

Feds Shred Constitutional Rights

Big Brother on the Loose

The fervor with which Arthur Andersen and Enron executives took to shredding evidence of their corporate plunder is nothing compared to that with which their buddies in the Bush administration have been shredding the Bill of Rights in the aftermath of September 11. Starting with the roundup and secret detentions of some 1,200 immigrants of Muslim background, Bush and Attorney General John Ashcroft rammed through the draconian USA-Patriot Act authorizing widespread wiretapping, surveillance and break-ins on the basis of political advocacy; implemented new FBI guidelines reviving the Feds' deadly COINTELPRO campaign of surveillance, intimidation, disruption and frame-up; ordered military tribunals for non-citizens designated by Washington as "terrorists" and a slew of other repressive measures.

The government's "war on terror" is in fact a war on democratic and legal rights which date back centuries in English and American law. Among those on the chopping block are the right to a jury trial and *habeas corpus* challenges to unlawful imprisonment, both of which have long been hailed as crowning achievements of Western democracy. According to the government, anybody Bush designates as an "enemy combatant" can be thrown into a military prison with no legal recourse—the Bush administration no longer sees any need to even concoct a frame-up prosecution. If the government labels you a "terrorist" it means you're an outlaw to whom they can do anything they want.

Under Bush and Ashcroft, all those caught in the government's "anti-terror" dragnet embark on a Kafkaesque journey into Alice in Wonderland where the only rule is that there are no rules. The most recent twist is Ashcroft's new "turn in your neighbor" plan called TIPS (Terrorism Information and Prevention System), where he and Bush seek to mobilize over a million American workers to become snitches in the name of promoting "homeland security." Meanwhile, Congress is expected to soon pass the Homeland Security Act, creating a massive federal agency to coordinate the government's police-state designs. Just in case this isn't enough, the Pentagon is openly ruminating about eliminating the posse comitatus law restricting the use of the military within the United States.



Paul Buck



Jaffer/Snaps India

Brooklyn protest against secret detention of immigrants, part of Bush/Ashcroft's domestic "war on terror." Witchhunt of Near Eastern and South Asian immigrants is spearhead of attacks on democratic rights of entire population.

With the cases of John Walker Lindh, Zacarias Moussaoui, Yasser Esam Hamdi, Abdullah al-Muhajir (Jose Padilla) and the thousands detained at Guantánamo, the government seeks to institutionalize in the American "justice" system norms regularly associated with the right-wing dictatorships they prop up around the world. The prosecution and/or treatment of these prisoners raises fundamental questions of democratic rights relating to everything from government secrecy, right to effective counsel, preventive detentions, military tribunals and the rights of prisoners of war. The government is also using these cases to bolster thought-crime conspiracy laws, whose victims are prosecuted on the basis of political views and associations rather than any actions they've carried out. Historically, these laws have been used to imprison countless union militants, fighters for black rights, leftists and anyone the government perceives to be an enemy.

The government has been able to ram through its new laws and executive orders by pushing the illusion that they were intended for a specific small and vulnerable sector of the population—immigrants from Muslim countries. But now American citizens Lindh, Hamdi and Muhajir have all been rounded up and face decades in prison with no shred of

evidence that they committed any crimes. Though citizens, Hamdi and Muhajir have been denied access to an attorney and bail and have had no charges filed against them which they can combat in a court of law. And if the government gets its way, they—and many more to follow—will be held indefinitely. The *New York Times* (16 July) noted that the treatment of Hamdi and Muhajir suggests "that the government may now view ordinary trials as more trouble than they are worth."

As we pointed out last winter, "The purpose of the new measures is to revive and deepen the broad-ranging repression and intimidation that marked the Cold War McCarthyite witchhunt of 50 years ago. The aim today as then is to coerce the entire population into ideological conformity, with the government wielding the spectre of seemingly pervasive 'Islamic terrorism' as a surrogate for Communism" ("Anti-Terror Law: Shredding Your Rights," WV No. 770, 7 December 2001). The American population is now told to accept repression of their rights as the norm for an endless "war on terror."

Were it not so pernicious, this ideological onslaught would be comical—in an insane kind of way. Anti-drug television commercials have portrayed teenagers

smoking a joint as abetting international terrorism. Last week Cincinnati Reds general manager Jim Bowden went after the Players' Association, declaring that if baseball players do go on strike, "make sure it's Sept. 11" because it would be like flying "the plane right into the building"!

The administration's plans have not slid through without opposition. A number of courts have directed the Immigration and Naturalization Service to open hearings to the public. On August 2, federal court judge Gladys Kessler ordered the government to finally reveal the names of those rounded up in the post-9/11 dragnets, citing a court decision from the 1960s that "secret arrests are 'a concept odious to a democratic society.'" The government plans to appeal Judge Kessler's ruling, hysterically declaring that her ruling "increases the risk of future terrorist threats to our nation."

Behind the "anti-terror" witchhunt is the bourgeoisie's need to stifle any dissent as it pursues its ambitions for world domination. Writing in "The Evil That Lurks in the Enemy Within," Richard Gid Powers cites columnist Andrew Sullivan's ominous characterization of leftist opposition to the government's "anti-terror" drive: "The decadent left in its enclaves on the coasts is not dead—and may well mount what

amounts to a Fifth Column" (*New York Times*, 16 June). Across the country activists protesting Israel's devastation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip have been brutally beaten and arrested.

It is absolutely vital for the labor movement to fight against the government's wholesale attacks on democratic rights. The laws and directives that today mainly target immigrants will ultimately be used to target black people and the whole working class. Under the USA-Patriot Act, striking postal workers who mobilize to stop or disable a scab truck could be charged as "terrorists." Last December's jailing of over 200 striking New Jersey teachers, whose spokesman was vilified as "the representative of the Taliban," is an example of how the government plans to deal with labor struggle. Even before the July 1 expiration date of the West Coast ILWU longshore contract with the shipping bosses, Homeland Security chief Tom Ridge issued an ominous warning to ILWU International president Jim Spinosa that "a strike would be bad for the national interest."

As sinister as the new "anti-terror" measures are, what the government is actually able to get away with will be determined by the level of social struggle. What is crucial is to mobilize labor's

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In Wake of Inglewood Police Beating Black Democrats Smother Outrage

LOS ANGELES—The July 6 videotaped beating of black teenager Donovan Jackson-Chavis by Inglewood cop Jeremy Morse has once again brought to the fore the everyday reality of cop terror. Hearing the agonized screams of several onlookers, Mitchell Crooks began filming the assault from a motel across the street. Even before the camera started rolling, Jackson-Chavis, a special education student with learning and speech disabilities, had been brutally attacked by Inglewood cops and L.A. County Sheriffs who were questioning his father about expired registration tags. Jackson-Chavis was struck repeatedly on the face, head and eyes, body-slammed to the ground, maliciously choked with a silver chain he was wearing and rendered unconscious. His father, Coby Chavis, handcuffed in the back of a patrol car, watched helplessly. As Jackson-Chavis' lawyer, Joe Hopkins, commented: "They basically tried to

hang him right there...had the chain not broken, we might be looking at a death." At least one of the cops involved called Jackson-Chavis a "n----r."

Crooks' video captured Morse lifting the limp, unconscious body of the handcuffed youth off the ground, viciously slamming his head onto the trunk of a police car and punching him in the face. Crooks had the good sense to turn over his videotape to the media rather than letting it get into the hands of the cops. But for exposing the criminal cop attack on Jackson-Chavis, the capitalist "justice" system rewarded Crooks by hauling him off to jail. Sending an ominous message of intimidation, L.A. County District Attorney Steve Cooley deployed a squad of undercover agents on July 11 to arrest Crooks as he was coming out of an interview at a CNN studio on petty warrants dating from 1999. While Crooks sits in jail, cop Jeremy Morse, who has a long

list of other complaints of misconduct and brutality—including beating another black man, Neilson Williams, into a coma in late June—sits at home on paid leave! **Free Mitchell Crooks now!**

One of the signs at a protest in Inglewood following the beating aptly declared: "This Happens Everyday in L.A." From Riverside to Compton, from California to New York, the cops' job is to "serve and protect" the interests of the racist rulers, from terrorizing the ghettos and barrios to busting up picket lines. The police, like the prisons and courts, are at the core of the capitalist state, which is an instrument of organized violence whose purpose is to maintain the rule of the capitalist exploiters.

Beware Democratic Party Hustlers!

No sooner was the video of Jackson-Chavis' beating all over the news than comparisons were made to the infamous Rodney King beating by the LAPD in 1991. The public fury generated by that sadistic attack and the acquittal of the racist cops touched off the 1992 multi-racial L.A. upheaval, the largest ever in the U.S., which put into the spotlight the widespread anger and discontent that lies at the base of American society. In the ten years since, with the elimination of millions of industrial jobs and the bipartisan drive to destroy the minimal social "safety net" that existed, the conditions of life in the U.S. have only continued to

get worse for working people and the oppressed. There is a lot of social tinder out there that the racist rulers are very aware of and rightfully fear could spark a social conflagration. That Attorney General John Ashcroft, an open admirer of the Confederacy, immediately dispatched a federal investigation team over the Jackson-Chavis beating provides a palpable measure of just how fearful the ruling class was of another upheaval.

Immediately following the airing of the video, prominent black politicians shifted into overdrive to show that "this time it's different," attempting again to co-opt and channel the deep anger at the Inglewood beating into dead-end reforms of the police and electoral support for the capitalist Democratic Party. Black Democratic Congresswoman Maxine Waters, whose district includes Inglewood, immediately called for indictments of the cops involved in the beating and launched the appeal for Ashcroft to intervene with a full investigation.

A July 20 Inglewood Town Hall meeting "To Stop Police Brutality" that drew over 300 people presented a panoply of black elected officials and "community leaders." This ranged from Inglewood's black mayor, Roosevelt Dorn, and Congresswoman Diane Watson to Tony Muhammad from the Nation of Islam and Michael Zinzun, a leader of the Coalition Against Police Abuse (CAPA). Watson announced that the Congressional

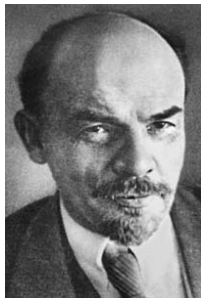
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TROTSKY

Capitalist Democracy: Tool of Exploitation

In a 1919 speech, Bolshevik revolutionary leader V.I. Lenin exposed the notion that the capitalist state, even in its most "democratic" form, could be anything but an instrument of organized violence for enforcing the rule of the bourgeoisie over the working class and oppressed. Lenin argued that only under the dictatorship of the proletariat, which was inaugurated in Soviet Russia by the 1917 October Revolution,



LENIN

would the state serve the interests of the working masses and lay the basis for a truly egalitarian communist society.

Every state in which private ownership of the land and means of production exists, in which capital dominates, however democratic it may be, is a capitalist state, a machine used by the capitalists to keep the working class and the poor peasants in subjection; while universal suffrage, a Constituent Assembly, a parliament are merely a form, a sort of promissory note, which does not change the real state of affairs.

The forms of domination of the state may vary: capital manifests its power in one way where one form exists, and in another way where another form exists—but essentially the power is in the hands of capital, whether there are voting qualifications or some other rights or not, or whether the republic is a democratic one or not—in fact, the more democratic it is the cruder and more cynical is the rule of capitalism. One of the most democratic republics in the world is the United States of America, yet nowhere (and those who have been there since 1905 probably know it) is the power of capital, the power of a handful of multimillionaires over the whole of society, so crude and so openly corrupt as in America. Once capital exists, it dominates the whole of society, and no democratic republic, no franchise can change its nature....

