

Women and Revolution



Journal of the Women's Commission of the Spartacist League



No. 45 WINTER-SPRING 1996

**Women's Rights Under Attack
in the "New World Order"**

**Abortion Rights
and
Class Struggle
in Europe**

EDUCATION
RESTRICTION
REVOLUTION



SEE PAGE 37

Reuters



Unholy Alliance of Feminists and Christian Right
Satan, the State and Anti-Sex Hysteria . . . 2

**Race, Sex, Class
and the Capitalist War on the Poor** 10

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Unholy Alliance of Feminists and Christian Right Satan, the State and Anti-Sex Hysteria

Hundreds Jailed in
"Satanic Ritual Abuse" Witchhunt

A Review

Satan's Silence: Ritual Abuse and the Making of a Modern American Witch Hunt by Debbie Nathan and Michael Snedeker (Basic Books, 1995)

Making Monsters: False Memories, Psychotherapy, and Sexual Hysteria by Richard Ofshe and Ethan Watters (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1994)

"The trial was a replay of the earlier hearing, as the four child witnesses gave mostly 'yes' answers to a flood of leading questions about their parents molesting them, selling them for sex in motels, and abusing them while the children hung from hooks. The prosecution presented nothing to support these claims—no hooks, no pornography, no telltale bank accounts, no receipts, no evidence of any trauma to the children, and no adults who had seen anything suspicious.

"In May 1984, the jury found all four defendants guilty. The McCuans and Kniffens had 'stolen from their children the most precious of gifts—a child's innocence,' said Judge Marvin Ferguson as he sentenced each adult to more than 240 years' imprisonment—at that time the longest terms ever imposed in California. Front-page stories in the local newspaper were illustrated with photographs of a grim,

impassive Scott Kniffen and of Brenda's face contorted in horror as they were led off to penitentiaries."

—*Satan's Silence*

To this day, 12 years later, Scott and Brenda Kniffen and Alvin and Debbie McCuan, all of Kern County, California, remain behind bars—imprisoned for crimes which never happened. Their children, cajoled and bullied into making completely empty charges against their parents and others, were ripped from them. They, and hundreds of other accused (many still in prison), and the children who were psychologically manipulated into making false charges, are the victims of America's third great witchhunt, the mass panic over child sexual abuse.

The worst of these travesties happened in the name of the most lurid and deranged aspect of the state-sponsored anti-sex witchhunt: "satanic ritual abuse." The lives destroyed by this madness are painfully documented in Nathan and Snedeker's *Satan's Silence* and Ofshe and Watters' *Making Monsters*. These two compelling books show how the claim spread that a network of satanic cults riddled the country, raping, sodomizing and terrorizing children at day-care centers, infesting seemingly normal suburban families who car-pool by day and carouse with the devil by night. In the mid to late 1980s and early 1990s, these stories, which would be the stuff of perverse comedy if they had not been used to torture ordinary people, became a stock feature, not only of evangelical Christian preachers, but of feminist journals like *Ms.*, conferences of social workers, doctors and mental health professionals—not to mention district attorneys' offices and police departments.

What used to be the demented ravings of the *Saturday Night Live* "church lady" became a deadly serious business. From New York to Washington state, charges of "satanic sex rings" were the basis for a series of vicious state prosecutions. Primarily targeting day-care center workers, the most spectacular case blew up at the McMartin Preschool in California—at the time, the longest and costliest trial in U.S. history. In Jordan, Minnesota, as in Kern County, California, social circles of working-class parents and their friends were arrested and accused of ritually abusing their own children. Tales of "inappropriate touching" of genital areas and sodomy were laced with accounts of naked dancing, objects shoved up vaginas and anuses, robed figures spiriting children off in airplanes, ritual animal sacrifice, black candles, the slaughter and cannibalization of babies, the drinking of blood—all from the mouths of children, some as young as two years old, who were treated as unimpeachable witnesses.

The Indictment, a movie dramatization of the McMartin Preschool case, captures the Kafkaesque horrors faced by the accused, as well as the utter venality of the state prosecutors and their social worker accomplices who built

Women and Revolution

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Sauro/NY Times

Day-care worker Margaret Kelly Michaels, victimized by witchhunt, spent five years in prison before New Jersey appeals court overturned her conviction in 1993.

fat careers out of fabricated lurid accusations. For those incarcerated by this witchhunt, prison is made worse by the violence inmates and cops habitually mete out to "child molesters." But even for those (usually petty-bourgeois, professional people) with the resources to successfully defend themselves in court, these insane accusations have devastated lives, careers, financial resources. Where they have been made available to the accused, videotapes of the coercive interviews of the child "witnesses" have been the basis for successful legal defense. Predictably, the response of the state prosecutors has been to stop videotaping the interviews.

Child witnesses were badgered and put through hell until they "told the truth." The more they denied that anything happened, the more they too were "buried in denial." There is now a whole layer of children in this country who have grown up believing that they are victims of horrible crimes and whose psyches are left writhing in agony. As we said in "The McMartin Day Care Witch-

hunt," "The trauma those children were exposed to by ambitious prosecutors is part of the incalculable toll in human misery the state took" (Workers Vanguard No. 497, 9 March 1990).

Today, "satanic abuse" hysteria no longer dominates newspaper front pages and TV broadcasts with the intensity it produced at its height in the 1980s, when it was fueled by politicians, the FBI and other government agencies. In 1994 an official U.S. government report, five years in the making, announced that there was no factual basis for satanic cult conspiracy theories. Nonetheless, in 1994-95, Wenatchee, Washington was gripped by a witch-hunt against a supposed satanic child abuse ring centered in a Pentecostal church. Some 20 of the accused in that case—most of them poor and many functionally illiterate—are still in jail. And the witchhunt's nationwide apparatus of sex cops, prying social workers and quacks, bolstered with millions of dollars, prestige and power, remains firmly in place.

Sex and the State

Cutting a wide swath, the anti-sex witchhunt has encompassed anti-gay bigotry, censorship of art shows and rock lyrics, "kiddie porn" prosecutions, banning of the distribution of condoms and other forms of birth control to teens, the bombing of abortion clinics and the jailing of "deviants." Much of this persecution aims to strengthen the bourgeois state in its regulation of the population and to spread panic as a diversion from the real brutality of life in this twisted, mean, bigoted, racist society. The Spartacist League has consistently opposed the outrageous intrusion of the government into private life, and demands an end to all laws against consensual "crimes without victims" such as prostitution, drug use and pornography. We are loathed by many "politically correct" feminists and radicals for our defense of the

Contents

Unholy Alliance of Feminists and Christian Right Satan, the State and Anti-Sex Hysteria 2
Clinton/Gingrich Unite on "Family Values," Assault Welfare Rights Race, Sex, Class and the Capitalist War on the Poor 10
Join the Labor Black League for Social Defense! 15
Friedrich Engels, Karl Marx's Partner, on: The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State ... 16
Babylon's Basement by Mumia Abu-Jamal 23
Abolish the Racist Death Penalty! Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! 24
Class-Struggle Defense Work in the United States 25
Abortion Rights and Class Struggle in Europe 37
As Bureaucracy Opens Door to Capitalist Restoration China: "Free Market" Misery Targets Women 56



16



24

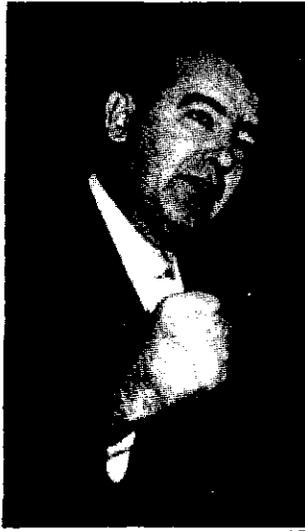


25

Cover photo: Students take to the streets of Paris, 21 November 1995, demanding more state funding for education.



Doubleday



AP



Harrity/US News & World Report

Witchhunters: New England's Cotton Mather approved Salem witch trials. Anti-Communist demagogue Joseph McCarthy ran "Red Scare" hearings in 1950s. Clinton's attorney general Janet Reno authorized FBI assault that killed 86 people, including 25 children, on religious compound near Waco, Texas in guise of fighting "child abuse."

rights of the persecuted—like the North American Man/Boy Love Association, which advocates the legalization of consensual sex between men and boys—and our opposition to the *a priori* criminalization of incest.

In the articles "Something About Incest" (W&R No. 28, Spring 1984), "The Uses of Abuse" (W&R No. 29, Spring 1985) and "The 'Date Rape' Issue" (W&R No. 43, Winter 1993-Spring 1994), we explored some of the ambiguities of sexuality in a society where the deformities of class inequality and racial and sexual oppression can lead to a lot of personal pain and ugliness. We pointed out that while the abuse of children is a vicious and horrible crime, many "illegal" sexual encounters are entirely consensual and devoid of harm *per se*. The willful conflation of everything from mutual fondling of siblings to the heinous rape of an infant by an adult caretaker creates a social climate of anti-sex hysteria in which the perpetrators of real violence against children often go free. And we insisted that the sexual proclivities of a group-living mammalian species such as our own are patently ill-suited to the rigid heterosexual monogamy which forms the ideological foundation of the institution of the family, reinforced by organized religion.

But there is nothing ambiguous, sexually or otherwise, about "satanic ritual abuse." The "crimes" never happened, any more than Rebecca Nurse, Susannah Martin and Bridget Bishop—three of the 19 who were hanged as witches in Salem, Massachusetts in 1692—actually flew on broomsticks and had sex with the devil. The frequency of "satanic abuse" charges only underscores the point that the government-sponsored panic did indeed aim to whip up social hysteria, to strengthen the forces of the state and to create a nonexistent danger as a scapegoat for the terrible anxieties of a society in convulsive decay.

As we wrote in the spring of 1985, when scare stories spread that hundreds of thousands of "child predators" were roaming the country:

"The hypocrisy of the government's concern to 'protect our children' is mind-boggling. Infant mortality rates in the U.S. are a shocking reflection of racist savagery. In 1981, black infants were twice as likely as whites to die before their first birthday—the rate was 10.5 deaths per 1,000 white babies and 20 per 1,000 for blacks, while in some parts of the country the black infant death rate has exceeded that of many Third World countries.... Reagan's White

House has pushed through an economic austerity program that ensures no future for the vast majority of youth who do grow up."

—"The Uses of Abuse," W&R No. 29, Spring 1985

It is a grotesque example of "newspeak" for a government which is intent on slowly strangling welfare payments that keep poor and black children from starvation to wage a campaign against "child abuse."

Feminist Fundamentalism

Dedicated to witchhunt victims still in prison, *Satan's Silence* was co-authored by Debbie Nathan, a journalist who exposed some of the satanic scandals as they developed in the 1980s, and Michael Snedeker, a lawyer who defended many of the accused. The book provides an excellent social history of the satanic scare as it unfolded, unraveling many of the threads which were woven into a witchhunt of chilling proportions.

A key piece was the 1974 Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, sponsored by Democrat Walter Mondale and specifically designed to appeal to conservatives wanting to bolster the authority of the patriarchal family. This law set up a national network of programs to combat child sexual abuse, mandating the states to require therapists, teachers and social workers to report any indications of abuse to the police. This aimed to make the education, social work and mental health professions snoopers for the bourgeois state's repressive apparatus. Some were only too willing to comply, giving the state a dangerous reach into the everyday lives of the population. Groups like the Los Angeles-based Interagency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect (ICAN) worked closely with the police and were instrumental in constructing the monstrous cascade of lies which fueled the McMartin Preschool hysteria.

In 1984, while it was gutting every other kind of social program, the U.S. Congress *doubled* the money for child protection programs and provided \$25 million for a program to train day-care center staff in how to prevent and detect sexual abuse. After the McMartin Preschool case broke that year, the budget of the National Center for Child Abuse and Neglect *quadrupled*. Such generous funding supplied career ladders for feminists to gain influence in a "child abuse" witchhunt which instilled fear and

loathing of day-care facilities and aimed to drive working women back into the home.

Class bias dripped from the petty-bourgeois social workers, parents and prosecutors. Literature distributed at a 1985 FBI conference which gathered together district attorneys and social workers involved in ritual abuse prosecutions described the accused satanists as "under-achievers" with "mediocre lifestyles," because they worked in day-care centers for the minimum wage! As Nathan and Snedeker say,

"Meanwhile, in the day-care scenarios, the accusers were generally not the kind of people whom prosecutors could easily ignore. The preschools that engendered ritual-abuse cases tended to cater to upper-middle-class professional families, and many parents had connections to—and considerable clout with—child-protection bureaucracies, politics, and the media. A remarkable percentage also had direct ties with local law enforcement, which allowed them to push successfully for prosecution."

Nursery Crimes: Sexual Abuse in Day-care, published in 1988, compiled much of the specious evidence presented in the early trials. According to *Satan's Silence*, *Nursery Crimes* argues that the apparently normal, sweet older women who were accused of heinous abuse in the day-care scandals had been corrupted by the sexual revolution of the 1960s, which had "engendered a New Woman succubus who, as *Nursery Crimes* put it, was so obsessed with 'power and control' that dominating men did not satisfy her—she even had to engage in the 'mortification' of innocent children."

Satan's Silence documents how the agenda of feminist-minded social workers concerned with combatting violence against women and children converged with the obsessions of the increasingly influential Christian right. As fanatics like Catholic fundamentalist Patrick Buchanan and Moral Majority head Jerry Falwell inveighed against the "sins" of abortion and declared AIDS god's punishment of gays, feminists claimed that pornography "caused" violence against women. This conveniently allowed the fundamentalists "to modernize their rhetoric by replacing embarrassing terms like *sin* and *lust* with more respectable ones such as *women's degradation*." As the god squad recruited right-wing bigots to besiege the abortion clinics, the feminist movement did little to organize against this real threat to women's rights. Instead the feminists have avidly pursued a necessarily unstable alliance with these same Christian fundamentalists on the questions of pornography and imaginary sexual abuse, calling on the repressive state to "protect" women.

Ms. featured a "first-person account of cult ritual abuse" by Elizabeth S. Rose as the cover story in January/February 1993. Feminist guru Gloria Steinem has proclaimed her belief that ritual cult abuse is widespread; so has anti-

To the memory of Eric Henrikson and Morton Stavis
and to the men and women still incarcerated,
including those whose names we know:

Robert Aldridge (Dayton, Ohio)	Robert Kelly (Edenton, N.C.)
Gerald Amirault (Malden, Mass.)	Brenda Kniffen (Kern County, Calif.)
Bernard Baran, Jr. (Lanesborough, Mass.)	Scott Kniffen (Kern County, Calif.)
Jeanie Bendt (Wenatchee, Wash.)	Kerri Knowles (Wenatchee, Wash.)
Lawrence Catcheway (Wenatchee, Wash.)	Cheryl Amirault LeFave (Malden, Mass.)
Anthony Cox (Kern County, Calif.)	Alvin McCuan (Kern County, Calif.)
George Cox (Kern County, Calif.)	Debbie McCuan (Kern County, Calif.)
Harold Everett (Wenatchee, Wash.)	Marilynn Malcom (Vancouver, Wash.)
Idella Everett (Wenatchee, Wash.)	Linda Miller (Wenatchee, Wash.)
Patrick Figured (Smithville, N.C.)	Jeffrey Modahl (Kern County, Calif.)
Gary Filbeck (Wenatchee, Wash.)	Alan Parker (Hendersonville, N.C.)
Sharl Ann Filbeck (Wenatchee, Wash.)	Mildred Parker (Hendersonville, N.C.)
Abel Fonseca (Lopez) (Wenatchee, Wash.)	Kenneth Bruce Perkins (Houston, Tex.)
Jessie Friedman (Great Neck, N.Y.)	Randall Reed (Wenatchee, Wash.)
Francisco Fuster (Dade County, Fla.)	Connie Roberson (Wenatchee, Wash.)
Barb Garaas (Wenatchee, Wash.)	Robert Roberson (Wenatchee, Wash.)
Nathaniel Grady (Bronx, N.Y.)	Michael Rose (Wenatchee, Wash.)
Dorris Green (Wenatchee, Wash.)	Debbie Runyon (Bainbridge Island, Wash.)
Ralph Gusvik (Wenatchee, Wash.)	Grant Self (Kern County, Calif.)
Robert Halsey (Lanesborough, Mass.)	Nancy Smith (Lorain, Ohio)
Donna Hidalgo (Wenatchee, Wash.)	Ray Souza (Lowell, Mass.)
Manuel Hidalgo (Wenatchee, Wash.)	Shirley Souza (Lowell, Mass.)
Sonja Hill (Smithville, N.C.)	Larry Steinborn (Wenatchee, Wash.)
Laura Holt (Wenatchee, Wash.)	John Stoll (Kern County, Calif.)
Donna Sue Hubbard (Kern County, Calif.)	James Toward (Stuart, Fla.)
Sadie Hughes (Wenatchee, Wash.)	James Watt (White Plains, N.Y.)
Paul Ingram (Olympia, Wash.)	Jenny Wilcox (Dayton, Ohio)
Daniel Keller (Austin, Tex.)	Kathryn Dawn Wilson (Edenton, N.C.)
Francis Keller (Austin, Tex.)	

Dedication page of Nathan and Snedeker's book, *Satan's Silence*, commemorates some of those still imprisoned in the "child abuse" witchhunt.

pornography ayatollah Catharine MacKinnon. Steinem financially supported a report by the McMartin Preschool parents in affluent Manhattan Beach, California, who organized their own (futile) dig of the ground under the school after the police had failed to turn up any evidence of the network of tunnels described by the child "witnesses." She didn't give a damn for Peggy Buckley or any of the other working women who were publicly humiliated, tried and imprisoned on these insane charges.

Janet Reno: Witchhunter

To state that the ritual abuse hysteria was in part a tool to strengthen the apparatus of the bourgeois state is no mere abstraction. Money and personnel were poured into "child abuse" bureaucracies, while the rights of the accused were consistently eroded. Prosecutors suppressed evidence, children "testified" on videotape (and while sitting in the judge's lap!), the "jailhouse snitch" was employed to offer perjured testimony, and sophisticated psychotherapeutic methods such as hypnosis and "guided imagery" exercises were used to extract confessions. The

"innocence of the children" was cited to excuse all violations of legal rights.

Janet Reno, then the Miami-area top prosecutor and campaigning in a hotly contested re-election, presided over the notorious Country Walk case in Dade County, Florida. Vicious "mind-control" techniques were employed against two defendants who were little more than children themselves—17-year-old Ileana Fuster, an immigrant from Honduras, and 14-year-old Bobby Fijnje.

Ileana, who ran a day-care center with her Cuban-American husband, Frank, was targeted as a satanist after a three-year-old asked his mother to kiss him all over his body, as Ileana did. Such demonstrations of affection are common in most Latin cultures, but they were enough to get Ileana and her husband locked up for "abusing" the kids in their care, and even their own son. Ileana was in prison for nearly a year before her trial, most of it in solitary confinement, where she lost weight and grew quite ill and disoriented. She was "interviewed" some 35 to 40 times by Miami psychologists Michael Rappoport and Merry Sue Haber, who ran a business called Behavior Changers. As *Satan's Silence* reports it, Rappoport:

"describes doing 'relaxation' and 'visualization' exercises with her, while constantly telling her that there was 'a deal being made' and that if she confessed she would be sentenced lightly, but if she pleaded innocent and was convicted, she would get life in prison.

"They also warned her that she would grow into an old woman in jail and remain there until she died if she could not remember."

After months of this torture, Ileana "confessed" in court and implicated her husband, "while sitting between psychologist Rappoport, who often hugged her, and Dade County chief prosecutor Reno, who held her hand." Frank Fuster was convicted and is still serving a sentence of six life terms, plus 165 years. Ileana herself served three and a half years in jail and was then deported to Honduras; in 1994 she recanted her confession.

In 1989, 14-year-old Bobby Fijnje was tried for sadistically assaulting several children at church. He was a diabetic, and only after he was detained, deprived of food and made to suffer the first throes of insulin shock did he "confess" that he had touched a preschooler. As soon as he was released, he retracted his confession. Reno ordered Bobby separated from his family and jailed in a juvenile facility. As *Satan's Silence* tells it, "The child needed to be isolated, she said, because his parents were probably satanist pornographers and that was why he was afraid to talk about his own abuse." Bobby was ultimately acquitted, but only after serving 20 months in detention, some of it in solitary confinement.

After being appointed by Bill Clinton as attorney general, Janet Reno—hailed by feminists as the first female federal attorney general—continued her campaign against "child abuse" when she authorized the FBI's invasion of the Branch Davidian compound near Waco, Texas—resulting in the incineration and death of 86 "cultists," including 25 children.

Recovered Memory and the Ruling Class

In *Making Monsters: False Memories, Psychotherapy, and Sexual Hysteria*, Berkeley professor Richard Ofshe and his co-author, journalist Ethan Watters, document further abusive psychological "techniques" which are associated with the satanic witchhunt through adult patients' "recovered memories" of abuse. They marshal scientific evidence, much of it developed by cognitive psychologist Elizabeth Loftus and other memory researchers, to debunk the current craze for "recovered memory" psychotherapy.

The same book which provided the first widely disseminated public charges of satanic cultism, *Michelle Remembers*, published in 1980, also helped set off the recovered memory craze. Co-written by Michelle Smith, who claims to have been tormented as a child by a satanic cult, and the psychotherapist who helped her "recover" the memories of her abuse (repressed or forgotten for 20 years), *Michelle Remembers* is a wild, lurid tale of a five-year-old who was supposedly raped, made to defecate on crucifixes and Bibles, forced to watch as babies and adults were murdered. It is still widely available in bookstores, and it established the themes which appear over and over again in modern accounts of supposed satanic cult abuse.

Currently, some 15 percent of patients who recover memories of childhood sexual abuse claim to have been involved in a satanic cult. Fully 12 percent of American Psychological Association members have treated one or more patients who claim a past of ritual abuse. As Ofshe and Watters note, "The accounts of satanic-cult abuse are the Achilles' heel of the recovered memory movement."

Recovered memory therapy is based on the conception that human memory works like a video camera—that the brain records every detail of life experience and that the memory thus "recorded" is permanently stored in the mind so that it can be "replayed" or recalled. In fact, as Ofshe and Watters explain:

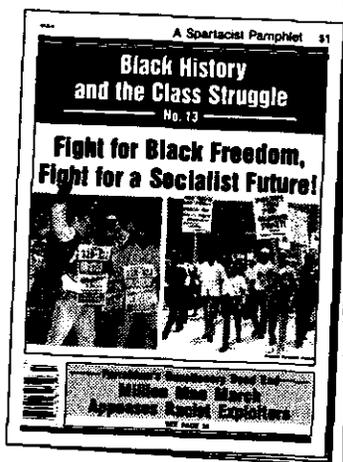
"This model of memory runs directly counter to almost all scientific studies and experiments on the topic. Reviewing the scientific research, a much less perfect, more malleable and ultimately more troubling picture of memory is formed. Not only does memory appear to deteriorate and often

Black History and the Class Struggle

No. 13

Partial contents:

- What We Stand For
Labor Black League
for Social Defense
- Attack on Blacks,
Immigrants, Women
Defeat Racist Assault
on Affirmative Action!
- International Outcry Wins
Stay of Execution
Battle For Mumia's
Freedom
- Racist Backlash Against
O.J. Simpson Acquittal
- Farrakhan's Reactionary
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Million Man March
Appeases Racist Exploiters



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disappear utterly, but it also shows the disturbing tendency to change and drift—even without any outside influence—becoming an amalgam of imagined and real events. Further, with the addition of subtle and not-so-subtle techniques of influence, laboratory experiments have shown that memory can be easily changed and even created."

The illusiveness of memory is something that any good historian takes as given—firsthand accounts must always be checked against the available documentary record. As Gore Vidal noted in his new memoir, *Palimpsest*, "A memoir is how one remembers one's own life, while an autobiography is history, requiring research, dates, facts double-checked."

Ofshe and Watters make a convincing case that many of the "recovered" memories of childhood sexual abuse are actually implanted by psychologists—wittingly or unwittingly—during the course of therapy itself. These therapists appear to be *creating* mental illness, obliterating the patient's ability to distinguish between reality and

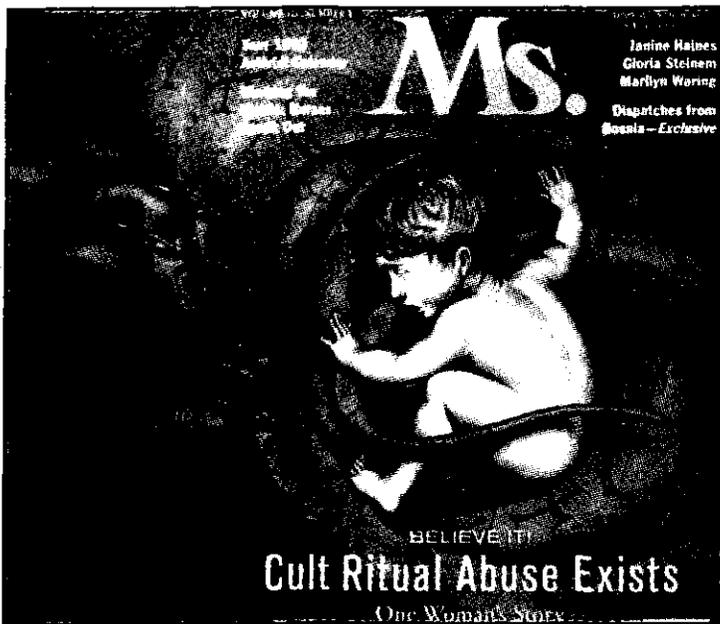
"An inappropriate touch or even a sexual stare can, according to this logic, be as damaging as a violent rape and therefore just as likely to be repressed.... All types of sexual abuse are grouped together (and can therefore be said to trigger memory repression) for no more sophisticated a reason than that we have—as adults—labeled all sexual encounters with children as abhorrent. This assumption that the internal workings of the mind mirror the moral and ethical demands of society is just one way that specific cultural ideas about sex, children, the devil, and, ultimately, good and evil, have crept into the supposedly objective facts and theories put forward by the recovered memory movement."

It is mainly via recovered memory therapy that the satanic scare has impinged on the lives of petty-bourgeois and bourgeois families. Adult women with the financial means to enter into therapy are increasingly being convinced that all their problems stem from one source—they were sexually abused as children. Anguished parents (also with means) accused of having abused their children are fighting back to save their reputations and careers, suing therapists and defending themselves before TV cameras. The bourgeoisie took particular note when the Menendez brothers used "sexual abuse" as a legal justification for murdering their (wealthy) parents. Now the *Wall Street Journal* is in the forefront of exposing the latest satanic frame-up trial in Wenatchee, Washington.

