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Protests Demand: Free Mumia Now!

The following article is reprinted from Workers Vanguard (No. 914, 9 May), newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S.

On March 27, the federal Third Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the conviction of Mumia Abu-Jamal, a former Black Panther, MOVE supporter and award-winning journalist known as the “voice of the voiceless,” who was framed up for the 1981 killing of Philadelphia policeman Daniel Faulkner and sent to death row solely for his political beliefs. Upholding an earlier 2001 federal court ruling, the appeals court decision means that either a new sentencing hearing will take place, in which the death sentence could be reinstated, or Mumia will be condemned to life imprisonment. This is an outrage! There is a mountain of evidence, which the courts have either rejected or refused to hear, that demonstrates that Mumia Abu-Jamal is an innocent man who should never have spent one day in prison!

In anticipation of the court decision, last summer the Partisan Defense Committee—a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League—and the Labor Black Leagues called for emergency protests immediately after the ruling. These protests, which took place on March 28 and 29, were followed by united-front demonstrations called by the PDC, which has championed Mumia’s defense for over 20 years, and heavily built by the Spartacist League and other sections of the International Communist League. On April 19, some 200 demonstrators mobilized for the united-front protest in Oakland, while over 100 came out in London and in Toronto. United-front protests were also held in Sydney, Australia, on April 23, on the campus of the National Autonomous University (UNAM) in Mexico City on April 24, and in Chicago and Los Angeles on April 26.

In addition to the united-front protests, the PDC and the New York Labor

April 24 united-front protest to free Mumia in Mexico City, initiated by Grupo Espartaquista de México.

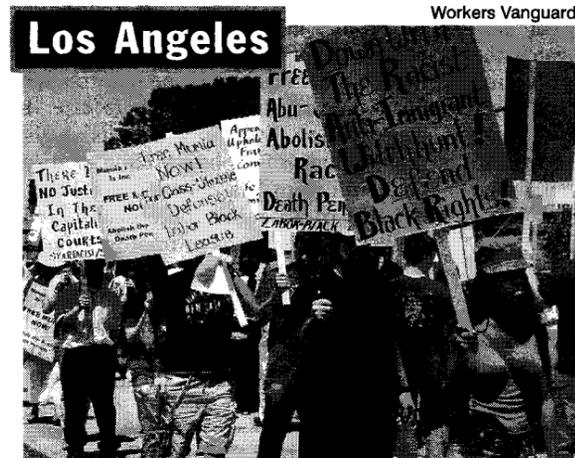
Black League for Social Defense mobilized a Class-Struggle Contingent of some 150 people for the April 19 demonstration in Philadelphia called by the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal (ICFFMAJ), which drew some 600 protesters. The same day, the Committee for Social Defense (CDDS), the PDC’s fraternal defense organization in France, also built a contingent of over 60 people at a Paris protest that drew over 200 demonstrators, while our comrades of the Grupo Espartaquista de México, section of the ICL, participated in a protest of some 50 people

in Mexico City. On April 12, the Committee for Social Defense (KfsV) in Germany had mobilized a Class-Struggle Contingent of 80 people in a demonstration called by the Berlin “Free Mumia Abu-Jamal” Coalition that drew about 300. These contingents marched under the slogans: “Mumia Abu-Jamal Is Innocent! Free Mumia Now! Abolish the Racist Death Penalty! There Is No Justice in the Capitalist Courts! Mobilize Labor’s Power—For Mass Protest!”

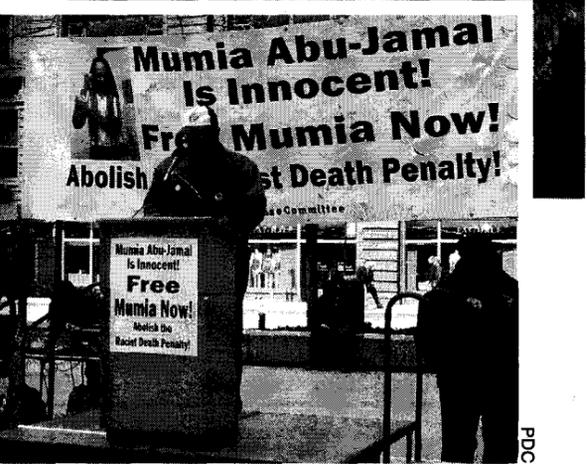
The united-front protests initiated by the PDC were called under the slogans: “Mumia Abu-Jamal Is Innocent! Free

Mumia Now! Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!” Over 500 individuals and organizations, including trade unions representing hundreds of thousands of workers, endorsed the protests (for a list of endorsers, go to: www.partisandefense.org). An early endorsement came from the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) Western Cape, which issued a statement declaring: “COSATU endorses the campaign to free Comrade ABU JAMAL.... We will stand with the millions of people across the world that are calling for justice to be done and will join the protest against this travesty of justice.” Other endorsers included the OPZZ Konfederacja

continued on page 12



As part of PDC-initiated international campaign to free Mumia, united-front protests were held in Sydney, Australia, on 23 April, and in L.A. and Chicago on 26 April.



Asp photo

PDC

The Inedible in Defence of the Unspeakable

The following letter first appeared in Workers Vanguard (No. 913, 25 April), newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S.

11 April 2008

Dear Comrades,

Evidently the International Bolshevik Tendency (BT) couldn't find sufficient ammunition in its well-stocked arsenal of lies against our organization to answer *The Logan Dossier*, which thoroughly documents the only-too-true and proven crimes of the BT's international leader, Bill Logan. Logan was expelled from our international tendency by the unanimous vote of the delegates at our first international conference in 1979 as a "proven, massive liar and a sexual sociopath who manipulated the private lives of comrades for reasons of power politics and his own aberrant appetites and compulsions in the guise of Marxism." *Thirty years after the fact*, the BT now charges that there was "a definite whiff of homophobia in the motion motivating Bill's expulsion"! This all-new malicious invention introduces the BT's "On the Logan Show Trial." Its not-so-subtle purpose is to distract from their studious evasion of the mass of factual evidence of Logan's cruel, sadistic and cult-like practices in his capacity as National Chairman of our Australian section in the mid-1970s, compiled in the nearly 200 pages of *The Logan Dossier*.

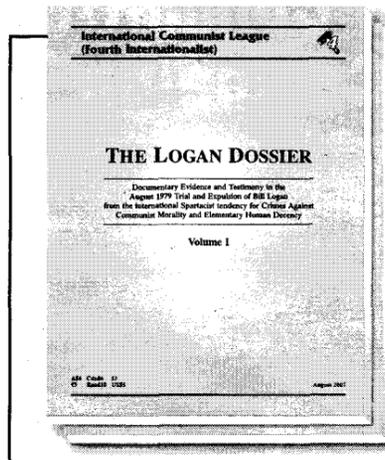
The charge that we are "homophobic" will surely shock the sensibilities of those leftists, feminists and others who have slandered us as "child molesters" and worse for our forthright, and rather elementary, opposition to the intervention of the capitalist state into consensual sexual relations of whatever type. It is a telling indictment of the BT's own attitude toward homosexuality that they associate "aberrant appetites and compulsions" with homosexuality. Such is in keeping with the contemptuous indifference of this outfit to the fight against special oppression, from their sneering denunciation of a memorial meeting we organized in 1985 for the survivors of the police/FBI's bombing of the MOVE organization in Philadelphia—in which eleven black people, including five children, were killed—to their Maple Leaf, Canadian-chauvinist opposition to independence for Quebec.

Our defense of those persecuted by the bourgeois state, which has included the North American Man/Boy Love Association, is an expression of our communist purpose. In 1977, the Spartacist League/U.S. carried out a unique fusion with the Red Flag Union, a collective that developed out of the New Leftist gay liberation milieu, and in the early '70s, a number of activists from the East Oakland Women as well as others in the left wing of the feminist women's movement were won to our communist program for women's liberation.

Bill Logan was expelled because he was

the antithesis of the very essence of the liberating goals of communism. As we wrote in the Preface to *The Logan Dossier* (reprinted in WV No. 900, 12 October 2007):

"We strive for a society in which all forms of social oppression, exploitation and



Documentary Evidence and Testimony in the August 1979 Trial and Expulsion of Bill Logan from the international Spartacist tendency for Crimes Against Communist Morality and Elementary Human Decency

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degradation—the warped byproducts of material scarcity—will be things of the past. To this end, we seek to make the proletariat—though shaped by the deformities of capitalist class rule—conscious of its historic role as the gravedigger of the capitalist system, and of class society as a whole. Power politics, lying and sexual manipulation are antithetical to this purpose. The Leninist party demands a monopoly on the political activities of those who join our movement. All the more so do we draw a hard line against interference in comrades' personal lives. Driven by considerations of power and control, Logan was a malicious puppet-master who was sadistically destructive of people's personal lives—making people live together who did not want to do so, causing people who did want to live together to break up. There is no place for the likes of a William King Logan in our movement."

At the time of Logan's trial, no one, including Logan himself, had or had given any intimation that he was gay. On the contrary, he and his companion Adaire were in appearance and attitude the epitome of straight-laced, uptight Presbyterian missionaries, something straight out of the painting "American Gothic." In practice, Logan's twisted and perverse anti-sexual pathology was expressed in his "slogan" for the membership, "Sew up their c--ts, cut off their balls!" Hardly the words of a sexual libertarian! On the contrary, for Logan sex was power, to be wielded for his own control. The most intimate details of comrades' personal lives were manipulated, with couples broken up or sexual relations manufactured by Logan in the guise of "building the party." Children were verboten, and sterilization and abortion were upheld as a party duty by Logan. He sadistically pressured a young woman comrade to have an abortion and, when that failed, to give up her child for adoption, driving her to attempt suicide.

party interference in comrades' personal lives since the earliest days of our organization, following a dispute with some comrades in our local in the Bay Area, where New Left-derived notions of the "personal is political" were rife on the left. Our policy was codified in our 1969 document, "Development and Tactics of the Spartacist League," which, under the section "SL Functioning," states: "The SL seeks to regulate personal aspects of comrades' lives *only* where those aspects themselves intrude decisively in the political or organizational life of the members, particularly in security matters" (reprinted in "Basic Documents of the Spartacist League," *Marxist Bulletin* No. 9).

Logan willfully flouted our organizational practices. One need look no further than the fact that the malicious manipulation of the personal lives of comrades in our Australian section ended when Logan left. Chris Korwin, who took over as National Chairman of the section after Logan, attested to this in his greetings to our 1979 international conference. Noting that the section had recruited two gay men, including a prominent leader of the fight for gay rights in Australia, he remarked that this represented "a humanization of the organization that would have been impossible under Logan."

We only learned that Logan was gay from his memoir, "Never Exactly One of the Lads..." published in *One of the Boys?* in 1988, nine years after he was expelled. Here, Logan himself allowed that he only began to come to terms with his homosexuality some years after he was expelled. This essay, with its saccharine accounts of his happy childhood and no mention of his ever having been a member of a Leninist organization, was all in the service of promoting himself as coming out of the closet as a "new" all-round sensitive man. *Caveat emptor* (buyer beware). Even in this memoir it is notable that Logan's sexual orientation continues to run a distant third to

considerations of power, a word that appears 12 times in some 20 pages. Since then, Logan has moved on to advertise his services as a "celebrant"—a New Age equivalent of a spiritual faith healer—with funeral services for dead babies, a "secular grace" and other ceremonies derived from the "Anglican and Presbyterian influences of my childhood." Hannibal Lecter reinvented as the soul of human kindness. As we wrote in "Bill Logan: From Krafft-Ebing to Mother Teresa? BT: Renegades for Hire" (WV No. 807, 1 August 2003), "This is one sick puppy."

That Logan is the leader of the self-proclaimed "International Bolshevik Tendency" should also tell you just about all you need to know about them.

Comradely,
Len Meyers

P.S. Remarkably, the BT's Web site features a letter to Logan from one Steve H. with his "Thoughts on the Spartacists' 'Logan Dossier.'" The BT opines that Steve H.'s "rather different lens tends to confirm the most important parts of our analysis" of the supposed "degeneration" of our organization. A rather different lens indeed! When Steve H. quit our Australian section in 1986, admitting to "alien faddist pursuits," he was searching for the solace of the lord through spiritual "rebirthing." A fitting new addition to the defense team for the BT's own sordid spiritual leader. ■



John Fairfax & Sons Ltd

June 26, 1978: ASp photographer arrested outside Sydney Central Court at protest defending those arrested during vicious cop attack on gay rights demo days earlier. Calling for class-struggle defence, Spartacists stood at forefront of fight to get charges against gay rights activists dropped and were among those arrested during months of confrontation that followed.

Australasian

SPARTACIST



For a workers republic of Australia, part of a socialist Asia!

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Spartacus Youth Club Classes - Sydney

Cops/Military: Out of Aboriginal Communities!
2 p.m., Saturday 28 June

Rudd's ALP Rules for Racist Australian Imperialism
2 p.m., Saturday 2 August

Both classes will be held at Humanist House, 10 Shepherd Street, Chippendale (off Broadway). For readings or more information call (02) 9281 2181, e-mail spartacist@exemail.com.au, or write to GPO Box 3473, Sydney NSW 2001

Socialist Alternative: Cheerleaders for Capitalist Counterrevolution

We reprint below a Spartacist League leaflet issued on 4 March.

No doubt still high on social-democratic euphoria over Rudd's newly-elected federal ALP government, a band of belligerent Socialist Alternative (SAlt) cadre, screaming and jostling, tried to prevent two supporters of the Marxist Spartacist League selling outside their 2 February Sydney University "public" event on the Russian Revolution (communists were barred from attending). Our supporters completed their sale, at a distance from the anti-communist SAlt honchos, whose despicable attempts at intimidation and political suppression included threats to call campus security. Confronted with the current issue of *Australasian Spartacist* [No. 200, Summer 2007/08], headlined "Rudd's ALP Rules for Racist Australian Imperialism," what really had these hardened Laborites in a frenzy is our Trotskyist program of unconditional military defence of the deformed workers states—today, China, North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba—against Australian and U.S. imperialism. A particular target of their hostility is our defence of China and North Korea's possession of nuclear weapons as a necessary deterrent against the imperialist nuclear cowboys in Washington and their Australian junior partners.

It is laughable for SAlt to present themselves as Marxist authorities on the 1917 Russian Revolution. From their hatred of the former Soviet Union to their treacherous call for workers to vote for the capitalist Greens in the recent elections (an act of class betrayal), SAlt's traditions have more to do with the *Menshevik opponents* of the Russian Revolution. Led by Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik Party, the Russian Revolution established the world's first workers state—a historic victory for the international proletariat. Despite its subsequent degeneration under a nationalist parasitic bureaucratic caste, which usurped political power from the Soviet proletariat in a political counterrevolution beginning in 1923-24 under J.V. Stalin, the proletarian property forms created by the October Revolution of 1917 remained. Based on these collectivised property forms, the Soviet state remained a workers state, albeit bureaucratically degenerated, until capitalist counterrevolution in 1991-92. It was the elementary duty of revolutionaries to stand for the unconditional military defence of the Soviet degenerated workers state and the deformed workers states created in the Stalinist image following World War II—in Eastern Europe, China, North Korea, Cuba and Vietnam—against imperialist attack and internal capitalist counterrevolution.

Not so for Socialist Alternative. Their political origins go back to the late Tony Cliff and his followers in Britain who were expelled from Trotsky's Fourth International in 1950 for reneging on this program of unconditional military defence. Bowing to the pressure of anti-communist Cold War hysteria during the Korean War, Cliff capitulated to the British bourgeoisie and the then-ruling British Labour Party, refusing to defend the Soviet Union, China and North Korea against the imperialist attack. Cliff's claim that the Soviet Union was "state capitalist" (promoted by earlier social democrats who had opposed the Russian October Revolution of 1917) was the "theoretical" justification for his pro-imperialist program. Today SAlt continue to re-hash this bogus "theory," ranting about an imagined

Defend China, North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba!

capitalist "North Korean ruling class" while actually falling in behind blood-drenched "democratic" imperialism.

Ever since the Korean War ended in a stalemate, the strategic aim of U.S. imperialism, backed by Britain and Australia, has been to isolate and destroy the Stalinist-led North Korean deformed workers state, on the road to overturning the gains of the 1949 Chinese Revolution. Today this includes the encirclement of China with imperialist military installations from South Korea to northern Australia to Central Asia. Backing the imperialists' drive for capitalist counterrevolution in China, in every issue of their paper, in their "who are Socialist Alternative?" column, SAlt pushes hostility to China labelling it an exploitative society "essentially no different from the West."

intervention. During the imperialist war on Iraq beginning in 2003, SAlt refused to take a side in military defence of neo-colonial Iraq. Showing faith in the capitalist rulers, they instead helped build popular-frontist "antiwar" coalitions with "peace lovers" from all classes to appeal to the bourgeoisie for an end to the subsequent occupation. A key demand of these coalitions, "Bring the troops home," dovetails with the bourgeois Greens and ALP push for a more aggressive role for the Australian imperialist military in the Asia-Pacific region, including against North Korea and China.

Peddling the lie that the capitalist rulers can be pressured to act on behalf of the oppressed, class-collaborationists like SAlt sow reformist illusions in the capitalist state. However this state, consisting

incipient workers political revolution in the East German (DDR) deformed workers state, fighting for a government of workers councils. Against the capitalist *anschluss* that eventually swallowed up the DDR, we uniquely fought for workers political revolution in the East and socialist revolution in the West, as the road to a red soviet Germany in a Socialist United States of Europe. In Moscow in 1991-92, we fought to mobilise proletarian opposition to the impending capitalist catastrophe including distributing over 100,000 Russian-language leaflets calling for "Soviet Workers! Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!" The overturn of the world's first workers state was a historic defeat for the international proletariat, throwing back political consciousness, albeit unevenly, such that today few workers identify their struggles with the fight for socialism. It has also removed the primary military and political counterweight to rampant imperialist pillage across the globe.

