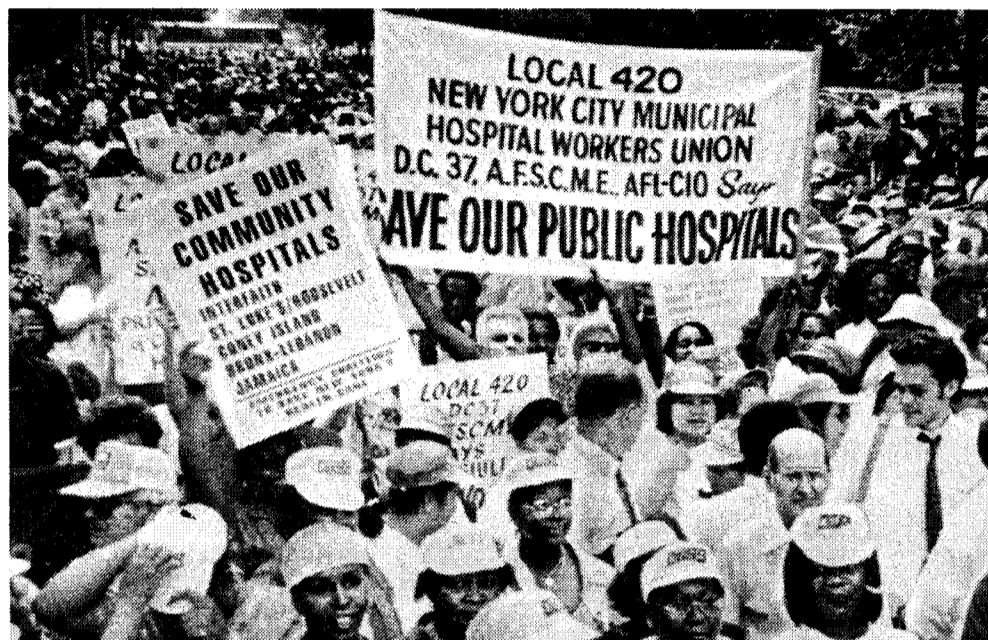
Today, the labor movement is being increasingly threatened and hogtied by having the class enemy in its house. With cop-infested and court-controlled unions, the labor movement *cannot* effectively wield its power on behalf of workers

man from office, the ISO started howling about the evils of government intervention. Thus a *Socialist Worker* (19 June) article on the Teamsters talked about the need for "shop-floor organization independent of the union bureaucracy—and for getting both the mob and the federal government out of the union."

Stung by what happened to Carey, the ISO has suddenly "discovered" the danger of government intervention. That this is sheer hypocrisy is shown by their response to the events in AFSCME

of cops, and for good reason: the ISO and its international patrons, Tony Cliff's British Socialist Workers Party, have time and again supported the "struggles" of prison guards and cops. Thus the *British Socialist Worker* (8 February 1997) posits that cops could cease being "agents of the state" if they "rebel collectively." And in 1996, the Canadian International Socialists supported a strike by "unionized" prison guards in Ontario in which they subjected inmates to a lockdown and, when the prisoners protested, rushed into the jail from their picket lines to suppress them.

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels declared some 125 years ago, and the entire



Washington/NY Times

AFSCME D.C. 37 hospital workers protest closures and cutbacks, 1996. D.C. 37 chief Stanley Hill has pushed through layoffs and union-busting, slave-labor "workfare" schemes for racist mayor Giuliani.

WV Photo

and the oppressed. We say: cops and courts out of the unions! For the unions to act as instruments of class struggle requires a political struggle against the pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy. This means in the first place a fight for the complete independence of the unions from the capitalist state, its cops and courts, and from the Democratic and Republican parties of capital.

The Spartacist League opposes state intervention into the unions as a matter of principle. Not so for such reformists as the International Socialist Organization (ISO), which has long promoted the Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU), an outfit which literally wrote the blueprint for the feds' takeover of the union. Along with other reformist "socialists," the ISO trumpeted Ron Carey, who took office as a direct result of the government's intervention into the union. But once the state removed their

D.C. 37. In *Socialist Worker* (25 September), the ISO lauds the "Committee for Real Change" (CRC) headed by Local 375 chief Roy Commer and Mark Rosenthal, the president of Local 983. The ISO claims the CRC stands for "organizing the unorganized, including workfare workers" and for implementing various reforms in the union. What the ISO *doesn't* say is that these bureaucrats have been acting as point men for state intervention into the union. When Rosenthal took office earlier this year, he proceeded to turn over to the D.A. reports on the union's finances. And Commer responded to his recent suspension from union office by filing a complaint against the union in federal court.

The ISO doesn't say a word about how these bureaucrats look to "reform" the union by running to the courts and finking for the D.A. Nor does the ISO ever object to the AFSCME tops' "organizing"

course of labor struggle has shown, that "the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes." In contrast, the ISO has a reformist perspective. As we wrote in "Government Steps Up Anti-Labor Attacks" (WV No. 675, 3 October 1997): "What the ISO pushes is *social-democratic* politics, the view that the capitalist state, which is organized to defend the interests of the bourgeois ruling class, can be pressured to act on behalf of the interests of the exploited." Key to unchaining labor's power is to imbue workers with the understanding that the capitalist state is the deadly enemy of the unions, of blacks and all minorities. The necessary instrument to sow that consciousness is a revolutionary workers party, forged through political struggle against capitalism's "labor lieutenants" and their "socialist" mouthpieces. ■

Spartacist Events

Spartacist League Forum

BOSTON

**For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!
Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!
Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!**
Friday, November 20, 7 p.m.
Sever Hall, Room 102
Harvard University
For more information: (617) 666-9453

Spartacus Youth Club Video Show and Discussion

NEW YORK CITY

Come see the Partisan Defense Committee video: "From Death Row, This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal"
Wednesday, December 2, 2:30 p.m.
Borough of Manhattan Community College
199 Chambers Street, Room S114
For more information: (212) 267-1025

Spartacus Youth Club Classes

NEW YORK CITY

Confronting the "Death of Communism" Myth: The Revolutionary Party in the Post-Soviet World
Tuesday, November 24, 7 p.m.
Loeb Student Center, Room 413
New York University (LaGuardia Pl./Wash. Sq. South)
For readings and information: (212) 267-1025

TORONTO

The Revolutionary Party and Its Program
Thursday, November 26, 7:30 p.m.
International Student Centre
Riddell Room
University of Toronto
33 St. George Street (north of College St.)
For readings and information: (416) 593-4138

Benefit for Class-War Prisoners



Organize for Mumia Abu-Jamal's Freedom

Join us for the 13th annual Holiday Appeal to raise funds for those imprisoned for championing the rights of labor and the oppressed. In sending monthly stipends to class-war prisoners and additional funds to them and their families during the holidays, the PDC continues a tradition dating back to the International Labor Defense of the 1920s.

This year's benefits are particularly

focused on the urgent struggle to free black death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. With the rejection of Jamal's appeal by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, there is an immediate danger that Governor Tom Ridge will sign a death warrant, aiming to silence forever this courageous fighter against racist injustice. Build the Holiday Appeal—Build the fight to free Mumia and abolish the racist death penalty!

New York

Friday, December 4
5 to 9 p.m.
AFSCME District Council 1707
75 Varick St. (at Canal)
For more information:
(212) 406-4252

Chicago

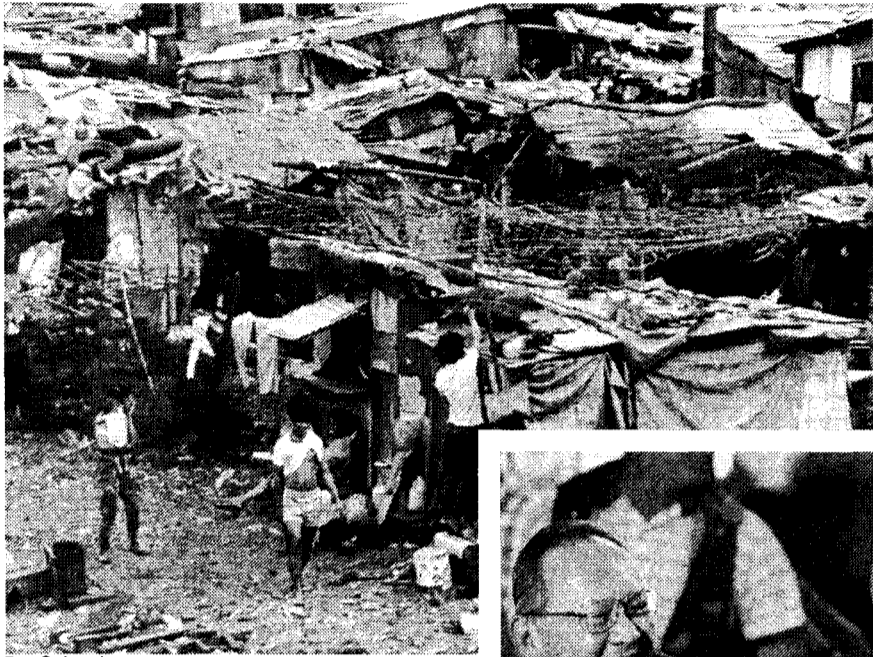
Sunday, December 6
3 to 7 p.m.
UE Hall
37 S. Ashland (at Monroe)
For more information:
(312) 454-4931

Bay Area

Sunday, December 6
1 to 4 p.m.
ILWU Local 34 Hall
4 Berry St., San Francisco
For more information:
(510) 839-0852

SPONSOR: PARTISAN DEFENSE COMMITTEE

Philippines: Estrada Regime Turns Screws on Workers, Poor



Der Spiegel



Reuters



Moyer/Review

Amid desperate poverty, Filipinos plead for help at presidential palace of Joseph Estrada (near left, with billionaire patron Eduardo Cojuangco).

NOVEMBER 16—Less than five months into his term as president of the Philippines, Joseph “Erap” Ejercito Estrada’s image as guardian of the *masa* (masses) is fading, and fading fast. Campaigning on the slogan “Erap para sa mahirap” (Erap for the poor) and on promises of jobs, cheap food and housing, the capitalist politician was elected in May on a wave of popular discontent over the austerity dictates imposed by his predecessor, former general Fidel Ramos, at the behest of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and U.S. imperialism. With class polarization progressively sharpening and labor militancy threatening to undermine the stability of this classic U.S. neocolony, Estrada is backing calls for emergency presidential powers and a moratorium on strikes. He is also championing the return of U.S. military forces to the country, throwing his support behind the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) signed early this year by Ramos.

Shortly before Estrada’s June 30 inauguration, Philippine Airlines (PAL) pilots walked out—defying a government injunction—against a union-busting attack by PAL boss and Estrada backer Lucio Tan. The pilots were subsequently joined by flight attendants and the combative PAL Employees Association (PALEA) representing ground crews. The day after Estrada’s inauguration, PAL strikers joined with other trade unionists, impoverished slum dwellers and youth in a 10,000-strong protest at the opening session of Congress in Manila, where the “populist” president unveiled a hard-nosed austerity program entailing deep cuts in the already measly social services budget and wholesale privatization of remaining state-owned firms and utilities.

