

NAFTA Starves Peasants, Workers



Espartero

Mexico Crash Made in U.S.A.

MEXICO CITY—For the second year in a row, the beginning of the year in Mexico was marked by a crisis that sent shock waves around the world. On New Year's Day 1994, Indian peasant insurgents of the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) rose up in the southern state of Chiapas, protesting, among other injustices, the inauguration of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). This was followed in April by the assassination of the presidential candidate of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), and in October the head of the perennial ruling party was killed. And although the PRI steamroller managed to "elect" the new president, Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León, with barely 50 percent of the vote in the August elections, the Zapatista rebels held on while peasant land takeovers spread through southern Mexico. All in all, 1994 was "a year to be forgotten" for the Mexican bourgeoisie and its imperialist patrons, who looked forward to 1995 with hopes of re-establishing "stability" so they could get on with the job of looting the country.

Instead, the inauguration of Zedillo at the beginning of December was quickly followed by a speculative attack on the overvalued peso that sent the national currency reeling and the Mexican stock market plunging. Between December 20 and the end of January, the peso lost up to half its value

Mexico City, January 5: Tens of thousands of workers march against capitalist austerity and government repression.

against the dollar on international markets (it has since recovered somewhat). Almost simultaneous with the peso crash there was a new flare-up of peasant struggle in Chiapas. And now, as the inflationary effects of the devastating devaluation reverberate through the economy, Mexican workers are beginning to take action to defend their hard-hit standard of living. On February 1, more than 5,000 workers went on strike at four RCA Thomson plants in Ciudad Juárez (opposite El Paso, Texas), the largest *maquiladora* (free trade zone) operation in the state of Chihuahua (see page 5). The overwhelmingly women workers demanded a 30 percent wage increase to make up for losses in purchasing power due to the devaluation.

The Mexican peso and stock market crash was all the more dramatic because the PRI regime of outgoing president Carlos Salinas de Gortari and his hand-picked successor Zedillo was supposed to be the model for export-oriented growth of "developing countries." Ever since the explosion of the Mexican "debt bomb" in 1982, PRI governments with their Harvard- and Yale-educated yuppie economists had imposed brutal austerity programs, slashing social services from health to education, driving down real wages by more than 40 percent (and the minimum wage by two-thirds), and opening up domestic markets to foreign imports. Governments throughout Latin America followed suit, clamoring

to join NAFTA. So when Mexico went bottom-up in mid-December, the so-called "tequila effect" shook markets from Buenos Aires to São Paulo. And then, when President Clinton couldn't get the U.S. Congress to go along with a \$40-billion bailout plan at the end of January, currencies as far away as Poland, Hong Kong, Thailand and the Philippines came under attack.

The Mexican crisis threatened to set off what one New York banker called a "global meltdown" of the capitalist financial system. With tens of billions of dollars in liquid capital shifting within minutes, the U.S. Federal Reserve, International Monetary Fund and Bank for International Settlements (BIS)—cornerstones of the international financial order—are no longer able to head off a full-scale panic by temporarily propping up

one or another currency. So with its back to the wall, the Clinton administration came up with a \$50-billion rescue package out of its own funds and by strong-arming the IMF and BIS to foot the rest of the bill. Washington's European imperialist rivals complained about not being consulted, although their real beef was that billions were being poured into the U.S. hinterland. For now "the markets"—i.e., imperialist bankers—are satisfied that their speculative investments have been secured, although they still want to get their hands on PEMEX, the Mexican state oil company. But the working masses and millions of poor people in Mexico, as well as a growing middle class, are seething.

Instead of being a ticket to "joining the First World," as Salinas had promised, NAFTA left Mexico defenseless in the face of speculators' depredations and imperialist greed. The crisis presages a new cycle of uncontrolled inflation

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Join the Campaign!

SAVE MUMIA ABU-JAMAL!

See Page Seven



Hundreds Come Out Against Nazi Provocation

Hitler-Lover David Irving, Foiled Again

BERKELEY, February 4—Some 400 protesters encircled Latimer Hall at the University of California's Berkeley campus last night, stopping an appearance by infamous Hitler-lover David Irving. While Irving tries to portray himself as a "historian," his obscene claims that Adolf Hitler never knew about the Holocaust have incited fascist terror gangs from Germany to Britain to North Amer-

ica. Last October, he and a pack of swastika-toting Nazis were run out of Berkeley by outraged anti-fascist protesters who responded to the Spartacus Youth Club's call to "Stop Hitler-Lover David Irving!" (see "Hundreds Rout Nazis in Berkeley," WV No. 609, 28 October 1994).

Attempting to reverse this victory against Nazism, the obscenely misnamed

"Berkeley Free Speech Coalition"—an outfit dominated by Islamic fundamentalists and whose supporters spew anti-Semitic filth—sought to bring Irving back to Berkeley. This effort had the backing of the UC Berkeley administration, which provided a room which is not normally available to student groups and also provided a crew of cops, many riot-equipped, to police the event.

Dressing up fascist terror and genocide in the robes of "academic respectability," they wanted to shove Irving and his Nazi gang down the throats of anti-fascist militants in the name of "free speech." Coming on the heels of the 50th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz death camp by the Red Army of the former Soviet Union—which focused attention on the unspeakable crimes of Hitler's Nazis—Irving's planned appearance was a deadly provocation against Jews, blacks, immigrants, socialists, gays and all the intended victims of fascist terror.

As a leaflet issued by the UC Berkeley SYC argued: "Were the gas chambers at Auschwitz, the torture experiments of Dr. Mengele expressions of 'free speech'? The fascists are not just right-wing ideologues with racist 'ideas.' They are paramilitary action squads whose program is to kill, culminating in genocide like that which was carried out by Hitler's Third Reich." In the U.S. the fascists are emboldened by the racist attacks on immigrants and black welfare mothers. And one of the leading exponents of this racist drive is California's Republican governor Pete Wilson, who also happens to be president of the University of California Board of Regents.



WV Photo

Wilson spearheaded California's Prop. 187 attack on immigrants, who are hideously exploited by his agribusiness buddies. Wilson's anti-black, anti-woman, anti-immigrant program opened the door Irving thought he could goose-step through. But he didn't get away with it. While Jewish student groups including Hillel held a silent candlelight vigil outside the meeting site with a long banner reading, "Remember the Holocaust—Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of Auschwitz," some 200 leftists surrounded the entrance to the meeting hall. A 50-strong Spartacist contingent marched up chanting, "David Irving, Nazi in a suit—Smash fascist terror!"

Irving's sponsors in the "Berkeley Free Speech Coalition" evidently had trouble getting into their own meeting. Today, an article in the San Francisco Chronicle headlined "Holocaust Denier Driven From UC." It was a damned good thing that Nazi apologist Irving was once again denied a platform to incite racist terror and recruit for more fascist gangs. ■



TROTSKY

American Communism and the Fight for Black Liberation

In the face of a bipartisan Clinton/Gingrich offensive aimed at eliminating welfare and gutting even the minimal gains of the civil rights movement, black and working people are paralyzed by the abysmal lack of a fighting leadership. In this Black History Month, it is appropriate to look back to the work of the early Communist Party which, under the impetus of the Russian Revolution, laid out a revolutionary strategy for



LENIN

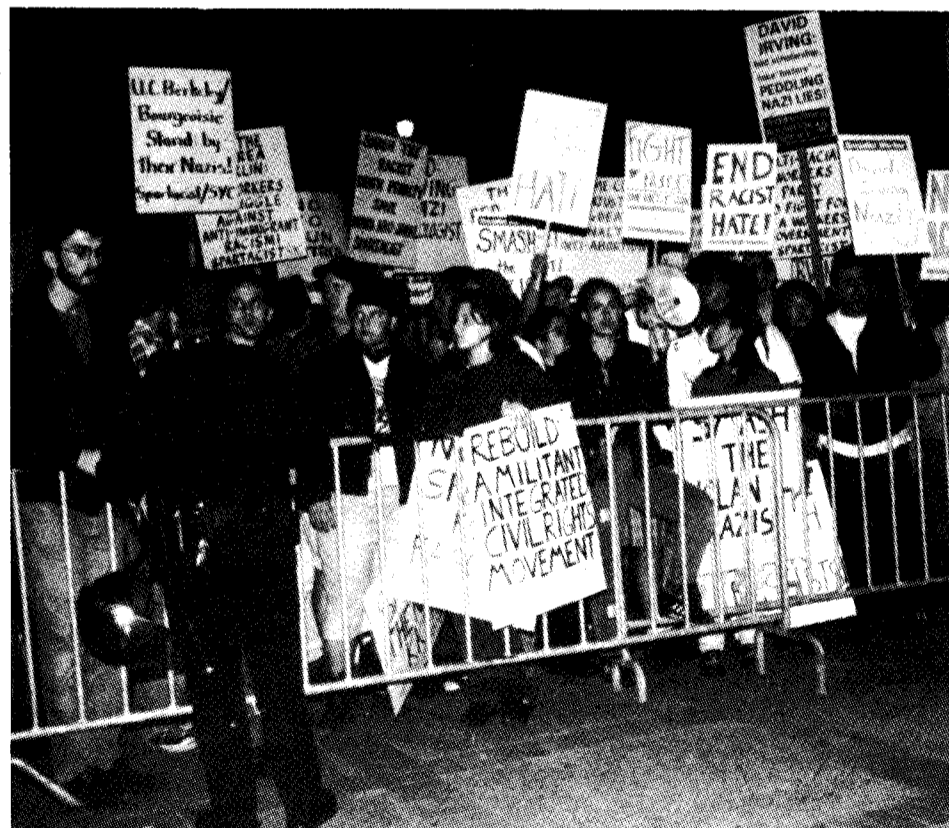
combatting black oppression in the U.S. In important respects, the following excerpt from the 1928 election platform of the Workers (Communist) Party prefigures our own program of revolutionary integrationism, for black liberation through socialist revolution. Later that year, Stalin imposed the call for an illusory "black nation" in the Deep South. The Stalinist degeneration of the Communist International led to the CP's embrace of the capitalist Democratic Party and betrayal of the cause of black emancipation.