In this deeply reactionary post-Soviet world, the bourgeoisie has introduced draconian racist "anti-terror" legislation that shreds the democratic rights of all and ultimately is aimed against the left and labour movement. Finding its echo on the campuses, in recent years Sydney Uni administration has unleashed its security guards to repeatedly harass, censor and drive leftists off the campus. It is in this context that SAlt cadre threatened to call these private cops of the capitalist administration against our comrades on 2 February. SAlt's attempted censorship and threats can only serve the interests of the bourgeoisie, which is hell-bent on promoting its "death of Communism" ideology in the service of erasing all memory of the historic significance and gains of the Russian Revolution.

It comes as no surprise that SAlt has welcomed into its ranks one Azlan McLennan, the Democratic Socialist Perspective (DSP) anti-communist thug who punched a female SL supporter in the face at a 2006 Melbourne trade-union rally! (See "We Will Not Be Silenced!" *Australasian Spartacist* No. 196, Spring 2006.) In widely exposing and condemning this DSP thug attack we asserted that, in the polemical traditions of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, we will continue to argue program and principle against pseudo-socialists such as the DSP and SAlt in order to clearly expose and defeat their sellout politics. This is part of the struggle to win workers and others from the poisonous grip of Laborism to the Trotskyist program necessary to fight to sweep away racist Australian capitalism through workers revolution. We fight to build internationalist proletarian vanguard parties like Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks, which can lead the working masses in new October Revolutions to open the road to a classless communist future. Workers, leftist youth and all those interested in joining this historic fight should check out our revolutionary Trotskyist program. ■



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Spartacist League contingent at protest against Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in Sydney, 8 September 2007.

They have promoted the CIA's "Free Tibet" rallying cry for counterrevolution and lauded pro-imperialist "trade-union activist" Han Dongfang who has been featured on radio broadcasts of official mouthpieces of U.S. imperialism, *Voice of America* and *Radio Free Asia*.

SAlt have a long history as anti-Marxist opponents of the revolutionary workers movement and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Throughout the 1980s as then-members of the Clifite International Socialist Organisation (ISO), SAlt cadre tailed the anti-Soviet, union-busting Hawke/Keating Labor regimes. They sided with the woman-hating, CIA-funded *mujahedin* cutthroats against the liberating forces of the Soviet Red Army in Afghanistan and championed the anti-semitic, anti-abortion and reactionary Solidarność—the chosen instrument of the Vatican, Wall Street and Western social democracy for capitalist counterrevolution in Poland. They cheered the Yeltsin/Bush capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union in 1991-92, which ushered in mass unemployment, starvation and nationalist fratricide.

SAlt's loyalty to capitalist "democracy" and "human rights" imperialism was also demonstrated in September 1999 when they participated in the chauvinist "troops in" rallies for the Australian military occupation of East Timor with placards proclaiming "East Timor—blood on Howard's hands." They enthusiastically supported the union bans on Indonesia that were organised by the Laborite trade-union misleaders to speed up the Australian imperialist military

at its core of the police, courts, prisons and military, exists to uphold the rule of the bosses over the working class and oppressed. It cannot be reformed—it must be shattered through workers revolution. Key to this perspective is the fight to mobilise the working class in independent class-struggle opposition to the capitalist rulers at home and abroad. We demand: Australian troops and cops get out of Aboriginal communities! Australian imperialist troops/cops get out of Iraq, Afghanistan, the Pacific and East Timor!

Our unconditional military defence of the Chinese, North Korean, Vietnamese and Cuban bureaucratically deformed workers states against imperialist attack and internal capitalist counterrevolution is a cornerstone of our revolutionary program. Within this framework we also fight for proletarian political revolution to oust the parasitic Stalinist caste that sits atop these workers states and whose bureaucratic mismanagement and appeasement of imperialism paves the way for capitalist restoration. Our defence of the deformed workers states is a defence of the overturn and expropriation of capitalism. To abandon defence of the deformed workers states is to abandon the cause of international proletarian revolution.

The International Communist League (ICL) has fought, and will continue to fight, tooth and nail against capitalist counterrevolution. When Solidarność made its counterrevolutionary bid for power in Poland in 1981, we forthrightly said: "Stop Solidarność Counterrevolution!" In late 1989, the ICL intervened to fight to bring revolutionary leadership to the

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Melbourne Rally Demands:

“Freedom For Mumia!”

On 17 May, some 50 supporters of foremost U.S. death row political prisoner, Mumia Abu-Jamal, rallied at Trades Hall in Melbourne to demand “Mumia Abu-Jamal is Innocent! Free Mumia Now! Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!”, protesting the outrageous 27 March decision by the U.S. Third Circuit Court of Appeals upholding Mumia’s frame-up conviction for the 1981 killing of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner. This decision proves once again that *there is no justice in the capitalist courts!*

A mountain of evidence demonstrates Mumia’s innocence—including the confession of Arnold Beverly that he, not Mumia, killed officer Faulkner—but the courts reject or refuse to hear it. Mumia was framed up because of his life-long struggle against racist oppression and police brutality—first as a Black Panther Party spokesman, then as a MOVE supporter and an outspoken journalist. The cops, prosecutors and courts—with the support of capitalist politicians, Democrats and Republicans—see in Mumia the spectre of black revolt, a voice of defiant opposition to the oppression of black people that is the cornerstone of American capitalism.

Speaking for the Partisan Defence Committee (PDC), Neil Flormimell told the rally, “what this ruling means is this innocent man, this powerful ‘voice of the voiceless,’ faces either execution or the slow death of the rest of his life in prison. We called this rally today to bring together those who say: *We must not let this happen!*” The rulers’ vendetta against Mumia is a vendetta against all who challenge police repression, trade unionists who defend their picket lines, those who protest imperialist depredations from Iraq to Afghanistan to East Timor and the South Pacific. After more than 25 years on death row, Mumia still stands defiant, writing commentaries in defence of the rights of black people, immigrants, unions. The fight for Mumia’s freedom is the fight for black rights, for workers rights, for the rights of all the oppressed. Workers, immigrants and all opponents of racist oppression must mobilise for Mumia’s freedom.

The rally was sponsored by the PDC, a class-struggle, non-sectarian, legal and social defence organisation associated with the Spartacist League. It brought

together a range of supporters for Mumia, including trade unionists, Aboriginal and Latin American activists, socialists, anarchists and others. Speaking from the platform alongside Flormimell were David Cushion, Assistant Secretary of the Victorian Branch of the Maritime Union of Australia and speaking on behalf of the union branch, David Kerin, Coordinator of Union Solidarity, as well as representatives from the Leonard Peltier Support Group, the Freedom Socialist Party (FSP),

and the Australian Prisoners Union, long-time supporter of the struggle for Mumia’s freedom. Brett Collins, noted “Mumia is the symbol of a generation now, of people who have been arrested for their political beliefs and their activism.” The Sydney rally was also addressed by a speaker from Iranian Democratic Unity, a member of the Wollongong Anarchist Collective, a student from western Sydney as well as speakers for the Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth Club (see speech page 6).

from Britain of the Guildford Four and Birmingham Six, Naughten noted that there is no limit to examples of frame-ups of innocent people in the bourgeois courts. Explaining that Mumia’s frame-up is an object lesson in the class nature of the capitalist state, she concluded “Mumia is up against vast resources of the capitalist state, but there is a road for victory for Mumia, for his freedom. That begins with the understanding that the class enemy will stop at nothing from lies to terror, on the streets and in the courts. Freedom for Mumia lies in understanding that the power to fight and win lies in...the mobilisation of the multi-racial, multiethnic proletariat. Free Mumia now!”

For a Class-Struggle Fight for Mumia’s Freedom

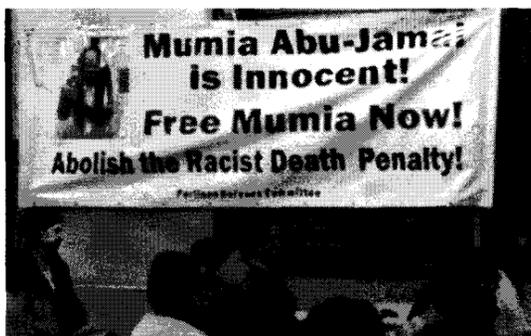
During the rally, Naughten encouraged participants to take up and openly debate the differences raised, which could only make more powerful the shared commitment to the urgent fight for Mumia’s freedom. PDC speaker, Neil Flormimell, explained that the fight to free Mumia must be based on a strategy of class-struggle defence: the understanding that capitalist society is fundamentally divided into two hostile classes—the capitalist class and the working class—and the capitalist state and its courts are organs of repression against working people and the oppressed.

Flormimell stressed the importance of turning union endorsements and letters of support for Mumia into union *actions*, and said, “There is a power to fight against the state’s vendetta against Mumia. The power to make the courts yield, the power to set Mumia free, rests with the international working class, whose hands on the levers of production, transportation and communication, give them the power to bring this capitalist profit system to a halt.” The working class has the power to scare the hell out of the bourgeoisie and to let them know that if Mumia is not freed there will be a massive social price to pay.

Flormimell explained that we oppose the death penalty on principle. He noted that while legal execution currently does not exist in Australia, there is a trail of bodies of mostly young Aboriginal men that testifies to the existence of a de facto death penalty in police cells and jails. Linking the fight for Mumia’s freedom to workers struggles, such as the taxi drivers, many of South Asian and other immigrant backgrounds, who courageously blockaded a busy Melbourne intersection in April in protest against racist attacks, and construction unions fighting against the union-busting Australian Building and Construction Commission (ABCC), Flormimell said: “The Partisan Defence Committee goes to the working class with the understanding that to emancipate themselves from the chains of capitalist wage slavery they need to reject the divide-and-rule schemes of the exploiters and their labour lieutenants. This means a fight in defence of democratic rights and the rights of all the oppressed, for instance, the victims of the racist ‘war on terror.’”

Indeed, the fight for Mumia’s freedom has everything to do with the fight against

Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!



PDC speaker, Neil Flormimell, addresses 17 May PDC-initiated Melbourne rally bringing together people from immigrant, indigenous, left, union and other organisations to express their determination that Mumia must be freed.



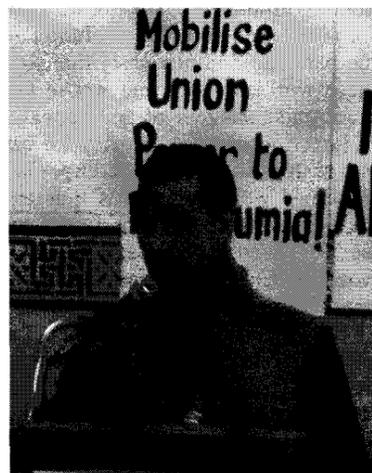
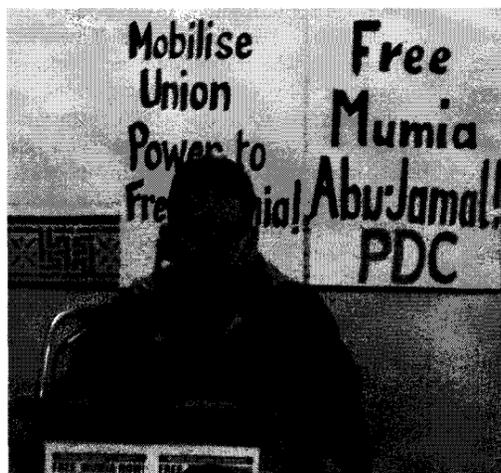
ASp photos

Australia Asia Worker Links and the Spartacist League. Solidarity greetings were read out from Len Cooper, Victorian Branch Secretary of the Communication Workers’ Union (CEPU), who was unable to attend and is a longtime supporter of Mumia’s fight for freedom.

The rally followed a PDC emergency protest on the day after the court ruling came down and a 23 April united-front demonstration, both held outside the U.S. Consulate in Sydney. The Sydney united-front protest was part of a series of international protests initiated by the PDC and its fraternal defence organisations. Among those protesting were death penalty abolitionists, prisoners’ rights activists, anarchist and immigrant youth and socialists. Speaking on behalf of Justice Action

Internationally, over 500 organisations and individuals endorsed the PDC-initiated united-front protests, including trade unions representing hundreds of thousands of workers. In Australia, endorsements came from the Victorian Branch of the Maritime Union of Australia, Chris Cain, State Secretary of the Maritime Union Western Australia Branch, Len Cooper, Secretary of the Victorian Branch of the Communication Workers’ Union (CEPU), Aboriginal activists Sam Watson and Jenny Munro, Black Rose Anarchist Library & Books, Workers Radio Sydney and others. International endorsements included the SUD Rail Workers Union of Paris Left Bank, the Timor Leste Trade Union Confederation, Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Locals 241 and 308, Chicago, and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU)—Western Cape. Other international endorsers included the Gay Liberation Network in Chicago, Professor Dr. Heinrich Fink, Chairman of the Association of the Victims of the Nazi Regime—Coalition of Anti-Fascists, in Berlin, former Black Panther Party leaders Elaine Brown and David Hilliard, writer Gilles Perrault in France, Senator Rosario Ibarra, the head of the ¡Eureka! defence committee in Mexico, and Che Guevara’s daughter, Aleida Guevara March (for more on the PDC-initiated international campaign, see article page 1).

The basis for the 17 May rally in Melbourne was laid through building support and gaining endorsements for the international united-front protests. PDC representative, Phillipa Naughten, said in opening the rally that it is our duty to support class-war prisoners. Citing the cases



ASp photos

David Cushion, Assistant Secretary, Victorian Branch of the Maritime Union of Australia (left) and Piergiorgio Moro, Union Convener, Australia Asia Worker Links speaking at the Melbourne rally.

Partisan Defence Committee Protest Letter

Cops, Anti-Sex Bigots Target Bill Henson

Almost three weeks after police and detectives from the Child Protection and Sex Crimes Unit raided the Roslyn Oxley9 art gallery in Sydney's suburb of Paddington, carting off some 20 artworks, including of a naked 13-year-old girl, by photographic artist Bill Henson, the NSW Director of Public Prosecutions announced it would not pursue charges of child pornography or publishing indecent images against Henson or the art gallery as they would be unlikely to succeed. Police returned the photographs on 10 June, and the exhibition was reopened, albeit on an invite only basis as the gallery owners were fearful demented yahoos might try to damage Henson's works.

Following the 23 May raids the gallery was the target of violent threats amid a frenzied witchhunt, fueled in good part by anti-sex witchhunters and talk-back radio bigots, that portrayed Henson and the parents of the children who had posed for him as criminals. There was however at the same time a countervailing outcry in defence of Henson. This included internationally acclaimed actress Cate Blanchett and over forty other notable cultural figures signing an open letter to prime minister Kevin Rudd opposing his attack on the photos. The letter read in part, "If an example is made of Bill Henson ... it is hard to believe that those who have sought to bring these charges will stop with him" (*Herald Sun*, 28 May).

Of course Henson's photos have found many defenders in the world of polite society who at the same time go along with state censorship of what is deemed "pornography." But we are for

freedom of expression, whether it is an art show or a seedy "adult" porn shop. The government has no business telling people what they can read or look at: such attitudes on free speech lead straight to political repression.

As the U.S. Partisan Defense Committee said in a 1987 Supreme Court *amicus curiae* ("friend of the court") brief on the side of Indiana booksellers against a government anti-porn witch-hunt trying to shut them down:

"The Spartacist League has a long-standing position against government regulation of private life Religious beliefs and determinations of morality cannot dictate what is permissible for man to read, think, fantasize—be it the classics or 'smut'; erotica or pornography. Absent physical harm to another, it is no concern of the state."

—"No to RICO Sex Witchhunt!",
Women and Revolution No. 35,
Summer 1988

We reprint below a PDC statement faxed to the office of the Director of

Public Prosecutions in NSW protesting the attempted censorship.

* * *

5 June 2008

Office of the Director of
Public Prosecutions, Sydney

The threat of child pornography and obscenity/indecency charges against internationally renowned photographic artist Bill Henson and the Roslyn Oxley9 gallery is an outrage! On Friday 23 May, the gallery was raided by NSW police and Henson's works featuring a nude 13-year-old were seized. Such witchhunting censorship carried out by the NSW police at the behest of the NSW ALP Iemma government, the federal ALP Rudd government and sanctimonious anti-porn crusaders projecting themselves as "child protection" advocates, is an attack on freedom of expression in the interest of enforcing a twisted morality rooted in anti-woman, anti-gay

and anti-sex bigotry. No doubt whipped up by comments such as the prime minister's declaration that the photographs are "revolting," the police actions have generated widespread hysteria, with galleries from Albury to Newcastle rushing to remove Henson's works following police intervention.

Real obscenity lies in the actions of the federal and state ALP governments, including the imperialist military occupations of Iraq, Afghanistan and East Timor, the deeply racist police/military occupation of Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory, and the arrest and beating of leftist anti-APEC demonstrators last year. Indeed, from the stealing of generations of Aboriginal children, to the incarceration of refugee children in hell-hole detention centres, to the terrorising of Iraqi, Afghan and East Timorese women and children, the capitalist state has well and truly demonstrated that it, and not the artistic community, is the systematic abuser of children.

Bill Henson must not join the long list of those who have fallen prey to the Goebbels-esque Australian censors. These include novelists D.H. Lawrence and Philip Roth, and revolutionary leader V.I. Lenin, whose treatise against the capitalist state, *State and Revolution*, was banned in the 1930s. The Big Brothers of the state legislature have absolutely no right to force their moralism on others. We demand: An end to all obscenity and anti-porn laws! State out of the bedroom and art galleries! Hands off Bill Henson! Return Henson's artworks to the Roslyn Oxley9 gallery now!



Shahin Hayes

May 23:
Police
oversee the
removal of
Henson's
artworks
from the
Roslyn
Oxley9
gallery.