What lies behind the American military presence in the Philippines has been amply evident in recent days, as Indonesia again erupts in mass protests met with bloody repression. Less than six months after dictator Suharto was forced out by student protests and plebeian upheavals, his successor and former henchman, B. J. Habibie, is likewise using military terror to prop up his austerity regime. The economic crisis which has engulfed the region, sending shock waves as far as Japan, Russia and Brazil, has driven millions to the edge of starvation. At the same time, it has impelled the urban and rural masses to fight for their very survival.

There has recently been imperialist

investment in light industry in the Philippines, although the country was sidelined during the much-touted Southeast Asian “economic miracle.” Now it is being buffeted by the effects of the economic crash. The lines of men and women—sometimes stretching more than half a mile—outside the Malacañang presidential palace pleading for jobs, housing, medical care and scholarships attest to the desperate conditions throughout the

historic tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, including expropriation of the landed estates. As Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky explained in *The Permanent Revolution* (1931):

“With regard to countries with a belated bourgeois development, especially the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the theory of the permanent revolution signifies that the complete and genuine solution of their tasks of achieving *democracy and national emancipation* is

No Illusions in Bourgeois Liberals— For Workers Revolution!

country. The number of jobless has climbed by 30 percent in one year. The Philippine peso has plunged to a record low, and the only thing apparently keeping the economy afloat is dollar remittances from the vast number of Filipinos working abroad. These conditions have provoked widespread proletarian unrest, measured in the 32 percent increase in strikes and lockouts over the past year.

The PAL strike, which served as a beacon for workers throughout the archipelago, went down to bitter defeat last month in the face of government-backed strike-breaking, sealed by a backroom deal between the PALEA tops and the airline bosses (see “Philippine Airline Strike Knifed,” page 9). But the groundswell of dissent and labor activity coming hard on the heels of the PAL strike was sufficient to rattle the capitalist rulers. Workers on the island of Cebu recently occupied and shut down a major plant while a nationwide walkout at Philippine Telegraph & Telephone crippled automated teller machines and lotto terminals.

The fraud of “Erap para sa mahirap” is not just the product of Estrada’s intimate relationship with imperialism and the Philippine oligarchy. In the epoch of capitalist decay, the bourgeoisie of the countries of belated capitalist development—the junior partners of the imperialists—are incapable of carrying out the

conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat as the leader of the subjugated nation, above all of its peasant masses.”

The Philippine proletariat must take its place at the head of the unemployed poor, the rural masses, women, subjugated ethnic and national minorities in a struggle for socialist revolution against all wings of the capitalist class. Such a struggle must be based on a perspective for proletarian revolution throughout the region and internationally, especially the U.S., Japan and Australia. This is underscored by the U.S. military presence, which seeks to enforce imperialist “stability” in this increasingly tumultuous region and to assist Washington’s interests against Japan. It is also a dagger at the throat of the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state, which is teetering on the brink of capitalist counterrevolution.

Trotskyists stand for unconditional military defense of China and the other remaining deformed workers states against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution while fighting for proletarian political revolution to oust the nationalist Stalinist bureaucracies. Socialist revolution in the Philippines would be an enormous impetus to the Chinese workers fighting the ravages of the Beijing regime’s “market reforms.” Above all, what is needed is the forging

of a proletarian vanguard party committed to the Trotskyist program of permanent revolution and steered in political combat against the myriad forms of nationalist class collaboration promoted by the Stalinist-dominated Philippine left.

An “Archipelagic Aircraft Carrier”

Significantly, the return of the U.S. military under the Visiting Forces Agreement comes 100 years after the U.S. seized the archipelago in the 1898 Spanish-American War which signaled America’s emergence as an imperialist power. In the process of suppressing nationalist resistance, the U.S. military launched a brutal, racist war that resulted in the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of Filipinos. As we noted in “A Century of U.S. Imperialist Plunder” (WV No. 686, 13 March): “The conquest of the Philippines, leading to decades of bloody colonial repression, was a statement of U.S. imperialist appetites in the Pacific and a harbinger of the future war with Japanese imperialism, which culminated in the American A-bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.”

The strategic importance of the Philippines for the U.S. was laid out following World War II by General Douglas MacArthur, whose father commanded the war of extermination against independence fighters at the turn of the century: “Now the Pacific has become an Anglo-Saxon lake and our line of defense runs through a chain of islands fringing the coast of Asia” (quoted in Nautilus Research, *Pacific Command: The Structure and Strategy of the US Military in the Pacific* [July 1983]). In 1951, MacArthur told the U.S. Congress: “From this island chain we can dominate with sea and air power every Asiatic port from Vladivostok to Singapore and prevent any hostile movement into the Pacific.”

Despite half a century of nominal independence, the Philippines remains an impoverished semicolonial vassal of the U.S. Described by the London *Economist* as an “archipelagic aircraft carrier,” the country has long served as a linchpin of the anti-Communist ASEAN alliance in Southeast Asia. During the anti-Soviet Cold War, the Philippines provided strategic military bases at Clark and Subic Bay for U.S. imperialism’s savage counterrevolutionary war in the 1960s and ’70s against the heroic Vietnamese

workers and peasants. When the U.S. opted to abandon its Philippine bases shortly after the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92, the Pentagon took literally everything, except the tons of toxic waste left behind. For more than half a century, the U.S. military arrogantly treated the Philippines as its warehouse. Thousands of Amerasian children were abandoned when the U.S. military left. Now these children, especially those of black GIs, face ostracism in the communities around the former bases.

Estrada became the darling of the nationalist "left" in good part because he spoke out against the U.S. military bases while serving as an opposition senator under the administration of President Corazon "Cory" Aquino. Recognizing the brittleness of bourgeois rule in a neocolony situated in a potential cockpit of interimperialist rivalry, Estrada now openly courts the favors of the United States. The VFA allows the U.S. military unlimited access to ports and installations throughout the Philippines. U.S. interests are especially focused around General Santos City at the southern tip of Mindanao—where USAID funds were used to upgrade the airport and ship handling facilities—which faces the maritime boundary with Indonesia and Malaysia.

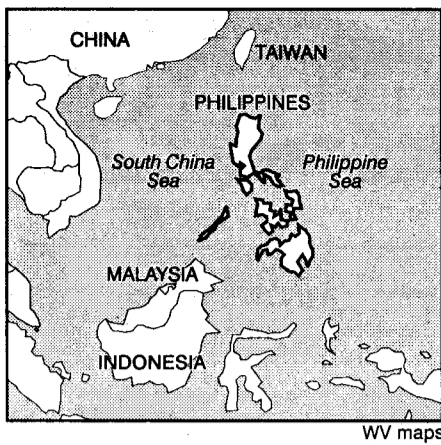
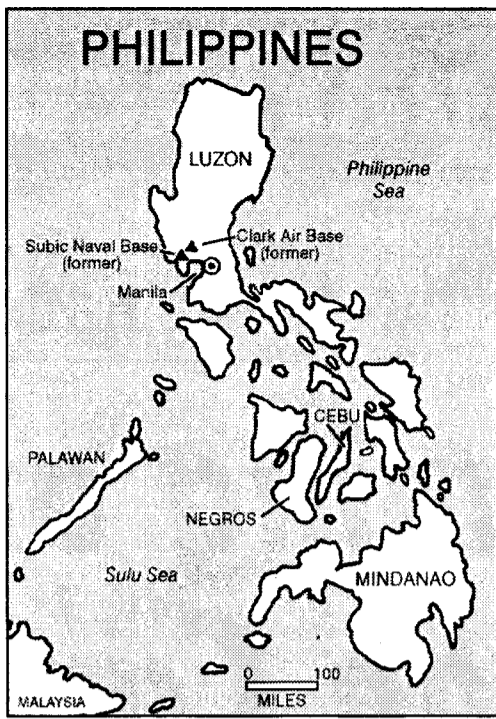
The VFA, which has provoked nationalist protests by elements ranging from the powerful Catholic hierarchy to the Stalinist and social-democratic left, is a response to intensified interimperialist competition and growing social turmoil in the region. The Philippines offers the U.S. a strategic position from which to threaten the sea lanes that are Japan's shortest oil supply routes as well as a jumping-off point for military intervention to quell social unrest in neighboring semicolonial countries. We say: Smash the VFA and ASEAN! U.S. troops out of the Philippines!

Dead End of Bourgeois Populism

Estrada's election was hailed by a host of liberals and avowed leftists as a "victory for the people." In fact, Estrada is simply the latest in a long line of imperialist-sponsored "populist" or *cacique* (landowner) politicians, from colonial Commonwealth caudillo Manuel Quezon and post-independence president Ramon Magsaysay to dictator Ferdinand Marcos and Aquino herself. For decades, Washington propped up the hated, corrupt Marcos dictatorship. When Marcos became too discredited to continue ruling in the 1980s, the U.S. promoted long-time CIA asset and millionaire Benigno Aquino. Following his assassination by Marcos' thugs in 1983, his wife took up the baton of the "democratic" opposition.

Three years later, Cory Aquino, one of the largest landowners in the country, was catapulted to office by the "people power" movement supported by Washington, the Catholic Church...and much of the "left." Months after becoming president, Aquino unleashed troops and cops on a demonstration in Manila calling for agrarian reform, killing 18 peasants and wounding scores more. Despite a veneer of parliamentary democracy, the Philippines remains a brutal police state in which leftists and working-class militants face imprisonment and death-squad terror.

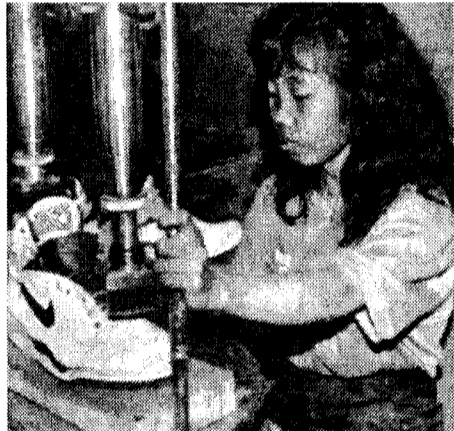
Estrada was a loyal Marcos supporter who organized goon-squad attacks against Aquino's followers. He gained popularity playing grade B movie roles as a hoodlum and, ironically, an incorruptible union leader, and earned his political spurs as the mayor of San Juan, a suburb of Metro Manila. One of his chief patrons is billionaire businessman and former Marcos crony Eduardo Cojuangco. When Cojuangco allowed the peasants on one of his eleven *haciendas* on the island of Negros to become "stockholders" in the plantation, Estrada hailed his *padrino* as the "godfather of land reform." Under the government's fraudulent "land reform" scheme, Cojuangco retains 60 percent control while the "emancipated" tenant farmers con-



U.S. uses Philippine neocolony as strategic outpost against Japanese imperialist rival and to quell social unrest in region. U.S. military presence is dagger at throat of Chinese deformed workers state.

tinue to slave as his plantation hands.

