

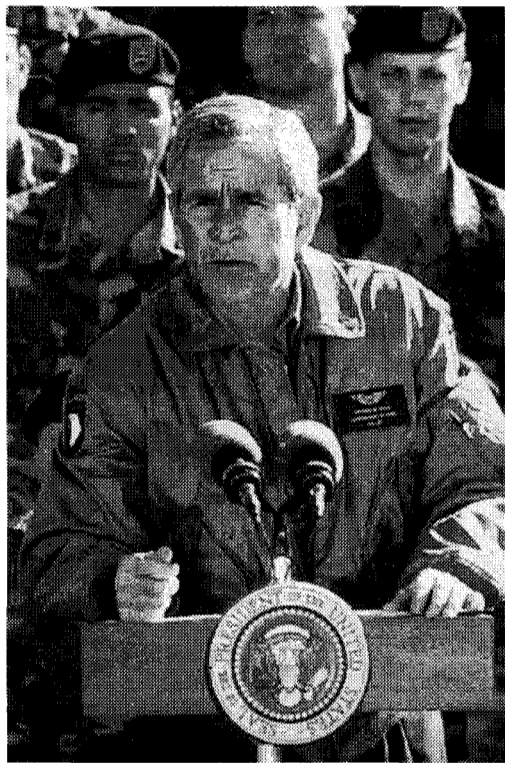
2002 Elections: Recession, Repression, War

Labor, Blacks Need a Workers Party!

Defend Iraq Against U.S. Imperialist Attack!

With the Republicans regaining control of the Senate and widening their narrow majority in the House of Representatives, the Bush administration now claims to have a popular mandate for its reactionary policies. Three days after the election, the U.S. secured a unanimous resolution in the United Nations Security Council giving it a UN fig leaf for the impending imperialist subjugation of Iraq. From bible-thumping bigots out to roll back women's rights to plutocrats unfazed by the financial scandals that have shaken the economy and out for still more gorging, the forces of reaction are clearly eager to push their agendas: permanent tax cuts for the rich, further slashing of social welfare programs and expanding the role of the religious right in government. The White House now sees a free hand to pack the judicial benches with anti-abortion bigots, white-supremacists and the like.

But the elections were hardly indicative of popular support for this right-wing agenda. In fact, the Republicans scored a narrow victory—with control of Congress hinging on barely 41,000



Janoski/Getty

votes—and only a small minority of the electorate even bothered to vote. Going into the elections, poll after poll indicated that overwhelming majorities of voters were primarily concerned not with “national security” but with economic security—their jobs, health benefits and pension funds and the threatened privatization and gutting of Social Security.



WV Photo

George Bush rallies troops for imperialist slaughter in Iraq while workers face mass layoffs and attacks on pensions and health care. September 25: NYC transit workers rally in lead-up to contract battle.

Even in the face of a government which has all but declared any dissent to be “terrorism,” over 200,000 came out to protest Bush's war plans against Iraq on October 26. But a central purpose of the organizers of these protests, the ANSWER coalition connected to the Workers World Party, was to provide a pre-election platform for a range of Democrats. This

purpose was captured by Jesse Jackson intoning, “Come alive on November 5!”

Following the elections, the Democratic Party is rife with recrimination. House minority leader Richard Gephardt stepped down and was replaced by the more liberal California Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi, who promptly voted for

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Government Threatens Roundup of Iraqi Americans

The *New York Times* (17 November) reported that the government has plans to round up and detain potentially thousands of Iraqi Americans or Iraqi nationals in the U.S., who are already being monitored under “national security” warrants coordinated by a range of spy agencies. The article stated, “In the event of an American invasion of Iraq, officials would intensify the program's mission through arrests and detentions of Iraqis or Iraqi sympathizers if they are

believed to be planning domestic terrorist operations.”

In the name of the “war on terror,” the government has already arrested or dragged off for “interrogation” thousands of people of Near Eastern descent. Well over a thousand people were detained last year without any criminal charges, denied access to lawyers or even to their families, and held behind bars for months on end. In mid November, nearly 150 airport workers, including a number of union members, were arrested in a sweep of New York City area airports by the Feds and local police. Mainly Hispanic immigrants working as cleaners for low-wage, non-union subcontractors, they were picked up for allegedly lying on their job applications. One cleaner was surrounded by

a half dozen federal agents, forced to his knees, handcuffed and then paraded around the airport like a prize trophy. A unionized black worker was arrested on minor drug charges dating back to his high school days nearly ten years ago.

Since the beginning of these sweeps, labeled “Operation Tarmac,” more than 900 airport workers around the country have been arrested or indicted, with many facing deportation. The roundup of the New York airport workers reportedly was the culmination of a nine-month investigation of 58,000 workers. Clearly the aim of these police dragnets is to intimidate and terrorize the entire workforce, victimize militants and keep a lid on labor struggle.

Now, according to the *Times*, the government is planning to throw Arabs in

the U.S. into concentration camps—and such plans didn't start with the war preparations against Iraq. As far back as the 1980s, the U.S. government has had “contingency plans” for herding Arab immigrants into detention camps in the event of U.S. military intervention in the Near East and North Africa. During the 1986 bombing of Libya, a camp in Louisiana had already been prepared for as many as 5,000 Arab detainees.

Plans for mass internment in times of “emergency” have a long history in this country. In 1942, as the U.S. waged war against Japan in the Pacific, Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066, which sent 120,000 Japanese Americans and immigrants to concentration camps. In the period before the roundups, all

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Hands Off Amer Jubran!

Several Palestinian activists are among those incarcerated as a result of the government's racist "anti-terror" witch-hunt. Well-known Palestinian community leader Farouk Abdel-Muhti was dragged from his New York City home in April by FBI and Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) agents and has been shuttled from one New Jersey jail to another ever since. If he is deported to Israel, Abdel-Muhti would almost surely face torture or worse at the hands of the Zionist state. Last week, his attorneys filed a *habeas corpus* petition demanding his immediate release, citing a Supreme Court decision limiting detention to six months in most deportation cases.

Earlier this month, Amer Jubran, cofounder of the New England Committee to Defend Palestine, was seized by the Feds and INS two days after leading a Boston march for Palestinian rights. On November 21, Jubran was released on bond, with the judge acknowledging the receipt of dozens of letters in his defense. However, Jubran still faces a February 20 court hearing on his deportation case. The Partisan Defense Committee calls on all fighters for democratic rights and the rights of immigrants, all opponents of the Zionist terror machine to demand: **Free Farouk Abdel-Muhti and all the detainees! Hands off Amer Jubran!**

We reprint below a 14 November letter in defense of Jubran sent by the PDC to the Boston-area INS director.

* * *

The Partisan Defense Committee denounces the 4 November INS/FBI arrest and seizure of Palestinian activist Amer Jubran. Mr. Jubran has been dragged off to the Adult Correctional Institution in Cranston, Rhode Island where, even though he is charged with no crime, he is threatened with indefinite detention.

The attack on Mr. Jubran comes in the context of a vicious nation-wide dragnet targeting immigrants or anyone of Arab or South Asian descent while the U.S. imperialist behemoth girds for war against impoverished Iraq. Under the aegis of reactionary legislation, hundreds languish in INS "detention" without even the pretense of due process or constitutional rights.

This outrage is clearly meant to chill any dissent—a frontal assault on all political activists who would defend the Palestinian people from escalating Zionist terror in the West Bank and Gaza as well as anyone fighting in defense of the working class, the poor and oppressed. **We demand the immediate release of Amer Jubran.** The PDC demands freedom for all the detainees.



TROTSKY

Bourgeois Elections and the Dictatorship of Capital

America's rulers trumpet this country's political system as a model of democracy for the whole world. But periodic elections under capitalism are a fig leaf for the class dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. In a 1919 lecture, V.I. Lenin, leader of the 1917 Russian October Revolution that established the first workers state in history, explained that even those capitalist states that were then upheld as among the freest and most



LENIN

democratic, such as the United States and Switzerland, are simply instruments for the brutal suppression of the working class.

Nowhere does capital rule so cynically and ruthlessly, and nowhere is it so clearly apparent, as in these countries, although they are democratic republics, no matter how prettily they are painted and notwithstanding all the talk about labour democracy and the equality of all citizens. The fact is that in Switzerland and the United States capital dominates, and every attempt of the workers to achieve the slightest real improvement in their condition is immediately met by civil war.... Nowhere is this suppression of the working-class movement accompanied by such ruthless severity as in Switzerland and the U.S.A., and nowhere does the influence of capital in parliament manifest itself as powerfully as in these countries. The power of capital is everything, the stock exchange is everything, while parliament and elections are marionettes, puppets....

Whatever guise a republic may assume, however democratic it may be, if it is a bourgeois republic, if it retains private ownership of the land and factories, and if private capital keeps the whole of society in wage-slavery, that is, if the republic does not carry out what is proclaimed in the Programme of our Party and in the Soviet Constitution, then this state is a machine for the suppression of some people by others.... We shall reject all the old prejudices about the state meaning universal equality—for that is a fraud: as long as there is exploitation there cannot be equality. The landowner cannot be the equal of the worker, or the hungry man the equal of the full man. This machine called the state, before which people bowed in superstitious awe, believing the old tales that it means popular rule, tales which the proletariat declares to be a bourgeois lie—this machine the proletariat will smash.

—V.I. Lenin, "The State" (July 1919)

WORKERS VANGUARD

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

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EDITOR, YOUNG SPARTACUS PAGES: Michael Davison

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

Workers Vanguard (ISSN 0276-0746) published biweekly, except skipping three alternate issues in June, July and August (beginning with the second issue in June) and with a 3-week interval in December, by the Spartacist Publishing Co., 299 Broadway, Suite 318, New York, NY 10007. Telephone: (212) 732-7862 (Editorial), (212) 732-7861 (Business). Address all correspondence to: Box 1377, GPO, New York, NY 10116. E-mail address: vanguard@tiac.net. Domestic subscriptions: \$10.00/22 issues. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Workers Vanguard*, Box 1377, GPO, New York, NY 10116.

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

The closing date for news in this issue is 26 November.

No. 792

29 November 2002

Mr. Jubran's detention follows the previous arrest of another Boston-area Palestinian activist, Jaoudat Abouazza, who has since been sent to Canada. These arrests, part of a nationwide pattern, are meant to criminalize any opposition to U.S. support for Israeli attacks on the besieged Palestinians. This repression will not go unopposed! Free Amer Jubran!

Letters demanding that all charges against Amer Jubran be dropped should be sent to: Steven J. Farquharson, USINS District Director, Room 1700, JFK Federal Building, Boston, MA 02203. Copies should be sent to: Commissioner James W. Ziglar, Immigration and Naturalization Service, 425 I Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20536. ■

Roundup...

(continued from page 1)

persons of Japanese descent who were not citizens were designated "enemy aliens." Their bank accounts were frozen, they were forbidden by law to become citizens and were forced to register and carry ID cards. This horrifying product of racist war hysteria destroyed thousands of lives.

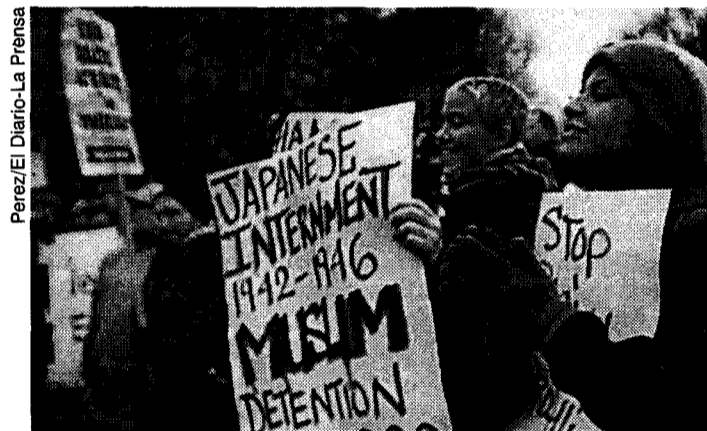
In the past, some elements of the bourgeoisie have bemoaned the WWII concentration camps as a "mistake" or aberration. But the Supreme Court has never overturned its endorsement of the World War II internments. And only a few years after the war, the 1950 McCarran Act mandated the registration and fingerprinting of Communist Party members and sympathizers, who were deemed "subversives." Tens of thousands of them were marked for internment in concentration camps in the event of a "national emergency."

