

IMF Pulls the Plug

Mass Protests Shake Argentina

JANUARY 7—The collapse of the government of Radical Party president Fernando de la Rúa amid massive street protests on December 19-20 has ushered in a major social crisis in Argentina. As angry demonstrators in Buenos Aires fought off police assaults in the Plaza de Mayo below, de la Rúa staged a panicky escape by helicopter from the roof of his besieged presidential palace. In his wake, three more presidents came and went in less than two weeks, while the popular unrest continued.

Now Eduardo Duhalde of the Peronist party has been appointed to head a self-described “government of national salvation.” The new regime aims to pacify the masses through rhetorical sops and by easing a small portion of the harsh austerity measures mandated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The attacks dictated by the imperialists, centrally the U.S., and implemented by the Argentine bourgeoisie have provoked deep anger throughout the population. The Duhalde government has now temporarily stopped payment on Argentina’s \$155 billion debt to the international bankers—the largest such default in history. The government also announced a devaluation of the peso as well as measures supposedly aimed at allaying the plight of the poor. But no one pretends that this will put an end to the turmoil. Days before he took office, Duhalde himself warned that the country could spiral into civil war.

Argentina is at an impasse: the people will no longer accept being governed as before, while the rulers can no longer govern as before. Close to half the population ekes out an existence below the poverty line, official unemployment is nearly 20 percent, much of the working class is in desperate straits and the living standards of the petty-bourgeois middle class, once the most prosperous in Latin America, are plummeting. Both major bourgeois parties—the Radicals and the Justicialista Peronists, who themselves served as hardline enforcers for the IMF under the regime of Carlos Menem in the 1990s—are widely reviled among the toiling masses. And lurking in the shadows is the army, whose brutal dictatorship from 1976 to 1983 saw over 30,000 leftists and labor militants assassinated or “disappeared.”

The wave of struggles that brought down the de la Rúa regime began in the provinces with road blockades by unemployed and semi-employed *piqueteros* (picketers). It then spread to the cities, where hungry masses looted grocery stores and striking workers stoned government offices, leading de la Rúa to proclaim a state of siege. It culminated with the eighth general strike in two years, quickly followed by mass protests of hun-

Break with Peronism— For a Revolutionary Workers Party!



Karmina Burana/Indymedia

Mass protest in Buenos Aires, December 20. Millions of protesters have taken to the streets against rising unemployment and starvation wrought by IMF, bringing down successive governments.

dreds of thousands, from young workers, students and the unemployed to retired civil servants and housewives banging empty pots. While street bonfires burned throughout Buenos Aires and in other cities, demonstrators chanting “All of them out!” faced down riot police firing tear gas and live ammunition outside the presidential palace and the Peronist-controlled Houses of Congress. At least 30 protesters were killed, many hundreds wounded and thousands imprisoned before the hated president finally fled. Free all the arrested protesters!

The current situation in Argentina has many components of a prerevolutionary crisis. The bourgeoisie is at an impasse, there is sharp dissatisfaction among the petty bourgeoisie and the working class has demonstrated great combativity. Crucially missing, however, is a proletarian revolutionary leadership which can give voice to the aspirations of all the oppressed in a struggle to shatter the rule of the venal Argentine bourgeoisie and the domination of its imperialist masters. *The fight for a proletarian vanguard party is therefore the central question facing Argentina today.* Critical to this perspec-

tive is the struggle for the complete and absolute independence of the working class from all the parties and agencies of bourgeois rule.

The majority of Argentina’s potentially powerful trade unions are directly linked to the bourgeois-nationalist Peronist party. Today, the nationalist trade-union bureaucrats are again working to channel popular discontent into the arms of the Peronists, whose occasional “anti-imperialist” rhetoric serves only to mask their fealty to capitalist imperialism. Living in deathly fear of the accumulated tinder at the base of society, the labor bureaucrats have found it necessary to call repeated general strikes over the past two years. At the same time, they have worked hand in hand with the Argentine rulers to contain discontent.

Only a few months ago, both wings of the Peronist CGT (General Confederation of Labor) signed a pact to control social unrest “in the interests of the country.” Amid the mass protests and street battles of December 19-20, leaders of the mainstream CGT called for “guaranteeing the resolution of this most grave political crisis within the framework of

the Constitution” (*La Nación*, 21 December 2001), while the dissident CGT-rebelde called on the regime to “adopt political solutions to control the social eruptions” (*La Nación*, 20 December 2001). When de la Rúa fell, they joined with the “independent” bureaucrats of the CTA (Argentine Labor Central) government workers and teachers union federation in calling off a threatened general strike against the state of siege and rushed to a private tête-à-tête with the new (and short-lived) Peronist president, Rodríguez Saá.

For their part, Argentina’s various pseudo-Marxist organizations—including relatively sizable fake-Trotskyist groups, some with parliamentary deputies—have long been little more than left satellites of Peronism. Today, while raising various criticisms of Duhalde and his labor auxiliaries, these groups push deadly illusions that workers and the oppressed can eliminate their immiseration within the framework of bourgeois rule, seeking merely to give it more “democratic” trappings. There is a burning need to forge a genuine Trotskyist nucleus in Argentina that fights to link the present struggles to a program of socialist revolution as the only solution to the country’s crisis. In the present conditions, even a relatively small revolutionary organization could grow explosively and sink roots among the proletariat, thereby opening the road to working-class power.

Such a party can only be forged on the basis of a program of proletarian revolutionary internationalism which seeks to extend the struggles of the Argentine proletariat throughout Latin America and into the imperialist heartlands of the United States and West Europe. In Europe, where many workers are facing mass layoffs and factory closures, there is an identification with, and apprehension over, the plight of the largely European-derived Argentine masses. European newspapers and TVs are filled with images of people in what was once the wealthiest country in Latin America storming the banks, battling the police and looting stores for the basic necessities of daily survival. There is genuine fear that if hunger riots could erupt in Argentina, then a dramatic plunge in living standards could be the future for European workers too. Although the particular mechanisms of class collaboration are different (social-democratic labor reformism in Europe, bourgeois nationalism in Latin America), the fundamental question is the same: unshackling a powerful proletariat from a pro-capitalist leadership.

For their part, the U.S. imperialists have long seen Latin America as their own private preserve for exploitation. The wall-to-wall military dictatorships that dominated South America in the 1960s and ’70s were the product of the “Alliance for Progress” instituted by Democratic Party president and liberal darling John F. Kennedy as part of the “war on Communism.” Today, reflecting

continued on page 10

The West and Islamic Fundamentalism

Salman Rushdie's Verses for Imperialism

SEE PAGE FOUR



7 125274 81030 17

Defend Cuba Against U.S. Imperialism!

Free the Miami Five! U.S. Out of Guantánamo Bay!

Last month, a U.S. District Court judge in Miami sentenced five Cuban citizens to terms from 15 years to life in prison on charges of espionage and murder. The Miami Five are supporters of the Cuban Revolution who monitored and infiltrated counterrevolutionary *gusano*

(worm) exile groups in Florida in order to report on their plans, as well as those of the U.S. military, for attacks and other provocations against Cuba. As proletarian revolutionary internationalists, we demand the immediate freedom of the Miami Five, whose heroic actions were in



Free the Five Committee

Fidel Castro standing before portraits of Miami Five at Havana rally demanding their freedom.



TROTSKY

Trade Unions in Dependent Capitalist Countries

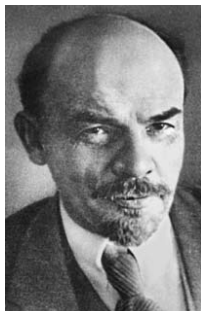
Argentina's economic and social crisis, engineered by the IMF, starkly illuminates the necessity for proletarian revolution to overthrow the bourgeoisie and liberate the country from imperialist bondage. But as Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky pointed out, a key obstacle to independent proletarian struggle in economically backward countries is the co-optation of the trade unions by the nationalist bourgeois rulers, who are beholden to the imperialist powers. The fight

for the complete independence of the unions from the bourgeois state is thus integral to any proletarian revolutionary perspective.

Colonial and semicolonial countries are under the sway, not of native capitalism but of foreign imperialism. However, this does not weaken but, on the contrary, strengthens the need of direct, daily, practical ties between the magnates of capitalism and the governments which are in essence subject to them—the governments of colonial or semicolonial countries. Inasmuch as imperialist capitalism creates both in colonies and semicolonies a stratum of labor aristocracy and bureaucracy, the latter requires the support of colonial and semicolonial governments as protectors, patrons, and sometimes as arbitrators. This constitutes the most important social basis for the Bonapartist and semi-Bonapartist character of governments in the colonies and in backward countries generally. This likewise constitutes the basis for the dependence of reformist unions upon the state....

Inasmuch as the chief role in backward countries is not played by national but by foreign capitalism, the national bourgeoisie occupies, in the sense of its social position, a much more minor position than corresponds with the development of industry. Inasmuch as foreign capital does not import workers but proletarianizes the native population, the national proletariat soon begins playing the most important role in the life of the country. In these conditions the national government, to the extent that it tries to show resistance to foreign capital, is compelled to a greater or lesser degree to lean on the proletariat. On the other hand, the governments of those backward countries which consider it inescapable or more profitable for themselves to march shoulder to shoulder with foreign capital, destroy the labor organizations and institute a more or less totalitarian regime. Thus, the feebleness of the national bourgeoisie, the absence of traditions of municipal self-government, the pressure of foreign capitalism, and the relatively rapid growth of the proletariat, cut the ground from under any kind of stable democratic regime. The governments of backward, i.e., colonial and semicolonial, countries by and large assume a Bonapartist or semi-Bonapartist character; they differ from one another in that some try to orient in a democratic direction, seeking support among workers and peasants, while others install a form close to military-police dictatorship. This likewise determines the fate of the trade unions. They either stand under the special patronage of the state or they are subjected to cruel persecution. Patronage on the part of the state is dictated by two tasks that confront it: first, to draw the working class closer, thus gaining a support for resistance against excessive pretensions on the part of imperialism; and, at the same time, to discipline the workers themselves by placing them under the control of a bureaucracy.

—Leon Trotsky, “Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay,” 29 September 1938, reprinted in *Leon Trotsky on the Trade Unions* (Pathfinder, 1975)



LENIN

defense of the Cuban Revolution against U.S. imperialism and its counterrevolutionary agents.

The FBI arrested ten Cubans in 1998, claiming that they were part of an espionage network in Florida which aimed to infiltrate the U.S. Southern Command, pass military secrets to Havana and penetrate Cuban American groups. Prosecutors later added a charge of “conspiracy to commit murder” in connection with the deaths of four pilots from the Brothers to the Rescue *gusano* outfit. The latter were shot down by the Cuban air force in 1996 after repeatedly and provocatively flying into Cuban airspace in a brazen challenge to the country’s air defenses. These *gusanos* are descendants of the former bourgeoisie and its henchmen in the brutal regime of Fulgencio Batista who fled the Cuban Revolution and have ever since waged a campaign of terrorism supported by their CIA masters.

The prosecution’s case was based on “evidence” illegally seized during FBI break-ins in a three-year period before the arrests. Threatened with long prison terms, five of the original defendants caved in and agreed to plea bargains in

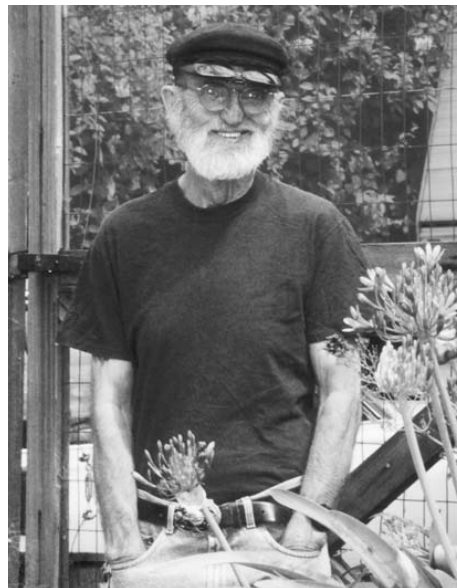
exchange for reduced sentences. But the others stood firm, despite being kept in solitary confinement for more than a year and a half before their trial.

Three of the Miami Five—Antonio Guerrero, Gerardo Hernández and Ramón Labañino—were sentenced to life imprisonment, the maximum allowed. The prosecution claimed that Guerrero, who worked as a janitor at the Boca Chica Naval Air Station in Key West, had endangered secret U.S. military plans by watching aircraft take off and land in training exercises. Hernández was hit with a second life term for allegedly providing Havana with flight information about the Brothers to the Rescue operation. The other defendants, Fernando González and René González, received 19 and 15 years respectively. René González had flown planes for Brothers to the Rescue in order to monitor the group’s activities and report them to Cuban authorities.

In a statement issued shortly after their conviction last June, the Cuban government affirmed that the Miami Five were part of an operation to “discover and

continued on page 9

William (“Bill”) Moultrie



Kat Burnham

1927–2002

Bill Moultrie, a longtime member of the Spartacist League, died on January 3 of complications following his recent surgery for lung cancer. Bill brought to the Spartacist League his unique experience as a militant union leader. As president of a major Communications Workers of America (CWA) Local in Michigan, Bill was a leader of the bitter phone strike of 1968 against the mammoth Bell Telephone Co. He held his local together in a wildcat, which continued the strike after the CWA International had caved in. Bill was eventually driven out of the industry as a result of collusion between the CWA bureaucracy and Bell Telephone.