This machine called the state, before which people bowed in superstitious awe, believing the old tales that it means popular rule, tales which the proletariat declares to be a bourgeois lie—this machine the proletariat will smash. So far we have deprived the capitalists of this machine and have taken it over. We shall use this machine, or bludgeon, to destroy all exploitation. And when the possibility of exploitation no longer exists anywhere in the world, when there are no longer owners of land and owners of factories, and when there is no longer a situation in which some gorge while others starve, only when the possibility of this no longer exists shall we consign this machine to the scrap-heap. Then there will be no state and no exploitation.

—V.I. Lenin, "The State" (July 1919)



Inglewood cop brutalization of Donovan Jackson-Chavis: "standard operating procedure" in racist rulers' war against black youth.

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WORKERS VANGUARD

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ILWU Threatened by “National Unity” Crusade

Break with the Democrats— For Independent Workers Action!

SAN FRANCISCO, August 5—As they enter the fourth month of negotiations for a new contract, West Coast longshoremen face the combined onslaught of the employers’ Pacific Maritime Association (PMA) and the Bush administration, which wants labor compliance on the docks so that it can wage its “war on terror” against the world’s working people without disruption. Today’s *Los Angeles Times* ominously reports:

“According to a member of the union’s negotiating team, the administration threatened to force members to work if a strike were called by invoking the Taft-Hartley Act. Other options mentioned included running the ports with U.S. Navy personnel, moving to break up the union’s coast-wide bargaining unit or backing legislation that would restrict the union’s ability to call a strike.”

Citing a Labor Department official, the article states that what has propelled these “options” is “the context of a job action occurring during wartime.” This means *outright government union-busting*, threatening to break up the powerful ILWU and intimidating the entire union movement. And it comes squarely in the context of U.S. imperialism’s drive toward war against Iraq, the latest target in the “war on terror.”

ILWU spokesman Steve Stallone got it right when he said, “The Bush administration is using the 9-11 scare as a way to try and take away union rights and come after ILWU, because we are one of the stronger unions in the country” (*Contra Costa Times*, 26 July). But what has characterized the public stance of the ILWU leadership is the refusal to take any action that might be interpreted as putting up a fight against the employers.

In mid-July, the union offered to give up 630 clerks’ jobs outright, but even this was rejected by the PMA, which is determined to gain all control of work on the waterfront. The ILWU’s Web site (25 July) tellingly bemoaned that “the employer’s response to the ILWU technology proposal was exceptionally disappointing considering it included the most extensive job concession package since the historic 1962 M&M [Mechanization and Modernization] Agreement that saw massive manning cuts due to the introduction of the shipping container.” In late July, the ILWU Coast Caucus empowered union negotiators to call a strike vote, but Stallone rushed to explain that union negotiators are “not interested in calling for it immediately.... We can just sit on this right now” (Associated Press, 26 July).

At the same time that it’s on its knees before the PMA, the ILWU leadership pursues the utterly futile strategy of lobbying the capitalist Democratic Party. A July 26 issue of *Longshore Bulletin*, published by ILWU Local 10 in the Bay Area, devoted a third of the text to appeals for donations to the political action fund “to enable us to have a larger influence in state and national politics.”

Worries are being stirred up among the longshoremen that the Bush government will destroy the ILWU the way Reagan did the PATCO air traffic controllers union. The combination of the ILWU leadership’s fear and capitulation is beginning to frustrate and discourage the union membership. *Workers Vanguard* salesmen are encountering workers who say that since there is a Republican in the White House, the union dare not wage a strike.

But fundamentally, it doesn’t matter which party is in power; the Democrats as much as the Republicans rule on behalf of the bosses. The capitalist government intervenes to try to stop *any* serious class struggle—protecting the profits of the capitalists against the working class is its *job*. The trade-union bureaucracy has poured millions into the Democrats’ coffers and rounded up a lot of votes for them over the years. In return, the Democrats have kicked workers in the teeth just like the Republicans; the difference is the Democrat wears a friendly smile on his face.

Democratic president Bill Clinton invoked the Railway Labor Act, which restricts strikes in the transport industry, against American Airlines pilots in 1997. Democratic president Jimmy Carter drew up the plans to break PATCO and militarize the airports a year and a half before Reagan launched the attack on the union in 1981. Carter also invoked Taft-Hartley against the coal miners during the Great Miners Strike of 1977-78. But the miners fought back: they shut down the non-union mines and dumped scab coal on the highways, making the legislation so much scrap paper. A popular expression at the time was “Taft can mine it, Hartley

**San Francisco:
ILWU rally outside
Pacific Maritime
Association
headquarters,
July 24. Bush
administration
threatens anti-strike
intervention in
name of “national
interest.”**



Macor/SF Chronicle

an aggressively hostile government, the longshoremen are indeed in a tough position. But it is false to think that if you just keep your head down, they’ll leave you alone. There’s no hope if the union surrenders its power in advance. Every con-

present labor leadership, which sees the world through the same lens as the ruling class and whose purpose is to ensure the subordination of the workers to the “national interests” of the enemy class.

The ILWU tops start from the premise that the working class has a vested interest in defending American capitalism. The *Los Angeles Times* article reports that when the Labor Department declared that the government “will use any means necessary” against the union to supply troops in the field, “the implication angered union officials, who said they never have held up military shipments.” On the “home front,” the ILWU International has already made the overwhelmingly immigrant port truckers a “national security” issue in Congress, complaining that they are being allowed free access to the docks, and has claimed jurisdiction over trucking within and between the ports. Embracing the bloody aims of U.S. imperialism against workers around the world necessarily cuts across the international solidarity of the other natural allies of the longshoremen in any strike, dockers in other countries who have a history of refusing to load and unload scab cargo.

A number of groups that call themselves socialist, including the International Socialist Organization (ISO) and Workers World Party, have organized

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Pat Oliphant

UMWA miners defied Democratic president Jimmy Carter’s Taft-Hartley injunction during 1977-78 national coal strike.

can haul it.” In this way, the miners were able to block the mine operators’ union-busting.

The destruction of PATCO was prepared by the AFL-CIO tops’ refusal to organize strike action by the union’s allies—Teamsters, machinists and pilots—to shut down the airports. Instead, the AFL-CIO pushed a toothless consumer boycott, asking the public not to fly. The ILWU is now pursuing a similar course. A report in the *Journal of Commerce* (26 July) states that a group called “Friends of Labor,” which says it’s affiliated with the ILWU, has been asking Home Depot customers in the Los Angeles port of San Pedro to sign letters threatening to boycott the store if it doesn’t pull out of the West Coast Waterfront Coalition of large retailers that’s backing the PMA. This is a diversion from the union’s source of power—the ability to withhold labor and therefore stop the flow of money into the pockets of the ruling class.

This is not a narrow question of union tactics but the broader political perspective from which such tactics flow. In the midst of an economic recession and with

cession won by the workers took hard struggle against the bosses and their government. A prerequisite is to remove the roadblocks to class struggle, beginning by waging a political fight against the

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IG: Simple-Minded Lies and Simple-Minded Liars

In the aftermath of the recent French presidential elections, in which the big gains scored by Le Pen's fascist National Front (FN) in the first round were translated into a landslide victory for conservative president Jacques Chirac in the second round, the Internationalist Group (IG) issued a rapid-fire series of Internet communiqués. Under headlines such as the 8 June "How ICL Turns French Fascists Into Ballot Box Rightists," they excoriated the putative "passive propaganda" and "defeatist" politics of our international organization, the International Communist League. To bolster such contentions the IG marshaled an array of lies that are as cynical as they are bald-faced.

Take the following, for example. In "Ballot Box Rightists," the IG fulminates against a "spate of articles in the Spartacist League's paper *Workers Vanguard* insisting that the FN is not fascist but an 'electoral party'." With dark innuendo the IG asks how it could be that our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyste de France were "still calling Le Pen's party fascist as recently as April 23?" Answering its own disingenuous query, the IG asserts that "a shifty WV 'introduction'" to a 23 April LTF statement "subtly 'corrects' their French comrades' leaflet." Very shifty indeed, considering this introduction was on the *front page* of WV (No. 780, 3 May) under the headline: "France: Fascist Le Pen Scores Big Gain in Elections"!!

The IG then turns its attention to the LTF, writing that our comrades made a "conditional offer of critical support to the candidate of Lutte Ouvrière, Arlette Laguiller." Shameless. On March 10, the LTF wrote an open letter to Lutte Ouvrière (LO), whose presidential candidate, Laguiller, was running on the basis of opposition to the popular-front government of former Socialist Party prime minister Lionel Jospin, the French Communist Party and the Green Party. Noting that LO's oppositional posture was vitiated by its telling silence on the brutal anti-immigrant measures taken by this government, particularly the racist Vigipirate security campaign, as well as LO's open support to reactionary police "strikes," the LTF's open letter declared:

"In spite of its call to oppose the government, LO finds itself tailing Jospin and Chirac when it capitulates to the climate of racist hysteria they fuel and which dominates the political life of this country. So long as LO does not oppose Vigipirate and the reactionary and racist cop mobilizations, *the LTF cannot support LO's campaign*. There is no party running in these elections presenting a candidate who represents in any real sense the workers' interests." [emphasis added]

On May 17, going into the June legislative elections the LTF issued another

leaflet warning: "Beware of false advertising! LO's opposition to class collaboration is emptied of all content by its capitulation to the racist security campaign, which is a crucial mechanism in France for tying the workers to their own bourgeoisie." This was run in WV No. 782 (31 May) under the headline: "Why We Still Don't Call for a Vote to Lutte Ouvrière."

Why the IG Lies

The IG's lies are so transparent that any idiot who can read—and not even whole articles but just headlines—would know it. So what is their purpose?

from any Marxist vantage point. When lying was no longer sufficient to silence political opposition, Stalin brought down the fist of violence. Writing at the time of the grotesque Moscow frame-up trials of historic Bolshevik leaders, Leon Trotsky observed in his 1937 foreword to the American edition of *The Stalin School of Falsification*: "The preparation of the bloody judicial frame-ups had its inception in the 'minor' historical distortions and 'innocent' falsification of citations."

With his tiny handful of followers, IG supremo Norden is hardly in a position to emulate Stalin (though he has been

its call "for the most combative sectors of the proletariat to actively oppose and even disrupt—i.e., to boycott—the run-off 'election'." With a wave of the hand, the IG simply disappears the obstacles to mobilizing the proletariat posed by the workers' existing misleadership. Here is a measure of the desperation, and cynicism, of a grouplet that has severed contact with social reality and abandoned any perspective of intervening in the existing working class with the purpose of winning its advanced elements to revolutionary consciousness.

But the IG could find a market for its

The Internationalist May-June 2002

before they t

This is not an isolated example, but an expression of the wholesale turn to the right by the ICL. In the French case, it is directly related to their conditional offer of critical support to the candidate of Lutte Ouvrière, Arlette Laguiller. The condition was that LO make a statement against the "Vigipirate"

tional in character. *Workers Vanguard's* discovery that the National Front is no longer fascist is closely linked to the ICL's policy of offering conditional (not very) critical support to Arlette Laguiller, the candidate of Lutte Ouvrière in the French presidential election. Most of the "far left" in France and internationally was mesmerized by Laguiller's vote prospects, stumbling over

Internationalist article dated June 8 blatantly lies about ICL position on French elections. IG resorts to Stalin school of falsification, whose logic is to encourage and justify violence in the workers movement.

