

## Pennsylvania Supreme Court Rules Innocence Is No Defense

# Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!

### Statement by the Partisan Defense Committee

*The following statement was issued by the Partisan Defense Committee, a legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League, on October 19.*

On October 8, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court yet again ruled that a court of law is no place for evidence of Mumia Abu-Jamal's innocence. That evidence—centered on the sworn testi-

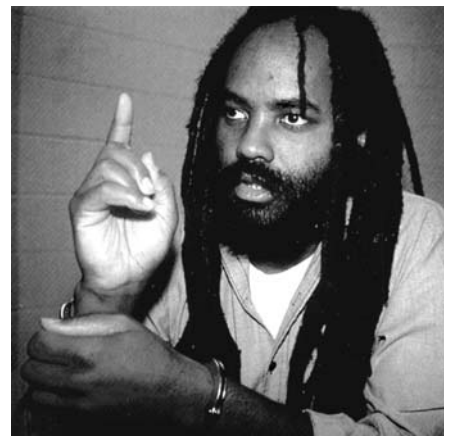
mony of Arnold Beverly that he, not Jamal, shot and killed police officer Daniel Faulkner on 9 December 1981—blasts through all the cover-ups and lies used by the state to put Jamal on death row for a crime he did not commit.

The testimony of Beverly, who has allowed his confession to be recorded on video, is corroborated not merely by a series of affidavits but as Jamal's attorneys described, "a stack of memoranda approximately the size of a New York City phonebook" written by PDC counsel Rachel Wolkenstein and Jonathan Piper, another attorney associated

with the PDC. Yet it has been ruled out of order by both the Pennsylvania courts where Jamal has sought to overturn his sentence under the state's Post Conviction Relief Act (PCRA), and the federal judiciary which has turned down Jamal's *habeas corpus* appeals and slammed shut the courtroom doors on evidence of Mumia's innocence.

The case of Mumia Abu-Jamal is a textbook example of a racist frame-up. A Black Panther Party spokesman at the age of 15, an award-winning journalist and a supporter of the Philadelphia

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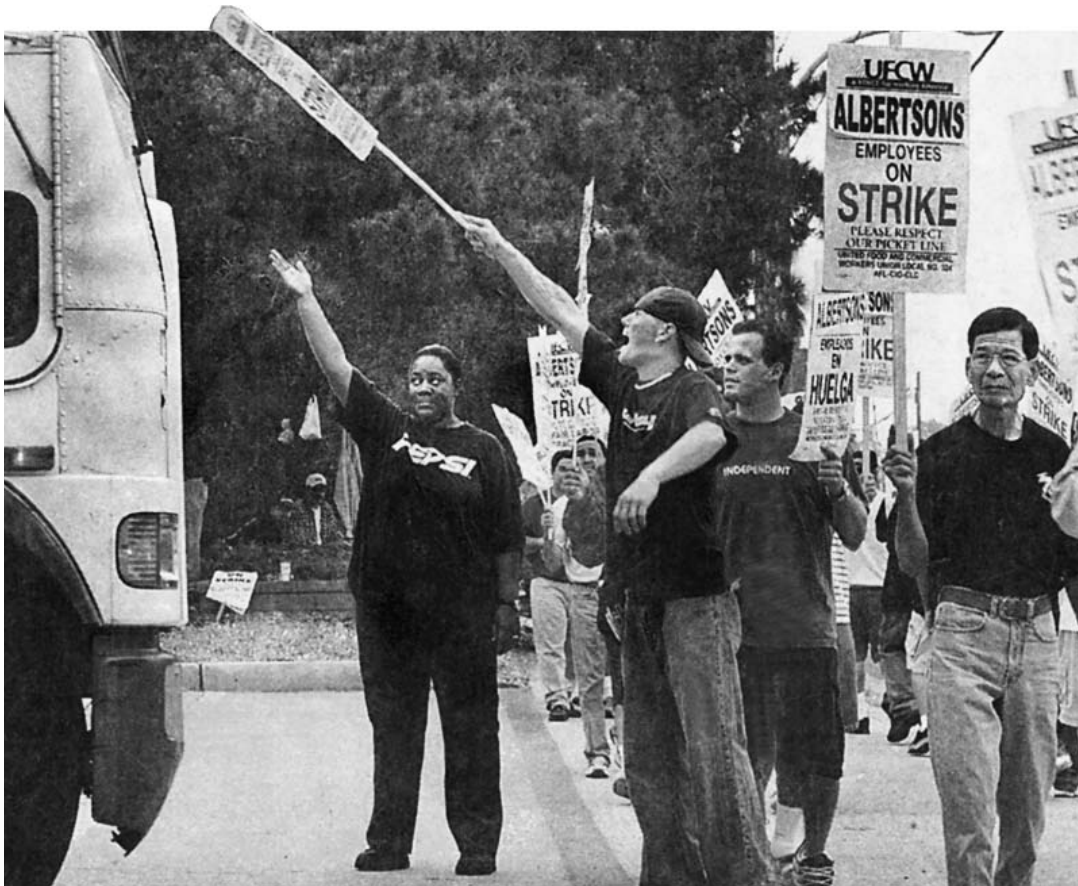
Terry/Gamma-Liaison

## Victory to Supermarket, Transit Workers!

# L.A. Strike City

LOS ANGELES, October 21—Major strike battles have erupted in Los Angeles and throughout Southern California. Seven United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) locals, representing 70,000 workers, are picketing the three supermarket giants Vons (Safeway), Ralphs (Kroger Co.) and Albertsons. Two days after the grocery strike began, over 2,000 mechanics and maintenance workers in Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 1277 downed their tools. Honoring the picket lines, which have shut down the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), are drivers organized by the United Transportation Union (UTU) and clerical, custodial and tool room workers organized by the Transportation Communications Union (TCU).

These strikes have struck a chord among workers throughout the L.A. area. Teamsters truckers have been honoring UFCW picket lines outside supermarkets and distribution centers. Teamsters members themselves are engaged in a number of strikes in the area, including workers at the Darigold milk company and the First Transit commuter route as well as sanitation workers—whose strike has just ended victoriously by winning Teamsters representation at Norcal Waste Services in the South Bay, which includes the airport, heavily black Compton and the posh Palos Verdes community. Meanwhile, 50,000 L.A. and



Picket line of striking Albertsons grocery workers faces down scab truck in Brea.

Orange County workers in Service Employees (SEIU) Local 660 have been working without a contract since September 30. Instead of the SEIU's lunchtime contract rallies, now is the time to strike alongside their class brothers and sisters!

The bosses' attempts to gut the unions and drastically slash medical benefits—as much as 50 percent in the case of the UFCW—are at the core of all these contract disputes. Union members are determined to defend their hard-won gains against employer demands that they sacrifice their health and livelihoods on the altar of company profits and government-

dictated austerity. Workers with some social power are saying "Enough!" and fighting back with widespread popular support. Victory to the grocery and transit strikes!

Coming only days after the recall election, when the AFL-CIO tops squandered millions of dollars in union dues in a futile effort to keep the widely despised Democratic governor Gray Davis in office, the current outbreak of strikes in Southern California offers a class-struggle road to fight capitalist austerity and union-busting. And it's not just a West Coast phenomenon: 10,000 UFCW

workers have struck in St. Louis, while 3,300 followed suit in West Virginia, Kentucky and Ohio. Other major UFCW locals will have strike votes before month's end. These struggles underline the common interests of the working class as a whole—from Latino immigrants and urban ghetto residents in the Southwest to impoverished white workers in Appalachia—against the capitalist class enemy. The fight for decent health care is a life-and-death issue facing workers and oppressed minorities across the country.

Historically an "open shop" anti-union town, L.A. is a city of vast disparities of wealth, with millions of low-paid immigrants and black workers. In recent years, there have been significant organizing efforts among the many Mexican and Central American workers who are exploited in low-wage, back-breaking jobs. These immigrant workers have brought with them traditions of militant labor struggle from their countries of origin and have helped revitalize the L.A. labor movement, as seen in the "Justice for Janitors" organizing efforts in the early 1990s and the organization of 90,000 home health care and other workers in 1999. This labor combativity was evident in the 2000 transit strike, which came amid a series of other strike battles and had wide popular support among the Latino and black poor who make up the bulk of the ridership in the L.A. mass transit system. The *Los Angeles Times* (29 September 2000) spoke at the time of "Striketown USA" and noted that those strikes "have been a great unifier across racial and ethnic lines."

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# Depraved Court Convicts Mother for Son's Suicide



Healey/NY Times

Judith Scruggs

## Connecticut

Everything bad that happens is your own fault if you're poor, they tell you at school. Small, weak kids get relentlessly bullied so much they just shut down or actually kill themselves. It happens a lot: suicide is the third leading cause of death for kids aged 10 to 14. If you do grow up, and if you're lucky, you get to work at a meaningless, deadening job that doesn't pay enough. If you're a working woman, there's even more trouble, because now the government is out to put you in jail for "neglect" if anything bad should happen to your kids. And something bad is always waiting to happen when you're poor.

In the old blue-collar town of Meriden, Connecticut, Judith Scruggs, a 52-year-old mother, worked 60 hours a week at two jobs to provide for herself, her 12-year-old son and her 19-year-old daughter. On October 6 she was convicted of a felony count in her son's suicide. Her boy, J. Daniel Scruggs, was small and

weak. So at school he was bullied, spit on, kicked and punched. Everybody knew it and nobody did anything, because that's how things are supposed to go in the brutal holding pens called public schools in America. He was so scared of school he stayed home 45 days in the months before he finally hanged himself in the bedroom closet where he often hid, on 2 January 2002. When the cops came, they found the house a mess. The state, incredibly, filed felony charges against the grieving mother for an "unsafe" home that posed a "risk of injury." Judith Scruggs now faces up to ten years in prison.

This isn't just one backwoods prosecutor running wild: only a few days later in New York City a mother in Canarsie, Brooklyn was arrested and faces up to 16 years in prison because her two young children tragically died in a fire. Kim Brathwaite, a single mother from Trinidad, had to go to her 12-hour 3 p.m. to 3 a.m. shift at a downtown Brooklyn McDonald's. Her babysitter cancelled unexpectedly, and nine-year-old Justina and 19-month-old Justin died in a fire in

their tiny illegal basement apartment in the early hours of Sunday, October 12. When she got home from work, her children were dead and Kim Brathwaite was charged with "reckless endangerment" and "endangering the welfare of a child," and placed on "suicide watch" by the judge who set her bail so high, at \$35,000, it was unlikely she'd be able to get out to attend her babies' funeral. We say all the charges should be dropped against these innocent mothers!

These stories are just the ones that made the newspapers. The daily terror and humiliation entailed in growing up impoverished or black in racist, capitalist America takes its toll largely unreported in the press, where dry statistics on packed prisons and cuts in education, welfare and social programs mask deadly official cruelty. There's an explosion in diseases and asthma rates, with rat and cockroach populations soaring once again in the wake of budget cuts in inner cities.

This brutal world reeks with official hypocrisy, starting with the government in Washington, D.C., which would like to replace the Bill of Rights with the Ten Commandments, and whose only "concern" for the lives of children ends once they're born. "Family values" anti-sex hysteria is used to punish kids and working people, setting up a patriarchal model at total variance with the way most people actually live, a fake ideal to cover the lack of social services, health care, education

and day care working people urgently need. A pack of wolves shows more solidarity and concern for its nursing females and young than the capitalist rulers do.

Viewed from the most basic standpoint of any civilized society—how the new generations are raised and educated—U.S. society is an utter disaster. Poor women without husbands are being hounded off welfare, told to get a job or "find a man" any way they can. But then when they do successfully stay off welfare and work to support themselves, like Kim Brathwaite and Judith Scruggs did, they are still blamed for everything that goes wrong. These working women were doing the best they could, and their children died because of the horrible cruelties of the capitalist system.

