

Down With Colonial Occupation of Iraq!

U.S. Bloodbath in Baghdad

All U.S. Troops Out of the Near East Now!



AFP
Imperialist devastation and slaughter: Iraqi worker being rescued from telecommunications facility hit by U.S. missile.

APRIL 8—As U.S. forces tighten their stranglehold around the Iraqi capital of Baghdad, they are leaving behind a trail of savage death and destruction. The morgues are filled with the bodies of dead Iraqi soldiers and civilians; the hospitals are overflowing with men, women and children who have been bombed by American jets, shot by American tanks, or who have lost arms and legs to American cluster bombs. After U.S. tanks rolled through residential and industrial areas on the outskirts of Baghdad, firing for three hours at anything that moved, one American soldier recalled, “People lying all over the side of the road—I can’t even count how many.”

The Pentagon boasted of 3,000 Iraqis killed just in those few hours—far more than even U.S. commanders in the field claim. There is no way to know how many have really been massacred. The International Red Cross reports that the casualty rate in Baghdad is so high that hospitals have stopped counting the number of wounded. Last night, under the guise of targeting Saddam Hussein and his sons, the U.S. dropped four 2,000-pound “bunker buster” bombs on a residential neighborhood of Baghdad, killing at least 14 people.

The Pentagon and its kept media brag about their victories in Iraq. *This is not a war but a one-sided slaughter.* In just over

two weeks, the U.S. and Britain have carried out over 30,000 air missions, including 12,000 military strikes. One BBC correspondent likened American bombing raids against Iraqi troops to “shooting fish in a barrel.”

Despite heroic acts of resistance, Iraq barely has any means to defend itself. The Pentagon’s budget for this war alone is twice Iraq’s total national income. Iraq has been bled white by 12 years of United Nations sanctions, which have resulted in the slow deaths by malnutrition and inadequate medical care of over 1.5 million of its citizens. That same blockade has deprived it of the realization of its wealth in oil. As a result, Iraq’s infrastructure

is in shambles and its armed forces, starved of resources and subjected to incessant bombing, has been reduced to a third of its size at the time of the 1991 Gulf War.

Leading up to the invasion, obliging UN inspectors in search of the still undiscovered “weapons of mass destruction” revealed Iraq’s remaining military resources to the poised colonial invaders of American imperialism. Today, Iraq can barely maintain a stable army on the battlefield. It has been denied any ability to manufacture weapons or to resupply its armed forces. In short, Iraq was and is a society on the ropes, now besieged by

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Reuters

Attack on Antiwar Protesters, ILWU

Oakland Police Open Fire on the Docks

Open Season on the Home Front?

The following statement was issued on April 7 by the Partisan Defense Committee, a legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League.

Early this morning at the Port of Oakland, riot-equipped police wearing gas

masks opened fire with wooden bullets, pellet-filled “sting bags” and concussion grenades on picketers protesting the “war merchants at the Oakland docks.” Motorcycle cops gunned their engines, speeding to within feet of the picket lines, and protesters were beaten and dragged to the ground. Among the many injured in this wanton and gratuitous police attack were several longshoremen, including a crane operator whose hand was badly mangled by police fire, threatening his very ability to work. Dozens were arrested, including International Longshore and Warehouse

Union (ILWU) Local 10 business agent Jack Heyman.

Trent Willis, another Local 10 business agent, declared: “They shot my guys. We’re not going to work today.” That’s exactly what should have happened throughout the port. With their bloody assault on antiwar protesters and ILWU members at the Oakland docks, the cops took aim and fired at the stronghold of labor power on the West Coast. *The Partisan Defense Committee calls for answering this assault by mobilizing mass, militant protest centered on the*

social power of labor! Drop all the charges!

The police attack was entirely premeditated. Two days ago, at an antiwar protest in Oakland officially sanctioned and dominated by local Democratic Party politicians, the cops were barely in evidence. But when a protest was taken to the docks, which are crucial to the U.S. imperialist war machine, the armed fist of the capitalist state was brought down in a hail of wooden bullets and concussion grenades, an attack fully endorsed by a

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Antiwar Postal Workers Victimized

19 March 2003

Dear Workers Vanguard,

I am writing this letter on the very night that the U.S. government is beginning its mass slaughter of Iraqis in the name of “freedom.” In the name of the “war on terror” these same rulers are attacking basic civil liberties, witchhunting immigrants, criminalizing opposition to the war, and overturning hard-won union gains. Several of my co-workers at the Post Office recently ran afoul of Postal Police for the “crime” of exercising their right to freedom of speech and, most particularly, for organizing *workers* to come out against the war. I am glad to say that the publicity and support for their case has led to a happy outcome.

Prior to the January 18th antiwar demo in San Francisco, two retired postal workers (with a combined seniority of 63 years between them) were handing out leaflets at the main postal facility in San Francisco urging workers to join a postal workers contingent. Their leaflet was endorsed by both the President of the SF American Postal Workers Union (APWU) and by SF Letter Carriers (NALC) Local 214. (These are the

two largest unions at the Post Office.) All of my co-workers agree that what particularly galled postal management was that the leaflet was entitled “No war on Iraq, No War on Postal Workers” and that it linked the war on Iraq to the ongoing assaults on working people here at home. (Postal workers remember with bitterness how callously we were treated during the anthrax letters crisis when the Congress was evacuated and postal workers were forced to keep working even though it meant some died.)

Even though these two workers were standing exactly where the union officials always stand to hand out material, they were soon approached by a very adamant sergeant from the Postal Police (there is, indeed, such an entity and they are *armed*) who ordered them to stop leafletting. As they moved to comply and retreated to a more distant spot, they were cited for leafletting and ordered to appear in *Federal* court.

The SF Central Labor Council passed a motion in defense of these workers. Then an Internet posting by the “Campaign Against the Taft-Hartley” encouraged workers to come out for the hearing.

I went because I could well imagine such a thing happening to me and because I’m sick and tired of seeing the Post Office ride roughshod over workers. I was pleased to see about 20 other people from the NALC, the APWU, the ILWU, the Web Pressman and others come out, too.

The Public Defender, an energetic young woman, seemed impressed with the turnout and took down everyone’s first name, occupation and relationship to the defendants. With this in hand she went off to argue behind closed doors with the authorities (whom we never actually saw). After much back and forth, she came back with the news that the case had been dropped. The “official” reason for this was that the citation forms were improperly filled out. Even the Public Defender didn’t believe this, instead ascribing it to the support the case had

aroused. The sergeant from the Postal Police was there, too, looking angry and making threatening remarks.

This small example shows both the power of labor, and the fear and loathing with which the American rulers regard the American working class. I’m sure the case would never have been dropped if all of us hadn’t all been there. It is clear that the Post Office (and the U.S. government in general) hate the idea of workers organizing against the war, even if only for a contingent in a liberal, antiwar demo. They fear the day when the workers slip the chains with which the labor misleaders bind them to the Democrats and start staging labor actions against war and the capitalist system which breeds it. When I see the bloody destruction that the U.S. is raining down on Iraq; the layoffs, poverty and racism at home; the terrible conditions in which my brothers and sisters labor at the Post Office, I know that that day is long overdue.

D.C.
Oakland Postal Worker

Editorial Note

On Turkey and the (Non) “Northern Front”

In “All U.S. Troops Out of the Near East Now! Defend Iraq!” (WV No. 799, 14 March), we wrote, referring to the parliamentary vote in Turkey rejecting U.S. demands that an invasion force of 62,000 troops be allowed to move through the country: “Despite the Turkish vote, the U.S. is already moving troops and weaponry through Turkey to the Iraqi border, while otherwise laying the groundwork for a full-scale invasion.” Coming in the context of a paragraph describing the massive arsenal of war then being arrayed for a U.S. invasion of semicolonial Iraq, this sentence clearly implied that such reported movements were part of a “northern front” for the war, when in fact the evidence was to the contrary.

The report on the American troop movement through Turkey came from the 7 March edition of the London *Financial Times* as well as the BBC. The *Financial Times* article noted that while the U.S. denied any troop movement, the Turkish

NTV television station “reported two convoys totalling 50 trucks had set off yesterday from Iskenderun to a base at Mardin, near the Iraqi border.” We do not know the nature of the movement of the convoy through Turkey (or if it really took place); nor do 50 trucks a northern front make. What is clear, however, is that the Turkish parliament’s vote and its refusal to revoke the issue of American troop deployment, despite pressure from Washington, dashed the U.S. imperialists’ expectations for a northern front, reducing it to a handful of Special Ops units and Kurdish *pesh merga* fighters. In that context, it was careless for WV to use the reports of the convoy movement to wrongly imply that it was part of a full-scale American invasion from the north. Especially given the massive disinformation campaign launched by the Pentagon and its media whores, exceptional vigilance is necessary to confirm the numerous “facts” that are reported by the various “news” sources out there. ■



TROTSKY

Communism and the Defense of Oppressed Nations

Counterposed to the reformist left, whose antiwar coalitions are based on appeals to the capitalist rulers for “peace not war,” the Spartacist League has called for the military defense of Iraq against the U.S. colonialist invasion and for class struggle at home by the American proletariat. In a 1932 statement written for the Left Opposition, at the time an expelled faction of the Stalinized Communist International, Bolshevik leader

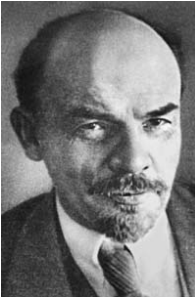
Leon Trotsky emphasized that any support to liberal pacifism served to block the mobilization of the working class against imperialist war, which can only be ended through proletarian socialist revolution.

Capitalist brigands always conduct a “defensive” war, even when Japan is marching against Shanghai and France against Syria or Morocco. The revolutionary proletariat distinguishes only between *wars of oppression* and *wars of liberation*. The character of a war is defined, not by diplomatic falsifications, but by the class which conducts the war and the objective aims it pursues in that war. The wars of the imperialist states, apart from the pretexts and political rhetoric, are of an oppressive character, reactionary and inimical to the people. Only the wars of the proletariat and of the oppressed nations can be characterized as wars of liberation....

Whoever directly or indirectly supports the system of colonization and protectorates, the domination of British capital in India, the domination of Japan in Korea or in Manchuria, of France in Indochina or in Africa, whoever does not fight against colonial enslavement, whoever does not support the uprisings of the oppressed nations and their independence, whoever defends or idealizes Gandhism, that is, the policy of passive resistance on questions which can be solved only by force of arms, is, despite good intentions or bad, a lackey, an apologist, an agent of the imperialists, of the slaveholders, of the militarists, and helps them to prepare new wars in pursuit of their old aims or new....

Whoever attempts to put all the programs, all the parties, all the flags into one package in the name of pacifism, that is, of a superficial struggle against war in words, performs the greatest service for imperialism. On the question of war, no less than on all other questions, the Communist Party must seek to free the masses of working people from the disintegrating and demoralizing influence of reformism.

