

Hands Off Zapatista Rebels!

Mexico: Troops Out of Chiapas!

Peso Crisis, Repression Made in U.S.A.

MEXICO CITY, February 20—The government of Mexican president Ernesto Zedillo is increasingly desperate. Nothing it does seems to work. Facing a run on the peso by nervous American investors late last year, Zedillo's devaluation put the Mexican currency into free fall and triggered a stock market crash. The boiling economic crisis was hardly calmed by a January 31 \$50-billion bail-

out engineered by the Clinton administration despite grumbling from the U.S. Congress and Washington's European imperialist "allies." So in a dramatic move to regain the initiative, on February 9 Zedillo ordered the Mexican army to capture the leader of the rebel Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) in the southern state of Chiapas. But the presidential coup backfired as sub-



Joe Cavaretta

Mexican army occupation of Chiapas pushed by Wall Street bankers to eliminate Zapatista peasant insurrection.

comandante Marcos escaped the dragnet, massive protests filled the square in front of the presidential palace in Mexico City, the ruling party lost elections to the right-wing PAN (National Action Party) in Guadalajara, and the market plunged again. After less than a week the manhunt was called off, although troops remain in place and a blowup could occur at any moment.

As we go to press, right-wing mobs in San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas tried to storm the church offices of Bishop Samuel Ruiz, charged by the government with backing the EZLN insurgents. And from Washington, the Clinton administration seems intent on provoking a social explosion against Yankee imperialist meddling, demanding that Zedillo

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New York Rally Demands: Save Mumia Abu-Jamal!

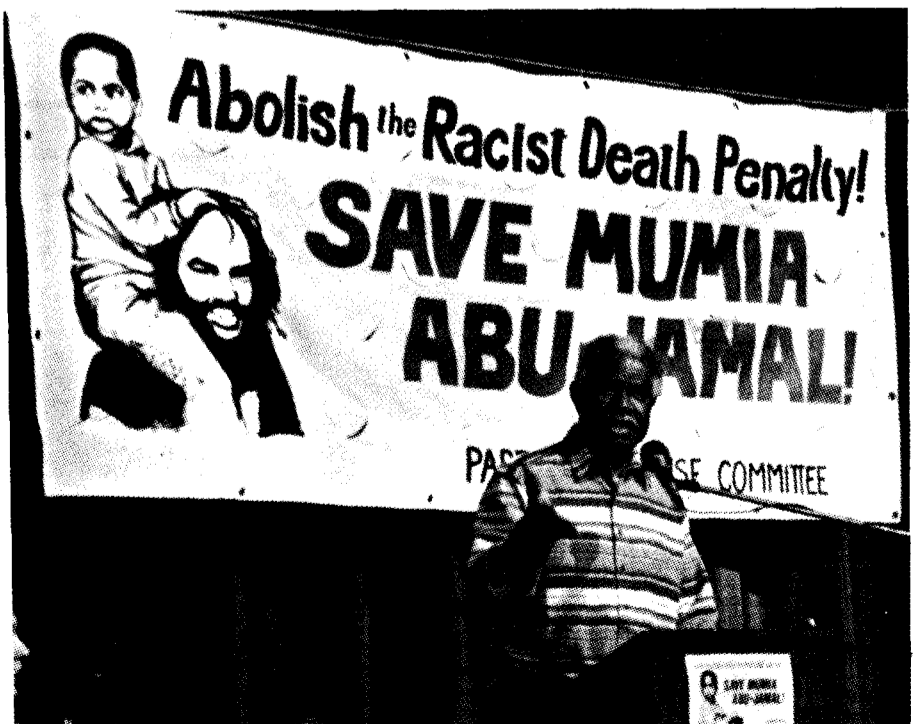
A rally hosted by actor Ossie Davis brought together over 400 opponents of the death penalty in New York City February 11 to demand, "Save Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!" Jamal is an award-winning black journalist, former Black Panther Party member and supporter of the MOVE organization in Philadelphia. The victim of a racist frame-up, Jamal sits on Pennsylvania's death row for his political beliefs. Newly elected Pennsylvania governor Tom Ridge wants a speedup on death row and is pushing through legislation to require executions within 30 days of a warrant being signed. At any time, Ridge could sign Jamal's death warrant.

Co-sponsored by the Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal and the Parti-

san Defense Committee (PDC), the rally represented numbers and strength far beyond the packed-to-capacity auditorium. Jamal's eldest son addressed the rally and brought a moving, personal voice to this urgent fight. Labor leaders representing hundreds of thousands of workers in the Northeast vowed to join the fight against "legal lynching" and to save Jamal. Students from 17 area colleges, as well as trade unionists and others, pledged to join the campaign. The rally was publicized in the black press and over radio station WBAI. Over \$3,000 was raised—every penny of it going to Jamal's legal defense.

The NYC rally demonstrated how the campaign to save Mumia Abu-Jamal is becoming a focus for many who seek to fight the all-sided racist and social reaction which has escalated since the right-wing victory in the November elections. For New Yorkers, this is underscored by the impending reinstatement of the death penalty in this

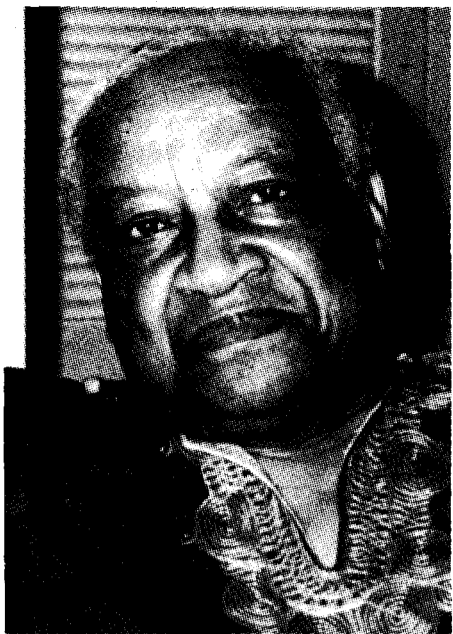
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WV Photo

Renowned actor and activist Ossie Davis, co-chair of Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal, addresses February 11 rally in New York.





American Friends Service Committee

Bill Meek

The following is an edited version of remarks made by Partisan Defense Committee spokesman Paul Cooperstein at the February 11 New York rally to save Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Honor Bill Meek and Breeze Barrow

As we join here together to fight to save the life of Mumia Abu-Jamal, I wanted to honor the memory of two people who were very active in that struggle who passed away recently.

One is Bill Meek, who we had worked with a lot in Philadelphia. He was very active on the National Community Relations Committee of the American Friends Service Committee. He was a very fair man, a man who fought for justice in a just way.

One of our first meetings with him was when the PDC initiated a mobilization against the KKK in Philadelphia in November 1988. Bill was very outspoken, making sure that all the groups and individuals that wanted to fight against the Klan did nothing to undercut each

other's efforts. He was a man who tried to get as many people from different viewpoints as he could to work together in the struggle. He died two weeks ago at the age of 73, and he will be sorely missed.

The other person is Breeze Barrow, who I only learned recently passed away in October at the very young age of 43. His wife Kai and his other comrades from the Black Panther Party Newspaper Collective are here today. I met Breeze about four years ago, when he invited the Partisan Defense Committee to speak at a commemoration in Jersey City for George and Jonathan Jackson. Some months earlier, two PDC representatives had been assaulted while distributing leaflets about Mumia's cause at the Tribunal for Political Prisoners in New York City. Breeze chaired the Jersey City meeting and repeatedly said, "We're not into that sectarian stuff." He invited us and others to speak and repeatedly urged individuals there to check out the literature tables.

Many people here may remember Breeze when he spoke last spring at a PDC forum to free Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt) about that imprisoned Black Panther Party leader. To see him up there, debating, laughing, joking, talking with people—very lively, vibrant, funny, friendly—there was no way to know that he was already very sick.

Breeze joined the Panther Party in 1970. For the rest of his life, he remained



WV Photo

Breeze Barrow

a dedicated community activist and fighter for black rights. He was a founder and editor of *Rising Truth*, a member of Right On, and he was instrumental in the reissuing of the *Black Panther* newspaper. He was active in tenant organizing and in fighting police brutality, as a member of the Arlington Gardens Tenant Association and the Jersey City Human Rights Commission. He was also a poet, a member of the Spirit of Life Ensemble.

At our forum, Breeze said of Geronimo, "He doesn't just think of himself, he has been dedicated and committed." And I think that's a good way to describe Breeze Barrow. He'll be very sorely missed by his friends, his family and by all people involved in this struggle.

We can honor the memory of these committed activists by not simply carrying on the struggle to free Mumia and the political prisoners but by stepping up our efforts. ■



TROTSKY

The International Campaign for Sacco and Vanzetti

In the fight to save death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal from legal state murder, the Partisan Defense Committee emphasizes the need for mass, labor-centered protest around the world. In this, the PDC follows in the class-struggle tradition of the early Communist International's International Red Aid and its U.S. affiliate, the International Labor Defense led by James P. Cannon. In the 1920s, as Cannon



LENIN

relates in this excerpt, the ILD and its fraternal organizations in other countries mobilized hundreds of thousands of workers in protest against the frame-up of immigrant radical workers Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti in Massachusetts. The blood-drenched capitalist executioners ultimately murdered Sacco and Vanzetti. Today, we redouble our efforts to ensure they will not take the life of Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Rarely has the vital importance of international solidarity of the working class been so decisively shown as in the world campaign for Sacco and Vanzetti. Had there not from the very beginning been demonstrated that unbreakable determination of the workers everywhere to make the fight of the two Italian agitators their fight; had there not been that splendid series of labor demonstrations in the capitals of the world; the incessant flow of resolutions and protests against this hideous conspiracy to murder two innocent workers—then the judicial vultures of Massachusetts might long ago have seized and demolished their prey....

Those who have observed even superficially the development of the case from that time on, know that it was this new campaign of protest and demonstration of solidarity that halted the hand of the executioner. The workers of this country, and of Latin America and Europe, by their tireless solidarity, placed an unbroken wall between Sacco and Vanzetti and the death chair that is being held vacant for them and gained for them a new respite....

Mass meetings were held in every large city. In New York City alone some 18,000 workers came to Madison Square Garden to protest against the proposed legal assassination....

Since the May decision of the court, demonstrations were held in front of the American embassies at Paris, Sofia, Lisbon, Buenos Aires, Berlin, Montevideo and Mexico. Everywhere the demand of the workers was for the immediate cessation of this hounding of two innocent labor fighters....

It was this campaign for international solidarity that has so far saved Sacco and Vanzetti from the death chair, and not the reliance solely upon the good intentions and judicial honesty of the Massachusetts courts. So long as Sacco and Vanzetti remain in the shadow of danger the workers of the world will stand guard. They will continue to make the cause of the two Italian radicals their cause, until their liberation has brought a successful end to the Sacco-Vanzetti case.

—James P. Cannon, "The International Campaign for Sacco and Vanzetti" (*Labor Defender*, February 1927)

WORKERS VANGUARD



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DIRECTOR OF PARTY PUBLICATIONS: George Foster

EDITOR: Jan Norden

EDITOR, YOUNG SPARTACUS PAGES: Carla Wilson

PRODUCTION MANAGER: Susan Fuller

CIRCULATION MANAGER: Shauna Blythe

EDITORIAL BOARD: Bruce André, Ray Bishop, Liz Gordon, Frank Hunter, Jane Kerrigan, Len Meyers, James Robertson, Joseph Seymour, Alison Spencer, Marjorie Stenberg

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WV Photo

Martha Phillips

10 March 1948 – 9 February 1992

It has been three years since the murder of our comrade Martha Phillips in Moscow. A cadre of the Spartacist League/U.S. for 20 years, Martha was actively involved in the antiwar, civil rights and labor movements. For many years, she had lived and worked in the San Francisco Bay Area, where she helped found the Labor Black League for Social Defense, which grew out of her 1983 election campaign for Oakland City Council.

In 1991 Martha went to Moscow, where she died on the front lines of the struggle to reimplant Lenin and Trotsky's communism in the homeland of the October Revolution. At the time of her death, Martha was the most visible fighter for the program of Trotskyist internationalism in the former Soviet Union. Our anguish over her irreplaceable loss is compounded by the fact that, to this day, we still do not know who murdered Martha, or why. Our efforts to press for a serious investigation into this tragedy were met with deliberate evasion and incompetence by the Moscow authorities and utter indifference by the American consulate.

The destruction of the Soviet Union cries out for the construction of a proletarian, internationalist party that can organize and lead the fight against grinding immiseration, murderous chauvinism, all-sided social bigotry and all the other horrors of capitalist restoration. Comrade Phillips dedicated her life to building such a party, a Leninist tribune of the people. We honor our fallen comrade's spirit, tenacity and courage through our resolve to continue the struggle to reforge the Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution.

Bridgestone Rubber Strike in Danger

Japan-Bashing Aids Union-Busting

CHICAGO—The 4,200 rubber workers who shut down five Firestone plants across the Midwest eight months ago are feeling the full brunt of union-busting. Hundreds of scabs continue to build tires at the struck facilities. Court injunctions enforced by police thugs have made it illegal to picket in any strength at plant gates. In Decatur, heart of central Illinois' "war zone" of labor battles, Firestone strikers are struggling alongside locked-out Staley corn processing workers and Caterpillar UAW members, who have also been hit with massive scabbing.

What's needed is united labor action to defy the injunctions, stop the scabbing, and *win these strikes*. Instead, the United Rubber Workers (URW) tops are drowning the strike in a sea of racist crap against the Japanese owners of Bridgestone-Firestone, while tying the workers to the anti-union Clinton White House and the Democrats. Local 713 president Roger Gates raves about Pearl Harbor and "another sneak attack." And at a January 28 solidarity rally in Chicago, URW International vice president Jay Michael Stanley (after saying he wasn't going to engage in Japan-bashing!) railed against Firestone's "foreign management."

Rather than set up some solid picket lines against the capitalist enemy at home, the union tops act as though they'd like to see the A-bomb dropped on Hiroshima again! As we warned in January, "The labor bureaucracy's program of protectionism and reliance on the capitalist Democratic Party has put the rubber strike in grave danger."

The URW International did nothing when the company declared that scabs would "permanently replace" strikers last month. The bureaucrats' prostration ignited panic at Local 7, which voted an unconditional surrender at Firestone's small race-car tire plant in Akron. And when the company decreed that only the first 100 of 150 workers crossing the picket line would get their jobs back, it set off a stampede to return to work. This capitulation was met with outrage by members of Decatur Local 713, who denounced the Akron workers as scabs and wanted to record their names on the "Wall of Shame," a list in the union hall of those who have crossed picket lines.

But the responsibility for the collapse at Akron lies squarely at the feet of the International, whose desire to wash its

hands of the strike was made crystal clear to none other than the *Wall Street Journal* (12 January), when a union spokesman hinted that other striking locals "might now feel it appropriate to return to work." A week later, the URW tops caved in to Bridgestone's giveback demands for grueling 12-hour shifts, pay linked to productivity, a two-tier wage system and health insurance givebacks. But the company is out to gut the union and refuses to take all the strikers back.

URW leaders never intended to organize a strike that could win. From the get-go, the union bureaucrats enforced no-strike agreements—the result of pre-

National Guard deployed against them by liberal Democratic Party governors. Today militant unionists such as West Virginia coal miner Jerry Dale Lowe and L.A. Teamster Jesse Acuna have been framed up and jailed for defending their strikes. Far from importing "alien" methods of strikebreaking, Bridgestone management is itching to try out American-style union-busting in Japan, which has a ban on "permanent replacements."

