

For a Revolutionary Workers Party!

Class-Struggle Road to Black Liberation

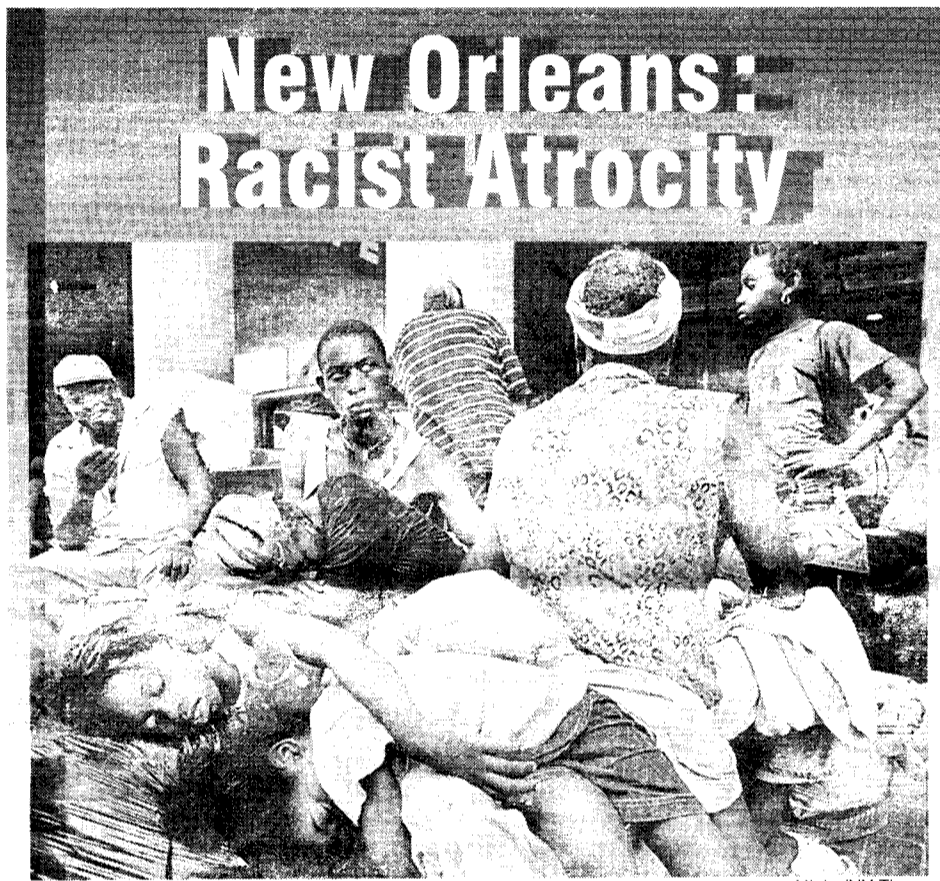
NOVEMBER 22—The abandonment of masses of overwhelmingly black and poor people by America's capitalist rulers in the face of Hurricane Katrina is a crime that must be seared into the memory of working people. Months after the catastrophe, New Orleans remains a rotting shell. Bodies are still being found almost daily. Nearly half the devastated city is without power, without medical care and with most of its population unable to return to their homes.

Barely a day after a moratorium on evictions by Louisiana's governor expired on October 25, record numbers of eviction notices were being served. Some 10,000 people now face homelessness as landlords raise rents by as much as 100 percent. With Dickensian cruelty, FEMA has announced that after the Thanksgiving holiday, it will evict as many as 53,000 families from the motel rooms they've been forced to call home. Thousands more will be evicted following Christmas and New Year's. Earlier this month, FEMA, in an unprecedented move, stopped payment to flood insurance policyholders, outrageously claiming that it had run out of money. This is an outright lie. Of the utterly inadequate \$62.3 billion Washington appropriated for relief after hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma, "more than half—\$37.5 billion—is sitting in FEMA's account, waiting for a purpose" (*Time*, 28 November).

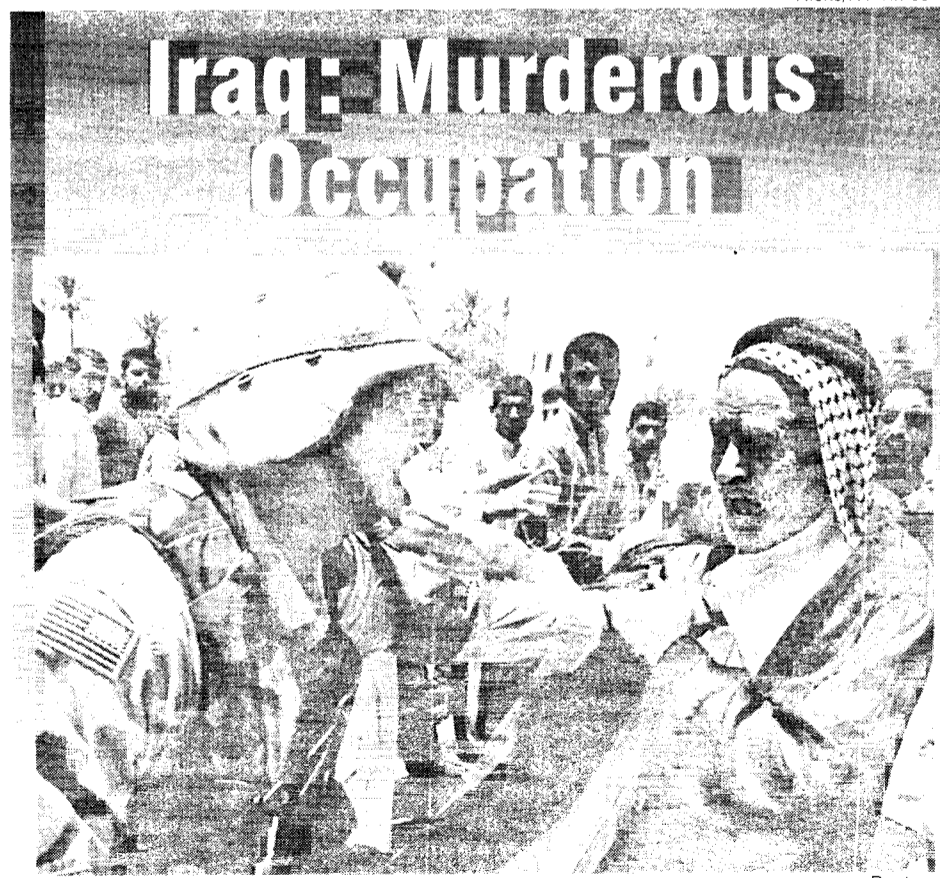
When the State of Louisiana requested \$250 billion in funds, this was contemptuously dismissed in the media as the "Louisiana Looters' Bill." In contrast, Congressmen had no problem voting themselves another pay raise as they recessed for Thanksgiving.

It is the capitalist looters who are making out big. Northrop Grumman is in line for \$2 billion in FEMA funds to rebuild its shipyards, where most of the Navy's surface ships are built. And defense contractor Titan, a company that has its hands in the Abu Ghraib torture scandal, has already received contracts worth over half a million dollars. Meanwhile, nationwide the bourgeoisie continues to intensify its attacks on the working class: on the heels of auto parts supplier Delphi's savage assault on its workers' wages and pensions through bankruptcy maneuvers, GM just announced its plan to cut 30,000 jobs over the next three years.

At the same time, popular support for the Bush administration continues to fall over government corruption scandals, the economy and, mainly, the debacle of



Hicks/NY Times



Reuters

the bloody Iraq occupation. On November 17, Democratic Congressman John Murtha of Pennsylvania, a longtime hawk, called to "redeploy U.S. troops" out of Iraq within six months, although when Republicans forced a House vote on the question, Murtha and all but three Democrats voted against immediate troop

withdrawal. The Democrats' concern is that through its incompetence and savagery in Iraq, the Bush administration is undermining the reactionary "war on terror" and U.S. imperialism's long-term strategic interests. Expressing this frustration, liberal columnist Frank Rich complained that "the percentage of Americans

who now regard fighting terrorism as a top national priority is either in the single or low double digits in every poll" (*New York Times*, 20 November).

The Democratic Party is a capitalist party dedicated to the fundamental interests of U.S. imperialism. As we wrote in "Big Lies and Imperialist War" (WV No. 856, 14 October):

"Growing opposition in the U.S. population to the Iraq occupation, revulsion over the government's role in the death and destruction of black people and the poor after Hurricane Katrina, anger at the attacks on fundamental democratic rights—the situation speaks to the burning need to build a workers party that would organize *class struggle* against the U.S. capitalist rulers.... Only when the multiracial proletariat seizes power from the blood-drenched, arrogant capitalist rulers can we begin to speak of a world rid of imperialist wars and occupations and offering *material security and social justice* for all."

We print below, edited for publication, a presentation by Spartacist League spokesman Erica Jones at an October 20 New York City forum.

* * *

We saw it as necessary to have a forum on the fight for black liberation and the fight for a workers America at this time because events such as the racist atrocity in New Orleans have further exposed the irrationality and anarchy of capitalism, its lies and its unsustainability. The tragedy of New Orleans isn't exactly "all natural," as the capitalist rulers and their media would have you believe. The raw, naked truth is that securing the safety of the black and poor living in New Orleans was not considered profitable. The facilities on the Mississippi River from Baton Rouge to New Orleans constitute the U.S.'s largest port, and the Louisiana coast produces one-third of the country's seafood, one-fifth of its oil and one-quarter of its natural gas. But the capitalist system as it relates to building and securing infrastructure is not rational.

The U.S. government, from Clinton's time to the current Bush administration, knew about the dangers facing New Orleans. They knew that the levees surrounding New Orleans were not built to withstand anything beyond a Level 3 hurricane, that the levees were in poor repair, that the wetlands which provided a barrier to the ocean were rapidly receding. Yet before hurricane season, funding for flood control was drastically slashed as more and more money was provided for the war in Iraq.

The capitalist class and the parties that uphold its rule—Democrats and Republicans—also knew that if a hurricane the size of Katrina hit New Orleans, given the social structure of America, the rich would be protected as they always are—on higher ground. Yet bourgeois

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NBA Racism

7 November 2005

To the editor:

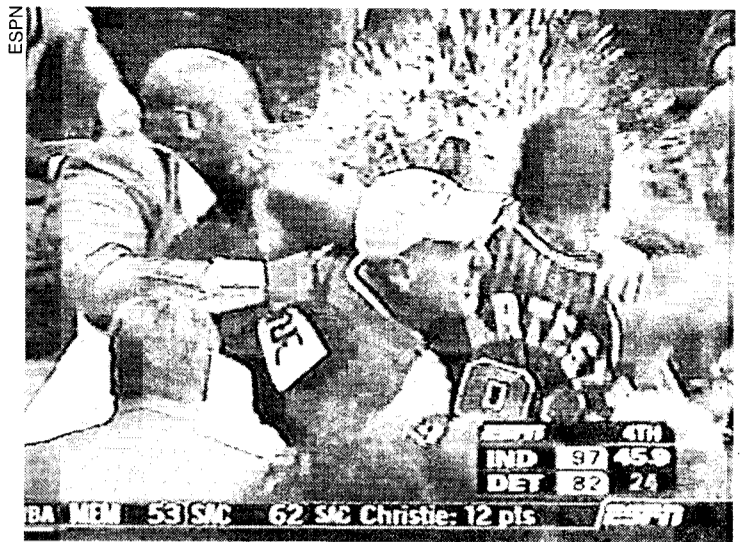
As the *New York Times* noted with the opening of another National Basketball Association (NBA) season, November 19 marks the anniversary of the now-famous brawl in the Indiana Pacers/Detroit Pistons game in Auburn Hills, Michigan. Black Pacers forward Ron Artest was suspended for a full season for punching a fan. Two black teammates were barred for at least 15 and 30 games respectively. This was a travesty that captures all too well the treatment of black people in this society—even those who have “made it.”

It turned my stomach to see Artest lying on the scorers’ table, being pelted by beer, food and who knows what else by white fans in the \$300-plus seats. At least one press account said the “N” word was used. Why shouldn’t Artest go after the racist pig who did this? I know Artest is not a freedom rider, but the image that popped into my head the more I

watched the repeated replays was that of the civil rights activists being pelted with flour and other foodstuffs at the Greensboro, North Carolina, Woolworth’s lunch counter in 1960 and elsewhere. Nobody else would have been expected to take this without standing up for himself. (Compare Artest’s treatment with baseball icon Ty Cobb—a racist sociopath—who once attacked with impunity a paraplegic fan for needling him.) Why are young black athletes expected to?

Not surprisingly, those screaming the loudest for Artest’s suspension were the sports press corps. To give a facade of evenhandedness they also criticized the fans who were involved. But it is the very same sportswriters who play a key role in inciting the fans. Their basic line is that young black players are nothing but overpaid, spoiled thugs who should kiss everybody’s ass that they have the chance to play professional basketball for money—if not for this they’d likely be in prison.

November 2004: Pacers forward Ron Artest hit with beer thrown by white fans.



The vilification of Artest and other black athletes is an essential component of the criminalization of a generation of black youth in a society that has no jobs for young black men and therefore no education to offer other than that found in a prison cell.