"war on terror" capitalist repression. As the cases of the Barwon 13, the Goulburn 9, Mamdouh Habib, Jack Thomas and David Hicks show, the bogus "war on terror"—now vigorously prosecuted by federal and state Labor governments—has led to a massive increase in state surveillance and repressive measures particularly targeting Muslims, Middle Eastern and South Asian immigrants and other Asian peoples. It has incited racist reaction on the streets and provided justification for shredding democratic rights and for massively strengthening state repression targeting all opponents of capitalism, the left and organised labour movement. As Florimell said, by taking up the fight against all manifestations of capitalist repression "workers are not just fighting for themselves pitted against individual employers, but on behalf of the entire working class, which has the power and the interest to change society fundamentally, through the overturn of capitalist class rule."

Canopy, from the Leonard Peltier

Support Group, spoke about the U.S. state's vendetta against American Indian Movement leader, Leonard Peltier, a political prisoner of over 30 years. Canopy noted Peltier's longtime support for Mumia and told the meeting that the Mumia and Leonard Peltier movements work closely together. He pointed to the U.S. prisons that are filled with indigenous Native Americans, blacks, Chicanos and Puerto Ricans jailed on trumped-up charges such as assaulting police, and getting "five to life." He said "All these movements have worked very closely together, because if you don't work together, you're not going to survive." He concluded: "Not only do I support Mumia, but I also support Leonard Peltier because they are two people worth supporting and seeing that they'll be freed."

The FSP speaker, Peter Murray, told the rally that the possibility of a new sentencing hearing, which could reinstate the death penalty, makes Mumia's case even more urgent. Declaring Mumia a com-

pletely innocent man, he argued, "The courts are not where we will win this fight—but win it we must. Street heat and union organisation is the key. What will make all the difference in the legal arena is mass public protest." Murray told the rally that at a 5 April Melbourne protest in support of Lex Wotton, the Palm Island Aboriginal activist facing state persecution for protesting the brutal cop killing of Mulrunji Doomadgee in 2004, a motion was unanimously adopted that called for Mumia's freedom. A resolution was also adopted at Melbourne's May Day rally this year, declaring "Mumia is innocent" and demanding his immediate release.

Piergiorgio Moro, speaking for Australia Asia Worker Links, said that AAWL has supported the campaign for the release of Mumia Abu-Jamal over many years, and explained, "there are cases out there, internationally, that just really are exceptional and are really test cases, and we see this very much as part of that." He noted the injustice meted out to Mumia is unfortunately not an isolated case, pointing to anti-working-class capitalist repression in this region. Saying that AAWL could assist in seeking further international endorsements for Mumia, he concluded "Let's look forward to actually having a day very soon when instead of being here saying Mumia's still in prison, we can actually have a meeting to say Mumia is free."

For a Revolutionary Perspective

Introducing Dave Kerin, who spoke on behalf of Union Solidarity, Naughten noted that Kerin is currently under legal threat from the state because of his support to striking Boeing workers in April. As she pointed out, we stand in his defence against this threat, just as we

stand in defence of all unionists facing attacks from the bosses, including on the right to strike. In supporting Mumia and Leonard Peltier, Kerin spoke of the COINTELPRO operations in the U.S. in which the Black Panthers, socialist groups, peace groups and others were "hit" by FBI agents (through COINTELPRO, the U.S. capitalist state carried out a war of murder, mass arrest and frame-ups against the Black Panthers). Kerin said "It's a long-standing strategy. We also have a long-standing strategy, and it works. When it's been applied, it works. When the workers fold their arms, nothing moves."

However Kerin put the need for workers actions in a parliamentarist framework. He said "we have a window of opportunity within which to begin to organise some industrial activity around the world that will bring some pressure to bear on the current electoral processes occurring in America," and pointed to Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton, then vying to lead the U.S. Democratic Party in upcoming elections. Countering illusions in the capitalist Democratic Party, an SL speaker noted during the discussion that both Obama and Clinton stand *for* the death penalty, while Naughten responded that following the acquittal of the New York cops who shot and killed young black man, Sean Bell, on his wedding day, Obama disgustingly responded "we respect the decision that came down."

In arguing "to bring pressure to bear through working-class organisation" on Obama/Clinton, Kerin said that this perspective has "been true in Australia, true of the IR [Industrial Relations] laws. That the only thing that has actually worked, that has given strength to the arm of every

continued on page 6

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"There Can Be No Justice in the Capitalist Courts!"

We reprint below, slightly edited for publication, the speech of comrade Tom of the Spartacus Youth Club to the Sydney 23 April united-front demonstration demanding the freedom of Mumia Abu-Jamal.

I'm Tom from the Spartacus Youth Club and as part of our fight for socialist revolution we have long been a part of the campaign to free Mumia Abu-Jamal. We have brought the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal to the campuses—we've been leafleting and poster-ing UNSW, UTS and Sydney University and been fighting to bring students and minority youth to the understanding of the need for a class-struggle fight to free Mumia Abu-Jamal because only the working class has the social power necessary to stand up to the racist capitalist rulers. This has been no easy task mind you. Our principled class-struggle position has brought down the ire of the capitalist overlords of these elitist institutions. Just this morning, the same security guards who keep the grounds of Sydney University off-limits to the Indigenous population of Redfern expelled us communist youth, who are fighting for the life of Mumia Abu-Jamal, from the grounds as well.

Mumia is an innocent man who should never have spent a single day in prison let alone be sentenced to rot on death row for over a quarter of a century. The case of Mumia Abu-Jamal is a lesson in the class nature of the capitalist state. The cops and courts who framed up this innocent man, the prison system in which he is jailed, the executioner who stands ready to kill: all are instruments of organised violence used to preserve the rule of the capitalist class through the forcible suppression of the working class and oppressed.

There can be no justice in the capitalist



Asp photo

Sydney, 23 April: Spartacus Youth Club speaker (right) addresses rally demanding freedom of Mumia Abu-Jamal.

SYC Speaker at Sydney United-Front Rally

courts! Here so no less than in the United States. From the incarceration of refugees in concentration camps, to the grim list of Aboriginal deaths at the hands of cops and prison screws, state terror is a cutting edge of capitalist rule in Australia; used no less by state and federal Labor governments than by the Coalition. Mumia's freedom will not be won through reliance on the rigged "justice" system or through capitalist politicians. The power to turn the tide will come from the mobilisation of the organised working class whose social power derives from its ability to shut down production. The road to ending racial oppression is through workers socialist revolution that will smash capitalist state terror.

No other leftists, including anarchists and those Laborite pseudo-Marxists who claim to oppose the death penalty but from whom we have not heard a squeak about Mumia—and if I have to spell it out, I'm talking about, in particular, Socialist Alter-

native and the Democratic Socialist Perspective—none of these left groups have a program to smash capitalist exploitation and oppression through workers revolution. It is only the Spartacus Youth Club and Spartacist League who, as a part of our program for international workers revolution, defend those states where capitalism has already been overthrown. The same capitalist state apparatus which has condemned Mumia Abu-Jamal to over twenty-five years on death row is now pushing for counterrevolution in China, centred on the demand "Free Tibet." Over the years much of the left has fallen in behind this rallying cry for counterrevolution. The protests in Tibet are reactionary, anti-Communist and counterrevolutionary and we Trotskyists of the Spartacus Youth Club, as part of the International Communist League, fight for the unconditional military defence of the Chinese deformed workers state against imperialist attack and capitalist counterrevolution, as we do

for the other deformed workers states: North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba. The 1949 Revolution that overthrew capitalist rule in China resulted in enormous gains for the working and peasant masses of that country, including the people of Tibet, who until the victory of the People's Liberation Army in 1959 were ruled by a pro-slavery "Lamaocracy" where flogging, mutilation and amputation were forms of criminal punishment.

The Spartacus Youth Club and Spartacist League of Australia demand: racist Australian troops and cops out of Aboriginal lands! Get out of Iraq, Afghanistan, the Solomons and East Timor! We de-

nounce the class-collaborationism of those leftists who rally to "Bring the troops home"; a demand designed to pressure Australia's racist rulers into adopting some sort of kinder, gentler foreign policy. Well guess what? The troops are home! Domestically and abroad, in the Northern Territory, in East Timor and elsewhere, the Australian cops and military oppress dark-skinned people throughout the region in the name of bloody Australian jackal imperialism, the junior brother to U.S. imperialism.

In opposition to the capitalists and their racist state terror, we communists shall continue to fight for the freedom of Mumia Abu-Jamal—a valiant fighter against the oppression of black people in the United States, a former Black Panther and outspoken supporter of the MOVE organisation. We shall continue to oppose racial and women's oppression and all forms of capitalist oppression seeking to build a youth auxiliary to a Leninist vanguard party which acts as tribune of the people, leading the workers and oppressed to their freedom. Join us! Mumia Abu-Jamal is an innocent man! **Free him now!** ■

Melbourne...

(continued from page 5)

other strategy, has been the capacity of workers to fight and win throughout the last three-and-a-half years of the IR laws." In reality, however, the pro-capitalist union tops' campaign against Howard's IR laws acted to head off the sort of class-struggle strike actions that could have turned these anti-union laws into worthless scraps of paper. Instead, they channelled deep working-class anger into the ballot box, campaigning to elect a federal Labor government including by directing millions in union members' dues to this campaign. Now ruling for racist Australian imperialism, the Rudd Labor government maintains the core of the Howard government's anti-union assault.

The rally was also told about Mumia's strong support over many years for the U.S. longshore unions, "even as he's been on death row," said David Cushion, speaking for the Victorian Branch of the MUA. Cushion noted Mumia's defence of Charleston dockworkers in the U.S. who were charged and faced imprisonment for defending their union picket line against a vicious cop assault. They defeated the charges through a campaign of international labour solidarity. Cushion also spoke about the 1 May West Coast International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) stoppage in the U.S. This stoppage was called to protest the U.S. occupation of Iraq (but not Afghanistan as

Cushion said) and, coming in the midst of ongoing contract negotiations with the shipping bosses, was a powerful display of union muscle. However, as an SL supporter took up from the floor, it was wrapped in the red-white-and-blue American chauvinism of the ILWU International bureaucracy.

The speaker quoted from a 1 May statement from International president, Bob McEllrath, which ranted: "we're loyal to America, and we won't stand by while our country, our troops and our economy are destroyed by a war that's bankrupting us." Opposing this vile loyalty oath to imperialism, the SL speaker declared, "You cannot fight the bosses and their machinery through national unity patriotism! No—what we need is revolutionary internationalism! That's what Lenin and Trotsky and the Bolsheviks taught us. And in order to win the freedom for the likes of Mumia and Leonard Peltier and many of the others that have been mentioned here, we argue that we need a program that mobilises workers independent of the capitalist rulers."

Cushion spoke of extending international union support for Mumia's cause and called for greater support from within this country. He asked "Where are the other unions?" and declared "We're in the Trades Hall and two unions have been named. That's disgraceful." Cushion stated "a supporter of unions should be supported by unions. This is a just cause."

Indeed, unions *should be mobilised in mass actions to demand Mumia's free-*

dom! So why haven't wider layers of the union movement taken up this just cause? Why didn't the modest union support materialise into any significant union mobilisation on the day of the rally? As the Spartacist League speaker, Margaret Rodda, pointed out (see speech reprinted page 7), a fundamental obstacle in this country to mobilising the working class in the interest of Mumia, and its own interests, is the stranglehold of the nationalist Laborite trade-union tops who foster nationalism and reliance on the capitalist state. Exemplifying the union bureaucracy's subservience to the capitalist state is the Victorian Trades Hall Council's (VTHC) embrace of the cops, witnessed in the affiliation of the Police Association to the VTHC for the last decade.

The fight for Mumia Abu-Jamal's freedom means drawing on the best internationalist traditions of the labour movement including the union actions in defence of the struggles of the Vietnamese workers and peasants against U.S./Australian imperialism and cutting across the vile nationalist, protectionist policies of the union bureaucracy and their Labor Party parliamentary mates. The union tops waged a concerted campaign to get the ALP elected to federal government. Today administering the capitalist state federally as well as in all states and territories, the ALP is up to its neck in its own national version of the racist barbarity that has resulted in the incarceration and attempted execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal in the U.S. It oversees racist "war on terror"

repression, the vicious military and police occupation of Aboriginal lands in the Northern Territory, and the imperialist overlordship of the Solomons and East Timor. It partakes in the brutal imperialist occupation of Afghanistan, and zealously upholds the counterrevolutionary U.S./Australia alliance aimed against the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state, joining the imperialist outcry over Tibet (see "Counterrevolutionary Riots in Tibet," page 16).

The ALP is a *bourgeois workers party*, thoroughly pro-capitalist in its program and leadership while having organic ties to the working class through the trade unions. To build the type of party that the working class needs—a party that stands on an internationalist, revolutionary, proletarian program—requires a *political struggle* to break the working masses from the pro-capitalist ALP tops centrally through the fight for a revolutionary leadership within the trade unions. Linked to a revolutionary workers party, such a leadership would seek to transform the political consciousness of the working class, taking up the fight against every manifestation of capitalist oppression on the way to sweeping away the whole racist capitalist system through workers revolution.

The Fight to Free Mumia Is the Fight for the Liberation of Us All!

With few exceptions, such as the FSP, most reformist Laborite left organisations

continued on page 11

Spartacist Speaker at Melbourne Rally For Mumia

“For a Workers Republic of Australia, Part of a Socialist Asia!”

We reprint below, edited for publication, the speech given by Spartacist League speaker Margaret Rodda at the 17 May rally for Mumia in Melbourne.

The Spartacist League, Australian section of the International Communist League demands the immediate release of Mumia Abu-Jamal. We fight to win the international working class to making the cause of Mumia their own. We place all our faith in the working class and none whatsoever in the capitalist state.

It's not surprising that during this campaign Mumia's case has resonated amongst wide layers, from within the multiracial trade-union movement, to the besieged Aboriginal people for whom being picked up by the police can mean bloody terror if not death. From the incarceration of refugees, to the whitewash acquittal of the cop who killed Mulrunji and the ongoing state persecution of Palm Islander, Lex Wotton, workers and the oppressed face a system of capitalist injustice.

Highlighting the vicious racism endemic to capitalism is the reactionary military and police takeover of Aboriginal lands in the Northern Territory—a naked land grab, now prosecuted by the Rudd federal ALP government. It has meant more Aborigines in prison and more deaths in custody. We oppose the quarantining of welfare payments and its extension to the broader population and demand cops and military get out of Aboriginal communities! Just as we must fight to defend trade unionists in the crosshairs of anti-union laws, Aboriginal people, refugees, and those targeted under draconian anti-terror laws must not be left to fight alone! It is necessary to mobilise the organised workers movement in a class-struggle fight against racist anti-working-class capitalist reaction.

It is particularly important to fight for Mumia's freedom here in Australia given the reactionary U.S./Australia alliance, today staunchly upheld by the Rudd Labor government. This alliance was forged in the bloody massacre of millions of workers and peasants from Korea to Indonesia to Vietnam. It incorporates the U.S. spy bases that target workers and peasants from Iraq to China and North Korea for imperialist military intervention. The struggle for Mumia's freedom is an oppor-

Break with Laborism! Build a Revolutionary Workers Party!

tunity to strike a blow against the American capitalist rulers who want Mumia silenced, to strike a blow against jackal Australian imperialism which plunders and exploits millions from Fiji to the Indonesian archipelago and beyond. We say: all Australian cops/troops out of the Solomons and East Timor! U.S., Australia, all imperialist troops out of Iraq

This is at best a pipedream. Under capitalism, the state—consisting at its core of the cops, military, courts and prisons—exists to maintain the rule and profits of the capitalist exploiters. It can't be pressured to serve our interests—it must be smashed through socialist revolution and replaced with a workers state.

We look to the power of the multiethnic

ism, fights for the independence of the working class from the bosses' state and the political parties that uphold the capitalist system, not one that channels workers anger back into the Labor Party, which in power administers capitalist reaction on behalf of the ruling class—as Hawke and Keating did, and Rudd is now doing. Based on this perspective, during last year's federal elections, we called for no vote to the ALP, a bourgeois workers party, and no vote to the capitalist Greens.

We need a fight for a class-struggle leadership of the unions that is prepared to wage strikes instead of cutting deals, that looks to the social power of the proletariat not to the bosses' arbitration courts, that backs up other strikes instead of bowing to government laws against secondary boycotts. We need a fight in the unions for a leadership that promotes international working-class solidarity instead of pushing poisonous chauvinist protectionism, which divides the working class and ties them to the bosses “at home.” Those that lead such a class-struggle fight in the unions will, of necessity, be linked to a revolutionary workers party.

Our struggle to free Mumia and all class-war prisoners is inseparable from the struggle for workers rule. For this task, workers need a revolutionary internationalist workers party that fights in the interests of the proletariat and against all instances of discrimination—what Lenin called a tribune of the people: that fights against racism, for women's liberation, for gay rights and for full citizenship rights for all immigrants! The fight to change consciousness is not easy, particularly as political consciousness has been thrown back since counterrevolution in the Soviet Union; but this makes it no less urgent. Only when workers rule will the road be opened to building a classless society where social injustice, along with the exploitation of man by man, is a relic from a distant past. Join us in the fight for a workers republic of Australia, part of a socialist Asia! Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the racist death penalty! ■



Asp photo

SL/SYC at 16 February 2003 anti-war rally in Sydney.

and Afghanistan now! U.S. bases out now! Hands off Iran!

We oppose the death penalty on principle. We do not accord the state the right to decide who lives and who dies. Our opposition to the death penalty extends to the deformed workers states—China, North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba. As Trotskyists, we know full well that the Chinese bureaucracy, for example, metes out repression to all those it views as opponents, including socialist militants. Nevertheless, despite their deformations, these workers states with their collectivised property forms continue to represent qualitative gains for the working class internationally.