WORKERS VANGUARD
No. 780, 3 May 2002

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In the lead-up to last week's elections, the LTF published an open letter to LO which noted that despite LO's attempt to draw a crude class line against the popular-front government, its silence on the brutal Vigipirate campaign and its support to reactionary police "strikes" made it impossible for the LTF to give LO critical support. The LTF declared: "LO's speeches on immigrant rights and their

WORKERS VANGUARD
No. 782, 31 May 2002

French Trotskyists on Legislative Elections:
Why We Still Don't Call for a Vote to Lutte Ouvrière

May 27—Jacques Chirac was re-elected president of France earlier this month with the support of virtually the entire left, who called behind this open rightist as a supposed champion of "European unity." (Later Chirac's "European unity" was revealed to be a lie.)

Down With Racist Vigipirate!

May 27—In a 4 May statement, the IG ideologically asserted that LO "encouraged vote for Chirac in the second round." Then at a May 17 demonstration in New York, IG founder-leader Jan Norden stated that the authors called "to the LO supporters"

The IG consists of elements who defected from our organization some years back, headed by former WV editor Jan Norden. To try to justify their defection, they charge that the ICL has abandoned its revolutionary heritage and become revisionist. This is an impossible task if the political differences are open to honest debate, and the very crudeness of their lies is testimony to that. Clearly the purpose is not to convince anyone interested in the political differences between our organizations. It is a pure and simple smear job intended to be wielded against us in circles hostile to Trotskyism, i.e., to the principles and program of proletarian revolutionary internationalism.

Lies and slanders are but the opening step to encouraging and justifying violence against political opponents in the workers movement. It was impossible for Stalin to defend his anti-revolutionary doctrine of "socialism in one country"

known to gratuitously hail Stalin as "commander in chief" of the Red Army in World War II). But the IG's lies derive from the same desperation and opportunist appetites toward alien class forces. As we have noted, during the French elections the IG merely provided a veneer of pseudo-radical bombast to the "anti-fascist" electoral unity, echoing the "fascism is around the corner" rhetoric of the French left that was used to rally votes for Chirac. Indeed, had there been a genuine fascist threat, the fake-left line that it could be defeated at the polls would have been suicidal, standing as an obstacle to the extraparlimentary mobilization of the proletariat needed to defeat the fascists. The IG excoriated us for observing that:

"Since the French proletariat does not currently pose an immediate threat to the bourgeois order, the capitalists are not about to resort to a fascist dictatorship. While Le Pen's gains at the polls will certainly embolden his fascist thugs, the FN's success is an electoral phenomenon."

—"France: Fake Left Backs Chirac," WV No. 781, 17 May

The IG retorts that "WV's 'hear no fascism, see no fascism' line is the smug complacency of a tendency which has lost its revolutionary will to fight" ("Ballot Box Rightists"). But the fact that we referred to Le Pen's fascist thugs being emboldened was a problem for the IG. So in its article the IG simply splices this statement out of the quote which they otherwise use in its entirety! And in the obvious hope that no one catches them in the act, the IG doesn't cite where the quote came from.

With the lies comes the bombast. Even in the face of the fact that some million and a half people demonstrated on the streets in support of the bourgeois "Republic"—and many more came out to vote in the second round of elections than in the first—the IG continued to trumpet

lies against the ICL among the larger forces of the French left, such as the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR), which openly shilled for the popular front—a coalition of reformist workers parties and bourgeois parties—in the first round while calling to vote for Chirac on the second. The LCR gained such prominence as the "respectable" voice of the "far left" that a whole array of reformists and centrists are now flocking to it in a new "regroupment" aimed at reconstructing a popular front with a radical "anti-fascist" image. In this regard, it is telling that the IG can barely manage a critical word against the LCR in its recent missives amid pages of shrill denunciations of the ICL.

The "Parliamentary Road" to Fascism?

After all its huffing and puffing over our insistence that the gains scored by Le Pen's FN were primarily electoral as against the fascism-is-imminent rhetoric that was used to cement a national front behind Chirac, the IG itself lectures in another 8 June cyberblast: "The claim that an 'electoral party' cannot be a fascist party is a classic social-democratic thesis" ("National Front At Forefront of Capitalist Drive Toward 'Strong State' in France"). From here we are informed that "Hitler's Nazis played the bourgeoisie's electoral game, and only abandoned it after taking power." In the three years of

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Le Bolchévique

While fake left pushed support for rightist Chirac following electoral gains of fascist Le Pen, LTF banner at huge May Day rally in Paris proclaimed: "Down With Unity With Chirac! For a Revolutionary, Multiethnic Workers Party!"

NOTICE

Workers Vanguard skips alternate issues in June, July and August. Our next issue will be dated September 6.

Stand-Off over New Airport Site

Mexico: Peasant Protests Against Land Seizure

AUGUST 2—After months of bitter struggle by the ejidatarios (peasants on communal land) of the village of Atenco outside Mexico City, the government announced today that it was abandoning plans to build a new international airport on the peasants' land. We print below a translation of a leaflet addressing this struggle issued last month by our comrades of the Grupo Espartaquista de México.

On July 11, the government of the State of Mexico, with the approval of the right-wing federal government of Vicente Fox, brutally repressed a mobilization by the ejidatarios who were protesting a decree expropriating their land to build a new airport. The result of this premeditated act of state terror was 15 incarcerated, many of them seriously wounded, and a siege of Atenco by the Policía Federal Preventiva [PFP] and the army. One of those arrested, Enrique Espinoza Juárez, died on July 24 from the brutal police beating, as the director of the IMSS hospital in which he was interned admitted (*La Jornada*, 25 July). But the staunch resistance of the peasants, with the support of various social organizations and the sympathy throughout the country that their struggle generated, made the government step back, withdrawing the police and troops that had kept the peasant communities under siege for several days. Now the government is talking about “dialogue” and has released the peasants it had imprisoned, but several of them still face “mutiny” charges, among others. ***The Grupo Espartaquista de México demands the immediate dropping of all charges.***

For eight months, the ejidatarios had been protesting the expropriation of their lands and fighting in the courts, where they reached a favorable ruling temporarily stopping the decree. Meanwhile, the government launched a campaign of provocations and slanders trying to isolate the ejidatarios. The government has deported 18 American students and academics simply for showing their support to the Atenco contingent at the [May 1] Labor Day demonstration. The government wants to prepare a climate favorable for crushing resistance by the peasants. It paints them as “terrorists” and guerrillas and demonizes the social and student organizations that support this struggle, like the CGH [General Strike Council] at UNAM [Mexico City's National Autonomous University] and the Frente Popular Francisco Villa. ***Down with the repression against student and social activists!***

We oppose the expropriation of communal lands and poor peasant holdings. The government wants to starve thousands of peasants by giving them as little as the grotesque amount of 7.2 pesos per square meter for their land, while profits from building the new airport are expected to be as high as several billion dollars (*La Jornada*, 15 July). Most of these peasants are older than 45. And as one of them pointed out, although just to get a janitorial job in an airport requires a high school education, some of them have, with difficulty, only gotten through elementary school. ***We call on the entire labor movement to defend the peasants and their lands against the government's attacks.***

The Mexican countryside is sunk in the worst crisis of its history, and the rural population is rapidly decreasing. Particularly since the coming into effect



Villaseca/La Jornada

July 11: Atenco peasants battle police attempting to suppress protest against government threat to build new airport on communal lands. July 24 funeral of Enrique Espinoza Juárez, who died of injuries suffered in police rampage.



Reuters

of NAFTA—the treaty of imperialist plunder against Mexico—thousands and thousands of poor peasants are being thrown off their lands every year, incapable of competing in the world market. Now Fox's government plans on furthering this imperialist plundering through the Puebla-Panamá Plan [intended to extend maquiladora factory zones to the south of Mexico and down to Panama]. Given growing unemployment due to the economic recession, with even the maquiladoras laying off thousands and entire plants being shut down, many of these peasants, overwhelmingly indigenous people, come to eke out a living as street vendors. They live under sub-human conditions in improvised shacks, subject to the continuous threat of police brutally kicking them off the streets. Even the perspective of making it across the desert into the U.S.—which every year costs the lives of dozens of Latin American poor—and finding a job there, under the constant threat of deportation and the brutality of the American immigration police, has become more distant. As thousands of workers are being laid off in the U.S. because of the recession, the American imperialist rulers are sealing off their borders even more tightly as part of their racist, anti-worker “war on terrorism.”

Thus, our defense of the Atenco peasants is part of a broader historical perspective for the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeois order. We do not romanticize, as many petty-bourgeois intellectuals and pseudo-leftists do, the current conditions of poverty, isolation and backwardness of the Mexican countryside. We want to make the advances of science and technology—education, tractors, irrigation, communications, etc.—available for all the rural population and to elevate their level of comfort, productivity and culture. It is impossible to carry out this perspective within the framework of capitalism—a system based on the production of profit for the handful of bosses and the misery of the overwhelming majority. The industrial working class, unlike the peasants, indigenous people and other oppressed sectors, has the social power and class interest to overthrow the capitalist class and thus free all the oppressed. The peasantry, however, can play a crucial role as an ally of the workers in that struggle.

But revolutionary struggle in Mexico can only be successful in emancipating all the exploited and oppressed as part of the international struggle of the world

proletariat. Our revolutionary perspective in Mexico is inextricably linked to the struggle of the workers and oppressed in the U.S., whose powerful, multiracial proletariat has the strength and the historic interest to overthrow its “own” imperialist bourgeoisie. Our comrades in the Spartacist League/U.S. fight to break American workers from the reactionary lie, pushed by their reformist misleaders, that they have common “national interests” with their exploiters. Our comrades seek to win these workers to the understanding that defense of their own interests demands resolute action in defense of racial minorities and immigrant workers at home and implacable opposition to the crimes of the rapacious U.S. rulers throughout the world. A workers revolution that joins with workers and oppressed in the U.S. is the only road to a successful struggle against imperialism.

Our Trotskyist program is very distant from that of pseudo-leftist organizations such as the Liga de Trabajadores por el Socialismo (LTS) and the Partido Obrero Socialista (POS). The POS pathetically *celebrated* the coming to office of the clericalist, imperialist stooge Fox as a great “democratic revolution” (*El Socialista*, July 2000). They even went so far as to babble about the “socialist character” in the process of their “democratic revolution” (*El Socialista*, August 2000)! The LTS, a little saner and seemingly more orthodox, presents a program to “solve” the demands of the oppressed masses of the countryside (*Estrategia Obrera*, 8 July), which includes demands such as full autonomy for the indigenous peoples, full access to natural resources for the rural masses, stopping payment of the foreign debt, etc. But the libera-

tion of the indigenous population, as well as emancipation from the imperialist yoke, cannot be realized short of a socialist revolution. The reformist program of the LTS is transparent in their recurrent demand for the “dissolution of the PFP and all the state's repressive bodies” (*Estrategia Obrera*, 6 June). To whom does the LTS think the Atenco peasants should address the demand for the “dismantling of the repressive bodies”? Fox? [Interior Secretary] Creel? The PRD [bourgeois-nationalist Party of the Democratic Revolution]? The repressive apparatus—the police, army, jails and courts—is the core of the bourgeois state. The LTS' proposition that the bourgeois state can be “dissolved” without a workers revolution is a suicidal illusion, according to which capitalist rule can be pressured into serving the interests of the oppressed.

