

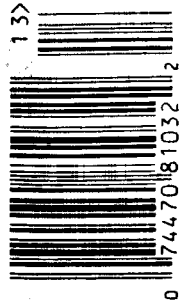
# Black History and the Class Struggle

No. 13

## Fight for Black Freedom, Fight for a Socialist Future!



Workers Vanguard Photos



— Farrakhan's Reactionary Dead End —

### Million Man March Appeases Racist Exploiters

SEE PAGE 35

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## Introduction

This issue of our *Black History and the Class Struggle* pamphlet series, reprinting articles first published in *Workers Vanguard* during 1995, reveals a capitalist America mired in deep political reaction, a society marked by an all-sided offensive by the rulers against labor, immigrants and especially black people. A closely analogous period in U.S. history is the 1920s, a time of anti-immigrant and anti-communist hysteria, anti-black race riots and rampant Ku Klux Klan terror, when the labor movement was weak, timid and dominated by right-wing business unionists.

The wave of racism and reaction that swept the country in the 1920s was a direct response by the capitalist class to the worldwide revolutionary movement inspired by the world's first victorious workers revolution, the Russian October Revolution of 1917 led by the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky. In contrast, today's wave of racism and rightism feeds off of the recent destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state, which was fatally undermined by decades of bureaucratic rule and the nationalist, anti-revolutionary program of Stalin and finally served up to the imperialists outright by his heirs. The former USSR quickly disintegrated into a myriad of mutually hostile capitalist states experiencing the "benefits" of counterrevolution: immiseration of the working people, rampaging social reaction and racist violence against dark-skinned minorities and Jews, all-sided degradation of women, fratricidal chauvinism and wars of conquest such as Russia's bloody adventure in Chechnya.

The significance of this historic defeat is not lost on the toiling masses of the world, especially the workers and poor peasants of Asia, Africa and Latin America who know that world imperialism is a powerful enemy of their struggles to free themselves from poverty, social backwardness and brutality at the hands of their own venal and repressive ruling classes.

Today the American ruling class, drunk with glee over this victorious counterrevolution, has been seized with a deep ideological passion to return to the imagined halcyon days of unfettered capitalist freebooting. As noted in the preamble to the program of the Labor Black League for Social Defense (see page 6): "The racist rulers of America—Democrat and Republican—believe they can get away with shredding any and all social welfare for the working class, the poor, blacks, the young, the old, without the slightest danger of social unrest." Imagining the "red men-

ace" a thing of the past, the bourgeoisie barely pays lip service to black equality, while simultaneously dumping the race and labor brokers (black politicians and trade-union "leaders") it previously cultivated to control the working class.

The attempt of the ruling class to dispense with its intermediaries and front men occurs in a period of enormous and growing social contradictions. Since 1980 there has been an accelerating shift in concentration of wealth into the hands of the bourgeoisie and a corresponding immiseration of the rest of the population. America now leads all industrial nations in *inequality* of distribution of wealth, with over 40 percent of the nation's income concentrated in the hands of 1 percent of the population. To contain the explosive contradictions generated by this growing gap between themselves and everyone else, the bosses have massively augmented the repressive apparatus of the capitalist state, which intrudes more and more into all aspects of social life.

### Lockdown U.S.A.

Today the country's biggest growth industry (now at \$30 billion per year) is prisons. And for every manufacturing job lost in the 1980s there is a new place in jail. "Lockdown U.S.A." (page 8) explains why and how the courts and prisons have become the dumping ground for those on whom the ruling class of this country has turned its back. The U.S. currently has the highest rate of incarceration in the world: 344 per 100,000 people. Over 50 percent of those behind bars are black, but black people make up just over 12 percent of the population. Hispanics are also disproportionately imprisoned.

The main vehicle for the rapid increase in the black and Hispanic prison population has been the so-called "war on drugs" (which is above all a poorly disguised war on minorities) with the Democratic Party and especially its black front men taking the lead. As the prisons become blacker (one in three young black American males is in jail, on probation or on parole), the few rights prisoners had are rapidly being curtailed. The right of *habeas corpus* has been severely limited. Legal aid for indigent defendants has been gutted. Sentences have been extended and education and rehabilitation programs have been abolished or sharply cut back. To top it all off, prison officials now want to ban the media from interviewing prisoners so the public will not know enough to protest. And to hammer the point home, they are resurrecting the hated prison chain gang,



Rubin/JB Pictures

**Black youth face permanent unemployment, increasing imprisonment. Over fifty percent of state and federal prison population today is black.**



Hille/Philadelphia Inquirer

hallmark of the Jim Crow South.

The deep racial polarization in American society was starkly illuminated by the vicious anti-black backlash over the acquittal of O.J. Simpson by a largely black jury ("Racist Backlash Against O.J. Simpson Acquittal," page 30). After a year-long show trial and media circus, the jury made short shrift of a blatant prosecution frame-up in which police and prosecutors lied, evidence was planted, and the key police detective was exposed not only as a liar but also as a fascist racist.

As the article notes, even Simpson, a multimillionaire black superstar and Reagan/Bush conservative who "made it" according to the rules of (white) American capitalism, after his arrest got the same frame-up treatment daily meted out in the ghettos. But the Simpson case also illustrated that the fundamental divide in this deeply racist country is not race but class. With his millions, Simpson was able to buy a topnotch team of attorneys who won his acquittal. As death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal noted: "If O.J. Simpson were a poor man of no influence, with the exact same errors in his case, he would still be on death row, for without money for good investigators, good jury specialists and good lawyers, who would know that such errors ever existed."

### **The Death Penalty: Impulse to Genocide**

In 1995, 56 people were executed in this country, one of two leading capitalist countries on the face of the planet which still practice the atrocity that is the death penalty. That number is the highest since the death penalty was reinstated in 1976. With the extension of the death penalty

to a number of federal crimes, the rate of executions will rise even more rapidly. The modern American death penalty is a barbaric legacy of a barbaric system of production: chattel slavery, a system which degraded black people to the status of property, to be used for profit and disposed of as the owner saw fit.

The death penalty is racist in its application. A majority of the over 3,000 men, women and children on death row are minorities. Nearly 50 percent are black. A black person is 22 times more likely to be sentenced to death if he is convicted of killing a white person than if the victim were black. In the McCleskey case, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that this racist bias does not matter, because to question it "throws into serious question the principles that underlie our entire criminal justice system." Yes, indeed.

The symbol of the struggle against the racist death penalty in America today is the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal, a former Black Panther, award-winning journalist and supporter of the controversial MOVE organization, who was framed up for the 1981 killing of a Philadelphia policeman. Jamal is an innocent man who should never have spent a day in prison.

In this pamphlet, we have reprinted "International Outcry Wins Stay of Execution—Battle for Mumia's Freedom" (page 17) which tells the story of Jamal's attempt to win a new trial in the courtroom of "hanging judge" Albert Sabo, who sent him up in 1982. Jamal now faces a district attorney who seeks the death penalty more often than any other in the country. In the face of significant new evidence proving his innocence, this judge told Jamal's attorneys, "Justice is just an emotional feeling" and denied

Mumia's petition for a new trial. On page 22, readers will find Jamal's statement in response to Sabo's refusal to remove himself from hearing the petition for a new trial.

The Partisan Defense Committee called for an international campaign of protest to stop the execution scheduled for 17 August 1995. Demonstrations were held around the world. Here in the U.S., the Labor Black Leagues participated in building a series of labor-centered demonstrations around the country on August 3 demanding, "Stop the Execution" and "Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!" In response to the international outcry, Sabo signed a stay of execution on August 7. Jamal wrote:

"The state of Pennsylvania still has every intention of killing me—just not right now.

"Thus the stay is a limited victory...let us utilize this precious time to build a stronger and broader movement, to not 'stay' one execution, but to halt them all! *Down with the racist U.S. death penalty!*"

On February 9, Jamal's attorneys filed papers in Pennsylvania Supreme Court challenging Sabo's rulings and demanding a new trial. The Partisan Defense Committee, the Spartacist League and the Labor Black Leagues are committed to a campaign to free Jamal. While using every legal avenue open to us, we put no faith in the "justice" of the capitalist courts, but place this case before the masses. We take up Jamal's defense as part of our struggle for black freedom and proletarian revolution in the interests of the liberation of all of humanity.

Immediately, our aim is to effect an international campaign of protest and publicity like that which saved the Scottsboro Boys from the electric chair



WV Photo

**NYC transit workers demonstrate against layoffs. To fight for its interests, labor must break with the Democrats and forge a class-struggle workers party.**

in the 1930s. Toward that end, in late spring of last year, the Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee went to South Africa to build support for Jamal's case among militants who well remember how the apartheid regime used the death penalty to behead the black struggle. We sought also to engage leftist and working-class organizations there in discussion on the strategy to combat continued racist oppression and capitalist exploitation under Mandela/DeKlerk's "power sharing" regime.

The eyewitness report by Don Alexander, "South African Unions Take Up Jamal's Fight as Their Own" (page 23), also serves as a brief update of *Black History* No. 12, "South Africa Powder Keg." Increasingly, bitter black workers and unemployed youth are saying that nothing has changed in their jobs, their townships, their homes. Whites still own 87 percent of the land, 90 percent of the productive wealth and have an average income ten times that of blacks. Unemployment among black youth in the townships stands at 70-80 percent.

The ANC/SACP/COSATU "tripartite alliance" is a nationalist popular front, tying the black proletariat to their bourgeois exploiters. The situation cries out for a revolutionary party fighting for a workers government. A workers revolution in South Africa would have an electrifying impact in industrial centers throughout the world, particularly on blacks in the U.S. who strongly identified with the struggle against white

supremacy in apartheid South Africa. Correspondingly, it is clear that without extension of that revolution to the main imperialist centers, especially the U.S., any South African workers revolution would face the grim prospect of bloody counterrevolutionary intervention by the major capitalist powers. Thus the black freedom struggle is necessarily international in scope, from opposition to imperialist plunder of the neocolonial countries to the building of a world socialist economy based on the equality of all peoples.

### **Black Separatism—A Gift to the White Ruling Class**

Black separatist movements in 20th-century America have all found their growth spurred in periods of defeat. For the Garvey movement of the early 1920s, it was the post-World War I wave of racism and repression that gave it impetus. Today it is the defeats of black struggle, the rampant racism and grinding desperation of Clinton/Gingrich's America and the deadly and dead-end reliance on the capitalist Democratic Party that has left black workers and students prey to separatist nostrums, such as Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan's reactionary woman-hating Million Man March for "atonement" (see "Farrakhan's Reactionary Dead End—Million Man March Appeases Racist Exploiters," page 35).

The Million Man March dressed a black constituency in the conservative trappings of anti-woman "family values"

and segregationist bigotry. As journalist Don Terry noted in the *New York Times* (15 October 1995), "Mr. Farrakhan is a conservative, and on the surface, at least, some of the rally's themes echo those heard at Republican gatherings: God, loyalty, family, discipline" (see "Why Did Rulers Applaud Million Man March?" page 39). In order to court America's parties of property (Democrats and Republicans) the black misleaders—Farrakhan, Jesse Jackson, Ben Chavis, blame blacks for their own oppression and condemn black women to be "the slave of a slave" (see "Black Women and Revolutionary Struggle," page 42).

Much was made of the march as a demonstration of "black operational unity"—a million black men standing together. In the 1960s, "I'm Black and I'm Proud" race consciousness, shaped by the millions mobilized in the civil rights struggles, was defiant of the racist capitalist rulers. Today we hear, "I'm Black and I'm not a criminal" from a desperate black middle class begging for "understanding" from the racist rulers. Black misleaders, branded by race themselves, can barely conceal their contempt for the black masses on whom they call to "atone." We say *black people have nothing to atone for!* The false prophets of the "American Dream" blame the victim for not "succeeding" and degrade the proud history of black working people who have struggled to break the chains of racist oppression.

Farrakhan recalls with nostalgia the Jim Crow era: "When civil rights broke down the desegregation laws we began to lose black businesses and spend our money with white businesses. So throughout the South the economic advancement that we gained under Jim Crow is literally dead" (*Emerge*, August 1990). Economic advancement for whom? Surely not the sharecropper chained by debt to the plantation store and the rural capitalist's land. Surely not the "last hired, first fired" urban worker who fought tooth and nail for a decent-paying job in industry. Surely not the youth who studied in dilapidated schoolrooms with outdated books because "public tax money" was needed for projects to enhance business opportunity.

Farrakhan denounces Jewish, and now Arab and Asian, ghetto shopkeepers as "bloodsuckers." The new Booker T. Washingtons seek to be the *real* "bloodsuckers"—the capitalist exploiters—of "their" people, claiming the ghetto as their illusory "exclusive market." It's absurd to believe that this ruling class will share any part of its market with a yet unformed black capitalist class. Farrakhan's utopian dreams of a "black capitalism," feeding off segregation, are premised on the benevolent acquiescence of the white power structure.

The Constitution of this country was originally meant to apply to white male Protestant freeholders—that was behind the definition of a “citizen.” As that definition was expanded, the rights extended to the “citizen” were correspondingly diminished. This process continues: witness California’s anti-immigrant Prop 187 and its legal extensions, such as a current bill to deny citizenship to children born in this country if the parents themselves are not citizens. Accompanying the legal rollback of democratic rights is an assault on the living standards and lives of immigrant workers (see “Killer Cops and Sweatshop Slavery—Brutal Anti-Immigrant Repression in L.A.,” page 27). The anti-immigrant hysteria, which Farrakhan reinforces, benefits only the bosses in their campaign to crush unions and drive down wages. That is why the Labor Black League for Social Defense raises the call:

“Full citizenship rights for all immigrants; everyone who made it into this country has the right to stay and live decently! Stop deportations! No to racist “English only” laws! Down with anti-Hispanic, anti-Semitic, anti-Arab and anti-Asian bigotry!”

Immigrants’ rights and the rights of blacks and labor go hand in hand. As soon as the reactionary forces mobilized around California’s right-wing governor Pete Wilson succeeded with Prop 187, they launched a campaign to eliminate affirmative action programs for minorities and women in jobs and education. The clear intent is to bar black people from much chance at a decent life. As we point out in the article “Defeat Racist Assault on Affirmative Action!” (page 12): “The drive against minorities, immigrants, women and labor can only be defeated by militant *class* struggle in defense of all the oppressed against both parties of American capitalism and its state.” The assault on affirmative action highlights important differences with the 1920s, a period when Jim Crow reigned supreme in the South. Today there exists a substantial black middle class—over 12 percent of black households earn over \$50,000 per year. It is this group that feels particularly threatened by the right-wing crusade against affirmative action, and who, in the absence of a combative labor movement, is turning to nationalist demagogues such as Farrakhan.

Historically, the appeal of black nationalism has been undercut in periods of sharp class struggle. The mass migration of blacks out of the rural South and into Northern cities and basic industries, vastly accelerated by World War I, positioned black workers to play an important role in forging a powerful labor movement, particularly with the rise of the CIO in the 1930s. “Conrad Lynn, 1908-1995” (page 44) will be of special

interest to our younger readers, for here is chronicled the life of one of the young black intellectuals drawn to the Communist Party in the late 1920s by its commitment to racial equality and won to the struggle for socialism. Lynn was to break with the Stalinized CP over the reactionary implications of its class-collaborationist line of the “People’s Front,” but never abandoned his commitment to social justice, and as an attorney played a courageous role in many key battles against cop terror and segregation.

On the back of the membership cards of the Labor Black Leagues, whose program is reprinted on page 6, is a quote from the founder of modern communism, Karl Marx, on the occasion of the American Civil War. It reads, “Labor cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded.” This quote tells two important truths: first, the fundamental division in society is class; second, racism is a tool of the capitalist class to *divide and rule* the working class.

Labor and black rights will go forward together or fall back separately. “Cross-Burnings and Anti-Union Terror” (page 28) reports on attempts to organize the 200,000 poultry workers concentrated in the traditionally anti-union South. Primarily black single mothers and immigrants, these workers spend their days slaving for miserable wages under turn-of-the-century conditions. In 1991, in an effort to keep workers from “stealing” chicken parts, emergency exits at a Hamlet, North Carolina processing plant were locked—a fire broke out and 25 workers died. Last year in Dothan, Alabama, plant managers seeking to “discourage” a vote for the union burned a cross on company property, hanging a “vote yes” T-shirt from the wreckage. In other areas, management threatened to close the plant if the union won. Where the unions have been able to institute collective bargaining, some minimal gains have been made. But to win a living wage and decent conditions, labor must get off its knees and organize *all* of the South—especially the new industrial corridor along the I-85 highway. This means defying the bosses’ laws and going back to the class-struggle weapons that built the unions in the first place, like militant mass picket lines, factory occupations, solidarity strikes and “hot-cargoing” scab output. It means confronting the racist status quo by taking up the broad social defense of all the oppressed.

As we wrote in 1994:

“The unionization of the South cannot and will not have a narrowly economist character, nor will it likely emanate from the top echelons of the AFL-CIO. On the one side, the entire black community will tend to rally behind racially integrated workers fighting the local white power structure. On the other side, the Southern

branch of the American ruling class will resort not only to the police, company goons and professional strikebreakers but, if hard pressed, also to the Klan and its ilk, while using racist demagoguery to turn backward white workers against the labor movement. In short, a union organizing drive in the South will become a major arena of political struggle between the oppressed black masses and the white ruling class.... A unionization drive could generate an embryonic workers party which would also become the political expression of the black community. ‘Organize the South’ and the call for integrated labor action to defend black rights are key slogans for Southern work today.”

—“The Post-Soviet World: Perspectives and Tasks of the Spartacist League/U.S.,” *Spartacist* No. 51, Autumn 1994

To organize the South requires a labor leadership that actively champions black rights and that fights in the interests of all of labor and the oppressed on the basis of a program whose starting point is the independence of the proletariat from its exploiters. The CIO’s post-World War II campaign to organize the South, grotesquely named “Operation Dixie,” was wrecked on the shoals of the red purges, racism and the CIO’s ties to the Democratic Party. In many cases, to get the “reds,” anti-Communist labor bureaucrats worked to *destroy* already extant Southern unions that were largely Communist Party-led and had a large black membership. The labor bureaucrats’ ties to the Democrats obviously rendered them incapable of organizing the South because that would have meant going up against the Dixiecrats. Today, the AFL-CIO tops scream about shipping jobs “offshore” to cheap labor markets. But it was this bureaucracy’s betrayals that guaranteed cheap internal labor in the American South.

For us, the study of black history, which is a key part of the history of the class struggle in America, is not a passive endeavor: we seek to understand the world *in order to change it*. The solacing illusions of black nationalism and the cynical lie of “black capitalism” notwithstanding, black people in the U.S. are not a “nation” but a specially oppressed race-color caste within the American people as a whole. Segregated at the bottom of American society, they are also integrated into strategic sections of the industrial proletariat, in whose hands lies the power to shatter this racist capitalist system. The key is revolutionary *leadership*. The Spartacist League and the Labor Black Leagues fight to mobilize the working class on the program of revolutionary integrationism—the full integration of blacks in an egalitarian, socialist society. The road to black freedom lies through proletarian emancipation, the building of a society in which those who labor rule. ■

# Labor Black League for Social Defense

The first Labor Black Leagues were formed as a result of the Spartacist League-initiated, 5,000-strong labor/black mobilization that stopped the Klan from marching in Washington, D.C. in November 1982. We stand for mobilizing the masses of minority and working people for militant integrated struggle against the brutal system of racist oppression that is capitalist America. Initiated by and fraternally allied with the Spartacist League, a multiracial revolutionary Marxist organization, the Labor Black Leagues are part of the revolutionary movement of the workers and oppressed against the bosses and for socialism.

Since 1980 over a million manufacturing jobs have been lost, and in the same period over a million people—mainly black and Hispanic—have been added to the prison population. With the gap between rich and poor growing daily, there is an accelerating drive to diminish constitutional rights, like, among others, *habeas corpus* and the Second Amendment right to bear arms. The LBLs defend the democratic right to self-defense and say that gun control kills blacks. Further emboldened by the victory of capitalist counterrevolution in the former Soviet Union and East Europe, the racist rulers of America—Democrat and Republican—believe they can get away with shredding any and all social welfare for the working class, the poor, blacks, the young, the old, without the slightest danger of social unrest. They are encouraged in this belief by the labor bureaucracy which has undermined the power of organized labor by tying the unions to their exploiters through the Democratic Party and turning a blind eye to the devastation of the black population in the inner cities.

The passivity of the labor movement, enforced by the trade-



1982: 5,000-strong anti-Klan demonstration in Washington, D.C. galvanized the black and oppressed population and sparked the formation of the first Labor Black Leagues.

## What We Stand For

union misleaders, has opened the door for the sinister demagogue Louis Farrakhan. Farrakhan was joined by Jesse Jackson and other black elected officials at his Million Man March where they preached the sermon of Gingrich and Clinton that blacks are responsible for their own oppression. This poison is directly counterposed to the struggle for black freedom. It's the agenda of desperate black middle-class elements who want to be the exploiters of "their own" people. Echoing the racist rulers who try to blame the desperate immigrant for "stealing jobs," Farrakhan seeks to turn the anger of the ghetto against the Jewish, the Arab, the Korean shopkeeper. Against this poison of ethnic hatred, the LBLs stand for uniting the multiracial, multiethnic working class in struggle in defense of all the oppressed.

The Civil War broke the chains of chattel slavery. But the promise of equality, for which 200,000 black troops were among those who so courageously fought, was betrayed by the Northern capitalists. Blacks were stripped of political rights and economically subjugated. In the 1960s, hundreds of thousands of courageous militants—black and white—joined in the civil rights struggle against Jim Crow segregation in the South. But the civil rights movement, whose liberal-pacifist leaders looked to the Democratic Party for salvation, was defeated in the North because it had no perspective for challenging the hellish oppression of the ghetto masses, which is entrenched in the whole system of racist American capitalism. The "Black Power" movement, with the radical nationalist Black Panther Party its most militant, contradictory expression, rejected the program of integrated class struggle which poses the only real solution to racial oppression: black liberation through socialist revolution overthrowing existing society. Murderous government repression then sealed the destruction of the Black Panthers, the main radical black organization in the sixties that initially sought to organize independently of the Democrats and Republicans.

The Labor Black Leagues for Social Defense raise the call: Finish the Civil War! We base our perspectives on the realization that it will take a third American revolution, a workers socialist revolution, to finally liberate black people. And as American capitalism's fate is inextricably bound up with the world market, revolutionary struggle in the U.S. is necessarily part and parcel of the fight for socialism internationally.

The membership cards of the LBLs are inscribed with Karl Marx's statement about the American Civil War: "Labor cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded." Black people are not a nation within the U.S., but a specially oppressed race-color caste, segregated at the bottom of U.S. society but also integrated into strategic sections of the industrial proletariat in whose hands lies the economic power to shatter this racist capitalist system. Full equality can only come through the struggle for revolutionary integration, to free black people from grinding capitalist oppression through mobilizing the social power of the multiracial working class and establishing a socialist society where those who labor rule. There is no other road to black freedom or proletarian emancipation. Getting there is a question of leadership. The Labor Black Leagues are multiracial organizations of militant workers and youth fighting for revolutionary integration: for black liberation through socialist revolution!

## If You Stand For—

**1** Full rights for black people and for everyone else in jobs, housing and schools! Defeat the racist assault on affirmative action! For union-run minority job recruitment and training programs! For union hiring halls! Open up the universities to all—for open admissions, free tuition and a full living stipend for all students. Free, quality, integrated public education for all!

**2** A fighting labor movement—picket lines mean don't cross! For sit-down strikes against mass layoffs! Fight union-busting, keep the capitalist courts out of the unions! Organize the unorganized, unionize the South! Jobs for all—for a shorter workweek at no loss in pay with full cost-of-living escalator clause! Cops and prison guards out of the unions!

**3** Fight for women's rights! Defend abortion clinics! Free abortion on demand; free, quality 24-hour childcare! Equal pay for equal work! For free, quality healthcare for all!

**4** Full citizenship rights for all immigrants; everyone who made it into this country has the right to stay and live decently! Stop deportations! No to racist "English only" laws! Down with anti-Hispanic, anti-Semitic, anti-Arab and anti-Asian bigotry!

**5** Down with anti-gay laws! Full democratic rights for homosexuals! Government out of the bedroom!

**6** Mass labor/black/Hispanic mobilizations drawing on the organized power of the unions against the racist terrorists, in and out of uniform! Stop the Nazis! Stop the KKK!

**7** Abolish the racist death penalty! Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Free Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt) and all victims of racist, capitalist repression! No faith in the capitalist courts! For class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense; support the work of the Partisan Defense Committee!

