

Down With Anti-Immigrant Dragnet!

Crazed Imperialists on the Warpath

For Class Struggle Against Capitalist Rulers at Home!

Defend Afghanistan!

OCTOBER 23—For over two weeks, “Operation Enduring Freedom,” as it is cynically called by the U.S. imperialists and their British partners, has brought even more devastation to Afghanistan, a country so ravaged by war that U.S. officials were earlier complaining of a *lack* of targets. Hundreds of civilians have been killed by the bombing, including 120 who were trying to rescue others from a Jalalabad mosque hit by U.S. missiles. “Humanitarian” airdrops of peanut butter are accompanied by bombs smashing into United Nations and Red Cross aid facilities. Meanwhile, they’re creating a refugee crisis potentially greater than anything seen in Kosovo two years ago, when American TV broadcast endless footage of desperate Albanians (largely fleeing the U.S. bombing) as propaganda for the U.S. war of terror against Serbia.

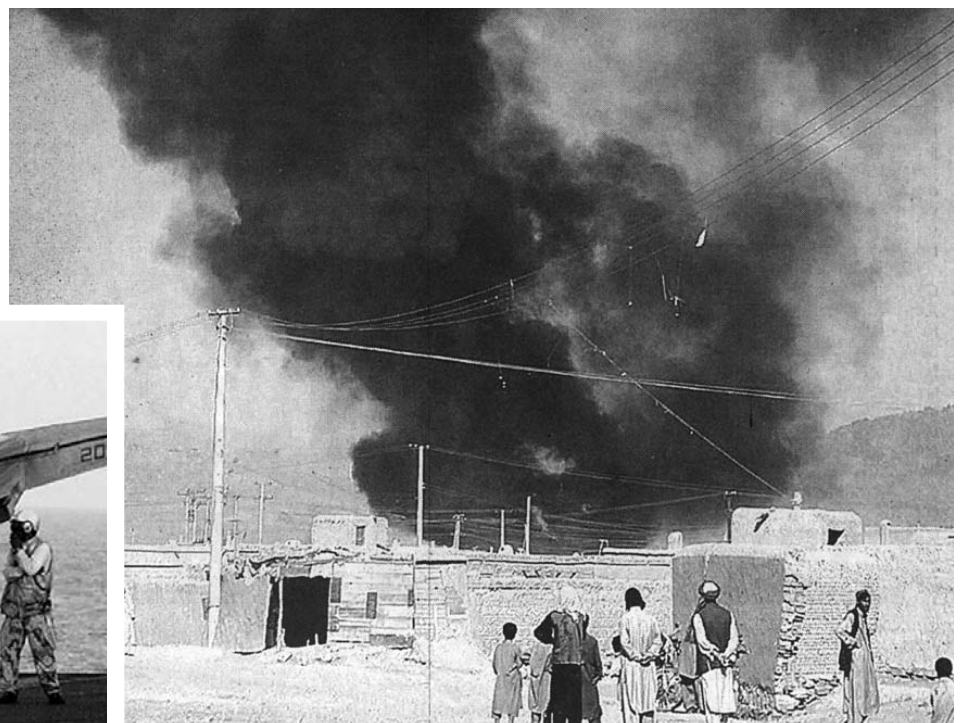
This vicious war has *nothing* to do with “freedom” for Afghans chafing under theocratic Taliban tyranny or with “justice” for the killing of thousands of innocent people in the World Trade Center. The world’s mightiest imperialist power, having taken hits on its own territory in the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, is lashing out to assert its unchallenged supremacy. In the first instance, its target is backward, rubble-strewn Afghanistan, but Iraq could well be next. The U.S. has begun ground incursions into Afghanistan, using Special Operations commando units, while the deranged “Wolfowitz cabal” in the Pentagon is already hatching plans for the next “phase” of the war, an invasion of Iraq. Moreover, as American imperialism establishes a permanent military presence in Central Asia, with a thousand troops already stationed in Uzbekistan, this will stimulate new appetites by the U.S. (as well as the West European powers) to grab or steal what they can in this oil-rich region. An already dangerous world is becoming even more dangerous and unstable.

Washington’s claims that it is not waging a war against Islam have been a public relations disaster, as mass demonstrations led by Islamic fundamentalists erupt against pro-American regimes in Pakistan, Indonesia, Egypt, Jordan and elsewhere. Even that most repressive of



AFP

Fuel depot in Kabul ablaze after being hit by U.S. air strike. Hundreds of Afghan civilians have been killed by imperialist terror bombing.



Reuters

Arab regimes, the oil-rich Saudi monarchy, is in trouble—and if it were to fall at the hands of anti-Western Islamists, that would spell really big trouble for the American oil giants. Fearful that the whole Near East could be thrown into turmoil, even the U.S.’s staunchest ally, Blair’s Britain, has balked at White House plans for a full-scale onslaught against Iraq, with one senior British official calling it “daft.”

In Israel, the nuclear-armed Zionist madmen are threatening to “eliminate” American “coalition” partner Yasir Arafat and his Palestinian Authority, as the Israelis wreak vengeance for the assassination of fascist cabinet minister Rehavam Zeevi by commandos of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), whose leader was killed by the Israelis in August. In targeting the secular-

nationalist PFLP, the Zionist rulers act as though they would rather have only the reactionary, anti-Semitic fundamentalists of Hamas to represent the Palestinians. However, the PFLP’s taking out one or another particularly heinous Israeli government official in no way alleviates the suffering of the Palestinian people.

Anti-Arab butcher Ariel Sharon has sent Israeli tanks and troops to reoccupy large swaths of the West Bank and Gaza, killing nearly 30 Palestinians in less than five days, and tightened the starvation blockade around the Occupied Territories. This is merely one step removed from the genocidal “final solution” espoused by Zeevi, who demanded the forcible expulsion of all Palestinians from Israel and the Occupied Territories. Scrambling to placate Washington, Arafat has outlawed the PFLP and ordered 30 of

its militants arrested, having already unleashed his cops to kill anti-U.S. protesters. Hands off the PFLP! Defend the Palestinians against Zionist terror! All Israeli troops and settlers out of the Occupied Territories!

The American imperialist rulers declare that they are waging a “war against terrorism.” It is a war against the weak, because it is the weak who have no other way to fight back than from ambush. This is the case not simply in the neocolonial world today. In the American War of Independence, the American rebels, too, resorted to guerrilla ambushes, including snipers firing against the British regulars.

Today, the weak of the neocolonial countries cannot openly declare war against the nuclear-armed American behemoth, so they resort to terrorism as a means of struggle. The depredations of imperialism—enforced by corrupt, despotic regimes that serve as local lackeys for the imperialists—rule out any semblance of a livable life for the dispossessed of the Near East and the rest of the semicolonial world. Desperately and indescribably poor, forced to labor for wages of a dollar a day or less from the time they are children, illiterate, ragged, maimed, millions around the world feel like they have nothing left to lose and many are prepared to strap their bodies with explosives and get the “enemy,” real or perceived. In a July 1989 article in the leftist journal *Searchlight South Africa*, Paul Trehwela compellingly captured the conditions leading to the rise of Islamic fundamentalism as a political movement:

“It is a form of self-expression of the wretched of the earth, a major part of the world’s downtrodden, in which a contradictory mass of material and social impulses are confusedly bound together in a self-negating, self-destructive form.”

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AP

Protesters outside U.S. embassy in Jakarta, Indonesia defy police water cannon. Imperialist attack on Afghanistan has provoked turmoil in predominantly Islamic countries.



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AIDS and the Ghetto Poor

New York City
14 June 2001

To the Editor:

After spending 15 years as a nurse working with AIDS patients, it has become clear to me that while the *direct* cause of the disease is the HIV virus, the reasons for the *scale* of this epidemic are largely social and political (see “AIDS Ravages Black America,” WV No. 759, 25 May).

A huge number of black families in the U.S. have at least one member who has either died of AIDS or is living with HIV. When you’re working in a hospital you almost never see a white woman patient with HIV, and when you do it’s related to an obvious risk factor—drug use or a male partner who used drugs.

Black and Hispanic women now bear the brunt of the AIDS epidemic. Among the nonwhite poor, HIV transmission is now predominantly heterosexual and the virus has escaped from the narrow pool of IV drug-users into the general

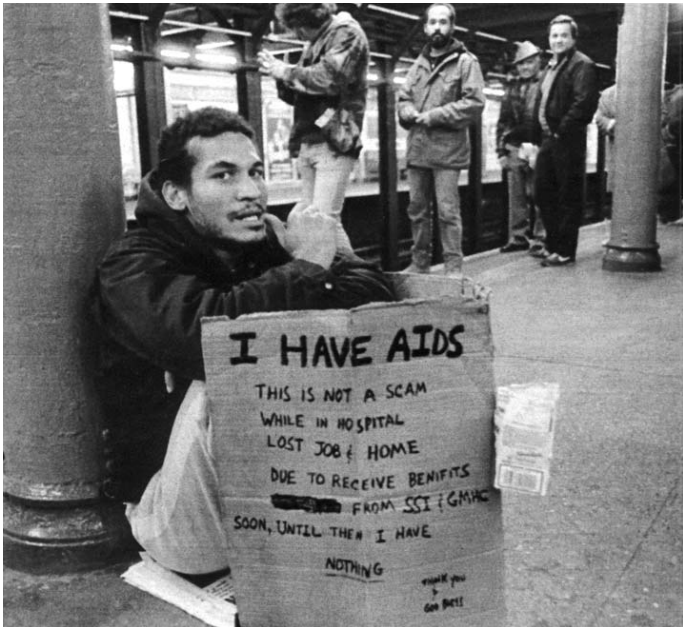
population.

Women may be biologically more susceptible to sexually transmitted HIV than men. But more importantly, many women—especially prostitutes—have little control over condom use by their male partners or sometimes even over when and if they have sex.

I’ve taught classes about safer sex to poor women. Many women tell me that they can’t get their partners to use condoms. Many are afraid to ask. Many are beaten by their partners on a regular basis. It’s a nightmare to see a 14-year-old girl with HIV who was raped and then tested positive for the virus. When you don’t have a roof over your head, you don’t worry about condoms. Many homeless women are forced to trade sex for shelter. They’re the lucky ones—the unlucky ones frequently get forced into prostitution, and the rate of HIV among street hookers runs 90 percent in some areas.

I worked for several year with homeless people with HIV and in a homeless

Inner-city poor have been ravaged by AIDS epidemic, bigotry and government cutbacks.



Donna Binder

shelter. So many homeless people are happy to find they have HIV, because it often gets them priority for subsidized housing, drug rehab programs, disability payments, mental health and social work services, free health care. If you have HIV you go to the head of the line for the social services that should be freely available to all who need them but now are being rapidly cut back or eliminated. Plenty of patients have told me that being diagnosed with HIV saved their lives.

I’ve done a lot of work teaching the homeless or recently homeless how to take their complicated regimens of anti-retroviral medications regularly, on schedule and effectively. When you don’t know where your next meal is coming from and your life is totally disorganized, it’s difficult to take multiple pills three times a day. Everyone with HIV should have free access to quality health care and anti-retroviral drugs. But medical care is not enough. There has to be housing, regular meals, a stable income.

Trying to convince a person who’s living in a state of hand-to-mouth economic insecurity that they should do something difficult and unpleasant to avoid getting sick a year from now takes work. Prophylaxis or prevention is not a concept the desperate easily comprehend.

Street drugs are a hideous public-health problem, the scourge of the black and Hispanic poor. In New York City, estimates are that 90 percent of the IV drug-users are HIV-positive. I’ve worked with a lot of addicts, and I’ve seldom seen one that was HIV-negative. A few that only sniffed heroin or cocaine. *One* that injected who was negative. I asked him why: he was a diabetic, had been taught to inject his insulin using sterile techniques by a nurse and he always had a supply of clean needles. His doctor prescribed them and Medicaid paid for them.

If the people who run this society wanted to stop HIV, they could flood the market not just with free condoms but with free, clean needles and needle-disposal boxes. I’ve tried teaching addicts to use sterile, clean injection techniques and not share needles. You get tired of treating abscesses from infected injection sites, and bacterial endocarditis is horrible. It’s not just HIV that kills addicts. Many of them die of other causes before AIDS has a chance to kill them.