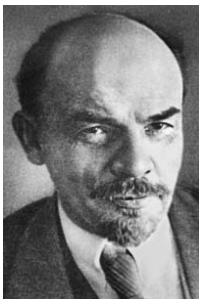
The capitalist politicians, Democrats and Republicans alike, are part of the problem, and voting for them is no solution. The biggest lie they teach you in school is that working people themselves can't do anything about their condition. In fact, it is the working class which has both the power and interest to fight for the needs of all its members—men and women, adult and young alike—through overturning capitalist rule. Only the establishment of a workers government can lay the basis for abolishing forever the brutal exploitation of labor and the humiliating bullying and intimidation of the poor, of women, of youth, that is its inevitable accompaniment under capitalism. ■



TROTSKY

### For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

*The 1917 Bolshevik Revolution was a beacon to workers and the oppressed around the world. The Second Congress of the Third (Communist) International, founded in 1919, recognized the potential of doubly oppressed women workers in the struggle for socialist revolution and laid out the communist program for women's emancipation in a resolution edited by German Communist leader Clara Zetkin.*



LENIN

It is imperative that proletarian women play a powerful role in the revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of capitalism and realization of communism. The goal is to secure for all women complete and unrestricted social rights, so that in their education and employment and as mothers they can develop every aspect of their full human personality, linked by bonds of solidarity with society as a whole. The proletariat must attain greater unity and strength so that, in the revolutionary struggle against the bourgeois order as in the revolutionary construction of the new order, it may create the social preconditions for achieving this goal for women....

For women to achieve full social equality with men in truth and fact and not just on the passive pages of dead law books, for women as well as men to win the possibility of unrestricted achievement and free development of their full human personality, two primary conditions must be met. First, private property must be uprooted and replaced by social property. Second, the activity of women must be integrated into the social production of a new order free of exploitation and subjugation. Only the realization of these two conditions will prevent women from becoming economically dependent on men as wives and mothers in the family, or, as a result of the class conflict between exploiter and exploited, falling under the economic subjugation and exploitation of the capitalist as proletarian women working a job.

—"Theses for the Communist Women's Movement," *The Communist International in Lenin's Time: Proceedings and Documents of the Second Congress, 1920*, Vol. 2 (Pathfinder Press, 1991)

## WORKERS VANGUARD



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## Spartacus Youth Club Class Series

### BAY AREA

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Monday, October 27, 5 p.m.  
San Francisco State University  
Room TBA

#### Defend the Gains of the Chinese and Korean Revolutions Against Capitalism!

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UC Berkeley, Wheeler Hall, Room 223

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3806 Beverly Blvd., Room 215  
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Information and readings: (213) 380-8239  
or e-mail: [slsycla@cs.com](mailto:slsycla@cs.com)

### CHICAGO

#### Alternate Wednesdays, 6:30 p.m.

#### October 29: The Russian Revolution of 1917: How the Working Class Took Power

U of C, Cobb Hall, Room 107  
5811 S. Ellis Ave.

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

Visit the International Communist League Web site:

[www.icl-fi.org](http://www.icl-fi.org)

### BOSTON

#### Alternate Tuesdays, 6 p.m.

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725 Commonwealth Avenue  
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Information and readings: (617) 666-9453  
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### NEW YORK CITY

#### Alternate Tuesdays, 8 p.m.

#### October 28: Race, Sex, Class and the Capitalist War on the Poor—For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

Columbia University  
Kent Hall, Room 405  
Information and readings: (212) 267-1025  
or e-mail: [nysl@compuserve.com](mailto:nysl@compuserve.com)

### TORONTO

#### Alternate Saturdays, 3 p.m.

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Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Room 4410  
252 Bloor St. West  
(above St. George Station)  
Information and readings: (416) 593-4138  
or e-mail: [spartcan@on.aibn.com](mailto:spartcan@on.aibn.com)

### VANCOUVER

#### For a Revolutionary Workers Party! Break with the Racist, Pro-Imperialist NDP! Independence for Quebec!

Thursday, November 6, 6 p.m.  
Simon Fraser University  
Maggie Benston Centre, Room 2290  
Information and readings: (604) 687-0353  
or e-mail: [tltt@look.ca](mailto:tltt@look.ca)

# No to the Racist Expulsion of Lila and Alma!

## The Islamic Headscarf in French High Schools

### Lutte Ouvrière Spearheads Expulsions in Aubervilliers

We print below a leaflet issued by the *Ligue Trotskyste de France*, section of the *International Communist League*, on October 9.

On September 24, two sisters at a high school in Aubervilliers, a Paris suburb, were expelled for wearing the Islamic headscarf, pending a permanent decision by the disciplinary committee which will take place tomorrow. These expulsions come as a national debate is taking place. A government commission (the Stasi Commission) has been set up to study the possibility of banning the Islamic headscarf at school. President Chirac and Prime Minister Raffarin cynically pretend to be interested in the fate of young Muslim girls. No way! They feel so concerned that they are deporting hundreds of Muslims, animists and others daily by charter flights! The government is so determined to fight Islamic fundamentalists that in late August they deported Nasr Eddine Bourached, a spokesman for *sans-papiers* [undocumented immigrants] in Perpignan, to his probable death at the hands of Algerian Islamic fundamentalists! The government is so worried about the fate of Muslims that they fuel the lie that every Muslim is a potential terrorist with Vigipirate, a campaign of daily racist terror. The *Ligue Trotskyste de France* says: **Down with Vigipirate! No to the deportation charter flights! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! No to the racist expulsions of girls wearing the headscarf! For Alma and Lila to be reinstated at school!**

Right-wing politicians are not the only ones fighting for the racist expulsion of girls who wear the Islamic headscarf at school. *Lutte Ouvrière* (LO) [a left group that claims to be Trotskyist] spearheaded the campaign for Lila and Alma's expulsions in Aubervilliers. According to *Le Monde* (9 October), "Teachers who are members of *Lutte Ouvrière* have argued since the beginning of the school year for immediate sanctions." Whatever their intentions, LO is campaigning for the same thing as the government. LO hails the teachers who fought for Alma and Lila's expulsion: "Well, we approve of the teachers who had the courage to defend that position and we hope that there will be many more in this country. Furthermore, teachers should not need an excuse, should not have to rely on a law. Their vocation as teachers and their conscience should be enough" (*Lutte Ouvrière*, 26 September). In other words, LO calls for teachers to do the job themselves of expelling girls wearing the headscarf, in the middle of a hysterical campaign in France to do just that.

LO is not alone in its campaign to expel the schoolgirls. The *Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire* (LCR) has some internal differences, but at the Aubervilliers high school they differ with LO only on a nuance: the LCR seeks to "avoid as much as possible deprivation of education and expulsion" but "we do not want to exclude

the possibility of sanctions if dialogue is not possible" (*Le Monde*, 9 October). The LCR member continued: "The problem is that those two students go much further.... They pursue a logic of activism." An LCR teacher even denounced the JCR (*Jeunesse Communiste Révolutionnaire*, youth organization of the LCR) because the JCR has the correct position of opposing the racist expulsions (*Le Monde*, 9 October). Nevertheless, the JCR is "politically subordinate" to the LCR, and the JCR is preparing to campaign in the spring for the electoral slate—and thus for the politics—of the LO/LCR. Whether it is done by Raffarin's racist laws or by teachers who are members of LO and LCR, the result for these schoolgirls is the same: "Get out!"

We defend Alma, Lila and all girls who wear the headscarf against the reactionary bourgeois state and against the teachers and others who seek to expel them. At the same time, as communists, we oppose the Islamic headscarf and the veil which represent a reactionary social program of confining women to the family, the home and a position of subservience (see "Women and Immigration in France," *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 57, Winter 2002-2003). Our opposition to the veil and the headscarf is also part of the reason that we oppose the expulsions. These expulsions can only lead to even greater isolation and oppression for these young women. Their religious beliefs can only be reinforced if they are cut off from public education. We defend secularism and the separation of church and state, but the principle of secularism is deformed by the racist, anti-worker and anti-woman French state when used to attack young Muslims wearing the headscarf. Secularism is based on the idea that the state should not interfere with people's personal beliefs. Alma and Lila's father, a lawyer for the MRAP [an anti-racist group associated with the French Communist Party], aptly evoked the hypocrisy of this cam-

Lila and Alma Levy, students expelled from high school for wearing headscarves, targets of French government anti-Muslim witchhunt.



AP

paign when he referred to the "ayatollahs of secularism who have abandoned common sense" (*Le Monde*, 25 September). This man, who opposes the veil and has fought against the expulsion of his daughters, correctly denounced the "double punishment" that risks being inflicted upon them: "the one which they wear on their heads and the one which would deprive them of the humanity that school provides" (*L'Humanité*, 9 October).

LO does not defend the schoolgirls' expulsion on the basis of secularism but rather primarily on the basis of "defending women." LO claims that it is necessary to expel girls wearing the headscarf for their own good: "The question is not the 'right' of some girls to wear the veil, but the right of thousands of young girls and young women to rely on the banning of the veil to stand up against the reactionary constraints that their social milieu tries to impose on them" (*Lutte Ouvrière*, 19 September). LO claims that it is possible to turn schools into havens of progressivism. That in no way resolves the oppression of women who are forced to put the veil back on as soon as they leave school. Furthermore, LO's campaign to expel girls from school reinforces the racist segregation which is one of the sources of oppression for these girls.

Confined to the ghettos, youth of immigrant origin in France are denied jobs and a decent future; so they seek an identity in religion. This is the case of Alma and Lila in Aubervilliers. Their father is a Jewish atheist, their mother is from Kabylia [a Berber-speaking region in Algeria], and these sisters do not regularly attend the mosque. This is far from being an excep-

tion. In the absence of any perspectives and given the hopelessness in capitalist society, youth are increasingly turning toward Islam. These young women seek refuge in religion as a "heart in a heartless world" (as Karl Marx put it), as an illusory consolation in the great beyond for the very real suffering down here. Contrary to LO and the LCR, who want to make people believe that Alma and Lila pursue a "logic of activism" for Islamic fundamentalism, the reality in France is that many of these girls wear the headscarf in reaction to racist segregation in this society. Islam is a religion of the oppressed and of the ghetto. Even Alma and Lila insist that they "would never wear the veil in a country in which it is obligatory" (*Libération*, 22 September).

LO argues that some left groups "call for the 'right' of young Muslim women to wear the veil at school. Sometimes they add the argument that, in the absence of that right, they will not have access to culture and to the knowledge acquired in school. This is actually a concession to reactionary pressure" (*Lutte Ouvrière*, 19 September). The real reactionary pressure in France comes from the bourgeoisie (which, furthermore, uses the imams and pushes them forward in order to control the ghettos), not from young girls wearing the headscarf! LO falsely suggests that those who oppose the racist expulsions necessarily accept the veil. There are in fact groups that do not believe that the veil is a symbol of oppression. For example, *Socialisme Par en Bas* [Socialism from Below—SPEB, affiliated with the British Socialist Workers Party of the late Tony Cliff] says: "The Islamic headscarf represents, above all, a symbol of resistance to religious and racist oppression" (*Islamisme et Révolution*). However—as opposed to the SPEB, LO and the LCR—we in the LTF have always fought fiercely against the veil and Islamic reaction, and we continue to do so. In Afghanistan one can see most clearly who really wanted to fight against the oppression of veiled women.

The only time in centuries that Afghan women were not forced to wear the suffocating *burka* was in the 1980s. That was because in 1979 the Soviet Union intervened in Afghanistan at the request of the government—a petty-bourgeois, modernizing regime that sought to lower the bride price. Under the protection of the Red Army, Afghan women were trained as nurses, teachers and soldiers. This was just the opposite of what the French colonial capitalists did in Algeria, because the Soviet Union was a workers state. Despite

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Le Bolchévik

1981: LTF protest in defense of Soviet intervention in Afghanistan against Islamic reaction.

# L.A. SYC Organizes Strike Support Rally at PCC

On October 16 the Los Angeles Spartacus Youth Club initiated a united-front rally at Pasadena City College (PCC) around the slogans: "Victory to the UFCW grocery workers strike! Victory to the transit workers strike! Picket lines mean don't cross!" Afterward, we brought students out to the picket lines to show their support for the striking workers.

Earlier in the day, a member of the SYC went out to the ATU picket lines and invited union members to come and speak to the PCC students. Two workers came out. PCC students cheered as one of them spoke. Many students we spoke to understood that the workers' fight for health benefits, union jobs and pensions would benefit them, too. Some students are grocery workers themselves. The grocery and transit strikes in Los Angeles are concrete examples of the power that workers have to shut down production.