In their glorified gossip columns these writers daily scream their resentment for the salaries the athletes command, the women they get to sleep with and adulation they get. They whip up pseudo-populist resentment against the players—not the multimillionaire owners who ply the sportswriters with perks, comps and martinis—for the high price of tickets which the “working stiff” (like the six-figure salaried sportswriters) have to pay to see them play. (In contrast nobody complains about the high cost of movie tickets that pays the \$10-20 million per film that Ben Affleck gets for such artistic gems as *Gigli*.) The players’ personal lives are retailed in the gutter press, with their jobs put on the line every day by innuendo. Have a couple of bad games and the suggestion of drug or alcohol “abuse” is likely to appear, and with it the threat of being cut, prosecution and cop terror. It is in the context of this everyday dehumanizing treatment of black athletes that the fans at Auburn Hills, a white suburb of black Detroit, felt they could do and say anything to Artest and his teammates.

The Artest suspension was intended as a warning to all young black players to toe the line or be cast back out on the street. While basketball is seen as a “black sport” it is increasingly less so. The influx of successful European ball-players, which will be accelerated by the embarrassing losses of the U.S. Olympic team last year, means there are fewer blacks in the NBA and will be even less in the immediate years to come. The *New York Times* quoted former NBA star Charles Barkley, “The NBA has a double standard because fans are looking at a black league. Larry Bird [1980s great white hope for the Celtics] touched on it last year when he said the league needs more white players.” The attack on Artest is inseparable from the attack on black people, especially young black men, throughout this society.

To purge itself of the “hip hop” image, the NBA recently adopted a new

dress code prohibiting chains, pendants and medallions, sunglasses worn indoors, shorts and T-shirts. Cited as the godfather of the young players to whom these restrictions are directed is Philadelphia 76ers star Allen Iverson. From the moment he donned a Sixers uniform, Iverson has played under the shadow of a “criminal” past. What does that criminality consist of? When he was a star high school player in Hampton, Virginia, Iverson and some friends were set upon by a gang of racist thugs at a bowling alley. They defended themselves. A brawl ensued. As would be expected, only the black students were charged. Iverson was convicted and spent four months in jail. Throughout his entire college career and early pro years Iverson was branded a troublemaker and a felon, without anybody—most black sports fans included—knowing what really happened. This marked not only him, but a generation of black NBA players as well.

Having “made it” in the world of sports, like the entertainment business, does not spare these black stars the contempt regularly meted out to black people. The half-time show at the NBA all-star game was a southern country band. When the show was over Charles Barkley observed, what’s this NASCAR stuff doing here? With hundreds of black performers and record executives in attendance, this year’s Grammy Awards included a tribute to Southern Rock, which featured the Lynyrd Skynyrd song “Sweet Home Alabama,” a segregationist anthem written in response to Neil Young’s anti-lynching song “Southern Man.”

Eighteen years ago *Workers Vanguard* (“Racism in Sports,” No. 426, 17 April 1987) noted, “Ever since the 1830s when slaveholders imported boxing from England to bet on which slave (in plantation colors) could best pummel the ‘property’ of a rival plantation, black athletes have been used to entertain and make millions for their bosses, only to be chucked aside when their talents were no longer profitable.” We added, “Sports is about the only profession where, for a few short, brutal years, blacks can earn six- and seven-figure incomes. But even for those on top, the ‘American Dream’ is a nightmare.” As the case of Ron Artest shows, nothing has changed over the past two decades.

Paul C.

Marxism and the State



TROTSKY

A vital lesson drawn by Marxists from the experience of the Paris Commune—when the city’s proletariat briefly held power in 1871—was that the working class cannot emancipate itself by taking hold of the machinery of the capitalist state. In his introduction to Karl Marx’s The Civil War in France, Friedrich Engels explained the necessity for the working class to smash the bourgeois state and establish its own class dictatorship. It is through the victory of proletarian revolution internationally that

the material basis would be laid for the elimination of classes and the withering away of the state.

From the very outset the Commune was compelled to recognise that the working class, once come to power, could not go on managing with the old state machine; that in order not to lose again its only just conquered supremacy, this working class must, on the one hand, do away with all the old repressive machinery previously used against it itself, and, on the other, safeguard itself against its own deputies and officials, by declaring them all, without exception, subject to recall at any moment. What had been the characteristic attribute of the former state? Society had created its own organs to look after its common interests, originally through simple division of labour. But these organs, at whose head was the state power, had in the course of time, in pursuance of their own special interests, transformed themselves from the servants of society into the masters of society. This can be seen, for example, not only in the hereditary monarchy, but equally so in the democratic republic. Nowhere do “politicians” form a more separate and powerful section of the nation than precisely in North America. There, each of the two major parties which alternately succeed each other in power is itself in turn controlled by people who make a business of politics, who speculate on seats in the legislative assemblies of the Union as well as of the separate states, or who make a living by carrying on agitation for their party and on its victory are rewarded with positions....

The state is nothing but a machine for the oppression of one class by another, and indeed in the democratic republic no less than in the monarchy; and at best an evil inherited by the proletariat after its victorious struggle for class supremacy, whose worst sides the victorious proletariat, just like the Commune, cannot avoid having to lop off at once as much as possible until such time as a generation reared in new, free social conditions is able to throw the entire lumber of the state on the scrap heap.

Of late, the German philistine has once more been filled with wholesome terror at the words: Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Well and good, gentlemen, do you want to know what this dictatorship looks like? Look at the Paris Commune. That was the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

—Friedrich Engels, 1891 Introduction to *The Civil War in France* by Karl Marx (1871)



LENIN

WORKERS VANGUARD

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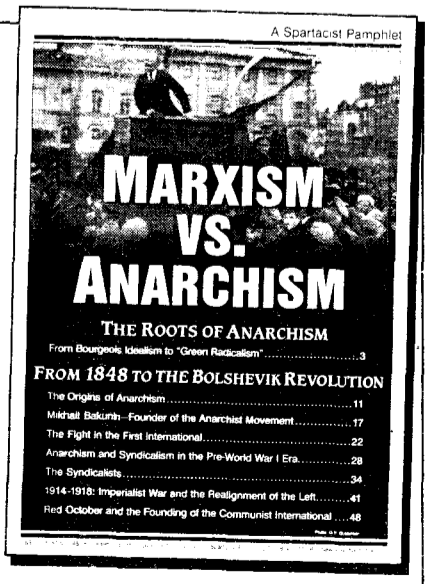
No. 859

25 November 2005

This pamphlet presents a comprehensive historical analysis of the origins of anarchism and the views of its leading figures through the 1871 Paris Commune and the split in the First International and discusses the impact of the 1917 October Revolution. The first article addresses radical youth today who, in an ideological climate conditioned by the so-called “death of communism,” are drawn to all variants of anarchism, Green radicalism and left liberalism. The pamphlet is dedicated to the fight to win a new generation to revolutionary Marxism.

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Young Spartacus

Campus Cops Attack Black SFSU Professor Hands Off Antwi Akom! Drop All Charges!

We reprint below a November 7 statement issued by the Bay Area Spartacus Youth Club in response to the arrest of Africana Studies professor Antwi Akom at San Francisco State University (SFSU) on October 25. Professor Akom had dropped by his campus office that night to pick up a book and was arrested by campus cops as he hurried back to his two children asleep in his car. In a letter to the San Francisco Bay View, Akom stated: "My children asked me: 'Daddy, why did you leave us for so long?' Because they treat us like disposable people, because they treat zoo animals better than they do the Black, Brown, Arab and yes some white folks too, in jail. The pain and suffering that I witnessed has shaken me to my core" (SFBayView.com, 9 November).

Although the false charges of resisting arrest and assaulting a police officer were reduced from felonies to misdemeanors at a November 1 arraignment, Professor Akom still faces up to one year in jail. In a letter to the editor based on the following statement, which was printed in the SFSU newspaper the Golden Gate [X]press on November 10, the SYC stated: "Anti-racist students must link arms with the multiracial working class, the only force in society with the social power and interests to make real social change through socialist revolution."

Capitalist America's anti-black racism reared its ugly head once again at SFSU when, on the night of October 25, Professor Antwi Akom was arrested going into his own office after hours. Akom was charged with two felonies (the charges were later reduced to misdemeanors),



Lubin/SF Chronicle photos
Professor Antwi Akom at November 1 arraignment. Right: SFSU students and faculty support Akom at arraignment.



resisting arrest and assaulting a police officer—adding "being on a university campus" to the list of things that it is illegal to do while being black. Outrageously, his bail was set at \$51,000. **Hands off Professor Akom! Drop all charges!**

The arrest of Professor Akom threatens the right of all black students, workers and faculty to be on campus. For decades the American rulers have been saying "drop dead" to black youth. The rising costs of tuition and the gutting of affirmative action are a racist purge driving black youth from the universities—locking them into ghettos and then into prison unless they enlist as cannon fodder for the imperialist military. The role of the cops on campus is no different from their role on the streets—subjugation through terror. **Cops off campus!**

We warn students against illusions that

the administration can be relied upon to end racism on campus. The administration's role is to make sure that the campus is administered in the interests of the capitalists, including enforcing their bogus "war on terror," which targets blacks, immigrants, leftists and labor. The Spartacus Youth Club has defended targets of the SFSU administration, most recently when the International Socialist Organization and Students Against War were sanctioned for protesting military recruiters on campus. Last year, a 15-year-old black high school student was beaten and arrested on this campus. In 2004, when four women students from predominantly Muslim countries defended themselves against the College Republicans who called them "terrorists," we demanded, "No administration reprisals! Down with the right-wing witch-

hunt!" In 2001, we joined with the General Union of Palestine Students in protest against the administration's handing over immigrant students' records to the FBI, demanding, "Down with SFSU collaboration with FBI anti-immigrant witchhunt! Defend immigrant rights!"

This history shows that [SFSU president] Corrigan's recent claim that "We are a campus community that identifies itself by a central commitment to social justice and equity" is nothing but a sick joke. The truth is that the administration is feeling the pressure from enraged students and faculty and launched an "investigation" team of former SF mayor Willie Brown and Louise H. Renne to put a lid on protest. But don't be fooled.

The Democratic Party figure Willie Brown is a black front man whose job is to make it easier to enforce segregation and oppression through brutal cop terror and economic marginalization in San Francisco's poor black neighborhoods. Louise H. Renne is a hangman of the capitalist injustice system, the president of the Police Commission that oversees the San Francisco police and its "Office of Citizen Complaints," whose purpose is to whitewash the cops' image.

The Spartacus Youth Club fights for free, quality education for all. Students who want to fight for equality must link arms with the multiracial working class, the only social force in society with the power to make real social change. **For student/worker/faculty control of the university! Abolish the administration!**

Drop all charges against Professor Akom now! ■

Racist "Ghetto Party" at University of Chicago

We reprint below, edited for publication, an October 31 leaflet issued by the Chicago Spartacus Youth Club in response to a racist "ghetto party" thrown by students at a University of Chicago dorm. The leaflet was widely circulated on campus, and SYC members intervened at a meeting of minority students where the party was the focus of the discussion. The controversy was featured in the Chicago Tribune and picked up on all the local TV news shows, as well as MTV.com. The U of C administration was quick to try to salvage its tarnished image, calling a "campus climate" meeting on November 8 that drew over 300 students. A member of the SYC intervened at this meeting, turning his back to the panel of campus bureaucrats. He warned students against any illusions in the racist administration whose job is to run the campus in the interest of capitalism. Our comrade motivated our program of revolutionary integrationism, based on the understanding that black oppression, which is the bedrock of racist American capitalism, can only be ended through revolutionary struggle that overthrows the profit system. The SYC also submitted a copy of the leaflet to the campus "progressive" newspaper Diskord, but they responded that they could not publish it unless "the Marxist rhetoric" was "toned down quite a bit."

It was a racist outrage when several students at May House held a "Straight Thuggin Ghetto Party" on October 14. Students were encouraged to dress "ghetto," and showed up flashing mock gang signs, drinking from 40-ounce bottles in

Outrage!

paper bags, and wearing handcuffs. The only thing missing from this disgusting spectacle were students wearing black-face! When several black students arrived to investigate, they were told, "You guys should've come earlier because you're far more ghetto than us"! And the garbage has continued, with some students setting up a Web page called "People Against Ghetto Parties Are Stupid" on the campus's online "facebook," mocking the just anger of many students who were appalled by the party.

It speaks volumes about the times that students thought they could act out these racist stereotypes and get away with it.

The racist atrocity that recently took place in New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina laid bare the nature of the capitalist system and showed quite clearly the contempt the ruling class holds for the black population. The capitalist rulers abandoned thousands of poor blacks to die as the city was submerged in water, and then proceeded to brand blacks who were forced to find food in abandoned stores and hotels as "looters," while whites who did the same thing were hailed as heroically "finding food." For two decades an entire generation of black youth has been criminalized through the racist "war on drugs" carried out by the capitalist Democrats and Republicans alike. The reality for poor black people today is segregation into ghetto hellholes that are more akin to prisons than neighborhoods, enforced with rampant cop terror.

From the days of chattel slavery to the present, black oppression is the foundation upon which the American system of capitalist exploitation rests. It is not the result of bad ideas, nor is the source of racism to be found in some mythical "human nature." Rather, black oppression has its material basis in the fact that black people are an oppressed race-color caste, in the main segregated at the bottom of American society. Black workers, who compose the majority of the black population, are a specially oppressed layer of the proletariat: last hired in times of economic boom, first fired during a recession. Ghetto youth are increasingly viewed as an expendable surplus population unworthy of being provided even the basic needs of subsistence. The genocidal logic of America's rulers was captured in right-wing bigot William Bennett's recent statement on his "Morning in America" radio show that "you could abort every black baby in this country, and your crime rate would go down."