The AFL-CIO brass try to portray Japanese investment in American industry as some kind of "foreign invasion." But in 1982, they hailed a protectionist "domestic content" law in Congress as, in the words of UAW president Doug

destroying the power of labor. Meanwhile, the union tops urge workers to look to the racist, big business Democrats as "friends of labor," while moaning that "strikes can't win" anymore.

The kind of strikes these pro-capitalist bureaucrats "organize" could never win, not with the workers handcuffed to anti-labor politicians and the labor tops enforcing the bosses' rules. One Decatur striker told *Workers Vanguard* how the union bureaucrats joined with Democratic Party politicians like Congressman Glenn Poshard to stop the workers from closing down Firestone's scab operation:

"We almost shut the plant down back [in early January], but then Poshard and the secretary of labor and the federal mediators came down hard on us and then Gates decided we shouldn't do it.... The politicians made sure we didn't shut down the plant."

The need for class-struggle leadership is posed acutely in the Illinois "war zone," where the possibility of militant struggle embracing a broad section of the working class is apparent to all. Elected strike committees should be set up to coordinate mass picketing to shut down the Firestone, Caterpillar and Staley plants. Strike delegations have to be dispatched to the transport unions, demanding that they stop servicing the struck plants. Well-planned sit-down action has to be organized, prepared to respond to any National Guard mobilization. Such decisive action would win the active backing of thousands of other unionists who have already shown their will to struggle by traveling from miles around to demonstrate support for the "war zone" struggles.

But all of this requires a political fight to break the unions from the grip of the pro-capitalist tops and their phony "friends of labor." Above all, there has to be a struggle to forge a workers party independent of the two capitalist parties and committed to a fight to sweep away the whole capitalist system that breeds unemployment, union-busting and racist terror. A workers party would put short shrift to the racist anti-Japanese propaganda that is killing the Bridgestone-Firestone strike, instead appealing for solidarity *action* to Bridgestone workers in Japan, who will be next on the chopping block if the URW goes down in defeat.

The Democrats and bureaucrats seek to derail class struggle by pitting workers in the U.S. against their class brothers and sisters abroad. When Democratic Party liberals like Harkin and Moseley-Braun call for a "tougher" line against Japan, they threaten all of us. The ratcheting up of economic tensions leads to trade wars and then shooting wars. The main enemy of working people in the U.S. is the capitalist class here, from Wall Street to the White House. We need to put these exploiters out of business once and for all by forging an internationalist workers party which fights for a workers government to expropriate industry and get it running again. ■

Union tops' program of anti-Japanese protectionism and support to capitalist politicians is killing Bridgestone rubber strike.



vious concessions to the company—at four URW-organized plants in North America and made no attempt to shut a major non-union plant in Wilson City, North Carolina. Loath to mobilize union power, the URW leadership instead begged Clinton (the former governor of "open shop" Arkansas) to intervene against "Japanese union-busting."

In mid-January, the Clinton administration unleashed a barrage of protectionism. Labor Secretary Robert Reich "summoned" the U.S. chairman of Bridgestone-Firestone, Masatoshi Ono, to Washington. Clinton's ambassador to Tokyo, Walter Mondale, tried to strong-arm the Japanese foreign minister during a White House reception for visiting Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama. This is the same Mondale, who railed in 1982, "If you try to sell an American car in Japan, you better have the United States Army with you when they land on the docks!"

Democratic Senators Paul Simon, Carol Moseley-Braun, Tom Harkin and John Glenn weighed in with a letter to Murayama warning that Bridgestone's use of permanent replacements "threatens to harm U.S.-Japanese relations." Then Clinton lectured Bridgestone about "our tradition of peaceful collective bargaining to solve labor disputes."

But the "tradition" of the American capitalist class is the violent suppression of working-class struggle. And this isn't just in the past, like the Homestead steel strike in 1892 or the 1937 Memorial Day massacre of Republic Steel workers. In the last decade, Phelps Dodge copper miners and Hormel meatpackers had the

Fraser, "a major step toward forcing the Japan-based multinational auto companies to create jobs here in America."

The way to defend jobs is through class struggle. Protectionism undermines that with the lie that U.S. workers have a stake in higher profits for the capitalists. And this poison also promotes the racist climate which sets American-born workers against immigrant workers, Anglo against Hispanic, white against black. In particular, it fuels the racist terrorists of the KKK and Nazis, who have targeted the Springfield-Peoria area. This is the bosses' "divide and rule" strategy for

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Chambers St. near Church St.)
New York, NY Phone: (212) 267-1025

SPARTACIST LEAGUE/U.S. LOCAL DIRECTORY

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

Atlanta

Box 397
Decatur, GA 30031
(404) 521-9338

Boston

Box 390840, Central Sta.
Cambridge, MA 02139
(617) 492-3928

Champaign-Urbana

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Champaign, IL 61825
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Chicago

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Box 29497
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San Francisco

Box 77494
San Francisco, CA 94107
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Washington, D.C.

Box 75073
Washington, D.C. 20013
(202) 872-8240

TROTSKYIST LEAGUE OF CANADA/LIGUE TROTSKYSTE DU CANADA

Toronto

Box 7198, Station A
Toronto, ON M5W 1X8
(416) 593-4138

Montréal

C.P. Les Atriums
B.P. 32066
Montréal, QC H2L 4V5

Vancouver

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Vancouver, BC V6B 3X2
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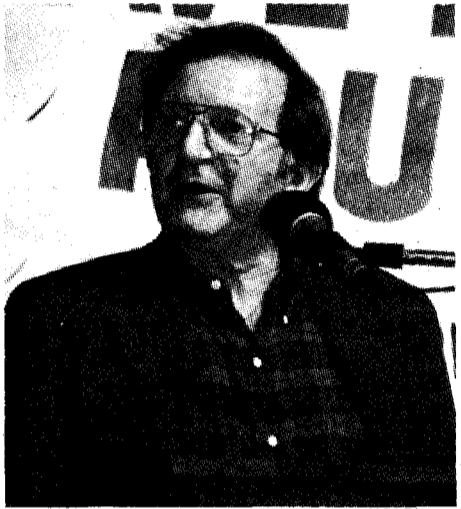
Save Jamal...

(continued from page 1)

state. A statement by black leftist and former political prisoner Angela Davis read to the rally declared, "The case of Mumia Abu-Jamal has emerged as the most important case in this challenge to the death penalty."

Jamal's case was highlighted last summer, when National Public Radio canceled an invitation to him to broadcast a series of commentaries from death row. The Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal and the PDC held a speak-out in New York to protest this capitulation to a sinister campaign orchestrated by the Philadelphia Fraternal Order of Police (FOP), whose spokesmen have vowed to see Jamal dead and even called for an "electric couch" for his supporters. In January, these Philly cops jumped, choked and brutally beat a plainclothes black policewoman. And last week the former president and treasurer of the FOP were convicted on racketeering charges of defrauding the public to the tune of \$2 million.

At the February 11 NYC rally, the



WV Photo
Len Weinglass, lead counsel for Mumia Abu-Jamal.



WV Photo
United-front rally drew integrated crowd of over 400 death penalty abolitionists, including trade unionists, socialists and students from throughout New York region.

opening remarks by Ossie Davis, co-chairman of the Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal, galvanized Jamal's supporters. He linked Jamal's case with the historic struggles to free the Scottsboro Boys and Angela Davis. He stressed that it took mass political protest beyond the courtroom to defeat those racist frame-ups and that is precisely what is needed to save Jamal today. Davis put Jamal's case squarely in the context of the far-right turn of the U.S. ruling class, which has declared war on blacks, labor, immigrants and the poor. The death penalty is central to the intensifying political repression against minorities and dissenters, and Mumia Abu-Jamal's case is what the death penalty is all about: an attempt to terrorize the minority population and extend the extralegal terror of the KKK and summary executions by the cops on the streets with institutionalized racist murder.

As Pennsylvania State Representative David Richardson emphasized, "African-American males make up roughly 5 per-

cent of Pennsylvania's population, yet we make up well over 50 percent of inmates on death row. How many of our young men and women are being railroaded and shipped down these tracks of no return? Mumia, my brother, has been placed on that Metroliner of death." Richardson proclaimed, "Mumia is innocent. I know that for a fact and I will stand anywhere—in a court of law, in the halls of the House of Congress in Washington, D.C., in Australia, in Germany—and tell you that Mumia Abu-Jamal is innocent of killing any cop in Philadelphia."

Jamal's lead counsel, attorney Len Weinglass, who is preparing legal papers for a new trial, testified to the growing support for Jamal. "The prison has received so many faxes on Mumia's behalf that it knocked the system out of order." Weinglass added, "People ask me, wherever I go to speak about Mumia's case, 'How is it possible that an award-winning journalist could be on death row? Why aren't his colleagues in the media fighting

about this? What if Tom Brokaw were on death row, or Peter Jennings?'... Mumia is on death row because of his political affiliation, because of his political association and his political work."

Charles Brover, co-chairman of the Partisan Defense Committee, dubbed the Republican and Democratic twin parties of capital the "American Newtzie Party." He pointed to the bipartisan drive for repression of black people and other minorities as a consequence of a capitalist economy that can no longer provide jobs and thus regards its former "reserve army of unemployed" as expendable. In fighting for freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal and other class-war prisoners, the PDC avails itself of every judicial process possible, while recognizing that the courts, prisons and police exist to maintain, through organized violence and terror, the rule of the exploiters. Placing no faith whatsoever in the "injustice" system, the PDC seeks to mobilize the social power of the integrated working people to support and

Ossie Davis: "We're In for the Fight of Our Lives!"

We print below excerpts from the opening remarks by Ossie Davis, co-chair of the Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal, at the February-11 New York rally.

I remember quite vividly what it was like in the '50s at the time of McCarthyism, and at its height, when there was what we called a witchhunt. People were punished, people were singled out, purely on the basis of their political belief and their political affiliations. It was widespread, it was rampant, it did a lot of damage—damage from which we suffer even to this day.

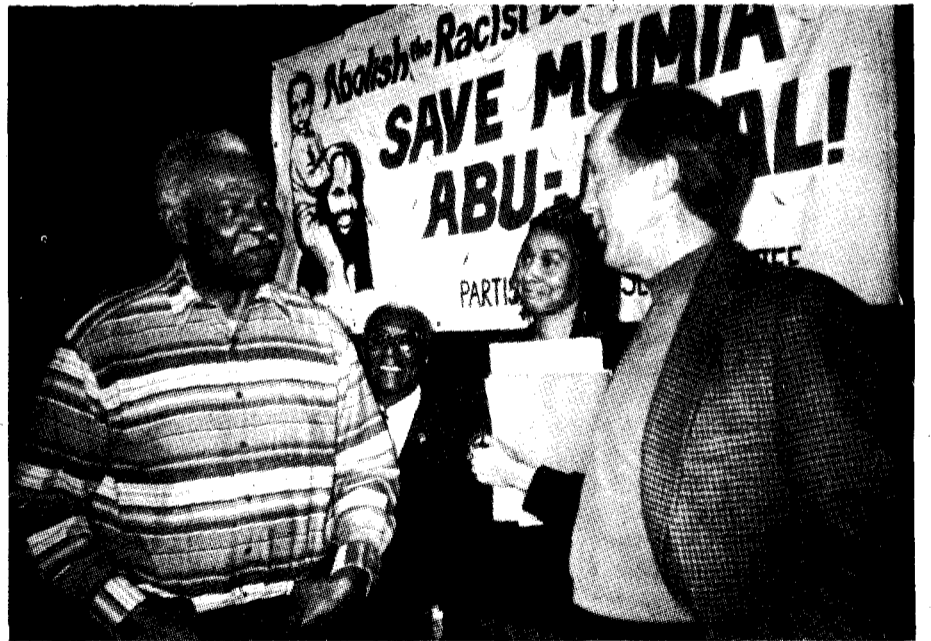
There was in the background an attitude and an atmosphere in the country which made the witchhunt possible. It wasn't that Americans of one persuasion all of a sudden got mean and angry and anti-constitutional in their relationship to free speech and its rights. There was a fear in the land. We feared very much the atomic bomb, particularly since it had come into the hands of the Soviet Union. And it was those who willingly manipulated that fear in the public who were truly the enemy and who were able through manipulating that fear to make America do such damage to itself.

Now today there is once again fear abroad in our land. Fear. Fear. Fear. And that fear is once again being manipulated to achieve devious ends

by people who have their own concept of what this country is, and our place in this country. The fear now is of an economic disaster that creeps closer and closer to happening every day. The average American no longer feels secure, no longer feels safe, is no longer sure that tomorrow's going to happen at all, certainly not for his children and maybe not for his parents. Unemployment rises, not only among the traditionally unemployed, but the white collars, the Harvard graduates.

There is fear, and that fear is being manipulated. That fear, to some people, appears in the form of what we would call "immigrants," or in the form of what we call "black folks," in the form of "criminals," or young folks with "strange" lifestyles. Now they have found, in some cases, those symbolic weapons that they use so skillfully. If they succeed in executing Mumia Abu-Jamal, they will release the floodgates and sort of make authentic the move and the cry out of hysteria to kill all of the rest of the people on death row. I say that in order to remind us that we are not only fighting to save the life of one man, and to remove the death penalty. We are fighting because greater, more profound issues are at stake.

Some of these days we are going to have to deal constructively with what



WV Photo
Ossie Davis with trade-union speakers at New York rally. From right: Jan Pierce (CWA District 1), Brenda Stokely (AFSCME Local 215) and James Webb (Coalition of Black Trade Unionists).

is behind the fear, the economic fear, generated in our country. What kind of economic and social and political system do we have, and do we need to look at it with the possibility of suggesting basic systemic changes, so that we don't have an economy that says to us with the straight face of Mr. Milton Friedman that there's a natural rate of unemployment, and that natural rate means that six percent of your workforce has got to be laid off before inflation will quiet down. If you have too much employment, then the bondholders are going to suffer, because inflation will get their mamma!

We need to struggle. We have examples before us of social protest being used to influence judicial outcome. We struggled in the streets to get a better

verdict for Angela Davis. And we struggled in the streets to change the verdicts in the case of the Scottsboro Boys. There comes a time when we must take the struggle beyond the courtroom into the streets, and arouse the people's wrath against the powers that be and put a stop to all of this!

We can ratchet the struggle up a little higher. One thing that we must remember: this is the beginning of a struggle which may well take a very long time. We are in for the fight of our lives, and we might as well face that. But once facing that, the power, the strength, the purpose of the people, once focused and set in motion, can achieve justice. And maybe the time has come for us to recognize that in this country, there ain't no other way to do it.



COC Productions

From Death Row, This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal

High-Tech Hell

The following statement from Jamal for the international campaign of protest was read to the February 11 New York rally.

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. ONA MOVE!

My words come to you from Pennsylvania's new, bright, shining hell. This state's supermax is a wholly political construction, erected solely to ease the fears of those who have

feasted for years on the blood and misery of the weak and the poor. It is correction's newest, latest fashion craze; but I ask you, those who labor under the illusion of their own so-called freedom, do you feel safer now?

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. Prayer vigils are not enough. Midnight strolls in candlelight are not enough. Prestigious appeals for government piety are not enough.

It is time for direct action. For mass action. For concerted action of the silent many whose silence through timidity is perceived as the silence of acquiescence. 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. I hope you will be among them.

From death row, you have my thanks and my salute. ONA MOVE!
LONG LIVE JOHN AFRICA!

— 9 February 1995

defend class-war prisoners, jailed for defending their unions and fighting against racism.

Spartacist League spokesman Marjorie Stamberg denounced the death penalty as a "hallmark of police-state rule." She drew the connection between the institution of the death penalty and the consolidation of fascist dictatorships in Mussolini's Italy in the 1920s and Hitler's Germany in the 1930s. Stamberg concluded, "Capitalist reaction always has recourse to the death penalty, and thus, ultimately to get rid of it, you need a socialist revolution. That requires above all a revolutionary workers party to lead it. As Lenin stressed, it must be a 'tribune of the people' which is 'able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears, no matter what stratum or class it affects'."