Today as the Labor Party joins the imperialist outcry over Tibet, the bourgeois Greens and sundry reformist groups such as the Democratic Socialist Perspective, Solidarity and Socialist Alternative, champion the reactionary “Free Tibet” movement, the spearhead for capitalist counterrevolution in China. The extension of the Chinese Revolution to Tibet ended the rule of the pro-slavery “Lamaocracy” and the status of women as beasts of burden. It opened the road to social progress. We stand for the unconditional military defence of the Chinese deformed workers state against capitalist counterrevolution and imperialist intervention. Working people of China must fight for a proletarian political revolution, to replace the nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy with the rule of workers, soldiers and peasants councils.

In fighting for Mumia's freedom, we seek to rekindle the traditions of internationalism amongst the working class. Genuine proletarian internationalism is counterposed to the strategy of reformism, which at bottom seeks to pressure the capitalist state to be kinder and gentler.

working class. The seeds of Mumia's only hope for freedom are represented in the support from trade unions internationally, including some here today, and the thousands of union brothers and sisters these unions represent. Their power lies in the fact that they can bring the capitalist wheels of profit to a halt. But a key obstacle to mobilising the working class in Australia for Mumia's freedom, and in its own interests, is the politics of Laborism, which preaches nationalism and reliance on the capitalist state. Workers need a leadership that, in breaking from Labor-

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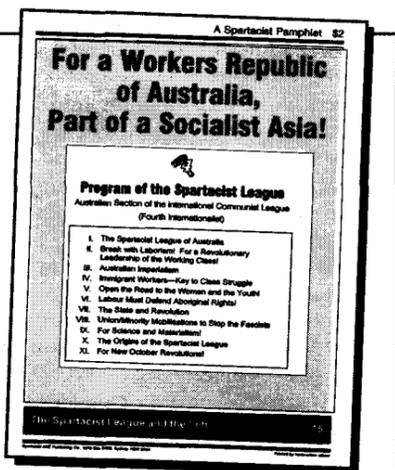
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Opportunist Left and the Chávez Referendum

Break with Bourgeois Populism!

For Workers Revolution!

Venezuela

The following article is reprinted from Workers Vanguard (No. 907, 1 February), newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S.

Across the political spectrum, the December constitutional referendum put forward by Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez was described as an attempt to institute a “socialist state.” The narrow defeat of the referendum is now celebrated by a cabal ranging from the Venezuelan oligarchy to the Catholic church to the Bush White House as a victory for “democracy.” On the other side, it has provoked much hand-wringing among self-proclaimed Marxists and others who have promoted Chávez as some kind of “revolutionary.” As for Chávez himself, he immediately made conciliatory gestures to the right-wing opposition.

Popular illusions notwithstanding, Chávez, a former army colonel, is a bourgeois nationalist administering a capitalist state. Far from undermining capitalism in Venezuela, Chávez’s referendum went out of its way to underline that private ownership of the means of production would be protected under the constitution. His proposed referendum was centrally aimed at strengthening the repressive powers of the Venezuelan capitalist state and concentrating increased authority in the executive office of the president. While cloaked in populist rhetoric of “people’s power” and promising some social reforms, such as a shorter workweek and pensions for the self-employed, the key provisions of Chávez’s referendum sought to increase presidential authority to declare unlimited states of emergency, to decree special military regions, to transform certain parts of the country into federal territories under direct presidential control, and to allow the president to dissolve the National Assembly.

The capitalist state—which at its core consists of the military, police, prisons and courts—is the instrument for the forcible suppression of the working class and oppressed in defense of the capitalist social



November 30, 2007: Demonstration in Caracas calling for “yes” vote on referendum to increase the power of bourgeois-nationalist Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez (right).



Corbis photos

order. Any augmentation of the Venezuelan capitalist state powers will be used against the working class when it struggles for its own class interests. As Marx and Engels put it following the experience of the Paris Commune, when the Parisian proletariat held power for nearly three months in 1871 before being bloodily crushed, “One thing especially was proved by the Commune, viz. that ‘the working class cannot simply

regime without giving it one iota of political support, as with Loyalist Spain from 1936-39.

The fact that most ostensible Marxist organizations either openly supported or abstained on Chávez’s referendum is testimony to both their own political bankruptcy and Chávez’s popularity. The very things that have made Chávez a thorn in the side of the arrogant U.S. rulers have made him

attack, they are not socialist measures. In the case of Mexico, the subordination of the working class to Cárdenas resulted in more than 60 years of corporatism and the shackling of the proletariat to the Institutional Revolutionary Party, the bourgeois ruling party until 2000.

It is a sign of the times that Chávez today is embraced as the leader of the fight for “21st century socialism.” As we wrote in “Venezuela: Populist Nationalism vs. Proletarian Revolution” (WV No. 860, 9 December 2005):

“The popularity of Chávez and his ‘Bolivarian Revolution’ among idealistic young leftists—and wized opportunists—must be understood against the backdrop of the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union. Among radical youth, nurtured by more than a decade of ‘death of communism’ propaganda from the ‘left’ and the right, the October Revolution is widely perceived to have been a ‘failed experiment.’ They reject as well the Marxist understanding that the working class is the unique agency for social revolution against the capitalist order. Moreover, capitalism has, by and large, been equated with that particular set of economic policies known as ‘neoliberalism’—widespread privatization of public facilities, destruction of social welfare programs, untrammelled imperialist aggrandizement. “The recent history of Venezuela amply demonstrates that neoliberalism and populism are nothing but two faces of the same coin, sometimes carried out by the same bourgeois regime in different periods.”

Indeed, in Venezuela in the mid 1970s Democratic Action (AD) president Carlos Andrés Pérez nationalized oil and mining. Similarly buoyed by booming oil revenues, the Pérez regime also massively subsidized food, transportation, health care and education. When the boom went bust, the Pérez regime itself then instituted brutal austerity measures beginning in the 1980s against the country’s working and poor people.

Today’s high oil prices, again, allow for limited reforms. But the very workings of the capitalist system ensure the continued exploitation and impoverishment of the Venezuelan masses. In fact, Chávez’s referendum was narrowly defeated largely because the masses of urban poor, who poured out in the streets against the 2002 coup and were the base of Chávez’s landslide victory in the 2006 elections with over seven million votes, largely sat this

U.S. Hands Off!

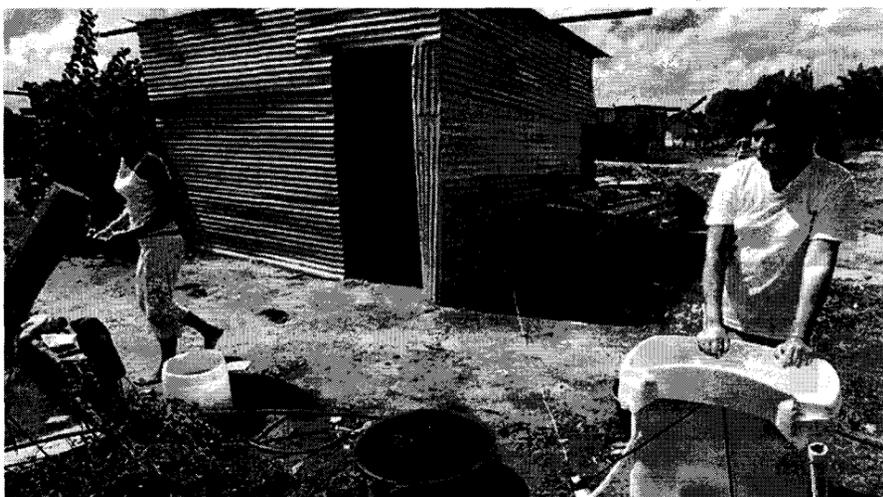
lay hold of the ready-made State machinery, and wield it for its own purposes” (1872 Preface to the German Edition of the *Communist Manifesto* by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels).

As Marxists who fight for proletarian socialist revolution to smash the bourgeois state and put in its place a workers state, we were for a “no” vote on Chávez’s referendum. At the same time, we make clear our intransigent opposition to the right-wing forces that mobilized against the referendum. Chávez has provoked the ire of the U.S. imperialist rulers, Democrats as well as Republicans. In the event of a U.S.-sponsored coup, as in 2002, we stand for the military defense of the Chávez

an idol for the impoverished masses in Venezuela and for large numbers of young leftists around the world. Chávez has bitingly castigated the Bush administration and ostentatiously embraced Washington’s chief nemesis in the Western Hemisphere, Cuban leader Fidel Castro. He has condemned the U.S. occupation of Iraq and the threats against Iran and denounced the “neoliberal” economic policies promoted by the U.S. in Latin America and elsewhere. He embarrassed the Bush administration in 2005 when he offered to provide relief for the dispossessed people of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina (the offer was rejected). And as the U.S. heads toward a recession, Venezuela, through its CITGO affiliate, is once again supplying low-cost heating oil this winter to poor families in 23 states in the U.S.

Chávez is a populist who has used profits generated by the skyrocketing cost of oil to implement a series of social reforms. He has also undertaken some minimal nationalization of industry and land distribution. These measures, together with the fact that Chávez boasts of his *zambo* (mixed African and indigenous) heritage, have earned him the contempt of the lily-white Venezuelan oligarchy.

But Chávez is no socialist. And by historical standards, he is not even a particularly radical bourgeois nationalist. Mexico’s Lázaro Cárdenas nationalized that country’s oil industry, which was owned by the U.S. and British imperialists, and made significant land redistributions in the 1930s. While we defend such bourgeois nationalizations against imperialist



Slum in Maturín, Venezuela. The very workings of capitalist system ensure continued exploitation and impoverishment of Venezuelan masses.

referendum out. As a woman from one of Caracas' wretched slums put it: "If this government cannot get me milk or asphalt for our roads, how is it going to give my mother a pension" (*New York Times*, 30 November 2007).

As against Chávez's populist nationalism, it is necessary to mobilize the proletariat, standing at the head of all the downtrodden and oppressed, in the struggle for socialist revolution against all wings of the Venezuelan bourgeoisie, which is tied by a thousand threads to the imperialist order. Only thus can the struggle for national independence and other democratic tasks be realized in such countries of belated capitalist development in the imperialist epoch. As Leon Trotsky, co-leader with V.I. Lenin of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, stressed in his "Basic Postulates" in *The Permanent Revolution* (1930):

"The dictatorship of the proletariat which has risen to power as the leader of the democratic revolution is inevitably and very quickly confronted with tasks, the fulfilment of which is bound up with deep inroads into the rights of bourgeois property. The democratic revolution grows over directly into the socialist revolution and thereby becomes a permanent revolution."

There can be no fundamental amelioration of the plight of the urban and rural poor without the smashing of the capitalist state and the overthrow of the capitalist social order, laying the basis through a series of proletarian revolutions internationally for a global classless society in which all forms of exploitation and oppression have been eliminated. Crucially, this means linking the struggles of the Latin American masses to the fight for socialist revolution in the U.S.

Reformist Apologists for Chávez Regime

Under the Chávez regime, the Venezuelan bourgeoisie has made out very well (and foreign oil companies haven't done badly themselves). According to the World Bank, the richest 20 percent of the population continue to pocket 53 percent of all income while the poorest 20 percent are the recipients of a miserly 3 percent. While raking off massive profits, much of the bourgeoisie is taking its money out of the country as well as hoarding its products, resulting in soaring inflation and shortages of food and other basic necessities.

Workers who have occupied factories that have been bankrupted by their owners or shut down, like those at Sanitarios Maracay, have found themselves on the receiving end of the armed forces of the Chávez regime. In April 2007, as they made their way to Caracas to demand the nationalization of the company, workers from this factory were stopped by state police and army forces who fired on them, leaving 14 wounded and 21 arrested. Similarly, representatives of the public employees trade union who had gone to negotiate a contract with the Ministry of Labor in August 2007 were locked inside a room at the ministry and six days later driven out by hired thugs.

None of this has stopped self-proclaimed Marxists from cheering on Chávez's "Bolivarian Revolution." Among the most shameless is the International Marxist Tendency (IMT) of Alan Woods who boasts of his credentials as a "Trotskyist" adviser to Chávez. In the lead-up to the referendum vote, the IMT's Venezuelan section, the Revolutionary Marxist Current (CMR), issued a 30 November 2007 statement calling for "an avalanche of votes in favor," declaring that a victory "will be a new step forward for the revolution." Incredibly, the CMR claimed that the victory of Chávez's referendum would have marked "the end of the bourgeois state apparatus!"

The CMR claims that to have called for a "no" vote would have played into the hands of "the capitalists, imperialism and the bureaucrats." This line is echoed by a number of other left groups, including the Revolutionary Leftist Youth (JIR), Venezuelan section of the Trotskyist Fraction-



Left: Leaders of failed, U.S.-backed military coup against Chávez in 2002. Right: November 2007 demonstration in Caracas organised by rightist bourgeois forces calls for "no" vote against Chávez referendum.



Fourth International, a split from the international tendency led by the late Nahuel Moreno. The JIR proclaimed, "we don't support this referendum because it upholds the legal basis for capitalism, the continuity of exploitation of the workers in the city and the countryside, securing the class society framework." Nonetheless, the JIR justified its call for abstention by arguing that "the call by some left-wing sectors for a NO vote, which mixes their banners with the pro-American right, is an attack on a position of class independence" (*En Clave Obrera*, December 2007).

There is no question that the main forces behind the "no" vote were right-wing opponents of the Chávez regime. But to support or abstain on a referendum that would have strengthened the repressive powers of the bourgeois state apparatus is a betrayal of the class interest of the proletariat. The opportunist left promotes the dangerous illusion that the capitalist state can be made to serve the interests of working people and renounces the struggle for socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. The class independence of the working class from all the agencies and representatives of bourgeois rule—including the most "progressive" bourgeois forces—is the fundamental starting point for the working class to struggle for its own class interests. It is essential for the forging of a revolutionary workers party that fights for the overthrow of capitalism and for liberation from the yoke of imperialist subjugation.

Fake Trotskyists Prettify Bourgeois Nationalism

In its article on the Chávez referendum (*Workers Power*, Winter 2007-08), the British Workers Power group, leading section of the League for the Fifth International, quotes Trotsky from his article "Bourgeois Democracy and the Fight Against Fascism" (13 January 1936) correctly urging, "We must vote against all measures that strengthen the capitalist-Bonapartist state, even those measures which may for the moment cause temporary unpleasantness for the fascists." Workers Power immediately adds: "The presidency—no matter who occupies it—remains an institution of the bourgeois state which be it said revolutionaries are

in favour of totally abolishing." Their conclusion? To call for an abstention on measures, which by their own admission, would strengthen the powers of the bourgeois state!

Similarly, the centrist Internationalist Group (IG) argued that the referendum was "a program for a bonapartist 'strong state' regime" and concluded that "for socialists to approve such measures would be to renounce the program of proletarian revolution" (*Internationalist*, December 2007). And so, the IG urged "class-conscious Venezuelan workers"... "to cast a blank ballot" or "abstain." So much for the program of proletarian revolution!

That neither Workers Power nor the IG, for all their orthodox-sounding disclaimers, could choke out a call for a "no" vote is sheer opportunism. Both Workers Power and the IG point to Venezuela as a bourgeois state. But they do not want to be seen as opponents of Chávez's referendum. The bombastic cries of "class war" and "a fight to the finish against the counterrevolutionaries" by the IG serve to promote the fraud—openly peddled by Chávez's more unabashed left apologists—that there is an ongoing revolution in Venezuela. Thus the IG's December 2007 article called to "Impose Workers Control on the Road to Socialist Revolution" and to "Smash Counterrevolution with Workers Mobilization!" All this talk of Venezuela "on the road" to socialism is deliberately crafted to obscure the fact that Chávez is administering a capitalist state.

It is worth noting that a few years ago the IG was whistling a different tune. In the face of a 2000 referendum by Chávez aimed at busting the Confederation of Venezuelan Workers (CTV), an article posted on the IG's Web site in Spanish headlined, "Against Chávez, the Stock Market and the IMF—Venezuela: Mobilize Workers Power to Defeat the Anti-Union Referendum." We too opposed this referendum and defended the CTV unions against government attack and control. However, the IG depicted Chávez as simply a stooge of the Caracas stock exchange and the imperialists and played down the real dangers of U.S. intervention, as well as the CTV's organic ties to the bourgeois AD and its historic connections to the CIA's "labor" fronts in Latin America.

As we observed in "Opportunism Makes Strange Bedfellows" (WV No. 787, 20 September 2002), "It didn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that the U.S. imperialists had it in for Chávez. Only idiots or CIA apologists could gloss over that fact." We also found the IG's denunciations of Chávez something of an unnatural act: "Given its history of lining up behind 'anti-imperialist' nationalists from Mexico to Puerto Rico and beyond, one could have expected the IG to cozy up to the nationalist-populist Chávez." And so it has come to pass.

Following Chávez's landslide victory in the 2006 elections, much of the left was heralding his calls to deepen the "revolutionary process" through more nationalizations, the creation of "communal councils" and the foundation of the thoroughly bourgeois United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV) as some harbinger of a revolutionary assault on the Venezuelan

bourgeoisie. The IG followed suit by defending Chávez when he revoked the broadcasting license of RCTV, one of the main media mouthpieces for the 2002 coup. In "Venezuela: Battle Over the Media" (*Internationalist*, July 2007), the IG argued that "in revolutionary conditions or wars, democratic questions are subordinate to fundamental class issues."

For Marxists, democratic questions are always subordinate to the class line. That said, there is neither a revolution nor a civil war in Venezuela today. For his part, Chávez made clear at a mass rally in Caracas where he announced the revoking of RCTV's license: "We have no plan to eliminate the oligarchy, Venezuela's bourgeoisie. We have demonstrated this sufficiently in our eight years" (quoted in *International Socialist Review*, July-August 2007).