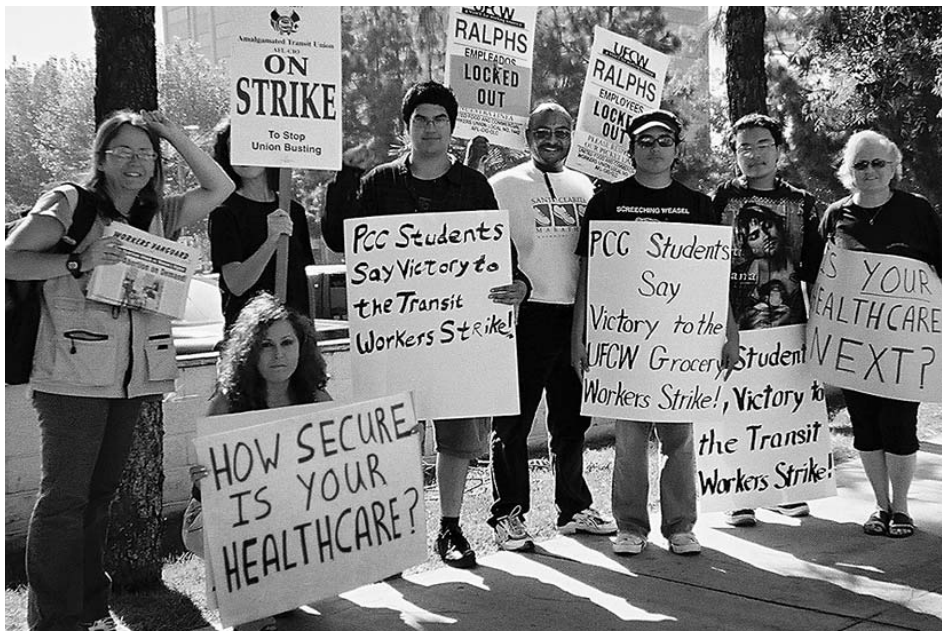
Earlier in the week, we had invited Students for Social Justice, a leftist campus group at PCC that includes anarchists, to endorse and speak at the united-front rally and to come to the picket lines with us. But even though they were nearby during the rally, they declined to speak. Originally, they planned to support the strikers by protesting at Von's corporate headquarters—that is, by begging the bosses. To their credit, after our march to the picket lines, Students for Social Justice organized students to go to the picket lines too.

At the picket lines, one of their members handed out a leaflet critical of the labor leaders and the Democratic and Republican parties. The leaflet also advocated a general strike of workers and students. That's a good sentiment—but what the Students for Social Justice did not advocate was that the working class fight to take power, expropriating the bourgeoisie and running society in its own interests and in the interest of all the oppressed. Real social justice requires a socialist revolution. And that will take leadership, a revolutionary vanguard party. We print below, slightly edited for publication, the speech delivered by SYC member Camilo at the united-front rally.

\* \* \*

I'm Camilo with the Spartacus Youth Club here at PCC. We seek to bring revolutionary socialist politics to students at PCC and win them over to actively take the side of workers and the oppressed. We are the youth group of the Spartacist League, which is the U.S. section of the International Communist League. We follow the program of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky.

We are here today in a strike support rally to mobilize students to take the side of workers against the bosses—both the MTA transit workers and UFCW grocery



Spartacus Youth members and PCC students join strikers at UFCW picket location in Pasadena, October 16.

store workers who right now are on strike because of threatened cuts to their health care benefits. These strikes are very important to support because when they are walking their picket lines, they are fighting *not only* for themselves, they are fighting for wages and health care of all workers and the oppressed, as well as in defense of unions themselves! If you cross those picket lines you are actively aiding the capitalist bloodsuckers.

The Students for Social Justice are supporting the strike by going to the corporate headquarters to pressure the company, making appeals to the conscience of the bloodsucking bosses. But a strike is a question of *power*. We seek to build solid picket lines that *no one* dares cross! Strikes work by shutting down production, stopping the flow of profits to the bosses. These strikes show that the workers make the city run—the workers should run the city! We seek to build a vanguard workers party to lead an international socialist revolution and do away with the racist capitalist system. *Picket lines mean don't cross—Side with the workers against the bosses! PCC students: Join the fight, take a side for workers rights!*

As communists, we in the SYC and SL fight for free health care and quality education for all. But under the economic system of capitalism, workers, minorities and the poor will never be guaranteed free health care and education because capitalism is based on profit. The capitalist administration of Gray Davis just slashed

the budgets of community colleges and increased the tuition and fees at all the public colleges in the state—this is a racist purge, denying access to higher education for working-class and minority youth. Capitalist society is divided into two main classes, the capitalist ruling class and the working class. Only a few rich capitalists own the means of production and the raw materials while the majority of the population are workers who produce all the wealth of society but are exploited and subjected to all forms of oppression and repression. *Capitalism offers no solution! For international workers revolution! Asian, Latino, black and white—Workers of the world, unite!*

Imperialist war abroad means racist attacks against blacks, immigrants and unions here at home. As internationalists we defended the Soviet Union which served as a deterrent to U.S. imperialism. U.S. imperialism was able to rape Iraq because the Soviet Union no longer exists. Down with the colonial occupation of Iraq! We fought to win U.S. workers to stand in solidarity with their working-class brothers and sisters in Iraq by taking a side against their own ruling class, by defending Iraq against U.S. imperialism without giving any political support to the capitalist regime of Saddam Hussein. We called for U.S. workers to oppose the bloody imperialist war drive through class struggle here at home. Imperialist war is an inevitable product of the capitalist system, which is why we

say: *Capitalism means racism and war—Workers revolution is what we're for!*

Domestically, the "war on terror," which is enthusiastically supported by the Democrats and Republicans alike, has meant anti-immigrant witchhunts directed overwhelmingly against Muslims and Arabs and is also aimed at attacking organized labor. In the eyes of the ruling class, a strike by the working class disrupts their "national unity." This has been demonstrated over the past period by the Taft-Hartley union-busting injunction against the ILWU longshore union last year during the lockout by the bosses. New Jersey teachers two years ago were slandered as representatives of the Taliban when they dared to go on strike. We say: *Down with the anti-immigrant witchhunt! For full citizenship rights for all immigrants! The working class has no nation!*

So why didn't transit or grocery store workers strike during the recall election? Because their leadership in the unions looks to the Democrats for "help." In contrast, we in the Spartacus Youth Club and the Spartacist League seek to *break* workers from the Democratic Party, the party of racism and war. We need to build a multiracial, class-struggle workers party. The Democrats represent the same capitalist system—they just lie better than the Republicans. The worldview of labor tops—even those of the most "progressive" stamp—is defined by what is possible or "practical" under capitalism, a system which is predicated on the exploitation of labor. We communists pursue another road, one based not only on getting better terms of exploitation but fighting to do away with the entire system of capitalist wage slavery.

Hillary Clinton was on the board of directors of Wal-Mart and played a major role in strikebreaking against transit workers in New York City. The grocery workers are being told by their union leaders to protest Wal-Mart, a southern strikebreaking company, because Wal-Mart buys Chinese goods. We seek to organize the South and organize Wal-Mart workers into unions. We defend the Chinese deformed workers state because the 1949 Revolution overthrew capitalism, which is a very good thing. But China today is in danger of capitalist counterrevolution due to the policies of the Stalinist bureaucracy which runs China. *Defend China, Cuba, Vietnam and North Korea!*

We will continue to fight for socialist revolution through organizing the working class and engaging in class struggle. So if you are interested in learning more about the SYC/SL and revolutionary politics, check us out. Come march with us to join the picket lines! Now! ■

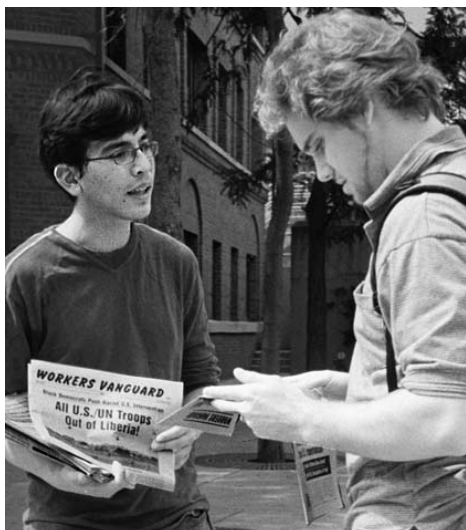
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# L.A. Strikes...

(continued from page 1)

The prominence of immigrant workers on the front lines of these strikes underlines the connection between defense of the unions and defense of immigrant rights. This means opposing the “national unity” barrage pushed by the bosses and echoed by their labor lieutenants, which is used to justify a “war on terror” that is in fact a war against immigrants, black people and all of labor. The AFL-CIO tops sow illusions in the capitalist Democratic Party as “friends” of labor and minorities, as during the recent Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride. Instead, it is necessary to fight for a workers party and to mobilize the working class independent of the capitalist parties to demand: Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!

Jesse Jackson, speaking at a UFCW support rally yesterday, was widely applauded when he spoke about the need to organize the unorganized. Jackson’s appearance at the rally testifies to the national significance of the Southern California strikes. And with low-wage, anti-union giants like Wal-Mart prominent in the retail industry, the need to organize the unorganized *is* urgently posed. But this can only be achieved through the mobilization of labor’s power *against* the capitalists. Instead Jackson preaches unity between the union and the union-hating grocery bosses against Wal-Mart. Jackson only seeks to use the L.A. strikes to boost the “friends of labor” credentials of the Democrats in the buildup to the 2004 elections.

Speaking at an October 16 strike support rally organized by the Spartacus Youth Club at Pasadena City College, one transit worker said:

“A victory for us against the union-busting attacks by the MTA and the grocery bosses will be important not only for union members but for the over three million uninsured workers and immigrants here in Los Angeles. We need to take the lead in fighting in defense of all those here in Los Angeles who have been victimized by this anti-union town, by the anti-union bosses....

“What we have to depend on is our solidarity, our strength and our numbers on the picket line—*where it counts*—and *not* on appeals to the Democrats. In our last strike, three years ago, the Democratic Party of this town was anti-union and...they led the offensive against the unionized drivers and mechanics of the MTA. And we will never forget the fact that [MTA board member and county supervisor] Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, that Jesse Jackson told us to actually come back and kiss the feet of the MTA bosses. We say no! We’ll fight in our defense and fight in defense of all those people in this county that need health care.”

## Picket Lines Mean Don’t Cross!

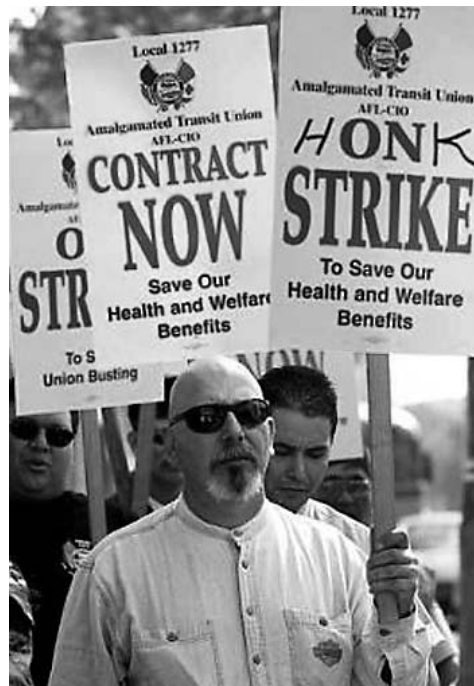
The struggle here in Southern California began when grocery workers struck the Vons supermarket chain after “last ditch” negotiations sponsored by a federal mediator broke down on Saturday evening, October 11. UFCW officials had delayed the strike for the futile talks, expressing “tremendous respect” for the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service. But the government and its agencies are not neutral mediators in the class struggle—they are the executive committee of the capitalist class. The real purpose of government mediation is to pressure the unions into capitulation in the name of “compromise.”