As the case of Cojuangco illustrates, the bourgeoisie and the landlord class in such semicolonial countries are inextricably intertwined. Half of the peasantry consists of tenants who are forced to hand over up to three-quarters of their crops to rapacious landlords, while well over a third of the overall population lives below the official poverty line. Food prices have skyrocketed in recent months amid widespread shortages. Genuine agrarian revolution—expropriation of the landed estates—can only be realized through the overthrow of capitalist class rule. Directly



Loeb/Philadelphia Inquirer

Workers at Philippine shoe factory make 15 cents an hour. Oppressed women workers will play key role in fight for socialist revolution.

related to the land question is the oppression of the dozens of ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities on this chain of over 7,000 islands. Various Muslim insurgencies have raged for years on the island of Mindanao, one of the poorest areas in the archipelago. And, as in Indonesia and elsewhere in the region, ethnic Chinese are simultaneously represented in the bourgeoisie and subjected to vile racist persecution.

The woman question is also a central and explosive issue in this 80 percent Catholic country. While large numbers of women have been drawn into the workforce in recent years, they have also been the hardest hit as unemployment climbs in the spreading economic crisis. Even before, millions of women were forced to seek work abroad—in the U.S., Japan and the oil-rich Arab emirates—as nurses or servants, many of them treated literally as slaves. Philippine law en-

AP



Philippine Airlines workers demonstrate in support of striking pilots in June (left). Workers picket electrical utility owned by U.S. Union Oil during 1996 strike.

shrines the oppression of women, who cannot even sign contracts without a husband's consent. The 1987 constitution promulgated under Aquino includes one of the most severe anti-abortion laws in the world, and a bill proposed last year would make abortion punishable by death both for the woman and the doctor who performs it.

It is necessary to fight for free abortion on demand and free quality health care for all. Marxists call for strict separation of church and state and oppose every manifestation of discrimination against women, homosexuals and ethnic, national and religious minorities. Religious backwardness—whether Catholic or Muslim—serves to bolster the family, the key institution for the oppression of women.

To even begin to emancipate women from domestic slavery and all-sided oppression, the system of capitalist exploitation must be swept away through socialist revolution, leading to the creation of an international planned, collectivized economy. The ICL seeks to build an internationalist revolutionary vanguard party to act as a tribune of the people, mobilizing the proletariat in defense of all the oppressed against the common class enemy. Particularly in Asia, the fight for the emancipation of women is a key component of this perspective. *For women's liberation through socialist revolution!*

For Proletarian Class Independence!

The chief condition for any real struggle against imperialist subjugation and capitalist exploitation and oppression is the class independence of the proletariat. Yet the Filipino left has historically been mired in class collaboration. In advanced capitalist countries, such class collaboration often takes the political form of "popular fronts"—bourgeois coalitions of reformist workers parties and openly capitalist parties. In semicolonial countries, the same treacherous strategy is generally manifested through the vehicle of bourgeois nationalism.

In the recent elections, the various left groups either tailed Estrada or politely refrained from opposing him, giving their supporters the signal to go vote for "Erap." But many voters who had earlier sported the bumper sticker "Erap para sa

mahirap" have now replaced it with one reading, "I'm sorry I voted for Erap." And a columnist for Manila's *Today* (25 July) observed, "Those who can't afford to buy bumper stickers, much less a car to stick them on...suffer the greatest disillusionment and feel the deepest sense of betrayal." In turn, the reformist "socialists" now seek to distance themselves from Estrada.

Such opportunist twists and turns are in keeping with the whole history of Filipino Stalinism and help explain why the left there consists of a veritable alphabet soup of groups which are barely distinguishable politically—all agreeing on the Menshevik/Stalinist "two stage" model. Each new betrayal tends to result in a cliquish split in which one faction or another is denounced for relying too much on the "national bourgeoisie" and not understanding the "leading role of the working class in the democratic revolution" or for focusing too much on "guerrillism" instead of electoral politics.

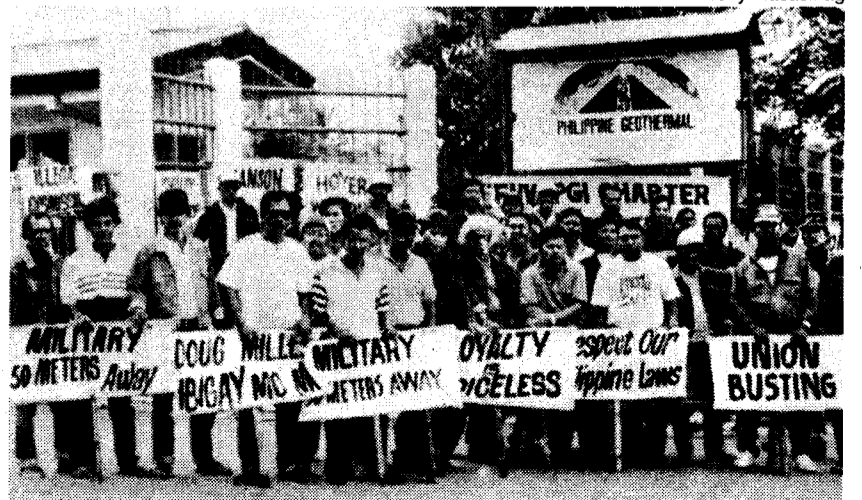
In warning against illusions in Aquino in 1986, we wrote: "Many a Third World nationalist regime has sought to protect its left flank by bringing the Communists into a 'democratic (or anti-fascist, anti-imperialist, etc.) coalition government,' only to set them up for a massacre on the morrow" ("Philippines Workers Must Fight for Power!" WV No. 415, 7 November 1986). What is necessary is a *programmatically* break with all variants of the Menshevik/Stalinist dogma of "two-stage revolution," which subordinates the proletariat to a "progressive" or "anti-imperialist" wing of the bourgeoisie in the fight for "democratic" capitalism while putting off the struggle for socialism to a future that never comes. From the Chinese Revolution of 1925-27, which was drowned in blood by Chiang Kai-shek's nationalist Guomindang, to the slaughter of Indonesian Communists by Suharto's military and Muslim fundamentalist gangs in 1965, history has repeatedly demonstrated that "two-stage revolution" means bloody defeat for the working class and oppressed.

This has been amply confirmed in the Philippines as well. In leading the Huk-balahap—the "People's Anti-Japanese Army"—during World War II, the old Philippine Communist Party (PCP) followed Stalin's prescription of supporting the "democratic" imperialist Allies. With the end of the war and American reconquest of the islands, the U.S. imperialists turned their guns on the Huks, drowning the peasant-based rebellion in blood. This campaign, assisted by Magsaysay and a young Benigno Aquino (whose family collaborated with the Japanese during the war), served as the laboratory in which the CIA developed the bloody techniques of "counterinsurgency" later used to slaughter millions of Vietnamese.

The current Philippine Communist Party (CPP) of Jose Maria Sison, which emerged as a Maoist split from the pro-Moscow PKP in 1968, is no less wedded to such nationalist class collaborationism. The Sisonites have led the New People's Army (NPA) in a peasant-guerrilla struggle which has waxed and waned over the years as overtures are made to each new bourgeois regime. While defying murderous state repression, such "armed struggle" is essentially a means to pressure the bourgeoisie.

continued on page 9

Tony Macasinag



Young Spartacus

Defeat of Reconstruction and the Great Rail Strike of 1877

The Shaping of Racist American Capitalism

We publish below an edited presentation by Young Spartacus editor Jacob Zorn at a Chicago Spartacus Youth Club forum last month.

As Marxists, we understand that racism is not a question of "bad ideas." Rather, there is a *material basis* for racial oppression. It is necessary to understand how this material basis was shaped by the history of this society. And that means understanding the pivotal events of 1877. That year saw the final defeat of Reconstruction, as the bourgeoisie withdrew the last federal troops from the South, where they had been stationed to suppress the slavocracy defeated in the Civil War and defend the rights of the emancipated black slaves. At the same time, federal troops—including troops withdrawn from the South—were sent to break a strike by thousands of rail workers, the first national strike in this country.

The fight for black liberation is central to the fight of the working class in the U.S. to smash this capitalist system of exploitation, oppression and misery and to create a truly egalitarian socialist society. We call to finish the Civil War through a socialist revolution which places the working class in power. As we wrote in the International Communist League's Declaration of Principles (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 54, Spring 1998):

"The U.S. black question is defined by the particular history of the United States: slavery, the Civil War defeat of the Southern slavocracy by Northern industrial capitalism and the bourgeoisie's betrayal of Radical Reconstruction's promise of equality, leading to the racist segregation of black people despite the economic integration of black toilers into the proletariat at the bottom. The forcible segregation of blacks, integral to American capitalism, has been resisted by the black masses whenever a perceived possibility for such struggle has been felt. Hence our program for the U.S. is revolutionary integrationism—the full integration of blacks into an egalitarian, *socialist* America—and our program of 'black liberation through socialist revolution'."



State militia fires on striking rail workers in Baltimore. Great Rail Strike of 1877 signaled emergence of American labor movement.

An "Irrepressible Conflict"

In the years after its founding, the American republic was divided between two social systems, slavery and capitalism. In the fight for independence from Britain, the first American Revolution drew on the ideas and even some of the institutions of the parliamentary side of the English Civil War of the mid-17th century, such as the right of citizens to bear arms, as codified in the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. In the 19th century, the developing Northern system of large-scale industrial capitalism required "free" wage labor to exploit—this is how the capitalist class makes its profits—as well as a mobile and somewhat literate working class. In order to grow, capitalism needed to create an expanding home market for the goods that it produced.

On the other hand, the South was ruled by a narrow slavocracy, and most productive labor was done by enslaved blacks who were legally nothing more than chattel—property. The Southern plantation economy was based on growing great

amounts of cotton to sell to the world capitalist market, primarily the British textile mills. At the same time, the slave system was based on very primitive and inefficient agricultural production. So the slaveowners continually wanted to expand their system to virgin soil which had not been depleted by cotton farming and to increase the highly profitable slave trade.

The inherent conflict between these two social systems gave rise to a series of clashes over whether new territory in the West would be slave or free. The inevitable battle was always delayed through some sort of "compromise," in which the Northern bourgeoisie allowed the slavocracy to remain dominant in the weak federal government: for example, the Missouri Compromise of 1820, which admitted Missouri as a slave state; or the Compromise of 1850, which admitted California as a free state while enacting a fugitive slave law, enabling slaveowners to pursue escaped slaves throughout the country.

In the 1850s, this "irrepressible conflict" reached a boiling point. An indica-

tion of this was the founding of the Republican Party in 1854, in the course of the fight for a free Kansas. During that struggle over "bleeding Kansas," free-soilers, including the heroic John Brown, bravely fought pro-slavery marauders. The most radical representatives of the strong abolitionist movement which developed—such as Brown, Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman and Thaddeus Stevens—foresaw that only armed action would end slavery. If you want to learn more about this, I recommend the fifth issue of our pamphlet series *Black History and the Class Struggle*, titled "Finish the Civil War!"

The Republicans nominated Abraham Lincoln, a moderate, for the 1860 presidential election, seeing him as able to win more votes than a more radical candidate. Lincoln did not call to immediately end slavery where it existed but

merely opposed its extension. But the Southern slavocracy opposed *any* constraints on the slave system. Following Lincoln's election, eleven states seceded from the Union to form the Confederate States of America, which guaranteed the "right" to own slaves in its constitution.

