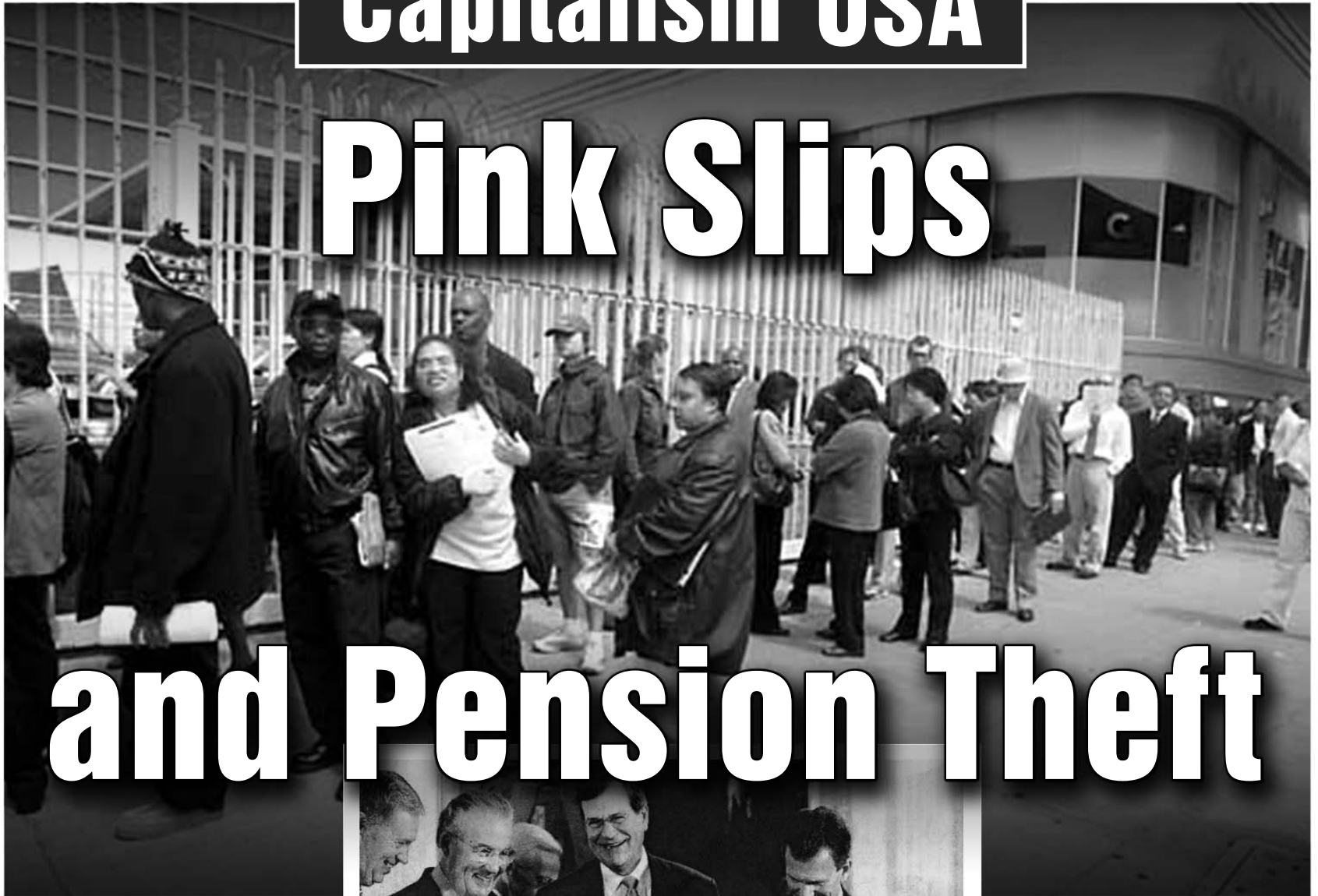


Capitalism USA

Pink Slips

and Pension Theft

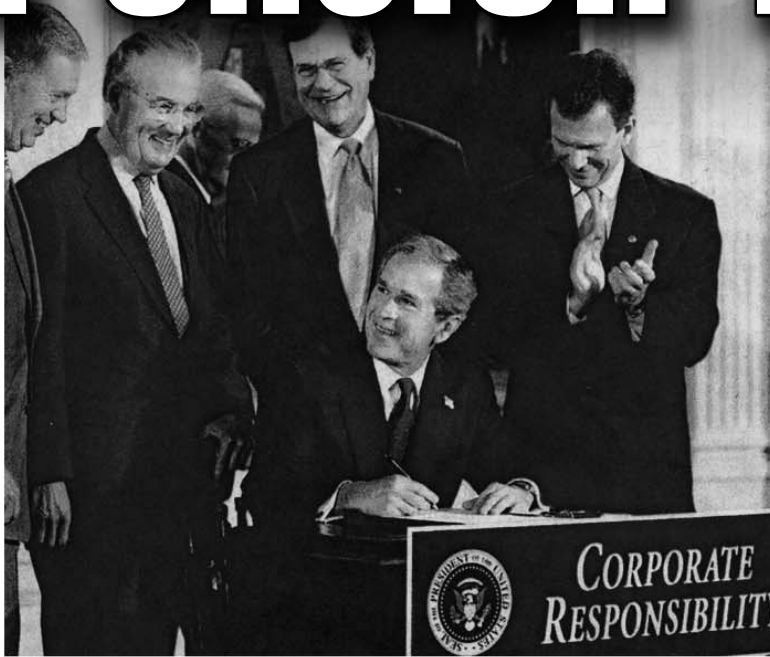


O'Hara/SF Chronicle

Lining up for their photo-ops, one bourgeois politician after another sought to commemorate the 9/11 anniversary by pushing flag-waving chauvinism and promoting "united we stand" patriotism. But behind all the unity talk lie the real *class* divisions that separate the working people in this country from their exploiters. The Bush administration and the U.S. imperialist ruling class seized on the September 11 attacks to launch an endless "war on terror" to further U.S. imperialism's reach over the globe. First in the cross-hairs was already devastated Afghanistan. Now, having failed to capture the leadership of Al Qaeda, the Bush team is setting its sights on Iraq as a target of opportunity, vowing to enact a "regime change" which will doubtless cause further devastation to the Iraqi people, who have lost over a million and a half of their countrymen through the United Nations-imposed sanctions.

At home, the U.S. rulers are waging war on immigrants and minorities, on civil rights and labor rights. Though carried out in the name of "fighting terrorism," the war on the domestic front is driven by the capitalists' need to squeeze ever more profit from the labor power of the working class, especially as the economy continues its downward turn. If the U.S. rulers have their way, the horror of the World Trade Center attack, the loss of thousands of lives, will soon be exceeded by the slower but more exacting terror of escalating economic privation, death by attrition and futures without hope.

With the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92, the U.S. bourgeoisie declared the advent of a "new world order" where communism



AP

George W. Bush, flanked by Republican Senator Trent Lott and Democratic Senator Tom Daschle, signs bill to bail out corporations and CEOs, while mass layoffs swell unemployment lines.

was dead and the class struggle a relic. The economic boom of the 1990s—which was based on an increase in the rate of exploitation of the working class through the imposition of multi-tier wage schemes and massive speedup, a proliferation of non-union runaway shops, the slashing of medical, pension and other benefits—was declared proof positive of a "new economy" of unprecedented and permanent growth, opening up a new "golden age" of capitalist expansion and prosperity. During that period, the U.S.—with a weakened labor movement, the dismantling of social welfare programs and a high-flying stock market—was held up as a model to be emulated by the rest of the world. In short, the boom-bust business cycle, which has been inherent in capitalism from its inception, was declared to be done away with.

In reality, the global economic downturn exposes and explodes the mystifications surrounding "globalization." It underlines the Marxist understanding that inherent in the capitalist system is the tendency toward periodic economic crises which, in the words of the 1848 *Communist Manifesto* by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "put the existence of the entire bourgeois society on trial." The

fundamental laws of capitalism are being borne out once again.

The deepening global economic crisis is certain to exacerbate existing tensions between the U.S. and its imperialist rivals in West Europe and Japan. Already, this has manifested itself in the ongoing "debate" over invading Iraq, with everyone, with the exception of Tony Blair's Britain, opposing an American invasion, for now. Social Democratic German chancellor Gerhard Schröder has vowed that Germany will not foot the bill for any "adventure" in Iraq. During the 1991 Gulf War, Germany and the

other U.S. allies paid over 80 percent of the cost, and there is deep concern among U.S. rulers that an invasion of Iraq largely financed by the U.S. could further worsen the American economy. And all are concerned about the potential for substantial increases in the price of oil, which would have a heavy impact on working people around the world.

War, poverty, economic crisis are all endemic to the capitalist system, which is based on the private ownership of the means of production—the factories, electrical power plants and grids, airlines, oil fields, mines, etc. It is a system where production is based on profits for a few wealthy capitalists, while the rest of the population is faced with increasing assaults on living standards or utter poverty. But within its mechanisms, capitalism also creates its own gravedigger: the working class, whose historic role is to smash the irrational capitalist system and replace it with a planned economy where production is based on the human needs of all, rather than profits for the few. The only answer to the anarchy and brutality of the capitalist system lies in the struggle for socialist revolutions internationally to sweep away the bourgeois ruling classes and their capitalist states and forge in their place

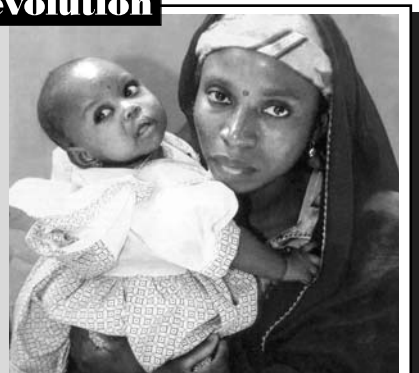
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Women and Revolution

**Nigeria: Woman
Sentenced to
Death by Stoning**

Save Amina Lawal!

See Page 5





Fighters Against Imperialism and Racism

Free the Ohio 7!

We print below a 7 September letter to Federal Bureau of Prisons director Kathleen Hawk protesting the medical torture of class-war prisoner Richard Williams by Lompoc, California prison officials. Williams—along with Jaan Lamaan, Raymond Luc Levasseur and Thomas Manning—was part of the leftist Ohio 7, who were convicted for their roles in a radical organization that took credit for bank “expropriations” and bombings in the late 1970s and early ’80s against symbols of U.S. imperialism, such as military and corporate offices. They have spent nearly two decades in prison. As Marxists, we reject the strategy of individual terror but defend those like the Ohio 7 who com-

mitted no crime from the standpoint of the working class. Our principled defense of the Ohio 7, who should not have spent a single day in prison, stands in contrast to the stance of the “respectable” reformist left, which spurned them when the full brunt of government repression came down upon them.

* * *

The Partisan Defense Committee vehemently protests the severe repression being meted out to political prisoner Richard Williams, #10376-016. Since September 11, 2001, Mr. Williams has spent ten of the ensuing twelve months in brutal conditions of solitary confinement where he has been cut off from family

and friends, not allowed access to literature and denied adequate medical care. After enduring five months in brutally cold conditions in solitary lockdown, Mr. Williams was sent back to the general prison population in Lompoc, California on February 11. Within days he suffered a heart attack during which he was “treated” by being shackled to his hospital bed and had guns trained on him, intimidating his doctors and nurses. Yet again on April 30 Richard Williams was sent back into the grotesque conditions of isolation where he languishes still.

It is crystal clear that Richard Williams is being subjected to this unrelenting cruelty because of his political beliefs. Mr. Williams was a leftist activist arrested and convicted in the mid ’80s as a member of the radical Ohio 7. Having spectacularly failed in 1989 in re-convicting Mr. Williams, along with fellow anti-

imperialists Ray and Pat Levasseur, on phony “seditious conspiracy” charges, the Federal government seems intent on destroying this courageous man. The treatment of Mr. Williams is part of an ongoing attack on civil liberties ratcheted up since last September 11—a qualitative diminution of the rights of all, especially workers and the oppressed.

The Partisan Defense Committee demands that Mr. Williams be immediately taken out of solitary confinement. We demand he be given prompt and adequate medical treatment for his ongoing heart condition. We demand he have access to any literature he desires and restrictions against visitors and communications with family and friends be lifted. In the eyes of the working class Richard Williams has committed no crime. We demand you stop brutalizing this political prisoner.

Protest Firing of Palestinian Professor!

The following protest letter was sent to the president of the University of South Florida on August 31.

The Partisan Defense Committee strongly protests your decision, in concert with the University of South Florida Trustees, to fire tenured computer science professor Sami Al-Arian. Dr. Al-Arian is the victim of a vile media-abetted campaign of threats and vilification ranging from the reactionary Fox News commentator Bill O’Reilly to the contemptible radio schlock-jock Bubba the Love Sponge.

Sami Al-Arian is targeted merely because he is an Islamic scholar and defender of the Palestinian people from marauding Zionist terror. We join with countless others, including the American Association of University Professors, in condemning your despicable efforts to deny this man his First Amendment rights and, indeed, his livelihood.

Your earlier attempt to justify the firing of Sami Al-Arian was based on spurious “campus security” concerns. Now you try to present to the Hillsborough Circuit Court in Florida so-called new evidence that Dr. Al-Arian “is using academic freedom as a shield to cover improper activities.” This follows years of invasive scrutiny of Dr. Al-Arian’s activ-

ities by various bourgeois state authorities who have found no grounds for any criminal action. From the onset this has been a political prosecution of a man for his views and advocacy on behalf of the besieged Palestinians.



Sami Al-Arian

Your campaign against Dr. Al-Arian in league with state and federal authorities is part of a grotesque bipartisan witch-hunt particularly targeting immigrants, Muslims and Arab Americans. It has already led to the deportation of Dr. Al-Arian’s brother-in-law and the detention of hundreds of others in the dungeons of America. Stop the persecution of Sami Al-Arian!

Australia: Drop Charges Against All Woomera Detainees and Protesters!

We reprint below an August 20 protest letter from the Partisan Defence Committee in Australia to the Australian Attorney General’s office.

The 18 July seizure and reimprisonment of Afghan refugees, 12-year-old Montazar Bakhtiyari and 13-year-old Almadar Bakhtiyari, was an act of sheer racist brutality. On 28 June these two courageous youth escaped for the second time from the hell-hole Woomera detention camp where they were incarcerated with their mother Roqiah and younger sisters Nagina, Samina and Amina, aged ten, eight and four years respectively. The boys escaped along with 33 other mainly Afghan refugees at the time of a desperate 16-day hunger strike by most of the Woomera detainees. Earlier the hideous conditions at Woomera, including detention guards beating children and throwing them against razor wire fences, drove the Bakhtiyari family to such desperation that Roqiah and Almadar sewed their lips together and the boys attempted to slash their own wrists.

Montazar and Almadar had sought asylum in the British consulate in Melbourne. The foreign secretary of Britain’s Labour government, Jack Straw, personally intervened to ensure they were thrown back into the clutches of the Australian authorities. This highlights that capitalist governments of all stripes around the world are conducting a racist war on immigrants, as the spearhead of their attacks against the working class as a whole.

The day after their seizure by Australian Federal Police, the recaptured Bakhtiyari brothers were flown out of Melbourne back to Woomera just an hour before their distraught father, who lives in Sydney on a temporary visa, arrived to see them. While federal Liberal/National coalition and state Labor governments alike shove “family values” down the throats of the population, Roqiah and her children are forcibly separated from their husband and father. Now the government is vindictively threatening to revoke

continued on page 15



TROTSKY

The October Revolution and Women’s Emancipation

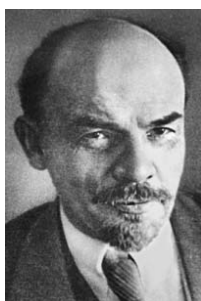
In smashing capitalist rule, the 1917 October Revolution marked a giant stride toward the liberation of women in backward Russia. Though mired in economic backwardness and poverty, the young Soviet workers state sought to take the first steps in removing the material foundations of women’s oppression, which is rooted in the institution of the family. Although the Stalinist degeneration beginning in 1923-24 eventually undid

many of the Bolsheviks’ measures, the establishment of a planned, collectivized economy opened the road to women’s emancipation in the USSR, most dramatically the Muslim East. Writing in 1926, historic Marxist leader Clara Zetkin recounted the moving comments of a young woman made at a Muslim Women’s Club in Tiflis, Georgia, which we present below.

One of the speakers burst out: “How was our life before the revolution? Our fathers sold us like young lambs when we were hardly ten or twelve years old—sometimes even younger. Our husbands demanded our affection and love, even when they seemed to us revolting. When our husbands were in the mood for it, they beat us with clubs or whips. We had to serve them day and night like slaves. When they grew tired of us, they told us to go to hell. They rented us out as mistresses to their friends. They starved us when it suited their fancy. They took away our dearest daughters who were the joy of our eyes and the aid for our weak arms. They sold them just as they had bought us. No mullah came to our aid when we were in need. Where could we have found a judge who would have given us legal aid?