As Trotsky wrote in a 1938 article against a campaign by Vicente Lombardo Toledano, the leader of the CTM union federation in Mexico under the Cárdenas regime, "to 'curb' the reactionary press, either by placing it under a democratic censorship or by banning it altogether":

"Both theory and historical experience testify that any restriction of democracy in bourgeois society is, in the final analysis, invariably directed against the proletariat.... Bourgeois democracy is of use to the proletariat only insofar as it opens up the way for the development of the class struggle. Consequently, any working class 'leader' who arms the bourgeois state with special means for controlling public opinion in general and the press in particular is, precisely, a traitor. In the last analysis, the sharpening of the class struggle will impel the bourgeoisie of every stripe to reach an agreement among themselves; they will then pass special laws, all sorts of restrictive measures, and all kinds of 'democratic' censorship against the working class. Anyone who has not yet understood this should get out of the ranks of the working class."

—"Freedom of the Press and the Working Class," 21 August 1938

In its article on RCTV, the IG shamelessly equates the bourgeois Venezuelan regime of Hugo Chávez to the Soviet government in Russia after the Bolshevik-led workers revolution had smashed the capitalist state and established a workers state. The IG writes:

"In a 9 November 1917 decree of the Petrograd Soviet, Lenin ordered that only those papers be shut down which (1) call for open resistance or insubordination to the Workers' and Peasants' Government; (2) sow sedition through demonstrably slanderous distortion of facts; (3) instigate actions of an obviously criminal, i.e., criminally punishable, nature. RCTV (and other networks) in Venezuela filled all three criteria." [emphasis added]

Continuing in the same vein, the IG writes in its December 2007 article on the referendum that Chávez "expresses admiration for the Russian Revolutionary Leon Trotsky, but his actual policies are far more timid." More timid?! Trotsky was a leader of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. According to the IG, being "more timid" is what separates the bourgeois-populist Chávez from a revolutionary leader of the international proletariat!

For all its pronouncements that Venezuela is a bourgeois state, the IG repeatedly draws analogies and makes

continued on page 10



Alan Woods of pseudo-Trotskyist International Marxist Tendency embraces Chávez.

Venezuela...

(continued from page 9)

comparisons with countries where capitalism was overthrown. The IG opines that "while Chávez may slough off pro-capitalist elements the way East European Stalinists got rid of bourgeois ministers one by one through 'salami tactics' after World War II, there is no Red Army occupying Venezuela to serve as ultimate arbiter and power base for erecting a deformed workers state." This analogy is as breathtaking as it is outrageous. The East European countries were not bourgeois states after they were occupied by the Red Army following its victory over Hitler's Nazis. Rather, the power of former puppet regimes of the Third Reich was broken when the Nazis were smashed, leaving behind a power vacuum that was filled by the Soviet Army. Confronted with the onset of the imperialist anti-Soviet Cold War, the Stalinists established deformed workers states as a "buffer zone" through cold social transformations from above.

In raising this surreal analogy, the IG's not-so-subtle implication is that the bourgeois Chávez government is some kind of "transitional regime" that might accept or overthrow capitalism. Thus the IG consolidates its position on the left end of the spectrum of Bolivarian "Trotskyism."

We have characterized the IG's politics as "Pabloism of the second mobilization," referring to the liquidationist current led by Michel Pablo that destroyed the Trotskyist Fourth International in the early 1950s. Faced with the onset of the imperialist Cold War and the creation of Stalinist-ruled deformed workers states in East and Central Europe, the Pabloites looked to non-proletarian forces and argued that the Stalinists, social democrats and Third World nationalists could be pressured to outline a "roughly" revolutionary course, denying the need for a Trotskyist vanguard party. By the early 1960s, Pablo himself became an adviser to the bourgeois FLN regime in Algeria after it won independence from French imperialism.

Referring to those who would write off the struggle against Pabloism that was led by American Trotskyist James P. Cannon within the Fourth International because of its partial quality, IG leader Jan Norden noted when he was still a Trotskyist in the International Communist League, "This, in turn, frees the born-yesterday centrists to pursue their eclectic, anti-internationalist lashups with abandon, combining and recombining with other denizens of the pseudo-Trotskyist swamp" ("Yugoslavia, East Europe and the Fourth International: The Evolution of Pabloist Liquidationism," *Prometheus Research Series* No. 4, March 1993). This aptly describes the IG. Their opportunism reflects adaptation to the retrogression of political consciousness in the post-Soviet world, leading them to an increasingly desperate search for, and accommodation to, social forces other than the proletariat and vehicles other than a Leninist vanguard party to advance the struggle for human emancipation. Enter Hugo Chávez.

The Myth of "Workers Control" in Venezuela

The IG's call to "Impose Workers Control on the Road to Socialist Revolution" purposely confuses the meaning of workers control, which is dual power at the point of production in a revolutionary crisis. In other words, the workers have the power to veto management actions they oppose. Such a situation can only end in either the workers seizing state power through socialist revolution or in the capitalists reasserting their power through counterrevolution. Trotsky wrote in his 20 August 1931 article "Workers' Control of Production": "Control can be imposed only by force upon the bourgeoisie, by a

proletariat on the road to the moment of taking power from them, and then also ownership of the means of production."

The IG points to "workers committees which exist in embryonic or developed form in many plants and workplaces" in Venezuela. These committees, which mainly exist in industries that have been nationalized by the state, are in fact co-management schemes with the capitalist state in which the latter holds the whip hand. This is recognized even by the abject reformists of the British Socialist Workers Party (SWP), who write: "Government representatives run the factory, sometimes in coordination with workers' representatives. At the moment there are about 60 factories under some form of workers' occupation



KLOS

Venezuelan troops attack demonstrator from a Sanitarium Maracay workers caravan to Caracas demanding nationalisation of factory, April 2007.

pressing for nationalisation. Where that has occurred it has taken the form of co-management, which is a long way from workers' control" (*International Socialism* No. 116, 28 September 2007).

Indeed, these are class-collaborationist schemes aimed at chaining the workers to the capitalist state. The same goes for the "workers cooperatives," which no less an apologist for the Chávez regime than CMR leader Jorge Martín points out have in many cases "become an excuse for outsourcing of the labour force," i.e., busting the unions. A significant factor behind Chávez's formation of the PSUV is to maintain government control over the trade unions. As Trotsky wrote in the aftermath of the expropriation of the imperialists' oil holdings in Mexico by the Cárdenas regime:

"The management of railways, oil fields, etc., through labor organizations has nothing in common with workers' control over industry, for in the essence of the matter the management is effected through the labor bureaucracy which is independent of the workers but, in return, completely dependent on the bourgeois state. This measure on the part of the ruling class pursues the aim of disciplining the working class, making it more industrious in the service of the common interests of the state, which appear on the surface to merge with the interests of the working class itself."

—"Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay" (1940)

The IG points to the wing of the National Workers Union (UNT) headed by Orlando Chirino, which opposed entering the PSUV and called for an abstention in the December referendum, opining that the UNT "has been bedeviled from the beginning by the riddle of how to oppose Chávez' attacks on the workers while not breaking from the popularity he enjoys among Venezuela's impoverished masses." This likewise bedevils the IG. Left unsaid in the IG article is the fact that the UNT was founded by *chavista* union bureaucrats who set up the federation in 2003 under the umbrella of the government. The UNT was created to break up the Confederation of Venezuelan Workers, itself a corporatist union tied to the former bourgeois Democratic Action regime and with links to the U.S. imperialists. Chirino's posture as an advocate of independent unions is belied by his loyalty to the Chávez regime. In an interview with the British SWP's *International Socialism* (9 May 2007), Chirino boasts of his credentials as a member of "the first political organization to support Hugo Chavez's

presidential candidacy."

In the same interview, Chirino points to China as part of "international consortia" that are "exploiting our workers more than ever." He goes on to state that "capitalism was restored in China a number of years ago, and today it is the country where the working class is most exploited. They are modern-day slaves." In fact, China is a bureaucratically deformed workers state where capitalism was overthrown as a result of the 1949 Revolution, a victory for the international working class. Despite the inroads made by the "market reforms" instituted by the Stalinist bureaucracy, the core of China's economy remains collectivized. In his anti-China diatribe, Chirino takes his place with much of the reformist

left, which, having hailed the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state in 1991-92, now line up with their own capitalist rulers and refuse to defend China. This, as they sing the praises of the bourgeois-populist Hugo Chávez and his "Bolivarian Revolution."

At the same time, numerous leftists and others have falsely compared Chávez to the Castro regime in Cuba. But, like China and *unlike* Venezuela, Cuba is a deformed workers state. When Castro's Rebel Army marched into Havana in January 1959, the bourgeois army and the rest of the capitalist state apparatus that had propped up the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship shattered. In the face of the hostile encirclement of U.S. imperialism, in 1960-61 the Castro regime nationalized U.S.-owned and domestic capitalist property, marking the expropriation of the Cuban bourgeoisie as a class. This was a social revolution. The existence of the Soviet Union was crucial in providing both an economic lifeline and a military shield that helped stay the hand of the Yankee imperialist colossus just 90 miles away.

As revolutionary Trotskyists who fought for the unconditional military defense of the Soviet degenerated workers state and the deformed workers states of East and Central Europe against imperialism and capitalist counterrevolution, we apply this same program to the remaining deformed workers states of China, Cuba, Vietnam and North Korea. At the same time, we fight for workers political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucrats—whose dogma of "socialism in one country" serves to undermine the defense of the workers states—and to establish regimes based on workers democracy and revolutionary internationalism. Those who do not defend the existing gains of the working class cannot conquer new ones. Our military defense of the deformed workers states is part of our struggle for new October Revolutions. Key to our perspective is the fight to reforge Trotsky's Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution.

For Permanent Revolution!

The difference between idealistic young radicals who look to Chávez and the wized opportunists is that the latter try to pass off support for Chávez as Marxism. Many radical intellectuals and reformist groups peddle Chávez's invocation of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution as good coin. In this, they turn Trotsky's

theory on its head. Permanent revolution is predicated on the understanding that the bourgeoisie in countries of belated capitalist development, however radical sounding their regimes, are too weak, too fearful of the proletariat and too dependent on imperialist foreign capital, to resolve the problems of political democracy, agrarian revolution and independent national development. Instead, as was borne out in the 1917 Russian Revolution, the accomplishment of these tasks can only be carried out under the class rule of the proletariat.

The conquest of power by the proletariat does not complete the socialist revolution, but only opens it by changing the direction of social development. The proletariat in power would expropriate the bourgeoisie as a class in order to establish a collectivized planned economy where production is based on social need rather than profit. But short of the international extension of the revolution, particularly to the advanced, industrialized imperialist centers, that social development will be arrested and ultimately reversed. The efforts of U.S. imperialism to bring down the Chávez regime underline the need for proletarian revolutionary internationalism, which is at the core of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution. The struggles of the proletariat in the semicolonial countries are necessarily intertwined with the fight for power by workers in the imperialist centers, not least in the U.S.

For all his populist rhetoric, Chávez is no less the class opponent of the victory of the workers and urban and rural poor than his neoliberal opponents. We seek to break the illusions of working people and the oppressed—both in Venezuela and internationally—that the bourgeois Chávez regime can be an agent of social revolution. In contrast, our political opponents accommodate and deepen such illusions. As we wrote in "Venezuela: Populist Nationalism vs. Proletarian Revolution" (*WV* No. 860, 9 December 2005):

"History will reserve a harsh verdict for those 'leftists' who promote one or another left-talking capitalist *caudillo*. The way forward for the downtrodden throughout the Americas does not lie through painting nationalist strongmen as revolutionaries and populist forays as revolutions. It lies instead in constructing national sections of a reformed Fourth International in the spirit of uncompromising revolutionary hostility to any and all kinds of capitalist rule. South of the Rio Bravo, such parties will have to be built in political struggle against widespread illusions in populism and nationalism. In the United States, the belly of the imperialist beast, a revolutionary workers party will be built in the struggle to break the proletariat from the Democratic and Republican parties of capital and to replace the pro-imperialist AFL-CIO tops with a class-struggle leadership." ■

International Communist League Pamphlet

**The Development and Extension of
Leon Trotsky's Theory
of Permanent Revolution**

See Page Three

**Just
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(continued from page 6)

conspicuously boycotted this PDC-sponsored rally and the earlier protests in defence of Mumia. This contrasted to their feverish activity in the "struggle" to get out the vote for the ALP and the capitalist Greens in last year's federal elections. One lone Democratic Socialist Perspective (DSP) cadre, Chris Slee, attended the 17 May rally. Speaking during the discussion as a member of Socialist Alliance (SA) and Civil Rights Defence, he stated that "Socialist Alliance supports the campaign to free Mumia Abu-Jamal." Unfortunately, apart from Slee's attendance at this rally, there is no evidence of SA taking up this fight—for example, they didn't endorse or mobilise for the PDC-initiated international united-front rallies.

Reporting on the 17 May rally in the pages of *Green Left Weekly*, Slee did not restate his assertion that SA supports the campaign for Mumia, nor did he state the basic truth that Mumia is an innocent man (while conspicuously excluding the Spartacist League from his otherwise complete list of speakers). Neither did he report a key message of the rally—that there is no justice in the capitalist courts—because, in fact, the DSP-run SA (along with the FSP, Socialist Alternative and others) promote faith in government inquiries such as the 1987 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody—a whitewash that upheld police and coroner verdicts in all 99 cases it reviewed. The DSP were also in the vanguard of the social-chauvinist campaign for Australian imperialist troops to East Timor in 1999.

As Florrimell explained, the frame-up of Mumia like the acquittal of the Queensland cop for the brutal killing of Mulrunji Doomadgee, and the current persecution of Lex Wotton for protesting this, shows that working people and the oppressed are up against a machine for the systematic suppression of the working class and oppressed. In order to prevail, the working class must be mobilised independent of the capitalist state and its parties. In this country it means rejecting illusions in whitewash government enquiries and schemes to make the police "more responsive" such as calls for community control.

An SL speaker from the floor also took up the call for community control of the police, often raised by the FSP. Responding to Peter Murray's reformist demand to "jail all the killer cops," he asked, "Who's going to jail the killer cops?" Linking this to demands to implement the 1991 findings of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, he continued, "this all sows illusions in the very state that persecutes the likes of Mumia. No, what we need is a program that says...we have to get rid of this state, we have to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat."

The speaker also recalled the fight waged by the SL in 2004 to hold a meeting at the Victorian Trades Hall in defence of Aboriginal militants, following the upheaval in Redfern sparked by the cop killing of local teenager, T.J. Hickey. At the behest of the Police Association, our meeting was banned by Trades Hall. This graphically illustrates the understanding that the police, part of the armed fist of the capitalist state, have no place in the workers movement. The SL speaker continued, "We fought this [ban]. We approached leftists and unionists, and we know that some unions moved against this outrage, which was a great thing, and we won our room back...which means that we can now have this meeting here for Mumia in this room."

The 27 March decision upholding Mumia's frame-up conviction should be a wake up call to anyone lulled into the idea that the very courts that have entombed Mumia on death row for over a quarter of a century would one day dispense justice.

Drop the Charges Against Lex Wotton!

We reprint below a 5 June Partisan Defence Committee statement in defence of Palm Island Aboriginal community activist Lex Wotton. Wotton, who is currently due to go to trial in October, continues to face racist state persecution for protesting the killing of Aboriginal Mulrunji Doomadgee in 2004.

Adding insult to injury it has recently been reported that Queensland policeman Chris Hurley—acquitted in a whitewash trial for the killing of Doomadgee—was outrageously awarded a confidential \$100,000 payout for the alleged loss of belongings when a fire burnt down the Palm Island police station, watchhouse and officer-in-charge residences following protests by Palm Islanders against Doomadgee's heinous and brutal killing.

As with the case of black political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal (see articles pages 1 and 4) Wotton's case demonstrates that workers and the oppressed face a system of capitalist injustice. What is necessary is *class-struggle defence* based on the understanding that capitalist society is divided into two hostile classes and that the capitalist state and its courts are organs of repression against the working people and the oppressed. We need mass trade union-centred actions, on the streets to demand: **Drop the charges against Lex Wotton now! Down with racist state terror! For union/minority!**

black mobilisations to defend Aboriginal people!

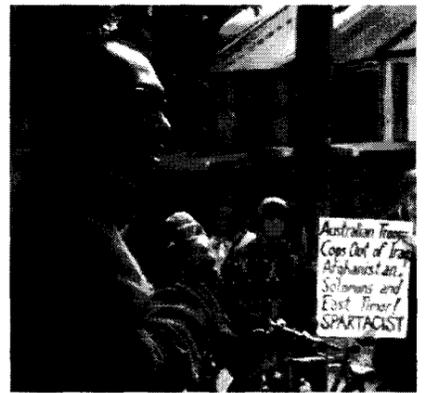
* * *

5 June 2008

Office of the Director of the Department of Public Prosecutions, Queensland

The Partisan Defence Committee protests the ongoing persecution of Palm Island Aboriginal man, Lex Wotton. Mr Wotton has been charged with "riot causing destruction of buildings" in relation to protests that erupted on the island following a coroner's report supporting police claims that the brutal death of Mulrunji Doomadgee in the Palm Island police station on 19 November 2004 was an accident. Mr Doomadgee was beaten so savagely his liver was almost cleaved in two. Lex Wotton has been charged under Section 65 of the Queensland Criminal Code, an archaic provision enacted in 1899 which carries a maximum sentence of life in prison. **We demand that the charges against him be dropped immediately!**

The prosecution of this Baha'i man is particularly vindictive. Early on 27 November 2004, over 50 police, with dogs, surrounded Mr Wotton at his house. When he refused to kneel, he was outrageously tasered with 50,000 volts. Wotton feared for the safety of his partner and children who watched in horror. His mother and his sister were also charged.



ASP photo

Redfern, Sydney, 22 September 2007: Lex Wotton addresses rally organised in his defence.

These charges were later dropped. The treatment of Lex Wotton stands in stark contrast with that of the police officer Chris Hurley. Despite his admission in court that he must have caused Mulrunji's fatal injuries, Hurley was acquitted of "manslaughter" by an all white jury in a whitewash "trial" in Townsville.