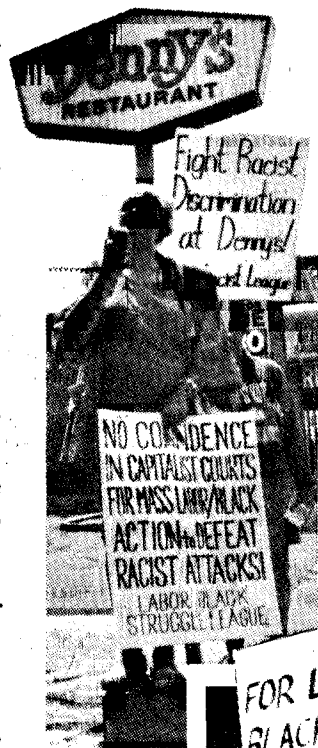
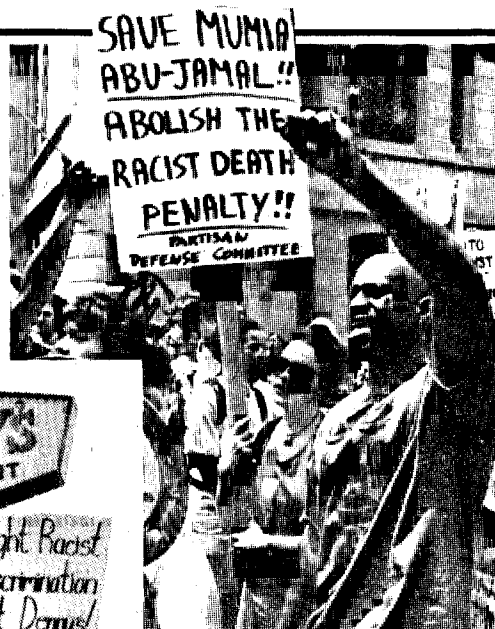
**8** Unconditional opposition to every attempt to abolish welfare! Down with slave-labor, union-busting "workfare" schemes! Fight any and every attempt of the government to take away or cut back even more social programs such as Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, public health and aid to education and housing! For a massive program of public works—high quality, integrated housing, schools, libraries, hospitals for the working people and the poor!

**9** Down with the chauvinist poison of protectionism! For international working-class solidarity! Support revolutionary struggles of working people abroad! Defend Cuba, Vietnam, China and North Korea against capitalist restoration and imperialist attack! For labor action against U.S. imperialist war moves and military adventures!

**10** Down with the Democrats and Republicans! For a revolutionary workers party that champions the cause of all the oppressed! Finish the Civil War! Those who labor must rule! Take industry away from its incompetent and corrupt owners—all the wealth belongs to the working people who created it! Rebuild America on a socialist planned economy!

## —Join the Labor Black League for Social Defense!

Membership pledge is \$3/year unemployed;  
\$10/year employed



Above: Philadelphia, July 1995 rally to defend Mumia Abu-Jamal. Left: July 1993, Chicago Labor Black Struggle League protests racist discrimination at Denny's—part of a nationwide series of protests. Below: September 1993, San Francisco demonstration against anti-immigrant racism.



WV Photos

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# Lockdown U.S.A.

## Racist Prison Hell: 1.5 Million Behind Bars



Photo: Leifer/Camera 5

America's rulers have embarked on an all-sided assault on the poor, the elderly and children. In the past month, Congressional committees have voted to scrap the national school lunch program, food supplements for pregnant women and infants, assistance to unmarried mothers with children and aid to thousands of poor children with physical or mental disabilities. There are also plans afoot to reduce the Medicare program for the elderly, while the so-called balanced budget amendment—which recently failed by one vote in the Senate—would entirely gut the Social Security system, already regularly looted by the federal government. Now the Republican-controlled Congress is rewriting the Democrats' "crime" bill, passed last fall, to make it even more vicious, jacking up federal subsidies for spending on prisons to over \$10 billion. And crowning it all is the massive speedup on death row.

The bipartisan drive to deny millions of poor people even a semblance of subsistence has nothing to do with "bal-

ancing the budget," which is bloated by hundreds of billions in military expenditures. What they want is to be rid of a whole layer of the black population which has been deemed "surplus" by the racist rulers. The coldblooded policy of starving black welfare mothers and their kids is augmented by a racist "war on crime" which snatches young men and women from the streets and throws them into prison hellholes. Jails replace (non-existent) jobs, billy clubs are substituted for the blackboard. In the calculations of the American bourgeoisie, the inner-city ghettos which used to provide a reservoir of unskilled labor for the auto plants and steel mills—a "reserve army" of the unemployed to be tapped when the economy needed them—are simply written off, patrolled by police who act like an occupation army and devastated by poverty and disease.

A couple of statistics sum it up. Over a million manufacturing jobs were lost in the U.S. in the 1980s, on top of the wholesale destruction of whole swaths of Mid-

west industry the decade before. *For every place lost on the assembly lines, one has been added in the prisons.* Since the mid-1970s, the country's state and federal prison population has *quadrupled*, recently passing the one million mark and growing at the rate of 1,500 a week. Added to the nearly half million held in local jails, the total prison population of over 1.5 million equals that of the city of Philadelphia. And black people account for *54 percent* of those behind bars—more than *four times* their proportion of the population as a whole—as compared to 35 percent only 20 years ago.

Since the feds geared up their "war on drugs" in the early '80s, the prisons have been filled to overflowing. This was a deliberate policy decision to send hundreds of thousands of youth to jail. Fully 60 percent of federal prison sentences are now meted out for drug offenses, in many cases simple possession. A slew of Congressionally imposed mandatory minimum sentences has led to the spectacle of tens of thousands of

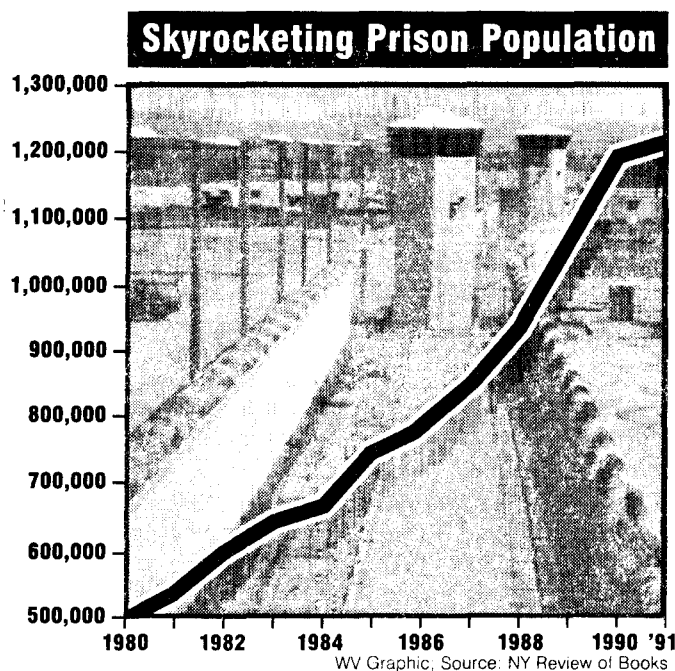


teenage kids being locked away for years without any chance of parole for getting caught with small amounts of crack or marijuana. While black Democrats like Jesse Jackson promote this racist crusade with demagoguery about "hope, not dope," we have insisted from the outset that the "war on drugs" is a racist war on black America.

Before 1981, the juvenile arrest rate for drug offenses was higher among whites than blacks. Yet while federal agencies concede that drug use remains higher among white youth, the arrest rate for blacks has skyrocketed. To take but one example, in Baltimore, the number of young blacks arrested for drug sales climbed from 86 in 1981 to over 1,300 a decade later, while arrests of white juveniles remained constant. Today, a staggering 56 percent of all black men in Baltimore between the ages of 18 and 35 are ensnared in the "criminal justice" system, with comparable figures in other major cities.

The "prison-industrial complex" is just about the only "growth industry" in America today. Not least among the factors driving the phony "war on crime" is a powerful political lobby which seeks to reap ever greater profits from the burgeoning system of incarceration and execution. Combined federal, state and local spending on prisons jumped almost eightfold in the past 20 years, to a rate of \$30 billion a year. California alone has devoted \$10 billion to prison construction in the past decade. And many of the new facilities are designed to be "supermax" high-security institutions, in which prisoners are locked up in isolation 23 hours a day behind high-voltage electrical "death fences." The prototype for these new facilities is the federal penitentiary at Marion, Illinois, which even the U.S. Court of Appeals described in 1988 as "sordid," "horrible" and "depressing in the extreme."

Sitting behind bars at the Greene supermax prison in Waynesville, Pennsylvania is death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. Jamal's case has become the focus of opposition to the barbaric death penalty. This former Black Panther and acclaimed black journalist, widely known as the "voice of the voiceless," has been condemned to death solely for his outspoken opposition to racist oppression and persecution. With nothing to offer the masses of black poor and working people but ever-deeper degradation and immiseration, the capitalist ruling class is intent on extinguishing any sign of protest with brute force. *A victory in the struggle to save Mumia Abu-Jamal will strike a blow against the*



**America's No. 1 "growth industry": Number behind bars has more than tripled since 1980, topping 1.5 million in federal and state prisons and local jails in 1994.**

*entire system of legal lynching and racist repression.*

### Return of the Chain Gang

We have noted that the death penalty in the United States is rooted in the racist legacy of the slave system. Today, in their vendetta against black youth, reactionary politicians from both capitalist parties are moving to bring back the penal code of the Jim Crow South in all its horror. In the past few years, state legislatures in Alabama, Indiana and Washington have even considered bills to have "sex offenders" castrated. Describing a special session of the Mississippi state legislature last fall, the *New York Times* (17 September 1994) reported: "There was talk of restoring fear to prisons, of caning, of making prisoners 'smell like a prisoner,' of burning and frying." Mississippi has now banned TV, radio, stereo and weight-lifting equipment in prison. In a direct throwback to the days of the chain gang, all inmates will now have to wear striped uniforms with the word "convict" across the back. And Alabama just spent \$17,000 for 300 sets of leg irons to be worn by chain gangs.

When it comes to prison "reform," Mississippi—which ranks at or near the bottom of the 50 states on virtually every educational or social indicator—is in the forefront. Congress is now insisting that subsidies to the states for new prison construction mandated by Clinton's crime bill last year be predicated on cutting back or eliminating parole and imposing stiffer sentences. Meanwhile, Congress and the states are enacting new laws daily

which will gut the rights of prisoners and the accused, from restricting habeas corpus appeals to eliminating the constitutional ban on police searches without warrants. They want to go back to the days when a 19th-century judge (echoing the infamous 1857 Dred Scott decision that blacks "had no rights which a white man was bound to respect") declared that a prisoner was "the slave of the state," who "not only forfeited his liberty, but all his personal rights."

From California to Florida, state and local governments are banning anything resembling educational, rehabilitation or recreational facilities. Among the measures passed with overwhelming bipartisan support by Congress last year was one cutting off educational opportunities for inmates. In 1989, the Supreme Court ruled that prison officials had full discretion to ban any publication considered "detrimental," from porn to political material. Texas prison authorities recently decreed that *Workers Vanguard* was *verboten* because we ran the world-famous photo of Vietnamese children running naked from a U.S. napalm attack. Joining a nationwide trend to deny prisoners the relief of an occasional cigarette, California and Texas now even refuse to allow death row inmates a final smoke as a last request before execution!

Such increasingly inhuman prison conditions provoked 374 riots in 1992-93, more than three times the number in the previous three years combined. ACLU National Prison Project spokesman Alvin Bronstein has warned that by making "prisons so harsh," politi-

cians and prison authorities "will ensure another Attica," the 1971 prison rebellion in upstate New York which was drowned in blood by Governor Nelson Rockefeller, who unleashed a cop massacre which left 43 people dead. Today, U.S. rulers appear almost eager to provoke a revolt of prison inmates which they could use as a pretext for a major bloodletting.

In the past decade, 33 inmates have been shot to death by prison guards in California alone. The *Los Angeles Times* (22 September 1994) reports that guards shoot prisoners as a "routine and accepted way of breaking up fights among convicts."

Rape, an ever-present horror of prison life, has also been made an instrument for control and humiliation of inmates. *The Dilemmas of Corrections* (1991) noted: "The contribution to sexual assaults between prisoners that is made by correctional officers...is legendary." Conservative estimates indicate that more than 290,000 males are raped in prison every year, a virtual death sentence for many given the high levels of AIDS in prison. On top of this is the willful misuse of medical care to punish prisoners. A three-part investigative report in the *San Francisco Chronicle* (3-5 October 1994) cited "hundreds of cases" of "incompetent, negligent or punitive" medical care "reminiscent of prison conditions in centuries past."

The treatment inflicted on the mentally ill in prison has become a major social issue because of the slashing of funds for psychiatric care. There are now more mentally ill people in New York's state prisons than in its psychiatric hospitals, a third of them with severe illnesses like schizophrenia and manic depression. Yet, even when convicted of mild crimes, these people are placed in maximum-

security prisons where they are subjected to the most stressful treatment. In 1990, the Supreme Court approved forcible injections of anti-psychotic drugs by prison authorities without recourse to judicial hearings. This is bitterly ironic when one recalls how the imperialists railed during the Cold War against the use of drugs on prisoners in Soviet psychiatric institutions.

A more recent form of high-tech torture in U.S. prisons is the use of electric shocks. In Los Angeles County, eight people were killed between 1987 and 1989 by guards using Tasers, stun guns which shoot darts that deliver a paralyzing 45,000-volt shock. An offshoot of the Taser gun is an electrical shock belt called React, which has been purchased by some 250 local police forces. The belt, worn by prisoners during court appearances, can deliver a 50,000-volt shock to the back muscles at the push of a guard's button.

### High-Tech Hellholes

The "new wave" in prison torment is the so-called maximum-security prisons in which inmates are virtually buried alive in six-by-eight-foot solitary confinement cells with no furniture and only reinforced concrete slabs to serve as bed and table. Solid steel doors, opened electronically by remote control from a central guard post, prevent communication—or even eye contact—with other inmates. Prisoners are fed alone through a slot in the door and are denied access to libraries, training and recreational activity. For the brief period when prisoners are allowed to leave their cells, they are forced to wear leg irons and escorted by a number of heavily armed guards.

These high-tech hellholes have their

origins in 1950s "psy-war" experiments on brainwashing techniques. Centered on the use of isolation units and sensory deprivation, they sought to "modify" the behavior and attitudes of political prisoners and resisters. In a chilling report on the prototype supermax prison at Marion, Illinois, journalist Russell Miller wrote in the London *Sunday Times* (23 May 1993):

"The regime makes no pretense at rehabilitation. Its function is psychological emasculation, to crush the spirit, strip a man of the last vestige of defiance and force him to conform to the most punitive system the courts will allow and the public will tolerate."

Key to these new "maxi" prisons—the most recent is the Florence, Colorado federal prison—is the ability not only to control prisoners, but to *kill* them. As the "industry" journal *Corrections Today* (July 1992) coldly commented, "When contemplating the design of a new maximum security facility, issues related to the use of deadly force must be addressed early in the planning process."

Among the four new super-maximum prisons in California is the notorious Pelican Bay State Prison near the Oregon border. Since its opening barely five years ago, guards have fired on inmates on 129 separate occasions, wounding 23 and killing three. Last month, a federal judge in San Francisco ruled that "the use of excessive force for the purpose of punishment and deterrence" at Pelican Bay violated the constitutional ban on cruel and unusual punishment. Among the examples cited was that of mentally ill inmate Vaughn Dortch, who was thrown into a scalding bath that left him with second- and third-degree burns over a third of his body. One Pelican Bay prisoner remarked bitterly, "I think hell is a better place than this."

Hawaii Correctional Industries



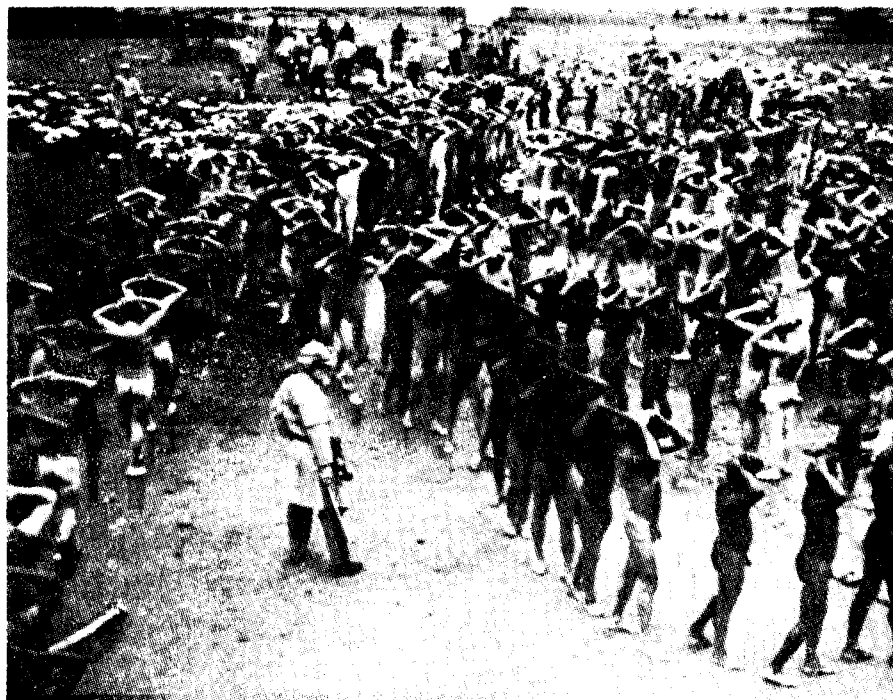
States are bringing back chain-gang labor. Prisoners in Hawaii working on pineapple plantations.

Another maximum-security institution in California is the Calipatria State Prison, which opened in 1992. An internal prison memorandum recently published in the *People's Weekly World* (24 December 1994) exposed the openly racist policies which are rampant throughout the prison system: "Visits for Black and Mexican inmates will be behind the glass, limited to 15 minutes per inmate per day. Visits for white and other inmates will be unrestricted.... Black and Mexican inmates will be escorted to canteen 10 inmates at a time. White and other inmates will have access to the canteen during their normally scheduled yard periods.... There will [be] no yard activities for Black and Mexican inmates. There will be normal yard activities for white and other inmates...." There are ten suicide attempts *every month* in Calipatria.

Not surprisingly, leftist political prisoners—including American Indian Movement leader Leonard Peltier, Ray Luc Levasseur of the Ohio Seven, Puerto Rican nationalist Alejandrina Torres and New Left activist Susan Rosenberg, among others—have been particularly singled out for these supermax facilities. A former warden at Marion frankly stated that its purpose "is to control revolutionary attitudes in the prison system and in the society at large" (Ward Churchill and J.J. Vander Wall [eds.], *Cages of Steel* [1992]). Former California Black Panther Party leader Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt), who has been locked away for 24 years for a crime the government knows he did not commit, has waged a constant struggle against attempts to subject him to a harsher prison regime, and has repeatedly been denied parole for refusing to renounce his political beliefs.

### Capitalist Decay and Genocide U.S.A.

The bourgeoisie's vicious drive to imprison and execute ever-increasing numbers of ghetto youth reflects a sinister impulse to genocide against a layer of the black population. Particularly in the wake of the multiracial plebeian uprising which rocked L.A. after the acquittal of the racist cops who beat Rodney King, the ruling class is dead-set on suppressing a generation for whom capitalism in decay offers no productive employment. Spending on education and social services has gone bust, while prison construction booms. Last fall, Texas simultaneously added \$1 billion to the "corrections" budget while rejecting a \$750 million bond issue for education. Similarly in California, the Department of Corrections hired 26,000



New York State Special Commission on Attica

**Attica, 1971: Prisoners stripped and herded into the yard following Governor Rockefeller's bloody suppression of rebellion, leaving 43 dead.**

people in the last ten years while the higher education system lost 8,000 jobs. The capitalist ruling class leaves no doubts about its priorities.

While a "reserve army" of unemployed workers is a necessary and inevitable feature of capitalism, the growth of a large sector of permanently unemployed "outcasts" has historically impelled the bourgeoisie toward annihilation of those it considers "surplus" population. In the early years of capitalist development, preceding and during the industrial revolution in Britain, the bourgeoisie deliberately drove vast numbers of peasants off the land, through such measures as the "enclosure laws," in order to create a pool of labor for large-scale manufacturing. But, as Karl Marx explained in *Capital*, "this 'free' proletariat could not possibly be absorbed by the nascent manufactures as fast as it was thrown upon the world." Draconian laws were enacted to intimidate and destroy the resulting mass of unemployed vagabonds. During the 16th-century reign of Henry VIII, some 72,000 beggars and thieves were hanged—when England's population was scarcely a few million.

Today, with capitalism in decline, there is again a drive to get rid of whole sections of the population. But now it is not because the productive forces are too immature to find useful employment for all, but rather because they have vastly outgrown the limits of a system based on production for profit. The 20th century is marked by high-tech barbarism, epit-

omized by the slaughter of two imperialist world wars, punctuated by the Holocaust and the A-bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and continuing with countless fratricidal and genocidal conflicts. Augmenting these bloody slaughters, many of them the product of counterrevolution in the Soviet Union and East Europe, are the "peacetime" phenomena of widespread famine and epidemics which ravage much of the Third World and the current "social policy" of the U.S. bourgeoisie directed at devastating and decimating a whole layer of the country's minority population.

What we have called "Genocide U.S.A." is not an ephemeral aberration due to the political victories of right-wing Republicans but rather a strategic policy embracing a bipartisan consensus. It is no accident that the labor bureaucrats and black misleaders—from Jesse Jackson to Louis Farrakhan—are at best impotent and at worst complicit in this drive toward death, because they are committed to the maintenance of this racist capitalist system. The only way out of a grisly future of homelessness, starvation and prison for millions of minority youth lies in a revolutionary struggle to sweep away the capitalist profit system. And the key to that lies in forging a revolutionary workers party which will mobilize the social power of the multiracial proletariat to act as a tribune of all the oppressed in the fight for a socialist society in which there will be an equal and productive place for all. ■

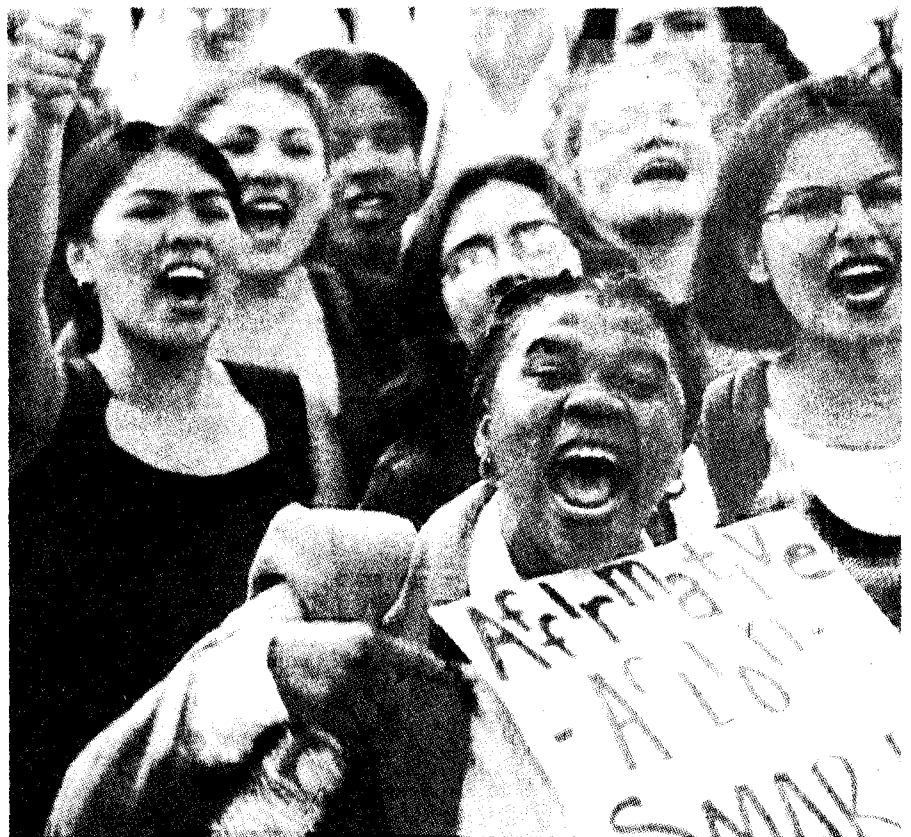
# Attack on Blacks, Immigrants, Women Defeat Racist Assault on Affirmative Action!

Riding high after the right-wing victory in the November elections, reactionary forces are mounting an offensive against affirmative action programs for minorities and women in jobs and education. A bill outlawing "racial preferences" in business has been introduced in Congress. In June, the U.S. Supreme Court is expected to rule against policies favoring companies owned by women and minorities in government contracts.

The focal point of the drive against affirmative action is California, which last fall served as a springboard for an escalating racist crusade against immigrants with the passage of Proposition 187 denying education and health care to "illegal aliens." We warned at the time that "immigrant-bashing and anti-black racism go hand in hand," denouncing sinister nativist appeals aimed at lining up the impoverished black masses, desperate for scarce jobs and social services, behind the assault on Latinos and immigrants (see "Down with Prop 187! Mobilize California Labor to Smash Anti-Immigrant Racism!" *WV* No. 608, 14 October 1994).