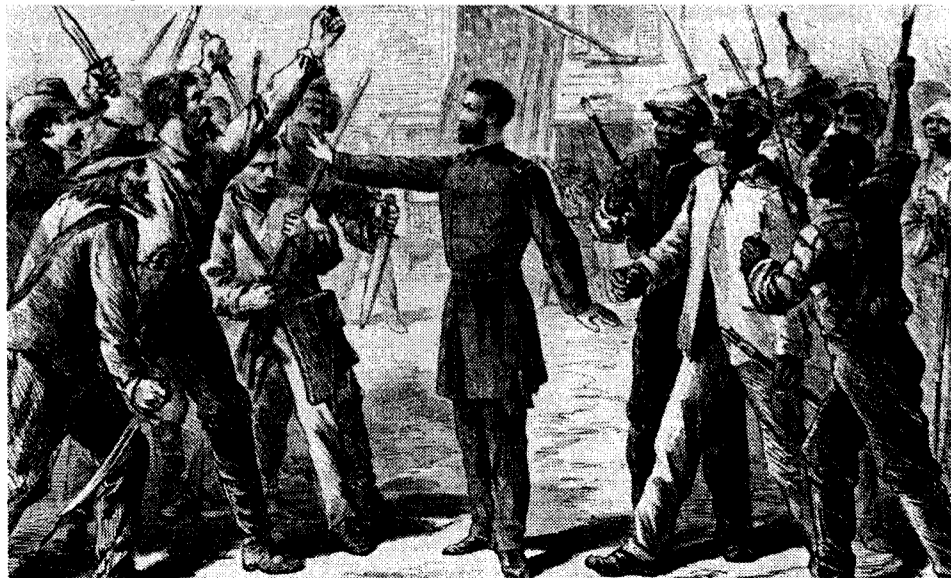
The North did not go to war specifically to emancipate the slaves but to suppress the Confederacy and restore the Union. Nonetheless, it was clear from the beginning that the war was about slavery. Karl Marx, who followed American developments closely, wrote at the time:

"The whole movement was and is based, as one sees, on the *slave question*. Not in the sense of whether the slaves within the existing slave states should be emancipated outright or not, but rather whether the 20 million free men of the North should submit any longer to an oligarchy of 300,000 slaveholders."

—Karl Marx, "The North American Civil War" (1861)

As Frederick Douglass had argued from the start of the war, whatever the *intent* of the Union leadership, the North would have to emancipate the slaves in order to win the war. Thus on 1 January 1863,

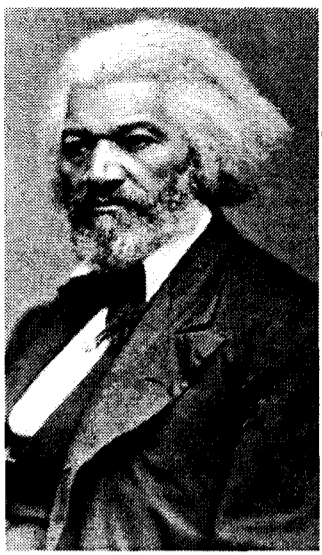
Library of Congress



Thomas Nast



Union Army in South was instrumental in defending rights of freed slaves. Thomas Nast cartoon depicts murderous KKK, which was given free rein by withdrawal of last federal troops in Compromise of 1877.



Frederick Douglass House

MEN OF COLOR
To Arms! To Arms!
NOW OR NEVER
THREE YEARS' SERVICE!
BATTLES OF LIBERTY AND THE UNION
FAIL NOW, & OUR RACE IS DOOMED
SILENCE THE TONGUE OF CALUMNY
VALOR AND HEROISM
PORT HUDSON AND MELLIKER'S BREV.
ARE FREEMEN LESS BRAVE THAN SLAVES
OUR LAST OPPORTUNITY HAS COME
WE APPEAL TO YOU!
STAND NOW!

Radical abolitionist Frederick Douglass campaigned for blacks to join Union Army. Black troops helped turn tide of war against slavocracy.

Library of Congress



Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, ordering that slaves in the Confederacy (but not in Union slave states such as Maryland) be freed, and soon after authorized the enlistment of black soldiers. Some 180,000 black troops—emancipated slaves in the South and free blacks in the North such as the heroic “Massachusetts 54th” led by Robert Gould Shaw—demonstrated before the eyes of the nation the courage and commitment of black soldiers and helped turn the war’s tide.

Reconstruction and the Compromise of 1877

The Civil War was the shaping event of American history—the last great bourgeois revolution, the second American Revolution—finally and firmly establishing the rule of the bourgeoisie throughout the U.S., with a strong central government and a national political economy. After the war, the question of what to do with the South was debated heatedly. The question of the freedman was central: would he become a full, enfranchised citizen, or would he be confined to second-class status, not slave but not free.

Lincoln wanted to assimilate the South back into the Union as quickly and painlessly as possible. But the defeated slavocracy would have none of it and acted as though it hadn’t lost the war, sending former Confederate leaders to Congress and enacting “Black Codes” which all but re-enslaved blacks. When Lincoln was assassinated less than a week after the South surrendered in 1865, the former slaveowners were encouraged by his successor, Andrew Johnson, who threw his lot in with white supremacy during the brief period known as Presidential Reconstruction.

In response, the policies of radicals like Thaddeus Stevens and Charles Sumner attained great influence within the Republican Party, the main party of the Northern bourgeoisie. The central goal of Radical Reconstruction—carried out on the ground by the freedmen and sympathetic whites who were slanderously labeled “carpetbaggers” and “scalawags”—was to reconstruct the South on a bourgeois-democratic basis, with the integration of blacks (who comprised the majority in much of the South) into capitalist society. With the 14th Amendment granting citizenship to “all persons born or naturalized in the United States” and the 15th Amendment extending the right to vote to all men, black Americans went from being chattel to citizens. What made this possible were the federal troops, many of them black, stationed in the South to suppress resistance by the former slavocracy—which was organized in the Democratic Party—and its Ku Klux Klan terrorist auxiliary.

Blacks not only voted at rates as high as 90 percent but were elected to state and national offices in large numbers. More than 600 blacks, mainly ex-slaves, served as legislators. Millions of freedmen, aided by the Freedmen’s Bureau but largely through their own initiative, learned to read, a right denied under

the slave system. Some became skilled tradesmen and professionals. Poor whites also benefited. Massive public spending on education created some of the first real public schools in the South, for whites as well as blacks. While women—both black and white—were denied the vote, they began to participate in civil society in great numbers.

For Reconstruction to succeed would have required not just the *defeat* of the plantation class, but that the plantations be seized and redistributed to those who toiled on them, the freedmen. In 1865, the Union government promised freedmen 40 acres each to farm. In fact, many plantations, including the family plantation of former Confederate president Jefferson Davis in Mississippi, were already being run collectively by the former slaves as the landowners fled after the war. But as we wrote in a founding document of the Spartacist League in 1966, “Black and Red—Class Struggle Road to Negro Freedom”: “Capitalist and slave alike stood to gain from the suppression of the planter aristocracy but beyond that had no further common interests.”

The American bourgeoisie was not interested in a thoroughgoing social reconstruction of the South. Northern capitalists looked at the devastated South and saw an opportunity not for building a radical democracy but for exploiting Southern resources, and the freedmen, profitably. Dividing the plantations into small plots would not have facilitated this. Rather the aim was to restart Southern agriculture, which meant getting the agricultural workforce—blacks—to work again, to the advantage of the landowning class, now dominated by mercantile interests with ties to the Northern capitalists.

Such demands as “land to the tiller” are not anti-capitalist per se—they are in fact the quintessence of the bourgeois revolution. But especially after the 1871 Paris Commune—the first, short-lived example of what Marx called the “dictatorship of the proletariat”—the bourgeoisie saw the expropriation and redistribution of private property as a threat. In return for having Republican Rutherford Hayes declared the winner of the 1876 presidential election, the Republicans agreed to pull the last troops out of the South in yet another “compromise,” the Compromise of 1877. This final compromise was largely just a codification of the actual defeat of Reconstruction several years earlier.

The post-Reconstruction period—called “Redemption” by racists—was marked by a political counterrevolution aimed at black people and enforced by Klan terrorists. Blacks were disenfranchised and brutally exploited in the form of sharecropping and tenancy, while being driven out of the skilled trades. Jim Crow segregation was formally codified in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the 1896 Supreme Court ruling which gave the official stamp of approval to “separate but equal.”

I want to underscore the point that during Reconstruction the general thrust of black struggle was toward integration and equality in American society. In fact, it was only *after* the defeat of Reconstruc-

tion and the consolidation of Jim Crow segregation over the next 20 years that the accommodationism of Booker T. Washington and, later, utopian separatist schemes gained prominence.

The Birth of the American Labor Movement

As I mentioned earlier, the Civil War laid the basis for a national economy in the United States, based on industrial capitalism and “free” wage labor. Integral to the development of this capitalist system were the railways. In 1850, there were only 2,201 miles of track in use; in 1877, over 79,000 miles. The concentration of railways in the North helped the Union win the Civil War. The extension of the railways throughout the West unified the country. And the convergence of railways here in Chicago made this city the epicenter of American capitalist development in that period. Railway barons amassed huge profits in the “Gilded Age” of the late 1800s, which was marked by rampant speculation. It was the president of the Pennsylvania Railroad, Thomas A. Scott, who actually drew up the Compromise of 1877 in order to guarantee the development of a Texas Pacific Railroad.

A unified capitalist system also laid the basis for a unified working class. There is a famous quote by Marx in the first volume of *Capital*:

“In the United States of North America, every independent movement of the workers was paralysed so long as slavery disfigured a part of the Republic. Labour cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded. But out of the death of slavery a new life at once arose. The first fruit of the Civil War was the eight hours’ agitation, that ran with the seven-leagued boots of the locomotive from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from New England to California.”

Expanding on Marx’s understanding, American Trotskyist Richard S. Fraser, who first laid out the perspective of revolutionary integration, wrote in his 1955 document “For the Materialist Conception of the Negro Question” (reprinted in *Marxist Bulletin* No. 5 [Revised]):

“There were, of course, labor struggles during the pre-Civil War period. But they were dwarfed in importance beside the anti-slavery struggle, because the national question for the American people had not yet been solved....

“The whole future of the working class depended, not so much upon organizational achievements against the capitalists, as upon the solution to the question of the slave power ruling the land. “This is the fundamental reason for the belated character of the development of the stable labor movement in the U.S.”

The expansion of railway transport led to one of the first working-class movements in the U.S. based on industrial unions—made up of all workers in an industry—as opposed to craft unions which organize each skilled trade separately. Railwaymen were extremely exploited, as the rail magnates continually sought to increase profits and dividends at the expense of the workers. The elimination of safety equipment was common, and workers who had run trains hundreds of miles were forced to pay for their return trips.

Speculation and overdevelopment by the railroad barons, who engaged in what were literally wars—pitched battles—with their competitors, helped precipitate the depression of 1873, which until the 1930s was referred to as the “Great Depression.” Many railway lines were placed under court management when their owners defaulted. As unemployment soared and wages were slashed, railroad workers struck and began to organize in the industrial Trainmen’s Union, a move strongly opposed by the capitalists, who sought to destroy any form of unionism.