Democrats No Friends of Blacks, Labor

The rally drew unionists who pledged to get key sections of labor—hospital, communications and city workers—behind the fight to save Jamal. And their presence sparked an interesting and crucial political debate over the relationship between the labor movement, poor people and minorities, and the Democratic Party. Since Roosevelt's "New Deal" of the 1930s, which were rocked by massive struggles to organize integrated industrial unions, the Democratic Party has posed as a "friend" of labor and the oppressed while serving the same capitalist class more nakedly represented by the big business Republicans. The old "New Deal" coalition of Democratic Party constituencies has been shoved aside by the Southern racist yuppie Clinton's "New Democrats." Clinton denounced minorities and organized labor as "special interest groups" and publicly snubbed Jesse Jackson, sending the message to black people that there isn't any room even at the back of the bus.

Jan Pierce, vice president of Communications Workers of America District 1 representing 150,000 workers, stated bluntly that "I believe the union cause, without a social component, is a lost cause. And I must stand here before you and admit, in this day and age, the union movement is almost a lost cause." Addressing the "politics of fear" referred to by Ossie Davis, Pierce stated that "we cannot deal effectively with any of those other issues, of hunger, homelessness, injustice, inequality, union-busting, gay-bashing, racism, sexism, or political executions, within the existing political framework. We need a real movement."

Brenda Stokely, the president of AFSCME Local 215, which represents social workers and is part of the 22,000-strong District Council 1707, differed with Brother Pierce on the state of the labor movement. She went on to note that with less than 15 percent of the workforce organized, and with very few people coming out to vote, "we have a

very serious mandate" to go out and organize. Stokely called for connecting the campaign to save Mumia Abu-Jamal with union organizing. Regarding the Democrats, she remarked:

"A lot of what's happening in the labor movement is that people pushed people into thinking that they had some stake in voting for the Democrats, that somehow there's some fundamental difference between the Democrats and the Republicans. And as far as I know, the same racist money-hungry people who defeated the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party [in 1964] always existed in the Democratic Party. As far as I know, both parties have always defended the interests of the people who rule this country, which are the people who control the resources and the money in this country and throughout the world.

"I get tired of people criticizing folks because they didn't go out to vote, because I think when people are clear that something's in their interest, they move. When Jesse ran—and we're not going to get into a debate about Jesse...people thought they heard or saw something that was different from these two wings of the same party, or the head and the tail of the same body. And they came out to vote."

James Webb, president of the New York chapter of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, a veteran of the struggle to extend voting rights to the disenfranchised black population in the Jim Crow South, disagreed with the idea that black people had nobody to vote for in the midterm elections. Webb argued that not voting led to "what we have in this city, this state and the country now." Angela Doyle, a vice president of Local 1199 which represents 100,000 hospital workers, concurred with the sentiment against

300 demonstrate outside U.S. embassy office in Berlin, February 9, part of international campaign of protest to save the life of Mumia Abu-Jamal.



Robert Grahm

the "Republicrats and Democans" but noted her union had "worked very, very hard in the recent gubernatorial and mayoral campaigns" (Local 1199 president Dennis Rivera is vice chairman of the state Democratic Party). She concluded that "we have to give people an alternative that they can believe in."

Spurned by the racist capitalist party they had served so loyally for so long, many smarting labor officials and black Democratic Party fixtures are now making noises about forming an independent "third" party. Cynical maneuverers like the "Labor Party Advocates" or Jesse Jackson's former campaign manager Ron Daniels with his "21st Century Party"

talk about "independence" while in fact seeking to funnel discontent into pushing the Democratic Party "to the left." This "popular front" pressure politics is a dead-end strategy. But it is also true that the desperation and alienation at the base of this society is so extreme that a few labor leaders with integrity feel the pressure to find some way to fight the racist onslaught on behalf of the workers they represent.

For a Class-Struggle Workers Party!

To find an equivalent precedent for the ruthless repression and destruction
continued on page 6

Michael and Robert Meeropol Political Execution: "Could It Happen Again?"

The following statement by Michael and Robert Meeropol, sons of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, was read to a PDC forum in Boston on February 16.

In June of 1953, our parents Ethel and Julius Rosenberg were executed by the United States government. The official charge was conspiracy to commit espionage. The charge in the public consciousness, and the charge that both the judge and President Eisenhower used to justify the Death Penalty was that they had stolen the secret of the Atom Bomb and placed our nation's very survival in jeopardy. We now know that that charge was totally false, and the FBI and prosecutors who developed that charge knew it to be false. This is small consolation because our

parents have been "safely dead" for years.

Even at the time of the execution, when America was gripped with Cold War McCarthyite hysteria, it was evident to everybody that the case of our parents was first and foremost a POLITICAL case. They themselves were clear that they were POLITICAL PRISONERS.

We have worked to bring the truth of our parents' frame-up to the public for over 20 years. When we began to speak out, over and over again, people asked anxiously, "Could it happen again?"

We are gathered here tonight because for the first time since the execution of our parents, a political prisoner sits on

Death Row. Make no mistake about it. The death penalty was imposed in this case because of the POLITICS of Mumia Abu-Jamal. Make no mistake about it, the legal system is brushing aside all evidence of prosecutorial misconduct and other denials of due process because of Mumia Abu-Jamal's POLITICS. Make no mistake about it, the answer to the question of whether something like our parents' case could happen again is a snarling YES pronounced by the Supreme Court and new Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Our parents were almost saved by the mobilization of thousands of Americans. Mumia can yet be saved if we devote ourselves wholeheartedly to spreading the word about his specific case and also about the awful way the Death Penalty is used as the ultimate weapon against political opponents of the status quo—both to kill the most dangerous and to frighten the rest. We must not be frightened. We must not shy away from the defense of Mumia. We must make sure that NO AMERICAN POLITICAL PRISONER suffers the fate of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg.

International Campaign of Protest—Mobilize Now!

SAVE MUMIA ABU-JAMAL!

Death Row Political Prisoner • Black Journalist • "Voice of the Voiceless" • Former Black Panther • MOVE Supporter

BAY AREA

All proceeds from these events go to Jamal's legal defense.

CHICAGO

Speakers include

Don Alexander, Partisan Defense Committee
 Robert Bryan, attorney
 Mike Garcia, President, SEIU Local 1877,* San Jose, CA
 Anthony Van Jones, Director, Bay Area Policewatch*; Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area*

Ben Visnick, President, Oakland Education Association/CTA/NEA,* Oakland, CA
 Lydia Wallace, sister of Mumia Abu-Jamal
 Leonard Weinglass, Jamal's lead counsel
 *Organization for identification purposes only

Saturday, Feb. 25, 7:30 p.m.

For more information: (212) 580-1022, (510) 839-0852

ILWU Local 6 Union Hall
 99 Hegenberger Road, Oakland
 (Hegenberger exit off #880/
 Bus #58 from Coliseum BART)

Sponsored by the Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal, the Partisan Defense Committee and the Labor Black League for Social Defense

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Saturday, Feb. 25, 2 p.m.

Undergraduate Library Lecture Rm.
 Howard University

For more information: (202) 872-8240

Sponsored by the Partisan Defense Committee

LOS ANGELES

Saturday, March 4, 7 p.m.

SEIU Local 399 Union Hall
 1247 W. 7th Street (at Witmer)

For more information: (213) 380-8239

Sponsored by the Partisan Defense Committee

TORONTO, CANADA

Speakers include

David Bleakney, Chief Steward (South Central), Canadian Union of Postal Workers, Toronto Local*
 Lennox Farrell, Black Action Defense Committee
 Marc Lamarre, Haitian Resistance Movement in Toronto
 Zoltan Lugosi, Prison News Service
 Peter Stevens, Partisan Defense Committee
 *Organization for identification purposes only

Saturday, March 11, 7:30 p.m.

For more information: (416) 593-4138

St. Paul's Centre, 427 Bloor St. W.
 (one block west of Spadina subway)

Sponsored by the Partisan Defense Committee

Speakers include

Jackie Breckenridge, International Vice President, Amalgamated Transit Union,* Chicago, IL
 Paul Cooperstein, Partisan Defense Committee
 Danny K. Davis, Cook County Commissioner,* 29th Ward Peoples Assembly, Chicago, IL
 Seth Donnelly, Executive Director, Illinois Coalition Against the Death Penalty,* Chicago, IL
 Hector Flores, Vice President, Amalgamated Transit Union Local 308, Chicago, IL
 Belgium Greene, President, Chicago Westside Branch NAACP, Chicago, IL
 Wadiya Jamal, wife of Mumia Abu-Jamal
 Katie Jordan, President, Coalition of Labor Union Women,* Chicago, IL
 Clifford P. Kelley, Chicago, IL
 Darby Tillis, former death row inmate; Pastor, Friends to Strangers Ministry,* Chicago, IL
 Leonard Weinglass, Jamal's lead counsel
 Standish E. Willis, Chairman, Chicago Conference of Black Lawyers; Spokesperson, African American Defense Committee Against Police Violence, Chicago, IL
 *Organization for identification purposes only

Saturday, March 4, 2 p.m.

For more information: (212) 580-1022, (312) 663-0719

United Electrical Hall
 37 S. Ashland

Sponsored by the Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal and the Partisan Defense Committee

VANCOUVER, CANADA

Speakers include

Yvonne Brown
 Gord Hill, Anti-Fascist Info
 Aweis Issa, Somaliland Friendship Society of B.C.
 Man Chui Leung and Aias Cienfuegos, Third World Alliance, Vancouver
 Jim Lougheed, 1st Vice President, Canadian Union of Postal Workers, Vancouver Local*
 Miriam Scribner, Partisan Defense Committee
 *Organization for identification purposes only

Saturday, March 11, 7:30 p.m.

For more information: (604) 687-0353

Centre culturel francophone de Vancouver
 1551 West 7th Avenue
 (west of Granville; 2 blocks north of Broadway)

Sponsored by the Partisan Defense Committee

Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!

Save Jamal...

(continued from page 5)

of labor and minorities today, you would have to turn the clock back in this country to the 1920s, when the Klan was on the march, the trade-union movement was decimated and radical workers Sacco and Vanzetti were executed. Trying to pressure the Gingrich-Clinton coalition is a lost cause—all they offer is poorhouses, orphanages, boot camps, or the executioner's chair.

The political agenda of the American ruling class is to reverse the minimal gains wrested through mass militant struggles during the civil rights, Vietnam antiwar and women's liberation movements. The promise of black freedom held out by the defeat of the slaveowners in the Civil War is today openly repudiated by the capitalist rulers, who declare it is irrelevant that the death penalty is

blatantly racist. Black oppression has dramatically intensified since the collapse of Stalinism and the destruction of the Soviet Union. With no "red menace" to deflect mounting domestic discontent and fear over the economy, the bourgeoisie plays the race card—with a stacked deck backed up by police-state measures—to divide the working class along race, sex and ethnic lines.

Black people never much bought the anti-Soviet war drive because they knew that their enemy was at home. Yet blacks were cynically used as voting cattle for the bosses' Democratic Party—by its front men like Jesse Jackson—who dismissed struggle as the means for achieving social justice. During a 1983 campaign stop in New York City, Jackson lectured black students that "You cannot serve the age of those who sat in, you cannot serve the age of those who rode the flaming buses.... We can use the ballot to bring about change and transition

through elections and not bloody revolution." When Jackson denounces revolution he is arguing for *maintaining* the capitalist system based on exploitation and oppression of the many for the profits of the few, a system in which labor and blacks always lose.

Everything—the right to vote, to form unions, to attend school—*anything* that working people and minorities have in this country they won through hard class struggle. Notably, a quarter of black workers are union members today and have some consciousness of the social power of the integrated labor movement. This more militant sector can lead more backward white workers in action. It is necessary to wage a political fight against the labor lieutenants of capital in order to break the ties that bind the working class to the parties of capital. We need to forge a multiracial workers party that is not a parliamentary machine but the revolutionary vanguard in the class struggle. And such a workers party

will surely attract some of the more serious black and labor officials from the orbit of the Democratic Party, who will break from mainstream bourgeois politics in order to stand with the oppressed.

The working class has the organization and the social power to lead a revolutionary fight against the *system* of racist repression. United-front action around the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal can be a catalyst for the kind of open political debate and militant struggle that's needed in combatting the war on black people, immigrants, labor, women and all the oppressed. The hundreds of unions and community organizations, and the several thousand activists who have become involved in his case are just the beginning. In fighting the "legal lynching" of Jamal we will strike a blow against the whole system of capitalist exploitation and oppression. *Save Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the racist death penalty!* ■

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Urgent: Send Funds for Jamal Defense!

Money is absolutely vital to the fight to save Mumia Abu-Jamal's life. Cases which have successfully overturned death sentences have cost at least \$1 million, and Jamal is up against the vast financial resources of the state.

All money raised by rallies and forums to save Mumia Abu-Jamal, organized by the Partisan Defense Committee, is going for Jamal's legal defense. Over \$7,500 has been collected and pledged since February 9, including \$1,000 from Chicago ATU Local 308, and \$200 each from the Northern California Newspaper Guild and ILWU Local 10 executive boards. Hundreds of thousands more \$\$\$

are needed. Time is of the essence, so send a generous contribution NOW!

To help raise funds, Jamal's legal team initiated the Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal, co-chaired by actors Ossie Davis and Mike Farrell. Advisers include Whoopi Goldberg, Harry Belafonte, Ed Asner, E.L. Doctorow and Sonia Sanchez.

Make out your tax-deductible contribution for the defense to: Bill of Rights Foundation, earmarked "Mumia Abu-Jamal Legal Defense," and send it NOW to: Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal, 163 Amsterdam Ave., No. 115, NY, NY 10023-5001.

Young Spartacus

Rutgers: "Bell Curve" Racism Ignites Storm of Protest



Rutgers students march through New Brunswick, New Jersey campus, February 9. Rutgers student demands ouster of university president Lawrence at Board of Governors meeting (top right). Black woman student initiates sit-in forcing cancellation of Rutgers-UMass basketball game (below right).

For more than three weeks, student protests have swept the three Rutgers campuses (New Jersey's state university) in response to racist remarks made by Francis Lawrence, the university's president. At a faculty meeting at the Camden campus last November, Lawrence casually referred to "a disadvantaged population" which lacks the "genetic, hereditary background" to score well on standardized college admissions tests.

On February 1, nearly 500 angry students, mostly black and Hispanic, marched through the main New Brunswick campus after the Newark *Star-Ledger* (31 January) reported Lawrence's comments. One student paper, *The Daily Targum*, and the national director of the NAACP called for Lawrence's resignation. Several days later, Lawrence apologized, calling his remarks an unfortunate "slip." But many students aren't buying it and want him out. As one protest sign put it: "Fran better bell-curve his ass out of here."

Each day he remains in office is a hurtful reminder of his hateful words and the racist program of *The Bell Curve*—the pseudo-scientific tract that paints blacks as "genetically inferior." Lawrence's code words are common parlance for white supremacy and ruling-class privilege. While his remarks came in the context of a useful argument he sought to make against the use of notoriously biased "standardized" test scores, their message was no less clear. As *New York Times* columnist Bob Herbert wrote in "Lawrence Must Go" (11 February):

"It was another blow to the solar plexus of those blacks who cling to the slender hope of someday being seen by whites as fully human and equal beings. For not

only was the remark racist, it was an expression of the bedrock concept on which the entire edifice of white racism is built."

We agree.