Satan in Academic Robes

Many in the academic and mental health fields have embraced the full lunacy of this witchhunt, although some prefer to describe the "cults" they write about in academic papers as "sadistic," rather than "satanic." The most outrageous, virulent crap gets academic credence. *Making Monsters* cites a 1989 article which used the similarity of pre-Inquisition accounts of satanic activity with those of today's recovered memory patients to "prove" the existence of ritual abuse cults. At least the psychiatrist authors regarded any testimony from the Inquisition as tainted. Others are not so squeamish: Martin Katchem, a researcher in the field of dissociation and hypnosis, defended the Inquisition as the necessary police work of a society seeking to fend off a satanic assault.

One Cory Hammond, a psychologist at the University of Utah medical school and a past president of the American Society of Clinical Hypnosis, believes that the current American cult network originated when the U.S. government imported Nazi satanist doctors to conduct mind-control experiments funded by the CIA. While Nazi doctors and the CIA are no doubt capable of almost any depraved act, Hammond's tale is the stuff of right-wing crackpot conspiracy theories, riddled with anti-Semitism and fear of sex and drugs. According to Hammond, the head satanist (who changed his name from Greenbaum to Green) as a boy taught the Nazi doctors Jewish cabalistic mysticism. Hammond believes the cult created Hollywood horror films to "desensitize" the American public to evil. Supposedly, tens of thousands of Americans have been brainwashed by the cult, which aims to create "mental robots who will do pornography, prostitution, smuggle drugs, engage in international arms smuggling. Eventually, those at the top of the satanic cult want to create a satanic order that will rule the world."



U.S. feminist journal *Ms.* pushes hysteria over satanism in its January/February 1993 front-page story claiming "Cult Ritual Abuse Exists."

fantasy. *Making Monsters* blames the Freudian concept of repression for all the idiocies of "recovered" memory, a claim which is debatable. But certainly one could say that recovered memory therapy fuses a sort of "pop Freudianism" with reactionary, patriarchal, anti-sex religious values.

Recovered memory therapy in search of a presumed history of incest is an episodic fad—much like the now-discredited technique of lobotomy in the late 1940s and 1950s, whose inventor received the Nobel Prize in 1947. Fueled by "survivors' bibles" such as Ellen Bass' sensationalist *The Courage to Heal*, "sexual abuse" has entered widely into popular culture and literature. As Katie Roiphe recently wrote, incest is the cliché dominating new novels, "the stock plot of a culture obsessed with sexual abuse" (*Harpers*, November 1995). *Making Monsters* attacks the mindset which is at the root of the recovered memory movement:

Hammond regaled a seminar at the Fourth Annual Eastern Regional Meeting on Abuse and Multiple Personality in 1992 with this fantasy, insisting that he was risking his life by speaking up. His lecture was delivered to wild applause from an audience of hundreds at a workshop fully accredited as a continuing education seminar by the American Medical Association.

And then there is Dr. Bennet Braun, director of a prestigious unit treating Multiple Personality Disorder (MPD) at Chicago's Rush-Presbyterian Hospital. Previously extremely rare, the diagnosis of MPD has grown dramatically, an offshoot of the recovered memory movement. Ofshe and Watters again convincingly argue that most cases are iatrogenic—created in the process of therapy itself. This doesn't make the psychic disintegration any less painful to the victims and their families.

Making Monsters tells the story of Anne, one of Dr. Braun's star MPD patients, who "recovered" memories of being a high priestess in a satanic cult. Under the influence of massive doses of Inderal, Halcyon and Xanax, Anne was often woken in the middle of the night over a period of years to be strapped to a table and urged to "recover" tales of rape, lit torches used as sexual devices, and being forced to eat her own aborted fetus as well as parts of some 2,000 humans sacrificed each year. Anne claimed to still be in contact with the cult through elaborate coded messages sent in the guise of get-well cards and bouquets of flowers. Braun also believed Anne's five-year-old son to be a victim of MPD and a cult member. The boy was hospitalized for a year and a half and psychically tortured to "remember" satanic rituals.

Anne was finally able to escape from this "treatment." She has returned to some semblance of normal life and is currently suing Dr. Braun. But in lectures to medical conferences Braun still uses Anne's "memories" as proof of the satanic cults which he believes infest the country. Meanwhile, Braun's 12-bed MPD unit is a big moneymaker for Rush-Presbyterian Hospital. As *Making Monsters* notes, with an MPD diagnosis doctors can tap into the much higher coverage limits that insurance companies allow for inpatient treatment. It is not uncommon for treatment for hospitalized MPD patients to cost over \$1 million each. In one case, fees ran to \$2.7 million. In another, the patient's insurance ran over its \$1 million cap and she was dumped into a state institution, which soon discharged her as having "no significant psychopathology."

While psychologists and therapists have played the role of chief inquisitors and exorcists, "proof" of abuse of the child witnesses provided by physicians was key to the conviction of many of those still in jail. *Satan's Silence* recounts how many of the children were subjected to horrible, degrading physical exams, which Tricia, the daughter of Debbie and Alvin McCuan of Kern County, California, now describes as "the worst thing that ever happened to me." At the hands of Dr. Bruce Woodling, looking for "evidence" for the prosecution, the distraught eight-year-old girl had glass test tubes inserted into her rectum, swabs rubbed on her anus and photographs taken of her genitalia.

In court, pediatricians testified that if a child's anus "winked open" when stroked, this was evidence of prior sodomy. In reality, this is a 19th-century anti-gay superstition promulgated by one Ambroise Auguste Tardieu, a doctor who was obsessed with discovering physical

"proof" of homosexual inclination or activity. Juries were also told that tears, bumps and irregularities on a girl's hymen were an indication of vaginal penetration, as were vaginal discharges and hymenal openings greater than 4 millimeters. All of this is hogwash.

In a 1985 Kern County trial, jumbo pictures of the vaginas and rectums of the "victims" were displayed to the jury, which convicted largely on the basis of the medical testimony. The pediatricians who developed "evidence" in the Kern County and McMartin cases were invited to the meetings which helped establish the 1985 AMA guidelines for diagnosing child sexual abuse! As Nathan and Snedeker document, significant medical evidence now exists to refute the AMA guidelines, but it has not been widely disseminated.

Why Satan? Social Backwardness in the United States

In the past 20 years American bourgeois reaction has unleashed a furious assault on the working class, the poor and oppressed. When the mass insanity of "satanic abuse" was at its peak, so were attempts by bible-thumping fundamentalists to replace Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection with "creationist" fictions in school textbooks. Reagan egged on imperialism's drive to destroy the USSR by dubbing it the "evil empire" (while his wife, Nancy, consulted her astrologer). Specious "theories" about the innate inferiority of blacks and women yet again began to gain academic respectability.

The American republic was based on the extermination of the Native population and race-based chattel slavery was enshrined in the Constitution. The social backwardness of the United States has historically been conditioned by the ethnic and racial divides rending the American proletariat, which has resulted in the lack of a class-conscious workers movement. The capitalist class has been ruthless and skillful in widening these divisions, manipulating primitive beliefs to keep workers at each other's throats. Christian superstitions run deep in the United States; some 44 percent of Americans attend religious service at least once a week, compared with 18 percent in western Germany, 14 percent in Britain, 10 percent in France and 4 percent in Sweden. Belief in the more fanciful aspects of Christianity has skyrocketed in the last three decades. In 1964, only 37 percent of Americans believed in the existence of Satan; today the figure stands at some 65 percent. More innocuous examples of superstitious backwardness in the U.S. today include Elvis sightings and UFO abduction stories.

As Friedrich Engels noted years ago:

"The Americans are worlds behind in all theoretical questions; and although they did not bring over any medieval institutions from Europe, they did bring over masses of medieval traditions, religion, English common (feudal) law, superstition, spiritualism—in short, every kind of imbecility which was not directly harmful to business and which is now very serviceable for stupefying the masses."

—Letter to Sorge, 29 November 1886

The themes of Christian fundamentalism and anti-sex hysteria unite with anti-immigrant nativism and virulent anti-black racism in providing the social nexus of reaction. In such a social climate, witchhunts like this one are the inevitable excrescence of a class society which is unjustifiable by any rational criteria. And indeed such madness is calculated to stir up reactionary prejudices and

bigotry—and it has done so in each of America's three witchhunts.

In Salem in 1692, the ravings of hysterical girls were used by unscrupulous men to target their personal enemies and various outcasts of the community. In the process, they sought to reinforce the troubled Puritan theocracy, threatened by the growing diversity of the population and the rising merchant class. At the end, almost 30 died—hanged, pressed to death, or wasted away in prison. Well over 100 languished for months in stinking prisons, chained to the wall—including a child only four and a half years old. Estates and possessions were seized, fields left unplowed, children abandoned to fend for themselves. As historian Frances Hill writes in *A Delusion of Satan: The Full Story of the Salem Witch Trials*, "The witchcraft hysteria...had wrecked eastern Massachusetts as would a civil war."

The labeling of the 1950s McCarthyite red scare a "witchhunt" was no mere historical hyperbole. An ever more intrusive and brutal state power sought to destroy the organized left and to break the ties of leftist militants to the trade unions and throughout society generally through firings, prosecutions, blacklisting, and slander and innuendo. Vicious persecution was accompanied by lurid stories of "reds" conducting Manchurian Candidate-style brainwashing and poisoning the public through the fluor-

idation of water. Indeed, ever since the Russian Revolution of 1917, international Bolshevism had been portrayed in satanic terms (didn't communists, like satanists, advocate the "community of women"?).

As Nathan and Snedeker note at the conclusion of *Satan's Silence*, the Puritans in Salem soon repented of their madness; by 1709 they were paying reparations to the families of the executed. But no such apologies have been forthcoming for those falsely accused of ritual abuse.

These two books perform an invaluable social service by exposing the atrocities which have been committed in the name of combatting child sexual abuse. However, the broader issues raised in the books cannot be addressed within the authors' liberal bourgeois framework, which offers only legal palliatives and moral appeals in the face of social insanity. The nexus of superstition, fear and sexual repression which laid the ideological basis of the witchhunt remains deeply embedded in this society. Strengthened by increased resources and an atmosphere of mass panic, the state apparatus has tightened its grip on society and thus reinforced its ability to quash any challenge to its exploitative and oppressive rule. It is profoundly in the interest of all in the workers movement to protest and expose this ghastly witchhunt. Overturn the trials—free the victims! ■

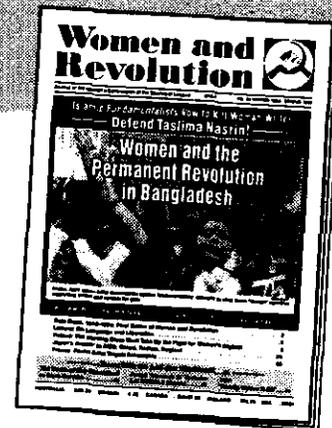
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Clinton/Gingrich Unite on "Family Values," Assault Welfare Rights

Race, Sex, Class and the Capitalist War on the Poor



Lehman/SABA

South-Central Los Angeles welfare office. Three out of five single mothers in U.S. live in or near poverty and face starvation by welfare "reform."

We print below an edited version of a talk given in October and November 1995 at Boston University, Cornell University and in New York City by Women and Revolution editor Amy Rath.

Part of our job as the revolutionary Marxist vanguard is to study how the capitalist system works, and, by exposing its inequalities and cruelties through a materialist analysis, to build the class consciousness of the proletariat and to draw support for revolution from all layers of society. Vladimir Lenin, who with Leon Trotsky was the key leader of the 1917 Russian Revolution, the central political event of the 20th century, described the revolutionary party as:

"...the tribune of the people...able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears, no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects...able to generalize all these manifestations and produce a single picture of police violence and capitalist exploitation...able to take advantage of every event, however

small, in order to set forth before all his socialist convictions and his democratic demands, in order to clarify for all and everyone the world-historic significance of the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat."

—What Is To Be Done?

It's in this spirit that I speak to you about "family values," the government attack on welfare and the war on the poor in general. The program to starve the poor is a political and social goal of the rulers of this society. An important step in this program is to recruit as large a section of the population as they can to the proposition that the exploitation of labor is the inevitable, god-given "way" that society must be organized. The armed might of the state power—cops, courts, army—is the ultimate weapon in the capitalist arsenal, to terrorize and intimidate the population into resigning themselves to a life of misery. But the considerable power of other, less tangible methods of persuasion—the poison of race-hate, the subjugation of women, the illusions of religion, the manipulation of



Gibson/AP

Democrat Clinton (right) joins forces with Newt Gingrich in war on poor, blacks, immigrants, workers.

differences in culture and language to drive wedges between people—should not be underestimated.

This arrogant and greedy worldview is not merely the program of the right, as liberals like to claim. It reflects the bourgeoisie's need for a compliant force of wage slaves, which underlies the "family values" assault on welfare rights. Tied with innumerable, interlocking threads to the basic operations of the "free market" economy are the institution of the family, the main mechanism for the oppression of women and youth, and the welfare system, which is a prop of the reserve army of the unemployed.

Today, many of the myths of this contradictory society are summed up in the catchall phrase "family values." This isn't just some windbag's ranting; for decades, politicians, preachers and other busybodies have waved the sacred banner of "the home" to manipulate people's anxieties and vulnerability and line them up to function in a way conducive to social stability. "Family values" is meant to capture the standard American fable that was supposed to entice generations to labor in the mills and factories across the continent: through hard work, you can "pull yourself up by your bootstraps" and "stand on your own two feet" here in the "land of opportunity," where democracy, virtue and honest work mean that even people born in log cabins can live the "American dream."

The 1990s' recasting of this mythology is that poverty is "caused" by a "cycle of dependency." According to ideologues such as the Heritage Foundation's racist "family values" guru, Robert Rector, welfare "is an insidious system in which the more you spend, the more clientele for the programs you create.... The more you spend, the more you erode the work ethic, the more out-of-wedlock births you have" (*Wall Street Journal*, 23 January 1995). In this view, the poor are not poor because of soaring unemployment, plunging wages, shrinking educational opportunities and the cruel deterioration of American society, which has turned former industrial centers like Detroit into an expanse of vacant lots. Rector blames the victims' moral character: "Illegitimacy is the primary factor driving

most other social problems, from school failure to unemployment to crime to emotional problems."

Bipartisan Attacks on the Welfare State

The attacks on the 60-year-old federal welfare system are a manifestation of a historic political shift in the country. The main program for the poor, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), was founded in the 1930s as part of Roosevelt's New Deal. Congress and the White House are also haggling over cutbacks in Social Security and Medicare, on which millions of old people are dependent. Also under the budget knife are many programs instituted as part of the government response to the massive civil rights struggle of the late 1950s and 1960s: food stamps, school lunches, Medicaid, Legal Aid, the Head Start programs for poor kids, affirmative action, funding for education—the entire infrastructure of social benefits from housing to medical care to mass transit.

It's a *bipartisan* drive. While the "Contract With America" was launched by Republican Newt Gingrich, Democrat Bill Clinton ran his presidential campaign on the pledge to "end welfare as we know it" and to promote "family values." The politicians are only arguing about the terms: how many children will starve when they're cut off AFDC—half a million, one million, two million? It's a numbers game. But the numbers they're really interested in are the Dow Jones closings on Wall Street.

While the welfare cuts will have a devastating effect on millions of poor people of all races (the majority of recipients are white), the word "welfare" in the mouth of a bourgeois politician means black people. "Workfare" means that if single black welfare moms get jobs at all, they'll be swabbing toilets, or replacing laid-off city workers at a fraction of the old union wage. Meanwhile, state and local officials are instituting dehumanizing measures like fingerprinting welfare recipients—as if it were a crime to be poor. They want to stigmatize and humiliate the poor—especially blacks and immigrants—so that everyone sees them as hardly human, in order to alienate the working class from the most desperately oppressed sections of the population and to reinforce labor discipline.

A workforce fearful of ending up cast out, starving, humiliated is a workforce presumed to accept any conditions. As *Nation* columnist Sumner M. Rosen pointed out, "An immediate goal of the right is to insure a continuing supply of employees for the low-wage service industries and factory sweatshops, which depend on a nonunionized, disproportionately female work force" (*Nation*, 3 April 1995). We would only disagree with the statement that it is a goal "of the right"—no, it's a goal of the economic system. Wage slavery in the U.S. today means "two tier" wages for superexploited youth, increasingly treacherous conditions like those at the North Carolina poultry plant where 25 workers, mainly blacks and women, died in a fire in 1991, and virtual slavery for illegal immigrants like the Thai women in California, locked up behind barbed wire in a textile sweatshop.

The weakness of the labor movement is the necessary precondition to the capitalist assault on social programs which seemed invulnerable 20 years ago. For a politician to go after Social Security would have been his death sentence then. But the relationship of forces has shifted: in the late 1970s and 1980s, Carter and Reagan launched



AP

Poultry workers, mainly Guatemalan and Mexican immigrants, at Case Farms in North Carolina face down scab truck during bitter fight which won union recognition in 1995.

a drive to smash the unions and break the organized power of the working class. In 1994, *Business Week* bragged that "over the past dozen years, in fact, U.S. industry has conducted one of the most successful anti-union wars ever, illegally firing thousands of workers for exercising their right to organize." As a result, unionized workers are now a smaller portion of the workforce—just over 15 percent—than they were at the end of the 1920s.

The capitalist war on labor was and is aided and abetted by the bosses' lieutenants, the AFL-CIO bureaucrats who derail the workers' struggle into votes for Democrats, impotent protest actions, "corporate campaigns" and anti-strike pledges. Such no-win tactics go hand in hand with the labor bureaucracy's support to the most venal racism and social reaction in this country: refusing to organize the "open shop" South and the sweatshops exploiting "illegal" immigrants, protecting racist job-trusting, refusing to support women's rights. As we wrote in "Labor: Stop Playing by the Bosses' Rules!" (*Workers Vanguard* No. 632, 3 November 1995):

"Encouraged by the labor tops' curtailment of class struggle, America's capitalist rulers in the Republican and Democratic parties pursue an all-sided campaign of racism, regimentation and austerity directed primarily at the heavily minority, urban working class....

"What the working class needs is not rehashed pressure tactics, but a *revolutionary class-struggle leadership with a program to mobilize the working class, both economically and politically, to fight in its own interests against the ruling class and its government.*"

This requires breaking with the "friend of labor" anti-labor politicians and unleashing the weapons of class struggle: massive picket lines that nobody crosses, unionizing drives in the South, militant defense of the rights of blacks and immigrant workers.

How the Ruling Class Rules: Divide and Conquer

The bourgeois right-wingers in ascendancy in this country have forgotten why the system needed the New Deal and the 1960s "anti-poverty" programs in the first place, which was to co-opt social protest. They needed to try to tame the worst of the boom-bust cycling of capitalism

because it was so destructive to their own interests. Now under the pressure of increased inter-imperialist rivalry in the wake of the restoration of capitalism in the USSR, they believe they can do anything they want to the workers and poor and have forgotten even their own fear of the working class.

The economist John Kenneth Galbraith captured something about the nature of American capitalism:

"I repeat myself here: No one who has stood at the top of Wall Street of an evening can doubt for a moment how much better it is that that throng making its way home is in pursuit of money rather than involved in war, religion, or highly motivated political persuasion."

This was in 1987, during the Greed Decade. Now that throng is involved in religion, politics and war as a necessary extension of the moneymaking. There's been a vast spillover of greed-crazed yuppies running the country, culminating in combined indifference and hostility to the poor.

You hear a lot about the "budget crisis" today. And indeed, underneath the record Dow Jones highs produced by union-busting and wage-gouging is a society in decay. The "prosperity" is built of fast Wall Street deals and glitter. The infrastructure of the country is crumbling, the highways are deteriorating, the hospitals are closing. The profits lie in the massive export of capital to low-wage areas abroad and in making movies, building more McDonald's and selling Coke® in Moscow.

The growing gap between rich and poor has resulted in a concentration of poverty in the inner city, in particular among blacks but also among the urban poor in general, on a level unprecedented in history. Between 1973 and 1986, the drop in real income was as great as it was at the beginning of the Great Depression in the 1930s. Wages are at a 30-year low.

Profits, says *Business Week* (17 July 1995), are at a 45-year high. Falling profits in the 1960s and 1970s led to a tremendous shift in production out of the Midwest to the South and overseas—where labor power is cheaper, where unions don't exist or are weak or repressed. The big companies employ measures such as subcontracting—hiring temporary and part-time workers—to avoid higher

pay, benefits and union protection.

But it's not only money that's the question here. Tens of thousands of young black men are slammed into jail each year despite the fact that it costs more to keep them there than to send them to Harvard. In fact, it's not very expensive to give people the basic care they need. Prenatal care, immunizations, diet supplements, Head Start programs and housing allowances to every poor mother and child for a year would cost less than it cost the American government to run three weeks of its Desert Storm slaughter in the Persian Gulf. But Desert Storm was necessary to the overall military aims of American imperialism, and taking care of those needy women and children is expendable—which only shows how hypocritical those "family values" really are. Just consider this: in the face of an epidemic of homelessness, Congress chopped funding for low-income housing from \$32.2 billion in 1978 to \$9.8 billion in 1988. Meanwhile, child labor law violations doubled from 1983 to 1989.

You can't change this system by begging Congress to take care of the destitute. Capitalist profit-making needs a labor army of wage slaves who have nothing to live off but the labor power they sell to the bosses. Gains can only be wrested through fierce struggle against the capitalist rulers by those who have some potential power, which means in the first instance, the working class.

For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

Today, escalating cop terror against black people is the social corollary of the fact that *there are no jobs* for whole layers of youth and minorities. Instead of going to school or entering apprenticeship programs, one out of three young black men is in jail, on parole or otherwise under the surveillance of the courts or cops. This is largely the result of the "war on drugs," which is an excuse for unleashing a reign of cop terror against the inhabitants of the ghettos. The drugs being "warred on" are in turn a no-hope way to kill the boredom of a useless existence. The capitalists' shrinking labor needs are reflected in such virulent anti-immigrant measures as California's Prop. 187, which denies most social benefits, including education and health care, to "illegal" immigrants.

Keeping black workers as the most oppressed section of the workforce and feeding white racism is a central mechanism of American capitalism, and so racism is the rule in any "welfare" system the bosses have ever allowed. Under Richard Nixon's presidency, Congress and the White House hotly debated the Family Assistance Plan (FAP) which was supposed to provide a minimum income to all families. The pressure for this and other programs was generated by the militant, integrated struggles of the civil rights movement. But the FAP was axed by opposition from Southern Congressmen and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Although its provisions were wholly inadequate, it would have guaranteed an income based on the minimum wage—and most Southern blacks earned even less than that. Georgia representative Phillip Landrum expressed the Dixiecrats' worry: "There's not going to be anybody left to roll these wheelbarrows and press these shirts" (quoted in Jill Quadagno, *The Color of Welfare: How Racism Undermined the War on Poverty*, Oxford University Press [1994]).

As we wrote in "Cross-Burnings and Anti-Union Terror" (*Workers Vanguard* No. 628, 8 September 1995):

"Racism and racial oppression are a mechanism for social control used to keep white labor bigoted, backward and unorganized. The bosses want a docile workforce to keep the South a bastion of the runaway, low-wage, non-union 'open shop.' The racist terror of the Klan is the ultimate defense of racist exploiters."

Even to win the most minimal union rights or narrow economic gains, the workers movement must take up the struggle for black rights. This elementary truth was dramatically brought home in the summer of 1995 when a union organizing drive aimed at Southern poultry workers was battered and largely defeated by the forces of the capitalist government and the extralegal racist terror of the Ku Klux Klan. The hated INS swept down on poultry processing plants, handcuffing and deporting "foreign looking" workers; KKK provocations included a cross-burning on the eve of a union recognition vote at a Perdue chicken plant in Dothan, Alabama.

A class-struggle leadership must directly confront KKK terror by mobilizing the power of the multiracial working class in actions like the labor/black mobilization in Atlanta in 1989 that brought out 3,000 anti-Klan protesters. A unionization drive, which must take on these vital questions, could generate an embryonic workers party which would become the political expression of the multiracial working people.

Sex and Social Control

In the face of today's bitter devastation, stuffy bigots are still trying to convince us that "social disorder" is "caused" by the "crisis of the family," by unwed mothers, illegitimacy, sex on TV, non-traditional lifestyles, condoms and X-rated movies. It's hard to make sense out of this madness. But manipulation of anxiety and insecurity about sex has long served the ruling class to regiment the population into adopting behavior and attitudes reinforcing its rule.

For example, Clinton's firing of the surgeon general, Joycelyn Elders, was a ludicrous example of the anti-sex mania of the "family values" agenda. At a United Nations-sponsored event commemorating World AIDS Day, Dr. Elders was asked about the prospects for "a more explicit discussion and promotion of masturbation." She replied, "I think that is something that is a part of human sexuality and it's a part of something that perhaps should be taught" (*Washington Post*, 10 December 1994). This bland statement got her fired, while the *New York Times* denounced her "adventurous sallies on sensitive issues!"

Upright right-wing bigots hated Elders' common-sense acceptance of the fact of masturbation as much as they hated this outspoken black woman's support for sex education, abortion rights and the decriminalization of drugs. A pediatrician like Elders knows that the U.S.'s astronomical rate of teenage pregnancy can't be dealt with by denying young women access to abortion and contraception, throwing young mothers off welfare and ramming their children into orphanages.

At the time I joked, "Wow—the ruling class really *does* think that masturbation leads to communism!" The serious point behind the joke is the power of "morality" and religion to promote social reaction. Uniquely among the advanced countries, this country is steeped in



Reuters



Lee/Star Tribune

Nationalist demagogue Louis Farrakhan's Million Man March and white, male-only Christian "Promise Keepers" rallies echo reactionary "family values" campaign.

religiosity—but there is no established church. The Anglo Protestant moral values of the WASP ruling class must be enforced by law and social custom. The material crux of these values is the need for a disciplined workforce. The Protestant work ethic, which stigmatizes poverty as "moral failure," reflects the needs of the capitalist labor market.