—Leon Trotsky, “Declaration to the Antiwar Congress at Amsterdam” (July 1932)



LENIN

WORKERS VANGUARD

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



Spartacus Youth Club Class Series

BOSTON

Alternate Mondays, 7 p.m.

April 14: **For New October
Revolutions Across the World!
The History of the 1917
Russian Revolution**

BU School of Education, Room 212
605 Commonwealth Avenue
Information and readings: (617) 666-9453
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CHICAGO

Alternate Tuesdays, 7 p.m.

April 22: **The Russian Revolution
of 1917: How the Working Class
Took Power**

University of Chicago, Cobb Hall
5811 S. Ellis, Room 204
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or e-mail: spartacist@iname.com

LOS ANGELES

Saturday, 2 p.m.

April 12: **Women’s Liberation
Through Socialist Revolution**

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

NEW YORK CITY

Alternate Tuesdays, 7:30 p.m.

April 15: **The Working Class, the
Revolutionary Party and the Fight
for Socialist Revolution**

Columbia University
Hamilton Hall, Room 306
Information and readings: (212) 267-1025
or e-mail: nysl@compuserve.com

OAKLAND

Saturday, 3 p.m.

April 19: **The Struggle Against
Imperialist War and the
Capitalist System**

1634 Telegraph Ave., 3rd floor
(Near 19th Street Bart)
Information: (510) 839-0851
or e-mail: slbayarea@compuserve.com

TORONTO

Wednesday, 6:30 p.m.

April 16: **Defend the
Palestinian People! For a Socialist
Federation of the Near East!**

Ontario Institute for Studies
in Education, Room 5185
252 Bloor St. West (above St. George Station)
Information and readings: (416) 593-4138
or e-mail: spartcan@on.aibn.com

U.S. Vendetta Against Al Jazeera

Truth Is the First Casualty of War



Al Jazeera correspondent Tariq Ayoub, minutes before being killed by U.S. missile strike.

APRIL 8—Today two U.S. missiles struck the Baghdad office of the Arab TV station Al Jazeera, killing correspondent Tariq Ayoub. A few minutes later, U.S. warplanes returned to hit the neighboring offices of Abu Dhabi TV. Two more journalists—Reuters' Taras Protsyuk and Jose Couso of Spain's Tele 5—were killed when a U.S. tank fired on Baghdad's Palestine Hotel, where most foreign journalists are housed. The U.S. claimed the bombing of Al Jazeera's office was "accidental." But as Al Jazeera correspondent Tayseer Allouni declared, "We were targeted because the Americans don't want the world to see the crimes they are committing against the Iraqi people."

Since the launching of the U.S. war drive against Iraq, Al Jazeera has been a particular target of the U.S. Its staff was kicked out of Kuwait when they reported that a third of the country was occupied by U.S. troops. Washington then tried to force the Emir of Qatar, where the station is based, to shut it down for the duration of the war. When Al Jazeera ran images of U.S. POWs, the Pentagon launched a campaign of demonization against the station, despite the fact that Al Jazeera (like every American media outlet) also ran pictures of Iraqi POWs. Then intense hacking from the U.S. shut down Al Jazeera's Web site. Finally, in the ultimate affront, Al Jazeera's reporters were booted off the floor of the New York Stock Exchange.

Why the vendetta? As one Al Jazeera

journalist explained, "By reporting propaganda as fact, the mainstream media has simply mirrored the Blair/Bush fantasy that the people who have been starved by UN sanctions and deformed by depleted uranium since 1991 will greet them as saviours." He added: "My station is a



Reuters cameraman Taras Protsyuk, mortally injured by U.S. tank attack on Baghdad's Palestine Hotel.

threat to American media control—and they know it" (London *Guardian*, 28 March). Because of its unique coverage of the war, Al Jazeera has earned millions of new viewers in Europe and the U.S.

It's not only Al Jazeera that Washington and its media whores have vilified. Last week, Peter Arnett was hounded out

of his job at NBC and National Geographic for simply reporting to Iraqi TV that the U.S. military had encountered unexpected resistance. Arnett earned the ire of the American imperialists for his honest reporting of the Vietnam War in the 1960s and for his exposure of the bombing of a baby formula factory during the 1991 Gulf War.

On March 26, U.S. forces arrested three independent (i.e., not "embedded") journalists, two Israelis and one Portuguese, who had sought refuge from a sandstorm. They were awakened at gunpoint and accused of espionage. When the Portuguese journalist asked to phone home, he was beaten to the point that his ribs were broken. One of the Israeli journalists, reported *Ha'aretz* (29 March), "added that he received the impression that the American army had done everything it could to ensure that not one independent journalist was reporting from Iraq."

"The first casualty when war comes is truth," remarked Progressive Party Senator Hiram Johnson in 1917. A few days into the American invasion of Iraq, a senior member of BBC News complained, "We're absolutely sick and tired of putting things out and finding they're not true. The misinformation in this war is far and away worse than any conflict I've covered, including the first Gulf War and Kosovo" (London *Guardian*, 28 March).

From the start of this one-sided slaughter, CNN, MSNBC and most other

major American and British news stations and papers have willfully retailed lie after lie coming from the Pentagon and White House:

- A day after the U.S./British ground assault began, the Pentagon "reported," in the words of a London *Financial Times* (22/23 March) headline: "Division of 8,000 Iraqi Troops Surrenders." Within 24 hours, this was revealed to be a total fabrication.

- Around the same time, U.S. Central Command claimed to have taken the port town of Umm Qasr—a claim repeated *nine* times before the city was finally "secured."

- On March 25, British commanders claimed that an anti-Saddam uprising had begun in the southern city of Basra. The correspondent for Al Jazeera—the only news agency to have a reporter in the city—kept sending dispatches that there were no signs of an uprising, but the American TV media kept "reporting" the "uprising," including the alleged gunning down of civilians by Iraqi soldiers, as fact! Then on March 27, the *Financial Times* conceded: "Allies Admit Predicament as Basra 'Uprising' Evaporates."

- On March 28, British prime minister Tony Blair announced that two British soldiers whose corpses were shown on Iraqi television had been "executed." But as the London *Guardian* (28 March) reported: "The sister of Sapper Luke Allsopp, one of the dead soldiers, yesterday accused the prime minister's office of lying about how the two died. Nina Allsopp said the army had told her family that her brother and Staff Sergeant Simon Cullingworth, both bomb disposal experts, had been killed in combat."

- When Private Jessica Lynch, who had been wounded in combat and captured by the Iraqis, was sprung from a Nasiriyah hospital by an American Special Ops unit, the front page of the right-wing *New York Daily News* (3 April) screamed, "Jessica Tortured"—parroting claims that she'd been repeatedly stabbed. As it turned out, her injuries were from combat and there was no evidence of torture.

- When two *Newsday* journalists disappeared for a few days, the U.S. claimed that they were executed by the Iraqis. A couple of days later, they turned up in Jordan after having been held by Iraqi authorities for a short period.

When the war began, Donald Rumsfeld heaped praise on the Pentagon scheme to "embed" journalists with U.S. military units as an expression of a "free press." British defence secretary Geoff Hoon intoned, "Having journalists have the protection of our armed forces is both good for journalism. It's also good for people watching." Indeed, as John Pilger remarked in a London *Independent* (6 April) article, "Like a mafia boss explaining the benefits of a protection racket, Hoon is saying: do as you are told or face the consequences."

The Big Lie campaign is intended to manipulate the population into backing the war aims of U.S. imperialism. The big papers and TV stations are capitalist enterprises, and are fundamentally loyal to their class. It is to the Marxists—those who stand for the interests of the world working class—that you can look for the truth about this bloody imperialist slaughter. ■

Spartacist Educationalals

CHICAGO Sunday, April 27

1 p.m.

U.S. Imperialism on Bloody Rampage in the Post-Soviet World

Speaker: Joseph Seymour
Spartacist League Central Committee

4 p.m.

Bolshevism vs. Social Democracy, Anarchism The Russian Revolution and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

University of Illinois – Chicago (UIC)
Circle Center (CCC), Room 713
750 S. Halsted

For information: (312) 563-0441
or e-mail: spartacist@iname.com

TORONTO Sunday, April 27, Noon-5 P.M.

First Session

Russia 1917: From War to Revolution

Second Session

"New World Order": Imperialist Barbarism

Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Room 5185
252 Bloor Street West (above St. George Station)

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

BAY AREA Saturday-Sunday, May 3-4

Saturday, May 3, 2 p.m.

U.S. Imperialism on Bloody Rampage in the Post-Soviet World

Speaker: Joseph Seymour
Spartacist League Central Committee

Saturday, May 3, 5 p.m.

The Kurdish Question and the U.S. Invasion of Iraq

Speaker: Bruce André, Spartacist League

Sunday, May 4, 12 Noon

The Fight for a Revolutionary Workers Party France 1968: Lessons of the Student Revolt and Workers General Strike

Speakers: Valerie West and Steve Henderson

University of California at Berkeley
Valley Life Sciences Building, Room 2040
For information: Los Angeles: (213) 380-8239,
Bay Area: (510) 839-0851, Vancouver: (604) 687-0353
or e-mail: slbayarea@compuserve.com

NEW YORK CITY Saturday-Sunday, April 26-27

Saturday, April 26, 5 p.m.

The Kurdish Question and the U.S. Invasion of Iraq

Speaker: Bruce André, Spartacist League

Sunday, April 27, 1 p.m.

Twelve Years After Counterrevolution in the USSR Why We Fought to Defend the Soviet Union

Speaker: Victor Gibbons, Spartacist League

322 West 48th Street, first floor
(E or C train to 50th Street, between 8th and 9th)
For information and readings call: (212) 267-1025
or e-mail: nysl@compuserve.com

Down With the Witchhunt Against De Genova!

A cabal of right-wingers, yellow journalists and government officials are witch-hunting Columbia University professor Nicholas De Genova for advocating the military defeat of the U.S. in Iraq at a Columbia University antiwar teach-in on March 26. Among those screaming for his job are pro-war alumni threatening to withhold donations and some 66 U.S. Congressmen in an April 1 letter to Columbia's president. The *New York Post* went so far as to "fantasize about a volley of Kent State-style militia musketry rattled off in *his* general direction" (30 March). With death threats pouring in, De Genova has effectively been fired because he cannot visit campus for fear of his life. ***Down with the witchhunt! Defend De Genova!***

While before the onset of war it was trendy for academics to denounce it, the shrinking size of antiwar demos shows that there has been a shift to the right under pressure of a pro-war media barrage and government declarations. De Genova's admirable stance against the U.S. colonial rape of Iraq represents a break with the craven, flag-saluting, "support our troops" mainstream liberal antiwar movement. For that he has been singled out. The press has tried to further demonize De Genova for his courageous comment at an April 2002 pro-Palestinian campus rally: "The heritage of the victims of the Holocaust belongs to the Palestinian people. The state of Israel has no claim to the heritage of the Holocaust" (*Columbia Spectator*, 18 April 2002).