The Partisan Defence Committee stands in solidarity with the struggles of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples against racist state terror and oppression. Lex Wotton is a well-respected member of his community; he has been a founder and/or member of social programs on the island, including drug and alcohol rehabilitation councils, initiating the island's first literacy survey and fighting to get a library established, and seeking a better, community-run shop on the island. **Lex Wotton has been charged and persecuted because he is an articulate and resolute Aboriginal man. We demand that all charges against him be dropped immediately!**

The movement that once mobilised protests of tens of thousands was demobilised by reformist groups who subordinated the fight for Mumia's freedom to the bankrupt call for a new trial. A speaker from the Melbourne Anarchist Communist Group, endorsers of the PDC-initiated united-front protests, also opposed the call for a new trial noting former political prisoner, Tim Anderson, had to beat not one but two frame-up trials over the 1978 Hilton Hotel bombing in Sydney (see "Tim Anderson Framed, Again" *Australasian Spartacist* No. 139, Summer 1990/91). Neil Florrimell explained that the demand to re-try Mumia, an innocent man, is a sop to the liberals and others whose main concern is that the blatant frame-up of Mumia exposes the "neutrality" of their "justice" system as a lie. Behind the demand stands a political policy of reliance on the courts and the capitalist state.

Today, it is all the more urgent to revitalise mass protest to free Mumia and to link his fight to the struggle to abolish the racist death penalty. While every legal avenue must be pursued, what is needed is a *class-struggle* perspective based on the social power of the working class and the understanding that the capitalist state, its military, cops, courts and prisons, exist to uphold the rule of the bourgeoisie against the struggle of the working people and oppressed. As we stated in our call for the 23 April Sydney united-front protest: "Full equality for the oppressed masses requires that the working class rip the economy out of the hands of the capitalist rulers and reorganise it on a socialist basis. Only then will it be possible to eliminate the material roots of racist oppression and build an egalitarian socialist society based on a collectivised economy with quality jobs, housing, health care and education for all. The fight to free Mumia is the fight for black liberation, part of the broader fight for socialist revolution and therefore for the liberation of us all."

The PDC speaker warned, "There is no room for complacency in the fight for Mumia's freedom. Very powerful forces want to see him silenced for life. The arch-segregationist Supreme Court in the U.S. has just recently lifted the de facto moratorium on the death penalty and the wheels of legalised murder are gathering pace again. Mumia's case is at a critical juncture." As Florrimell urged everyone at the rally: spread the word, arm yourselves and others with the facts, show the

PDC video, *Live from Death Row*, get your organisations to pass motions, sign onto the international statement issued by the PDC. He declared, "Let the fight for Mumia's freedom become the struggle of all in the fight against capitalist injustice everywhere." Mass united-front mobilisations are needed internationally to send a message to the racist capitalist rulers and their courts: **We will not let Mumia die or rot another day in prison! Free Mumia now!** ■

Join the Campaign to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!

Funds are urgently needed for legal defence!

Make a contribution today, payable to "National Lawyers Guild Foundation" (earmarked for "Mumia") and mail to: Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal, P.O. Box 2012, New York, NY 10159, U.S.

Donations to the PDC earmarked "Mumia Legal Defence" as well as collections at PDC or other events for Mumia's legal defence are receipted and transferred in full to the above NLG account as has been designated by Mumia's lawyer for this purpose.

Organise protest! Pass motions in your unions, campus, community and religious organisations demanding Mumia's freedom. Get your union or organisation to make a contribution and join rallies and protests for Mumia. Publicise Mumia's case in your union or organisation's newsletter.

Spread the word! Contact the PDC for copies of *The Fight to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal—Mumia Is Innocent!* This pamphlet arms activists in the struggle for Mumia's freedom by presenting the political basis of the state vendetta against Mumia and the explosive evidence which completely destroys the more than two-decades-long frame-up of this eloquent fighter for black freedom. It is available for \$1. Get the PDC badge: "Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!"—\$1 each. Order the PDC video, *From Death Row, This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal*—\$10 for DVD. Bundles of the 4-page brochure, *Mumia Is an Innocent Man: Free Mumia Abu-Jamal*—\$2 for 25 copies.

Order from/make cheques payable to Partisan Defence Committee, PO Box Q217, QVB, Sydney NSW 1230. Contact us on (02) 9281 2181 or (03) 9654 4315, or e-mail pdc.sydney@exemail.com.au.

Mumia...

(continued from page 1)

Pracy (All-Poland Workers Trade Union Confederation of Labor) and the All-Workers Fighting Front (PAME) union federation of Greece, which is allied with the Communist Party. In Scotland, the Aberdeen Trades Union Council and the Scottish Trades Union Congress endorsed, with Grahame Smith, General Secretary of the Scottish Trades Union Congress, declaring in his greetings to the protests that Mumia "should be freed immediately from prison. He is innocent, and the inherently racist death penalty should be abolished."

Additionally, 40 trade-union locals in the U.S. and around the world endorsed the united-front protests. These locals represent workers in industries such as transport, waterfront, steel, auto, electrical and communications, as well as postal workers, teachers and campus workers. Scores of individual union leaders also endorsed as well as representatives of such organizations as the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, the Coalition of Labor Union Women and the Latino Caucus of SEIU Local 721 in L.A.

The PDC also sought support for Mumia's cause among students, antiwar and gay rights activists, minorities, immigrant communities, left organizations and other public figures. Endorsements for the united fronts were received from former Black Panther Party leaders Elaine Brown and David Hilliard, the head of the VVN-BdA (Association of the Victims of the Nazi Regime—Coalition of Anti-Fascists) in Berlin, South African actor Dr. John Kani, Cynthia McKinney (U.S. Green Party candidate for president) and well-known writers Cornel West, Gilles Perault, Robert Allen, Michael Eric Dyson and Manning Marable. From Cuba, we received endorsements from author Celia Hart and Che Guevara's daughter, Aleida Guevara March. A statement of solidarity was sent by Leonard Peltier, the longtime jailed American Indian Movement leader who remains unbowed in the face of a decades-long vendetta by the U.S. government. The protests were also built and attended by black nationalist groups in London, Chicago and Oakland, gay rights activists in Chicago, and others. Speakers included trade unionists, family members of slain Black Panthers and former Black Panthers facing frame-up charges today.

The PDC encouraged the endorsing organizations to issue their own calls for the demonstrations. All organizations that endorsed the protests were also invited to speak. Where participants took up the PDC's invitation to express their own views, including raising political differences with other participants, a broad range of political viewpoints was aired, which only made more powerful the shared commitment to the urgent fight for Mumia's freedom.

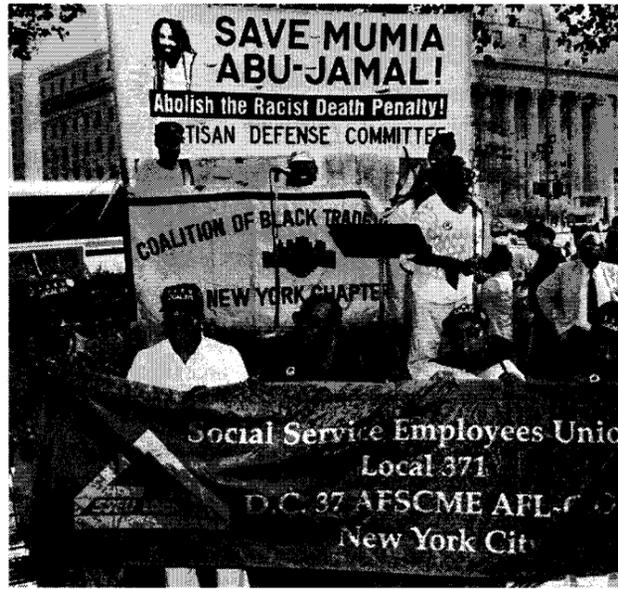
Reformists Demobilised a Mass Movement—Rebuild the Movement for Mumia!

What is vital is to turn the endorsements and statements of support from the international labor movement into labor action in the fight to free Mumia. We fight for a strategy of class-struggle defense, which must be based on the understanding that capitalist society is fundamentally divided between two hostile social classes—the capitalist exploiters and the working class—and that the capitalist state and its courts are organs of repression against working people and the oppressed. As PDC counsel Rachel Wolkenstein underlined at the Mexico City united-front protest:

"There is a power to fight against the state's vendetta against Mumia. The power to make the courts yield, the power to set Mumia free rests in the international, multiracial, multiethnic working class that can stop production, transport and communication!... That power is represented in embryo by endorsers of this demonstration

and those who have come out today! This power must be used to fight for Mumia, for all class-war prisoners, as part of turning economic struggles of the working people into political struggles leading to socialist revolutions around the globe."

As part of this class-struggle strategy, the PDC has fought for genuine united-front action in Mumia's defense. The united front is a tactic for common actions undertaken under the watchword, "march separately, strike together." That means unity in action based on agreed-upon slogans and complete freedom of criticism—i.e., open debate about what strategy is needed to rebuild the movement for Mumia and fight for his freedom. As communists who participate in united-front actions, we never relinquish the obligation



PDC-initiated united-front protest in New York City, August 1995. Mass protests, including by unions representing millions of workers internationally, helped stay Mumia's execution in 1995.

to say the truth as we see it. However, in the service of class collaboration, the Stalinists and social democrats have over the decades perverted the term united front, using it to mean a political bloc of opportunists who would not dream of openly raising criticisms of one another. Today, that means evading the political struggle necessary to move forward the fight to free Mumia.

In its April 8 "Open Letter to Fighters for Mumia's Freedom" (reprinted in *WV* No. 912, 11 April), the PDC noted that the March 27 court ruling made it so clear that Mumia cannot get justice in the capitalist courts that "even those who have mobilized for many years on the basis that Mumia could get a 'new, fair trial' now proclaim that there should be no illusions in the American injustice system." Prior to the April 19 ICFMAJ demonstration in Philadelphia and the PDC-initiated united front in Oakland, the PDC approached the San Francisco Mobilization to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal and the Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition (NYC) to endorse the PDC-initiated protests and to turn the Philly protest into a genuine united front. But these proposals were rejected outright. As the PDC stated in its "Open Letter":

"The frame-up of Mumia Abu-Jamal is a stark expression of the class and race bias of the capitalist courts and underlines the need for the multiracial working class to champion the fight for black liberation....

"The call for a 'new trial' is based on a political program of reliance on the capitalist class, its politicians and courts to afford justice to fighters for the oppressed. Nobody ever called for a 'new trial' for Angela Davis, Huey Newton or Nelson Mandela. Had the political counterposition between our call to 'Free Mumia' and those advocating a 'new trial' been openly debated over the past decade, the movement for Mumia today would have been stronger and firmly based on the need to mobilize to free this innocent man....

"The rejection of our urgent call for united-front action by the Mobe and the New York Coalition is political cowardice. At this urgent hour, they are subordinating the fight for Mumia's freedom to their fear of political debate."

Indeed, while numerous organizations and individuals endorsed the united-front protests, conspicuously absent were most of the left—with a few exceptions, such as the Freedom Socialist Party and the

Internationalist Group (IG)—though we actively sought their endorsements and encouraged them to help build the protests. Supporters of the Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL), the League for the Revolutionary Party (LRP) and the Campaign to End the Death Penalty (dominated by the International Socialist Organization) showed up at the Chicago united-front protest, while supporters of Spark came to the one in Los Angeles. But all these organizations (and others) refused to endorse the united-front protests, which simply called for freedom for an innocent black political prisoner and an end to the racist death penalty (things that should be ABC to any decent liberal, let alone a self-professed socialist). As Marxists, we oppose the

larger reformist forces internationally, such as the French Communist Party (PCF), as well as trade-union bureaucrats in the U.S.

The effect was devastating; a mass movement was demobilized. Why mobilize on the streets or in the unions if Mumia can get justice from the courts? As the KfsV, the PDC's fraternal defense organization in Germany, stated in a polemic against the Berlin Coalition for Mumia (see "Germany: Anti-Communists Undermine Fight to Free Mumia," *WV* No. 906, 18 January):

"To make the demand for a 'new, fair trial' a perspective for the movement for Mumia's freedom means reaching out to those liberals who question Mumia's innocence, who would be content if he were condemned to a living death, who just want the frame-up to gain the appearance of 'fairness' and 'due process.' The Coalition seeks to appeal to those in the 'mainstream' who see the legal hell that Mumia has been put through as a stain on the image of American 'justice' or a deviation from European 'constitutional' democracy. Preaching that the next court is *the court* that will grant Mumia a new, fair trial also demoralizes those youth and workers who initially joined the fight for Mumia because in his fight, they saw their own fight against 'the system' as they understood it and have experienced it first hand."

A crucial part of the PDC's ongoing international campaign is to undo the damage done by the reformists and rebuild the movement for Mumia. As we took Mumia's case to campuses, we found that most youth today, even black students, had not even heard of him, unlike a decade ago. Equally telling, most of those who had heard of him thought he had already been freed, was about to be freed, or even that he had been executed.

The reformist left's subordination of Mumia's struggle to the bourgeois liberals and "progressive" Democrats is fundamentally no different from their treatment of other social struggles—such as that against the invasion and occupation of Iraq, the fight for immigrant rights, abortion rights, etc. These and more have been hitched to unseating the Republican majority in Congress—already accomplished in 2006—and to installing a Democrat in the White House this year.

This stems from the reformists' opposition to the fight for socialist revolution to overthrow the capitalist order and their promotion of the lie that capitalism, through protest and pressure, can be reformed to serve the interests of working people and the oppressed. Thus, today the reformists, either explicitly or implicitly, seek to boost the fortunes of pro-death-penalty capitalist politician Barack Obama (or, to a far lesser extent, pro-death-penalty capitalist politician Hillary Clinton). Meanwhile, others are promoting "progressive" capitalist politician Cynthia McKinney, the presumptive nominee of the small-time capitalist Green Party.

In building for the April 19 Mumia protest in Philadelphia, the PDC set up a banner calling for Mumia's freedom in the vicinity of the Obama rally on April 18. Spartacist comrades made clear our fight for the political independence of the working class from the capitalist class, distributing the April 17 article, "Obama, Clinton: No Friends of Workers, Blacks, the Oppressed—Break with the Democratic Party of Imperialist War and Racism! For a Class-Struggle Workers Party!" (reprinted in *WV* No. 913, 25 April). That article made clear that we "do not extend any political support on principle to any capitalist politician—Democrat, Republican, Green or 'Independent'."

In going to this rally, we sought to publicize Mumia's cause and to intersect liberal youth attracted to Obama with Mumia's case. Ever since we took up Mumia's case in 1987, we have always sought to bring in broader forces that do not share our Marxist framework in the struggle on his behalf. In going to the "mainstream," the reformists sought to build a "movement" that took an agnostic position on Mumia's innocence. It is the PDC and the SL that

have publicized Mumia's case and brought it to the broadest possible forces, and done so—through our mobilizations, rallies and publications (most recently, for example, the PDC Fact Sheet pamphlet, *Big Lies in the Service of Legal Lynching*)—on the basis that he is an innocent man, the victim of a racist and political frame-up, who must be immediately freed.

One can contrast the protests initiated by the PDC with the other recent Mumia protests, which sought to exclude our communist views from the expressions of "diversity" permitted from their platforms. At the April 19 Philadelphia rally, the organizers arranged that different groups of demonstrators protest separately in their own little bantustans: the contingent built by the PDC on one corner, while on other corners there were supporters of organizations such as the ICFMAJ, WWP, PSL and the RCP's October 22nd Coalition. This division only emboldened fascist provocateurs and other supporters of the racist cops to carry out their previously announced threats of harassment and violence against Mumia's defenders.

In contrast, the PDC-initiated protests *united* forces with diverse political viewpoints behind the call to free Mumia, while allowing each group to put forward its views. In Oakland, speakers included Richard Brown, Hank Jones, Francisco Torres and Ray Boudreaux of the "San Francisco 8," former Black Panthers who are now being dragged through the courts on frame-up charges of killing a cop, which had been dismissed 30 years ago.

Speakers in the London protest included a number of black nationalists, such as Brother Omowale, who spoke on behalf of Galaxy Radio, which had publicized the PDC-initiated protest. Jessica Huntley, who helped found Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications, gave a very powerful and vivid picture of Mumia's professionalism and political knowledge as a journalist when she had met him in 1981. She recalled Mumia calling her after he was arrested, telling her



Mumia in hospital after being shot and beaten by cops in 1981.

working-class struggle across racial lines against the racist bourgeoisie.... They despair of the possibility of winning working-class leadership, so therefore the only thing...left is support to the Democratic Party. This is a united-front protest. So freedom of criticism. That's why it was appropriate for Jokarhi to get up here and give his perspective. And that's why I'm giving mine."

From Mexico City to Sydney: Mumia Must Be Freed Now!

Addressing the 100 protesters who mobilized in Mexico City for the April 24 united-front protest called by the GEM, Rachel Wolkenstein emphasized: "We are here to declare our opposition to the determination by the American state to execute Mumia or keep him in prison for the rest of his life. Mumia's only crime was to be an unbending opponent of racism, police brutality, imperialist war and colonial depredation." She added: "The American racist rulers see in Mumia the spectre of black revolt.... When Mumia was only 14 years old, he joined the Black Panther Party and soon became Minister of Communications of his local.... Mumia was put on a government list when he was 15 years old, for the crime, in the words of the FBI, of being an 'effective spokesman'." She continued:

"Mumia's fight for freedom is a fight for all of us—in the United States, in Mexico, around the globe. In the United States his frame-up embodies every aspect of racist capitalist injustice. It lays bare the essence of the capitalist state as an instrument of repression against working people and the oppressed. The development of U.S. capitalism is rooted in black chattel slavery. The death penalty is the legacy of slavery—when blacks could be tortured and murdered as the property of their owners. The death sentence is the lynch rope made legal."