As it has evolved historically, the Protestant ethic means not only qualities like thrift and punctuality, so valuable in a wage worker, but the absence of temptations perceived as threats to the maintenance of these qualities. Stamping out these "threats" leads to the prohibition of alcohol, drugs and tobacco, the stigmatization of all non-married, non-monogamous, non-heterosexual sex, and the censorship of "dirty" rap lyrics and pornography on the Internet. Religious fanaticism has grown to such an extent that some members of the god squad think it's justified and legal to blow away abortion doctors and staff with shotguns. The mainly white, Christian Promise Keepers are organizing hundreds of thousands of men into "an environment of godly masculinity" (*Economist*, 3 June 1995).

As stated in a report by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago, "American society is structured to reward those who play by the marriage rules" (*Sex in America: A Definitive Survey*, 1994). Certainly the straitjacket of one particular, "approved" model of sexuality has produced a lot of human misery. But it also has broader social ramifications. "Family values" and "workfare" set up an impossible contradiction for women. They are told that day care is a "satanic plot" and that working mothers are abandoning their children—but at the same time, the root of the social crisis is said to be the "cycle of welfare dependency" among black mothers, who are supposed to defy the "feminine mystique" and go to work, leaving their children at some nonexistent day-care center that they can't afford.

The contradictions ricocheting through American society are magnified for black people, who are oppressed as a race/color caste and largely segregated on the bottom. Far from living in dependency, married black women have historically gone to work at five times the rate of white

women—they have had to, in order to live. After the Civil War, when black women newly liberated from slavery attempted to stay home like white women did, a hue and cry arose against "female loafers." The planters made sure that wages were low enough to force the women back into the cotton fields to raise the family income.

The ruling class uses "morality" and "religion" to justify the oppression of black people. This works in several ways: first, it reinforces white racist attitudes by painting blacks as "immoral" or otherwise deserving their social degradation. Social critic Stephanie Coontz comments in her perceptive book, *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* (Basic Books, 1992):

"In almost every decade, for 200 years, someone has 'discovered' that the black family is falling apart. After the American Revolution, politicians argued that the loose morals of blacks made them poor candidates for citizenship. In 1844, Secretary of State John Calhoun announced that free northern blacks were rushing headlong into 'vice,' 'pauperism,' and insanity because they lacked natural family virtues and could not survive without slaveholders' paternalism.... In the 1890s, historian Philip Bruce argued that black children were being born into 'moral degeneracy' because emancipation had removed the constraints slave-owners had wisely imposed on black immorality....

"Welfare workers in the 1950s warned of a threat to social order posed by the 'immorality' of black mothers. In 1964, Daniel Moynihan described black families as a 'tangle of pathology'."

The racist effluvia Coontz describes was intended to disguise a system of exploitation and oppression. Meanwhile, under slavery, planters ripped black children from their mothers' arms to put them on the auction block. Today, they talk about locking them up in orphanages.

Historically, the message of "self help" and self-blame was echoed by separate-and-unequal accommodationists like Booker T. Washington; today, black preachers like Jesse Jackson campaign for more black business contractors and support the government's anti-drug witchhunt with moralistic catch-phrases like "Hope, not dope." These spokesmen for the status quo reinforce the religious attitudes of black people themselves, to build respect for "authority" and "obedience" to the existing order.

This was strikingly evident in the Million Man March

in Washington, D.C. on 16 October 1995, a self-abasing display of "atonement" organized by separatist demagogue Louis Farrakhan. The "message" of the march—which told black women to stay home, pray and take care of the kids—was endorsed by racist capitalist politicians of all stripes: Clinton saluted its emphasis on "personal responsibility," while Gingrich hailed the turnout as evidence that "these men think there is something profoundly wrong with the welfare state." Such endorsements should make it clear that far from voicing the aspirations of black people, Farrakhan offers himself up as a cop for the racist rulers to impose "morality" and "law and order" in the ghettos in the name of the pipe dream of black capitalism.

The "Progressives" Demand the "Right Kind of Home Life"

The development of welfare and relief systems in the U.S. shows the same interplay between the wage system, the family and the oppression of minorities and immi-

grants. Examples from a few key periods in American history provide striking illustrations.

The late 19th century is called the "Robber Baron" era because the huge boom in industrial development reaped millions for men like Cornelius Vanderbilt, Jay Gould and Andrew Carnegie. After 1890, immigrants poured into the country in even greater numbers to run the railroads, work power looms and fire the blast furnaces. Industrial recruiters went to Eastern Europe to bring the backward peasant masses from stagnant economies in countries like Poland and what later became Yugoslavia. The bosses found it extremely useful that they could use language and religious differences to pit workers against each other to stymie the development of union militancy. Immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe—Italians, Poles, Russians—suffered discrimination and racism much as Mexicans, Puerto Ricans and Koreans face in the U.S. today.

But the ruling class worried about the "foreign" culture
continued on page 18

Join the Labor Black League for Social Defense!

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

WE STAND FOR

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

For more information write the Labor Black Leagues

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Friedrich Engels, Karl Marx's Partner, on:

The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State



Friedrich Engels' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (1884) is the basic Marxist text on the roots of the subjugation of women in private property. Engels outlines the successive social and economic forms which underlay early history, as humanity gained mastery over the means of existence. The book drew from *Ancient Society* (1877) by the anthropologist Lewis Henry Morgan, who befriended the Iroquois and studied the development of property relations in ancient history and the relationship between social production and kinship forms, or the family. Ties of kinship formalized as "gentes" (gentile society) or "clans," the term more commonly used today, formed the social framework of primitive agriculturalists. Although not a political leftist, Morgan recognized that the "property career" did not exist in the early stages of society and looked to the "liberty, equality and fraternity of the ancient gentes" as a goal for the future.

Much has been learned in the fields of anthropology and archaeology since Morgan's time; for example, Engels estimated 2,500 years for the existence of class society, whereas the figure is now known to be at least 5,000 years. But Morgan's central insight—that social relationships reflect the material basis, or "successive arts of subsistence," of human society—has only been confirmed. "Morgan in his own way had discovered afresh in America the materialistic conception of history discovered by Marx forty years ago," as Engels wrote in his preface.

In the primitive communal hunter-gatherer society, the division of labor between men and women was based not on female dependency but on the biological reality of childcare. The work that women undertook for the community had to allow for pregnancy, breast-feeding (there was no cow's milk or porridge substitute for human milk) and the care of infants and small children. As anthropologist Eleanor Burke Leacock says, "The significant point for women's status is that the household was communal and the division of labor between the sexes reciprocal; the economy did not involve the dependence of the wife and children on the husband.... Both sexes worked to produce the goods necessary for livelihood."

It is not only Marxists and most anthropologists who recognize this social equality. Early European explorers in America were scandalized to find that Native women had "the command of their own Bodies and may dispose

of their Persons as they think fit; they being at liberty to do what they please."

This primitive social equality was overthrown when inventions such as agriculture began to develop the social surplus which provoked the division of society into classes. With classes came the development of the institution of the monogamous family and patrilineal descent, which Engels called "the world historical defeat of the female sex." The biological fact of childbearing and child rearing was henceforth tied to the social oppression of women. Society split into antagonistic classes, and the ruling, or property-owning, class governed society through the armed state. As a means of the consolidation of wealth in the hands of a tiny minority, the patriarchal family decreed monogamy for women to determine inheritance of property.

Today, the intellectual windbags occupying the halls of academia and scribbling in the capitalist media peddle the lie that the cruel society we live in is "inevitable"; that war, competition and aggression are "innate"; that social inequality is "in the genes"; that the state power is necessary to "control" the evil in people.

On the contrary, the state is an instrument for the repression of one class by another. The Paris Commune of 1871 proved that a successful socialist revolution must conquer through the dictatorship of the proletariat, which will root out all vestiges of capitalist rule and lay the basis for the withering away of the state altogether. The following selection of quotes from Engels' book show that oppression and exploitation are rooted in *private property*, a human invention as subject to change as any other.

* * *

In the old communistic household, which comprised many couples and their children, the task entrusted to the women of managing the household was as much a public, a socially necessary industry as the procuring of food by the men. With the patriarchal family and still more with the single monogamous family, a change came. Household management lost its public character. It no longer concerned society. It became a *private service*; the wife became the head servant, excluded from all participation in social production. Not until the coming of modern large-scale industry was the road to social

production opened to her again,—and then only to the proletarian wife. But it was opened in such a manner that, if she carries out her duties in the private service of her family, she remains excluded from public production and unable to earn; and if she wants to take part in public production and earn independently, she cannot carry out family duties. And the wife's position in the factory is the position of women in all branches of business, right up to medicine and the law. The modern individual family is founded on the open or concealed domestic slavery of the wife, and modern society is a mass composed of these individual families as its molecules.

* * *

...the peculiar character of the supremacy of the husband over the wife in the modern family, the necessity of creating real social equality between them and the way to do it, will only be seen in the clear light of day when both possess legally complete equality of rights. Then it will be plain that the first condition for the liberation of the wife is to bring the whole female sex back into public industry, and that this in turn demands that the characteristic of the monogamous family as the economic unit of society be abolished.

* * *

The increase of production in all branches—cattle raising, agriculture, domestic handicrafts—gave human labor



**Lewis Henry Morgan,
1818-1881.
Ground-breaking anthropologist lived among the Iroquois and studied their kinship systems.**

Morgan Papers, University of Rochester

power the capacity to produce a larger product than was necessary for its maintenance. At the same time it increased the daily amount of work to be done by each member of the gens, household community or single family. It was now desirable to bring in new labor forces. War provided them; prisoners of war were turned into slaves. With its increase of the productivity of labor and therefore of wealth, and its extension of the field of production, the first great social division of labor was bound, in the general historical conditions prevailing, to bring slavery in its train. From the first great social division of labor arose the first great cleavage of society into two classes: masters and slaves, exploiters and exploited.

* * *

The distinction of rich and poor appears beside that of freemen and slaves—with the new division of labor,

a new cleavage of society into classes. The inequalities of property among the individual heads of families break up the old communal household communities wherever they had still managed to survive, and with them the common cultivation of the soil by and for these communities. The cultivated land is allotted for use to single families, at first temporarily, later permanently. The transition to full private property is gradually accomplished, parallel with the transition of the pairing marriage into monogamy. The single family is becoming the economic unit of society.

* * *

It is by the vilest means—thrift, violence, fraud, treason—that the old classless gentile society is undermined and overthrown. And the new society itself during all the 2,500 years of its existence has never been anything else but the development of the small minority at the expense of the great exploited and oppressed majority; today it is so more than ever before.

* * *

Only one thing was wanting: an institution which not only secured the newly acquired riches of individuals against the communistic traditions of the gentile order, which not only sanctified the private property formerly so little valued and declared this sanctification to be the highest purpose of all human society; but, an institution which set the seal of general social recognition on each new method of acquiring property and thus amassing wealth at continually increasing speed; an institution which perpetuated not only this growing cleavage of society into classes but also the right of the possessing class to exploit the nonpossessing, and the rule of the former over the latter.

And this institution came. The state was invented.

* * *

The state is therefore by no means a power imposed on society from without; just as little is it "the reality of the moral idea," "the image and the reality of reason," as Hegel maintains. Rather, it is a product of society at a particular stage of development; it is the admission that this society has involved itself in insoluble self-contradiction and is cleft into irreconcilable antagonisms which it is powerless to exorcise. But in order that these antagonisms, classes with conflicting economic interests, shall not consume themselves and society in fruitless struggle, a power, apparently standing above society, has become necessary to moderate the conflict and keep it within the bounds of "order"; and this power, arisen out of society but placing itself above it and increasingly alienating itself from it, is the state.

* * *

As the state arose from the need to keep class antagonisms in check, but also arose in the thick of the fight between the classes, it is normally the state of the most powerful, economically dominant class, which by its means becomes also the politically dominant class and so acquires new means of holding down and exploiting the oppressed class. The ancient state was, above all, the state of the slave owners for holding down the slaves,

just as the feudal state was the organ of the nobility for holding down the peasant serfs and bondsmen, and the modern representative state is an instrument for exploiting wage labor by capital.

* * *

The state, therefore, has not existed from all eternity. There have been societies which have managed without it, which had no notion of the state or state power. At a definite stage of economic development, which necessarily involved the cleavage of society into classes, the

state became a necessity because of this cleavage. We are now rapidly approaching a stage in the development of production at which the existence of these classes has not only ceased to be a necessity but becomes a positive hindrance to production. They will fall as inevitably as they once arose. The state inevitably falls with them. The society which organizes production anew on the basis of free and equal association of the producers will put the whole state machinery where it will then belong—into the museum of antiquities, next to the spinning wheel and the bronze ax. ■

War on the Poor...

(continued from page 15)

of these immigrant workers, who included some socialists and other veterans of class warfare in Europe. A good portion of the early American Socialist Party was German-speaking workers who had fled from Bismarck's crackdown on Social Democracy. There was a drive to Americanize the immigrants in the cities. The profession of social work was invented to do this, as part of the "Progressive Era" reforms right after the turn of the century.

The Progressives aimed to clean up the worst excesses of society in order to stabilize it. Laws were passed to regulate food and drugs, to provide more safety in the factories so that there weren't so many deaths and mutilations, and to clean up the cities to control the rates of diseases like TB. But to these reformers, the non-WASP culture and, sometimes, radical politics of the immigrants were as big a source of the problem as the abuses of industrialism. As prominent reformer Florence Kelley said at the time, "Anarchy has become hereditary from generation to generation among the [Italian] immigrants and their children" (quoted in Linda Gordon, *Pitied But Not Entitled: Single Mothers and the History of Welfare 1890-1935* [Free Press, 1994]).

Private relief systems were set up to implant American "family values" and the Protestant work ethic among the immigrants. (At this time, even in the South where the majority of blacks lived, public aid was not associated with black people, who were excluded by "reformers" who believed that segregation was essential to the stability of society.) While often not officially affiliated with a church, the settlements (like Jane Addams' Hull-House) sought to inculcate the values of the often deeply religious people that ran them. As Linda Gordon says:

"Social work assistance and supervision, aimed at making sure that children had 'suitable homes,' could not help but offer a vision of proper home life particular to those who designed these programs. Recipients were often required to keep a religious presence in their households, and once religion was admitted as an area of concern, social workers' anti-Catholic and anti-Semitic attitudes entered clients' homes. Mothers were urged and sometimes coerced into classes in English, citizenship, infant care, nutrition, cooking, and sewing. There they were taught to keep milk fresh but to avoid garlic, a dangerous aphro-

disiac; that diapers should be clean but also that pacifiers would spoil babies. The stipends given had strings attached: Social workers 'helped' recipients create budgets and then supervised their adherence to them."

Private charity workers focused on "defects" in home life—as President Teddy Roosevelt himself had said, America depended on "the right kind of home life." Mary Richmond, a prominent social worker, wrote that any household that violated the prescribed sexual division of labor would quickly become a "breeding place of sin and social disorder." "Unfit" mothers were excluded from relief programs; you would be judged "unfit" if you drank liquor, had a boyfriend or missed church on Sunday. Charity Organization Society leader Josephine Shaw Lowell declared that "the unrestrained liberty allowed to vagrant and degraded women" was "one of the most



Free Press

Lithuanian mothers schooled in "American" child-rearing in early 20th-century Chicago settlement. Rulers feared that socialist and anarchist beliefs of many immigrants threatened private property system.

important and dangerous causes of the increase of crime, pauperism, and insanity" (quoted in Mimi Abramovitz, *Regulating the Lives of Women: Social Welfare Policy from Colonial Times to the Present* [South End Press, 1988]).

"Unworthy" parents faced having their children ripped away from them. "Child savers" like the Children's Aid Society shipped over 92,000 kids to "free" foster homes "in the country" where they exchanged hard labor for

National Archives



Encampment of unemployed WW I servicemen, protesting refusal of government to grant their wartime bonuses, attacked by police, Washington, D.C., 1932.

support. Catholic immigrants believed that such moves were intended to forcibly Protestantize their children. In the 1890s, state legislatures increased the power of the courts to take custody of children. Juvenile courts and reform schools were invented to discipline youth, to prevent them from doing things like hanging out on street corners, drinking beer, keeping late hours, gambling and going on dates.

Reformers also feared that the failure of the immigrants and poor to "Americanize" their family life was a threat to property and the wage system. Some workers, for example, would organize their own urban self-help institutions to pool resources and help out other families in times of crisis. The social workers generally didn't like this because it went against the going-it-on-your-own mentality and the working-your-way-up myth of the American work ethic. Laws regulating slum housing established not only important safety rules like fire codes, but also zoning codes which prohibited the sharing of quarters and "promiscuous socializing." Hysteria over "boarding and lodging"—rivaling today's day-care witchhunt—meant that if you were found to have a boarder in your house, you were disqualified from relief. As one University of Chicago professor said in 1902: "A communistic habitation forces the members of a family to conform insensibly to communistic modes of thought."

How Roosevelt's New Deal Perpetuated Racism and Male Chauvinism

During the terrible depression conditions of the 1930s, class battles, often led by Communists, erupted and laid the basis to forge the trade-union movement in harsh confrontations with the bosses and the cops like the 1937 River Rouge auto strike. Led by Trotskyists, the Minneapolis Teamsters sparked a powerful citywide strike. The victory of the Minneapolis strike spawned organizing drives that made the Teamsters one of the most powerful

unions in the country. In the South, sharecroppers and tenant farmers unions were so militant that planters moved to put them down with, as a newspaper described at the time, "slave law, mob violence, and Fascist methods."

At the same time, a militant movement of the unemployed sprang up. The most famous demonstration was the 1931 Bonus March, when thousands of war veterans with their families encamped on the outskirts of Washington, demanding payment of their bonus (granted them under a 1924 law, but never paid). They were forcibly evicted by the police and army, leaving several dead and many wounded. On a local level, unemployed councils organized as many as 450,000 in 1935. Their actions included sit-ins, protests and eviction preventions. In Chicago, one council would put a sticker on the door of an apartment where they had moved a family back in after an eviction: "This furniture was moved back by Local 23 of the Unemployed Council."

Trotsky made some interesting points in reference to American capitalism and the New Deal when he talked about the tremendous power and wealth of American society in being able to afford such an expensive plan. The government, representing the liberal wing of the capitalist class, delivered an ultimatum to the bosses: look, you've got to cough up some money because we've got to stabilize this society, and if we don't we're going to have a revolution. This was not a unanimous sentiment in the ruling class—later the Supreme Court ruled some parts of New Deal legislation unconstitutional—but the liberal side won at this point, and that's where you see the origins of the federal welfare system.

There's a myth about the New Deal which is promulgated by the Stalinists and by the labor bureaucrats, that Roosevelt and the Democrats were true friends of labor and were going to help the "little guy." The reality is quite otherwise. The legislation was consciously passed in order to forestall the development of a militant workers

party out of the mass outburst of struggle in the 1930s which resulted in the establishment of the CIO.

One reason why the liberals, Stalinists and labor bureaucrats called Roosevelt a friend of labor is because of the famous Section 7A of the National Recovery Act, which "guarantees" the right to organize. But labor already had the right to organize—whenever they chose to exercise it. Strikes are not called at the agreement and blessing of the ruling class. The workers have to use their own forces, consciously, politically, against the social control of the bosses. It's never been done as a result of getting permission. Section 7A was added to the original draft as a sop to the labor bureaucrats.

New Deal legislation discriminated against women. The federal government barred married women's employment, and thousands of federal workers were thrown out of their jobs because they were married. More than half of the states passed laws against married women working, and the AFL Executive Committee supported this reactionary scheme. The propaganda at the time claimed it was "selfish" for a married woman to work and "take the job" of some man who needed it to support his family.

Roosevelt's presidency depended on a coalition with the Southern Dixiecrats. Roosevelt refused to back legislation against lynching or poll taxes (which were used to keep blacks from voting). Three-fifths of all black people were excluded from Social Security programs, which specifically eliminated agricultural workers and domestic servants, and from New Deal reforms. The work programs often did not allow blacks to participate. If they did, it was always on some segregated basis and often at lower wages. In the South, state employment services operated as a conduit for low-wage menial jobs for black people.

Often the mechanism for exclusion and discrimination worked via local implementation of the plans. As historian Linda Gordon points out, "Local control allowed major employers to dictate relief policy that would not interfere with hiring at very low wages." This was crucial in the agricultural areas of the Midwest, South and West. In California, the big growers forced relief agencies to refuse relief when pickers were needed. Massive unemployment among farm workers resulted in a campaign to "repatriate" Mexican Americans, even though many were citizens. Some 130,000 to 160,000 were coerced to "return" to Mexico by 1936.

The New Deal also subsidized farmers to replace workers with machines. The industrialization of American cotton agriculture began in the 1930s and escalated after World War II, resulting in mass evictions of the sharecroppers, who then went to the Northern cities. As a result of this migration, the question of racial inequality moved firmly to the center stage of national politics. It wasn't until 1960 that more than half of blacks lived outside of the South. This is key to how welfare became identified with black people. Blacks migrated to the cities just as levels of urban unemployment began to rise.

The National Housing Act, passed in 1934, was supposed to ensure mortgages to economically sound investors. But the law redlined what were called "risky areas" of cities and towns, and of course these were the integrated and black areas. The Federal Housing Authority

today has a long and sordid history of turning down blacks for mortgages.

Real advances for black people came out of the rise of the militant, industrial-unionist CIO which opened its doors to black workers on an equal basis. By 1940, there were over half a million black members, who were militant leaders in auto and steel in places like Birmingham and Detroit. An example of the difference this made in their lives is that between 1939 and 1959 earnings of black men relative to whites improved by over one-third.

Rosie the Riveter Meets "Family Values"

World War II created increased demand for the labor of black people and women. Putting the lie to bourgeois claims of incapacity, many industrial recruits were taught new skills in a matter of months. To enable women to work, Congress passed funding for an extensive network of childcare centers (previously considered a communist plot to undermine the family) virtually overnight.

After the war, women were massively dismissed from their jobs or downgraded to low-paying "female" jobs like secretary or file clerk. Within months, 2,800 day-care centers slammed shut. This policy was promoted, and the family bolstered as an institution, with an extensive propaganda campaign about women's "dependency." Women seeking educational or employment parity with men were called "castrating" in the 1947 bestseller, *The Modern Woman: The Lost Sex*. Women rebelling against their "roles" were institutionalized and sometimes subjected to electric shock treatments. Stephanie Coontz writes, "Shock treatments also were recommended for women who sought abortion, on the assumption that failure to want a baby signified dangerous emotional disturbance."

This anti-woman drive took place in the context of the outbreak of the Cold War, the purge of communists and other militants from the unions, and the rise of the McCarthyite witchhunt against reds. Under the guise of investigating "subversives," there was an unprecedented state intrusion into family life. A "normal" family and vigilant mother became the "front line" of defense against treason; anti-Communists linked "deviant" family or sexual behavior to sedition. If you were found to read the wrong books or have the wrong friends, you could be pressured to resign from your job; gays were massively purged from government and academic jobs. One of the more bizarre events of the time was Nixon's famous "kitchen debate" with Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev: Nixon "asserted that the superiority of capitalism over communism was embodied not in ideology or military might but in the comforts of the suburban home, 'designed to make things easier for our women.'"

Indeed, suburban white, middle-class family life was seen as a bulwark against militancy and protest of every kind. The government poured millions into a mass campaign to build family homes in the suburbs with artificially low down payments and interest rates, and built 100,000 miles of highway which eased transportation for the family car. Meanwhile, the G.I. bill funded education for millions of veterans.

But the white, middle-class beneficiaries of these



National Archives

Welder at California shipyard, 1943. During World War II, blacks and women were trained in skilled trades, facilitated by extensive day care. After war, day care slammed shut, women were driven out of their jobs. Right, a typical week's load of housework, 1947.



Nina Leen

government programs were not branded as "pathologically dependent." Nor were the white teenage mothers of the time dismissed as hopelessly depraved. The proportion of white brides pregnant at marriage more than doubled in the 1950s; the "problem" of illegitimate births was dealt with by handing out wedding rings. But welfare recipients were subjected to "surprise raids" where the discovery of, for example, a man's suit in the closet was enough to disqualify them.

The Family As a Necessary Part of the Exploitation of Labor

The origin of the word "family" in English is a tip-off to its function in society. It comes from Latin, *familus*, which means servant or slave. The patriarch at the head rules the household, everyone from the wife down to the kitchen maid. While this institution originated with the division of society into classes (see "Friedrich Engels, Karl Marx's Partner, on: The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State," page 16), it has varied with the relationship of social forces through history. But whether the family is nuclear, extended, monogamous or polygamous, the subjugation of women remains a constant.

Under capitalism, the institution of the family is linked to the wage system in numerous ways. In *Wage Labour and Capital*, Marx talks about the cost of labor power being determined by the cost of existence and reproduction of the worker. This encompasses a worker's daily costs, his training and the reproduction of the next generation of laborers, that is, the costs of maintaining his wife and children. The hypothetical model is one wage earner (the "breadwinner") who is supposed to support the proletarian family. It's a socially conservatizing force, for example in the following way: Every family needs a home. You get married, you buy a house. In order to

buy a house, you take out a loan from the bank. And then you spend the rest of your life working to pay it off. Any threat to your ability to earn wages to pay that mortgage becomes a threat to the well-being of the wife and the children. The ruling class knows this and they use this vulnerability quite consciously in different ways.

When Adam Smith, the great British theorist of the capitalist free market, discussed "the invisible hand" of capitalism, for example, he assumed that it was men's responsibilities to their families that motivated them to work for increased production and prosperity. As the *New York Post* put it in 1829, "The only way to make husbands sober and industrious was to keep women dependent on them."

The capitalist seeks to drive down the cost of labor in order to boost his profits. This includes not just wages paid into the pockets of the workers, but the cost of historically established institutions like public education and a health care system, which are necessary to the maintenance of the working class.

The family socializes people to behave according to certain norms—for example, the definition of "manhood" in this country is the ability to support a wife and children. The so-called "crisis of the family" is directly related to the destruction of high-paid union jobs. You cannot have a stable family life without a stable income. Today, one in three American men between the ages of 25 and 34 cannot earn enough to support a four-person family. The earnings for black male high-school dropouts fell by half, in real terms, from 1973 to 1989 (*Economist*, 9 September 1995). And married women are working in greater numbers than ever because no one can make it on only one wage any more. Without the work of wives, the entire bottom 60 percent of the U.S. population would have had real income losses between 1979 and 1986. This is not the only period where economic chaos has impacted



Workers Vanguard

Spartacists join defense of abortion rights against Operation Rescue terror at California clinic, 1993.

upon people's family lives: Historically, there always has been a correlation between increased unemployment, the decline of marriage and fertility rates and the rise of desertion and divorce.