Today, the same racist forces which pushed through Prop. 187 are spearheading the drive to put women, blacks and other minorities "back in their place." After being re-elected on the wave of support for Prop. 187, California governor Pete Wilson now seeks to catapult himself into the 1996 Republican presidential nomination by becoming the standard-bearer for the attack on affirmative action. Wilson is pushing a measure, cynically called the California Civil Rights Initiative, to end preferential guidelines in education and state jobs. Competing with Wilson, fellow Republican presidential hopeful and Senate majority leader Bob Dole rants that "the race-counting game has gone too far" and that white men should not continue "paying a price" for black slavery. And the Clinton White House, seeking to shore up the Democrats' racist flank, is calling for a "review" of federal affir-

**Jobs, Free Quality Education for All!**



Morse/L.A. Times

**UCLA students demonstrate March 16 in defense of affirmative action against right-wing assault on women, minorities.**

ative action programs.

The California initiative was drawn up by two obscure, supposedly apolitical academics, Glynn Custred and Tom Wood, who wanted, in Wood's words, to "end affirmative action as we know it." In fact, the two have a record of activism in reactionary causes. Wood heads the California branch of the National Association of Scholars, which was co-founded by Custred and is tied to right-wing groups like the Heritage Foundation. This "scholars" outfit has made a name for itself by fighting to eliminate

racial and sexual harassment codes. Custred has also been active in the chauvinist campaign against bilingual education and calls for limiting remedial programs.

Racist organizations that earlier campaigned for Prop. 187 are now rallying behind the new racist initiative, which has been dubbed "Son of 187." In addition to Ross Perot's "United We Stand America" and the Christian Coalition led by the sinister anti-Semitic bigot Pat Robertson, these include the San Fernando Valley "Voice of Citizens

Together," whose president rails, "People are abusing our civil-rights laws to support an agenda of redomination and conquest by Mexican irredentists. This will help put a stop to the invasion from Mexico" (*LA Weekly*, 3-9 March).

A particular target of right-wing forces is "preferential admissions" programs which have allowed relatively small numbers of black and Hispanic students to overcome discriminatory barriers which have kept them out of colleges and universities. The attack on affirmative action also complements the reactionary "family values" drive against women's rights. While "right to life" terrorists murder abortion providers and bomb clinics, the right wing is also going after women's advances in the workplace and managerial/professional positions. But targeting women could prove to be a two-edged sword. Clinton won the 1992 election largely on the strength of women's votes, while Bush desperately sought to distance his candidacy from the anti-abortion fanatics on the Republican right wing.

Nationwide, opposition to affirmative action is becoming the new rallying cry for the racist drive to roll back the minimal gains that grew out of the fight for black equality in the civil rights movement. School integration through busing has long been a dead letter. Now, bandying about absurd charges of "reverse discrimination," the racist reactionaries are cynically using the language of "civil rights" to tear up even the most token measures addressing real, historic and continuing discrimination against women, blacks and Hispanics. This is part and parcel of the bipartisan war on minorities and the poor, which ranges from decimation of social welfare programs to the speedup on death row.

"Reverse discrimination" against white males is a myth, fabricated out of the whole cloth: between 1990 and 1994, only 100 of more than 3,000 discrimination cases before the courts claimed white men as victims of preferential treatment of minorities and women, and only six of those complaints were found to be valid. What is really going on here is a racist ideological offensive against minorities. Blacks in the inner cities are portrayed as indolent "welfare queens" who are costing "the hard-working middle class" a lot of tax dollars. Blacks who have made it out of the ghetto are now portrayed as unfairly getting jobs or college admissions at the expense of whites. The purpose of all this is the further impoverishment and oppression of the entire working class—no jobs, no social programs, no nothing for no one.

**Construction worker contingent at 80,000-strong march in Los Angeles last October against racist anti-immigrant Prop. 187. Now the racists are pushing "Son of 187" referendum against affirmative action.**



When they're lambasting "welfare" in the name of "balancing the budget," they're also going after Social Security. And these attacks are a *bipartisan* policy.

The liberal-led civil rights movement of the 1950s and '60s shattered Jim Crow segregation in the South, gaining formal legal equality for blacks. But in refusing to challenge the capitalist profit system itself, it could do nothing to tackle the economic bedrock of racial oppression in jobs, education and housing. Affirmative action programs were set up as a sop to defuse social struggle and in order to create and co-opt a layer of black middle-class professionals. But these paltry, tokenistic efforts never made a dent in the deep-seated oppression of the black ghetto masses, whose condition has continued to deteriorate over the past few decades. And today the liberals cannot defend these measures which they instituted in the first place, because they have nothing to offer the working class, white or black, and besides, they can't square them with their ideology of meritocracy and abstract "democracy." The stark fact is that there is no way to overcome entrenched racial and sexual oppression within the framework of capitalism.

Today, fully 53 percent of black men nationwide are either unemployed or earn less than the poverty level for a family of four. The relentless drive by racist politicians to push blacks back to the back of the bus, combined with massive cuts in funding for education and other social services, has led to a sharp decline as well in the prospects of the "talented tenth." Overall, black enrollment in the University of California sys-

tem has gone up by all of 0.2 percent since 1980. And at UC Berkeley black enrollment has fallen by nearly a third in the past five years. Meanwhile, the racist rulers have plenty of preferential treatment for their own. *Newsweek* (13 February) refers to "affirmative action for the academically disadvantaged children of alumni (about 12 percent of all admissions at elite colleges)." How else could Dan Quayle, who can't spell "potato," have gotten into law school?

Demagogic appeals by racist politicians to "angry white men" capitalize on the false *perception* that minorities and women have been given preferential advantage. From the outset, liberal affirmative action schemes were designed in such a way as to set whites against blacks and men against women in competition for a diminishing share of jobs, classroom seats and professional openings. After all, within the framework of the capitalist status quo, advancement for one sector of the population can only come at the expense of another. Yet the minimal affirmative action measures don't even come close to overcoming the racial and sexual discrimination that is built into the capitalist system. And now women and minorities are being made the scapegoats for 20 years of declining living standards for white workers and the middle class.

As part of our fight for full equality for minorities and women, the Spartacist League opposes the reactionary assault against affirmative action. However, unlike liberals and reformists who uncritically hailed these programs, we emphasized from the beginning that those who

look to the American capitalist state to eliminate racial and sexual discrimination were living in a fool's paradise. Today, with the Democrats and Republicans waging full-scale war on minorities and the poor, it should be apparent that the halls of Congress are not the venue for redressing discrimination. We seek to mobilize the working class in a fight for jobs and free, quality education for all, particularly reaching out to the masses of unemployed minority youth and women with special union recruitment and training programs. It will take a socialist revolution, sweeping away the entire capitalist system, to lay the basis for wiping out the centuries-old legacy of racial and sexual oppression.

### Racist Purge on Campus

At a time when minority students are under fire from budget-cutting college administrators and skinhead thugs alike, abolishing racial quotas in education has joined the bipartisan war on welfare mothers and the "anti-crime" crusade as rallying cries for white reaction. The ideological driving force behind this is the lie of blacks' supposed genetic "inferiority," codified in the pseudoscientific tract *The Bell Curve*. Last month, over 200 protesters rallied at the University of California's Boalt Hall law school in defense of black and Latino students who had received hate mail raving, "Your failures are hereditary and can't be corrected by these liberals.... You belong at Coolie High Law don't you forget!" In New Jersey, Rutgers students mounted two weeks of protests against



**NMU hiring hall in New York City in the 1960s. Government "affirmative action" schemes initially attacked hard-won union gains like seniority and the hiring hall, which defend all workers against victimization. Labor movement must fight for jobs for all, with programs for minority recruitment.**

racist comments by "liberal" president Francis Lawrence about "disadvantaged" black people who lack the "genetic, hereditary background" to pass university admissions tests.

Black and Hispanic students are under siege because the capitalist rulers have decided not to spend resources educating people they will likely never employ. Attacking affirmative action is just one weapon in their arsenal. Across the country, galloping tuition increases at state schools are driving minority youth out in droves. The threatened hikes of up to 75 percent in New York's state and city

university system amount to nothing less than a *racist purge*.

For the vast majority of ghetto youth, college is an unattainable dream, as they remain trapped in crumbling, prison-like primary and secondary schools and constantly beset by police terror. As one 14-year-old black student described, "We have a school in East St. Louis named for Dr. King. The school is full of sewer water and the doors are locked with chains. Every student in the school is black. It's like a terrible joke on history" (Jonathan Kozol, *Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools*, [1991]). Affirmative action is the slender thread that gives some minority youth their only shot at higher education.

Many of today's crusaders against affirmative action were inspired by the 1978 U.S. Supreme Court ruling upholding the "Bakke decision." A white engineer, Alan Bakke successfully challenged the University of California at Davis medical school's preferential admissions program, which reserved 16 out of 100 openings for minorities. The stage for the Bakke decision was set by the defeat of school busing, which was abandoned by Democratic Party liberals in 1973-74 when racist mobs attacked black schoolchildren in the streets of Boston and Louisville.

The Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth Clubs defend affirmative action in university admissions because this has brought gains, although terribly inadequate, against the race and class bias that permeates education under capitalism. But such gains are at best tokenistic and easily reversible, as the recent cutbacks

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in higher education show, because they accept the limits imposed by the bourgeoisie, which views education as a privilege, not a right.

Moreover, *quotas* are ultimately reactionary, far more likely to be used to *restrict* rather than advance minority admissions. The so-called *numerus clausus*, restricting Jewish access to universities and the professions, was a hallmark of the anti-Semitic capitalist regimes of East Europe before World War II and of the tsarist autocracy in Russia. Today, even as Asian Americans are being cynically mobilized to oppose black "quotas," they find themselves fending off quotas restricting their place in education which are *pushed by the same racist forces that are attacking affirmative action for blacks and Latinos*. In San Francisco, Asian American parents filed a lawsuit against quotas which limit Asian students to 40 percent of enrollment at the city's premier high school.

We fight for *free, quality integrated education for all*. To provide real access to higher education, we call for nationalizing the private universities, and for open admissions and free tuition with a state-paid living stipend for students. We demand full remedial programs at the universities and an end to "tracking" in the high schools, which pushes working-class and minority youth away from courses that would prepare them for college. Meanwhile, technical secondary education to train young skilled workers has already been devastated.

While preferential admissions are a step against the racist status quo in education, government-sponsored affirmative action programs in jobs are often a very different matter. During the Nixon administration, schemes like the so-called "Philadelphia Plan," which set minority hiring quotas on federal construction projects, were explicitly used for *union-busting*. Such plans attacked hard-won union gains like the hiring hall and seniority. Similar schemes were pushed by elements of the reformist left. At the Fremont, California General Motors plant in the early 1970s, Maoist-supported union members launched a lawsuit which demanded "preferential seniority" for women, in effect calling on the courts to order the layoff of male workers (including many blacks) first. Unlike liberals and reformists, as Marxists we oppose on principle state intervention into the unions, which always weakens labor's ability to fight the exploiters.

To be sure, racist job-trusting practices particularly by the "labor aristocracy" in the skilled trades were aimed



WV Photo

**Spartacist contingent marches in 1978 Washington, D.C. protest against the racist Bakke decision, which rolled back minority access to higher education.**

at keeping blacks and women out. But these despicable practices should not obscure the fundamental fact that seniority helps protect workers, black and white alike, against arbitrary victimization and firings, while union control over hiring makes possible genuinely non-discriminatory access to jobs on a "first come, first served" basis.

In their service to the capitalist ruling class, the conservative AFL-CIO bureaucracy has not only spurned the fight for equal rights for minority and women workers, but has presided over the decimation of the union movement. The wholesale closing of Detroit auto plants since the 1970s has thrown hundreds of thousands of black workers in particular out of relatively well-paying union jobs. The union tops have rightly earned the scorn of much of their membership, to say nothing of the dispossessed ghetto youth. What is required is a struggle within the unions to oust the bureaucratic misleaders and replace them with a class-struggle leadership committed to mobilizing labor's social power on behalf of all the oppressed. As we wrote in 1978, as part of a fight for jobs for all:

"A class-struggle leadership in the unions would not only institute training programs for minority workers paid for at the expense of the corporations and the government, but would undertake massive recruitment drives to insure that blacks can compete with white job seekers on an equal basis."

—*Young Spartacus* No. 63  
(April 1978)

Particularly given the sharp decline in union organization and membership over

recent years, such demands today would necessarily be linked to the fight to *organize the unorganized* through a massive union recruitment drive.

### **For a Class-Struggle Fight Against Racial Oppression**

The racist campaign against affirmative action has been joined by conservative black academics like Shelby Steele and Thomas Sowell, long a darling of the Republican right. In January, black UC regent Ward Connerly called for scrapping racial and sexual preferences at the university. Steele slams affirmative action because "white women have benefited from it far more than any other group." White women have, in fact, fared better than black men or women in breaking into professions and corporate boardrooms in the last 30 years, but the changes have been minimal and are quite reversible. The recent report of the federal government's "Glass Ceiling Commission" shows that while white males constitute only 43 percent of the workforce, they hold 95 percent of senior management positions. By pitting women against blacks, Steele helps fan the flames of the reactionary assault on *all* of the oppressed.

In a 5 March commentary, black *New York Times* editorial writer Brent Staples got the measure of these apologists for the racist backlash, writing that in the "Reaganaut 80's, many African-Americans...became converts to the gospel of Horatio Alger." They represent the right wing of the black middle class that

benefited materially from the struggle for black equality in the 1950s and '60s, while the masses of blacks slipped deeper into poverty. Expanding government programs and tokenistic corporate hiring policies generated a narrow layer of petty-bourgeois blacks increasingly separated from the ghettos. Between 1967 and 1991, the proportion of black households earning at least \$50,000 a year rose from 5.2 to 12.1 percent, while the proportion earning over \$100,000 more than doubled.

But this tenuous hold on middle-class status is slipping every day, from the withering of preferential programs in business to the massive cutbacks and layoffs in government. In fact, the wage gap between white and black college graduates *more than quadrupled* between 1973 and 1989. Overall, earnings of blacks compared to whites continue to be around 62 percent, while black unemployment is more than double that of whites. Among teenagers, black unemployment was 36.2 percent in 1991 compared to 14.9 percent among white youth. And that is according to official statistics, which significantly understate the reality. This massive racial disparity applies across the board, from college admissions to infant mortality.

It has always taken massive social struggle to gain any improvement in the lives of workers and oppressed minorities in this society, from minimal special admissions programs to the open admissions program at the City University of New York, which was won in the late

1960s. Today, with the capitalist economy in decline, the profit-hungry ruling class wants to dispense with the overhead of these reforms and inflame racial and sexual divisions in the working class.

The liberals and reformists have no answer to deal with this racist offensive, tied as they are by a thousand strings to the racist yuppie in the White House. Clinton's recent announcement of a "review" of federal affirmative action guidelines was immediately supported by key black Democrats like Kweisi Mfume, the former head of the Congressional Black Caucus. Liberals like Jesse Jackson say the attack on affirmative action should be "resisted" through registering to vote Democrat, while the bourgeois-feminist National Organization for Women says capitalist politicians should be held "accountable" if they fail to defend quotas.

Tailing behind the liberals is the reformist "left." Thus, at UC Berkeley, an "Affirmative Action Coalition," which is dominated by the ex-Stalinist Committees of Correspondence and includes the Revolutionary Workers League, the International Socialist Organization and Labor Militant, offers militant students nothing more than limp appeals to the UC regents, president and administration. These reformists do not even pay lip service to militant *action* based on mobilizing the social power of labor to fight the attacks on minorities, immigrants and women.

At a March 27 speakout at Cal State Hayward, a Spartacus Youth Club speak-

er indicted the capitalist ruling class for the current assault on minority rights:

"The attacks against affirmative action are part of the whole racist rallying cry of the rulers of this country. They are cut of the same cloth as the attacks on desperate welfare mothers, on immigrants and their families. Small wonder that California state governor Pete Wilson, the architect of Proposition 187 (and, by the way, the president of the UC Board of Regents) is now leading the charge against affirmative action. For it is all cut of the same cloth, that of a system of the exploitation of the many by the few.

"Jesse Jackson tells us to 'resist' by registering to vote for the very Democratic Party that spat on him during the last elections. They spat on him as a way of spitting on their entire black constituency, because they were appealing to the white racist vote.

"Don't let them condemn you to no education, no jobs, no future! Fight to have free college education, decent housing, medical care. To fight racist reaction, we need a revolution, a socialist America that will put the wealth of this country into the hands of those who produced it."

The drive against minorities, immigrants, women and labor can only be defeated by militant *class* struggle in defense of all the oppressed against both parties of American capitalism and its state. What is needed is a multiracial revolutionary workers party, to give communist leadership to the struggles of labor and the oppressed. We fight for workers rule, where everyone's labor and talents will be needed to build a world of abundance and equality, and where education for all will be a natural part of this collective labor. ■

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## International Outcry Wins Stay of Execution

# Battle for Mumia's Freedom



### Abolish the Racist Death Penalty! Mobilize Labor/Black Power Now!

**Philadelphia, August 12: Thousands of demonstrators surge down Market Street from City Hall to Independence Mall.**

Cheers rang out in a Philadelphia courtroom on August 7 when Judge Albert Sabo announced a stay of execution for black jour-

nalist Mumia Abu-Jamal, who had been scheduled to die on August 17. The ruling came in the midst of the battle being waged by Mumia and his defense team to reverse his frame-up conviction and death sentence for the 1981 shooting death of policeman Daniel Faulkner. Mumia is up against a cabal of the racist Philly cops, a District Attorney maniacally committed to pursuing the death penalty whenever she can, and Judge Sabo, who presided over Jamal's 1982 "trial" and has sent far more people to death row than any other judge in the

U.S. They seek to silence forever his impassioned, articulate voice on behalf of the oppressed. Mumia Abu-Jamal is an innocent man who should never have spent a day in prison. And class-conscious workers and all opponents of the barbarous and racist death penalty around the world must not rest until he is freed.

Ever since the current hearing began on July 12, Sabo declared that he would not be moved by the protests in defense of Mumia that have mushroomed around the globe. Assistant D.A. Charles Grant (who has subsequently quit the

prosecution team) sneered about "politically motivated people" trying "to undo or redo what 12 simple people in this town, and

not in Sweden and not in Denmark or New Zealand, said the facts were." But as Rachel Wolkenstein, Partisan Defense Committee staff counsel and one of Mumia's co-counsel, declared on August 7: "It is absolutely clear that without the international support coming from all quarters, from trade unionists, from civil libertarians, from authors and writers and students, it would not have been possible for the stay to be granted."

While the big business press has castigated the movement for Jamal as only a rehash of 1960s "radical chic"

WV Photo

promoted by, in Philly D.A. Lynne Abraham's words, a "well-oiled, well-financed propaganda machine," America's capitalist rulers have clearly been taken aback by the scope of these protests, enlisting broad sections of the labor movement internationally and even including leading capitalist politicians around the world. On August 12, some 8,000 marched through the streets of Philadelphia. The bourgeoisie now seeks to defuse the protest movement. Jamal warned of this danger, writing in his column, "The Stay":

"The state of Pennsylvania still has every intention of killing me—just not right now.

"Thus, the stay is a limited victory, not just for the Jamals and the Africas, but for thousands and tens of thousands of people from every corner of the globe....

"Although many radicals and progressives expressed joy at news of the stay, other political analysts saw it as a clever move by a clever judge, who did what higher courts would've done and, in so doing, attempted to blunt the edge off of a growing and militant anti-death penalty movement, in Philadelphia and beyond, thereby stymieing a series of planned demonstrations.

"Whatever the reasoning, let us utilize this precious time to build a stronger and broader movement, to not 'stay' one execution, but to halt them all! *Down with the racist U.S. death penalty!*"

The protests for Jamal; the unabashed bias against him shown by Sabo, which has been reported in newspapers around the world; the brisk sales of Mumia's book, *Live from Death Row*, now in its sixth printing; all this has helped make Jamal's case an embarrassment for the U.S. ruling class. The sight of thousands marching against America's racist "justice" system is particularly untimely as the Democratic White House joins with the Republican Congress to beef up police powers and accelerate the rate of executions. This program was codified in Clinton's "anti-crime" legislation and now by the "counterterrorism" bill, which guts *habeas corpus* protections against wrongful imprisonment, the primary means by which death sentence reversals have been achieved. On July 26, Congress did its bit for death by eliminating funds for 20 regional law centers which specialize in death-penalty appeals.

Jamal has always linked his fight with the struggle to abolish the death penalty. Recently, Jamal pleaded with fellow Pennsylvania inmate Leon Moser to fight his execution, scheduled a few days before Mumia's. Moser, however, was killed by lethal injection on August 16 after the U.S. Supreme Court intervened twice in two days to reverse stays of

**Mumia Abu-Jamal at the SCI Greene maximum security prison in western Pennsylvania on 21 December 1995 being interviewed by *Workers Vanguard*.**

WV Photo



execution granted by a U.S. district judge who was seeking a hearing on Moser's mental competency. (Moser had earlier been treated at Fairview State Hospital for the criminally insane.)

After the second stay was upheld by an appeals court at 9:00 p.m. on August 16, the U.S. Supreme Court acted at literally the eleventh hour to reverse it. Less than 30 minutes later, Moser was strapped to the gurney and the lethal drugs began to flow, while the federal judge's law clerk was in communication with Governor Ridge's general counsel, pleading to conduct the competency hearing by telephone! The week before, Oklahoma death row prisoner Robert Brecheen, who was scheduled to die in a few hours, tried to commit suicide. Prison guards promptly revived Brecheen...in order to carry out his execution by lethal injection. In Moser and Brecheen's cases, the state majestically declared it would brook no challenge to its sovereign "right" to kill its subjects.

In the wake of the swelling tide of protests for Jamal, important sections of the ruling class would prefer to see him locked away for life instead of killing him and turning him into a martyr. They want to entomb Jamal in what he describes as "prison hell." Philadelphia's daily newspapers have repeatedly editorialized along these lines. They have now been joined by the *Washington Post* as well as the U.S. bourgeoisie's "paper of record," the *New York Times*, which wrote in a 17 August editorial, "[Jamal's] supporters are right to fight his execution." The *Times* continued, "They should be careful, however, in portraying him as the hapless victim of vindictive prosecutors and shoddy defense attorneys.... The trial record tells a different story."

In fact, the 1982 "trial" was a blatant

frame-up based on a tissue of lies, presided over by a notorious hanging judge. It was held in a climate of vicious cop persecution of the black MOVE group, who in 1985 were to suffer eleven dead when the Philly cops, in league with the FBI, bombed their West Philly home. Getting Mumia was part of the cops' campaign to destroy MOVE, and was the culmination of years of FBI/cop targeting of Jamal going back to the government's war against the Black Panther Party.

### **Sabo: "Justice Is Just an Emotional Feeling"**

Jamal's defense team, headed by Leonard Weinglass, has been waging a herculean battle against a virulently hostile court to overturn the 1982 conviction and sentencing. The Post-Conviction Relief Act (PCRA) papers forming the core of Jamal's defense paint a clear picture of his innocence and the state's murderous vendetta against him, including evidence that was not available, or not made available, in 1982. A new book published by Common Courage Press, titled *Race for Justice*, includes these papers. An amended version of the PCRA submitted this month includes more new evidence.

On August 15, the PCRA hearing was recessed until September 11, when "findings of fact" will be presented and final oral arguments heard. While the prosecution pushed to have the defense rest its case, Jamal's attorneys argued that potential witnesses are continuing to come forward and must be heard. No one who has sat through any part of the hearings can expect Sabo, who presided over the original trial, to rule in favor of Jamal's appeal. Ever since refusing on July 12 to remove himself from hearing the case, Sabo has tried to thwart

Jamal's defense in any way he can. Outrageously, he routinely ruled against defense demands for discovery of information which the prosecution has kept covered up. Sabo, a retired member of the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP), oozes with contempt for Jamal and his attorneys, at one point telling Weinglass, "Objection is overruled, whatever it was." Sabo has also threatened to arrest demonstrators outside, whose shouts of "Free Mumia!" and "Sabo Must Go!" have been heard in court.

When Sabo ordered evidentiary proceedings to begin on only two days' notice, Jamal's attorneys appealed to the state Supreme Court, which ordered Sabo to grant an extra week before the hearings began. Sabo quashed over 25 defense subpoenas for witnesses, refused to allow evidence on four claims of constitutional violations, and ruled for the prosecution and against the defense on virtually every objection raised in the hearing. In "L'affaire Mumia," an exasperated *Philadelphia Inquirer* (13 August) editorialized that Sabo "seemed to be fighting the last war—ridiculing, interrupting and generally feeding the worst suspicions of Abu-Jamal's supporters."

On August 2, when Wolkenstein objected to the quashing of subpoenas and the disallowing of any evidence challenging Pennsylvania's death penalty on the grounds of racial bias, Sabo ordered her taken into custody, handcuffed and thrown into jail. In an interview with reporter Sally O'Brien, Jamal, ridiculing the charge that he had disrupted the 1982 trial, pointed out that "what should be clear to everyone is that the behavior of the judge hasn't changed one iota." On August 11, Weinglass was slapped with a \$1,000 fine for taking "too long" to hand over autopsy slides. "Explaining" these blatant attempts at intimidation, Sabo told the defense, "Counselor, justice is just an emotional feeling."