“But now, my dear sisters, how everything has changed! The revolution arrived like a mighty thunderstorm. It has smashed injustice and slavery. It has brought justice and freedom to the poor and oppressed. Our father can no longer take us when we are young and force us upon the bed of a strange husband. We are able to select our husband and he must never again become our master; rather he shall be our friend and comrade. We want to work and to fight next to him and help to construct a new society. A new life must begin for everybody. The Soviets have written a new law. It states that we are human beings just like men are and that we are free and have the same rights as they do. We, too, can select the people, both men and women, that we would like to be sent to the Soviets. And we, ourselves, can work in them. When we have grievances toward our husband, a neighbor or a boss, we take them to the People’s Court. It will side with us if we are in the right. Nobody asks us what prophet we follow: Mohammed, Moses or Christ. The Soviets brought us salvation. Eternal gratitude to them!”

—Clara Zetkin, “In the Muslim Women’s Club” (1926)



LENIN

WORKERS VANGUARD

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Mass Jailing of Blacks in Tulia

“War on Drugs” Texas Style

On 23 July 1999, 46 men and women were rounded up in early-morning raids in Tulia, a windswept West Texas town of 5,000 halfway between Lubbock and Amarillo. All but six of those dragged from their homes to the county courthouse, often half-dressed and wondering what they were being targeted for, were black. Framed up on phony drug charges by a racist, corrupt narcotics agent, 42 of those arrested were thrown into prison by overwhelmingly white juries for mammoth jail terms. Tulia epitomizes what the rulers’ racist “war on drugs” can mean in the rural South.

The case has recently gained national coverage through the efforts of *New York Times* columnist Bob Herbert, who has catalogued the egregious manufacturing of evidence, racist targeting of black people and harsh sentencing in recent columns. Herbert has also exposed how this “monstrous, racially motivated miscarriage of justice” wrought havoc in Tulia’s small black community and how those who organized this breathtaking series of frame-ups were lauded for their efforts by the Texas state government, then run by George W. Bush.

The now-defunct local newspaper, the *Tulia Sentinel*, crowed, “Tulia’s Streets Cleared of Garbage” after the raids and praised the cops for sweeping up Tulia’s “scumbags.” Reverend William Guenther, the jury foreman in one of the first trials, which handed down a 25-year sentence, proclaimed, “The whole idea behind the sentence was to send a message to drug dealers: We don’t want you in this community.” The defendants, overwhelmingly poor, had to rely on underpaid and overworked public defenders in the face of racist juries and a D.A. out for blood. The charges and arrests, though, had nothing to do with drugs and everything to do with terrorizing the town’s black population.

Tulia’s black community of 350 people was devastated as over 10 percent of the black populace and half the adult black men were swept into prison. House after house stands empty, and virtually every black family in town has been affected as friends and family members were caught up in the dragnet. Those whites who were arrested either had close connections to Tulia’s black population or lived in the ramshackle part of town, still often called “N----rtown” by racist whites.

The narcotics agent almost single-handedly responsible for the arrests, Tom Coleman, is a real piece of work. Coleman is a stone racist noted for his frequent use of racial epithets against black people. Even Coleman’s former boss, Sheriff Ken Burke of nearby Cochran County, informed the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement that “Mr. Coleman should not be in law enforcement if he’s

going to do people the way he did this town” (London *Independent*, 20 August). In the midst of Coleman’s “investigation,” Cochran County brought him up on misdemeanor charges of theft and abuse of his position. Swisher County sheriff Larry Stewart, Coleman’s boss in Tulia, allowed Coleman to put his “investigation” on hold while he resolved the charges.

Coleman’s “investigation,” had it not been so devastating, would be almost

bars despite overwhelming evidence of their innocence.

And who were these “drug dealers”? Overwhelmingly, they were poor, local black people, most of whom had no criminal records or anything to do with the drug trade. Police found no traces of illicit drugs in the houses of those arrested, no weapons and no money. There were no fingerprints on the drugs the cops claim to have “seized.” Joe Moore, a 57-year-old black pig farmer,

mob might have been the instrumentality, as when a deputized white mob burned the black Greenwood section of Tulsa to the ground in 1921. Now all you need is a zealous D.A. and a creative narc. “It was a mass lynching that day,” Roy Credico of the William Moses Kunstler Fund for Racial Justice asserts. “It’s like being accused of raping someone in Indiana in the 1930s. You didn’t do it, but it doesn’t matter because a bunch of Klansmen on the jury are going to string you up anyway.”

Such blatant disregard for the rights of the accused is not unique to Tulia. A former narcotics agent in Chambers County, Texas summed up a typical drug bust as follows:

“It’s probably better known as a free-for-all. You get a bunch of warrants, search and arrest, get ’em all ready to go, get 30 or 40 officers from different jurisdictions, anybody who wants to come along can play. During the course of this, the wrong doors get kicked.... A whole lot of illegal searches and seizures go on.”

— *Texas Observer*,
26 October 2001

In the United States, where the special oppression of black people is integral to capitalist class rule and to the exploitation of the entire working class, drug laws are used to repress and herd a generation of black youth into jail. Tulia grotesquely reveals the racist injustice in which drugs are used as a *pretext* for waging war against the black population as a whole. We Marxists call for the decriminalization of drugs. Those addicted to drugs should have free access to quality medical care and counseling.

Herbert favorably quotes New York Democratic Senator Charles Schumer as saying that Tulia looks like “racial profiling, arresting and prosecuting with trumped-up evidence.” Yet Schumer has long supported both the racist death penalty—a direct legacy of chattel slavery in the U.S.—and the very “war on drugs” that spawns such outrages as Tulia. The Democrats are just as responsible for the racist assault on black people under the auspices of the “war on drugs” as the Republicans. Indeed, it was Democratic president Bill Clinton who in 1996 ordered the Department of Housing and Urban Development to strictly enforce the “one strike you’re out law” in public housing, which mandated the eviction of any public housing tenant if that person—or even a guest of the tenant—is caught using drugs anywhere. And black Democrats like Jesse Jackson played a prominent role in promoting the racist rulers’ anti-drug crackdown in the ghettos.

The “war on drugs” is one expression of an overall ratcheting-up of repression against working people and the oppressed. But black people, who form a significant portion of the American working class, are not helpless in the face of this onslaught. The working class, the only class with the social power and objective interest to take down the capitalist system, can and indeed must take up the fight against the racist “war on drugs” as part of a fight for the rights of all the oppressed. A political struggle against both the Democrats and their hangers-on in the trade-union bureaucracy is necessary to bring the social power of the working class to bear. Key to this struggle is forging a revolutionary workers party that will fight for an egalitarian socialist future, from the South Bronx to the southern plains. ■



Amarillo Globe-News



Bob Ramsey

Demonstration at Austin state capitol (above) and candlelight vigil in Tulia, Texas to protest the racist roundup.

comical. He wrote down “reports” of “drug deals” on his body, threw away many of his records and built his case on uncorroborated, unsubstantiated testimony. Everyone who knew Coleman well knew that he was a liar and a crook, but the word of a white cop was sufficient to railroad the Tulia defendants into prison.

In spite of polygraph tests corroborating the innocence of those arrested and the obvious unreliability of Coleman as a witness, only four cases were thrown out, generally over egregious misidentification by Coleman, whose physical descriptions of several defendants were wildly inaccurate. In most cases, though, a combination of inadequate legal representation and relentless prosecution led to sentences breathtaking in their severity. “What happened in the courtroom,” says Freddie Brookins Sr. of Tulia’s NAACP chapter, which has been fighting the convictions, “was really a kangaroo court. They run ’em through like cattle and put a number on ’em. They just stuck ’em all in prison.” For his role in this monstrous frame-up, Coleman was named the Texas “Lawman of the Year”! Fifteen of those arrested remain behind

currently serving a **99-year sentence**, was identified as the “kingpin” of the ostensible cocaine ring despite his obvious poverty and even though the charges against him involved only 3.5 grams of powder cocaine. Kizzie White, a 24-year-old mother of two with no criminal record, got 25 years, while her husband, a white man named William “Cash” Love, received a sentence of **434 years** in prison.

Liberal *Times* columnist Herbert has placed his hopes in a federal investigation. He states that “federal investigators who are both honest and diligent will find plenty of evidence of official wrongdoing waiting for them in Tulia” (*New York Times*, 22 August). While Tulia may be an extreme example of the degree to which the war on drugs is aimed at black people, it is not an aberration or an isolated miscarriage of justice. The war on drugs is a **racist war against black people!** In many inner-city ghettos, one in three black men is entangled in the criminal “justice” system, often due to minor drug charges like those the Tulia defendants faced. Over half of the two million people in America’s prisons, most of whom are black and minority, are there on the basis of drug-related convictions.

West Texas is not New York, Philadelphia or Chicago, however. Tulia’s black population is isolated in the arid plains of a remote region of a Southern state justifiably infamous for its heavy-handed approach to “justice.” While the “war on drugs” is used throughout the U.S. to terrorize black people and other minorities, in the rural South it has been used to decimate entire communities, and that’s exactly what happened in Tulia. The authorities manufactured a drug ring out of whole cloth and then used it, in effect, to target the entirety of the town’s black population. Perhaps 80 years ago a racist

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Batasuna Party Banned in Spain

Down With Repression of Basque Nationalists!

The following was written by our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyste de France, section of the International Communist League.

PARIS, September 16—The Spanish government has seized on the post-September 11 “war on terrorism” to attempt to finish off the Basque nationalists. On August 26, Spanish judge Baltasar Garzón ordered a three-year suspension of Batasuna, an electoral political party which gets over 10 percent of the votes in the Spanish Basque country, where it has offices as well as social clubs/pubs and elected officials in most cities. The same day the Spanish parliament overwhelmingly passed a motion to require that the Supreme Court ban Batasuna; with the recent “anti-terrorist” legislation passed in Spain, this means a complete and definitive illegalization of Batasuna, the first ban of a political organization since the end of the Franco dictatorship in 1975 and a qualitative step toward banning any organization advocating Basque independence.

The same night the local police, the hated *ertzaintza*, started raiding and closing Batasuna’s public offices in dozens of Basque cities. On orders from Garzón (who has become a darling of the fake left with his inquiries into former Chilean dictator Pinochet), the state had already seized Batasuna’s bank accounts, trying to squeeze 24 million euros from it. This is allegedly to pay for damage caused in street fighting during police attacks against youth in the Basque country. There have been protests on both sides of the Spanish/French border against the ban. On September 7 and 8 thousands of people defied the Spanish ban on pro-Batasuna demonstrations, taking to the streets in Bilbao and San Sebastián. And two days ago, 50,000 protested in Bilbao despite the repression. It is the urgent task of the proletariat, particularly in Spain and France, to mobilize against this sinister ban, which not only targets radical Basque nationalists but also sets the stage for repression of any political dissent by workers or youth. **Down with the ban on Batasuna! Freedom now for the hundreds of Basque nationalists, some of whom have been in prison for many years in Spain and France!**

The obstacle to such a mobilization lies with the social-democratic labor traitors: in Spain, the Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) has enthusiastically voted for the ban, while the ex-Stalinists from Izquierda Unida (United Left) abstained.



San Sebastián: Rally protests ban of Basque nationalist Batasuna party and demands release of Basque political prisoners, September 1.

In France, the previous government led by the Socialist Party (PS) and Communist Party (PCF) routinely carried out arrests and deportations of Basque nationalists to Spain. For example, on 15 September 2000 a combined operation of the French and Spanish police on French soil ended up in the arrest of Ignacio Gracia Arregui, an alleged leader of the Basque separatist ETA (see “Free Imprisoned Basque Nationalists!” WV No. 744, 20 October 2000). In the ’80s, under Socialist president Mitterrand, the French police collaborated with the PSOE government and its death squads of the Grupos Antiterroristas de Liberación (GAL), which even operated in France. Most recently, two ETA leaders, Juan Antonio Olarra Guribi and Ainhoa Mugica, were arrested today near Bordeaux in France in a joint operation by French and Spanish police. We have steadfastly denounced these arrests, murders and deportations as well as the multiple attacks in France against minority languages. As proletarian internationalists, we defend the right of self-determination of the Basque people, south and north of the Pyrenees (and if the sacred borders of the “united and indivisible French republic” should be altered, so be it!).

The immediate pretext for the massive increase of state repression against Basque nationalists in Spain was a bomb attack on August 4 in Santa Paola, near Alicante, against Guardia Civil (military police) barracks, where two people were killed, including a 4-year-old girl. The government and bourgeois media promptly blamed the ETA for this attack.

When Batasuna refused to clearly condemn the attack, the government moved to ban the party. The ETA has often targeted cops, judges, capitalists or bourgeois ideologues. While defending the ETA against the current wave of state repression, Marxists oppose the desperate petty-bourgeois strategy of individual terrorism as an obstacle to proletarian, internationalist class struggle: the elimination of individual oppressors does not address the fundamental issue of getting rid of the capitalist system itself, which requires collective struggle by the working masses. Moreover, when a military target is hit, other people can get killed too, as in Santa Paola. The awful death of the little girl was a godsend for the Spanish state to whip up “national unity,” including among workers, behind anti-Basque Spanish chauvinism.

The Spanish state uses anti-Basque chauvinism as well as anti-immigrant racism to divide and weaken the work-

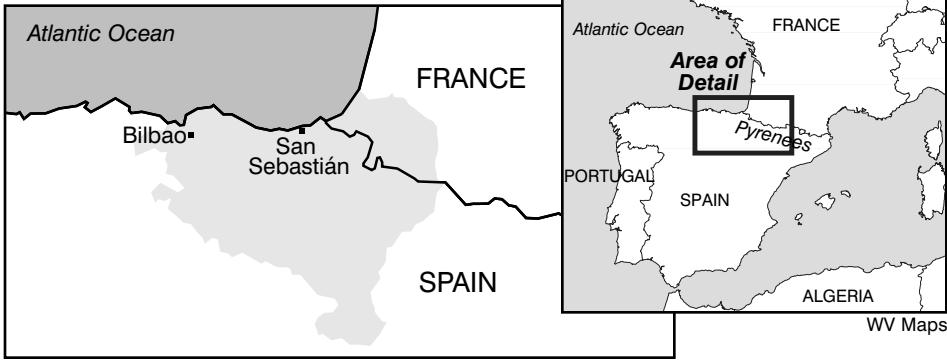
ing class. Two years ago, the government launched the El Ejido pogroms against Moroccan agricultural workers. In recent years, hundreds of Maghrebins (North Africans) have drowned trying to cross the Straits of Gibraltar into Fortress Europe. Now the government is trying to set Maghrebin immigrants against East European immigrants. As we declared in our recent ICL statement (see WV No. 784, 12 July): “Capitalist Europe’s war on immigrants is a war on all workers—Workers of the world, unite! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! Stop the deportations!”

Since the entirely criminal World Trade Center attack a year ago the “war against terrorism” has been a code word all over the world, not only for a far greater U.S.-led terrorist slaughter in Afghanistan, but also for a drastic escalation of police terror at home, which particularly targets immigrants. In France, we have opposed the Vigipirate police campaign from the moment the former PS/PCF government reinstated it. On August 25, on the very eve of the ban on Batasuna, the new right-wing government deported to Italy Paolo Persichetti, a former Italian radical from the UCC (Union of Fighting Communists). Up to 150 Italian leftists who took refuge in France now fear their deportation to Italy and its laws against alleged terrorists. **Freedom for Persichetti! No deportations!**

The Chirac government intends to quickly incorporate into French legislation the new, draconian European Union measures which potentially criminalize any political activity. According to these guidelines, strikers seizing transit installations or cutting the supply of electricity could be charged with “terrorism,” as well as anyone “encouraging or supporting a terrorist group.” The Spanish government wants to add Batasuna to the European list of terrorist organizations, which would automatically mean its banning in France, causing unease to the French government which fears the increasing spillover of agitation over the Basque question to France.

The Basque people’s right to self-determination, i.e., the right to secede, is a key issue in both Spain and France. We demand: **Down with the ban on Batasuna! Defend the right of independence of the Basque people, south and north! For Trotskyist parties in Spain and France, sections of a reformed Fourth International! ■**

Basque region spans border between Spain and France. ICL defends right of self-determination for the Basque people.



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Nigeria: Woman Sentenced to Death by Stoning

On August 19, an Islamic high court in Nigeria's northern Katsina state rejected an appeal by Amina Lawal, a 30-year-old single mother, and upheld her sentence of death by stoning for having sex outside marriage. Lawal was first sentenced in March by a lower Islamic court. She is scheduled to be executed in January 2004, as soon as she finishes breast-feeding her baby. *The workers movement throughout the world must mobilize in protest action to stop this hideous execution!*

Amina Lawal was not the first woman to incur the wrath of Islamic fundamentalists in Nigeria. Safiya Hussaini, a divorced mother, was sentenced to die by stoning last year. An appeals court overturned her sentence this past March. A third woman's case is on hold until she is healthy enough to appear in court.

Since *sharia*, the Islamic set of social and penal codes, was introduced in a dozen of the predominantly Muslim northern states of Nigeria two years ago, women have been forced to wear the veil and mixed schools have been turned into single-sex establishments, if girls are schooled at all. A teenage girl was given 100 lashes for having premarital sex. Women are banned from riding in the same buses or taxis as men. The sale of alcohol is banned and men caught drinking have been caned in public. A vigilante force was established to enforce the new codes.

The implementation of *sharia* in the northern states is a lethal addition to an already worsening situation for women in Nigeria. Abortion is illegal in the country. The bride price is prevalent in both Christian and Muslim communities. The horrific and dangerous practice of female genital mutilation, performed on young girls to "curb their sexuality" and ensure chastity, is rampant across ethnic and religious groups, with millions of Nigerian women subjected to this barbarism. Nigeria is one of the few sub-Saharan countries that have no laws prohibiting the practice.