The retail food giants want to shift an estimated **\$1 billion** in medical insurance costs onto UFCW members—estimated by the union at an additional \$3,455 per year in one possible family scenario—forcing lower-paid workers to drop medical coverage altogether. The employers also want to ax the union’s defined-benefit pension plan in favor of a cheaper cash-contribution model which places workers at the mercy of the stock market. Threatening the union’s very existence, the grocery bosses are demanding a two-tier wage system with significantly lower pay and benefits for new hires, the subcontracting out of union labor and the

right to open non-union stores in “non-union” areas.

The employers’ hardline demands are so outrageous that the UFCW officials were finally forced to call a strike. Yet they announced in advance that the union would only strike one of the big three chains. The companies responded, as promised, with a lockout at the other chains, prompting workers to set up picket lines over an area extending from Central California to the Mexican border. Outside a Vons warehouse in El Monte, a scab trucker nearly ran over a UFCW picket captain, only to be shepherd away by the cops afterward. At another location, when a union-hating customer knocked a picket sign out of a worker’s hands, the striker shouted back: “You can’t cross picket lines on two broken legs!” ***Picket lines mean don’t cross!***

Some strikers have expressed illusions that the L.A. County sheriffs’ “sickouts” are part of labor’s struggle. The sheriffs, and all cops, are the racist hired guns of the bosses. Their job is to defend the bosses’ property, break strikes and suppress social struggle from the picket lines



to the ghettos and barrios. On October 15, Robert Haerberle, the father of a striking UFCW worker, was arrested by the Fullerton Police Department for helping his son defend a picket line at Albertsons against the driver of a scab truck. Strikers told WV that the truck nearly ran Haerberle over and that the driver spat on him.

The leaders of unions like AFSCME and SEIU that organize cops, parole officers and prison guards are betraying the basic interests of working people and the oppressed. Cops out of the unions!

Teamster solidarity is the key to a grocery workers victory not only in this strike but in organizing non-union outfits like Wal-Mart. While Jim Santangelo, head of Teamsters Joint Council 42, vowed to honor UFCW pickets, Teamsters delivery drivers—while themselves honoring the lines—have routinely allowed scabs to drive their rigs the final 100 feet or so across UFCW lines at the stores. This kind of empty solidarity doesn’t sit well with many Teamsters who know that if the UFCW strike loses, they’ll be targeted next—strikers at Vons reported rumors that the company plans to replace Teamsters drivers with owner-operators in the 2005 contract round. While the Teamsters are honoring the picket lines at two struck warehouses, according to the *Los Angeles Times* (16 October), “Santangelo said some members already were pushing to widen the job action to [the ten Teamsters-organized] warehouses, but he indicated that such action was premature.”

The unions must **shut down** all the processing and distribution centers to win: nobody shops at empty stores! That would mean mass pickets to stop all scabbing—defying restraining orders to “limit pickets” and preparing the union to deal with cop and court scabherding. This perspective, including the mass pickets needed to stop all scabbing, goes against the outlook of—and would have to be carried out through a political

struggle against—the legalistic, class-collaborationist labor bureaucracy.

The UFCW strike has from the outset elicited broad popular support, with business at the markets a fraction of what it was before the strikes. But the bureaucracy’s focus on a consumer boycott is a diversion. In the end, consumer boycotts don’t win strikes—they are always partial and subject to the vagaries of media-manipulated “public opinion.” At the same time, the union misleaders have welcomed “friend of labor” Democratic Party officials. At an October 16 UFCW support rally, there were in fact more local Democratic Party politicians called on to speak than union officials. The labor bureaucracy’s loyalty to the Democratic Party is the political expression of its commitment to class collaboration in defense of the capitalist profit system. And that means, for the sake of class peace, they are willing to call off strikes and accept rotten compromises and empty promises.

While numerous Democrats have cynically proclaimed support for the super-market workers—in an attempt to put a

pit the black and Latino poor against the unions. The transit bosses’ ploy didn’t work, however, as the strike by mainly black and Latino bus drivers was widely popular. The unions should actively reach out to the ghetto and barrio masses for support and solidarity on the picket lines. Championing the interests of the oppressed, including through the demand for **free mass transit**, is the way to build real public support.

The union bureaucracy’s allegiance to the Democratic Party and the capitalist state is counterposed to class struggle. For months the transit union misleaders had been doing everything possible to demobilize the membership and avoid a strike. ATU maintenance workers had voted overwhelmingly to strike in January, while UTU drivers did likewise in June. When a strike against the union-hating MTA bosses appeared inevitable this summer, the ATU and UTU bureaucrats pleaded with Gray Davis for a 60-day “cooling off” period, in effect asking the capitalist government to bar their memberships from walking out. ATU Local 1277 president Neil Silver then



AP photos

**Left: Transit workers walk the picket line. ATU strike has shut down L.A. transit system. Above: Strike rally by grocery workers in L.A., October 16.**

lid on the struggle—liberal Democrats on the MTA board have been in the forefront of attacks on the ATU strikers, vilifying transit workers as indifferent to the plight of the working poor. MTA board chairman and county supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky ranted, “People who depend on the transit system to get to work, to get to school...will be held hostage to a set of demands that are unreasonable and unmanageable.” This is obscene coming from bourgeois politicians with \$140,000-per-year salaries who have presided over the L.A. County budget cuts and devastated public hospitals, schools and social services.

The MTA similarly tried to play the race card three years ago during the 32-day strike of UTU bus drivers, hoping to

cravenly asked the bosses’ courts to rule on whether ATU members could honor UTU picket lines if the drivers struck first while mechanics were still “cooling off”! Only when the MTA refused to back off from its demands to extort \$200/month employee medical insurance contributions as well as hijack the union-run health trust, which the MTA had been underfunding, did the ATU tops finally pull workers off the job.

Silver has returned to the negotiating table at the urging of Democratic mayor James Hahn and City Councilman Antonio Villaraigosa. Looking to end the strike as quickly as possible, Villaraigosa declared, “We’re pushing parties to the table. The only side we’re taking is the

*continued on page 6*

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# L.A. Strikes...

(continued from page 5)

side of the public” (L.A. *Daily News*, 16 October). While balking at an immediate return to work without an agreement, Silver declared in advance his willingness to cut a deal to increase health care contributions and cede partial control of the union health fund.

Selling out workers struggles on behalf of the Democrats is nothing new for labor bureaucrats. But they don’t always get away with it. Transit workers remember that during the last UTU drivers strike in 2000, when Davis signed a law demanded by the union tops that any new “regional transit zones” be covered by existing contract provisions for four years, Silver immediately bowed to Davis and ordered ATU members to cross the drivers’ picket lines! Flouting a 30-year tradition of transit unions honoring each other’s lines, Silver declared, “If there is a picket line, it shall be crossed.” Silver was forced to reverse himself within 24 hours as his membership—almost to a man—defied him and refused to cross! The heroic stand by the maintenance workers and the determination of the other unions forced the MTA to back off its harshest demands.

This time around, while UTU drivers are honoring the ATU strike, most are not manning the picket lines. The bosses are trying to get a contract negotiated with the UTU first in order to put pressure on ATU members to settle for a substandard contract. No one should go back to work until everyone has a contract! All UTU drivers, Teamsters transit workers and TCU members should be out on the picket lines alongside the ATU. *All* the regional buses and Metrolink rail lines which bring in the suburban business commuters should be shut down. What’s needed is a single industrial transit union from Santa Monica to Foothill, San Fernando Valley to Long Beach.

## Organize Wal-Mart!

The corporate grocery giants have all cited non-union Wal-Mart’s low wages and minimal benefits as the reason they need to drastically cut labor costs to remain competitive. UFCW officials have rightly dismissed this as a negotiating ploy, since the “big-box” Wal-Marts that sell groceries are only projected to have 1 percent of the local market share. Yet the biggest cheer at the October 16 UFCW support rally went to Villaraigosa when he announced that he was going to sponsor a bill to keep out non-union Wal-Mart superstores. This epitomizes the legalistic, lobby-your-Democrat strat-

egy, which substitutes futile reliance on local ordinances and lawsuits for the necessary task of union organizing.

In those few instances where the UFCW has tried to organize individual Wal-Mart stores, workers who vote for the union in NLRB elections are invariably fired or otherwise driven off the job. As reported in the *Nation* (28 June 2002), two weeks after the first successful election for union representation at a U.S. Wal-Mart store—the Wal-Mart Supercenter in Jacksonville, Texas—in February 2000, the company announced that it would eliminate meat-cutting operations in 180 stores and switch to pre-cut beef. This was followed by a spate of firings over petty infractions. As of last June, the union had gotten the NLRB to issue 40 complaints against Wal-Mart in 24 states, all to no avail. Even with such rulings, the damage is already done, resulting only in a slap on the wrist. The UFCW might take a lesson from garbage haulers in L.A. who, in the midst of the current grocery and transit strikes, withdrew their petition to the NLRB for union recognition and went on strike instead.

The failure of the AFL-CIO to organize the South has meant that fanatically anti-union corporations like the Arkansas-based Wal-Mart, now the world’s largest retailer, are driving down wages and living standards everywhere. The labor movement needs to organize Wal-Mart workers starting in those areas already unionized and extend the organizing drive to the South. Any serious effort to organize the South requires a fighting labor movement committed to the cause of black liberation. The unions will have to face down company gun thugs and Klan terror in order to organize workers and lead integrated strikes. But this won’t happen playing by the bosses’ rules.

Opposed to a class-struggle perspective, the UFCW and Teamsters tops’ anti-Wal-Mart campaign instead appeals to flag-waving patriotism, which serves only to fuel anti-immigrant chauvinism—particularly poisonous in a city where first- or second-generation immigrants make up a goodly portion of the unionized proletariat. Wal-Mart is lambasted for importing most of its apparel and much of its general merchandise despite its “Buy America” programs. The unions’ protectionist outlook is offered up in the “progressive” guise of opposing sweatshop labor. The labor tops point to the fact that Wal-Mart is one of the largest buyers of China’s growing export goods, which are now mainly produced by firms jointly owned with Western capitalists. With their anti-Communist China-bashing, the AFL-CIO misleaders join in the American bourgeoisie’s counterrevo-



AP  
**Jesse Jackson and Democratic Party MTA board member Zev Yaroslavsky embrace after helping to end 2000 transit strike.**

lutionary crusade to open up China to capitalist exploitation and turn it into *one giant sweatshop*. China is a bureaucratically deformed workers state where capitalism was overthrown as a result of the 1949 Revolution and whose economy is still based on nationalized property. Just as workers defend their unions—despite sellout leadership—against the bosses, workers must defend China against imperialist-backed counterrevolution despite the Beijing bureaucracy’s accommodation to capitalism.

In fact, the “AFL-CIA” (as it is known internationally) has long acted as a pawn for the American imperialist rulers in fomenting counterrevolution and proping up anti-labor dictatorships abroad. The union bureaucrats have even less appetite to help organize workers abroad than they do to organize the South, and can only demand that America’s racist capitalist rulers enforce “labor standards” designed to ban cheap foreign goods. WV was told by one striker that UFCW organizers passed out American flag pins to Wal-Mart workers after 9/11 in displays of patriotic unity. But there is no unity of interests between labor and capital, and appeals to patriotism only serve the bosses’ interests.

## Health Care U.S.A.

It is a measure of the huge gains embodied in the planned, collectivized economy of those countries where capitalism has been overthrown that tiny Cuba, despite a decades-old U.S. embargo, has been able to provide decent health care to its population, resulting in an infant mortality rate comparable to the U.S. as a whole and better than many

American ghettos. In America, with its vast wealth and medical technology firmly in the grip of the capitalists, health care has become a crisis of epidemic proportions. As the rates of poverty and unemployment rise, the number of those without health insurance has grown to some 40-45 million nationally. At the same time, Medicare payments are being slashed and millions driven off the welfare rolls. Those not lucky enough to find job-based health insurance are one medical crisis away from a major family catastrophe.

Hit by the national recession and facing (as of June 2002) an \$800 million health budget shortfall over the next three years, Los Angeles County, dubbed “capital of the Third World,” has embarked on another round of criminal cutbacks to an already destitute public health care system. With over three million L.A. County residents having no health insurance, the majority Democratic County Board of Supervisors has closed four school-based health centers and 11 of its 18 remaining public health clinics, causing the *L.A. Weekly* (30 August 2002) to proclaim L.A. the “ground zero of the national health care crisis.”