For us it is clear that the defense of the Palestinians—which the mainstream antiwar movement has buried in order to court liberals in the pro-Zionist Demo-

cratic Party—is closely linked to opposition to the war in Iraq. At the same time the U.S. is waging its war, it is funding the Zionist human-grinding machine; and the Israeli state has used the cover of the U.S. war to step up its campaign of terror against the Palestinians. ***Defend the Palestinian people! Israeli troops, settlers out of the Occupied Territories!***

De Genova has also taken heat for noting at the antiwar teach-in how "U.S. patriotism is inseparable from imperial

the "savages" of the East—hark back to the days of the "white man's burden."

Pro-war forces have become increasingly provocative on campus. In Boston, UMass professor Tony Van Der Meer was arrested on April 3 after standing up to a National Guard recruiter who had screamed at an antiwar student distributing leaflets on campus: "You should be shot in the head." Campus cops were called in to aid the guardsmen and tackled Van Der Meer to the ground, enrag-



Steve Poellet/Columbia Spectator

De Genova's students symbolically gag themselves at Columbia sit-down protest on April 1 in defense of his free speech rights.

warfare and white supremacy" (*Columbia Spectator*, 27 March). The upholders of the capitalist system are offended that he attacks racism. But in fact, U.S. imperialist justifications for the invasion of Iraq—bringing civilization and "democracy" to

ing students who protested the unprovoked attack. ***Drop the charges against Van Der Meer now!***

Everyone who believes in freedom of speech should defend De Genova. We print below the letter in defense of De

Genova submitted by the Spartacus Youth Club to the *Columbia Spectator* on 3 April.

* * *

The CU administration, the *Columbia Spectator* and media outlets nationwide, including CNN, are howling against Professor Nicholas De Genova's speech from a 26 March antiwar teach-in. Going far beyond the "peace is patriotic" drivel of the mainstream antiwar movement, he stated, "U.S. flags are the emblem of the invading war machine in Iraq today. They are the emblem of the occupying power. The only true heroes are those who find ways that help defeat the U.S. military." In a *New York Post* (1 April) opinion column, De Genova—as well as other Columbia professors—was attacked by Daniel Pipes and Jonathan Harris, organizers of the sinister Campus Watch website which targets left-leaning professors for witch-hunting. A letter in the same issue of the *Post* called for De Genova to be "beaten with sticks as the administration runs him off campus." Ominously, De Genova has received over 1,000 death threats. They want to use De Genova as an example to stifle all dissent against the war.

The Spartacus Youth Club (SYC) defends De Genova and solidarizes with his remark that "Iraqi liberation can only be effected by the Iraqi people...resisting and defeating the U.S. invasion as well as overthrowing a regime whose brutality was long sustained by none other than the U.S." (*Columbia Spectator*, 31 March). We are for the military defense of Iraq while giving no political support to the Saddam Hussein regime. U.S. troops out of Iraq! Down with U.S. imperialism! We fight for class struggle against the capitalist rulers at home. The working class has the power and historic interest to rid the world of this system of capitalist exploitation and imperialist war through socialist revolution. The SYC seeks to win youth to the fight to build the workers party necessary to lead such a struggle. ■

Letter to *Spectator* by Nicholas De Genova

"Iraqi Liberation Can Only Be Effected by the Iraqi People"

The following letter written by Columbia University assistant professor Nicholas De Genova in defense of his comments at the March 26 campus antiwar teach-in is reprinted from the *Columbia Spectator* (31 March).

Spectator, now for the second time in less than a year, has succeeded to quote me in a remarkably decontextualized and inflammatory manner. In Margaret Hunt Gram's report on the faculty teach-in against the war in Iraq (March 27, 2003), I am quoted as wishing for a million Mogadishus but with no indication whatsoever of the perspective that framed that remark. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that your Staff Editorial in the same issue, denouncing the teach-in for "dogmatism," situates me in particular as the premier example of an academic "launching tirades against anything and everything American."

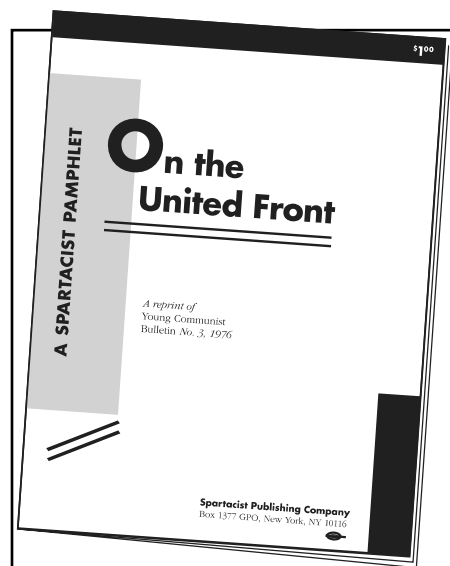
In my brief presentation, I outlined a

long history of U.S. invasions, wars of conquest, military occupations, and colonization in order to establish that imperialism and white supremacy have been constitutive of U.S. nation-state formation and U.S. nationalism. In that context, I stressed the necessity of repudiating all forms of U.S. patriotism. I also emphasized that the disproportionate majority of U.S. troops come from racially subordinated and working-class backgrounds and are in the military largely as a consequence of a treacherous lack of prospects for a decent life. Nonetheless, I emphasized that U.S. troops are indeed confronted with a choice—to perpetrate this war against the Iraqi people or to refuse to fight and contribute toward the defeat of the U.S. war machine.

I also affirmed that Iraqi liberation can only be effected by the Iraqi people themselves, both by resisting and defeating

the U.S. invasion as well as overthrowing a regime whose brutality was long sustained by none other than the U.S. Such an anti-colonial struggle for self-determination might involve a million Mogadishus now but would ultimately have to become something more like another Vietnam. Vietnam was a stunning defeat for U.S. imperialism; as such, it was also a victory for the cause of human self-determination.

Is this a tirade against "anything and everything American"? Far from it. First, I hasten to remind you that "American" refers to all of the Americas, not merely to the United States, as U.S. imperial chauvinism would have it. More importantly, my rejection of U.S. nationalism is an appeal to liberate our own political imaginations such that we might usher in a radically different world in which we will not remain the prisoners of U.S. global domination.



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New York, NY 10116

Protest Racist Budget Cuts at California Community Colleges!

LOS ANGELES—On March 28, 2,000 community college students and faculty took to the streets of downtown Los Angeles to protest the budget cuts and tuition hikes that the Democratic Party administration of Governor Gray Davis wants to impose on the backs of working-class and minority youth. A large portion of the militant protesters were black and Latino students who are directly threatened by this racist purge. Students chanted against Davis and carried grave-stones naming classes that would be axed.

The budget cuts proposed by Davis for California's 108 community colleges come in the midst of a "budget crisis" caused by the profit-hungry bosses who bankrupted the economy. If enacted, the proposals would more than double tuition fees and would slash funding by **\$1 billion** over the next two years. There have already been cuts in services, staff and courses. Los Angeles Community College alone cut 300 classes from the curriculum this semester.

It is estimated by the Community College League of California that some **200,000** students would be driven out of the community colleges, including more than 6,000 black and 19,000 Latino youth in Los Angeles County. In contrast to the



Young Spartacus
Students protest proposed California community college budget cuts in Los Angeles, March 28.

more elite schools like UCLA and UC Berkeley, where the elimination of affirmative action in 1996 drastically reduced the number of black and Latino students, the less costly community colleges offer the only real chance most blacks and Latinos have of obtaining a higher education. Meanwhile, foreign students, already saddled with extra tuition, will face

even greater costs, a measure that plays into the U.S. government's "homeland security" initiatives by discouraging foreign students from attending school in the U.S. altogether.

The "separate and unequal" funding for working-class colleges mirrors the pattern of racial segregation and class inequality in American public education

as a whole. The public schools in the ghettos and barrios are chronically underfunded and overcrowded holding pens for youth. One black youth at the March 28 demonstration said bitterly, "If I can't pay for school, all I can do is work for McDonald's or join the military." That is the bitter reality for many working-class and minority youth in this country, where the racist rulers don't give a damn about educating them because there are no jobs anyway. We communists in the Spartacus Youth Club say: For free, quality, integrated public education for all!

Many of the protesters we talked to were angered that a disproportionate number of the first U.S. soldiers killed in the invasion of Iraq have been Latino and black. This is nothing new. For those who grow up in the ghettos and barrios, where jobs are few and jail cells are many, youth join the armed forces because it seems that the only way they can pay for college and get ahead is to offer themselves up as cannon fodder for the imperialist war machine.

Among the few antiwar signs at the March 28 protest, the most prominent was "Money for Books, Not Bombs." While a nice sentiment, this slogan makes

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Bible Belt Bigotry Against Gay Student

A holy trinity—the church, state and school administration—have conspired to wreck the life of Thomas McLaughlin. The administration and assorted teachers at Jacksonville Junior High School in Arkansas have decided that Jesus himself has spoken through them, telling them that Thomas must be "corrected."

When McLaughlin was in eighth grade, his science teacher overheard him refusing to deny to another boy that he was gay. The science teacher told assistant principal Sharon Hawk, who pulled him out of class and issued the ultimatum: he had until the end of the day to tell his parents he's gay, or the school would do it

for him. Later that afternoon, with McLaughlin in her office, the guidance counselor called his mother and told her that Thomas was having feelings for other males.

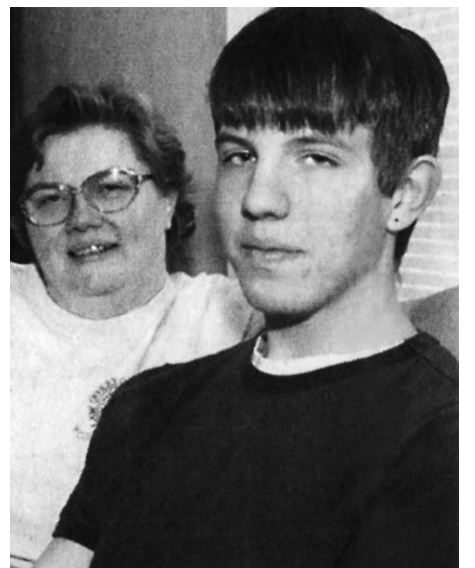
After the "outing" the harassment only continued. Over the next 18 months, teachers quoted scripture to him and advised him to read Bible passages about homosexuality, and one made him read sections on Sodom and Gomorrah aloud to her. Teachers called him "abnormal," "sickening," "unnatural." One teacher called a conference with his parents and the principal because she objected to him being open about his sexuality, at which they

told his parents outright that he was gay. Then when his typing teacher overheard him talking about some boy he thought was cute, he was sent to assistant principal Emanuel McGhee's office, where McGhee forced McLaughlin to read out loud from the Bible, gave him a tract from his church and asked Thomas to close his eyes and pray to be saved.