One feature necessary to the lowering of the wage minimum is the reserve army of the unemployed, a role relegated in this country largely to blacks, women and immigrants. When the ruling class cuts funds to welfare recipients, it acts to drive down wages in every area of the economy. Thus, while women are oppressed as drudges in the home, when the capitalists need their labor they go out to work, where they face persistent discrimination. In the U.S., for example, women workers earn on average about 70 percent of what men earn—one of the largest gaps in the advanced capitalist world.

Forward to the American Socialist Revolution!

In order to even begin to fight, the workers movement must take up demands like equal pay for equal work and free, quality childcare. These issues address the real, day-to-day concerns of the working people of this country. But the cowardly, pro-imperialist "leaders" of the official labor movement are an obstacle. We need class-struggle leadership in the unions and a *revolutionary Leninist party*—a multiracial workers party capable of leading all the exploited and oppressed against the capitalist bosses and their state. As part of building that party, the working class must fight to replace the demeaning and dehumanizing welfare system with a struggle for *jobs for all* in a socialist society. What Leon Trotsky wrote in the 1938 Transitional Program for proletarian revolution, shortly after the advent of the New Deal, is even more apt today:

"The right to employment is the only serious right left to the worker in a society based upon exploitation. This right today is being shorn from him at every step. Against unemployment, 'structural' as well as 'conjunctural,' the time is ripe to advance, along with the slogan of public works, the slogan of a sliding scale of working hours. Trade unions

and other mass organizations should bind the workers and the unemployed together in the solidarity of mutual responsibility....

"The question is one of guarding the proletariat from decay, demoralization, and ruin. The question is one of life or death of the only creative and progressive class, and by that token of the future of mankind. If capitalism is incapable of satisfying the demands inevitably arising from the calamities generated by itself, then let it perish."

We Trotskyists are proud to proclaim that we are the party of the Russian Revolution, which put into power a program upholding every human being's right to full participation in all of the benefits and services of society. The later Stalinist perversion of that program had nothing in common with the communism of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky.

Real human dignity and equality can only come about through collective ownership of the means of production—the steel mills, railroads, all the institutions of society—where allocation of resources and wealth is made according to human needs and not according to Wall Street profits. To liberate women means that the family as an institution has to be *replaced* with collective childcare and housework, in order to bring women fully into society. The Bolsheviks passed measures such as the abolition of all laws regulating people's private sexual lives. "Illegitimacy"—an idea that was born with class society as a way to determine the inheritance of property—was abolished in law.

In a socialist society, where those who labor will rule, there will be jobs for all, free education and health care—including free abortion on demand and free contraception for all who want it—and free, quality housing for all. "Welfare," "workfare" and poverty will be relics of a barbarous past. The ability to survive will no longer depend on selling your labor power to a boss. As Karl Marx wrote in *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, the basis of human cooperation will be "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs." ■

From Death Row, This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal

Babylon's Basement



"His distrust of the mayor is visceral, intense.

"I don't like him. I don't like his ways. I don't like the way he speaks about poor people. I don't like his eyes. I watch his eyes. There's too much coldness there."

—David, New York City high schooler, to Jonathan Kozol, *Amazing Grace* (Crown, 1995)

To those who read this who live in an American ghetto, *el barrio*, nothing in *Amazing Grace* will surprise.

To those who do not, and who still think America is a just, fair society, it is possible *Amazing Grace* will strip one's soul.

In New York City, the economic, cultural and media capital of the American Empire, the pressing, perpetual oppression of the poor continues unabated.

Readers of this column will remember writings on Kozol's *Savage Inequalities*, which detailed the educational apartheid that rips apart even the pretense of a future for millions of the nation's poor and dispossessed.

In *Amazing Grace*, Jonathan Kozol listens to the tortured voices of those at the economic bottom in the South Bronx, the grandmoms, the moms, those with AIDS, and the children.

The children.

They are beautiful, and wonderfully bright, children who know, in their hearts, that the rich and politically powerful would rather they were never born.

They think, before they are in their tenth year of life, of death, of God, of justice, and of an ever-present, gnawing hunger.

They visit the city's glittering downtown, where fortunes are traded every day, where they are treated as trash, and bristle.

They pray to a god with an intensity only the very young could muster, and wonder why it seems God doesn't hear.

They hear the public, barely disguised expressions of official, governmental and class contempt, and wonder why they are so deeply and completely hated.

The voices of these young are, at once, as beautiful as they are haunting.

They remind us that the young are perceptive, and acutely sensitive to their environments.

They see their mothers slandered and disrespected, their neighborhoods made into corporate dumping grounds, their schools impoverished, and their hopes diminished.

They are the children of an acute despair.

While this writer was assigned to the Black Panther Party's Ministry of Information, he lived in the South Bronx.

Although a ghetto then, it still had the buoyant spirit of hope within it.

Blacks and Afro-Ricans worked to affirm the people's

inherent dignity; their human right to self-defense.

The Party's free breakfast and other such programs enhanced feelings of community solidarity, while serving some basic needs.

Years after the BPP and the Young Lords Party (a Spanish organization somewhat similar to the BPP) were decimated by government assaults, the one thing that pulsed in the community, hope, seems to have ebbed with time.

Kozol tells us some reasons why.

The South Bronx, like North Philly, Roxbury, Hunter's Point, Chicago's West side, like African-American and Third World poor areas in city after city, have been written off, like old, hated relatives, to die.

Amazing Grace will reap rivers of tears, sell untold copies, but, in the end will change nothing, for politicians are deaf to the cries of the poor, and ignore the powerless.

Babylon is fallen.

19 December 1995

©1995 by Mumia Abu-Jamal

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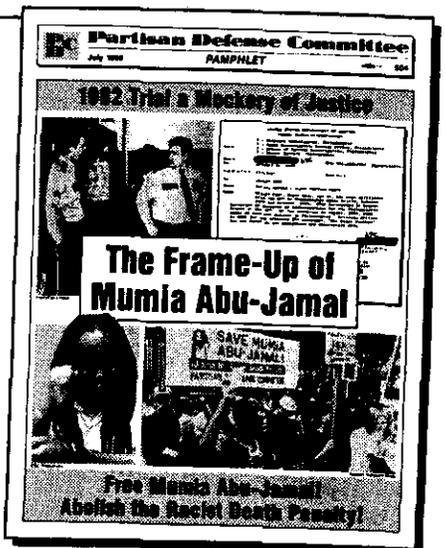
Mumia Abu-Jamal, a Philadelphia black journalist, is on death row at Pennsylvania's Greene state prison. Framed up because of his political views, Jamal faces death for his defiance of the racist, capitalist order. His columns appear periodically in *Workers Vanguard* and other newspapers.

To get involved in the fight to save Mumia Abu-Jamal and abolish the death penalty, contact the Partisan Defense Committee, P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013. If you wish to correspond with Jamal, you can write to: Mumia Abu-Jamal, AM8335, SCI Greene, 1040 E. Roy Furman Hwy., Waynesburg, PA 15370-8090.

Join the
campaign—
Spread
the word!

\$.50 (16 pages)

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



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



Workers Vanguard

Mumia Abu-Jamal at SCI Greene, Pennsylvania maximum security prison on 21 December 1995, during interview with *Workers Vanguard*.

A cry of rage against the racist death penalty spread across the world in the summer of 1995 as hundreds of thousands took up the call to save radical black journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal from legal lynching. In the largest anti-death penalty protests in this country in decades, trade unionists, students, young black activists and civil libertarians took to the streets in city after city immediately following the signing of a death warrant by Pennsylvania governor Tom Ridge and again as the August 17 date of execution drew nearer.

From Brazil to Australia, Japan to Mexico, Vancouver to Paris, individuals and organizations representing millions rallied to stop the execution. Support from the international working-class movement included a June 24 labor rally in Rome, numbering over 70,000 in protest against government austerity measures, which joined the campaign to save Jamal. In Berlin, some 5,000 people marched to the U.S. consulate on July 22, in a national demo called by anti-racist *Autonomen* youth. Heads of state from French president Jacques Chirac to South African president Nelson Mandela issued statements in support of Jamal, reflecting the attention and sympathy his case has received worldwide.

For 14 years Jamal has been imprisoned on death row,

an innocent victim of a grotesquely racist frame-up on charges of killing a Philadelphia cop in 1981. As a co-founder in the 1960s of the local Black Panther Party chapter and then a renowned radio and newspaper journalist, Jamal fought against the segregation, unemployment and cop brutality faced by blacks in Philadelphia. He became a supporter of MOVE in the aftermath of the murderous 1978 siege on this black commune's home by more than 600 heavily armed cops, a police vendetta which culminated in 1985 with the bombing of their home, leaving eleven MOVE members and children dead. An entire block was burned to the ground.

Even from the living hell of death row, Jamal continues to speak out in commentaries which have been heard on radio and regularly published in newspapers all over the country. A book of his work, *Live from Death Row*—a collection of his intensely compassionate writings about the horrors of racism, injustice and prison life—was published in spring 1995.

For these outspoken protests, Jamal has been in the cross hairs of Philadelphia's racist killer cops for 26 years and was targeted from the age of 15 by the FBI's notorious "Counter-Intelligence Program" (COINTELPRO), which sought to neutralize the Black Panthers and killed some 38 militants. From the original frame-up to the rush to execution this past summer, these reactionary forces are out to silence Jamal forever.

Upon getting advance word that Jamal's attorneys were to file a petition for a post-conviction relief hearing on June 5, the governor rushed to sign a death warrant for Jamal on 1 June 1995. The hearing was then held before Judge Albert Sabo, the same judge who presided over the 1982 trial, a man who has sentenced more people to death row than any sitting judge in America. Despite the blatantly prejudicial conduct of Sabo against Jamal, which prevented dozens of defense witnesses and exhibits from coming before the court, Jamal's legal team presented overwhelming evidence of his innocence and of the police lies and judicial misconduct that made his 1982 trial a mockery of justice in which evidence was suppressed, witnesses coerced, black candidates for the jury excluded.

Less than two weeks before the execution date, Jamal was granted an indefinite stay of execution, the direct result of the worldwide outcry on his behalf. Then, on September 15, Judge Sabo predictably ruled against Jamal's request for a new trial. An appeal to the Pennsylvania State Supreme Court was filed on February 9.

We cannot expect justice in the capitalist courts. As the legal battle goes forward, we must redouble our efforts to fight for Jamal's freedom. As Jamal himself wrote, "Let us utilize this precious time to build a stronger and broader movement, to not 'stay' one execution, but to halt them all!" ■

Class-Struggle Defense Work in the United States



International Newsreel

NYC rally supporting hard-fought 1926 textile strike in Passaic, New Jersey. Picket line battles and police raids drove home to workers that the state stood on the bosses' side. ILD took up defense of hundreds arrested.

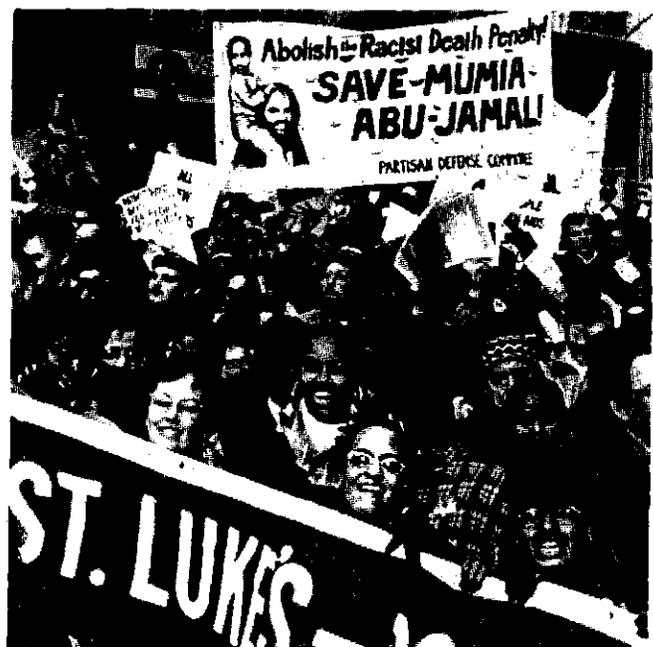
Building on the Heritage of the International Labor Defense

We print below an edited speech by Deborah Mackson, executive director of the Partisan Defense Committee, prepared for April 1995 regional educationals in New York, Chicago and Oakland as part of a series of meetings and rallies sponsored by the PDC to mobilize support for Mumia Abu-Jamal and the fight against the racist death penalty.

Mumia Abu-Jamal describes his current conditions of incarceration on death row at the State Correctional Institution at Greene County, Pennsylvania as "high-tech hell." When Governor Tom Ridge assaults all of the working people and minorities of this country by initiating the first execution of a political prisoner in America since the Rosenbergs, he must hear a resounding "No!" from coast to coast. Because Jamal is an articulate voice for the oppressed, this racist and rotting capitalist state wants to silence him forever. He is indeed dangerous. He is indeed a symbol. He is, indeed, innocent. Hear his powerful words, and you will begin to understand the hatred and fear which inspires the vendetta against this courageous fighter:

"Over many long years, over mountains of fears, through rivers of repression, from the depths of the valley of the shadow of death, I survive to greet you, in the continuing spirit of rebellion.... As America's ruling classes rush backwards into a new Dark Age, the weight of repression comes easier with each passing hour. But as repression increases, so too must resistance.... Like our forefathers, our foremothers, our kith and kin, we must fight for every inch of ground gained. The repressive wave sweeping this country will not stop by good wishes, but only by a counterwave of committed people firm in their focus."

We of the Partisan Defense Committee, the Spartacist League and the Labor Black Leagues are committed to a campaign to free this former Black Panther, award-winning journalist and supporter of the controversial



Workers Vanguard

Fight for Mumia Abu-Jamal's freedom raised by PDC at NYC hospital workers rally, 1 March 1995.



Labor Defender

Bill Dunne, Tom O'Flaherty, Bill Haywood and Jim Cannon. In 1925, Cannon with Haywood initiated ILD.

MOVE organization who was framed for the 1981 killing of a Philadelphia policeman. Our aim is to effect an international campaign of protest and publicity like that which ultimately saved the nine Scottsboro Boys, framed for rape in Alabama in 1931, from the electric chair. We must mobilize the working class and all the oppressed in the fight to free this class-war prisoner framed by the government's murderous vendetta.

As Marxists, we are opposed to the death penalty on principle. We say that this state does not have the right to decide who lives and who dies. Capital punishment is part of the vast arsenal of terror at the hands of this state, which exists to defend the capitalist system of exploitation and oppression. America's courts are an instrument of the bourgeoisie's war on the working people and the poor; they are neither neutral nor by any stretch of the imagination "color blind."

To us, the defense of America's class-war prisoners—whatever their individual political views may be—is a responsibility of the revolutionary vanguard party which must champion all causes in the interest of the proletariat. The Partisan Defense Committee was initiated by the Spartacist League in 1974 in the tradition of the working-class defense policies of the International Labor Defense, under its founder and first secretary from 1925 to 1928, James P. Cannon. Today, I want to talk to you about how that tradition was built in this country by the best militants of the past 100 years—the leaders of class-struggle organizations like the pre-World War I Industrial Workers of the World, the early Socialist and Communist parties and the Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party.

The Roots of Black Oppression

To forge a future, one has to understand the past. The modern American death penalty is the barbaric inheritance of a barbaric system of production: chattel slavery. Like the capitalists who hold state power today, the slavocracy used the instruments of their power, special bodies

of armed men and the "justice" system—the laws, courts and prisons—to control people for *profit*. Directly descendant from the slavocracy's tradition of property in black people is the death penalty.

A trail through history illustrates this truth. The "slave codes" codified a series of offenses for which slaves could be killed but for which whites would receive a lesser sentence. In Virginia, the death penalty was mandatory for both slaves and free blacks for any crime for which a white could be imprisoned for three years or more. In Georgia, a black man convicted of raping a white woman faced the death penalty; a white man got two years for the same crime, and punishment was "discretionary" if the victim was black. Slaves could not own property, bear arms, assemble or testify against whites in courts of law. Marriage between slaves was not recognized; families were sold apart; it was illegal to teach a slave to read and write. Slaves were not second- or third-class citi-

zens—they were not human, but legally "personal, movable property," chattel.

William Styron in *The Confessions of Nat Turner* has the fictional character T.R. Gray explain the slaveowners' rationale to Turner:

"The point is that *you* are animate chattel and animate chattel is capable of craft and connivery and wily stealth. You ain't a wagon, Reverend, but chattel that possesses moral choice and spiritual volition. Remember that well. Because that's how come the law provides that animate chattel like you can be tried for a felony, and that's how come you're goin' to be tried next Sattidy.

"He paused, then said softly without emotion: 'And hung by the neck until dead'."

While the slave codes were a Southern institution, legal and extralegal terror were never exclusive to the South. As early as 1793, fugitive slave laws were on the federal books. The 1850 Fugitive Slave Law was passed in response to the growing abolitionist influence which had inspired several Northern states to pass "personal liberty laws," giving some protection to slaves who had successfully negotiated the Underground Railroad. The 1850 law, seeking to protect the private property of slaveholders, put the burden of proof on captured blacks, but gave them no legal power to prove their freedom—no right to *habeas corpus*, no right to a jury trial, no right even to testify on their own behalf.

Many blacks were caught in the clutches of this infamous law, which had no bounds. For example, a man in southern Indiana was arrested and returned to an owner who claimed he had run away 19 years before. The law knew no pretense. A magistrate's fee doubled if he judged an unfortunate black before the bench a runaway slave instead of a free man. And fugitives were pursued with vigor. In *Battle Cry of Freedom*, historian James McPherson recounts the story of Anthony Burns, a slave who stowed away from Virginia to Boston in 1854. The feds spent the equivalent of \$2.3 million in current dollars to return him to his "owner." That is approximately equal to what

an average death penalty case costs today.

Any hope that "blind justice" could be sought from the U.S. Supreme Court was dashed with the 1856 Dred Scott decision. Chief Justice Taney wrote that at the time the Constitution was adopted, Negroes "had for more than a century before been regarded as beings of an inferior order...so far inferior, that they had no rights which a white man was bound to respect."

While slavery itself was overthrown in the Civil War and Reconstruction, the needs of the American capitalists for compulsory agricultural labor in the South remained. A new, semi-capitalistic mode of agriculture developed, in which the semi-slave condition of the freed blacks was made permanent by the re-establishment of the social relations of slavery: color discrimination buttressed by segregation and race prejudice.

After the Civil War the slave codes became the "black codes," a separate set of rules defining crime and punishment for blacks and limiting their civil rights. They were enforced by the extralegal terror of the Ku Klux Klan; in the last two decades of the 19th century, lynchings vastly outnumbered legal executions. As W.E.B. Du Bois said of lynching:

"It is not simply the Klu Klux Klan; it is not simply weak officials; it is not simply inadequate, unenforced law. It is deeper, far deeper than all this: it is the in-grained spirit of mob and murder, the despising of women and the capitalization of children born of 400 years of Negro slavery and 4,000 years of government for private profit."

The promise of Radical Reconstruction, equality, could only be fulfilled by attacking the problem at its very root: private property in the means of production. Neither Northern capitalists nor Southern planters could abide that revolution, so they made a deal, the Compromise of 1877, in their common interest. That's why we call on American workers, black and white, to finish the Civil War—to complete, through socialist revolution, the unfinished tasks of the Second American Revolution!

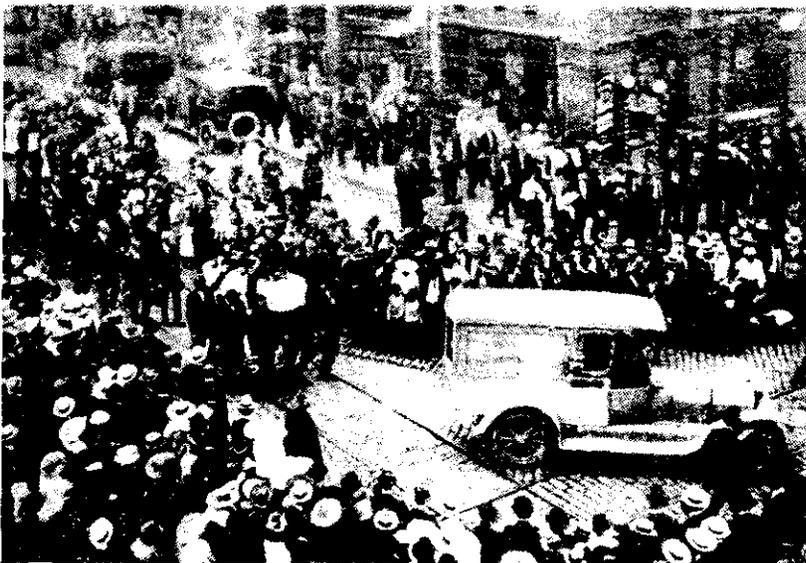
In the wake of the Compromise of 1877, the U.S. Supreme Court began to dismantle the Civil Rights Acts of the Reconstruction period. One landmark decision was *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896, which permitted "separate but equal" treatment of black and white in public facilities. But separate is never equal. This was simply the legal cover for the transformation of the "black codes" into "Jim Crow"—the "grandfather clause," poll tax, literacy test, all designed to deny blacks the vote, and the institution of separate facilities from schools to cemeteries. This legal and practical segregation, instituted in the South and transported North, was a tool to divide and rule.

America's Racist Death Penalty

The death penalty was applied at will until 1972. From 1930 to 1967 the U.S. averaged 100 or more executions per year. In 1972, following a decade of civil rights protests, the Supreme Court ruled the death penalty was "cruel and unusual punishment" because of its arbitrary and capricious application. But the hiatus lasted only four years.

In 1976 the Supreme Court reinstated the death penalty and has been expanding it ever since. In 1986 the court ruled it unconstitutional to execute the insane, but gave no criteria for defining insanity; in 1988 it approved the execution of 16-year-olds; in 1989 it ruled for the execution of retarded persons. Since 1976, 276 people have been executed in this country. Between January and April of 1995, 17 were killed. And innocence is no barrier, as the Supreme Court recently decreed in the case of Jesse Dwayne Jacobs, executed in Texas in January 1995 after the prosecution submitted that he had not committed the crime for which he had been sentenced. The Supreme Court said it didn't matter, he'd had a "fair trial." What an abomination!

Perhaps the most telling case in recent history was the 1987 *McCleskey* decision. The evidence submitted to the



Labor History Archives, Wayne State University



Labor Defender

30,000 at funeral for labor martyr Joe Hill, IWW poet, framed up and killed by Utah firing squad, 1915. On eve of execution, Hill wrote Haywood, "I die like a true blue rebel. Don't waste any time mourning. Organize!"



Documentation Française

courts illustrated beyond the shadow of a doubt that racism ruled the application of the death penalty. Overall, a black person convicted of killing a white person is 22 times more likely to be sentenced to death than if the victim is black. When the *McCleskey* case went to court, liberals across the country hoped for a *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in regard to the death penalty. The evidence of racial bias was clear and overwhelming. But while the Supreme Court accepted the accuracy of the evidence, it said it *doesn't matter*. The court showed the real intention of the death penalty when it stated that McCleskey's claim "throws into serious question the principles that underlie our entire criminal justice system" and "the validity of capital punishment in our multi-racial society." Or as a Southern planter wrote in defense of

Slave auction at Richmond, Virginia in 1856. Families were often ripped apart. Boston poster was part of abolitionist struggle against Fugitive Slave Law of 1850. Death penalty in U.S. is a legacy of chattel slavery.

CAUTION!!

COLORED PEOPLE
OF BOSTON, ONE & ALL,
You are hereby respectfully CAUTIONED and advised, to avoid conversing with the
Watchmen and Police Officers
of Boston,

For since the recent ORDER OF THE MAYOR & ALDERMEN, they are empowered to act as

KIDNAPPERS
AND
Slave Catchers,

And they have already been actually employed in KIDNAPPING, CATCHING, AND KEEPING SLAVES. Therefore, if you value your LIBERTY, and the Welfare of the Fugitives among you, Show them in every possible manner, as so many HOUNDS on the track of the most unfortunate of your race.

Keep a Sharp Look Out for
KIDNAPPERS, and have
TOP EYE open.

APRIL 24, 1851.

Library of Congress

the slave codes, "We have to rely more and more on the power of fear.... We are determined to continue masters" (quoted in Kenneth Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution*).

Let's take a look for a moment at "our multi-racial society." The U.S. has the highest rate of incarceration in the world: 344 per 100,000. It is one of the two "advanced" industrial countries left in the world which employs capital punishment. As of January 1995, 2,976 men, women and children occupied America's death rows; 48 are women, 37 are juveniles. According to the latest census, blacks make up 12 percent of the population, yet 51 percent of the people awaiting execution are minorities and 40 percent are black.

Eighty-four percent of all capital cases involve white victims even though 50 percent of murder victims in America are black. Of a total of 75 people executed for interracial murders, three involved a black victim and a white defendant, 72 involved a white victim and a black defendant. The death penalty is truly an *impulse to genocide* against the black population for whom the ruling class no longer sees any need in its profit-grabbing calculations.

Understanding this and understanding the broader importance of the black question in America, we take up Jamal's case as a concrete task in our struggle for black freedom and for proletarian revolution in the interests of the liberation of all of humanity.

Early History of Class-Struggle Defense

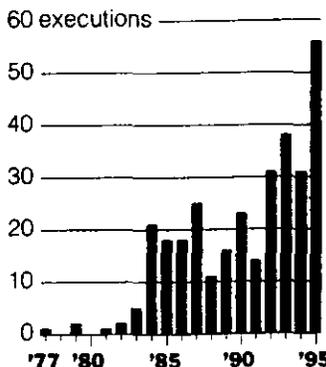
From the beginning of the communist movement, a commitment to those persecuted by the ruling classes, whether "on the inside" or out, has been recognized as an integral part of the class struggle. Marx and Engels spent years defending and supporting the refugees of the Paris Commune.

As Trotskyists, we feel this responsibility keenly because we inherited some of the finest principles for class-struggle defense from James P. Cannon, the founder of American Trotskyism. The traditions which inspired the International Labor Defense (ILD) were forged in hard class struggle, dating back to the rise of the labor movement after

Speed up on Death Row

Executioners' Toll

The number of executions carried out each year since the death penalty was reinstated by the Supreme Court in 1976.