The special oppression of black people in America cuts across class lines; even the thin layer of black students who make it to an elite college (black students are only 4 percent of the U of C student body) are still targeted with raw racism. The beating of black grad student Clemmie Carthans last year by two University of Chicago cops illustrates this point. At 3:30 in the morning on January 24, 2004, having already stopped Carthans simply because he was a black man on the U of C campus, the campus cops brutally beat Carthans after they saw him hugging a white woman.

The University of Chicago does not exist in a vacuum, detached from the outside world, but is itself a bastion of white bourgeois privilege dedicated to the maintenance of the capitalist system.

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SYC protests racism at U of C: March 2004 student protest against beating of black student Clemmie Carthans by campus cops.



Fight Government Repression!

This fall, a series of rallies against government repression, initiated by the Partisan Defense Committee, drew hundreds of union members, activists, students and socialists. Held in New York on September 15, in Chicago and Berkeley on October 1, and in Los Angeles on October 8, these united-front events helped broaden support, particularly in the labor movement, for the causes of Mumia Abu-Jamal, Lynne Stewart and Assata Shakur—fighters against oppression victimized by the racist capitalist “justice” system.

Participants discussed the need for massive protest against the government’s all-sided attacks on democratic rights. As the PDC—a legal and social defense organization associated with the Marxist Spartacist League—pointed out in its leaflet building for the rallies:

“The bloodthirsty U.S. government’s frontal assault on democratic rights is being carried out under the pretext of the bogus ‘war on terrorism.’ Basic rights, won through the hard-fought class struggles of the 1930s union organizing drives and the social struggles of the 1950s through the early 1970s—in the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War protests, for women’s and gay rights—are being run through the shredder by the Bush administration with the full agreement of the Democratic Party. Political opponents face being imprisoned with no right to an attorney or a trial. The government asserts the ‘right’ to disappear and torture its opponents—to lock them up and throw away the key.”

The leaflet stated that the Mumia, Stewart and Shakur cases “must be rallying points for labor, blacks and defenders of civil liberties.... Their fight is a fight for us all.” Passing the bucket at the four events raised some \$2,750, which was divided between the defense committees for Mumia and Stewart.

Leftist attorney Lynne Stewart is facing years in prison for her vigorous legal defense of Islamic fundamentalist cleric Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman. Her conviction threatens the Sixth Amendment right to an attorney (see “Lynne Stewart Speaks at NYC Rally,” WV No. 855, 30 September). She is scheduled for sentencing along with her co-defendants, Mohamed Yousry and Ahmed Abdel Sattar, on January 20 in New York City. Stewart’s speech in New York was videotaped and played at the West Coast rallies.

Assata Shakur, former member of the Black Panthers and the Black Liberation Army, and two companions, Zayd Malik Shakur and Sundiata Acoli, were ambushed by New Jersey state troopers in 1973. The troopers immediately opened fire, killing Zayd Shakur, and one of the cops was killed with a bullet from a police revolver. The two remaining militants were convicted of killing the cop and their own comrade. While Sundiata Acoli has been in prison for over 30 years, Assata escaped prison hell in 1979 and eventually fled to Cuba, where she still resides.

Addressing Assata Shakur’s case were Brother Sadki “Shep” Ojore Oughala of the N.Y. Hands Off Assata Shakur Coalition and Dara Cooper, Hands Off Assata

PDC Rallies



Chicago united-front rally against government repression initiated by the PDC, October 1.

Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Hands Off Lynne Stewart! Hands Off Assata Shakur!



COC Productions



AP



Elana Levy

Campaign/Chicago Coalition. In her NYC speech, Stewart recalled that years ago she, like many others, had a sign on her door reading, “Assata Shakur Is Welcome Here.” She added, “Now if you put that on your door, you could be accused of materially aiding terrorism.” In May, the federal Department of Justice and state of New Jersey raised the bounty on Assata Shakur’s head to \$1 million, while the Feds added her name to domestic and international “terrorist” lists.

Mumia Abu-Jamal, America’s foremost class-war prisoner, has been on death row for over 23 years, falsely convicted of killing a cop. Mountains of proof of his frame-up and the conspiracy that put him in prison have been compiled for the world to see, including the confession of Arnold Beverly, that he, not Jamal, killed Daniel Faulkner in 1981. But the capitalist rulers want to see the execution of the ex-Black Panther Party spokesman, MOVE supporter, award-

winning journalist and outspoken voice for all the oppressed. Over the past two decades, the PDC and Spartacist League have fought to bring this case into union halls and workplaces from the U.S. to South Africa, seeking to mobilize the social power of the working class to free Mumia and abolish the racist death penalty.

Mumia provided the rallies with taped greetings and a commentary on the Hurricane Katrina disaster. Addressing Mumia’s cause in NYC was Pam Africa of the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal. Monique Code read a statement of support for the rally from Mumia’s son Jamal Hart. Imprisoned since 1998 on bogus firearms possession charges, Jamal was targeted for prominently speaking out in defense of his father. Robert R. Bryan, lead counsel for Mumia, spoke in the Bay Area. Mumia’s sister Lydia Barashango traveled from Philadelphia to speak at the Chicago and Los Angeles rallies (see article page 6). Jonathan Piper of the PDC, who was a member of Mumia’s defense team from 1990 to 1999, also addressed the Chicago rally.

The West Coast forums were chaired by the PDC’s Valerie West, who had worked with Stuart Hanlon and others in defense of framed-up Black Panther Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt). Geronimo fought for 27 years to prove his innocence before winning his freedom in 1997. West particularly aided him against attempts by state prison authorities to punish him for continuing to struggle for his freedom. In her remarks, West made special mention of a Spartacist League/Spartacus Youth League lawsuit against the FBI over earlier “terrorism” guidelines. In 1984, the government conceded the central point of

our legal challenge: that Marxist advocacy cannot be equated with violence or terrorism. This was a modest but genuine blow to the government’s efforts to criminalize leftist political dissent. The broad repressive sweep of the current “war on terror” makes it all the more urgent to mobilize in defense of its victims.

Mobilize Labor’s Power!

Based on the need to mobilize labor, blacks and defenders of democratic rights independent of the capitalist parties, the PDC-initiated rallies were in stark contrast to the dime-a-dozen liberal-reformist “Anybody but Bush” gatherings that serve to reinforce Democratic Party lesser-evilism. United-front defense actions can be catalysts for the open political debate and militant struggle needed to combat the rulers’ war on black people, immigrants, women and labor. In taking up the cause of the class-war prisoners, the trade unions will be striking a blow against the very capitalist state whose purpose is to repress working people and minorities. It is through such struggles that the working class will develop the consciousness to wield its social power and organization in a revolutionary fight to smash the murderous, racist capitalist state and replace it with a workers state. The Spartacist League seeks to forge a revolutionary workers party to lead the workers in this battle.

In motivating a class-struggle approach, PDC rally moderators stressed that while all legal avenues must be pursued in cases that are in the interests of the entire working class, no faith must be placed in the “justice” of the capitalist courts. As Rachel Wolkenstein explained in NYC: “Class-struggle defense means mobilizing the social power of the working class with its allies to create the type of pressure needed to obtain Mumia’s freedom, overturn Lynne’s conviction and defend Assata from the bounty hunters” (see article page 5).

The rallies featured speakers from unions representing thousands of workers. The Berkeley rally was addressed by Brian McKeever, Vice President of Local 9 of the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association, whose strike against Northwest Airlines is important for the entire labor movement. Jack Heyman, Executive Board member of International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 10, also spoke there. New York speakers included James Webb, President Emeritus of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, who has spoken out for Mumia for many years; Cleo Silvers of 1199ers for Peace and Justice, the Communist Workers Organization and Workers to Free Mumia; and Chris Silvera, Secretary-Treasurer of Teamsters Local 808 and chairman of the Teamsters National Black Caucus. Mike Elliott,

continued on page 6



WV Photo

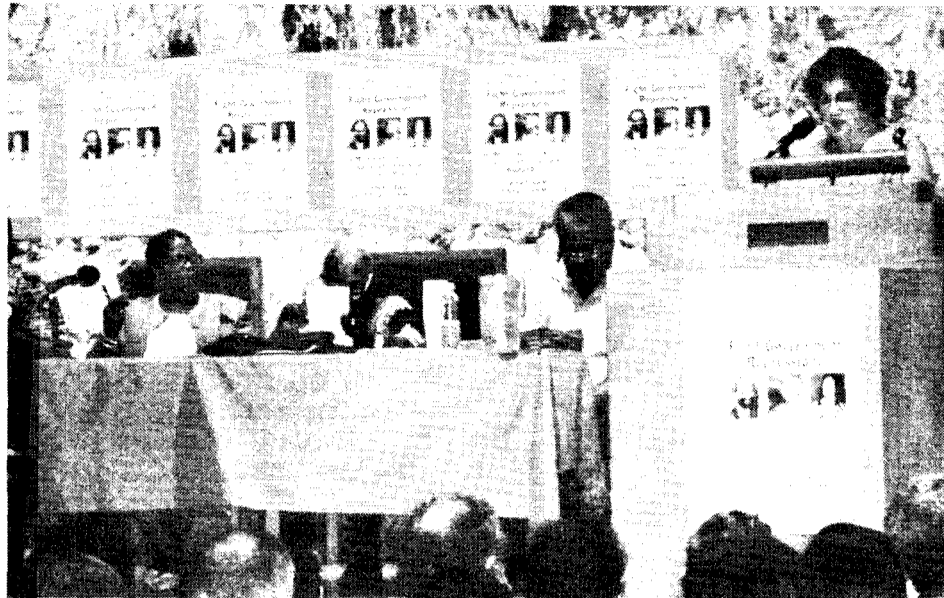
Oakland, 9 February 2002: PDC banner at labor-centered demonstration in defense of immigrant rights, against USA Patriot Act.

For Class-Struggle Defense!

We print below the opening remarks by Rachel Wolkenstein of the Partisan Defense Committee at the September 15 New York City rally against government repression, which she chaired.

This rally and others which will follow in Chicago, the Bay Area and Los Angeles were called by the Partisan Defense Committee a couple of months ago. Our purpose: to rally against Lynne Stewart's conviction and before her sentencing. She faces 30 years' imprisonment—this would be effectively a life sentence. We rally to show defiance of the one-million-dollar bounty placed on Assata Shakur's head like a fugitive slave warrant. We rally to mobilize to free Mumia Abu-Jamal and abolish the racist death penalty.

Since the September 11 attacks, Bush and the Democrats have used the bodies of those killed in the criminal attack on the World Trade Center as a bloody shirt to launch the so-called war on terror as well as the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. The reality is that the "war on terror" is nothing but a pretext for a frontal assault on democratic rights and an attempt to invoke "national unity"—the notion that the exploited have the same



September 15: PDC's Rachel Wolkenstein addressing New York City rally against repression.

energy in opposition to the policies of this racist capitalist system and in defense of the very kinds of people—poor, black, those specially targeted by the state—who have been criminally victimized in the aftermath of Katrina.

My name is Rachel Wolkenstein. I have been counsel for the Partisan Defense Committee since it began in 1974. I was part of Mumia Abu-Jamal's legal defense team from 1995 through June 1999, in charge of the defense investigation. It was this investigation which led to obtaining Arnold Beverly's confession that he, not Mumia, shot and killed Police Officer Daniel Faulkner. In July 1999, I resigned from the legal team, along with Jon Piper, when lead attorney Leonard Weinglass and co-counsel Dan Williams precluded Mumia from putting this evidence of his innocence before the courts.

The Partisan Defense Committee is sponsoring this united-front rally to bring together, in defense of Mumia, Lynne and Assata, speakers and organizations across a spectrum of political beliefs, each raising his own views on these vital cases and how to fight to win. The PDC is based on the principles of non-sectarian, class-struggle defense. This purpose is in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League. We have a Marxist worldview; this is a class society. A handful of capitalists control and reap the wealth of the world for their own benefit, but this wealth is created by the many who labor. We say: Those who labor must rule!

The interests of the capitalist class, including the political parties which represent it, are totally opposed to the interests of the working class and minorities. And in the United States, black oppression is the bedrock of capitalism. Thus, the PDC is partisan, unconditionally, on the side of the working people and the oppressed. We stand for pursuing all legal avenues in defense of the cases and causes that are in the interests of the working people. But we place all our faith in the power of the masses and no faith whatsoever in the justice of the courts.

The capitalist system and its courts cannot be fundamentally reformed. We stand for the independence of the working people from the capitalist state and its parties—Democratic, Republican, Green—regardless of whether the politician is white or black. Class-struggle defense means mobilizing the social power of the working class with its allies to create the type of pressure needed to obtain Mumia's freedom, overturn Lynne's conviction and defend Assata from the bounty hunters—a mass movement, centrally based on the independent power of the working class.

The PDC is also non-sectarian. That means we defend any member of the workers' movement—workers, leftists, fighters against black oppression—who suffers persecution by the capitalist courts because of his activities or opinion. These are class-war prisoners. We stand on the old IWW (Wobbly) slogan, "An injury to one is an injury to all!"