After McLaughlin's typing teacher heard him tell another student what happened in McGhee's office, he was suspended for two days. The administrators threatened to expel him if he talked about the suspension. The McLaughlins have now threatened to file a lawsuit with the American Civil Liberties Union against the school. **Stop the harassment of McLaughlin! Erase all records of disciplinary actions against him! For the separation of church and state! For full democratic rights for homosexuals!**

While McLaughlin's family is being supportive, this kind of "outing" to one's family is potentially deadly. When in 1997 police officers threatened to tell a Pennsylvania youth's family that he was gay, he committed suicide.

Bigotry against gays is not just a matter of personal values or lack of education about "differences." It flows directly from a core element of capitalist society: the institution of the family. The family and the sexual division of labor within it—the root of the oppression of women in class society—embodies societal gender roles which are then reinforced by religious moral codes. Class-divided capitalist society, built upon private property and the ruling class's domination over workers and the oppressed, needs the institution of the family. It is a bedrock conservatizing force, the mechanism by which private property is passed down and, for the workers and oppressed, a social unit to bear the burdens of society that the capitalists will not provide: health care, a decent education, food, shelter. Therefore bourgeois society cannot ultimately "legitimize" those who, like gays, fundamentally



Wintroath/NY Times

14-year-old Thomas McLaughlin with his mother.

deviate from the family's restrictions.

We fight to end all laws that oppress gays and others deemed "deviant" by the American bourgeoisie's Christian anti-sex moralism. They are an invitation to torture teenagers like 14-year-old Thomas McLaughlin in the name of "protecting youth." We say: **Down with reactionary "age of consent" laws! Government out of the bedroom!** The working class must take up the fight for gay and women's rights as part of a fight against capitalism and all its manifestations. Central to this is the struggle for free abortion on demand. But to fully liberate women and fundamentally transform the deeply rooted attitudes toward sex roles and sexuality, a socialist revolution is necessary to lay the basis for replacing the family as an institution. A proletarian revolution would sweep away the system that spawns religious obscurantism, male chauvinism and anti-gay bigotry. We in the Spartacus Youth Clubs seek to win youth to the fight to build a party to lead the working class and all the oppressed to victory. ■

ROTC Off Campus!

Join the Protest at UC Berkeley!

Saturday, April 12, 10 a.m.
(In front of Wheeler Hall, South Entrance)

Right now, the U.S. imperialist rulers are engaged in a campaign of mass murder and destruction in Iraq, to be followed by direct colonial occupation of that country. Meanwhile, the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) continues to operate under academic cover at UC Berkeley and other campuses. The military killers-in-training of ROTC are planning on showcasing themselves at "Cal Day," April 12, by rappelling down a building on UC Berkeley's campus—a truly gross spectacle considering the carnage the imperialist

military is presently piling up in Iraq. ROTC chapters are direct appendages of the U.S. military—we must mobilize in militant demonstrations to drive them off campus! Students can strike a blow against the U.S. imperialist war machine by making it impossible for them to recruit on campus and organize for murder. Join and help build a united-front demonstration to demand: **ROTC Off Campus! All U.S. Troops Out of the Near East Now!**

For more information and to endorse call: (510) 839-0851.

All U.S. Troops Out of the Near East Now!

Affirmative Action...

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liberals and reformists who uncritically hailed these programs, we emphasized from the beginning that those who look to the American capitalist state to eliminate racial and sexual discrimination were living in a fool's paradise. We seek to mobilize the working class in a fight for jobs and free, quality, integrated education for all. To reach out to the masses of unemployed minority youth and women, we call for special union recruitment and training programs. To provide real access to higher education, we call for nationalizing the private universities and for open admissions and free tuition with a state-paid living stipend for students.

Supreme Court of Injustice

The assault on affirmative action began long before Bush Jr. entered the White House. In the 1978 Bakke decision, which is now presented as some kind of anti-racist beacon for at least allowing race to be a factor in university admissions, the Supreme Court outlawed quotas for black and other minority students at the University of California. As the Supreme Court prepared to hear the case, we warned: "Bakke has become the leading edge of a wave of racist reaction aimed at rolling back every gain made by blacks" ("Down With Bakke!" WV No. 177, 14 October 1977). In 1995, the UC Regents voted to eliminate affirmative action. In 1996, the grotesquely misnamed California Civil Rights Initiative (Proposition 209) passed, eliminating affirmative action in public education and government contracting and hiring. In the following five years, black undergraduate enrollment at UC Berkeley plunged 33 percent—on top of a drop of nearly a third over the previous five years largely due to skyrocketing tuition costs.

Yet it is to an even more right-wing Supreme Court that the liberals and their left hangers-on look to as a bulwark of affirmative action today. The platform of the April 1 rally was chock-full of Democratic Party politicians like presidential hopeful Al Sharpton, who intoned, "We're not asking the court for favors. We're asking the court to make right what it made wrong." The demonstration organizers, the By Any Means Necessary coalition (BAMN) launched in 1995 by the Revolutionary Workers League, enthused in their protest call that "a victory at the Supreme Court will open up a new struggle for progress towards integration and equality in education and throughout American society." A BAMN petition posted on its Web site hailed affirmative action as "the only successful method for integrating all of this nation's universities."

To proclaim as a victory the retention of the miserable, racist status quo is truly a statement of bankruptcy. The stark truth is that there is no way to overcome entrenched racial oppression within the framework of capitalism, in the universities or elsewhere. Affirmative action programs were set up as a sop to *defuse* social struggle and in order to create and co-opt a "talented tenth" of black middle-class professionals. But these paltry, tokenistic efforts never made a dent in the deep-seated oppression of the black ghetto masses, whose condition has continued to deteriorate over the past few decades. Today, many liberal proponents of affirmative action have abandoned even talk of black equality in favor of the rhetoric of "diversity"—an aim Bush himself deems "laudable"—as though the purpose is to prepare yuppies for the real world by sitting alongside a handful of black students in the classroom.

Typically, Boston University's Glenn Loury writes in an op-ed piece in the *New York Times* (29 March) that "in our racially stratified society, diversity is a necessary



Ebony

Four decades after mass civil rights protests for school integration, public education is increasingly segregated.

part of an effective college education" and that "a racially integrated elite" is essential. Scores of Fortune 500 corporations and former Pentagon bigwigs have filed *amicus* briefs on behalf of the University of Michigan. "Diversity creates stronger companies," says a vice president of the Merck pharmaceutical giant, an argument embraced even more emphatically by the military brass, who fear that a return to a Jim Crow officer caste would "hurt morale" among enlisted ranks drawn heavily—as high as 44 percent in the Army—from minorities.

At the April 1 rally, a speaker from the Detroit NAACP beat the drums for the imperialist war machine and its rape of Iraq, declaring: "If we can build democracy over there, we must also maintain democracy over here." The "democracy" U.S. imperialism has in store for the people of Iraq is a colonial version of the racist police-state terror and degradation daily meted out to black people in this country.

No decisive victory for black and working people was ever won in Congress or the courts. It took the Civil War to smash the slave system, in which teaching black people to read or write was a crime punishable by death, and to establish public education for black people in this country. It took a mass movement of millions on the streets, courageously defying Southern Democratic "Dixiecrat" governments and their truncheon-wielding cops and KKK mobs, to put an end to Jim Crow segregation in the schools. From Little Rock in 1957 to James Meredith's courageous stand as the first black student at the University of Mississippi five years later, the fight for school integration was the flashpoint of battle after battle for black equality.

But the black Democrats and reformists demobilized those struggles, straining to keep fighters against black oppression within the confines of Democratic Party electoralism, preaching reliance on the Supreme Court, on Congress, on the FBI and federal troops—on anything but the independent mobilization of the multiracial working class. The 1974 defeat, at the hands of howling mobs of racists, of a busing plan to integrate Boston's public schools opened the floodgates to a nationwide assault on school desegregation. And it was the liberals and reformists who helped set up busing for the kill, channeling the fight to defend busing into dead-end appeals for federal intervention. Barely four years after busing was smashed on the streets of Boston came the Bakke decision.

Disgustingly, some fake leftists like the Revolutionary Socialist League, the predecessor organization of Sy Landy's League for the Revolutionary Party, even joined with the racists in opposing busing and integration. As black schoolchildren were being terrorized on the streets of Boston for trying to enter an all-white school, Landy & Co. railed that integration "means the *subordination* of

blacks to the dominant whites. It represents a strategy to *quell* the black struggle" (*Torch*, December 1974). Capitulating to black separatists who despaired of the possibility of integrated class struggle, these "separate-but-equal socialists" ended up in an objective bloc with outright racist scum.

We supported busing in Boston and elsewhere—demanding its extension to the overwhelmingly white, middle-class suburbs—and called on the unions to organize labor/black defense guards to repel the racists. Against the reactionary pipe dream of black separatism and the liberal integrationist lie that black people can achieve full equality within this racist capitalist system, we fight for *revolutionary integrationism*. We seek to



WV Photo

Washington, D.C. protest against racist Bakke lawsuit, April 1978.

mobilize labor's social power in defense of even such partial steps toward racial integration and equality as are possible under capitalism, understanding that full social and political equality for black people can only be achieved through workers revolution and the creation of an egalitarian socialist society.

For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

The liberal-led civil rights movement of the 1950s and '60s shattered the Jim Crow system of legalized segregation in the South, gaining formal equality for black people. But in refusing to challenge the capitalist profit system itself, it could do nothing to tackle the economic bedrock of racial oppression in jobs, education and housing. Writing of the landmark 1954 Supreme Court ruling that overturned "separate but equal" segregation, liberal journalist Jonathan Kozol stated in his book *Savage Inequalities* (1991): "In day-to-day fact, the 1954 *Brown* decision is now dead. Indeed, this nation has yet to live up to the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision. Our schools are still separate, but they're certainly not equal." Today, more than 70 percent of black students attend predominantly minority schools, and fully one-sixth attend so-

called "apartheid schools," which are almost 100 percent nonwhite.

In a *Young Spartacus* review of Kozol's book headlined "Education U.S.A.—Separate and Unequal" (WV No. 544, 7 February 1992), we noted:

"The ruling class spends on educating those they exploit and oppress only what they can realize back in profit. Having taken the wrecking ball to the auto factories, gutted the steel mills and closed many of the mines, there are few jobs left for which to train the children of the working class and poor. And if educating the sons and daughters of white workers has increasingly become an expendable overhead for decaying American capitalism, the children of black workers and poor are deemed *an expendable population*. Once a reserve army of labor to be maintained, albeit minimally, today for the racist rulers the black ghetto poor are not worth 'wasting' money on even to keep alive, much less educate."