The irrationality of capitalism is such that the basic needs of life are held hostage to profit. Medical care is denied to improve the capitalists’ bottom line. Safeway/Vons CEO Steven Burd recently declared that the grocers’ hardline stance slashing medical benefits and labor costs “is an investment in our future” (*Los Angeles Times*, 17 October). Well, working people need to fight for a future without capitalism. The only way that immigrants, blacks and all working people will be assured free, quality medical care is to rip the means of production out of the hands of the capitalist class and put them in the hands of those whose labor builds this society.

Safeway and the other grocery bosses are planning on a long battle to wear down the strikers. But it doesn’t have to go that way. If the warehouses are shut down and *all* the chains are struck, transit stays out and *extends* the strike to the regional lines, and other unions join the fray in *strike* action, this could be over in a hurry.

What’s needed is a class-struggle leadership of the unions. Workers must break from any illusions in the Democratic Party as a “lesser evil” and fight to defend their class interests. We fight to build a revolutionary workers party. Such a party, acting as a tribune of all the oppressed, would mobilize in hard class struggle against capitalism to defend existing gains and fight for a socialist future. Victory to the grocery and transit strikes! ■

# Headscarf...

(continued from page 3)

the political domination by a parasitic Stalinist caste, the social basis of the USSR was the expropriation of the capitalists and the collectivization of the economy; this was incompatible with the medieval enslavement of women under the *burka*. Lined up against the USSR and the Afghan government were the anti-woman *mujahedin*, those who today once again have the upper hand. The U.S. and French imperialists supported and armed these reactionary fundamentalists, from Masoud to the Taliban and bin Laden, who wanted to force women back into the veil and kill as many Soviet soldiers as possible.

At the time, LO condemned the Soviet intervention, saying that Afghanistan was like Vietnam. They wrongly equated the rape of Vietnam by the French—followed by the American—imperialists with the progressive intervention of the Red Army in Afghanistan (*Lutte de Classe*, 7 July 1980). As for the LCR, they wrote in 1988 that the fall of the Afghan government “would in any case represent a lesser evil than the perpetuation of the Soviet entanglement in Afghanistan” (*Inprecor*, 11 April 1988). We, on the other hand,

declared: “Hail Red Army in Afghanistan! Extend the gains of October 1917 to the Afghan peoples!” And we fought against the withdrawal of Soviet troops in 1989. The fruit of this betrayal by the Soviets in Afghanistan is the horror that exists there today. Those who now shed crocodile tears for the fate of Afghan women and the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in the world do not want to admit it, but at bottom the cause is the fall of the Soviet Union. In the 1980s, LO and the LCR refused to oppose the worst Islamic scum in Afghanistan, and today they complain about Islamic fundamentalists in France! But these two positions are linked in a very concrete way: then, as today, they sided with their own French bourgeoisie.

In order to liberate women, not only from the veil but from every form of oppression, it is necessary to fight for workers revolution which is the only way to do away with the material basis for oppression. To achieve that, it is necessary to build a revolutionary workers party. Such a party would fight in the interests of all workers and thus against racist terror and the oppression of women. That is the party we seek to build. For women’s liberation through socialist revolution! ■

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Mumia...

(continued from page 1)

MOVE organization, Jamal was saddled at trial with a lawyer he didn't want—and one who did not want Mumia's case—a judge, Albert Sabo, known as the "king of death row," an overwhelmingly white jury, a prosecutor's office that concealed and fabricated evidence and a parade of witnesses who were coerced by the notorious Philadelphia police into giving lying testimony against Mumia.

Jamal's innocence has been evident from the outset. We have repeatedly exposed the D.A.'s case, which rested on three legs; eyewitness accounts that were secured through police manipulation, coercion and outright terror; a purported "confession" by Jamal while he was lying near death in the hospital, which didn't surface until two months after the killing; ballistics "evidence" concocted by the police that the bullets that killed Faulkner were fired from Jamal's gun.

This is Texas lynch law justice—up North. Not only did the court bar Beverly's confession but rejected the sworn account of court stenographer Terri Maurer-Carter of a conversation she overheard in the courthouse where Mumia was tried, in which Judge Sabo declared in regard to Jamal's case, "I'm going to help them fry the n---r." As Jamal's legal papers stated:

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

The court justified its refusal to even consider Maurer-Carter's testimony by claiming the issue of Sabo's bias had already been litigated and ruled upon in Mumia's 1995 PCRA appeal—before the same Judge Sabo, who exonerated himself of any racist animosity and prejudice toward Mumia!

This latest setback appears to terminate Mumia's appeals before the Pennsylvania state courts, leaving only his *habeas corpus* appeals in the federal courts. Those appeals have been on hold pending the recent ruling by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. Nearly two years ago federal court judge William Yohn overturned Jamal's death sentence while affirming the conviction, condemning him to a life of prison hell. Jamal's attorneys appealed that decision, seeking to overturn the conviction. The state appealed as well, seeking to reinstate the sentence of death. Still on death row, Mumia remains just a short walk and maybe a few months from the death chamber. Workers, minorities and all opponents of racist capitalist repression must now redouble their efforts to mobilize mass protests centered on the social power of the labor movement to demand: *Free Mumia now!*

Death Penalty—Capitalist Barbarity

Jamal's case throws a spotlight on the barbaric, racist death penalty, a form of institutionalized state terror directly de-

scended in the U.S. from the system of black chattel slavery. In the U.S., where the decaying capitalist system offers no future to millions of inner-city youth, the death penalty, the mass incarceration of black men and the elimination of welfare speak to the bourgeoisie's impulse to genocide. For more than a decade, Democrats and Republicans did everything in their power to increase the number of victims and speed the pace of state-sanctioned murder. In 1993 the Supreme Court ruled in the Texas *Herrera* case that the execution of an innocent man was not unconstitutional. Such contempt for the lives of the black and Hispanic poor was clearly expressed earlier this year by prosecutor Frank Jung who, when asked by a Missouri Supreme Court judge, "Are you suggesting even if we find Mr.

Jamal's current attorneys utilized information provided in Wolkenstein's affidavit (reprinted in the PDC pamphlet *Mumia Abu-Jamal Is an Innocent Man!* [September 2001]), stating, "For nine whole years, attorney Weinglass and attorney Williams did more than any prosecutor could ever do to send Petitioner Jamal to his death. They strangled at birth the evidence which shows that he did not kill Police Officer Faulkner and, in the process, jettisoned numerous other decisive claims for relief." Wolkenstein and Piper, in fact, resigned from Jamal's legal team in 1999 precisely over the suppression of the Beverly confession. As she explained in her affidavit, Weinglass' refusal to proceed with Beverly's confession and other evidence "was also my final realization that attorney Wein-

ing is Ronald Castille, who was District Attorney at the time when his subordinate Jack McMahon made an infamous videotape instructing members of the D.A.'s office on how to exclude blacks from juries. Castille was the D.A. opposing Jamal's first appeal, and was later one of the members of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court who turned down Jamal's appeal of Sabo's denial of his PCRA in 1997. A number of defendants have had their convictions overturned on the basis of this racist jury-rigging—but not Mumia. Castille has blocked every effort by Jamal to determine his role in the production of the McMahon video.

The court's lie that the prosecutors are just impartial truth seekers was shared as well by Weinglass and Williams. Williams' entire book is an articulation of the idea that the capitalist state is some kind of neutral arbiter, expressing and defending the interests of all the people. But the state is not neutral. It is the instrumentality for organized violence by one class, the capitalist rulers, against the working class and all those at the bottom of this society. In the U.S., this is expressed in the terror and frame-ups carried out by viciously racist, brutal and corrupt police.

Williams' hatchet job reflects the views of a layer of liberals whose function is to refurbish the credentials of the capitalist "law and order" system by curbing its "excesses" and giving it the appearance of fairness. They ignore the overwhelming evidence that Mumia is innocent and instead speak of his supposed "guilt." Among the latest examples is Dave Lindorff, who writes for *CounterPunch* and the *Nation* and recently authored the book *Killing Time*, and filmmaker Michael Moore, who declares in his recent book, *Dude, Where's My Country?*, that Mumia "probably killed" Faulkner but "that does not mean he should be denied a fair trial or that he should be put to death." It is precisely to appeal to such liberals that the reformist left, most notably Socialist Action and the Workers World Party, subordinated any call for Jamal's freedom to the demand for a "new trial" for Mumia—as if he could get a fair trial in the racist capitalist courts.

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



New York City, 23 October 1999: Trade unionists at PDC-initiated anti-Klan mobilization.

Amrine is actually innocent, he should be executed?" replied, "That's correct, your Honor."

Even as scores of men and women condemned to death have proven their innocence and won their freedom in recent years, numerous states have adopted laws with stringent time restrictions on filing death penalty appeals on newly discovered evidence. These restrictions make it virtually impossible for victims of prosecutorial frame-ups to uncover the evidence to prove their innocence of the killing for which they were sentenced to die. Pennsylvania's law, enacted in 1995 explicitly to cut off Jamal's appeal rights, provided the pretext for the current court ruling barring Beverly's confession as untimely. The federal Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, signed into law by Democratic president Clinton in 1996, was the pretext for federal court judge Yohn also barring Beverly's testimony in Jamal's *habeas corpus* appeal.

Using these laws, the capitalist rulers send black, Hispanic and working-class men and women to their graves as if it were no more than a question of an overdue library book. In opposing Jamal's motion for a stay of execution during his 1995 appeal the prosecution bared the state's contempt for Mumia, grotesquely declaring, "The carrying out of a valid death sentence cannot constitute irreparable injury for purposes of requesting a stay"!

The entire history of the state's vendetta against Jamal reveals that the courts have in fact spurned any provisions of the law that would allow this outspoken champion of the oppressed to walk out of prison a free man. As Jamal's attorneys explained, his case is governed by the Pennsylvania death penalty statute's exception to the filing deadline, where "interference by government officials" is responsible for the failure to previously raise a claim. As they demonstrated, in actively working to suppress Beverly's confession and other evidence of Jamal's innocence, Jamal's attorneys at the time, Leonard Weinglass and Daniel Williams, "acted in function, if not in fact, as *agents* of government officials insofar as their actions served the interests not of petitioner, but of the District Attorney."

glass would not carry out the defense demanded by our innocent client."

That Weinglass and Williams played the role of prosecutor was set forth for the world to see in the publication two years ago of Williams' false "inside account" of Jamal's case, *Executing Justice*, published shortly before Beverly's confession was submitted to court. Williams' declaration that Beverly's confession was "lunacy" was the core argument used by prosecutors in fighting to keep this conclusive evidence of Mumia's innocence out of court.

The court didn't merely reject the argument that Weinglass and Williams were acting as agents of the state, but pronounced that it wouldn't even matter if they were. According to this court, five of whose members are former prosecutors, the state's interests are not inimical to those of Jamal (or any other defendant in a criminal case). "The Commonwealth, having the obligation to seek justice, is not a 'beneficiary' of poor defense lawyering"—i.e., they're claiming that incompetent defense doesn't benefit the state and its prosecutors!

Among the judges endorsing this rul-

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## Mexico...

(continued from page 12)

the possibility of *maquiladora* factory jobs. After the end of the U.S. *bracero* program, which functioned as an escape valve for the unemployment crisis in Mexico, the Mexican government opened the first free-trade zone in 1965. Foreign investors who set up a factory in Mexico near the U.S. border were exempt from tariffs (for the parts they imported) and didn't have to pay other taxes. This was extended in 1994 with NAFTA [North American Free Trade Agreement], which converted all of Mexico into a source of enormous imperialist profits based on the miserably paid labor of Mexican workers. The Mexican, American and Canadian sections of the International Communist League wrote in a joint statement in 1991: "While strengthening the U.S. bourgeoisie against imperialist trade rivals, an FTA [Free Trade Agreement] will also subject the working masses of the Americas to greater exploitation. We call on Mexican, U.S. and Canadian workers to join in opposing this anti-labor pact" (see "Stop U.S. 'Free Trade' Rape of Mexico," WV No. 530, 5 July 1991).