American white imperialism oppresses in the most terrific way the ten million Negroes who constitute not less than one-tenth of the total population. White capitalist prejudices consider the Negroes a "lower race," the born servants of the lofty white masters. The racial caste system is a fundamental feature of the social, industrial and political organization of this country. The Communist Party declares that it considers itself not only the party of the working class generally but also the champion of the Negroes as an oppressed race, and especially the organizer of the Negro working-class elements. *The Communist Party is the party of the liberation of the Negro race from all white oppression.*

There is a "new Negro" in process of development. The social composition of the Negro race is changing. Formerly the Negro was the cotton farmer in the South and domestic help in the North. The industrialization of the South, the concentration of a new Negro working-class population in the big cities of the East and North, and the entrance of the Negroes into the basic industries on a mass scale have changed the whole social composition of the Negro race. *The appearance of a genuine Negro industrial proletariat creates an organizing force for the whole Negro race, furnishes a new working-class leadership to all Negro race movements, and strengthens immensely the fighting possibilities for the emancipation of the race....*

The Negro fled from the South, but what has he found in the North? He has found in the company town and industrial cities of the North and East a wage slavery virtually no better than the contract labor in the South. He has found crowded, unsanitary slums. He has exchanged the old segregation for a new segregation. He is doing the most dangerous, worst paid work in the steel, coal and packing industries. He has found the racial prejudices of a narrow, white labor aristocracy, which refuses to recognize the unskilled Negro worker as its equal. He has found the treachery of the bureaucracy of the A.F. of L. which refuses to organize the Negroes into trade unions. The lynchings of the South are replaced by the race riots of the East. The employing class deliberately arouses the racial hatred and prejudice of the white workers against the Negro workers with the sinister aim to split and divide the ranks of the working class, thereby maintaining the oppression and exploitation of white and Negro workers. What Marx said about the United States is still true: "Labor in a white skin cannot emancipate itself as long as a dark skin is branded." The Negro worker must learn to utilize to the fullest extent the possibilities created by modern capitalism for organization and struggle against wage slavery in alliance with the workers of other races.

—"National Platform of the Workers (Communist) Party" (May 1928)



WV Photo

Hundreds protest outside Berkeley meeting hall, February 3, stopping Nazi apologist David Irving's scheduled appearance.

WORKERS VANGUARD



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No. 616

10 February 1995

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Entrance to Nazi death camp at Auschwitz following liberation in January 1945 (left). Camp survivors with Red Army soldiers (right).

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The Auschwitz Commemoration

A Report

Last month saw the 50th anniversary of the Soviet Red Army's liberation of the Nazi death camp at Auschwitz. Between 1941 and 1945, more than two million Jews—together with Poles, Russians, communists, socialists and at least 20,000 Sinti and Roma (Gypsies)—were murdered in the gas chambers of this extermination factory, the ultimate embodiment of capitalist bestiality.

Lech Walesa and the capitalist government of Poland, who have "rehabilitated" the Polish fascists of World War II, marked the anniversary by hosting a hypocritical "commemoration" at Auschwitz on January 27. Many death-camp survivors and Jewish organizations boycotted this obscene spectacle and organized their own commemoration for the day before. Supporters of the International Communist League distributed a declaration in German, Polish, Russian and English (reprinted in WV No. 615, 27 January). We print below, in edited and abridged form, a report by Renate Dahlhaus of the Spartacist Workers Party of Germany (SpAD).

We issued an international statement on Auschwitz signed by the Spartakowska Grupa Polski (SGP), Spartacist/Moscow and the Spartacist Workers Party of Germany. Then we went to Auschwitz for the 50th anniversary commemoration, to put this statement in the hands of those who wanted to pay tribute to the victims. Our team was three comrades, from the SGP, the SpAD and the Spartacist Youth. Comrades in Warsaw also distributed statements at the Jewish Theater to people leaving by bus for the commemoration.

We didn't go to Auschwitz for the people who turned the event into a TV extravaganza, who tried to make it some sort of imperialist reconciliation among the war criminals. Among the "honored guests" was Roman Herzog, president of the German Fourth Reich, the self-described legal continuator of Hitler's Third Reich. Grotesquely, there was even an SS doctor, who was supposed to "expose the Auschwitz lie" by taking people around and explaining: This is where I carried out my selection of individuals; here I decided who was to die, and who was to be available for "experiments." He wasn't present during the Jewish commemoration, which had been put off limits for him. But in the late afternoon he was going around Auschwitz-Birkenau, surrounded by 50 journalists who duly recorded his "evidence."

Our bus traveling to the site was stuck for two hours in a traffic jam in Krakow. The entire city was closed off because



International Communist League statement issued in German, Polish, English and Russian for 50th anniversary of Red Army liberation of Auschwitz.

Walesa was speaking at the Citadel at the same time. In his speech, he failed to even once mention the Holocaust or the word "Jew." The anarchists demonstrated against Walesa there, but the press naturally ignored this.

At the entrance, we made the acquaintance of a Polish former prisoner who explained how the camp was laid out. He was standing on the road, unable to go further because he was exhausted. It was he who made sure we could distribute our statement there on the main road to the memorial ceremonies. He gave our leaflets to all the museum employees and the Polish police, explaining to them in Polish that this group of three Trotskyists had the right to be there. This meant we were taken directly under the protection of the former prisoners, and from then on we had no problems distributing our statement.

We were the only organization to distribute material. From the start, camp survivors agreed with our headline, "The Red Army Liberated Auschwitz!" Many, especially old people, expressed gratitude to us for making this basic point, which they said was not mentioned at all in the proceedings. People asked, "Then why isn't the Russian government here?" We explained that it isn't the Red Army anymore, there is no more Soviet Union. But there are still communists who stick by the ideals of the October Revolution and fight on.

There were some very moving scenes. Two Poles who the Nazis used as forced laborers came up to us and said, "So, you're Germans. I spent three years in Dessau, in Dresden, Köln and Aachen—that's where I learned German." We also distributed statements to families of Roma who said, "We learned German here in Birkenau in the 'Gypsy camp.'" Some of the Polish and other prisoners

comrades who were unable to attend because they were ill.

When they asked us, "International Communist League, what does that mean?" and I answered that we are Trotskyists, there were various reactions. There was an old Jewish man from New York who immediately began to weep when I told him we were Trotskyists. He said he'd been in a camp with Trotskyists for 12 years, and all of them had been shot.

On the second day, a Polish woman ran to the police and said, you've got to ban this communist propaganda. The police refused to kick us out. Then she went to the soldiers. The soldiers refused. Afterwards, a Polish journalist came to us and asked whether we were aware of this. He felt it was wrong that the Polish government hadn't said that the Polish government and army of the time also bore responsibility for the annihilation of the Jews.

When Walesa spoke at the official government "commemoration," prisoners came out and told us that it was unbearable to have this man speak. "We've had it up to here," they said, "We don't want to hear him anymore." At one point we had a leaflet in Polish handed to us that attacked the concordat between Pope Pius XII and Hitler. It was passed out by a former prisoner in protest against the Catholic church, which in league with Walesa is today seeking to turn Poland into an anti-Semitic, anti-woman theocracy.

Everywhere we met with a positive response. Our statement in Russian, Polish, German, English was a powerful sign of our internationalist position. ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

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S.F. Press Strike:

Bitter Fruits of a Sellout

WORKERS VANGUARD

Defend Teamster Jobs! Total Amnesty for All Strikers!

S.F. Press Bosses Hammer Newspaper Unions

San Francisco, November 21. The press bosses of the SF Chronicle and Examiner have waged a relentless campaign of harassment and intimidation against unionized workers. After eleven days on strike, the union tops caved in on the key issue of Teamster jobs—allowing them to be eliminated wholesale through “attrition”—and failed to provide amnesty for strike militants. Yet at the time, leaders of the Conference of Newspaper Unions (CNU) crowed that they had won a “victory.” In this they were joined by a host of fake socialists, who acted as eager press agents for the labor tops to help push through the sellout.

WV opposed sellout of SF newspaper strike, while reformists (at right) were press agents for the bureaucrats.

SAN FRANCISCO—In the aftermath of last November’s newspaper strike, the press bosses of the SF Chronicle and Examiner have waged a relentless campaign of harassment and intimidation against unionized workers. After eleven days on strike, the union tops caved in on the key issue of Teamster jobs—allowing them to be eliminated wholesale through “attrition”—and failed to provide amnesty for strike militants. Yet at the time, leaders of the Conference of Newspaper Unions (CNU) crowed that they had won a “victory.” In this they were joined by a host of fake socialists, who acted as eager press agents for the labor tops to help push through the sellout.

Now newspaper workers are tasting the bitter fruits of this “victory.” For weeks after the settlement, the company refused to recall the majority of Teamster drivers. By late January more than 70 full-time jobs had been cut. According to the president of Web Pressmen Local 4, some 25 percent of pressmen jobs have been eliminated, putting journeymen with as much as seven years seniority back to the sub line where they are reduced to filling in “as needed.” Seven pressmen were fired for strike activity, while harassment and speedup have already driven a number of older workers to early retirement. This is what the company means by “attrition.”

Altogether, some 50 workers have been suspended, while others have been dragged through the bosses’ courts. The phony “amnesty” agreement excludes any striker convicted of a felony or who “committed acts with the intent to cause bodily harm or serious property damage.” Several of the 35 strikers arrested on the picket lines, including pressman Pat Alderman and Teamster driver Lee Wyatt, still face felony charges. Charges against pressman Ed Rosario were finally dropped on January 11. Bay Area labor must come to the defense of the victimized union brothers. Drop all the charges! Reinstate all the strikers now!

Last November, *Workers Vanguard* called to “Mobilize S.F. Labor to Win the Newspaper Strike! For Mass Pickets

Who Told the Truth

to Shut Down *Chronicle/Examiner!*” Immediately after the sellout we told the bitter truth: “What the union tops hailed as a ‘victory’ is shaping up as a rout for the newspaper unions.” We warned that the very existence of the unions depends on “the kind of no-holds-barred class struggle that built them,” but that this could not happen under the current leadership (“S.F. Press Bosses Hammer Newspaper Unions,” WV No. 611, 25 November 1994).

The bosses’ union-busting provocations are a direct result of the bureaucrats’ rush to call off the strike at any cost. The union misleaders disowned the militancy of the ranks, and looked instead to Mayor (and former police chief) Frank Jordan to get them off the

out of the Socialist Workers Party in the early 1980s, Socialist Action provided goons to help bureaucrats prevent striking Greyhound drivers from stopping scab buses.