Largely illiterate, the chattel of their fathers and husbands, women in Nigeria are forced into marriages, overworked, malnourished and, in times of the ethnic bloodlettings that constantly plague the country, subjected to rape and killing. Polygamy, based on the subordination of women, is widespread. With little control over their reproductive lives, women are under enormous social and economic pressures: infertility is a stigma and male children are the only potential support in old age. The exponential spread of AIDS in the country, with over four million people infected with the HIV virus, and the attendant ostracism and stigmatization are used to reinforce backward anti-woman ideologies. Because it is a sexually transmitted disease, AIDS is used to intensify the repressive taboos, guilt and shame over sex that subjugate women.

On September 9, the mayor of Rome, Italy conferred "honorary citizenship" on Safiya Hussaini, a Nigerian woman whose death sentence was reversed earlier this year. As Oscar Wilde put it, "Hypocrisy is the homage vice pays to virtue." Indeed, barbaric practices oppressive to women are not confined to Nigeria or the Islamic world. In all societies based on private property, various forms of oppression have been meted out by all religions to buttress women's subjugation. In medieval Europe, women were burned at the stake for purported witch-

craft and forced to wear the chastity belt. The "adulteresses" of 17th-century New England were forced to patch the scarlet letter to their breasts. Foot binding was prevalent in pre-revolutionary China. In Ireland, unmarried pregnant women were declared mad and forced to slave in convents for decades. To this day, *suttee* (widow-burning) is rampant in India.

Even the most basic needs of the vast mass of women in Nigeria—an end to seclusion and the veil; an end to forced marriages, polygamy and the bride price; freedom from poverty and legal subjugation; the right to free quality education and decent health care, including the right to abortion and contraceptives—demand an attack on the foundations of

events leading up to the Biafra war in the late 1960s. At that time, following massacres of the Ibo in the north, that ethnic group tried to secede from the rest of the country. The war that followed, with close to two million killed, was one of the most brutal conflicts in Africa's post-independence history.

President Olusegun Obasanjo, a military ruler during the '70s, was brought back to power in 1999 with the backing of the military and the support of the northern elites. He openly supported the introduction of *sharia* in the north, saying that "sharia is not a new thing and it's not a thing to be afraid of...the federal government would not dispute the rights of states to use it" (London *Guardian*, 20 August).

An outcry of protests filled the imperialist press following the sentencing of Amina Lawal. The European Union, the U.S. State Department and the Canadian government all joined in condemning the "gross violation of human rights." Nothing could be more cynical coming from the imperialist powers, who in their own countries promote attacks on women's rights, most graphically shown by the attacks on abortion rights and the axing of welfare in the U.S. On September 9, Regina Norman Danson, a Ghanaian woman seeking asylum in the U.S. to escape genital mutilation in her country, was arrested and now faces loss of her passport and deportation on the bogus claim that she fabricated her story.

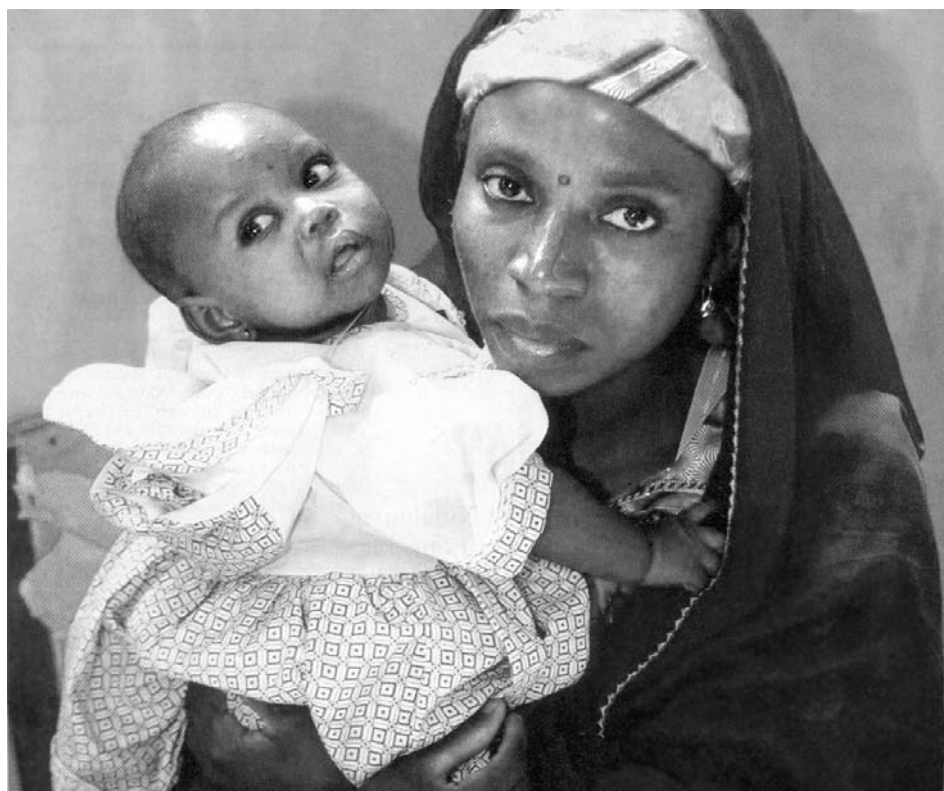
The imperialists have never had the least concern for women in the countries they sought to dominate and exploit. For centuries, these powers enslaved black Africans and plundered the continent. Most recently, it was these powers that "liberated" Kabul in Afghanistan, installing the regime of the Northern Alliance cutthroats, which has kept all the barbaric *sharia* laws of the Taliban, only slightly "modified." A leading Afghan judge declared that those convicted of "adultery" would still be stoned to death...but with smaller stones.

For Permanent Revolution!

Nigeria, with over 300 ethnic groups cobbled together into an amalgam of a nation, is a creation of British colonialists following the carve-up of the continent at the conference of Berlin in 1884. The main ethnic groups are the Hausa, the Ibo and the Yoruba, who form about 70 percent of the population and lord it over the hundreds of other smaller ethnic groupings. The Hausa, who dominate the north, are mostly Muslims; the Ibo in the east are mostly Christian; the Yoruba in the southwest are divided between Muslims and Christians. Kept divided and

continued on page 13

Save Amina Lawal!



AFP

In all these class societies, the central source of women's oppression is the institution of the family, a vehicle through which property is transmitted from one generation to the next and the mechanism for raising new generations of workers. In *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, written in the late 19th century, Friedrich Engels explained that the monogamous patrilineal family arose "to make the man supreme in the family, and to propagate, as the future heirs to his wealth, children indisputably his own." The family is used to regiment society to the powers that be, instilling subservience for authority and reinforcing religious obscurantism.

The struggle for the full liberation of women is tied to the struggle to overthrow capitalism. But to unleash the tremendous revolutionary potential of the fight for women's liberation requires the leadership of a genuinely communist party armed with the broad vision of a social order of equality and freedom and drawing in women as part of its leadership.

the imperialist-dominated capitalist social order and pose nothing less than socialist revolution. Ultimately, overcoming the hideous impoverishment and cultural backwardness of sub-Saharan Africa requires an internationally planned socialist economy based on proletarian revolutions in the advanced capitalist countries of North America, West Europe and Japan. *For women's liberation through socialist revolution!*

Imperialist Hypocrisy over Women's Rights

The implementation of *sharia* in northern Nigeria triggered a violent religious and ethnic conflagration between the majority Muslim Hausa and the minority Christian Ibo tribes. As thousands were killed on both sides and countless churches, mosques and houses were destroyed, hundreds of thousands of Ibo fled to the east, where they are the ethnic majority. A similar exodus of Hausa headed north, fleeing the revenge killings. The ethnic killings recalled the

Nigerian women shut down ChevronTexaco oil facilities in July, protesting desperate living conditions and demanding employment for their families.



Venezuela

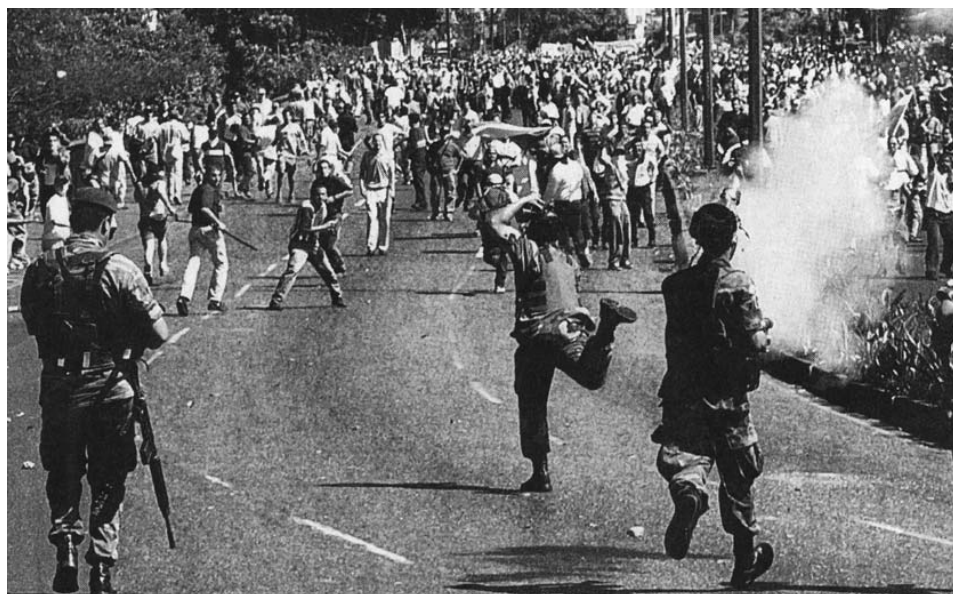
CIA Targets Chávez

The clash between backers and foes of Venezuelan nationalist strongman Hugo Chávez has reached a fever pitch that recalls the atmosphere leading up to last April's short-lived coup. That military putsch was carried out with the blessing of the U.S. imperialists, who despise Chávez for his populist posture and, above all, his sale of oil and other acts of support to Castro's Cuba. This summer, as they did before the April coup, hundreds of thousands of middle- and upper-class anti-Chávez demonstrators filled the streets of Caracas calling for the president's ouster, while his supporters from the city's slums lined the sidewalks jeering at the marchers. Opposition politicians are openly calling for another military coup or even for Chávez's death.

The April 12 coup had Washington's paw prints all over it. In the months leading up to the coup, U.S. officials repeatedly met with Venezuelan business and military leaders who opposed Chávez and later played prominent roles in the military takeover. The budget earmarked for Venezuelan opposition groups by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), a CIA front, was quadrupled to more than \$877,000. According to the London *Guardian* (29 April), U.S. navy ships "helped with communications jamming support to the Venezuelan military." The day of the coup, the head of the International Republican Institute, the Republican Party's conduit for international political subversion, proclaimed, "The Venezuelan people rose up to defend democracy in their country." But as the coup quickly unraveled, within two days Washington was furiously backpedaling.

On the ground, the coup was carried out by anti-Chávez businessmen and military officers in an unholy alliance with

ian (13 May), hundreds of pro-Chávez troops were hidden in the cellar of Miraflores. Once Carmona was inside, the commander phoned him "to tell him that, with troops virtually under his chair, he was as much a hostage as Mr Chavez." The new president resigned less than 48 hours after taking office.



AP photos
Venezuelan National Guard tear-gasses anti-Chávez protesters on April 11 in Caracas. Right: Chávez supporters demonstrate on May Day. Sign reads "Chávez Is the Messiah, Bush Is Lucifer."

The popular outpouring that helped to bring Chávez back to power was fueled by outrage at the venal Venezuelan ruling class and their imperialist masters in Washington. Over the last century, the enormous income from oil, the country's principal export, has simply fattened the wallets of the imperialists and their junior partners in Venezuela. Thirty years ago, per capita income in Venezuela was higher than in Japan. Today, 68 percent of the population lives below the official poverty line. Nearly half the workforce ekes out a living on the margins of the economy as street vendors, gypsy cab drivers and day laborers. This desperately poor layer, seeing in Chávez's populist rhetoric some hope for a decent life, is the base of his "Bolivarian Movement." They have been used by Chávez as a battering ram against the unions, whose sellout leadership, tied to the capitalists and U.S. imperialism, looks like anything but a champion of the country's dispossessed.

As in virtually all interventions by U.S. imperialism in Latin America, the wretched bureaucrats of the AFL-CIO, loyal servitors of their capitalist masters, were in the baggage train. The AFL-CIO's international arm, the American Center for International Labor Solidarity, served as a conduit for NED funds, channeling \$154,377 to the Venezuelan CTV. Two months before the coup, the AFL-CIO sponsored a U.S. tour by CTV tops, paid for by the NED. The CTV bureaucrats who participated in a closed forum in Washington reportedly "noted that they were here to discuss the chances for a coup" (*Labor Notes*, May 2002).

The "AFL-CIA" labor traitors were also involved in the 1964 overthrow of the nationalist Goulart regime in Brazil, the 1965 invasion of Santo Domingo by U.S. Marines and the 1983 invasion of Grenada, among other CIA operations. For decades, the AFL-CIO intervened in Latin America through its "American Institute for Free Labor Development" (AIFLD), a front for anti-labor, CIA-sponsored operations founded in 1962 as an adjunct of the Alliance for Progress, President Kennedy's response to the 1959 Cuban Revolution. One of the AIFLD's specialties was organizing strikes to help destabilize regimes that Washington opposed. Its most successful operation was

the 1973 truckers "strike" in Chile, which was instrumental in bringing down the Chilean Popular Unity government of Salvador Allende, paving the way for a bloodbath of tens of thousands of workers and leftists under the Pinochet dictatorship.

The U.S. officials who worked with the Venezuelan coup plotters were all vet-

military drive against rebels in that country. He expressed penitence over his earlier diatribes against the Catholic hierarchy. Oil shipments to Cuba were abruptly cut off (they were restored earlier this month). Chávez supporters in the National Assembly promised to "adjust" laws limiting land holdings, restricting foreign



investment and increasing royalties paid by foreign oil companies.

But despite his concessions to the U.S. imperialists, Chávez, as demonstrated by the ongoing protests against him, still faces the prospect of an overthrow. Essentially undamaged by the reversal of the April coup, the Venezuelan bourgeoisie maintains its confidence in its ability to oust Chávez.

The measures reversed by Chávez after the coup had been touted as the centerpiece of his "Bolivarian Revolution." Chávez is a bourgeois populist demagogue who came to power four years ago cynically promising to raise living standards for the poor, increase social benefits and distribute land to the peasants. The Venezuelan masses were fed up with the traditional bourgeois parties, Democratic Action and the pro-Catholic COPEI, which promised pie in the sky when oil prices went up and came down with the naked fist of repression when prices fell. In 1989, hundreds of people were killed in the *Caracazo*, when the populace of Caracas, enraged by the government's IMF-imposed austerity program, stormed into the streets. Three years later, Chávez came to prominence by leading a failed coup against that same government.

Chávez won the adoration of many of the country's poor through his cultivated image of a baseball-loving man of the people and, in a country of glaring racist discrimination, his open pride in his indigenous origins. He played to his base with irreverence toward the worthies of the nation, calling the rich the "squalid ones" and referring to Catholic bishops as "devils in vestments." He particularly infuriated the church by failing to include an unequivocal ban on abortion in the new constitution. (The church responded by declaring that the floods in 1999 that killed 10,000 people were "the wrath of god" in response to Chávez's impudence.) Chávez also gained popularity with his gestures of opposition to U.S. imperialism, such as his support to the FARC guerrillas in Colombia, his visit to Saddam Hussein's Iraq and his denunciation of the U.S. bombing of Afghanistan.

The Clinton administration was more or less willing to live with this thorn in their side as long as the oil continued to



Reuters

Chávez welcomes Fidel Castro to Venezuela, August 2001. Chávez's dealings with Cuba have incensed U.S. imperialists.

the notoriously pro-imperialist leadership of the corporatist CTV trade-union federation. The CTV oil union tops and the oil bosses had been staging joint shutdowns and protests for months. After weeks of confrontations triggered by Chávez's decision to replace executives of the state-owned oil company, on April 9 the CTV and the bosses' National Chamber of Commerce (Fedecámaras) jointly called a general strike. When gunmen fired on a mass anti-Chávez demonstration, the military high command moved in to arrest Chávez and install Fedecámaras head Pedro Carmona in the Miraflores presidential palace.

But thousands of Chávez's supporters soon poured out of the wretched slums around Caracas, blockading roads, seizing television stations and surrounding the Miraflores palace. Military officers began shifting their support back to Chávez. According to the London *Guard-*

erans of Reagan-era covert operations against leftist guerrillas in Nicaragua. Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs Otto Reich, who secretly raised money for the CIA's Nicaraguan contras in the 1980s and was once U.S. ambassador to Venezuela, met with a number of anti-Chávez figures, including CTV head Carlos Ortega, in the months leading up to the coup. Meanwhile, leading Democrats, while chiding Bush for openly applauding the coup, covered for the administration by claiming that there was "no evidence" that U.S. officials were actively involved. Democratic senator Christopher Dodd, chairman of the Western Hemisphere subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, commissioned a report that concluded that actions by U.S. officials "were consistent with U.S. policy."