So a group of addicts explained why my instructions about safer injection methods wouldn’t work: after one or two shots of heroin you’re too out of it to know what you’re doing. You start off

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Marxism vs. Bourgeois Pacifism



TROTSKY

The reformist and pacifist organizers of protests against the bombing of Afghanistan push the illusion that the imperialist system can be pressured into being “peaceful.” Writing as the storm clouds of World War I were gathering in 1911, Rosa Luxemburg, then a leader of the revolutionary-internationalist wing of the German Social Democracy, outlined the Marxist understanding that imperialist militarism and wars of depredation and plunder are an

inherent feature of the capitalist profit system. The following translation appeared under the title “The Road to Peace” in Young Socialist (October 1958), organ of what became the youth group of the then-Trotskyist U.S. Socialist Workers Party.

First and foremost, our task is to make clear to the masses of people the nature of militarism and to bring out, sharply and clearly, the difference in principle between the standpoint of social-democracy and that of the bourgeois peace enthusiasts.

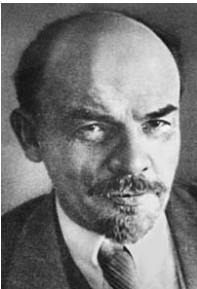
In what does this difference consist? Certainly not merely in the fact that bourgeois apostles of peace rely on the influence of fine words, while we do not depend on words alone. Our very point of departure is diametrically opposed: the friends of peace in bourgeois circles believe that world peace and disarmament can be realized within the framework of the present social order, whereas we who base ourselves on the materialist conception of history and on scientific socialism, are convinced that militarism can be abolished only with the destruction of the capitalist state. From this follows the essential difference in our tactics in spreading the idea of peace....

The nations of today, if they are really serious and honest in their wish to call a halt to competitive armaments, would have to begin by disarming in the commercial and political field, by giving up predatory colonial campaigns, by abandoning the international politics of spheres of influence in all parts of the world—in a word, in their foreign as well as domestic politics, they would have to do the exact opposite of everything which the nature of the present politics of a capitalist state demands....

Only those who believe in the mitigation and blunting of class antagonism and in the reduction of the economic anarchy of capitalism can believe that these international conflicts will permit of slackening, mitigation and elimination.

For the international antagonisms of the capitalist state are but complements of class antagonisms and world-political anarchy, but the reverse side of the anarchic system of capitalist production. Both grow together and must be overcome together. “A little order and peace” is, therefore, just as impossible, just as much a petty-bourgeois utopia, with regard to world politics as it is with regard to the capitalist world market, with regard to the limitation of armaments as it is with regard to the restriction of crises.

—Rosa Luxemburg, “Peace Utopias” (May 1911)



LENIN

WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League of the U.S.



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The closing date for news in this issue is 23 October.

No. 767

26 October 2001

Spartacus Youth Club Class Series

BAY AREA

Tuesdays, 7 p.m.

October 30: **The Russian Revolution**
UC Berkeley, 155 Kroeber Hall
Information and readings: (510) 839-0851

BOSTON

Alternate Thursdays, 6:30 p.m.

November 1: **The Revolution Betrayed**
Boston University
Back Court Lounge, GSU Cafeteria
Information and readings: (617) 666-9453

CHICAGO

Alternate Thursdays, 6 p.m.

November 1: **The Fight for Black Liberation: Key to the American Socialist Revolution**
University of Illinois at Chicago
Behavioral Sciences Bldg., Room 215
1007 West Harrison Street
Information and readings: (312) 563-0441

LOS ANGELES

Alternate Thursdays, 12 noon
November 1: **For Class Struggle Against U.S. Capitalist Rulers—Defend Afghanistan Against Imperialist Attack!**
Pasadena City College, Room tba

Alternate Saturdays, 2 p.m.
November 3: **The Economics of Capitalism**

3806 Beverly Blvd., Suite 215
Information and readings: (213) 380-8239

MADISON

Saturday, 2 p.m.

October 27: **The Victory of the Bolshevik Revolution and the Fight for a Workers Party**
University of Wisconsin, Memorial Union
Information and readings: (312) 563-0441

NEW YORK CITY

Alternate Tuesdays, 7 p.m.

October 30: **For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!**
Columbia University
Hamilton Hall, Room 302
Information and readings email: nysl_syc@yahoo.com

TORONTO

Alternate Wednesdays, 5:30 p.m.

October 31: **The Bolshevik Revolution: How the Working Class Took Power**
York University Student Ctr., Rm. 311C
Information and readings: (416) 593-4138

VANCOUVER

Alternate Wednesdays, 7 p.m.

October 31: **Defend Afghanistan Against U.S./Canadian Imperialist Attack!**
University of British Columbia
Student Union Building, Room 211
Information and readings: (604) 687-0353

Visit the ICL Web Site!
www.icl-fi.org

Chicago SYC Says: “NATO War Criminals Off Campus!”

On October 17, two NATO military officials came to the University of Illinois at Chicago campus to whip up support for imperialist war. This was especially outrageous on a campus whose substantial minority population is a special target of the current hysteria pushed by America’s racist rulers. The Spartacus Youth Club organized a protest against the U.S./NATO war criminals and in defense of Afghanistan against U.S. imperialist attack. Our spirited protest chanted slogans like “Imperialist troops, we say no! This whole damn system’s got to go!” and “Defend Afghanistan against imperialist attack!” Speakers explained that we defend weak, oppressed nations, even ones led by reactionaries like the Taliban, against U.S. imperialism which is truly the biggest terrorist in the world.

Immediately after the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center, the Democrats and Republicans launched their “war against terrorism” and drive for “national unity.” Their purpose is to regiment the population as the capitalist rulers unleash their killing machine abroad and seek to pay for the cost of recession and military buildup out of the hides of working people and minorities. We sought to cut through the flag-waving



Young Spartacus

October 17: SYC protests U.S./NATO war criminals at University of Illinois at Chicago.

patriotism, chanting “National unity is a lie! Bosses profit, workers die!” and raising a revolutionary program of class war against U.S. imperialism.

The International Socialist Organization (ISO) pointedly refused to join our principled antiwar protest. Instead, the day before the event, as NATO continued to provide military support for the American and British bombs raining on

Afghanistan, ISOers passed out unsigned leaflets inviting students to attend the NATO event and engage in a polite discussion: “Come hear senior military leaders speak about the function of NATO and the current war with Afghanistan!... Make your voices heard during Q&A session!” Like militant coal miners used to say, which side are you on? The ISO is used to keeping the same company as

NATO, especially in NATO’s offensives against the USSR, including supporting the CIA-backed *mujahedin* in Afghanistan in the 1980s and effusively backing Wall Street’s anti-Communist Solidarność “union” in Poland, paving the way for capitalist restoration there.

At the NATO event, they handed out flyers signed by the ISO-led “UIC No War” coalition to the audience, asking them to raise questions like “Since the fall of the Soviet Union nuclear weapons have become unnecessary for mutual deterrence against attacks. Why does NATO maintain a stockpile of nuclear weapons anyway?” and “What is the acceptable civilian body count in Afghanistan?” So the ISO agrees with NATO that American nuclear weapons were necessary so long as the Soviet Union existed! And one wonders what would be an “acceptable civilian body count” for the ISO. The ISO looks to persuade the murderous U.S. capitalist state to implement the pacifist call of “no war.” Fat chance! Rather than trying to convince these mass murderers of better policy options, we seek to overturn the system which needs mass murderers to carry out its dirty work.

Only the working class has the social power and objective interests to liberate mankind from oppression. We of the Spartacus Youth Club seek to win students that want more than panhandling for peace to the fight for a workers party. Such a party is necessary to lead a socialist revolution against capitalist exploitation and imperialist slaughter. As we chanted on Wednesday, “Pressure politics won’t stop war! Socialist revolution is what we’re for!” ■

SYC Speakout at Bronx Community College

The New York SYC’s October 10 speakout at Bronx Community College demonstrated that its largely black and Latino student population is not buying the bourgeoisie’s tenacious and blatant attempts to sell this war. We sold nearly 50 pieces of literature there, reflecting that our revolutionary perspective and program has a resonance with the students. Many students we ran into were concerned about the possibility of eventually being drafted, knowing well that the military drafts primarily blacks, Latinos and the working class. Many thought ridiculous the idea that the terrorist attacks happened because the U.S. supposedly is “a haven of democracy and freedom.” Some agreed that the U.S. ruling class is the biggest terrorist in the world, citing specifically the bombing of Iraq. Others agreed that the increasing anti-Arab racism is the same racism meted out to blacks and Latinos on a daily basis—quipping that racial profiling was now “legal.” Some students called this country the most racist in the world. They recalled the so-called “war on drugs” and knew exactly what putting more cops on the

streets of New York City means.

Amid chants of “Democrats, Republicans—Parties of war! A workers party is what we’re for!” our comrades emphasized our defense of Afghanistan against imperialist attack. The racist American rulers—Democrats and Republicans alike—have no interest in liberating Afghanistan, but have every interest in consolidating their hold on the region. As one of our comrades noted, “Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, which we hailed, gave that country a shot at emerging from religious and social backwardness, not least in the fight for women’s rights.” We noted that the U.S. capitalists, who seek to line up the working class behind a program of “national unity” in the “war against terrorism” even as they ratchet up repression at home, funded and braintrustered the feuding, mullah-ridden factions that dominate Afghanistan today. Our chant, “Defend Afghanistan! For class struggle at home!” emphasized our point that the fight against capitalist war and oppression must be a *class* fight and that only the working class has the social power to overturn capitalism. ■

CCNY Professors Witchhunted for “Un-American” Statements

The SL/SYC issued the following letter of protest on the witchhunting of professors who made comments critical of the U.S. government at an October 2 teach-in at the City College of New York (CCNY), a public college that is part of the City University of New York (CUNY) system. The letter was issued on October 10 and sent to CUNY chancellor Matthew Goldstein, the CUNY Board of Trustees, and Gregory Williams, the president of CCNY. While no formal disciplinary action has been taken against the professors or the professors union thus far, the *Chronicle of Higher Education* reported one trustee’s statement that the professors “have the invitation to take a hike.”

A number of students from other schools in the CUNY system have voiced their opposition to the witchhunting of the CCNY professors, including at an October 12 press conference. The professors singled out have continued to receive threatening messages, including death threats; reportedly these have particularly been directed at a female Muslim anthropology professor, M.A. Samad-Matias. Our statement below mentions threats made against professor Walter Daum, a supporter of the League for the Revolutionary Party; at a subsequent teach-in at CCNY on October 16, professor Daum said that he had received a letter signed by the Ku Klux Klan stating “The Klan is coming to get you.” The attacks on the civil liberties of leftists and minorities by the administration have obviously served to embolden the forces of race-terror who represent a mortal

threat not just to people like Walter Daum, but also to the heavily black and minority student body at CCNY and anyone opposed to racist oppression and capitalist injustice.

* * *

The Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth Club vehemently protest the attempts by the CUNY administration to witchhunt the Professional Staff Congress of the City University of New York (PSC-CUNY) and those professors who

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Young Spartacus

NYC, October 7: Spartacist contingent at protest the day bombing of Afghanistan began stressed defense of immigrants, opposition to bosses’ “national unity.”

Spartacist Forum

Only Workers Revolution Can End Imperialist War
For Class Struggle Against U.S. Capitalist Rulers—
Defend Afghanistan Against Imperialist Attack!

Saturday, November 3, 5 p.m.

CHICAGO

University of Illinois at Chicago
Taft Hall, Room 219
(behind Circle Center—750 S. Halsted)
For more information: (312) 563-0441

The Internationalist Group: Centrist Pathology

“Great conflicts sweep away all that is halfway and artificial and, on the other hand, give strength to all that is viable. War leaves room only for two tendencies in the ranks of the working class movement: social patriotism, which does not stop at any betrayal, and revolutionary internationalism, which is bold and capable of going to the end. It is precisely for this reason that centrists, fearful of impending events, are waging a rabid struggle against the Fourth International.”

—Leon Trotsky, “Sectarianism, Centristism, and the Fourth International” (22 October 1935)

In the immediate aftermath of September 11, every section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) published the statement of the Spartacist League/U.S. Political Bureau titled “Oppose Domestic Repression, Imperialist ‘Retaliation’—The World Trade Center Attack” (see *Workers Vanguard* No. 764, 14 September) with an introduction taking up the crimes of their “own” bourgeois ruling classes, seeking to galvanize the workers movement to defend the besieged Arab and Asian minorities and to punch through reactionary “national fronts” pushed in their respective countries. In the next issue of *WV* (No. 765, 28 September), newspaper of the ICL section operating within the “belly of the beast” of murderous U.S. imperialism, we wrote: “National Unity’ Jingoism: Bosses Profit, Workers Pay—Repression, Recession and War” and prominently called for, among other things, “U.S. Hands Off Afghanistan, Iraq!” When Washington commenced its war against

before a court of law.” Reformists such as the Workers World Party (WWP) have their tactical differences with, and varying appetites from, the ISO. But they are equally looking to build an “antiwar movement” that is hospitable to a wing of capitalist (read: Democratic Party) politicians “critical” of the Bush White House’s rampage at home and abroad, when and if such a wing should emerge. Thus the classless, “pacifist” bleat by WWP’s ANSWER coalition that “war is not the answer” (see “Spartacus Youth Clubs Say: Only Workers Revolution Can End Imperialist War!” *WV* No. 766, 12 October).

