

From the catalog of Mehring Books

## The Truth Behind the Mack Avenue Fire

9 March 2010

In connection with the Citizens Inquiry sponsored by the Socialist Equality Party into the recent fire on Dexter Avenue in Detroit and the social conditions that gave rise to it, Mehring Books is recommending to readers *The Truth Behind the Mack Avenue Fire*.

This pamphlet contains the record of the Citizens Inquiry initiated by the Workers League, forerunner of the Socialist Equality Party, into a tragic house fire that took the lives of seven young children on Mack Avenue in Detroit in 1993. It provides important background material on the social crisis gripping the former automotive capital of the world.

The Mack Avenue fire was the outcome of the extreme poverty prevalent in Detroit, which has only deepened in the intervening years. On the morning of February 17, 1993 a work crew from the Detroit Department of Water and Sewerage shut off water to the home of Shereese Williams and Leroy Lyons without notice because of an overdue bill for \$225. Lyons, thinking the pipes were frozen, attempted to thaw them with a torch. A fire broke out shortly afterwards.

The Workers League convened the inquiry to oppose the prosecution of Lyons and Williams, whom the media tried to turn into scapegoats for their own children's deaths. Over the course of a seven-hour hearing, 13 witnesses provided testimony on the social conditions that contributed to this and similar tragedies. The exposure conducted by the Workers League played a large role in the subsequent jury acquittal of Williams and Lyons. The pamphlet contains the findings of the inquiry. Statistics on social conditions are summarized in graphs and charts for easy reference.

*The Truth Behind the Mack Avenue Fire* can be purchased online from Mehring Books by clicking here

\$2.00 plus shipping and handling, Published by Labor Publications: 1993, 22 pages



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](http://wsws.org/contact)**