The prize for cynicism goes to the *Militant Printer*, issued by one Fred Ferguson, a self-styled leftist in BATU Local 21. At the ratification meeting, he told workers to “Vote yes but hold your nose.” His 23 November issue claimed the walkout—in which the union tops never shut down production at the key Army Street printing plant—was “one of the most militant and effective strikes in a generation.” In fact, the workers’ militancy was betrayed by the union tops with Ferguson’s support. Now he calls to “Abrogate the phony signed ‘agree-



Line of cops protects scab trucks at Army Street printing plant during November 1994 strike. Union tops never shut down production at this key plant.

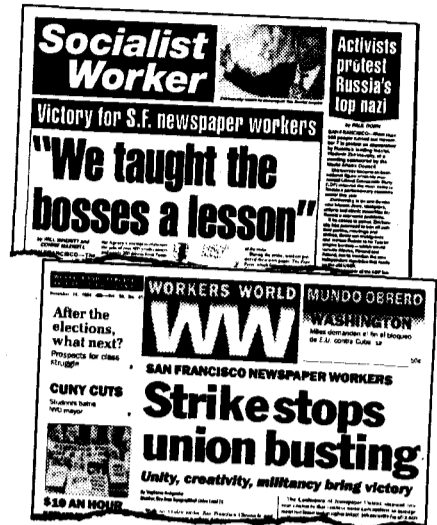
hook and end the strike through “mediation.” Now CNU officials are busy complaining about the company’s broken “promises.”

Assisting this snow job are assorted fake-left organizations who rushed into print to cheer—and now attempt to alibi—the bureaucrats’ sellout. The reformist Communist Party’s *People’s Weekly World* (19 November 1994) proclaimed, “S.F. Newspaper Unions Gain from New Pact.” The International Socialist Organization’s *Socialist Worker* (18 November 1994) echoed: “Victory for S.F. Newspaper Workers—‘We Taught the Bosses a Lesson.’” *Workers World* (24 November 1994) headlined, “Strike Stops Union Busting—Unity, Creativity, Militancy Bring Victory.” Not until a month later did *Workers World* admit “the struggle isn’t over”—only to laud a “support rally” the Labor Council tops called on December 19 to blow off steam.

Socialist Action (December 1994) ran an article by Paul Colvin, a member of the BATU (Typographers) Local 21 Executive Board, under the plaintive headline “Why Are We Losing a Strike We Thought We Won?” But during the strike, when it counted, Colvin’s full-page article in the November *Socialist Action* contained not a single criticism of the labor bureaucrats. Last July, they wrote glowingly of the labor tops’ “corporate campaign” strategy to beg corporate advertisers to pressure the newspaper owners. *Socialist Action* has always acted as waterboys for the union bureaucrats: just after being chucked

ments”—which he was so eager to sign, knowing they were a betrayal! A truly gross attempt at a cover-up.

Trailing the CNU bureaucrats right into City Hall, Ferguson sells the lie that the position of Mayor Jordan was to “balance between the two major contending forces in the strike,” the workers and the capitalists. This view of the bourgeois state as somehow “neutral” is at the core of illusions in the possibility of reforming capitalism.



From SF Labor Council chief Walter Johnson to CNU president Doug Cuthbertson and more, the labor tops rely on the intervention of Mayor Jordan and the good graces of the capitalist government’s National Labor Relations Board. Meanwhile, most of the “left” looks to so-called militants in the CNU leadership like Teamster Local 921 secretary-treasurer Andy Cirkelis, one of those centrally responsible for getting the sellout through. Shortly after the strike, when the CNU tops declared a “deadline” for the company to comply with the contract, Cirkelis said: “We cannot go past December 7.... Pearl Harbor Day, a day of infamy and treachery. That’s our deadline” (*New Free Press*, 1-7 December 1994). Not only did this “deadline” come and go with nothing more than a rally to blow off steam, but this despicable Japan-bashing is a poison which undermines labor’s cause and feeds the racist anti-immigrant frenzy in California whipped up around Proposition 187.

As we wrote in WV No. 611: “To really fight back and win requires a leadership that is imbued with the understanding that Frank Jordan, the cops and courts are not any ‘friends of labor’; that knows that real labor solidarity means labor action based on the old Wobbly slogan of ‘an injury to one is an injury to all’; that understands that if labor is to win it must champion the rights of all the oppressed.” Under such a leadership, workers will not only be able to win some strikes for a change, but will arm themselves to forge a revolutionary workers party and take on the entire capitalist system of exploitation, racism and union-busting. ■

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Labor's Gotta Play Hardball to Win!

Maquiladora Workers Strike RCA Thomson

FEBRUARY 7—For the past week, 5,600 workers at four RCA Thomson plants in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico have been on strike demanding compensation for the loss in purchasing power of their starvation wages due to the drastic devaluation of the peso. These courageous workers should receive solidarity in *action* from unionists in the U.S. and Mexico.

The walkout began on January 31, in defiance of the pro-government, pro-company bureaucrats of the corporatist Mexican Labor Federation (CTM). The workers, mostly young women, staged what a company spokesman called a "sit-down protest" on the first shift, then moved outside and blockaded the main street in the Bermúdez Industrial Park, a *maquiladora* (free-trade) complex which includes some 50 plants producing for the U.S. market. That afternoon they were joined by the second shift, as well as by foremen. Two days into the strike, workers blocked the entrance of a fifth Thomson plant in the Juárez Nuevo area.

This is the same RCA factory where in 1986 one of the first strikes in the *maquila* industry took place (see "Class Struggle in the Global Sweatshop," *Women and Revolution* No. 34, Spring 1988). The plant manager is the brother of Chihuahua state governor Francisco Barrio. The current strike quickly reverberated in the U.S., where RCA final assembly plants employing 2,400 workers in Indiana and North Carolina were quickly forced to close, as they ran out of the TV chassis from Mexico. RCA is owned by the French consumer electronics company Thomson.

The collapse of the peso has meant an instant wage cut of at least 40 percent for the Juárez workers, while the company sells in dollars and is reaping windfall profits. Wages were already at their lowest level in two decades, with a base rate of 114 new pesos per six-day week, which was about \$35. After the devaluation, this fell to \$19—a wage on which it is impossible to survive. Strikers demanded a 30 percent raise.

Forming a Coalition of Workers, the strikers are demanding that the company labor relations chief be fired and the hated local CTM chief Cruz Mendez ousted. As strikers assembled this morning, some 200 CTM goons, acting in concert with the company, menaced them at the gate. As we go to press, strikers have re-entered the plant and are at their workplaces but refusing to work, while the state CTM has taken over negotiations at the government arbitration board.

Conditions in the industrial park are like a police state. "It is difficult to strike here," one worker told WV, but "hunger makes people do it." If the Ciudad Juárez workers are joined by the unionized RCA Thomson workers in Indiana, together they can bring the company to its knees.

The possibility for sharp class struggle that spans



Ruben R. Ramirez

Strikers mass outside of RCA Thomson plant in Ciudad Juárez, February 2.

the border is manifest. This strike is a key opportunity for class-conscious workers in Mexico and the U.S. to wage an internationalist fight against the capitalists' NAFTA "free trade" assault on the Mexican workers.

L.A. Teamsters Fight Railyard Lockout

LOS ANGELES—Workers at the Santa Fe railroad yard here were stunned by the announcement in early January that the entire workforce of 215 was being locked out. The facility in Commerce, California, where freight containers are transferred on and off rail cars for trucking to the nearby ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles, was operated for Santa Fe by an outfit called ITS, the largest intermodal operator in the U.S. This yard was the only unionized yard in the company nationally.

The workers, members of Teamsters Locals 208 and 63, were summarily fired on January 13 as a new operator, Parsec, took over the yard for the railroad. Parsec started busing in scabs for 12-hour shifts. The workers told WV that thousands of union rail, truck and port jobs have been lost in recent years. One Teamster warned that "the longshoremen will be next." Indeed, the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) has already been hit by wholesale job cuts, as when Southern Pacific fired all the ILWU members at its intermodal yard in Carson three years ago. Across the street from Santa Fe in Commerce, the Union Pacific facility is also non-union.

It was at this same Santa Fe yard that Ruderis Lazo, an active member of the Latino American Truckers Association (LATA), was brutally beaten by the hated

railroad police last September. In a frame-up designed to cover the cop assault, Lazo was recently convicted of "interfering with an officer" and fined. Phony assault charges didn't stick. Last fall, LATA truckers held protest actions at the ports against the victimization of Ruderis Lazo and the anti-immigrant Proposition 187.

When they were fired, the Santa Fe Teamsters took up picket signs and angrily demanded that the union sanction a strike. But their locals are run by the "New Teamsters," supporters of International president Ron Carey and the Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU). Installed in office in a government-run election after years of dragging the union through the capitalist courts, these Labor Department "democrats" are there to frustrate a class-struggle fight to defend union jobs. They are aiding the bosses' decades-long vendetta to cripple the enormous power of the Teamsters union.

The TDU bureaucrats of Locals 208 and 63 refuse to sanction a strike, instead setting up an "informational" picket line at a single gate, allowing trucks to roll in and out unimpeded. But the picket line is the battle line of class struggle—the only "information" scabs need is that crossing a picket line is dangerous to their health! Real picket lines mean mobilizing the power of labor to *stop* scabs, and demanding that rail workers, longshoremen, Teamsters and LATA truckers defy Taft-Hartley prohibitions on "secondary boycotts" and *refuse to handle* containers from the struck yard.

The Carey/TDU crew are so detested that a lot of L.A. Teamsters are nostalgic for the corrupt "old guard" regime. Now lawyer Jimmy Hoffa Jr. is trying to get into the act to advance his campaign for union president, visiting the picket line where he glad-handed the sheriffs assigned to get the scabs in and out. It was the "old guard" that allowed ITS to rip up the Master Freight Agreement in 1990, splitting the Teamsters at Santa Fe from the national contract. In the four years that ITS operated the yard, two workers were killed.

Workers in the transportation corridor along Alameda Avenue between downtown L.A. and the huge Los Angeles/Long Beach port complex know they have enormous economic power. That's why every transport strike here runs hard up against the bosses' anti-labor laws, their courts and cops. During the national Teamster strike last year, Jesse Acuna, who once worked at the Santa Fe yard, was jailed for five years for courageously defending his union picket line. All L.A. labor must demand: Free Jesse Acuna!