From his experience, Moultrie drew the conclusion that there could be no lasting gains for any section of the working class short of a working-class revolution, requiring an international revolutionary party to lead it. To this end, Bill became a communist and joined the Spartacist League, moving to the San Francisco Bay Area where he was a member of the SL local committee for many years.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to his comrade and steadfast companion of over three decades, Kat Burnham, who saw Bill through his long battle with illness; his brother Bob and sister Virginia; and his four children, Ray, Pam, Mike and Joe. A more complete account of his life and political contributions to our party will appear in a coming issue of *Workers Vanguard*.

WORKERS VANGUARD

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



EDITOR: Len Meyers

EDITOR, YOUNG SPARTACUS PAGES: Michael Davison

PRODUCTION MANAGER: Susan Fuller

CIRCULATION MANAGER: Irene Gardner

EDITORIAL BOARD: Ray Bishop (managing editor), Bruce André, Jon Brule, George Foster, Liz Gordon, Walter Jennings, Jane Kerrigan, James Robertson, Joseph Seymour, Alison Spencer, Alan Wilde

The Spartacist League is the U.S. Section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

Workers Vanguard (ISSN 0276-0746) published biweekly, except skipping three alternate issues in June, July and August (beginning with omitting the second issue in June) and with a 3-week interval in December, by the Spartacist Publishing Co., 299 Broadway, Suite 318, New York, NY 10007. Telephone: (212) 732-7862 (Editorial), (212) 732-7861 (Business). Address all correspondence to: Box 1377, GPO, New York, NY 10116. E-mail address: vanguard@tiac.net. Domestic subscriptions: \$10.00/22 issues. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Workers Vanguard*, Box 1377, GPO, New York, NY 10116.

Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.

The closing date for news in this issue is 8 January.

No. 772

11 January 2002

Whatever Happened to “Stalin as Commander in Chief”?

IG Disappears Red Army Fight Against Islamic Reaction in Afghanistan

The founding leaders of the Internationalist Group (IG) have, since defecting from our organization some years back, long and loudly proclaimed that they uniquely carry forward the revolutionary program of Spartacism. The manifest fraud of this posture is easily demonstrated by a mere glance at the objects of the IG's political affections since its inception. These have ranged from trade-union opportunists in Brazil who turned to the bourgeois courts to preserve their positions in the leadership of a municipal workers union that includes cops; to an assortment of petty-bourgeois nationalist forces in the colonial and semi-colonial countries; to a wing of the Stalinist bureaucracies in China and Cuba which the IG invests with revolutionary capacities.

Some years ago the IG's central leader, Jan Norden, conjured up the notion that the geriatric remnants of the former Stalinist bureaucracy of the East German DDR deformed workers state—who had sold out the DDR to imperialism—were going to lead a “fightback” against the ravages of capitalist counterrevolution! As an appeal to the sensibilities of such types, Norden insisted on heralding Stalin himself as “commander in chief” of the Red Army forces that defeated Hitler's Third Reich. (More accurately, the Red Army prevailed *despite* Stalin, who beheaded the Soviet general staff on the eve of World War II and whose constant attempts to appease the imperialists undermined the defense of the Soviet Union.) But now the IG is working a different side of the street. Seeking to ingratiate itself with the various reformists and renegades who have headed up the “peace” coalitions in response to U.S. imperialism's terror bombing of Afghanistan, the IG has deep-sixed one of the few truly *progressive* acts of the Soviet Stalinists—the 1979-89 Red Army intervention in Afghanistan against CIA-backed Islamic reaction.

In our article “The Internationalist Group: Centrist Pathology” (WV No. 767, 26 October 2001), we noted that while the IG might make passing reference in writing to professed agreement with our call to “Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!” the story was rather different on the ground. At teach-ins and other coalition meetings, the IG ever-so-politely refrained from pointing out that outfits like the International Socialist Organization (ISO), as well as virtually every other self-professed “socialist” organization on the face of the planet, had stood on the side of imperialism and its *mujahedin* cut-throats against the Soviet Union. Then, at a November 28 Hunter College rally initiated by the IG to protest plans by the CUNY administration to drive out “illegal” immigrant students through extor-

tionate fee hikes—part of the anti-immigrant witchhunt that has accompanied the U.S. bombing of Afghanistan—the IG completely disappeared any and all mention of the Red Army in Afghanistan.

Those Who Can't Defend Past Gains Will Never Fight for New Ones

The Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth Club endorsed the November 28 protest, which was called around the slogans “Down With CUNY's Anti-Immigrant ‘War Purge’! Stop Racist Tui-

military defense of China, and it meant defense of the Soviet Union and the other deformed workers states. All of the left groups now talk about how the U.S. armed and funded the *mujahedin* against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan in the '80s. But what they don't say is that they all capitulated to the imperialist anti-Soviet war drive, with, for example, the ISO hailing the *mujahedin* as ‘freedom fighters.’ Only we Trotskyists said: ‘Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!’”

This is hardly an academic question or one irrelevant to the defense of the working class and the rights of all the oppressed today.

ter, Washington seized on the Red Army intervention to launch a renewed Cold War offensive, bankrolling and arming the woman-hating Islamic fundamentalists in the largest CIA covert operation in history.

The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan offered the prospect of extending the gains of the October Revolution to the hideously oppressed peoples of that country. Although certainly not the intent of the Kremlin Stalinists, the intervention in Afghanistan cut against their nationalist, anti-Marxist dogma of “building social-



Paris Match



UPI



WV Photo

Soviet military presence in Afghanistan opened road to social progress for Afghan women. As our sign at Hunter College protest proclaims, Trotskyists said: “Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!”

tion Hike and ‘Student Data Collection System’!” As we stressed in the placards carried by our contingent, in speeches by SL and SYC members and in a leaflet distributed to the protest (see “Defend Immigrant Rights—For Class Struggle Against U.S. Capitalist Rulers!”, WV No. 771, 28 December 2001), the defense of these students and of immigrant rights is critical to combatting the “national unity” chauvinism wielded by the American imperialist rulers to further their rapacious military adventures abroad and their class war against the working class and oppressed at home.

United-front actions are also vital to providing a platform for the contention of different political programs and strategies, the kind of sharp political debate that is necessary to raising the political consciousness of the working class, youth and others who are looking for the way to successfully combat the brutal depredations of capitalist imperialism. In her speech to the protest, SYC'er Anna Woodman stressed:

“Opposition to imperialism means defending those gains that workers have already made. That means unconditional

From the time of the 1917 October Revolution, the first and only successful workers revolution in history, the defense of the Soviet Union against imperialist attack and the forces of counterrevolution was the touchstone of the class struggle internationally. As James P. Cannon, the founder of American Trotskyism, put it in 1939:

“The Russian question has been and remains the question of the revolution. The Russian Bolsheviks on November 7, 1917, once and for all, took the question of the workers' revolution out of the realm of abstraction and gave it flesh and blood reality.”

Despite the Stalinist degeneration of the Soviet Union—the product of relentless imperialist pounding militarily and economically, the isolation of the Soviet Union and the defeat of revolutions elsewhere, particularly Germany—it remained a workers state based on the planned economy and collectivized property established by the 1917 Russian Revolution, which brought enormous gains to workers, peasants, women and national minorities. In the late 1970s and 1980s, Afghanistan became the front line of the imperialists' relentless ambition to destroy the Soviet workers state.

The “Russian Question” Pointblank

The *mujahedin* insurgency in Afghanistan in the late 1970s was directly triggered by the modest measures taken by the Soviet-backed PDPA (People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan) regime to free women from feudal tyranny, illiteracy and the stifling head-to-toe veil (*burqa*) that symbolizes their degraded status and enforced isolation from all social life. At the request of the PDPA government, the Soviet Union sent troops into Afghanistan in December 1979 to combat the Islamic reactionaries and to secure the USSR's crucial southern flank. Under Democratic president Car-

ism in one country,” inspiring many in the Soviet population with a sense of internationalism. This was crucial to our perspective of fighting for workers political revolution in the Soviet Union to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy and return to the proletarian internationalist program of Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik Party.

On their side, the imperialists aimed not only to kill as many Red Army soldiers as possible but to wield Islamic fundamentalism within the historically Muslim regions of the USSR as a spearhead for counterrevolution. And indeed, when

continued on page 9

Will the IG's Real Line Please Stand Up?

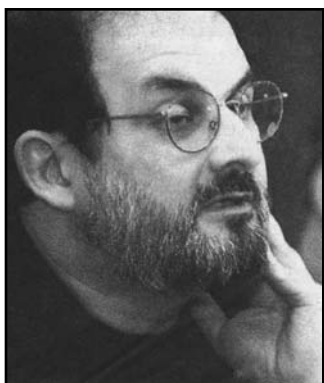
Genuine communists defend semi-colonial countries against imperialist attack as we fight for socialist revolution against their bourgeois and, in the case of Afghanistan, feudalistic leaders. During the 1930s, Leon Trotsky and his supporters in the Fourth Internationalist movement defended Ethiopia against Italian imperialism.

—Internationalist, Fall 2001

Because of its extreme economic backwardness, the social forces within Afghanistan are too weak for a workers revolution to be carried out from within. That is a key reason why Soviet intervention to stave off the victory of Islamic reaction was necessary in the 1980s and why Trotskyists strongly supported it. But Afghanistan was isolated in isolation from the rest of the world.

Two-line struggle in IG? Same issue of Internationalist calls for “socialist revolution” in Afghanistan—which lacks even a proletariat—then thinks better of it.

Born into a Muslim family in India, Rushdie has for many years lived and worked in England. His satirical 1989 novel, *The Satanic Verses*, involving the figure of Mohammed, provoked a murderous reaction from the self-proclaimed guardians of the Islamic faith. Ayatollah Khomeini, then the supreme leader of Iran, issued an edict that “all



J. C. Schisler

Bush's "war on terror" has provided a broad and sympathetic American audience for Rushdie to express his deeply felt hostility—indeed, visceral hatred—for Islamic traditionalism. He argues:

As a liberal idealist, Rushdie sees Islamic fundamentalism only as irrational hatred for personal freedom and secular-humanist values, which he identifies with the advanced capitalist countries of North America and West Europe.

In reality, Western, centrally American, imperialism is largely responsible for the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in recent decades, not least in funding the *mujahedin* to fight the Soviet Army in Afghanistan in the 1980s. Even the conservative London *Economist* (15 September) pointed out: "America may be tempted to overlook one uncomfortable fact. Its own policies in Afghanistan a decade and more ago helped to create both Osama bin Laden and the fundamentalist Taliban regime that shelters him."

Salman Rushdie's Verses for Imperialism

At the same time, the main fundamentalist political-military organizations in the Near East—Al Qaeda, the Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, etc.—are fueled, so to speak, by oil money from the Saudi Arabian or Iranian governments and ruling elites, which are economically dependent on the Anglo-American oil cartel and the banks of Wall Street, the City of London, Frankfurt and Tokyo. It is the “godless materialism” of the West that provides the money for the clerics who denounce the “godless materialism” of the West as a threat to the “purity” of Islam.

At the most fundamental level, the evolution and structure of world capitalism has *arrested the development* of North Africa, the Near East and South Asia, thereby perpetuating the backward social and economic conditions that sustain Islamic traditionalism and have now given rise to militant fundamentalism. A 10 percent fall in the world market price of oil causes millions of people in Iran, Iraq, Yemen and elsewhere in the Near East to lose their livelihood, driving their families to the brink of starvation and causing their children to die of disease for lack of medical treatment.

For such people, religion—especially the belief in an afterlife—is a needed solace for the seemingly unchangeable miseries and horrors of their earthly life. As Karl Marx wrote in a famous passage:

“*Religious* distress is at the same time the *expression* of real distress and also the *protest* against real distress. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of spiritless conditions. It is the *opium* of the people.

“To abolish religion as the *illusory* happiness of the people is to demand their *real* happiness. The demand to give up illusions about the existing state of affairs is the *demand to give up a state of affairs which needs illusions.*”

— “Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Law”
(1843)

And to eliminate that state of affairs requires a *socialist revolution* against capitalist imperialism.

Rushdie writes of the Islamic East as if a world capitalist economy doesn't exist. For decades, Saudi Arabia, with its huge oil reserves, has been, from an eco-

conomic standpoint, America's most important client state in the Near East. The Arab engineers who oversee the Persian Gulf oil fields are trained at ExxonMobil, Chevron et al. The enormous wealth of the Saudi royal family (with its 700 princes) is managed by Western-educated financial technocrats whose careers include stints with J.P. Morgan, the Deutsche Bank or the IMF.

Osama bin Laden is not some Bedouin whose youth was spent tending camels in the Arabian desert. He is just as much a privileged product of modern globalized capitalism as George W. Bush. Both are scions of wealthy families in major oil-producing regions of the world, Saudi Arabia and Texas respectively. The men



Der Spiege

Bitter fruit of British colonialism: 1947 partition creating Hindu-dominated India and Islamic Pakistan triggered one of history's bloodiest communalist slaughters.

who handle the money for Al Qaeda or the Lebanese Hezbollah are more than competent to teach corporate finance at the Harvard Business School or London School of Economics.

The “Islamic revolution” in Iran that toppled the Shah in 1979 did *not* significantly change the *economic relationship* between that country and Western capitalism. The Iranian economy under Khomeini, despite his ranting against America as the “Great Satan,” remained dependent on the export of oil purchased and distributed worldwide by Exxon, British Petroleum et al. The Shi’ite theocracy in Teheran along with the Wahabbi theocracy in Riyadh continued to attempt (though without much success) to manipulate the world market price of oil through OPEC. Iran today accounts for roughly 10 percent of world oil exports, about the same as it did under the pro-American regime of Shah Pahlevi.