The report of plans for detention of Iraqis and the roundup of NYC airport workers came amid almost daily pronouncements of new "anti-terror" legislation, executive orders, court rulings and arrests. The launch of the Department of Homeland Security marks a

new level in the state's ability to monitor the entire population's activities. Another government spying operation is the Total Information Awareness System. Headed by John Poindexter, who was convicted on five counts of lying to Congress in the Iran-Contra affair in the 1980s, this "Big Brother" operation would gather and centralize information on virtually anything you do, from applying for a passport to renting a car or buying an airline ticket. On November 18, the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court of Review, which meets in secrecy, overruled its own lower court and affirmed broad powers to spy on individuals, which include allowing break-ins and wiretapping with absolutely no evidence of criminal activity.

The new police-state measures that first target immigrants will be used against just about everyone perceived as an opponent by the capitalist rulers—from those who oppose U.S. imperialist wars abroad to those who speak out against racist oppression or fight to defend their unions and livelihoods. As the roundups of airport workers underline, it is necessary for the airline unions and the labor movement as a whole to mobilize in defense of immigrant workers and all those in the cross hairs of this capitalist government's "war on terror." ■

Sign at January demonstration in New York against roundups of immigrants recalls World War II internment of Japanese Americans.



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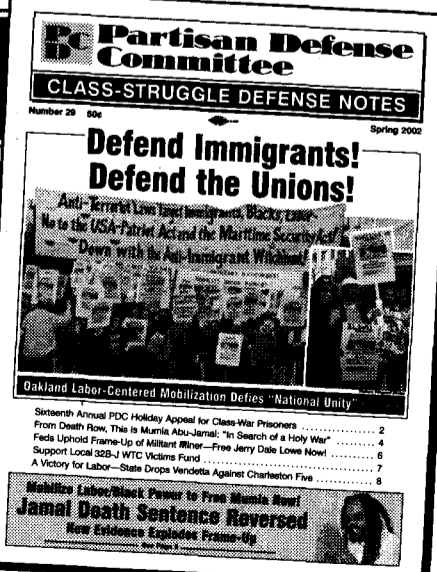
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Two Workers Killed on Tracks in Two Days

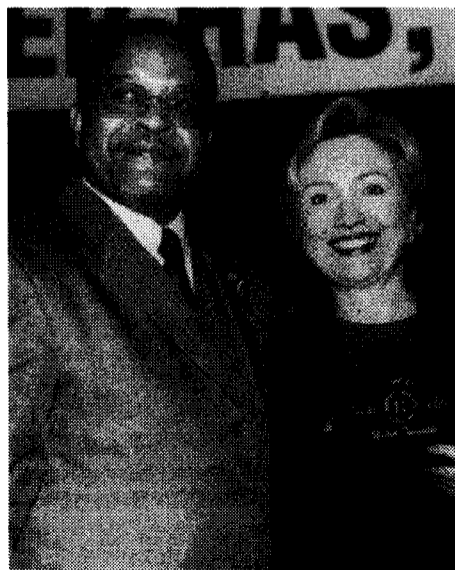
New York Transit Workers vs. Union-Busting Austerity

NEW YORK CITY—With a December 15 contract deadline fast approaching, the 34,000 members of Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100 who keep this city's subways and buses running are facing a major showdown with the political representatives of Wall Street. Threatening "very severe" penalties if the TWU votes for strike action, multi-billionaire mayor Michael Bloomberg and the city bosses want to gut the union, a powerhouse of New York's multiracial working class, as part of an effort to make working people pay for the city's huge budget deficit. The state Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) is intent on pushing through a wide array of attacks on health benefits and working conditions, while foisting a massive fare hike on riders.

The MTA's drive to cut costs is deadly. Two transit workers were killed on the job in as many days because of the transit bosses' contempt for the safety of the workforce. On November 21, signal maintainer Joy Antony, a 41-year-old father of two young children, was killed by an oncoming train because management did not provide a flagman to warn the driver that work was being done on the tracks. The next day, 57-year-old light maintainer Kurien Baby was dragged under a passing train at another station. Four workers have been killed on the job in two years and 21 since 1980.

New York City Transit is the only transit system in the state not subject to federal safety regulations. After the second recent accident, management stopped all non-emergency track work for 24 hours to review safety procedures. But unsafe procedures should be stopped *before* workers are killed or injured! Transit workers must fight for *elected union safety committees* with the power to *shut down any unsafe working conditions on the spot*.

What's needed is for transit workers to mobilize union power in defense of their interests and those of all of New York



Hendrickson/Local 100 Express

Roger Toussaint, TWU Local 100 president, embraces Democratic Senator Hillary Clinton at union meeting last year.

City's working people and the ghetto and barrio poor. Workers from one maintenance facility at a union rally in Midtown Manhattan on October 30 carried a banner reading, "Ready to Rumble." But as transit workers prepare for a confrontation with the capitalist class enemy, they



WV Photo

Transit workers rally outside NYC transit headquarters in Brooklyn, September 25.

Break with the Democrats— Mobilize Union Power!

are saddled with a union leadership that places its faith not in the power of a mobilized membership but in the false "friends" of the capitalist Democratic Party.

Thousands of transit workers have turned out for union rallies in Brooklyn and Manhattan this fall. The signs and banners carried by union members spoke to the issues facing the workforce. "No Health Care Cuts! Stop Abusive Discipline!" read one. "T.A. Labor Relations = Plantation Justice" declared another. With the Health Benefit Trust on the verge of bankruptcy, the MTA is now driving to drastically increase what transit workers pay for medical care. TWU Local 100 should fight for full health care coverage at no cost for all union members, including retirees, and their families. With health benefits increasingly under attack by employers across the country—and with at least 42 million people having no health coverage at all—the labor movement must take the lead in fighting for *free, quality health care for all!*

In the year 2000 alone, more than 16,000 disciplinary notices were dished out to transit workers. Now the MTA is out to undermine seniority rights by cutting the number of "job picks," which allow workers to choose their shifts and work locations. This is a step toward eliminating this hard-won union gain entirely. An array of other proposed MTA measures target working conditions and safety regulations, from speedup and "broadbanding," which would broaden job descriptions to force workers to do jobs they're not trained for, to reduction of "release time"—time allotted during working hours for elected union representatives to defend their members. This is a recipe for more death on the tracks.

The MTA's "plantation justice" and the ranks' determination to defend their union rights were both on display at the East New York transit facility in Brooklyn a few months ago. Union stewards and other workers there told *Workers Vanguard* that a black worker was threatened with firing for defending himself against a foreman who physically attacked and hurled racist slurs at him. After a cam-

paign in which over a hundred of his co-workers organized in his defense, the company backed down.

The attacks on transit workers' health benefits and working conditions go hand in hand with plans to increase the subway fare by up to 33 percent. Riding on a huge budget surplus during the 1990s boom, the city administration kept wage increases for city workers to a bare minimum while allowing rents to skyrocket. Meanwhile, schools and hospitals were left to deteriorate and the homeless to freeze and starve in the streets. Now, in the midst of an economic downturn and a huge budget deficit, they intend to take it out of the hides of the workers, slashing services and wages even further. A union sign at the October 30 TWU rally declared: "No Fare Hike on the Backs of the Public and T.A. Workers." A fight to defend the union, linked with the call for free public transit, would win enormous support, not least among the city's poor and minority populations.

Democrats: Enemies of Labor

The union rallies should have been used for mobilizing union power against the capitalists' attacks. Instead the Local 100 leadership under President Roger Toussaint turned them into election rallies for capitalist politicians, as the speaker's platform was given over to Democrats looking for votes. Certainly, with a particularly vicious Republican administration in Washington that flaunts its ties to big business and openly revels in inflicting pain and suffering on working people, many workers buy into the lie that the Democratic Party is a "lesser evil." But it is precisely their image as "friends" of labor and minorities that allows the Democrats to more easily get away with attacks just as vicious as those carried out by the Republicans—witness the Clinton years, with the axing of welfare and the massive growth in inequality between a handful of rich and almost everybody else. When it comes to the fundamental interests of the capitalist class—against labor at home and the perceived enemies of U.S. imperialism

abroad—the Democratic Party is at one with the Republicans.

Tying the unions to the Democratic Party is an *obstacle* to labor struggle. It was Democratic state attorney general Eliot Spitzer, not just Republican mayor Giuliani, who brought the full force of the capitalist state down on Local 100 during the contract battle three years ago, invoking the strikebreaking Taylor Law, threatening to arrest transit workers who even uttered the word "strike" and surrounding union headquarters with an army of cops. And then-candidate for Senate Hillary Clinton endorsed this draconian assault on the union, calling the Taylor Law a "wise law" because "public employees should not legally be allowed to strike." Two years later, Toussaint invited Clinton to be the featured speaker at a mass union meeting, where she drummed up support for the "war on terror" and the U.S. bombing of Afghanistan.

The bipartisan "war on terror" has meant a racist witchhunt against Arabs and Muslims and a wholesale assault on immigrant rights and the civil liberties of the population as a whole. Its ultimate target is the labor movement, the real "enemy within" in the eyes of the American bourgeoisie. As the U.S. imperialists gear up for war against Iraq, they will further escalate their war on the unions in order to ensure class peace at home. This has already been underscored by the anti-union Taft-Hartley injunction leveled against the International Longshore and Warehouse Union.

The bosses have already wheeled out their anti-union propaganda machine against the TWU. Attacking Toussaint as a "radical," the *New York Post* railed against the possibility of a strike in a rabid editorial titled "Communist Underground" the day of the October 30 rally. And on the ground, a horde of cops prevented transit workers from marching to Governor Pataki's Midtown offices. Yet the Local 100 leadership had invited the head of the police "union," Patrick Lynch, to speak at the earlier TWU rally in Brooklyn. Cops are the paid strikebreakers of the capitalists; they have no place in the labor movement!

The TWU bureaucracy itself has fallen in line behind the "war on terror." As the *New York Times* (17 November) reported, the Local 100 tops have complained about subcontractors who do not undergo background checks yet have access to the subway system's power and communications facilities. John Samuelsen, a Local 100 official, ranted that the typical subcontractor "picks up a truckload of day laborers.... We don't know if they have a criminal background or anything about them." Rather than denouncing these non-union and largely immigrant workers, the TWU should be fighting to organize them into the union at full union wages and benefits. The TWU should also be organizing the "workfare" laborers forced to take on transit jobs to get their meager welfare payments. The labor movement must take up the fight for citizenship rights for all immigrants.

Union Tops Threaten to Split TWU

Criminally, in the face of a ruling-class offensive, Toussaint's opponents in the union bureaucracy, TWU International president Sonny Hall and his cohorts in

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Young Spartacus

"War on Terror" on Campus

Defend Pro-Palestinian Protesters!

On campuses across the country, a sinister cabal ranging from the nefarious Anti-Defamation League (ADL) to racist demagogue David Horowitz to campus administrators and higher offices of the state is targeting any student who would speak out in defense of the Palestinians. Last spring, the UC Berkeley administration banned the Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) after an April 9 Wheeler Hall demonstration calling for the university to divest its holdings in Israel. This fall, Harvard's Lawrence Summers condemned divestment proposals as "anti-Semitic in their effect, if not their intent" and accused unnamed student groups of having links with "terrorist" organizations.

Around the same time, the Zionist think tank Middle East Forum set up the Campus Watch Web site in an attempt to blacklist pro-Palestinian academics, whom it labels "apologists to terrorism." An ad published on November 4 in the student newspaper of Rutgers University, the *Daily Targum*, pictures a man with a machine gun captioned "Palestinian school children's hero," imputing that any Palestinian sympathizer is necessarily a supporter of terrorism.