Between the overt social-patriotism of the fake left and our revolutionary, proletarian, internationalist program stands the Internationalist Group (IG), a small outfit composed of defectors from the revolutionary Trotskyism of the ICL. Despite some orthodox-sounding criticisms of the reformists on paper, the IG has lent its services, such as they are, to playing the role of a left-sounding “loyal opposition” to the reformist-led “antiwar movement”—a service fulfilled not least of all by attacking the ICL. A special issue of the IG’s *Internationalist* (27 September) contains its 14 September statement titled “After Indiscriminate World Trade Center Attack—U.S. Whips Up Imperialist War Frenzy, Drives Toward Police State” and its 27 September article, “Capitalism = War, Racism, Economic Crisis—For Workers Revolution!” The latter charges us with opportunism akin to that of the renegade German ex-Marxist Karl

panied the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, the IG prettifies the existing consciousness of the working masses in order to embrace alien class forces.

While the objects of its political coquetry vary from place to place, the IG’s specialty has been aggrandizement of a “hardline” wing of the Stalinist bureaucracies in Cuba and China, as well as genuflection before petty-bourgeois nationalists (and worse) in the colonial and semicolonial world. Shortly after departing the ICL, the IG consummated a fusion with a Brazilian organization with whom we had broken relations because they proved to be garden variety trade-union opportunists. The IG’s Brazilian comrades ran an ex-cop for president of a cop-infested public employees union, and then wielded lawsuits to drag the union through the bourgeois courts in order to hold on to their positions in the union (see “Lies, Damned Lies and Anti-Union Lawsuits: IG’s Brazil Fraud Exposed,” *WV* No. 669, 30 May 1997). Elsewhere, such as in Puerto Rico and Mexico, they rushed out to flatter petty-bourgeois nationalist forces.

Playing the Counterfeit Card of Anti-Americanism

In its 27 September statement, the IG writes of the Spartacist League: “Thus the SL put out a statement dated September 12 with the innocuous title, ‘The World Trade Center Attack.’ While a superhead called to ‘Oppose Domestic Repression, Imperialist Retaliation,’ the beginning of the statement focuses on denouncing the terrorists, as does most of the end of the statement. Nowhere does the SL statement call to *defend* the countries (notably Afghanistan and Iraq) which were already targeted by Washington in the first hours after the WTC/Pentagon attack.”

As for the IG’s fulminations that we have failed in our internationalist duty to defend Afghanistan and Iraq: a glance at the headlines of our newspaper repudiates such absurd slander. It is all the more ridiculous for those who know something about the record of our international tendency, including our forthright statement in the ICL’s “Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program”: “In wars of imperialist depredation against colonial, semicolonial or dependent nations, the duty of the proletariat in every country is to aid the oppressed nations against the imperialists, while maintaining complete political independence from bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalist forces” (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 54, Spring 1998). Indeed, as soon as the U.S. imperialists started raining down bombs on Afghanistan, we raised the call to “Defend Afghanistan against imperialist attack!” not only on our front page but also on our banners and signs at demonstrations and in our interventions at “antiwar” meetings.

We noted in our 12 September statement on the World Trade Center attack: “Those who perpetrated this horrific attack (and there is no evidence at all as to who that was) *embrace the same mentality as the racist rulers of America—identifying the working masses with their capitalist exploiters and oppressors!*” Indeed, the hideous massacre of thousands of working people who perished in the attack on the World Trade Center was an enormous tragedy. Around the world, millions of people watched in gut-

wrenching horror as live television showed people jumping to their deaths from the burning twin towers moments before they collapsed. This attack was a gift to the American rulers, who seek to manipulate widespread and justifiable outrage in the interests of forging “national unity” and pushing U.S. imperialist war aims.

Why then does the IG berate us for our straightforward denunciation of an act that was a crime from the standpoint of the working masses? In fact, the IG talks out of both sides of its mouth, reflecting the effort to capitulate simultaneously to different audiences. In the third paragraph of their 14 September statement, the IG themselves stated that they “categorically oppose the indiscriminate terror used by the hijackers, who in grotesquely taking the lives of several thousand ordinary working people thereby equate them with the American government that oppresses workers and minorities in the U.S. along with peoples around the world.” But by the time of their next statement, the IG is denouncing us for telling the Marxist truth. Typical of centrists, their occasional use of orthodox formulations is meant only for the unwary. Certainly the IG doesn’t believe its own rhetoric. As we have stressed in our propaganda, American imperialism must be shattered from within, by mobilizing the proletariat against the capitalist order. Anyone seeking to win the American proletariat to this perspective would have to face reality squarely and acknowledge the wave of chauvinism and jingoism that the ruling class is manipulating.

But the IG’s purpose is otherwise; it is playing to a different audience, one of “Third World” nationalists for whom the “only good American is a dead American.” One can search their two statements in vain for anything of substance dealing with how the fake left in Europe and Latin America manipulates the counterfeit currency of anti-Americanism to reconcile itself to its own bourgeoisie, or any sober assessment of the increasing role of political Islam in large parts of the world.

One will find at most a bare, passing reference in the IG material to the escalation of interimperialist rivalries in the wake of the destruction of the USSR, which is the context for the machinations in Afghanistan and Central Asia by the U.S. and other imperialists. In such countries as France and Germany, where the IG (dubiously) claims to have supporters, reformist and centrist forces have accepted the war aims of U.S. imperialism, such as driving out the Taliban, while making much ado about not following U.S. diktats and arguing instead for more powers for their own capitalist rulers, or for a war directly administered by the giant condom for U.S. imperialism, the United Nations. In Berlin, the Nazis have tried to outflank the social-chauvinist “leftists” by denouncing the war in Afghanistan because it is in the interests of American—not German—imperialism. Burning an American flag in Berlin—or for that matter in Peshawar—does not make one a proletarian revolutionary.

In the economically backward world, where mass poverty prevails as a result of the economic and military depredations of U.S. imperialism over the years, it is hardly surprising that many people would feel satisfaction over the attack on the World Trade Center. In such countries, nationalists and sometimes even “leftists” play to their audience by seeking to paint the slaughter of thousands of innocent people as an act of “anti-imperialism.” This is a gift to the venal and brutal rulers of their own countries for whom nationalism—the lie that all Americans or all Mexicans have the same fundamental interests—is key to keeping the oppressed masses in line. The statement issued by the ICL’s Mexican section, the Grupo Espartaquista de México (GEM), sharply polemicized with a local nationalist organization that hailed the attack on the World Trade Center, falsely claiming that it weakened

is the trademark of all those revolutionary capacity of the

The ICL’s defeatist conclusions are not limited to the former Soviet Union. The counterpart in predominantly Muslim countries is the claim, in the same Declaration, that: “The 1979 ‘Iranian Revolution’ opened up a period of ascendant political Islam in the historically Muslim world....” The ICL even organized an “Islamic commission” during its third international conference. This thesis of Islamic ascendancy is actually a “left” version of the

The Internationalist
Summer 2001

Islamic fundamentalists on the march in Algeria, 1994. IG says it ain’t so.

Cambio 16



Afghanistan, we headlined: “War-Crazed Imperialists Stalk the World: For Class Struggle Against U.S. Capitalist Rulers—Defend Afghanistan Against Imperialist Attack!” (*WV* No. 766, 12 October).

The reformist “left” in the U.S. is meanwhile engaged in crass, faith-based appeals to U.S. imperialism along the lines of the call raised by the International Socialist Organization (ISO) for “No Blank Check for War” (as opposed to a specified check for war?) or of the ISO-influenced “San Francisco Town Hall Committee to Stop War and Hate,” which called on the U.S. rulers to “work with the international community to identify & locate all those responsible & bring them

Kautsky, who provided a left prop for the chauvinist Social Democrats during World War I.

Charging us with being “defeatist” and “abstentionist” and the like has been the stock in trade for the IG. At the time of its defection from the ICL in 1996, we were supposedly “passive propagandists” because we opposed a bogus “regroupment” perspective pushed by Jan Norden—until then a leading member of the ICL and now IG supremo—toward the Communist Platform of the German Party of Democratic Socialism, the very forces that had sold out the East German deformed workers state. Denying the retrogression of consciousness that accom-

imperialism. The GEM stressed that in contrast to all variants of nationalism, Trotskyist internationalists draw a class line: against the capitalist rulers at home and in solidarity with the American proletariat in the fight for world socialist revolution.

Nothing better captures the bankruptcy of the IG's fraudulent "international" than the fact that for weeks its Mexican co-thinkers handed out the IG's U.S. statement without a single word against the *Mexican* ruling class. Meanwhile, the right-wing government of Vicente Fox had been using the World Trade Center atrocity to jack up its attacks on Near Eastern immigrants, indigenous peoples and rebellious peasants like the Zapatistas, as well as its witchhunt against activist students at Mexico City's National Autonomous University. But the performance of the Mexican IG here is quite logical coming from a group that denies that the main obstacle in Mexico to revolutionary proletarian consciousness is bourgeois nationalism.

Afghanistan and Religious Fundamentalism

The woeful performance of the IG's "international" did not fall from the sky. Even before his flight from the ICL, the IG's founder-leader (and former *WV* editor) Norden had a strong tendency toward impressionism and vicarious adventurism, animated by an often fatuous optimism about the capacity of forces very distant from Trotskyism, or from the proletariat for that matter, to "struggle" in some successful measure against the depredations of the imperialist bourgeoisie. At the time of the 1991 Persian Gulf War,



WV Photo

Revolutionary Contingent at October 20 San Francisco antiwar protest.

presumed that the Gulf War was akin to the Vietnam War two decades earlier. But the Vietnamese workers and peasants were fighting for a social revolution, which gave the military struggle a huge impetus. At that time, the SL called for "Victory to the Vietnamese Revolution!" while calling for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracies in Moscow, Hanoi and Beijing. During the Gulf War, uncritical enthusing over Hussein's armies could only serve to embellish bourgeois Arab nationalism.

Over the last two decades, disappointment in bourgeois nationalism has fueled the growth of Islamic fundamentalism. In turn, Norden & Co. have lurched very far in the direction of chasing such alien

stand for the liberating goals of the Enlightenment (see our 1998 pamphlet *Enlightenment Rationalism and the Origins of Marxism*). That Norden considers this anything other than a badge of honor is a devastating self-indictment. Those with no perspective of a *proletarian* revolution are left with the ersatz “anti-imperialism” of nationalists of every sort, and even Islamic fundamentalists. This applies not only to the “state capitalist” ISO but to the IG as well.

Today, of course, it is fashionable on the left to point out that the likes of Osama bin Laden were subsidized and groomed by the American government. But what the fake left seeks to avoid at all cost is any discussion of *where they stood*



Der Spiegel

these tendencies began to find expression in the pages of the party press. Following the defection of Norden and a handful of others, we wrote in “A Shamefaced Defection from Trotskyism” (WV No. 648, 5 July 1996):

“From the question of the survival of Sandinista Nicaragua against U.S. imperialism in the 1980s, to the capacities of the army of Saddam Hussein’s Iraq to inflict serious damage against the imperialists during the Persian Gulf War, Norden always stood at the extreme end of a tendency to impressionistically overdraw (and often fantastically so) the military factor. Correspondingly, this meant conjuring up an anticipated flood of anti-imperialist struggle while seriously downplaying the crucial and related factors of political consciousness and material economic reality.”

In the mouths of opportunists, “military support” is often the cover used to express political confidence in anti-working-class regimes and parties. In contrast, we called to defend Iraq while giving no quarter politically to the Ba’athist regime of Saddam Hussein, the nationalistic butcher of millions of workers, Communist militants and Kurds. Norden took as good coin Hussein’s vows to wage “the mother of all battles” against the U.S. because, having despaired of the prospect of defeating U.S. imperialism by workers revolution from within, he was desperate to find some other agency to whom he could subcontract the task. Norden’s inflation of Hussein’s military capacities



WV Photo

Red Army in Afghanistan opened road to social liberation. Right: At Bay Area abortion rights protest and around the world, PDC raised funds to aid civilian victims of siege by CIA-backed *mujahedin* following 1989 Kremlin withdrawal.

when the Afghan *mujahedin*, and their allies like bin Laden, were being financed by the CIA in an attempt to bring down the Soviet degenerated workers state. Trotskyists then said: “Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!” while calling to extend the social gains of the October Revolution to that country. In contrast, anti-communists like the ISO stood with the imperialists

and the counterrevolutionary *mujahedin* against the USSR.