For Rushdie, the cultural attitudes and values inculcated by Islam are the root of

"Suppose we say that the ills of our societies are not primarily America's fault, that we are to blame for our own failings? How would we understand them then? Might we not, by accepting our own responsibility for our problems, begin to learn to solve them for ourselves?...

"An Iraqi writer quotes an earlier Iraqi satirist: 'The disease that is in us, is from us.' A British Muslim writes, 'Islam has become its own enemy'."

Rushdie writes as if the countries of the Islamic East are the only impoverished and culturally backward parts of the world. Hardly. Is predominantly Hindu India, Rushdie's original homeland, more economically developed and culturally enlightened than Egypt or Iran? As Rushdie knows perfectly well, the British ruled India from the mid-18th to the mid-20th century. It was precisely during these two centuries that Britain was transformed (in part by plundering India) into an advanced industrial economy and a parliamentary democracy. India, however, remained benighted by the Hindu caste system, with such barbaric practices as *suttee* (the ritual burning alive of widows), and riven by murderous enmity—deliberately manipulated and aggravated by the British colonial rulers—between Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. There is a deep causal connection between British colonialism and the present social, economic and cultural backwardness of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

And what of sub-Saharan Africa, the poorest and most economically backward region of the world? Does the basic cause of the untold human misery in Congo or Uganda lie in the traditional tribal cultures and animistic religions of the black African peoples? Such a view of black Africa was propagated for decades by the former white-supremacist regime in South Africa.

And how does one explain the vast socioeconomic gulf between the United

[illegible]

Haydar Haydar's Arabic novel is powerful testament to failure of Arab nationalism and rise of Islamic fundamentalism. To order review in WV No. 770 (7 December 2001), send \$.50 to Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116.

Mumia...

(continued from page 12)

might be commuted, Cannon warned of the rulers’ duplicity:

“The rumor is being cautiously spread that the governor of Massachusetts, in whose hands the final decision on Sacco and Vanzetti is placed, may commute the sentence of death to one of life imprisonment. It is being spread so that the enemies of Sacco and Vanzetti may feel out the reaction to this prospect among the defenders of the two Italian rebels. They want to know if this splendid movement of solidarity, which has time and again struck heavy blows at the Massachusetts reaction, will allow itself to be dissolved with the bait of a commutation....

“The workers who have thus far, by their power and solidarity, prevented the execution of the two rebels must continue their great fight with more consciousness and determination. The workers who have snatched Sacco and Vanzetti from the chair of death must snatch them from the cell of death by slow torture. No unfounded joy must dull the sharp edge of the movement. It must continue to fight forward with its million-armed power until this great issue is settled with a great victory.

“The hearts of the Massachusetts executioners have not softened with kindness, and their desire to murder our comrades has not changed. On the contrary, they seek for new methods of torment. The working class must reply:

“Not the chair of death, but life for Sacco and Vanzetti!”

“Not imprisonment of death, but freedom for Sacco and Vanzetti!”

—“Death, Commutation or Freedom,” *Labor Defender* (July 1927)

Don’t let them bury Mumia alive! Workers, minorities and all opponents of racist capitalist repression must now redouble their efforts to mobilize mass protests centered on the social power of the labor movement to demand Jamal’s immediate freedom.

* * *

We are here as part of the fight to free a courageous fighter for the oppressed—Mumia Abu-Jamal. From the time he was 14 years old, protesting a presidential campaign rally for Alabama’s segregationist governor George Wallace, Mumia has fought relentlessly for the poor, oppressed and disenfranchised. After more than a decade of surveillance and harassment, Jamal was sentenced to death in 1982 on manufactured charges of killing a Philadelphia police officer.

At trial he faced the notorious judge Albert Sabo, known as the “king of death row” and a “prosecutor in black robes.” It was recently revealed that Sabo promised to help “fry” Mumia, using the “N” word to describe his anticipated victim. Jamal faced a D.A.’s office which trained its attorneys to kick black people off juries; he faced a prosecuting attorney experienced in the art of frame-up who cited Mumia’s background as a Black Panther as grounds for a death sentence. Denied the right to represent himself, Jamal went up against the state with a



WV Photo

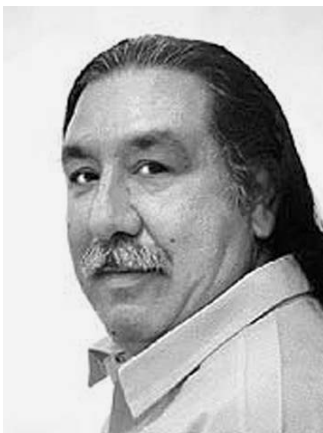
lawyer he didn’t want—and who wanted him even less.

From Mexico City to Johannesburg, workers who daily experience grinding exploitation and brutality have taken to the streets in Mumia’s defense to demand the freedom of a man whose struggle mirrors their own. But a host of Jamal’s professed “socialist” defenders in this country have demobilized and demoralized Jamal’s supporters by promoting illusions in the capitalist courts and tethering Jamal’s struggle to Democratic Party politicians—what they call “the mainstream.” These capitalist politicians have no interest in seeing Jamal walk out of prison a free man but only in preserving the integrity of their justice system.

We take to heart lessons passed down by our forebears, such as James P. Cannon, founder of the early Communist Party’s International Labor Defense, which organized massive protests for Sacco and Vanzetti. As the American bourgeoisie was putting the finishing touches on its plans to execute these courageous anarchist workers, Cannon warned: “Put no faith in capitalist justice! Organize the protest movement on a wider scale and with a more determined spirit! Demonstrate and Strike for Sacco and Vanzetti!” This is no less urgent now in the fight for Mumia’s freedom.

Capitalism Is a System of Brutal Repression

On August 17, Jamal’s new attorneys—Marlene Kamish, Eliot Grossman and British barrister Nicholas Brown—appeared before Pennsylvania state judge Pamela Dembe in an effort to present dramatic new evidence of Jamal’s innocence, centered on the sworn confession of Arnold Beverly that he, not Mumia, shot Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner in 1981. One month earlier, William Yohn, the U.S. district court judge deciding Mumia’s *habeas corpus* appeal, ruled in effect that a court of law is no place for evidence of Jamal’s innocence! Yohn went a step further, gratuitously advising his Pennsylvania court



Worthington/Toronto Sun

Victims of state frame-up machine: Black Panther leader Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt) spent 27 years in prison. American Indian Movement leader Leonard Peltier still imprisoned after 25 years.

colleague Dembe to do the same.

Beverly’s confession stated: “I was hired, along with another guy, and paid to shoot and kill Faulkner. I had heard that Faulkner was a problem for the mob and corrupt policemen because he interfered with the graft and payoffs made to allow illegal activity including prostitution, gambling, drugs without prosecution in the center city area.... I shot Faulkner in the face at close range. Jamal was shot shortly after that by a uniformed police officer who arrived on the scene.”

Mumia’s innocence has been evident from the outset. We have repeatedly exposed the D.A.’s case, which rested on three legs: eyewitness accounts that were secured through police manipulation, coercion and outright terror; a purported “confession” by Jamal while he was lying near death in the hospital, which didn’t surface until two months after the killing; ballistics “evidence” concocted by the police that the bullets that killed Faulkner were fired from Jamal’s gun. The Post-Conviction Relief appeal filed by Jamal’s attorneys in Pennsylvania state court on July 3 demolished every last vestige of the discredited “three legs.”

Jamal’s new legal team was assembled after he fired his lead counsel Leonard Weinglass and assistant counsel Daniel Williams when he learned of the lying contents of a so-called “inside account” Williams was preparing to publish, aptly titled *Executing Justice*. In a chapter of his book, “Fighting Ideology,” Williams denigrates the Beverly confession as “bona fide lunacy,” “patently outrageous” and “absurd.” Pages of this section have been quoted by the prosecutors as their central argument for barring Beverly’s confession and other new evidence from being heard in court. Williams and Weinglass had been aware of Beverly’s confession since 1999. Outrageously, they fought to bury it and the volumes of corroborating evidence.

Williams’ central premise is that the cops never could, never would, knowingly frame up an innocent man. But as any inner-city resident—actually, as any

reader of daily newspapers—can tell you, cop corruption, murder and frame-up is a fact of life. In Philadelphia hundreds of convictions based on concocted evidence, coerced confessions, police torture and manipulation of witnesses have been thrown out in the last several years. Most notorious was the case of a 53-year-old black grandmother, Betty Patterson, who the cops set up on charges of drug dealing in order to manufacture evidence against her sons in a murder investigation.

The history of American bourgeois justice *is* a history of the frame-ups, imprisonment and execution of labor militants, black activists and partisans of the oppressed. That’s a fact!

- **The Haymarket Martyrs:** Anarchists and labor organizers of the protests for an eight-hour workday in 1886—executed in Chicago. *Innocent!*

- **Joe Hill:** IWW organizer legally murdered by a Utah firing squad in 1915. *Innocent!*

- **Sacco and Vanzetti:** Anarchist workers framed for a murder during a bank robbery and executed in 1927—rounded up as part of the anti-red anti-immigrant hysteria that followed the Bolshevik-led Russian workers revolution of October 1917. They were nowhere near the crime scene. *Innocent!*

Do you think it’s “ancient history”?

- **Black Panther leader Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt):** Before his release in 1995, 27 years in prison for a killing the government knew all along he didn’t commit—they had wiretap logs showing he was 400 miles away. *Innocent!*

- **Leonard Peltier:** This American Indian Movement leader has spent 25 years in federal prison on charges of killing two FBI agents during the government’s brutal siege of the Pine Ridge reservation in 1975. Even the government attorneys conceded during one of Peltier’s appeal hearings that they had no idea who shot the agents—but Peltier continues to rot in a prison hell which has stolen most of his eyesight and destroyed his health. *Innocent!*

- **Black Panther, MOVE supporter and award-winning journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal:** *Innocent!*

But what does the innocence of this man who has dedicated his life to the cause of black freedom mean to a ruling class whose hands are stained with the blood of over a million Iraqis killed by U.S. bombs and a starvation blockade, of thousands of Serbs and countless others—in U.S. cities and across the globe. The prosecutors and the capitalist rulers they represent want to inject Mumia with the same lethal dose which snuffed out the life of Shaka Sankofa (Gary Graham), also an innocent black man, at the height of George W. Bush’s presidential campaign. They want to execute Jamal because they see in this black journalist, MOVE supporter and former Black Panther Party spokesman a symbol of defiant opposition to their system of racial oppression. They want Mumia dead in

continued on page 6

James/Philadelphia Inquirer



Philadelphia police raid on Black Panthers, 1970, part of FBI’s murderous COINTELPRO operation. Jamal (above) as young Black Panther Party leader, targeted since age of 15 by Philly cops.

Mumia...

(continued from page 5)

order to send a chilling message to all those who challenge cop terror in the ghettos, who stand up for labor's rights on the picket lines, who protest U.S. imperialist mass murder abroad.

No Illusions in the Capitalist Courts!

The rulers put their machinery of state repression in high gear particularly if they sense any potential evidence of the explosive combination of black and red. This was expressed clearly by FBI director J. Edgar Hoover, who announced in the 1960s: "The Negro youth and moderate[s] must be made to understand that if they succumb to revolutionary teachings, they will be dead revolutionaries."

Mumia's role as an articulate young spokesman for the Panthers put him squarely in the sights of the Philly cops and the FBI. The FBI amassed at least 900 pages on Jamal in its COINTELPRO files. Jamal had been in the cross hairs as well of the Philadelphia Police Department's Civil Defense Squad, formed in the mid-1960s. He was placed under daily surveillance by the CD unit, which not only closely collaborated with the FBI, but also served as a model for the deadly FBI's COINTELPRO operation of disruption and provocation against the left which resulted in the murder of 38 Panthers around the country. Philadelphia's police commissioner and then mayor, Frank Rizzo, became an icon of racist "law and order" among cops nationwide, particularly for his attacks against the Black Panther Party.

Mumia survived the rulers' onslaught against the Panthers in the '60s and '70s. Unlike Fred Hampton and Mark Clark, Jamal wasn't assassinated in his sleep in the dead of night. But the Feds and Philly cops did not call off their vendetta against Mumia. They continued to hate him for his eloquent and impassioned defense of black rights, and particularly because he remained defiant and unbowed in the face of state repression and racist oppression. The drive to execute Mumia is the extension of the COINTELPRO terror campaign by the FBI. It is a demonstration of the machinery of repression wielded by the capitalist rulers against any perceived threat to a system based on the exploitation of the many by the few, which in the U.S. is rooted in the forcible subjugation of the black population at the bottom of society.

Working-class militants, fighters for black freedom and leftist youth who have enlisted in Mumia's cause must learn the lessons paid for in blood in the struggles of the past. In particular they can learn from the writings of James P. Can-



William Loren Katz Collection

1917 march in New York City protested national wave of lynchings by race-terrorist Ku Klux Klan.

non. In his 1927 article "Who Can Save Sacco and Vanzetti?" Cannon laid out the counterposition between liberal appeals and the principles of non-sectarian class-struggle defense on which the Partisan Defense Committee—a legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League—bases itself:

"One policy is the policy of the class struggle. It puts the center of gravity in the protest movement of the workers of America and the world. It puts all faith in the power of the masses and no faith whatever in the justice of the courts. While favoring all possible legal proceedings, it calls for agitation, publicity, demonstrations—organized protest on a national and international scale....