For over a century, U.S. policy in Latin America has consisted of a bloody trail of military interventions, coups and death squads. Under Democrats and Republicans alike, the U.S. imperialists have treated Latin America as their god-given empire to be lorded over and pillaged at will. Today, in the name of the "war on drugs," Bush has sharply escalated Clinton's policy of U.S. military involvement in the Colombian government's dirty war against guerrilla insurgents. Above all, for more than four decades the two parties of American capitalism have sought to roll back the gains of the Cuban Revolution, including through invasion, airplane hijackings, assassinations and other acts of terror, and economic sanctions aimed at starving the population. Down with the embargo! Defend Cuba against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution! U.S. hands off Latin America!

Chávez: Populist Rhetoric, Petty Changes

Chávez regained the presidency following the short-lived coup chastened by the prospect of losing power and calling for "reconciliation" with the opposition. He withdrew his appointees at the head of the state oil company and named the secretary general of OPEC to run the company. A leader of the coup, General Lucas Romero Rincón, was named to head the armed forces. Chávez toned down criticism of "Plan Colombia," Washington's

flow. But even before Bush entered the White House, his aides heralded a harder line toward Chávez. The Bush administration is filled with veterans of U.S. imperialism’s counterrevolutionary terror in Central America in the 1980s, including Elliot Abrams, who presided over the CIA’s contra war in Nicaragua, and current United Nations ambassador John Negroponte, who oversaw savage repression in Honduras. Counterrevolutionary Cuban *gusanos* (worms), including Reich, hold eight of the top twelve positions in the Latin America sections of the State Department and the Pentagon. The London *Guardian* (8 February) reported that Reich helped secure the release of Orlando Bosch, who bombed a Cuban airliner in Caracas, adding: “Amazingly, Bosch was granted a pardon by George Bush senior in 1990 and is now in Florida, apparently untroubled by the current president’s commitment to rooting out terrorism in all its forms.”

Upon coming to power, Chávez tried to bring Venezuela’s powerful oil workers union to heel. He assumed office declaring that the CTV “must be demolished.” But a three-day strike by oil workers in October 2000 won a pay raise that Chávez had previously sworn never to accept. Two months later, a union-busting referendum was called by Chávez to place the CTV under his thumb. But the CTV called for a boycott and only 25 percent of eligible voters participated. When *chavista* thugs in some localities sought to take over union locals, they were driven out by CTV members.

The role of populists like Chávez is to protect the capitalist order by deflecting the just rage of the oppressed masses. While spouting empty rhetoric against the rich, Chávez has deregulated the banking system, privatized the Caracas electrical system and scrupulously respected the agreements with the IMF negotiated by his predecessor. Chávez’s proclamation of an “agrarian revolution” drove the large landowners into a frenzy and raised enormous expectations in a country where a scant 3 percent of farmers own 70 percent of the arable land. But the big estates remain intact, and peasant leaders are being gunned down by the landowners’ hired killers at the rate of a dozen per year.

For Workers Revolution in Venezuela!

Over the past decade, the dominant model for imperialist exploitation in the Third World has been IMF-dictated “free market” neoliberalism and privatization of state industry. The IMF’s ability to dictate draconian economic austerity is in large part based on the absence of the Soviet Union as a counterweight to the imperialists. At the same time, the current economic crisis in Latin America, from



U.S. soldier directs Colombian troops in military exercise south of Bogotá, part of “anti-drug” war of terror against peasants and workers.

Argentina to Mexico, is producing a broader shift in the political-ideological climate away from neoliberalism back toward the nationalist populism espoused by Chávez and identified most closely with Perón’s Argentina in the 1940s and ’50s, where wide sectors of industry were nationalized. While we defend nationalizations carried out against imperialism, these in no sense free those industries from capitalist domination.

The nationalization of Venezuela’s oil industry is a case in point. A decade after oil was discovered beneath Lake Maracaibo in 1917, Venezuela had become the world’s leading exporter of oil. But the beneficiaries of that fabulous wealth were Royal Dutch Shell and Standard Oil. In 1976, the oil industry was nationalized. But the flow of profits to the imperialist corporations was guaranteed through a system of royalties, technology purchases and consulting fees. Petróleos de Venezuela became a state within the state, its policies set largely by the imperialist corporations which bought its output and sold it its capital goods. The autonomous units that made up the new state corporation were the old imperialist subsidiaries under new names (Standard Oil became Lagoven, Mobil was Llanoven, etc.). Even management was left intact.

More generally, as Leon Trotsky pointed out in regard to Mexico’s oil expropriation in the late 1930s, such bourgeois nationalizations are eminently reversible under the pressure of imperialism: “Only lamentable utopians can represent the future of Mexico, as well as any other colonial or semicolonial country, as one of a constant accumulation of reforms and conquests until complete and definite emancipation has arrived” (“Ignorance Is Not a Revolutionary Instrument,” January 1939).

At bottom, populism and economic neoliberalism are simply alternative poli-

cies of capitalist rule, often pursued at different times by one and the same person. In Brazil, Luiz Inacio da Silva of the Workers Party (WP), the front-runner in the campaign for next month’s presidential elections, put aside his populist rhetoric this summer to embrace a \$30 billion IMF bailout package, promising, if elected, to respect the austerity measures that were part of the deal. At the same time, the U.S. is certainly unhappy at the prospect of “Lula,” as he is known, winning the Brazilian election. Already, major firms closely associated with the Bush administration, like Morgan Stanley Dean Witter and Merrill Lynch, downgraded Brazil’s investment rating because of Lula’s potential victory, sending the Brazilian stock market tumbling and destroying millions in local investments.

Following the collapse of the April coup in Venezuela, the *Wall Street Journal* (15 April) editorialized:

“The turmoil is also a reminder of Latin America’s dangerous deterioration. Most U.S. media haven’t noticed, but half of that continent is in political or economic trouble, or both, following a decade of U.S. mistakes and neglect. Maybe the Chavez fiasco will alert American elites...to stop indulging Cold War grudges and start addressing current problems in the region.”

This mouthpiece of American finance capital is concerned that years of accumulated social tinder could explode and set all of Latin America aflame. The ongoing collapse of Argentina has triggered crises from Uruguay to Brazil and beyond. In Bolivia, a populist candidate openly hostile to U.S. imperialism nearly finished first in the recent presidential election. In Colombia, the installation of the right-wing Uribe regime and escalating U.S. military intervention could transform the longstanding, low-level guerrilla insurgency into a full-scale civil war.

Crucial to breaking the unending cycle

of bourgeois-nationalist demagogues and neoliberal imperialist puppets is the mobilization of the working masses throughout Latin America independently of and against all manner of bourgeois forces, populist or otherwise. Venezuela’s own history demonstrates that the bourgeoisie, irrevocably tied by a thousand threads to its imperialist masters and fearful of and hostile to the proletariat, will not and cannot bring any real solution to the desperate situation of its working people.

It is only the working class, putting itself at the head of the struggle for justice and freedom for the country’s masses of poor and oppressed people, that has the social power to end the rule of the foreign imperialists and their local lackeys. A successful workers revolution that brings the proletariat to power will expropriate the local and imperialist bourgeoisies, give land to the peasants and cancel the country’s foreign debt. The U.S. and other imperialist powers would certainly move to crush such a revolutionary regime. Key to the survival of a workers revolution in Venezuela is its international extension to the rest of Latin America and into the imperialist United States itself.

The burning need in Venezuela and throughout Latin America is the forging of authentic Leninist-Trotskyist parties. Such parties would call for the full independence of the trade unions from the bourgeois state. They would act, in Lenin’s words, as the “tribune of the people,” rallying all those suffering under the capitalist yoke to the cause of the proletariat. They would emblazon on their banners the fight for women’s liberation, combatting *machismo* and backward Catholic attitudes and raising demands for the full integration of women into the workforce at equal pay. They would fight for free abortion on demand as part of the struggle for free, quality health care for all, and for full democratic rights for homosexuals.

To liberate themselves from Wall Street debt peonage, the workers of Latin America must be won to the principles and program of proletarian internationalism, embodied in the fight to reforge a Trotskyist Fourth International. As the Fourth International stated at its founding in 1938 in “Theses on the World Role of American Imperialism”:

“None of the countries of Latin America or the Pacific which are now under the domination of American imperialism to one degree or another is able either to attain complete freedom from foreign oppression or to retain such freedom for any length of time if it confines its struggle to the efforts of its own self. Only a union of the Latin American peoples, striving towards the goal of a united socialist America and allied in the struggle with the revolutionary proletariat of the United States, would present a force strong enough to contend successfully with North American imperialism.”■

IG on Venezuela — Opportunism Makes Strange Bedfellows

One of the positions most passionately defended by the cynical centrists of the Internationalist Group (IG) is their assertion that the CTM unions in Mexico, because they are linked to the bourgeois Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), “are not workers’ unions any more than are the company unions (*sindicatos blancos*) sponsored by the right-wing PAN (National Action Party); rather, they are apparatuses for bourgeois control of the workers” (*Internationalist*, Summer 2001). The CTM, proclaims the IG, is an agency for “police control over the workers” (*El Internacionalista*, March 2000). The IG has fiercely denounced us for stating that the CTM unions, despite being corporatist, i.e., unions that are organically tied to the bosses’ parties and/or their state, are also “forced to mobilize their base every once in a while” (WV No. 748, 15 December 2000).

If, as the IG insists, the corporatist CTM “represents the *class enemy*” (*El Internacionalista/Edición México*, May 2001), what does that make the Venezuelan CTV union federation? The CTV has been tied from its inception to the bourgeois Democratic Action (AD) party, which ruled Venezuela for much of the last six decades. And as its central role in the U.S.-orchestrated coup attempt against the Chávez regime last April showed, the CTV bureaucracy has also acted as a direct agency of Yankee imperialism. But in a lengthy article on the CTV dated November 2000, the IG did not have a word about the Venezuelan unions being “corporatist straitjackets,” “police” agencies or the “class enemy.” Curious indeed. Being on the CIA’s take is apparently only a venial sin in the IG’s opportunist catechism, whereas support for the nationalist PRI is a mortal one.

The IG’s statement, posted on its Web site only in Spanish, came a month before Chávez rammed through a referendum allowing him to “renovate” the CTV leadership through government-supervised elections. Under the headline “Against Chávez, the Stock Market and the IMF—Venezuela: Mobilize Workers Power to Defeat the Anti-Union Referendum!” the IG declared: “Despite their sellout leaderships, the unions are *workers* organizations, and it is urgent to defend them against the capitalist state that seeks to subdue them in order to destroy any outbreak of proletarian independence.” It was indeed the duty of leftists to oppose Chávez’s reactionary referendum and defend the CTV unions against government attack and intervention—just like we, unlike the IG, defend the CTM against the Mexican state.

The IG asserted that “the government

wants to punish the unions” following a victorious strike over wage demands by the powerful CTV oil workers union that October. It criticized the CTV bureaucrats for calling for “international sanctions” against the Chávez regime, counterposing typically bombastic calls to “paralyze the oilfields,” “blockade the Stock Exchange,” etc., etc. The IG painted a picture of Chávez as a stooge of the Caracas stock exchange and the imperialists, attacking the unions with a corrupt labor bureaucracy forced to oppose him. But as the range of bourgeois and imperialist opposition to the referendum demonstrated, the picture was hardly as clear cut.

An article in the *New York Times* (5 December 2000) after the referendum reported, “Opposition parties and local labor, business, and human rights groups

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Young Spartacus

Florida Adoption Laws Pillory Women, Gays

Updating the story of *The Scarlet Letter* with a Southern gothic twist, a Florida law enacted last October requires unmarried mothers offering their children for adoption to take out advertisements detailing their sexual histories. Not only must these women, many of whom are young and impoverished, pay to run these ads in newspapers in each city or county where conception might have taken place for four weeks running, they must reveal their names and physical descriptions—including race, their child's name, and the names and descriptions of any men they might have had sex with in the year before the child's birth. Behind this adoption law which stigmatizes and humiliates women is a reactionary "family values" moralism. The state has no business scrutinizing women's sex lives! We say: Government out of the bedroom!

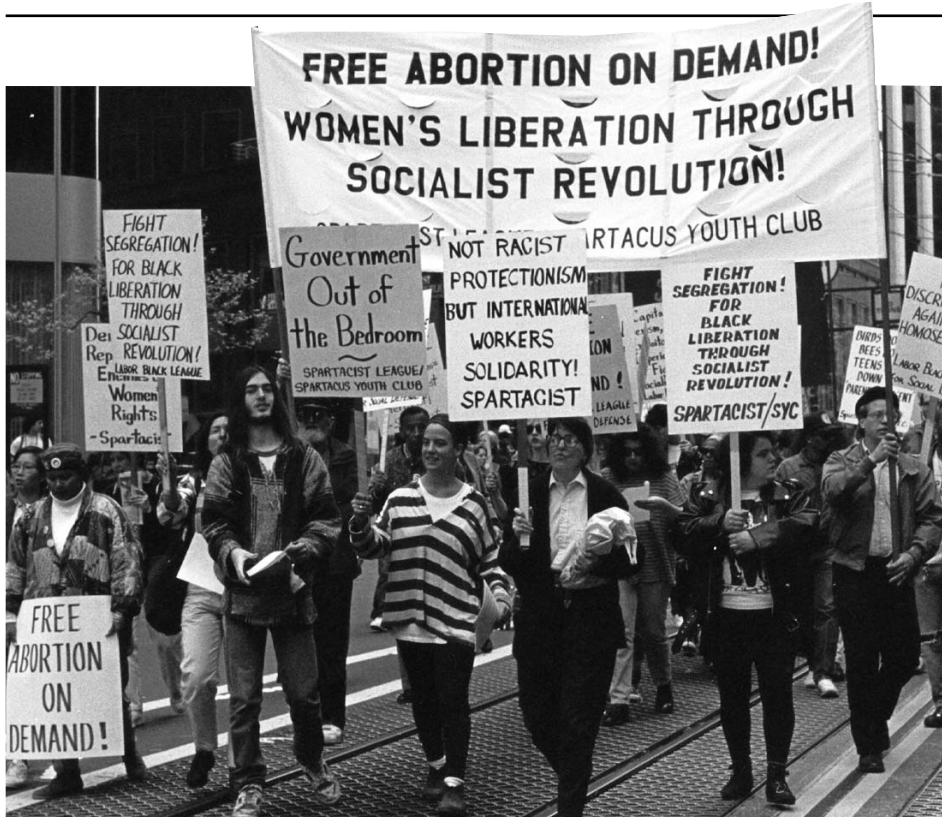
Seeking to overturn this barbaric law, an adoption lawyer last year filed suit on behalf of six women, including two victims of rape. The judge made an exception for rape victims but ruled that the other women had no right to privacy unless they could prove that there were other, "less intrusive" means for the state to determine their children's paternity. And that's what it's all about. Ostensibly enacted to "protect the rights of fathers" who might object to such adoptions (although none to date have come forward), what this law is really about is victimizing women who violate bourgeois and religious morality that mandates marriage, reinforcing the stigma of "illegitimacy" for children born out of wedlock, and fingering "deadbeat dads" so the state can garnish their wages for child support. In addition, in the Deep South many women are rightly worried that as a result of this law they will be targeted by white racists if they admit to having sex with black men.

Adoption law has long been a club in the hands of the religious right as it seeks to enforce the sanctity of the bourgeois family at the expense of poor and unwanted children, which is every bit the case in the state of Florida. In 1977, after the Miami city council passed a law prohibiting discrimination based on sexual preference—a simple democratic right—religious fundamentalists, led by smarmy has-been beauty queen and citrus industry shill Anita Bryant, mounted a vicious hate campaign which succeeded in repealing the ordinance later that year.

On the heels of this right-wing victory, the governor of Florida signed outrageous legislation outlawing any child's adoption by homosexual parents. A prominent backer of Bryant's anti-gay crusade and one of the main sponsors of this adoption law, former state Senator Curtis Peterson, said at the time that it sent a message to homosexuals that "we are tired of you and wish you would go back into the closet." On September 10, voters in Florida's Dade County barely defeated a proposal to repeal a section of the county's "human rights" ordinance banning discrimination against homosexuals in employment and housing.

Although at least three court cases have challenged the ban on adoption by gays, Florida's judicial system has steadfastly upheld it. The most recent suit, filed by

Government Out of the Bedroom!



Spartacist/SYC contingent at 1992 abortion rights protest in San Francisco.

the American Civil Liberties Union in 1997, will be heard by the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals this winter, the first time the law has been challenged in federal court. Former daytime talk-show host Rosie O'Donnell has been publicizing the case of one couple, both pediatric nurses, who are foster parents to five children classified as HIV-positive and therefore "unadoptable" by the state of Florida. Now that one of the children has tested negative, he has been reclassified "adoptable," but the only parents he's ever known are barred from adopting him.

Although Florida and the Southern "Bible Belt" are particularly notorious for state-sponsored anti-gay and anti-woman bigotry, such laws are not restricted to south of the Mason-Dixon line. New Hampshire, for example, also explicitly prohibits gay adoption. Elsewhere, the issue of gay marriage has reactionaries up in arms from Hawaii to Massachusetts. As Marxists, we stand in opposition to all forms of persecution and discrimination against gays, lesbians and all others whose sexual identity does not conform to the norms of bourgeois society. We demand the immediate repeal of all anti-homosexual laws and all legislation outlawing so-called "crimes against nature" (such as "sodomy"). We stand for the democratic right of privacy and oppose all legislation or other state action which intrudes on private affairs between consenting parties. Those who defend democratic rights must adamantly champion the rights of the more vulnerable social groups, which will be targets in today's climate of increasing state repression.