When we bring this unpalatable truth to members of the left and workers movement (many of whom are too young to remember the Red Army intervention in Afghanistan), the fake left goes into a frenzy, howling that “that’s over the limit” and trying to shout us down. On paper, the IG may well include a paragraph or two claiming to be in agreement with what our tendency fought for in Afghanistan, but that is not what they push on the ground. At a large September 20 teach-in at New York University featuring the ISO, the IG speaker oh-so-politely avoided confronting the fake left’s shameful history on the question of Afghanistan.

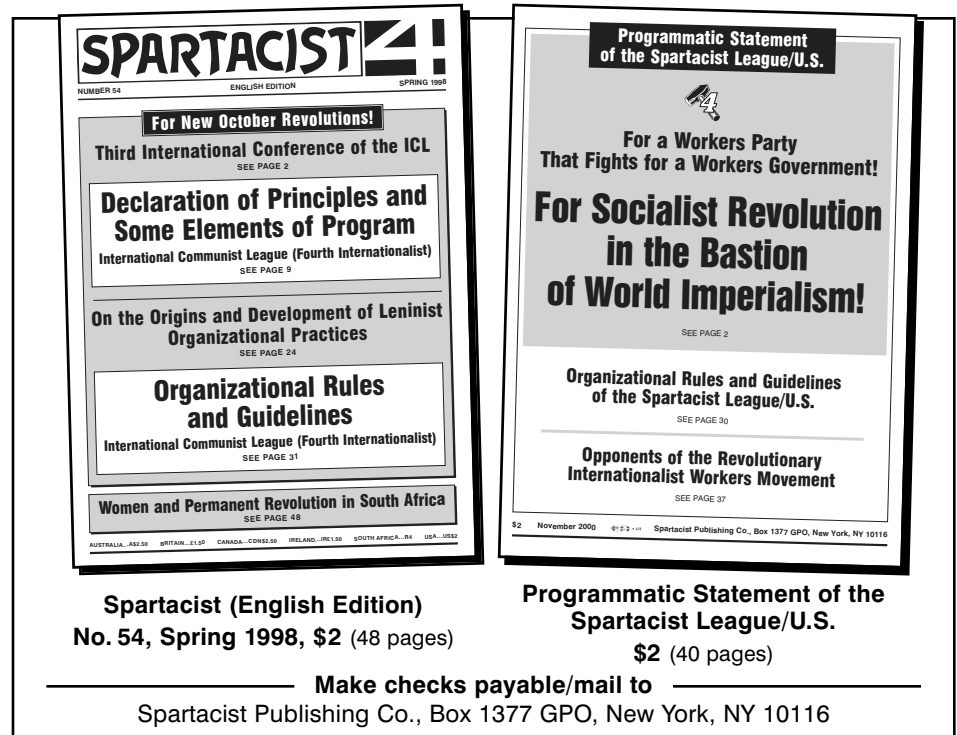
In raising the call to defend Afghanistan against imperialist attack, the ICL makes clear that this does not involve an iota of political support for the thoroughly reactionary Taliban, or any version of “Third world” nationalism. Not so with the IG, which rushed to call to “defend Afghanistan” even before the bombs started falling. “Genuine communists,” writes the IG, “defend semi-colonial countries against imperialist attack as we fight for socialist revolution against their bourgeois and, in the case of Afghanistan, feudalistic leaders” (“The Left and the War in Afghanistan,” 27 September). To put it mildly, this is totally demented. Socialist revolution is made by an insurgent proletariat that seizes the means of production, abolishes the capitalist class and establishes the dictatorship of the proletariat. Afghanistan is a devastated and backward country with no industry, no working class and not even much agriculture.

Not least of our reasons for hailing the Soviet military intervention in 1979 was that only the victory of the Red Army and a prolonged military occupation by Soviet forces gave the Afghan peoples the possibility of leaping over centuries into the modern world. The IG's dimwitted formulation obliterates any class distinction between the proletariat and the oppressed peasant masses, as is typical of petty-bourgeois nationalists. One might note that the call for "socialist revolution in Afghanistan" was used in the 1980s by various "third campists" (like Workers Power) who wanted to avoid a clear choice between the Red Army and the CIA-backed *mujahedin*.

“Radical” Renegades from Trotskyism

At demonstrations in New York City, IG supporters have ranted about our statement that “to her credit, black Oakland Congresswoman Barbara Lee, a protégé of former liberal Congressman Ron Dellums, registered the sole vote against the resolution giving Bush a blank check for war” (WV No. 765, 28 September). They claim that this statement amounts to a political capitulation to the Democratic Party, akin to the role played by the U.S.

continued on page 8



Warpath...

(continued from page 1)

It is a form of anger at this world that serves only to strengthen its chains. Indignation at insults, at oppressiveness, at impoverishment is turned, not against the axes of power, but against an incidental target."

Now, the most powerful, nuclear-armed imperialist country on the face of the planet, the U.S., is seeking "retribution" for the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, lining up the American population behind "one nation under god" patriotism. If it had just been the Pentagon, the headquarters of the murderous American imperialist military machine, the ruling class would have had more difficulty whipping up such a jingoist frenzy. But the mass killing of thousands of ordinary people of all races, religions and nationalities in the World Trade Center—in an attack which, taking place at 9 a.m. on a workday morning, was purposely designed to kill as many as possible—serves as a bloody shirt in the hands of this imperialist government, which is matchless in its own depraved indifference to human life.

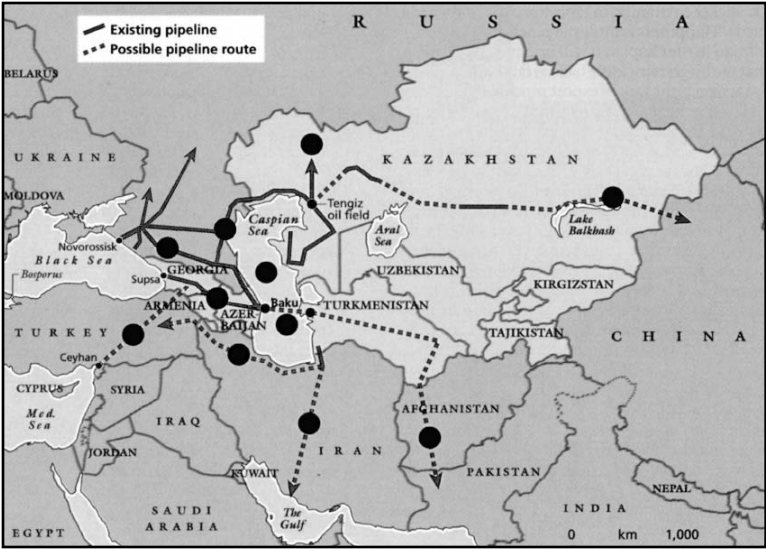
The U.S. rulers have seized on and manipulated the sadness, rage and fear of millions in the U.S. who watched in horror as the twin towers collapsed after being hit by planeloads of innocent people. They play on the grief of the thousands who desperately distributed pictures of relatives and friends who worked in the World Trade Center; on the rage against this entirely criminal mass killing of some 5,000 people, most of whose bodies will never be recovered; on the heroism of the many hundreds of firefighters, construction and other workers who put their own lives on the line in rescue efforts; on the fears of those who wear face masks to keep out the acrid fumes that blow upwind from the mass funeral pyre that was once the World Trade Center.

The American government and its media mouthpieces point the finger at Osama bin Laden and the bloodcurdling cry for war on the "infidels" by his Al Qaeda outfit. Leave aside that there is yet no proof at all of who was responsible for the September 11 attacks. When bin Laden and his ilk were skinning Soviet Red Army soldiers alive, throwing acid in the faces of unveiled women and murdering schoolteachers for the "crime" of teaching young girls to read and write, the Islamic reactionaries were heralded as "freedom fighters" and bankrolled and backed by the American government. The multimillionaire Saudi construction prince bin Laden and his acolytes are hardly the wretched of the earth. Rather, they manipulate the fears and resentment of the Muslim poor in order to build their own power.

And now the U.S. rulers find the opportunity to manipulate the fears and resentments of the working class and oppressed of this country for the purpose of reinforcing their power and class rule. Their war against the weak is not confined to bombing desperately impoverished and backward peoples abroad. It is also a war against the exploited and dispossessed right here at home, as the government wields the all-purpose spectre of "terrorism" to further the exploitation of labor and the vicious racial subjugation of the black population, to round up immigrants and to target any perceived opponents of the bourgeoisie's class rule.

Whoever attacked the World Trade Center, they handed the American bourgeoisie a "gift from god," the opportunity to convince a distrustful population that it has the same interests as the capitalist rulers. The ruling class sees its chance to break the "Vietnam syndrome"—the popular opposition to sending U.S. troops, young working men and women, to die in the military adventures of this country's rulers. At home, the aim of the filthy rich exploiters is to stamp out any opposition to the deepening recession, intensified exploitation and racist oppression.

It is desperately necessary to fight! The



Pipeline routes in Central Asia, oil worker in Turkmenistan. Imperialists vie over control of vast oil and natural gas reserves in region.

road to eliminating the hideous oppression and exploitation which every day create thousands more suicide bombers and which create unemployment, homelessness, poverty and destitution in the U.S. is the road of class struggle. And only this road offers the way forward to proletarian socialist revolution and the elimination of a system based on profits for the few and exploitation and immiseration for the many. *For class struggle against the capitalist rulers at home! Defend Afghanistan against U.S./British attacks! Only socialist revolution can free humanity from capitalist enslavement!*

The War at Home

Since the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, America's rulers have been seeking a new external enemy as a surrogate for "godless Communism," against which they can rally the population and deflect mounting domestic discontent. Now they think they have found that new bogeyman in "terrorism." The "war on terrorism," warned Vice President Richard Cheney, "may never end, at least not in our lifetime." The very right-wing Bush administration, which rode into the White House with no electoral mandate, has seized on the September 11 attacks—and its own current popularity—to crystallize a new set of laws that would mean a qualitative diminution of democratic rights.

These measures seek to eliminate many existing legal restraints on the government's power to spy on the population, imprison political activists or labor militants, and indiscriminately round up and detain non-citizens. The proposed legislation defines "terrorists" to include anyone charged with destroying public property for purposes deemed to be aimed at influencing or changing the government. Though Attorney General John Ashcroft wanted these measures pushed through in a matter of days, the legislation is still pending in Congress because of objections coming from a broad spectrum.

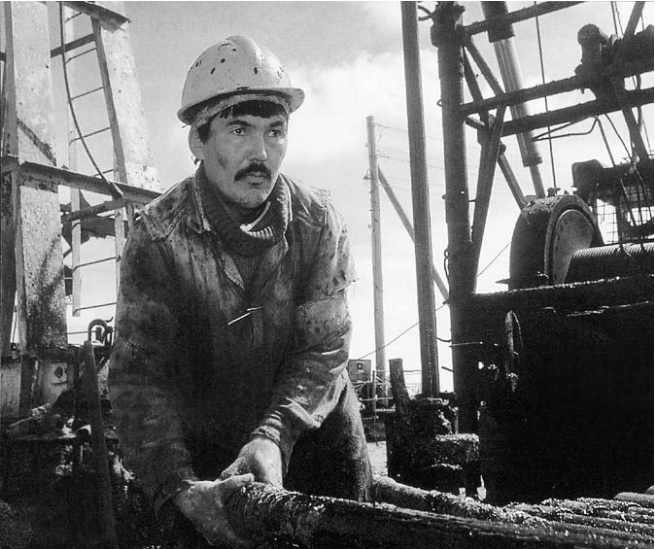
A compromise proposal by Democratic Congressman John Conyers would replace a mandate for indefinite "preventive detention" of non-citizens suspected of "terrorism" with a seven-day limit on detention. The current bill in Congress also imposes a "sunset clause" requiring the law to be reapproved in five years, while some Republicans in particular oppose provisions for stiffer surveillance of bank accounts in the guise of hunt-

ing down "terrorist" funds. Nonetheless, there is bipartisan support for a draconian assault on existing civil liberties, and a number of the current provisions were foreshadowed by the "anti-terrorism" measures enacted under the Clinton administration, which gutted *habeas corpus* appeal rights and set up secret courts to detain and deport non-citizens. Commenting on the proposed new regulations in an interview in the *New Statesman* (19 October), Gore Vidal said: "Requesting all those special powers pushes us even further along the path towards Hitler's Enabling Act of 1933.... They're now going to lock up anybody they want to, silence anybody they want to."