"The other policy is the policy of 'respectability,' of the 'soft pedal' and of ridiculous illusions about 'justice' from the courts of the enemy. It relies mainly on legal proceedings. It seeks to blur the issue of the class struggle.... It tries to represent the martyrdom of Sacco and Vanzetti as an 'unfortunate' error which can be rectified by the 'right' people proceeding in the 'right way'."

Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!

When Timothy McVeigh was put to death in June, the federal government carried out its first execution in 38 years. This unrepentant mass murderer was a perfect model for the re-imposition of federal executions, especially at a time when reservations about capital punishment have become increasingly prominent. One week later a more representative example of those on the government's hit list—one of the 80 percent of those on federal death row who is black or Hispanic—Juan Paul Garza was executed. In a statement issued on June 5, the PDC protested the executions of McVeigh and Garza, stating:

"We recoil at this spectacle of vengeful, state-sanctioned murder. Capital punishment is a barbaric legacy of medieval torture, and in the U.S. of black chattel slavery. It is a system of legal murder that reinforces the brutalization of society in all respects. We oppose the death penalty on principle—for the guilty as well as the innocent."

In the U.S., where the decaying capitalist system offers no future to millions of inner-city youth, the death penalty, the mass incarceration of black men and the elimination of welfare speak to the bourgeoisie's impulse to genocide. For more than a decade, Democrats and Republicans did everything in their power to increase the number of victims and speed the pace of state-sanctioned murder. *Habeas corpus* was virtually eliminated and death penalty appeals were hastened with Clinton's 1996 Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act. Funds to defenders' offices dedicated to poor people charged with capital crimes were slashed, leaving many defendants stuck with such representation as lawyers who sleep through trials, who are drunken KKK kleagles, and even lawyers who brag about how many clients they sent to the death chamber. Clinton's 1996 federal crime bill, which expanded by dozens the offenses punishable by death, included imposing the death penalty in states that had rejected it. Bush's attorney general, John Ashcroft, an open supporter of the Confederacy, made this explicit, promising that the Feds are going to aggressively seek death sentences in those states. This recalls the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 which extended the reach of the slave-owners into the "free states" of the North.

Confronted almost weekly with exposures of innocent frame-up victims, public support for capital punishment, although still a majority, has significantly waned over the past two years. In January 2000, after the thirteenth case came to light of a death row inmate in his state who had been falsely convicted, Illinois' Republican governor, George Ryan, decreed a moratorium on executions pending review of death penalty procedures. Other municipalities have followed suit. Even nine cities and towns in North Carolina, in the heart of the old Confederacy, have passed nonbinding resolutions for a moratorium. However brief the Illinois moratorium may be, and whatever reasons the Illinois state authorities had for its institution, a curtailment of state-sanctioned murder is something Marxists welcome. But we also recognize that it does not change the fundamentally racist and oppressive nature of bourgeois class rule.

Some liberal bourgeois politicians, most notably Jesse Jackson, have pushed "life without parole"—i.e., a living death—as an alternative, portraying the death penalty as "ineffective" and too costly. At the same time, reformist groups like the International Socialist Organization (ISO) and its Campaign to End the Death Penalty have built platforms for Chicago Democratic Con-

gressman Jesse Jackson Jr., and his call for a nationwide moratorium on executions. The ISO's entire strategy is premised on appealing to the capitalist state and its representatives for justice. Cravenly, Campaign spokesman Alice Kim pleaded with Clinton last year: "Have a heart this Valentine's Day...Stop all federal executions!"

We don't play that game—our starting point is not what is the most effective means for the capitalist rulers to repress those they exploit. We seek to explain the true nature of the capitalist state—at its core made up of the cops, military, prosecutors and courts—as an instrument to protect the property, profits and class rule of the handful of capitalists against the working class and oppressed. We fight to bring to the working class an understanding of the class-struggle methods by which they can organize to fight. Our purpose is to imbue the proletariat with the understanding that the capitalist state must be smashed through socialist revolution and replaced with a workers state.

For the most part, as a recent *Wall Street Journal* (22 May 2001) article points out, the debate today isn't primarily about *whether* capital punishment should exist, but how it's applied in practice. "Opponents want stronger safeguards because it will mean fewer executions. Supporters will tolerate fewer executions as a means of stemming the erosion of public confidence in the death penalty."

Behind this is the worry by a section of the bourgeoisie that the high-profile exposures of a series of bogus death row convictions will undermine the "authority" of the state's killing machine. In early July, Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor conceded to a group of women lawyers in Minneapolis that the U.S. "may well be allowing some innocent defendants to be executed." Noting that Minnesota has no death penalty, O'Connor told them, "You must breathe a big sigh of relief every day." A few weeks after her speech O'Connor voted to uphold the execution of Napoleon Beazley, a 25-year-old black man convicted of killing oilman John Luttig during a carjacking when he was 17. Luttig's son, an appellate judge in Texas and a vocal advocate of the death penalty, assisted the prosecution in securing an all-white jury—including an outspoken white-supremacist and the president of the United Daughters of the Confederacy.

Of course, the concerns voiced by the capitalist rulers are laced with a heavy dose of hypocrisy. Oklahoma governor Keating proposed that the courts use a standard of proof more rigorous than "beyond a reasonable doubt" in capital cases, pontificating, "the people now expect moral certainty." That hasn't stopped Keating from ordering more executions this year than even Texas.

The ISO's Campaign to End the Death Penalty adapts to bourgeois liberals by subordinating the call for abolishing capital punishment to calling for "moratorium now, abolition next." But one doesn't necessarily follow the other. Britain's conservative news magazine the *Economist* perceptively pointed out, "Such reform could drive a stake through the heart of the abolitionist movement. The more the public becomes convinced that every person who sits on death row is guilty, the less of a groundswell there will be for ending capital punishment."

There have been prior moratoriums in American history. Between 1907 and 1917 nine states either abolished or severely restricted the death penalty and other states saw a sharp drop in executions. But corresponding to the anti-immigrant hysteria during the "Red scare" which followed the October 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, five of those nine states restored the death penalty. In the 1920s, the American capitalist state, fearing that the black masses were "seeing red"—the words they used to describe popular black support for the Russian Revolution—constructed a deadly apparatus of political repression. This vast

SPARTACIST LEAGUE/U.S. Local Directory and Public Offices

Web site: www.icl-fi.org • E-mail address: vanguard@tiac.net

National Office

Box 1377 GPO,
New York, NY 10116
(212) 732-7860

Boston

Box 390840, Central Sta.
Cambridge, MA 02139
(617) 666-9453

Chicago

Box 6441, Main PO
Chicago, IL 60680
(312) 563-0441

Public Office:

Sat. 2-5 p.m.
222 S. Morgan (Buzzer 23)

Los Angeles

Box 29574, Los Feliz Sta.
Los Angeles, CA 90029
(213) 380-8239

Public Office:

Sat. 2-5 p.m.
3806 Beverly Blvd., Room 215

New York

Box 3381, Church St. Sta.
New York, NY 10008
(212) 267-1025

Public Office:

Tues. 6:30-8:30 p.m.
and Sat. 1-5 p.m.
299 Broadway, Suite 318

Oakland

Box 29497
Oakland, CA 94604
(510) 839-0851

Public Office:

Sat. 1-5 p.m.
1634 Telegraph, 3rd Floor

San Francisco

Box 77494
San Francisco, CA 94107
(415) 395-9520

Public Office:

Tues. 6-8 p.m.
564 Market Street
Suite 718

TROTSKYIST LEAGUE OF CANADA/LIGUE TROTSKYSTE DU CANADA

Toronto

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

Vancouver

Box 2717, Main P.O.
Vancouver, BC V6B 3X2
(604) 687-0353

From Death Row, This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal

Powerless at the Post Office



In the wake of the mid-October 2001 Anthrax scare, the imagery of Congressional members and staffers fleeing their Washington offices and chambers spoke volumes about the power of fear that motivates human conduct. This was quickly reinforced by the almost unprecedented evacuation of the august Supreme Court as word leaked out of the suspected presence of Anthrax spores at an off-site mail facility that serviced the nation's highest judicial body.

The evacuation of Capitol Hill and the Supreme Court building brought an eerie silence to an area that was long unaccustomed to such a hush, save on national holidays, weekends or seasonal vacations.

What it also revealed was the power of the powerful to protect their interests, no matter how infinitesimal the threat, while relegating those perceived to be lower on the food chain to the possible exposure of a significantly greater threat. For although no traces of Anthrax were found in the offices or mail rooms of the House of Representatives, both Senators and Representatives closed up shop, and left.

Postal workers, however, perhaps closest to the contaminating agent, worked on, blissfully unaware of, and uninformed of, the real and deadly risks facing them.

Neither were they tested or given the long-term regimen of the antibiotic, Cipro, as were their Congressional colleagues.

Although some postal areas were cleaned and detoxified the rank-and-file postal employees weren't informed of the results of any testing done in their work areas.

Such clearly disparate responses and treatment has left postal workers feeling like the low men (and women) on the totem pole; thus, angry, resentful and scared.

It is perhaps impolite to point out the obvious, but an undeniable truth emerges from the varied responses to the Anthrax scare: many, if not most, postal employees are black and of Latin origin. By contrast, postmen cannot strike.

Imagine their fears multiplied tenfold when a postman died, but his 911 call recording remained to broadcast his fears:

911 Operator: What's the problem?

Mr. Thomas L. Morris: My breathing is very, very labored.

Q: How old are you?

A: I'm 55. Ah, I don't know if I have been, but I suspect that I might have been exposed to Anthrax.

Q: You know when or what—

A: Ah, it was last what, last Saturday, a week ago last Saturday [Oct. 13] morning at work. I work for the Postal Service, I've been to the doctor. I went to the doctor Thursday. He took a culture but he never got back to me with the results. I guess there was some hangup over the weekend. I'm not sure. But in the meantime, I went through achiness and headachiness.

This started Tuesday. Now I'm having difficulty breathing. And just to move any distance I feel like I'm going to pass out.... It was—a woman found the envelope and I was in the vicinity. It had powder in it. They never let us know whether that thing had—was Anthrax or not. They never treated the people who were around this particular individual and the supervisor who handled the envelope. So I don't know if it is or not. I'm just—I've never been able to find out. I've been calling. But the symptoms that I've had are what was described to me in a letter that they put out almost to the T.... The doctor thought that it was just a virus or something.... [fr. 911 call, Oct. 21, 2001]

Thomas L. Morris, his words an eerie electronic echo from the grave, spoke in ways that resonated deeply with his fellow postal employees when he expressed his feelings about USPS management: "...I have a tendency not to believe these people."

Members of the New York Metro Area Postal Union sued in Federal Court to force the Postal Service to fully clean, detoxify, and close the Morgan postal facility in Manhattan until this could be assured. The U.S. District Court denied the injunction, saying postal workers had not "demonstrated that there is a likelihood of irreparable harm." By noting that the Morgan facility was the busiest in Manhattan, the court seemed to be balancing the harms to both sides. In reality it was a balancing of power, for although the union is vast it is forbidden by law to strike. And a union unable to withdraw its labor lacks a powerful tool.

Distrustful, and largely unheralded, they wait for another deadly shoe to drop.

29 November 2001

©2001 Mumia Abu-Jamal

Send urgently needed contributions for Mumia's legal defense, earmarked "Mumia Abu-Jamal," to: Humanitarian Law Project, 8124 W. 3rd Street, Suite 105, Los Angeles, CA 90048.

If you wish to correspond with Jamal, you can write to: Mumia Abu-Jamal, AM8335, SCI Greene, 175 Progress Drive, Waynesburg, PA 15370.



Labor Defender

Mass mobilizations were key in saving the nine youths framed up in 1930s Scottsboro case from legal lynching.

army of spies and informers, local police "red squads," and a system of wiretaps and mail interceptions was later deployed by Hoover's FBI in the '60s. (For more on state activities against black militants following the 1917 Russian Revolution, see "The Russian Revolution and the Black Freedom Struggle," WV No. 751, 2 February 2001.)

In 1967, as a result of the mass civil rights movement and protests against the U.S.'s dirty, losing imperialist war in Vietnam, the capitalist rulers felt compelled to put the death penalty on hold. Five years later the court ruled that the death penalty was "wanton and freakish" and ordered the states to rewrite their laws. By 1976 the protest marches had stopped, and the same court gave the green light to resume executions. Nearly 600 people have been legally murdered since.

Amid growing apprehension about capital punishment, the American rulers' killing machine plugs on with its dirty business. Bush, who in his six years as governor of Texas carried out over 150

executions—one every two weeks—went ahead with the Garza execution despite charges of racial disparities in meting out death sentences. And figure this out: with 14 blacks and two Hispanics on federal death row compared to three whites, Attorney General Ashcroft declared that it was white people who were more likely to be targeted under federal laws!

American Capitalism and Black Oppression

The U.S. and Japan are the only advanced capitalist countries to retain the death penalty. In Japan it is used infrequently, although quite sadistically. No advance notice is given. One day the victim is taken from his cell and his life is terminated. Weeks later his family is sent a letter informing them that their loved one is no more.

The recent spotlight on capital punishment in the U.S. was a bit more luminous this spring, when Bush made his first trip to Europe. Stung by the contempt the Bush administration has shown its imperialist competitors/allies—like the about-

face on the Kyoto accords and U.S. plans for a missile shield program, for example—the Europeans eagerly, and accurately, portrayed Bush as an ignorant, bloodthirsty, spoiled frat boy. The European powers were relishing the opportunity to posture as more civilized than crude Americans.