Jamal's attorneys began their case by calling character witnesses who testified to the enormous respect Mumia was held in as a youth and later as a journalist. One of those testifying, black Pennsylvania State Senator Dave Richardson, a longtime friend of Mumia's, died suddenly of a heart attack on August 18. None of these witnesses were presented when Mumia was railroaded 13 years before. His court-appointed attorney at the time, Anthony Jackson, also testified at the PCRA hearing, confirming defense claims that he was grossly ineffective as counsel and that he was provided almost no resources to conduct a defense.

Also called to the stand was Gary Wakshul, the cop who guarded Jamal

from his arrest until he was treated in the hospital. A key element of the 1982 frame-up was the tale that Jamal had "confessed" before entering the hospital emergency room—a "confession" first reported *two months* after the incident. Wakshul, however, had submitted a report after his shift stating that "the negro male [Mumia] made no comments." On the stand, Wakshul incredibly claimed that he was too shocked by the "confession" to remember it...until a month or two later, at a meeting called by the D.A.'s office to orchestrate the cops' testimony. This was the first time this meeting had ever been made public.

Several witnesses gave evidence that Jamal did not shoot Faulkner. One, William Singletary, said not only that he saw another man shoot the cop and run away, but that Jamal then approached Faulkner asking if he could help him. Singletary described being pressured to submit false testimony. He was held for hours at the Police Administration Building, where cops repeatedly "tore up" or "threw in the trash" the statements they did not approve. Finally, a Detective Green warned him "to write what he wanted me to write [or] they would take me in the elevator and beat me up."

Another witness, William Harmon, who was called to the stand by Sabo over defense objections that they had had virtually no time to interview him, testified that two men shot Faulkner, and that neither was Jamal. In order to denigrate his statements, prosecutors pointed to Harmon's criminal record, and even asked whether the fact that he had often been arrested without serving time had to do with his being a cop informant. But three out of four of the D.A.'s key witnesses in 1982 had criminal records. One of them, the prostitute Cynthia White, had 38 arrests to her name and was allowed to work the streets under police protection after giving their line. In contrast, Harmon, a black man currently in state prison, risks being denied parole for another six years as a result of speaking out.

Yet another witness, Arnold Howard, testified how he and two other black men were arrested the night of the shooting because police thought one of them might be the fleeing shooter. Police tested their hands for nitrates—to see if they had fired a gun—a test they didn't perform on Jamal!

The final 1982 eyewitness to be called was Robert Chobert, a white cab driver whose license had been revoked and who had a prior conviction for arson, a fact which Sabo kept from the jury in 1982. Chobert first reported to police that he



Philadelphia Daily News  
**MOVE member Delbert Africa is stomped by police after cop assault on MOVE's Powelton Village home in 1978.**

saw Faulkner's assailant run away. This could not have been Jamal, who was found sitting on the curb bleeding from his wound. Chobert changed his testimony for the trial, claiming that Jamal was the shooter. At the PCRA hearing, he admitted that then-prosecutor Joseph McGill had promised to "look into" getting his driver's license back. Chobert never did get it back, but managed nevertheless to drive without a license for the next ten years without being charged!

Central to the evidence exonerating Jamal are 800 pages of FBI files detailing years of FBI/cop surveillance and "dirty tricks" against him, including an attempt to frame him for a murder in Bermuda that occurred while Jamal was working in Philadelphia. Sabo ruled these papers "irrelevant." When Wolkenstein attempted to submit a deposition from a Pennsylvania Corrections Department official showing that privileged correspondence between Jamal and his attorneys had been intercepted, opened and given to the governor's office, Sabo screamed that was not his doing and again threatened her with arrest.

Many who have joined the protests for Jamal center their demands on the call for a "fair trial," which they feel would surely result in reversal of the

death sentence. If things were being done strictly "by the book," even the truncated version of Jamal's defense allowed by Sabo should be enough to at least grant his petition for a new trial. According to the *Brady* rule, for example, failure by the prosecution to disclose evidence favorable to the defense is grounds for invalidating a guilty verdict. In addition to the D.A.'s and cops' coercing false testimony from witnesses, the PCRA hearings revealed that a bullet fragment taken from Faulkner's body had "disappeared."

But the capitalist legal system is anything but fair when it comes to such an outspoken black opponent of racism and exploitation. For many youth, what is happening in the courtroom and on the streets is a real eye-opener. The events daily demonstrate the truth of Russian revolutionary Marxist V.I. Lenin's description of bourgeois democracy as "democracy only for the rich, for the minority." In the U.S., with centuries of subjugation of black people first as chattel slaves and then as wage slaves, the state apparatus—cops, courts, prisons—is racist to the core.

In these hearings, Sabo once again led a "legal lynching" posse with the D.A.'s office and the FOP. Early in the hearings, Wolkenstein protested that the FOP contingent in attendance was allowed to waltz into court with its weapons while Mumia's own family was harassed as they passed through a "Frisk-Em" metal-detecting gate. Portraying Mumia's supporters as some sort of terrorist band, Sabo responded that the cops were "protecting" him.

In a column printed in the *New York Times* (13 August) and several other newspapers, D.A. Lynne Abraham, whose office seeks the death sentence more than any other jurisdiction in the U.S., sneers that the notion that Mumia "was a famous journalist whom the police framed to silence his unpopular political views" is "ludicrous." What's ludicrous is that Abraham would write this when Philadelphia newspapers are filled daily with exposés of police frame-ups, corruption and violence. Currently, over 1,100 arrests may be overturned as a result of investigations into the 39th precinct in North Philadelphia alone.

Anyone coming out for Jamal in Philly is a potential target of the cops. The largest union in the city, hospital and health care workers Local 1199C, was besieged by 300 gun-toting cops for daring to rent its hall for a Jamal benefit in July. In Los Angeles, Boulder, Colorado, New York City and other places, dozens have been arrested for demonstrating for



WV Photo

**New York, August 3: Labor/black mobilization for Jamal, initiated by Partisan Defense Committee, drew 1,000 people, including contingents from SSEU Local 371, Local 1199 hospital workers, Mail Handlers and Teamsters. Speaking at the podium, Jim Webb, president of Coalition of Black Trade Unionists.**

Jamal, some of whom face felony charges. We demand the dropping of all charges against these protesters!

Frame-ups, cop terror and judicial railroading are inherent in the capitalist system of racist injustice. It will take massive social struggle, tapping the power of the organized working class, to win his freedom. Nothing short of workers revolution will destroy this repressive machinery—and with it the racist death penalty—and open up the vista of freedom from oppression and human degradation.

### **For United-Front Defense of Jamal**

The protests calling to stop the execution of Jamal have made this issue front-page news around the world and a political question of growing importance. French president Jacques Chirac directed his ambassador in Washington "to take, in a strictly humanitarian sense, and respecting American law, any step that might help to save the life of Mr. Mumia Abu-Jamal." German foreign minister Klaus Kinkel wrote to Pennsylvania Governor Ridge to protest Jamal's impending execution as well as the death penalty. The Belgian government and Italian parliament called for stopping the execution. In South Africa, where there have been weekly protests outside the U.S. consulate in Cape Town, president

Nelson Mandela, pointing to the recent abolition of the death penalty there, wrote to Governor Ridge to "use your power as Governor of the State of Pennsylvania to commute the death sentence imposed upon Mumia Abu-Jamal." There continue to be demonstrations throughout Germany and other European countries.

Jamal's fellow writers have increasingly been speaking out for him. Journalists unions in Germany, Britain and South Africa have made Jamal an honorary member, as has the National Writers Union, organized by the UAW, in the U.S. The International PEN writers group held emergency press conferences in Paris and New York on August 1. Recently, the Union of Journalists of Cuba wrote: "Judicial monstrosities like those in Mumia Abu-Jamal's case are inconsistent with those who describe the American society as a model of respect to freedom of speech, of conscience and other basic human rights." Such solidarity is like garlic to a vampire in the case of the wretched National Association of Black Journalists in the U.S., which refuses to even demand a new trial for Jamal, calling instead for "judicial review" of his case.

The Partisan Defense Committee has always stressed the centrality of mobilizing the labor movement in the fight

for Jamal. In early August, a series of united-front demonstrations initiated by the PDC from New York, Oakland, Chicago and L.A. to Toronto and Vancouver, Canada and Melbourne and Sydney, Australia brought out key trade unions which pledged to continue this struggle. A 1,000-strong demonstration in New York on August 3 drew contingents from Social Services Employees Union Local 371, AFSCME District Council 37, Local 1199 health and hospital workers union, Teamsters Local 808 and others. Among the more than 700 who marched the same day in Oakland, California were contingents from the ILWU longshore union and several locals of the SEIU service workers, along with speakers from the Alameda County and San Francisco Central Labor Councils.

The New York City rally tied the fight for Mumia with the struggle against racist cop terror at home. Margarita Rosario, whose son Anthony and nephew Hilton Vega were executed by cops, shot in the back while lying face down on the floor, spoke movingly: "We want justice for Mumia as much as I want justice for my son." In Oakland, Larry Wright, co-chair of the stewards council of ILWU Local 10, compared Jamal's case with Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, executed in 1953 in a climate of anti-Communist hysteria, calling it a "political attempted execution" that is racist and "against the working class.... That's why the Longshoremens have taken a strong stand to

free Mumia."

United-front actions, where organizations can speak in their own name and carry their own signs and banners, are critical in building mass support for Jamal's freedom. Unfortunately, in a clear act of political censorship, organizers of the August 12 Philadelphia demonstration, initiated by the National People's Campaign (NPC), refused speakers for the PDC, Refuse & Resist and MOVE, all of whom have long been active in Mumia's defense. At the same time, a representative of crackpot ultrarightist Lyndon LaRouche was allowed to speak. In response to the exclusion of the PDC from a rally called by the "Coalition to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal" in Vancouver, a vice president of the local postal workers union wrote: "Political exclusionism is not the way to achieve victory in this case. Especially at a time when we need the broadest base of forces dedicated to Mumia's defense."

### Where to Take the Fight to Free Mumia

Such sectarianism is aimed above all at the Trotskyists who have long defended Jamal and play a key role in the campaign for his freedom. Thousands of workers and youth are debating which road to take in this struggle. Liberals call for a "fair trial" for Mumia, as if he could ever get such a thing in the racist courts. During the civil rights struggles

of the 1950s and '60s, liberals and reformist "leftists" preaching reliance on the capitalist courts and the federal government helped derail the fight for black freedom into the dead end of the Democratic Party. Now Workers World Party/NPC is making Mumia's cause a focus of their "caravan" to Washington to plead that the Democrats fight the Republicans' "Contract With America."

In Jamal's case, it's not hard to see the bankruptcy of this strategy, as the courts conspire with the governor's mansion and a national cop network to ram through Jamal's execution. But what strategy should militants adopt? Following the August 3 New York rally, there was a spirited debate at the AFSCME DC 37 hall after a screening of the video, "From Death Row, This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal." Various anarchists, Refuse & Resist supporters and others desperately looking at the approaching August 17 execution date advocated civil disobedience and symbolic acts like shutting off lights across the city at a given time. What the "radical" proponents of "CD" share with liberals is a lack of any perspective of mobilizing mass support for Mumia. In particular, they despair of bringing out the forces of organized labor, which has been hamstrung by its pro-capitalist leadership while the bosses have decimated the unions in their war against working people and the poor. It is precisely through getting the unions to fight for the masses of the

## Join the Campaign to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!

**Funds are urgently needed for legal defense!** Make a contribution today to the Bill of Rights Foundation (earmarked "Mumia Abu-Jamal Legal Defense") and mail it to: Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal, 163 Amsterdam Ave., No. 115, New York, NY 10023-5001

**Organize protest!** Pass motions demanding Jamal's freedom in your unions, campus, community and church organizations. Get your union or organization to make a contribution and join rallies and protests for Jamal. Publicize Jamal's case in your union or organization's newsletter.

**Spread the word!** *Class-Struggle Defense Notes* No. 22 centers on the struggle to save Jamal, and the PDC pamphlet, *The Frame-Up of Mumia Abu-Jamal*, exposes in detail the prosecution's case of lies, the coercion of witnesses and the FBI's COINTELPRO terror campaign against Mumia and the Black Panther Party (\$1 for both). Order bundles of either publication; 25 copies for \$10. The PDC video, *From Death Row, This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal*, can be purchased for \$30 from the address below.



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## By Mumia Abu-Jamal

# Statement of July 12

As expected, Judge Sabo has denied the motion: we are not surprised. What does one expect from a "retired" member of the F.O.P. who now masquerades as a fair, impartial senior jurist?

As a matter of fundamental fairness, would not a "fair," "impartial" judge have announced to the defense, before trial, of his professional associations, especially in a case such as this?

That he did not is silent and sufficient testament to what "fairness" and "impartiality" mean in the city of Philadelphia.

A blind man can see that I didn't receive a fair trial, and now, to compound this outrage, I have been denied a fair PCRA hearing.

As South Africa assigns the death penalty to the garbage can of history, Philadelphia whets its racist appetite as it bays for more black blood. In the most benighted sectors of South Africa, from the *laagers* of Afrikanerdom, to the drunken *shebeens* of the townships, all know that the Constitution protects the fundamental "right to life."

Here, in Philadelphia, the very place where the American Constitution was written, signed and published, the Constitution is no more than a passing thought; it is a minor hindrance, to be tolerated when able, and ignored when necessary, when the state's goals are death.

What does it protect, save the interests of the established?

As South Africa takes a great leap forward, America embraces its second season of neo-apartheid, as racist dem-

agogues run on raw hatred—the political flavor of the '90s.

Several years ago, at my so-called "trial," I repeated Mao Zedong's familiar quote: "Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun."

In retrospect, perhaps a more fitting quote would've been: "Political power grows out of the seat of an electric chair."

Look—and you'll see a widening politics of DEATH; from the D.A., to the Mayor; from the judgeship, to the governorship; from the Congressman, to the President—all allied in death centrism.

Politicians all—running on death.

Who brought you the massacres of the MOVE bombing, the mass murders of Waco and the many mini-murders in between—all whitewashed by the same government that claims to be "tuff on crime"—unless it's their own; for people get trial and prison, while governments get hearings and re-elections.

You have seen a trial where a man has been denied his right to select a jury; to defend himself; to have counsel of his choice, or even to have competent counsel of the state's choice.

You have seen a trial where evidence of my innocence was withheld, false evidence utilized, all presided over by a card-carrying member of the F.O.P. ("retired"), where "presumption of innocence" was an inside joke.

If it was proper for the state to go back over a *decade* to promote my former Black Panther membership, why is it suddenly improper to ex-

amine Judge Sabo's former F.O.P. membership?

Even if the government granted a new trial, before an unbiased jurist, how could I receive the assistance of *John Africa* at the defense table, or of Theresa Africa as a paralegal, when this selfsame government murdered them in the massacre of May 13th, 1985, by shooting and bombing them, incinerating them out of this existence?

The same D.A.'s office prosecuting this blatantly unjust death sentence, looked at the bloody carnage of May 13th—with 11 men, women & children bombed into oblivion—and saw no crime, no violations of any law.

The same D.A.'s office that intentionally removed 11 black jurors from my jury pool, had the nerve to select an "investigating" grand jury in the May 13th bombing of my brothers and sisters, only to "recommend" that they file no charges in a case of premeditated mass murder.

From such an entity, what can the word "justice" really mean?

True justice requires more than a stay of execution—it requires a complete dismissal of this clearly political persecution!

It requires more: it requires the committed mobilization of our communities to resist a system that is more repressive than South Africa's—to abolish this racist death penalty!

It requires *freedom*—for all MOVE political prisoners, and all political prisoners of whatever persuasion! *Now!*

It requires a continuing revolution—to beat back the forces of the neo-apartheid state.

Organize! Mobilize!

From South Africa to the U.S.A., push the racist death penalty away!

Ona Move! Long Live *John Africa!*

ghettos and barrios that labor will steel itself for its own battles.

The core of the New York labor-centered rally on August 3 were the black and Hispanic-centered unions. Several union speakers at the rally pointed to their own experience in fighting for freedom for Angela Davis in the 1970s, and in fighting union-busting today. As a PDC speaker at the rally remarked: "The struggle for workers' rights and black rights must go forward together or we will all fall back separately." This sentiment was echoed by Larry Adams, president of

Mail Handlers Union Local 300, who declared: "To the degree that the trade unions take up this struggle is the degree to which we will forge the necessary social force to save Mumia, all political prisoners, and to in fact rid society of all forms of oppression and exploitation."

The labor-centered demonstrations initiated by the PDC have laid the basis for further organizing in the unions with the aim of pulling out many tens of thousands of workers in alliance with the minority poor. The need to unleash labor/black power is inseparable from the ques-

tion of revolutionary leadership of the working class. As Don Alexander of the Spartacist League told the August 3 rally in Oakland, "The fight to free Mumia can be a turning point in reviving the labor movement, which is on its back because it is chained to the parties of the rich." What is needed, Alexander continued, is "a complete break from the Democratic Party and the pro-capitalist union leadership, and the forging in struggle of a revolutionary workers party."

*Spread the campaign—Free Mumia! Abolish the racist death penalty! ■*

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# South African Unions Take Up Jamal's Fight as Their Own

*The campaign to save the life of Mumia Abu-Jamal has reverberated throughout South Africa, where black and "coloured" (mixed-race) working-class militants see in the political persecution of this outspoken opponent of racist injustice in the U.S. a mirror of their own repression by the apartheid state. In the late spring, comrades of the Spartacist League/U.S. and Partisan Defense Committee made a trip to South Africa to raise support for Jamal's case and to engage leftist and working-class organizations in political discussion on the strategy to combat the continued racist oppression and capitalist exploitation of Mandelade Klerk's neo-apartheid regime.*

*We reprint below a speech by comrade Don Alexander, which he gave upon his return at a Spartacist forum on July 8 in Berkeley, California. In the weeks that have followed, support from South African trade unions and civic organizations has multiplied (see "South African Workers Fight to Save Jamal," WV No. 626, 28 July). Most recently, South African president Nelson Mandela sent a letter to Pennsylvania governor Ridge asking him to commute the death sentence imposed upon Mumia Abu-Jamal.*

## Eyewitness Report

The power of labor is being brought to bear on behalf of Mumia Abu-Jamal in South Africa. A comrade with whom I worked in South Africa spoke to a rally of 15,000 black workers in Johannesburg on June 19 where they chanted slogans to stop the execution of Mumia and to abolish the racist death penalty. This is an important development. If, for example, there were a one-day political strike to save Mumia by the Congress of South African Trade Unions, COSATU, which represents 1.5 million workers, and if it were joined by the other black labor federation, NACTU, the National Council of Trade Unions, that would reverberate around the world.

The tremendous receptivity to the international fight to save Mumia was powerfully expressed in South Africa,



July 26 march to the U.S. embassy in Pretoria protested threatened execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal. AP

where I was for two weeks in late May and part of June. The black trade unions, principally COSATU and also NACTU, are rallying to this fight. I and other comrades talked to a number of militant blacks, coloureds, Indians, anti-racist whites and left organizations and death penalty abolitionists who know that the barbaric racist death penalty is the expression of racial subjugation and legally sanctioned state murder. While I was there, the Constitutional Court abolished the death penalty. However, the neo-apartheid capitalist government of Mandela and De Klerk continues to try to weaken and break the powerful black labor movement.

It was the struggles of the militant black working class that broke down the rigid apartheid of the white-supremacist racist police state, only to see installed black front men for the Randlords who preside over continued racial oppression and capitalist exploitation. In Johannesburg and Cape Town, we brought to class-conscious workers and militant youth our program for international class-struggle defense to free Mumia and for world socialist revolution. In numerous discussions, we posed the necessity

for workers revolution to sweep away racist capitalist domination.

A week before I arrived, over 100 black miners, a number of whom were migrants from various places in southern Africa, were killed in a mining disaster. An underground train jumped its tracks, fell into a shaft, snapped the cables controlling an elevator and plunged 1,650 feet to the bottom. There were no safety mechanisms in place to stop it, to break the fall of the train or the elevator. The gold magnates, the owners of the Anglo American mine called the Vaal Reefs Mine, didn't want to spend the money because black life is cheap, though it's been the sweat and blood of black workers that is the source of the enormous riches of the racist bosses. This was industrial murder, and it underscores the reality of the brutal superexploitation of black labor which is the bedrock of apartheid.

This was the context in which I visited the "new" South Africa. Traveling around Johannesburg, through the townships and in Cape Town, I saw the horrible poverty of the black and coloured masses, millions of whom are squatters within earshot of major cities. The tin roof hovels, the lack of elementary san-

itation facilities—these were the visible signs of the “new” South Africa, embodied in the so-called power-sharing neopartheid capitalist regime. The Government of National Unity promised massive housing construction, but what is the reality? Supposedly under the Reconstruction and Development Program, the RDP, a million houses in five years were going to be built. Eight hundred have been built out of an initial target of 50,000 in the first year. It is

maintain a monopoly on the means of violence. Also one of the things that the Mandela/De Klerk government warned was that the main danger at the moment was...the left. The government admitted the considerable number of street crimes that are being committed by the *police*, who seek to supplement their income.

South Africa cries out today for a revolutionary leadership, for a revolutionary workers party that will lead a fight for state power, for a black-centered

They took leaflets to raise this among broader layers of the working class and the oppressed.

On June 6, I went to a massive march to the Chamber of Mines, over 100,000 black workers in Johannesburg that shut down a major part of the city. In a march in South Africa, you really march. You run. They call it the *toyitoyi*. You use every part of your body. It makes aerobics tame by comparison. It was a very militant and defiant demonstration of black workers, men and women who want to fight for their interests. And there were a lot of pro-socialist slogans at this demonstration because they haven't bought the bourgeois lie that communism is dead.

Unfortunately, the pro-capitalist leadership of the march—at which Mandela spoke—simply want to modify the reactionary Labor Relations Act, which is aimed at crippling the labor movement by subordinating the unions to the capitalist state. The purpose of the march was to pressure the state to come up with a less repressive labor law governing the relations between labor and capital, whose interests are irreconcilably opposed.

We explained to people on the march the direct connection between the recent industrial murder at the Vaal Reefs Mine and the state's attempt to silence Mumia. The capitalist class that in South Africa wants to maintain the brutal system of superexploitation of black labor is the same capitalist class that in the U.S. wants to kill Mumia and crush all of those who stand up for the “voice of the voiceless.” We were mobbed when we started passing out Mumia leaflets. Word passed along that the leaflets were being distributed to stop the execution of a political prisoner in the U.S. who was black, and there was great interest and excitement.

We were also there to meet people and tell them about our public forum the next night. The public meeting in Johannesburg for Jamal at the Workers Library was a success. People came from unions, youth from left organizations like the South African Communist Party, the Workers Organisation for Socialist Action, shop stewards in the NUMSA union, the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa, which is one of the more militant COSATU affiliates. They came to watch the video and to join the fight to free Mumia. Blacks, coloureds, Indians and whites gathered to express their solidarity with Mumia. The video and our comments afterward emphasizing the urgency of this struggle had a big impact.

**Former ANC guerrilla leaders Joe Modise (right), now defense minister, and his deputy Ronnie Kasrils (center) share a laugh with apartheid army commander Georg Meiring.**



estimated that nine million blacks are jobless, and youth unemployment is in the 70 to 80 percent range in most of the townships. Women workers, mainly black and coloured, are the first to be laid off—which has taken place in certain industries like textile, food and beverage. Also, there are dwindling gold reserves in South Africa; a lot of miners are being let go. And trade-union membership is plummeting.

Hardly a day passed in which I didn't either hear or read about the deportation of immigrants, especially Mozambicans and Zimbabweans, who are being scapegoated for the bankruptcy of the capitalist system. There's a lot of talk about a crime wave that has hit big cities, especially Jo'burg; there's taxi-war shoot-outs, vicious competition along the lines. But of course this desperate poverty is a product of the capitalist system that cannot provide jobs and housing and education. And the main response on the part of the government is gun control—just like it is here—to take the guns out of the hands of the black workers and youth in order for the capitalist state to

workers government based upon the simple proposition that those who labor must rule. An important step in that direction is the growing support in South Africa for Mumia. A lot has happened since I left a month ago. There was a meeting in a black township 60 miles from Johannesburg. Militant black youth and other residents from the squatters' settlement called Serafina also came to this meeting. We visited these places, and when we asked people what they thought of the government Reconstruction and Development Program, the so-called pro-poor, pro-working-class program, one resident snapped, “Oh yeah, the RDP. You mean Rich People Developing Poor People. Oh, that program.”

The meeting in this township near Johannesburg attracted leaders of the working class from different political parties—AZAPO, the Azanian Peoples' Organisation; the Pan Africanist Congress; African National Congress. They crowded into a room wall to wall, shoulder to shoulder, to watch the video on Mumia. And they were very vocal about the opposition to the frame-up of Mumia.



Now, once again I want to emphasize that the South African working class, the proletariat, are very class-conscious. But it's hard to overemphasize the jolt to their consciousness when they learned about the realities of life in racist capitalist America. People didn't know about the brutal nature of racism and exploitation taking place in this country. They thought that America was some kind of haven of democracy. For many, it was shocking and an eye-opener to see, in the video, the racist murder of MOVE in 1985, to see cops kicking in heads of black youth, to find out about the cops that killed Black Panthers in their beds for defying the racist capitalist oppressors, to learn that Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt) has been in prison for 25 years for a crime he didn't commit, and also to learn that in Clinton/Gingrich's America, there's a massive bipartisan assault on rights of the working class and of the oppressed.