Even before any such legislation has been enacted, the government has detained more than 830 people, overwhelmingly of Near Eastern origin. Many remain unaccounted for and effectively "disappeared." A Saudi doctor living in San Antonio, Texas was awakened in the middle of the night by FBI agents and flown in shackles on a government plane to New York City, where he was met by an army of Feds with their guns pointed at him. Held in solitary confinement for nearly two weeks, he was only released after the intervention of a lawyer for the Saudi Aramco oil giant. An Egyptian restaurant owner in Evansville, Indiana was dragged off and held for a week simply because he had taken flying lessons. Over 200 colleges have *voluntarily* turned over the names of foreign students, especially those from Near Eastern countries, to the FBI, the immigration cops and other government agencies.

Even the Feds admit that only ten of the 830 arrested have the vaguest "connection" to anything related to the September 11 attacks. But once they've got you ensnared, they'll try to make sure you confess to *something*. A report in the *London Times* (22 October) is headlined, "FBI Considers Torture as Suspects Stay Silent."

The government is using the fear born of the September 11 attacks to sell the American people the lie that more cops and more restrictions on democratic rights are for their own "protection." The truth of the matter is that the government fears and loathes "the people." The bourgeoisie's purpose is to further ensure that the capitalist state—its cops, courts, prisons and army—tightens its monopoly on the means of violence, which it employs against the population. Thus, an



Nicholl/Matrix

entirely rational union proposal that pilots be allowed to carry a gun in the cockpit was rejected out of hand. But consider this: if the passengers and crew of the hijacked airliners had been packing, things could've turned out a whole lot different.

Instead, people are now being harassed and intimidated by armies of cops who flood the subways and by National Guard troops patrolling the airports, trains and bus stations. F-16s fly regularly over New York City in formation, ready to shoot down any airliner that deviates in the least from its scheduled flight path. The FBI has deployed its entire force of 28,000 with the primary aim of hunting down "terrorists."

The government is cynically using the deaths of two Washington, D.C. postal workers from anthrax inhalation to further fan the "anti-terrorist" hysteria. In fact, their deaths—and the infection of at least two other workers at the same facility as a result of these truly sick, anonymous poison mail parcels—underscore the absolute indifference of the bosses to the lives of working people. When an anthrax-laden letter handled by this facility reached Democratic Senator Tom Daschle's office, the response was swift: his office was evacuated, quarantined and 50 aides tested for anthrax and given the Cipro antibiotic. And after a Congressional aide was exposed, the entire House of Representatives closed up shop for days.

But the workers at the postal facility were callously told to keep working when they asked to be tested for exposure. In Trenton, the postal workers who handled the anthrax letter sent to NBC anchorman Tom Brokaw were likewise told that tests were not deemed "medically necessary." Now at least two workers at that facility are also infected. In Manhattan, postal workers had to threaten a job action to force the bosses to allow them to get time off for such tests. The only way workers can defend their rights—and, in this case, their lives—is by using the power they have to withdraw their labor, to wage a strike to demand effective health and safety provisions.

"National Unity": Bosses Profit, Workers Pay

It is to be expected that all sections of the population, including the working class, would be swept up by jingoist propaganda in the initial stages of a mobilization for war. But it is a measure of the desperation experienced by working people that the all-out drive for "national unity" has already encountered several strikes, notably a two-week walk-out by state workers in Minnesota and now a strike at three General Dynamics *tank plants*, with management attacks on health coverage being a major issue in both cases.

While the airlines and other corporations have lined up like pigs at the trough to get government handouts, not a dime of any of these bailouts has gone to the workers. Over 100,000 airline workers have lost their jobs since September 11. At least a third of the heavily immigrant membership of the 300,000-strong HERE hotel workers union is now without a job,



Beit Jala, West Bank: Israeli troops killed nearly 30 Palestinians in Occupied Territories in five days after assassination of fascist cabinet minister Rehavam Zeevi.

SL Supporter at Charleston Five Defense Rally

“Unity of Bosses and Workers Is a Lie”

We print below the remarks of a Spartacist League spokesman at a support rally for the Charleston Five held at the International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10 hall in San Francisco on October 10. The five are members of Charleston, South Carolina International Longshore Association (ILA) Local 1422, a beachhead of labor power in the racist “open shop” South. They face up to five years in prison for defending their union picket line against a massive cop assault on the Charleston waterfront in January 2000 (see “Thousands Rally to Defend Charleston Longshoremen,” WV No. 761, 6 July).

I’m Kathy with the Spartacist League. We continue to support the Charleston ILA in its struggle against the vicious union-busting by the bosses and their government. We have publicized the case in our newspaper *Workers Vanguard*, and the Partisan Defense Committee has both contributed to and appealed for funds for their defense. It’s important that thousands of unionists have supported the Charleston Five, but the only force that the ruling class understands is mass protest and strike action centered on the social power of the multiracial labor movement.

The terrorist attack on the World Trade Center, an indefensible criminal act, has had the effect of driving the working class into the arms of its oppressors—the capitalist class. Both ruling parties are fanning the flames of patriotic fervor to line

up the population behind their military aims abroad and to further chain the working class to the interests of the bosses at home. The prosecution of the Charleston Five shows that this unity is a lie.

Some parties that claim to be socialist call for bringing the perpetrators of the World Trade Center attack to “justice” in a “court of law.” Justice from whom? The racist U.S. courts that framed up Mumia Abu-Jamal? What “court of law”? The United Nations, whose economic blockade has starved to death a million Iraqi children? The labor movement must wage class struggle at home and defend Afghanistan against imperialist attack!

The ruling class is using this patriotic fervor to vastly increase the apparatus of state repression against workers, immigrants and the oppressed. They want to beef up the Maritime Security Act, calling for “background checks” of longshore workers. We say, “Government out of the unions!” In Minnesota, striking public workers are confronting the full blast of the bosses’ propaganda machine against their right to strike. “National unity” means attacks on jobs, wages and hard-won civil rights, and it means workers are to bear the brunt of the deepening economic crisis.

Now more than ever it is vital for the working class to struggle to be politically independent from both capitalist parties, who together are waging a one-sided war against the working class. Remember: the cop attack against the ILA was orga-



WV Photo

Facing charges for defending their union: portraits of Charleston Five on stage at Columbia, SC defense rally, June 9.

nized by Democratic Party mayor Riley’s police chief.

For decades, the pro-capitalist AFL-CIO leadership has tied workers to their class enemy through support to the Democrats. Their purely legalistic strategy of voting Democrat and collaborating with the bosses and their government has weakened the ability of the unions to defend themselves.

For that reason, we believe it is necessary to wage a political struggle within the unions to forge a revolutionary workers party that will fight for black free-

dom, for immigrant rights and for our class brothers and sisters abroad against U.S. imperialism. Such a party will lead the fight to get rid of the capitalist order and create a workers government and a new society without exploitation. This is the only road to end racism and war forever. Those who labor must rule!

* * *

Send donations for defense of the Charleston Five to: Dockworkers Defense Fund, c/o Robert J. Ford, Treasurer, 910 Morrison Drive, Charleston, SC 29403. ■

and most of them are ineligible for *any* social benefits—thanks in large part to the legislation enacted by the Clinton administration axing welfare. That applies as well to the families of the more than 50 workers killed in the World Trade Center’s “Windows on the World” restaurant. In the days after September 11, immigration cops staged roundups of “illegal” immigrants working as dishwashers and janitors at the Denver airport, and over 800 undocumented workers were fired in Portland, Oregon. Meanwhile, border crossings from Mexico have been further restricted.

The majority (61 percent) of all workers applying for unemployment insurance are “ineligible” for benefits because they have been buffeted from one transitory McJob to another in an economy in which the only lifetime job available seems to be a seat on the Supreme Court. With the costs of health insurance skyrocketing, even those who get jobless benefits won’t be able to provide medical care for themselves or their families. The vaunted budget surplus has already disappeared into the pockets of the wealthy (with even more tax breaks for the rich scheduled), and the coffers of state governments (which had to some extent covered holes left by the Feds in the “safety net”) are empty. Meanwhile, employers have begun to use bankruptcy (Bethlehem Steel) or the threat of bankruptcy (United Airlines) for the purpose of extracting wage and benefit concessions from their workers, an alibi that will soon become epidemic.

The pro-capitalist labor tops instantly rallied behind Bush’s “war against terrorism,” with AFL-CIO chief John Sweeney lecturing workers that “no sacrifice is too great” to defend American “values.” The values espoused by Sweeney & Co. are those of America’s capitalist rulers. Promoting the Democrats as a “lesser evil” at home, the AFL-CIO tops push “America first” protectionism against workers abroad. Their only complaint against the bipartisan warmongering on Capitol Hill is that the Democrats aren’t hard enough against any easing of trade protectionism.

The bourgeoisie’s campaign of “na-

tional unity” must be punctured by the struggle of working people and the oppressed in defense of their rights and livelihoods against the capitalists’ onslaught. Critical to this perspective is the mobilization of labor’s social power to defend immigrant rights. In this country, the raw exploitation of labor has always come wrapped in the envelope of racial and ethnic hostilities fomented by the capitalist rulers. Many black workers and poor know well what it means when the racist rulers tell you to keep your mouth shut and take whatever they dish out in the name of “national unity.”

At the same time, many black people buy into the capitalist rulers’ attempts to pit American-born workers against immigrants. This only feeds the overall racist offensive in which black people, whose oppression is the cornerstone of American capitalism, will be hit hardest. Any opposition to “racial profiling” is now condemned as giving aid and comfort to “terrorists.” The NYPD cops, the coldblooded killers responsible for gunning down Amadou Diallo and countless other ghetto and barrio residents, are today portrayed as “heroes.” And the “anti-terror” squads being set up with orders to “shoot to kill” will mean more Amadou Diallos across the country.

Black and immigrant workers are not just victims of capitalist repression but a vital—and in the case of black workers, strategic—component of the multiracial working class. The fight for black rights is an integral part of the fight for the emancipation of the working class. We seek to forge the workers party that will lead the fight not for more crumbs from the capitalists, but to overthrow the entire profit system through socialist revolution, smashing the capitalist state and creating a workers state where production is geared to society’s needs rather than profits for the few.

Imperialism Breeds War

It is just over two decades since the Soviet Union—responding to urgent appeals from the pro-Soviet, left-nationalist People’s Democratic Party (PDPA) regime in Afghanistan—sent in troops to

prevent a victory by Islamic fundamentalists who took up arms against the government’s modernizing measures, particularly in relation to women. The imperialists seized on the Red Army intervention in Afghanistan to launch a renewed Cold War offensive. Uniquely on the left, we Trotskyists hailed the Soviet intervention, which not only posed military defense of the USSR against a CIA-backed Islamic insurgency on its southern flank but opened the possibility of liberation for the peoples of Afghanistan, especially the women enslaved by feudalist reaction.

By the mid-1980s, the Red Army clearly had the *mujahedin* on the run. When the Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy pulled out of Afghanistan in 1988-89 in an attempt to placate the imperialists, we denounced the withdrawal as a criminal betrayal not only of Afghan women and leftists but of the Soviet degenerated workers state. Today, the liberation of the impoverished and oppressed peoples of Afghanistan hinges on successful proletarian revolutions in Pakistan, India, Iran and other countries in the region where there are powerful proletarian concentrations.

We warned in 1989 that it was better to fight imperialism in Afghanistan than to have to fight it in the Soviet Union

itself. To the besieged left-nationalist regime in Kabul, we offered to raise an international brigade to “fight to the death” against the U.S.-backed *mujahedin*. When the Afghan regime instead requested financial assistance, the Partisan Defense Committee launched an international fundraising campaign, collecting nearly \$50,000 for the civilian victims of the *mujahedin* siege of Jalalabad.

A few short years after the Stalinists’ pullout from Afghanistan, the emboldened forces of counterrevolution triumphed in the Soviet Union. The destruction of the USSR in 1991-92 was a world-historic defeat for the international proletariat. No longer constrained by the counterweight of the Soviet Union, U.S. imperialism proclaimed a “one-superpower world,” acting as though it could throw around its military might unchallenged. At the same time, the end of the Cold War removed the constraints binding the other imperialist powers to the U.S.-led anti-Soviet consensus, leading to an escalation of rivalries among the major capitalist powers and a far more unstable world. In Europe, Germany has moved to expand its military presence in its own “backyard,” heading up the NATO occupation of Macedonia. In the Pacific,

continued on page 8

New!