The U.S. ruling class is *barbaric* and the greatest enemy of the world's working people. However, this doesn't mean that the European imperialists treat their exploited and oppressed any less brutally. The horrendous crimes committed by the French, British and other imperialist powers against their colonial vassals and working masses are not merely subjects for history books. Citizenship rights for those second and third generations born in these imperialist countries has long been denied. Today, faced with a growing pool of ethnic minorities, these powers have stepped up deportations and increased brutal attacks on immigrants and asylum-seekers.

Witness the attacks in Britain on the brutally impoverished and oppressed immigrant communities in Oldham, Bradford and Burnley in the last few months. Across the Channel in France the cops have carried out a systematic campaign of terror against the North African ghettos surrounding every major French city. In Sweden, a place social democrats like to point to as some sort of socialist paradise, cops opened fire with live ammunition against anti-globalization protesters in June. In late July outside the G-8 meetings in Genoa, Italian cops killed pro-

tester Carlo Giuliani in cold blood and arrested hundreds, with many of them tortured. This is the real face of "civilized" capitalist Europe.

But if the death penalty stands at the pinnacle of a state apparatus whose purpose is to repress with force any threat to the capitalist social order, why have the European capitalist powers eliminated capital punishment and the U.S. hasn't? The central difference lies in the unique history of American capitalism—built on the unpaid labor of millions of chattel slaves. The origins of capital punishment in the U.S. are rooted in the Southern slave system which was smashed by the Civil War. Today 43 percent of those on death row are black—triple the representation of blacks in the general population.

In the infamous 1857 Dred Scott decision, the Supreme Court announced that black people "had no rights which the white man was bound to respect." Exactly 130 years later, when black Georgian Warren McCleskey challenged his death sentence by presenting indisputable facts of the racist application of capital punishment in the U.S., the Supreme Court declared it to be an "inevitable part of our criminal justice system." The court rejected McCleskey's appeal, declaring that its premise "throws into serious question the principles that underlie our entire criminal justice system," including "the validity of capital punishment in our multiracial society." In their own legalese, the black-robed justices are confirming the old saying among black

continued on page 8

Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste Forum

"Anti-Terror" Witchhunt Targets Immigrants, Workers and the Left

Labor Must Defend Immigrant Rights!

TORONTO

Saturday, January 26, 7:30 p.m.

Trinity-St. Paul's Centre, 427 Bloor St. West
(west of Spadina)

For more information: (416) 593-4138 or e-mail spartcan@on.aibn.com

Mumia...

(continued from page 7)

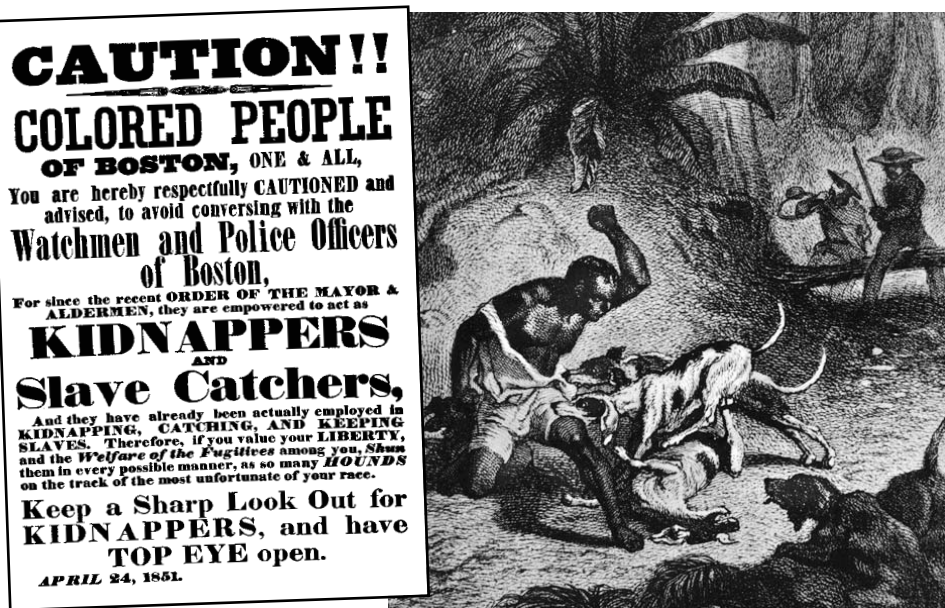
people: “They got the capital, we get the punishment.”

The early Slave Codes defined the black slave as chattel—property—to be slaughtered with about the same “safeguards” as might befit a recalcitrant mule. Under the Southern slavocracy, special “Negro courts” were set up for slaves who, in the words of a South Carolina statute, could expect to be tried “in the most summary and expeditious manner” and executed by means “most effectual to deter others from offending in the like manner.” Among the numerous crimes deemed capital offenses for slaves in every Southern state before the Civil War were rebellion and attempted rebellion. In Louisiana, death was mandated for a slave who struck his overseer or any member of the slaveowner’s family, or for a third conviction for striking any white man.

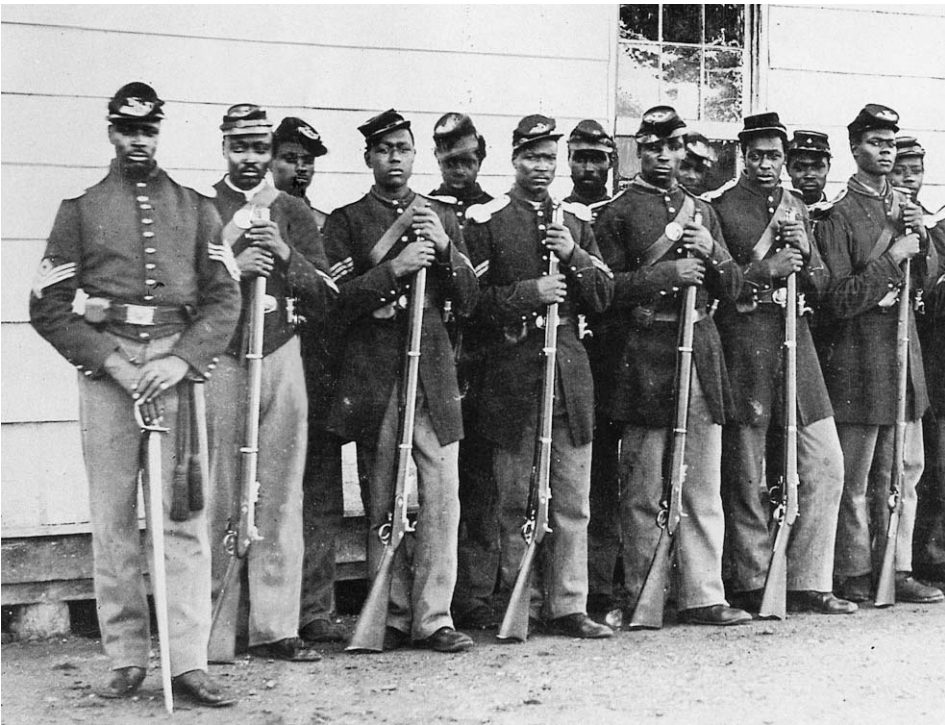
The Civil War smashed the slave system and was the last great bourgeois-democratic revolution. The needs of the war, especially the recruitment of black soldiers into the Union Army to fight against the Confederacy, resulted in slavery’s abolition and the consequent destruction of the old Southern plantation agricultural system. While many freed slaves fought to have the former plantations distributed to those who tilled them, the American bourgeoisie was not interested in a thoroughgoing social reconstruction of the South. Northern capitalists looked at the devastated South and saw opportunity—not for building radical democracy, but for profitably exploiting Southern resources and the freedmen. The Compromise of 1877, completing the withdrawal of the Union Army from the South, sealed this betrayal of black freedom.

A new system of racist exploitation was established through institutionalized repression of the freedmen’s fight for land, education and civil rights. The former slaves became tenants and sharecroppers toiling on land owned by the white propertied class, made up of elements of the old slavocracy and a new Southern bourgeoisie with strong ties to Northern capital. A rigid system of legally enforced segregation called Jim Crow was imposed and maintained by KKK terror and police-state suppression of blacks and anti-racist whites. In 1896 the Supreme Court codified “separate but equal” segregation as the law of the land in the *Plessy v. Ferguson* ruling.

At the heart of Jim Crow was lynch-law terror. From the late 1800s on, some 5,000 or more people were killed by lynch mobs. In the 1890s, as the Jim Crow regimes consolidated in the South, there were at least 1,540 lynchings—one every other day for ten years. The anti-lynching campaign initiated by courageous black journalist Ida B. Wells simply fought to get blacks charged with crimes into the courtroom. To the extent this happened, legal lynchings largely supplanted the extralegal ones. By the 1930s, mob lynchings had nearly



Library of Congress Hull Museums
Boston poster was part of abolitionist struggle against 1850 Fugitive Slave Law. Black soldiers were key to victory of Union Army over slavocracy in Civil War.



ceased—replaced by the perfunctory death penalty trial. More than 1,600 people were executed during the 1930s alone—more than one every other day for ten years. Between 1930 and 1967, black people accounted for more than two-thirds of all U.S. executions.

The Scottsboro defendants—nine black youths who in 1931 were falsely charged with rape, tried and sentenced to death in Alabama in a matter of days—narrowly escaped being added to these statistics. While the NAACP did nothing initially, an international protest campaign led by the Communist Party’s International Labor Defense threw a worldwide spotlight on the brutal oppression of black people in the South and saved their lives. The Scottsboro defendants got a retrial, and another, and still spent nearly two decades in the horrendous Alabama prisons.

A recent book, *Proximity to Death*, by historian William McFeeley, captures this American reality very well. McFeeley, an expert on the Civil War and the South, was asked by Stephen Bright of the Southern Center for Human Rights to testify for Carzell Moore, a black defen-

dant in a death penalty appeal in Georgia. The purpose of his testimony was to demonstrate that a black man cannot even conceive of equal justice in a courtroom whose state flag bears the St. Andrew’s cross of the Confederate battle flag.

McFeeley described the history of the adoption of the flag on February 9, 1956 as a symbol of opposition to the civil rights movement’s efforts to integrate Georgia’s schools. This came one day after the all-white General Assembly of Georgia passed a resolution of interposition, which called for nullifying not only the Fourteenth Amendment but also the Thirteenth which abolished slavery. On the witness stand, McFeeley described how during the Civil War the Confederate flag would be “run into battle, accompanied by the rebel yell.” He continued: “It flew, as well, after the war when Klansmen rallied and rode to surround a Negro cabin. The whole black county knew the terror, when one black person was dragged out of the cabin and killed.”

The Confederate flag stands for black enslavement and racist murder, KKK cross-burnings, the lynching of any who would fight for the rights of blacks and labor. It still flies in Georgia and other Southern states, including Mississippi which this past spring voted overwhelmingly to retain it. Everywhere it flies—from Southern state capitols to KKK and Nazi skinhead rallies—it is an incitement to racist terror. And as Carzell Moore’s attorneys attempted to point out, it stands for racist terror and state-sanctioned murder inside the courts as well. To make the link between KKK terror and legal lynchings by the state, Bright’s witnesses included a grand dragon of the Klan who described celebrations outside the Georgia Diagnostic and Classification Center—a nice Orwellian name for the home of Georgia’s electric chair.

The massive expansion of the death penalty is only the tip of the iceberg of an all-sided intensification of capitalist state repression. America houses one-fourth of the world’s prison population—and half of them are black. Behind it all

is the deepening poverty of the ghetto masses and sharp attacks on the living standards of the working class. In the 1970s and 1980s industry was decimated, and for every place lost on the assembly line, one was added in the prisons. In the past year nearly a million manufacturing jobs were eliminated. With nothing to offer the masses of black poor and working people but ever greater degradation and immiseration, the capitalist ruling class is intent on extinguishing any sign of protest with brute force.

For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

Karl Marx captured a fundamental truth of American society when he wrote at the time of the Civil War, “Labor cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded.” It took a bloody civil war to destroy the system of chattel slavery. But the promise of black freedom was betrayed. Black people who fled to Northern cities to escape brutal Jim Crow segregation in the South were integrated into the workforce at its bottom and forcibly segregated into inner-city ghettos. As the “last hired and first fired,” the black population supplied, in Marx’s words, a “reserve army of labor” for the American capitalists.

The color bar remains a fundamental dividing line in American society, a key prop for obscuring the irreconcilable class divide between labor and capital. The special oppression of black people as a race/color caste is the bedrock of American capitalism. At the same time, black workers are a strategic component of the multiracial proletariat in the U.S. Won to a revolutionary program, black workers will be the living link fusing the anger of the dispossessed ghetto masses with the social power of the working class. In fighting to mobilize labor in Jamal’s behalf, we seek to win workers to the understanding that they cannot break the chains of exploitation as wage slaves of the capitalists without simultaneously combatting every manifestation of racial oppression.