Black youth, particularly black men, are fast becoming "missing persons" from a society that's locked them into ghettos with no exit from poverty and a likely stretch in prison other than as cannon fodder for the imperialist military. The cynically named No Child Left Behind Act siphoned off scarce funds from public schools attended by the poor into voucher programs for parochial and other private schools. Bush's current budget would slash hundreds of millions more from public education, eliminating 47 government programs entirely. Ruling against a New York City suit demanding sufficient funding to prepare students for "competitive employment" opportunities, a state appellate court recently asserted last year that learning to wrap Big Macs was just about all the "basic education" most inner-city kids needed. Lecturing that the majority of jobs "may well be low level," the judges warned that any higher

standard of public education would pose a challenge "to the capitalist system in general!"

The fight for school integration and free, quality education for all must and can only be waged as part of the broader struggle for black liberation through socialist revolution. As the Spartacus Youth Club wrote in a leaflet addressed to an August 1995 protest at UC Berkeley in defense of affirmative action (WV No. 628, 8 September 1995):

"We need to fight for education to be the *right* of everyone—not a privilege for the wealthy and chosen few. The only way to cut through the 'savage inequalities' of education in racist America is to fight for OPEN ADMISSIONS—with no tuition and a state stipend for all who want to go to school. Nationalize the private universities—no more class privilege in education! Massively expand remedial programs so that students deprived of the right to an education in inner-city holding pens misnamed 'schools' can catch up with those who had the advantage of well-funded suburban and private schooling....

"For universities to really become public institutions of learning open to all requires a revolutionary struggle against the capitalist system itself. The Spartacus Youth Club is dedicated to building the revolutionary party, based on the multiracial working class, which is necessary to lead that struggle to victory in a socialist revolution." ■



Chin/NY Times

Iraq...

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the greatest military power that has ever existed. That the Iraqi people, confronted with such overwhelming odds and saddled with a bloody regime installed by U.S. imperialism in the first place, have been able to mount any resistance is a measure of their hatred of the colonial invaders.

To this inhumane onslaught, the Bush administration has added a propaganda barrage, the lying hypocrisy and racist overtones of which seem a hybrid of the efforts of Joseph Goebbels and Pat Robertson. Not a day passes without another Bush sermon on good and evil or another paean to America's "war of liberation"—this while his administration moves to erase such liberties and freedoms that are still available to U.S. citizens. Not a day passes without a cover-up of U.S. responsibility for civilian deaths and without a fabrication of Iraqi "war crimes." In the service of sustaining the pretense of the invincibility and righteousness of American imperialism's military forces, efforts were made to silence newsman Peter Arnett for simply reporting on Iraqi TV that military resistance to the invasion had not been anticipated by the White House.

As U.S. imperialism rides roughshod over the people of Iraq, the Bush administration is making it amply clear that not only Iraqis but working people all over the world will pay for the American victory. At home, this can be seen in the attack by Oakland cops, firing wooden bullets and concussion grenades, on anti-war protesters and longshoremen yesterday. Abroad, it will mean a bloody colonial occupation of Iraq and the unleashing of the American war machine against other countries. Emboldened by the rape of Iraq, former CIA chief James Woolsey raved that this was the onset of a "Fourth World War" (the third being the Cold War). He went on to declare: "As we move toward a new Middle East over the years and, I think, over the decades to come... we will make a lot of people very nervous. Our response should be, 'Good! We want you nervous. We want you to realize now, for the fourth time in 100 years, this country and its allies are on the march'."

From the outset of the drive to war we have forthrightly stood for the military defense of Iraq against U.S. attack without giving any political support to the Saddam Hussein regime. In contrast, the reformist organizers of antiwar protests, bleating "No to war" alongside the handful of Democratic Party politicians they have pursued, have served to mask the fact that it is in the interest of workers and the oppressed, especially in the U.S., to take a clear stand against U.S. imperialism.

In a 19 March Spartacist League/U.S. statement, issued the night the bombing began, we wrote: "Every victory for the U.S. imperialists can only encourage further military adventures. In turn, every humiliation, every setback, every defeat they suffer will serve to assist the struggles of working people and the oppressed around the globe." Our call for class struggle against the U.S. capitalist rulers

is premised on the understanding that there can be no unity between the exploiters and exploited in the fight against imperialism and war. The bloodbath being perpetrated in Iraq underlines the urgency of forging a revolutionary workers party committed to the defeat of U.S. imperialism through socialist revolution.

U.S. Imperialism Menaces the World

It is the intention of America's imperialist rulers to perpetuate and extend their domination of the world, now possible as a result of the capitalist counterrevolution in the USSR in 1991-92. But the way this



AP

March 28: Antiwar demonstration in Teheran, Iran.

war is being waged is very much the product of an arrogant, reactionary, insular and simple-minded administration that actually seems to believe that the world's peoples eagerly seek its "liberating" interventions. These god-like illusions quickly encountered reality in Iraq. It is not hyperbole to call heroic the actions of those Iraqis who attack tanks and Bradley vehicles in pickup trucks armed, at best, with .50-calibre machine guns. Or the actions of those who directly confront Marine units with only rifles in hand, or even of those who exterminate themselves to kill the invaders. Iraqi Shi'ites resident in Jordan, no lovers of Saddam, have returned in busloads to the hell that is home to fight the American/British colonialists.

In the aftermath of a suicide attack that killed four U.S. soldiers, a Pentagon official declared, "Everyone is now seen as a combatant until proven otherwise." What this meant was seen in the killing of at least seven women and children, as an American soldier shot up the van they were traveling in. Three British soldiers were sent home in custody for complaining about unwarranted civilian deaths caused by trigger-happy U.S. troops. Since then, a convoy of Russian diplomats on their way to Syria was attacked and a convoy of U.S.-allied Kurds in the north was bombed. When an American A-10 pilot opened fire on a British convoy on March 28, killing a British soldier and also shooting dead one 12-year-old Iraqi, another British soldier complained of the pilot: "He had absolutely no regard for human life. I believe he was a cowboy." In a piece in the London *Independent*



AP

Iraqis flee fighting in Basra (left). U.S. soldiers terrorize unarmed Iraqi.

(6 April), British correspondent John Pilger wrote:

"We now glimpse the forbidden truths of the invasion of Iraq. A man cuddles the body of his infant daughter; her blood drenches them. A woman in black pursues a tank, her arms outstretched; all seven in her family are dead. An American Marine murders a woman because she happens to be standing next to a man in uniform. 'I'm sorry,' he says, 'but the chick got in the way'."

These atrocities are not just the result of trigger-happy soldiers. As Pilger goes on to write:

"These Anglo-American invasions of weak and largely defenceless nations are meant to demonstrate the kind of world

imperialists forcibly amalgamated the Shi'ite, Sunni and Kurdish areas into an artificial entity that became Iraq. While hundreds of CIA-sponsored Iraqi "freedom fighters" are being parachuted into the country to act as an auxiliary to the American occupation, the U.S. has already made it clear that the country will be under direct military rule for at least six months. The quality of the "native" stooges can be assessed by a current leading candidate, one Ahmed Chalabi, an Iraqi-born financier (who has not seen Baghdad in over 45 years) touted by Vice President Cheney and who, in recent years, was convicted of bank fraud in Jordan. His projected administrative area is, of course, finance. The Iraqi "opposition" has dutifully pledged to denationalize the state monopoly on oil to enable a take-over by American oil companies.

"Cronies Set to Make a Killing," declared a headline in the London *Observer* (6 April), reporting on how the "reconstruction" of Iraq is being doled out to Bechtel and other corporations with close ties to the Bush administration. The docking facilities at the port town of Umm Qasr have been given to the anti-union Stevedoring Services of America, which is a lavish contributor to the Republican Party and which headed last autumn's lockout of West Coast longshoremen. The corporate greed that has led to job losses, wage-slashing and the disappearance of pensions over the last decade in this country will be magnified 100 times through the lens of U.S. colonial occupation.

While America's overwhelming military preponderance all but assured quick victory in the invasion, the Iraqi military resistance portends what is likely to be a long, bloody and uncertain occupation. The 1898 Spanish-American War was also an easy win for the U.S., but the subsequent decades-long colonial occupation of the Philippines was met with a series of insurgencies, including one in which up to a half million Filipinos were slaughtered between 1899 and 1902.

The current spectacle of the lesser great powers—France, Germany, Russia—that led UN "opposition" to the war now demanding their place at the trough of Iraqi oil would be humorous did it not augur the rape of that country once it has fallen. National security adviser Condoleezza Rice stated bluntly, as the *New*

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Iraq...

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York Times (5 April) put it, that “the American-led alliance had shed ‘life and blood’ in the Iraq war and would reserve for itself—and not the United Nations—the lead role in creating a new Iraqi government.” This is a statement to the European powers to expect not a penny from the postwar “reconstruction” bonanza.

Down With Racist Colonialist Conquest!

Echoing the typical complaints of all imperialist colonizers, native resisters to such depredations are seen by Bush & Co. as bloodthirsty cowards only capable of attacking from ambush and then scurrying away to hide among the populace (perhaps because they, unlike the invaders, are part of the populace). Such insidious elements then, in the eyes of the imperialists, become responsible for the mass executions of innocents forced on the “decent” conquerors. And no world power—save, perhaps, Nazi Germany—has massacred more innocents under these racist premises than the U.S., which in Korea and Vietnam alone slaughtered six million people.

U.S. imperialism is waging war against the weak, and the weak have no other way to fight back than from ambush. It is interesting to remember that the American Revolution was essentially won by those who, dressed in rags and animal pelts, ambushed the British forces and then melted back into the swamps, the forests and the hills. A prime example of this was South Carolina’s Francis Marion, known as the “Swamp Fox.” After his regular army regiment was defeated by the British, he organized a band of guerrillas that staged bold raids over swampy terrain, often defeating larger bodies of British troops. By demonizing Iraqi resistance as “terror,” the U.S. imperialists have reduced the American Revolution to a terrorist enterprise!

Predictably, to follow in the wake of the invasion of Iraq are the Christian missionaries to “civilize the savages”—in other words, religious bigots who have been in the forefront of support for the Bush administration, in this case notably the Southern Baptist Convention and Samaritan’s Purse, led by Franklin Graham, the son of evangelist Billy Graham. The leaders of the former recently characterized Muhammad as a “pedophile” and “terrorist” while Graham has been satisfied to label Islam as “wicked” and “violent.” It is accurate, but not enough, to say that the forerunners of these zealots were steeped in unwashed ignorance until those under Islam’s sway recivilized Europe. It is more to the point that their minions are a reservoir of racist reaction who, not infrequently, find religious adherence compatible with membership in or sympathy for the KKK.

Iraqi resistance to the colonial invasion has fueled increasingly militant, mass demonstrations against American imperialism throughout the Near East. These have not, in all cases, been led by Muslim religious reactionaries, especially in Egypt where just resentment against national oppression has, in part, been led by left



WV Photo

April 5: Spartacist/Labor Black League contingent at Harlem antiwar protest.

nationalists who hark back to the days of Gamal Abdel Nasser in the 1950s and ’60s. Referring to the current Egyptian president, many of the protesters chanted, “Mubarak leave!” Bush’s current consultants for mopping up urban resistance are British (with recent experience in Northern Ireland) and Israeli “experts,” past and, in the case of Israel, present masters in turning whole cities into concentration camps. At base, the driving force of outrage in the Near East is the hideous and potentially genocidal national oppression of Palestinians by Israel.