Source: Death Penalty Information Center, Washington

New York Times graph

From 1976 to 1995, 313 people were executed in the U.S. Today more than 3,000 men, women and juveniles sit on death rows in 38 states; more than half are minorities. Government is moving to curtail appeals process and cut funding for legal aid to prisoners.

the Civil War. One of the first acts of the Republican government following the Compromise of 1877 was to pull its troops from the South and send them to quell the railway strikes that had broken out throughout the Northern states. The federal strikebreakers tipped the scales in the hard-fought battles of the time, many of which escalated into general strikes, and the workers were driven back in defeat. But united struggle against the bosses had been launched, and less than a decade later the workers movement had taken up the fight for an eight-hour day.

In the course of this struggle, workers in Chicago amassed at Haymarket Square in early May of 1886. The protest was just winding down when a bomb went off, likely planted by a provocateur. The cops opened fire on the workers, killing one and wounding many. The government's response was to frame up eight workers, who were sympathetic to anarchist views, on charges of murder. They were tried and convicted, not for the bombing but for their agitation against the employers. Four were hanged, one committed suicide, three were finally pardoned in 1891.

The period from the turn of the century to America's entry into World War I was one of intense social struggle; militant strikes were more numerous than at any time since. The Industrial Workers of the World (IWW—the Wobblies) led union organizing drives, anti-lynching campaigns and a free speech movement. The level of struggle meant more frequent arrests, which gave rise to the need for defense of the class and individuals. The left and most labor currents and organizations rallied to the defense of victims of the class war. Non-sectarian defense was the rule of the day. The Wobbly slogan, "an injury to one is an injury to all," was taken to heart by the vast majority of the workers.

This was Cannon's training ground. One of his heroes was Big Bill Haywood, who conceived the ILD with Cannon in Moscow in 1925. As Cannon said, the history of the ILD is "the story of the projection of Bill Haywood's influence—through me and my associates—into the movement from which he was exiled, an influence for simple honesty and good will and genuine non-partisan solidarity toward all the prisoners of the class war in America."

Big Bill Haywood came from the Western Federation of Miners, one of the most combative unions this country has ever produced. The preamble to their constitution was a series of six points, beginning, "We hold that there is a class struggle in society and that this struggle is caused by economic conditions." It goes on to note, "We hold that the class struggle will continue until the producer is recognized as the sole master of his product," and it asserts that the working class and it alone can and must achieve its own emancipation. It ends, "we, the wage slaves...have associated in the Western Federation of Miners."

Not all labor organizations of the time had this class-struggle perspective. Contrast the tract of Samuel Gompers' American Federation of Labor (AFL), "Labor's Bill of Grievances," which he sent to the president and Congress in 1908:

"We present these grievances to your attention because we have long, patiently and in vain waited for redress.



Chicago Historical Society

The Haymarket Martyrs: Chicago workers' leaders victimized for their anarchist views, hanged 11 November 1887, following bombing provocation at 1886 rally for eight-hour day.

There is not any matter of which we have complained but for which we have in an honorable and lawful manner submitted remedies. The remedies for these grievances proposed by labor are in line with fundamental law, and with progress and development made necessary by changed industrial conditions."

The IWW, whose constitution began, "The working class and the employing class have nothing in common," was founded in 1905. Haywood was an initiator and one of its most aggressive and influential organizers. As a result of that and his open socialist beliefs, in 1906 he, along with George Pettibone and Charles Moyer, were arrested for the bombing murder of ex-governor Frank Steunenberg of Idaho (the nemesis of the combative Coeur d'Alene miners). The three were kidnapped from Colorado, put on a military train and taken to Idaho.

The Western Federation of Miners and the IWW launched a tremendous defense movement for the three during the 18 months they were waiting to be tried for their lives. Everyone from the anarchists to the AFL participated. Demonstrations of 50,000 and more were organized all across the country. It was this case that brought James Cannon to political consciousness.

The case was important internationally, too. While they were in jail, Maxim Gorky came to New York and sent a telegram to the three with greetings from the Russian workers. Haywood wired back that their imprisonment was an expression of the class struggle which was the same in America as in Russia and in all other capitalist countries.

On a less friendly note, Teddy Roosevelt, then president of America, publicly declared the three "undesirable



Cover and appeal from ILD's *Labor Defender*, launched in 1926 as organizing tool for non-sectarian, class-struggle defense. Partisan Defense Committee today has revived ILD tradition of sending regular stipends to class-war prisoners.

citizens." Haywood responded that the laws of the country held they were innocent until proven guilty and that a man in Roosevelt's position should be the last to judge them until the case was decided in court.

The Socialist Party (founded in 1901) also rallied to the defense. While in jail, Haywood was nominated as the party's candidate for governor of Colorado and got 16,000 votes. The leader of the SP, Eugene Debs, wrote his famous "Arouse, Ye Slaves" for the SP's *Appeal to Reason*:

"If they attempt to murder Moyer, Haywood and their brothers, a million revolutionists, at least, will meet them with guns.... Let them dare to execute their devilish plot and every state in this Union will resound with the tramp of revolution....

"Get ready, comrades, for action!... A special revolutionary convention of the proletariat... would be in order, and, if extreme measures are required, a general strike could be ordered and industry paralyzed as a preliminary to a general uprising."

Haywood's trial began in May of 1907. It was Clarence Darrow for the defense and the infamous Senator William E. Borah for the frame-up (prosecution). That this was a political trial was clear to everybody. The prosecution, for example, introduced into evidence issues of the anarchist journal *Alarm* from 1886, when Haymarket martyr Albert Parsons was its editor. Haywood thought that Darrow's summary to the jury in his case was the best effort Darrow ever made in the courtroom. But Haywood also got a bit exasperated with his lawyer. In his autobiography, he tells the story of Darrow coming to jail depressed and worried. The defendants would always try to get him to lighten up. Finally Pettibone got tired of this and told Darrow they knew it would be really hard on him to lose this great case with all its national and international attention, but, hey! he said, "You know it's us fellows that have to be hanged!"

Every day of the trial the defense committee packed

the courtroom with what Haywood called "a labor jury of Socialists and union men." This is a practice we proudly follow today. On the stand, Haywood told the story of the Western Federation of Miners and its battles against the bosses, putting *them* on trial. He refused to be intimidated by Senator Borah. When Borah asked whether Haywood had said that Governor Steunenberg should be exterminated, Haywood replied that to the best of his remembrance, he said he should be "eliminated."

On June 28 Haywood was acquitted. Soon thereafter, so were his comrades. At a Chicago rally organized to greet him upon his release, he told the crowd of 200,000, "We owe our lives to your solidarity." Haywood knew that innocence was not enough. It is that kind of solidarity we are seeking to mobilize today for Mumia Abu-Jamal.

The Labor Movement and World War I

Haywood was elected to the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Party in 1908, during its most left-wing period. In 1910, he was one of the party's delegates to the Socialist Congress of the Second International in Copenhagen. Shortly after, the SP moved to the right, and in 1912 (the year Debs polled nearly a million votes in his campaign for president) a number of leftists, including the young Jim Cannon, left the Socialist Party. A year later, when Haywood was purged from the executive board, there was another mass exodus.

The IWW, in which Haywood and Cannon remained active, expanded the scope of its activities. This was the period of the free speech movement and anti-lynching campaigns. One Wobbly pamphlet, "Justice for the Negro: How He Can Get It," discusses the question of integrated struggle and how to stop lynchings:

"The workers of every race and nationality must join in one common group against their one common enemy—the employers—so as to be able to defend themselves and one another. Protection for the working class lies in complete

solidarity of the workers, without regard to race, creed, sex or color. 'One Enemy—One Union!' must be their watchword."

They almost got it right: as syndicalists, they didn't understand the need for a vanguard party to fight for a revolutionary program.

With the beginning of World War I and preparations for U.S. involvement, the government declared political war on the IWW and the left. Thousands of Wobblies were imprisoned under "criminal syndicalism" laws—100 in San Quentin and Folsom alone. In response, the IWW adopted the slogan, "Fill the jails." It was a misguided tactic, but unlike many so-called socialists today, the Wobblies had a principled position where it counted: they'd go to jail before they'd cross a picket line.

1917 was the year of the Russian Revolution. A month after that world-historic event, Haywood was back on trial in Chicago with some 18 other Wobblies. He was convicted and sentenced to 20 years in Leavenworth prison. In 1919 he was released on bail pending appeal and devoted his time to the IWW's General Defense Committee, launching a campaign to raise bail money for those in prison. When the Red Scare and the Palmer Raids began, Haywood learned that he was a primary target. So, as his appeal went to the Supreme Court, he sailed for the Soviet Union. A student of history, he had no illusions in "blind justice."

Cannon was also heavily influenced by the case of California labor leaders Tom Mooney and Warren Billings. In 1916, as America was preparing to go to war, Mooney and Billings were framed up for a bombing at a Preparedness Day Parade in San Francisco. The Preparedness Movement was a bourgeois movement of "open shop" chamber of commerce, right-wing vigilante groups, who were very serious about getting the U.S. into World War I. They went into Mexico to fight Pancho Villa as practice. The Preparedness Movement was opposed by labor, and in fact two days before the bombing there had been a 5,000-strong labor demonstration in San Francisco.

Mooney and Billings were convicted. Mooney was sentenced to hang, Billings got a life sentence. At first, their case was taken up only by the anarchists. The official AFL labor movement took a hands-off position. But when it became clear that they had been framed with perjured testimony, a "Mooney movement" swept the country.

The Mooney case had a big impact on Russian immigrant workers, among others. Thus the Mooney case was carried back to Russia, and in April of 1917 the Russian anarchists led a Mooney defense demonstration in Petrograd at the American consulate. Worried about Russia pulling out of World War I at that point, Woodrow Wilson personally interceded on behalf of Mooney and Billings. It didn't get them out of jail, but the effect of international pressure was not lost on Cannon.

In the U.S., the cops broke up Mooney defense meetings and arrested those present. The class-struggle nature of the defense movement, involving such actions as one-day strikes, was a felt threat to the ruling class, especially in the face of a war. In a conscious effort to dissipate this movement, the state commuted Mooney's death sentence to life in prison. In combination with the domestic repression following the war, this took the life out of the Mooney movement. Mooney and Billings stayed in prison for 22

years. They were released in 1939, and Mooney spent two and a half of the next three years in the hospital and then died.

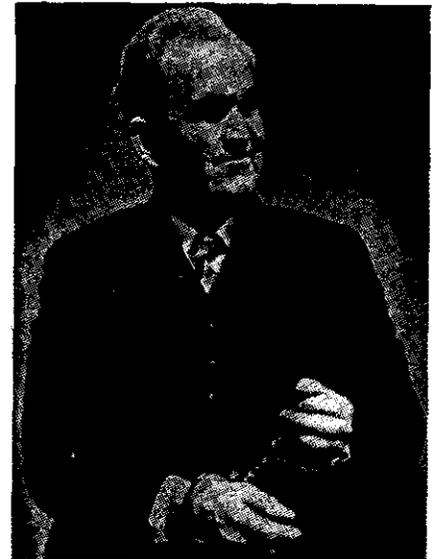
In his eulogy "Good-by Tom Mooney!" Cannon wrote: "They imprisoned Mooney—as they imprisoned Debs and Haywood and hundreds of others—in order to clear the road of militant labor opposition to the First World War, and they kept him in prison for revenge and for a warning to others."

As World War II began, Cannon would find himself in the same position.

The Tradition of International Labor Defense

The parties of the Second International backed their own ruling classes in World War I, and the Bolsheviks fought for a new international party committed to the Marxist movement's call, "Workers of the World Unite!" In 1919, the leaders of the Russian Revolution founded the Third International, the Comintern, to build revolutionary parties which could take up the struggle against capitalist rule. 1919 was also a year of massive strike activity in the U.S. This wave of class struggle swelled the ranks of the Socialist Party, which then split in September. The most left-wing workers regrouped, giving

Tom Mooney, California socialist and labor activist, opposed imperialist war drive. Mooney-Billings defense case galvanized a generation of young Communists during and after World War I.



San Francisco Chronicle

birth to the American Communist movement, and Cannon was among them.

America in the 1920s was not a nice place to be. Warren Harding was elected in a landslide victory on the slogan of "Return to Normalcy." And "normal" was racist and repressive. His attorney general, A. Mitchell Palmer, launched a war on the left inspired by fear of the Russian Revolution, which resulted in massive deportations of leftists and jailing of American radicals. The young Communist Party went underground. 1920 saw more lynchings and anti-black pogroms than any time in recent memory. The Klan grew like wildfire, and the government passed anti-immigration legislation that would give Newt Gingrich and Pete Wilson wet dreams.

When it was clear that the IWW was for all practical purposes broken, many of its jailed members, including Eugene Debs, were pardoned. The Communists, however,



Labor Defender



no credit

New York rally at Union Square demanded freedom for anarchists Bartolomeo Vanzetti and Nicola Sacco (shown right, on their way to trial), Italian workers executed in Massachusetts, 1927, during wave of anti-immigrant "Red Scare" repression.

remained in jail. The union movement took it on the chops as well, and by the end of the 1920s only 13 percent of the workforce of this country was unionized.

The 1921 Third Congress of the Comintern was held under the watchword "To the Masses." In the U.S., the newly formed party had been underground and could hardly make a turn to the masses. At the Comintern's urging, the Workers (Communist) Party emerged in December of 1921 with Cannon as its first chairman and main public spokesman.

By the time of the Fourth Congress of the Comintern in 1922, the tactic of the united front had been defined; the Fourth Congress detailed its application. The need for the united front grew out of the post-World War I ebbing of the revolutionary tide following the Russian Revolution. The offensive by the capitalists against the proletariat and its parties was forcing even the reformist-led organizations into partial and defensive struggles to save their very lives.

The slogan "march separately, strike together" encapsulated the two aims of the united-front tactic: class unity and the political fight for a communist program. The Comintern sought both to achieve the maximum unity of the working masses in their defensive struggles and to expose *in action* the hesitancy of the leadership of the reformist organizations of the Second International to act in the interests of the proletariat and the inability of its program to win against the ruling class.

The united front is a tactic we use today. Our call for labor/black mobilizations to stop the execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal and abolish the racist death penalty has brought together many different organizations and individuals to save Jamal's life. At these rallies and demonstrations, we

have insisted on the right to argue for our program to put an end to racist injustice and capitalist exploitation through socialist revolution.

In line with the policies hashed out at the Third and Fourth Congresses, the Communist International founded an international defense organization, the International Red Aid. These events had a substantial effect on the young American party, and one of the direct results was the foundation in 1925 of the International Labor Defense (ILD).

Cannon's goal was to make the ILD the defense arm of the labor movement. Cannon wrote to Debs on the occasion of his endorsement of the ILD:

"The main problem as I see it is to construct the ILD on the broadest possible basis. To conduct the work in a non-partisan and non-sectarian manner and finally establish the impression by our deeds that the ILD is the defender of every worker persecuted for his activities in the class struggle, without any exceptions and without regard to his affiliations."

From 1925 to 1928, the ILD was pretty successful in achieving that goal. It established principles to which we adhere today:

- United-front defense: The ILD campaigns were organized to allow for the broadest possible participation.
- Class-struggle defense: The ILD sought to mobilize the working class in protest on a national and international scale, relying on the class movement of the workers and placing no faith in the justice of the capitalist courts, while using every legal avenue open to them.
- Non-sectarian defense: When it was founded, the ILD immediately adopted 106 prisoners, instituting the practice of financially assisting these prisoners and their

families. Many had been jailed as a result of the "criminal syndicalism" laws; some were Wobblies, some were anarchists, some were strike leaders. Not one was a member of the Communist Party. The ILD launched the first Holiday Appeal. Of course, the ILD also vigorously defended its own, understanding the vital importance of the legal rights of the Communist Party to exist and organize.

Social Defense and Union Struggle

The ILD's most well-known case was the defense of Sacco and Vanzetti. The frame-up for murder and robbery of these two immigrant anarchist workers, who were sent to their deaths by the state of Massachusetts in 1927, grew directly out of the "red scare" of the early '20s. The ILD applied with alacrity the main lines of its program: unity of all working-class forces and reliance on the class movement of the workers. Thousands of workers rallied to their cause, and unions around the country contributed to a defense fund set up by Italian workers in the Boston area. But the level of class struggle is key to the outcome of defense cases, and the ILD's exemplary campaign proved insufficient to save the lives of Sacco and Vanzetti.

As the case drew to a close, one of the feints used by the state was to start rumors that Sacco and Vanzetti's death penalty sentence would be commuted to life without parole. This was designed to dissipate the Sacco and Vanzetti movement and *prepare their execution*. Cannon rang the alarm bells from the pages of the *Labor Defender*, rallying ILD supporters to mass demonstrations and warning them of the devious and two-faced nature of the bourgeoisie. Cannon had not forgotten the demobilization of the Mooney movement after his sentence had been commuted nor the living death that Mooney and Billings were enduring in their 22 years of internment.

This has significance for us today as we fight against the threatened execution of Jamal. Life in prison is hell. Think about the "life" of Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt), another former Panther, jailed for a quarter of a century for a crime the state knows he did not commit. While some call upon Pennsylvania governor Ridge to convert Jamal's

sentence to life without parole, we demand the freedom of both these innocent men.

The ILD also worked in defense of the class as a whole. In 1926, about 16,000 textile workers hit the bricks in Passaic, New Jersey. Their strike was eventually defeated, but it drew sharp lessons on the role of the state and demonstrated for Cannon the absolute necessity for a permanent, organized and always ready non-partisan labor defense organization. Cannon wrote in the *Labor Defender*:

"Our I.L.D. is on the job at Passaic. Not a single striker went into court without our lawyer to defend him. There was not a single conviction that was not appealed. Nobody had to remain in jail more than a few days for lack of bail.... A great wave of protest spread thru the labor movement and even the most conservative labor leaders were compelled to give expression to it."

In 1928, the Trotskyist Left Opposition (including Cannon) was expelled from the Communist Party. The ILD remained under the control of the Communist Party and thus became subject to the zigzags of Stalinist policies throughout the 1930s, including the perversion of the united front from a tactic for class unity into an instrument for class collaboration and counterrevolution.

In 1929, Stalin declared the "Third Period," an ultraleft shift, the main tactic of which was to smash the Social Democratic and other leftist parties by creating what the Stalinists called "united fronts from below." The Comintern charged the reformists with "social fascism"; the real fascists were to be dealt with secondarily. In Germany, this policy contributed to Adolf Hitler's seizure of power—there was no united fight against fascism by the workers in the mass Communist and Social Democratic parties. This policy had an effect on the U.S. party and its defense work.

Legal Lynching in the American South

One result of the stock market crash of 1929 and the ensuing Depression was that 200,000 people made the rails their home as they moved from place to place looking for work. On 25 March 1931, nine black youths, ranging

Prometheus Research Library Book

James P. Cannon and the Early Years of American Communism

Selected Writings and Speeches, 1920-1928

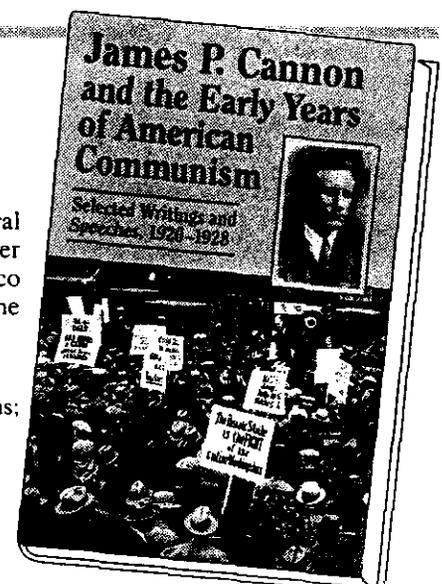
James P. Cannon was a founding leader of American Communism and later a central collaborator of exiled Russian revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky. He was a founder of the International Labor Defense and active in its campaign for the anarchists Sacco and Vanzetti. This volume of Cannon's writings covers the period when he was one of the principal leaders of the American section of the Communist International.

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in age from 13 to 20, were riding the Memphis to Chattanooga freight train. Two young white women, fearful of being jailed for hoboing when the train was stopped after reports that there had been a fight with some white boys, accused the blacks of rape. Among the nine were Olen Montgomery—blind in one eye and with 10 percent vision in the other—headed for Memphis hoping to earn enough money to buy a pair of glasses; Willie Roberson, debilitated by years-long untreated syphilis and gonorrhea—which is important if you're going to be talking about a rape case; and Eugene Williams and Roy Wright, both 13 years old.

The group were nearly lynched on the spot. The trial began in Scottsboro, Alabama on April 6. Four days later, despite medical evidence that no rape had occurred—not to mention gross violations of due process—eight were sentenced to death and one of the 13-year-olds to life in prison. The Communist Party issued a statement condemning the trial as a "legal" lynching. That night, the campaign to free the Scottsboro Boys began.

Freedom was a long time coming. A series of trials and appeals all went badly for the defendants. In 1933, one of the alleged victims, Ruby Bates, recanted her testimony, but it wasn't until 1937 that four of the defendants were freed. Three more were paroled in the 1940s, and in 1948 Haywood Patterson escaped from Angola prison to Michigan, where the governor refused to extradite him. The last, Andy Wright, who had had his 1944 parole revoked, was finally released in 1950. The nine had spent 104 years in jail for a "crime" that never happened.

The ILD made the word "Scottsboro" synonymous, nationally and internationally, with Southern racism, repression and injustice. Their campaign was responsible for saving the Scottsboro Boys from the electric chair. As Haywood Patterson's father wrote in a letter to his son, "You will burn sure if you don't let them preachers alone

and trust in the International Labor Defense to handle the case."

The CP's publicity was massive and moving. They organized demonstrations in Harlem and across the country, appealing to the masses to put no confidence in the capitalist courts and to see the struggle for the freedom of these youths as part of the larger class struggle. Young Communists in Dresden, Germany marched on the American consulate, and, when officials refused to accept their petition, hurled bottles through windows. Inside each was the note: "Down with American murder and Imperialism. For the brotherhood of black and white young proletarians. An end to the bloody lynching of our Negro co-workers."

In the South, the defense effort faced not only the racist system but the homegrown fascists of the Ku Klux Klan as well, which launched a campaign under the slogan "The Klan Rides Again to Stamp Out Communism."

The ILD's success in rallying the masses to the defense of the Scottsboro Boys happened despite their sectarian "Third Period" tactics. The ILD denounced the NAACP, the ACLU and most of the trade-union movement as "social fascists" and threw the "Trotskyite" likes of Jim Cannon out of Scottsboro defense meetings. But fascism was on the rise in Europe, and, seeking now to make as many allies as he could, in 1935 Stalin declared the "Third Period" at an end. A Comintern resolution urged the Communist parties to form "popular fronts" with any and all for progressive ends. In the U.S. this meant supporting Roosevelt and abandoning the struggle to link the defense of black people with the fight against the capitalist system. You can imagine the surprise of the NAACP, who were now greeted warmly by the ILD as "comrades"! This comradeship did not extend to the Trotskyists. The Scottsboro Defense Committee was formed, and a lot of the life went out of the movement as the case dragged on.

Cannon and his party, the Communist League of America, supported the efforts of the ILD to free the Scottsboro Boys. The Trotskyists insisted on the importance of an *integrated* movement to fight in their defense. Cannon pointed out that it was wrong to view the Scottsboro case solely as a "Negro issue" and agitated in the pages of the *Militant* for the organization of white workers around the case.

When Clarence Darrow refused to work on the case unless the ILD withdrew because he didn't like its agitational methods, Cannon wrote:

"The ILD was absolutely right in rejecting the presumptuous demands of Darrow and Hays, and the Scottsboro prisoners showed wisdom in supporting the stand of their defense organization. Any other course would have signified an end to the fight to organize the protest of the masses against the legal lynching; and with that would have ended any real hope to save the boys and restore their freedom."

Darrow's big argument was: "You can't mix politics with a law case." Cannon replied:

"That is a reactionary lie. It is father to the poisonous doctrine that a labor case is a purely legal relation between the lawyer and client and the court.... It was the influence of this idea over the Sacco-Vanzetti Defense Committee which paralyzed the protest mass movement at every step and thereby contributed to the final tragic outcome. Not

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to the courts alone, and not primarily there, but to the masses must the appeal of the persecuted of class and race be taken. There is the power and there is the justice."

Communists on Trial

During the time that the Scottsboro Boys were languishing in their Southern jails, World War II began in Europe. The American workers had gone through the experience of one of the biggest union organizing drives in the history of the country, resulting in the formation of the CIO, and many of the new industrial unions had won significant victories. Communists, including the Trotskyists, Jim Cannon and the Socialist Workers Party, had participated in and led many of these struggles. War is great for capitalist economies—the destruction creates constant demand, and if you win, you get new markets to exploit. But to go to war, you have to regiment the population at home, and that begins with the suspension of civil liberties.

On the eve of America's entry into World War II, Congress passed the Smith Act, requiring the fingerprinting and registering of all aliens residing in the United States and making it a crime to advocate or teach the "violent overthrow of the United States government" or to belong to a group advocating or teaching it.

For public consumption, this act was billed as an anti-fascist measure, but the Socialist Workers Party (successor to the Communist League of America) and Minneapolis Teamsters were the first victims of the Smith Act prosecutions. Why did the head of the Teamsters Union, Daniel J. Tobin, the U.S. attorney general, Francis Biddle, and the president of the United States, Franklin Roosevelt, conspire to take away the First Amendment rights of a small Trotskyist party, a party with maybe a couple thousand members and influence in one local of one union?

Part of the answer is that the SWP was effective. The party had led some hard class struggle; it was their comrades who had provided the leadership for the Minneapolis strike of 1934 which led to the formation of Teamsters Local 544. Another part of the answer is politics: the SWP was forthright in its opposition to the coming war. This was a calculated government attack designed to cripple the SWP where it had the most influence in the proletariat as America girded for imperialist war.

In the courtroom, the SWP's goal was to put the capitalist system on trial, a tradition we carry forward in our own cases. On the stand, Cannon pedagogically explained the positions of the SWP on the questions of the day and Marxism in general. But the Minneapolis defendants went to jail for 16 months—sentenced on the same day that Congress voted to enter the war. The ruling class hoped that the party would be leaderless and pass from the stage. But at that time the SWP was still a revolutionary party with a revolutionary program and a collective leadership—so that hope was, in the main, dashed.