This witchhunt is hardly confined to college campuses. Last week, a young woman Brooklyn high school student of Palestinian descent wearing a "Free Palestine" T-shirt and Palestinian flag pin to school was grabbed and frisked by security guards. She was forced to remove pro-Palestinian stickers from her notebook and summarily warned by a dean that the only flag she could "represent at school was the American flag" (*New York Daily News*, 21 November).

The charge of "anti-Semitism" has become the standard smear against those who would defend the right of the Palestinians to exist. More than 300 college and university presidents pledged in an American Jewish Committee ad in the *New York Times* (7 October) that "all instances" of supposed intimidation against Jewish and Zionist students "will be investigated and acted upon." This ad and the "anti-Semitism" smear willfully conflate actual anti-Semitic attacks, such as the defacing of synagogues, with political protest against the Zionist military garrison state. As New York University professor Khaled Fahmy noted, "This narrowing tolerance is sad and dangerous as it leaves real anti-Semitism and real moral bankruptcy unchallenged" (*Washington Square News*, 20 November).

Branding defenders of the Palestinians as "anti-Semitic" and "terrorists," the Zionists tried everything to shut down the Second National Conference on the Palestinian Solidarity Movement at the Uni-

versity of Michigan at Ann Arbor in mid-October. They filed a lawsuit that claimed the conference represented a threat to the physical safety of Jewish students. In a classic frame-up operation, an anti-Semitic e-mail message was made to appear to originate from a pro-Palestinian student group helping to organize the

conference. (This was exposed as a fraud by the administration itself.) When all else failed, more than a thousand Zionists from as far away as the East Coast besieged the conference and demonstrated outside it chanting "Shame for supporting the killing of university students" and carrying signs reading "This Is an Anti-Semitic Hate Conference."



Bay Area Spartacus Youth Club at September 30 protest outside UC Berkeley administration trial of pro-Palestinian activists.

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Witchhunts and Repression

The effort by Zionist ideologues to smear pro-Palestinian protest as "anti-Semitic" reached the highest levels of state government in California last July, when Democratic governor Gray Davis, citing the ADL, called on the University of California and California State University systems to crack down on what he called anti-Semitic "violence, harassment, and abuse" (*UCLA Daily Bruin*, 30 July). Davis outrageously and falsely condemned entire demonstrations as anti-Semitic, including the April SJP demo at UC Berkeley and protests at San Francisco State University (SFSU).

At SFSU last May, a pro-Zionist demonstration was met by a pro-Palestinian counter-protest, a confrontation which be-

came heated on both sides. Following the rally, university president Robert Corrigan seized on false allegations that the General Union of Palestine Students (GUPS) is riot-prone and anti-Semitic in order to summarily impose sanctions on the group, including probation, termination of funding and the loss of its Web site. The

ADL advised Corrigan in the witchhunt of GUPS. These well-connected Zionists have a long and sordid history at SFSU. In the early 1990s, when the ADL was exposed as spies for some of the deadliest regimes on the planet—from apartheid South Africa to Latin American death squad dictatorships—more than a dozen SFSU student groups were found on their computer hit list. In a September meeting with GUPS, Corrigan responded to a GUPS request to lift the sanctions against it with the outrageous comment: "Why, so you guys can start throwing bombs in January?" (*Golden Gate [X]press*, 17 October). This vile and inflammatory comment can only be a prelude to aggressive government repression or worse, especially given FBI efforts to use student records to go after Near Eastern students as supposed "terrorists." SFSU was among the first to hand over such records to the FBI, an action that was opposed by an SYC-initiated united-front protest demanding "Down with SFSU collaboration with the FBI anti-immigrant witchhunt!" SFSU administration hands off GUPS!

Across the bay at UC Berkeley, the administration is single-mindedly determined to find some way to punish 32 protesters arrested during the April SJP demonstration and sit-in, despite the official unequivocal "factual finding of innocence" issued when criminal charges were dropped by the Alameda County District Attorney's Office last June. The administration has charged 31 students with violating the Student Code of Conduct and threatens them with suspension. One student, Roberto Hernandez, faces an additional trumped-up charge of physical assault and has had his degree withheld, preventing him from attending his docto-

ral program and endangering his financial aid package. This prosecution comes after the university banned SJP as a campus organization (though the university later backed down from the ban in the face of opposition). As Hernandez' lawyer, Anne Weills, told a *Young Spartacus* reporter, "The attack on these students is such that it is chilling dissent."

The administration's prosecution of the Wheeler 32 has been a kangaroo court from the beginning. The 32 were denied their request for a group hearing, the hearings were closed to the public (though two months after the initial hearing the university finally agreed to open hearings), and the proceedings were moved from the central campus to a more remote location. Meanwhile, much of the scant evidence the university has come up with is itself inadmissible according to state law because the Wheeler 32 were found factually innocent. Now, as the result of a ruling on a lawsuit filed by the defendants, the university was issued a court order to restart the hearings and withhold the arrest records from evidence.

The SYC has been active from the beginning in the defense of targeted pro-Palestinian protesters through taking up their cause in rallies and publicizing it at our lit tables. In a protest statement distributed in May at SJP rallies, we demanded "Down With the suspension of SJP! No administration reprisals against the protesters!" At an October Wheeler 32 defense organizing meeting, we encouraged the participants to bring their struggle to the then locked-out West Coast dock workers, pointing out that getting the social power of labor behind them would represent the best possible defense of persecuted pro-Palestinian activists.

Campus Divestment Campaign: Appeal to Forces of Repression

The divestment campaign pushed by many in the pro-Palestinian movement, including the International Socialist Organization, embraces the idea that the University of California, which runs laboratories involved in "developing new tools in the war on terrorism" (as the UC Web site attests), or the Harvard Corporation, run by former World Bank vice president and Clinton Treasury Secretary Summers, will side with Palestinians and divest from Israel. This is absurd. As we wrote in "What's Wrong with Campus Divestment Campaign" (WV No. 780, 3 May):

"The divestment campaign looks to employ moral suasion to pressure campus administrations, American corporations and ultimately the U.S. capitalist rulers to ditch Israel and implement a more benevolent policy toward the Palestinians. Aside from the fact that American corporations do not have significant investments in Israel, the notion that moral suasion will make the U.S. dump a strategic and longstanding ally in the Near East is simply ludicrous."

Now, this campaign puts its advocates in the position of appealing to campus administrations, who are presently witch-hunting pro-Palestinian activists, to come to the aid of Palestinians.

If the sympathies of the administration were not already sufficiently clear, just look at the lengths it went to quash any protest against a November 19 appearance at UC Berkeley by former Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak, who presided over the initial Zionist crackdown on the

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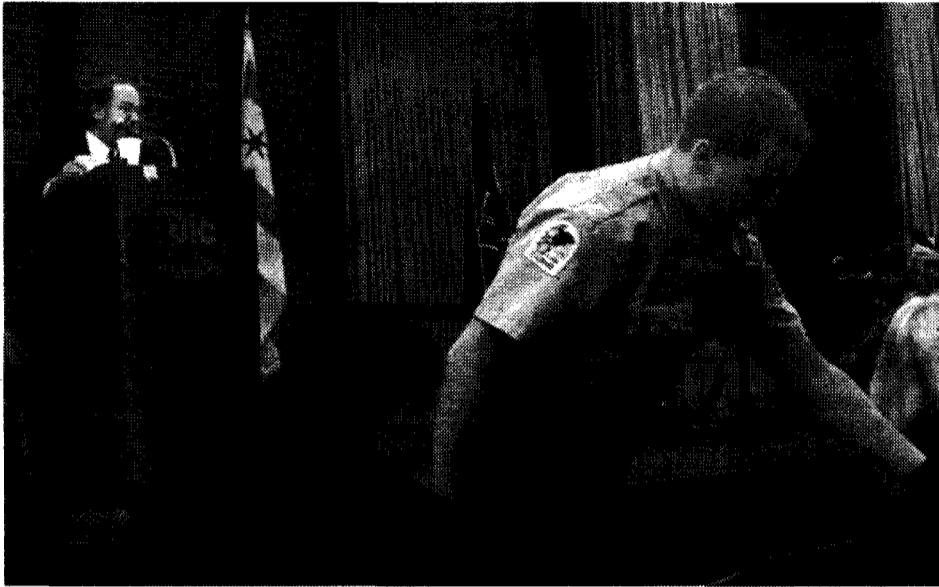
Racist Demagogue Horowitz on a Rampage

The Chicago Spartacus Youth Club protests the arrest of Jessica Maiorca who had been simply heckling racist demagogue David Horowitz during his October 30 lecture at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC). After Maiorca turned around in her chair to call security on right-wing students who had been physically harassing her, campus cops immediately descended on her and dragged her out of the auditorium. Though the arrest charge of disorderly conduct was dropped, she still faces possible disciplinary action from the administration. Maiorca, a member of the UIC No War coalition, was targeted for her political beliefs. **Defend Jessica Maiorca!**

Horowitz's appearance at UIC was a part of his neo-McCarthyite campaign to whip up pro-war patriotism and advance the capitalist rulers' witchhunt against all those who oppose or even question U.S. imperialism's war moves against Iraq. In an advertisement published in 15 campus newspapers in September 2001, Horowitz accused protesters against the Vietnam War of having been "enemies within." Today Horowitz is touring college campuses giving a speech entitled "How the Left Undermines America's Security," in which he smears leftists as "Al Qaeda's little helpers." These slanders are an incitement to violence and a justification for government repression against anti-war activists.

In fact, the "big helper" of Islamic fundamentalism in Central Asia was the American capitalist state. Osama bin Laden and his fellow *mujahedin*—who

University of Illinois at Chicago



O'Holleran/Chicago Flame

October 30: Pro-imperialist spokesman David Horowitz ranting from podium at UIC. His appearance was a calculated provocation—four people were ejected from the event and one of them was arrested.

would later fill the ranks of Al Qaeda, the Taliban and the Northern Alliance—were armed, trained and funded by U.S. imperialism as part of its war to smash the Soviet Union in the '80s.

Furthermore, Horowitz's claim that the

"anti-American" left has stifled free speech on college campuses is a calculated attempt to intimidate leftists and minorities into silence. His professed free speech concerns were completely exposed during his campus visit. Early in

the day of his talk, after he failed to have an International Socialist Organization campus literature table shut down, this right-wing provocateur went so far as to **attack** that lit table, ripping down a protest sign and tearing it to pieces! During his talk, he fingered people in the crowd who were angered by his reactionary ranting so that the campus cops would forcibly remove them. Following the lecture, he abruptly cut off the promised discussion, claiming he didn't like the "tone" of a question.

Horowitz has a recent history of fueling racist reaction and campus witchhunts. Two years ago, Horowitz orchestrated a national ad campaign on college campuses that attacked "reparations" for black people on the grotesque basis that slavery actually "created wealth for black Americans." In a similarly twisted vein, his current ad, which ran in the UIC *Flame* just weeks before his appearance, blames Palestinians for their own oppression at the hands of the murderous Zionist state, painting all those who sympathize with the Palestinian cause as terrorist supporters. The SYCs have initiated united-front protests against this reactionary ideologue.

Marxists understand that it is necessary to refute the lies of pro-imperialist ideologues like Horowitz and combat the corrosive impact of their retrograde ideas. However, our aim is not just to expose reactionary ideas, but to change reality. A socialist revolution is needed to uproot the racist system of imperialist exploitation and war for which Horowitz is a brazen mouthpiece. ■

second *Intifada*. As a member of the Bay Area SYC, which had mobilized for the protest against Barak, reported: "At 5 p.m. it seemed as though the cops wanted to make the protest into an occupied West Bank. Helicopters flew overhead, and the entrance to Zellerbach was blocked off by police barricades, pushing protesters into a corner at least 200 feet away from where Barak was supposed to speak."

It is a measure of how virulent the Zionist witchhunt against support to the Palestinians has become that they target the divestment campaign, which in the words of one of its most renowned supporters, Edward Said, is "the mildest and most decorous of responses" to Zionist terror (*Washington Post*, 12 October). Yet, the smear that anyone who protests against the Zionist military garrison state is anti-Semitic has long been used by the Israeli rulers to bolster their genocidal aim of eradicating the Palestinians.