Both wings of the bureaucracy have sought to subvert Teamster power at every turn. They have chained the union to one or another of the capitalist parties, which are carrying out an all-sided assault on labor, blacks, immigrants and the poor. Instead, what's needed is a fighting workers party and a leadership of labor with a program to wage sharp, integrated labor battles, uniting all the transportation and waterfront unions and drawing in the ghettos and barrios in a solid front of class struggle. *For a drive to organize the unorganized up and down the Alameda corridor!* ■

S.F. Cops Stage Gestapo Raid on AIDS Benefit

SAN FRANCISCO—At about 4 a.m. on New Year's Day, 40 or more cops, including 17 state Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) board agents, burst into a private benefit party for Visual AID, a local AIDS charity. They assaulted the doorman and coat attendant, herded up to 800 people into the night, arrested eleven and brutally beat several, while sneering about "AIDS-infected faggots." Cops used a potentially lethal chokehold to knock out one man who demanded to see their hidden badges—then arrested him (*San Francisco Bay Times*, 12 January). The cops reportedly seized over \$1,700 in cash as well as personal stereo gear, and illegally searched living quarters and computer files.

SF police chief Anthony Ribera tried to paint this terrorist rampage as a "routine response" to an "illegal nightclub" where an entry fee is charged and alcohol is on sale. But numerous eyewitnesses have exposed these lies—the party was invitation only, no alcohol was served, and only voluntary donations were collected for Visual AID, a non-profit organization that helps professional artists suffering from AIDS and HIV-related illnesses. The organizer of the party,

Terence Alan, who lives at the site and whose lover died of AIDS, repeatedly contacted police before the event and was told he needed no permits—as police captain Mike Yalon later admitted. A growing outcry forced police to drop all the fake "charges" against those arrested.

The massive cop mobilization—including eleven ABC officers shipped in from Sacramento for New Year's Eve—stinks of high-level intrigue. Sergeant John Haggett (previously cited *17 times* for violence and racist harassment, according to the ACLU) spiced up his lying police report with lurid and irrelevant claims of "numerous acts of oral copulation" and "sodomy," making clear the raid was premeditated, motivated by blatant anti-gay bigotry. It's part of the Clinton/Gingrich capitalist reaction targeting immigrants, minorities, welfare mothers, the homeless, gays, youth, you name it—anyone who's vulnerable.

On Christmas Day, taking their cue from the recently passed anti-immigrant Proposition 187, SF cops attacked Latino day laborers on the street in the Mission District and hauled off 13 men to be beaten in the district's new police station. "The cell was already bloody,"

recalled one victim, recounting his own beating and jailing. "I was not the first" (*San Francisco Bay Guardian*, 25 January). Finally released after midnight, three victims had to go straight to SF General Hospital. A police spokesman went out of his way to make it clear this was a conscious act of racist anti-immigrant terrorism. At a meeting with outraged day laborers, he belittled the beatings and waved the threat of INS deportation: "You are in this country illegally. The INS can come and take you away whenever they want." Labor must fight for *full citizenship rights for all immigrants—organize the unorganized!*

On January 11, some 150 demonstrators held a protest march from the site of the New Year's Eve AIDS benefit to the Hall of Justice, where they filed complaints and appeared before the police commission. A class-action lawsuit is being planned, while the raid has been denounced by the ACLU and gay rights leaders. But the fact is, gays are increasingly becoming targets for violence in this supposed "liberal" mecca—last October a gay man was shot in the chest for walking hand in hand with his lover on the street in San Francisco. Con-

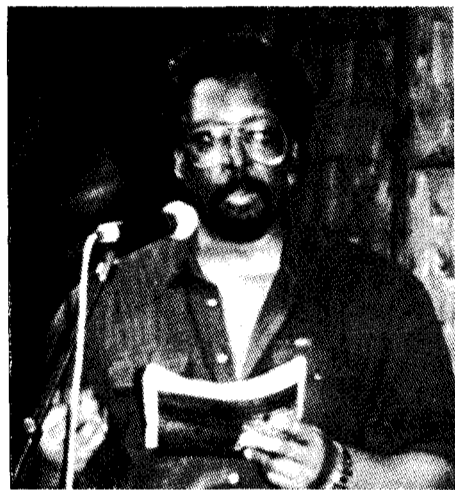
tingents of cops in the city's annual gay pride day march, liberals on the Board of Supervisors, the toothless, pathetic "Office of Citizen Complaints" serve only as a fig leaf for a viciously hostile capitalist state apparatus.

SF Democratic mayor Frank Jordan is notorious for a brutal police sweep of the gay Castro district in October 1989 when he was police chief. As mayor, he's made his name by harassing the homeless and those who try to feed them. "Food Not Bombs" activist Keith McHenry faces an ongoing vendetta run from the mayor's office. (McHenry's next court date is February 19.) And lately Jordan's cops have been raiding and shutting down South of Market nightclubs, targeting especially minority youth.

The same cops worked overtime in recent months busting union picket lines and protecting scabs against striking newspaper and hotel workers. The time is long overdue for the social power of labor to be brought to bear in hard class struggle. That's the only force that will back off the strikebreaking, racist bigots in blue, on the road to socialist revolution to sweep them and their criminal masters away for good. ■

Class-War Prisoners and Capitalist Repression

With the victory of right-wing pro-death penalty forces in the November elections, the campaign to save the life of death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal has become increasingly urgent. In this context, the Partisan Defense Committee's annual Holiday Appeal fund-raisers for class-war prisoners were particularly important. Benefits were held in December in Atlanta, Chicago, New York and the San Francisco Bay Area. The benefit in Chicago recorded the highest turnout there ever, some 110 people, and raised over \$3,000 for the 17 prisoners who receive regular



WV Photo

SL spokesman Ed Kartsen

"The fight to defend the class-war prisoners is a fight against the entire system of capitalist government repression."

PDC stipends. The more than 100 people who turned out for the Bay Area benefit, held at the ILWU Local 6 union hall in Oakland, were particularly drawn to a videotape of the demonstration which routed Hitler-lover David Irving at Berkeley last October.

In New York, some 175 people, including AFSCME, Teamsters and TWU members, turned out for the December 9 benefit. A featured guest speaker was James Frazier, a black NYC transit worker who is the victim of a police frame-up after having his eye blown out by the cops. As we reported last issue, Brother Frazier faces trial beginning February 8 (see "All-Out to

Defend James Frazier!" WV No. 615, 27 January). Speaking for the Spartacist League was comrade Ed Kartsen, who emphasized the link between defense of class-war prisoners and the fight to mobilize workers and the oppressed in struggle against the capitalist system of racist injustice. Comrade Kartsen's speech is reprinted below in slightly edited form.

* * *

This government, which is a government of Wall Street, a government of the multinational corporations, protects the system of racism and exploitation. Their courts and their cops are the tools for conducting a war on the black community, on the Hispanic community, and on the labor movement. The recent acquittal of the cops responsible for the brutal murder of Ernest Sayon in Staten Island is one clear example of this system of oppression.

Mumia Abu-Jamal sits on death row for his political beliefs because he is a consistent and determined fighter for black liberation. Former Black Panther leader Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt) has been locked up for 24 years in California for a crime the government knows that he could not have committed.

Jerry Dale Lowe is in jail because he is a militant defender of the United Mine Workers picket line. And there's brother James Frazier, a transit worker who faces prison because he *survived* a brutal, deadly police assault.

These are just some of the victims of the rule of the exploiters. And the list of victims mounts every day.

The politics of government repression in this country are the product of an entire history of lynch-mob terror and strike-breaking, overseen by both Democrats and Republicans. The primary thrust of this right-wing capitalist campaign today is anti-black, anti-immigrant, anti-sex, anti-labor. The themes that they use in order to popularize this campaign are "war on crime," "war on drugs," the fight to "protect" American jobs, "family values," the fight against inflation.

But who's responsible for the conditions of poverty which fuel crime, hopelessness, drug addiction and broken families? Who's responsible for raising prices and taxes in order to pass on the

price of the continued military buildup? Who's responsible for driving down wages and promoting unemployment?

It's not blacks and Hispanic people. It's not immigrants. It's not working people. It's not welfare mothers. It's the ruling class. This extremely small part of the population appropriates all of the wealth of working people. This small class preserves their enormous power and their political rule by keeping all the other sections of society at each others' throat. As long as they can maintain that condition, they can preserve their conditions of privilege. Their ideologues develop political campaigns which focus not on the crimes of capitalism but on the victims of capitalism.

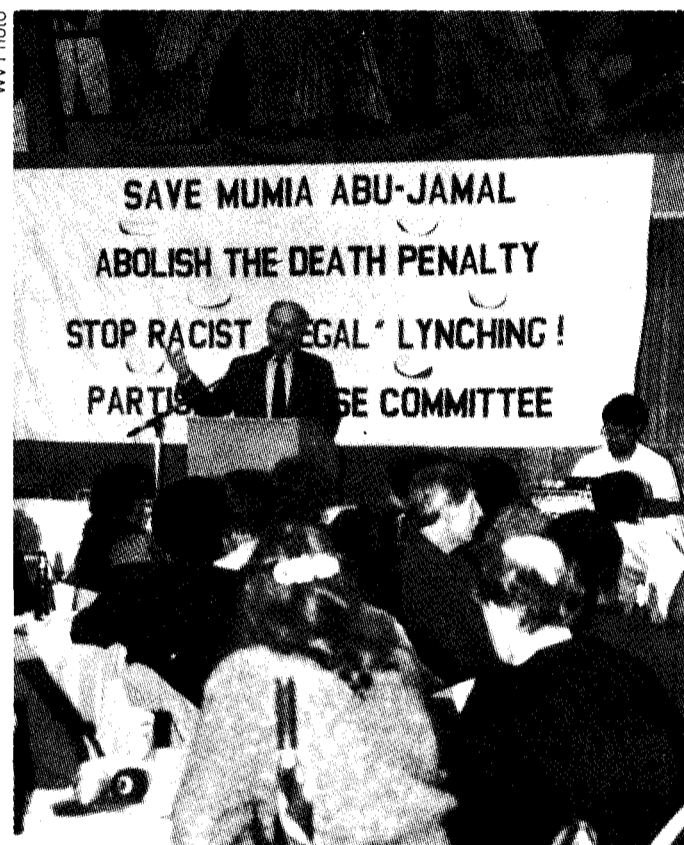
This government seeks to destroy any force they see as a threat, as they did

187 in California.

We support the building of a leadership that will promote class solidarity between men and women, between young workers and more senior workers, a solidarity that is premised on a struggle against all forms of capitalist oppression. What we need is a leadership that will declare uncompromising war on the politics of the bourgeoisie! One that will answer the so-called "war on crime" with the demand to end the police war against the black community, and against the ghettos and barrios throughout this country. One that will answer the "war on crime" with the demand for jobs and decent living conditions for all, and an end to discrimination in jobs, housing and schools.