Among the protesters in Mexico City were UNAM students and campus workers, leftists—including the Liga de los Trabajadores por el Socialismo-Contracorriente (LTS, allied with a Morenoite current of ostensible Trotskyism) and the IG, both of which addressed the rally—and spokesmen for defense groups including ¡Eureka! and the National Front Against Repression (FNCR). Inti Martínez from ¡Eureka! brought greetings from Senator Rosario Ibarra, National Coordinator of ¡Eureka! and an endorser of the united-front protests. Referring to the decades-long struggle by Ibarra and ¡Eureka! to recover their children, spouses and comrades disappeared by the Mexican state, he said: "They took them alive, we want them back alive! Free all political prisoners, free Mumia!"

The speaker for the Juventud Espartaquista, youth group of the GEM, recalled that the previous day was the ninth anniversary of the beginning of the militant UNAM student strike in defense of public education, "a very combative struggle that had the potential to light the fuse of workers revolution in Mexico. To realize this potential, a revolutionary leadership was necessary." The strike was broken by bloody state repression by all three of Mexico's bourgeois parties, the PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party), PAN (National Action Party) and PRD (Party of the Democratic Revolution), and the JE speaker linked this to the attacks by right-wing thugs against leftist students on campuses today. He also took up the current campaign to smear prominent Mexican

leftist spokesmen as well as UNAM students and working-class militants as "terrorists" in the wake of the murderous Colombian government attack on a camp of the guerrillaist FARC in Ecuador in early March, which killed 22 people, including several UNAM students.

The theme of labor solidarity across the border was repeatedly raised. The speaker for the Workers Assembly at the Political and Social Sciences School, organized in the STUNAM union, declared, "Death to tyranny! Death to the death penalty!" He demanded freedom for Mumia and for "all the Mexicans and Latinos unjustly prosecuted" by the U.S. government. The LTS speaker saluted the PDC for the international campaign and pointed to the power of the U.S. working class and the need for American workers to unite with workers around the world. Disavowing confidence in the U.S. Democratic or Republican parties, he called on the trade unions to lead the struggle for Mumia's freedom. The speaker for the GEM responded that through its calls for "dissolution of the repressive forces of the state," the LTS partakes of the same illusions in the capitalist state that demobilized the fight for Mumia's freedom.

Celia Hart sent a solidarity message linking Mumia's case to that of the Cuban Five, framed up in Miami on bogus espionage charges because of their solidarity with Cuba. She wrote: "With great honor and commitment I endorse the campaign for the immediate freedom of our brother Mumia.... Our five Cuban *compañeros*, revolutionary fighters, suffer unacceptable sentences just as Mumia does. They are six fighters for the happiness of their peoples (two of the Cuban comrades are also Americans). These two campaigns should be one.... We need those six internationalist fighters out from behind bars...."

At every united-front protest, the injustice suffered by Mumia was linked with capitalist oppression and racist cop terror at home. At the April 23 united-front protest in Sydney, Australia, where some 55 demonstrators called for Mumia's freedom, the speaker for the Spartacist League, Margaret Rodda, said: "We oppose the death penalty on principle and demand its abolition. We do not accord the state the right to decide who lives and dies. While the death penalty was officially abolished in Australia...it is applied in practice against the deeply oppressed Aboriginal population in the prisons and police cells. This gives Mumia's case a deep resonance in this country." Denouncing the military and police takeover of Aboriginal lands in Australia's Northern Territory, she demanded, "The Aboriginal people must not be left to fight alone—mobilize the organized workers movement in a class-struggle fight for Aboriginal rights!"

Chicago: "Mumia Belongs Out Here with the People"

The Chicago demonstration drew more than 200 protesters and included 13 speakers representing a broad range of political and union organizations. Chicago endorsers of the united-front protests included Amalgamated Transit Union Locals 241 and 308, United Auto Workers Local 3212 and AFSCME Local 3506. Students mobilized for the protest from campuses across

Chicago, including from the University of Illinois at Chicago, the University of Chicago, DePaul University, Chicago State University and Northeastern University. Campus endorsers included the Black Student Union at DePaul and the MEChA and Students for a Democratic Society groups at the University of Chicago.

Virtually every speaker expressed outrage at the acquittal, the day before the rally, of the NYPD cops who killed Sean Bell in a hail of 50 bullets. LBSL speaker Bernard Branche stated that "two of the cops who killed Sean Bell were black, and in gunning down a black youth they were just doing their jobs in the eyes of the racist rulers. We seek to mobilize labor in protest against these outrages while explaining to the masses that things like racist cop terror can only be ended when the class that the cops protect is removed from power by the working class."

Calling for mass protests centered on the power of labor to fight for Mumia's freedom, Branche pointed out that racial oppression has been a fundamental aspect of the workings of American capitalism "since slavery, through the defeat of Radical Reconstruction, all the way up to the present with examples like Katrina or the Jena Six." He continued:

"The division of the working class along racial and ethnic lines has been used to stifle the working class in its struggle against the corrupt and racist bosses. Our perspective is that of revolutionary integrationism. We seek to fight every manifestation of the racial oppression of black people. We understand that only through the construction of an egalitarian socialist society can black freedom be won. This strategy stands counterposed to both the liberal-integrationist pipe dream of a slow and gradual crawl to equality and to black nationalism, which accepts the ghettoization and separation that is a key aspect of black racial oppression."

Branche added: "We seek to win the working class, including white workers as well as the growing number of Latino and other immigrants to the fight for black liberation. We also see the necessity for black and working-class militants to fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants. This is to prepare the working masses to fight their common capitalist enemy. An injury to one is an injury to all!" Spartacist League speaker Paula Daniels pointed to the pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy as the obstacle in the workers movement to mobilizing labor's power for Mumia's freedom, stating, "Labor needs a leadership based on the *independence* of the working class from the bosses' state and political parties."

Speaking for the Gay Liberation Network, Bob Schwartz said: "Yesterday I saw a prominent politician on television stating that we must respect the court decision that exonerated the killers of Sean Bell. Now who was that politician? That's right, it was Barack Obama. It wasn't George Bush, or John McCain, although it could have been, but it was Barack Obama. I'm sure that no one here, or I hope no one here, has illusions in Obama or in any other capitalist politician to bring about liberation."

Speaking at the rally, Rachel Wolkenstein noted:

"While directed at Mumia, the Court of Appeals ruling is an attack on the rights of all of us. The court upheld the exclusion of black jurors, approved the outrageous racist conduct of Judge Sabo and gave license to the prosecutor's unconstitutional argument to the jury that they could convict Mumia because he'd have 'appeal after appeal.' The Third Circuit made 'Mumia rules' in order to undermine those rights which are supposed to be in the Bill of Rights for everyone...."

"The ruling in Mumia's case confirms again that no justice can be expected from the capitalist courts. Every possible legal avenue must be pursued vigorously to challenge this recent court decision. But we cannot afford to have any illusions in fair hearings and impartial judges."

Glenna Swinford spoke for the Freightliner 5, UAW Local 3520 members in North Carolina who were fired for leading a strike. She detailed how the UAW

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Workers Vanguard

PDC contingent at May 2007 Philadelphia rally for Mumia combatted illusions in capitalist courts exemplified by call for "new trial" by WWP's International Action Center and other reformists.

he was in prison for a crime he did not commit. (For more on the Oakland, Toronto and London united-front protests, see "International Protests Demand: Mumia Must Be Freed Now!" WV No. 913, 25 April.)

And there was political debate. Our class-struggle perspective, which stands in counterposition to the reformist left's reliance on the U.S. "justice" system, was a point of controversy. During the Chicago united-front protest, as Bernard Branche, speaking for the Labor Black Struggle League, was underlining the need for integrated class struggle to fight for Mumia's freedom, a supporter of the Black Panther Party, whose speaker Jokarhi Shakur-El had earlier addressed the crowd, tried to interrupt, declaring, "It doesn't just take the working class." Branche noted in response: "They've had their speaker.... They have their own strategy. They put it forward. That strategy...despairs of united

Mumia...

(continued from page 13)

International bureaucrats declared the strike "illegal," setting the workers up for victimization. "Mumia is fighting for his life, his freedom, and wrongful incarceration," she said. "This is a battle he has fought for over 25 years. The justice system has failed him, but he still keeps fighting for his freedom, and the Freightliner 5 will continue to fight for ours."

"We know that Mumia is innocent. We know he belongs out here with the people. He's part of the people," said Bill Hampton, brother of Fred Hampton, the Chicago Black Panther Party leader who along with Mark Clark was assassinated by the Chicago cops in 1969. Exonerated former death row prisoner Delbert Tibbs also endorsed and attended the protest. "If anybody believes that there is going to be justice in this system, let me tell you, I'm sorry, but you're wrong" said immigrant rights activist Jorge Mujica, Co-Coordinator of the March 10th Committee. Mujica referred to the 1927 execution of framed-up immigrant anarchist workers Sacco and Vanzetti and the 1953 execution of Communists Julius and Ethel Rosenberg. He linked the struggle to free Mumia with the struggle for immigrant rights, pointing to the militancy that immigrant workers have brought into the U.S. labor movement.

Earl Silbar, a retired member of AFSCME Local 3506, paid tribute to the power of Mumia's journalism. He also remarked, "The fact is I never would have been involved if it weren't for my subscribing to the Spartacist paper.... Despite any and all disagreements, the Spartacist League has been consistent over many, many years...in raising Mumia's case and keeping people informed and bringing people out and so I want to pay tribute to them for that and for this rally."

The rally began with demonstrators listening to a recording of the moving speech made by Mumia's daughter, Goldii, at the March 28 PDC demonstration in New York, where she underlined that the rulers want to kill Mumia "because they are afraid of him, because of his eloquence, his intelligence" (Goldii's speech is available at: www.partisandefense.org/pubs/articles/videos0408.html). Greetings to the rallies were read from Mumia's son, Jamal Hart, who has been in prison since 1997 for bogus weapons charges in retaliation for defending his father.

Los Angeles: "The Fight to Free Mumia Is a Fight for Black Liberation"

In Los Angeles, up to 150 people participated in the united-front rally at the Westwood Federal Building, including a contingent that marched from UCLA. The demonstration reflected the multiracial working class of the city. Rosie Martinez, flanked at the podium by several fellow unionists, spoke as the chairperson of the Latino Caucus of SEIU 721, which represents county and city workers in Southern California. "The Latino Caucus," she said, "stands in solidarity with the demand to free Mumia Abu-Jamal." She noted, "We in the labor movement know the racist capitalists try to divide and oppress workers here in the United States and worldwide," adding: "We will continue the struggle, brothers and sisters, until we free Mumia and all political prisoners and end the racist death penalty."

James Lafferty, Executive Director of the L.A. branch of the National Lawyers Guild (NLG), proudly noted that "Mumia Abu-Jamal has been a Vice President for Jailhouse Lawyers" in the NLG for more than 25 years. Lafferty added: "I bring you greetings as well from KPFK," where "we have been proud to broadcast Mumia's commentaries." KPFK, he added, was the first radio station to put Arnold Beverly's confession on the air.

Reverend Richard Byrd told the Los Angeles protest that "35 percent of young black men between the ages of 19 and 29 are incarcerated or in some way involved in the criminal injustice system. That's a lynching." He also cited the cop shooting of Sean Bell. "The labor movement must get involved," emphasized Jesse Smith, President of the African American Caucus of SEIU United Healthcare Workers-West. "In the 13th amendment to the United States Constitution they tell you that slavery and involuntary servitude are abolished," Smith said, but that doesn't apply to "the nearly one million black men and women" behind bars today. Mumia "is a victim of slavery in this criminal justice system," he added.

Other speakers included Don White, coordinator of the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador-L.A. (CISPES) and Sherman Austin, a young black anarchist who was railroaded to prison for a year for the "crime" of hosting an

Mumia" (United National Collective, "Together, Let's Save Mumia"), which is supported by the PCF, issued a statement that, among other things, condemned as "slander" the fact that the CDDDS noted of the Collectif that "their confidence in the capitalist state flows from their conviction that the courts and the police are some kind of neutral public service like the post office."

The CDDDS replied in an April 17 open letter: "While the PCF has been administering the capitalist state for decades at the municipal level, as well as at the national level in popular-front governments like under Mitterrand and Jospin, the LCR [Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire] has been aspiring to do so, too.... LO [Lutte Ouvrière] just ran in the municipal elections on a number of slates with the PCF.... A central plank of many a municipal program for these slates was to re-establish the 'neighborhood police'.... Fueling illusions in the racist police



Philadelphia, 19 April: Partisan Defense Committee and Labor Black League's 150-strong Class-Struggle Contingent at demonstration for Mumia Abu-Jamal, which drew some 600 people.

anarchist Web site. Austin performed his hip-hop protest songs "Raise the Fist" and "Freedom." Additionally, Walter Lippmann, editor of the online CubaNews, spoke. He noted that the Spanish translation of Mumia's book *We Want Freedom* is widely available in Cuba, where Mumia's case is closely followed and where he is viewed as a leader in the struggle for justice in the United States.

Spartacist League spokesman Don Cane said: "Our task is to assist the international working class in making the cause of this class-war prisoner their own, so that the demand 'Free Mumia' rings out from worker-led protest around the world!... Labor must champion freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal! This would give labor a sense of its own power. The fight to free Mumia is a fight for black liberation, the emancipation of labor, and it is part of the struggle for socialist revolution."

From the Reformists to the Dubious

A number of reformist groups have sought to paint the March 27 federal court decision as a "victory." *L'Humanité* (28 March), daily paper of the reformist French Communist Party, headlined, "Mumia Abu-Jamal Gets Off Death Row." But as Mumia stated in an April 7 radio interview: "If you look at what the court said and what they did: what they did is, they made up new rules. You see, that is not a victory. That is, again, the Mumia rule.... So it's the 'Mu rule' once again. When a court has to make up new rules and make up new laws to uphold something that was unjust before, that's not a victory. It's not a victory. But we struggle on."

In France, the CDDDS, the PDC's fraternal defense organization, has fought to expose the fallacy of the PCF's "victory" claim. Stung by this exposure, the Collectif Unitaire National "Ensemble, sauvons

and court system of capitalist-imperialist France goes hand in hand with preaching the need for a 'new, fair trial for Mumia,' as these groups have done."

While the reformist left has sought to avoid our united-front protests like the plague, the dubious International Bolshevik Tendency (BT) has sought to be the microbe that poisons the labor-centered mass protest necessary to free Mumia. Having become involved in the united-front protests in Toronto and London, the BT then promoted protests in cities where we do not have active branches: Dublin, Ireland; Cologne, Germany; and Vienna, Austria. These three Potemkin-village "protests" drew a combined total of no more than 35 people. The Dublin "rally" featured a speaker from the anarchist Workers Solidarity Movement who questioned Mumia's innocence without a peep in response from the BT. Meanwhile, BT supporters showed up at the April 19 Oakland united-front protest and, while claiming to support the slogans of the protest, refused to endorse it. What gives?

The BT was formed over 25 years ago by embittered ex-members of our tendency and has been marked by utter disdain for special oppression, not least a sneering contempt for the fight for black freedom. When we launched a series of labor/black mobilizations to stop the Klan and Nazis in major urban centers in the early to mid 1980s, the BT denounced us for abandoning trade-union work in favor of "community organizing." When in 1985 Philly cops under black Democratic mayor Wilson Goode, working in collusion with Ronald Reagan's FBI, bombed the Osage Avenue home of MOVE, of which Mumia is a supporter, killing eleven people, the BT could not choke out a word of protest. Instead, when we organized a New York memorial meeting in solidarity with the victims of this racist atrocity, the

BT attacked us for not polemizing against MOVE's philosophy!

The BT, in fact, did not have an article on Mumia until 1996. But they made a press splash around Mumia's case the prior year in the midst of the protests against the execution warrant—in the pages of the *Wall Street Journal*. A 16 June 1995 article by this house organ of U.S. finance capital retailed the BT's slanders of the Spartacist League as a deranged "cult" in order to smear the efforts of the PDC and others on Mumia's behalf. As we wrote in "Dubious BT's 'United Front' Fraud—The Fight for Class-Struggle Defense of Mumia Abu-Jamal" (WV No. 903, 23 November 2007): "The *Wall Street Journal's* intent was transparent enough. How and why the minuscule BT was readily wielded as a tool for the *Wall Street Journal* is not."

We can only guess why an organization that cares nothing about black oppression would get involved in Mumia's case. What we do know is that the BT—an organization led by the twisted sociopath Bill Logan, who was expelled from our tendency in 1979 for crimes "against communist morality and its substrate elementary human decency"—has always pursued an unnatural and hostile obsession with our organization. Insofar as they have gotten involved in Mumia's case, it has been to conciliate the reformists' calls for a "new trial" while attacking the PDC and SL as "sectarian" as we have fought to reverse the demobilization of Mumia's supporters.

Mobilise Now to Free Mumia!

The PDC was founded in 1974 in emulation of the International Labor Defense (ILD) of the early American Communist movement. The ILD was headed by James P. Cannon, who would go on to become the founding leader of American Trotskyism. It was the American branch of the International Red Aid (MOPR) established by the Third (Communist) International following the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. From its inception, the PDC has championed cases and causes in the interest of the working class in the spirit of non-sectarian solidarity. In addition to defending class-war prisoners, such as union militants victimized for defending picket lines, the PDC defends anti-racist militants, opponents of imperialist war and colonial oppression, activists for women's and gay rights and all others targeted by the capitalist rulers for their defense of the oppressed. Over 20 years ago the PDC initiated a monthly stipend program for class-war prisoners, which today includes Mumia, Leonard Peltier and the MOVE prisoners.