A February 7 protest put a national spotlight on the rage and anguish sparked by Lawrence's words. A lone young black woman sat in at center court at halftime during a nationally televised basketball game between Rutgers and 4th-ranked University of Massachusetts, sending a message that "Lawrence must go." The crowd had just spent the first half cheering black athletes playing for good ol' Rutgers. With the sit-in, their cheers suddenly turned to racist taunts of "n---er," "s--cs" and shouts to "put a banana on a string" to get the woman off court. Facing down the taunts, more than 200 people joined her in the protest, shutting down the game. "We're fine as long as we're passing that ball around and putting it in the hoop," one protester said afterward. "But if I try to make a stand on behalf of my humanity, I'm just another n---er."

Black basketball players on the Rutgers team who had intended to sit out the game in protest were threatened with losing their scholarships and were later ordered not to comment on the sit-in. The next day, nearly a thousand students marched in solidarity with the protest. While out of one side of his mouth Lawrence bleated that his comments were a mistake that contradicted his real record, out of the other side he threatened to call out the cops to stop the protests. Lawrence announced he would not tolerate further disruptions of athletic events and warned, "We cannot allow the action of one group to interfere with

the rights of another." On February 10, Lawrence mobilized campus cops to repulse student protesters trying to get in to a Board of Governors meeting, which voted unanimously to back him.

Racist Assault on Blacks and Poor

In three words, Lawrence captured precisely the racist onslaught targeting blacks and working people in the U.S. *The Bell Curve* is the textbook for a bipartisan assault on black and poor people—from Bill Clinton's electoral pledge to "end welfare as we know it" to Newt Gingrich's vow to root out the last vestige of 1960s "counterculture." The drive to dismantle social programs, schools, hospitals, jobs and welfare amounts to a program of genocide for an entire layer of inner-city, predominantly black and Hispanic poor.

This agenda is pushed by so-called liberals and racist conservatives alike. Liberals who once might have marched for black rights and argued to spend more to educate the "truly disadvantaged" now rally against crime and cry out "not in my back yard" against social welfare centers. They, too, see a "cognitive elite" threatened by a growing underclass of poor, allegedly dumb, darker-skinned people who necessitate social control through police-state tactics. Trying to outdo the conservatives with "get tough on crime" rhetoric, they feed a reactionary climate characterized by the triumph of the far right in the 1994 midterm elections.

Lawrence's defenders have made much of his track record of recruiting and promoting minorities. In fact, none

of this contradicts the tenet that black people will be "uplifted" through accepting a helping hand from social reformers. Liberals think the capitalist system works, except for the "problem" of blacks who don't fit in. This liberal bias was a fundamental underpinning of the mainstream "war on poverty" of the 1960s, which sought to tinker with the machinery of the racist capitalist state to make it appear more egalitarian. But in order for black equality to be achieved, the capitalist system that is designed to keep black people "in their place" must be scrapped.

For Free, Quality Education for All!

Mass student meetings at Rutgers have argued for reforms, and a coalition of students has formed across the New Brunswick, Newark and Camden campuses. They demand: a rollback in tuition payments; a restructuring of the board of governors; multi-ethnic studies added to core curriculum requirements; women's centers on all campuses; removal of the SAT from admissions requirements and the resignation of Lawrence.

Some of these measures may well improve life at Rutgers, but to eradicate the inherent race and class privilege in higher education will require a socialist revolution to bring about free, quality education for all. The New York Spartacus Youth Club has protested at Rutgers, pointing out the role of the universities in training the next generation of technicians and architects, scientists and administrators for capitalist rule. University presidents like Lawrence are simply

continued on page 15



Trippett/Sipa

Sex and the Surgeon General

Henry W. Foster



Haber/AP

Joycelyn Elders

Washington doesn't want a surgeon general at all—it's a high priest they're after. Amid the fundamentalist diatribes emanating from Capitol Hill these days, the controversy over Clinton's nomination of Henry W. Foster as surgeon general underlines the bipartisan support for the bigots' agenda, especially anything to do with sex. As the "pro-life" reactionaries line up to denounce Dr. Foster as an "abortion activist," the White House waffles on support for its own nominee for performing a legal medical procedure which is a necessary part of his specialty, gynecology. "Pro-choice" politics Clinton-style means caving in to bigots who hold that abortion is illegitimate and should be illegal. This only emboldens the anti-abortion murderers who shoot doctors! Clinton is in tune with the times, when "justice" means cranking up the machinery of legal murder and "kindness" equals cutting poor women and children off welfare to starve.

Clinton picked Foster as his candidate to promote the anti-sex witchhunt. George Bush declared this "family values" doctor one of his "1,000 points of light" for his "I Have a Future" program preaching sexual abstinence to teenagers. As if leaking a guilty secret, the number of abortions Foster "admitted" performing climbed from one to "fewer than a dozen" to 39. Wasting no time, the nominee declared, "I abhor abortion; I abhor war." He swore he had performed abortions only in cases of rape or incest or to save a woman's life, and had delivered "10,000 babies." Then, in a February 10 speech at Georgetown University, Foster "slipped," referring to abortions as "illegal." He emphasized that if confirmed as surgeon general, he would mount a bully pulpit to preach against teenage pregnancy—while opposing the distribution of condoms without parental consent. Meanwhile, the fact that Foster performed sterilizations on retarded women has been brushed aside as "accepted" medical policy at the time.

The bungled nomination sparked a crisis in the Democratic Party, already in disarray over the Republican victory in last November's elections. It's symptomatic of the pervasive political mood opposing abortion rights that the *Wall Street Journal* castigated Clinton for not showing enough "respect" for the "right to life," urging "compromise" with the religious right. The *New York Times* called for the withdrawal of "The Tainted Foster Nomination," taking out the White House for naming Foster "without... knowing the answers to potentially explosive questions" (10 February). Voicing the discomfort of the liberal wing of the bourgeoisie, the *Times* maintains its nominal support for legal abortion, however limited: After all, they want to be sure that their own daughters, wives and mistresses can get out of a fix. While they look down on the fundamentalists who preach creationism and rail against sex, they need their help in promoting "social control of the masses."

Down With the Anti-Sex Witchhunt!

The anti-abortion veto threatening Foster's nomination was guaranteed by Clinton's humiliating dismissal of Joyce-

lyn Elders as surgeon general last December. It was a move dictated by the right wing, which disliked this outspoken black woman's support for sex education, abortion rights and the decriminalization of drugs. Upright bigots demonized Elders as the "black condom queen" for comments like, "Look who's fighting the pro-choice movement—a celibate, male-dominated church" (*Washington Post*, 10 December 1994). The event precipitating her dismissal couldn't be a more ludicrous indictment of the anti-sex mania of the "family values" agenda. At a United Nations-sponsored event com-

measures of public health in response to the AIDS epidemic.

Elders' frank talk about sex and masturbation touched a deep nerve in America. It's a real clash of human biology with the reactionary social atmosphere, in which sex is supposed to barely exist. For example, late last year a new study of American sexual behavior by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago, published as *Sex in America: A Definitive Survey* (Little, Brown; 1994) finally released its findings to combined anxiety and glee. Proposed in order to come up

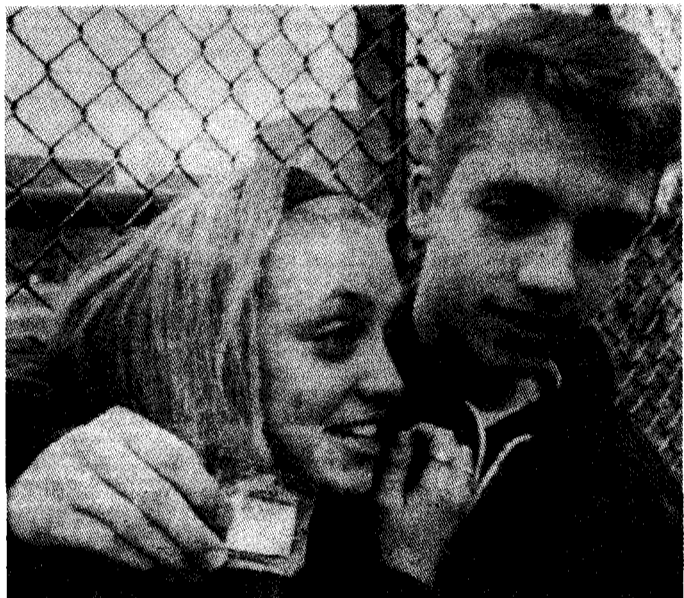
has been trying instead to impose prayer in the classroom. Nor can a sex education program devised by the rulers of this deeply conservative country take into account the social backgrounds of individual students, whose parents run the gamut from "illegal" immigrants to lesbians to strict Mennonites.

When Elders acknowledged that masturbation was "a part of human sexuality," she touched a deep taboo in American society. It starts from the biblical injunction against Onanism ("spilling your seed upon the ground") and goes on to the deep puritanical anxieties of this very strange and sexually repressive country. As documented in *Sex in America* itself, stopping masturbation among the young was an obsession of 19th-century doctors and reformers, who claimed the practice would ruin youths' physical and mental health. J.H. Kellogg said cornflakes would do the trick, while Sylvester Graham, the inventor of the cracker, had a complete dietary plan. Kellogg further advocated circumcision "without administering an anesthetic, as the brief pain attending the operation will have a salutary effect upon the mind, especially if it be connected with the idea of punishment." He advised the parents of girls to apply "pure carbolic acid to the clitoris." Entrepreneurs invented devices to prevent masturbation, including a genital cage that used a spring to hold a boy's penis and scrotum in place and a device that sounded an alarm if a boy had an erection. The result was "a reign of terror and fear that was reflected in the anxieties reported by young men as late as the Kinsey studies conducted in the 1930s and 1940s."

Young children are taught from infancy that touching themselves is wrong, learning fear and disgust for sex and their own bodies. Today these anti-sex horrors are carried on by such bigots as the feminists MacKinnon and Dworkin, who are revolted that men look at pornography as an aid to masturbation. And until recently, guys at West Point were expelled if caught masturbating.

It's hard to make sense out of all 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 their rule. The school prayer program serves to prop up two institutions fundamental to the maintenance of capitalism: the family, the main source of the oppression of women in class society, and institutionalized religion.

A recent *Newsweek* featured a cover article, "Shame: How Do We Bring Back a Sense of Right and Wrong?" with accompanying sidebars, "What Ever Happened to Sin?" and "No 'Perverts' Allowed." According to this article, public humiliation, such as publishing the pictures of convicted prostitutes in the newspapers, and physical punishment, such as paddling of juvenile criminals, is on the rise. This drive for "morality" is going to affect all of us. For example, many states are considering legislation that would make it harder for couples with children to get an easy divorce. Proper moral regimentation, say the experts, will stop the "slip-sliding toward turpitude" that threatens "fragile



AP

Students in Brooklyn display condom distributed at their public school. Such programs save lives, but reactionary anti-sex bigots want to shut them down.

memorating 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 led Clinton to immediately fire her, while the *Times* denounced her "adventurous sallies on sensitive issues!"

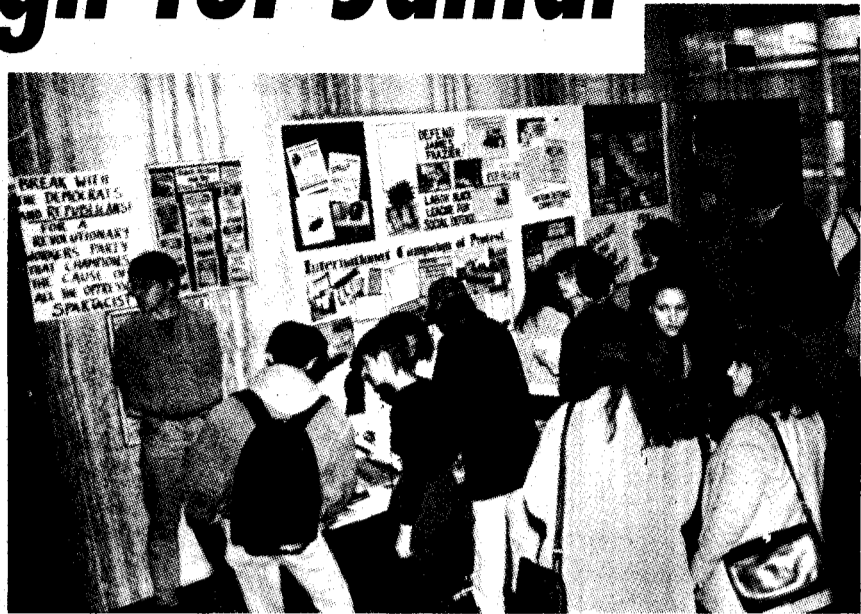
The post of surgeon general has little actual power and serves mainly as a platform for exhortation of the public. But to what purpose? Increasingly over the last 15 or 20 years, that purpose has been to preach a message of "morality" in medical terminology: smoking, drinking and having sex are bad, and those who get sick deserve their fate. While individual surgeons general have not always played along with the reactionary dogma, government policy has been to turn public health departments into vice squads. People with AIDS are neglected and abused, gay sex is stigmatized, as is all non-married, non-monogamous sex. Drug users go to jail for years and years. And the highest rate of teenage pregnancy in the industrialized world is to be dealt with by denying young women access to abortion and contraception, throwing young mothers off welfare and ramming their children into orphanages. While the U.S. has no established church, America is uniquely among the advanced countries steeped in religiosity. Yet the practice of medicine is rooted in the sciences, so any surgeon general is likely to come into conflict with the utterly reactionary policies of the government. Even the ultra-conservative C. Everett Koop ran afoul of his masters in proposing some basic

with ideas to contain the spread of AIDS, the study had been opposed from the beginning in Congress. Senator Jesse Helms thundered in 1991, "The real purpose behind the current sex survey proposal is not to stop the spread of AIDS, but to compile supposedly scientific facts to support the left-wing liberal argument that homosexuality is normal, just another life style." Funding for the survey had to come from private sources.

According to the triumphant bourgeois press, the survey purported to discover that "Faithfulness In Marriage Thrives After All." Most people screw very little, and almost always at home, crowed the media. But the surveyors themselves point out what is wrong with their own survey: "American society is structured to reward those who play by the marriage rules." The book documents the myriad controls society places on people's relationships, especially sexual ones—from the institution of the family itself to segregation by race, class and religion. What reason do the researchers have to believe their respondents are telling the truth? As Robin J. Ely, associate professor of public policy at Harvard, commented, "There is probably a fair amount of measurement error in people's wishful thinking. And people underreport behavior that has negative social consequences" (*Ms.*, January/February 1995).

For a doctor like Joycelyn Elders, a pediatrician, the real problems of children and youth just don't square with the bigots' agenda. Kids are reaching puberty at a younger age, and hormones and glands aren't going to wait for the preachers' OK. But any medically or scientifically sensible proposal for sex education in the schools is anathema in the current social climate, when government

Students Campaign for Jamal



WV Photos

Young activists champion the cause of Mumia Abu-Jamal in January 17 march at inauguration of Pennsylvania governor Ridge in Harrisburg (left). Youth from 17 area campuses turned out for New York rally on February 11 (right).

Students across the country are rallying to save the life of Mumia Abu-Jamal. On the West Coast, youth activists galvanized by the fight against anti-immigrant Proposition 187 have turned their energies to the fight against the death penalty. A multiracial audience of more than 250 Laney Community College students attended a screening of "From Death Row, This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal" at a February 8 event co-sponsored by the Ethnic Studies Department and the Spartacus Youth Club.