What we need is a leadership that will answer the anti-immigrant bigots with the demand for full citizenship rights for *all* immigrants, an end to deportations and INS terror and "English only" laws! One that will answer these anti-sex Moral so-called Majority people with the call for free abortion on demand and full democratic rights for homosexuals, for government out of the bedroom, and for 24-hour day care. One that will put on

WV Photo



Death penalty abolitionist Robert Bryan speaks at PDC holiday appeal benefit at ILWU Local 6 union hall in Oakland, December 3.

through the FBI's COINTELPRO program. They use manipulation and lies. They use legal harassment and extralegal terror against the labor movement.

The fight to defend the class-war prisoners is a fight against the entire system of capitalist government repression. It will take a determined class struggle on the part of working people in order to free and save class-war prisoners. Latino trade unionists in L.A. have already raised the demand to free Geronimo Pratt. They've shown the way for unions throughout this country.

Some elements of the labor movement have demonstrated, as represented by some of the people here tonight, their determination for organized labor to take up the cause of class-war prisoners. But there are enormously powerful sections of labor that remain passive due to the betrayals of the labor misleadership, of the labor lieutenants of capital, who betray the masses of workers through class collaboration, who support cops being part of the labor movement, who push national chauvinism, promoting racist policies which sabotage working-class solidarity.

The Spartacist League works to advance the struggle to oust these agents of capitalism in the labor movement and replace them with a class-conscious, militant working-class leadership. We work to build a labor leadership that will destroy the racist barrier that stands between black and white workers. We fight as well to destroy the chauvinist bigotry expressed in anti-immigrant Proposition

the banners of the strikes and struggles of working people around this country the demand that the life of Mumia Abu-Jamal be saved, that Geronimo Pratt and Jerry Dale Lowe be liberated from their persecution, and that the persecution of people like James Frazier be ended.

What we need is a leadership that will answer this capitalist war on labor with a fighting labor movement that will stop union-busting, organize the unorganized sections of labor, mobilize to stop the racist terrorists in and out of uniform—the Nazis, the skinheads and the Ku Klux Klan! One that fights for a workers government that will take industry away from the incompetent, corrupt capitalists and rebuild this economy on the basis of socialist planning.

The Spartacist League seeks to transform the working class into a class-conscious force by infusing it with the awareness of the real situation, by educating it in the historic lessons of the class struggle, by strengthening it in ever-deeper struggles, by destroying illusions and backwardness, by reinforcing its revolutionary will and self-confidence. As part of the international revolutionary movement, we are committed to the task of building a party which will lead the working class in the victory of socialist revolution in this country!

We urge you to read our literature, study our program and join us! Free all class-war prisoners! Finish the Civil War! ■

JUST OUT!

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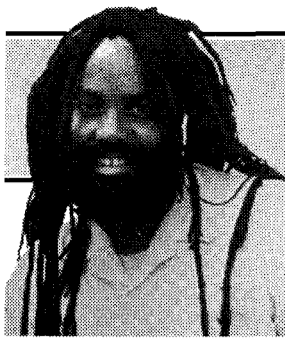
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SOUTH AFRICA POWDER KEG

For Black Proletarian Power

Pseudo-Science in the Service of Racism
The "Bell Curve" and Genocide U.S.A. SEE PAGE 24

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Join the Campaign to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal!

Protests from Brazil, South Africa, Germany

FEBRUARY 7—Faced with an escalating state offensive to shove ever more victims into this country's execution chambers, opponents of the barbaric death penalty around the world are rallying to the campaign to save the life of political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal in Pennsylvania. Jamal's case is becoming the focus of opposition to racist capital punishment. Trade unionists, leftists and anti-racist youth have responded to urgent appeals by the Partisan Defense Committee and its fraternal organizations in other countries for united-front actions in defense of Jamal. In Berlin, Germany today, 300 people turned out in a cold rain to demonstrate outside the office of the U.S. embassy to demand: *Mumia Abu-Jamal must not die!*

As part of the right-wing victory in last November's elections, Republican Tom Ridge became governor of Pennsylvania vowing to speed up the racist assembly line of death. This is particularly threatening for Mumia Abu-Jamal. Immediately after taking office last month, Ridge announced that he would begin signing death warrants in February. He also proposed legislation mandating that executions be carried out within 30 days after warrants are

signed. Ominously, on January 13 Jamal was moved to a new maximum security prison in a remote southwestern corner of the state.

Outside Ridge's inauguration in Harrisburg on January 17, some 250 people, including PDC supporters, joined a protest initiated by International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, Equal Justice USA and Refuse & Resist. A protest by several dozen supporters of Jamal also took place that day in Minneapolis.

For many seeking to fight the all-sided racist onslaught and capitalist injustice, the international campaign to save Mumia Abu-Jamal is a rallying point for concerted action. His victimization throws a spotlight on what the death penalty in this deeply racist country is all about: "legal lynching." Jamal is a former leader of the Black Panther Party, a supporter of the MOVE organization, and a courageous journalist known for his searing indictments of America's racist rulers. Locked away on death row for

continued on page 11



Building campaign for Jamal in Berlin: Addressing PDS congress, January 28 (left); circulating petitions among conference attendees. Spartakist photos

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

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Speakers include

Don Alexander, Partisan Defense Committee
Robert Bryan, attorney
Mike Garcia, President, SEIU Local 1877,* San Jose, CA
Wadiya Jamal, wife of Mumia Abu-Jamal

Ben Visnick, President, Oakland Education Association/CTA/NEA,* Oakland, CA
Leonard Weinglass, lead counsel for Jamal

* 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

NEW YORK CITY

Hosted by Ossie Davis

Speakers include

Charles Brover, Partisan Defense Committee
James Frazier, TWU Local 100,* Brooklyn, NY
Wadiya Jamal, wife of Mumia Abu-Jamal
Kica Matos, Research Director, NAACP Legal Defense Fund,* New York, NY
Jan D. Pierce, Vice President, Communication Workers of America District 1,* New York, NY
David P. Richardson, Jr., State Representative, Pennsylvania House of Representatives,* Philadelphia, PA

Henry Schwarzschild, National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty
Brenda C. Stokely, President, AFSCME Local 215/DC 1707,* New York, NY
James Webb, President, New York Chapter, Coalition of Black Trade Unionists,* New York, NY

Leonard Weinglass, lead counsel for Jamal

Bruce Wright, author of *Black Robes, White Justice*

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Saturday, February 11, 3 p.m.

For more information: (212) 580-1022, (212) 406-4252

P.S. 41

116 W. 11th Street (at 6th Ave.)

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

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

CHICAGO

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
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, lead counsel for Jamal
Standish E. Willis, Chairman, Chicago Conference of Black Lawyers; Spokesperson, African American Defense Committee Against Police Violence, Chicago, IL

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Saturday, March 4, 2 p.m.

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

United Electrical Hall
37 S. Ashland

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Boston University
725 Commonwealth Ave.

For more information: (617) 492-3928

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Georgia State University

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Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!

Mexico...

(continued from page 1)

and debt, wild economic instability and starvation wages. As the peso fell through the floor, Zedillo decreed a brutal assault on public spending and workers' pay. The business press warned of the potential for convulsive social struggle. Typical was the pro-government Mexico City weekly *Epoca* (9 January), which stressed that for the bourgeoisie, "The greatest challenge of 1995 will be in the political-social arena, and this will have to be thoroughly dealt with in order to reduce the risks of a large-scale social explosion, since the workers and have-nots are going to be making the sacrifices again." Just to survive, the working class could be forced to make real the bourgeoisie's fears of an explosion of struggle.

But there are key obstacles in the way of victorious class struggle, centrally the stranglehold of corporatist state control over the workers movement by the PRI-government, and the bourgeois populism of the nationalist opposition around Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas. What's necessary is to forge a revolutionary workers party that can mobilize the powerful Mexican proletariat at the head of all the oppressed against the vicious austerity policies of the capitalist rulers. This view is uniquely put forward by the Grupo Espartaquista de México (GEM).

NAFTA Means Starvation for Mexico's Workers and Poor

The peso crash highlighted Mexico's prostration before Wall Street in the era of NAFTA. This blueprint for a "fortress North America" was designed to bolster the position of U.S. imperialism in the "new world disorder" against rival trade blocs ruled by Germany and Japan. Before the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, the weak bour-



Reuters
Mexican president Ernesto Zedillo (left) with predecessor Carlos Salinas at inauguration.

geoisies of semicolonial countries like Mexico could use the existence of the Soviet bloc to gain a bit more maneuvering room for nationalist posturing vis-à-vis the U.S. behemoth. In 1982, with the explosion of the "debt bomb," Mexican president Miguel De la Madrid was able to put some nationalist window-dressing on his capitulation to Washington by raising tariffs and nationalizing the banks. There was nothing socialistic about such measures: they only hampered wholesale capital flight. Today, all this is out the window.

As the Mexican, U.S. and Canadian sections of the International Communist League noted in a 1991 joint statement opposing NAFTA ("Stop U.S. 'Free Trade' Rape of Mexico," WV No. 530, 5 July 1991): "The American ruling class wants to pick up the Mexican economy in one huge buyout—at bargain basement prices.... What the New World



Ruben R. Ramirez

Women workers at RCA Thomson maquiladora in Ciudad Juárez strike against devastation caused by peso devaluation.

Order means for Mexican workers and peasants is literal starvation." Now MIT economist Rudi Dornbusch notes that "Mexico will enter the next century far poorer than it was two decades ago" (*Business Week*, 16 January). And having been bought out by Wall Street, Mexico is no longer able to formulate any national economic policy. Throughout the devaluation crisis, Zedillo has done nothing until first getting the word from Washington. No wonder the Mexican president is "eager to avoid charges that he is turning Mexico into a U.S. colony" (*Business Week*, 30 January).

This really was a crash "made in U.S.A." In February 1994, the Salinas administration boasted it had a record \$31 billion in dollar reserves. Ten months later, \$25 billion of this was gone and the wolves were at the door. Under NAFTA Mexico had become a speculators' paradise; up to 80 percent of foreign investment went not into producing goods and services but into the stock market and volatile short-term Treasury bonds (*tesobonos*), known in Mexico as *golondrina* ("sparrow," or flight) capital. And fly away it did: the exodus of capital in 1994 amounted to more than \$23 billion, with \$3 billion leaving the country just on December 19! The imperialist press blamed the overvalued peso, making imports artificially cheap and leading to a whopping trade deficit (\$30 billion in 1994, the largest in Mexico's history). But until the crash, the Mexican government had deliberately refused to let the peso fall in order to spur exports from the U.S. and thus shore up support for NAFTA north of the border.