Since 1974, we have conducted legal and social defense work in accordance with these principles. The PDC cut its teeth organizing international defense campaigns for Latin American leftists in the grip of bloody military dictatorship. We launched fundraising campaigns for striking British miners in the mid 1980s, as well as for the people of the Afghan city of Jalalabad when it was besieged by CIA-backed Islamic reactionaries following the Soviet withdrawal in 1989. We have initiated mass labor/black mobilizations to stop the KKK and Nazis from marching in cities across the country, including the nearly 10,000-strong mobilization in New York City in October 1999.

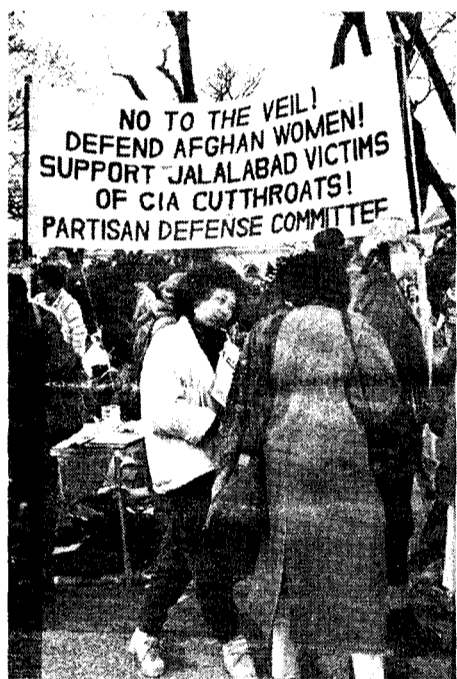
In Oakland in February 2002, the PDC and the Labor Black League for Social Defense initiated a united-front demonstration centered on the powerful ILWU longshore union in defense of immigrants and against the USA Patriot Act. The PDC, along with the Spartacist League, has filed friends of the court briefs in the Federal Court of Appeals and in the U.S. Supreme Court challenging the government's "enemy combatant" policy in the case of Jose Padilla. This is the government's attempt to establish its so-called right to disappear people.

Twenty years ago, the PDC revived the tradition of monthly stipends for those in prison for standing up to racist capitalist oppression. Over the years, we have provided financial support to 35 prisoners on three continents. A number were former supporters of the Black Panther Party, notably Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt), who was in prison for 27 years for a murder the cops and FBI knew he did not commit. Among the first stipend recipients was Ramona Africa, the sole adult survivor of the 1985 bombing of the MOVE commune in Philadelphia by the FBI, the ATF [Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms] and the Philly cops under black Democratic mayor Wilson Goode.

In 1987, MOVE prisoners asked us to take up the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal, and we threw ourselves into his defense at a time when he was virtually unknown. Beginning in 1989, we held rallies across the country and internationally to mobilize support for Mumia and to fight to abolish the racist death penalty. We have emphasized that this is a political death penalty case which illustrates the racism endemic in this country in its cruelest, most vicious form and lays bare the essence of the capitalist state. We are opposed to the death penalty as a matter of principle. It is not for the state to determine who is to live or to die.

Our work succeeded in getting broader forces to take up Mumia's case, although most of them generally did this not on

continued on page 7



April 1989: PDC raising funds for people of Jalalabad, besieged by U.S.-backed Afghan Islamic reactionaries, at Washington, D.C. abortion rights demo.

interests as the exploiters who rule this society. Under this "national unity" umbrella, the capitalist rulers carry out their brutal policies toward black people, the poor, immigrants, and have launched a repressive assault on the working class and leftists.

These rallies could not be more timely. The criminal racist policies of the capitalist state carried out by its two parties, the Democrats and Republicans, have been laid bare in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. The class and race divisions in the United States are clear. The devastation and death, which has been inflicted primarily on black and poor people, was not caused by nature. It was manmade, produced by the rulers' criminal neglect and contempt toward the poor and blacks. The death and destruction there was caused by the operation of the capitalist system. This anarchic, profit-driven system cannot even provide for the safety and welfare of the population. That system has to go!

The same capitalist state which is responsible for the savage occupation of Iraq and the human disaster on the Gulf Coast also attempts to silence, imprison and kill the voice of the voiceless, Mumia Abu-Jamal, radical attorney Lynne Stewart and Assata Shakur. These are fighters who raise their voices, give their lives and

Holiday Appeal Benefits for Class-War Prisoners

Bay Area

Sunday, December 11
2 to 6 p.m.

Oakland YWCA Tea Room
1515 Webster Street

For more information: (510) 839-0852
P.O. Box 77462
San Francisco, CA 94107

Los Angeles

Saturday, December 10
2 to 6 p.m.

Mount Hollywood
Congregational Church
4607 Prospect Avenue

For more information: (213) 380-8897
or e-mail:
partisandefense-la@sbcglobal.net



New York

Friday, December 9
6 to 11 p.m.

6 Harrison St. (at Hudson)
Manhattan
(Take 1 or 9 to Franklin St.)

For more information: (212) 406-4252
P.O. Box 99, Canal St. Sta.
New York, NY 10013

Chicago

Sunday, December 11
3 to 7 p.m.

United Electrical Hall
37 S. Ashland (at Monroe)

For more information: (416) 563-0442
P.O. Box 802867
Chicago, IL 60680

Toronto

Saturday, December 10
7 to 10 p.m.

Steelworkers Hall
25 Cecil Street
(near Queens Park Sta.)

For more information: (416) 593-4138
P.O. Box 314, Station B
Toronto, Ontario M5T 2W1

This is not charity—it's a duty and an act of solidarity with those in prison. Their fight is our fight!

SPONSOR: PARTISAN DEFENSE COMMITTEE

PDC Rallies...

(continued from page 4)

UAW Local 551 Education Committee chairman, spoke in Chicago, while the Los Angeles rally featured Henry Walton, host of the KPFK radio program "Labor Review."

From the podium and the floor, discussions brought out the critical difference between a class-struggle strategy and one based on appealing to the capitalist state and political parties. On the West Coast, Don Cane of the Bay Area Labor Black League for Social Defense addressed the recent split among the AFL-CIO tops and called for a political fight against all wings of the labor bureaucracy:

"Both Sweeney's AFL-CIO and Stern's Change to Win Coalition forsake class struggle in support of the capitalist profit system and are tied, hand and foot, to the capitalist Democratic Party. They whine to the capitalist government for concessions to help them silence the ranks of American labor. They will barter with the Republicans for votes and flirt with the capitalist Green Party, too, as they pander to the racism and chauvinism that divides the workers. The multiracial revolutionary workers party must fight for trade-union independence from all capitalist parties and defend the economic interests of all workers with resolute struggle."

A prominent focus of the rallies was the social disaster in the Gulf Coast region, a racist atrocity that threw a harsh light on the grotesque inequities of the U.S. capitalist system. As Don Alexander of the New York Labor Black League and Spartacist League Central Committee said, "Hurricane Katrina has ripped away the tattered facade of the U.S. government as 'of the people, by the people, for the people,' exposing the racism, venality and ineptitude of the White House gang. It also demonstrated the utter irrationality and anarchy of the profit-driven capitalist system.... The capitalists are not fit to rule. The workers have to fight to run this world" (see WV No. 855, 30 September).

Chris Silvera, who has long been a supporter of Mumia's cause, had just returned from a tour of the Gulf Coast. Silvera recounted the desperation he had seen there and spoke to the need to defend workers' gains and the fight for jobs and social service programs. However, Silvera said nothing about the class struggle needed to wrench such gains from the capitalists. Instead he called on everyone to turn out for the October 15 Washington, D.C. "Millions More March" led by the sinister Louis Farrakhan. Spartacist speakers and supporters responded by exposing the "Million Worker March Movement" (MWMM) led by Silvera and other left-talking union officials. While it claims to stand for the "class independence" of the workers, the MWMM made its mark last year by rallying in D.C. two weeks before the elections in a thinly veiled attempt to get workers disaffected with the two capitalist parties to vote for John Kerry. At the time, Silvera called the action "a crucial vehicle for voter mobilization."

It is a sign of the demoralization of the labor misleadership that, coming off Kerry's defeat, its "left" components are doing the donkey work for the anti-working-class, anti-Semitic, anti-woman

Speeches from PDC Rallies

We print below edited extracts from a selection of speeches at the PDC-initiated rallies against government repression.

Standish E. Willis

Chicago Conference of Black Lawyers

There's a saying that we used to have back when I grew up and developed my political consciousness. As I study his-



tee tory, it is certainly true: this country has basically three ways to deal with social unrest and those in our communities who dare show leadership on behalf of our people. One way, of course, is to try to co-opt you, and that has been very effective. Another way—if they can't co-opt you—is to harass you and to scare the hell out of you, and to keep you out of the movement because you are too afraid. Lynne Stewart's case is a case about that. It's to scare progressive lawyers away from the movement. And a third way, if they can't co-opt you and scare you away, is to frame you and put you in prison or kill you. And there aren't that many in-betweens. And so we see that the United States framed Mumia, framed Assata and framed Lynne Stewart.

And then we look at the targeting and the organizing of the United States government's so-called COINTELPRO, the Counter-Intelligence Program by the United States government that was designed to derail and destabilize and neutralize black folks, the civil rights movement and the black nationalist movement. And "neutralize" was not a neutral phrase. Neutralize means get rid of them by any means necessary. So in the mid '60s we see the United States government, and some of you say, well that was Hoover. It wasn't Hoover, it was the United States government. It was the Kennedy administration that was involved with the assassination of Patrice Lumumba. So we have to go beyond just looking in the United States because we have this government and these liberal Democrats and Republicans that are committing these crimes against our people all over the world!

We've seen these attacks against our

bigot Farrakhan. With the Bush administration facing massive outrage over New Orleans and growing opposition to the bloody Iraq occupation, several black Democrats, along with Bill Clinton, supported Farrakhan's rally in a bid to further the Democrats' electoral fortunes (see "'Progressive' Union Bureaucrats and Farrakhan: A Cynical Lash-Up," WV No.

people in the '60s and '70s, and as a result of those attacks, in 1968 some 300 young Black Panther Party members went to prison and several dozen were murdered. In Chicago, Fred Hampton and Mark Clark—and I knew Fred Hampton—were murdered. And I remember, I was here at this school when I heard young Fred had been murdered—I didn't know at the time, but I had a strong suspicion—by the United States government and the local government. And they murdered them because these young people were probably one of the first generations to not be afraid in masses.

Lydia Barashango

Sister of Mumia Abu-Jamal, describing the night her brother, falsely charged with killing a police officer, was brought to the hospital after being shot by police.

When this happened, I was working as a nurse. I got a call at work from one of my other brothers saying, "One of my brothers is in jail and one is in the hospital." So I took off and went to the hospital first. I found Mumia in a holding area with all kinds of tubes. There were mini-



mally six cops around him, with guns on them. Mumia was not alert or oriented. He appeared to be unconscious when I got there. And there were Foley bags to urinate in, there were IVs, there was oxygen, and through all of that, Mumia's face was monstrously swollen. I mean, I would not have recognized him had not I already spoken to the doctor, who asked me to give consent for Mumia to have surgery.

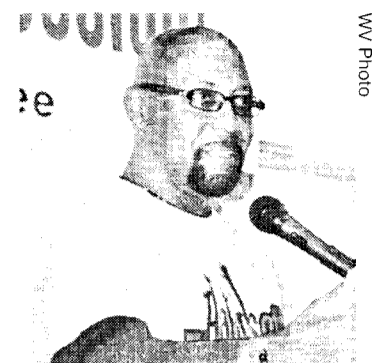
I got to the bed, and I shook him. I was trying to tell him that I was going to give consent for him to have surgery. He could just open his eyes, he was just barely coming through. And he says, "I'm innocent, I didn't do it, I didn't kill him, I didn't kill him." Then he slipped back into unconsciousness. If that didn't assure me, my past relationship with him did assure me that Mumia is innocent. And I've known that all the time. He's innocent.

856, 14 October). Notably, the "Millions More" organizers did not play a taped message for the rally that Mumia had provided from death row.

It is the class-collaborationist program of all wings of the labor officialdom—politically expressed centrally through its support to the Democrats—that blocks the mobilization of the multiracial proletariat in its own class interests. As Don Cane put it, "The victims of New Orleans need more than tears and charity. We demand massive public works; jobs at union wages; safe, decent housing; education and health care for all. These would be the demands of a multiracial revolutionary workers' party." Cane continued: "Black workers are key. They are a key component of the industrial working class. Armed with a class-struggle program, they can open the road to struggle against this system. When black workers see their own leadership capacity, they will have no more use for the reverends: the Reverend Jesse Jackson, the Reverend Al Sharpton and the Minister Louis Farrakhan." As Cane pointed out:

"Farrakhan was a sworn enemy of the martyred Malcolm X in life; but with the militant Malcolm forever silent, Farrakhan is promoted to the undeserved position of militant. The anti-Semitic demagogue Farrakhan is calling for a march commemorating the tenth anniversary of the 1995 Million Man March. The 1995 march placed black people—and black men, in particular—on their knees begging for 'atonement' for the sin of being oppressed and poor. It was an act of appeasement toward America's racist exploiters."

Mike Elliott
Chair, UAW Local 551
Education Committee



Any one of us could be targeted; any one of us could be in any of these three people's positions—tomorrow.