There was genuine surprise when they learned how closely especially black Americans pay attention to their struggles because they saw and see in the savage white-supremacist capitalist regime of South Africa a mirror of their own oppression. It was a revelation for many to learn that black workers in the U.S. form a strategic component of the multiracial working class who have been inspired by their struggles for liberation in South Africa and who under revolutionary leadership have the power to lead a fight to bury the racist capitalist system in the U.S.

So there was a deeply felt solidarity with Mumia and the struggles against racism in the U.S., and we worked hard to gather their support. The South African Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union, SACCAWU, a militant union which waged a hard-fought struggle last year against the Pick 'n Pay grocery store chain, sent a letter to Pennsylvania governor Tom Ridge:

"In South Africa we have long struggled against racism and oppression and the use of jails and death sentences to silence political protest. In this regard we drew strength from millions of activists and other citizens of countries throughout the world who protested against the Apartheid state's attacks on the lives of black people and democrats of all communities. We know from bitter experience how a state criminalises the activities of political activists in order to silence them. The case of our first democratically-elected President is but one such example."

In a May 25 statement, the Food Farming Beverage and Allied Workers Union of South Africa remarked that, "Comrade Mumia is a victim of imperialist and capitalist racism. He is not only on the

wrong side of the colour-line, but he has also dared to challenge the *status quo*." Now, this is a clear recognition of not only the racist nature of the death penalty, but its use as a class weapon to destroy opposition to the reactionary attacks of the capitalist ruling class.

The National Union of Metalworkers, one of the most powerful unions in South Africa, representing 187,000 workers, also added their voice in support of Mumia. We also gathered support from the African National Congress. We met with Mandela's secretary in Jo'burg. They know all about the case, particularly now. In Cape Town, where the legislature and the parliament is, we met with Cyril Ramaphosa, who is a former leader of the National Union of Mine-workers and is now secretary general of the African National Congress. Ramaphosa sent a letter in support of Mumia. Also, you can read in *Workers Vanguard* [No. 625, 30 June] the powerful letter from Paul Trehwela, co-editor of *Searchlight South Africa* to Mandela asking him "to urge that the execution be set aside."

We also met with Moses Mayekiso, a former Metalworkers leader, now a leader of the South African Communist Party and a member of parliament. Mayekiso was very responsive. Ten years ago, he was one of the Alexandra Township Five who were framed and faced execution by the apartheid state. We were also able to mobilize black workers who support Mumia in the Metalworkers union and the Turning Wheel Workers' Union, a newly formed union that last year staged a militant truck blockade that tied up the roads. The Mandela/De Klerk government had jailed some of the leaders of that union and warned the workers what would happen to them if they defied the government.

The impressive labor support is a promising beginning in the struggle to root this solidarity firmly in the powerful labor movement and in the townships. The recognition that there are common interests of the oppressed and exploited worldwide is crucial. From South Africa to the U.S., the campaign against the racist death penalty is part of the fight to smash the whole chain of oppression of the capitalist state in the struggle for international working-class revolution.

The absence of revolutionary leadership and a revolutionary party is keenly felt in South Africa. There must be a determined struggle to break the black working class and the oppressed non-white masses from the nationalist misleaders of the African National Congress, to break the so-called Tripartite Alliance between the African National Congress,

the South African Communist Party, COSATU, who are in a coalition with the so-called "democratic" capitalists of the National Party. The government that exists in South Africa is a nationalist popular front, a coalition between workers organizations and sections of the ruling class in defense of capitalist private property. We stand with Trotsky's program of permanent revolution, that in backward capitalist countries in which the bourgeois-democratic revolutions of the past have not been achieved, the working class must take power in order to carry out elementary democratic tasks, from giving land to those who till it, to achieving genuine political democracy and national independence.

All talk of healing and reconciliation and "letting bygones be bygones"—and while I was there, the big world rugby tournament in Cape Town was hailed as a "vehicle of reconciliation"—is a fraud, for the simple reason that there are antagonistic interests between the oppressed black masses and the privileged white minority. Under capitalism, under the system of the private ownership of the means of production, there can be no equality between the oppressed and the oppressors, between the capitalists and the working class. So while there are more blacks in parliament and a few black millionaires, state power remains in the hands of the white capitalist class and its armed bodies of men defending the capitalists' property. The economic and social dominance of the white minority remains intact.

Now, we talked to a lot of different groups. Our pamphlet *Black History and the Class Struggle* calling for proletarian revolution in South Africa was very powerful. In many of our discussions with South African leftists, one illusion that surfaced time and again was that there will be a stable multiracial bourgeois order in South Africa. So many of the youth and workers with whom we spoke believe that the task is to make the centerpiece of the government's program, the Reconstruction and Development Program, work for them, to make capitalism work. We had long arguments on how the whole program of the popular front, which is a reformist program, has paved the way for bloody defeat for the working class, from Spain in the 1930s to Chile in the 1970s.

There's nothing in the RDP that deals with the burning needs of the masses. The ANC and Mandela have betrayed the black masses and turned their backs on their earlier populist promises of nationalization, land distribution and even "one man, one vote." The masses

have been told to tighten their belts so that the white capitalists and the new black elite can rake in their profits undisturbed. The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank—the architects of murderous poverty and misery for the poor and oppressed people throughout the world—are calling the shots in South Africa.

Capitalist politicians here—black and white, Democratic and Republican, Jesse Jackson and Bill Clinton and their reformist tails like the Communist Party and Socialist Action and many other groups—went into a kind of religious frenzy with the coming to power of Mandela, hollering “Free at last!” as if the murderous apartheid system was simply a matter of legally sanctioned racism—as opposed to an entire people made foreigners in their own country. The International Communist League told the truth, the simple truth from day one that Mandela and the ANC would betray the black masses.

Well, what are they doing? The bourgeois-nationalist government is demolishing squatters’ settlements of blacks and of coloureds. The former head of the CP who was the housing minister, Joe Slovo, called for an end to “the culture of the nonpayment of rents.” So while I was there, the government started turning off the electricity and lights in the townships. The South African National Defence Force, the army, is crushing the struggles of the blacks for land—in a country where whites, who are 13 percent of the population, own 86 percent of the land and 90 percent of the total wealth.

We talked to many leftists in several organizations—the Workers Organisation for Socialist Action, Comrades for a Workers Government, International Socialist Movement—who have big illusions in the so-called neutrality of the capitalist state. They put forth the line that the cops, the capitalist police, are workers, that there are “good cops,” that there are “progressive” cops. Now, there’s a very large black so-called police union, called Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union, POPCRU, that has been very active in South Africa, staging protests for higher pay, against racism on the police force, for bigger guns—the usual things. The cops in South Africa, like in every capitalist country that has ever existed, defend the interests of the possessing class, the capitalists, against the exploited and the oppressed. And we should never buy the lie that they are workers because it’s not only a lie; it’s a deadly illusion. Every ruling class in history has had armed bodies of men



WV Photo

**Jamal campaign has resonated among black workers in South Africa. Workers at June 6 COSATU demonstration in Johannesburg hold up Jamal flyers.**

defending to the death their so-called right to exploit. So we had big fights on this question. We did get some revolutionary minded youth to step back and rethink this question because they and we know that this is no abstract question, but goes to the heart of making a revolution in which a revolutionary vanguard party that is a tribune of the people can lead the working class in insurrection to smash the capitalist state machine.

We also laid out in our discussions with serious militant workers and youth who have been through some battles that the capitalist system cannot be reformed. A number of them want to do social work in the townships. We don’t argue against the need for electricity and more spigots. But we struggled with the comrades on the need to win the advanced layer of the working class to build an internationalist revolutionary party that will stand at the head of the struggle for national and social liberation in South Africa; that would fight for the nationalization of the urban lands to wipe out homelessness; to expropriate without compensation the white-owned agribusinesses, to give the land to the black agricultural workers who are without any; that would fight for jobs for all through a shorter workweek with no cut in pay to spread the available work; that would stand up for women’s rights, for equal pay for equal work, and for free abortion on demand, which is a hot issue increasingly in South Africa; that will defend democratic rights for gays; that will fight for full citizenship rights for foreign

workers in the struggle for the establishment of a black-centered workers government fighting not only for socialist revolution in South Africa, not only for a socialist federation of southern Africa, but for world revolution.

Especially in the context of the collapse of the Soviet Union, which served as a counterweight to bloody U.S. imperialism, imperialism has been emboldened. From the U.S. imperialist slaughter of over 100,000 Iraqis—not counting the subsequent death by starvation inflicted on the Iraqi masses—to the racist colonialist invasion of Somalia and Haiti, U.S. imperialism and its rulers, Reagan, Bush, Clinton and whoever is elected next, are racist mass murderers. There will be no successful workers revolution in South Africa apart from the struggle for international working-class revolution, centrally in the industrial centers of Western Europe, Japan and North America.

Everything depends upon building a fighting international revolutionary vanguard party that genuinely bases itself upon the call to action of the first Communist International, that workers of the world must unite—we have nothing to lose but our chains. If we are to change the world, this is what must guide us in this fight to free Mumia. We have a world to win against imperialist bandits and mass murderers in the White House, Congress and the Pentagon, the bloodiest ruling class that history has ever known. Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the racist death penalty! ■

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# Brutal Anti-Immigrant Repression in L.A.

## Killer Cops and Sweatshop Slavery

LOS ANGELES—A wave of killings of Latinos by L.A. cops and county sheriffs, coupled with the recent exposé of the virtual enslavement of Thai women garment workers here, have underlined that the entire working class must take up the fight for immigrant rights. The passage last November of anti-immigrant Proposition 187, currently tied up in the courts, has given the cops a green light to step up their attacks on all minorities in L.A. By denying basic rights to immigrants, Prop. 187 has also reinforced their brutal exploitation by the sweatshop bosses. Meanwhile, as a racist frenzy against affirmative action sweeps the state, the playing of tapes of the vile ex-detective Mark Fuhrman has exposed, once again, the whole system of racist police terror in L.A.—and indeed throughout the country.

Latinos were already fuming over the cops' killings of Santiago López García in April and Jesus Vargas in early July when, on July 29, 14-year-old José Antonio Gutiérrez of Lincoln Heights on L.A.'s east side was shot down by police as he was doing an errand for his mother. The shooting immediately sparked angry protests, which the cops met with a two-day virtual state of siege, arresting over 25 and beating people at will. Then on August 15 in the town of Torrance, south of Los Angeles, 18-year-old Richard Chacón was shot and killed by police who claimed he was a "gang member."

José Gutiérrez was similarly victimized by an "anti-gang" patrol called the "Community Resources Against Street Hoodlums" (CRASH). He was shot four times by CRASH cop Michael Falvo and then handcuffed as he lay dying. The cops even beat José's mother as she ran to his side. The coroner's report on the shooting showed that Gutiérrez was shot three times *in the back* and once in the side. His killing demonstrates the workings of American "law and order," where all black and Latino youth are "gang members" subject to summary execution by the cops.

The police followed this killing with a series of brazen provocations against neighborhood residents. On the second



Cops arrest Latino youth protesting LAPD killing of 14-year-old José Gutiérrez in Lincoln Heights.

day of protests following the shooting, the LAPD shut down a fund-raising car wash organized by friends of the Gutiérrez family, cursing and handcuffing participants while outraged onlookers gathered. Several days later, people leaving a rosary service were harassed and searched. At an August 12 protest march, the cops continually walked through the crowd, videotaping and attempting to incite the protesters, hoping to set up a bloodbath.

Police have taken their cue from local politicians like Democratic city councilman Mike Hernandez, who initially called the shooting "justified," and Mayor Richard Riordan, who lashed out at groups "like the Brown Berets, the Communist Party and others" who "have only one motive in mind—that is to rile up the people." Feeling the heat of anger among Latinos, in July Mexico's consul general in Los Angeles felt compelled to protest to the sheriffs' department on behalf of the estimated 4.3 million Mexican nationals in Southern California.

Through its brutal repression of immigrants and minorities, the racist ruling class seeks to keep L.A. a low-wage haven for capitalist profit, with the trade unions weak and the workers divided by race and nationality. The true-life horror stories of slave labor in El Monte, 15 miles east of Los Angeles, give an idea of the kind of environment the bosses want to create for working people as a

whole. Here young women who fled dire poverty in Thailand were forcibly kept inside an apartment complex-turned-sweatshop surrounded by barbed wire. They regularly toiled seven days a week from 7 a.m. until midnight—and sometimes longer—for \$1.60 an hour, making clothes for toney retail stores, and also chains like Montgomery Ward. Some were held there for as long as seven years, subject to beatings by guards if they tried to escape.

Seventy-two workers were found when the California Labor Commission raided the El Monte factory on August 2. They were then shackled by Immigration agents and hauled off to jail. As a lawyer with the Asian Pacific-American Legal Center bitterly complained, "They were imprisoned at work and then by the INS." The Thai women are being given temporary work permits allowing them to stay in the U.S. long enough to testify against their slave drivers. But they are threatened with deportation after that, and have now become a political football as the Republicans and Democrats compete for votes by scapegoating immigrants for the falling wages and unemployment produced by decaying American capitalism.

All-purpose bigot Pete Wilson, who was re-elected California governor last fall under the banner of Prop. 187 and is now running for the Republican presidential nomination on his racist creden-

tials against immigrants and affirmative action, ordered the August 2 raid and later denounced the Clinton administration for not cracking down on it earlier. (In fact, the El Monte sweatshop operated unhindered despite the knowledge of the federal government going back to Bush's term.) But Wilson hit a sore spot in Washington, prompting the feds to raid three separate L.A. garment factories on August 23, seizing dozens of Asian and Central American immigrants.

Superexploitation of immigrant labor has thrived whenever the capitalists have needed it, and is burgeoning today, from California fields and orchards to garment factories in New York's Chinatown. For decades, the flag-waving, pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy has turned its back on immigrants, saying they threatened "American jobs." This garbage only benefits the bosses, who relish pitting workers against each other in order to crush unions and drive down wages. Lately, garment, hotel and other unions have successfully organized some of the tens of thousands of immigrant workers in

the L.A. region. For the labor movement to get off its knees requires actively fighting to defend immigrant workers and all of the oppressed. For starters, the unions must demand unconditional release of the imprisoned garment workers, no deportations and *full citizenship rights* for all immigrants.

It is precisely to sap the strength of the integrated unions that the government persecutes the foreign-born and unleashes its uniformed thugs on all minorities. After the shooting of José Gutiérrez, it was revealed that killer cop Falvo was one of 44 "problem officers" identified by the Christopher Commission in the wake of the police beating of Rodney King. Now, with the playing of the Fuhrman tapes, the revelation about Falvo has the local bourgeoisie terrified of the spectre of another multi-racial social explosion like the one that rocked L.A. after the acquittal of the cop tormentors of Rodney King.

The only difference between Michael Falvo and Mark Fuhrman and the rest of the LAPD is that a few of the incidents

in which they terrorized "suspects" have come to light. Now some activists around the Gutiérrez case have demanded "community control" of the police and called on the FBI and the Justice Department to investigate the killing. But who can expect even a hint of justice from Clinton and Reno, responsible for the hideous Waco massacre of 86 men, women and children in 1993? From the FBI and the Justice Department to the LAPD and county sheriffs, the bourgeois state is racist to the core and *exists* to repress workers, youth and minority communities in defense of the capitalist status quo.

As a Spartacist sign at the August 12 protest declared, what's necessary is to mobilize the power of labor and minorities to stop racist terror. Some of the most energetic strike actions in recent years have come from heavily immigrant construction, trucking and hotel workers unions in the L.A. region. A fighting workers party must be built to mobilize labor in defense of the ghettos and barrios and to unite workers internationally in struggle for socialist revolution. ■

## Cross-Burnings and Anti-Union Terror

ATLANTA—Called "Freedom Summer '95," it was to be a substantial union organizing drive across the South, undertaken by the Laborers International (LIUNA) and United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) unions. Evoking the civil rights movement's Freedom Summer of over 30 years ago, the campaign was aimed at bringing unionization to poultry workers at plants from Mississippi to North Carolina. That the largely minority workers face many of the same enemies today, and that unionization of the South is inseparable from the fight for black equality, was dramatically driven home by a KKK-style cross-burning outside of an Alabama processing plant on the eve of a union recognition vote in June.

The conditions faced by tens of thousands of workers in these plants were exposed to the world four years ago, when 25 workers, mostly women and blacks, were the victims of industrial murder in an inferno at a chicken processing plant in Hamlet, North Carolina. Infernal conditions are still the rule in these hellholes, where temperatures reach 110 degrees and chemicals like chlorine burn skin and scar the lungs. The rapid and repetitious work exhausts the body and cripples the limbs of the heavily black, and today increasingly

### Fight Klan Terror! Unionize the South!



**May 1995: Striking Case Farms poultry workers in North Carolina face down scab truck. Workers, mostly Latin American immigrants, later won union recognition.**

immigrant workforce.

The fight, with strikes, protests and marches, to win even the most elemental union defense for these brutally exploited workers has run smack into the whole apparatus of 1990s union-busting—backed to the hilt by the forces of the capitalists' government and the

extralegal racist terror of the KKK. On the Eastern Shore of Maryland, in rural North Carolina and the Mississippi Delta, the courageous efforts of these workers to win unions underscore the necessity to forge a class-struggle leadership in the labor movement. It is vital to link the struggle to organize the South to the

fight for black equality and immigrant rights against the racism and exploitation that are integral to capitalism.

### Perdue and the KKK

The "Freedom Summer '95" campaign came to Dothan, Alabama, where workers at the Perdue chicken plant were scheduled to vote for a union on June 15. The night before, white plant supervisors burned a cross on company property to intimidate 1,100 mainly black poultry workers. Hung from the cross was a "Vote Yes" T-shirt. Preceding this provocation were burnings of Laborers union literature and of videotapes featuring Jesse Jackson appealing for unionization. A union loyalist was told he would be "carried out in a body bag," while others were physically attacked in the plant the day of the vote. Some of the same supervisors who burned the cross "visited" workers in their homes. These acts of race-terror are the stock in trade of the Klan. In this climate of blatant intimidation, the unionization effort went down to defeat.

Later that month, at another Perdue plant in Lewiston, North Carolina, the UFCW narrowly lost a union drive. On July 12, poultry processing workers at a Perdue plant in Robersonville, NC lost a union vote. In this instance Perdue threatened to close the plant (which is hugely profitable) while the local police chief in concert with company security harassed union activists daily. But the organizing drive has not just produced defeats. Also on July 12, some 500 mainly Guatemalan and Mexican workers at a Case Farms poultry plant in Morganton, North Carolina won union representation with the Laborers after a bitter fight.

Meanwhile, federal immigration cops are increasingly being used to intimidate workers. In July, Clinton's Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) went to work for the poultry bosses, sweeping down on poultry processing workers in Salisbury, on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. "Six agents set up a roadblock a few hundreds yards outside the factory entrance and stopped every foreign-looking worker" entering Showell Farms, another Perdue plant (*Washington Post*, 23 July). Korean-born workers with papers were summarily handcuffed. Another 27 Mexican and Central American workers were deported, some within hours.

The hated INS (*la migra*) is carrying out a dragnet centered on the Southeast, called "Operation South PAW," which as of July 4 had seized 2,078 workers.

This racist campaign stands for "Protect American Workers" and stems from the criminal call of Atlanta union tops for raids against undocumented workers laboring in numerous projects for the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta. The vile program of the labor traitors is a knife against *all* workers—black, Hispanic and white. In fact, in numerous struggles across the country, immigrant workers have breathed new life into unions crippled by the betrayals of the labor bureaucracy. A revolutionary leadership would unite the multiracial working class in the U.S. and across North and Central America by demanding *full citizenship rights for anyone who has come to this country*, and forging genuine solidarity in action to aid workers' struggle across the borders.

The recent surge of union organizing, particularly in the South, has drawn the attention of the *Wall Street Journal* (1 September) which headlined, "Some Unions Step Up Organizing Campaigns and Get New Members." This mouthpiece for big business cited a "major shift in strategy" by labor in turning attention to low-paid workers. The *Journal* highlighted the victory of Morganton's poultry workers as an example that "it can be done." But the immigrant workers at Case Farms had organized even before LIUNA arrived, showing their power by *striking the company* rather than relying on the bosses' government, as the hidebound bureaucracy does.

Many of the Guatemalan workers at Case Farms had been hounded from their homeland by U.S.-backed death squads. They were brought up from Florida to Morganton, where wages were a paltry \$6.35 an hour. Out of this, workers had to pay for their own safety supplies and were limited to one bathroom break a day. In May, 300 workers staged a sit-down strike, refusing to leave the plant, and then walked out for four days. The company promised concessions on working conditions, but in the end only installed two microwaves. The outraged workers approached the Laborers, and in July the union won an NLRB election by a 238-183 vote. After the victory, workers were greeted by placards in Spanish declaring "First Triumph for Workers in Morganton" and "Long Live Your Union."

Integrated unions will play a decisive role in the fight against resurgent Klan terror and the heritage of Jim Crow segregation across the South. It is no accident that in February of this year 100 black newly organized textile workers in Union Point, Georgia formed the core of a protest march against that city's racist

ban of 21 local black youth from entering downtown businesses. In the small towns where the large capitalist corporations build their plants, wages for blacks are wretched—but abysmal for whites as well. Racism and racial oppression are a mechanism for social control used to keep white labor bigoted, backward and unorganized. The bosses want a docile workforce to keep the South a bastion of the runaway, low-wage, non-union "open shop." The racist terror of the Klan is the ultimate defense of racist exploiters.

When the KKK staged a provocation in Atlanta in January 1989 under the protection of thousands of cops and National Guardsmen, the Partisan Defense Committee initiated a counter-demonstration that brought out 3,000 anti-Klan protesters, calling to "Mobilize the Power of Organized Labor and Minorities Against KKK/Nazi Killers!" This is what a fighting workers party would do. But the subservience of the union tops to Clinton and the Democratic Party stands as a roadblock to the sharp class struggle that is necessary. Who believes that the AFL-CIO bureaucracy will lift a finger against the cruel exploitation of workers by poultry king Don Tyson, Clinton's chief bankroller and Arkansas crony? Jesse Jackson's picket line appearances are a downpayment for the Democratic Party—brushing up his credentials so that he'll be better able to rope workers and blacks back into the voting booth for Clinton next year.

Poultry workers themselves have little economic clout, but a concerted union organizing drive can and must extend to the huge industrial belt that is springing up along the I-85 corridor, particularly auto and related industries, and elsewhere in the South. By 1990, North and South Carolina had more manufacturing production workers than any state except California. Pointing to this development, the document of the Spartacist League's Ninth National Conference (1994) noted:

"A unionization drive could generate an embryonic workers party which would also become the political expression of the black community. 'Organize the South' and the call for integrated labor action to defend black rights are key slogans for Southern work today."

—*Spartacist* No. 51,  
Autumn 1994

The social struggle to unionize the South and rid it of Klan terror requires a revolutionary leadership of the labor movement that will build a *multiracial workers party*, leading a fight against racial oppression and Klan terror and the capitalist system which spawns it. ■

# Racist Backlash Against O.J. Simpson Acquittal

## Race, Class and American "Justice"



Skali/Daily Breeze

**Vindictive L.A. cops seek payback for Simpson acquittal by arresting black youth graffiti artists in South-Central.**

For a moment, it seemed as though the whole country had come to a standstill: phone traffic plunged, assembly lines stopped, classrooms went silent, even trading on the stock and commodities exchanges ground almost to a halt. Then cheers erupted in a chorus that resounded from one end of black America to the other, from run-down inner-city housing projects to swank bank offices, from prison cells to black colleges and churches. Not only blacks rejoiced. Amid shouts of "The Juice is loose," in Times Square blacks and whites embraced, whites at Atlanta's airport applauded, Latino bus riders in Los Angeles cheered. But in city after city there were scenes of sharp racial polarization, as shocked or angry whites stood alongside jubilant black co-workers or fellow pedestrians.

One of the longest and costliest, certainly the most publicized and analyzed of criminal trials in American history

came to a close with an explosive climax, as the jury of eight black women, one black man, two white women and one Latino man declared Simpson not guilty of the murder of his ex-wife Nicole Brown and her friend Ronald Goldman. We don't know what happened the night they were brutally slain. But we do know a blatant frame-up when we see one. In the face of ample proof that the police and prosecutors lied, that evidence had been planted, that fascist detective Mark Fuhrman—at the center of the prosecution's case—was driven by racist contempt for a black man married to a white woman, the jury rightly observed the legal standard "*falsus in uno, falsus in omnibus*" (false in one thing, false in everything) and the legal definition of innocence, finding Simpson not guilty because he had not been proven so beyond a reasonable doubt. The fact that it only required a couple hours of delib-

eration to reach a unanimous verdict constituted a scathing indictment of the prosecution's case.