New Evidence Explodes Frame-Up: Declarations and affidavits of Mumia Abu-Jamal, Arnold R. Beverly, Rachel Wolkenstein and others prove that death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal is an innocent man.

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Warpath...

(continued from page 7)

Japan is using its support for the U.S. war to assert its regional military power, with Japanese warships also now venturing into the Arabian Sea.

Washington’s “New World Order” is marked by ever greater disorder and instability. In South Asia, renewed U.S. support for Pakistan has provoked deep fears among India’s Hindu-chauvinist BJP ruling party. On the eve of Secretary of State Colin Powell’s visit, India started shelling Pakistani positions in predominantly Muslim Kashmir, site of three wars between the two regional powers. The *New York Times* (16 October) noted: “The intense firing today seemed to confirm the fears voiced by President Bill Clinton and again last week by Deputy Secretary of State Richard L. Armitage that Kashmir is the most dangerous place in the world, one where two nuclear powers are ‘shooting, shouting and glaring at each other,’ as Mr. Armitage put it.”

Pakistan, the chief sponsor of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, is opposed to a takeover by the Northern Alliance—the U.S.’s new ally—which has long been supported by India, Russia and Iran. That’s why the U.S. is mooted the idea of a “coalition” government made up of the Northern Alliance and tribal warlords defecting from the Taliban. There is also talk of installing a United Nations force in Kabul after the overthrow of the current regime. The UN is a front for imperialist terror; it is under the UN-imposed starvation blockade that Iraq has been turned into a tomb for more than one and a half million men, women and children.

Whatever Washington and its allies cobble together, there is little likelihood of stability in Afghanistan in any case. The forces that make up the Northern Alliance are no less reactionary than the Taliban and were infamous during their 1992-96 rule of Afghanistan for mass murder and rape, as well as the constant internecine feuding that finally led to their downfall. A government centered on the Northern Alliance, which is based largely on the Tajik and Uzbek ethnic minorities, would be even less stable than the Taliban, which is based on the

Posters of victims of World Trade Center attack have been put up by relatives and friends all over New York City.



dominant Pashtun tribes.

As it drives toward a new assault on Iraq, Washington has moved to mend fences with the Shi’ite fundamentalist regime in Iran, long denounced as a “terrorist state.” Iran, in turn, recently agreed to assist any American military personnel whose planes are forced to land on its territory. Throughout the 1980s, the U.S. fueled a bloody ten-year war between Iran and Iraq—providing arms to both sides—in which more than a million young men were killed. Now, with Baghdad in his cross hairs, Pentagon chief Donald Rumsfeld cynically declaims, “How did it happen that we are on the opposite side of both Iran and Iraq?”

Russian president Vladimir Putin, hoping to improve relations with the U.S.-dominated NATO alliance and to reopen discussion on Bush’s provocative plans for a “national missile defense,” is currently betting on the Americans. For now, the U.S. has stopped its hypocritical “human rights” bleatings against Russia’s brutal suppression of Islamic insurgents in Chechnya, but the U.S. has been largely silent about Chechnya anyway because Russia is a nuclear power well equipped with delivery systems. To curry favor with Washington, Putin announced that he will close down a Russian naval installation in Vietnam and a listening post in Cuba, holdovers from the days of the Soviet Union. But the Russian military high command is none too happy with the prospect of U.S. forces in its

Central Asian “backyard.” Aware of this, the U.S. just signed a “mutual defense” agreement with Uzbekistan, providing a pretext for a permanent American military presence in the guise of “defending” Uzbekistan’s sovereignty.

The Stalinist regime in Beijing has also lined up behind Washington’s new crusade, and Chinese leader Jiang Zemin embraced Bush when he arrived in Shanghai for an Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation summit last week. This comes only months after the U.S. spy plane provocation in the South China Sea underlined U.S. imperialism’s unremitting hostility to the Chinese deformed workers state. The Beijing bureaucracy thinks it can do business with the imperialists, but the imperialists are determined to open China to untrammelled capitalist exploitation and will never be reconciled to the existence of any state where capitalism was overthrown. The criminal betrayals of the Beijing bureaucracy serve only to undermine defense of the Chinese deformed workers state. We fight for unconditional military defense of China against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution. Key to defending the gains of the 1949 Chinese Revolution is the construction of a Trotskyist party to lead the combative Chinese working class in a political revolution that ousts the nationalist bureaucracy and replaces it with a regime based on workers democracy and revolutionary internationalism.

The international unity being pro-

claimed behind the U.S.’s “war against terrorism” is a mirage. Such temporary alliances among the major capitalist powers are nothing but truces between wars. Escalating interimperialist rivalries, with the U.S. riding high in the saddle as the world’s nuclear cowboy, pose a great danger to the whole world. While U.S. officials talk about terrorism being America’s main enemy abroad, a real challenge to American imperialism’s current hegemony would come from, for example, an alliance of Germany and Russia, bringing together Russia’s grain, oil and huge nuclear arsenal with German technical know-how.

Burgeoning interimperialist competition over markets, spheres of influence and natural resources, not least oil, will ultimately lead to a new world war and a nuclear holocaust if the proletariat does not first seize power. Reformist “socialists” like the International Socialist Organization and Workers World Party push pacifism in the face of U.S. imperialism’s war of terror against Afghanistan, sowing illusions that capitalism can be rational, benevolent and peaceful. But as Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin explained in his 1916 pamphlet, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, written in the midst of the slaughter of World War I:

“The only conceivable basis under capitalism for the division of spheres of influence, interests, colonies, etc., is a calculation of the *strength* of those participating, their general economic, financial, military strength, etc.”

Such calculations led to the first interimperialist war, as well as World War II, and many other wars of imperialist depredation by the U.S. and other major capitalist powers over the last century, at the cost of many tens of millions of lives.

Wars of aggrandizement and plunder are inherent to the imperialist system. That system cannot be reformed, but must be overthrown through workers revolutions that sweep it into the dustbin of history. A socialist America would do much to right the many wrongs, here and abroad, committed by the imperialist rulers of Washington and Wall Street and would help usher in a new era for humanity free of exploitation, war, religious obscurantism and fear. It is the task of the ICL to build the revolutionary parties, in the U.S. and internationally, needed to lead the fight for this new world. ■

Opportunism...

(continued from page 5)

Socialist Workers Party during the Vietnam War when it tailored the politics of its “National Peace Action Coalition” to curry favor with the Democratic “doves” who called for stopping that losing war in order to stop the damage it was causing U.S. imperialism. In its propaganda, the IG wisely refrains from such absurdities, restricting its attacks on this matter to the CP and Workers World—both past masters at promoting “peace” Democrats. Our party has an unbroken record—not simply on paper—of struggle to break the working class, the black masses and all the oppressed from illusions in the Democratic Party of war and racism.

Perhaps the oh-so-radical IG would prefer no cracks in the bourgeois edifice and for there to be total—as opposed to near-unanimous—support for Bush’s war measures. We are not so flippant. For taking even a partial step against the prevailing jingoism, Lee received several death threats. The IG makes noises about the “drives toward a police state,” but their dismissal of Lee’s dissenting vote, which reflected the lack of enthusiasm for this war from many black workers and youth, gives the lie to this. Marxists are not indifferent to bourgeois-democratic rights, which provide some room for the working class and the population generally to dissent, organize and struggle. Moreover, we know that if reactionary forces are given free rein to muzzle even a capitalist politician, moves to repress revolutionary Marxists will not be far behind.

In its 27 September statement, the IG

sneers at the SL/U.S. statement on the attack on the World Trade Center:

“For that matter, it doesn’t even call to *defeat* the mounting war drive, only to ‘oppose’ it. This is no minor difference: as Lenin emphasized against ‘social pacifists’ like Karl Kautsky in World War I, at issue is whether you are calling for a different policy for the imperialists or taking a stand for their defeat.”

The IG’s charge against us contains, unwittingly, a kernel of truth about what divides these centrists from the program of Trotskyism. The IG’s call to “defeat” a particular imperialist drive toward war partakes of the view—which the reformists like the WWP and the ISO are pushing for all they are worth—that imperialism is a “policy” which can be altered by means of pressure, presumably by some “movement” on the streets. From a Marxist perspective, however, there is no way to “defeat” the inevitable drive toward war by the capitalists short of their being expelled from power through victorious workers revolution, such as the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 which ended Russia’s participation in World War I by expropriating the capitalists and landlords and establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat. The entire thrust of our propaganda has been to imbue the proletariat and subjectively anti-imperialist youth with a clear understanding of how to defeat imperialism through class struggle at home. As Trotsky taught us, it’s the revolutionary party which is the necessary instrument to lead the proletariat against all obstacles, not least the centrists who direct their fire against the Bolsheviks and peddle their wares in the shadow of the reformists.

We have noted before a certain symmetry between the Bolshevik Tendency

(BT) and the IG, which are decomposition products that fled from revolutionary Trotskyism at the beginning and the end of the period of Cold War II. Both resort to extremist rhetoric and “chicken”-baiting of the ICL, but this is but a mask for their impulse to be at one with the fake-left swamp. For years after departing our organization, the BT’s line on the Russian question on paper represented a blurred caricature of our own. Of course, we understood and pointed out that this posture was a total fraud, as demonstrated by the fact that the BT was welcome at meetings organized by every variety of virulently Soviet-hating “left” organization and their “peace” front groups, while the SL was excluded. And the BT knew the rules—the reformists who called on the cops to keep us out had no problem with the BT, which

voiced “constructive criticisms” in keeping with the “unity” of the “movement.” Eventually the BT proved our point, formally retrospectively repudiating the call to “Hail Red Army in Afghanistan” in order to be palatable to the reformist milieu. The IG similarly feels quite comfortable with today’s red-white-and-blue, pro-Democratic Party “peace” swamp.

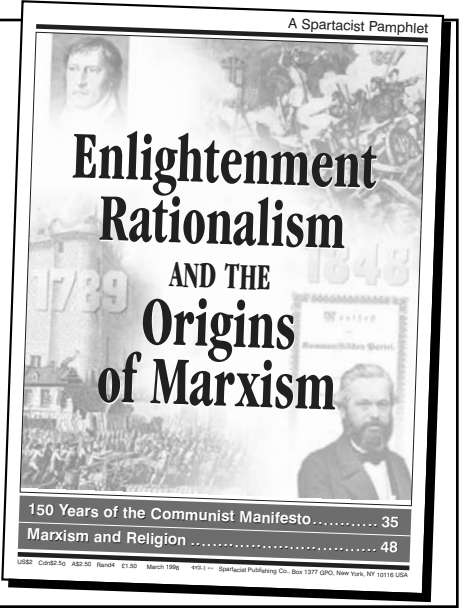
In his September 1935 polemic against the British centrists of the Independent Labour Party (“The ILP and the Fourth International—In the Middle of the Road”), Leon Trotsky wrote that Marxism and Leninism “are absolutely irreconcilable both with an inclination to radical phraseology, and with the dread of radical decisions.” Comrade Trotsky’s polemic captures the essence of the IG today: a pseudo-radical outfit that flinches when and where it counts. ■

This pamphlet reprints presentations given by SL Central Committee member Joseph Seymour on the origins of Marxism in the French Enlightenment and in left Hegelianism. Also included are “150 Years of the Communist Manifesto” and “Marxism and Religion.”

In the retrograde climate of post-Soviet reaction, the struggle to reassert the validity of the program and purpose of revolutionary Marxism is crucial for our fight for new October Revolutions.

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AIDS...

(continued from page 2)

using your own needle and wiping with alcohol, but once you get high you don't care what needle you use. Needle-disposal boxes would help prevent re-use and accidents.

The "war on drugs" and America's war on the nonwhite poor are synonymous. The prisons are a very effective mechanism for spreading both HIV and TB. A substantial percentage of the prison population is HIV-positive; nearly 20 percent of prisoner deaths are attributable to AIDS-related causes. Currently 13 percent of male inmates in New York State prisons are HIV-positive, and among women prisoners it's dramatically higher—22 percent (AIDS in Prison Project fact sheet). Prison systems refuse to distribute condoms (in spite of strong inmate demand for them). Everyone knows men have sex with men in prison, and rape is widespread and systematic in a system that encourages violence between prisoners as a means of control.

Health education is almost unavailable in America's public schools, while any kind of education is increasingly difficult to get for the inner-city poor. Providing health education to the homeless was a challenge. Many were functionally illiterate. I taught a class on hepatitis. First I had to explain what your liver does and where it is. Then no one knew what a virus or bacteria was. But they learned.