The right-wing clerical government of Fox and his band of seminarians ensures that Mexico is a very attractive place for foreign investment and for Mexican blood-sucking bosses while it attacks the rights of all working people and of specially oppressed sectors of society such as indigenous people, women and homosexuals. The privatization of nationalized industries being sought by Fox would hit millions with hunger and unemployment. The economic recession has already caused the closing of many *maquiladoras* and massive layoffs, especially in the border zone. Between the year 2000 and mid 2003, 700,000 (one out of every ten!) jobs have been lost in Mexico's manufacturing sector (*El Norte*, 1 September). This occurs in the context of the worst unemployment crisis in six years. Women, who in general occupy the least skilled and more easily replaceable jobs, are the most affected.

### Women in the *Maquiladoras*

Guillermina Valdez Villalva, founder of the Center for Orientation of Working Women in Juárez, said:

"When the plants first came to the city, we always expected them to hire the unemployed male. But very soon we discovered that...young women between the ages of 16 and 21 were the only ones hired."

—Quoted in *Women and Revolution* No. 34, Spring 1988, "Class Struggle in the 'Global Sweatshop'"

Work in the *maquiladoras* is characterized by its mechanical and repetitive nature. What matters is to have agile fingers, to be young and to be in great need in order to be willing to withstand the



Radele/Liaison



Ruben R. Ramirez

**Women form strategic part of working class in border zone *maquiladoras*. Below: 1995 strike at RCA Thomson plant in Ciudad Juárez.**

worst. A large component of women who work on the border left their peasant and/or indigenous communities with the hope of no longer being subjected to the family nucleus, although they usually send part of the money they earn to their parents or siblings. Also living in the border zone are men and women who tried to cross into the U.S. to work and didn't make it or were deported.

Sandra Arenal's book *Sangre joven* [Young Blood] recounts a series of conversations with women workers who express their strength and anger over their experiences upon arriving at the *maquilas* [factories]. Stories are told about supervisors who decide to have the personnel strip every now and then to make sure they haven't stolen some of the

clothing they sew. A woman worker in the electronics industry has to solder 2,000 tiny, barely visible parts in one day. Pain caused by repetitive movements and diseases caused by work materials are common.

"My sister started to work at SILVANIA on 30 January 1974, and from there she went to TUBOS ELÉCTRICOS in 1981 and then to the HONEYWELL plant in Juárez, where she died. The cause of her disease, according to the hematologist who saw her at the hospital, was that she was anemic in the fourth degree due to acetone, which is the substance she had handled daily at work.... She was only 30! During her funeral I heard that around the very same time another woman worker had died."

A 22-year-old woman who had already spent six years in the *maquilas* said she had "outlasted others." Her finger bones are deformed and on both hands she has an enormous yellow-brown callus from the tip of the thumb, over the back of the hand, to near the wrist. Looking at her hands with sadness, she says: "They will not pay me for my hands!"

### The Origins of Women's Oppression

In our article "Capitalist Exploitation and Anti-Woman Terror" (*Espartaco* No. 13, Fall-Winter 1999), in which we analyzed the attacks against women in the Ciudad Juárez *maquiladora* zone, we explained:

"We communists fight to end the oppression of women, an inheritance of the social backwardness maintained by the bourgeoisie. We stand out in our fight for full equality for women and their complete integration into the workforce. We call for equal pay for equal work and for free, safe abortion on demand as part

of a free, quality health care system. But the eradication of women's oppression requires an immense leap forward in the existing material conditions—and this can only be achieved through a socialist revolution not only in Mexico but by means of the creation of an internationally planned economy based not on capitalist profit but on the fulfillment of everyone's needs. In other words, the liberation of women cannot be realized separate from the emancipation of the working class."

One of the ironies of history is that the special oppression of women is linked to one of the first social advances: the development of technology beyond what was necessary for the minimal subsistence that characterized hunter-gatherer societies. Agriculture, metallurgy, domestication of animals and other revolutionary advances made possible the existence of an idle ruling class living off the work of others. The institution of the family, which demands monogamy and women's domestic slavery, emerged to ensure that the inheritance of property passed through the male line. Malechauvinist ideology, propagated by the ruling class through government institutions, the media and religion, serves to justify the subjugation of women.

With the growth of capitalist industry, the entry of women into the workforce in factories has taken them out of their isolation in the home and provides a prerequisite for their emancipation: participation in social production. However, under capitalism, this means adding wage slavery to domestic slavery. The complete liberation of women from this double oppression can only take place through the replacement of the family with the socialization of domestic work. The expansion of the productive forces laid the basis for the socialization of domestic work, but this will not happen under capitalism because the family plays an important economic role for the bourgeoisie. In a socialist system things would be very different. The planned economy would allow the replacement of the economic functions of the family with 24-hour childcare, and collective laundries and kitchens. **For women's liberation through socialist revolution!**

### Police Terror and Illusions in the State

Lilia Alejandra was the 17-year-old mother of a three-year-old boy. She worked for the *maquiladora* Servicios Plásticos y Ensamblados in Ciudad Juárez. Her body was found wrapped in a blanket on 21 February 2001 in an unlit empty lot which she crossed every night to get home from work. The forensic doctor explained to her parents, when they went to identify the body, that there were signs of physical and sexual violence and that the cause of death was strangulation. The same day that Lilia Alejandra didn't come home, the neighbors around the empty lot had called the police to report that a woman was being beaten and raped by two men in a car. A police car arrived at the site only after the neighbors made a second call, and it still took over an hour. The car had already left.

Various investigations and testimonies point to the nefarious role of the police, "special prosecutors" and government agencies. We completely solidarize with the demands for justice from the families of the victims and from organizations like Mujeres de Negro [Women in Black] and Casa Amiga [Friendly Home]. Simply seeking some justice can turn one into a target of attack. A secretary at Casa Amiga, which provides psychological support services and carries out investigations about the crimes, was shot down in the doorway to the organization's office.

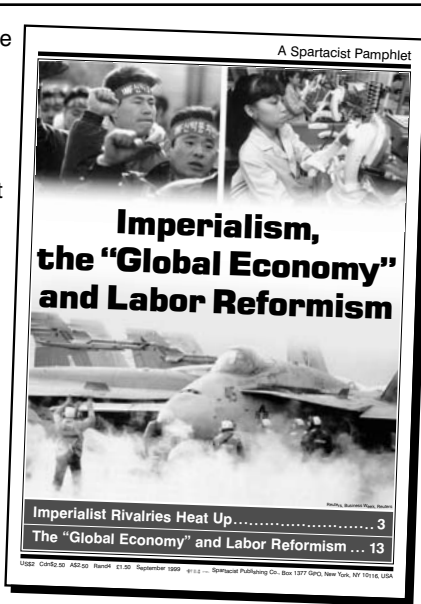
But the desperation that the disappeared and murdered women's families live with, the indignation that many people around the country feel, and the fear

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

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

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among women workers of becoming “one more” victim is channeled into a deadly illusion: the idea that with more police presence the anti-woman crimes will stop.

The solution is not pressuring the state—the armed bodies of men that one class uses to maintain its hegemonic power over another—to function better. It is necessary to understand the social role of the capitalist state in assuring capitalist domination over the working class. A key part of capitalist rule is the subjugation of women; anti-woman violence is inherently part of capitalism. The police, army and courts are, and will be, used to break combative strikes that stymie the bourgeoisie and to perpetuate the oppression of women.

The United Nations, that den of thieves whose sanctions killed 1.5 million Iraqis and set Iraq up for the U.S. attack, is now the “human rights” cover for an expansion of the repressive police force in Juárez. The UN sent a commission to Juárez which has recommended that the FBI train Mexican police. During the civil rights movement in the U.S., the FBI worked hand in hand with the fascist Ku Klux Klan to murder fighters for civil rights, even including four young black girls in a church in Birmingham, Alabama in 1963. This gives some measure of how grotesque the notion is that these imperialist agencies could defend women’s rights.

In the documentary *Señorita Extraviada*, there is an interview with a woman named María, who was charged with public disturbance along with others and taken to the Cárcel de Piedra prison in Chihuahua. There the police raped her and took her to a clandestine cell. After she was released, she reported the police, and although they were captured, they were never sentenced. In spite of the death threats she has faced, she tells of her experience at the police headquarters courageously and with tears in her eyes:

“And then one of them said, ‘Or what, do you want us to take you to Lomas de Poleo?’... he began throwing pictures of the girls at me: ‘Look at them, bitch, look at them, bitch.’... All of them were dragging her, through the bushes...there they rape her...they start beating her...in the pictures you see them laughing at what the other is doing...you could see the [women’s] faces...like this, in pain, suffering, crying and yelling.”

The purpose of the police force as a whole, independent of the degree of moral corruption of the individuals who comprise it, is to carry out the violence and terror that the bourgeoisie needs to stay in power. Fighters for social justice must unite with the social power of the working class. No other force can end capitalism or the oppression and violence that it generates. We oppose calls on the bourgeois state to increase its police forces. *No illusions in the armed fist of the bourgeoisie!*

We are for the right of armed self-defense. Of course, the right to bear arms will not emancipate women, whose oppression is deeply rooted in the capitalist system and its fundamental institutions, and this emancipation can only be achieved through a socialist revolution. However, the right to bear arms makes an obvious difference in one’s capacity for self-defense. But the existing gun “control” laws in Mexico and other capitalist countries ensure that the army, police and criminals have a monopoly on arms. And it is precisely the police and the criminals that the women of Juárez fear, not only because of the murders, but also because of the role that they play in opposition to the organization of women workers in the *maquiladoras*.

### The Struggle for Women’s Emancipation

Stopping this wave of terror is in the interest of the working class and the oppressed. Women make up 30 percent of the working class. They are a doubly oppressed layer of the proletariat maintained as a lower stratum and a reserve army of labor that the bourgeoisie uses to divide workers, keeping wages low and thereby increasing the exploitation of all.

The future for women and their struggle for complete emancipation is linked to class struggle against capitalism.

We Spartacists fight to forge a revolutionary Leninist-Trotskyist party to intervene in social struggles and thus change the consciousness of the working class. Lenin wrote in *What Is To Be Done?* (1902), “Class political consciousness can be brought to the workers *only from without*, that is, only from outside the economic struggle, from outside the sphere of relations between workers and employers.” We seek to build a leadership of the working class that fights as a defender of all the oppressed. Lenin explained that the ideal revolutionary

“should not be the trade-union secretary, but the *tribune of the people*, who is able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears, no matter what stratum or class of people it affects; who is able to generalise all these manifestations and pro-



Mexico City, February 15: GEM comrades march in demonstration against U.S. attack on Iraq.

duce a single picture of police violence and capitalist exploitation; who is able to take advantage of every event, however small, in order to set forth *before* all his socialist convictions and his democratic demands, in order to clarify for *all* and everyone the world-historic significance of the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat.”

The most class-conscious militants in the unions should fight to mobilize the social power of the working class to fight against the oppression of women, to organize them in the unions with salaries and rights equal to those of men. They should fight for free, quality health care services, and for the right to free abortion on demand. They should fight to organize workers detachments to defend the women against these attacks. But the current union leaderships aren’t even interested in demanding buses to transport the personnel—a basic service—while many women workers in Juárez are murdered walking through solitary fields on their way to their jobs or back home. The situation of the working woman is, on its own, proof of the total bankruptcy, servility and male chauvinism of the union bureaucracy.

While a large portion of the workforce on the border and in the country in general is not unionized, the CTM [Confederation of Mexican Workers] is the main workers union in the *maquiladora* zone. Their pro-capitalist thug bureaucrats tied to the [former ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party] PRI daily mobilize teams of thugs against labor struggles for better wages or union democracy and are sadly renowned for their “protection contracts” which are totally favorable to the bosses and signed behind the backs of the workers. It is obvious that the CTM heads couldn’t care less about the situation of working women. And aside from some inoffensive forum here or there that has more to do with protecting their “image” than looking for some favorable change for women workers, the “independent” bureaucrats who are loyal to the PRD [opposition Party of the Democratic Revolution] and to the inherently anti-woman capitalist system also do nothing

to improve the situation of working women nor to unionize those who aren’t unionized.