I'm a worker, and I happen to understand that as a worker I'm part of the most powerful class in the world, the working class. And I'm very proud of that. I just wanted to sum this up by saying that it's time for us all to take a stand right here and right now and to defend our families, our communities, our unions, our organizations, our children and ourselves. We are compelled by the voices of Mumia Abu-Jamal, Lynne Stewart and Assata Shakur to organize, agitate and educate.

James Webb

President Emeritus, Coalition of
Black Trade Unionists

To me, things have not improved a bit from the days of the old civil rights fight. Many of us think they have, but I am one that says no, there is no improvement. Everything that we fought for has slowly been taken away. We wake up now and find ourselves right back in the position we were then. Maybe we're not being lynched on a tree, but 41 bullets in a hallway to me is lynching.



We're still fighting the system. It's a corrupt system. We've got to stay together, stand together and support one another. ■

Evidence Explodes Frame-Up: Declarations and affidavits of Mumia Abu-Jamal, Arnold R. Beverly, Rachel Wolkenstein and others prove that death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal is an innocent man.

Published September 2001
\$.50 (32 pages)

Order from/pay to:
Partisan Defense Committee
P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station
New York, NY 10013



Free Mumia Now!

Labor: Fight for Mumia's Freedom!

Labor's role in the struggle against racist capitalist repression also came up in regard to the fight for freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal. In his presentation in the Bay Area, ILWU Local 10 representative Jack Heyman criticized the SL and PDC for not fielding contingents at the 24 April 1999 "Millions for Mumia" demonstrations and for not commending the union's West Coast stop-work meeting on behalf of Mumia the same day. He also raised our dismissiveness toward the 1997 *Neptune Jade* "community picket line" at the Port of Oakland, which was aimed at stopping the unloading of a scab ship in solidarity with Liverpool dock workers in Britain. We had

We join student activists, trade unionists and defenders of civil liberties in outrage over the recent frame-up conviction of Hostos Community College student leader Miguel Malo. Malo, the former Student Senate President at Hostos, was arrested in 2001 for the "crime" of holding up a sign denouncing cuts in bilingual programs and hikes in fees for English as a Second Language workshops. On October 24, over four years and 50 court appearances later, he was convicted on frame-up charges of reckless assault and disorderly conduct based on false allegations that he assaulted two City University of New York "peace officers." Numerous witnesses have testified and evidence has

Hands Off Miguel Malo!

shown that it was actually CUNY cops who assaulted Malo, leaving him with injuries to his wrists, forearms and back.

The Partisan Defense Committee sent a November 7 protest letter to Bronx County District Attorney Robert T. Johnson, pointing out that: "Over the lengthy persecution of Mr. Malo, your office has attempted to deny him the legal counsel of his choice, deny him a translator, violated his Fifth Amendment right to remain silent by demanding that he write an affidavit, and most

recently, your office demanded that a prohibitively high bail of \$3,000 be set ensuring that he spend time in jail. Because of the political witchhunt carried out by your office with assistance from the CUNY administration, Mr. Malo, an innocent man, faces up to a year in prison when he is sentenced.... The Assistant District Attorney involved in the case argued that to believe Miguel Malo would mean that the campus cops are 'complete and utter liars.' Well, the prosecution's entire case was based on

fabrications and suppression of evidence. Cops are so well known for lying that there is a word for it: 'testilying.' Nobody knows this better than the largely black and Latino residents of the Bronx."

Miguel Malo was targeted because he is a student leader and activist who defends immigrant rights on an overwhelmingly minority campus. His persecution is intended to stifle all protest so that CUNY can continue to slash education for workers, immigrants, minorities and the oppressed. **Show support for Miguel Malo at his sentencing hearing on December 13 outside the Bronx County Criminal Courthouse at 215 East 161st Street!**

TWU...

(continued from page 12)

an "ally" of the TWU. The cops are the hired guns of the capitalists whose job is to terrorize the ghettos and barrios and repress working-class struggle—they have no business in the unions! Neither do the MTA's "Property Protection" security guards, who are members of Local 100.

In a gross violation of labor principles, five local vice presidents are suing Toussaint and the union over a series of complaints. Before his election in 2000, Toussaint's New Directions opposition group repeatedly sued the leadership in office at the time. The courts are an agency of capitalist repression—their intervention into union affairs can only

weaken the union. Courts, cops—out of the unions!

MTA "Plantation Justice"

NYC transit workers are wary of their leadership in this year's contract negotiations given their experience the last time around. In 2002, 10,000 transit workers voted to authorize strike action at two mass meetings a week before the contract expired. Then, as the clock was ticking down, thousands of TWU members marched over the Brooklyn Bridge to City Hall prepared for a long-awaited fight, but were infuriated to learn that the ink was already drying on a deal.

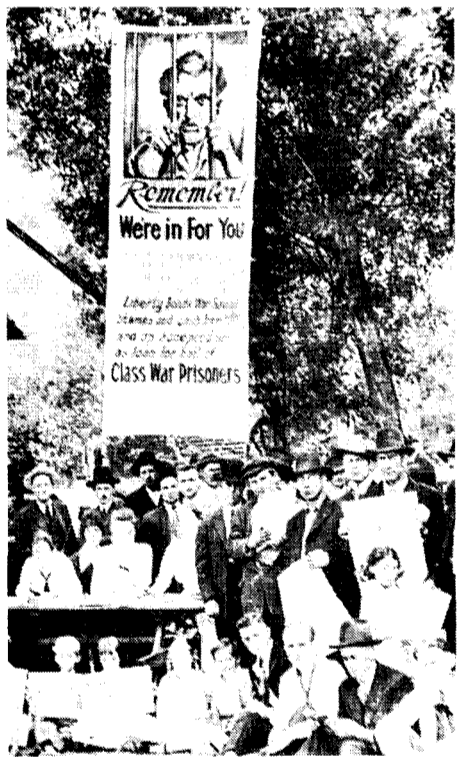
Under that settlement, workers received no wage raise in the first year, just a lump-sum bonus. Local 100 officials claimed that they at least won some gains against the MTA's vicious disciplinary system,

but the numbers tell a different story. A recent Local 100 Internet posting notes that renewed MTA efforts to "increase efforts to improve employee availability" mean "tougher time and attendance rules and more disciplines and threats." Last year alone, the MTA hit the predominantly black subway and bus workers with **15,204 disciplines**, with minority and women workers in the lowest-paid jobs the hardest hit. No wonder transit workers call this "plantation justice."

This time the Local 100 tops are not even making a pretense of preparing for a strike. Isolated shop rallies have taken the place of union-wide protests, and a mass union meeting isn't scheduled until December 10, just five days before the contract expires. What's needed is a series of mass meetings—not showpieces where the bureaucrats present the decisions they've

already made and union members get no chance to speak, but decision-making meetings where the membership hammers out a policy of struggle against the MTA.

It is through union struggle that the TWU can defeat the MTA's multiple schemes to pit different sections of the workforce against each other, weakening the union as a whole: immigrant versus native-born, new-hires versus veteran workers, bus division versus subways, regional/suburban lines versus city transit. A hard fight lies ahead. The only road to victory for transit workers and the entire working class is mobilizing labor's power independent of the capitalist state and political parties. The working people need a party that fights for **their** class interests, a workers party committed to overturning this whole system of capitalist exploitation, racial oppression and imperialist war. ■



U. of Washington Library
1917 IWW picnic in Seattle for class-war prisoners.

struggle strategy to the liberal-reformist outlook of the rally organizers and exposing the maneuvering of Heyman. His role was in fact to aid the reformists whose reliance on liberal public opinion has **demobilized** protests for Mumia.

Responding to Heyman, an SL speaker explained that the protest organizers deliberately rejected the call to free Mumia in favor of the "new trial" slogan because they did not want to alienate people whose faith in the bourgeois justice system would not allow them to believe that "there could be this conscious political frame-up of an innocent man. In other words, they were pandering to the illusions of liberals in the nature of the racist capitalist system." Many in the liberal milieu believe that Mumia may be guilty and oppose his conviction solely on the ground that he did not receive a fair trial. The comrade pointed out that Heyman obscured the fact that these slogans embodied different strategies and opposing class perspectives.

Mumia Abu-Jamal Is an Innocent Man!

In Chicago and L.A., Lydia Barashango, Mumia Abu-Jamal's sister, spoke movingly of her brother's character as they grew up together. She spoke of the impact this case has had on her family, which has been "on hold" for all these years—including men who have been driven out of Philadelphia and who live in constant fear of state retribution.

In NYC, Pam Africa urged everyone to get the affidavit by Rachel Wolkenstein reprinted in the September 2001 Partisan Defense Committee pamphlet, *Mumia Abu-Jamal Is an Innocent Man!* The pamphlet includes the confession of Arnold Beverly and other eyewitness accounts and declarations that confirm Mumia's innocence. Pam Africa called it a "must-have" because it tells the truth about Mumia's case. She told the audience, "If you want to be in this fight to free Mumia, get the Rachel Wolkenstein affidavit.... Arm the youth with some information about what is really happening with Mumia."

Robert Bryan, Mumia's lead counsel since 2003, told the Berkeley rally what

Mumia had said to him that same day about his case:

"He said, Robert, it's about the thousands of men and women on death row, which is not only in the United States but around the world. It's about the many more thousands of people, certainly in the U.S. but around the globe, who are victims of human rights abuses. It's about people who are discriminated against because of their politics, because of their gender, because of their sexual preference. It's about the right of children not to go to bed hungry anywhere in the world. It's about the right for people to have an education and not to be abused, particularly by governments such as the one in this country."

Bryan noted that "when there were few people who were willing to stand up for Mumia, when there were virtually no organizations, there was the Partisan Defense Committee. And the Partisan Defense Committee started organizing, having rallies, raising the consciousness of all of us before anybody else was doing it."

Speaking during the discussion at this rally, Wolkenstein described her battles with others on Mumia's former legal team, namely lead defense attorney Leonard Weinglass and co-counsel Daniel Williams. Recounting that Weinglass and

Williams had suppressed the evidence of Jamal's innocence and ensured it was never introduced in court. Wolkenstein said: "All the issues that are raised around the Beverly evidence—and it's much more than the confession by Arnold Beverly—have to be raised in the course of the mass movement which must be built. Because that evidence confirms in every way that this was a political prosecution, not only racist but political, and touches on the entire workings of the American capitalist legal system." She continued:

"The legal betrayals of the case came from politics—the people who were supposedly doing the lawyering succumbed to a political view that they had to present Mumia in a way that would be palatable to the bourgeois courts. It was the political Marxist lawyers who were fighting to turn over every stone and pursue in the courts every bit of investigation that was possible, along with all the different constitutional violations."

As Wolkenstein stated in conclusion, Mumia's case shows "the total nature of the capitalist, racist frame-up system.... It's a political frame-up, and it will only, only be a mass movement based centrally on the power of labor that will get him free." ■

Class-Struggle Defense...

(continued from page 5)

the basis of class-struggle defense. Others have been agnostic on Mumia's innocence, thereby effectively denying that this is a political case. Mumia is an innocent man! He is the victim of a racist political frame-up. There have been illusions sown in the courts by campaigns based on the call for a new trial for Mumia, rather than a call to free Mumia. There is no justice in the capitalist courts! This campaign for a new trial effectively demobilized a whole generation who had come out for Mumia in the hundreds of thousands at the time of his 1995 hearings in the face of the death warrant and into the later 1990s.

The question of defense of Mumia, Lynne and Assata and the overall fight against government repression, the de-

fense of blacks and others throughout the Gulf Coast victimized by the capitalist rulers, the defense of the trade unions—all are dependent on our understanding of the capitalist state and its courts, and that the system as a whole has got to go! The power to defend all intended victims of this racist capitalist state is going to come out of the social power of the working people and its allies. That means labor strikes, mass protests and demonstrations organized around the power of the integrated labor movement in this country and internationally. The speakers here tonight are activists and leaders. And I say that with Lynne here, because that is her main role, not as a defendant or a victim. They are all here to explain, to rally new supporters and, importantly, to debate the way forward, the best way to fight government oppression. Free Mumia! Hands off Lynne Stewart! Hands off Assata Shakur! This rally is one part of that very important struggle. ■

Chicago SYC Replies to YDS: "State Department Socialists" and FBI Smears

When the Chicago Spartacus Youth Club posted an announcement for its Marxist class series to the e-mail list of the University of Chicago Young Democratic Socialists, former YDS honcho Lucas Shapiro replied with vitriolic slanders. We reprint below the SYC's reply, issued as a leaflet titled "YDS: Lapdogs for U.S. Imperialism" on October 29.

On October 10, Young Democratic Socialists (YDS) former national organizer Lucas Shapiro posted an e-mail on the YDS list serve, slandering the Spartacist League as a "sect" whose members "might as well be federal agents" because they "disrupt other leftwing events." We of the Spartacus Youth Club are responding to refute these smears. What Shapiro calls "disruption" is simply the exercise of our democratic right of raising criticism of the left's crawling before the capitalist Democratic Party. With his "federal agents" slur, Shapiro is taking a page from former FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover's sinister COINTELPRO pro-

gram that targeted leftists and black radicals in the 1960s for "neutralization."