A number of CIO unions issued statements in defense of the Minneapolis defendants, as did numerous black organizations. The American Communist Party, however, issued the following statement: "The Communist Party has always exposed, fought against and today joins the fight to exterminate the Trotskyite fifth column from the life of our nation." In line with their support for Roosevelt



Brown Brothers

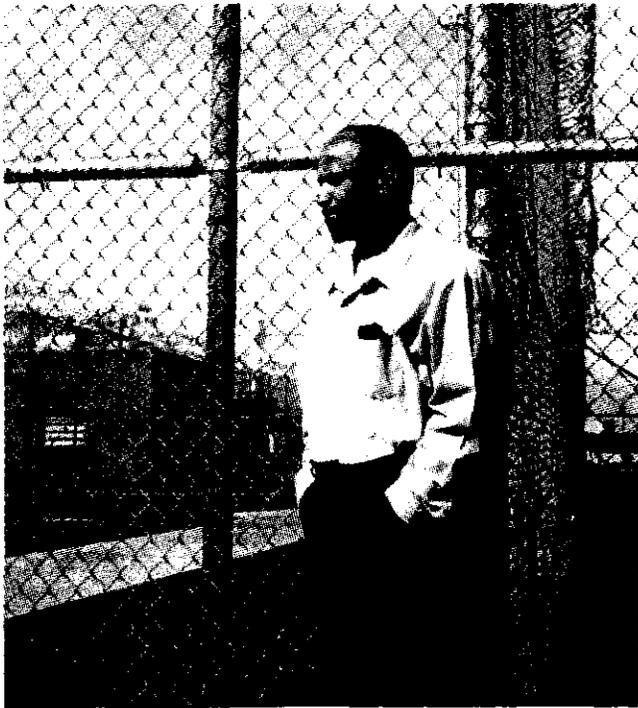
Scottsboro defendants meeting with attorney in Decatur, Alabama jail. International defense campaign exposed racist Jim Crow system in American South.

and the war, the CP aided the government in the Smith Act prosecution of the SWP and aided the FBI in their persecution of the Trotskyists in the trade unions. The CP's disgusting collaboration did not prevent them from being prosecuted under the very same Smith Act, beginning in 1948. The Trotskyists, of course, defended the CP unequivocally against the government prosecution while criticizing the CP's Stalinist politics.

Years later the attorney general, Francis Biddle, apologized for prosecuting the Trotskyists. The bourgeoisie sometimes apologizes when its crisis is safely over. Fifty years after the end of World War II, the U.S. government "apologized" for the wartime roundup and internment of Japanese Americans, offering a token compensation to those whose homes were seized and livelihoods ruined. They say whatever outrageous trampling of civil liberties occurred was an "excess" or "wrong" and of course it will "never happen again." But the Reagan government drew up plans to intern Arab Americans in concentration camps in Louisiana after the bombing of Libya. Those camps are ready and waiting for the next time the bourgeoisie feels its rule is substantially threatened.

Class-Struggle Defense Work

The Partisan Defense Committee was initiated in 1974 by the Spartacist League with the goal of re-establishing in the workers movement united-front, non-sectarian



Jonathan Eubanks

Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt) has spent 25 years behind bars, framed up in FBI COINTELPRO vendetta against Black Panther Party.

defense principles in the tradition of Cannon's ILD.

This was not anticipated to be, nor has it been, an easy task. Unlike the ILD, which inherited the rich and principled defense traditions of the IWW and the personal authority of mass leaders like Cannon and Haywood, we were the immediate inheritors of a tradition of Stalinist perversion of defense work. In addition, the ILD was founded as a transitional organization, seeking to organize the masses for class-struggle defense work under the leadership of the party. By its second conference, the ILD had 20,000 individual members, a collective, affiliated membership of 75,000, and 156 branches across the country. The PDC attempts to conduct its work in a way that will make the transformation to such an organization possible.

The PDC program of raising money for monthly stipends for class-war prisoners is an example of an ILD practice to which we adhere. We currently send stipends to 17 prisoners, including Jamal, Geronimo ji Jaga and other former supporters of the Black Panther Party, victims of the FBI's murderous COINTELPRO frame-ups; Jerry Dale Lowe, a miner condemned to eleven years in prison for defending his picket line; and members of the MOVE organization locked up because they survived the racist cop assaults on their homes and murder of their family. We also follow the ILD's policy of strict accounting of finances and have modeled our journal, *Class-Struggle Defense Notes*, on the ILD's *Labor Defender*.

We take to heart Cannon's point:

"The problem of organization is a very significant one for labor defense as a school for the class struggle. We must not get the idea that we are merely 'defense workers' collecting money for lawyers. That is only a part of what we are doing. We are organizing workers on issues which are directly related to the class struggle. The workers who

take part in the work of the ILD are drawn, step by step into the main stream of the class struggle. The workers participating begin to learn the ABC of the labor struggle."

Class-struggle defense is a broad category. We are a small organization and must pick and choose our cases carefully, with an eye to their exemplary nature. The case of Mario Muñoz, a Chilean miners' leader condemned to death in 1976 by the Argentine military junta, is a good example. This was the PDC's first major defense effort. Co-sponsored with the Committee to Defend Workers and Sailor Prisoners in Chile, the international campaign of protest by unions and civil libertarians won asylum for Muñoz and his family in France.

Some of our work has been in defense of the revolutionary party. The Spartacist League takes its legality—the right to exist and organize—very seriously, and has been quick to challenge every libel and legal attack. The party successfully challenged the FBI's slanderous description of the SL as "terrorists" who covertly advocate the violent overthrow of the government. A 1984 settlement forced them to describe the SL as a "Marxist political organization."

The PDC takes up not only the cases but the causes of the whole of the working people. We have initiated labor/black mobilizations against the Klan from San Francisco to Atlanta to Philadelphia to Springfield, Illinois, and mobilized sections of the integrated labor movement to join these efforts to stop the fascists from spewing their race hate.

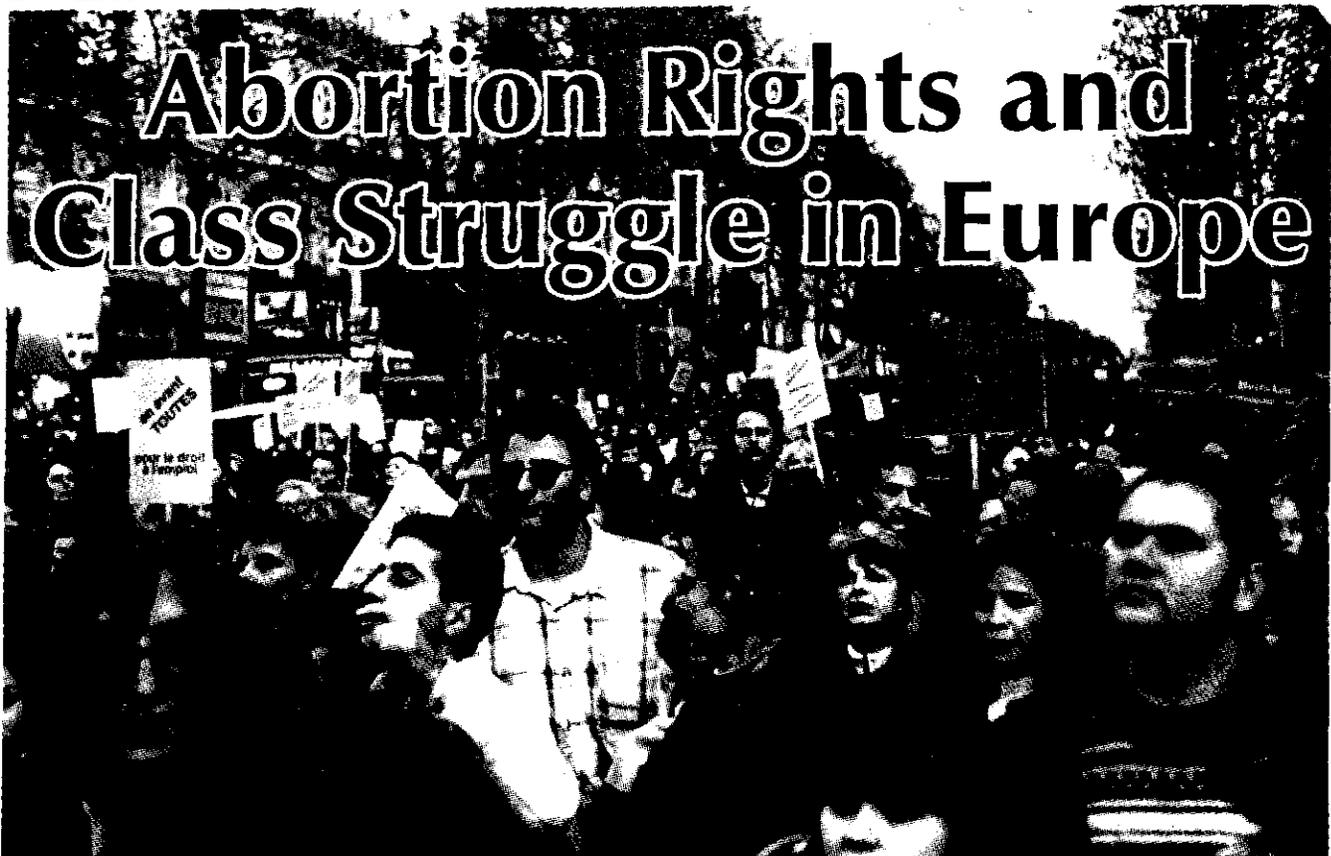
In 1989, we broadened our thinking about how the PDC could champion causes of the international proletariat and offered to organize an international brigade to Afghanistan to fight alongside the forces of the left-nationalist Kabul regime against the imperialist-backed, anti-woman Islamic fundamentalists on the occasion of the withdrawal of Soviet troops. When our offer of a brigade was declined, we launched a successful campaign to raise money for the victims of the mullah-led assault on Jalalabad. To reflect this, we expanded the definition of the PDC to one of a legal and social defense organization. To carry out this campaign, it was necessary to expand the PDC internationally. Sections of the International Communist League initiated fraternal organizations in Australia, Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy and Japan.

Currently we focus our efforts on Mumia Abu-Jamal and the fight to abolish the racist death penalty. Our actions in the Jamal case embody many of the principles of our defense work and the integral relationship of that work to the Marxist program of the Spartacist League, in this case particularly in regard to the fight for black liberation, which is key to the American revolution. This is a political death penalty case which illustrates the racism endemic in this country in its cruelest, most vicious form and lays bare the essence of the state.

Throughout the very difficult period ahead, we will put all our faith in the mobilization of the working class and none in the capitalist courts. We embark now on exhausting every legal avenue open to Jamal, but we know the result hinges on the class struggle.

We hope you will join us in the fight to free Mumia Abu-Jamal, to abolish the racist death penalty and finish the Civil War. Forward to the third American revolution! ■

Women's Rights Under Attack in the "New World Order"



Le Bolchévik

Paris, 25 November 1995: 40,000 demonstrate for women's rights as part of explosion of protests against government austerity plan.

The availability of safe, legal and free abortion is a measure of the condition of women, which in turn is an index of the general advancement of any society. This simple, safe medical procedure is a fundamental democratic right. Like all benefits for the working class and oppressed in capitalist society, the right to abortion was the product of great social struggles. Abortions have been legally available, albeit often with cruel and degrading restrictions, in many European countries and in North America since the 1970s. Yet today abortion rights are under sharp attack.

Abortion is an explosive *political* issue because, at bottom, it raises the question of the equality of women. Engaging deep fears and prejudices which the capitalists stoke in their attacks on health care and other social services, abortion rights are thus subject to the ebbs and flows of the class struggle.

The current anti-abortion offensive sweeping Europe is part of a generalized assault on the living conditions of the working class. The restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union and East Europe has intensified inter-imperialist rivalries. In competition against U.S.- and Japanese-dominated markets, the European bourgeoisies are in a race to boost profit margins by lowering costs—the wages paid to workers and the money spent on social welfare

programs. The ruling classes are out to strike a decisive blow against the unions, which would set the stage for a broader onslaught against the working class. Directed first and foremost at organized labor, these attacks will hit youth, minorities and women especially hard.

The ruthless offensive is the Maastricht treaty's equivalent to Thatcher's assault on the British miners in 1984-85 and Reagan's destruction of the PATCO air traffic controllers union in 1981. The crushing of PATCO was a milestone in two decades of austerity and reaction in the U.S., a crucial component of which was unremitting attacks on women and the right to abortion which today is all but unavailable in many states.

Abortion provides women with a modicum of control over whether or not to have children and thus is viewed as a threat to the institution of the family, which is a crucial prop for the capitalist system of exploitation. And as each country seeks to jockey for its economic and military position, each ruling class seeks to further regiment the population through the disciplinary and conservatizing influence of an enhanced family structure and to regulate its birthrate.

The attack on abortion rights runs parallel with the generalized restriction on immigration and the ruthless oppression of immigrant populations within the European

countries. The bourgeoisies' concern for increased and ethnically homogeneous populations reflects a rising nationalism often seen in prewar periods. In this regard, the current actions of the ruling classes are strikingly similar to the Nazis' "family" policies of the 1930s in which women were fired in massive numbers from the workplace and forced back into the home. It is not accidental that the fascist forces throughout Europe have become much more actively engaged in the fight against women's rights.

The assault on abortion rights began in earnest in the 1980s as an ideological cutting edge of anti-Soviet Cold War reaction in Europe and North America. The imperialists sought to "morally rearm" the population in their crusade against the "godless Communists."

The revitalization of organized religion is another indispensable weapon in the capitalist arsenal. For 17 years, the virulently anti-Communist Polish Pope, Karol Wojtyla, has tramped the globe inveighing against equality for women and birth control. To fight abortion he has put the immense wealth and political power of the Vatican at the disposal of some of the most reactionary and violent forces in society. His 1995 encyclical, "Evangelium Vitae," denies women the status of full human beings, would



Gamma

Lech Walesa's Solidarność, agency of Catholic church and Western bankers, organized restoration of capitalist rule and outlawed virtually all abortions.

excommunicate homosexuals and "fornicators," and calls AIDS "god's punishment." Declaring abortion murder and god's laws above those of men, the head inquisitor of Rome gives absolution in advance to anti-abortion assassins and commandos everywhere. This obscurantist bigot is a deadly criminal whose war on abortion rights is responsible for untold deaths and injuries for women the world over.

The International Communist League upholds the right to abortion as a necessary measure for women's health and existence. We fight for *free abortion on demand* in order to ensure that legal abortion can become a reality for working, minority and immigrant women. We empha-

size that this cannot be isolated from the fight for good living conditions and free health care and childcare. Nor can it be separated from the fight against the state, family and religious institutions which keep the working class shackled to capitalist exploitation, which is the basis for all manifestations of oppression. To break these chains, the working class must be mobilized to take power in its own name, overthrowing the bourgeois order and laying the basis for a socialist society on a world scale. As communists, our task is to forge a revolutionary workers party that can organize and lead such a struggle, linking the needs of the oppressed to the social power of the proletariat.

In contrast, the large reformist organizations in Europe overtly capitulate to the capitalist state and thereby aid the European bourgeoisie's anti-abortion offensive. In some countries, the reformists openly bloc with anti-abortion, clericalist political formations. Elsewhere, if abortion is fought for at all, demands are tailored so as not to exceed the narrow limitations of the liberal wing of the bourgeoisie. At base, the reformist left despairs of the struggle for proletarian power. Unwilling and unable to challenge the fundamental basis for the attacks on working people and women, these groups can only hope to "pressure" one wing or another of the ruling class for the scarce resources available under capitalism. But from Poland to Italy and Ireland, from Germany to France, even the most enlightened of the bourgeoisie are dependent for their continued class rule on the maintenance of their state, family and church.

Poland: Clerical Reaction Born of Counterrevolution

Women's right to abortion has been a key social issue in Poland since the restoration of capitalist rule in 1990. In 1993 the clerical-nationalist Solidarność government of Lech Walesa outlawed virtually all abortions. In the first year of the new law, the number of legal abortions plummeted from well over 100,000 annually to 786!

Behind these devastating numbers lies misery. After years of decreasing, the number of miscarriages has risen sharply. In 1994 there were 162 documented cases of infanticide, and a growing number of infants are simply abandoned by desperate and troubled women. One couple who lacked the millions of zlotys for an illegal abortion instead performed it themselves. Tragically, the woman died and the man is now charged with murder of (in this order) a child and a woman.

While back-alley procedures are the lot of the vast majority who want abortions, if they can scrape up the money, wealthier women have been able to go abroad to Belarus, Ukraine and the Czech Republic. But even these options are narrowing as the Czech Republic now refuses to allow "foreign women" to get abortions there. A Warsaw company that organized travel for Polish women to the Czech Republic had its phone lines tapped in a sting operation to entrap both the company and the women.

The Catholic church has received rich political and financial rewards for its aggressive role in the restoration of capitalism. Vast amounts of property confiscated by the Polish bureaucratically deformed workers state have been restored to the church, and the Vatican is trying to

engineer a "concordat" formalizing the church's role in the Polish state.

The December 1995 presidential elections, in which abortion was a central issue, saw the Vatican's man Lech Walesa defeated and replaced by Aleksander Kwasniewski, who is associated with the former Stalinist regime. Appealing to Polish voters, who in their majority favor abortion rights, Kwasniewski promised to liberalize the abortion laws if elected. But as head of the constitutional committee on which the Catholic church has official standing, Kwasniewski made it clear that he would not antagonize the clerics and sought "compromise," even as the church was driving to get anti-abortion and anti-homosexual provisions into the constitution. The governing Democratic Left Alliance similarly has no intention of ruffling clerical feathers (see "The Working Class Must Take Up the Fight for Women's Rights!" W&R No. 44, Winter 1994-Spring 1995).

Most of the Polish left has taken their cue from these ex-Stalinists, who are now unabashedly committed to capitalism. For example, the pseudo-leftists of Grupa Samorządność Robotnicza attack us for introducing "secondary" questions—like the fight to defend abortion—into the workers movement, an appallingly backward attitude echoed by the rest of the left. The Polish United Secretariat group, whose parent organization staunchly backed Solidarność from 1980 on ("a great socialist," said the USec's late leader Ernest Mandel of Lech Walesa), attended an "anti-clerical" demonstration with a banner reading, "Jesus is with us"! And in their paper, *Dalej*, they speak grotesquely of the "right of motherhood."

Conciliation of the Catholic church is the kiss of death for class struggle. The Spartakusowska Grupa Polski says, "Scrap the concordat! Priests out of the schools and out of our bedrooms! For the strict separation of church and state!" Our SGP comrades have called upon workers to take up the struggle against all manifestations of capitalist counterrevolution, including anti-Semitism and anti-Roma (Gypsies) racism, as well as the attacks on women.

Italy: "Progressives" March over Women's Bodies

The presence of the Vatican lends the abortion rights struggle in Italy a particular sharpness. The "Concordat," the 1929 treaty between Mussolini's fascist state and the Pope, was incorporated into the Republican 1948 Constitution—with the approval of the class-collaborationist Italian Communist Party. The Concordat grants the church a privileged position above other religions, providing the Vatican with billions of lira and permitting it to propagandize in the public schools its reactionary ideology against abortion and contraception.

Since 1978 when Law 194 legalized abortion—won by the struggles of the entire working class—the Vatican has crusaded for its overturn. Now their crusade has the official imprimatur of the judicial system. Speaking the Vatican's language, the president of the constitutional court declared Law 194 unconstitutional because it doesn't guarantee the "right" to life of the fetus. In the front lines of this assault is a powerful coalition of doctors, pharmacists and the notorious "committees of bioethics," which are essentially Mafia circles infested with the anti-sex, anti-abortion fanatics of *Comunione e Liberazione*.

Immigrant women have been targeted for especially cruel treatment. According to press reports, some women have been fleeced for their money and then turned over to the police after the operation! In Modena in the heart of the "red" Emilia region, a 29-year-old woman from Ghana, Giorgina Yaboah, died of complications before giving birth, fearing that if she went to the hospital she would be deported because she was "clandestine."

The trial of the Mangiagalli doctors, who have been persecuted and harassed since 1992 for performing abor-



Spartaco

Milano, 15 March 1995: LTd'I calls for free abortion on demand, available to all including minors and immigrants and "For women's liberation through socialist revolution!" at protest against persecution of Mangiagalli doctors.

tions, sharply highlights the state repression against those few doctors who do perform abortions. Taking their cue from the government, Nazi skinheads have mobilized against the doctors and their clinic in the name of "defense of life." In 1993 the government demanded jail terms for the doctors of up to three years and six months. Last spring the Lega Trotskista (LTd'I), section of the ICL, participated in a rally in front of the Milano courthouse in defense of the Mangiagalli doctors with placards reading: "State and priests: Hands off the abortion clinics!" "Free abortion on demand for all, including minors and immigrants!" "Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!"

The 19th-century revolutionary democrat Giuseppe Garibaldi once said that the Vatican is "the cancer of Italy." This cancer has infected much of the left. In the past, the Italian Communist Party (PCI) confined itself to upholding Law 194 (itself a compromise with the Vatican) as the last bastion against clerical reaction. But no more. The Italian bourgeoisie wants a "strong state" in order to contain a restive proletariat; their preferred vehicle at present is a popular-front coalition of bourgeois parties with the PCI's heir, the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), which in turn needs the approval of the Vatican. In order to obtain such consensus, the PDS is more than willing to trample on the rights of women.

PDS secretary Massimo D'Alema now declares that his

party is ready to review Law 194...to further restrict abortions. He blocs with the Pope on the issues of euthanasia and artificial insemination, and sides with the "natural family" against homosexual couples, declaring that "the defense of life is a value which brings Catholics and seculars together, it doesn't divide them." He added that he will "do everything that can be done to avoid abortions." Together with Rifondazione Comunista, the "left" split from the PCI, the PDS supported dozens of reactionary clerical and anti-abortion candidates in the last national elections in March 1994, including the Green, Mattioli, who declared that abortion is "violence."

Hundreds of thousands of women don't want to be thrown back to the era of "god, country, and family"... and clothes hangers. They are seriously worried about the infuriating anti-woman politics of the politicians and the capitulation of the left. Thus last June in Rome some 50,000 came to the demonstration organized by the Virginia Woolf Circle, the "City of Women" and other women's groups in defense of Law 194.

Last spring on the anniversary of the Concordat, a protest rally was organized in Milano by the Bruno Giordano Circle, an anti-clerical group made up largely of ex-members of the Radical Party. On the left, only the Lega Trotskista participated. The other left organizations were conspicuously absent—as they have been at any number of demonstrations in defense of abortion rights. In addressing the rally, the LTd'I emphasized our demands: Separation of church and state! Church out of the bedrooms, the schools and the hospitals! Down with the Concordat! Expropriate all the property of the Vatican!

Millions of workers were mobilized in the fall of 1994 in a general strike against government austerity programs. Again in 1995 there were important demonstrations and strikes against pension cuts. Bringing this immense power to bear in defense of abortion, the rights of women and other specially oppressed sectors of the population like

immigrants, youth and Roma would greatly contribute to breaking the anti-political syndicalist conceptions that the reformist leadership use to block the development of class consciousness in the working class.

Workers Must Rule in Ireland if Women Are to Be Free

The Catholic church also dominates social life in the Republic of Ireland, where the fundamental right to abortion is a match to the explosive tinder of women's oppression. In this terribly backward country, women cannot get abortions. The story of abortion is one of tragedy and fear, of maternal death, infanticide and persecution.

In 1992, when a pregnant 14-year-old tried to get an abortion outside the country, the Supreme Court ruled this illegal, thereby essentially placing every Irish woman seeking an abortion under house arrest. With tens of thousands, mostly young women, demonstrating against the Supreme Court ruling, the government finally backed down and allowed the young woman to leave the country for an abortion.

To defuse the enormous anger over what came to be called the "X case," in 1992 the government held three referenda on the question of abortion rights. Two were on the availability of abortion information and travel, and the Dublin Spartacist Group advocated a "yes" vote, while fighting for free abortion on demand. But our comrades opposed the third, which sought to limit the legality of abortion, as well as the 1995 Abortion Information Bill, now law, because of its imposition of severe restrictions on abortion information.

The new act means that an abortion referral by a doctor or counseling agency is now illegal. Under the act, a doctor can be struck off the medical register and fined £1500 for so much as contacting an abortion clinic on behalf of a woman patient. The police have been given the power to seize medical records. Even information on



Farrell/Photocall

Ireland, November 1995: Catholic church launched reactionary mobilization against referendum to legalize divorce, which passed by a bare majority.

billboards and "unsolicited" leaflets about abortion are deemed illegal. Films and plays can also be banned if they are judged to "advocate" abortion.

This bill was supported by the Labour Party and Democratic Left, government coalition partners of the bourgeois Fine Gael, who have paid the price of their cabinet posts by capitulating to the Catholic church. Fighting for abortion rights means confronting these misleaders—the last thing the reformist left has in mind. In the 1992 elections, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP—followers of Tony Cliff), the Irish Workers Group (IWG—sister organization of the British Workers Power group) and Militant Labour all backed Labour and Democratic Left, both of which had declared their intentions of joining in a coalition government with the bourgeois parties. The DSG stood out as opponents of the popular front. We said no vote to Labour, the Workers Party or Democratic Left, and warned that such a class-collaborationist alliance would necessarily be anti-woman, anti-Traveller (Gypsies), anti-working-class and pro-imperialist.

As the left backs the popular-front coalition, so they mirror aspects of the bourgeoisie's own reactionary policies. Their claims to stand for women's liberation are shown to be hollow as they refuse to fight for free abortion on demand. Dublin Abortion Information Campaign (DAIC), a coalition of groups including IWG, Red Action and the Workers Solidarity Movement, calls *only* for abortion information. At the time of the X case, the SWP capitulated to the liberal bourgeoisie's line of restrictive "special grounds" for abortion. "Rape victims," they said, "have the right to abortion"! Militant Labour goes further, pandering to the anti-woman notion that abortion is a shameful "problem." The DSG says *all* women have the right to abortion!

In 1990 Mary ("I'm opposed to abortion") Robinson was elected president as the candidate of the popular front because she offered a possibility of heading off growing outrage over clericalism and of seeking accommodation with the capitalists of Northern Ireland in order to broker an imperialist "peace." The recent divorce referendum was similarly designed to give an appearance of European modernization. While noting that the proposed law—which requires *four years'* prior separation—was far from making divorce available unconditionally at the request of either partner, the DSG called for a "yes" vote. The referendum won by a slim 1 percent margin, and the result was immediately challenged by former senator Des Hanafin, the main spokesman for the anti-abortion campaign. Implementation of this meager advance awaits court rulings.

The forces lined up against divorce rights include Human Life International, with connections to Operation Rescue in the U.S., and Youth Defence which, with its fascistic core, has physically targeted pro-abortion forces and leftists. While the SWP and Militant Labour have ignored the threat posed by Youth Defence, the DSG has fought for united-front mobilizations to stop these shock troops for Catholic reaction.