In May 1877, representatives of four large railroad companies met and conspired to slash wages by a further 10 percent, and other railway companies soon followed suit. In mid-June, workers on the Baltimore & Ohio line walked out, demanding the restoration of their past wage rate. For more than a month, the strike spread throughout the U.S. and even to Canada. Increasingly, federal troops were used to break the strike; *continued on page 8*

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1877...

(continued from page 7)

bourgeoisie deemed the National Guard unreliable in a confrontation with strikers. As a pretext to call in the troops, mail cars were attached to the struck trains, and the strikers were then charged with obstructing the mail. In Pittsburgh, troops killed ten workers and wounded eleven, causing angry strikers to burn the railroad's property, including 39 buildings and 1,200 freight cars.

In Chicago, militants called a general strike, which was prevented only by the threat of bloody state repression. One of the strike leaders there was Albert Parsons, a former Confederate soldier who had become a staunch Republican during Reconstruction in Texas. After being driven out of the South by racists as a so-called "scalawag," he joined the socialist movement here in Chicago. In 1886, Parsons was a leader of the Haymarket strike which fought for an eight-hour day. He was framed up by the police and hanged for his role in that strike, which is commemorated by May Day, the international labor holiday.

In St. Louis, the strikers' executive committee, led by members of the Workingmen's Party of the United States (WPUS—American section of Marx's First International), essentially ran the city and established what was called the "St. Louis Commune." As Philip S. Foner wrote in his book *The Great Labor Uprising of 1877* (1977):

"The executive committee ruled the city. Nearly all the manufacturing establishments in St. Louis had been closed. Sixty factories were shut down.... Such economic activities as continued did so only with the permission of the executive committee."

Only the threat of state repression ended the St. Louis general strike.

By August, the rail strike had been crushed, largely without any economic gains. But it was apparent that the U.S. was no longer the same. The rail strike gave birth to the modern American labor movement. It was the first major strike to face the use of government troops and the first to see the major use of strike-breaking court injunctions. It illuminated the class nature of the state—what Marx and Engels called the "committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie"—as an armed force which safeguarded the property, profits and class rule of the bourgeoisie. The armories today present in most major cities are a result of this strike—or more precisely, of the bourgeoisie's fear generated by this strike.

Racism: Poison to Class Struggle

Above all, the strike signified that the American working class had entered the scene as a force in itself. Especially since it came only six years after the Paris Commune, the capitalist class saw in the rail strike the spectre of "Red Revolution" coming to America. The American prole-

tariat had not become what Marx called a "class for itself"—consciously struggling for its own class rule—but it had achieved some sort of critical mass. In a letter to Friedrich Engels in London during the strike, Marx stated:

"This, the first outbreak against the associated capital oligarchy that has arisen since the Civil War, will, of course, be suppressed, but may well provide a point of departure for the constitution of a serious workers' party in the United States. There are two favourable circumstances on top of that. The policy of the new President will turn the negroes, just as the big expropriations of land (exactly of the fertile land) for the benefit of the Railway, Mining, etc., companies will turn the peasants of the West—whose grumblings is already plainly audible—into militant allies of the workers."

Engels replied with a letter expressing his "delight" at the level of struggle attained by the American working class: "The way they throw themselves into the movement has no equivalent on this side of the ocean."

The first Marxist party in the U.S.—what later became the Socialist Labor Party (SLP) led by Daniel De Leon—did develop out of the intervention of the Workingmen's Party into the strike. But the SLP remained essentially a small propaganda group. A "serious workers' party" was not founded in the U.S., either then or since. There are a number of reasons why the American working class has

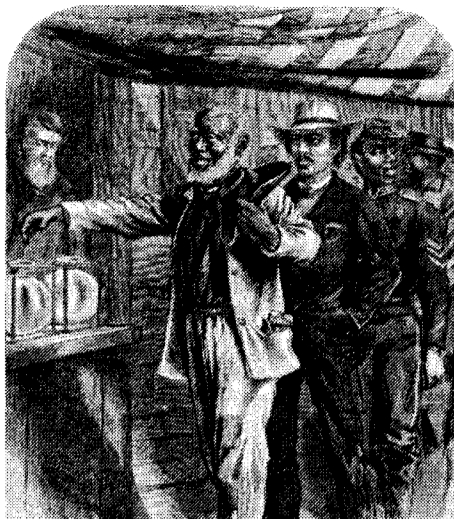


Leslie's Illustrated Weekly

Haymarket martyrs framed up and hanged in Chicago, 1887, for leading struggle for eight-hour day.

never achieved even a rudimentary level of political consciousness, including the availability of land and large-scale immigration. But the main reason lies in the defeat of Reconstruction and the way in which the American capitalists, abetted by the trade-union tops, have succeeded in using racist poison to divide the working class.

The militant alliance projected by Marx never happened, largely because the labor leaders—including the "Marxists"—did not attempt to find a bridge to the freedmen. This is clear in the case of William Sylvis, leader of the National Labor Union (NLU), which was founded in 1866 as one of the first national union federations in the U.S. and was affiliated



Harper's Weekly

Blacks won right to vote under Reconstruction, were elected to state and national office.

with the First International for a while. As Michael Goldfield put it in his recent book, *The Color of Politics* (1997):

"Though Sylvis was among the white leaders who spoke in favor of admission of Blacks to labor unions and supported equal pay for equal work, he was especially obtuse about the importance of the struggles of southern freedmen. He never indicated any sympathy for their demands in the South for land, education, and the vote. He denounced the Freedmen's Bureau as 'a huge swindle' and called for its closing."

In 1869, the National Colored Labor Union (NCLU) was formed and its leaders sought joint work with the NLU. But the issue of Reconstruction kept the two apart. While blacks supported the Republican Party, white labor leaders and immigrant workers supported the Democrats. In 1863, Irish workers in New York City had staged draft riots against the Civil War and carried out a pogrom against blacks. Yet Irish immigrants were themselves despised by the predominantly Protestant bourgeoisie and were later targeted by the virulently anti-Catholic KKK.

At the time of the 1877 rail strike, there were not many blacks in the industrial working class, which was centered in the Midwest and Northeast and composed largely of immigrant workers. Instead, most blacks lived in the South and worked in agriculture, usually as either sharecroppers or tenant farmers. In St. Louis, where the strike was strongest and the WPUS largely controlled the leadership, the strike leaders at first welcomed the participation of blacks. But as the strike continued and the media attacked the strikers as combatting not only economic but racial inequality, the Workingmen's Party eschewed black participation. One WPUS leader recalled that black workers, whom he disgustingly called "n-----s," "sent word that they wanted to join our party. We replied that we wanted nothing to do with them." In order to discourage black participation, the WPUS even stopped calling strike rallies.

While avowed Marxists and other veterans of the Revolutions of 1848 in Europe played a prominent role in the Civil War and the fight against slavery, racist hostility to blacks figured heavily in the early American socialist movement. For example, several leaders of the Socialist Party in the early 1900s were viciously racist. The American Federation of Labor (AFL) founded by Samuel Gompers pushed lily-white craft unionism. Even Socialist leader Eugene Debs, a railway union leader who was one of the best of the early American socialists on the black question, argued: "We have nothing special to offer the Negro, and we cannot make separate appeals to all the races." The prominent exception to this outlook was the syndicalist Industrial Workers of the World, which fought for integrated labor struggle and opposed anti-Chinese racism. But it was not until the young Communist Party examined the black question in the early 1920s, at Russian Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin's urging, that American Marxists actively took up the fight for black liberation as

part of the fight for communism.

Until the substantial entry of blacks into the industrial workforce during World War I, anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic racism were the chief weapons of the capitalist rulers in dividing and holding back the working class. In the 1870s, almost all labor leaders—including the NLU and NCLU—pushed anti-Asian bigotry. The year 1877 also marked an increase in anti-Chinese and anti-Japanese racism on the West Coast, as strike support rallies in San Francisco degenerated into pogroms against Chinese immigrants, many of whom had helped build the railroads. This was followed by the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. AFL leader Gompers and the right wing of the Socialist Party were also virulent opponents of Chinese immigration. Today as well, the pro-capitalist union bureaucrats, with their anti-immigrant racism together with appeals for protectionist measures against workers in Japan, Mexico and elsewhere, exude poisonous chauvinism. Meanwhile, petty-bourgeois black nationalist demagogues like Louis Farrakhan spew vile racist diatribes against Korean and Arab shopkeepers, Jews and others. We oppose chauvinist protectionism and call for full citizenship rights for all immigrants. Labor's fight is international—workers of the world unite!

For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

The legacy of the betrayal of Reconstruction is that blacks in the U.S. constitute a *specialty oppressed race-color caste*, segregated at the bottom of this society. At the same time, unlike the Reconstruction era, blacks are today overwhelmingly part of the proletariat. During World War I, blacks began to move to Northern and Midwestern cities and became industrial workers. Today, even the South is increasingly urban and industrialized, a factor which contributed to the development of the civil rights movement of the 1950s which led to the end of formal Jim Crow segregation. Black workers are not only integrated into the American economy but form a strategic component of the multiracial proletariat, especially in key sectors like auto and transit. So that the question is posed even more starkly: union rights and black rights will either advance together or fall back separately.

The combination of economic militancy and political backwardness has been characteristic of the American working class since 1877. The history of the American workers movement is one of the bloodiest in the world. Yet the U.S. remains the only industrialized country in the world where the workers have not had their own independent political party reflecting in some way the conflicting interests of labor and capital. The chief obstacle to the development of such consciousness is the trade-union bureaucracy, which chains the working class to the Democratic Party. We fight to forge a revolutionary workers party which champions the cause of all the oppressed, modeled on the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky which led the workers of Russia to state power in October 1917. *Break with the Democrats—For a workers party that fights for socialist revolution!*

Key to the fight for socialist revolution is the understanding that black oppression is the cornerstone of American capitalism. The American bourgeoisie has very consciously used racism and racial oppression to divide the working class and to derail militancy. The struggle for black equality is a driving force in the fight against racist American capitalism. But complete social and political equality can only be realized in an egalitarian socialist society in which those who labor rule. Achieving that goal requires the building of a revolutionary vanguard party which can lead the multiracial working class in a third American Revolution, a proletarian revolution. *For black liberation through socialist revolution!* ■

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Philippines...

(continued from page 5)

Shortly before the ouster of Marcos, the Sisonites' "National Democratic Front" demanded: "Unite all anti-imperialist forces to overthrow the US-Marcos dictatorship and work for the establishment of a coalition government based on a truly democratic system of representation." The CPP's class collaborationism was also reflected in conciliation toward the church, serving to reinforce the reactionary social values of the bourgeoisie. Before the recent elections, the Sisonite-controlled KMU union federation invited Estrada and other bourgeois presidential wannabes to a May Day demonstration in downtown Manila. While most did not show up, the Sisonites provided a platform for a candidate connected to the sinister Catholic rightist Opus Dei organization.