Capital continued to flee in the first weeks of 1995, so that by the end of the month the *International Herald Tribune* (30 January) reported from the annual international capitalist confab at Davos, Switzerland that Mexico's hard currency reserves had fallen to \$2 billion and default was imminent. That was the news that sent U.S. Treasury secretary Rubin scurrying to come up with a \$50 billion bailout literally overnight. Gone were Washington's earlier demands that Mexico break off trade with Cuba, raise the minimum wage, clean up the environment, act as border guards to cut off "illegal emigration" to the U.S., and open up Mexican oil to imperialist penetration. This was an emergency, a matter of "national security." Of course, what Washington bailed out was Wall Street, as right-wing populists in the U.S., like Ross Perot and Patrick Buchanan, harped on in their chauvinist appeals to "Main Street U.S.A." As for Mexican workers, they got hammer blows from both the Mexican and American bourgeoisies.

On January 3, Zedillo announced his "economic emergency program" based on brutal budget cuts and "sacrifice" for the workers. Wage raises are to be held to 7 percent while the government officially estimates inflation will be 19 per-

cent; everybody knows it will be far higher—prices of basic products such as milk are already skyrocketing. Cash is to be raised by more sell-offs ("privatization") of government enterprises: rail, highways, ports and airports will go on the chopping block. Already firings from the three biggest government enterprises—oil, rail and social security—are so numerous that the Mexico City Conciliation and Arbitration Board declared itself to be in a "work emergency" because it couldn't handle all the claims. After some unaccustomed grumbling, Zedillo's emergency pact was signed by the pro-government labor officialdom. But whether the corporatist "unions" can keep the lid on workers' struggles is another matter.

The *New York Times* (8 January) characterized the way Zedillo was selling his plan abroad: "That the workers would take a cut in their standard of living, that the government would slash its spending, that foreign investors would be persuaded not to take money out of the country, and that new investment would pour in to take advantage of lower real wages." It was revealed that two versions of Zedillo's plan were released: one in Spanish, for Mexico, and a more complete one, in English, for U.S. investors! The obscenity of calls for more "sacrifice" from the workers can be seen in the fact that, while half the Mexican population lives under the official poverty line, and 17 million live in "extreme poverty," under the Salinas administration the number of Mexicans with more than a billion dollars in wealth increased from 3 to 24, the fourth-highest number of any country in the world.

American capital has long demanded that Mexico's nationalized oil industry be placed on the auction block. Even under the "softened" conditions of Clinton's bailout, Mexico's dollar earnings from international petroleum sales are to be deposited as collateral in an account in the U.S. Federal Reserve Bank in New York! And as history shows, behind the imperialist "loans" stand the Yankee armed forces. U.S. "counterinsurgency" expert Colonel Rex Applegate, in a recent article ("Time Bomb on the U.S. Border: Mexican Military Unable to Counter Insurgency," February 1995) quotes General Paul Gorman, former chief of the U.S. Southern Command, predicting in 1986: "In ten years, the president of the U.S. [will] focus as much time on affairs with Mexico as on any other security matter." Today, trying to outflank the Republican right which wants to extend California's anti-immigrant Proposition 187 nationwide, Clinton is beefing up the border militarily and justifies the Mexican bailout by playing to hysteria about "hordes" of "illegal immigrants."

Proletarian internationalists stand foursquare against Washington's deliberately humiliating efforts to deepen the

neocolonial subjugation of Mexico. We stand with Leon Trotsky, who defended the nationalization of Mexican oil by President Lázaro Cárdenas in 1938 as a blow against Yankee and British imperialism. And against the bourgeoisie's racist drive to pit worker against worker, we fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants. We seek to build an international revolutionary workers party, linking the class struggle on both sides of the border through the human bridge of immigrant workers.

Chiapas Seethes, "Opposition" Scrambles to Bail Out Zedillo

While an armed truce has prevailed in Chiapas since mid-January 1994, the recent period has seen a wave of militant land and town hall seizures by Indian peasant groups. Landlords have beefed up the private armies of gun thugs known as *guardias blancas* (white guards), who have committed a number of massacres in recent weeks. Military experts from Argentina's 1970s "dirty war" against the left have been sent to "train" the Mexican army in Chiapas, and the Guatemalan army has deployed 15,000 *kaibiles* (elite "counterinsurgency" troops) just across the border. Meanwhile, election fraud has caused turbulent protests in the states of Chiapas and Tabasco. When Zedillo, in a deal with the opposition, made it clear he wanted the PRI governor to resign in Tabasco, the local PRI threatened that the state would secede from Mexico!

In response to Zedillo's attempt to blame the peso devaluation on the EZLN insurgents, Zapatista rebel leader *subcomandante* Marcos ironically promised that the rebels would "reduce their dollar bank accounts." Yet the Zapatistas' response to the crisis has been to call on the head of the bourgeois opposition—Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas of the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD)—to lead a "Movement of National Liberation." This harks back to the populist group of the same name in which Cárdenas and his father, former president Lázaro Cárdenas, were active in the early '60s. At the same time, after Marcos met with Zedillo's interior minister in mid-January, the EZLN indefinitely extended its cease-fire in return for a pull-back of government troops from Zapatista areas. While defending the Chiapas insurgents, the Grupo Espartaquista de México has noted since the uprising began that the EZLN leadership seeks to be an armed pressure group on the regime rather than fight for social revolution.

Since the peso crisis hit, Cárdenas' PRD—to which the Mexican "left," "independent trade unions" and peasant groups have subordinated themselves in a "popular front" chaining the oppressed to the politicians and institutions of the bourgeois state—has been broadcasting far and wide that its concern is to head

Hiroshima...

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After months of endless conciliatory deletions and alterations, on January 30 the Smithsonian announced that the 10,000-square-foot exhibit and an accompanying 600-page catalog were being axed. Only a portion of the fuselage of the *Enola Gay*, the B-29 which dropped the Hiroshima A-bomb, would remain in the museum, together with a plaque about the crew and a video.

A memo from the official Air Force historian complained that the original exhibit included 49 photos of Japanese casualties but only three American casualties. He further protested that:

"The script gives the impression that President Truman, in making his decision to drop the bomb, did it to impress the Soviet Union rather than to save American lives in any potential invasion of Japan. The script also conveys the idea that Truman was motivated by racism and that dropping the bomb was unjustified."

In other words, even a glimmer of the truth about this barbaric atrocity by U.S. imperialism was deemed too "un-American" to be presented to the American public.

In a crude admission of the museum's capitulation to the flag-waving Big Lie campaign, a Smithsonian spokesman whined after the exhibit was canceled, "They were not looking for analysis and, frankly, we did not give enough thought to the intense feelings such analysis would evoke" (*New York Times*, 31 January).

Of course, the victors always get to write the official history of wars, and the historians of U.S. imperialism paint the carnage of the Pacific war as a crusade of "democracy" against "Japanese militarism." But the real story behind the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki has become increasingly well known. The supposed military necessity for using the A-bomb was debunked by leading spokesmen of the American military establishment decades ago.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Commander of the Allied forces in World War II, admitted in 1963, "The Japanese were ready to surrender and

it wasn't necessary to hit them with that awful thing." And only five years after the bombing, the wartime Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral William Leahy, wrote, "The use of this barbarous weapon at Hiroshima and Nagasaki was of no material success in our war against Japan.... My own feeling was that in being the first to use it, we had adopted an ethical standard common to the barbarians of the Dark Ages."

So why did the U.S. drop the bomb? In part, it was sheer racism. The war in the Pacific was justified with vile anti-Japanese propaganda, and the liberal Democrats then in power were just as guilty as the Republicans. During the war, President Franklin D. Roosevelt ordered the incarceration of Japanese Americans (but not German Americans) in U.S. concentration camps. And the Smithsonian did its part at the time to justify the virulent anti-Japanese racism: its curator of physical anthropology assured FDR that the Japanese were "as bad as they were" because their skulls were "some 2,000

years less developed than ours"!

It was the then-president of elite Harvard University, Dr. James Conant, who came up with the strategy of mass killing of Japanese civilians. He suggested dropping the A-bomb in a location "closely surrounded by workers houses," in order to "make a profound psychological impression on as many of the inhabitants as possible" (see Gar Alperovitz, "Why the United States Dropped the Bomb," *Technology Review*, August/September 1990). Besides, the U.S. had spent billions of dollars on developing the bomb and were damned if they weren't going to use it.

Behind the U.S. imperialists' incineration of almost a quarter million Japanese civilians was a *political* calculation. The racist American rulers used the already defeated Japanese as a human testing ground to prove to the world—and especially to the USSR—that they would stop at nothing to maintain global domination (see "Racism, Anti-Sovietism and Atomic Holocaust," *WV*

No. 459, 12 August 1988).

By the spring of 1945, the Soviet Union—at the enormous cost of some 27 million Soviet dead—had broken the back of the Nazi war machine. Once it was clear that Japan was tottering, Washington's main strategic interest was to stop the Soviet Union from entering the war against Japan and invading Manchuria. Truman deliberately postponed the Potsdam meeting with Stalin until July, after the first successful test of the atom bomb. Hiroshima was bombed on August 6, two days before Moscow declared war on Japan; Nagasaki was hit on August 9.