### The Fight Against Imperialism: For Proletarian Internationalism!

The woman worker of the *maquiladora* earns a miserable wage in a foreign-owned factory which produces exorbitant profits for the owners. The woman worker of Juárez sometimes takes two hours to get to work on foot because there aren’t even paved roads between where she lives and the avenues for the trucks that take the raw materials to the factories. The oil worker fears losing the minimal economic stability he has gained in the face of the threats of privatization and foreign investment. The *campesino* [peasant] can’t make a living anymore off his land because of the competition from American agribusiness. The indigenous

ation of women is profoundly rooted in precapitalist “tradition” and religious backwardness. Thus, the fight for the liberation of women will be an indispensable motor force for revolution.

No wing of the bourgeoisie can play a progressive or revolutionary role. It cannot bring any significant advance for women and all of the oppressed. The fact that the bourgeois-nationalist PRD often poses as a defender of women is simply a testimony to the brutal ideological backwardness of its bourgeois opponents. An example of this was the scandal caused by the “Robles Law” introduced by the PRD in Mexico City a couple of years ago. While we defend this law, which grants the right to abortion in the case of deformation of the fetus or danger to the woman, against clerical attack, we note that the PRD has made clear its opposition to the unrestricted right to abortion. In general, the capitalist class opposes full access to abortion because it allows women some freedom from total subordination in the family structure.

The only way to be rid of the imperialist yoke and obtain elementary democratic rights for women and the oppressed is for the proletariat to take state power through a socialist revolution and reorganize the economy in a planned and rational manner.

The phenomenon of the *maquiladoras* clearly shows the potential power of the unity of workers in the U.S. and Mexico. They are part of a common industry with the same bosses. Conscious of the social power that the proletariat would attain through unification of its struggles, the American and Mexican bourgeoisies apply “divide and conquer” strategies. This obstacle to joint struggle of all the oppressed against their common oppressor comes in different forms in different countries, and one of the principal tasks of revolutionary parties is to combat these ideas that only serve the bourgeoisie.

Our comrades in the Spartacist League/U.S. know that the struggles of the workers against the bosses and that of blacks and immigrants against racism will advance together or fall back separately. In the U.S. it’s necessary to combat anti-black racism in all spheres, including among Hispanic immigrants. Our comrades also intervene for the working class to raise the slogan “Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!” (see “Oakland Labor-Centered Mobilization Defies ‘National Unity’—Defend Immigrants! Defend the Unions!” WV No. 775, 22 February 2002). In Mexico, bourgeois nationalism has been the main ideological obstacle for the working class in its battle against exploitation. It is necessary to combat the false consciousness of Mexican workers that their ally is the Mexican boss and not the American worker.

And in both countries we combat the anti-woman ideology that is a prop for the capitalist system which requires the subjugation of women. Only in this way will we be able to forge a revolutionary, proletarian, internationalist party with the capacity to finish off the capitalist system of exploitation, misery and terror once and for all. *For women’s liberation through socialist revolution! ■*

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# Recall...

(continued from page 12)

the necessary political fight for working-class independence from the capitalists and their parties that will make the forging of such a party possible.

Against the reformist illusions and schemes for shortcuts promulgated by the ostensibly revolutionary left, the Spartacist League stands on the Transitional Program—*The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International*—the founding program of the Fourth International written by Leon Trotsky in 1938. We seek to link the daily struggles of the masses against the capitalists to the program for proletarian revolution through a system of transitional demands stemming from today’s conditions and from today’s consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat. In intervening in the workers struggles, we hold to the words of Lenin:

“It is the task of the Social-Democrats [i.e., revolutionary socialists], by organizing the workers, by conducting propaganda and agitation among them, to turn their spontaneous struggle against their oppressors into the struggle of the whole class, into the struggle of a definite political party for definite political and socialist ideals.”

—“Our Immediate Task” (1899)

How keenly such a fight is needed has only been underscored by the eruption of a mass class battle in Southern California just days after the recall election. Seventy thousand members of the United Food and Commercial Workers have been on strike or locked out since October 11; just days later, mechanics who have been working without a contract for over a year shut down the L.A. transit system.

The grocery store workers are acutely aware that behind this contract battle stands an attempt by the bosses to break the core of their union. A central issue in both strikes is health care. The burgeoning health care crisis in American society is one of the clearest examples of the inability of the capitalist system to address even the basic needs of the workers and oppressed. A revolutionary party must intervene into the ongoing struggle to point out that the workers could mobilize massive support for the strike by calling for *free, quality health care for all*—including undocumented immigrants—and *free transit for all*. As Leon Trotsky wrote in the Transitional Program, “There can be no discussion of systematic social reforms and the raising of the masses’ living standards...every serious demand of the proletariat and even every serious demand of the petty bourgeoisie inevitably reaches beyond the limits of capitalist property relations and of the bourgeois state.” For a workers party that fights for a workers government!

## The Two Property Parties of the Bourgeoisie

Whereas the Democrats are inclined to at least talk about co-opting and deflecting discontent from below, the Republicans are shameless Robin Hoods in reverse: no taxes for the rich; cuts, layoffs, union-busting for the working class. In his campaign, Schwarzenegger went after the workers compensation and unemployment systems, promising to lower business costs—that is, cut aid to injured and unemployed workers. He garnered support from racists through his denunciation of Bustamante for accepting big donations from Native American tribal gambling interests. And he capitalized on anti-immigrant chauvinism by denouncing Davis’ signing of a law to allow undocumented immigrants to obtain driver’s licenses. Given the enormous role played by Latino immigrant labor in the economies of both California and Mexico, it is no wonder that the election of the “Terminator” is a hot topic in Mexico, where the newspaper



Woods/Newsday

*Ovaciones* (8 October) headlined: *Brace-ros* [Mexican laborers] in Arnold’s Cross Hairs: **TERROR! Rise of Hitlerian Actor Means Millions of Mexicans in California at Risk.**

Two factors rang the death knell for Davis and the Democrats. Having vetoed the driver’s license law—a law we Marxists fiercely defend as a minor extension of rights for immigrants, whittling away at their “illegal” status—twice before, Davis looked hypocritical by signing the bill in a play for the Latino vote, which went 46 percent for the recall and only 52 percent for Bustamante (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 9 October). Davis lost the anti-immigrant wing of his supporters over the driver’s license issue (opposed by some 70 percent in exit polls), and infuriated millions by hiking car registration fees to outrageous levels—a regressive tax that we Marxists oppose.

This was scarcely, however, an unalloyed victory for the Republican right that launched the recall campaign in the first place. When the recall made the ballot, the Republican campaign was hijacked by its more mainstream wing



AFP

**Latinos celebrate Gray Davis’ signing of bill allowing “illegal” immigrants to get driver’s licenses—about the only good thing to come out of the California elections.**

represented by former governor Pete Wilson and former Reagan/Bush Sr. cabinet member George Shultz. Their candidate, Schwarzenegger, was spurned by the more extreme bigots, the born-again, anti-abortion, anti-homosexual “family values” types who favored conservative Republican Tom McClintock. (The Pete Wilson wing restricts itself to more “moderate” reaction, like the notorious anti-immigrant Prop. 187 that denied education and health care to undocumented workers, and the racist anti-affirmative action measure, Prop. 209.) Schwarzenegger won the election partly by campaigning as a quasi-Democrat, because he is not intransigently opposed to all abortion rights for women (he advocates restrictions like banning some late-term abortions and supporting “parental consent” laws), appointing Democrats among his advisers and advertising his marriage to Maria Shriver (a member of the Kennedy clan), touted as Arnold’s “secret weapon.”

Significantly, Proposition 54, which

**ISO enthusiastically supported Green Party candidate Ralph Nader in 2000, gushes over Camejo (right) in 2003, promoting illusions in reformability of capitalism.**



Pench/Sacramento Bee

would have banned government collection of statistics that document race, was defeated by a vote of 64 to 36 percent. The Spartacist League called for a “no” vote on Prop. 54 as a racist ban on the gathering or publication of statistical evidence of the discrimination endemic in capitalist America. As a testament to the depth of that discrimination, the desperation of the black population came out in the election in a grim “lesser-evilism”: two out of three black voters even backed Bustamante—a man known for public racist slurs against blacks, while nearly three out of four (73 percent) black voters opposed the recall of pro-death penalty Davis.

## The Syphilitic Chain of Class Collaboration

Helping out the labor tops in misleading the workers and oppressed were a range of self-proclaimed “socialist” organizations, which through support for one shill or another end up in a syphilitic chain of support for the Democratic Party. By providing this policy of subordination to the bosses’ parties with “leftist” justifications, these fake socialists stand in the way of the fight to make workers aware of their class interests. The Communist Party and Committees of Correspondence for Democracy and Socialism (CCDS) were the most overt, loudly campaigning for a “no” vote on the recall—a blatant vote of confidence in the Democratic Party and its current government in Sacramento. Workers World Party was one step removed, calling for a vote to the left-radical Peace and Freedom Party—which called for a “no” vote on the recall.

Another wrinkle on the sellout was presented by the Maoist Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP), which, in an article titled “California Recall: The Coup Inside the Circus” (*Revolutionary Worker*, 21 September), cast the recall as part of a national right-wing Republican conspiracy which began with the impeachment of Clinton in 1998. Ignoring the widespread and justified hatred of wage-slasher Davis, the article ended with an appeal that “this bizarre episode of ‘democracy in action’ is a wake-up call to everyone that we need a new and massive resistance—to deliver a resounding NO!, to make it clear that in our millions, we are not going to tolerate their punishing, imperial plans for the people of the planet.” Readers logically concluded that the “resounding no” was meant to be a vote against the recall of Davis. Uncomfortable with such blatant opportunism, some individual RCPers have told us that their “real” position was...not to vote at all.

During the war against Iraq the RCP established the “Not In Our Name” (NION) coalition in order to draw in liberal, pacifist youth without challenging their false belief that war could be ended without abolishing capitalism. The NION “Pledge of Resistance” does not mention the words capitalism or imperialism and speaks only of the need to “make common cause with the people of the world to bring about justice, freedom and peace.” Within NION contingents, the RCP’s youth would sometimes posture with red flags and militant chants, but without challenging the moralistic, classless (and ultimately pro-Democratic Party) politics on which NION was based. With their article on the recall, the RCP continues to tail the NION constitu-

ency, whatever their “r-r-revolutionary” posture, proving once again that Maoism (a variant of Stalinism) is nothing but a rationale for class collaboration.

The International Socialist Organization (ISO) opted to “oppose” the two capitalist parties by abstaining on the recall and then, after much coquettish flirting, enthusiastically embraced another *capitalist* party, the Greens, in the person of “progressive investment banker” Peter Camejo, who placed fourth in the election with 222,121 votes. *Socialist Worker Online* (3 October) declared Camejo “A real alternative in the recall circus.” Also tailing Camejo is the grossly misnamed Socialist Alternative (affiliated with Peter Taaffe’s Committee for a Workers’ International): “With California labor leaders failing to provide an alternative, despite serious weaknesses in his program, a vote for the Green Party candidate Peter Camejo is the best way of demonstrating opposition to all candidates of both major parties, and the need for a working class alternative to the crisis.”

Is this for real? Camejo, who used to be a stockbroker at Merrill Lynch, is the co-founder of Progressive Asset Management, a financial investment firm that recommends investment in “good” capitalist firms. Some working-class alternative! Camejo doesn’t even give lip service to socialism, as supporters of the Spartacus Youth Club pointed out when ISOers uncritically hailed him at a campaign rally at San Francisco State University on October 2. At this rally, Camejo, a no-show, was represented by a fellow Green: a San Francisco *assistant district attorney*, whose job it is to prosecute the black and Hispanic poor for breaking the capitalists’ laws. As Camejo’s Web site says, “The Green Party is the party of law and order.” It calls to “Amend the ‘three-strikes’ law so that it is applied only [!] when the third offense is a serious or violent felony.”

ISOers were embarrassed by Camejo’s cloying support to Democrat Bustamante. At a debate in Los Angeles, “Camejo also came close to endorsing Bustamante, saying he would be a better governor than Davis or the Republicans running to replace him,” wrote the *San Francisco Chronicle* (10 September). At a forum in East San Jose on September 21, Camejo declared: “I’m happy to sit here with Cruz Bustamante and say, maybe, finally, we’re going to have someone who is not a European-American male as governor” (*San Jose Mercury News*, 22 September). No doubt the ISO’s unease was fed by its own ambivalence over the vote on the recall: some members advocated a “no” vote to keep Davis in office, as did many Greens as well.