Closely intertwined with anti-homosexual bigotry, which incites savage anti-gay attacks like the 1998 murder of Matthew Shepard in Wyoming, is the anti-abortion backlash. Spearheading this backlash are

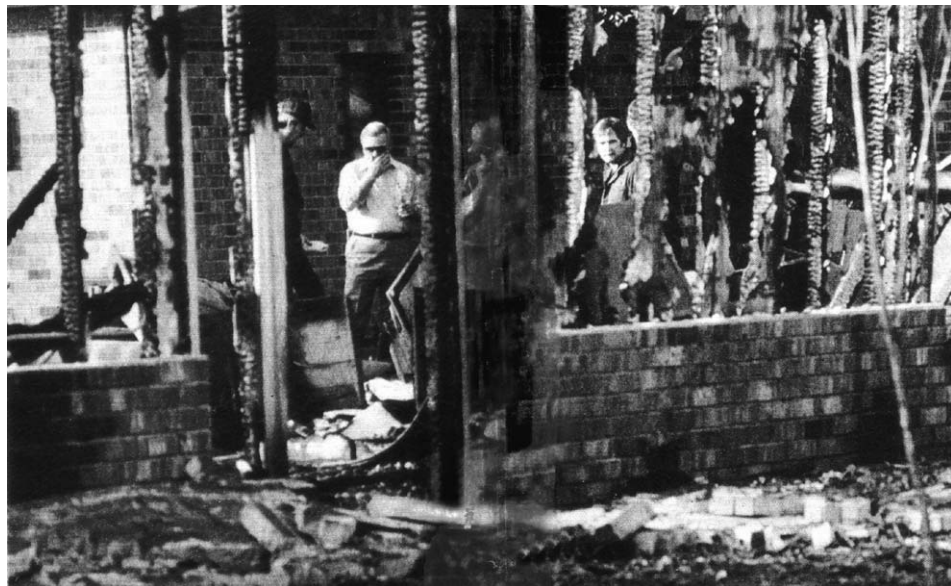
the Catholic church and various "right to life" outfits, often closely linked with fascist elements, such as those behind the sinister "Nuremberg files" Web site targeting abortion providers for assassination. There is a history of violent anti-abortion terrorism in Florida, from the murder of abortion providers to the bombing of clinics by right-wing religious fundamentalists linked to the Ku Klux Klan. As for the state government, it offers "Choose Life" license plates and uses the proceeds to fund anti-abortion "counseling centers." The new adoption law nakedly exposes the claim by these anti-abortion forces to support adoption of unwanted children.

Women's rights, like homosexuality, is seen as a challenge to the bourgeois family and the ideological and moral structures that enshrine it. For revolutionists,

women's liberation and the defense of democratic rights for homosexuals are inextricably linked to the goal of replacing the family as an economic and legal unit in a socialist society. For so long as the family remains the key institution for the oppression of women in class society, "family values" based on religion, chastity and "morality" will constitute a conservatizing ideology used to regiment the population and prop up bourgeois "law and order."

In Iowa, these forces of "law and order" are attacking women's right to control their own medical records, as a district court judge has ordered all hospitals and clinics in the Storm Lake area to turn over the names of women whose pregnancy tests were positive between August 2001 and May 2002. This state attempt to snoop into the private lives of hundreds of women, supposedly in search of the mother of a dead baby found in a dump, has been opposed by the operators of the local Planned Parenthood clinic, who have appealed the case to the state Supreme Court. Already the number of pregnancy tests performed at the clinic is down 70 percent. Down with the government sex snoops!

Such invasions of privacy are becoming more and more frequent, as the anti-abortion Bush White House builds on the policies of the previous Democratic administration, emboldening right-wing forces nationwide. From the campaign to replace sex education with "abstinence only" preaching to the pushing of mandatory marriage and enforcing of reactionary "statutory rape" laws, women's rights and the rights of youth are in the cross hairs of an interventionist capitalist state. The Spartacus Youth Clubs call for free abortion on demand, free 24-hour childcare, free quality health care, jobs for all, open admissions to the universities with no tuition and a living stipend. But the full liberation of women cannot be achieved under capitalism. Only victorious proletarian revolution can break the chains of economic compulsion which underlie the bourgeois family, allowing the allocation of resources according to human need and not Wall Street profits. ■



Pensacola, Florida abortion clinic bombing, December 1984. SYC defends abortion clinics against right-wing terrorist attacks.

Iraq...

(continued from page 16)

people. This is part of our opposition to the “national unity” campaign and anti-immigrant witchhunts of the bosses and our fight to organize and build a workers party under whose leadership the working class can seize state power and expropriate the bourgeoisie. *Anti-imperialism abroad means class struggle at home!*

In contrast, the reformist International Socialist Organization (ISO) enthuses over building “the broadest possible anti-war movement,” which in the end is tailored to liberal, pro-imperialist sentiments. Exactly who the ISO wants in its “antiwar movement” was made clear at the first meeting of the ISO-led Columbia Anti-War Coalition (CAWC) last Monday. After the SYC put forward its proposal for a united-front protest against war in Iraq, opposition surfaced from students worried about alienating youth with “confrontational” slogans. In fact, at the meeting the ISO agreed to make opposing war in Iraq the sole basis for participation in CAWC so as to leave the door open to those who generally support the “war on terror.” Though ISOers voiced formal agreement with our protest demands and CAWC adopted “points of unity” that were variants of these demands, two-thirds voted against endorsing the demonstration.

For the ISO, keeping pro-imperialist liberals on board its coalition came before principled opposition to the U.S. government’s “war on terror,” of which war in Iraq is a part. The ISO went so far in appeasing its coalition partners as to claim it was “too early” for protests. If now is not the time for protest, then when? Once Iraq has been reduced to a mass graveyard?



Young Spartacus

SYC impromptu speakout against military recruiters present at Columbia University student activities day, September 6.

Guided more by anti-communism than anti-imperialism, the ISO also refused to join our protest at the activities fair against the ROTC military recruiters, who were well within view of the ISO literature table.

During the 1991 Persian Gulf War, the ISO likewise eagerly joined with pro-imperialist liberals in antiwar coalitions. Falling in line with the U.S. government’s war aim of ousting the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, the ISO tore up its paper opposition to sanctions to endorse demonstrations calling for the imperialists to impose sanctions as a “peaceful” alternative to bombing. Today, the ISO cries over the 1.5 million victims of the UN-sponsored starvation blockade, but it got what the coalition demo it endorsed asked for at the time, to deadly effect.

This is the ISO’s “antiwar” strategy—to spread illusions that the “excesses” of

capitalism can be alleviated through mass pressure on supposedly progressive capitalist forces, namely the Democratic Party. In a posting on its Web site, the ISO looks kindly upon Al Gore, who we are told “wrote an op ed piece in the August 4 *New York Times* that made a sharp turn toward class struggle rhetoric,” and holds out the possibility of building the “movement” through “a break to the left in mainstream politics.” The Democratic Party is a party of racism and war! Most of the Iraqi victims of the embargo died under the watch of the Democrat Clinton (and Gore), about which Clinton’s UN ambassador Madeleine Albright reckoned: “We think the price is worth it.” In addition, near-daily U.S. bombing in the last two years of the Clinton administration killed hundreds of Iraqi civilians. Today, the Democrats fulsomely support extend-

ing the “war on terror,” whether to Iraq or elsewhere. *The main enemy is the capitalist class at home! Down with the two imperialist war parties!*

The ISO’s faith in the existence of a progressive wing of the bourgeoisie led it to howl with the imperialist wolves in the 1980s against the intervention of the Soviet Red Army into Afghanistan during the civil war between Islamic fundamentalists and forces favoring democratic reforms. The ISO cast its lot with the U.S.-backed, women-hating *mujahedin* cutthroats, whom it called “freedom fighters.” We hailed the Red Army, which represented the only hope for emancipation of the hideously oppressed women of Afghanistan. Generally, the ISO supported every imperialist-sponsored cause, no matter how reactionary, against the Soviet Union, the world’s first workers state, where capitalism was overthrown. Opposition to imperialism requires defense of those gains the international working class has won. We Trotskyists unconditionally militarily defended the Soviet Union—as we defend the remaining deformed workers states of China, Cuba, North Korea and Vietnam today—against the imperialists and capitalist restoration. Simultaneously, we fight for workers political revolution to oust the sellout Stalinist bureaucrats and bring workers to power internationally.

The SYC seeks to win radical youth to the perspective that only workers revolution can break the stranglehold of the imperialist system around the globe. We stand on the tradition of Lenin and Trotsky’s Bolshevik Party, which successfully led the working class to power in Russia amid the carnage of interimperialist war. Oppose the U.S. imperialist war drive and rally in solidarity with the people of Iraq—*Join us in protest this Wednesday!* ■

Mumia...

(continued from page 16)

Rachel Wolkenstein (reprinted in the September 2001 Partisan Defense Committee pamphlet “Mumia Abu-Jamal Is an Innocent Man!”), the new papers detail how “for nine whole years, attorney Weinglass and attorney Williams did more than any prosecutor could ever do to send Petitioner Jamal to his death. They strangled at birth the evidence which shows that he did not kill Police Officer Faulkner and, in the process, jettisoned numerous other decisive claims for relief.” Wolkenstein, who is counsel for the PDC, resigned from the legal team in 1999 precisely over the suppression of the Beverly confession. As she explained in her affidavit, Weinglass’ refusal to proceed with Beverly’s confession and other evidence “was also my final realization that Attorney Weinglass would not carry out the defense demanded by our innocent client.”

That Weinglass and Williams played the role of prosecutor was set forth for the world to see in the publication last year of Williams’ false “inside account” of Jamal’s case, *Executing Justice*, published shortly before Beverly’s confession was submit-

ted to court. Jamal’s latest papers point out, “Williams falsely and malevolently suggests in his introduction to *Executing Justice*, subtitled ‘The Problem of Ambiguity,’ that Petitioner Jamal is guilty. This *ambiguity*, which is the central theme of *Executing Justice*, is something which attorneys Weinglass and Williams implanted into Petitioner Jamal’s case by suppressing” evidence that someone else shot officer Faulkner. Williams’ declaration that Beverly’s confession was “lunacy” was the core argument used by prosecutors in fighting to keep this conclusive evidence of Mumia’s innocence out of court.

In a letter to Jamal last year, Weinglass acknowledged that Williams’ book was to be a “pre-emptive strike” against use of the Beverly confession, should it later emerge. Jamal’s new legal papers summarize, “Among the unsavory motives that Messrs. Weinglass and Williams had in publishing the book was that of ruthlessly covering up the manner in which their own cowardice and mishandling of Petitioner’s case over the previous nine years, capped off by their suppression of Arnold Beverly’s confession and the evidence which corroborated it, had undermined and sabotaged Petitioner’s defense

at the very same time that they had built their careers on cynically and hypocritically posing to the world as his courageous and self-sacrificing *radical* lawyers, fighting a heroic battle against ‘the system’.”

Their radical veneer notwithstanding, Weinglass and Williams’ outlook is premised on absolute faith in the inherent justice of the capitalist courts. But as Jamal’s new papers point out, his treatment by the courts is reminiscent of the infamous Supreme Court decision in the case of fugitive slave Dred Scott in 1857.

In turning down Jamal’s PCRA application last year, Judge Dembe dismissed the sworn account of court stenographer Terri Maurer-Carter of a conversation she overheard in the courthouse where Mumia was tried: “Judge Sabo was discussing the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal. In the course of that conversation, I heard Judge Sabo say: ‘Yeah, and I’m going to help them fry the n---r.’” According to Dembe, such a blatant statement of racist bias was insignificant—since Jamal had a jury trial, he had no right to an impartial judge!

As Jamal’s legal papers state:

“Judge Sabo’s vile racist comment... meant that, in Judge Sabo’s courtroom, Mr. Jamal, like Dred Scott before him, was not a citizen with rights guaranteed to him by the Constitution, but rather an inferior being with ‘no rights which the white man was bound to respect’.”

Mumia’s attorneys also pointed out that “in ruling that Mumia Abu-Jamal had no right to an impartial judge, Judge Dembe implicitly ruled that Petitioner Jamal had no right to a fair tribunal. But since being tried before an *unfair tribunal* is no different from being ‘tried’ by a lynch mob, the ‘right’ to be tried before an *unfair tribunal* is no right at all.”

Among those on the Pennsylvania Supreme Court is former D.A. Ronald Castille. Castille was District Attorney at the time when his subordinate Jack McMahon made an infamous videotape instructing members of the D.A.’s office on how to exclude blacks from juries. The video bears not only Castille’s name but

also the logo of DATV Productions, the video production department of the Philadelphia D.A.’s office. A critical issue in every one of Mumia’s appeals has been the unconstitutional exclusion of black men and women as jurors. Castille was the D.A. opposing Jamal’s first appeal, and was later one of the members of the Supreme Court who turned down Jamal’s appeal of Sabo’s denial of his PCRA in 1997. A number of defendants have had their convictions overturned on the basis of this racist jury-rigging—but not Mumia. Jamal’s attorneys demonstrate how as a Supreme Court justice Castille has blocked every effort by Jamal to determine his role in the production of the McMahon video.

In turning down Jamal’s appeal, Dembe sneered, “It is hornbook [text] law that witnesses...who mysteriously appear long after trial are regarded with suspicion by the courts.” In the past three years, dozens of death row inmates have been spared execution by evidence of their innocence only discovered years later. After serving 13 years of his life sentence on a false murder conviction, Lamont Branch was finally released from a New York prison last week, six months after his brother Lorenzo confessed to the murder.

Jamal’s legal filing illustrates that for a defiant and outspoken opponent of this racist system like Jamal, there is no justice in the capitalist courts. As the introduction to the PDC pamphlet “Mumia Abu-Jamal Is an Innocent Man!” explained: “The long hidden and suppressed evidence of Mumia’s innocence is the truth. But in this capitalist system of injustice, the truth is insufficient to secure Jamal’s freedom. What we need is not just more truth but more social power. It is elementary that if labor’s power is to be brought to bear in a mighty blow on Jamal’s behalf, it must be mobilized independently of the very forces of the capitalist state that have worked for years to frame up and kill this innocent man.” *Mobilize now to free Mumia! Abolish the racist death penalty!* ■

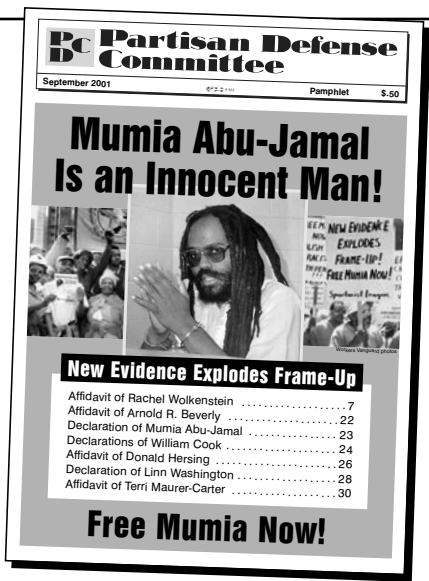
New Evidence Explodes Frame-Up: Declarations and affidavits of Mumia Abu-Jamal, Arnold R. Beverly, Rachel Wolkenstein and others prove that death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal is an innocent man.

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Capitalism...

(continued from page 1)

workers governments where those who labor rule.

Corporate Scams and Swindles

“There’s a handful of C.E.O.’s that have done more to hurt our economy than Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda combined.”
—David D’Alessandro, chief executive officer (CEO) of John Hancock Financial Services

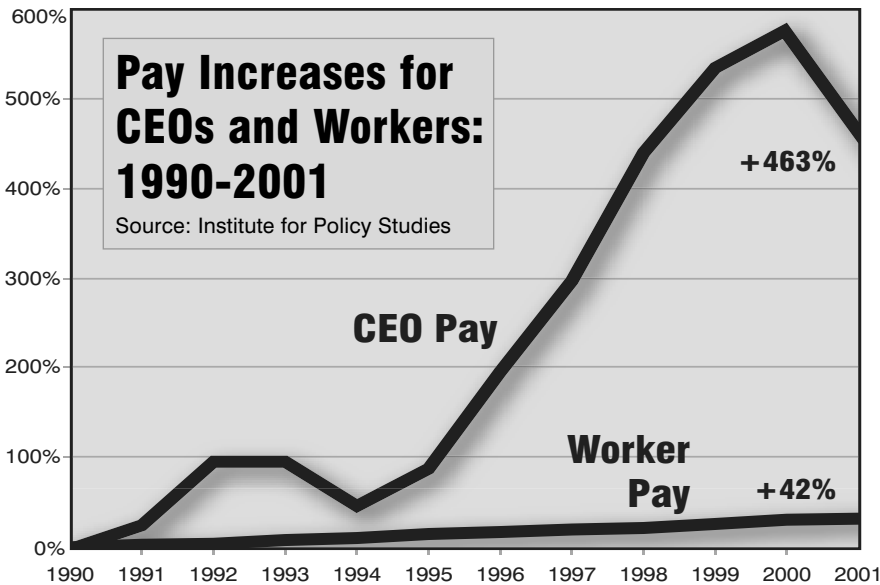
Every few days a high-level corporate executive or Wall Street financier be-moans that the unrestrained greed of some of his colleagues has undermined public confidence, not least that of foreign investors, in American capitalism. “I find myself feeling embarrassed and ashamed by what I see in corporate America,” Andrew Grove, chairman of the big computer chip maker Intel, confesses to us. Grove’s embarrassment and shame are no doubt aggravated by the fact that Intel stock is now selling for \$19 a share compared to a high of \$40 a share last year. But he is definitely not embarrassed that Intel has recently laid off 4,000 employees in an effort to bolster its profits and stock price.