Lenin on the State and Revolution

Particularly under the impact of capitalist counterrevolution in the USSR and imperialist triumphalism over the "death of communism," the CPP's congenital opportunism has led to an escalating proliferation of cliquish splits. One such, the SANLAKAS breakaway headed by Filemon Lagman, openly joined an Estrada rally at Manila's Rizal Park to cheer for Lagman's brother Edcel, who was running for senator on the Estrada ticket. Another, the Proletarian Revolutionary Movement (PRK), emerged as a "left" split from the CPP in the early 1990s. The PRK claims to be the authentic "Marxist-Leninist" organization in the Philippines and polemicizes against the multiple strains of reformism and "two-stage revolution" peddled by the Sisonites. But while correctly placing Estrada in the camp of the class enemy, the PRK nonetheless urged that his capitalist regime be "pressured" to carry out its promises to the impoverished masses.

Thus do these "Marxist-Leninists" reject the Leninist understanding of the state. The bourgeois state is not a "neutral" agency which can be pressured to act in the interests of the masses. Rather, as Lenin stressed in *The State and Revolution*, "the state is an organ of class rule," consisting at its core of armed bodies of men—the military, the police, the prison system. The capitalist state is an *instrument of repression* against workers and the oppressed which must be smashed through socialist revolution and replaced by a *workers state*. The PRK's revisionist view of the state is reflected as well in its characterization of China, Vietnam, North Korea and Cuba as "state capitalist" regimes. The PRK's refusal to militarily defend these states and its cheering for the "democratic" counter-revolutions which destroyed the Soviet Union and the East European deformed workers states represent a capitulation to "democratic" imperialism and the Philippines' own anti-Communist bour-

Philippine Airlines Strike Knifed

Marking a bitter defeat for the country's combative labor movement, in early October the Philippine Airlines Employees Association (PALEA) returned to work under vicious union-busting terms. This ended a strike which had crippled Asia's oldest airline and one of the country's top corporations for months. Under intense pressure from the government of "Erap" Estrada, the union accepted a deal which its members had rejected only three weeks earlier, signing away the right to strike and all collective bargaining rights for *the next ten years*. Billionaire Philippine Airlines (PAL) owner and Estrada backer Lucio Tan has already threatened mass layoffs. As payoff for pushing through this deal, PALEA president Alex Barrientos expects to get one of the seats being given to the union on the PAL board of directors. The union also gets 20 percent ownership of the airline, thus directly subordinating the interests of PAL workers to company profitability.

The strike was the first major test of the Estrada regime's resolve in imposing crushing austerity on the working masses on behalf of the imperialists and the International Monetary Fund. Beginning with a walkout by the pilots union in June, the strike spread the next month to the 8,000-strong PALEA ground crew union just as the new government took office. Week after week, the strikers tenaciously held out against

Tan's threats of mass firings and red-baiting tirades by Estrada and the bourgeois media against union militants. But strike militancy alone was not enough to defeat PAL and its protectors in the state apparatus. What directly paved the way for the defeat of the strike was the class collaborationism of the PALEA tops, who looked to Estrada as an ally against Tan. When Tan shut down the airline on September 23 after the strikers rejected his terms, the PALEA tops appealed directly to Estrada. As the *Far Eastern Economic Review* (8 October) reported:

"His three-month-old government, they were certain, wouldn't dare let the national flag-carrier close. That would disrupt air travel throughout the archipelago. But Estrada had other ideas. Just four days after PAL's closure, Cathay Pacific Airways agreed to take over PAL flights from Manila to the major cities of Cebu and Davao. Union leaders promptly asked Estrada to intercede; they would accept Tan's ultimatum after all."

Betrayed by their leadership, workers voted for the deal on October 2, but not without militant opposition. In a confrontation between Barrientos and enraged PALEA militants who took over the union hall, a member of Barrientos' bodyguard drew his pistol on union members. Barrientos had long tried to keep PALEA members from walking off the job in support of the pilots. Several PALEA officials opposed the sellout. But they also look to the

Estrada regime, vowing to challenge the agreement in the courts, which far from being "neutral" are a key component of the brutally repressive capitalist state.

Among those opposing the agreement was Filemon "Popoy" Lagman, leader of the leftist SANLAKAS group, who was one of the targets of the red-baiting campaign. But Lagman also helped sow illusions in Estrada among workers, joining an Estrada election rally. And when the Lagmanites' Konsume coalition, which included striking PALEA members, staged a demonstration during Estrada's "State of the Nation" address, a spokesman explained: "What we are looking for is an ally inside Malacañang [the presidential palace]. What we are asking is that the President give meaning to his slogan, Erap para sa Mahirap [Erap for the poor]" (*Philippines Inquirer*, 24 July).

What unites the union bureaucrats and "leftists" like Lagman is their nationalist embrace of their "own" exploiters, who are seen as allies against the imperialist overlords. But the "national bourgeoisie" in such countries of belated development is tied by a million strings to the imperialists. Key to the mobilization of the proletariat at the head of all the impoverished and oppressed is first and foremost the political independence of the working class from all wings of the Philippine bourgeoisie and its state.

geoisie. Indeed, the Philippines is key to the U.S. drive against the Chinese deformed workers state.

In the "Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program" (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 54, Spring 1998) adopted at the Third International Conference of the ICL earlier this year, we assert:

"The proletariat must give unconditional military defense against imperialism to the deformed workers states in China, Vietnam, North Korea and Cuba. Our position flows from the proletarian class character of these states, embodied in the collectivized property relations—nationalized property, planned economy, monopoly of foreign trade and banking, etc.—established by social revolutions that destroyed capitalism. Despite the bureaucratic deformations of these states, our defense of them against the class enemy is unconditional, i.e., it does not depend on the prior overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracies, nor does it depend upon the circumstances and immediate causes of the conflict."

For a Leninist-Trotskyist Party!

Yet another organization, Liga Sosyalista (LS), recently emerged around a split from the Lagmanite student group and the newspaper *Progresibo*. The LS

bolted the Lagmanite organization in July after spending months as an opposition to "Stalinist and sectarian policies" and "the continuing drift of its politics...toward the right" (*Progresibo*, July/August 1998). Describing itself as a "pre-party formation of the working class," LS argues for "an open socialist formation" to "regroup the growing number of socialists and politically conscious individuals from the mass movement." It attacks Lagman as a Stalinist and even cites Trotsky favorably. Yet LS remains buried in the liberal coalition AKBAYAN, a motley assortment of disillusioned ex-Stalinists, left nationalists and "Christian socialists" which calls for vague "pro-people social and economic reforms." And the same issue of *Progresibo* features a front-page headline reading, "Progressives Close Ranks: Extend the Gains of the Elections!" What is this if not a programmatic commitment to chaining the working class to the cart of the bourgeoisie?

Indeed, Sonny Melencio, now leader of LS, openly defended class collaboration in a January 1997 speech to a conference of the Australian Democratic Socialist Party (DSP). The DSP itself is a thoroughly reformist outfit which includes in its leadership the likes of Max Lane, who served in the Australian embassy in Indonesia under Labor Party rule. Formerly linked up with Jack Barnes' U.S. Socialist Workers Party, the DSP reformists joined with the Barnesites in the 1980s in explicitly renouncing Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution, going on to act as press agents for "human rights" imperialism and for petty-bourgeois nationalists like the Indonesian PRD. In his speech to the DSP, Melencio raised the question of "whether or not to include the bourgeois liberal forces in a broad front, form an electoral bloc with them and support them in elections." He continued:

"Lenin's 'Left Wing' Communism—*An Infantile Disorder* argues precisely for such a tactic in order to advance the class struggle and for the party to carry out an alliance (including an electoral bloc) with the bourgeois liberals in order to defeat a more reactionary target, and in order to expose the bankruptcy of the liberal line to the masses."

This is a gross falsification of Lenin and Leninism in the service of bourgeois liberalism. Lenin argued against ultra-leftists who refused on principle to work in reformist-led trade unions or to stand *Communist* candidates in parliamentary elections. It was not Lenin's Bolsheviks but the Mensheviks who promoted political blocs with the liberal bourgeoisie—and Lenin opposed them down the line. When the Mensheviks consummated their political appetites by entering the bourgeois Provisional Government after the February Revolution of 1917, Lenin waged an indefatigable campaign of opposition and exposure against these class traitors, counterposing the fight for workers rule: "All power to the Soviets!" It was this uncompromising struggle against bourgeois coalitionism which directly prepared the victory of the October Revolution.

And it was the Stalinist embrace of Menshevik class collaboration which prepared defeat after bloody defeat for the international proletariat and led ultimately to the final undoing of the October Revolution. In the Philippines and throughout Southeast Asia, it is necessary to forge Leninist vanguard parties rooted in proletarian internationalism and armed with the Trotskyist program of permanent revolution. Socialist revolution in the backward countries would necessarily have to link up with the struggles of the working people in Indonesia, South Korea and elsewhere in the region—and would act as a powerful impetus for proletarian political revolution in China and for socialist revolution in Japan, Asia's economic powerhouse.

The millions of Filipino toilers who are to be found throughout Asia, the U.S. and elsewhere can serve as a living link uniting the workers of the semicolonial countries and the imperialist centers. In the U.S., the Spartacist League seeks to build a revolutionary workers party which champions the rights of blacks, women, immigrants and all the oppressed as part of the fight for proletarian revolution to smash racist American imperialism. The ICL fights to reforge the Fourth International of Leon Trotsky as the indispensable instrument for leading new October Revolutions around the world. ■

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Iraq...

(continued from page 1)

socialist revolution to end racial oppression, exploitation, war and imperialism."

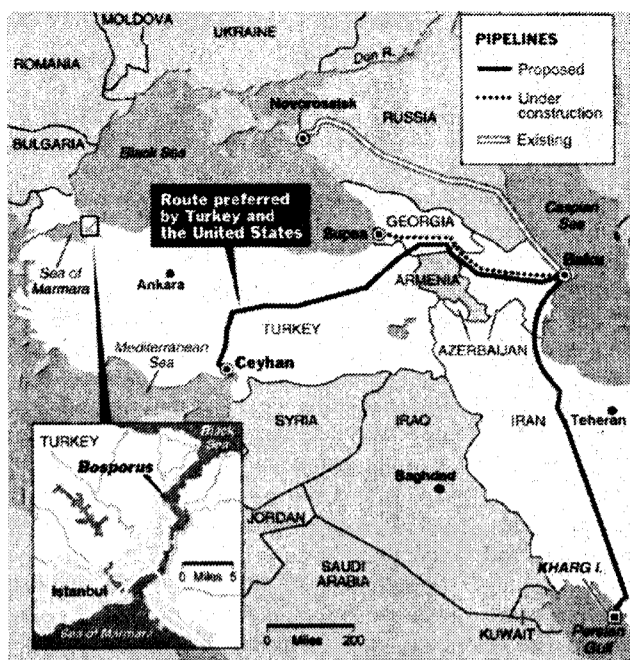
Interimperialist Rivalries in the Near East

During the Cold War, antagonisms among rival imperialists were held in check by their mutual hatred of the Soviet Union. With the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state and the deformed workers states of East Europe, competition among the major capitalist powers—the U.S., Germany and Japan—and their respective trade blocs came to the fore. The U.S. proclaimed a "one superpower" world, intent on using military blackmail to guard its position as the planet's pre-eminent power. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, barely a month has gone by when Washington has not either issued bellicose war threats or actually carried out invasions or terror bombing against defenseless peoples from Panama and Haiti to Somalia and the Sudan. By the U.S. Army's own account, its military operations have increased 300 percent since 1989 (*Los Angeles Times*, 11 November).