For the early ILD, one of the defining issues was the case of Sacco and Vanzetti (see "Lessons of the Fight to Free Sacco and Vanzetti," WV Nos. 897 and 898, 31 August and 14 September 2007). At the Los Angeles emergency protest on March 28, PDC speaker Michael Graham noted striking parallels between the ILD's fight to save Sacco and Vanzetti and Mumia's case today:

"The two anarchists were framed up by the capitalist state in much the same way that Mumia is being framed up today: phony ballistics, witness intimidation, and the use of the defendants' political background to inflame the jury. As in Mumia's case, a criminal confessed that he, not Sacco and Vanzetti, was involved in the crime for which the two were convicted. And as in Mumia's case, liberals, the reformist Socialist Party and the pro-capitalist leaders of the American Federation of Labor demobilized the fight for Sacco and Vanzetti's freedom, diverting the movement into appeals for a 'fair day in court' for the sake of America's 'democratic' image."

The PDC-initiated united-front protests give a taste of what is necessary to win Mumia's freedom. Time is running short, and the racist rulers are determined to silence Mumia. **Labor's power must be mobilized to fight racist oppression and free all class-war prisoners! Free Mumia now! Abolish the racist death penalty!** ■

AUSTRALASIAN SPARTACIST

Tibet...

(continued from page 16)

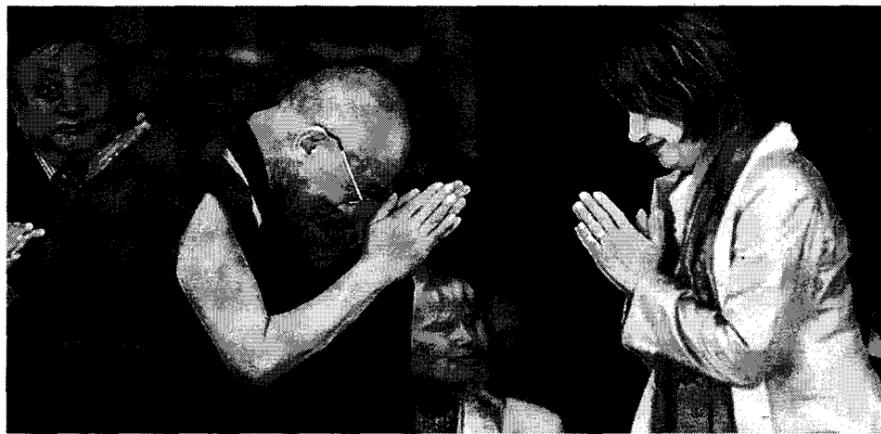
Tibet" protesters by five to one. Joining the anti-PRC "Free Tibet" crowd were Vietnamese rightists, carrying the flag of the counterrevolutionary Saigon regime that was defeated by the heroic Vietnamese workers and peasants in 1975.

Labor prime minister, Kevin Rudd, was quick to join the imperialist outcry over Tibet, albeit taking care not to jeopardise the capitalist rulers' booming trade with China that currently props up the Australian economy. Taking their cue from Rudd, who cited "problems" and "abuses" of "human rights" in Tibet, the pro-capitalist Laborite trade-union misleaders, such as Unions NSW and the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU), have been in the forefront of the recent anti-PRC campaign. Indeed the anti-China protectionist ACTU president, Sharan Burrow, was a featured speaker at the reactionary 31 March "Global Day of Action" in Melbourne organised by the Australian Tibet Council around the demand "Stand Up for Tibet." A leading figure in support of the counterrevolutionary mobilisations has been anti-communist Greens leader, senator Bob Brown, who organised a plane to skywrite "Free Tibet" over Parliament House during the Canberra torch relay. In a website statement the same day, under a heading in the vile traditions of White Australia capitalist reaction, "Australia's flag swamped," the xenophobic Brown railed against pro-PRC protesters declaring that "Canberra, just like Lhasa, was dominated by Communist China's red flag" (www.bobbrown.org.au, 24 April).

For their part, the fake "socialists" are marching in lockstep behind their imperialist rulers' attempts to foment counter-revolution in China, just as they supported the counterrevolutionary destruction of the USSR, a world-historic defeat for the international proletariat that has brought devastation and misery to the peoples of the former Soviet Union. In this country, those in the forefront of targeting China are the anti-communists of Socialist Alternative (SAlt) and Solidarity, a recent merger of three small reformist groups. This is hardly surprising. The political origins of both these groups go back to the late Tony Cliff and his followers in Britain who were rightly expelled from the Fourth International in 1950 for refusing to defend the Soviet Union, China and North Korea against imperialist attack during the Korean War (see article on page 3).

Continuing in this reactionary tradition, Solidarity backs the imperialist-inspired counterrevolutionary Tibetan riots and protests declaring "Tibet rises up against occupation" (*Solidarity*, April 2008). Similarly SAlt, which labels China an exploitative society "essentially no different from the West," vituperates in the April issue of *Socialist Alternative*: "In reality, Chinese control has meant decades of subjugation for the Tibetans." During the 1980s, the International Socialist Organisation, now part of Solidarity and from which SAlt emerged in the mid-1990s, sided with the imperialists in support of the Cold War II anti-Soviet crusade over Afghanistan. Railing against the Soviet Union, whose army moved into Afghanistan in 1979 at the

urgent request of the left-nationalist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) government, the Cliffites cheered the CIA-armed Afghan Islamic fundamentalist *mujahedin* cutthroats who launched a reactionary *jihad* against the PDPA's attempts at minimal democratic measures such as land reform, the elimination of the bride price and teaching young girls to read! In contrast we Trotskyists *hailed* the Red Army in Afghanistan noting this was a genuinely progressive act posing the possibility of extending the social gains of the 1917 Russian Revolution, which overthrew capitalist rule, to the hideously oppressed



March 21: Democratic House speaker Nancy Pelosi with Dalai Lama, leader of "Free Tibet" movement, a rallying cry for capitalist counterrevolution in China.

women of Afghanistan. We denounced Gorbachev's withdrawal of Soviet forces in 1989 as a *historic betrayal* that paved the way to the capitalist counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union itself.

The deeply reformist Democratic Socialist Perspective (DSP) argue that China is already capitalist in order to more easily justify marching in lockstep with the imperialists' drive to foment counter-revolution there. As long-time active promoters of counterrevolutionary forces, including the "Free Tibet" crowd, today the DSP fulsomely praise "the growing global movement in solidarity with Tibet's struggle for self-determination" (*Green Left Weekly*, 23 April).

Meanwhile, the reformists of the Committee for a Workers' International, which publishes *China Worker* and is associated with the Socialist Party in Australia, have declared themselves to be for Tibet's "right to independence." They saluted the supposed "radical layers" among Tibetan youth as against the "conciliatory approach" of the Dalai Lama, while admitting that "national independence on a capitalist basis can in no way solve the problems of the impoverished masses" (*China Worker*, 18 March). Enemies of the Chinese deformed workers state, these opponents of the revolutionary internationalist workers movement are willing to consign the Tibetan masses to the return of the lamaocracy. The pseudo-Marxists' calls for Tibetan "independence" stand to the right of even the Dalai Lama, who admitted in 2005: "As the material development of China moves forward we gain materially, like the railway. If we were a separate country it would be very difficult and we would not benefit" (*South China Morning Post*, 14 March).

Patterned after the Soviet Union after the usurpation of political power from the

working class by the Stalinist bureaucracy, the Chinese workers state was deformed from its inception. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) of Mao Zedong that carried out the 1949 Revolution was not a party based on the working class, but rather the peasantry. From the start, the CCP regime suppressed independent action by the working class, excluding it from political power. Representing a nationalist bureaucratic caste resting atop the collectivised economy, the Beijing Stalinist regime preached the profoundly anti-Marxist notion that socialism—a classless, egalitarian society based on material abun-

dress were proscribed. Much of what had been at the core of Tibetan culture was simply smashed up and destroyed, although with the beneficial side effect of driving monks into actual labour.

After Mao's death, Deng Xiaoping lifted the strictures against Tibetan language, attire and hairstyles. At the same time, monasteries were rebuilt and refurbished, and idle monks returned in droves and numbered 40,000 to 50,000 by the late 1990s. Meanwhile, the "market reforms" initiated under Deng have increased Han privilege in the area. The real gains won by the Tibetan masses from the 1949 Chinese Revolution stand alongside continuing inequalities.

Over 92 percent of China's population is Han. It is vital for the Chinese proletariat to combat the Han chauvinism of the Stalinist bureaucracy and oppose all discrimination against Tibetans, the Muslim Uighurs of Xinjiang and other national and ethnic minorities. What is needed is a fight to sweep away Stalinist bureaucratic rule in China and replace it with a regime based on workers democracy, expressed through workers and peasants councils and rooted in Marxist internationalism. This would be a workers *political* revolution, not a social one. It would be based on defending the Chinese workers state and fighting for international socialist revolution. Key to realising this perspective is the forging of a Trotskyist party in China. The fate of the Tibetan people is inextricably bound up with the struggle for proletarian political revolution in China and socialist revolution in the capitalist countries—from the Indian subcontinent to Japan, Australia, the U.S. and other imperialist centres.

Back in 1959, in the aftermath of the failed Tibetan uprising, James Robertson, one of the founding leaders of our international tendency and national chairman of the Spartacist League/U.S., wrote a leaflet that was printed in *Young Socialist* (June 1959), newspaper of the Young Socialist Clubs, forerunner of the youth group of the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP). Robertson was a former member of a Shachtmanite organisation that had a "third campist" (i.e., non-defencist) position toward the Soviet Union. An ardent communist, he was won to Trotskyism and joined the SWP. This leaflet, titled "The Tibetan Brigade: Crocodile Tears Stain the Monks' Cloth" and issued by the Eugene V. Debs Club of Berkeley, was his first statement of Trotskyist Soviet defencism. In it he asserted:

"The real choice for Tibet if Chinese control were thrown off is not independent nationhood but abject dependence on American arms, money and advisors...."

"The victory of the Chinese Communist government is clearly the progressive choice in the present contest. However, to recognize this is not to whitewash that regime. But even in its distorted way it is part of great and positive changes on the Asian mainland, changes that eventually will be the Maoists' own undoing. Through these very achievements the regime will be overthrown by the mass of people anxious to rule their own destinies without the intervention of a privileged elite. That is the future; the Tibetan monk-rulers are the past." ■

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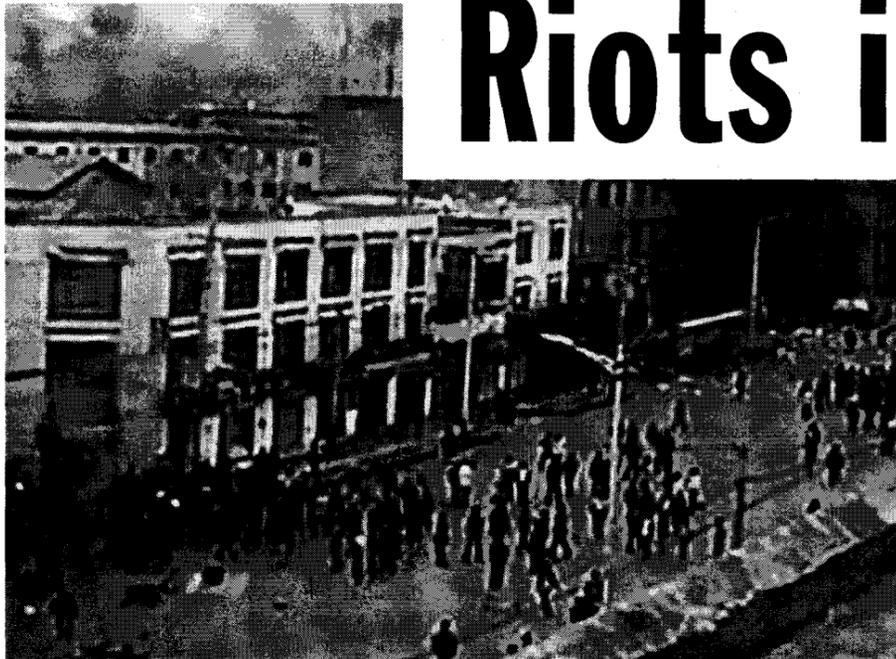
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Defend Chinese Deformed Workers State!

Counterrevolutionary Riots in Tibet



Lhasa: Counterrevolutionary rioters in streets (left). Owner sifts through remains of shop, 16 March (right). Ethnic Chinese businesses have been especially targeted by rampaging mobs.

The following article on the counterrevolutionary riots in Tibet during March is adapted from Workers Vanguard No. 911 (28 March 2008), newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S. These events have since been overshadowed by the devastating 12 May earthquake in the Chinese province of Sichuan.

"An orgy of anti-Chinese rioting." That's how the *Economist* online (14 March), which had the only official foreign correspondent in Lhasa, described the protests in the Tibet Autonomous Region. Launched on 10 March to commemorate the anniversary of the 1959 uprising against Chinese rule—an uprising inspired, armed and financed by the CIA—the protests were led by Buddhist lamas and were echoed by coordinated actions in China's Gansu, Qinghai and Sichuan provinces, where there are substantial Tibetan populations. There was also a march in India from the centre of the Dalai Lama's "government in exile." Shouting "Long live Tibet" and "Long live the Dalai Lama," rioters led by monks, often at the head of teenage gangs, rampaged in Lhasa's old Tibetan quarter, burning and destroying shops run by ethnic Chinese and killing at least 13 people. Among those attacked were also ethnic Chinese Hui, a Muslim minority in the region. The *Economist* (22 March) reported that "shops owned by Tibetans were marked as such with traditional white scarves.... They were spared destruction."

The protests in Tibet were reactionary, anti-Communist and counterrevolutionary. As Trotskyists (i.e., genuine Marxists), we of the International Communist League fight for the *unconditional military defence* of the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state against imperialist attack and capitalist counterrevolution—as we do for the other remaining deformed workers states of North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba. The 1949

Revolution that overthrew capitalist rule in China has resulted in enormous gains for that country's working and peasant masses, including for the people of Tibet, which, until the victory of Chinese forces there in 1959, was ruled by a pro-slavery "Lamaocracy." The "Free Tibet" cause originated with the machinations of the CIA and other imperialist forces intent on restoring capitalism in China, which would once again reduce the country to semicolonial subjugation. The call to "Free Tibet" is a rallying cry for counterrevolution and would in fact mean imperialist lordship over the Tibetan masses. The counterrevolutionary destruction of the Chinese deformed workers state would be a tremendous defeat for the international proletariat, including for the Tibetan people.

Before being crushed by the People's Liberation Army in 1959, the Lamaist theocracy in Tibet was perhaps proportionally the largest and most idle ruling stratum in human history, economically supported by peasants, growers of barley and herders of yak. At base, this meant that the back-breaking labour was mostly done by women, since both the monks and a not small portion of the male population, who emulated the monastic life after "sinning" by procreating, were employed in contemplation.

After suppressing the CIA-backed 1959 uprising, the Chinese government abolished *ulag* (forced peasant labour) and put an end to flogging, mutilation and amputation as forms of criminal punishment. The land, livestock and tools of the aristocrats who fled into exile were distributed to the peasants, as were the land and chattels of the monasteries that had participated in the uprising. The Chinese deformed workers state established secular education and constructed running water and electrical systems in Lhasa. As a result, the average life span of Tibetans, which had been 35

years in 1950, rose to 67 in 2001. Infant mortality, which was an astounding 43 percent in 1950, dramatically decreased to 0.661 percent in 2000. The recent opening of the Lhasa-Qinghai railway, connecting Tibet to the rest of China, has led to economic development and an improvement of living standards. These gains are testimony to the social progress resulting from the expropriation of the capitalist class and landlords and the institution of proletarian property forms that issued out of the 1949 Chinese Revolution.

Especially since the counterrevolutionary destruction of the deformed workers states of East Europe and, in particular, the destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state in 1991-92, China has been increasingly in the crosshairs of the imperialists. To promote counterrevolution, they combine pursuit of the economic openings offered by the Beijing Stalinist bureaucracy, through which they seek to encourage internal counterrevolution, with escalating military pressure. China, the strongest of the remaining deformed workers states, is surrounded by a whole system of U.S. military bases from South Korea to northern Australia to Central Asia. Following the signing of a reactionary treaty by the U.S. and Japan to prop up the brutal capitalist bastion of Taiwan in 2005, last year the Australian rulers concluded a military pact with Japan which targets China and North Korea. Along with North Korea, China is on the Pentagon's hit list as a potential target of a nuclear first strike, while the U.S. program of National Missile Defense has the strategic goal of neutralising China's modest nuclear capacities.

The imperialist rulers hope to take advantage of the upcoming Beijing 2008 Olympics to intensify their pressure on China through their support to the Dalai Lama. In a provocation that prefigured the Tibet riots, within a space of five weeks beginning last

September the Dalai Lama met with German chancellor Angela Merkel in Berlin, U.S. president Bush in Washington—the first time a sitting U.S. president has met publicly with the Dalai Lama—and Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper. British prime minister Gordon Brown hosted the Dalai Lama in London in May and Australian federal ALP immigration minister, and then-acting prime minister, Chris Evans did likewise in June.

While the U.S. Bush administration has called on China to exercise "restraint" in Tibet, the Democrats have sought to outdo the Bush gang in belligerence toward China. After the Tibet riots broke out, Democratic House speaker Nancy Pelosi visited the headquarters of the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala, India. In a 12 March statement, Pelosi condemned "the violent response by Chinese forces to peaceful protesters in Tibet." While then Democratic presidential hopeful Hillary Clinton issued a statement declaring that "Chinese repression in Tibet continues," Barack Obama's statement echoed Pelosi's in condemning "the use of violence to put down peaceful protests." In fact, during the violent riots, China's security forces "appear to have acted with relative restraint," as the *Economist* online (16 March) reported.

In late March and April, in response to frenzied protests by the counterrevolutionary "Free Tibet" crowd in cities along the route of the Olympic torch relay, students and others from the People's Republic of China (PRC) countermobilised, including in large demonstrations of support in Seoul, South Korea, and Nagano, Japan. In Australia, following violent anti-PRC protests against the Chinese consulates in Sydney and Melbourne, some 7,500 to 10,000 pro-PRC demonstrators mobilised for the torch relay in Canberra on 24 April, outnumbering the "Free

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