We are intransigent defenders of the Palestinians against Zionist state terror. At

the same time, we are equally opposed to Arab nationalist calls to "drive the Jews into the sea." Against all variants of deadly nationalism, we counterpose a program of proletarian revolutionary internationalism. The road to the social and national liberation of the Palestinian people lies through common class struggle by the Hebrew-speaking and Arab workers against both the Israeli and Arab ruling classes, who likewise are oppressors of the Palestinians. Only within a socialist federation of the Near East can the right to national self-determination for both the Palestinian and Hebrew-speaking peoples be equitably realized.

U.S. imperialism's imminent war against Iraq could very well provide the Israeli state, armed to the hilt by the U.S., with the cover to carry out a full-scale ethnic cleansing of the Occupied Territories. As the war drive escalates, attempts to quell protest sympathetic to the Palestinians will only intensify on American campuses. This points to the urgent need to mobilize in defense of both the Palestinian people and those who sympathize with their plight. This struggle must be linked to revolutionary opposition to the impending imperialist war and standing in defense of Iraq against U.S. attack.

The divestment campaign fosters illusions in the potential benevolence of the American state. Effective defense of the victims of the U.S. military behemoth, as well as the victims of its Zionist junior partner, cannot come through appeals to the moral scruples of the U.S. imperialists or their agents on the campuses. Instead, it requires mobilizing the social power of the working class in militant class struggle directed **against** the capitalist rulers here. Anti-imperialist students and partisans of the Palestinian people must be won to a revolutionary perspective, the understanding that the working class is the one class that has both the interest and the capacity to overthrow this murderous capitalist system and end the threat of imperialist war once and for all. ■

Berkeley Protest Against Anti-Gay Bigot Phelps



Young Spartacus

BERKELEY, November 16—The Bay Area Spartacus Youth Club mobilized youth today to join 150 gay rights activists in protesting against Fred Phelps' vile Kansas-based Westboro Baptist Church. These anti-gay bigots came to the Bay Area to picket high school performances of *The Laramie Project*, the powerful play about the sadistic 1998 murder of Matthew Shepard, a gay University of Wyoming student. This comes after they grotesquely picketed outside the home of transgender youth Gwen Araujo following her brutal murder last month in an act of demented anti-gay hatred (see "Transgender Youth Murdered in Brutal Attack," WV No. 791, 15 November). At UC Berkeley, the Phelps family came to picket a football game, apparently assuming it would be a den of homosexual activism, with signs reading "Matt

[Shepard] in Hell" and "No Tears for Queers." Demonstrating just how twisted they are, the Phelps clan also held a sign that said, "Thank God for Sept. 11," derived from their belief that America is being punished by god for allowing itself to be overrun by "hedonists."

Most of the counter-demonstrators passively staged a toothless "silent protest." In contrast, our intention was to make sure that the Phelps congregation's murderous provocation did not go unanswered and that they never set foot in Berkeley again. The SYC militantly opposed their religious fanaticism with chants such as "Down with the anti-gay crusade! Separate the church and state!" and "Get your cross out of our crotch, anti-gay bigotry must be stopped!" Down with anti-gay bigots! Matthew Shepard, Gwen Araujo—We will not forget!

Stalinist Class Collaboration: A Legacy of Revolutions Betrayed

**Near East, 1950s
Permanent Revolution vs.
Bourgeois Nationalism**

Two-part series appeared in
WV No. 740, 25 August 2000 and
No. 741, 8 September 2000

\$1 for 2 issues (includes postage)

Make checks payable/mail to:
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In Memory of Our Comrade Cory Pearson

Family, friends, co-workers and comrades of Cory Pearson joined with his comrade and wife Ellen at the AFSCME District Council 1737 hall in New York on November 16 to celebrate Cory's life and commemorate his death. A committed communist and member of our movement for 29 years, Cory died on October 16 following a heart attack. He was 54.

A display in the hall gave a sense of Cory's remarkable talents, featuring a selection of the many, many photos he had taken as chief photographer for *Workers Vanguard* and in pursuit of his many other interests. Attendance by fellow phone workers and members of the Communications Workers of America (CWA) spoke to the impact Cory had on all who knew him—and that included many comrades throughout the International Communist League, even though Cory was based in New York City all his years as a member. Comrades in Berlin honored Cory with a wreath at the Treptow Park monument for the Soviet soldiers who liberated the city from the Nazis; in Tokyo, comrades will similarly honor Cory at the graves of Richard Sorge and Ozaki Hotsumi, heroic defenders of the October Revolution who were executed in 1944.

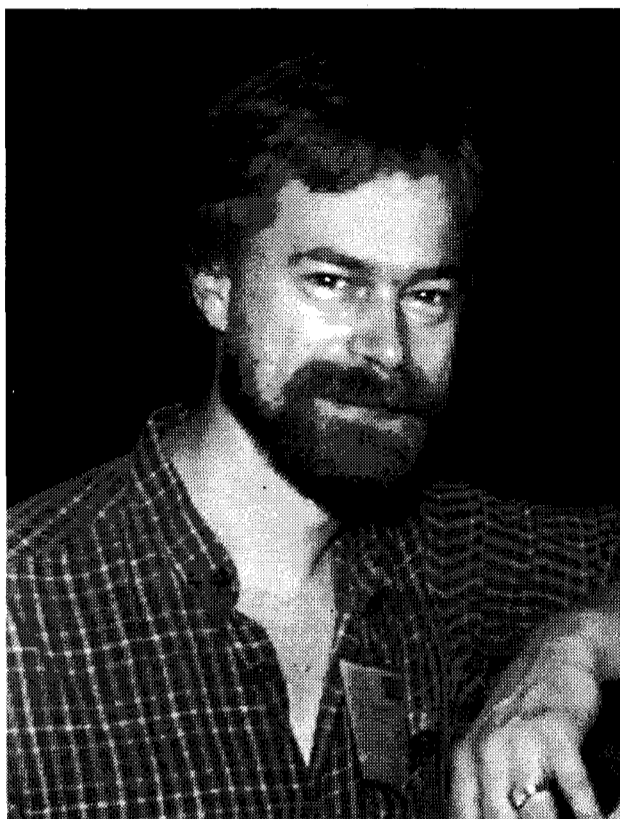
We publish below excerpts from remarks to the memorial gathering by comrades Bruce Mishkin and George Foster and by Cory's sister, Connie Pearson Duquette. Among other speakers was Irene Granovsky, who worked closely with Cory during his five years in the WV circulation department.

Bruce Mishkin: Shocked expressions of sorrow at Cory's death have come from cities around the world, from New York to Tokyo, the Midwest to Australia. Cory touched a lot of people. For many of us, Cory was perhaps the nicest man we'd ever met. He moved many with his generosity, his diligence, his characteristic infectious enthusiasm, and his devotion to the ICL and to the comrades who comprise it.

Growing up in the South concurrently with the civil rights movement, Cory developed a revulsion against racism and all the forms of bigotry that he encountered. His distaste for conventionality combined with a lifelong interest in the history of black struggle. It's not accidental that year in and year out Cory was part of our Southern Tour each *Workers Vanguard* subscription drive.

He said he entered political awareness on the right wing of the American spectrum, but that didn't last long, as he always sided with black people in battles against their oppression. As an engineering student at Cornell University, he was affected by the militant black student occupation in 1968. It was there, during the height of the Vietnam War, that he was won to radical politics.

While there, he was a DJ at the campus radio station and developed what would become a lifelong interest in music, recording and electronics. Later, he worked in



Pearson Family



1948-2002

a sound studio in Washington, D.C.

While living in Washington, he was won to Trotskyism as the program and ideology for realizing his radical ideals. He moved to New York to be active in the Spartacist League's youth organization, then called the Revolutionary Communist Youth. Although during the course of his life the bulk of his political responsibilities were elsewhere than the youth organization, he was always keenly interested in our younger members, frequently hosting them in his loft and offering his loft for youth parties and social gatherings.

A few years after moving to New York, he became a phone worker and was a member of CWA locals 1150 and 1101 for over 20 years. Pictures of him on picket lines during phone strikes are in the displays out there. He became an adept and capable phone technician.

The bulk of his life as a party member was bound up with our press, in one capacity or another. Whatever he

undertook was carried out with a keen sense of the importance of professional standards of quality, a driving enthusiasm, and the knowledge that the press is the scaffolding of a communist propaganda group. He was driven by a passion for finding ways to make our press more effective. His constant suggestions and continuous stream of projects were powered by a vision of the impact *Workers Vanguard* could have. Cory set the standard that the photographer, like in all other party work, is a political interventionist, not a passive observer.

Cory's photos are a chronicle of the history of our movement, our interventions, speeches, rallies, demonstrations and picket lines. He was there during the 1977 Stearns, Kentucky coal miners strike, taking the picture of the hand-lettered sign reading, "Warning: The Stearns Miners Have Determined That Scabbing Is Dangerous to Your Health." That sign was imitated seven years later by striking Phelps Dodge copper miners who had seen his photo in our paper.

His photos made our polemics tangible. He was particularly proud of a picture he took in 1978. The head of the Stalinist Spanish Communist Party, visiting the U.S., crossed a union picket line. We had alerted the union, and they had pickets waiting. Cory got it on film.

He was there for our victories, taking the pictures of our demonstrations which stopped the fascist Klan and Nazis in their tracks, powerfully documenting those victories and enabling us to propagandize and publicize them.

He had some of the qualities of a combat photographer: his personal safety was not foremost in his considerations. He had a knack for being in the right place at the right time to get the one picture that evocatively captured the situation, illustrated our politics or demonstrated the crassness of our opportunist opponents.

Cory understood that technical skillfulness is *necessary*, like a motor powering a car, which, in turn, must be steered by political purpose. He had none of the pretentious, petty-bourgeois dichotomy between doer and thinker, manual and mental.

In 1982, we showed the film *Revolution or Death* at an East Village theater to build support for leftist rebels fighting the U.S.-backed dictatorship in El Salvador. We needed a big movie poster real fast. Cory created it, turning his loft into a giant darkroom by covering the windows with trash can liners and then enlarging the negative onto a great piece of photo paper mounted on the opposite wall.

To aid our photographers, he wrote a manual, *Political Photo Journalism*. In it he wrote:

"Beyond the premise that our publications' appearance should correspond to our tendency's serious and professional political approach, the old cliché is true: one picture can be worth a thousand words....

"Why are we making this revolution? How are we making this revolution? Those are the questions your photos must answer."

His efforts to educate others were tireless. Citibank has this advertising slogan, "The Citi never sleeps." *Their* claim is dubious, but Cory never did. He spent late nights corresponding with our photographers in the field, critiquing their contact sheets, making suggestions for how a shot could have been done differently, what to do in the future.

He visited other SL/U.S. locals and ICL sections when he could, always training our less experienced photographers. When our field photographers visited New York, or at national gatherings where he knew he would encounter them, Cory organized photography workshops and get-togethers. His patience never ran out.

It is true, he could thoroughly inundate you with a mass of technical detail. But he was *not* a technical snob. There was no skill he did not want to learn. Although he had been in the WV composition department for 24 years, when the proposal came up for Cory to switch to the circulation department, he was eager to try a new and different assignment.