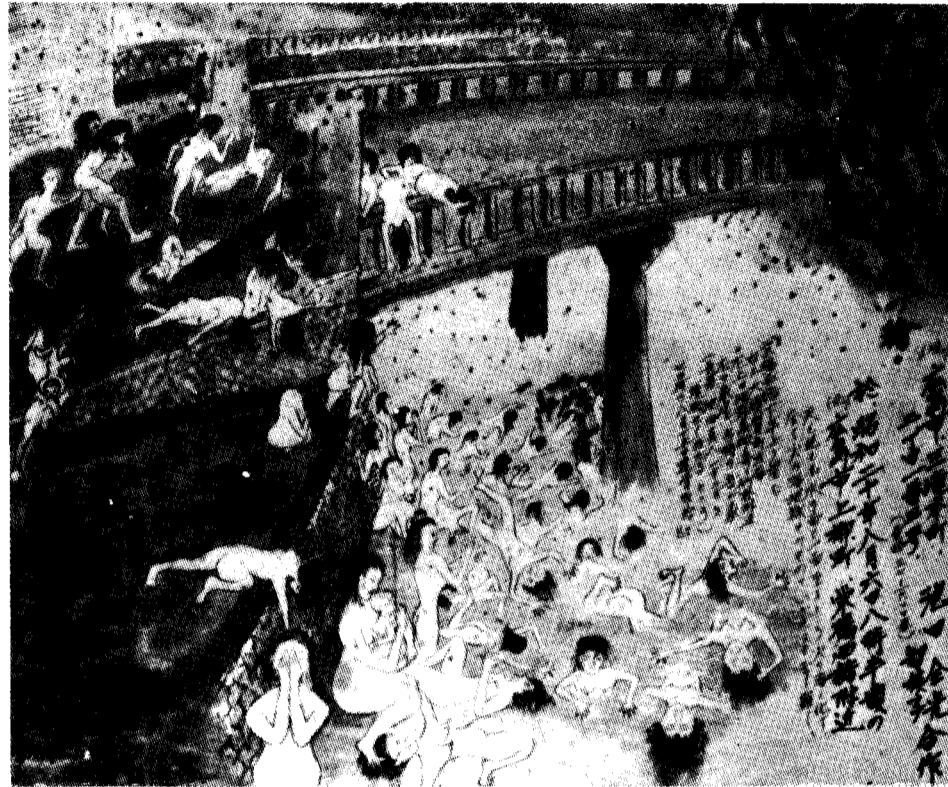
No sooner had World War II officially ended than the U.S. turned its arsenal openly against the USSR, making at least 25 nuclear blackmail threats from 1946 to 1980 (Michio Kaku and Daniel Axelrod, *To Win a Nuclear War—The Pentagon's Secret War Plans* [1987]). The U.S.' nuclear brinkmanship was ideologically buttressed with McCarthyite red scares and social regimentation. Today the right-wing reactionaries who forced the cancellation of the Smithsonian exhibit want to bring back that era when politicians sanctimoniously intoned that "the family that prays together stays together."

Despite Washington's propaganda about "defending democracy," World War II was a reactionary war between competing imperialist alliances to divide the world. Revolutionary communists, the followers of Leon Trotsky, stood for military defense of the Soviet bureaucratically degenerated workers state, while opposing both the Axis powers and the Western Allies. Just days after the A-bombing of Japan, the American Trotskyists wrote:

"Let the cataclysmic horror of Hiroshima and Nagasaki serve as a clarion call to the working class! The workers must wrench the power from the hands of the blood-drenched capitalist criminals and take their destiny in their own hands.... Today the fight for socialism is a fight to prevent the annihilation of the human race."

—*Militant*, 18 August 1945

Today, following the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, as heightened interimperialist rivalry presages a new drive to war, this fight is as urgent as ever. ■



Painting by Hiroshima survivors depicts bridge at Kami Yanagi-cho, where terrified residents flung themselves into river desperately trying to escape nuclear blast.

Kobe...

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we continue to rely on them, we'll starve to death." The governor of Osaka contemptuously blamed the victims for their plight, declaring, "They think they can all be helped by others"! More than half of those killed were over the age of 60, two-thirds of them women, who are in any case deemed "not important" in this deeply sexist society. Those who survived have been abandoned in the shelters without heat and medication. There are virtually no social services in Japan for the aged, whose care is relegated by rigid Confucian values to the all-encompassing family.

Tomiiichi Murayama (Social Democratic Party head of the unpopular popular-front government) supposedly only learned of the earthquake hours after it happened, as he watched television news while eating breakfast. He flew in and out of Kobe the following day. The head of the National Land Agency made an aerial survey of the damage and immediately flew back to Tokyo. The minister of transportation attended a campaign fund-raising party in the middle of the disaster, haughtily insisting he was in touch because "I took a cellular phone along." With discontent mounting in the shelters, the "father of the country," Emperor Akihito, and his wife Michiko put in an appearance two weeks later to "offer words of encouragement."

As local government officials stood paralyzed, firefighters from nearby prefectures waited for orders to help put out the fires, but no instructions were issued. Offers of food, clothes and med-

icine came in from dozens of countries; few were accepted. The country is desperately short of flu vaccine, but the government rejected a donation of one million shots from U.S. relief organizations. Doctors from other countries had to wage a fight to be allowed to enter the country and, once here, had to fight to administer aid. Meanwhile, many of the trapped died under the wreckage.

Much of the arrogance displayed by the Japanese ruling class following the 1989 San Francisco earthquake and the quake last year in Los Angeles has been muted, as the bourgeois press, politicians and "experts" engage in cynical "soul searching." It is now admitted that "irregular, but not illegal" methods were employed in the building of underground railway tunnels, elevated highways and railway track beams. Nine sections of the famed *shinkansen* "bullet train" railway collapsed, as did ceilings of the subway system; the main steel pillars of half the high-rises in upscale Ashiya City were damaged; 18 ten-foot-thick support columns of the Hanshin expressway snapped at the base.

Grotesquely, the same American companies that built the Northridge freeway that fell last year in L.A. and also Oakland's Cypress Street Viaduct, whose collapse in 1989 killed scores, are now hoping to get a piece of the action in Kobe's reconstruction.

Fault Lines, Class Lines and Racist Oppression

The quake shook more than the earth. It also blew apart the myth that 90 percent of the population are part of the "middle class." An article in the *New*

York Times (25 January), under the headline "Fault Lines and Class Lines in Japan," remarked: "This week, many poor families are arranging funerals and many rich ones are arranging vacations."

The rich have been "inconvenienced," forced to resort to a Honda motorcycle instead of a Mercedes, to move into their second home or a hotel. Meanwhile Nagata, the hardest-hit ward in Kobe and home to many of Japan's "outcasts," was burned to the ground—not by the earthquake, but by the fires that came later. The gas mains were not shut off for 13 hours after the quake; 3,700 buildings were destroyed.

Nagata was home to 12,000 Koreans—the largest concentration in Kobe—and thousands of *burakumin* (low-caste "untouchables"), mostly workers in the synthetic shoe and chemical industries who lived segregated from the rest of the city in small wooden homes with no central heating and gas supplied by outdoor propane tanks. The bourgeoisie wanted Nagata to burn. Now it plans the "largest reconstruction project in the country's history" in Nagata and five other areas. On the ashes of the homes and businesses of the people who once lived and worked there, they will build not new homes, but "wide roads, parks and future evacuation centers." Significantly, in reporting on the disaster the bourgeois press has not so much as mentioned the word *burakumin*, since the very existence of these people, socially ostracized and relegated to poor-paying jobs, is a taboo subject in "respectable" society.

The fate of the Korean minority community in Kobe has provoked comparisons with the Great Kanto Earth-

quake of 1923. After that quake, rumors were circulated that Koreans had poisoned wells, set fires, raped and killed. The government launched a pogrom in which as many as 6,000 Koreans, as well as hundreds of workers' leaders and socialists, were massacred by the police, military and racist *jikeidan* (vigilante groups). In their book *Koreans in Japan* (1981), Changsoo Lee and George De Vos describe the bloodbath following the '23 quake: "They used bamboo spears to stab, clubs to beat, and bare hands to choke Koreans to death. Language was the criteria—any 'Korean accent' marked a person for extermination.... They chopped off their arms and threw the bodies into a fire."

Today, the country is inundated with self-congratulatory propaganda about the "harmony" between Japanese and Korean survivors of the recent quake. But with 150 dead, 1,500 injured and 1,000 homes completely destroyed, Koreans have suffered vastly disproportionate death and destruction. Meanwhile, thousands of police and soldiers have invaded the area. Foreign workers who have "overstayed" their visas are not only being deprived of relief benefits, they have been virtually driven into hiding. The bourgeois media instigated a vicious racist rumor mill, claiming that an organized gang of Hong Kong Chinese and Iranians were robbing and pillaging throughout the Kobe area. When some of them were caught, they turned out to be Japanese.

The Rulers Want the Workers to Pay

Every aspect of economic activity in the region has been disrupted. For three days the country was cut in half when

Jamal Campaign...

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13 years after being framed for the killing of a Philadelphia cop, he remains the "voice of the voiceless," writing a column which regularly appears in many papers including *Workers Vanguard*.

In the coming weeks, rallies and forums to defend Jamal will be held in cities across the U.S. The New York City rally, to be hosted by Ossie Davis, will be co-sponsored by the PDC and the Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal, as will the Chicago rally. Joining those sponsors in the Oakland rally will be the Labor Black League for Social Defense. The PDC is also organizing forums in Boston, Washington, Los Angeles and, with the Black Student Alliance of Georgia State University, in Atlanta. There will also be a benefit concert in San Francisco on February 19 by the band Pothole.

In the fight for freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal, we place no confidence in the capitalist courts and all faith in the mobilization of the masses. We look in particular to the social power of the working class in defending Jamal and all class-war prisoners. The Chicago and Oakland rallies are being held in union halls, and rallies around the country will be addressed by speakers from a number of unions, representing transit and communications workers, teachers and other public employees.

In Los Angeles, Doris Boyd Snyder, first vice president of SEIU Local 399, known for its "Justice for Janitors" campaign, will be a guest speaker at a forum held at the Local 399 hall. This local held a demonstration last August at the L.A. District Attorney's office demanding freedom for former Black Panther leader Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt). Geronimo is a victim of the government's COINTELPRO program against black militants and has been imprisoned 24 years for a crime the state knows he could not have committed.

United-front demonstrations and rallies have also been called for Sydney, Australia, February 9; Paris, February 21; Tokyo, February 26; Toronto and Vancouver, Canada, March 11; as well as London in mid-March. As in the U.S., all money raised at these events will go to Jamal's legal defense.

Militants Mobilize for Mumia in Germany

A high point of the February 7 demonstration was a statement from the powerful IG Medien newspaper union, announcing that it had made Mumia Abu-Jamal an honorary member. This act of solidarity exemplifies the considerable union support rallying to Mumia's cause. Another highlight was a statement of greetings from prominent American leftist Angela Davis, who

declared, "The case of Mumia Abu-Jamal has emerged as the most important case in this challenge to the death penalty."

The demo drew significant numbers of high-school students from as far away as Hamburg and Halle. The rally was addressed by, among others, spokesmen for the Jewish Group of Berlin, the Kurdistan Information Bureau (itself the object of government repression), and by Heinrich Fink, who was witchhunted out of his position as rector of Humboldt University following the capitalist reunification of Germany.