On that note, it's striking that Shapiro spells the name of our organization "Spartacist League" (with an "i"). Considering nearly everyone even vaguely familiar with us is aware that our name is spelled "Spartacist," it is remarkable that someone who presents himself as being knowledgeable in regards to our group could misspell our name. This particular misspelling obviously does not come from reading our own press. Instead, it has a very sinister origin, and has appeared in a variety of slanderous, violence-baiting provocations directed against us over the years. We researched its origins, and traced it back to FBI and CIA surveillance files about our organization, some of which were recovered by us under the Freedom of Information Act.

Shapiro has some nerve to claim that we "might as well be federal agents," considering that Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) founder Michael Harrington and the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee, the DSA's predecessor, both have had known ties to the CIA. In 1959, for example, Harrington (then a member of the Socialist Party [SP]) led the Young Peoples Socialist League (the youth organization of the SP) in their participation in a CIA-funded event in Vienna designed to provide a counterweight to the World Youth Festival, a Communist Party supported event. This was later admitted to by well-known feminist and DSOC member Gloria Steinem, who herself served as an executive of the CIA-funded "International Research Service" (*Washington Post*, 18 February 1967).

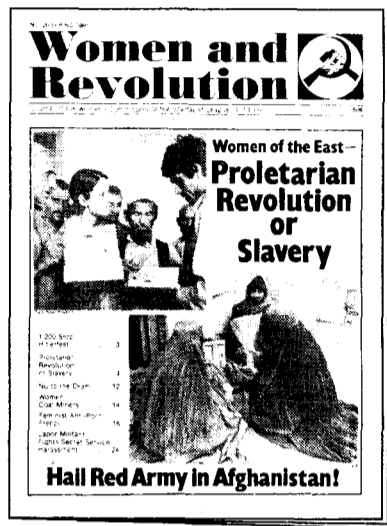
Like all fake leftists who throw around smears about "disruption" and "cults," what sets Shapiro off is that we oppose the left's program of "unity" to pressure the capitalist politicians. What Shapiro, the DSA and YDS really despise about us is our revolutionary politics, exem-

plified by our unwavering defense of the former Soviet Union against imperialist aggression and capitalist counterrevolution while calling for workers political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy. The DSA and its predecessors, on the other hand, have consistently given their support to U.S. imperialism's vicious struggle against socialist revolution. Michael Harrington, for instance, was head of the Socialist Party when the SP supported U.S. imperialism in its

ers state, and the defense of the gains made by the October Revolution of 1917. We hailed the Red Army's march into Afghanistan, realizing that the presence of Soviet troops in Afghanistan made possible the extension of these gains to the Afghan people, women in particular. The Soviet intervention into Afghanistan allowed the Afghan government to redistribute land to poor peasants and grant women and young girls the right to an education, and in Soviet-occupied Afghanistan women were free from the oppressive veil. In contrast the DSA (like most of the left) sided with U.S. imperialism in supporting the forces of Islamic reaction, led by the CIA-funded mullahs and clerics such as Osama bin Laden and what became the Taliban.

Solidarność was a mobilization of clerical-nationalist forces in Poland fighting for capitalist restoration, not the trade union it was portrayed as by much of the left. Solidarność's counterrevolutionary bid for power in 1981 was cheered not only by Wall Street banking interests who sought to gain a foothold in eastern Europe, but also by such "democracy" loving types as Ronald Reagan, the CIA, the Catholic church, various fascist organizations, and...the DSA. We supported the spiking of Solidarność's attempted counterrevolution by the Warsaw regime because we knew Solidarność's real goal was to sell the country off to the imperialists. Some ten years later, victorious capitalist counterrevolution in Poland led to an all-sided assault on the working class, and was accompanied by rapidly decreasing living standards and a rise in all forms of reaction.

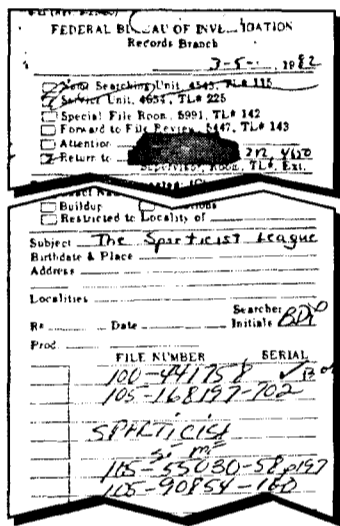
We encourage anyone that honestly wishes to fight for socialism, and is rightfully repulsed by the DSA's disgusting work on behalf of imperialist counterrevolution, to come to any of our events. For anyone interested in learning more about our politics, selected articles can be found on our Web site. ■



SL defended Red Army intervention against CIA-backed Islamic fundamentalists in Afghanistan in the 1980s. YDS forebears sided with U.S. imperialism.

attempt to crush the heroic struggle of the Vietnamese workers and peasants who were fighting to oust capitalism.

It infuriates Shapiro that the SYC and SL supported both the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and the suppression of Solidarność's counterrevolutionary power grab in Poland. We are proud of our positions on these events, which were both aspects of our principled defense of the Soviet degenerated work-



FBI files misspell Spartacist League's name. YDS slander mimics previous provocations against us that used same FBI misspelling.

Racist Party...

(continued from page 3)

Founded by oil baron John D. Rockefeller, the U of C serves as a training ground for the next generation of capitalist politicians, corporate lawyers, and other assorted representatives of the property-owning class. Located in a black neighborhood in one of the most segregated northern cities in the United States, the U of C is a leading landlord in Chicago's largely black South Side, and utilizes a private army of campus cops to terrorize black residents of the surrounding neighborhood. This is a school whose student orientation helps foster anti-black racism, inculcating a fear of black residents of the surrounding neighborhood. We of the Spartacus Youth Club

call for the opening of the U of C to the surrounding black neighborhood as part of our fight for a free, quality education for all. Nationalize the University! For open admissions, no tuition and a state-paid living stipend for all students!

Many students have rightfully expressed their outrage over the racist May House party, but this is mainly expressed in calls to pressure the administration to make the university a more "tolerant" place. What should have happened was immediate protest by students and campus workers to show that this racist crap will *not* be tolerated! Given the administration's role as a pillar of the racist capitalist order, it is dangerous to believe that it can be made to act on behalf of those this system oppresses. Just look at Georgia State University, where in 2004 the Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity had a racist

"Straight Out of Compton" party, with two students even going so far as to wear blackface to the event. The GSU's Black Student Alliance and the campus NAACP organized a series of speakouts and rallies to respond to this outrage. The GSU administration reacted by *suspending the BSA*, charging them with intending "to incite others by making a misleading flyer" and "discriminatory harassment"! Any powers granted the administration to discipline groups deemed as offensive will ultimately be used to target minority groups and leftists.

The Spartacus Youth Clubs look to the working class as the only social force with the power and interest to smash the capitalist system of exploitation and eliminate the racism it produces once and

for all. Just as it took the Civil War to crush the resistance of the Southern slaveryocracy, nothing short of an overturn of the capitalist system will succeed in destroying the economic base of black oppression. We advance a program of *revolutionary integrationism*, seeking to mobilize the power of the labor movement to fight against all instances of racist oppression, while understanding that to eliminate black oppression will require a socialist revolution. To accomplish this requires breaking the chains that bind labor to the Democratic Party of war and racism and forging a revolutionary workers party. The Spartacus Youth Clubs fight to win youth to the perspective of building such a party. *For black liberation through socialist revolution!* ■

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Spartacus Youth Club Events

BOSTON

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Thursday, December 1, 7 p.m.

Boston University
George Sherman Union, Room 322
775 Commonwealth Avenue
(BU Central stop on Green Line B)

Information and readings: (617) 666-9453
or e-mail: bostonsyc@yahoo.com

Visit the ICL Web Site:
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CHICAGO

The Bolshevik Revolution: How the Working Class Took Power

Tuesday, November 29, 7 p.m.

University of Chicago
Cobb Hall, Room 104, 5811 S. Ellis Ave.
Information and readings: (312) 563-0441
or e-mail: chicagospartacist@sbcglobal.net

LOS ANGELES

Women's Oppression and the Family

Saturday, December 3, 2 p.m.

3806 Beverly Blvd., Room 215
(Beverly/Vermont Red Line Station)
Information and readings: (213) 380-8239
or e-mail: slsycla@sbcglobal.net

Black Liberation...

(continued from page 1)

politicians such as Clinton, who ran to Bush's side immediately after the hurricane hit, want you to believe that the government is doing all that can be done and that racism has nothing to do with the relief efforts. And in regard to the destruction of the ports and oil refineries, who do you think is profiting off rebuilding them? You guessed it, the Halliburtons, the Bechtels, etc.

The death and destitution were preventable. Just compare how hurricane situations are handled by the Cuban deformed workers state, where the capitalist class was expropriated and where collectivized property and a planned economy exist. Its government can actually provide for the safety and security of its citizens, even in the face of the long-standing U.S. economic embargo. The Cuban government has repeatedly safely evacuated up to two million people from oncoming hurricanes.

Why didn't the U.S. government prepare to evacuate its poor and black citizens of New Orleans in a similar way?

Guardsmen, and only those families who had members helping repair the levees were allowed access to the food provided by the Red Cross. The rest were left to fend for themselves.

Does this sound familiar? The only interest that this capitalist government serves is the defense of private property and the profit system as a whole. The U.S. capitalist class has a lengthy history of exploiting labor and oppressing minorities. It is futile to appeal to its "conscience" or "morality." Its actions are guided by its class interest, which is to maximize profits. They're not even bothering to count the bodies of many who died during the Hurricane Katrina flood. Almost two months later, there are still over 500 people "missing" from New Orleans Parish Prison, where prisoners had been left to drown in their cells.

For Class War Against Capitalist Rulers!

This reminds me of Iraq, where the U.S. imperialists and their allies aren't even bothering to count the bodies of Iraqis they bombed and murdered under the pretext of the "war on terror," "weapons of mass destruction" and "Saddam Hus-



Reuters

Havana, September 4: Cuban doctors preparing to go to aid of Gulf Coast victims. Bush refused Castro's offer of almost 1,600 doctors equipped with medical supplies.

Perhaps a shred of New Orleans history may offer a clue. In 1927, there was a flood of the Mississippi River that threatened to destroy the land and property of the wealthy aristocrats who dwelt in southern Louisiana. To divert the damage that the flood might have caused to their property, they devised and implemented a plan to dynamite the levees surrounding the black and poor neighborhoods to take pressure off the levees surrounding their own. As a result, thousands of black and poor Louisiana residents were left homeless. And those black people who worked on the plantations in the region were not allowed to leave because the plantation owners rightly feared that they would never come back to work in slavery-like conditions. So they were herded on top of the levees under the guns of National

sein's links to Al Qaeda." Lies, lies and more lies. Even the lies used to bolster patriotic support for the bloody imperialist war in Iraq remind me of the racist atrocity in New Orleans. Not even a day after the levees broke, the bourgeois media was in a frenzy, telling tall tales of looting, robbery, murder and mayhem in New Orleans. In the face of starvation, the media wrote that blacks "stole" food and white people "found" it.

To be sure that this is racist America that we're talking about, dusted off was the lying slavery-era cry of the black man as sexual predator. Thus there was the scare over alleged rapes. "Hold on to your skirts, Southern belles, we're sending in armed federal guards with shoot-to-kill orders" was the message and method of justification for turning New Orleans into a federally occupied military zone. It wasn't to help people. They'd also have you believe they're helping the Iraqi peoples by bringing "democracy" and "liberation." Even the torture scandals of Abu Ghraib hit close to home. The U.S. houses nearly two million mostly black and Latino men, women and even youth in prison hellholes. It is the prisons of America that provided the training ground for torture like that we hear about in Abu Ghraib in Iraq and in Guantánamo.

The *New York Times* now reports that there was no evidence for the scare stories about New Orleans. The real criminals are the government and its army and police, a few of whom were recently investigated for stealing Cadillacs. And just a week ago, a retired elementary school teacher, Robert Davis, who is 64 years old and black, was brutally beaten by cops in the French Quarter for merely asking about the curfew time. The real thugs and looters are the U.S. imperialists and their allies who are exercising military might and plundering the world.

There is a war going on here at home as well. And as the racist New Orleans atrocity shows, it's a war against black people, poor people and working people. Now more than ever, it is clear that the workers and oppressed minorities in the

Democrat Clinton, along with Bush Sr., rushed to back up George W. Bush in face of popular anger over government response to Hurricane Katrina.



U.S. must side with the Iraqi peoples who face imperialist onslaught, just as we must side with the victims of the U.S. rulers here in the belly of the beast. We must demand that the U.S. troops get out of Iraq now! Insofar as the forces on the ground in Iraq aim their blows against the occupiers, we call for their military defense against U.S. imperialism, without giving one iota of political support to the insurgents and while opposing communal violence and religious fundamentalism.

At home it is necessary to wage class war to fight against the racist capitalist rulers and to fight for workers revolution to defeat U.S. imperialism. After the hurricane disaster, we called for trade unions to mobilize for the rescue effort and to demand a massive rebuilding effort. Powerful unions such as the TWU transit workers and the ILA longshoremen should be mobilizing black, white, Latino and immigrant workers to organize unions in Louisiana, to fight for union jobs at good union wages, for public works and health care, emergency clothing and safety equipment. Such a fight would strike a blow against the capitalist bosses and the government's attempts to pay below-prevailing wages on federally funded construction projects. It is necessary to fight for abolishing the capitalist system in its entirety.