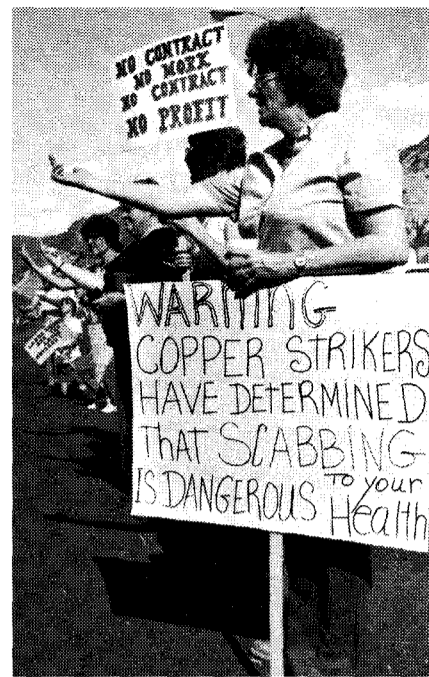


Pearson Family

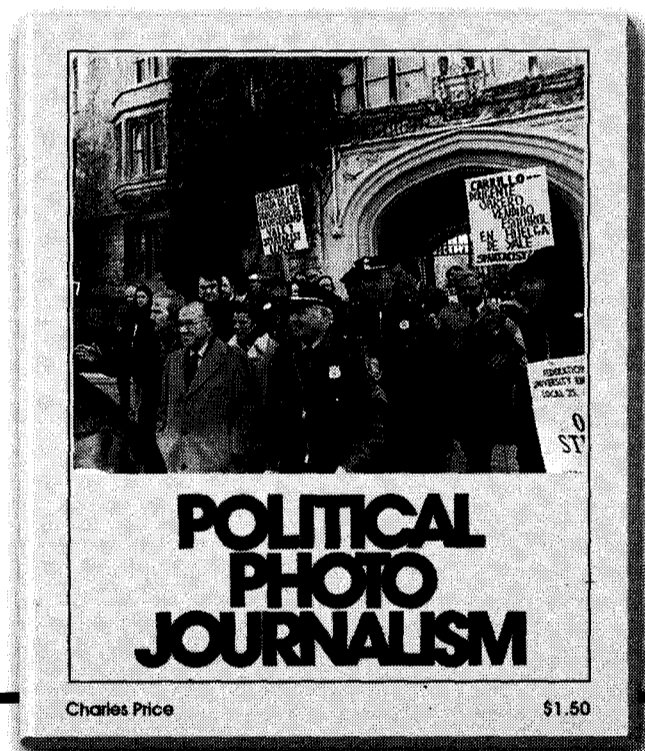
Cory and Ellen, his comrade and wife of 20 years, at their wedding.



After seeing Cory's 1977 photo of striking Stearns, Kentucky miners (left) in *Workers Vanguard*, Arizona Phelps Dodge copper miners copied slogan for their own 1984 strike (photo taken by another WV photographer).



“Remember that you are documenting the revolution.”



Cory's photos exemplified the fundamentals presented in the photo journalism handbook he wrote. Above right: Local 1199 NYC hospital workers rally, 1995; right: PDC-initiated united-front mobilization against the Klan in Springfield, Illinois, 1994.



The bulk of my years in *Workers Vanguard* are interwoven with memories of Cory: helping him develop prints under the eerie red lights in his darkroom; consulting before a demonstration on where the best shots were likely to come from; waiting with anticipation for him to arrive from his darkroom, rain-soaked but wearing sandals, carrying the prints still damp from the chemical baths in his well-protected blotter book.

Cory's energy was unstoppable. But it tended to be diffuse, divided among a half dozen subjects he felt important, all simultaneously. This was his weakness. Cory's energy required focusing. He needed the party for prioritizing, for direction. Being part of a disciplined collective enabled him to harness his boundless energy in order to make an effective contribution.

He was compulsively political. He was always on the lookout for ways to increase our effectiveness. He supplied a constant stream of listserv and Web printouts to responsible comrades on anything he came across which he thought might help them. They came to rely on this information.

What an amazing range of interests were packed into his meager spare time! He was knowledgeable in all of them, and delighted to discuss them with anyone he

could: jazz (he also collected country, blues, and was interested in anything avant-garde), art, nature photography. There were many more. But, as *WV* [No. 790, 1 November] observed, his concern for his comrades had first claim on what time and energy he had aside from his assignments. He ran our concessions operation in Comp, and later in Circ. To what *WV* said, I would only add that when Cory ran concessions it was always well stocked. He spent many hours taping movies, especially those of political and historic interest, for the informal video lending library he organized for comrades' use.

For Cory, commitment to the party was inseparable from commitment to the people who made up the party. In this regard, so many remember Cory and Ellen's generosity in sharing their loft with comrades who needed a place to stay. Weddings took place there—and sometimes people found themselves there when the marriage didn't work out. And then there were all the people who were put up there while visiting town.

Speaking of his interactions with our young comrades, the Chicago local wrote to Ellen: "Cory has had an impact on virtually all the youth in Chicago. We doubt that we are unique in this."

Cory, we will continue to train our young comrades,

as you did. But how does one educate enthusiasm? How does one encapsulate inspiration? What is the formula for passion? These are things people find within themselves when inspired by others. We are thankful for those qualities, which Cory had in such abundance and shared so freely.

Connie Pearson Duquette: Cory was one of five children initially. We then had stepbrothers and stepsisters added in. Although they were all adult by the time, we liked to include them just because it shocked people to say there were nine of us!

As a big brother, he was very protective and very kind. He was very patient. He was funny. When he was in high school, he ran for a lot of offices and—I told this earlier in church—he never made signs that said, "Vote for Cory." He would go to the grocery store—I don't know where he got this idea—and he brought signs like, "Grapes Are Good, Buy a Bunch." And he'd X out the "grapes" and write in "Cory"—"Cory Is Good, Vote for Cory!"

People always used to say he was so quiet. He wasn't at all. He was a very good partyer. When he went to work

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Cory Pearson...

(continued from page 7)

in recording, he was so excited, and working with the Isley Brothers there was the biggest thrill he'd had. He took me to my first Rolling Stones concert—when they were still in the grubby stage—and somehow, even though he was only in college and had a college press pass from Cornell, he got on stage. And I was thinking, he is standing like right next to Mick Jagger!

When he went to Cornell, he did get much more involved in politics. He introduced me to the antiwar protests. And my mother, bless her heart, was very understanding about having 30 to 40 college kids descend on her home. When I began flying [as a flight attendant], I'd never been in a union and to my knowledge I didn't know anyone in a union, and Cory was always there for me when I was on strike for three years. He came out and supported our strike. He had me come and speak.

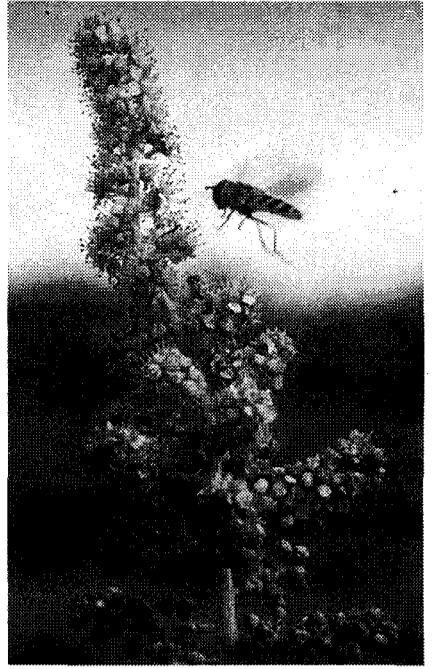
One of the happiest times in our family was when he said he was going to marry Ellen; my mother was just over the moon! We all were. And they had a great wedding at our house. Ellen forgot her bouquet. My brother Bill had to go mincing down the aisle and come back and get it.

Anyway, I know that you all will miss him as a friend and as a comrade. But we will miss him most of all as a brother. And having all of you here who loved Cory means a lot to us.



Pearson Family

Cory's wide range of interests are reflected in his photo portrait of Miles Davis and his exquisite nature photography.



George Foster: I was very grateful for Cory's sister speaking to us about his life, because it captures another dimension of a man who, when I think about him, I think of humanism.

Cory came to political consciousness, as Bruce said, in the late '60s. It was in the period of the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War, the black rebellions that swept the country, the then-recent Cuban Revolution and the great French general strike of '68. Those events impelled Cory to our organization. He didn't simply want to protest the worst excesses of the brutal racist system of capitalist exploitation and imperialist wars. He decided to dedicate his life to trying to abolish it.

It should be said that in a party with more than its share of opinionated characters and iconoclastic rebels, Cory stood out as a free spirit with boundless energy and enthusiasm. And in his own way he embodied the kinds of contradictions that made him a truly interesting personality. He was, for example, simultaneously fiscally as frugal as any caricature of a Calvinist and very warm and generous with all those around him.

Comrades have mentioned Cory's justly famous picture of the Stearns miners picket line. Needless to say, Cory was at one with them on that subject. In his own union, the Communications Workers of America, he had no truck with the "two-gate" system that the union bureaucracy had foisted on the strikers, whereby some phone workers go on strike but others working for a different company continue to work in the same struck building. Cory knew this was wrong and stuck to his guns on this issue, which he rightly saw as undermining the elementary principle of labor solidarity.

Comrades spoke of Cory's role in producing and cir-

culating WV. I wanted to add that he was enormously proficient technically. Any job he did for the party, he did it right and sometimes so smoothly that I think it was underappreciated. This certainly extended to his work as a phone worker. Cory played a very big role in installing and bringing on line a major Internet network in Lower Manhattan. And he wrote a very impressive technical manual for his fellow communication workers charged with troubleshooting and maintaining that network. As a party that genuinely aspires to the end of capitalism and the rule of the working class, we value such skills very highly.

When Cory joined the Spartacist League, he did so because he knew that capitalism could not be reformed, that it had to be abolished as a system. He understood that the working class could not rely on the old state apparatus of the capitalists, which in fact is nothing more than a tool for the capitalists to protect their own rule. He understood that for capitalism to be abolished as a system, the workers needed a new kind of state—their own state—and that the abolition of capitalism required the organization of the entire people to democratically administer the means of production through workers councils. And to get that workers government, he knew that workers needed a political party to educate them to that task and lead them to accomplish it.

Cory was in many ways the embodiment, and also the proof that such a thing can be done. That's why we value his competence, because he was one of what will be hundreds and thousands of workers who *will* administer a new society—a society in which there will no longer be the exploitation, the brutality, the misery and the wars. That is the cause to which Cory dedicated his life. ■



Pearson Family

New York, August 1989: Cory with co-workers on CWA picket line.

Transit...

(continued from page 3)

the Local 100 leadership, George Jennings and Michael Curran, are campaigning to *split the union*. According to the *Chief-Leader* (22 November), Hall, Jennings and Curran are moving to charter a separate local for the 1,500 private bus lines workers, with a membership vote on the split scheduled for December 4. Transit workers must reject this despicable maneuver, which threatens to unravel this industrial union, which was forged through decades of bloody struggle beginning in the 1930s.

The treacherous actions of the rival wings of the TWU bureaucracy feed right into the MTA's union-busting plan to split the local into separate subway and bus bargaining units. This is part of a proposal by Bloomberg for a "Regional Bus Company," which would bring the private lines under the MTA and saddle private lines workers with the Taylor Law. Underlining the felt need for workers' unity against the MTA, one member of the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU), which organizes some NYC transit workers, carried a sign at the October 30 TWU rally urging that ATU Local 1056 and TWU Local 100 stand "side by side." What is needed is *one industrial union of all NYC transit workers, one expiration date for all contracts and full parity in wages and benefits at the highest levels! Labor must smash the Taylor Law!*

Two years ago, many workers who voted for Toussaint and his New Directions (ND) slate perceived him to be some kind of militant alternative to the discredited Hall "old guard" and then Local 100 president Willie James. A gaggle of avowed leftists inside New Directions acted as water boys for Toussaint, only to be sidelined and purged by him once he came to power. Now, some of these opportunist has-beens have regrouped around an opposition newsletter called *Rank and File Advocate*. Also tailing behind Toussaint at the time of the election was the so-called *Revolutionary Transit Worker* supported by the League for the Revolutionary Party, which urged a "critical" vote for him based on nothing more than his empty rhetoric. We headlined our article at the time "Sellouts, Traitors, Finks: No Choice in TWU Local 100 Elections" (WV No. 746, 17 November 2000). And we warned:

"ND's stock in trade is using the courts and other government agencies as a club against its rivals, which serves only to further shackle the power of the union and place it under the thumb of the capitalist state. Such appeals to the agencies of the capitalist class enemy are proof enough why ND, despite its occasional 'militant' posture and talk of 'democracy,' offers no alternative to James and Melendez. *Government hands off TWU Local 100! Labor must clean its own house!*"

What transit workers need is a *class-struggle* leadership that fights for the complete and unconditional independence of the union from the capitalist state

and its politicians. Such a leadership must be forged based on the understanding that the interests of capital and labor are irreconcilably counterposed, and that the enormous social power of New York City's transit workers must be mobilized on behalf of all working people and the oppressed. There must be a struggle to

break the political chains forged by the trade-union tops to the capitalist Democratic Party and to build a workers party committed to the fight for a workers government. When the working people rule, transport and industry will be ripped out of the hands of the greedy capitalists and put in the service of society as a whole. ■

SPARTACIST LEAGUE/U.S. Local Directory and Public Offices

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

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

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Box 390840, Central Sta.
Cambridge, MA 02139
(617) 666-9453

Chicago

Box 6441, Main PO
Chicago, IL 60680
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Sat. 2-5 p.m.
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Box 29574, Los Feliz Sta.
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(213) 380-8239

Public Office:

Sat. 2-5 p.m.