This united-front protest was initiated by the KfsV (Committee for Social Defense—fraternal organization of the Partisan Defense Committee), which along with the Spartakist Workers Party



Banner at Spartakist meeting at Humboldt University in Berlin, January 26, reads: "Down With Racist Death Penalty! Save Mumia Abu-Jamal!"

(SpAD) and the radical AGIPA-Press collective have for years been publicizing Jamal's case. The extensive list of endorsers points to broad support for Jamal in Germany, where the death penalty is identified with Hitler's Third Reich. In recent years, tens of thousands of youth have mobilized against anti-immigrant racism and fascist terror. The call for the protest was also issued in Turkish, seeking to bring this campaign to the large, heavily proletarian Turkish and Kurdish communities.

Endorsers included the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) and a number of prominent individual PDS supporters, including leftist writer and Bundestag deputy Stefan Heym, Dachau survivor Karl Kielhorn, and veteran trade unionist Jakob Moneta. The head of the PDS Bundestag parliamentary group, Gregor Gysi, had earlier endorsed the Jamal demo at the annual January 15 commemoration of the 1919 murder of Communist leaders Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, where over 8,000 brochures on Jamal's case were distributed. Other endorsers of the Jamal demo included the Communist Platform (KPF) of the PDS in Hannover and Sachsen-Anhalt, and the "Red Riot" youth group in

Paderborn, supporters of Ernest Mandel's United Secretariat.

The case of Mumia Abu-Jamal was a prominent issue at the PDS party congress in Berlin in late January. Posters of Mumia were widely displayed, and stacks of KfsV leaflets were to be found on literature tables of numerous organizations. Hundreds of signatures on petitions to Pennsylvania governor Ridge were gathered. Delegates at the youth session of the congress unanimously voted to join the international campaign for Jamal and to call on all PDS locals and members to build the February 7 protest. However, the day before the demo, the PDS national executive decided, for sectarian reasons, not to have an official presence. Nonetheless, the Mainz PDS sent a message of soli-

cial vendetta "to reduce to silence, by execution, a man who has put his voice, his pen and his talent at the service of those who suffer." Prominent Nazi-hunter Serge Klarsfeld and his organization, Sons and Daughters of French Jewish Deportees, denounced Jamal's plight as "inhuman" in a February 1 protest letter to Governor Ridge which concluded, "Please don't give your agreement to his execution."

In Brazil, the Palmares Cultural Foundation (named after slave revolt leader Zumbi de Palmares) fired off a letter to Governor Ridge in December. They wrote: "This is the call which, here in Brazil, we have heard in unison from many of the Afro-Brazilian movements and movements for human rights.... As black citizens of a country with no death penalty, we call for saving the life of Mumia Abu-Jamal. And we join our voice to that cry which today is echoing here in Brazil as well: *MUMIA ABU-JAMAL MUST NOT DIE!*"

That cry echoes today as well in South Africa, where state executions of blacks and others were a central component of repression under the racist apartheid system. Last September, a leftist working-class organization in South Africa sent the following message to the PDC:

"The Workers' Organisation for Socialist Action (WOSA), together with the WORKERS' LIST PARTY, wants to express its abhorrence at the continued use, by the United States government, of state terror in the form of capital punishment.

"The fact that this abominably barbaric measure is also being used in a racist manner and for political ends, as in the case of Cde. Mumia Abu-Jamal, is a clear indication of the bankruptcy of western imperialism.

"We call for the immediate abolition of the racist and barbaric death penalty, and add our voices to all brothers and sisters in the United States and elsewhere who are demanding a re-trial, at the very least, for Cde. Abu-Jamal."

Abolish the Death Penalty!

The campaign for Jamal is an opportunity to mobilize everywhere against the bourgeois injustice system in all its forms. International solidarity actions can be a tremendous impetus in bringing the power of the working class to bear on behalf of Jamal and all class-war prisoners. In the early 1930s, labor-backed protests in Berlin, Paris and other cities in Europe, as well as throughout the U.S., were instrumental in preventing the legal lynching of the Scottsboro Boys, nine black youths falsely accused of raping two white women.

As the recent PDC call to "Save Mumia Abu-Jamal!" (see WV No. 615, 27 January) noted: "The racist death penalty goes hand in hand with the extra-legal terror of the KKK and summary executions by cops on the street to keep black people 'in their place.' The fight to abolish the death penalty is part of the historic struggle for black equality in America." *Mobilize now—join the campaign to save Mumia Abu-Jamal!* ■

the transport system in the Kansai area centered on Osaka, Kyoto and Kobe, which is Japan's main artery, was wrecked. Kobe port also handles 30 percent of all international maritime container business. Japanese manufacturers have been forced to suspend shipment of parts to their plants in Southeast Asia. What most concerns the bourgeoisie is that the damage will put a damper on the fictitious economic recovery which the government announced last fall. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry estimates the quake will end up costing ¥40 trillion (US\$400 billion), about 10 percent of Japan's GDP.

While steel, metal and auto companies are sharing vital equipment in a burst of "post-quake cooperation," their treatment of the workers is another matter. Already 4,500 workers are threatened with firing, but union bureaucrats join the bourgeoisie in insisting that "reconstruction" comes first. The Kobe steel

workers union has already said it will not fight during this year's annual *shunto* (spring labor negotiations), and the Japan Railway Rengo union has promised not to demand any pay raises. With the government and companies launching a vicious offensive, now is the time for labor to throw off the shackles of the ritualized *shunto*, which channels labor struggles into impotent actions.

The government feels embarrassed not because of the loss of life, but because the inefficient, bureaucratic, arrogant and feudalistic manner in which it operates was revealed to the world. When the Yamaguchi-gumi, the largest *yakuza* (crime syndicate) organization, ordered all their affiliates to collect relief supplies, goods poured in by helicopter, boat and truck. For Tokyo, to be offered aid from the Philippines, South Korea and other "underlings" is a "shame" that will not be erased overnight. Even North Korea had sent \$1 million within days.

This earthquake did not come at a good time for the bourgeoisie. Japan has had seven prime ministers in as many years. The vaunted "clean-up and political reorganization" campaign—which has resulted in much bourgeois infighting—is aimed at making a leaner and meaner government to strengthen Japan in the "New World Order." The politicians are fighting over how best to administer Japanese imperialism, how to create a new neocolonial "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere," how to avoid high labor costs by more intensively exploiting the workers of Asia, and how to take on the U.S. on the trade front.

Now many bourgeois politicians are trying to use the Kobe earthquake to beef up the government's repressive powers. They are pushing to give the prime minister sweeping new authority, including regulation of economic activity. Opposition kingpin Ichiro Ozawa has called for new legislation to "preserve law

and order" and wants to "regulate the activities of individual citizens in 'emergencies.'" There are also plans afoot to incorporate the Self Defense Force (military)—which has recently begun to flex its muscles overseas—into local government disaster programs, and to enable them to enter private property and demolish or remove objects in times of "disaster."

This "natural" disaster has starkly highlighted and exacerbated the class tensions in Japan. What is needed is to build an internationalist Bolshevik party, dedicated to sweeping away the all-powerful *zaibatsu* monopolies which run Japan Inc. for their corporate greed, and to put an end to the archaic "emperor system" which props up the system of capitalist rule. Only under a workers republic can the wealth and technology of this economic powerhouse be put at the disposal of all, even and especially in times of natural disasters. ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

Natural Disasters and Capitalist Greed

Aftershocks of the Kobe Earthquake

Report from Japan

TOKYO—In the early morning of January 17, the earth below Hyogo Prefecture in western Japan literally split in two, moving one and a half feet upward and four and a half feet sideways. The Great Hanshin Earthquake, registering 7.2 on the Richter scale, has left an estimated 5,200 dead and 27,000 injured in the Kobe area. Thirty-six hours after the quake, fires continued to burn, with entire sections of the city razed to the ground. People died as their neighbors tried desperately to claw them out from under the rubble of their homes.

More than 250,000 homeless are crammed into unheated temporary evacuation centers, in tents on school playgrounds, in parks or in their cars. They are now facing a massive influenza epidemic, diarrhea, malnutrition and severe dehydration. Sanitation just does not exist. People are scooping water from severed water mains to wash and drink, and burning what is left of their homes and furniture to keep warm and cook.

Food is scarce and prices have skyrocketed. Hospitals still standing are operating with no running water or heat, plagued by shortages of vital medicines.

While the earthquake was a natural disaster, within hours it became strikingly obvious who was responsible for the wake of destruction which followed, causing the death of thousands: the government and the construction industry. The authorities did nothing to prevent the city from burning while refusing to rescue, house, feed and provide medical care for survivors. The building industry set the stage for this catastrophe by cutting corners and engaging in some of the biggest kickback deals of the century during the construction boom over the last 30 years.

Most people initially remained in their destroyed neighborhoods, vainly expecting government relief and rescue teams to arrive. "The authorities haven't done anything," complained one refugee. "If

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Elderly woman in the burned-out ruins of Kobe.

Reuters

The August 1945 atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the United States posed before mankind the chilling prospect of total annihilation. There were 140,000 killed at Hiroshima, 70,000 at Nagasaki, while the agony of the survivors and their descendants, crippled and maimed by the poisonous radiation, continues. Fifty years later, the image of those deadly mushroom clouds still exemplifies the nuclear barbarity which capitalism has in store for humanity.

To this day, the rulers and ideologues of American imperialism justify these unspeakable war crimes. Late last year, the Postal Service announced plans to "commemorate" the 1945 A-bombings with a stamp depicting an atomic explosion against a red sky. The caption read, "Atomic bombs hasten war's end, August 1945." The stamp has since been dropped.

Now, following an orchestrated campaign of chauvinist hysteria, Washington, D.C.'s Smithsonian Institution has been forced to cancel a planned exhibition on Hiroshima at its Air and Space Museum. "The Last Act: The Atomic Bomb and the End of World War II" was billed as a "re-examination" of the "conventional understanding" of the U.S.' Pacific war with Japan. But the American Legion, other military groups and a sizable bipartisan Congressional lobby denounced the proposed exhibit's depiction of the horrors suffered by Japanese civilians as "unbalanced."

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Enola Gay at the Smithsonian

Orgy of Chauvinism Sinks Hiroshima Exhibit



Shigeo Hayashi

Center of Hiroshima after American A-bombing, August 1945. U.S. Post Office planned to "commemorate" this butchery with mushroom cloud stamp.



U.S. Postal Service