But history and current experience show that neither the left nationalism of a Nasser nor its current right-wing variant in Iraq can provide an answer to imperialist domination. That can only be accomplished by a proletarian revolution in the area that inspires class overturns throughout the region, including Israel, where currently a nationwide general strike against government-sponsored cutbacks is posed. What is needed to achieve self-determination for all the region’s national minorities and to throw off the yoke of imperialist domination is a series of workers revolutions to sweep away all the capitalist regimes of the region and create a socialist federation of the Near East.

The conquest of power by the proletariat does not complete the socialist revolution, but only opens it, by changing the direction of social development. Short of the extension of the revolution internationally, particularly to the advanced, industrialized imperialist centers, that social development will be arrested and ultimately reversed, as happened in the case of the Soviet Union. This underscores the need to forge Leninist-Trotskyist parties of socialist revolution as part of a working-class communist international to lead the proletariat in struggle against all forms of oppression, exploitation and injustice.

The War at Home

With the start of combat in Iraq, there has been an increase in patriotic sentiment and support for the war in the U.S. and Britain, accompanied by increasing government moves to quash protest. That this patriotic upswing has been relatively modest gives testimony both to continuing reservations about the justice of this colonial venture and to the fact that

working people in both countries remain primarily concerned about more mundane matters, like the ability to remain employed and survive from day to day in the bleak economic circumstances they face. Among black people in the U.S., however, opposition to the war remains strong and unchanged. A recent *Washington Post*/ABC News poll indicates that opposition to the war stands at 61 percent of the black population as contrasted to 20 percent of whites.

A black academic told the *Washington Post* (25 March), “Black Americans are routinely told that there’s not enough



National Geographic

British troops enter Baghdad, March 1917.

money for housing, medicine, education and rebuilding the inner city, but...considerable sums can be raised for war.” It is true that war costs will be used as an excuse to continue to savage such meager social benefits as are available in this country.

Just as importantly, most black people understand that Bush is president only as the result of a swindle. Indeed, it is likely that had not Bush’s brother, Jeb, organized to exclude black people from voting in Florida, Al Gore would have won the election. It was under the Clinton/Gore administration that welfare and many other social services were axed while the prison population, which today numbers over two million, soared. And it was under Clinton/Gore that the starvation and devastation of Iraq continued apace. In 1996, Clinton’s secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, was asked what she thought about the half million Iraqi children who had died as a result of the blockade. She replied, “We think the price is worth it.” Two years later, Clinton signed into law the “Iraq Liberation Act,” which sailed through the Senate with unanimous approval. That same year, Clinton launched a massive bombing campaign against Baghdad, the biggest of a number of air assaults against Iraq under his administration. Most recently, the \$80 billion war appropriations bill passed with the support of every Democrat in the Senate and the opposition of fewer than a dozen Democrats in the House.

Speaking at a rally in defense of af-

firmative action in Washington, D.C. on April 1, the president of the Detroit NAACP declared of the Iraq war, “If we can build democracy there, we must also maintain democracy over here.” The “democracy” that this liberal wants to maintain is the “democracy” that consigns millions of black children to abject poverty and malnutrition. One in eight young black men is currently in prison and more than one in four young black men can expect to be imprisoned at some point in their lives. In fact, some black people identify, as the *New York Times* (27 March) put it, “with poor Iraqis, whom they saw simply as people of color being attacked by a rich, and largely white, American government.”

The development of American imperialism began shortly after the Civil War and emerged on the world arena with the 1898 Spanish-American War, launched as a mission to “civilize savages,” a racist battle cry that Bush now echoes. It is no accident that that development was accompanied by the entrenchment of Jim Crow legislation and lynch law “justice,” including racist mob riots against black people. The plight of the black population is rooted in the race/caste oppression that is the cornerstone of the American imperialist order.

Imperialism is, at base, business, the expression of the desire by a nation’s capitalist rulers to extend their capacity to reap profits. As Lenin put it, politics is concentrated economics. The imperialists will not sacrifice their guns for the

benefit of the people any more than a boss would sacrifice profits to provide job security and a decent living for workers. It is only struggle against the system of capitalist exploitation that can make inroads against its depredations and only the overthrow by socialist revolution of that system that can end, for all time, exploitation and war.

This social overturn cannot be accomplished without breaking the ties of the working class and black people to the Democratic Party and forging a party of proletarian revolution. This is no small task. While the Republicans offer only thinly disguised contempt for working people, and are openly racist, the Democrats offer false promises and words of support for racial equality as they carry out the dictates of the capitalist order. In this regard, the liberal black Democrats are invaluable to the capitalist rulers in maintaining the adherence of black people to this system. While, for the most part, white contenders for the Democratic nomination for the presidency have dropped any criticism of the war, black Democrats like Al Sharpton have continued their qualified opposition to the war, now tempered by calls for support of “our boys.”

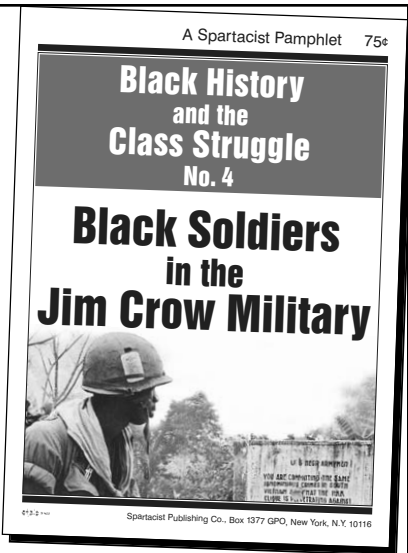
For these black politicians, support for “our troops” is a statement of allegiance to the American imperialist order. But for the black masses, in many cases, the troops literally are their sons and daughters. As one black New Yorker told the *New York Times* (27 March), “We’re going to be in

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As communist revolutionaries, we are not for meaningless deaths whether, in this context, American or Iraqi. It is America's rulers who bear all the responsibility for sending young working-class and minority men and women to kill and be killed in order to extend the power and profits of U.S. imperialism. The Iraqi soldiers and others who are resisting the imperialist invasion are simply defending their homes and country. It must be recognized that support for "our boys" necessarily entails support for what they are doing, i.e., for a particular manifestation of U.S. imperialism's drive to subjugate all nations to its mandates.

Predictably, most of the left, some of whom would describe themselves as socialist but whose real aspiration is to achieve sufficient weight to influence bourgeois policy, have capitulated to the—less than virulent—increase in patriotic fervor. From the beginning, the ersatz socialist builders of protest against the war, primarily Workers World Party (through its International ANSWER coalition) and the International Socialist Organization (ISO), have argued that the largest possible and, therefore, most effective movement can only be built on the basis of slogans palatable to all—“No to war” or, in the case of the upcoming April 12 ANSWER protest in D.C., “Bring the troops home now.” What this has meant and could only mean is building a coalition with the soft wing of the bourgeoisie, i.e., with liberal Democrats.

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“Bringing the boys home” did not end the Vietnam War, which continued for some years after U.S. troops were withdrawn. The war ended only when the North Vietnamese Army and the southern National Liberation Front rolled over the remaining forces of U.S. imperialism’s puppet forces in the South. The military defeat of U.S. imperialism at the hands of Vietnam’s workers and peasants was a victory for working people and the oppressed the world over, not least in the U.S. What the liberal Vietnam antiwar movement did succeed in doing was to deflect many of the millions of youth radicalized by that war and the civil rights movement back into the arms of the Democratic Party, thereby undercutting a significant opportunity for the development of a revolutionary workers party in this country.

Real opposition to imperialist war is impossible without opposition to the system that breeds it, an opposition that must, in the final analysis, be based on the mobilization of the working class, the only force capable of challenging and overturning bourgeois rule. In the course of sharp class struggle and through the instrumentality of a revolutionary party that patiently educates the working class in the understanding not only of its social power but of its historic interests, the workers will become conscious of themselves as a class fighting for itself and for all the oppressed against the entire capitalist system and its government.

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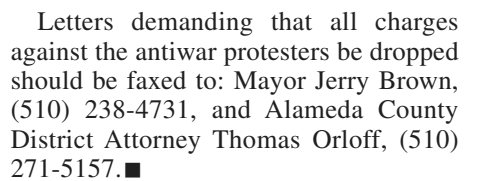
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The direct link between the war against Iraq and the war on labor in the U.S. was brought home with a vengeance in Oakland today. The cop attack on the protesters began at the American President Lines terminal and resumed when picketers were forced down to the Stevedoring Services of America (SSA) terminal, where a ship was docked and longshoremen were standing by. The SSA, which last year led the shipping bosses' union-busting drive against the ILWU, has now been awarded a contract by the Bush administration to operate the Iraqi port of Umm Qasr.

Wielding the criminal attack on the World Trade Center to advance their own ambitions for total world domination, the U.S. imperialists' "war on terror" took first aim at immigrants of Near Eastern and South Asian descent. Then they declared that anyone the imperial president deems to be an "enemy combatant" can be stripped of all constitutional rights and effectively disappeared.

The only way students are going to win their demands is through linking their struggles with all the victims of this



The SYCs seek to win youth to the perspective of building the multiracial workers party necessary to lead the struggle against the capitalist order. Join us in the fight for a future without exploitation, racist oppression and imperialist war! ■

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Zionist Rulers Step Up Anti-Palestinian Terror

On March 22, several hundred thousand demonstrators in New York City came out to protest the U.S. war on Iraq. Only a week later, barely 500 protesters gathered at the same site in defense of the Palestinians. The Spartacist League contingent at this demonstration demanded, *Defend the Palestinians! All Israeli troops, settlers out of the Occupied Territories! For a socialist federation of the Near East!* Antiwar activists who genuinely want to fight this rapacious imperialist system must take up the defense of the Palestinian people against the U.S.-backed Zionist rulers.

But the reformist organizations—like Workers World Party and the International Socialist Organization—heavily involved in the antiwar coalitions had less than a token presence at the Palestinian protest. With most antiwar protest organizers looking to appeal to the rabidly pro-Israel Democratic Party, the Palestinian cause has largely been buried at protests against the war in Iraq. And the ongoing Zionist war of terror against the Palestinian people has largely been buried in the American bourgeois media.

After a brief lull at the start of the U.S. attack on Iraq, the Zionist state has renewed its bloody mass terror campaign. On April 2, Israeli troops broke into a

Mass Strike Rocks Israel

UN-administered girls school in the refugee camp in the West Bank town of Tulkarm, summoned the male population there in the middle of the night and loaded up to 3,000 people into trucks to be dumped at a nearby camp for three days. This was the first mass expulsion of Palestinians since at least the start of the current Israeli military campaign more than two years ago. Israeli liberal Uri Avnery called the operation “an army exercise and test to see how the world, the media, and the Israeli public would react. And there was no reaction, which proves that it can be done. The people on the trucks could easily have been taken to the Jordan River bridges”—i.e., expelled from the Occupied Territories entirely.