For their part, the PRD, PVEM (green-ecology party) and other bourgeois forces oppose the new airport fundamentally from a hypocritical “ecologist” position, given that some species of birds that live in Texcoco Lake could disappear. But in fact, the “alternate” proposal of the PRD government of Mexico City implies the continued functioning of the existing, highly unsafe airport located in one of the most polluted cities in the world. The PRD has recently tried to appear as a friend of the Atenco peasants, especially by means of its unofficial organ, *La Jornada*. But it was PRD's Mexico City mayor López Obrador who first unleashed brutal state repression against the peasants, when last November he mobilized his police against a peaceful demonstration in downtown Mexico City soon after the

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Young Spartacus

Down With High School Drug Testing!

On June 27, the Supreme Court gave its approval to the mandatory random drug testing of public high school kids who participate in extracurricular activities (everything from cheerleading to the chess club). The new ruling, which upheld the policy of the Pottawatomie County school board in rural Tecumseh, Oklahoma, is an extension of its 1995 decision giving schools the right to test student athletes for drugs and widely expands the list of students in schools across the country who can potentially be tested. The ruling also opens the door for the capitalist state to target select groups of students for drug testing if involved in an extracurricular activity—an open invitation to target black, immigrant and leftist youth.

This latest decision is part of a series of attacks that undermine student rights and chip away at the 1985 Supreme Court ruling that school administrators and teachers are not *in loco parentis* (parental bodies outside the home). Before 1985, students had next to no constitutional rights, including no protection under the Fourth Amendment's prohibition against intrusive and unreasonable searches. Students could literally be forced to do anything from emptying out their backpacks to kneeling down to have their skirts measured to see if they were "too short." Today, things are much the same. The minimal constitutional protections established in the 1985 decision have been stripped through subsequent legislation and legal rulings. As the *Los Angeles Times* (15 April) put it in an editorial: "Only prisoners, as a group, have lesser constitutional protections by law."

The brutal reality of the "war on drugs" is that it is the banner under which young black (and Latino) men are terrorized by



Scott Goldsmith

Drug testing is invasion of privacy meant to regiment youth. Recent Supreme Court decision threatens to vastly expand testing programs in high schools.

Decriminalize Drugs!

the cops and disproportionately imprisoned, their meager possessions stripped from them. At least a quarter of the prison population consists of people convicted on drug-related offenses, and some 50 percent of those incarcerated are black. Police on drug raids confiscate cars, throw families out of their homes and shoot to kill.

In this context, it is clear that the drug testing of student athletes is part and parcel of a wider assault on black youth, for whom success in sports is perceived as one

of the few ways to escape from the hellish misery of the ghetto. That many black youth are seen as an expendable surplus population in racist capitalist America is reflected in the desperate conditions of the inner-city ghettos, from low-wage jobs and rampant unemployment to the severely underfunded and rotting public schools. The warehousing, not teaching, of black youth takes place in overcrowded, dilapidated classrooms lacking even the most basic supplies. Overcoming the massive disparities between inner-city schools and schools in affluent white suburbs requires a fight for free, quality, integrated public education for all.

The new ruling also targets a somewhat different stratum as it aims to regiment the college-bound. Justice Clarence Thomas claimed that the ruling "preserves an option for a conscientious objector" because students who refuse to submit to drug testing are banned from all extracurricular activities, not from school, under the Tecumseh policy. But the truth, as many students know, is that it is no longer enough to score well on your SATs and earn good grades; you *have* to take part in extracurricular activities to get into the best colleges.

People should have the right to do what they want with their own bodies. In most cases, what is the administration likely to find out? That the Boy Scouts of America are "high" on testosterone? However stupid, the measure is a serious blow to the personal rights of youth and another dangerous tool of repression at the disposal of the state. Metal detectors, armed guards and locker searches are increasingly common in high schools throughout the nation. What next—cops dragging youth out of class as well? The only recourse that a student has is to either forego extracurricular activities or, in the snide words of Justice Anthony M. Kennedy, have their parents

send them to a "duggie school."

Policies and laws to regiment the population have a long history in this viciously anti-labor and puritanical society. Henry Ford, for one, had the homes of workers inspected to ensure that they kept "good hygiene." In the 1950s, Joe McCarthy's hysterical anti-Communist witchhunts, the "reds under the bed" scares, the family prayer sessions pushed by the "Legion of Decency," the polygraph "lie detectors"—all were used to gear up the population for the "Crusade against Communism." Today, it's your urine they're after—General Jack D. Ripper, muttering about "vital bodily fluids" in *Dr. Strange-love*, meets the Nancy Reagan disciples! When drug testing was imposed on transportation workers in 1988, we wrote: "The purpose of this drug witchhunt is to break the resistance of the labor movement to the government's all-sided assault on American working people" (WV No. 466, 2 December 1988).

This bizarre campaign to ensure the "purity" of American workers and students through thousands of lab assistants checking millions of Dixie cups of piss is truly mind-boggling. In addition, this ruling could lead to even greater intrusions like demands to provide DNA samples and medical records. Imagine if teachers and administrators knew every last detail about you and could more easily find out who has HIV and who is pregnant. It would be a huge weapon for terrorizing youth. Already, in Northern California's Modoc County, the school board wanted to go even further than their counterparts in Pottawatomie County and just test the whole school for drugs, but this idea was dropped after parents and students protested. One of the protesters posed the provocative question: "Why not test the whole town?" (*Los Angeles Times*, 15 April 2002).

The argument against the Tecumseh policy in most of the liberal and student press is that extracurricular activities tend to keep kids off drugs, so forcing those who use drugs occasionally to leave an after-school activity will give them more time to do drugs. Also, liberals are fond of pointing out that drug testing costs a lot of money (\$472 million in federal funds are available to pay for it). But this is to miss the point. We are in principle opposed to any law against what are

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U.S. Rulers Close Borders to “Commuter Students”

Let Them Back In!

Until recently, part-time university and college students from Mexico and Canada have been relatively free to cross the border into the U.S., attend their classes and return home at night. But not any longer. Last month, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) declared that they are to be barred from entering the country, beginning with the fall semester. As a result, thousands of these “commuter students”—most from border cities like Ciudad Juárez in Mexico and Windsor, Ontario—will be prevented from completing their programs, in which they have invested a lot of time and money. The INS ban will close the door to much of a future other than a very impoverished one for thousands of working-class youth, especially from Mexico, who will be deprived of access to higher education altogether.

The U.S. capitalist rulers have had foreign students, immigrants and refugees dead in their sights since the September 11 attacks. Over 200 campus administrations agreed to turn over confidential student files to the FBI, while the INS began a nationwide sweep, fishing for “visa violations.” Over 1,200 immigrants have at one point or another been detained. With no pretensions to due process, “terror suspects” are today quietly disappeared into open-ended military detention—a revival of the *lettres de cachet* used by French monarchs to dispose of inconvenient subjects, until the Revolution of 1789 put an end to the practice. **Down with the INS ban on “commuter students”! Free the detainees! Fight the anti-immigrant witchhunt!**

Meanwhile, Canadian police have scooped up scores of Near Eastern immigrants and held them incommunicado, reportedly turning many over to U.S. authorities. The right-wing Liberal Party government of Jean Chrétien has enacted Bill C-36, an “anti-terrorism” law every bit as sweeping and repressive as the USA-Patriot Act. Chrétien has now closed the border to all refugee claimants arriving from the U.S. And to the south, Mexican president Vicente Fox has launched his own attacks on people of Near Eastern descent, rebellious peasants and student radicals.

The INS decree extends such truly vicious domestic “anti-terrorism” campaigns against immigrants and refugees into the realm of bureaucratic absurdity. Nobody pretends that the now-proscribed “commuters” intend to stay in the coun-

try, least of all the students themselves. They are daytime visitors who spend money, mostly in depressed American cities like Detroit and El Paso. Even from the economic standpoint of the U.S. capitalist class, the ban on “commuter students” is simply irrational. Many smaller universities and colleges depend on the tuition fees of cross-border part-timers to fund their general programs. Heavily

prompted a bipartisan Congressional resolution to create a new visa category allowing the part-time students to resume their studies.

For other sections of the bourgeoisie, more significant than the loss of short-term cash flow from students’ tuition is that the new INS decree—along with other border restrictions imposed post-September 11—crimps the exploitation



Bay Area Spartacus Youth Club initiated San Francisco State protest last December against anti-immigrant witchhunt. Protesters chanted: “Down with la migra! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!”

black and working-class Wayne State University in Detroit stands to lose 2 percent of its enrollment and a million dollars in revenue. Following September 11, the INS has also cracked down on unofficial border crossings near Big Bend National Park in Texas, disrupting the lives of people on both sides of the border who for decades have depended on these crossings to get to work and do their shopping.

If the new decree were about relegating black and working-class Americans to an even more substandard education, the deeply racist U.S. rulers would be solidly, malignantly indifferent. But there’s cold hard cash at stake in the border states, and this consideration alone has already

of labor and production for profit. An administrator at the University of Texas at El Paso has complained that keeping out part-time Mexican students would result in a shortage of skilled workers in both Ciudad Juárez and El Paso, which are in many ways already a single city. The pillage of Mexico by U.S. imperialism (and its Canadian junior partner) codified in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) cannot proceed smoothly without a pool of trained Mexican technicians and overseers. NAFTA has vastly increased immiseration in Mexico, leading to a huge increase in desperate immigrants seeking to cross the border by any means possible. The murderous impact of racist U.S. border restrictions was brought home yet again late last month in Texas when two immigrants were found dead after having been locked inside a truck in the scorching heat by ruthless immigrant smugglers.

There can be no progressive or rational immigration policy under capitalism, where all immigration laws are necessarily racist and chauvinist. The central axis of struggle by revolutionary socialists must be for full citizenship rights for all foreign-born workers and immigrants. We have always actively fought against all manifestations of anti-immigrant racism. At a united-front protest in defense of foreign students initiated by the Spartacus Youth Club at San Francisco State University last December, militant protesters chanted, “Down with la migra! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!”

For years, various reformist organizations have raised the call to “open the borders.” In certain conjunctures, this demand can be important in mobilizing

the working class in defense of the oppressed. During World War II, the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party demanded that the borders be opened to Jewish refugees escaping Hitler’s Europe. However, as a general slogan, “open the borders” is purely utopian, sowing the illusion that the capitalist rulers will voluntarily dismantle their own state. Recently, this has come to the attention of the centrist League for the Revolutionary Party (LRP), which, correcting its previous line, now admits that “‘Open the Borders’ is an ambiguous slogan at best and conveys a utopian confusion at its worst” (*Proletarian Revolution*, Spring 2002).

Yet this slimy centrist outfit slanders the SL’s rejection of the call to “open the borders” as “obviously a cover-up for a national chauvinist position.” They condemn the following quotation from a 1974 article:

“However, on a sufficiently large scale, immigration flows could wipe out the national identity of the recipient countries.... Unlimited immigration as a principle is incompatible with the right of national self-determination.”