In clericalist Ireland, a fight for abortion rights is also a fight for the means to carry it out, i.e., ending church control over health care. Contraception must be made free and available on demand. The secularization of education and provision of free quality health care requires

the expropriation not just of the church's property but of the entire ruling class.

Working-class struggle in defense of women's rights in the Republic can be a catalyst for cross-communal struggle in Northern Ireland, where abortion is virtually illegal and where the reactionary Protestant Loyalists oppose divorce and rights for gays. But for such struggle to succeed, revolutionaries must win the trade unions to the perspective of championing the rights of all the oppressed, not least for free abortion on demand, and that in turn means fighting tooth and nail against the sellout labor bureaucrats and giving no quarter to the wretched, anti-woman popular front.

Imperialist Germany: Down With Paragraphs 218 and 219!

It is a measure of the deeply retrograde Christian conception of women in German society that the abortion pill RU 486, invented under the auspices of a German pharmaceutical company, is neither licensed nor sold in this country because both the company and the Federal Health Authority are clericalist opponents of abortion. German abortion law, one of the most restrictive in Europe, is based on "Paragraph 218," which goes back to the Criminal Code of the autocratic founder of modern Germany, Otto von Bismarck.

In the former German Democratic Republic (DDR), a bureaucratically deformed workers state, instruction on sex and contraception was part of elementary education, and the birth control pill was free. In 1972, free abortion became available in the first three months of pregnancy. Two years after capitalist reunification, the German parliament voted a "compromise" abortion law. For women of the former DDR, already the target of sweeping layoffs and the destruction of free day care, the end to free abortion was devastating. The restrictive nature of Paragraph 218 may be gauged by the fact that this new law meant a slight gain for West German women.

In the summer of 1995, the law, judged too liberal, was rewritten to conform to the restrictions laid down by the German High Court. The current law, voted up by Kohl's Christian Democrats, the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the Free Democrats, makes a distinction that could only come from the Kafkaesque minds of German jurists: for a woman who goes through all the bureaucratic hurdles, abortion is "not punished" but remains "illegal"!

Under a sinister web of laws, abortion is allowed only in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy and only after extensive counseling at state-financed "advice centers" which are committed above all to the "protection of unborn life" and which must issue reports to the federal government. Abortion is now a criminal offense against "marital status and the family," and the concept of "criminal coercion" has been expanded to wide circles of a woman's friends and family who could go to prison for as much as five years for "advising" a woman to get an abortion. Critics fear this could lead to another "Memmingen trial," the monstrous witchhunt in Catholic Bavaria in 1988-89, in which gynecologist Horst Theissen and hundreds of his patients, mostly immigrants, were prosecuted. Agitation for the prosecution of doctors performing abortions under Paragraph 218 is increasing.

These vicious provisions didn't prevent the SPD from hailing the new law as a victory. Nor has the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), the former Stalinist rulers of the DDR, mobilized against the present abortion law in even a token fashion. Many members of the German nationalist Greens have long since dropped their opposition to the notorious Paragraph 218 and today applaud the elimination of abortion in cases of severe birth defects or life-threatening disease, claiming such abortions are the same as Nazi eugenics!

The German left's manifest indifference to the abortion rights struggle is a real testament to their prostration before the powerful German ruling class and their lieutenants in the SPD. *Soz* (newspaper of Unification for Socialist Politics, a group of former Maoists and members of the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat) published the "Women's Manifesto" of the Evangelical (Lutheran) Church conference. Silent on abortion and birth control, this "Manifesto" states that "Society and church have a claim to the ideas and creative powers of women." Bismarck himself couldn't have said it better!

The powerful German imperialists are leading the drive to dismantle the "social state" throughout Europe. The 1994 re-election of Helmut Kohl's Christian Democratic/Free Democratic coalition was the signal for an all-out assault on social services as well as heightened attacks on German workers in an effort to drive down wages. The powerful medical insurance cartel is now slashing the kinds of medical treatments covered and increasing the amounts that patients must pay. Insurance companies no longer pay for abortions unless it is possible to prove rape or "danger to life or severe physical or mental damage to health," and they have the power to decide who is eligible for the increasingly limited state subsidies for the poor. These costs underline the class nature of the current law: poor working women, particularly immigrants, cannot afford the price of an abortion which equals over half a month's wages.

The fight to smash the reactionary abortion laws could galvanize broader social struggle by the working class,

especially in the former DDR where the memory of what was lost remains fresh and bitter, against the current assault by the German imperialists.

France: Euro-Austerity and the War on Abortion Rights

In France the attacks on abortion are part of the sweeping Chirac/Juppé attacks on the entire health care and social service system. The French bourgeoisie is under relentless pressure from Germany to slash social welfare programs and drastically cut the budget deficit in the interests of launching a common European currency by 1999. This reactionary offensive hits hardest at women, "immigrants" and youth, the most vulnerable sectors in society.

The government's assault galvanized opposition from French public service workers. For much of December the combative workers virtually paralyzed France. Railroads were shut down for three weeks, mass transit in Paris and other cities ground to a halt, postal workers stayed off the job, and there were a series of one-day general strikes and repeated mobilizations that saw millions of workers in the streets. These labor actions were enthusiastically supported by the bulk of the population.

Even as the French imperialists prepared to send their army to impose NATO's dictates in the former Yugoslavia, they threatened to use these soldiers to impose the economic dictates of NATO Europe on French workers. While vowing to maintain his plans to gut public health services, Juppé offered to piece off the railway workers, and with the support of the union tops, the strikes were brought to an end. But the current stand-off could explode again in the near future.

On November 25, close to 40,000 demonstrated in Paris in protest against the French bourgeoisie's escalating war on abortion rights. Unprecedented in its size, with contingents from all the major union federations, this mobilization was an integral part of the sharp class struggles that rocked France.

Abortion rights have significantly eroded in recent years

DPA

Christof Strache



Lübeck, Germany, 18 January 1996: 10 people died and some 50 were injured in racist arson attack on refugee hostel. German cops and media seek to whitewash racist terror, blame immigrant resident for setting fire. Right, woman cries outside hostel as blaze rages for four hours.



Le Bolchévik

Paris, December 1995: As France erupted in mass transport strikes, a protester carried a sign commemorating the Paris Commune of 1871, the first proletarian revolution.

as a host of reactionary limitations have been imposed. Drastic budget cuts have forced some clinics to impose quotas as low as two abortions per week. Some clinics are kept running by voluntary medical teams, while others have been forced to close altogether.

Ominously, the anti-abortion fanatics of "SOS-tout petits" and La Trêve de Dieu (with links to the U.S.-based Operation Rescue terrorists) have escalated their terror against patients and staff, blocking access, invading clinics and tampering with surgical equipment—under the protection of the cops. The courts have given these deadly enemies of women the green light. Declaring that a fetus is "a future human being, already alive," a Paris judge acquitted nine anti-abortion protesters who had blocked access to the Salpêtrière public hospital. On January 27, anti-abortion forces surrounded the André-Mignot hospital in Versailles after one of their leaders received the first prison sentence ever imposed for blocking a clinic. They were met by a militant counterdemonstration of feminists and anarchists which was charged by the police, one of whom had a fascist cross inscribed on his billy club.

A growing number of women are completely excluded from the right to abortion. The dangerous ten-week waiting period forces many to seek illegal late abortions, and minors and HIV-positive women face heavy discrimination. And in savagely racist France, immigrant women without proper residency cards (a great many) cannot get the procedure at all; some 5,000 women annually are forced to travel to the Low Countries or Great Britain for the procedure. The struggle for full citizenship rights for

foreign-born workers and their families dovetails with the struggle for free abortion on demand and free quality health care for all.

The anti-abortion mobs and Le Pen's National Front fascists are heavily interpenetrated. Mass labor/immigrant mobilizations to sweep these vermin from the streets would strike a double blow in defense of both women and minorities. There have been small actions carried out by the so-called "vigilante committees" made up of feminists, anarchists and ecologists, but the main currents of the French left have consciously not tried to mobilize the working class in defense of abortion rights.

In a special 4 December 1995 supplement to *Le Bolchévik*, our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyste de France wrote:

"Today, the eyes of workers around the world are riveted on France, where the combative workers have demonstrated that the class struggle lives. But what is necessary for the workers to move on to victory is that Marxism live, in the form of an internationalist, Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party which fights for the proletarian conquest of power—a party of revolutionary action, not of parliamentary sellouts and trade-union bureaucrats. Such a party will be infused with Lenin's understanding that it must serve as a tribune of the people, opposing all manifestations of oppression against all sectors of the population, drawing in behind the power of the working class the youth, the besieged North African and black African workers and their children, who are dismissed as 'immigrants' even when they are born in France and are French citizens, the women whose right to abortion is increasingly at risk."

Leninist Party: Tribune of All the Oppressed

In *What Is To Be Done?* Lenin argued that "working-class consciousness cannot be genuine political consciousness unless the workers are trained to respond to *all* cases of tyranny, oppression, violence, and abuse, no matter *what* class is affected." It is through the instrumentality of the revolutionary party that the workers' struggles can become *class struggle*, when the most advanced workers become conscious of themselves as a single class whose actions are directed against the entire class of capitalists and their government. As long as the working class is not mobilized by a party based on revolutionary theory, its consciousness is decisively shaped by bourgeois ideology and culture.

Against the "Economists," who belittled the role of the conscious factor and attacked revolutionary Marxism as dogmatic and obsolete, Lenin argued that for socialists to adapt to the existing trade-union consciousness *prevents* the development of the class consciousness necessary to overthrow capitalism. Those sorry leftists who cannot fight for something so elementary as a woman's right to abortion have not only adapted to bourgeois political consciousness, but serve as a transmission belt to the working class for reactionary bourgeois ideology.

Under the banner of the working class, all the diverse sectors and layers of society oppressed and devastated by capitalism can be united in struggle to overthrow the capitalist exploiters. In this way, all the "drops and streamlets of popular resentment" at the manifold outrages created by capitalism must, in Lenin's words, "be combined into a *single* gigantic torrent" in a thoroughgoing social revolution. For women's liberation through socialist revolution! ■



Marshall/JB Pictures

Growing class divisions in Deng's China: high-rises spring up next to impoverished workers' district in Guangdong province, site of first "free trade" Special Economic Zones.

China...

(continued from page 56)

losers in China's "socialist market economy." In informal roadside labor markets springing up throughout the country, tens of thousands of rural women rendered "surplus" by the breakup of agricultural collectivization are being kidnapped and sold as "wives" every year. Police are bribed to look the other way. And what does decrepit Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping's mantra, "to get rich is glorious," mean to the families of dozens of young women who burned to death in the capitalist Zhuhai "Special Economic Zone" (SEZ) in 1993 because the doors of their jam-packed factory dormitory were locked as always to prevent them from leaving?

With an eye toward the collapse of Stalinist bureaucratic rule in the USSR, the Chinese "Communist" regime is dismantling ever more of the gains of the Chinese Revolution as it prepares the groundwork for the forces of capitalist counterrevolution. The Stalinist bureaucrats hope to position themselves as part of an emerging bourgeoisie. Hundreds of millions of women achieved enormous advances following the overthrow of capitalist rule by Mao Zedong's peasant army in 1949. As described in Jack Belden's classic account, *China Shakes the World* (1949), even before 1949, a social explosion was taking place as Mao's forces fought the final stages of the civil war against the bourgeois Guomindang (GMD, spelled KMT in the Wade-Giles transliteration system) Nationalists of Chiang Kai-shek. The Communists mobilized women to work in the fields to free men up for military service or, less frequently, to join armed units themselves. In Communist-controlled "liberated areas," women's associations played a key role in land reform and in protecting women abused by their husbands and in-laws.

The peasant-based 1949 Revolution, however, was bureaucratically deformed from the outset. And today, Mao's heirs in the bureaucracy are consciously undermining the most significant achievements of the revolution, in particular agricultural collectivization, which was

destroyed in the 1980s, and the planned economy. The Stalinists' market "reforms" have already given the women of China a small but bitter taste of the fate that has befallen women, and all workers and minorities, in East Europe and the former Soviet Union, where the restoration of capitalism has brought mass unemployment and starvation, nationalist bloodletting, the banning of abortion and the driving of women out of the factories.

In China's rural areas, home to three-fourths of the population, the liquidation of the communes in favor of individually leased farm plots—dubbed the "family responsibility system"—has breathed new life into centuries-old horrors like female infanticide, which are rooted in the "traditional" Chinese family. In the SEZs, young women newly arrived from the countryside are forced to work under conditions reminiscent of early 19th-century British textile mills, slaving up to 15 hours a day with barely a day off per month, earning wages far lower than in Taiwan and Hong Kong, where most of the investment in these plants originates, to be cast off at a moment's notice. The Labor Bureau of the Shenzhen SEZ estimates that today 80 percent of unemployed above the age of 24 are women.

In the cities, although women make up only 37 percent of the workforce, they are the vast majority of those being laid off in state factories as managers are ordered to make their plants "profitable" according to the laws of the market. The principal activity of the government-run All-China Women's Federation is now counseling and retraining displaced workers. Women have also suffered from the dismantling of the state job assignment system for university graduates, which, while never free from discrimination, did manage to provide a modicum of equality in job placement.

This broad-gauged assault on women and the entire working people is creating a huge stock of social tinder. With each passing year, examples abound of sharp class struggle against the effects of free-market "reforms": strikes in the SEZs over wages and working conditions; demonstrations by workers in state industries in defense of their "iron rice bowl" of guaranteed jobs and benefits, one of

the most precious gains of the revolution; riots by the peasantry against taxation and corruption. In 1995, there were 12,000 reported strikes, demonstrations and other labor actions, a rise of 20 percent from the year before. A key role in these struggles is being played by militant women workers, whose place in the growing capitalist sector has been strengthened by the need for new pools of labor to be exploited.

The threat of capitalist restoration can only be answered on the political plane. What is required is proletarian political revolution to overthrow the venal bureaucracy, which mocks its "Communist" name as it openly offers to serve as brokers for imperialism. This must be linked to the fight for socialist revolution in South Korea with its combative proletariat, and the industrial powerhouse of Japan, which would provide the material means for achieving modernization and the eradication of rural poverty in China—and with this, the uprooting at last of every vestige of the oppression of women.

In a historic sense, the moribund Chinese workers state stands on the brink of vast social explosions. As in the 1949 Revolution, women's enormous and somewhat altered deep grievances must find their expression in the confrontations that lie ahead. The task for Marxists is to build a Leninist-Trotskyist party among the vanguard elements of workers, women and youth, based on the lessons of the class struggles of the past, as part of the fight to forge a world party of socialist revolution.

Women and Revolution in China

As Mao's peasant army swept into power over the collapsing Guomindang army, Jack Belden wrote, "In the women of China, the Communists possessed, almost ready made, one of the greatest masses of disinherited human beings the world has ever seen. And because they found the keys to the heart of these women, they also found one of the keys to victory over Chiang Kai-shek."

To begin to understand the depths of women's oppression in the old China, it helps to consider that at the turn of the 20th century many Chinese women didn't even have a name. Their fate was to be sold into marriage, where they were enslaved by their arranged husband and mother-in-law. The traditionally acceptable way out of an unwanted marriage was, simply, suicide. The systematic oppression of women was integral to the Confucian code of conduct, which mandated unquestioning loyalty to father, husband and emperor.

The scourge of bound feet was both a symbol and tool of women's subjugation to husband and hearth. Young girls routinely suffered the agony of having the bones in their feet broken, then bound to take the ideal form of three-inch-long "golden lilies." Otherwise no self-respecting family would accept her as a bride for their son. Permanently maimed, the mass of women was cut off from any role in social production and locked into the home to act as household slaves and sexual toys for their husbands. Exceptions to this barbaric practice were mostly in areas populated by non-Han Chinese minorities and in some Han areas where female labor was absolutely essential—for example, extremely poor households and in parts of subtropical southern China where intensive rice and silk production went on all year.

Every modern revolutionary movement has in one way

or another recognized that the emancipation of women was central to the liberation of the Chinese people as a whole. An early example was the Taiping Rebellion, the most powerful of the peasant revolts against the Qing (Manchu) Dynasty which broke out following China's defeat by Britain in the first Opium War. Beginning in 1851 in southern Guangxi province, the rebellion was initially based on the Hakka and other minorities who had never practiced female footbinding. The Taipings enrolled women in the rebel army and set up separate male and female military camps. A supporter of the Qing reported in horror the exploits of the women fighters:

"Being of vile minorities such as the Yao and the Zhuang, they grew up in caves and run around with bare feet and turbaned heads. They can scale steep cliffs with ease, and their courage surpasses that of men. On the battlefield, they carry weapons and fight at close quarters. Government troops have been defeated by them in battle."

—quoted in Ono Kazuko, *Chinese Women in a Century of Revolution* (Stanford University Press (1989))

After a series of stunning military victories, in 1853 the Taipings captured the city of Nanjing (Nanking) and proclaimed the "Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace," whose power extended over much of central and southern China. Their radical-egalitarian program outlawed private property and called for the land to be collectivized and redistributed to all, men and women alike. The Taipings, whose leader, Hong Xiuquan, was a religious zealot-inspired by Protestant evangelism and Chinese utopianism, were fervent opponents of Confucianism. Women were appointed administrators in the "heavenly kingdom," and footbinding



Joseph Abeles Collection

In imperial China, barbaric practice of footbinding symbolized utter servile degradation of women. Confucian ethic prescribed women's unquestioning obedience to state, father, husband.



Jinlan Xiang Jingyu Tongzhi

Xiang Jingyu (Hsiang Ching-yu), leader of early Communist Party women's section, played central role in revolutionary upheavals of 1925-27.

was resolutely combatted, although sometimes with extreme over-zealousness: when nightly inspections in the camps revealed women whose feet were still bound, the punishment could be cutting off the feet! They also adopted an ultrapuritanical sexual code under which "illicit" sex was punishable by death.

Although Western imperialists were initially taken with the Christian-influenced rebels, they quickly came to realize that the Taipings' revolutionary aims threatened the entire social order under the Manchus, and with this the imperialists' enormously profitable trade in opium and manufactured goods. In an 1853 *New York Daily Tribune* article titled "Revolution in China and in Europe," Karl Marx hailed the revolt's potential to "throw the spark into the overloaded mine [bomb] of the present industrial system" and touch off political revolutions in Europe. He wrote, "It would be a curious spectacle, that of China sending disorder into the Western World while the Western powers, by English, French and American war-steampers, are conveying 'order' to Shanghai, Nanking, and the mouths of the Great Canal." Finally, the "heavenly kingdom" was overthrown in 1864 by a Chinese imperial army with weapons supplied by Britain and France.

Like numerous other peasant revolts throughout Chinese history, the Taiping Rebellion proved unable to overthrow dynastic rule and achieve an agrarian revolution. But following China's military defeat by Japan in 1895-96, a new wave of struggle broke out against the Manchu court, which had become a powerless appendage of imperialist rule, and in 1911, Sun Yat-sen's bourgeois-nationalist Republican movement toppled the "last emperor." Nationalist women's army units were organized, a movement based on the British suffragists emerged, and a campaign was launched to pressure the parliament in Nanjing to grant formal women's equality. But only one year later, the Republican regime fell to the military

dictator Yuan Shih-kai, who unleashed a reign of terror on women militants. The country was subsequently torn apart into regional military fiefdoms ruled by warlords in alliance with one or another of the imperialist powers.

The fate of the short-lived Republican government revealed the incapacity of the weak Chinese bourgeoisie to achieve the tasks associated with the bourgeois revolutions which began in Europe in the 17th century: national unification, political democracy, agrarian revolution. To clear the road to capitalist development, these revolutions swept away feudal institutions and replaced social relations based on obligations and privileges with those based on contractual equality. These measures had a huge impact on the family structure and women's status in the society. But while some of the most radical elements of the revolutionary bourgeoisie sought to extend the concepts of equality and freedom to include equal rights for women, the new bourgeois ruling classes upheld the subjugation of women inside the family, even as they began exploiting women and children in the factories and mills.

In the age of capitalist imperialism, however, the imperialist powers maintain their domination by suppressing all democratic and national aspirations of the peoples of the colonial and semicolonial world. In these backward countries, the bourgeois nationalists are tied by innumerable strings to the big landholders and imperialists, for whom they act as local "compradors" (agents). Thus they are incapable of achieving national liberation or of carrying out a deep-going, modernizing revolution in social relations, particularly in the countryside, which is key to the emancipation of women.

The solution to this problem was laid out in the theory of permanent revolution developed by the Russian Marxist Leon Trotsky, which holds that for backward countries in the current epoch, the democratic tasks of the bourgeois revolution can only be carried out through the seizure of power by the working class in alliance with the oppressed peasantry, and through the extension of socialist revolution to the advanced capitalist countries. The Russian workers revolution of 1917 confirmed this perspective in practice, smashing capitalist rule and ushering in a new era of revolutionary struggles from the imperialist centers to the colonial and semicolonial countries. The 1938 edition of the book *The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution* by Harold Isaacs, a journalist won to Trotskyism in Shanghai in the mid-1930s who later became bitterly hostile to Marxism, powerfully shows how Trotsky's perspective fit Chinese conditions. In 1949, in a deformed way, the Chinese Revolution would break the chains of feudal-derived oppression through smashing capitalism.

Communists Lead the Fight for Women's Rights

Chinese Communism arose along with the Chinese workers movement from the milieu of mass student protests in 1919 against colonial domination known as the May Fourth Movement. The young militants of that period sought to modernize Chinese society as they fought the country's subjugation to imperialism. Thus, they were wide open to radical ideas from the West, not least in regard to the question of women and the family. Not only did they realize the centrality of the woman question for China, but many were themselves in open revolt against the oppressive family system.

Chinese translations of sections of Friedrich Engels' work, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (the entire work was not available in Chinese until 1929) were a profound influence on this layer, who found in it the materialist understanding that footbinding, concubinage and arranged marriages were rooted in the institution of the family. Opposition to such "customs" was thus raised from moral outrage to an appreciation that they would be wiped out through overcoming the backwardness of the country as a whole. The knowledge that the family developed with the emergence of class divisions in society was particularly liberating: for years to come, Chinese Marxists would refer to early matriarchal societies to prove that women's oppression was not a natural condition of human existence.

Under the impact of the October 1917 revolution in Russia, key May Fourth leaders such as Li Dazhao (Li Ta-chao) and Chen Duxiu (Ch'en Tu-hsiu) were won to communism. A valuable book by U.S. academic Christina Kelley Gilmartin, *Engendering the Chinese Revolution* (University of California Press [1995]), documents the pioneering efforts of Chinese communists in undertaking special work among women. This work was consciously modeled on the experience of the Bolshevik Party, which championed the rights not only of the working class but of all the oppressed.

Even before the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) 1921 founding congress in Shanghai, communists in Guangzhou (Canton) were publishing a women's journal, *Labor and Women*, co-edited by Chen Duxiu. At the 1921 congress, the party moved to do more systematic work, launching the journal *Women's Critic*. This was not narrowly conceived as "women's work," but the work of the whole party. (It couldn't be otherwise, as the CCP at the time had only two female members out of 57.) While today most of the left, which caters to bourgeois feminism, would see this as a crime against nature, no Chinese radical of that period saw the fight for women's emancipation as separate from the broader revolutionary struggle.

A party congress held the following year established a committee to oversee its work among women—later called the Central Women's Bureau—which was modeled on the Bolsheviks' women's section, the Zhenotdel. The work among women was initially concentrated in Shanghai, where women constituted over half of the working class. Communists intervened into and eventually took over the local Federation of Women's Circles and helped set up schools to teach women literacy, such as the Shanghai Pingmin Girls' School, out of which they recruited party writers and working-class organizers. This work became a springboard for similar efforts from Beijing, where communist activity faced unrelenting repression under warlord rule, to Hunan province where the party was led by the young Mao Zedong, and especially Guangzhou, the center of nationalist fervor.

In the revolutionary upsurge beginning in 1925, the CCP developed a mass proletarian base. In 1926-27, an estimated one and a half million women were members of women's organizations generally led by Communists. In Guangzhou, International Women's Day rallies initiated by Communists grew from around 3,000 in 1924 to 25,000 in 1927, as demonstrators demanded abolition of arranged marriages, the right of women to divorce and an end to exploitation of women workers. Polish Marxist Rosa Luxemburg, who was murdered by right-wing German Freikorps troops at the behest of the Social Democratic government in 1919, became a special hero for women throughout Guangdong province. Not only were there memorial meetings and newspaper articles every January on the anniversary of her and Karl Liebknecht's assassination, but provincial peasant associations even named their self-defense units "Rosa Luxemburg battalions."

However, the young party's ground-breaking efforts were fatally compromised by the CCP's alliance with the GMD, which after 1925 was led by Chiang Kai-shek. This suicidal policy was foisted on the CCP by the leadership of the Communist (Third) International under Stalin, who represented the consolidating bureaucratic caste which had seized political power in the Soviet Union. Whereas the Comintern of Lenin and Trotsky had sought the extension of socialist revolution internationally, Stalin preached reliance on "progressive" bourgeois forces considered to be allies of the USSR. Thus the GMD, whose founder Sun Yat-sen had professed admiration for the Soviet workers state, was held by Stalin & Co. to be the natural leader of China's impending revolution.

Chinese Communists were directed to sign up as individual members of the GMD. The CCP turned over its membership lists and even its stock of weapons to Chiang. The leader of the party's women's bureau, Xiang Jingyu (Hsiang Ching-yu), was assigned to build a women's organization for the GMD. Trotsky sought to oppose this policy in writings later published as *Problems of the Chinese Revolution*. There was also strong opposition inside the CCP among those who recognized that Chiang Kai-shek, who was beholden to the warlords and imperialists, was the bitter class enemy of China's working masses. Peng Shuzhi (Peng



Tens of thousands of Communists, including militant women such as Xiang Jingyu, were executed in counterrevolutionary terror following defeat of Shanghai proletariat in April 1927.

UPI



Schaler/Black Star

Study group near Guangzhou (Canton) during time of Mao. 1949 Revolution brought literacy to masses of women, which was vital for their integration into economic life.

Shu-tse) fought against the atrophy of CCP work among women. Peng, together with Chen Duxiu, the principal leader of the CCP, was won to Trotskyism as a result of the defeat engendered by Stalin's policies.