These were not stupid people. They were eager for knowledge and often offered penetrating insights into the way society works and the constant discrimination they faced. One discussion group got out of my control. I was trying not to be political, because I wanted to keep my job. The group of homeless black and Puerto Rican men discussed what this society had done to them and the most outspoken summarized it: "It used to be Russia was the enemy and it was Communism. But that's gone and now *the enemy is us!*"

The worst of the released felons I had as patients seemed to have about the same moral standards as the successful businessmen I've had as patients (who were never HIV-positive). I worked with hundreds of truly desperate characters, some mentally ill, some who had served time for armed robbery or homicide. No one ever threatened me, and I was never afraid. The level of human decency is higher among addicts and the homeless than in the police departments. (True, I was providing this population with something they needed and knew they couldn't get elsewhere. The hard guys in this pop-



Biddle/Washington Post

Protest last spring against closing of Washington, D.C.'s only public hospital. Poverty, lack of medical care fuel AIDS epidemic in inner cities.

ulation, the serious ex-felons, made it clear that anyone who messed with a nurse had to deal with them.)

I worked for a while in a shelter for homeless adolescents. Many of them had been orphaned by AIDS. The population of AIDS orphans is at least as large as the population of HIV-positive children. I talked to a lot of overwhelmed black and Hispanic grandmothers who desperately wanted to care for their grandchildren but either weren't able to or did so at great personal sacrifice.

The New York and New Jersey area, in a swath that sweeps from Harlem to Newark, has one of the highest, if not the highest, rate of heterosexually transmitted HIV in the U.S., with a correspondingly large concentration of HIV-positive women. This pattern exactly corresponds to the pattern of black and Hispanic inner-city populations. So many members of these social layers have relatives and friends with HIV or dead from HIV that I've actually seen a decrease in prejudice against people with HIV and a rising tide of sympathy. The Urban League and the Congressional Black Caucus can't turn their backs on the epidemic anymore. America's black population is being systematically destroyed, and I think it's only a matter of time until they face the same devastation as the black population of Southern Africa. The capitalists are not unhappy with this situation. Genocide can be active or passive.

Discrimination in health care is widespread. Many studies have shown that women receive less aggressive care for cardiac problems than men, and black men less than white men. The medical profession, even apart from the question of who can pay their bills, routinely provides discriminatory care—if you're less valuable in their eyes, you get less care.

Corresponding to this is the attitude of blacks and Hispanics to a racist health-care system. The Tuskegee Experiment—the horrific federally funded study in

which hundreds of black men infected with syphilis were denied treatment or even knowledge of their disease from 1932 until 1972 (they were told they were dying from "bad blood")—comes up constantly with black patients. They believe the system is trying to kill them, and I've constantly been told, "We don't want to be guinea pigs." So their white doctors' advice and prescriptions are automatically suspect even if the doctor is really dedicated to providing quality health care to the poor.

Try to find a black doctor. They're few and far between. Killing off affirmative action programs means fewer black and Latino doctors (there is a color line here, though; light-skinned Hispanics from upper-class families aren't affected). But given the level of distrust generated by the racism of the society that capitalism has created, black doctors and Spanish-speaking doctors are essential to combatting the AIDS epidemic.

Even in the U.S., wealthy as it is, I don't believe it's possible to employ adequate public-health measures to stop this epidemic under capitalism, nor is it possible to provide free or even affordable modern health care to everyone with HIV. The obstacle is not just the cost of drugs. Those drugs are free right now in New York and New Jersey. It's food, housing, education, social support systems that are lacking. Racism and the criminal injustice system compound the problem. How many times have I called Rikers Island prison to tell their nurses that my patient who was just arrested was on anti-retrovirals and has to get back on them. Then there's the man who was only locked up for 24 hours, but the cops threw his pills in the trash and laughed at him.

As long as capitalism endures, the drug companies make billions while the poor die and the epidemic spreads. Only a proletarian revolution can create a society that is able to fully mobilize its resources to combat disease and make the full ben-

efits of modern technology and health care available to all.

I've worked in Catholic medical institutions. You can't write "condom" or "contraception" in the medical record. You have to refer your female patients who want contraception to Planned Parenthood. A friend of mine works in a Catholic school—sex education is not allowed. The archdiocese ordered an AIDS education program that doesn't mention condoms.

Our article on the privatization of education and social services ("Defeat School Voucher Plan! Defend Public Education!", WV No. 745, 3 November 2000) didn't stress enough that sex education, condoms, safer sex, contraception, abortion are totally taboo topics at Catholic institutions. All they teach is abstinence.

AIDS is an equal opportunity infectious agent, and as a virus respects no class, race or gender privileges. But the worse your life, the less you're able to defend yourself against HIV. The less education you have, the harder it is to learn how to protect yourself. The map of HIV is a map of poverty.

Gay men as a group contain the only large numbers of middle-class and down-right wealthy white people with HIV. Part accident, part oppression, part the way sexually transmitted diseases work. Street hookers have about the same rate of HIV that gay men of my generation had in the '90s in San Francisco. It's not news, because this society despises prostitutes and poor women in general. I took care of some very wealthy gay men who were dying of AIDS. There's a major industry out there of social services, non-profit organizations, consumer marketing to reach the HIV-positive "gay community." How you experience the disease depends more on what class you belong to than on anything else.

As a small propaganda group, we can't do much right now about East Timor or the Middle East or a lot of other places we write about or have demonstrations about. Well, HIV, poverty, homelessness in the U.S. we can't do much about *in the immediate sense*, either. However, our propaganda will have an impact not just in the U.S. but also internationally. The U.S. spends a lot of time posturing as the international defender of "human rights" and waxes indignant when it gets edged out for the UN Human Rights Commission. Let's take a good look at how the poor live in the U.S.—people around the world are really interested in what goes on in the U.S. and it cuts through the human rights pretensions of this imperialist monster. This too is internationalism. T.C.

Witchhunt...

(continued from page 3)

organized and participated in the Tuesday, October 2 teach-in at the City College of New York (CCNY). At this PSC-sponsored teach-in professors and students expressed their views in the wake of the criminal attack on the World Trade Center including addressing the U.S. government's escalating drive for war and imperialist retaliation. Those who dared to question the U.S. government's propaganda campaign and war drive at this teach-in have been condemned by Chancellor Goldstein, who stated, "I have no sympathy for the voices of those who make lame excuses for the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon based on ideological or historical circumstances." The CUNY Board of Trustees has decided to vote to endorse Chancellor Goldstein's statement at an upcoming board meeting, after having dropped a proposed draft resolution which, according to the October 6 *New York Post*, condemned the union for the "un-American" and "seditious" statements made by its members. Such charges evoke the hysteria of the post-World War II anti-Communist

McCarthyite witchhunt during which campus administrations purged leftist and liberal intellectuals and stifled political dissent, including at CCNY where several professors were fired.

We defend the PSC-CUNY which as the union representing CUNY professors and staff has issued a statement defending itself against these attacks and asserting its intention to defend the First Amendment rights of its members and students. We also defend professors such as Walter Daum who has been singled out by the *New York Post* for his statement that "The ultimate responsibility lies with the rulers of this country." Ominously, Professor Daum has received death threats through phone calls and e-mail since the teach-in. From the incineration of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to the starvation of over a million Iraqis through starvation sanctions, it is no secret that the U.S. imperialist rulers have been responsible for the deaths of millions around the world and have earned the animosity of those who have suffered under the boot of U.S. imperialism. This simple assertion has, in effect, been outlawed by the campus administration, which wrongly insists it is a justification for the indefensible act of mass terror carried out against the thousands

of innocent people in the World Trade Center on September 11. The U.S. government's "national unity" patriotic propaganda campaign is aimed at achieving consensus among the American population for bloody retaliation against all those the U.S. rulers deem "terrorists" and for regimenting the population at home. The insidious attacks by Chancellor Goldstein and the Board of Trustees

against the PSC-CUNY serve a similar purpose on campus—to stifle anyone who has the temerity to question the U.S. war drive. We stand in opposition to these attempts to intimidate the union membership and students from expressing their views and will vigorously protest any measures taken by the administration to silence dissenting political views on the campus.■

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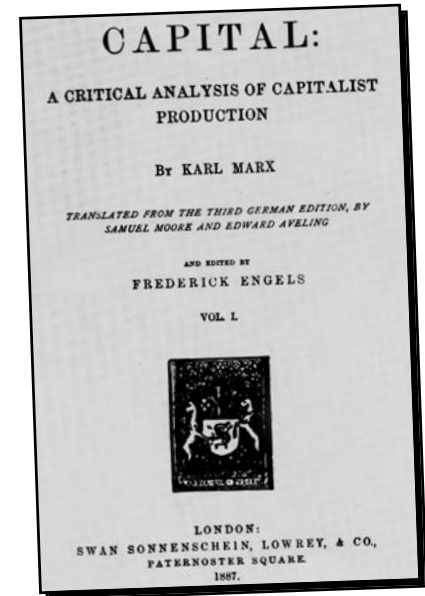
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Recession...

(continued from page 12)

personal bankruptcies and loan defaults, these U.S. banks are now losing money at home. In order to recoup their losses at home, American financiers are trying to squeeze even more money out of debtor countries like Argentina and Brazil by demanding ever harsher austerity policies there. And, of course, the loan sharks in London, Frankfurt and Tokyo are likewise bleeding South America.

Euroland, as it's now called, is by no means immune from the current made-in-U.S.A. world slump. This is especially the case for Germany, the major European economy and third largest in the world. The effects of the American downturn are by no means limited to reduced demand for imports from Europe. There are also the secondary effects of reduced import demand in East Asia and elsewhere. Capital goods (e.g., machine tools) make up a much larger component of Germany's export structure than those of other European countries. With South Korean auto and electronics factories—which are geared to the U.S. market—



was Wall Street in the late 1990s. In one sense it is misleading to speak of a world economic downturn, as if most of the world had but recently experienced an economic upswing. The economic expansion of the 1990s affected only the advanced capitalist countries (particularly the U.S. and excluding Japan) and certain sectors in some neocolonial countries like



Imperialist terror: thousands of retreating Iraqi soldiers were slaughtered by U.S. military in 1991 Persian Gulf War.



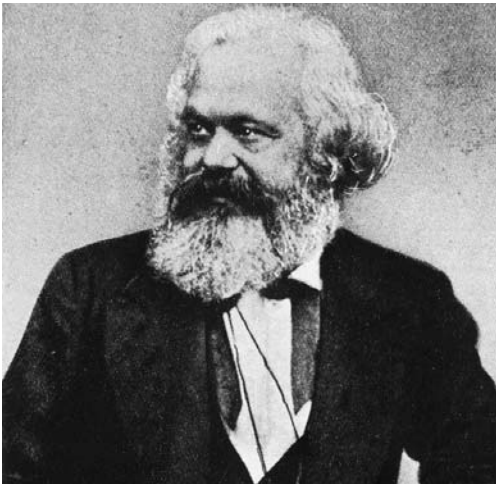
operating at as low as 50 percent capacity, they are not going to purchase German industrial equipment to expand productive capacity.

There is another important linkage between American and West European capitalism that is frequently overlooked. Since the 1980s European manufacturers have sought to take advantage of relatively lower labor and social-welfare costs in the U.S. by shifting their operations there, especially to the non-union South and Southwest. Daimler-Benz' takeover of Chrysler is the biggest and best-known example of a broader trend. One out of every 12 factory workers in the U.S. is now employed by a European company. And the sales of American-based affiliates of European firms are almost four times greater than European commodity exports to the U.S. So the depressed condition of the American manufacturing sector—which has lost 1.2 million workers in the past three years—has a direct negative impact on the profits of Volkswagen, Michelin, Volvo et al. Furthermore, moneymen in the City of London and Frankfurt lost tens of billions of dollars in the speculative mania that

South Korea and Mexico. Despite all the talk of a new globalized economy, the gap between the First World and Third World has *widened, not narrowed*, in recent decades.

According to UN statistics, in 1960 per capita national income in the wealthiest 20 percent of the world's countries was 30 times higher than in the poorest 20 percent. By 1997, the income gap between the richest and poorest countries had increased to *74 to one!* The vast majority of the population of Asia, Africa and Latin America—some three billion people—live in abject poverty, trying to survive on the equivalent of less than two U.S. dollars a day. One and a half billion people in these countries have no clean drinking water. One out of every four people in "Third World" countries dies of infectious diseases which can be prevented or cured by modern medicine but to which they have no access.