But it’s not just that Camejo serves as a shill for Bustamante. The Green Party is a capitalist party with a capitalist program. The Green platform calls to “minimize the exportation of jobs to other countries.” This means support to flag-waving trade protectionism, pushed especially by the labor bureaucracy. A major theme of Ralph Nader’s campaign as the Green Party’s presidential candidate in 2000 was strident China-bashing, combining a reprise of Cold War anti-Communism with scarcely disguised “yellow peril” racism. Such chauvinist protectionism also serves to aid Ashcroft’s anti-immigrant witchhunt.

As for the Green Party’s calls for “the

In fact, the ISO argument in favor of a vote for Camejo has its own contradictions. In its “Where We Stand” column, the ISO states, “We do not support candidates of capitalist parties like the Democrats or Republicans.” But in its praise of Camejo, *Socialist Worker* never claims that the Greens are *not* a capitalist party, and when asked, individual ISOers contradict each other on the question. The gist of the ISO argument is never about the class line, but that Camejo is “a real alternative from the status quo presided over by the mainstream parties” (*Socialist Worker*, 3 October). He provides them with a “movement” to work in.

Just because a party is independent of the Democrats and Republicans does not mean it's independent of the capitalist class itself; after all, few members of *any* party are actually capitalists, who are a distinct minority.

“The masses of any bourgeois party are always cattle, although in different degrees. But for us the masses are not cattle, are they? No, that is precisely why we are forbidden to subordinate the proletarian party to a bourgeois party, but on the contrary, must at every step, oppose the former to the latter.”

In "California: Vote Yes to Recall Davis!" (WV No. 810, 26 September) we incorrectly implied that Gray Davis set up the California Anti-Terrorist Information Center (CATIC) during the lockout of long-shore workers last fall. However, it was set up before that. As we wrote at the time that the sinister role of CATIC came to light, "CATIC was set up and is run not by the Bush administration, but by the governor. Gray Davis, and state attorney general Bill Lockyer, both Democrats, who made it a centerpiece of their re-election campaigns last year" ("‘War on Terror’= War on Workers," WV No. 805, 6 June).

signs on to the Bush government's Homeland Security crackdown: "Increase state funding for additional security of critical infrastructure against terrorist attacks." This demand is barely distinguishable from the mainstream Democratic Party.

But the Green “magic words” (according to *Socialist Worker*, 3 October) that seem to really bewitch the ISO are: “tax the rich,” which “could solve the state’s huge budget deficit.” This is a utopian fantasy. While Marxists oppose regressive taxation, which would disproportionately fall on the working poor, the ISO and other reformists regard the slogan “tax the rich” as a way of posing the possibility of radically redistributing wealth without getting rid of capitalism, i.e., as a way of pandering to liberal pro-Democratic Party illusions. But the only way to get rid of social inequality is to get rid of the capitalist production system, and what the ISO means when it denounces “corporate America” is rather the petty-bourgeois bugaboo of the megacorporation. Even if a “tax the rich” measure could get through the legislature (an assembly of the rich!), highly taxed capital will simply flee to more profitable investment environments. More likely, since *they* have state power, the capitalists will mobilize their cops, courts and troops to wage war upon the working class in an effort to drive back up the rates of profit.

Sure, the Greens want to *tinker* with the capitalist system. The ISO seems to think that it can trick history and promote socialism by “working within” such a party. However, this is not a new idea. In one instance, the American Communist Party, then called the Workers Party, came close to supporting the 1924 presidential candidacy of Republican Senator Robert La Follette on the Progressive Party ticket as a “third party alliance” seeking



to build a farmer-labor movement at a time of widespread agrarian crisis. Trotsky's intervention played a central role in turning the American Communists from this opportunist course of seeking to forge an ongoing bloc with capitalist forces. In "Strategy and Tactics in the Imperialist Epoch" (*The Third International After Lenin*), Trotsky polemicizes against this "two-class" party:

The U.S. Trotskyist movement was founded by communists who had learned the hard lesson of such attempts at trickery and fakery and been won from it by Trotsky's arguments. Trotsky pointed out that those who sought the "two-class" alliance were thoroughly imbued with skepticism concerning the American proletariat, seeking shortcuts around the hard political fight to *win* the working class to a revolutionary perspective. This skepticism also drives the opportunism of the entire reformist left today, from the Green-chasing ISO to the Third World cheerleaders of the RCP.

Our *critical* support to the SWP candidate was yet again underlined when we learned that the SWP had taken a position of not voting—i.e., abstaining—on the racist Proposition 54. Hiding this capitulation to racist attacks behind radical-sounding rhetoric, Britton claimed that Prop. 54's bourgeois opponents promote reliance on the capitalist state—a truly hollow protest from the organization that called for the intervention of federal troops in the 1960s civil rights struggles! That the SWP has by no means changed its colors was reaffirmed by the *Militant* (October 6), which confirmed its profound respect for the capitalist state by claiming that the recent Supreme Court decision on affirmative action showed that the gains of the civil rights movement could not be overturned short of a “massive counterrevolutionary movement.” No SWPer we have talked to can answer how they reconcile their position defending affirmative action with their abstention on Prop. 54, which would have banned the

Furthermore, the IG denounced us for our critical support to the SWP because its call for a “workers and farmers government” and a “socialist world” is just “Sunday speechifying.” By this logic, the only electoral support one could ever give to a reformist or centrist formation is *uncritical* support, sowing illusions that such groups really do have a program to fight for socialism. We would like the IG to explain, then, why Lenin in “*Left-Wing*” *Communism—An Infantile Disorder* advocates that communists pursue various tactics (including critical support) toward the British Labour Party, whose vague “socialist objective” was the epitome of such “Sunday speechifying.”

Tellingly, the IG went into a conniption fit two years ago when *Workers Vanguard* made a simple statement of fact: “To her credit, black Oakland Congresswoman Barbara Lee, a protégé of former liberal Congressman Ron Dellums, registered the sole vote against the resolution giving Bush a blank check for war”—when the Democratic Party as a whole was cheering on Bush’s “war on terror.” This was denounced by the IG as “uncritical lauding” of Barbara Lee, whose stance merely reflected her black and working-class constituency in Oakland. But in the California elections, like the ISO, which also advocated an abstention on the recall, the IG is afraid to vote against the Democrats.

Throughout the course of the California recall election, the crucial point for us was how to use the heightened political interest as an entry point for our revolutionary program. We insisted on no vote to any capitalist party, and called for a vote to Britton as a statement against capitalism and war. Every other left group failed the test, either groveling outright before the Democrats or taking their place a step or two or three removed. But we told the truth: What's needed is the forging of an internationalist workers party to fight for the American socialist revolution. Join us! ■

## ISO Enthuses over Capitalist Greens

# The California Recall and the Left

Republican action movie star Arnold Schwarzenegger is now the governor-elect of California following the October 7 vote that recalled Democrat Gray Davis from office by a margin of 55 to 45 percent. This victory to a candidate who campaigned explicitly against “illegal” immigrants and trade unions as “special interests” will be touted as giving Schwarzenegger the mandate for layoffs, budget cuts and union-busting that the despised Gray Davis lacked.

Davis and his party are no less an enemy of working people and the oppressed than are Schwarzenegger and the Republicans, but you would never know it from the \$10.8 million that the AFL-CIO threw (unsuccessfully) into beating the recall, or, failing that, electing Democrat lieutenant governor Cruz

Bustamante in Davis’ place. Despite these massive efforts, many union members stayed home; union households barely backed Davis by 51 percent and split almost evenly between Schwarzenegger and Bustamante.

The trade-union bureaucracy (who would sell their grandmothers for a lunch invitation to the governor’s mansion) hobble the mobilization of workers power against the capitalist class enemy through endless preaching that the “ballot box” is workers’ salvation. As a core component of the capitalist Democratic Party, which

they portray as the “friend” of blacks and labor, the AFL-CIO tops seek to cement the political allegiance of labor to the racist capitalist system. The fundamental task of revolutionaries in the United States is to break the multiracial proletariat from the stranglehold of Democratic Party “lesser evilism” and to forge a revolutionary workers party that will fight for a workers government to overturn the capitalist profit system.

The Spartacist League viewed the recall election as an opportunity to present our revolutionary program to the

working class and the oppressed. As we explained in “California: Vote Yes to Recall Davis! No Vote to Capitalist Parties!” (WV No. 810, 26 September), we advocated a “yes” vote to recall Davis as a vote of working-class opposition to the capitalist Democratic Party and a vote for Socialist Workers Party candidate Joel Britton, the one candidate on the ballot whose campaign drew even a crude class line against capitalism and war. (Britton got 655 votes in the election.) Our vote to Britton was from a perspective of *critical support*, not least because the SWP is virtually uncritical of the trade-union bureaucracy. While it calls for “a fighting working-class alternative to the twin parties of imperialist war and occupation,” these are empty words short of

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## Ciudad Juárez, Mexico

# Capitalism and Anti-Woman Terror

We reprint below a translation of an article printed under the *Mujer y Revolución* (Women and Revolution) masthead from *Espartaco* No. 21 (Fall-Winter 2003), newspaper of the *Grupo Espartaquista de México* (GEM), section of the International Communist League.

In the last decade and a half, some 500 young women have disappeared in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico; among these cases 370 are registered homicides showing a pattern of torture, mutilation, rape, burning and/or strangulation of the victim. Most were dark-skinned, thin, and had long hair. Many worked in *maquiladoras* [foreign-owned factories producing for the export trade]. Several groups of vic-



AFP



AP

**Mexico City, November 2002: Protesters demand investigation into murder and disappearance of over 300 women in Ciudad Juárez (above). Crosses mark location where corpses of eight young women were found in 2001.**

reported that “the homicides of young poor women, with traces of rape, are mounting in Argentina, southern Spain and Guatemala. Impunity is the norm and official responses range from inefficiency to hints of complicity.”

There has been a series of statements about the dead women of Juárez which blame the young women for what happened to them! Francisco Barrio, former governor of Chihuahua and current coordinator of the PAN’s [governing National

Action Party of President Vicente Fox] congressional deputies, said that the killings happen because “the girls move around in certain places, hang out with a certain type of people.” Jorge López Molinar, former assistant attorney general of Chihuahua, said that the possible solution would be the “self-application of a curfew.” On September 27 a man found the body of a woman who had been strangled with a purse belt; she was seminaked with her pants and underwear below her knees and her blouse above her breasts. The body was that of 29 year-old-Erika Pérez. The Chihuahua attorney general, José Silva Solís, declared that “she was not sexually attacked and died of an overdose”!

Anyone who knows something about Mexico knows that male chauvinism rules in this country of capitalist exploitation and oppression. The church inculcates the subservient role of women; there is no democratic right of abortion; violence against women happens in *six out of every ten* homes. Working-class and peasant women are doubly oppressed, as the slaves of slaves.

Víctor Ronquillo, in his book *Las muertas de Juárez* (1999) [The Dead Women of Juárez], describes the hatred against women and notes that the murders represent a threat to every woman:

“The way in which the bodies are abandoned, the traces of torture, the vestiges of a personal rite: the right breast cut off and the left nipple bitten off. Fire immolates the victim. All this reveals a message whose designated recipients are the next victims.”

### The Border Zone: Imperialist Superexploitation

In 1960 Ciudad Juárez was a small town of 250,000 inhabitants on the border with the U.S. Today, it has a population of over 1.2 million people, attracted by

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## ESPARTACO

### Mujer y Revolución

tims’ relatives have organized to try to find the disappeared and not let them be forgotten. A recent report by Amnesty International, as well as several books that have been published, have detailed negligence on the part of the government and the police in investigating these crimes. After receiving acclaim in Europe and parts of the Americas, the powerful documentary *Señorita Extraviada* [Young Woman Missing], produced by Lourdes Portillo in 2001, was finally shown on Mexican television in September.

Ciudad Juárez, a border city in the state of Chihuahua, is known for these brutal anti-woman crimes, but unfortunately what is happening there is not unique. Articles in different local papers in the *maquiladora* zone in the north of the country and even in cities like Monterrey testify to several cases similar to those which continue to be reported in Juárez. On September 15 *La Jornada*