Around the world, foreign leaders and bourgeois spokesmen indulge in moralizing lectures about America’s “crony capitalism” and rampant corporate fraud. The London *Financial Times* (28 June) complains that European investors in the U.S. feel like “they were suckers in a game rigged in favour of insiders.” Vladimir Putin, political capo of post-Soviet Russia’s gangster capitalists, chides U.S. business leaders for their lack of social responsibility. One almost expects Saddam Hussein to denounce the corporate swindlers of America’s investing public.

The current focus on those corporate executives who have violated the laws and the accepted business practices of American capitalism should not obscure the fundamental criminality of capitalism *as a system*. It is a system based on the exploitation of the working class by the owners of the means of production. This is especially obvious in the U.S. today, when corporate CEOs make *more than 400 times* the wages of the blue-collar workers they employ.

While some of these executives also swindle their stockholders, they are basically paid to increase actual corporate profits at the expense of their workers: holding down or cutting back wages and benefits, speeding up production, preventing unionization. A CEO who fiddles the books to show \$250 million more in profits than the firm actually earned is today vilified. But one who increases actual profits by \$250 million by wage cuts or layoffs is praised and rewarded on Wall Street.

While stock prices have recovered somewhat from the panic-selling in July in the immediate aftermath of the WorldCom scandal, the market valuation of corporate America has *fallen almost 40 percent* from the stratospheric heights of a few years ago. Wall Street spokesmen, from Bush on downward, contend that a few bad apples, like the men who ran Enron and WorldCom, have soured inves-



CEOs like Enron chairman and Bush crony Kenneth Lay make grab for unprecedented gains off backs of working people.

tor confidence. The fundamentals of the American economy, they say, are sound.

However, the stock market slide began two and a half years ago and so was not caused by the recent wave of corporate scandals beginning with Enron last fall. The Wall Street bull market of the mid-late 1990s was driven by a speculative mania defying all rational economic calculation and expectations. It really didn’t matter whether the profits reported on corporate financial statements were real or artificially inflated. Stocks were wildly overpriced in either case, both by historical standards and in comparison with the earnings of other, far safer financial assets (e.g., U.S. Treasury bills).

In the past, a stock market crash and prolonged bear market battered the working class through its secondary effects on the economy. The collapse of business investment in new plant and equipment resulted in mass layoffs and unemployment. Corporate managers moved to recoup profit margins by cutting wages and benefits. And this is also happening now. For example, the nation’s second-largest airline, United, which has long advertised itself as “employee owned” because its workers were encouraged to buy stock through the Employee Stock Options Program, is threatening bankruptcy unless its workers accept pay cuts as well as layoffs.

With some 60 percent of the American working population having invested in IRAs or similar retirement plans, tens of millions of working-class families have seen the value of their retirement funds and other savings (e.g., for their children’s education) cut by a third or half by the plunging Dow Jones Industrial Average and Standard & Poor’s 500 index. Employees of large corporations used to have guaranteed, fixed-benefit pensions funded and administered by the corporation, sometimes in conjunction with the union. But beginning in the early 1980s, changes in government tax laws and corporate policy forced working people to finance their own old-age pension fund through 401(k) plans and IRAs. In doing so, the capitalist class saved hundreds of billions of dollars by cutting the size of pension compensation. In funded plans, the employers take the losses in an economic downturn; with 401(k)s and IRAs,

it is the workers who take the losses, as they’re now doing.

As working people were forced to try to accumulate the funds to support themselves in old age, corporate America launched a massive advertising campaign to convince them that stocks were the best available long-term financial asset. “We’re bullish on America,” proclaimed Merrill Lynch, the giant Wall Street investment bank/brokerage house now deeply implicated in the Enron swindle. Merrill analysts in e-mails to one another described the stock of some Internet companies as “crap” and “a piece of shit” while touting the merits of these companies to the firm’s clients. In 1997, the prominent liberal economist Charles P. Kindleberger, author of a standard history of financial crises, described the Wall Street boom as a “mutual funds mania bubble, instigated in part by changes in pension laws.”

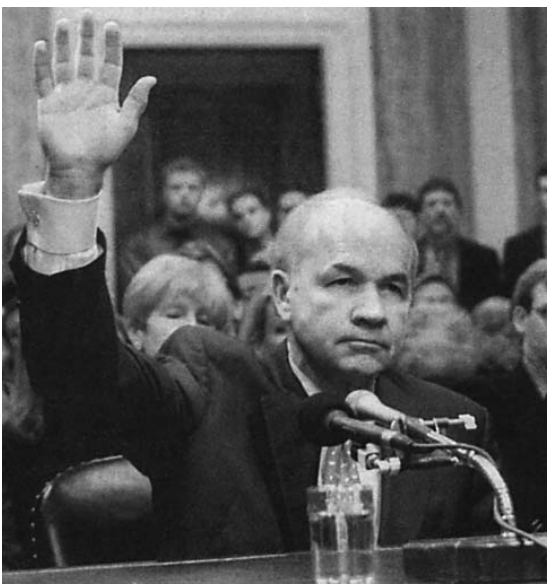
While the stock market bubble has now burst, spectacularly so, there’s still a bubble in the housing market fueled by very low interest rates and an acute housing shortage. And when that bubble bursts, the impact will be very big. Not only will a lot of people lose their homes, but many banks and other financial institutions holding real estate loans could go belly up.

The Wall Street bull market of the ’90s also attracted hundreds of billions of dollars of speculative capital from around the world. The Japanese economy was mired in a decade-long recession following the bursting of its own stock market/real estate bubble in the late 1980s. Growth in the economies of West Europe, saddled with relatively high labor costs, was sluggish. The United States looked to be the only economically dynamic, major region in the advanced capitalist world. Not only was there massive foreign investment in American corporate securities, but European industrialists also greatly expanded their manufacturing operations in the U.S., especially in the non-union South.

For years, foreign investors have financed this country’s large balance-of-trade deficits and more recently the rapidly growing federal government budget deficit as well. Forty percent of outstanding U.S. Treasury bonds are in the hands of European, Japanese and other foreign finance capitalists.

From the standpoint of London, Frankfurt and Tokyo financiers, these days the United States is no longer the best place to put their money. Direct foreign investment peaked at \$300 billion in 2000 and then fell by more than half to \$125 billion last year. When the wave of corporate scandals culminated with WorldCom earlier this summer, the *Wall Street Journal* (28 June) ran an article headlined: “Funds Flow Back to Europe as Mistrust in Wall Street Mounts with Each Day.” The *Journal* quoted Wolfram Gerdes, chief investment officer of the Frankfurt-based Allianz Dresdner Asset Management: “It’s almost a joint move of people being appalled by what they’re seeing in the U.S.”

Since the beginning of the year, the exchange value of the dollar has fallen sharply against the euro for the first time since the European Union’s currency was



Hosefros/NY Times

launched a few years ago. The dollar has likewise fallen against the Japanese yen. A *New York Times* (28 June) editorial pointed to this worrisome trend and laid out a worst-case scenario: “Capital flight is a danger we usually associate with countries like Argentina, but a few more WorldComs and the comparison may seem apt.”

Since the Soviet Union was destroyed by capitalist counterrevolution in 1991-92, the United States has been the supradominant power in the world. Consequently, the stock market crash, falling dollar and looming double-dip recession have a major effect on all aspects of global politics. For example, the European imperialist ruling classes are even less likely to support an American war against Iraq now that they’re losing hundreds of billions of dollars on their investments in the U.S.

When the WorldCom debacle jolted Wall Street a few months ago, the *New York Times* (30 June) ran a headline with the rhetorical question: “Could Capitalists Actually Bring Down Capitalism?” The answer is no. American capitalism has survived corporate scandals, stock market crashes and prolonged economic slumps. The only social force that can destroy this destructive system, which is driven by greed and profits and not by the needs and interests of humanity, is the multiracial working class supported by the oppressed and impoverished black and Latino masses. To realize this, the proletariat must be transformed from a class in itself—the object of capitalist exploitation—to a class for itself—conscious of its purpose as the agency for the eradication of the capitalist order. It must be educated and led by a Marxist workers party committed to the establishment of workers rule.

Stock Options and Other Financial Scams

Two decades ago, corporate CEOs earned on average 40 times more than production workers. Today, they make more than 400 times more. The main difference has been the widespread use of stock options, which now account for almost 60 percent of executive compensation. Options provide both a direct, personal incentive to maximize stock prices by fair means or foul and a major foul means of doing so.

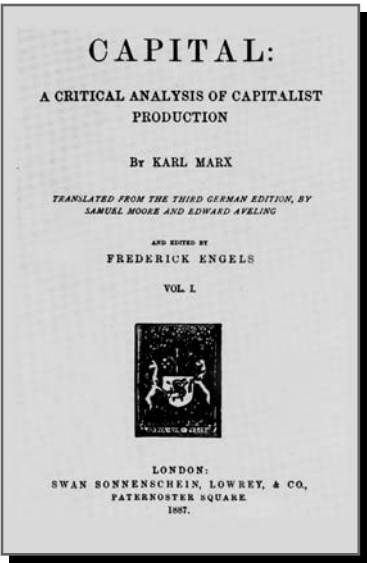
An executive is given the option to buy a block of stock in the future at the price it was trading for when the option was granted. If the price of the stock stays the same or goes down, the option is not exercised and no money is lost. If the price goes up, the executive buys it at the earlier lower price, sells it at the current higher price and pockets the difference. It’s a one-way bet where you can only win.

How then does the use of stock options artificially inflate reported corporate profits? If a CEO is given an additional \$500 million in salary, this is recorded as an operating expense and is therefore deducted from revenue in calculating profits. But if the same CEO makes an additional \$500 million by exercising his stock option, this does not show up on the corporation’s books at all. The argu-



Beard

Boom-bust cycles outlined by Karl Marx in his seminal work, *Capital*, demonstrate fundamental irrationality of capitalist system of production.



ment is that while executives' salaries and bonuses are paid out of the company's treasury, the money received from the exercise of stock options comes from outside the company, from the investors who repurchase the stock from its executives.

Well-known business spokesman Warren Buffett, who fancies himself the conscience of Wall Street, has long campaigned for treating stock options as a corporate expense just like salaries and bonuses: "When a company gives something of value to its employees in return for their services, it is clearly a compensation expense. And if expenses don't belong in the earnings statement where in the world do they belong?" (*New York Times*, 24 July). A recent academic study headed by a retired J.P. Morgan vice president estimates that corporate profits have been overstated by at least 20 percent because of the failure to list stock options as expenses and other accounting manipulations. AT&T, for example, would go from showing a slim profit to registering a substantial loss if its exercised stock options were shown as an expense on its books.

There is one important federal government agency which has not gone along with the stock-option scam: the Internal Revenue Service, which has demanded and gotten its cut. Corporate executives and other employees have to report income from exercised stock options on their IRS tax returns. The U.S. government thus literally keeps two sets of books on the level of corporate profits, one based on corporate financial statements, the other on the tax returns of cor-



Chicago: Hotel workers, members of HERE union, demonstrate against attacks on wages and health benefits, August 23.

billion in expenses for last year and the first quarter of this year. A previously reported profit of \$1.5 billion for 2001 was instantaneously transformed into a substantial loss. What was involved here was a fraud so stupidly obvious it could have been caught by a business school undergraduate in Accounting 101. The WorldCom management had "reclassified" ordinary operating expenses for the maintenance of its phone cables as a capital outlay for new equipment to be depreciated over several years, and thus reduced their expenses on paper. One commentator quipped that even a seven-year-old knows the difference between

their retirement funds and other savings in corporate shares? Because they were led to believe the stock prices would continue to rise at the exceptional rates of the previous few years.

Yale University economist Robert Shiller aptly described the stock market boom as a "naturally occurring Ponzi scheme." This famous financial swindle was named for one Charles Ponzi, who operated it in Boston in the 1920s. It basically works like this. The initial round of investors can resell their stocks at a higher price from the money provided by a larger second round of investors. They, in turn, can resell the stock at a higher price from the money provided by a still larger third round. The scheme continues to spiral outward and upward until the supply of gullible investors runs out and then the stock collapses. On a gigantic scale involving trillions of dollars, millions of investors and thousands of companies, that is basically what happened in U.S. financial markets over the past decade.

The Boom-Bust Cycle of Capitalism

The collapse of the Wall Street bull market represents at the financial level, exaggerated by speculative expectations and illusions, the fundamental laws of the capitalist economic system analyzed a century and a half ago by Karl Marx. In particular, the tendency of the rate of profit to fall periodically blocks and reverses the expansion of production. Marx explained in Volume III of *Capital*:

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

Capitalists invest in expanding productive capacity on the assumption that the additional output, whether automobiles or Internet services, can be sold at the existing rate of profit, or at a higher rate if they're investing in cost-cutting technology. If, as is usually the case, capital construction is financed by new bond issues or bank loans, corporate management expects a rate of profit more than ade-

quate to meet the future debt service. However, during periods of expansion the average rate of profit tends to fall. Even if productivity rises and wages don't, increased profit per worker does not offset increased capital investment per worker.

The causal relationship between capital accumulation and a falling rate of profit is especially clear in the telecommunications sector where, not coincidentally, the recent big corporate scandals—WorldCom, Global Crossing—have been concentrated. In the early 1990s, the rapid growth of Internet and also cellular phone traffic strained existing facilities. Profits in the industry were well above average, with a rate of return on capital of 15 percent or more. Capital flowed in to finance a massive expansion of fiber-optic cable networks and other facilities. The result: a sharp fall in the rate of profit to 8.5 percent by the end of the decade, leading to what the London *Economist* (20 July) calls "The Great Telecoms Crash": "Too many firms got caught up in Internet mania, assumed astronomic rates of traffic growth and, egged on by bullish investors, started building networks to carry that traffic."

Telecommunications represents an extreme case of what happened throughout the U.S. economy during the 1990s boom. As the economy moved into recession a year ago last spring, *Business Week* (9 April 2001) explained why, naturally from the standpoint of capitalists, not the working class:

"After years of frantically investing to build up the human and physical capacity to keep up with soaring growth, the U.S. economy is struggling with overcapacity as far as the eye can see. From Intel's half-finished building in Austin, to the multitudes of identical retail stores that seem to dot every other corner, to the gaping, empty billboards that loom over New York's Times Square, every sector is struggling with the hangover caused by too many years of too much investment."

Obviously, for working people there cannot possibly be *too many* job opportunities and goods and services available. What business executives and their ideological spokesmen mean by "overcapacity" is that the U.S. has the actual capacity to produce far more goods and services than can be sold at a *satisfactory rate of profit*. As Marx explained:

"There are not too many necessities of life produced, in proportion to the existing population. Quite the reverse. Too little is produced to decently and humanely satisfy the wants of the great mass.... "Too many commodities are produced to permit of a realization and conversion into new capital of the value and surplus value contained in them under the conditions of distribution and consumption *peculiar to capitalist production*, i.e., too many to permit the consummation of this process without constantly recurring explosions." [our emphasis]

—*Capital*, Volume III

According to the latest government statistics (which could be revised downward), the U.S. economy was in recession most of last year but pulled out of it by the beginning of this year. Yet unemployment continues to rise, with older workers simply not being rehired. This is what bourgeois economists call a "jobless recovery." The economy is growing so slowly it cannot absorb the additional

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Mike Keefe/Denver Post

porate executives. Using tax returns and other data, the government's Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) recently published a comprehensive *revision* of U.S. economic statistics for the mid-late 1990s. According to this new report, *corporate profits actually peaked in 1997*, not in 2000 as previously indicated in both government statistics and the business press.

Summarizing the BEA analysis, *Business Week* (12 August) commented: "That means the stock market was even more irrationally exuberant in 1999 and 2000 than anyone realized, skyrocketing in value even as profits tailed off." *Business Week* further pointed out: "The recession in New Economy profits helps explain why there was so much accounting chicanery during the boom years. Companies were under pressure to show earnings growth, even while their real profits were declining."

So corporate America fraudulently inflated revenues and earnings and/or disguised its level of debt. The Enron management set up supposedly "independent" partnerships which borrowed tens of millions that did not show up on the company's books. Enron was followed by a succession of exposés of fraudulent accounting involving big companies, though of somewhat lesser magnitude—Global Crossing, Dynegy, Tyco International, Adelphia Communications.

Then in late June the telecommunications giant WorldCom, the nation's second-largest long-distance carrier, announced an upward revision of almost \$4

painting the family house and buying a new house.

In one sense, the furor over Enron and WorldCom has masked the real, underlying dynamic of yesterday's Wall Street bull market. Even though Enron cooked its books, the books it cooked still showed a poor return on investment. The London *Economist* (18 May) noted that Enron's "operating return on capital and its return on equity [stock holdings] declined sharply during 1996-2000, falling below the economic cost of capital. In other words, the publicly available data showed the company was operating at a loss."

The long-accepted basic measure of corporate stock valuation is its price-earnings ratio (P/E)—the ratio of the price of a share to corporate profits per share. For well over a century, the average P/E of corporate stocks in the U.S. was concentrated in the 10 to 20 range. At the height of the 1920s boom, just before the crash of October 1929 which triggered the Great Depression, the P/E reached the then-historic high of 32.