—“The Leninist Policy Toward Immigration/Emigration,” WV No. 36, 18 January 1974

This is a simple statement of fact! It is powerfully demonstrated by the trampling of Palestinian national rights by the massive immigration of Jewish refugees into Palestine, most of whom were fleeing the Nazi Holocaust and thanks to the imperialists had nowhere else to go. Our article also pointed out that if Mexico were to have an “open border,” it would lead to “well-financed American ‘colonists’ buying up Mexican enterprises and real estate,” subjecting Mexico to direct economic and political domination.

Above all, as dishonest polemicists, the LRP omits the central point of our article, that the call to “open the borders” is “tantamount to advocating the abolition of national states under capitalism.” Though the LRP writes that to believe that an imperialist state would “tolerate open borders is an impossible fantasy,” their so-called correction amounts to a rewording of the same slogan: “End all Restrictions on Immigrants and Refugees.” For the capitalist state to end all restrictions on immigration would mean abolishing the border patrols, the INS, the Coast Guard and every other government agency that deals with immigration—i.e., it is a call on the capitalist state to open its borders!

It will take workers revolution expropriating the wealth of the capitalists to make possible a vast increase in the productive forces of all countries, which alone can provide a decent life for those who now live in the squalid shantytowns of the Third World as well as the ghettos and barrios of the U.S. Only this can lay the material basis for abolishing national borders. An American workers state would be committed to overcoming global inequality through an internationally planned socialist economy. This could well involve large-scale immigration from the Third World. But the real key will be the massive transfer of resources and technology to Latin America, Africa and Asia.

The entire capitalist system of production for profit is irrational, and it finds leaders, and bureaucracies, to suit. The exclusion of “commuter students” offers one more small proof of this fact. We say: **Down with the ban! Let the part-time students back in!** ■

called “crimes without victims,” e.g., laws against drug use, vagrancy, prostitution and obscenity. The bourgeois state has no business intervening in people’s personal affairs and private lives. Such laws only reinforce the repressive apparatus of the bourgeois state and encourage reactionary social attitudes.

As it is now, if you’ve got the money you can buy quality drugs when you want them, quality lawyers to defend you and, if needed, the Betty Ford clinic when drug use becomes an inconvenience. We Marxists call for the decriminalization of drugs, which would also take the huge profits and consequently much of the violence out of the trade. Under socialism, drug treatment and prescriptions would be easily accessible to those who need them as part of a broader program of free, quality medical care for all.

Part of Bush’s so-called education plan

Inglewood...

(continued from page 2)

Black Caucus will be having hearings around the country on police abuse, while Michael Zinzun, who is a darling of much of the reformist left in Los Angeles, called for an “elected, not appointed” civilian police review board.

It’s been a long road down for Zinzun from his former days as a member of the Black Panther Party, which was forged in the heat of the struggle against cop brutality on the streets of Oakland in the 1960s. At the Town Hall meeting, Zinzun declared, “I’m not anti-police; I’m against police abuse.” To give this some radical veneer, he ended with a chant of “Power to the People!” But not too much power, as a spokesman from the NAACP made clear when she declared: “Power to the People, but it has to be used judiciously.” For his part, a spokesman from the Nation of Islam declared: “We should change the police department and have the Nation of Islam as the police!” Indeed, the NOI has acted as the adjuncts to the racist police in public housing projects, harassing the residents and enforcing the rulers’ racist “war on drugs” and “war on crime.”

Everyone on the podium of the July 20 event was united in seeking to restore public confidence in the police through calls for civilian review boards. But just about every major city in America has seen one civilian review board after another instituted supposedly to combat police brutality, and cop terror has continued with impunity. The cops cannot be “controlled by the community” for the simple reason that they are servants of a ruling class whose profits are derived from the exploitation of labor and the racist oppression of blacks, immigrants and all minorities. To be sure, the cops

hate the idea of any kind of body they view as an infringement on their power, but the purpose of civilian review boards is to whitewash cop terror while building dangerous illusions that the racist, capitalist state can be reformed to serve the interests of working people and the oppressed.

In the wake of September 11, the ruling class has been pushing the lie of “national unity” in order to whip up support for U.S. imperialism’s wars abroad and increased state repression. The cops, we are told, are heroes who are to be admired. And in order to ensure our “security” against the ubiquitous terrorist bogeyman, we’ve been told that we must sacrifice the few civil liberties that working people and minorities have in this country. But the horrible reality of black oppression, which the recorded cop beating of Jackson-Chavis once again brings to the fore for all to see, and the spectacle of hundreds of thousands of workers being laid off and their pensions and savings destroyed as a handful of capitalists get filthy rich exposes the myth that all Americans have common interests. America is a viciously racist, class-divided society, and the working class and the oppressed in this country share nothing in common with the capitalist exploiters or their political agents.

Break with the Democrats! For a Workers Party!

Echoing Zinzun et al., at a demonstration on July 12 in Inglewood, the reformist Freedom Socialist Party carried a placard reading: “The problem: police brutality. The solution: elected civilian review boards.” A speaker for the October 22nd Coalition Against Police Brutality, a liberal group associated with the Revolutionary Communist Party and Refuse & Resist, did not go beyond calling for a vague “movement of the people”



Inglewood: SL/SYC contingent at protest against cop terror, July 12.

Mexico...

(continued from page 5)

federal government issued the expropriation decree. The PRD, no less than the PRI [former ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party] and PAN [Fox’s National Action Party], is a bourgeois party committed to removing any obstacle in the way of capitalism.

As Marxists, we favor advances in the infrastructure of industry and services in society—even under capitalism—such as the building of dams, electric plants, highways, etc., because they are socially useful works. The existing Mexico City airport is small, with only two runways, and lies entirely within the city. This makes it highly unsafe, not only for airline workers and passengers but also for the population that lives under the airplanes’ routes. Thus, we would favor a new and safer airport for Mexico City. If the government wants to use communal lands or those of poor peasants for this, then it must pay! *These lands should be used only with the consent of the peasants, on the basis of a generous payment by the government.*

Today, most workers and peasants do

not have access to air transportation, as is also the case in regard to modern highways and the Internet. We do not fight to stop advances, but for there to be *advances for all*. Only through a planned economy and the nationalization of all land, under a workers government, will it be possible to bring technological advances to the countryside in order to lift the peasantry out of its ancestral backwardness and oppression. Our struggle is based on the perspective of building a society without classes, where there is no division between those who work and those who possess. We fight for a society that overcomes economic scarcity and reaches a level of labor productivity qualitatively higher than that of even the most advanced capitalist countries. Only this can guarantee both the full scientific and cultural development of the individual and his comfort, on the basis of material plenty. To realize this perspective, it is necessary to build workers parties around the world that lead the proletariat, rallying behind it all the oppressed in struggle for their liberation. This is the fight to which the Grupo Espartaquista de México, section of the International Communist League, is dedicated. *Defend the Atenco peasants!* ■

Free Mitchell Crooks!

The following letter was sent by the Partisan Defense Committee on July 15 to the District Attorneys of Los Angeles and Placer counties in California.

The Partisan Defense Committee protests the vindictive arrest of Mitchell Crooks only days after the airing of his videotape showing the brutal police beating of black youth Donovan Jackson in Inglewood on July 6. The police vendetta against Crooks began from the moment the videotape was released. On July 10, L.A. Chief Deputy D.A. Curt Livesay telephoned L.A. radio station KFI-FM during an interview with Crooks to threaten him with a grand jury subpoena. The next day, plainclothes cops arrested Crooks

outside CNN’s office, placing him into an unmarked cop car as he was screaming for help. Crooks had to be hospitalized overnight for injuries he received during the arrest. He is now in a jail cell in Placer County.

Crooks’ arrest is clearly aimed at punishing him for his courageous action. It is intended as an ominous warning to anyone who would dare document the brutality that is “standard operating procedure” for the racist cops. We add our voice to the many others in Southern California and around the country who are outraged at the vicious attack against Donovan Jackson and the arrest of Mitchell Crooks. *Drop the charges against Mitchell Crooks! Free him now!*

to “stop police brutality.” But there can be no end to cop terror short of the destruction of the system of capitalist exploitation and racist oppression which the cops enforce.

Sounding more radical than these pussillanimous outfits is the Progressive Labor Party, which issued a 13 July leaflet titled: “Inglewood, LA Cops Are the #1 Terrorists!” The leaflet ended with the correct statement that the ruling class uses “their racist cops to enforce terror against workers just like they want US soldiers to enforce terror against workers around the world!” But behind the radical veneer lie the same liberal politics. Expressing profound confidence that the capitalist state is the vehicle for retribution, the leaflet demands: “The beating of Donovan Jackson must be avenged by demanding that Morse be fired and jailed for racist assault on Jackson and many other residents of Inglewood!”

At the time of the 1992 L.A. upheaval against the acquittal of the cops who beat Rodney King within an inch of his life, the Partisan Defense Committee—a legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League—issued a statement declaring:

“The working class must not allow the black population to be isolated—the powerful L.A. unions such as longshore, aerospace and city workers should organize work stoppages and mass mobi-

lizations to solidarize with and defend the black community as the LAPD looks to spill more blood to ‘celebrate’ their racist victory over Rodney King.”

This year the vicious assault on Donovan Jackson-Chavis came in the midst of a contract battle pitting the powerful ILWU longshore union against the shipping bosses out to gut the union. An ILWU strike would demonstrate the social power of the labor movement, a power that needs to be mobilized in defense of the ghettos and barrios against the marauding racist cops. But the labor movement is hamstrung by the union tops, whose program is one of class peace and collaboration with the bosses, in particular through their support to the Democrats.

The first step to unleashing labor/black power is to break the chains that shackle the working class to its capitalist class enemy. The working people need their own party—one that champions the rights of black people and all the oppressed; a workers party committed to the fight for workers revolution and the replacement of the deeply inhumane and brutal capitalist system with a workers government where those who labor rule. Only then will cop terror and racist oppression be forever done away with. *No reliance on capitalist courts, cops or politicians! Break with the Democratic Party of racism and war! Build a revolutionary workers party!* ■

ILWU...

(continued from page 3)

themselves into the Dockworkers Solidarity Committee. The ISO newspaper *Socialist Worker* (5 July) approvingly quotes Local 10 secretary-treasurer Clarence Thomas as saying that “national security is when everyone has a job, with a living wage, health care and a pension”; the July 11 issue of *Workers World* quotes Jim Spinoso to the same effect. In an op-ed piece in the *San Francisco Chronicle* (23 July), left-talking Local 10 business agent Jack Heyman expresses opposition to “national security,” but only because it will “deny basic civil liberties.” In this way, both the union “militants” and their “socialist” chorus founder on the shoals of the “national unity” crusade. Refusing to confront its central premise, they merely seek to redefine it.