Time is short and the stakes are high. There is much to be done—and much to be undone. The new evidence of Jamal’s innocence is the truth. But in this capitalist system of injustice, truth alone will not set Jamal free. What’s needed is social power. If labor’s power is to be brought to bear in a mighty blow on Mumia’s behalf, it must be mobilized independently of the very forces of the capitalist state that have worked for years to frame up and kill this innocent man. It is necessary to expose not only those like Weinglass and Williams who openly betray Jamal’s cause but also the reformists who would subordinate his fight for freedom to appeals to liberal Democratic politicians and the capitalist courts. Above all, it is the trade-union bureaucracy that is an obstacle to labor flexing its muscle in struggle on behalf of all the oppressed; labor must break the chains forged by the union misleaders that have shackled the unions to the political parties and the state agencies of the enemy class.

We say: Free Mumia! That means mobilizing now the power of the multiracial working class, the workers who run the trains, make the cars, drive the trucks, lay the pipes—who produce the vast wealth of this society. Workers who by withholding their labor can choke off the lifeblood of this racist ruling class: capitalist profits.

The Spartacist League fights to forge a multiracial revolutionary workers party, a Leninist tribune of the people. This is key to sweeping away this system based on exploitation and oppression and putting a final halt to the grisly workings of capitalism’s machinery of death—be they the guardians of death row or the cops who operate as “judge, jury and executioner” in gunning down minority youth on the streets. To put an end to this racist killing machine of lynch ropes, gas chambers and lethal injections means getting rid of the racist capitalist system once and for all—through workers revolution. ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League

☐ \$10/22 issues of *Workers Vanguard* (includes English-language *Spartacist* and *Black History and the Class Struggle*)
international rates: \$25/22 issues—Airmail \$10/22 issues—Seamail

☐ New ☐ Renewal

☐ \$2/6 introductory issues of *Workers Vanguard* (includes English-language *Spartacist*)

☐ \$2/4 issues of *Espartaco* (en español) (includes Spanish-language *Spartacist*)

Name _____

Address _____

_____ Apt. # _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (____) _____ E-mail _____

772

Make checks payable/mail to: Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

Miami Five...

(continued from page 2)

inform on the terrorist plans hatched against our people” (*Granma*, 20 June 2001). The defendants themselves proudly acknowledged their role in a message to the American people published in the same issue of *Granma*. They asserted that Cuba, which “has heroically survived four decades of aggressions and threats to its national security, of subversive plans, sabotages and destabilization, has every right to defend itself from its enemies who keep using the U.S. territory to plan, organize and finance terrorist actions.” Adding that they were “in no way repentant of what we have done to defend our country,” they stated: “We declare ourselves non guilty and simply take comfort in the fact that we have honored our duty to our people and our homeland.”

During the trial, the defense called a retired U.S. Air Force colonel to the witness stand, who testified that National Security Agency records show that the Brothers to the Rescue planes were well inside Cuban airspace when they were shot down in 1996. This flatly contradicts Washington’s claims that they were over international waters at the time. The

defense also called Brothers to the Rescue leader José Basulto, who turned back his plane in 1996 and was not pursued by the Cuban air force. Basulto admitted under questioning that he “broadly supports exile groups bent on overthrowing Fidel Castro violently.”

From the CIA-backed invasion at the Bay of Pigs in 1961, to the bombing of a Cubana airliner by U.S.-trained counter-revolutionaries which killed 73 people in 1976, to the ongoing starvation embargo, the American imperialists and their *gusano* creatures have not ceased in their attempts to overthrow the Cuban Revolution. As well as arresting the Miami Five, last fall the FBI imprisoned Ana Belen Montes, a senior U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency analyst, on charges of providing classified material to Havana. She is being held without bail and could face the death penalty if convicted.

The smashing of capitalist class rule and the creation of a workers state, albeit deformed under the rule of the Stalinist Castro bureaucracy, brought tremendous gains to the Cuban population, from free medical care to jobs, housing and education. It also delivered a huge blow to racist discrimination against black Cubans, who had been the lowest of the low under the mafia-infested

Batista puppet regime.

The Bush administration’s drive to destroy the Cuban Revolution carries forward that of successive U.S. regimes starting with the Kennedy Democrats, who imposed the economic embargo in 1962. We oppose the U.S. blockade against Cuba. But at the same time we warn that this will hardly put a stop to the efforts of the imperialists to penetrate Cuba with the aim of the counterrevolutionary restoration of capitalism. Indeed, a whole wing of the American ruling class argues for ending the embargo in order to flood the Cuban economy with dollars and strengthen the forces for counterrevolution from within.

Following the 1991-92 destruction of the Soviet Union, once Cuba’s economic lifeline and chief international ally, the Castro regime has increasingly opened the country to imperialist economic penetration, thus far from Europe and also Canada. This has meant a big increase in inequality, notably for the black population. While standing forthrightly in defense of Cuba against imperialism and counterrevolution, we call for workers political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy, whose nationalist program of building “socialism in one country” has placed the gains of the Cuban Revo-

lution in mortal danger. Crucial to the defense of the Cuban Revolution is the struggle for proletarian power throughout Latin America and beyond, especially in the belly of the American imperialist beast.

The railroading of the Miami Five comes in the context of U.S. imperialism’s “war on terror,” which has seen more than a thousand people, chiefly Muslims, thrown in jail, with only a handful even being charged. The “anti-terror” campaign is being used to strengthen the forces of state repression, including even broader powers for the FBI to conduct break-ins, electronic eavesdropping and other hitherto “illegal” activities. Now, the Bush administration has declared that it is planning to hold prisoners from its war against Afghanistan at the naval base it continues to maintain at Guantánamo Bay in Cuba, while sending in an additional 2,500 American troops. *U.S. out of Guantánamo now!*

In defending the Miami Five, we take a stand in defense of democratic rights at home and of the gains of the Cuban Revolution against the predations of U.S. imperialism. These are both crucial aspects of our fight to forge a revolutionary workers party that can lead the American proletariat to victory. ■

IG...

(continued from page 3)

Gorbachev, trying to placate the imperialists, pulled the Red Army out of Afghanistan in 1989, this was not only a deadly betrayal of Afghan women but a direct precursor to capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union itself.

The restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union in 1991-92 was a world-historic defeat for the international working class. In East Europe and the former Soviet Union, capitalist counterrevolution has brought an unparalleled plunge into mass immiseration, disease and fratricidal nationalist bloodletting. It also brought about a much more dangerous world. Without the counterweight of the Soviet Union, the U.S. imperialists have since been riding high in the saddle as the “world’s only superpower,” waging terror wars from Iraq to the Balkans to Afghanistan. The domestic price being paid for the imperialists’ victory in the Cold War is the all-sided class war against the working class, immigrants, blacks and the poor, which has been dramatically ratcheted up with the imperialists’ “war on terror.”

IG Deep-Sixes Red Army

Those self-professed “Marxists,” like the ISO and most of the rest of the fake left, who stood on the side of imperialism and its Frankenstein monsters in Afghanistan should be scathingly exposed as nothing other than reformist servants of the capitalist order. That is exactly what we did in our speeches, propaganda and placards at the Hunter protest. An understanding of the dearly bought lessons of the past is crucial to the consciousness that is necessary if the proletariat is to be mobilized in the struggle to shatter the rule of capitalist imperialism. For revolutionary Marxists, polemical combat against the various reformists and renegades who make pretensions to Marxism is critical to breaking the false consciousness that serves to tie the working class to its “own” bourgeoisie.

Not so for the IG. Whatever they may on occasion write in their propaganda stands in sharp contrast to their efforts to conciliate the reformists, liberals and others on the ground. In his speech to the protest, the IG’s “commander in chief” Norden lamely declared: “We fought against the Taliban, we fought against the Islamic fundamentalists when the United States was pushing them.” Completely eliminated was any mention of the Red Army intervention or that the “we” was the Spartacist League, of which Norden was a member at the time. And we stood with the Red Army against imperialism as

part of our unflagging commitment to the Trotskyist program of unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union.

What was left out of Norden’s speech was hardly an oversight. Not one of the IG’s placards, not one of their speakers and none of the propaganda they produced for the Hunter protest said a word about the Red Army or the Russian question. Subsequently, an entire 32-page IG pamphlet (December 2001) devoted to the CUNY protest went so far as to edit out any reference to the Soviet intervention in the SL speech at the rally and completely eliminated the SYC speaker.

Obviously the IG did not want to offend those like the ISO, the League for the Revolutionary Party or the Revolutionary Communist Party who had endorsed and attended the rally and who to a man were on the imperialist side against the Red Army in Afghanistan. Here is a textbook example of what Trotsky spoke to in his article “Centrism and the Fourth International” (*Writings*, 22 February 1934): “A centrist always remains in spiritual dependence on rightist groupings and is inclined to cringe before those who are more moderate, to remain silent on their opportunist sins and to color their actions before the workers.” As Trotsky also noted, the centrist—revolutionary in words, reformist in deeds—seeks to cover his tracks by reserving his polemical fire for the Bolshevik-Leninists. This, too, aptly characterizes the IG which, while not wanting to remind the reformists of their criminal embrace of the aims of the imperialist rulers, deliberately lies that the Spartacist League capitulates to jingoist warmongering in the U.S.

This is for the benefit of distant cyberspace audiences who cannot ascertain the truth on the ground. The IG’s utter silence in front of several hundred protesters at Hunter College on the force that could have defeated the forces backed by U.S. imperialism in Afghanistan—the Soviet Red Army—certainly demonstrates that its oh-so-revolutionary calls for the defeat of U.S. imperialism is so much hot air.

In attacking our propaganda on the U.S. war against Afghanistan, the IG’s *Internationalist* No. 12 (Fall 2001) fulminates against our call for “Class Struggle Against Capitalist Rulers at Home,” declaring that the “emphasis on ‘at home’ is counterposed to the call to defeat the imperialists *abroad*.” But the IG’s call to “Defeat U.S. Imperialism” in its war against Afghanistan is nothing more than empty rhetoric. The notion that the world’s most powerful imperialist country was going to be defeated at the hands of tribal forces in one of the world’s most backward countries is truly deranged. The easy win for the U.S. in Afghanistan dem-

onstrated that the Taliban was a creature of Pakistani intelligence services, with no base of local support. And while dispatching Special Forces to track down bin Laden, U.S. imperialism is not interested in a large-scale deployment of American ground troops in Afghanistan. Indeed, the international “peacekeeping” force has British, French, Italian, Spanish, Turkish and other troops, but not an American among them.

The IG’s elevation of military struggle against imperialism over and above the political struggle to mobilize the proletariat to smash imperialism *from within* is simply a measure of its despair in the revolutionary capacity of the working class. Norden has always had proclivities toward a fatuous optimism about the capacity of forces very distant from Trotskyism, or the proletariat for that matter, to “struggle” in some successful measure against the depredations of U.S. imperialism. Correspondingly, this means seriously downplaying the crucial and related factors of political consciousness and material economic reality.

The slogans used by the revolutionary party to lead the working masses to the seizure of state power are necessarily conjunctural. In 1941, when James P. Cannon, leader of the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP), and 27 other Trotskyists and Minneapolis Teamsters leaders were tried for their opposition to U.S. imperialism in World War II, an ultraleft critic in the Fourth International, Grandizo Munis, chastised Cannon for not stressing during his trial the need for the “organized violence of the poor masses.” Cannon replied that it was foolish to engage in such phrasemongering. Noting that the SWP was still a small party whose task was to organize the pro-

letarian masses to carry out a revolution, he referred to Bolshevik leader Lenin’s writings in May 1917. Having already won the Bolshevik Party leadership to the perspective of “All Power to the Soviets!” and no support to the bourgeois Provisional Government, which was in power following the fall of the tsar in February, Lenin argued that this did not mean that the Bolsheviks should immediately raise the slogan “Down with the Provisional Government!” He wrote that since the Bolsheviks were still a minority in the working class, “such a slogan is either an empty phrase, or, objectively, amounts to attempts of an adventurist character.”

Today, the IG hotly denies that there has been any retrogression in class consciousness following the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union. But they themselves are the product of a climate in which it is preached that the theory and program of Marxism have proved to be a “failed experiment.” The IG’s politics are those of accommodation to the existing consciousness, trying to give a “progressive” veneer to all manner of alien class forces and retrograde ideologies. Our politics serve a different purpose. As we wrote in our leaflet for the Hunter demonstration: “Unlike the revolutionary phrasemongers of the IG, we fight to awaken class combativity in the proletariat, and through patient education and in the course of class struggle to imbue the working class with revolutionary class consciousness.” In its own way, the very existence of the IG as “death of communism” centrists underlines the vital necessity of this task, including and especially polemical combat to remove the obstacles on the road to the successful seizure of state power through proletarian socialist revolution. ■

Espartaco

Publication of the Grupo Espartaquista de México

No. 17
Winter 2001-2002

\$.50 (12 pages)

Subscription:
\$2 for 4 issues
(includes Spanish-language *Spartacist*)

Order from/make checks payable to:
Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

Argentina...

(continued from page 1)

the heightened interimperialist rivalries that have come in the wake of the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, the U.S. has sought to extend its NAFTA “free trade” rape of Mexico throughout all of Latin America under the proposed Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA).

As proletarian revolutionaries in the belly of the U.S. imperialist beast, the Spartacist League/U.S. fights to mobilize the social power of the proletariat to shatter the rule of American imperialism from within. The pro-imperialist AFL-CIO trade-union bureaucrats who for decades have done the bidding of U.S. imperialism in its war on the workers and oppressed of Latin America now push the chauvinist poison of protectionism against these workers. Breaking the chains, forged by the labor tops, that shackle the proletariat in the U.S. to its “own” ruling class is central to a revolutionary perspective throughout the hemisphere. Down with NAFTA and the FTAA! For socialist revolution throughout the Americas!