Marxism and Black Liberation

Throughout the history of class society, there has been slave and slave master, lord and serf, and today there is the capitalist class (the bourgeoisie) and the working class (the proletariat). In today's society, the bourgeoisie owns all of the means of production—the factories, the mills, the shops, the plants—along with the modes of transportation and all of the material resources needed to keep production running. The proletariat has its labor power, which it must sell to survive. The bourgeoisie exploits this labor power to create profit.

The state appeared when society first divided into classes. The ruling class needs a special apparatus of coercion and of subjugating the will of others by force. Thus in today's society, the working class is kept under control by the state, which at its core is made up of the cops, the military, the courts and prisons, all of which exist to uphold the bourgeoisie's private property system and keep the workers and the rest of the have-nots in place. Supplemented ideologically by the churches, educational institutions and media, the state is used by the ruling class

to suppress anger over such conditions as the ever-widening gap between the rich and the poor.

In the U.S., key to mobilizing the working class to smash this system of repression is the perspective of revolutionary integrationism. The Spartacist League's program of revolutionary integrationism was developed by Richard Fraser when he was a member of the then-revolutionary Socialist Workers Party (SWP). In his 1953 lectures titled "The Negro Struggle and the Proletarian Revolution" (reprinted in *Prometheus Research Series* No. 3, "In Memoriam—Richard S. Fraser"), Fraser wrote:

"The racial division of society was born with capitalism and will die only with the death of this last system of exploitation. Before capitalism there was no race concept. There was no skin color exploitation, there was no race prejudice, there was no idea of superiority and inferiority based upon physical characteristics.

"It was the advent of Negro chattel slavery in the western hemisphere which first divided society into races....

"Having become the imperialist leader of the capitalist world, the U.S. exports race prejudice as naturally as it does death and destruction to the colonial world."

In the years since the civil rights movement of the 1950s and '60s, the fundamental conditions of life for the majority of black people, particularly in the key areas of employment, housing, wages and education, have worsened. Fifty percent of black men are unemployed in New York City. There are 9,000 homeless black children in the Chicago public school system, and many children walk out of the metal detectors at their school entrances into the metal detectors at the entrance of their local and state prisons. In cities like Detroit, black ghettos look like war zones with dilapidated houses, abandoned businesses and armed police patrolling the streets looking to kill with impunity. For the past 20 years, the "war on drugs" has hit black people with a brutal vengeance—a war of police repression and imprisonment aimed at the black and minority population that has sent almost a generation of black men to prison. America is as racist today as it ever was.

In the U.S., black workers have historically made up a disproportionate percentage of the bourgeoisie's reserve army of labor, sought after in times of economic boom and war but the first to be laid off when times are bad. American black workers face pervasive racial oppression both on and off the job. And, more and more, the black population has become an

continued on page 10



Mississippi Department of Archives and History

In 1927 Mississippi River flood, black people were forced to live on levees and to work without pay.

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Black Liberation...

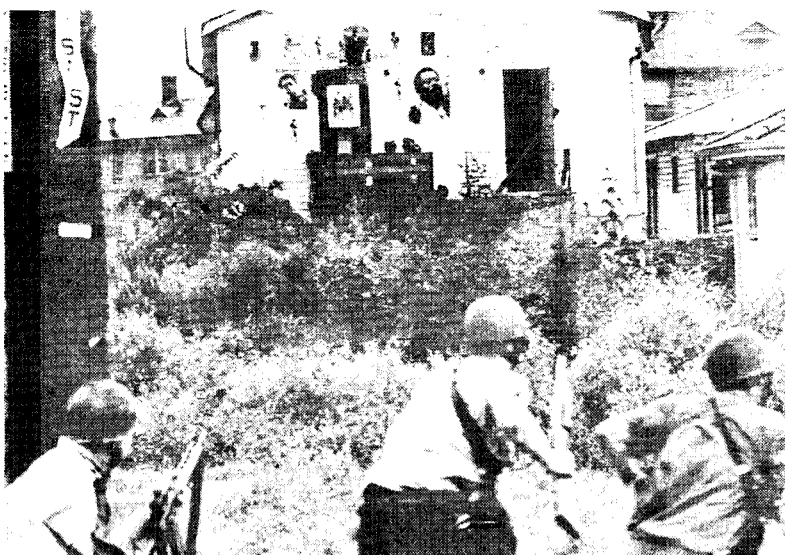
(continued from page 9)

excess, surplus population for the ruling class. William Bennett's comment that "you could abort every black baby in this country, and your crime rate would go down" reflects the bourgeoisie's impulse toward genocide of the black population.

However, black workers play a strategic role in the American economy and are represented in union jobs at a higher rate than white workers. For the struggle for black freedom to succeed requires struggle by the working class as a whole to abolish capitalism and establish in its place an egalitarian socialist society. Our program of revolutionary integrationism is premised upon mobilizing the working class to take up the fight for black liberation—a class-struggle fight to uproot the source of black oppression, which is capitalism.

But the struggle of black people in this country for freedom, while part of the struggle of the working class as a whole, is also more than that struggle. Black people are an oppressed race-color caste. And while there are other racial and ethnic minorities, mainly immigrants, who also face oppression because of the inherently racist nature of U.S. capitalist society, the histories of non-white groups of people in this country are not all the same.

The liberal "people of color" rhetoric that you hear actually erases the distinct history of each racial minority group and liquidates the unique aspect of black oppression rooted in U.S. history—like slavery, like lynching and the Klan, like the degradation and humiliation of riding in the back of the bus, sitting in the back of a restaurant and not being allowed to travel or buy a home where you want. Dividing the working class along race lines is key to maintaining capitalist rule in the U.S. Conscious of the social power that the proletariat would attain through



Far left: Black Panther leader Huey Newton. Left: 1970 police raid on New Orleans Panther office, part of murderous government vendetta.

center of your program. The question of black oppression in the United States is strategic to the revolutionary task of the working class.

We Are the Party of the Russian Revolution

We base our program on the lessons of the Russian Revolution of 1917. The October Revolution, led by the Bolshevik Party under V. I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky, is the only successful workers revolution in history, where the working class overthrew the rule of its capitalist exploiters and took power. The October Revolution created a workers state based on workers councils, or soviets, and forged a Red Army that triumphed in war against counterrevolutionary forces backed up by world imperialism.

The early Soviet government expropriated the holdings of the capitalists and cancelled the debt owed to the imperialists. It proclaimed the right of working people to jobs, health, housing and education, and took the first steps toward building a socialist society. The revolutionary government gave land to the peasants and self-determination to the many oppressed nations of the former tsarist empire. The

of *American Communism* (1962). "The main discussions on the Negro question took place in Moscow." It was based on these discussions and the influence and pressure of the Comintern that the American CP of the '20s started to really do something to fight black oppression. The CP adopted the understanding of the black question as a special question of doubly exploited second-class citizens, requiring a program of special demands as part of the overall revolutionary program.

I hope this paints a clear picture as to why we proudly say, "We are the party of the Russian Revolution." We militarily defended the Soviet Union and its collectivized property system and planned economy against the imperialists and internal counterrevolution, in spite of the bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet Union under Stalin beginning in 1923-24. We fought for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy and for the extension of the revolution worldwide.

Communism is far from dead. While the bourgeoisie has been busy perpetuating the lie about the "death of communism" since the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92, it is also actively dusting off its special police "red squads." The government has also initiated some of the worst attacks on democratic rights in recent history, such as the USA Patriot Act and the detention of Jose Padilla, whose case represents the government asserting its "right" to disappear people, and the recent conviction of leftist attorney Lynne Stewart and new attacks on former Black Panther Party members. All of these attacks are ultimately aimed to suppress the working class.

While the U.S. rulers are now grabbing more of the oil wealth of the Near East, their main and ultimate target is the People's Republic of China, by far the largest and strongest of the remaining states where capitalism has been overthrown. Capitalist restoration in China, a country of over a billion people, would mean death and starvation of enormous proportions. China and North Korea are among those states explicitly indicated as potential targets for a U.S. nuclear first strike.

This makes all the more clear our duty to fight for the unconditional military defense of the remaining bureaucratically deformed workers states of China, North Korea, Cuba and Vietnam against the imperialist powers. And that means defending their collectivized economies

and the economic and political expropriation of the capitalist class. It also means defending the right of North Korea to develop nuclear weapons. As we did in the former USSR and the East European deformed workers states, we also call for proletarian political revolutions to get rid of the ruling nationalist bureaucracies, whose policies undermine and weaken those states, and install governments based on workers democracy and revolutionary internationalism.

Trotskyism vs. Black Nationalism

The SWP, formerly the Trotskyist party in the U.S., capitulated to both the liberal civil rights leaders and to black nationalism. They gave up on political combat against the black misleaders and on recruiting cadre from a generation of black youth who were radicalized by the civil rights movement. Many of these youth became involved with the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense. The Black Panther Party represented the best of a generation of radical black youth. In high school, when I first became politically engaged, I was immediately drawn toward learning more about and emulating the Panthers. But in regard to the contradictory and radical-nationalist Black Panthers, all you hear about nowadays is their free breakfast programs. It wasn't their social work that attracted me to them. It was their militancy.

Little do you hear about the militancy of the Panthers. That aspect has been whitewashed by Hollywood and the liberals, who'd have you believe that the Panthers were the Black Panther Party for Social Welfare and not the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense. Little do you hear about their offer to send troops to Vietnam to assist in the fight against U.S. imperialism, about how they initially organized independently of the Democrats and Republicans, or about how they advocated armed self-defense against racist attacks. However, the Panthers rejected mobilizing the revolutionary power of the multiracial proletariat to fight black oppression.

Some of the key leaders and groups, such as the Black Panthers, that came out of the Black Power movement became self-avowed black nationalists. But black people are not oppressed as a nation. There is no economic basis for a separate, independent black economy. Black nationalism is utopian; it's pseudo-nationalism. But even such a form of nationalism is



Canal Street, a central thoroughfare in New Orleans, remains devastated nearly three months after Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast.

unified struggle, the American bourgeoisie applies "divide and conquer" strategies.

In racist capitalist America, the right to abortion is under attack, and the fastest-growing component of rising incarceration rates is young black and Latina women, who are also getting the HIV virus and AIDS at a higher rate than the rest of the population. Black women workers face triple oppression. They are oppressed as part of a race-color caste, oppressed as women and oppressed as workers. In the U.S. and all over the world, we fight for full equality for women and their complete integration into the workforce. We call for equal pay for equal work and for free, safe abortion on demand as part of a free, quality health care system. The struggles against exploitation, against women's oppression, against racial oppression will advance together or fall back separately. The working class cannot be free unless it fights for black freedom, and you cannot have a workers revolution without black freedom at the

regime separated church and state and, significantly, funded secular education and science, promoting a thoroughly materialist worldview. It eliminated all laws discriminating against national and ethnic minorities, women and gays. And it decreed that abortion be free and legal. What made the Russian Revolution successful was the leadership of the Bolshevik Party, which fought not only for the freedom of those oppressed by capitalist rule in Russia but for the emancipation of the international proletariat and for a world socialist order.

As revolutionary internationalists, the Bolsheviks under Lenin and Trotsky saw that for U.S. Communists, the fight for black liberation was a central priority. As early as 1920, a main point on the agenda of the Second Congress of the Communist International was the situation of black people in America. As James Cannon, an early Communist Party (CP) leader and later the founder of American Trotskyism, wrote in *The First Ten Years*

Programmatic Statement of the Spartacist League/U.S.

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Programmatic Statement of the Spartacist League/U.S.

For a Workers Party That Fights for a Workers Government!
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Organizational Rules and Guidelines of the Spartacist League/U.S.

Opponents of the Revolutionary Internationalist Workers Movement

divisive and interferes with the development of class consciousness.

The Panthers were, in fact, confined by a sectoralist perspective of blacks liberating blacks, Latinos liberating Latinos, Asians liberating Asians, etc., and lacked an internationalist class-struggle program. Black workers have an exceptional role to play in the revolutionary struggle to smash capitalist wage slavery. Because of their position as both the most oppressed and the most conscious layer of the proletariat, black workers are slated to be a key factor in the coming American revolution. By rejecting a working-class perspective, the Panther leaders cut themselves off from becoming leaders in the struggle for socialist revolution internationally.

The lack of a working-class orientation also made the Panthers more vulnerable to FBI director J. Edgar Hoover's COINTELPRO, or Counter-Intelligence Program, which was originally set up in 1956 against the Communist Party but was revived particularly to murderously repress and disrupt the Panthers. Some 233 out of the 295 FBI COINTELPRO actions against black organizations were against the Panthers. At least 38 Panthers were murdered by agents of this racist



V. K. Bulla



Wide World

Left: Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin addressing Second Congress of Communist International, 1920. Right: Black poet Claude McKay speaking on racial oppression in U.S. at CI's Fourth Congress, 1922.

and Latino youth. While he pardoned his capitalist crooks and cronies on his way out of the office, he made doubly sure that innocent political prisoner and American Indian Movement activist Leonard Peltier was not to be freed. Clinton paved the

of capitalist rule and thus every bit as much a part of the problem as the Republicans—even more so because there is an element of trickery in their posture as friends of labor and the oppressed. What we need is a revolutionary workers party that stands up for labor rights, black rights, immigrant rights, women's rights and gay rights.