In fact, the capitalists’ attacks on democratic rights and on the labor movement at home go hand in hand with their imperialist military adventures around the world. The need to win the working class to the understanding that defense of their own rights entails opposition to the U.S. capitalist rulers has motivated the Spartacist League in our support to the longshoremen against the PMA and the government. This perspective was put forward by the SL at a July 27 meeting titled “Democracy and the ILWU,” which was attended by 125 people, most of them longshore “B-men” (who have no democratic rights in the union). Following a

video on the historic 1934 San Francisco longshore strike, our comrade pointed to the role of the government at that time in protecting the bosses against the striking workers, stressing the urgent necessity of being able to distinguish between one’s friends and one’s enemies in the current struggle. She expressed our opposition to the fact that Democratic mayor (and active strikebreaker) Willie Brown was the keynote speaker at a July 24 rally sponsored by the Dockworkers Solidarity Committee in front of the PMA offices in San Francisco, noting that “his purpose in being there was to head off the union from exercising its social power against the bosses and to blow off steam.” She summed up:

“I want to remind people here about the demonstration on February 9 when the Labor Black League for Social Defense and the Partisan Defense Committee initiated a labor-centered united-front protest in downtown Oakland that broke through the post-September 11 ‘national unity.’ With many of you longshoremen at its core, the rally was directed against the anti-immigrant witchhunt which has targeted many of your brothers, the port truckers; the USA-Patriot Act, which has gone against many immigrants; and the Maritime Security Act, something that strikes at the heart of the ILWU. The protest gave a taste of labor’s power when organized under its own banners, independent of the capitalist state and its political parties.

“What we need is a revolutionary workers party that will fight for the interests of the working class. We fight for a socialist and egalitarian society. We urge workers that are looking for a way forward to read our paper and come to talk to us.” ■

IG Lies...

(continued from page 4)

this “electoral game” leading up to the Nazi victory, Germany was in a state of virtual civil war, as Hitler’s SA storm-troopers staged attacks against Jews and trade unionists and the streets of Berlin and other cities saw pitched battles between the Nazis and Communist militias.

For all its fulminations about “fighting fascism,” it is the IG that downplays the very real horror of triumphant fascism. A couple of years ago they went ballistic when the fascist Jörg Haider’s Freedom Party (FPÖ) joined the governing coalition in Austria. This was not the first time the FPÖ had been in the Austrian government. But where the FPÖ was in a coalition with the Socialist Party (SPÖ) from 1983 to 1986, the SPÖ was frozen out of the current coalition. This fact played no small role in impelling the social democrats and their left lackeys to organize a wave of “anti-fascist” protests across Europe. And then, too, the IG brought up the “militant” rear, decrying our assertion that Haider’s victory was essentially an electoral phenomenon.

As Trotsky explained in “Whither France” (October 1936): “The historic function of fascism is to smash the working class, destroy its organizations, and stifle political liberties when the capitalists find themselves unable to govern and dominate with the help of democratic machinery.” But, as we have noted in our polemics against the IG on this question, such is not the case in Austria, where the organizations of the left and working class seem remarkably intact given the fascist threat much ballyhooed by the IG. In its “Strong State” article, the IG finally responds to our pointed question, “So does the IG think Austria is fascist today?”:

“The cynical editors of *Workers Vanguard* know perfectly well that we do not argue that Austria or Italy are fascist because of the presence of fascist parties as junior partners in coalition governments. But more fundamentally, the ICL’s parliamentary blinders prevent them from seeing that while fascist dictatorship is not on the agenda, *there is a clear and present danger posed by the drive toward a bonapartist ‘strong state.’* In recent years, the bourgeoisie as a whole and its reformist lieutenants in the workers movement have rammed through police-state measures across Europe, in the U.S. and throughout the capitalist world. The imperialists’ current terrorist ‘war on terrorism’ intensifies this push. The real danger represented by Le Pen and his ilk is that in various countries where they have a historical presence, the fascists act as the cutting edge of this drive.”

This is doubletalk. In a 4 May statement, the IG drew an analogy between the re-election of Chirac and the 1932 election of the arch-reactionary militarist Hindenburg as German president, who handed over power to Hitler a year later. Now, having hammered away at the imminent fascist danger, the IG assures

us that there is no danger of a fascist takeover but rather that the fascists are content to remain junior partners in constitutional governments. The IG willfully and idiotically conflates very different situations. The German bourgeoisie turned to the fascists in the early ’30s in order to suppress an insurgent proletariat in the context of severe social crisis and in a desire to reverse its defeat in World War I. Today, West Europe is faced with a conjunctural economic downturn in which the millions of immigrant workers brought in earlier are deemed “surplus.”

To be sure, the main role of the fascist parties in Europe currently is to act as pressure groups on the parties administering capitalist rule. But it was largely under the auspices of social-democratic parties at the head of popular-front governments that a continent-wide war against immigrants was unleashed, aimed at disarming the working class in the face of relentless attacks on their living standards and double-digit unemployment rates. The bourgeoisie doesn’t presently need to unleash the fascist gangs, as its “democratic” state machinery is more than adequate to handle the job of repression and terror to keep the working class in line.

Taking us to task for observing the reality that “fascist terror against immigrants is not now rampant in France,” the IG points to the “fascist-infested police [who] have put immigrant areas under a state of siege.” And if the cops weren’t fascist-infested, they would behave differently? The IG goes on to make the supposed revelation that not only the police, but the French army, anti-abortion outfits and union-busting private security agencies are riddled with fascists. For communists it is hardly news that the capitalist state and its auxiliaries have lots of fascist knuckles and fists. But that does not make the attacks by these state agencies on the working class and oppressed equivalent to the rise of fascism. The implication of the IG’s banal but breathless “relations” is that somewhere there must be cop agencies unsullied by fascist penetration, dovetailing with the social-democratic fantasy that there can be “good cops” who serve the people.

What the IG tries to obscure with its talk of a “strong state” is exactly what Lenin emphasized in the key Marxist work on the state, *The State and Revolution* (1917): that the brutal machinery of capitalist state repression is the *normal workings of bourgeois democracy*; that the capitalist state—whether in democratic, bonapartist or fascist garb—is the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.

We Marxists fight every escalation of capitalist state repression and every step toward bonapartism. That is why the LTF has placed such great stress in its propaganda before, during and since the elections on the need to mobilize the proletariat against Vigipirate and the whole racist “security” campaign that has served

as the crucial mechanism for tying the workers to their “own” bourgeoisie. Far from Norden’s doubletalk about the fascists and the “strong state,” what the workers movement must understand is that the Jospin popular front paved the way for intensified bonapartist repression, including literally writing the laws for Chirac & Co. Entire elements of the Vigipirate “emergency powers” adopted under Jospin have now been drafted wholesale into French law by Chirac.

“Death of Communism” Defectors

For the IG, the wellspring of the ICL’s supposed retreat from revolutionary Trotskyism is to be found in our acknowledgment that the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state has led to a worldwide regression in working-class consciousness. Yet the impact that this world-historic defeat would have on the proletariat is so obvious that it was addressed decades ago by the adherents of Trotsky’s Left Opposition in the U.S. Their 1929 “Platform of the Communist Opposition” argued:

“The collapse of the Russian revolution as the dictatorship of the proletariat would signify the retardation for decades of the revolutionary movement in Europe and America and the uprisings of the colonial peoples, whose main point of support today is the victory of the Russian October. A collapse would be followed by an unequalled reign of reaction throughout the world and would entail a restoration of world imperialist rule without precedent in the last two or three decades.”

The reactionary effects of capitalist counterrevolution are manifest. The once mass Communist parties in Italy and France—which, however reformist their politics, reflected some identification by large numbers of workers with the Russian October—have been reduced to shadows of what they were. Indeed, it is in good part because of the impact that the current reign of reaction has had on the working class that the bourgeoisie sees no proletarian challenge on the horizon and therefore no need for fascism to maintain its rule.

The IG itself is the demoralized product of the wave of imperialist reaction and triumphalism over the “death of communism” that swept the globe with the final destruction of the gains of the great October Revolution by capitalist counterrevolution in 1991-92. Its desperation is evidenced in its pretentious, world-altering *diktats*—from clarion calls for unspecified forces (Afghani tribesmen?) to defeat U.S. imperialism in Afghanistan to thundering cries, amid a crusade for national unity behind the “French Republic,” for a workers boycott of the French elections. Its lies are used to justify a reality that the IG itself has constructed.

The IG asserts that the ICL has redefined “the French National Front as an electoral rather than a fascist party” to argue that we have given up on any fight to mobilize the proletariat. Yet when a real fascist menace was posed by a potential mobilization of some thousands of Le Pen’s stormtroopers in Paris on May Day, the LTF declared: “What’s necessary is mass mobilizations to repulse this danger.” The IG dismisses this out of hand because we pointed out that the obstacle to such a mobilization was the social-democratic misleaders who kept hundreds of thousands of people away from the fascists and herded them to vote for Chirac. Unlike the IG with its phony agitational rhetoric, we recognize that our small organization in France (much less the IG’s phantom “French section”) does not yet have the roots and influence in the proletariat to implement our call to defend the workers’ May Day. One could posit that Norden and his sidekick Negrete have been so overcome by megalomaniacal delusions of their own grandeur that they actually believe that if they call for the workers to act they will. In fact, it is pure cynicism in the service not of combatting the current misleaders of the proletariat but of accommodating to them.

That the LTF even considered the pos-

sibility of critical support to LO had the IG so exercised that it crafted another lie—that we had made an offer of “conditional critical support.” As we have said, the popular front and Vigipirate are intertwined axes of the class collaborationism that maintains capitalist rule in France. By refusing to support the popular front in the first round of the elections, and Chirac in the second, LO took a half-step away from class collaborationism. Had it taken a full step and opposed Vigipirate and the racist roundups, we would have, without qualms, offered critical support to LO in the elections—i.e., we would have voted and campaigned for them while counterposing our revolutionary program to their reformist politics every step of the way.

Indeed, such breaks from existing forms of class collaboration are precisely the basis for considering critical support. Not because they are some kind of measure of the “sincerity” of the reformist or centrist party in question, but because they are an indicator of pressure in its ranks, i.e., of the potential to win some portion of its membership to a revolutionary program and party. Applying the tactic of critical support also affords the opportunity to address workers who are attracted to an opposition to class collaborationism.

To forfeit such opportunities out of hand is to forfeit the process of splits and regroupments necessary to build a revolutionary party of scale and would signal the abandonment of any real intention to forge a Leninist vanguard party. But the IG’s notion of “regroupment” has more in common with doling out McDonald’s franchises based on political treatises full of sound and fury and signifying nothing. Take the first group adhering to the IG’s League for the Fourth International, the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil. We had broken relations with this outfit when it became clear that they were simply opportunists interested in the defense—at all costs—of their positions at the head of a cop-infested municipal workers union in Volta Redonda. To this end they launched a series of court suits against their opponents, appealing to the capitalist state to adjust the union leadership configuration to their advantage. When we exposed this betrayal, the presses of the IG’s *Internationalist* went into high gear generating lying denials and obfuscations (see “Court Papers Prove They Sued the Union—IG’s Brazil Cover-Up: Dirty Hands, Cynical Lies,” WV No. 671, 11 July 1997).