Argentine Capitalism at a Dead End

Argentina was long one of the most economically and socially advanced countries in the former colonial world. Having substantial natural resources and a highly educated workforce, and free of the leaden weight of pre-capitalist remnants such as a large peasantry, by 1930 it had far outdistanced the rest of Latin America in per capita income and wage levels. The urban working class enjoyed a living standard superior in some respects to that of most workers in continental Europe. By 1945, as it grew wealthy from selling food to the imperialist armies in World War II, Argentina had about the same per capita income as Canada. Now the average Argentinean earns *one sixth* as much as the average Canadian.

The country’s current prostration provides a vivid illustration of one of the central premises of the theory of permanent revolution elaborated by revolutionary Marxist leader Leon Trotsky: that the bourgeoisies of the dependent capitalist countries are too weak and beholden to imperialism and too fearful of the power of the proletariat to be able to break the yoke of imperialist domination. The forms of bourgeois rule in Argentina



Trade union demonstration in Buenos Aires, August 2001, demands unemployment benefits. Powerful Argentine proletariat is shackled to bourgeois state by Peronist labor tops.

have run the gamut: from laissez-faire liberalism (the age of the agrarian bourgeois *estancieros* and British-dominated export economy in the early 20th century), to bourgeois nationalism and state-sponsored industrial development behind protectionist barriers (Peronism in the 1940s and ’50s), to unbridled imperialist domination under the recent neoliberal regimes. And this has been the case under both the trappings of bourgeois democracy and the jackboot of military rule.

With the destruction of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War configurations, the minimal autonomy that the Argentine ruling class thought it possessed—as displayed, for example, during the Malvinas/Falklands War with Britain—has evaporated. There is no way to break out of the cycle of crises, coups and state repression which has been the lot of Argentina since at least the 1930s short of a successful proletarian struggle for state power. The tasks of the proletariat in Argentina cannot be separated from those of the working class in the rest of Latin America. Elaborating on the perspective of permanent revolution in the region, Trotsky wrote:

“The theses of the Fourth International state:
““South and Central America will be able to tear themselves out of backwardness and enslavement only by uniting all their states in one powerful federation. But it

is not the belated South American bourgeoisie, a thoroughly venal agency of foreign imperialism, who will be called upon to solve this task, but the young South American proletariat, the chosen leader of the oppressed masses. The slogan in the struggle against violence and intrigues of world imperialism and against the bloody work of native comprador cliques is therefore: the *Soviet United States of South and Central America*’.”

Trotsky continued:

“Only under its own revolutionary direction is the proletariat of the colonies and the semicolonies capable of achieving invincible collaboration with the proletariat of the metropolitan centers, and with the world working class as a whole. Only this collaboration can lead the oppressed peoples to complete and final emancipation, through the overthrow of imperialism the world over.”
—“Imperialist War and the Proletarian World Revolution,” May 1940

IMF Starvation Austerity Enrages Argentine Masses

For more than a decade, Washington and the IMF touted Argentina as a prime example of a “fiscally responsible emerging economy.” In turn, Argentina has been a staunch ally of U.S. imperialism, most recently pledging to send 800 “peace-keeping” troops to aid the U.S. war in Afghanistan. But now the country is bankrupt and in turmoil (and the troops are staying home).

In a 1 January *New York Times* op-ed piece titled “Crying With Argentina,” columnist Paul Krugman wrote:

“Argentina, more than any other developing country, bought into the promises of U.S.-promoted ‘neoliberalism’ (that’s liberal as in free markets, not as in Ted Kennedy). Tariffs were slashed, state enterprises were privatized, multinational corporations were welcomed, and the peso was pegged to the dollar. Wall Street cheered, and money poured in: for a while, free-market economics seemed vindicated, and its advocates weren’t shy about claiming credit. Then things began to fall apart....

“Now Argentina is in utter chaos—some observers are even likening it to the Weimar Republic. And Latin Americans do not regard the United States as an innocent bystander.”

So tightly tied to the fortunes of the American dollar, the Argentine economy was severely damaged by the U.S. financial/economic boom of the mid-late ’90s. This saw capitalist investors worldwide flood into the Wall Street bull market, causing the value of the dollar to rise sharply in relation to nearly every other currency...except Argentina’s. The Argentine peso—and thus the price of Argentine goods on the world market—also rose sharply compared to almost all other countries, including its main trading partner, Brazil. This made Argentine goods uncompetitive and produced mounting balance-of-trade deficits. The normal capitalist market mechanism to redress this would be currency depreciation, which reduces the world market price of exports and increases the domestic price of imports. But in an attempt to stabilize

the economy, the Argentine government and many large businesses had denominated most of their new bond issues in dollars, so any peso devaluation would have proportionately increased Argentina’s debt.

Thus the country slid into a deep recession four years ago, well before the current worldwide slump. Layoffs and plant closures grew by the month. By July of last year, the economy was collapsing at an annual rate of 11 percent and the masses were desperate. But the U.S. made clear that it expected all the loans negotiated by the Menem and de la Rúa regimes to be repaid with interest. In August, Washington put together an “emergency rescue package” through the IMF—not to bail out Argentina, but to bail out the Wall Street banks that hold Argentine government (and private) bonds. As usual, this involved harsh austerity conditions, including a suspension of the social security system. But the workers and poor, together with an increasingly impoverished middle class, were not willing to take any more and took to the streets in protest. The IMF’s response was to freeze \$1.3 billion in aid early last month, whereupon the government stole \$700 million from the government workers’ pension funds to pay the interest on the debt. All this led to the yet broader protests that brought down the de la Ruá government.

The situation cries out for the *repudiation of the foreign debt*, which for decades has lined the imperialists’ coffers at the expense of Argentina’s workers. But no capitalist Argentine government would take such a step, since this would bring down unremitting hostility from its imperialist patrons and undermine the whole basis of its rule. IMF spokesmen now claim that whatever the government does, it will take a further cut of 30 percent in real wages, plus another five to ten years of recession, for Argentina to become internationally competitive!



Argentine strongman Juan Perón, 1952.

From the bourgeoisie’s class standpoint, it is hard to see *any* regime short of a military dictatorship being able to enforce such gouging austerity against an already enraged population. Yet any move toward a military coup would be met by immense opposition from a population which remembers vividly the last army dictatorship, whose brutal rule ended only after its ignominious defeat in the 1982 Malvinas/Falklands War.

Since 1977, protesting mothers have been meeting at the Plaza de Mayo every week to memorialize the thousands killed and “disappeared” by the military government, which worked closely with the CIA against leftist insurgencies throughout Latin America. The mothers were in the forefront of the huge December 19-20 anti-government protests, where demonstrators chanted, “*Madres de la Plaza, el pueblo las abraza!*” (“Mothers of the Plaza, the people embrace you!”).

Peronism: Deadly Trap for the Workers

To try to control the upsurge, the Argentine bourgeoisie has turned, for now, to the Peronists, specifically the

Rushdie...

(continued from page 4)

and the even sharper economic downslide in Japan are devastating the economies of South Korea, Thailand and the rest of capitalist East Asia.

To recognize that the fundamental responsibility of Western (and Japanese) imperialism for the economic impoverishment and cultural backwardness of the Third World does *not* exculpate (to use Rushdie’s term) the indigenous ruling classes of these countries. Quite the contrary. All of the ruling groups in the Near East, whether Islamic traditionalists or modernizing nationalists, whether they read the Koran or Rushdie’s *The Satanic Verses*, act as the *political agents* of the imperialists. And as long as these countries are part of the world capitalist system, it cannot be otherwise.

The *only* country which during the 20th century transformed itself from a backward, semi-feudal, predominantly agricultural economy to an advanced industrial society was Soviet Russia. This was possible because—and only because—capitalism was overthrown in Russia by the Bolshevik Revolution of October 1917, laying the basis for a planned socialized economy. Even today the distance between the socioeconomic and cultural conditions in the former Soviet Central Asian republics like Uzbekistan and Tajikistan and those of Afghanistan are to be measured in centuries.

However, the Soviet Union was throughout its history confronted by hostile and powerful capitalist states, above all the United States. Weakened internally by decades of Stalinist bureaucratic misrule and under the unrelenting economic, military and political pressure of world imperialism, the Soviet Union was destroyed by capitalist counterrevolution in 1991-92.

Rushdie concludes his piece: “If terrorism is to be defeated, the world of Islam must take on board the secularist-humanist principles on which the modern is based, and without which Muslim countries’ freedom will remain a distant dream.”

It is Marxism that is the heir—the only legitimate heir—to the secular humanism of the Enlightenment that was the ideological driving force behind the bourgeois revolutions of the 18th century in the West. Fearful of proletarian revolution, the imperialist bourgeoisies have since supported or embraced all manner of social obscurantism and religious fundamentalism; in the U.S., this prominently includes the bigotry of the Christian right, which is heavily represented in the current White House. The only road to the social, economic and cultural modernization of the countries of the Islamic East lies through proletarian revolution—new October Revolutions—leading to an internationally planned socialist economy extending from the oil fields of the Persian Gulf to the industrial plants of the American Midwest and German Ruhr. ■

wing under Duhalde which has chosen to put on national-populist trappings. This is a transparent attempt to utilize popular nostalgia for the government of General Juan Perón during the late 1940s and early '50s, which has come to be seen as a golden era when wages were raised, social programs launched and unions organized. Following a 1943 military coup, Perón emerged as Argentina's strongman. He followed a nationalist-corporatist model of capitalism, in which key sectors of the economy were state-owned, domestic industry was protected by tariffs and import licenses and foreign-exchange transactions were subjected to an array of controls.

While occasionally utilizing anti-Yankee demagoguery, the Peronists in the post-World War II period functioned as the local political agents of Wall Street, keeping the proletariat in line through the labor bureaucracy. They periodically slashed wages and depressed living standards to repay Argentina's debt to U.S. and other foreign banks, usually through the mechanism of accelerated inflation rather than the deflationary measures now favored by the IMF. Workers' wages would rise, but the prices of food, fuel, clothing and other necessities rose even faster. Perón himself was an open admirer of Franco's Spain and Mussolini's Italy. During the "years of the fat cows," he outlawed the Communist Party, smashed every manifestation of working-class independence and subordinated labor to the state in corporatist fashion.

With the massive rise of industrialization, there was a corresponding explosive growth of the trade unions. Perón proved quite successful both in co-opting dissident union leaders and in organizing corporatist unions directly dependent on the government for their existence. Only those unions which swore allegiance to the Peronist agenda were declared legal, and only legal unions qualified for dues checkoff, subsidies for union buildings and access to social security programs, pension funds, etc. The Peronist regime used nationalist "anti-imperialist" rhetoric in order to further tie the working masses to the Argentine capitalist state.

New president Duhalde, a former vice president under the IMF's man Menem, now peppers his speeches with paeans to Perón and his wife Eva and cynically blames the plight of the Argentine people on a U.S.-backed "free-market model," which he calls "immoral." But this shift to the national-populist rhetoric of yesterday is simply designed to strengthen the forces of capitalism in Latin America by recementing the ties of the working class to its "own" national bourgeoisie. Huge sections of the population will continue to suffer grinding immiseration under the Duhalde Peronists as the latter attempt to "reconstruct" the country on the backs of the working class and sections of the petty bourgeoisie.

The imperialist chains that bind the Argentine proletariat can only be broken through a struggle for socialist revolution in Argentina, throughout Latin America and beyond. A workers revolution in a country like France or Spain would have profound effects on the struggles of the Argentine working class. Conversely, nothing would be more heartening to the proletariat in South Africa and workers and the oppressed throughout the Third World than a socialist revolution in a country like Argentina. Crucial to this perspective is intransigent opposition to Peronist bourgeois nationalism, which has time and again led the Argentine workers and oppressed to disaster.

Argentine Left Pushes National Reformism

Opposition to bourgeois nationalism is the last thing being offered by the fake-Trotskyist groups that populate the Argentine left. Far from having an independent class perspective against the bourgeoisie, they are mired in national reformism, particularly tailing the Peronists. The main trend of ostensible Trotskyism in Argentina is that of the late Nahuel Moreno, today represented by the Movimiento Socialista de los Trabaja-

dores (MST) and its split-off, the Partido de los Trabajadores por el Socialismo (PTS). In the 1950s, Moreno passed himself off as a "left" Peronist; his newspaper at the time was published as an "Organ of Revolutionary Workers Peronism—Under the Discipline of Gen. Perón and the Peronist High Council"! (See our 1980 *Moreno Truth Kit* pamphlet for the history of this tendency.)

During the Malvinas/Falklands War, the reformist left in Argentina openly backed the genocidal ruling military in the name of "anti-imperialism." The Moreno tendency boasted that it stood squarely "in the military camp of the Argentine dictatorship" (*Correo Internacional*, April 1982). With the backing of the fake left, the generals used the war to head off a general strike, part of burgeon-



Hudson/PA

British marines collect captured arms following Argentina's surrender in Malvinas/Falklands War, 1982. Argentina's defeat led to fall of military regime.

ing proletarian struggle against the military regime. In sharp contrast, we fought for proletarian revolutionary opposition to both British imperialism, then ruled by "Iron Lady" Margaret Thatcher, and the Argentine generals, declaring: "Sink Thatcher! Sink the Junta! The Main Enemy Is at Home!"

In 1989, the Morenoites gave backhanded support for the installation of a new Peronist government under Menem. Declaring that "Menem received the majority of votes of the working people," they asked why he didn't use that support "to impose the solutions he says he has" (*El Cronista Comercial*, 31 May 1989). And Menem did just that.