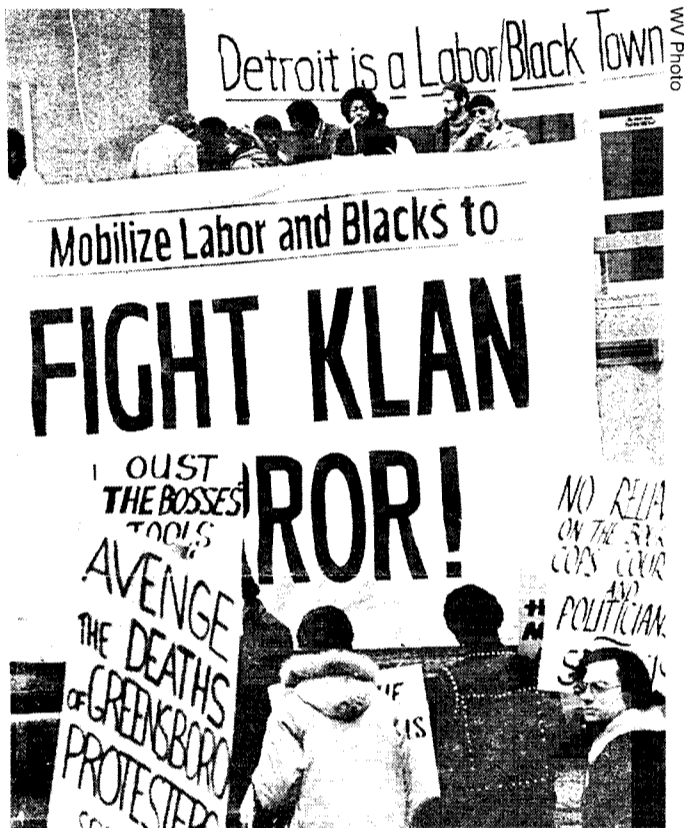
It is not just that union leaders tie workers to the Democrats. Tailing them are reformist so-called socialist groups like the Workers World Party and their ANSWER coalition and the International Socialist Organization. Each of them has at one time or another given support to Democratic or other capitalist politicians like the Greens. Even the ultrarevolutionary-sounding Progressive Labor Party has acknowledged in its paper that its supporters have campaigned for Democrats Dennis Kucinich and Barack Obama.

The lifework of groups like the Workers World Party/ANSWER is protest politics within the framework of bourgeois "democracy." Fundamentally, they believe that the capitalist system can be reformed. Opposed to revolutionary Marxism and a working-class perspective, such groups organize massive rallies to pressure whatever White House administration is in office to give money for food and education not war. If you've ever talked to some of these activists, they will near-unanimously tell you that we have to do something now, and the fight for socialist revolution is too far down the road. I guess by doing something now they mean pushing for certain capitalist politicians to get into office and then begging them for handouts. In many ways they, too, have bought into the "death of communism" phenomenon. Some, such as the ISO, cheered for counterrevolution in the USSR.

That brings me to what to do now. What has to be done now is to organize the working class independently of the capitalist class. This means breaking with the Democratic Party and fighting for a workers party that champions the cause of all the oppressed. In the U.S., it's necessary to combat anti-black racism in all spheres, including among immigrants, in addition to combating the anti-immigrant chauvinism that exists among black people. We also have to intervene into working-class struggles with the slogan, "Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!" We have to organize the working class now to defend Mumia Abu-Jamal from execution by the capitalist state. The working class must be mobilized, on the basis of no illusions in the capitalist courts, to demand that the racist death penalty be abolished and that Mumia be freed now!

For revolutionaries, Marxism is a living science and a guide to action. Revolutionary situations occur rarely in history, and we must be theoretically and politically prepared. Our object is not simply to understand the world but to change it. But to be able to change it requires that we have a lever to effect revolution, to rip up this rotten social system that more and more threatens destruction, if not extinction, for humankind. That lever is a workers party of the Leninist type, organized in a democratic-centralist Fourth International. Such a party cannot be simply proclaimed but must be forged in struggle.

Without the leadership of a revolutionary party, the working class cannot wrest power from the bourgeoisie. Thus most importantly, if you want to get rid of capitalism, join the revolutionary internationalist Spartacist League or the Spartacus Youth Club, our youth auxiliary. ■



Detroit, 1979: SL-initiated protest stopped Klan from celebrating massacre of civil rights and labor activists in Greensboro, N.C.

capitalist state through the instrument of COINTELPRO.

Today numerous former Panthers remain locked up in prison dungeons. The remnants of COINTELPRO remain with the capitalist state's attempt to execute former Panther and innocent death row prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. Mumia's case is a signature political frame-up spanning both Bush administrations, the Clinton administration, back into the Reagan years. Today COINTELPRO has been repackaged. A clear example of this was the recent FBI killing in Puerto Rico of Filiberto Ojeda Ríos, the Puerto Rican independence fighter who was gunned down by agents of the capitalist state and then left for 12 hours to bleed to death.

Break with the Democrats!

As outrage over New Orleans and the bloody occupation of Iraq fuels popular opposition to the Bush administration, the Democratic Party hopes to further its electoral fortunes. At the reformist-led September 24 rally against the Iraq occupation in Washington, D.C., and at Louis Farrakhan's October 15 D.C. "Millions More March," Jesse Jackson proclaimed the need to take back the White House in 2008. And believe me, he didn't have the Parliament/Funkadelic conception of painting the White House black.

The Democratic Party is no friend of black people and labor. It was Clinton who enacted "the end of welfare as we know it," leaving both black and white poor families without access to food and medical care. Clinton also presided over a huge increase in incarceration of black

way for Bush's Iraq war through eight years of regular bombing attacks and through continuing the starvation embargo that led to the deaths of some 1.5 million Iraqis. He also helped pave the way for Bush's "war on terror" at home with the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996.

But it wasn't just the Clinton-era Democratic Party that was racist and bloodthirsty. The Democratic Party oversaw the Korean War, the Vietnam War and the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba. It was the Congressional Black Caucus that in 1998 voted along with the rest of Congress to have Assata Shakur extradited from Cuba. It was black Democratic mayor Wilson Goode, working with the federal government, who ordered that a bomb be dropped on the MOVE home in Philadelphia in 1985, killing eleven black women, men and children. And more recently, it was black Democratic mayor Jack Ford of Toledo, Ohio, who called black protesters against the Nazis a violent group of gangs and unleashed police terror to subdue them.

A fighting labor movement will not be forged through impotent appeals to the Democrats but through sharp struggles to break with such representatives of the capitalist class enemy. That means seeing that the Democrats are the alternate party

NYC NOTICE

The New York Spartacist League's public office will not be open on Saturday, November 26.

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WORKERS VANGUARD

NYC Transit: Jobs, Health Care, Pensions on the Line

TWU Must Fight Bosses' Attacks!

NEW YORK CITY—With the contract between Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100 and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) expiring on December 15, the transit bosses are gunning for major givebacks from the union's 33,000 subway and bus workers. The MTA typically tries to conceal enormous budget surpluses as it works to squeeze the union for concessions. But the MTA is only too ready to fatten the pocketbooks of its real estate buddies, as seen last year when it offered to sell property on Manhattan's West Side worth nearly \$1 billion to developers for \$210 million. With this year's contract negotiations proceeding, the MTA has a surplus of over \$1 billion that's just too big to hide. Even so, the bosses are demanding major concessions that would lead directly to fewer jobs and higher health care costs for workers as well as an additional tier of workers with inferior benefits.

The attacks on the TWU are part of a class war by the capitalist rulers against working people in the U.S. and internationally. The same capitalist government that launched the imperialist wars against Afghanistan and Iraq left masses of black poor and others to die in New Orleans. Now many Hurricane Katrina survivors are threatened with eviction from the meager shelter they managed to get in other areas, while many also still remain without jobs. With help from the courts, United and Northwest airlines and auto parts maker Delphi have declared bankruptcy in order to annul pension plans and tear up union contracts, part of a broad assault on wages and health care and other benefits. To the parasitic capitalists, pensions have become outmoded and outlandish perks: workers should simply work like slaves, then die.

It's time that labor waged some class struggle against these assaults. Earlier this month, over 5,000 Philadelphia transit workers in TWU Local 234 and United Transportation Union Local 1594 waged a one-week strike that blocked the bosses' drive to make workers pay thousands in health care premiums (see "Philly Transit Strike Beats Back Bosses' Assault," *WV* No. 858, 11 November). Although some concessions were made, the strike fended off the bosses' most onerous demands, showing that unions have the power to fight back.

TWU Local 100 must fight the MTA's

union-busting multi-tier system. If the TWU gives in to the MTA's current demand, new-hires would be forced to pay health care premiums for the first time and would have to work an additional seven years to qualify for a pension. The company's attempt to pit younger workers against older workers must be

the MTA's modernization schemes are intended only to save them money by getting rid of workers, simultaneously making the subways *more* dangerous for both workers and passengers. The MTA wants to remove station agents from the token booths, which would frequently leave passengers without assistance, par-



March 2001 TWU rally to defend health benefits fund.

WV Photo

answered with the elementary union principle of "equal pay for equal work," reinforcing the union solidarity needed to defend all workers. Sanitation workers, firefighters and several other NYC public employee unions have recently negotiated contracts that stiff new-hires with lower pay packages in return for long-delayed wage hikes that barely cover inflation. The MTA is also reportedly going after the workers' right to change job locations, while demanding an expansion of "broadbanding." Under this scheme, workers do several types of work rather than stick to what's in their current job title, leading to a reduced workforce carrying heavier workloads in more dangerous conditions.

The MTA also wants to reduce the workforce by introducing new technology that would supposedly make many workers redundant. The decaying, century-old subway network does need to be modernized and made safer: 21 workers have died on the job in the last two decades. But

particularly for emergencies. The transit bosses are also aiming to remove conductors from the trains by implementing the computer-operated One Person Train Operation system. Under capitalism, the introduction of new technology, which should benefit the whole of society, is inevitably used to eliminate jobs. The labor movement should counter this by fighting for a shorter workweek with no loss in pay, to divide up the work and provide more jobs.

If the MTA insists on hardlining its giveback demands, then the TWU must be prepared to resist with all its might. The union's power to do so ultimately resides in its ability to shut the city down by mobilizing its membership to strike. Transit workers did this successfully in 1966, and also struck in 1980 before being sold out by the union misleaders. But they also know they are saddled with the state's Taylor Law, which was created to shackle unions by outlawing public employee strikes. The right to strike can only be won through hard struggle in *defiance* of anti-labor laws. Key to smashing the Taylor Law is forging a fighting alliance with all of NYC labor at the head of the city's working masses and its ghetto and barrio poor.

Workers Need Class-Struggle Leadership

To reverse the decades of attacks on labor will require the kind of class struggle that built the industrial unions. Labor needs a leadership that understands that the interests of the working class and the capitalist class are completely counterposed, and that labor must be politically independent from the capitalist Democratic and Republican parties.

Local 100 president Roger Toussaint, who won office with phony credentials as a "militant" alternative to the conservative TWU "old guard," has strengthened the chains binding the union to the exploiters. Toussaint supports Democrats like Hillary Clinton, who in 1999 explicitly supported the use of the Taylor Law against a possible TWU strike. Last year the TWU International threw its support to John Kerry, and the AFL-CIO tops spent millions in union dues on his failed presidential bid. This year the Local 100 tops hustled votes in the mayoral election for Fernando Ferrer, a man who declared that the NYPD committed no crime by its coldblooded killing of African immigrant Amadou Diallo.

Pouring union resources into the coffers of capitalist politicians—a clear expression of the labor bureaucracy's acceptance of the entire capitalist system—is the antithesis of what workers need. A class-struggle labor leadership would break the unions' ties to the Democrats and support the building of a workers party that fights for a workers government. It would also break from the labor bureaucracy's *criminal* support to the government's "war on terror," which is nothing but a pretext for brutal imperialist war in Afghanistan and Iraq and for cracking down on immigrants and opponents of government policy at home. The government's repressive measures attack

fundamental democratic rights and are particularly aimed at suppressing the black population and regimenting the entire working class. That the "war on terror" takes aim at unions was graphically demonstrated during the transit contract struggle in 2002, when the gutter press terrorist-baited the TWU for threatening to strike.

Toussaint enthusiastically signed on to the "anti-terror" drive, working to turn union members into auxiliaries of the racist cops. Following the criminal London transit bombings in July, the Local 100 bureaucracy offered that "transit workers are in a position to spot suspicious activity in the system" and berated the MTA for not training transit workers to do that (*Local 100 Express*, August 2005). Toussaint provided union funds to hire Israeli and other "counter-terrorism" experts to "train" Local 100 members.

The crackdown on "terror suspects" following the London bombings brought nothing but more vicious racist repression, as cops flooded subway stations and other transit facilities. In London on July 22, police jumped a worker from Brazil, Jean Charles de Menezes, who was sitting in a subway car, and executed him with seven shots to the head. In NYC on July 24, a police SWAT team dragged several men from Britain of Pakistani origin off a tourist bus in Midtown Manhattan, handcuffed them, forced them to kneel and searched their bags before finally releasing them.

Toussaint and the labor bureaucracy as a whole criminally embrace the racist cops as union brothers. Thus Toussaint touts Patrick Lynch of the New York Patrolmen's Benevolent Association as

continued on page 7



Agents/NY Times

16 December 2002: Local 100 president Roger Toussaint embracing MTA chairman Peter Kalikow after announcement of contract sellout.