Since its inception, the IG has demonstrated the dialectic of conciliating alien class forces and shameless lying in the service of such appetites. If indeed we had truly maligned their Brazilian comrades, which we didn’t, the IG could have just published the court papers that they claimed demonstrated their innocence. But few people can get to Volta Redonda to determine for themselves the facts of the matter, and the IG’s lies against the ICL have played well among some trade-union opportunists and reformists in the U.S. But not so over the French elections, where the village idiot could detect their lies. ■

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Government Blitzkrieg on Civil Liberties

Even Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz conceded, "I don't think there was actually a plot beyond some fairly loose talk" (*Guardian*, 13 June). Though admitting that the prospect that Muhajir had anything to do with a "dirty bomb" was "not realistic," former Defense Secretary James Schlesinger, who also served as CIA director, chimed in: "The intent was there, the threat was there." Thus, "it was a criminal act" (*New York Times*, 11 June). In the old days a "thought crime" meant being prosecuted solely for one's political views. Under this administration it's like something out of the movie *Minority Report* with Bush, Ashcroft and Cheney as the three "pre-cogs" who designate for arrest people who haven't even planned a crime yet. Describing how "the government has produced no evidence that a dirty-bomb plot existed," a June 12 editorial in the *New York Times* noted: "We do, however, have President Bush's assurance...that 'This guy Padilla is a bad guy.'"



tion” because in so doing they would

At the same time, the cases of John Walker Lindh and Zacarias Moussaoui illuminate the use of conspiracy laws to imprison people with absolutely *no evidence* that they committed any crime. Lindh, the 21-year-old Californian whose great sin was that his religious fanaticism led him to the Taliban rather than their fundamentalist Christian counterparts in the U.S., was arrested in Afghanistan. He was charged with conspiracy to kill Americans, providing support to terrorists and using “destructive devices during crimes of violence.” Lindh’s lawyers sought protection from the firearms charge in the Second Amendment, citing the Justice Department’s own position that it “broadly protects the rights of individuals...to possess and bear their own firearms.” But the prosecution simply sneered, declaring that such rights do not apply to people like Lindh.

The “prize catch” in the government’s “war on terrorism” is Zacarias Moussaoui, a French citizen of Moroccan descent who faces the death sentence on charges of conspiring with the September 11 hijackers. The government has labeled Moussaoui, who was arrested a month before the World Trade Center attack, the “20th hijacker,” but they have produced nothing linking him to the September 11 hijackings: no witness, no evidence that Moussaoui ever met the plot’s purported leader, Mohamed Atta (or any other hijacker), or that he even had any communications with them.

In a *New York Times* (2 August) op-ed piece titled “What Was Moussaoui’s Crime?” Dahlia Lithwick, senior editor of *Slate*, explained that “the government charged Mr. Moussaoui with a conspiracy he never knew about.” She accounted for his “bizarre conduct,” including his attempt to plead guilty, by describing how “until last week, he believed he was facing the death penalty for Sept. 11 just

According to CBS attorney Andrew Cohen, “Prosecutors aren’t supposed to proceed to trial with cases when they know or have reason to know the evidence doesn’t support the charges in the indictment.... If he merely conspired to commit a crime that never occurred and never harmed anyone, and if he was in jail at the time of the September 11 attacks to boot, how in the world will prosecutors with a straight face be able to push for a death sentence? And why in the world would any judge permit such a sentence to be carried out?” (CBSNews.com, 19 July). Not only is it not uncommon for prosecutors to push for the death sentence knowing their prey is likely innocent, but executing someone for a crime he did not commit was a hallmark of Bush’s tenure as governor of Texas.

In the 1950s, schoolkids were instructed, “if your mommie is a commie, turn her in.” Aided by modern computer technology such as “Magic Lantern,” which allows the government to read the keystrokes off your computer, the Bush administration seeks to outdo the FBI’s deadly COINTELPRO program of the 1950s-70s, under which the FBI and local police red squads kept files on hundreds of thousands of leftists, unionists, civil rights activists, antiwar protesters, feminists, supporters of gay rights, tenants’ rights advocates—virtually anyone critical of government policies. It was under COINTELPRO that the government launched a war of terror against the radical Black Panther Party, gunning down 38 of its members and railroading hundreds more to prison.

An illustration of what TIPS would mean was seen on July 17 when an Indian film star and her entourage were dragged off an ATA flight arriving in New York from Chicago. The group was held and interrogated until four in the morning on the grounds they might be terrorists. Why? Because they were South Asian and a passenger deemed they were acting “suspiciously” because they were, for example, excitedly looking out the windows of the plane at the tall buildings of New York City.

“WHEREAS, as seen in Nazi Germany, with workers encouraged to spy on each other, neighbors on neighbors and even family members to spy on their own kin, the government utilized these tactics more for their self-preservation, they must be opposed....”

The result has been a panoply of newly minted laws, orders, directives and gov-



Palestinians...

(continued from page 12)

(defined as a per capita income of \$2.50 per day). Income is expected to plunge by yet another 30 percent by the end of the year.

The tightening ghettoization of Arab towns and villages, combined with the massive destruction of West Bank society and infrastructure carried out by the Israeli military in April, has reduced what economic life existed to the barest minimum. Meanwhile, the Zionist rulers are withholding some \$600 million in international aid from the Palestinians. *Israel's rulers are carrying out a policy of starvation in the Occupied Territories.*

After nine years of Palestinian “autonomy,” the number of Zionist settlers has doubled, totaling some 400,000 in Gaza, the West Bank and an ever-expanding East Jerusalem. The true face of the settler movement was seen in the pogromist rampage last week in Hebron, where some 500 settlers protected by 6,000 troops lord it over an Arab population of 120,000. A funeral for a settler killed by Palestinians was turned into an anti-Arab pogrom, as a racist mob shot dead a 14-year-old girl in her home, wounded her brother, stabbed another young boy and broke into Palestinian houses and smashed up the local market. A recent poll conducted by the liberal Peace Now organization showed that 68 percent of the nearly 200,000 West Bank settlers would be willing to leave if compensated. Presumably, these are largely the recent immigrants who were forced to live there by the government or those drawn mainly by artificially low housing costs. That leaves a solid core of 60,000 or more hard-bitten zealots—just in the West Bank—who are determined to serve as an advance guard in a genocidal war to expel the Palestinians.

At bottom, the settler movement is an auxiliary army of occupation and the settlements little more than military outposts, linked by strategic “bypass” highways, open only to Jews, and a growing network of military checkpoints where Palestinians are routinely terrorized and humiliated. It is to maintain this apparatus of terror that the Israeli government spends *\$1 billion* a year on “security” and housing subsidies in the Occupied

Territories, even as it denies the bare essentials of existence to the Palestinian population and slashes social services for working people in Israel. Defense of the Palestinians must begin with the demand for *the immediate removal of all anti-Arab fortifications in the Occupied Territories—the troops, the settlements and the apartheid highway network.*

While Palestinian attacks on Israeli soldiers and their fascistic settler auxiliaries at least target the enforcers of the brutal Zionist occupation, the bombings of schools, buses, shopping malls or discos are criminal from the standpoint of the working class. Such attacks are aimed simply at killing as many Israeli civilians as possible, just as the Israeli state terror in Gaza, carried out with far more formidable firepower, was aimed at killing as many Palestinians as possible. The choice of Hebrew University as a Hamas target is particularly significant, as this is one of the few venues where Jews and Arabs have continued to intermingle despite the steady deepening of national antagonisms over the last two years. And, in fact, many of the wounded at the university were Arab students.

The organizers of such indiscriminate bombings—whether Islamic fundamentalists or Palestinian nationalists like the Al Aksa Brigade—share the reactionary mindset of the Zionist rulers. Just as Sharon deems every Palestinian a “terrorist” to be tortured, murdered or starved to death, Hamas & Co. consider it a crime to have been born into the Hebrew-speaking population or even to associate with it in any way. Such criminal attacks serve only to deepen the grip of chauvinism over the Hebrew-speaking working people and drive them further into the arms of their own exploiters.

For a Socialist Federation of the Near East!

The Gaza City attack came just as the Tanzim militia associated with Yasir Arafat’s Fatah organization was about to declare a cease-fire that would end “all attacks on innocent men, women and children who are non-combatants.” Obviously timed to scuttle this unilateral declaration, which was largely brokered by the European Union, Sharon’s bombing followed a pattern of provocation that goes right back to the start of the Palestinian uprising. What triggered the *Inti-*

fabulous increase in their riches and profits over the past two decades through increasing the exploitation of the working class and slashing virtually all social programs benefiting the poor (as well as looting their own corporations to the tune of billions), America’s rulers are quite cognizant they are sitting on top of seething discontent among the masses at the bottom of this society.

By first targeting Muslim immigrants, the rulers have created the spectre of an “enemy within” in order to strengthen the powers of their own consummately violent state. What is necessary is to fight now in defense of our rights and the rights of immigrants and all the oppressed. The Labor Black League for Social Defense and the Partisan Defense Committee, a legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League, initiated the Oakland February 9 united-front, labor-centered mobilization of trade unionists, immigrants, blacks and others in defense of immigrant rights and against the government’s new repressive laws. As the SL speaker emphasized at the rally:

“In fighting every injustice and every oppression, we in the Spartacist League have the aim of making the working class as a whole conscious of its historic tasks: bringing down this whole system of greed, exploitation and war that is capitalism. It’s necessary to fight, and in the process forge a party of professional revolutionaries that acts as a tribune of the people—addressing questions like the oppression of women, the right to abortion; a party that fights against anti-gay bigotry; a party that recognizes the centrality of the fight against black oppression in the fight for a socialist revolution. Join us in this fight!”■

fada in the first place was Sharon’s march (with the approval of the then Labor government) through the Muslim holy shrine of Al Aksa in Jerusalem with more than a thousand heavily armed soldiers in the fall of 2000.

Since then, every attempt to broker some kind of “peace” agreement—invariably based on the demand that the Palestinians cease to defend themselves against the Zionist occupiers—has been buried in the rubble and burning wreckage left by another onslaught of the Israeli war machine. Thus when Arafat met U.S. president Clinton in November 2000, Israel responded by blowing up a Fatah activist in his van—also killing random pedestrians—with anti-tank missiles launched from helicopters. Similarly, a Jordanian “peace mission” in April 2001 was greeted with an Israeli bombing attack in Lebanon along with additional provocations in the West Bank and Gaza.



AFF

Along with seven killed, 80 students, both Jewish and Arab, were wounded in criminal July 31 bomb attack by Hamas at Jerusalem’s Hebrew University, one of few integrated institutions in Israel.

This past February, Israel reacted to a Saudi-sponsored “peace” proposal by devastating another refugee camp in the West Bank, killing over 30 Palestinians.

Throughout this slaughter, Israel has been backed to the hilt by the U.S. imperialists with arms, supplies and billions in cash. For both major bourgeois parties in the U.S.—Republicans and Democrats—support for the Zionist state is an unsailable article of faith. At the same time, the U.S. seeks to maintain enough of a semblance of concern for the plight of the Palestinian people so as not to completely discredit Washington’s Arab client regimes in the face of widespread popular unrest and powerful Islamist opposition movements. Thus after Israel’s air strike in Gaza, some State Department advisers wanted to “put enough daylight between us and them so that our efforts are not completely discredited.”

This is where black Democratic Party mainstay Jesse Jackson steps in to offer a helping hand. Last month, Jackson traveled to the Near East to urge the Palestinians to adopt a policy of “nonviolence” and to promote “reconciliation” between Israel and the Palestinians. Jackson called on the United States to “use its leverage, incentives and world power to make it happen,” as though the same government that subjects black Americans to ghettoization and mass incarceration will somehow “protect” the Palestinian people from the Zionist terror machine armed and subsidized by U.S. imperialism.

Jackson is looking to revive the “peace process” that Democrat Clinton presided over in 1993. Coming after the 1991 assault on Iraq, in which U.S. imperialism reasserted its unchallenged hegemony in the oil-rich Near East, the 1993 “peace” deal was seen by Washington as a way of sealing a Pax Americana in the region. For the Zionist rulers, it was a way of offloading the policing of the Occupied Territories into the willing hands of Arafat and a handful of his nationalist cronies. For all the vague promises of an eventual bantustan-style mini-state in the sweet by-and-by—if the Palestinians “behaved themselves”—that was the real content of the “autonomy” ushered in by the Oslo Accords.