When the bull market peaked in early 2000, the P/E was 39. Consider someone who in 1998 bought \$1,000 worth of stock at a P/E of 30. The annual return in terms of corporate profits would be \$33. Yet for the same \$1,000 he could have purchased a one-year certificate of deposit from a bank, insured by the federal government against default, with a guaranteed return in interest of \$50 or more. Why then were ever more American families investing an ever greater portion of

This pamphlet assesses recent changes in the world economy in a historical perspective, from the origins of modern imperialism in the late 19th century through the capitalist counterrevolution in East Europe and the former USSR and its aftermath. Reformist ideologies of "globalization" seek to obscure the role of the capitalist nation-state and the danger of interimperialist war which is inherent in capitalism, while amnestying the refusal of the labor bureaucracies to wage class struggle against their respective bourgeoisies.

Exploitation, poverty and social degradation can be eliminated only through proletarian revolutions in the imperialist centers as well as the neocolonial countries, laying the basis for an international planned socialist economy.

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A Spartacist Pamphlet

Imperialism, the "Global Economy" and Labor Reformism

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Capitalism...

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workers entering the labor market. Furthermore, those workers who do have jobs have seen their take-home pay fall as a result of reduced overtime and other deductions. For example, many companies are taking increased health insurance premiums out of their employees' paychecks. James Foreman, managing director of a business consulting firm, explained very clearly how capitalists respond to a recession by seeking to increase what Marx called the rate of exploitation: "Profits are squeezed so employers have to shift more of the cost to employees, and it is harder and harder to get a job, so companies don't have to worry about employees going somewhere else" (*New York Times*, 11 August).

The only thing sustaining the economic "recovery" is that consumer spending has not yet fallen significantly despite greater unemployment and smaller paychecks. How is that possible? Working-class families as well as affluent members of the middle class have so far resisted cutting their living standard—by going even more deeply into debt. The combined mortgage, auto loan and credit-card debt of the average American family is now **nearly 100 percent** of annual after-tax income, up from 75 percent a decade ago. Obviously, this trend cannot continue for long.

Significantly, the big banks are pushing through new federal legislation to make it a lot harder, if not impossible, for working people to get out from under their debt burden by declaring personal bankruptcy. Describing the Congressional bill as "a creditor's wish list," Henry Sommer, vice president of the National Association of Consumer Bankruptcy Lawyers, explained: "Many who by filing [for bankruptcy] now could save their homes from foreclosure or their cars from repossession won't be able to do so under this bill. And many will come out of bankruptcy owing as much as they owe now" (*Nation*, 8 April).

Wall Street's main man on Capitol Hill in guiding this soak-the-poor legislation through Congress is Senate *Democratic* majority leader Tom Daschle. Daschle has long had close ties to Citibank—the nation's largest credit-card usurer—which operates its main credit-card processing center in his home state of South Dakota. Last spring the Senate Democratic leader boasted of getting Congress to pass "a strong bankruptcy bill" for Bush to sign into law.

As working-class families experience the value of their retirement funds and other savings falling and their credit-card and other debt rising, they will have to cut back their consumption spending. Both business and academic economists therefore see an increasing likelihood of double-dip recession by the year's end. More fundamentally, there is a striking parallel between the U.S. economy today and that of Japan after its stock market/real estate bubble burst in the early 1990s:

"The similarities between America's financial bubble in the 1990s and Japan's in the 1980s have been well rehearsed. In both cases, share prices and capital spending soared; households and companies went on a borrowing binge.... "America's economy over the past two years has in many ways mirrored the performance of Japan's immediately after its bubble burst."

—*Economist*, 15 June

And ever since, the Japanese economy has been in a prolonged slump.

Wall Street's Democrats

Before the WorldCom fraud broke in June, Republican pollster Bill McInturff was certain the GOP would keep control of the House of Representatives and had a good chance of regaining a Senate majority in the November elections. After all, Bush was still riding high in the public standing as Commander-in-Chief of the "war on global terror." But the escalating wave of corporate scandals and the ensuing fall in stock prices have significantly changed the political climate in



AP

Argentine economy devastated by IMF austerity. Left: Soup kitchens in financial district of Buenos Aires. March by unemployed workers in August demands unemployment benefits and new jobs.



Reuters

terms of the upcoming elections. Republican strategist Stuart Stevens, Bush's media adviser in 2000, now thinks, "The Democrats have a real opportunity here." At the same time, the Republican Bush administration is playing up its drive toward war against Iraq.

The Republicans flaunt their close ties to Wall Street and the Fortune 500 corporations while touting the virtues of unfettered "free market" capitalism. The Democrats are the "soft cops" of American capitalism. They appeal to a different constituency, using a different rhetoric. The particular role of the Democratic Party in American bourgeois politics is to convince the working class and the oppressed black and Latino minorities that they, too, can benefit from the capitalist system with the right kind of government policies and regulations.

Thus Democratic Congressional leader Richard Gephardt blames the GOP leadership for allowing and encouraging Enron, WorldCom and the other corporate swindles: "In 1995, when the Republican leadership came in, both Newt Gingrich and Tom DeLay made statements that the main goal of their effort was to deregulate corporate America. Well, they did a lot of that in the last years, and now

recommending these stocks to the firm's clients.

A major theme of liberal journalism these days is muckraking exposés of the ties between the Bush gang, beginning with George W. himself, and corporate malefactors. The left-liberal *Nation* is campaigning for the ouster of Secretary of the Army Thomas White, a former Enron executive directly implicated in fixing the firm's books and also manipulating California's energy crisis a few years ago. Another favorite liberal target is Harvey Pitt, Bush's appointee as head of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), the agency charged with overseeing new stock issues and other corporate financial transactions. Pitt is a former top-level Wall Street lawyer mainly employed by the big accounting firms. Liberal publicist Frank Rich quipped that appointing him head of the SEC is like appointing a Mafia *consigliere* as director of the FBI.

However, leading Democrats are just as involved with and beholden to corporate America as their GOP counterparts. We've already indicated that Senate Democratic majority leader Daschle is one of Citigroup's main political point men in Washington. On behalf of his Wall

tion for fraudulently inflating its revenues through phony transactions with other telecom companies. McAuliffe parlayed an initial investment of \$100,000 into \$18 million when the firm went public by selling stock. Tipped off by inside information, the Democratic national chairman sold his stock before the telecom company went down the tubes. Incidentally, some top union bureaucrats also benefited from Global Crossing's operations.

The ties of Daschle, Lieberman and McAuliffe to corporate America, including its shadier operators, are a surface manifestation of the fundamental nature and role of the Democratic Party. Abetted by the AFL-CIO labor bureaucracy (itself a component of the party's leadership), the Democrats seek to suppress the struggles of the working class and oppressed minorities through political deceit as well as state repression.

This was clearly evidenced earlier this summer in the face of a possible strike by West Coast longshoremen against the anti-union attacks of the Pacific Maritime Association. The International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) contract expired just after the WorldCom scandal broke which provoked an upsurge of public hostility toward corporate bigwigs. A longshore strike against the maritime bosses would have had widespread popular support extending far beyond the ranks of organized labor. But in the face of threats by the Bush administration, the ILWU bureaucracy seeks refuge among "labor friendly" Democrats instead of fighting for independent workers action and solidarity among workers in the U.S. and internationally. As we wrote:

"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."

—"ILWU Threatened by 'National Unity' Crusade" (WV No. 785, 9 August)

Wall Street's Troubles Rattle World Economy

In the past, a stock market slide and ensuing economic slump in the U.S. damaged the European and Japanese economies mainly through the contraction of world trade aggravated by protectionist policies in Washington. That is what happened in the early 1930s and again in the early 1980s, the most severe global economic downturn in the post-World War II era.

Additionally, however, European and Japanese capitalists are suffering the consequences of their massive investment in Wall Street securities and vast expansion of manufacturing and other operations in the U.S. Revenue from the domestic sales of European-owned American subsidiaries (e.g., DaimlerChrysler) is now three times greater than the value of European commodity exports to the U.S. Consequently, a recession in the U.S. impacts on European and Japanese capital more directly and quickly than in the past.

Thus *all* of the major stock markets in the capitalist world have fallen in tandem since the Wall Street bubble burst two and a half years ago. In fact, the main European stock market indices, the FTSE and FTSE Eurotop, have plummeted to an



WV Photo

Spartacist supporters at Oakland February 9 united-front demonstration against government's "anti-terror" laws.

we see some of the results of that" (*New York Times*, 28 June).

Gephardt to the contrary (and he knows better), the financial deregulation of the 1990s was very much a *bipartisan* operation. When not preoccupied with the Monica Lewinsky affair, the Clinton White House collaborated with Gingrich, DeLay & Co. in undoing many New Deal-derived regulatory measures designed to curtail the worst excesses of unbridled speculation. For example, in 1999 Clinton and the Republican-led Congress repealed the 1933 Glass-Steagall Act which prohibited Wall Street firms from engaging in both investment banking and stock trading. An investment bank gets money from corporations for arranging and promoting their new stock and bond issues. A brokerage house gets money from its clients for recommending those stocks that are the best buy. There's an obvious conflict of interest here. Witness Merrill Lynch analysts describing some Internet stocks as "crap" in private while

Street masters, he's just condemned millions of working-class families to years of debt peonage.

Another of Wall Street's favorite Democrats is Joseph Lieberman, the party's vice-presidential candidate in 2000. In the early 1990s, then head of the SEC Arthur Levitt proposed new federal legislation requiring corporations to list as an expense on their financial statements the income of their executives from exercised stock options. It was Lieberman who spearheaded the counter-offensive that killed Levitt's proposed reform in the Senate. This leading Democrat is thus directly responsible for perpetuating the most important form of de facto fraudulent accounting practiced by U.S. corporations. In fact, Lieberman is still a die-hard defender of the stock-options scam.

Then there's Terry McAuliffe, chairman of the Democratic National Committee, with his close and lucrative ties to the failed telecom company Global Crossing, now under criminal investiga-

sought to have the referendum declared unconstitutional.” Also opposing the referendum were the anti-Communist International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and the International Labor Organization—an arm of that imperialist den of thieves, the United Nations—as well as UN “human rights” commissioner Mary Robinson. Nor was that all. The director of the United States Overseas Private Investment Corporation, a government agency, warned: “When a country is out of step with internationally recognized workers’ rights, that could force us to review our investments,” amounting to a whopping \$4.3 billion. Such types hadn’t talked about “workers’ rights” so much since the days when the CIA was bankrolling the counterrevolutionary, priest-infested Solidarność “union” in Poland in the 1980s!

Even the IG acknowledged, in passing, that the CTV bureaucracy had a history of “playing a central role in Yankee imperialism’s ‘dirty games’.” In fact, the CTV has long been notorious for its close ties to the AFL-CIO’s “American Institute for Free Labor Development” (AIFLD), a CIA “labor” front now called the “American Center for International Labor Solidarity.” In 1990, the CTV’s “Labor University” trained counterrevolutionary operatives as part of the AIFLD/CIA-backed mobilization that helped bring down the left-nationalist Sandinista government in Nicaragua.

It didn’t take a rocket scientist to figure out that the U.S. imperialists had it in for Chávez. Only idiots or CIA apologists could gloss over that fact. Yet the IG statement dismissed Chávez as someone who merely “irritates” Washington and intoned that “Chávez defends the capitalist system.” Of course, this bourgeois bonapartist does not oppose the capitalist system or even imperialist subjugation. But he did flaunt a level of independence—compared, e.g., to Mexico’s Vicente Fox—intolerable to the imperialists.

Over a year before the IG’s statement, *Business Week* (20 September 1999) reported that Chávez’s election had “brought investment—local and foreign—to a screeching halt.” In August 2000, Chávez became the first head of state to meet Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein since the 1991 Gulf War, “in defiance of criticism from the United States, a major importer of Venezuelan oil” (*New York Times*, 11 August 2000). That October, he signed a deal to provide Castro’s Cuba with one-third of its oil imports, on favorable terms. These facts did not even get a mention in the IG’s six-page statement, nor was there a single word about the pillaging of Venezuela’s oil by U.S. imperialism nor the slightest sense of what it means for such a country to live under the imperialist yoke. And ever since, the IG has maintained a stony silence on events in Venezuela—in the face of a number of shutdowns organized by the oil bosses in cahoots with the CTV tops and even of last April’s “Made in U.S.A.” coup attempt.

When Is a Union Not a Union?

Given its history of lining up behind “anti-imperialist” nationalists from Mexico to Puerto Rico and beyond, one could have expected the IG to cozy up to the nationalist-populist Chávez. Indeed, behind the IG’s criminal refusal to defend the Mexican CTM is its opportunist pursuit of elements around the “left” nationalist Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas. According to the IG, the only real unions in Mexico are the so-called “independent” unions that are politically close to the PRD. This position has no other purpose than to relieve the IG of having to defend the CTM unions from the bosses’ offensive and to prettify the pro-PRD bureaucracy.

The IG even opposed a “closed shop” provision in Mexico’s labor law, which provides the unions the right to demand that the so-called exclusion clause obligating employers to hire only union members and to discharge non-union

members be included in union contracts (see “Mexico: The IG, the Unions and the State,” WV No. 775, 22 February). Nor did the IG write a single word about one of the most important union struggles in Mexico in recent years, the strike by 45,000 CTM-organized sugar workers that was declared “non-existent” (banned) by the government in December 2000. To the IG, the strike was “non-existent” because it contradicted their claim that the corporatist CTM was simply an agency of the bourgeoisie.

The IG argues that the class character of the CTM was transformed through an anti-Communist purge in 1948-49. But by then, the CTM had been part of the PRI and its predecessor, the Party of the Mexican Revolution, for a decade. By



Sabetta/Getty

Unholy alliance between oil bosses and CTV union bureaucrats: Workers at PDVSA state oil company mobilized by bosses to protest firing of anti-Chávez oil executives four days prior to coup. Sign reads: “We Are All PDVSA.”

the IG’s standard, the class character of the AFL-CIO should have changed with the Cold War purges of the late 1940s. And in the case of the CTV, the bourgeois AD achieved hegemony over the Venezuelan trade-union movement by denouncing Communist-led unions to the military regime during World War II and then setting up rival unions in their place. When a military coup brought the AD to power in 1945, it set up a corporatist system in which strikes were settled through systematic government arbitration while trade-union leaders were integrated into state bodies. When the CTV was founded in 1947, every member of its Executive Committee was in AD, including one who doubled as vice president of the Constituent Assembly.

CTV bureaucrats ruled their bailiwick through blatant vote-rigging, purging of leftists and beatings of oppositionists by gangs of thugs—or by direct intervention of state security forces. By the 1990s, CTV leaders were sworn in by the head of state, top CTV officials had a direct interministerial phone in their offices, and the federation’s finances were part of the public budget and were audited by the government accounting office. The flow of oil money allowed the bourgeoisie in Venezuela to afford a few more democratic trappings than in Mexico, including the managed alternation of power between AD and its bourgeois rival, COPEI. So COPEI also got its cut of positions in the CTV bureaucracy.

This is hardly the first time that the IG has taken a very different attitude toward corporatist unions in countries other than Mexico. After mass protests erupted in Argentina, the IG began describing the Peronist unions there as bona fide workers organizations, even while acknowledging in a January 2002 article that “all the main leaders are part of the [bourgeois] ‘Justicialist’ movement founded by General Perón.” Likewise in Algeria, the IG treats the UGTA as a real trade-union federation despite its links to the military regime (see “Algeria Rocked by Mass Protests,” WV No. 761, 6 July 2001).

One could scarcely imagine a more graphic illustration of Trotsky’s observation that centrist opportunism, defined by

accommodating to differing pressures on various national terrains, is inherently nationalist. According to the IG, the Mexican CTM is not a legitimate labor organization, while the Peronist unions in Argentina were corporatist but are no longer and the CTV never was. Like gods on high, the little *caudillos* of the IG decree which unions are real on the basis of their opportunist whims of the moment. In Mexico, the targets of their affections are elements around the PRD. In Argentina, they adapt to the mass protests against a burgeoning economic catastrophe. And one can only wonder who or what they’re chasing after in Venezuela.

While the corporatist CTM is corrupt and gangster-ridden, we Trotskyists do not recognize a *class* difference between the CTM-affiliated unions and other unions, whether the “independents” in Mexico or the CTV unions in Venezuela. With the PRI no longer in power, the CTM does not even have a state patron anymore. In any case, as Leon Trotsky noted in “Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay” (1940), a common feature in the development of all modern trade-union organizations under reformist or nationalist leadership “is their drawing closely to and growing together with the state power.” Marxists fight for the class independence of the proletariat in all countries. In Mexico or Venezuela, that means breaking the unions from the capitalist parties and their imperialist patrons. In the U.S., we fight to break workers from the Democratic Party and demand that the AFL-CIO cut its ties with the CIA’s “labor” fronts.

It takes some nerve for the IG to call to “defend the independence of the unions” in Venezuela. These are the words of the group that in 1996-97 dragged the municipal workers union in the Brazilian town of Volta Redonda through the bourgeois courts, in a bureaucratic struggle to hold on to the leadership of this cop-infested union, in which the IG’s supporters ran an ex-cop for union president. The IG’s Brazilian comrades turned over the union’s bank statements, account books, statutes and minutes of union meetings to the courts as “evidence” (see “IG’s Brazil Cover-Up: Dirty Hands, Cynical Lies,” WV No. 671, 11 July 1997).