3806 Beverly Blvd., Room 215

New York

Box 3381, Church St. Sta.
New York, NY 10008
(212) 267-1025

Public Office:

Tues. 6:30-8:30 p.m.
and Sat. 1-5 p.m.

299 Broadway, Suite 318

Oakland

Box 29497
Oakland, CA 94604
(510) 839-0851

Public Office:

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1634 Telegraph
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San Francisco

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San Francisco
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Firefighters...

(continued from page 12)

union-hating Sun calls the FBU "Saddam stooges" while Defence Secretary Geoff Hoon implies that further union strikes would hinder the planned military invasion of Iraq. Union leaders who buy into or capitulate to the government's war drive undermine the ability to wage class struggle at home. To wage imperialist war abroad, the bourgeoisie needs "class peace" at home. The events of last week made it crystal-clear that the working people and the semicolonial masses of Iraq have a common enemy in the war-crazed gangs in the White House and No. 10 Downing Street and the capitalist classes they represent. Imperialist war and union-busting at home are flip sides of the same coin: the capitalist system is predicated on the exploitation of labour, and driven towards war in competition over spheres of trade and exploitation. We call for defence of Iraq against U.S./British military attack, without giving an iota of political support to Saddam Hussein.

Blair & Co. accuse the firefighters, who daily risk their lives to save others, of undermining public safety. These hypocrites want to blame the workers for the results of their own wage slashing and social spending cutbacks. Everyone knows the privatised railways are death traps, and Blair wants to do the same with the London Tube. The RMT is already balloting for a strike as Tube workers have been threatened with discipline for rightly refusing to drive trains without fire cover. The transport, rail, construction and other unions must set up union safety committees, with the power to shut down unsafe operations. RMT leader Bob Crow should get off the Transport for London management board! This is an instrument of class collaboration that undermines the ability of the union to defend its own interests.

In Islington, North London, members of Day-Mer, the Kurdish-Turkish Solidarity organisation, brought sweets and food to picketing firefighters. During the 1984-85 miners strike, the black, Asian and other minority communities were among the staunchest supporters of the NUM [National Union of Mineworkers] as it courageously battled the scabs and strike-breaking cops. Unlike the rank-and-file soldiers, the cops are simply racist, anti-union mercenaries. Anyone who says otherwise—groups like the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) or Socialist Party (SP), who preach that the police are "workers in uniform" or who support cop strikes—are lying! Blacks, Asians and Irish Republicans have experienced firsthand the brunt of state and racist cop persecution. Down with Blair's "war on terror"! The ultimate target of this wholesale assault on civil liberties, which singles out South Asians and Muslims for racist victimisation, are the unions—they are the real "enemy within" in the eyes of the bourgeoisie. The workers movement must be mobilised to defend the rights of immigrants and asylum seekers. For full citizenship rights for all immigrants!



British auto workers protest Labour government wage controls in 1977. Labour's attacks provoked wave of strikes, including last national firefighters strike.

Blair arrogantly sneers that if firefighters get their 40 percent claim, other public sector workers would want the same. The government wants to designate firefighters as "professional," not manual workers, in order to justify giving even less to manual and council workers, as if these workers don't also deserve a living wage. To even begin to approach what is necessary, council workers and other public sector employees should have their wages doubled! After decades of capitalist decline, Britain is notorious as a centre for exploitation of low-wage labour. Hundreds of thousands of council workers currently make less than £5 an hour, with two-thirds of council workers earning less than £13,000 per year. Women and immigrants earn even less. This points to the urgent need for council and other workers to link up in struggle with the FBU.

In the Short Strand area of Belfast, Catholic and Protestant youth set aside sectarian chanting to compete in applauding the striking firefighters. This demonstrates again that proletarian struggle can transcend this deeply rooted communalism. We fight for revolutionary unity of the struggles of British and Irish workers! For immediate unconditional withdrawal of British troops from Northern Ireland! And outside the British Isles the FBU strike has struck a chord as well. French rail workers promised industrial solidarity. The Uniformed Firefighters' Association in New York, hundreds of whose members lost their lives in heroic rescue efforts after the criminal bombing of the World Trade Center and which now faces layoffs, says it will send pickets to Wales.

Blair has never hidden his desire to break New Labour from dependence on the unions, refashioning it on the lines of the capitalist Democratic Party in the U.S. But union leaders like Andy Gilchrist, echoed by fake socialists like the SWP, have argued to retain the union link to New Labour. Blair's threat to use the mailed fist of army/police strikebreaking ought to make crystal-clear the futility of pressuring New Labour. Others like the SP have condemned New Labour for

breaking with its "socialist past," which is fictitious, and call for a new union-based party modelled on "Old Labour." Yet it was Old Labour that called out the army during the last firefighters strike in order to enforce the "social contract," i.e., wage cuts. The same government of Wilson/Callaghan implemented racist "virginity tests" for immigrant Asian women at Heathrow airport. Neil Kin-

interests, from defence of workers and minorities at home to anti-imperialist solidarity with our class brothers and sisters overseas.

The trade unions must be built on the broadest possible industrial basis to maximise the unity of the working class against the capitalist exploiters. At the same time, we fight to forge a multi-ethnic communist vanguard party whose purpose is to sharpen the differences between competing tendencies in order to raise the consciousness of the working masses. A "party of the whole class" based on bloc affiliation of the unions is antithetical to this end. In contrast, we seek to assemble the most advanced workers and revolutionary youth in a Leninist party whose purpose is to lead the workers to state power.

The British bourgeoisie and their Labour Party lieutenants have run this country's manufacturing base into the ground, destroying the livelihoods of millions. Entire swathes of the population in Wales, Scotland, the north of England and elsewhere are condemned to permanent unemployment. The shutting down of the mills in places like Oldham and Burnley has devastated these areas and turned them into spawning grounds for fascist filth. It is possible to undertake a renewal of economic life and vastly increase the presently pathetic quality of life for British working people, but not within the framework of capitalism.

London, September 28: Spartacist League/Britain marches in 400,000-strong demonstration against U.S./British war moves.



nock and the TUC tops knifed the miners strike in 1984-85, handing Thatcher her greatest victory, and ultimately paving the way for Blair. And the Labour Party has pursued the interests of British imperialism abroad, supporting both inter-imperialist world wars and the Korean War. Labour governments carried out bloody colonial policies in India and the Near East, murdered workers and peasants in Malaysia and Greece in counterrevolutionary wars after WWII, and sent troops to Northern Ireland in 1969. We need a party which is not only based on the working class but which represents the working class's fundamental class

What's needed is not the "Old Labour" programme of piecemeal nationalisations that have only enriched the bankers and bosses but the expropriation of the entire capitalist class through socialist revolution and the establishment of a workers government—one based on workers councils, not the capitalists' Parliament. Such a government would set about reviving economic life through a collectivised economy, including a couple of ambitious five-year industrialisation plans, and would fight for a socialist united states of Europe on the way to a world socialist order.

Victory to the firefighters strike! ■

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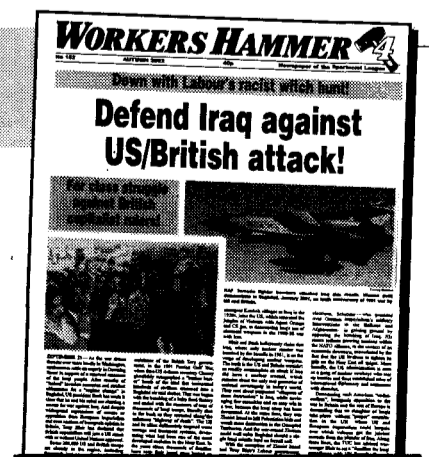
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Elections...

(continued from page 1)

Bush's Homeland Security Act. AFL-CIO chief John Sweeney complained that the Democrats "needed to be crystal clear about what they stand for on issues of importance to workers—jobs, the economy, health care." Jesse Jackson, the party's most prominent black spokesman, sermonized: "Democrats seemed to forget the lesson that diversity is their strength. Minority voters can't be inherited. They have to be informed and inspired to vote."

Sweeney and Jackson want the Democratic Party to resurrect its image as the friend of labor and black people, in order to keep the working people fooled that they can benefit from capitalism as long as the right party is in power. It is this lie that has long been used to shackle workers and minorities and divert their struggles into the dead end of bourgeois electoralism. That the Democrats did not offer even a semblance of an alternative to the party of Enron reflects the fact that no matter how they may differ in other respects, the Democrats, like the Republicans, defend and further the interests of Wall Street bankers and Fortune 500 corporate executives.

The union bureaucracy, itself a key component of the Democratic Party, provides labor cover for the capitalist politicians, misleading the workers into thinking they can win at the ballot box. But as we wrote after Bush imposed an anti-union Taft-Hartley injunction amid a lockout of the West Coast International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU): "In the voting booth, 10,000 ILWU longshoremen have no more power than any other 10,000 voters. But as workers they have the power to shut down nearly half of the capitalist economy. However, that power cannot be mobilized to take on the capitalists represented by the PMA [shipping bosses] if the union is out rounding up votes for the capitalists represented by the Democratic Party" ("Labor: Defend the ILWU!", WV No. 789, 18 October).

Only days after the elections, the *Wall Street Journal* (8 November) crowed, "Republican officials are beginning to think of ways the new GOP control of Congress can be used to weaken the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, say people close to the GOP. Options include putting the union involved in the dock strike under the Railway Labor Act, which makes federal intervention in a labor dispute easier, or breaking the union up into smaller pieces."

In short order, Congress passed the Homeland Security Act with an overwhelming bipartisan majority. Mandating a sweeping escalation of government spying against the population, the act also scraps union rights and civil service protections for government employees under the new Cabinet department. The White House also announced plans to transfer as many as 850,000 government jobs—nearly half the federal civilian workforce—to private contractors. Bush has "declared all-out war on federal employees," exclaimed the head of the main federal government employees union. Very true. But the AFL-CIO tops have stood foursquare behind Bush's "war on terror."

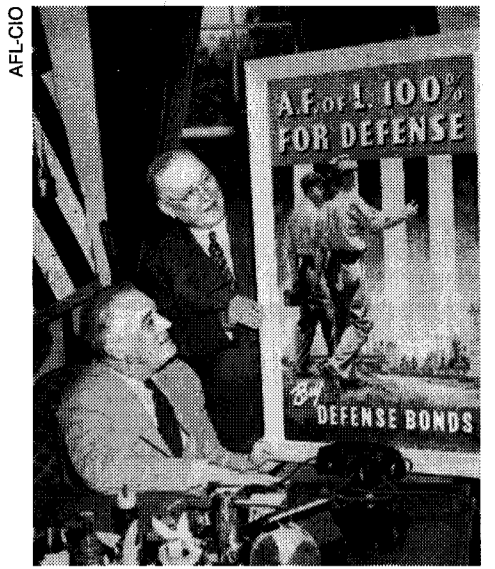
In the face of the vicious labor-hating gang in the White House, trade unionists rightly fear that they are an endangered species. The Bush administration is a particularly nasty and right-wing variant of bourgeois "democracy." But wage-cutting, union-busting and racist and anti-immigrant repression are inherent in the capitalist profit system. The function of the capitalist state, whether in its Republican or Democratic face, is to enforce the dictates of capital and suppress the struggles of the working people.