Before the video, Hursey Bush of the Labor Black League for Social Defense underlined the urgency of the fight to save Mumia's life: "If Mumia is executed, it will be the first political execution since the Rosenbergs, Jewish communists framed and killed in the 1950s. So the death penalty has a political purpose for the ruling class. The death penalty is the Klan's lynch rope made legal." Some 50 students signed up on the spot to work on the campaign. The African Student Union agreed to circulate campaign material and to set up a table on the campus to fill petitions addressed to Pennsylvania governor Tom Ridge. Some students plan to join SYC members at supermarkets to petition, while others took the forms with them. A few students want the video shown to their friends and at other classes. Here's what's happening elsewhere:

- At the University of California at Berkeley, the SYC gave an hour and a half presentation and video showing in Professor Robert Allen's class on racial politics. Joseph Seymour of the Spartacist League spoke of the message behind the government's campaign to kill this courageous and eloquent spokesman for the oppressed: "Central to the testimony [against Mumia] was his political association, the fact that he was a Panther. He wasn't convicted as a criminal. He was convicted as a revolutionary. That's a message. And the message for every

black radical, for everyone who goes beyond the bounds of 'respectable' opinion in this country, is if we can kill Mumia, we can kill you." The following night, two students from Allen's class came out to another video showing in Berkeley to get involved in the fight for Mumia's life.

- A benefit concert by the popular group Pothole drew a youthful crowd of about 200 in the San Francisco Bay Area on February 19. One rap artist, Click Dark, announced at the event that 10 percent of the proceeds from his new CD will go to political causes, including the defense of Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt) and Mumia Abu-Jamal. \$540 was raised for Jamal's legal defense from the band's performance.

- About 100 participants from Boston campuses, western Massachusetts and New Hampshire attended a February 16 Boston University forum on the campaign to save Mumia. The event, co-sponsored by the BU black student group Umoja, BU Friends of the Spartacus Youth Club and the Partisan Defense Committee, featured labor and community organizers as well as historian Howard Zinn, author of *A People's History of the United States*. Many students returned to their campuses armed with petitions and packets of information on the case. More than \$600 was raised for Mumia's legal defense.

- In the South, historically the center of racist "legal lynching," 30 people attended a forum at Georgia State University co-sponsored by the Black Student Alliance and the PDC. The assembled abolitionists joined a representative of the Black Workers for Justice in chanting, "Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!" to kick off the event. During the discussion after the video presentation, a friend of Mumia and a spokesman for Political Prisoners of War urged the youth in the crowd to get involved: "The movement needs new cadre!" A highlight of the event was the

response of campus maintenance workers who plan to show the video to co-workers. The BSA president jumped at the idea of organizing with other BSAs to save the life of Jamal.

At the February 8 Laney event, students raised many questions not only about how to defend Jamal but also about the capacity of the working class to struggle. What strategy can win in the fight against the racist capitalist system? How do you unite the workers and the oppressed in the struggle when there are so many desperately poor and unemployed?

Our comrades pointed to the power of the multiracial working class, the one force that can and must be mobilized if there is to be a real fight against this whole rotten racist system. That many youth can't conceive of the labor move-

ment as a force to fight on its own behalf, let alone on behalf of blacks, immigrants, desperate welfare mothers, or the ghetto poor, is a question of leadership. The key to realizing the revolutionary potential of the working class is to build a multiracial revolutionary vanguard party forged in struggle against the racist, pro-capitalist leadership of the labor movement.

When one Laney student asked, "Where is the leadership?" another called out to him, "You are the leadership! You know what must be done, and you lead and get others to join the struggle." Another student said, "It's up to you. You can take the *Workers Vanguard* home and leave it in your book bag, or you can take the knowledge you've gained and go out and talk to others about this!" ■

Protests Against Racist Backlash at Berkeley's Boalt Law School

One week after Hitler-lover David Irving's return to UC Berkeley was spiked, vile race-hate flyers appeared for a second time in the mailboxes of minority students at University of California's Boalt Hall School of Law. More than 200 students and faculty rallied against this racist provocation on February 15.

Behind the flyers' racist epithets and semi-literate whining about affirmative action stands the real threat of fascist terror. The ruling-class effort to dismantle affirmative action programs in California has rapidly become a rallying point for racists everywhere. Coinciding with the hate mail at Boalt Hall, Nazi flyers appeared at nearby College of San Mateo. These outrageous provocations are part of a campaign of racist intimidation aimed at driving minority students off campuses. Defense of affirmative action on the campuses must become part of a broad working-class fight to defend blacks, minorities and immigrants against all-sided racist reaction!

In a disgusting turn of events, Berkeley Chancellor Tien was allowed to appear at the Boalt protest. This is truly gross! The university had just tried to provide Irving with a police-protected venue on February 3, even after he was run out by anti-fascists last October (see "Hitler-Lover David Irving, Foiled Again," WV No. 616). Tien now threatens "the strongest possible sanctions" against the anonymous perpetrator(s) at Boalt. Students beware: Leftist and anti-racist protesters have always been the ultimate target of university disciplinary codes.

A law student speaking at the February 15 rally noted, "There are a lot of mes-

sages going out throughout the state saying racism is OK." These messages emanate from the capitalist ruling class, from Democrats as well as Republicans, and start with the corporate millionaire U.C. Board of Regents, which is now "rethinking" affirmative action. Professors from the right-wing California Association of Scholars are pushing for a reactionary "Son of [Proposition] 187" voter initiative to ban affirmative action in employment, education and contracting. Hoping to save them the trouble of getting signatures for the ballot initiative, a state senator from San Francisco, Quentin Kopp, co-sponsored an identical piece of legislation as a constitutional amendment. All these reactionary forces agree on reversing what is left of the minimal gains made for blacks and other minorities through *fierce struggle* against the American rulers' racist order.

The Spartacus Youth Clubs understand the urgency of fighting the racist backlash at Boalt Hall, which is part of a nationwide push to ensure that higher education remains overwhelmingly white and upper-middle-class. We defend affirmative-action admissions in education to open access to universities for minorities, but quotas are not our program, and indeed they take racial discrimination in U.S. society as a given. To combat the race and class privilege inherent in higher education under capitalism, we call for free tuition and open admissions to open the school doors to all. This requires a revolutionary party that fights for a socialist revolution to end capitalist rule. Join us in building that party! ■

civilization." And that, our rulers believe, will ensure a workforce that will turn up on time, work till they drop, accept the wage cuts necessary to increase profits...and go to war when ordered.

There are some real heroes in medicine in the United States today, but they aren't to be found sitting behind desks on Capitol Hill or yelling at teenagers for having sex. In less than two years, two doctors, an escort and two receptionists, all working to provide abortion services to women, have been brutally murdered by anti-abortion bigots in this country. Scores of others have been shot at, threatened and stalked, as the clinics where they work are bombed and blockaded. Many of the doctors travel hundreds of miles a week to perform abortions in isolated counties where abortions would

otherwise simply not be available.

This is a real indictment of the barbarism of this capitalist system, which spawns the reactionary atmosphere encouraging intimidation and even murder of women and their doctors over ending a pregnancy. Clinton and his cops aren't going to do anything to defend the clinics—it's up to workers, women, youth to mobilize to stop the bigots. We need free abortion and contraception on demand, as part of free, quality health care! But in order to get what should be every human being's right, we're going to have to overthrow this profit system and build a new society. It's about time we put this ruling class out of the business of telling us what to do in our bedrooms—and out of business, period. ■

East Europe: Five Years of Counterrevolution

We print below the conclusion of a three-part series. Part 1, "The Fall of Polish Solidarność," appeared in WV No. 614 (13 January); and Part 2, "Hungarian 'Socialists' Push Anti-Worker Austerity," was published in WV No. 615 (27 January).

The counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union was accompanied by and in turn fueled a sharp rise in nationalism, both Great Russian chauvinism and myriad separatist movements among the non-Russian peoples. Since Boris Yeltsin's seizure of power from the collapsing Stalinist bureaucracy in August 1991, ushering in capitalist restoration and the dissolution of the USSR, fratricidal civil wars have flared up in one after another former Soviet republic. Yeltsin's invasion and occupation of the tiny Caucasian region of Chechnya is an attempt by the new capitalist overlords of Russia to restore the tsarist prison house of peoples.

The spearhead for the nationalist breakup of the ex-USSR, triggered by the Baltic secessionist drive, was the Sajudis movement in Lithuania, which in early 1990 became the first Soviet republic to declare independence. Spouting virulent anti-Russian chauvinism and shot through with outright fascists, Sajudis and its leader Vytautas Landsbergis initially rallied wide popular support as they sought to resurrect the anti-Communist Lithuanian regime of the period between World Wars I and II. Yet less than three years later, by the fall of 1992 this arch-reactionary outfit had been reduced to an empty shell, while the once-despised Stalinist bureaucrats rode back to power on a wave of popular discontent with the effects of capitalist restoration. The Lithuanian elections established a pattern of Stalinists-turned-social-democrats displacing right-wing nationalists, which was then repeated in Poland, Hungary and, most recently, Bulgaria.

When independence brought not expected Western-financed prosperity but near-total economic collapse, the Lith-



Breakup of Soviet Union has brought economic immiseration amid nationalist frenzy. Store clerk in Vilnius demands customer show Lithuanian passport to buy bottle of vegetable oil.

Part 3: Nationalism and Social Democracy in the Baltics

uanian masses turned against the reactionary fanatics of Sajudis and in favor of the ex-Stalinists, who promised to restore ties with Russia and ameliorate the harsh economic austerity imposed by the nationalists. Under Sajudis, industrial output and wages dropped 50 percent, while inflation reached 1,700 percent. Food production plummeted by two-thirds in three years, the result of a forced-march *decollectivization* by the Sajudis regime, which laid waste to productive farmland by handing it back to its pre-1940 owners. One cooperative

farm worker said bitterly, "I know one thing: We were better off under Soviet rule."

In the October 1992 elections, the Democratic Labor Party (DLP), successor to the Lithuanian Communist Party, won 76 out of 141 seats in the Seimas (parliament) against a mere 27 for Sajudis. A few months later, in February 1993, DLP leader Algirdas Brazauskas was elected president with over 60 percent of the vote, defeating a relic of the interwar regime who was backed by a coalition of 14 right-wing nationalist parties. But far from offering a return to the living standards and economic security of the Soviet era, the DLP is firmly committed to capitalism. "The word communism does not exist in our party," Brazauskas announced following his election, adding that privatization would be "one of the main means of stimulating and modernizing our industry." At his inauguration at Vilnius' Catholic cathedral, this former "Communist" vowed allegiance to "Nation, Country, God."

Like its Polish and Hungarian counterparts, the DLP benefited from the popular identification of capitalist immiseration with hard right-wing, anti-Communist (and anti-Russian) nationalism. This contrasts with Russia, where the Stalinist leftovers were able to join forces with open anti-Semites, monarchists and fascists in a chauvinist "red-brown" coalition for a Great Russian *derzhava* (strong state) against Yeltsin's pro-Western orientation. But to the Lithuanian nationalists of Sajudis, anything smacking of the former Soviet Union was anathema. Thus forced to defend themselves against victorious right-wing nationalism, the

ex-Stalinists of the DLP had little choice but to define themselves as a pro-working-class opposition.

The Sordid Legacy of Baltic "Independence"

During the Cold War, the Baltic republics provided a stock theme for anti-Soviet "Captive Nations" propaganda in the West. Like the CIA and its émigré nationalist agents—many of them former Nazi collaborators—Sajudis and its nationalist "Popular Front" counterparts in Estonia and Latvia looked back to and glorified the vaunted "independence" of the interwar years, when tiny ruling elites exploited and terrorized the workers and minorities of their respective countries. In fact, under capitalism, these statelets—whose total population is barely eight million—were historically and are again today nothing more than neocolonial vassals of the European imperialist powers. But the worker and peasant masses had a long history of struggle against their foreign and domestic masters.

Before 1917, the three Baltic states were incorporated into the tsarist empire. Under Russian administration, a German-derived nobility—the Baltic barons—exploited the Latvian and Estonian peasants and town laborers, while the Lithuanian upper classes were intermeshed with their Polish cousins. As the tsarist autocracy began to crumble in the early years of this century, Latvia and Estonia became bastions of left-wing socialism, joining the Bolsheviks in revolutionary opposition to the imperialist war, while Lithuania was a center of the SDKPiL of Rosa Luxemburg, Leo Jogiches and the Polish Lithuanian Felix Dzerzhinsky.

Already in May 1917, the Latvian Rifles became one of the first military units to come out for soviet power. Paying tribute to their critical role in defending the October Revolution, Red Army founder Leon Trotsky said in 1918, "Let anyone name any military units that are as disciplined, as firm and as self-sacrificing as our Lettish units." After the Bolshevik seizure of power in Russia, Soviet republics were established in the northern Baltic region with massive popular, centrally proletarian, support. Soviet power in Latvia and Estonia was, however, overthrown by an unholy alliance of British and German imperialism, White Russian forces and Baltic bourgeois nationalists. Large numbers of left-wing Lettish and Estonian workers and intellectuals were forced to flee to Soviet Russia and elsewhere.

By the 1930s, the three Baltic states had become right-wing dictatorships which suppressed the left and workers movement and persecuted Jews through such measures as the *numerus clausus* restricting access to higher education and the professions. (Among the Lithuanian Jews who fled the right-wing regime were the families of the late South African Communist Party leader Joe Slovo and SACPer Ronnie Kasrils, now South Africa's deputy minister of defense.) Nonetheless, their existence as independent states fostered a national identity among the Baltic peoples distinct from



WV Map

the Slavic core of the Soviet Union. At the same time, the Stalinist bureaucratic degeneration of the Russian Revolution—especially the bloody purges of the mid-1930s—increasingly alienated the traditionally socialist and pro-Soviet proletariat of Latvia, Estonia and also Finland.

Following the 1939 Hitler-Stalin pact, the USSR annexed the Baltic states as a strategic defense measure. While insisting on unconditional military defense of the Soviet degenerated workers state against all its capitalist enemies, Trotsky warned that the military advantages accruing to the Soviet Union would be more than offset by the negative political effects:

"It cannot be doubted that control over the military bases on the Baltic coast represents strategic advantages. But this alone cannot determine the question of invasion of neighboring states. The defense of an isolated workers' state depends much more on the support of the laboring masses all over the world than on two or three supplementary strategical points....

"At present this important pre-condition for revolutionary intervention exists, if at all, in a very small degree. The strangling of the peoples of the USSR, particularly of the national minorities, by police methods, repelled the majority of the toiling masses of the neighboring countries from Moscow. The invasion of the Red Army is seen by the populations not as an act of liberation but as an act of violence, and thereby facilitates the mobilization of world public opinion against the USSR by the imperialist powers."

—Leon Trotsky, "The World Situation and Perspectives" (February 1940).

With the Estonian coast overlooking the western approach to Leningrad and its capital Tallinn barely a hundred miles away, Soviet control of the Baltics was of vital strategic importance. But Stalin squandered this military advantage by placing his confidence in Hitler's assurances of "non-aggression," having already decapitated the Red Army on the eve of war. When the Nazi leader launched his Operation Barbarossa in June 1941, the Wehrmacht was able to roll right through the Baltics and Byelorussia to the very edge of Leningrad, stopped there only by the heroic efforts of the Red Army and the city's population.

Meanwhile, the Baltic nationalists seized on the German invasion to enlist in the Nazi Holocaust. Lithuanian anti-Semites carried out the worst pogrom in East Europe in Kaunas (Kovno) two days after the invasion, while the Lithuanian police later enthusiastically assisted in the slaughter of 120,000 people, overwhelmingly Jews, at Ponary. Estonian and Latvian SS units, the latter including the Arajs Commando death brigade, surpassed even the German Nazis in their anti-Semitic zeal. The Estonian SS killers went on to form the Forest Brothers, a terrorist gang that attacked Jews and Communists after the war. In Latvia, the Aizsargi fascist militia began carrying



Sipa



John Voos

Ex-Stalinist, now social democrat Algirdas Brazauskas replaced anti-Communist fanatic Vytautas Landsbergis (at right, under picture of 13th-century King Mindaugas) as Lithuania's president in 1993.

out pogroms even before the German army entered the country in 1941. These same fascists had earlier been instrumental in overthrowing the 1919 Soviet republic and in installing the Ulmanis dictatorship in 1934.