Pabloites of the Second Mobilization

What is perhaps most curious about the IG’s line on Venezuela is its apparent spurning of Chávez’s greatest fan, Fidel Castro. For the IGlistas have themselves long had a soft spot for the Cuban Stalinist leader, even before Jan Norden & Co. defected from our organization to found the IG in 1996.

Norden’s Stalinoid bent toward Castro’s Cuba was expressed, perhaps most grotesquely, in his initial attempts as editor of *Workers Vanguard* to alibi the Stalinist show trial and execution of Gen-

eral Ochoa on charges of international drug dealing in 1990. Ochoa had fought with Castro against the Batista dictatorship and led the Cuban troops in Angola against the forces backed by the U.S. and South Africa. Norden was finally persuaded that the Ochoa trial was a classic Stalinist purge. But in the article “Stalinist Show Trial in Cuba—The Execution of General Ochoa” (WV No. 500, 20 April 1990), Norden insisted on “disproving” Washington’s claims that the Havana regime was involved in the drug trade by upholding Castro’s integrity: “For Castro to lie about this would be to invite an invasion.” Of course, the White House’s drug charges against Castro were part and parcel of U.S. imperialism’s relentless drive to crush the Cuban Revolution. But to assert, as Norden did, that Castro couldn’t lie about this was a statement of blind faith in the Cuban Stalinist bureaucracy. This was fought out, resulting in a clarification box in WV No. 501 (4 May 1990) that noted, “It is not that Castro cannot tell a lie, or that Stalinist regimes never run drugs.”

We have characterized the IG’s politics as “Pabloism of the second mobilization,” referring to the liquidationist current which destroyed the Fourth International in the early 1950s. Faced with the onset of the imperialist Cold War and the creation of Stalinist-ruled deformed workers states in East Europe, the Pabloites denied the need to construct Trotskyist parties and argued that the Stalinists and social democrats could be pressured to outline a “roughly” revolutionary course. The IG’s opportunism, in turn, reflects despair over the destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92 and imperialist gloating about the “death of communism,” leading to an increasingly desperate search for, and accommodation to, social forces other than the proletariat and vehicles other than a Leninist vanguard party to advance the cause of the struggle for human emancipation.

To see where the IG’s impressionism and opportunist appetites could lead them, recall that Michel Pablo ended up as an adviser to Ben Bella’s FLN government, which came to power following the Algerian war of independence, while Pablo’s man in Argentina, Nahuel Moreno, liquidated into the Peronist movement. On the other hand, they had something to sell out. Except for a few clots here and there, the IG’s existence is largely limited to the etherworld of cyberspace.

In our first article on the Nordenites’ split, titled “A Shamefaced Defection from Trotskyism” (WV No. 648, 5 July 1996), we observed: “As to where they are going, the possibilities are wide open so long as the minimum norm of being anti-Marxist is met.” In its political appreciation of a gang of CIA-linked labor bureaucrats in Venezuela, Norden & Co. have shown that those possibilities are very wide open indeed. ■

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“Tomorrow It Could Be Against You”

Anti-Muslim Hysteria in Florida

On Friday, September 13, three Muslim medical students (two of them U.S. citizens and one a foreign student on a valid visa) driving two cars across southern Florida's Interstate 75 were met with a massive police “anti-terrorism” dragnet of 100 cops from 19 agencies. The highway was shut down and the three students were dragged away for hours of police interrogation, while their cars and belongings were examined by bomb-sniffing dogs, a police robot, men in ceramic bomb suits, X-ray machines, chemical swabs and radiation-detecting equipment flown in by the FBI. The names of the three students, Ayman Gheith, Kambiz Butt and Omer Chaudhry, were run against terrorist databases, possible Florida “targets” were identified and ports were alerted. But after over 17 hours in custody, all three men were released and the cops forced to admit that there were in fact no bombs, no “weapons of mass destruction,” no “terrorist links,” and no “terrorist plot.”

The ostensible basis for this massive display of police power was a telephone “tip” after the students stopped for breakfast the day before at a Shoney's restaurant in the backwater town of Calhoun, Georgia. A white customer noted that Gheith was wearing a skullcap and had a long beard, and claimed she overheard the three men “giggling and laughing” about September 11 memorial services. So she scribbled down their license plate numbers and phoned them in to the police. Her phone call precipitated a “Be On the Lookout” alert. Shortly after midnight, the three medical students were pulled over as they began



Kambiz Butt, Ayman Gheith, Omer Chaudhry at press conference in Florida, September 15.

the final leg of their cross-country drive to South Miami, where they planned to start a medical rotation at Larkin Community Hospital.

“We never made any threatening remarks in that restaurant,” said Gheith, who family members said had helped organize a candlelight vigil at his medical school after the September 11 attacks. “She saw obviously the way I was dressed and maybe she put a little salt and pepper into her story” (*New York Times*, 14 September). Gheith poignantly remarked, “I think it's time for us as Americans to put down our big sticks and pick up our books and read about other people and read about what they believe before we jump to conclusions.”

Outrageously, Georgia prosecutors are still looking for a basis to prosecute

the men for creating a “hoax”! “These people are going to learn a lesson,” a Georgia Bureau of Investigation spokesman threatened. Now, all three have been kicked out of the Larkin Hospital program, purportedly based on “safety” concerns as a result of an avalanche of threatening phone calls and e-mails received by the hospital. We demand: *Hands off Gheith, Butt and Chaudhry! Reinstate them at Larkin Hospital!*

“These efforts, started yesterday at a Shoney's, are something all Floridians should be very pleased about,” Florida governor Jeb Bush intoned. “In this time of heightened vigilance, I think it's important to show this system works” (*Miami Herald*, 14 September). The victimization of these three Muslim students is a vivid illustration

of how the government's anti-terrorism apparatus will “work,” especially the new “turn in your neighbor” plan called TIPS (Terrorist Information and Prevention System), the latest government effort to augment its legal arsenal in preparation for a never-ending “war against terrorism.”

In the buildup for its impending attack on Iraq, the Bush administration is also desperate for something it can claim as an intelligence victory in its “war on terror.” All the government's previous such “victories” have proven to be pure bull. Immediately on the heels of the fizzled Florida “plot,” the Feds arrested five members of a supposed Al Qaeda-trained cell in Buffalo—all of them U.S. citizens. Yet the FBI admitted that the purported cell was not active, and that they did not have “anything specific that they were planning that would jeopardize the health and safety of anybody in the United States or western New York” (CNN, 15 September).

“It is against us today,” Gheith told reporters after his release. “Tomorrow it could be against you.” We have said that the post-September 11 laws and directives that initially targeted immigrants and those of Near Eastern descent would be used to target black people and the whole working class. A striking confirmation of this is the government's promise to use its war powers authority to prevent a strike by the powerful ILWU longshore union. The Bush government is now imbued with the notion that it can do whatever it wants to those that dissent. Witness the absurd case of a 65-year-old man arrested near Pittsburgh earlier this month for holding up a sign reading “The Bushes Must Love the Poor—They've Made So Many of Us” as a Bush motorcade went by.

What the government can get away with will be determined by the level of social struggle. It is urgently necessary to mobilize the social power of the labor movement to demand: Down with the government's “war on terror”! Defend immigrant rights! Break the bosses' “national unity” through class struggle! ■

Woomera...

(continued from page 2)

Mr. Bakhtiyari's visa and, less than two weeks after his recapture, Almadar and other detainees were brutally beaten again in a rampage by detention centre guards. Stop this vicious persecution! We demand: Asylum now for all refugees—no deportations! Close the concentration camps! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!

It is a measure of the racist barbarism of the Australian capitalist state that it seeks to deport Afghan refugees back to a country that it is helping its U.S. allies to devastate through terror bombing. Many of these refugees fled the former Taliban regime. Like the present regime of cut-throats, these woman-hating fundamentalists are the creatures of the U.S.

and, among others, its Australian junior partners who bought and paid for their services against the Soviet Red Army's liberating intervention in the 1980s. Meanwhile another large group of refugees is threatened with deportation to Iraq, where they will face being starved by the murderous UN blockade that the Australian navy helps enforce, and/or being annihilated by a threatened U.S./Australia military onslaught.

Outrage at the government's detention of refugees in concentration camps, in large part policed by state ALP governments, was spectacularly demonstrated during the Easter weekend pro-refugee demonstrations at Woomera. On 29 March defiant protests by detainees and nearly 1,000 anti-racist activists liberated 50 asylum seekers including Roqiah and the Bakhtiyari brothers.

While eleven remain free as a result of

the March actions, some 30 recaptured detainees have been charged with “escaping detention” and face up to five years in jail. Additionally, over 30 activists have been charged, with some facing up to four years jail for “harbouring escapees.” From the later 28 June “breakout,” 20 of the 27 recaptured detainees have been ordered to appear in the Adelaide Magistrates Court on 5 November while five of the several

dozen refugee supporters who assisted them have been charged and three face up to ten years in jail if convicted.

Your government's vicious persecution of defiant immigrant detainees and their courageous supporters is aimed at cowing all opponents of racist reaction and state-sponsored union-busting. We demand: Drop the charges against all Woomera detainees and protesters! ■



March 29: Refugees break out of Woomera Detention Centre in Australia as hundreds of supporters rally outside.

Spartacus Youth Club Class Series

CHICAGO

Alternate Tuesdays, 6 p.m.

October 1: **Marxism vs. Anarchism**

University of Illinois at Chicago
Room 117 Lincoln Hall
707 S. Morgan St.

Information and readings: (312) 563-0441
or e-mail spartacist@iname.com

TORONTO

Thursday, 6:30 p.m.

September 26: **Marxism, Communism and the Fight for Revolution Today**

University of Toronto
International Student Centre
33 St. George St. (north of College)
Information and readings: (416) 593-4138
or e-mail spartcan@on.aibn.com

NEW YORK CITY

Alternate Tuesdays, 7 p.m.

September 24: **U.S. Imperialism is the World's Biggest Oppressor—U.S. Hands Off Iraq!**

Columbia University
(116th and Broadway)
Meet at Hamilton Hall Lobby
Information and readings: (212) 267-1025
or e-mail nysl@compuserve.com

BAY AREA

Alternate Tuesdays, 7 p.m.

September 24: **Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism**

UC Berkeley, 246 Dwinelle Hall
Information and readings: (510) 839-0851

VANCOUVER

Tuesday, 6 p.m.

September 24: **The Principles of Communism**

University of British Columbia,
Student Union Building, Room 213
Information and readings: (604) 687-0353
or e-mail tlit@look.ca

LOS ANGELES

Alternate Saturdays, 2 p.m.

October 5: **Introduction to Marxism: Historical Materialism**

3806 Beverly Blvd., Room 215
(Vermont/Beverly Red Line Station)
Information and readings: (213) 380-8239
or e-mail slsycla@cs.com

ICL Web Site:
www.icl-fi.org

WORKERS VANGUARD

New York Spartacus Youth Club:

Protest U.S. War Moves Against Iraq!

The Spartacus Youth Clubs are holding speakouts across the country this week and next protesting the U.S. imperialist war moves against Iraq. We reprint below the call for the united-front protest issued by the New York SYC on September 15.

Hell-bent on going to war with Iraq, the Bush cabal has arrayed an armada of death in the Persian Gulf and dispatched an advance war command team to nearby Qatar. An American military attack would

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revisit massive death and destruction on the semicolonial peoples of Iraq, much as the imperialists laid waste to a benighted Afghanistan under the banner of the “war on terror.” In the U.S., the “war on terror” has been used as a pretext for repressive new laws, racist dragnets and anti-immigrant witchhunts, in which the Columbia University administration is complicit by handing over the names and records of immigrant students to the INS. The Spartacus Youth Club calls on all those who oppose imperialist war moves against Iraq and the attacks on immigrant students to join us on Wednesday, September 18, in a united-front protest with the following demands: *U.S. hands off Iraq! Down with the UN starvation embargo! Protest Columbia handing over students’ names and records to the INS!*

As part of its open-ended “war on terror,” the American ruling class is stepping up its efforts on campus to recruit to its officer corps and spy agencies. When the SYC spotted two tables manned by Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC) cadets at Columbia University’s student



Young Spartacus
Spartacist-led Revolutionary Contingent at San Francisco antiwar protest during onset of imperialist “war on terror” last October.

activities day on September 6, we initiated a speakout protest, featuring such chants as “Army recruiters, imperialist looters—off campus now!” ROTC is designed to provide specialized training for the next generation of imperialist butchers, to produce an educated officer caste that will plan and execute wars while working-

class and minority youth are hurled to the front lines to serve as cannon fodder.

Leftist students drove ROTC off many campuses, including Columbia in 1969, during the Vietnam antiwar student protests of the 1960s and ’70s. In that period, a group of black students occupied the ROTC lounge in Columbia’s Hartley Hall

and renamed it Malcolm X Lounge. Now, the federal government has begun enforcing a 1996 law that requires schools to allow military recruiters on campus or risk losing hundreds of millions of dollars in federal funds. On September 30, the CIA is sending its agents onto the Columbia campus to recruit for U.S. imperialism’s premier spy syndicate, which has tortured and murdered literally millions of people since World War II. We oppose the use of the universities for military training and military and CIA recruitment. *Not one man, not one penny for the U.S. imperialist military!*

War is endemic to the imperialist system, which is driven by competition for sources of profits and spheres of influence between rival advanced capitalist countries. To oppose war simply in the name of “peace” or to look to pressure the more “humane” imperialists is to ignore the fundamental class nature of the state, which enforces the rule of the capitalist class over the working class. The racist American capitalist state, which at home terrorizes and disproportionately imprisons black people and mobilizes to smash strikes, cannot be made to serve the oppressed and working people of the world.

There is no solution to imperialist war and exploitation short of socialist revolution by the working class, the only class that has the social power and consistent class interest to sweep away the capitalist system. Our revolutionary-defensist position means that in the case of imperialist military aggression against dependent countries, we are for a defeat of the U.S. imperialists and agitate for workers struggle at home in defense of the semicolonial

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New Court Papers Filed

Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Now!

On August 27, attorneys for political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal filed an appeal with the Pennsylvania Supreme Court seeking to reverse the order of Judge Pamela Dembe barring the confession of Arnold Beverly and rejecting Jamal’s second application to reverse his conviction under Pennsylvania’s Post-Conviction Relief Act (PCRA). In his latest papers, Jamal is also seeking a special hearing before the state’s highest court to present Beverly’s testimony.

One and a half years after Jamal’s current attorneys filed Beverly’s sworn affidavit that he, not Jamal, shot and killed Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner on 9 December 1981, state and federal courts have refused to even consider his testimony, leaving Jamal under

the shadow of death in Pennsylvania’s Greene County prison. Last December, a federal court overturned Jamal’s death sentence while affirming the conviction, condemning Mumia to life in prison. Appeals filed by both the state and Mumia’s attorneys are on hold pending the outcome of this latest PCRA petition.

Jamal’s appeal papers constitute a devastating indictment of the machinations used not only by the courts and prosecutors but also Jamal’s former attorneys, Leonard Weinglass and Daniel Williams, to suppress the evidence proving that Mumia is an innocent man. They paint as well a searing portrait of the racism that pervades the Pennsylvania courts and the judiciary’s utter indifference to even the

appearance of a fair trial for a black radical like Mumia.

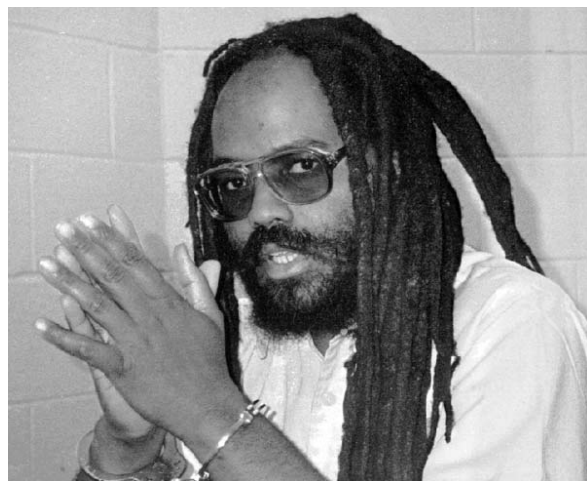
The case of Mumia Abu-Jamal is a textbook example of a racist frame-up. A Black Panther Party spokesman at the age of 15, an award-winning journalist and a supporter of the Philadelphia MOVE organization, Jamal was saddled at trial with a lawyer he didn’t want—and one who did not want Mumia’s case—a judge, Albert Sabo, known as the “king of death row,” an overwhelmingly white jury, a prosecutor’s office that concealed evidence and a parade of witnesses who were coerced by the notorious Philadelphia police into giving lying testimony against Mumia.

Judge Dembe barred the Beverly confession and other evidence of Jamal’s

innocence on the pretext that Jamal had failed to comply with the filing deadlines mandated by a 1995 state law enacted to drastically cut off death row appeals. But the statute provides an exception to the filing deadline where “interference by government officials” is responsible for the failure to previously raise a claim. As the new legal papers explain, in actively working to suppress Beverly’s confession and other evidence of Jamal’s innocence, Weinglass and Williams “acted in function, if not in fact, as *agents* of government officials insofar as their actions served the interests not of petitioner, but of the District Attorney.”

Using information contained in the affidavit of one of Jamal’s former attorneys,

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WV Photo