The working people need their own class party to fight for their own class rule, a workers government that expropriates the bourgeoisie and organizes production to provide for the needs of society as a whole. Such a party cannot be



Wayne State University

Auto sit-down strike, 1937. Mass struggles of 1930s posed fight for workers party, but labor reformists tied new industrial unions to Democratic Party. Roosevelt with AFL leader William Green, who pledged labor support for U.S. imperialism in World War II.



AFL-CIO

simply proclaimed from above; rather it will be forged in the crucible of convulsive class battles.

The contradictions of the capitalist system necessarily generate class struggle. Just look at Europe today. In the mid 1980s, the British working class was dealt a devastating blow as the right-wing Thatcher government smashed a heroic yearlong strike by the militant miners union. Now an equally union-hating Labour government is confronted with a major upsurge in class struggle, evoking deep sympathy and solidarity for striking firefighters among the most downtrodden and oppressed layers of society. In France, the recently elected right-wing government is currently facing labor struggle on several fronts.

In U.S. society, too, there are enormous discontents at the base. In the absence of a working-class fight, desperation and discontent can lead to all kinds of responses. For those discontents to be channeled into an effective struggle against the ravages of recession, deepening repression and the threat of imperialist war, the working class and its allies among the oppressed must be mobilized independently of and in counterposition to the capitalist class, its state and its political parties.

An example of that perspective was seen in the Bay Area on February 9 in a demonstration in defense of immigrants and the unions against the government's "war on terror." Drawing on the social power of the ILWU, that united-front protest was initiated by the Partisan Defense Committee and the Labor Black League for Social Defense (LBL). Addressing the rally, LBL spokesman Adwoa Oni declared:

"To line up the population behind their war-crazed ambitions abroad, both capitalist parties, the twin parties of capital, the Democrats and Republicans, are fanning the flames of patriotic bigotry through jingoistic 'united we stand' anti-immigrant campaigns. They are fostering the false notion that the ruling class has common interests with the workers even as living standards plunge and the ranks of the unemployed grow....

"American workers must rise up from their knees, fight for their own interests with no regard to the interests or property rights of the capitalist exploiters. The main obstacle to such independent political action by the working class is political loyalty to the Democratic Party....

"The Labor Black League stands for the building of a revolutionary workers party that champions the cause of all the oppressed. It is time to fight or starve!"

U.S. Imperialism Menaces the World

The current political climate, domestically and internationally, is shaped by the defining event of the late 20th century: the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state in 1991-92. We Trotskyists fought tooth and nail in defense of the Soviet Union, homeland of the October Revolution, against imperialism and capitalist counterrevolution. Despite the rule of a nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy, the Soviet Union was based on a planned, collectivized economy, which vastly improved conditions of life for working people and enabled a once-backward country to become the world's second strongest military power. In eliminating any military and diplomatic counterweight to U.S. imperial-

ism's ambitions for world domination, the collapse of the Soviet Union has ushered in a far more dangerous world.

Acknowledging this, leftist intellectual Perry Anderson observed in the *New Left Review* (September/October 2002):

"By the end of the decade, strategic planners in Washington had every reason to be satisfied with the overall balance sheet of the nineties. The USSR had been knocked out of the ring, Europe and Japan kept in check, China drawn into increasingly close trade relations, the UN reduced to little more than a permissions office; and all this accomplished to the tune of the most emollient of ideologies, whose every second word was international understanding and democratic goodwill."

The Bush gang has dispensed with the "human rights" rhetoric of the Clinton administration.

The heinous attack on the World Trade Center last September 11 was a godsend for the White House, allowing it to rally the population against "Islamic terrorism" as a substitute for the Cold War nemesis of "godless Communism." Under the rubric of the "war on terror," the Bush administration has pushed through a qualitative assault on democratic rights and pursued a course of unbridled unilateral assertion of the dominance of U.S. imperialism, including over its imperialist "allies."

Today, it is mainly the Republican right which is orchestrating a war against Iraq. The Republican president William McKinley opened America's age of imperialism with the war against Spain in 1898 to seize Cuba, the Philippines and Puerto Rico. However, Democratic presidents conducted almost every major war over the last century. It was Harry Truman who A-bombed the Japanese civilian populations of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It was also Truman who in the name of fighting "world Communism" launched a bloody three-year war in Korea that left three million Koreans dead. It was the liberal Democratic Kennedy/Johnson White House that napalmed villages in South Vietnam and carpet bombed North Vietnam. And it was the last Democratic president, Bill Clinton, who launched the U.S./NATO air war which devastated Serbia. Clinton continued the ongoing bombing of Iraq and the starvation blockade which has killed a million and a half people through malnutrition and disease.

Social Reforms and Social Struggle

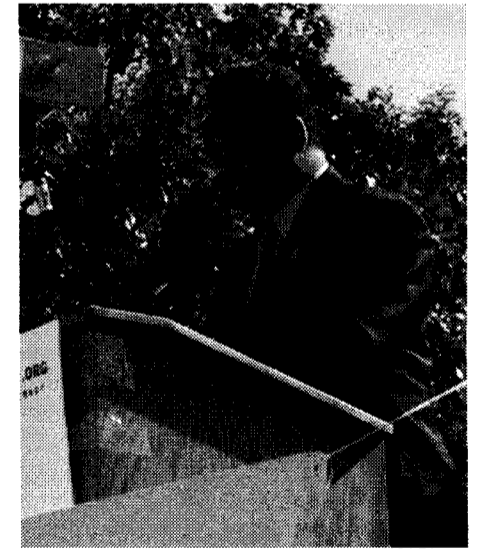
Left-liberals argue that the Democratic Party should again take up the mantle of Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal. In this vein, the Green Party's Ralph Nader wrote in a 31 October "Open Letter to the Democratic Party": "Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the Democrats won election after election by conveying one singularly clear impression—that the Republican Party was beholden to the wealthy and the Democratic Party represented the working people." Paul Wellstone, one of the few Democratic Senators to claim to stand in this tradition, has undergone a virtual canonization in liberal circles since his death. But reforms like Social Security and unemployment insurance did not flow from the largesse of FDR's Democrats, but were the by-product of class struggle.

Every social program beneficial to working people, every democratic reform

benefiting black people and other oppressed groups has been won through *mass struggle*, not electoral politics. The New Deal reforms of the 1930s were granted in an attempt to put a lid on the explosive class battles of the time, especially the mass unionization drives—the sit-down strikes, the pitched battles between workers and cops—which were often led by Communists or other leftists. The federal civil rights legislation of the mid 1960s was won in the streets of Montgomery, Atlanta, Greensboro and other Southern cities and towns, as the black masses rose up against the racist police state under which they lived. Johnson's "war on poverty" was a response to the ghetto upheavals that swept every major city from New York to L.A. The ending of the draft and the *Roe v. Wade* decision legalizing abortion were a reaction to the social turmoil then convulsing the country in opposition to the Vietnam War.

The class struggles and political radicalization of the 1930s generated widespread support among workers for an independent party of the working class. Yet the trade-union tops, the Stalinist Communist Party and the social democrats diverted these sentiments back into support for the Democratic Party and its New Deal coalition.

In the 1960s, the Dixiecrat-infested Democratic Party was widely resented by the black masses and reviled as the party of the Vietnam War by many young anti-war radicals. Seeking to intersect such



October 26, Washington, D.C.: Jesse Jackson was keynote speaker at anti-war protest. Reformist demo organizers built platform for Democrats.

sentiments, the Spartacist League raised the call for a Freedom Labor Party as an expression of working-class political independence and of the need to mobilize the labor movement to fight for black freedom. But the official leadership of the civil rights movement under Martin Luther King Jr. remained firmly bound to the Democrats and the capitalist system and led the black struggle into a dead end, particularly when it moved North and tried to tackle the racial discrimination in housing, jobs and education which is endemic to American capitalism.

Because these struggles were roped into a bourgeois electoral framework, they were soon demobilized and many of their activists co-opted into the Democratic Party. And because reforms achieved under capitalism are necessarily

limited and reversible, many of the gains won through the struggles of the past have been attenuated or reversed in the absence of ongoing struggle.

The conditions of black workers and the ghetto poor are in many ways worse than when the civil rights acts were passed. The main federal welfare program granted in the 1930s was abolished under the Clinton presidency. The right to vote for black people in the South, a signal achievement of the civil rights movement, has been seriously eroded, not least as the result of the racist "war on drugs," which has led to one in seven black men losing the right to vote due to felony convictions. A third of all young black men are now in prison, on probation or on parole. Legalized abortion has faced a growing assault and in practice has been ever more restricted to women of financial means. And U.S. imperialism is about to launch one of its biggest wars since Vietnam.

In a recent spread in *Socialist Worker* (8 November), the International Socialist Organization (ISO) writes that the reforms of the 1930s and '60s were won when capitalist politicians "were forced to make concessions, or face a wider revolt" and declares in a headline, "The 'Lesser Evil' Is Still an Evil." Nonetheless the ISO argues, "Liberal Democrats can attract welcome attention to struggles when they participate in protests and other activities." With the aim of roping in Democratic Party politicians, the ISO and other reformists seek to ensure that their broad-based, lowest-common-denominator "movements" are sanitized of anything that might offend the liberals.

The same *Socialist Worker* goes on to reassure readers that "elections do matter," adding that "there are political parties that don't represent big business," specifically Ralph Nader's Green Party. American history is replete with examples of bourgeois third parties promising reform—all of them designed to channel social protest into the dead end of bourgeois electoralism, and usually back into the Democratic Party. The Green Party is but the latest example, and as revealed by Nader's "Open Letter," its primary purpose is to act as a pressure group on the Democratic Party's liberal wing.

Clinton Brutalized Blacks, Weakened Labor

"Centrist" Democratic leaders, in response to liberals blaming them for the recent election loss, point to Clinton's victories in 1992 and 1996. Clinton, they argue, appealed to "independent" voters while distancing himself from the party's association with labor and blacks. Did he ever! In order to bolster his racist "law and order" credentials, during the 1992 campaign Clinton, then governor of Arkansas, flew back to Little Rock to personally oversee the execution of a brain-damaged black man, Ricky Ray Rector.

But the key to Clinton's 1992 victory was the abortion issue, the only substantial policy difference between the two parties. With the Republicans, dominated by the Christian right, making the illegalization of abortion a major campaign issue, Clinton was able to gain the votes of many women who would otherwise have voted for Bush Sr. or not voted at all. At the same time, Clinton took over much of the Republican program, notably the abolition of welfare.

As we wrote after the Republicans gained a majority in both houses in the 1994 elections:

"The Republican sweep puts a seal on years of bipartisan social reaction rolling back the minimal gains of the 1960s civil rights movement. With Clinton's yuppie racist 'New' Democrats going out of their way to spit on the party's traditional black and labor constituencies, the field was open for a rout by the more openly racist Republican right."

—WV No. 611, 25 November 1994

The economic policies of the Clinton administration, working in close collaboration with Republican Congressional leaders like Newt Gingrich and Trent Lott, further weakened the labor movement. Despite a large increase in the total

labor force during the economic boom of the 1990s, the proportion of unionized workers has fallen from 15.8 percent when Clinton took office to 13.5 percent in 2001. All of the militant tactics that built the big industrial unions in the 1930s—mass picketing, plant occupations, secondary strikes—have long since been made illegal.