In its latest war moves against Iraq, the Clinton administration made a point of "going it alone," not even seeking the fig leaf of a UN Security Council resolution. Aside from Britain's Blair, who has taken on the role of Washington's voice within the European Union, the other major capitalist powers offered at best grudging support to a military strike. In his column in the *London Independent* (6 November), Robert Fisk pointedly asked, "How long will Europeans, let alone Arabs, go on accepting America's theatricals in the Middle East?" Germany and France in particular are already at loggerheads with the U.S. in the jockeying for influence in the Balkans, as a *New York Times* (10 November) article titled "Kosovo Crisis Strains Relations Between the U.S. and Europe" made clear. One German official complained that "the Americans prefer to cut us out."

The cruise missiles, jet fighters and aircraft carriers zeroing in on Iraq are ultimately aimed at securing U.S. imperialism's geopolitical interests in this strategic, oil-rich region. Washington is intent on asserting its dominance there as the imperialist powers scramble over the immense oil and gas reserves being opened up near and under the Caspian Sea. The American bourgeoisie wants to control these energy resources particularly because they are so vital to its competitors, especially Germany and Japan. The *New York Times* (8 November) noted: "Rivalries being played out here will have a decisive impact in shaping the post-Communist world, and in determining how much influence the United States will have over its development."

The immediate backdrop to the latest war buildup is a conflict over where to construct a pipeline which will carry oil from the Caspian region. The major oil conglomerates prefer a route through Iran—which is why many of them are lobbying for Washington to "normalize" relations with Teheran. Another route



New York Times map

would go through the former Soviet republics of Azerbaijan and Georgia, where Russia seeks to assert its imperial ambitions in what it calls the "near abroad." Both of these routes would deny Turkey billions in potential revenues. The Clinton administration is insisting on construction of a far more expensive pipeline to the Turkish port of Ceyhan.

Not the least of Washington's reasons is its interest in strengthening ties with Turkey, which has long served as a key



Action Press

Amid imperialist scramble over Caspian oil resources, U.S. demands new pipeline go through Turkey, which is waging war of terror (above) against Kurdish minority in eastern region.

the Palestinians is aimed at shoring up U.S. support among the Arab regimes. However, the chief import of the sham "Wye Accords" recently signed by Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestine Authority president Yasir Arafat is to openly affirm the CIA's role as arbiter and overseer of the anti-Palestinian "Pax Americana." The only road to emancipation for the Palestinian people lies in socialist revolution to explode the Zionist garrison state from within. Trotskyists seek to break the Hebrew-speaking proletariat from anti-Arab chauvinism and to win the Palestinian masses from the dead end of petty-bourgeois nationalism and religious fundamentalism. *U.S. out of the Near East! Israel out of the Occupied Territories!*

While hypocritically railing against Saddam Hussein's oppression of the Kurds in northern Iraq, both the U.S. and Germany have showered military aid on the Turkish bourgeoisie as it wages a murderous war against the Kurdish population and the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK). Last Thursday, only days after the Russian parliament voted to grant asylum to PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan, he was arrested in Rome and is threatened with deportation to Turkey, where he would face imprisonment, torture or death. The ICL demands that Ocalan be released immediately and calls for asylum for Kurdish and all other refugees from right-wing terror! At the same time, we oppose the PKK's petty-bourgeois nationalism. Enslaved by a number of capitalist regimes, the Kurdish people can only win national emancipation by joining with the workers of Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria in socialist revolution. *For a Socialist Republic of United Kurdistan!*

The capitalist regime of Saddam Hussein has many crimes to answer for, from its bloody repression of Communists and workers to its brutal subjugation of the Kurds and ethnic and religious minorities. It is the job of the Iraqi workers, standing at the head of the peasants and all the oppressed, to overthrow Saddam Hussein's dictatorial rule. *Down with all the colonels, sheiks, mullahs and Zionist butchers! For Trotskyist parties committed to the perspective of permanent revolution—Workers to power! For a socialist federation of the Near East!*

Reforge the Fourth International!

Washington's war moves in the Near East are carried out by the same racist ruling class that has ruthlessly driven down the living standards of working people in the U.S., that fiercely oppresses blacks, Hispanics, immigrants and others, that has condemned millions to homelessness and starvation through the axing of welfare. Last year's UPS strike and the recent GM strike testify to a revival of labor militancy and underline once again the fundamental irreconcilability of labor and capital. It is the multiracial U.S. proletariat which has the social power to sweep away this rapacious imperialist ruling class. To mobilize that social power requires breaking with the class collaborationism of the chauvinist AFL-CIO bureaucracy, which chains workers to the capitalist Democratic Party and embraces



Young Spartacus

SYC campus speakout in Los Angeles demands: "U.S. imperialism get your bloody hands off Iraq! Defeat U.S. imperialism through proletarian revolution!"

outpost for the U.S. military while being the object of massive German investment. Last year, the German-dominated European Union denied membership to Turkey amid a furor that this would invite an influx of Turkish and Kurdish immigrants into racist "Fortress Europe." Months later, the U.S. joined with Turkey and Israel in staging joint military maneuvers. Under Washington's patronage, Turkey has forged a Near Eastern axis with Zionist Israel, American imperialism's other main gendarme in the region, antagonizing the neighboring Arab regimes.

Clinton's increasingly impatient attempts to pressure Israel into granting some cosmetic territorial concessions to

the aims of the imperialist rulers.

Reformists like the International Socialist Organization (ISO) and the Workers World Party (WWP) promote the illusion that U.S. imperialism and Clinton's Democrats can be pressured into adopting a more "peaceful" policy. In a call supported by these groups for a New York City protest on November 17 against the U.S. war moves, there is not even a hint of the need for class struggle against the capitalist rulers. Indeed, WWP's chief public spokesman on the question of Iraq has long been Ramsey Clark, who served as attorney general in the Democratic administration of Lyndon Johnson when it was raining down napalm on the Vietnamese workers and peasants and waging a war of terror against black radicals in the U.S.

An ISO leaflet for the demonstration fatuously claims: "Thousands protested last February to stop the slaughter and we can stop it again." Today, with imperialist spokesmen around the world calling for an end to the UN embargo, the ISO and WWP push appeals to the U.S. government to "lift the sanctions" in their demonstration call. But during the Gulf War, the ISO dropped its formal opposition to the imperialist boycott in order to endorse a January 1991 "Campaign for Peace" march which explicitly called for economic sanctions as a supposedly "peaceful" alternative to war.

It is a cynical reformist fantasy to suggest that liberal "peace" marches can stay the hand of the most rapacious imperialist power on earth. As we concluded in our February statement:

"The International Communist League adheres to Lenin's injunction that revolutionaries 'will not deceive the people with admitting the idea that a peace without annexations, without oppression of nations, without plunder, and without the embryo of new wars among the present governments and ruling classes, is possible in the absence of a revolutionary movement' (*Socialism and War*, July-August 1915). We fight for socialist revolution in the U.S. and internationally as the only way to put an end to war and imperialist oppression. This requires building revolutionary working-class parties like Lenin's Bolsheviks, in the U.S. and around the world, and the re-forging of Trotsky's Fourth International of world socialist revolution." ■

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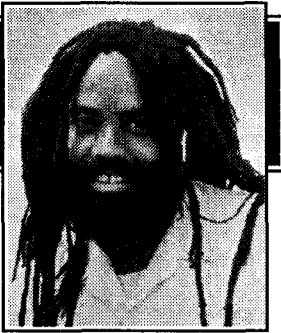
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From Death Row, This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal



A Quiet and Deadly Violence

"The deadliest form of violence is poverty."
—Gandhi

It has often been observed that America is a truly violent nation, as shown by the thousands of cases of social and communal violence that occur daily in the nation.

Every year, some 20,000 people are killed by others, and an additional 20,000 folks kill themselves. Add to this the nonlethal violence that Americans daily inflict on each other, and we begin to see the tracings of a nation immersed in a fever of violence.

But, as remarkable, and harrowing as this level and degree of violence is, it is, by far, not the most violent feature of living in the midst of the American empire.

We live, equally immersed, and to a deeper degree, in a nation that condones and ignores wide-ranging, "structural" violence, of a kind that destroys human life with a breath-taking ruthlessness. Former Massachusetts prison official and writer, Dr. James Gilligan observes:

"By 'structural violence' I mean the increased rates of death and disability suffered by those who occupy the bottom rungs of society, as contrasted by those who are above them. Those excess deaths (or at least a demonstrably large proportion of them) are a function of the class structure; and that structure is itself a product of society's collective human choices, concerning how to distribute the collective wealth of the society. These are not acts of God. I am contrasting 'structural' with 'behavioral violence' by which I mean the non-natural deaths and injuries that are caused by specific behavioral actions of individuals against individuals, such as the deaths we attribute to homicide, suicide, soldiers in warfare, capital punishment, and so on." [Gilligan, J., M.D., *Violence: Reflections On a National Epidemic* (New York: Vintage, 1996), 192.]

This form of violence, not covered by any of the majoritarian, corporate, ruling-class protected media, is invisible to us, and because of its invisibility, all the more insidious. How dangerous is it—really? Gilligan notes:

"[E]very fifteen years, on the average, as many people die because of relative poverty as would be killed in a nuclear war that caused 232 million deaths; and every

single year, two to three times as many people die from poverty throughout the world as were killed by the Nazi genocide of the Jews over a six-year period. This is, in effect, the equivalent of an ongoing, unending, in fact accelerating, thermonuclear war, or genocide on the weak and poor every year of every decade, throughout the world." [Gilligan, p. 196]

Worse still, in a thoroughly capitalist society, much of that violence became internalized, turned back on the Self, because, in a society based on the priority of wealth, those who own nothing are taught to loathe themselves, as if something is inherently wrong with themselves, instead of the social order that promotes this self-loathing. This intense self-hatred was often manifested in familial violence, as when the husband beats the wife, the wife smacks the son, and the kids fight each other.

This vicious, circular, and invisible violence, unacknowledged by the corporate media, uncriticized in substandard educational systems, and un-understood by the very folks who suffer in its grips, feeds on the spectacular and more common forms of violence that the system makes damn sure that we can recognize and must react to.

This fatal and systematic violence may be called, The War on the Poor.