The liquidation into the Guomindang led to disaster. Beginning in Guangzhou in March 1926, Chiang moved to behead the CCP, culminating in an anti-Communist bloodbath in Shanghai in April 1927 where tens of thousands of militants were slaughtered. The white terror that followed particularly targeted Communist women, tens of thousands of whom were executed from 1927-1930, including Xiang Jingyu. In a single incident in Guangdong, 200-300 women were slaughtered for having untraditional bobbed hair or unbound feet.

The 1949 Revolution

In the wake of this crushing defeat, the bulk of the Communist Party fled the cities for the countryside, severing its ties to the proletariat and transforming itself into a petty-bourgeois party at the head of a peasant guerrilla army (see, for example, Benjamin Schwartz' *Chinese Communism and the Rise of Mao*, Harvard University Press [1961]). Civil war ensued between Communist-led forces under Mao and the GMD. Nevertheless, during the Japanese occupation, the CCP formed a nationalist popular-front alliance with the GMD—in Stalinist terminology, the "bloc of four classes"—which lasted from 1937-1945. During this time, the CCP suspended its more radical land reform policies and held off measures bringing women into social production in deference to its reactionary bourgeois bloc partners. Following Japan's defeat in World War II, the civil war resumed until Mao's Red Army, reinforced by captured Japanese armaments, sent Chiang's forces fleeing to Taiwan and Hong Kong and took over Beijing, Shanghai and other key cities in 1949. (See Part Two of our series, "Women and Permanent Revolution in China," *W&R* No. 28, Spring 1984.)

The 1949 Revolution enabled women to advance by leaps and bounds over their previous miserable status. For the first time in history, the mass of Chinese women

became literate, key to their integration into social and economic life. Yet women's inequality has never been completely eradicated, and today some of the most hateful anti-woman practices of prerevolutionary China are returning with a vengeance. Why is this?

The declaration of the People's Republic of China on 1 October 1949 marked the birth of a *bureaucratically deformed workers state*. While capitalism was smashed, the working class was excluded from political power. Mao's regime was modeled after Stalin's Soviet Union, in which a conservative bureaucratic caste upholding the anti-Marxist dogma of "socialism in one country" ruled through brutal police-state measures after having usurped political power from the proletarian masses. The Stalinist bureaucracy arose after the failure to extend socialist revolution to Germany and other imperialist centers left Soviet Russia, after years of imperialist and civil war, isolated and impoverished. Whereas the revolutionary Bolshevik regime under Lenin and Trotsky initiated heroic efforts to replace the functions of the family through socialized childcare and kitchens, Stalin's regime glorified the family, even awarding medals for women who had eight or more children, and reversing legalized abortion and democratic rights for homosexuals.

In *The Revolution Betrayed*, Trotsky exposed the roots of this reactionary position in the material backwardness of the Soviet Union: "You cannot 'abolish' the family; you have to replace it. The actual liberation of women is unrealizable on a basis of 'generalized want'." Trotsky also explained that "the most compelling motive of the present cult of the family is undoubtedly the need of the bureaucracy for a stable hierarchy of relations, and for the disciplining of youth by means of forty million points of support for authority and power." In Mao's CCP, Stalinist glorification of the family fit well with the consciousness of its peasant base, for whom the family is the basic nucleus of production.

The collapse of the Soviet degenerated workers state following Boris Yeltsin's coming to power in 1991 proved

for all time the falsity of the schema of "socialism in one country." This Stalinist dogma stands counterposed to the Marxist understanding that socialism is an international system which can only be constructed on the basis of the most advanced technology available, requiring the overthrow of capitalist rule in the advanced industrial societies of North America, West Europe, Japan. If the policy of "socialism in one country" was utopian and reactionary under Soviet conditions, it was even more absurd to claim that backward China could achieve socialism on its own as it groaned under the weight of a downtrodden, benighted peasantry numbering in the hundreds of millions.

Looking at the position of women helps illuminate the profound contradictions of the deformed Chinese workers state. The smashing of feudal relations in the countryside and the establishment of a planned economy enabled women for the first time to be brought *en masse* into economic life. China's constitution holds that "women enjoy equal rights with men in all aspects of life, such as politics, economy, culture, society and family life."

But legal equality *per se* does not negate the oppression of women. Chinese women remain trapped in the confines of the family. Women in "People's China" are expected both to take part in social production and do the cooking and housework to keep their families functioning. As a 1974 article in *Women and Revolution* put it, paraphrasing Mao's famous dictum, "Women hold up half the sky, and then some." Recently, when a tour guide in the city of Xian was asked what holidays are celebrated in China, she quipped that people get days off on May Day and October 1, but only half a day for International Women's Day—which she uses to finish her housework!

The 1950 Marriage Law

Those who claim that the Chinese Revolution achieved equality for women invariably point to the Marriage Law

passed on May Day 1950, which banned concubinage, prostitution and arranged marriages, while giving women the right to divorce and to own property. The measure soon became known as the "divorce law," as skyrocketing numbers of people took the opportunity to void their arranged marriages. While the law shook China's traditional marriage system to its foundations, it was essentially a statement of *bourgeois-democratic* right, akin to the right of citizenship and the vote.

Even so, the law met stubborn resistance in the countryside, where tradition held that "a good woman hangs herself, while a wicked woman gets a divorce." An estimated 80,000 people were killed *annually* over marriage issues in the years following promulgation of the law, the majority of whom were young women attempting to assert their new rights. Cadres assigned to enforce the law in the villages mostly bowed to the overwhelming pressure of the peasantry which wanted to maintain the traditional family. Some officials developed "supplementary" regulations which compromised the spirit and letter of the law, while others set up special courts to prosecute wayward women. As a saying of the time put it, "If you're thinking of divorce, you've got to go through three barriers: the husband barrier, the mother-in-law barrier, and the cadre barrier. And the cadre barrier is the toughest!"

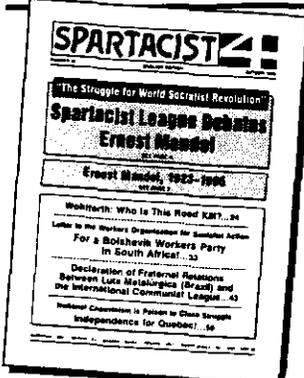
As a feminist academic perceptively observed, "The Marriage Law of 1950 in its most radical statement, that men and women have equal rights, goes beyond anything the United States has offered women.... The law did *not* seek to do away with the family, as some observers contend, but it did aim at destroying the authority of the extended, multigeneration unit" (Margery Wolf, *Revolution Postponed*, Stanford University Press [1985]).

The exigencies of economic construction have at times compelled the bureaucracy to take special measures to free women from their domestic burdens. But China lacks the means on its own to provide the quality collective

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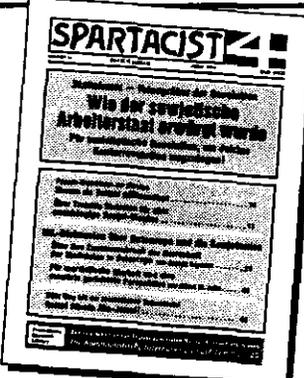
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facilities necessary to replace the functions of the family, which is at the root of women's oppression. There was an attempt to establish communal kitchens during the late-1950s' Great Leap Forward—a utopian campaign to catapult China to the level of the advanced industrial countries through mobilizing mass peasant labor. But the poor quality of the kitchens caused huge discontent among the villagers, and the kitchens were quickly abandoned when the Great Leap collapsed—an event which led the exhausted society into one of the worst famines in history.

After the economy was nationalized and central economic planning was developed in the 1950s, the number of women working in industry soared from 600,000 at the time of the revolution to 50 million today. Yet sexual discrimination in labor is still evident. Skilled industrial jobs and construction work are almost all done by males. On the other hand, almost all street-cleaners are women, as are workers in light-manufacturing plants like silk-reeling and textiles, many of which still operate on the technical level of the 1920s. Women are also the majority of workers in many of the highly exploitative "township-village enterprises." On average, women workers earn less than men, and are expected to retire at an earlier age.

Bureaucratism and the "One Child" Campaign

A formative experience in the early Communist Party's development was American birth control pioneer Margaret Sanger's tour of China in 1922. Her speeches in Beijing kicked off a spirited debate, mirroring similar discussions in European Communist parties, over whether Marxists should advocate birth control. Some argued that "overpopulation" would be automatically solved with the establishment of socialist society, which would overcome the poverty endemic to capitalism. For Marxists, the important point is rather the freedom of individual women to decide to have children or not: we call for full availability of birth control, including free abortion on demand and free quality medical care for all.

Birth control—a key instrument in enabling women to get control over their lives—is unquestionably a critical question for a country that holds roughly one-fourth of the world's people but only 7 percent of its arable land. During the rise of capitalism in the West and in Japan, falling birthrates accompanied industrialization. But in the "Third World," regulating population growth runs straight up against not only retarded industrial development, but the far more powerful problem of entrenched peasant "family values."

Mao's narrow peasant-nationalism was reflected in the Chinese Stalinists' flip-flops on birth control. For the most part, Mao *opposed* limiting the population—he liked to answer the threat of imperialist nuclear blackmail by saying that even if a few hundred million Chinese were to die, there would be hundreds of millions left to repopulate the country! Even when the regime launched a family-planning campaign in 1956, it was abruptly terminated during the Great Leap Forward. A similar effort begun in 1962 fell apart in the chaos of the Cultural Revolution, which disrupted the distribution system for contraceptives.

In the early 1970s, the bureaucracy began a "later, longer, fewer" campaign—later marriages, longer intervals between births, and fewer children overall. By 1977, peas-



Zuchmann/Magnum

Chinese Stalinists rigidly enforce "one child" policy to accompany "free market" modernization drive.

ant and urban families alike were limited to two children. Two years later, as those born in China's post-revolution "baby boom" began to reach the allowed marriage age, the Deng Xiaoping regime decided more drastic birth control measures were needed. In his view, these were a necessary complement to the "four modernizations" drive, which sought to turn China into an economic superpower through such "free market" measures as special zones for foreign capital investment. Thus began the "one child" campaign, which led to the birthrate being cut almost in half between 1970 and 1994. Evidence of the one-child family is readily apparent to anyone visiting public parks, which are packed on weekends with working-class families.

Anti-Communists and woman-hating "right to life" bigots yammer that the "one child" policy is really a totalitarian program of forced abortions and sterilizations, causing desperate women to flee to distant shores in pursuit of having babies. Of course, Chinese immigrants are not exactly welcome in the imperialist "democracies": the vast majority of the nearly 300 "illegal" immigrants whose *Golden Venture* ship crashed outside New York City in June 1993—and who mostly claimed to be escaping the "one child" policy—are still languishing in prison. Recently some three dozen of these women imprisoned in California went on a hunger strike to protest their continued incarceration.

Responding to the hue and cry over its population

policies, the Chinese government's 1995 "White Paper on Family Planning in China" claimed that its program is a "combination" of "state guidance with voluntary participation by the masses." This would be the norm of a workers state based on the democratic rule of workers and peasants councils. But in the Chinese deformed workers state with its brutal repressive apparatus, the regime has used a myriad of means to limit births, from economic incentives to rigid bureaucratic control over the masses of workers and peasants, which in the very personal matter of childbearing can be hideously intrusive.

Urban couples limiting themselves to one child receive wage and pension bonuses, free education and medical care for their child, and priority in housing assignments—a huge incentive in the perennially overcrowded cities. In the current controversy over China's state orphanages, even the rabidly anti-Beijing *New York Times* had to admit that the great majority of urban residents support the "one child" policy. But there are also strong coercive forces ensuring compliance. Many factories and rural villages post women's menstrual cycles on bulletin boards to be checked off each month! If a couple violates the birth control policy, their *danwei* (work unit), which controls social benefits, can throw them out of their apartment and jobs. Although the powers of the *danwei* are being breached as the regime chops away at the "iron rice bowl" of guaranteed jobs, housing, medical and pension benefits, it remains a key instrument of bureaucratic regimentation of the working class.

Another weapon in this arsenal of repression is the puritanical Stalinist sexual code that prohibits (or at least tries to prohibit) pre- and extramarital sex...in a country where the legal minimum marriage age is 23 for women and 28 for men! And homosexuality is so repressed that its existence is rarely acknowledged. Margaret Jones' 1979 *The Confucius Enigma* gives an account of stultifying life in Stalinist China, providing a vivid symmetry with Belden's description of the liberating effects of the early revolutionary struggle. Recently, there has been a loosening of sexual mores, at least in the cities, due to the incursions of the marketplace (and especially of foreign investors). New sex-help phone services and clinics are being flooded with questions on the most basic "facts of life." In 1994 the government set up an "Association for Sexology," not to promote sexual freedom but seeking to control increasingly rampant prostitution and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS.

In contrast to the cities, there is rather wide resistance to birth control in the countryside, even though many couples, particularly in minority areas, are legally allowed to have a second child. Here the traditional desire for large families has been greatly exacerbated by the destruction of collectivized agriculture beginning in 1979 and the initiation of the "Family Responsibility System," in which peasants lease land from the state to be farmed

privately. An openly stated goal of this policy is to create a rich peasant class which would hire farm labor. By 1983, the birthrate in many rural areas had already begun to rise drastically as farmers looked to increase the family workforce.

Other "reforms" initiated under Deng Xiaoping also serve to undercut family planning. The ripping up of pension benefits for peasants, which came with the destruction of collectivized agriculture, has added the very real worry of who will care for them in their old age. This has helped stoke the desire for male children, since men typically earn more than women, and the old custom of the bride being accepted into the groom's family has not been broken. The liquidation of the rural communes also disrupted the distribution of contraceptives, which are no longer free of charge, posing a financial burden on peasants whose incomes are on average one-half that of urban workers. Male offspring are also desired to inherit family possessions and carry on the family line, as well as for heavy farm work, even though women are now commonly seen working the fields because their husbands have fled to the cities to find better-paying work.

This means that young peasant girls are again being discriminated against from birth in everything from schooling to medical care, which most city residents receive free through their employers but which rural families must pay for. "If a boy gets sick, the parents may send him to the hospital at once," said an official in China's State Family Planning Commission. "But if a girl gets sick, the parents may say to themselves, 'Well, we'll see how she is tomorrow'" (quoted in *China Wakes*, Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn, Random House [1994]).

Likewise, education, which is not free, is easily affordable



Der Spiegel

Russian Orthodox priest on Yeltsin's barricades, August 1991. As Chinese masses face threat of counterrevolution, the restoration of capitalism in former Soviet Union has brought economic ruin and chauvinist bigotry against women, minorities.



Popperfoto

After the 1949 Revolution: people's court in Henan province tries man accused of attempting to sell a female member of his family.

for almost all urban households, but can be a significant financial burden for peasant families, who, if they have a boy and girl, are likely to send only the boy to school. Being strapped for cash reinforces this type of discrimination, which is rooted in the old custom of sending brides to live in their husbands' villages. As a Fujianese peasant woman put it, "If you educate a daughter she might go out and work and send money home, but then she would get married and you would have wasted all that money to benefit another family." One result is the undermining of one of the most prized accomplishments of the revolution—female literacy. While literacy rates for women have roughly doubled since 1949, 13 percent of women today cannot read and write, three times the rate for men.

In today's China, old anti-woman biases combine with modern medical procedures to produce some startling results. Among the huge advances in health care is the availability in even the most backward villages of ultrasound machines, which have been produced in China since 1979. The overwhelming majority of abortions in the countryside are of female fetuses whose sex was determined by ultrasound. The state's banning of these machines for this purpose has been largely ineffectual in the villages, where many doctors have set up lucrative private practices.

In the face of such resistance, Beijing has sought to enforce compliance with the birth limitation regimen through severe repressive measures. Couples who violate family planning regulations are faced with steep financial penalties, seizure of livestock, destruction of personal property. Villages are regularly visited by teams of officials who check that women are fitted with IUDs, while women who have had their quota of children often suffer forced sterilization. After a concerted crackdown, in 1992 China's fertility rate dropped below two births per couple. But state agents enforcing the guidelines had become so brutal that in 1993 the government was obliged to forbid them from tying up or beating peasants who violated the birth control program, demolishing their homes, or "causing

the death of people because of family planning"!

Among the most tragic effects of the peasantry's resistance to birth control is the "disappearance" of young girls through abandonment and infanticide. Even the most strident anti-Communist ideologue would admit that female infanticide was virtually eradicated after 1949. But in 1981, official reports began to appear documenting the return of this horror to rural areas. Now newspapers report such stories as one rural couple who had five female children...and drowned each in succession. Some couples hide the existence of baby girls so they can keep trying to conceive a boy. One expert estimates that up to 800,000 girls are born each year whose lives are kept secret. And China's orphanages are filled with girls abandoned by parents who want their child quota to be filled by a boy. Resurgent female infanticide and selective abortions have created a huge sexual imbalance in the population. In 1992, a government survey showed that newborn males outnumbered females by 119 to 100. At this rate, by the year 2010, three in ten men of marrying age will be short of brides!

The Market for Women

The liquidation of the rural communes created a huge labor force for foreign-owned factories and township enterprises, as well as for the massive construction that has taken place in the booming cities of China's eastern coastal region. This "floating population" is now estimated as high as 100 million. The dynamic growth of the Chinese proletariat has mainly come from this layer of young peasants, both male and female. But along with this development, the "socialist market economy" has created another type of "trade"...in women.

The victims of this sexual slave trade are typically women from poor villages who flock to the unofficial labor markets that have popped up on streets and roadsides throughout China looking for jobs in local businesses or in the cities. They are approached by prospective "employers," who capture them and sell them to men

paying on the order of \$250-500. Usually, the buyers are not rich peasants, but middle-layer farmers who can't afford dowry and wedding banquet expenses which can reach \$1,000.

The kidnapping and sale of women as "brides" has become so widespread that no one has a good estimate of the numbers involved. Police in southern Guizhou province reported that they had rescued 2,000 kidnapped women and children in May and June 1995 alone—and this figure is undoubtedly swamped by the number of unreported cases. The official *Legal Daily* admitted that "each attempt to fight the crime of abducting and selling of women seems to end in failure." This is largely due to the gross corruption of state officials who are bribed to give their seal of approval to such "marriages."

The Terminal Crisis of Chinese Stalinism

A China run by democratically elected workers and peasants councils would make short shrift of the scum who traffic in human beings. But to overcome the social pathology that has brought about the return of female infanticide, abandonment of children and selling of women into slavery requires alleviating the poverty and isolation of the peasant masses, which in turn requires the massive modernization and mechanization of the countryside to lay a material basis for a rational recollectivization of agriculture. This task is dependent on the economic integration of China into a socialist Asia based on the advanced industrial capacity of countries like Japan and Australia.

The Chinese Stalinists have been bitter enemies of the



An Age-Old Horror

In Deng's China, the scourge of female slavery has been revived. Wives for sale in rural area, from cover of 1989 book, *An Age-Old Horror*.

revolutionary-internationalist program of Marxism, from Mao, who called on CCP cadres to "serve the people" in the pursuit of a mythical Chinese "socialist" autarky, to the out-and-out capitalist-roader Deng. The difference is that the gerontocratic parasites who rule China today no longer give even lip service to socialism, but aim to build a new Asian economic "tiger" by incrementally introducing capitalist market measures while keeping an iron grip on society, à la Singapore and South Korea. Many influential imperialist bankers and ideologues view this course as a positive alternative to the social chaos which accompanied the restoration of capitalism in the former Soviet Union and East Europe.

The heated economic growth (mostly funded by foreign capital) of the last 15 years and the concomitant riches flowing into the corrupt officialdom have turned many a wistful Stalinist eye on Deng's China. After visiting China in December, Cuban president Fidel Castro proclaimed his desire to emulate Deng and build "socialism with Cuban characteristics." But the vision of a "peaceful," bountiful road to a capitalist market economy is wildly utopian. For one thing, capitalist restoration is not a fore-gone conclusion: there are huge social explosions down the road whose outcome cannot be predicted. If, however, a capitalist counterrevolution were to succeed, it would almost certainly throw China back into the condition of a superexploited neocolony of the dominant imperialist powers. Such a counterrevolution would have to destroy what remains of the deformed workers state and construct a new state apparatus unequivocally committed to enforcing brutal capitalist austerity on the restive worker and peasant masses.

This was the fate of the working people of the Soviet Union, where the Stalinist reformer Gorbachev set the stage for the coming to power of Boris Yeltsin, who, with the backing of world imperialism, seized power in August 1991 and initiated the destruction of the degenerated

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workers state. Chinese Stalinism is no more capable of averting such a disaster than its counterparts in the Soviet Union, East Germany or Poland. The "socialist market economy" is simply a different road to counterrevolution, featuring a huge penetration of direct foreign capital investment, the participation of wide layers of government and military officials in capitalist enterprises, and growing class differentiation in the countryside. These developments have ripped the fabric of the bureaucratic apparatus, as regional officials increasingly answer to local business partners and not to central state authorities. The threat of a reborn warlordism in a capitalist-restorationist China is not to be taken lightly.

There is still time for the Chinese proletariat to mobilize to stop the threat of counterrevolution. China is today racked with the same kinds of social tensions that broke out into the open during the 1989 Tiananmen Square upheaval: rampant inflation, flagrant corruption, economic insecurity. Tiananmen brought China to the brink of political revolution, but centrally due to the lack of revolutionary leadership, the Stalinist regime was able to muster the forces to put the rebellion down in blood. As we wrote in the International Communist League's 1992 conference document:

"The conditions which led to near civil war in 1989 have in no way been mitigated. China is today a seething cauldron of contradictions and discontents barely suppressed by an octogenarian Stalinist regime.... When Deng dies, if not before, the succession crisis likely will lead to a situation in which proletarian political revolution or capitalist counterrevolution are poised pointblank, thus determining the fate of the most populous country on earth."

—"For the Communism of Lenin and Trotsky!"
Spartacist No. 47-48 (Winter 1992-93)

Since that time, reports have reached the world press of a series of violent peasant revolts, including the destruction of government offices and the killing of officials, as well as increased workers strikes and protests. Besides beefing up its police forces, the Beijing Stalinists are trying to ward off social unrest by stoking nationalist passions and even reviving Confucianism. The state has also been rehabilitating Buddhist and Taoist temples throughout the country—selling a bit of the "opiate of the people," as it were.

The greatest potential force standing in the way of counterrevolution is the proletariat, whose numerical strength has soared during the last several years of economic expansion. Unlike the workers of East European countries like Poland, who reacted to Stalinist bureaucratism by buying Western propaganda that capitalism would give them a life of plenty, millions of Chinese workers have already endured harsh capitalist exploitation in the "socialist market economy." This experience has given rise to some nostalgia for Mao's time, when the regime at least stood on paper for social equality and claimed a heritage of fighting imperialism. The bitter struggle of the Chinese army during the 1950-53 Korean War prevented the conquest of North Korea by the U.S. and its puppets in the South.

But Maoist economic and foreign policies were always guided by the *nationalism* inherent in Stalinist bureaucratic rule, which ran all the deeper in China due to its ancient xenophobic heritage. The reactionary consequences of Stalinist nationalism were borne out in the

Sino-Soviet split of the late 1950s, after which "Soviet social-imperialism" became China's new *bête noire*. This turn led directly to Mao's rapprochement with U.S. imperialism, which had always seen the USSR as its main enemy, and culminated in Richard Nixon's visit to China in 1970 while American bombs were being rained on Vietnam.

Also commanding a hearing in the working class are Tiananmen-era "dissidents" who have begun organizing workers, particularly in the capitalist SEZs. To the extent that such "dissidents" are linked to pro-imperialist mouthpieces like "independent" union leader Han Dongfang, who is championed by the likes of U.S. president Clinton and the anti-Communist Hong Kong labor bureaucracy, they must be exposed as agents of "democratic" capitalist counterrevolution. To keep from being pawns for imperialism, trade unions and other mass organizations emerging out of working people's struggles must unequivocally stand for the defense of the Chinese deformed workers state. The pursuit of class struggle against the new exploiters cannot be separated from the fight to defend the gains of the Chinese Revolution through political revolution.

As Marxists, we aim to cohere a Leninist-Trotskyist party in opposition to both the Beijing bureaucracy, which acts as agents for the reconquest of China by imperialism, and pro-capitalist "dissidents" who seek to exploit the masses' justified grievances for the benefit of their imperialist patrons. As the "tribune of the people," a vanguard party would fight tooth and nail against the attempt to drive women from their hard-won positions in the workplace and would mobilize working people to defend women set upon by the purveyors of sexual enslavement. A revolutionary leadership would seek to organize the masses of poor peasants behind the urban working class in struggle for a China of workers and peasants councils (soviets). While fighting to extend the revolutionary struggle internationally, a soviet regime would begin to reconstruct a centrally planned economy under conditions of workers democracy, and undertake the recollectivization of agriculture and the expropriation of imperialist enterprises.

Forging a Leninist vanguard party in China will require educating militants in the ideology and program of authentic communism, which for decades was distorted and trampled on by Stalinism. In her book on the early Communist Party, Gilmartin wonders why Communists at the time upheld as their model of female militancy the European Communist Rosa Luxemburg and not the heroic Chinese nationalist Qiu Jin, who was beheaded in 1907 for organizing women against the dying Qing dynasty. The question itself reveals a deep misunderstanding, for what motivated the founding Communists was not the nationalism of the later party under Mao, but the profound internationalism inspired by the 1917 Russian Revolution, which they sought to emulate.

It is that internationalist consciousness, the polar opposite of Stalinism's perversion of Marxism, that will provide the link for a new generation of militants with the heroic early Communists who blazed the trail for women's liberation through world socialist revolution. And it will guide the best fighters against the capitalist re-enslavement of China into the ranks of the Trotskyist Fourth International—the embodiment of revolutionary Marxism in our time. ■

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As Bureaucracy Opens Door to Capitalist Restoration

China: "Free Market" Misery Targets Women



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Shoe factory in industrial center of Tianjin. Faced with assault on gains they achieved through the Chinese Revolution, women play key role in working-class struggle.

At a New York City forum building toward the UN Conference on Women held in September 1995 in China, a representative of China's official Xinhua news agency was asked if women there were not bound to suffer tremendous setbacks due to the capitalist market "reforms" sweeping the country in light of the disaster which counterrevolution has wrought for the women of East Europe and the former Soviet Union. Yes, the journalist answered, many women are being thrown out of

their jobs by profit-conscious managers unwilling to shell out for previously guaranteed rights like six-months' maternity leave at full pay. But, she continued, many of these women are being retrained...to go into business for themselves. Among women in China today, she said, there will be "winners and losers."

This gospel of the marketplace is scant solace to the vast majority of women who look to be among the biggest

continued on page 44

For Proletarian Political Revolution!