The AFL-CIO bureaucracy hides behind the anti-labor laws to explain away the steady erosion of union strength over the past three decades. As we wrote in "Labor's Gotta Play Hardball to Win" (WV No. 349, 2 March 1984) during the union-busting offensive in the 1980s under the right-wing Republican president Ronald Reagan:

"No decisive gain of labor was ever won in a courtroom or by an act of Congress. Everything the workers movement has won of value has been achieved by mobilizing the ranks of labor in hard-fought struggle, on the picket lines, in



Oakland, February 9: LBL/PDC-initiated united-front protest was first labor-centered mobilization in defense of immigrant and union rights against "war on terror."

plant occupations. What counts is power. The strength of the unions lies in their numbers, their militancy, their organization and discipline and their relationship to the decisive means of production in modern capitalist society. The bosses are winning because the power of labor, its strength to decisively cripple the enemy, has not been brought to bear."

The starting point for mobilizing labor's power is the understanding that this society is divided between two hostile classes whose interests are irreconcilably counterposed: workers who are forced to sell their labor power in order to survive and the property-owning capitalist class to whom their labor power is sold.

The aim of the working class must be not simply to ameliorate the conditions of its exploitation under capitalism through trade-union struggle, but to forge a revolutionary workers party that fights to abolish the system of exploitation as a whole. As Karl Marx wrote in his pamphlet *Wages, Price and Profit*:

"Quite apart from the general servitude involved in the wages system, the working class ought not to exaggerate to themselves the ultimate working of these everyday struggles. They ought not to forget that they are fighting with effects, but not with the causes of those effects.... Instead of the conservative motto, 'A fair day's wage for a fair day's work!' they ought to inscribe on their banner the revolutionary watchword, 'Abolition of the wages system!'"

Insofar as the trade unions do not challenge the system of private property, they necessarily adapt themselves to the capitalist state, which is simply the executive committee of the bourgeoisie as a whole. Thus the labor bureaucracy, whose relatively privileged position derives from its support for capitalism, seeks to demonstrate its reliability to the "democratic" capitalist state and acts to police the labor movement on its behalf.

The South: A Bastion of Racist Reaction

Between the early 1930s and the late 1960s, the Democrats were the dominant party nationally, occupying the White

House for all but eight years. During much of that period they also had a majority in both houses of Congress. The Democrats' ascendancy in Washington was based on the so-called New Deal coalition consisting of organized labor, the black and Jewish minorities, middle-class liberals and...the white-supremacist rulers of the South, a racist police state in which blacks were deprived of every basic democratic right. The New Deal coalition literally extended from black leftist union organizers in the Midwest to Southern sheriffs who were members of the Ku Klux Klan.

Today, both liberals and Republicans, for different reasons, disappear the white-supremacist component of the old Democratic Party coalition. The Republicans want to brand the Democrats as the party of black interests and causes. The liberals don't want to acknowledge that the party of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S.

This cannot be achieved on a narrow economist basis but, on the contrary, will have to directly confront the profound racial divide which depresses the living standards of all Southern workers. On the one side, the black masses will tend to rally behind racially integrated workers struggles against the local white power structure. On the other side, the Southern branch of the American ruling class will resort to police, company goons and professional strikebreakers, and if necessary the Klan and its ilk, while using racist demagoguery to turn backward white workers against the labor movement. Thus, the defense of strike pickets and the need to defeat racist terror will be directly linked.

For a Revolutionary Workers Party!

Not only in the South but in the rest of the country as well, the labor movement cannot go forward or even defend itself against capitalist attacks without active and broad-based support from other sections of American society. The capitalist rulers have fomented racial hatred and made the color bar a fundamental dividing line in this country in order to obscure the irreconcilable class divide between labor and capital. This goes a long way to explaining why the U.S. is the only advanced industrial country without even a reformist labor party claiming to represent the interests of the workers.

Under a class-struggle leadership, the union movement would be in the forefront of all struggles against racist oppression—against the wholesale imprisonment of young black men in the name of "the war on drugs," against the continuing decimation of government social programs for the poor, against the deportation of "illegal" immigrants. It is necessary for labor to lead a struggle for decent housing, education, health care and, above all, jobs for all—welding the power of the multiracial working class to the anger of the ghettos and barrios. It is through these kinds of social struggles that a revolutionary workers party can and must be built.

It is significant in this regard that black and Latino youth are disproportionately represented in the lower ranks of the U.S. armed forces. For those coming of age in the ghettos and barrios, joining the Army or Navy is often the only way to acquire a useful job skill or get three square meals a day. That the most oppressed sections of American society, those most alienated from the white racist ruling class, make up such a large part of the military is a potential Achilles' heel for American imperialism. In the last few years of the Vietnam War, the U.S. conscript army there was semi-mutinuous.

Key to labor struggle against imperialist militarism is breaking the class-collaborationist "national unity" pushed by the bourgeoisie and its labor lieutenants in the AFL-CIO bureaucracy. And that means, first and foremost, breaking the chains forged by the labor tops and the black politicians and preachers that bind the proletariat and the ghetto masses to the Democratic Party of American imperialism.

Things look grim, but working-class struggle can and indeed *must* change the reactionary political climate. To reverse the erosion of social services, to oppose the U.S. rulers' wars of depredation and to defend civil liberties demands the independent class mobilization of working people on behalf of all the oppressed. If there is to be an end to this system of imperialist war, racist oppression and all-sided, grinding misery, the multiracial U.S. working class must be won, through Marxist education and its own experience in struggle, to the perspective of building a workers party that fights for socialist revolution. The capitalist system must be overturned and replaced by the rule of the working class, a workers government that will seize the means of production and establish a planned, collectivized economy as part of an egalitarian socialist society internationally. It is to that task that the Spartacist League, U.S. section of the International Communist League, is dedicated. ■

Truman and John F. Kennedy was also the party of the White Citizens Councils and the KKK.

The Southern Democrats, the Dixiecrats, wielded enormous political power in Washington in the 1930s, '40s and '50s; indeed Roosevelt refused even to support a law against lynching. Congress was effectively controlled by a bloc between Dixiecrats and Republicans. It was this bloc that in the late 1940s pushed through the Taft-Hartley Act, which remains the core of federal anti-labor legislation.

Nonetheless, the labor bureaucrats made little or no effort to unionize the South so as not to disrupt the fragile "unity" of the Democratic Party. As Art Preis, a Trotskyist and labor organizer in the 1930s, wrote in his history of the struggles that built the industrial unions of the CIO:

"It was impossible to support the Democratic Party and not reinforce its Southern wing, the chief political prop of the Jim Crow system and one-party dictatorship in the South. The CIO leaders refused to wage political war against the Southern ruling class because that would undermine the whole Democratic Party.... To this day, the organization of the South remains unachieved because the union leadership is in an alliance with a political machine that is built in large part on the rule of the white supremacists and labor-haters of the South."

—*Labor's Giant Step* (1964)

The New Deal coalition was finally exploded by the civil rights movement. With the passage of the 1960s civil rights acts, a large fraction of the Dixiecrats switched to the Republican Party, taking their racist constituencies with them. Since then, the Republicans have been the dominant party in Washington. The only two Democratic presidents in this period, Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton, were former governors of Southern states.

The unionization of the South, particularly with the shift of manufacturing plants there from the Midwest and Northeast, remains an important key to revitalizing the labor movement in this country.

WORKERS VANGUARD

For Mass Pickets! Down With "New Labour" Strikebreaking!

Victory to the British Firefighters!

NOVEMBER 25—A massive confrontation between Tony Blair's New Labour government and the British working class was set off on November 22 as the 50,000-strong Fire Brigades Union (FBU) launched an eight-day strike. A two-day strike the week before demanding a 40 percent pay raise was the first national firefighters strike in 25 years. The FBU leadership was ready to scuttle the November 22 walkout for a 16 percent offer from an umbrella group of local authorities, but even this miserable offer was too much for the arrogant Blairites. Prime Minister Blair, Bush's little drummer boy for war against Iraq and close ally of the right-wing, labor-hating Italian prime minister Berlusconi, fired off instructions from the NATO summit to nix the settlement.

New Labour ministers and the bourgeois press unleashed a barrage of invective against the firefighters. But as our comrades of the Spartacist League/Britain reported from discussions on the picket lines, this action has struck a hugely responsive chord in British society:

"The strike is extremely popular. While we were at Islington station [in London], some middle-class Asian women drove up to the picket and brought the guys a few boxes of donuts. Earlier in the day at that same station, an armoured car transporting prisoners stopped in traffic right in front of the picket. We all started to hear massive thumping sounds—it was the prisoners banging on the windows from inside the car. After a few seconds of disbelief, this sent the picket line into massive cheers. Across the country, all sorts of people—including middle-class professionals—are stopping by picket lines to express their support to the FBU and drop money in their collection buckets."

As in the two-day strike, the government has deployed the army with antiquated firefighting equipment. But government threats to send cops and troops



November 22: Glasgow firefighters man picket line in widely popular struggle against union-busting Blair Labour government.

through picket lines to seize modern fire engines met with some reluctance. Military chief Sir Michael Boyce complained it would be bad for "morale" if troops were tied up attacking picket lines instead of preparing for war against Iraq. Many strikers now see that there is a link between the looming war against Iraq and the government's attack on them. One firefighter told SL/B supporters that "the longer our strike goes on, the harder it is for the government to wage war against Iraq."

Particularly infuriating to firefighters is that their union is still financially subsidizing Blair's New Labour Party, even as strikers say they now believe Blair is out to bust the FBU. Yet FBU chief Andy Gilchrist has argued to retain the union link to New Labour. Firefighters' initial illusions that they could "go it alone" are

breaking down. While other unions are expressing support, concrete action is key. During the two-day strike, many London Underground (subway) lines were shut down as 350 drivers refused to work in unsafe conditions. During the current strike, drivers refusing to work for safety reasons were sent home without pay. While the Rail, Maritime and Transport (RMT) union leadership under left-talking Bob Crow condemns this employers' action as illegal and disgraceful, the RMT tops have postponed any possible strike against worker victimizations until mid-December.

We reprint below a leaflet being distributed on the picket lines by the Spartacist League/Britain.

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This battle is no longer just about a pay rise for the firefighters but has become

a test of strength between the unions and Blair's New Labour government. Earlier the government gloated that it would "crush" the Fire Brigades Union (FBU). As a government spokesman put it, "Industrial relations have always been Labour's Achilles' heel. But not this time" (*Financial Times*, 16/17 November). But last week's two-day strike was enormously popular among workers and minorities. Millions of public sector workers and others know that their pay and conditions and the very future of their unions depend on the outcome of this battle. The hundreds of thousands who protested the impending war against Iraq several weeks ago know that Blair's priorities are not in the interest of working people. Let's win this strike!

Blair has threatened to use the army to seize and operate modern firefighting equipment—the same army that is regularly employed to carry out the dirty work of the British bourgeoisie abroad, from Iraq to the Balkans to closer to home in

Northern Ireland, where it is an instrument to oppress the Catholic minority. The last time large-scale army strikebreaking was employed was the General Strike of 1926. Now waffling over sending in the troops, the government moots that the cops might be used. In response to threats of army strikebreaking, FBU leader Andy Gilchrist declared that "firefighters are neither prepared nor looking to hinder the armed forces." A leadership that proposes passive acquiescence in the face of such union-busting is not a leadership! This is contrary to the interests of firefighters and all workers looking to the FBU for a lead. A battle conceded before the fight is a battle lost.

No one wants a small, losing confrontation against the forces of the capitalist state. What is necessary are mass pickets to ring the fire stations. This was successful in backing down the Callaghan Labour government when it tried to send troops across picket lines in the 1977 strike. The FBU must not stand alone! Millions of trade unionists are itching to strike a blow against Blair's union-hating government. They must be mobilised to join the FBU picket lines. Bring out RMT and UNISON council workers on strike now! Screw the TUC [Trades Union Congress] and government's "picketing guidelines" and anti-union laws! The only "illegal strike" is one that loses. If troops are used, the FBU must appeal to the soldiers, many of whom are of working-class origin, not to be used for strikebreaking. The union issued such an appeal during the 1977 strike.

Oozing with hatred and fear of union militancy, the government and the capitalist media earlier attacked the FBU leaders as "Scargillites." Now Murdoch's

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Troops using old military fire engines deployed in strikebreaking duty. Blair reviewing British troops in Oman in preparation for imperialist invasion of Iraq.