More than 20 Palestinians have been killed since the Iraq war began, including a 14-year-old boy in Jenin and a 10-year-old girl in Bethlehem. Four Palestinians were killed on April 3 in the southern Gaza refugee camp of Rafah, where the Israelis stormed in with assault helicopters, bulldozers and 40 tanks. The same day, on the outskirts of East Jerusalem

the earthmoving machines arrived at dawn and demolished more than a dozen homes and buildings as part of the ongoing Israeli campaign to purge Palestinians from Jerusalem.

Only weeks after an Israeli bulldozer crushed to death 23-year-old American peace activist Rachel Corrie, two other members of the International Solidarity Movement were shot by the Israeli military on April 5. Brian Avery, an American, was hit in the face by a bullet from an armored vehicle as he stood in the street, and Lassel Smith, a Dane, was hit in the leg. The Zionist state wants to underline that nothing will stand in the way of its unrelenting terror campaign against the Palestinian population.

In the midst of this stepped-up repression against the Palestinians, some 100,000 municipal workers organized in the Histadrut labor federation walked off the job, leaving Israel’s rulers to scream about the terrorist threat posed by uncollected garbage. While some have returned to work, the Histadrut is also threatening a general strike to begin on April 10,

which would bring out over 500,000 workers and shut down ports, airlines, railways, defense industries, banks and hospitals, as well as many large private companies. The strikes are directed at a plan by the right-wing Sharon government and its finance minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, to push through legislation imposing huge wage cuts and layoffs in order to finance the war and ultra-Zionist settlements in the Occupied Territories amid a deepgoing economic crisis.

The current strikes underline that the Israeli working class—Hebrew and Arab—is the Achilles’ heel of the Zionist state. Israeli workers now see arrayed against them the same government that orders the brutal suppression of the Palestinian people. Hebrew-speaking workers must be broken from anti-Arab chauvinism and won to the defense of the Palestinians. And Arab, Persian and Kurdish workers throughout the region must be won away from all forms of nationalism and religious fundamentalism and to a program of international class unity. The urgent task at hand is the construction of internationalist workers parties committed to sweeping away the entire rotting edifice of capitalist class rule in the Near East. ■

United Airlines Swindle

Already reeling from the economic recession, the airline industry is going deeper into a tailspin. On top of the quarter-million-plus workers who have lost their jobs or seen their wages and benefits slashed after September 2001, airline workers are being further hit as fuel costs rise and reservations plummet—down by 40 percent on international flights and 20 percent domestically. The six largest domestic airlines have announced schedule cutbacks of as much as 12 percent. Carrier after carrier has threatened to declare bankruptcy in order to rip up labor contracts and extract more concessions from the workers, often using the “war on terror” and now the war on Iraq to invoke “force majeure” or “act of god” clauses in union contracts. The Air Transport Association trade group projects that 70,000 more jobs will be axed due to the Iraq war. At the same time, commercial airliners are being used to transport troops and war matériel for the bloody U.S. colonial invasion and occupation of Iraq.

What is posed is an industry-wide showdown between the airline corporations and their highly unionized workforce. United Airlines, the second-largest domestic and international carrier, declared bankruptcy in December after already having squeezed its five unions for billions of dollars of concessions. The airline bosses have repeatedly turned to the bankruptcy courts for plain and simple union-busting. Now United intends to wring \$2.56 billion a year from its 72,000 workers by imposing new contracts that would slash wages, vacations and down-time pay and sweep many work rules aside, undermining the safety of workers and passengers by reducing maintenance and repair crews while increasing their workloads.

On April 4, new six-year contracts were accepted by the leaders of the dispatchers and flight attendants unions, who had already agreed to a 9 percent wage cut in January. Later this month, the 8,800-strong Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA) at United will vote on making permanent a 29 percent wage cut which its leadership accepted in January as a “temporary” measure. Meanwhile, United CEO Glenn Tilton announced he would take a 14 percent pay cut this year in his base salary, which accounted for all of some 3 percent of his

Bankruptcy and Union-Busting



Reuters

total take of **\$9.65 million** last year!

The 10,500 mechanics and utility workers organized in International Association of Machinists District Lodge (IAM) 141-M, however, have tenaciously resisted the company’s extortionate demands at every turn, beginning with the union contract signed last March and again in November when the company demanded concessions before its bankruptcy filing. When the IAM refused to negotiate over concessions this January, a bankruptcy judge imposed pay cuts of 14 percent anyway. Then on March 25, United management retaliated against the union by invoking “force majeure” to close a state-of-the-art maintenance base in Indianapolis, laying off all 1,148 IAM members.

United’s attacks on the unions utterly expose the fraud of the company’s “Employee Stock Ownership Plan” (ESOP), which the IAM and ALPA tops sold to their memberships in 1994. From the beginning, this setup was a quintessential expression of the class-collaborationist program of the AFL-CIO bureaucracy, which preaches the lie that labor and capital have common interests. Billed as giving the unions a “controlling interest” in the company, the ESOP traded huge pay cuts and other givebacks totaling \$5 billion, a six-year no-strike pledge, an agreement to cross the picket lines of other striking airline workers and massive contracting out of work for 55 percent of company shares and two union representatives on the board of directors.

When the ESOP deal was announced, we wrote in “Phony ‘Worker Ownership’

at United Airlines” (WV No. 593, 4 February 1994):

“Even if the workers had 100 percent, it wouldn’t make a fundamental difference. Workers have no control whatsoever over the capitalist market, which is inherently anarchic. At the first financial difficulty they would be at the mercy of the banks.... To ‘save jobs’ by making one airline ‘more competitive’ is to drive down the living standards of all.”

In the aftermath of the company’s bankruptcy filing, the workers’ share is less than 20 percent, and the stock itself is worth practically nothing.

US Airways has already used bankruptcy to wrest massive concessions from its unions. Last month, American Airlines, the largest carrier since its acquisition of the remnants of TWA, threatened bankruptcy to wring \$1.8 billion in concessions from its unions. Hawaiian Air, the 12th largest airline, recently filed for bankruptcy. Management at Continental, which just laid off 1,200 workers, Northwest and Delta have all publicly threatened bankruptcy filings by the end of this year. While they wield this sword over the heads of the unions, the airline bosses are also strictly enforcing disciplinary rules and “random” drug testing, aiming to intimidate the entire workforce and to weed out union militants.

Following the criminal attacks on the World Trade Center, the government doled out some \$15 billion in cash and loan guarantees to the airlines, which were already in the grip of an economic crisis predating 9/11. Now as part of the Iraq war budget,

Congress has approved another \$3 billion in government welfare for the airline corporations. Air transport is a crucial part of the economy, and by the same token the airline unions potentially have enormous strategic power. It is to keep that power in check that the capitalists mobilize their state apparatus against the airline unions, from bankruptcy courts to anti-labor laws like the Railway Labor Act (RLA), which prohibits airline unions from striking when their contracts expire, forcing them through a maze of “mediation,” “cooling off” periods and the like.

Now the airline bosses are pressuring Congress to strengthen the RLA by amending it to require binding arbitration of union contracts. In response, the union tops are cravenly lobbying capitalist politicians, particularly the Democrats who pose as “friends” of labor, to keep the original law in place. It was under Democratic president Jimmy Carter that the airlines were deregulated in 1978, paving the way for 25 years of union-busting attacks. And it was Bill Clinton who used the RLA to stop a strike by American Airlines pilots in 1997.

In the face of the anti-union onslaught, there must be a unified struggle by the IAM, Teamsters, pilots and flight attendants unions. But the pro-capitalist union bureaucrats are committed to the “profitability” of the airlines, for which they have repeatedly sacrificed hard-won union gains. This has led some frustrated workers to embrace the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association, a craft union that has launched decertification drives against the IAM, threatening to further divide and weaken the workforce. What is needed is **one industry-wide union** of all airline workers!

Imperialist military adventures abroad go hand in hand with attacks on the working class and minorities at home. What labor needs is a leadership that understands that it cannot fight for the workers’ cause if it embraces the profit system of the capitalist class enemy, its political parties and imperialist wars. It is through the class struggles of the workers that such a labor leadership will be forged and a workers party built that can lead the fight for a workers government, the only way to put an end to capitalism’s economic chaos, racism and wars. ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

Death Row Lawyer Axed for Winning

Texas

For nearly a quarter century, the forces of Texas “law and order” have been trying to take the life of Johnny Paul Penry, a man with an IQ of 54 who was orphaned and brutally abused as a child. Although sentenced to death three times for a 1979 murder, Penry has held the hangmen at bay for two decades, largely through the hard work of his lawyer John Wright. Two times Wright has managed to get the United States Supreme Court to overturn Penry’s death sentences, based on the trial courts’ continuing failure to take Penry’s mental retardation into account in jury instructions.

So after the third death sentence was imposed on Penry last summer, Polk County Judge Elizabeth Coker decided to knock Wright out of the case, denying his routine request for appointment to handle Penry’s next round of appeals. Coker’s supposed basis for switching lawyers is that on appeal Penry might need to argue that Wright mishandled the trial, creating a supposed “conflict of interest”! As legal ethics expert Stephen Gillers put it: “This is Alice in Wonderland law” (*New York Times*, 24 March). In fact, Wright was kicked off the case because he has fought tooth and nail for his client, and was winning. Coming from a state notorious for sticking capital defendants with lawyers who are untrained, poorly paid, and in some cases

even sleep through their clients’ trials, this Texas judge’s professed concerns about the quality of Wright’s advocacy are nothing but a grim joke.

But it gets even more sinister. The new attorney in whose hands Judge Coker chose to place Penry’s fate is a Texas law professor named Stephen Taylor, who just last summer was *helping the prosecutors* build their case *against* Penry! The trial prosecutor has admitted he consulted with Taylor repeatedly to brainstorm strategies for dealing with Penry’s mental disability, which is sure to be a central issue on appeal.

“Please move quickly to withdraw from my case,” Penry wrote in a letter to Taylor. “I do not want you to handle my appeal.” But Judge Coker, who last summer ruled that Penry *is* mentally competent enough to be executed, turned around in December and decided Penry may *not* be competent to choose his own lawyer! In a grotesque Catch-22, the prosecutors are suggesting that if Penry can figure out that he doesn’t want a prosecution agent as his “defense” lawyer, that proves he is not really mentally retarded.

While Texas is exceptionally notorious, this gross outrage is not just some Texas aberration. As novelist and attorney Scott Turow pointed out in *The New Yorker* (6 January), many of those on death row are there “essentially for the crime of having the wrong lawyers.” In “Up North” Illinois, a series of highly publicized cases where innocent people got death sentences led the outgoing

governor, George Ryan, to commute the sentences of the state’s entire death row population in January (see “Abolish the Racist Death Penalty! Illinois Governor Empties Death Row,” WV No. 796, 31 January). Meanwhile, in Pennsylvania, former Black Panther, MOVE supporter and award-winning journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal still sits on death row after being railroaded for the 1981 killing of a Philly cop, even after the man who actually shot the cop confessed.