Notwithstanding the media circus which gorged itself on this sordid crime, the jury grasped the simple truth that a conviction would have been an open endorsement of flagrant police racism and frame-up. As L.A. Urban League leader John Mack trenchantly remarked, Fuhrman's taped genocidal ravings were the missing sound track to the vicious videotaped LAPD beating of Rodney King in 1991. The understanding that the cops regularly frame people up is pervasive in the ghettos and barrios, and it is widespread as well among other sectors of the population which have had direct experience with the racist, strike-breaking thugs in blue. In the coal fields of West Virginia, white United Mine Worker militants and their families, veterans of bitter class warfare, had no

trouble with the Simpson verdict.

A flood of commentaries in the mass media expressed alarm at the racial fault line in American society "revealed" by the reactions to the Simpson acquittal. The breathtaking banality of this "revelation," self-evident to every ghetto school kid, was supplemented by a hefty measure of hypocrisy, as the capitalist press went out of its way to fan the flames of race war. To believe TV and newspaper reports, not one white person in the country supported the jury's verdict. In fact, the reaction among whites was mixed: despite the media campaign, a Gallup-CNN poll taken a couple of days after Simpson was acquitted reported 42 percent of whites said the jurors made the right decision. Yet a steady stream of racist vitriol was directed at Simpson's black lead attorney, Johnnie Cochran, at the majority black jury, at every black person across the country who saw in the verdict a brief glimpse of justice.

Simpson's acquittal was met with a bloodthirsty outcry. Reeking with racist arrogance, yuppie lead prosecutor Marcia Clark declared: "Liberals don't want to admit it, but a majority black jury won't convict in a case like this." *Los Angeles Times* columnist Al Martinez scurrilously ranted, "The Johnnie Cochran Troupe did everything but tap-dance and tumble before a jury that wouldn't know DNA from the PTA." With incredible chutzpah, high-flying white executives and suburbanites moaned that Simpson beat the rap only because of his wealth! We didn't hear these screams of outrage when white multimillionaire Claus von Bülow got off on appeal on the charge of attempted murder of his wife.

It's striking that in the forefront of the uproar were feminists and liberals, who presumed Simpson guilty from the start. The National Organization for Women (NOW) in L.A. organized screaming protests against the acquittal. On the Op-Ed pages of the *New York Times*, liberal feminist Maureen Dowd fumed about Simpson going free: "hide your wives and daughters." Black columnist Bob Herbert lashed out at the "degrading spectacle" of black people "furiously celebrating the Simpson verdict," maligning it as "a collective dance on the graves of two innocent people." Anthony Lewis pointed to the prosecution's "conclusive" evidence and dismissed defense claims that the cops framed Simpson, asking incredibly: "What motive would they have to do that?" What motive?! What world does Lewis live in?

Around the country, cops and fascists took the racist backlash to the streets.



Fisher/Quad City Times

**Racial polarization in response to Simpson acquittal: as black students in Illinois college cheered, many whites expressed shock.**



Myung J. Chun

In a black neighborhood of South Philadelphia, as a police cruiser slowly drove past blacks holding signs reading "Not Guilty," the cop inside ominously gave the finger to the crowd. Black San Francisco mayoral candidate Willie Brown reported getting dozens of hate calls, L.A.'s black weekly, the *Sentinel*, received at least a dozen threats to burn down their building or of a drive-by shooting. Within 15 minutes of the verdict, Harlem's *Amsterdam News* was warned, "There's going to be a whole lot of dead n-----s." This threat was punctuated in Boston by the burning of a cross and in southern Pennsylvania hooded Klansmen paraded in the streets.

That O.J. Simpson, a multimillionaire celebrity and Reagan/Bush conservative whose ambition was to be a Republican Senator, would become a symbol for the downtrodden and dispossessed in itself speaks volumes about the depth of racial oppression in the U.S. Even a black superstar who "made it" according to the rules of (white) American capitalism, once he was in the clutches of "the law," O.J. got the same frame-up treatment meted out daily in the ghettos. But the fundamental divide in this deeply racist society, as in every capitalist country, is not race but class. With his millions, O.J. Simpson was able to buy himself an ace team of lawyers. The sentiment of one Seattle man was repeated nationwide: "If it had been me or anybody else, or any

other black man," he said, "without the money and without the fame, he'd be in jail or on death row or dead already."

Former Black Panther Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt) has been in a California prison for 25 years, framed up for a crime the government knows he did not commit. And Mumia Abu-Jamal remains on death row in Pennsylvania, innocent of any "crime" but his eloquent and outspoken defense of the oppressed. As Jamal wrote in a column on the Simpson verdict titled "The Power of Money":

"If O.J. Simpson were a poor man of no influence, with the exact same errors in his case, he would still be on death row, for without money for good investigators, good jury specialists and good lawyers, who would know that such errors ever existed."

To free political prisoners such as Geronimo and Mumia, and the countless nameless, faceless black men and women who are daily entrapped by lying prosecutors or shot dead by racist cops will take a powerful movement of social struggle that strikes at the core of this criminal system, the capitalist state apparatus.

The passivity of the labor movement, enforced by misleaders whose fundamental loyalties are to the capitalist system, has created such despair in the face of an onslaught of racist reaction that Simpson's acquittal was seen by many as a rare sign of hope on the horizon. Nonetheless, it is to mobilizing the

potentially decisive power of the working class that opponents of racist oppression must look. The 1992 plebeian upheaval in L.A. after Rodney King's racist cop tormentors walked and the recent picket-line battles in the Midwest point to the basic Marxist understanding that the workings of the profit system itself will provoke social struggle. What is needed is a multiracial revolutionary workers party to fuse the anger of the black ghetto masses with the militancy and social power of white West Virginia miners and the integrated urban working class in a struggle that sweeps away the entire machinery of capitalist exploitation and oppression.

### The Capitalist State— Frame-Up, Inc.

The central strand in the prosecution's case was the "testifying" of fascist cop Mark Fuhrman. Months earlier, this swastika-wearing racist pig had boasted, "If I go down, they lose the case." Then came the bombshell exposé of Fuhrman's genocidal rantings on 12 hours of audiotape. Judge Ito allowed the jury to hear only the tiniest portion of Fuhrman's repeated slurs of blacks, Hispanics and Jews, and not one mention of 18 incidents he nauseatingly described of L.A. cops beating suspects, coercing testimony, lying, destroying and manufacturing evidence. But the evidence they were allowed to hear and see was more than enough to convince the jury that the prosecution's star witness was a lying bigot who regularly plants evidence against interracial couples.

The "mountain of evidence" claimed by the prosecution was almost all highly suspicious and tainted: the still-moist bloody glove "discovered" by Fuhrman six hours after the murder; the socks "found" on a carpet that a police videotape taken minutes earlier showed to be

bare; the failure to discover blood on the socks and Simpson's back gate until weeks later. And "incompetence" alone could not explain why the chief detective transported a vial of Simpson's blood from police headquarters 20 miles to Simpson's house.

Then there is Fuhrman himself. The capitalist media sanctimoniously denounced "rogue cops," but anyone who ever had a run-in with the LAPD recognized it as business as usual. In fact, Fuhrman was so typical that he didn't even make it onto the 1991 Christopher Commission's list of the LAPD's 44 worst cops. The prosecution *knew* that he had a record as a sadistic racist going back at least to the late '70s. When a fellow cop married a Jewish woman, Fuhrman painted a swastika on his locker. Yet this fascist cop was one of the first four detectives to arrive at Simpson's house following the murder.

To believe the prosecution's alibi for introducing illegally obtained evidence, the cops landed on Simpson's doorstep not because he was their prime suspect—though his mug shot was featured in a California cop training film on domestic violence—but because they wanted to break the news of his ex-wife's death to him gently and help care for his children! Then Fuhrman jumped over the fence to scour Simpson's estate—without a search warrant. Writer Joe Domanick, author of a book on the LAPD, remarked: "Mark Fuhrman went over the wall at O.J. Simpson's house simply because that's what he always did."

Indeed, it was a striking expression of the arrogant bonapartism of the police and prosecutors, who chafe at the most minimal constraints, that they treated this case as though they were dealing with an anonymous ghetto youth saddled with an apathetic and underpaid public defender. The seemingly endless list of slipshod omissions, constitutional violations and outright lies in the Simpson investigation make sense only if it is understood that the cops and prosecution do not depend on getting evidence to secure a conviction.

The American "justice" system is *predicated on frame-up*—of the guilty as well as the innocent—whether out of vindictiveness or sheer laziness. The cops' word is usually all it takes, occasionally augmented by some "scientific" evidence churned out in a police crime lab. Most of the time, it works. One homicide cop inadvertently made that clear when he complained, "There are people doing life without parole who have been convicted with one-tenth of the evidence that they had in the Simpson case." But

Simpson's "dream team" of high-priced lawyers, experts and investigators—though arrayed against a massive prosecution effort backed by the full power of the state and well over a million dollars in corporate "pro bono" funding—had the resources to unravel the lies and discredit the DNA tests. William O'Dell Harris, a black man from West Virginia, did not: he spent seven years behind bars before it came out that the DNA evidence used to convict him had been fabricated by a police chemist.

What was on trial in the Simpson case was the LAPD and, by extension, every police department in the country. The cops—black as well as white—act as an occupying army in the ghettos and adopt a corresponding mentality of racist contempt against all black people. Liberals leapt to denounce the Simpson verdict because, no less than the conservative right, they are committed to upholding the sanctity of the capitalist state. If anything, in recent years liberals have placed themselves in the vanguard of the drive for "law and order" with their push for ever more stringent gun control, seeking to ensure the state's monopoly over armed force. They bemoan the "excesses" of "rogue cops" and decry racism in the police force as an "aberration" because they seek to strengthen the authority of this institution of racist class domination. As we wrote in "The Frame-Up of Mumia Abu-Jamal" (WV No. 625, 30 June):

"This sinister web of spying, intimidation and frame-up is not an aberration which can be cleansed from the system, as liberals would have it. Rather it goes to the very core of the capitalist state which, with its cops and courts, its prosecutors and executioners, is an instrument for the repression of the working class and the oppressed. This is part of the Marxist understanding of the capitalist state, and as Marxists we understand that it will take nothing less than a workers revolution to sweep away this machinery of state terror whose purpose is to keep profits and interest payments flowing into the coffers of Wall Street."

### Police State, U.S.A.

Not for the first time, the effective exercise of a democratic right—trial by a jury of one's peers—is leading to calls for its elimination. California governor Pete Wilson is pushing for a ballot initiative to allow for convictions by non-unanimous juries. Other measures call for further eroding defendants' right to refuse to testify, limiting the use of expert witnesses, restricting TV coverage of trials and allowing for the wholesale introduction of illegally obtained evidence. Many of these measures represent a frontal assault on the Bill of Rights: the Fourth Amendment's ban on

## Spartacist League Public Offices

—MARXIST LITERATURE—

### Bay Area

Thurs.: 5:30-8:00 p.m., Sat.: 1:00-5:00 p.m.  
1634 Telegraph, 3rd Floor (near 17th Street)  
Oakland, California Phone: (510) 839-0851

### Chicago

Tues.: 5:00-9:00 p.m., Sat.: 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.  
328 S. Jefferson St., Suite 904  
Chicago, Illinois Phone: (312) 454-4930

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Tues.: 6:30-9:00 p.m., Sat.: 1:00-5:00 p.m.  
41 Warren St. (one block below  
Chambers St. near Church St.)  
New York, NY Phone: (212) 267-1025





George Holliday Video



Black Star

**Fascist L.A. cop Mark Fuhrman's genocidal ranting was "missing soundtrack" for videotape of vicious LAPD beating of Rodney King.**

unreasonable search and seizure (already vitiated by numerous Supreme Court decisions), the Fifth Amendment's guarantee against self-incrimination, the Sixth Amendment's promise of the right to counsel and a public trial.

Viewed in combination with the current onslaught on the rights of immigrants—including naturalized citizens—and the massive intrusion of Christian Coalition religious bigotry into politics, this assault on constitutional rights reflects a reactionary yearning to return the Constitution to the exclusive benefit of those it initially was intended to cover: property-owning men who were of course English-speaking, Protestant and surely "white." Over the ensuing two centuries, including a revolutionary civil war, the definition of "citizen" came to include many—though by no means all—of those people resident in the United States.

The achievement of substantial legal equality for black people, beginning after World War II, was also heavily motivated by U.S. imperialism's felt need to look good internationally—not least in its competition with the Soviet Union in the Third World. However, even as citizenship rights were extended to broader sectors of the population, these rights—notably the Second Amendment right to bear arms—were simultaneously attenuated. Now, some significant elements of white racist reaction, exemplified by the nativist groups who designate black people as "Fourteenth Amendment citizens," are placing a large question mark over the very extension of citizenship to freed black slaves. We call for full citizenship rights for everyone who lives here.

The capitalist rulers have implemented a barrage of new legislation aimed at bolstering their powers of repression, while dusting off old legislation. The recent conviction in the NYC "terrorism"

trial of blind Egyptian cleric Omar Abdel Rahman and nine other Islamic fundamentalists on charges of "seditious conspiracy" is an ominous precedent for widespread police-state frame-ups. The ten were not even charged with carrying out a crime, but simply with a "conspiracy of intent." Sedition laws have historically been used to go after leftists and labor activists, from the 1919-20 Palmer raids which rounded up thousands of foreign-born leftists in the aftermath of the 1917 Russian Revolution to the World War II prosecution of 18 Trotskyist leaders. Most recently, the feds attempted to use sedition laws in a failed 1989 case against three members of the Ohio 7, New Left radicals who were already serving time on another frame-up conviction.

With bipartisan support, the capitalist rulers are trying to turn the United States into a "democratic" police state. The occupation of the ghettos proceeds apace with the militarization of the Mexican border. As Johnnie Cochran aptly put it, "The vision of America has become barbed wire from sea to shining sea." The latest report from the U.S. Sentencing Project shows that fully *one third* of all black men in their twenties are now either in prison or on parole or probation—up from 23 percent six years ago—largely as a result of the "war on drugs." Meanwhile, some *three million* kids and their mothers are about to be deprived of even the most minimal means of existence, as Clinton/Gingrich/Dole abolish welfare. This is the pathology of capitalism in its death agony.

Behind the current escalation of police-state terror is the drastic decline in the living standards of wide layers of the population. The discontents wracking America stem from the decline of U.S. capitalism as an area of production in the world market, signaled by the

August 1971 fall from the gold standard at the height of the losing, imperialist war in Vietnam. Even as wide swathes of American industry and millions of unionized manufacturing jobs have been devastated, the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union has led those who own the equity and debt of America to fantasize about an infinite vista of pure profit and untrammled exploitation. This is the banner of the Gingrich/Dole Congress (with Clinton limping along behind it), pushing a fantastical scheme of a utopian capitalism which can somehow pay for a huge military machine and rid itself of an enormous debt while slashing taxes for the rich, all simply by demolishing social welfare for the poor.

Meanwhile there is growing despair not only in the black ghettos but in the Idaho hillsides and in the Midwest Rust Belt. The expressions of this despair are, however, sharply differentiated along race lines. In the ghettos, and even more so among the black middle class, there is an openness to pseudo-nationalist demagogues like Louis Farrakhan. Among whites who now feel cut out of the "American dream," there's a tendency to look to rightist answers, including eccentricities, blaming current social and economic ills on, e.g., immigrants, the "ZOG" (Zionist Occupation Government), satanism and single black welfare mothers. In the absence of sharp class struggle leading to a decisive fight for political power by the working class, this is a recipe not only for increased racial polarization but ultimately for one-sided genocidal race war.

Yet this widespread disaffection also creates an immediate problem for the ruling class. If there is one thing on which various sectors of the population agree, it is that the government can't be trusted. Clinton's draconian "counter-terrorism" bill has run aground on distrust over the feds' murderous assaults at Waco and Ruby Ridge. And, even before the Simpson acquittal, cops and prosecutors were complaining that it is getting increasingly difficult to get largely black and Hispanic juries in the inner cities to convict. The Bronx, for example, has an acquittal rate of over 47 percent for black defendants in felony cases. An editorial in the *Wall Street Journal* (4 October), titled "The Jury's Right," wrote that "we would be fools not to see that the Simpson jury is trying to tell this country something important." The verdict, said this mouthpiece for finance capital, sent "a large message" about the criminal justice system: "They don't trust it. Neither do a lot of other people."

Reflecting similar concerns within the bourgeoisie, William J. McDonough, head of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, recently warned: "We are forced to face the question of whether we will be able to go forward together as a unified society with a confident outlook or as a society of diverse economic groups suspicious of both the future and each other" (*New Yorker*, 16 October). Yet even more far-sighted capitalist spokesmen have no answers, because at bottom this is an irrational system predicated on anarchic market forces which lead to the destruction of productive capacity and of ever wider layers of the working population. And that necessarily means increased police repression.

### For a Leninist Party, Tribune of the People!

The Simpson trial provided a graphic illustration of the suicidal character of ethnic and sectoralist politics in racist, capitalist America. Ronald Goldman's father—whose lawyer was earlier Fuhrman's spokesman!—violently denounced Cochran for comparing Fuhrman with Hitler in his summation speech. Cochran's statement was eminently true. Referring to Fuhrman's genocidal call to "place all the n-----s on a pile and burn them," Cochran warned: "There was another man not too long ago in the world who had those same views.... This man, this scourge, became one of the worst people in the history of this world, Adolf Hitler, because people didn't care or didn't try to stop him." It takes the mindset of a bigoted Zionist to see this as black anti-Semitism or any kind of trivialization of the Holocaust. If the Fuhrmans of this country were to take power, Jews would be in peril as well as blacks.

More pronounced has been the feminist outcry over the Simpson acquittal. Tammy Bruce, the rabid leader of the L.A. chapter of NOW, barely tried to restrain her bloodlust for a Simpson lynching party. Simpson was a reprehensible wife-beater, but that doesn't prove that he was a murderer, as the feminists and the prosecution would have it. Sexual relations between black men and white women are an explosive issue in this profoundly racist society. It is enough to recall the Scottsboro case of nine young blacks in the 1930s who were nearly lynched on the false charge of raping two white women. Countless black men in the Jim Crow South were lynched for nothing more than "reckless eyeballing" of white women. That's what happened to 14-year-old Emmett Till in Mississippi 40 years ago, and nobody was tried for *his* murder.

The Simpson case provided an excruciating contradiction for opportunists whose politics are based on tailing after various petty-bourgeois forces, from feminists to black nationalists. Sam Marcy's Workers World Party decided that after the Fuhrman tapes, "racism eclipsed the other critical social issue in the spotlight—domestic violence" (*Workers World*, 12 October). And if Fuhrman's genocidal rantings had not been revealed, would that have swung the balance the other way?

One group which had no contradictions is the Workers League (WL) of David North. In the last couple of years, this dubious outfit has written off the trade unions as any sort of working-class organizations and denounced the right to self-determination for oppressed nations. Now, the WL has become the "left wing" of outright racist reaction. In a commentary co-authored by WL supremo North, these racist pro-cop "socialists" sounded like a press release from the prosecution: "A very wealthy man was able to manipulate the legal system and, as in this case, literally get away with murder." North alibis the cops, dismissing "claims of frame-up" which "confuse routine sloppiness, lies and arrogance with a genuine conspiracy to manufacture a case." Since Simpson was not a leftist or a worker, they claim, he could not have been the victim of a police and government frame-up. And what of racism? Not an issue for North, who explicitly equates "white racism and black nationalism" as "mutually complementary."

This is far from the first time that the WL has acted as bloodhounds for the cops. When SWP militant Mark Curtis was framed up on bogus rape charges by Des Moines, Iowa cops and prosecutors in 1988, the Northites scripted the summation for the prosecution, which in many cases was virtually identical with the WL statement. And in 1992, the Workers League acted as spokesmen for a white racist backlash against the presence of a school named after Malcolm X in the predominantly white Warrendale area of Detroit. As school doors were defaced with swastikas by avowed opponents of integration, the WL blithely claimed, "the issue in Warrendale is not race." And in the Simpson trial, North & Co. declare that "Racism...is only a secondary and incidental basis of the oppressive role of the police."

For years, the Northites have presented a "colorblind" version of "socialism" that dates back to the American social democracy before the impact of the Russian Revolution was felt. In the early part of this century, Socialist Party

leader Eugene V. Debs once declared, "We have nothing special to offer the Negro." But North has more in common with Debs' social-chauvinist opponent, Milwaukee "sewer socialist" Victor Berger, who was an open racist.

Marxists have a different, and counterposed, tradition. A defining political struggle in the early socialist movement was over the case of Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish officer in the French general staff who was framed up in an anti-Semitic witchhunt. Dreyfus was no leftist or worker any more than O.J. Simpson is, but rather a conservative militarist and supporter of French imperialism. Nonetheless, genuine socialists did not wait for Dreyfus's tormentors to admit they were carrying out a frame-up—which the French army high command finally did only a month ago, *100 years* after the fact—but rallied to his defense as part of the fight against anti-Semitism and all aspects of political reaction.

Russian Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin had in mind the Dreyfus case and similar instances of chauvinist persecution in writing that the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat must be a *tribune of the people*, fighting against every manifestation of oppression and anti-democratic discrimination. Following Lenin's example, the Spartacist League calls for a revolutionary workers party which champions the cause of all the oppressed. The Simpson case confirmed yet again that, despite the changed demographics of American society with the influx of Hispanic and Asian immigrants in recent years, black oppression remains, as it has always been, the cornerstone of reaction in the U.S. We fight for *black liberation through socialist revolution*.

Large numbers of black people understand that the whole system of police frame-up and judicial persecution is loaded against them. But this racist "injustice" system will not be defeated in the courtroom with high-priced lawyers. In recent years, the SL and the Partisan Defense Committee played a key role in organizing the fight to free death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. We seek in particular to mobilize the social power of labor to free Mumia from the clutches of his would-be executioners and abolish the racist death penalty. For the one third of young black men in the clutches of the cops and courts, for the millions of welfare mothers and children facing starvation, for the working class as a whole, the program of revolutionary class struggle to sweep away the capitalist oppressors is the only road to liberation. ■

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# Farrakhan's Reactionary Dead End Million Man March Appeases Racist Exploiters

At a time when the murderous racist rulers of this country are smashing every gain won through the blood and toil of the workers and minorities, the nationalist demagogue Louis Farrakhan, later joined by former NAACP president Ben Chavis and Jesse Jackson, called a march of a "million black men" for *atonement*. They forgive the oppressors and exploiters for their enormous crimes against black people, working people and poor, while blaming the oppressed for their oppression.

*To hell with atonement!* What's needed is integrated class struggle to fight for the liberation of black people and all the oppressed. Black oppression in this country is rooted in the bedrock of American capitalism, from the days of chattel slavery to the wage slavery of modern industry. It took a revolutionary civil war to destroy the Southern slavocracy, and it will take a third American revolution, a workers revolution, to overthrow the whole capitalist system of racist degradation and impoverishment.

"Black Men's Rally for Responsibility," the *Washington Post* called the October 16 event, which was possibly the largest-ever march in the capital. From the podium Farrakhan echoed Clinton's speech, delivered the same day in Texas, by laying the blame for conditions in the ghettos on the "personal responsibility" of black men. What about the vista of permanent unemployment, the assault on health care, the elimination of welfare, the overflowing prison population and racist police terror? These are non-issues for this apostle of "black capitalism," whose message is "do for self."

This march was a reactionary appeasement of the capitalist rulers. Clearly, most participants in this massive out-

pouring of black men were not there because they agree with Farrakhan's racist tirades against Jews and Asian immigrants or because they have bought into his vision of "black capitalism" in a racially segregated society. But despite the outrage and despair over the hellish conditions of racist America felt by the hundreds of thousands at the Mall in Washington, this march was *directly counterposed* to any struggle for black emancipation.

At a meeting on September 28, the Political Bureau of the Spartacist League/U.S. passed a motion stating:

"Farrakhan's 'Million Man March' for 'Atonement' is a right-wing, segregationist, and sexually exclusionist mobilization whose aim appears to be to pressure the Democratic Party to acknowledge the black constituency Clinton's 'New Democrats' spat on in '92. The utter vacuum of black leadership, intersecting the intensification of racist state repression and slashing of opportunities for blacks in all spheres of life, creates circumstances such that even this Booker T. Washington type mobilization, which blames black people for their oppression and tells the women to step back, stay home and pray, is attracting the support of unionists and youth who have no interest in Farrakhan *per se*. 'The participation of the big public service unions is particularly regressive and perverse. The purpose of unions is to represent all of the working people, yet they are now lending themselves to a march from which white workers and all women are excluded. This is a poisonous reactionary mobilization we will stay away from.'"

While many liberals and reformist leftists tried to dance around these hard facts, the march was not only built by Farrakhan but also built his authority as the pre-eminent black leader in Clinton/Gingrich's America. And that's not accidental, for his message is not that different from theirs. At the same time mass

support for this reactionary separatist is passive and superficial, and could be blown away by any significant social struggle.

## Reactionary Message, Reactionary Messenger

Farrakhan first called for the rally last December, proclaiming a "holy day of atonement" for black men for "not playing the role of head of the household" and for "the abuse and misuse of our women and girls." Chavis, who was ousted as head of the NAACP in part because of his attempts to reconcile with Farrakhan, later took on the role of national organizer. But the march really took off in the last month and a half with the endorsement of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) and several black churches. They were joined by Jesse Jackson and a number of black elected officials (BEOs), including Washington mayor Marion Barry and Detroit's mayor Dennis Archer.