Today, with the Peronists widely discredited, the Argentine left is trying to cloak its nationalist reformism in slightly different rhetoric. The Morenoite MST and the Stalinist Communist Party are the main components of the United Left (Izquierda Unida—IU), an electoralist bloc whose program raises as its maximum demand a call for "an independent political alternative of the workers and people." In the wake of the mass upsurge which overthrew de la Rúa, the IU joined with another fake-Trotskyist outfit, the Partido Obrero (PO) of Jorge Altamira, and some smaller groups in a December 22 declaration which prominently features the call "For a People's and Workers Government." And the more left-posturing PTS pushes the same perspective in its leaflets and statements, writing that "the revolutionaries of the PTS struggle for a workers' and people's government" (leaflet of 31 December 2001).

This purposefully confusionist call, which dissolves the proletariat into the mass of the "people," is the classic facade for a class-collaborationist alliance with a wing of the national bourgeoisie (who are, after all, part of the "people"). All of these groups uphold the disastrous, anti-revolutionary perspective of the "anti-imperialist united front," which is but a code word for the subordination of the working class to its "own" bourgeoisie. The social turmoil in Argentina today involves many layers of society, from the middle class to students to the unemployed and rural poor. If the proletariat is to emerge as the leading force of the oppressed, fighting for the overthrow of the capitalist order and imperialist domination, it is crucial to draw a clear class line. The MST, PO, PTS et al., in contrast, mix everything together in a "popular" reformist stew.

This is shown as well in the perennial call raised by PO and the PTS for a "constituent assembly" which would, in the words of a 31 December PO leaflet, express "the sovereign will of the workers and unemployed." The PTS adds its own twist to this demand in a statement calling for *both* a "national assembly of employed and unemployed workers" *and* "a sovereign Constituent Assembly, so that the people can discuss democratically and in freedom the way out of the crisis" ("Revolutionary Days," 22 December 2001). And how is this to be accomplished? "Even to open the road to this kind of democracy," the PTS writes, "it is necessary to sweep away the current power with a general strike and with a great national uprising that finishes the task initiated during the revolutionary

days of December 19 and 20."

The call for a constituent assembly is, at best, a democratic slogan which at particular times can be used against dictatorial capitalist regimes as a subordinate element in a program for workers revolution. But Argentina currently *has* a bourgeois-democratic form of capitalist class rule with periodic elections, and this has been the case for nearly two decades now. Under these circumstances, the call for a constituent assembly serves only to foster, not break, bourgeois-democratic illusions among the workers and oppressed. In situations of pre-revolutionary turmoil, genuine Trotskyists would fight to forge *organs of dual power*—soviets (workers councils), factory committees, etc.—as organizing centers in the fight for proletarian revolution. But for the centrist PTS, the call for a "workers assembly" is just window-dressing for its perspective of a "great national uprising" to win...another bourgeois parliamentary body!

For all their "anti-imperialist" rhetoric, the Argentine reformist and centrist left were as one with the U.S. imperialist rulers in backing the forces of counterrevolution that destroyed the Soviet Union and the deformed workers states of East Europe. As the West German imperialists pushed for the counterrevolutionary annexation of the East German deformed workers state in 1989-90, the Morenoites came out with a program "whose guiding slogan is: German reunification now" (*Correo Internacional*, January 1990). For its part, the PTS called for "the defense of the right of the German masses to unite however they wish, even if they decide to do so in the framework of cap-

italism" (*Avanzada Socialista*, 30 March 1990).

This treachery was repeated when the Morenoites and Altamira's PO hailed Boris Yeltsin's pro-imperialist counter-coup in Moscow in August 1991. In a 28 August 1991 statement, the Morenoites called it a "Great Revolutionary Victory in the USSR," while PO proclaimed that "the people's victory over the coup has a revolutionary scope" (*Prensa Obrera*, 29 August 1991). These groups bear their own small measure of responsibility for the post-counterrevolutionary devastation that swept the former USSR and East Europe and redounded so negatively against the working people of Latin America. In contrast, the International Communist League fought to the bitter end in defense of the working-class gains that were embodied in these states, despite their Stalinist misrulers. While the rest of the left embraced imperialist "democracy" against Stalinist "totalitarianism," we fought for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucrats and restore the program of revolutionary internationalism that animated Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik Party.

For a Genuine Trotskyist Party!

The burning need in Argentina today is the forging of an authentic Leninist-Trotskyist party. Such a party would call for the full independence of the trade unions from the bourgeois state. It would act, in Lenin's words, as a "tribune of the people," rallying all those suffering under the capitalist yoke, from the unemployed and impoverished pensioners to the rural poor and small shopkeepers who are being ruined by the austerity crisis. It would emblazon on its banner the fight for women's liberation, combatting *machismo* and backward Catholic attitudes and raising demands for the full integration of women in the workforce at equal pay. It would fight for free abortion on demand as part of free, quality health care for all, and for full democratic rights for homosexuals.

Argentine society is saturated with the chauvinism of a ruling class which revels in its supposed "European" superiority over the rest of Latin America and which is riddled with former Nazis. Crucial to any revolutionary perspective is unmitigated opposition to all manifestations of racism, anti-Semitism and hostility to indigenous minorities and immigrants.

Only a program of revolutionary internationalism can offer a road forward for the Argentine working class. Following the 1917 Russian workers revolution, Lenin's Bolshevik Party canceled the debt amassed by the tsar and the Russian bourgeoisie by simply refusing to pay it. Recognizing that imperialism could not be appeased, they fought to extend the October Revolution worldwide. Today, to liberate themselves from Wall Street debt peonage, the workers and oppressed masses of Argentina and throughout Latin America must be won to the principles and program of proletarian internationalism as represented by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. This is the perspective of the ICL: to reforge the Fourth International in order to lead the struggle for new October Revolutions across the planet.■

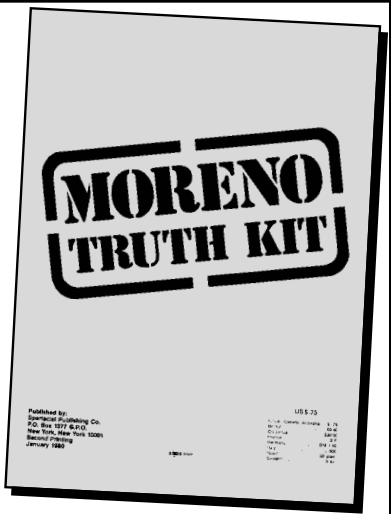
Documentary Exposure

published 1980

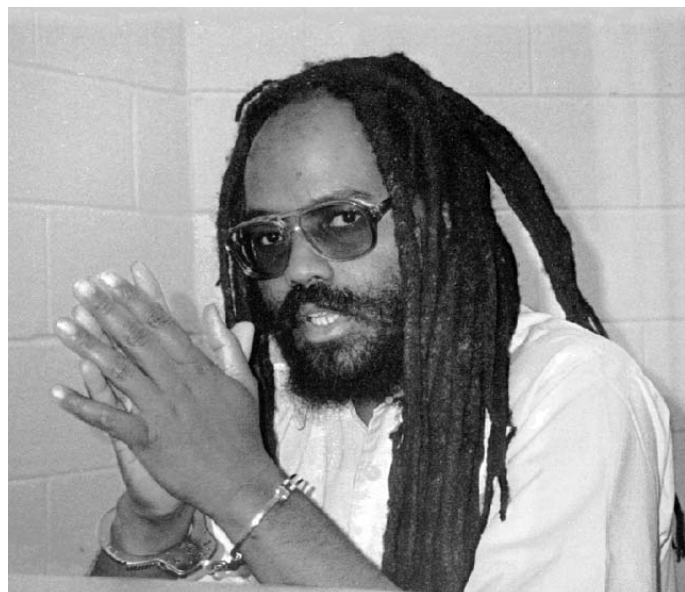
- **Moreno in Argentina I:**
From Left Peronism to Social Democracy
- **Moreno in Argentina II:**
Back to Peronism
- **Moreno's Left Face:**
Portugal, Angola, Eurocommunism
- **Opportunist Chameleon Sui Generis**
- **Moreno the Swindler**

English edition: **\$.75** (40 pages)
Spanish edition (included in Spanish *Spartacist* No. 11): **\$1.50** (56 pages)

Order from/make checks payable to:
Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116



WORKERS VANGUARD



WV Photos

San Francisco: Revolutionary Contingent at May 2001 demonstration. Mobilize labor/black power in fight to free Jamal!



Mumia Abu-Jamal Is an Innocent Man! Free Him Now!

We print below an edited version of a presentation on the fight to free Mumia Abu-Jamal given by Spartacist League supporter Valerie West on September 15 in Oakland. Three months later, on December 18, federal district court judge William Yohn reversed the death sentence that has been hanging over Mumia's head since 1982. Ruling that the trial judge's jury instructions virtually compelled a sentence of death, Yohn gave the prosecution 180 days to conduct a new sentencing hearing, which could result in either another death sentence or life imprisonment. Their failure to hold a hearing would automatically reduce Jamal's sentence to life imprisonment without parole.

Yohn's ruling is the first crack in the state's 20-year vendetta to legally lynch this courageous fighter for the oppressed. It is clearly a response to the millions around the world who have rallied to Mumia's cause. It also represents fear that dramatic evidence of Jamal's innocence, centrally a sworn confession by Arnold Beverly that he, not Jamal, shot police officer Daniel Faulkner, could be heard in court.

Recognizing that even the limited legal forum of a death sentencing hearing could burst this case wide open, prosecutor Hugh Burns complained: "If there was a new sentencing hearing, it would probably entail the empaneling of a jury...and whatever evidence the defendant wanted to review again would be presented to the jury." Echoing these fears is Fraternal Order of Police mouthpiece Michael Smerconish, a Philadelphia lawyer who has led the howls for Jamal's blood for years. Smerconish signaled that he may reconcile himself to Jamal's life imprisonment—rather than death—because a sentencing hearing would open up a new round of appeals.

Following a six-month news blackout of his case, during which just about every major newspaper refused to even mention the confession of Arnold Beverly, Jamal's case was front-page news once again. The day after Yohn's ruling, millions of people watching NBC's *Today* show saw an interview with Eliot Grossman, one of Mumia's attorneys,

and an excerpt from Beverly's videotaped confession.

Yet Mumia still resides in that same "valley of the shadow of death" which for 20 years he has searingly described in numerous columns from death row. Democratic Party District Attorney Lynne Abraham has appealed Yohn's order, and should that appeal be granted, not only would the death sentence be reinstated, but Jamal's execution would be imminent. In one ruling, Yohn threw out legal papers by Mumia's new attorneys demolishing the prosecution's case and arguing to present Beverly's confession. In another 272-page decision, Yohn denied all the claims of Jamal's habeas corpus petition challenging the frame-up conviction of this innocent man.

Jamal's 1982 trial was a travesty of justice, the prosecution's case based on an assemblage of lies manufactured through police coercion of witnesses and other invented "evidence." A central pillar was the claim that Jamal confessed on the night of the shooting, after he'd been

critically wounded and nearly beaten to death by the cops. This supposed "confession" was not even reported for *over two months after the shooting*. The original official police report from Officer Gary Wakshul, who was with Jamal the entire time from his arrest through his medical treatment, said that "during this time, the negro male made no comments." Yet in his December 18 ruling, Yohn declared for the veracity of this concocted confession story, his bottom line being that if the cops and D.A. said it happened, then it did.

While rejecting Jamal's claim that blacks were unconstitutionally excluded from the jury, Yohn "permitted" this one question to be appealed to a higher court. Should the Court of Appeals take the unlikely step of upholding Mumia's claim, the conviction would be overturned. But, under Clinton's 1996 Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, there can be no further appeals allowed on any other claim without judicial permission.

Yohn's ruling indicates that significant sectors of the bourgeoisie are eager to have this case put aside once and for all, confident that after the elimination of the death sentence Jamal's international support will dissipate. Left-liberal columnist Alexander Cockburn grotesquely echoed this in his *Nation* (7 January) column, writing: "One good feature of Judge Yohn's ruling is that it takes the emphasis off innocence or guilt, which surrenders the basic moral axiom of the anti-death penalty cause, namely, that capital punishment is wrong." State-sanctioned legal murder is indeed a barbaric abomination. But so is the fact that an innocent man would be entombed for life. As Mumia himself said of life imprisonment in one of his writings from death row: "'Life' is thus but a grim metaphor for death, for only death releases one from its shackles. 'Life,' it might be said, is merely slow death."

West's forum took place four days after September 11. Since then, the U.S. government and its imperialist allies in Europe have seized on the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center to sell the lie that the vast new powers for state harassment, intimidation and terror are for their populations' own "protection." But even in this climate of bloodthirsty jingoism, a recent Gallup poll revealed there has been virtually no change in support for the death penalty in the wake of September 11. Last year marked the second straight year of a drop in executions, testifying to the declining support for capital punishment. On January 3 Florida prosecutors finally dropped all charges against Juan Roberto Melendez, a man who spent 18 years on death row. In December, Melendez' conviction was overturned on grounds that prosecutors had withheld critical evidence—four confessions made by the actual killer!

In her talk, West quotes from speeches by International Labor Defense secretary and founder James P. Cannon as the state geared up to execute Sacco and Vanzetti in 1927. When the mass movement for these two anarchist workers was faced with rumors that the death sentence

continued on page 5

Get Your Copy

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.

\$.50 (32 pages)

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