This is the legacy of "independence" of which the various Baltic nationalists speak so fervently today, as they seek to recreate the totalitarian, anti-Semitic regimes of the interwar years. Among the first acts of the Sajudis regime was to pardon fascist war criminals who had been imprisoned by the Soviets. In Estonia, the regime extinguished the eternal flame in Tallinn in memory of Soviet fighters against fascism. And, "Latvia may be the only place in the world building monuments to the SS"—with at least 19 of these grotesque celebrations of the Holocaust, as the London *Guardian* (12 February 1993) reported. The infamous Aizsargi are back on the streets in force, while SS veterans publicly flaunt their iron crosses and meet regularly at Riga's War Museum.

Gorbachev "Market Reforms" Ignited Baltic Counterrevolution

The immediate backdrop to the rise of rabidly nationalist secessionist movements in the Baltics lay in the market-oriented perestroika "reforms" introduced by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in the mid-1980s. Gorbachev looked to the Baltic republics—the most economically advanced part of the USSR—to become the vanguard region of perestroika. To this end, he promoted the formation of the Latvian and Estonian Popular Fronts and the Lithuanian Sajudis (originally called Movement for the Support of Perestroika) as a means of getting around more conservative elements in the bureaucracy. But these movements were quickly taken over by pro-imperialist anti-Communists, and the ensuing nationalist upsurge tore the Baltic branch of the Soviet bureaucracy to shreds.

In Latvia and Estonia, the principal leaders of the Communist parties broke

with Moscow to become bourgeois-nationalist politicians indistinguishable from their erstwhile anti-Communist opponents. In Lithuania, the old-line Stalinist leadership of the CP was replaced in 1988 by the "reformer" Brazauskas, who favored a gradual move toward independence. The following year Brazauskas, too, broke with Moscow, provoking a split by a pro-Soviet minority, which has since been driven underground. But the chauvinist fanatics around Sajudis regarded even national-liberal Stalinists like Brazauskas as traitorous agents of the Kremlin. One member of the Lithuanian parliament proposed the summary execution of all present and former members of the Communist Party!

Egged on by its imperialist sponsors, the Sajudis regime embarked on a course of provocative confrontation with the Kremlin. Despite their equally rabid chauvinism, the Latvian and Estonian Popular Fronts were somewhat constrained in pushing for secession by the opposition of large Russian-speaking minorities (primarily ethnic Russians, but also Ukrainians and Byelorussians). These make up half the population of Latvia and almost 40 percent of Estonia, but only 20 percent of Lithuania consists of Russians and Poles. Rightly fearing they would be persecuted or expelled following independence, these minorities—who formed the majority of the industrial proletariat in both countries—rallied behind Moscow-loyal CPs and the so-called "Internationalist Movement."

Led by a Russian and a Siberian Estonian, the "Inter-Movement" organized a series of effective strikes and protests against discriminatory measures by the Estonian Popular Front regime, harking back to Lenin in calling for "equal rights for all nations." But despite such appeals, in practice the leadership of the "Inter-Movement" sought to pressure the Kremlin to act as guardians of the Russian-speaking population. However, the rising tide of nationalism could not be stopped without ousting the entire Stalinist bureaucracy through pro-

letarian political revolution and halting the rapid slide toward capitalist counterrevolution. What was needed was a Leninist-Trotskyist party fighting to restore Soviet democracy and Bolshevik internationalism.

Following independence, the Baltic nationalist regimes moved to strip the Russian-speaking population of citizenship, if not to expel them outright. Latvian president Gorbunovs (former head of the Latvian Communist Party) expresses open admiration for apartheid South Africa as a model for solving the "ethnic question." Non-Balt residents of Estonia and Latvia—including those who were born there—are required to get visas costing as much as \$20 (the equivalent of four months' pay) to return home if they cross the border. Many were fired from their jobs. Even a more liberal law passed last year under pressure from the West denies Latvian citizenship to many Russian speakers at least until the year 2000 and excludes all those who opposed independence or were active Communists.

To justify their chauvinist onslaught, Latvian and Estonian petty-bourgeois nationalists maintain that the large-scale influx of Russians and other "Soviet peoples" into the northern Baltic region was a deliberate plot by Moscow to destroy their national identity. In fact, these areas, particularly in the cities, traditionally had large non-Balt populations. On the eve of the Russian Revolution, Riga was a thoroughly multinational city: 20 percent of its inhabitants were Russian, 14 percent German and 7 percent Yiddish-speaking Jews. The immigration of Russian speakers following World War II was, by and large, a reflection of the general mobility of Soviet workers in response to economic opportunities. Russian working people, especially youth emigrating from the countryside to the cities, were attracted to the higher living standards and job openings in Riga and Tallinn.

During the Soviet era, the Baltic republics not only experienced an enormous

continued on page 12



Niedenthal/Time



AP

Lithuanian Sajudis nationalists, shown demonstrating against Gorbachev visit to Vilnius in 1990 (left), were in forefront of counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union. Supporters of Lithuanian Communist Party (right) protest against secession from the USSR, January 1990.

East Europe...

(continued from page 11)

improvement in the living conditions of all their inhabitants but also preserved and deepened their distinct national cultures. In his sympathetic account of the Baltic secessionist movements, Anatol Lieven, who is of Latvian descent, acknowledges:

"By 1940, use of the Baltic languages in education and higher culture was still new and fragile. Despite Russification, the fact of official status for their languages, and the opportunities afforded by Soviet republican institutions (such as schools and universities in the Baltic languages, Writers' Unions, and so on) put the Balts in a better position to defend their language and identity than several other small linguistic groups in modern Europe: the Gaelic Irish in the last century, or the Basques, Bretons and Welsh in this one, for example."

—*The Baltic Revolution: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and the Path to Independence* (1993)

Independence and Economic Collapse

The Baltic nationalists dreamed that capitalist independence would quickly allow them to live like Swedes or Finns. Expecting the West to shower them with dollars and D-marks as a reward for aiding the destruction of the Soviet Union, the Lithuanian Sajudis and its counterparts in Latvia and Estonia made little or no attempt to negotiate new economic arrangements with the Yeltsin regime in Moscow when the USSR broke apart in late 1991. As part of the integrated Soviet economy, the Baltic republics received oil, natural gas and other raw materials at nominal cost. But now they had to pay hard currency at the extortionate world market price manipulated by the Seven Sisters/OPEC cartel. Fuel prices in the new Baltic states skyrocketed, climbing to as much as 800 times their 1990 levels. By the end of 1992, industrial production in Lithuania had fallen by half, in Estonia by 40 percent and in Latvia by a third. Bread was rationed, and homes had hot water for only two days a week and in many cases not at all.

Speeding up the political suicide of Sajudis was the move to decollectivize agriculture and restore farmland to those who had owned it in 1940 or their descendants, many of whom lived in West Europe or North America. When angry collective farmers marched in Vilnius in late 1991 to protest the seizure of their land for the benefit of Lithuanian Americans in Chicago, Sajudis boss Landsbergis denounced them as agents of Moscow! By contrast, the ex-Stalinists of the DLP presented themselves as champions of the rural toilers.

More generally, the social democrats promised to restore the economic advantages of the former Soviet Union, which Brazauskas & Co. had helped to destroy. During the election campaigns, the DLP leader boasted, "I have thirty years experience with the Moscow bureaucracy....



Boni and Liveright

Latvian rifle battalions in Petrograd played heroic role in 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. Workers and farm laborers in northern Baltic region of the tsarist empire were stronghold of left-wing socialism.

I won't get lost in those Moscow corridors." However, the Moscow bureaucracy of Yeltsin was separated from the Moscow bureaucracy of Brezhnev or even Gorbachev by a fundamental divide—the divide of counterrevolution. The Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy at least paid some lip service to internationalism, while the new rulers of capitalist Russia are openly nationalist, with a vengeance.

As president of the Russian republic during the last period of the Gorbachev regime, Yeltsin was initially the main friend and protector in Moscow of Sajudis and the Latvian and Estonian Popular Fronts. But the disintegration of the Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy led to a mushrooming of Russian nationalism. In order to maintain and develop the Soviet Union as a whole, the bureaucracy had been willing to subordinate the narrow economic interests of Russia to a considerable extent, heavily subsidizing, for example, the poorer, Turkic-speaking regions of Central Asia. But now Yeltsin promoted an independent Russia that would no longer have to subsidize Central Asia or supply cheap oil to the Ukraine and other Soviet republics. Following the breakup of the USSR, Yeltsin then slapped a 100 percent tariff on industrial imports from the Baltic states.

Hence the shift in governmental power in Lithuania from right-wing nationalists to ex-Stalinist social democrats in no way halted the economic collapse. A year after the DLP took power, industrial production remained less than 35 percent of the Soviet-era level. Factory workers were working one or two days a week in a transparent attempt to disguise the reality of mass unemployment.

Far from bringing Scandinavian-style prosperity, independence has reduced the Baltic states to impoverished neocolonies of the West. Even Estonia, which leads the Baltic republics in foreign investment and is hailed as a Baltic success story for Harvard economist Jeffrey Sachs' draconian "shock therapy," has seen a massive economic collapse. A couple of winters ago, thousands of

Estonians nearly froze to death but for an emergency shipment of heating oil from Finland. In the Russian-populated industrial center of Narva, one out of two workers is unemployed. Yet Fatherland Coalition prime minister Mart Laar "wants to keep unemployment benefits meager to encourage the jobless to work" (*New York Times*, 13 June 1994).

The Baltic economies, such as they are, have essentially been subordinated to imperialism, particularly Germany and the Scandinavian countries. Declaring "Baltic States Look Back to the Future," a headline in the *Central European Economic Review* (Winter 1994) asked, "A New Hanseatic League?" referring to the German-dominated Baltic coast mercantile alliance of the 14th and 15th centuries. The Treuhand, the Bonn agency responsible for closing down East German industry following reunification, now has a branch office in Tallinn to oversee Estonia's "privatization" process, while "Latvia's central bank was created under the watchful eye of the Bundesbank." Sweden and Finland dominate foreign investment in Estonia; Germany and the U.S. in Latvia. The Estonian kroon is pegged to the D-mark, while the new Lithuanian lita, like its prewar antecedent, is pegged to the dollar.

Imperialist domination of the Baltics is not simply economic. Estonia's army is commanded by a former U.S. army colonel (and supplied with Israeli weaponry). In Latvia, not only is the defense minister an American (whose family fled Latvia...in 1944, for Nazi Germany), but so is the minister for foreign trade and a leading parliamentary figure. This reverse diaspora is dominated by such hard-bitten anti-Communist nationalists that even a Latvian politician was driven to complain: "They want Latvia the way it was before they left. Many of them are full of revenge. It is very dangerous" (*Washington Post*, 6 July 1994).

For Socialist Revolution Throughout the Lands of the Former USSR

During the heyday of nationalist euphoria in the Baltics, an American journalist observed, "Ordinary people in Lithuania are mostly sane, but their leaders are mostly mad." But the chauvinist frenzy which has taken hold in East Europe and the former Soviet Union is neither an insane "excess" nor is it a throwback to primitive tribal impulses, as Western commentators would have it. Rather it is a direct consequence of capitalist counterrevolution. And the responsibility for this enormous catastrophe for working people the world over lies squarely at the feet of the Stalinists.

The Soviet economy was integrated on an all-Union basis, and enterprises were designed to take maximum advantage of economies of scale. For example, 70 percent of all the different types of machine tools made in the USSR were produced in one factory and in no

other. Energy supplied to most Soviet enterprises came from a few huge oil and natural gas fields in Siberia. The integrated economic development of the USSR went hand in hand with the intermingling of its diverse peoples. However, the multinational character of Soviet society and its economic structure stood in sharp contradiction to the increasing Great Russian chauvinism of the Kremlin oligarchy and corresponding anti-Russian nationalism of the intelligentsia and even much of the bureaucratic *nomenklatura* in non-Russian republics.

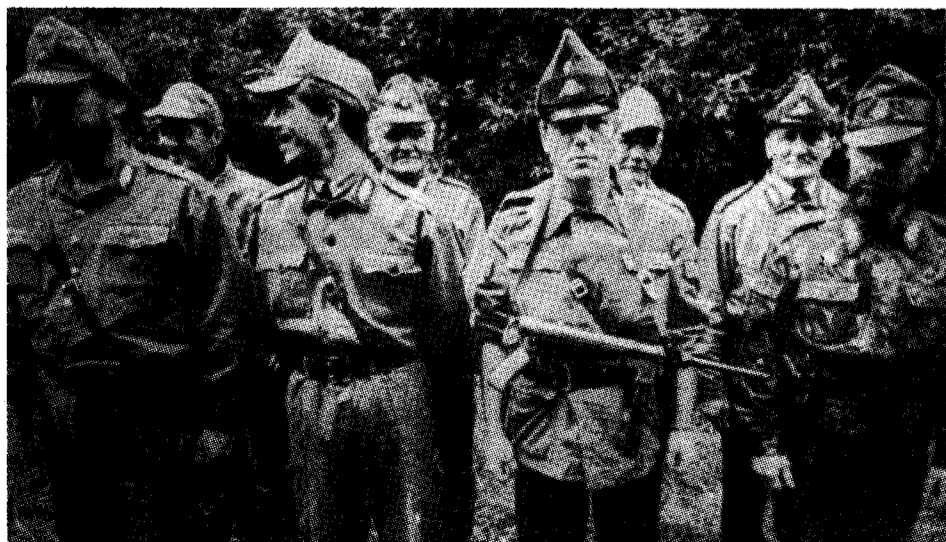
Thus the counterrevolutionary destruction of the USSR has produced and was bound to produce fratricidal slaughter, especially in the Caucasus, and Russian economic warfare against the far weaker neighboring states of the "near abroad." The current slaughter of the Chechen people by Yeltsin's Russia and the Nazi-like laws depriving Russian speakers of citizenship in Latvia and Estonia underscore a fundamental fact of the post-Soviet world: the rulers of the nascent bourgeois states arising out of the breakup of the USSR will invariably trample on the large national minorities living in those territories.

The October Revolution and the formation of the multinational USSR were made possible only through the Bolsheviks' internationalist opposition to such Great Russian chauvinism—and all nationalism—expressed in Lenin's call for the right of self-determination for all nations in the tsarist prison house of peoples. The Stalinist usurpers simultaneously encouraged nationalism while bureaucratically trampling on the national—as well as social and political—rights of the diverse Soviet peoples. As nationalist strife threatened to blow the USSR apart, a host of pseudo-Trotskyists cheered on Sajudis, in some cases (e.g., the British Workers Power group and the Argentine-based Morenoite tendency) even demanding that the imperialists aid this anti-Soviet movement.

In contrast, the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) opposed capitalist restoration down the line and fought for proletarian political revolution as the only way to save the Soviet degenerated workers state. At the same time, we insisted on the right of all nations to separate from the rest of the Soviet Union as independent *workers states*—i.e., where "independence" was not a cover for counterrevolution.

Far from ensuring the national rights of the non-Russian peoples, capitalist restoration has produced a chauvinist frenzy of fratricidal slaughter, forced population transfers, deportations and pervasive discrimination. Today, as well, we stand for equal rights for all nationalities, and for full citizenship and language rights for all peoples throughout the lands of the ex-USSR. But these elementary democratic demands, particularly given the degree of interpenetration which continues to exist among different peoples, can only be achieved through united proletarian struggle for socialist revolution against all the wretchedly reactionary capitalist regimes now in place.