The death penalty is the apex of a whole system of state repression which is rigged from top to bottom to protect the interests

of the capitalist rulers against working people and the oppressed. We Marxists oppose the death penalty in principle, for the guilty as well as the innocent, because we do not accord the government the right to say who lives and who dies. And in this deeply racist and class-divided society, it is black people, Latinos, and overwhelmingly the poor (like Penry) who get the death sentences. The multiracial labor movement should mobilize its ranks to get rid of the barbaric system of capital punishment. In doing so, they will strike a blow against the whole frame-up system. **Abolish the racist death penalty! ■**

August 2001 protest in San Francisco on behalf of black death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal.



Egypt...

(continued from page 12)

in Pakistan, Iran, Yemen, Sudan, Saudi Arabia and “liberated” Afghanistan, among others. It is a measure of the pervasiveness of anti-gay bigotry in these societies that there is no word in Arabic, Urdu or Farsi for homosexual that is not demeaning or derogatory.

Nor is the industrially advanced Christian West a safe haven for gays and lesbians. The murder of Matthew Shepard in Wyoming in 1998 is a chilling reminder of the fragility of democratic rights for the oppressed. In the U.S., 13 states have so-called sodomy laws, with homosexuality punishable by up to life imprisonment in states like Idaho and Oklahoma. Upholding Georgia’s “sodomy” law in 1986 the Supreme Court declared that “consenting adults have no constitutional rights to private homosexual sex.” Now the court has agreed to hear *Lawrence v. Texas*, a case in which two men were convicted for private consensual sex. Chief Justice William Rehnquist made his bigoted views clear when he likened a university’s refusal to recognize a gay student group to “measures necessary to prevent the spread of measles.”

In Britain, the Victorian-era laws of “buggery” and “solicitation for immoral purpose,” used to prosecute Oscar Wilde over a century ago, still await the Blair government’s years-old promise of a “historic sweep.” In 1998 the laws were used to prosecute and convict the “Bolton Seven” for having consensual sex. In the face of massive public outrage the government was forced to set them free, but in the last couple of years there have been massive roundups under the guise of “protecting” children from “pedophiles.”

In capitalist society, the persecution of homosexuals is linked to the subjugation of women and is used to buttress the institution of the family. The family, the main source of women’s oppression, serves as a vehicle through which private property is passed down from one generation to the next and to provide the means by which future generations of workers are raised. Through the institution of the family the

ruling classes instill bourgeois codes of “morality,” subservience and obedience to authority, and reinforce religious obscurantism, thus serving the ultimate goal of regimenting society. Those who deviate from these set restrictions ultimately become the subjects of persecution.

Immediately upon their accession to power, the Bolsheviks swept away all laws discriminating against homosexuals.



Cairo, March 18: Demonstrators’ sign reads: “No to a Strike on Iraq, No to Zionist Massacres.”

Describing the measures taken by the revolutionary government that took power after the Russian Revolution in 1917, Dr. Grigori Batkis, the director of the Moscow Institute of Social Hygiene, wrote:

“It [the new Soviet legislation] declares the absolute non-interference of the state and society into sexual matters, so long as no body is injured and no one’s interests are encroached upon....

“Concerning homosexuality, sodomy, and various other forms of sexual gratification, which are set down in European legislation as offenses against public morality, Soviet legislation treats these exactly the same as so-called ‘natural’ intercourse. All forms of sexual intercourse are private matters.”

—quoted in John Lauritsen and David Thorstad, *The Early Homosexual Rights Movement*, 1974

The International Communist League, in

the tradition of Bolshevism, is irreconcilably opposed to each and every manifestation of sexual discrimination. We stand firmly for the absolute non-interference of the state into consensual sexual relations. We call for **full democratic rights for homosexuals**. We demand the immediate release of all the gay men jailed in Egypt and the abolition of all legislation that discriminates against homosexuals.

It was no coincidence that the court handed down its sentences on the eve of the American colonial assault on Iraq. In bed with the American imperialists and contributing to their war effort by facilitating the passage of warships through the Suez canal, Mubarak’s regime sought to head off potential protests against the war by appeasing the Islamic fundamentalists. But unlike the protests against the war in Afghanistan which were overwhelmingly dominated by Islamic fundamentalists, the current antiwar protests in Egypt have had a large component of leftist youth and Arab nationalists who look back to the regime of Gamal Abdel Nasser in the 1950s and ’60s.

For more than ten hours, tens of thousands of protesters filled Tahrir (Liberation) Square in central Cairo on March 20,

the first day of the U.S. attack on Iraq, venting their anger against the regime and chanting songs by the poets Ahmed Negm and Sheik Imam. The duo was famous in the 1960s and 1970s for representing the militant fervor of students and workers during strikes, sit-ins and demonstrations. “It took 31 years and an American-led war on Iraq for the rare occurrence to be reenacted,” wrote *Al-Ahram Weekly* (27 March-2 April), referring to the left-wing led student movement that shook the country in 1972. The protesters at Tahrir Square last month were met by the regime’s terror machine of police dogs, armored police cars and fire engines. Thousands were arrested and beaten, among them Nasserist member of parliament Hamdeen Sabahi.

Marxists seek to win these leftist youth to a revolutionary program, including defense of the rights of homosexuals, women and religious minorities. Acting as the tribune of the people, a revolutionary Leninist party must lead the working class in defense of all the oppressed as an integral part of its struggle against the capitalist system. Only the overthrow of the capitalist order internationally through proletarian revolution can lay the material foundations for a new world in which the oppressive institution of the family will be replaced with collective childcare and housework. Only then can all human relations be truly based on the free choice of individuals. The International Communist League is committed to championing these liberating goals of communism and the necessarily global struggle for a classless society. **Stop the persecution of homosexuals now! ■**

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Affirmative Action Under Fire

For Free, Quality, Integrated Education for All!

Chanting “Jim Crow—hell, no!” thousands demonstrated outside the Supreme Court on April 1 as Bush administration lawyers argued that a University of Michigan admissions policy that takes the race of minority applicants into account is unconstitutional. If the Court agrees, it will spell the death of what remains of affirmative action programs for blacks

Young Spartacus

and other minorities set up as a result of the mass struggles of the 1950s and '60s for school integration. Noting that Bush's vilification of affirmative action on Martin Luther King Jr. Day was followed by a modest increase in government funding for historically black colleges, a protester from one such institution, Hampton University, remarked, “It was his ‘go back to Africa’ statement.”

The drive to eliminate affirmative action is part of a continuing racist purge of higher education, from the gutting of open admissions and remedial programs at the City University of New York to massive tuition hikes there and at other public universities to the latest effort by right-wing forces to do away with minority scholarship programs. The doors to the best universities are not just being slammed shut, but bolted against all but the thinnest layer of black and Latino students. And those who remain have been subjected to a nightmarish hell in recent years: racist



Washington, D.C., April 1: Thousands rally outside Supreme Court to protest attack on University of Michigan affirmative action program.

graffiti on a main sidewalk at the University of Michigan; a black mannequin hanging by a noose from a tree at liberal Antioch College; a “ghetto party” at a white fraternity at Dartmouth; simulated lynchings of black students by white frat boys dressed in KKK robes at Auburn.

Bush condemned affirmative action for giving preference to some applicants “not because of any academic achievement or

life experience, but solely because they are African-American, Hispanic or Native American.” So preference is supposed to be based on “academic achievement” and “life experience”? This from a former C-average student whose entire silver-spooned life, including his admission to Yale, was greased by having the surname Bush. Another “principled opponent of affirmative action” is the new Republican

governor of Alaska, former Senator Frank Murkowski. When he was elected governor, it became his job to select his replacement as Senator. After deep thought and much research, he decided the best person for the job was...his daughter, Lisa Murkowski. “Your mother and I are very proud,” he beamed in announcing the appointment.

Higher education, like every bourgeois institution in American society, is shot through with race and class bias. As a *Wall Street Journal* (20 February) headline acknowledged, “At Many Colleges, the Rich Kids Get Affirmative Action.” Duke University, for example, allocates as many as 160 places for “applicants with rich or powerful parents who are not alumni,” above and beyond the sons and daughters of rich or powerful alumni. As late as 1966, at the height of the civil rights movement, only 400 of the University of Michigan's 32,000 students were black, this in a state where black school enrollment in Detroit alone was over 150,000. Even under the current Michigan plan, a white applicant from a rural high school with an honors program can get almost as many preference points, 16 compared to 20, as a black youth.

As part of our fight for full equality for black people and other minorities, the Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth Clubs oppose the reactionary assault against affirmative action. However, unlike

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Protest Anti-Gay Persecution in Egypt!

On March 15, a Cairo appeals court sentenced 21 men charged with “habitual debauchery,” “obscene behavior” and “contempt of religion” to three years imprisonment and forced labor. The men were part of the so-called “Queen Boat defendants,” a group of 52 arrested in May 2001 in a police raid on a Cairo night club of the same name, and charged with the “crime of homosexual activity.” During their pre-trial detention they had been beaten and tortured until they confessed to being gay. The men were further humiliated by being subjected to forced medical examinations in order to determine whether they had engaged in anal intercourse. Their names, photographs,

addresses and workplaces were front-page news in the state-owned newspapers. They were accused of being agents of Israel and of being funded by foreign agencies to spread the “Western disease” of homosexuality. As a result, in addition to the victimization and suffering of the men themselves, many of their relatives lost their jobs.

In November 2001, the 52 men were tried by a State Security Court, a legal arm established under the emergency laws by which President Hosni Mubarak has kept the country under the boot since 1981. Twenty-two of them were sentenced to prison terms ranging from one to two years. One man was sentenced to five



Schiller/NY Times

Victims of anti-gay dragnet transported to state security court in Cairo, July 2001.

years imprisonment and 29 were acquitted. Not satisfied with the sentences, Mubarak ordered a retrial of all the men, “innocent” and “guilty” alike, before an appeals court which duly obliged by handing down harsher sentences.

Since the raid on the Queen Boat two years ago, the regime has escalated its campaign of repression against homosexuals. Hundreds of gay men have been arrested in raids on their homes and through Internet entrapments, put on trial before star-chamber courts and sentenced to prison terms of up to three years.

According to the *New York Times* the police have made an average of one arrest a week since the beginning of 2003. Neither the self-proclaimed leftists in the country nor bourgeois liberals have protested the witchhunt. *The working class in Egypt and around the world must protest these heinous acts of persecution!*

Egypt is not alone when it comes to the persecution of homosexuals. Across the Islamic crescent, from Morocco to Malaysia, homosexuality is a crime under Sharia (Islamic law), punishable by death

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