Their watchword was "black operational unity." This was largely an expression of the desperation and impotence of "black elected officials" and other misleaders. For years, Jackson has been riding in the back of the Democratic Party bus, trying desperately to gain influence, appealing to the broad range of "constituencies"—blacks, women, white workers, Jews—that made up the "New Deal coalition." He even sought "reconciliation" with that symbol of Dixiecrat segregation, former Alabama governor George Wallace. To no avail. And with Clinton, he was kicked off the bus. Likewise, with the Republican ascendancy in Congress, the Congressional Black Caucus lost even the semblance of any influence.

So to get some "clout," they embraced

**No to Sexism, Nationalism! For Revolutionary Integrationism!  
Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!**

# Farrakhan: The Man Who Wanted Malcolm X Dead

By Minister Louis X  
(Boston, Mass.)

## "TO FOLLOW MALCOLM IS TO BE DOOMED"

If any Muslim—whether he be an Imam or just a rich man—backed a fool like Malcolm in building a Mosque, he would be a fool himself. Only those who wish to be led to hell, or to their doom, will follow Malcolm. The die is set, and Malcolm shall not escape, especially after such evil, foolish talk about his benefactor (Elijah Muhammad) in trying to rob him of the divine glory which Allah has bestowed upon him. Such a man as Malcolm is worthy of death, and would have met with death if it had not been for Muhammad's confidence in Allah for victory over the enemies

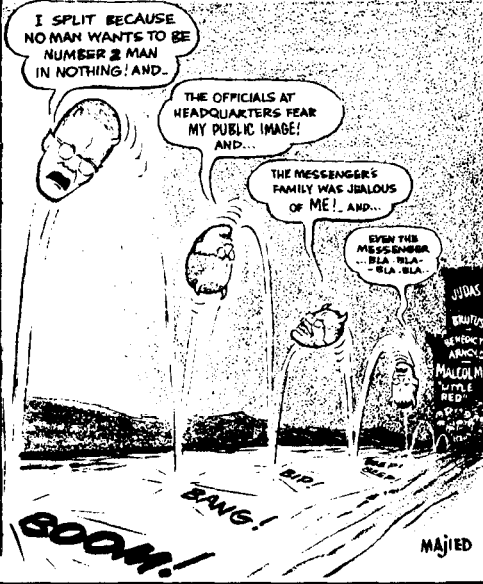
Muhammad Speaks

4 December 1964

Muhammad Speaks

10 April 1964

## On My Own



Months before Malcolm X was assassinated, Farrakhan (then known as Minister Louis X) declared Malcolm was "worthy of death," while Muhammad Speaks called for his head to roll.

Farrakhan's march, hoping that the sight of a million black men in front of the Capitol would give them some bargaining power. The "march" was also a giant voter enrollment device, "Operation Big Vote," ostentatiously encouraging participants to register as independents. This was linked to the recent boom in support, as an independent or Republican presidential candidate, for former Pentagon chief Colin Powell, who was invited to address the rally. It is ironic that Nation of Islam (NOI) leader Farrakhan expresses admiration for Powell, whose claim to fame was perpetrating the massacre of over 100,000 of Iraqi Muslims!

Significantly, the march had wide (if grudging) support among the white ruling class. President Clinton supported the "aims" of the march and "honored" the participants. Senate Republican leader Dole said "I like the talk about self-reliance, about picking yourself up, cleaning up our cities and getting kids off drugs," while cynically vituperating

about Farrakhan's anti-Semitism. While the Zionist Anti-Defamation League scurrilously compared this march with a Klan or Nazi mobilization, even the American Jewish Committee had positive words to say about a march for "atonement," which was, after all, consciously modeled on the Jewish Yom Kippur. And, grotesquely, Philadelphia's Democratic mayor Ed Rendell, who has been demanding the execution of death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, helped build the march.

Zionist support for Farrakhan, despite their mutual animosity, is not coincidental or hypocritical. What Farrakhan offers is a black version of Zionism. The Zionist state of Israel was founded on a program of racial separatism and "Jewish capitalism." And there are deep parallels between Farrakhan's program and that of the current right-wing consensus in American bourgeois politics. When Clinton was elected in 1992, the NOI leader hailed the yuppie racist's plan for

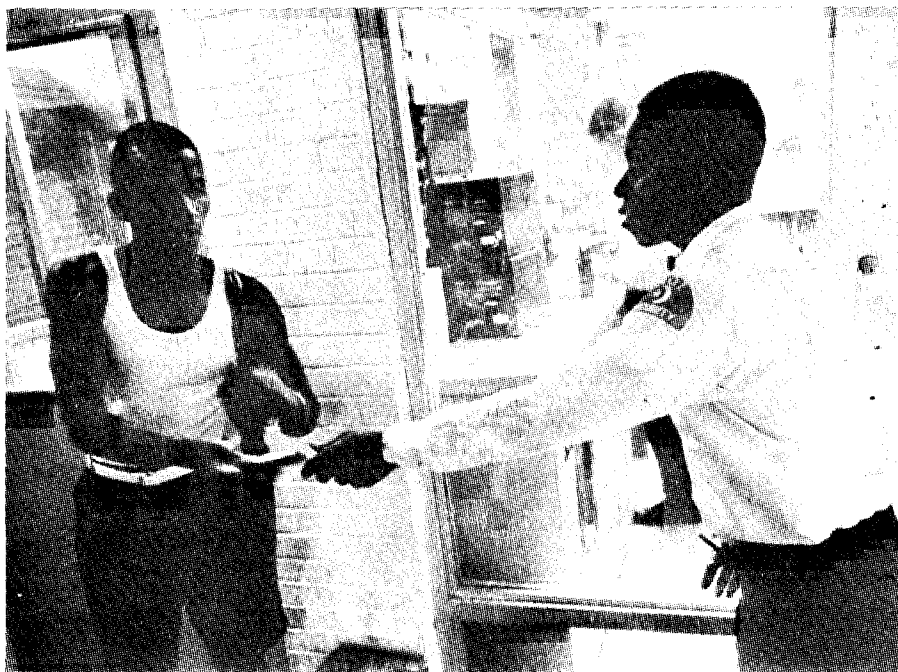
welfare "reform" and called to "cut federal spending" (Louis Farrakhan, *A Torchlight for America*). As journalist Don Terry noted in the *New York Times* (15 October), "In many ways, Mr. Farrakhan is a conservative, and on the surface, at least, some of the rally's themes echo those heard at Republican gatherings: God, loyalty, family, discipline."

Various liberal black integrationists, feeling the pressure to jump on the bandwagon for Farrakhan's march, went into contortions trying to separate the "message" from the messenger. Harvard professor Cornel West called on "radical democrats" to participate in order not to "yield the terrain to Minister Farrakhan." Social democrat Manning Marable initially called for the march to have "a much broader character," later calling it a "diversion" while continuing to look for "common ground" with Farrakhan. But West climbed on board, just as the CBC and BEOs did, because in the face of the bipartisan assault on black rights and social welfare, they have no alternative agenda to Farrakhan's illusory perspective of "self help" through black capitalism.

While they may squirm over some of Farrakhan's egregiously reactionary social positions, they basically have the same message as the "messenger." A key theme shared by all of the sponsors of the march is support for the deadly "war on drugs," which is really a war on the black ghettos. From Jesse Jackson to Louis Farrakhan, these bourgeois black misleaders shamelessly boost this campaign of state repression that has led to the imprisonment of a vast section of the country's black youth. As a recent report by the Sentencing Project makes clear, the "war on drugs" has been "an unmitigated disaster for young blacks and other minorities." For all the talk of "family values," from Gingrich, Dole and Clinton to Farrakhan, the report concludes:

"As increasing numbers of young black men are arrested and incarcerated, their life prospects are seriously diminished. Their possibilities for gainful employment are reduced, thereby making them less attractive as marriage partners and unable to provide for children they father. This in turn contributes to the deepening of poverty in low-income communities."

Today, fully one in three black men between the ages of 20 and 29 are in the clutches of the criminal "justice" system, whether in jail, facing trial or on probation or parole. This is the direct result of the "war on drugs," which is racist to the core. For example, getting caught with 5 grams of "crack" cocaine, prevalent in the ghetto, draws the same sen-



Palmer/U.S. News &amp; World Report

**Nation of Islam security guards in Baltimore housing project. U.S. government funds Farrakhan's rent-a-cops in service of racist repression.**

tence as 500 grams of powder cocaine, the yuppie drug of choice. Congress recently overruled a recommendation by the federal government's own sentencing commission to equalize the penalties.

The stark fact is that while blacks constitute 12 percent of the population and an almost identical proportion (13 percent) of regular drug users, blacks account for 35 percent of all drug arrests, 55 percent of convictions and 74 percent of prison sentences. Some 90 percent of all sentences to state prison for drug possession in 1992 were meted out to blacks and Hispanics. And in 16 states, not a single white person has ever been prosecuted for crack possession. When Jesse Jackson leads chants of "up with hope, down with dope," he is cheerleading for this drive to turn the ghettos into a vast prison.

### **Farrakhan: Bad News for Black People**

The fundamentally reactionary character of the Million Man March was demonstrated not least by its exclusion of women. This provoked angry opposition from a number of black women. Many uneasily accepted a subaltern role of organizing for the march so that "their" men could attend. C. DeLores Tucker, who campaigned against Time-Warner because of the lyrics on "gangsta rap" CDs, supported the march as a step against "pornography and violence." In a cynical concession, several women were added to the speaker's list, includ-

ing poet Maya Angelou, Rosa Parks of the 1956 Montgomery bus boycott, and even Malcolm X's widow, Betty Shabazz.

However, some black feminists denounced the march, most prominently Angela Davis. But Davis et al. can offer no solution for triply oppressed black women workers, because such reformists are beholden to Clinton's Democratic Party, which pushes the same "family values" reaction as Newt Gingrich or Louis Farrakhan. For our part, we recall that the vanguard of the abolitionist movement against slavery—John Brown, Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth and the Grimké sisters—stood for the commonality of interests of all the oppressed. As Frederick Douglass proclaimed, "Right is of no sex—Truth is of no color." In our struggle for socialist revolution to eliminate black and women's oppression, we stand on the tradition of these radical-democratic revolutionaries.

Despite the efforts of his "mainstream" allies to downplay his role, Farrakhan made it very clear that in going "big time" he had no intention of toning down his virulent anti-Semitism and bigotry. On the eve of the march, a two-day conference was held in Washington featuring Farrakhan's notoriously anti-Semitic deputy Khallid Muhammad who spewed diatribes against Jews, white women and "race mixing." And a couple of days earlier, Farrakhan himself, in a Reuters TV interview, declared that not

only did he consider Jews to be "bloodsuckers" but that this applied to a whole list of ethnic groups:

"Many of the Jews who owned the homes, the apartments in the black community, we considered them bloodsuckers because they took from our community and built their community but didn't offer anything back to our community. And when the Jews left, the Palestinian Arabs came, Koreans came, Vietnamese and other ethnic and racial groups came. And so this is a type and we call them bloodsuckers."

With such views, it's no wonder that Farrakhan is more than willing to collaborate with white-supremacists like California Nazi Tom Metzger. Even back in the 1960s under Elijah Muhammad, the NOI got funding from Texas ultrarightist H.L. Hunt and cultivated relations with the American Nazi Party and the KKK. This is a suicidal trap for black people, who would be the first victims of a fascist takeover.

The petty-bourgeois hucksters of the NOI seek to pit one sector of the oppressed against others because their program is to become the "bloodsuckers"—that is the capitalist exploiters—of "their" people, claiming the ghetto as their exclusive market. During the rally, a call went out from the podium for everyone to wave a dollar bill in the air as a symbol of the potential for black "empowerment." This scene of hundreds of thousands of men waving dollar bills encapsulates the fraud of "black capitalism": the idea that a significant black bourgeoisie could be consolidated in racist America is a reactionary utopia. In the face of a genocidal drive that is devastating the ghettos, Farrakhan & Co. preach accommodation to the racist capitalist status quo.

As we wrote last year, in an article reprinted in the Spartacist pamphlet series *Black History and the Class Struggle* No. 11 (August 1994), "Farrakhan Is Bad News for Black People." Farrakhan's hostility to militant black struggle is underscored by his vendetta against Malcolm X. While today he tries to claim the mantle of Malcolm, two months before his assassination, Farrakhan proclaimed that Malcolm was "worthy of death." In his 1993 Savior's Day speech, the NOI leader thundered, "we dealt with him like a nation deals with a traitor."

Despite his anti-white bombast and the NOI program which still calls for "complete separation in a state or territory of our own," Farrakhan seeks to hire himself out to the racist capitalist rulers as a cop over the ghetto masses. After patrolling the Mayfair Mansions housing project in Washington, D.C., in the early



Eve Arnold

**Delegation of American Nazi Party at 1961 Nation of Islam meeting in Washington, D.C. Farrakhan treacherously seeks "common ground" with genocidal fascists on basis of anti-Semitism and segregationism.**

'90s the NOI Security Agency won contracts to guard federally subsidized apartment complexes in Baltimore, Chicago, Los Angeles, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. The NOI rent-a-cops serve the racist rulers in carrying out repression of black youth no less than the government's official killers in blue. And in Farrakhan's black capitalist utopia this serves a greater purpose: profits. He writes that if the NOI were given "unhindered" rein, "we could effect a change in the lifestyle of our people that would allow us to do more with less wages."

### **For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!**

Many march participants, and some speakers, compared Farrakhan's "Million Man March" to Martin Luther King's 1963 march on Washington. This was the high-water mark of the liberal civil rights movement. It was intended by its liberal Democratic Party organizers to *defuse* the militancy of sections of the movement, notably the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and steer the movement into the calmer waters of legislative reform to get rid of Jim Crow segregation. Malcolm X aptly called that march the "Farce on Washington." What does that make Farrakhan's march, which blames black people for their oppression and tells the women to stay home?

When the civil rights movement "went North," it came up against the realities of black oppression—in jobs, housing, schools—which are rooted in the very

structure of American capitalism and cannot be eliminated through legal reforms. Frustration in the Northern ghettos exploded in a series of ghetto upheavals in the mid-'60s, which were brutally put down by cops and National Guard troops. Simultaneously, the federal government sought to buy off discontent and create a layer of black middle class and professionals as a buffer against black unrest. Today, there is a greater disparity in income among blacks than among whites, with 20 percent of black families earning half of all black income.

This layer, which continues to endure the daily humiliations of racism, has seen the openings which they were afforded slam shut, especially for their children. Predisposed by their relatively privileged position to buy into the sham of "black capitalism," many members of the black middle class are turning in despair from the goal of integration and some have provided an audience for Farrakhan's demagoguery. The outlook of this layer is typified by Ben Chavis. When the Spartacist League and the Labor Black Leagues launched a campaign of demonstrations last year protesting against Jim Crow racism at Denny's restaurant chain and calling for unionization, the NAACP under Chavis cut a deal that gave them a seat on the chain's board of directors, as well as empty promises for black franchises and managers.

By its very nature, black oppression cannot be ended without an overturn of

the capitalist system. As American Trotskyist Richard Fraser wrote in his seminal work, "For the Materialist Conception of the Negro Struggle" (January 1955): "The dual nature of the Negro struggle arises from the fact that a *whole people* regardless of class distinction are the victims of discrimination. This problem of a whole people can be solved only through the proletarian revolution, under the leadership of the working class." Adopting Fraser's perspective of "revolutionary integrationism," the Spartacist League declared in one of its founding documents, written at the time of the ghetto struggles of the '60s:

"The Negro people are an oppressed race-color caste, in the main comprising the most exploited layer of the American working class. Because of the generations of exceptional oppression, degradation and humiliation, Black people as a group have special needs and problems necessitating additional and special forms of struggle. It is this part of the struggle which has begun today, and from which the most active and militant sections of Black people will gain a deep education and experience in the lessons of struggle. Because of their position as both the most oppressed and also the most conscious and experienced section, revolutionary black workers are slated to play an exceptional role in the coming American revolution."

—"Black and Red—  
Class Struggle Road to  
Negro Freedom" (1967),  
*Marxist Bulletin* No. 9

Farrakhan's program of enforcing a strict separation and a return to Jim Crow segregation could only be realized through a victory of the most extreme right-wing racist forces in this country. Grotesquely, a significant number of unions supported Farrakhan's march, particularly public employees unions in Washington, D.C. and Philadelphia. The only force that could benefit from unions throwing their weight behind a racially and sexually exclusionist program is the Ku Klux Klan.

The march takes place against the backdrop of a steady immiseration of the whole working class, with real wages dropping by over 20 percent during the last two decades. The absence of serious class struggle is centrally due to the role of the union bureaucracy and the related dispersal and co-optation of labor radicals. The labor police of capital have presided over the destruction not only of millions of jobs but also of large sections of their own organizations without lifting a finger in struggle. It's no wonder, then, that they turn a complete blind eye to hideous conditions for blacks and other oppressed minorities.

What is required is forging a revolu-

tionary leadership of the workers movement, including through a political struggle against the sellout leadership in the unions, whose first loyalty is not to the workers but to the capitalist system. We Trotskyists continue the tradition of the Communist International in Lenin's day, which proclaimed itself "not simply the

organization of the enslaved white workers of Europe and America but equally the organization of the oppressed colored peoples of the world" whose duty is "to encourage and support the international organization of the Negro people in their struggle against the common enemy." We seek to forge a multiracial vanguard

party which can lead the proletariat at the head of all the oppressed in a struggle for workers revolution, to replace the capitalist system, whose decay is so painfully evident in America's inner cities today, with a socialist society that can realize the promise of emancipation and equality for all. ■

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Faircloth/Philadelphia Daily News



Bourgeois press and politicians lauded massive turnout for Farrakhan's message of "atonement," blaming the oppressed for the poverty, degradation and violence meted out by the capitalist oppressors.

# Farrakhan: Broker for Racist Reaction

## Why Did Rulers Applaud Million Man March?

Imagine how the government and media would respond to a mass militant protest against Klan and cop terror, or against the lynch-law crusade to execute black political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. Even the acquittal by an integrated jury of black football superstar O.J. Simpson in the face of a blatant police and prosecution frame-up provoked an obscene outcry of racist vituperation. Yet the same bourgeois political establishment which contemptuously scorns or ruthlessly represses any and every protest against black oppression

greeted the massive turnout for the October 16 Million Man March with effusive praise. That alone should make it clear to every militant black worker and youth that the self-abasing display of "atonement" organized by separatist demagogue Louis Farrakhan had nothing whatever to do with the struggle for black liberation.

For all the tortured attempts to "separate the message from the messenger," the Nation of Islam (NOI) leader has clearly been the main beneficiary of the mammoth gathering of black men in

Washington, D.C. two weeks ago. As he announced a voter registration drive aimed at consolidating his influence as a black broker for the racist rulers, Farrakhan proclaimed: "We intend to leverage that power you saw on the Mall yesterday." Farrakhan's move was welcomed by the chairmen of both the Republican and Democratic parties. This anti-immigrant, anti-woman and anti-gay bigot who preaches a reactionary utopia of "black capitalism" and "self-help" to the downtrodden and dispossessed ghetto masses is a "black leader"

made to order for Clinton/Gingrich's America.

Notwithstanding their hypocritical denunciations of Farrakhan's vile anti-Semitism and anti-white demagoguery, the "message" of the Million Man March was endorsed by racist capitalist politicians of all stripes. President Clinton saluted its emphasis on "personal responsibility." Republican presidential hopeful Bob Dole praised its "talk about self-reliance" and "getting kids off drugs." Newt Gingrich pointed to the turnout for Farrakhan as evidence "that these men think there is something profoundly wrong with the welfare state." Even fascist Republican Pat Buchanan chimed in: "Americans can and should unite behind the stated goals of the Million Man March—of men taking responsibility for their own actions and their wives, their families and their communities." And the *Wall Street Journal* (18 October) summed it up in a headline, "One Magnificent Day."

Joining the racist Republican right and the main mouthpiece for American finance capital in hosannas for the march were a broad spectrum of reformist leftists. Despite its earlier profession of opposition, the Socialist Workers Party could not resist the allure of a "mass movement" and showed up to peddle its literature, conspicuously minus the issue of the *Militant* which criticized Farrakhan and the march. The Communist Party's *People's Weekly World* (21 October) ran a huge front-page display blaring "African Americans March" and extolling the "feeling of togetherness and pride...in the mainly working-class crowd" as a "response to the rising racist offensive." The Progressive Labor Party's *Challenge* (25 October), after earlier denouncing Farrakhan's march as a "fascist mass mobilization," changed its tune when it saw the size of the turnout, discovering that "the overwhelming motivation of the vast majority was an intense hatred for racism in this society."



UPI  
**Marcus Garvey, founder of 1920s "Back to Africa" movement.**



Jon Levy

**Chain gangs return to Alabama as racist ruling class intensifies brutal state repression particularly targeting black youth.**

Sam Marcy's *Workers World* (26 October) backloded what complaints it had of the NOI—which notably did *not* include its reactionary separatism—while enthusing that the "great majority" of the participants came out for "Black unity, Black solidarity, Black pride and a growing desire for economic and political empowerment." Taking the cake for craven fawning was the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP), whose Carl Dix hailed the march as "an excellent idea" and cheered: "A lotta people see this Million Man March as a way to change the way things are going down and to jump start a serious movement against the oppression of Black people, even if they ain't down with everything that the march organizers are putting out" (*Revolutionary Worker*, 8 October).

The Million Man March was a *reactionary* mobilization of the oppressed,

something rarely seen in the United States but not uncommon internationally. Another example would be the Hindu-chauvinist and virulently anti-Muslim BJP in India, which is supported by millions of low-caste peasants. But support for a reactionary "mass movement" is nothing new for the fake left. Most of them flocked to Khomeini's 1979 "Islamic Revolution," when obscurantist mullahs and middle-class merchants succeeded in roping in the Iranian masses for "Death or the veil" and "God is great." In contrast, just as we opposed Khomeini (no less than the bloody shah he replaced), we bluntly wrote of the Million Man March last issue: "Despite the outrage and despair over the hellish conditions of racist America felt by the hundreds of thousands at the Mall in Washington, this march was *directly counterposed* to any struggle for black emancipation."

Behind Farrakhan's nationalist rhetoric is a program of separate-and-unequal accommodation to the racist status quo. A *New York Times* (17 October) piece by Don Terry, describing Farrakhan as "a Booker T. Washington-style conservative and a Marcus Garvey black nationalist," noted: "He is often portrayed as a militant, but much of what he says sounds ghost-written by a Republican, with its talk of self-help and bootstraps." Farrakhan's social agenda dovetails with the reactionary white racist bourgeois consensus which blames the oppressed



for their oppression and paints blacks as "violent" and "lazy." This was epitomized by the demeaning pledge the "Minister" imposed on the assembled men.

As for black women, they were told to stay home, pray and take care of the kids. This was a key "message" of the march for the NOI, who denounce abortion as murder and insist that women belong in the home and behind "their" men, not as equals in the fight against oppression. In this, Farrakhan strongly echoes the program of the fundamentalist right wing of the Republican Party, presenting a black nationalist version of the white Christian "Promise Keepers." This sinister reactionary movement has drawn over 700,000 men this year alone to "family values" rallies across the country, where they are enjoined to take back "their God-given 'spiritual leadership' in the home" (*San Jose Mercury*, 30 September).

Far from voicing the aspirations of the ghetto masses, Farrakhan offers himself up as a cop for the racist rulers to impose "morality" and "law and order" in the ghettos, appealing to the "talented tenth" to assert their rightful place as exploiters of the black poor. The Million Man March was, in fact, a mainly *middle-class* crowd: a Howard University survey conducted on the Mall showed 41 percent of participants having an annual income upwards of \$50,000—nearly *three times* the 1992 median income for black men. Significantly, although a number of unions endorsed this exclusionist rally, reports circulated that black union leaders were not welcome on the speakers' platform.

It is due to the abysmal treachery of the labor and black misleaders, who go all out to prove their loyalty to Clinton's Democrats and the Wall Street financiers, that this right-wing huckster could gain even a momentary mass hearing for his bizarre excursions into the mysteries of the number 19. But while Farrakhan has become the pre-eminent black leader in America today, the black population has not embraced his reactionary political program and his mass support is shallow.

A community worker in Chicago expressed the sentiment that drew many to the march: "Finally, somebody is doing something. The situation in black America is so bad now that it almost doesn't matter what that something is as long as it's some kind of action." Farrakhan has seized on the despair felt by black people, in the face of an unremitting racist offensive and in the absence of any response by the misleaders of the integrated labor movement, to anoint

himself as chief overseer for the grinding oppression of the black masses. He has been aided and abetted in this by Jesse Jackson, the Congressional Black Caucus and a host of other black politicians who sponsored or spoke at the event. Echoing Farrakhan—and Gingrich, Democratic Baltimore mayor Kurt Schmoke told the crowd, "Today we ask nothing of the government, today we ask everything of ourselves." And, though her organization refused to endorse, NAACP head Myrlie Evers Williams hailed the march as a "spiritual awakening" and urged, "Let's give him a chance."