It is found in every country, submerged beneath the sands of history, buried, yet ever-present, as omnipotent as death. In the struggles over the commons in Europe, when the peasants struggled and lost their battles for their communal lands (a precursor to similar struggles throughout Africa and the Americas), this violence was sanctified, by church and crown, as the "Divine Right of Kings" to the spoils of class battle. Scholars Frances Fox-Piven and Richard A. Cloward wrote, in *The New Class War* (Pantheon, 1982/1985):

"They did not lose because landowners were immune to burning and preaching and rioting. They lost because the usurpations of owners were regularly defended by the legal authority and the armed force of the state. It was the state that imposed increased taxes or enforced the payment of increased rents, and evicted or jailed those who could not pay the resulting debts. It

was the state that made lawful the appropriation by landowners of the forests, streams, and commons, and imposed terrifying penalties on those who persisted in claiming the old rights to these resources. It was the state that freed serfs or emancipated sharecroppers only to leave them landless." (52)

The "Law," then, was a tool of the powerful, to protect their interests, then, as now. It was a weapon against the poor and impoverished, then, as now.

It punished retail violence, while turning a blind eye to the wholesale violence daily done by their class masters.

The law was, and is, a tool of state power, utilized to protect the *status quo*, no matter how oppressive that status was, or is.

Systems are essentially ways of doing things that have concretized into tradition, and custom, without regard to the rightness of those ways. No system, that causes this kind of harm to people should be allowed to remain, based solely upon its time in existence. Systems must serve life, or be discarded as a threat and a danger to life.

Such systems must pass away, so that their great and terrible violence passes away with them.

19 September 1998

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The October 30 Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruling against Mumia Abu-Jamal places the life of this courageous, eloquent spokesman for the oppressed in immediate danger. All fighters against racist repression, all opponents of the barbaric death penalty must join the fight to free Mumia now! Mobilize your unions, your student and community groups. Contact the Partisan Defense Committee. In New York: PDC, P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013-0099; phone (212) 406-4252; e-mail: 75057.3201@compuserve.com. In Chicago: PDC, P.O. Box 802867, Chicago, IL 60680-2867; phone (312) 454-4931. In the Bay Area: PDC, P.O. Box 77462, San Francisco, CA 94107-0462; phone (510) 839-0852.

Urgently needed contributions for Mumia's defense, which are tax-deductible, should be made payable to "Mumia Abu-Jamal Legal Defense" and sent to the Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal, 163 Amsterdam Avenue, No. 115, New York, NY 10023-5001. If you wish to correspond with Jamal, you can write to: Mumia Abu-Jamal, AM8335, SCI Greene, 1040 E. Roy Furman Hwy., Waynesburg, PA 15370.

Jamal...

(continued from page 12)

Mumia's freedom and abolition of the racist death penalty.

Chicago is a labor and black town. It is the birthplace of the modern labor movement. Remember the Haymarket martyrs—executed for leading the fight for trade-union rights and the eight-hour day in 1886. Among these heroic working-class fighters was Albert Parsons, who also fought for labor to champion equal rights for black people. *We don't need more martyrs! We need Mumia back in the arms of his family and free to serve on the front lines of the struggle against this racist system of poverty, war and death.*

Chicago area unions have a proud history of joining efforts to defend black

rights against the union-hating lynchers of the Ku Klux Klan, from the June 1982 labor/black mobilization which spiked a Nazi provocation against Gay Pride Day to the January 1994 Springfield mobilization against a KKK race-hate rally on the birthday of Martin Luther King Jr. In 1987, the ATU and other unions joined forces to beat back the racist frame-up of black transit worker Cassandra Seay. Many of these same unions supported the successful fight waged by the PDC to defend the Anti-Klan Three, who faced imprisonment for their role in stopping a violent Klan attack in Daley Plaza in June 1996.

There must be no illusions that the capitalist state lacks either the power or the will to execute Mumia. There must be no illusions that Mumia can get a fair trial in the capitalist courts, despite massive evidence of his innocence in the December 1981 killing of a Philadelphia policeman. From the sham trial in 1982 to the rigged appeal hearings in 1995-96 to the latest ruling, Jamal's case itself has shown that this "justice" system is racist and anti-working-class to the core.

Neither must there be any illusions in the Democratic Party, which is no friend of labor and blacks but a party of big business no less than the Republicans. Clinton has condemned millions of women and children to starvation through the devastation of welfare. His White House has implemented a vast intensification of racist "law and order," including the "war on drugs" which has filled the prisons to overflowing and a massive expansion of the death penalty. For the social power of the working class to be unleashed, labor must be independent of the political parties and the state that represent the enemy class. That also means ridding the labor movement of cops and



WV Photo

Springfield, Illinois: Chicago unions joined in PDC-initiated labor/black mobilization against KKK provocation on Martin Luther King Day, January 1994.

opposing court intervention. The working class cannot effectively fight the racist frame-up of Jamal with cop-infested and government-controlled unions.

The Partisan Defense Committee is a non-sectarian, class-struggle legal and social defense organization which champions cases and causes in the interests of the whole of the working people. This purpose is in accordance with the views of the Marxist Spartacist League. We understand that the cops, courts and prison system which have persecuted and seek to kill Mumia are at the core of an apparatus of repression which protects the rule and profits of the employing class. The death penalty is at the pinnacle of this system of capitalist repression. And Mumia's case symbolizes what the death penalty is all about: it is legal lynching pure and simple, rooted in the Southern slave system smashed by the Civil War and in the oppression of the black masses

which has been the bedrock of American capitalism ever since.

We seek to bring together the broadest possible forces in labor-centered united-front actions—where all participants are free to express their own particular views—to free Mumia and abolish the racist death penalty. In taking up the fight for Mumia's freedom, the working class will be striking a blow against an entire system predicated on the brutal exploitation of labor and rooted in the racist oppression of the black population. The fight for black freedom is central to the emancipation of labor itself. Those who labor must rule!

Trade unions, civil rights organizations, students and youth, all opponents of racist injustice: Mobilize now to bring out your members for a mass, defiant protest at Federal Plaza on November 21! Free Mumia now! Abolish the racist death penalty! ■

A Spartacist Pamphlet \$1

Black History and the Class Struggle
No. 15

Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!
Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!

Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

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WORKERS VANGUARD

**All Out for Labor/Black Rally—
Chicago, November 21
12 Noon, Federal Plaza (Adams and Dearborn)**

Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!

We print below the call for the Chicago demonstration issued by the Partisan Defense Committee on November 5.

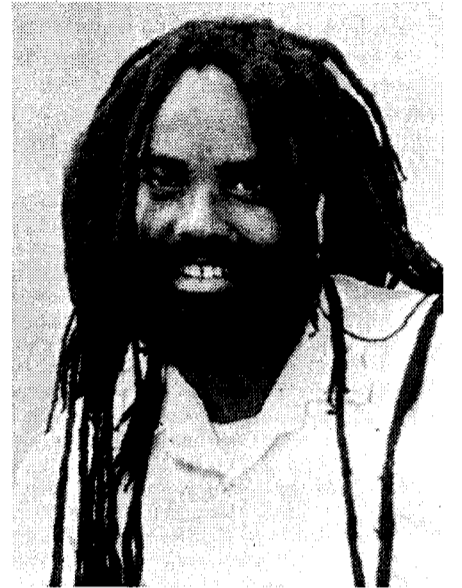
An innocent man, an award-winning writer, a lifetime fighter for the oppressed is in danger of execution. Any day now, Republican Pennsylvania governor Tom Ridge may sign a death warrant for Mumia Abu-Jamal. On

October 29, the state Supreme Court upheld the racist frame-up conviction that railroaded Mumia to death row more than 16 years ago. This is a fight for more than the life and freedom of one courageous man. They want to kill Mumia because of what he represents: defiance of this racist system which saps the lifeblood from the many mil-

lions to ensure fabulous profits for a wealthy few. *All of labor must mobilize now to demand: Free Mumia! Abolish the racist death penalty!*

Mumia, a MOVE supporter, has been in the cross hairs of the racist rulers from the time he was a 15-year-old spokesman for the Black Panther Party, which was targeted for destruction by the FBI's COINTELPRO terror operation against black revolutionaries. If they get away with killing Mumia, it will be a blow against all black people, all minorities, all working people—because the state will have strengthened its forces to move against all of us. It will embolden the cops in "Segregation City" to intensify their daily terror in the ghettos and barrios. *Black rights and union rights go forward together or fall back separately.*

Those who howl for Mumia's execution—from the Philadelphia Fraternal Order of Police and District Attorney's office to the governor on up—are the same forces which bust up picket lines, break strikes and seek to criminalize the very unions which were built to defend our jobs and livelihoods. The unions are the only racially integrated mass organizations in this country. The bosses and their state hate and fear the integrated union movement because

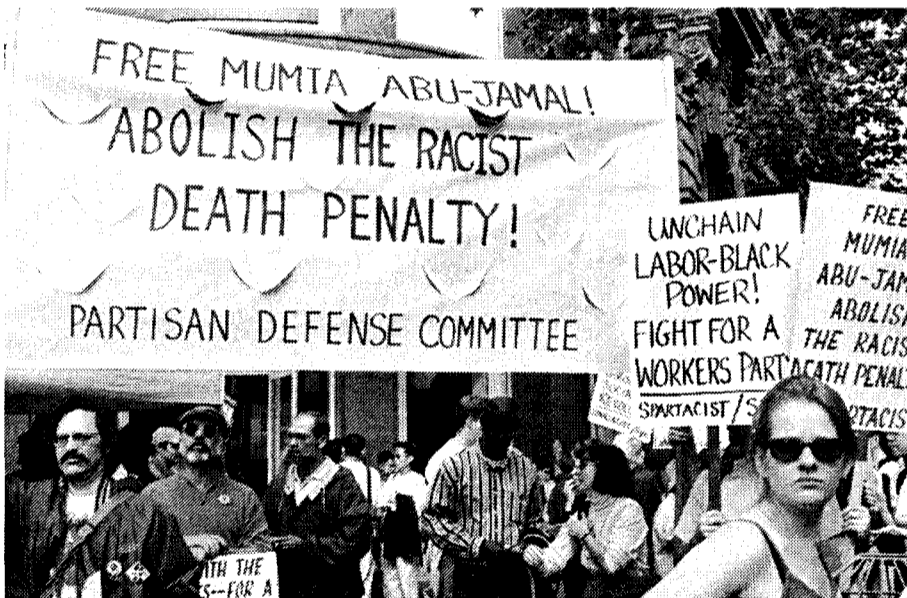


Jennifer Beach

there lies the power to challenge the racial divisions they promote to weaken the working class. And it is precisely the power of the integrated trade unions that must be mobilized to free Mumia. In mobilizing to defeat the frame-up of Jamal, the unions will take a huge step forward in becoming instruments of struggle to defend not only their own immediate interests but those of all the oppressed.

When Philadelphia transit workers went out on strike last summer, Mumia spoke out powerfully on their behalf from the dungeons of death row. Now all of labor must speak out and *act* on Mumia's behalf. Every union in the Chicago area should follow the example of Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 241, which has taken up the call by the Partisan Defense Committee to build for a powerful united-front labor/black mobilization to demand

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WV Photo

SL/PDC contingent at October 31 emergency demonstration in San Francisco. Multiracial labor movement is key to fight for Mumia's freedom.

"We endorse and will help build a mass labor/black demonstration in Chicago on November 21 to deliver the urgent message: All Out to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!"

Partial List of Endorsers as of 16 November 1998

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*Organizational affiliation for identification purposes only.

We want to make it very clear that these endorsers do not necessarily agree in any particular with the call by the Partisan Defense Committee printed above.