Those countries were also directly affected by the restoration of capitalism in the former Soviet Union in 1991-92, marking the final undoing of the 1917 Russian Revolution. The financial aid that had been used by the Soviet Sta-



John Mayall
Karl Marx explained in *Capital* how falling tendency of rate of profit leads to periodic economic crises.

linist bureaucracy to purchase alliances with underdeveloped capitalist countries against the imperialist bloc was no longer available. Thus, those countries were now left prey to the merciless demands of the imperialists through agencies like the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Unlike our sham socialist opponents, we uniquely defended the Soviet degenerated workers state against capitalist restoration and imperialist attack.

Depressions and wars are inherent features of the capitalist profit system. In opposition to the global immiseration wrought by capitalism, we fight for new October Revolutions to expropriate the bourgeoisie and open the road to a communist future. As we explain in the International Communist League's "Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program" (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 54, Spring 1998):

"The victory of the proletariat on a world scale would place unimagined material abundance at the service of human needs, lay the basis for the elimination of classes and the eradication of social inequality based on sex and the very abolition of the social significance of race, nation and ethnicity. For the first time mankind will grasp the reins of history and control its own creation, society, resulting in an undreamed-of emancipation of human potential, and a monumental forward surge of civilization."

The Boom-Bust Cycle of Capitalism

In the wake of the collapse of the USSR, neoliberal advocates of "free market" capitalism have argued that the "revolution" in information technology has created a fully integrated global market for both commodities and financial assets (stocks and bonds). National economies, which could previously be influenced by government regulations and monetary and fiscal policy, are supposedly a thing of the past. Consequently, "welfare state" liberalism in the United States, social democracy in Europe and corporate paternalism in Japan have been rendered historically obsolete. For neoliberals, not only is communism "dead" but so are all forms of traditional social reformism.

At the same time, such types maintain that the new information technology has produced a quantum leap in labor pro-

ductivity, opening up a new "golden age" of capitalist expansionism and prosperity on a global scale. During the 1990s, the United States—with its weak labor movement, dismantling of social welfare programs and high-flying stock market—was held up as a model of the "new economy" to be emulated by the rest of the world.

The current world slump has exposed and exploded the mystifications surrounding the term "globalization" in both their right- and left-wing forms. Obviously, the "revolution" in information technology has not produced a new era of capitalist expansionism and prosperity. Quite the contrary. What precipitated the present world downturn was the bursting of the high-tech stock market bubble last year, as the NASDAQ index plummeted by more than 60 percent from its March 2000 peak even *before* the World Trade Center attack. The market value of the rest of corporate America also fell sharply, if not as catastrophically as the tech stocks concentrated on the NASDAQ.

Underlying the stock market collapse and the ensuing recession are basic economic laws governing capitalism analyzed a century and a half ago by Karl Marx. In particular, the falling tendency of the rate of profit periodically blocks and reverses the expansion of production. Marx explained in Volume III of *Capital*:

"The expansion or contraction of production are determined by the appropriation of unpaid labor and the proportion of this unpaid labor to materialized labor in general, or, to speak the language of the capitalists, by profit and the proportion of this profit to the employed capital, thus by a definite rate of profit, rather than the relation of production to social requirements, i.e., to the requirements of socially developed human beings."

Capitalists invest in expanding productive capacity on the assumption that the additional output, whether automobiles or Internet services, can be sold at the existing rate of profit, or at a higher rate of profit if they're investing in cost-cutting technology. However, during periods of expansion the average rate of profit tends to fall. Even if productivity rises and wages don't, increased profit per worker does not offset increased capital per worker.

This dynamic can be clearly seen in the telecommunications sector, one of the mainstays of the "new economy." The return on capital for telecommunications companies fell steadily from 12.5 percent in 1996 to 8.5 percent last year. Wall Street analyst Blake Bath unconsciously paraphrased Marx in describing what happened: "It looks like the sector is way overcapitalized. Spending has grown at absurdly fast levels relative to the revenues and profits produced by that spending" (*Business Week*, 25 September 2000).

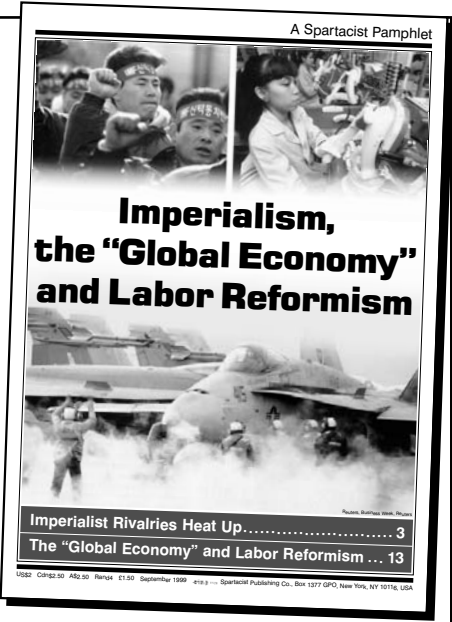
Telecommunications is an extreme case of what has happened throughout the U.S. economy. *Business Week* (9 April) summed it up, of course, from the standpoint of capital, not labor:

"After years of frantically investing to build up the human and physical capacity

This pamphlet assesses recent changes in the world economy in a historical perspective, from the origins of modern imperialism in the late 19th century through the capitalist counterrevolution in East Europe and the former USSR and its aftermath. Reformist ideologues of "globalization" seek to obscure the role of the capitalist nation-state and the danger of interimperialist war which is inherent in capitalism, while amnestying the refusal of the labor bureaucracies to wage class struggle against their respective bourgeoisies. Exploitation, poverty and social degradation can be eliminated only through proletarian revolutions in the imperialist centers as well as the neocolonial countries, laying the basis for an international planned socialist economy.

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Behind the Global Capitalist Recession

The savagery of America's ruling class is amply evident as it unleashes its massive arsenal of terror against the already devastated and deeply impoverished people of Afghanistan. Hand in hand with the bombing of Afghanistan, the U.S. rulers are carrying out a war against immigrants, minorities and working people at home. Though carried out in the name of fighting "terrorism," the war on the domestic

PART ONE

front is driven by the capitalists' need to squeeze ever more profit from the labor power of the working people in the face of a burgeoning recession. The awesome horror, the thousands of lives smashed in the attack on the World Trade Center, will, if the bosses have their way, soon be matched by the slower but more exacting terror of escalating economic privation, death by attrition and futures without hope.

Since the attack on the World Trade Center, 200,000-plus workers in the U.S. have been handed their walking papers. But they join the *million and a half* who had lost their jobs to the "downturn" (now acknowledged to be a recession) in the year before September 11. To be sure, the dislocation in travel was responsible for the suddenness of the layoffs in the airline industry, but even the airlines were already going down the tubes before the destruction of the World Trade Center. Indeed, the billions in profits made in "put orders" by betting that airline stocks would drop in value, initially attributed to a perfidious "terrorist" plot, was subsequently found to be due to business decisions by those who saw the plunge in stock values coming.

Having been made into the all-purpose, Number One enemy by the American imperialist ruling class, Osama bin Laden is even being blamed for the current ills of the American and world capitalist economy. Though obscured by the dramatic impact of the September 11 attack, including the worst week on Wall Street since the Great Depression of the 1930s, the fundamental fact is that the world economy was already in a deepening recession.

Washington's imperialist rivals in West Europe and Japan have signed on to the "coalition" against "terrorism" in order to further their exploitation and repression of the working class, immigrants and minorities in their own countries and to propel their particular international ambitions. The imperialists' conflicting interests have increasingly come to the fore since capitalist counterrevolution destroyed the Soviet Union in 1991-92, removing the glue of anti-Soviet unity. These conflicts will only sharpen as U.S. military extension into Central Asia threatens to place greater control of the world's oil spigot in American hands, just as during the Persian Gulf War a decade ago U.S. troops were placed in the Saudi

It Didn't Start on September 11



Schoenbaum/NY Times, graph: Morgan Stanley Capital International

New York City jobless wait in line at soup kitchen. Worldwide recession began with collapse of 1990s stock market speculation bubble.

oil kingdom. The only way out is *revolutionary class struggle* to sweep away the imperialist bourgeoisies whose rivalries ultimately threaten another world war, this time fought with nuclear weapons.

Global Recession Made in U.S.A.

When the U.S. economy moved into recession early this year, we predicted this would have major global repercussions:

"What we are seeing is the beginning of a downward spiral in the world capitalist economy. A slowdown in one country reduces the export earnings of its trading partners which, in turn, cut back their imports from that country. When that country happens to be the United States, the downward spiral in the world economy can accelerate very rapidly."

—"Boom Economy Going Bust," WV No. 754, 16 March

And so it has.

Over the past year, industrial production in the U.S. has fallen 4 percent, in Mexico almost 5 percent, in Japan by

close to 10 percent and in the rest of capitalist East Asia by more than 10 percent. West Europe, which experienced only sclerotic economic growth in the 1990s, has now slowed to a standstill. About a month before the Trade Center attack, the conservative and hardheaded London *Economist* wrote: "Economies almost everywhere are looking sick."

Sickest are those economies most closely linked to the United States through trade, investments or loans. Chief among these is East Asia, not so long ago hailed as the "economic miracle" region of late 20th century capitalism. The Japanese economy, stagnant for over a decade, is now rapidly sliding into a full-scale depression. The elite core of the high-tech sector—NEC, Toshiba, Fujitsu—are slashing big chunks of their labor force, shredding the remnants of the once famous "lifetime employment" policy of corporate Japan.

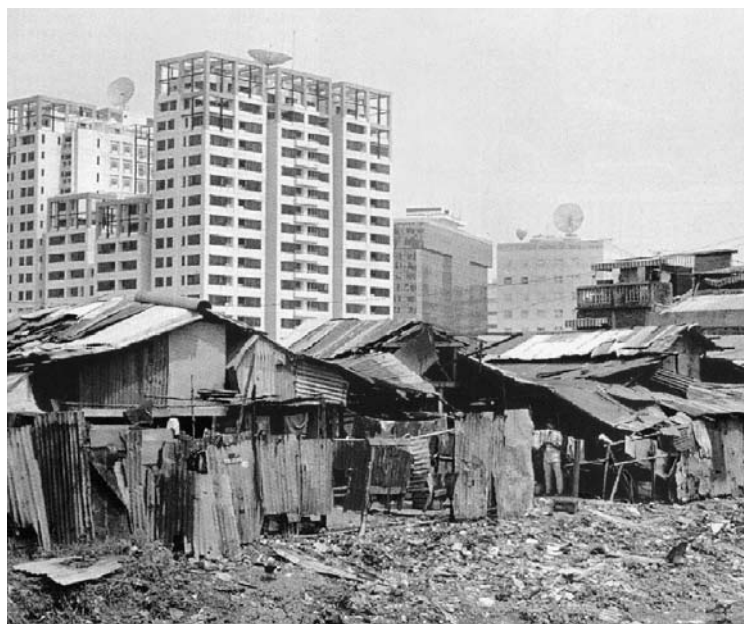
In even worse economic shape are

the now declawed East Asian "tigers" like South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore. These and other East Asian countries (e.g., Thailand, Indonesia) had partially recovered from the 1997-98 financial/economic crisis by expanding exports to the then-booming American economy. Export earnings, heavily concentrated in the IT (information technology) sector—computers, telecommunications, etc.—account for *almost 40 percent* of the total regional output of capitalist East Asia (excluding Japan). So the depressed demand for information technology in the U.S. has "cut off their lifeline," as an economist for Morgan Stanley's East Asian operations put it.

No less hard hit are the traditional neocolonies of U.S. imperialism in Latin America. Especially since the inception of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994, the economic condition of Mexico is determined first and foremost by its exports north of the Río Bravo. "Free market" rightist Vicente Fox, a former CEO of Coca Cola's operations in Mexico, was elected president last December promising to create 1.5 million new jobs by integrating Mexico even more closely with the U.S. economy. Since then an estimated half million workers have lost their jobs. "The correlation of manufacturing job losses in Mexico to the deceleration of the U.S. economy is about one to one," said Alfredo Thorne, an economist at J.P. Morgan Chase in Mexico City.

The largest South American countries—Brazil and Argentina—are much less directly dependent on exports to the U.S. than Mexico and East Asia. But in a different way, they are just as economically vulnerable. For years, Brazil and Argentina have run large balance-of-trade and government budget deficits that are heavily financed by Wall Street banks. Since the stock market bubble burst last year, generating increasing corporate and

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Reuters



Cambio 16

Jakarta, Indonesia shantytown (left) and impoverished Mexican children. Recession in U.S. has plunged masses of dependent semicolonial countries into deeper misery and hopelessness.