To combat the social and economic degradation of the counterrevolution and the ensuing nationalist and communalist wars, the working class throughout the former USSR, centrally Russia, will have to rediscover and reacquire its own revolutionary tradition, which was destroyed by Stalinism. The proletariat which made the October Revolution learned from Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks that it was part of an international struggle. It understood that the only prospect for survival lay in extension of the revolution to the advanced capitalist countries. Only as part of the struggle to reforge an authentic world party of socialist revolution can the working people in the lands of the former Soviet Union cohere the leadership they need to sweep away the horrors they now confront. ■



Wayne Sorce

Fascist former members of Latvian SS units, which fought with Hitler's Wehrmacht against the Soviet Red Army, now flaunt their Nazi medals and celebrate the Holocaust.



Carlos Cisneros



Espartaco

Hundreds of thousands have demonstrated in Mexico City's Zócalo (central square) against military occupation of Chiapas. Right: Supporters of Grupo Espartaquista de México call to "Mobilize the Working Class Against Repression and the Starvation Plan."

Mexico...

(continued from page 1)

impose "tight money" policies that would lead to a collapse of banking and industrial production, while insisting that the U.S. has control of Mexico's multi-billion-dollar oil revenues as a condition for its bailout "loan." Such outright looting can only produce outrage in this country where General Lázaro Cárdenas' 1938 nationalization of foreign oil companies is seen as a second declaration of independence.

The military assault on the EZLN's base of support in the Lacandon rain forest in Chiapas was long in preparation. An estimated 60,000 of the Mexican army's 130,000 troops were concentrated in the region. Some 100 tanks and armored cars were sent down dirt roads to seize scores of communities. The Mayan Indian peasants fled into the hills, and those who were captured were subjected to torture by military interrogators trained by Argentine officers who carried out the infamous "dirty war" against the left in the 1970s. On the other side of the border, Guatemalan *kaibile* counter-insurgency troops cut off escape routes to the south and east from the Mexican army's "cordon of death." Meanwhile, in the capital and other cities, helicopters flew low over neighborhoods as judicial police carried out a witchhunt for alleged Zapatista supporters. The "arsenal" they seized consisted of a few pistols and homemade bombs, making a mockery of Zedillo's claim that this justified breaking off dialogue and sending the army after Zapatista leaders.

But most disturbing for the government was the hornet's nest of opposition its assault touched off. On Saturday, February 11, only two days after the military operation was launched, more than 100,000 protesters poured into the Zócalo, the huge square in the center of Mexico City, to denounce the government. While the bourgeois opposition Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) called the protest under the slogan "For a Peaceful and Democratic Solution—No to the War," thousands of demonstrators showed a combative spirit sharply contrasting with such pacifistic appeals. Students commandeered buses, draping them with "Viva EZLN!" banners. "We are all Marcos" was by far the most popular slogan, along with "Marcos hold on, the people are rising up!" Union contingents carried full-size posters of the EZLN leader in his trademark ski mask. When PRD activists tried to mount a cheer for their leader, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, and even for his father Lázaro Cárdenas, massive cries of "Viva Marcos!" drowned them out.

And the protests have not stopped. In midweek, tens of thousands again protested in solidarity with the Zapatistas,

and on February 18 an even larger crowd, estimated at between 120,000 and 200,000, gathered in the Zócalo to denounce the regime's bloody repression as well as its brutal economic policies which spell starvation and misery for the Mexican masses. And what is the response of the popular-front opposition led by the PRD? At the February 11 demonstration, Cárdenas said that it is necessary to "fill the plazas a thousand times over to obtain an immediate truce, a peaceful and political solution for Chiapas and the construction of peace with justice and dignity" (*La Jornada*, 12 February). A week later, Cárdenas called to "build bridges with other political forces," namely the right-wing PAN and forces within the ruling party. But many protesters must be asking themselves if marching "a thousand times over" under the leadership of bourgeois politicians is going to solve the burning problems of the oppressed.

For the crisis is more than that of the peso, the repression, or Zedillo's presidency. The domination of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), which has maintained a one-party regime for the last six and a half decades, is beginning to crack. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) not only sharply intensified Mexico's semicol-

onial subjugation to the U.S.; it has produced an economic collapse that is already setting off massive social unrest. As we have noted before, using Lenin's image of tsarist Russia in World War I, *Mexico is the weak link in the chain of U.S. imperialist domination of the hemisphere.* And as the brittle edifice of the PRI-government comes under attack, it is urgent to mount internationalist class struggle against this authoritarian capitalist regime.

While the Mexican left joins in channeling unrest into the bourgeois-nationalist "democratic" opposition, the Grupo Espartaquista de México issued a 14 February statement headlined, "Mobilize the Working Class Against the Repression and Starvation Assault." In the U.S., the Spartacist League joined protests against the military repression in Chiapas, with signs denouncing "Peso Crisis, Repression Made in U.S.A."

Wall Street Demands Bloody Payback for Bailout

In a communiqué responding to the government's assault, the Zapatista command issued a statement eloquently declaring, "Zedillo has opted to be humble and servile toward the powerful, and highhanded and haughty toward the poor." It denounced the government for

demanding that the EZLN fall to its knees as a condition for "dialogue": "It is mistaken; since 1 January 1994 we are living on our feet. On our feet we will talk, or on our feet we will fight, or on our feet we will die." It noted that the price of the U.S. loan is "to be paid off with Mexican blood, especially with Indian blood, in order to liquidate the debt" (*La Jornada*, 13 February). In fact, while the Mexican army was chomping at the bit to finish off the Zapatistas, there is plenty of evidence that they got a big push from Washington and Wall Street.

In the 1 February issue of *Counter-Punch* magazine, Alexander Cockburn and Ken Silverstein published a memorandum of the Chase Manhattan Emerging Markets Group authored by Riordan Roett, a Chase adviser on leave from his position as director of Latin American Studies at Johns Hopkins University. In the memo, dated 13 January, Roett baldly argues for wiping out the Zapatista insurgents:

"While Chiapas, in our opinion, does not pose a fundamental threat to Mexican political stability, it is perceived to be so by many in the investment community. The government will need to eliminate the Zapatistas to demonstrate their effective control of the national territory and security policy."

And at a conference of academics and financiers on Mexico in January, Roett argued that it is "essential, from the investor point of view, to resolve the Chiapas issue as quickly as possible."

Chase Manhattan is one of the handful of major banks holding hundreds of millions of dollars in Mexican commercial debt. With the Mexican government begging for emergency loans from the U.S. and the IMF, such "recommendations" from Wall Street amount to orders. Roett's memo also pointed to the fundamental issue of "whether or not the Mexican working class will accept a prolonged period of wage losses and diminished living standards." Although Roett was subsequently dropped as an adviser by Chase Manhattan, the program of deliberate immiseration of the working class is still being followed with a vengeance by the policymakers of U.S. imperialism. And now they are openly going after Mexico's oil revenues as well, as a prelude to demanding that PEMEX, the nationalized oil company, be privatized and opened to foreign investors (i.e., takeover). This imperialist assault must be resolutely opposed by the workers movement.

The impact of NAFTA on Mexico has been devastating. In the year since the "free trade" agreement went into effect, an estimated 475,000 jobs were lost in Mexico, more than two-thirds in manufacturing. In the state of Jalisco, where the PRI just lost the election, more than 600 businesses, including 185 factories, have closed since July. The peso crash

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Ruben R. Ramirez

Militant strike of over 5,000 workers, mostly women, at RCA Thomson maquiladora plant in Ciudad Juárez erupted after peso devaluation drastically cut real wages.

NYC Labor...

(continued from page 16)

a blood lust, and the blood being spilled is almost exclusively that of working people, the elderly and the poor.... The mayor calls the upheaval 'reality therapy.' In Vietnam, they called napalm 'soft ordnance'."

Under this budget of doom, Harlem Hospital will likely be gutted of its maternity facility and many preventive and diagnostic units. Over the last 20 years, eight hospitals in the area have closed. In 1993 alone, the infant mortality rate soared *more than 60 percent*, to 25.2 per thousand births. Yet Giuliani arrogantly complains, "New York has too many hospital beds."

He also rails that "hospitals aren't a job program." Yet Harlem has an unemployment rate of 35 percent. And with the disappearance of jobs in manufacturing, garment and construction, with New York City's productive base gutted by Wall Street brokers and real estate speculators, health care has become one of the few job "growth sectors," keeping tens of thousands of black, Hispanic and Asian workers afloat.

Also targeted for a whopping \$600 million cut are nearly 200,000 unionized city workers, who are being squeezed for "increased productivity" and threatened with a *10 percent pay cut* to fund their health benefits. This swindle is being peddled with the lying promise of "job security." Giuliani thundered, "You don't have a vested right to hold on to a government job." Already, over 15,000 city workers have lost their jobs dur-



Paraskevas/Newsday
Every night, dozens of families are forced to sleep on the floor of the only emergency center for the homeless left in NYC. Giuliani's "reality therapy" will throw tens of thousands more onto the street.

ing Rudy the Slasher's 14-month reign, including hundreds who serviced welfare recipients, AIDS patients and the homeless.

Now Giuliani is actually begging Pataki and the state legislature to appropriate *less* money for social services and higher education for next year, in order to cut back on the city's "matching fund" expenditures. In addition to decimating welfare, Pataki's proposed state budget calls for laying off 7,000 state workers, doubling up inmates in state prison cells and raising tuition at the City University (CUNY) and State University (SUNY) by at least \$1,000! This latter amounts

to a *racist purge* of higher education in New York, making a college diploma an impossible dream for tens of thousands of working-class and minority youth. With 32 percent of CUNY students already working full-time while going to school, Giuliani sneers that "it might not be so bad for students" to "learn a little civic responsibility" by working harder!

Mass transit is another target: the Transit Authority faces at least \$128 million in cuts. The TA has already shrunk its workforce by 3,000 since 1990 through attrition. Now the transit bosses intend to start handing out pink slips to subway cleaners and token-booth clerks, while threatening yet another hike in subway and bus fares from \$1.25 to at least \$1.50. Giuliani even wants to eliminate the transit subsidies which allow hundreds of thousands of schoolchildren to get to school.

Life in this city is mean and ugly and it's about to get more so. A storefront soup kitchen in Harlem which now feeds 550 people expects to see thousands more line up, while government funding to feed the hungry is slashed. And it's not just people living on the edge. A Queens housewife who voted for Giuliani bitterly complained about the elimination of day-care programs: "I know he thinks after-school programs are a typical New York luxury that the taxpayers have gotten used to. But these things are the backbone of life here. Without them, working families are just going to pack up and move out."

Giuliani can be defeated. He is despised by wide sectors of New York's population. While elected by a narrow margin on a racist "law and order" campaign, his social base for this kind of economic warfare is extremely small. When racist pig Ed Koch shut down Harlem's Sydenham Hospital, thousands took to the streets. In 1983, angry crowds drove Koch out of Harlem over racist harassment and abuse by the NYPD. In 1991, CUNY students tied up Wall Street and City Hall for days against the last round of budget cuts by black Democrat David Dinkins.

But faced with a dictatorial mayor who refuses to play pressure politics, the labor and black misleaders are caving in. Key is the understanding that *both* capitalist parties share the program of "downsizing" government, as the capitalist system throws ever more people on the streets. While the labor "leaders" grovel before "King Rudy," it's desperately necessary to forge a *class-struggle workers party* fighting to do away with this government of the rich, by the rich and for the rich.

Union Tops Knuckle Under to Cops' Candidate

Naturally, New York City's huge and trigger-happy police force won't lose a penny in the budget—in fact, the NYPD is the only part of city government that's getting an *increase*, to the tune of 7 percent. Meanwhile, the racists-in-blue are being armed with 9mm Glock semi-automatic handguns with 15-round clips. Cops with Glocks have turned "crime scenes" into a hail of bullets. Last week in the Bronx, cops "foiling a robbery in a bodega" fired off 170 bullets without a single shot being fired in return. In December, 18 cops fired 247 rounds during a running shootout with a gunman in Queens, killing a bystander as he left a nearby restaurant. The cops insisted the gunman killed the bystander, and the story would have washed except that Queens Congressman Gary Ackerman was eating in the same restaurant and demanded an investigation.

Giuliani was the cops' candidate in the 1993 elections, after whipping up a racist mob of armed police which laid siege to black mayor Dinkins' offices in City Hall the previous year. The cops greeted his move into Gracie Mansion with a police assault on the Nation of Islam mosque in Harlem and the killing of a Muslim youth in Brooklyn. The first six months of 1994 registered a 46 percent increase in police brutality complaints, and 1994 saw a *50 percent*



Sevulich/Daily News

Wall Street's kind of labor "leader": AFSCME District Council 37 chief Stanley Hill has for years enforced labor peace in the face of massive job losses and cutbacks. Here he offers hand to Rudy "the Slasher" Giuliani.

Mexico...

(continued from page 13)

and soaring interest rates will cause even more plant closures. While it will push workers to the wall and may provoke desperate strike actions, the economic crisis greatly weakens labor's clout. But there is one sector where production is strong, the *maquiladora* "free trade" plants, particularly along the northern border with the U.S.

We reported in our last issue how 5,600 workers, mostly young women, struck the RCA Thomson plant in Ciudad Juárez, opposite El Paso, Texas. Under police-state conditions, menaced by riot police and hundreds of thugs, this was a truly heroic strike. Although they did not achieve the original demand for a 30 percent increase (they won 13 percent), the Coalition of Workers won recognition by management, new union elections, full pay for the week on strike and no victimizations. This will certainly encourage further strike movements elsewhere in the *maquiladora* belt. The RCA strike, like an earlier work stoppage at TDK in the same city and the unrest in the many auto and parts plants in the region, shows the enormous potential for class struggle in Mexico today. But key is throwing off the stranglehold of the corporatist CTM "unions" which are directly inte-

grated into the capitalist ruling party and the elaborate "conciliation and arbitration" mechanisms of state control.

In a grotesque example of the role of the CTM, its decrepit (over 90 years old) leader Fidel Velázquez, after signing a vicious austerity pact with Zedillo, promised his capitalist masters that there would be no "disobedience" from the workers. And in the wake of the peso devaluation, the CTM boss called for workers to "donate" one day's pay from their starvation wages toward the foreign debt, outrageously saying this was "one way to show solidarity with the rich"! This obscene proposal fell flat, and as the RCA Thomson strikers showed, worker "disobedience" is already beginning. In its supplement, the Grupo Espartaquista put forward a program to "elect workers committees independent of the bourgeois parties, including Cárdenas' PRD—to break the corporatist shackles of the CTM (which acts as labor cops for the PRI) on the working class, to smash the wage ceilings and fight to triple the minimum wage and for a sliding scale of wages to combat inflation."

The EZLN and a host of popular-front leftists blame the present situation on the "neoliberal model" of unfettered global "free markets." But decades of "national development" under the PRI also left the masses in dire poverty. What's needed is *workers revolution*. And this means a

political fight, first and foremost to break with the "popular front" of class collaboration in and around the PRD. The EZLN calls upon Cárdenas to lead a "National Liberation Movement." Yet Cárdenas declared explicitly that Zedillo could head up the "government of national salvation" he has insistently called for (*El Financiero*, 3 February). Meanwhile, virtually the entire ex-Stalinist and pseudo-Trotskyist left has liquidated into the embrace of the PRD, including a number of "independent unions." The Mandeliste PRT, which supported Cárdenas for president, hardly exists anymore except for speakers at PRD rallies. And the "Militante" group, followers of British Labourite Ted Grant, calls itself the "Marxists of the PRD," hawking the bourgeois party's yellow flags at demonstrations. These fake socialists all lack the most basic *class* line.