A chance to do what? What Louis Farrakhan is doing is fanning the flames of racial polarization while counseling the black masses to retreat into the ghetto rather than fight. At a September 30 forum in Chicago, Spartacist League Central Committee member Don Alexander indicted Farrakhan and other black misleaders for their complicity in the racist rulers' war on black America:

"What about their silence about the racist MOVE massacre in 1985? Jesse Jackson's response when the black neighborhood was burned down was, we need more black contractors, i.e., black capitalism. How about the labor/black mobilizations, from Washington, D.C. in 1982 to Philadelphia in 1988 to Berkeley last year when David Irving the Nazi was going to speak? What was their response to these successful labor/black mobilizations that swept the Klan and

the skinheads and the Nazis off the streets and prevented them from carrying out their program of racist murder?"

"How about their virtual silence over the question of anti-immigrant racism—Proposition 187—not mobilizing the black masses along with the working class and Latinos and others to challenge this, which of course set the stage for the attack on affirmative action? Now many of these same leaders, like Kweisi Mfume of the Congressional Black Caucus, are rallying around former head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell, who was one of the chief architects of mass murder in Iraq.

"This march is about politically disarming the working class and the black masses, it's about strengthening illusions in this deeply racist, sick capitalist society and its violent rulers."

What's needed is a racially integrated working-class struggle against the right-wing assault on labor, minorities and immigrants. The labor-centered mobilizations for Mumia Abu-Jamal in New York and the Bay Area in August gave a taste of that kind of labor/black power. Hundreds of workers, black and white, marched together behind their union banners to fight for this death row political prisoner who faces execution because of his outspoken advocacy of the oppressed. Those protests, counterposed to everything Louis Farrakhan stands for, point the way forward to a class-struggle fight against black oppression led by a multiracial revolutionary workers party. *For black liberation through socialist revolution!* ■

reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 634, 1 December 1995

## On Reactionary Mobilizations of the Oppressed

9 November 1995

Dear Comrades,

The article "Why Did Rulers Applaud Million Man March?" in *WV* No. 632 (3 November) made an analogy between the march and Hindu-chauvinist BJP mobilizations in India. While I wholeheartedly agree with *WV's* central point, that "the Million Man March was a *reactionary* mobilization of the oppressed, something rarely seen in the United States," I think the BJP analogy is misleading, obscuring far more than it reveals. The Hindu-chauvinist BJP mobilizes lumpen and petty-bourgeois masses *for action*, often with the immediate aim of real ethnic violence against the Muslim minority. In any case, the

BJP's fascistic program represents the *dominant oppressor nationalism* of India. In contrast, the Million Man March was not a mobilization for race war but for reconciliation with the racist capitalist order. Its program was one of black capitalism, the program of the black petty bourgeoisie, while dishing out as a palliative anti-woman ersatz racial pride and feel-good spiritualism representing the nationalism of an *oppressed minority*. These distinctions are crucial. The logic of the BJP analogy is to portray Farrakhan and the Million Man March as fascistic—a position which we argue against in the same issue of *WV*.

Comradely,  
Emily T.

# Black Women and Revolutionary Struggle

We print below, in slightly edited form, an excerpt from a presentation by Spartacist League Central Committee member Don Alexander at a November 18 SL forum in Berkeley. The talk was titled, "Class-Struggle Road to Black Freedom" and dealt in large part with the reactionary nature of Louis Farrakhan's Million Man March.

The exclusion of women was a neon sign of the reactionary nature of this march. A few black women were cynically added to the speaker's platform, but the message was: stay at home, pray, take care of the children, and stand behind the man. Feminist Angela Davis denounced the march, but offers no answers since for decades she has supported the so-called lesser-evil Democratic Party.

In a recent *New York Times Magazine* (12 November) piece titled, "A Manifesto of Sorts for a Black Feminist Movement," Kristal Zook showed where feminism—which claims that the main division of society is between men and women, not exploiters and exploited—leads. While correctly opposing the march as a "seductive mask for old-fashioned sexism," she wants to retry the 1930s Scottsboro case—nine black youths framed up on charges of raping two white women in Alabama—remarking that with all the hype about endangered black males, "black women are left without a way to talk about how some of the Scottsboro 'boys'...actually did commit acts of violence and murder against their girlfriends." This trash is similar to the filth peddled by white feminist Susan Brownmiller years ago in her book, *Against Her Will*, where she tried to justify the lynching of 14-year-old Chicago black youth Emmett Till, who was accused of whistling at a white woman in Money, Mississippi in 1955.

For communists, the degree of progress of women mirrors the progress or lack thereof of society as a whole. Women's oppression is rooted in the institution of the patriarchal family, which is a key prop for the maintenance of the bourgeois order. This oppression must be uprooted through socialist revolution. At bottom, feminism of all hues preaches class collaboration, the union of women of all classes. This is counterposed to a fight to wipe out all forms of social oppression through the elimination of capitalist ownership of the



New York City, March 1—30,000 hospital workers fill the streets of midtown Manhattan in protest against Giuliani/Pataki's killer budget cuts.

means of production.

The fight against racial and sexual oppression, the defense of democratic rights for gays, the fight against the triple oppression of black working women, are critical to revitalizing the labor movement, to transforming the unions into instruments of class struggle. The radical Abolitionist Frederick Douglass, who was a militant fighter for women's rights up to the last days of his life, proclaimed that "Right is of no sex—Truth is of no color." The program of trying to reform the racist status quo necessarily leads to lining up with the ruling class in the oppression of women and to pitting sections of the oppressed against each other.

Elijah Muhammad, leader of the Nation of Islam, opposed the right of women to have an abortion, warning

about the "tricks the devils are using," particularly in relation to birth control. He contended that black women were created by god to serve their husbands and sons, saying, "The woman is man's field to produce his nation." Farrakhan didn't need any encouragement from "Operation Rescue" when he wrote, "When the Black woman kills her unborn child, she is murdering the advancement of her nation."

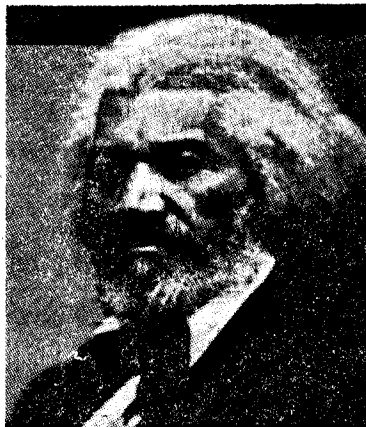
The Million Man March was not the first attempt to exclude black women from having their voices heard. The organizers of the 1963 March on Washington, which Malcolm X rightfully denounced as the "Farce on Washington," tried to keep militant black women from speaking. Only at the last minute, as a result of challenges from women in SNCC, were they allowed to speak. Dur-



New York Historical Society



Schomburg Collection



Frederick Douglass House

From left:  
Sojourner Truth,  
Harriet Tubman  
and Frederick  
Douglass

ing the civil rights and "black power" movements, black women were systematically prevented from assuming top leadership positions. Ella Baker, who helped establish SNCC and was a leading activist in M.L. King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), was relegated to secretarial positions. What she had to say is very revealing:

"There would never be any role for me in a leadership capacity with SCLC. Why? First, I'm a woman. Also, I'm not a minister. And second...I knew that my penchant for speaking honestly...would not be well tolerated. The combination of the basic attitude of men, and especially ministers, as to what the role of women in their church setups is—that of taking orders, not providing leadership—and the...ego problems involved in having to feel that here is someone who...had more information about a lot of things than they possessed at that time.... This would never have lent itself to my being a leader in the movement there."

—Paula Giddings, *When and Where I Enter* (1984)

It was hell, too, for many white women in SDS, Students for a Democratic Society, which was a petty-bourgeois New Left organization.

Stokely Carmichael (now Kwame Ture), as a leader of SNCC argued that the position of women in the movement was "prone." He's still trying to live that down. Cultural nationalist Ron Karenga of United Slaves (US), whose organization killed Black Panthers at the time and who now supports the march in D.C., said: "What makes a woman appealing is femininity, and she can't be feminine without being submissive." In the mid-'70s, Karenga did time in San Luis Obispo prison for allegedly torturing women in his organization.

Amiri Baraka, Karenga's sidekick in the 1960s, stated that black females had to internalize "submitting to their natural roles by studying their attitudes toward their 'man, house and children'." Baraka

opposed the Million Man March; however, he opposed the exclusion of women on narrow tactical grounds, stating that "I won't go to war and leave half the army home." But it isn't merely a matter of "half the army" being left at home. Militant black women will be among the leaders and generals of the future revolutionary party and proletarian army if we are to succeed in sweeping away capitalist rule.

From Abolitionist Harriet Tubman—who led a battle during the Civil War—to the civil rights movement, black women have been in the front lines of the struggle for black freedom. Now you have a lot of talk accusing black women of lapping up all of the gravy of affirmative action and taking well-paid jobs from black men. There's this one guy named Claude Anderson, who recently wrote a book, *Black Labor, White Wealth*, which paints a rosy picture of black women under slavery, saying that they had it so good. These are vicious lies that serve the interests of the male-chauvinist, racist bourgeoisie.

Increasingly, we have witnessed the growth of all-black-male schools, and some "Afrocentric" nationalists have called for replacing welfare programs for black women with programs for black men. Farrakhan's opposition to welfare coincides with the racist rulers' drive to teach black women "abstinence" and submission to the head of the household. Pushing the drive for "workfare," they paint black women, particularly single mothers, as "immoral," "promiscuous," not good mothers. And Gingrich is proposing that their children be put in orphanages. Moreover, there exists the "Promise Keepers" movement, a white Christian reactionary crusade promoting male hegemony. The proliferation of all-male groups is part of the drive to reverse the minimal gains of women and to keep them "in their place," that is, bare-

foot and pregnant. Its most murderous expression has been the terrorist bombings of abortion clinics and the murder of clinic workers and doctors.

### The Struggle for Revolutionary Leadership

The multiracial working class must answer the murderous violence of the woman-haters through mass mobilizations relying on our own independently organized strength. We fight for organizing the unorganized, many of whom are women workers, especially Latino and black women; for jobs for all; for free, quality 24-hour childcare; for free abortion on demand and defense of the clinics against anti-abortion terror; for free medical care; for equal pay for equal work. We oppose gun control: the right to bear arms is a great equalizer.

The Spartacist League and Labor Black League, which is an anti-racist, anti-capitalist organization in political solidarity with the SL, fight to unchain labor/black power, to change this racist capitalist system from top to bottom. The reformists, the nationalists, seek to hold the masses in check. Farrakhan's black capitalist schemes and the pro-Democratic Party liberals like Jesse Jackson both represent dead ends.

We have big tasks. U.S. imperialism has been the main international support for South African apartheid, Salvadoran death squads, the Saudi Arabian slave-owning royal family and other bloody crooks in the business of suppressing the workers and the oppressed. Revolutionary black workers and youth, along with Latino, white and Asian workers, men and women, fighting in the spirit of the black men who fought in the Union Army to bury slavery, will be a critical part of a multiracial class-struggle workers party that buries this obsolete system of capitalist wage slavery. ■

In the midst of this all-out police assault, Bill Epton's Harlem Defense Council (HDC) issued a leaflet calling for the organization of block committees as basic units of community self-defense, and for a mass demonstration of these block committees in organized defiance of the reign of cop terror. The city administration, backed up by the craven official black "leadership" organized in a Harlem "Unity Council" (including everyone from the NAACP to the Muslims), went all out to stop that march.

Epton was put under intense pressure to call off the action—when he refused, the police banned the march, marshaling an incredible army of 27,000 cops to make sure no one dared protest in Harlem that day. In a singular act of personal courage and defiance of New York's arrogant racist rulers, Bill Epton, surrounded by supporters, went to the march assembly point. At his side, arms linked with Epton's, was Conrad Lynn—probably the only well-known civil rights lawyer in the country willing to stand with Epton at that moment. Epton and Lynn were arrested as they stepped off the curb—the march was stopped.

We in the Spartacist tendency also did our best to defend the embattled black masses of Harlem, seeking to mobilize the social power of the working class. A few days after the abortive HDC march, a rally in the city's garment district sponsored by the Spartacist-initiated Harlem Solidarity Committee drew over 1,000, demanding "Remove the rioting cops from Harlem" and "Support the right of the citizens of the ghetto to defend themselves." Again Conrad Lynn was there—a featured speaker along with Milt Rosen of Progressive Labor and Jim Robertson of Spartacist. In response to the frenzied redbaiting of the bourgeois press, which sought to blame the Harlem protest on a communist conspiracy, Robertson noted, "Unfortunately there aren't many Reds in Harlem now—but *there will be!*"

However, the reign of cop terror and redbaiting managed to put a clamp on the growing protest movement in New York. The witchhunters went after Progressive Labor with a vengeance. Injunctions were issued barring many members of Progressive Labor and other radicals from even setting foot in Harlem. A grand jury investigation was begun. Bill Epton was charged with criminal anarchy and many other PLers were jailed for contempt for refusing to testify before the jury. When in February 1965 Jim Robertson was subpoenaed to appear before the grand jury, we determined to use his testimony to undermine the lurid

lies being told by the "red squad." While refusing to "name names," we sought to indict the system and defend our socialist aims and views instead of taking the Fifth Amendment. Robertson's testimony placed the blame for the "riots" the previous summer squarely where it belonged—on the cops.

Conrad Lynn and his partner Gene Ann Condon agreed to serve as Robertson's legal counsel, and assisted in preparing his testimony. Lynn understood well the potential power of our tactic. Called to testify before the witchhunting House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) in 1963, he had refused to take the Fifth Amendment. Indeed, Lynn had gone on the offensive in the HUAC hearing, detailing the injustices against black people which had been perpetrated in each of the Committee members' districts! In his fundamental outlook, Conrad was far from sharing the legalistic prejudices of his profession.

In the following few years we sometimes had cause to consult Conrad over legal matters, and he followed our press and our activities, writing to us a few times (see *Spartacist* Nos. 4 and 5, May-June 1965 and November-December 1965). Even after we developed our own legal apparatus, we continued our connection with him. His complimentary subscription to *Workers Vanguard* began with issue No. 1 and continued to the end of his life.

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### The Best of His Generation

Conrad Lynn published his autobiography *There Is a Fountain: The Autobiography of a Civil Rights Lawyer* (Lawrence Hill & Co.) in 1979. It was given little attention in either the mainstream or the left press. *WV* (No. 252, 21 March 1980) reviewed it and the SL helped distribute it. *There Is a Fountain* is quite as useful an introduction to the major battles for black freedom and social justice in this country this century as one is likely to read. We are happy to report that it is currently in print and available in both paperback and hardback editions.

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### Marxist Bulletin 5

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#### Trotskyism vs. Black Nationalism

Key documents and articles 1955-1978

Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

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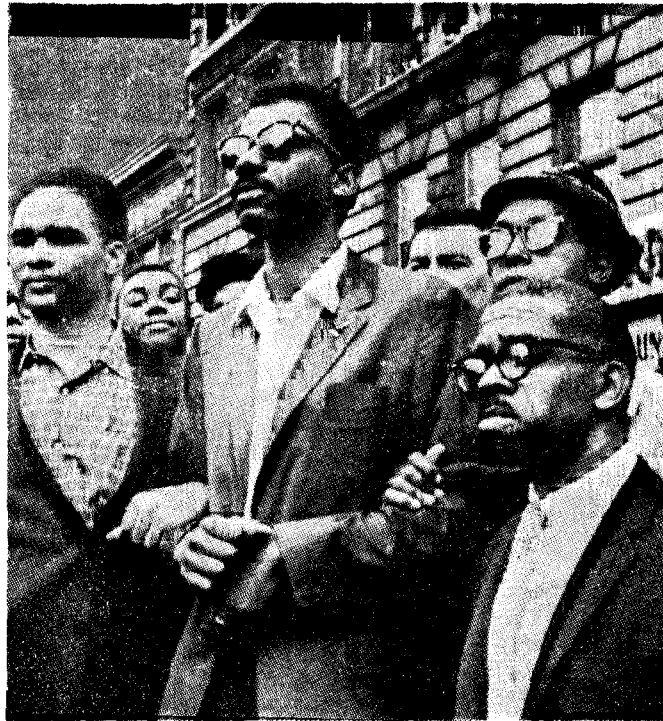
club training in karate—they were targeted by the cops because they dared to jump to the defense of some young schoolchildren being beaten by a police tactical squad in the hot spring of 1964.

The “Harlem Six” were charged with the heinous murder of a Jewish shopkeeper and his wife—the cops used the perjured testimony of one of the real murderers to put the six behind bars. Lynn’s account of the case reveals not only the depths of the police frame-up system, but the limits and hypocrisy of the bourgeois courts. After the frame-up was exposed, four of the six defendants accepted a deal offered by the district attorney—on the understanding that the two youths already falsely convicted would be released and the other four would plead guilty to manslaughter. Needless to say, the D.A. never lived up to the bargain.

But *There Is a Fountain* is more than just a story of Lynn’s major legal cases—it is the odyssey of a black radical, won to communism in his youth, who retained his Marxist convictions and fighting spirit into old age. That makes the book a rare work.

Many young black intellectuals were won, as Conrad Lynn was, to the Stalinized American Communist Party (CP) in the late 1920s and early 1930s. At that time and despite the limits of its program, the CP did some heroic work against the hideous racial oppression that is the bedrock of American capitalism. Many young blacks saw in the party—and the socialist revolution it claimed to fight for—the vehicle for black liberation. But the CP betrayed the promise it had held out to its black comrades, sacrificing the struggle for black freedom after 1935 in favor of craven support to the American government of Democratic president Franklin Roosevelt.

This was part of the policy known as the “People’s Front.” It was adopted because Stalin looked to the imperialist rulers of the U.S., Britain and France as allies against Nazi fascism. In the name of the popular front, in order not to “frighten” the “democratic” bourgeoisie, the Stalinists bloodily suppressed proletarian revolution in Spain. The CPs abandoned demands for independence of British, French and U.S. colonies (from India to Vietnam to Puerto Rico). When Hitler invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941, the Kremlin proclaimed World War II a “war against fascism.” The American CP denounced struggles for black rights as undermining the war effort. But while class-conscious workers around the world stood for defense of the Soviet Union, WW II for the impe-



Conrad Lynn (right) and Bill Epton (center) were arrested as they tried to lead off July 1964 march against police occupation of Harlem, defying cop ban.

Wide World

New York Times  
26 July 1964

## POLICE BREAK UP HARLEM PROTEST; 2 LEFTISTS SEIZED

Small Band of Followers Is  
Dispersed After Defying  
Murphy and Injunction

PLEAS PROVE FRUITLESS

Negro Leaders Had Sought  
to Avert Demonstration,  
but Opposed Ban, Too

By R. W. APPLE Jr.

The police blocked a proposed protest march in Harlem yesterday by arresting the leftists who had organized it.

They had insisted on proceeding with the demonstration against the police despite a ban by Police Commissioner Michael J. Murphy, a Supreme Court injunction obtained by the city and the combined opposition of nearly every organization in Harlem.

The march had been planned by the Harlem Defense Council, an offshoot of the Communist-controlled Progressive Labor Movement. City officials had feared that the demonstration would precipitate renewed violence in Harlem.

Those arrested were William Epton, 32 years old, the council's leader and a self-described disciple of the Chinese Communists, and his lawyer, Conrad J. Lynn, 55, who has a long record of associations with left-wing elements.

rialist countries was a war to redivide the world among themselves.

The Communist Party's consolidation around its popular-front program in the late 1930s, supporting FDR and his “Dixiecrat” allies, abandoned a burgeoning proletarian base in the Deep South, where CP-led struggles for black workers and sharecroppers and against Jim Crow discrimination had won to communism a vanguard layer of young black fighters. CP black intellectuals also began to leave in disillusionment. The experience of this social layer is reflected in the best of 20th-century American literature—works by Richard Wright, Chester Himes, Ralph Ellison provide fictionalized accounts of the crushing disappointment of this layer of black ex-revolutionists, many of whom became bitter anti-communists. Those who didn't leave the CP became hollow and cynical Stalinist hacks and figureheads, bowing to every twist and turn in the Kremlin's line.

Conrad Lynn escaped both these fates. He was won to the Young Communist League (YCL) in 1928 as a student at Syracuse University (he was the school's first black law graduate). He soon dropped out of the YCL for political reasons. He opposed the idiotic idea—pushed onto the American party by Stalin—that blacks in the “black belt” of

the American South constituted a separate nation which should be given the right to self-determination. Lynn reports:

“I could hardly contain my amusement when we discussed this proposition at the YCL meeting. My contacts with the Deep South were close; in fact, my emotional affinity for Southern blacks was far stronger than for their Northern cousins. In all my reading of Southern Negro expression, and in conversations with acute black thinkers from that region, I had never heard of any demand for a separate black nation in the American South.”

Lynn later rejoined the Communist movement, but only in 1934, after the self-determination slogan had been quietly shelved (and before the open class-collaboration of the “People's Front”). He watched in dismay as the party adapted its line to what was acceptable to the “democratic” imperialist powers. He was expelled in 1937 for his insistence that the CP should support a strike of oil workers against British imperialism on the Caribbean island of Trinidad.

Though Lynn resolved never again to join a radical political party, his experience in the Stalinist CP never shook his belief in the necessity for social revolution. He continued to be active in and around the left-wing movement—he was the lawyer who won the rescinding of the 1939 postal ban against the Trotskyist *New International*, theoretical organ

of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), for example. He worked with Bayard Rustin and other pacifists as a participant in the first black freedom ride in 1947. He adopted a non-sectarian, if aloof, attitude toward the various groups active on the American left.

During the 1950s, Conrad Lynn led the defense of Puerto Rican nationalists jailed by the U.S. for their fight for independence for the Caribbean colony. Following an uprising on the island and an attack on the Blair House residence of President Truman in 1950, the government jailed Nationalist Party leader Pedro Albizu Campos. At the height of the McCarthyite witchhunt, when few lawyers would touch this explosive case, Lynn defended Albizu Campos in a San Juan court. (It was during this time that Conrad met his future wife, Yolanda Moreno, who had been a nurse of Albizu Campos.) Later, after four Puerto Rican Nationalists staged an armed attack on the U.S. Congress in 1954, Lynn was the attorney for the leader, Lolita Lebrón, and 11 of the 16 *independentistas* who were tried for conspiracy to murder the Congressmen.

Lynn remained an astute observer on the left. In the early 1960s he was a regular speaker at the SWP's Militant Labor forums, as was Malcolm X. In *There Is a Fountain*, he recounts a discussion about the SWP which he had with Malcolm X shortly before his murder:

"At this later meeting Malcolm talked with me about the Socialist Workers party. He was grateful that its paper, the *Militant*, was printing his speeches in full because his message was at least being circulated. But he noticed, and I did too, that a strong nonviolent tendency was beginning to show itself in the SWP. This would seem laughable if an individual examined only the group's rhetoric, but it was nonetheless true. The SWP could no more escape the influence of the pervading psychology than most other groups. Only the hungry barbarians at the gates incessantly see their salvation in war."

From their own vantage points, it seems Lynn and Malcolm had picked up on the SWP's slide into reformism, increasingly seeing itself as a white party enthusing from the sidelines for liberal and nationalist leaders of the black struggle. The Spartacist tendency formed inside the SWP to fight against its degeneration in the early 1960s, sharply opposing the failure of the party to intervene in the civil rights movement North and South to fight for Trotskyist leadership.

An early supporter of the Cuban Revolution, Conrad helped arrange Fidel Castro's famous stay in Harlem's Hotel Theresa in 1960. Lynn not only sup-

ported the social revolution in Vietnam, he traveled to North Vietnam in 1967 as part of Bertrand Russell's War Crimes Commission in order to expose the terror-bombing campaign of U.S. imperialism against the Vietnamese Revolution. In 1965, when liberal pacifists insisted that "Stop the War Now" be the sole slogan of the New York Fifth Avenue Peace Parade, Lynn praised Spartacist for insisting on the demand for the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops. As he wrote: "Any position less than this is objective aid to the Johnson Doctrine of armed intervention against the social revolution where ever it may break" (*Spartacist* No. 5, November-December 1965).

In *There Is a Fountain*, Lynn writes: "It would be hard to deny...that the basic ideas of Karl Marx have afforded a key to understanding the fundamental factors about which the world has been in conflict for the last one hundred and fifty years." Yet although he saw a socialist future as necessary, Lynn stood aside from the fight to forge a Marxist party on the program to lead the working class

in the struggle for power. Thus he often adopted an uncritical attitude toward the leaderships of existing social struggles, for example the Stalinist NLF in Vietnam. He preferred to cheer where he himself did not seek to lead. As we noted in reviewing *There Is a Fountain*, "In Conrad Lynn one finds an example of a courageous and principled black radical, but also the self-limitation of that role."

In the epilogue, Lynn expressed the hope that "The struggle of our brothers and sisters in the neo-colonial regions of Africa, Asia, Central and South America will at long last re-arouse the spirit of the working people in the so-called advanced countries." He expressed confidence in a socialist future and hoped that "it will still be possible in the cases I continue to handle to encourage in a small way the building of a base for real civilization." Conrad Lynn's nearly three-quarters of a century of struggle in defense of the persecuted earned him a place in the ranks of honored fighters for the American socialist revolution, to which the struggle for black liberation is key. We honor his memory. ■

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