This *betrayal* of the just aspirations of the Palestinian people was the result of the nationalist strategy pursued by Fatah and the rest of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), including such “radical” groups as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Enormously outgunned by the Zionist state, the PLO was under no illusion that a military struggle could achieve Palestinian statehood. In practice, these petty-bourgeois nationalists looked to the Arab bourgeois states, the United Nations and, finally, directly to the U.S. imperialists to pressure Israel into a deal.

With the counterrevolutionary collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991-92, the PLO was deprived of crucial diplomatic and financial support, paving the way for the ignominious U.S.-sponsored “peace.” The result has been such a catastrophe that large sections of the historically cosmopolitan Palestinian population have

turned to the Islamic fundamentalists of Hamas and Islamic Jihad, purveyors of religious obscurantism, anti-woman bigotry and anti-Semitism.

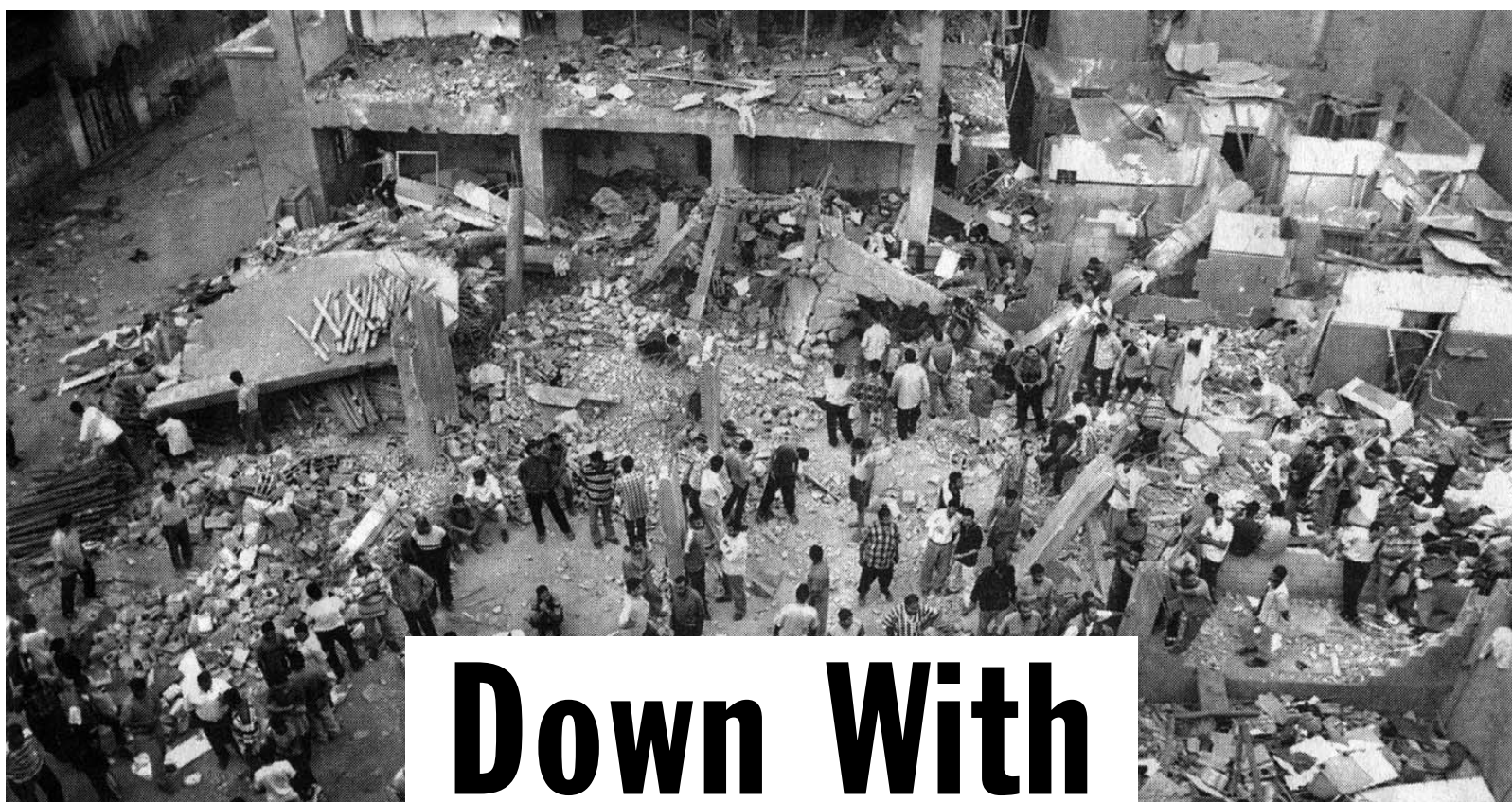
The horrors to which the Palestinians have been subjected have provoked outrage and protest around the world. But many of these protests have been aimed at appeals to one or another imperialist agency to intervene in defense of the Palestinians. We warn that any imperialist military intervention would only aid in *quelling* the Palestinian national struggle, as the United Nations did in overseeing the creation of the Zionist state in 1948 and in disarming Palestinian fighters in Lebanon in 1982, leading to Sharon’s massacre of over 2,000 Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps. As for the U.S., it is already intervening in the region, not only in support of Israel but in the ongoing bombing of Iraq. We fight rather to mobilize the working people in this country and internationally in concrete acts of class-struggle solidarity with the besieged Palestinians. *Down with the U.S./Israel axis of terror! Down with U.S. aid to Israel!*

There can be no genuine self-determination for the Palestinian Arab people—carved up between Israel, the Occupied Territories, Jordan and Lebanon—short of thoroughgoing socialist revolutions that sweep away the capitalist order throughout the Near East. Nor is self-determination conceivable without the right of Palestinians to return to the lands inside Israel from which they were expelled in decades past. But the Hebrew-speaking nation also has the right to exist. The contending national claims of these two peoples can never be equitably sorted out under capitalism, which is based on national aggrandizement.

It is vitally necessary to build revolutionary workers parties that will fight to break Hebrew workers from the stranglehold of intense chauvinism and Arab workers from the nationalism and Islamic reaction that bind them to their rulers. Only under the red banner of proletarian internationalism can all the peoples of the region achieve national and social justice within a socialist federation of the Near East.■

WORKERS VANGUARD

Defend the Palestinians!



AFP

Down With Bloody Zionist Occupation!

AUGUST 5—Just before midnight on July 22, an American-supplied F-16 fighter jet dropped a one-ton bomb on a densely populated neighborhood in Gaza City. Supposedly aimed at killing one man, the alleged founder of the military wing of Hamas, the terror bombing killed 14 other Palestinians, including nine children, who were asleep in their homes. Right-wing prime minister Ariel Sharon gloated that this was “one of our major successes,” while “Labor” foreign minister Shimon Peres responded to international criticism by conceding that “a smaller bomb could have been more appropriate.” In other words, the extent of death and devastation—an entire block of apartment buildings reduced to rubble, scores of people cramming hospital wards, dead babies dug out from the heaps of debris—was too much for these butchers to conceal.

This atrocity was a bloody provocation designed not to prevent terror attacks by the Islamic fundamentalists of Hamas, as Israeli government spokesmen claimed, but to *guarantee* more of them. On July 31, Hamas set off a bomb at lunch time in the cafeteria of Jerusalem’s Hebrew University, killing seven people, mostly students. This was followed in rapid succession by a murderous Israeli crack-down in Nablus—one of seven West Bank cities reoccupied last month—more army killings in Gaza and further Palestinian terrorist attacks. Yesterday, Hamas claimed credit for the bombing of a bus which left at least nine people dead and more than 40 injured. Meanwhile, the Zionist rulers are carrying out the Nazi policy of “collective punishment” with a vengeance, blowing up homes or deporting families of suspected terrorists and subjecting the whole Palestinian population to a total lockdown.

Seizing on the Hebrew University attack, whose victims included five Americans, U.S. president Bush issued a blank check for the next round of brutal Zionist attacks, intoning that “Israel must defend herself.” But in the face of an international clamor, even Bush felt

Fifteen Palestinians were killed, 160 were wounded and an entire Gaza City neighborhood was destroyed in July 22 Israeli attack by U.S.-supplied F-16 jet.

U.S. Hands Off Iraq!

compelled to distance himself from the “heavy-handed” Gaza bombing. Above all, the White House is concerned that any serious escalation by Sharon could pose an obstacle to its one overriding obsession in the Near East: the crushing of the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein. Over the past month, the Bush administration has sharply ratcheted up talk of an invasion. A number of possible war plans are being mooted, including a massive ground invasion involving a quarter-million troops and an “outside-inside” scheme combining heavy air strikes with a deployment of 50,000 troops to seize Baghdad and assassinate Hussein.

The invasion threat has generated considerable unease among the West Euro-

pean powers, among Arab leaders like Jordan’s King Abdullah—who warned Bush that an invasion could throw the whole region into turmoil—and even among elements in the Pentagon. Most pusillanimous have been the Democrats, who whimper only that Bush should first present his case for an invasion in Congress. What case? Even Hitler felt the need to fabricate a provocation to justify his invasion of Poland in 1939. But the American imperialist rulers arrogantly declare that they need no justification to overthrow any government or “pre-emptively” invade any country they can get away with attacking. For all the blather about “weapons of mass destruction,” Bush administration spokesmen

have rejected out of hand Iraq’s offer to reinstitute the United Nations “arms inspection” regime.

An American invasion of Iraq would massively deepen the destruction carried out by the U.S. in the 1991 Gulf War, and by the bombing campaign which continues to this day, further devastating the infrastructure of what was once one of the most advanced Arab countries. In recent months, Washington has been putting a squeeze on the “oil for food” program which provides a minimal lifeline for a population besieged by the continuing UN starvation blockade. Curtailing oil sales ensures that there will be even more victims than the one and a half million men, women and children who have already died from malnutrition and lack of medicines. ***Down with the imperialist embargo! U.S. hands off Iraq! All U.S./ UN troops out of the Near East! Israel out of the Occupied Territories! Defend the Palestinians!***

Zionist Cycle of Terror

The current plight of the Palestinian people is the end-product of the 1993 “peace” accords setting up an “autonomous” Palestinian Authority that is now effectively buried under Israeli tank treads. A recent World Bank study conveys some sense of the nightmarish conditions in the Occupied Territories. The lack of any real Israeli investment since the territories were seized in 1967 meant that Palestinians relied overwhelmingly on menial, low-wage jobs in Israel. But especially since 1993, those jobs were increasingly sealed off through ever more frequent “security” closures and the building of a concrete-and-barbed-wire wall around Gaza. From 1992 to 1998, the total number of Palestinian workers employed in Israel declined by half—and even more in the case of Gaza residents—reducing per capita income to 1967 levels. Today, the unemployment rate has surpassed 50 percent, half of all children suffer from malnutrition and two-thirds of Palestinians live below the poverty level

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**Hebron, July 28:
Fascistic Zionist settlers
riot against Palestinians,
killing 14-year-old girl.
In Hebron, 120,000
Palestinians are placed
under 24-hour curfew
while 500 settlers roam
the streets protected
by thousands of
Israeli troops.**



Reuters