Perhaps the most militant-sounding of the left groups is the MPI (Independent Proletarian Movement), a syndicalist group which leads the Mexico City bus drivers union SUTAU and is part of the leadership of the left wing of the "National Democratic Convention," a popular-front grouping linked to the EZLN. The government has accused them of financing the Zapatista rebels, a clear threat of future repression. In a January 5 march in Mexico City, the MPI

posed various correct demands, including for a break from the CTM and the Congress of Labor umbrella federation which is a "jail" for the workers. But in reality, the MPI's policy is for marching "a thousand times over" while *refusing* to mobilize the power of its proletarian base in genuine workers actions, which could unite it with auto workers and other sectors where there are independent unions.

What is required is a sharp break with the bourgeois parties and politicians, to forge a revolutionary workers party that fights for a workers and peasants government. Such a revolutionary government would completely repudiate the imperialist debt which is suffocating the working people. Against the inevitable imperialist reprisals, it is necessary to mobilize the workers and peasants in all of Latin America and to unite with the proletariat of the U.S. and Canada. International class struggle is key to combating the NAFTA rape of Mexico, as well as to defend the Cuban Revolution against attempts at capitalist restoration from within and without. We fight for a Socialist United States of Latin America and for workers revolution throughout the hemisphere. It is to this goal that the Grupo Espartaquista pledges itself in the struggle to reforge Trotsky's Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution. ■

jump—from 38 to 54—in the number of people killed by cops on the street or who “died in police custody.” One of the most recent victims was 29-year-old Anthony Baez, choked to death by a cop in the Bronx after a patrol car was hit by a stray pass in a street football game.

Giuliani was installed in City Hall on a racist, “revenge of the outer boroughs” white vote: without his 80,000 votes from Staten Island, he would have lost. He began his career as a henchman in Reagan’s Justice Department, and then as federal prosecutor in Manhattan played a role in the government’s vendetta against the Teamsters. The sneering former prosecutor’s current vendetta is against the people of New York. Giuliani has succeeded thus far because the working class, the one social force that can bring him down, has been kept quiet. The dismal misleaders who shackle the city’s most powerful unions—transit, teachers, hospital workers, Teamster and AFSCME city workers—are utterly beholden to the Democratic Party. The U.S. labor bureaucracy is so completely loyal to and dependent on the capitalist system that it won’t even lift a finger against the very gutting of the unions.

Dinkins, who pledged to the bankers that workers and minorities “would take it from me,” began the cuts in 1990. And the union tops took it. But not even Dinkins’ hiring of 6,000 more cops gave the rulers confidence that he could dish it out, given his close ties with the labor bureaucracy. Giuliani has open contempt for the union movement. When Hizzoner snapped his fingers and directed AFSCME District Council 37 chief Stanley Hill, UFT president Sandra Feldman and the rest of the public employee union heads to report to his mansion on the Upper East Side, they dutifully trooped up there. Hill remarked, “I know there is a tough budget out there. I know the Mayor is going to explain what’s out there, and we’re going to listen” (*New York Times*, 10 February).

The labor bureaucrats take their cues from the Democrats. Last December the overwhelmingly Democratic City Council vetoed Giuliani’s proposed budget changes, 47-to-1. But despite the fireworks and even a court challenge, they only juggled the figures to come up with the same amount of cutbacks. Giuliani gets away with budget ax murder because Republicans and Democrats and labor bureaucrats all accept the dictates of Wall Street. Liberals say that this is a “Gingrich-Pataki-Giuliani” budget, but Democrat Clinton should be right at the top of the list.

The union tops rarely even breathe the word “strike.” Hospital workers Local 1199 head Dennis Rivera is now calling for protests against the Medicaid cuts.

But instead of mobilizing the city labor movement for concerted action, this union leader who doubles as vice chairman of the New York State Democratic Party is trying to channel the workers’ anger into pleas to Albany to soften the blow. The unions, especially the powerhouse of NYC labor, the Transport Workers Union whose members run the subways and buses, can paralyze the center of U.S. finance capital. But that means going head on against the whole arsenal of no-strike laws and injunctions. When transit workers struck in 1980 in defiance

in debt-service payments, which will total 18 percent of the city’s tax revenue, almost \$5.5 billion, next year. This is more than all the expenditure on welfare and Medicaid combined. Moreover, New York is one of the few states that makes local government pick up a chunk (25 percent) of Medicaid costs. NYC’s Medicaid budget next year will be about \$2.5 billion—almost as much as the city’s entire \$2.7 billion estimated deficit.

This is simply the latest blast of the racist bipartisan crusade to abolish “welfare as we know it” and to “shrink

Union has unleashed...Newt Gingrich.

Gingrich, in the tradition of a long line of nativist populist demagogues, despises New York City because of its large immigrant, black and Jewish population. During the 1964 elections, Barry Goldwater, the ideological godfather of Reaganite conservatism, openly fantasized about New York City being sliced off America to drift out to sea. During the mid-’70s fiscal crisis, the head of the city’s Housing and Development Administration, Roger Starr, anticipated the cutthroat racist vision of New York that Giuliani represents today:

“We should not encourage people to stay where their job possibilities are daily becoming more remote. Stop the Puerto Ricans and the rural blacks from living in the city.... Our urban system is based on the theory of taking the peasant and turning him into an industrial worker. Now there are no industrial jobs. Why not keep him a peasant.”

—Robert Fitch, *The Assassination of New York* (Verso, 1993)

Starr’s remarks caused such outrage that he was forced out of his city post... whereupon he joined the *New York Times* editorial board, helping to shape elite “public opinion” for the ’80s.

Two decades down the road, New York is a lot closer to the wasteland Starr envisioned. Fitch recently wrote an article, “Explaining New York City’s Aberrant Economy” (*New Left Review*, September-October 1994), noting that “Truly, Gotham has become the Bermuda Triangle of lost jobs.” Some 600,000 manufacturing jobs were lost in the ’70s which have never been recovered. But this is part of a broader national and international pattern, and as we wrote at the time of the Dinkins cuts, “within the confines of New York City, and the capitalist system, there’s no solution to the problems this city faces” (*WV* No. 514, 16 November 1990):

“America, with its declining economy, is now paying for the world’s most expensive military establishment, and for the past decade and a half, the capitalist rulers have systematically starved America’s cities of funds. Koch got the banks to roll over the huge municipal debt, but now the whole financial system is in deep shit and they’re calling in the loans. It’s a blind alley, and the only way out is revolution that expropriates the entire capitalist ruling class.”

In order to carry out any defense of the unions, to fight for housing for the homeless and health care for the poor, to beat back racist cop terror, it is necessary to challenge—and sweep away—the profit system and its apparatus of state repression. The situation cries out for Bolsheviks everywhere. There are no reformist solutions to the mess that capitalism has made of New York. The way out is the expropriation of the capitalist class by a workers government. ■



1991 City University budget cuts sparked massive student protests in New York. Above: Student strikers join march of tens of thousands of city workers.

of the state’s Taylor Law, the TWU bureaucrats kept trying to “play by the rules”—setting up the workers for vicious post-strike fines and instilling the defeatist lesson that “strikes don’t pay.”

But under a class-struggle leadership, strike action by transit, hospital and other city workers could galvanize the deep anger of the working class and minority poor. What’s necessary is a struggle to forge a revolutionary workers party to lead the broader battle against the ruling class whose interests are served by both wings of the “property party” in capitalist America.

Cancel the Debt Through Workers Revolution!

Wall Street demands that Giuliani slash jobs and burn social services, in large part to pay for a mammoth increase

big government” through union-busting attacks on municipal labor. The rulers have decided to dispense with a whole layer of the inner-city population, heavily black and Hispanic, who used to make up the “reserve army of the unemployed.” Led by right-wing Republicans and me-too Democrats, they want to return to the untrammelled capitalism of the 1920s, which led to the stock market crash of 1929 and ended in the Great Depression. They want the “law” of supply and demand to hold sway, without any kind of Keynesian “interference.” The current capitalist offensive, both in Europe and the United States, is partly a result of counterrevolution in East Europe and the USSR. The bosses no longer feel the need to hold up the “welfare state” as an alternative to “Communism.” Thus the collapse of the Soviet

Los Angeles...

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campaign is in part a backlash against the multiracial upheaval of L.A.’s poor and dispossessed in 1992 sparked by the acquittal of the LAPD cops who viciously beat black motorist Rodney King. And the chauvinist hysteria whipped up over 187 to attack immigrants necessarily also targets blacks.

D.A. Garcetti has made a practice of refusing to prosecute racist attacks on Latinos and blacks. He refused to file charges against the Compton cop videotaped beating Felipe Soltero last July, and also the Lynwood grocer who in April chased down and shot 14-year-old Aldo Vega for allegedly stealing a box of cookies. Meanwhile, the fascist skinhead scum who are Masters’ spiritual kin are stepping up attacks on blacks and Hispanics throughout Southern California. The day before Masters shot Arce and Hillo, black musician Leonard Boles was stabbed on Ventura beach by some of these knife-wielding, swastika-tattooed vermin. Another two skinheads are to go on trial for the murder of black Hunt-

ington Beach resident Vernon Flournoy last September.

As if to drive home the futility of appeals to the capitalist state, Garcetti stonewalled members of the Mexican American Bar Association who met with him February 8 to plead for a grand jury investigation of Arce’s killing. And the Masters atrocity also tears the mask off the bourgeoisie’s drive for “gun control”—it’s meant to disarm minorities and the working class while leaving the forces of capitalist state repression, and their chosen extralegal hit squads, armed to the teeth.

“Anti-crime” vigilantism, which is spreading nationally, is racist violence encouraged and subsidized by the capitalist state. In Southern California, cops organize “neighborhood watch” patrols and give \$500 “rewards” for fingering “taggers.” In Texas—where Masters once got himself arrested for brandishing martial arts swords and taking a gun into a courthouse—a group called “Dead Serious Inc.” offers a \$5,000 cash payment “in the event you kill someone in accordance with Texas Penal Code 9.42 while they are in the process of committing a crime against you, your family or your property” (*New York*

Times, 11 February). This is a serious move toward old-fashioned American lynch law historically carried out by the nativist fascists of the KKK to terrorize blacks.

Los Angeles is not some rural backwater where KKK-style lynch mobs can roam freely. Latino workers in the L.A. area—from Justice for Janitors and *dry-walero* construction workers to truckers—have been in the forefront of fighting for the rights of workers in this historically open-shop town. Los Angeles is home to a vast multiracial working class with the power to drive these vigilante/fascist dregs off the streets. It’s the capitalist ruling class that holds the leash on these rabid attack dogs, and it will take workers revolution to sweep them all away. Mobilize L.A. labor to defend immigrants and minority youth! ■

Rutgers...

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the agents of the racist ruling class which decides what constitutes learning and what to read, write or think. The SYCs fight for open admissions and free tuition. We say: abolish the boards of

trustees! Universities should be run by students, workers and faculty. Education should be a right, not a privilege.

The campus is simply a microcosm of the rot and racist crap permeating society as a whole. Racist dogma cloaked in pseudo-scientific theory like the “Bell Curve” is a key weapon for a ruling class that no longer wants to spend money on educating poor black children because there are no jobs for which to train them. The racist exploiters only invest in what they can profit from. As Marxists, we in the Spartacus Youth Clubs fight for a society whose purpose is to maximize the potential of all.

The ideology of racial inferiority and a master race originated to justify American slavery. The systematic oppression of black people as a forcibly segregated race-color caste is fundamental to the American capitalist system in every sphere: in jobs, housing, education and even personal relations. To challenge racial oppression and class exploitation requires a thoroughgoing proletarian revolution. And that requires a revolutionary party which champions the causes of all the oppressed, the type of leadership the SYCs are dedicated to building. Join us! ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

Workers, Students, Minorities—All Under the Ax

NYC Labor: Smash Giuliani's War on the Poor



Hospital workers rally last September against massive budget cuts which will decimate half of city hospitals and wipe out up to 80,000 jobs in health care. WV Photo

Proving that capitalist politics in America's largest city is the continuation of war by other means, Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's Valentine's Day budget massacre will slash a staggering \$2.7 billion from the New York City budget next year. This comes on top of massive \$2 billion cuts in welfare and Medicaid by New York's newly elected Republican governor George Pataki in Albany. Not since the Great Depression, when New York became a vast poorhouse for immi-

For a Class-Struggle Workers Party!

grants and the unemployed, have the workers and poor of this city been subjected to such starvation cutbacks.

Giuliani's ax will fall most heavily on welfare and health care. At least 2 million New Yorkers rely on public assistance and food stamps to stay alive, barely, and many more depend on the

city's eleven municipal hospitals for health care. Combined with state and federal cuts, the new budget will slash the city hospital system's operations by one-third—\$1.2 billion out of \$3.7 billion. As entire hospitals, nursing homes and community clinics are forced to shut down, up to 80,000 health care industry

workers may be laid off.

Giuliani grotesquely calls this "reality therapy." But even important spokesmen for the ruling class such as the *New York Times* (15 February) objected to the mayor's budget, calling it "shock therapy" which would throw "the entire system into cardiac arrest." And *Newsday* columnist Sydney H. Schanberg added: "Pataki and Giuliani seem to have taken the budget-cutting to the realm of

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Racist Vigilante Murder in Los Angeles

LOS ANGELES—Around 1 a.m. on January 31, a white gunman shot down two youths in Sun Valley, killing 18-year-old Cesar Rene Arce with a shot in the back and seriously wounding 20-year-old David Hillo. Why? They were Latino and they were graffiti "taggers," spray-painting on a freeway pillar. To the gunman, William Andrew Masters II, who describes his victims with racial slurs, that meant they were fair game. The LAPD and District Attorney Gil Garcetti agreed, releasing Masters after a day and a half with *no charge!*

The killer boasted of carrying guns without a permit. If he had been black or Latino, the cops would have come down on him like a ton of bricks. Instead, authorities have considered charging Hillo, who survived Masters' attack—not only for "armed robbery,"

but under a bizarre California law, for the murder of his friend committed by Masters! This is *state-sanctioned racist terror*, and it has sparked a dangerous pro-vigilante, racist outpouring in the city.

Masters, a part-time bit actor, claimed he felt "threatened" by the youths when he wrote down their car license number and told them he would turn it in to police, resulting in an argument. He said he felt they were about to rob him, so he pulled out his .380 semiautomatic and shot them down as they tried to flee. Masters' flimsy cover story is as credible as this apparently compulsive liar's claim to be a Marine (he was kicked out after 41 days). But the cops proclaimed the word of this racist vigilante inherently "more compelling" than Hillo's, who told how Masters held

the gun to his head as he lay wounded on the pavement.

In fact, as Masters proudly explained, he regularly took one of his six guns and went out at midnight searching for "taggers" to confront: *he went looking for minority youth to kill.* Holding court for reporters and well-wishers after he was freed, the swaggering Masters called his victims "a couple of skinhead Mexicans" and blamed Arce's death on Arce's mother: "She murdered her son by being an irresponsible, uncaring parent" (*Los Angeles Times*, 4 February). With Arce's mother overcome by grief, his sister Lilia Arce replied, "It's [Masters'] mother's fault for making that kid so paranoid.... He's not a hero, he's a killer."

The psychopathic bigot Masters was

immediately hailed by talk show racists and other reactionaries. For a layer of white petty-bourgeois suburbanites, "tagger" is a code word for minority youth (in L.A., Latinos in particular) who are regarded as vermin to be exterminated. Sandi Webb, a councilwoman from the white enclave of Simi Valley, raved, "Kudos to William Masters for his vigilant anti-graffiti efforts" and declared him a "crime-fighting hero" (*San Francisco Examiner*, 12 February).

Racist terrorists have been emboldened by the passage of California's Prop. 187, the anti-immigrant initiative passed last November targeting especially Mexicans and Latin Americans. While 187 is tied up in the courts, it is having its intended effect on the ground. This immigrant-bashing

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